

Anger is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you.

— Horace, *Epistles*

scenes of
FRENZY

Scenes for Vampire the Requiem using the Storytelling Adventure System

Written by Will Hindmarch Original Art by Avery Butterworth and JS Rossbach Product Design by Will Hindmarch

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

SCENES 6	MENTAL ●●○○○ PHYSICAL ●●●●○ SOCIAL ●●●●○	XP LEVEL 35-74
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“Voluptuaries, consumed by their senses, always begin by flinging themselves with a great display of frenzy into an abyss. But they survive, they come to the surface again. And they develop a routine of the abyss: ‘It’s four o’clock. At five I have my abyss...’”

— Sidonie Gabrielle Colette

Introduction

This is “Scenes of Frenzy,” a collection of six stand-alone scenes for use in any **Vampire: The Requiem** chronicle.

Use these scenes to play out moments of frenzy, whether you expected them or not. Though each scene is presented with a potential cause of frenzy in mind — a sudden wound, a swelling fire, a gluttonous euphoria — the heart of each scene really lies in the moments after frenzy becomes unavoidable. These scenes aren’t about vampires that are *almost* swept away by the animal instincts of the Beast. The drama here is about characters wrestling with the Beast, whether to halt it or steer it.

Playing With Frenzy

Frenzy is a narrative device and a gameplay element as much as it is a part of the fictional experience of the Requiem. Instead of being a repetitive instance of senseless violence, look at it as a recurring part of the game, emerging now and again to present the player and her character with a challenging decision to make — decisions that bring the personal horror of **Vampire** to center stage and, hopefully, reveal something about the character in the process. It should be a surprising and fearsome event loaded with meaning and followed by dramatic consequences.

Some of the following scenes deviate from the strict rules for frenzy given in **Vampire: The Requiem (V:TR)**. Other scenes present particular actions or dice pools that might seem to be a bit out of sync with frenzy as described in the **Vampire** rulebook. But, despite their name, the game rules are not necessarily strict limitations on how things work in the World of Darkness. They are not scientific laws. They are tools for turning the dramatic aspects of the Requiem into compelling and playable game experiences. They model, rather than dictate.

For example, the third bullet point describing frenzy on p. 179 of **Vampire: Requiem** says simply that a frenzied vampire “cannot perform any action that requires much thought.” Pretty vague, right?



AN ANTHOLOGY

“Frenzy Scenes” is the first anthology product for the Storytelling Adventure System.

The scenes in these pages don’t go together. They don’t combine to make a story. Rather, these are resources you use on the fly, when your chronicle takes an unexpected turn and you want a reliable source to turn to for fiery drama, rich narration and challenging gameplay.

In this case, these scenes are meant to be used when a character in your chronicle is faced with the ferocious horror of frenzy, as described in **Vampire: The Requiem**, p. 178–181. If you think the risk of frenzy is the right tool for dramatizing a conflict in the current session, but you weren’t planning on pitting a character against her Beast tonight, borrow one of these scenes to bring that threat into play.

Because the circumstances of frenzy are so unpredictable — they depend on the roll of the dice, after all — an outbreak of furious, panicked or gorging vampires can blindsides even the most prepared Storyteller. In the event of an unexpected frenzy of any type (anger, Wassail or Röttschreck), pull out one of these scenes and keep your story moving.



But the amount of thought necessary for Jarod the vampire doctor to find someone’s carotid artery isn’t the same as the amount of thought it would take Edgar the vampire antiquarian.

Just what exactly “much thought” means is intentionally left for you, the Storyteller, and the rest of the troupe to define according to your idea of a good story.

To keep frenzy a compelling and varied part of a **Vampire** chronicle, repetition needs to be diminished. Every instance of frenzy should be characterized, whether subtly or grossly, by the Kindred that succumbs to it. An intellectual vampire may find some traction in her century of experience with medicine or the occult that gives her a rare edge — perhaps just this once — to wrestle her Beast back into its pen.

The Frenzy Roll

In these scenes, when you see a reference to “the frenzy roll,” we’re talking about the default Resolve + Composure roll a player makes for her character to gain control over any kind of frenzy, whether that means trying to resist it (as described on p. 179-180 of **V:TR**) or trying to ride the wave (p. 181). Thus, modifiers to the frenzy roll impact the character’s likelihood of keeping control of the Beast, whether the vampire wants to make it heel or let it slip.

In comparison, “the frenzy action” refers to the whole extended action to resist frenzy or ride the wave, which is often made up of multiple frenzy rolls, depending on the number of total successes needed for the action.

The Beast’s Dice Pool

A few of these scenes make use of a new, experimental mechanism in **Vampire**, used to roughly gauge the power of a vampire’s Beast. In some scenes, you’ll find references to “the Beast’s dice pool,” usually used to oppose the vampire in some kind of contested action.



ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you’ve chosen a fine place to start. However, to keep this product lean and sharp, we haven’t included any of the Storyteller advice and dramaturgical meditations we put at the beginning of full-length SAS story kits. The scenes in this product are easy enough to use on their own — most of the entries in each scene are self-explanatory — but if you’re looking for a way to get more out of this product, be sure to read the *free SAS User’s Guide*, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

The gist of the SAS format is this: The actions described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** are archetypal, but by no means exhaustive. The “Foot Chase” action on p. 65 of that book, for example, describes foot chases in general. It gives you a place to start. The action in an SAS scene describe one specific event, one instance of action. So while the **World of Darkness Rulebook** gives you mechanics for a foot chase, an SAS product gives you game mechanics for *this one* foot chase.

This gives your story’s actions more color and detail, and adds mileage to every Skill on the players’ character sheets. No two foot chases — or whatever other action they’re taking — are alike.



