



Black Dog Game Factory
The Sun Has Set



The Sun Has Set

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Giovanni Chronicles III:

The Sun Has Set™



By Christopher Howard

Credits

Author: Christopher Howard
Developer: Ken Cliffe
Editor: Allison Sturms
Art Director: Lawrence Snelly
Layout & Typesetting: Conan H. Venus
Art: Dennis Calero, Richard Clark, Brian LeBlanc
and Christopher Shy
Cartographer: Christopher Howard
Cover Design: Conan H. Venus

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Brian "Blood Coalie" Glass, for bringing the game to a halt by spitting.
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Steve "Long Arm of the Law" Wieck, for having that big D. reach.



735 PARK NORTH BLVD.
SUITE 128
CLARKSTON, GA 30021
USA

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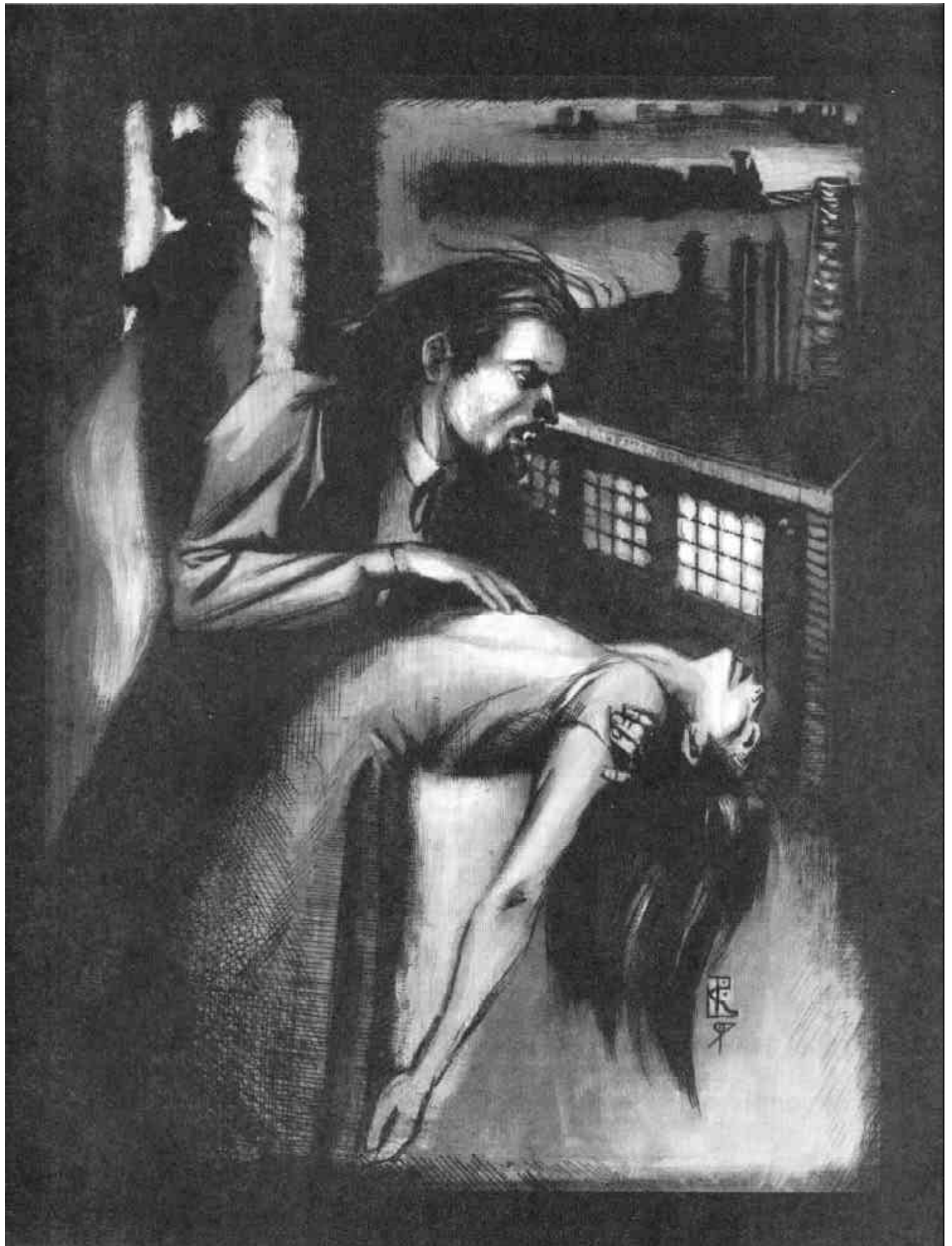
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The Sun Has Set is the third book in the **Giovanni Chronicles** series, adding another chapter to the story begun in **The Last Supper** and continued in **Blood & Fire**. This book deals with the ongoing saga of Clan Giovanni and the growing threat it represents to the Kindred of all other clans. While they have seemingly withdrawn from the Jihad, the Giovanni have spread silently like a cancer, growing in both temporal and necromantic power. They have few Kindred rivals in their studies of the dead, which makes them a threat like no other.

In this book, the conflict between the players' characters and the Giovanni intensifies. No longer content to stage feints from the shadows, the Giovanni resort to open warfare against the hated characters. **The Sun Has Set** is intended primarily for characters who have been through the first two chapters of this series. Almost two centuries have passed since the events of **Blood & Fire** and the characters now wield considerable power within vampire society. This chronicle can be told with brand new characters, though. Players simply need to create elder characters under the Storyteller's supervision (see **New Characters**). New characters' encounters with the Giovanni, and interference in the Nectromancers' plans, soon make the elders targets of revenge by the Roman vampires.

Why Black Dog?

The *Giovanni Chronicles* belong to the Black Dog Game Factory line for several reasons, but not for the most obvious ones. Many people equate Black Dog to sex and violence — a chance for White Wolf to do splatter books that the roleplaying industry doesn't normally tolerate. That's not the motive behind these books, though. We created Black Dog to experiment with roleplaying, to present issues that our hobby doesn't normally address, such as the horrific depths of evil, and to examine ourselves through playing extreme scenes and characters. Sometimes you have to do justice to a scene, character or circumstance, such as the malignant corruption of a player's own character, and to be true to the subject matter. That might mean portraying a character's downward spiral, and the vileness that comes with it. Black Dog was created to offer you that freedom.

The *Giovanni Chronicles* is Black Dog because you are called upon to portray centuries-old vampires who have probably forgotten or no longer care about what it means to be human. Death is meaningless, thus your characters can take the lives of others as they please. With this indifference can also come depravity — if life offers no more appeal, what pursuits will undying vampires resort to for entertainment? Torture? Abuse? Corruption? And how long can even these acts break up the monotony before only truly heinous deeds fire a spark of interest?

The *Giovanni Chronicles* let you play such characters, which goes far and away from what most gaming groups accomplish with their stories. We acknowledge that you are capable of handling and depicting extreme scenes, characters and events in your games — you probably do it by course with even traditional roleplaying products. However, by offering this series, we insist on your maturity, respect for other players and awareness that this is just a form of entertainment. That's why the *Giovanni Chronicles* — and this book — are included in the Black Dog line.

This is just a game.

What Has Gone Before

Giovanni Chronicles I (1444): *The Last Supper* dealt with the death of the Antediluvian Cappadocius and the ascendance of the Giovanni Necromancers. Characters created during that story began as the pawns (and meal) of the Conspiracy of Isaac — a group of vampires committed to helping the Giovanni achieve supremacy over Clan Cappadocian. The conspiracy attempted to use the characters as fodder against its enemies, the Founders of the Camarilla. The tables turned, however, and the characters struggled against their erstwhile sires at the Founders' command. In doing so, the characters learned two secrets: The Antediluvian Cappadocius sought apotheosis, a state of godhood, and Augustus Giovanni sought Cappadocius' death. Augustus slew Cappadocius and drank the Antediluvian's blood, leading to the end of the Cappadocian Clan and to the rise of the Giovanni in its place.

Giovanni Chronicles II (1666): *Blood & Fire* chronicled the characters' quest (undertaken by order of the Camarilla's Founders) for a necromantic document, the *Sargon Fragment*, stolen by the Giovanni mastermind Ambrogino — a powerful and enigmatic elder. The Founders believed this document, previously hidden in the Vatican, contained the necromantic formula that Cappadocius used in his pursuit of apotheosis. The Founders feared what a sorcerer of Ambrogino's ilk might do with this information. Ambrogino's trail led from Rome to the Black Monastery near Basel, Switzerland, where the characters met several elders of the nascent Sabbat. The elders sought spiritual paths to guide the sect and offered the characters clues to Ambrogino's movements, in return for philosophical insights.

The story concluded in London, where Ambrogino sought the services of the Tremere *antitribu* Mallotte, who translated the *Fragment*. The characters also learned of another party who was interested in the *Sargon Fragment*, the Setite Count Jocalo. In the end, the Tremere sorcerer betrayed Ambrogino by attempting to use a spell from the document in a personal bid for godhead. Mallotte's plans went awry, though, as the unimaginable power invoked by the ritual reduced him to a cinder. The *Sargon Fragment* was destroyed in the resultant Great Fire of London and put the characters' struggle with the Giovanni in stalemate.



Giovanni Chronicles III Synopsis

Book One (London, 1848)

In Book One, the characters go to London in search of new information on the *Sargon Fragment*, and they become involved in an imminent Sabbat attack on Camarilla interests there. The characters who try to uncover the plot may be Camarilla, or Sabbat try to foment or delay the attack. The Camarilla Count Dunlop, a Scottish Gangrel and pawn of the Giovanni, is also involved in the scheme.

As the characters investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack, they discover that Ambrogino Giovanni — their rival for the *Fragment* nearly 200 years before — aids the Sabbat to draw attention from his own activities in London. The characters may also uncover the secrets of Lord Camden, a powerful Cappadocian Necromancer and former chamberlain to London's Prince Mithras. Camden's writings provide clues to the location of Lazarus' tomb, which is a probable resting place of the *Sargon Fragment*.

Book Two (Egypt, 1882)

Following the clues uncovered in Camden's crypt, the characters travel to Egypt. They discover the Giovanni trail anew in Cairo and come into conflict with both the Ghiberti (African Giovanni) and two Roman elders: the Count and Countess Rossellini. In Alexandria, the characters may gain valuable information and possible allies among the Lilim — a mystery cult dedicated to the Giovanni's destruction. Ultimately, the characters' quest leads them to the Followers of Set, who have more interest in the characters' souls than in Lazarus' tomb.

Storytelling The Sun Has Set

The events of this chapter of the *Giovanni Chronicles* are complicated and complex. There are so many background elements and permutations to this book that no two stories told with it would be remotely the same. That complexity is part of what makes this book *Black Dog*; inexperienced players and Storytellers could not tell its story effectively. Even proven Storytellers will find it challenging. We, therefore, offer a few pointers that may help you in staging this chronicle.

- Determine what each player's character has been doing for the past 200 years, and integrate that information into the background to this book. Most importantly, where do the characters currently stand between the Camarilla and Sabbat? Political affiliations are fundamental to how this chapter unfolds. A group of Sabbat characters might help stage the revolt in London, while a band of Camarilla characters might fight to stop the Sabbat usurpers. Characters make different contacts and learn varying information based on their sect loyalties — or disloyalties.

The precludes detailed in this book are instrumental in establishing background to this chapter, and they should be run before proper play begins.

- Read this entire book before staging any element of the chronicle. You should have a general sense of where events can lead before diving in. That may seem obvious, but it's very important here because players have so many options before them that this book can take almost any course. Characters could prove to be disinterested in affairs occurring in England, in which case you must adapt the story for them to be motivated to travel to Egypt in search of more information on the *Sargon Fragment*.

- Although you know what can generally happen in this book, read, learn about and master only small portions of its content at a time — probably enough for one or two nights' game sessions. That way you can tailor events directly to what the characters have done and will do next. There's no point in mastering all of the permutations that this book can have; you'll tell only one story in the end.

- After staging this story's precludes, and after staging each night's session, ask the players what their characters plan to do next. That information allows you to prepare for the next session and lets you prepare and stage events seamlessly. Events can certainly go in different directions than those outlined here, but you can anticipate these possibilities by questioning the players after each game session.

Characters in The Sun Has Set

Players in this chapter of the *Giovanni Chronicles* may use their characters from one of the last two books, or they may create new ones for this chronicle. Newcomers to the chronicle can also invent characters now and be introduced to past and ongoing events.

Old Characters

If the players are using characters from the previous two books, their characters are complex entities with strong reasons for participating in coming events. They witnessed the diablerie of Cappadocius, the cold-blooded slaughter of

one of the very Antediluvians, and they have wrestled for centuries with murderous Giovanni who seek to achieve godhood.

The players' characters are seventh generation (barring any diablerie during previous events) and are over 400 years old at the outset of this book. They may have pursued any course of study over the past two centuries and learned all manner of secrets and gained incredible powers (see *Subjects of Research*, below). Generations of humans have been born, remade the world and turned to dust while the characters have remained the same. Immortals can delve deeply into any realm of science, art or vice. Players in an ongoing chronicle receive 45 freebie points to represent their characters' activities over the past two centuries.

The Storyteller should help acclimate these elders to the world of the 19th century. Characters of this age are now strong, if not pivotal, players in vampire society. At the same time, however, they have become more aware of the greater power games played by the ancients. For all of the characters' apparent power, truly old vampires consider the characters to be little more than children.

At the other end of the spectrum are the growing tanks of neonates and of humanity itself. Most young Kindred consider elders, like the characters, to be the entrenched vampire establishment. Some resent being manipulated by the characters, while others try to ingratiate themselves to increase their own power. Young Cainites are also more familiar with the modern world and consider the characters to be tempting targets for diablerie. The characters hold the middle ground in the Jihad, between the ancients and the infants, and they must watch their step if they are to survive.

Players should explain what their characters have done for the past two centuries. Have they accepted roles as the personal agents of the Founders? Perhaps they have joined the Sabbat to escape the Founders' influence. Have they spent the last two centuries expanding their financial holdings, studying arcane lore or attempting to gain information on the Giovanni? How players spent experience points earned in the last chapter, and how freebie points are spent now, greatly influences characters' past activities and present plans.

As Storyteller, you should try to encourage characters along avenues that keep them within the scope of the ongoing chronicle. Try to reinforce the notion that the elders have inherited a destiny that's intertwined with that of the Giovanni, as revealed by Durga Syn's prophecy of the Blood Egg in *The Last Supper*. Just be sure not to pressure the characters in this direction; players don't like to be curtailed or suspect that their characters are being controlled. The patterns of fate become all too clear by this chapter's end.

You and players should also consider the psychological changes that take place in vampires of this age. Some may have divorced themselves completely from human society. However, characters born and Embraced during **The Last Supper** were products of the rapidly changing Renaissance world. They may have less trouble adapting to the changes of the past 200 years than do vampires Embraced even a mere century before them.

And yet, a certain melancholy and stagnation set in after four centuries, no matter when a vampire was Embraced. Young Kindred may maintain regular contact with humans, but human concerns are increasingly alien at age 400. Many vampires believe that amassing power among the Kindred is antithetical to any notions of humanity. Remaining involved in human affairs requires a very special effort. The characters' many experiences have probably made them jaded. They have lost two Humanity points over the past couple of centuries. Those characters who have concentrated on retaining a human perspective may spend freebie points to buy these lost Traits back at four points per dot of Humanity.

New Characters

Although this book is primarily for those familiar with its two predecessors, it is possible to play **The Sun Has Set** as a stand-alone scenario with new characters. This option requires a little more work on the Storyteller's part, though.

It's assumed that the events of the first two books occurred, albeit with different protagonists. (Cappadocius was diablerized, and the Founders sent agents to intercept the Sargon Fragment.) New characters take up the torch from vampires who have fallen or disappeared since the events of the last book.

New characters probably don't have the same interests in Clan Giovanni as do those who have been through **The Last Supper** and **Blood & Fire**. Therefore, the Storyteller must help players invent characters' concerns for the proceedings of this book.

Perhaps the characters had holdings in 17th-century London that were destroyed in the Great Fire, and they learned only recently that the Giovanni were responsible for the conflagration. Revenge might certainly be in order. Perhaps fate chooses the characters to become its next champions against the Giovanni, and the elders are approached by the visionary Durga Syn, who warns them of the fate about to befall them. Or, the players' characters could have been Embraced centuries ago by the Camarilla Founders and trained ever since to become weapons wielded by the sect. The elders are let loose on the Giovanni only now. Ultimately, the new characters' motives for contending with the Giovanni are left to you based on who the players create.

Players should design their characters according to the normal generation procedure, but you should give each character 50 freebie points with which to handle the perilous tasks ahead. You may also allow new characters to spend a sixth freebie point on the Generation Background, allowing them to buy their characters up to seventh generation.

New characters should not be neonates; they could not survive the rigors of this book. "New" characters might be as much as 400 years old and have accrued a certain degree of temporal and personal power. (That is, they have something that the Giovanni endanger with the Necromancers' bid for godhead.) The players' characters may have some Status but are probably not on a first-name basis with the Founders or Sabbat elders who populated the previous two books.

Character Loyalties

Although clan or sect loyalties may play a role in characters' activities, personal ambition is a vampire's strongest motivator. Age and blood usually trump "mink" in groups like the Camarilla or the Sabbat: the characters are powerful figures no matter how they lend their support. Group affiliation is mainly for purposes of protection among the Kindred. Young Caitites congregate to resist the machinations of their elders. Yet, regular contact with a circle of close confidants is the exception by age 400. Even the closest of powerful allies seek to turn events primarily to their own advantage. Characters in **The Sun Has Set** may also agree to work with (or even for) older vampires at some point, but usually as a means to increase their personal power. Elder characters may be offered favors, lands, access to or control of herds, training in Disciplines, secrets — anything that they as nocturnal lords and ladies could find useful in their unlives. By no means should the elders' peers give the characters orders or expect anything from them that isn't paid for. Such is one of the benefits of power for the players' characters.

And yet, despite the characters' formidable age, some Kindred in this book possess even greater power. These monstrous forces may become puissant allies or long-term enemies of the characters. Perhaps only they have the power to truly give the characters orders, and even then, it is with some expectation of resentment or revenge.

Storytelling Elder Characters

Storytelling a chronicle involving elder vampires can be difficult. At 400 years, and as the most openly active players in the Jyhad, there is little that they fear. With characters as powerful and arrogant as only aged immortals can be, some players think their characters should be able to do anything. Keeping such characters "in line" may be something of a challenge for the Storyteller.

There are a number of things you can do to keep the game on track. Use contested rolls; they pit a character's capabilities directly against an adversary's of equal or superior skill. That way, a character with high Trait scores can't simply throw her weight around; her powers are countered by those of her vampiric peers.

Players should remember that their characters are elders — the figures of power in Kindred society. Elders don't usually dirty their hands with lowly activities such as fighting neonates and gathering a herd. Elders operate behind the scenes and use neonates and ghouls to accomplish "minor" goals. An elder's Background Traits indicate who and what is at his beck and call. Agents and proxies can stage a wide variety of missions. Just because an elder can perform an action easily doesn't mean that he lowers himself to actually doing it.

Keep in mind, however, that pawns can be destroyed by rival powers. Ghouls and neonates might be destroyed easily by the forces of opposing elders, or by the wraiths that the Giovanni control. As the characters have aged and gained power, so, too, have their enemies. Elder characters thus have to use their agents wisely or they might have none left.

Vampires do not live for centuries by being careless or stupid. Elder vampires are master manipulators. However, even they are manipulated by greater powers (unless the characters avoid all contact with other Kindred). Characters who throw their power around may be reined in quickly by their superiors, either under threat of Final Death or through the mysterious evaporation of all of the elders' resources.

Another avenue to explore in keeping power-hungry characters in line are the advantages, disadvantages and idiosyncrasies of immortality. After four centuries, vampires' survival instincts are strong and a certain degree of paranoia is unavoidable; most elders fear anything that might end their long unives. Suspicion, fear and underlying weakness are significant aspects of elder existence. A rampaging character may be quieted with a simple reminder of his ultimate vulnerability. A near-successful attempt at diablerie by a young vampire can remind an elder how delicate his unlife is.

Furthermore, old Kindred almost invariably suffer mental stagnancy. Most elders have a difficult time comprehending modern technology, fashion or social trends. The Storyteller may force characters to take the Anachronism Flaw to distance elders from the world that they might wreak havoc on.

Any and all of these techniques remind otherwise powerful elder characters of their weaknesses: Only a foolhardy vampire disregards his failings, and he certainly won't remain an elder for long.

Subjects of Research

After their last major encounter with the Giovanni in *Blood & Fire*, characters may have pursued areas of study that aid them against the Necromancers. These may include the study of Kindred Lore (specializing in Lilith or Cappadocian myths), the Chaldean language or Area Lore (specializing in the Middle East or London). Scores in these Traits can be purchased normally through experience earned in previous chapters, or through the extra freebie points that players have to spend before this chapter begins.

The characters may have investigated the powers of Japheth's cloaks (see Artifacts List), relics acquired earlier in the Giovanni series that let characters perceive ghosts, the agents of the Giovanni. A character who learns *Auspex*, whether as a clan or out-of-clan Discipline, can use a cloak. Increasing Perception or Empathy also raises a character's sensitivity to wraiths.

The characters may have researched Thaumaturgy and pursued any leads to the *Sargon Fragment*. Characters' successes in either effort are determined by the Storyteller, depending on how far the elders can impose upon or insinuate themselves into Clan Tremere, and depending on the nature of any clues gained to the *Fragment*.

And finally, the characters could have studied Clan Giovanni itself in hopes of understanding their enemies.



Researching the Giovanni

If the players use characters from the first two books, they have likely elected to keep an eye on the Giovanni over the years. Doing so is no easy task. The Giovanni are an insular clan and, since the promise in 1528, when they promised to remove themselves from Kindred affairs, they have shown little interest in pursuing the Jihad. The Necromancers seem to interpret this agreement very loosely where the characters are concerned, though, justifying their ongoing contention with the elders as a personal grudge, not as an affair that involves the other clans.

The characters' clashes with the Giovanni up to this point have undoubtedly involved feints and parries, with neither scoring a major victory. Giovanni activities in *Blood & Fire* probably did not violate the vow of 1528, but clan actions in this book absolutely do.

Ironically, the Giovanni enmity for the characters gives the elders a unique opportunity to observe the Necromancers' actions. Indeed, the characters may be fast becoming their sect's premiere experts on the Roman clan. If this is the case, players should buy *Kindred Lore* with a specialty in the Giovanni. Much of the lore acquired through the characters' investigations of and duels with the Giovanni may be hearsay, but some is true. Alternatively, the Storyteller may allow players to acquire Giovanni Lore (based on Camarilla

Lore from *The Vampire Players Guide*). However, characters should not begin this story with a rating higher than 2 in this Knowledge, given the difficulty of learning information directly from the source.

Characters who study the Giovanni learn several things: They know that the clan, guided by Augustus' will, is more hierarchical and authoritarian than most; they also learn of the Giovanni's strange family ties with Catholicism. The actual nature of this relationship is obscure, though some vampiric scholars attribute it to a cult of "Augustus as God" among the Giovanni. Yet, direct Giovanni influence in the Church seems rare.

Investigators may learn that a major power shake-up occurred in the clan, and even about the death of Claudius Giovanni, though not how he actually died (see *Clanbook: Giovanni*). They also know that the Giovanni have offered a substantial reward for the capture of Marianna, the child of Claudius Giovanni, who the characters met in *The Last Supper* (she has fled her clan and is now hunted).

If the characters have ever come too close to the Giovanni in their studies, Augustus' minions lashed out. The Necromancers' control of wraiths made investigating dangerous and terrifying. Furthermore, the Giovanni are masters of commerce and may have manipulated temporal powers against the characters' business holdings. The Giovanni are also a very physical clan. They make effective

use of Potence and are quicker to initiate combat than most Kindred are. An over-inquisitive character might have found himself face to face with relatively powerful Giovanni pawns in the past, which could have shocked Kindred accustomed to manipulation or intrigue, rather than brute force.

You are free to embellish characters' encounters with the Giovanni in the past, and that may explain how the Roman clan reacted to the elders' snooping. Indeed, citing a list of wrongs that the Giovanni have perpetrated against the characters over the past 200 years rekindles the players' dislike for the Romans, establishes mood for the coming story, and gets *The Sun Has Set* started on the right foot. The rival clan may have killed characters' loyal retainers, framed the elders for crimes against the Camarilla or Sabbat, or even destroyed any of the characters' childer and ensnared the victims' souls to be used as wraithly pawns.

Necromancy

It is highly unlikely that the characters have been able to learn Necromancy over the past two centuries. They may have tried to pry its secrets from captured Giovanni, but such attempts were almost certainly futile. Necromancy is a difficult Discipline to understand under the best of circum-

stances, and its arcane nuances are almost impossible to learn from an unwilling captive. Furthermore, young Giovanni seem to be under the effects of a ritual blood-prohibition that proscribes them from teaching the Discipline to outsiders. Members of the clan have been quicker to die under torture rather than reveal the Romans' great secret. Finally, the Giovanni were supposedly Necromancers before their Embrace and seem to have a natural affinity for the art. Giovanni Necromancy appears to be "in the blood" — in-born rather than acquired.

Another explanation for why characters cannot learn Necromancy is that they have been touched by fate. Destiny has brought the characters and the Giovanni together as enemies; though, they seem eternally bound, they are also eternally divided. The Giovanni's "Via Ossis" (Road of Bones) is not the characters' path to walk, but it is not the only path available to understanding. Japheth's cloaks and Thaumaturgy are the elders' primary tools in gaining more supernatural power (studying Thaumaturgy is discussed above). Of course, the characters may recognize their combined fate with the Giovanni, and the almost sublime barrier that seems to divide the enemies, only with time. The Storyteller may point it out almost as an observation made after centuries of the characters' contemplation of their unives.

Storytelling Wraiths

The Giovanni's control of wraiths makes the vampires dangerous to Kindred as a whole. Wraiths are an invisible enemy and, as far as most Kindred know, could be at any place at any time. Vampires who deal with the Giovanni rapidly become paranoid, whether they realize it or not. That fear is justified; wraiths are the Giovanni's eyes and ears, and they are dispatched to observe any place where or person with whom the Giovanni have business. Wraiths are invisible, they can go through walls and possess a plethora of unknown powers. The question, then, is how does one defend against them?

The characters can't be wraith-proof, but they can be wraith-resistant. Players may spend points to increase Occult Knowledge, specializing in wraiths. If you have *Wraith: The Oblivion*, you may reveal select passages from that game to knowledgeable characters. Occultists realize that just because wraiths can be everywhere, that doesn't mean they *are* everywhere. There are, therefore, some common-sense measures that characters can take against them.

Obfuscate is the most obvious defensive measure at the elders' command. Even at its lowest level (Cloak of Shadows), Obfuscate can potentially hide a character from most common wraiths (make a contested roll of the wraith's Perception versus the vampire's Obfuscate rating). Chimerstry and Obtenebration can likewise be used to fool all but a few ghosts. Some Nosferatu and Malkavians have used Mask of the Thousand Faces to create multiple fake personalities to confuse wraiths and to feed the Giovanni false information. Use of Auspex 4 (Telepathy) is almost completely safe from prying wraiths. (However, if characters speak solely through Telepathy, other Kindred become suspicious of them, or believe the characters to be outright sinister.) Japheth's cloaks (see below) are perhaps the most reliable means by which the characters can perceive wraiths when this chapter begins.

Despite the power of their necromantic abilities, the Giovanni have fewer wraiths under their direct control than wary Kindred would believe. Many wraiths retain identities in the afterlife and are resistant to control by the Romans. Other wraiths hate the Necromancers and work against them. Such wraiths could even help the characters.

The Storyteller should create the illusion that the Giovanni and their pawns are omniscient, but the characters' paranoia may give the Necromancers more credit than they're due.

The World of the 19th Century

The world has changed a great deal in the 182 years since the events of *Blood & Fire*. The 18th and 19th centuries have been fraught with revolution, turmoil and rapid technological and social progress. The Scientific Revolution begun in the 17th century has born fruit, culminating in the Industrial Revolution. Humanity's place in the universe has grown both larger and smaller. Kepler's discovery that Earth orbits the sun has taken root in the human psyche; Earth is no longer the celestial diadem at the cosmos' center. At the same time, however, the Age of Exploration has continued unabated. Explorers have now mapped all but the most distant reaches of the world.

In human society, the age-old forces of monarchy and religion are rapidly giving way to popular sovereignty. Another great factor in the human realm is a rationalist mode of thought embodied by Enlightenment-era philosophers and those who follow them. Thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau and the Founding Fathers of the American Republic introduce such radical notions as "fundamental human rights." The international slave trade has also waned by the mid-19th century.

The advances of the steam engine and railroads have tied much of the industrial world together; travel is safer, faster and more comfortable now than ever before. The new economic order of capitalism has spawned improvements in living standards for millions, while at the same time giving rise to a host of new social ills. In industrial cities throughout the world, children labor 16-hour work days under dangerous and unhealthy conditions, while the plight of the poor reaches epidemic proportions.

Meanwhile, the European Camarilla has expanded its power throughout the Western world and seems to be the preeminent power in Kindred society. Concentrations of urban citizens and the poor make feeding almost too easy for vampires. The Ventrue and Toreador mostly sate their palates on the cream of European society, while less civilized predators cast a dark shadow throughout the slums. Grueling work days, alcoholism and despair have broken the spirits of many urban poor, who are like cattle awaiting slaughter.

The Sabbat exodus from Europe has continued unabated during the past two centuries and led to strong initial gains in the Americas, while largely ceding Europe to the Camarilla. Sabbat expansion in the New World has slowed considerably, however, after the Tzimisce launched an attack on Lasombra interests under cover of Shay's Rebellion in 1786. What began as a private struggle in the New World has reverberated back to Europe as an all-out war between several powerful Sabbat elders. The Sabbat is now

divided against itself. The sect's continued existence is in doubt by the middle of the 19th century. Some Sabbat leaders fear that a single well-placed blow by the Camarilla could destroy their sect forever. Therefore, these leaders advocate a unilateral cessation of aggression against the Camarilla while the Sabbat deals with its own problems. Despite this order, others in the Sabbat have increased attacks on Camarilla interests. These raids have coincided with a rash of human revolutions in the middle of the century.

1848

Revolutions sweep throughout Europe, leaving many cities in flames. Popular insurrections have scarred Paris, Vienna, Milan and Berlin, among others. The crowned heads of Europe fear continental rebellion on an unprecedented scale and have brutally suppressed revolts. Under cover of these rebellions, an influential Brujah elder named Streck has attacked Camarilla interests in a manner not seen in over 150 years. Streck uses guerrilla tactics and strikes at Camarilla interests from the shadows and retreats before the establishment can mount effective counterattacks.

Although Streck's attacks have not yet caused major damage to the Camarilla, its leaders fear that these strikes are merely preludes to a greater campaign. One of the Camarilla's strengths and most appealing qualities is that it provides order and safety for its members. Streck has intentionally killed four Camarilla neonates while leaving the old guard untouched. The attacks have undercut many young vampires' confidence in the Camarilla, and Streck has used this divisiveness to recruit co-conspirators from the fringes of Camarilla society.

This is the world that characters live in, and these are the forces that they must deal with at the onset of *The Sun Has Set*.

Dramatis Personae

The first two books of the *Giovanni Chronicles* introduced a host of characters, some of whom do or can appear in this book. The following is a brief description of important figures from the previous books. This list is meant to refresh your memory. Those who do not have the earlier books may use this as a guide to the names that appear hereafter. You may use some of these characters as hooks to introduce (or reintroduce) the players' characters to the chronicle. Most of the figures described here do not intervene directly in the events of this book. Others provide direct motive for the characters to get involved in events in



London, where *The Sun Has Set* gets underway. You may introduce these people to your chapter as you see fit, depending on the depth of your chronicle.

The Camarilla

The Founders have attempted to cultivate their "adopted children" over the centuries, to encourage them to reach across clan lines in the interests of Camarilla unity. Nevertheless, the Founders are a fractious lot; their personal ambitions frequently eclipse their egalitarian rhetoric.

Decide how the characters fit into the Founders' schemes in the 19th century. Does Adana de Sforza, Brujah leader, play the characters off other powerful vampires in Europe to ensure her continued survival in the New World? Does the Malkavian Founder, Camilla Banes, know some horrific secret about the characters and make disturbing allusions to it in her religious rhetoric, pressuring the characters to act as her Camarilla pawns? Or does Mistress Fanchon of the Tremere try to leak what she has learned of the Sargon Fragment to Camarilla society as a whole in hopes that someone like the characters will find it for her? And what does von Baren, Nosferatu Founder, do to undermine Fanchon's efforts to maintain balance in the sect?

No matter what the Founders' machinations and personal plans are, remember that they're more powerful than the characters are and manipulate even the characters' potent elders.

Of course, the characters must decide their own relationships with the Camarilla. Do they seek power using the sect as a vehicle, or do they belong to the organization for only safety and convenience? The characters gain certain "responsibilities" if they take full advantage of the Camarilla as an instrument of power.

Characters who are the Founders' (adopted) progeny may have a great deal of influence over the Camarilla. Players may choose to spend their Background points on Status, gaining the high rank of Archon (Status 5) if their characters serve the Founders faithfully. The rank of prince or Justicar dangles tantalizingly out of reach as reward for unspecified "future services." Characters who are loyal to the sect in this way may be among the Camarilla's architects, though that means their power rises or falls with the sect's fortunes. Loyal Camarilla characters should be acutely aware that — while the sect has gained a great deal of power and prestige — even older powers wait to devour them should they fall.

Characters who did not participate in the events of the previous two books may still be under the Founders' sway, individually or as a group. Some of the Founders may even give letters to such "new" characters, introducing them to members of the London Primogen for when the events of this book get underway.

Elders who are tentatively true to the Camarilla — only as long as it protects them — have a certain independence, but they are also endangered by their very sectmates. Characters who pay lip service to the Camarilla's leaders do not run afoul of the Founders unless the characters break the Traditions or otherwise attract unwanted attention. Elders who have shown only passing deference to the sect receive little or no sympathy from the Founders and no support from other Camarilla members, who let endangered characters hang out to dry. A German elder and half-hearted Camarilla constituent who offends the Chamberlain of London is not likely to be spared thanks to a kind letter from sect Founders.

Ultimately, the Founders may have information about a forthcoming Sabbat attack on London and negotiate with the characters to investigate or even put down the assault. (Thus, the characters are motivated to get involved in the events of this book.) The Founders respect the relative authority of elder vampires, so they are willing to pay handsomely with power, titles, favors, blood reserves, secrets or lands — but they also have the strength to manipulate the characters into doing their bidding. The players' characters are powerful, but they are no match for the elders.

Camilla Banes (Malkavian): This Malkavian leader had a special relationship with Cappadocius and is a slave to his posthumous cult of personality. She seemingly regards Cappadocius as both a lover and a Messiah figure, though none knows the truth (if any) of her relationship with the Antediluvian. Camilla encourages any characters enthusiastically (including those of other clans) to investigate the foul Giovanni who murdered her "beloved Cappadocius."

Camilla has an obvious martyr complex and sleeps crucified on an iron cross. Her mania seems to have Christian trappings, but some suggest that she acts out of calculated self-interest rather than out of any true devotion. Ultimately, no one is aware of Camilla's true motives, which is especially true in matters involving the *Sargon Fragment*. Camilla has an enigmatic connection with a mad vampire prophet named Anatole. The nature of this relationship is also obscure.

Rafael de Corazon (Toreador): Many Kindred considered all-out war with humanity during the Inquisition. Rafael de Corazon was one of the powers who averted a bloodbath. He is the most high-profile of the Founders. However, characters who have known him since the events of *The Last Supper* might consider de Corazon little more than a figurehead; he has many biases against the other clans — and many more personal agendas. De Corazon resents anarchs, in particular, and Brujah by extension. He may recruit characters to watch over those that he perceives to be influenced by Adana de Sforza (essentially, anyone who does not beat the Camarilla drum long and loud). Despite his Camarilla rhetoric, Rafael is far more motivated by

personal gain than by ideology. He uses seduction and his flawless beauty to get his way. He has a particular interest in the Giovanni, though strangely not in the *Sargon Fragment*.

Rafael de Corazon led negotiations in the 1528 treaty between the Camarilla and the Giovanni. Although his "inept" ratification of the treaty has become something of a joke among the Necromancers, Rafael is shrewder than his foppish demeanor suggests. (For more on Rafael de Corazon, see *Children of the Inquisition*.)

Adana de Sforza (Brujah): The Brujah Founder has been slipping philosophically toward anarchism for over a century, and she shows little interest in the Giovanni. The only thing that reignites her interest in Camarilla politics is direct proof of another copy of the *Sargon Fragment*.

Adana moved to America during the 1770s and involved herself in vampiric events during the American Revolution, and she has come into violent conflict with several Sabbat elders. Adana seems to have more enemies than any other Founder but has survived thanks to her wits and a powerful, unknown patron. Adana de Sforza is fast to anger, but she is a useful ally to those who earn her respect.

Mistress Fanchon (Tremere): Mistress Fanchon has developed a near mania for the *Sargon Fragment* since its discovery and the events of *Blood & Fire*. She is fluent in Chaldean and well-versed in ancient lore. She is a master occultist, and a frightening intelligence glitters in her eyes. Fanchon attempts to engage some of the characters as her agents in matters pertaining to the *Fragment* and offers great rewards for success. Tremere under her sway know the penalty for failure or betrayal is severe. The demands of her service are rigorous, but characters may find the power she represents too alluring to resist — an Archon under her tutelage carries much authority in the clan.

Tremere is the most hierarchical of the Camarilla clans and it is almost impossible for members to avoid the whims of their superiors. A Tremere character who partook in the previous two books and who wants to escape Fanchon's service now might join the Sabbat or gain another powerful Tremere mentor instead. Indeed, a Tremere character may seek the *Sargon Fragment* and other ancient magic to free himself of Fanchon's control.

Hardestadt (Ventrué): Despite his blustery reputation, Hardestadt is a shrewd tactician and the epitome of the political vampire. He takes the Giovanni threat seriously, but the Sabbat worries him more. He encourages characters under his sway to look out for matters of general Camarilla security, including the actions of the Giovanni, should events warrant. Hardestadt is both the child and descendant of a much older vampire of the same name (the enemy of the Brujah Tyler). Hardestadt lives in Berlin, though he still maintains Castle Deverick, his Italian haven. He feels contempt for those who have not lived the military life, and

he feeds only from military men. He displays an overwhelming hatred of the Sabbat (Streck, in particular), and Hardestadt rewards richly those who weaken the rival sect.

Milov Petrenkov (Gangrel): Petrenkov disappeared into the wilds of Siberia during the 1820s and no one has seen him since. He lost much of his identity to his bestial nature in the decades preceding his disappearance, and supposedly, he had friends and enemies alike among the Lupines. Some believe he was a diablerist who hunted other vampires for sport. Before his disappearance, Petrenkov showed little interest in the Giovanni or in cultivating the characters (unless previous roleplaying decided otherwise). Those who managed the difficult task of gaining his confidence discovered that his intrigue for the Giovanni was greater than he professed.

Valerius (Ventrue Chamberlain): The characters met Valerius during the events of the last book. He is currently Chamberlain to Prince Mithras of London and has spoken in his lord's stead since the Methuselah disappeared in 1898. Valerius is perhaps the most influential Kindred in the British Isles. The characters may have cultivated the chamberlain as an ally during *Blood & Fire*, but have to deal with him in London regardless of their previous relations with him. Valerius has called a Conclave recently to discuss what steps the Camarilla must take on this, the 50th anniversary of Mithras' disappearance.

Violetta (Justicar): She took an active role in the events of *Blood & Fire*. Characters who worked with her may have gained her loyalty. The Toreador embodies political stability amid the fractiousness of the Founders, but she is increasingly at odds with some of them. She is stern about her position as Justicar and tolerates no activities that might undermine the Camarilla. Those who have maintained close relations with Violetta since the London fire realize that she has become decadent and detached. (Some attribute this description to her rumored consumption of faerie blood.) A certain hardness has also crept into her demeanor and her smile has grown a little cruel.

Violetta may "contract" the characters — individually or ensemble — to investigate Giovanni or Sabbat activities in London. If the characters did not gain her as an ally during the events of the last book, they may have an opportunity to do so in this one by fulfilling her mission. See the Justicar prelude in the next chapter for more details.

Josef von Bauren (Nosferatu): The cautious Josef von Bauren may be the glue that holds the Founders together. The Giovanni interest him, but he also has "matters of greater importance" to contend with. Nevertheless, he wants to keep tabs on the Necromancers. If one of the characters is a Nosferatu, Josef pays her well for information. In the absence of a Nosferatu, he may attempt to employ characters of other clans by promising information that they

want in return. Josef drinks only cold blood and lives in decrepit splendor beneath the ruins of a great Munich opera house.

The Sabbat

Given the Sabbat's rate of attrition in its battles with the Camarilla and, more recently, in its own civil war, many of the elders that the characters met in Basel (in *Blood & Fire*) are either missing or dead. Past play and your discretion should decide who remains. Elders have killed each other in fatal rivalries, or they have died at Camarilla hands, or from their own excesses. The remaining Sabbat elders have little knowledge of the *Sargon Fragment* (unless the characters told them of it). Most of them show less interest in the Giovanni than they do in the Camarilla. This factor — and the general disinclination of Sabbat elders to interfere unnecessarily with their childer — give Sabbat characters more latitude than their Camarilla counterparts have.

Nevertheless, certain factions in the Sabbat plan an offensive against the London Camarilla. Some surviving elders from *Blood & Fire* are involved in these events and may require agents to work on their behalf. Since some of these elders are in direct conflict with each other, Sabbat packs in this story may face clashing sect pressures. Most Sabbat vampires are strong individualists, though, and may be able to ignore blood ties in favor of enlightened self-interest. The three elders listed below are suggestions for those who might remain. You may want to reintroduce others to provide clues or an additional flavor.

Lord Alexandre (Lasombra): Lord Alexandre leaves his shadow form rarely, but when he does, the characters notice that he appears older than when they first met him in 1666. He is physically wasting away, as if his shadows are devouring him. Much of his erosion is the result of a conflict with Lady Vladislava of Clan Trimisce. Since their relationship in Basel, Lord Alexandre and Lady Vladislava have entered a bitter feud. Alexandre considers her to be a destabilizing presence who may drive the Sabbat into conflict with the Camarilla before it is ready. He has heard rumors that Vladislava sponsored a recent Trimisce assault against the London Toreador. The offensive was ineffective by Trimisce standards (two Trimisce neonates died with only one Camarilla Toreador for a prize), but Alexandre suspects that it was just the opening feint of a full-fledged war.

