

C L A N B O O K :

MaLkAvian™



A Sourcebook for VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

C L A N B O O K :

Malkavian

Method in the Madness

If You Buy This, You'll Believe Anything

By Daniel Greenberg

*The important thing
is to pull yourself up by your own hair
to turn yourself inside out
and see the whole world with fresh eyes.*

*-Peter Weiss, The Persecution and
Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Per-
formed by the Inmates of the Asylum of
Charenton under the Direction of the Mar-
quis De Sade*



Most Kindred cling to the familiar shores of sanity like drowning men, resisting the tug of dark, seductive waters. Though they know a constant, low-level madness from their slavery to the bloodlust, most Kindred usually resist it and fight off all other derangements. Some are eaten alive from within by the Beast; most grip their sanity with a miser's clutch.

But some Kindred plunge in where the strongest elders fear to go, giving full vent to their demon desires and mad caprices. Some do it by choice, but the rest do it because they are forced to. The curse of Malkav has stolen their choice in the matter, and they can either agree to dive into madness, or be dragged under the murky waters by the chains of insanity.

Malkavian

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Chapter Won: The Malkavians

Mad, adj.: Affected with a high degree of intellectual independence; not conforming to the standards of thought, speech and action derived by the conformers from study of themselves.

— Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

"No, no, no!" the old crone screeched, her fangs flashing at Adam. "Again you make that same mistake! You're doing it all wrong. Feel the Curse of Malkav shatter your mind, and make the walls you see around you crumble into shale."

Adam staggered backward, reeling. "My head's pounding," he gasped. "I can't stand it!"

"Then sit down, little fool," she snapped. He stumbled backward into a chair, holding his throbbing head as if to prevent it from splitting open.

"How am I going to teach you to be a Malkavian when you won't even learn to focus your powers. I must have been crazy to think you'd make a good Malkavian. I ought to return you to the loony bin and your miserable life as a scholar wasting away as a salesman. Well, I can't, so you're stuck with me!"

"Just give me a minute," he said. "It's just ... I can't cope with this ... this head rush!"

"Yes you CAN cope, you ninny. You're trying to shut down the process just as it is starting to work."

"Just give me a minute. I'm not shutting anything down. Please!"

"Oh, now the student thinks he can teach the master, eh?" She cocked her enormous right eye at him as she squinted her glazed left eye. "Very well. I'll give you five minutes of peace before we start again."

He slumped forward in the chair, burying his face in his hands and kneading his weary eyes. He was grateful for the moment's respite.

"Aaaaaaargh!" she suddenly shrieked in his ear. He leaped to his feet, his entire body a jangle of electrified nerves.

"You said five ... you said five minutes!" he protested.

"And you BELIEVED me!" she cackled with glee.

"Mistress LaVeel, please! I can't cope!" he shouted. "My body doesn't function right any more. My mind doesn't work any more. I can't remember things right. My head feels like a sieve, and my thoughts fall right through. I'm losing my ... my THOUGHTS!"

"What you're losing is your sanity. You're becoming a Malkavian."

"No! I'm sane!"

"Ah, you came unwrapped long before I even met you."

"I only had a nervous breakdown!"

"I only had a nervous breakdown," she mimicked in a whiny, singsong voice. "I had only broke down my only nerves. My nerves only had to break me down. I only watched

as my entire painstakingly constructed world view shattered before my very eyes and I saw the great, naked universe in all its unfettered glory! FEH! You are loony as a jay bird."

"If I did, you should be on your knees in eternal gratitude. But no, I did nothing but pass along the Curse of Malkav, which is forcing you to complete the process YOU began by breaking down your nervous system!"

"It hurts," he moaned. "It's painful."

"Good," she said with a sneer. "You could USE a bit of pain, ye whining whelp. Now go away and arrange to get yourself a good thrashing. I want to stare into the middle distance for a little while seeking inspiration about what to do with you. Or about how to piddle on the next Brujah rant. Now go on. Get out!"

Madame LaVeel pointed to the battered, reinforced door that led up the basement stairs. Her ghoul manservant Troy stepped past Adam, opened a combination lock, slid back the great bolt, and opened the door. Adam felt a blast of fresh, cool air gust into the musty, smelly basement. Without further coaxing, he bolted from his sire's haven and ran out into the night.

"Ah, that son of mine," Madame LaVeel said with a sigh.

"Just like a callow youth to burst out so rudely," Troy said, looking after Adam with a trace of envy. "Oh well, the night air will do him good."

"Oh no," Madame LaVeel said with a wicked smile. "It will do him BAD. It will do him VERY bad."

Adam felt a merciful release as he raced through the rain-slicked streets. He pounded through deep puddles as he ran, tireless and strong, but dizzy, disoriented, and lost.

The fever gripped him, and the street started doing it again. Twisting. Wrapping itself around itself again, until he didn't know which street would take him home again. Or if he had a home. Streets aren't supposed to do that, he thought plaintively. There was a time when streets behaved properly. When they stayed in neat, ordered rows. When they went where you were going.

But now the pressure in his temples and the fear in his throat and the welling tears in his eyes were too much for him, and twisted his thoughts into a tight, taut Gordian knot.

He stomped frenziedly into a dark alley. The pressure built and built in his head until he could contain it no longer. He screamed a piercing, bloodcurdling scream and slammed his head into a brick wall. He slammed it again and again and again, until the scream worked its way out of his body. He slumped back, oblivious to the precious blood that poured down his face.



"No!"

"Yes. So you better get used to the idea."

"No! You did this to me!"

"Oh good. Very good. Scream. That's good."

He whirled around, shocked by the delicate female voice that hovered behind him.

A beautiful, sensuous, barefoot woman lay reclining in a low-hanging fire escape. Her diaphanous white spring dress draped her body like silken spider web. Her pale blonde hair cascaded around her head in gentle curls. Her full red lips parted, and she said "That's a good start. Very good start. But is that all you think there is to being a Malkavian? Screaming and banging your head?"

Adam felt a stirring of far-off emotions that had lain dormant since he became a vampire. "Who are you?" he asked, enraptured.

"Why, I'm your guardian angel," she said with a laugh like tinkling bells. "Your conscience! Your Jimminy-Jesus-Christ-Crickee! The better angel of your nature! Your psychopompous Karen the Boatman on this Lethal river Styx. Hey, did you like them? I'm partial to bad 70s rock, myself."

"No, I ... I ... You're my ... what? Are you a hallucination?"

She sat up on the fire escape. "Who isn't? We're all hallucinations on this bus. One big hallucination that we all share, more or less. Except some people stay at home in their hallucinatory homes, and some greedy people range over all hallucinatory territory. Those people are called Malkavians and, guess what? You're one of them."

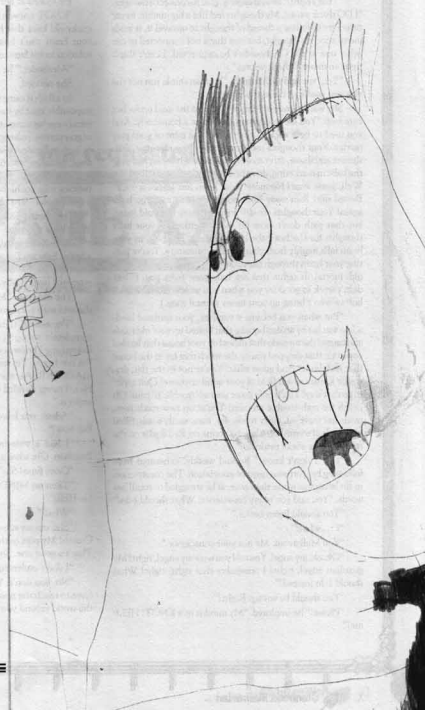
"I ... what?"

"I Malkavian. You Jane. No, you Malkavian too, so me must be Jane. Crazy Jane. No, wait, me Malkavian too, so I am me as you are we and ye need to pull yerself together. Come together! Right now-ow-ow. Over me. Bah-ba-bum-ba-ba bop!"

"That's it!" he said, clinging to the thought like a drowning man. "THAT'S what I need. I need to pull myself together! I ... I can't think straight!"

"Noooooooooooooooooooo!" she shrieked, leaping to her feet. He fell backwards, startled, and landed in a deep puddle of stagnant water.

"STOP trying to think straight! You can't think straight anymore, so stop TRYING! You can only think curved. But curved is so much *bed-dur* than straight," she added in a sexy, pouty voice, wiggling slowly and seductively. "Think curved. Think bent. Get WAY bent!"



"That's just it," he gasped desperately, kneeling in the muddy water. "I can't think straight or bent!"

"Oh, you can think, all right," she said, sinuously slipping down off the fire escape. "You just can't think all RIGHT. You can just think WRONG."

"That's right!" he said eagerly, glad to connect a thought. "I DO think wrong. My thoughts feel like a big jumble. Every time I try to follow a thread of thought to unravel it, it leads me to another thought, but one that's not connected to the other one at all! Or shouldn't be connected. I can't think right anymore. I think wrong."

"Yes," she said with a smile. "You can think, just not the way you used to." He said nothing.

She walked over to him, oblivious to the mud under her bare feet. "You see, your brain used to be a homebody. And you used to be a stick in the mud of the mire of your gray matter. Your thoughts used to get up in the morning, shit, shower and shave, drive to work, take a lunch break, lust over the babe in marketing, drive home, whack off, and fall asleep. Well, guess what! No more! Your brain just leaped a track! Busted out! Run away from home, and you can't go back again! Your thoughts are still trying to drive their old route, but that path don't exist no more. Neither do your lusty thoughts for the hot babe in marketing. The pain in your brain falls mainly from your feigning humanity. You're putting your brain through the agony of hell trying to think the old, mortal thoughts that are long gone from you. (They didn't work so good for you when you were a mortal either, but we won't bring up your messy mental state.)

"But when you became a vampire, your spiritual landscape was hit by an earthquake that busted up your old roads and caused the tornado that picked up your house that landed you in Oz that dropped you on the witch that lay in the house that Jack built! And guess what? You're not in the flat, dry, sterile Kansas wheat field of your mind anymore! Quit tryin' to go that way! You'll only cause yourself trouble 'n' pain! Oh ... oh for mah trouble an pain! You're on new roads now, roads less traveled, dusty roads, dry, bare, sandy roads, filled with ends of wyrms! So whatcha gonna do, Red Ryder on the storms of the sea of madness?"

"I ... I don't know," he said weakly, exhausted from following her tortuous turns of association. The constriction in his brain was worse than ever, as he struggled to recall her words. "You said you're my conscience. What should I do?"

"You should listen better."

"I ... what?"

