

NIGHT HORRORS

SPILLED BLOOD



*A Sourcebook for
Vampire: The Requiem*

“Unbeing dead isn’t being alive”

— E.E. Cummings



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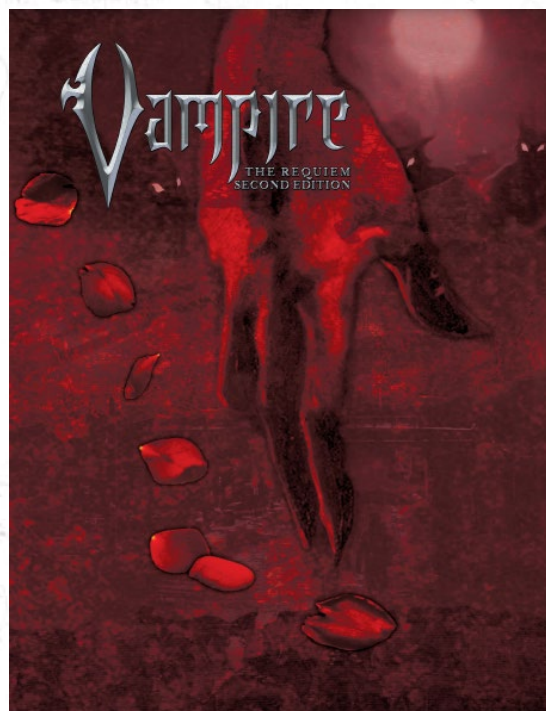
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Introduction

"People should either be caressed or crushed. If you do them minor damage they will get their revenge; but if you cripple them there is nothing they can do. If you need to injure someone, do it in such a way that you do not have to fear their vengeance."

— Niccolo Machiavelli

Themes

It's always interesting to explore new aspects of our condition. You find in yourself the culmination of eons of perfection the weak and fragile cast off and lost along the way. I don't think much on those who came before, or the lost clans. Why would I, when there are so many still living with interesting stories to tell?

Night Horrors: Spilled Blood is a book about the strange, twisted things that come with being a creature of the night. It's one part cautionary tale against the fanatical, another part legend of what happens when you are too different, strange, or powerful for the rest of the All Night Society to keep you around.

Requiem + Masquerade

The All Night Society holds many secrets, and plenty they keep from each other instead of just the mortal world. The denizens of **Spilled Blood** have their own secrets, and most would do anything to keep those secrets out of Kindred hands. In doing so, they threaten both the Requiem and the Masquerade.

You may not know why your nights are being disrupted. You didn't do anything to deserve it. Or did you? Even if you didn't, now you have to deal with the consequences of suspicion and paranoia that permeates your home. If you really want to do something about it, you'll find the ones really responsible. Just remember that what you do to survive the nights, to keep yourself going, is not very different from what they are doing. And just like you will fight to make it right, they will fight to keep what they think is a good thing going.

Old + New

It's easy to think something you've never seen before is new. Sure, it's new to you. But mostly it's because you are the new one. You simply don't have the experience to recognize that

what you're up against is as old as time, but rare enough that few know of its existence.

New institutions come up every day, some stay, some fall. And those that fall may stick around in some small part for centuries to come. Ancient horrors rarely just go away, instead they hide until collective memory has passed them by.

Pity + Blasphemy

There is no good and evil. There is only predator and prey. Most of the Kindred won't agree with this assessment, but they don't have to. They generally accept their role as predator without ever wondering when or if they will become prey on their own.

And when they see a member of a clan lost to time, not because that clan was weak, but because their own kind hunted them to extinction, they can comfortably apply the label of good vampires who routed bad vampires. But really, those who lost were the prey. Just when you're there putting labels on things, hope that those who were once prey don't become the predator on you.

How to Use This Book

This book is devoted to antagonists who roam the night. Inside, you will find various entities who prey on vampires. They might not attack a vampire directly, but sometimes their very presence will disrupt the nightly activities of the Kindred. From vampires with twisted bloodlines to immortal creatures whose very existence challenges that of the undead.

The antagonists you find in these pages are not all out to destroy the All Night Society. Some simply wish to exist, but their very existence is a danger to the Kindred and their way of life. Some are very personal problems that target only one or two specific people, likely your player characters. Others are a threat to other supernatural creatures, but those threats will blow back on all Kindred if not halted.

Spilled Blood mixes the personal horror elements you find in **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** with the strange, lost, and horrible. Vampires give in to their Beasts or baser instincts, ghouls rebel against the blood, and immortal beings find succor in vampiric hosts.

Who's Inside

The following is a brief list of the antagonists found inside **Spilled Blood** by chapter.

Twists of the Blood

The bloodlines in this book may feel a bit different than others. Some of these bloodlines can be entered by more than one clan, and that extends to all clans within a single covenant. Bloodlines that accept any clan within a covenant are rare, but exist, essentially being simultaneously founded by a group of likeminded Kindred. This doesn't preclude anyone from leaving the covenant after entering the bloodline, though few do. Entering the bloodline is not only a form of indoctrination in the covenant, but the covenant members don't look kindly on those who leave, often hunting them down to keep the covenant's secrets.

The **Ankou** act as guardians to humanity, culling vampire kind like the plague it is.

The **Icelus** Foundation has a wonderful plan for your dreams, like a wolf has for mutton. But first, please sign this waiver.

The **Jharana** hear the signal, and they serve the God-Machine. That is what they say, though their sickness spreads to others, and no one knows for sure what the ultimate plan is.

Taking their fill of human emotions, the **Lidérc** enrich the lives of their victims as they sap away their souls.

The **Nosoi** haunt the halls of hospitals and care facilities; these citified Gangrel carefully cultivate herds brimming with their favored bloodborne maladies.

Whether they are thought of as hidebound bores or devout leftists, **The Parliamentarians** are undoubtedly Carthians. They come armed with verbal assaults able to strip an opponent's social standing to the bone.

Dealing in secret desires and forbidden knowledge, the **Penumbrae** are a rare sect of the Mother's Army who can delve into the dreams to divine wisdom.

Scions of the First City claim an unbroken lineage tracking back before any of the extant covenants. These Invictus enjoy a deep connection with the cities they claim as their own, a byproduct of their obsessive worship.

The **Vardvle** are addicted to a dream of perfection. They do whatever they can to reach that obsession, even taking on other people's lives.

Lost in desire and debauchery, the **Vilseduire** bring out the worst in mortals and Kindred alike.

Those Who Are Us

This chapter delves into vampires and vampire groups who antagonize other vampires. We start with alternate covenants, or strong coteries, and move to the individual. Each of these vampires has a reason to hunt others, but not all hunt indiscriminately. Here you will find a few remnants of lost clans as well as those who have been wronged by their brethren.

Belial's Brood have embraced the Beast over the Man in a last ditch effort to retain some semblance of intelligence as humanity slipped away.

The Esoteric Order of the Golden Star is a young, but ambitious, movement that promises magical power to its vampire students. Those promises are lies, but their influence is growing.

The Kenora Coterie has devolved into feral cannibals, unable to gain Vitae in any other way than by consuming raw flesh.

Lost to the frozen wastes of the Arctic, the **Amari** have nearly all died in swiftly melting snow caps, and the sole survivors are seeking revenge for their exile.

Ayanda walks a fragile path between life and death, perhaps more than any vampire. For centuries, the Bound have haunted her for the crimes of her sire, and her fellow Mekhet have wondered at the true nature of the Specter in their midst.

The fall of clan **Bekaak** is written in their withered flesh, but don't look too closely. Their touch carries the weight of history, and they would dearly like to share it.

The **Hypatians** offer miracle cures at deep discounts, and witch hunts at a premium.

A long-lost clan of water-dwelling vampires, the **Nhang** have allied with the Strix to take revenge against Kindred.

Subject 09-12 is an escaped experiment from an Ordo Dracul lab. She has mastered the ability to walk in a twilight form, and steals Willpower and Vitae from her victims.

The Requiem is a lament for the **Twice-Cursed**, made all the louder each time a victim rejects their obsessions, but they'll share that pain with every vampire their knives can reach.

Those Who Are Not Us

The antagonists in this chapter often prey on vampires or antagonize vampires by their very existence. Most are not vampires themselves, and never were; some were once vampires, but now bear little-to-no resemblance to their former selves. Many hold parasitic relationships with vampires, needing them as hosts or Vitae resources.

Be wary of the street cats prowling, they might be **Amaranthine Cats**. Those ghouls hunt vampires who are alone or in torpor and create more of their own without outside aid.

Blessing of Athena graces only the chosen, or so those infected claim as they coo over and protect their protruding

tumors, calling them children and our future. With just one quick injection, you can be blessed, too.

Parasites that dig into the veins of Kindred and seize control from the inside, **Blood Worms** turn their victims into near-mindless feeding machines.

The Brotherhood of Blood is a hate group infused with the essence of vampires. Their cult of white supremacists acts as pseudo-vampires who must steal blood to stay alive.

No one knows where the **Chimera Virus** originated, but the sentient plague overwrites vampiric flesh until what follows is a walking colony, instead of one of the Kindred.

The Everlasting are an ancient race, maybe older than vampires themselves, whose obsession with repetition makes

them at once stagnant and immovable to the changing world of the All Night Society.

The **Heart's Bane** disease lurks in the blood, chasing Vitae out of every open wound. The diabolic variant destroys everything, falling only to isolation and fire.

Something calls from the ocean's most crushing depths, and the **Nereid** answer. These sub-oceanic creatures, the result of an unknown infection that hijacks existing vampires, rise more frequently in recent nights, but at whose command?

The leaders of **Rampart Logistics** have learned that Vitae is a great source of power. Now they pump their soldiers full of the stuff to enact illegal missions – and finding new vampire donors is at the top of that list.





Fifteen minutes past zero hundred hours, and Anabeth was late.

Useless, Declan thought for the third time that night. *Absolutely useless. Never send a ghoul to do a vampire's work.*

The Gangrel had agreed to lend him Dr. Anabeth Montmartre, a noted specialist in western occult texts, to decipher a cryptogram for him. Declan considered it something of an insult, having to pay for the ghoul's assistance, but he couldn't really refuse — the Gangrel was higher up in the Invictus than he was, and her reputation for occult studies rivaled that of the Mekhet.

Twenty minutes past. Declan paced, restlessly cracking his knuckles. Had he been human, he might have lit a cigarette out of frustration.

"Waiting for someone?" chirped a voice at his elbow.

He would not give her the satisfaction of seeing him flinch. Slowly, he turned to look at this odd little ghoul who had appeared next to him.

Anabeth was just a hair shy of five feet tall, with blunt-cut dark hair, round dark eyes, and sunken shoulders. Whatever she was wearing was tucked under a shapeless oilcloth raincoat that dragged on the ground, and a pair of galoshes. Declan found himself twitching in annoyance. Something about her not preening for him, her master for the night, gnawed at him.

"You must be Anabeth," he huffed.

"Dr. Montmartre will do," she cheeped back, chipper as could be. "I finished my thesis several decades ago, you know."

"Are you as good as Bailey said you'd be?"

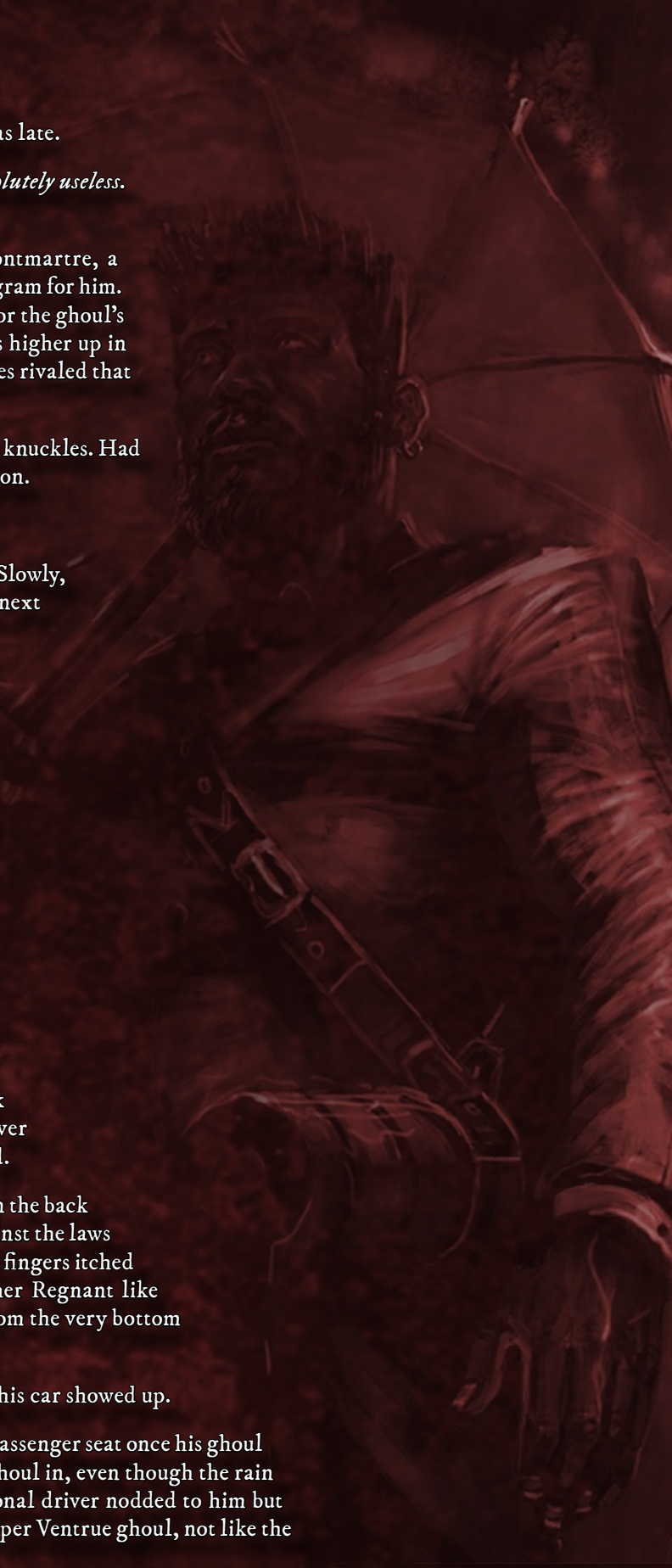
"Better. She doesn't give me nearly enough credit. I think it's because she'll have to give me the Embrace if she ever acknowledges that I'm as good as I know I am." She winked.

Declan felt his Beast start to stir as cold rage dripped down the back of his throat. He could kill her right now. It wouldn't be against the laws of the local domain — he'd just have to pay Bailey back. His fingers itched to strangle this strange woman, who had turned to text her Regnant like nothing was wrong. He had worked his way up the ladder from the very bottom of the Invictus. He would not be treated this way.

He had almost decided that fuck it, it was worth it, when his car showed up.

Declan flung himself less-than-gracefully into the front passenger seat once his ghoul driver slowed to a stop. He didn't even offer to let Bailey's ghoul in, even though the rain was enough to muss his carefully-styled hair. The professional driver nodded to him but said not a word. He wouldn't speak unless spoken to — a proper Ventrue ghoul, not like the woman who was wrestling with the car's back door.

Finally, she made it in and slammed the door behind her. Declan grimaced and tapped the dashboard once. The driver pulled out into the street.



chapter one twists of the blood

Ankou

"We bring death to the ones who break the code. There will be no pleasure in yours."

— Istvan Daele

Some complain that the world is overpopulated and that we're in need of another plague. While that may be true according to some, severely reducing an entire group damages the ecosystem and is short-term thinking. The Ankou have taken up the task of maintaining both the Kindred and human populations, while also limiting the interaction between the two. They follow a strict code, which details who and when they should kill or act.

Ankou shy away from the Kiss, preferring to kill a victim rather than give him pleasure from the bite. It may sound ridiculous, but the code demands such stringency. Ankou believe that vampires are not part of the natural order of life, and that above all, the thirst is the driving force leading to intertwined sins between the living and the dead. They drink to survive but want their mortal victims to gain no joy from such indulgences. Because of this, they only target those who

violate the code: those who murder without need, and those who interact with the living despite being dead. They also target ghouls, which they see as an unholy union between living and dead. They seek to cleanse the Earth of such putrid beings while protecting both humans and Kindred from the dangers of humanity.

How one interprets the different parts of the code differs between the individual Ankou. When following their childe, some are hands-on and always present. Others observe from a distance, only to intervene when the childe is about to break the code. A few of the Ankou disregard this part of the code entirely, saying that they don't have the time to parent a new vampire. Their duty is too important to put on hold to coddle a new Kindred — if they indeed are worthy, then they should already understand their task.

Why you want to be us

You think most vampires are as much of a cliché as they are a risk to all Kindred. Their one-dimensional behavior and short-sightedness make you want to gag. We are far superior, but it doesn't come naturally. Humans and Kindred alike associate us with death, and we give them just cause to do so.

While the rest of Kindred society either chooses to forget those who hunt vampires or spend their Requiems in ignorant bliss, we do not shy away from the truth. We choose to go deeper down the rabbit hole, and we know more about the VII and the Strix than anyone else. It can be a lonely existence, being one of the few who faces how dark this world is, but we never doubt the importance of the vital work we do.

The Ankou Code of Death

Guardians only kill those who are a threat to the balance and who continue to kill with no remorse.

Those who are unliving must not interact with those who are alive.

Reserve the Embrace for those who are unafraid to kill.

Follow your childe and observe the first hundred deaths dealt by them.

Why you should fear us

We hunt our own, regardless of clan or stature. Those who violate our code must die to preserve the delicate ecosystem we each are required to sustain.

We also hunt the creatures that most pretend don't even exist. Vampires aren't the apex predators, especially not in the shadows. While many think we're hired killers, we don't kill those who haven't broken the rules. However, if you want to point us in the direction of a target and send us off with material compensation, then we most certainly won't object.

So, who should fear us the most? The stereotypical modern vampire.

We see everything: how you fuel the flames of desire in your prey with lustful promises, further perpetuating the human's view of vampires as sexually desirable. We're everywhere, watching your hideous acts. The reason we don't strike you down at that instant is because we strive to ensure that your death will come to you in a way that serves as a warning to others like you.

Why we should fear ourselves

Our eyes were opened for the first time when we were Embraced. The sins of other Kindred, as well as our own, lie in plain sight of the Ankou. Hunting Kindred isn't the best survival tactic, and there are no rules against us culling those of our bloodline. Seeing another Ankou is like meeting the grim reaper. They see all of your hidden sins and you see theirs. Whose Requiem will come to an end tonight?

We have our code of death, but we make our own interpretations, and from time to time we disagree. Whenever that occurs, it leads to Final Death for at least one Ankou. Our distrust towards others makes for a solitary Requiem, and we can often feel the pull of companionship. We tirelessly remind ourselves that the living we associate with risk becoming pawns in our own or someone else's plans.

Bloodline Origins

- All rumored Bloodline origins agree that the first Ankou, whose real name has been forgotten, wrote the code of death. To us, she's known as the Lady of Death. She lost her beloved human partner to a fellow Kindred, and since, she couldn't stand watching how Kindred treated life with such disrespect. While the Lady of Death had no plans to start a covenant devoted to the issues, she decided to form her bloodline so that she could leave an indelible mark upon the Kindred race.
- Other stories say the Lady of Death formed a covenant, Ogma's Sword, consisting mostly of Mekhet sages studying the Strix. They sheltered some Kindred who were rumored to have defected from the VII. While some of those deserters were honest, a few were spies. Ogma's Sword collapsed from within, although the Lady managed to escape. With

the knowledge learned from the covenant, she created the Ankou bloodline and decided to focus on an offensive strategy in contrast to her peaceful past.

- The Ankou's least favorite rumor is that the Lady had a terrible run-in with the Strix which left her broken, scared, and determined to cull the creatures from the world. While many know she hates the Birds of Dis, only a few guardians speak of the fear she has for them. She pushes the other Ankou to hunt those whom she dares not hunt herself, and culls those who defy her.

Parent Clan: Mekhet

Nickname: Guardians, reapers (derogatory), death dealers

Bloodline Bane (The Distanced Curse): Witnessing the hidden horrors of the world, the Ankou feel even more detached from their human side than before they joined the Bloodline. As an Ankou's heart grows colder throughout their Requiem, simple joys become lost on them and it gets harder to see any point in having a Mask. Whenever an Ankou attempts to regain Willpower by maintaining their Mask, roll Humanity. On a failure, the Ankou does not regain Willpower.

Favored Attributes: Intelligence or Composure

Disciplines: *Auspex*, Celerity, Obfuscate, Vigor

In the Covenants

The Ankou are loners most of the time, except for when they must look after a childe as part of the code. Loneliness and safety in numbers push them toward joining a covenant, but each eventually must leave or minimize their interaction with them as to not break the code. If they find another guardian within a covenant, they often become attached at the hip and leave together if they need to.

The Carthian Movement: Ignorant, naive, inconceivable. The Ankou view them as teenagers who have discovered politics for the first time. A few idealistic guardians join the Carthian Movement but are either swiftly wiped out by their own or leave when they realize that they cannot square the covenant's actions with the code they follow.

The Circle of the Crone: Hiding behind a handful of cultists and pretending like you're somehow the leader of something? Not an appealing pitch to the guardians. Though they are one of the lesser evils. You won't see any Ankou amongst their ranks due to their intimate relations with humans.

The Invictus: The Invictus is the most common covenant for the Ankou. It's not a secret that the Ankou are killers. While they disapprove of using humans, they know that they cannot all live like hermits away from them. For humanity to live in ignorance, they Ankou must pull the strings from the shadows. The Masquerade is ultimately what keeps them safe. Just because the Ankou join the Invictus and are willing to murder doesn't mean they'll go against their code. They are guardians first. If a fellow covenant-mate throws a hissy-fit when they refuse to go after a target, he can expect a fiery grave to befall him soon.

The Lancea et Sanctum: The Lancea et Sanctum is a common covenant for the Ankou to be a part of, especially the hermetic orders within it. Their purpose is to be death bringers. This covenant also favors stability and tradition, characteristics that are popular amongst the guardians.

Ordo Dracul: The Ankou have a love-hate relationship with the Draco Ordul. While they can relate to their strong desire to twist the vampiric condition, they can't stand how easily the Dracul experiment on human test subjects. Their enemies are strong, especially the Birds of Dis, whom they fear most. Some guardians compromise their code for the desire to become an indestructible weapon. They find the knowledge to become that in the ranks of the Ordo Dracul.

VII: Don't mistake the Ankou for being one of them. The VII kill Kindred outside of their covenant indiscriminately, while the guardians kill anyone who threatens the balance between Kindred and humans. The Ankou exist to maintain the populations, not deplete them. The VII are high on the list of indiscriminate killers who need culling. And the Ankou aren't afraid of a fight if the VII come looking for one.

Rumors

"Where the hell are you!? The stupid wardens forgot to lock up the prisoners in max outside of town! Murderers are on the loose, so please, for the love of God, come home now!"

News of the missing murderers spread through the town like wildfire, and some are pointing their fingers at the Ankou. The guardians are infamous for Embracing serial killers and hitmen because they want Kindred who aren't against killing. While they reject the notion of having a hard-on for murderers, they stand firmly in their belief that innocent people deserve a peaceful death. Yet there are Ankou who Embrace those who would defile their code, and that often leads to public uproar among the human populations. No one likes to have a known killer on the loose.

"So, I tried this thing where I wrote the name of someone I want killed and put it in one of the loose stones of the old church. The rumor says that if you do that, and list the person's bad deeds, then someone will make them pay. Guess Tiffany being a cheating bitch isn't enough of a sin for them, but holy shit, Brad supposedly died after someone wrote his name. What the fuck do you think he did to deserve that?"

This urban legend has its roots in a group of organized Ankou acting as contract killers for the living and the dead.

Their secret way of accepting contracts has somehow leaked to the mortal population, but no one has successfully established contact with them. These groups crop up from time to time, but don't last for long.

"I wouldn't want to be one of the Ankou right now. I've heard the Lady of Death is in town. She's their creator, you know, and only hunts Ankou who break the code. They say that the only time you see her is the second before your final death."

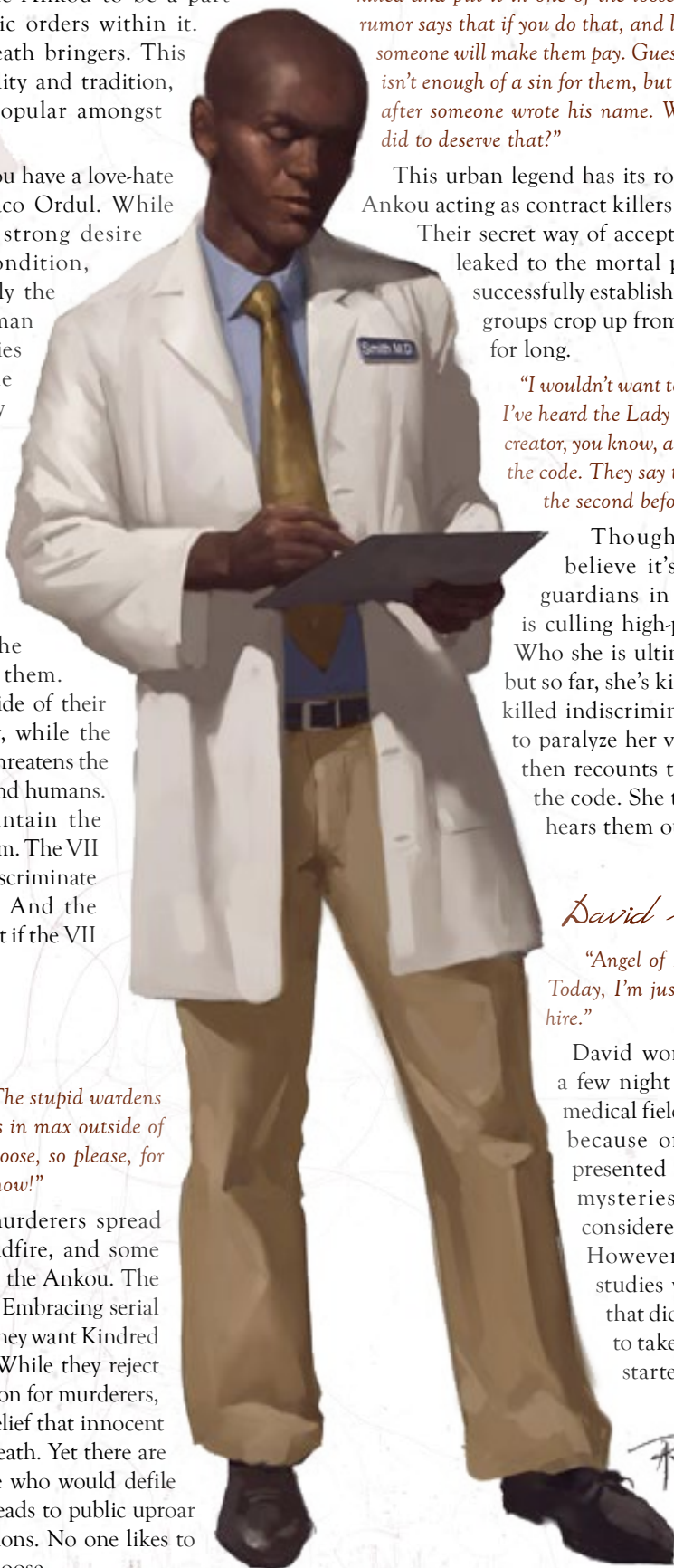
Though most Kindred want to believe it's just a story to keep the guardians in check, the Lady of Death is culling high-profile Kindred in the city. Who she is ultimately after, no one knows, but so far, she's killed several Ankou who had killed indiscriminately. Supposedly, she tries to paralyze her victims by staking them and then recounts the times they acted against the code. She then kills them — and never hears them out.

David Smith

"Angel of Death? Perhaps years ago, yes. Today, I'm just another regular guardian for hire."

David worked as a nurse, filling in a few night shifts here and there. The medical field initially piqued his interest because of the constant challenges presented there and the unexplained mysteries of human anatomy. He considered working as a pathologist. However, David struggled in his studies whenever faced with a task that didn't interest him. He decided to take a break from university and started work.

Unbeknownst to him, an Ankou watched David's every move while investigating a rumor that an "angel of death" worked at a local hospital.



After weeks of staking out the hospital, she confronted David in the act of administering a lethal dosage of digoxin — a drug used to treat various heart conditions — to his twelfth victim. He had avoided scrutiny by his peers by killing the patients during night shifts which he had off. When asked why he killed the victims, David confessed to killing those who wanted to die but could not take their own lives. If they were able to die by assisted suicide, the patients would have died in much more painful, gruesome ways. He then surrendered some of his blood to the Ankou for testing before the guardian vanished into the night. The Ankou returned a week later and asked David to swear an oath to follow the Ankou code of death and become a guardian. After two hours of asking questions, David accepted the oath and became one of the Ankou.

Even now after coming to terms of being one of the Kindred, David is drawn to take up work in medicine so he can see corpses and complete his ambitions of becoming a specialist in pathology. His morbid curiosity about death has only grown since his Embrace. He derives a peaceful enjoyment from watching people die, which he can now indulge in without anyone noticing. Working in hospitals also provides the perk of easy access to blood without having to feed from a victim.

Clan/Bloodline: Mekhet/Ankou

Covenant: None

Mask: Perfectionist

Dirge: Authoritarian

Touchstone: Sheena Davis, the surviving widow of his first victim

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Research) 2, Computer 2, Medicine (Pathology) 4, Politics 1, Science (Biology) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 3, Stealth 1, Weaponry 3 (Knives)

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Acute Sense, Alternative Identity 2, Haven 2, Resources 3, Safe Place 2

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Obfuscate 2, Vigor 3

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 8

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Icelus

“The only way out is through. Begin again.”

— Icelus mantra

Do you suffer from anxiety? Most of us do these days. Between work, debt, politics, and the other paper cuts of day-to-day life, we have so little to aspire to. What happened to our dreams? Maybe you’ve been looking for someone to tell you what your dreams are all about. Maybe you need someone to make them come true.

The Icelus Foundation is here to help. Humankind lost their connection to dreams, and we know how to take it back. The science of Psychognosis™ taps into the all-knowledge of dreams to heal the banal-sociopathy of modern-living. Did you know society actually *makes* you crazy? We do, too. That’s why

our patients have trusted us with their mental health since 1951. Don’t take our word for it, though. Just watch these testimonials as you relax on one of our orthopedic daybeds. Enjoy your rest! Our friendly staff will see to your dreams.

Both bloodline and business, the Icelus are a conspiracy of Mekhet and Ventrue who claim mastery over humanity’s dreams. Appearing just after World War II as modern psychology and dream theory came into vogue, the first vampires to take the name Icelus concluded that the collective unconscious was a quantifiable resource — one they could tap like a keg. Marketing itself as a professional organization

of hypnotherapists, the Foundation has forged a brand on Psychognosis, *The Science of Sleep*, which is a dream eating technique they use to gather data on their herds. These Auditors and their minions operate throughout North America, with study groups and knockoffs all over the world. It helps that they have backers with deep pockets. The Ordo Dracul is the Foundation's eager enabler, believing that by providing materiel and mystical support, they can help the Icelus crack open a whole new Mystery, a path of transcendence the Dragon himself never imagined.

Practices vary from city to city. Some Auditors use Rogerian dialogues and hypnotic regression, while others employ LSD, MDMA, DMT, or any other hallucinogen on hand. Thoroughly drugged and/or emotionally raw, their patients enter an alpha state to the dulcet jargon of Psychognosis, convinced the blackness they experience is therapeutic — that's how you know it's working.

People believe it, too. Humans can convince themselves of just about any placebo, and they'll cling to a cure even if it makes them miserable. Some might call that a sunk cost fallacy, but even Icelus patients who do realize they've been taken for a ride find it hard to walk away. The Auditors mine deep veins of unfiltered desire in the dreams they steal, little of it flattering to their victims.

That said, few Icelus are frauds. Auditors subject each other to the same therapies they test on mortals, hoping to trigger dead organs of dreaming the Embrace snuffed out. Their theories hold that Kindred sleep states are disconnected from the collective unconscious, or at least that they're lesser than those of humans. One night, they believe they'll dream again. Then their studies can begin in earnest.

Why you want to be us

Ignore the crap about dreams. We're Panopticon with fainting couches, kings, and secret police wrapped up in the same tweed jacket. Servants and spies are just dressing when you've got patients. Bait the hook with a wriggling, half-dead hope and you'll have everything you need. Forget power. Forget knowledge. Trust is control.

Why you should fear us

You think you dream alone. That's your time and your mind, no matter what's lurking beneath the bed. Safe in sleep, what could hurt you? Us, for one. Your imagination is our meat, and your brain's the abattoir. Good on you if you can find meaning in that, but it's no concern of ours. Just keep on dreaming. Real nightmares have nothing to do with sleep.

Why we should fear ourselves

It's a slippery slope from dream guru to raving lunatic, and you'd be surprised how many of us forget that. Watch too many nightmares and you start feeling bad for the suckers.

You convince yourself you really are there to change lives. That's when it becomes a cult, not just a buffet. A real cult's hard to control. The tighter you squeeze, the faster they slip away, but you just keep on squeezing. And then? Forget it, Jake. It's Jonestown.

Bloodline Origins

- Vampires fuck, feed, and murder without shame, and one night the gore congealed for an incestuous little gang of Lords and Shadows. Between the lust for secrets and the hunger for power, these vampires pooled their talents, deciding pseudo-psychological dream bullshit was a clear way to draw in victims. Or maybe it was all just an elaborate Dragon in-joke. It would've stayed that way if it hadn't started working.
- Project ICELVIS was a joint government-Kindred effort to breed psywar operatives, using dreams to weaponize telepathic energy against Soviet agents and otherworldly threats. As the most psychically gifted clans, patriotic elders in the Ordo Dracul provided government spooks with Mekhet and Ventruue "volunteers." Funding fell through when Invictus-controlled factions of the CIA found out what was *really* going on, but by then the original subjects had gone to ground. They still want to finish the mission.
- Once upon a midnight darkly, the Emperor suffered fitful sleep. No healer in the land could help him, but a lowly servant thought she knew what ailed her master. Hiding in his room until the doctors left, she let a nightingale fly from her robe. The bird told her that the lord did not dream true dreams, and it sang its song to ease his nightmares. Touched by the melody, Death came to end the monarch's misery, but saw It could not reap him without his dreams. Now the Emperor and his servant, who is his trusted shadow, walk the night to help others dream true dreams — tirelessly ever after.

Parent Clan: Mekhet or Ventruue

Nicknames: Auditors, the Foundation

Bloodline Bane (The Hypnotic Curse): In addition to their clan banes, Icelus suffer obscure, disjointed visions in daysleep. They rarely remember them, but these nightmares leave their Beasts exhausted and pliable. On top of Bestial, Competitive, or Wanton, if an Auditor fails a detachment roll he also takes the Mesmerized Condition as his Beast gives in to sleep. He can still act under his own will, but his actions may appear uncannily rote to observers. Anyone can exploit this Condition while it lasts, using the rules for Mesmerize (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 131). Resolving this Condition does not confer the usual +3 to resist Dominate.

Favored Attributes: As with parent clan

Disciplines: *Auspex*, *Dominate*, *Obfuscate*, *Resilience*

In the Covenants

The Carthian Movement: Revolution is a dream made manifest, but it needs defenders. Mekhet Auditors are the Movement's secret police, psychoanalyzing and spying on dissidents, while Ventrue serve as its recruiters, bringing important mortals into the Foundation to build up political capital for the cause. In hard times, Carthian Icelus unleash total psychological warfare on their enemies, breaking secrets and brains for the cause of freedom.

The Circle of the Crone: The Crone lives. She sleeps in the dreams of every mortal, and Icelus of the Mother's Army want to wake her up. Most of the time this is metaphorical, or an excuse to demolish healthy sleep patterns in the name of the Dark Mother, but a few fanatical Auditors believe they can really bring her back. They only need to devour enough nightmares to shock her into wakeful wrath.

The Invictus: The First Estate doesn't subscribe to any particular metaphysics the Icelus can twist to their ends, so the few Auditors who rise in the ranks of the Invictus emphasize the Foundation's profit margins. Their multi-level marketing schemes are easy money, and even help enforce the Masquerade — it's hard to spot vampires when you spend most of your time in therapy.

The Lancea et Sanctum: God speaks through dreams, and He wants the Icelus to divine His words for the chosen. Sanctified Auditors use the Foundation as a proving ground for faithful mortals, bringing a touch of predestination doctrine to Psychognosis. These vampires believe they can separate the rams from the ewes with dream analysis, pinpointing exactly who falls into (and out of) God's plan.

The Ordo Dracul: The vast majority of Icelus are Dragons. The covenant is so central to the bloodline's ethos that all Auditors, regardless of faction, can gain honorary membership if they want it. The Defiant are happy to offer academic backing to Icelus of any political stripe if they share the results of their work.

Wyrms' Nests are indispensable research aids to Icelus who prefer fieldwork. Auditors with the means routinely create sleep studies in haunted houses and spirit loci, leveraging the pliability of dreams in these mysterious places.

Rumors

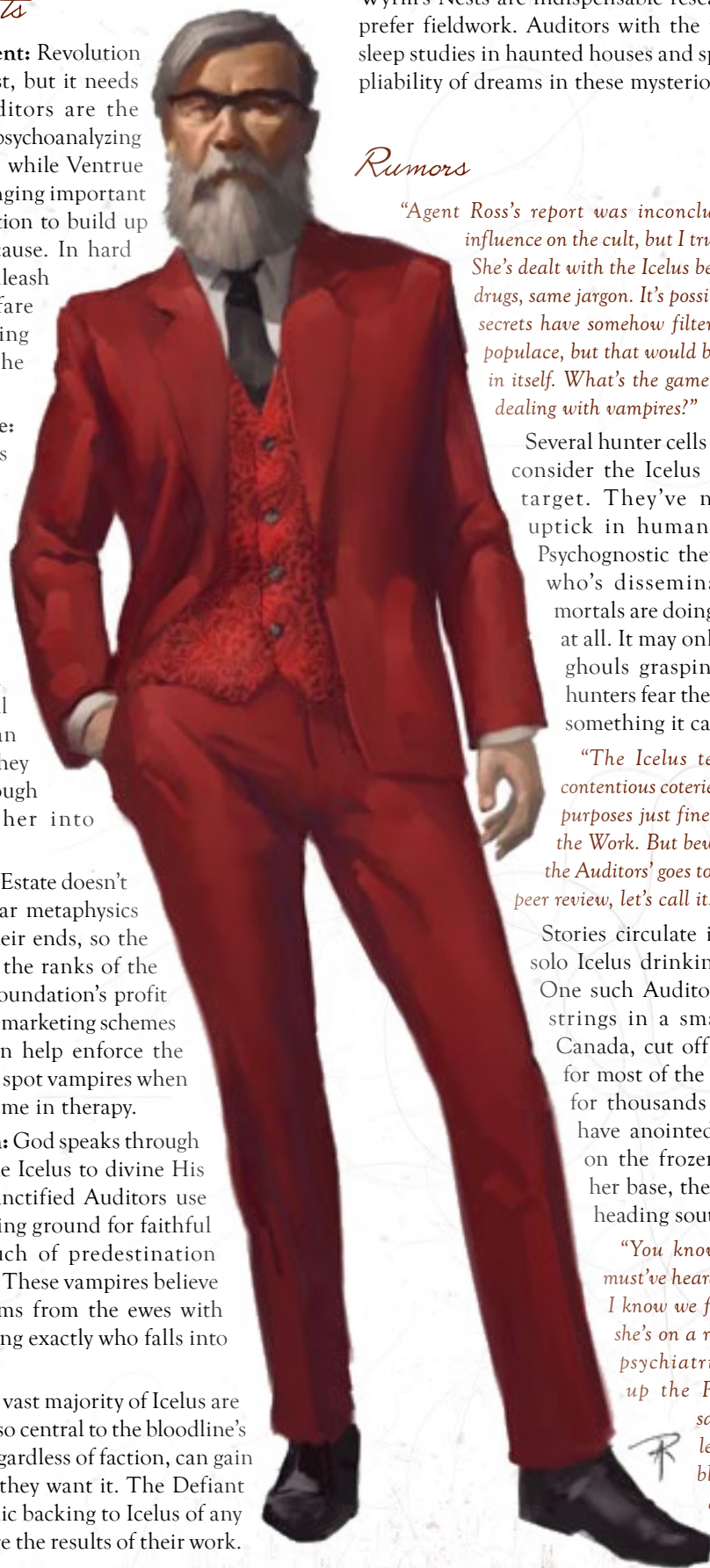
"Agent Ross's report was inconclusive regarding SP/ENE influence on the cult, but I trust Agent Carrie's instinct. She's dealt with the Icelus before: same hypnosis, same drugs, same jargon. It's possible the Foundation's trade secrets have somehow filtered down into the human populace, but that would be a troubling development in itself. What's the game plan when we're not just dealing with vampires?"

Several hunter cells and anti-cult taskforces consider the Icelus Foundation a priority target. They've noticed an alarming uptick in human organizations using Psychognostic therapy, and it's not clear who's disseminating it... or if these mortals are doing anything supernatural at all. It may only be a few independent ghouls grasping at power, but many hunters fear the Foundation has started something it can't control.

"The Icelus tend to move in insular, contentious coteries, which serves the Order's purposes just fine — competition is good for the Work. But beware the loners. Power like the Auditors' goes to a person's head without... peer review, let's call it."

Stories circulate in the Ordo Dracul of solo Icelus drinking their own Kool-Aid. One such Auditor supposedly pulls the strings in a small town in northern Canada, cut off from the world by ice for most of the year. The only vampire for thousands of miles, her patients have anointed her a dream goddess on the frozen wastes. Having built her base, the Foundation fears she's heading south.

"You know Felipa? The P.I.? You must've heard about her big case, then. I know we frown on hunting kin, but she's on a real tear about some crazy psychiatrist vampires. Screwing up the Primordial Dream, she says, making people dream less. And, you know, evil, blood-drinking therapists aren't exactly... good. Last I heard she's closing in,



but those fuckers have a lot of bodies to put between her and them. And lawyers."

Psychognosis cleaves victims from their dreams, the hunting grounds Begotten use to spread fear and teach lessons, and that puts the Auditors on an exceedingly short blacklist of monsters even Beasts won't work with. Which isn't to say they never do. Felipa hungers for secrets, and her Icelus investigation was keeping her well-fed until she hit an unexpected wall: a restraining order filed by their lawyers, the firm of Imani, Esperanza & Ai — a brood of Whispers, like herself. The question of why IEA's senior partners want to thwart her feeding and butter up the Icelus is Felipa's current bottleneck; she's looking for Kindred with their own grudges against the Foundation to help with some extralegal troubleshooting.

Jules

"Dream as big as you can, but plan for retirement. Expect a few getaways. And, well, live forever. That's my secret."

Julius d'Entremont was always a conman, but the Icelus taught him that cults can turn a prettier profit than crime. He spent his early Requiem as a minor Montreal Firebrand before he met a coterie of Dragon Auditors, evangelists looking for dreams and recruits. Never a true believer but always a good student, by the 70's Jules had milked them for all they were worth, and just as Montreal fell to the Nameless, he skipped town with the Foundation's secrets.

Victoria wasn't his first escape choice, but a vampire on the run doesn't get to choose the finish line. It was as far away from Quebec as he could get, and it had long been a cloister, cut off from mainland Kindred after a violent coup in Vancouver. For almost fifty years, his off-brand Foundation has been co-opting the Island's small vampire community, as well as the New Age and pagan study groups endemic to the area. He isn't quite Voivode of Victoria, but in a crisis, he'll play the part.

However, Jules didn't exile himself to the Island just to rule it. He's one of the few Kindred who can see the way the local dreamscape affects the waking world. It may be one of the biggest Wyrms' Nests on earth. Jules's personal notes record countless nightmares projecting into the physical world, and he's working on tapping into that phenomena with some very experimental Psychognosis. If he's successful, the next stop's Vancouver. Then, Montreal, and anything in between.

Clan/Bloodline: Mekhet/Icelus

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Mask: Cult Leader

Dirge: Conspirator

Touchstone: Arjun, a patient

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Icelus Foundation as Mystery Cult

- Psychology Specialty in Medicine
- A dot of Library (Occult)
- A dot of Medicine
- Three dots in Fast-Talking, if prerequisites are met, or Inspiring, regardless of Presence rating
- The cultist becomes a ghoul with an extra dot in Auspex or Dominate. She automatically joins the Icelus bloodline upon Embrace.

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Medicine (Psychology) 2, Occult (Cults) 4, Politics 4

Physical Skills: Firearms (Revolvers) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Paranoia) 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Con Artistry) 3, Subterfuge (Crime) 5

Merits: Alternate Identity 3, City Status 5, Dream Visions, Fast-Talking 4, Herd 5, Honey Trap, Language (English), Library (Occult) 3, Mekhet Status 3, Mystery Cult Influence (Icelus Foundation) 5, Ordo Dracul Status 5, Psychognosis 5, Retainer 4, Secret Society Junkie, Resources 4, Staff 3, Sworn

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Celerity 2, Coil of the Voivode 3, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 3, Resilience 2

Devotions: Quicken Sight

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 9

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3 (Active Defense 5)

Armor: 1/3 (Kevlar vest)

Notes: Jules suffers the Holy Day bane. Mystery Cult Influence functions the same as Initiation, but the character holds more direct control over his cult. It is purchased for a minimum of three dots.

New Merit: Psychognosis

The Icelus gain power through a technique they call Psychognosis, a method of dream analysis and limited oneiromancy. Most Icelus believe they're accessing the collective unconscious via their victims, but those who don't buy the Foundation's dogma say they're only borrowing a bit of brain power.

In addition to accessing the following Merit, Icelus characters gain Dream Visions for free, including Ventrue. Mekhet who purchase it before joining the bloodline are refunded the Experiences spent.

Psychognosis (• – •••••)

Prerequisites: Icelus, Psychology Specialty in Medicine, Auspex, and Dominate (see below)

Effect: Your character has studied the pseudoscientific art of Psychognosis, allowing her to devour a human patient's dreams to boost her Disciplines. Each dot is a discrete effect. Aided by drugs, pendulums, or mantras, she must first hypnotize her subject, then lull him into a state the Icelus call psychognostic sleep. The vampire then spends a point of Willpower and rolls to establish a connection. Each additional technique requires the expenditure of a separate Willpower point, but effects last until sunrise (even if the sleeper wakes), and it only takes a reflexive action to review stolen dreams up to that point in the night.

All techniques have a prerequisite Auspex or Dominate level.

Drawback: Brains need REM sleep. Psychognosis disrupts it. Used too many times in a row, the victim will suffer hallucinations and lost time, or even death.

Cost: 1 Willpower, plus one for each technique

Requirement: The patient must be in a hypnotic state; this can be created with Mesmerize, but the subject must consent to its use.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Medicine – Resolve

Action: Resisted; resistance is reflexive

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The vampire is flooded with unfiltered dreams and gains the Lethargic Condition. She cannot use Psychognosis for the rest of the night.

Failure: The vampire fails to access the subject's dreams, but she can try again.

Success: The victim falls into psychognostic sleep for hours equal to successes. The vampire can now spend Willpower to activate any techniques she knows, but only while the victim remains in his trance.

Exceptional Success: The vampire does not need to spend Willpower to activate techniques.

- **Hypnotic Precognition (Dominate 2):** The Auditor gains clarity from the sleeper's dreams and bends minds to prescient ends. Each time your character successfully Mesmerizes a subject or issues an Iron Edict, you may choose to ask a question about the victim for the purposes of Dream Visions, up to a number of times equal to Psychognosis dots.
- **Diagnostic Dreaming (Auspex 2):** The Auditor draws on the strength of human dreams to highlight fissures in the material world. Count any normal success on Beast's Hackles as an exceptional success. You may also spend a Vitae to gain additional questions up to your number of Psychognosis dots after activating Uncanny Perception.
- **Waking Prescience (Auspex 3):** Your attunement to the architecture of the dreaming mind lets you perceive it's shadow in the waking world. Instead of rolling Spirit's Touch, you automatically succeed as if you had a single success, and you can spend Willpower to learn answers to additional questions.
- **Morphean Blackmail (Dominate 4):** The Auditor collects the anxieties of the multitudes and exploits them to her own ends. In addition to normal costs, if your character spends a Vitae when activating Dominate, victims can only apply half their relevant Attribute (round down) when resisting or contesting her.
- **Shared Minds (Auspex 4):** Just as she gazes into dreams, the Auditor spreads her perceptions through lucid beings. When activating Lay Open the Mind, your character can spend an additional Vitae to link with her victim's mind on a deeper level. While connected, she can see, hear, taste, and smell anything he does, though she can't influence him. The initial link lasts one scene, but she can spend a Vitae per scene to renew it. **Drawback:** While active, this connection imposes a -3 on your character's Perception.

Jharana

"Can't you see it? Hear it thrumming? No? Of course you can't. Tick-tock-tick-tock. That's the heartbeat of the world, baby. That's the soul of the Machine. Listen!"

— Aurora Roman, Jharana mender

What are centuries to a vampire? Nothing, that's what. They can plot and plan for months or years, figuring out how to execute a minor plan in just the perfect way. Some are too impatient, of course. They could never see the big picture. They have their uses, but they'll never be great. They refuse to recognize their place in the Machine.

What is a vampire to the Machine? One more cog. A specialized one, to be sure, but all part of the same schema. The most seductive Daeva and the most terrifying Nosferatu are all pieces of the grand design, one only the God-Machine could have produced. The Jharana are caretakers of this design. They listen to the song of the machinery around them and build their plans according to what they hear.

How do they hear? Carefully. All Jharana were Stigmatics before their Embrace. Through some happy accident of fortune or another plan of the God-Machine, the Jharana saw the truth of the world. They do not know — cannot know — everything the Machine has in store for them, but they are content knowing that they are chosen. Every sire passes the knowledge that they are specially chosen with a duty in mind to their childer. It is all part of the plan.

How do they know the plan? The God-Machine provides. With few exceptions, most Jharana spend a great deal of time with the Holy Engineers, a small covenant devoted to listening to and interpreting the signals of the God-Machine. They are among the most proficient Holy Sufferers (vampires or Stigmatics who receive visceral prophecies), and they seek out opportunities to find and interpret omens from the God-Machine or its servants. Some claim to have talked to angels personally, while others specialize in soothing and mitigating Radio Sickness through Dead Signal (p. XX). Jharana are not secretive except when necessary, and they actively share what they know with other people. They are the mechanics, the mystics, and the menders.

So, how are these kindly ones vampires? They get hungry, too. Jharana, while generous, are not gentle or subtle. Stigmatics who run from themselves and spurn the gift of the God-Machine and its servants do not become Jharana. Jharana do not flee their Stigmatic past, and they look forward to their eternity as servants of the Machine. They know what they're doing is Right and True, because everything they do is

blessed by the God-Machine. It will tell them if they need to change course — and if they haven't been told, then why worry?

Why you want to be us

Everyone wants to be part of something bigger than themselves. Don't lie to me. I see it in your eyes, in the way you draw breath. You too were touched by the God-Machine. You could be embraced by the Daeva and learn how to make the world dance to your tune, or by the Gangrel and live forever as yourself. But their little clubs aren't *really* what you want. You want to know your place in the world, where you belong. You want to know why you were given this gift, and how you can best use it. Come with me. Let me show you the beauty of chrome and blood.

Why you should fear us

We are bigger than you. We may not be the most powerful, or the most beautiful, or the deadliest, but *we are bigger than you*. We know who we are, and we are bonded in one purpose. How many Kindred can say that? Show us a false Machine and we will tear it to pieces with our teeth. Angels protect us and Infrastructure shelters us. Even before our Embrace, we could hear the heartbeat of the world. If you tear one of us down, the Machine will build another to fill our place anew. What will your talons do against that?

Why we should fear ourselves

Even the most perfect machine can have sand thrown in its gears. What if we misunderstand the signal? What if we incur the wrath of one of the Covenants in our quest, and they wipe us out? What if, God forbid, we spill secrets to one of the Second Children? Our big mouths and tendency to enable each other, no matter what, might have consequences.

Bloodline Origins

- The angel who lives under Uluru (known to others as Ayers Rock) might be sleeping, but that doesn't mean they're unaware of what's happening. They seethe and plot, their curse only kept at

bay by the sweet songs of indigenous peoples. The Jharana are their eyes and ears in the world. They are the children of the rock, the fountain that springs forth from barren soil. A piece of the Angel of Uluru resides in every Jharana, connecting them in a dormant psychic network. Should that network ever be awakened, well...

- When the Deva Corporation brought back Packet Theta from the moon, a piece fell out in transit to the labs. This piece, a fossilized insect, scuttled away unnoticed, lured by the bright noise of the modern world. It bit a Stigmatic woman and burrowed into her skin, forever changing her into an undead servant of the Machine.
- Someone touched something they shouldn't have. Maybe a Stigmatic flipped a switch. Maybe a vampire pressed a button or snapped a wire. Maybe a Daeva seduced an angel, running her cold fingers up the angel's electric thigh. Jharana weren't planned for, weren't drawn into the greater blueprint. They were a mistake. What will happen when they discover that they aren't special servants at all?

Parent Clan: Daeva

Nickname: Menders, Machinists

Bloodline Banes (The Omen Curse):

Like their Daeva parents, the Jharana tastes the emotional weight of everything and everyone around them — especially in the blood. Unlike their parents, however, the Jharana do not run the risk of becoming emotionally attached to their prey. Instead, should a Jharana feed on someone more than once per chapter, roll Humanity. Failure causes the Persistent Obsession Condition as she starts to see that person in all her signals. Signs point to the target, Radio Sickness manifests in her voice — even angels might look like that unlucky (or lucky) person.

Favored Attributes: Manipulation or Intelligence

Disciplines: *Auspex*, *Dead Signal*, *Celerity*, *Vigor*

In the Covenants

Carthian Movement: Perhaps here more than any other covenant (except for the Holy Engineers), the Jharana feel at home. The Movement's focus on democracy and support of individuals means that the Menders can flex the extent of their personal talents.

Circle of the Crone: Jharana scorn the Acolytes, seeing them as misguided and led astray by the seductions of the natural world. Plants, dirt, and blood magic are a grimy finish on the purity of the God-Machine's pitiless steel, and to deny the structure for the blood is idiotic at best. Still, some Jharana join the Circle temporarily to learn Crúac, the better to understand their relationship to the world in which they have been placed and fit with other Kindred.

Holy Engineers: To put it succinctly, the Engineers are a smaller covenant perfect for a smaller bloodline. While the Engineers do not have quite the same restrictions on Embrace that the Jharana do, their goals align too perfectly for it to be any coincidence. Jharana take prominent roles within the Holy Engineers as spies, mechanics, interpreters, and Holy Sufferers. If the Holy Engineers have a prominent presence anywhere, it's a good bet that there will be at least one Jharana among them.

Invictus: While the Jharana focus on what the God-Machine wants for them, they are still Kindred. The finer things in life exist within the universe that the God-Machine created, and therefore the Menders are welcome to them. Some are members of the Invictus for this reason alone. Others have a deeper purpose: the ability to interact with the Deva Corporation on roughly equal footing. Whether they want to steal back Packet Theta, destroy it, or get close enough to worship at the base of its vitrine, some Jharana see the Invictus as the quickest way to get the money and power necessary to achieve their goals.

Lancea et Sanctum: While at first glance the Second Estate might look like an ideal place for the Jharana given their focus on a Grand Design and the place of Kindred within it, little could be further from the truth. The Menders virulently reject the theology of the Sanctified, seeing



them as heretical and poisonous. While the God-Machine might work within the Catholic Church to ensnare kine, Kindred should be above such elaborate, petty designs.

Ordo Dracul: The Jharana have a mixed relationship with the Dragons. While they scoff at the idea that the entirety of vampirism stems from the sins of one count in eastern Europe, the Coils are of interest to them. Since the Jharana need to interact with other Stigmatics relatively often, including those who are still alive, the ability to temporarily overcome the Beast is extremely valuable. Some have joined the Ordo Dracul and are actively working on their own Coils, experimenting with vampiric and Stigmatic powers to twist themselves into beings akin to angels. These experiments are still in progress, with no finished product yet in sight.

Rumors

"They're not real vampires, the Jharana. They're something else entirely. Maybe they're weird robots who eat blood. I don't know, man. You ask them. I'll give you a thousand dollars if you get back alive."

While the Jharana might present oddly to other vampires, they are definitely Kindred. They worship an eldritch, unfathomably huge machine with designs on the entire universe, but they still require blood and pleasant nights to live. Encountering a Jharana might expose you to horrors unknown, however, especially if they like you.

"They're not like us. There's a Daeva, she's a friend of a friend, who funded some experiments in India. They're a whole new kind of Kindred."

A group of Ordo Dracul in India did indeed find and experiment on the Menders. That group is the source of the name Jharana (literally "waterfall" in Hindi), but they were not the first to encounter them. They didn't create Jharana. The Menders are just as much of a mystery to the Deva Corporation as they are to the Danse Macabre, though the experiments continue to this day.

"Oh please. They don't exist. And you're certainly not going to get sick from hanging out downtown. That Nos is just fucking with you – she does that with all the newbies."

Jharana don't spread Radio Sickness, but it seems to follow them wherever they go. Or more on point, they follow it when they catch wind of it. But rumors of increasing numbers of people coming down with a weird sickness associated with the God-Machine plagues the city. Everyone is afraid to go downtown, which is exactly where the Jharana are.

Aurora Roman

"You're not ill. You just need to be reconfigured. Sit down, we'll fix you right up."

Aurora received her Stigmata after her mother died in a car crash. She was in the front passenger seat when a massive

geomid made of gears came swooping down at the windshield. She doesn't remember anything before that. Her mind was reconfigured by the construct of the God-Machine that ran her mother's car off the road. The doctors said she had amnesia due to grief. Aurora didn't. It was just that nothing else mattered, now that she'd seen the truth.

Aurora was embraced at the tender age of 20 by a Jharana who lured her in with the most soothing signal she ever heard. Her nights are now devoted to devouring God-Machine lore in the same way another Kindred might devour blood. She has her Haven in Toronto, in a pleasant little apartment overlooking Yonge Street. There, she takes in fellow Holy Engineers, watches the traffic for patterns and omens and, occasionally, patches up Kindred who have had painful run-ins with other monsters – for a very reasonable price, of course.

Clan/Bloodline: Daeva/Jharana

Covenant: Holy Engineers

Mask: Nurturer

Dirge: Conformist

Touchstone: The foot traffic at the intersection of Yonge St. and Lawrence Ave.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Sociology) 3, Computer 5 (JavaScript, C++, COBOL), Investigation 2, Medicine (Neurology) 4, Occult 3, Science (Physics) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive (Evasion) 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 4, Persuasion (Sermon) 3, Streetwise (Navigation) 3

Merits: Fleet of Foot 1, Multilingual, Sympathetic, Staff 1, Striking Looks 2, Unseen Sense: God Machine

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Dead Signal 5, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5 (Active Defense 8)

New Mechanics:

RADIO SICKNESS (PERSISTENT)

You heard the God-Machine speak to you. You didn't understand or couldn't act on the message. As a result, you've developed Radio Sickness, a peculiar malady characterized by tinnitus, teeth grinding, and sharp, electric pains throughout the nervous system. A character with Radio Sickness suffers a cumulative -1 penalty on Mental rolls, Stealth rolls, and rolls made in combat. This penalty increases each week the character fails to interpret or act on the God-Machine's instructions (maximum -5). If left untreated, Radio Sickness can be fatal.

Possible Sources: Dead Signal Discipline, the God-Machine speaking to the character

Resolution: A vampire uses the Dead Signal Discipline, or the character resolves the God-Machine's orders.

Beat: When someone notices your odd behavior in a way that is detrimental or dangerous to you.

Dead Signal

A rare Discipline developed by the oldest Jharana, Dead Signal allows the Jharana to see where her target fits into the God-Machine's plans, and thus reconfigure her personal design to better fit its plans.

Analyze Signal (•)

The vampire can determine if someone is suffering from Radio Sickness or a Stigmata.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure + Dead Signal

Action: Instant

Duration: Instant

Roll Results

Success: The vampire knows if the target is suffering from Radio Sickness or if they have a Stigmata from interacting with the God-Machine.

Exceptional Success: In addition to a simple yes/no, the vampire receives additional information. If the target has Radio Sickness, the vampire knows how far along it's progressed and what omen induced it. If the target has a Stigmata, the vampire receives a vision generally outlining how they received it.

Failure: The vampire has no idea what the signal means and may misread it as something it's not.

Dramatic Failure: A burst of static hits the vampire, causing 2 levels of bashing damage.

Minor Repairs (••)

Through their experiments with the forms given to them by the God-Machine, Jharana have learned how to cure minor ailments and heal damage.

Cost: 1 Vitae per Condition or level of bashing damage

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine + Dead Signal

Action: Standard

Duration: Instant

Roll Results

Success: The vampire can spend one Vitae to heal one Condition (excluding persistent Conditions) or one point of bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: One Vitae heals one Condition (including persistent Conditions) and two points of bashing damage.

Failure: The vampire fails to heal the target.

Dramatic Failure: By poking at the target, the vampire does more harm than good. The target gains the Shaken condition.

Receive Transmission (•••)

Radio Sickness is an ailment inflicted on vampires who receive transmissions from the God-Machine, but who either can't or won't interpret them. By using this level of Dead Signal, the Jharana can briefly take on the effects of another's Radio Sickness, giving them more time to process the question.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Dead Signal

Action: Standard

Duration: One night

Roll Results

Success: The vampire takes on the target's current stage of Radio Sickness for one night. The target is completely cured for that day. Once the sun rises on the end of the next night, the target's Radio Sickness returns unless she has successfully interpreted her omen, in which case both the vampire and her target are cured.

Exceptional Success: The vampire takes on the target's Radio Sickness at its current stage, but at the end of the next night, the target's Radio Sickness returns to the target at the first stage, effectively adding three days to her unlife.

Failure: The vampire fails to take on the Radio Sickness and the target is still affected.

Dramatic Failure: The vampire takes on the Radio Sickness but cannot get rid of it unless she either solves the omen given to the target, someone else takes on her Radio Sickness, or she dies her Final Death.

Configure Receiver (.....)

The God-Machine sometimes sends us signals we are not equipped to receive. With this level of Dead Signal, the vampire can play with the way their target is assembled, gently nudging them into position to be open to the songs of the Machine.

Cost: 1 willpower + 2 Vitae per trait boosted

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Dead Signal

Action: Standard

Duration: One night

Roll Results

Success: The vampire weaves her blood with that of the target, moving points around on her sheet for one night. For every two Vitae she spends on using this Discipline, she can boost a Skill by one dot. No Skill can be boosted over 5 dots.