The Lasombra suspects that although this attack was staged ostensibly against the Camarilla, Lady Vladislava's true intention is to undermine Lasombra leadership of the Sabbat. Alexandre may encourage one or more of the characters to investigate the Trimisce attack to determine if it hides a greater plot. Those who ally themselves with Lord Alexandre enhance their standing as leaders of the Sabbat.

Alexandre maintains a base of operations in the Black Monastery in Switzerland and is allied with a pack of monstrous black-furred Lupines.

He suggests that the characters make contact with the Lasombra priscus of London, Lady Astor, before they begin their investigation.

Mateur Gryzbowsky (Nosferatu antitribu): This Nosferatu elder lives in Dresden and may have helped the characters find Ambrogino's trail when they visited the Black Monastery. Gryzbowsky is seemingly on good terms with Marianna (who is probably an ally of Sabbat characters):

If any clan is safe from the Giovanni's wrath spies, it is the Nosferatu. The sewer-dwellers are also more aware of the Giovanni as a threat than most other clans are. Gryzbowsky believes the Necromancers are a danger to the Sabbat and may provide the characters with information about the enemy. In the winter of 1847, Gryzbowsky confides that Marianna is seeking information from a human occultist; she supposedly referred to the occultist only as "Monsieur M." and searches for him in Barcelona. Gryzbowsky does not know what she seeks but suspects that it has to do with the *Sargon Fragment*.

Although Gryzbowsky is Sabbat, he maintains semi-cordial relations with some Camarilla Nosferatu. A rumored Trimisce attack on Lasombra interests in London also concerns him; he considers it counterproductive to the Sabbat's greater needs. He may engage one or more of the characters to investigate Trimisce activities in London. By late summer 1848, Gryzbowsky has heard rumors of an impending attack in London.

Lady Vladislava (Trimisce): Lady Vladislava has a cold and disturbing beauty, the product of two more centuries of Fleshcrafting. Her skin has a glossy, translucent-blue quality, and her features are so sharp that she appears to be made of chiseled glass. Her brittle hair is black with tinges of purple and is held in place by clasps made from human finger bones. Her most striking feature is her eyes, which have green, catlike pupils.

Lady Vladislava has a vested interest in an upcoming attack in London and seeks agents who can fulfill her goals there. Although her stated target is the Camarilla, her real purpose for getting involved is to undercut Lady Astor's influence. Lady Vladislava's grudge against London's Lasombra elder is purely personal. If the characters dare ask of Vladislava's motive for supporting an attack on the Camarilla, she explains that Lady Astor would become priscus of the city if the Sabbat claimed it. Vladislava simply explains that that cannot be permitted to happen. In truth, she desires to see her own child control London's Sabbat.

Lady Vladislava most likely seeks the services of fellow Trimisce, though she works with members of other clans who impress her with ruthlessness and efficiency. She is generous in her negotiations; a character who agrees to work

for her can practically name his price. She further explains that the two Trimisce who attacked the Toreador haven in London were neonates, who chose an ancilla (Sir Hortense Holden) as the target for their baptism by fire. The childer failed in their initiation and the Toreador overwhelmed them.

Lady Vladislava suggests that the characters travel to London and tells them to contact a certain Doctor Streck.

The Giovanni

If the characters took part in the events of the last two books, the Giovanni now recognize them as a threat — as well as a source of valuable information on the *Sargon Fragment*. The Giovanni have monitored the elders' activities over the past two centuries with varying degrees of success. The characters may have attempted to learn something about the Giovanni as well, though this effort no doubt was a difficult task. The Giovanni have gone underground with a vengeance since 1528, when the Giovanni agreed that the clan would withdraw from the Jihad.

And yet, the Giovanni actively pursue and oppose the characters. If the players' characters ever speak to their Necromancer foes, Giovanni agents explain enthusiastically that the elders' transgressions against the clan pre-date 1528, and that any private vendetta in response to the characters' "crimes" is wholly justified. If the players' characters in this book are new to the chronicle's ongoing storyline, the events of this book forcibly bring the elders and the Giovanni to each other's attention.

Ambrogino: A powerful Necromancer and clan mastermind, Ambrogino Giovanni was the primary force behind the events of *Blood & Fire*; he sought the *Sargon Fragment* in a quest for apotheosis. Whether he was working directly on Augustus Giovanni's behalf or for his own ends is uncertain.

The characters have heard whispered rumors of Ambrogino's activities during the centuries since the Great Fire. Indeed, they may have managed to trace some of the Giovanni attacks against them back to him, though any conflict with the elder has been through proxies. However, the conflict with the Necromancer has become increasingly personal. It is also clear that Ambrogino knows more about the characters' movements than they do about his (unless the characters have kept a very low profile since the fire). If the characters played a role in the last book, Ambrogino now acknowledges them as an impediment to his ongoing quest for godhead.

Augustus Giovanni (Giovanni Antediluvian): The youngest of the Antediluvians, Augustus Giovanni is one of the very few of that legendary group who is awake and active in the 19th century. His very existence is a font of fear, rumor and speculation. The ancient vampire reputedly lives half in the world of the living and half in the shadowy realm

of the restless dead. Frequent rumors about the ancient vampire claim that he devours souls, as well as blood, for sustenance.

If the characters were Embraced during the events of *The Last Supper*, they were present when Augustus Giovanni killed his sire, Cappadocius. Augustus fears that Cappadocius may survive in some fashion and is growing paranoid of his sire's return. Although the characters were mere neonates at the time (and hence, beneath Augustus' notice), their subsequent actions have indeed brought them to Augustus' attention. The elders become aware of Augustus' presence in preludes that lead up to the events of this book (see the Preludes Chapter), and they develop a disturbing sense that the Antediluvian watches them.

The Antediluvian has recently acquired the services of an enigmatic creature known as the "Capuchin." The Capuchin feeds Augustus' paranoia, and some Giovanni blame the wizened robed figure for Augustus' violent murder of his childe, Claudius Giovanni. (See *Clanbook: Giovanni* for further information on the Capuchin.)

Claudius: Claudius Giovanni was the progeny of Augustus and the leader of the Conspiracy of Isaac, and he was present during the events of *The Last Supper*. Claudius recently shamed Augustus when he failed at a chance to recover a flask of Cappadocius' blood. Infuriated, the father killed his childe with his bare hands. Claudius' violent death still reverberates throughout the clan as warning of what happens to those who fail Augustus — even his own childer. (For more details on these events, see *Clanbook: Giovanni*.)

Gillespi: A London-area Giovanni don, Gillespi Giovanni was one of the few Necromancers who was openly involved in the events of *Blood & Fire*. He may have acted as an unwilling intermediary between the characters and Ambrogino. Gillespi seems to have withdrawn from his London financial holdings since the Great Fire. Rumor has it that he has returned to Rome.

Others

The Conspiracy of Isaac: The Conspiracy of Isaac was a group of elders, led by Claudius Giovanni, who Embraced the characters during the events of *The Last Supper*. The conspiracy sought the destruction of Cappadocius and ascendancy over the Founders. It failed, thanks in part to the characters. In 1848, some of the conspirators are dead while the rest remain the prisoners of the Founders. If she survived the events of the first book, Lady Amisa (the Setite elder) is rumored to have disappeared mysteriously from her cell, and she has presumably been replaced by a caitiff neonate altered to look like her.

Durga Syn: An enigmatic Ravnos soothsayer, Durga Syn was instrumental in pleading the characters' case to the Founders during the events of *The Last Supper*. She performed a scrying ritual (the Blood Egg) and predicted that

the characters would have a significant role in the unfolding drama surrounding Clan Giovanni. Durga Syn has not been heard from in over 250 years, except through rumors about her that originate in Russia.

Rose Chandler: Rose Chandler was a minister's daughter who was Embraced by Mallotte during the events of the last book. If the characters rescued her from Mallotte and helped her avenge her father's death (by Doctor Hopkins, the infamous Witch Finder General), she allied herself with them. It is quite possible that Rose is a character's adopted childe. She may further her "sire's" interests by being an agent and messenger. However, she has developed plans of her own, as befits a vampire of almost two centuries, and is no longer the naïve childe that she was in 1666. If the characters did not rescue Rose 200 years ago, she is long dead — hunted down by Mallotte's Crimson Bacchanal.

Count Jocalo: An ancient and powerful Follower of Set, Count Jocalo interfered not only with the characters' efforts in *Blood & Fire*, but with the carefully constructed plans of Ambrogino Giovanni in an apparent bid to gain the *Sargon Fragment*. The characters have heard virtually nothing of the count's activities since that time. The Methuselah remains a bogeyman to neonates and elders alike.

Jocalo's messenger plays a vital role in Book Two of *The Sun Has Set*, and she represents the count's presence in Egypt.

Marianna: Characters Embraced during the events of *The Last Supper* know Marianna as the unwilling childe of Claudius Giovanni. It is also possible that they established a tentative alliance with her during the events of the last book. Yet, the characters have neither seen nor heard from Marianna in over 130 years. She disappeared after the Great Fire but resurfaced briefly in Paris during the early 1700s. Marianna was pursued by the Giovanni and narrowly escaped in an exchange that left a Camarilla ancilla and two Giovanni dead. Any characters who lived in Paris during that time might have heard of these events. Any elder character with Giovanni Lore or Kindred Lore might have learned that the Necromancers hunted after her relentlessly after she last appeared in London, at the time of the Great Fire.

Artifacts List

The characters may have come into contact with three mystical artifacts in the previous *Giovanni Chronicles*. These items are also important to this book.

Lilith Fragment: This manuscript describes a legendary meeting between Adam's first wife, Lilith, and the Angel Gabriel. Characters who experienced events from the first book know that Cappadocius believed Lilith to be a female aspect of God, and perhaps as part of his path to apotheosis. The characters may have recovered a copy of this document during the Great Fire.

Sargon Fragment: This is a portion of an ancient Chaldean Thaumaturgical manuscript that was sought by the Founders, by Ambrogino and by Malotte two centuries ago. Some occultists rumor that the *Sargon Fragment* confers godhead to those with the skill to use it, though most consider it to be a myth. In *Blood & Fire*, the manuscript increased Malotte's Thaumaturgy powers to unimaginable levels before destroying him.

Any research conducted on the *Fragment* refers to Sargon as either a vampire or a human mage. Some stories insist that God touched the sorcerer's thoughts, thus revealing the secrets of the universe. Sources on the *Sargon Fragment* are rare, and a researcher has no way of telling fact from fancy.

Japheth's Cloaks: These garments were gifts to the characters from the Cappadocian Japheth and were granted shortly before the death of Cappadocius. The cloaks afforded the characters some degree of protection in earlier books. If the characters followed Marinna's advice after the Great Fire (sleeping with the cloaks on in a graveyard), they suffered terrible nightmares of shadowy skeletal hands reaching for them from the crypt soil. When the characters awakened, they realized that they could detect otherwise invisible entities.

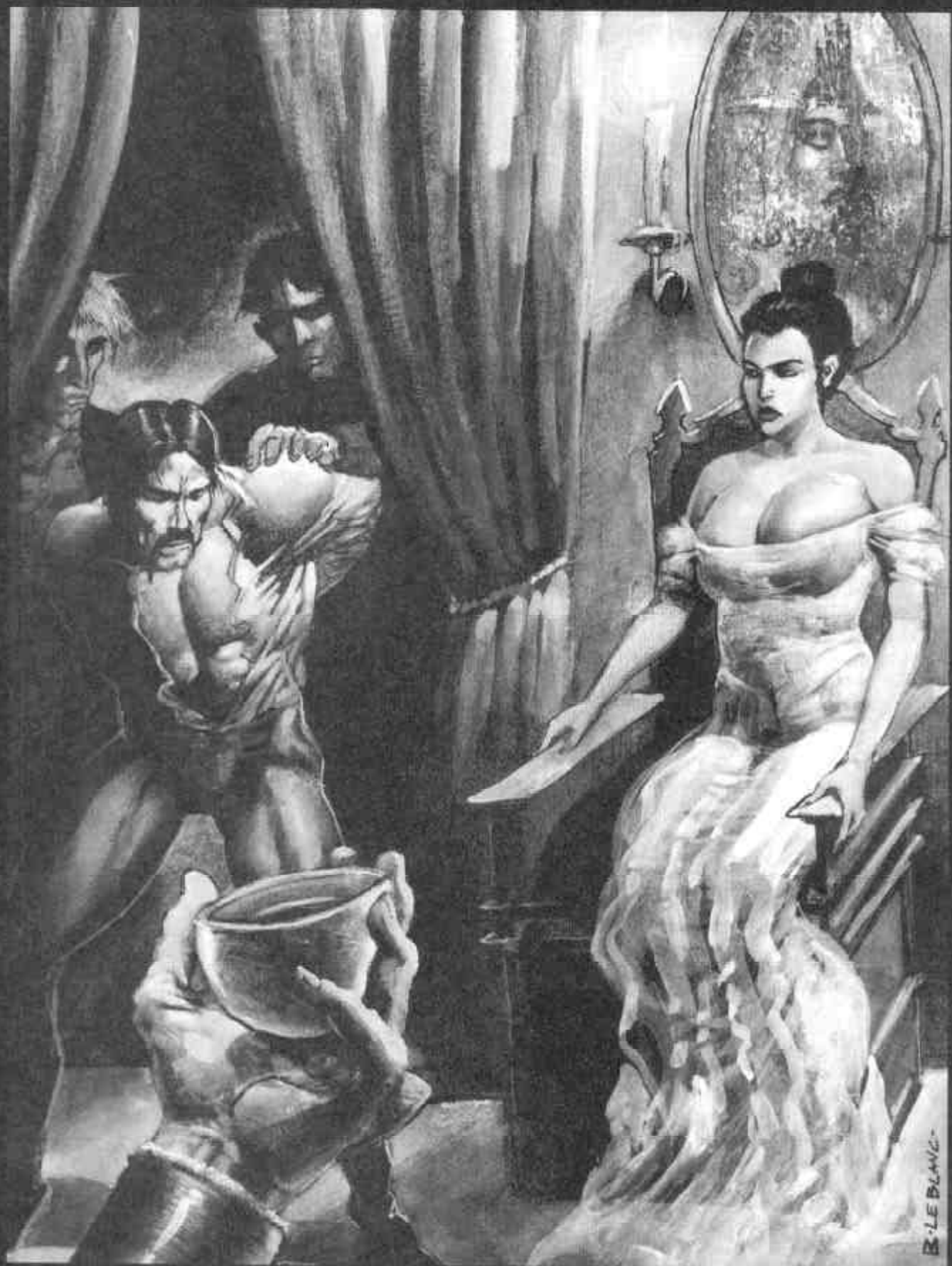
A character who wears a cloak can mentally sense wraiths, but only in the most limited sense. If there are wraiths nearby (no farther than 15 meters), a character can detect their presence if she has *Auspex 2* (Aura Perception) and the player makes a successful Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8).

One success alerts a character to wraiths' presence. Three successes indicate an approximate direction of the spirits and attest to the number of wraiths in the area. If a character receives four successes, she sees faint outlines of any spirits.

Characters who combine the use of *Obfuscate* with these cloaks may engage the Giovanni's wraiths in a deadly game of "blind man's bluff," as each searches for the other until one party succeeds.

Japheth's cloaks are now over 400 years old. Although they were well-made, they now show signs of age. If a character has worn her cloak on a regular basis, it is now in little more than tatters and almost useless. If the players are using newly created characters, you may want the elders to find the cloaks in the early parts of this story; the cloaks are invaluable in helping characters detect and resist the Giovanni's agents.







*A ghost, that loved a lady fair,
Ever in the starry air
Of midnight at her pillow stood,
And, with a sweetness skies above
The luring words of human love,
Her soul the phantom wooed.
Sweet and sweet is their poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,
Ever singing "die, oh! die."*

— Thomas Lovell Beddoes, "The Phantom-Lover"

The Sun Has Set truly gets underway when the characters arrive in London, on or before December 13, 1848. Be subtle, yet compelling, when you encourage characters to leave their havens across Europe or even travel abroad to England. The characters are Kindred elders who don't do anything that proxies can do for them. Thus, the characters should have personal and irresistible reasons for jeopardizing their immortality by traveling to and entering a city that they may not have visited in 200 years.

The following are several precludes that you can stage before this book's story gets fully underway. These precludes give the elders personal motivation to travel to London; they refresh the players' memories of previous events; they

reintroduce people that the characters have met before; they update the characters on events that have happened since 1666; and they lay the foundation for events to come.

These suggestions are ideas on how to bring the characters into the story. However, different characters have different agendas, and this book can't possibly account for every contingency. Adapt these story hooks as you see fit to inspire the characters, or invent precludes of your own. Take note, though, that the precludes provided here are significant to the coming story; they foreshadow future events and introduce important people that the characters will meet. Try to include these clues and hints of import in your own precludes.



The “Gaunt”

This prelude hints at enigmatic events surrounding the characters' lives, and it reminds them that they seem to be destined to be haunted, whether by the Giovanni, the Necromancers' wraiths, or simply by mysterious powers.

After the Great Fire, the characters recognize gradually that a spectral shadow tends to appear when the elders wear Japheth's cloaks. The spirit is stooped and hidden in a black, hooded robe. A cold, dank wind rises whenever it appears. Those with a keen sense of hearing detect the distant sound of water dripping as if in a subterranean pool. The figure proffers a gold cup in a gnarled gray hand. It makes no attempt to communicate and disappears at the characters' approach. The apparition appears every few decades, but with increasing frequency of late. The characters can make whatever they like of these bizarre visitations.

Augustus Giovanni

This prelude doesn't motivate characters to go to London as much as it reminds players of past events in the *Giovanni Chronicles*, and it also advises characters that fate has bound them to the Giovanni.

The Antediluvian becomes an occasional feature in the characters' daytime dreams after the events of *The Last Supper*. Indeed, his appearances increase after the events of *Blood & Fire*, when the characters confounded Clan Giovanni as a whole. The elders are like lost and frightened children in these nightmares, and they feel whatever souls they still possess slip away beneath Augustus' dread glare. The dreamers inevitably awaken late into the next night, sheathed in a film of bloody sweat.

The Anexhexeton

Stage this prelude one year before the events of *The Sun Has Set* begin.

Characters who seek information on apotheosis, necromancy or wraiths — undoubtedly to gain power over the Giovanni — uncover accounts of a coven of sorcerers that operated in Savoy, France during the 1450s. Although stories of such groups were common during the witch-hysteria of centuries past, information about this group is particularly compelling: One of the witches claimed to be familiar with *The Anexhexeton*. Characters with occult knowledge know the name of this book to be a synonym for or component of the *Sargon Fragment*.

Characters who research the Savoy cult are initially frustrated that judges, executioners and supposed witches have all long succumbed to old age or the pyre. After some digging, however, the characters uncover magisterial records of the witches' interrogation.

The court scribe penned a complete, if passionless, account of the proceedings. The first three witches were wealthy, unpopular merchants, with varying interests in the occult. The men broke under torture and named their leader: a self-styled warlock who called himself "Belial." The magisterial tribunal summoned this man for questioning. He lasted for five days against a highly accomplished torturer.

And yet, on the fifth night, Belial supposedly cried out "like a woman under the slightest touch of the justice's iron, begging the good Lord for forgiveness. Seeking redemption and deliverance, the wretch gave several other names, each also hostile to the Church and the town's good order."

In his contrition, Belial incriminated a warlock from Barcelona, that he knew only as "Monsieur M." Belial claimed that this person possessed a book called *The Anexhexeton*. The characters' documents continue on to explain that Belial was put in a cell after his confession. His body was "all maggoty and corrupt with the stench of a month's decay" the next morning. The Savoy tribunal then sent letters of inquiry to Barcelona but learned nothing of this Monsieur M.

Barcelona is a port city on the Mediterranean coast of Spain. It was once a major center of commerce yet has declined over the past three centuries. Many of its buildings have Roman or Moorish influences. (See *A World of Darkness* for more on Barcelona.)

The Lasombra and Toreador Clans hold the balance of vampiric power in Barcelona, but the city is also a center for occult activity. There are rumors of several Tremere and human magi operating there. The characters' discovery in France inspires them to pursue these humans, to learn more about apotheosis and to perhaps gain knowledge that even the Giovanni lack.

The characters learn that Monsieur M. is, amazingly, still alive — proof of his dark arts. After several nights' investigation, his trail leads to a ruined church outside the city that overlooks the sea. The church has a sinister reputation among nearby villagers, who believe it to be haunted, and it appears to have been put to the torch recently. Damage done by the fire is considerable: Tapestries hang in smoldering tatters on scorched walls; cooled puddles of lead and gold are all that remain of the church's reliquary. The ocean wind blows through the collapsed structure.

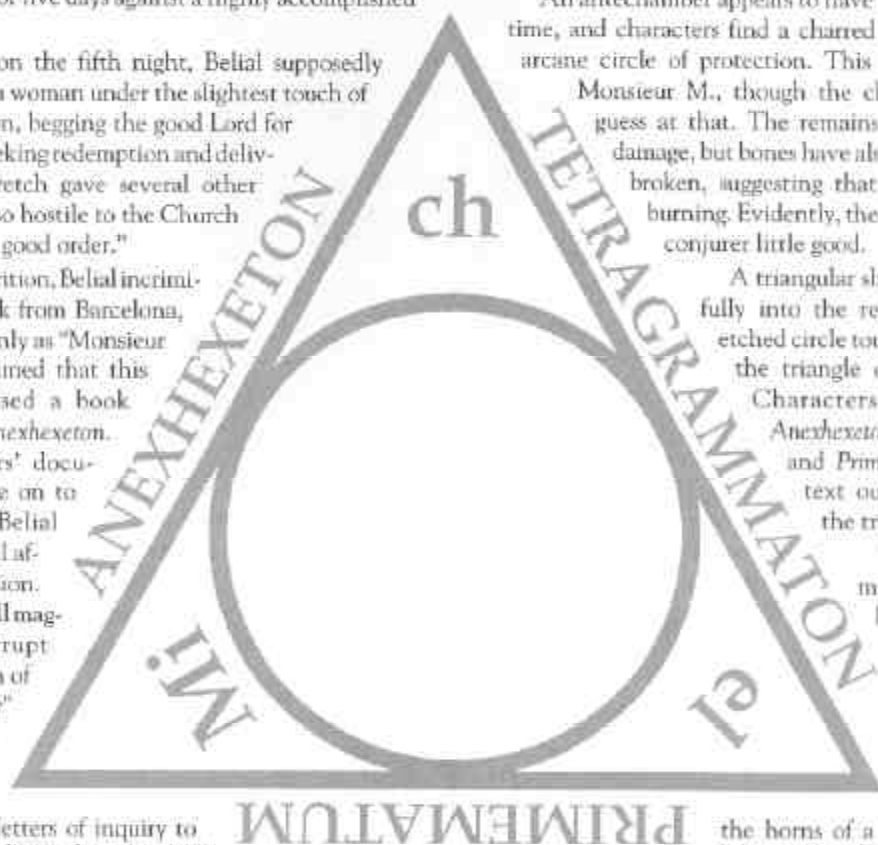
An antechamber appears to have been hidden at one time, and characters find a charred corpse lying in an arcane circle of protection. This is the skeleton of Monsieur M., though the characters can only guess at that. The remains have suffered fire damage, but bones have also been crushed and broken, suggesting that death was not by burning. Evidently, the circle had done the conjurer little good.

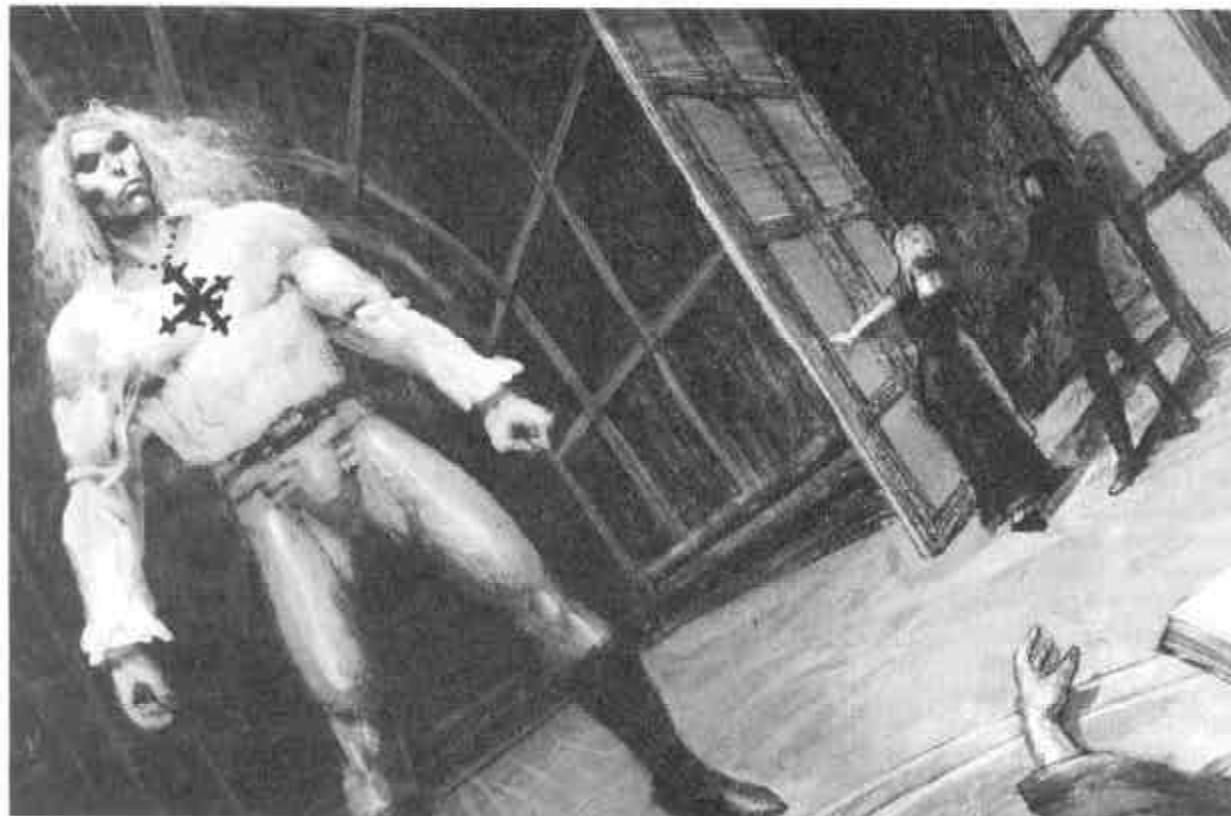
A triangular shape is chiseled artfully into the red stone floor. An etched circle touches the interior of the triangle on all three sides. Characters read the words *Anexhexeton*, *Tetragrammaton*, and *Prinematum* in Arabic text outside each face of the triangle.

The charred remains of a nearby book prescribe such theatrical ritual elements as: "Vervain, the head of a black cat fed on human blood for five days,

the horns of a goat that has had intercourse with a girl, candles made from distilled baby fat, a cap made from lead, the skull of a parricide. . . ." The remains of several other occult tomes lay there as well, though none is of particular interest. Monsieur M. appears to have been a practitioner of death magic, with an eye toward divine ascension.

Use of *Auspex 3* (*The Spirit's Touch*) on either the corpse or nearby artifacts renders a different sort of information. The character's vision reveals Marianna (the rebellious child of *Claudius Giovanni* and the woman that the characters have known since the events of *The Last Supper*) knocking the magician unconscious and stealing a black-bound tome from a secret compartment in a wall.





The character then sees a tall blonde woman (Lucretia Giovanni — see Book One) and another vampire enter the magician's abode and search the place. The man is none other than Ambrogino Giovanni himself (although the viewing character may not recognize him if she did not meet the vampire in previous chapters of this series). If this truly is Ambrogino, there must have been something incredibly important at the church for the dark lord to pursue it in person — perhaps a new clue to the *Sargon Fragment* — Ambrogino's prize of decades past!

The two apparently find the church bare. The last thing the character sees is the magician's last sight: a pair of sinewy gray hands throttling the life from him. These are the hands of Ambrogino's foul weapon, the *Preta Shūnyatī* (see Book One: London).

As the characters prepare to leave the remains of the church, they sense that they are not alone. A tall figure — clearly a vampire — steps from the shadows. He is tall and slender, with light brown hair and a composed look. He wears a simple white peasant's shirt; his only adornment is a gold Coptic crucifix. Despite the newcomer's casual stance, the characters sense something disturbing about him: Use of *Auspex* reveals a sparkling gold aura — True Faith. Since such a thing is virtually unheard of among Cainites, the characters may disregard this vision as a powerful use of Presence, but

the shock is still undeniable. The figure keeps his distance, almost in acknowledgment of the discomfort his presence causes.

A character with Malkavian ties could recognize the vampire as the prophet Anatole, an occasional ally of Cāmilla Banes and rumored apostle of Cappadocius. If the characters are not familiar with him, he introduces himself and claims that he carries a message from Marianna.

The vampire explains that he foresaw the characters' arrival in a divine vision, and he delivers Marianna's letter to "further God's work," though he does not elaborate. The letter is written in blood. A character with *Auspex* 3 can verify that Marianna wrote it. A successful roll reveals an image of the woman, haggard and injured, in a dank cellar, desperately writing the letter in her own blood.

The letter — addressed to all of the characters in Barcelona that Marianna knows — has an urgent, pleading tone. It tells of her long flight from the Giovanni. Marianna writes that although she initially did not understand the reason for the Giovanni's pursuit of her, she now believes that she has a partial means to their destruction. She claims to have learned more about the

Sargon Fragment and will share her information with the characters if they meet her in London in one year. The letter is dated December 13, 1847.

Anatole claims to be a friend and servant to Marianna, who has "moved on from Barcelona to escape her hunters." He is rumored to have met her during her flight from the Giovanni, and Anatole recognized a spiritual significance to her persecution. He claims to perceive a divine plan at work and believes Marianna and the characters are part of it. His answers to characters' questions are cryptic at best, claiming simply that the elders are "putty to God's will."

Anatole does not know exactly what role the characters are destined to play, but he offers to bless them for seeking Marianna out. He warns that the offering may cause discomfort. The Malkavian touches willing elders on the forehead; they suffer a stabbing pain behind their eyes and are blinded by a pure, white light. They endure headaches for the rest of the night, but otherwise seem to incur no long-term effects.

Anatole knows little of the blonde vampire who accompanied Ambrogino (assuming the characters saw her in a vision), but he believes her to be one of the Giovanni; Anatole can also explain the meaning of the triangle on the floor and the significance of the terms surrounding it (see sidebar).

Resolution

The characters are undoubtedly stunned by the information they learn in Barcelona. An investigation into some obscure occult lore has led to the revelation that Marianna is still alive, that only Malkavians seem mad enough to help her, and, most importantly, that Ambrogino Giovanni (one of the characters' centuries-old rivals) continues his pursuit of apotheosis. If, after hundreds of years of conflict with the Giovanni, these discoveries do not inspire the characters to venture to London to meet Marianna, perhaps the Storyteller must appeal to the characters' baser needs: the promise of power. See "The Justicar" for further options.

Accounts of Count Jocalo

The characters may also hear disturbing stories about the Setite Count Jocalo while among Spanish Kindred. Jocalo's last rumored appearance was in the 1500s, and it coincided with the death of a vampire elder in Madrid. According to various sources, Jocalo can walk in sunlight, devour the souls of those he kills, consort with demons and the dead, he is not really a vampire but something far worse, and he controls a chantry of human mages. Some or none of these rumors may be true.

Information about Jocalo is merely meant to remind players and characters of the Setite lord. His presence isn't felt in London, but certainly is through his pawn, the Messenger, in Book Two of *The Sun Has Set*.

The Triangle of Solomon

Trained occultists recognize the triangle in the desecrated church as the Triangle of Solomon, an ancient Cabalistic glyph said to embody the three aspects of God. However, the remains of arcane books in the secret chamber suggest dark purposes for the figure: It is used in necromantic or even diabolic rituals. This symbol is hardly new to those who are well-tutored in the occult, but its apparent relationship to the Giovanni, Marianna and Anatole may elevate its position in subsequent studies.

Tetragrammaton: *The personal name of God, YHVH (yod he vau he).* This word is traditionally held to be the key to God's power. This may be the key that Mallotte translated from Ambrogino's folio in 1666. Without knowledge of the other two keys, the Tremere could not hope for control of the power he unleashed.

It is unlikely that Ambrogino gave Mallotte his only copy of the *Sargon Fragment* for study. Thus, the Giovanni are presumably one step ahead of the characters in their collective pursuit of the secrets to apotheosis.

Anexhexeton: *Omniscience; the wisdom of godhead.* Anexhexeton is the key to understanding the *Sargon Fragment*. The Tremere apparently knew this, but nothing more.

Primematum: *The binding force of Heaven.* The most difficult and obscure of the three keys, the *Primematum* offers mastery and is reputed to control the hosts of Heaven (or Hell). Certain lore holds that *Primematum* is the name of the power that Moses uttered to open the earth and swallow Corah, Dathan and Abiran.

The Justicar

Stage this prelude only a few months before the events of this book begin.

It is late November, 1848, and Paris has just doused the flames following a working-class uprising and its suppression by the French National Assembly. The Sabbat launched an attack in the interests of Prince Villon under the cover of these revolts. The attacks were staged primarily against young Camarilla vampires. If the characters are loyal agents of the Camarilla, some or all of them may have come to the city to help put down the Sabbat uprising. The Camarilla successfully crush the Sabbat attack with the characters' aid.

In the aftermath of these events, the Treador Justicar Violetta, who the characters know from 17th-century London, summons the elders to a suburban Elysium along the banks of the Seine. Her apartment contains a new form of art (proto-*Impressionism*), which those of a traditional disposition may find disturbing.

After welcoming the characters graciously with light banter and golden goblets of blood, the Justicar becomes very serious. She believes the Paris attacks were just a foray designed to undermine the Camarilla by eroding young vampires' confidence in their superiors. Violetta explains that she captured a Sabbat vampire (apparently) of Clan Brujah. Her guards bring in a short, grubby man with a drooping black mustache. He appears physically unharmed, but his fear is palpable; however, he manages a sneer as he enters. Violetta smiles at him politely. Her tone is soft, with a note of menace as she addresses the vampire by name.

"Marcel, you have committed illegal acts against the Camarilla lords of this city. You are condemned to death. However, you are young, created as fodder by a sire who does not care for your well-being. I, therefore, give you a chance to escape your fate by speaking freely. Tell me of your sire and of this 'Doctor Streck,' whose name I have heard these past nights." (Of course, those listening know that a "pardon" for the Sabbat wretch is highly unlikely.)

The neonate thumps his chest at the elders with startling bravado, "I am Sabbat! We do not beg!" He snarls almost as speaking from rote. Violetta's brow furrows in mock anger, and her red lips curl around gleaming white fangs in a predatory smile.

"You refuse my generosity and offend me in my own home?" She smiles conspiratorially at the characters. "You see what brutes the Sabbat employs?" The characters may use this moment as an invitation to step in and handle the interrogation.

Despite his bravado, Marcel is next to nothing to the elders, at least in age, power and wisdom; they can force him to speak in any number of ways. They may decide to handle the neonate gently, or to break a few bones. Marcel is bound by the *Vinculum* and literally writhes if the characters force him to speak. If the characters remain observers, Violetta uses her Presence to make the neonate feel absolute love for her, then she breaks his will. The Brujah ultimately speaks.

Marcel's story is sympathetic — to those who can still remember what that word means. He was a poor peasant who hated the monarchy for the heavy taxes it imposed on his farm. When the tax collector came to foreclose, Marcel had killed him in a blind rage and escaped. The authorities threw his wife in prison in his place. Marcel eluded capture for three days. A German vampire named Dietz found him on the third night and rewarded his rebellion with the Embrace.

Marcel has lived among the undead for only a few months and knows less than the characters do about the Sabbat as a whole, and even less about the motives behind the attacks staged recently. His mission was to kill a Camarilla neonate. Marcel decapitated his victim with an ax, but Violetta had captured him minutes later. Marcel knows that Streck was the reputed leader of the revolt but claims to have never met the man.

A trace of bitterness creeps into the Brujah's voice toward the end of the interrogation: "Bastards. They offered me vengeance and then left me to rot!"

The characters may decide that Marcel could be useful and try to spare him from Violetta's "mercy." She gives him casually to the characters as part of any arrangement they reach with her, though she seems amused if they show misguided compassion for the wretch. If the characters don't bargain for the neonate, Violetta orders that he be taken away by guards, to be executed with the morning sun.

After Marcel departs, Violetta admits that London is ripe for attack in Mithras' absence. The characters may know Streck's reputation as an agent of chaos (perhaps having been told so by the Founders), though no one in the Camarilla has ever actually seen him. Fashionable sentiment holds that he is a fictional character, like General Ludd of the Luddites. Violetta discounts this theory.

Violetta further confides that Ambrogino Giovanni seems to have some interest in English affairs; her agents have encountered his in the city. She fears that there is a connection between the Sabbat and the Giovanni and that London is in grave danger. Therefore, Violetta requests that the characters investigate matters in London. She suggests that they make contact with Valerius and use the upcoming London Conclave, called to resolve matters regarding the missing prince, as justification for their presence. Violetta also notifies the characters that another old ally from the Great Fire, Archon Geoffrey Leigh (from *Blood & Fire*), may meet them after their arrival.

Violetta has power within the Camarilla. She can offer the characters a variety of favors in exchange for their services. She may be able to wipe clean a stain on a character's name or reputation for past deeds. She also has the authority to call — or call off — any investigation into a character's dubious affairs, present or future. There's much to be said for having a Justicar in one's debt.

The Dream

This prelude can be run any time leading up to the events of this book. It literally confronts a character with her eventful and painful past, reminding her that she has always been and perhaps always will be a pawn of fate. The event also offers enigmatic motivation to travel to London, to explore what destiny holds in store — because, after all, fate cannot be denied.

A character dreams that he walks against howling winds. Moldering corpses disinter themselves and converge on him. Bilious humors ooze from their mouths as they shamble toward the dreamer. The zombies rip his flesh with clawed fingers, leaving jagged wounds that do not heal. The character's blows shatter the dead like overripe fruit and release a mind-numbing stench, but two corpses rise to take the place of each one that falls.

The dreamer stumbles on blindly, with numbed body and soul from the cold. After a seeming eternity of running, a beacon of firelight parts the miasmal fog.

The character hurls himself forward in search of sanctuary, but instead bears witness to a horrifyingly familiar scene at Castle Deverick. The Founders appear as they did over 400 years ago — standing in imperious judgment over the characters as they once were: frightened young children at the threshold of immortality. Memories of events from *The Last*

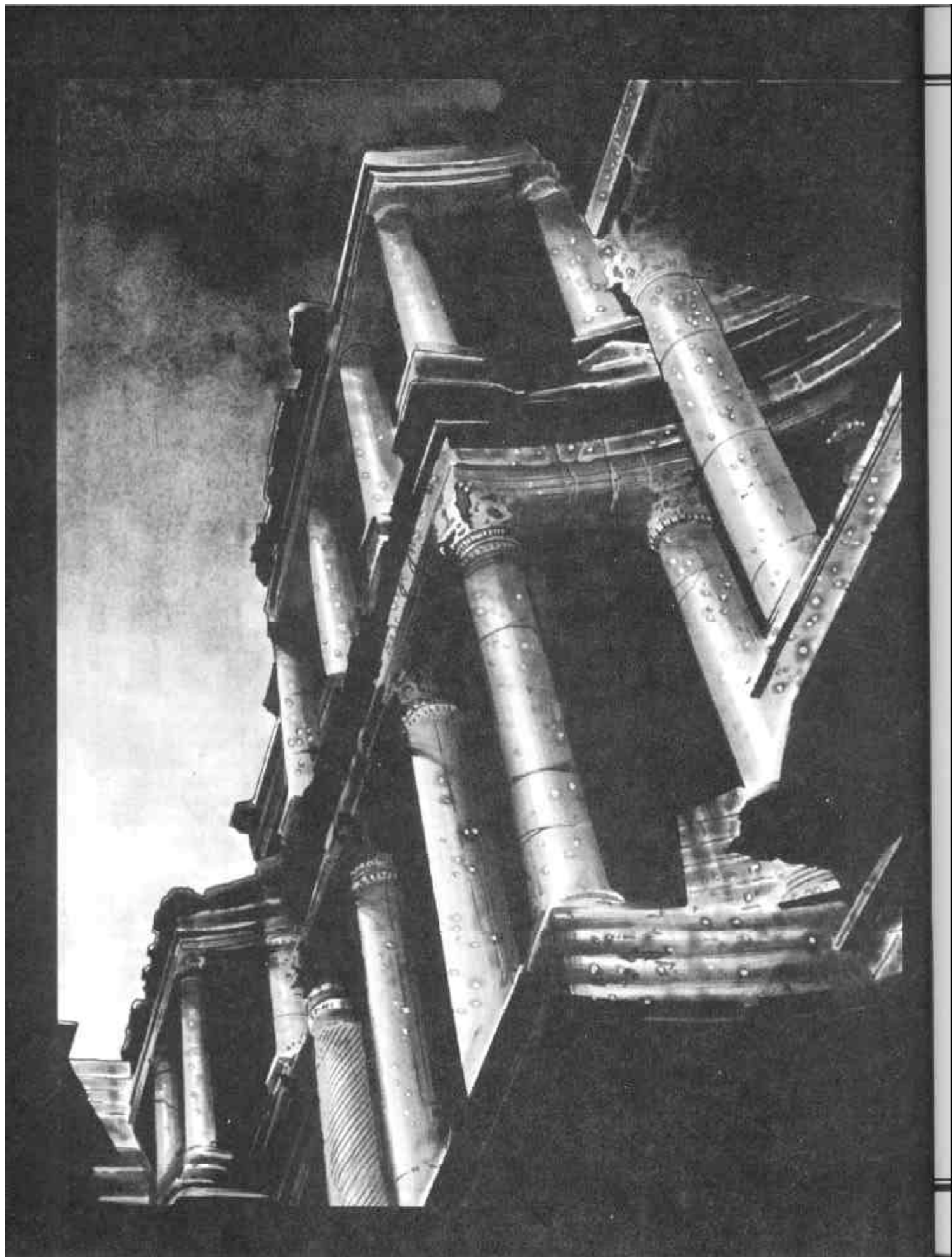
Supper overwhelm the character. He relives the agonizing tortures perpetrated on him and his companions by the Conspiracy of Isaac, and the characters' subsequent flight into the arms of the Founders, who now fiercely debate their fate.