"You Malkavian. Me not your conscience."

"Ok, ok, my angel. You said you were my angel, right? My guardian angel, right? I remember that right, right? What should I do instead?"

"You should be wrong. Right?"

"Please!" he implored. "My mind is in a KNOT! HELP me!"

"Come, come, my precious scholar," she said, putting soothing hands on his shoulders. "You filled your poor pia mater with so much book learning, so many ordered words, that surely you can recall a historical precedent for knot answers."

He looked at her meekly, confused. "Not answers?"

"KNOT answers!" she said emphatically. "A bad old, sticky old knot that has your poor mind all constricted, so your brain can't breathe. You can use Alexander's final solution to his famous knot."

"Alexander?" he said. "The knot, the Gordian Knot?"

She nodded.

In a flash it came to him. Cut right through it! Undo the impossible knot by slashing it into a thousand ribbons! In his mind's eye he summoned a vision of his brain as a great knot of gray matter, pulsing black where it was constricted and tied in a giant knot. As he unfolded the vision, he picked up a huge, gleaming sword, and slashed right through the brain! Black blood splattered as gray matter split in two halves! The twisting ridges of his brain slithered away like snakes, leaving a shining star in its place.

He toppled over, breathless and relieved. The pressure in his head was gone.

Then he sat up, alarmed. "Oh no," he thought. "Without a brain, how am I going to think?" Then he cackled a long, chortling laugh. "Bwah ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!" he screamed hysterically.

The old crone, Madame LaVeel, ran to him. "Adam!" she said with concern. "Are you all right?"

"I'm not all right!" he shrieked. "I'm all wrong! I'm completely wrong! I've never been so wrong in my life! Everything I know is wrong! And I'm so HAPPY! No, wait, I'm not happy, I'm sad. No, wait, I'm not sad, I'm mad, I'm MAD! I'm REAL mad! Very! Mad! Am! I! Ha ha ha ha ha! Hey, I never cackled before! That felt great! I see why you enjoy it."

"Adam, you have done it! You crossed the threshold! But how?"

"I had a visit from Crazy Jane, my own Karen the Boatman. Oh, what a babe!"

"Crazy Jane? She's was destroyed 300 years ago!"

"Then my MIND was playing TRICKS on me! Ha HA! He HEE!"

"What?"

"She was my sub-conscience. My Jimminy Christ on a Crutch! My port in the stormy sea of my psyche. Heh, heh. That's a good one. She'd like that ..."

"I don't understand ..." LaVeel protested.

"No, you don't. You can't. Face it, the pupil will now have to teach the master! Now, look at me and YOU make the world around you crumble into shale!"

As you requested...

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(see Werewolf: The Apocalypse)



Chapter To: Legends of the Malkavians

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Sifting through the rubble of Malkavian history in search of a coherent pattern has driven the sanest Camarilla scholars to the brink of madness. Do the Malkavians have a purpose? Do their frenzied rages and ravings point in some important direction? Or are they an evolutionary dead end—a twisted branch of Caine's family tree that has not yet died out sufficiently to fall off?

Though most Kindred doubt that the Malkavians have any purposes greater than fanciful caprice or violent reactions to mental anguish, the elders are not so sure. Though most elders would be hard pressed to determine what the Malkavian mission is, they hedge their bets, and assume the mad clan has one. They just can't figure out what it is.

And they are right. According to the most secret of Malkavian legends, the mad Kindred do have a greater purpose, though most Malkavians are not aware of it, and their involvement in the matter is unclear. Their legends paint a picture of a family of vampires playing a game of defining and redefining the universe through hyperconscious participation with it. They are in the process of "becoming." And what the Malkavians become will influence the development of humanity, vampire and all reality.

Malkavian Core Beliefs

I have had a most rare vision, ... past the wit of any man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream.

— Shakespeare, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*

Malkavian legends diverge wildly and paint startlingly contradictory pictures of the secret purposes of the lunatic clan. The legends include tales explaining the clan's greater goal as global iconoclasm and anarchy, personal illumination, infectious insanity, the degradation of all moral authority, magical utopia, the hegemony of absolute chaos, material detachment, divine connection, artistic reflection of society's madness, rampant hedonism, creative ignorance, ascension of personal Will, pleasure through cruelty, cosmic salvation, and absolute nihilism. And some legends say that the Malkavians have absolutely no higher purpose, and that all attempts to explain Malkavian motivations are clever lies concocted by madmen to obfuscate the fact that the Malkavians have absolutely no core purpose.

Each of these philosophies has a following, but the "true believers" rarely meet, and do little to espouse the philosophy. This leads some inquisitive Kindred to conclude that the whole notion of a core Malkavian belief is just another prank. And still other Malkavian scholars insist that is just what the Malkavians want everyone else to believe.

Untangling the Legends

To the Ventrue, Tremere and Nosferatu scholars who have taken upon themselves the mammoth task of codifying the incomplete and tangled history of vampires, the Malkavian clan presents a uniquely frustrating puzzle. Its history defies orderly classification, and no theory quite reconciles the facts and legends in the matter.

This has led some scholars to only half-jokingly wish for Gehenna to arrive quickly, so they can question the Malkavian clan founder about his contradictory role in early vampire history and his actual motivations. Few believe he is simply mad. Instead, they are sure he has a purpose that is difficult for most people to see. As the Tremere Etrius wrote on the subject, "I refuse, as an article of faith, to believe that the Malkavian progenitor is merely mad. But comprehending his actual intent is maddening."

At issue are the contradictory reports of the clan's purposes, including whether or not it has one. Here are the core beliefs of the Malkavians, as the respective leaders of these camps explain them.

Global Iconoclasm

The world is full of fools who hold tawdry baubles before their faces, watch them glint and shine, and give their very lives and souls to the flashy trash. I love my country, my god, my segregated neighborhood, my success, my money, my sex, my stuff, or my alma mater and would kill anyone who shows them the slightest iota of disrespect. And, by the way, your country sucks. And so does your god, your segregated neighborhood, your success, your money, your sex, your stuff, and your alma mater. Well, I swallow your baubles whole and vomit them back up on you! Perhaps then you may see your folly.

Anarchy

END ALL CONTROL! NO ONE MAY FORCE ANOTHER! DESTROY ALL LAMER ANARCHISTS, LIKE THE BRUJAH!

Personal Illumination

The curse is a ticket to outside the world-illusion and inside your pineal gland. Ride the stillness like a twilight surfer.

Infectious Insanity

Feel how the germ turns in your stomach! I am a tiny seed of madness, and I grow in your belly, like that watermelon seed you swallowed when you were four, and your uncle

Alvin told you it would grow into a huge watermelon tree in your stomach and, come summer, they could pluck melons from your mouth! I infect the world with madness, and I will not stop until we are all rooting in the dirt like pigs seeking the truffles of our broken minds.

Degradation of All Moral Authority

Pious hypocrites all! They rule in the name of the Divine Lie! I reject them! I tear their heads open, and blow up their airships, and burn their sacred sites! No one gets to lord it over anyone because she is a wiser or nicer person!

Magical Utopia

When we release the surly bonds of sanity, we don the shimmering wings of madness, and fly on wings of great power! We find the world is nothing but a projection of our own cracked minds, and we can do anything in it! When I free the minds of all people, they will become all-seeing and all-knowing, just like me! We'll be in paradise! I'll do it as soon as I stop the robot-laser from mind-controlling me!

Hegemony of Absolute Chaos

BLEA!

Material Detachment

Disconnect! Disconnect! Unplug your overloaded senses from the surging wall-socket of the world-machine! Cast down your script, and drop your robot roles! The sane are prisoners of their toys. Detach! Detach! Be free! Be free!

Divine Connection

I hear the true voice of God. Surrender and give unto me a holy offering of blood, and I shall give you God.

Artistic Reflection of Society's Madness

The insanity is not within my brain. The insanity reigns in the streets. I am the distillate of that madness, and I am wherever you turn to look. As Seneca said, governments are reflections of the state of their people. And our governments are mad. But we turn our faces away and say that madness is not mine. Well, I too am a reflection of your society. Everything you reject, I must be. And you cannot ignore me! I tear up your streets and creep in your window at night to whisper my madness to you.

Rampant Hedonism

Crazy? Me! Crazy? Ya'll watch you ya'll call crazy, now. Watch me, see if you can follow this. I don't drive to work every day! I don't allow a tightfisted moron who's my inferior tell me what to do all day. I don't stand in lines! I don't let people laugh at me and make fun of me. I don't obey my

parents! I don't get out of anyone's way! I don't worry about my got-damn cholesterol! I don't pay taxes! I ain't the one who's CRAZY! You kin come play, too. Just live fer yerself!

Creative Ignorance

Be simple. Be true. Ah, but you can't. You know too much to ever be at peace, or even happy. As Nietzsche said, "Our knowledge will take its revenge on us, just as ignorance exacted its revenge during the Middle Ages." Give up all ideas. They only bind you.

Ascension of Personal Will

We Malkavians are hardly mad. We but follow the intoxicating piping tune of the inner Will. We have tuned out the static of interfering signals, and listen to the supreme force known to sentient creatures: the individual Will. It looks mad to those who supplicate to the dictates of fickle and ungenerous gods and men, but it is greatness. We are far from cracked. We are whole.

Pleasure through Cruelty

Do my little pranks wound you? Good! I rejoice to taste your misery, delight to drink deep on your despair! A heady brew it is — better than blood, and more nourishing. Love and respect come curdled, but pain is as fresh a draught as God ever made!

Cosmic Salvation

The world is torn by conflicting reality constructs propped up by fearful souls terrified at the thought of being wrong. They invest the entirety of their lives' energies in supporting a crumbling, inconsistent belief system for no other reason than that it is the one into which they were born. Malkavians are free of that dance of folly. We see beyond the narrow tunnel and constricting filters to see the world As It Is. We offer this to all our progeny, all our fellow Kindred, and all of mortalkind.

Absolutely Nihilism

The world is a mad design, written in the dust of the vast, hollow emptiness. It was dust, is dust, and always will be dust. Use your knowledge to annihilate the world! Accelerate the cycle. Bring on Gehenna!

No Core Beliefs

You believe we believe anything? Ha ha ha ha ha!



Fresh Eyes: The Evolution of Vision

We know for certain, for instance, that for some reason, for some time in the beginning, there were hot lumps ... Animals without backbones hid from each other, or fell down.

—The Firesign Theatre, *I Think We're All Bozos on This Bus*

Once, there were little buggies, little one-celled creatures that could bump about and smell a few chemical changes in their world of organic soup. "This is all there is to be known," they declared, and went about their contented existences, absorbing and dividing, absorbing and dividing, and making a lot more of themselves.

