



VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE INTRODUCTORY KIT

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Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised.

Based on the **Vampire: The Masquerade** game created by Steve Brown, Andrew Greenberg, Chris McDonough, Mark Rein•Hagen, Lisa Stevens, Joshua Gabriel Timbrook and Stewart Wieck

Check out White Wolf online at <http://www.white-wolf.com>,
alt.games.whitewolf and rec.games.frp.storyteller.

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Welcome to Vampire: The Masquerade

Vampire: The Masquerade is a roleplaying game. It is a beautifully illustrated, hardcover book that details the passions and powers of mythic vampires. It gives you rules for creating your own vampire character, and describes the dark and compelling world in which your vampire exists.

What happens next is up to you.

This booklet is a simplified version of **Vampire: The Masquerade**. It gives you the highlights of the Vampire setting and rules, the information you need to play a game.

Try it out. If you like it, the rulebook is available in most book, hobby and comic stores. When you're ready, we'll be there — waiting for you to invite us in.

STORYTELLING

The rules pamphlet you hold provides an introductory look at **Vampire: The Masquerade**, a storytelling game from White Wolf Publishing. With the rules in this kit, you and your friends are able to take the roles of night-stalking vampires and tell stories about the characters' triumphs, failures, dark deeds and glimmerings of goodness.

In a lot of ways, storytelling resembles games such as *How to Host a Murder*. Players take the role of a character — in this case, a vampire — and engage in a form of improvisational theatre, saying what the vampire would say and describing what the vampire would do.

In a storytelling game, players take their characters through adventures, called (appropriately enough) stories. Stories are told through a combination of the wishes of the players and the directives of the Storyteller (see below).

PLAYERS AND STORYTELLERS

Most people who play **Vampire** are players. They create vampire characters — imaginary protagonists similar to those found in novels, films and comics. In each group, however, one person must take the role of the Storyteller. The Storyteller acts as a combination director, moderator, narrator and referee. The Storyteller creates the drama through which the players direct their characters. The Storyteller also creates and takes the roles of supporting cast — both allies with whom the characters interact, and antagonists against whom the characters fight. The Storyteller invents the salient details of the story setting — the bars, nightclubs, businesses and other institutions the characters frequent. The players decide how their characters react to the situations in the game, but it is the Storyteller (with the help of the rules) who decides if the characters actually succeed in their endeavors and, if so, how well. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the final authority on the events that take place in the game.

Example: Rob, Brian, Cynthia and Alison have gathered to play **Vampire**. Rob, Brian and Cynthia are players: Rob is playing Baron d'Havilland, a Ventrue aristocrat; Brian is playing Palpa, a Nosferatu sewer-dweller; and Cynthia is playing Maxine, a Brujah street punk. Alison is the Storyteller, and has decreed that the characters have been brought

before the vampire prince of the city to face judgment. The players may now decide what to do: Rob, speaking as Baron d'Havilland, may try to smooth-talk his way out of the prince's ire; Cynthia, as Maxine, may angrily denounce the prince as a "fascist"; and Brian, as Palpa, may simply decide to use magical invisibility to flee the situation. Ultimately, though, it is Alison, the Storyteller, who determines the prince's reaction to the characters' words or acts; it is Alison, speaking as the prince, who roleplays the prince's reaction; and it is Alison who determines whether the characters' actions, if any, succeed or fail.

WHAT IS A VAMPIRE?

Storytelling and roleplaying games may feature many kinds of protagonists. In TSR's *Dungeons & Dragons*, players assume the roles of heroes in a fantasy world. In Hero Games' *Champions*, players take on the roles of superheroes. In **Vampire**, appropriately enough, players assume the personas of vampires — the immortal bloodsuckers of the horror genre — and guide these characters through a world virtually identical to our own.

The vampires who walk the Earth in modern nights are both similar to and different from what we might expect. It is perhaps best to begin our discussion of the undead as if they were a separate species of being — sentient, with superficial similarities to the humans they once were, but displaying a myriad of physiological and psychological differences.

In many ways, vampires resemble the familiar monsters of myth and cinema. (There is enough truth in the old tales that perhaps they were created by deluded or confused mortals.) However — as many an intrepid vampire hunter has learned to his sorrow — not all of the old wives' tales about vampires are true.

- **Vampires are living dead, and must sustain themselves with the blood of the living.** True. A vampire is clinically dead — its heart does not beat, it does not breathe, its skin is cold, it does not age — and yet it thinks, and walks, and plans, and speaks...and hunts and kills. For, to sustain its artificial immortality, the vampire must periodically consume blood, preferably human blood. Some penitent vampires eke



out an existence from animal blood, and some ancient vampires must hunt and kill others of their kind to nourish themselves, but most vampires indeed sustain themselves from the blood of their former species.

- **Anyone who dies from a vampire's bite rises to become a vampire. False.** If this were true, the world would be overrun by vampires. Vampires feed on human blood, true, and sometimes kill their prey — but most humans who die from a vampire's attack simply perish. To return as undead, the victim must be drained of blood and subsequently be fed a bit of the attacking vampire's blood. This process, called the Embrace, causes the mystical transformation from human to undead.

- **Vampires are monsters — demonic spirits embodied in corpses. False...and true.** Vampires are not demons *per se*, but a combination of tragic factors draws them inexorably toward wicked deeds. In the beginning, the newly created vampire thinks and acts much as she did while living. She does not immediately turn into an evil, sadistic monster. However, the vampire soon discovers her overpowering hunger for blood, and realizes that her existence depends on feeding on her species. In many ways, the vampire's mindset changes — she adopts a set of attitudes less suited to a communal omnivore and more befitting a solitary predator.

At first reluctant to feed, the vampire is finally forced to do so by circumstance or need — and feeding becomes easier and easier as the years pass. Realizing that she herself is untrustworthy, she ceases to trust others. Realizing that she is different, she walls herself away from the mortal world. Realizing that her existence depends on secrecy and control, she becomes a manipulative user of the first order. And things only degenerate as the years turn to decades and then centuries, and the vampire kills over and over, and sees the people she loved age and die. Human life, so short and cheap in comparison to hers, becomes of less and less value, until the mortal “herd” around her means no more to her than a swarm of annoying insects. Vampire elders are among the most jaded, unfeeling, paranoid — in short, monstrous — beings the world has ever known. Maybe they are not demons exactly — but at that point, who can tell the difference?

- **Vampires are burned by sunlight. True.** Vampires must avoid the sun or die, though a few can bear sunlight's touch for a very short period of time. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it extremely difficult to remain awake during the day, even within sheltered areas.

- **Vampires are repulsed by garlic and running water. False.** These are myths and nothing more.

- **Vampires are repulsed by crosses and other holy symbols.** This is generally false. However, if the wielder of the symbol has great faith in the power it represents, a vampire may suffer ill effects from the brandishing of the symbol.

- **Vampires die from a stake through the heart. False.** However, a wooden stake — or arrow, crossbow bolt, etc. — through the heart will paralyze the monster until it is removed.

- **Vampires have the strength of 10 humans; they can command wolves and bats; they can hypnotize the living and heal even the most grievous wounds.** True and false. The power of a vampire increases with age. Young, newly created vampires are often little more powerful than humans. But as a vampire grows in age and understanding, she learns to use her blood to evoke secret magical powers, which vampires call Disciplines. Powerful elders are often the rivals of a fictional Lestat or Dracula — and the true ancients, the Methuselahs and Antediluvians who have stalked the nights for thousands of years, often possess literally godlike powers.

THE HUNT

When all is said and done, the most fundamental difference between humans and vampires lies in their methods of sustenance. Vampires may not subsist on mortal food; instead, they must sustain their eternal lives through the consumption of blood — fresh human blood.

Vampires acquire their sustenance in many fashions. Some cultivate “herds” of willing mortals, who cherish the ecstasy of the vampire's kiss. Some creep into houses by night, feeding from sleeping humans. Some stalk the mortals' playgrounds — the nightclubs, bars and theatres — enticing mortals into illicit liaisons and disguising their predation as acts of passion. And yet others take their nourishment in the most ancient fashion — stalking, attacking and incapacitating (or even killing) mortals who wander too far down lonely nocturnal alleys and empty lots.

THE NOCTURNAL WORLD OF THE VAMPIRE

Vampires also value power, for its own sake and the security it brings — and vampires find it ridiculously easy to acquire mundane goods, riches and influence. A mesmerizing glance and a few words provide a cunning vampire with access to all the wealth, power and servants he could desire. Some powerful vampires are capable of implanting posthypnotic suggestions or commands in mortals' minds, then causing the mortals to forget the vampire's presence. In this way, vampires can easily acquire legions of unwitting slaves. More than a few “public servants” and corporate barons secretly answer to vampire masters.

Though there are exceptions, vampires tend to remain close to the cities. The city provides countless opportunities for predation, liaisons and politicking — and the wilderness often proves dangerous for vampires. The wilds are the home of the Lupines, the werewolves, who are vampires' ancestral enemies and desire nothing more than to destroy vampires outright.



THE EMBRACE

Vampires are created through a process called the Embrace. The Embrace is similar to normal vampiric feeding — the vampire drains her chosen prey of blood. However, upon complete exsanguination, the vampire returns a bit of her own immortal blood to the drained mortal. Only a tiny bit — a drop or two — is necessary to turn the mortal into an undead. This process can even be performed on a dead human, provided the body is still warm.

Once the blood is returned, the mortal “awakens” and begins drinking of his own accord. But, though animate, the mortal is still dead; his heart does not beat, nor does he breathe. Over the next week or two, the mortal’s body undergoes a series of subtle transformations; he learns to use the Blood in his body, and he is taught the special powers of his clan. He is now a vampire.

Some vampire clans Embrace more casually than others, but the Embrace is almost never given lightly. After all, any new vampire is a potential competitor for food and power. A potential childe is often stalked for weeks or even years by a watchful sire, who greedily evaluates whether the mortal would indeed make a good addition to the clan and the line.

HISTORY

Vampires — or Kindred, as they call themselves — exist for centuries and often seem unchanging to mortal eyes. Even Kindred society, however, has undergone evolution, upheaval and strife. Let us look at history as the Kindred view it, that we might better understand their actions tonight.

CAINE AND THE FIRST NIGHTS

According to Kindred myth, the first of their kind was Caine, the first murderer. For his crime, Caine was cursed by God and thereby transformed into a vampire. Exiled from his people, Caine was forced to stalk the fringes of civilization, fearful of the sun and ravenous for blood.

In his loneliness, Caine came upon a mighty witch named Lilith, who had been Adam’s first wife. Lilith taught Caine how to use his blood for mighty magic (indeed, a few heretics claim that Lilith, not Caine, was the First Vampire). Lilith taught Caine many things, including how to use his blood to evoke mystic powers — and how to create others of his kind.

