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-Ammianus Marcellinus

PATERFAMILIAS

*An adventure for Requiem for Rome
using the Storytelling Adventure System*

Written by Howard Ingham Development and additional material by Eddy Webb
Edited by Genevieve Podleski Layout: Jessica Mullins Art: Miguel Coimbra,
Michel Koch, Mathias Kollros, Jessica Mullins, Matias Tapia, Cathy Wilkins

WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING, INC.
2075 WEST PARK PLACE
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STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

MENTAL	●●○○○
PHYSICAL	●●●●○
SOCIAL	●●●○○

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STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

SCENES

7

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

●●○○○

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XP LEVEL

35-74



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"Kindred of Rome, but no Kindred of mine:

"Know this, that I am Flavius Paullus Gaudens, sworn of the Temple of Minerva. Know that it is my right as the shepherd of your kind for these three decades to pronounce judgment upon you. Know that it is my right as a father to claim vengeance for the murder of my virgin daughter.

"You shall not go unpunished.

"You may seek right to appeal, but know also that the most you can expect from me is a swift destruction. You may choose the flames or my blade. But your end is assured."

INTRODUCTION

Justice will out; everyone knows that. Throughout history, civilized peoples have told their children and their children's children that the good will come to the surface. Everything will turn out right in the end. The divine, whether singular or plural, watches over us all and ensures that the good are rewarded and the vile are punished; if not in this world, then in the next.

Even the Kindred try to kid themselves that it isn't a lie.

No justice exists. You want justice? Make it happen.



ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the *free SAS Guide*, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

Here are some of the features available in *Paterfamilias*:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in red will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It may also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.



Witness the predicament of Flavius Gaudens, who has lived a life of honor in the name of the old gods, who has fought for the right to do so every hour of his adult life. And what does he have to show for it? His family has disowned him. His son followed his father into the family trade and died in the line of duty. Worse, he saw his virgin daughter embraced by corruption.

Gaudens seeks justice for his family, his daughter and his people. And a small group of vampires — your coterie — are his targets, thanks to the machinations of one Gagliauda.

The coterie must fight for their survival against a man with nothing left to lose. Gaudens' fate depends on them now. He is doomed, but can a coterie of dead men find the courage and will to avert that doom? Or are they its agents? And will he drag them down to Hades with him?

TREATMENT

The story begins *in medias res* with the coterie lured to a derelict *insula* — a Roman apartment block. The block goes up in flames while the vampires are there, and the vampires soon realize that two hunters, Flavius Gaudens and Anastasius Cimber, are stalking them. Gaudens in particular wants the vampires to be absolutely sure of who he is and why he has targeted them. Gaudens is smart, resourceful, courageous and absolutely unafraid to die.

The vampires destroyed his daughter, he says. The coterie is innocent of this; the actual culprit is one Gagliauda, Bringer of Pox and Justice, favored child of Thascius Hostilinus. The Sanctified, tiring of Gaudens' pursuit, decided that the best way to end it was to find patsies, vampires without any real protection, and make Gaudens think that they were the culprits. The idea is that Gaudens kills them and ends his battle, thinking that justice has been served. It's not personal. Gagliauda chose the coterie because she doesn't care about them, because they don't matter. No malice informed her decision, and if somehow the coterie kills Gaudens and they find out who set him on them, she might even thank them, and probably wouldn't understand if they took offense at her use of them.

The one outcome that Gagliauda has completely discounted is that the coterie finds out that both they and Gaudens have been played for fools and somehow join with him to bring down Gagliauda.

The structure of this story is open. Will the coterie prefer to escape the flames, kill the hunter and ask questions later? They can do that, in which case the story centers around the vampires' desperate attempts to escape the blaze and defeat Gaudens. If they decide to find out the truth, their investigations provide a coda to the narrative that provides the springboard for other stories.

Paterfamilias

Introduction

Or will the coterie take the path of mercy? Will they try to reason with Gaudens and find out the truth? He's a reasonable man, and he's only three-quarters sure he has the right vampires anyway. A terse debate follows, with the apocalyptic backdrop of the burning *insula* as its setting. Whether Gaudens remains convinced of their guilt or not, the coterie should realize that they've been played for fools. It's up to them whether they let it lie or not.

THEME: JUSTICE

Justice is the theme of this story... inasmuch as there isn't any. No one gets what they deserve. Not Gaudens, not the coterie, not the poor innocents who suffered thanks to Gaudens and Gagliauda's feud. Gagliauda might get what she deserves, but when justice comes to her, it comes at a price, as her powerful friends escalate things further.

MOOD: HATE

Hate is everywhere, and a mood of hatefulness and vengeance should inform everything the coterie experiences. When justice has finally exhausted itself, Flavius Gaudens has only hate left.



A CHAPTER IN YOUR CHRONICLE

This story can fit into your **Requiem for Rome** chronicle. **Paterfamilias** is set during the reign of the Emperor Julian in 362CE. If you're using the ready-made chronicle in **Fall of the Camarilla**, the best place to slot the story in is either between "Saint of Whores" and "The Age of Toleration" or between "The Age of Toleration" and "The Messenger."

Having said that, Julian being Emperor is really just a flavor element, and by simply removing that, the story can be placed in a slightly wider period (again, if you are using **Fall of the Camarilla**, the story can be placed anywhere before the beginning of "Vandals in the City of Emperors").

If your chronicle is set in an earlier era, Gagliauda might need to be altered. Perhaps, rather than a Sanctified zealot, Gagliauda is a member of the Cult of Augurs and a childe of one of the more prominent members of the Camarilla.

A STORY BY ITSELF

On its own, **Paterfamilias** works just fine — the only difficult thing is the introduction of the coterie to the action. You can create motivations for each of the characters, but the best thing to do is ask the players how the characters know each other, and what suckered them into coming to the room in the *insula* where the story starts. Since the fact that it's a trap gets established almost immediately, it doesn't make any difference if the players know that from the beginning.

BACKSTORY AND SET-UP BACKSTORY

What follows informs the actions of the supporting cast in this story. The troupe may find these things out as the narrative unfolds; they may not. Either way, these facts drive the conflict and motivate the main cast members.

Flavius Gaudens has given three decades of his life to the *Aves Minervae*, the Birds of Minerva, a dying conspiracy of hunters who in a brighter age protected the Roman people by night. Although he has never once lost faith in the absolute rightness of his work and the certainty of justice, he has lost everything else: his home, the lives of his wife and two sons, and the respect of his family. Flavius Gaudens' last possession of value was his teenage daughter Flavia, whom he loved desperately and intensely and whom he protected with a dedication that surpassed even his approach to his terrible work.

Three months ago, Gaudens killed a man named Gaius Vitala, who was a procurer by trade. Vitala had, it seemed, gone mad. He had begun to stalk and kill his clients and families in imaginative, appalling ways. He became a bogeyman on the streets of Rome. Gaudens found him within a day of the stories reaching him. He killed the man quickly and cleanly, ending the monster's reign of terror in seconds.

What Gaudens didn't know was that Vitala's urge to murder was actually the work of the vampire Gagliauda. She and her own cronies had broken the man, sending him out as "a plague of judgment destined to refine the poor of Rome." And more, she did this with her sire Thascius Hostilinus' approval. Gagliauda took the abrupt end of her project as a personal slight.

Which is why she found Gaudens' daughter, kidnapped the girl, Embraced her, bound her under a Vinculum and began her training, remarkable even in an age where violence against women was normative in its brutality.

It took Flavius Gaudens six weeks to find his daughter, and when he found Flavia, he discovered an enthusiastic disciple of Longinus, a devout grandchilde of the Plague Angel. Gagliauda had set the girl to work the streets as a whore, "feeding on the sinful and afflicting them with just pestilence." And she had been remade, utterly convinced that she was an agent of God's will directed against the sinner, made to hate her father.

She tried to seduce him.

Any Roman paterfamilias would have killed her then, out of shame as much as anything else. But even seeing the horror his beloved daughter had become, Flavius Gaudens couldn't bring himself to do his duty until she tried to kill him.

Grief became rage. Rage led to the will to revenge. Gaudens has, so he thinks, found the perpetrators of his daughter's destruction. He found out where they will be — in a derelict *insula*. With the help of his colleague Cimber, another veteran of the Birds' vigil, he chases out the last few inhabitants and sets the *insula* alight. He will bring fire and justice to the monsters.

He will die.

What Gaudens doesn't know is that Gagliauda is already ahead of him. The Bringer of Pox and Justice is nothing if not well-connected: a few well-placed agents, and Gaudens was sent chasing the wrong vampires, patsies whom Gagliauda has manipulated into being Gaudens' culprits.

SET-UP

The set-up for **Paterfamilias** actually takes place as a flashback in the scene "Flashbacks" on pp. 11-12.

THE CAST

FLAVIUS GAUDENS, GOOD MAN AT THE EDGE

Quotes: "Did you act this way when you enslaved my daughter? Did you? Did you whine and mewl like a child? Have you no dignity? Shall you die like a coward?"

"Trust? In a man, maybe. Not in you. Never in you."

"I am already dead."

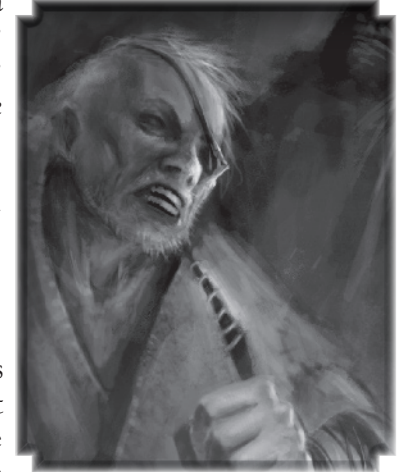
Virtue: Justice. Gaudens believes that the truth will out, and the right will vindicate itself. And that it is the will of the gods that men like him should aid in that vindication.

Vice: Pride. Gaudens does not see when it is time to give in. He is brave and stoic, and certainly reasonable, but he cannot amend his worldview.

Background: Gaudens has given his life for the goddess. He has never once doubted that he was doing the right thing, and he's lost everything because of it. His family converted to the new faith, and disowned him when he did not. Gaudens' son died before his eyes, torn apart by a dead man. A terrible monster whom Gaudens had wronged found Gaudens' home five years ago and ripped his wife limb from limb, leaving the pieces laid out in the house for the hunter to see. He got his justice, but it couldn't bring back his wife.

Gaudens' only remaining relative was his daughter, and Gagliauda took her. The monster made her into a cold dead painted thing, a Christian, a whore and a student in the monster's vile enterprise. An *enthusiastic* student.

He killed her, like any other Roman *paterfamilias* would have done. But while another man would have killed her for the dishonor wrought upon her, Gaudens would not have killed her at all. He would have let



her go if she had not happily followed the order to kill *him*. Instead he was forced to behead her... and by that act he destroyed himself.

Now his only reason to live is to bring justice — true, final justice — to the creature who perverted his beloved child and broke his heart.

Description: *The man wears a battered leather cuirass under a cloak that was once of fine quality, but is now threadbare. A huge, wide scar, like the mark of some wild beast's claw, runs from a mass of scar tissue where his left ear should be along his jaw line and half-way down his thick, corded neck. His hands are huge, with thick, brutal fingers. His calves and forearms ripple with old, solid muscle.*

Everything about him is gray: his receding hair, his bright, stony eyes, his old, rough skin. He could be made of earth or the hardest leather. He looks like he has lived for centuries. He looks as if he has never smiled.

His round shield carries the device of an owl.

Storytelling Hints: Flavius Gaudens is that rarest of things: a truly good man. His tragedy and horror is that it doesn't help him. He believes in justice and clings to it beyond anything else, but receives none. He tried for years to see the best in every situation and things grow worse and worse for him. He is honorable and reasonable, and listens to the creatures he fights before he kills them. Characters who appeal to justice should be able to reach him, or at least get him to hear them out before he kills them.

Gaudens is one of those people who always seems to talk through gritted teeth. He rarely raises his voice, and his movements and facial expressions are tightly controlled.

The *insula* is full of broken furniture. Gaudens and Cimber are never without at least two or three stakes.

Armor	Rating	Defense penalty	Special
Leather cuirass	1/1	-1	None
Shield	+1	—	requires off-hand

Attacks	Damage	Dice pool	Special
Sword	2L	10/13	Aggravate ritual used on blade
Knife	1L	8	None
Wooden Stake	1L	9	None
Torch	2L/A	9	sets alight, +2L (A for vampires) per turn

AMBROSIUS CIMBER, AGING SIDEKICK

Quotes: *"I do not hate you, monster. But justice is justice."*

"You lose nothing by hearing them out."

"We don't have to die here today. You... that's not so open an outcome."

Virtue: Charity. Cimber is a loyal friend. He has always stood by his friends, and he'll die for them if he really has to.

Vice: Lust. Cimber knows how to get an answer from a monster and he knows how to make it hurt. He relishes the chances to use these skills.

Background: Valerius Ambrosius Cimber is a survivor of dozens of campaigns on behalf of the goddess. Unlike his friend Gaudens, Cimber never found himself excluded from society any more than he was already. Although he carries a noble name, he grew up in poverty. The temple took him in when he was no more than a boy, begging on the streets. He grew up with the Birds of Minerva. He lived with them. They were the friends and family he had. He enjoyed the work, and had a sense of purpose and meaning that he had never had on the streets.