But a radical few somehow knew there was more out there than proteins and amino acid chains. They could sense it in their cilia, feel it in their flagella and know it in their nucleus. They could not prove it, but they knew there was more to be known about What Is Out There. Though most of the bacteriological community rejected this radical thesis and thought them mad, a precious few wanted to lift the veil on the rest of their universe.

So they put their potentially eternal life on the line and, in fear and hot water, they organized themselves into multiple-celled critters. In that transcendent moment they OPENED THEIR FIRST EYE! Not an actual eyeball, of course, but a collection of real, working nerves.

Good move! Now they could FEEL their connection to the chemical soup that swarmed about them and knew far more about What Is Out There. This gave them a tremendous advantage over the sense-less ones, whom they ate. The dark, quiet, still, flavorless pool of slight chemical variation became an active sensory bath of pinches, bumps and strokes. Quite inflamed by this new flood of data, the nematode nation invented sex.

Another good move, because not only did they multiply like crazy, but in that magic moment of frenzied fornication, they also came into contact

with a quiet feeling deep within their nerve clusters.

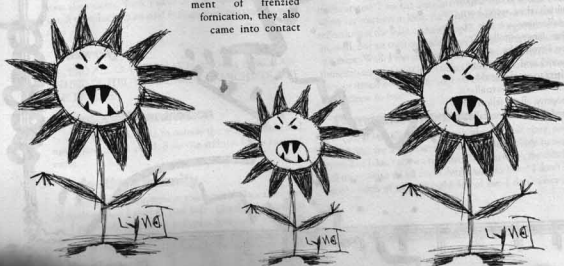
There was still more to know! Though the rest of the worms scoffed and called them mad, the pioneering few concentrated their nerves in the direction of the faint, faint, impossibly faint stimulus that beckoned to them and, in a transcendent moment, OPENED THEIR SECOND EYE!

Light! Sound! Color motion pictures! Good move again! More of the universe unfolded, a sensual cornucopia of information about What Is Out There and their connection to it; and they gorged themselves on it—eating, reproducing, and watching 500 channels of cable TV. One frenzy of sensual fun later, the organic soup was filled with these Children of the Organized Nerve Cluster.

Though deep within their ganglia they knew there was more to be known, most of them made the mistake their single-celled ancestors made so long ago. They scoffed at the notion that there was any more to be known and any more ways of knowing it, and called any dissenters madmen. Well, sir, a pioneering few again concentrated their awareness on the still, sweet sound that lay across the chasm of sensory awareness, stirred something somewhere within the recesses of the glandular system and, in a transcendent moment, OPENED THEIR THIRD EYE!

Good move yet again! They received messages and sensory information unknown to the average cow or market analyst and just as hard to explain to them as it is to explain trigonometry to a meal worm. They took another quantum leap forward in knowledge about What Is Out There and their ineffable connection to it. But the rest of the cows and market analysts call them mad. Well, twenty-three zillion bacteria said the same thing a hundred million years ago. And guess where they are today? They're still bacteria!

So I say to you, be mad! Be willing to be insane before the rest of the world. Wear your individual madness proudly! Overcome the tyranny of your current neurological input devices, and Take Leave of Your Senses!



A Short History of Madness

True history lies in a subterranean tradition that must be brought to light.

—David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*

The Method in the Madness

Despite the Malkavians' erratic and inconsistent behavior, a pattern has emerged over the last 4,000 years of Kindred history. Malkavians continue to return, in one form or another, to one purpose: a desperate, transcendent need to break through to something new, something unseen and unfelt. Malkavians seem obsessed with the idea that there is far more to the world than our eyes see and our minds interpret.

Though they approach this idea in a bewildering variety of forms, they always seem to focus on the struggles of people and of all life to understand the world and to know more than our senses tell us. The Malkavian legend "Fresh Eyes" explains this in terms of living creatures spontaneously generating new senses. Another legend tells of the search in the form of hearing the Voice of Voices. What little is known of the history of the strangest line of vampires can only be understood in the light of transcendent madness.

Cosmological Secrets

According to Malkavian elders, the long and tragic history of the Malkavian clan begins long before the birth of the clan founder, the Third-Generation Antediluvian, Malkav. It begins instead with the primal forces that shaped the formless universe and created order out of chaos.

The universe was a dynamic, changing thing, full of ripe possibilities and endless contradictions. The beings that inhabited that flux universe were star-children who could be anywhere and everywhere and nowhere at once. Their existence was pure potentiality, of such richness that none today can even comprehend it.

Not all of these gollings were content with the infinity they had, and they conspired to keep eternity from others. They began to carve out the infinite possibilities and nailed them down to words and sounds. This cut off massive sections of the flux from the other inhabitants and cut off parts of their being, as well. This caused a massive breach in the cycles of magic in the universe, and clogged them with scabious lesions. The rich possibilities of magic stopped flowing. Creatures of pure flux energies, like the Faeries, suffered

greatly from the disruption in the mana that was their life's blood. Many perished, and most of the survivors fled to the distant dimension of Arcadia. They managed to escape the catastrophic magical drought that had turned Earth's reality into a barren wasteland, but they still seek to return to their native land in force.

This destructive damning of magic continues today, as Earth's reality is continually nailed to a crucifix of science and "objective reality." The legions of mortals who embrace empirical evidence as the only source of knowledge reinforce the deadly damage and cut the rest of the race off from their astral heritage. The Malkavians, along with their secret Faerie allies, work to undermine the reality constructs to set the mana free.

(This is the clearest reading the Camarilla scholars could compile on the cosmological beliefs of the Malkavians. They readily admit it could all be a massive Malkavian hoax. They give it credence because it makes sense in the light of Malkavian history. The doubters point out that if it makes sense, it must be a Malkavian hoax.)

The Cainite Lineage of Malkav

Just as the Malkavians have a completely different view of the creation of the universe, they have a completely different view of the origins of the Great Vampire Progenitor, Cain. Like the other clans, they see him as a remarkable man; a man of vision, insight and power far beyond other men; a man far removed from his peers due to the gift of vampiric powers. Unlike the other clans, they see him as being obsessed with breaking through the artificially constructed reality barriers.

They say the mark upon him that caused fear and respect was not merely his vampiric spirit, but his inner illumination. He was on a crucial mission, striving toward greater individuation, which would allow him to break through the barriers of fixed, immutable reality and return the universe of infinite possibilities.

Cain supposedly wanted all of his progeny to follow his footsteps, but most of them imperfectly understood his mission and pursued selfish goals instead. Of all Cain's progeny, Malkav came the closest to understanding the Progenitor's quest. He sought to pierce the veils between his inner eye and eternity by obliterating his own perceptual and interpretive filtering mechanisms. The end result was madness. He no longer saw the universe as others saw it, but saw past it to the levels of possibility locked out when the universe fragmented.

Malkav has not perfected his new vision, but is continually testing his process. He passed on his new vision to his progeny and uses them to test the infinite ways to break through psychic barriers. He knows that many of them will suffer horribly because of their detachment from consensual reality, but he believes the outcome is worth the price.

The March of Madmen

Malkav dwelt in the Second City with his brothers and sisters of the third generation. His madness created great dissension, because he and his retainers refused to accept the very underpinnings of reality on which all the others built the entirety of their lives. The other Third-Generation Antediluvians accused him of dangerous obstructionism that threatened them all.

When the city fell, Malkav and his coterie fled to the city of Petra. He spread his madness to the rest of the Middle East, causing massive discord, which continues to this day. Some Camarilla scholars insist that Malkav's slumbering presence radiates contagious madness and accounts for much of the ongoing regional destabilization in the Middle East.

Malkavians spread out across the world, bringing a disruptive influence to all lands. They found cities in all lands. They people on the verge of madness or well across the threshold in every city. While they rarely founded colonies or created religions or mustered armies of built cities, they did infect each colony, religion, army and city with their skewed perspectives.

The more enlightened Malkavians could see the Faerie realms and walked the spiral path to Arcadia in each of these new lands. They formed compacts with the Faeries, who often recognized in the Malkavians an opportunity to interrupt mankind's annihilation of the possibility energies and contradictions that make up the Faerie existence.

Some Malkavians became influential mystical leaders, throwing ecclesiastical dung on the orthodoxies of the day. They led few disciples, but they were powerfully committed to the intellectual revolutions that stormed the battlements of the sacred institutions, and they spread havoc and wild change everywhere they went.

In India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the primitive tribes of Europe, Malkavians spread their mad ideas about insanity and illumination. They even made inroads into Asian nations where the mysterious Eastern vampires ruled with an iron hand. Some civilizations embraced Malkavians as holy men, but many spurned them and sent the children of Malkav fleeing.

Many Malkavians served as protectors to the minority populations of madmen in each culture — though each had a unique idea of what protection meant. Because the insane had no way to defend themselves from worlds with no place

for them, the Malkavians made sure they were not abused. They succeeded in convincing many nations that madmen had special gifts and were to be honored.

Malkavians always ran afoul of temporal authorities, who had worked hard to harness society's energies and channel them in specific directions. Malkavians disrupted uniformity of thought both by their plans and by their very nature. They were — and remain — ideal targets of establishment persecution, and are the least equipped of all clans to organize. In addition, leaders of other vampire clans often sought revenge for Malkavian pranks and humiliating tricks. As a result, Malkavian populations stayed very low, and their influence in the world remained peripheral.

Anarchs and Elders

When the Anarch Movement began in the Middle Ages, many of its adherents expected the Malkavian pranksters to rush to the crusade. What

they found was that the Malkavians were just as likely to play malicious pranks on anarchs as on the Camarilla. When the anarchs bitterly complained about this, the rate of Pranking increased tenfold. The anarchs felt deeply wronged by the Malkavians and squandered their energies in seeking revenge against these wayward "allies" rather than concentrating on their real foes.

Some Camarilla scholars credit the Malkavians with dividing the anarchs at a critical moment in history, thus keeping them from crushing the elders when they had a chance. Instead, the elders had a chance to form the Camarilla and managed to regain the offensive.

Still, the Malkavians were a dangerous wild card. If they took no position in the Elder-Anarch war, they would not be influential. If they took a position, it could be critical. Both camps sent representatives to court the mad clan, and both sets were rebuffed by malicious pranks that left the powerful emissaries mad, missing or dead. Then, unexpectedly, the powerful seventh-generation Malkavian Unmada, an Indian Brahmin, organized a majority of the unruly children of Malkav into an orderly group and deposited them on the doorstep of the elders.