Exceptional Success: In addition to increasing Skills, the vampire can also increase one Attribute for the same cost.

Failure: The target's traits remain the same.

Dramatic Failure: The target's traits are not moved, and the vampire inflicts herself with Radio Sickness.

Broadcast (.....)

By calling on the longing of the Beast within her, the vampire can send out a signal to those around her, drawing servants of the God-Machine to her. This includes other Jharana, Holy Engineers, Stigmatics, and sometimes even angels or demons (see **Demon: The Descent**).

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Dead Signal

Action: Extended

Duration: 1 hour/Vitae

Roll Results

Success: The vampire summons local servants of the God-Machine to her with a sweet, alluring broadcast that just registers on the edge of their hearing. They will be friendly, or at least not immediately hostile.

Exceptional Success: The vampire summons an angel, with a message for her from the God-Machine. It will answer questions to the best of its ability.

Failure: No broadcast goes out.

Dramatic Failure: The broadcast infuriates local demons, compelling them to find out who is sending this awful static into the air.

Lidérc

*"Of course, relationships are transactional, darling. Nothing wrong with that.
Just remember who's paying the tab."*

— Josiah Long, Invictus venture capitalist

Love is work. It's the triumph of the heart over petty jealousy. It's the vision to see what your lover really needs, and the will to deny what he merely wants. It's the clot in the blood and the leech that breaks the vein. The Lidérc know this struggle well, and the happy orgies of corpses in their wake stand as monument to their labors.

The Beloved are the unstated question that comes with every prick of the fang: *how does that feel?* The Lidérc tap into the emotional, limbic brain and feed from the runoff, fulfilling and taking their fill of passions at the cost of the victim's will. Greater than the rush of the Kiss, Beloved feeding brings prosperity and the highs of pure emotion, yet the price is steep. Victims lucky enough to escape do so with a stern lesson in being careful what they wish for... but who has such a black heart that he wouldn't give everything for love?

A Lidérc basks in cliques and in-crowds, but she detests stereotypes. Everyone deserves love. Monday, she's a patron of the arts, drawing in future exes with exploits Puccini and Byron would call overwrought. Friday, she runs the best campaign to ever grace your friendly local game store. You *will* feel the spikes as your paladin hits the pit, and she *will* be at your side with a shoulder to cry on. Wherever the party is, whatever it is, she'll be the life of it. Sure, she has favorites, but her deep bench of friends and lovers is an open call. Still, don't mistake an open door for a revolving one. She loathes one-night stands.

Ah, but then monogamy rears its ugly head. Her Serpent blood means that meeting the One isn't an if but a when. She knows all about divorce rates, though, so she likes to take it

slow. She lets her lover play at being the vampire for a while, allowing her to take her for all she's worth before she does the same in return. She can't help but drain her conquest dry, but she makes sure it's worth the sweet mortal's time. Her lover is the richest woman in town when it ends, but she finds her fortune dims in the absence of the Lidérc's light. Love is so fickle.

That's if she survives, of course. Letting go isn't always enough on a Requiem's timescale. Sometimes the right thing to do is the worst thing, but a Lidérc knows the sea is vast and full of hearts. She'll never swim alone.

Why you want to be us

Serpents are so cold. Our Daeva cousins keep a practiced distance because they fear love might find them in all the wrong places, but we don't need such ice in our blood. We revel in our lovers as they revel in us. We give something back. Haven't you ever wanted to do away with the fangs and the back alleys? All we need is a good story. A perfect teardrop. A *real* kiss. We glut on their joy and their sorrow and they can't help but love us for it.

Why you should fear us

It's a myth that rationality doesn't follow from emotion, but one can reason so beautifully from false premises. It feels good when we tell a joke, and that means we're your friends. It feels great when we say we love you, so you must love us, too. But now imagine that joking and loving and feeling is devouring your self-control, bit by juicy bit, all while the voice of reason nervously insists it couldn't possibly be a bad thing.

Why we should fear ourselves

It's exhausting liking someone too much. Ever felt that way? That need to be around him so much you're not sure where you end and all the red flags creeping up begin? That's our all-the-time, and you're a sad little fool if you think it's a feature, not a bug. We always find new playthings to scratch the scab, but infection invariably sets in. Our Hell is smelling the rot before they do. That's the torture of knowing feelings so well – never being wrong.

Bloodline Origins

- Beloved of the Acolytes say their grandsires stole hearts in ancient Babylon as lilitu, night demons of the Levant, but the word *lidérc* (LEED • airts) is Hungarian, not Semitic, referring to an odd succubus who hatched from a hen's egg warmed in horse manure. That myth is the source of more than a few horseshit jokes from other Kindred, but elder Lidérc insist their modern membership descends from a prolific Eastern European brood, not some miracle chicken. That, or mortals mistook the Beloved for another, stranger creature one night in the murky past.

- The fair folk tell of a man so lonely he walked the whole world in search of true love. After many disappointments, his wanderings brought him to the thorny borders of Fairyland, where its Queen granted him an audience. She felt pity for his plight but warned that even true love has its price. He said that he'd gladly pay it, so the Queen held up a mirror to show him all the ghosts he'd left behind, the lovers he'd leached of life in his quest for gratification. The mirror sapped away his life as he died of joy, for he finally understood. He married the Queen that night, and their children still walk, hoping true love will show them what they really are.

- Once upon a midnight darkly, a farmer's goose laid a golden egg. A widower, the man had grown cold and cruel from loss and grief, and he worked his children to the bone. He saw the egg as the fruit of his labors and praised the bird for her faithful service, but his seven sons and seven daughters saw only their blood and tears in the egg's luster. They stuffed their father's prize down his gullet and tore the screeching bird asunder as he watched. When the farmer finally died, his corpse split in twain and birthed the very likeness of his departed wife. She praised her children for their bond and promised they would never work so hard again – lovingly ever after.

Parent Clan: Daeva

Nickname: The Beloved

Bloodline Bane (The Devoted Curse): Like all Serpents, Lidérc must be careful of drinking from the same vessel more than once, but the Beloved suffer an extra twist of the heart. Whenever a Lidérc gains the Dependent Condition from her clan bane, her Touchstones fade in the face of true love. No matter how many she has attached, they only add a single die to detachment rolls, and she can only ever replenish one Willpower for their defense, even if it causes her serious harm. If the subject of her affection *was* her Touchstone, she immediately loses her as opposed to detaching.

Favored Attributes: Manipulation or Presence

Disciplines: Celerity, Majesty, Obfuscate, Vigor

In the Covenants

The Carthian Movement: The heart is an engine of revolution. Some Carthian Beloved use their abilities in negotiation with sensitive interests, showing union bosses and mob enforcers a face they can trust. Others treat love as a spanner in the works, whether as honeypots for the Revolution's mortal enemies or as assassins whittling away human will.

The Circle of the Crone: While most Beloved crave stability from their lovers, Lidérc of a hedonistic bent fill the ranks of the Mother's Army. The presence of a Beloved coterie can break inhibition among the hardest prey, and their bloody orgies make even other Serpents swoon. Many Acolyte Lidérc

adopt the succubus persona, ritualistically seducing their victims and honoring the Dark Mother with wet dreams and night terrors.

The Invictus: The Invictus doesn't demand the Beloved politicize, ritualize, or test their relationships — it only asks they keep them on the down low. The Lidérc aren't well-equipped to enforce the Masquerade, per se, but they're brilliant at building social networks. Their friends and lovers make unrivaled gossip chains, and if a Beloved wants the truth behind a rumor, or to spread his own little lie, he need only tap Reply All.

The Lancea et Sanctum: Beloved who take up the Spear either refocus on celibacy and their love for God or become the basest tempters in the church. Sanctified Lidérc test faiths with a choice between sinful, earthly love and divine *agape*. Mortals who fail often join their herds of unholy decadents. The vampire keeps these reprobates occupied away from innocents, or unleashes them to prove the worth of the righteous.

The Ordo Dracul: Sociology meets masochism. Defiant Lidérc subject themselves and their lovers to humiliating experiments, seeking measurable fissure points in intimate relationships. A Beloved Dragon might build a cult around his favorite human, then turn the other members against him to pinpoint the exact amount of suffering he can take as his lover falls to sharp knives. Lidérc Dragons generally prefer quantity over quality in their devotees, favoring the Mystery of the Voivode as a way of manufacturing affection en masse.

Rumors

"If you meet one of these drama queens, ask if she's ever heard the word 'Inamorata.' Quite a feat making a vampire go pale."

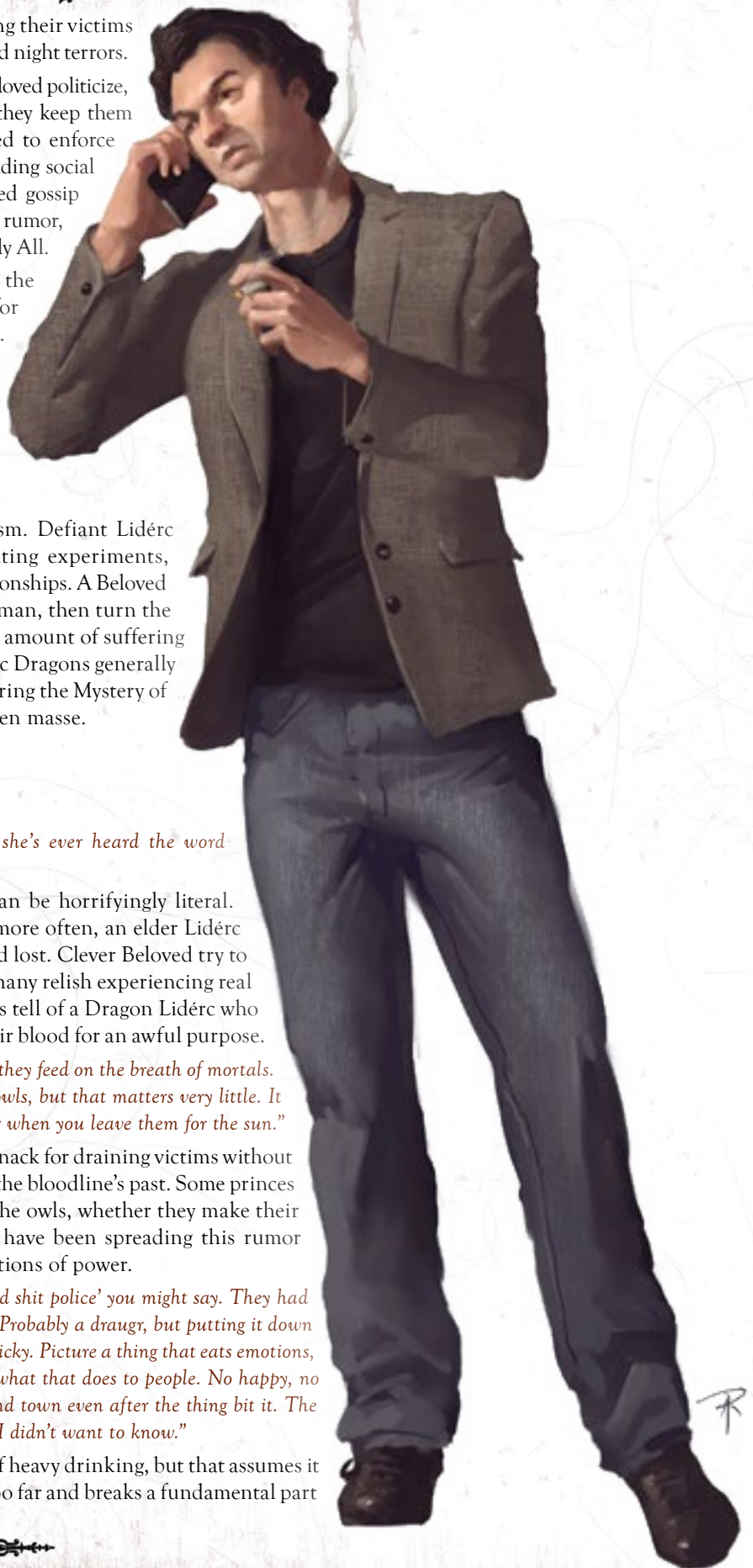
Some exes haunt you, and for Beloved that can be horrifyingly literal. Whether he spawns Inamorata or attracts them more often, an elder Lidérc often finds himself plagued by faces he's loved and lost. Clever Beloved try to use this against their rivals in the bloodline, but many relish experiencing real danger at the height of their powers. Some rumors tell of a Dragon Lidérc who captures Inamorata and studies them, stealing their blood for an awful purpose.

"They do not drink emotion. No. Like the Nemeses, they feed on the breath of mortals. Perhaps they don't see themselves as catspaws for the owls, but that matters very little. It only means you grant the 'innocent' ones a small favor when you leave them for the sun."

Many Kindred have noted the Lidérc and their knack for draining victims without fangs and wondered if and where the Strix fit into the bloodline's past. Some princes ban Beloved from their domains for resembling the owls, whether they make their suspicions explicit or not. Recently, a few Strix have been spreading this rumor themselves, all in cities where Lidérc occupy positions of power.

"My buddies Al and Zach are fixers of a sort. 'Weird shit police' you might say. They had to deal with a hell of a mess one of those things made. Probably a draugr, but putting it down wasn't the hard part. It was the victims who proved... tricky. Picture a thing that eats emotions, and now imagine it has no self-control. Now imagine what that does to people. No happy, no sad, no nothing, and that was starting to spread around town even after the thing bit it. The guys didn't tell me how they finished that one off, but I didn't want to know."

Beloved feeding isn't much worse than a night of heavy drinking, but that assumes it happens just one night. Sometimes a Lidérc goes too far and breaks a fundamental part



of her lover. In the above case, Al and Zach *didn't* deal with that one. Not completely. One of the victims wandered off before the boys could deal with the draugr, and the two have been following a trail of contagious ennui through three counties. The pair is looking to recruit another Beloved to cure patient zero (or try to), but time's running out. If they don't stop the infection soon, it's going to hit a major population center.

Josiah Long

"Hey, I bet you know this one. I bet it's your favorite."

Playing smoky nightclubs in the 60's, Jed Longfellow played the keys with the best of them, but he never amounted to much outside the scene. Irene changed that. Unlike most Lidérc, she wasn't interested in love, but she knew a meal ticket when she saw one. Hoping his easy way with people might enhance her business ventures, their brief affair turned sour after she Embraced him — she'd forgotten even dead hearts can play like pianos.

Josiah doesn't think much about Irene anymore, or even his past life as Jed for that matter, except for what their relationship taught him about the overlap between showmanship and obscene wealth. He's built a fortune selling himself with his products, from real estate to pop stars. Kindred are wary of his charms, yes, but he knows a workaround or two. It's easy to make a buck when the prince's mortal granddaughter falls for you. Josiah just makes sure it's easier to pay him off than to knock him off.

Yet love is still a devil on his shoulder. He tries not to let relationships last long, but sometimes their eyes remind him of those smoky nightclubs. When he lets them call him Jed, it's not just business anymore.

Clan/Bloodline: Daeva/Lidérc

Covenant: Invictus

Mask: Perfectionist

Dirge: Courtesan

Touchstone: The ex he let go

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Economics) 3, Crafts (Piano Repair) 2, Politics (Financial, Kindred) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Firearms 2, Larceny 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Reading a Room) 3, Expression (Piano) 5, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 4, Socialize (Life of the Party) 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Allies (Music Scene) 3, Etiquette 3, Cacophony Savvy 3, City Status 2, Contacts (Musicians, Hollywood, Wall Street) 3, Invested, Invictus Status 3, Professional Training (Socialite) 5, Resources 5, Where the Bodies Are Buried

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Majesty 3, Obfuscate 2, Vigor 2

Devotions: The Look, The One That Got Away, The Pledge

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Initiative: 5

Defense: 4 (Active Defense 7)

Notes: Professional Training is on p. 46 of the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**. Josiah's Asset Skills are Empathy, Expression, and Socialize.

New Devotions

The Lidérc refer to the Devotions they use to manipulate hearts as *Siphon*. Except for The Look, these abilities only work on one victim at a time. They do not work on vampires or negate the Daeva clan bane.

Other Kindred cannot learn these Devotions.

The Look (Majesty ••)

Considered the signature ability of the Beloved, this Devotion transforms human will into Vitae.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: Scene

Once per subject in a scene, if the vampire exceptionally succeeds on a mundane roll to provoke emotion, whether positive or negative, she steals a point of Willpower from the victim and converts it to Vitae. If the victim has no Willpower to lose, he takes a point of lethal damage instead.

If using this Devotion fulfills a Mask or Dirge, the vampire may choose to gain another point of Vitae instead of Willpower.

Beloved with Blood Potency high enough to require Kindred blood for sustenance can use this Devotion to feed on humans, but only Vitae taken from Willpower is palatable.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

The Give-and-Take (Celerity ••• or Vigor •••)

Instead of stealing her victim's essence, the vampire makes a trade.

Cost: 2 Vitae

Requirement: The vampire must feed on the victim.

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Duration: One night

As she feeds (with The Look or otherwise), the vampire recycles power back into her vessel. The victim gains two dots of the vampire's physical Disciplines for the rest of the night, spending Willpower instead of Vitae when needed. However, for the same period, the vampire automatically steals any Willpower the victim might gain for fulfilling a Vice. The vampire does not have to be present to gain the Willpower.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

The One That Got Away (Obfuscate ••••)

The vampire occludes her victim's dreams with visions of an unrequited lover, then steps into the role of that old flame.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Requirement: The vampire must feed on the victim while he sleeps.

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: One night per dot of Blood Potency

When the victim wakes, he's convinced the vampire bears a physical or personal resemblance to the person of his dreams. The victim gains a new Vice of sacrificing (work, money, favors, etc.). In addition, the vampire has Exceptional Success on three successes instead of five on actions to incite the victim's emotions.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

The Pledge (Majesty ••)

In myth, the Lidérc provided sex and wealth in exchange for mortal blood. With this Devotion, the vampire makes a similar deal, offering true love or friendship and all the rewards therein.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Requirement: The vampire must feed on the victim.

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

If the mortal consents (e.g., she can't be blood bound or subject to Dominate, Majesty, or other forms of coercion), the vampire feeds, paying the activation cost as he does. Both characters gain the Promised Condition.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

PROMISED (PERSISTENT)

Your character has pledged devotion to a mortal, who finds the mystifying quality of his affection rubs off on others — people want to give her gifts and be her friend. For the Condition's duration, the victim gains Merit dots equal to your character's Majesty, which she can spend on Allies, Resources, or Status.

Conversely, your character can no longer use Siphon Devotions on anyone else, but any exceptional success on rolls to incite your promised one's emotions automatically regenerates a single Willpower.

Resolution: Losing Integrity because of the relationship. Inflicting any level of Vinculum on the mortal. Choosing to end the relationship at the cost of a Humanity 1 breaking point. Death of the mortal.

Beat: Taking damage in the rightmost Health box from Siphon feeding (human). Not feeding from another vessel for a week (vampire).

Nosoi

"I'm listening, darling. Tell me: where does it hurt?"

— Fox Everest, Nosoi of Austin

Something sickly this way comes: on two feet, on four feet, on eight, on a thousand. It creeps through the darkness bearing the taste of too much sugar, too many white blood cells, the rarest bacteria on its lips. It slides through sterile halls, a pale shape brimming with illness. It leans over her sickbed. Its sibilant words whisper in time with the beep of machines, with the ventilator's hush-hush. It peers over the doctor's shoulder, and only she sees it, her dulled eyes staring into the room's darkest corners.

Something comes. Something stays. Something whispers.

"Why shouldn't you make your disease your identity, the center of your frail mortal self? Let it swallow you. Let it determine everything that you are. Let it drive you. Give yourself to it, to me. I can justify your fears and give you the strength to see tomorrow."

A cool hand rests on her feverish forehead. A calming voice coos through muscle spasms and pain that seems to eat her from inside. A charming man holds her hand, sits at her bedside. For a moment, her pain slips away: opioids are child's play compared to his touch. Afterwards she swears she's stronger, even as the pain slams back into her. The nurses watch her back arch as agony consumes her like a backdraft. Her hand stretches toward the darkness and she's crying for him.

He isn't there, and she sobs for him. He isn't there and she screams for the doctors, but really, she screams for him. He could have everything she is for that moment when it doesn't hurt.

His voice calls her in with the others, clustered on bent metal chairs in a musty basement. The circle feels like standing stones in a forest. Every Tuesday night, she pours out her heart to him. She is strong everywhere but here, where the sobbing starts and doesn't stop, and she is strong through her chemo because he lets her be weak when she is with him. Some small voice tells her that he makes her weaker, not stronger, but that can't be right.

She isn't even sure she'd choose to be well anymore. If she had to give up this group, if she had to give up *him*. It doesn't matter, anyway. There's no cure. Remission, sure. Treatments, sure. There's not really a cure.

Why you want to be us

You understand the beauty in the broken. You know that the impurities in the blood are the sweetest taste. You feel the pulse of illness running through you, understand its growth, harbor it like a child. You groom your broken garden, weed it of the weakest, teach your chosen to thrive in their illness. Your heart no longer beats, but blood heats it like a fever dream. You understand the difference between the taste of a fever and the taste of a body eating itself alive, and to your tongue it is the finest delicacy.

Why you should fear us

We will survive when others fall. When the world boils and festers, when the skin of your herd sloughs off and antibiotics no longer work, when hunger twists all other bellies, we will drink and be full. We learned to walk in the cities when they clear-cut our forests. We learned to scavenge among humanity's dregs. We learned to walk with the urban fox and the carrion crow, and we will outlive you when humanity's brief flirtation with medicine ends. It cannot last forever: already, resistant strains rise. Other Gangrel think they know how to survive. They have no idea how to *thrive* in these new nights.

Why we should fear ourselves

When you need sickness, are you ever well? Illness drives the Beast, strips away the man. A sick animal is a reckless one, and our herd doesn't have the strength to tear us apart, until they do. Someday they may come for us, or we may lose the last fragments of who we are, devoured by competing strains of each disease we've harbored.

Bloodline Origins

- The plague came. No, not to Medieval Europe, but far before: to the first city, mud-brick huts clustered around an alluvial fan, a slow-moving river sliding through pre-history. Everyone died. Then night fell, and two got back up from their sweat-soaked fever beds. The fever hadn't died, though their bodies were now cold.

- Gods of wine have nothing on the gods of illness. They walked through the weakest, they winnowed the herd. In the time of painted columns and gossip written in angular paint on Athenian alleyways, the priests of sickness and death walked muddy streets barefoot. They reveled in the face of pestilence: behind closed doors, their bacchanals made Dionysus look like a child, and the bloody-faced survivors' laughter echoed.

- **Retribution** is a powerful motivator. When they threw infected corpses over the walls, when they sent food and wares laden with illness, bodies fell with their limbs strewn this way and that. Ashes, ashes, we all fall down. And some get up again.

Parent Clan: Gangrel

Nickname: Plague Doctors

Bloodline Bane (The Calamitous Curse): Long-forgotten diseases boil in her blood, curling themselves companionably around her Beast. Every Nosoi has a blood-carried ailment whose taste calls to her like a drug, and the older she gets, the less tolerance she has for any other kind of nourishment. It might be something as rarified as myelofibrosis, as common as Type 2 diabetes, or something in between like lupus, but sooner or later, that's the only taste that satisfies her.

The Nosoi's ability to gain sustenance from blood uninfected with her favored ailment is capped nightly at her Humanity.

Favored Attributes: Stamina or Manipulation

Disciplines: Dominate, Obfuscate, Protean, Resilience

In the Covenants

Wherever Nosoi roost, they curl their possessive fingers tightly around the medical industry. This causes conflict with pretty much everyone else, both within vampiric society and outside it. Most deal with this by choosing a singular Haven and fortifying it in ways which impress even the most paranoid undead. It isn't easy staying safe in cities while tending

a sickly garden full of such needy little flowers, but Nosoi manage it. They almost never openly admit to their blood except to one another.

Carthian Movement: Firebrands have little use for Nosoi and tend to fear them; many Carthians rely on healthy herds and mortal allies. Carthian protectiveness of the humans they rely on to spread their ideals makes the two groups natural adversaries. While a rare few of the Plague Doctors become passionate enough about their place in vampiric society to intrigue the Movement, their bizarre habits and the danger — real or perceived — they pose to Herds is enough to prompt most Carthians to keep them at arm's length.

Circle of the Crone: Of all the covenants, the Circle of the Crone love the Nosoi best and fear them most. Who loves what blood can do more than those who drown in sickness? The tainted cup they bring is alluring, and Plague Doctors cluster to the Circle most often.

Invictus: Within the First Estate, Nosoi shore up whomever's in charge, though not without question and never without a price. Sure, she can get access to the clinic's blood banks, to a rival's ghoul's medical records, to the donors whose money flows through their hospitals, but what's in it for her? After all, she's content in her little world, so what can the Invictus power brokers offer her? Plague Doctors play coy with the First Estate, luring some in with the potential of getting a Nosoi under their thumb and having a direct line to everything the urban Gangrel offer. An overly-aggressive Invictus neonate often realizes too late that he's overextended his hand and is utterly in debt.

Lancea et Sanctum: The Lancea et Sanctum can either draw or repel Nosoi; the idea of sickness as penance is religion's oldest tale. Thus, the few Sanctified Plague Doctors are frighteningly pious. This fervor drives them from Nosoi in other covenants, but that just makes them cling to each other more tightly. Such few Perversions as exist within this bloodline are nearly always found within the Lancea et Sanctum, by necessity: most other Nosoi will have little to do with them.

Ordo Dracul: The Ordo Dracul find Nosoi fascinating: what sort of events cemented their desire — and later need — for tainted blood? Such a perversion of expectation cannot but fascinate the Dragons, and Plague Doctors court their attention accordingly. They



scatter members through every covenant, but in the end their first loyalty is to one another and to the deep sickness that burns through the bloodline.

Rumors

"My coterie-mate said the First Estate in Tallahassee is pretty much entirely run by Nosoi. Doesn't make much sense to me, but he said you respect them, or it goes hard for you. Don't cross someone who can make your entire herd sick overnight."

While it's true that Nosoi could eventually sicken an entire herd, that would be quite the feat indeed. And the First Estate in Tallahassee isn't run by Nosoi. A pair of Plague Doctors have bluffed their way into quite the hold on the Invictus there, but if anyone ever figures out that the pair can't just snap their fingers and infect someone's herd with MRSA, they'll be in real trouble.

"Every hospital's got at least one. You don't want to stay there any longer than you absolutely must, and don't raid the blood bank unless you've cleared it with them. Look for the nurse with the cross-shaped scar on the back of their neck: that's how they mark their overseer ghouls. That's who you go through for access."

Exactly one Nosoi in London marks his current favorite ghoul with a cross scar on the back of the neck. Every Nosoi marks her favorite in some visible way so other Plague Doctors know which medical resources are already spoken for, but the cross isn't universal. The bloodline is rather fastidious about not stepping on each other's toes; it would be the height of rudeness to intrude on someone else's garden of the ill.

"There's one of those undead bleeding freaks in Albuquerque, some little redheaded weirdo. If she touches you with her bloody little hands, your skin will fall off. Someone was talking about it last month, a whole bunch of Carthians got sick when they fucked with her favorite clinic. Nobody's been able to make them better."

While the compounding of the Undead Menses merit and the disease-spreading tendencies of the Nosoi are a terrifying combination, it doesn't require something so dire for Nosoi to pass on diseases, even those which are not normally infectious or transmissible. And yes, Cynthia *absolutely* made an entire group of Carthians carriers for lupus when they raided her clinic's blood bank without asking.

Agnes Bobowski

"Let me help, darling."

Born in 1918 in Perryopolis, Pennsylvania, Agnes grew up in a coal-mining town. Surrounded from an early age by death and disease, she fled into marriage as soon as possible: her mother was delighted when her youngest daughter wed a doctor. Agnes, hoping to escape coal country, soon found that John had no desire to leave Appalachia.

So, she left, pinning on a nurse's apron and running toward danger. Perhaps at the time she thought she could

help, patching together the wounded as the world descended into WWII.

The U.S. Military wouldn't even let her set foot on foreign shores and Agnes became discontent. She tended the sick as best as she could but found herself unable to heal the real wounds she found, just as her estranged husband couldn't do anything about the black lung which drowned her home community in coal dust. Resentment boiled in her breast, and when her sire found her, he treasured that anger, tended it like a hothouse flower. Under his tutelage, her desire to cure twisted like the limbs of a bonsai tree into something else entirely. Eventually, her desperate drive to help turned into the Nosoi compulsion to control a dependent herd.

In 2011, Agnes finished consuming the resources at Walter Reed VA Hospital and relocated to the VA Hospital in Philadelphia – close enough to home for pilgrimages to Perry County. The staff at Corporal Crescenzo Medical Center either come under her sway, fall ill, or find themselves abruptly unemployed. From her nest centered in the complex, the Nosoi tends not only her personal garden of perpetually-ill veterans, but grooms the next generation of Nosoi, teaching them how to turn pink ribbons and puzzle pieces into ideological snares. Gossips claim that her brood's thralls hold positions of significance in every exploitative medical charity on four continents.

Clan/Bloodline: Gangrel/Nosoi

Covenant: Circle of the Crone

Mask: Conspirator

Dirge: Cult Leader

Touchstone: John's Daughter

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Bureaucracy) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (Blood-borne disease) 4, Occult 3, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 4, Stealth (Shadowing) 3, Survival (Urban) 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Gaslighting) 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Pack Alpha, Swarm Form, Covenant Status (Circle of the Crone) 1, Allies (Medical) 4, Contacts (Medical, Advocacy Organizations, Veteran's Administration) 3, The Mother-Daughter Bond, Bloodhound

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Obfuscate 5, Protean 4, Resilience 2

Devotions: Plague Doctor's Mask, Tiny Guardian, Cloak of the Gathering, Infectious Bite

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 10

Willpower: 9

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 10

Defense: 5

Notes: Infectious Bite (Lupus)

New Devotions

Infectious Bite (Protam ••••)

Prerequisite: Nosoi Gangrel

Every Plague Doctor carries their favored disease: repeated exposure and something in the bloodline combine to twist the Vitae. When creating a Nosoi, choose a blood-borne illness. This ailment must be detectable by a blood test: lupus, celiac disease, and leukemia are common favorites. A Nosoi may not later change her favored disease.

All Nosoi may learn this ability at no cost.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Medicine vs Stamina + Survival

Action: Instant

With the expenditure of a vitae and a successful contested roll, a Nosoi may infect a mortal with his favored disease, even if this disease is not normally transmissible. Type 1 diabetes isn't infectious, but his bite can permanently inflict it on a target.

Drawback: The Nosoi has the Addicted Condition, which cannot be resolved by any means: an addiction to the blood of someone suffering from their favored disease. Additionally, Infectious Bite doesn't exactly make Nosoi fun party guests. The bloodline closely guards the truth of this ability, rarely using it except to expand their dependent Herd.

Plague Doctor's Mask (Obfuscate ••)

Prerequisite: Nosoi Gangrel

For a mortal whose illnesses brings pain, exhaustion, or other agonies, relief from those symptoms can be intoxicating. Nosoi use this devotion as a means of interrogation or to create deep bonds of dependency between their Herd and themselves.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Plague Doctor's Mask modifies a Nosoi's Touch of Shadow. By spending an additional point of Vitae, she can mask the symptoms of a single blood-detectable illness within a target. If a mortal has more than one such malady, the Nosoi may spend additional Vitae to mask additional symptom sets. No opioid relieves pain more thoroughly than the Plague Doctor's Mask.

This power neither cures symptoms nor alleviates them; it is possible for a person to profoundly hurt themselves when they can't feel pain from joints swollen by an autoimmune disease, for example, should they spend the scene running around. A doctor or other person who examines the mortal will be surprised to find clear eyes, a lack of fever, an even heartbeat, etc., unless they succeed on a Wits + Medicine roll assisted by appropriate equipment. The Mask can't hold up to a CAT scan and won't fool supernatural powers which provide assessments of health, but the Mask fools any unassisted Medicine roll as the observer's eyes slide past obvious symptoms.

This devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Tiny Guardian (Protam •••)

Prerequisite: Nosoi Gangrel, Swarm Form Merit

Nosoi obsessively guard their domains, keeping a tight watch over their lairs. Sometimes it's necessary for them to observe remotely, and they do so through their tiny guardians.

Cost: 1 Vitae per insect created

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Each Vitae spent creates one Size 0 insect or arachnid. The Nosoi can command this insect or arachnid as though using Animalism. The guardian is part of the Gangrel, and accordingly the Nosoi can perceive everything at the insect's location. The guardian acts quasi-independently but according to the Nosoi's desires; new commands can be given at any time, but the guardian responds to changes in circumstance with the Gangrel's intelligence and a perfect understanding of her will. If a spider is sent to follow a stranger through her hospital who then leaves and gets into a car, the spider knows that the Nosoi wants him followed, and does so. There is no maximum range on these guardians; if the man being followed boards a plane, that spider may also board the plane and will not disintegrate due to range as with the merit Swarm Form.

Drawback: Guardians are part of the Nosoi and sending them out into the world is potentially both visible and dangerous. For each guardian deployed, not only must the Gangrel spend one Vitae, but when the guardian is created, a finger joint on her dominant hand disappears. With one guardian created, the smallest joint on her pinky goes missing; with two, the smallest and second-smallest, and so on; those digits become whole again when the devotion ends. As the guardians are still part of the Nosoi, if they are destroyed, she takes 1 lethal damage. Lastly, the guardians must return by sunrise; she takes 1 lethal damage for each guardian she hasn't drawn back into herself by night's end.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

The Parliamentarians

"I wasn't quite finished. Please attend carefully to the first point on my agenda..."

— Jaakko Ahava, Helsinki Parliamentarian

Humans are persistence hunters. Long before they tilled their first field, humans survived by outlasting their prey. Antelopes and hares flee in short bursts, but humans don't stop. They pursue until their prey drops from exhaustion.

Parliamentarians are persistence arguers.

Anyone who's ever survived a three-hour meeting dragged out by interpersonal clashes and inflexible adherence to protocol knows the soul-sucking weariness which Hidebound wield like Zorro's blade. These Carthian bureaucrats drive their opponents from polite company with elaborately-constructed and endlessly-detailed public denouncements, grooming their recruits into compliant groupthink. Attempting to argue with a Parliamentarian is an absolute exercise in futility: the only way to win is to avoid ever arguing with him at all.

They confuse outsiders: how could these narrow-minded creatures be Firebrands? And yet, within every group of revolutionaries lurk those ready to enforce the new orthodoxy, turning revolution after revolution into fascist regimes. Perhaps the Parliamentarians originally attempted keep the Carthians from pulling themselves in too many different directions, but now they tread dangerously close to becoming exactly what they claim to guard against. A hundred anarchists banging at typewriters won't create a coherent manifesto, but a hundred Parliamentarians will never even get past arguing over which font to use.

Perhaps that's why Hidebound deny so vehemently that they could be anything *but* Carthians: they're aware on some level that they've become the opposite of what they want to be, aware of what a danger they pose to the Firebrands.

It's such a shame they're so utterly convincing; they've utterly convinced *themselves* that they're completely beneficial to their host covenant. No one knows how to keep the Carthians aligned with their goals better than the Parliamentarians. Just ask them.

Why you want to be us

You talk and people don't just listen, people do what you want — if not at first, then at last, when it really matters. Your words open doors or close them forever. You're not a rock star, and you don't need to be: you're the manager, the one who controls the contracts, the money, the agenda. You

know that power is rarely *actually* held by the glittering and the beautiful, and that some of the world's greatest monsters stand just outside the limelight. You know that a softly-spoken "Actually" is more powerful than a fist, a fang, or a scream. You know that eventually, everyone breaks, and you want to be the one who breaks them. You love the taste of frustrated tears.

Why you should fear us

A Parliamentarian will give you what you want if it matches what she wants, but by the time she's done talking, you can't tell if you really wanted it or she just talked you into it. She'll tease out a sentence to the point where you're tempted to gnaw off your own arm to get away from her hand on your wrist. A meeting can drag on to the point where you want to die, and if you don't give in, that Hidebound might just indulge you.

Why we should fear ourselves

Conventional and routine-driven, Parliamentarians are static creatures, even by vampiric standards. If a Hidebound's bed sat six steps from the nearest window at his old haven and he's forced to relocate, the new bed had best sit six steps from the nearest window or he'll be unbearable. Order and reason mean everything to a Parliamentarian, but it's *her* order and *her* reason. As decades pass, this reliance on pattern often spells her undoing. Is this what eternity was meant for, this slavish devotion to rules?

Bloodline Origins

- A handful of French vampires created the rules of etiquette enforced by the Sun King. When France fell into revolutionary chaos, they picked up the pamphlets of E. B. Carth, studied them, and began attending meetings. Every system requires bureaucrats, and the Carthians ironically provided the perfect breeding ground to turn vampires flexible enough to shift from monarchists to anarchists into inflexible undead clinging to routine.
- 1779? Try 1776. Anyone who's ever read the records of the Continental Congress already understands how incredibly long-winded people become when trying to out-argue one

another. If you can't debate to form, forget it: no one cares what you say if you don't say it exactly how they think you should. Parliamentarians claim *they* imposed order on a chaotic New World: just ask one. If Hamilton wasn't Hidebound, then the Parliamentarians at the least politely applauded his six-hour Constitutional Convention speech.

- They're not that old, after all: even for Carthians, this group is made up of children. A Carthian in New York claims no one has *confirmed* the existence of Parliamentarians before the 1930s, and that the first individual undeniably referring to himself as a Parliamentarian was ardent Trotskyite, Arkady Medved. Survival under the man who named himself "Steel" meant wearing away that steel over time, persistent as dripping water.

Parent Clan: Any; must be a member of the Carthian Movement

Nickname: Hidebound

Bloodline Bane (The Ordered Curse): In the long term, all of humanity's squabbles become so much trifling noise, so many piffling agenda items to be filed, checked, and marked complete. When you have the rest of eternity to arrange your agenda and do things in precisely the right order, it becomes ever-so-easy to distance yourself from the passion that makes you human, from the lust for existence which keeps the Man in your heart. Who has a passion for filing? No one human.

When his personal order is upset, the Parliamentarian's Humanity dots act as a cap on all his Social actions as his agitation rises to the surface.

Favored Attributes: Manipulation or Resolve

Disciplines: Animalism, *Auspex*, Celerity, Majesty

In the Covenants

Parliamentarians are only *ever* members of the Carthian Movement. There's nothing so brutally

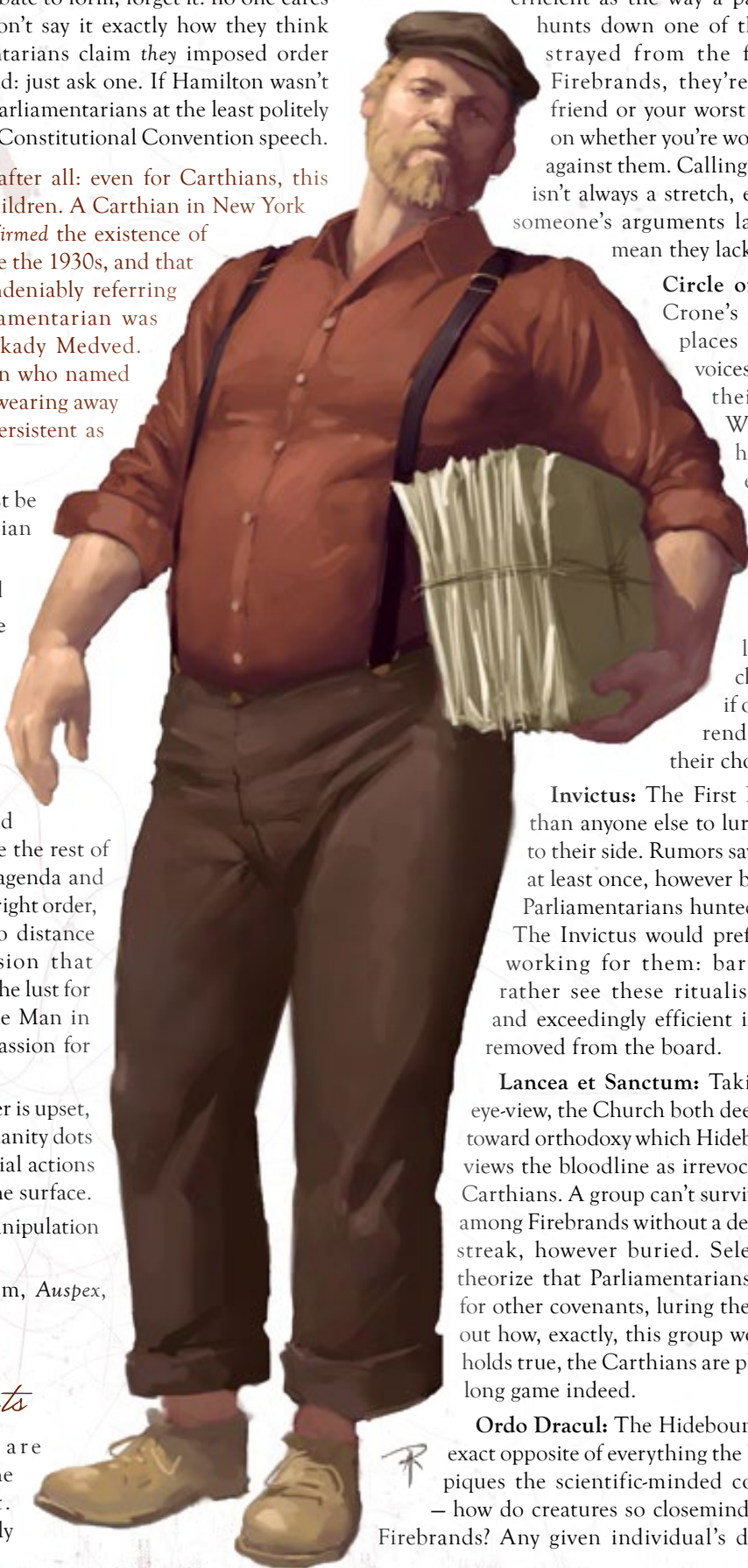
efficient as the way a pack of bureaucrats hunts down one of their own who has strayed from the fold. Within the Firebrands, they're either your best friend or your worst enemy, depending on whether you're working with them or against them. Calling them "Firebrands" isn't always a stretch, either: just because someone's arguments last forever doesn't mean they lack passion.

Circle of the Crone: The Crone's choir would have places for these droning voices, if they could get their hands on one. Who wouldn't want to have the persuasive equivalent of a gristmill as part of your coterie? As it stands, Crones treat Parliamentarians like the disturbing clichés that they are, if only because they're rendered imperfect by their choice of Covenant.

Invictus: The First Estate tries harder than anyone else to lure Parliamentarians to their side. Rumors say they've succeeded at least once, however briefly, before other Parliamentarians hunted down the traitor. The Invictus would prefer the Hidebound working for them: barring that, they'd rather see these ritualistic, perfectionist, and exceedingly efficient individuals entirely removed from the board.

Lancea et Sanctum: Taking a more gimlet-eye-view, the Church both deeply desires the tool toward orthodoxy which Hidebound might be and views the bloodline as irrevocably tainted by the Carthians. A group can't survive, let alone thrive, among Firebrands without a deeply-individualistic streak, however buried. Select few Sanctified theorize that Parliamentarians are a sort of bait for other covenants, luring the faithful in to find out how, exactly, this group works. If that theory holds true, the Carthians are playing an extremely long game indeed.

Ordo Dracul: The Hidebound appear to be the exact opposite of everything the Dragons are, which piques the scientific-minded covenant's curiosity – how do creatures so close-minded flourish among Firebrands? Any given individual's desire to study the



group quickly dissipates upon meeting a Parliamentarian; the bloodline's ability to invert the meanings of words unnerves the Dragons. When basic conversations turn into arguments over the definition of "to be," which the Dragons almost inevitably lose, there's no benefit to interaction.

Rumors

"The Prince of Eugene, Oregon just walked into the sun after talking to one of them for an hour! No one held him down, no one staked his sorry ass, he just walked! I'm telling you, if we get one of them here, we could rid ourselves of so many of our problems."

The Prince of Eugene, James Meehan, didn't walk into the sun, he was dragged, word by word. "Walk" implies the sort of mental clarity needed to choose to undertake a given action. It is true that a Parliamentarian spent the last several hours of the Prince's unlife discussing Meehan's actions during last several years in minute — excruciatingly minute — detail, and this conversation ended with a pile of ash on the concrete in front of one of Eugene's Elysia. The Carthians present during the Sanctified's talk down refuse to share details of what happened; the only response anyone's gotten are vaguely horrified stares.

"No one can predict what's going to set one of them off. I heard about a Sheriff in Phoenix who made a comment in Elysium about how he'd rather get an ice pick through the head than listen to Hidebound talk. Five minutes later, he got read for absolute filth in front of everyone. No one would look at him. He fled the city before morning."

This absolutely happened. The Parliamentarian was a dyed-in-the-wool Trotskyite, and if that doesn't explain it in full, then that's part of the problem — with the Parliamentarians. They're prone to overreacting to slights both real and imaged and pulling the political house down around their heads like verbal Samsons.

"They're just a bunch of insufferable pricks who decided to call themselves a bloodline because the rest of their clan can't stand them. I did a lot of research into them, and I promise you: charlatans, all of them. And it makes sense — have you ever seen a Daeva so hopelessly mired in their own garbage that they can't feel anything? What kind of passion is that, anyway? Serpents? Limp pink trouser snakes at best, those."

Attempts to track this bloodline's source or to independently verify its status, have not merely been stymied by the Parliamentarians: active pursuit has ended in social or literal death for multiple seekers. Daeva outside the bloodline view the questionable Carthian offshoot as art akin to a dangerously-corseted waist: just because something's achieved through passion doesn't mean it's helpful or healthy.

Jean-Paul Veilleux

"It is I, Veilleux, yes. I overheard you speaking: someone said the word 'tankie.' We tolerate no Stalinists in Minneapolis."

Born to a Bordeaux shipping magnate in the late 1700s, Jean-Paul Veilleux stumbled by twenty-three into an Invictus Daeva's service. He spent the next century practically welded to her side — manservant, bodyguard, favorite toy — as she meandered drunkenly across Europe. The Bond pacified him while he cleaned up her messes for a few decades, but even that strained when her vampiric liaisons turned disastrous one after another and she came crashing back into Veilleux's care regular as clockwork.

During the 1920s, she placed too much trust in a putative lover sent as a rival's catspaw; that breach in Haven security ended her cyclical escapades. Veilleux snapped along with her hold on him. His years of service made him a delicious prize full of intel: local Carthians swooped in, spiriting him across the Atlantic before the First Estate could retrieve or put down the errant ghoul.

What emerged in Minneapolis' political theatre two years later bore some *physical* resemblance to Europe's Veilleux, but only that: once controlled, he had become controlling. Once content to spin along in the wake of another's madcap social life, now he kept a strict appointment calendar. Once, he'd praised the First Estate as only a starry-eyed ghoul could do, he now presided over Carthian roundtables.

Veilleux currently resides in Saint Paul with his coterie, rumored to have their own six-page constitution with amendments and sub-clauses. He and his Daeva coterie-mate (and almost assured Perversion) Antje either drive the Twin Cities Carthians or are ruining them from within, depending on who you ask.

Just don't ask *him*. He might answer you.

Clan/Bloodline: Daeva/Proceduralist

Covenant: Carthian

Mask: Idealist

Dirge: Conformist

Touchstone: Someone Else's Ghoul

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Bureaucracy, Marxism) 4, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Politics (Carthian, Communism) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Rapier) 4

Social Skills: Empathy (Hidden Motives) 4, Expression (Rhetoric) 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Sense Deceit, False Accusations) 3

Merits: Allies (Minneapolis Socialists) 3, Carthian Pull, Contacts (IWW, Democratic Farm Labor Party,

Local Media, Communist Party USA, Local Police) 5, Carthian Status 5, Fast Reflexes 3, Lex Terrae, I Know A Guy, Mandate from the Masses, Plausible Deniability, Kindred Dueling 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Majesty 4, Nightmare 1, Resilience 1

Devotions: Cross-Contamination, Summoning, Enfeebling Aura

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 9

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 6

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 8)

Notes: Fast Reflexes can be found on p. 44 of the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

New Merits

Recruitment Tactics (●●●)

Prerequisite: Must be a member in good standing of the Parliamentarians

Effect: Brought into the bloodline via extensive grooming, a Parliamentarian may turn those same techniques on others. His deep and unshakeable belief in his own immutable correctness allows him to sway others to those beliefs. Once per story, whenever using real-time verbal or written arguments to persuade others, add the character's Blood Potency as successes to the results of a single social roll. This argument must be live and interactive: in-person or via telephone, instant message, or other immediate form of communication. It fails if he attempts to use it via radio, television or any other form of delayed media, or if he isn't overcoming arguments. Recruitment Tactics only functions in a discussion or a debate: monologues won't do.

Drawback: This intense fervor comes with a price: for Blood Potency days after using this power, the Parliamentarian suffers from the Competitive Condition. If he is already affected by the Competitive Condition, he gains the Obsession Condition: any threat to his carefully-groomed routines might very well send him spiraling into verbal or physical violence. The character may resolve either or both Conditions normally within that time, or it will fade after Blood Potency days.

Denouncement (●●●●)

Prerequisite: Must be a member in good standing of the Parliamentarians

Cost: 1 Willpower

Effect: The character denounces her target before witnesses. She makes a contested Social roll against her target, and if successful, inflicts the Shamed Condition.

The Hidebound's denouncement must be a minimum of several sentences long, listing the basis for denunciation. This shaming monologue must center around a real or perceived breach in the group's social mores. A Parliamentarian alleging her target hired a hitman in front of mobsters, for example, simply fails. The storyteller is, as always, the final arbiter of an accusation's suitability.

Denouncement fails without at least two witnesses from the group whose mores the target supposedly violated. Denouncing an Invictus for calling a casual acquaintance by their first name in front of six Carthians does nothing, while the same denunciation in front of three Invictus and three Dragons works. Denouncing someone when she's alone simply fails: if a Parliamentarian yells in a forest, no one cares.

These allegations need not be true: the careful and methodical way in which a Parliamentarian lays out her case at least temporarily convinces onlookers of her target's guilt.

Drawback: Use of this merit inflicts -2 on the Parliamentarian's Social rolls with the specified group for a week as her actions once again remind everyone exactly why no one wants to get too close to her.

SHAMED

Your character has suffered a public humiliation and members of a particular group think she is at best an embarrassment and at worst a traitor. Depending on the severity of the accusation, she may be shunned or hunted. For the duration of this Condition, your character has no access to Status from the group in question, nor does she have access to any Merits with that Status as a prerequisite. This may leave your character without pull, struggling to leverage allies or contacts, or any number of other difficulties.

Possible Sources: Being denounced by a Parliamentarian.

Resolution: Prove false the accusations against you; convince your accuser to withdraw the accusations; successfully appeal to a higher authority within the group; publicly make recompense for the deeds you were accused of.

Penumbrae

"The secrets of the universe lay themselves bare for an open mind."

— Corina Koster, Penumbrae Mystic

Something lingers at the edge of the dark. The presence watches you in that murky twilight of the mind between sleeping and waking. It waits there for your eyes to close, for your thoughts to slip. There's a doorway there that only the lurking figure can see. It opens as you slide into sleep, just at the moment where there's no jerking back awake. What do they want, hovering at the edge of your conscious? What could you possibly offer such a specter? You don't know what they'll take from you, but you know they don't ask.

Penumbrae, masters of uncovering secrets and seekers of forbidden knowledge, are a small sect of the Circle of the Crone who have married their Mekhet roots with the blood magic of the Acolytes. As their powers stem from Crúac, their presence outside the Circle is forbidden. The Penumbrae deliberately keep their numbers low, as the power to delve into the minds of others and divine meaning from chaos makes them a prime target for extermination. Their unique abilities give them a powerful bargaining chip, however; the Seekers know how to leverage themselves and become valuable to anyone looking to get ahead of their competition.

The Penumbrae delve into the secrets that drive others mad. They spend their nights deciphering cryptic visions, comparing symbolism from images, and reading meaning layered into phrases. They don't often share their methods, but for the right price, they share the results of their gifts. Knowing their lot aren't likely to be trusted, the Seers accept their place as outcasts and hermits. Even their brothers and sisters in the Mother's Army don't easily trust Seekers.

Truth is in the blood, yes; but the Penumbrae know the truth is also the quiet recesses of the mind, for those brave enough to walk where few have tread. Often existing as the only one of their kind in a city — sometimes even as the only member of the Mother's Army — the Penumbrae enjoy their solitary lives. It's rare that two Seers agree on how to interpret their visions, and conflicts between them have resulted in bloody engagements lasting decades.

Why you want to be us

You want to find your own order in the chaos of the Cacophony. You see omens everywhere and wish to push the limits of your own senses. You know you can't trust anyone

around you, and you'll do anything to learn their plans. Your dreams feel more real than your waking hours, and you want to know why.

Why you should fear us

When is a vampire more vulnerable than while he sleeps, and who is more dangerous than someone who doesn't need to be near him to manipulate his slumbering mind? Even if you don't know your next move, the Seers do. No matter how hard you've tried to hide your past, the Seekers will ferret it out. They know you would do anything to keep them quiet. They're counting on it.

Why we should fear ourselves

They say if you gaze too long into the abyss, it begins to stare back. The Penumbrae know better. It doesn't merely gaze; it consumes. Those who seek knowledge beyond their comprehension, who walk the darkened landscapes of the Kindred's collective unconscious reach a point of no return. What do you become when you no longer know where your mind ends, and another's begins?

Bloodline Origins

- She had ventured into the tomb looking for her ancestor's blood. The slumbering ancient's Vitae held secrets her "family" refused to reveal, and the only solution she saw was to take them for herself. It was almost too easy to find his withered and dusty frame, laid out in regal repose but otherwise unattended. Even his ghouls, charged with serving his childer in his long absence, had left him alone. Still, the raw power he gave off drew her closer, the arcane knowledge she sought so close at hand. Kneeling, she glugged herself on him, intent on drawing that power into herself. Instead, she found herself facing him. Bearing a hideous rictus grin, he offered his hand.

He remained slumbering when she managed to separate herself from him, gasping from the experience, certain a thousand years had gone by. Though the same night had hardly progressed, the lifetime she'd lived in his mind

remained with her. In the back of her mind, his voice remained as well, drawing her back to him when she slept. Together they reached further, reaching into the dreams of anyone slumbering nearby, taking the useful dreamers for themselves. When she slept, he woke, and she lived in the back of his mind, with the chorus of voices.

- The dreams of her deep slumber meant something. They had when she was alive, and now that she was dead, they were no different. All she needed was a way to control them, to guide herself toward what she needed to know. The answer was in the blood, manipulating it into giving up its secrets. Oh, to be one with it, flowing through ossified veins and learning the secrets it carried. Losing something of herself was a small price to pay to learn the secrets of those she hunted. She never noticed how much harder it became to come back to herself each time. Some say she sits at a shrine still, her body a smiling statue while her mind wanders forever.
- They called her the Unaging One, revered her as a queen. There was no question she couldn't answer, if they could pay the cost. If they couldn't, she would answer their questions anyway. Her prices weren't advertised, leaving it up to the asker to bring what they thought would be enough. If they were injured, if they failed, if they vanished, it was because they hadn't given proper tribute. Her people knew better than to question her judgement. Though her name has long been forgotten, she still rules them now, from behind the glowing screens that they pour their hopes and dreams into. They tell her as much as the blood used to while she sleeps.

Parent Clan: Any; requires Circle of the Crone

Nickname: Seers, Seekers, Sleepers (derogatory)

Bloodline Bane (The Somnolent Curse): The slumbering mysteries call to you even in your waking hours. Your mind is always filled with whispers and voices from beyond, filling any quiet space you try to carve out for yourself. They lull your Beast, but they take your mind with it, sapping your will. Your torpor is one that is near impossible to rise from.

When a vampire with the Somnolent Curse enters torpor, the duration is determined by her Humanity - dots in Crúac. Waking her prematurely requires an additional point of Vitae for every dot of Crúac she has. When she wakes from torpor or rises after using the Clotho's Skein rite, she suffers the False Memories Condition. This automatically resolves itself after her next daysleep.

Favored Attributes: Intelligence or Stamina

Disciplines: *Auspex*, *Celerity*, *Crúac*, *Vigor*

In the Covenants

The Penumbrae are only present within the Circle of the Crone, but their presence is known throughout the rest of Kindred society. Spoken



of only in whispers, behind doors closed, locked, and sealed tight, the others wonder at what they're truly capable of... or admire their handiwork as it benefits them.

Carthian Movement: The Firebrands have mixed opinions on the Seers. The secrets of the Circle of the Crone are questionable at best, and delving into the minds of others makes creating a fair and equal society even harder than usual. Some consider it a useful tool for leadership, while others consider it an invasion of privacy. Unsure of exactly what the Acolytes can do with their power, the Carthians consider Seers with an especially wary eye.

Circle of the Crone: While the Mother's Army is no stranger to secrets, the Seers have even more than the rest of the covenant. Those who can traverse the uncharted paths of the slumbering mind are highly regarded amongst the Acolytes, purveyors of wisdom and knowledge previously untouched. However, even their peers view the Seekers with caution; even the Acolytes can be driven mad by too much time spent in their waking dream. Some have lost themselves entirely, awake and yet elsewhere, and even more dangerous for it.

Lancea et Sanctum: Like most anything the Circle of the Crone does, the Lancea et Sanctum violently oppose the existence of the Seers. If it were part of their mission to commune with their slumbering brethren, it would be possible through their own sorcery, not the bastardized blood practice of the Witches. The Sanctified believe there are certain things beyond even immortal comprehension, and that Torpor is a necessary and private thing that shouldn't be disturbed by prying minds.

Invictus: The Invictus, while outwardly condemning the Circle of the Crone, often have a Seer as a well-kept secret. Few things are more powerful than knowledge. Staying one step ahead by any means is crucial to anyone in the covenant. Whether plumbing the minds of captured enemies or willing allies, a Seer's power is invaluable to those looking to stay ten steps ahead of their opponents. Of course, this gives the Seer the opportunity to manipulate anyone employing her; many a member of the Conspiracy has been mysteriously undone, leaving nothing more than a power vacuum.

Ordo Dracul: The Dragons are intrigued by the Seer's alleged ability to interpret the mysteries of Torpor, but that hardly means they trust the group. As the means by which to understand such visions are hidden within Crúac rituals, the Ordo Dracul have struggled to study their methods and claims. Some seek to duplicate the effects without the associated blood magic, to little avail. Such mysteries confound the Order, and many write it off as unfounded and improbable.

Rumors

"The Sanctified are saying their allies in the Invictus have been getting more secretive and drawing away. Strange — there's a reason they call them the First and Second Estates. They're usually thick as thieves. Then again, they also call the Invictus the Conspiracy

for a reason. They're making some risky moves, but it always seems to turn out alright."

In a bid to take over the city, the leaders of the Invictus have decided to throw in with the Mother's Army. More impressed with the blood magic of the Circle of the Crone than the miracles of Theban Sorcery, they have secretly allied themselves with a small coterie of Acolytes near the edges of the city's territory. Both groups have plans to undermine the other once they're satisfied with the progress they've made. The Invictus believe they have the upper hand, with their impressive presence in the city; the Circle, however, has been infiltrating the Carthian Movement, and plan to use the Invictus' naked ambition against them.

"No one knows how she managed to twist his arm like that. Protected by order of the Prince himself? The Witches haven't been welcome here in generations, and now she's got her whole coterie set up in the best part of town. If he thinks there won't be backlash, or that they'll play nice now that they're here... it might be time for a new Prince."

Recent transplants into the city, the Acolytes don't want to be in control. Their leader knows full she's painted enough of a target on their backs. She's content to let the Prince continue leading his city and take on whatever ill-effects come from their presence himself. Under the influence of her Clotho's Skein ritual, he will protect the Acolytes until he is either removed from power or her influence is broken. Fleeing persecution, the coterie has gladly acquiesced to becoming their new Prince's thralls. The group has used the opportunity to turn this requirement against him, divining secrets from the Vitae consumed.

"I know we have the catacombs. It's the duty of the new initiates to tend to the sleeping ones, but why do the others go there? They spend hours with them, and no one else is allowed in while they're there. Then they come out with orders and it's time to go, or they're in such a bad mood that there's no talking to them."

Within a coterie made up of members of the Circle, Penumbrae groom other Kindred for acceptance into their bloodline. Ruled by several torpid ancillae, the waking leaders frequently consult the minds of their elders for advice and guidance. Those who show the most respect for the slumbering bodies of the elders and can balance their curiosity with respect for traditions are taught the ways of the Penumbrae, but only after proving they can keep secrets even from their brothers and sisters in the Mother's Army.

Sabine Esters

"Of course the things you see in your dreams are important. They're usually what you don't want to think about when you're awake."

A spiritualist all her life, Sabine was groomed from the time she was a teenager to join the Kindred. She remained a ghoul for years to introduce her to Kindred society, she welcomed her Embrace on the eve of her twenty-first birthday. Believing her power to always have been connected to her sire, whom

she considers her guardian angel, Sabine supported herself for years as a psychic. Reading tarot cards, palms, and offering astrological advice paid the bills, but her primary focus had been, and now always will be, dream interpretation. Her old tools mean little to her now, as she has something much more valuable: her Disciplines grant her more power than her mortal self would ever have dreamed, and the raw potential of Vitae is her favorite choice for a divining tool.

Pleased with her eager devotion to the Mother's Army and its ideals, Sabine's sire ensured her thorough education in both Disciplines and rituals. Tight-lipped as any of the Acolytes, devoted with religious fervor to honing her abilities, and eager to explore the mysteries of her new condition, she entered the ranks of the Penumbrae as one of their youngest members.

Having mastered the rituals of the Penumbrae, Sabine has since left the safety of her sire's haven. Finding the isolated building hidden away in the woods too remote for her tastes, she has struck out on her own, relying on her abilities to keep safe. She drifts from city to city, never staying long enough to cause any real trouble. She believes her visions are guiding her to a leader in need of her help, and she will know who it is when she sees them. All she knows at the moment is that they are not yet in power, and that by working together, she and her mysterious liege will upend any obstacles that stand in their way and rule together.