A player never uses her character’s Beast’s dice pool. It is not a feature of the character, but of her Beast. And the Beast is, so often, an antagonist.

The Beast’s dice pool is the inverse of the vampire’s Humanity. That is, the Beast’s dice pool is equal to 10 minus the character’s Humanity. A vampire with Humanity 2 has allowed her Beast’s dice pool to swell to eight dice. A vampire with Humanity 4 has a Beast dice pool of 6.

Whether this represents, in the metaphysics of the World of Darkness, the relative power of some mystical creature lurking within the black and decrepit wilderness of the Kindred body, or whether this is a statement of the Kindred’s own internal struggle against her own human psyche and Damned impulses, is a question to be explored through stories and contemplation. All this simple mechanic is concerned with is providing an easy tool for Storytellers to use to help dramatize the conflict.

How to Use These Scenes

Each of these scenes is meant to be used as a single instance of frenzy, whether you, the Storyteller, planned for frenzy to be a part of the current chapter of the chronicle or not.

Each scene is robust enough, though, to add a bit of dramatic depth to a story, too. You can include one of these scenes into your plans for a story by incorporating a conflict that could result in that scene’s frenzy for one of the characters. Use the inciting incident sketched out at the beginning of each scene, or devise one for your troupe’s unique characters.

When using these scenes on the fly, in reaction to an expected frenzy that happens during play, you have two main ways of selecting the right scene:

Storyteller’s Choice

As usual, the Storyteller decides the consequences of frenzy and presents them to the player. “The Beast sets your blood on fire,” the Storyteller says. “That fucking asshole can’t talk to you like that! Show him what you do to pushy scum-suckers who think they know better than you!”

Or, “The whiff of Vitae from under the door is so strong, it’s like you have blood in your nose. Get in there. The Beast *wants* you to get in there and get it blood.”

Or, “No way in hell is your ass getting burnt up tonight. You’ve got to run. Go, go, go!”

If the player is up to it, she keeps making the decisions for her character, even if the *character* isn't really making decisions for *himself*. The Storyteller, in collaboration with the player if possible, determines what the frenzied vampire wants and the player decides how her character, running hot on hate, terror or hunger, does to get it. She decides what's in-character for *her* crazed monster.

But if the player won't step up to the challenge, tries to dodge the tough choices and the ugly side of the character, the Storyteller may have to call the shots. Frenzy is one of the scariest parts of **Vampire**, and while it's natural to want to skip the scary parts, or avoid the stuff that makes a beloved character look ugly, this is a vital tool in the personal-horror repertoire.

Frenzy fills a character with motives — animal impulses — that the character might not want. That's tough. That's the consequence of the Curse. That's why they're the Damned.

The shock or disgust that comes with a vivid, moving scene of frenzy should be the kind of reaction the player would seek out from a great horror film. The goal of horror isn't to humiliate or demean the audience, and the goal of frenzy is not to make the player regret playing **Vampire**. It isn't to embarrass or punish, it isn't to teach the *player* a lesson, even if it *can* have that effect on her character. If a scene of frenzy is used to teach the character a lesson, the player should be in on it.

If the player's not the sort to appreciate the image of her character reduced to a state of snarling, hissing insanity, evoke the frenzy in other ways. For example: The character simply wakes crusted with dried blood, a severed hand held in his like a lover's. For a fleshed out example of this idea in action, see the **Vampire SAS** story, **Blood Red + Ash Gray**. ([Click here to visit the webpage.](#))

It's up to the player to either portray her character's unique behavior in those circumstances, or surrender her frenzied vampire to the Storyteller's control for the scene.

Player's Choice

The player selects a frenzy scene to dramatize his character's plight. Thus, even a player who doesn't feel comfortable calling the shots for a bloodthirsty, immoral monster capable of the most inhumane behavior is still able to have a say on what is at stake in the scene. The dramatic details of the character's behavior may still be surrendered to the Storyteller, but what sorts of dice pools will be used, what sorts of risks will be taken, and what sort of tough choices are to be made are up to the player to decide.

All the above advice on frenzy and horror applies here, too.

To use the Player's Choice option, try to have choices available beyond just the six in this kit. (More frenzy scenes will be available in the future, if enough people seem to like the idea.) Create more options by swapping out Skills, targets, and consequences for failure. Replace the Empathy Skill in "Ecstasy" with Medicine (to get a sense of the victim's body's reaction to the blood loss), for example. Change the subject from a lovely stranger to a friendly acquaintance, make the consequence not just death but exposure or capture.

Your goal is to create a tough choice for the player of the frenzied character, or the character's allies. Frenzy is ugly. These choices shouldn't be easy — this is a "two evils" situation. Here are some examples of the kinds of tough choices the players should be faced with on behalf of their characters:

- Do you let an innocent stranger die or take the risk that he'll ID the frenzied vampire later?
- Do you risk the respect of a Retainer or Mentor by frenzied in their presence or do you take your chances on the street?
- Do you lock the frenzied character up and accept whatever damage he causes to the haven or do you let some other poor bastards suffer?
- Do you flee through a mortal crowd and risk exposure in the hopes of getting your Beast to a safe spot faster or do you trespass on another vampire's turf and risk spending the day there, near his ghouls?
- The lover you drained nearly to death — do you take her to the hospital where people will see you together or do you risk her life and take the time to find some night doctor to treat her?

A Quick Summary

Here are brief sketches of the scenes presented for each category of frenzy, for your reference:

Anger

Pain: A bloody scene of senseless anger in the midst of violent chaos.

Spite: A scene of dialogue explodes into ferocious violence.

Hunger

Agony: Starvation turns a hunter into a butcher without conscience.

Ecstasy: The distraction of the Kiss gives the Beast a chance to gorge.