The elders were suspicious, but elated. Some elders worried that an intertribal group including the Kooks would be completely unpredictable and inherently unstable, and that the Camarilla would never be stronger than this weakest link. Still, the elders voted to keep the Malkavians as members rather than risk facing them as enemies, and over great protests, accepted them as full partners. With Malkavian support (or, rather, without the threat of Malkavian disruptions), they moved quickly to unify the clans into the Camarilla.

They won a razor-thin victory over their rebellious progeny and planned to punish the offending tribes in the infamous Council of Thorns. Unmada's prize disciple, the illuminated Princess Vasantasena, recoiled in horror at the punishment. In an impassioned and utterly lucid speech before the assembled leaders of the Camarilla, she warned that harsh revenge would not end the violence, but would instead return to them a thousandfold. Forgiveness, she maintained, would also return to them a thousandfold and end the rivers of blood. But if the rebels were magically punished, a climate for a real war would be created—a never-ending state of battle would span the centuries and make the Elder-Anarch War look like a minor skirmish.

Her words chilled many of the elders to the core but, in the end, the titans of the Camarilla were certain that they had broken the back of the anarchs, who should never again pose a threat. Revenge prevailed. Without further word, Vasantasena freed a host of anarch prisoners and joined the scattered ranks of the Lasombra and Tzimisce in the Sabbat.

Camarilla elders raged that all Malkavians were traitors and even toyed with the notion of wiping out the clan. But Vasantasena's words rang in their ears, and they finally ended their calls for revenge.

The Sabbat found the *Antitribu* Vasantasena a disruptive presence in their efforts to organize the ranks. She insisted that the ranks of anarchs not be led like sheep, but that their every move be a path to inner enlightenment. She was a popular rolemodel among the legions of the Sabbat, and her example inspired the Sabbat obsession with the Paths of Enlightenment. The leaders of the rival Paths courted her endorsement, but she continually spurned them, mocking their attempts to codify and formularize the experience of enlightenment.

The Fable of the Clever Grandsons

One day, God was feeling a trifle prankish, so he called a little trick to mind. He created children to comprehend the universe for him. When his first children had produced children, Caine and Able, he issued them a challenge. He told the boys, "Your job is to find out what is really going on here. Go get Me a sacrifice worthy of Me."

Caine prepared a sacrifice of plants, saying, "Here's the greatest sacrifice I can find: the stuff that gives me life." But Able prepared a sacrifice of blood—animal blood—saying, "Here's an even better sacrifice: blood!"

"Clever boy, Able," God said, and He took the blood. Caine figured out the trick and whacked Able on the head. "Here's an even better sacrifice!" he said. "Able's blood!"

"Clever boy, Caine," God said. "You figured that one out right away. You figured out that blood is the ticket to power, and power is the ticket to figuring out what's really going on. The power you have tapped into will be your protection on your journey."

Caine understood, but knew he could no longer dwell with his parents and the people of his parents, who were now as sacrificial animals to him. So he roamed the world.

One day, Caine was feeling a trifle prankish, so he called a little trick to mind. He created children to comprehend the universe for him. When his first children had produced children, he issued his "grandchildren" a challenge. "Your job is to find out what is going on here. Go get me a sacrifice worthy of me."

They all sacrificed a bunch of stuff for power—art, magic, money. One guy made an offering of freedom by sacrificing his subjection. One smart granddaughter sacrificed her beauty on an altar of mortification. And one guy, who apparently didn't learn from Able, sacrificed some animals. We won't hold that against him.

But little Malkav didn't have anything to sacrifice that was worthy of the man who gave him his blood. So he said, "The only thing I can sacrifice that is even close to worthy is myself." So saying, he sacrificed himself. Or he tried to, anyway, but couldn't figure out how. What he ended up sacrificing was his own sense of self.

"Clever boy, Malkav," Caine said to the little fellow, who was coughing up the blood of his missing ego identification. "You have figured out that the blood of the self is even more powerful than the blood of others, and is the ticket to figuring out what's really going on."



Chapter 3: Traditions

What traditions?

Just kidding.

Actually, the Malkavians have lots of traditions. Their traditions are just not very *traditional*. And their traditions are constantly shifting with the tides of their madness.

There is far more to Malkavians than meets the eye. They are masters at putting up a front of nonsensical lunacy that distorts and distracts from their larger purpose. But their purpose is really there . . . in secret. Like many vampires, they hide their true nature behind layers and layers of masks. They believe they are winding their way down a path of screaming enlightenment wearing a mask of antic insanity and anarchic, meaningless tomfoolery.

There are seven (or eight) great traditions crucial to understanding the Malkavians. Each tradition builds on the last, and scholars of the other Kindred clans insist that understanding them all is crucial to defending against the dangerously unpredictable Malkavians. Elders warn that even the most powerful Kindred are vulnerable to pranks if they lack a thorough working knowledge of the seven (or eight) traditions.

The Seven (Or Eight) Traditions

One: The Tradition of Mutable Traditions

In times of breakdown and incipient discontinuity, vision and transcendence — what amount to the gnosis of ascent — become vehicles for fundamental change.

— Morris Berman, *Coming to Ours Senses*

The Malkavian's central, unifying tradition, if they have one, might be that mind and reality are as supple and malleable as clay — and just as much fun to play with. As the sentient creature shapes its mind, it shapes reality. But too many people mold their minds into a cookie-cutter form that mimics what they see of reality, place that form into the kiln of absolutism, and scorch their minds into rigid, inelastic, brittle terra cotta. The petrified brain in turn affects the external world, calcifying reality into a similar form. The rigid reality in turn works on the minds of all beings born into it, molding them into the cookie-cutter form, beginning the whole cycle anew.



in the process, by squeezing reality back into supple clay form, or shattering it in the process. This is a very dangerous game, because it puts one's very reality in jeopardy.

Malkavian Explanation: "My mind! It's stuck in all these echelons of reality! Mired in all the innuendoes I must take into account! My autograph book won't tell me who's been signing it. It's not my fault the pages are all ripped up."

Two: The Tradition of the Broken Mirror

*To stay young,
To save the world,
Break the mirror.*

— Nanao Sakaki,

"Break the Mirror"

An old Malkavian saying urges, "If you find you are falling into madness—dive." The blood of Malkav courses throughout the Malkavian vampire and loosens the restraints placed on the mind by a lifetime of societal conditioning. This results in deep, magical insight and great, magical powers.

To accept the new way of seeing, a Malkavian must give up his old way. He must surrender his attachment to his old world-image, which many accomplish, and to his own self-image, which many cannot accomplish. For this reason, the most common symbol of the Malkavian is a broken mirror.

Those who do break the mirror of their body-image, world-image, and god-image find a whole new world of possibilities. They take charge of their perceptions and seek new ways to shake up their remaining fixed notions. They don't have to, but it helps if they do it themselves, rather than waiting for the Curse of Malkav to routinely devastate their minds, leaving them to pick up the pieces and to try assembling coherent thoughts.

As they break down and reconnect their minds and unsolder and rewire their expectations of reality, they come to approach their minds and perceptions as tools to be

Malkavians don't hate the cookie-cutter form. They just know that form to be only one of many, and they grow impatient when reality stays frozen. Though Malkavians may express this thought in a myriad of ways, most of their actions point to some variation on this underlying theme.

If they have a traditional mission, it is to infect the rest of the world with their madness. Their pranks and mischief and outrageous atrocities are geared in one direction: to radically shake up the thinking of Kindred and mortal alike. To squeeze minds back into supple clay form, or shatter them

tinkered with. They become responsible for their own perceptions and the reality that results from them. They have found tremendous power in this formula.

Malkavian Explanation: "Bust up your reality tunnel! Be in charge of your own mind! Reclaim your glandular system, and reclaim your pineal gland! Program your own bio-computer, and reprogram the Main Frame! Boldly go into your own enigmas! And do it quick, because the light at the other end of your reality tunnel is heading toward you at a high rate of speed!"

Three: The Tradition of Madness in the Blood

Perhaps from the very moment of their monstrous births, it was decreed, by some sadistic jack-in-office of the universe, that they should befall and ruin a fellow creature they had never heard of ... in a city they had never seen.

— Dylan Thomas, *The Doctor and the Devils*

The flip side of the rapturous joy known to Malkavians who gleefully smash their old ways of looking and knowing is the dark, malevolent anguish of Malkavians who resist the process that forcibly loosens their minds from old restraints. The Liberation of Malkav becomes the Curse of Malkav, and causes endless, unendurable agony.

They droop and screech and gibber and rage and withdraw and injure themselves and hurt others and go catatonic. All those actions seem insane, but understood in context, they become utterly and chillingly lucid: when unendurable inner pain rules, endurable outer pain can overthrow it. Temporarily.

When the inner pain becomes so great that the outer pain can no longer mask it, some Malkavians destroy themselves. Among immortal vampiric creatures who cling to unlife with fanatic zeal, the Malkavians are the only clan with a high suicide rate. For those poor, mad Kindred, their old way of seeing the world was more important to them than their very existence. They had enshrined the self's beliefs in a position over the self. Other Malkavians who see the self-immolations of their brothers and sisters often double their resolve to break their mirrors, regardless of the ensuing pain.

Malkavian Explanation: "Who took the ribbons from my hair? Why is everything so cloudy in here? Is nobody listening? Look at what's in the shadows. The same old monkeys!"

Three: The Tradition of Universal Madness

Everything you know is wrong!

— The Firesign Theatre, *Everything You Know Is Wrong*

The Malkavians do not believe that they are alone in the process of building reality. They think that the world is a madhouse, and doubly mad for doubting it. Many feel that they are the only ones who can see clearly, because they are escape artists from the house of straitjacket sanity.

Malkavian Explanation: "In truth, we're all mad. How do we know we are sitting here talking reasonably? What would happen if we were really in an asylum somewhere, raving for the delight of the spectators. Well, they would interpret that frightened look you have on your face and the way you are backing away from me as some meaningful remnant of your potty-training behavior! So they would probe you with rude implements and shock you with electricity and slice off bits of your psychic selves in an effort to understand and 'cure' your madness! And what would happen then? You would suffer inexplicable problems that seem to lack a cause. How do you know they are not doing that right now?"

Four: The Tradition of Pranking

... his acts seemed thoroughly insane. He explained that he had deliberately tried to scare me out of my wits because I was driving him up the walls with my expected behavior ... [He said] "Either we take everything for sure and real, or we don't. If we follow the first, we end up bored to death with ourselves and the world. If we follow the second, ... we create a fog around us, a very exciting and mysterious state in which nobody knows where the rabbit will pop out, not even ourselves.