Clan/Bloodline: Mekhet/Penumbrae

Covenant: Circle of the Crone

Mask: Scholar

Dirge: Visionary

Touchstone: Old Dream Diary (6)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts 1, Medicine 2, Occult 5 (Dream Interpretation)

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1 (Daggers)

Social Skills: Empathy 3 (Giving Comfort), Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Larceny 2, Persuasion 3 (Recruitment), Subterfuge 1

Merits: Circle of the Crone Status 2, Dream Visions 1, Inspiring, Safe Place 1, Striking Looks 2, Undead Menses 2

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Crúac 5, Obfuscate 2, Vigor 1

Rites: Cheval, Clotho's Skein, The Hydra's Vitae, Sanguine Auger, Willful Vitae, Wisdom of the Blood

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 9

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5

Crúac Rites

Penumbrae have access to a limited number of rites specifically delving into secrets of the blood and the mysteries of torpor.

Sanguine Auger (•)

Target number of successes: 6

Even before it becomes Vitae in a vampire's veins, blood is a powerful divining tool. Penumbrae have learned to manipulate the ties blood has it to its owner, and they can target their most recent victim with this ritual. A Penumbra may target other vampires with this ritual, but when she does, she is subject to the usual risks of drinking another's Vitae. The next time she is called to rest, she is visited by cryptic visions of her target, which reveal to her something she did not previously know about them. For every additional point of Vitae she spends, she can either receive another piece of information or a less cryptic vision. She can only benefit from one of these effects, never both in the same evening. Characters can learn specifics about other Kindred this way, including Touchstones, bloodlines, and Merits, as well as their lineage as many generations back as the character's dots in Crúac. When used on mortals, the caster can learn specifics about their lives, as the strength of any Vinculum they may have.

Wisdom of the Blood (•••)

Target number of successes: 6

Using the mind of a torpid vampire as her medium, the ritualist taps into the collective unconscious of the Kindred. For every point of Vitae she spends, she may ask a question, and receives through her target's dreams a brief prophecy. While carefully phrasing any inquiries is important, reducing them to yes-or-no questions or presenting options does little to clarify the answers. The prophecies are always fleeting impulses and images, filtered through the mind of whomever the vampire is using to connect to the subconscious whole. They may carry the biases of her target, which may in turn affect how she interprets her visions, but the cryptic messages never speak false.

Clotho's Skein (•••••)

Target number of successes: 9

Resisted by: Resolve + Blood Potency

By casting this ritual, the vampire gives herself to power to walk the uncharted paths of the slumbering mind. The next

time she lays down to rest, her mind remains aware, slipping into a landscape unlike anything in the waking world. From here, she can see the threads that connect all the Kindred within a 1-mile radius, though she may only target one. She can either determine her target while casting the ritual, in which case her target's trail glows brightly, or wander and choose a target while she rests. Choosing a target after the initial casting is more difficult, as there's no true way to determine who is who; only vague impulses of their dreams.

If this ritual succeeds, the caster can implant a single thought or idea into her target's mind. This can be a goal for them to achieve, or it can sway someone's opinion on a subject. This ritual cannot cause the target to harm themselves, though it may move them to violence against others. Whatever idea is implanted, he goes about through whatever means he normally uses — implanting the idea to crush an opponent in the mind of a Ventrue will garner different results than implanting it in a Gangrel, for example.

Scions of the First City

"If the City must to burn to be resurrected, if riots must crest through Her streets like tsunamis to cleanse them, if every brick must be scattered to build something perfect and pure, so be it."

— Richard Lancaster, Scion Elder

Her heartbeat pulses through the streets. The soles of our feet press down to asphalt like a child pressing her cheek to her mother's breast. She envelops us, holds us.

Her heartbeat flows up through cracked concrete, through our limbs, rides our veins and nerves, climbs our spine. The City sings in our blood like blood sympathy. We love Her.

She is perfect order and elegance, our City. We love Her and perfect Her: every moment, every night. We move imperfect pieces, test Her systems. We are Her lymphatic system and the undead echo of Her heart's living pulse.

We have always been here. She *needs* us. From the first city to the last, we will be here. And here is what you cannot understand: every city is Her. When we step into a new city, we press our hands to a rusted lamppost or a broken brick wall, link our heart to a new metropolis, and it is still Her.

All cities are one city, as a woman may tonight wear velvet with a broken heel like New York but tomorrow sport Portland's flannel and cork-soled sandals. All cities are one City. The First City. Our Mother.

They say we are Helen of Troy, Nero, and Oliver Cromwell, that we destroy cities, not make them. They cannot understand the art creation via destruction, the way the crash and scream of metal twisting in a purging fire gives way to clean-lined buildings rising in neat layers toward the sky, how a scandal sweeps clogged bureaucracies clean.

Our Mother loves us, and we seek Her secrets. Whether we wear the Man's smile or follow the Beast's call, we are of the First City from which all others were birthed. We seek Her secrets more desperately even than our prey's fluttering pulse.

Board rooms and networks of wires close around us like protective armor, and disgorge us into the darkness, demanding always more. We have never found the First City's secret, we have never perfected the City, and from the First City to the last, we will test Her systems, we will chase imperfections which follow Her streets like white blood cells chasing down an infection.

We are the First Estate's heart, the First City's beloved children. The City loves us immeasurably. Why would you resist our guidance?

Why you want to be us

You've turned a corner in a new city one night and understood, for just a second, that this city is on some level the same as every other. That moment of déjà vu is when you're *almost* us. You have the insatiable urge to break things to see how they work. You don't just get possessive over cities: you get possessive over *neighborhoods*. You know the difference between Brooklyn's smell and the Bronx's, between background noise in Strawberry Hill and Manayunk, between the way the fog lays on the water in Westminster and curls up the alleys of Camden Town. You want to know everything.

Why you should fear us

The City reveals Her secrets to us: London draws back Her fog like a Victorian headmistress coyly lifting her skirts to show Her ankle; Atlanta's pulse and thrum play for us like the rhythm of a debutante's décolletage rising and falling; New Orleans leans over and whispers her secrets to our ears like a 2 AM half-drunk confession. Nothing hides from us, sooner or later. We are the First Estate: the First City and all Her children belong to us. You cannot run from us: The City slowly envelops this planet, and sooner or later, She will have the entirety of the world. And then we will, too.

Why we should fear ourselves

Her secrets are our addiction: we crave Her attention like a needy toddler. We cannot talk to Her without breaking Her creations. We must introduce disorder so we might yet improve Her designs. Those who see us sing Her songs call us a cult, and perhaps that is not too far from the truth. We do not care if we are a cult. We are told that this may be a problem. We still do not care.

Bloodline Origins

- Originally a Mekhet bloodline, the Invictus didn't so much absorb the Harbingers as hijack them; the First Estate couldn't bear someone else having access to the Scions. Those who wouldn't fall in line met final ends. Through some manner of pact with the City of Alexandria in 48 BCE, they permanently subsumed the bloodline into what became the Invictus.
- On another hand rests the rumor that the Scions weren't originally Mekhet but born of a Gangrel sire/childe pair. Infuriated by Pompeii's expansion into their territory, they planned to confront the Invictus driving the city's explosive growth. Within three nights, they became fascinated by the way that the city's population formed its own complicated wildlife systems. They burned when the top came off the mountain three years later, but by then, they'd passed on their new-found obsession.
- Five thousand years ago, desert sand blew through Ubar, from whom pilgrims carried home precious frankincense to their temples and royalty. The residents believed their city perfect, irreplaceable, and a cult rose, worshipping Her. When Ubar's limestone foundations collapsed, the city was swallowed by a sinkhole which fell even further into a cave. A few cultists miraculously

survived. Attributing their survival to the city's protection in Her moment of death, they nursed their wounds in subterranean darkness. When they emerged, they sought another city to which to carry their devotion to Ubar, transferring their fanatical piety to their new homes.

Parent Clan: Any; must be a member of the Invictus

Nickname: Harbingers, Scions (within the Invictus)

Bloodline Bane: (The Mother's Curse) When separated from their City, Scions become agitated. The longer she's outside her City's bounds, the harder it becomes for her to resist the call of her Beast. If stranded from her home City, she may adopt another, but if she's stranded in a rural area, she may begin to lose touch with the Man.

When the Scion is outside a metropolis (or a city with a population fewer than 10,000), all dice pools are capped at Humanity dots.

Favored Attributes: Wits or Stamina

Disciplines: Animalism, *Auspex*, *Obfuscate*, Resilience



In the Covenants

Carthian Movement: If you can find a Carthian who genuinely *likes* a Scion — any Scion, anywhere — there’s a Mekhet named Blaine who hangs out at Bridge Tap in St. Louis who’ll grant a minor boon for proof of that unlikely fact. That challenge, which began as a joke three decades ago, has taken on a life of its own, with more than a little truth to it. There’s no love lost between the covenants on their best days, but add in “creepy-ass blood-walking” and “shit always falls apart near the Harbingers, but they come out smelling like fucking roses,” and there’s just nothing for Firebrands to like.

Circle of the Crone: Many among Circle of the Crone sigh wistfully and dream of recruiting Harbingers. Certainly, the Mother’s Army would love to weave the Harbinger’s particularly intimate relationship with Vitae into their own rituals. Any Acolyte who convinced a Scion to join the Circle’s worship would both put themselves at incredible risk from the Invictus and greatly elevate their own Status. Still, there’s trepidation: the sobriquet “Harbingers” didn’t come from nowhere, and even the wildest bacchanal can’t end with the *entire* city aflame. Where would the Circle dance tomorrow?

Invictus: The Invictus guard the Scions carefully, even if they’re the ones who nicknamed the bloodline. Handle a Harbinger like holding C4 in your bare hand, the First Estate tells their Princes: occasionally *very* useful, and inevitably destructive. Hold a Harbinger wrong or toss them carelessly after an enemy, and you’ll end up blowing a gaping hole in the side of the wrong thing.

Lancea et Sanctum: The Lancea et Sanctum and First Estate struggle for control in every city they share, dating back to the founding of both covenants. Harbingers are just another weapon only in the First Estate’s armory, which makes the church particularly despise them. Many high-ranking members of the Church preach extensively about the Harbinger’s evils: the falseness of their claim to an unbroken lineage traceable to the First City, and their blasphemous rituals. Perhaps those sermons are made with genuine intent. Perhaps they’re simply attacks on a bloodline whose activities rarely benefit the Church.

Ordo Dracul: With their long-standing research into Vitae’s uses and applications, their development of the Coils of the Dragon, and their love for experimentation, the Ordo Dracul are — for the most part — fascinated by the Harbingers. Anything that looks this much like a blood cult draws them like moths to a streetlight.

Rumors

“This one ghoul in Atlanta who calls himself Cromwell keeps a shrine to Helen of Troy, who he says was the first Scion. He wants to be one of them one day, but his regnant doesn’t get the point. It’s not about the people, it’s about the city, or some shit. I wouldn’t want to be near Cromwell whenever he figures out that he’s Doing It Wrong and she’s never going to embrace him: he might just start acting as destructive as his goddamned boss.”

There’s no proof that Helen of Troy was a Scion, and most Scions would argue the idea — everyone involved in that story put their own happiness above the well-being of the city. None of the cities involved came out the other side better, and poor Cromwell will never be embraced if he doesn’t change his perspective.

“My sire told me that the rumor about that Harbinger in Brussels who only feeds on the blood of people who ‘sin’ against her city is bullshit. I’d never say he’s a liar or anything, but like, I think whoever told him that is a liar. I bet it’s true of all of them, and if we could cut off their food supply somehow...”

Scions are no more or less restricted in their diets than any other random vampire: their particulars are their own, and while some individuals might have restricted diets, those restrictions do not apply to the bloodline as a whole.

“One of my friends in New York said they wrapped a Harbinger up in a blanket and drove her out to the middle of the Poconos. Three days later, she was... a mess. Just an animal. They left the door open to the woods and she ran out into the dawn. He said it was almost sad, but then he remembered how much he hated that bitch.”

The bloodline bane of the Scions is their greatest weakness, but not every Harbinger will react so dramatically. If a Scion is separated from her City and subjected to Disciplines, Devotions, or other powers meant to weaken her will, she inevitably snaps. The City is their Mother, and when they can’t hear her song, they suffer. The sad case of Adara Zelly of New York is precisely accurate: bundled up in a blanket and kept in a cabin for three days, she ran into the sun rather than suffer the silence any more.

Alana Troy

“I’m young, scrappy, and hungry, and I’m not — what? Don’t you sing while you work?”

One of the youngest Scions, Alana was born Marsha Freeman in Ferguson, MO in 1986. Her unhinged sire crawled into a blast furnace the day after embracing her. Only her best friend’s company kept her from walking directly into the sun when she realized what she’d become. The Prince of Granite City’s mercy saved her from a quick end once the Sheriff found her: he pawned the abandoned fledgling off on the only Scion in his city, not-so-secretly hoping that Marsha would give him a reason to put Darius, her appointed caregiver, down.

He never counted on her adopted sire’s ability to bring the young vampire to heel, nor Alana’s drive to survive. Marsha disappeared for a few months. When she returned to society as Alana Troy, she quickly made herself so useful that Darius became resentful of the favor she curried with the city’s elders. Years in dead-end customer service jobs suddenly had a purpose: Alana’s ability to find answers while wearing a fawning, facile smile served her much better than Darius’s fanatical, strict demeanor.

After a nearly-fatal falling-out between them, Alana fled across the river to St. Louis, where she’s meticulously built a network of contacts and allies rivalling that of much-older Invictus. She mercilessly hounds anyone she considers harmful

to her City, willing to sacrifice anything to root out secrets, and hides that ruthlessness behind her megawatt smile.

Alana's sympathies are far too Carthian for most Invictus tastes: given her age and background, the Millennial Scion might be the first to break from her parent covenant, should a clever Firebrand properly frame their argument.

Clan/Bloodline: Daeva/Scion of the First City

Covenant: Invictus

Mask: Visionary

Dirge: Survivor

Touchstone: Tasha, Her Best Friend

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 2, Occult (Omens) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Larceny (Security Systems) 3, Stealth (Urban) 2, Survival (Urban Tracking) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression (Singing) 2, Intimidation (Feral Mannerisms) 3, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Police) 3, Allies (Media) 2, Allies (Working Class) 4, Allies (Social Workers) 2, Contacts (Hospitals, Dock Workers, Retail Workers, Invictus Elders) 4, Enticing, Sleight of Hand

Disciplines: Resilience 3, Obfuscate 2, Auspex 5, Celerity 2

Devotions: Incriminating Evidence, Our Mother's Mind, Gargoyle's Vigilance, Quicken Sight, Shatter the Shroud

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 11

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 7

Defense: 5 (Active Defense 7)

Active Defense: 7

Notes: City Attunement (St. Louis), Omen Sensitivity: **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** p. 58.

New Devotions

City Attunement (Auspex •)

Prerequisite: Scion of the First City

Harbingers don't just live in a city, they become one with it. She attunes with it nightly so that she may see, hear, and experience everything that happens within it. A city must have at least 10,000 inhabitants; a Harbinger won't trouble herself with a mere *town*.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Action: Instant

By spending a Vitae and resting one or both hands on a building exterior or paved street within the city, the Harbinger renews his link to Her. Most Harbingers do this upon exiting their havens nightly. Harbingers may not be linked to more than one city at a time. In the case of a metropolis, the Harbinger is linked to the greater metropolis and not a given neighborhood: She is not Fishtown, She is Philadelphia.

All Scions of the First City may learn this ability at no cost.

Incriminating Evidence (Auspex •••)

Prerequisite: Scion of the First City

The Scions of the First City know everything that happen within their chosen home. They can and will find all its hidden, dirty secrets.

Cost: Varies; use of this devotion is tiring. The first use within a scene is free; additional uses cost 1 Vitae each.

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Auspex

Action: Instant

This Devotion modifies the Harbinger's Spirit's Touch, allowing him to find evidence of a secret within the city. He focuses on a person whom he has previously touched that night and attunes his Beast to the city. The city then guides the Harbinger to evidence of wrongdoing that person might have committed. The Scion must use the Devotion outside, and he gets a number of clues equal to the successes he gained on activation.

The Storyteller should lead the player via the urban environment's background noise: if the Harbinger is being led toward the Haven where his target buried the bones of a dead girl, a missing child poster with the face ripped off might skitter down the pavement, leading the way. If he's pointed toward the Prince's embarrassing personal correspondence, red lights flicker on the wall, indicating a door. Incriminating Evidence won't tell or hint at the secret; it only leads him toward the location of evidence. Engage in a Clash of Wills (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** p. 125) if this ability comes into conflict with Obfuscate.

This does not grant passage past locked doors or even tell a Scion which door on a building the secret can be found behind; it can only lead him to a general location such as a

building, parking garage, or stadium. Harbingers often use this ability repeatedly, narrowing in on their target. If not used carefully, they may arrive weak and face their opponent's security systems while exhausted.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Our Mother's Mind (Auspex ●●●●●)

Prerequisite: Scion of the First City

Usually, a Kindred's use of Auspex at this level allows her to leave her body behind and travel wherever she wishes. A Scion knows her place in the world is her City, and she therefore uses her city as a homing device rather than casting herself willy-nilly into the Astral. There must be some aspect of her which travels and communes with something unseen, as the City itself acts against her prey. Harbingers use this discipline to track someone who has wronged their city; abusing it for personal vendettas will surely backfire.

Cost: 2 Vitae

Roll: Intelligence + Occult + Auspex vs Blood Potency + Resolve

Action: Instant

The Harbinger smears her Vitae onto her feet and walks barefoot through the City, following Her signs toward a single target. The player declares a target to the Storyteller in a short phrase, for example: "Randall the Gangrel" or "that mime I saw last night" or "the person responsible for the fire downtown."

The City guides the Harbinger with Her sounds and sights; the Storyteller is encouraged to lead her as with Incriminating Evidence. The surface thoughts of passersby leak into her mind in a traceable trajectory. Sirens wail to her left when she should turn. Motor oil trails up an exit ramp like a neon arrow. For every success, she is led her Blood Potency number of city blocks toward her target, following the city's directions like a bloodhound on a scent. If the target leaves the city, she is led to where they exited. Upon failure, the Harbinger is aware she has failed; she receives no guidance from the City.

In addition, the City acts to impede the Harbinger's target: for every success, the target's non-combat dice pools and Speed are reduced by 1 for the duration of the effect. Lights change against him and those sirens are a distracting wail which keeps him from noticing the Harbinger in pursuit.

This devotion leaves traces of the Harbinger's vitae on the ground, which may pose a danger to her from the city's other denizens.

Drawback: To perfect the City, the Scion must be willing to destroy imperfections at every personal cost. For each success, the Harbinger must temporarily sacrifice access to a level of Contacts, Allies, Retainer, or Resources. The Storyteller determines how access to these merits is temporarily lost and is encouraged to be creative: a Retainer hospitalized due to a car accident; bank accounts temporarily frozen due to administrative error or Police Allies jailed. The Scion regains access to these merits one week after use of this devotion. *Players may choose not to utilize all their successes.*

This Devotion costs 3 Experiences to learn.

Vardyvle

"I can make your dreams come true. I only need a bit of your blood. Trust me."

— Maddy Hill, Vardyvle founder

Have you ever seen someone on the street one night and swore that it was someone you knew? You call up that person and hear that the friend you thought had lied to you about not being able to go out is indeed at home with the flu, and does sound very sick. You catch a second glimpse of the person and he does not have his phone in hand. With a shrug, you tell your friend that you just saw someone who looked just like them on the street. Another night, our existence goes unnoticed, and our prey remains in ignorant bliss.

The Vardyvles were ambitious dreamers in their previous lives. Most of them struggle with letting go of the past, and so they find themselves addicted to those who manage to fulfill the dream in a way that Kindred could never have done. The Kindred's life was cut short, her dreams shattered; in finding someone else, she hopes to salvage some of those ambitions. These ambitions could be becoming an Olympian, owning a successful business, or becoming an actor. The Vardyvle's desire could be things that he would never think possible

if he had remained mortal, like being a beautiful model, or having an alluring singing voice. In some cases, the desire is human rather than materialistic, such as having a family or someone who loves you.

Their appearances change often, which makes them easy to miss. The Vardvle name is also new, as they change it with everything else. There was a time when they were called Tiresias. Such a romantic name, steeped in Greek myth and tragedy. Same with the name Huldra, from the Scandinavian folklore, but they decided against it as they didn't want to be mistaken for faeries. Notice a pattern with mythology? Their name must be grand to match their grandeur, but nothing is ever good enough for long. The name changes are confusing, and the Vardvles accept that, thinking "you have to switch it up every now and again if you want to stay on top of the trends."

The bloodline is relatively new, but it explodes in number whenever a dream pervades the human psyche. Whenever there's a new movie or a music genre goes through its golden age, they appear with gusto. The biggest boom was during the Cold War era. Spies have always been integral in ploys and wars, but then they were glamorized in the public eye. Living an exciting double life, that's all they could ask for!

The Vardvles were naive to believe that the spy drama wouldn't paint a target on them. Of course, others would use their passion for their schemes. Nowadays that's what most Kindred perceive them as — pawns for them to use in a game.

Why you want to be us

We are the children of Ventrue who don't settle for good. We want what's best. There's a problem with this as there'll always be someone better than you — someone prettier, someone richer, the list goes ever on. This is the basis of the Vardvle's infamous envy. You can struggle for an eternity, yet a mortal will come, and in less time than you rise to the top, leaving you in second place. So why not trade places with them and ride their wave of glory? We can live vicariously through the humans who managed to succeed during their lifetime, while we died in our own. You can finally be whomever you want to be.

Why you should fear us

We share the Ventrue's deadly sin of pride, but ours are also the sins of greed and envy. When we claim our skills or gifts, we mean it. We say we're drop-dead gorgeous, and you can count on the fact that there's a trail of dead admirers in our wake. We claim that we have politicians eating out of our hand, you'll see that happen, verbatim, the next night. Why do you think it's such a common thing for politicians to get wrapped up in sex scandals? If you ask us nicely, we can make sure that your least favorite politician "accidentally" leaks images of themselves wearing bondage gear.

We use our ability to change into other people to instill paranoia in our enemies, human and Kindred alike. How do

you know it's us you've found? You won't unless we tell you. Is it really your partner greeting you by the door when you come home, or is it one of us wearing their skin? Whom have we infiltrated and replaced? Who can you trust? We will ruin your life if that's what we want.

Why we should fear ourselves

Our weakness is the unpleasant side of our strength, the obsession of our dreams and desire to live our lives through them. Though we might act all high and mighty, our arrogance leads to our downfall when we aren't careful. Our hidden desires only emerge once we've had a taste of them. We can never be safe with our prey, no matter how much we stalk them, for they are the key to unlocking a passion we cannot fulfill. You think you are safe after months of observing her only to find that as the victim's blood reaches your tongue, there's a suppressed wish within you that desires that you could live as carefree as she does. The grass will forever be greener on the other side.

With every new victim we prey upon, we risk finding our better half, the person we wished we were, and the person we desperate want to be. We spread paranoia as we become frightened and fearful ourselves. Being a doppelgänger leads to a sorrowful and lonely existence. The only thing that brings solace during those times is to be the person you wish to be, once again leading us to a vicious and destructive cycle. We know that our misery is caused by none other than ourselves.

Bloodline Origins

- The Vardvle's envy is clear in the story of Niklas Persbrandt, one of the first doppelgängers and rumored creator of the Bloodline. His frail disposition, an excuse to hide his vampirism, lead to his father picking the youngest son to be his successor. Enraged, Niklas murdered his father, which was mercy in comparison to the treatment he showed his younger brother. He worked the young man to death, barking orders under the guise of their father.
- The Bloodline's infamous greed is their never-ending thirst for accomplishments, exemplary in the heists of Maddy Hill. Her Requiem has been filled with episodes of espionage fitting for a movie series. No one knows when she was embraced, but her rumored first accomplishments were during the First World War where she played the role of a French spy. Never satisfied with one life for long, she defects when the side she's on has a clear advantage. Desperate people are willing to pay a higher price for her services.
- The Vardvle's origin isn't well known outside of the bloodline. Supposedly the creator of the bloodline was a Ventrue named Faye. Her accomplishment consisted of tricking a now-dead lineage of vampires who had been cursed by the Strix or some other spirit. She copied their powers by diablerie or she grew powerful enough to mimic it.

Every Vardylvle knows this story, and it used to be told by every sire by tradition. Some details have gotten muddled, whether the first Vardylvle was named Faye, or if the creature the progenitor betrayed was a Fae, no one is sure. In any case, the creature whom Faye tricked called themselves Nhang, a bloodthirsty creature that ate the flesh of a person to create a body and take their victim's place. None of the living Vardylvle ever saw the original vampires, and yet they retain the supposed ire of the Nhang. The younger ones chafe under this. It isn't like they were the ones who stole the power. The older Kindred give the vague answer that "everything has a price," which insinuates that they don't care who it was and that all Vardylvle must pay for their progenitor's crime.

Parent Clan: Ventruue

Nickname: Doppelgängers, look-stealers, stalkers, skin-takers, Tiresias (old name)

Bloodline Bane (The Covetous Curse): The Doppelgängers weakness is obsession with their prey. The Vardylvle don't see their victims as human, but a hindrance to glory. Each time the Vardylvle feeds on someone whom she envies, she risks obsession and that person's life consuming her. When she feeds on such a human, roll Humanity. On a failure, she gains a memory from the victim and believes it is her own. This acts as a False Memory Condition, which lasts for a week. A dramatic failure means she also gains the Addicted Condition towards that victim's blood.

Favored Attributes: Manipulation or Presence

Disciplines: Dominate, Obfuscate, Protean, Resilience

In the Covenants

The Vardylvle are in all the covenants, though they are most often found in the Circle of the Crone and the Invictus. It depends on the individual, but most are self-centered rather than religious or scientific sorts.

The Carthian Movement: A few Vardylvle join the Carthian

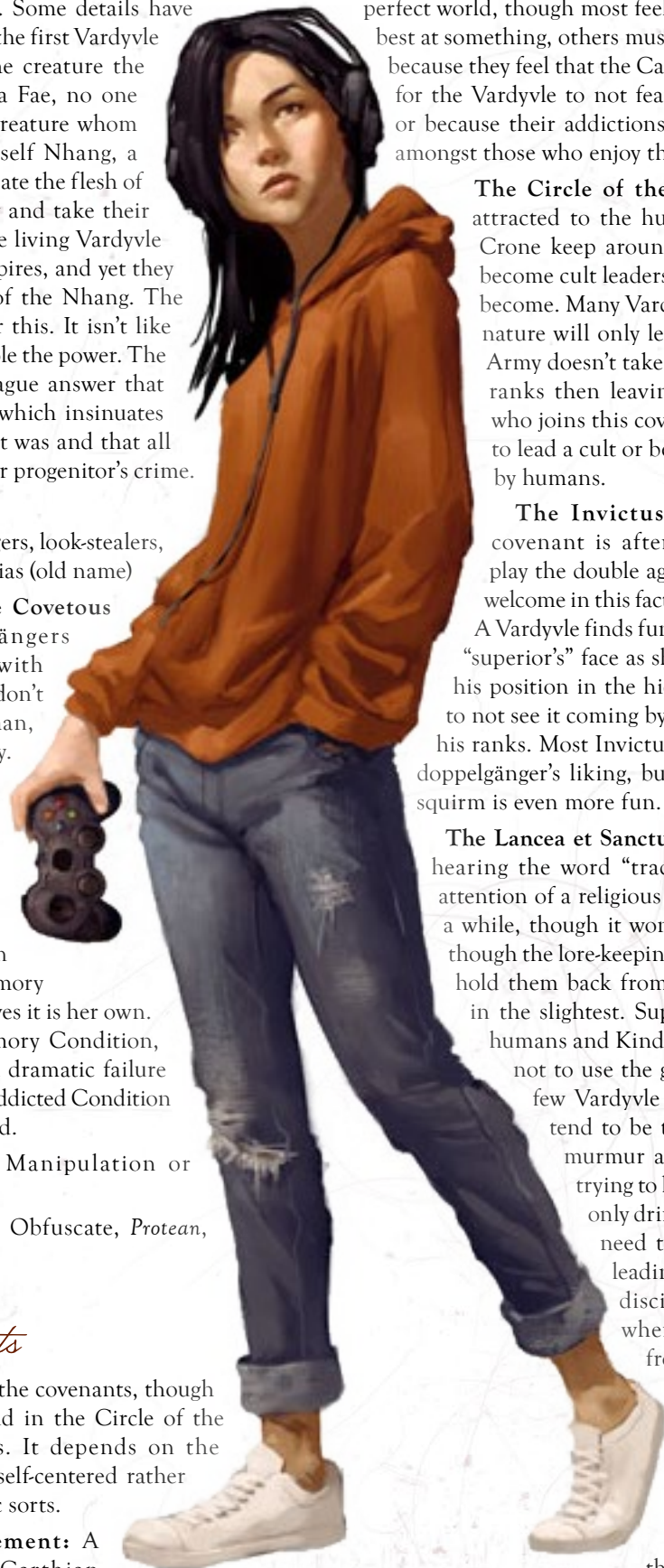
Movement. They can sympathize with the desire to create the perfect world, though most feel that for them to become the best at something, others must be less fortunate. Some join because they feel that the Carthians' ideal world has room for the Vardylvle to not fear other Kindred using them, or because their addictions won't be such a hinderance amongst those who enjoy the company of humans.

The Circle of the Crone: The Vardylvle are attracted to the human cults the Circle of the Crone keep around them. They yearn to join, become cult leaders, and have so many people to become. Many Vardylvle fear that their mercurial nature will only lead to danger as the Mother's Army doesn't take well to Kindred joining their ranks then leaving abruptly. A doppelgänger who joins this covenant often has the ambition to lead a cult or be worshipped as a pagan deity by humans.

The Invictus: A doppelgänger in this covenant is after power and often loves to play the double agent game. They're very much welcome in this faction as someone's subordinate. A Vardylvle finds fun in watching the shock on her "superior's" face as she backstabs him and assume his position in the hierarchy. Surely, he was a fool to not see it coming by the time he allowed her into his ranks. Most Invictus are a bit too uptight for the doppelgänger's liking, but that means watching them squirm is even more fun.

The Lancea et Sanctum: Most Vardylvle gag when hearing the word "tradition." Being the center of attention of a religious gathering can be exciting for a while, though it won't last for long. Many feel as though the lore-keeping and strict traditionalist view hold them back from enjoying the Requiem even in the slightest. Suppose that if God did create humans and Kindred, then it would be a shame not to use the gifts He blessed us with. The few Vardylvle who are with the Sanctified tend to be the self-flagellating kind who murmur about sin under their breath, trying to keep their sin under control by only drinking animal blood. Sadly, his need to feed eventually takes over, leading to a binge session. Mental discipline can only do so much when up against a punishment from God, as some see it. The lust for perfection consumes all Vardylvle in the end.

Ordo Dracul: A Vardylvle who joins the Ordo Dracul is a vampire playing with fire, though many succumb to their



handily crafted lure. Who wouldn't want to be a vampire without flaws? A Vardyvle risks what all bloodlines do when joining the ranks of the Dragons: a microscope put on her life by the members of her own Covenant as they attempt to learn everything they can about her.

Rumors

"I'm sure you've heard it since it's all over the news, but it's just so crazy... they finally found that serial kidnapper, only to discover that all the victims were hung up as if for slaughter. All those people were locked in that creep's cellar. Their arms were full of needle marks, and the police recovered a bunch of blood bags at the scene. I heard someone say it's a black market thing. Isn't that awful?"

Kidnapping a victim for blood isn't a behavior exclusive to the Vardyvle, but their bane can trigger some possessive behavior in which they want to become the victim. They need two things for that to happen. First, that person needs to be off the street. Second, the Vardyvle needs their blood on a regular basis. Connect the two, and you'll see where the reputation of all Vardyvle having a personal stock of humans. It does get awkward when someone finds their stash of victims. A Vardyvle who's hooked on a victim's blood tends to get sloppy and risks exposure.

"Have you heard of that innocent fella who got mistaken as a murderer? How unlucky can you be to have an actual evil twin? They can't find the killer, but at least the innocent party walks free!"

Finding a look-alike can be a fun or quirky experience. But in the case of Vardyvles who steal their victim's lives, it can be much more dangerous. Locally, three different people have been blamed for murders they didn't commit. It all seems to point back to a Vardyvle, but this one is crafty enough to not get caught.

"Have you heard of the urban legend where if you see yourself on the street and make eye contact with your doppelgänger, you'll die the next night? My brother's girlfriend's friend said she saw her doppelgänger at the train station, and the next day she was dead! The cops said it's a suicide, but all her friends say that there's no way she would take her own life."

Vardyvle don't become their victim, and those who fail to force that person off the streets may find themselves caught. The best solution is to kill the person, though this destroys the manicured illusion the doppelgängers create for themselves. So instead, a Vardyvle may try to change the person's memories or find similar, less permanent solutions before resorting to murder.

Kagami Hinata

"I remember all of my children fondly. Evelyn, Maria, Mikhail, and Fredrick. No parent should have to outlive their children."

Kagami Hinata was a famous video-blogger and a music writer under another name before her embrace. She had a medium-sized following and didn't want to jeopardize her

image if it turned out she would flop, so Kagami decided to create a new account to explore her interest in music. Her music career took off under a different pseudonym, where her fandom assumed that she was a young man. Happy with the subscriber count she had amassed by not correcting these claims, she played along and created a unique persona for her music production.

When her subscriber count came to a halt and her fifteen minutes of fame seemed to be fading, she revealed her true identity in hopes of climbing back to relevance again. This severely backfired, and her subscriber count dropped as death threats flooded her mailbox. Kagami's situation attracted the attention of a doppelgänger who offered her a chance to begin anew, as she had effectively ruined all her chances to become famous. The only thing the Kindred asked for in return was that Kagami promise to go out with a bang. Seeing no other way, she agreed and live-streamed her "suicide." The streaming turned out to be a huge success, as memorial videos and purchases of her songs skyrocketed.

By the time the public had moved on from their loss, Kagami had moved on from her life as a human and was busy taking on new roles whenever it suited her. She's hooked to internet fame and prefers to target people who are currently enjoying their time in the spotlight. When she feels like she's had enough of pretending to be them, she wrecks their careers permanently.

Secret Desire

She stumbled across her hidden desire for the first time when feeding on a woman who was a perfect candidate to mimic: mediocre-looking and without ambition. The next thing she knew, memories of a small child — her child — flooded her mind. Evelyn. She released the woman so she could follow her home where it would be easier to access her blood. Two days later, when Kagami saw her daughter smile at the dinner table, she made up her mind. Her Requiem's purpose was being a good mother for Evelyn and ensuring that Brad, the cheating bastard, lost shared custody.

Though happy, Kagami's illusion of having a loving family was short-lived. One mistake. One fatal error was all it took for her dream to shatter. How was she supposed to know that Evelyn was deathly allergic to peanuts?

Clan/Bloodline: Ventrue/Vardyvle

Covenant: The Carthian Movement

Mask: Spy

Dirge: Nurturer

Desire: Fame, explicitly being famous on the internet.

Secret desire: Motherhood

Touchstone: Adopted daughter, Maria

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer (Social Media) 3, Crafts 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 3, Stealth (Shadowing) 2

Social Skills: Expression (Music) 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Cacophony Savvy 1, Status (Social Media) 3, Sympathetic, Taste, Trained Observer 3

Disciplines: Dominate 2, Protean 2, Obfuscate 1

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 7

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 5

Defense: 5

New Mechanics

The Open and Hidden Desire

All Vardvyle have a dream that they actively chased in life. Each also harbors a secret desire that they don't know about. It lurks underneath the surface, only revealing itself after the blood of their better half has landed on the Vardvyle's tongue. A Vardvyle's secret desire is something that the Kindred can never have, leaving them to forever covet it. The only way to even come close is to pretend to be the people who have managed to attain their dream.

Whenever a Vardvyle feeds from a victim that fulfills the open or hidden desire, the vampire risks succumbing to the bloodline Bane if they have it.

Shapeshifting (Protean ••, Obfuscate •)

The Vardvyle's famed tool of their success is their unique capability to change part of their appearance to match the victim whose blood they still carry in their system. It gets them into as much trouble as it helps them, but it never fails to serve its function. Especially when breaking and entering or seducing that special someone.

Cost: 1 Vitae per feature copied

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: 1 Night

The Kindred can copy one small feature (e.g., facial features, hair color, birthmarks, voice, etc.) from a victim from whom they've fed. Each Vitae spent when activating the devotion allows the vampire to alter an additional feature.

The Vardvyle cannot change their size to become taller or smaller to match the look of the victim. If they attempt to recreate or modify a body part which they don't have, they can make it appear as if they have the organ. However, they cannot use it. After one night, the effect fades, and the vampire looks like her usual self.

The Vardvyle does not immediately know how to act or talk like the person she is mimicking, and anyone who knows the person well will suspect there is something wrong. They might not know they are dealing with a doppelgänger, but the Vardvyle suffers -2 to Social rolls against people with close ties to the victim.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Vilseduire

*"Stare at something hideous long enough, and you'll find its beauty.
Of course, the opposite's also true."*

— Javier Estrada, Vilseduire Slumlord

Something beckons to you from across the room. It hides in a shadowy corner. All you can see are smiling lips and the finger that curls, wrapping around your mind, your heart, drawing you closer. The world falls away as you stumble over, your focus shrinking to the size of a pinprick. The smile. The finger. The lipstick is the same exact shade as the polish, a deep, vibrant purple. You think of venom. You think of royalty. You think of bruises.

You awaken the next day, in the club from last night. The grandeur is gone, and the splendor. It's not a club; it isn't even a dive. It's a filthy room in a filthy house, filled with filthy, sleeping people. There's vomit on your clothes, on the floor, mixing with spilled drinks and piss into a nascent, filmy coating that stretches wall to wall.

There's a message on your phone, received hours ago. You don't recognize the name. There's no photo of a face, but a shoulder draped in purple velvet. You know without thinking you will accept the invitation you read.

The Vilseduire force mortals and Kindred alike to face the worst in themselves. While the Nosferatu revel in the worst of things, they do so for the discomfort it inspires in others. While the Daeva enrapture their prey and engage in all manner of indulgence in search of meaning, their efforts yield only shallow emotions while encouraging the vices of everyone around them. Somewhere, somehow, the two lines came together, and the Vilseduire were born. Some speculate the interference of the Ordo Dracul, attempting to breed childer of clans beside their own; others say a ghoul of one clan was embraced by the other; still more murmur of revenants raised by Daeva blood, or posthumous Embraces tainted by too much time gone by. If any of them know the true story, they aren't telling. They only spin more lies of the worst kind, seeming to desire to outdo each other with gruesome details. Each reimagining or retelling grows more horrific, and even more enrapturing for it. Neither clan wishes to claim them as their own, but childer from either have the potential to join their ranks. It's only the most ruthless and rapturous among them that are deemed worthy. Of course, as nothing is taboo to the Vilseduire, several Kindred too impatient to wait to join the bloodline have taken matters into their own hands via diablerie.

Why you want to be us

What better way to command the masses than to be something no one can force themselves to look away from? Walking destruction in slow motion, you guide horrors that attract others with sick devotion. You take the irresistible and add an undercurrent of the repulsive, knowing full well your followers will be unable to turn away. You are the train wreck that transfixes watchers with horror and breathless excitement. You are the scintillating leader whose devotees follow every murderous, sadistic command for the chance to glimpse your smile. Nothing you can do will ever be too much; they will love you, always, with tears streaming from their unblinking eyes.

Why you should fear us

Stare into the eyes of insanity and you'll find you can't blink. There is no turning the other cheek to the Vilseduire, no brushing them under the rug. You go screaming, eyes open wide, into madness, and you enjoy every moment, whether you like it or not. All the while, the Vilseduire pull your strings, and despite knowing you are but a tool in their arsenal, you come back time and time again. If you find it repulsive, they will force you into it one way or another; the stick is brutal, but the carrot always enough to draw seduce you back again.

Why we should fear ourselves

The Kindred are bloodthirsty in the most literal ways, true, but even the worst among them have their limits. Not true for the Vilseduire. There is no depravity they will not entertain, no line they will not cross, nothing they will not sacrifice to see their goals achieved. The ends will always justify the means. The problem is when others don't see it that way. A Vilseduire struggles to connect to others around herself, and even those who prostrate themselves at her feet sicken her after a time. When everything is expendable, what has meaning?

Bloodline Origins

- They told the story of the gorgons, painting them as hideous and wretched, indiscriminately turning any who gaze upon

them
to stone.
They must
tell these stories.

Telling the truth is too painful: the three sisters, unmatched in their grace and beauty, are everything you desire them to be, and their power enough to persist after death. It isn't their serpentine locks and steely gaze that turn you to stone. It's the truth they speak. They gladly answer any question you ask of them. It's the poison in their smiles and the venom in their words that freeze you on the spot, turning your mind inward, to the nightmares you never imagined. Smiling sweetly, giving you everything you asked for, they take your world away with every word. You wanted this, they whisper, walking through a garden of bodies frozen in place. You wanted to know the truth.

- The greatest among them was the famous Marquis. Not the first, no, but the farthest reaching, doling out pleasure and even more pain. It became a movement, something they named after him, to give with one hand and take with the other. Flout God, punish the body, revel in the pain. Take the ugly and make it beautiful, raise it above what it ever thought it could be. They will only talk about the taboo when it crosses to scandal; why not put it on display for all to see? In time, they won't be able to look away, drawn like moths

to a flame. It will destroy them in the end. It has hurt them before, and it will hurt them again, but they return to it nonetheless. Nothing will ever be as sweet as its agony. Nothing will ever make them feel so complete as when it swallows them whole.

- Sailors warn anyone traveling out to sea not to listen to the voices that sing from the rocks. They promise whatever you desire and invite you to leave what you know in exchange for paradise. They say something different to everyone, promising things that live in deepest recesses of the mind. Everyone knows someone who has heeded their call, jumping overboard in the middle of the day or the dead of night, determined to reach the phantoms that call to them. They vanish into the

sea, to be mourned by their shipmates. When they wash up on shore, waterlogged, swollen, and disoriented, they hunger for things more deeply than they can say. They wander the coast, shambling along and mumbling to themselves, telling and retelling their tale. They beg anyone they meet to fulfill them again the way they once knew. When their companion fails to deliver the way their ancient masters had, a new body washes up on shore in the morning. The cycle begins anew.

Parent Clan: Daeva or Nosferatu

Nickname: Tempters, Enablers, Devils

Bloodline Bane (The Ablative Curse): The Vilseduire struggle to keep up with the times. They know they have decades, if not centuries, to enact their plans, and mortals are little more than pawns. They shrug off attachments to their old life like ill-fitting clothes, embracing their new selves with malicious abandon. The Vilseduire may never have more than one attached

Touchstone. Additionally, Vilseduire treat all breaking points as though they occurred at half their normal Humanity, rounded down. What would be a Humanity 5 breaking point for most Kindred would therefore be a Humanity 2 breaking point for those suffering the Ablative Curse.

Favored Attributes: Manipulation or Composure
Disciplines: Majesty, Nightmare, Obfuscate, Resilience

In the Covenants

Both familiar and alien, the Enablers can blend in with most covenants without revealing anything unusual about themselves. Prone to fits of passion fueled by boundless curiosity and constrained by little in the way of a moral compass, the Devils push the boundaries of any organization they come in contact with.

Carthian Movement: The Carthian Movement champions a voice for every vampire, a system in which everyone is equal and can be heard. Amongst even the fringes of the Movement, the Vilseduire are considered extreme; when they join the Movement, they call for complete and utter anarchy. Their ability to sway another and cause her to fight for things that actively harm her makes them particularly dangerous when joined with Carthian zeal. They are the vocal minority swaying the group as best they can, shouting down sensible suggestions in favor of immediate, often violent, action. Why petition the rulers when you can put fire to their homes? Why march when you can riot?

Circle of the Crone: Few push the limits of their condition and their abilities like the Devils that join the Mother's Army. Without any qualms when it comes to sacrifice and their ability to draw followers like moths to a flame, the Vilseduire experiment with the rituals the Acolytes teach. They amass massive cult followings of mortals interested in primal spirituality, inviting their devotees to let loose any restraint while they worship. If they hate themselves in the morning, all the better; they'll still be back for the next meeting. Using others as fuels for their Crúac rituals, the Madmen orchestrate massive, bloody rites, pushing their own limits as well as that of the magic itself. Should they fail, they can just try again with a new group.

Lancea et Sanctum: The Vilseduire have no love for the Lancea et Sanctum, and the Sanctified return the sentiment. The two frequently clash whenever they occupy the same city; the Vilseduire love nothing more than to provoke the congress, questioning their devotions, poking holes in their faith, and poaching members of the laity. The most insidious pose as leaders within the church, commanding followers to carry out tasks, only revealing their treachery as things start to unravel.

Invictus: The Vilseduire do well as members of the Invictus. Their willingness to break any bond and sacrifice anything to achieve their goals drives them to the top of any organization they choose to join. And their inexorable presence earns them loyalty, even if it isn't deserved. Their undoing within the Conspiracy is their lack of focus. Too often, the Vilseduire get bored with the trappings and bureaucracy that make up the core of the Invictus. They prefer to work from the outside, destroying the anthill to watch the ants scatter, wielding a magnifying glass with incomparable glee.

Ordo Dracul: Much like those who join the Circle of the Crone, the Vilseduire push the boundaries of possibility when they join the Ordo Dracul. Their experiments don't adhere to any ethical or moral standards; they have been known to Embrace swathes of childer in order to experiment on other Kindred, tinkering with the peculiarities of blood bonds and the cumulative effects of diablerie. They push to develop new Coils, exposing their subjects to increasingly specific and cruel banes in order to combat them. No one is safe from the ministrations of a Defiant Vilseduire; even other Dragons have realized too late that their laboratories are nothing more than one giant experiment, engineered and overseen by one of their own.

Rumors

"Have you noticed how the clergy have been on edge lately? Something's wrong. They aren't saying anything, of course, but it doesn't take a genius to notice. I overheard them muttering to each other – some mission or other that none of them seemed to know about. I don't think they're used to being the ones getting tested."

Having spent their Requiem within the church but disenchanted with the notion of a higher power, a small group of Vilseduire have made it their duty to remove the wool from the eyes of their congress. Remaining outwardly faithful, they've begun to quietly sow the seeds of discord and doubt among the laity. They know that simply proclaiming the words of the clergy to be false won't change any minds, and would likely galvanize the faithful into an even stronger group. Their goal is instead to undermine the words of the leaders, revealing those that pose as shepherds as the wolves they really are.

"It's just... strange that they're here. In the VIP section. And we're locked out. They look like cadavers. They live in that abandoned factory. Not like, in a grunge-chic, renovated, upscale way. It's an abandoned warehouse with broken windows, rusty pipes, and no self-respect. They have their territory, and this is ours, and if she doesn't have the spine to kick them out, I say we send her out with them."

The Nosferatu and the Daeva have a contentious relationship in the city, but things seem to be shifting as of late. While the two clans aren't sure what to make of the new developments, leaders within each seem quite content to bury the centuries-old hatchet. The Vilseduire are a new development here, a mystery of what seems to be blood bonds and Embraces gone wrong; rather than destroy the offending childer, the leaders of the clans are willing to embrace the anomaly. Less accepting are those who don't have the context to grasp the sudden mending of fences, and the other clans who see the sudden and strange alliance of two old enemies as highly suspicious. All parties must tread carefully moving forward, lest they spark a territorial conflict.

"It's all over the internet. Videos, blogs, tweets – but we can't find who's starting it. It's someone different in every video, but they're showing up more and more. There's even ghouls in on it, breaching

the Masquerade in the middle of the day. What are we supposed to do about that? We can't even hear about it until hours after the fact. What in the hell is going on?"

Nothing is sacred to the Madmen, not even the Masquerade. It's not only the Kindred that need to confront their worst nightmares; mortals must learn as well. What else is so perfect an example of something so horrible and magnetic as the perfection of the human form? They deserve to know, the Vilseduire think, about the monsters that go bump in the night. They're not in your closet; they're not under your bed. They walk alongside you on the street. They work with you at your job. They look just like you. Isn't that the worst part?

The scramble it provokes within the All Night Society when the curtains drop is just the icing on the cake. It's two birds with one stone: unmasking a monster with a human face makes everyone afraid.

Jimmy Armstrong

"No gods. No kings. Just blood."

Once a rebellious punk railing against leaders he found oppressive, Jimmy's passion for his beliefs and irreverent attitude caught the eye of several younger Daeva. One, looking for a way to push back against her sire, fixated on him, growing first addicted and then dependent. Embraced not long after, Jimmy found his community within the All Night Society, becoming a fixture of the Carthian Movement. Viewing himself as an outsider in both worlds — no longer human, and disavowed by the grandsire who refused to teach him what his sire could not — he grew jaded with both communities. When his sire and old friends both moved on, his habits grew more and more destructive, catching the attention of another vampire. His newfound mentor welcomed him into the ranks of the Vilseduire.

Having moved from cynical to nihilistic, the ways of the Enablers gave Jimmy a newfound sense of purpose. The world around him, with all its pointless constructs and social structures, was nothing but a farce. Tearing down institutions one by one to highlight just how meaningless they really were became the center of his being. Championing anarchy within the Carthian Movement and pushing his mortal followers to increasingly dangerous methods, he sits atop a throne made entirely of lies. He waits for someone to turn against him, questioning the authority he wields. Any who do will earn

his Embrace, but first they must see the truth of the world as he does. Asking the right questions and making the right demands, following his trail of breadcrumbs to their proper conclusion, is only the first step. Anyone can say the world is a wreck, and that they're tired of the way things are. It's what they plan to do about it that he's interested in.

Clan/Bloodline: Daeva/Vilseduire

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Mask: Rebel

Dirge: Idealist

Touchstone: Reverse Utopia - band

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Politics 4 (Rebellion)

Physical Skills: Brawl 2 (Mosh Pit), Drive 1, Larceny 1

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 5 (Music), Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Cacophony Savvy 2, Carthian Pull, Carthian Movement Status 3, City Status 1, Fame (Bass player, Reverse Utopia) 1, Plausible Deniability

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Majesty 5, Nightmare 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 3

Devotions: Cross Contamination, Cult of Personality, Enfeebling Aura, The Wish

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 10

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3 (Active Defense 5)

Armor: 1/0, torso (Battle vest)



Bailey's night had gone from bad to worse with the flash of a single pair of wings.

One Strix was enough. Letting it ride her prize ghoul was no trouble at all — Anabeth wouldn't mind, not really, not once Bailey had a chance to explain. For all her studies, Anabeth was a pliable soul, just wanting to be liked and respected. Academia hadn't given her that chance, so Bailey satisfied her instead. Anyway, being a spirit horse for a Strix was easier for a human, and the old Gangrel had told the bird it could take its payment any way it wanted from Declan, so *she'd* be fine, at least.

But this?

She had not bargained for this.

Frowning and narrowing her eyes, Bailey padded to the window, just to be sure. If there were more, she needed to be the first to know.

One minute went by. Then two. Then five. She felt a clock ticking within her, her teeth on edge. It wasn't until she was ready to give up that the shadow swooped by again.

Then another.

So, there were three of them.

Bailey flung open the window over the stormy city night. The shadows swooped towards her, a cloud of despair, hooting softly in unison. Six Striges, not three, landed on her windowsill.

"Fuck," she said blankly.

"Fuck," repeated one of the Striges.

"Which one of you was with Anabeth?"

"Not I."

"Not I," chorused the rest of the Striges. One of them was preening. She wondered, wildly for a moment, if they would shit on her windowsill like normal birds. An inverted cartoon princess, talking with her owls from hell.

"Come on, one of you has to have gone after that cocksucker Declan," she said helplessly.

"No, but we know who-o-o did," intoned the Strix on the left end of the line. *Not a line*, she thought, *a parliament. A parliament of Striges.*

"Oh. Then you're just passing through?" Ask a stupid question...

"We're here until our wingleader comes back," said another Strix. "After that, who knows?"

"Who knows," agreed the parliament.

"So, you'll be leaving, then," Bailey wheedled, feeling less and less confident in her choices by the moment.

"Who knows," said the parliament, "who knows."

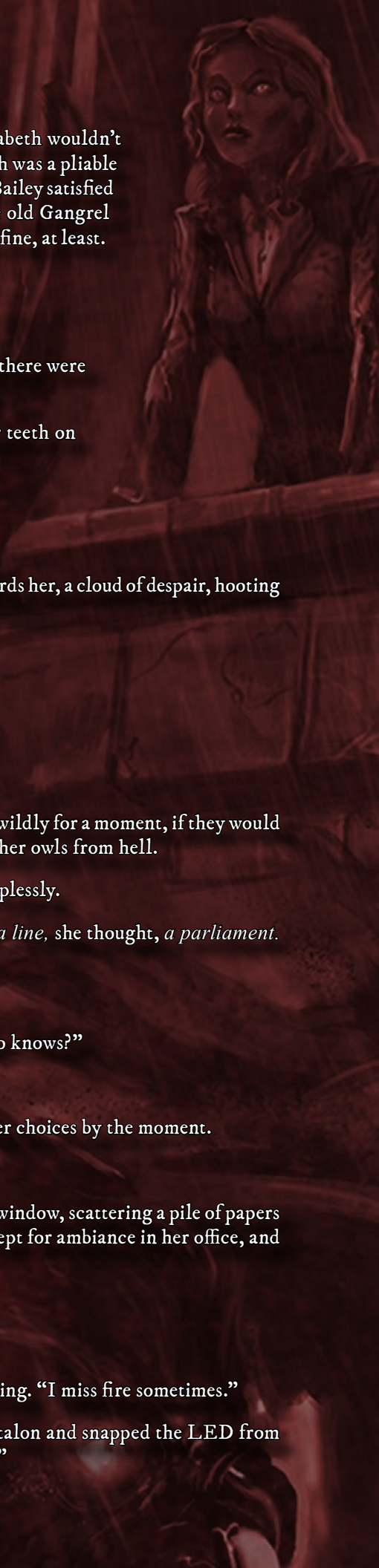
One Strix, the one on the left, carelessly hopped down onto the end table under the window, scattering a pile of papers Bailey had stacked. It wandered over to her candle, the one with the fake flame she kept for ambiance in her office, and tilted its head, examining the LED.

"This won't protect you, you know."

"Won't protect you," agreed the parliament.

"I know. I like how it looks," Bailey said, grasping for anything to keep them talking. "I miss fire sometimes."

"Fire is a crutch," said the one looking at the candle. It reached out one shadowy talon and snapped the LED from the top of the candle. The device crackled, then died. "Fire is life. Life is unworthy."



chapter two those who are us

Belial's Brood

"Every instinct will scream for you to turn away. To survive as you are today. Ignore that instinct. That is your old life clinging to the known. Step into that scream and realize what it means to actually live."

— Boro, Alpha of the Promised Hunt

I hear the first, distant wails of police sirens through the bullet holes that perforate the windows around me. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth with a gritty paste of blood and ash. On the floor, a man with hardened hazel eyes stares at me. I'm crushing his throat with my boot.

"It's not fair." He grips my slender ankle in a useless attempt to push me off. "It's not right."

"Does the wolf wonder if she is being fair to the sheep she slaughters? Does the fire consider what is right as it purifies the forest?" I see his anger. The righteous twist of his features. The clench of his jaw. All the resentment that comes from flagellating himself with the whip of humanity. That used to be me.

Pathetic.

"You bitch." He bares his cute, little fangs. "Do what you came here to do or get out of my house."

A month prior, his Invictus trio had stumbled into my city. A Brood city. Whether drunk on delusions of power or bad ideas, they set their sights on taming it. No one will tame me.

For weeks, I stalked them. I followed them from their haven to their clubs and back again. Investigated their business ventures. Read their mail. Listened to their conversations. Watched them while they slept.

And then I took them one by one.

The first fell with ease. A sloppy neonate who thought his immortality was a shield. I chased him through the warehouse district before severing his head and delivering it by hand

to their doorstep. I prefer a challenge, and this should have given them a head start on survival. But they were stubborn.

The second tried to avenge the first, following me into a darkened alley and straight into my trap. I broke her hands and feet before carving out her heart with my stiletto nails. I had them painted Violent Violet just for the occasion.

The third and final closed his brick haven around him like a scared, little pig. But the big, bad wolf has nothing on me.

"You don't fear death?" I shift my weight to make him squirm under my boot.

He obliges with an indignant wiggle. "I'm already dead. So finish it, if you can."

"If I can?" The challenge sends a thrill up my thighs. I haven't felt this hot in weeks. "You want to join your friends in the afterlife?"

"Those weren't my friends. We just shared a bed. And a roof. And a sire."

I tilt my head. "Will your sire mourn you? Will anyone?"

"Why would they? Sentiment is weakness. There's no family. No friends. It's kill or be killed. We're all alone in this world." The Beast within him howls at me in a language only I can hear. It declares its power, demanding an opportunity to destroy me.

Low in my abdomen surprise tickles me. Given how pitifully his broodmates died, it's intriguing to have one of them cry for a fight. I lean in, bringing my Beast within sniffing distance

of his. "You're more right than you realize. There are no friends. No family. There's no guilt or shame or regret. Those are illusions. They cage us. Shackle us to anger and suffering. But there's another way. For the Beast within you doesn't feel doubt or pity. It doesn't know jealousy or hatred, or any vice created by man. The Beast only knows survival. I look down at you and see a scared and outraged man, but the Beast within you is staring back at me in defiance. It wants to hunt me, fuck me, kill me, and eat me and that is something worth saving. Something real and entirely unapologetic. If you like, and if you dare, I'll show you what it means to be free."

I extend my bloody hand and wait for him to claim it.

You want to join Belial's Brood because

You believe in freedom. You have passed through the looking glass, survived the journey, and given the Beast a big, sloppy kiss. You have surrendered your mortal self and evolved into something primal. Where once a wall separated man from Beast, now the two exist in harmony, and you walk, hunt, and kill with purpose, unshackled by conscience.

The big picture

Belial's Brood are less of a covenant and more of a state of mind. Those who call themselves Brood, at one point or another, had been lost to the Beast. With their humanity stripped, they had become draugr — mindless predators fueled by pure instinct and unable to control their urges. While the vast majority do not survive this state, a precious few evolve in their wild state, which is when they become something altogether different.

Many Kindred have learned how to ride the wave. They know how to grab the Beast by the reins and wield its monstrous power. Claimed,

however, are the unshackled Beast which has learned to ride the man. In this permanent hybrid state, the Beast and the mortal exist synergistically.

The Brood is able to speak, reason, and deceive, mimicking the skills of a human.

But the ethics or morality of humanity is literally only skin deep. The body of the person is only sheep's clothing worn by a predator. A Brood is a vampire that has cast aside their Masks, Dirges, and Touchstones, and fully embraced the Bestial Triad.

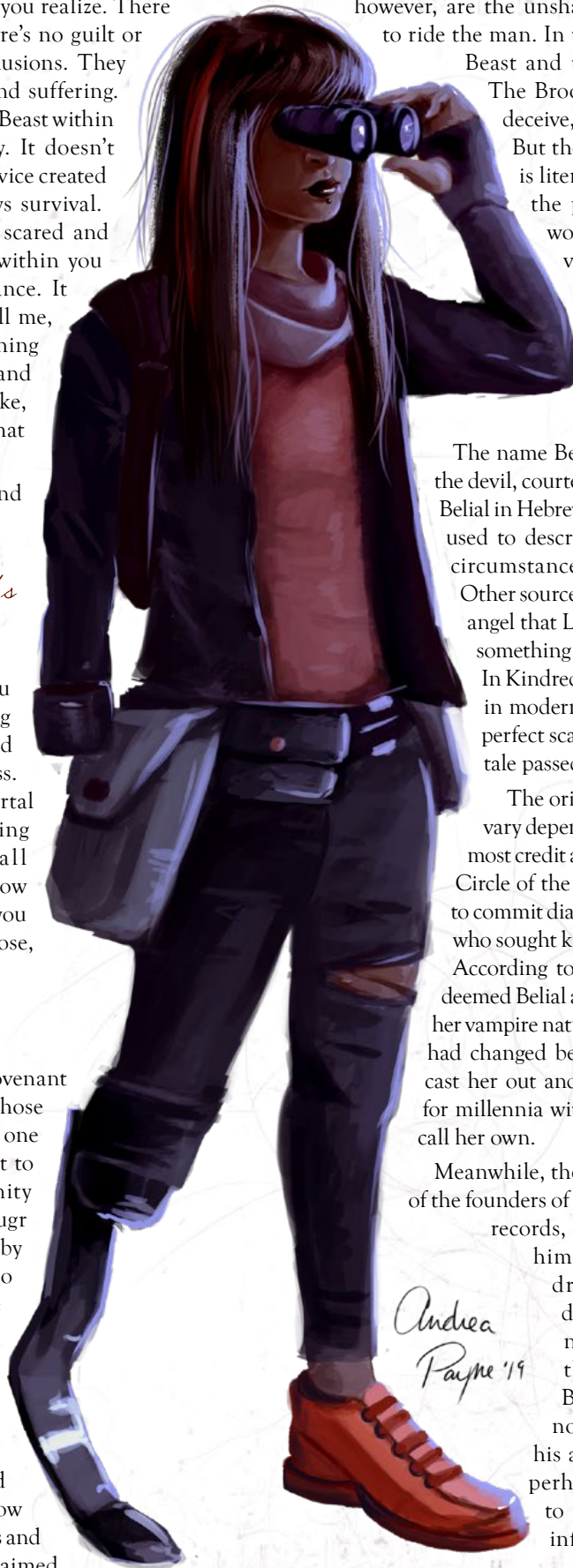
Where we came from

The name Belial is most often associated with the devil, courtesy of Hebrew and Christian texts. Belial in Hebrew means "worthless," and has been used to describe nefarious people, calamitous circumstances, and even the devil himself. Other sources picture Belial as a separate fallen angel that Lucifer's service has corrupted into something as malignant as they are malicious. In Kindred society, the Sons of Belial, known in modern nights as Belial's Brood, are the perfect scapegoat and a common cautionary tale passed down from sire to childe.

The origins of how the Brood came to be vary depending on who tells the tale, though most credit a single Kindred named Belial. The Circle of the Crone believe Belial was the first to commit diablerie, the proverbial Kindred Eve, who sought knowledge in the drinking of souls. According to Crone legend, early pagan cults deemed Belial an unhinged witch after perverting her vampire nature. These judges declared that she had changed beyond what was acceptable. They cast her out and forced her to wander the earth for millennia with no home, friends, or family to call her own.

Meanwhile, the Invictus say that Belial was one of the founders of the Camarilla. According to their records, his fellow Invictus assassinated him for building a secret army of draugr and for threatening to declare himself emperor if they did not concede to his wishes. While they take credit for destroying Belial, they insist that there was no way to determine how large his army of draugr had become and perhaps some fled before burning to ash. It is via these few that the infection of Belial has spread.