THE SECOND GENERATION AND THE FIRST CITY

At first Caine refused to beget, believing it wrong to curse the world with others of his kind. But eventually he grew lonely and brought three others into the vampiric fold. These three in turn begat 13 more, and these voracious monsters went among the early peoples of the world, carelessly feeding and using mortals as puppets in their sibling feuds. Caine, outraged by this behavior, forbade the creation of any more progeny. Gathering his childer and grandchilder to him, Caine built a great city — the First City in the world — and here vampires and mortals coexisted in peace.

THE ANTEDILUVIANS AND THE CLANS

It could not last. Caine’s childer squabbled for their sire’s affections, and once again the mortals were used as pawns in the feud. Finally the city was thrown down — some say a natural disaster was the cause; others, that a spurned childe’s vengeful sorcery precipitated the cataclysm. Caine vanished into the wastes, never to be heard from again. The three vampires of the Second Generation likewise disappeared into the mists of legend. But Caine’s 13 grandchilder, free from restraint, began breeding new vampires with abandon. The 13 vampires became known as Antediluvians, and their childer, created in their images, inherited the Antediluvians’ magical gifts and curses. Thus were the clans formed.

THE DARK AGES

The clans spread across the world, sowing discord and misery. Though each successive generation of vampires proved weaker than the last, they made up for it with greater numbers. In the ziggurats of Babylon, in the palaces of Crete, in the tribunals of Rome, vampires ruled as shadowy tyrants, forever using mortals as food and unwitting soldiers. Vampire warred with vampire, clan with clan, and thus — from the ancient rivalries of the First City — was born the great Jyhad, which is still fought today.

The Kindred reached their worst excesses during the early Middle Ages. During this period, many vampires ruled openly, smothering peasant and lord alike beneath their nocturnal grip. The vampiric population reached unhealthy numbers, and it seemed that the Earth would belong to the Kindred forever.

THE ANARCH REVOLT

Again, it could not last. The Children of Caine, in their hubris, began to flaunt their power flagrantly. Terrified peasants whispered of the monsters in their midst — and the Church began to listen. The reports of a few horrified priests spawned a frenzied Inquisition, and vengeful mortals rose up in a tide of fire and blood. Though individually much more powerful than mortals, even the mightiest vampires could not stand against the humans’ sheer numbers; vampire after vampire was dragged from its lair and hurled into fire or sunlight.

In the throes of the Inquisition, a current of revolt gripped the Children of Caine. Younger vampires, who were being deployed as sacrificial lambs by terrified elders, began to rise up against their sires and masters. In Eastern Europe, a group of vampires learned how to sever the mystic bonds through which sires controlled their childer. Soon all of Europe seethed beneath a nocturnal revolt, as rebellious childer threw off the yoke of their masters. Between the Inquisition and the revolt of the vampire “anarchs,” it seemed as though the Kindred would not survive.

And so, in the 15th century, a council was called. Seven of the 13 clans united in an organization called the Camarilla. With its advantage of numbers, the Camarilla suppressed the anarchists and agreed to exist behind a great Masquerade. Never



THE SIX TRADITIONS

Camarilla vampires swear to uphold the legendary Six Traditions of Caine, the laws which Caine supposedly passed to his progeny. Like any other laws, the Traditions are commonly ignored, bent or violated outright.

THE FIRST TRADITION:

THE MASQUERADE

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

THE SECOND TRADITION:

THE DOMAIN

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

THE THIRD TRADITION:

THE PROGENY

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

THE FOURTH TRADITION:

THE ACCOUNTING

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

THE FIFTH TRADITION:

HOSPITALITY

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

THE SIXTH TRADITION:

DESTRUCTION

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

more shall vampires rule openly, the lords of the Camarilla decreed. We shall hide among the mortals, and conceal our natures from our prey, and in a few decades the mortals will know vampires only as myths.

Thus, the Masquerade was born, and the Inquisition gradually forgot its original target. Those anarchists who would not join the Camarilla were driven into the wastes, from which they would later emerge as the dread Sabbat cult. With the discovery of the New World and the dawn of science, humanity gradually forgot about the Kindred, relegating them to the status of childhood legends.

But, though hidden, vampires were still quite real. The wars of the Jyhad raged on, though the nights of open battle were replaced by sudden ambushes and maneuvering of human pawns. Weaving their webs throughout the ever-expanding cities, the Kindred eschewed their previous games for more methodical but no less deadly ones.

THE MODERN NIGHTS AND GEHENNA

And the wars continued down the centuries, and continue still. The Jyhad rages as it always has — though skyscrapers take the place of castles, machine-guns and missiles replace swords and torches, and stock portfolios substitute for vaults of gold, the game remains the same. Kindred battles Kindred, clan battles clan, Camarilla battles Sabbat, as they have for eons. Vampiric feuds begun during the nights of Charlemagne play themselves out on the streets of New York City; an insult whispered in the court of the Sun King may find itself answered by a corporate takeover in Sao Paulo. The ever-swelling cities provide countless opportunities for feeding, powermongering — and war.

Increasingly, vampires speak of Gehenna — the long-prophesied night of apocalypse when the most ancient vampires, the mythical Antediluvians, will rise from their hidden lairs to devour all the younger vampires. This Gehenna, so the Kindred say, will presage the end of the world, as vampires and mortals alike are consumed in an inexorable tide of blood. Some vampires strive to prevent Gehenna, some fatalistically await it, and still others consider it a myth. Those who believe in Gehenna, however, say that the end time comes very soon — perhaps in a matter of years.

THE CAMARILLA

The Camarilla is a great sect of vampires that formed in the late medieval period. A vampire “United Nations” of sorts, it was formed to protect vampires from the purges of the Inquisition, to uphold the Traditions of Caine, and to enforce the great Masquerade. Many Camarilla vampires, remembering the nights of fire when vampires were uprooted and destroyed, uphold the Masquerade fanatically. Camarilla vampires reject the idea of vampires as monstrous predators, instead preferring to live clandestinely among mortals and feed cautiously.

The Camarilla is the most populous sect, and (in theory) the most powerful. But it comprises seven clans of vampires, each with its own culture and agenda, and this renders it prone to discord. Ruled as it is by a fractious sort of parliamentarianism, the Camarilla is slow to act and often indecisive in the face of threats; when it brings its combined might to bear, however, the Camarilla is virtually unstoppable.

Beginning characters are assumed to be Camarilla vampires, and to belong to one of the seven clans. The clans are:

- **Brujah:** A clan of violent, antiauthoritarian vampires espousing freedom from societal restrictions.

- **Gangrel:** A clan of solitary, nomadic shapeshifters who prefer the wilderness to the confines of the cities.

- **Malkavian:** A bizarre clan of lunatics whose members are infamous for their insanity — and insight.

- **Nosferatu:** A loathsome clan of deformed monsters who skulk in subterranean tunnels and sewers.

- **Toreador:** A clan of elegant, passionate vampires who patronize artists, musicians, actors and the like.

- **Tremere:** A secretive, treacherous clan of vampire warlocks who practice blood magic.

- **Ventrue:** A clan of aristocrats and nobles who consider it their duty to lead the Camarilla.

THE SABBAT

The Camarilla's bitter rival is the dread sect called the Sabbat. Originally the remnants of the shattered anarch packs, the Sabbat has evolved — or devolved — into something much deadlier. The Sabbat would “liberate” all vampires from the chains of the Camarilla and their sires. The ultimate Social Darwinists, the Sabbat espouses the tenet of vampiric supremacy — the doctrine that, because vampires are highest on the food chain, they should not hide from mortals, but instead dominate them outright. This attitude toward humans often manifests itself in actions that appear horrific and cruel by mortal standards; accordingly, the Sabbat is often branded a sect of violent evildoers by outraged Camarilla vampires.

Two clans lead the Sabbat. The Lasombra clan is the most prestigious clan and is dreaded for its members' control over the stuff of shadow. Its ally and occasional rival is the Tzimisce, a clan of twisted scholars and sorcerers infamous for cruelty. Tzimisce are said to have the power to warp and mold their own and others' flesh and bone.

THE ANARCHS

Some younger vampires strive to remain free of both Camarilla and Sabbat control. These vampires style themselves “anarchs” in homage to the warriors who led the great revolt of the 15th century. For the most part these modern anarchists are ragtag bands of Brujah and Caitiff predators, though all clans are represented in their ranks. The Camarilla treats them as it would termites — individually insignificant, but potentially crippling if allowed to breed and fester.

THE NEUTRALS

Four clans choose to remain neutral in the great Jyhad, bartering their services to (and jockeying for power with) Camarilla and Sabbat indifferently. These are: the Assamites, a deadly clan of vampire assassins based in the Middle East; the Followers of Set, a dark cult of vampires devoted to the worship of the snake-god Set; the Giovanni, an insular family of incestuous necromancers and financiers; and the Ravnos, a nomadic line of Gypsy charlatans and thieves.

THE INCONNU

Finally, certain ancient vampires withdraw from the sects' games altogether, seeking solitude amid the wastes. These old ones, called Inconnu, reject the power-games of the clans and sects, instead seeking self-mastery and enlightenment. Some whisper of a darker purpose behind the Inconnu's withdrawal from the Jyhad, but most vampires think of Inconnu as nothing more than deluded recluses.

THE JYHAD

Since the nights of antiquity, the Children of Caine have struggled for supremacy. Leaders, cultures, nations and armies have all been pawns in the secret war, and vampiric conspiracies have influenced much (though by no means all) of human history. Few things are as they seem in the vampires' nocturnal world; a political coup, economic crash or social trend may be merely the surface manifestation veiling a centuries-old struggle. Vampire elders command from the shadows, manipulating mortals and other vampires alike — and the elders are often manipulated in turn. Indeed, most combatants may not even realize for whom they fight, or why.

STATUS

Vampires are very hierarchical creatures. The vampires of the Camarilla, in particular, have created an elaborate structure to ensure order among the undead.

Vampiric territory (generally consisting of cities and outlying suburbs) is divided into fiefdoms. Each fiefdom is ruled by a prince, a mighty vampire elder. This figure may grant lesser vampires hunting territories within his (or her; “prince” is used unisexually) fiefdom; these territories are referred to as domains.

THE PRINCE

The ruling vampire of a Camarilla-held territory is called the prince. This powerful vampire is usually of Clan Ventrue or Toreador; however, Brujah, Nosferatu or even Malkavian princes are not unknown. The prince has absolute power to establish, grant or strip domains, and to declare certain areas off limits for hunting. The prince may declare certain areas as Elysium (neutral ground where violence is prohibited), and may call blood hunts on rebels and malcontents who violate the Six Traditions.