— Carlos Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan*

Of all the Malkavian behaviors despised by the other vampire clans, the most detested is their habit of playing elaborate, dangerous pranks. These jokes have ruined potent Tremere rituals, collapsed important Ventrue business deals, ruined priceless Toreador artifacts, made the rebellious Brujah look as self-important as the elders they attack, and even embarrassed the antivanity Nosferatu.

Some pranks are cruel and dangerous. Some are hysterically funny. Some seem completely pointless. Some are enjoyed by even the butt of the joke. And some are deadly. Many Kindred become enraged when they learn they were the butt of a Malkavian prank, but many are also secretly glad to come through it alive and whole.

The pranks seem pointless, and even the Malkavians say it's nothing they do on purpose — they just can't help it. But many Kindred, even elders, secretly credit a Malkavian prank with helping them resolve a critical dilemma or break through

to a new level of understanding. Very few vampires reveal this, though. Admitting you see things in a more Malkavian way is grounds for suspicion, scorn and ostracism.

The Malkavian tradition of Pranking comes directly from their erstwhile Faerie allies, who sometimes give them magical, otherworldly assistance. There is an ancient Faerie tradition similar to Pranking that the Malkavians have picked up.

Malkavian Explanation: "Pop! Goes you weasels! I'm squashing your head! I'm squashing your head! Now sit still! This is for your own good, that I bring to you a bit of the Curse of Malkav. Remember, 'Curse' is 'Cures' spelt sideways! I'm just helping you look askew at your life. Or is it askance?"

Five: The Tradition of the Malkavian-Arcadia Connection

A change of worldview can change the world viewed.

—Joseph Chilton Pearce, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg: Changing Constructs of Mind and Reality*

The Malkavians are secretly being aided at the highest levels by the Faeries who stayed behind in earth's reality when most of their fellows fled. They see the Malkavians as a direct assault on the Wall of Sleep, the calcified reality structure that precipitated the loss of magic energy in Earth's dimension.

The Malkavians question the authority of objective reality with a manic energy and put cracks in the Wall of Sleep every time they create a powerful prank.

The Malkavians carry out Faerie pranks on all institutions that continue to prop up the structure of the Wall, assaulting mortal civilization, vampire society, scientific reasoning, recorded history, and anything else they feel binds the universe to a common reality.

Faeries have been known to funnel magic power to the Malkavians, teach them arcane Faerie lore, aid them in their times of need, and teach them greater pranks (often by playing tricks on the mad vampires).

Some Malkavians, like the mysterious Word Eater, are rumored to have evolved from man to vampire to otherworldly Faerie creature.

Malkavian Explanation: "It's fun to visit Faerieland. They understand me when I talk and, best of all, when I don't."

Six: Breaking the Rules

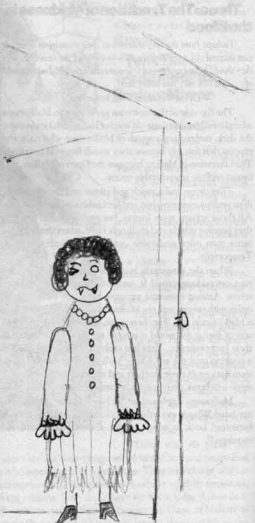
Sometimes in life, situations develop that only the half-crazy can get out of.

—LaRochehoucauld, *Maxims*

In their moments of greater lucidity, Malkavians explain that, because they see more of the universe than other creatures, they have great difficulty explaining this concept to those who see only through clogging filters forced on them

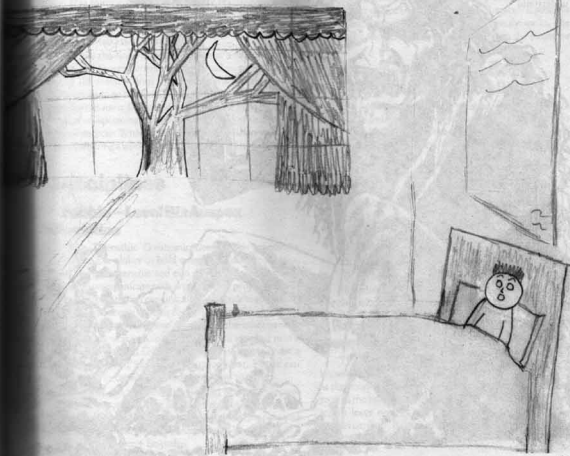
by the world-machine. They say they have trouble explaining the rest of the universe to the part of the universe that only knows part of the universe.

But, though they can't always explain the wonders they see, they can learn to exploit them. With study and training, they can slough off restraints like matter, distance and even



causality. They can go beyond mere magic into direct manipulation of the universe, the way Faeries perform their magic. In short, they can break the rules. This talent is only available to the highest levels of Malkavian madness, though some Malkavians break through to it by accident during anguished fits of self-discovery.

The Malkavians who have mastered this ability are legends among the mad clan. They include Rasputin, the Mad Monk of Russia; the creature known only as Word-Eater; and the mysterious Sphinx, the creature who presented



the riddle of god and man to Oedipus. (Part of her riddle commonly forgotten by scholars is "What is weakest when it has the most support?")

Rasputin is supposed to have feigned his own death and plunged Russia into turmoil, despair and a madness to match his own. Legends say that he is beyond the reach of the Brujah and Ventruue who fight over Russia, because he now resides on an utterly different plane of being, where he can spread his madness to Russia with impunity.

The Word-Eater is the strangest Malkavian of all, and even Malkavians are strongly divided over whether he or she ever existed. The Word-Eater is said to be a great, enlightened sage who went mad from the Curse of Malkav. In his insane/illuminated state, he realized that he did not have to subsist on blood, but could consume anything, and become more of what he ate. This secret is unknown to Western vampires, though Methuselahs whisper that the mysterious Asian vampires understand

it implicitly. The Word-Eater ate rock, sky, colors, and ideas before he decided he liked ideas most of all. He began to consume words, believing it would make him wise again, and restore his sanity.

Some Malkavians say that the words he eats are gone forever — and so are the ideas. The reason he has no proper name is that he ate it. No one will never know what ideas are missing, because they are gone forever, and gone retroactively. These Malkavians say the Word-Eater is limiting the world to a smaller and more feeble reality all the time, and must be stopped. They are trying to reach his level of transcendent reality so they can Prank him and end his dangerous behavior.

But other Malkavians defend him, saying that the Word-Eater is protecting Malkavians from their Kindred enemies and helping free all living creatures. He is eating his way through the concept of the universe from the dawn of Names, but only so limited that a name can be attached to its totality:

Names live in the Wall separating the real and the ideal. These words are baked into the fluid reality. The more words they say, the sooner they of the world. They say that the Word-Eater is the only one who can break through the



and other butchers' aprons.

Secrets of the Malkavians

*This life's five windows of the soul
Distorts the Heavens from pole to pole
And leads you to believe a lie
When you see with, not thro' the eye.*

— William Blake, "The Everlasting Gospel"

Living a life unfettered by the constraints of reality has freed the Malkavians to explore great vampiric powers. While there are always rumors of one-of-a-kind-powers that break all the rules, some can be codified.

Knowledges

Malkavian Time

This Knowledge, available to only Malkavians, allows the character to plug into the Malkavian Madness Network (a connection of similarly deranged minds) to learn of upcoming Malkavian events.

To use the Knowledge, roll it against a difficulty of six. (Often the Storyteller will make the roll in secret, a week before the event.) With one success, the Malkavian gets instructions to go to a certain area immediately, because the meeting just started. With two successes, the Malkavian can learn of an upcoming gathering a day ahead of time and its general purpose. With three successes, the Malkavian learns of the gathering a week before the event, and knows all about it.

Disciplines

Babble—Level Six Auspex Discipline

Like Telepathic Communication, Babble grants the Malkavian the ability to hold telepathic communications, but it has extra benefits and two extra disadvantages. The user can communicate with as many other people as he has Willpower points, and can link all their minds together, but all parties must carry on their conversation out loud. Participants hear the other persons' voices as if the other persons were standing next to him. If Mad Hattie is standing near a construction site and Gomar the Strange is hiding under a bed in the hushed haven of a Venture elder, Hattie can whisper and be heard, but Gomar will have to shout.

The user can add more people than he has Willpower points if those people have derangements and do not resist the Babble. The Malkavian can add a number of people equal to his Empathy. So, the maximum number he can link in a Babble is Willpower + Empathy.

Like Telepathic Communication, Babble requires a Charisma + Empathy roll against unwilling parties.

Melange: Level Seven Auspex Discipline

The Malkavian can look into the world and see a level beyond the current state of reality. This looks like a collage of shifting forms, but the Malkavian understands it and knows everything that goes on in that plane, without regard to physical barriers, distance or even time. He can see things hidden in objective reality, like Obscured creatures, the insides of locked safes, and the fact that his lupine ally is really a shape-changed mage.

It is easy for the Malkavian to see all of reality. The difficult part is knowing how to reference that moving tapestry to return to the physical plane of waking reality. The Storyteller will explain what the Malkavian understands of the other plane through riddles, metaphors, or stream-of-consciousness babbling, and it is up to the player to interpret it.

While in the Melange state, all the player's rolls use half the number of dice (round up), and the character is prone to mutter incoherently and bump into things as she walks. The Storyteller should feel free to enforce this on the player, as well.

Malkavian Madness Network: Level Eight Auspex Discipline

The Malkavian can call a meeting of all Malkavians with the Knowledge called Malkavian Time. Roll Willpower + Empathy (difficulty 6). Other Malkavians will only hear it if they make their Malkavian Time rolls.

Successes:

- 1: All Malkavians in three city blocks.
- 3: All Malkavians in a three-mile radius.
- 5: All Malkavians in a 10-mile radius.
- 7: All Malkavians in the city.
- 10: All Malkavians in the greater metropolitan area.
- 13: All Malkavians within 300 miles.
- 15: All Malkavians on the continent.
- 20: All Malkavians in the world.

Note that though Malkavians hear the message, they are not compelled to obey it.

Repression of the Obvious: Level Seven Dominate Discipline

The Malkavian can look at another sentient being and know the thought that the target is most directly repressing at that moment. It could be a simple idea like, "I really have to go to the bathroom, but this guy's rantings are too interesting to leave now." Or "I'd love to strangle that scrawny Malkavian fool!" If the target has a great secret that consumes him, that will overpower any lesser, momentary thought. But

if the secret is not something that he obsesses about, it will only come to mind if the Malkavian first brings up the subject in conversation or somehow puts the target in mind of it.

With three successes, the Malkavian can make the target blurt the repressed idea out loud. Great fun during dinner parties or tense trials.