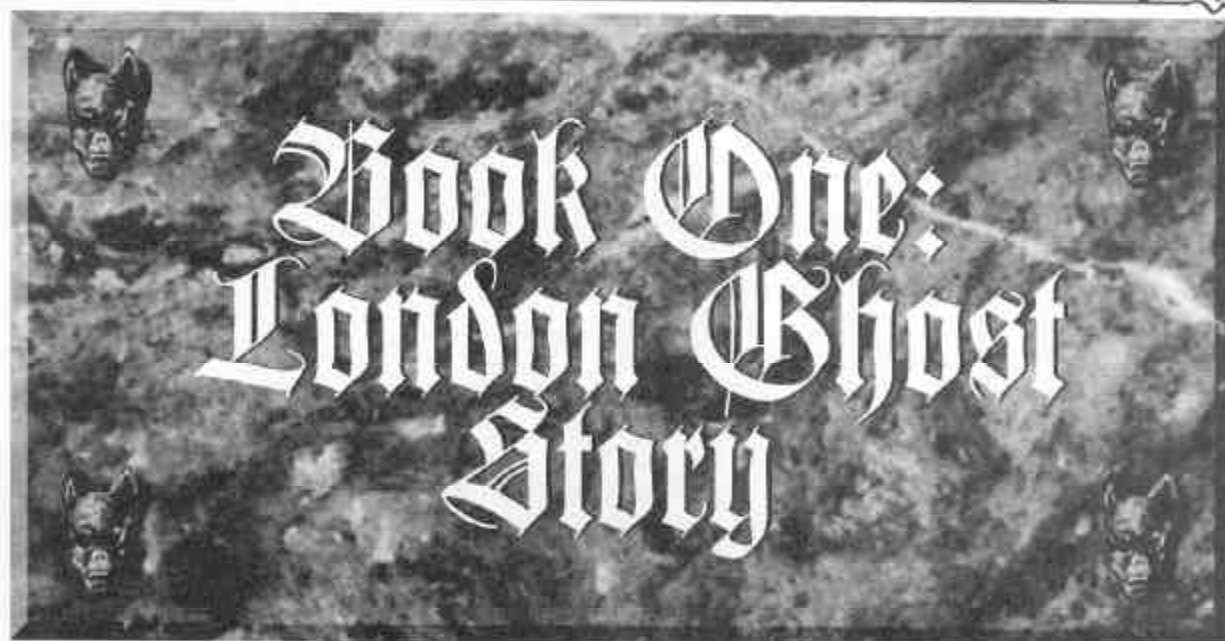
The dreamer stands apart from events, a phantom observer of the proceedings. The withered crone, Durga Syn, sues for clemency. She produces an egg and breaks it open, disgorging its bloody contents into a wooden bowl. "I am not unskilled in the arts of my people. This is a sign that these young ones are meant to play a part in a long and bloody drama," she pronounces.

The Founders resume quarreling and repeat the events that immediately followed the prophecy of the Blood Egg. The lords' voices become muffled and indistinct. Ignoring the debate, the old Gypsy turns toward the dreamer; her eyes exert a nearly irresistible pull. She smiles kindly, but sadly, and whispers, "The season is heavy with portent and the hour of your fate draws near. If you would embrace your word and gain power over your enemies, then go to old Londinium and await my coming. Do this, and you may yet survive the approaching maelstrom." The woman utters her last words with a meaningful glance out the window, and the wind suddenly wails louder outside the castle.

The image then blurs and the character awakens abruptly.







A wet Sunday in London: shops closed, streets almost empty; the aspect of a vast and well-kept graveyard. The few people in this desert of squares and streets, hurrying beneath their umbrellas, look like inquiet ghosts; it is horrible. A thick yellow fog fills the air, sinks, crawls on the very ground: at thirty paces a house or a steam-ship looks like ink-stains on blotting paper...after an hour's walking one...can understand suicide.

— Hippolyte Tains, *Notes sur l'Angleterre*

Synopsis

Characters arrive in London for any number of reasons, just in time for the clash of forces that vie for control of the city. London is Camarilla-controlled currently, but tenuously allied forces seek to undo that — and pursue their own agendas.

Some Sabbat, under the direction of Doctor Streck who, according to Justicar Violetta, was involved in sect uprisings in Paris, prepare to undermine London's reigning elders. Streck seeks a subversive victory: the weakening of neonate support for their Camarilla "elders," luring the "misguided" over to the Sabbat.

Streck's plans are not wholly supported by the Sabbat, though, not even by some sect members in London. The civil war that rages among the Sabbat draws lines in London, as Lady Astor, the ruling Lasombra in the city, plays her pieces against Streck. She hopes to maintain the current status quo between the Sabbat and Camarilla and strike against the establishment when it is weak and the Sabbat is strong.

The good doctor has allies, though: Ambrogino Giovanni, no less! Ambrogino has learned through English agents that clues to the Sargon Fragment lie in the burial crypt of Thomas Camden, Cappadocian and former chamberlain to Prince Mithras. Ambrogino allies himself with Streck in hopes of using the Sabbat attack as a cover to gain access to the Cappadocian's tomb — in the very home of London's current chamberlain Valerius (who the characters met in *Blood & Fire*).

Ambrogino does not come alone into this scheme, however. His Giovanni agents in London arrange a deal with a Scottish Gangrel in the Camarilla, Count Dunlop, before the city's coming Conclave and the Sabbat attack. Dunlop, a long-time enemy of Mithras and his childer, agrees to coincide an attack on Valerius with the Sabbat assault, which buys Ambrogino even more time to search Camden's crypt for the elusive *Sargon Fragment*.

Ambrogino's bid for godhead continues, and the players' characters arrive in time to confront him yet again. This time, however, the Giovanni lord has powerful forces arrayed against the characters, and the elders must contend with all of their foes if they are to see another night.



Theme

The overriding theme of events in London is betrayal. Doctor Streck and his Sabbat followers betray their superiors in the sect and others of their kind by staging the presumptuous attack on London. Count Dunlop betrays his prince and the Camarilla by aligning with the Giovanni and Sabbat and by seeking to destroy Valerius and the very power of Mithras. Finally, Ambrogino betrays God Himself, by seeking godhead and by hoping to usurp divine power and claim it for himself.

This theme should pervade your storytelling techniques in this chapter. If a decision ever arises in which a vampire or even a human has to choose between supporting friends or backstabbing them, he almost always chooses the latter. Vampire elders who stalk the night witness repeated scenes of London's poor fighting among themselves for table scraps, pennies and sexual partners. Furthermore, for some reason — the atmosphere of the city? — other vampire lords' private agendas seem petty and selfish. Perhaps this last insight induces revelations among the characters about their own agendas and motives — or it makes them realize that they have many other personal goals that they could pursue and that the other players' characters stand in their way.

Characters should trust no one ultimately, especially after they observe how others of their kind break alliances and their word. Indeed, the characters soon learn that they can trust not but themselves — and perhaps not even that!

Mood

The atmosphere of this chapter is oppressive. London's putrid yellow fog hangs inanimate in the air, shrouding the city as if in a death mask. Sounds echo strangely down narrow city streets — muffled by the opaque mist. It's as if the city waits quietly for an unknown fate.

That sentiment rings true among London's vampires as well. Pressures mount as Camarilla and Sabbat alike impatiently await the coming storm, and every night that the Sabbat trap is not sprung, the snare quivers in anticipation. Vampires grow short with each other; tempers flare and violence increases. The characters sense this oppression perhaps more so than any one; they must deal with the feuding Sabbat and Camarilla, but they also know that the Giovanni stalk the city as well, and the unseen predator is the most dangerous of all.

As Storyteller, define London's close spaces and heavy fog. The poor live in cramped misery. Feeding on them is easy, but disappointing; there is no challenge, and moving among the broken, spiritless, sick and dying ruins an elder's appetite, if such malaise is even possible for the character. Play your sessions at a small table and position chairs close together so that players occupy each other's space. Dim the lights and even use dry ice in your gaming area if your local magic shop carries it.

Travel

The characters may reach London by a variety of means. Although the first self-propelled ship appeared in 1840, the majority of ships still use sails. The mid-19th century is the age of the great clipper ships, though sails are slowly giving way to steam power by 1848. Characters with the money or contacts can travel in safety and comfort. Others may stowaway in dark holds, preying on sailors or passengers. Those who profited from the sale of the *Osprey* in *Blood & Fire* may even have their own boats.

On land, characters may choose to travel by carriage or horse. Those positioned highly in the Camarilla have the option of traveling in a well-appointed train car that can shut out daylight with window blinds and shutters.

You may emphasize the relative ease, comfort and safety of travel in the 19th century, contrasting it with the dangers that the characters faced on their perilous journey to London in 1666.

A ship delivers characters to London's port district, along the Thames. A train leaves them at Paddington Station. In either case, they may be met by retainers to Valerius or Lady Astor of the Sabbat, if they wrote ahead announcing their arrival.

London, 1848 (Kine)

London has risen to a position of world dominance since the events of the Great Fire in 1666. Decades of unparalleled growth have made it the world's largest city, with a population of almost four million by mid-century. During the 1840s, over 330,000 immigrants flooded the city, many of them fleeing the Irish potato famine. This massive influx led to a building boom for the wealthy and middle class, while the poor huddled together in the rotting tenements of Nottingham Dale and Agar Town. At least a thousand homeless people wander the city nightly.

The economic and military expansion of the British Empire has made London the preeminent city of the world's largest political power. London is a center of commerce, learning and the arts. Its services' economy provides jobs, from skilled labor to street peddlers. Child labor has become a crucial factor in London's economic growth; children work grueling 16-hour days in the city's factories.

Gaslight stains the London fog a ghastly yellow, while smokestacks in the city's growing steel and textile factories drape the place in a dark halo. London has six major industries: shipbuilding, textiles, wood and furniture, metals and engineering, printing, and the manufacture of precision machinery (watches, scientific instruments, surgical apparatuses).

Urban living for the wealthy and middle class is bearable because of advances in amenities, including the invention of hot and cold running water. Yet, overcrowding precipitates the wealthy to flee to the suburbs and leave the poor stranded in the city's slums. The poorest Londoners slave in the city's workhouses and earn less than is necessary to keep body and soul as one.

London, 1848 (Kindred)

Kindred who traveled to London in the last book note, superficially at least, that the city is more calm than the plague-riddled London of 1666 was. Appearances can be deceiving, though. Despite such grand cathedrals as St. Paul's, 19th-century London is urbane and largely secular, which earns it a reputation as a modern-day Gomorrah. Drinking establishments, gambling taverns, music halls and penny theaters abound. Over 80,000 prostitutes and other peddlers of various vices ply their trade in almost every part of the city. These depravities, combined with the city's exploding population, make hunting easy for vampires and curse London with the largest Kindred population of any city.

Certain enterprising vampires have gained power over London's financial institutions. London's Toreador have seemingly made peace with Ventrue rule and turned their attentions toward building the city's cultural institutions and Elysium. A few anarchists, bitter about recent losses to the elders, are increasingly strident, yet ineffective, in their opposition of the lords' rule. Although London remains in Camarilla hands, a recent skirmish with the Sabbat puts that proposition in doubt.

Geography

The Thames River flows east to west and divides London almost in half. The river now runs black with residue from the city's major industries (predominantly metal foundries), and it no longer supplies citizens with fresh fish — but still remains a central avenue of trade. An extensive complex of docks and artificial lakes line both banks of the Thames. Famous ports — such as the Isle of Dogs, the London Docks, the East India, the Surrey Docks and St. Katharine's Dock — process imports from throughout the world.

The old city still lies within decrepit walls on the river's northern bank. Kindred who took part in the events of *Blood & Fire* remember this as the site of the Great Fire. This portion of the city still houses such landmarks as St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London and the British Museum (an Elysium administered by the Toreador). Wealthy Kindred and kine frequent this area's high-class

shops in Picadilly and Mayfair. Oxford Street shops cater to the wealthy women of London, while Bond Street offers a wide array of clothiers for men. Also here is the Rosewood Inn, a safe and popular meeting place for well-healed Kindred. Whitechapel, just north of the Tower of London, is known for its sugar-refining, its bell-makers (who made the chime for Big Ben) and silk-weaving. The district also contains some of the city's harshest slums, which later become the scene of the Ripper murders.

Over a quarter of a million people labor in warehouses and docks on the Thames' northern bank, in Stepney. These people live in ramshackle tenements with no public drainage. Stepney currently suffers from a cholera epidemic. At least three highly territorial Nosferatu claim the area as their private reserve and are thus hostile to intruders.

Bermondsey, along the southern bank, produces leather goods and is also the world's first source of tinned meats (a concept that most Kindred find disgusting).

The Thames is host to a number of highly productive shipyards at Millwall, Blackwall and Rotherhithe. Most of the city's gasworks are located along the Thames for economic reasons. Other Thames districts include Battersea and the middle-class neighborhood of Chelsea.

East London contains a mixture of docks, warehouses and working-class communities. Recent Jewish immigrants work in the area's textile factories, doing piece-work labor.

Other East End districts include Wandsworth, Fulham, Hampstead, Hammersmith, and the middle-class enclave of Kensington. Several Toreador sponsor a thriving arts community here and much of Kensington is Elysium. The East End also houses the famous Paddington Station. The area once boasted fashionable middle-class neighborhoods, but it now includes a number of poor ones. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are the city's largest parks. Fashionable ladies and gentlemen enjoy pastoral activities here both day and night. Gangrel find the region tolerable when they must conduct business in the city.

The fashionable West End includes Greenwich, Lewisham, Poplar and Deptford. Woolwich is a military district and houses the Royal Arsenal, the military academy and the Royal Artillery Barracks.

North London includes the city of Westminster, St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Islington, Hackney and Stoke Newington. The North also contains Agar Town, which is a destitute shantytown with narrow streets and no drainage. Hunting is good here; many of the inhabitants are indigent and not likely to be missed.

London's South End includes Camberwell, Lambeth and Southwark. The last is home to the famous Perkins and Dunsirn Breweries (Dunsirn is an important Giovanni resource in town and is described in detail later). The South End is busy and well-traveled even late into the night.



London



London County Council Boundaries

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) City of London | 16) Camberwell |
| 2) Holborn | 17) Lambeth |
| 3) Finsbury | 18) Battersea |
| 4) Shoreditch | 19) Chelsea |
| 5) Bethnal | 20) Kensington |
| 6) Stepney | 21) Paddington |
| 7) Bermondsey | 22) Hampstead |
| 8) Southwark | 23) Stoke Newington |
| 9) City of Westminster | 24) Woolwich |
| 10) St Marylebone | 25) Greenwich |
| 11) St Pancras | 26) Lewisham |
| 12) Islington | 27) Wandsworth |
| 13) Hackney | 28) Fulham |
| 14) Poplar | 29) Hammersmith |
| 15) Deptford | |



London's railway system binds the city together. The first railways connected Southwark to Deptford, London Bridge and Greenwich. Additional lines connected Euston, Ealing, Paddington and Bishopsgate. The effects of the railways are diverse; they have built up some areas of the city and devastated others. Railways are used primarily for inter-city transportation in the late 1840s, with a "mere" 27,000 entering the city by rail every day. The age of the railway commuter and the first subways is still 20 or more years in the future.

Homecoming

The Storyteller may run the characters' arrival in London in any number of ways. It is, of course, possible that some characters have been living in London all along. In this case, the characters may reunite in the hustle and bustle of the docks or the train station. London natives may choose to put their out-of-town acquaintances up in their havens. Some or all of the characters may have access to various Elysium houses.

Note that any reunion between vampire elders is likely to be more of one between associates and allies of convenience than of old friends (though, there are exceptions). Old feuds and suspicions are expected at any such reunion.

Camarilla characters should make contact with Valerius, the *de facto* prince in Mithras' absence, whether they are foreigners visiting the city or inhabitants returning from abroad. The Ventrue take pains to make their control of London clear. They enforce the Masquerade rigorously and have little tolerance for those who endanger it, or who break the laws of prestation. Indeed, Ventrue patience is sorely pressed by the events of the coming nights, and even minor infractions of the Traditions may be penalized.

Sabbat characters may have directions from sect leaders to meet with the presumptive Lasombra Archbishop of London, Lady Astor. Other Sabbat may have separate appointments with Lady Vladislava's ally, Doctor Streck.

House Valerius

If Valerius knows the characters are coming, he dispatches his manservant Carlyle to pick them up in a private carriage. Carlyle treats the characters with the utmost respect, regardless of their status, unless they are outwardly rude or hostile. Valerius possesses several havens around the city, although he receives new arrivals at his secondary home, a fashionable mansion near the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich. The mansion is a large 18th-century, red-brick building at the end of a private driveway. High ivy-covered walls crowned with metal spikes surround the house on all sides. Great hounds stalk the grounds' shadowy perimeter.

A deferential guard opens the gate for any vampires who have announced their arrival in advance. Those who turn up unexpectedly (or without Carlyle) have to wait while the guard sends a message to the mansion. Ultimately, all may enter — barring any highly provocative behavior.

The mansion's interior is somberly tasteful, and an obvious outdoorsy motif underlies much of the décor. Valerius awaits the characters in the library; two huge Irish wolfhounds stand obediently at his side. Valerius' child, Lady Anne Bowesley, and Archon Geoffrey Leigh are also in the room. Although Valerius is clearly of the ruling class, he originates from the medieval (or, perhaps Renaissance) nobility and is less polished than most modern nobles anticipate. Valerius is quick to pass some rules of etiquette off as "foppish affectation," and he tends to break into Middle or Old English when angered.

As the characters enter, they witness Valerius thrashing two men (poachers) who were captured on his property during the day. It is clear that he is using but a fraction of his true strength; after all, the men are still alive. One poacher is tall and athletic, while the other is unkempt and obese. A guard reports to his lord that the tall man shot one of the estate's prize stags.

Valerius' face contorts with ire as he curses the mortals and then beats them resolutely with each word. "I know thee knaves: rascals, eaters of broken meats, base, shallow, beggarly! Thou art nothing but the composition of beggars, cowards, panderers and the sons and heirs of whores!"

The poachers, bruised and bloodied, plead for clemency. "Mercy, your lordship. We were only trying to feed our hungry families," the rotund man squeals as he extends his hand in supplication. This action violates an invisible barrier and a wolfhound snaps off two fingers. The man howls in pain and falls silent before Valerius, and he shakes with shock and fear. "You belie yourself, villain. You sell my pelts for a hefty enough price in the Southwark markets to support a wife and a mistress," Valerius snarls at the terrified man. The short man's expression shifts from fear to surprise.

"Still, your arrival here is fortunate," Valerius continues. "The feast for that accursed Scotsman draws near. Your presence means I won't waste my herd on that brute, Dunlop. Perhaps your sluggish blood will dull his appetite before he sups from my private stock."

Valerius is well within his rights to kill the men and takes umbrage at those who interfere with his dispensation of house justice. If a character intercedes on the poachers' behalf, Valerius may agree to let them go if they survive Count Dunlop's visit.

Guards drag the now-silent poachers away after a slight motion of Valerius' hand. The chamberlain turns his full attention to the characters. If they impressed him in *Blood & Fire*, they may have become Valerius' allies over the intervening centuries. In that case, he welcomes them



warmly and treats them as colleagues, though he is much older than they are, and he speaks with the authority of the prince. Valerius' word is law in London.

If the characters are of a lesser stature, or if they meet Valerius for the first time, the meeting is cordial unless their behavior demands otherwise. If the characters are Sabbat vampires masquerading as Camarilla, it is unlikely that they have kept up anything but a superficial relationship with Valerius over the years. The chamberlain may be somewhat stolid in his thinking, but he is perceptive and well-informed; Valerius may see through the characters' charade. Camarilla impostors must act with care in London.

If the characters do not make it clear that they are in town specifically for the Conclave, Valerius questions them about their business. If they report information from any of the preludes, he listens with interest. Lady Anne remains present for most of the interview, though Valerius asks her to leave if the characters bring up the *Savon Fragment* or the Giovanni. He then tells them that the London Giovanni have been almost inactive over the past two centuries, but that they once had an interest in the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wandsworth. The lead is at least 50-years old, but Camarilla characters may decide to investigate nonetheless.

Valerius claims to have seen no sign of Durga Syn, but he offers to have his proxies watch out for her at the characters' request. He has, however, heard rumors that Marianna was

sighted recently in the city. She never presented herself to the chamberlain, but she supposedly fled town as rapidly as she appeared. Characters who came to London to meet Marianna after *The Anxhexeton* prelude never find her; she realizes that Ambrogino is hot on her heels and decides to flee rather than wait for the characters. Durga Syn can provide more information on Marianna's whereabouts after events settle in London (see *The Arrival of Durga Syn* at the end of this Book).

Valerius also states that Sabbat agents launched an attack a month ago that left a Toreador neonate and two Sabbat dead. He suggests that the characters speak with the Toreador elder, Sir Hortense Holden, if they desire further information.

Valerius believes that members of the London Primogen are trying to undercut his position as chamberlain, and he is suspicious of anyone that he does not know well or who does not come with reliable recommendations (the characters may wonder where they fit into this scheme).

If the characters prove to be sociable, Valerius invites them to a feast preceding the Conclave. He explains that he and other Kindred who control the city want to "greet" the Scottish Count Dunlop before the Conclave proper begins. Dunlop is a long-standing rival of Mithras, and therefore, of Valerius. Their true intent is to feel the Gargrel out on his stances in the coming meeting, and also to apply pressure in

an effort to silence the lord to avoid any dissension at the Conclave. Valerius wants as many supporters as he can get at the feast to pressure Dunlop, so he may even insist that the characters attend. The feast is only a few nights away, and characters who plan to stay in London for any duration are wise to accept Valerius' "gracious" invitation.

Valerius suggests several places for the characters to stay if they are strangers in town. He may invite allies to stay at his country haven on the western outskirts of the city. Barring any further business, Valerius dismisses the characters, leaving them to their own devices.

Storyteller Note: The upcoming Conclave is merely a backdrop to the events of this Book. England's Camarilla Kindred gather in London, but the character can choose to avoid the whole meeting if so desired. Characters might also wonder why the Sabbat would opt to attack the city when its Camarilla population increases suddenly. Surely, that would be the most dangerous time to strike — unless the Sabbat have allies among the Camarilla.

The Conclave may eventually occur after the events of this Book, and the characters may attend if you choose to stage it, but the actual meeting falls outside the scope of this chapter. Characters could use the Conclave as an opportunity to jockey for power, or to gain allies and information. The Conclave may even be the crowning glory to the characters' heroic deeds in London, or a gravestone to an unfortunate episode in Camarilla history.

Lady Anne Bowesley

Lady Anne is Valerius' child and he has groomed her to take his place should he fall. She is well-versed in managing political and financial influence, and many of her holdings are independent of the chamberlain's. A polished courtier, Lady Anne wields power as though born to it. If anything, she is even more refined than her sire.

Lady Anne is a diablerist and, therefore, equal in generation to Valerius. Her victim was a rival Ventrue; she and Valerius endeavor to cover up her act. Lady Anne supports all of Valerius' decisions publicly and puts whatever resources are necessary at his disposal. However, she has her own ambitions and defends her personal interests before those of her clan or sire.

Sabbat Business

If the characters are Sabbat, they may seek out one of two vampires upon arriving in London: Lady Astor or Doctor Streck. If the characters go their separate ways to find both vampires, those seeking Lady Astor likely have better luck. Characters seeking Streck require a successful Intelligence + Streetwise roll (difficulty 9) to initiate contact with the city's Brujah *antirifu*. The connected characters meet Streck's agents, the Taylor brothers, at a sketchy dockside tavern. The Taylors are identical twins who are part of Streck's coterie and who bring the elders to the Rat's Castle for a late-night meeting.

The Whisper Gallery (Streck and Lady Astor)

Lady Astor maintains an opulent townhouse at St. Katharine's Dock, near the Tower of London. The characters' arrival has been forewarned by the elders themselves, or by Sabbat lords across Europe. If the characters' appearance is unannounced, they are still powerful Sabbat and are welcomed graciously by Lady Astor.

An elderly servant opens the door and shows the characters to the conservatory. A barely audible murmur, as if a hushed welcome, ripples through the room as they enter. Candles are the only source of illumination. The halls are immersed in deep shadows and adorned with grotesque black-basalt carvings. Human and animal figures, carved in a Russian Baroque style, seem to flicker and dance with a life of their own. Other portions of the carvings display webbed,ropy patterns that look like pulsing veins in the dim light. Holes carved in the tableau seem to whisper as the characters' passage disturbs the air. (Faster movements make a louder sound.) Black shadows dance and dart on the periphery of the characters' vision. Some images are indistinct, while others have almost human form. Those who wear Japheth's cloaks sense an indefinable presence to the place.

As the characters approach the conservatory, it seems as if the air moving mysteriously through the manor does them a service; two shouting voices can be heard.

"Our position here is weak," says a woman (Lady Astor) in a cold English accent. "Move against the Camarilla now — when they're gathering for their Conclave — and you will bring them crashing down on our heads. Witness the failed coup in Paris."

A man (Streck, who visits Astor to win her support for his upcoming attack on the city) replies, "Paris was not a failure. We learned all that we needed and lost but one of our number. The Ventrue here are no more than a paper tiger, despite their display of strength. Mithras has been missing for 50 years. Without him, this city is like a turtle on its back. His lackey, Valerius, does not have the support of the Primogen. Strike now and few will come to his aid! Show that you can reverse three centuries of Camarilla dominance, and our brothers and sisters throughout Europe will flock to your banner!"

"Oh? And if Mithras returns?" Lady Astor replies. "I know your reputation, Streck. You sow discord, yet you are nowhere to be found when it's time to face the consequences. I have not built and planned for two centuries to watch you throw it away in an arrogant act of bravado!"

"I am handing you an opportunity, yet you refuse it?" Streck intones. "What have your centuries of planning brought you? The Camarilla solidifies its control decade by decade while you languish—"



The debate ceases abruptly as the characters enter the room. Lady Astor and a gaunt, angular man with round glasses are clearly at odds.

Lady Astor is refinement personified. She is a tall, regal woman in her mid-30s with chalk-white skin and glistening black lips. She converses in a reasoned tone, though there is an imperious gleam in her slate-gray eyes. Her shiny black hair is worn loose and seems to whip and writhe around her face like a nest of angry black snakes.

She sits calmly at a large, black-lacquered harpsichord. A number of chairs are arranged in a semicircle as if for a recital. The only light in the room is from a blue lamp with a dragonfly pattern. Azure light coruscates on black wood and dapples a nearby door frame with sinister shadows. Two white mummified hands, clasped as if they once belonged to lovers, rest atop the instrument.

Brujah characters recognize Streck as one of the intellectual cornerstones of the Sabbat Brujah. He is a tall, thin academician with a subverted aristocratic bearing. He's dressed casually in blacks and grays. His cold blue eyes sparkle behind his glasses with an insolent, dark mirth.

Streck gives the characters a thin smile as Lady Astor motions for them to come forward. Tension continues to pervade the room, even though the occupants have stopped arguing. Lady Astor nods at Streck, "I believe your business here is complete, unless you care to join my shadows..."

Streck gives another brittle smile and turns to the characters. "It seems I have worn out my welcome here, but that need not prevent our talking later. Once you tire of milady's admiration for the Camarilla, you may find me at the Rat's Castle, at the east end of Shaftsbury, tomorrow night. Be there by 10 o'clock and knock four times at the red door. Ask for Marron."

If the characters interject that they have overheard the lords' conversation, Streck delays his departure. If they agree with Streck's opinions, he invites them to come with him immediately. If they side with Lady Astor and warn Streck to forego his plans, he thanks them politely for their interest and promises to take their comments under advisement. In any event, Lady Astor has requested Streck's leaving. The room's shadows ripple and unwind menacingly in response to her constrained anger. The Brujah does not delay his departure for any further banter.

Lady Astor's Proposal

Lady Astor visibly relaxes once Streck leaves the room. Some of the characters may already know her if they are long-time residents of London, though few know her well. Lady Astor's welcome depends on past affiliations with the characters and on the elders' overall reputation within the Sabbat. If they are unknown to her — or if some of them agreed with Streck — she is highly suspicious. Lady Astor greets the characters warmly if any of them are allied with Lord Alexandre.

Astor has seemingly little interest in the Giovanni and dismisses the *Sargon Fragment* as myth, though her interest grows if the characters link it to the Setite attacks surrounding the Great Fire of London.

Lady Astor considers Streck her primary problem and tries to engage the characters to be agents against him. To her, Streck's plan to attack the Camarilla in so foolhardy a manner is a *de facto* breach of the Code of Milan — specifically the provision about working for the sect's greater good. Characters who follow the Path of Honorable Accord may recognize the validity of this argument, while followers of other paths must make their own interpretations. Lady Astor requests that the characters go to the Rat's Castle and "reason" with Streck. She does not initiate any conversations that indicate "stern measures," but she listens to the characters' suggestions in this regard.

Since Astor is asking a lot of the characters, it is unlikely that they are bought off with a few trinkets. As opposed to their past associations with elder vampires, the characters are now on more even footing and can name their own terms. They are no longer neonates to be ordered about. Each may have his own requests and may negotiate with Astor individually.

Lady Astor offers anything from lands, to feeding privileges, to positions of power in London when it falls to the Sabbat (in about another 100 years by her calculations). If the characters keep faith with her, they gain a powerful ally. Characters who agree to work with Astor may take Herd 3 for the duration of their stay in London (and afterward, if they negotiate for it). Sabbat do not use herds as much as Camarilla Kindred do, but they resort to them occasionally as a matter of convenience. Astor also offers access to two luxurious private havens.

Lady Astor tries to convince the characters to support her cause, but she does not use anything but verbal persuasion. However, she paints a dire picture of a Camarilla crackdown in the aftermath of Streck's revolt; Astor cites the execution of two Sabbat during a recent attack on the city's Toreador as a sample of what's to come.

The characters suffer no repercussions if they refuse to help Lady Astor; she is simply not disposed to aid them in the future.

Lady Astor

Once named Katerina, she was born to Kievan nobility in the 10th century. She was a scholar and, by her mid-30s, a powerful matriarch of a family one step removed from the Kievan throne.

Supernatural conflict permeated the Russian capital as Prince Vladimir Christianized the land. Katerina's wealth and power made her an ideal candidate for the Embrace by local Kindred. Her scholarly pursuits brought her to the attention of a foreign Lasombra, though; he wanted to expand his interests in the Rus. Following Russia's conversion, Katerina moved to Constantinople for a number of centuries.

After the fall of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, Katerina came to England with the intention of establishing her place permanently. She assumed her current identity before inculcating herself into the English aristocracy.

Lady Astor has spent the past few centuries accumulating power and laying plans for an eventual Sabbat takeover of London. Her designs are well over a century from fruition, though, and she resents any activity that might disrupt them. Astor is afraid that Streck's impending attack will draw too much attention from the Camarilla. She hopes to utilize the characters as agents to prevent the attack from taking place.

Lady Astor is a follower of the Path of Honorable Accord and subscribes to the Code of Milan; she tries to avoid spilling Sabbat blood. She has mastered Obtenebration, Potence and Dominate. Astor is the oldest and longest lived member of the Sabbat in London and presumably would become archbishop if the city ever fell into Sabbat hands.

If the characters agree to work with Astor, she shares her knowledge of the Giovanni. Her information is somewhat more extensive than that of Valerius. She knows the Giovanni have been lying low for two centuries, but Astor has heard that they maintain interests in Southwark or Lambeth breweries. More importantly, she tells the characters about Claudius Giovanni's death. Lady Astor is not sure how he died, but she has heard a reliable rumor that Setites killed him in Cairo. (This rumor is false, but it should make the characters consider a journey to Egypt.)

Lady Astor claims that, during her time in Constantinople, she came into brief conflict with Ambrogino Giovanni over "minor," unspecified matters. She tells the characters that Ambrogino was servitor to a Cappadocian named Lady Constancia (a favorite of Cappadocius), who died in the late 1500s. Astor has seen no sign of Durga Syn; she never heard of Marianna but knows that a woman was recently in town and asked about Sabbat who, ironically, match the characters' descriptions. Apparently, Marianna left abruptly, as if pursued. (Again, Marianna searched London for the characters, but she fled for fear of being captured by Ambrogino, her eternal assailant. Marianna's current whereabouts are revealed by Durga Syn toward the end of this Book.)

Havens and Herds

One of Lady Astor's havens is a large and lavishly decorated home on Oxford Street. The other is a secluded Thames-side chateau eight miles east of Hammersmith. Characters can remain at one or the other if they negotiate for the privilege.

If any of the characters arrange for access to Astor's herd, she has vessels arrive at a time and place of their choosing. She forewarns that her stock is a trifle strange, "They are not much on conversation, but that is hardly their purpose, I suppose — vulgar little merchants." Some vessels may await the characters in one of Astor's havens, while others arrive as needed. The blood donors are all middle-aged or older men, and most of them are moderately well-dressed. They are all mutes, and there is a hint of fear and avarice in their eyes.

Their handicap is psychological rather than physical — and clearly Astor's doing. Investigating characters discover that Lady Astor pays her vessels well for their services, not out of necessity, but because it fits her warped sense of humor. The men are lonely and pathetic misers; their inability to speak cuts them off from society, yet their greed for money continues unabated. Their blood is nourishing enough, but thin and dissatisfying.

St. Giles Rookery

The characters have some difficulty locating the Rat's Castle (Intelligence + Area Lore, difficulty 8), even if they are somewhat familiar with London's sketchy side. Shaftsbury Avenue splits into a maze of unmarked streets, courts and blind alleys, collectively known as St. Giles Rookery. The area's outer ring is host to a mixture of peddlers, streetwalkers and indigents of every sort. Pale oil-lamp light turns the fog an eerie yellow, but these lamps grow farther apart as the characters move toward the center of the maze. Dismal tenement buildings with broken or boarded windows loom like brooding sentinels.

Despite the area's dismal condition, the characters notice a well-dressed merchant walking purposefully toward the center of the neighborhood. The characters may choose to join or follow the man in hopes of locating their destination.

Small bands of ruffians armed with sticks and knives wander the area and peer from dark alleys with malicious intent. The thugs may confront the characters if the vampires are few and not obviously dangerous by insisting that the strangers pay a "toll" to pass unmolested.

The merchant or the bandits know the exact location of the Rat's Castle. The characters may convince either to help them on their quest through various means. A successful use of *Auspex 3* (Telepathy) also reveals the Castle's location, though the district is so confusing that multiple successes are necessary for the elders to find their way with this "mental map."

If the characters remain hidden to observe events in the neighborhood, the ruffians may rob the merchant. They cudgel the man horribly. One takes a well-aimed blow to his teeth, splaying them out at a horrible angle. The man screams for help, but mortals only watch from their windows. The bandits strip the man of his clothes

and toss him down a sewer opening and laugh that the rats will finish the job. If anything of value is stolen, the thugs proceed to fight for it, in keeping with this Book's theme. The characters may aid the merchant, ignore the altercation or take the opportunity to sate their thirst.

If the characters aid the merchant, he tells them his name is Robert (it is really Thomas). He confides that he is visiting the Rat's Castle for a little entertainment and "horizontal refreshment." He is happy for any civilized company while walking through such a dangerous area.

The Rat's Castle

The Rat's Castle is a plain brick building that was a theater in the last century. Boards cover the building's few windows. The entrance is a red door in a refuse-strewn alley. If the characters knock the requisite four times, a small man in a garish uniform responds and asks to see their invitations. Characters who have befriended Robert are invited in as his guests. If they ask for Marron, the doorman calls an anemic boy and tells him to escort the visitors.

Once past the doorman, the characters walk down a hall and ascend some stairs into a loud and boisterous auditorium. The room is large and garishly lit. Crudely painted and faded two-penny figures decorate the walls. A tall gawky man with dishveled hair and a long thin beak of a nose stands near the entrance. Black makeup smears his face, he wears a chimney sweep's hat and a sandwich board that reads: *The Priest and the Privy. A Modern Morality Tale in Three Acts* by Henri Marron.

The characters are led to or they pick out Marron, who is a small, mustached vampire in a gaily decorated, red overcoat. He sits with two women and chats amiably. The characters may be there at Streck's invitation, and Marron recognizes them from their description. He greets them warmly, dismisses the women and asks the characters to sit.

If the characters are there without Streck's invitation, but at Lady Astor's behest, Marron is suspicious and asks their intentions. If they say they speak for Lady Astor, Marron tells them that Streck regrets that the two could not come to terms — but that the attack will proceed. Marron suggests politely that Lady Astor and the characters take cover and "protect their assets," if they do not wish to help. This suggestion may seem somewhat cavalier to those who interpret the Code of Milan literally. If the characters insist on seeing Streck in person, Marron cedes to their demands reluctantly. Marron is friendly to characters who are there to aid the cause, and he brings them to Streck at the end of the play's next act.

Characters may forego the interview with Marron if they arrive with Streck or the Taylor brothers.

The Play

The play in progress is an odd combination of burlesque and anarchist sentiment. The audience is a mixture of workers, hooligans, hedonists and anarchist intellectuals. They drink beer or cheap wine and are in a raucous mood. A quartet of musicians plays comical music in time with the actors' performances. The tall man who carried the sandwich board plays the role of a trickster revolutionary. He winks conspiratorially at the audience and produces a large round bomb with a theatrical fuse. He stealthily puts it in a cabinet and exits stage left.

An actor portraying a rich landlord appears stage right and — curious about the sound of the burning fuse — bumbles through the room to uncover its source. He stuffs his head deeply into a trashcan and gets stuck under his bed. The audience shouts out insults and helpful hints to the actor who then sticks his head into the fateful cabinet. A drum roll crescendoes and quickens as gray smoke erupts from the cabinet, thus obscuring the actor. A frighteningly realistic head sails through the air and lands off-stage to wild applause.

The play appears at first to be a heavy-handed satire of human politics, with an unoriginal assortment of stereotypes (bourgeoisie land owners, hypocritical priests and rich bankers). However, those versed in the subtleties of vampire politics recognize it as a cunning parody. Its main target is the Camarilla, but the Sabbat suffers some blows as well. The act ends with a nobleman (who looks disturbingly like Valerius) clumsily attempting to hang himself to the laughter of the audience. Careful observers realize that the actor playing Valerius' role is really hanging himself. The actor's eyes loll with mad fear as the noose tightens around his neck. His body jerks and a wet stain spreads across the front of his trousers. The audience again cheers and applauds for more.





Streck

Marron leads the characters upstairs. Those with enhanced senses hear low moaning and smell sex in the air, establishing the second floor as a brothel. Streck and his coterie await in a small spartan garret on the top floor. Besides Marron, the coterie includes the two Taylor brothers and a German vampire named Dietz. Three candles bathe the room in a dingy yellow glow. Streck welcomes the characters and asks them their business.

If the characters are here to speak for Lady Astor, Streck repeats Marron's admonition and adds that a clever woman like Astor should avail herself of the opportunities that the attack will bring. Streck then asks the characters to leave. If the characters attempt to attack, Streck Obfuscates his companions and retreats into the dark mazes that constitute the rest of the top floor. The Brujah are intimately familiar with the maze and escape through a passage to another building. A strong chemical stench in the next building makes any attempts to track them by smell impossible. The anarchists do not fight unless cornered.

Note that characters who attack Streck to "protect the code" may violate the same provision they seek to enforce. This ambiguity can make for some interesting roleplaying and may even prevent characters from attacking Streck at this juncture.

If the characters are there to aid the Sabbat raid on the city, Streck asks them their reasons for joining and attempts to read their auras to determine their honesty. He is particularly suspicious of characters that he perceives to be authority figures. If Streck is not won over by the characters, he insists that they leave. If the characters convince him of their good intentions, Streck takes them into his partial confidence. He confides that the true target of the attack is not the entire Camarilla, but Clan Ventrue, the leaders of the Camarilla. Streck believes that the other Camarilla clans will delay before coming to Valerius' aid — time enough for the conspirators to flee the country.

If the characters ask Streck about the recent Sabbat attack on the Torcador Elysium, he scoffs it as a "shit job" and adds that the Tzimisce involved should have stuck to their musty torture chambers and left the fighting to those who know how. (Marron looks somewhat uncomfortable during this course of questioning.)

Streck gives allied characters five addresses around the city where they may sleep and acquire blood before the attack. He fails to mention the Giovanni's role in providing blood for the raid. If the characters question him directly about the Giovanni, Streck denies any knowledge of them. In many ways, this is true; Streck has made a deal with them only for blood, and nothing more. However, as the Giovanni become aware of the characters' presence in town, Streck learns about the Necromancers' vendetta against the elders. (The doctor supports the characters against the Giovanni, should he ever have to pick sides.)

Streck suggests that characters with Camarilla identities attend Valerius' upcoming reception for Dunlop, "to get a look at the competition." He speaks the Gangrel's name with obvious distaste and explains begrudgingly that the guest of honor is an ally in the upcoming attack. Doctor Streck cautions the characters about fraternizing with Dunlop too much at the reception, for fear of raising suspicions.

The only member of Streck's pack who poses as a member of the Camarilla is Marron, who he plans to attend the feast as part of the Brujah elder's party.

Finally, Streck informs the characters that he is abandoning the Rat's Castle but tells them that messages can be delivered to him through one of the blood warehouses — the one in Agar Town (see *The Attack*).

Investigations

Once the characters have made initial contacts in the city, they should be allowed to find a haven and make plans. Camarilla elders have an upcoming dinner engagement with London's leaders and this "Count Dunlop." They may stage their own investigations in the meantime, though. Camarilla characters may look into the local Giovanni or Sabbat.

Characters without any connections to the Founders or to any London Kindred may learn about the impending Sabbat attack through their own means. The Storyteller should encourage the characters to pursue this search in their own way, based on the data provided below.

If the characters work with Lady Astor and investigate the Giovanni, they probably know about the Necromancers' reputed connections to Southwark breweries and follow that lead (see *Southwark*).

Investigating the Sabbat

Camarilla characters who investigate the Sabbat in the city undoubtedly focus on the recent attack on the Toreador (and, in turn, learn about a similar attack on the local Tremere). The characters may also decide to investigate the Sacred Heart Cathedral (see *Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*), if the characters have spoken with Valerius.