Princes tend to control city-sized regions; thus, there is a Prince of Paris, a Prince of Chicago, a Prince of Atlanta, etc. Because a city's prince has often lived in the area for centuries, she has had ample time to build a power structure, and usually



knows far more about the workings of “her” city than rebellious anarchists give her credit for.

THE PRIMOGEN

The prince is often served by a council of advisors chosen from powerful elders of the various clans. These elders are collectively called primogen. Though, in theory, a prince’s rule is absolute, a prince who fails to heed her primogen often finds herself deposed or killed in short order. The primogen are formidable forces in their own right, and ceaselessly intrigue against each other and the prince.

THE ELDERS

Elders are vampires who have existed for 300 or more years. They have mastered many magical powers during this time; most elders are deadly and formidable creatures. Elders tend to be scheming, ruthless and paranoid beings; they will do anything to hold onto their power structures, oppress or manipulate the younger “upstart” vampires, and destroy their rivals.

THE ANCILLAE

Below the elders are the ancillae. Ancillae are most often vampires who have lived from 100 to 300 years of unlife, though certain ambitious younglings may achieve the rank prematurely. As their name suggests, ancillae often serve as aides and agents for elders or the court; they usually play their own power-games as well, though these are of lesser consequence than the manipulations of the elders.

THE NEONATES

Lowest in rank are the neonates, those vampires created less than a century ago. Though occasionally cherished, neonates are often deployed as pawns by scheming elders. This callous treatment, combined with the value recent generations place on individuality, often causes neonates to resent their elders. After all, when one came of age during the Summer of Love, it is hard to empathize with a reactionary old tyrant who grew up amid feudal oaths and Divine Rights.

Most beginning characters are presumed to be neonates. Vampire elders are usually far more powerful than the characters created through the rules in this kit.

CHARACTER CREATION

Now that you know a little bit about the world of the undead, it is time to create a character. Character creation consists of three basic choices: choice of clan, ranking of Traits, and choice of Disciplines. Additionally, every vampire starts with 10 Blood Levels and seven Health Levels; Blood and Health Levels can increase or decrease as the character injures or heals herself, feeds or grows hungry.

THE METHUSELAHS

Ask a mortal to name the most dangerous predator on Earth, and he might mention a Bengal tiger, a Nile crocodile or a great white shark. Ask the same question of a vampire, and often one will hear the word “Methuselah” leaving those cold lips.

Simply put, Methuselaha are ancient vampires — beings that have survived for over a millennium. Having been undead for so long, Methuselaha often undergo profound physiological and psychological changes. From a vampire’s point of view, the most horrible of these is a predilection for vampire blood — just as vampires stalk mortals, so they are occasionally stalked in turn.

Most vampires prefer to ignore the existence of the Methuselaha, considering them near-extinct aberrations akin to dinosaurs. It is ironic, then, how many of the plots of the Jyhad can ultimately be traced to these ancient, shadowy progenitors.

Creating a character is easy, involving just a few simple choices. It is a good idea to have a general concept of what you want your vampire to be like (Was he a gangbanger abducted off the street? A rich boy chosen at a society ball? A computer specialist picked for expedience by an ancient vampire who knows nothing about “those infernal contraptions”?). Even this is not necessary, however; a concept can be created as you go.

The first thing to do is pick the character’s clan; this provides a lot of details about the character’s strengths, weaknesses and general outlook on existence. Do you want to be an angry Brujah punk? A loathsome, sewer-creeping Nosferatu? A gorgeous, immaculate Toreador? Once a clan is chosen, write down the listed Aptitude, Advantage and Weakness. Make a note of the Disciplines as well, so you’ll have them handy during the Discipline-choosing phase.

Next, you get to decide your character’s Trait levels. Characters have four Traits: Physical, Mental, Social and Psychic. Rank these from 1 to 4; 4 is the best, 1 is the worst. (Each number may only be assigned to one Trait; you can’t give your character a 4 in everything!) So, if you decide your character is really bright, in good shape, fairly self-disciplined, but abrasive and introverted, you might decide the character has Mental 4, Physical 3, Psychic 2, Social 1.

Now, pick your character’s Discipline Levels. Each clan teaches three Disciplines — magical powers — to its mem-

CHARACTER-CREATION QUICK CHART

- **Choose clan:** Write down the clan Aptitude, Advantage and Weakness. The choice of clan also determines which Disciplines you may select for your character.

- **Choose Traits:** Rank the character's Physical, Mental, Social and Psychic Traits from 1 to 4; 4 is the best, 1 is the worst.

- **Choose Disciplines:** Each clan has three Disciplines listed with it. These are the clan Disciplines, powers in which a particular clan specializes. **The player may choose one of three Discipline schemes:**

- All three listed Disciplines at the Basic level.

- One Basic Discipline and one Advanced Discipline (player's choice)

- Two Basic Disciplines, plus an extra two points to place in Traits. (If this option is chosen, one Trait may be raised to 5 — a superhuman level of proficiency.)

- **Write down Health and Blood Levels:** Beginning characters start with 10 Blood Levels (they are assumed to have recently fed).

- **Give your character a name, and make up some details about her appearance, personality, mannerisms and other features salient to roleplaying.**

bers, but some vampires are more adept with some Disciplines than others. Disciplines come in two levels: Basic and Advanced. A beginning character may choose one of three "Discipline schemes":

- All three clan Disciplines at the Basic level.
- Two clan Disciplines: one Basic Discipline and one Advanced Discipline.
- Two clan Disciplines at the Basic level, plus an additional two points to spend on Traits. (If this option is chosen, the vampire may raise one Trait to 5 — superhuman capacity.)

That's about it. Write down your character's Blood Levels (10), Health Levels (7), and make up some further details about your vampire. What is her name? What does she look like? Does she still have mortal friends? Does she hate vampires of another clan? What outstanding personality traits does she have?

Once this is done, your character is ready to enter the world of the eternal night.

Details about clans, Traits and Disciplines can be found on the following pages.

THE CLANS

According to the ancient myths, Caine's grandchilder, the Antediluvians, numbered 13. Each of these Antediluvians, the stories continue, founded a great clan of vampiric descendants, all of whom bore the gifts — and the stigmata — of their progenitors.

Eons and lies have shrouded the truth of this story, but there can be no denying that 13 clans of Kindred walk the Earth. These clans bestow distinguishing benefices and taints upon vampires Embraced into them; thus the Nosferatu are infamous for their hideousness, for example, while the Brujah are notorious for their violent tempers.

Clans act as combination families, social cliques and schools. For example, the violent Brujah disciplines its childer to become inhumanly strong, fast and fearsome, while the sorcerous Tremere instructs its disciples in the ways of ESP, mind control and magic. Some clans are insular and tightly knit, with definite social structures and worldwide agendas; others are loose and anarchic, united by little save their common blood.

When creating a vampire, the player must choose one of these seven clans. (There are six other clans — four neutral and two Sabbat clans — but this kit does not concern itself with them.) Each clan provides an Aptitude (a certain mundane feat at which clan members excel), an Advantage (an area of supernatural specialty or societal influence), and a Weakness (a mystic curse laid upon the clan in ancient, or not so ancient, times). Each clan also provides certain Disciplines — mystic powers which the clan teaches to its members.



BRUJAH

The Brujah are inheritors of a majestic and ancient legacy, which is unfortunate. Tonight's Brujah seem less like a clan and more like a mob. Punks, terrorists, revolutionaries, criminals, gangbangers and the like make up the Brujah; the clan seems to be united in nothing save its contempt for the institutions of vampire and mortal society. Well, this is not entirely true; Clan Brujah are among the most savage vampires, and the most trivial slight or annoyance may trigger a howling Brujah frenzy.

The Brujah's disunity keeps the clan tenuously in the Camarilla, but Brujah thugs routinely defect to the anarchs, the better to strike against their hated elders. Even the "tamer" Brujah annoy the elders and princes routinely through acts of defiance and rebellion. Despite their recalcitrance, however, Brujah are valued as warriors; they are perhaps the most dangerous vampires in a straightforward battle. To anger a Brujah is nigh suicidal — and Brujah are notorious for their tempers.

Aptitude: +1 with combat. Brujah are natural fighters; when in combat, a Brujah may add one die to any one action taken per turn.

Advantage: Blood Rage. A Brujah may spend a Blood Level to enter a semicontrolled form of frenzy. While under the Blood Rage, the vampire may ignore the effects of pain, but must attack foes directly, without missiles or non-Physical Disciplines (no firearms when one has the opportunity to tear one's foe apart with bare hands!).

Weakness: Blood Madness. Brujah anger much more quickly than other vampires do. All difficulties to resist frenzy increase by one (maximum 6).

Clan Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Presence



GANGREL

Of all vampires, the Gangrel are perhaps closest to their inner nature. These nomadic loners spurn the constraints of society, preferring the comfort of the wilderness. How they avoid the wrath of the werewolves is unknown; perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the Gangrel are themselves shapeshifters. When a mortal speaks of a vampire changing into a wolf or a bat, she is probably speaking of a Gangrel.

Like the Brujah, Gangrel are fierce warriors; unlike the Brujah, Gangrel ferocity does not stem from anarchic rage, but from animalistic instinct. Gangrel have a keen understanding of the Beast in their souls, and prefer to spend their nights in communion with the animals whom they so emulate.

Aptitude: +1 in the outdoors. When in natural surroundings (a park counts; a city street doesn't), a Gangrel may add one die to any one action taken per turn.

Advantage: Hunter's Instinct. Gangrel are natural predators; by spending a Blood Level, the Gangrel may automatically gain the initiative next turn, even against foes with Celerity. Alternatively, the Gangrel may apply his instinct to hunting; by spending a Blood Level, he will automatically succeed in a hunt, unless there is absolutely no prey to be found in the vicinity.

Weakness: Bloodlust. Gangrel are tainted by the Beast Within. Over time, many Gangrel develop animal features, such as catlike eyes, fur, or batlike snouts and ears. In any event, Gangrel often find it difficult to spare wounded or beaten foes; to do so, the Gangrel must make a Psychic roll (difficulty 4).

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean



MALKAVIAN

At first glance, the members of Clan Malkavian do not appear to be a clan at all; they are chosen from all races, creeds and social strata. But Malkavians, regardless of mortal standing, bear one disturbing commonality: They are all quite mad. Whether from the clan's choice of victims, the circumstances of the Embrace, or some property in Malkavian blood itself, all Malkavians go insane shortly after the transformation (if they were not insane to begin with).