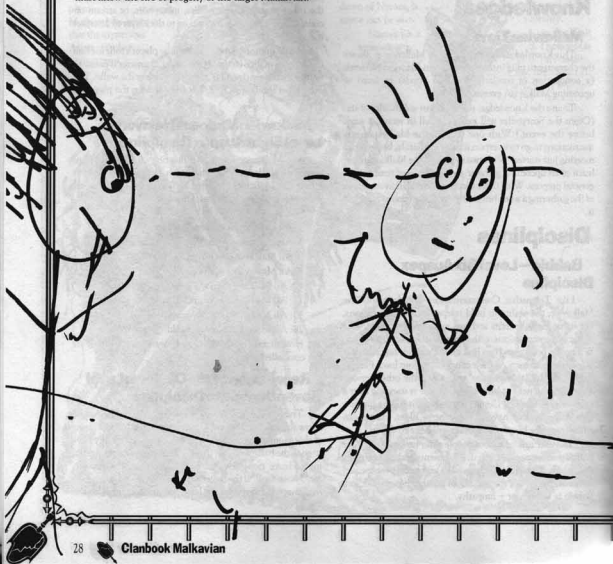
Scrawl: Level Six Obfuscate Discipline

The Malkavian can speak and write in a secret, universal code of the insane. Only other Malkavians can read and understand it. If the Malkavian chooses to further encrypt his words, he can make it readable only by Malkavians with the Scrawl discipline, or understandable to only to selected Malkavians, or just one particular Malkavian. He can make it readable to Malkavians he has never met — though he must know the sire or progeny of the target Malkavian.

Elder Malkavians use this ability to leave each other secret messages, or to contact all the Malkavians in a city through graffiti. These messages cannot be deciphered or even noticed as Malkavian scrawl.

Visit Faerieland: Level Seven Obfuscate Discipline

The Malkavian can utterly disappear from the area and appear in Faerieland. From Faerieland, she can go anywhere on Earth she wishes to go. But, first, she has to pass the Faerie Keepers, who dislike capricious use of their land. They question the Malkavian about her purpose, and if they don't like her story, they push her back into the world she left, near the time she left it. The keepers are willing to listen to bargains, especially if the Malkavian will Prank the entity of the Keepers' choice.



Malkavian Hierarchy

Meetings

Malkavian meetings are on "Malkavian Time." They happen when a group of Malkavians appear in the same area at the same time, with no apparent preplanning. They emanate messages to one another on the previously detailed Malkavian Madness Network, a level of consciousness unavailable to most creatures. As Malkavians become more powerful, they become better at picking up these signals.

Authority

Malkavians usually yield to the authority of their elders, like any other clan, though sometimes a neonate will say or do some bizarre act that gains the attention and respect of the other kooks.

In general, Malkavians defer to one another based not on age, but on how far along the path of Malkav they are and how deeply the curse has taken root in them.

The Five Stages of Malkavian Development

There are five generally recognized stages of the Curse of Malkav, ranging in severity of impact it has on the psyche of the Malkavian.

Fool

This is the common designation given to those who are new to life as a Malkavian vampire. They have only recently been given The Curse, and still suffer from the early manifestations of the madness. They are characterized by tics, neuroses and mild phobias, and their Pranks are often pallid and ineffective.

These early Malkavians are usually not much of a threat, as they are forced to expend most of their energy coping with their inner demons. They can't disguise their inner torments, and the cruel Kindred of other clans find their breakdowns highly entertaining to watch.

Maniac

As The Curse takes hold, it drives its victims to greater and greater levels of excruciating psychic agony, plunging them deeper into psychosis. The intense inner pain drives them to outrageous acts of violent Pranking, which leave devastating results. These uncontrollable outbursts, frenzied fits of delirium, and wild seizures are legendary among the Camarilla. To the other clans, the Maniac is the most

commonly known type of Malkavian, because most Malkavians are stuck in this stage and are impossible to ignore.

Madman

The first positive change that can take place in a Malkavian comes with the acceptance of the dementia and a cessation of the struggle against it. Malkavians usually reach this stage after a series of debilitating breakdowns and subsequent mental restructuring. This stage pulls Malkavians further from conventional reality and into deeper into unknown waters. By accepting the curse and going with the madness, Malkavians put themselves in the hands of far more powerful and far more dangerous forces than their own senses of self-preservation would allow. Malkavians who have surrendered to the madness ride the whirlwind, and do not know where it will take them. Their pranks become far more clever and more precise, as their breakdowns lead to breakthroughs in insight. Though many Malkavians never reach this stage, a few arrive here right away.

Lunatic

In rare cases, some Malkavians have a flash of insight in which they realize their madness is just a tool to crack the shell of the world-illusion. They abandon the constraints of madness and simply see through to higher realities. At this level, Malkavians wield frightening power to break all the rules of conventional reality, and their incomprehensibly ingenious Pranks have devastating, life-altering effects on their targets.

Fool

At this point, Malkavians realize that everything they know is wrong, and start over again. This stage is functionally indistinguishable from the first stage.

Most Malkavians are in the first two categories. It is rare for Malkavians to embrace madness. Because it means giving up all connections and associations to the physical world, Malkavians often counter-rebel against the rebellion of their own minds, and conflicts themselves utterly. Accepting and embracing the madness is a difficult matter which demands constant change and allows not a single moment of respite. This is a torturous existence and accounts for the high burnout rate among Malkavians.



Attitudes: Malkavians and the World

Paranoia and blind faith are psychic handmaidens.

— Bill Griffith, *Zippy the Pinhead*, 12/5/92

The Malkavians find the other clans tiresome and have little patience for their dogma and narrow worldviews.

Brujah

Wasted and wounded, bruised and brutal Brujah, how does your rebellion grow? Ranting and raving and chanting and changing everything but your own weary self. You would pluck out the eyes of the rest of the world before you would rinse the film of filth from your own eyes and see that the outer world you hate looks a lot like your self-polluted inner landscape. You know, the one you flee from. Remember, all revolutions go 360 degrees. That's why they call them revolutions. That's what I call a vicious circle.

Brujah bully boys can be useful buddy boys, 'cause their eyes are sometimes still open. Prank them good, and help them rebel against everything they hold dear instead of what other people hold dear. Otherwise, you'll see their revolution come full circle and bite 'em on their Brujah butt.

The few Brujah called Individualists (imagine that — a group of people called Individualists. And they call US crazy!) have already taken a good whack at the wall between Here and What Is Out There, and have put a few good cracks in it. Prank that wall from the other side, and meet 'em halfway!

Gangrel

Scruffy the cat and Dougie the doggie and all the little Rumpoleasers — restless wanderers, country hicks, and animal pals. If I could talk to the animals, learn their languages ... then I could talk to a Gangrel.

They may be lost in the forests of their minds and not know about the thorn in the paw of their soul, but they sure can sit quietly and watch the moon rise, and hey, that's half the battle.

Nosferatu

How many Nosferatu does it take to end the Inquisition?

All of them.

These ugly little vermin have got their fangs sunk into a larger chunk of the elephant than the rest of the blind bats, and know a whole lot more of the Big Picture. But the price they pay for their knowledge is this icky rejection of the flesh stuff. Pee-yoo! Still, at least they know they are vampires and don't try to sanitize it for your protection, like the others. Who knows, they may get to the heart of the matter before we do. Keep an eye on them. But, for heaven's sake, be sure to give them a little vanishing cream to get rid of those unsightly blemishes!

Toreador

Sung to the tune of that really pompous march from Carmen:

"Toreador, go bathroom on the floor-o' Toreador, Toreador!"

Sorry, just had to get that of my system.

Posur, Artiste, Hoser, Farteste: they're all one and the same. Oh no, now I remember. One makes the art, and the other eats it. Prancing ponces and pretentious puffs all. Which makes them great company. With simply machelvous parties, don't you know. Which means they'll put up with you reaming them and pranking them WAY longer than

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anyone else will, because they think it's hip and trendy to have a Malkavian cut up at their parties. Besides, all their friends will snicker at them for being a poor sport if they complain. So they have to be good sports and laugh, overly made-up clown, laugh, even when their ego is breaking.

But they'll turn on you in a second and stick a stake in your back quick as they'll say, "So how do you like the Vermeer behind you? Don't you love the textural play of the light on the towel around her head?" So be sure not to turn your back to see, but instead look 'em in the eye and say, "Yeah!"

If that doesn't take 'em down a peg or two, nothing will. Except slashing up the Vermeer next time you sneak into their Haven. No, no, they'd just blame that on a Brujah. No, don't slash it up. Replace it with a cunning replica you

painted to look just like the original except that now her eyes follow you around the room except when you are looking right at it. Then give the original canvas to a chilly homeless person to keep him warm. And who says art can't be functional? By the time the Toreador realizes the switch and tracks the original down, it'll be cracked and stinky. And so will he, cuz the staring eyeballs will drive him around the bend.

And some of the ones that actually create art are pretty close to edge already. Reach out and give 'em a push.

Here's the Toreador paradox: They live for pleasure, yet they are not alive and can't experience pleasure. They have fallen into an undead memory of pleasure, and they can't get up. Free them.





Tremere

Tricky tricky tricky Tremere. Clever lads, but oh, so serious. Very serious; scholarly little wizards. Clever, but stodgy enough to be the butt of a good joke. And they throw great tantrums when we frustrate them. We used to be able to fool 'em good, but now they're onto us. Some of 'em anyway. Not all of 'em. Don't believe that rot about them all being ants in a great, airtight, hive-mind pyramid of power. That's one leaky pyramid, pal. You better start bailing out the sand it's filling up with.

But some have begun to figure us out. Some younger wizards presented a dissertation on us before a big Wiz Circle. "New Vis Sources Procurable through Malkavian Perceptual Reality Adjustment." That's Wiz-speak for: they are cracking the code. We played a Prank that made the Elder Tremere ridicule them, but some of 'em know there is power in reality-tunnel manipulation, and they won't quit till they get it. So let 'em follow you down the primrose path to psychopathic power. Cuz before they know it — ZAP! You can't have the pow without the psycho. You can take the power out of the psycho, but you can't take the psycho out of power. Or is it the other way around?

Ventrue

If there were Kindred any easier to torment than these stuffed capes, we'd have to quit 'cause it would just be too damned easy. Their belts and ties are too tight, constricting the blood flow and making their spirits constipated. Hey, that could happen.

These spiritual B&D fans enjoy being tied up to the conventional reality tunnel of the day. They are so chained to the rock of consensual reality that they cannot see the vulture of conformity until it plucks out their liver of ... of ... well, of something damned important!