Hortense Holden

Hortense Holden is an influential Toreador ancilla who's in charge of the city's Elysium. He also speaks for Clan Toreador's elder, who has become insular over the past century. Long-time residents of the city know Holden as one of the city's most visible Kindred; his word carries far more political weight than it should for his 200 years. (You must decide what previous contact that local characters may have had with Holden, if any.)

The Toreador is a tall, raven-haired man in his early 30s who exudes an airy grace and style. He holds fashionable court in a palatial Kensington home. If the characters meet Holden at Valerius' behest, the Primogen answers any questions willingly that they have about the Sabbat attack. Characters who act at the behest of the Founders may drop names to encourage Holden to talk.

He claims to not know why the Sabbat attacked his home, the Elysium. Hortense Holden explains that the Toreador "outwitted" the Sabbat attackers, though characters may suspect that the Camarilla simply overwhelmed the interlopers through force of numbers. One Toreador died in the attack and another was "damaged" by the intruders' skin-weaving powers. The Toreador killed one attacker and staked the other in the sun after reading his mind.

Holden still has one of the Sabbat bodies available for study. If the characters express interest in examining it, he leads them to an ivy-covered crypt behind the guest house. Bony protrusions extend from the creature's hands, designating him as Tzimisce.

Hortense Holden mentions that the Tremere have supposedly suffered a similar attack of late, though he is unsure of any details. The Toreador offers directions to a known Tremere holding. He isn't surprised if Valerius failed to mention any Sabbat attacks on the Tremere — "There's no love lost between the sorcerers and the Ventrue."

Holden shows the characters the scene of the attack if they request to see it. Those with Spirit's Touch may perceive an image of two monstrously deformed vampires entering the Elysium through the back gate. Tracing the intruders' path, the character sees as if with the vision of both Sabbat. One of the Tzimisce attacks a mortal guest (a talented musician) from behind and severs his head from his body with an extruded bone scythe. The second invader corners two Toreador neonates — a man and woman — in the third story of a tower. The man attempts to immobilize the intruder mentally. The woman stands inactive in mute fear and fascination. The Tzimisce kills the man with little effort. Awakening from her reverie, the woman attempts to flee, and the attacker backhands her through a window.

The vampires rejoin on the second story of the tower, where they encounter Holden and his followers. The group subdues the two monsters, destroying one in the process.

If the characters ask after the woman, Holden explains that her name is Victoria Ash, his child, and that she has recovered from her fall. The characters may ask to question Victoria, but Hortense Holden cautions that the experience has left her a trifle "disturbed."

Victoria Ash

Victoria is a beautiful young woman with green eyes and red hair. She watched ineffectually as the Sabbat attacker plucked out her lover's heart before hurling her through a window. She broke several ribs and narrowly missed being impaled on an iron fence below. Victoria tells investigators that she has recovered from the ordeal with the help of the other Toreador and "her lover's ghost," who visits her from time to time. Such a claim may be somewhat surprising coming from a young vampire, though the characters may decide that she is mad (the other Toreador are skeptical of her claims).

Yet, Victoria seems sincere in her beliefs; she is almost fixated on death. She claims to have no special power over wraiths, just the ability to see and hear them at times — especially in mirrors. (Victoria assures the characters that there are no ghosts currently present.)

The characters may decide that she would make a good "ghost detector." Others may believe her psychotic; you should initially keep her true nature as nebulous as possible.

Victoria cannot actually see wraiths. A character who reads her mind perceives startlingly vivid images of ghosts in her tangled thoughts, but they are the products of an elaborate hallucinatory psychosis. If Victoria wears one of Japheth's cloaks and sleeps in a graveyard (such as that at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, see next page), she begins to see real wraiths more efficiently than even the characters do (but she still sees her hallucinatory ghosts as well).

Victoria may serve as a wraithly "lightning rod," a red herring or even as a source of genuine information. She wants to be taken seriously and has learned the dynamics of seduction quite well. She tries to seduce one of the characters (the one that she finds most compelling or tragic), but she has no greater plans. If the character accepts Victoria's advances, he learns that the Toreador is drawn to strong individuals and is submissive. Her sire becomes quite angry if a character mistreats Victoria; a simple ill word from Holden can damage the elders' reputation in London severely.

Any searches for ghosts through Victoria are likely to turn into explorations of her psychosis instead.

Storyteller Note: Victoria is young (Embraced in 1820), but is eighth generation. She is an amateur poet and was clearly not Embraced for her talent. She depends on her looks and sheer charisma to retain her position as a court favorite. Although Victoria is aware of elder manipulations in an intellectual sense, she is still quite naive. Her vampiric potential is barely tapped; she has promise. Her Disciplines are Auspex 3, Celerity 1 and Presence 2.



Monsieur Pachard (Tremere Elder)

London's small Tremere presence has never been particularly popular with the city's Ventrue. Characters who follow Holden's directions and visit Monsieur Pachard's brooding stone chantry receive a frosty reception if they announce that they act on behalf of Valerius.

Monsieur Pachard is a small, intense man, with tufts of white hair that sprout like wild grass from his otherwise bald head. There is something amphibian about him, and his hands are webbed up to the first knuckle. He has a high-pitched Gaelic accent, and he is an old and potent Thaumaturgist.

Pachard announces that he has no intention of attending Valerius' reception for Dunlop, though he plans to be at the Conclave. Any discussion of the *Sargon Fragment* excites him greatly, and he offers to translate the tome should the characters find it.

Pachard denies that his people have been attacked by the Sabbat, while simultaneously drawing his cloak around one arm as if to hide an injury. He offers no further information.

London's Tremere are on the defensive. Other members of the local Camarilla offer them little support, and the Tremere are too few to apply much pressure when it comes to political manipulation. The Tremere, therefore, keep to themselves and refuse to risk their necks for anyone.

Investigating the Giovanni

The characters may decide that the doings of the Sabbat or the Camarilla are secondary to their interests in the Giovanni. The Necromancers have hidden their tracks well but are also creatures of habit. The characters may search for them using the experience they have acquired over the past four centuries. Camarilla characters are likely to search the Sacred Heart Cathedral (as related to them by Valerius). Sabbat characters have learned from Lady Aster about Giovanni involvement with various Southwark breweries.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

The cathedral is in Wandsworth, a run-down, lower-middle-class area. Despite this factor, the streets are clean and well-kept. Christmas wreaths decorate doors and candles light up many windows. People walk unafraid here until late into the night. A constable patrols near the cathedral, which is a large, domed building that stands on its own plot. Ivy strangles the building.

The characters sense that faith lingers in the old building. The aura is discomforting, but not intolerable. Surveying the edifice reveals that a priest, a deacon and several monks reside there. Most of them are asleep when the characters arrive.

A plaque hangs on one of the rectory walls. It lists all of the church's priests since its founding in 1685. The name of the most recent father is Theodore Coughlin. The name of his predecessor is Marcus Giovanni (a mortal member of the Giovanni family, but one whose faith has kept him from falling to the depravity of his kin).

A thorough search reveals nothing else out of the ordinary, though the characters may discover Deacon Crandall's papers (see below).

Father Coughlin

Characters who take a direct approach and knock at the door awaken Father Coughlin. He is cross at being disturbed, yet maintains a polite facade. The characters may question him in any way, from subtle inquiries about the Giovanni, to using their Disciplines to force his compliance.

Coughlin is evasive at first but is only human and reveals what he knows under pressure. The priest explains that his predecessor, Father Marcus Giovanni, disappeared over a month ago, along with the cathedral's treasury. This is only half true. Additional coaxing compels Coughlin to admit that he stole the collection after Marcus' disappearance. Coughlin genuinely does not know what happened to Marcus, but his being missing profited Coughlin, who has been pressured to not investigate the disappearance any further, or to contact the police.

Coughlin believes that he is following orders from his bishop to remain quiet in this matter, to avoid a "scandal." However, the order to stay silent actually came from Clan Giovanni. A character who reads Coughlin's mind may realize that something is amiss if she receives two successes on an Intelligence + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 6). Additional rolls may reveal the face of the characters' old nemesis, Gillespi Giovanni, issuing the command.

If the characters do not discover the Giovanni subterfuge and pursue the bishop lead, they follow a red herring and harass an innocent man.

Deacon Crandall

At least one clergyman in the church suspects foul play in the disappearance of Marcus Giovanni. While the characters question Father Coughlin, one, or more characters, spots a deacon spying on them. The man runs if approached, but he is easily overtaken by a determined vampire.

The deacon blanches with fear (especially if the characters exhibit supernatural powers). He suspects that the strangers are behind Father Giovanni's disappearance. Surprisingly, the clergyman also believes in supernatural powers

and flashes a crucifix. His faith is weak, though, and the action causes only a flicker of discomfort. The man is frightened but can be calmed with a judicious application of diplomacy or Presence. The deacon is Douglas Crandall and was Marcus Giovanni's "close friend."

Crandall has had a recent brush with the supernatural and is capable of giving useful information to the characters. He claims to have been concerned about Marcus, who had been severely depressed for weeks before his disappearance. The priest would not share his problems, except to say that he faced a "devil's choice."

The night before Marcus went missing, he reputedly went for a walk in the adjacent cemetery, as was his habit. Crandall watched from a window as a man and woman (Gillespi and Lucretia Giovanni) appeared. They spoke with Marcus and made threatening gestures. Marcus waved his cross at them, and the strangers vanished.

Father Marcus Giovanni is rumored to have walked the cemetery the next night against Crandall's pleas, and he never returned. (He was kidnapped by Clan Giovanni and interred into one of their blood houses, which were created to feed the Sabbat before the upcoming attack on London.) Local members of Clan Giovanni had tried to corrupt the pious Father Giovanni into joining their undead ranks; they offered him generous amounts of money to sign over deeds to church lands in the city, on which the vampires intended to build "safe" slaughter houses. The seduction failed and the frustrated vampires took their revenge. (Characters might have a chance to encounter Father Giovanni later, before the Sabbat raid.)

Douglas can show the characters to a storage room where he hid some of Marcus' personal effects. Among these are several recent banker's checks for substantial amounts from a Montgomery Dunsirn of Dunsirn Breweries. The checks are made out to Marcus Giovanni, but they are unsigned by the recipient. The characters may find Dunsirn's home address through the church's record of parishioners; Douglas tells them that Montgomery is an intermittent churchgoer and that he pays generous tithes.

Unless the characters have been very discreet in their investigation here, one of the Giovanni's wraith sentinels soars silently into the night sky to warn his masters. Any character who wears one of Japheth's cloaks might catch a glimpse of the fleeting image.

Storyteller Note: The Dunsirn are an old Scottish banking family that has been Embraced into the ranks of the Giovanni. The family's respectable reputation is an effective cover for members' Giovanni ties, and other secrets. (The family's human members are cannibals.)

The Dunsirn are an important source of income for the Giovanni, and they enjoy more freedom than is granted to most subordinate clan families.

Montgomery Dunsirn is the mortal pawn of John Dunsirn, a 200-year-old "Giovanni" with connections to Ambrogino.

Discovering Count Dunlop

If characters explore the cemetery where Marcus took his constitutionals, they notice that the graveyard is far older than the church itself. A high stone wall surrounds a series of hillocks and dales, each of which is covered with gravestones of every description. Use of Japheth's cloaks reveals a tangle of indistinct, slowly moving presences — a sensation the characters have felt in other places of the dead.

Before long, the characters notice a large wolf crouching in the shadows of the cemetery gate. Aura Perception reveals a dark-blue halo, suggesting suspicion. If the characters see the wolf before it sees them (Perception + Alertness, difficulty 8), they may approach it and do whatever they wish. If the wolf spies the characters first, it dashes from the gates and into the surrounding streets.

The fleeing wolf is Alice Seymour, a Gangrel ancilla. She is highly suspicious of other vampires at the church; she recently discovered that Count Dunlop is already in London and is in league with other vampires, perhaps even Giovanni. Alice spotted and trailed Dunlop to the church two nights ago, where he met with vampires who Seymour sniffed out to be Nectromancers.

If Alice does not recognize the characters or knows them to be Sabbat, she flees to escape what she believes will be imminent attack at the church (though she may also try to ambush one of the characters who looks weak by doubling around on any pursuers).

If Alice Seymour recognizes the characters by face or description as fellow Camarilla, she still flees to draw them from the church, which she believes is being watched. A trickster at heart, she is not above deriving perverse delight in running the elders ragged. Alice must have something of a death wish to play such dangerous games with vampires as old as the characters.

Pursuing characters trail the wolf through slick cobble streets and alleys. If it is still early in the night, the streets are filled with people. Commuters disembark from huge horse-drawn, red and yellow omnibuses. People stroll the sidewalks. Some in the milling crowd are working; others are shopping or engaging in casual conversation. The smell of roasting chestnuts rises from a nearby street vendor. And, a blind beggar sits at the mouth of an alley.

The wolf is not shy about darting through the crowded streets. Her presence evokes everything from screams to curiosity among the startled pedestrians. A horse rears in panic and a black-lacquered hansom cab spins out of control. Thus, it isn't difficult to follow the wolf's trail. Characters who are concerned with the Masquerade may try to follow in a way that does not contribute to the commotion. If it is



late at night, the streets are almost empty and the chase causes little disturbance, but characters must rely on their senses or Disciplines to follow the wolf.

A character may pursue on horse or foot. A fellow Gangrel may be able to follow in wolf form (and may already recognize Alice by smell if they could have met in the past). Some characters may suspect that the wolf is leading them into a trap, but the chase resembles play more than treachery. One or more Peelers (policemen) may join the pursuit, depending on its duration.

Alice is finally cornered in a dead-end alley and crouches defensively before the characters, her eyes glow red in the darkness. If the characters indicate that they mean no harm, she assumes human form, greeting them appropriately. She shows great (though not completely sincere) contrition if a character seems angered by her game.

If the characters are investigating events on Valerius' behalf, she tells them that (contrary to Valerius' belief) Count Dunlop is already in the area: He has been camped outside the city for almost a week. She has been following his scent and trailed him to the church two nights ago. Valerius met two vampires — a man and a woman — who smelled of the grave. Alice suspects they were Tremere or Giovanni. She has felt "watched" ever since she trailed Dunlop, and the feeling intensifies around the church. Characters who examine Alice for a ghostly tail discover nothing, though this is by no means conclusive.

Alice explains that she sought out a trail left by the two strangers after their meeting with Dunlop. The smell of death led her to Dunsin Breweries (see Southwark).

Alice is willing to take the characters to Dunlop's lair, though she mentions the place with a shudder.

This exchange is less civilized if the characters are Sabbat. Hardly a "loyal foot soldier of the Camarilla," Alice is violently opposed to the Sabbat nevertheless and doesn't waste time with talk. If Sabbat characters catch up with her, they probably manage to subdue her, but she may extract more than a pound of flesh before they do. Once Alice is beaten, the characters can probably force her to reveal — one way or another — why she is spying on the church. Sabbat characters who are involved with Streck's attack may recognize that her knowledge of Dunlop's presence jeopardizes their plan (though a Dunlop/Giovanni connection comes as a surprise). The Sabbat may decide that Alice knows too much and then silence her permanently. Alternatively, they may decide to Dominate her into forgetting what she has seen.

Sabbat characters serving Lady Astor's interests may find their own uses for the meddlesome Gangrel, perhaps even set Streck up for a Camarilla trap. Sabbat might use Alice's information to coerce Dunlop into breaking his pact with Streck, thus leaving the anarchist vulnerable when the Sabbat attack gets underway. (See Dunlop's Lair for more information on the count.)

Alice Seymour

London's unchecked urban growth and increased Lupine aggressiveness over the past century have conspired to displace local Gangrel. Many have retreated north to less oppressive climes. Life for outlanders who have remained near London has become more desperate.

Despite her past differences with the Ventrue, Alice may rally her pack to the chamberlain's defense if the Sabbat attack. However, she will not become involved until she is sure it is necessary. If any Sabbat characters propose an alliance with the city's Gangrel, Alice listens with interest. She reports directly to her elder, preparing the city's Camarilla for any Sabbat menace, or allowing the Gangrel to profit from the upcoming attack after Valerius is out of the way (you may decide Gangrel reaction to any conspiracies).

Alice Seymour is a tall, attractive woman with short, red hair. Her features show only the slightest hints of her bestial nature. She wears a white shirt with a leather waistcoat and gentlemen's leggings. Despite her feral nature, she displays a certain polish, bespeaking a privileged upbringing (hedge nobility). Alice supports the Camarilla generally, but she is nervous of anyone except for fellow Gangrel. She is roughly equal generation to the characters but is less than half their age. Her Disciplines include Animalism 4, Celerity 1, Fortitude 3, Potence 2 and Protean 4.

Dunlop's Lair

Characters who join Alice to investigate Dunlop eventually reach a deep cleft along one of the Thames' tributaries. Alice crouches by the stream, stares intently into the fog and growls lowly. There is an unearthly quiet to the place and no animals of any kind are nearby, except for insects. Alice relates that she saw Dunlop and his pack enter and leave the area several times. Technically, Dunlop is not camped in London, so he doesn't break the Traditions by remaining unannounced to the chamberlain. And yet, his secret forays into the city to meet at the church could easily be deemed defiant to Camarilla law. Of course, the characters have no proof that the count met vampires at any church.

A high-flying crow acts as Dunlop's eyes in the area. The bird alerts the count to the characters' presence unless they are Obfuscated or otherwise well-hidden. If the characters choose to simply mark the location and leave, Dunlop recognizes their approach but does nothing else. If the characters try to send an animal into the area as a spy, it resists. The characters may persuade it to proceed, but the animal inevitably fails to return.

A character with Auspex 5 may reconnoiter the area with her mind. The character sees that the cleft opens out into a dismal fen choked by weeds and brackish water. Two large wolves stalk the perimeter. Rooted in the shallows of a stagnant pond is a small copse of dead gnarled trees. Arcane glyphs of an obscene nature are carved into the dead, gray

Storytelling Count Dunlop

The characters may believe any number of things after visiting Count Dunlop. They might even guess at the truth: Dunlop's motives are primal, and he has dark plans. The count hates Mithras and Valerius for manifold wrongs, both real and imagined, the greatest of which was Mithras' very real murder of Dunlop's daughter and child. Dunlop has transferred this hatred to Valerius, Mithras' favorite. Killing the prince's child would be a fitting revenge — the first of many — and would be easier than confronting the Methuselah himself. Dunlop is committed to Valerius' destruction.

To this end, Count Dunlop has made a temporary alliance with the Sabbat and a long-term agreement with the Giovanni. The Necromancers have made various promises to the count, including one to lift his wasting curse (see the count's profile at the end of this chapter) and use this pull to direct his actions as far as the Gangrel will allow. Dunlop lies and prevaricates about his intentions in London, but they become almost transparent at the coming feast.

bark. A successful Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 7) is required to identify the markings as ancient Celtic runes of a dark, animist nature.

Six locals (farmers and trappers by their clothing) hang limply from tree branches like rotten fruit. Two are barely alive while the rest are in varying states of decomposition; none is over a week dead. It looks as if birds have been at the victims' eyes as red rivulets flow from their bloody sockets. The birds have not had a chance at the victims' tongues, though, which have been sliced off with a knife. Large wooden basins lie beneath the two still-breathing victims, and are filled to the brim with semi-congealed blood. The bowls display various runes and several other artifacts (a ceremonial dagger, an incense pots) that suggest a malefic ritual in progress.

There is an almost palpable heaviness to the area that grows more oppressive as the character mentally reaches the heart of the region — a cave in the side of a hillock. Two large, red-haired men sit across a small fire at the cave's mouth. Both are armed with large iron axes. If the projecting character tries to enter the cave, she is struck by waves of sickness and disorientation. Her mind races back to her body as she vomits blood.

If the characters suggest entering the swamp, Alice reminds him that Count Dunlop, however mysterious, is a member of the Camarilla. And yet, her energetic nature shows through and she accompanies the characters if they proceed. The elders soon discover that the mist-shrouded fen is full of large, foul-tempered insects. The bugs make a shrill chirping as the characters pass, thus broadcasting their every move. The characters may sneak by the insects if they use *Obfuscate* and if two successful *Dexterity + Stealth* rolls (difficulty 9) are made.

The patrolling wolves, Dunlop's Gangrel sons, converge on the source of any commotion and challenge the characters. Their vampiric powers may even let them detect the characters when the swamp's insects do not. The wolves' fur is a dead-ash gray. Their yellow fangs protrude unnaturally as the animals emit a guttural growl: a warning to proceed no further.

Rather than sneak around in the swamp, the characters may decide to take the forward approach and hail the Gangrel from outside the swamp, possibly even by wolf call. The same two wolves come to the edge of the fen and assume human form. The younger of the two red-headed men comes forward, but he does not leave the reeds. He identifies himself as Richard Dunlop, first son of the count. He has a strong Scottish accent and speaks with an imperious tone. He demands to know why the characters disturb his father.

If the characters ask why Dunlop has not yet reported to the chamberlain, Richard replies that they intend to do so shortly, but that they needed to perform a family ceremony

first. The ritual is complete and the family now wishes to inform "the prince's vassal" of their presence. Perhaps the characters would be "good enough to deliver the message"?

Richard refuses to offer any details on the ceremony and dispenses of it as a family matter. Characters who have used *Auspex* to survey the swamp, and who take Camarilla law seriously, may be angered by the young man's dismissal of the murderous rite. And yet, how do the characters confront the young Dunlop on the issue without revealing that they have spied on his father? If the characters insist that the Dunlops present themselves to the chamberlain in person, they promise to do so the next night.

The Dunlops make it obvious that they do not want the characters to enter their impromptu haven. The Dunlop clan attacks en masse if the characters force the matter. Run combat normally and let the cards fall where they may. If the characters win, the Sabbath attack may already be half-way defeated; the rest of this adventure may flow very differently than as written. If the characters lose, Count Dunlop allows the intruders to leave with their unlives (or has his sons dump the characters' bodies in the swamp). The count has more important targets in the city, and he doesn't want his plans ruined by the deaths of such "small fish." If the characters report their defeat, Dunlop can always claim to have been attacked first — which may be true.

Ultimately, it is unlikely that violence erupts at this point. The characters may still want to watch the count over the next few nights, though.



Storyteller Note: This scene is intended primarily for Camarilla characters, but Sabbat ones may uncover Dunlop's haven, too. Perhaps they get the information from Streck or force it from Alice Seymour. Dunlop's haven is a mere three miles west of Lady Astor's Hammersmith chateau, albeit on the other side of the river.

Dunlop's lair was once a Black Spiral Dancer caern (see *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*): Dark spirit energies have dissipated, but the place still bears palpable psychic scars.

Southwark

The Giovanni used to maintain a strong interest in London's banking and lending institutions, but their influence there has evaporated completely. The Dunsirn family has since proven invaluable in asserting the clan's interests in Southwark's breweries.

Lady Astor indicated that Giovanni involvement in London breweries was hearsay. Sabbat characters may nevertheless choose to follow this line of inquiry. Characters of either sect may also investigate the Giovanni trail that Alice Seymour followed from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to the Dunsirn Brewery.

There are several breweries in both Southwark and Lambeth. Both are busy manufacturing areas and remain active (and well-lit) throughout the night. Southwark is also home to large leather manufacturing industries and extensive open-air markets that are in business until the late hours. The two biggest breweries are the Perkins in Lambeth and the Dunsirn in Southwark. An investigation of the Perkins Brewery unearths no supernatural elements; the Dunsirn Brewery is something else entirely.

Dunsirn Brewery

The brewery is patrolled by watchmen, and all entrances except for a back loading dock are locked. These precautions aren't likely to deter the characters; they should have little difficulty gaining entry.

One may project herself into the place mentally before — or, instead of — entering. The vast majority of the building consists of manufacturing facilities, with a veritable army of grim-faced workers bottling and packing beer from great vats. The technology and antlike efficiency of the operation may amaze characters who are unfamiliar with 19th-century mass production. The world has changed a great deal since the 1400s.

Characters who wear Japheth's cloaks soon become aware of another presence in the factory: Four wraiths, the servants of the factory's owner John Dunsirn, watch over the place. If the wraiths see the characters (the elders do something bold or blatant), a wraith departs swiftly to report the intrusion to its master. There is nothing else of an incriminating nature in the manufacturing area.

If the characters sneak into the office portion of the building, they discover three people still at work. Two of them are rough-looking guards (ghouls), both of whom carry hidden pistols. A bronze plaque on a heavy oak door displays "Montgomery Dunsirn." The door has a complicated lock (Intelligence + Security, difficulty 9; two successes needed to open). Forcing the door may alert the ghouls or the building's third occupant, Catherine Baker (see next page), to trouble. The brewery president's office is decorated lavishly. It is largely devoid of anything interesting. However, characters easily locate paperwork that lists Montgomery Dunsirn's address.

Located near Montgomery's office is a large accounting room with 25 desks lined in neat rows. The room is almost completely dark, except for a lamp at one desk, where a young woman works. She wears a conservative gray dress with black trim, and she seems to labor over a ledger that troubles her in some way. The woman is undoubtedly mortal.

If the characters ignore her, they may search a third office. It contains cabinets and paperwork. These are primarily business files; the company seems almost studiously law abiding. There is some interesting paperwork here, though. A successful Perception + Investigation roll (difficulty 7, three successes required) turns up a deed to church lands in Nottingham Dale and construction contracts with a local lumber yard. The deed is signed by none other than Marcus Giovanni, former priest of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (his signature appears to be shaky and faltering, not bold). These articles are explained in full below.

The characters have little trouble subduing guards who investigate any commotion. If the young woman catches the characters prowling, or if they approach her, she is frightened but attempts to stand her ground. She demands to know who they are and what they're doing. She tries to run if the characters are menacing. If they convince the woman of their "good intentions," she may talk, but she is still afraid and chooses her words carefully. Characters may also force information from her easily, or read her mind.

Dunsirn's Guardians

The brewery is under surveillance at all times. The factory's owner has fettered four wraiths to the building to protect it from intruders. If the characters just breeze through the building and seem to learn little, the wraiths observe their actions but do not interfere. If the characters damage the place, question Catherine Baker too deeply, or are on the verge of learning any other valuable secret, the wraiths work to expel the vampires from the factory.

Previously dead oil lamps suddenly burst to life, shaking and rattling of their own volition. One of them rises from a table and hurls toward the characters and bursts into flames on impact. If the characters are in the plant's factory area, the wraiths hurl bottles with amazing speed and accuracy. They may also attempt to pour boiling malt on the intruders. If the characters display any soft-heartedness (toward Catherine, for example), the wraiths may also throw one of the plant's wretched child laborers into the clanking ma-

chines to see if the characters attempt a rescue. The wraiths are not choosy and may target even Catherine. The characters may help her, kill her or leave her to fend for herself.

The wraith attack appears erratic, but it is actually strategic: They try to herd the characters from the building. The ghosts endeavor to avoid attention from the human plant workers, though. The characters may also note with a perverse curiosity that the wraiths care little for the general condition of the plant. (The players may ascribe whatever motives to the ghosts that they wish.)

The wraiths attack with limited powers, mostly through throwing and shoving and starting small fires. There are also strange shadows and cold spots in the factory where space seems to warp and bend, and where characters may be disoriented (they lose two dice from all Dice Pools).

In general, it is very difficult for the characters to defend against this assault. The wraiths are not in sufficient contact with the living world for the characters to fight them normally. The characters do have one weapon, though: Japheth's cloaks. The rags are dangerous to the shades. The characters may be able to snare wraiths in their cloaks. A character who receives three successes on a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8) discerns the approximate direction of a wraith and makes contact with his cloak. It takes anywhere from one to four hits of a cloak to destroy each wraith. The wraiths may retreat from such an attack, but they are fettered to the building and cannot leave.

Storyteller Note: The melee may end in any number of ways, from police bursting down the doors, to wraiths (accidentally) or the characters (vindictively) setting fire to the building. The factory is not a dead end. Papers indicate a strange connection between the brewery and a priest, and they suggest the odd possession of church lands by a brewery. Something more seems to be going on, and characters may try to investigate the church lands or look for the priest in the city.

Catherine Baker or various papers also reveal the location of Montgomery Dunsirn's mansion. The characters may wish to pay him a call. He is long gone if they wait a night, thanks to his wraiths' warning. Of course, Montgomery's Giovanni masters also learn the disturbing news of the characters' activities. Ambrogino is alerted and prepares to confront the characters, perhaps his long-time nemesis.

Catherine Baker

Catherine Baker is the daughter of a merchant family that fell on hard times during the 1830s. Her mother died and her father drank himself to death soon afterward, which left Catherine in the charge of a maiden aunt. Although of modest means, Catherine managed to scrape together enough money for some meager schooling, and she studied accounting. She found it difficult to prove herself in a man's profession but caught the eye of Montgomery Dunsirn. He offered her a job and demanded sexual favors in return.



Catherine has been with the brewery for less than a year and has worked hard to distinguish herself as an accountant. In return for her initiative, her "mentor" has chipped away at her confidence and has hit her more than once. Yet, at the same time, he has convinced her that he loves her and has hinted at marriage. Montgomery's master, John Dunsirn, has also met Catherine and considers her "toothsome." Catherine can identify John Dunsirn by sight and knows Montgomery's address.

Baker maintains a fierce hope that things will turn out for the best, but she is slowly losing her sanity. She doesn't know anything about vampires but suspects something very frightening about the Dunsirns. If the characters read her mind — and do not make contact with her — they learn what she currently knows.

If Catherine survives the scene at the brewery, she soon uncovers information that may be of use to the characters. She finds several large bills for lumber and building materials (enough to build a small house). The bills are from a known lumberyard in town. Catherine also finds the deed to a church's land, signed (under duress) by Marcus Giovanni. This information leads her directly to one of the Sabbat's blood warehouses.

What she does with this information depends on how the characters dealt with her at the brewery. Wraiths follow Catherine through her discoveries and eavesdrop on any transaction between her and the characters. If the elders are blatant in their dealings, Catherine may soon be dead.

Montgomery Dunsirn

Montgomery Dunsirn lives near his factory in a large semi-rural, red-brick mansion. A high metal fence surrounds the grounds, and large guard dogs stalk the yard silently. If Montgomery is forewarned of the characters' activities at the brewery and recognizes the threat that they pose, he attempts to flee his home (he takes time to collect his thanatological curios, though — see below). The characters may intercept Montgomery. He offers little resistance; however, he keeps a pistol hidden in a desk, or on his person if stopped outside.

Montgomery manages the brewery, but more importantly, he coordinates the London Giovanni's daytime activities. Killing or capturing him cripples the clan's daylight effectiveness. If the characters search the house, they find boiled and polished bones stacked neatly in rows on a basement shelf. They also find empty rest chambers for vampires and emergency caches of cold blood. If the characters question Montgomery quickly, they learn several things: from John Dunsirn's activities in building blood houses across the city, to a Giovanni alliance with London's Sabbat. Montgomery knows nothing of the Giovanni connection to Count Dunlop, though.

Montgomery considers women inherently inferior to men — to himself in particular. He foolishly extends this misconception to the vampires and smugly patronizes any female characters. Such characters sense that he undresses them mentally, even when he's under duress.

Montgomery is watched by wraiths as closely as his factory is. As the characters question him, those who wear Japheth's cloaks notice a gathering of spiritual energies. The wraiths here are similar to those in the brewery, but with even less regard for property values. The wraiths' strategy is twofold: They seek to damage the characters while splitting their forces. At least one wraith is skilled in creating strange illusions that make the walls in the front hallway bleed. Another wraith tries to spirit Montgomery away from the characters. One character sees strange lights dancing in the backyard that compel him to investigate. (These lights are created in an effort to draw one or more characters out and into a trap prepared by Ambrogino.)

Montgomery is a 90-year-old ghoul and has the Disciplines Dominate 2, Fortitude 1, Necromancy 1 and Potence 3.

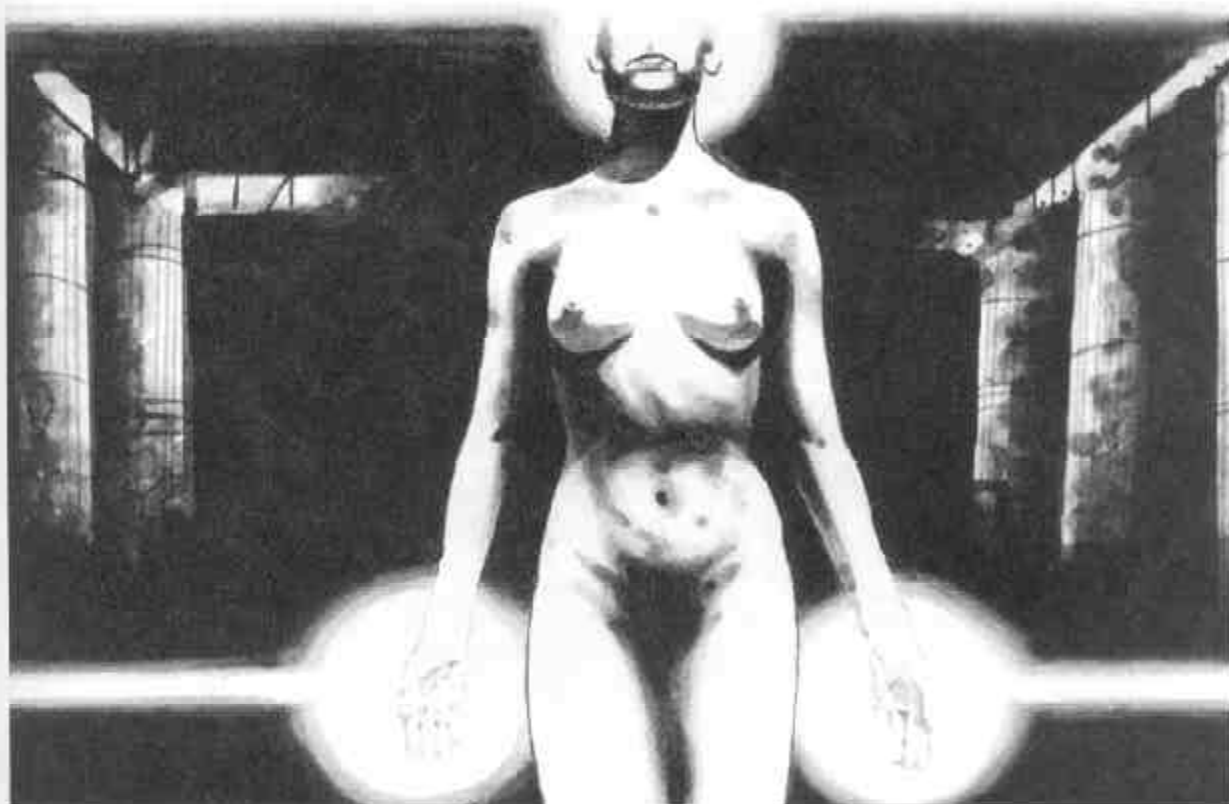
Ambrogino

The garden behind Montgomery's house is opulent, bordering on ostentatious. Reproductions of ancient Roman statues line red-brick pathways. High hedgerows prevent a complete view of the garden. It has begun to snow and a thin layer of white ice crystals crunch beneath the character's feet.

A lured character who enters the garden sees dancing balls of light that cast faint patterns of color on the snowy ground. The will-o-the-wisps retreat farther into the garden at the vampire's approach. Once the character has followed for a short distance (or refuses to follow or moves to turn back) an apparition of peerless beauty appears. This is the Lover, a powerful Spectre that serves the Giovanni. The creature's appearance reflects its victim's deepest desires (if more than one character enters the garden, the Lover appears to only its intended paramour, who is the character who would be most moved or frustrated by the affections of another). The spirit may seem to be a ghostly woman in white, a darkly handsome gentleman or something completely alien.

There is something ethereal about the apparition, but it melts away in the kaleidoscope of falling snow as two figures emerge from the shadows. One is Lucretia Giovanni, a tall blonde woman dressed entirely in black. A thin black blade is barely visible atop a sheath on her back. She smiles at the character; her ice-blue eyes gleam with a mixture of amusement, bloodlust and madness. There is an ingenuous quality to her and a character may decide (incorrectly) that she is younger than he. He may also have seen her before, during *The Anxheteton* prelude.

Behind Lucretia is John Dunsirn, a smallish, bearded man who leans on a black, boar-headed cane. He wears a stylish blue suit and a greatcoat. If the character doesn't attack immediately, the woman greets him by name and introduces herself. She may even trade pleasantries about the weather, about the myriad of uses of ghosts, "especially for spying," or about "the disappointing depths to which the Camarilla seems to plunge to find



its elders." Her tone is by turns friendly, mocking and predatory. The man says nothing, but he watches with an air of greedy anticipation.

"You have caused my associates much grief over the past centuries," Lucretia says ruefully. "I assure you that I have no animosity toward you personally. What I do now, I do with regret."

Lucretia springs forward, bares her fangs and draws her blade. The sword is made of an odd, matte-black metal that is almost invisible in the darkness. Despite the woman's rather foppish demeanor, it is clear that she knows how to use a blade. Her assault is simple and elegant, but a primal ferocity underlies it. Lucretia plays games, passing up killing blows in the early stages of combat. She then pushes the attack to test her opponent's limitations. If the character matches her with a blade, she steps up the speed, finesse and ferocity of her attack.

She compliments a skillful opponent, "You fight well. It is a pity we are enemies." Lucretia is sincere in her disappointment, but this doesn't prevent her from going for the kill once she has satisfied her vanity. Lucretia tries to inflict wounds that cause major blood loss, and she severs her victim's limbs cruelly — driving him into near torpor.

If the character tries to run, she is not adverse to hitting the coward in the back. If he defends himself in a manner other than melee, Lucretia adapts her strategy accordingly. The character's counteroffensive may be effective — or not. Lucretia is probably older and has richer blood than the

character. Yet, a clever combination of martial skill and Disciplines may force her to retreat. Perhaps the characters were not fooled by the wraiths' diversions in the house, or the garden, and set a trap of their own.

Despite Lucretia's pretense of honor, the fight is not really fair. The surrounding ground suddenly swarms with shadowy spider forms. A second glance reveals that they are really hands, severed at the wrist, that move with an unnatural unlead vigor. These are the *Preta Shūnyatā*, ghostly servants of Ambrogino Giovanni. As the character becomes aware of these monstrosities, a large, imposing figure emerges from the darkness — Ambrogino. The character may have never seen him before, other than in a vision in one of this book's preludes, or the character could have seen Ambrogino's impersonator, the Foundling Snee, in 1666 (see *Blood & Fire*).

Ambrogino sweeps from the trees like a thing of nightmares. His majestic, irresistible eyes glow a ghostly shade of green, like portals to some netherworld inferno. The fight is over when Ambrogino joins.

He may attack in one of three ways. He may simply freeze the character dead in his tracks with Dominate. He may let his arcane servants deal with the upstart. The *Preta Shūnyatā* are the hands of murderers and they exist only to kill. Their skin is semi-translucent and slippery to the touch, and they attack with sharp nails. The character may recog-

nize the hands as those that killed Monsieur M. in Barcelona (again as seen in visions from *The Anexhexeton* prelude). The hands are fast, strong and — although they demonstrate no strategy — display an instinctual awareness of how to damage their victim (they fight dirty and claw at vital spots such as the character's eyes). Hitting one of the hands with Japheth's cloaks (Dexterity + Melee, minus two dice for the clumsiness of the garment) singes it with a blue flame and emits a slaughterhouse stench. Two such blows are required to destroy each hand.

Ambrogino may also enter the conflict directly, using his Potence and skill with a sword to hack the character to pieces. If this is the battle's conclusion, the Storyteller should describe each blow with ghoulish glee. A defeat like this should be a disturbing and humiliating experience for an elder. Ambrogino is something of a sadist (yet not obsessively so). He twists his blade cruelly in the character's gut but leaves an interrogation to Lucretia and John Dunsirn.

Lucretia and Dunsirn converge on the helpless character. Lucretia feeds an unconscious character just enough blood for him to regain his wits (and to forge the first link in a Blood Bond). She questions him in a playful, sensuous tone — politely at first, then with increasing violence. Lucretia does all the talking; Dunsirn performs the actual torture.

The Giovanni have used their wraiths to spy on the characters for centuries, and they believe Marianna has contacted them. Lucretia demands to know Marianna's whereabouts and accuses the elder of fomenting a "foul plot" with her to destroy Clan Giovanni. The character probably lacks the information Lucretia desires unless the character underwent *The Anexhexeton* prelude.

Dunsirn is adept at torture, though the 400-year-old character has probably dealt with worse (the Scotsman lacks imagination). Dunsirn isn't really trying to extract information, just to inflict pain to distract the victim from the Lucretia's true intent (see below). If the character is not adept at resisting torture, he may divulge everything he knows (three Stamina rolls, difficulty 8 to remain silent). The Giovanni may gain some valuable information. However, regardless of how the character answers, Lucretia professes to not believe him and then intensifies the abuse.

While Dunsirn tortures the character — cutting him open and slicing off his fingers — Lucretia attempts to read the character's mind and then fetters a wraith (The Lover) to him. The Storyteller should roll for Lucretia's mindreading. The Lover is intended as a hindrance to the character and as a spy that the Giovanni can use in the future to learn of the character's activities — specifically, if he has encountered Marianna.





Conversely, the character may try to use his own powers to gather information about the Giovanni. The character loses three dice on all such attempts due to his weakened and disoriented condition.

The elder doesn't know the extent of what the Giovanni do when they fetter the Lover to him. While dealing with Dunsirn's torture, the character suddenly feels searing pain in his long-dead heart: There is an explosion of unbearable light and heat, like facing the morning sun. A dagger seems to break off in the character's chest and he feels a delicious rush of sensuality, like a thousand caresses. His eyes swim with vivid colors and images, and he feels strange emotions. The experience is unequivocally sexual and the character may fancy that he feels his heart beating with life. A mellifluous voice whispers, "Love me! Love me! Love me!" in the back of his mind.

The character regains consciousness shortly before dawn or soon after the other characters find him. He is badly injured, but enough blood courses in his veins to heal any wounds that prevent him from reaching shel-

ter. Indeed, the character feels quite good under the circumstances. The Lover is a dim and distant memory. There is no sign of a knife wound or of the Giovanni.

Storyteller: Ambrogino and his coterie have spied on the characters for a long time and know a little about each of them. The Giovanni planned this ambush ahead of time. Despite their power, they avoid confronting the group as a whole, targeting one or, at the most, two characters. If the ambush does not occur at Montgomery's mansion, it may happen at any other point in the story.