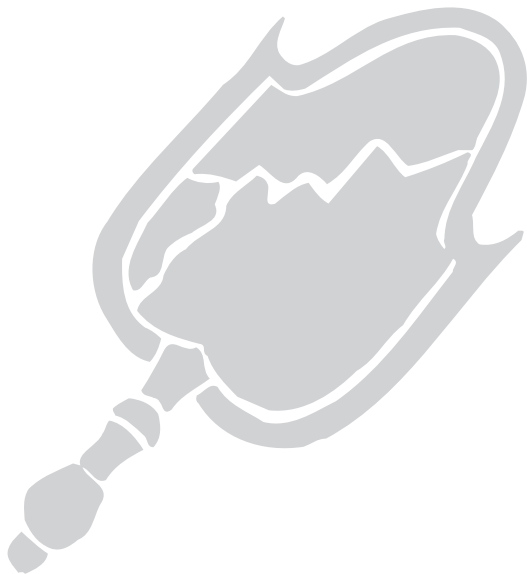
Accordingly, many Malkavians find themselves pariahs, ostracized by a vampiric society fearful of their random urges and capricious whims. Wiser Kindred, however, prefer to keep the madmen close at hand: Behind the Malkavians' lunatic cackling and feverish rantings lie smatterings of insight, even wisdom.

Aptitude: +1 with trickery. When attempting to deceive (or avoid being deceived), a Malkavian may add one die to appropriate rolls.

Advantage: Lunatic's Insight. Once per story, the Malkavian may make a Mental roll (difficulty 4); if she succeeds, she may ask the Storyteller one yes-or-no question about the current situation, which must be answered truthfully.

Weakness: Mad Fits. At the beginning of the game session, the Storyteller rolls a six-sided die. The number rolled is the number of times he may ask the Malkavian's player to make a Psychic roll (difficulty 4). The Storyteller may call for this roll at any time. If the player fails, the Malkavian falls into a frothing, gibbering fit for one turn. While in the fit, the Malkavian may do nothing except writhe, babble and twitch; she may not even defend herself if attacked.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate



NOSFERATU

Caine's childer are called "The Damned," and no vampires embody this more than do the wretches of Clan Nosferatu. While other vampires still look human and may travel in mortal society, Nosferatu are twisted and deformed by the curse of vampirism. To put it bluntly, the Embrace transforms them into hideous monsters. Unable to walk among humans, Nosferatu must dwell in subterranean sewers and catacombs. Other vampires revile Nosferatu, considering them disgusting and interacting with them only when they must.

Because of this stigma, however, Nosferatu are survivors *par excellence*. Few creatures, mortal or vampire, know the city's back alleys and dark corners like the Nosferatu do. Additionally, Nosferatu have refined the crafts of sneaking and eavesdropping to fine arts; if anyone or anything has the latest dirt on mortal or vampiric society, it is the Nosferatu. Finally, millennia of shared deformity and abuse have fostered strong bonds among the monsters. Nosferatu forego the squabbling and feuds ubiquitous to the other clans, preferring to work in unison. You mess with one, you mess with 'em all — and that can get messy indeed....

Aptitude: +1 with stealth. Nosferatu are natural sneaks and may add one die to all situations involving hiding, moving silently, or other stealth-related feats.

Advantage: Horrid Visage. Nosferatu are hideous creatures, but this can actually serve them in good stead. When first confronting potential opponents or prey (appearing from invisibility, stepping out in front of them, etc.), the Nosferatu may roll six dice (difficulty of the target's Psychic +2). If this roll succeeds, the opponent is so stunned with terror and disgust that he may take no action for one turn.

Weakness: Loathsome. As has been mentioned, Nosferatu are horrifically foul to look at, and not overly pleasant to boot. A Nosferatu's Social Trait is considered to be zero — though when intimidating others, he may substitute his Physical Trait for a Social Trait.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence



TOREADOR

The Toreador are called many things — “degenerates,” “artistes,” “poseurs,” and “hedonists” being but a few. But any such mass categorization does the clan a disservice. Depending on the individual and her mood, Toreador are alternately elegant and flamboyant, brilliant and ludicrous, visionary and dissipated. Perhaps the only truism that can be applied to the clan is its members’ aesthetic zeal. Whatever a Toreador does, she does with passion. Whatever a Toreador is, she is with passion.

To the Toreador, eternal life is to be savored. Many Toreador were artists, musicians or poets in life; many more have spent frustrating centuries producing laughable attempts at art, music or poetry. Toreador share the Ventrue’s love of high society, though not for them the tedium of actually running things — that’s what functionaries are for, darling. Toreador know that their place is to captivate and inspire — through their witty speech, graceful deeds, and simple, scintillating existence.

Aptitude: +1 to perception. Toreador are natural critics; while irritating, this trait occasionally serves them in good stead. Toreador add one die to any task involving observation or alertness (for example, detecting an ambush or spotting a hidden wall safe).

Advantage: Herd. Toreador glide elegantly through nightlife and are invariably at the center of whatever social scene they choose to grace. Accordingly, Toreador attract a following of friends, acquaintances, lovers, ex-lovers, sycophants and other hangers-on. Most of these mortals are unaware their “charming friend” is a vampire. The majority are relatively worthless, but some might know useful information or have useful skills. In any event, they are useful sources of blood; once per story, a Toreador with access to his herd may completely replenish his Blood Levels.

Weakness: Rapture. Toreador are lovers of the aesthetic and beautiful. When a Toreador views, hears or even smells something that is (in the Storyteller’s opinion) truly beautiful, he must make a Mental roll (difficulty 4) or become entranced by the sensation. The Toreador will stand in rapt fascination for a scene or until the beautiful thing withdraws. Enraptured Toreador may not even defend themselves if attacked, though being wounded allows them to make another Mental roll to “break the spell.”



TREMERE

Even among vampires, the insular Clan Tremere bears a reputation for treachery. This reputation is well earned; the Tremere were formerly a cabal of human wizards who, hungering for immortal life, wrested the secrets of vampirism from unwilling Kindred. Such vile deeds earned the clan a sinister reputation; even today, certain vampire clans would love nothing better than to destroy the entire Tremere line.

Nonetheless, Clan Tremere holds a place in the Camarilla, for its members were instrumental in suppressing the Inquisition and supporting the Masquerade. Then, too, the Tremere have proved themselves dangerous enemies — and powerful allies. Tremere still practice a version of the arcane arts they studied in life, and so these “warlocks” use their sorcerous powers in service to the Camarilla...almost as much as they use the Camarilla in service to themselves.

Aptitude: +1 with scholasticism. Tremere are studious creatures; they add one die to all Mental tasks involving scholarly knowledge (research, occult lore, science, deciphering languages, etc.).

Advantage: Wizard’s Familiar. All Tremere are taught a ritual to create a familiar. A familiar is a small creature alchemically created from the vampire’s blood. Some familiars look like black cats, others look like bats, and still others resemble grotesque little horned gargoyles. A familiar is usually about the size of a cat; it has ratings of 1 in all Traits, but when dodging or sneaking, its Physical is considered to be 4. It has four Health Levels and takes one die of pain penalties per Health Level lost. A familiar can telepathically communicate with its master when within 50 feet of her. Familiars are most commonly used as spies. If slain, a familiar can be re-created via a five-night ritual and the expenditure of five Blood Levels (one per night).

Weakness: Hierarchy. All Tremere are expected to be loyal to the Seven Elders who rule the clan — but just in case, all Tremere are required to drink the blood of the Seven Elders. This ingestion creates a mystic link among all members of the Tremere, but particularly between elder and younger Tremere. A Tremere character must make a Psychic roll to resist a direct command from a Tremere elder (difficulty varies, depending on the absurdity of the command — for example, refusing a request to deliver a message would be difficulty 5 or 6, but refusing a command to kill oneself would be difficulty 2). Additionally, Tremere elders need spend one fewer Blood Level than usual when using Dominate powers against recalcitrant younglings.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy



VENTRUE

Elegant, aristocratic and regal, the Ventrue are the lords of the Camarilla. It was Clan Ventrue that provided the cornerstone of the Camarilla, and it is Clan Ventrue that directs and coaxes the Camarilla in its darkest hours. Even in the modern age, the majority of princes descend from Clan Ventrue. The Ventrue would, of course, have things no other way. In the tradition of *noblesse oblige*, the Ventrue must lead the other clans for their own good.

In ancient nights, Ventrue were chosen from nobles, merchant princes or other wielders of power. In modern times the clan recruits from wealthy “old-money” families, ruthless corporate climbers, and politicians. Although Ventrue move in the same social circles as the Toreador, they do not fritter away their existences in frivolity and idle chatter. The Ventrue proudly wear the privileges of leadership, and stoically bear its burdens. Thus has it always been; thus shall it always be.

Aptitude: +1 with commands. Ventrue are nothing if not charismatic; they add one die to all Social rolls to lead or command others. This includes many uses of the Dominate Discipline.

Advantage: Wealth. Most Ventrue are filthy rich; even those who aren't may call on the financial aid of their clanmates. Once per story, the character may access a large source of funds (perhaps a Swiss bank account, perhaps laundered money, perhaps a trust fund or a stipend from her sire).

Weakness: Rarefied Tastes. Ventrue are elegant and discriminating, even when it comes to blood. Not just any blood will do for a Ventrue; the player must pick a certain type of blood on which her character feeds (only from musicians, only from virgins, only from royalty, only Shriners, etc.). This blood, and only this blood, will satisfy the Ventrue's palate; she will drink nothing else, even if starving.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Presence



TRAITS

The power and skill of a vampire are measured by her Traits: abilities possessed by all humans to some extent. These four Traits are:

Physical: This Trait measures a vampire's physical prowess — her raw strength, agility and stamina. *This Trait is used to resolve all tasks involving fighting, lifting things, running, etc.*

Mental: This trait measures a vampire's brains, reasoning ability, wits and cunning. *This Trait is used to resolve all tasks concerned with trying to notice something, puzzle out a clue or think quickly.*

Social: This Trait measures a vampire's charm, attractiveness and presence. *Social is used to resolve all tasks concerned with trying to coerce, seduce, convince or con someone into doing something.*

Psychic: This Trait measures a vampire's inner strength: her willpower, inner discipline and self-mastery. In many ways it is a measure of a vampire's soul. *Psychic is used to resolve all tasks concerned with resisting intimidation, mind control or frenzy.*

Traits are rated from 1 to 4; a rating of 1 indicates a mediocre level of ability, while a rating of 4 indicates a Trait at peak human ability (an Olympic athlete, a genius, a great statesman, or a near-Buddha). It is possible to have a zero in a Trait, reflecting a crippled or decrepit character (most characters do not start out with any zeros, though Nosferatu characters do have zeros in their Social Traits, reflecting their hideous appearance). It is also possible for vampires to attain superhuman scores — 5 or even higher (again, most characters do not start with such might, but vampire elders and those close in blood to Caine often have such Traits).