*Andrea
Payne '19*



The Lancea et Sanctum, on the other hand, claim a simpler theory. They believe that Belial was a Sanctified priestess during the second century after Christ who was possessed by a wild demon of gluttony. They, too, allege to have destroyed her despite the assertions of the Invictus. As proof, they present a silver urn filled with ash, though they do not allow anyone outside the Sanctum to study it.

The Ordo Dracul hypothesize that Belial was a prized protégé of Dracula with a keen understanding of the Beast. They state it was Belial's experiments that led the Order to discover the ability to ride the wave. Believing that Dracula had taken credit for stolen work, Belial rejected him as his mentor and exiled himself from Kindred society. While existing in exile, Belial perverted the lessons of the coils and used them to create the Triadic Evolution. The Ordo Dracul has since made a policy of capturing instead of destroying members of Belial's Brood for further investigation and experimentation. A number of Ordo Dracul have died as a result, which continues to be a point of contention within the covenant.

Finally, the Carthian Movement has no origin story for the Brood, but they do have various opinions regarding them. Some have formed intrepid hunting clubs devoted entirely to the eradication of the Claimed. Others, who have never encountered one of Belial's Brood, maintain that they are merely an urban legend created by the Invictus. They insist that the stories are a cover for Invictus assassins and mercenaries to murder members of the Movement.

Irrespective of covenant affiliation, a few of the more paranoid lore masters insist that Belial continues to roam the Earth, controlling those who have taken up the philosophy through the language of the Beast. They insist that until someone silences Belial's Beast, there will always be Brood with which to contend. Regardless of what is and is not the truth to Belial's origins, they first began to gather in small numbers sometime shortly after the fall of the Camarilla and have existed as a pervasive threat — real or imagined — to Kindred society ever since.

Our practices

Members of Belial's Brood can think, reason, and decide a course of action. They can cover their tracks, blend in with society, and uphold the Masquerade when they must, because all Claimed have a talent for survival. Most often, this is expressed through the Bestial Triad: through destroying threats, through instant gratification, and through control and dominance. In this regard, most Brood practice some form of diablerie as Amaranth remains the ultimate expression of dominance among Kindred. Many Brood adhere to the notion of survival of the fittest and devour the souls of weaker Kindred as mercy killings.

Very few Kindred actively seek to become Claimed, but many are drawn to them by circumstance. As a Kindred experiences loss, violence, or trauma, and as they slide further

down the bestial rabbit hole — losing more and more of their humanity — many find reasons and means to expedite the process. Many choose to end their lives before becoming draugr. Others, believing that redemption is impossible but not wanting to exist as draugr, actively chase the legends and philosophies of the Brood in a desperate attempt to survive with their psyche intact. The Beast roars in their ears, yearning for freedom, until one day the Kindred gives in and the draugr is unleashed. All Brood were once draugr, but not all draugr become Brood. Most don't, in fact. Only when a powerful enough Beast takes hold of the conscious, does the draugr evolve in a process the Brood call the Claiming.

There is some debate within Kindred society if the Claiming is a forced process or an emerging evolutionary step within all Kindred. For many, this is a terrifying prospect because it suggests the Beast can take over even the most noble and pious of Kindred. And for those who believe Belial still exists, it means a single voice can corrupt Kindred society. Those who adhere to the latter suggest that Belial, whatever their gender or origin, is forcing a dark vision and twisted philosophy upon the most vulnerable within Kindred society.

Beyond the Claiming, Brood do not often attempt to embrace another because when they do the results are always disastrous. The Brood embraces either fail or result in mindless draugr. Indeed, Invictus sires tell their childer of what occurred during the nights of the Camarilla wherein Belial, the First Brood, attempted to embrace an army of ghouls only to accidentally create an army of draugr.

Those who seek to become Claimed follow a dangerous path. This path becomes even more treacherous once the Claiming is successful, as all of Kindred society universally despises the Brood. The Brood claim this hate comes from those who fear what they do not understand. Nevertheless, they do what they must to survive and sometimes congregate with others of like mind. These groups are called clutches. An Apex commands each clutch. Apexes usually have the highest Blood Potency, and they have proven their ability to both kill as well as command. While there are no formal customs or codified written laws that govern Claimed society, all follow three very simple precepts:

- **Bow to the Strong.** Whenever two Brood disagree over important courses of action, a retelling of events, or even petty things like who gets to ride shotgun, the weaker acquiesces to the stronger.
- **Respect the Challenge.** Any Brood may challenge an Apex for leadership of the clutch. That challenge cannot be ignored. Challenges are always to the death once declared. The only requirement is that no one beyond the two challengers can be involved, assist, or otherwise affect the outcome. Not only is outside tampering easily discovered through the language of the Beast, any attempt to rig the challenge by someone not involved directly is foolish when strength is what ensures survival. As a result, when they discover the saboteur, they are hunted.

- **Honor the Hunt.** Mortals are too easy of a challenge, and thus Kindred or their own people make standard targets for Brood hunts. Because of their primal desire to hunt and kill, no Brood can refuse a call to hunt.

Nicknames: The Brood, the Claimed, the Worthless (derogatory)

When we are in power

Brood-controlled cities are extremely rare. They exist only when a Brood clutch has wiped out all other Kindred presence. Once secure, the Claimed reinforce either their position or branch out, seeking to remove any potential threats from neighboring areas. A Brood city is one that exists via survival of the fittest. They are chaotic domains, wrought with violence, hedonism, and conflict.

When we are in trouble

This is, by and large, the default position for most Claimed. Most Brood live solitary lives separate from others of their kind. They exist on the fringes of society, having carved out small, private kingdoms to rule. The more sporting types actively hunt Kindred either in the open or via infiltration. And sometimes, on a long-enough timeline, Brood occasionally find each other forming clutches that operate out of collective survival. Seeing an active threat, the Brood mobilize, using the skills and resources at their disposal to carve out and maintain their territory.

Triadic Evolution

After the Claiming, all Brood lose their Masks, Dirges, and Touchstones. Brood are still susceptible to frenzy but no longer need to spend Willpower when attempting to Ride the Wave. Finally, Brood gain one permanent Condition; they may choose from Bestial, Competitive, or Wanton (see **Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** pp. 301-307).

The Brood are also able to manifest the Beast in new and advantageous ways, known collectively as Triadic Evolution. Like Cruac Sorcery or Theban Curses, Triadic Evolution is a Ritual Discipline. It allows the vampire to manipulate her Beast through sheer force of will, drawing on the Triad to create powers and abilities unique to the covenant. All Brood can learn Triadic Evolution without a teacher but cannot teach others. Triadic Evolution has a rating system like any other Discipline but doesn't have any useful effects by itself. All the Discipline does is allow the vampire to access Manifestations. Characters may buy Manifestations separately from the Ritual Discipline for two Experiences each. Every dot of Triadic Evolution (including the first) also comes with a "free" Manifestation. Manifestations cost one Willpower Point to mentally prepare and execute.

Dice Pool: Stamina + Occult + Triadic Evolution

Action: Extended. You may roll as many times as the unmodified dice pool. The base time per roll is half an hour, reduced to 15 minutes if the character has more dots in Triadic Evolution than the dot rating of the Manifestation being cast. Brood must complete the Manifestation in one attempt and do not receive any bonus for attempting a Manifestation if already failed with a near miss. Manifestations automatically fail if interrupted. Brood may not use Defense while casting.

Success: The Manifestation accumulates successes. If she meets the target number of successes, the Manifestation goes into effect immediately.

Exceptional Success: The character makes great strides in achieving the Manifestation. The player decides which of the following effects takes place in addition to accumulating successes.

- Reduce the target number of successes by her dots in Triadic Evolution.
- **Apply the Steadfast Condition when the Manifestation succeeds.**
- Reduce the time per roll to 15 minutes (or to five minutes if she has more dots in the Discipline than the rating of the Manifestation).

Failure: The vampire is having difficulty and accumulates no successes. The player decides whether to abandon the Manifestation entirely or to continue. If the Brood continues, she gains the Stumbled Condition.

Dramatic Failure: The Manifestation completely fails. The character gains the Distracted Condition. The next Manifestation attempted by the vampire suffers a -2 dice penalty.

When she meets the target number of successes, the Manifestation goes into effect immediately.

Suggested Modifiers

+1 to +3	Power is turned on or applies to a vampire with whom the Brood already has blood sympathy.
0	The Brood is unaffected by threats or distractions.
-1 to -3	The Brood is rushed or distracted. The penalty is cumulative with multiple distractions.

Defending Against Manifestations

Manifestations note in their descriptions if they are Contested or Resisted, along with the dice pool involved. Contesting a roll is reflexive. Furthermore, via a sensation much like blood sympathy, vampires are always aware when someone uses a Manifestation on them – their Beasts react

to the Brood's presence from the moment the Manifestation is executed, regardless if it succeeds. This applies even to vampires in daysleep or torpor, although they can't do anything about it until they wake. Note that vampires don't know what a Manifestation is doing, only that one is taking place. Conscious victims may spend Willpower Points to increase their dice pool to Contest by +3, or to add a +2 bonus to Resistance. Frenzying increases a victim's dice pool or Resistance as though she spent Willpower without requiring the expenditure.

Manifestations

The following Manifestations are examples of those available to members of Belial's Brood.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM •

Target number of successes: 5

The Brood may add her level of Triadic Evolution to any mundane Expression, Persuasion, or Socialize challenge. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

DON'T LOOK IT IN THE EYE •

Target number of successes: 5

The Claimed may add his level of Triadic Evolution to any mundane Animal Ken, Intimidation, or Streetwise challenge. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

CAMOUFLAGE ••

Target number of successes: 6

So long as the Brood stands perfectly still and takes no action, she blends into her surroundings and cannot be seen. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

COVER YOUR TRACKS ••

Target number of successes: 5

The Claimed can mask his own scent for a number of nights equal to his level of Triadic Evolution.

MERELY A FLESH WOUND ••

Target number of successes: 6

The Brood may ignore wound penalties for a number of scenes equal to her level of Triadic Evolution.

SPRINT ••

Target number of successes: 6

The vampire may add his level of Triadic Evolution to his running speed or to any non-combative physical maneuver that uses the Athletics Skill. This Manifestation may not be added to the Brood's Defense. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

ACIDIC BLOOD ...

Target number of successes: 7

The Brood transforms her blood into acid. Vampires and Strix drinking from her suffer one point of lethal damage per Vitae taken and gain no nourishment from it. Mortals and ghouls drinking from the Brood suffer two points of lethal damage. Blood is only venomous as long as it's in the Brood's system, and the effect ends at the next sunrise.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT ...

Target number of successes: 7

For the next hour, the Claimed cannot be surprised. Actions initiated against him function as normal.

PERFECT AMBUSH ...

Target number of successes: 7

The Claimed may add her level of Triadic Evolution to their Dexterity + Stealth rolls for the purposes of determining surprise. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

TROPHY ...

Target number of successes: 7

Normally when a Kindred dies, the body crumbles into ash. With Trophy, the Brood can preserve any Size 1 body part from a Kindred for a number of years equal to his level of Triadic Evolution.

INSTINCTUAL CONVERSATION

Target number of successes: 8

Contested by: Composure + Blood Potency

The vampire can engage in line of sight telepathic communication with anyone who currently has a Bestial Condition. She can project her thoughts as images into the target's mind, and she is able to read and receive them in the same manner.

RIDING THE MAN

Target number of successes: 8

The character may add his level of Triadic Evolution to any one Intelligence or Wits roll. This Manifestation may not be added to his Defense. This Manifestation lasts for one hour.

SURVIVE

Target number of successes: 8

So long as the Brood takes no offensive action against anyone, she may add her level of Triadic Evolution to her Defense pool. This lasts for a number of scenes equal to her Triadic Evolution.

ENTER THE ZONE

Target number of successes: 10

The character may obtain all the benefits of having entered Frenzy without actually entering Frenzy. He becomes stronger, faster, and tougher. His Beast drives him to feats of terrifying physical prowess. Add his Blood Potency dots to any Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina rolls or resistances. Ignore any wound penalties he would suffer. He can grab and bite as a single instant action as he ravenously mauls his victim. Apply the successes on his Strength + Brawl roll to establish a grapple as lethal damage, and he takes an immediate point of Vitae from the victim. This Manifestation lasts for five scenes or one hour, whichever ends first.

HOUNDS TO THE HUNTERS

Target number of successes: 10

Contested by: Composure + Blood Potency

The Claimed can track the scent of a given target, regardless of condition or defensive countermeasures such as Obfuscate. Hounds to the Hunters does not trigger a Clash of Wills test, and the target must have been present in the area within 5 nights, which is equal to the Claimed's level of Triadic Evolution.

Sample Clutch: Promised Hunt

The clutch of the Promised Hunt personifies the modern Belial's Brood: small, mobile, and able to navigate the concrete jungles of the city. For a time, there were five Promised, led by an Apex named Boro. The old Gangrel was the veteran of various foreign wars who fought during his mortal days as well as his Kindred nights. Shortly after forming the clutch of the Promised Hunt, a name taken from some long-forgotten deity, they attacked the local praxis in force. They hunted and killed several court members, removing their heads and dumping the piles of ash onto the floor of the Elysium. They continued these hit-and-run attacks for months until the city, using its considerable resources, laid an ambush for them. Using the prince as bait, the Promised Hunt walked straight into a trap. The Kindred killed Boro while the other four barely escaped.

Reese, Ani, Faris, and Summers live independently now, carrying out their own personal agendas, but unite when called. This type of cell structure insulates them and provides some measure of protection. If one is discovered or captured, the other three cannot be compromised. They communicate in secret and code, and only meet when Reese, the new Apex, commands it. While the Promised recognize that the local Kindred population outnumbered them 10 to one, they also know that any good hunt requires patience and respect for one's prey.

Reese, Hunter of Kindred

"You'll wake up tomorrow, leave your haven, turn a corner, and fade to black as a .308 hollow-point round is fired from six hundred meters. It'll enter the base of your skull, shattering your third vertebrae. You'll hear a sharp pop, and be dead before you hit the ground, leaving nothing behind but a red mist. That...or you can tell me what I want to know."

Jennifer Reese was one of those brave souls who joined the military in the days and weeks after 9/11. A second lieutenant serving two tours in Afghanistan, she led supply convoys until she hit a pressure-plate IED and the following ambush almost took her right arm and leg. She recovered from her wounds but with compromised mobility; she never returned to active duty. The talents she learned on the battlefield, however, did manage to attract the attention of a local Mekhet assassin. Within a few years, he Embraced her.

She had been honored to serve her country. But after years of killing in her sire's name — most often to protect some piece of territory or clan asset — the young neonate grew resentful. Ennui took over, and with each life she took the Beast within

her grew. Bitter, resentful, and broken, by the time Reese's sire ordered her to kill a Claimed by the name of Boro, she could barely make the effort.

Nevertheless, she did as she was ordered, following the clues to an abandoned warehouse. When she entered the derelict building, Boro disarmed her with ease. And there, the two spoke with the Brood presenting Reese with a viable alternative to an unfulfilling existence. Boro recognized Reese as a predator still pretending to be human. And when the Brood offered to show the young neonate a way to live free of guilt or shame, Reese devoted herself to the philosophy. Her education concluded when the pair turned on Reese's sire. With his destruction, Reese was Claimed.

Since Boro's passing, Reese has lived a solitary life on the outskirts of the city. She is a cold and calculating hunter, patiently tracking the Kindred denizens of the city. She has spent nights watching from rooftops and alleyways, quietly compiling meticulous notes on every target. All this in preparation for the moment she finally kills those responsible for Boro's death and any who stand in her way.

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Belial's Brood

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 4 (Tracking), Medicine 2, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Drive 2, Firearms 4 (Sniper Rifles), Larceny 4, Stealth 4 (Urban), Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 2

Merits: Allies 3 (Private Security Firm), Anonymity 2, Contacts 3 (Police, Mercenary Corps, Press), Haven 3, Resources 2

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 5, Obfuscate 3, Resilience 3, Triadic Evolution 4

Manifestations: Don't Look It in the Eye, Camouflage, Fight or Flight, Survive

Health: 10

Willpower: 5

Blood Potency: 5

Humanity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 6

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 11)

Condition: Competitive

Ani, the Wounded Animal

"It's no fun killing something while it's standing still. So, you better start running."

Antigone and Eric Giovinazzo were twins born to hippie parents during the Summer of Love. They spent their youth in California compounds, Nevada reservations, and Montana cabins. They learned to live off the land, to self-sustain, and to give back to their communities. Ani and Eric were inseparable. When a car accident killed both of their parents, the two survived and remained together for as long as they continued to live.

The twins then came under the care of a distant uncle who, it turns out, was actually a Kindred, a Gangrel. The resourcefulness of the two struck him. After several years of tutelage, he Embraced the pair together. The trio functioned as a single coterie while protecting the interests of their clan for many decades. That was until mortal hunters killed their uncle, leaving Ani and Eric alone once again. As the twins avenged their sire, killing the hunters one by one over several years, the two transformed from a pair of liberal siblings into something darker. Through grief and revenge, the two fell into hedonism and despair, and with each new kill, their Beasts took greater hold over their hearts and minds.

If Boro had not found them, they would have become draugr, and likely died shortly after. But Boro, sensing the strength of their predatory instincts, attempted to guide them through the Claiming. Ani emerged as a Claimed and joined the clutch of the Promised Hunt. Eric did not. His Beast wasn't strong enough to climb out of his draugr state. Instead of destroying him, Boro let him run off into the wild. In less than a week's time, the local Kindred found and destroyed him during a patrol.

In the aftermath, loss or guilt didn't consume Ani, but she felt the absence nonetheless. They had taken away something that was hers. The two souls had grown up together and the two Beasts had hunted as one. But now, for the first time, Ani was alone. A wounded animal, and even more dangerous than before, the Ani of tonight is a wild creature spending more time on four legs than on two. She stalks the borders of the city, hunting and killing anything that comes within her orbit, and dreaming of vengeance on those who took her brother.

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Belial's Brood

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 4 (Hunting), Medicine 2, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 5 (Biting), Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4 (Forests)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 4, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Bloodhound, Claws of the Unholy, Contacts 2 (Park Services, Rangers), Haven 3, Herd 2, Riding the Wave Fighting Style 3, Swarm Form

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Protean 5, Resilience 3, Vigor 3, Triadic Evolution 3

Manifestations: Don't Look It in the Eye, Merely a Flesh Wound, Perfect Ambush

Health: 10

Willpower: 6

Blood Potency: 4

Humanity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 17

Initiative: 7

Defense: 7

Condition: Bestial

Faris, the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

"You wanna know if someone's lying? You keep asking them questions. A man who's lying will eventually change his story. But the man who tells the truth cannot change, however unlikely that story sounds. So, you wanna lie with impunity? Learn when to keep your mouth shut, and when to change the fucking subject."

The young Fred Faris survived his cutthroat education in Folsom State Prison and emerged years later as a legal adult with a new set of skills. While no great fighter, he had gained a talent for lying and deception, coupled with sleight-of-hand maneuvers that made him an able thief. Life on the outside was good, but his appetite for fast cars, gourmet food, and pricey companionship put him in tremendous debt. Debt that eventually attracted the attention of a certain Ventrue of the Carthian Movement. This Ventrue put Faris' skills to good use and, in time, rewarded him with the Embrace.

Unfortunately, Faris' appetites did not stop after becoming Kindred. Rather, they intensified. Faris soon found himself spending long hours and great effort disposing of bodies he created. Each death brought new scandal and scorn and, eventually, an outright blood hunt. He fled, and in the hope that the urban legends were true, he actively sought out a member of Belial's Brood. Eventually, he found Boro. The old Claimed had considered killing the gluttonous Carthian but saw in him talents on which he could capitalize. He gave Faris the choice. After surviving his Claiming, Faris went to live among the sheep of the city.

Faris has since infiltrated the prince's court. He gathers intelligence on the Kindred populace and feeds it to the clutch. He first reported to Boro, and then after his death, to Reese. Faris waits with patience he never had in life or

his Kindred unlife, building his infrastructure, for the night Reese calls the hunt.

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Belial's Brood

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 3 (Hacking), Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 3 (Hot-Wiring), Firearms 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4 (Sleight of Hand)

Merits: Acute Senses, Alternate Identity 3, Haven 3, Resources 4

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Celerity 3, Dominate 5, Resilience 5, Triadic Evolution 2

Manifestations: Animal Magnetism, Sprint

Health: 12

Willpower: 6

Blood Potency: 3

Humanity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2 (Active Defense 5)

Condition: Wanton

Summers, the Hunter of History

"Everything dies. But knowledge? Knowledge doesn't die, it's just forgotten. It's the key to everything. It's the apple on the tree. The key to our past and our future. That knowledge may be beautiful, or it may be horrific, but at least it'll be true. And as long as one person remembers, it'll never be forgotten."

Carolyn Summers was always an inquisitive child. She was born into an affluent family, and with a predilection for history and literature, excelled at her studies. Eventually, she earned a master's in history and traveled throughout Europe during her PhD candidacy, where she attracted the attention of certain scholarly Nosferatu who decided to Embrace her.

Despite the vast knowledge and forgotten lore that was now available to her, Carolyn Summers did not respond well to the Embrace. Cut off from her family and her former life, she became resentful of her new condition, and particularly her sire. For the next decade, she learned everything she could

about Kindred history during which she came to realize its fragile state, cobbled together with rumors and stories but few facts. However, the legends of the Brood and their seeming mastery over the Beast appealed to her.

When she confronted her sire about the mysterious covenant, she received only scorn, which in turn only enflamed her scholastic curiosity. Her sire made it clear that the Claimed were nothing more than mindless monsters with no actual value to Kindred society. Unwilling to take it on her sire's word, given what Carolyn had already learned about most vampires' loose association with the truth, she broke off from her sire and chose to find answers for herself.

After another decade, her search lead her to Boro. Carolyn's courage and her desire to know the truth above all things struck him. So, he taught her what he could, but pointed out that to truly understand the Brood, one must become Brood. He gave her two weeks to decide.

She calculated that the chance of success was extremely low, yet she also considered the notion that Triadic Evolution was closer to the truth of what she was rather than the facades and Masquerades of Kindred. And she was nothing if not a pursuer of truth.

Carolyn accepted despite her fears, and after a brief tutelage that left her humanity in shambles, Boro pushed her over the edge. To both their surprise, she emerged victorious, reborn as one of the Claimed.

To this night, Summers continues her studies, collecting various scraps of knowledge and history in a desperate attempt to compile the real history of vampires and satisfy her voracious hunger for knowledge. She assists her fellow Promised when she can but otherwise keeps to herself, preferring isolation and uninterrupted study. It is her hope to one day find her wayward sire and prove to her how very wrong she was. However, in the meantime, Carolyn is content to read, watch, and learn.

Clan: Nosferatu

Covenant: Belial's Brood

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 5 (European History), Computer 2, Investigation 4 (Research), Medicine 2, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 4 (Hiding in Plain Sight), Survival 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies 4 (University), Contacts 4 (Auction Houses, Historical Society, Occult Shop, University Professor), Haven 4, Resources 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Animalism 2, Obfuscate 5, Triadic Evolution 2, Vigor 2

Manifestations: Don't Look It in the Eye, Camouflage

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Blood Potency: 3

Humanity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Condition: Bestial

The Esoteric Order of the Golden Star

"My friends, my fellow travelers, the Golden Path lies ahead of us, and we need but the courage to take the next step! Heron of Alexandria and Saint Constantine walked it before us, to enlightenment in the dark, and by their blood anointed be the faces here before me."

— Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard

A wrought-iron fence is a dramatic statement, especially when it wasn't there a year ago, but I guess that's what you can expect from mystics — if you want to be taken seriously, you need to mind the optics. The house is nice, anyway — an old mansion on a hill, built in the 30s. It just needs a dead oak and some lightning, and it'll be the perfect place for an occult society. It's impressive, if you look at it right. Go inside, and it's much the same: lots of purples, old wooden furnishings, weird art with occult themes. The teachers wear purple robes; the rooms smell of old books and weird chemicals. I mean, it's no Hogwarts, but someone made an effort. No wonder they get students.

So, why did I come here? Kindred need something to reach for in...I almost said life. I mean, it can be tough, you know? Going night to night, getting hungry, existing to feed. I always found it made me feel...dirty, maybe? Inferior, definitely. I mean, walking corpse, right? Corpses are gross. Before I died, I had a hard time finding much point, but I muddled on. Get a job, maybe have a family — life goals. Milestones. Something to aspire to. This Requiem, as they call it, it doesn't really offer that kind of thing. You've gotta find it yourself, despite what the All Night Society claims. This place has something to offer. A meaning, or at least a goal. Learn magic, that's pretty cool, right? The Sanctified, the Acolytes, they have their own stuff, but it's all blood and rituals, and I don't want that. I want something a bit more...eh, you know what I mean. And I'm not alone.

It's a dozen of us, listening to the headmistress. Dyed red hair, wears her robes with the hood up. Chiseled features, like an ancient statue. Welcome, mysteries of the ancients, Golden Path, some names, yeah, I'm not paying attention to all that. I just wanna get started, you know? The lessons are free, we pay for the materials, seems pretty sensible to me. We have dorms, are expected to sleep on campus, that's cool by me cause my place sucks. Just one last thing: contracts. Sure, whatever...signed in blood. Okay, that's weird. I look around me, I'm not the only one who thinks that's weird, but when it comes down to it, I guess the faculty members know their

stuff better than me. I mean, I hope so. That's why I'm here, right? So, sign, pay the 200 bucks they want for the basic stuff, and here we go — magic awaits!

You want to join the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star because: You're unfulfilled in unlife and want something more. You think magic is cool. You're looking for a community in which you can immerse yourself fully. You want to escape the world. You see where the money's going, and you want in on the top floor.

The big picture: The Order of the Star is a small player in a big game, and it survives on its security. It's just one place, one big fenced-off mansion with its ghoulish guards and Kindred on campus, and it's never going to rival one of the big covenants. Maybe some of the students think otherwise, that the magic powers they learn will make them a political force, but they're wrong. The magic the school teaches is bullshit. It's all about the money.

When it comes down to brass tacks, the Order is a scam. They promise enlightenment, and in exchange sell books and tools and various faux reagents. The tuition's free, but the education kills your wallet anyway. Some of the students here have sunk tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars into useless crap, and some have accepted blood bonds and do favors for the staff because they can't pay.

The headmistress, Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard, and her inner circle of 12 teachers have no intention to do this forever. They're a fearful bunch, afraid of their students and what will happen when the game is up, and they're more than happy to rely on blood bonds and ghouls for safety, but eventually, they will move on and open a new school elsewhere. They've done so before. But times are changing and, eventually, their past will catch up to them. It's just a matter of time.

Origins

In 1967, a young, idealistic San Francisco hippie named Debbie Meyer died of an LSD overdose. A Gangrel found the corpse while it was still fresh, and Embraced the young

woman, who thus entered into her own personal Requiem. In 1979, that same woman had been thoroughly disillusioned. The hippie movement was dead, her peers from back then had either moved on or turned into sad remnants, and the glorious new age in which she'd once believed hadn't come around. Mortal mysticism had let her down, and among Kindred, she had found little substitute. She had already long abandoned spiritual fulfillment in favor of material comfort, but what money she had scraped up had long since dried out, and she was in debt. It was time for Debbie Meyer to vanish and reinvent herself.

So it was that Meyer vanished from the All Night Society, and Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard showed up in Seattle, selling books on Kindred history to gullible buyers. The scam had begun. By the end of the year, she published her first book on ancient mysticism, and she held her first seminar in the fall of 1980. Since that point, her schtick has slowly grown more elaborate and refined, and she has picked up co-conspirators along the way — 12 of them, to reach the number 13, though two of them are imperfect fits that are slated for replacement. Szilard considers that an inevitable side effect of trying to impose a mystical image on reality — you have to fudge it a bit to fit.

At present, the Order of the Star has changed locations and run different, nearly identical schools in several cities. After narrowly escaping a student rebellion in Vancouver in 2006, brought on by the victims of the scam realizing what was going on, the inner circle has grown more paranoid and controlling, and has started employing mute ghouls for protection. However, in the age of social media, Lady Szilard believes it to be all-but inevitable that eventually

ex-students from other locations will share their stories with the current crop. When, and if, that happens, she plans to burn the building down and escape with her cronies, reinventing themselves on the money they have already squirreled away.

At present, the Order sees the writing on the wall. They must change or perish. While they have always spent a portion of their budget on researching potential avenues to find some actual power, ancient or otherwise, to call their own, they have stepped these activities up drastically. They are currently following up rumors on a long-slain Iroquois Kindred elder only known by her family name, Burning Sky, whose reputation involved some unknown form of blood sorcery. Her distant descendant Joseph Burning, a Lord, is one of the teachers at the school, and he considers any secret knowledge his ancestor might have found beyond the grave rightfully his. The fact that Burning Sky actually has a still-active grandhilde who also has a good claim to being her heir, the Mekhet Acolyte Joshua Taylor, matters little to Burning.

Practices

Image is everything. The Esoteric Order of the Golden Star is all about form over substance.

They can do anything, justify anything, so long as they do it with style — dark and occult style. Within the Order's power, everything is structured to keep questions and criticisms to a minimum, because the paint peels around the edges and might just come off if someone picks at it too diligently.

Ritual, spiritualism, and secrecy form the heart of Order's practices. Its campus functions as a boarding school, guarded by a cadre of ghouls whose tongues have been cut out to keep them obedient. Dormitories, laboratories, and lecture halls dominate, each decorated in a sort of Victorian-occult chic, dominated by purples, grays and browns. Colored lights and incense are omnipresent.



*Andrea
Payne '19*

An average night on the Order's campus begins at nightfall, when one of the ghoul guards enters each dormitory ringing a handbell to rouse the students from their sleep. The students have 30 minutes to prepare themselves and must then be in the main auditorium for the day's opening lecture by Lady Jezebel herself. This lecture usually involves florid oratory and little substance, but the headmistress is an accomplished and charismatic speaker and tends to leave her listeners feeling like everything she said made sense, but they weren't smart enough to understand. These lectures last about 30 minutes and end with some kind of communal activity to make the students feel like part of something greater than themselves.

After this, the students are finally permitted into the refectory to partake in the institute's meal plan, which costs a hefty monthly fee and is all but obligatory. Here, they dine on animal blood which the teachers claim is a sort of fast and spiritual cleansing. Afterwards, classes begin, each lasting between 30 minutes and an hour. These can take the form of rituals, meditation, lectures, and bizarre alchemical laboratory classes, along with arts and crafts. Most of these are designed to bamboozle and bore the students, while others are just filler.

A subset of students catches on to the scam, of course. When that happens, and the teachers find out, Lady Jezebel personally tries to lure them into becoming part of the act, offering them money, favors, and other privileges in exchange for helping to reinforce the illusion of a real magic school and keep the other students in line. Those who reject find themselves escorted off campus by ghoul guards, and become subject to smear campaigns orchestrated by the Order of the Star. The ones who accept become teachers' assistants and make a tidy little profit from their positions, but their main perk is simply elevation above their fellow students. They get nicer rooms, can expect human blood on occasion, and most importantly, they can boss around and abuse the regular students as they please so long as they aren't too blatant about it.

Most of the teachers were recruited directly into the upper echelons of the Order, but a few – the later ones – came from the ranks of the TAs, and within their numbers is where Lady Szilard is looking for a replacement for her two not-quite-right teachers. If she finds the right candidates, of course, the replaced teachers can't be permitted to spread the word of the Order's true purpose, so the headmistress has already made plans for how to quietly dispose of them. A teacher can expect luxury and money, living in fine suites attended by their favorite ghouls who see to their every whim. They can pursue expensive hobbies and afford most things they might want, and all they must do in exchange is make up some bullshit classes and namedrop some historical and occult figures every so often.

The Order's ghoul guards are mostly either loyal henchmen or enemies of the group, most of whom, regardless of where they came from, have had their tongues removed, both to stop them from sharing Order secrets and because it gives

them a mysterious air. Mortals who discover the existence of the Order and draw their attention risk becoming another body in the campus guard, and mortals who try to infiltrate or investigate them are converted as a matter of procedure. When the inner circle decides to abandon the current campus, they also leave behind any surviving ghouls, with only a few favorites following each teacher to their next location. The headmistress herself has never found a ghouls she decided to bring along.

Order ghouls are dressed in purple uniforms reminiscent of the late 19th century, and wear burnished brass helmets that resemble those popularly associated with ancient Greek hoplites. They wear sashes with rank insignia based on alchemical symbolism – bronze, silver, gold – and carry revolvers and cavalry sabers. They have also recently started being issued AK-47s. They communicate with each other by a proprietary set of hand signals invented by one of the teachers.

There is only one headmistress, and there has only ever been one. Lady Jezebel Elia Szilard, also known as Debbie Meyer, is a fallen idealist, and she has fallen hard. She is a bitter and cynical woman who embraces her former mystic beliefs in a darkened mirror of the hippie she used to be. Seeing her peers from back in the 60s turn into just another iteration of the previous generation left her disillusioned and despairing, and the spiritualism in which she used to bury herself just rang hollow. Ironically, in her backlash against her fellow baby boomers, she has mirrored the heartless materialism that embittered her in the first place, only she wraps it in new-age trappings instead of Wall Street worship. She still sees the world through the lens of her own generational struggle, and neither generation X nor the millennial generation have really hit home with her – she just sees the peers who betrayed her repeated over and over, all their potential willingly surrendered and stuffed into business suits.

Deep down, she wants to save the world and see a new enlightened age of spiritual fulfillment and restored ancient wisdom arrive, to uplift humankind to ever-greater heights. Only a single mind, strong and unbending before the corruption of the world, can usher in such an era, she believes – a benevolent dictator, to ensure no further generations are allowed to fall. She has a vision of spiritual purity, uncorrupted by politics and money, and she believes only she can keep others pure. The biases in her vision, and the hypocrisy of a con artist seeing herself as the sole reliable guardian of authenticity, are completely lost on her. And hidden behind her sour ideals is a growing hunger for power: If she sees the chance to turn her scam into a full-sized covenant, especially if she finds a source of actual magical power, then she will seize it greedily and govern her new power base with an iron hand.

Nicknames: Orderites (among members), star cultists (neutral), wizards (sarcastic insult). The Order's profile is low enough that many Kindred would also simply call them, "who?"

Players and the Order

The Order of the Star works well as a nemesis for a player character, whether because they have inducted — as student or ghoul — someone a coterie member cares about, or someone with hold over another individual the coterie cares about. It also works as an antagonist in any search for occult objects or secrets. Anyone who reveals the secret lies of the Order can expect to become their immortal enemies, and the cult also acts as a patron for certain individuals in Kindred society. Its lust for power and the way it preys on its members makes it dangerous in any chronicle where it has some measure of political influence.

But the Order is also a playable option, in which case the default assumption is that the character in question is a victim of the scam who will eventually want to break free, and maybe take revenge. In this case, Storytellers should mention up front that the cult's "blood sorcery" does not exist up.

A player can also potentially take on the role of a cult member who is knowingly and willingly participating in the scam, but in that case he should seek Storyteller permission first, as the Order is foremost an antagonist group. In either case, there are no special mechanical benefits (beyond being able to buy Social Merits related to membership) to joining the Order — the only one they do offer is a lie. Though it is not a true covenant, it can take the place of one.

When in Power

Should a whole domain fall under our control, we would structure it into a cult of personality if possible, centered on Lady Jezebel. Then we would build up a cadre of blood-bonded minions and try to centralize all the wealth and power of the local Kindred among our leadership. With enough controls in place, we can establish a firmly entrenched autocracy among our peers and start targeting mortal wealth.

We have never even approached that level of power, but every time our house of cards collapses around us, we learn new lessons and perfect our control. We do spend funds trying to discover something real with which to back our teachings — if only we found real magic, we would be mighty. We also have still-loyal alumni in other cities, mostly former TAs, and if we can create enough of those, we might eventually cross the threshold and become a true covenant.

When in Trouble

We never expect to last long in any given occasion. We can't just blood bond all of our students and be done with it; if we don't bring in new marks, the ones we have dry out and our funds trickle back to others. We also can't expect every Kindred in a

city to join us — if we reach 10 percent, we've had an exceptional run. Sooner or later, the money runs out, the students become suspicious, and something goes wrong. We can counter that by bonding as many of our marks as possible, but that has always just led to the remainder rebelling to avoid the Vinculum. Realistically, three to five years is as long as we can keep it up in any one place.

When things go wrong, we fight, we stage accidents, we burn the mansion down, and we move along. Then we relocate, finding a new place to set up shop, and recruit new students, pouring some of the money we made last time into improving the new campus above and beyond what the old one had to offer. If worst comes to worst, though, and we can't do that for some reason, then we will retire and assume new identities. With the nest egg we have built up, our core circle can afford a comfortable existence — especially if we prune our numbers a bit.

Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard

(a.k.a. Debbie Meyer)

"Welcome, students, to your destiny. Here, in these hallowed halls, we shall peel back the veil of mundanity and peer beneath. Walk with me down the road to enlightenment, and you may pick up a few tricks along the way."

As the head of the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star, Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard draws most of her actual power from the fact that most of the ghouls on the estate are her personal minions, as well as from the blood bonds she personally maintains over a segment of the student base. She has forbidden the use of the blood bond by any other Kindred on campus and enforces it even against other teachers. Like most of the Order's staff, her strengths lie primarily in her social acumen, and here she is perhaps the most impressive of all the faculty.

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: None

Mask: Guru

Dirge: Authoritarian

Touchstone: A diary from her mortal life

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Pseudoscience) 3, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Politics (Order of the Star) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Claws) 3, Survival 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Expression (Bald-Faced Lies) 4, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Allies (Order of the Star) 3, Staff 3 (Ghouls: Intimidation, Students: Academics, Teachers: Subterfuge), Resources 4, Status (Order of the Star) 3

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Dominate 2, Protean (Claws, Feral Senses, Wall Crawling) 2, Resilience 3

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 10

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5

Joseph Burning

"I'm sorry, but the money's mine now. That's life. Unfair? Oh, cry me a river – I was smarter than you, and now it's mine, it doesn't get much fairer than that. But, hey! If you're so principled, why you don't you go give back the blood you've taken? Heh."

Born and raised in poverty on the Allegany Reservation in New York, Joseph Burning learned early on to look out for number one. While his parents tried to teach him right from wrong, young Joseph took an interest in history, and found an entirely different lesson there: the weak and the losers invoke morality, while the strong do whatever they want. Again and again, he saw terrible deeds excused by success, and greed rewarded. As he grew into a young man, he promised himself that he would do whatever he could to seize any opportunity and advance his own station in life, no matter who he had to hurt on the way. One evening, when Joseph was 17, his parents returned home to find the place robbed and their son gone. A note on the table demanded a ransom if they ever wanted to see their kid again. His loving parents borrowed money and sold much of what they had, and finally scraped up enough to pay the ransom, but they never saw their son again, nor the money. Joseph Burning had just made his starting capital.

With his parents' money, Burning managed to arrange to enter Harvard to study business, and set himself up as a con artist, targeting the elderly to pay his way. Middling academic performance did not bother him; he simply found ways to cheat, and finally graduated fifth in his class. He quickly set about building wealth in the stock market, and founded his own company, JDB Consulting, to hide his financial crimes behind. When that company went down and Burning had to pay a million-dollar fine for his involvement, he had already made 10 times that amount and catapulted himself to wealth.

That was when Maximillian Nguyen found him. As one of JDB Consulting's fraud victims, Nguyen was impressed with the yuppie shark who had managed to pull the wool over the eyes of an experienced Ventrue businessman. In 1992, Burning found himself plunged into the night.

Two years later, his training complete, the young Lord found himself cut off from his abusive sire, expected to make it on his own. Determined to make being dead work for him, he searched for something to exploit. Had he found another opportunity, he would have taken it, but as luck would have it, the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star happened to be set up in New York City at the time, and as an inveterate cheater himself, he knew a good scam when he saw it. He enrolled as a student, studied for a while, and then tried to blackmail Lady Jezebel for protection money. She offered him a different proposition instead: tenure. Intrigued, Joseph accepted.

Since then, he has been the Order's professor of occult history. Clean-cut and attractive, Burning cuts a handsome figure in his black business suits and purple ties. His lectures are based in part on real history – both mortal and Kindred – for which he still has a passion, and in part invented whole cloth. Burning takes pleasure in making up twisted and cruel material, based in part on his students' fears and insecurities. His utterly professional and clinical delivery simply serves to mask the glee he takes in making them squirm.

A few years ago, he discovered the existence of a long-vanished Kindred elder and reputed blood sorcerer for whom he could only dig up her family name: Burning Sky, an old form of his own surname. After spending many hours scraping up what little information he could find on this enigmatic being, he managed to establish a positive genealogical link – he was her direct descendant. With mounting enthusiasm, he has taken up studying every scrap of lore that might possibly relate to his ancestor, so he can claim his birthright. What he does not realize is that Burning Sky's grandchilde, the Mekhet Joshua Taylor, is still around and has made it his mission to find her remains himself.

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: None

Mask: Scholar

Dirge: Survivor

Touchstone: A bank accountant

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (History) 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Kindred History) 2, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 1 (Light Pistol)

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Scams) 3

Merits: Allies (Order of the Star) 3, Status (Order of the Star) 2, Fast-Talking 3, Pusher, Resources 4

Disciplines: Dominate 3, Resilience 3

Blood Potency: 3**Health: 10****Willpower: 5****Humanity: 5****Size: 5****Speed: 11****Initiative: 6****Defense: 4****Notes:** The Pusher Merit can be found in **Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 53.*Flora Constance O'Hare*

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I can't help you. I don't have access to the school's finances, and I'm afraid the headmistress doesn't listen to me. You really ought to get ... get back to your dormitory."

Age 54 is far too young to die of cancer, but for Flora Constance O'Hare, the world had never been considerate. Always flighty and gullible, she had spent much of her life chasing fads and letting herself get exploited with little to show for it, and on her deathbed, she had nothing but regrets.

Why the ancient came for her, Flora does not know. But come it did, hooded and swathed in sackcloth with a death's-head mask studded with jade, speaking in a hoarse whisper that betrayed nothing but the wind across a lonely grave. It took mercy on a dying soul, and gifted her with a terrible curse, and the aging woman felt whole once more.

With a new start to her existence, Flora was determined to make more of herself than in her wasted life by committing herself to spiritualism and delving into the mystic yearnings she held in life, instead of just chasing diets and superstition. As a Kindred, she already had some of the superhuman abilities she'd wanted in life, but she wanted more. She dabbled in both the Circle of the Crone and the Lancea et Sanctum but found both to be outside the bounds of what she truly desired, a New Age approach to traditional Christianity. This strange desire is what eventually led her to the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star.

The Order fulfilled everything she desired. She found people just like her, who believed in crystal healing and electronic voice phenomena, and who treated Atlantis as known historical fact, as they should. In short, she found a place that never made her doubt her preconceptions. She'd found yet another guru to exploit her.

Flora excelled as a student and was popular with her peers. Her heartfelt belief in the material and her mature appearance gave her a sense of wisdom and authority with which the other students easily fell in line. When the headmistress decided to increase her staff to 13 for the symbolic value, Flora O'Hare seemed a natural fit.

Since then, the Haunt has been part of the Order's staff, serving as the school's professor of alchemy and geomancy. Still a friendly soul deep down, O'Hare is deeply depressed

and prone to excess in hunting and feeding, and now finds her vampiric nature weighs heavily on her. She's once again trapped in the same pattern as in life, and she knows it. Jezebel keeps her in line with threats and emotional manipulation, but Flora's guilt is deep, and she is deeply ashamed to have abused the gift her sire gave her in such a manner.

Flora keeps a cadre of three ghouls, none of which have had their tongues removed. Their names are Janeka, Rita, and Frederick, and they are all loyal friends of hers. They'll fight and die for O'Hare, and Rita especially is spoiling for a fight against the rest of the Order. If any promising opportunity to do so comes along, Rita will be more than happy to arrange for Flora to learn about it.

Clan: Nosferatu**Covenant:** None**Mask:** Nurturer**Dirge:** Follower**Touchstone:** Ghoul trio (Janeka, Rita, and Frederick)**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl (Bite) 3, Stealth (Lurking) 2**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Cats) 1, Empathy 3, Expression (Speeches) 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2**Merits:** Acute Senses, Allies (Order of the Star) 1, Double Jointed, Trained Observer 3, Resources 3**Disciplines:** Animalism 1, Celerity 2, Obfuscate 2, Resilience 2, Vigor 4**Blood Potency:** 4**Health:** 10**Willpower:** 5**Humanity:** 6**Size:** 5**Speed:** 17**Initiative:** 6**Defense:** 4 (Active Defense 6)*Order of the Star Ghoul Guard*

A bell rings.

The ghouls of the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star are well-trained and disciplined paramilitary troopers who employ

ghoul dogs to patrol the campus. They are armed with cavalry sabers and revolvers, and about one in seven carry AK-47s. With most having had their tongues cut out, they rely on a sign language that Lady Jezebel personally invented, which isolates them from the rest of the world — without knowing ASL or any other widespread language, they must rely on writing and gestures alone to communicate with anyone but each other.

The main exceptions to the tongue-removal mandate are the teachers' individual ghouls. While the Order guards are Lady Jezebel's blood-bonded servants, the other teachers each have several personal servants, and only a couple of the staff elect to render their ghouls mute. Even Lady Jezebel leaves a few of her most trusted ghouls with tongues in their heads so they can employ negotiation tactics to deescalate situations.

Lady Jezebel's ghouls can create animal ghouls on their own, and they do it often. Almost half of them have ghouls pets or guard dogs to assist them. In combat, the Order of the Star's guards act methodically, trying to cordon off escape routes and subdue their opponents. Lady Jezebel keeps her ghouls well-fed so that they can afford to spend their precious Vitae supplies in battle. They prefer to avoid actual confrontation, though — if they can subdue someone by staring them down, then all the better.

Virtue: By individual, often Courage, Loyalty, or Meticulousness

Vice: By individual, often Addiction, Apathy, or Wrath

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2 (Sabers)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2 (Dogs), Empathy 1, Intimidation (Stare down) 2, Streetwise 1

Merits: Allies (Order of the Star guards) 3, Police Tactics 3, Taste of the Wild

Disciplines: Any two (Animalism 2, Protean 2, Resilience 2)

Blood Potency: 0

Health: 8 or 10

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 4-6

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4 (3 with flak jacket)

Armor: 2/4 (flak jacket)

Notes: Police Tactics Merit can be found in *Chronicles of Darkness*, p. 64.

Order of the Star Ghoul Guard Dog

Drawn from large, strong breeds, the Order of the Star's ghouls are powerful, well-trained and obedient creatures. They are generally popular among the students, though far from universally.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2 (Bite), Stealth 1, Survival 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Disciplines: Resilience 2

Blood Potency: 0

Health: 8

Willpower: 5

Size: 4

Speed: 10

Initiative: 4

Defense: 5

Notes: The domitors of Order guard dogs are the ghouls guards themselves. The animal normally has 2 or 3 points of Vitae in its system. To determine randomly, the Storyteller may roll a single die — on a 1, it has 1 Vitae; on a 2-5, it has 2; on a 6-9 it has 3; and on a 10, it has 4.

Joshua Taylor

"I will see this city burn before I let anyone steal my bloodright."

When the ancient Mekhet, Burning Sky, realized her nights were numbered, she took a childe, her first and only; and to him, she gave a drum of simple construction and poor sound. But hidden on the underside of the head, engraved in leather, she left in the form of imagery the secrets of her craft, indescribable in any mortal tongue. Her childe, however, was a man of pragmatic sensibilities, who scorned art and music, and did not see the value in her gift. So the drum sat undisturbed, and eventually forgotten.

But the blood passed on, and in 1962, Burning Sky's childe, now an elder himself, found himself cornered, just like his sire before him. He, too, took his first and only childe, Joshua Taylor. A struggling young musician at the time, the elder saw in Taylor something of his own sire that he had never himself

achieved, and with no time left to pick a more ideal candidate, he inducted Joshua to the All Night Society.

With the Embrace came a hunger and cold that Joshua had never felt before — and his music was suddenly hollow and meaningless. So, he left his instruments and note sheets behind and carved himself a bloody new niche in the world as the CEO of a moderately successful arms manufacturer, raking in millions off the carnage of Vietnam. His true passion, though, turned out to be city planning, and he invested his fortune and retired from business to join the city government.

He always intended to explore his heritage, but the time never seemed quite right. When Joseph Burning came around, he suddenly realized time was almost out. He found out about the Order of the Star while investigating Burning. He has made it his goal to destroy the cult, recover Burning Sky's old drum, and take down his newfound rival.

Joshua Taylor is a man of passion and vision, an architect and a dreamer. He is ruthlessly self-centered and lightning smart, and he is fanatically devoted to his Kindred heritage. The fact that someone else would steal his rightful inheritance spurs him to spiteful possessiveness — he will stop at nothing to thwart Joseph Burning's search.

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Mask: Perfectionist

Dirge: Authoritarian

Touchstone: His daughter, Troya

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (History) 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Kindred History) 2, Politics 2 (Armed Conflicts)

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 4, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 1, Streetwise 1

Merits: Carthian Status 2, Contacts 2 (Arms Dealers, City Officials), Resources 5, Status 2 (City Government), Strength of Resolution

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Obfuscate 3

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 9

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5 (Active 9)

The Kenora Bateria

*"Everyone always talks about the blood.
But what about the ones that need a little more to get their fill?"*

— Sextus Albright, Daeva Philosopher

One of humanity's greatest taboos is consuming the flesh of their kin. Cultures that included it as a part of worship or custom are painted as primitive and barbaric; even broaching the topic in hushed, horrified whispers is unfit for "civilized" circles. Stories from a number of cultures speak of the terrible consequences of breaking that greatest taboo; how partakers lose their minds and their humanity, twisting into horrible monsters that crave more and more of the forbidden flesh they consumed. Sometimes their appearance warps to match their inner cruelty and reflect their lack of humanity. Sometimes,

they remain the gleaming paragons of morality they parade themselves as. Those who can manage it, paint themselves as benevolent leaders, guides and teachers who would never do any wrong. Behind closed doors, when no one else is watching, they greedily transgress against the morals they publicly preach. The more they indulge, the less they are able to hide their monstrous side, which inevitably becomes their undoing.

Such an unfortunate and often public end is only hastened when Vitae enters the mix. While it's not possible to partake of the flesh of a vampire, as anything separated from them turns



to ash, it's possible to get bodies steeped in Vitae other ways. Though ghouls can't make others like themselves, unusual effects can come out of unusual circumstances. Mortals accidentally consuming Vitae through the body of a ghoul, something the Kindred had never considered, can lead to some of the strangest effects of them all. To Embrace someone is a conscious act; it's well-known Vitae reacts in unpredictable ways. Most consider it limited to spontaneous Embraces, but other, incomplete effects have shown themselves over time.

Bloody Desperation

Blood-bonded mortals will do almost anything to get their fix. Ghouls will do absolutely anything, even knowingly sacrificing others to their master's demonic thirst. Under the guise of leading four of his friends on a hiking trail, one such ghoul planned to give them over to the vampire. A secluded figure living deep in the woods, the Nosferatu he served promised an even sweeter reward than he'd ever given if his servant could prove himself able to reliably bring a source of blood. Hypnotized by the prospect of more Vitae and power, and desperate after his master's withholding, he was eager to bring his potential sire anything he asked for. The power he once knew was draining from him slowly, and nothing was going to stop him from getting it back.

Partway through the trip, disaster struck in the form of a falling tree. Determined to save his precious sacrifices, and

forgetting he lacked the strength to which he was accustomed, his attempt to save their lives resulted in his being crushed beneath the trunk. Unable to resuscitate their friend after freeing him, the other members of the group were left to fend for themselves in an unfamiliar forest. Unable to reach the outside world and unwilling to go far for fear of getting lost, the group did its best to survive in the hopes of being rescued.

As the days wore on and attempts to trap or hunt left them empty-handed, starvation and dehydration threatened the small band. They fought against the unthinkable for days before finally succumbing to their hunger. Their guide's body, remarkably preserved and untouched by bugs or wildlife, served as more than sustenance. After nearly a week in the woods, not one of them questioned why his blood was black ichor, just as no one spoke his name after that first meal.

It started with small bites, cringing as they brought them to their lips. Nibbling gave way to mouthfuls gave way to savagely tearing at his corpse, losing their humanity by degrees with every bite. By the time there was only bone, the flesh, blood, and guilt had done their work, leaving behind four tortured souls, always hungry for more.

Their indirect exposure to Vitae and its effects manifested in a number of odd ways for the coterie. Without ingesting Vitae directly and instead consuming flesh suffused with it, their physical forms received boosts while their minds deteriorated. While their powers wax and wane as they feed, they don't

have the same ability as vampires to turn flesh or blood into Vitae to sustain them, but neither do they frenzy when they're starved. Though they will attack anyone or anything to feed themselves, they only regain Vitae by feeding on someone who has likewise consumed it. Blood-bonded thralls offer them one point of Vitae, while ghouls impart however much they've consumed in the past month. Kindred themselves, despite their nature, give precious little to the Kenora; fixated as they are on flesh, they'll tear a vampire apart before drinking from him, wasting the precious resource that gives both beings their power. The ashen remains hold nothing but frustration for the members of the coterie.

The Kenora possess a number of abilities that heighten their physical presence. The more recent their latest kill, the more pronounced their power. They are stronger than most mortals, faster than most Kindred, and can track better than a bloodhound. They have no ability to learn Disciplines outside of Celerity, Resilience, and Vigor, but use the three to terrifying effect. The Kenora can use their stolen Vitae to power these Disciplines as normal; even when they have no Vitae within them, the persistent effects remain.

As they don't produce Vitae of their own and operate more on instinct than by premeditated thought, the Kenora have not yet shown the ability to produce childer. Of course, declaring theirs a sterile lineage is preemptive; to date, no one has partaken of their flesh as they partake of others.

Recognizing the Beast

The Kenora reflect their dark and twisted impulses in their appearance. They're always emaciated, no matter how much or recently they've fed. Despite their fragile and starved appearance, they command formidable physical prowess, but aside from strength, speed, and stamina, have no supernatural capabilities. While they can recover from substantial injury, they scar easily, bearing all manner of marks and tears over their bodies. Wide, dark eyes dominate their facial features above cracked and irritated lips. They appear ragged and unkempt, stained with the blood of kills recent and long past.

Any Kindred who come upon the Kenora can sense the Vitae that has altered them, but know they are not blood-bonded kine, ghouls, or vampires. While some might wish to study them, subduing them first and keeping them sedated would be absolutely necessary. They may not be able to gain sustenance from Kindred, but that doesn't stop them from trying.

The Kenora exist in a small, loose group at the edge of civilization. They don't rely on each other for their survival in a cooperative or social sense, operating more as a pack of predators that need each other to reliably take down prey. Driven primarily by their hunger and the craving for a meal like their first, the only thing keeping them from turning on each other is the fact that they've already tried. Each is heavily scarred with marks that look suspiciously like bites; the lack of satisfaction gained from each other preserves their tenuous bond. Perpetually in a semi-feral state, the

Kenora often grapple and fight amongst themselves, both as means to contest their place in the hierarchy and to entertain themselves.

After discovering the vampire their friend had been taking them to meet before his untimely demise, the coterie claimed his cabin for themselves. Secluded and isolated, the vampire's old haven isn't recorded on any map and only his other servants — now long dead at the coterie's hands — knew its location. The building has started to fall into disrepair, as its current occupants aren't concerned with creature comforts and maintenance any longer. They go through the motions of humanity, sleeping in beds and holding to routines, patrolling the border of the territory they've claimed as their own.

The Kenora have only the barest hint of their humanity left, enough to lay out reasonably complex plans and hunt together as a pack. They avoid people as much as possible, well aware that their presence is no longer accepted in the world at large. With their appearances as warped as their minds, it's not hard for them to determine why the humans they encounter in the woods run screaming. Similarly, it's not hard to deduce that being seen within their old neighborhoods would provoke the same reaction on a larger scale. The Kenora are hunters through and through, and they won't stand for becoming the hunted by exposing themselves to humanity.

The only thing that drives the Kenora is their hunger. The longer they go without Vitae, the stronger it grows. Consuming untainted flesh reduces the pain but does little to dampen the drive to consume. Addicted to Vitae, they'll do anything to get their fix. Though they normally bear a sense of self-preservation, if they go too long without Vitae, their madness drives them to desperate acts. They'll risk revealing themselves if it means getting their fix, but as it gets harder and harder to find, they get more and more reckless.

Their two purposes sit in a permanent hierarchy, the need to stay hidden just below the need to feed. There's little else they care for; though they'll defend each other in a fight, their camaraderie is loose, and losing one of their number only means more food for the rest.

Rumors

"What? No. You don't go camping in those woods. Haven't you heard the stories? People go missing there all the time. People say there's a crazy old hermit that lives out there and tortures people... the police have never found anything, but seriously, go look at the number of missing persons reports. Don't go into those woods, not for anything."

Of course, every legend has a grain of truth; the old Nosferatu living deep in the forest isn't there any longer, but his presence first inspired the stories of what happens to people who never return from hiking or camping trips. Nowadays, the Kenora stalk through the trees, following the scent of anyone who enters the woods, forever seeking to taste Vitae-sweetened flesh. While they don't feed indiscriminately

on average mortals, anyone entering the ill-defined bounds of their territory pays with their life; thus, the disappearances continue, and the old legend lives on.

"Can you believe this? They call it a...chupacabra? Some alien thing that eats cattle. I mean, sure, some of them have been torn apart, but there's wolves around here. They're clever, you know; forget to lock a door and they'll nose their way inside. I swear, everyone always jumps right to something crazy..."

For all their inhuman cravings, the Kenora retain enough of themselves to know they can't be seen by the kine. When hunting is thin and ghouls hard to find, they'll settle for whatever they can get their hands on. While flesh untouched by Vitae doesn't benefit them in any particular way, it temporarily quiets the gnawing hunger that drives them to hunt. Needs must still be met when a more palatable meal isn't available, and the coterie has been known to attack horses, livestock, and even large dogs. On rare occasions, they're drawn to beasts who have been raised as familiars through Animalism and target them exclusively.

Any Kindred with the ability to communicate with animals learns from survivors the direction from which the Kenora came and to where they departed, as well as loose descriptions of the ones present. All animals fear the Kenora, recognizing them as something warped and evil, but separate from the Kindred.

"Something's hunting them down. I'd say it was one of those idiot Carthians who think we shouldn't keep ghouls, but they go missing during the day. If any of them have managed that, well, I know Dragons who'd want a word. Besides, even the Firebrands aren't that stupid. Let them petition against creating new ones, fine, but they know better than to attack the ones we have."

The ghouls who serve the vampire population in the nearby town have been vanishing at an increasingly alarming rate. The Kindred themselves aren't sure what's happening; their daytime eyes and ears plucked out one by one, they're left increasingly in the dark about what is plaguing their holdings. Those with enough influence have started to put substantial pressure on the local prince, while Elysium has turned into a riotous free for all as those without direct connections to their leaders demand recompense and a cease to the slaughter.

The Kenora, tracking the scent of Vitae, strike most often at dusk and dawn. They incapacitate their chosen victims and carry them back to their forest to feed. As the number of ghouls dwindles and their appetites increase, they hunt anyone who carries the scent of Vitae, leading them directly to members of a vampire's herd.

The Coterie

"More."

They had names, once upon a time. All that's left of them now are the shells that vaguely resembled them, albeit after a good many months of hardship. Their hair is greasy and

matted, eyes dull and sunken in their faces. Most slouch when they walk, almost but not quite to the point of going about on all fours. Some speak a word or two, the rest just growl and grunt. You'll hear them before you see them; when your paranoia hits its peak, one's on top of you before you can even think to react, and then the world explodes into pain. The last thing you see is another one coming out of the woods, hunched and rail thin and far, far too fast. It, too, is on you in a flash, and then the world goes black.

Leoni

The closest thing the coterie has to a leader, Leoni keeps the others in line. Outdoorsy before succumbing to her current state, she retains enough of her mind to set up simple traps and snares and has the perimeter of their territory rigged with a number of them.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 1, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts (Snares) 3, Academics 1, Investigate 1

Physical Skills: Brawl 5, Stealth 3, Survival (Tracking) 3

Social Skills: Intimidation (Leadership) 4, Persuasion 3

Merits: Acute Senses, Distinguished Palate (Ghoul), Feeding Grounds 3, Indomitable, Producer 1, Safe Place 1 (Shared, 4), Haven 2

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Resilience 3, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 1

Health: 11

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3 (Active Defense 5)

Michael

Toward the bottom of the loose hierarchy keeping the Kenora in line, Michael acts as both guard dog and bloodhound. When searching out the only thing that will satisfy their infernal hunger, Michael leads the pack, a feral gleam in his hoary eyes as he pursues his goal with single-minded intensity. The first to suggest resorting to using their deceased friend to survive, he's furthest in the grip of the curse it laid upon them all.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Craft 3, Investigate 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Grappling) 5, Stealth (Stalking) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 5

Merits: Acute Senses, Anonymity 2, Atrocious, Bloodhound, Feeding Grounds 3, Producer, Safe Place 1 (Shared, 4), Unseen Sense (Ghouls)

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 1

Health: 9

Willpower: 3

Humanity: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 3

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 9)

Paula

Second only to Michael in terms of strength, Paula retains enough of her intelligence to put together the group's more ambitious ambushes and coordinated attacks, and acts as muscle on hunting trips outside of the forest.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Strategy) 3, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Subdual) 3, Stealth (Ambush) 5, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Feeding Grounds 3, Kindred Dueling (Hand-to-Hand) 2, Producer, Safe Place 1 (Shared, 4) Striking Looks (Horrific) 2

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Resilience 3, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 1

Health: 10

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Initiative: 5

Defense: 5 (Active Defense 8)

Sean

The watchdog of the group, Sean patrols the perimeter on a regular basis and acts as a scout when the group hunts. While the rest of the group's members aren't particularly skilled in mimicry, he uses animal clicks and whistles to signal the others.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation (Scouting) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Larceny (Kidnapping) 4, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Expression (Mimicry) 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Double Jointed 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Feeding Grounds 3, Producer, Safe Place 1 (Shared, 4)

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 1

Health: 9

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 7

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 9)

The Amari: The Forgotten Ones

Legends

The name “Amari” comes from the Inuit word *amarok*, a dire wolf of legend said to stalk and kill those foolish enough to hunt alone at night. Another Inuit story speaks of a man who killed the pups of the *amarok*, only to have his soul stolen in turn by the great beast. But the Kindred of the modern age tell a different story, one wherein the Amari were hunted to extinction, with a precious few having survived. And those who did survive have since declared vengeance in turn. For nearly a century, the story of the Amari has passed from sire to child as a warning that while all kingdoms fall, nothing is truly forgotten or forgiven.