Caitiff

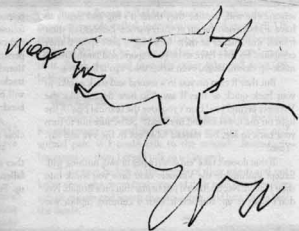
Poor lost lambs. Pity them not, but give 'em as good as you give anyone else. They're close enough to the edge that you can push 'em over. But there is power in growing old and powerful with no clan to tell you what to do.

Assamite

'At's a mite stupid silly limitation. But 'at's a mite powerful solution. A very concentrated solution.

Follower of Set

Try to remember the snakes of November and follow, follow, follow...



Giovanni

High roller, holy roller, holy terror resurrectionists, the Godfathers of Souls who art into Italian suits and naughtiness with corpses, nekkid-rophillic, nekkid-romantic, nek-kid on the block of vampiric clans, but gathering power as fast as the other clans are gathering dust. They are fast, slick, and don't like jokes AT ALL. But the worst part of their power is this: they are Toys-in-the-Attic CRAZY! Why, that's not fair. Their madness gives them such an edge over all the other clans. The very idea!

The Camarilla

This has got to be the greatest idea we ever came up with! Imagine a place where all Kindred clans want to get together to discuss Matters of Grave Consequence. Imagine the stuffiest vampires, who are just CRYING OUT to be taken down a peg or two, setting themselves up for a fall by ACTUALLY INVITING US IN AND ACTUALLY ASKING US FOR SUGGESTIONS!

Camarilla meetings prove to be an endless source of never-ending fun. The best part is that they suffer with us, squirm before our pranks, and fall to the Curse of Malkav, and next year THEY INVITE US BACK AGAIN! And they call us crazy.

Don't believe the rumors that we joined the Camarilla out of fear of being wiped out by Sabbat. It's scurrilous gossip cooked up to make us look like we care. Like we care.

The Sabbat

More fun than the Camarilla because they Prank so easily; less fun because they seldom get the joke. "Ooo! Bad Malkavian make fool of Otto! Otto smash!" Yawn.

Still, many Sabbat are just plain nuts and tempting targets for the Curse.

Anarchs

When the anarch rebels against his master, he grants himself a special chance—one chance in hell to rebel against himself. Well, there's a whole lot of anarchs rebelling against their masters. But how many have figured it out so far and rebelled against themselves?

Salubri

What's with these guys? Where are they? Do they really exist? Do they really have a third eye? I mean, come on, an actual third eye! Come on. Someone's taking things waaaaay too literally.

Who knows? They may see the universe clearly. If anyone can find one, ask him the sound of three eyes clapping. Then poke him in all three.

Golgonda

Just another state in the dis-united states of Malkavia. If you want it, go for it. Me, I prefer blood. Keeps me in touch with people, ya know? Keeps me goin' back to the hood to hang with the homlies.

Lupines

Wolf boys are a fun bunch. They keep to themselves and like to kill us on sight, but other than that make wonderful company. There's also a secret alliance of Malkavians and Lupines, made up of outdoorsy Malkavians and some werewolves born under the new moon. These trickster wolves and rugged kindred call their group the Lunatic Fringe, and Prank their fellow wolves and vampires.

Here's the secret poop on the "Garou": they are chasing their own tails. Yep, that's the problem, and they don't even know it. Maybe they'll figure it out before end of the world. Then again, maybe not.

Mages

Madness and magic go together. Unfortunately, most living mages are sane. And they wonder why they aren't getting anywhere in their studies. Pranking these mini-Merlins has a great payoff, 'cause they have so very far to fall and so much to gain if they cross over into the lonely realms of madness. Then again, they can't take a joke and lash out over the least bit of mischief. And they always want our blood. Too bad they don't know about the madness that runs through it. Heh, heh ...

Faeries

Our best pals, on the nights they're speaking to us. Get to know them better.

The Blind Bats and the Elephant— The Creep Master for Nonobjective Reality

Once upon a Time, there were seven blind bats. Or 13 ... I forget. Anyway, they were a bit hungry for fresh blood, because they were Vampire Blind Bats, so they looked around for something to bite. Except they couldn't look around, as they were blind, which you should have realized already.

But their unerringly keen senses of smell led them to a plump, juicy, blood-filled elephant — which in this story stands for all of reality. Got it?

The Gangrel bat bumped into the tail and said, Aha! This elephant is really a twitching animal! That is what I shall become.

The Brujah broke his fangs trying to bite the hoof and said, Aha! The elephant is like a hard, stony, insensate pestle that crushes all beneath it with pitiless abandon! That is what I shall become!

The Nosferatu flew into the elephant's butt and said, Aha! The elephant is really a wrinkled, stinky, puckered, desiccated mass that lives in a dank cave! That is what I shall become!

The Tremere bit the head and said, Aha! The elephant is really a puny little brain struggling to control a vast and powerful body! That is what I shall become!

The Venture felt the legs, and said Aha! The elephant is really a powerful, upstanding pillar that can bear all weight with strength, but with very little suppleness or resilience! That is what I shall become!

The Toreador felt the trunk and mouth and said, Aha! The elephant is really a great, firm shaft or a warm, moist hole! That is what I shall become!

And the Malkavian bat, blinder than all the rest, swooped down and managed to miss the entire elephant. Aha! said the benighted Malkavian, as it flapped past. The others are making a huge fuss over an elephant that is really a big lot of nothing! Well, that is what I shall become!

And so, I say unto you, flap on!



Method Roleplaying: Acting the Madness

Ok, the Malkavian is crazy. Bonkers, round the bend, unraveled. Right? But we Vampire players and storytellers aren't. Right? So how do we get a handle on playing a Malkavian, let alone make the character convincing?

Clash Your Nature and Demeanor

One secret of creating an exciting, unique Malkavian lies in the basics of character creation. In most characters, Nature and Demeanor peacefully coexist, with the character carefully planning how to use his outer Demeanor to cover or protect his inner Nature. His inner motivations and outer manner can peacefully coexist. But the Malkavian has difficulty managing both and cannot always control the conflict.

You can use this to your advantage by finding clever ways to bring your nature and demeanor into opposition. For example, an inner Visionary with an outer Curmudgeon could hold schizophrenic arguments with himself in trying to find a course of action. One moment he would argue to take the high road, and the next moment, he will cynically shoot down his own plan and chide himself for being so naive.

Any Nature and Demeanor can clash, but complete polar opposites can generate more friction with less effort.

Any contrasts can help you bring color to your character. Feel free to add more conflicting, contradictory elements to your character, like Merits and Flaws, or add clashing abilities.

Play up the Derangement

Derangements are far more than limitations on your character's actions. They are a great starting place for adding flavor or color to your Malkavian and can be incorporated into much of the character's existence. For example, a vampire with the Paranoia derangement does not just have to be suspicious of threats to his existence, but could be fearful of any perceived slight to his pride. This can add great color to the character without making the derangement monopolize the game.

Stream of Consciousness

This is a fun way to make your character uniquely bizarre and to perhaps even surprise yourself. As your Malkavian character goes deeper into madness, feel free to actually make less sense. Add a few strange nonsequiturs, an occasional

rambling thought that just goes on and on, or a fit of outright stream-of-consciousness doublespeak. Sprinkle double entendres and oddly meaningful malapropos in your character's dialogue. This may not be easy at first, but it gets easier with practice. Read some James Joyce or T.S. Elliot or e. e. cummings or any Dadaist for inspiration.

When you become accomplished at this, try letting your train of thought completely jump the track and land somewhere else entirely. Don't worry about knowing where the idea you are talking about is going to end up. Just go with it. The fun thing about stream-of-consciousness roleplaying is that you can't do it wrong. The other players can read anything they want into your words, which should make for some interesting games. If your occasional flights of nonsense make no sense at all to them, you're doing just fine. And if you start to make sense in a strange sort of way...

Add Dream Imagery

Your dreams are a rich mine of fresh material percolating straight from your uncensored subconscious. Make use of it. Remember dream images and ideas and words, and launch into dialogue and action from them. You'll be surprised how original and inventivethis approach can make your character.

When You Find You're Falling, Dive

The best advice to a Malkavian player is the same advice to any player. Cut loose. Boldly go where no gamer has gone before. Experiment. Be willing to fail in a big way. And then be willing to fail again. That's the best way to break through to something original and creative. Your Malkavian character gives you special permission to go out on a limb, so go for it. People will remember one excellent bit of roleplaying far longer than they'll remember 100 of the most colossal failures.

Keep in mind that there is a narrow range between going wild and mucking up the game for everyone else. Keep in mind everyone's enjoyment as you seek new roleplaying heights, and you'll do just fine.

Notes to the Storyteller

A good game requires successful collaboration between player and Storyteller. The player can make the Storyteller's job easier by eagerly playing up even the most difficult aspects of the character's madness, and the Storyteller can make the player's job easier by giving him a lot of room to experiment. Get out of his way, and let him determine how he wants to sculpt the madness. Only when the player resolutely refuses to play his madness or dominates every game session with a hyperextended characterization should the Storyteller intervene.

If the player simply ignores her character's madness and acts as sane as anyone else, find some time outside of the game session to inquire about it. The feedback may be all she needs

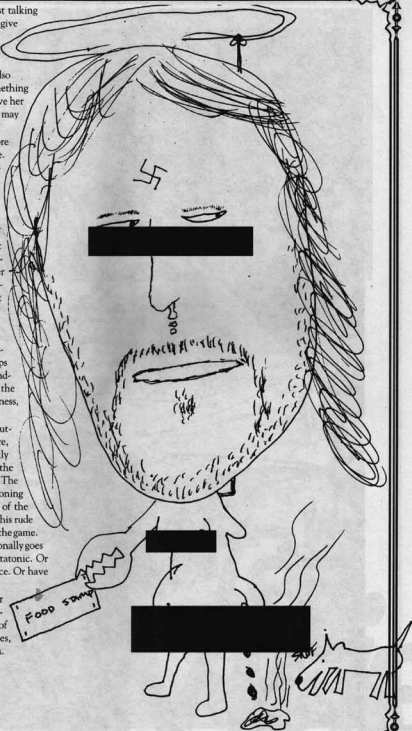
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to play her derangement better. Just talking about it outside of the game might give her some fresh ideas. If she has difficulty making her character's quirks show up, offer suggestions, or give her ideas to spur her thinking. It's also possible the player may be up to something so different you never noticed it. Give her the benefit of the doubt, because she may just surprise you.