Most humans possess ratings of 1 or 2 in their Traits; beginning vampire characters, however, are considered the cream of the crop.

TRAIT RATINGS

- 0 Abysmal
- 1 Mediocre
- 2 Pretty good
- 3 Really good
- 4 Human perfection
- 5+ Superhuman (vampires only)

Players creating new characters rank these Traits from 1 to 4. So, a player creating a stereotypical high-society Toreador might place a 4 in Social (she's absolutely fabulous, dahling), a 3 in Mental (of course she knows the difference between Post-Modernism and Abstract Expressionism), a 2 in Physical (those ballet lessons weren't a complete waste), and a 1 in Psychic (how dare you criticize her taste in vessels? What kind of Philistine are you? Ohhhh, the pain...).

DISCIPLINES

Vampires are miraculous — or horrific — by dint of their very existence. One might think that the spectacle of a corpse rising from death to live again is wondrous in itself. But Caine's curse bestowed other dark gifts on its victims. Though the Blood itself makes vampires formidable creatures, the Disciplines are what truly give the undead their power.

Disciplines come in two levels: Basic and Advanced. Each level gives a vampire access to a number of supernatural powers. A Blood Level must be spent for each power activated (two Blood Levels to use an Advanced Discipline power). Obviously, a vampire with an Advanced Discipline has mastered the Basic Level as well. Mastering a Discipline level gives access to all the powers listed under that Discipline.

ANIMALISM

Vampires with the Discipline of Animalism find themselves with greater control over both the animal world and the Beast Within.

BASIC

- **Beast Speech:** The vampire may communicate telepathically with any animal larger than an insect. The power lasts for a scene.
- **Beast Summons:** The vampire may summon any animals of a given species within one mile. The animals must actually exist in the area (i.e., summoning tigers in Brooklyn is unlikely to work), and they answer the summons as fast as their own mobility allows. The animals obey the caster's commands if they are not too dangerous. If two opposing vampires both employ Beast Summons on the same animal, the one with the higher Social Trait wins.

ADVANCED

- **Song of Serenity:** The vampire may sing a soothing song, pacifying all creatures in the vicinity. Beings who hear the song become lethargic and incapable of acting aggressively toward anyone. Mortals are automatically affected by the power; to target another vampire, the singer must make a Mental roll (difficulty of the victim's Psychic +2).
- **Drawing out the Beast:** The vampire may "cast" her Beast on another. To use this power, the vampire must be in a situation where she risks frenzy (see the frenzy rules, below). She may then transfer her inner Beast into another being's soul by making a Psychic roll (difficulty of the opponent's Psychic +2). If the transfer succeeds, the target immediately enters frenzy. Once the target's frenzy ends, the Beast returns to its "owner."

AUSPEX

The Discipline of Auspex bestows telepathic and extra-sensory perception powers on its practitioners.



BASIC

- **Heightened Senses:** The vampire's senses become superhuman. Sight and hearing are doubled, and the vampire may hear ultrasonic sounds (a dog whistle, whalesong, etc.). Smell becomes as acute as a wild animal's, and the vampire may read the print on a page by touch. The vampire gains an extra die to all perception-oriented tasks.

- **Aura Perception:** The vampire may sense the invisible "aura" surrounding all living creatures. For each success on a Mental roll (difficulty 4), the vampire may ask the Storyteller one yes-or-no question about another character's emotional or physical state. (Permissible questions include: "Is she angry?" "Is he lying?" "Is she a vampire?" "Is he sane?" and the like.)

ADVANCED

- **Telepathy:** The vampire may attempt to read a victim's mind. The vampire must be able to see the person to be scrutinized. The vampire makes a Mental roll (difficulty of the opponent's Psychic + 2). Success allows the vampire to read the victim's surface thoughts, while three or more successes allow the vampire to read the victim's subconscious thoughts, dark secrets, etc.

- **Astral Projection:** The vampire may project her spirit from her body. The spirit is invisible and intangible. The spirit may travel up to 500 m.p.h., and may penetrate walls, doors, etc. The spirit may use any senses the vampire possesses. While the spirit roams, the vampire lies dormant and helpless. Use of this power costs three Blood Points.

CELERITY

Vampires with Celerity are dangerous foes, for this Discipline enables them to move and attack at superhuman speeds. A character with activated Basic Celerity always gains initiative (the first move) over a character without such enhancement. Likewise, a character with activated Advanced Celerity always gains initiative over a character without Advanced Celerity. (The only exception is a character using the Gangrel Advantage Hunter's Prowess; such a character gains initiative over everyone else.) If two characters have the same level of Celerity, defer to the normal initiative process (see "Initiative," below).

BASIC

- The vampire's movement rate doubles. Additionally, she gains an extra action per turn.

ADVANCED

- The vampire's movement rate triples, and she gains two additional actions per turn.

DOMINATE

Vampires with Dominate may mesmerize others, or even control their minds outright. Use of this power requires eye contact.

BASIC

- **Command:** The vampire may issue a one-word command ("Go!" "Stay!" "Halt!" and the like are acceptable; "Die!" is not) to another being. Unless the victim beats the vampire in a Psychic roll (difficulty 4 for both), the command must be obeyed. The victim must understand the vampire's language. If the vampire gains no successes on her Psychic roll, the command does not take effect.

- **Mesmerize:** The vampire may make hypnotic suggestions to her victim. After making a suggestion, the vampire makes a Social roll (difficulty varies, depending on the Storyteller's interpretation of the order: 3 to make the victim do something she was inclined to do anyway, 4 to make the victim do something that isn't terribly inconvenient, 5 to make the victim do something embarrassing or against his principles, 6 to make the victim do something life-threatening). If the vampire succeeds, the victim obeys the suggestion.

ADVANCED

- **Forgetfulness:** The vampire may "block out" pieces of the victim's memory (even the fact that the victim ever saw the vampire). To do so, the vampire must beat the victim in a Psychic roll (difficulty 4 for both). One success (over and above the victim's successes) enables the vampire to "wipe" the victim's memory for a scene; three successes enables the vampire to "wipe" the victim's memory permanently.

- **Possession:** The vampire may transfer his consciousness into the victim's brain. This power works only on mortals. To use it, the vampire must make a Psychic roll (difficulty 4) and gain more successes than his victim, who makes the same roll. If he succeeds, the victim is his puppet; the vampire's body goes dormant, but the vampire may make the victim do anything, even commit suicide. This power costs three Blood Levels to use.

FORTITUDE

Vampires with Fortitude prove unnaturally resistant to damage. They must often be literally hacked apart, like the walking corpses they are. Fortitude is always on (no Blood Levels need be spent to use it).

BASIC

- The vampire has +1 die for soak rolls, +1 Health Level (an extra "Light" level) and may soak fire, sunlight and other aggravated-damage attacks.

ADVANCED

- The vampire has +2 dice for soak rolls, +2 Health Levels (both "Light") and may soak damage from fire, sunlight and other aggravated attacks. Additionally, potential damage from long-term exposure to fire and sunlight is halved (i.e., the vampire only tallies damage from direct sunlight every other turn, from indirect sunlight every four turns, etc.).

OBFUSCATE

Obfuscate is the ability to mystically cloak oneself in illusions or shadows, thereby disguising or concealing oneself.

BASIC

- **Cloak of Shadows:** The vampire may step behind some sort of cover and thereby shroud herself from sight. Any sort of cover will do—for example, a 7', 400-pound vampire could step behind a two-inch-wide post, and the power would still work. *So long as the vampire remains perfectly still*, no one may see her. Foes with the Auspex Discipline who are actively searching for the vampire may make a Mental roll (difficulty of the hidden vampire's Psychic + 2) to see the concealed vampire.

- **Unseen Presence:** The vampire may hypnotically cause others not to see him. So long as he confines himself to walking about and otherwise acting unobtrusively, others will simply ignore him. Should he speak or act in a violent fashion, he must make a Mental roll (difficulty 6) not to break the spell. To activate this power, the vampire must be hidden from view; he must then spend three turns in concentration and make a successful Mental roll (difficulty 4). Foes with Auspex may roll to detect the vampire per Cloak of Shadows, above.

ADVANCED

- **Mask of 1000 Faces:** The vampire may evoke illusions and thereby disguise himself as another person. To disguise oneself as "Everyman/woman" (just a random, undistinguished person) requires no roll; to disguise oneself as a specific person requires a Mental roll (difficulty equals the Social +2 of the person one wishes to impersonate).

- **Vanish from Mind's Eye:** The vampire may disappear from plain sight. This requires a Mental roll (difficulty 4). If the vampire scores three successes, others in the vicinity will forget that they ever saw him at all. Again, foes with Auspex may roll to detect him per Cloak of Shadows, above.

POTENCE

Vampires with Potence are terrifying opponents, for they possess the strength of several humans. Potence is always on (no Blood Levels need be spent). When resolving any feat of strength (arm-wrestling, tug-of-war, etc.), a character with Basic Potence always beats a character without Potence. Likewise, a character with Advanced Potence always beats any character without a similar level of Potence. Two vampires with the same level of Potence resolve such Physical rolls normally.

BASIC

- The vampire inflicts +2 damage in hand-to-hand combat, and he may lift approximately 1000 pounds.

ADVANCED

- The vampire inflicts +3 damage in hand-to-hand combat, and he may lift approximately one ton.

PRESENCE

All vampires are impressive, scary creatures, but those with the Discipline of Presence are particularly captivating. Vampires with Presence can manipulate others' emotions, becoming their victims' dream lovers — or most terrifying nightmares.

BASIC

- **Awe:** The vampire gains a charismatic aura, becoming a natural leader, seducer and orator. The vampire's Social score is effectively doubled.

- **Fear:** The vampire, by hissing and baring fangs, instills an unnatural terror in foes. Unless they score a number of successes on a Psychic roll equal to the vampire's Physical or Social Trait (whichever is higher), they must turn and flee for a scene.

ADVANCED

- **Entrancement:** The vampire becomes superhumanly fascinating. If the vampire makes a successful Social roll (difficulty of the victim's Psychic Trait + 2), the victim becomes convinced that the vampire is his friend, lover, or whatever — a figure to be protected and adored. This lasts for one day per point of the vampire's Social Trait.

- **Majesty:** Vampires with Majesty are quite literally awesome. Majesty bestows an almost godlike aura upon the vampire; mortals fall to their knees in worship or terror, and even vampires must make a successful Psychic roll (difficulty 4) to attack, insult, or be anything other than respectful and deferential to the vampire. Majesty costs three Blood Levels to invoke.