When Kindred speak of the Amari, they most often reference the ancient cities of ice and snow, clustered in the Arctic. For one half of the year, under the polar night, the Amari would rule without question. The dark and vast northern landscape was theirs, touching two continents and a frozen ocean in between. During the second half of the year, under the midnight sun, the Amari would burrow into the ice and permafrost to hibernate, protected only by the elements and their loyal ghouls.

As no sane Kindred would choose to venture north during the summer months, the Amari spent most of their brief existence unmolested. Then came the Northern Wars. Then came the melting of the polar ice caps and the grand effects of climate change. And then, within 100 years, the Amari clung to the precipice of extinction.

When there is a disruption to an oil pipeline by impossible means or when a Ventrue tied to deforestation efforts in Brazil disappears without cause or clue, Kindred whisper about the Amari. When eco-terrorists suddenly find themselves armed by a mysterious benefactor or when bodies start piling up in the Strait of Hormuz and other oil shipping ports around the world, the Amari get a mention. For those who once only wanted peace and solitude now seek retribution for their decimated numbers. They intend to punish the Kindred populace, and the world at large, for their past transgressions.

History

Some Gangrel scholars, those who claim Ekhidna as their progenitor, believe that Amari was a brother to the Mother

of Monsters. They speak of the two quarreling and eventually warring with each other. The defeated brother was cast out, and his descendants joined the human migrations to the Americas from Asia along the Bering Strait some 20,000 years ago.

Another tale speaks of an early tribe of humans who, thwarted by harsh winters and little game, began to starve. After they fell to cannibalism, a local shaman cursed them to wander the Earth forever alone and hungry. A similar tale mirrors the first, but with a pack of wolves instead of a tribe of mortals.

The bulk of Kindred knowledge on the Amari comes from a single source, which includes a more modern interpretation of their origins. Laszlo Schächt was a Gangrel Ordo Dracul and Kindred historian accredited with being the first to discover the Amari clan. Schächt was a German explorer who made several expeditions into the Polar Regions of Russia. According to his notes, Schächt discovered the lost clan along the Taymyr Peninsula, the northernmost part of the mainland of Eurasia.

Just as some believe the Ventrue descend from the Julii, Schächt contended that the Amari descended from the Gangrel. He presented this theory to the court of Prague in the late 18th century and displayed an actual Amari to solidify his case, a vampire who called himself Saga.

What made Saga unique was their unprecedented ability to preserve Vitae. It was not through some Discipline or Ritual Sorcery but by pure instinct. Not only could Saga function for weeks on precious little blood, but they could also store Vitae for months. This evolution allowed Saga and their childer to survive in desolate areas because of their lesser dependence on humankind as a food source.

Schächt toured Europe, parading Saga in front of secret cabals of Dragon scholars in Warsaw, Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. But despite countless examinations and tests, none could unlock Saga’s secrets or explain how they were able to do what they did. They encouraged Saga to Embrace, and were surprised when their unique abilities passed on to their childer. This discovery of a new clan prompted further studies by the Ordo Dracul and outright kidnappings by other Covenants.

According to Schächt’s own journal, the Dragon began to realize how his actions exploited the Amari, and how his

Sunday, 28th of December, 1890. Captain Rudolf Randall Commanding.

Having left Camp Conrad yesterday, we begin our last trek to reach the North Pole. The men are in good spirits, though Mr. Lamb and Mr. Slade are both suffering from severe frostbite. Dr. Kellick believes he will need to amputate several toes. Regardless, by my estimation, we are no more than eight hundred kilometers from the Pole, and we remain strides ahead of Peary or Nansen or any other rival to this grand expedition. So long as our food stores hold and the dog sleds continue to run, I am confident of our success.

Wednesday, 31st of December, 1890. Captain Rudolf Randall Commanding.

For New Year's Eve we stopped early, offering the lads some well-needed rest, double rations, and a few sips of whiskey. Unfortunately, five of our dogs went missing during the festivities, forcing us to abandon one of the sleds. This means our eight-man crew now only has four sleds between us with no reserve. I had the men spread the supplies out amongst the remaining sleds, which will add more weight to each of us. Even though our progress north will ultimately slow, Lieutenant Crisp assures me that the men, now well-fed and well-rested on this fine New Year's Eve, have the means to achieve our objective.

Friday, 9th of January, 1891. Captain Rudolf Randall Commanding.

Lieutenant Crisp has informed me that our lead scout has spotted something quite remarkable. A few kilometers ahead of us, just beyond the ridgeline, there appears to be a castle made of ice! I almost can't imagine such a thing, let alone believe it, but our scout, Mr. Lee, is an honest and honorable man. He has never been prone to exaggeration.

He describes smooth walls of ice surrounding tall spires that snake upward into the sky with buttresses for support. In place of a drawbridge, a smooth opening is perfectly circular — like a polished cave designed by Michelangelo himself. Mr. Lee saw no one present, nor any light or sign of activity. Thus, perhaps this is some long-abandoned castle from some ancient civilization. Perhaps it has sat here, all these years, undiscovered! I intend to push forward tomorrow morning in force to see this Winter Kingdom for myself. I can hardly sleep for my excitement and anticipation. Peary will fall over dead when he hears of this!

feelings eventually evolved into something resembling love. To atone for his actions, Schächt freed the Amari from their servitude. Together, they escaped Europe. Schächt and the Amari sailed west toward Greenland and the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. They followed the expeditions of man, settling where they did and venturing beyond. The Amari propagated, mingling with the Inuit and Yupik tribes of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Siberia, learning their ways and their customs.

During the 19th century, these Winter Kings built a vast and secret empire. Covering everything within and slightly beyond the Arctic Circle, land other Kindred considered useless. However, a century later, as the European powers backed by their Kindred puppeteers began to war with each other and extend their influence, they soon reencountered the Amari. At the height of their power, during the first quarter of the 20th century, the Amari controlled major outposts within the Arctic Circle. In addition, they held the cities of Tromsø, Bodø, Yellowknife Bay, Longyear City, Point Barrow, Nuuk, Norilsk, Murmansk, and Arkhangelsk.

It is this last claim, that of Arkhangelsk, that ultimately proved a bridge too far and garnered the attention of the greater Kindred populace. Concerned Kindred launched a series of privately funded explorations into the north under the premise of discovering the North Pole and the great Northwest Passage, but were in fact, to locate the Amari. Financed in large part by individual interest groups, these Kindred used the great explorers of their age, including Sir James Clark Ross, Fridtjof Nansen, Robert Peary, and Sir John Franklin, as pawns and hunting hounds.

In 1921, with a better sense of the terrain, two European and one Russian prince launched the Northern War. The coalition targeted Amari-controlled cities via proxies and industrial agents. Later, they employed mortal ghouls to assassinate the Amari during the light of day. And finally, in 1930, Kindred struck an unrecoverable blow through sheer numbers and force of will. The coalition drove the Amari from the European, Asian, and North American continents. They hunted the Amari for another two decades, though most dug deep into the Arctic ice for safety.

Saturday, 10th of January 1891. Lieutenant Henry Crisp Commanding.

I barely know how to begin this entry, for today's horror begs that I question my sanity. With the death of Captain Randall and four others, I have taken command of the expedition, ordering our immediate retreat back to Camp Couraë.

Under a new moon, we approached the ice castle spotted by M^r. Lee yesterday. Within sight of it, we stopped briefly to rest, wherein the dogs began to go mad, barking at shadows. But these were not shadows. They were a man. A terrible man with ivory skin. Some lost race of cannibal snowmen. May God strike me down, it moved faster than anything I have ever encountered.

It tore M^r. Lamb in half and cut M^r. Howard's throat with one swipe. Captain Randall shot it with his revolver, and I know it pierced the creature's flesh, but it seemed to have no effect. The snow cannibal grabbed Captain Randall and bit into his throat. His screams continue to haunt me. Even now, hours later. As does the image of my captain's blood upon the snow, steaming in the cold night air. D^r. Kellick, M^r. Lee, and I are all who remain of the Randall Expedition, currently heading toward Camp Couraë. I fear we will not be able to outrun this monster.

Sunday, 11th of January, 1891. Lieutenant Henry Crisp Commanding.

Three others have joined the abominable creature. They have surrounded us. Should anyone find this journal, please see to it that our families are informed. Tell them that we fought to the last in this Godforsaken land. Tell them that we were brave.

While they never found Saga, they did discover Schächt in Murmansk. Transported back to the court of Prague in chains, they publicly executed him shortly after.

In the wake of the Northern War, the surviving Amari received a short reprieve, but it did not last long. A second culling came in the form of industrialization. For the next 60 years, as the world warmed, the landscape of the world changed. Those Amari who survived the Northern Wars by burrowing deep into the ice for safety and respite, found themselves suddenly exposed. Most perished during the process, but some believe a scant few have survived. Now the Winter Kings want more than mere survival. They demand vengeance, not only on those Kindred who slew their ancestors, but on those Kindred who have manipulated world events and created the global catastrophe that is climate change.

Nickname: Winter Kings

Clan Bane (The Pale Curse):

The Amari have learned to extend their nocturnal activities, operating under the polar night for weeks on end. But this adaptation has come at a cost. As such, they suffer a penalty of 10▯ Humanity to resist frenzy from fire and sunlight, instead of the normal modifier.

Favored Attributes:
Manipulation or Stamina

Disciplines: Obfuscate, Protean, Resilience

Rumors

"I've heard that an ancient Kindred with a chip on their shoulder about global warming is living up in Greenland. Yuri went up there to check it out, but we haven't heard back from him in months."

Saga maintains a stronghold in Greenland. Many Kindred adventurers flock to the island during the winter months in search of their lair, though few make it back to tell the tale.

"It isn't a safe time to be in Prague. I'm not even talking about the mortals either. An old-ass vampire comes here every year at the same time. Don't get in their way is all I can really say."

Saga travels to Prague once a year to visit the grave of Laszlo Schächt. Some also believe that Saga has a particular hatred of the Czech capital and is responsible for much of the city's unrest.

"Those activists from down in the bayou? They all up and disappeared. Well, not completely. I still see some of them around, but now they are Kindred? I don't know, it's pretty confusing, and if the prince finds out someone is Embracing without permission, it's bound to cause problems."

Saga is Embracing a new generation of Amari, plucked from the ranks of conservationists, environmentalists, and eco-terrorists. They are not discreet about it, and some cities are feeling the effects more than others.

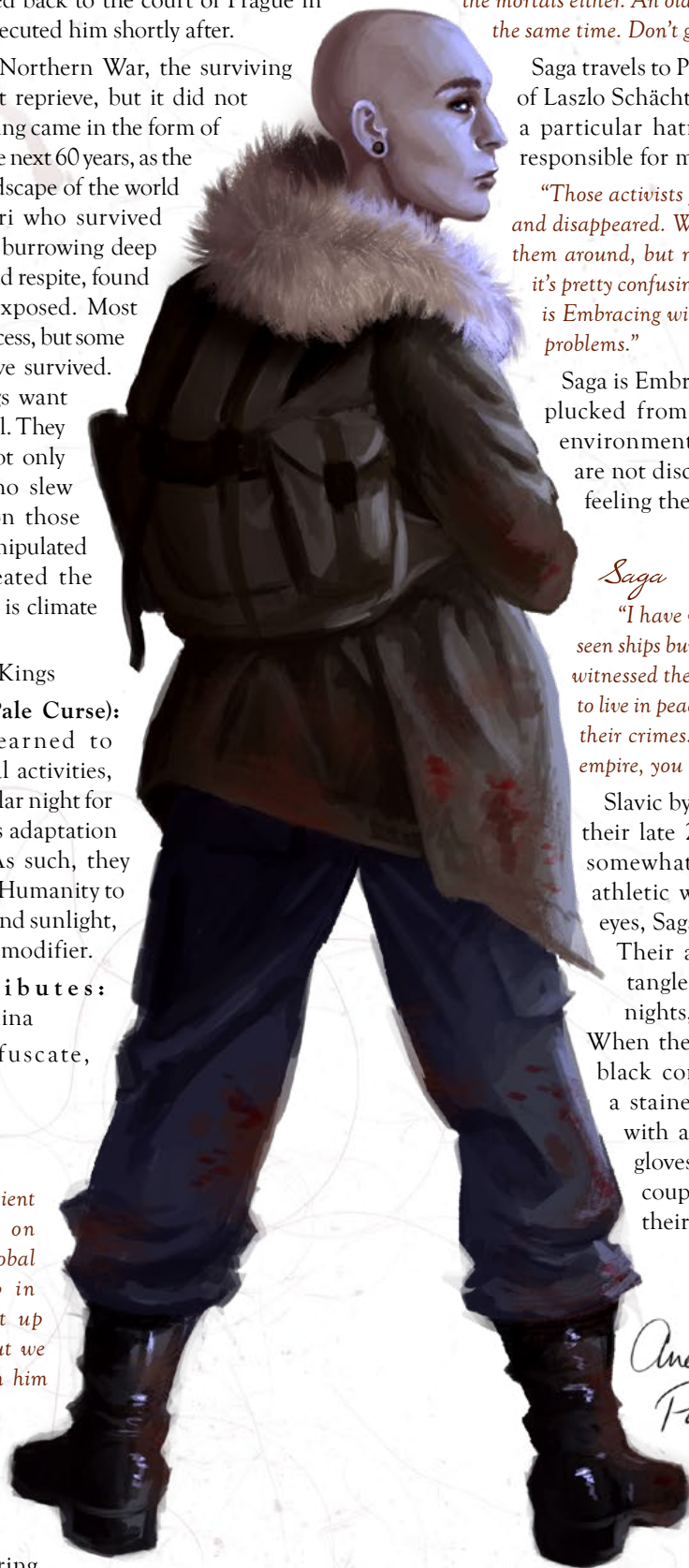
Saga

"I have watched cities fall into the ice. I have seen ships burn underneath the aurora. And I have witnessed the genocide of those who merely wished to live in peace. Your dead ancestors cannot pay for their crimes. But as the inheritor of their bloody empire, you certainly can."

Slavic by birth, Saga became a vampire in their late 20s, giving them a youthful and somewhat naïve appearance. Short and athletic with alabaster skin and ice-blue eyes, Saga is often mistaken for a woman. Their auburn hair was once long and tangled, pulled into a braid. In modern nights, Saga prefers to shave their head. When they walk the streets, they do so in black combat boots, worn cargo pants, a stained shirt, and a long dark jacket with a faux-fur hood. Black, fingerless gloves complete the ensemble, which, coupled with the backpack slung over their shoulder, gives the appearance of a world-worn traveler. The

only personal item they carry is a collection of bones — a set of wolf fangs and a set of raven wings. Representing Saga's nurturing past and their destructive future, they keep them in a worn leather pouch at their waist.

Saga's early history is unknown. According to legend, Saga hunted and killed a small wolf pup



*Andrea
Payne '19*

to survive, only to have their soul stolen by the pup's mother. A victim of the amarok, Saga was reborn, without their soul. But the Saga who stalks the world tonight is not the same Saga who led the Amari out of Europe in the 18th century. The former was an idealist and a dreamer. They thought they could carve out a piece of the world for their descendants. A kingdom far from Kindred politics and the pitchforks of hunters. A realm where the Amari could walk under the polar night for entire months at a time.

That dream did not last.

Over the decades, Saga watched as Kindred eradicated their people. They watched the Amari's numbers disappear like ice under a hot sun. They watched their arctic castles melt into the sea, taking their sunken children along with them. And with each new tragedy, Saga became less of the pioneer they once were and more of the monster the Kindred world portrayed them to be. Saga has since spent the last 20 years wandering the earth, studying their enemy, building support mechanisms, and executing hit-and-run attacks against major oil corporations.

Saga is a monster by any modern standards, but there is a wild, passionate necessity to their actions. Beneath the need for violence is a deep and bitter wound, one that has metastasized over decades. When Saga strikes, they do it with raw anger, coupled with a battle cry and crimson tears. It is the transference of their personal pain onto those believed to be responsible for it.

Clan: Amari

Covenant: Unaligned

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 4 (Urban Tracking), Medicine 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4 (Arctic), Weaponry 4 (Swords)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies 4 (Eco Terrorists), Allies 4 (Smugglers), Anonymity 4, Bloodhound, Claws of the Unholy, Herd 4, Indomitable, Language 4 (English, Russian, Yupik, Inuit), Resources 2, Riding the Wave Fighting Style 5, Swarm Form

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 2, Obfuscate 3, Protean 5, Resilience 5, Vigor 5

Devotions: Body of Will, Force of Nature, Gargoyle's Vigilance, Juggernaut's Gait, Shatter the Shroud

Blood Potency: 7

Health: 15

Willpower: 8

Humanity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 18

Initiative: 8

Defense: 8

New Mechanics

All Amari have the following abilities at no cost.

Conservation

Amari only lose one Vitae each week as opposed to one each day.

Rationing

Amari may crystallize their Vitae into a physical form, usually resembling a large crimson stone, though never more than Size 1. This costs one Willpower point to do, though they may do so multiple times. The stored Vitae comes from the Amari's own body and any vampire, Strix, or ghoul who touches it can retrieve it. The Vitae still causes vinculum and blood addiction in anyone drinking it. After one month, the crystal crumbles into dust.

Ayanda

"A shadow is just a grave. See? You've been digging."

— Ayanda

Death has a strange sense of humor. As the centuries march on, Ayanda appreciates it less and less, but one hot night at the end of the 17th century, in a small Xhosa village, she just wanted to understand the joke. She was always a curious child, and a bit too perceptive for her own good. The other children might say "contrarian," especially when she proved them wrong so easily. Her mother always chided her for the endless questions and worried her daughter's need to know everything would bring unhappy answers. As mothers often are, she was right.

The dead men weren't interested in the living, but they knew enough respect for them to make their purpose known: They had quarry. It was understood among the villagers that the affairs of dead men were theirs alone, and the elders made no objection. The woman they'd come for made her haven just outside the village since Ayanda's grandfather was a boy, and she'd always been a sore spot. The locals called her Unathi, since she hadn't bothered to give them a name, and she was either a witch or a crank depending on who you talked to. Some called her an *impundulu*, one of the lightning birds that feeds on human blood, while others whispered she was their keeper, claiming to have seen her commune with them in the forest, offering up corpses of the unclean and plague-ridden.

No one ever proved anything. The elders let her to stay for reasons that were never clear to the others, but the matter

was considered settled by the time Ayanda came of age. She'd wondered about Unathi since the old woman came to her grandfather's sick bed and banished the evil spirits causing his disease. Unathi sometimes called herself an *amagqirha*, a healer and diviner, one who bargains with the dead to end their afflictions on the living, but Ayanda wasn't sure she believed that. She'd met other healers, and none of them took their payment in blood.

The night the dead men arrived, Ayanda decided to follow them to the old woman's cabin. She wanted to see what they would do with her, and if they would finally reveal what she really was.

As she followed, Ayanda felt a cold foreign to the reaches of Southern Africa, one that ran deep like a shameful memory. She could almost make out the ghosts. She'd never felt or seen anything so beautiful or horrible, and it made her want to come closer as the dead men and their servants approached the cabin. But as they twisted their forms and called on strange, pale fires, her stomach knotted. She had no loyalty to Unathi — only an abiding curiosity — but she could feel the corner of death's mouth start to curl. She called out.

Ayanda doesn't remember a lot after that. She knows a ghost following one of the men killed her, with long, brittle fingers. As the life bled from Ayanda in waves, Unathi emerged from her hut, and tore out the heart of the man standing by the door faster than the dying girl could think. The other was more prepared. Ayanda knows the screams weren't just Unathi and the dead man, but she's never known what it was that flew from the forest at the old crone's bidding, hidden even from the dark.

Then Ayanda died, and she would've been happier if she'd stayed that way.

On the Run

She never saw her home or her mother again. The old woman told Ayanda that the dead men wouldn't stay dead long, and that the two of them had a long ride ahead. Stealing their assailants' horses, they abandoned the village and rode north.

Ayanda still isn't sure why Unathi Embraced her into her strange line of Shadows. It might've been gratitude for warning her of the assassins, but she's almost certain the old woman knew they were coming. That, and gratitude wouldn't fit with Unathi's personality as Ayanda came to know it. Unathi had little time for favors, or sincerity. As time went on, Ayanda realized most things the old woman said were untrue, but she wasn't sure if it was madness or a way of keeping others at arm's length.

She had reasons for wanting to be alone. Creatures called Sin-Eaters wanted the two of them truly dead. Unathi told her new childe these two-souled necromancers were once her allies, but that they'd turned against her when she tried to show them more profitable explorations of death. The difference between Unathi and the Bound, she would mutter, was that the fools never learned to be immortal as she was, or to profit as she did, making mortals and ghosts alike her pawns with a bit of blood. They could if they wanted to, but the cowards rejected her insights.

Ayanda was skeptical. Unathi wouldn't elaborate on the definition of "allies," or the exact nature of the dead men's grievance with her, but to know Unathi was to hate her, so it seemed. The old woman also bore a grudge against her fellow Mekhet, who seemed to keep their distance when she came to their domains. Unathi always claimed ignorance, but Ayanda suspected their ire had to do with the impundulu the two bartered with over the years; she knew the old woman was hiding graver crimes than she was willing to admit.

From safer havens in North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, Unathi taught her childe to speak for the dead over the next two centuries. Ayanda never had

much fervor for these lessons, or any real respect for her sire at all. Unathi was a joyless creature who spent her nights enslaving ghosts or preying on the living in the name of avarice masked as duty. She taught her childe to lie, cheat, and steal to survive, yet threatened to sell her to the Bound if she ever tried to leave. Ayanda knew she could never escape the countless eyes Unathi commanded beyond the veil, but she also knew it was only a matter of time before the old woman made a mistake.

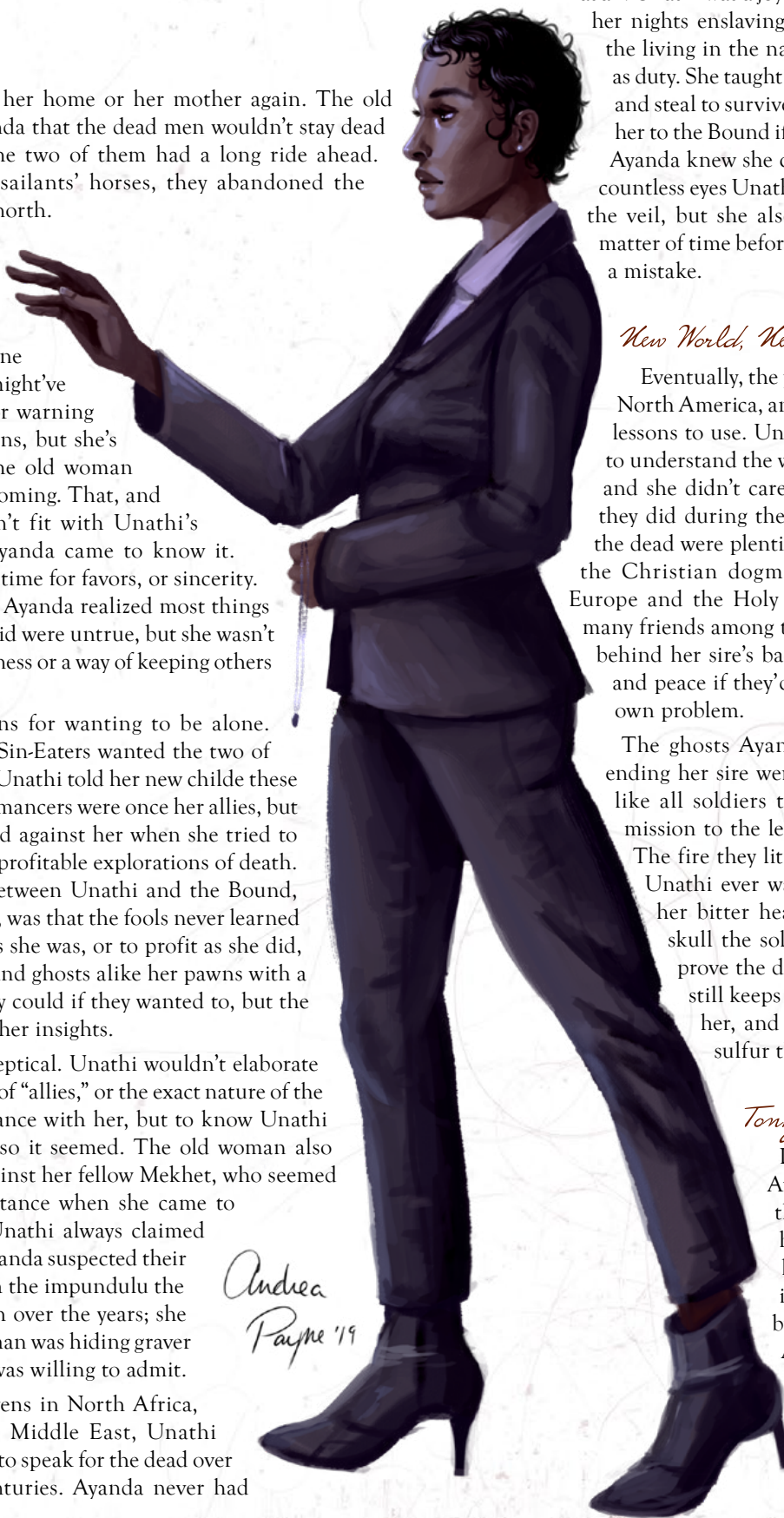
New World, New Dead

Eventually, the pair found their way to North America, and here Ayanda put her lessons to use. Unathi was too stubborn to understand the ways of western ghosts, and she didn't care to learn. Arriving as they did during the American Civil War, the dead were plentiful and easily led with the Christian dogma Ayanda studied in Europe and the Holy Land. She cultivated many friends among these American ghosts behind her sire's back, promising revenge and peace if they'd help take care of her own problem.

The ghosts Ayanda manipulated into ending her sire were soldiers in life, and like all soldiers they carried out their mission to the letter. Perhaps too well. The fire they lit consumed everything Unathi ever was, from her bones to her bitter heart, except a scrap of skull the soldiers brought back to prove the deed was done. Ayanda still keeps the mask they handed her, and it still smells more of sulfur than ash.

Tonight

Deep in her heart, Ayanda mourns what the old woman did to her, but over time she's learned to take solace in the power damnation brings. Unlike her sire, Ayanda revels in the world of the living. She understands the other side too well, and a Daeva lover taught her just how



much she was missing. Still, the dead have their uses. A traveling court of ghosts is her constant companion, and wherever she goes hauntings and possessions are sure to spike. Sometimes she deals with unquiet spirits as Unathi did, but as a rule she avoids ghost drama, especially if Sin-Eaters are about.

Among the covenants, Ayanda is a dilettante. The Ordo Dracul was attractive to her logical mind for a while, but she found their obsession with transcendence unappealing. She's also flirted with the Invictus, and even the Carthian Movement, but she's had the most common ground with the Circle of the Crone, who share her spiritual knowledge and interests. The only nonstarter is the Lancea et Sanctum, whom she sees as the most obvious heretics in history. Ultimately, Ayanda prefers not to pin herself down. She detests being held to one place, and she bows to other vampires only if it suits her interests.

Despite standing a little under five feet, and looking every bit the 19-year-old girl she was the night Unathi Embraced her, Ayanda cuts an imposing figure in the All Night Society. Mekhet tell campfire tales of "the Specter" and her court, and of the deathly horrors she brings down on those who fail to please her. Her status as an urban legend or ghost story is a bit of a put on, but she still questions with the sincerity of youth, and her curiosity is far more destructive than constructive these nights. When she visits a city, her dead servants leave riddles and puzzles in local havens, written in grave dirt or window frost. Sometimes they whisper into daysleep. When enough time passes, Ayanda comes to collect her answers, testing the creativity of the Kindred, or to see if she can crowdsource an enigma. She's just as likely to kill for an inadequate answer as she is to provide her own, and if a prominent member of the court reacts badly to her intrusions, she's happy to set her minions loose for a citywide haunting.

Blood of the Specter

Neither a lost clan nor a bloodline, Ayanda represents an odd variant of the Mekhet, but on the handful of occasions she's made progeny, her childer have been normal Shadows (for given definitions of normal). She might be able to create others like herself if she could learn more about her sire's own Embrace.

Clan Bane (The Taboo Curse): As Ayanda's Humanity falls, the Mekhet finds herself subject to the laws of the dead. When she gains this bane, she instead gains a ghost ban (**Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 128). Rank is determined by her current Humanity and the chart below.

Humanity	Ban Equivalent
10-8:	Rank 1
7-4:	Ranks 2 and 3
3-1:	Ranks 4 and 5

Rumors

"She diablerizes ghosts, I bet. Steals their creepy...ghost...powers. I mean, how do you think she does all that stuff?"

Ayanda's main source of Vitae these nights is ghosts, but she can't diablerize them, and she wouldn't do it if she could. She has a grudging respect for the dead, even if she frequently exploits them. However, the distinction between "devouring whole" and "feeding on" is lost on most Sin-Eaters. Whether they've heard of Ayanda's sire from whispers in the Underworld or witnessed the aftershocks of her presence among the living, the Bound consider Ayanda an eater of the dead. Many have grown willing to sink to the level of working with vampires to deal with her, and the idea is starting to gain currency over the Twilight Network.

"She wants to wipe out the Shadows and be matriarch of her own clan. The only reason she hasn't started Embracing is because she hasn't collected enough ghosts to take out the other Mekhet. Maybe not the whole world over, but still... She needs an army, and it won't be long before she has it."

Ayanda has no grand schemes to be Shadow Queen, but the nature of her curse is still a mystery. Xenophobic Mekhet say she isn't really one of their own, but rather a distantly related lost clan of warrior priests, who died out for focusing too much on the dead over the living. Others say Unathi was a Sin-Eater who ate her geist and replaced it with the Ka of a Hollow Mekhet. As noted, Ayanda's Embrace begets standard Shadows, but that doesn't mean her curse hasn't spread. Once, as she wreaked havoc on a primogen council that had particularly offended her, revenants of the city woke up to find their hungers sated, and hidden voices keen on knowing what they'd do next.

"Unathi's still around, crazy as ever, so you know it's gonna get medieval when she wraps her cold, dead hands around that bitch's neck. Being a ghost gives you a whole lotta time to plan payback."

Since Ayanda last rose from torpor, a handful of Mekhet elders have suffered nightmares in their daysleep, visions of a figure demanding they end the so-called Specter's Requiem. In an effort to silence the voice, several of these Kindred have called their childer and grandchilder together for a blood hunt of international proportions. One has even hired a Sin-Eater to deal with Ayanda's ghost court. For her own part, Unathi (whatever she is now) is haunting anyone she can, searching for the voice's identity and demanding protection for her wayward childer. She has other plans for her daughter.

Ayanda

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: None

Mask: Nomad

Dirge: Questioner

Touchstone: Her mother's shawl

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Religion) 4, Crafts (Embalming) 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Ghosts) 5, Politics 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Survival 3, Weaponry (Knives) 4

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Ride) 2, Persuasion (Ghosts) 4, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Acute Senses, Allies (Ghosts) 4, Cutthroat, Dream Visions, Fame 3, Honey Trap, Language (Dutch, English, French), Resources 4, Staff 5, Striking Looks 2, Undead Menses, Unnatural Affinity (Ghosts, Sin-Eaters) 2

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Auspex 5, Celerity 5, Coil of the Wyrm 1, Crúac 3, Dominate 2, Majesty 4, Obfuscate 3, Protean 3, Resilience 4, Vigor 5

Devotions: Cult of Personality, Enfeebling Aura, Ghost Skin, Pierce the Veil, Séance, Shatter the Shroud

Rituals: Cheval, Deflection of Wooden Doom, Pangs of Proserpina, The Pool of Forbidden Truths

Blood Potency: 7

Health: 13

Willpower: 8

Humanity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 18

Initiative: 6

Defense: 7 (Active Defense 12)

Notes: If a mortal asks Ayanda a question in isiXhosa, her mother tongue, she cannot use her Disciplines for the rest of the scene (including passive benefits) or harm the speaker as long as he doesn't begin to speak another language. The Pool of Forbidden Truths ritual can be found on p. 184 of **Secrets of the Covenants**.

New Devotions

Unathi taught Ayanda many ways to manipulate ghosts. For more on ephemeral beings and the state of Twilight, see **Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 122.

Ghost Skin (Auspex ●●●●●)

Normally vampires who attain the pinnacle of Auspex can only skim the Twilight world. With this Devotion, Kindred can join the ranks of the true dead.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

When activating Twilight Projection, the vampire can spend a Willpower to attune her form with ghosts, allowing her to see and physically interact with the dead. Treat her traits as the same as in her physical form. The vampire is ejected back to her body if she takes full lethal damage and meets Final Death if the damage is aggravated. By default, she can still only use Auspex in this form, but if she knows Pierce the Veil (below), she can spend a Vitae on activation of that Devotion to access other Disciplines.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

Pierce the Veil (Auspex ●)

A Mekhet who trusts his sixth sense can commune with the dead. If he puts his will into the effort, he can even bend them to his will.

Cost: None or 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: Scene

The vampire perceives any ghost present within the extent of his Kindred Senses and knows its Rank with a reflexive Wits + Occult roll. He can see or speak to any wraith hidden in Twilight form (provoking a Clash of Wills if necessary). By default, he can only use Auspex on ghosts, but if he spends a Willpower at activation his focus is keen enough that he can use other Disciplines as well, but he is still limited in that he cannot physically interact with them.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Stance (Auspex ●●●, Vigor ●●)

The Mekhet can grant ghosts a short visit to the material realm, or else force them into battle on his own terms.

To use this Devotion, the vampire must be in the presence of the ghost's Anchor.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Auspex vs. Resistance + Rank

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive

Roll Results

Success: The ghost teleports to her Anchor if not already present and gains the Materialized Condition for the rest of the scene, which cannot be ended prematurely unless the ghost loses all Corpus boxes to lethal damage.

Exceptional Success: The Condition lasts the rest of the night.

Failure: The ghost refuses the call.

Dramatic Failure: The vampire inflicts the Open Condition on himself.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

Bekaak

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, sayeth the Lord. Well, the Almighty ain't met me."

— Lead Drinker Joe, Sanctified mendicant

The corpse is tiring to look at. Not in the warm-and-fuzzy way you feel when head hits pillow, but rather in the insomniac realization that, all things being equal, you have a non-zero chance of dying in your sleep one night. The body plots to betray us the moment we rip it from the womb's warm oblivion, and the dead thing wears that treachery in the cracks that line its face. See your future in the fissures — did your hand just shake? Perhaps it's a tremble. A tremor! Better sit down. Better sleep. We so rarely value our youth while it lasts, and Father Time has come to reap your ingratitude.

The Bekaak are entropy's ragged maw, and in that they're among the few honest vampires. Time never breaks its promise, and the Bekaak are its Prophets, with a touch that starves the flesh of vigor and a bite that rips youth from the marrow. Yet they say they're unjustly damned for this honesty, denied the ageless perfection of their Kindred for a crime they've long since paid off in time served.

Time Immemorial

The Prophets weren't always this way. In the lost time of Turtle Island, the Bekaak were warriors and hunters, cowing the living for their hubris in walking the woods at night. They ruled their lesser Kindred, or anything else unfortunate enough to challenge their might, and they claim their dead confederacy spread from the Great Lakes to the reaches of the Saint Lawrence. Had the Camarilla somehow found their way across the Pacific, they might've found like minds and rivals in the New World.

The Bekaak agree on their storied past but not their downfall. Each version of their apocalypse follows a similar structure, but the details vary. The Prophets can't help but be truthful, but their perceptions of that truth have bent over millennia:

- A being of light came to the elders of Clan Bekaak, offering beauty and pleasure in exchange for servitude. It called itself an avatar of the Great Spirit and demonstrated its godly arts to the awe of the other Kindred, making frescos of flame and crafting storms from the very earth. The other dead bowed to this being, but the Bekaak refused. They knew a fraud when they saw one. It was not an avatar of the Great

Spirit, they said, but of Misiginebig, the dread Serpent. They punished the creature for its blasphemy, devouring it to send a message to its master, but by the time they saw their mistake it was too late. As it died, the being's arts changed the Bekaak, burning away their immortality. Their ageless empire broken, the Prophets have searched the world over for a spark to build it once again.

- The creature was born of darkness. Forced to wander the Earth by vile masters in the east, the thing was clever and cruel, and saw that the Bekaak were much like itself. It told them it would serve them for a simple tithe of mortal flesh, to fuel its own ends. But the Bekaak always saw through deceivers. They cast the creature out, warning it to never lay a hand on their living pawns. When it refused, and took their vessels as meat, they found their own use for its blackness. They drank deep of its broken soul, hoping to rid the world of its blight and bring it to their own ends. Little did they know that this was its design. The dark thing infested their souls with its own cannibalism, dooming their descendants to reenact their mistake or reveal the stain on their souls.
- The thing wasn't light or dark. It was beyond that dichotomy. It was far from home and needed a place to stay while the heat died down. The Bekaak's woods were deep, cold, and dead, far from the arid wrath of its enemies. It didn't make any offer except the promise to move on. The Bekaak were no fools, though. They could tell a liar with a look. They knew it hid untold power from them — and they were right. When they dragged it from its hiding place, it made another promise, that they'd know what truth really was when they were done. As it withered on their fangs, they realized in horror that it was indeed correct. In penance, the Prophets abdicated their power, and have spread the truth of time far and wide ever since.

Tonight

In the handful of cities where the Prophets thrive, the Lancea et Sanctum is ascendant. It's likely the covenant gave them that nickname in the first place, and since the colonization of North America, the church and the Bekaak have enjoyed a special relationship. The Sanctified see the

Prophets as undead proof of God's cruelty, and encourage them to use their entropic Discipline, *Vitiate*, to punish pride in the faithful, teaching harsh lessons on the inevitability of God's final judgment. Some hide for weeks in *Obfuscate*, laying enervating hands on wicked mortals until they repent their sins. Given this purpose, the Bekaak say the Sanctified saved their last members from Final Death, although some elders of First Nations descent see Longinus and his followers as invaders, who robbed the clan of its chance to rise again.

That said, even Bekaak who reject the church fall into similar roles. Prophets of the Mother's Army delight in punishing vain mortals and exult in taking on the Crone's true visage. Dragon Prophets conduct research into stasis and torpor, and those among the *Invictus* use their curse as a tool of the Masquerade, serving as CEOs long after eternally youthful Kindred would've caused suspicion. Carthian Bekaak are among the strangest, but some of the most fervent. And dangerous. Between their clan bane and their aging curse, these Prophets try to live openly among mortal radicals, to comprehend the purity of revolutions.

The Bekaak say their aging helps them hide among the kine, but the Kindred are doubtful. The only safe way for a Prophet to revert before he reaches skeleton levels of decay is torpor, making it difficult to thicken his Blood and hold to power. That alone means most Prophets linger past their expiration dates, but if it were just a matter of hiding their deathly pallor, it wouldn't really be a problem. In their dotage, Bekaak minds slip. An honest, senile vampire is a dangerous thing, especially one who can rip life from flesh. New Mexican Kindred recall an incident in the early 1800s, when an elder Prophet annihilated an entire pueblo having forgotten how not to use its Disciplines.

More insidious, the Bekaak can steal youth to regain their own. With effort, *Vitae* restores their forms, but the victim takes on their decrepitude. Kindred are the best sources, but humans do in a pinch, at least if no one's keeping too close an eye on the Masquerade. Outside the Sanctified, this does little to endear the already-strange clan to other Kindred, but the Bekaak are long past caring what others think. Only God can judge, and he already did. Let the other clans preen, they say. The Bekaak will bide their time.

Nickname: Prophets

Clan Bane (The Righteous Curse): Bekaak can only speak truth to those they deem worthy, whether they want to or not. Unless a Prophet spends a Willpower, her base dice pool on rolls to deceive mortals with higher Integrity is limited by her Humanity dots. Spent Willpower does not add +3 to the roll. This bane does not apply to rolls against ghouls or Kindred.

Favored Attributes: Composure or Presence

Disciplines: Animalism, *Obfuscate*, *Vitiate*

GERIATRIC (PERSISTENT)

Your mind has succumbed to the deleterious effects of extreme old age. Lose the 10-again quality on all mundane Wits-based rolls except Perception; any failure on such a roll becomes a dramatic failure. In addition, suffer a -3 any Social action that requires quick thinking.

Possible Sources: Bekaak curse.

Resolution: Regress in age sufficiently.

Beat: Suffer embarrassment or problems due to your addled behavior.

Rumors

"A Bekaak can end her aging forever if she bathes in the blood of a mortal willworker, but he must be a truly powerful witch to break such a curse."

Oceans would overflow with the blood wasted on Bekaak baths. Bathing in mage blood doesn't work, but Prophets often have a fanatic's resolve when it comes to their curse. The next soak will surely take. Few hunt mages directly (it's a good way to end one's Requiem), but some pay handsomely for other Kindred to take the risk. Other aim lower, and prey on people with minor psychic abilities instead. Supposedly, a whole coterie of neonate Prophets is searching for stigmatics touched by the God-Machine, hoping hypertechnology, rather than magic, holds their cure.

"They're not the only Kindred who age, you know. But they're the only ones who can reverse it. There are some folks who'd love to learn that trick."

More than a few bloodlines bear aging curses, and the Bekaak's ability to reverse the process is a source of desperate hope. Not that these vampires would *share* that secret if they could get their hands on it. To that end, one bloodline with a lot of capital has recruited non-Kindred allies for this purpose, with expertise on the synergy between physiology and the supernatural. With the promise of some very old money, hunters of the Cheiron Group are tracking down every Prophet they can, aiming for the biggest pay bump of their careers.

"There are survivors, folks who held against the curse or got out before things got ugly. I know. I met one."

Lead Drinker Joe is the wandering historian of his clan. Despite talking and dressing like a John Wayne knockoff, he couldn't hit the far side of a barn if it stepped in his way, and he's taken more bullets in his time than most can count. As one of the Sanctified, Joe tries to fill in the gaps of his clan's story by searching out Bekaak who haven't revealed themselves to the All Night Society, and for the last century he's been on the trail of a vampire he calls the Gravedigger. She's the only Prophet to have escaped the curse (he thinks), and he believes God is guiding him toward her. If he can pinpoint her remote haven, he'll need a team for an expedition into the tundra.

Dalton Smith

"Brothers and sisters, Time does not sow the field. He burns it."

Born to an affluent Salt Lake City family, Dalton was on the fast track most of his life. With an athletic scholarship to BYU and a carefully planned future in medicine, his mission for the LDS Church was meant to kickstart a bright future.

They always tell missionaries to go out in pairs, but one night, Dalton forgot his bag at a diner. His partner had gone to bed early, and it didn't seem like big a deal, walking just a block. He never did learn the name of the hag who Embraced him — she only told him to go forth and spread the Gospel.

Eventually the Sanctified found him, lost and alone in the big city. He tried his best to follow the Dark Father's teachings, but his upbringing was hard to break, and he couldn't accept the idea that he'd been damned against his will. However, when he realized he was aging, and realized the others found that strange, he finally had a sign that God did want him for a different purpose.

Just as he had as a mortal, Dalton undertook a mission. As he's developed his clan's unique talents, and as his aging has progressed, he's come to a more personal understanding of the Testament's teachings on damnation. Dalton observes a form of pacifism by attrition, one that he hopes serves God's equal need for wrath and love for the meek. He doesn't feel he has the right to judge mortals on the Lord's behalf, but he's honor bound to

deny unworthy Kindred their meals, using his abilities to sap vampires of their strength and their youth, reminding them that the flesh is weak even for the Kindred. With this ethos, he brings a healthy dose of Mormon theology, teaching that his clan was first among the damned of North America, testing the righteous of the Nephite and Lamanite peoples.

He's attracted a small following in his public persona as a schismatic Latter-Day Saint, and he makes good use of his flock to teach vampires all about humility.

Clan: Bekaak

Covenant: Lancea et Sanctum

Mask: Guru

Dirge: Conformist

Touchstone: Sara, a member of his mortal flock

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Christianity, Book of Mormon) 4, Medicine 3, Occult 1, Politics (Church) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Preaching) 4, Persuasion (Non-Violent Resistance) 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Fame 1, Flock 4, Herd 4, Lancea et Sanctum Status 2, Library (Academics) 3, Lorekeeper 1, Resources 1, Retainer 2

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Celerity 3, Obfuscate 1, Theban Sorcery 3, Vitiate 3

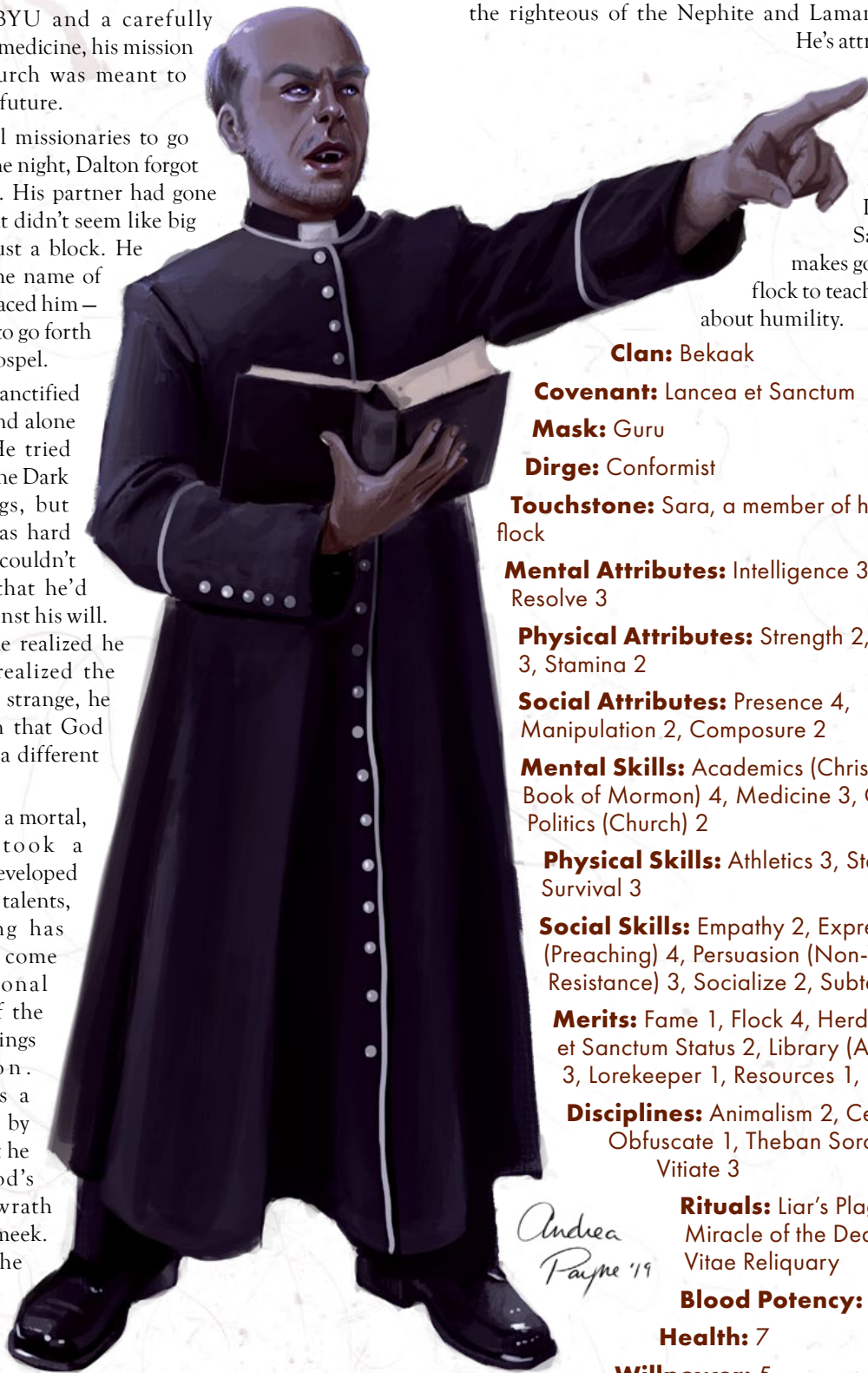
Rituals: Liar's Plague, Miracle of the Dead Sun, Vitae Reliquary

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 7

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 6



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Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 5

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 9)

Notes: The Flock Merit and Miracle of the Dead Sun ritual are on p. 193 and p. 196 of **Secrets of the Covenants**.

New Mechanics

Bekaak age like humans. This doesn't affect their physicality, but eventually their mental faculties degrade. If a Bekaak's apparent age remains above 100 years (give or take), she gains the Geriatric Condition (p. XX). At about 200 she stops aging, as she's little more than bone by that point. A Prophet can fully reset her aging by falling to torpor and reducing her Blood Potency by a dot.

Alternatively, she can prey on others to restore her youth. As she feeds from a victim, she can sacrifice a Willpower dot and immediately spend any stolen Vitae to revert: Mortals victims bestow five years per Vitae spent; vampires can yield 15 but must be of equal or greater Blood Potency. The Bekaak is limited in that she cannot revert past her age at time of Embrace.

Meanwhile, the victim gains an inverse amount of age. The transformation is ultimately only cosmetic (i.e., the victim remains his own physical age despite appearances), but it is permanent, short of cosmetic surgery or mystical healing. Vampires can remove each decade as a point of aggravated damage, but aging does not automatically fade in daysleep. Bekaak can regress their victims as well, taking on age rather than removing it.

Taking the Unnatural Affinity Merit might allow a Bekaak to regress using the blood of other supernatural creatures instead of Vitae, but preying on werewolves, mages, changelings, and the like presents its own challenges

Vitiate

Vitiate refines the Beast's appetite for life. The Bekaak have learned to channel their ceaseless aging into a weapon, an aura of entropy in which they clothe themselves and their prey. Victims subject to a Prophet's touch feel exhausted and weak, and even find their bodies turn against them.

Cost: None or 1 Vitae per active effect

Dice Pool: None

Action: None (for persistent effects) or Reflexive (for active effects)

Duration: Permanent (for persistent effects) or one turn (for active effects)

Like physical Disciplines, Vitiate has persistent and active effects. Persistent effects are always on and have no cost. Active effects are Reflexive, and cost one Vitae per effect.

Persistent: Anyone who touches the vampire or comes within close contact with her suffers a penalty equal to her dots in Vitiate to their next Physical action. If a character successfully makes an attack on the vampire at close range, he is considered to have touched her for the purposes of this effect to occur.

Active: By spending Vitae, the vampire can intensify her aura and nearly cripple her victims. For each point of Vitae spent, choose one effect from the following list. A vampire may spend additional Vitae to invoke multiple effects simultaneously, but no effect of Vitiate may be used more than once per turn.

- After a successful Brawl attack, instead of damage the vampire can spend a Vitae to inflict one of the following Personal Tilts on her victim: Arm Wrack (one arm), Blinded (one eye), Deafened (two ears), or Leg Wrack (one leg). She can also inflict the Mute Condition as if it were a Tilt. Other Tilts might be possible at Storyteller discretion; see **Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 280. Narratively, these effects represent a sudden affliction of old age or ill health (cataracts, tinnitus, arthritic joints, etc.) and last for a number of turns equal to the character's dots in Vitiate. The vampire can only inflict one Tilt per victim until it resolves. Outside of combat, touching the victim for a turn is sufficient to inflict a Tilt, rather than an attack.
- After a successful Brawl attack, the vampire can spend a Vitae to send an opponent to the end of the Initiative queue instead of dealing damage. For the purposes of bookkeeping, his Initiative is effectively 1. If the victim has already acted, this applies on the next round of combat. Once he has acted, the subject must reroll Initiative with a penalty on the result equal to the vampire's Vitiate dots. If the victim is already at the end of the turn order, this ability has no effect. A victim can use the queue-jumping ability of Celerity to negate this effect, but this provokes a Clash of Wills.

Null Space (Animalism •••••

or Obfuscate •••••, Vitiate •••)

The vampire turns her haven into black hole, feeding all life down its maw.

Cost: Half the Vitae spent on Lord of the Land or Oubliette (round up)

Requirement: The vampire marks an area for the purposes of Lord of the Land or Oubliette

Dice Pool: None

Duration: One week per dot of Blood Potency

An unwelcome visitor entering the area must spend a Willpower. If he does not or cannot, he gains the Beaten Down Tilt if violence breaks out. Once every 10 minutes, if she's present, the vampire can spend a Vitae to force this choice again.

In addition, the vampire doesn't need to hit her victims to inflict the active effects of Vitiate, but she can only affect one victim per turn, who must be within line of sight.

The vampire can reinforce this Devotion before it expires, at the same time as the connected Discipline effect.

This Devotion costs 4 Experiences to learn.

Hypatians

"What price would you put on a miracle? Wait, don't answer yet! What about a whole barrel?"

— "Doctor" Oswald Loganhopper, Carthian conman

Step right up!

The wagon's seen better days, but the doc still carries all the cures for what ails you. Come one, come all to the only genuine, bona fide medicine show still in operation, established 18-none-of-your-business. *Marvel* at the doctor's toothsome smile! *See* his colorful potions! *Always* read the fine print. People are too quick to trust physicians, really. "What's in that syringe?" would've been a good question five minutes ago, before your white count was a few quarts short and your brain was on fire. You hope it's just fire...but flames do burn away pretense. Now you see past the white coat and the smug diagnoses. Now you see big pharma's got big fangs. Apples won't keep this doctor away, but a nice stake will.

The Hypatians distill immortality down to a formula, with a dash of human viscera for taste. Born of an experiment that only half worked, the Kindred regard these Blights as a necessary evil at best and an open wound on the Masquerade at worst. The Hypatians don't worry too much about the witch hunts they leave in their wake, though. Externalities have never concerned them.

Playing God

In 1846, a British alchemist called Hypatia turned herself into a vampire. She took notes. She left instructions. She left her legacy to the world and was murdered for it.

That's the soundbite the Hypatians like to give, at least. According to the Blights, Hypatia was an alchemist of great talent, but her immortality obsession lay with vampires rather than Prometheans. She believed she could replicate the Kindred tendency toward stasis without becoming one of them, using alchemy to transform her own blood into a catalyst of eternal life.

With her veins on tap and mixing her blood with scraps of human corpses prepared using Created techniques, Hypatia

developed her own branch of alchemy, one with no need for Pyros. The process she would later term Blood Chymistry, let her alter her physiology to inhuman degrees, but it couldn't make her immortal. Eventually she realized she needed a more powerful catalyst, and with the help of her elixirs, she had the means to acquire it. Her Kindred victim never gets a name in her notes, but the Hypatians often make a toast to its sacrifice.

Using Blood Chymistry, Hypatia combined her victim's Vitae and her own Pyros, concocting what she thought was an elixir of eternal youth. While her progeny acknowledge that this isn't *quite* what she accomplished, the Blights argue that Hypatia should still be lauded for siring a new clan of vampires, perhaps the only one with an identifiable progenitor.

Hypatia didn't share whether she felt this was a success or a failure, but she did find immortality more difficult than expected. For one, she couldn't Embrace — her botched attempts to bring other alchemists into "true" immortality burned whatever bridges she had left with them. Too late she realized Pyros was the key ingredient, and she couldn't get her hands on any without facing hostile former colleagues, or somehow catching one of the rare Created.

Instead, she turned to the All Night Society, but she didn't last long with them either. The court of London mocked her story, casting her out as a charlatan. She didn't last long after that, but it wasn't Kindred who ended her brief Requiem. Prometheans would've understood the Disquiet she was spreading among mortals, but whether in arrogance or blindness, she never saw the torches coming.

Hypatia's notes survive by way of the one true success she had after her self-Embrace: her ghoul. A trusted lab assistant, he'd later meet his regnant's fate after using her procedure and alienating the wrong backers, but by that point he'd circulated his master's findings among several continental alchemists. Few of them put any stock in Hypatia's journals, but they did circulate copies as a curiosity. Eventually, that curiosity took on a life of its own.

What...Are They?

Unclear. The Hypatians say they're Kindred, nothing more, nothing less, but their lack of a true Embrace puts lie to that claim. However, in all other ways they operate the same as the five clans, so the difference may well be academic. Or temporary. Blights with any knowledge of Kindred mythology believe that, like Ancient Egyptian Mekhet and their posthumous Embrace, it's only a matter of time before they learn to make childer the right way.

Alchemists who've heard Hypatia's story have a different theory. Humans touched by Divine Fire know the obsession of a demiurge when they see it: Hypatia made her own body the great work rather than an assembled corpse, and inexplicably succeeded. The Hypatians then are a kind of Created/Kindred hybrid, vampires who spread Disquiet, or undead Prometheans that feed on blood to restore their Vitae humour. Some Prometheans take that theory a step further, arguing that the evidence points to Hypatia being one of their own. In their view, the Blights represent a failed endpoint on the Pilgrimage.

Tonight

Hypatia's notes only survive in copies of copies, much of the biographical missing or incomplete. Indeed, the name "Hypatia" might've been appended long after her death. Nonetheless, the Blights have traveled far and wide with her Blood Chymistry, whether they're former alchemists with a taste for blood or vampire obsessives who got more than they bargained for.

The Hypatians present themselves as something between a traveling medicine show and mad scientists. Unfortunately, humans react about as one might expect to those professions; it's rarely long before villagers arrive with tar and feathers. Because of that, the All Night Society is by far the safest community in

which Hypatians can hide, but vampires are wary of the attention the Blights bring down. Even to Kindred buying their merchandise, the Hypatians are a complicated problem. Blood Chymistry grants powerful advantages, but users soon find their vessels grow hostile, or worse, investigate their affairs in the All Night Society. The longer Kindred rely on the Blights, the less they can control the kine.

To stay a step ahead of their reputation, Hypatians play at being Haunts and Lords, or hide among the Ordo Dracul and Carthian Movement. The Order is the easiest for Hypatians get along in. They have similar sensibilities, and most Defiant assume Blood Chymistry is just another set of Scales – which can be a problem if the Blight isn't a member. The Dragons also aren't strangers to witch hunts over the cause of science. As for the Firebrands, the Hypatians provide a weapon the Revolution doesn't normally get to wield. Carthians understand the laws of social change, but little of those governing science and the occult. Carthian Blights do undercover work, sabotaging members of other covenants by feeding them potions without clarifying the side effects.

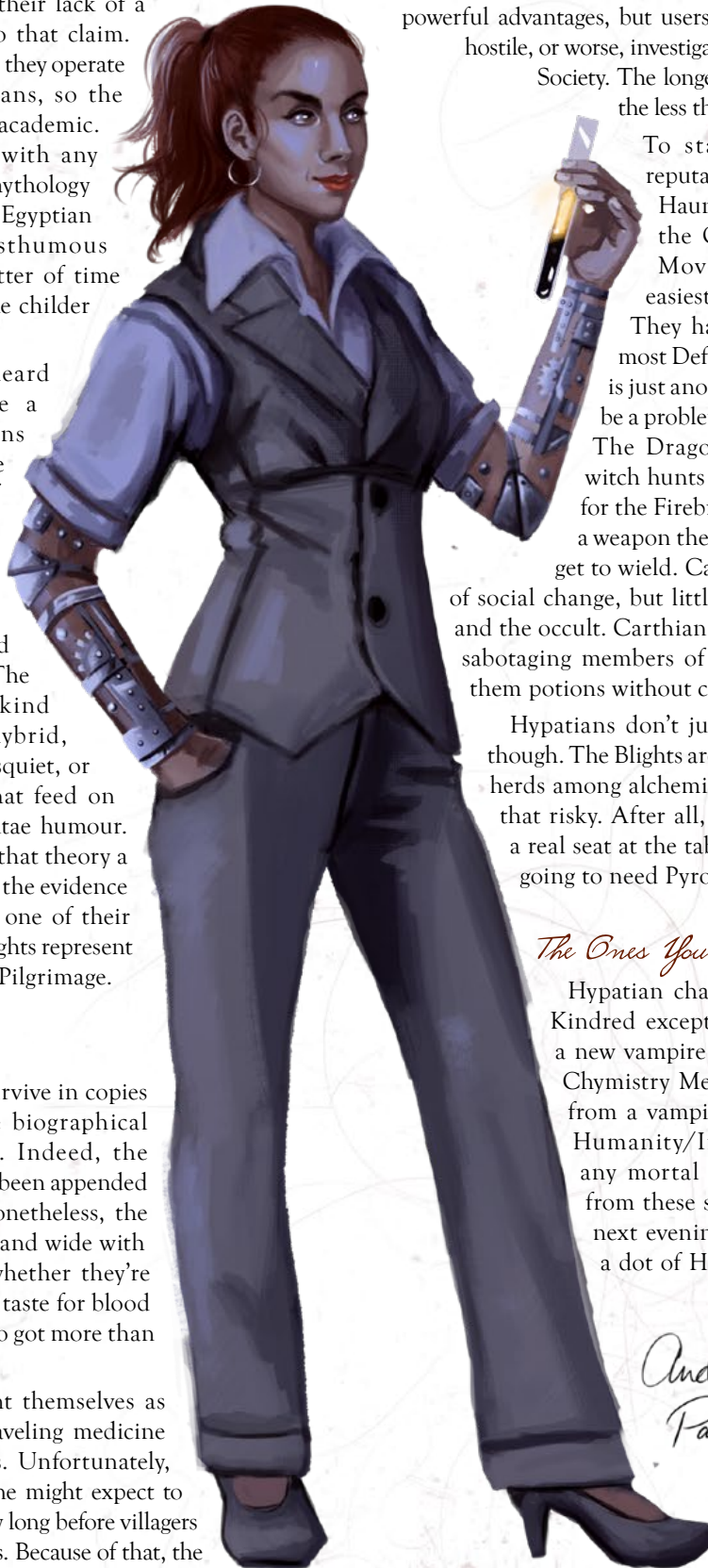
Hypatians don't just move in Kindred circles, though. The Blights are fond of cultivating allies and herds among alchemists, even if their bane makes that risky. After all, if they're ever going to take a real seat at the table with the Kindred, they're going to need Pyros – and recruits.

The Ones You Can't Trust

Hypatian characters operate the same as Kindred except for the Embrace. Creating a new vampire requires a dot of the Blood Chymistry Merit (below), a point of Vitae from a vampire, and Pyros equal to 10 – Humanity/Integrity. Properly brewed, any mortal consuming a potion made from these substances dies and rises the next evening as a Blight. The sire loses a dot of Humanity once the procedure completes. In this way, a Hypatian can self-Embrace. For the purposes of blood sympathy, a self-Embraced character treats the Vitae donor as her sire.

Nickname: Blights

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Clan Bane (The Paranoiac Curse): Hypatians sow mistrust wherever they go. If a Blight fails a Social action with a human, roll her Humanity minus the subject's Composure. On a failure, the mortal takes an instance of the Suspicious Condition (p. XX). As long as the Condition remains, the vampire must make this roll after *any* major interaction she has with the human. If he would gain a fourth instance, the subject and anyone else with Suspicious gains the Obsession Condition with the following objective: Destroy the vampire. This bane does not apply to Kindred, Touchstones, ghouls, or those with a full blood bond to the vampire.