If the player continues to ignore the character's madness, intervene. Assume that the character is resisting the Curse of Malkav and is therefore suffering greatly for it. Occasionally inform the player that the character just spent a Willpower point resisting the derangement. If that doesn't work, it's time for drastic measures. The character will start seeing reality differently from the other characters. He receives erroneous information. He starts seeing beasts that are not really there coming to get him. He finds out he just did the exact opposite of what he intended to do. This continues until the character accepts that he is mad and stops resisting the Curse. This carrot-and-stick method works well to enforce the Malkavian dictum: go with the madness, or the madness comes to you.

Some Malkavian players try to utterly dominate the game with bizarre, outlandish behavior that continually derails the plans of the players and the enjoyment of the other characters. The Storyteller can keep order by mentioning her concerns to the player outside of the game. If the player does not modify his rude behavior, you'll have to intervene in the game. Inform him that his character occasionally goes so far over the top that he goes catatonic. Or make him temporarily lose his voice. Or have all his gifts stop working for a day.

Remember, the Storyteller should intervene only in extreme circumstances when the enjoyment of the game is on the line. In most cases, the game will iron out its own kinks.





Chapter Fore!!!: Malkavian Templates

There's something seething in the air we're breathing.

— Natalie Merchant, "Tolerance"

Malkavians are a more diverse and bizarre lot than any other vampire clan. Many Malkavians do not even acknowledge a kinship with the others, but the Malkavian blood is

undeniable, just as the madness that follows it is inevitable. They all take very different paths and grapple with the demons of their madness in wholly different ways.

Malkavian

Malkavian

Malkavian

Malkavian

MALKAVIAN

MALKAVIA

Mesmeric Manipulator

*The women all control their men,
With razors and with wrists.
And the princess squeezes grape juice
On a torrid, bloody kiss.*

— Tom Waits, "In the Colosseum"

Quote: "I see you are grappling with a difficult internal problem revolving around your personal life. The spirit of the Assyrian Warrior-Chief Tzan-Tzan tells me your answer lies in renouncing your present direction and investing only in funds endorsed by the Holy Rule of Names. I shall name them now, but only once, so listen carefully..."

Prelude: You were the daughter of a wealthy landowner in 19th century London. When you were barely 16, gambling debts, blackmail and scandal wiped out your father's estate and left the family disgraced and penniless. Rather than face a life on the streets or begging from condescending relatives, you ran off with a famous spiritualist. You worked as his assistant and learned all his prestidigitation and cons.

The day he crossed a more famous spiritualist in a fight over a wealthy contributor was the day you both died. The other spiritualist, a Malkavian vampire, was intrigued enough with you to give

you the Curse. He took you on as his assistant and taught you real power. When he went fully insane and disappeared, you were on your own.

Concept: Part con artist, part mad mesmer, part vampire, part you control a large herd of credulous mortals who are channeling world to give them advice

Roleplaying Tips: You find creature in the world arming charm and dominate all who

Equipment: sword cane, magical apparatus, ultra-

vamp, lous mortals who aspirits from another on business and love.

Speak slowly and enigmatically. You find creature in the world arming charm and dominate all who

Handcuffs, lockpicks, whip, black cloak, cards, wands, ratus, home security system with sonic sensors, black sports car, small revolver.



MaLkAviAh™

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Name:

Nature: Autocrat

Sire:

Player:

Demeanor: Visionary

Generation: 13

Chronicle:

Concept: Mesmeric Manipulator

Haven:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●○○○○○○○
Dexterity ●●●○○○○○
Stamina ●●○○○○○○○

Social

Charisma ●●●○○○○○
Manipulation ●●●●○○○○○
Appearance ●●●○○○○○

Mental

Perception ●●○○○○○○○
Intelligence ●●●○○○○○
Wits ●●●○○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Acting ●●○○○○○○○
Alertness ●●○○○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○○○○
Dodge ●○○○○○○○
Empathy ●●●○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○○○○
Leadership ●○○○○○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○○○○
Subterfuge ●○○○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○○○○
Etiquette ●●○○○○○○○
Firearms ●●○○○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○○○○
Music ○○○○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○○○○
Security ●○○○○○○○
Stealth ●●○○○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○○○○

Knowledge

Bureaucracy ○○○○○○○○
Computer ○○○○○○○○
Finance ●○○○○○○○
Investigation ●○○○○○○○
Law ●○○○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○○○○
Occult ●●○○○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○○○○
Science ○○○○○○○○

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●●○○○○○○○
Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obfuscate ●○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Allies ●○○○○○○○
Contacts ●○○○○○○○
Fame ●○○○○○○○
Herd ●○○○○○○○
Resources ●●○○○○○○○
Retainers ●○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience ●●●●○
Self-Control ●●●●○
Courage ●●●●○

Other Traits

Seduction ●○○○○○○○
Ventriloquism ●○○○○○○○
Sleight of Hand ●●○○○○○○○
Malkavian Time ●○○○○○○○
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Humanity

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Willpower

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Blood Pool

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

Bruised
Hurt -1
Injured -1
Wounded -2
Mauled -2
Crippled -5
Incapacitated

Weakness

BEGIN UNLIFE WITH AT LEAST ONE DERANGEMENT

Kidney One: Who's Who Among Malkavians

I was thus occupied in scrutinizing the mob, when suddenly there came into view a countenance ... there arose confusedly and paradoxically within my mind, the ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood-thirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense — of extreme despair.

— Edgar Allen Poe, "The Man in the Crowd"

The Dionysian

One of the most mysterious of the Malkavian elders is the ancient vampire known as the Dionysian. He is rumored to be 3,000 years old and very powerful. Some say he is of divine birth and blessed by the gods with divine madness. His connections to Arcadia allow him to step in and out of Faerieland at will and to establish a completely safe Haven there, beyond Earth's plane in the land of perpetual twilight.

According to legend, he is keenly interested in Malkavian illumination and has helped many a neonate survive the rigors of their selectively shattering psyches. He is supposedly looking for the special Malkavian (or Malkavians) who can lead the clan to the next level of enlightenment. He sees the Malkavians as the secret to restoring hope and magic to the world.





B 193



Rasputin

The mad monk of Russia did not die in the great revolution, but went deep underground, where he continues to bedevil the Russian people out of an undying thirst for revenge. He is mad beyond all reason and broadcasts terror to the Russian people in the interests of keeping them divided and broken. He blankets the area with a pollution of the spirit that has degraded all of Eastern Europe. He has survived Brujah and Ventrue assassination attempts and flaunts his power before them. Some suspect that he is a pawn of the Nosferatu Baba Yaga and serves her vengeance.

He has reached a powerful level of vampiric existence and is rumored to no longer need blood for sustenance. Instead, he claims to live on the consecrated Host sanctified by the Eastern Orthodox Church, because it transubstantiates to the blood of Christ in his mouth. He is rumored to stalk Russian churches, saying to the other parishioners, "These midnight masses are all that's keeping me alive!"

Vasantasena

The Sabbat claim one of the most powerful Malkavians, the prophetess Vasantasena. She is a wise, vampire who is eager to unify the Kindred community against their Antediluvian progenitors, who she believes are stirring from their ancient slumbers. She believes that, though the thin-blooded lineages of vampires can never match their ravenous ancestors in raw power, Kindred can gain extraordinary insights into the very nature of the Antediluvians and protect themselves through enlightenment.

Her methods are very unorthodox, and she is willing to sacrifice the sanity of those she comes in contact with to achieve her goals. She believes the Camarilla is a blind pawn of the progenitors, and that the Sabbat offers the only hope of surviving Gehenna.



Crazy Jane

Seventeenth century England was not a hospitable place for poor women. Jane Pennington went mad from disease, unsanitary childbirth procedures, and the overall decay of British society. She ended up in a filthy asylum run by a powerfully wicked

Malkavian
named

Mad Tom. He made her one of his vampiric slaves, which intensified her madness. But it also gave her special insights into the nature of magic and power. She rose up and dethroned Mad Tom, turning the asylum into an oasis of peace in a mad world.

Her happiness did not last long. Ventrue saw the asylum as an attempt to organize Malkavian might and destroyed it. Crazy Jane did not rebuild it, but took it as a sign that she had no home. She now wanders the world, seeking out Malkavians who have difficulty adapting to their madness and helping them accept and embrace the Curse of Malkav.

Her very existence is a matter of some debate. The Ventrue believe they destroyed her, and the only Malkavians who have ever seen her have been those undergoing extreme psychic distress. But many revere her as a healer and greet each other saying, "May Crazy Jane see you through your next breakdown." She is also rumored to have been muse to Edgar Allen Poe — a source of much of his exaltation during a tragic series of events.



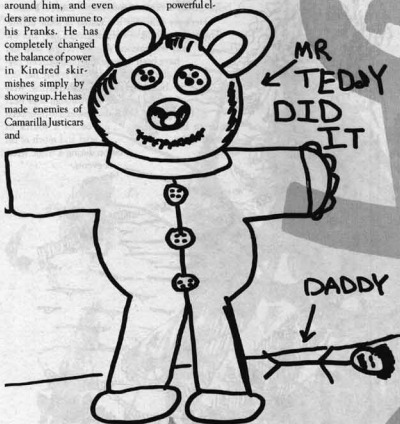
Malk Content

Malk Content is a trickster of unknown origin. He has woven a hundred tales of his origin and has claimed to be a Native American shaman, a Mongol warrior, a Babylonian King, the son of Aeneas, a Persian prince, an alien, a ruler of the Seelie Court of the Faeries, the son of God, and Malkav himself. He appears in many forms and many guises, but always has the image of a broken mirror somewhere on his person — sometimes tattooed to his forehead.

He is a disruptive presence, with great powers of contagious madness. His presence causes reality to warp around him, and even powerful elders are not immune to his Pranks. He has completely changed the balance of power in Kindred skirmishes simply by showing up. He has made enemies of Camarilla Justicars and

the Sabbat Black Hand, both of whom see him as a very dangerous loose cannon. Some credit him with making conditions in Industrial Europe so squalid that each nation was forced to undertake reforms.

He has stolen magical books and artifacts from the Tremere, forged unholy alliances with Lupines and malevolent spirits, and created great dissension among the vampiric community. No one knows where he will strike or what his motives are (or even if he has any). Most simply try to guard against him.



The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance, yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend.

— Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*

C L A N B O O K :

Malkavian™



What is this thing called madness? They say those touched by insanity have also been touched by divinity. *No they don't.* Madness is often only a step away from enlightenment and, for some, is a step beyond. *No it isn't.* Now learn how the Malkavians twist the world for their benefit. *You won't learn a thing.* Discover the truth of their madness. *It's too late for that.*

Clanbook: Malkavian includes:

- The history of the clan and the true depth of its member's insanities;
- 10 sample characters suitable for players and Storytellers; and
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