Fear

Spark: The surprise of a sudden flash of flame leads to panic.

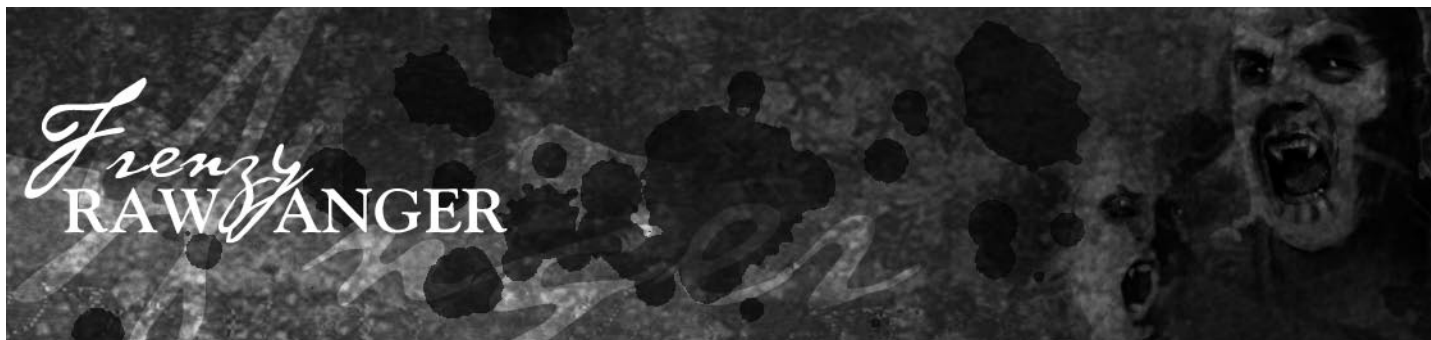
Flame: Peril spreads along with flame in a frenzied vampire's wake.

Anger Frenzy

When the mortal man or woman would curse, flick off, spit at or brawl with some bastard, or punch a whole in the drywall over some intangible upset, the Beast pushes for raw, animal violence.

It doesn't want to make people feel bad, it wants to hurt them. It doesn't want someone to feel stupid, it wants them to bleed and beg. It doesn't want that bitch to lose face, it wants to slash her face and leave her scarred. It doesn't lose control and kick a door, it loses control and scratches at the bricks until its fingernails splinter. It pounds on the glass and grinds shards into that bastard's mouth. It sits on that fucker's chest and pulls out his hair and sucks blood from his torn scalp. The Beast wants to be heard and feared.

YOU WILL HURT



THE ONES YOU LOVE

In the **Vampire** rulebook, it's called anger frenzy. Among the Damned, it is simply straight-up frenzy. It's the senseless, furious spite of the Beast. This is the feral fever that plagues all Kindred — the bloody flare of madness that lurks within the Curse. The calm nights between frenzy are not any kind of "true" state; they are just nights when the Beast's wrath is in remission.

Every Beast hates. Kindred are all creatures of anger. On some level, every vampire feels the impulse to lash out against the world, against the Curse, against their mistakes, against their enemies, against the endless succession of lookalike nights spent caught in the net of the Danse Macabre, against the oppression of Princes and lords, against the treachery of so-called allies, against the lies they tell and the truths they hide, against the endless meals of tepid blood, against the looks of fear in the eyes of the living, against the assholes, against the ghosts, against everything they said eternity would be and everything it really is.

Frustration, vexation, disappointment, spite, wrath — anger.

Anger Scene: Pain

Your Skin or Your Soul

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL ••

This scene is meant to overlap the end of a violent scene already in progress, when a character's injuries drive her beyond hostility, to frenzy.

The successes necessary on the failed frenzy action triggering this scene are irrelevant — this scene could even be used when a character chooses to ride the wave. What matters is that the character is (or thinks she is) in grave peril. She should be suffering numerous lethal or aggravated wounds. This is about more than pride or humiliation.

Overview: A character (or perhaps more than one) is hurt in a fight with mortals, other vampires, or something else. Maybe she's angry at being threatened by people so *beneath* her, maybe she feels betrayed somehow by these enemies of hers, or maybe she just wants to damn her accursed luck. Whatever it is, something has turned her desire for survival into a bestial, irrational rage... and it's gotten the best of her. The Beast is calling the shots, now.

Description: *Your body is dead, but your wounds still hurt like hell. You can feel the Blood oozing through your corpse toward the [gashes/holes] in your flesh, your body trying out of habit to bleed, maybe. Your teeth grind. Your fingers tremble. The Beast has its hands in yours, wearing you like a disguise. It tries to cover your eyes, push you down, and take control. Utter control. It's never been like this before.*

Storyteller Goals and Tips: This scene presents the possibility of an unusually potent frenzy — a display of immoral, awful violence so extreme that the blow-by-blow details can't be adjudicated through the typical combat rules. Put this frenzy into play, and the scene becomes not a question of ammunition or tactics, but of direct morality and mercy. The point of this scene is to challenge the player to choose, for her character, between simple self-preservation and fearsome, reckless power. The player's answer determines the nature of the Beast's actions in this scene, and the consequences that result.

Character Goals: On the surface, the character's goal is to survive the scene or put an end to her enemies. Beneath the surface, the question becomes whether or not it is also her goal to maintain her Humanity. Her morality is at stake, but we can't say whether it is her goal to protect her morality or just her hide. How this scene turns out will reveal something about that, though.

Ask the player, on behalf of her character:

"Are you willing to relax even your faint remaining grip on the Beast to get out of this? Do you let the Beast off its leash at the risk of your Humanity or hang on as best you can at the risk of your Requiem?"