Lucretia seeks to trap a character that she might consider a hedonist, to increase the Lover's effectiveness (Toreador are good candidates). However, her ego may compel her to select a character with a reputation as a swordsman. She also has a certain fascination with — and fear of — Malkavians.

After this encounter, the characters can confirm that the Giovanni are in London and are searching for Marianna, which is only half the truth, though; they also seek to gain entry to Camden's crypt, in Valerius' mansion, to learn clues to the *Sargon Fragment*. (See Camden's Crypt).

The Lover

The Lover is a potent and subtle Spectre. It remains dormant within its host for the next few decades, learning about its companion. When it does emerge, the Spectre manifests mainly as a whispered voice that delicately seduces the character's subconscious. It knows exactly what the character desires and forms itself to meet those needs. At first, the character may see visions of the Lover, perhaps reflected in store windows or in daytime dreams. However, a second persona begins to impinge on the character's psyche over the next few decades.

In game terms, the character gains a second Nature of your choice. The type depends in part on the character's own personality; the Lover becomes a dark reflection of his soul. The Lover may look like the character's ideal "mate," a long-lost loved one, or even himself if he is narcissistic. The spirit may also change form to suit the character's current fancies.

The Spectre has two goals: to remain receptive to its Giovanni masters and to reveal information to them whenever the character is in the presence of Necromancers — and to destroy the character. To the latter end, it subtly encourages the character's base qualities, tempting him to degrade or compromise himself in return for comfort from the Lover.

An ongoing historical chronicle lets you stage a long-term seduction between game sessions and during periods of character inactivity. The character is largely unaware of the Spectre, though he probably knows *something* occurred while he was at Lucretia's mercy. The Lover is a servitor of the Giovanni but is also a strong-willed spirit with its own agenda and predilections. The player should be encouraged to enact his character's degeneration as time passes. The character may not recognize the change that occurs to him over the decades, but the other elders certainly do, especially after any significant time spent apart.

If you have **Wrath: The Oblivion**, treat the Spectre as the character's Shadow. The Lover is a Doppelganger and possesses the Arcanoi Argos 2, Embody 2, Mollate 5, Phantasm 2 and Puppetry 1, and the Dark Arcanoi Contaminate 4. In **Vampire** terms, the Spectre empowers the Beast within the character, destroying Humanity or distracting the character from pursuing his path. The Spectre has the Disciplines Auspex 4, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 3, Presence 1 (although this power is used very effectively), Vicissitude 4, and Willpower 8. The Lover can use these abilities only on the individual to whom it is fettered.

The Preta Shūnyata

Background: The Preta Shūnyatā are the hands of murderers birthed in a necromantic ritual, and they are controlled by Ambrogino with an ancient, evil artifact that he acquired in Tibet. Ambrogino has 40 of the creatures at his command in London and can make more, though doing so takes time and effort.

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 0, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3

Skills: Stealth 5

Disciplines: Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 1, Potence 3

Willpower: 3

Image: The Preta Shūnyatā are severed hands with jagged, graveyard nails. They are abnormally large and assume a splayed, spiderlike stance. Their skin is slightly translucent and has a glistening, bluish-gray hue. Close observers see garishly hued muscles, tendons and bones beneath the skin. The spectral hands are like ticks: They do not appear to take damage until they are destroyed completely, at which point they splatter with a moist cracking sound.

Roleplaying Hints: The Preta Shūnyatā are mindless servitors that are urged on by the hate that once inspired their murderous "owners." They follow Ambrogino's simple commands.

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, Destroyed

Storyteller Note: Despite their long, ragged nails, the hands do not do aggravated damage. They are essentially mindless and are immune to Dominate and Presence. When the hands swarm in a group of 10 or more, those facing them must make successful Willpower rolls (difficulty 8) or the vampires frenzy.

A Feast of Ghosts

This scene is dedicated to Valerius' feast, held in honor of the newly arrived Count Dunlop. The event takes place about two nights after the count announces himself to the chamberlain (which he undoubtedly did the night after the characters encountered the Gangrel—perhaps even as the Dunlops promised to do).

Camarilla characters probably attend the feast, if only because Valerius pressured them to upon their arrival in the city. Sabbat characters who pose as Camarilla may also attend, but they had better be certain of the security of their ruses after spending so many nights in London, undoubtedly in the company of known Sabbat. If the characters have yet to complete their own investigations or recover from meetings with Ambrogino or other enemies, you can delay the feast until all of the characters can take part. Justify the delay by staging a game of Valerius' own—Dunlop has toyed with the chamberlain by failing to announce himself in a timely fashion, and now Valerius toys with the Gangrel by delaying the festivities for a night or two. Trivial luges and parries, perhaps, but ones that are profoundly meaningful in Kindred court.

Valerius' purpose in holding this feast is to sound out Dunlop before the Conclave. The Ventrue is aware of the count's animosity toward Mithras and the court in general and hopes to bait the uncouth lord to play his hand before the meeting proper, so that Valerius gains the advantage and maintains control of the proceedings.

It is cold the night of Valerius' reception; a clammy mist obscures city and country alike. The gathering is held in a large 13th-century manor overlooking the Thames, three miles west of Woolwich. The house is a looming fortress of heavy gray stone. Valerius explains to the characters that Prince Mithras gave the mansion to him in 1666, after Snee burned the chamberlain's old mansion to the ground.

After the events of the past nights, the characters may have much to report to the chamberlain. Valerius listens grimly to their news and is particularly disturbed by reports that Dunlop may be in league with the Giovanni. (Camarilla characters probably still have little hard evidence linking either of these groups to the Sabbat, though.) At the least, Valerius is irritated by Dunlop's failure to show proper pretension, but he decides not to push the issue (unless the delaying option discussed above is used).

The reception is held in a huge hunting hall. Four large hounds curl up by the fire. The polished wood floor is marred by horses' hooves. There are several long, polished wooden tables with knife marks on their surfaces.

Valerius has obtained a large herd of dazed humans to serve as refreshments for the party. Some of these have taken various intoxicating substances, while others are completely free of drugs or alcohol (but are still dazed).

House rules forbid the unnecessary killing of the herd. The two poachers that Valerius beat upon the characters' arrival in London are among the vessels, and they look dazed and depressed.

There are also large casks of blood on each table, and there's even a small quantity of animal blood for vampires who shun human vitae. A number of ghoul retainers prepare the hall; some are musicians. Valerius sits at a large table in front of a roaring fireplace. A great antlered stag's head hangs above the main table. Swords and shields bearing Valerius' crest (a sable lion rampant over a red chevron and field argent) line the walls. The first guests arrive around 10 o'clock.

10:00 P.M.

Valerius' servant, Carlyle, announces each group of guests in a robust fashion as they enter the hall. Lady Anne arrives by carriage with two Ventrue of lesser station. They are all in a sociable mood and introduce themselves, engaging the characters in light banter. The Ventrue, especially the young ones, profess to be greatly honored to meet Kindred of the characters' caliber. The Ventrue attendees, true to their clan's nature, seek to gain political advantages through dealings with the characters. Some bring up the coming Conclave and voice their strong support of the chamberlain.

Another complement of three Ventrue arrives shortly thereafter. Among this group is the Ventrue elder, Joseph Gaiman. Joseph is a slight, brown-haired man with a neatly trimmed beard. He dresses smartly in rich clothing, usually black or deep blue. Gaiman is one of the most influential Kindred in London and is older than the characters by at least a century. He is allied to Valerius, but he has his own plots and schemes.

If the characters were involved in the events of the last book, they remember Gaiman as the benefactor of Rose Chandler. If Rose, the Caitiff who the characters may have adopted in *Blood & Fire*, is still with the group, there is a cheerful reunion between the two. This meeting may become awkward if the characters (and hence, Rose) are secretly Sabbat and plan to attack the Ventrue. Gaiman is charming, but utterly ruthless when necessary, and is most interested in preserving order and, thus, his own power. He aids characters in matters involving the Sabbat more readily than he does those involving the Giovanni.

There is some friction between Lady Anne and Joseph Gaiman. Mithras' disappearance has made the political situation among the Ventrue uncertain—more unstable than it has been in centuries. Both vampires have vied for power throughout this period. Gaiman's supporters make allusions to Lady Anne's dubious connections to the Ambers (see *Blood & Fire*), who have fallen out of favor with Mithras. The Ambers did not receive invitations to attend the feast. If the characters are Valerius' allies, they may sit at the main table with him, Lady Anne and Gaiman.

10:40 P.M.

Alice Seymour arrives with two of her pack (if the characters let her live earlier) and represents the Gangrel. She speaks briefly with Valerius and then takes her place at a low table on the east end of the hall.

If Alice met the characters previously, she tells them that Dunlop had already left when she passed his haven; she expresses some surprise that he is not yet here. If the characters have not met her before, she introduces herself to any Gangrel in the group, but Alice does not take pains to present herself to others. She is receptive to any efforts the characters make to introduce themselves, though.

The hall whispers with private conversations as the guests break into small knots. The characters may decide to use this occasion to make alliances or to catch up on news. They no doubt have other plots and interests they wish to further that have nothing to do with the Sabbat or the Giovanni.

11:25 P.M.

The Brujah elder Reginald Moore arrives next. Moore is an old and powerful revolutionary who was Embraced in the early 13th century. Despite his radical past, some young Brujah consider him to be too deferential to the city's Ventrue. His party includes three other Brujah and Streck's associate Henri Marron. If the characters are part of the Sabbat plot, they may attach themselves to the Brujah's party (or come alone at any point during the festivities).

The Brujah generally wear modest finery, though one wears rough working clothes in an apparent act of defiance. The rabble takes over a large table on the same side of the hall as the Gangrel, though there is little initial contact between the two groups beyond perfunctory nods. The Brujah are in a boisterous mood and make more noise than the rest of the guests combined.

Midnight

Shortly after the Brujah's arrival, Carlyle emerges and announces in choking mockery of his usual voice, "Count Dunlop and party," before stepping aside quickly. Count Dunlop enters the hall and many guests look as if they wish he had not. His face is a virtual skull, with haggard sunken eyes (the effects of the curse that made him undead). The ruddy glow of the torches tints his gray, parchment-skin to a sickly orange color. His tartan is the shade of dried blood and is worn nearly to tatters. A cold stinking breeze blows into the hall with him, and one guest whispers "Nosferatu," whether out of intimidation or mockery.

The count's coterie — composed of his natural sons — follows him. They are easier to look upon, but they are clearly touched by their father's malady. First is Richard, who the characters may have spoken with a few nights ago. The other two are William and Arthur.

Those who spoke with Richard may remember him saying that he was first born, yet he is clearly the youngest of the three.

Dunlop's coterie takes its place at a table on the south side of the hall, across from Valerius. The chamberlain, initially stunned by the Gangrels' ghastly appearance, recovers swiftly and raises his tankard in toast, "Lords and ladies, honored guests — it has been too many centuries since our highland cousins have visited us. May they find a warm reception here, one they will cherish on their return home." The guests raise their glasses in consent, especially to this final slight.

Lord Dunlop raises his glass in reply and pronounces in a guttural Scottish accent, "May our visit here be an entertaining one for us all, Lord Valerius." As if to punctuate this, William and Arthur pull out stringed instruments and place them on the table, looking in the direction of Valerius' minstrels. The chamberlain laughs and some of the tension eases, though Dunlop's group still exudes an air of menace.

The guests drink deeply from both the casks and the human vessels. Some of the herd fall unconscious and Valerius' retainers carry them from the room. The two poachers are among the first to be presented to the Gangrel. The two men, reeking of fear, step forward like sleepwalkers. Raven-haired William and the ancient-looking Arthur are the first to drink, as if testing the blood for their father and his favored son Richard. William drinks long and deeply from the tall poacher and moves on to another vessel, leaving the archer alive. Arthur whispers something into the fat man's ear, which invokes a shudder, before ravaging the man's throat. The victim's eyes roll back into his head as blood pours from his mouth and throat; he stumbles drunkenly for a moment, beckoning with his hands for help or absolution, and then falls dead with a thud. Richard beckons for more vessels and mind-numbed blood donors shuffle forward.

Characters who read auras detect a bright orange — terror — dominating the herd's otherwise mottled glow. The Dunlops' auras are hypnotic, flowing swirls of brown and green, indicating bitterness and mad obsession.

William bars the way of anyone who attempts to approach the count. Dunlop brusquely ignores any tries at conversation, saying only that "it is not permitted." If a character pursues Dunlop persistently, she may learn finally that he believes humans are becoming more cattlelike every year, dulling the blood of their hunters. He blames the Ventrue for much of this and intends to say as much at the Conclave. Count Dunlop does not leave his table, nor does he mingle. However, if Rose Chandler is present, one of the characters sees Dunlop look at her and smile enigmatically. Valerius and his coterie remain seated as well.



1:05 A.M.

Hortense Holden enters fashionably late with four vampires. The Toreador all wear splendid finery. One wears a coat that would have been the height of fashion in the Court of Elizabeth I, while the others display more modern regalia.

Victoria Ash is among their number and is perhaps the youngest Caitite in attendance. She wears the latest in Parisian fashions; a dark-purple dress with lilac-colored ruffles. Her eyes are emerald green and sparkle with a youthful ebullience bordering on madness. She is quiet initially and stays close to her sire.

The Toreador banter gaily, and their presence seems to dispel much of the gathering's gloom and provide the missing element that turns the feast into a party. Sir Hortense Holden socializes and approaches Dunlop at one point; the two speak for a moment and then Holden departs. Dunlop's eyes narrow suspiciously as the Toreador walks away.

At some point, a character notices Victoria staring distractedly into a great mirror on the wall. Her mouth moves as though she's talking to her reflection. If the character asks what she is doing, she responds, "Oh, I am watching the ghosts dance." If the character requires an explanation, she points out the various ghosts who "populate" the hall. She describes them in minute detail, ascribing motives and personalities to each, "You see that tall gentleman bowing before the countess? He loves her, but she is enthralled by that red-haired squire."

A character who reads Victoria's thoughts, with or without her consent, confirms these accounts. Richly attired ghosts do weave in and out of the hall, holding grand court, oblivious to the Kindred feast that occupies the same space. If the character is attuned to the dead (Storyteller's decision), he may notice that certain details in the wraiths' ensemble are amiss. It's almost as if a modern theater costumer dressed the spirits. These "ghosts" are simply figments of Victoria's imagination.

However, a character who wears Japheth's cloaks notices that there is *something* present in the hall. Victoria comments on it, too, "Of, course, I don't think the resident spirits have noticed the ugly little brate who lingers about Dunlop. Do you?"

Count Dunlop doesn't know it, but the Giovanni have attached a wraith to him to spy on the Gangrel's activities and on the proceedings at the Camarilla feast. Victoria describes the spirit to the character: A squat, toadlike creature with webbed feet, and its yellow, saucer-plate eyes are cracked with veins of red. The creature looks at Victoria and the character and darts from the room. Victoria is bored so she is more than willing to help the character pursue the beast. She also muses, almost as an afterthought, that the gaily dressed Brujah (Henri Marron) looks familiar, but she cannot place him. (Marron was the leader of the Trimisce attack on London's Toreador but was kept out of sight — or so Marron thought.)

If the character reports the wraith to Valerius, the chamberlain becomes visibly disturbed and asks the elder about his expertise (if any) in spirits. Valerius does not use this information to eject the Dunlops immediately, but constrained rage darkens his brow.

The Crypt

If the character and Victoria pursue the ghost, they are led throughout the mansion and notice that most of it is in disuse. Large white cloths cover furniture like funeral shrouds. If the character follows Victoria, her ghostly fancies lead them on a merry chase from one end of the estate to the other. If the character follows senses imparted by Japheth's cloaks, the player may have to make several Perception + Empathy rolls (difficulty 6) to track the fast-moving wraith as it winds its way through the dark mansion. Victoria follows by using her own descriptions to embellish the experience. (Ideally, allow the two hunters' apprehensions to feed each other's paranoia.) Victoria may also take this opportunity to seduce the character. (She believes that her ex-lover's ghost has given his blessing for her to take other lovers.)

The ghost's trail leads the pair to the mansion's gray stone catacombs. Three large Irish wolfhounds and four of Valerius' men stand guard before a thick iron door. A guard informs the vampires that this portion of the building is off-limits: the character can, of course, circumvent the guards in many ways.

If the character manages to peer into the crypt, he sees an empty stone room. Thaumaturgical runes cover the walls and seem to describe some sort of opening ritual to a character with Occult 3 or higher. If the character enters the crypt physically, Valerius is alerted to the intrusion through a magic ring that he wears (a gift from Mithras). Valerius and his allies soon arrive to intercept the intruder. Archon Geoffrey Leigh also appears as if from nowhere.

Valerius is stern with a character who intrudes on the crypt. The chamberlain is in no mood to be trifled with. He lets the incident pass if the character claims to have been trying to help by tracking a spirit. Otherwise, he warns the character to watch his step. There is no further sign of the wraith, though Victoria claims to see a set of slimy toad prints leading into the crypt.

The tomb is the resting place of Mithras' previous chamberlain, Lord Camden. The aide was a Cappadocian and was destroyed by the Giovanni years ago. Valerius continues to protect the crypt under Mithras' command because Camden was known to possess arcane powers, and because an unknown intruder broke into the tomb a few months ago — to make rubbings of the carvings on the walls, of all things.

Meanwhile

The party continues while characters are ghost hunting or disturbing Valerius. William and Arthur join the musicians, and one of the Toreador produces a fiddle. The musicians play a tune called "The Rabbit and the Fox," which is a bawdy song about a lecherous priest and a miller's wife. Those Embraced during the 1400s may recognize it as a song that swept Europe. It started in Italy and finally made its way to the Scottish Highlands by the century's end. William Dunlop asserts patriotically that it was the other way around. At least four guests dance in maddening circles.

Of all of the Dunlops, William seems to be the most approachable. He can hold his own in conversation ranging from hunting to music to philosophy. His older brother Arthur, apparently reclusive, excuses himself from the festivities and slips from the room.

If one of the characters follows Arthur from the hall, she trails him to the room where the herd recuperates. Arthur sneaks inside and finds a vessel who is still awake. The victim starts with fear as the Gangrel looms over him and cackles nastily. Arthur plunges his teeth into the mortal's neck. The vessel manages a choking scream before the intruder drains him dry.

If no one follows Arthur, he kills five people in this manner before one of the young Ventrue discovers him. Arthur is clearly killing out of cruelty, not for need of nourishment. Regurgitated blood covers the floor and much of his tunic. If a character interrupts Arthur, he turns with a contemptuous snarl and asks why she is so concerned — "They are only humans." The Gangrel's eyes betray malignant spite.

Arthur does not attack, but the character might. The two may battle uninterrupted for three turns before guests from the main hall arrive to stop the struggle. If the character kills or injures Arthur badly, Count Dunlop bellows in anger and swears to have the offender's head. "This is how you treat honored guests?" he says to Valerius. "You shall pay the price for this offense before the Conclave," the Gangrel threatens as he and his remaining sons leave the hall, carrying Arthur's body. The Dunlops later try to kill the character who attacked Arthur in the coming raid on Valerius' home (see The Attack).

Arthur continues his grisly work if a character does not start a fight and kills at least four more people before returning to his father's side. He was blood-stained when he left the hall, so no one notices that anything is amiss. If the character tells Valerius about the incident, the chamberlain leaves the room to see Arthur's carnage for himself. He stalks back to the dining hall and mutters angrily about the "rules of comity." Valerius has had enough no matter how these events transpire. He assumes a majestic bearing, draws his sword and bellows for silence. The torches burn about

him crazily, transforming him into a creature of ancient and unnamable power. The other Ventrue present employ their Presence powers as well; the room seems to be full of giants.

Valerius turns to Dunlop. "You have violated the sanctity of this home and exhausted the patience of the prince. Depart at once!"

Dunlop, who normally towers over Valerius, now looks small by comparison. Nevertheless, he growls back, "You are not the prince. I knew Mithras of old and you are not he! You Ventrue have become soft and are leading us to our doom. I will speak my mind at the Conclave!" Dunlop's children fall into place behind their sire and follow him out. A few of the Brujah and one of the Gangrel give Valerius a nasty stare after Dunlop leaves.

Most of the other guests make their excuses and leave shortly thereafter. If the characters are Sabbat posing as Camarilla, they may also take this opportunity to leave, though daring ones may stay to spy.

Storyteller Note: It is possible that the feast breaks into a full-fledged battle. The Dunlops do everything they can to kill Valerius before retreating. The characters may join either side, depending on their alliances. Geoffrey Leigh is also close at hand and stands by Valerius, as do all of the other Camarilla vampires present. The characters may well decide the outcome of this battle. A battle is unlikely, however, since neither Dunlop nor Valerius wants one at this time.

Other Matters

Holden: As the Toreador leave, Holden tells one of the characters that he believes Dunlop intends to kill Valerius. Any characters with Telepathy who spent Willpower to read Dunlop may come to the same conclusion, though the Dunlops' minds are so deranged that reading them is like deciphering Malkavians. A character using Telepathy must gain two successes to perceive anything even remotely intelligible. Those who succeed in reading the Gangrel's thoughts detect a deep and abiding hatred for Valerius and Mithras. They also see the image of a red-haired girl with a strong familial resemblance to the Dunlops. Finally, a telepath sees Mithras' snarling visage framed by blood and blackness.

Marron: If one of the characters decides to pursue Victoria's suspicions about Marron, results vary according to the elder's approach. Victoria does not have any specific memories of Marron but believes she saw him shortly before the Trimisce attack. She agrees to help the character in his inquiries. If the character accuses Marron outright during the party, the other Brujah are likely to back Marron (who seems well-liked). The Brujah elder, Reginald Moore, takes particular offense if someone questions his guest; Marron denies all knowledge of the matter. If the character goes to the Brujah elder privately, he listens but requests proof of Marron's complicity.



The character may also try to lure Marron away from the party to question or capture him, which is not difficult, especially if the character suggests artful mischief. Marron scowls at the general state of things in London. Looking scornfully at the Ventrue table, he asks the character, "How many poncey Ventrue are there in this city, anyway?"

Dealing with Marron at the feast may end in any number of ways, from the Brujah getting away scot-free to his capture and confession of his role in the upcoming attack. Marron's capture may cause major problems for the Sabbat, though the Giovanni (and therefore, Streck) learn of his arrest through their wraith spies. Of course, Sabbat characters realize that Victoria has damaging information and that she needs to be dealt with—anything from altering her memories to killing her.

After the Feast

Characters who leave the feast with most of the guests are now at loose ends and are free to pursue any course of action. If they work with Valerius, he asks them to stay in the city to support him, explaining that Dunlop surprised him tonight. Valerius has not seen the count in over 300 years; the Gangrel has aged badly. Valerius states that Dunlop has never blatantly worked against Camarilla interests, but he fears that it may be his intention now. Valerius asks the characters to continue their investigations of the Sabbat and the Giovanni and to also keep watch over Dunlop. Some characters may suspect a connection among these three parties. They may also have decided that Dunlop's grudge is against Valerius in particular. Valerius may agree to relocate to a secret haven, and Geoffrey Leigh volunteers to serve as bodyguard.

Camden's Crypt

If the characters ask about the crypt beneath the house, Valerius tells them reluctantly that it is the grave of Mithras' old chamberlain, Lord Camden of Clan Cappadocian. Valerius explains that Camden was a potent Necromancer, as well as an architect and engineer. Mithras never told him the complete story of Camden's death, only that the Giovanni were responsible.

Valerius further admits that someone broke into the crypt a few months ago, but Spirit's Touch revealed only the image of a masked man who took rubbings. The chamberlain almost captured the man and has since posted guards to protect against intruders. The character who stalked the toad-wraith with Victoria may wish to describe his encounter at this point if he has not done so already. Valerius has kept the crypt a secret at Mithras' command but shows it to the characters if they express an urgent desire to see it.

Valerius unlocks the iron door to a small room. Small pieces of cut crystal are embedded into the ceiling of the room. They seem to amplify some kind of light from behind

them (moonlight is directed into the subterranean vault through a series of ingeniously placed mirrors), casting a dim-blue glow on the floor. A character who is competent in engineering (or who is highly perceptive) notices a hairline crack that traces a three-meter-long rectangle in the crypt floor. There is no apparent way to lift the delineated stone.

There is no coffin in the crypt, but arcane symbols cover the walls. Those knowledgeable in the occult may recognize these as Thaumaturgical—the means to some kind of opening ritual—and that some symbols are meant as wards. The characters may also use Spirit's Touch (difficulty 9) to get their own impression of the intruder—John Dunsirn of Clan Giovanni (see sidebar). He was masked when he raided the place.

The opening ritual described by the runes is Level Three Thaumaturgy and requires an extended Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 7, 10 successes) to decipher. The ritual itself takes three hours to perform. Valerius forbids the characters to translate the markings and perform the ritual by declaring that Mithras strictly forbade such efforts. In any event, the characters may decide that the crypt is a prize best kept from the Giovanni.

John Dunsirn and Camden's Crypt

John Dunsirn, an adept occult scholar, recognized that Lord Camden's secrets could be gained, even though the Cappadocian was dead. Therefore, he began a search for the former chamberlain's resting place. Mithras had let it be known that the chamberlain's Giovanni assassins returned to Rome with the body in an effort to allow Camden to rest in peace. Dunsirn knew better.

He searched for the body fruitlessly for over a century before he uncovered one of Camden's secret havens in 1846. Dunsirn discovered Thaumaturgical runes and cast the spell that they recorded. A large stone chest rose from the crypt floor. Inside were letters that revealed the location of Camden's tomb. Dunsirn's wraiths soon confirmed that there was indeed a crypt in one of Valerius' mansions. However, Dunsirn's wraiths couldn't penetrate the outer crypt because of necromantic safeguards.

Dunsirn took matters into his own hands and stole onto the property. He broke the lock to the crypt and made rubbings of the Thaumaturgical carvings on the wall. John Dunsirn didn't have time to open the crypt's secret chamber, and Valerius almost captured him as he left. Dunsirn translated the rubbings and learned that opening the inner crypt involved a three-hour ceremony; he then passed this information on to Ambrogino Giovanni—despairing himself of an opportunity to perform such a ritual on his own.



Blood Houses Revealed

Shortly after the feast at Valerius' manor, the characters learn of, or even discover, the Sabbat blood houses. (If the characters are Sabbat, they learn that the houses are in danger of being exposed and must work to silence the discovery.)

When the characters investigated Dunsirn Breweries, they may have discovered paperwork detailing the construction of a building and the deed to lands once owned by a church. The characters come across one of the blood houses built by the Giovanni as their contribution to the coming Sabbat attack on the city.

The characters might also gain this information from Catherine Baker, assuming she survived their previous encounter. Catherine becomes seriously concerned that her employer is hiding something sinister. She finds his lumber invoices and the deed and investigates them; she goes to the old church lands in Nottingham Dale to discover a newly constructed building on the grounds. Catherine then sneaks past guards and into the structure and is terrified by what she sees — humans penned up like cattle and horribly mutilated, but alive — and she flees to the characters (if they established a good rapport with her earlier) or to Scotland

Yard. If Catherine contacts the characters, she tells them her story and begs them for protection. The characters may detect that a wraith watches over her.

If Catherine goes to the police, her report comes to the attention of the night captain — a Ventrue ghoul named Cyrus Bazemore. A small group of Ventrue-influenced officers investigate the warehouse. The two guards escape, but the police find the prisoners. They provide food and medical attention, but they do not let the poor people leave, pending orders from their Kindred superiors. Word reaches Valerius rapidly, who asks the characters to investigate this breach of the Masquerade and to acquire Catherine Baker. Ghouls are dispatched to accomplish these things if the characters do not.

Catherine is put in protective custody. Valerius can arrange for his men to bring her to the characters in a police cart, or the characters may decide to visit Scotland Yard and retrieve her in person. The Giovanni are after Catherine at this point, too. The characters beat the Necromancers to her if they go to Scotland Yard themselves; they have no trouble taking Catherine with Cyrus' help. If the characters request the police cart, it never reaches its intended destination. A group of Giovanni ghouls attack it *en route* and capture Catherine Baker.

Sabbat characters allied with Streck learn of events a little differently. Wraiths watching the warehouse warn John Dunsirn that Catherine has discovered one of their

feeding houses. Dunsirn tells Streck, who agrees that the Ventrue may catch wind of this if they have not done so already. A Giovanni mole in Scotland Yard reports that the police are moving the witness. Streck tells the characters about the security breach and asks for their help in abducting Catherine. If they refuse to take part, he sends five ghouls to secure her from the authorities.

The police cart travels to a meeting place with the characters or with Ventrue proxies. The coachman lashes the horses to run faster. Catherine sits quietly and afraid within the iron cart, along with two policemen.

Characters who decide to take a personal hand in Catherine's rescue/abduction can retrieve her in any number of ways: Animalism he used to stop the horses, and Presence or Dominate can be used to incapacitate the guards; Obfuscate is effective at hiding or distorting the operation.

The guards carry nightsticks, but no other weapons. Sabbat ghouls accomplish their mission through an attack that leaves one policeman dead and the other two badly injured. Once the Sabbat have Catherine, they escort her to one of their other blood houses. If the Sabbat suspect that the Ventrue have Catherine, they send agents to Dunsirn Breweries to destroy records of the blood houses' construction, assuming that the characters don't possess those papers.

Scotland Yard

London is one of the first cities in the world to institute a police force. Founded in 1829 by Home Secretary Robert Peel, the "Peelers" (later called "Bobbies") carry truncheons rather than blades or firearms. The blue-uniformed police were initially unpopular but have slowly earned the citizens' trust. Their main headquarters is at 4 Whitehall Place, which overlooks Scotland Yard (where the king used to greet Scottish nobility).

The Ventrue have influence over the police force through various agents and have passed a strict edict against vampires hunting policemen. Some other clans (most notably the Brujah and the Toreador) also control low-ranking officers in the force. The Giovanni's mole is a contact/informant who suspects his employers' vampiric nature.

Nottingham Dale

The characters must enter the wretched slums of Nottingham Dale if they decide to investigate the blood house. Irish immigrants from the recent potato famine and families displaced by the growing railroads overcrowd the slum. The few opportunities for employment

here are pig-keeping, brick-making and peddling. The neighborhood is derisively known as "piggeries and potteries"; pigs outnumber the area's human population by three to one. The acrid smell of open-air slaughterhouses permeates much of the dimly lit region. Most of the people on the street after dark are drunks or belong to roving gangs. The area currently suffers a cholera epidemic; hunger and disease have claimed over a third of the children here in the past year.

The Giovanni blood house is a large, two-story wood building with no windows. It's built on lands once dedicated to the nearby parish church, but those lands have been acquired by Clan Giovanni through the forced signature of mortal priest Marcus Giovanni.

Two possible scenarios can occur here. If Catherine went to the characters first, they find two men patrolling the exterior of the building. Evading or overcoming these guards is easy, but the characters may also detect the presence of wraiths. One of these wraiths follows the characters until detected or summoned away by its master, Gillespi. The guards are ghouls of the lowest variety; both are wanted murderers and each possesses one level of Potence and Fortitude. They know little of value, though the characters may force them to reveal their master's name: Gillespi. The ghouls don't know where to find him, nor do they know anything about the upcoming Sabbat attack.

Characters inside the building find the prisoners in a long iron and wood box that bears an unsettling resemblance to a slaughterhouse stall. The mind-numbing stench of urine, feces and fear permeates the air. The prisoners stagger back in animal fright as the characters approach the box. Many of the humans are unconscious, and two are dead. The survivors huddle together for warmth and in a vain attempt at protection. Their Sabbat captors have sewn their lips shut with copper wire; their begrimed faces look like old laundry sacks. The Sabbat have cut jagged holes in the prisoners' cheeks through which they receive meager nourishment. Discarded rat skeletons lie strewn on the floor as testament to how the prisoners have supplemented their diet.

The characters may help, question or leave the prisoners as their consciences dictate. The humans are primarily vagrants who report being kidnapped by thugs with guns and clubs. Some of them think they are dead and in Hell. They have all heard their captors killing individual prisoners and drinking their blood. Yet, none of the prisoners has actually seen their captors, except as shadows through the stalls' wooden gratings.

Camarilla characters may act to cover up this violation of the Masquerade; they can use their power to make the prisoners forget these events, or they may simply kill the humans.

If Catherine went to the police first, four Peelers guard the building when the characters arrive. The Peelers let the characters into the edifice. An elderly doctor cuts wire



from his patients' faces with shaking hands. Those who have already been treated wear bloody bandages and drink alcohol provided by the Peelers to deaden their pain. The doctor is a ghoul and claims to have never seen anything like this in his life. The elders may question the prisoners and look for other clues.

Characters who arrive wearing Japheth's cloaks, no matter the circumstances, detect several spirits slip away from the area toward the Thames.

Jasper

Characters who try to follow the ghosts toward the Thames soon lose the spirits' trail, unless the vampires use *Obfuscate* to hide their pursuit. (Wraiths can see through *Obfuscate* with a contested roll of their *Perception* score [typically 3] versus the vampire's *Obfuscate*.) However, pursuit is difficult even if the wraiths don't know they're being followed (the wraiths travel through buildings and other obstacles that the character must travel around). The characters lose the wraiths' near the river front in a district of dilapidated warehouses.

The abandoned docks are fog enshrouded. Wooden piles groan and coils of old rope tighten and creak with the motion of the river. The mournful sound of a ship horn sounds out in the distance. The boats here are small and in poor repair. As the characters ponder their next move, they

notice a ratlike fellow walking toward them. He glows a flickering green and has a translucent quality; his skin is bloated and corpse-white. Weeds and river grass cling to him like a briny garland, and his feet make a faint squelching sound as he walks. The man mumbles angrily to himself and is initially oblivious to the characters. He is very startled when he becomes aware of them.

Jasper is a wraith, albeit a rare one, who has resumed physical form to have his revenge on the living. Indeed, characters may be surprised to discover that Japheth's cloaks are not even required to see the spirit.

The dead man shows a certain deference if the characters are well-dressed, but there is still a saucy impudence to his tone. He is not completely "in phase" with the characters: his voice doesn't rise above a whisper, although characters with *Auspex* can hear him clearly enough. He eyes the elders suspiciously and asks, "How is it you can see me, yer lordships?" Although Jasper has been dead only a few nights, he is aware that he is a ghost and isn't too surprised if the characters reveal that they are vampires. If questioned, he tells them his sad story at great length and describes every injustice he has ever suffered (see below).

Jasper has never heard of the "Jonvoni," but he says that he saw several other ghosts pass by just minutes before the characters' arrival. If they ask in what direction, Jasper laughs, "Why should I tell you? What good does it do me?"

He wants revenge as payment. "My whore-wife and that goddamned Nate drowned me for my money. They eat white bread and drink good beer while I sup on brine!" Jasper wants the characters to kill his wife and her lover.

If the characters agree, Jasper is adamant that they fulfill their side of the bargain first, "How do I know you won't just walk away and leave if I tell you first?" Besides, his wife "lives only a short ways away." If the characters agree to his terms, Jasper leads them to a ramshackle two-story house. Careful scrutiny reveals that three other families share it, in separate apartments.

Jasper's wife and the loathed Nate are at home and may be awake or asleep, depending on the hour. Jasper eagerly shows the way to the apartment. If his enemies are asleep, he urges the characters to wake them "so they know what's coming." If the couple is awake, they are frightened but try to brazen it out. The wife swears her innocence in all things. Burly, bad-tempered Nate may attack the characters. Jasper screams silently from the sidelines, egging the characters on, "Kill them! Drown them in the river! Rip their guts out and tear off their heads!"

Jasper cackles with glee if the characters kill the adulterous murderers in at least one of his suggested manners. Jasper is disappointed if the characters kill the couple quietly in their sleep, but he still keeps his part of the bargain. In either event, a certain spark seems to go out in him and he begins to fade. Jasper seems genuinely surprised by the phenomenon and curses this last stroke of bad luck. He points toward the well-lit docks on the other side of the river as he disappears, saying, "The Isle of Dogs."

If the characters balk at doing Jasper's favor, he points at them accusingly and promises bloody vengeance. He runs away, but then follows the characters discreetly if he can. (He may even be recruited by the Giovanni if you choose.)

Characters who have acquired some wraith lore may realize that Jasper's need for vengeance was the only thing that kept him in the living world.

The Isle of Dogs

The Isle of Dogs is one of the city's busiest docks and is bustling throughout the night. Cubitt Town is the most active area on Dog Island; it is a complex of brick fields, sawmills and wharves. It is also host to numerous cement and iron works that spew grit and dust into the air. Characters who are local merchants may have business interests here.

The characters probably lost the wraiths that fled the blood house, but detecting the presence of other ghosts on the island is not difficult. Many spirits seem to congregate at a small graveyard to the north. A dilapidated 17th-century mansion overlooks the graveyard on a small piece of property; the house looks solely out of place among the docks and sawmills.

Gillespi

The manor is the lair of Gillespi Giovanni, and he has hidden here for almost two centuries. He has crumbled and become a shadow of his former self. If the characters were involved in events surrounding the Great Fire, Gillespi blames them for his fall from grace. He also fears them. Gillespi is home alone when the characters arrive, save for his wraiths. The elders may approach in almost any manner, but the ghosts warn of the characters' arrival unless they are well-hidden. The characters may subdue Gillespi if they catch him by surprise.

Gillespi sends eight of his wraiths against the characters if they're spotted. Elders who wear Japheth's cloaks may catch brief glimpses of the wraiths' skeletal shapes. The characters also feel a cold nether wind blow about them as the spirits strike. The wraiths probably can't stop the characters, but it's also unlikely that the characters can damage the wraiths (the wraiths attack as they did at the Dunsim Brewery, and the characters may counter with Japheth's cloaks).

Gillespi uses Dominate and Potence to escape in the confusion. He is the approximate equal of one of the characters and may well overwhelm a single pursuer and disappear. His chances of getting away dwindle if more than one character pursues him.

Gillespi prefers death to capture. The characters are friends bent on destroying what is good in the world, so far as he's concerned. Gillespi has suffered greatly since the Great Fire: enduring demotion and humiliation and being forced to go underground. He has grown extremely bitter.

Although the characters frighten Gillespi, Ambrogino and Augustus terrify him. He refuses to answer any questions, but the characters may be able to wring information from him in any number of ways. Gillespi resists abuse and players must roll Manipulation + Torture (difficulty equal to Gillespi's current Willpower) to beat information out of him. Characters may also use telepathy or mind control. Characters should ultimately be able to get information if they push Gillespi hard enough.

A few months ago, Gillespi received a letter from Ambrogino that told him to aid John Dunsim in providing logistical support for a Sabbat attack. Gillespi arranged to have five pens built in various locations throughout London and he filled them with vagrants to serve as blood reserves for the attackers. Gillespi is not privy to information on the Sabbat raid. He knows Dunlop by name only, and he has met Streck only twice. He distrusts the Sabbat and does not recognize what Ambrogino's ultimate intentions are, but Gillespi suspects that Clan Ventrue is the primary target of all of the schemes.

Gillespi also knows that John Dunsim has learned something important about the burial place of Lord Camden, Mithras' previous chamberlain. The Giovanni can reveal that the tomb is located in Valerius' manor. Gillespi is too

tired to bother to profit from this knowledge himself but might use it to buy his freedom, especially from characters who have contended with Ambrogino for centuries. Sabbat characters, in particular, would be glad to have this information; the secrets available in a Cappadocian's burial tomb would surely be sought after by the Ambrogino and would further explain the ancient Giovanni's presence in London.

Finally, Gillespi has heard rumor that a sinister creature, the Capuchin, is in the service of Augustus Giovanni. Gillespi distrusts the Capuchin and believes it may be responsible for the death of Claudius Giovanni.

Should the characters fail to follow the wraiths from the blood house, or refuse to help Jasper, they may never find Gillespi. His information on the blood houses can still be construed from what the characters may have learned from Montgomery Dunsin, or from Catherine Baker. Alternatively, you could have one of the hostages escape the Nottingham Dale blood house and reveal the blood reservoir. Confirmation of the connection between Dunlop, the Sabbat and the Giovanni becomes apparent enough when they stage their coordinated attack on the city.

The Attack

The Sabbat make final preparations for their attack on London shortly after Valerius' feast, but before the Camarilla Conclave. You may stage the raid any night following the feast, but after the characters have had some time to pursue more leads and do more investigating.

The attack is described as a suggested series of events. Characters' actions thus far may alter some of what is detailed below, requiring that you skip events or improvise alternatives. Regardless of what happens at this point, events occur rapidly, with little time for deliberation or analysis.

Sabbat War Party

Sabbat characters must make some hard decisions. Elders who watch Streck for Lady Astor are probably aware of the imminent attack. Lady Astor requests that they try to reason with Streck one last time; she does not want bloodshed but condones the destruction of the rebels if the characters recommend it. Word among the city's rebellious Sabbat has it that Streck's war party is meeting at the Agar Town blood house, which is amidst the worst of the city's slums. The streets are narrow and there is no drainage in this part of London.

Revelry can be heard even as the characters approach the Sabbat meeting place. The poor avoid the area surrounding the building because they recognize that something foul is occurring. Streck doesn't fear discovery at this point; the attack is about to begin, and the police won't enter this part of town.

The Sabbat war party is in full swing. The main holding pen is similar to that in Nottingham Dale and is caked with blood and feces. The prisoners' faces are sutured shut. Sabbat characters who witness this for the first time may find such treatment of mortals crude and "pedestrian." Streck and his coterie are killing prisoners and draining them in preparation for the raid. The characters have no doubt carved out their niche in the plans if they are part of the assault.

Streck treats the characters like honored equals. He toasts all of his companions in mayhem, exhorting them to acts of heroism in the Sabbat's name. He is clearly using Presence to whip up his followers, and the characters may also exercise their Disciplines to enhance the party's enjoyment. Streck recounts the crimes of the "Antediluvian-controlled Camarilla," and his agents shout their acclaim. The characters may join in this merriment or take their share of the herd and throw their own party. The warehouse is huge, with plenty of place to spread out.

Streck and his associates have cut off all avenues of escape. The Sabbat can chase victims through the darkened building and play any games they like. The weakened prisoners are hardly a challenge, but their horror is at a fevered pitch; the characters may nurture this fear into any pathology they wish.

Streck doesn't partake of the carnage and distances himself from the games. He seeks to engage at least one of the characters about her general opinion of the Sabbat.