He's getting old. Most of his friends have died, and fewer join every year. He knows that in a generation or two, the Birds of Minerva will be gone. And he's getting slower. Ambrosius Cimber will die soon, and he knows it. The way he sees it, he'd rather die fighting than die of old age.

Description: *The smaller man cuts an almost comical figure. His sinewy arms seem to have been cut so many times that they show more scar than flesh. His face is heavily lined and leathery, but always at least in a half-smile. He's completely bald, his scalp showing scars and the age-spots of an old man's skin. He's missing most of his teeth. His hooked, broken nose leans precariously to the right. He's obviously a Roman, but he carries a barbarian's sword that he brandishes with a dexterity and speed that seem uncanny in a man of his age.*

The old man cackles, advances with a spring in his step. He looks like he'll relish a fight.

Storytelling Hints: Cimber laughs and tells jokes, and does his best to keep his vengeful friend's spirits up. He throws himself into fights — chances



are that he'll jump into close combat before Gaudens. At the same time, he hasn't managed to stay alive for so long by being foolhardy, and he'll encourage Gaudens to hear out any offers of negotiation that the coterie offers, even if he intends only to create an advantage to exploit later.

Ambrosius fights exceptionally dirty. A man without fear of death does not have to be a fool: Cimber is the living proof of that.

The *insula* is full of broken furniture. Gaudens and Cimber are never without at least two or three stakes.

Armor	Rating	Defense penalty	Special
Leather cuirass	1/1	-1	None

Attacks	Damage	Dice pool	Special
Long sword	3L	10/12	Aggravate ritual used on blade
Knife	1L	7	None
Stake	1L	8	None
Bow	2L	9	None
Torch	2L/A	8	sets alight, +2L (A for vampires) per turn
Bow	2L	7	Only 12 arrows

GAGLIAUDA, BRINGER OF POX AND JUDGMENT



Quotes: *"The Lord demands that the sinner be afflicted. That I provide the affliction is my holy duty."*

"The righteous have nothing to fear from me."

"I hold no animosity against you. Rejoice! You served as a barrier to the unsanctified that my holy work might continue!"

Virtue: Fortitude. Gagliauda survives. She sees things through. She does not give in until she has no hope left.

Vice: Envy. Fiercely protective of her projects, and vengeful towards those who dare to thwart her, Gagliauda often goes too far in her quest for revenge.

Background: Thascius Hostilinus the Plague Angel, called the Numidian and the Pestilence, founder of the bloodline called Morbus, took three children in his time in Rome, each of whom he set to being his project and his tool. The first was a Christian deacon, Georgius by name, whom he instructed to test living Christians through affliction and suffering. The second, Elisabeta, he told to test the living by preaching heresy and leading the weak and the unfaithful astray. The third was Gagliauda.

She was a Frank, stolen from her home and sold into slavery in Rome, her body used at the whim of the sons of Romulus. She hated what they made her do. They degraded her. And they infected her with their filthy diseases. And they told her that she was the sinful one. They told her it was her fault. She hated them. She began to despair.

And then the African came. He bought her, and she took him to her room, and he said to her, "Can we not go to a place more private?"

She said to him, "We cannot. And God sees all."

And the Plague Angel, for it was he, said to her, "Do you know of God?"

The prostitute and the vampire conversed all that night, and an hour before dawn, when the pimp came to find her and Hostilinus tore his throat out, she had converted to the Plague Angel's faith and agreed to die — and be resurrected.

As a vampire, she set aside her hate. She found in the faith of the Sanctified a purpose and a reason for her disease and her suffering. It was God's will that she was taken away, and it was God's will that she became diseased. It was God's will that she let the sinners of Rome buy her and that she afflict them.

Her abdomen and chest are hollow; her body contains only mold and decay.

And with her death, even as she rotted from within, her desirability grew. Her clients — now blood-bound slaves — now include the secretary to the Vicar of Rome, a pimp, a notorious criminal, a self-righteous cenobite, a charioteer and an officer of the Garrison of Rome. Although she has bound all of them to her by Vinculi, not one of them a ghoul.

Her long-nailed fingers caress the body of Roman government. Her voice is heard within the most intimate chambers. Gagliauda spreads plague in the cor-

ridors of power, and the more disease she inflicts, the more her reach extends. Her connections surpass those of nearly all of the Senex. If the Senex knew how far Gagliauda's command of Rome extends, they might panic and try to remove her, not realizing that it is too late. Gagliauda is the unliving proof that the Lancea et Sanctum have already won the war of influence in Rome.

But when Flavius Gaudens dispatched her pet killer, Gagliauda, who has become used to getting her way, embarked on an ambitious program of revenge. Flavia's sufferings were exquisite — even in an era remarkable for the extent and horror of the violence perpetrated against women — thanks to Gagliauda's cenobite retainer. The girl's will snapped like a dry twig. She became a willing and joyful disciple, but the Bringer of Pox and Judgment, strangely clueless, thought that Flavia would break her father. She does not really understand why he cannot take what she sees as his just punishment. And this is why her plan is so tortuous, so dangerous: she couldn't think of anything simpler to do.

Description: *The whore, bedecked in cloth of gold, golden baubles and painted face, represents the classic Roman standard of beauty: her curves are ample, her skin white like a swan's plumage, her neck smooth and straight, her lips full, her nose noble. Her hips swing smoothly under her silken gown. Something about the way she opens her mouth, the way she licks her lips is obscene and inviting all at once.*

She talks with a slight Germanic accent, in a deep whisper.

Her garments rustle slightly when she walks, but the boards of the floor do not creak under her, nor does she disturb the dust she walks on. Her perfume barely disguises a sweet smell of corruption that seems to come from nowhere.

Storytelling Hints: Gagliauda is as convinced of the rightness of her work as Gaudens is of his. Nevertheless, she is terribly insecure. As vampires go, she is not at all powerful — probably not as dangerous as the weakest of the coterie. Her power in the mortal realm and her Status within the Lancea et Sanctum comes wholly from her unequaled stable of powerful blood-bound men. She's still a neonate and her vampiric powers are still fledgling. Characters who reach her can finish her in no time. Of course, then they'll have to deal with the consequences of that, as Thascius Hostilinus does right by his childe and the cycle of reprisal and revenge begins again.

Beside her relative lack of supernatural and physical power, Gagliauda's biggest weakness is her inability to know that she has lost. In some respects her understanding of people is fatally flawed. The only certain way she knows of to deal with people is to enslave them — give people three draughts of blood and they'll do whatever they tell you. She cannot comprehend an honest man like Flavius Gaudens. If she finds that the hunters and the vampires have somehow joined together, she'll have no idea what to do and will panic, perhaps sending

one or more of her devotees to assault them, but leaving the path to her door wide open. She might send the cenobite to raise a mob against them, or send the garrison officer to try to arrest them, or the criminal to drive them away by force. But the ploys are clumsy. The more success the coterie achieve, the more ham-fisted her attempts to throw them off the trail become.

If the coterie kill the hunter and then come and find her, she will try to avert their wrath by explaining that her actions weren't personal and try to shower them with gifts and favors.

Talk in whispers. She keeps talking when confronted, coming up with lies and excuses even when her antagonists know exactly what the truth is, even when it is too late for her.



GAGLIAUDA'S RETAINERS

If Gagliauda has the opportunity to use her connections to stall or fight the Coterie, use the statistics for the various mortal Storyteller characters found in **Requiem for Rome**, pp. 236: the Cenobite, Agens in Rebus, Young Noble, the Officer of the Garrison and the Charioteer.



NEW GROUP: THE BIRDS OF MINERVA

Flavius Gaudens' watch — his vigil — has lasted for so many years, and he can see only one outcome. He is not alone in this. He is one of the *Aves Minervae*, the Birds of Minerva, the Order of the Owl. Each carries the brand of the Owl, the symbol of the Goddess, the sacred bird of Minerva. Each bears the wisdom of the Owl, and each embodies its terror. His ancestors did the will of the Goddess long ago, hunting down the monsters who preyed upon the sons and daughters of great-hearted Romulus; their sons followed them, and their sons after them, until now. Despite the work of a new emperor, the worship of the old Gods of Rome is dying. Now the Birds of Minerva are few, and growing increasingly desperate.

The Sibyl of Cumae, writer of the Sibylline books, predicted in the time of the kings that Rome would need an army to defend her people against the creatures of the night, and that Minerva would command them. Who can gainsay the word of a god? Who can ignore the summons of a goddess?



The Order of the Owl is her secret army, and its purpose is the protection of the people of Rome from the secret government of the vampires.

It is the business of the Order of the Owl to protect Rome however its members see fit. Each man has only to pledge that he will defend the sanctity of Rome from the creatures of the night; that he will come to the aid of a brother in arms; and that he will share the knowledge he receives with the virgin priestesses of the Owl. The priestesses, for their part, do sometimes go out in the field — some even fight alongside the men — but all see as their main role the preservation of the library of the Owl.

The library lies beneath the Temple of Minerva. No other group of hunters — not even the fabled Aegis Kai Doru, who pursue the monsters of Greece and Asia Minor — have a collection so comprehensive and accurate.

The vampires for their part know that a group of men sometimes appear bearing the device of the Owl — which, mutter the Julii, cannot be a coincidence. On the other hand, the Order of the Owl know that sometimes a creature of evil appears in the form of the Goddess' sacred bird, a blasphemy that must be destroyed.

THEIR FATE

The Birds of Minerva have always been swift to die for the cause, and now their numbers dwindle as the young men of the eternal city abandon the gods of Rome for the new God and ignore the summons of the temple. The Order of the Owl will induct its last new member in twenty years' time. In 410, when the Goths sack Rome, the Library of the Owl will be lost forever in the flames. And a few years after that, one of the very last of the Order shall pass the secret of the Red Rituals on to other more brutal hunters, more suited for a coming dark age. Within a few years, the Birds of Minerva will be gone forever.

STATUS

Hunters who gain dots in the Merit: Status (Birds of Minerva) receive extra benefits, depending on how many Status dots they gain.

- The Hunter gains the right to learn and use the **Red Rituals** (see below).
- The Hunter gains a +2 bonus to all Academics, Religion and Occult dice pools dealing with the recognition of supernatural creatures, their victims and their minions.
- The Hunter receives the key to the Library of the Owl, receiving the equivalent of the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit. (After the year 410 CE, this no longer becomes available to Hunters who don't have it already, because the source of the Birds' knowledge is no longer there).



THE BIRDS OF MINERVA AND HUNTER: THE VIGIL

Storytellers with reference to **Hunter: the Vigil** should consider the Birds of Minerva to be a conspiracy of hunters, and for its members to have all the advantages other hunters have: Tactics and risked Willpower, for example. If you want to use the systems for Hunters found in that book, feel free to allow Gaudens and Kimber access to two or three Tactics of your choice.

The Red Rituals are an Endowment. One day in the fifth century a member of the *Aves Minervae* will pass on the secrets of the Red Rituals to the survivors of Vitericus' Cainite Heresy, who will use them as their Rites of Denial. The Rites of Denial can be found in **Night Stalkers**, starting on p. 149. Note that the Red Rituals are slightly different from their modern equivalent. The Birds of Minerva may only learn a few, and they work on several of the more potent supernatural creatures, while the modern Rites of Denial only work on vampires and the walking dead. Times change; over the centuries the Cainite Heresy's single-minded vendetta against the vampires may have changed the very nature of the magic they use.



USING THE RED RITUALS

Minerva is a no-nonsense goddess, and it stands to reason that the rituals the Order of the Owl attributes to her are neither elaborate nor difficult to perform, provided that the hunter using them knows the right form and has in his possession a small vial containing the blended blood of the Birds, taken from a jar kept and consecrated by the priestesses in the vaults of the temple.

The Red Rituals are an Endowment (a limited collection of supernatural powers available to persons with Status in a hunter conspiracy), bought with Merit dots.

This is how the *Aves Minervae* perform the rituals:

Cost: 1 Willpower and some measure of blood, depending on the ritual.

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult

Action: Instant or extended

Each ritual demands that the hunter takes an action spending some blood from his consecrated vial, along with other actions. Every vial is the same: a tiny terracotta jar, corked, filled and refilled as necessary by the priestesses who tend the Birds' jar with the blended blood of the Order of the Owl.

Each of the Red Rituals requires the expense of some of that blood, described in terms of the number of "thimbles" of blood that the Bird must use. If the jar doesn't contain enough blood, he can't perform the ritual. A full vial of blood contains six thimbles full.

If a Bird tries to perform a ritual without blood taken from a consecrated vial filled by a priestess of the Order of the Owl, he suffers a dramatic failure.

A Bird of Minerva knows as many of the Red Rituals as he has dots in the Merit: Endowment (Red Rituals). Unless otherwise stated, the Red Rituals work on spirits in material form or possessing humans (including the Striges) and on supernatural creatures with Blood Potency or its equivalent (so on vampires and werewolves, for example, but not on mortals or ghouls).

Unless mentioned otherwise, the Red Rituals work until the end of the scene, or if the hunter is killed, whichever comes first.

AGGRAVATE

The Owl drizzles a little of the blood from his vial onto a weapon, and spreads it out with his finger so that the mystical number VII, number of completeness and good fortune, is written on the blade. The blood brands itself into the fabric of the weapon. It feels heavier, sharper, more dangerous. The hunter's hands burn a little, and he hears a sound like rushing waters in his ear. And then it causes devastating injuries.