If you need to bring it home:

"If you shut your eyes, hide inside yourself, and let the Beast take utter control, it will ruin this place, and you will have let it happen. If you don't, you and the Beast take your chances together, with the usual force of frenzy and whatever odds you think you have here."

If necessary, break it down for the player like this: Let go of the Beast, and the character will survive this scene but have to deal with the aftermath, morally and materially. Rein it in, and the character gets just the normal frenzy effects (**V:TR**, p. 179).

Dice Pool: None. This action hinges entirely on the player's choice.

Action: Reflexive. This internal moment between the Man and the Beast is just a second of fleeting correspondance between intellect and instinct, like the mental go-ahead that tells a desperate bladder to go ahead and piss.

Obstacles/Penalties: Limit the player's time to decide — count down, out loud, from ten, five, or even three.

Results

Let Go of the Beast: The Beast destroys the character's enemies, biting open arteries, standing on throats, stabbing out eyes and slashing open bellies. Most of them bleed out; a few die quicker. The character's Humanity, if it is 4 or higher at the start of this scenes, automatically drops by one dot. Check for a derangement as normal. The player cannot spend Willpower to take control during this frenzy.

When you resurface in your mind, your nose is clogged with blood. Your eyes are practically stuck shut with a gooey red paste. Your clothes are soaked through; your shirt is stuck to your skin like you've been sweating in it. In your hand is a fistful of hair. You're standing on a corpse with its head facing the wrong way. There's a long hair caught between your teeth.

The place is thick with running gore, handprints, footprints, debris. You have totally fucked the Masquerade. So now what do you do?

Rein It In: Without turning to the Beast for help, the character is left to fight her own way free, without special treatment. If you want to reward the player for picking the more humane path, however, allow her to attempt to a new frenzy roll to steer her anger frenzy into fear, and ride the Beast out of this scene to safety (or something like it).

Anger Scene: Spite

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •••

A scene of dialogue turns into a scene of unconscionable violence. When a character is confronted with an angry frenzy caused not by violence or physical danger, but by humiliation or treachery, consider this scene. This is an example of a vampire exploding into bloody violence when a living person might just punch a wall or slam a door.

The frenzy action leading up to this scene should be worth at least 5 or more successes, as described on p. 179 of **V:TR**. Bad luck isn't enough to warrant the grotesque behavior of this scene — the character should be faced with something potentially infuriating. If the inciting act attacks the vampire's Virtue or Vice, that's even better.

Overview: In this scene, the frenzied character is confronted with an inciting event that might justify anger, but not the level of violence that he employs in response. Maybe he's been betrayed by a trusted Contact, maybe his lover's reputation or Status is being threatened, maybe a covenant-mate is unexpectedly shuffling blame off onto the character — whatever it is that's going on, it's only when the character succumbs to frenzy that the scene goes from words to blows.

Description: *That fucker. That's fucking enough. You can feel hot fumes in your throat that make you feel like you're gonna puke, but it's the Beast, trying to burn your Blood. It's coming, and it's going to put that fucker onto the floor and peel his skin. It wants him to do more than just suffer... and it's too late for you to stop it now.*

Storyteller Goals and Tips: As with "Pain," the idea in this scene is to draw a connection between the vampire's motives and the Beast's actions, to demonstrate how frenzy does not absolve a vampire of his Beast's actions. In this case, however, justification is not an issue. Whatever has pushed the character this far can't justify the torture the Beast seeks to employ in spite.

The question, in this scene, is how the vampire tries to recover from his Beast's actions and what, if anything, he can salvage from his violent reaction. For this scene to play out to maximum effect, witnesses with ties to Kindred society are essential. The character should be concerned not just with his own Humanity, but with how this bloody display makes him look to other vampires.

Ideally, at the end of this scene, you should be able to draw attention to just how frightening it is that these monsters are more concerned with how frenzy makes them look than they are with the violence it causes.

Character Goals: The MPS-dot rating of this scene, above, is meant to describe a situation in which the frenzied character's social or political standing is jeopardized more than his physical wellbeing. The idea is that, whoever the target of his spite is, the character stands to lose more by being seen as vulnerable to manipulation and his own explosive temper, than he is to any physical attack.

More Than Just Suffer

The Beast wants to knock that fucker down, bite into his face and start scraping it away like wallpaper. The player has the option to spend Willpower to slow the Beast down for one turn, as usual (p. 180, **V:TR**), but in this case that's just enough to keep the leash from breaking — the vampire may still be spastic at the end of his chain.

This is a test of the character's Composure, more than anything. The frenzy is a foregone conclusion at this point, but if the character can make his actions look even a little more calculated than crazy, he may be able to save his reputation, or even benefit from it. The question for the player is: *"Would you rather your character be seen as passionately driven but vulnerable to frenzy or ruthless and immoral?"*

Dice Pool: Presence + Composure. The character's reasoning is already lost to spite, but with enough control over his appearance, he may be able to disguise his frenzy as an inhumane ruthlessness. With luck, the character can convince witnesses, or his victim, that the torture he inflicts comes from his own mind, and not his Beast.

Action: Reflexive and extended. The target number of successes is equal to the target number of the failed frenzy action. The character is assumed to be using his action each turn to brutalize the target of his frenzy, but by spending a Willpower point the character can restrain himself for one turn and attempt some other action, or use Intimidate or Subterfuge in place of Presence to scare the victim or feign some greater degree of control, and work towards the target number.

Consequences: In frenzy, the character tortures his target (a Humanity 2 sin) to a sickening degree, beyond the limits of what any humane person would say he "had coming." Word spreads (from the victim or from witnesses) about the character's gruesome behavior. If this action is successful, the character develops a reputation for being insanely brutal if crossed; if unsuccessful, word spreads that the character is emotionally vulnerable to whatever caused the frenzy.