PROTEAN

Protean is the purview of the shapeshifting Gangrel, though they have taught their secrets to a few other vampires. Vampires with Protean may shapeshift into a variety of forms.

BASIC

- **Eyes of the Beast:** The vampire may see in pitch darkness.

- **Talons of the Beast:** The vampire may sprout claws inflicting +1 damage. This damage is aggravated; only vampires with Fortitude may roll to soak it.

- **Lair of the Beast:** The vampire may mystically sink into the earth (earth only — not stone, concrete, etc.). She may not move or act while in this state, though she may will herself back to the surface at any time. This power can be used to escape sunlight and fire.

ADVANCED

- **Form of the Beast:** The vampire may transform into a wolf or bat. In wolf form, running speed is doubled and the vampire may bite for +1 damage. In bat form, Physical becomes 1 to attack, but +1 to dodge, and the vampire may fly at 25 m.p.h.



- **Form of Mist:** The vampire may transform into mist. The vampire may not attack while in mist form, but can be damaged only by sunlight, fire or mental Disciplines.

THAUMATURGY

The study of Thaumaturgy is largely restricted to the Tremere, although certain vampires among the Sabbat are rumored to employ the Discipline. Thaumaturgy is vampiric sorcery: ritual spellcasting and blood magic. Unlike other Disciplines, Thaumaturgy requires both blood expenditure and a Psychic roll (difficulty 4) to use successfully. If the roll fails, the Blood Level is lost.

BASIC

- **Blood Magic:** The vampire may manipulate his own blood. The first success he rolls allows him to “charge” two Blood Levels in his body, making them of double potency if spent (i.e., a Blood Level “charged” in this manner heals two Health Levels or adds +2 Physical). Each additional success enables him to “charge” an additional Blood Level.

- **Defense of the Haven:** The vampire casts this ritual on his haven before going to sleep for the day. This ritual darkens the haven, preventing any stray sunlight from reaching the vampire. Additionally, any stake thrust at the sleeping vampire’s heart automatically crumbles to dust.

- **Telekinesis:** The vampire may levitate and move objects via psychic force. The amount of weight he can lift (in pounds) equals 50 times his Psychic Trait. Living beings may resist Telekinesis by scoring more successes on a Mental roll (difficulty 5) than the vampire scored on his Psychic roll.

ADVANCED

- **Fireballs:** The vampire may hurl mystical fireballs. These inflict three levels of aggravated damage. Each fireball costs one Blood Level (not the normal two) to create.

- **Weather Control:** The vampire may change or amplify existing weather patterns. Additionally, if under the open sky, the vampire may call down bolts of lightning on his foes (difficulty 5 to target accurately). Lightning inflicts three levels of normal damage.

- **Cauldron of Blood:** The vampire may mystically boil the blood in an opponent’s body. Mortals affected by this power die instantly; vampires lose a number of Health and Blood Levels equal to the vampire’s successes.

BLOOD AND HEALTH

Besides the four Traits already mentioned, vampires are measured via two other criteria: Blood Levels and Health Levels.



BLOOD

Vampires can use ingested blood to perform various supernatural feats.

Characters have 10 Blood Levels, representing the different stages of satiation. Vampires spend Blood Levels to power Disciplines, boost Physical Traits, and heal wounds. They regain Blood Levels by feeding on mortals.

Each night, when a vampire awakens, she expends a Blood Level. She may expend additional Blood Levels to perform supernatural feats.

- A vampire may spend blood to heal wounds. Each Health Level healed costs one Blood Level. Healing takes one full turn of concentration to perform.

- Each use of a Basic Discipline costs one Blood Level.

- Each use of an Advanced Discipline costs two Blood Levels, unless stipulated otherwise.

- A vampire may spend blood to imbue herself with superhuman strength and vitality. To add a single point to the Physical Trait costs one Blood Level. Extra points may be added, but each additional point costs one one cumulative Blood Level (the second Physical dot costs two Blood Levels, the third dot three, etc.). Thus, a vampire seeking to increase her Physical Trait by +3 would have to spend six Blood Levels (1 + 2 + 3).

A vampire with no more Blood Levels in her body enters torpor (see below).

Vampires regain blood by feeding on humans. Each turn, a vampire may suck one Blood Level from a human. Humans have 10 Blood Levels in their bodies. When a human is reduced to five or fewer Blood Levels, he is in need of hospitalization. If all blood is drained from him, he dies. More merciful vampires try to restrict themselves to one or two Blood Levels from a given victim.

Hunger: When a vampire has five or fewer Blood Levels, she is *hungry*. If she sees or smells blood, she must make a frenzy check to avoid immediately seeking to feed. A vampire at two or fewer Blood Levels is *ravenous*; merely being in the proximity of a blood source (i.e., a human) is cause for a frenzy check, and actually seeing or smelling blood increases the difficulty of the check by one.

Other Creatures: Vampires may feed from animals, but this is unsatisfying. Animal blood is not nearly so nourishing as human blood. Assume that a cow (or similar-sized creature) has five Blood Levels, a dog two, and a cat one.

Vampires may drink from other vampires, and even drain them outright. This is called *diablerie*, and it is the greatest crime a vampire can commit — at least among Camarilla vampires. It is rumored that if a vampire drinks the blood of an elder vampire, she gains all his power. And, of course, the Methuselaha are known for being able to feed only on other vampires.

HEALTH

Vampires have seven Health Levels, representing various stages of wounding. These are: Light, Light, Medium, Medium, Serious, Serious, and Critical. As wounds are accumulated, check off the wound boxes on the character sheet. Blood Levels may be spent to heal wounds. When all Health Levels are gone, the character goes into *torpor* (see below).

PAIN

Though undead, vampires do feel pain. When a vampire reaches the Medium Health Level, she suffers -1 die to all actions. When she falls to the Serious Health Level, she suffers -2 dice to all actions. A minimum of one die is always rolled, no matter how wounded a vampire is. Vampires in frenzy (or Brujah in the throes of Blood Rage) may ignore pain penalties.

TORPOR AND FINAL DEATH

When a vampire has lost all her Health and/or Blood Levels, she enters a state called torpor. She is still “alive,” but is effectively catatonic, incapable of movement or action. To recover from torpor, a vampire must be fed at least one Blood Level.

If a vampire falls into torpor and takes one more injury from an aggravated wound (fire, sunlight, claws, etc.), she dies again — this time permanently. This is called the Final Death, and no vampire may come back from it. A vampire may also be sent to Final Death if, after entering torpor, the vampire is dismembered (decapitated, limbs chopped off, body hacked into pieces, etc.). Dismemberment takes five turns to accomplish.

A character who has been sent to Final Death is out of the game forever; the player must create a new character.

RULES

Most of the action in *Vampire* is determined by the players and Storyteller, but we provide a few rules to help arbitrate complex situations.

This system uses six-sided dice, which you can find in most hobby stores, Monopoly sets, Wal-Marts, etc. When a player decides to have his character undertake an action for which the outcome is in doubt (shooting a gun at a distant foe, trying to fast-talk the prince, etc.), the Storyteller looks at the character’s Traits and decides which Trait (Physical, Mental, Social, Psychic) is most relevant. He gathers a number of dice equal to his character’s Trait, and the Storyteller assigns a difficulty number (a number between 2 and 6) to the feat. The player then rolls the dice. If at least one (or sometimes more) of the numbers on the dice equals or exceeds the difficulty number, the action succeeds. If not, the action fails.



AUTOMATIC TASKS VERSUS DICE ROLLS

Most tasks are automatic. If Cynthia says, “My character Maxine walks into the deserted alley,” Cynthia does not need to make a roll to do this. It happens automatically. Likewise, for the purposes of drama, routine tasks such as driving to a nightclub or climbing a ladder can be assumed to succeed, even though in real life there is always a chance of having a wreck or falling off the ladder. Rolls need be made only for those events that are particularly dramatic and that have a good chance of failing.

Sometimes a routine event can become a dramatic, tension-filled scene if performed in haste or under duress. For example, if the character driving to the nightclub is barreling down the road at 100 m.p.h., against the flow of traffic, while being chased by the Sabbat and the city police, Physical dice rolls to avoid wrecking the car might well be called for!

DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties range between 2 and 6. A difficulty of 2 represents the easiest feats; a difficulty of 6, the most challenging. **When in doubt, the default difficulty is 4. Difficulties can never be higher than 6 — if a difficulty is calculated to be greater than 6, reduce it to 6.**

- 2 Easy (walking atop a two-foot-wide wall)
- 3 Routine (seducing someone already “in the mood”)
- 4 Normal (stalking a reasonably alert victim)
- 5 Challenging (shooting a target at long range)
- 6 Really tough (escaping from handcuffs)

NUMBER OF SUCCESSES

Each die whose number equals or exceeds the difficulty number is called a “success.” Most of the time, a single success allows the vampire to succeed in her attempted task — barely. Getting more successes indicates a higher level of performance. For example, let’s say a Toreador (Social 4) gives a performance in a nightclub. Four dice are rolled; while a single success indicates an acceptable performance (she doesn’t get booed off the stage), three or four successes are needed to give a brilliant or virtuoso performance.

Successes	Quality
1	It’ll do
2	Good
3	Great
4+	Masterful

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Cynthia’s character, Maxine the Brujah, has been sought out by Devil Jack, the prince’s Gangrel enforcer. (Devil Jack is played by the Storyteller.) Devil Jack begins questioning Maxine concerning her whereabouts on last Wednesday night (the night an anarch gang set fire to the prince’s refinery). Cynthia, speaking as Maxine, indignantly denies any knowledge of the deed (“I was at a dance club on the other side of town!”), and the Storyteller tells Cynthia to make a Social roll to convince Devil Jack. Maxine has a Social score of 2, and the Storyteller tells Cynthia that the difficulty is 4 (Devil Jack is loyal to the prince and knows that Maxine occasionally hangs out with anarchists, but he likes Maxine and is inclined to trust her). Cynthia rolls two dice and scores 1 and 5: one success. Devil Jack reluctantly accepts Maxine’s alibi (perhaps he is unwilling to question the story too deeply), but sternly warns Maxine that the prince’s eyes are everywhere, and that she’d better toe the line for awhile.

If, in the Storyteller’s opinion, Devil Jack had particularly damning evidence against Maxine, or disliked her, the Storyteller might have raised the difficulty of Maxine’s roll to 5 or even 6, or might have decreed that Maxine needed two successes to convince Devil Jack of her innocence.

CONTESTS

Sometimes, a character will be in conflict with another person or vampire, not simply a situation. Such events are known as contests. To resolve a contest, the player rolls against a difficulty number as normal, but the opponent also gets to roll his own Trait against the same difficulty number. The contestant who scores the most successes wins. Ties reroll.