A Bird of Minerva can cast the ritual onto a close combat weapon (one whose use is governed by the Weaponry skill) or onto a single arrow.

Cost: 1 Willpower, 2 thimbles of blood

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The weapon suffers immediate Structure damage equal to the Bird's dots in this Endowment.

Failure: The weapon feels empowered, but gains no bonus, otherwise.

Success: For the remainder of the scene (in the case of a close combat weapon) or for one attack (in the case of an arrow), the weapon now gains a bonus equal to the hunter's dots in Endowment (Red Rituals) when used on a supernatural creature.

If the weapon would previously have done only bashing damage (the leg of a chair, for example), it now does lethal damage.

Exceptional Success: On the weapon's first attack, the damage it causes is aggravated. However, when the scene ends, the weapon crumbles to dust.

DENY

The Bird spreads a line of salt across the threshold of a door or a windowsill and then spreads a few drops of blood over the sand. Suddenly, a supernatural creature cannot pass, and is unable to bring himself to cross the line unless the Bird who created the line explicitly invites her in.

Cost: 1 Willpower, 2 thimbles of blood

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The ritual fails. Some of the blood in the Bird's vial boils over; another thimbleful of blood is gone, not to be reclaimed.

Failure: The line of salt and the trickle of blood provide no barrier.

Success: The doorway or window prevents access to the dead. No supernatural creature can cross that line unless he spends a *dot* of Willpower to do so. If someone attempts to throw the vampire through the door, the creature takes a point of aggravated damage and continues to do so each successive turn until he spends a dot of Willpower or gets back onto the other side of the barrier.

Exceptional Success: As above, but when the supernatural creature encounters the barrier, he must roll Resolve + Composure or lose one point of Vitae (or its equivalent).

EVADE

The soldiers of the Order of the Owl know how to fly like their namesake. The hunter smears a line of blood on the ground with his first two fingers before stepping over it. Suddenly, he finds that he can move with impossible speed.

Cost: 1 Willpower, 1 thimble of blood

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The hunter suffers the opposite of the desired effect: his legs seize up with awful cramps for the rest of the scene. His Speed is halved (round up) and any Athletics dice pools requiring the use of the hunter's legs suffer a -3 dice pool penalty.

Failure: The Bird receives no benefit. The blood is wasted.

Success: For the next hour, the Bird gains a bonus to his Speed whenever involved in chasing down or being chased by a supernatural creature. This bonus is equal to twice the character's dots in the Endowment.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the hunter also gains +1 to Initiative when in combat with a supernatural creature.

OBLIGATE

A monster's footprints carry a little of its spirit, its psyche. A Bird of Minerva drops a few trickles of blood inside the borders of the footprint, smeared on a nail taken from a soldier's boot, and the monster — wherever he may be — cannot move from her position.

An Owl must perform the ritual within an hour of the monster leaving the footprint. If the hunter tries to perform the ritual too late, he fails and wastes the blood.

Cost: 1 Willpower, 2 thimbles of blood

Action: Extended (the blood must be rubbed into the boot-nail; this roll necessitates a number of successes equal to the vampire's Speed score, and each roll equals one turn's worth of time)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The nail burns the hand of the Owl, and he suffers a point of bashing damage as a result.

Failure: Nothing happens. The Bird wastes the blood.

Success: The hunter achieves the necessary successes. Wherever the creature is at the time the hunter completes the Red Ritual, the foot with which it left the footprint becomes fixed to the ground for ten minutes for every dot the hunter has in the Merit Endowment (Red Rituals). He is "obliged to remain."

To move his foot, the monster must succeed in a roll of Resolve + Composure and spend a point of Willpower. The ritual still retains its potency; even if the monster frees himself for the remainder of the night, he operates at half of his Speed (rounded down).

Exceptional Success: As above, but the vampire cannot unmoor his foot. He is frozen in place wherever he is for the duration.

UPDATED RULES: SOCIAL CONFLICT

In this SAS, we're extending the use of the Debate rules (described in **Requiem for Rome**, pp. 178-189) to difficult social conflicts outside of formally structured debates. All of the rules for debate apply, with only a couple of exceptions.

First, in an interaction without an audience, rhetorical techniques don't matter, and you can calculate characters' dice pools using whatever's relevant to the situation (we'll describe how these work later).

Also, we calculate target numbers in debates without audiences slightly differently. A character's "Social Health" is calculated as:

Higher of Intelligence or Presence + 7

This number begins at its maximum at the beginning of each social conflict.

A vampire dealing with humans limits his dice pools in these interactions to his Humanity score, but may add bonuses for equipment and circumstance *after* lowering his dice pool to his Humanity score (this is in contradiction to the usual rule).

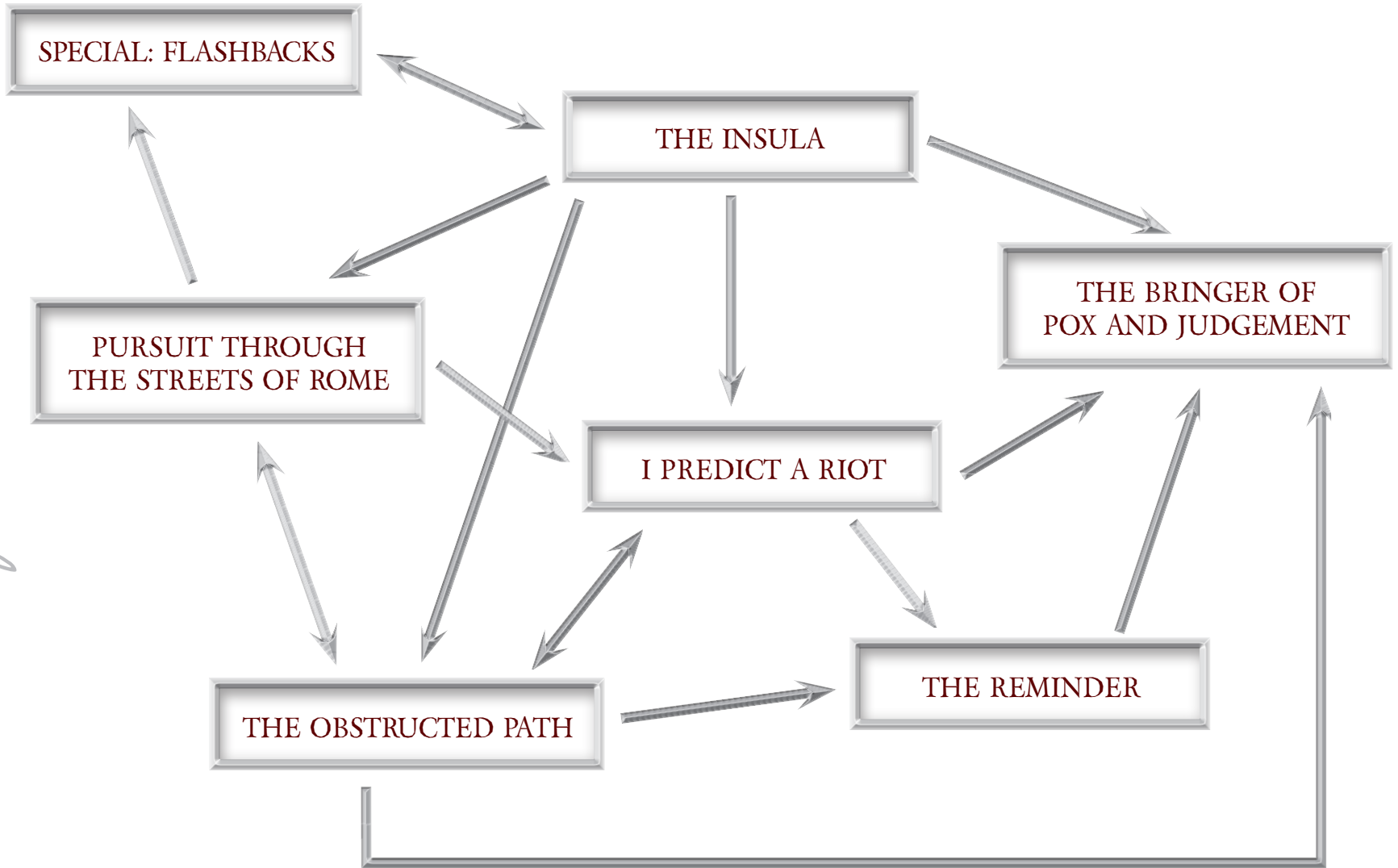
Example: *Herennia is trying to convince Flavius Gaudens of her innocence. The Storyteller determines that the dice pool in this discussion is Wits + Investigation. She has Intelligence 2, Wits 3 and Presence 3. She has three dots in Investigation and three dots in Empathy. Her Humanity is only 4. The target number of successes Gaudens needs to beat her is 3 (Presence) + 10 - 4 (10 minus Humanity) = 9. Herennia rolls four dice in her pool (Wits + Investigation is 6, but she must lower the pool to 4), although if she had some proof of her innocence beyond the circumstantial, she would still receive the opportunity to raise her dice pool above that.*

The circumstantial complications listed in **Requiem for Rome**, pp. 181-2 still apply at the Storyteller's discretion.

SCENE FLOWCHART

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Scene Flowchart



Special: Flashbacks

MENTAL – PHYSICAL – SOCIAL –

OVERVIEW

The characters experience a series of flashbacks, detailing how they ended up in the *insula* in the first place.

DESCRIPTION

You reflect for a moment on how you ended up in this situation...

STORYTELLER GOALS

This is a special scene. Normally this is the material you would find in the “Set-Up” section of one of our previous SAS stories, but here that set-up material takes the form of a flashback that you can insert at any point in the narrative (though it works best before, during or after the scene “The Insula”). The goal is to quickly sketch enough narrative to help set the stage for the start of the story before diving back into the flow of events.

This scene needs some work between the Storyteller and the players, because every character is unique. When there’s an appropriate point in the story, run some brief flashback scenes, explaining the reasons why the different members of the coterie have ended up in a burning building. It’s easy enough to do this simply by taking notes based on the characters’ Merits and relationships, but the best way is to ask the players why they think their characters are here. If the characters are in an established coterie, it makes it easier in some respects, since only one or two of the characters need to have a reason to be here (because the ones who do have a reason to come here naturally bring their companions).

CHARACTER GOALS

Take a moment to work with the Storyteller to explain why your character is in the *insula* before rejoining the action.

ACTIONS

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Here are some suggestions as to possible reasons why the vampires are here, both the actual cause of their arrival and what really

happened (which the characters might find out later). They’re not the only ones. The reason why each character is here very much depends on the character. Tailor them to the expectations of the players.

- A vampire’s retainer handed a message on to her, telling her that a rival’s haven was in this place, and that the rival was in torpor and easy pickings. *Gagliauda*, learning of the rivalry between the character and the other vampire, fed false information to the retainer through one of her agents.
- A member of the coterie received a letter from a trusted ally requesting a meeting in the *insula*. *Gagliauda* forged it.
- A hated enemy wishes to broker a truce or negotiate on neutral ground; a mortal messenger arrives with the message. *In fact one of Gagliauda’s retainers delivers the message — perhaps the charioteer or the cenobite, depending on the character and the enemy.*



Paterfamilias

Special: Flashbacks

- Thascius Hostilinus himself requests that a member of the Lancea et Sanctum appear at the *insula* on an errand; he says that the room contains an object hidden there in nights long ago (a locket, for example, or a cache containing a copy of a Gospel other than the four most commonly read by the living, or a vial of the sacred blood of one of the Saints) and he must retrieve it before the *insula* is gone. *Gagliauda has gone to her sire and asked for this favor. Hostilinus, who has a blind spot when it comes to his childer, agrees without reserve that Gagliauda is of more worth to the Sanctified than the characters and happily sacrifices them, although Gagliauda is now heavily in his debt.*

- A prominent member of the Senex — perhaps Gaius Octavius or Macellarius Corbulo, or (if you are using **Fall of the Camarilla**) Tertia Julia Comitor — hears that some sacred relic of the Sanctified is hidden in the room, and encourages a pagan *propinquus* to retrieve it before the Sanctified get it, intimating that this small task might pave the way to greater responsibilities and favors in future nights. *Gagliauda, with the help of her sire, has fed misinformation to the members of the Senex with the hope of their sending someone there. Under this rationale, Gagliauda doesn't actually care who the coterie are, just that they're in the right place to get executed for the corruption of Gaudens' daughter or to rid her of the troublesome hunter.*

- Suitable for characters of a more militant bent: One of the character's Allies — preferably a wealthy one — comes to the character, begging for help. His daughter (or his wife, or his son) has been kidnapped, and he does not know what to do. The kidnappers are hiding in the *insula*. He will be massively in their debt. *Gagliauda has the man's relative and promises to let her go if he betrays the characters. The relative is already dead.*

- A conspiracy — criminal, religious, political, whatever — of which the coterie is a part is due to meet; the message names the *insula*. *Gagliauda knows about the conspiracy, and has invented the meeting. The messenger is her agent. No meeting is planned.*

CONSEQUENCES

The consequences from this scene should be very minimal, since they happened previously in the narrative (though in a different time frame for the players). Once the scene is over, move back to whatever scene “Flashbacks” interrupted.

The Insula

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

The coterie arrives in a room on the fourth floor of a derelict *insula*, either independently or individually. Whatever or whoever they were expecting to see, the only sign of life the coterie finds in the room is the desiccated corpse of its former inhabitant.