Either reputation is worth a ± 2 modifier on Social actions, favoring or penalizing the character as appropriate, for as long as you see fit.

Wassail

The vampire stalks. She whispers. She struts, she lies, she lures and seduces. She slides her hand up a thigh and slips her teeth through flesh, and sips away at the living with a Kiss.

The Beast pounces. It snarls. It holds the prey down, it pushes the head away from the shoulders to stretch out the neck, it cuts flesh and laps blood. It chews and peels, gets its fingers in and stretches out the opening. It gulps. It licks the floor and sucks bloody tissues. It sucks until the taste of copper turns to ash, until the nectar turns to pulp.

The vampire hopes to use her head, but falls back on her instinct and heart. She feels for a pulse, she watches for red lips to go pale, tempers her thirst with her humanity, and stops before her heart breaks.

The Beast knows only its throat and gut. It sucks to fill its throat, swallows to fill its gut, and stops when there is no more.

YOU WILL FEED



OFF THE LIVING

It is the impulse that drives the Man and the Beast to squabble against each other over a common goal, like vultures fighting over a stinking carcass. It plagues the vampire and her Beast alike, but the two react very differently to its drive. It is Wassail, the lust for blood.

Whereas a vampire may be utterly opposed to her Beast's reactionary anger, and may agree with her Beast's panicky flight in the face of fire, her negotiations with the animal manifestation of her thirst are more precarious... more subtle... more insidious. The Beast that hunts is ferocious, but the Beast that is feeding can be surreptitious. It can climb up a vampire's throat under cover of the ecstatic Kiss and take control of the mouth. In the face of panic or ire, the Beast's impulses rattle the body and snarl in the mind, but in the face of *just a little more blood*, it can sneak past the Man and shake the body into a hunger frenzy that shocks hunter and prey alike.

Wanting, lusting, insatiable, voracious, gluttonous — only for blood.

Wassail Scene: Agony

MENTAL ••• PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •••

Starvation turns a hunter into a predator without conscience. This is an archetypal scene of Wassail — a hungry vampire driven mad by the sudden scent of blood feeds with messy shamelessness of an animal. What this page provides is fodder for multiple instances of this common scene.

This scene can follow any failed hunger frenzy action provoked by the sight or smell of blood (see **V:TR**, p. 179). Hungry or starving vampires are most likely to succumb to this scene. Only vampires who can still feed directly on the blood of the living (BP 6 or lower) are suitable for this scene; Kindred who can only feed from humans (BP 3 to 6) are the best fit.

Overview: This scene is based on the presumption that the frenzied character has succumbed to Wassail unexpectedly (from his perspective, at least). The vampire might have been on the prowl for prey, or perhaps just low on Vitae following a fight, when he is exposed to the sight or scent of living blood by chance. The Beast, roused and hungry, bolts like a hound, dragging the Man behind.

Frenzy is a foregone conclusion by the time this scene comes into play, the *source* of the inciting blood might not be. We present this scene with a placeholder victim that could be a homeless person, a hooker, a partygoer out for a smoke, a random pedestrian, a guy taking out his garbage, some dude waiting for the bus, or whatever else is right for your circumstances; any gender, any age. If possible, aim your description to make the player's choice in the following action as difficult (but not punishing!) as possible.

Description: *You're licking blood off someone's collarbone. Fangs still snagged in flesh, blood oozing between them. Under your hand, hot breath is trying to push out a scream. A tear runs down the cheek, into your mouth. Panicked eyes look at you from behind your clamped fingers.*

Storyteller Goals and Tips: Your goal for this scene is to quickly evoke the irrational binge of Wassail, create one tough moment pitting morality against the Masquerade, then get on with your story. And then haunt the character with his choice later.

If the character has a Humanity of 3 or higher, play this scene for its moral

crisis. If the character is already such a monster that killing his victim is not such a difficult choice, play up the practical issue of disguising the scene.

Character Goals: The goal of any vampire under the spell of Wassail is the same — blood. As a **Vampire** character, this Kindred's goals presumably include protecting his Humanity, or the Masquerade, or both.

Humanity or the Masquerade?

Risk your soul or risk being discovered? Kill for the sake of certainty or trust for the sake of your Humanity? As the vampire drinks in enough blood to break out of the Beast's hold (probably about 3-5 Vitae), he regains his senses. The Beast has brought down a lone victim like a lion brings down a gazelle — no finesse, no subtlety. The victim is now also a violation of the Masquerade. Does the character kill her, or find some more moral way to try to keep his secret?

Dice Pool: If the choice is between Humanity and the Masquerade, no dice pool is necessary. If the character chooses to commit murder, the murder is successful. The degeneration and derangement rolls becomes the relevant dice pools.

If the character tries to cover up the crime, either after or instead of committing murder, the appropriate dice pool is up to you to adjudicate based on where this scene is set. Intelligence, Wits and Dexterity are apt Attributes, while Investigation, Medicine, Larceny and Subterfuge are logical Skills to use. What's important is that the character's efforts to hide the scene be described with a single roll — he should be left to worry about whether the results will stand up to scrutiny. His hurry to be out of there, his vague detachment in the face of potential exposure, are all lingering animal coldness left over from the frenzy. The character is still at the mercy of the circumstances of the frenzy scene.

Action: Instant and contested. Whatever investigator(s) that you decide eventually arrive on the scene make the opposing roll when they inspect the victim — so the vampire can't be sure how well he's covered his trail when he leaves the scene.

Obstacles/Penalties: Witnesses (-1 to -5), a well-lit or public place (-1 to -3), victim cries out (-3), vampire cries out (-2).

Aids/Bonuses: A blade, to disguise the bite marks (+2), a bribe worthy of Resources •••• or more to the victim (+2), a remote location (+1 to +4), a rainy setting (+1 to +3).