Marron is the main instigator of the carnage, unless one of the characters assumes that role. Marron steers victims about like living set pieces — directing a theater of the absurd. Starved, dehydrated and in terrible pain, the prisoners shamble about like zombies. Marron loosens the wires on victims' mouths, but he leaves them dangling to act as impromptu marionette strings. The Brujah assigns a few lines to remember and cheerfully urges the victims to "put some heart into it." The play itself is an impromptu grotesque, with none of the wit of Marron's earlier work.

Other Brujah rip the wires brutally from their victims' mouths, so the humans can "perform their lines" through wrecked and bloodied gums. One man loses his entire jaw as Dieter viciously yanks the wires free. The man emits a gurgled scream as he dies. Dieter studies the jaw with an almost childlike intensity before throwing it in a refuse pile.

A young woman lies in the corner with a dead baby at her breast. Her eyes are dim and uncomprehending. Marron commands her to stand and dubs her Queen Victoria. "Your mount is ready, your majesty!" he shouts as he has her ride another victim. The "queen" smiles nervously. Holding her baby to her chest with one hand, she balances precariously and uses the wires in her mount's mouth as a bridle.

Marron also gives prisoners a chance to strike back at their "oppressor," who is a man who has been dubbed "the doctor." The doctor was forced to sew up his fellow prisoners'

lips, while his mouth remained free. Marron gives the prisoners boards and encourages them to chase the naked man through the building and beat him to death. Some of the characters may find the spectacle uninteresting, but it meets with general approval from the Brujah anarchists.

The doltish Taylor brothers add their own crude touches to the revelry. There's blood to spare, so they tie a small cask of gunpowder around one wretch's neck. A kick to the man's backside sends him scurrying through the building. The Taylors hurry him off into the darkness as the man vainly tries to untie the ropes. The explosion is impressive, as everything above the man's waist erupts into a ball of blood, fire and bone. Not even this noise brings mortal authorities to the wretched Agar Town.

One prisoner (who was stuporous until now) stands without direction from Marron. He hurls rocks, sticks or feces at Streck and the characters, all the while shouting for God to strike them down. The attacker is the missing priest, Marcus Giovanni, from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He seems to be in a daze but lobbs his missiles with remarkable speed and accuracy. If one of his throws hits a character, it hurts more than expected. The impact evokes a sudden self-revulsion mixed with anger and fear, rather than physical pain. Characters with *Auspex 2* see a blinding golden aura around the priest — the hallmark of True Faith. Indeed, the priest's very presence causes pain and exposes the characters as the monstrosities they are. Any attempts to use *Dominare* or *Presence* to quiet the priest are ineffective.

If the characters fail to act, Streck leaps at Marcus Giovanni and hurls the hapless priest against a slaughterhouse wall with bone-shattering force. The mortal's skull shatters into a spray of fine red mist. Streck's face contorts into a grimace of pain and nausea as his hand twists into an agonized claw. If one of the characters attacks the priest, the same thing occurs to her, and her hand (or other applicable body part) is useless for the rest of the scene. If Marcus dies, every other prisoner in the blood house dies as well and miraculously escapes the Sabbat's tortures.

Marcus Giovanni

The characters may learn something about the priest, whether he's alive or dead. They discover a strange chain-link tattoo constricting a stylized heart on his left breast. Those wearing Japheth's cloaks notice that the tattoo shimmers with a dark and repulsive shade of red. John Dunsirn wanted the mortal Marcus to aid in the creation of strongholds for the Sabbat attack. Marcus refused and Dunsirn decided that if he would not serve the clan in life, then he would do so in death. The tattoo virtually guarantees that a mortal human comes back as a wraith when he dies. Dunsirn threw Marcus to the Sabbat for punishment, but also to learn first-hand about Sabbat torture methods. The Necromancer planned to question the traitor after his death.



Characters with Occult Lore 3 or higher may recognize the tattoo as a Giovanni creation, or as a ward of imprisonment and may try to engender mistrust between Streck and the Giovanni. Streck may interpret the tattoo as a sign that the Giovanni are spying on him more than he cares for.

If Marcus survives, the characters may be able to bend the priest to their purposes, though this is far from easy. He is strong-willed and intelligent — an exceptional human. Marcus knows about vampires and is what the Tremere call a “neutral.” (He is immune to Dominate.)

Marcus may prove to be valuable if the characters save his life — not because of what he knows, but because of who he is. He might become the agent (though probably not the ally) of the characters, and he could spy on his Kindred brethren. Marcus can't be Dominated, Blood Bound or Embraced, but characters may trick him, perhaps “demonstrating” their good will by sparing blood-house victims. The possibilities of such a development are left up to you and the players.

Last-Minute Challenges

Sabbat characters who work with Lady Astor may arrive at the blood house at any time during these proceedings. They may simply choose to attack, or they may try to talk to their rebellious brothers. Streck is dedicated to the attack, but there is a slim chance that characters can persuade him to stop it. Streck agrees to halt the attack if the characters are able to turn one of Streck's coterie to their side through rhetoric — but only if one of the characters can defeat Streck in armed combat. The characters must pick their champion, and fighting should be run normally. Most Sabbat duels are to first blood. If Streck loses, he keeps his word and cancels his portion of the attack. He cannot recall Dunlop or the Giovanni, though.

Joseph Gaiman

The Sabbat want to not only destroy Valerius, but also those of his house. If the Sabbat attack advances as planned, Streck and his minions assault their first target, Valerius' ally — Ventrue Joseph Gaiman. Streck goes after Gaiman, giving Dunlop an opportunity at Valerius, as agreed. Streck has taken advantage of Giovanni wraith resources and is well informed of his targets' whereabouts. Sabbat characters can join in the mayhem, couple with Dunlop (see Camarilla Defense) or choose their own course (perhaps even raid Camden's tomb).

Gaiman is in his private Oxford business office, unless he has moved for security reasons. He has sent all of his human workers home as he prepares to deal with any corollary damage that the Sabbat attack may cause. Joseph is accompanied only by a young ninth-generation Ventrue and three ghoulish guards. He does not believe the Sabbat have the belly for a fight; any attack on his haven surprises him.

Gaiman's office is in a high-traffic area, but the building absorbs sound like a tomb. The fight may pour onto the streets, though, involving the human population and threatening the Masquerade. Gaiman is a century older than the characters and of equal blood. He is particularly powerful in Dominate and Presence, and he attempts to use these powers to turn the characters on each other and escape during the confusion. Gaiman is also skilled with a sword and can roll with a punch. He is not an easy target and tries to reach Valerius if he escapes. Gaiman has the Disciplines Auspex 2, Celerity 1, Dominate 5, Fortitude 4 and Presence 5.

Camarilla Defense

Camarilla characters may institute a wide array of defensive measures in the nights leading up to the attack, or it may catch them completely off-guard. They may shield Valerius, research the Giovanni or carry the attack to the Sabbat at one of the blood houses. The characters may have confused the Giovanni's wraiths if they have taken Byzantine security measures. The characters' efforts may have rallied the Primogen to Valerius' defense — or not. The characters could have guessed at least two of the attackers' intended targets (Valerius and Camden's crypt) and stand guard over them.

If Ambrogino has learned about Victoria Ash, he may send a wraith messenger to whisper in her ear about a fictional attack on an Elysium to further divide Camarilla forces. Valerius may be in his secret haven north of Hampstead. Lady Anne Bowesley has made her own arrangements at Valerius' behest and hides with the aid of a Nosferatu ally. (She is not one of the Sabbat's primary targets and likely survives no matter what happens.)

Characters who have kept watch over Dunlop know that he returned to his lair after the feast and has not stirred since — and, at least not until the night of the attack.

Dunlop and Valerius

Valerius may elude the Giovanni's wraiths, but he cannot escape the eye of Count Dunlop. The Gangrel and his childer cast a ritual that allows them to track their target for a full week (hence, Dunlop's apparent inactivity after the feast). Dunlop comes knocking wherever Valerius hides. The former and his childer pad quietly from their fen in wolf form and take every precaution to stay hidden. If a character manages to keep up with Dunlop's pack, she sees them enter the city and stop at a warehouse — one of the blood houses.

(It's possible that Sabbat characters link up with Dunlop instead of Streck and may do so here. Dunlop allows them to “tag along,” but he warns them that Valerius is his to kill.)

Dunlop and his coterie gorge themselves at the blood house. The Gangrel are mostly business, in contrast to the theatrics of Streck's Sabbat. The captured humans cower in fear, unable to move. The Gangrel family descends on them

and wrings their necks with careless efficiency, like farmers killing chickens. The room fills with the sound of tearing muscle, popping cartilage and pitiful choking screams. Count Dunlop and the red-haired Richard kill their victims in a casual manner, slowly enough to cause pain. William snaps their necks swiftly and cleanly. Arthur is the only one who shows any emotion, chasing some of the victims around, clucking like a demented rooster.

One man, apparently a local farmer, begs for mercy for his wife and son. The man takes a swing at Arthur who, still giggling, overpowers the human and ties him to a nearby chair. The demented vampire assumes the solemn demeanor of a priest and kisses the man on the eyelids. He then sucks the man's eyeballs from their sockets. A faint pop attends their extraction as the man wails in pain. Arthur cradles the orbs gently in his hands, directing them toward the man's family as Richard dispatches the woman and child. Arthur, then disinterested, drops the eyes. They dangle horribly on the man's cheeks as Arthur turns away in search of other amusement.

Characters who stalk Dunlop may attack here or continue to give chase. The Dunlops leave a few humans alive and plan to return here after their mission. If the characters attempt to stop Dunlop after he leaves the blood house, he and his coterie attack without hesitation. If no one interferes with the count's progress, he continues on to Valerius' estate.

Ambrogino's Bidding

Dunlop's attack on Valerius is altered if the characters have set up a defense of Camden's crypt, in the catacombs of Valerius' mansion. Ambrogino commands Dunlop to join the Giovanni in his attack rather than let the Gangrel attack on his own. (See *The Giovanni* for more details.)



The main obstacle standing between Dunlop and Valerius is Geoffrey Leigh (assuming that the characters are not guarding the chamberlain). Dunlop and the Archon are evenly matched in most respects (brute strength versus finesse), but Dunlop's coterie tips the scales in the Gangrel's favor.

Valerius dispatches his ghouls to watch from windows; they carry pistols and wooden stakes. Leigh and Valerius do not leave the house if they detect Dunlop's arrival, but they wait for him inside. Dunlop's clan clambers over the high walls and enters the house. The Gangrel hope to sneak in, but brave a hail of gunfire if they're detected. Dunlop and his sons enter through several entrances at once, murder

servants and drink their blood. There is little strategy to their attack: They kill everything in sight. The coterie finally corners Valerius and Geoffrey Leigh in the main hall, where the two Kindred must fight or die. The entire pack attacks Leigh, while Dunlop goes after Valerius.

Characters who get involved may join either side. Sabbat characters who want a taste of Valerius' blood may help Dunlop cut down the chamberlain and his defenders, destroying a dynasty that dates back almost 800 years. Dunlop wants the glory of the kill, though, and roars murderously at any character who kills Valerius. A character who steals his right to revenge becomes Dunlop's primary target before the night ends (see *Treachery*, below).

Camarilla characters may arrive just in time or prepare a trap for Dunlop. If the characters have planned too well (removing Gaiman as a target, for example), Streck and his team may join Dunlop in a frontal attack on Valerius' compound. The house is the scene of a truly bloody melee, with numerous vampires on each side. A few characters may even remember to keep an eye on Camden's crypt.

Treachery

Ambrogino, using his influence over Dunlop, has arranged for the count to be an instrument of revenge for the characters' past transgressions. He has given the Gangrel orders to destroy the characters, along with Valerius. Dunlop works alongside Sabbat characters as long as they have a common Camarilla foe. Once the fighting is over, Dunlop turns on them.

Despite the count's strength, it is unlikely that he engages the whole group; he tries to pick off characters one by one. Ambrogino singles out Rose Chandler if she has stayed with the group since the Great Fire. Other potential targets are Victoria Ash (if she has aided the group) or any of the characters' childer or beloved retainers. Dunlop's attack should surprise Sabbat characters, who probably have little reason to expect duplicity from him.

In the case of an attack on Rose, Dunlop grabs the Caitiff. He tears her head off with his massive strength and hurls her body at the characters' feet. "Compliments from Ambrogino!" he snarls as he and his coterie move in for the kill.

If Sabbat characters have not learned of Camden's crypt before this point, Dunlop can expose Ambrogino's purpose in attacking the mansion, "Once I'm through with you, that accursed Giovanni can exhume his damned Cappadocian and my debt will be paid." Characters can ply Dunlop for further information about Ambrogino's intentions while they fight. The Gangrel is happy to share — his goal is simple revenge. The full extent of Ambrogino's plan might even be revealed if the characters can defeat and question Dunlop, or read his mind. (See *The Giovanni*, for details on Ambrogino's raid of Camden's crypt.)

The Giovanni

Ambrogino and Lucretia have only one goal during the Sabbat attack: to open Camden's tomb and retrieve its contents. The Giovanni meet at a tavern near Valerius' manor, and Ambrogino sends his wraiths to investigate the mansion's defenses. If he spies the characters lying in wait, he sends his wraiths to summon Dunlop (and possibly Gillespi) to his side.

Ambrogino sends Dunlop to precede him into the house with instructions to kill any guardians. If Dunlop does not appear (the characters have distracted or killed him), Ambrogino sends his wraiths to attack and distract any guards.

Ultimately, no matter who comes to his aid or who defends the crypt — or even how many vampires stand in waiting — Ambrogino stages his raid. He is determined to learn Camden's secrets about the *Sargon Fragment*.

Ambrogino Dominates Valerius' human guards, rather than kill them, to cover his presence at the tomb. The characters may pounce on him immediately or let him play his hand.

Ambrogino pours a strong acid on the crypt's lock. Once he is within the tomb, his companions stand guard while he lights a small fire and begins to chant, passing his fingers lightly over the crypt's runes. Ambrogino casts the ritual that John Dunsim learned to reveal Camden's remains. This ritual takes three hours to perform. If it is allowed to proceed to completion, there is momentary stillness and the sound of scraping stone as four handholds emerge in the trap door in the floor. The Giovanni lift the stone, revealing Camden's resting place (see Exploring the Crypt, below).

Ambrogino is prepared if the characters attack. He dispatches Dunlop and Lucretia. If they cannot stop the characters, he joins the fight. Ambrogino uses Dominate, Potence and Thaumaturgy to devastating effect. His Preta Shúnyatá fill the halls of the catacombs, all the while distracting and possibly overwhelming the crypt's defenders.

The odds are in favor of Ambrogino, Lucretia and Dunlop if they are together. However, Valerius, Geoffrey Leigh or even Streck might lie in wait with the characters. Ambrogino and Lucretia retreat farther into the catacombs if the battle goes against them. Dunlop covers their retreat at Ambrogino's command.

If Dunlop falls or things look bad for the Giovanni, Lucretia defends her sire as he intones a potent rite in an unknown tongue. A black roiling doorway opens in mid-air; the surrounding catacomb ripples as if viewed under water. A cold, ash-laden wind blows through the portal. The characters then see a dark and stormy landscape beyond, with jagged stone cliffs illuminated by intermittent blue

explosions. The sky is a sickly green with bloated black clouds. Ambrogino and Lucretia leap through the portal, which closes instantly after their passage.

The portal leads to the Shadowlands, a realm of the Underworld. Characters might not recognize the place, but the sense of dread and fear that it creates is undeniable. It drives all vampires back; not even frenzied Kindred can hope to follow the Giovanni. Unfortunately for Dunlop (if he is present), he, too, staggers away from the portal and is at the mercy of the characters.

If Ambrogino is undisturbed in Camden's crypt, he descends into the chamber where the former chamberlain's body lies. The Giovanni's plot is foiled by the ultimate of ironies, though: The dead vampire's secrets are protected by spells and devices of Cappadocian design — the keys to unlocking them died out with Clan Cappadocian, the very vampires that the Giovanni obliterated.

Storytelling the Shadowlands

You could let characters follow the Giovanni through their portal, though it is an extraordinarily dangerous undertaking. The Giovanni know where they have gone and have every advantage in the Shadowlands; they disappear immediately and leave the characters in the lands of the dead.

You could tell a story set in the Shadowlands as characters search for a way to return to the land of the living. Vampires are very useful to the lords of the Underworld, and the powers that be might even make deals with the characters — passage home in return for favors on the other side. Indeed, a long-dead and powerful spirit might tether itself to the characters and thus forge a bond that could last for centuries.

Exploring the Crypt

If the characters are the victors in the battle, they probably have full opportunity to explore Camden's crypt. (Durga Syn, the Ravnos prophet from *The Last Supper*, also arrives and may give Camarilla characters access to the tomb if Valerius otherwise denies it.) Even if the characters are Sabbat and the attack fails overall, there is a strong chance that the crypt's role in events goes unnoticed without the characters' emphasis on it, and they gain the opportunity to explore the tomb.



(Sabbat characters may have learned of the crypt from Gillespi — see the Isle of Dogs. They might also have learned of the crypt's importance to the Giovanni from Dunlop. The count may have been told to buy Ambrogino time to enter the crypt, but Dunlop had no idea what the Giovanni hoped to accomplish there.)

If the characters stopped Ambrogino from casting the ritual in the crypt, the characters may try to do so in the aftermath of the raid (see Camden's Crypt for details on learning the ritual). If no one is skilled in Thaumaturgy, the group may persuade Monsieur Pachard, the Tremere that they may have spoken to earlier, to help; though, he demands the second choice of items (if any) in the tomb. Durga Syn might also be able to perform the ceremony.

No matter who performs the ritual, it causes handholds to appear in a stone slab set in the crypt's floor. The stone is extremely heavy, but the combined strength of vampires can lift it.

A large chamber is revealed. The room is three meters high. The characters smell the sweet scent of funerary flowers — amazingly, it still lingers after all this time. The walls are made of smooth, dark marble and the chamber is free of dust. An iron sarcophagus lies at one side of the room and is flanked by low stone tiers.

Six vampire skulls rest on the pedestals, with their eye sockets staring blankly in the gloom. Characters with *The Spirit's Touch* may determine that these were the Giovanni responsible for Camden's death. The vision reveals Camden killing two of the assassins, by cutting off one's head and savaging the other's neck. The last sight of the remaining four Giovanni was of an enraged Mithras descending upon them to avenge his chamberlain's destruction.

If the characters open the sarcophagus, a cloud of pungent gas billows up. Camden's remains are extremely dry and well-preserved for a vampire of his age. His severed head lolls to one side and exposes black dust and gray spinal bone. He wears a dark-gray, 13th-century robe, and his hands are folded across his chest. Camden's only adornment is a pewter clasp with an ebony stone.

A large metal strong-box is set into a wall of the tomb. It contains a single yellowed document with writing in Classical Greek (see sidebar). If characters cannot read the language, they must have the letter translated.

The letter indicates where the characters can proceed in their hunt for the *Sargon Fragment*: Egypt, supposedly at the lair of Lazarus himself, who was one of the disciples of Cappadocius (characters with *Occult 5+*

or Kindred Lore 4+ would likely know this). The characters' travels to Egypt and ongoing search for the Sargon Fragment are detailed in Book Two of *The Sun Has Set*.

Though the characters might hope to study the map discussed in the letter, they must apparently know the third rhyme of the Via Ossidis — one of the vampiric paths — in order to conjure the image up. The rhyme died with the Cappadocians, though; a bitter irony that denies even Ambrogino from viewing the map. Although the Giovanni also follow Via Ossidis, even they lack the highest truths that the Cappadocians possessed, and this rhyme is one of those truths.

It appears, then, that the characters must return to the crypt on the date specified in the letter — 34 years from now — as Camden instructs. When the map does appear, the very air in the crypt glows blue as starlight is reflected down into the tomb through a series of intricate mirrors built into Valerius' manor (not even the chamberlain knows of their existence). The stones set into the ceiling of the crypt cast light-shapes onto Camden's sarcophagus — revealing Lamias' lair.

Storyteller Note: Mithras never seemed to make use of the tomb's contents, for unknown reasons. Perhaps he did so out of respect for his former chamberlain, or because of a fundamental disinterest in necromancy. In any event, the hidden chamber of the tomb has gone untouched since Camden's death.

My beloved Constanca,

If you are reading this, then perhaps God can still hear the prayers of our kind. Though I am long dead, you may yet live. I learned of your peril in Egypt and sent Leolis to aid you against Augustus' brood, but there are ever so many more of them than us these nights. He told me that he lost your path and feared the worst, yet I still dare cling to hope. I am not strong in the ways of prophecy, but I sense my time is short, so I write this letter.

Our clan's fire burns dim since the death of Father Cappadocius. The cursed Giovanni pursue us without respite and even I, Chamberlain to Lord Mithras, am not safe. We Cappadocians have reflected on death so long, yet we know its touch but once. Now that I sense its silent approach, I find the thought both invigorating and restless. Whatever my fate, the upstart Giovanni must pay the price for attacking their betters. Though they swallow us whole, we will stick long and hard in their throats.

It is to this end that I now address myself. As you sought the wisdom of Lazarus in occult tomes, I studied the man himself. Was he really Sapheth, as you have so often asked? I fear I will never know. Since our Father's folly beneath dread Kaymakli, Lazarus has become Infiores — heretic — and some accuse him of stealing Sargon's lore. He is a difficult man to find, if indeed he still exists. He did receive at least one visitor before his disappearance — the ill-fated Caias. What passed between them in that valley of serpents is unknown.

You were right. The secrets we seek must lie beneath the desert sands. My studies of poor Caias have rendered some fruit in your absence. He was a careful man and had visited Lazarus' lair before. I have recovered a map of its lower strata and it is this that I now bequeath to you. Replace the sarcophagus and cover up my old bones: incant the third rhyme of the Via Ossidis and the map will stand revealed by the light of the stars. Use it and avenge me loved one, if such is your desire.

If you found what you sought in Egypt, then you will no doubt make good use of this. Lord Mithras swore that none but you would visit my remains, but forever is a long time. If another of our kind reads this, know you that the Giovanni are a blight upon this world and they gnaw at our souls. The map will reappear every 42nd year hereafter, the night of our Lord, February 17, 1504, by the Gregorian calendar. If you have the will and the knowledge to use this information, look to our kinwomen, the Lamia, for aid. Bear this letter and they will do you no harm.

Beloved, I must go now to make final preparations. When they come for me, they will find me ready. I will not ask for Lord Mithras' protection, damned pride, but at least he will furnish me some small measure of revenge. That jackal Amber will no doubt be the next chamberlain. God save the prince. We have fought long and hard, you and I. If you continue for a while in the world — which is my most fervent wish — then my soul flies before you, protecting you from harm. When at last you die, let your soul fly to mine in whatever pleasant darkness awaits us.

Your loving,

Thomas Becket Camden.



The Arrival of Durga Syn

At some point before dawn on the night of the Sabbat attack, Durga Syn arrives on the scene. She may appear at a Camarilla victory party, or to Sabbat characters anywhere in the city. If one of the characters went through the Dream prelude, she appears before him first. Durga Syn did not send the dream but knew the characters were in London at this time. (She also has a blood potion that heals even aggravated wounds and feeds it to anyone who has been injured, if required.)

Gangrel may detect the faint smell of the Garou upon the aged woman.

Although Durga Syn is feeble and worn, she walks unafraid into even the bloodiest of Sabbat celebrations to find the characters. If they remember her from earlier dealings, they notice that she has become far more bent and worn over the past 400 years. Yet, there is a light in her eyes, and she almost emanates pure power. Her presence has a calming influence that affects even the most callous Sabbat killers.

Durga Syn tells the characters that fate has drawn her here. This is an old refrain with her, but those who have not met her before may find this introduction strange. Vampires other than the characters may be present for Durga Syn's reunion with the elders, but she pays scant attention to anyone else.

Be prepared for a barrage of questions from the players. Durga Syn is the archetypal wise woman and has predicted things in the past, and the characters have no doubt gathered some questions over the past four centuries. In particular, Durga Syn reports cryptically that Marianna, who the characters may have hoped to meet in London after *The Anexeaton* prelude, is still chased by the Giovanni and "walks among desert serpents in her pursuit of the divine."

Given Durga Syn's ties to fate, some characters may feel that she has been pulling their strings and may test her now. She can see the ways of fate, but she is hardly above them.

Durga Syn has been in Russia and several other parts of the world, countering the servitors of something called "the Baba Yaga." She tells the characters that she saw them in a vision. "The great and violent storm called Gehenna is fast approaching," she exclaims and believes the characters will play a significant role in the events leading to this apocalypse. Durga Syn claims to see a great darkness growing in

the heart of Rome that could be the stirrings of an Antediluvian, and she has come to read the characters' fortunes, if they allow it. "This is a dangerous time for you," she intones. "The wheel of fate is spinning, and you are bound to it. You should know your destiny. How say you?"

If the characters refuse to be read, Durga Syn does not berate them but cautions, "I must leave again in three nights. If you change your heart, ask for me aloud and I shall find you."

The Vision

If the characters submit to the reading, Durga Syn does not use the Blood Egg as she did in 1444. She produces a long, brilliant red feather with a yellow and orange tip. She sits and chants, waving the feather back and forth slowly, and she appears to go into a trance.

The characters' surroundings distort and collapse, then fade to black. The air crackles as if with possibility on the verge of form. Suddenly, a dim vista appears. The characters see a dry wasteland. A viper leaves strange undulating tracks as it winds its way over the sands. The characters see themselves in the desert, drinking from a river of living blood that flows from the body of what appears to be Claudius Giovanni.

The vision ripples abruptly, like a stone thrown into a pond. The characters then see themselves in another place and time. Blackness gives way to geometric canyons of light, though this image is darker and more remote than the last. The characters are surrounded by great buildings of steel and glass in a metropolis that far exceeds the grandeur of London. Strange carriages and garishly dressed humans pass by, unseeing. The characters can perceive cobweb patterns of destruction etched into every surface. They taste vampiric blood on their lips, but it is thin and anemic. The veil between the quick and the dead is slim, and the group sees legions of the dead massing behind the frail barrier.

Great waves of darkness suddenly thunder down. Time and distance seem to crumble and distort as the vision changes. A river of brackish blood flows forth from the veins of a monstrous Augustus Giovanni and floods the city streets. The river roils and breathes like that in the previous vision, but the blood is older and more potent. Its reek overwhelms the characters by making their heads reel. The Antediluvian's eyes flood the world with a blood-red light. The river washes outward and tears down the frail barriers between this realm and the next.

The world is conquered by the dead: Neither Kindred nor kine can survive. A malefic thunder peels throughout Creation. As the characters drown in darkness, they taste the Antediluvian's blood—a taste that is still there when they awaken from their trance.

As the vision fades, the light dims in Durga Syn's eyes and she seems drained. The characters are shaken, but also strangely invigorated. They may be willing to entertain several thoughts at this point. The first may be that this is just an extremely good piece of Ravnos fakery. Yet every sense tells them it was real (or was as real as a prophetic vision could be). The Antediluvian blood on their lips may put such suspicions to rest. They have had only the slightest taste, but even that hints at a power and darkness that they have never dreamed of.

If Valerius is alive and present, he waits until Durga Syn has finished the characters' reading and speaks, "Little Modier, would you do a reading for me? We are a kingdom without a crown."

The characters see a look of irritation cross her face, as if to say, "I am not here for you." Durga Syn agrees to the reading on one condition: Valerius must let the characters open Camden's tomb (assuming the characters have not already done so). Valerius' first instinct is to refuse, but he may owe the characters his life after the night's events, so he consents. Alternatively, Valerius' desire to know the future of his principedom may prompt him to acquiesce, despite Mithras' injunction against disturbing the crypt.

If the chamberlain agrees, Durga Syn stares blankly into the distance and then decrees, "Your prince will return, but not for long. I see a great stag in the forest, beset by wolves. They rear him down and the lowest cur saps on his blood. I am sorry, there is no help for it."

On this note, she says she needs to rest—dawn is also fast approaching. Durga Syn is nowhere to be found the next night, if the characters allowed their fortunes to be read.

Aftermath

The characters' adventures in London may end in any number of ways. The Camarilla may stand triumphant or House Valerius could lie in smoldering ruins. In any event, the Camarilla reacts, if belatedly, to restore full command of the city. If the Sabbat did significant damage, Lady Astor's worst predictions come true: Known Sabbat are hunted down and destroyed, and the Camarilla remains vigilant for future uprisings for some time to come.

If Valerius is dead, the line of succession is clear: Lady Anne Bowsley is declared chamberlain at the Conclave, though it's a baptism of fire as all of the other clans seek to claim some power. Lord and Lady Amber (Venture from Blood & Fire) arrive rapidly in London to keep the peace and to back Lady Anne's claim, thus reinvigorating their own fading power.

If Valerius lives, his power declines over the next few decades as his child's comes to the fore. Valerius steps down and Lady Anne becomes chamberlain in 1879.

The Sabbat have to flee London quickly, even if they win a stunning victory by devastating House Valerius. The Camarilla rallies within two nights (though that may still

leave Sabbat characters time to open the crypt). The characters must sneak back into the city if they are to see Camden's map in 34 years.

No matter what happens, Lady Astor is likely to weather the storm, but she must curtail some of her personal plans. Streck's influence wanes, even if the rebellion goes as intended; a continent-wide crackdown follows the 1848 rebellions and diminishes the Brujah's status.

Gillespi finally receives his dearest wish and returns to Rome "where it's safe." John Dunsirn goes back to his haven in the highlands and drops out of sight for a time. If the Giovanni still have Catherine Baker at the end of the story, Dunsirn brings her "to meet his human family." The cannibals dispose of her.

Ambrogino considers Dunlop a useful pawn and strives to reclaim the Gangrel if possible. If Dunlop can evade the characters, he escapes the country and may even reappear in Egypt as one of Ambrogino's agents. The Giovanni's primary lead to the *Sargon Fragment* has been denied to him, which makes him hate the characters now more than ever. Ambrogino is not without other leads, though. His agents soon report that Marianna has fled to Egypt, and he continues his quest for apotheosis there. Ironically, that is where the characters' search leads them as well....

Characters (London)

The Camarilla



Valerius (Regent of London)

Background: Valerius was Embraced by the powerful Ventrue patriarch Bindusara (an ancient Ventrue scholar) after the mortal sustained a fatal injury at the Battle of Hastings. Valerius later pledged his sword to Prince Mithras and proved his worth in a hundred battles. He rose to prominence among the Kindred as the prince's chamberlain, following the mysterious death of his predecessor, the Cappadocian Lord Camden (see *Clanbook: Cappadocian*). Valerius was granted one of Mithras' brooding stone manors in 1666, ostensibly as reparation for his estate, which burned shortly before the Great Fire.

After Mithras' disappearance in 1798, Valerius became Prince of London in fact, if not in title. Imperial England has undergone a meteoric rise during Valerius' reign, though not necessary through his doing; Clan Ventrue's control of the city's Primogen has dwindled during Valerius' tenure.

Clan: Ventrue

Sire: Bindusara

Nature/Demeanor: Architect/Traditionalist

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 1066 (Battle of Hastings)

Apparent Age: 25

Haven: West London Estate

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 4, Melee (Rapier) 5, Ride 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 5, Investigation 4, Law 4, Linguistics 3, Occult 3, Politics 6

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 5, Obluscate 1, Potence 3, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 4, Influence 5, Mentor (Mithras) 6, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 5

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 4

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 9

Merits: Judicial Ties, Political Ties

Image: A wiry, athletic man in his mid-20s, Valerius has long red hair and a neatly cropped beard. He wears well-tailored, 16th-century clothing. Although he appears young, a certain grayness has crept into his demeanor since he shouldered the burdens of empire. For all Valerius' power, there seems to be little joy left in his unlife. His 800 years of vampiric existence are eroding him away.

Roleplaying Hints: Atlas seems to have set his burden squarely on your shoulders. You remember Mithras' departure, one cold, foggy night at the turn of the century. He

summoned you to his haven and told you he was leaving and that he needed to attend to "personal" matters. The paperwork was all in order and Mithras assured you of the family's loyalty, and then he departed. He had left the British Isles before, of course, but never for so long. You do not know what disturbs you more: That the islands are without his protection for the first time in centuries, or that there are events afoot that require his "personal" attention.

Although the kingdom prospers like never before, you suspect that it is vulnerable to attack from any direction. You uphold the prince's banner out of loyalty and plan to return it to him, in person, when he returns.

You are the quintessential Ventrue: polished on the surface, but quick to anger if your prerogative is questioned. You are an architect by nature, and you use your great influence to destroy those who would threaten the nation you helped build. Your humor is exhausted by the recent Sabbat uprisings; an ancient rage builds within you and mars your polished countenance. You have lost your near-legendary cool more than once over the past few decades as the Beast rises within you. Yet, you are sentimental about the damndest of things and, ironically, you are nostalgic for the young island nation you once knew.

You concentrate your efforts of late on the upcoming Conclave, but you sense doom and futility in the proceedings. Your agents tell you that a Sabbat attack is imminent. The Toreador Justicar has sent her Archon to provide additional security, which does help. Some of the Primogen make their support clear, while others are evasive.

Still, you did not rise to your current position by shrinking from adversity. You are Valerius—right hand of Prince Mithras. You are the builder of kingdoms, the Lion of England and a hundred other such (you belatedly realize) laborious titles. If you die, it is with a dignity that befits your unlife, and it is not alone.

Equipment: Rapier, fine clothing, thoroughbred riding horse, pistol

Geoffrey Leigh (Camarilla Archon)

Background: Born in the 11th-century Byzantine Empire, Geoffrey Leigh (then named Justinian) was a frontier noble and warrior who fought the Seljuk Turks. In one nocturnal battle, Leigh's garrison was killed, save for himself. Resigned to his imminent death, he fought on viciously and killed a score of Turks. His prowess attracted the attention of the Turkish leader, a powerful vampire warrior. The Cainite singled Justinian out and let the mortal lash out at him. When the Gangrel decided that Justinian was worthy, he Embraced the human and left him to fend for himself.

Justinian survived and changed his name when the Byzantine Empire fell. He wandered Europe and Asia, where he eventually met Violetta and assumed his current position as Archon.

Clan: Gangrel

Sire: Unknown

Nature/Demeanor: Rebel/Survivor

Generation: 6th

Embrace: A.D. 1042

Apparent Age: 27

Haven: Country Manor

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 6, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 2, Firearms 5, Melee (Sword) 6, Music 3, Repair 4, Sailor 5, Security 4, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Finance 2, Investigation 4, Law 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 3, Occult 3, Tracking 6

Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Fortitude 7, Obfuscate 2, Potence 4, Presence 2, Protean 6

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Resources 4, Retainers 3, Status 3

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Merits: Iron Will, Code of Honor, Berserker, Acute Senses

Image: Leigh is an extremely large and imposing man in his mid-20s, with a bristling mustache and long, wavy brown hair. His is swarthy in contrast to most of London's Kindred. He usually wears well-made, but weathered, traveling clothes; he looks slightly uncomfortable in noble finery.

Geoffrey has a hawkish expression and it shows the signs of his feral blood. Fine black hair sprouts from the tips of his pointed ears and his good-humored grin reveals Lupine fangs. He goes shirtless in the wild; black wiry hair covers most of his muscular frame. He walks with an imperious stride. Despite Leigh's fearsome demeanor, he is a convivial, and even jovial, person. He has a booming laugh and appears to enjoy his unlife to the fullest.

Roleplaying Hints: You realize that you do not possess the subtlety (or desire) necessary to play a major role in the Jihad. You take your responsibilities as Archon seriously, though. Soldiering is the noblest profession, and you follow a code of chivalry stringently, though most Kindred consider the notion passé. The two great loves in your life are Violetta and the wild. However, given Violetta's dark moods of late, you are better off with the animals.

Equipment: Sword, leather jerkin (one point of armor), travel gear



Count Dunlop

Background: The person who became Count Dunlop was a highwayman who stole his name and title from the noble Dunlop clan. He murdered the last of the Dunlop men and kept their wives as chattel. All but a few of the house's servants died in the casual violence of the new "lord's" early reign.

The impostor raised four children — three sons, Richard, William and Arthur, and a daughter, Mary Elizabeth. Although the count killed the wife who bore his daughter, something made him spare the girl. She grew up as an untarnished blossom in a house of butchery. He bought every refinement to ensconce her in luxury and blessed innocence.

Dunlop's greed for territory was his downfall: He fought wars against neighbors, forced entire villages into bondage, and his aggressions finally erupted into a border war. His sons fought by him while his daughter remained oblivious. Dunlop's enemies forced him to retreat slowly, and he even ordered his men to destroy his villages rather than see them fall.

The count's fearsome hold over the region ended abruptly one night. As Dunlop surveyed a burning village, a hoarfrost chill pierced him. His sons lay unconscious nearby as an old witch cackled at him from the darkness. The woman marveled at the destruction he had caused and gave him a simple choice: instant death, or eternal life and vengeance against his enemies. The decision was obvious.

When he awoke, the witch woman was gone, but her blood still froze his veins. Dunlop fell back to his keep and Embraced his sons to aid in the castle's defense. The family's newfound powers helped them hold onto their fiefdom, though Mary Elizabeth was exposed to the bloodshed.

Dunlop recognized the advantages of immortality. He exacted ghastly revenge on some enemies, and he simply outlived others. He let Mary Elizabeth grow to womanhood and breed human heirs and murdered the unworthy fathers after the children were born. When Dunlop Embraced his daughter, it was as a genuine act of love, a gift of immortality. The old hag's blood still festered in him, though, and corrupted everything he touched.

Dunlop soon learned the limits of vampiric power when he attacked Ventrue holdings. Mithras appeared alone in Dunlop's private chambers and demanded that the attacks cease. The count hurled himself at the Methuselah, who turned the attack with contemptuous ease, crushing the Gangrel's bones. Mary Elizabeth witnessed the fight and hurled herself at her father's assailant. Mithras decapitated the child with his sword and, turning his attention to the impudent father, warned that such a fate would befall the Gangrel if he did not mend his ways.

Dunlop capitulated to Mithras' reign but has remained a thorn in the side of the London Ventrue. He built a shrine to his daughter, consecrating it with his hatred for Mithras and, in turn, Valerius.

After his first century, Dunlop realized that he was still aging. The old hag's blood was polluted and corrupt. Dunlop inherited that curse — and passed it on to his sons. Years of searching for a cure were fruitless. It was only when he met John Dunsirn of Clan Giovanni that Dunlop realized a remedy for his malady was at hand. All he had to do was pay for it....

Clan: Gangrel

Nature/Demeanor: Bravo/Rebel

Generation: 6th

Embrace: A.D. 963

Apparent Age: Between 45 and 100

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Streetwise 3

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 1, Firearms 3, Herbalism 4, Melee (Ax) 5, Ride 3, Security 2, Stealth 3, Survival 5

Knowledges: Finance 1, Investigation 1, Law 2, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Politics 2

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Fortitude 5, Obfuscate 2, Necromancy 1, Potence 3, Protean 5, Thaumaturgy 1

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 2, Herd 2, Influence 1, Resources 3, Retainers 4

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 1

Willpower: 9

Merit/Flaws: Huge/Premature Aging, Hunted (Werewolves)

Image: A strong, lean wolf of a man, Count Dunlop has a brutal face, with a craggy broken nose. His long red and white beard do not soften these features, but only make them more hoary. His gigantic stature towers over almost everyone, Kindred or kine. Dunlop wears the weathered tartan of a Scots lord three centuries out of date. Although he exercises a control over nature, other Gangrel recognize that animals avoid Dunlop even more than they do other vampires.

Dunlop's expression is haggard and his face is shrunken with age. His skin is like parchment worn tight over bone and sinew, though he can imitate the bright flush of life by expending his blood. His brow is a sunken thicket of black; his eyes glistening emeralds suspended in orbs of ghastly yellow.

Dunlop is a diablerist, but he hides this with alchemical blood potions. (Auspex does not reveal him as a diablerist.)

Roleplaying Hints: Everything falls apart. Life and unlife are both nightmares of decay. You realize this with horror because years pass for you almost as they do for mortals. You were young when you became a vampire, but you have become very old after 900 years. You will be dust within a century.

You sought cures and potions for your curse. Nothing worked; you broke more than a few charlatans over your knee. Vampire blood slowed down the process, but you needed more to stave off the rot. Then you discovered the Necromancers.

They say they can arrest your decay and have shown you proof of their powers. You have stopped aging for a full decade now, and perhaps grown a little younger!

Now the Giovanni keep you on a leash and tease you with a year here or there for your services. They have taught you just enough of their craft that you may see their ghostly servants — at least the ones that they will let you see — and they promise to teach you more. And if the Giovanni ask you to kill for them? Well, you've never been above mayhem and carnage.

The Necromancers instruct you to support a Sabbat raid under the pretense of the Conclave. Struck must have crawled out from under a log, but you will work with him until the Giovanni say otherwise. Yes, you will wage this little war for them — you get to hurt Mithras by killing his lapdog. The Methuselah may be out of reach, but destroying Valerius will even the score for your daughter.

Equipment: Furs; tattered, blood-red tartan; large two-headed ax; pouch of herbs

Dunlop's Pack

Dunlop trusts no one but his childer — Richard, William and Arthur — to protect him. The Gangrel watch over their father like well-trained guard dogs. Dunlop wears faded finery, but he insists that his sons and retainers wear only the newest clothes. Morbid Kindred may find that Dunlop and his retinue look like a funeral march.

Richard, William and Arthur Dunlop

Background: The brothers were each born of a different mother in a house of murder and casual cruelty, and they soon proved themselves to be true Dunlops. Richard murdered his first servant at age five, and William developed a talent for knives. Arthur seemed more interested in art and music than mayhem and thus prompted his father to drown his mother on suspicions of infidelity. He need not have worried; when Arthur was 12, he led his family into a secret cave where they found seven missing servants and peasants carved into an elaborate work of rotting flesh-sculpture. The lady helped their father maintain the family territory by procuring victims and suppressing dissent as they grew to manhood.

When Count Dunlop Embraced his children to repel the family's enemies, the three brothers fought at his side. The count maintained control of the house for the next 50 years through force, but each son tested his power eventually. The count attacked them, staked them and entombed each in turn behind a stone wall. The three sons remained trapped for two centuries while their father grew in power. When Dunlop awoke them at last, he was able to Dominate them fully.

The sons have discovered that they share their father's malady, but have not aged as quickly because of their time in torpor. Count Dunlop has forced his childer into torpor several times over the centuries. The longest period they have been awake has been 80 years, during the 15th century, which make the sons partial contemporaries of the characters. The three have currently been awake for only two decades and are having difficulties adjusting to the modern world.