They soon discover that they're trapped here. The building is burning, and a hunter with a grudge that seems to have nothing to do with them stalks them. If the fire doesn't get them, will he?

DESCRIPTION

It's the Kalends of September, 362CE. Julian is Emperor and right now the tide seems to be turning back to paganism. It won't last, but few people, apart from the most fervent Christian zealots, expect Julian's end to come quite as swiftly and abruptly as it will. Aside from the monks and bishops who preach in the streets against the perfidy of the pagan emperor and the Christian teachers who have lost their jobs (Julian outlawed Christian teachers in June), it's business as usual for most of the people in Rome.

The nights are hot and dry this September, a holdover from a blazing summer. The bad parts of the city suffer as they ever do from the plague, and carry the stink of a hundred years of uncleaned sewers.

It's eerie tonight. Christians cry out hymns of retribution directed against the apostate emperor, calling for his swift death and eternal damnation, and they hold their vigil until the rising of the sun, new voices joining the chorus as others leave. The hymns, sung in Greek, Latin, Gothic, Syriac and a dozen other languages, provide an accompaniment to the nightly dealings of the living. Gangs of beggars prick up their ears and make a beeline to the squares and high places where the congregations sing, looking to bilk the faithful for alms with stumps and sores and sad stories. Whores and their pimps make the damnation-songs their soundtrack:

we are doomed to hell; we shall hear this and remember and take your money in back streets and gutters. In the brothels and taverns, they pay flautists and lyrists to play at an ear-splitting volume in some attempt to hide from the Christians' songs. And it doesn't work. The melodies clash. The people drink and play dice and fuck in the cacophony.

Even in the poor places, the derelict places, the songs are always there, always faintly nagging, always reminding the listener of Christian vengeance.

In the Suburra, still the filthiest corner of Rome, the disciples and childer of Thascius Hostilinus make their domain. Their slaves and victims are everywhere. The young bruiser with the pox-ridden mouth, the half-blind prostitute with the cataract, the old soldier with the palsied hand and the half-slack mouth: Are they just the unfortunate poor, or are they the eyes and ears of the Afflicted?

Here, in this almost derelict insula, you can hear the hate-songs; the moon shines through a window with broken shutters. The shriveled, dust-covered corpse of an old woman who died here forgotten lies half-on, half-off a worm-eaten wooden couch.

From below, you hear the sound of footsteps, running up the stairwell. And then, you smell the smoke.

STORYTELLER GOALS

The coterie must become aware that the building is on fire and that the way out is blocked by flames. Flavius Gaudens must make himself known to the coterie — he does not have to engage them, but must make them aware that he wishes to destroy them because he believes them to have corrupted his daughter. The vampires must have the choice presented to them: escape, fight or negotiate.

CHARACTER GOALS

The coterie must realize that they have been led into a trap. They can face Flavius Gaudens and his colleague and defeat them, escape them or talk to them.

Paterfamilias

The Insula



OWLS AND MOTIVES

Storytellers who have read the character descriptions of Gaudens and his colleague Cimber will be aware that each carries the device of Minerva's bird — an owl.

Owls have a particularly unpleasant significance to Kindred living in Rome, and there's a good chance that characters who have encountered the Striges add two and two to get five and conclude that Gaudens and Cimber are agents of the Striges. It's up to the Storyteller to decide the extent to which this should affect the characters' actions.

Playing up the owl motif with an especially sensitive group of players seals Gaudens' doom. If you want that, driving the game towards brutal, bloody death for Gaudens and Cimber, that's a good idea. If you'd prefer the story to direct itself towards a less violent solution, or at the very least one where the decision to talk to the hunters is easier, you might want to consider not mentioning the owl motifs at all.



SCENE CONSIDERATIONS

Gaudens and Cimber are ready to die, but they're not ready to die *pointlessly*. If the vampires get out of their deathtrap, the two hunters won't just throw their lives away. They will use the rituals they know (see pp. 8-9). Both men have empowered their swords with the Aggravate ritual and Gaudens has used the Deny ritual on the door leading to the roof. Cimber is also using Evade. This means that currently, Gaudens is down two points of Willpower and has two thimbles of blood left in his vial. Cimber is also down two points of Willpower and has three thimbles of blood left in his vial.

Maybe Gaudens and Cimber have used some of Cimber's remaining resources to allow Gaudens to perform the Deny ritual somewhere else in the building. It's up to you if they have done this. The entire *insula* is covered in dust, rat droppings and cobwebs, meaning that the vampires leave footprints; the hunters use the Obligate ritual when they have the chance. Broken furniture is everywhere, and the hunters have several stakes each; either man can find another in most of the former residential rooms with only thirty seconds' preparation time.

WHERE THEY START

When the vampires first become aware of Gaudens, the two hunters have split up. Gaudens is at the top of the stairwell on the sixth floor — this is where Gaudens is standing when he issues his proclamation (see below).

Meanwhile, Cimber is lying in wait on the fifth floor.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FIRE ON THE ACTION

Smoke and flame: Mortals (the hunters, not the vampires) suffer a -1 to all actions while in the smoke two floors above the fire and a -2 while in the floor above the blaze or on the same floor as the fire. Vampires, who don't need to breathe (they do when they talk and sniff, but it's not a prerequisite for survival) only suffer the penalties to Wits-based perception rolls, as things become hard to see, hear or smell. The flame causes three points of lethal damage per turn to any living human in contact with it, and three points of aggravated damage to a vampire.

The extent of the blaze: The *insula* is mostly made of wood and plaster. Notoriously flammable, buildings like this could be reduced to ash in the course of an evening. The ground floor is where the fire starts. The fire takes over another floor every ten minutes. Each floor then becomes uninhabitable, while the smoke travels up two floors above.

INTRODUCING GAUDENS

Give the characters a few moments to figure out that something is up before introducing Gaudens. When you're ready to bring Gaudens into the game, have him call out. His voice rings down the stairwell or corridor of the *insula*, above the crack of the flames. It's as if everything is silent when he speaks.

"Kindred of Rome, but no Kindred of mine:

"Know this, that I am Flavius Paullus Gaudens, sworn of the Temple of Minerva. Know that it is my right as the shepherd of your kind these three decades to pronounce judgment upon you. Know that it is my right as a father to claim vengeance for the murder of my virgin daughter.

"You shall not go unpunished. You may seek the right to appeal, but know also that the most you can expect from me is a swift end."

THE ESCAPE ROUTE

Shortly before trapping the vampires in the building, the two men suspended a rope between the roof of this *insula* and the nearest neighboring building.

The entry point to the roof of the *insula* is a trap door at the top of a ladder, which Gaudens warded with the Deny ritual (see p. 8), meaning that it's inaccessible unless Gaudens is dead (because the ritual fails when he dies) or he deliberately effaces the ritual.

Should the vampires get out — and the hunters didn't survive as long as they have without being aware that monsters can be just as resourceful as people — Gaudens and Cimber escape by means of the rope and pick up the trail, stalking the vampires through the city until they have their justice. It may take a couple of days until they have caught their quarry, but they will.

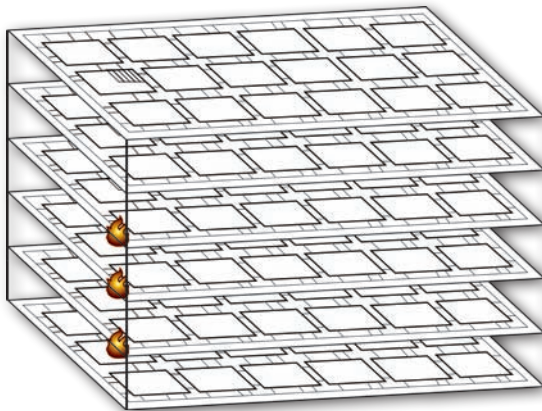
Characters who get to the roof before Cimber and Gaudens do — for example, if they manage to kill the Hunters — should be allowed to get across the rope and onto the other building to relative safety without making any dice rolls, ending the scene.

ACTIONS

THE FIRE

The coterie begins on the fourth floor; this *insula* has six.

The smell of smoke is the most immediate stimulus, and characters might realize that they've been had and head downstairs to investigate. Flavius Gaudens, who waits on the sixth floor and has a camp set up on the roof has set the fires in the stairwells — see the map on p. III.



The coterie should become aware that the stairs are on fire without having to roll any dice—the crack of flames, the smell of smoke, the rising heat all make themselves apparent to characters on the stairs. Characters with *Auspex* notice first (you can if you wish pass the players of characters with *Auspex* a note saying “The building’s on fire!” a couple of minutes before telling the other players).

Seeing the flames at the bottom of the stairwell requires extended rolls against fear frenzy requiring five successes, but with a +2 bonus to dice pools.

BRAVING THE FLAMES

Characters who wish to brave the flames to investigate the lower floors need to gather up the courage before going in. The chances of them getting out in one piece are very slim, and while characters should be allowed the chance should they ask for it, impress on the players how dangerous the flames are.

Dice Pool: Resolve + Composure to avoid fear frenzy; Stamina + Athletics to make it through.

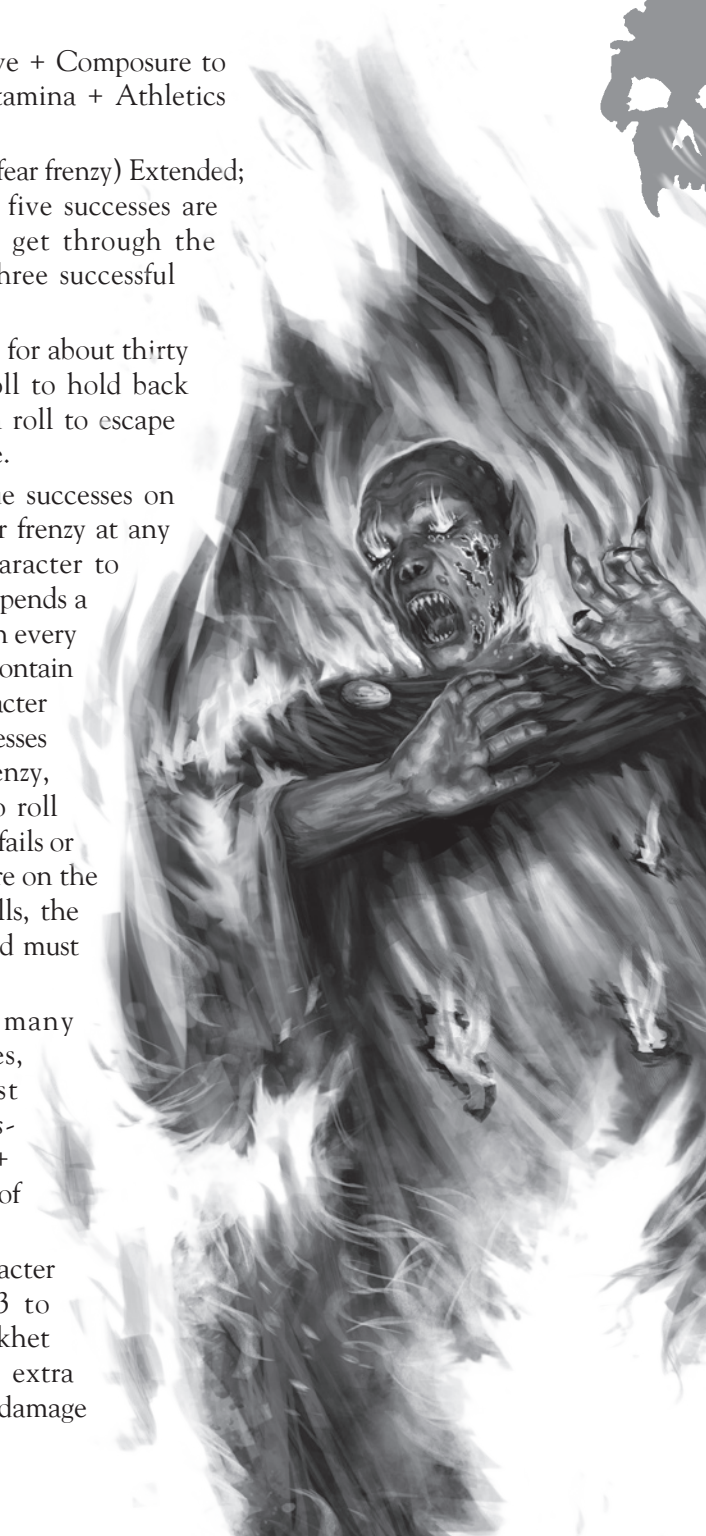
Action: (avoiding fear frenzy) Extended; roll each turn until five successes are accrued; (trying to get through the flames) extended, three successful rolls needed.

Each roll accounts for about thirty seconds of time. Roll to hold back fear frenzy and then roll to escape the flames each time.

A failure to accrue successes on the roll to avoid fear frenzy at any point forces the character to turn back unless he spends a point of Willpower in every subsequent round to contain himself. Once a character has accrued five successes on rolls to avoid frenzy, he does not need to roll any more. If a player fails or rolls a dramatic failure on the character’s frenzy rolls, the character frenzies and must turn back.

No matter how many rolls a player makes, the character must make *three successful rolls* of Stamina + Athletics to get out of the building.

Hindrances: Character already injured (-3 to fear frenzy rolls). Mekhet characters take one extra point of aggravated damage from fire every turn.