Almost all contests are considered difficulty 4. First, the attacker rolls. Then the defender rolls in an attempt to take away the attacker’s successes.

Example #1: Baron d’Havilland (Social 4) and Lady Ravenwood (also Social 4) are striving to seduce the same beautiful model. Because the model likes d’Havilland and Lady Ravenwood about equally, both vampires must roll versus difficulty 4. D’Havilland rolls four dice and scores 1, 3, 4, and 6 — two successes. Ravenwood also rolls four dice and scores 2, 5, 6, and 6 — three successes. The model slinks away with the smirking Lady Ravenwood, and d’Havilland must seek blood and companionship elsewhere this night.

Example #2: Baron d’Havilland (Social 4) is attempting to order a recalcitrant mortal (Psychic 2) out of his way. D’Havilland rolls four dice and scores 1, 3, 5, and 5 — two successes. The mortal rolls two dice and scores 3 and 6 — one success. D’Havilland wins — the mortal grudgingly lets the vampire pass.

Example #3: Maxine the Brujah (Physical 4) is arm-wrestling a Nosferatu (also Physical 4). Both vampires have Basic Potence, so they are considered of approximately equal strength. The Storyteller decides that the first vampire to

score three cumulative consecutive successes wins. On Turn #1, Maxine rolls two successes, and her opponent rolls one. Maxine has one success in the contest; she levers the Nosferatu's arm down ever so slightly. On Turn #2, the Nosferatu scores two successes, and Maxine scores none. The Nosferatu not only canceled out Maxine's "stored" success, but got one of his own; he powers his arm back to the neutral position, then bends Maxine's arm over a little. This battle will seesaw back and forth until one or the other wins.

DRAMA

The nocturnal world of a vampire is a cauldron of danger, mystery and terror. The following section presents some common quandaries faced by vampires, as well as rules to resolve them.

TIME

Time, in *Vampire*, is fluid. It is measured in terms of turns, scenes and stories.

Turn: A turn usually lasts about three seconds. It is used when adjudicating dramatic situations involving split-second decisions and actions, such as combat. In one turn, each character can take one action, unless he has the Discipline of Celerity.

Scene: A scene is a sequence of events in roughly the same time and place. So, a brutal back-alley brawl and a soiree at the prince's mansion both constitute a scene, even though the party lasts longer than the fight.

Story: A story is an entire sequence of events in which the characters take part. It has a plot, a climax and a resolution.

Example: In the movie *Star Wars*, each swing of Obi-wan's/Darth Vader's lightsabers took a turn; the scene in the Death Star garbage disposal took, appropriately enough, a scene; and the entire movie was a story.

INITIATIVE

Sometimes it's important to know who acts first. A vampire who gets the jump on her opponent is said to have the *initiative*.

To determine initiative, compare Traits in this order:

Hunter's Instinct (activated)
Advanced Celerity (activated)
Basic Celerity (activated)
Highest Physical
Highest Mental

Ties: Roll one die; the highest roll wins. Keep rolling until the tie is resolved.

Example: Devil Jack the Gangrel attacks a monstrous Gangrel vampire of the Sabbat. Both have activated Hunter's Instinct. Neither has Celerity, so the Storyteller compares Devil Jack's and the Sabbat vampire's Physical Traits. Both have Physical Traits of 4. Comparing Mental Traits, the Storyteller sees that Devil Jack has a Mental Trait of 3, while the Sabbat vampire has a Mental Trait of 1. Devil Jack attacks first. If the Sabbat vampire had had a Mental Trait of 3, the Storyteller and Devil Jack's player would have simply rolled a die, with the highest roll acting first.

All extra actions gained via Celerity come after everyone has taken their first actions. Initiative of extra actions is determined normally.

COMBAT

Vampires are masters of manipulation and subtlety, preferring to win battles through indirect means. Every now and then, though, a vampire is forced into combat — to take down resistant prey, to defend herself from a blood-hungry anarchy, or simply to eliminate a centuries-old rival once and for all.

Combat is conducted in three-second turns. It uses the task system already established; initiative is determined normally, and most combat actions are considered Physical tasks. There are two basic types of combat: hand-to-hand and ranged.

HAND-TO-HAND

Hand-to-hand combat is conducted with fists, natural weaponry (claws or fangs), or weapons. Initiative is determined normally. Attacks are resolved in order of initiative. Each turn, a combatant may choose to strike, grab or dodge.

- **Strike:** The attacker rolls Physical (difficulty 4). The combatant being attacked automatically defends (also Physical, difficulty 4). If the attacker scores a number of successes equal to or exceeding the defender's roll, he has successfully struck the defender.

- **Grab:** The attacker rolls Physical (difficulty 4). The combatant being attacked automatically defends (also Physical, difficulty 4). If the attacker's Physical Trait equals or exceeds the defender's Physical Trait, or the attacker has a higher level of Potence Discipline than the defender, the defender is grabbed. Each turn thereafter, the attacker may automatically inflict damage, and the defender is trapped until he successfully strikes and inflicts damage on the attacker, in this or a subsequent turn. Furthermore, if the grabbing attacker is a vampire, he may choose to forego his automatic damage and instead bite his prey. A bite inflicts only one Health Level of damage, but thereafter the vampire may begin draining Blood Levels from the victim's body at the rate of one per turn.

- **Dodge:** Actively dodging takes an action — the dodging party may not do anything else, even attack, this turn. However, the dodging combatant gains +2 to her Physical roll



to avoid all attackers' blows. If the dodging defender beats the attacker's successes, she gains the initiative next turn!

Damage: If the attacker hits, he inflicts a number of Health Levels of damage equal to his Physical Trait, or (if using Protean claws or a weapon) equal to his Physical Trait +1.

Soak: Because vampires are clinically dead, they may attempt to absorb some of the damage with their corpse-like bodies. An injured vampire may make a Physical roll (difficulty 5); if she succeeds, she only takes half normal damage, rounded up (minimum of one Health Level). Fire, sunlight, vampire fangs, and the claws grown through the Protean Discipline are considered aggravated damage; the vampire may not soak these types of damage unless she has the Fortitude Discipline.

RANGED COMBAT

To conduct ranged combat, the vampire must have a thrown object or a gun. Each turn, the vampire may throw an object or fire one accurate shot, provided she has objects to throw or bullets to fire. Celerity allows increased rates of fire.

- **Strikes:** Strikes take place at long, medium or point-blank range. Strikes made at long range are difficulty 5; at medium range, difficulty 4; and at point-blank range, difficulty 3. (However, at point-blank range, the defender has the option to enter hand-to-hand combat with the attacker!)

- **Dodge:** A defender may dodge normally, as above, though this does not automatically give the defender the initiative in the next turn if successful. A defender may also execute a running dodge. A running dodge takes an entire action, and the defender does not gain any bonuses to her Physical Trait; however, she automatically closes the gap between herself and the attacker by one range level (i.e., if she was at long range, she is now at medium range).

- **Straight Run:** A defender may decide to simply charge at the attacker. This takes an entire action, and the defender may not defend against the attacker's shot; however, at the end of the turn, the defender is automatically in hand-to-hand range and may attack next turn.

Damage: Damage from thrown objects and gunshots is conducted a little differently from hand-to-hand damage. A thrown object inflicts a number of Health Levels equal to the attacker's successes on the strike roll +1. A bullet inflicts a number of Health Levels equal to the attacker's successes on the strike roll +3.

Soak: Bullets and thrown objects can be soaked normally.

FIRE AND SUNLIGHT

Sunlight and fire are the vampire's worst foes. Direct sunlight automatically inflicts one Health Level of wounds

every turn. Indirect sunlight (the vampire is heavily cloaked or shaded) inflicts one Health Level of damage every two turns. This damage may not be soaked unless the vampire has Fortitude.

Small/weak fires inflict damage as indirect sunlight, or one automatic Health Level for a sudden burn (a torch, etc.). Large and/or intensely hot fires (a burning building, a propane torch) inflict damage as direct sunlight, or two automatic Health Levels for a sudden burn. Again, this damage is soakable only with Fortitude.

FRENZY

At heart, all vampires bear an inner Beast. This Beast manifests in the terrifying state known as frenzy.

Whenever a vampire sees or smells blood while hungry, is confronted with sunlight or fire, or is enraged or humiliated, she must check to see if she frenzies. To do this, the player rolls the vampire's Psychic Trait (difficulty 4). If the player fails, the vampire flies into a frenzy; she must immediately attack the food source or emotional provocation (if sent into frenzy by sunlight or fire, the vampire must flee the feared substance). Vampires in frenzy may ignore the effects of pain (they are too fearful or enraged to register pain). The frenzy lasts for a scene, or until the source of the frenzy is eradicated (the vampire feeds, the opponent is killed, etc.).

HUNTING

Each night a vampire must expend a Blood Level merely to rise from sleep. Vampires thus become hungry quickly, and much of a vampire's existence revolves around the search for sweet-blooded human prey.

System: A vampire's hunt depends on the general area. She must make a Mental roll; the difficulty varies, depending on the area.

The Rack (bars, nightclubs, theatres, etc.)	2
Downtown Quarter (business district, bohemian/"alternative" areas)	3
Uptown (upscale and wealthy areas)	4
Slum Area	4
Suburbs	4
Rural	5
Wilderness	6

Success on the Hunt roll merely means the vampire has found a likely target (a solitary stroller, pair of young lovers, unwatched child, etc.). The vampire must still subdue the prey.

PURSUIT AND CHASES

Sometimes, characters will want to chase other characters. Chases are resolved as is initiative, based on the following chart:

Advanced Celerity (activated)
Basic Celerity (activated)
Advanced Potence
Basic Potence
Physical
Mental
Tie: Die roll, per initiative

Example: Maxine the Brujah is chasing a Sabbat vampire. She has Basic Celerity — but so does her quarry. She has Basic Potence — but so does the Sabbat. Moving down the chart, the Storyteller sees that Maxine's Physical Trait is 4. The Sabbat vampire's is 3. Maxine catches the Sabbat vampire.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Vampires are creatures of passion and power; it is inevitable that they will become embroiled in social intrigues. Vampires may resolve social challenges in several ways; a few are listed below.

- **Intimidation:** The vampire may try to intimidate her target through physical threats (use the Physical Trait), social condescension (use the Social Trait) or verbal bullying (use the Mental Trait). The victim may resist with her Psychic Trait. The highest roll wins.

- **Leadership:** The vampire may issue commands, but must make a Social roll to convince a hesitant target. If the target is inclined to disobey, he may make a Mental roll to resist. The highest roll wins.

- **Seduction:** The vampire rolls Social; the party being seduced uses Psychic to resist. The highest roll wins.