Consequences: If the character was alone, does he later tell someone else what he did? Can he suffer in silence, enduring the guilt or doubt that follows his choice? If the character wasn't alone, can he trust whoever was there to stay quiet? If the consequences of this scene are serious enough, they might warrant a psychological or Social Flaw for the character.

Wassail Scene: Ecstasy

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ...

The distraction of the Kiss gives the Beast a chance to gorge. This is a scene of passionate feeding gone too far, of a time when a Kiss leads to something more complicated.

Daeva are particularly good fits for this scene, though hungry or starving vampires of any ilk could fall victim to this kind of creeping frenzy. This is an example of Wassail incited by the taste of blood, not just the sight or smell of it. Feeding is assumed to be happening already and the vampire is assumed to somehow value her vessel. Maybe it's a lover, Retainer, member of her Herd, loyal ghoul or old friend.

Overview: The thrust of this scene is the moment of panic between the failed frenzy roll and the Beast's inevitable efforts to keep its prey from getting away. Can the character protect the vessel from her aroused Beast? If so, where does she then aim her hungry Beast?

Description: *Something's wrong. While your hands are moving like a lover's, you find your legs tensing, pressing down for purchase. You realize that you've been gnawing on flesh, stretching the wound with your tongue, and pressing your mouth, your hips, as hard as they'll go. [The vessel] is still under the spell of the Kiss... but you open your eyes to find yourself caged in your own body, no longer in control. The Beast is coming. No — it's already here.*

Storyteller Goals and Tips: Panic. Melodrama. The Beast is here, and the vessel is in danger. Only the character can protect him... if anyone can. As a scene of horror, you want to tangle up some of the ideas of sex and death by drawing parallels between the impulsive frenzy of the Beast and the thoughtless excess of sex gone too far. At this point, the pretense of feeding is falling away and the specter of rape is being revealed in its place.

This is dark, mature stuff — do not force it further than you would want entertainment, even provocative entertainment, to do so. As an alternative to the full-on horror of a rape allegory, try characterizing this escalation of uncontrolled lust as the adolescent mistake of going too far too fast, of making an impulsive mistake that terrifies and thrills.

Character Goals: The character's goal is to protect her vessel from

unnecessary harm, or even destruction, at her hands. If the vessel has been protected from the reality of vampires, or just the character's identity as one of the undead, the stakes of the scene expand — the pretense is too much to be maintained in the face of the Beast. Can the character salvage her relationship with the vessel after this shock?

Man Versus Beast

First, the question is, how long as the Beast managed to slip into the vampire's flesh unnoticed? How close is the vessel to danger? Beyond that, it's an issue of how long the vampire can keep the Beast in check (presumably by spending one Willpower per turn) and protect the vessel?

The first issue is resolved with two simple actions, described here, the second depends entirely on the character and her vessel — you must follow the action where it takes you. We cannot lead you there, because we don't know your unique circumstances.

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy versus the Beast's dice pool.

Action: Instant and contested. Make the first roll when the amount of Vitae the character *intended* to drink has been consumed. The Beast keeps feeding, though, one Vitae per turn. Repeat the action each turn until either the character succeeds or the vessel is reduced to just one or two Vitae, at which point his pain and fear become too much for the vampire not to notice.

Obstacles/Penalties: The setting is loud or dark (–1 to –3), the vampire has little or no experience feeding from this vessel (–1 to –4).

Aids/Bonuses: The setting is intimate or private (+1 to +3), the vampire is intimately familiar with the vessel (+1 to +4).

Details: *Feeling the wound with your tongue, the edges are ragged. This is no Kiss, not anymore. You cannot hide this with a lick.*

- *Pushing down on the Beast is like trying to hold a door shut, trying to seal a hatch in your throat. You can't trust your own hands or mouth.*

- *Maybe, if you push hard, you can get [the vessel] time to run. You can whisper, you can plead around the Beast breaking through your cracking voice, or you can shout and scream over it, but it's too late to hide the frenzy in you.*

Consequences: Is the character left with no choice but to scare away the vessel using Intimidation or even Nightmare? Can she give her vessel more than just a running start before chasing her down? Is the vessel left to flee, bleeding and weak (with wound penalties) from the vampire he was, a moment ago, so close to? What can a vampire do to regain the trust of someone she hurts — or nearly kills?

Rötschreck

A frightened person talks to himself, freezes in place, breathes heavy. A vampire doesn't breathe at all. A vampire freezes in place to sneak up on his prey. A frightened vampire can't calm his worst fears with words, because the Beast won't listen.

The Man inside the vampire might be afraid of killing, of letting someone down, of losing money, of simple failure, but not the Beast. Humiliation and frustration makes the Beast angry. Only one thing scares the Beast, and that's the gift the gods gave to the Man: fire, the semblance of day.

The panicked Beast lashes out for a chance to run, to make a hole big enough for itself to scramble through, to hide in. It bolts for shadows, darkness, pits. It sprints hissing through the night, it runs deep into decrepit buildings in search of solid chambers, it scrambles downward, away from the sun.

YOU WILL RUN



INTO THE DARK

They call it the Red Fear. Only the sun, and all those things that descend from it — fire, flaring light, embers and sparks — reach this part of the Beast's panicky cowardice. Only the Man, and his memory of life, can steel the Beast against Rötschreck.

A panicked Beast is a unique threat, especially to one's allies. A furious or hungry Beast can be anticipated — it goes after a target. What it wants is clear. It is unreasonable, but it is focused. A Beast propelled by the Red Fear is irrational, desperate and wild. It wants to move, and it doesn't give a fuck what happens to anyone else. The Beast wants only to prolong the Requiem and it worries about nothing but its own survival.