Help: Ingenious way to avoid burning (old curtains soaked in water; +1 to +2 to avoid the flames).

Disciplines: Characters who activate Celerity 1 or 2 need only make two rolls to escape the building. Characters who activate Celerity 3 or more need roll only once. Resilience downgrades aggravated damage to lethal and allows for extra health dots. A character using Protean 5 suffers one fewer point of damage from the flames, but must still roll Strength + Stamina each round to escape the blaze, and still requires a total of three successful rolls to get out.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: If the player rolls a dramatic failure to avoid fear frenzy, the character ends up losing his nerve and ending up under a falling beam, taking three points of aggravated damage. Worse, he catches on fire, taking the same damage again in each successive turn (see **The World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 180). If the player rolls a dramatic failure on a roll to avoid the flames, the character catches on fire, suffers three points of aggravated damage each turn and needs to make an extra roll to escape the flames: he's taken a wrong turn.

Failure: If the character succumbs to fear frenzy, he suffers three points of aggravated damage and must make another roll of Athletics + Stamina to end up back where he started.

Success: The character controls himself, and manages to get closer to the door. He still takes a point of aggravated damage, meaning that the roll to avoid fear frenzy is at a -2 subsequently.

Exceptional Success: The character controls himself, gets closer to the door and takes no damage.

GOING UP TO THE ROOF

This is easy enough — except that Gaudens has cast the Deny ritual (see p. 14) at the top of the steps leading to the roof, and it's an ideal place for him to make a stand. He's not crazy, though. If he thinks he's going to lose, he'll back up the stairs and through the warded door.

If the coterie explore the upper floors, at least one room on each of the fourth, fifth and sixth floors has been booby-trapped with a ring of oil which, when lit, goes up in seconds (2 successes on Resolve + Composure roll to avoid fear frenzy, with a -2 penalty; -5 if the character has been burned already).

JUMPING OUT OF A WINDOW

A character can jump out of a window at any time, and probably has a much better chance of surviving than a mortal would. Each floor is a little over five yards high, meaning that jumping from the fourth floor inflicts seven points of bashing damage. Jumping from the fifth causes nine points of bashing damage, while jumping from the sixth floor or the roof, which is about thirty yards up, causes ten points of *lethal* damage (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 179).

The hunters would have warded the windows, but haven't the resources, the time or the colleagues to do it. They might try to bluff the vampires into believing that they *have* warded the windows, however.

FIGHTING GAUDENS AND CIMBER

Portray Gaudens and Cimber as intelligent fighters, but don't make them invincible. When one of them has run out of tricks, or if one of the players gets lucky with a dice roll, they die just like everyone else.

Gaudens and Cimber try to fool the vampires into believing that more than two hunters are after them. Remember that thanks to the Evade ritual, Cimber can move exceptionally fast (although not as fast as a vampire with Celerity) and tries to get around the vampires.

At the first opportunity, Gaudens casts the Obligate ritual on one of the characters' footprints.

Cimber uses his bow whenever he can, only closing when he runs out of arrows. Both men do their best to ensure that they're in positions where they can take advantage of the cramped spaces in the *insula* and the rotted bodies of the poverty-stricken plague victims that litter the place. The pieces of rotting furniture serve as hiding places, improvised weapons and cover.

Gaudens and Cimber have both performed the Aggravate ritual over their swords, meaning that Gaudens gains three extra dice on his attack pools (13 dice) and Cimber gains two (12 dice). Both men also have flaming torches (two successes on Resolve + Composure roll to avoid fear frenzy; -3 if character has already been wounded).

Hindrances: Various doorways and wrecked furniture (-1 to -2 to movement); the moth-eaten curtains that cover some of the doors don't help to put out fires — they simply don't survive in a solid enough form to be any use.

Help: Various doorways and wrecked furniture (+1 to +2 for cover); pieces of debris and rat-gnawed bones can be used as improvised weapons (+1 to +3 on Strength + Weaponry, bashing damage); stones and hunks of plaster can be thrown (+1 on Strength + Athletics, bashing damage); moth-eaten curtains cover some of the doors (+1 to Stealth).

Paterfamilias

The Insula

PARLAY

Characters might wish to try to parlay with the hunter, concluding that there's a case of mistaken identity going on here. Gaudens and Cimber, although wary and *really* well-prepared, will hear out the characters, but only in the most formal terms, which means that the coterie find themselves in a truly bizarre circumstance: a reasoned discussion using the rules of rhetoric and debate in a burning building.

The stakes are high: no more or less than the possible Final Deaths of the characters. The coterie is trying to prove their innocence; the hunters work on the assumption that the characters are guilty. Neither Gaudens nor Cimber has any Debate Style Merits.

Dice Pool: Intelligence or Wits + Investigation or Empathy (using the best possible dice pool) vs. each hunter's pool (see table below). Remember that because Gaudens and Cimber are living, vampire characters' dice pools can be no higher than their Humanity scores (before equipment and circumstance bonuses).

Character	Integrity	Target to Defeat	Dice Pool
Gaudens	3	9	6 (Wits + Investigation)
Cimber	2	9	5 (Wits + Empathy)

Action: Extended and contested; rolling ends in five turns.

Cimber weighs in on the debate if he is present and more than one character is joining in on the other side. The characters have five turns to convince Gaudens that they're innocent. Gaudens, for his part, will describe the evidence that he has of their guilt: letters naming them as owners of a brothel (forged); the sworn testimony of three separate witnesses — a Christian cenobite, a tribune in the garrison, and the secretary to the Vicar of Rome, no less — describing each of the characters (all of them are under the control of Gagliauda); and the most damning evidence of all, that they are here where Flavius' daughter was corrupted. Here is where she died, and here is where he destroyed her.

Disciplines: Characters may gain bonus dice using the various powers of Majesty or end the debate abruptly using Nightmare. Gaudens is wise to the existence of Dominate, and makes a point of not making eye contact, meaning that attempts to Dominate him suffer a -3 penalty to dice pools.

Result: If Gaudens wins, the battle continues in earnest and the gloves are off. If the coterie wins, Gaudens concedes that he may be mistaken, but tells the coterie that they must prove that they are innocent.

CONSEQUENCES

If the coterie can make it out of the *insula* by braving the flames, they deserve to survive. Don't make them suffer any more than they have, and allow a few nights for them to heal before Gaudens — if they haven't killed him — picks up the trail and begins to follow them.

If they don't get away quickly, Gaudens and Cimber pursue them (go to the scene "Pursuit in the Streets of Rome"). Gaudens, whether hostile or not so hostile, will appear periodically, following the characters. He'll find out what they know, and figure out pretty quickly that they are the patsies of the real villain. If the coterie manages to escape and kill Gaudens and Cimber, they're free to go; Gagliauda won't molest them any more.

On the other hand, they might begin to seek out the reason why they came here. If so, Gagliauda starts to throw obstacles in the path of the coterie. The obstacles presented here actually make it *easier* for the coterie to find Gagliauda. This isn't to say that they're not dangerous. But every obstacle Gagliauda places in the path of the coterie gives them a chance to catch hold of someone and say, "Who sent you?" Go to either "The Obstructed Path" or "I Predict A Riot."

If the coterie somehow manages to convince Gaudens to forge a truce, they must still prove they are innocent. Will Gaudens accompany them? Or is he following at a distance? Will he arrive at the denouement?

If the coterie manages to kill Gaudens and don't investigate further, Gagliauda comes and finds them (go to "The Bringer of Pox and Justice").

The Obstructed Path

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

It doesn't matter how the coterie got here: all that matters is the fact that the coterie escaped from the inferno and that they know that someone set them up. On the warpath, they start looking for whoever it was that made patsies of them.

This is a whole lot easier than it might seem to be. If Gagliauda went to ground and did nothing, or carried on the way she always has, she might be able to escape the coterie's notice. But she panics, and goes out of her way to contrive hasty, somewhat ham-fisted obstacles to their path – both this scene and "I Predict A Riot" comprise those obstacles.

In this scene, the officer under Gagliauda's thrall tries to arrest the coterie.

DESCRIPTION

Six armed men block your way – soldiers of the garrison. The leader, wearing the regalia of an officer, calls you to halt. "You are charged with fraud, kidnap and murder. By the authority vested in me by the Vicar of Rome, I must place you under arrest. You may not resist."

Going quietly with them means being held in a cage until after dawn. It means destruction.

STORYTELLER GOALS

This is not a time for talking. The characters can run for it or fight it out. If Gaudens and Cimber are with the coterie, the soldiers will not target them. The hunters will run or fight with the coterie.

The hardest part about this event is that the Storyteller characters must impart to the coterie who is behind their troubles while looking like they don't want to. It's a difficult balance to hold. The officer might, when interrogated, wax lyrical about the beauty of his lady.

The Storyteller's goal, then, is pretty simple: keep throwing things at the coterie, but each time give the vampires a chance to get a description of Gagliauda, the name of one of her prominent slaves or even the name of the Bringer of Pox and Judgment herself.

CHARACTER GOALS

Avoid being arrested, and find out who sent these soldiers after you.

ACTIONS

RUNNING FOR IT

Run the characters through the "Pursuit in the Streets of Rome" scene. They shouldn't have a lot of trouble getting away from the soldiers.

FIGHTING

The Officer is Paul, Gagliauda's slave. Use the traits of the Officer of the Garrison (**Requiem for Rome**, p. 242).

The soldiers' relevant traits are as follows.

Initiative	Combat	Foot Chase	Defense	Armor	Health
5	6 dice (lethal)	4 dice	1	2	7

Assume all other dice pools have three or four dice.

The soldiers don't fight to the death. If more than four of them die, the others desert, regardless of the terrible penalties they might have to pay.

INTERROGATING PAUL

Dice Pool: Wits, Manipulation or Presence + Intimidation or Persuasion – Paul's Integrity (three dice)

Action: Social conflict (see p. 9)

Paul, an Arian, does not believe in the existence of vampires. If Gaudens is somehow with the coterie, the hunter takes part in the interrogation. If Paul understands what the coterie are or if he realizes that they will not spare his lady, he takes his own life as soon as he can, in any way he can.

Character	Integrity	Target to Defeat	Dice Pool
Paul, officer of the Garrison	3	10	6

Hindrances: Paul's Integrity (-3)

Help: None.

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The Obstructed Path



Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Paul does not break, and is so convinced of his superiority that he regains a Willpower point.

Failure: Paul does not break, and expects the coterie to do their worst.

Success: Paul breaks. Each success reveals one piece of information:

- Paul is the Tribune of the Garrison who sent Gaudens to kill the coterie.
- Paul knows Gagliauda by name, and believes that he shall one day marry her. He begs them to kill him in her place.
- She sent him to arrest them and hold them, but only until noon in the morning. He does not know why, only that it is a favor for his love.
- He knows where she makes her haven, and will tell if asked.

Exceptional Success: The coterie learns all of the information that Paul knows (above), and he will not attempt to take his own life.

CONSEQUENCES

If the coterie escape from the soldiers, the soldiers will find them again and again, until the characters have confronted Gagliauda or they stand and fight, in which case they can interrogate or kill the officer.

The only soldiers in the garrison who have the vampires' names are Paul and the soldiers with him when he addresses the coterie. Which means that if they kill him or cause him to kill himself, the kindred get away scot free with their crime. Individual soldiers might remember their names and cause trouble in the future, but they're free from official censure. The coterie don't know that, though, and their paranoia may aid a sense of urgency in the drama.

If the characters kill Paul without finding out who sent him, run "I Predict A Riot" if you haven't already. Otherwise, go to "The Bringer of Pox and Judgment."

If Gaudens is still alive and the characters haven't decided to find Gagliauda, go to "The Reminder."



The Obstructed Path

I Predict a Riot

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

Matthew the Galatian, Gagliauda's cenobite retainer, recognizes the coterie. He incites his motley congregation to riot through the Suburra, in the direction of the characters, who were last to get out of the way. Or were they?

DESCRIPTION

The night goes still. The gangsters abandon their dice games and vanish, dice abandoned on street-corner tables. The prostitutes withdraw into their doorways; the only sign that they were here is the fluttering of threadbare silk curtains. Even the rats, the feral cats and the stray dogs have gone, as if everyone and everything here knew something was coming, in the way that the herd knows the lion is stalking its weaklings.

Suddenly there is a scream, the anguished cry of a cenobite that cuts through the silence. He's going to prophesy in the marketplace. It's a bad cry, a cry of divine wrath. Cenobites make the noise and imagine they are making the sounds of a woman in childbirth, in imitation of the words of the Apostle Paul. A man making the noise sounds grotesque, less than human.

Hands clap; the voices of men and the weeping of women rises and falls. He cries out again, about to bring a new word to life. "The devil spits out his demons onto our streets! They come to us and would sup upon our blood! They are the bringers of all pestilence! The sinners have fled the light of God, but the monsters feed on us, and will feed more if they will. God will bring judgment upon this place of sin and we shall be His agents..."

STORYTELLER GOALS

The hardest part about this event is that the Storyteller characters must impart to the coterie who is behind their troubles while looking like they don't want to. It's a difficult balance to hold. The cenobite imagines Gagliauda in terms of an angel, for example.

The Storyteller's goal, then, is pretty simple: keep throwing things at the coterie, but each time give the vampires a chance to get a description of Gagliauda, the name of one of her prominent slaves or even the name of the Bringer of Pox and Judgment herself.