STEALTH

The vampire stalking prey rolls Physical (difficulty 4); the prey, guard, etc., rolls Mental (difficulty 4). If the vampire

wins, he successfully remains undetected; if the prey wins, she detects the vampire; if the vampire and prey tie, the prey “thinks she hears something” or “sees something out of the corner of her eye” (future rolls to detect the vampire are difficulty 3).

STORY IDEAS

- **The Embrace:** The characters are newly created vampires, and may even begin the game as mortals. In this story, the characters and Storyteller play out the (sometimes ecstatic, often horrific) Embrace, and establish the relationship between the characters and their sires (the vampires who transform them into undead). Were the characters transformed knowingly or against their wills? Do they get along with their sires or hate them for what they have done? How do the characters react to their newfound state (the need to drink blood, the pain and fear inspired by sunlight, etc.)? How do they deal with the fact that they are forever severed from their mortal lives?

- **Power Struggle:** The characters are new in town and must wrest their nightly livelihood from established undead. In this story, the characters and Storyteller play out the gritty realities of establishing one's niche in a hostile town. Must the characters fight for hunting grounds? Make deals with established vampires who are also seeking to raise their status? Use mortals to undermine their rivals power bases from within?

- **Love Story:** A character falls in love with a mortal or another vampire. If the object of affection is mortal, is the love requited — and if so, does the character inform his love that he is a vampire? (Doing so, remember, is a violation of the Masquerade and punishable by both parties' deaths.) If the beloved is another vampire, does she return the love — or merely use the character as a convenient pawn? And what if a hideous Nosferatu falls in love with a beautiful Toreador or Ventruue?

- **Fight for Survival:** Something wicked this way comes. Perhaps the Sabbat stages a raid on the city; perhaps a rogue, bloodthirsty Methuselah appears and being wreaking havoc like the pagan god he effectively is. In any event, the characters must outwit or outfight this threat to their domains.



SAFE AS HOUSES

“Safe as Houses” is an introductory story for **Vampire: The Masquerade**. It is designed to give new players and Storytellers a taste of the Kindred’s dark world and illustrate a few of the game systems in action.

Some material is presented in boxes below — this text can be read directly to the players, as it describes what their characters sense in a given situation. In some sections of the story, the Storyteller must improvise her own setting detail or character dialog. Don’t be afraid — wing it! This kind of improvisational drama is what **Vampire** is all about.

“Safe as Houses” is a brief story, one that takes place in one or two nights of game time. It can be played through in two hours or less, depending on how much detail and character interaction the Storyteller introduces. In the story, the prince finds that a mortal she wishes to Embrace has gone missing. She turns to the characters for their assistance, promising rewards and favorable consideration among the elder Kindred of the city. Once it becomes evident exactly who the kidnaper is, the characters must track down that individual and rescue the prince’s prospective child. This story is a bit more linear and closely constructed than most **Vampire** stories Storytellers and their players usually tell, but that’s okay — this is only the first step. Soon you will be creating your own stories with as much or as little structure as you wish.

A note to Storytellers: Arbitrating a story may seem like a daunting task, especially for the first time. It is! But the rewards of telling a good story outweigh that risk, so don’t worry about it — just sit back and enjoy. If a detail becomes important that isn’t mentioned here, make it up. If a character needs to say something that isn’t presented in the dialog box, improvise. A storyteller should think of herself as a movie director or producer, coordinating all the elements of the story around her players’ characters, who are the main characters in the “film” being played out.

PART ONE: CALL TO DUTY

The agents and servants of the Kindred prince have contacted you all. It would seem that she has a favor to ask of you. This is a grand opportunity; most Kindred see the prince only from afar, if at all, and many of the vampires in the city have said that the prince rewards loyalty greatly. Indeed, you are surprised that you have even been considered, given that there are likely at least a few Kindred more suited to help the prince than you are — after all, you are simple neonates, new to the unlife of vampires.

In any event, the prince has sent an impressive black limousine to gather you, for she does nothing without style. As the last of you enters the car, the driver informs you that your coterie should be in the prince’s presence within ten minutes.

[**Note:** Storytellers may wish to take the opportunity to have the players introduce their characters to each other at this point. Players may also wish to converse “in character” about the events that await them. This should be encouraged — let the players run with it!]

The limousine pulls up before a mansion best described as palatial: Wrought iron gates open into a lavish, rolling estate, at the center of which stands the prince’s opulent home and haven. One would think that the home of such an important person would be better guarded, but you each get a sense that there are unseen security measures at work here.

The chauffeur pulls the car into the driveway and opens the door, motioning you toward the daunting double doors of the prince’s home. As the last of you exits the vehicle, he pulls away, taillights vanishing into the night.

At this point, the characters should enter the mansion, where they are greeted by the prince’s manservant, Standish. No Traits are provided for Standish; if the players are foolish enough to act hostile toward him, he will communicate this to the prince, who will deal with them accordingly. The Storyteller is encouraged to portray Standish in a manner that provides the best interaction with the players’ characters. Perhaps Standish is haughty and condescending, or maybe he is furtive and sniveling — whatever makes for the most interesting interaction. Play out the exchange between Standish and the characters, and have him call upon the prince briefly thereafter.

While Standish is gone, describe the lavish appointments of the prince’s mansion. Detail the sensory information the players pursue. Is there a priceless painting on the wall? How do the velvet cushions of the couches feel? Does classical music waft into the room ever so softly? Is there a cloying hint of death and decay in the air?

Before too long, Standish returns, ushering the characters into the prince’s sanctum.

Before you, behind an enormous desk of aged mahogany, sits a dark-haired woman with a piercing gaze. She is strikingly beautiful, but her beauty has an edge, like the deadly beauty of a shark or coiled viper. She wears a smart designer business suit, and she rises as you enter the room.

“Greetings, my dear friends,” she purrs, lulling you into a sense of trust and complacency. “Please have a seat. We have much to discuss. Standish, some refreshments for our guests?”

Of course, the prince is using her powers of Presence to sway the characters to her cause. Play out the conversation, which should take the form of the prince informing the players' Kindred that her prospective childe has been kidnapped, and she would like them to track down the fiend who has absconded with him. The prince's childe-to-be is named Martin, and she promises rewards of prestige, honor and possibly even interests in her own business pursuits to tempt the characters. She will never stoop so low as to offer cash — she sees that as tantamount to hiring mercenary thugs. Instead, she would rather reach "arrangements" with her "friends."

While the discussion occurs, Standish returns to the room, bearing a silver tray with a bottle and numerous fluted glasses on it, one for each member of the coterie. He hands a note to the prince, stating, "Madam, this just arrived," and pours a glass of rich, red *something* for every character. This is, of course, blood, and the Storytellers should describe the rich vintage for everyone who partakes. Unfortunately, it is not warm, and much of what would enhance the flavor is absent, as it may only be sipped from a glass and not taken from a living vessel. Should any character not drink the offered refreshment, the prince eyes the character warily, curious as to their refusal of her hospitality.

"Well, my *allies*, it would seem that you have not arrived a moment too soon," states the prince. "I have just received a communiqué from one of my spies among the anarchs."

You almost gasp in shock as the prince reveals this — she has spies among the anarchs? Then it could be that she has placed a spy among your ranks as well.⁹

"The Kindred responsible for Martin's disappearance is one known as Spider, from a clan unknown to me. My agent has said that Spider plans to attend the Black Room tonight, which is a disheveled little bar on the outskirts of the Rack, the area where mortals go to drink and carouse and where we Kindred feed with relative ease. Please go to the Black Room and inform Mr. Spider that I would like my *property* returned to me. And, of course, mind the Traditions as you do so."

PART TWO: MISSING PERSONS

At this point, the players should probably take their characters to the Black Room, though clever groups may wish to dig up more dirt on this Spider individual. If the Storyteller wishes, she may flesh out the story with minor plot twists and secondary characters, as the players contact their own allies, mentors, etc. looking for more information about the anarch Spider.

The prince may also provide assistance to the characters, in the form of transportation, arrangements to enter the club without paying cover, and the like. She prefers the matter to

be handled civilly, and will not give the coterie guns, large sums of cash, cadres of vampire minions, etc.

Unless the players or Storyteller have something else in mind (which should not be discouraged — the more the players explore, the richer the story is), the characters likely head to the Black Room. When they get there, a strange man, who claims that he has been waiting for them, approaches them. If any of the players' Kindred has the Auspex power Aura Perception, they can see that this man is a vampire.

"Ah, you are finally here!" exclaims the odd man, who wears rough clothing reminiscent of biker gangs. "The Spider will see you now."

The bar itself is a dark, scurrilous place, reeking of mortal blood, sweat and alcohol. The music pounds incessantly, and the bodies of the dancers on the floor gyrate wildly. Dangerous-looking individuals lurk in shadows and seem to watch your every movement.

"Come. The Spider is waiting."

This is the turning point of "Safe as Houses," and the Storyteller must make a decision. If the players' coterie seems inclined toward combat (high Physical scores, numerous combat Disciplines), she may wish to let the characters fight the Spider for Martin's whereabouts. If the players seem to be socially oriented (high Social scores, etc), she may wish to play out the negotiation of Martin's status. If the characters have a mental bent (high Mental scores, etc), the Storyteller may wish to have Spider challenge the group to a contest of wits or a test of obscure Kindred riddles. Whatever the coterie seems most likely to enjoy, give them.

In the end, however, it turns out that the Spider has made a mistake — he had no idea that the prince had her eye on Martin. If the encounter has resulted in violence, it is probable that the characters and the Spider both feel quite foolish — they have risked their unives over a simple misunderstanding. Spider reluctantly relinquishes Martin to the characters, grumbling about the "damn prince and her high-and-mighty act."

Martin gladly accompanies the characters back to the prince's mansion, where she berates him and sends him to his chambers. (Some Storytellers may wish to play out a conversation between Martin and the characters on the way back to the prince's home.) The prince makes good on her reward offers to the characters and they may return to their havens for the night.

But even after this closure, they should have questions. Have they done the right thing? Was the prince "right" and the Spider "wrong"? What did the anarch mean about the prince's "high-and-mighty act"? As you can see, there are many mysteries left unsolved — but those are best left to another night.



VAMPIRE[®]

THE MASQUERADE

PLAYER NAME:

CHARACTER NAME:

CLAN:

APTITUDE:

ADVANTAGE:

WEAKNESS:

TRAITS

PHYSICAL
00000

SOCIAL
00000

MENTAL
00000

DISCIPLINES:

BLOOD POOL

HEALTH

LIGHT

LIGHT

MEDIUM

MEDIUM

SERIOUS

SERIOUS

CRITICAL

TORPOR

POSSESSIONS