It wants to move. Hold it down, it bites and slashes to get away. Lock it up, it breaks its fingernails and wears away its flesh to get out. Let it go, it smashes through the night until it is exhausted, protected, cornered, starved or finally dead.

Terror, panic, fright, dread, shock — don't look back.

Scenes of Frenzy

Rötschreck

Rötschreck Scene: Spark

MENTAL ..

PHYSICAL ..

SOCIAL

The surprise of a sudden flash of flame leads to panic. Can the vampire choke it down long enough to maintain the illusion of self-control?

This scene is meant to follow the kind of unlucky frenzy that follows exposure to an otherwise routine spark of fear — a match being struck, a flashbulb going off, a cigarette's ember caught by the wind. In such a situation, the vampire that can't stomach that little spike of the Red Fear stands to lose a lot of respect.

Failed fear frenzy actions of just 1-3 successes are the best trigger for this kind of scene, but any kind of casual exposure to fire might result in this sort of dreadful situation. Maybe a willful Dragon keeps a fire going in his fireplace to gain that slight edge over visiting Kindred, or maybe a stray spark from some witch's ritual bonfire pushed the vampire that little bit too far.

Overview: The character has failed a frenzy roll, and now whatever task he came here to do has become that much more difficult. Even if the character was just here to deliver a message, put in an appearance, or touch base with a Contact, things have gone sideways. This scene works best if the vampire is caught in a social situation with a superior or a valuable asset — someone that shouldn't see him in a moment of weakness.

Description: *You flinch. Did [he/she/anyone] notice?*

Inside, it's like your guts are squirming, flailing like a dog on the end of a chain. Your knees tremble, and maybe its plain to see. Your lungs are trying to fill with air so the Beast can shriek. Your legs want to run. You feel like you're gonna piss. That little [ember/spark/flash] was enough to spook the Beast, and it is not going to wait for you. It wants out of here.

Storyteller Goals and Tips: This is a pure suspense scene — can the character maintain his cover as a Kindred with his shit together and get out of the room before the bomb goes off? Only, in this case, the character is the ticking bomb.

You want to ratchet up the tension every turn. How long you have should be clear: You have a number of turns equal to the character's remaining Willpower points.

Character Goals: The character's goal is to get through whatever business or encounter was going on before the Rötschreck took hold without going ballistic in front of everyone.

Faking It

The simple idea behind this action is to hit the character with one suspenseful stimulus after another. You're not trying to force the character to flee, you're trying to keep the tension rising so that this frenzy — and any that follow — remind the player just how vulnerable vampires are not only to fire, but the idea of fire.

Underlying all these obstacles are two important ideas:

- The character has something else to accomplish in the scene, whether it's simply to be formally dismissed and save some face, or something more complicated, like an interrogation. If possible, turn that goal into an extended action (worth at least 10 total successes), establishing a second deadline clock and instantly ramping up the stress. Can the character get the information (or the signed contract, or approval of his plan, or whatever) before he runs out of Willpower and succumbs to the Red Fear?

- A player can spend only one Willpower point per turn.

Dice Pool: Varies. See the obstacles below and use any or as many as you deem necessary. All dice pools are opposed the Beast's dice pool.

Action: Reflexive and contested. If the character succeeds at the reflexive action to overcome one of these obstacles, he can hold off Rötschreck for one turn without spending a Willpower point, buying him time or the ability to spend that Willpower point somewhere else.

Obstacles: *Keep that initial panic hidden:* Presence + Composure.

- *Remember what you were going to say:* Intelligence + Composure
- *Focus on the issue at hand:* Intelligence + relevant Mental Skill
- *A glint of metal, reminding you of that spark:* Resolve + Composure
- *The Beast is in your guts, trying to push out blood like piss:* Stamina + Composure, to keep legs steady
- *It wants to scream. If you open your mouth, will it be you or the Beast that gets heard?* Composure + Presence, Manipulation or a Social Skill
- *It's showing. Look natural. Fake it!* Presence or Manipulation + Expression or Subterfuge

Consequences: Once the vampire is no longer able to hold off the Red Fear, he flees to a safe distance, and possibly weeps or vomits blood (losing 1 Vitae) as the panic pours out of him. If this happens in front of witnesses, he suffers a -2 penalty to Social actions with anyone who hears about it, or possibly even suffers a temporary reduction in Clan, Covenant or City Status among the Damned, who say the character cannot even endure a little spark.

Rötschreck Scene: Flame

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL •••• SOCIAL •

Peril spreads along with flame in a frenzied vampire's wake. This scene presents a series of Physical obstacles that could endanger a frenzied vampire rushing through the night in an animal panic. Most of these are seemingly random, and might not be so dangerous to a Kindred with his wits about him. But the Beast rushes into traffic like a frightened animal.

These obstacles are meant to challenge vampires who have failed a frenzy roll provoked by a major source of fear — something worth four or more successes on a frenzy action. This scene assumes that the vampire has already failed his frenzy roll and succumbed to Rötschreck's flight response. He is tearing ass at top speed, in search of safety.

Overview: This scene threatens a character's Physical wellbeing. The possibility of torpor looms ahead of him. Too many failures and the vampire may be left torpid in the street.

Description: *It's like that dream. You're sprinting across the ground, running on your hands and feet, branches scratching your face. Blurry lights, smeared in your panicked vision, streak by. Your arm scratches on some jutting metal edge. Your knee clangs against something, your foot crunches down on glass, tangles in a shred of chain link or curl of wire. You're riding inside the Beast, looking out through red eyes at a blurry jungle of metal and concrete, and you're screaming inside your head for it to stop running.*

Storyteller Goals and Tips: A nightmarish rush of threats, one after another, creating a rhythm of peril and escape that peaks either with the vampire laying vulnerable, possibly out in the open, or finally reaching a spot of safety, where the Red Fear slowly drains away.