CHARACTER GOALS

The characters need to find the villain who set them up, and to survive the increasingly desperate if clumsy attacks of Gagliauda's agents.

ACTIONS

GETTING OUT OF THE WAY

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure + Auspex

Action: Instant

How quickly did the characters catch on to the danger in the hermit's screams?

Hindrances: Looking like a possible customer of the red-candle district (-1)

Help: Looking like a Christian adherent (+1); three or more dots of Stealth (+1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character fails to get his act together. Not only is he caught right in the path of the Christians, the player doesn't get to roll Initiative (adding 0 to his Initiative Trait for the purposes of combat).

Failure: The character does not manage to get out of the way in time, but does get to roll initiative normally. He has time for one turn's worth of action before the riot hits him. On the other hand, if he has a dot or more of Celerity, the character *can* escape if he activates it immediately.

Success: The character takes advantage of a split-second opportunity: He has one turn to get himself and his friends out of the way, for every success he rolls. If he has one dot of Celerity, double that, triple that if he has two dots, and so on.

Exceptional Success: The character sees an appropriate escape route and takes it, getting himself to safety before the mob notices that they don't belong.

FIGHTING THROUGH OR FIGHTING OUT

Dice Pool: Strength + Brawl or Weaponry vs. the mob's dice pool of 4

Action: Extended and contested (10 successes to escape).

Characters might try to fight their way free. This works as a combat; treat the mob as a single combatant directed against each of the characters. The mob doesn't have health levels — characters can't, strictly speaking, "kill" it. Instead, each success a player rolls on a combat roll

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brings the character that much nearer to getting away from the mob. Any successes you roll for the mob against a character cause points of lethal damage against that character. The riot's statistics look like this:

Initiative	Dice Pool	Target to escape
5	4	10

When a player manages to gather a number of successes equal or greater than the target number, her character “beats” the mob. Either she gets out of the way in one piece, or she fights through to achieve a confrontation with Matthew the Galatian, depending on what her stated intent was at the start of the combat.

Narrate each round of combat as if it were something unpredictable. Characters who score successes push, kick, stab and bludgeon their way out of the hostile crowd. People wave torches and kitchen implements, rake their fingernails across a character's eyes, clutch at throats, pull hair and tear clothes.

Hindrances: None.

Help: Vampires can augment physical Attributes with Vitae, as usual, and can make use of Disciplines:

Protean: Protean 5 enables a character to escape the mob completely without having to roll. Protean 4 only allows the character to escape if she can turn into an animal with wings (such as a bat or a crow); if she turns into a small animal like a rat or a house-cat, the character gets to escape, but the riot gets one more “attack” on the character before she escapes. If the character turns into a larger animal like a dog or a wolf, the character still has to escape as normal.

Obfuscate: A character successfully using Obfuscate 3 can escape without having to fight.

Celerity, Resilience and Vigor: All of the physical Disciplines have their usual effect.

Majesty and Dominate: Most Majesty and Dominate powers are useless in this situation, since it is impossible to hold anyone's attention for any length of time. Sovereignty (Majesty 5) does work, however. Once the player spends a Willpower point, the power is on. Every round before rolling for initiative, make a roll for the Discipline (see **Vampire: the Requiem**, p. 132) and oppose it with the Riot's Composure of 3. If

the roll is successful, the mob doesn't get an attack on her that round. The player still makes an attack roll against the mob, and any successes rolled on the Sovereignty roll count against the target the character needs to get out of the riot. If she succeeds, she walks through the mob, unmolested. Because the Sovereignty roll doesn't involve violence, an exceptional success on a roll improved by Sovereignty doesn't hurt anyone and does not occasion a Humanity roll.

Example: The Daeva Herennia has spent a Willpower point and activated Sovereignty. In the first round, she makes the roll for the Discipline and gets three successes. Not only does the mob not attack her, but she adds three dice to her attack roll against the mob. Rolling eleven dice, she gains six successes. Even so, Herennia will not need to make a degeneration roll after the fight is over. However, in a second round, Majesty fails her and she must fight. The player rolls five successes and Herennia literally tears someone's head off. After the fight, as she licks the blood from her hands and arms and face, Herennia's player must make a degeneration roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character loses all progress in working through the mob.

Failure: The character makes no progress in getting through the mob.

Success: The character makes progress in getting through the mob.

Exceptional Success: In addition to making significant progress through the mob, the character has killed someone, which is cause for a degeneration check after the scene is over for characters with Humanity 4 or above (since it's the same as “impassioned manslaughter”). It doesn't matter how many times a character achieves an exceptional success — roll for Humanity loss only once.

CONFRONTING THE GALATIAN HERMIT

It's not hard to catch up with Matthew. Characters may have fought through the mob that surrounds him. Characters using Obfuscate 3, Protean 4 or Protean 5 might be able to bypass the crowd completely and grab him. They might wait until the mob has died down and follow the unsuspecting hypocrite to a quiet spot either to get their revenge or put an end to him, or both.

Physically speaking, he is a poor specimen, his body in a terrible state thanks to years of self-flagellation, meaning that characters don't have to make any dice rolls to catch him or contain him.

But in terms of resisting coercion, he's made of stronger stuff. You don't spend twenty years whipping yourself every day without developing a tolerance to it.

Dice Pool: Presence, Manipulation or Wits + Religion, Intimidation or Empathy – Matthew's Integrity (three dice).

Action: Social conflict (see p. 9)

Matthew is the cenobite who told Gaudens where the coterie hunted, and implied that they were Flavia's corrupters.

Character	Integrity	Target to Defeat	Dice Pool
Matthew the Galatian	3	10	5

Hindrances: The cenobite is bound to Gagliauda and will not name her; he barely feels pain anymore (-2 to tactics involving pain or torture).

Help: Characters familiar with Christian language and theology (+1)

Disciplines: Characters using the relevant powers of Dominate, Majesty, Auspex or Nightmare can use them at any time. Matthew's Resolve is 3, his Stamina is 4 and his Composure is 4.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Matthew refuses to talk, and gains a Willpower point back for his staunch defiance.

Failure: Matthew remains unbroken. He will not name his master.

Success: Matthew tells all, phrasing his betrayal in triumphant language, more for the benefit of his own conscience than for any other reason:

"You shall not defeat her. God has ordained her holy victory. She will bring judgment on you all, and strike you down with the pestilence that is God's sentence on your sins. She is the Bringer of Pox and Judgment, and she shall strike you down for my death."

That's right, he said "death." He expects — *wants* — the characters to martyr him. He needs it. It's the only thing that will in his own mind redeem him from the tangled mess of sin and self-loathing that governs his mind. He'll antagonize the characters as much as he can, playing at turns the firebrand preacher, the upright martyr and the holy giver of forgiveness.

Eventually, he tells them where she dwells, and what she does.

Exceptional Success: As above, but Matthew will stop needling the characters into killing him after his first attempt.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HERMIT

Matthew the Galatian's self-damage derives from both guilt and sexual desire: he hurts himself because he draws sexual pleasure from being hurt, while at the same time using it as a means of punishing himself for drawing sexual pleasure from being hurt. Characters who don't get as far as torturing him probably won't find this out, but the Galatian's genitals are a ruined mess of burns and ribboned flesh. It was how he fell under Gagliauda's spell, and the hold she has over him is complete (thanks to the Vinculum) and horribly ambivalent. He loves her utterly and hates her for drawing him into terrible sin.

Matthew betrays his mistress readily, proclaiming his love for her, all the while selling her out.

He's not all that unusual. This was an age where the dark side of faith manifested itself in the most horrible forms of self-mutilation and violence against both men and women — especially women — where the sinful could only be made holy through the worst excesses of confinement, brutalization and torture, both psychological and physical.



CONSEQUENCES

If Matthew betrays his mistress, he'll try to court martyrdom any way he can. The cruelest thing one of the characters could do is just to leave him. If they do that, he will be unable to cope, falling into a deep, terrible depression.

If Gaudens or Cimber are alive and Matthew is too, and the hunters are not allied with the vampires, the characters find Matthew's corpse stabbed to death on the following sunset, in or near one of their havens. He bears a beatific expression on his face. The hunters, revolted by the hypocrite, gave him his dearest wish after he told them everything.

On the other hand, if a hunter is following the vampires and they kill Matthew, he leaves behind Matthew's cross (or some other memento of the madman) at the entrance to a haven belonging to one or more of the coterie.

If the vampires didn't get Gagliauda's name and you haven't run "The Obstructed Path" yet, go to that scene. Otherwise, if the coterie thinks that they know enough to find Gagliauda, go to "The Bringer of Pox and Judgment."

If the hunters have let the vampires go, or the characters are stuck or need a recap, go to "The Reminder."

Paterfamilias

I Predict a Riot

Pursuit in the Streets of Rome

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL -

OVERVIEW

Characters have the opportunity to engage in chase scenes through the streets of Rome. Whenever a chase occurs, use this scene to resolve it. The flowchart allows you to dovetail this with the foot chase rules.

DESCRIPTION

The street's cobbles are worn smooth under centuries of traffic; the smell of the city's effluent rises like steam from the clogged gutters. The moon is the only light the street has. You careen past stray animals feeding on the unspeakable contents of the city gutters, sleeping beggars, the abandoned furniture of the day.

STORYTELLER GOALS

Provide an exciting chase scene for the players, using a special extension of the foot chase rules in *The World of Darkness Rulebook*, p. 65.

CHARACTER GOALS

Escape from your pursuers, or catch the people you're chasing.

ACTIONS

Each time you start a chase, it happens in three stages. The characters start each time at location 1 (City Street) and move from there to either location 2 (Night-time marketplace) or 3 (Rooftop). From 2, the characters can go to 4 or 5; from 3, the characters can go to 5 or 6.

In each location, make one roll for each participant in the chase using the standard foot chase rules. If the quarry ends up ahead, go to the next stage. If the quarry or the pursuer ends up accumulating enough successes to surpass her antagonist's Speed, the chase ends: the pursuer catches the quarry, or the quarry gets away. If the quarry is still ahead at the end of the last stage, she gets away. If not, the pursuer runs her to ground in that location.

Note that the flowchart plays fast and loose with the usual rule that forbids actions outside of running, in order to make the urban locations in Rome a more vibrant part of the chase scene.

1. City Street

You careen past stray animals feeding on the unspeakable contents of the city gutters, sleeping beggars, the abandoned furniture of the day. A flight of steps leads up the side of a town house — a possible escape? Otherwise, you're heading for the marketplace...

The characters start the chase here. No special rules apply.

Does the quarry head straight for the forum? Go to 2.

Does she dart up the outer steps of a nearby building? Go to 3.

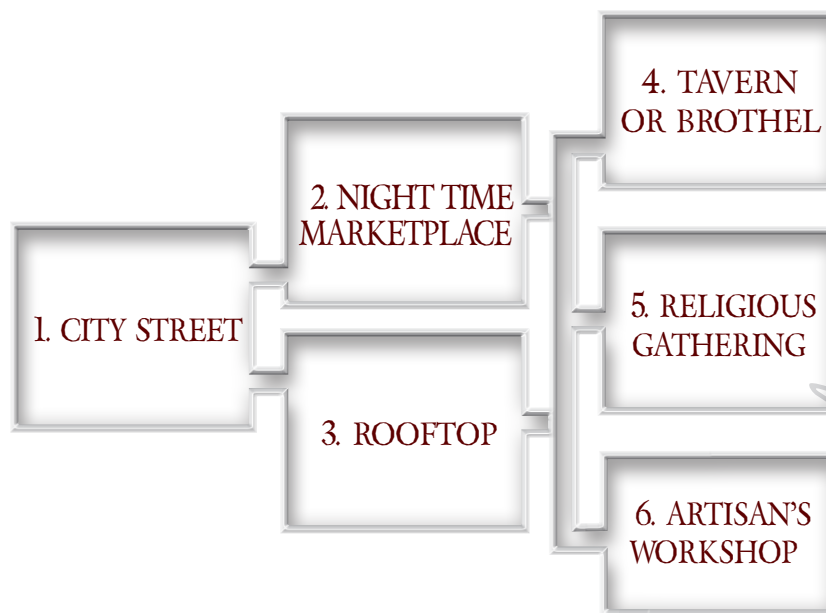
2. Night-Time Marketplace

You pass canvas-covered market stalls, chicken coops, small pens containing chained-up livestock, sleeping night watchmen and tethered guard dogs who bark like crazy as you whizz by. The curtained door of a drinking establishment reveals lights, suggests crowds in which you can lose yourself. You're running headlong towards another crowd, the sound of chanting...

With a Wits + Athletics roll, the quarry might be able to grab at a tarpaulin, or knock over a market stall, spilling fruit or vegetables, or some other ware on the ground, inflicting a -1 dice pool penalty to the pursuer, or a -3 if the quarry rolls an exceptional success.

Does the quarry duck behind the curtain? Go to 4.

Does she keep on going? Go to 5.



Paterfamilias

Pursuit in the Streets of Rome

3. Rooftop

And it's up the steps, three or four at a time, thundering across a roof, avoiding a rain-hatch, over a narrow gap onto a nearby, lower building. To your left, you can see a door leading down into the building. On the street below, you can hear the sounds of people...

The quarry can choose to continue running across rooftops, meaning that the Rooftop scene can lead to another one. In order to do this, her player needs to achieve two successes on a Wits + Athletics roll.