Favored Attributes: Resolve or Stamina

Disciplines: Animalism, Nightmare, Resilience

SUSPICIOUS

Your character distrusts the vampire. For each instance of this Condition (maximum three), she gains a +1 on her effective Composure when interacting with him. This does not apply to Discipline resistance. You may also add this modifier to Social rolls made to convince others of your misgivings. Success bestows that person with an instance of Suspicious, and the character replenishes a Willpower. This Condition fades without resolving in about two weeks.

Possible Sources: Hypatian clan bane.

Resolution: Thoroughly investigating what the vampire is up to. Ruining the vampire's reputation. Death of the vampire.

Rumors

"Brother, stay away from dead men, but most of all the ones the others call Blights. They want the fire in your belly more than any hundred-hand ever has."

Blights who regret their choice think the alchemists are right, that Hypatians are a strange kind of Promethean rather than Kindred. Some even believe they could learn to walk the same Pilgrimage and regain mortality...but most decide harvesting Vitriol is the quick fix they need to burn off their vampirism. After all, many Hypatians are former alchemists; victimizing the Created comes naturally. So far, none have been successful, but it's common for a Blight (even one without this desire) to warn other vampires about Prometheans, assuring that if a throng passes through her city, the Kindred will do half the work for her.

"I knew one of those. Walerian. Useful fellow with all those chemicals...right up until the murders began. Yes, I know the joke. No, I'm not kidding. But it wasn't my buddy with the pretty potions doing the killing. See, he'd been careless whilst dining out. Bit of a sloppy eater. The beasts coming back from the dead weren't revenants, but they were mighty hungry. Ever seen The Thing? When we got rid of poor Walerian, we got rid of the Things."

Like any vampire, a Blight who kills her vessels has to face the music sooner or later. Normally, that's to the tune of a starving revenant, but the Hypatians aren't quite normal. Sometimes the victim's corpse tears itself apart as dead flesh mutates into grotesque, cannibalistic monsters. Prometheans call them Pandorans, which Kindred find to be an inadequate term once they've lost a limb to the little fuckers. Hypatian-made Pandorans feed on Vitae, and short of a blowtorch and a lot of luck, the best way to destroy them is bringing Final Death on their hapless creator.

"Hypatia didn't die, she just went into hiding. I'm telling you, everything we know about her is a lie. She wasn't the first. She was the last."

A handful of Hypatians believe vampires like themselves were once brothers and sisters to the Nosferatu, forced to live off the land rather than risk spreading mass paranoia in the cities. They lived as medicine women and witch doctors, and they sold their wares to the desperate and took blood as payment. But their reliance on potions and their distance from humanity made them easy prey when the corpses ran out. Conspiratorial Blights hand out pamphlets and zines declaring Hypatia was the last of these vampires, and that she used mortal alchemy to cut a loophole through extinction. Members of a British Hypatian coterie think they might have tracked her down, if the stories are true about a mobile alchemical lab known for grave robbing. If Hypatia did escape Final Death, she may be conducting a bigger experiment than anyone thought possible.

Ida

"Blood is the means of production, children, and we wield the hammer."

Ida Lovac worked steel in the Great War as the men went off to die. It made her strong and angry, but it also made her wonder how all those machines worked. She liked to tinker, and over the years she turned that into a passion, one that helped hold back the rage in her heart.

When steel wasn't enough, she turned to her own flesh, learning the ways of alchemy almost as an afterthought. She met her fate somewhere in the dust bowl, where she'd hidden from ignorant eyes. The thing she killed that night had a thirst so great it parched her. At first, she thought it was a patchwork man from the books she'd studied, but it was much better than that.

She followed the thing's notes to the letter, and that made her good and dead. It didn't take long to find her way to the Kindred. She didn't care for the way vampires exploited the living, but she saw that the Order of the Dragon might help her tinker and show her better ways to hold back that big bad Beast in her head. Of course, she used to be a union girl, so she didn't always care for the Defiant's brand of meritocracy. Sometimes the Carthians tried to bring her into the fold, but they were just babes in the wood compared to the Reds of her

day. In a way the Firebrands never could, the Dragons taught her that the means to power is in the Blood, not the people.

The people, then, need new blood. The ghouls she's breeding are hardier than most. She's not sure they *are* ghouls anymore. They bleed different things, like bile and phlegm, and they can stand up to a vampire, both his fists and his blood. She wants to send them all over the world, spread their seed so they can show the Kindred what humanity's really made of. She still has some refining to do, naturally; other people don't much care for her children, but she's always got time to tinker.

Clan: Hypatian

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Mask: Competitor

Dirge: Nurturer

Touchstones: Nancy, her mortal granddaughter

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 4, Crafts (Butchery, Metallurgy) 4, Investigation 1, Medicine 4, Occult 2, Science (Alchemy) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl (Wrestling) 4, Survival 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3

Merits: Blood Chymistry 4, Contacts (Alchemists, Geneticists) 2, Giant, Grappling 2, Herd 3, Language (Polish), Professional Training (Alchemist) 2, Ordo Dracul Status 2, Resources 2, Retainer 3, Safe Place 3, Staff 3

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Coil of the Ascendant 3, Coil of the Wurm 1, Nightmare 3, Protean 2, Resilience 3, Vigor 3

Scales: Blood Cleansing Ritual, Day-Wake Conditioning

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 12

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5

Size: 6

Speed: 14

Initiative: 4

Defense: 7

Notes: Professional Training and Grappling can be found on p. 46 and p. 62 of the **Chronicles of**

Darkness Rulebook. Ida's Asset Skills are Occult and Science.

New Merit: Blood Chymistry (•-•••••)

Prerequisites: Resources ••, Safe Place •, Alchemy Specialty in Science

Effect: Your character has trained in Hypatian alchemy. Each dot is a discrete effect. To prepare components, roll Intelligence + Science minus the procedure's dot rating. Exceptional success doubles the duration. Dramatic failure means the substance explodes or becomes corrosive, inflicting a point of lethal damage (even to vampires). Using the same potion twice has no additional effect.

All procedures require a donation of one Vitae, which can come from any vampire. Human blood works as well, but not as efficiently: Halve the shortest possible duration, to a minimum of one scene. The chymist can also substitute Vitae for a point of Pyros, which grants the 8-again quality on the preparation roll.

Drawback: Subjects of Blood Chymistry make others uneasy. As long as they benefit from procedures, users suffer a -2 penalty on Social actions, inflicting the Suspicious Condition on any dramatic failures. For Hypatian users, instead treat Humanity as one dot lower for the purposes of their clan bane.

- **Cinnabar:** The chymist feeds a mix of turpentine and mercury sulfide to a human and induces vomiting. Drying out the result yields a chalky red bezoar, the consumption of which heals bashing and lethal damage equal to donor Blood Potency (start with the most severe) and accelerates the body's response to minor injuries for a night. In humans, a point of bashing damage heals in five minutes. In vampires, one Vitae heals three points of bashing damage.
- **Colostrum:** After heating human bone marrow and salt of tartar until only a burnt residue remains, the chymist can inject the substance into a subject, granting him the 8-again quality on two Physical Skills of his choice. This lasts a number of hours or scenes equal to donor Blood Potency.
- **Ens Primum:** The chymist saturates a human brain in oil of vitriol over the course of a night, then electrifies the runoff. A vampire or ghoul consuming this substance gains the ability to use Physical Intensity (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition** p. 91) on one Mental or Social Attribute. This lasts a night per donor Blood Potency.
- **Ens Veneris:** After rendering a human heart, the chymist combines the result with colcothar and sal ammoniac. Drinking this substance temporarily increases a vampire's Blood Potency by a dot or bestows a single dot on a ghoul. This lasts a night per donor Blood Potency.

- **Terra Figulina:** The chymist pickles a freshly severed human hand or foot for a few nights, then removes the bones and kneads the remains into clay. Spreading this over a subject's abdomen grants him the ability to form a bestial homunculus from his flesh by spending a Willpower point. The creature uses the traits of a Minion Horror (*Chronicles of Darkness*, p. 143) and obeys simple commands.

It can feed on blood to restore Willpower and is vulnerable to fire like Kindred. At sunrise, the creature transforms back into raw clay. This ability lasts a week per donor Blood Potency.

Drawback: Birthing a homunculus inflicts a point of unavoidable aggravated damage. To heal, the subject must devour the inert clay, if able. Otherwise, damage remains until healed normally.

Nhang

"You know our name, for you have given us many. You may know us by a different name depending on the tongue, but the First Thief called us Nhang, and we have not pardoned you."

— Mariam

This clan is lost to history, though similar beings in mythology are widely known. The term 'Nhang' comes from Armenian mythology and is an umbrella term for different malignant creatures that live in water. However, one being in particular has earned this name, a shapeshifting monster that drowns and drains humans of their blood. Similar to the Neck and Kelpie, the Nhang mimic the human form to lure unsuspecting people into the water.

This clan was never fated to last for long, but it has survived surprisingly well despite the fact that it seems to have passed from Kindred memory. These Nhang, also called Water Serpents, are unique in how they are active during both night and day in the water.

What makes them a threat, despite their almost extinct status, is their hatred toward Kindred, and the possible connection they have to Strix.

Behavior

The Ordo Dracul has heavily studied the Nhang's ability to shapeshift. According to them, the Water Serpents empty their victims of blood to take their shape. Unless the victim dies from blood loss, the Nhang don't seem capable of changing their form. Transforming into a person is of crucial importance for the Nhang, as it allows them to forage on land, blend in, and bring even more unsuspecting victims to the water.

The Nhang have had a difficult time adapting to modern society, but their tenacity allows them to lie in wait and gorge during the summer. Their victims commonly consist of lone

tourists bathing in the still water of a pond or surfers who thought they could catch some beautiful waves in the early morning. The older Nhang are trained to survive for an extended period without blood. They can enter a torpor-like hibernation during tough periods, such as the low tourist season.

The Nhang's appearance baffles many, as it's different from humans. After the Embrace, their looks slowly change over time: Their skin hardens and changes color to resemble scales and their bodies grow long. While still humanoids, they have reptilian features, hence their nickname: Water Serpents. The Nhang can change the color of their skin to better resemble the color of the water in which they currently lurk. Pollution makes it harder for the Nhang to hide, as their skin color tends toward blues and browns, which doesn't help in areas of industrial waste, which tend to have a green or red hue. Additionally, the Water Serpents also have a nictitating membrane (a translucent eyelid) over their eyes, which allows them to hunt in water.

Though the Nhang are famous for killing their victims, they don't necessarily have to do so. Prey is sometimes hard to find, and some Nhang get overzealous. Most times, they drink from an unwitting victim. This person experiences the bite as a small nip on her leg, which causes a strong feeling of excitement. Many of those victims foolishly come back to find out why they got aroused over being bitten, and it's even better if they bring a friend.

There's an agreement among the Nhang that one should not target those who are the relatives of other Water Serpents. They often wear jewelry made of shells or the bones of different

sea creatures to mark themselves. One important factor that distinguishes the jewelry as a Nhang protection amulet is that the charm consists of local species where the Water Serpent resides. These pieces of jewelry are also commonly given to lovers. The Nhang also oppose the act of blood bonding between members of their coterie as it puts the entire group in jeopardy if they decide to put one member above everyone else and ignore their duty.

The Nhang has a strict hierarchical system, similar to the Kindred's own. There's one Water Serpent at the top, much like a prince but only ruling a few. It's the leader of the coterie who decides who should be the day guard and if a Nhang can Embrace a new member into the group. When a group becomes too large to hide efficiently, it splits in two, and those who leave most likely never see the other group again. Just because they are few in number doesn't mean that all the Nhang get along, and territorial disputes often turn violent.

When Nhang change their form to blend in with humans, they use that look to lure more humans to the water. Common tactics are to claim that someone is drowning in the lake or to go to the group with which their victim traveled and suggest going bathing in the moonlight. Like a crocodile lying beneath the surface, the Nhang stare at the world outside of their haven, waiting for an opportune moment to strike.

From the Watery Depths

The eldest Water Serpents speak of the Nhang ancestors living in lakes and rivers, having to consume meat to obtain a form. These stories predate those of their being vampires and indicate that the Nhang believe they were

something wholly other before ever being blood drinkers. They drank the life of the sea creatures around them and could not exit the water to live on land.

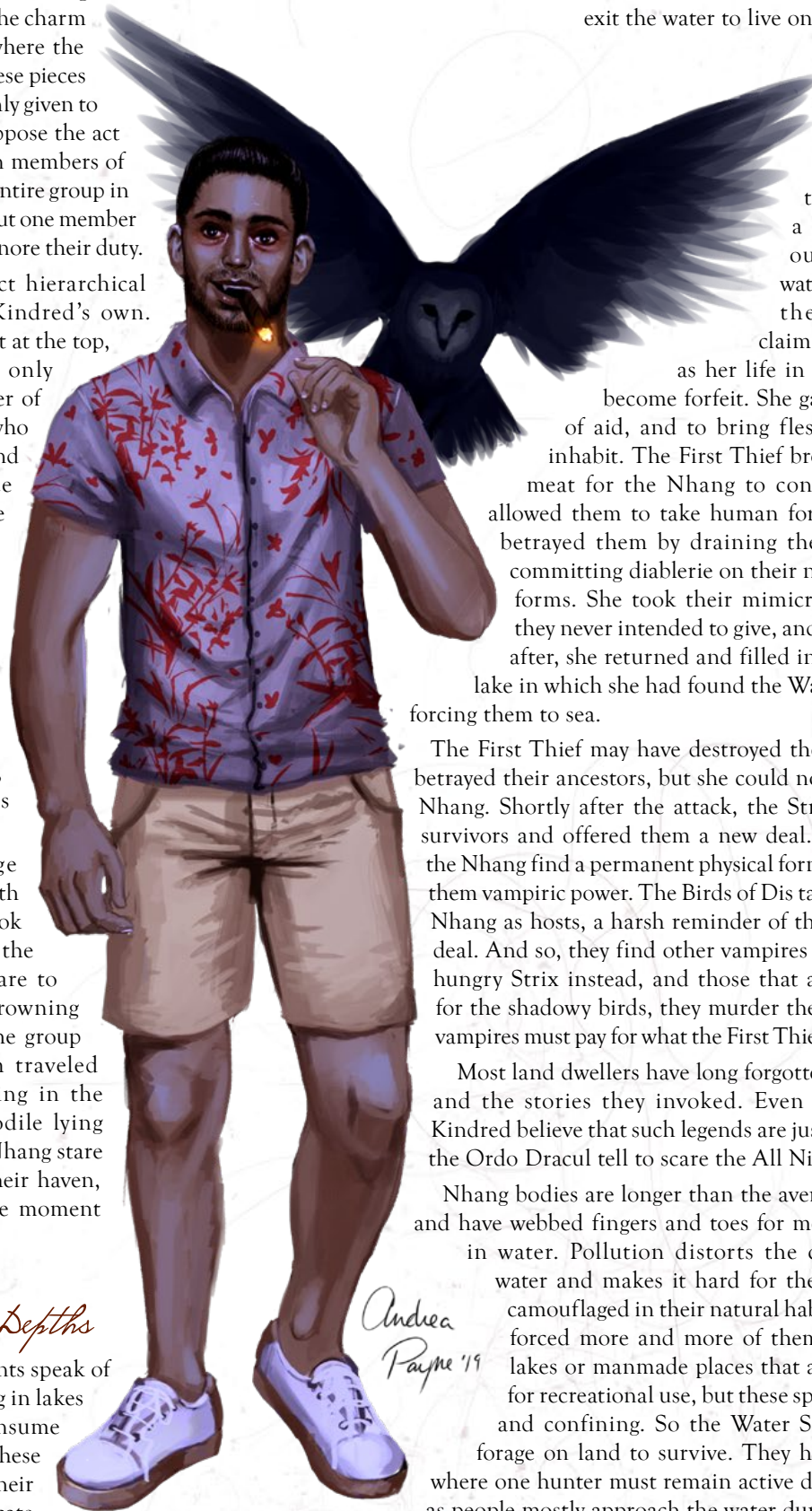
The story goes that a Ventruë, the First Thief, heard their plea for a life in flesh outside of the water. She gained their trust by claiming a kinship as her life in the light had become forfeit. She gave a promise of aid, and to bring flesh they could inhabit. The First Thief brought human meat for the Nhang to consume, which allowed them to take human form. Then she betrayed them by draining them of blood, committing diablerie on their new weakened forms. She took their mimicry skill, a gift they never intended to give, and fled. Shortly after, she returned and filled in the brackish lake in which she had found the Water Serpents, forcing them to sea.

The First Thief may have destroyed their home and betrayed their ancestors, but she could not destroy the Nhang. Shortly after the attack, the Strix found the survivors and offered them a new deal. They helped the Nhang find a permanent physical form and granted them vampiric power. The Birds of Dis take the unruly Nhang as hosts, a harsh reminder of their ancestors' deal. And so, they find other vampires to give to the hungry Strix instead, and those that aren't marked for the shadowy birds, they murder themselves. The vampires must pay for what the First Thief did to them.

Most land dwellers have long forgotten the Nhang and the stories they invoked. Even many of the Kindred believe that such legends are just lore or tales the Ordo Dracul tell to scare the All Night Society.

Nhang bodies are longer than the average Kindred, and have webbed fingers and toes for moving quickly in water. Pollution distorts the colors of the water and makes it hard for them to remain camouflaged in their natural habitat. This has forced more and more of them into inland lakes or manmade places that are kept clean for recreational use, but these spaces are small and confining. So the Water Serpents must forage on land to survive. They hunt in packs, where one hunter must remain active during the day as people mostly approach the water during sunlight.

The Strix taught the Nhang how to Embrace and create



*Andrea
Payne '19*

more, but their fledglings often die before reaching maturity as they cannot fully survive in the water, and outside the water they are cursed just like the rest. It takes great care for a new Water Serpent to reach maturity and learn the Disciplines she needs to survive, meaning that the clan's numbers remain low.

When they Embrace, the Water Serpents must live in water teeming with fish so that the young can feed and look after themselves while the elders sleep. As the childer age, the young Nhang wean off animal blood. If they have still not learned how to hibernate, they will starve in winter.

Nickname: Water Serpents

Clan Bane (The Curse of the Depths): The Nhang's haven is also their watery prison. Nhang cannot stand being on dry land for too long, and exposure to air when low on Vitae can be as lethal as standing in full sunlight. A Nhang's skin becomes brittle and fragile if she has less Vitae in her system than her Humanity rating. Any damage she suffers while in this state is upgraded, from bashing to lethal and from lethal to aggravated.

Favored Attributes: Stamina or Wits

Disciplines: Celerity, Protean, Resilience

Rumors

"It's the anniversary of the Iron Lake Man; furthermore, I heard another person went missing... A young child disappeared after a night at the lake, and the entire community scrambled to gather a search party. Weeks passed, and the grieving mother remained at the lake in hopes that her child would be alive, or she could find a body to bury. The mother thought that she was going crazy, as she kept seeing a young man who she thought looked much like her son. She finally returned home after seeing the man, then miraculously discovered the rotten corpse of her child. Do you think it might've been to make her go away?"

The Iron Lake Man is an old rumor of a suspected Water Serpent. Due to the drawback of the Nhang's Flesh Form, they are forced to find new victims to not look like a decrepit corpse. Stealing a child's body means that they can go longer without having to consume a victim entirely, giving birth to the rumor of the Iron Lake Man. The first rumor went identically to the most recent version – a child goes missing, and family members question their sanity when they see an older version of their lost one. Some suspect that it's not a singular Nhang living in the lake, but an entire pack.

"Did you hear about Josie in 11D? Her entire family died while staying at a cabin near the lake. Her statement to the police was that they vanished one evening, but the cops say that the deaths were at least two months prior to their discovery. She just sat there in the cabin alone for months while their bodies decomposed in the lake! What's even sicker is that they found shell jewelry inside the corpses, just like the one Josie carries around her neck."

The Nhang commonly wear or gift their handmade jewelry to those who they wish to mark as unique to a Water Serpent so that others won't kill them. They also store possessions in rotting bodies on land, though why they do this no one knows.

Josie must be special to a Nhang to carry one of their shell amulets, but now she's in protective custody as the police suspect she is responsible for her family's death. It's only a matter of time before her Water Serpent protector comes looking for her.

"I've heard a rumor that there was a standoff between a group of Nhang and a pack of Gangrel after the Savages moved in to expand their territory. They were completely obliterated, and the Nhang were feasting on their corpses..."

Those unfortunate enough to move into Nhang territory, like a lake district or a beach, risk complete destruction at the hands of the Water Serpents. The Nhang seek out Kindred in retribution for the First Thief's betrayal and won't hesitate to kill any who come too close to their territory. What's more is that they happily commit diablerie as a matter of course, and then wear the Kindred's body to search out more of their kind.

Gevorg

Gevorg grew up in a poor farmer's family that, after years of drought and poor harvests, was forced to take drastic actions. Being the eldest, he took the burden upon himself.

For days he walked with his siblings along the dried-out river, until they reached an area where the river hadn't dried completely. The still water had a putrid smell, and out of it crawled a single Nhang. Facing Gevorg, the Nhang asked him to hand over the children and promised their safety. The creature handed him a bag of seeds, said to be able to survive the drought, as payment for his siblings. While the seeds weren't the lifesaver he had been praying for, it was enough for his remaining family to get through the year.

Gevorg decided to come back to the place where he met the Nhang previously. The river had recovered slightly, as the drought finally ended. No one showed the first year he returned, but the second year he went back, a woman was sitting by the river. She introduced herself as Mariam. Nervously, she explained her younger brother had run away and she tried to chase after him but hurt her ankle.

Gevorg sensed something was off but was intrigued by the woman's beauty. He told her he had seen a child further up the river and brought her to a young boy he had seen on his way down. Mariam gladly took the boy with her, not knowing that Gevorg followed her and saw her feed. Horrified, he tried to run, but Mariam stopped him before he could escape. He had intrigued her, and she offered him the Embrace. He accepted, unsure of what kind of life he was signing up for.

Now Gevorg is old, verging on ancient. He lives in a resort lake district in northern Germany with his coterie. The area is surrounded by rental homes used as vacation spots for weeks at a time by families from all over Europe. His primary goal is much like any other Nhang: He wishes to capture and torture a vampire before bringing them to the Strix, ensuring he won't be the next one offered up as a host. The Owls have him under scrutiny after hearing rumors that Gevorg's priority lies elsewhere rather than

the Nhang's duty to the Strix. During summers, Gevorg spies on his distant relatives and likes to listen in on how their lives are going. Though Gevorg is fully aware of what happened to his siblings, he long ago made peace that sacrificing them to Mariam is what enabled him to survive. He is instead protective of his distant relatives who visit the lakes every summer.

Clan: Nhang

Mask: Nurturer

Dirge: Survivor

Touchstone: Gregor, a distant relative

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Jewelry) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl (Claws) 5, Stealth (Staying Motionless) 5, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Acute Senses, Double-Jointed, Indomitable, Riding the Wave 3, Safe Place 2

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Dominate 2, Protean (Aquatic, Claws, Prehensile Tail) 4, Resilience 2, Vigor 3

Devotions: Flesh Form, Water Hibernation

Blood Potency: 6

Health: 10

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 4

Size: 6

Speed: 19

Initiative: 10

Defense: 9 (Active 12)

Nhang physiology

Nhang have slightly different physiology from other Kindred. Water shields them from direct sunlight, but only the parts submerged in water.

Their inner eyelid allows them to see underwater if the water is clear. The default size of a Nhang in their natural form is 6, and they have webbing between their fingers and

toes that enables them to swim faster. Nhang hide in water, and their skin can adjust its color to mask them further, as long as the water is uncontaminated with toxins that change the color of the water.

Water Hibernation (Protean •)

This devotion works similarly to Unmarked Grave. A vampire submerged in water becomes immune to almost any harm, including stray rays of light that penetrate the surface of the water.

Cost: 0 Vitae

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Requirement: The vampire is fully submerged in water.

Duration: Indefinite

The vampire remains submerged under water without surfacing for as long as she desires. If the water evaporates or is otherwise removed, the Kindred is damaged, taking one point of bashing damage when uncovered. If the vampire is fully exposed, she becomes susceptible to sunlight.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Flesh Form (Protean ••, Resilience •)

Flesh Form allows the Nhang to inhabit the body of her victim. She does not put on the flesh as though a suit, but instead consumes the body completely and uses it to shape her own form. The Nhang must empty the victim of his blood and devour the body to take his shape.

Cost: 3 Vitae/day

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: Indefinite

The Nhang becomes identical to her victim in both look and sound but does not necessarily gain the ability to adopt the person's demeanor or attitudes without prior study. The Nhang's transformation lasts until she decides to return to her original form. The Nhang must spend the Vitae cost to maintain the shape each night when she awakens or otherwise revert to her normal state.

For each week the Nhang remains in her stolen form, the body ages by a decade. There is nothing she can do to prevent this, as the flesh she consumed decays inside her. The Water Serpent may retain the form long after it would naturally die based on the rate of aging, but she soon begins to look like a shambling corpse.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Subject 09-12: Amara

*"I'm out from under your control now, and I'm never going back.
I'm more than you ever meant for me to be."*

Mortals have long since imagined having powers to explore realities or dimensions beyond their own. They seek answers from realms beyond, claim to see the dead, and try to interact with them for better or worse. They tell tales of possession, of roaming spirits entering bodies that aren't theirs and changing their host's personality. Some rely on priests to banish spirits they consider unholy. Others focus on the energies in the world around them, believing the arrangement of furniture and fixtures can directly affect their quality of life, or that meditating quietly and performing specific exercise can align their inner power to flow more efficiently. Spiritualists and mediums alike feel there is something in the world they can't see, but can manipulate, and they seek to find it and tap into the metaphysical around them. They beseech crystals for energy and inspiration, using them to focus their thoughts or empower their psyches.

The Kindred know you can't get blood from a stone. Some of them, however, wonder if there's a way to get by without any blood at all. If there is a metaphysical force that flows through the world, they can try to harness it and feed themselves that way, to better blend in with those around them and further transcend their current state. If Vitae has its own power, and the Kindred can persist as they are and manifest their will through their Disciplines, it stands to reason they could at least try to reach out with their power in other ways. Siphoning off energy and vitality from mortals using less-conventional methods paves the way for the next step in the vampiric condition. The Dragons, of course, are fascinated by this prospect, and certain members of the Ordo Dracul have attempted to harness the power of the mind to reach past its physical limits. Touching the minds and thoughts of others is the first step to pulling them away and using them in place of the Vitae that sustains the Kindred.

Embraced as part of an experiment run by the Ordo Dracul, Amara belongs to clan Ventrue. She has limited knowledge of her clan's Disciplines, but a healthy command of the Coils and Scales of the Dragon. Tied in Vinculum and often Dominated to remain docile in the face of her life as a lab rat, only the unexpected side effects of her master's ministrations allowed her to escape in the first place. While on the run, she resists the call to return to her sire, whose blood bonds are heightened by the Mystery of the Voivode. Tempted to use her ability to satisfy herself from afar, she holds off from the

fear that it would open her to their overwhelming presence again, drawing her back under her sire's spell.

Siphoning Sustenance

She never sired anyone out of affection; Amara learned that the hard way. It was one of her master's rules; knowing her childer personally would "surely loan bias to her experiments." Sparing Amara or her other subjects painful or damaging treatments wouldn't help her make the progress she sought, and so she remained distant. The latest in a long line of attempts to perfect the vampiric condition, Amara – or "09-12," as she was exclusively called – was the "lucky" one who showed more promise than any others, proving her sire was on the right path to her intended transcendence.

It all came down to the blood. So messy, but so necessary. They could free themselves from so many of the banes that paid for their immortality, but the blood always remained. How freeing would it be to find something else, something subtler and more potent, perhaps even less deadly; something that would lead to fewer accidents, leave less of a trail behind, and prevent messy Embraces born of lingering Vitae from an unwitting and unwilling sire.

Posited on the theory that blood is just a carrier for an otherwise-unharnessed energy, her sire's experiments focused on training the mind to reach out. The untapped potential stored within a human body, by whatever name it was given – the soul, chi, psychic ability – could surely be farmed in a more effective way than by drinking the blood within. After failing to extract anything useful from blood on its own and failing to find a connection between unaltered blood samples and samples of Vitae, Amara's sire turned her attention to the powers within a vampire's grasp. When even Disciplines and existing Coils and Scales failed her, she shifted her focus to creating something new. Her attempts failed to create exactly what she was looking for; rather than devise a way to draw energy inwards, Amara displayed a way to push her own consciousness out.

Though failing to serve as an alternate method of feeding off of kine, Amara's newfound abilities appeared instead to draw on the Vitae of vampires themselves. Without displaying the usual side effects of addiction and blood bonding, other Kindred – subject and scientist alike – found themselves

drained to the point of starving, waking each night without the reserves with which they'd gone to rest.

In the little time between the manifestation of Amara's new power and her escape from the Order's facility, her sire managed to learn that, through her new power, Amara could part her consciousness from her body. Walking the world as an intangible spirit, imperceptible even to the most wary and augmented eye, she could travel through most any obstacles, and at seemingly unlimited range. Her other abilities were of no use to her in such a state; no Coils, Scales, or Disciplines, innate or invoked, worked while parted from her physical self. Instead, she had two primary abilities on which to rely when parted. She could enter the minds of slumbering subjects and skim the topmost layer of their memory, allowing her to discern their activity in the most recent hours, and most notably where they had lain down to rest. While unable to feed, she could siphon the Vitae consumed by other vampires to use to sustain herself. They appeared as glowing figures in the dark, burning bright red in an otherwise cloudy and shifting landscape. Merely touching the figures dimmed their glow, offering her a surge of strength.

Though unable to discover a limit to the distance she could travel from her body, Amara quickly uncovered the weaknesses she still carried; remaining parted past sunrise one morning proved nearly fatal, as her unprotected self was left subject to the sun. Fleeing as quickly as she could to return to her body, she woke the next evening still fighting off the frenzy it had inspired.

Her most triumphant discovery led directly to her escape; while unable to funnel Vitae to herself when awake and whole, direct contact with another allowed her to sap their strength of will instead. Able to resist her sire's command for the first time, she played the part of the obedient slave

until opportunity arose. Amara broke out of her bonds and escaped the facility. She remains on the run, determined to maintain her freedom.

Amara's number-one priority is avoiding recapture. She will do anything in her power to blend in with the kine and stay securely hidden from her sire. Knowing the stable of ghouls and other retainers kept by the Order, she avoids drawing attention to herself as much as possible. With no way of knowing who acts as her sire's eyes and ears, she's hesitant even to step outside for long during the day. She limits her contact with mortals and only interacts with Kindred indirectly, prodding at their slumbering minds in the small window between their rest and her rising.

Alongside preserving her freedom, Amara seeks to maintain her Humanity. She isn't willing to sacrifice mortal lives in order to cover her own tracks, and even more unwilling to put her friends and family in danger. She has few connections among the Kindred, remaining fairly isolated as an experiment under the oversight of the Dragons. The blood bond tying her to her sire offered her limited freedom, as between the tie and domination, she was sure to return when ordered. However, the practice ensured her sire knew the names and faces of everyone important to her. She avoids visiting them in person now, certain they're under surveillance. Instead, she uses her unusual powers to visit them undetected, and ensure they aren't being tormented or used by the Order or other Kindred.

Amara's eventual goal is to escape her town entirely and start anew in a different city. Holding her back is her attachment to her aunt, the Touchstone that keeps her clinging to her Humanity. If she can somehow convince her aunt indirectly to leave town, she has nothing else keeping her so close to so much danger. Without a destination in mind, she isn't sure she could even find someone else to keep her grounded should she need to flee without her aunt.

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Recognizing the Beast

Other Kindred recognize Amara as one of their own; even her Coils and Scales can't prevent that. Ghouls, if they see her out in the day, might recognize her face if they've been sent after her. Otherwise, unless she has spent enough time outside to show substantial damage, she's difficult to place as a vampire. Her most telling habit is her reliance on full-coverage clothing, even when it might be unseasonable.

So far, only Amara exhibits power beyond the usual scope of a vampire. Her creator seeks her escaped experiment night and day, sending ghouls out when the sun prevents her from pursuing Amara herself. Not trusting the company of others, Amara isolates herself as much as possible; she knows well that her sire won't let her disappearance stand and will have others looking for her. She uses her Scales to withstand the sun and remain hidden as much as possible, abandoning the nocturnal life of the Kindred. She even avoids mortals, unsure of who might be under the control of one of her sire's cronies. While she could use her new gifts to keep track of her sire, she would have to sleep in the day, while her sire does the same; unwilling to leave herself at risk during the night, she only lets herself sleep in occasionally, checking in briefly to make sure she stays two steps ahead and alone.

Perpetually on the run, Amara doesn't have much in the way of a haven. She frequents homeless shelters, couch surfs in the homes of mortals she can manipulate, or stays in cheap hotels and motels when she has the cash. Tethered to her town by her eccentric aunt, she's trying to work out a way to take Tanya with her and get further away from her sire. Though her aunt has offered her home to Amara, she avoids staying with her, knowing her sire will look for her there. Unwilling to put someone so precious to her in danger, Amara struggles to maintain their connection while keeping them both safe.

Rumors

"We've tolerated the Dragons long enough. Now one of their abominations has gotten loose! Her own creator can't track her down, and Kindred are frenzying all over town – I've had enough. If any of the Ordo Dracul wish to remain here, they must submit to a blood bond. And as for the one that's escaped...well. Anyone who brings me her ashes will be handsomely rewarded."

The prince, already unhappy with the Ordo Dracul's presence in his city, has lost his patience now that Amara's escaped. He has declared Subject 09-12 as kill on sight and given his ultimatum to the Dragons. Unwilling to force them out with a decree, he's given them to chance to gracefully leave on their own or acquiesce to his conditions. Of course, it's likely he's underestimating their abilities, as the Dragons regularly push the boundaries and limits of the average vampire. While some go along with the decree, members of the covenant who have kept their membership a secret from the All Night Society are creating a cell to push back against his restrictions. With each passing night, the tension rises

and the bounty on Amara's head grows larger. Her sire only cares about the way the escape reflects on her; her carefully recorded and encrypted research means she can recreate the experiment once the heat has died down.

"That old lab isn't really shut down, you know. There's some kind of secret government facility in there, but they run it out of the basement, you see, so we don't see that the lights are on. You can hear the screaming at night, though. People are in there, getting experimented on! Genetic enhancements, gene splicing – you name it, they're doing it down there. Mark my words."

The old lab is shut down, that's for sure. There's a newer one, state of the art, on the other side of town, dressed up to look like a drab set of office buildings. That's where the screams come from, and where the Order houses their experiments. Behind the reinforced walls and layers of security, they toil away in plain sight, confident in their camouflage. When the alarms suddenly blare to life and people are seen coming and going, even the kine take notice. With their security threatened and an experiment on the loose, the Dragons in the city turn against Kindred and kine alike to keep their secrets – even if it means burning everyone else to the ground. Amara's looking for safety in the city, or safe passage out of it, but the covenant has taken things a step further than anyone would like: reported her as a missing person to the police, putting everyone in the city on high alert.

"You said a voice for everyone! Well, everyone's been vanishing, and you haven't been doing anything about it! It's affecting the Church, the Movement, the Conspiracy – it's everyone in the city! What are you going to do about it? We need answers, and we need to protect ourselves! This isn't about the Masquerade anymore; it's about saving our own damn hides!"

In a Carthian-run city, Amara's presence is wreaking havoc. She's hiding as best she can by using her Scales and keeping to a human sleep cycle, but her feeding has set everyone on edge. Kindred all over the city have been "spontaneously" going into frenzy or, more strangely, dropping into torpor; without much to go on, the Kindred are on edge. The louder Firebrands are rallying for the loose council of their leadership to act, and the more hotheaded among them have started protesting (rioting, if you ask some of the other covenants). On the verge of violent anarchy, the city's Masquerade is held together by a thread, and will unravel unless the source of the issues is discovered.

Amara

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Mask: Follower

Dirge: Visionary

Touchstone: Aunt Tanya

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2 (Spirits), Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Stealth 2 (Hide in Plain Sight), Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy 4 (Intuitive Insight), Expression 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Anonymity 2, Fast Talking 3, Indomitable, Iron Will, Safe Place 2

Disciplines: Coil of the Dragon (Ascendant) 2, Dominate 2, Resilience 2

Scales: Beseech the Sleeping, Command the Mind, Day-Wake Conditioning, Psychic Leech, Spirit Tether

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 9

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

New Scales

Somewhere between Scales and something stranger, Amara's powers draw upon the altered state of being that comes with pursuing the Order's Mysteries. Unless otherwise noted, once a vampire has completed the procedure to learn the modified Scales, the power is innate; the procedure need not be repeated every time.

Spirit Tether

Requirements: Resolve ••••, Coil (Any) ••

Procedure: The vampire concocts a mixture of hallucinogenic substances and Vitae, and either ingests or injects himself with the substance. Once under its influence, he repeatedly lulls himself into a near-torpid state, laying his body to rest while keeping his mind aware of his surroundings.

Outcome: This Scale functions as Twilight Projection (Auspex •••••). While using Spirit Tether, the vampire has access to the subsequent Scales she has learned.

Psychic Leech

Requirements: Spirit Tether, Empathy •••

Procedure: The vampire attunes her disembodied mind to Vitae by anointing places — or even people — with her own blood. At least one location must be marked for each dot of her Blood Potency. Vitae previously fed to ghouls or used in bonds only serves to attune this way if it was given the same night as the other anointments. She then tethers herself and returns to each of the anointed points, drawing her own energy back into herself as she goes.

Outcome: The vampire is drawn to the presence of Vitae when she is tethered, represented by a red glow surrounding figures carrying it. By spending a point of Willpower, the vampire can drain up to her Blood Potency in Vitae from her target and use it to feed herself instead. If this causes her target to begin starving, he must resist frenzy as his Beast rages against the unseen assailant.

Beseech the Sleeping

Requirements: Spirit Tether, Expression ••

Procedure: The vampire must sleep through the night and spend an entire day under the effects of the Blush of Life. This procedure must be repeated each time she wishes to use Beseech the Sleeping.

Outcome: After tethering herself, the vampire can reach into the recent memories of sleeping mortals, discovering anything she wishes about from the past 24 hours. Anything she learns from her target is colored by their emotions, and she can only learn about their own experiences.

Command the Mind

Requirements: Manipulation •••, Dominate •, Psychic Leech

Procedure: While tethered, the vampire must “Embrace” her own body, spending a permanent point of Willpower and a point of Vitae to imbue her body with the ability to absorb energy the way her spirit can.

Outcome: The vampire can spend Vitae to siphon Willpower from her target. If she is in direct, skin-to-skin contact with another sapient being, she can drain Willpower from them equal to half her Blood Potency rounded down, to a minimum of 1 per Vitae spent.

Twice-Cursed

*"It's not that you can't always get what you want.
Sometimes you just have to take it by the throat."*

— Chet Lawrence, Twice-Cursed contractor

The curse of vampirism isn't static. It's a virus. That doesn't make it alive, but it's clever, and it spreads in defiance of the worst conditions. Like the living, the dead adapt, but change in Kindred is less a product of natural selection and more the afterbirth of fear and self-loathing. The Twice-Cursed are the latter. What begins as despair evolves into a weapon, and that weapon cuts deeper than mere flesh.

The Twice-Cursed aren't quite a clan. By their name and own admission, they suffer a far worse fate. Seemingly born of Daeva and Nosferatu blood, the Twice-Cursed have few of those clans' gifts and all their defects. Like the Haunts, they repulse their victims; like the Serpents, they fall in love with them. That tension mocks the Twice-Cursed every night of their Requiems, an endless struggle between isolation and desire few Kindred ever experience.

A History of Rejection

The first true records of vampires like the Twice-Cursed appear at the end of the 19th century in the northeastern United States, roughly coinciding with a tuberculosis outbreak. Among the living, a toxic blend of folk medicine and mass hysteria was taking hold. The people of New England believed their dead family members were rising from the grave, returning to drain the life of their loved ones. In desperation, families would exhume the corpses of their loved ones and burn their organs, eating the ashes as a form of protection. With salacious horror, big city newspapers wrote of Mercy Brown and Frederick Ransom, young victims of the disease whose survivors defiled their corpses. Since then, the New England vampire panic has been a cautionary tale for mortals, a parable on the dangers of small-minded, small-town thinking.

The Kindred aren't so sure. Journals kept by Sanctified priests in Exeter, Rhode Island, record an upsurge in their flocks at this time. These new vampires said they'd died in the plague and risen a few nights later, no sire in sight, and claimed they were all cast out by their friends and families when bloodlust overcame them.

Spikes in revenant risings are sadly common in epidemics. Naïve vampires kill plague-ridden victims out of mercy or

expedience, then find themselves with little accidents a few nights later...but these Kindred didn't have the hunger of the half-damned. Instead, they bore the uncanniness of the Nosferatu and the obsession of the Daeva, fixating on their victims yet repulsing them. The priests wrote that God was punishing these Twice-cursed souls for defying Him. Determined to return to their loved ones despite His plague, they bore the Serpents' curse for the sin of lust; possessed of thirst for their own lifeblood, they bore the Haunts' curse for the sin of gluttony.

Unfortunately, Kindred of the other covenants had no use for theological explanations. They quickly turned on the Twice-Cursed, blaming them for spreading the disease among the kine in the first place. Still bearing mortal memories of the travesty at Salem, the Sanctified protected as many of them as they could, believing they should answer for their sins with service to the Spear, but most of the strange revenants met their end at the hands of the locals.

Credit and Blame

The Twice-Cursed descend from a few survivors of the New England brood, but the cause of their rising is still unknown. Incurious vampires think the obvious answer is the right one, and that a bit of Haunt and Serpent blood soured in the grave. Some claim a mixed coterie took advantage of the plague, making TB-stricken villages their unfettered feeding grounds. Under the weight of the epidemic, their Vitae mutated and merged instead of spawning revenants.

Others say it wasn't a specifically Daeva and Nosferatu problem. The Embrace goes wrong sometimes, especially if given for the wrong reasons. With enough mistakes in a small space of time, patterns form. Perhaps the Kindred of New England were just as prone to hysteria as the humans. A Ventrue resurrects her last mortal grandchild to keep a grasp on her legacy, realizing too late what she's robbed him of. A Mekhet sees an untimely death and tells himself he's doing a kindness, that his curse is the least awful of all the clans, but soon he learns the price of lacking self-awareness. In that light, the Kindred of New England were covering up their own sins.

A few Kindred say the plague survivors couldn't account for the modern Twice-Cursed population, small though it is. Instead, they look for answers in older stories of familial loss and vampires. The Aztecs warned of *Cihuateteo*, people killed in childbirth who then became demons, snatching babies from cribs and making their lovers go mad. In Malaysia they call them *pontianaks*, ghosts who shift between beastly and beautiful forms and feast on human organs. The Twice-Cursed don't take credit for these myths, but they can't deny seeing their Requiems in the details.

Tonight

Without a way to make obsession a two-way street, or to turn unease into full-blown terror, the Twice-Cursed lean into the other name they've acquired: Stalkers. They can't deal with humanity on its own terms, but the Kindred are another matter. Clothed in darkness like a Nosferatu, with the speed of a Daeva and the strength of both, the Twice-Cursed have carved a role as vampire-hunting vampires, whether as contract killers for the covenants, or ritual murderers for worse things flying through the night.

Some Twice-Cursed build elaborate guilds around this profession, giving their curse an air of legitimacy, while others act as loners and dirty open secrets, the ones you come to when no one else will do. The bitter hunt vampires for petty revenge, teaching the Kindred what it really is to be desperate. That reputation all but guarantees nights of bloodshed and rejection, but it does provide a fatalist thrill to fill in the gaps of their Requiems. Without the human element, violence comes too easy to the Stalkers, but they have the benefit of knowing they aren't good for much else.

Yet violence has its limits. It doesn't leave room for family, and indeed most Stalker attempts at the Embrace end with the victim's painful death. The trick is having nothing to lose — so little that the Kindred would burn every last Stalker if they knew the truth. To Embrace, a Twice-Cursed vampire must have a connection with her victim, one that reminds her what is to be human. Like her forebears in New England, she always returns to the ones she loves the most, damning them in the hope they'll see past what she's become.

That's not always an option, though. Maybe she has no stomach for that degree of self-harm or knows the blood on her soul has left her too calloused. In that case, many other mortals have sympathy for the dead.

Nickname: Stalkers

Clan Bane (The Miserable Curse): When a Twice-Cursed drops to Humanity 6, she immediately gains both the Daeva and Nosferatu clan banes.

Favored Attributes: Dexterity and Strength

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Vigor

Rumors

"There's a ton of reasons you shouldn't fraternize with these psychopaths, but here's one more. That curse of theirs is a big one, big enough that it spreads to the rest of us. How'd you like to be thrice-cursed?"

The Twice-Cursed spread their burden to others in rare instances. Sometimes, a Stalker will cow another vampire with her Predatory Aura, and if the victim survives the encounter, he finds his retainers start to put him at arm's length, or he becomes overly infatuated with one of them. This doesn't usually last long, but then most Kindred have never even met a Stalker, let alone heard the term Twice-Cursed. Feeding from one, or diablerizing one, might yield different results. Rumors abound of a prince who made such an error, and who offers a reward to anyone who can bring him a Stalker for study.

"This is the way it starts. A gang of malcontents pick up the idea that their garbage curse means they don't have to answer to anyone, or that Kindred are 'the most dangerous game' or some similar delusion. If these things learn to Embrace with any consistency, we won't hear from them again until they start burning Roman numerals into our coffins."

Your average Stalker wouldn't know VII if it staked her, but the Twice-Cursed have attracted interest from forces hostile to the Kindred. Malachi of Clan Akhud is their biggest and, so far, only fan. He's been taking blood and gold for contracts on vampires since the sack of Jerusalem, and the handful of Twice-Cursed he's met are the first "Kindred" who've actually impressed him.

The elder Ahranite is starting to send Twice-Cursed strike teams against carefully selected Kindred targets, cultivating and



*Andrea
Payne '19*

Other Matches Made in Hell

The Stalkers aren't the only vampires that could be described as Twice-Cursed. The Moroi bloodline that serves the Ordo Dracul may have begun as Twice-Cursed with Gangrel and Nosferatu traits, but then somehow managed to transcend. Many combinations are possible. A melding of the Mekhet and Ventrue curses might be a warlock: Invincible in his tower and commanding unseen familiars, he gains banes as fast as he casts away friends. Vampires with Daeva and Gangrel traits might be undead serial killers: Strong, fast, and unrelenting, they suffer hairpin triggers and terrible obsessions.

testing promising Stalkers before he brings them into his full-time employ.

"You can cure them. We've done it. Or, well, we came close. My associate Mr. Kovalenko here managed to knock one of them into torpor after she attacked us — we're in demand, you know how it is — and I swear on my stunning good looks she turned human before our eyes. Heart beating, blood pumping. Like, everywhere. Mr. Kovalenko can confirm — yep, he confirms. Problem is, having met the business end of my friend's claws, she didn't live very long."

Like any rumor of vampires becoming human, this one's never told the same way, and just like other stories, this is as bunk as they come. The Twice-Cursed are damned in their condition just like any other vampire, and as much as one would want to think they might find reprieve from their desires and offenses, nothing yet has presented itself short of death.

Clo

"You can't pay me off. That's not the point."

Clotilde was going to be a Daeva. She was groomed from the moment she became a ghou, with lessons in etiquette, politics, and combat. Her regnant, Maximus, was a Serpent's Serpent, a lord of the Invictus with plans for a dynasty built on a golden childe. Clo was a star athlete and *magna cum laude*, the perfect gem to set in his crown. But despite his pretensions, Max lived a double life. He'd hidden his affair with a Carthian harpy quite well, but her blood was taking a toll. When he finally diablerized her to truly consummate their relationship, it pushed his timeline up.

Clo's Embrace was rushed and painful, not the pampered affair she expected, and it didn't take long for sire and childe to realize something was very wrong. Her friends and family recoiled in her presence, yet she was growing more and more obsessed with each blood doll. Neither of them know the term Twice-Cursed (even tonight), but Max had no trouble finding her a new purpose. Given his habits, he had a lot of cleaning up to do, and needed a trustworthy agent to carry the mop.

Clo hated this new job — and all the women Max began to audition as new heirs — but the old bastard let her do as she pleased, provided she obeyed.

Sadly, even that leash proved too long. Jacqueline and Louis were old friends to whom Clo clung for support. One night, after a bad, frightening argument about the blood they could see on her fingernails, the pressure got to be too much. She snapped, and poor Jacq died bloodless in her arms. Then she had to shut Louis up. Then, she was alone. The only two people in the world who mattered to her were dead, and she'd have to bury them before the bodies rotted. In an act of desperation and selfishness, she poured blood down their throats and waited. Jacq made it, Twice-Cursed as her; Louis did not.

Naturally, Max found out his childe broke the Second Tradition, but he doesn't really care. His only real punishment was upping the difficulty of Clo's assignments, so the backups come in handy. Tonight, she calls Jacq her Knife. She doesn't tell her who she really works for, but she's spent years enforcing the idea that no one wants Jacq but her, and that they're in it together for the long haul.

Jacq wants to leave. She knows who's really pulling Clo's strings and fears the end of her friend's downward spiral is close at hand. Jacq's been in touch with some nomadic Firebrands who're willing to take her on, but she won't leave while there are still mortals she cares about. Her own curse makes her stay despite her misgivings.

Clan: Twice-Cursed

Covenant: Invictus

Mask: Authoritarian

Dirge: Masochist

Touchstone: Her parents

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 4, Computer 2, Investigation (Stalking) 2, Occult 1 (Kindred)

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 2, Brawl (Unarmed) 3, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Survival (Hiding Tracks) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Invictus Status 2, Kindred Dueling 2, Kiss of the Succubus, Mentor 3, Resources 3, Riding the Wave 3, Unsettling Gaze, Where the Bodies Are Buried

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Celerity 3, Obfuscate 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 4

Devotions: Not So Special

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 8

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 15

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5 (Active Defense 8)

Notes: Jacq uses the Cocky Mob Hitman's traits (**Chronicles of Darkness**, p. 119). Adjust dice pools and add Disciplines as needed. She has a dot of Dominate she's hiding, and a few Carthian-adjacent Merits.

New Mechanics

Something dead approaches. It just wants to be friends. It just wants to talk. Please. *Please*.

Besides the traits of normal vampires, Twice-Cursed share the following qualities:

- Twice-Cursed gain Kiss of the Succubus and Unsettling Gaze for free at character creation and can purchase other Merits exclusive to the Daeva and Nosferatu. However, Majesty and Nightmare cost five Experiences per dot instead of four, in addition to the usual requirements for learning a clan's unique Discipline.
- Stalkers can only Embrace Touchstones, whether their own or another vampire's. They do not create revenants, but they can uplift them.

Not So Special (Obfuscate ••, Vigor •••)

The vampire denies his Kindred victim her trade secrets, temporarily blunting her signature Discipline long enough

Bloodlines

At Storyteller discretion, Stalker characters who meet Blood Potency requirements can join Daeva and Nosferatu bloodlines, but they cannot gain Majesty or Nightmare in-clan. The Storyteller should decide on an appropriate replacement; generally, Obfuscate stands in for Majesty, and Celerity for Nightmare. The Storyteller has veto power if losing Majesty or Nightmare dilutes the bloodline's themes too much. Players should also keep in mind the challenge of adding another curse to their already Twice-Cursed characters.

to strike. This Devotion only works on the subject's unique clan Discipline; it can't affect Animalism, Obfuscate, or the physical Disciplines. To use this Devotion, the vampire must touch his victim (**Vampire: The Requiem Second Edition**, p. 177).

Cost: 1 Vitae per Discipline dot nullified

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Vigor vs. Blood Potency + Stamina

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive

Duration: Minutes equal to successes

If successful, the victim cannot access a number of dots in the chosen Discipline per Vitae spent, starting with the highest level. This also affects associated Devotions. If a Discipline effect is already active, this provokes a Clash of Wills. The effect continues if the victim wins the clash, but he cannot activate the power again if it expires naturally. Conditions inflicted with a Discipline (e.g., Mesmerized) do not count as active effects.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.



She could only watch as her body bled the Daeva dry. His blood was hot on her tongue, warmer than her regnant's, soupy and savory with a little too much salt. He had been feeding on the same people for weeks at time, she could taste them running down her throat. The Strix was cackling with her voice.

The car had long since collided with the concrete barrier on the interstate ramp. Was the other ghoul dead? She couldn't see him, with her face buried in Declan's neck. At least, that's what she thought his name was. She should remember that, seeing as his blood ran down her oilecloth coat. She shouldn't have been able to hold him down, not a monster like that, but the Strix had sapped his strength.

It hated her. She knew that much. Hated that it had to be in her small, soft body, had to speak with her gentle voice. But a deal was a deal, and it was taking exactly what it was owed.

Dimly, she wondered if the Strix would take the Vitae with it. Five liters of blood was far too much for any ghoul, and she didn't want to spend the rest of the night throwing up Declan's unlife. If there would be a rest of the night — she didn't want to think about that. Of course, the Strix would release her back to Bailey. This was a one-time deal. She trusted her regnant.

It was the bird she didn't trust.

Finally, it pulled her head up, and Declan's body slowly disintegrated, leaving nothing but a pile of ash on the front passenger seat to mark his passing. Bailey would be happy about that, she supposed.

"Delicious," said the Strix from somewhere behind her eyes. "Aren't you lucky."

"Lucky?"

"I gave you a whole life to eat. I think that's more than fair."

Anabeth made to reply, but thought better of it, feeling the blood bloat her stomach.

"What do you want?" it said after a minute.

"I want to go home and drink myself stupid," she said honestly.

The Strix hooted. "Is that it? There's so much here, so much I can use. You're not going to ask me for anything?"

"No," she said stubbornly. "I have a good bourbon at home. 1973. I want to read about Aleister Crowley for the third time this year and pass out in a drunken stupor. Bailey will need me for something tomorrow, and I can't be late."

"It's very sweet that you assume there will be a tomorrow, Doctor Montmartre."

She swallowed as the Strix helpfully tilted her head back. "What do you mean?"

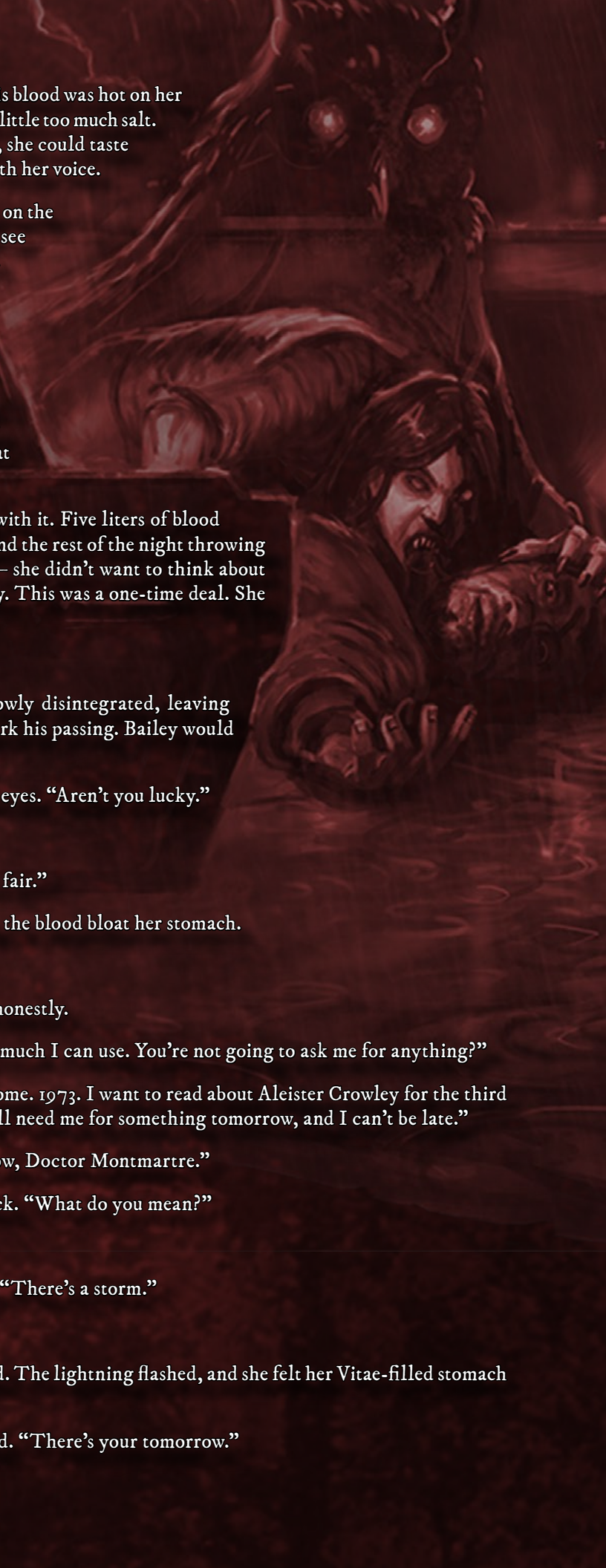
"Look up, that's it. Wait just a moment."

The rain pattered on her face, and she blinked heavily. "There's a storm."

"Wait just a moment, for the lightning to flash."

Obediently, she waited, shielding her eyes with one hand. The lightning flashed, and she felt her Vitae-filled stomach fall into her feet.

"There," said the Strix, as the cloud of wings descended. "There's your tomorrow."



chapter three those who are not us

Amaranthine Cats

“They’re just cats!”

— reportedly the last words of neonate Damon Carter
before leaving a bar in Istanbul for an ill-advised walk

In every city and town, stray cats roam the streets. They prowl through alleys, cross through yards, and commandeer stairwells. Stray cats alter the local ecosystem. Brutally efficient killers, they slaughter birds and small animals, like squirrels and rabbits. In larger cities, cats form colonies that take over parks and backstreets. Japan even has several islands so overrun with felines they’ve become known as Cat Islands. Mortals strive in vain against these small conquerors. Various organizations collect and neuter the cats before returning them to the streets, while other organizations beg people to keep their cats indoors or to stop having pet cats altogether. In other cities, however, neighborhoods build homes for the cats along the street and leave out food so the cats don’t need to hunt. The little predators are everywhere.

To most in the modern age, stray cats are a nuisance for the ecosystem and a tragedy for former pets but are otherwise just part of the scenery. Not all are so below notice for vampires, however. Cats are hunters and, for some, vampires are their preferred prey.

Julia

No one knows Julia’s true name. She was an elder resting in torpor in Tivoli, Italy. Investigation of her resting place in 2014 discovered artifacts and writings that suggest she was alive during the time of the Camarilla. She may even have been one of the Julii, but the truth will never be known. By the time vampires found Julia’s hiding place, her body had been devoured, leaving only bones. At first, the vampires of Tivoli had no idea who or what to blame. Then, the

local cat population began to act strange. They were more present. Every vampire in the town noticed cats around more frequently. The cats were more affectionate, approaching vampires and rubbing against them. They were also more bloodthirsty. They’d nuzzle a bare ankle and then sink their teeth into the vampire’s fleshy calf. Another vampire was slaughtered in his torpor, this one the prince’s sire. The prince felt the desecration occurring and rushed to see who was responsible. Writhing over his sire’s body were dozens of cats, their mouths red and fur streaked with dark, fragrant blood. The prince killed as many of the cats as he could, but many escaped.

As the stories from Tivoli spread, others shared their own tales. Julia shifted conversation from jokes and urban legend to serious threat. Vampires who had long kept silent about their encounters with cats shared their experiences. As stories and, more importantly, photos and video spread, vampires stopped laughing.

Cats and Ghouls

While most ghouls require an act of will to create, rare exceptions like Amaranthine Cats exist. Just as cats domesticated themselves nearly 18,000 years ago, so have they empowered themselves with Vitae. By consuming all the Vitae a vampire contained, the cats turned themselves into ghouls. Then they bred with one another and formed families. Their skills and Vitae addictions passed down the generations. Efficient killers, the cats have learned the easiest way to feed their Vitae addiction is to track down vampires in torpor and



consume them at their leisure. This practice is the origin of their name – the cats that commit amaranth.

As cities grew and spread, so did the Amaranthine Cats. They hide among normal strays with ease and breed with them, growing their packs. The larger the pack, the greater ease the cats have in locating resting vampires. Larger packs also mean greater demand, however. When a pack gets too large, it splinters. Some cats remain; others travel together to another city, suburb, or town – wherever they can sense Vitae. Not all cats in a city are Amaranthine, but every city has at least one pack of the Vitae-thirsty cats.

Vitae Hunters

Amaranthine Cats hunt Vitae. Their ghoulish nature has made them even more efficient and well-designed for this task. They have a keen nose for Vitae and can sense it from blocks away, even through the myriad other smells of a city. The Vitae has made them stronger and harder – they withstand attacks and the elements with ease. More disturbing, however, is their stealth. Where a vampire sees one cat, 10 others lurk in the shadows unseen.

The cats seek easy prey, hence their preference for vampires in torpor. In some areas, however, the cats also attack vampires in day sleep. These attacks are usually less deadly – the vampire awakens, scattering the cats – but sometimes the

attack causes the vampire to slip into torpor. Unless someone else interrupts, the cats then have all the time they need to consume their prey.

Though the cats prefer sleeping prey, they are not helpless against awake vampires. A large pack can lure a young vampire away by mimicking the sounds of someone in distress and then descend upon the neonate from all sides. The vampire is strong, but the cats are legion. Even if the vampire lives, the cats will have whetted their appetites.

This is not conjecture. In Istanbul in the early 2000s, the large local cat population killed three neonate vampires in the space of 10 nights before the prince of the city realized what was happening. The city's protectiveness toward all cats prevented mass extermination. Instead, the prince shared what happened and lightly recommended that vampires take care when walking down isolated alleys alone. The instructions garnered wide ridicule, but the streak of the deaths eased. Now, Amaranthine Cats only kill one to three vampires in Istanbul each year, rather than within a single fortnight.

Lost Secrets

While mass extermination may seem like an easy solution – ignoring the difficulty of finding all the cats and the mortal attention such extermination would bring – not all vampires think the Amaranthine Cats *should* be eradicated.

When the cats devour vampires, the secrets and knowledge those vampires held remain within the cats' blood. No one cat contains the entirety of any life; the full story is spread in morsels among the pack. Some members within the Lancea et Sanctum and Ordo Dracul hunt down the Amaranthine Cats to drain their blood and discover the secrets they hold. Amaranthine Cats have licked Vitae from the veins of lost elders and clans, stealing secrets and scattering them among the pack.