Character Goals: Survive the scene. Overpower the Beast long enough to protect his undead flesh. Keep this from being the last night of his Requiem.

Threats in the Dark

This a quick series of Physical threats to a fleeing, frenzied vampire. Use as many of them as you like to quickly inject peril into a scene of Rötschreck. With these in place, the consequences of the Red Fear become meatier, tangible, dangerous. In the interests of time, and to

create the disjointed, dreamlike state of frenzy, each of these perils is reduced to a simple action/consequence dynamic that's faster, with little concern for realism.

Dice Pool: Varies. See the list of obstacles below for specific examples. All of these actions put the onus for survival on the frenzied character instead of, for example, the anonymous driver that might hit him with a truck.

Meanwhile, the character is also seeking out a safe place to hide from the Red Fear — a cellar, an empty truck, an abandoned building. This is a perception action, relying on Wits + Composure in most cases, but possibly also drawing on Skills like Crafts, Larceny, Survival or even Streetwise.

Action: Instant and possibly contested for the following obstacles. The effort to find a hiding place is a reflexive, extended action attempted once for each obstacle faced. The total number of successes should be 5-10, or even more, depending on your goals.

Obstacles: *A flash of headlights, the spit and squeal of hydraulic brakes:* Dexterity + Strength or Athletics. Each successes cancels out one of 8 points of bashing damage.

- *A curtain of chain link gives way and the concrete pit of an unfinished building opens up below you:* Strength + Dexterity or Athletics. Success finds the character grabbing onto the edge, dangling. Failure drops him into a construction yard of concrete rubble and rebar, dealing 3 bashing damage and 3 lethal damage.

- *Someone is screaming, "Out of here, fucker!" and swinging what feels like a crowbar:* Dexterity + Weaponry – 2. Each success cancels out one of 4 points of lethal damage.

- *A pane of glass and a field of plywood come into sudden focus:* Strength + Stamina. Each success negates one of 5 points of lethal damage.

Penalties: For the purposes of this scene, consider a frenzied vampire's irrational state to impose a –3 penalty on Mental Attributes and Skills.

Aids/Bonuses: Disciplines like Auspex (the first dot, at least), Celerity, Resilience and Vigor give the vampire an edge in this scene, and can be used even by a panicked Beast desperately burning Vitae.

Consequences: Torpor. Final Death. Spin-off frenzy. A character who runs low on Vitae during this scene may find Wassail overwhelming the Red Fear. A character struck by a car or shot by some lunatic on the street might explode into an anger frenzy. As long as the character is in frenzy, shifting from one kind to another may simply be a matter of Storyteller fiat, or a consequence of failing another frenzy roll.

SCENE: *Anger: Pain*

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●●●
SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

LET GO OF THE BEAST:
Automatic degeneration
if Humanity 4+

Possible derangement

Cannot forestall frenzy with Willpower

REIN IT IN
Vulnerable to attack

HELP

LET GO OF THE BEAST
Automatic survival

REIN IT IN
Retain Humanity

Turn anger into fear frenzy

STs Make the character complicit in the Beast's immoral rampage.

PCs Choose between assured survival and Humanity.

SCENE: *Anger: Spite*

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●
SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

HELP

STs Demonstrate the inhumane way that Kindred regard violence.

PCs Spin an insane rage into a fearsome reputation.

SCENE: *Wassail: Agony*

MENTAL ●●●
PHYSICAL ●●
SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

Witnesses (-1 to -5)

Well lit or public setting (-1 to -3)

Victim cries out (-3)

Vampire cries out (-2)

HELP

A blade (+2)

Resource ●●●●+ bribe (+2)

Remote location (+1 to +4)

Rainy setting (+1 to +3)

STs Create a mood of haunting guilt or doubt in the wake of a horrific choice.

PCs Choose between Humanity and the Masquerade.

SCENE: *Wassail: Ecstasy*

MENTAL ●●●
PHYSICAL ●
SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

Setting is loud or dark
(-1 to -3)

Vampire has little experience
feeding from this vessel
(-1 to -4)

HELP

Setting is intimate or private
(+1 to +3)

Vampire is intimately familiar
with this vessel
(+1 to +4)

STs Show how no one a vampire gets close to can really be safe.
Dramatize the selfishness of the vampires and the Beast.

PCs Save a friend or loved one from the gluttony of the Beast.

SCENE: *Rätschreck: Spark*

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●
SOCIAL ●●●●

OBSTACLES

Hide Panic: Presence + Composure

Focus: Intelligence + Composure

Reminding Glint: Resolve + Composure

Anxious Beast: Stamina + Composure

Speak, Not Scream: Composure + Presence, Manipulation or Expression

Look Natural: Presence + Manipulation

HELP

Willpower points

STs Dramatize the agonizing balance between the Beast and the Danse Macabre.

PCs Appear strong in the face of fear.

SCENE: *Rätschreck: Flame*

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●●●
SOCIAL ●

OBSTACLES

Hit by a Truck: Dexterity + Strength or Athletics vs. 8 bashing

Open Pit: Strength + Dexterity or Athletics vs. 3 bashing & 3 lethal

Maniac with a Crowbar: Dexterity + Weaponry – 2 vs. 4 lethal

Glass and Plywood: Strength + Stamina vs. 5 lethal damage

MODIFIERS

–3 to Mental Attributes and Skills

Auspex ●

Celerity ● to ●●●●

Resilience ● to ●●●●

Vigor ● to ●●●●

STs Create a dizzying atmosphere of peril and fear.

PCs Avoid torpor and find someplace to hide.

BLOOD RED + ASH GRAY

SOMEONE'S REQUIEM IS OVER...

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