Clan: Gangrel

Nature/Demeanor (Richard): Bravo/Fanatic

Nature/Demeanor (William): Martyr/Survivor

Nature/Demeanor (Arthur): Deviant/Plotter

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 963

Physical: Strength 3 (Richard 4), Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3 (Richard 4), Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2 (William 3), Intimidation 3, Leadership 3

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Ride 3, Stealth 3, Survival 5 (Arthur 3)

Knowledges: Investigation 1, Linguistics 1, Occult 2 (Arthur 4)

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Fortitude 3 (Richard 5), Obfuscate 1, Potence 2, Protean 4, Thaumaturgy 2 (Arthur)

Backgrounds: Herd 5, Resources 2

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

Humanity: Richard 2, William 4, Arthur 1

Willpower: 5

Flaws: Anachronism (1400s), Premature Aging

Image: Richard, though first born, appears to be the youngest of the three. His father's curse has touched him only slightly; he appears to be in his late 20s. He has curly, reddish-brown hair and a squinting, cynical look. He carries an ax similar to his father's and rarely leaves the count's side.

William, the second son, has remained the middle brother in apparent age. He has straight black hair with white streaks, worn in a ponytail. He wears three knives in whalebone scabbards when among other Kindred.

Arthur, the favored youngest son when mortal, has suffered the curse most of all. He appears to be a wan and sickly man in his mid-50s. He carries a gnarled staff and wears an arcane ruby pendant. He seems to have poetic sensibilities, but of a twisted and sadistic nature. He carries no weapon except the staff.

All three brothers wear dark-burgundy tattans.

Roleplaying Hints:

Richard: You are father's current favorite. You will protect him from your two younger siblings. William, in particular, may pose a problem. The Camarilla are fools and the Sabbat are weak. You distrust your father's Giovanni allies.

William: You bear God's curse for your family's evils. You hate your father and siblings, for they revel in their wickedness. Your father is too strong, though, and you serve him out of fear. If you show weakness, the other two are on you like wolves. You sharpen your knives in anticipation of the night you will be free.

Arthur: Your mother said you were evil before your father killed her, and she was right. You surpassed your father long ago in acts of wanton cruelty. You watch your rapidly decomposing body with morbid curiosity.

Storyteller: Richard is the perfect soldier and obeys his father's commands. William has a fascination with (and many misconceptions about) the Camarilla and is a possible recruit. Arthur is a malicious viper and a prime candidate for the Sabbat's Path of Evil Revelations.

The Sabbat



Doctor Streck

Background: Archibald Streck was born in 13th-century Prussia, a distant relative of the Holy Roman Emperor. The ruling Ventrue of the nation kept a jealous eye on the bright young Junker. The intellectual Streck was the proverbial early Renaissance man in his philosophy and politics, and he was an enthusiastic supporter of the emperor. When Emperor Frederick extended his control from Sicily to Germany, Streck's power rose.

Streck continued to support his lord even when Pope Honorius III excommunicated the king for breaking his vow to go on crusade. Thus, when Frederick finally complied with the Pope's demands, young Archibald Streck went on crusade as well as Frederick's *aide-de-camp*.

The Ventrue decided to add Streck to the clan. His site was to be family patriarch Baron Hardestadt. However, Streck met a very different fate before he returned from the successful Crusades. Hardestadt's nemesis, Marchettus the Bold, attacked and killed the Ventrue ghouls guarding Streck and Embraced the Prussian.

Streck's rigid aristocratic upbringing collapsed under his sire's force of personality and boiling Brujah blood. Streck learned to despise the Ventrue facade of civilization.

Streck is the voice of extreme Sabbat Brujah in the 19th century. His *Fifth Path of the Revolutionary* has virtually become doctrine among the burgeoning anarch population, steering some of them toward the Sabbat. Streck is the mastermind behind the 1848 rebellions. The Camarilla has been resistant to the changes he would make in Kindred and mortal society, so Streck has made whatever deals he can to fulfill his goals of liberty. He has made an alliance of convenience with Count Dunlop and John Dunsirn of Clan Giovanni.

Clan: Brujah *antribu*

Sire: Marchettus the Bold

Nature/Demeanor: Visionary/Rebel

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 1229

Apparent Age: 28

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 6, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee (Hand Scythes) 4, Ride 3, Stealth 5, Survival 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Finance 4, Investigation 3, Law 4, Linguistics 4, Occult 2, Politics 5

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 3, Dominate 1, Fortitude 1, Obfuscate 5, Potence 2, Presence 6

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Influence (Brujah and Anarchist) 5, Resources 3, Status 5

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 5, Morale 5

Path: Power and the Inner Voice 7

Willpower: 8

Merits/Flaws: Unbondable, Ambidextrous/Driving Goal (create chaos)

Image: Streck is a tall, thin intellectual with a subverted aristocratic bearing. He dresses severely in blacks and grays, is clean-shaven and wears his reddish-brown hair in a ponytail. A pair of round, iron-rimmed glasses magnify eyes that reflect either deep thought or fanatical intensity. Streck usually displays a reserved demeanor, but he becomes fiery when he speaks of revolution. As a master orator and rhetorician, his voice can fan embers of dissent into a conflagration of rebellion. At his most maniacal, a rictus-grin spreads across his face as he revels in the anarchy that his presence inspires.

Roleplaying Hints: It had been a good year — with the rebellions in Vienna, Milan and Berlin. And then there was Paris.... The Toreador Justicar reacted sooner than you expected and forced you to flee the city.

She didn't understand your purpose. The attacks aren't about territory, strategy or any of the crimes that the Camarilla ascribes to them. Your efforts are dedicated to chaos and to the power to create fear among your enemies. You know that paranoia and recriminations have sprung up in the wake of each attack.

Yet, you are unsure of your potential in London. There is something monolithic, almost sedentary about England — not like the old days, when you witnessed one faction destroy another. *Feh!* England's vampires have become shopkeepers. Even many Brujah here are

traditionalists who squabble over scraps. The Ventrue have drained the country dry, and now they use it as a weapon to impose their tyrannical brand of order throughout the world.

The Ventrue must be overthrown. The forays you have made this far are minor compared to what's to come. You expect to make House Valerius a funeral pyre. However, you do not trust your "allies" completely. The Giovanni are duplicitous at the best of times, while this Dunlop seems mad. Still, a provocateur must use the tools at hand. You watch your associates carefully and protect your coterie or any true Sabbat if your allies betray you. You do not act directly against fellow Sabbat.

Equipments: One-handed scythes, garrote, inflammatory political leaflets

Storyteller Note: Streck is something of a sibling to any character Embraced by Marchettus the Bold in *The Last Supper*. Streck maintains cool relations with any of his lineage, though. Sabbat characters may know of Streck. They may endorse his philosophy wholeheartedly, or reject it outright. Camarilla Brujah have no idea of any heritage shared with Streck, though he might attempt to use a blood relationship to his advantage if he discovers any connection.



Streck's Pack

Background: Streck's coterie consists of four Sabbat Brujah: Henri Marron, Gottfried Dietz, and Henry and Christopher Taylor, the two English brothers. They have all worked with Streck for over 50 years and are devoted to his cause. Marron was involved in the recent Tzimisce raid on the Toreador Elysium.

Clan: Brujah *antitribu*

Generation: 8th (Dietz is 9th)

Embrace: 1600s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

(The Taylor twins have Strength 4, Charisma 2 and Intelligence 1. Henri Marron has Charisma 4.)

Talents: Acting 2 (Marron), Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3 (The Taylors have Brawl 4), Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 2, Streetwise 3 (The Taylors have Streetwise 4)

Skills: Etiquette 1 (Marron has Etiquette 3), Firearms 3, Melee 2, Music 2, Ride 2, Security 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4 (Dietz), Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 2, Occult 2, Politics 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 1, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 3 (Marron), Potence 3, Presence 3, Protean 2 (The Taylors)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Herd 5, Influence 2, Resources 2, Status 2

Virtues: Callousness 3; Instincts 3 (The Taylors 4), Morale 4

Path: Power and the Inner Voice

Willpower: 6

Image: All four of Streck's associates dress on the low end of the social scale. Dietz dresses in the angular clothes of a Prussian bureaucrat, perhaps 50 years out of date. He always has a tense expression, as though the slightest start will shatter him. Marron tends to wear colorful theatrical garb (some may mistake him for a Toreador artiste). He has an easy air and is gregarious. The Taylor brothers are identical twins who wear the clothes of English dock-area ruffians. They are rough and unshaven, with a brutal quality.

Equipment: Guns, ammunition, printing press

The Giovanni



Ambrogino Giovanni

Background: Ambrogino, the bastard son of a Necromancer from a disreputable branch of the Giovanni family, steeped himself in occult lore at an early age. He was a superlative conjurer even before his Embrace, and he researched necromancy throughout the world. Indeed, Ambrogino cut off his own hand and replaced it with the evil relic, the Preta Shūnyatā, while pursuing the paths of the dead in Tibet. Ambrogino was Embraced by the Cappadocian, Lady Constancia, upon his return to Rome, to help assure Augustus' loyalty to the clan.

Ambrogino was Claudius' rival for Augustus' favor from early unlife. A strong hatred grew between the two young vampires. Claudius was from a better part of the family and was the direct child of Augustus; he considered Ambrogino an outsider by virtue of his bastard birth and Cappadocian sire. Ambrogino believed Claudius to be a bumbler in return.

Ambrogino traveled widely after his Embrace, and he grew in both necromantic lore and in control of a vast merchant empire. His status in Augustus' eyes increased when Ambrogino helped engineer the downfall of Cappadocius, though Claudius played a more public role. Ambrogino was also the hidden hand behind the death of Lord Camden, but he failed to find the Cappadocian's tomb or arcane library.

Ambrogino traveled to London in 1666 to engage the Tremere Mallotte's aid in translating the *Sargon Fragment*. The sorcerer's betrayal and the characters' interference were major setbacks to the lord, who has kept an eye on the elders ever since with the help of wraith spies. He has also launched a major search for Marianna, who he believes possesses further secrets to the *Sargon Fragment*. Ambrogino's

far-flung wraiths have not yet proved to be equal to her capture. However, the death of Claudius Giovanni has raised Ambrogino's position in the Antediluvian's eyes.

In 1847, Ambrogino finally learned the location of Camden's tomb through John Dunsirn and — against the advent of Mithras' possible return — urged Dunsirn and Gillespi into a rapid alliance with the Sabbat to cover his own activities in the city.

Clan: Giovanni

Nature/Demeanor: Conniver/Visionary

Generation: 5th

Embrace: A.D. 1045

Apparent Age: 35

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Leadership 4, Streetwise 4

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 4, Melee 5, Music 3, Ride 4, Security 4, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 5, Investigation 5, Law 4, Linguistics 5, Occult 7, Politics 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 3, Dominate 5, Fortitude 4, Mortis 3, Necromancy 7, Obfuscate 4, Potence 6, Presence 4, Thanatosis 1, Thaumaturgy 6 (Spirit Thaumaturgy 3)

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 5, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 5

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 5, Morale 5

Path: Via Ossis 9

Willpower: 10

Merit: Iron Will

Image: Ambrogino is a slender, powerful-looking man in his mid-30s, with straight, shoulder-length brown hair. He is a curious combination between a contemplative scholar and an imperious king. His expression changes easily among a confident air of quiet power, sincere empathy or overwhelming rage. His dark gray eyes peer out at the world like thunderclouds.

Ambrogino almost always masks his real visage behind *The Mask of a Thousand Faces*; few have seen his true appearance. Those who manage to penetrate his disguise see that he is older than he first appears, perhaps in his early 50s. Even his older form is powerful and vital, however.

He wears a dark-blue greatcoat and thick, black leather gloves. He is known to wear spectacles when in a contemplative mood, but these are an affectation. His left hand is gray and clawed, bearing a startling resemblance to the hands of the Preta Shūnyatā.

Roleplaying Hints: You possess an advantage that few others can rival — you can see the future. Not in full, to be sure — the Oracles of the Restless are enigmatic — but you have little doubt of your destiny.

You pursued paths of power through the dead even as a mortal. You have studied the *Bardo Thodol*, *De Arte Moriendi*, *The Petakhanda* of the Hindus, Swedenborg's *De Coelo et de Inferno* and even that rubbish *The Necronomicon*. You cut your own hand off and replaced it with that of a powerful magus to gain power over the Preta Shūnyatā. All of this before your Embrace!

The blood of Cappadocius closed some doors to you, but it opened others. The old man — Augustus — indulges your eccentricities because you have been valuable to him. If he knew your true motives, you would be as dead as Claudius.

You fear Augustus, but not as much as others do. He may pursue godhead, but he has not obtained it. For all of his power and ancient blood, he is fallible. You are not careless, though. Claudius' death serves as a potent reminder of what happens when one fails an Antediluvian. But then, Claudius was a fool, not worthy of his blood.

This "Capuchin" that Augustus deals with worries you. You have some theories on "its" origin. You are determined to ensure that it does not do to you what it seems to have done to Claudius.

You realize that Claudius' whelp, Marianna, is the key to your failures in obtaining the Sargon Fragment. She has already caused you more trouble than her idiot sire ever did. Perhaps Cappadocius is not as dead as people think.

You have a grudging respect for the vampires who interfered with your actions during the events of the Great Fire. As long as the Capuchin feeds Augustus' paranoia about them, you may continue to gather information about the Fragment for yourself. If the legends are true (and you do not doubt them), Sargon's lore has the power to shake Heaven and Hell to their very foundations.

You prefer not to kill the interfering vampires because they fit into your plans at this point. They unearth valuable information that you can use, like pigs rooting for truffles. They must die, however, if you are to fulfill your destiny — your own rise to divinity.

You play a dangerous game, but the prize is worth any risk. Your only real love is for your child Lucretia. You will take her with you when you descend Hell's dark stair.

That power would already be yours if not for that traitor Mallotte. You brought the Fragment to him, believing he could translate the language, but he was more knowledgeable than his bufoinish manner suggested. You practically handed him the keys to godhead! But he is dead now and the manner of his demise was most instructional. Your quest did not end with him. His was not the only copy of the *Tetragrammaton*, but without his rather specialized knowledge, you are only now beginning to comprehend the artifact's intricacies.

Count Jocaló's interference in your schemes is the only thing that truly frightens you. What that evil top intends is beyond your knowledge, but he will not find you unprepared.

Equipment: Swordcane, two pepperbox revolvers, hand of the Preta Shūnyatā



Lucretia Giovanni

Background: Lucretia was born in the Alpine climes between northern Italy and Switzerland as a product of the Giovanni's wealthiest human family. The great-great-granddaughter of Claudius, her heritage and beauty made her a highly eligible candidate for the Embrace. Several nocturnal suitors approached her, but Claudius drove them away. Many whispered that Claudius himself wanted to bring her into the family.

Despite the great honors intended for her, Lucretia's mortal life was far from settled. The young woman was subjected to whispering voices and went mad. Lucretia's parents consigned her to an asylum. She appeared to recover, but time spent in the madhouse scarred her deeply. Lucretia poisoned her parents on her 21st birthday as reward for the abuses she had suffered, and she took control of the family fortune.

Lucretia's treachery made her more eligible for the Embrace than ever before and attracted the attention of Ambrogino Giovanni. Claudius, now of a mind to procreate, decided that it was time to Embrace the woman. However, indiscretions had brought Claudius disfavor with his father. As Claudius' star was falling, Ambrogino's was rising. Augustus offered Ambrogino a boon and, instead of great wealth or necromantic lore, he requested the right to take Claudius' intended.

Although the move was a political stroke, a genuine bond has developed between child and sire. Lucretia has proved herself to be Ambrogino's most useful and loyal ally. She tracked Marianna to Barcelona (see *The Annexation* prelude). Marianna escaped and, with the aid of the Malkavian Anatole, stole valuable papers from a sorcerer with knowledge of the Soron Fragment. It is unknown what penalty, if any, Lucretia paid for her failure in this matter.

Clan: Giovanni

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Gallant

Generations: 6th

Embrace: A.D. 1205

Apparent Age: 21

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Empathy 4, Intimidation 3, Leadership 3, Seduction 4, Streetwise 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 3, Melee (Sword) 6, Ride 4, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Finance 3, Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Occult 4

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Dominate 4, Fortitude 4, Necromancy 4, Obfuscate 1, Potence 4,

Presence 2, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 4, Herd 2, Influence 3, Resources 4, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 5, Morale 5

Path: Death and the Soul 8

Willpower: 8

Merit/Flaws: Luck/Overconfident

Image: Lucretia is a wiry, athletic woman in her early 20s. She possesses sharp, beautiful features with high cheekbones and arched eyebrows. Long, wavy, light-blond hair with white highlights frames her face. Her eyes are cold-blue, like winter in the Alps, and they gleam with mocking derision. (Her eyes glow like ice when she uses *The Gleam of the Red Eyes*.) Her skin is a soft ivory-white and her crimson lips are in a sardonic smile. Lucretia affects the raiment of a cavalier, wearing a fashionably cut black overcoat with breeches and leather boots. She carries a black sword and strides with a preternatural grace.

Roleplaying Hints: You were 21 when you discovered the liberating power of madness — a lesson you learned just before you crossed the threshold of immortality. Your madness manifests as an intermittent death wish. You take terrible risks in order to fulfill your desires. You did not care for Claudius, but Ambrogino understands your needs. You admire him for his power, intellect and ambition. He is an avenue to great power and you will reap the fruits of his labors.

Your only concern is that your sire doesn't fear Augustus enough. Few things disturb you, but the Ancient One sends a chill of fear through your undead body.

You respect competent enemies, especially if they display a sense of style or panache. This respect may even develop into a warped affection for long-term foes.

You use your beauty to advance yourself within the clan. You have wrapped two elders around your finger. Not even your sire is resistant to your charms.

Equipment: Straight black broadsword



Gillespi Giovanni

Background: Gillespi managed far-flung European affairs for Clan Giovanni. His keen business acumen, family connections and willingness to pursue business opportunities in London earned him the Embrace.

Gillespi was successful in London for a time, mostly at the expense of the local Camarilla. After the Great Fire, business opportunities for the Giovanni turned sour. Gillespi's superiors ordered him to dissolve most of his interests and remain in the London as a secret operative.

Gillespi has remained in that position for almost two centuries, and he has hidden his tracks remarkably well. He has watched his financial reserves dwindle as well. He looks to Ambrogino to revive his fortunes and elevate him to his former status.

Clan: Giovanni

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Architect

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 1435

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Haven: Dog Island Mansion

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Security 3, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 4, Investigation 3, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Occult 3, Politics 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 1, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Necromancy 3, Potence 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Herd 3, Influence 1, Resources 3, Retainers 3, Status 2

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 2, Courage 3

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 7

Image: Gillespi was once a handsome man in his mid-20s. He appears much older now, having grown tired of his sequestered lifestyle and of vampiric existence itself. His spirit has been broken by the neglect of his family.

Roleplaying Hints: Augustus has been listening to that creature, the Capuchin, again, which means someone is going to die. You hope it's Valerius, but you feel the noose tightening around your neck.

You always get the shit work and your current, laborious assignment stinks like Uncle Antonio. Then there's that bastard Dunsirn; you have no idea how he got into the family. He's trying to damage your reputation to increase his standing. You suppose you'll have to take care of the Scottish shit if things go too far. He already has Sabbat sniffing around your place, as well as that hulking Gangrel, Dunlop. It looks like 1666 all over again.

Ambrogino pays you well for this shit duty, but no amount of money (heresy for a Giovanni, you know) is worth all of this. You're going back to Rome where it's safe — if you survive.

Equipment: Rusty sword, pistol, worn merchant clothes, tarnished gold



John Dunsirn

Background: John was one of the first members of the cannibalistic Dunsirn clan to be Embraced when the Giovanni inducted the family. John's occult talents and exceptional perversions acquired him respect among the Giovanni. He sought out the final resting place of Lord Camden, Mirhraz' previous chamberlain, to increase his necromantic and family power. Dunsirn discovered the crypt, but he didn't have the resources to explore it fully, so he sold his discovery to Ambrogino.

Dunsirn has allied himself with the coming Sabbat attack at Ambrogino's request, but he actually hopes to further his own influence by doing so.

Clan: Giovanni (Dunsirn Family)

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Traditionalist

Generation: 8th

Embrace: A.D. 1650

Apparent Age: 30

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Music 1, Ride 2, Security 3, Stealth 3, Torture 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Finance 4, Investigation 5, Law 3, Linguistics 1, Occult 4, Science (Chemistry) 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Necromancy 3, Obfuscate 1, Potence 3, Thaumaturgy 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Herd 5, Influence 2, Resources 4, Retainers 4

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 3, Morale 3

Path: Death and the Soul

Willpower: 7

Merits/Flaws: Corporate Ties, Criminal Ties, Eat Food (Human flesh)/Overconfident

Image: John Dunsirn is a small, pleasant-looking man in his mid-30s. He has neatly groomed brown hair, cut short to follow human trends. He wears a black Oxford Street cloak and carries a thick wooden cane with a bore's head at the top.

He is Scottish, but Dunsirn makes every attempt to blend in with London culture. His one concession to his Scottish heritage is a wool scarf that bears a dark-red tartan with green and yellow stripes.

Roleplaying Hints: Pleasure before business — first, last and always. You love visiting London. Diversions and perversions abound to sate your admittedly jaded — no, rarefied — palate. The women here are intelligent, sophisticated and ob-*so*-trusting. An idyllic ride through the park with a charming lady, the theater where you may feed your souls, and then back to your haven where you may satisfy your "baser" appetites. You can even fit in a round of night-golf at the club if you are lucky.

You consider your time in London to be a "businessman's holiday," and you use any excuse to satisfy your perversions. Your doltish servant Montgomery has some taste at least, and Catherine Baker has her charms — as a morsel. You intend to take your time courting, corrupting and ultimately consuming her once your work here is done. You haven't gotten where you are by neglecting business.

Equipment: Smart clothes, swordcane, various chemicals, four ghoul guards

Interlude (1848-1882)

Once characters have opened and investigated Camden's crypt, they undoubtedly discover that it will be some time before they may pursue their current leads to the *Sargon Fragment*. Indeed, not even Ambrogino is capable of activating the map that Camden protected with Cappadocian secrets. Therefore, the characters may return to Valerius' manor in 34 years, at the appointed time in 1882, to witness the projection of the map of Lazarus' haven — the supposed resting place of insight into the *Fragment*.

Characters might expect Ambrogino to turn up at that time as well if he got so far as to read Camden's letter. He does not, though. He suspects, rightfully so, that he has played his hand in London and that it is suicide to return at an appointed time — when all the Camarilla vampires in the world could await him.

Ambrogino pursues other leads instead. Namely, he continues his hunt for Marianna, who he believes can help him master the *Sargon Fragment*.

Of course, all of this means that down-time occurs between significant chapters in this chronicle. The characters may use it to continue their research into the Giovanni, into the arcane or into the *Fragment*. Each player should explain in general what his character does over the next three decades. You can use that information as the basis for further stories, or you can allow characters to simply improve their already formidable abilities. Each player gains five freebie points to spend on her character, in addition to whatever experience points are gained for surviving the events of Book One.

Characters may decide to research Egypt in anticipation of traveling there (or they might actually go there to get to know the place and develop an advantage over the Giovanni). You must decide what elements of Book Two that characters can learn by its outset.

The 19th Century

As the century progresses, changes occur faster than ever before. Even the most modern Kindred may have difficulty keeping up with the world's transformations. The American Civil War in the 1860s marks the advent of modern warfare and leaves over a million dead. Slavery falls into disrepute throughout most of the Western world. Technological advances such as photography change the way humans perceive the world, and they cause a new set of problems for Lasombra. The Scientific and Industrial Revolutions continue unabated, excising belief in the supernatural from the human psyche (at least in industrialized countries).

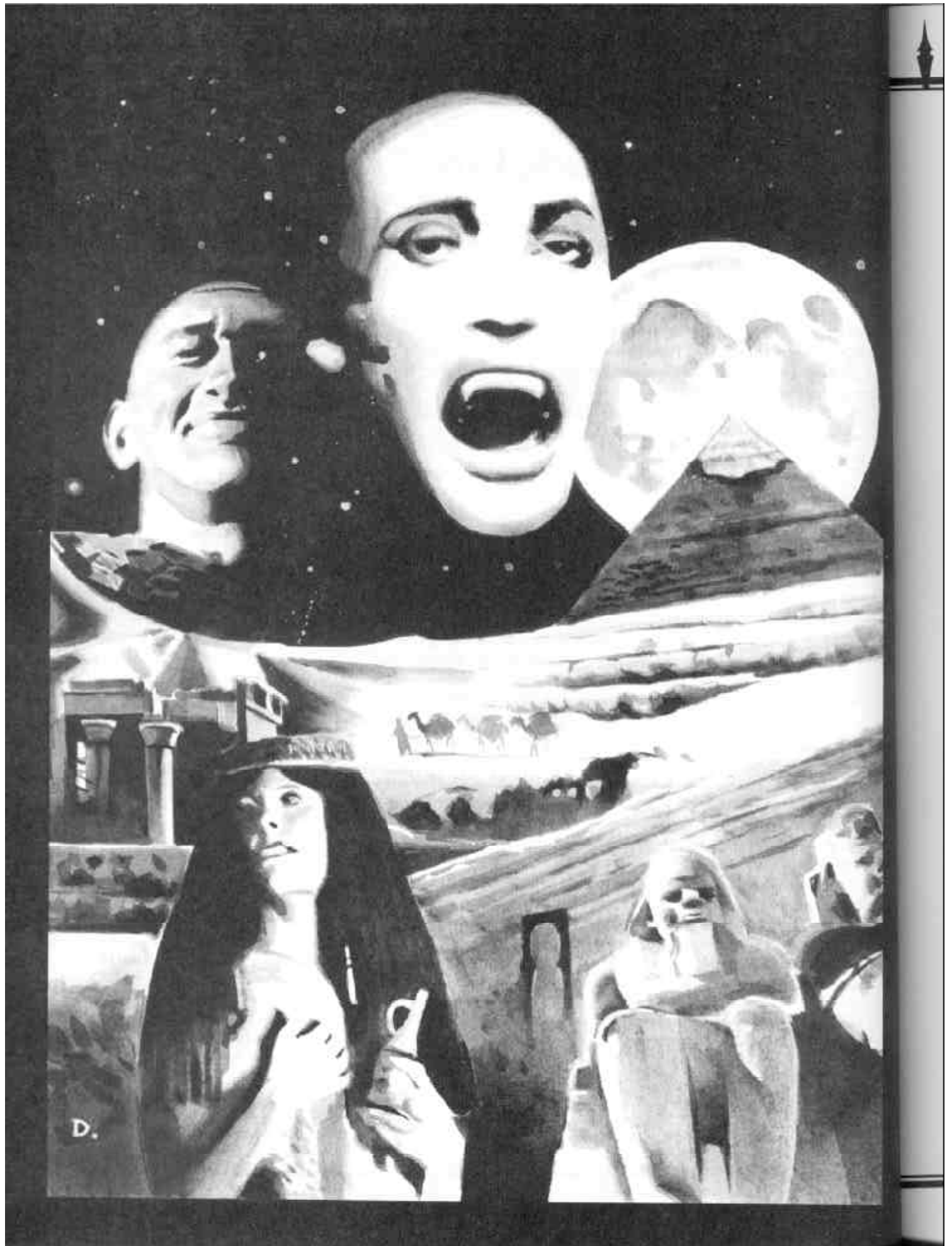
Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), and subsequent works, all cause a widespread sensation. These works spread beyond the scientific community and, to many, contradict millennium-old religious truths. Kindred and line see God tossed off His throne in another blow against faith and "irrationality."

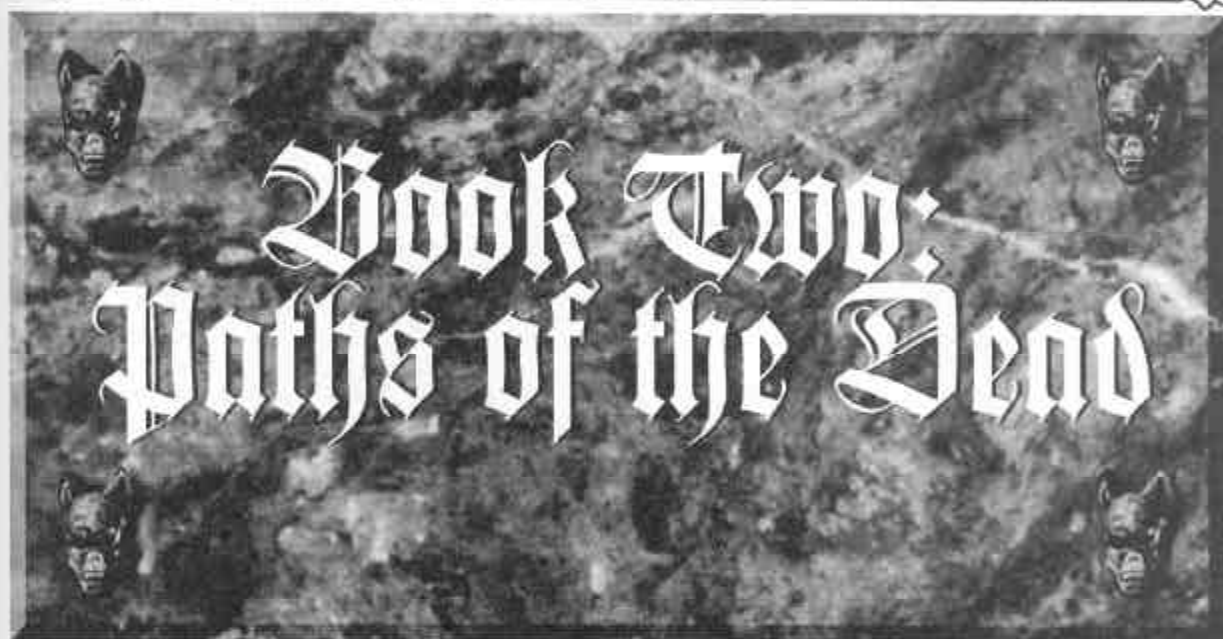
The internal combustion engine is already in use by 1882, and the first automobile is four years away. Trans-Atlantic cables are laid, thus allowing for almost instantaneous communication between Europe and North America. Inventions such as the telephone, the light bulb and the phonograph have come about, but they are not widely in use.

And yet, in many other parts of the world, things have scarcely changed since the characters' Embrace during the Renaissance.

The characters clash with the Giovanni again in this era. Camarilla characters may sway Kindred opinion against the Necromancers. If the Giovanni attack on the characters aren't evidence against the Romans; their apparent alliance with the Sabbat in London, if not in other places, sways opinion against the clan. (Creating Sabbat consensus against the Giovanni is far more difficult.)

The characters probably increased their skill with Japheth's cloaks, as well. They can now see ghosts, if only faintly. They can also detect the presence of wraiths nearby (within 15 yards) with only a successful Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 6) — *Auspex* is not required. One success alerts a character to a ghostly presence. Two successes gives an approximate sense of direction and indicates how many wraiths are in the area. A character with three successes sees a faint outline. Four successes let a character see details of apparitions.





Book Two: Paths of the Dead

My tongue goes to the Secretary of the Dead to tell the corpses, "I'm sorry, fellows, the killing was just one of those things difficult to pre-visualize — like a cow say, getting hit by lightning."

— Galway Kinnell, *The Book of Nightmares*

Synopsis

Events in London in 1848 motivate characters to travel to Egypt decades later to continue their search for the *Sargyn* Fragment — or to stop the Giovanni from claiming it and achieving divine power. Several leads gained in London point to Egypt:

- The letter left by the Cappadocian Camden instructs intruders upon his crypt to journey to Egypt to find Lazarus' haven and to keep the secrets hidden there from the murderous Giovanni.

- Durga Syn's vision showed the characters that their next fateful move in pursuit of the *Fragment* would take them to desert lands.

- Marianna has apparently fled England for Egypt in her ongoing search for the *Fragment*.

- If the characters return to Camden's tomb in 1882 (see below), they witness the projection of a diagram of what appears to be a church of both Christian and Moslem design, which might be found in Egypt — the very land where all other leads to the *Sargyn* Fragment point.

The characters learn that traveling to Egypt is easy, but trying to accomplish their characters' goals there is deadly. The Giovanni have agents abroad in search of Marianna and the *Fragment*. Ambrogino has sent a favored student — Rosaura Rossellini — and her brother Baldesar to the desert to find the rogue child. After his activities in London, Ambrogino decides to pursue the *Sargyn* Fragment more covertly for a while, to avoid bringing attention to himself from vampires abroad (particularly the characters), and specifically from Augustus. He, therefore, operates from the shadows in Book Two. However, the Rossellinis' and the characters' shared pursuit brings them into direct conflict.

And yet, the rival vampires may realize that they can survive only by working together. Their hunt for Marianna, Lazarus' lair and the *Fragment* brings them all into the hands of the Setites. The foreigners must play the Serpents' games if they hope to see another night and complete their quest — to win the means to apotheosis.

Theme

The theme of Book Two is sacrifice — what characters are prepared to give up for their goals or for the greater good throughout this story. The Camarilla of Egypt sacrifice many of the sect's traditional precepts in order to keep the peace among a wide variety of clans and Cainite philosophies. Egypt's Camarilla also acknowledges its feeble hold on the reigns of power and is willing to compromise its values, such as overlooking incursions by Setites, to retain control.

The characters' Giovanni enemies in this chapter must give of themselves for their master Ambrogino. The Necromancer pawns must endure the tortures of the desert to capture Marianna. If they fail to claim their prize, they make their sacrifice for naught — and perhaps even lose their own lives to their angry lord.

Marianna sacrifices herself constantly in an ongoing effort to undermine Giovanni plans to achieve apotheosis. Her very existence is offered up for the greater good.

Finally, the characters must decide what their absolute values are. Once they arrive in the desert haven of the Setites, these values are tested rigorously. Can the characters resist personal temptations for power, knowledge or lust in order to fulfill their goal of defeating the Giovanni? Or are the characters weak and do they fail to resist Setite seduction, losing everything they have strove for since their Embrace?

You can introduce this theme into your games by confronting characters constantly with moral dilemmas, and by asking players what actions they choose. Do characters continue their pursuit of the *Sargon Fragment* or do they take opportunities to gain personal power or satisfaction? Will characters feed on desirable Setite vessels or abstain in order to remain pure? Do characters risk losing face in their sects to fulfill higher ideals?

If a situation ever arises in which characters could simply be offered information or something else that they desire, enforce this story's theme and make a moral question of the situation. Make the players choose between what their characters need and what their characters want. Which of the two will be sacrificed?

Mood

The mood of Book Two is isolation. The characters journey to Egypt, where they soon learn that any American or European ways are out of place in the desert country. The Camarilla and Sabbat there do not abide by Traditions or rules as vampires of most "civilized" places do. Camarilla, Sabbat and even Setite vampires wander city streets almost without restriction. Characters who rely on their status in a sect discover that they have little clout in places such as Cairo and Alexandria, and they feel isolated as a result.

The vast desert also reminds even powerful vampire elders of their ultimate vulnerability in the world. No amount of blood can preserve an undead lord indefinitely in the desert. The endless landscape and blazing sun make simple existence a challenge and force the characters to realize how truly alone they are. Not even the company of Setite hosts is reassuring because the Serpents have their own plans for the characters, and the elders have no one to save them but themselves.

To create this insular mood, stage your game sessions in a big room and at a large table. Space players far apart and make them share tools such as paper, pencils and dice. The distance between players — their remoteness — soon becomes awkward, then frustrating, and perhaps even unnerving. This is the same range of emotions that their isolated characters experience.

London Prelude (February, 1882)

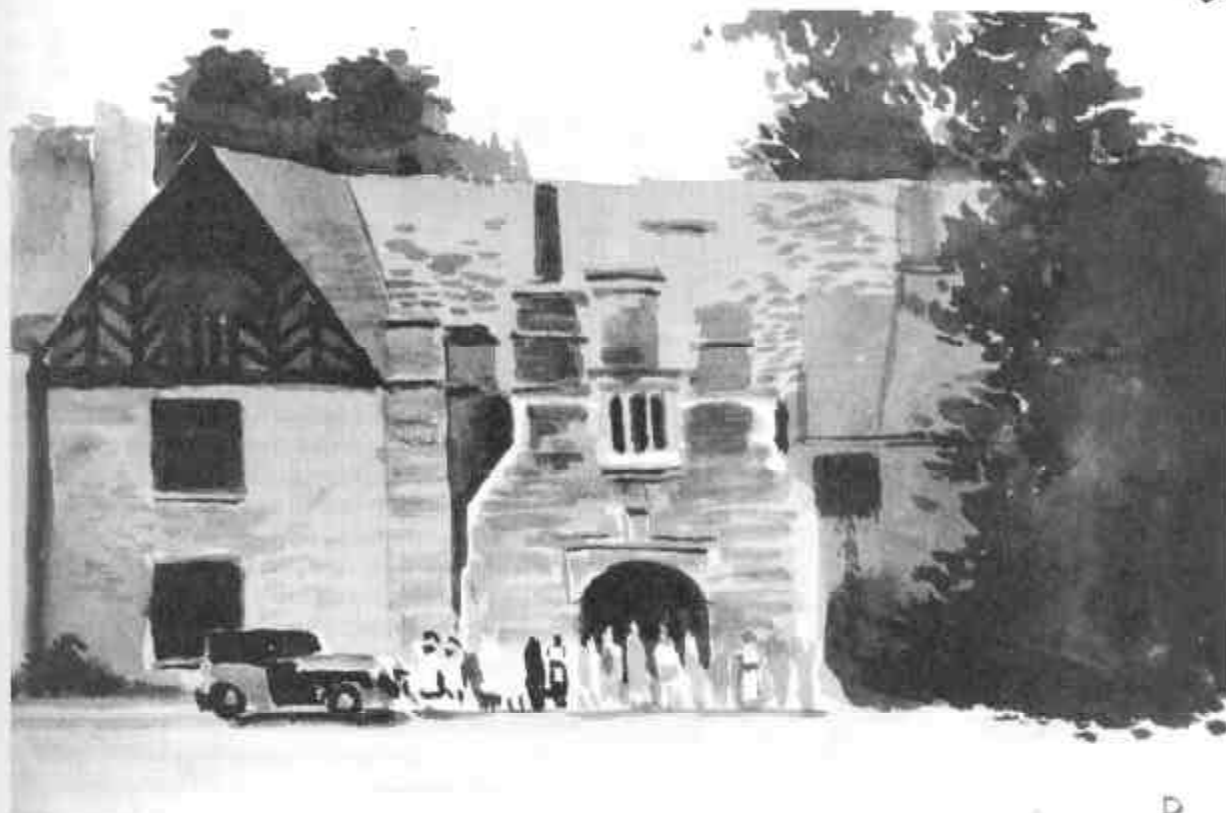
After the characters search Camden's crypt and read his letter in 1848, they realize that Camden's "map" last appeared in 1840 and will reappear next in February of 1882; that means returning to London and the presiding chamberlain's mansion, whether by invitation or stealth. If the characters left London under good terms with the local Camarilla, they are undoubtedly welcomed back to witness Camden's map. Valerius is still indebted to the characters if he is still chamberlain. And Lady Anne Bowesley, if she is in power, accepts the characters into her home out of respect for their past deeds.

Sabbat characters or those who left London on bad terms years ago must enter Camden's crypt without permission. Protection of the crypt has declined over the years, and characters may use *Auspex* to cast their senses into the mansion and tomb, or use *Obfuscate*, *Obtenebration* or simply stealth to gain access to the crypt.

No matter how the characters try to gain entry to Camden's tomb, they must see it now or wait until 1924, when it appears again.

The night the characters arrive at the chamberlain's mansion is foggy and overcast. However, stars seem to shine so brightly that they pierce even the fog. The starlight penetrates the dark cracks and fissures of the Ventrue manor and is reflected downward by Camden's ingenious system of mirrors. The crystals in the ceiling of Camden's tomb glow blue; their faces sparkle and then hone the starlight into beams that draw a picture on Camden's sarcophagus.

The image is of a Christian church in a cruciform shape, with a nave and transept. The appearance of columns suggests Moorish influence in the architecture. There



is clearly a staircase in one corner, which may serve as an entrance. A particularly bright spot of light at one end of the transept hints at something of importance there — but there's no telling what without finding the church itself.

The image fades after a few moments as the crystals in the ceiling dim. Characters may have made an illustration of the diagram or committed it to memory. The map does them no good, however, without a point of reference by which to find this church. Other evidence suggests that Lazarus' tomb is somewhere in Egypt, but where? It's a big, barren country. The characters may explore whatever avenues of inquiry that they can think of to locate this church, but they must ultimately travel to Egypt and, once there, hope to track the place down.

Travel

Ocean travel has undergone startling progress in the 40 years since the events in London. Steam engines and self-propelled ships have largely replaced the sail and paddle wheel. Ships are now larger, safer and more maneuverable. The *Great Eastern*, the largest ship of the age, carries a crew of 400 and up to 4,000 passengers. Opulent state rooms are increasingly in vogue; comfort-conscious Kindred can travel to Egypt in high style.

Yet, many ships still store sails to protect against engine failure and most ships are still made of wood, despite the recent development of ironclads.

When characters arrive in Egypt, they realize how little some parts of the world have changed in 400 years. The railroads that are now ubiquitous to Europe and the United States do not exist in Egypt. Overland travel is still by horse, camel, mule or often by foot. Travel up and down the Nile is by barge.

Travel in Egypt presents a host of difficulties for Kindred. Where do they sleep by day? Where can they find retainers on which they can rely? What is the danger of banditry? How quickly might the vampires' true natures become known, and what superstitions do the locals have about the undead? These are considerations that you, as Storyteller, should present to players, thus forcing them to make arrangements for their characters' transportation and protection.



Egyptian History (Kindred and Kine)

Egypt is one of the original centers of vampiric society and a valued prize since antiquity, but it is still an enigma to even the most knowledgeable of Kindred. Most vampire scholars believe that two brothers, Osiris and Set, battled each other for supremacy of Egypt before recorded history. Both were Embraced by ancient vampires of Antediluvian, or even more potent, blood. Osiris ruled Egypt while Set lived for a time in the Second City, acquiring dark lore. Set eventually killed his brother, though Osiris' memory lived on for centuries through various human and vampire cults. Set then learned to rule secretly through human pawns and may have been the force behind Pharaoh Menes' unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

A line of 30 human dynasties ruled Egypt on Set's behalf for three millennia. A seemingly ageless civilization was created, largely untouched by the outside world. Set's control was contested, though; Setites and the remaining followers of Horus vied for true power. Their struggle ended in 332 B.C. with the invasion by Alexander the Great. Toreador arrived with Greek invaders and ruled the land for 300 years. The Toreador, in turn, lost power to Roman Ventrue, only to regain it when the Roman capital shifted from Italy to Constantinople. Finally, Assamites usurped Greek power in the seventh century, and Egypt's capital was moved to Cairo in the 10th century.