Others, like some among the Circle of the Crone, simply respect the cats as fellow predators and proof that vampires have room for improvement. The cats are a warning against laziness. Anyone who doesn't guard their sleep is practically begging to be eaten. Other Acolytes recall the Cult of Bast and other traditions where cats were venerated.

Rumors

"While everyone talks about the Amaranthine Cats, they are not the true threat. The cats just showed the way. Now a group of vampires is creating a pack of Amaranthine hyenas. Or bears. Or coyotes. Every version of this rumor names a different animal."

Some vampires have tried. While they can make any animals into ghouls, so far only cats have developed families and packs that make fresh Vitae less necessary to them. Most modern Amaranthine Cats may crave Vitae, but even if they go without, they still demonstrate all of their enhanced abilities. Of course, someone in town is certainly trying. Increased reports of strange animal attacks within the city points to it, but no one wants to take the blame. Some say the cats' curse has infected the wilder animals.

"Dragons created the cats to hunt down lost secrets, but then they lost control. The cats escaped their masters and grew into the menace we suffer today. Dragons are desperate to hide their hubristic mistake and will go to any lengths to squelch the rumors and regain control of the cats. Others are working on a predator for the cats – something bigger and sneakier to capture the cats and obediently trot them back to the Dragons to extract the secrets hiding in the Vitae. Some say they've already created this predator and that it's gotten loose, too."

While many members of the Ordo Dracul are fascinated by the cats and their potential, they are not responsible for the creation or proliferation of the Amaranthine Cats or any rumored predator. That said, many Dragons would pay handsomely for a cat that has consumed the Vitae of ancient vampires. In some cities, suspicion of Dragons has grown so sharp that continuing to live in the city becomes a very dangerous proposition. Younger Dragons might even hire bodyguards to help them move through and out of an unfriendly city. One faction within the Ordo Dracul thinks these rumors are a riot and does whatever it can to provide "evidence" supporting them. The faction does not mind the negative reputation Dragons have in some cities, noting that it is good to be feared.

"I've heard that elders are using Amaranthine Cats to seek out and devour the last remnants of lost clans. You see, they have existed for as long as vampires have, so they have the unique ability to sense the Vitae of clans long forgotten. Then the elder takes the cat and the blood and gains its power. Is it diablerie if it's the blood of a cat?"

Amaranthine Cats have existed for much longer than vampires have paid attention to them. For the longest time, they were considered an urban legend and nothing more. When they show up in a city, it's often years before the Kindred population realizes they are there. No one brings them into a city, at least not elders. And they don't have any ability to sense specific kinds of Vitae. Amaranthine Cats are opportunistic hunters with a strong Vitae addiction. Vitae is Vitae.

Amaranthine cats seemingly appeared in town out of nowhere. At least people just started noticing them. The idea that an elder is drinking their blood is preposterous, but everyone's looking for a reason that they just now started noticing them.

A Small Pack of Amaranthine Cats

Mask: Stray cats

Dirge: Hunters

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 4, Survival (Hunting) 4, Brawl (Claws, Teeth) 4

Social Skills: Socialize 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Acute Senses, Pack Alpha, Parkour 2, Safe Place 1, Taste of the Wild, Vitae Hound, Clear-Sighted

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Obfuscate 3, Resilience 2, Vigor 1

Blood Potency: 0

Pack Size (number of cats): 5

Pack Size Modifier: 1 (Pack Size/3, rounded down)

Health: 6 × Pack Size Modifier

Willpower: 6

Size: 2

Speed: 10 × Pack Size Modifier

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4 (Active Defense 5)

Notes: Health and speed increase with the size of the pack.

The Blessing of Athena

*"Flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood.
As Athena burst from Zeus' head, so shall my child from mine."*

— Jupiter

According to the Athenians, the Greco-Roman gods were a vampire clan predating the Julii. Zeus reigned as the king of the gods because he did what none of the others could: He created a new god — a new vampire — without turning a mortal. This vampire was Athena.

The Athenians tell of Athena's birth as this: Zeus desired Metis, a werewolf woman who was already heavily pregnant. The more Metis spurned him, the more Zeus yearned for her. He chased her. Metis shifted between forms, hunting for any way to put Zeus off. Still he pursued and Metis, exhausted, relented. Then Zeus learned that Metis' children would grow to destroy him. Upon learning this, Zeus returned to Metis and fed deeply until her death. Then he pulled the growing babe from her womb and drained her as well. Over the following months, Zeus developed a growth within his skull that pained him mightily. He could feel his daughter growing and he kept her safe. When she was ready for the world, he asked Hephaestus to split open his skull and set her free. And so, Athena, daughter of Zeus alone, was born.

The Blessing of Athena

The Blessing of Athena is a disease in which a vampire grows teratoma — tumors containing teeth, hair, and skin — on their necks and heads. No one knows how or when the first case came about, as those affected are no longer alive. Rumors say that it came as a fluke from drinking fetal blood, others swear it comes from feeding from werewolves. Whatever the case, the disease is now transferable by imbibing infected Vitae.

The physical growth is only half of the disease. The other half is much more sinister. Something inhabits that growth. The best description is a spirit, though it isn't anything nearly so sentient or self-aware. When infected, this entity takes hold of the vampire's mind, making her increasingly protective of the growth, considering it her baby. This grows into an obsession that eventually overrides all else. Additionally, the disease wants to spread, and those infected will go to great lengths to infect others.

The blessing also carries another cost. Blessed vampires feel compelled to feed their "baby" before feeding themselves. The

first point of Vitae a vampire obtains each night goes to the growth and the vampire gains no benefit from it.

Additionally, the strain of growing a teratoma inflicts damage daily. As the "baby" grows, the severity of the damage also increases, easily outstripping the vampire's ability to heal. Most Athenians die before they can finish their gestation. For this reason, Athenians are always, constantly seeking ways to speed the growth of their "babies."

Nearly everyone who receives the Blessing of Athena joins the Athenians thanks to this bond. Unlike others, the Athenians also wish to protect their growths.

Jupiter, Minerva, and the Athenians

According to the Athenians, the first vampire, outside of mythology, to birth a new vampire independently was Jupiter in the 1920s. Jupiter was not his real name, but he took it in honor of Zeus. Jupiter argued that recreating the Camarilla required that vampires be able to create new life without turning humans. He is often quoted as saying some variation of "Only through reproduction can we loose ourselves from the shackles of human society."

Jupiter actively sought out the disease, which wasn't as easy as one would think. He drained all sorts in his attempt, finally gaining success on the fetal blood from a pregnant woman. She also happened to be related to werewolves, lending more credence to that theory. Within a month, he rejoiced as a large bulge began to grow from his neck. When the bulge grew teeth, he began to feed it blood and Vitae. Jupiter traveled widely, showing off his growing "daughter" and inviting others to join him in creating a new and better vampire society.

Jupiter had the type of charisma that invited others into his worldview. He redefined the world around them until his every utterance seemed merely common sense. His followers grew. He fed those who wished it his blood, while others supported the Blessed of Athena, helped them obtain Vitae, and protected them from those who would slaughter the babies in the name of a cure.

According the Athenians, when Jupiter's baby was the size of an infant, he removed her from his neck and named her Minerva. No one saw the birth take place, nor did anyone meet

the young Minerva. After establishing the Athenians, Jupiter disappeared. At the time, rumors spread that the local werewolves had killed him in revenge. Then, nearly 20 years after his disappearance, a vampire woman appeared claiming to be his daughter. Minerva shared the story of her birth and assumed leadership over the Athenians. When Kindred asked after Jupiter, Minerva confirmed that werewolves had indeed killed him.

Minerva has led the Athenians since her appearance in 1945. Though the Athenians are less a covenant and more a loose association based on common beliefs, Minerva keeps them connected. She travels, retelling the mythology and sharing news and discoveries among the groups. She also led the creation of the Athenian Network, a password-protected online community where members share photos of their growing babies and tips for encouraging their growth.

Minerva is not among the Blessed. One of the stories she spreads during her travels is of her own attempts at conceiving. After her third attempt, she fell into despair. Here, at her lowest, she dreamed of Athena. Athena never gave birth, but instead shared her wisdom and leadership. When Minerva awoke, she realized her purpose. Not all are called to be Blessed. She would serve the Athenians as their emissary and advocate. The *community* is her child, and she has been called to ensure her father's good work continues and grows in strength.

Minerva: Behind the Mask

"Sometimes faith needs a nudge. It isn't lying. We're simply aligning reality with what we already know is true."

Minerva is a con artist second and a true believer first. She genuinely believes that Jupiter gave birth to a Minerva before his murder at the hands of werewolves. If that Minerva will not step forward to lead, then this Minerva must. Minerva watched as doubt crept into the community during Jupiter's disappearance and stepped forward to claim the spotlight and galvanize belief.

Minerva constantly fears discovery. She has destroyed her past ties, ensuring no one can identify her as anyone other than Jupiter's daughter. Still, what if she'd overlooked someone? What if someone finds an old photo of her she cannot explain away? What if a baby is born and it doesn't grow up like she has? Minerva trusts no one with this secret. No one.

Minerva creates the mythology of the community. She spins together tufts of truth with large skeins of lies, creating tales that match what the obsessed community wishes to believe. She is even willing to manufacture missing evidence to match suspicions and hopes. When others learn of her lies, Minerva is unapologetic; sometimes reality needs a hand.

Minerva is not Blessed, nor has she tried to be, despite her claims otherwise. She fears the blessing, as she has seen how vampires become obsessive then die. She fears losing her mind, but also fears that the drive to reproduce might cause the Athenians to force the disease on her. She walks a fine line of lies in hopes that they won't turn on her.

Treatment

Treating the Blessing of Athena is easy. The vampire must have the teratoma, his "baby," removed. The surgery is not simple, however. The first and largest struggle is that the infected do not want the teratoma removed. Infected vampires fight against all attempts to cure them of their condition. The second struggle is that removing the teratoma causes a ferocious frenzy, as if the vampire had lost a lover (a 4 modifier). The frenzied vampire desires first to kill whomever removed his "baby" and second to create a new "baby." Once the vampire overcomes this frenzy without consuming more infected blood, he is cured.

The few vampires who have received this cure tend to connect online and support one another through the feelings of loss. Though they no longer consider the teratoma to be their children, the vampires still feel the loss of potential and of community. Athenians shun those who are cured and do not choose to receive the blessing again. Those outside the Athenians do not understand the hope and anticipation that fills the group. Cured vampires find themselves on the outside — spurned by the Athenians and misunderstood by the rest. Only others who have also been cured can understand their strange mixture of relief and regret.

Recent Actions

Over the past 70 years, the Athenian community has blossomed in secret. The Blessed, treated with disgust and scorn by mortals and their fellow vampires alike, live in private or in small group homes. Athenians who have yet to receive the blessing (all among the Athenians are either Blessed or are in waiting) ensure that the proud parents receive the Vitae and other support they need to protect and sustain the “babies.”

The Athenians could be a sad secret hidden away and mostly forgotten, except that the community is compelled to spread the Blessing of Athena. A group of Dragons in waiting first developed a method of concentrating a Blessed’s Vitae creating a perfect transmission of the disease. Now they can use it to effectively endow others with the blessing. In 2013, vampires in Cleveland successfully granted Penelope Hightower, one of the leading vampires of the city, the blessing. Each success emboldens the community.

Over the past decade, the number of those in waiting has increased within the community. The Athenians are outspoken voices among the Cacophony and spread a message of hope for evolution and renewal. Not everyone who joins the Athenians is a zealot; many join for the nurturing community that seems divorced from clan and covenant politics. The more recruits interact with the community, the more they buy into the mythology and the more they begin to also hope.

Those within the community typically fall into one of four groups: the Blessed, the doctors, the networkers, and the helpers. The Blessed are those growing “babies.” While they may be active in other areas of the community, “babies” are their primary role. The doctors develop ways to spread the blessing, sustain the lives of the Blessed, and encourage the growth of “babies.” The networkers maintain the online connections, disseminate information, and proselytize on the behalf of the community. The helpers support the Blessed, protect their homes, and obtain Vitae for them and the “babies.”

Rumors

“A vampire in Harbin, China has grown his baby to maturity. Extraction was difficult, but successful and his son is perfect. The child feeds on Vitae. At first, the child resembled the babies as they’re growing, with his features mixed up and out of order. With each feeding of Vitae, however, the child’s features have shifted. His nose is where a nose should be; his hair where hair should grow. He is now a normal vampire and a normal child both.”

The Athenian Network is full of photos of men with infants, all of whom could be the nameless vampire in Harbin. The man’s own silence is handwaved with speculation on the state of the internet in China and on the man’s need to protect his child from those who may see him as an abomination. Minerva claims to have held the child herself. The babe must exist.

The babe does not exist. The vampire in Harbin does not exist either, at least not yet. If vampires start to question too

much, Minerva will certainly create him and pull him around on tour with her.

In fact, despite several reports of successful children — the one in Harbin is only the latest — no one has attended a birth or met a “baby” separated from its parent. Minerva claims to be such a vampire, but she is lying.

“Dragons have put out a bounty for the Blessed. They want to poke needles into the growing babies, and are trying to discover what this disease is. Does this mean the Blessing is real? Certainly such absurd claims wouldn’t be taken seriously otherwise.”

The Ordo Dracul have a theory about the Blessed, and it isn’t that the blessing is real. They are sure that the disease seeks to self-perpetuate and that the Blessed will eventually start spreading their cursed disease everywhere. Unfortunately, they haven’t shared this theory with anyone, and instead are just testing on the Athenians without comment. Needless to say, some people who were on the fence before are now far more interested in what the Athenians have to say. For good or for ill.

“Watch out for Delphine Duval. Group of those teratoma freaks killed her daughter and she’s been on the warpath ever since. She doesn’t care if you’ve got a tumor sticking out or not. If you drink blood and lack a pulse, you’re on her hit list. If you can, avoid her. If you can’t, point her to a better target. Trust me, Delphine’s an old canny bitch; you’ve got no chance to take her or her pack on.”

Delphine Duval is a werewolf who has sworn revenge against the Athenians who killed her son, Joseph, believing the old tale that werewolf blood would transfer the Blessing. While she does lead a small pack that has sworn off defending territory in favor of hunting down Eulalie’s killers, she does not command an army. Also, while she is strong and clever, her legend is larger and bloodier than reality. Delphine isn’t out to kill all vampires; she wants to destroy those who murdered her son. At least, that is what Delphine claims and for now that seems to be the case. Once Joseph’s killers are dead, though, will she be able to stop her crusade? How many vampires will need to die to satisfy her fury and grief?

Caroline Hughes, The Blessed

“You do not understand yet. This child is my world.”

Caroline Hughes became the prince of Pittsburgh in 2009 when the Invictus wrested control of the city away from the Carthian Movement. By all accounts, she was ruthless, competitive, and infinitely patient. She was the water that carved stone. Then, in June 2017, that all changed.

Caroline was attending game five of the Stanley Cup Finals in her private box at the PPG. The game was in the second period and the Penguins were absolutely dominating on the ice. They were up by 5; the Predators still hadn’t made a single goal. After the disappointing losses in the previous two games, this game was exhilarating. Caroline rarely paid attention to human affairs in Pittsburgh, but always made an exception for hockey.

Caroline never noticed the shadow slipping into her box and barely felt the needle sliding into her neck as the goal horn blared; the score was now six-nothing. And Caroline was now infected with the Blessing of Athena.

Over the following weeks, Caroline started to develop a lump on the side of her face. Her initial concern quickly dissipated into enchantment and love for the growing mass. The Athenian community contacted her and brought her into the fold.

Caroline resigned from her position and devoted herself to the Athenians. She became one of their most effective advocates in Pittsburgh, leveraging her political wiles and knowledge to obtain protections and concessions for the Athenians. Even as her baby swelled on her cheek, stretching her lips and distorting her speech, she remained active and militant.

Under Caroline's leadership, the Athenian community in Pittsburgh has become a key political player in the governance of the city. As other members of the community flock to Pittsburgh to enjoy the amenities of a friendly city, the Athenian influence grows.

Caroline's former friends are frustrated by the changes in her priorities, but none more so than Jonathon Roseland, the mortal coach of the peewee hockey team Caroline used to sponsor. Caroline has shifted her resources elsewhere and now the team is scrambling to stay funded and afloat. Jonathon used to count Caroline as one of his friends and he is certain the woman he knows is still in there somewhere, but each passing month makes that belief harder to sustain.

Caroline is currently advocating that the city appoint five vampires each year to receive the Blessing of Athena. The scariest thing is that she's on the verge of success. Blessed or not, Caroline Hughes does not take no for an answer.

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Invictus

Mask: Authoritarian

Dirge: Martyr (Baby)

Touchstone: Jonathan Roseland, the one who got away

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Computer 2, Investigation 3, Politics (Local) 5, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Weaponry (Sword) 2, Survival 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Motives) 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Cacophony Savvy 2, City (Pittsburgh) 2, Covenant (Invictus) 1, Where the Bodies are Buried 2, Retainer 2, Athenians 3

Disciplines: Dominate 4, Resilience 2, Majesty 2

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 10

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 4

Mechanics

The Blessing of Athena is a disease that takes over the psyche of those infected. How or why anyone ever initially got the disease is a wonder, but now it spreads through design. A vampire infected with the disease grows a teratoma on his neck, face, or head. He feels a fierce protectiveness toward the teratoma, regarding it as his baby. Any aggression toward the "baby" is a potential cause for frenzy. The longer he's had the disease, the more bound up he becomes; treat the baby as a loved one for purposes of penalties to this frenzy.

The psychic hijacking goes further. After the first week, the disease shatters all blood bonds no matter their potency. The vampire is now bound to the teratoma instead, and cannot form new blood bonds. Additionally, those infected are compelled to spread their infection. It isn't just a cult of personality; the disease seeks out new hosts on a constant basis. If a Blessed has a chance to infect someone, she must spend a Willpower to resist the temptation to feed that person her Vitae.

The Blessed are both malformed and disgusting. This physical deformity imposes a -1 penalty to Stamina-based rolls, but does not affect their Health levels. Additionally, the vampire suffers a -1 penalty to Social rolls when dealing with other vampires, or a -2 when dealing with mortals.

As the tumor grows, it necrotizes nearby tissues and causes increasing damage over time. The character takes 1 damage each night. For the first month the damage is bashing, but then it turns lethal. After three years, the nightly damage is aggravated.

This damage heals at normal rates.

Infection

To receive the Blessing of Athena, a character must consume infected Vitae. Infection is not certain, however. The player rolls Stamina + Resilience + Blood Potency. If the player receives at least 1 success, the character does not develop the blessing. Each subsequent time the character is infected after that, the roll suffers a cumulative -1 penalty. The player may always roll 1 die to resist the infection. Those injected with the concentrated Vitae suffer an additional -2 penalty to their resistance roll.

When a character receives the Blessing of Athena, the player makes the following adjustments to the character sheet:

- Replace the character's Dirge with Martyr (Baby). The character will sacrifice his life and livelihood to protect his baby's growth and survival.
- Take the Athenians Merit at one dot for free. The player may shift dots from another Merit into the Athenians Merit.

Athenian (• to •••••)

The Athenians are a supportive community who look out for one another. They believe that vampires can reproduce through the Blessing of Athena and strive to see the promise of the blessing fulfilled. They support and protect the Blessed and seek ways to promote the health of the Blessed and spread the Blessing of Athena to others. Their priorities are the "babies" and the community, in that order. Both must thrive and grow.

Characters do not have to have the Blessing of Athena to be members of the Athenians.

- The community supports its members. The character receives Allies (Athenians) at 1 dot.
- The community stays connected through the Internet and members share their skills with one another. The

character's Cacophony Savvy increases by one dot.

- Each member of the Athenians tends to fall within one of four roles. At this stage, the character receives one dot in the Skill aligned with their role.

Blessed	Survival
Doctors	Medicine
Networkers	Socialize
Helpers	Streetwise

- The community ensures that everyone has a safe haven. The character receives one dot in Safe Place and two dots in Haven, which is shared with the Athenians.

- The player may distribute three Merit dots among Allies (Athenians), Cacophony Savvy, Safe Place, or Haven. Alternatively, the player may add a Skill dot to a Skill related to a secondary role his character holds within the community.

Drawback: The blessing turns members into fanatics and the Athenians demand loyalty and support. Members are expected to prioritize the community over their clan and covenant. Once members reach four dots in Athenian, they cannot have more than a single dot in any other Status.

Blood Worms

"You know the best part of being Kindred? You can't get sick. Well, so I thought ..."

— Julia Chien, Nosferatu neonate

Parasites. The dead hang like leeches off humanity. The living do their best not to think about just how many nasty things they carry around. Humans like to think they are the apex predator, top of the food chain, but that's arrogance. There are plenty of nasty little things that eat human, a nibble at a time.

Tapeworms and other intestinal worms are quite rare in the west. People like to be clean, and they like their food and water to be clean, too. But they still happen, by bad luck or as mommy's nasty little weight-loss secret. And rarely, on occasion, such a person is also a ghoul.

Human beings often have parasites. Kindred, by and large, do not. Their dead, static bodies do little to nourish the warmth of life. But the Vitae is potent, and those creatures who sip it develop a craving for more. For an intestinal worm, a ghoul's stomach is a pleasant place, but when the supply of

Vitae gives out, such a strengthened parasite does not simply wilt away. When its host is cut off or dies, the worm seeks out a new place to live, a new host that can provide it with the succulent liquid it craves.

No ordinary worm, a blood worm is a twisted, ravenous creature, mutated by the Blood. It is pink in color, slimy and silky to the touch, the size of a pepperoni sausage, and pulsates with an imaginary heartbeat. Its mouth is ringed by hooks, used for holding onto its host's intestines in the parasite's mundane form, but Vitae has given them a horrific, fang-like appearance. It is a twisted creature, no longer able to function as a normal parasite would, but the predatory influence of Vitae has provided an alternative path.

A blood worm instinctively uses these hooks to burrow through flesh. It can force its way out through a ghoul's stomach, and into



a dormant vampire's veins, though it usually only grows restless if the Vitae supply runs low. When that happens, though, the worm waits until daybreak and grinds away at the ghoul's intestinal wall with its barbs in a slow and agonizing process. When out, it can contract its digestive systems in rhythmic motions to slither like a slug across the floor, leaving a trail of gore behind it as it follows the scent of Vitae. With its barbed hooks, it can latch onto surfaces and slowly make its way up, working its barbs in alternating motions.

When the blood worm finds its Kindred host, it locates a major blood vessel, often in the neck, groin, or armpit, and begins to insert its hooks. Forcing its way through the victim's skin is a long, painful affair that takes hours, during which the worm is vulnerable. If the new host wakes up from the pain or someone else notices the attack, the creature is easy to kill and the wound easy to heal. But if not, then the worm slithers inside the vampire's body, and hooks itself firmly to the blood vessel's walls.

The blood is the life; the Vitae is the power. The worm consumes the host's stolen life, and in turn grows mighty. The two beings resonate with a twisted aspect of blood sympathy, and the worm allies with the Beast against the vampire's conscious mind. Slowly, its instincts insinuate themselves into the host's id, and seizes control. Rendered dormant, the conscious mind is only dimly aware of its circumstances, and the worm's primitive psyche takes hold of the Kindred flesh.

The Unlife Possessed

Quite a bit less clever than a draugr, the possessed vampire becomes a simple creature, clumsily searching the world for blood to drink. It hunts and kills and feeds, and the blood worm feasts. Bereft of intelligence, the host loses the ability to use any kind of tools, including doorknobs and even the simplest bludgeon, but the Kindred's Disciplines resonate with the worm. It can still make use of anything that does not require a ritual. Wherever the vampire slept when the worm crawled inside her, that becomes the blood worm's nest, and it returns there every morning, when the sky starts to brighten in the east. When the sun sets, it stumbles out of its lair again to hunt. If it finds anything threatening its sleeping spot, it attacks without mercy.

The worm host rarely shows any sign of a self-preservation instinct — only the Beast, when frightened, can drag the vampire's body away from danger. As the Beast is cleverer than the blood worm, a worm host who enters into a frenzy actually becomes more cautious and better able to interact with the world. The worm fights back doggedly, though, just like the Kindred's conscious mind would otherwise.

A blood worm's host is easy to confuse for a draugr, but those who know the difference can easily tell the two apart in the absence of an unfortunately-timed frenzy. Many a worm host has died at her fellow Kindred's hands in the assumption that she was draugr. But unlike that state, a blood worm infestation

can actually be reversed. By starving the victim, it is possible to drive the tapeworm out of the host's body, and surgery can also kill or remove the parasite.

The worm host also distinguishes itself from a draugr in a few other ways – firstly, the worm does not have enough brainpower to properly control a human (or ex-human) body. It can concentrate and focus on the parts that matter, but the rest of its body control suffers. This means that the worm host is clumsy and lethargic in movement, limbs and muscles drooping off its frame like inert flesh. It also means that the host can suddenly lash out or break into a sprint with surprising coordination – just not both at once. Secondly, over a period of weeks or months, the vampiric frame starts to degrade, with black sores opening across the body that ooze a black, tar-like substance that smells disgusting. Over several years' time, these sores spread across the entire body, giving the impression of a burn victim rolled in oil, and the smell becomes potent and unbearable.

Vampires who have been cured of the infestation at this stage report that these sores are intensely painful, but they also vanish rapidly after the worm leaves. They leave behind unsightly bumps beneath the skin, like infected lymph nodes, and then these vanish gradually over time. These bumps are painless and grow back if removed – the long-time disfigurement of a Kindred body is unusual, and comes from a reaction between the individual's own Vitae with the corrupted Vitae the worm excretes while inside a vampire's veins.

A blood worm infection, by the nature of the parasite's unintelligent nature, tends to follow a specific path. The host, over the course of a night or two, gradually slips into lethargy and unconsciousness, and the worm, once the host's mind is suppressed, pilots its new body out to hunt and kill. Leaving a trail of corpses behind, the worm draws attention almost immediately, and only a few nights pass before someone kills the host, or else renders her torpid or cured. Regardless, the worm will then seek out a new host to possess and start the cycle anew, unless stopped.

The only true cure for a blood worm infestation is to kill the worm itself. Cities and domains where the local Kindred lack the knowledge of this rare parasite face a mystery plague, and a blood worm's host Kindred has been mistaken for a zombie both by vampires and mortals. If several ghouls have infected each other with tapeworms, then the city potentially faces an inexplicable "zombie plague" among its Kindred – and the fact that it spreads by the Final Deaths of the patients is not obvious. The attention such incidents draw to the local All Night Society in an outbreak area has torn some Kindred domains to pieces, and on rare occasion brought down the wrath of mortals armed with unusual weaponry and abilities to smash the local vampires to pieces.

This pattern means that a Kindred city with a blood worm problem and no knowledge of the parasite often end up curing the problem with harsh measures. Not knowing why some Kindred are going berserk, some domains have done things

like rounding up the local Haunts or culling the younger generations. Of course, most outbreaks do end before that point, whether by the local Kindred finally pegging down the source of the problem, or by sheer chance, when the last infected's beheaded corpses just so happened to be too far from any viable hosts.

Spreading the Love

The more closely connected a city's ghoul population, the more likely that blood worms become a serious matter. Blood worm eggs can pass with excrement, but unique to Vitae-strengthened tapeworms is that the eggs of some species can also be carried in acid reflux, which is a common symptom of blood worm infection. If a ghoul with this particular expression of infection sneezes, she can deposit the eggs, where they might end up in food or beverages. Normal worms of whichever species the blood worm came from hatch from these eggs, but if they end up in a ghoul, that worm feeds off the Vitae the host drinks, and becomes a blood worm itself.

A vampire who has been possessed by a blood worm also carries the eggs in his bloodstream, so if a ghoul drinks his blood, she becomes infected, but blood worms don't intentionally donate blood to spread the infection – they may be super-geniuses among their species, but that still makes them unusually smart tapeworms, incapable of understanding concepts beyond "hungry" and "sleepy." In any case, the host's body rapidly purges the eggs if the worm leaves, so the chances of an ex-worm host spreading the parasite are slim.

Rumors

"Where did they come from? Motherfucking Ordo Dracul, of course. There's that one fucking Haunt down by the old steel mill? Yeah, she made 'em."

The Dragons have indeed experimented with blood worms, but they did not create them. In fact, blood worms have existed for centuries, maybe even millennia. The Ordo Dracul find them fascinating in the aspects of the Vitae they reveal, though, and a few individual members, such as the Nosferatu researcher in question, have indeed tried to weaponize them – with limited success.

"Sawmouth? Yeah, let me tell you something – a strong mind can actually resist a blood worm infection! Believe me, my sire was infected once, and he managed to subdue the damned thing, and absorb it. It helped him out, too! It made his blood stronger. Where'd Sawmouth go, you asked? Check the old mines – last I heard, he was looking for a fast way to thicken his Vitae."

The dangerous idea that a vampire can resist a blood worm's influence, and even make their blood more potent by doing so, is not entirely false. Some rare Kindred, through luck or by having some unknown ability that helped, have managed to shake off this sort of control, but more scientifically minded vampires have made the argument that something else could have killed the worm, such as sickness + ghouls have been

known to die of disease on occasion, and blood worms are something akin to ghoulish worms. As for the increased Blood Potency from absorbing a worm, nobody has managed to provide evidence to prove it, although a few reckless vampires have deliberately infected themselves for the sake of that elusive benefit.

"Hmm, yeah, the old blood worms – did you know there're smarter ones, too? Like the one that got in the Sanctified Archbishop. Oh, you didn't hear? Not surprised, old fucker's not exactly gonna say he's a horrible parasite looking to prey on the Kindred, now is he?"

Blood worms are not intelligent beings, and the rumors of one controlling a local Lancea et Sanctum authority figure are just rumors, not based in facts. The entity possessing her is actually something far more dangerous – a Strix. Woe be to the vampire who goes up against that monster expecting to fight a mundane Kindred with a leech in her chest! The Lancea et Sanctum might also resist any such aspersions with extra ferocity in cities where the Sanctified faith is more closely aligned with the Catholic Church, as blaming the church for the creation of the blood worms is an old anti-Catholic conspiracy theory among vampires.

New Mechanics

A blood worm, outside of its host, is a pitiful creature never evolved for independent survival. Nevertheless, it can live outside of a host body for around 48 hours on average, depending on the individual specimen's health and strength, and is capable of independent movement. It moves at Speed 2 and can dig its hooks into soft surfaces of Durability 1 to climb, though the process is so slow that no speed rating applies – it simply takes a full scene, and the worm can climb no higher than six feet, or two meters, before succumbing to exhaustion and falling. It rolls two dice when in chases or to hide. The worm is so weak outside its host that no combat traits are necessary – a simple roll of Dexterity (or Wits if the attacker is surprised) + Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry at a -2 penalty is enough to kill the creature, requiring only a single success.

When the creature finds a sleeping victim, it begins to rend a hole in the sleeping body and pull itself into the wound. Mortals generally awaken automatically from the pain, but if they do not, the process is fatal, as the worm attacks major arteries. Kindred are helpless and suffer two points of lethal damage in the process. The burrowing takes hours but is done before sunset. That night, she takes a -1 penalty on all rolls from lethargy; the night after, the worm is in control.

A worm host can be cured by starving her of blood. When her Vitae stores are completely empty, the worm will dig its way out in search of new blood, inflicting another two points of lethal damage. A surgeon can also extract the worm, once again inflicting two points of lethal damage. The procedure takes a full scene, at the end of which the player rolls Intelligence + Medicine. One success is enough to destroy the worm, and a failed procedure does not prevent future attempts.

Players and Blood Worms

Storytellers should generally avoid inflicting blood worm infection on the players' characters. It's not just unpleasant to lose control of one's only character – it's boring.

Regardless of how the blood worm is removed, the ex-host faces an *immediate breaking point* upon regaining consciousness – and only one, no matter what the worm did.

The Worm Host

When a blood worm seizes a host, what passes for the tapeworm's mind replaces the vampire's mind, and its significantly inferior social graces take the place of the Kindred's equivalent.

All Mental and Social Attributes of the worm host become 0 (except Wits, see below), requiring a chance die to succeed at any attempted action. All the host's Skills stay with the original unconscious mind and become 0 for the duration of the possession. The exception is Athletics and Brawl, both of which the worm can use because those Skills in part represent physical conditioning. *While possessing a body*, the worm enjoys two dots each of Wits and Intimidation. The worm's Wits rating represents reaction speed and instinct, not quick thinking and improvisation. Its Intimidation rating reflects pure mindless brutality, fearlessness, and the simple fact that something is so obviously and fundamentally wrong with the character's mind. It does not have access to Willpower.

The blood worm, like the host before it, is still locked in a battle against the Beast for control but with its limited resources, it has far more difficulty resisting. The worm has a natural resistance to the Beast of two dice, which it may not increase in any way. The Beast, while in control of the body, uses the host's Attributes, not those of the blood worm. Therefore, it is far more intelligent and creative than the worm could ever hope to be. These moments of frenzy draw the host's unconscious mind closer to the surface – if the Kindred is later freed, these are the only moments she can remember. The worm's time in control is beyond her reach, in the realm of vague feelings and images that are blurry beyond recognition.

Amanda Bertholdt

Amanda is not a lucky woman. First, she found out that vampires existed by becoming one, a long-term desire of hers, but then it turned out it fucking sucks – and that's with her being a Daeva, her own perfect vampire. Then, her romance with her college roomie Natasha got ruined because Amanda

blood bonded her and turned her into a ghoul, which didn't work out all that well. And now, it turns out Natasha had digestive worms, and one of those killed Natasha and then got into Amanda. Maybe it's for the best she's no longer conscious inside that skull of hers — Natasha's death would devastate her otherwise. Now, Amanda's shuffling around campus at night, mindlessly attacking wandering students and even campus police. This will not evade her fellow Kindred's attention for long, and then she'll probably be put down — unless someone can find out what's really ailing her.

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Mask: Conformist

Dirge: Perfectionist

Touchstone: None (It was Natasha)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 0 (4), Wits 2 (3), Resolve 0 (3)

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 0 (4), Manipulation 0 (3), Composure 0 (3)

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2

Merits: Acute Senses, Indomitable, Resources 3, Status (Carthian Movement) 2,

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Vigor 2, Majesty 3

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 8

Integrity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Initiative: 2 (5)

Defense: 5 (Active Defense 8)

Notes: Amanda cannot use the following Merits unless in Frenzy: Indomitable, Resources, and Status.

The Brotherhood of Blood

"My brothers, the country has been overrun by liberals and babies. Go and take their blood and add it to your own! Make their lives matter by feeding yours!"

— Roger Taggart

In 2007, a sizable sample of Kindred Vitae arrived at Dr. Malcolm Williams' corporate laboratory, along with instructions from on high: "Make something our people can use in the field." They had been hearing rumors of Rampart Logistics' success and believed it had the key. In 2008, Williams' team successfully pioneered a prototype of what it called "demon ichor," a viscous serum intended to deliver superhuman physical fitness to its subjects. It was deemed ready for human testing.

Unfortunately for Dr. Williams, his work had drawn the attention of a violent white supremacist named Roger Taggart, a man who wanted Williams dead for petty reasons of hatred. Having worked his way into the scientist's trust as a security guard, Taggart now saw the chance for personal power, to advance his racial agenda. Calling upon his fellow white supremacist infiltrators among the guards, Taggart and his

men seized the demon ichor and fled, leaving Dr. Williams' lifeless body behind — or so he thought.

Returning to his headquarters in Taggart's basement, he called the rest of his friends together and distributed the serum unevenly among them — more for those who had his favor, less for those without, and the largest dose for himself. What was left, he hid away in a secret place only he would know. Then, he waited for the effects to kick in.

And it worked. But unfortunately for Taggart's group, the demon ichor had severe side effects. It affected their healthy, red bone marrow, causing it to convert to fatty yellow marrow instead, incapable of producing much in the way of blood cells. The resulting anemia would certainly have killed them, had they not found a solution: taking the blood they needed from others.

So, they dubbed themselves the Brotherhood of Blood, styled themselves vampires, and armed themselves with two-pronged syringes. They then started assaulting and draining blood from random people, mostly those they disapprove of for political reasons — simple enough, since that’s almost everyone. Each member is currently required to bring in blood to the group regularly, to the amount of three fluid ounces per day. Then, the Brotherhood’s self-trained phlebotomist, Eugene Reynolds, determines the blood’s type, and gives each member regular transfusions from the stolen stock. Of course, it all depends on finding the right blood — some unfortunates with rare blood types have died for lack of transfusable blood.

Calling each other “vampire brothers,” Taggart’s gang consider themselves the closest thing to real vampires there is. With metal syringe “fangs” and superhuman speed, strength, and endurance, they feel damned good about their physical superiority over everyone they consider inferior, and that’s a lot of people. That said, these paragons of the master race look pale, scrawny, and sickly; obviously weathered by their condition. More and more of them are suffering from various bloodborne infections and diseases, with only the serum’s physical benefits keeping many of them functional. Many of these diseases also have different vectors, meaning that even those vampire brothers who haven’t received infectious blood yet are still subject to some of their comrades in arms’ ailments.

Even Taggart’s bluster-filled tirade can’t stop some vampire brothers from growing quietly resentful of the whole situation and the endless hunt for blood. Does diluting your own being with “dirty blood” really advance the cause of the white race, they ask. Of course, Reynolds is loyal, and every one of them is guilty of a long laundry list of assaults and murders, so few really see a way out that won’t involve their inevitable deaths from anemia.

The Compound

The cult has since moved out of Taggart’s basement and into a walled suburban compound, a small gated community that the Brotherhood has all but taken. Only a few households had residents sympathetic to Taggart’s views beforehand, but as their presence

started to drive out other people, the Brotherhood bought more neighborhood real estate. The few remaining holdout households face a passive-aggressive campaign aimed to make them want to move.

With food and clothes supplied by the Brotherhood to its members, the compound is becoming increasingly isolated, all to ensure loyalty to the cause. Only white men are permitted into the group, and even then, only those who are Christian or irreligious. Women are banned from the compound, and those still living there face harassment and abuse intended to make them leave. Members are also taught that women are de-masculinizing men and need to be brought back in line by withholding money and attention, so relationships are frowned upon. Some get around this by hiring sex workers, but even this is increasingly discouraged.

Membership

The core membership number is somewhere around a dozen, but the Brotherhood does not consist entirely of vampire brothers. In addition, they have as many as 100 lower-ranking members hoping to earn the demon ichor, whom they call mortals. The Brotherhood’s so-called mortals are required to donate blood to the gang’s stores every two weeks, and each must steal blood from a single random victim who falls short of the gang’s racial ideals in order to be accepted into the group in the first place.

Brotherhood mortals have a distinctly secondary role in the gang, and some of them believe that the vampire brothers are genuine undead beings. Their superiors can order them around and abuse them however they want, while the gang’s self-styled preacher, Gregory Dickins, plies them with hateful rhetoric. Mortals must sever all ties with their previous lives, get assigned new names to use, and may not refer to themselves in first person — instead, they must refer to themselves by their new names in third person. Disease is rampant among them, owing to their proximity to the vampire brothers. Increasingly, Taggart is exercising his control over the Brotherhood to make his followers see him as a divine figure, a promised savior of the white race.

Within the compound, the Brotherhood maintains a soundproofed firing range, a mess hall, and a parade ground used for paramilitary exercises. Here, the mortals and



vampire brothers of the cult train in militia and guerilla tactics, ostensibly to get ready to liberate America from the moderates, leftists, and less extreme right-wingers alongside other likeminded groups. They are also making bombs to take down what they call strategic targets in terror actions. They are well aware that their movement is on fragile ground and are fortifying the compound as best they can.

The Brotherhood has a makeshift movie theater where they show carefully selected movies that fit their ideals, and a rather unskilled on-site band called Blood and Honor. Each vampire brother has a personal shower, while mortals share, and hygiene is fanatical to combat disease, to little effect. They publish a weekly gazette, the *Vampire's Herald*, which is little more than a few blog posts printed out and spiral bound for the members to enjoy. The paper uses frequent photoshopped anti-Semitic imagery to mock the cult's various subjects of hate, alongside rambling invective-filled thinkpieces by their more intellectual members. They also publish it online, hoping to attract new members. Of course, this lack of discretion hasn't brought the Brotherhood wealth and power, but it has drawn attention.

The Blood Supply

The Brotherhood's normal procedure to steal blood is to leave the compound at night in about half a dozen small groups, and drive an hour or two away from their compound. Each group finds a lone target they don't like the looks of, and corner him away from witnesses. Then, using a syringe with two needles, they stab the victim in the neck and draw upwards of one pint of blood, before moving on to the next target. They usually also rob their victims of any money they might carry, and sometimes valuables. Some vampire brothers "hunt" every day, and others make weekly excursions to fill their quotas, but few fail to perform this duty.

The group has also committed various crimes, ranging from petty to severe. They have taken credit for the assassination of the Nation of Islam activist Mohammed Lewis, one of their most prominent critics, by arson. One night, a dozen Brotherhood members surrounded his house and lit it on fire, using a cell phone jammer to prevent Lewis from dialing 911. A witness reported that the victim tried to escape the fire by jumping out a ground-floor window, but was grabbed and thrown back into the house by one of the assailants. Their involvement is also suspected by local authorities in the apparent suicide of Ashley-May Bronson, an author and journalist who got into a Twitter fight with Taggart over his Holocaust denial. A synagogue near the Brotherhood compound has also named them as the probable responsible party for a break-in that left spray-painted Nazi slogans throughout the sanctuary.

The Brotherhood of Blood runs a drug business on the side to help cover costs, selling meth, cocaine, and heroin through middlemen and patsies. They are also behind several scams, including the Indie Livin' pyramid scheme,

Being Careful

While the Brotherhood of the Blood is a fictional group of wannabe vampires, white supremacists are a real-world issue. This group is intended to be terrible and off-putting, and we haven't shied away from writing them as terrible as they are so that your characters can make unequivocal decisions that they need to be taken care of. Even if they weren't giving vampires a bad name, they are likely to clash with your characters through antagonism of their allies and contacts. But this material is intentionally heavy. We suggest talking to your play group before introducing these antagonists as their activities could easily hit too close to home for some people.

which focuses on selling goods such as food, water, and cosmetics that are purportedly made independently without the chemicals and other unhealthy things its adherents believe corporate-produced goods are full of. The goods are generally bought in bulk from cheap overstock and expired product, and then repackaged in Indiana with Indie Livin' branding. They also make money off the sale of false celebrity memorabilia on eBay and similar sites, a large chunk of which is purportedly connected to Elvis Presley or the Beatles, and some to presidents and American founding fathers. They also get funding from an unknown benefactor, which most Brotherhood members and observers assume is some wealthy individual with a right-wing agenda.

Kindred Reactions

The Kindred who have heard of this phenomenon have had mixed reactions — amusement, offense, befuddlement, disbelief — but a common thread throughout most of them is worry. The Brotherhood of Blood have genuine Kindred-derived abilities at their disposal and represent a real danger of discovery to the All Night Society. Each covenant is still debating internally how to handle this discovery, and several individual Kindred have started their own investigations.

The police, accosted with a sudden string of characteristic murders, quickly discarded the idea of a serial killer on the loose, and the presence of white supremacists aligned with Roger Taggart on the force itself has done nothing but slow the investigation down. A few similar attacks across state lines, by visiting vampire brothers, has now also drawn the FBI's attention, and they have assigned an elite serial-crimes detective, Elona Ng, to the case. As the net closes on the Brotherhood, Taggart has started fortifying his new compound, preparing for a glorious last stand against the vermin who would destroy America. Afan Haidar, an Invictus Gangrel, is particularly interested in finding the group after their Islamophobic and anti-Semitic activities caught his eye. Afan

hasn't practiced mortal religion in a long time, but his business dealings work towards protecting marginalized groups out of respect for his Islamic upbringing. Elona feeds Afan information as much as she can, and he takes to the streets acting beyond the regular reach of the police department.

And what of Dr. Williams? When Taggart stole the demon ichor, he left the doctor in critical condition, but because Taggart had no medical training, he did not think to check if his victim was truly dead. An intern discovered the man in time, and Williams ended up comatose in a nearby hospital. There, Margot Roth, a Ventrue of some standing conducting a personal investigation into this vampire cult, discovered the man, and arranged for his sudden and unexplained recovery. Now, the fledgling Kindred, tasked by his clan to destroy the Brotherhood of Blood, is all-too eager to show the white supremacists what a real vampire can do.

Rumors

"So, yeah, they're some proper freaks over there. And what's more, I heard their leader, Roger Taggart, I think his name was? Yeah, he's Kindred. A Serpent, too, no less, not that we needed an asshole like that in our clan."

Is Roger Taggart Kindred? Probably not – probably. If he is, though, then he is smarter than he seems, and has an ulterior motivation for his actions. In this case, he is probably reinforcing his control of his cult with Disciplines, which means they are even more fanatical than expected – and if so, they will die for his cause almost to a man, at his say so. Otherwise, the disgruntlement among a few of his followers might lead to betrayal or surrender. Anyone intending to go up against the Brotherhood would be wise to investigate, though, or risk facing an unpleasant surprise if the rumor is true.

"They got this shit, demon ichor, right? Developed by some corporation, based on Kindred blood. Yeah, no shit. Thing is, that Vitae didn't just appear out of nowhere – it was donated. And whoever donated it made sure to spike it just a bit, so now they got a murder-cult they can order about as they please!"

While the information is far from public knowledge, the Vitae sample Dr. Williams based his serum on was substantial – over six gallons. While that doesn't mean a single donor is impossible, it's unlikely – rather, the Vitae was most likely a mix drawn from various Kindred. That points to the possibility of someone keeping vampire prisoners to extract their blood and sell it. If so, it is likely either mortal vampire hunters, independent ghouls, or some enterprising Kindred who are responsible. In either case, it's a threat.

"So, this group, the Brotherhood of Blood, have a secret backer, and I just so happen to know that the backer is in fact one of us. Family, you know? Whoever it is, he's filthy stinking rich, and he not only controls the Brotherhood, but he pulled the strings to get this serum done in the first place. So now you're probably asking yourself, why? Well, that's what I'm trying to find out."

It's entirely plausible that Taggart's mysterious benefactor is in fact a vampire. It would explain where the suspiciously large sample of Vitae came from, and there are a few facts which tentatively point to a Kindred donor. First, Taggart himself has been reported to have mentioned a Truman in relation to the money, and the name Truman is occasionally used as code for Ventrue. Second, the sample Dr. Williams worked with arrived in a box marked "VV," and speculation that one of those V's might stand for "Vitae" seems plausible. Third, no records exist showing where the corporation received the box, but a quiet financial audit by Kindred-adjacent parties did not reveal any expenses involved, suggesting that it may have been a donation. And finally, the choice of Dr. Williams as the target for Taggart's crew seems like an overly convenient coincidence, which has led some observers to speculate that he was manipulated into position by someone who knew about the research. If this mysterious patron exists, they will most certainly oppose any attempt to meddle with these plans.

New Mechanics

When a mortal receives an injection of demon ichor, he experiences the onset of extreme lethargy at scene's end. He suffers a -3 penalty on all dice pools until he has slept, and must spend a point of Willpower every scene to avoid collapsing into unconsciousness. While asleep, he cannot be woken up by any means until the next morning. At dawn, he awakens, infused with the serum's power. At this point, he may make one single attempt to shake it off, rolling a chance die. A player character may spend a Willpower point to add three dice. A success means that the patient's immune system has suppressed the serum, rendering the individual permanently immune. Demon ichor has no effect on anyone who has a Blood Potency rating or similar power trait.

The serum, if not fought off, causes the spine marrow to convert from red to yellow marrow, thus rendering it incapable of producing red blood cells. As such, the patient must receive regular blood transfusions, to the tune of 20 or so fluid ounces per week. Otherwise, he takes a point of aggravated damage, which he may not heal until he receives another transfusion. He also loses one full dot of Willpower temporarily, and lapses into a coma if he loses his last dot in this way. The week begins when he has received his 20th fluid ounce of blood, or when a week has passed since he last took damage from missing transfusions. He must receive a full 20 fluid ounces within that time and cannot "store up" transfusions between weeks.

The benefits of the serum are twofold. First, it provides one single dot each of Celerity, Resilience, and Vigor, each of which provides its passive bonus as normal, and the serum recipient may spend Willpower as though it were Vitae to activate the Discipline's active abilities. Should the character later receive the Embrace, he keeps these Disciplines. Secondly, he may also spend Willpower to heal his wounds as Kindred spend Vitae, on a point-by-point basis.

Creating demon ichor requires Dr. Malcolm Williams's notes, and an extended Intelligence + Science roll, requiring 12 successes. The interval is a day and represents a few hours' lab work. The process requires five points of Vitae per dose, all of which is spent regardless of the roll results, and involves multiple steps that require the concoction to sit for the better part of 24 hours. For every success beyond the threshold, you may prepare an additional dose, consuming another five Vitae; on an exceptional success, you may make as many doses as you want, so long as you have the raw materials.

Brotherhood of Blood Member

"Things that go bump in the night? Yeah, that's me. And what do I bump off? Threats to the white race, brother!"

A misfit collection of underachieving, middle-class white guys who are disgruntled for no apparent reason, and the paler dregs of society, the Brotherhood of Blood is hardly illustrious company. But they hate passionately and without grounding in facts, and they have an echo of Kindred power flowing through their veins, and that makes them dangerous.

Virtue: Obedience

Vice: Hatred

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Computers 1, Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Politics (White Nationalism) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Grappling) 2, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Stealth (Shadowing) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2

Merits: Allies (Brotherhood of Blood) 3, Anonymity 3, Contacts 1 (White Supremacists), Safe Place (Compound) 3

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Resilience 1, Vigor 1

Health: 9

Willpower: 4

Integrity: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Initiative: 3

Defense: 4 (Active Defense 5)

Armor: 1/0 (reinforced clothing)

Notes: This can represent any member of the Brotherhood of Blood. If the character in question is a so-called "mortal" (i.e., has not received an injection of demon ichor) then ignore the Disciplines line and reduce Allies to 1.

Chimera Virus

"The lowly germ is still the great destroyer of mortals and in their efforts to stifle them they have forced an evolution. You see the articles by virologists, warning about superbugs every winter. How long before those germs become so potent, so powerful, that they could infect us? I assure you, it's not so far off as you might think."

— Morgan Sanni, Ordo Dracul Archivist

Disease is an annoyance to the undead. Plagues sweep the land and nations crumble but, though they make food scarce for a time, the vampire endures. Infections find no purchase in the cold flesh and stilled blood of the Kindred. The Black Death meant nothing to those already dead.

There have been stories about corruptions of the blood to weaken, harm, or even destroy a vampire, but these always end with some Dragon or Crone found using unnatural poisons. In the modern era, the growing understanding of infection adds further evidence to the vampire's immunity. Viruses and bacteria are living things; simple, fragile, and mortal. Nothing supernatural here, just more organisms beneath a vampire's notice. At least, that's the way it's supposed to be.

A little less than a five years ago a new virus spread through civilization. A virus so potently deadly it infects, corrupts, and consumes live tissue in a matter of hours. An infected mortal dies and rots within the day, but a strange thing happened when the virus reached the dead flesh of a vampire.

Undead cells rest in an equilibrium of death and supernatural rebirth. The nightly toll of Vitae regenerates tissue, keeping the Kindred from rotting away. This constant regeneration balanced the virus, sustaining and giving it the opportunity to grow, develop, and mutate. As these cells develop, they become mutable, like stem cells at the first stages of life. The body turns malleable, starting with the soft tissues. The vampire develops an instinctive motor control over the new flesh and can sculpt their own tissue with a thought, adapting the body with inhuman features and abilities. In the late stages of the disease, every cell of once-dead flesh is gone, and the Kindred is now a roiling mass of viral tissue in which each piece of the body is independently undead, a colony of tumors mimicking what was once a vampire.

The scholars of vampiric medicine have dubbed it the Chimera. As a chimerical animal mixes the DNA of species, this Chimera virus mixes itself with the undead substance of the vampire. Cases are few and far between, so it is

CDC Incident Summary M-02479

Closing Notes by Dr. J. A. Petersen, MD. Winter Harbor, ME.

June, 13 2013

RECORD SEALED

This is nothing like any virus I've encountered, nor like anything I've seen in our databases. The strain incapacitates the host and terminates them before they can effectively spread the disease through secondary symptoms. The few samples isolated from Subject 4 cannibalized themselves after defrosting, ruining analysis.

Whatever this bug is, it seems doomed to burn itself out, and we need to thank Christ and all his heavenly angels for that. It's impossible to imagine how a disease this potent could have evolved without extremely resilient host organisms (perhaps even regenerative.) If it isn't some wild mutation, then we will need to consider the possibility that it was laboratory engineered.

Or we need to check in the hills for crashed flying saucers.

barely more than a rumor to the wider world. Invictus and Sanctified leadership want any confirmed infections dealt with immediately and permanently. Better to burn a few victims now than to torch whole cities later, as the mortals might. The Ordo Dracul are fascinated by this novel bug, and there are quiet orders among their inner circles to capture any Kindred carriers of the Chimera for experimentation. There's more to this disease than just death. Chimera may be the key that unlocks new paths of transfiguration.

Rumors

"It all started in some little fishing village on the Pacific. The tsunami washed this 'thing' up on shore and that's the first time anyone got sick with this Chimera disease. So, it stands to reason that if we want a cure, we need to go to the source of it all. Find the earliest, purest strain and then let the mystics and scientists work their magic. We just need to find out what the 'thing' was, and I think I might have a few ideas..."

During the clean up after the last tsunami an entire village fell sick with a previously unknown flesh-eating virus. The situation was worsened by widespread anemia, which seemed unrelated to the symptoms of the virus. The CDC, The World Health Organization, and Doctors Without Borders moved quickly to render what aid they could. While there, a team of forensic pathologists discovered the corpse of a deep-sea animal on the shore. The researchers suspected that its fetid bulk might have been the source of the strange illness, so they took samples. Now those samples of the undersea abomination sit in storage with one, or all, of these organizations.

"Isn't this how evolution works? A strange, new thing attacks the body and it adapts to preserve itself. And, in so doing, evolves to the next stage of its existence. There's been no reason for vampires to advance for thousands of years. Now, here it is. An evolutionary opportunity. A mutagenic agent. We have a duty to see what the vampire becomes when old flesh is replaced by the new."

A rogue group of the Ordo Dracul's researchers has decided to intentionally infect some vampires with the Chimera, to understand it better. How widespread this test will be, and how aware and willing the participants are is still unknown. Perhaps it would be a good opportunity to clear out some undesirable elements at the same time? And perhaps the test has already begun?

"You've read the book, or at least walked past some raving street preacher shouting it. Pestilence, the white horse, the silent invasion that will conquer all and pave the way for the end times, final judgment, Armageddon, what-have-you. Well, here it is! The end is nigh and all that because now even the undead will die. The first rider will ravage the land and Hell will follow. Now, my Kindred, now is the time when you must repent your sins and misdeeds and prepare yourself. We shall all be tested by this disease and those who survive will be changed."

Once word of a vampire plague got out, a cult of end-timers sprung up to take advantage of the fear, doubt, and instability. The Clergy of Bones offer salvation from the plague for their loyal followers but there's an agent of VII among their ranks. This could very well be a ploy intended to end the curse of the vampire, once and for all.

Skalla

"I knew the night would come when I would have to eat you. I'm just sorry it's tonight."

Once a rising socialite, Skalla had a run in with a Kindred drifter that left her so badly injured she fell into torpor for a month. When she returned to undeath her cohorts found she had been changed by her ordeal in mind and in body. That drifter hosted the Chimera virus and spread it to Skalla in their fight. Her prolonged regeneration fed the disease, so it had already begun to transform her by the time she awoke. She has not shied away from using her powers of mutation since then and had just entered Stage 4 when she consumed her sire. Now

she is wanted by the rest of the Kindred in her city, but she isn't worried. If she needs to destroy her former fellows to survive, then their meat will just be more fuel for the fire inside her.

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Invictus (formerly)

Mask: Competitor

Dirge: Questioner

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 2,

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Larceny 1, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Alternate Identity 2, Contacts (Local News, Social Climbers) 2, Cutthroat 1, Fast-Talking 2, Haven 3, Iron Will, Patient, Resources 3

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Majesty 2

Blood Potency: 3

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Initiative: 7

Defense: 6 (Active Defense 8)

Armor: 4/4

Notes: Chimera Stage 4, Patient is found on p. 46 of **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

The Chimera Virus

The Chimera Virus consumes a vampire from the inside, replacing her own tissue with its own. Infected characters gain a template and the level of infection is tracked in Stages from 1 to 5.

Metastasis

The virus moves through Vitae, using it to invade new areas of the host. When the host regenerates damage, it metastasizes infected tissue, spreading more viral cells through the body. Likewise, using the powers of the Chimera speeds up infection. The host's player tracks infection for healing injury

and for using the powers of the Chimera. The player marks 1 infection for every point of Vitae spent in healing injury and 1 for every point of Vitae spent in powering Chimera abilities. Every 10 infection advances the Chimera Stage by 1.

Alien Thoughts

The host vampire's gray matter is also replaced by the Chimera's mutagenic cells. It happens so gradually that the vampire is unaware of any change as the virus builds a facsimile of her neurons. Her identity and memories are intact, and her behaviors remain the same, at least at first. The brain is a very complicated organ though, and the tiny imperfections in the translation add up. Each time the Chimera Stage increases, the host faces a breaking point and possible loss of Humanity. The roll is made with a $\frac{1}{2}$ modifier. The player may not choose to take a Bane, since this break is the result of the brain physically unraveling and its chemistry changing. That, coupled with the increasing hunger and drive to kill and consume, means an infected vampire won't hold on to their humanity very long.

Antibody

The Chimera tissue is malleable and resistant to damage, moving and seeming to deflect away from an incoming source of injury as a form of self-preservation. An infected vampire gains a natural armor rating equal to his Chimera Stage against both close and ranged attacks.

Feeding Habits

Infected Kindred lose the ability to gain sustenance from blood. Beginning at Stage 3, they must consume twice the amount of blood they require to replenish their supply. They gain the option to eat raw meat in place of blood, inflicting one health level of lethal damage to the victim for each point of Vitae acquired. They remain unable to eat other food. At Stage 4 only meat will suffice. At Stage 5 the vampire's food must be alive, eaten right off the bone. It is the only way to provide meat fresh and potent enough to feed the Chimera's endless hunger. The infected can eat vampiric flesh to feed. If this causes the Final Death of their victim, then devouring the meat is an act of diablerie, consuming the soul along with the body.

Tainted Blood

The progressing disease turns Vitae inert. At early stages of infection, the vampire's Vitae tastes foul to anyone drinking it. It becomes hard to maintain blood bonds, and anyone making a roll to resist forming a blood bond gains a bonus to their roll equal to the vampire's Chimera Stage.

The disease spreads from the vampire as he shares blood, weakening and killing mortals and slowly transforming other vampires. Each time someone drinks the infected vampires' blood she must roll Stamina + Resolve - Chimera Stage in

resistance. Failure means she is now infected with the disease. A mortal or ghoul falls deathly ill, repeating the roll every night to resist one point of lethal damage, until 10 successes have accumulated. A vampire who fails the resistance roll becomes another host of the Chimera Virus, beginning at Stage 1.

Curing Chimera

No one knows if there is a cure for Chimera. There certainly doesn't seem to be one for humans, and people either succumb or get better on their own. Vampires likewise have not found a cure, though if it is caught early enough, a vampire may purge the Vitae containing the virus before it takes hold.

If a vampire with Chimera Stage 1 acts quickly, she can purge the virus. She must get rid of all the Vitae in her system, either by burning it off or by concentrating it and vomiting it out. If she is using it to heal, or to utilize the Chimera's power, she must purge again the next night before it is all out of her system.

Chimera Stage 1

The Chimera virus attacks soft tissue first. Fat, skin, and muscles become malleable as the virus takes them over.

Action: Extended

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Chimera Stage

With some time and effort, the host can reshape these tissues. If she needs a disguise, a couple minutes is enough to pull the nose out of shape, squeeze the contours of the gut, and push some blood into the cheeks. With an extended action the host can attempt to disguise themselves as a person with similar facial features, skin tone, and body shape. Photographs or other reference can be used as equipment to add to the dice pool. One roll requires 30 minutes of careful styling. Apply successes as a penalty to anyone attempting to recognize the host.

Chimera Stage 2

The host no longer needs to sculpt his flesh with hands or tools; with a little concentration he shifts his appearance, like flexing a muscle.

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine + Chimera Stage

The vampire can now alter details like skin tone and hair length, shade, and curl, improving the ability to disguise his appearance. Attempts to emulate another person now require only 10 minutes and the person trying to see through the disguise needs to spend ten minutes on each roll. The host can also make a "quick change," instantly altering her appearance.

This hurried disguise won't pass for any specific person but allows the host to conceal her identity. Apply successes as a penalty to anyone attempting to recognize the host.

Chimera Stage 3

The vampire's cartilage, bones, and teeth are converted and become as pliable as muscle. The skeleton can be shaped, and limbs distended, adding inches to height, reach, or girth with a thought.

Action: Instant or Extended

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: None

Now able to alter bone structure, anyone trying to see past the host's altered appearance suffers a penalty equal to his Chimera Stage.

The host can also create natural weapons by manipulating hard tissue, sprouting spurs of bone, claws, or clusters of teeth to add 1 to the damage from Brawl attacks. If the host takes five minutes or longer to craft them, the weapons inflict lethal damage. Weapons hurriedly generated inflict only bashing.

Chimera Stage 4

The host can craft her tissue into more complex and useful shapes, including creating functional tools from her body nearly without thought.

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Willpower, 1-3 Vitae

No longer limited to shaping crude implements, the host can manipulate her tissue to craft organic tools from or add functional features like additional limbs, new sensory organs, wall-climbing claws, and wings. In addition to the Willpower expenditure, the vampire must spend Vitae for the equipment rating of the tool, up to 3.

Chimera Stage 5

At Stage 5, the vampire's entire body has been replaced by mutant tissue. At this stage, it is no longer a vampire, but instead a Chimera, a walking entity made up of colonies of virus-controlled cells. These groups can separate and reattach, transforming to function independently. Beheading does not kill a Chimera; a lost head can slither away and reattach later.

To detach portions of its body, the Chimera spends one Willpower and then one point of Vitae for each piece separating from the core. The tissue can come from anywhere on the body — it can cut loose an arm or let a layer of fat and muscle peel off. One level of Size is subtracted from the Chimera's overall Size, and it temporarily loses one health level. The detached mass becomes a lowly crawler. It will form crude limbs, sensory organs, and the features it needs to function.