A character with Vigor who manages to jump 20 feet or more in a running jump can leap over to the roof of a building on the other side of the street. If the pursuer can't jump that far, especially if he is human and hence not so blessed, the chase ends with the quarry getting away.

The street is about 15 feet down: failed jumpers suffer 5 bashing as they hit the cobbles hard.

Does the quarry head down the steps to the street? Go to 5.

Does the quarry go down into the building? Go to 6.

4. Tavern or Brothel

No one looks up as you careen inside the building, into a crowd of standing and seated men and women, drinking, playing dice, arm-wrestling. A man yells as you spill his drink; a woman in gold paint and cheap silks curses you as you stand on your foot. The place could turn ugly in seconds...

Or:

You charge right past the middle-aged woman who stands by the curtain and past any number of curtained rooms. A naked, painted boy stares blankly at you as you pass him by. Ducking behind a curtain, you disturb a fat man and an emaciated girl in the act, and duck out the window...

In the tavern, characters can grab drinks, shove and push patrons and duck under tables. A successful Wits + Athletics or Wits + Brawl roll allows a +3 on the quarry's next escape dice pool.

The chase ends here. Either the quarry escapes, or is cornered by the pursuer.

5. Religious Gathering

The chanting of the robed figures falters. Labarums and hair-ropes surround you and close in behind you, offering you a chance to get free once and for all...

Or:

The dancing stops as you push a naked priest and he slips and falls in the blood from the still-steaming sacrifice; your foot makes a splattering sound as you step in the entrails...

The adherents at the religious gathering are too busy being horrified to be dangerous, but there are enough of them to make escape somewhat easier, and the disruption caused by a chase charging right through the middle leads to milling around and confusion. The quarry gets a +1 to her Strength + Athletics roll to escape.

The chase ends here. Either the quarry escapes, or is cornered by the pursuer.

6. Artisan's Workshop

No one is here: the tools of someone's trade, half-made goods and worktables surround you, and a door at the other end of the room...

This is the workplace of a sculptor, a smith, a potter, a carpenter or some other craftsman. A character who stands to fight in here has any number of improvised weapons she might pick up. Some of these cause lethal damage. Statues, pots, pieces of furniture and the like make fine obstacles.

If the quarry chooses to make it more difficult to be followed, a successful Wits + Athletics roll nets her a +2 bonus to her roll to escape.

The chase ends here. Either the quarry escapes, or is cornered by the pursuer.

CONSEQUENCES

The consequences depend on whether the characters are the pursers or (more likely) the pursued. After this scene is over, go back to either the scene you came from to get here, or the next scene in the flow. (Also, this is a good scene to reuse in other **Requiem for Rome** stories, and the consequences for those will differ depending on the story being told.)

The Reminder

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ••

OVERVIEW

This brief scene occurs if Flavius Gaudens has agreed to allow the vampires to try to prove their innocence. The vampires (or one of the vampires) awake to find him and his colleague in or by the entrance of the biggest haven they own.

He wishes to let the characters know that they still hang under his judgment, and expects them to tell him what they know.

If the characters did not convince Gaudens of their innocence in his daughter's destruction, you can still run this event. He found their haven; but he also found that they were somewhere else when his daughter vanished. He doubts their guilt now.

DESCRIPTION

You open your eyes. And the first thing you see is the scar-faced man from the insula, standing nearby, sword drawn but at rest. "You think you have forever."

STORYTELLER GOALS

The Storyteller should use this completely optional scene if the plot has stalled.

It's useful to get the characters re-acquainted with Flavius Gaudens. It's an opportunity for them to summarize what they have learned, and for him to offer back-handed clues if the players seem slow on the uptake.

If the players have no idea what's going on or why someone is trying to destroy them, this is when Gaudens reveals that he knows exactly who is responsible. He wants revenge; he surmises that they want revenge too, and offers to take them there.

CHARACTER GOALS

The characters need to know that Gaudens may have given them the benefit of the doubt, but he is not their friend.

The scene gives the players the chance, if they wish, to re-cap what they know so far.

ACTIONS

ATTACKING GAUDENS

The characters might decide that they've had enough of the hunter. He'll curse their treachery and retreat — although he admits that he had believed the characters were innocent.

He runs. The characters might be able to catch him, fight him and kill him (and if they do, that's just fine). However, he only one turn away from a threshold over which he has cast the "Deny" ritual. This might even be the entrance to the coterie's haven.

TALKING WITH GAUDENS

This is not necessarily a conflict scene. It's more like a cut scene from a video game, in that it gives the characters some breathing space to converse with each other and the hunter.

If the players seem a bit slow on the uptake, have Gaudens say something like "It seems strange that your opposition seems so clumsy, so easily manipulated. Either our enemy is toying with us, or she is a fool."

If the characters have found nothing, have Gaudens explain to them who Gagliauda is — a vampire, a whore, a manipulator, the mistress of whoever has made life difficult for them.

If you don't want to make it obvious to your players that you're dumping plot-related information on them, use the following roll to give the illusion that they're getting information out of Gaudens.

Dice Pool: Wits or Manipulation + Intimidation or Persuasion vs. Composure + Resolve (dice pool 7)

Action: Instant

Hindrances: None.

Help: Gaudens wants to talk (+3)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Gaudens refuses to talk to this character, but is willing to talk to another character.

Failure: Same as "Success," below.

Success: Gauden tells the players to get back into the plot, as above.

Exceptional Success: As with "Success."

CONSEQUENCES

The characters may have rid themselves of the hunter. They may have talked through what they know or decided to get revenge with the help of Gaudens.

The coterie should have a name by now, or at the very least her title. Go to the final scene, "The Bringer of Pox and Judgment."

Paterfamilias

The Reminder

The Bringer of Pox and Judgement

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •••

OVERVIEW

Even if it wasn't personal before, it is now. Gagliauda has panicked, sending her minions after the coterie in a clumsy attempt to get them out of her hair once and for all.

The fact is, Gagliauda is not terribly clever. Fanatical about her purpose, vengeful and self-centered, yes, but actually nothing like the Livia-grade manipulator she thinks she is. The Storyteller's goal so far has been to bring the coterie to find out that Gagliauda is the architect of their misery. What happens now is up to them.

The scene assumes that the characters have found out where Gagliauda dwells and have made their way to the place, a deserted brothel, where she is attended tonight by Franciscus, a charioteer.

DESCRIPTION

The charioteer stands at the entrance to the brothel. He holds a sword in his hand, but does not prevent your entry. He stares at each of you as you lift the curtain and go inside. The place is deserted: no madam stands here, demanding money up-front. The smell of perfume and incense is stale, tainted by a musty, fungal smell. Blood and other fluids spot the stone floor. The curtains of several of the rooms hang in rotting, moldy tatters. And inside this last room, a voice, a whisper. "Welcome."

STORYTELLER GOALS

Gagliauda should let the coterie know that her actions are not personal, and that she is willing to pay reparations or favors. Will they accept? Can they trust her?

One thing: the Storyteller should not make this meddlesome neonate at all likable. She is vain, manipulative, selfish and thoroughly without remorse.

CHARACTER GOALS

The characters should confront Gagliauda and decide what to do with her. Should they want to destroy her or send her into torpor, there's very little question that they should manage it with some ease.

But her connections are everywhere. And she is the childe of the Sanctified Bishop. If Gaudens is alive, he can be the solution: they can hand her over to him.

ACTIONS

FINDING OUT WHERE GAGLIAUDA MAKES HER HAVEN

There are a variety of ways in which the coterie might find out where Gagliauda makes her haven.

- The hermit and the officer both know where Gagliauda dwells and let the characters know.
- Thascius Hostilinus will not tell the coterie where she dwells, nor will any of the other prominent Sanctified. They do, however, imply strongly that Gagliauda did what she did with the approval of the Bishop.
- Prominent patrons from the Camarilla might know where she sleeps, and may tell the coterie.
- If no other means of letting the characters know comes to pass, have Gaudens tell them.

DO WE KNOW HER?

Characters who are not Sanctified have little reason to know Gagliauda. She does not attend the meetings of the Camarilla. For every success made on a successful Intelligence + Politics roll, the character remembers one of the following pieces of information: that she is Sanctified, the childe of a very prominent Sanctified leader, and probably a Mekhet. A patron might also know this.

Sanctified characters do not have to roll to know that she's a Sanctified; members of the Morbus bloodline know without having to roll that she's Sanctified, a prostitute and dedicated to spreading the plague as judgment, that she's the childe of Thascius Hostilinus the Sanctified bishop, and that she's very well-connected.

Paterfamilias

The Bringer of Pox and Judgement

IF GAUDENS IS ALIVE

Gaudens does not accompany the characters to the home of Gagliauda, whether he is the coterie's companion or not. He follows them there, though.

If at any time the action flags or the conversation with Gagliauda does not go anywhere, the characters hear the sounds of fighting outside. It's Gaudens making short work of Franciscus, Gagliauda's pet charioteer. Gaudens bursts in shortly afterwards, with Cimber in tow.

ARGUING WITH GAGLIAUDA

Gagliauda is vain and eager to tell the coterie exactly who she is, what she does, why she does it and what she did. She does not think she did anything wrong. Regardless of the outcome, however, it's still the coterie's choice what they do with her.

Character	Integrity	Target to Defeat	Dice Pool
Gagliauda	2	10	6

Dice Pool: Intelligence, Presence or Manipulation + Religion, Politics, Intimidation or Persuasion vs. Gagliauda's dice pool of 6.

Action: Social combat

Hindrances: Threatening Gagliauda (-1)

Help: Gagliauda wants to talk (+3)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Gagliauda refuses to talk, and calls for Franciscus (if he is still alive and isn't already in the room) – move to “Destroying Gagliauda.”

Failure: If Gagliauda wins, she refuses to admit any wrongdoing. It was not personal. That is all. But they must know whose childe she is and the mechanisms she has in place if she meets Final Death. This is only true if Paul and Matthew are alive. If they aren't, she has nothing.

Success: If the characters win, Gagliauda tries to convince the characters that she meant them no harm, and that any of them would have done such a thing for her, for the best of reasons. She apologizes (not sincerely), and offers favors in return, telling them that the debt has been canceled (adding, if appropriate, that she has lost some of her most valued retainers). But still, he tells them where she dwells, and what she does.

The characters don't have to buy this. If they are still hostile, she begs for her continued existence, and offers the coterie anything she can do. She is well-connected, and has attachments among the highest of the Sanctified. And the Sanctified have already won the heart of the Camarilla.

Exceptional Success: As with “success.”

DESTROYING GAGLIAUDA

If Gaudens and Cimber are not alive, the charioteer Franciscus rushes in and tries to defend her (use the traits found on p. 243 of **Requiem for Rome**). If they are alive, Franciscus is already dead.

Whatever happens, if Gaudens is alive, at some point, he will burst in and try to destroy the Bringer of Pox and Judgment, whether or not the characters want him to. This may be his last stand.

He may die here. If he is triumphant, and the characters have allowed him to live, he tells them to leave, and sets fire to the curtains with a torch taken from one of the sconces in the room. He and Cimber sit on the ground, and wait to die.

CONSEQUENCES

Do the coterie decide to let her go? Or will they destroy her? Either way, they shall have to deal with the fallout from their decision.

AFTERMATH

Destroying Gagliauda incurs the wrath of the Bishop of Rome. Sanctified characters risk falling completely out of favor with their leaders if they do this.

Getting her on side creates a powerful ally, but one who cannot be trusted. She does, however, have the ear of Thascius Hostilinus, the Bishop, and may allow the coterie also to get his ear, at which point the ruthless may wish to get her out of the way.

If she is allowed to survive or if she somehow escapes, Gagliauda may continue to be a thorn in the side of the coterie, more because of who she knows than because of her powers.

EXPERIENCE

Experience points are handed out after each chapter according to the suggestions in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 216-217. After the story is over, there are a few additional points that can be awarded:

- Give everyone in the group +1 experience for escaping the *insula*
- Give everyone in the group +1 experience for escaping from “Pursuit through the Streets of Rome” (only once per story)
- If the characters figured out what was really going on and who set them up without being told, give them +1 experience
- If the characters made a friend, or at least a contact, out of either Gaudens or Gagliauda, give them +1 experience

SCENE: *Special: Flashbacks*

11

MENTAL — PHYSICAL — SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

Flashback scene that retroactively establishes the story in the middle of a scene (or between scenes)

STs

Sketch enough narrative to help set the stage for the start of the story before diving back into the flow of events.

PCs

Take a moment to work with the Storyteller to explain why your characters is in the insula.

SCENE: *The Insula*

13

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •••• SOCIAL •••

HINDRANCES

Braving the flames: Character already injured (-3 to fear frenzy rolls). Mekhet characters take one extra point of damage every turn.

Fighting Gaudens and Cimber: Various doorways and furniture (-1 to -2 to movement).

HELP

Braving the flames: Ingenious way to avoid burning (+1 to +2).

Fighting Gaudens and Cimber: Various doorways and furniture (+1 to +2 to cover). Improvised weapons (+1 to +3).

Throwing stones and hunks of plaster (+1). Moth-eaten curtains (+1 to Stealth).

OTHER

The vampires are on the fourth floor when the fire starts. Cimber is on the fifth floor. Caudens is at the top of the stairwell on the sixth floor.

STs

Make sure the coterie knows the building is on fire. Introduce Flavius Gaudens.

PCs

Escape, fight or negotiate.