Crawler

A wriggling lump of flesh about the size of a large rat, with features blending the animal and insectoid. The thing is conscious of its surroundings and has the Mental Attributes of its creator but is incapable of communication or use of Social abilities. It is independent from the host, and though it will act as they would, it does not communicate to the host. Crawlers are best used as scouts, dispatched to investigate and return.

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 4

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 9

Size: 2

Health: 3

When creating a crawler, the Chimera may spend additional Vitae, one for each effect: the crawler gains 1/1 armor; the crawler is covered in bony ridges and teeth adding a 0 (L) damage attack with a Dice Pool of 3 against anyone who touches it.

To recover the crawler, the Chimera touches it and spends another Vitae. The thing liquefies and flows back into the main body, returning the Size and Health level it took when created. The knowledge of what it has seen and experienced is then absorbed into the Chimera's mind.

If the detached piece is lost or destroyed the Chimera must regrow the lost mass. The health level invested in the crawler becomes aggravated damage.

The Everlasting

"Every night someone must die to your hunger, or you rot. Every day you scabble in the dirt, fleeing the sunlight. What time you have between, you spend destroying one another. And you call that immortality?"

— Jeremiah Treet, antiquarian, lecturer, and Everlasting

You think the Invictus are a bunch of stick-in-the-mud status quo lovers? What if it wasn't enough for them to just block the Carthian's plans for change? What if they wanted to coat your world in amber and make it a fossil in their own personal museum? Well childe, you just imagined an Everlasting.

Is that even their name? They prefer to be addressed by their own names when encountered. Are they gods? If so, they are detached and uninterested gods. A few scholars have suggested they are some of the first created beings, before Enlil or whoever worked out how "death" was meant to work. They all look to be of Middle Eastern heritage, which has the theorists suggesting Babylonian, Sumerian, or Mesopotamian.

They're mostly right. The Everlasting came from those ancient places but even then, they kept quiet, living among the people, but hiding their true nature. They were never children, never younger or older than they are now. Everlasting don't reproduce and seem uninterested in the very idea of increasing their population. There aren't many of them and each operates independently. Over the centuries, they drifted away from the "cradle of civilization."

They possess a true, godly immortality. They don't need food or water, or air, and their hearts do not beat. They do not procreate. A fixed number of them entered the world millennia ago and no more have appeared. Acts of violence will harm them — even destroy them — so they fight with everything they have to stay alive. They have no ghostly presence or soul, so death is truly their end. If an Everlasting does expire, they leave behind a relic of their existence, their indestructible heart.

What do they do? They build little domains for themselves where things happen in a loop. Time still passes — they can't reverse it or make it stand still. What they *can* do is preserve the places, objects, and people from age or decay, and then hypnotize them into reenacting the same actions at the same times every day, week, month, or whenever. Sometimes they rebuild an old memory. Others enjoy a new experience and decide it is worth repeating. Permanence is the most important motivation of any Everlasting, because routine is what strengthens them.

They trade in secrets and excel at manipulation. They know where treasures and bodies are buried. They amass wealth and buy influence. They deal in permanence, in the certainty of a

future under control. They craft elegant webs of power over decades. When something disturbs their quiet corner of the world, that's when debts get called in, agents activated, and problems disappear.

How can you tell you're in the presence of an Everlasting? The first thing that gives it away is the smell. It's mysterious and exotic, but familiar at the same time: rich, but not heavy, sweet, but not cloying, like honey and olives and the blooms of Eden. The next indicator is the routine. Are the people acting like robots from some theme park ride, dressed in out-of-fashion but perfectly preserved clothes? Do they repeat the same motions or carry on a conversation with someone absent from the room? If you see all that, you've wandered into the realm of an Everlasting. Don't stay too long, or you may be handed a role to play and end up part of the show.

So, that's it then? Live and let unlive? Well, it's not so easy. Kindred tend to think big. They play the long game and have plenty of time and energy to invest in it. So do the Everlasting, and sometimes there just isn't enough room for all the players on the field. The Invictus and Lancea et Sanctum want to build systems that last forever. What if the whole linchpin of their plan is the mayor already in the back pocket of the Everlasting? The Carthian Movement and Circle of the Crone want to see it all change, pushing the clock forward or turning it back. What happens when someone moves into an Everlasting's backyard, shouting their progressive or regressive message? Ordo Dracul lust after anything ancient — there's always some crumb of knowledge in an old manuscript. But it's an Everlasting who personally carried that book out of the Library of Alexandria and pages through it each night. Don't forget the VII, looking to kill anything they think lives too long. I guarantee you, anyone we call Everlasting is not dying without a hell of a fight.

And then, sometimes, the Everlasting wants to make a change of their own. Maybe it's time to put a new wing on the museum, to add a bar where

it is perpetually 2016, or "immortalize" a beautiful creature. What if you happen to be in the way? In general, the Everlasting don't ask for permission, because they won't listen when you say "no."

Rumors

"There's a club downtown called the Grace Note. You probably haven't heard of it. Anyway, it's got a cute retro gimmick: It's 1946 in there, forever. Every night people come dressed in evening gowns and porkpie hats. And there's this Iraqi guy in a gray suit sitting at the table just to the left of the stage. I feel like he must own the place because he's really into the whole "stuck in time" thing; he reads the same newspaper, every night. The headline says "Guilty Verdicts in Nuremburg! Ribbentrop and Goering to Hang!" He must print up a new one every night, because it's perfectly clean and crisp."

Rafeeq is the man in gray, and the supposed owner. He's not above mingling with the clientele, so long as they don't try to talk over his favorite songs, but he isn't running a club to make friends. Acquaintances will find him to have an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of the city, going back to when it was a little camp by a river. There's a collection of strange relics in a vault in the basement and a library stuffed with books in dozens of forgotten languages.

He isn't interested in war, but he isn't interested in moving, either. Unfortunately, the Grace Note is in a prime location for the movers and shakers of the night. For now, the All Night Society has deemed the club "neutral territory," meaning that anyone wanting to go there is on their own.

Rafeeq offers hefty rewards to people willing to get their hands dirty to chase off real-estate developers, vampires expanding their turf, or other undesirables who might ruin the ambience.

"Jodi and Chelsea have been inseparable since New Year's Eve, 1924, when Jodi gave Chelsea the Kiss and they killed Chelsea's dad together. You can see them in a big group photo, taken in the ballroom of the Sutter mansion, leaning against a carousel horse, "Happy New Year" on the banner over their heads.

The historical society finished refurbishing the Sutter mansion, right down to the carousel horse. I told Jodi and Chelsea about it, thought they might get a kick out of seeing their special night again. They said they'd check it out. That was a couple months ago."

The Sutter mansion is right outside the old town border but is well within the city's garden district. It's open to the public, and some have reported seeing wax mannequins with Chelsea and Jodi's likenesses, but neither vampire has been seen recently. It turns out those wax statues aren't wax at all.

Jeremiah Treet saw millennia pass but the vibrant energy of the roaring 20s is his current favorite. His dear friends, the Sutters, threw the best parties and he wants to have everything back in its proper place in time for the centennial anniversary. Finding models to match up with the old photographs might have taken years (or expensive plastic surgery) but the vampires hadn't changed — they came ready made for the new display.

Now he's looking for anyone else who might have been there that night. Hoping to find some of them still around, ready to place on display right along with the others in his collection.

"The Crones have a rather unusual artifact. It's a giant topaz or maybe a chunk of amber, about the size of your fist. Thing is, it bleeds. Continuously. Eternally. It's not normal blood though, it's some kind of oil that the Hierophant has been putting into her Cruac rituals. It's doing something to them; their magic's growing stronger. If they keep on like this, there won't be a single Kindred who can resist her power."

The Hierophant has an Everlasting's heart, an endless source of Ichor, the "gods-blood" of the Everlasting. It's been a bonanza for the cult but the warier among them wonder if substituting Everlasting Ichor for blood has some long-term dangerous consequence. Perhaps their minds getting caught up in obsessive, looping behaviors? Or maybe just some undead repetitive stress injuries?

Baroness Caribaldi

"Once upon a time, there was a beautiful princess. And there still is. And there always will be."

The fascists burned the villa, killed the servants, and ruined her endless wedding party. She came to America in the hold of a trawler packed with Italian refugees. She told the children stories every night until they begged to hear the one about the runaway princess again and again, and she found her first handhold in the new world.

New Orleans was growing but already had its roots in the history of France, Haiti, and Africa, so she found traditions and rituals to latch on to: the old widows praying the rosary in church, the mayor perfunctorily screwing his secretary every

Tuesday when he said he was going to lunch. Her power grew. She bought a mansion and every day the servants welcomed her home as if it were her first time stepping through those double doors. She's taken a more active role in the politics of her new home. She's not going to let herself be surprised again by the outside world intruding on her special place and her special time.

Those refugee children still live on the third floor of the mansion, playing with toys all day, eating ice cream that tastes like lavender, dates, and honey. She tells them the princess story every night before bed. She disposed of their parents long ago, of course. They were too old for fairy tales.

Origin: Everlasting

Virtue: Idealist

Vice: Manipulator

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 6, Wits 6, Resolve 8

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 8, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Academics 6, Investigation 5, Medicine 3, Occult 5, Politics 4, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Firearms 4, Larceny 6, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 3, Intimidation 7, Persuasion 7, Socialize 6, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5

Merits: Allies (Police) 3, Allies (Local Government) 2, Allies (Historical Society) 1, Anonymity 2, Contacts (Mafia, News) 2, Etiquette 3, Indomitable, Language (Arabic, French, Italian, Latin) 4, Library (Academics) 2, Resources 5, Retainer (Butler; Bradley, servitor) 3, Safe Place 4, Staff 3, Status (High Society) 2

Disciplines: Celerity, Dominate 5, Majesty 5, Resilience

Ichor Rating: 8

Health: 11

Willpower: 13

Integrity: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 17

Initiative: 13

Defense: 9

Ichor

The gods of legend did not bleed. When pierced by the arrows of their enemies, pure nectar dripped from the wounds. Like the Vitae of vampires, the Ichor of the Everlasting fuels and focuses their powers. Ichor doesn't flow through their

veins, rather it seeps through them, a fragrant oil just beneath the skin they can exude from their pores with a thought or gesture. An Everlasting's Ichor Rating determines the upper limit on Skill and Attribute ratings, as well as the number of Ichor he may spend each turn.

Feeding Upon the Familiar

Routine feeds an Everlasting. The same breakfast at the same time, the same walk down the boulevard wearing the same perfect clothes. The same seat in the theater with the same Cary Grant movie, with the same little hiccup in the reel change between two and three. Turning the mundane into ritual by sheer repetition. These acts and experiences regenerate the Ichor in her body.

The amount of Ichor restored depends on the detail of the routine. Sitting at home, re-reading an old newspaper for hours while a butler deposits a cup of chamomile tea at exactly the stroke of four restores a single point. Throwing a Christmas dinner party for a dozen hypnotized guests, perfect down to the moment Trevor breaks the gravy boat, can restore five.

If she is interrupted, then the Everlasting's reverie is broken, and Ichor cannot be restored until the cycle begins again. Obviously, the Everlasting can break from routine as needed, but she needs to get back to the familiar patterns to recharge and refresh, either resetting a loop until it picks up again, or returning to a recurring scene already in progress.

Using Ichor

Everlasting use Ichor to heal injuries, preserve objects, fuel their immortal powers, and even repair items in their collections.

- Each point of Ichor spent restores 2 **bashing** or 1 **lethal** damage.
- The Everlasting can spend 1 point of Ichor per size of an object to add +1 to its **Durability**. She can run her hands over the object to smear it with Ichor or fill the air with a mist and let it seep in. Organics cost 1 point less, so a wooden door would cost 4 Ichor, while a steel one would cost 5. Organic Size 1 objects don't require spending Ichor — just handling them for a few minutes is enough.
- An Everlasting can restore an item from her collection to perfect form even if broken or destroyed. The item must have been reinforced with Ichor prior to breaking. Each point of Ichor restores one level of **Structure** to the object. The shards of a shattered vase collect and rejoin. A door knocked off its hinges jumps back into place and the screws reset in the frame. This power cannot repair or rebuild an object not already part of a collection. After the object has been restored, the Everlasting needs to spend Ichor to preserve it again.
- Ichor fuels immortal powers that work similarly to vampire Disciplines. The Everlasting can learn the following

Disciplines and use Ichor instead of Vitae for their activation: **Celerity**, **Resilience**, **Dominate**, and **Majesty**. In the cases of **Dominate** or **Majesty**, the Everlasting can communicate her orders without eye contact, if her subject can smell the scent of the master. An Everlasting can record orders to tape; dab a few drops of Ichor on the "play" button and a mortal who comes home to listen to his answering-machine messages has just been given his marching orders.

Everlasting stock personal museums with commemorative keepsakes they can hold and study and use, again and again. They must protect these objects, so they saturate them with Ichor and they become as eternal as the Everlasting. Organic materials are the easiest to preserve. The "sweat" of the Everlasting is absorbed into the cotton clothing she wears or the wooden keepsakes she handles. Inorganics, like plastic or metal, are more difficult but can still be reinforced. The Everlasting coats the object in layers of Ichor that become rigid and impermeable, a clear coating of supernatural stuff that resists impact, temperature, rust, etc.

Miasma

The Everlasting can release Ichor into the air. This invisible, but sweet, fog amplifies the effectiveness of her powers, allowing her to coat objects or fix broken pieces of her collection without touching them. Additionally, when she attempts to use one of her immortal powers, she gains a +1 bonus on the activation, or may decrease the miasma's effectiveness instead of spending Ichor for active powers on her physical Disciplines.

One point of Ichor fills a small room. Additional points of Ichor increase the miasma's rating or expand the space it covers. Fortunately for the Everlasting's opponent, the miasma is affected by wind. Low speed winds disperse the miasma, 1 point every minute. Higher winds do it faster; 1 point every turn. The miasma can't form at all in gale-force winds.

An Everlasting can cause the miasma to coalesce, forming a barrier of golden fog that restrains those trying to pass through it. The Everlasting spends an additional point of Ichor and condenses the miasma to a personal bubble. Anyone attempting to reach the Everlasting must succeed a **Strength + Athletics** roll contested by the Everlasting's **Resolve + Intimidation + Miasma**. If they fail, the Everlasting can engage them in grappling combat, using **Resolve + Intimidation + Miasma** in place of **Strength + Brawl**, as the fog of Ichor condenses around the Everlasting's target. The barrier can't block fast-moving objects, like a bullet for example, but can slow or deflect a melee attack.

Immortal Subjects

The Everlasting create subjects by having mortals imbibe their honeyed Ichor. Rather than opening a vein, an Everlasting need only allow the nectar to matriculate into a cupped hand. Easier than the vampire's way, but certainly less

exciting. Subjects exist in a physical stasis; they cease aging and their hair and nails stop growing. After a month of feeding on Ichor, they no longer need to eat or drink, a few drops of Ichor suffice as their sole source of nourishment. Subjects do not gain any other supernatural abilities though, and cannot

spend Ichor to heal themselves, though the Everlasting can restore them as they would a piece of their collection. A vampire consuming Ichor finds it to be as fulfilling as Vitae, and just as addicting.

Heart's Bane

"The cut should have healed, but blood flowed without ending. He fed and fed, but nothing remained. His Vitae fled from him."

— Viola Hawker, Ordo Dracul

Long ago, in an English kingdom as lost to time as Camelot, an ambitious prince named Anfortas married a mortal woman and elevated her above all others. He enforced new rules protecting and benefitting mortal life at the expense of his fellow vampires. Though many opposed these policies, no one could topple him from power. Anfortas was the keeper of the Holy Grail and its power reinforced his own.

The vampires of Anfortas' domain sought aid and, through the Lancea et Sanctum, found Balin, the keeper of the Spear of Longinus. Balin arranged an audience with Anfortas. Anfortas received him gladly. As Balin knelt before Anfortas, he attacked with the head of the Spear of Longinus, wounding Anfortas between the thighs. Anfortas' guards immediately attacked and Balin had to escape before killing Anfortas.

Anfortas tried to heal the wound, but the flesh would not close. Worse, his Vitae seeped from the wound without pause. Anfortas isolated himself on a large boat in the center of a large lake. He caught the Vitae he lost with the Holy Grail — which renewed the blood — and consumed it again, sustaining himself until he could be healed.

This tale of the Arthurian Fisher King is the earliest known record of Heart's Bane.

The Quiet Disease

Heart's Bane is a disease that affects the Vitae. Normally, Vitae is a jealous substance that draws blood back into vampiric bodies. Even when vampires do bleed, they rarely lose Vitae in the blood. Heart's Bane turns this jealousy into revulsion. Vitae seizes every opportunity to ooze out of the dead. Unlike in the story of the Fisher King, those infected with Heart's Bane can heal their wounds. In fact, the infected tend to be some of the best at patching themselves up since every moment a wound remains open is more Vitae lost.

Heart's Bane tends to be a quiet illness, more of a condition to manage than a sudden sickness to cure. Those infected take care to prevent getting cut, stabbed, sliced, or scratched — anything that could lead to bleeding. Very few advertise they have Heart's Bane, since it is an obvious weakness to attackers.

Transmission mostly occurs through the Vitae. A vampire who drinks from someone infected becomes infected. This is not the only way it can be passed, however. Infected vampires can infect other vampires with their Vitae in a similar way to how vampires infect mortals.

The disease can also be transmitted through ghouls. If ghouls drink from an infected vampire, they become a carrier for Heart's Bane. Even if they stop consuming Vitae and return to full mortality, the disease lingers within them. While these mortals are not affected by the disease, any vampire who drinks from them has a chance of contracting Heart's Bane. Ghouls are more effective at spreading Heart's Bane than other humans.

The Diabolic Variant

The diabolic variant of Heart's Bane is virulent and deadly. Vitae and Vitae-infused blood press to the surface of the infected vampires, causing them to seem unnaturally flushed and warm. The Vitae seeks any exit from the body — fleeing through the breath and bleeding out the eyes. Because of this, bloody tears are a very popular image associated with Heart's Bane. The more dangerous side effect of the fleeing Vitae is that vampires can infect others simply by breathing near them. As the Vitae flees, the vampires go into frenzy and destroy one another, seeking Vitae to fill their lack. Without sufficient Vitae, their wounds do not heal. All damage is more lethal. The vampires who fall into torpor before dying do so without regard for the coming day. Those who fall away from

possible sunlight remain infectious. No one knows if torpor can eventually cure the diabolic Heart's Bane or soothe it into its quieter form; no one has waited for someone to awaken. Killing them and burning them to ash is safer.

The current leading theory for the origin of the diabolic variant is that it occurs when someone commits diablerie on a vampire who has Heart's Bane. The potency of their condition, distilled through the perverse act, changes the disease. The cause for this theory is the same event that launched Heart's Bane from a quiet disease no one spoke about to one that vampires know to fear: the *SS Pellem*.

The SS Pellem

The *SS Pellem* was a 1931 ocean liner that caught fire during its month-long journey from France to New York. The ship made no distress call and authorities did not search for the ship until it failed to reach its destination. When freighters eventually found the ship, they found evidence of the fire and no survivors. A young woman's diary, hidden in one of the few rooms untouched by the fire, was the only account of the events. When the prince of New York learned the contents of the diary, he sent one of his Mekhet lieutenants to confiscate it.

The diary had two writers. The first was the prolific Adeline Lyon, a neonate Mekhet vampire who wrote about balancing her desire to master her abilities with her desire to be seen and make a difference against the injustices she noticed in the world and on the ship. She carefully documented the daily lives of the other vampires on the ship and the various ways they misused or were abused by power. She also wrote at length about her annoyance with and growing hatred for the admiral (a term then used for the Kindred who served as the prince on long sea voyages). The second writer was Philippe Janvier, an ancilla Mekhet who had been assigned by his prince to guide Adeline. Janvier's additions are minimal but do explain the final fate of the ship and its occupants.

The following translated excerpts from her diary explains:

September 27th—Even those who bother to see me still only see the spoiled girl I was. They see the ribbons winding in my hair and do not notice the intelligence in my expression. I am invisible by both my natures — a Mekhet and a young woman. My tutor is pleased with my progress, but I wish the admiral were as susceptible. She notices me with chilling precision. All others overlook me, but her gaze pierces me like a spear.

September 29th—The admiral condescends to me, overexplaining politics I know I understand better than she. Her temper is wicked. Even the slightest offenses can earn minutes to hours outside in the sun. My tutor simply avoids being seen; he hides himself from her notice and she does not realize. Though I envy him, I know hiding will not stop her.

October 2nd—I have an idea. The admiral revels in the trappings of humanity, in particular, eating. More than once she has forced some morsel to my lips demanding I recall the bitter sourness of an orange or the heat of cinnamon. If we were mortal,

I might think she was courting me. As we are not, I think she merely delights in my disgust. Still, this peculiarity of hers is my opening. She demands my company often (I think she knows how much her attention, despite my attempts to hide, frustrates me) and does not watch her food too closely. I will poison her.

October 12th—Success! Such success is beyond description. My body thrums, is thrumming with strength. I am shadow. I am endless. She fell. My poison in her drink and in her food struck like lightning bolts. She fell, her face all hurt and betrayal, and slept. It was a flirtation from the very start. I hear her thoughts wound through my own like my ribbons in my hair, ribbons she had wanted to steal and wrap around my wrists and bind me to her bed. Such fantasies, but no more. She fell and I bit her and I drank and it thrilled me, twisted through me like a worm. All shouldn'ts and yet my conquering compelled me on. I drank until nothing remained and then drank further until she was nothing and I was everything.

October 13th—The ship is an uproar over the admiral's death. I think my tutor suspects me, but the admiral gives me strength still and I hide from him. I feel feverish with excitement and my skin is still flushed pink with her Vitae.

October 14th—We met with a storm and the winds and waves heaved our ship from side to side. Some glass fell and shattered in the main cabin. I stopped to help, even though none would notice, and sliced my hand along the glass. It has been hours, but it is still bleeding. I have returned to my cabin at last. My tutor should be able to explain what is happening.

10-17-31, I bound Miss Lyon's wound and recommended rest. I checked on her the following sunset. She was near frenzy with hunger. I gave her two bottles of stored blood to help her regain control. She drank well, but then started to cry dark, bloody tears. I gave her another bottle. Her hunger did not abate. Her Vitae continued to seep from her eyes. I will confine her here until a Dragon can see her and explain.

10-18-31, Miss Lyon has broken quarantine. Sir Braithwaite has grown more flushed, as have others. I have read Miss Lyon's entries and am concerned that her condition has spread.

10-21-31, Miss Lyon is dead. Sir Braithwaite and twenty more have started to cry blood. Others, including myself, are experiencing the initial fever. The Dragons on board have no explanation. All treatments have failed.

10-23-31, All are sick or dead except the humans. The Dragons have determined one solution: annihilation. We must destroy ourselves or else this plague may destroy New York. Thanks to the storm, we have a week. I will hide this record as explanation and warning.

10-25-31, It is decided. It will be fire. No survivors.

After the discovery of the *SS Pellem*, investigation revealed that the ship's admiral, a Daeva ancilla named Zéphyrine Paget, suffered from Heart's Bane. Through various experiments, the Ordo Dracul in New York determined that the diablerie committed by Adeline Lyon had caused the Heart's Bane to mutate.

Over time, the story of the *SS Pellem* has changed considerably. A recent comic of the events, Adeline Gries,

describes a passionate, but forbidden, love affair between the admiral and Adeline Lyon, recasts the diablerie as a desperate act of love (one consuming the other thus allowing them to be together for eternity), and describes the Heart's Bane plague as divine punishment for not supporting Adeline and Zéphyrine's love. The final pages show Adeline, sobbing blood, as she torches the ship and meets the sun. Zéphyrine's name the final word on her lips.

Treatments and Cures

Heart's Bane, for most, is a perpetual condition they manage by preventing injury and avoiding blood bonds. As long as it is well-managed, it does not affect night-to-night activities.

That said, two cures do exist and have worked in the past. The cures are so dangerous; however, few dare to risk them. The first, and older of the two, is fire. Traditionally, a vampire must cut open her chest to expose her heart and cauterize the wound until the brink of death. When she awakens from the resulting torpor, her Heart's Bane is gone. The exposed heart is not necessary; any near-death by fire has the needed effect.

The second cure is a full Vitae transfusion. A vampire must be drained of all Vitae and then forced to feed on clean Kindred blood. This is exceptionally dangerous, since the draining must be carried out to the exact right moment. If the draining stops too soon, the remaining contaminated Vitae will infect the new Vitae. If the draining stops too late, the infected vampire will fall into torpor. The feeding is also dangerous; the drained vampire may not be able to stop themselves before committing diablerie.

Torpor alone has not yet worked, but Herkus Tamulis is an elder vampire currently in torpor who is testing whether a century of sleep may cure the disease. He will awaken in 2056.

The diabolic variant has no known cures or treatments. Complete eradication of all infected and those in close contact with them is the only safe response.

Rumors

"If a vampire drains a changeling, he can drink from an infected Kindred safely. The changeling blood will bond with the disease, preventing infection."

Utterly false, though still one of the more popular folklore treatments for Heart's Bane. This particular rumor likely arose from the stories of Jerome Spiegel. Mr. Spiegel was known in his city for his unfounded advice and false boasts. As stories spread, however, those less aware of Mr. Spiegel's reputation would take them as fact.

Guard against Heart's Bane is actually one of 11 possible uses Mr. Spiegel gave for changeling blood. Others included attracting familiars and removing old blood stains.

This rumor persists, and there's always an enterprising Kindred looking to take one of the Lost, much to his own detriment.

"The Dragons created the diabolic strain of Heart's Bane and knowingly released it on the SS Pellem to understand its epidemiology and test several cures they'd designed. When the experiment failed, they shifted blame to the diablerist Adeline Lyon."

This might be true. No one fully understands how or why outbreaks of the diabolic strain occur. The SS Pellem case is the most famous outbreak, but others have occurred. An act of diablerie is not always easy to determine after the fact. The Ordo Dracul has been working on a cure for Heart's Bane for centuries; it is not unreasonable that they've manufactured new strains in their quest to cure the most common one. That said, no one has any proof that the Ordo Dracul is responsible. While several have publicly denied the accusations, the rumors persist. Of course, finding a strain or two of Heart's Bane in an Ordo Dracul lab is a common occurrence.



"Heart's Bane is not a disease; it is instead the first step to regaining mortality. The Beast must be starved if the vampiric condition is to be conquered. After contracting Heart's Bane, one should wound themselves and allow the blood to flow freely. The quicker the Beast starves, the swifter humanity may return."

The Bleeders is a sect of vampires who believe this rumor. They infect one another and cut themselves at weekly meetings where they also study human trends so that they will better fit in when they become human again. So far none of the Bleeders have survived long enough to determine whether this rumor is true or false. The many deaths of their comrades have thus far only been proof of their own failures rather than the falsity of their belief. Those outside the sect, however, agree that this rumor is untrue.

Mikel Aija

"Kiss, bite, feed. I will make you poetry."

Mikel sees himself as a modern Romanticist. He revels in intense emotions and orchestrates his social interactions with the expertise of a soap opera showrunner. He scripts himself, ensuring every word has maximum impact and every observation twists some invisible knife. He surrounds himself with those who break themselves on the world and turn their bruises and blood into art. He is an artist and human society is his clay.

Within the human world, he is well known for his theater, The Bloody Screw. The Screw has developed a reputation for shocking performances of classic tragedies that reveal the innate ugliness and depravity of humanity. Mikel performs and directs, pushing his mortal actors past their breaking points. For Mikel, the theater, while beloved, is merely a means to an end. He seeks to redefine art for vampires and revolutionize how his fellow vampires view the world and their condition.

Mikel did not realize he had contracted Heart's Bane until he played in *Othello*. He had, at the opening performance, swapped his prop dagger for a real one. He wanted to bask in the horror of his fellow cast members when they realized the blood was real. Had the Desdemona not been a last-minute understudy, he would have smothered her as Othello smothered Desdemona. He'd been preparing Nora, the original actress, for over a month for the Embrace — not that she realized that.

Of course, little went to plan and instead of just blood pouring temporarily from his chest, his Vitae seeped out. Nora's little understudy had to stitch him up as though his chest was a torn sleeve. Utter humiliation. She could have at least feigned shock, rather than immediately setting to work. Mikel has brought this understudy into the Masquerade and renamed her Dulcinea. She is not his ghoul, not yet. Her humanity is a puzzle he wants to unlock first. He strives to shock and horrify her, but so far, she has proven a frustratingly placid creature.

Learning the name of his condition required some discreet investigation. At least it had a poetic name: Heart's Bane. An appropriate disease for an artist.

Mikel has taken Heart's Bane as a new artistic challenge. He seduces his fellow vampires, inviting them to sip his blood. He promises ecstasy and delivers tragedy. Their realizations are so sweet and the Vitae from their persistent wounds even sweeter.

He stitches them up afterward in brilliant threads, creating temporary scars across otherwise perfect skin. They are his masterpieces. This is theater reborn through performance art: raw, real, and revolting.

Mikel is an ancilla Daeva who deliberately infects other vampires with Heart's Bane. Since so few vampires discuss the disease openly and since Mikel has cultivated a reputation for perversity, few of his victims ever come forward. Besides, he does make the disease worth their while.

Mikel is a manipulator who thrives on drama and high-stakes emotions. He delights in manipulating those around him into sensations of madness and despair. Nora is still his star and one of these days he will kill her on stage, perhaps in *Titus Andronicus*. Dulcinea is his protégé, whether she likes that or not.

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: The Carthian Movement

Mask: Visionary

Dirge: Monster

Touchstone: Dulcinea

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Academics (Theatre) 1, Politics 2, Medicine (First Aid) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Larceny 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Insecurities) 2, Expression 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Enticing, Kiss of the Succubus, Resources 4, Status (Theater) 2, Striking Looks 1, Taste

Disciplines: Majesty 3

Blood Potency: 2

Health: 7

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 5

HEART'S BANE (PERSISTENT)

Your character has been infected with Heart's Bane. When she is wounded, she loses Vitae until the wound is bound or sewn shut. In combat, for each lethal damage the character has, she loses one point of Vitae per round. Outside of combat, the vampire loses one point of Vitae per lethal damage each scene.

Possible Sources: Your character fed from an infected vampire or from a ghoul or human carrying the disease in her blood.

Resolution: Endure fire until on the brink of death (traditionally this involves exposing and cauterizing the heart); or, engage in a full body transfusion replacing all infected Vitae with clean Vitae

Beat: Your character, at personal expense, chooses to avoid a situation — violent or pleasurable — that could involve bleeding.

Infection

A vampire may contract Heart's Bane from another infected vampire or from a human or ghoul carrying the disease.

If vampires feed from an infected vampire, they are infected.

If a human drinks from an infected vampire and is not turned, he becomes a carrier. If a human becomes a vampire, he does not remain infected or a carrier after his death.

If a vampire feeds from a carrier, the player rolls her character's Health. If she gains at least one success, the vampire does not contract Heart's Bane.

Nereids

"Come in. The water's friendly!"

— Bess the Spined

The drowned ones. Sirens. Not vampires but ghoul manatees, someone's idea of a bad joke. Rumors and falsehoods. Just some wayward Gangrel who hunts by haunting the shorelines.

So many differing stories about Nereids exist; origin and mere existence are so heavily debated that definitive determination of their origin is about as likely as nailing a jellyfish to a board. The first confirmed Nereid, Amphitrite, entered mythology as Poseidon's consort, making the Nereid at least several thousand years old. Mermaids exist in every mythology worldwide, through written and oral history. Steal a selkie's skin and trap her as your wife, gain a wish from a mermaid if you share your daily catch with her, or lash yourself to your mast so you can listen to the sirens sing and not answer them; all the myths get Nereid completely wrong. No skins to steal, no wishes to grant, only the youngest ever emerge, and then only to hunt. They don't care about humans; humans are only food.

Through extended contact with the aquatic vampires, a few Kindred have cobbled together a handful of quasi-reliable facts: first, the Sirens do not and cannot Embrace children. Every Nereid began as a land-dwelling vampire from one of the known clans, either living or now extinct. More Gangrel

become Nereids than any other clan, but that is likely simply due to the clan's affinity for wild places.

Second, a Nereid dies a sort of second death when he becomes one of that aquatic breed. Prior bloodlines get wiped away; prior clans are washed out of the blood as easily as a sandcastle succumbing to high tide. Clans, covenants, coteries, and blood bonds all disappear or become irrelevant; only the ocean matters now.

One Gangrel called the Nereid the "bad werewolves of the ocean," and from a strictly mythological standpoint, that's close to true. They obey the tides in their dead veins similarly to how old folk tales claim werewolves obey the moon, compelled by calls from somewhere deep in the water, audible only to them. A Nereid can't name what sings in her blood, but she knows it whispers to her, guiding her actions. She might come close to shore to hunt one night, dragging surfers from their boards during a nighttime competition and then suddenly disappear. When she returns months later, she's either unwilling or unable to explain where she went, what she did, or why she did it.

Their attempts at Embrace, blood bonds, and making ghouls all fail; their damaged blood doesn't allow it. Far more disturbing though, whatever's in Nereid blood seeks out those

already Embraced. A cut or bite from Nereid teeth or claws has no special effect on a human or any other non-vampiric creature, but a vampire thus damaged begins to feel the call of the sea, and the singing in his ears of voices he can't escape.

Once infected, a new Nereid feels an increasing and irrepressible call from the ocean. A formerly fastidious Daeva may find herself diving into the surf in her couture gown, and a Gangrel who's slept in the same patch of grassy graveyard for the last 10 years finds himself going to ground as close to the shoreline as possible. Within three nights, the new Nereid spends more time in the water than out of it, sleeping under the waves, and after a week, all vestiges of their former clan disappear. Bane replaced, bloodline stripped, they become almost unrecognizable. Nereid don't belong to covenants, either. The only covenant they have is with whatever is in their blood, and they renounce all past allegiances without fail.

The disease in her blood adapts her for natatorial unlife: her lower limbs fuse into a tail, her hands become webbed, and her eyes grow larger, improving her subaquatic nighttime vision. Sirens learn Devotions to permit them to still hunt on land, but the process disorients a new Nereid, and they often disappear under the waves for extended periods until they acclimatize to their new forms.

The Elder's Song

Those few Sirens willing to speak about their elders tell tales of deep-sea Nereid, those who rarely came anywhere *near* the surface before recent nights. Their elders live ensconced in the ocean's deep trenches, floating slowly among anglerfish and glowing worms, tending something that hums near the volcanic vents where new

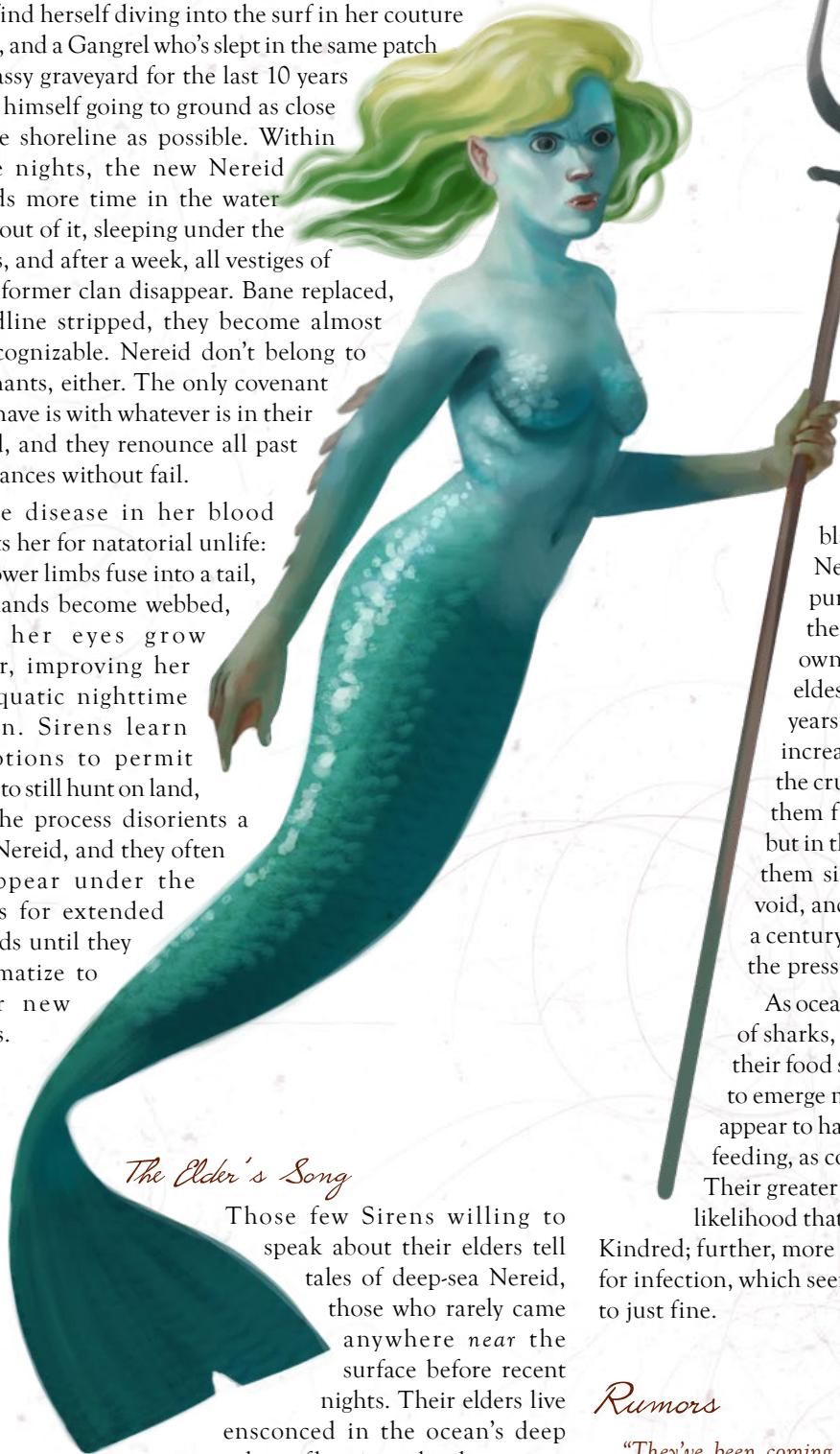
continents are born. Sirens sing to one another in the depths, calling out across the miles the strange songs each hears in her blood, and the abyssopelagic members of their infectious cult sing the strangest songs. Something in their melodies sounds like they're either mourning or praising something lurking even deeper in the ocean. When a Siren ages sufficiently to descend to the abyssopelagic zone, she stays there, and what she learns among the elders of her kind stays with her.

Whatever drives the Nereid has no connection to human morality, and while it's easy to dismiss the Sirens and their source as evil, even that's not correct. If good and evil are measured as gradients of black and white, whatever masters the Nereid answer to are aquamarine and purple. "Amoral" falls a little closer to the truth, though they must have their own morality, however alien to even the eldest of land-dwelling vampires. As the years pass for Sirens, their distended limbs, increasingly gelatinous skin, and desire for the crushing pressure of the deep ocean pull them further and further from human, yes, but in the end, the infection coursing through them sings them songs of the deep ocean's void, and they answer. By the time a Nereid is a century under the waves, their body requires the pressures of the deep.

As ocean pollution intensifies, and overfishing of sharks, tuna and other large sea life removes their food sources, circumstances compel Nereid to emerge more frequently to hunt on land. They appear to have no real preference when it comes to feeding, as content to sup on alligators as humans. Their greater presence on land means there's more likelihood that they'll cross paths with land-dwelling Kindred; further, more encounters mean more opportunities for infection, which seems to suit whatever they're answering to just fine.

Rumors

"They've been coming to land in Georgia recently, right near the Florida-Georgia line. A guy who came up to Chicago from Tallahassee recently says that they, like, eat manatees, and because



of the whole thing with the boats hurting manatees, they gotta come on shore more, but – I mean – that’s not enough, is it? No one really seems to know why, exactly. Not even the sea-witches themselves.”

Disturbing reports of Nereid coming on shore more frequently have only increased in recent nights, and some claim to have even seen the elders rising from the depths. Those elders are likely to unsettle even the most unflappable of land-dwelling Kindred: without the reinforcing pressure of the deep ocean, they look like nothing so much as ugly bags of gelatinous water, albeit with teeth and claws. Princes of many shoreline cities have sent out urgent warnings not to engage the aquatic vampires at all, worried that the infection will spread somehow to their herds and their entire city’s population will take to the sea.

“Nathania spent a long time talking to one of them, over a week or two. She finally got her to start talking about what it is that drives them. Nat said that the Siren was like... almost unable to talk about it, and it was kind of like trying to communicate with a jellyfish through interpretive dance, but basically at the end she figured out that there’s something out there in the ocean that comes from outer space. Or that’s what the Siren said, like, that an asteroid crashed into the Pacific Ocean a million years ago and there was something living in it.”

Nothing a Siren says about what sings to her can be trusted, no matter how much time a land-dwelling Kindred spends trying to win her trust: it’s possible that she couldn’t tell the truth about whatever lives in the Marianas Trench even if she wanted to. Maybe it comes from the stars. Maybe it comes from the trenches itself, out of the heart of the earth. Maybe there’s some sort of vast underworld gate in the depths of the ocean, with some ancient ghosts possessing those who cluster there. Only the elders know, and they’re not telling.

“We caught one several years ago, and our experiments yielded interesting results. First, we discovered that it is not simply saltwater that sustains them: it must be connected to the ocean in some way. One of my colleagues likened it to a mikveh, in that it must be living water – specifically, living ocean. Second, when they are connected to the living ocean, they do seem to receive some sort of communication, no matter the distance between themselves and the source. We can’t determine the source, and our subject could not explain what it is that he hears. Our instruments picked up some sort of deep thrumming sound we couldn’t translate – Jeremiah spent seven nights listening to it, attempting to interpret it. On the eighth night, we found the tank broken, and our former colleague had disappeared along with the captured unfortunate.”

Something calls to the Nereid, that much isn’t in dispute. Something old, alien, and with its own agenda, and when it calls, either the Siren obeys, or she goes mad trying to do so. What exactly lives in the deepest trenches of the ocean with the ability to call simultaneously to every single one of its “progeny,” unable to make the servants it wants but capable of overwriting clan and bloodline? No one knows, and everyone who’s looked too closely has ended up making a new home for herself under the waves.

Hannah the Cel

“Please help me. Please. I’m so hungry. I’m so hungry. I’ll sing you a song? Please, please help me...”

Hannah grew up in a clapboard house on the shore of Maine. Her father fished for lobster; her mother tended house. All of that’s so long ago and so irrelevant, so very like the beginning of a fairy tale. If someone asks Hannah about it, she shrugs and flaps her webbed hands in irritation, changing the conversation back to how hungry she is, or how pretty the ocean is, or something more relevant to who she is now.

Somewhere between the eternal now in which Hannah exists and that long-ago, vague, and faded time where she knew sunlight, a Gangrel became obsessed with the pretty, dark-haired teenager; her sire’s kidnapping and Embrace forced her out of her coddled merchant-class existence and into living in the woods. She could never go far from the ocean, though, and when he tried to convince her to head further inland, she waited for him to let his guard down, staked him, and left him for the sun.

No more than he deserved, she’s assured anyone who asks.

With no real education in Kindred society, she was genuinely shocked when other vampires insisted she be brought to answer for her sire’s murder. Slipping away as mist, she fled back to the ocean she’d always loved and sought temporary asylum beneath the waves where she was both happier and harder to hunt.

Hannah is technically still wanted in Bangor for the 1903 Final Death of Malcolm DeFarge, but she’s slipped away every time she’s been seen since then, giving rise to her nickname. Whatever happened to her underneath the waves, the pale-skinned creature seems finally at home in the ocean she always loved. The hunt for her was officially suspended in 1964, when she infected Landon Maze and cost the prince one of his best Sheriffs. As long as they leave her alone, it seems, she’ll leave them alone and not drag any more of Bangor’s Kindred into the ocean with her.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Ocean Master) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics (Swimming) 5, Brawl (Aquatic) 4, Larceny 1, Stealth (Aquatic) 3, Survival (Aquatic) 4

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression (Singing) 2, Intimidation (Feral Mannerisms) 3, Persuasion (Sweet Siren) 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Fast Reflexes 3, Allies (Coast Guard) 1, Striking Looks 2, Claws of the Unholy 1, Swarm Form 2, Enticing 1, Each to Each 2, Swimmer’s Skin 3

Disciplines: Protean 4, Resilience 3, Obfuscate 2, Majesty 1, Vigor 1

Devotions: Body of Will, Enfeebling Aura, Foul Grave, Sweet Siren's Song

Blood Potency: 4

Health: 11

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 1

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 11

Defense: 9

Notes: Fast Reflexes can be found on p. 44 of the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

Mechanics

Nereid might have started as vampires, but they are that no longer. They lose their Mask, Dirge, and Touchstone, and no longer feel compelled to act or connect with humanity in any way. Additionally, their Humanity drops to 1. They retain their Blood Potency and Disciplines, and can learn new Disciplines, but only from another Nereid. They lose whatever clan or bloodline bane they might have had and instead the following.

Nereid Bane (Ocean's Call) The Nereid cannot abide being away from the ocean for too long. If the Nereid has been away from the ocean more than an hour, make a Humanity roll penalized by the number of hours they have been away. Failure results in the Wanton Condition with the object of desire being the ocean. The Condition does not resolve normally, instead only resolves when the vampire returns to the ocean.

Additionally, Sirens hear the call of the deep, not only when connected to the ocean. All Nereid have the Obsession (Ocean Songs) Condition, which cannot be resolved by any means. What calls to them from the deep cannot be overcome.

Spreading the Infection

Cost: 1 Willpower

Contested: Special, see below.

By biting or clawing a vampire, the Nereid can attempt to afflict him with the deep-sea infection that draws every Nereid into the ocean.

The Siren must expend a Willpower and then make a successful bite or claw attack. The target resists as with any other disease, requiring 10 successes over a number of rolls equal to his Stamina + Resolve.

If infected, the vampire begins his transformation into one of the Sirens. For the first three nights, he gains the Obsession (Ocean) Condition and will do anything within his power to be closer to or in the water. Attempts to do anything that

doesn't involve coming closer to the ocean suffer a -2 penalty. From nights four through seven, his clan attributes begin to fall away, and he loses all his Anchors. At nightfall on the seventh night, his legs fuse into a tail, his hands become webbed, and if he has no one to teach him Sea Witch's Gift, he may find hunting difficult.

The disease may be resisted during the first week: the newly infected may make a fresh set of disease-resistance rolls every night, attempting to expel the infection from his blood. For nights one through three, the disease's rating is one, on nights four through seven, the disease rating rises by one each night, until on night seven, the disease rating is five. Should he acquire 10 successes on any one night, he overcomes the infection entirely, and all changes to his physiology are reversed on his next daysleep.

Infecting another individual creates a bond between the two vampires similar to a sire and childe's sympathetic bond, overriding all other sympathies or bonds that the vampire might have. The unknown entity compelling the Nereid tolerates no competition.

New Merits

Swimmer's Skin (•• or •••)

Effect: At two dots, Nereid with this merit move at full speed in the water and suffer no movement-based penalties in water. She strikes as quickly with her claws underwater as on land. This level requires no dice pool and is always active. At three dots, a Siren not only moves at full speed in the water, she becomes capable of short bursts of truly terrifying speed. With a successful reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll, the Nereid moves at triple speed in the water for a number of turns equal to her Blood Potency, allowing her to either close on her prey or make good an aquatic escape.

Each to Each (•)

Effect: Nereid call to one another underwater as easily as a human calling across a room. While underwater, a Nereid may send out a message which any other Nereid within Blood Potency × 10 miles hears. This grants the recipient no special means to rush to her sister's side, and the message may be no longer than three seconds in length.

Drawback: While calling Each to Each, the Nereid may take no other actions except moving at half speed.

New Devotions

Sea Witch's Gift (Protean ••)

While Protean usually brings out a vampire's bestial features, this devotion allows the Nereid to temporarily return

to bipedal form. Without it, they are unable to do more than drag their tailed form up the shore like a beached whale.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

By spending a Vitae, a Nereid using this devotion sheds her tail for an hour and regains her lost legs. She may spend additional Vitae to continue the effect without being compelled to return to the water. Sirens are deeply uncomfortable on land, and the expenditures necessary for prolonged time ashore make it likely that, if forced to stay two-legged, she will become ravenously hungry.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Siren's Sweet Visage (Obfuscate ••••, Majesty •)

Sea Witch's Gift allows the Nereid to walk on land, the Siren's Sweet Visage hides the way in which water acts upon vampiric flesh.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: Presence + Empathy + Majesty vs. Blood Potency + Composure

Action: Instant

No matter how distended her body might be from human norms — jellied flesh no longer being pushed inward by deep-sea pressure, skin so pale that even other vampires gasp — this devotion hides her abnormalities completely, functioning similarly to Familiar Stranger, except the Siren does not need to take on a visage other than her own.

While using this Devotion, the Nereid also becomes strangely compelling, drawing attention to herself wherever she goes. Those affected by Siren's Sweet Visage suffer a die penalty equal to her successes when resisting her Persuasion- or Intimidation-based Social maneuvers.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

Rampart Logistics

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When you hire Rampart Logistics, you're hiring a team of brave men and women
armed with that most important of all weapons, dedication."*

— Rampart Logistics advertisement, 2015

Rampart is a private military corporation with a very special advantage over the competition: A vampire blood donor supplying their operatives with supernatural powers.

The Board

Jonas Bartle is a retired U.S. Marine who spent years fighting in the Middle East. After retirement, he couldn't get the fight out of his head. So, he took his years of experience in Middle Eastern war zones and founded Rampart Logistics, a transport company with a small fleet of trucks and a few aircraft. Dedicated to providing "logistical solutions" in war zones, their security teams quickly filled with an international cadre of ex-military personnel and mercenaries. Today, Rampart is a private military contractor behind the façade of secure transport. But, as their clientele would say, you can't argue with results. Rampart has a perfect record of shipping weapons, currency, valuables, and VIPs through

dangerous environments. They owe this success to keeping their operations quiet and shooting first at any sign of trouble.

That ruthless reputation began to limit Rampart, and Bartle started looking for ways to get off the battlefields, but still put his company, his people, and their talents to use making huge amounts of money. The world is changing, and wars are getting smaller and smaller. A single soldier with the right tools and the guts to use them could be all you need to change the course of history. Bartle would like it very much if he were the one paying that soldier's salary.

Bartle's shrewd personality was tempered by Ken Steakley, his business partner. Where Bartle was pragmatic to the point of callousness, Steakley was outgoing and gregarious. Bartle saw everything as a puzzle to solve, from business and military tactics to personal relationships. Steakley instead saw opportunity everywhere and jumped feet first into activities — usually at Bartle's direction. The two were perfect partners. Soon, Ken was the one crossing war zones to sign deals with

nervous generals while Bartle kept the books and dreamt up the next big thing for Rampart.

Steakley was working a Rampart job in Syria when the Daesh destroyed some Assyrian ruins. First the vandals and looters turned up dead, but once the surviving Daesh got spooked and moved out, the killings continued among the civvies. Ken had made some contacts with the local Anti-ISIL fighters, and went asking around about the rash of unexplained, unclaimed killings. A sniper named Abeer told him about the creatures that slept in ancient places, who awakened with a thirst for blood if disturbed. She took him to see some of the victims, mummified corpses only a few days old. Ken was skeptical but made his decision: If he could locate this thing, he would find a way to make use of it. He called it all in to Bartle, who scoffed at the idea of an ancient monster, but agreed that whatever killed so many people was worth investigating.

Steakley followed the rumors, staked out the monster's hunting grounds, and gathered intel from the locals. After a few weeks he discovered some people who had become servants of the marauder. These ghouls were dedicated to their master and had been granted superhuman abilities to carry out her wishes. Ken kidnapped a few of them and forced them to arrange a meeting with their vampiric master.

The Queen

Though she lay in torpor in the ancient ruins, Salma is not nearly so old herself. One hundred twenty-five years ago, when her blood had grown too thick, she retired to the protection of the ancient ruins. The reverence people held for them had been enough to let her and others of her line slumber in peace in centuries past. Things changed, further and faster in the past 100 years than she expected. The new era lacked deference to history and her tomb became a target.

When she was disturbed, her thoughts went to revenge against the mortals who had forced her resurrection. After they were gone, she began to rebuild something of the power lost in her absence. She acquired servants and set to finding her place in the new world, as unpleasant as it was. She reached out to find the All Night Society, but they didn't get to her before Steakley did.

When Ken approached her, she was genuinely impressed by his confidence. She immediately added him to her ghoul entourage so that she could take his power and wealth for her own. Ken was eager to share it with her, flattering and pursuing her while her other servants cowered. He convinced her that he would be her best link to the modern world. They would replace her civilian servants with the battle-hardened soldiers and spies of Rampart. They would build her an army.

Meanwhile, Bartle watched hidden-camera feeds and read the reports his personal agents got by torturing captured ghouls. Ken was his partner, his friend, and all of it was washed away in a few nights by the blood of this vampire. At the same time, however, he saw the powers that Ken gained by drinking her Vitae and decided controlling her was worth

the sacrifice. He feigned ignorance of what had happened and was happy to have Ken come back home with his mysterious "find of the century." He eagerly set up the transport to bring them both home.

The Gambit

Bartle carefully planned and coordinated springing his trap around Salma's departure from Syria. His timing was perfect. He pushed off their timetable just enough to separate her from Ken, and whisked her away, staked and boxed in the cargo hold, just like in the old stories. He left Ken groveling in the dust on the airfield, impotently calling after his vanished master.

Bartle named his prisoner Aida, after the Egyptian queen taken hostage in an opera his mother loved. He forbade anyone from using her previous name, so that they could further cut the connection to what she had been. Rampart bought a building in Germany from the CIA. They cleaned it out, but Bartle had them leave the holding cells and interview space in the basement as they were. These rooms now belong to Aida: her prison.

Bartle took measures to keep her docile and ineffectual. He keeps a steel helmet over her head to prevent her from using "hypnotism tricks" on Rampart guards. If she acts out, he does just enough damage to make it very painful, but not to kill her. This pain has led to fewer outbursts. Aida has realized that she needs to think her way out of Bartle's clutches and play the long game.

Ken Steakley eventually made it back into Bartle's confidence, once his Vinculum had worn off. Steakley is one of the few in the upper echelon who don't receive doses of Vitae, for fear that he might turn again. This is a sticking point between the two, as Steakley desperately wants to taste the Vitae once again.

The Bishop

Finding and capturing Aida was only the beginning. He fed bits of her blood to his agents, but it wasn't enough for even a few hours, and getting Aida to create ghouls only led to loyalty issues. The solution came in the form of Dr. Bo Finnegan, a biochemist specializing in unusual blood chemistry. He was on the outs due to drug addiction and had trouble finding a job. Bartle pulled him on board by playing to his ego, then supplying drugs to cinch the deal. Now he's bound in secrecy like the rest.

As twisted as Finnegan is, his work is sound. After a few months of experimenting with Vitae drawn from Aida, he found a way to both dilute out the effects of Vinculum and concentrate it to last more than a few hours. Then he devised a special injector, designed to keep the Vitae viable for days. With this unique tool Rampart operatives can carry out missions all over the world.

The Knights

Rampart Logistics is filled with specialized teams, the best and the brightest Bartle can find. And for a price, these super-soldiers perform almost any job. Without the Vinculum to threaten them, Bartle gives his best and brightest as many injectors as they can hold. Unfortunately, the blood addiction remains, and Bartle must carefully balance his operatives' desperate desire with his Vitae supply, which is smaller than he'd like.

Rampart's elite don't know the full details of the source of their powers, but the supernatural effects of the transfusions can't be ignored, so Bartle has let them in on the secret, in part. These operatives understand the basics of vampires and ghouls: how they exist, how some of their powers work, and how they can be killed. If Rampart wants to operate with the powers of Kindred then they must be ready and able to defend themselves from the true denizens of the undead world.

This is especially true now that Bartle is gearing up to grow his blood supply, and thereby increase Rampart Logistics' scope and worldwide reach.

Rumors

"I swear, the guys who took Dade were ghouls. I don't know who this new player is in town, but they sent a team of ghouls after Dade and kidnapped him. I can't imagine what for, and we haven't heard anything from them since. I'm going to bring it to the prince soon, but I'm worried it's a play by the Carthians to get us in a bloody war with the Sanctified. I don't want to play into their hands, but I can't let Dade sit."

Vampires have started to go missing, and Kindred know that ghouls are taking them. These incidents are largely unreported to the rest of the All Night Society as everyone involved thinks there's some power play going on and are waiting to see how things shake out. It's early enough in Bartle's campaign that no one suspects the ghouls are free agents, and that the power play is dangerous to Kindred as a whole. And those who investigate their missing coterie mates meet a dead end or, worse, more Rampart agents.

Bartle would bottle up every vampire if he could get his hands on them. He isn't stupid, and he knows that all-out war with vampires is likely to end in the loss of Rampart Logistics. He also doesn't have a reliable way of finding and identifying vampires. He's certainly kidnapped his fair share of run-of-the-mill night owls instead. But when he does find a vampire, he's quick to act. He sends in his best-trained and combat-ready operatives to grab them. And if he loses a few in the fight, the Vitae he is getting is worth the loss.

"Radoslaw was in FBI custody when he got offed. He was supposed to be the star witness, with testimony that would bring a lot of heat down on some former Spetsnaz Russian Mafioso. He was buttoned up tight in a fancy hotel, guards all around him, armed to the teeth, but it didn't make any difference. FBI guys closed ranks quick after he was killed but not fast enough. The word got out and it's

breathtaking. Radoslaw and two of his guys, two cops and three FBI special agents, all dead. And it was the work of one man. And from the camera footage, that's been scrubbed from the internet unless you know what you're looking for, that guy isn't right. There's a guy in all black moving so fast you can barely see him. He takes a hit from a van as he's running that would kill anyone normal. Then he just runs off screen before the van driver can stop."

This kind of news story isn't at all strange when Rampart Logistics is involved. While they may be a group of ghouls, they have no concept of the Masquerade or keeping their powers hidden. They get involved in international crime and leave behind a trail of evidence that no one can explain, which has led to more scrutiny than the All Night Society would ever want to deal with.

After the mysterious death of a Brazilian ambassador, the NSA established a special cell dedicated to investigating these acts of superhuman terrorism. MI-6 is organizing their own team now. Mossad have had a unique squad of agents for over a decade that never goes anywhere without its "anti-golem kit."

"No, I'm telling you, this is some government-experimentation shit. Some kind of "operation Dracula," with CIA agents getting shot full of drugs that make them fight like they have Disciplines, but not actually have them. I mean, it's chemistry, right? I'm not saying that there's no magic in the world or that I'm hallucinating those ghosts that live in the apartment next door, but Vitae – it's just blood, plus. Some x-factor ingredient that opens up the door to the energies of the supernatural. And now all those "Agents Smith" out there just made themselves a key!"

You follow? I mean, c'mon, it's like you've never even heard of MKUltra."

Rampart has a lock on their blood tech for now, but their competitors – arms manufacturers, the intelligence community, and other industries – are hungry for the next leap in super-soldier science. Other interests have caught wind of what Bartle's people can do and are already looking for his secret. They're out there testing theories and maybe even some competing products. When they figure out the secret to Rampart's success, they'll need to get some vampires of their own.

Francois Martel

"This has been a lovely party but I'm afraid I have to kill you and both your bodyguards and make my escape. I've got a date with the queen of Egypt and couldn't bear to keep her waiting."

Francois Martel landed in a UN peacekeeping mission to Kosovo that showed him the worst violence the Baltics had to offer. After rescuing a few pathetic survivors from the horrors of an ethnic-cleansing campaign, he fell into a dark, dangerous rage. Increasingly ill-tempered and violent, he was removed from active duty and discharged.

He joined up with a mercenary organization, and then another, and another. He wandered through a world of kill-or-be-killed conflicts, venting his anger and racking up an

impressive record of combat operations before he burned out on another team and found Rampart Logistics. Bartle seemed to have something special in mind for Francois. He gave him an especially dangerous assignment and a dose of Vitae.

Today, Francois has just finished his fifth mission and is jonesing for a sixth. Bartle insists he wait, but he needs a dose and needs it bad. For Francois it's more than a fix — it's a religious experience. When the injection takes hold, he hears the voice of an angel. It was faint at first, but now her words are clear, calling to him and asking him to seek her out, to free her, to join her. And he would, if only he could find her. Maybe he will, with just a few more hits.

Virtue: Competitor

Vice: Addict

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 3, Firearms 5, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Allies (Rampart Logistics) 4, Allies (Other PMC) 2, Alternate Identity 2, Contacts (Intelligence Community, Underworld) 2, Language (Arabic, French) 2, Parkour 1, Resources 3, Trained Observer 1

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Vigor 2

Blood Potency: 0

Health: 8

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Initiative: 5

Defense: 6

Armor: Kevlar Vest (1/3)

Notes: Francois Martel goes ready for battle, with a heavy pistol, sniper rifle, and sawed-off shotgun with WP shells. He has an injector pen in his breast pocket (supposedly for his shellfish allergy).

The Injector

Finnegan's little technological marvel, the injector, carries and delivers a concentrated dose of Vitae. It's about the size of a pen, and with a few stickers about prescription use it could pass for emergency allergy medication. The Vitae itself is held in a special chemical suspension that preserves it, slowing the "spoiling" of the blood and the loss of vampiric essence. A dose is viable for up to 48 hours after it has been drawn from a vampire.

The Vitae has mostly been stripped of its connection to the donor vampire, but imparts up to three dots of Physical Disciplines upon injection, and the ability to use Physical Intensity. The concentrated dose is worth four points of Vitae. Because no vampire is investing Willpower into these ghouls, however, the effects of the Vitae injection are short-lived. The ghoul loses one Vitae every hour after the injection.

The injector can potentially be used by anyone, not just Rampart operatives. Crafting new ones, however, requires Finnegan's expertise and his highly specialized equipment. Just reverse-engineering the injector won't explain the elaborate mix of chemicals that concentrate and preserve the Vitae in each dose.



*Magic is at the heart of what we do here
at the Esoteric Order of the Golden Star.*

*With it you can find
your heart's desire and riches beyond
belief. I just need a small down
payment, and sign here on the
dotted line."*

~ Lady Jezebel Eliza Szilard

This book includes antagonists for both Vampire: The Requiem and other Chronicles of Darkness games. Including:

- Ten new bloodlines to serve as both antagonists and player character options.
- Two new antagonistic covenants.
- Several lost clans with reasons to both hate and work with Kindred.
- Myriad antagonists who prey on vampires, either as diseases or those who need Vitae.

Vampire
THE REQUIEM
SECOND EDITION