SCENE: *The Obstructed Path*

18

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

None

STs

Keep throwing things at the coterie, but each time give the vampires a chance to get a description of Gagliauda.

PCs

Avoid being arrested, and find out who sent these soldiers after you.

SCENE: *I Predict a Riot*

20

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

HINDRANCES

Getting out of the way: Looking like a possible customer of the red-candle district (-1).

Confronting the Galatian hermit: Bound to Gagliauda; barely feels pain (-2).

HELP

Getting out of the way: Looking like a Christian adherent (+1); three or more dots of Stealth (+1).

Fighting through or fighting out: Vampires can make use of Vitae and Disciplines. Confronting the Galatian hermit: Character familiar with Christian language and theology (+2)

OTHER

None

STs

Keep throwing things at the coterie, but each time give the vampires a chance to get a description of Gagliauda.

PCs

Find the villain who set you up, and survive the increasingly desperate if clumsy attacks of Gagliauda's agents.

SCENE: *Pursuit in the Streets of Rome*

23

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

Use the special chase scene matrix and rules on pp. 23-24.

STs

Provide an exciting chase scene for the players.

PCs

Escape from your pursuers, or catch the people you're chasing.

SCENE: *The Reminder*

25

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ••

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

Gaudens wants to talk (+3).

OTHER

Optional scene.

STs

Give the players a nudge in the right direction, if needed.

PCs

Re-cap what you know so far.

SCENE: *Bringer of Pox and Judgement*

26

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •••

HINDRANCES

Threatening Gagliauda (-1)

HELP

Gagliauda wants to talk (+3)

OTHER

None

STs

Let the coterie know that Gagliauda's actions aren't personal.

PCs

Confront Gagliauda and decide what to do with her.

SCENE:

27

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL ••

HINDRANCES

HELP

OTHER

STs

PCs

Name: Flavius Gaudens Virtue: Faith
 Concept: Good man at the edge Vice: Pride

Clan:
 Covenant:

Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●	Sterility ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

Skills	Merits	Health
Investigation ●●●●●	Allies (Temple of Minerva) ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Medicine ●●●●●	Contacts (Garrison) ●●●●●	Willpower
Politics ●●●●●	Danger Sense ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Religion ●●●●●	Endowment ●●●●●	Vitae
Athletics ●●●●●	(Red Rituals — see pp. 8-9)	□□□□□□□□□□ Vitae per turn _____
Brawl ●●●●●	Resources ●●●●●	Blood Potency
Larceny ●●●●●	Status	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Stealth (use shadows) ●●●●●	(Birds of Minerva) ●●●●●	Flaws
Survival ●●●●●	Disciplines	_____
Weaponry (sword, stake) ●●●●●	_____	_____
Empathy ●●●●●	_____	_____
Intimidation ●●●●●	_____	_____
Persuasion (leader of men) ●●●●●	_____	_____
Streetwise ●●●●●	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Notes

Rituals: Obligate, Aggravate, Deny. Integrity 3.

Humanity 8
 Size 5
 Speed 11
 Defense 3
 Initiative Mod 6
 Armor _____

Name: Ambrosius Cimber Virtue: Charity
 Concept: Aging Sidekick Vice: Lust

Clan:
 Covenant:

Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●	Sterility ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

Skills	Merits	Health
Investigation ●●●●●	Allies (Temple of Minerva) ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Medicine (field dressings) ●●●●●	Contacts (Streets of Rome) ●●●●●	Willpower
Archery (bow) ●●●●●	Endowment ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Athletics ●●●●●	(Red Rituals — see pp. 8-9)	Vitae
Brawl ●●●●●	Resources ●●●●●	□□□□□□□□□□ Vitae per turn _____
Larceny ●●●●●	Status (Birds of Minerva) ●●●●●	Blood Potency
Stealth (ambush) ●●●●●	_____	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Survival ●●●●●	_____	Flaws
Weaponry (longsword, stake) ●●●●●	_____	_____
Empathy ●●●●●	_____	_____
Intimidation ●●●●●	Disciplines	_____
Persuasion (wise counsel) ●●●●●	_____	_____
Streetwise ●●●●●	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Notes

Rituals: Aggravate, Evade. Integrity 3.

Humanity 6
 Size 5
 Speed 10
 Defense 3
 Initiative Mod 6
 Armor _____

Name: Gagliauda

Virtue: Fortitude

Clan: Mekhet (Morbus Bloodline)

Concept: Holy whore & weapon Vice: Envy

Covenant: Lancea Sanctum

Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
Wits ●●●●●	Destiny ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

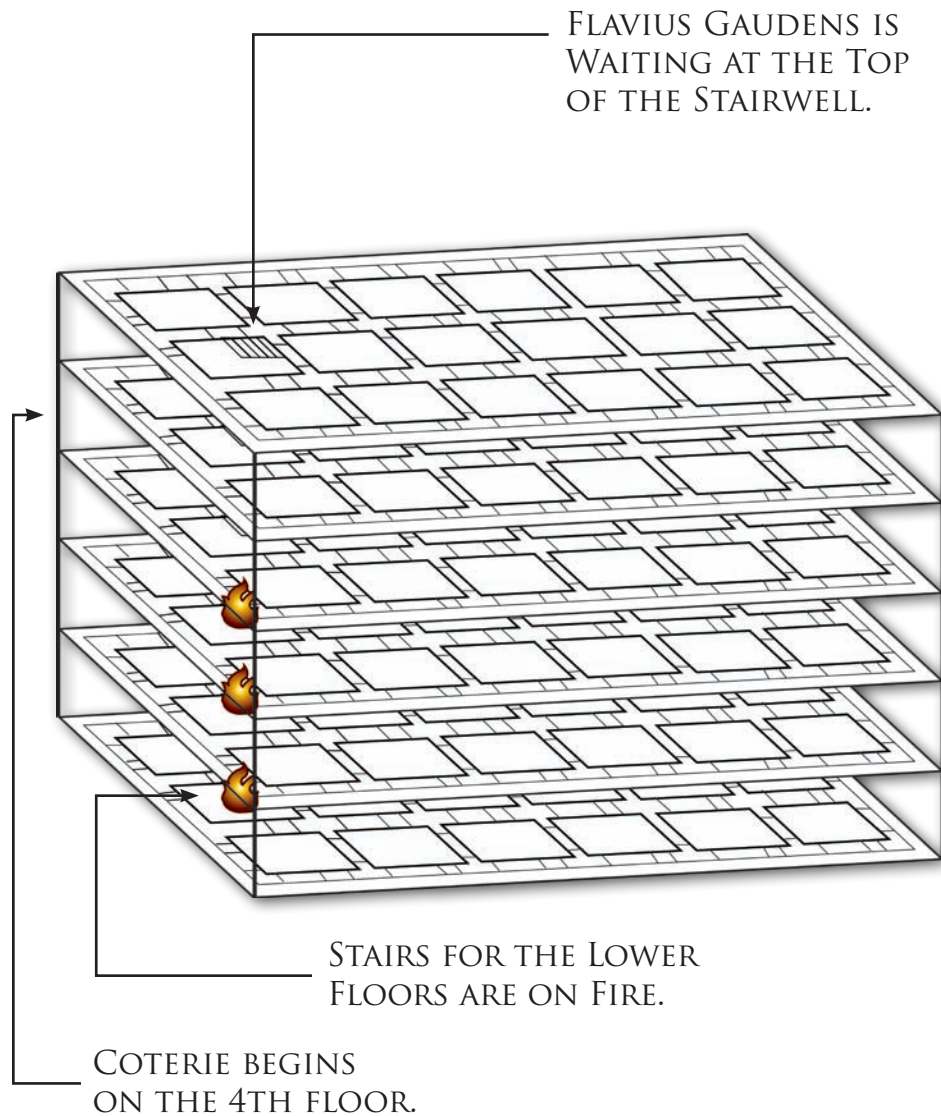
Skills	Merits	Health
Politics ●●●●●	Allies ●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Religion (sin) ●●●●●	(Pimps and prostitutes)	
Crafts ●●●●●	Contacts (Christian Bishops, Senators, Criminal gangs, Slavers, Garrison) ●●●●●	Willpower ●●●●●●●●●● □□□□□□□□□□
Larceny (forgery) ●●●●●	Haven (size) ●●●●●	
Stealth ●●●●●	Haven (location) ●●●●●	Vitae □□□□□□□□□□ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Vitae per turn <u>11/1</u>
Survival ●●●●●	Haven (security) ●●●●●	
Empathy ●●●●●	Languages	Blood Potency ●●●●●●●●●●
Expression (dance) ●●●●●	(Latin, Greek) ●●●●●	
Intimidation ●●●●●	Status ●●●●●	Flaws
Persuasion (seduction, religious instruction) ●●●●●	(Harlots and Madams)	
Streetwise ●●●●●	Status ●●●●●	
Subterfuge (intrigue) ●●●●●	(Lancea et Sanctum)	
●●●●●	Striking Looks ●●●●●	
●●●●●	Disciplines	
●●●●●	Auspex ●●●●●	
●●●●●	Cachexy ●●●●●	
●●●●●	Obfuscate ●●●●●	

Notes

Embrace: 315CE **Derangements:** Sanguinary Animism, Narcissism
 Gagliauda's native tongue is Frankish. Her Willpower is not yet restored after Flavia's Embrace. Integrity 2.
Additional Merits: Retainer (Benedictus, Secretary to the Vicar of Rome) 4, Retainer (Helenus, Most Notorious among the Gangsters of the Suburra) 4, Retainer (Matthew the Galatian, a cenobite) 2, Retainer (Franciscus the Charioteer) 3, Retainer (Paul, Officer in the Garrison) 3

Humanity 4
 Size 5
 Speed 9
 Defense 2
 Initiative Mod 4
 Armor _____

THE INSULA



FLAVIUS GAUDENS IS WAITING AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRWELL.

STAIRS FOR THE LOWER FLOORS ARE ON FIRE.

COTERIE BEGINS ON THE 4TH FLOOR.

APPENDIX: ERRATA FOR REQUIEM FOR ROME AND FALL OF THE CAMARILLA

Roman Equipment: We're very proud of *Requiem for Rome*, but it wasn't perfect. The one glaring omission we made in the book was the lack of a list of weapons and armor. Many of these could probably be extrapolated from the character write-ups in *Requiem for Rome* and *Fall of the Camarilla*, but for your convenience, here's a list of weapons and armor available in the time of the later Empire.

MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Size	Cost	Special
Cestus	0L	N/A	•	spiked boxing gloves; -1 to Dexterity dice pools involving use of hands for fine manipulation (eg. Larceny, Crafts)
Chain	1B	2	•	9-again
Long Sword	3L	3	••	
Net	0B	3	•	Adds two dice to grapple attempts (<i>World of Darkness Rulebook</i> p. 157)
Pilum/Spear	3L	4	••	+1 Defense
Short Sword	2L	2	••	
Trident	3L	4	••	+1 Defense

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Ranges	Strength	Size	Cost	Special
Pilum (thrown)	3L	*	3	4	••	
Short Bow	2L	30/60/120	3	3	•	
Trident (Thrown)	3L	*	3	4	••	
Sling	3B	20/40/80	2	N/A	N/A	9-again

* Short range for spears and tridents is equal to the character's Strength + Dexterity + Athletics, minus size of object, and then doubled; medium range is twice short range, and long range is twice medium range.

ARMOR

Type	Rating	Defense	Cost	Special
Gladiator Armor (Light)	1/0	—	••	Leather bands and straps or plates on arms (e.g. <i>retarius</i>); no helmet
Gladiator Armor (Heavy)	2/1	-2	••	Helmet and plate, or mask (e.g. <i>mirmillo</i>)
Helmet	2/2	—	••	Gives protection to called shots against head only
<i>Lorica Hamata</i> (Chain)	2/1	-2	•••	Versions worn by most soldiers during Republican and Late Empire periods; includes helmet
<i>Lorica Segmentata</i> (Banded)	2/2	-2	•••	Classic legionary armor; mostly in use in 1st-2nd centuries CE; includes helmet.
Leather Cuirass	1/1	-1	••	
Legionary Shield	+2 Defense	0	•••	requires off-hand
Small Shield	+1 Defense	0	••	requires off-hand
Tribune's Armor	2/1	-1	••••	Finely made breastplate, helmet and greaves

Requiem for Rome, p.243: The Officer of the Garrison of Rome has Morality 6. His Virtue is Justice; his Vice is Pride.

Fall of the Camarilla, p. 208: The first dot power of Obtenebration was accidentally swapped back to its modern counterpart. In these ancient nights, Night Sight is more potent than it will be in the modern nights, for it has not yet been diluted by generations of Blood or the sorcery of the Striges.

• NIGHT SIGHT

The most useful power of the Khaibit is the most frightening to them and the most dangerous to the Striges and other spirits. Vampires already see better in the dark than mortals; night sight allows the Asps to see clearly with almost no illumination at all. Even in complete darkness, the vampire can distinguish the many shades of black from each other, ebony from jet from sable. While using Night Sight, the vampire's eyes fill with an inky, swirling blackness.

Cost: 1 Vitae

Dice Pool: This power requires no roll.

Action: Reflexive

The vampire suffers no penalty for acting in darkness, and can see through any non-solid obstruction, such as fog or tear gas. In light, the vampire can see the shadows of spirits as if they were solid beings; in darkness, the otherworldly creatures glow an eerie, diffuse white, like the ghosts of an earlier creation.