The Ventrue, Toreador, Assamites and Setites all battled each other through various human pawns during the Crusades and hoped to gain final control of the desert nation. The Seljuk warrior, Salah ad-Din, finally seized Cairo with the aid of Mamluk mercenaries (former Turkish slaves). A Mamluk vampire named Mukhtar Bey survived a Setite attack on his Ventrue mentor and became ruler of Cairo — and the first and only Caitiff prince of a major city.

Egypt became a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, and — with a brief interlude during Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of 1798 — remained under Ottoman rule. Until recently, that is.

1882

British imperial expansion has brought Egypt under English rule. In the 1870s, Europe began a new era of colonization. Perhaps the greatest event to occur in this period was the opening of the Suez Canal by Napoleon III. The French built the canal, but the insolvency of the Khedive (viceroy) of Egypt paved the way for English intervention. Ismail Pasha ruled under the suzerainty of the

Sultan of Turkey and buried Egypt under a mountain of debt. The khedive defaulted on £4,000,000 in loans, allowing English Prime Minister Disraeli to acquire Egyptian shares in the Suez Canal Company. However, the worsening Egyptian economy put England's investment at risk, and European powers urged the Turkish sultan to replace the khedive.

This outside intervention resulted in an armed insurrection led by a charismatic Egyptian named Arabi. His rebellion was primarily against the Turkish sultan, but France and England supported Turkish authority.

No hostilities take place against English or French forces in Egypt in the first half of 1882, although English forces increase to protect the empire's investment. Tensions rise as the year progresses, though. France and Britain blockade the port city of Alexandria, which leads to an increase in anti-European sentiment. Egyptian nationals murder 50 Europeans; the British bombarded Alexandria forts in retaliation. On September 13, 1882, the British army under General Wolseley defeats Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir (near Cairo), thus putting Great Britain in control of Egypt.

The reception that characters receive in Egypt varies greatly depending on the time of year at which they arrive. They may dock before the outbreak of hostilities, or after the bombardment of Alexandria and during hostility against Europeans that occurs in the latter half of the year.

Egyptians are cool toward foreigners, but not inhospitable — in the first half of the year, that is. The native populace is aggressive toward "European infidels" after the bombardment, by harassing the characters' entourage if not attacking it outright. British authorities are constantly suspicious of the native "fellahin swine" and of Continental Europeans, especially Germans, who are their European competitors in the colonial race. However, the British are quick to warn Europeans or Americans to be wary of the natives, and the British seek to help any foreigners at whom the Egyptian people lash out.

Geography

Egypt is in Northeast Africa. Ottoman-ruled Libya borders the country to the west, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan lies to the south. The Mediterranean Sea is off the northern coast; the Red Sea lines the eastern coast.

Egypt consists of four main regions: The Nile Valley and Delta, the Eastern Desert, the Western Desert, and the Sinai. The Nile Delta is a fertile region: It boasts lush farmlands that extend about a hundred miles into the interior. Cairo, the nation's capital, is at the southernmost end of the delta. Almost all of the country's population lives in Cairo or along the Nile banks, while most of the remainder resides in Alexandria or along the newly built Suez Canal. The majority of foreign Kindred choose to live

in these regions as well, ceding the interior to the Lupines, Setites and whatever other horrors live beneath the shifting sands.

The Nile River runs the entire length of the country — 700 miles — into the Sudan below. Five hard reefs of black igneous stone (cataracts) impede the Egyptian Nile's progress southward, therefore, churning the river into turbulent rapids at each reef. There are five such rapids, but the events of this story do not bring the characters any farther south than the first cataract.

The Eastern Desert is part of the Sahara. The Western Desert is the nation's most barren region, with virtually no human settlements in the desert's southern latitudes. Not even Setites venture into this region, and some Kindred scholars speculate that it is the resting place of the legendary Second City. Few have dared to put this theory to the test, and fewer still have returned.

The Sinai Peninsula is a rocky plateau of burning desert that connects Egypt to the Ottoman-controlled Holy Lands beyond. Kindred rarely go here, either, but some do because of its holy aura and its large Lupine population.

Cairo

The characters probably disembark from the international travels at Cairo. It's the largest city in the country and probably the best place to get information and to make preparations for the next stage of their journey.

The elders must decide how to proceed, beyond making the obvious arrangements for accommodations. Cairo is nominally a Camarilla outpost in a Setite desert. The city is controlled by a Caitiff prince, but Mukhtar Bey upholds the Traditions (at least in theory), and demands that newcomers announce themselves. Even if characters know little of Cairo other than that it is a Camarilla city, they can probably expect to follow sect rules.

Of course, Sabbat characters need do nothing of the sort. There aren't many Sabbat in Cairo, though, so they have few leads to follow (see Character Contacts). Ironically, the Prince of Cairo is fair-minded; Sabbat characters who dare approach him are received on friendly terms.

Mukhtar Bey (Prince of Cairo)

The idea of a Caitiff prince offends many Camarilla vampires, perhaps even the characters. They may have learned to overcome this aversion if they have visited the prince on previous expeditions to Egypt (to learn more about the country before 1882, perhaps). Polite conversation about Mukhtar Bey describes him as the "Mamluk" prince of Cairo; the city's Camarilla vampires



rarely mention the word "Caitiff." If the characters are high-ranking officials in the Camarilla, the prince treats them as such.

Mukhtar Bey has agents throughout the city. They watch primarily for Setite incursions, but they also keep an eye out for newcomer vampires or those who have not announced themselves. Camarilla or Sabbat characters may spot these sentries and approach them with the intent of arranging a meeting with the prince, or they may be spotted and "advised" to present themselves. The prince is not as opposed to Sabbat vampires as European leaders are, and he is prepared to welcome them as readily as he is to peaceable Camarilla Kindred. Sabbat characters who have done any research into Egyptian vampires have heard of Mukhtar Bey's egalitarian rule, and they may recognize him as a source of information and support as long as they follow the Camarilla prince's rules — a striking contrast to the reigns of European rulers.

Mukhtar Bey maintains an opulent and well-fortified haven on a hill overlooking the Nile and much of the city. His home exudes wealth and quiet taste. If the characters have visited Cairo before and sent messages ahead announcing their arrival, they receive a polite invitation to dine with the prince. Visitors must remove their shoes before entering his home (as is custom in most Egyptian homes), and it's considered courteous to bring a small gift for the host. (An appropriate Area Knowledge or Lore roll, difficulty 4, is required to know these factors.)

Mukhtar Bey is a formidable warrior who dresses in Western finery with an Egyptian flair. His symbol of office is a stout wooden cane with an ibis' head. A blind female vampire wearing a plain, white dress, and a small Mamluk boy are present throughout any meeting between foreign vampires and the prince.

Mukhtar Bey asks the characters politely about their business. He has no interest in any outside feuds they have with the Giovanni, and he does not offer information that he suspects will be used to harm another vampire in his city. The characters are under the prince's protection while they're in Cairo, but not if their own actions get them into trouble.

The prince warns the characters not to unnecessarily disturb the city's Caitiff, anarchists or any of the other groups that Europeans might consider "scum." He makes room for vampires of almost all kinds — until they prove incapable of respecting the peace. The only Cainites who are officially not permitted in the city are Setites, who have been the traditional enemies of the city for centuries. And yet, even the Serpents make forays into Cairo.

The characters are free to enter and remain in the city as long as they respect these rules. Those who cause problems are hunted by the prince's sentries. Troublemakers are confronted by as many as a dozen vampire agents. They seek to capture disruptive vampires for presentation before

Mukhtar Bey, who orders the unruly to leave the city by ship immediately. Those who refuse or who defy their escort are staked and stowed away on board a ship bound for distant lands.

The prince has heard legends of Lazarus and knows that the Cappadocians had a history in Egypt, but he offers few details or facts about their past activities. "These things are best left alone," he explains. The Lamia, mentioned in Camden's letter, are also unknown to the prince.

Mukhtar Bey confesses to sightings of a woman in the city who fits Marianna's description. Indeed, she has been spotted sporadically over a period of decades. The woman has supposedly never presented herself to the prince, nor have his sentries ever been able to catch her.

Characters who ask for places to gather more information on their quest are directed to a tavern, The Impetigo, in the city's dock region.

Character Contacts

Camarilla Kindred or impersonators may — through study of the country, clan connections or information gained from the Camarilla Founders — learn of Egypt's Lord Waldo Harrington of Clan Ventrue. Harrington is a high-ranking member of the sect, which was established in Egypt to oversee Ventrue interests in the country. He maintains a Cairo townhouse and a larger haven that is five miles north of the city. Harrington appears to be a good-humored old man with a friendly face. Characters do well to look beyond that facade, though, and question his motives in giving them any kind of aid.

The lord maintains contacts with other Camarilla vampires in the city and may write a letter of introduction to Princess Ionna of Alexandria if the characters travel to that city. Harrington wants information in return for every favor, and he accepts only what he doesn't already know. Characters can reveal things that they know about vampires and clans across the world. If Harrington can't use a piece of information to strengthen his position in Cairo, he accepts any data that improves his standing among the Ventrue as a whole.

If the characters admit to searching for Lazarus' tomb or mention journeying into the desert, the lord warns them about the Serites and Lupines who, according to him, are prevalent.

Harrington knows less than nothing about Lazarus' tomb, lore on the subject, or how the Serites may be associated with it. He has never heard of the Lamia or Marianna but is happy to be informed about them.





Egypt has almost nothing in the way of a Sabbat presence. However, characters who have researched Sabbat connections in Cairo, perhaps through insurrectionists against the Camarilla, have learned of Aldema. He is a Moor of Clan Lasombra who exports various curios and *objets d'art*. Aldema's actual role in the city is to spy on the Camarilla and Setites, though he has no intention of risking his neck. He helps fellow Sabbat by providing herds and transportation, but only if characters can offer or promise information about Camarilla or Setite activities.

Aldema knows nothing about Lazarus or any legends related to the historical figure.

Harrington or Aldema explains that the Setites keep a low profile in the city, but that they largely come and go as they please. Harrington claims there is no formal avenue of dialogue with them. Prodding draws the words "Fire Court" from him, but no explanation of what that phrase means. Aldema volunteers this name up front, describing it as the desert haven of the Serpents.

Both men can also relate that the Giovanni have an operation in the city (maybe on the docks), but neither knows its exact location. Information might be available at the Impetigo, a known dockside hangout for riffraff. Kindred and kine. Aldema has heard a rumor that someone murdered an important Giovanni in the past month, but he knows little more. Either man shares that there is a Nosferatu (name unknown) who skulks north of the city and who trades in dark secrets. Harrington and Aldema would both like to know what the characters learn from this Nosferatu, if anything.

The Street

The characters have some success if they search for information on Cairo's streets. (European characters should maintain a low profile if they wish to avoid the notice of Egyptian nationalists.) Cairo's Kindred population is large, befitting a city of its size, and the characters meet a wide array of vampires. None has heard of Lazarus' tomb; any such inquiries elicit blank stares.

Successful Area Lore or appropriate sect Lore rolls (difficulty 6) reveal that the Cairo police are partially under the control of a Setite elder named Glycon (see The Fire Court). Anything that draws police attention attracts his eye as well.

A Nosferatu character may meet one of his few fellow clan members in the city. The most accessible of them is a Bedouin woman with a shattered cranium. A large wound severs hair, scalp and skull neatly down the middle, and black blood oozes down her face. She was Embraced shortly after receiving the wound, and her injury seems to have given her two personalities. The woman has forgotten her real name, but she has become something of a social chameleon; she uses Mask of the Thousand Faces to mimic the voice and appearance of a character who speaks with her, but she denies copying anyone.

The woman breaks into stories of her childhood if she isn't kept on track, but she is receptive to those who seem to take an interest in her comfort and well-being.

The Nosferatu has not specifically studied the Giovanni. She can confirm that they have been chasing a young woman throughout the city. The description that the woman gives bears a striking resemblance to Marianna. The Nosferatu suspects that the Giovanni have captured the stranger, but she then breaks into a different voice that demands that the woman escaped west, toward Alexandria. The Bedouin doesn't know where the Giovanni hide but suggests a dockside bar, the *Impetigo*, as a possible listening place.

The Impetigo

The *Impetigo* is a musty, raucous tavern in the busiest part of Cairo's docks, and it remains open into the late hours of the night. The docks are international territory and the tavern serves liquor (uncommon in Egypt). The clientele is a mixture of sailors, local toughs, British soldiers and human flotsam from a hundred ports of call. There are a number of English, French and American sailors here. A few men dance drunkenly to the music of an old black shipmate, and there are several card games in progress. A young brother and sister help their harried father tend bar. The local guard breaks up nightly fights and rounds up those who are too drunk to go home.

One such fight breaks out as the characters enter. A card game turns brutal and a sailor shouts insults at a tall black man, accusing him of cheating. The black man wears a suit that is the current fashion in the United States. He remains seated and shows little sign of being insulted; he tells the sailor to sit down and shut up before he gets into trouble. The man takes a drunken swing at the American, who dodges the blow easily, grabs the sailor by the collar and hurls him half the length of the bar. The sailor lies moaning in the wreckage of a broken table. A few people turn around, but it is obvious that this is not a fight they want.

Use of *Auspex* confirms that the black man is the only vampire in the bar. He doesn't give the characters a second glance unless they approach him. Then he introduces himself as Hank Biggs. The vampire knows the city and its vampire population, and he is prepared to offer information or to show elders around — for a price (£100 to £3,000, depending on what they want him to do). His fee doubles if characters are arrogant or if they try to lord over him.

If asked, Biggs reveals that there are Giovanni in the area and that they are "thick as thieves" with a local Brujah of his acquaintance. He continues to say that the Giovanni Cairo call themselves "Ghiberti." He knows that some "crazy Italian lady" killed the clan's local leader and that the Giovanni are out for blood. Biggs has also heard rumors that some Necromancer bigwigs are in the city, but he does not know if there's a connection between these events. The

Giovanni operate a brothel and haven in the northern suburbs of the city. Biggs shows the characters the way if they wish.

It soon becomes apparent that Biggs is an American idealist — charming, if somewhat naive.

Hank Biggs

Hank Biggs was an escaped Louisiana slave who became involved in the Underground Railroad and helped others escape to freedom. An unknown vampire bestowed the gift of *Caine* upon him as a reward for his efforts. Biggs briefly fell in with a pack of Louisiana Gangrel, and died with some Union Brujah during the War Between the States. He lost faith in the *Camarilla*, though; it seemed as corrupt an institution as the one he had escaped.

The Caitiff drifted to Egypt through circumstance. He took to Mukhtar Bey's egalitarian rule and has remained in the city ever since. Biggs has some useful information about the Kindred of Cairo. The characters may notice with some amusement that, like other young Kindred, he strives to hang onto his humanity and maintain mortal friends.

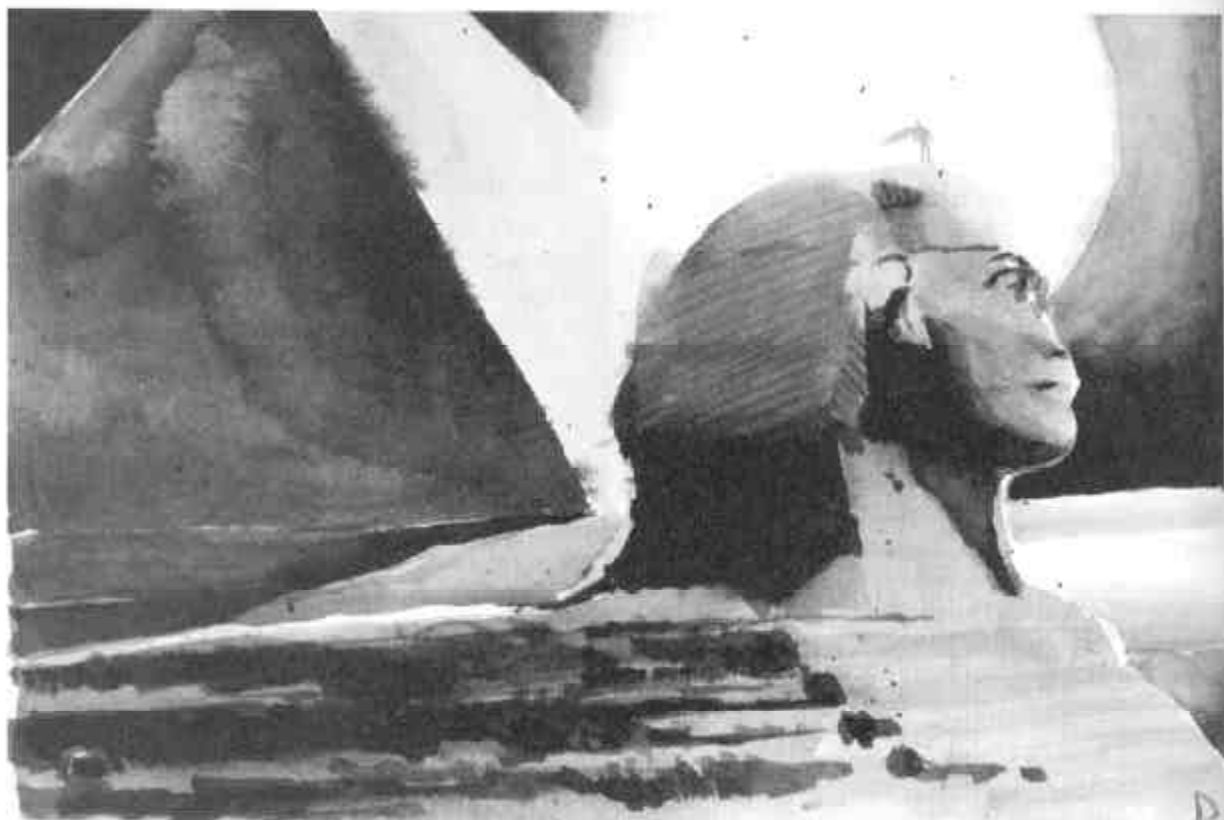
Hank Biggs is a young black man with a wiry build. He has a neatly trimmed beard and gives the impression of having traveled widely. He typically wears an American, tailored business suit. He moves with the energy and enthusiasm of youth. Hank has the Disciplines Animalism 1, Fortitude 1, Potence 2 and Protean 1. He is eager to learn more and foregoes his fee if one of the characters agrees to teach him a new Discipline.

The Giovanni

The Giovanni "bigwigs" that Biggs mentions are Baldesar and Rosaura Rossellini, agents sent by Ambrogino to track down Marianna after she had been sighted in Cairo. The siblings arrived in Egypt before the characters did and drafted Cairo Ghiberti leader Kenneth Stahl into their service.

The Rossellinis, like the characters, are strangers here. Indeed, they may be at a greater disadvantage than the elders are. They are accustomed to depending on necromancy, but they quickly learn that Egypt (especially Thebes) is rife with alien and troublesome wraiths. Many of the Giovanni's own ghostly agents become lost or destroyed in this foreign land, victims of the Egyptian ghosts of the Dark Kingdom of Sand, though Rosaura keeps several highly potent Spectres in reserve.

Ambrogino is sure of Rosaura's loyalties, but he is less certain of her brother's.



The Ghiberti

The Giovanni haven is a large, dimly lit, three-story building in a desolate neighborhood at the city's edge. The characters see a well-dressed gentleman ride up to the building in a carriage. A high brick fence with sharp, iron railings surrounds the place. There are several windows, some lit, some dark and some boarded up. A character using Psychic Projection to reconnoiter discovers the haven is a high-priced brothel that caters to wealthy businessmen. There are eight women and four customers inside. One woman seems anemic and sleeps fitfully in a back room. The house's business dealings occur on the first and second floors. There is a basement with several freshly turned graves; one of these contains the decomposed remains of a decapitated man.

There are two items of interest on the third floor. A dark office contains a bust of Pompey the Great that has been split almost completely in two. The room's windows are boarded up. Two well-dressed men occupy another room. They are at ease as they drink blood from expensive crystal goblets and speak Dutch. The surveying character hears them complain about "outsiders ruining the operation," if she understands their language.

One of the men looks up into space for a moment (he listens to a ghost who has spied on the characters) and suddenly shouts, "Intruders!" Both men leap to their feet and arm themselves with revolvers and rifles. They assume positions at top-floor windows and scan for targets. The characters may avoid detection by the Giovanni's spies if they disguise themselves aptly before approaching the building. Anyone wearing Japheth's cloaks senses several ghostly presences.

Characters can also take a more direct approach and pose as paying customers. The doorway to the brothel is blocked by a large, muscular man, a ghoul who attempts to turn the characters away if they do not use the proper passphrase: "Augie sent me." Characters can learn it if they read the doorman's mind. Yet, the establishment denies women and non-Europeans entry. Members of either of these groups may gain entrance through any number of means, like sneaking in through a window or back door.

Those entering through the front door pass a large guard dog that barks as they pass. An attractive older woman at a lectern eyes the characters suspiciously, assuming from the dog's reaction that the guests are Kindred. She takes them to a separate room and asks if they require "special services." The woman does not answer any queries about the Giovanni, but if the characters persist, she summons one of the men from upstairs, who requests that they leave.

The characters may gain information here in several ways; the encounter may or may not end in bloodshed. If an assault is staged, both of the Giovanni defend the house while the customers and prostitutes quail in fear. The vampires are ninth generation and are good with their guns. One is particularly strong while the other attempts to use Dominate to stop the characters. Ultimately, they are not a match for the elders.

The haven has wraith guardians as well, who are similar to those that the characters encountered in the Dunsirn Brewery. The wraiths harry the characters and throw small objects and oil lamps that start fires. One of the two Giovanni guards uses the wraiths' distraction to escape and warn his leader, Kenneth Stahl, who lives nearby, of trouble. The characters can follow the fleeing man or capture him before he escapes.

If the characters wake and question the girl in the back room, they learn that she witnessed the decapitation of the establishment's proprietor, Frederico Giovanni, one month ago. She is a favorite plaything of the Giovanni and is afraid that they will kill her soon. Her fearful description of Frederico's assailant matches Marianna exactly.

The Giovanni are defiant if apprehended and shout the prince's prohibitions on harassment. Nonetheless, it is not difficult for the characters to wrench the following information from them:

Marianna appeared not only last month, but also over 30 years ago in the company of another female vampire. Frederico Giovanni captured them through sheer numbers and held them prisoner. Marianna escaped, but they killed her companion. The Giovanni launched a major, but futile, effort to find the rogue clan member and concluded that she fled the country. She appeared again recently in Frederico's office, where she severed his head. The Ghiberti chased her around the city for two weeks, and two "officials" from Rome (the Count and Countess Rossellini) soon arrived to take over the hunt. The two Giovanni at the haven don't know the Rossellinis' current whereabouts, but they believe they may be in Alexandria.

Kenneth Stahl

Kenneth Stahl is an Afrikaner who took over the Cairo Giovanni after Marianna killed his predecessor. A search of his mansion reveals a taste for worldly goods (he displays more taste than John Dunsirn did). The house has several guards and servants. Stahl tries to escape attacking characters by drinking blood from his servants to gain strength and ordering wraith guards to slow his assailants.

Stahl isn't powerless, but is both younger and of weaker blood than the characters, and he is fairly easy to defeat if caught. He trades information readily to save his life. Stahl knows that Marianna fled to Alexandria with Baldesar in hot pursuit; he does not know Rosaura's whereabouts. The Roman Giovanni told Stahl to be on guard against Marianna's return.

The Cairo/ Alexandria Pass

The characters have come to Egypt in search of Lazarus' tomb. However, they have no idea where it might lie, or where to find the Lamia who, according to Camden's letter, should be able to help them. The characters do know Marianna, though, and are familiar with her ongoing involvement in the hunt for the Sargon Fragment. Therefore, they may go to Alexandria, where she has supposedly fled, to recruit her aid in their own quest.

Travel between Cairo and Alexandria is usually safe, but the events of the past year have changed that. The two cities are approximately 180 kilometers apart. The first and last lengths of the journey are through grassy scrub; the majority is through open desert. Merchants travel the road, and it is possible for the characters to attach themselves to a caravan, though they had better be prepared to explain their inactivity during the day.

Despite rumors of native brigands along the road, the characters are more likely to run into trouble with opportunistic English. Soldiers disguise themselves as bandits and raid caravans for booty. The most notorious of these men is a Captain "Handy" Jack Hannaford. You may have Handy Jack and his lads attack the characters' caravan to liven up the journey. The soldiers can attack by day, but they prefer night to cover their activities. Handy does not like witnesses and offers no mercy to those that he robs — he hides their bodies in a rocky ravine. Handy has eight accomplices in crime, all of whom are armed with Jacob rifles and bayonets.

There are other dangers along the road between the cities, though. The characters may suspect that the Giovanni have dispatched wraiths to watch over the route for Marianna or themselves. Characters who wear Japheth's cloaks soon realize that ghosts (actually Egyptian residents of Amenti) abound on the way to Alexandria. The Giovanni have a small wraith army at their command or there is something else at work.

The characters may decide to travel off-road given these dangers. Lord Harrington may have cautioned that the Setites keep the road clear of Lupines — that those who leave it are vulnerable to attack. And yet, off-road travel allows the elders to go undetected by ghosts.

Of course, the characters are unaware that the Giovanni's ghosts have been disappearing in Egypt. The Giovanni have enough spirit resources to learn that the characters are in the country, but not necessarily that the elders are on the road to Alexandria.



Desert Travel

Desert travel is a logistical nightmare for vampires. The characters must plan carefully for any such expedition. First, there is the matter of sustenance. The characters can carry blood in jars or canteens, but long treks almost certainly require camels to carry the amount needed. Blood spoils quickly outside the body; blood carried soon clots and fouls unless a character knows a ritual to keep it fresh. Human blood donors may fulfill the characters' needs, but these needs require provisions of their own. Furthermore, vessels may resent marching through the desert with no purpose but to feed bloodthirsty monsters. Ghoul guards may keep vessels in line and prevent them from digging up their masters during the day, but the addition of ghouls makes a caravan large.

Shelter from the sun is another vital necessity and difficult to find in the desert. Characters with Protean 3 (Earth Meld) have little difficulty in this regard. Those without it should bring light-proof shrouds, and they should have themselves buried.

Alexandria

Founded by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., Alexandria served as the seat of power for the Greek Ptolemies. The city grew into a center of learning, art and architecture during their reign. Queen Cleopatra VII made the city rival Rome in everything but military power, and it fell to the status of a large fishing village after her death. Alexandria has recovered only some of its former glory since the completion of the Suez Canal.

Both Egyptian and Greek ruins predominate Alexandria, though there are also examples of medieval Christian and Muslim architecture. Great antiquities such as the Pharos Lighthouse (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) have collapsed into the sea. A medieval Mamluk sultan used the rubble of the structure to build Fort Qait Bey. Furthermore, the city's Great Library, burned by the Romans and partially rebuilt by Cleopatra, burned a second time at Christian hands in A.D. 391 in an assault on "pagan intellectuals."

The city maintains a garrison of British soldiers. The troops do not see much action in the first half of 1848 and spend most of their time relaxing, drinking and stealing souvenirs for home. However, the port is blockaded by

French and English ships in early summer and bombarded a few weeks later. Entry into the city becomes much more dangerous once hostilities break out. Natives are outwardly aggressive to Europeans, and European soldiers detain and question almost everyone who seeks entry into the city.

The influx of foreigners over the past 13 years has almost doubled Alexandria's vampire population; most are Toreador. The Princess of Alexandria is a Toreador named Ionna to whom Camarilla vampires should present themselves. There is no set protocol for Sabbat entering the city, but if the characters met with Aldema in Cairo, he told them that a tenuous truce exists in Alexandria. The city has no native Sabbat population and the few Sabbat visitors have always "behaved." The court keeps an eye on Sabbat vampires who introduce themselves, but it does not have them killed outright.

The Dream Court

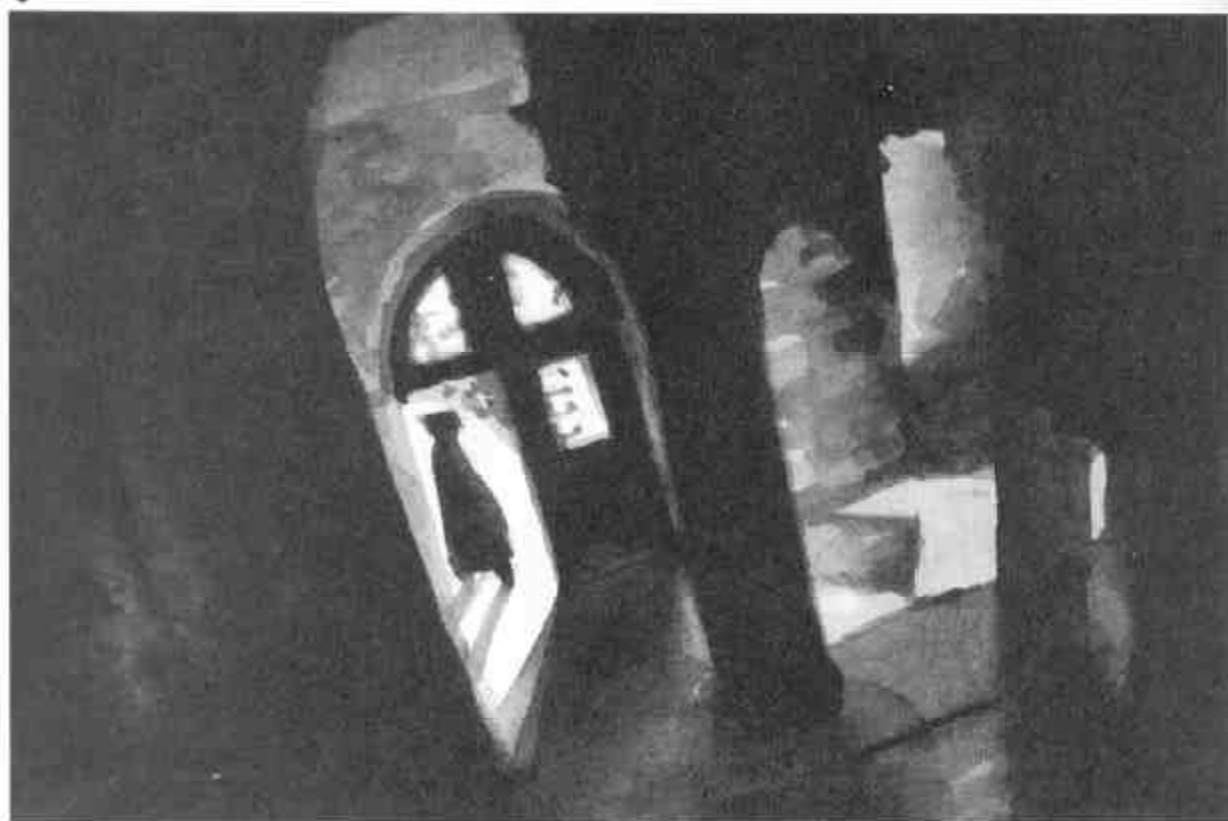
Ionna's court — the Dream Court — is hidden among catacombs that lie beneath a crumbled mosque overlooking the eastern harbor. Mukhtar Bey, Lord Harrington or Aldema may have told the characters where to find the princess' court.

The mosque that stands above the court seems to have been impressive at one time, but now grass pokes through its sand-covered floor. Characters who come to this site are confronted by a handsome young Greek man who emerges from the darkness. He introduces himself as Antonius and asks the characters kindly to identify themselves. If they refuse, Antonius disappears as quickly as he came, and the characters fail to find the entrance to the court. If the characters comply and introduce themselves, Antonius requests that they don blindfolds and follow him; he leads them through a maze of ruined hallways. They then hear a scraping sound as a hidden door opens. The door closes behind the group, and the characters may remove their blindfolds.

Oil lamps in recessed wall sconces illuminate a hallway. The walls are a deep Mediterranean blue and the floor is cerulean-blue marble with purple veins. The main court beyond is octagonal with a high-vaulted ceiling, which is blue-black with intricate Arabic star patterns running into ocean waves at the bottom of the dome. Corinthian columns of rich gold marble support the structure, and frescoed walls bear a number of painted tableau (desert-, ocean- and starscapes).

Ionna awaits at the center of the room on a gold scarab-throne that is supported by dolphins and other sea creatures. She is a tall, regal-looking woman with straight, brown hair and azure eyes. Ionna wears a simple white dress with a gold sash and a scarab necklace. She holds a lapis rod capped with gold as her symbol of office, and she has a serene expression. There are three guards in the room; all carry razor-edged sabers.





Ionna welcomes the characters in a calm, detached manner. She asks them their business in the city and listens thoughtfully to their answers, but she does not comment. Ionna is highly adept at detecting the truth and is a skillful telepath; however, she does not read the visitors' minds unless she suspects they are lying. If the characters seem truthful, she is inclined to help them. If they offend her by lying, she lets them stay in town but provides them no assistance.

Any character who attempts to read Ionna's mind finds this task exceptionally difficult. Her thoughts slip away like fine sand and she almost certainly notices the intrusion — which she deems to be an offense as great as a lie.

Like Mukhtar Bey, Ionna expects discretion from vampires in her city and does not want any part of outside feuds. If the characters impress her, she allows them to reside in the Dream Court itself for the duration of their stay (up to a month). Otherwise, she suggests a tavern near Montaza Bay.

If the characters present themselves well, Ionna is willing to answer questions. She reveals that a Giovanni and his retainers entered the city a week ago but did not announce themselves. Ionna sent her servants to demand their presence at the Dream Court, and they complied only after some "convincing." The visitor (Baldesar Giovanni) was not honest in his answers to Ionna's questions and she sent him back to Cairo — with his mission unfulfilled.

If the characters ask about Marianna and state truthfully that they mean her no harm, Ionna tells them that Marianna arrived in Alexandria a few nights ahead of the Giovanni; she remained in the city a short while, then returned to Cairo. If the characters ask about Lazarus' tomb, Ionna says that she believes it exists, yet does not know where it is. She suggests that they wait in town two nights, by the end of which she may (or may not) have more information on the place.

Elders who decide to leave immediately to chase Marianna or Baldesar may pick up their trails again in Cairo, but they fail to gain important information that is available in Alexandria.

A hardness is evident in Ionna's voice if the characters ask about the region's Setites. She proclaims that they are a threat to all, but that she has no choice except to allow them in her city. There may be Setites in the city currently, but Ionna suggests that the characters avoid contact with them. Ionna shudders visibly if the characters mention the Fire Court. She tells them it is the haven of the Setites and is over 300 miles south of Cairo — through hard desert — near the great tombs of Thebes (19th-century Luxor). She admits to having been captured and taken there three centuries ago and that she escaped with her sanity barely intact. An uneasy truce exists with the Setites and the vampires of Alexandria, and Ionna insists that the characters do nothing to raise the Serpents' ire. Other than that, the characters are free to do as they wish in Alexandria.

Two Nights in Alexandria

Characters who seek out other vampires learn that Alexandria is primarily a Toreador art colony. A young Ventrue merchant also operates out of the city, and two Gangrel survive in the surrounding desert.

Characters who discussed Lazarus, the Lamia or Lord Camden with Ionna, or anyone else in the city, receive a guest on their second night in the city. The visitor approaches them, and may do so anywhere you choose—at the characters' hotel, in the desert or even in the catacombs beneath the city. The visitor is a thin young European woman with a faint Austrian accent, which is strange in these lands. She wears a blood-red robe with black ivy patterns woven throughout it. A hood and veil conceal her features except for her red, glowing eyes. The woman carries a cruelly carved scimitar on a belt, and she graciously declines to give her name. Those who read her aura determine that she is curious and suspicious.

The woman explains that she may be able to help the characters on their quest, but that they must not reveal anything she shows them. If the characters are uncommunicative or antagonistic, the woman chastises them, "How could ones such as you know of the lair of Lazarus?" and she turns to leave. Only profuse apologies convince her to stay and continue her business.

The woman asks the characters about their interest in the Giovanni and their intentions toward Marianna. If they answer correctly (that they hate the Giovanni and seek to help Marianna), or they show her the letter from Lord Camden's crypt, the woman leads them into the desert on the eastern side of the city.

The woman takes the characters to an open stretch of desert beneath a statue of an ancient pharaoh. The night is clear and shooting stars streak through the heavens. Four ghostlike female figures emerge from the dunes, each wearing a blood-red robe like the original woman's. The newcomers carry bows with black, barbed arrows. (The arrows are tipped in a potent blood potion and do aggravated damage.)

These beings are the descendants of the Lamia discussed in Camden's letter, who are the remaining agents of Clan Cappadocian who supposedly help enemies of the Giovanni find Lazarus' haven. One of the four women glides gracefully toward the characters. Her hands and skin are a dusky brown; her voice has a Bedouin tone. There is a mystique of both age and power about her. She speaks primarily to female characters, if there are any.

This woman repeats the questions about the characters' intent toward the Giovanni and Marianna, and she watches intently as the elders answer. If their answers please

her, she introduces herself as "Omega" and reveals that Marianna has returned to Cairo and is seeking the Temple of Lazarus. Omega shows the characters an old scroll that locates the tomb near Laxor (disturbingly close to the Fire Court). The scroll is written in the ancient Chaldean language, but the woman translates. She is stunned if a character knows Chaldean. Characters who went through the events of *Blood & Fire* may recognize the scroll's script as similar to that of the *Lilith* Fragment. This scroll is much newer, though, and probably a copy.

Old Naby-falcon-eaten, seventh made of the Shemau-Heru (1), passed forth from the hungry winds of Quat (2), still seeking Amam the Devourer who stole his ka (3). He walked the road near Thebes, where the dead kings reign (4) and came to a place where the road lay four ways equally divided. At each new divergence there stood a figure: one man, one woman and one beast.

Old Lazarus-dark-eye stood at the right-hand road, holding a skull lit by human tallow. "I know you, lost one. Why should I follow your crooked path?" asked Naby. "Mine is the road of bones (5) and secrets lost. If you have no spirit, come and I will find you another in its stead." Lazarus responded. But Naby shook his head and said, "I will not follow such a path, for it is an offense to Horus."

Old Naby turned to the woman on the center path, who stood among a garden of Serpents (6). "Who are you and where does this path lead?" The woman replied, "I am deceiv' unbound by Osiris' oppressive chains. Follow my path and know the ecstasy of my touch." But Naby spat, "Am I a fool to be so deceived? You are serpent and anathema," and so saying, he struck her down with his spear.

Naby turned to the beast on his left, jackal-headed child of Anubis (7). "I have already walked long through the lands of Quat; what more can your kind show me?" The wolf replied, "Though I am old, I still remember the past between our people and your mother Isis. I promise nothing but the loyalty of my kind." And old Naby knew that this was the correct road.

Lazarus is merely an incidental character in this fragment, but it still contains seven useful facts. Players may make Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 8) or appropriate Lore rolls (difficulty 7). Characters decipher one of the enumerated points in the text for each success. If the players' rolls fail, Omega deciphers key elements. Alternatively, the Storyteller may let the players discuss the artifact and figure it out for themselves before rolling.

Each number in the document indicates an important element.

(1) Shemsu-Heru is a name used to describe most Egyptian mummies.

(2) Duat is the Egyptian land of the dead.

(3) Ka is the portion of a mummy's spirit that remains at a tomb to guard its body.

(4) The Valley of the Kings

(5) The Via Ossis or "Road of Bones" was a path followed by many Cappadocians and is still followed by some modern Giovanni.

(6) A Follower of Set.

(7) A werewolf, probably of the "Silent Strider" tribe. No one has heard of Amam the Devourer, but he is apparently an unpleasant individual.

Astute players may realize that this scroll contains information that transcends the above elements. The story speaks of a road with four specific directions (see the Thebes map). If the characters are able to determine one point on the "compass," they should be able to determine the others by default. Those who have studied a map of Egypt know that a major road runs north-south along the Nile bank, past Luxor (where Thebes once was).

The parchment does not indicate the direction in which Nabq was walking, so there are four ways that characters may orient this map. Of course, it's possible that the road is ancient and no longer exists, or that the roads are metaphorical rather than real.

Omega can relate that the story was scribed by an unknown Malkavian, but she doesn't know how he came by the information contained in the parchment.

If the characters quote or produce an old copy of the *Lilith Fragment*, Omega's glowing red eyes widen in obvious surprise. It may become evident (if it's not already) that the women hate the Giovanni and curse them for killing the last of the Cappadocians — especially the Lamia. The women may offer to help the characters in the future if the foreigners seem sincere in their hatred of the Necromancers.

The Lilim

Characters who have researched the Giovanni extensively may know of an obscure bloodline attached to Clan Cappadocian: the Lamia. These vampires were almost exclusively female, they worshipped Lilith and served Clan Cappadocian loyally for centuries. The Giovanni hunted the Lamia down, along with the rest of the clan. However, the Lamia established a legacy — the Lilim — before they all died out.

The Lilim is a small, female mystery cult that worships Lilith and preserves the philosophies of the Lamia. The women are heirs to much of Lamia lore and have cells in Alexandria and several other Middle Eastern cities. The cult maintains a tradition of complex rituals designed to hone the mind and body. The Lilim bear a terrible hatred for the Giovanni, but they also fear the Necromancers' power (the women are security conscious to the point of paranoia). The Lilim do not know it was actually the Camarilla that killed the last Lamia in the 18th century. High-ranking Camarilla characters may recognize the Lilim's ignorance.

The Lilim do not bring the characters to the cult's haven in the Kom ash-Shuqqifa catacombs. There is no particular bad blood between the Lilim and the Setites, but the women have sought (unsuccessfully) to keep their existence hidden from the Serpents. The Lilim are suspicious of both the Sabbath and the Camarilla.

If one of the characters is a woman and is knowledgeable about Lilith, the Lilim may consider her for recruitment. The initiation process takes at least a decade, and none of the cult's secrets is taught until that time has past. Initiates must also share in the Lilim's version of the *Vaulderie*. All Lilim have at least one level of Necromancy, and most of them have some proficiency with *Auspex*, *Fortitude* and *Mortis*. (For more on the Lamia, see *Clanbook: Cappadocian and Dark Ages Companion*.)

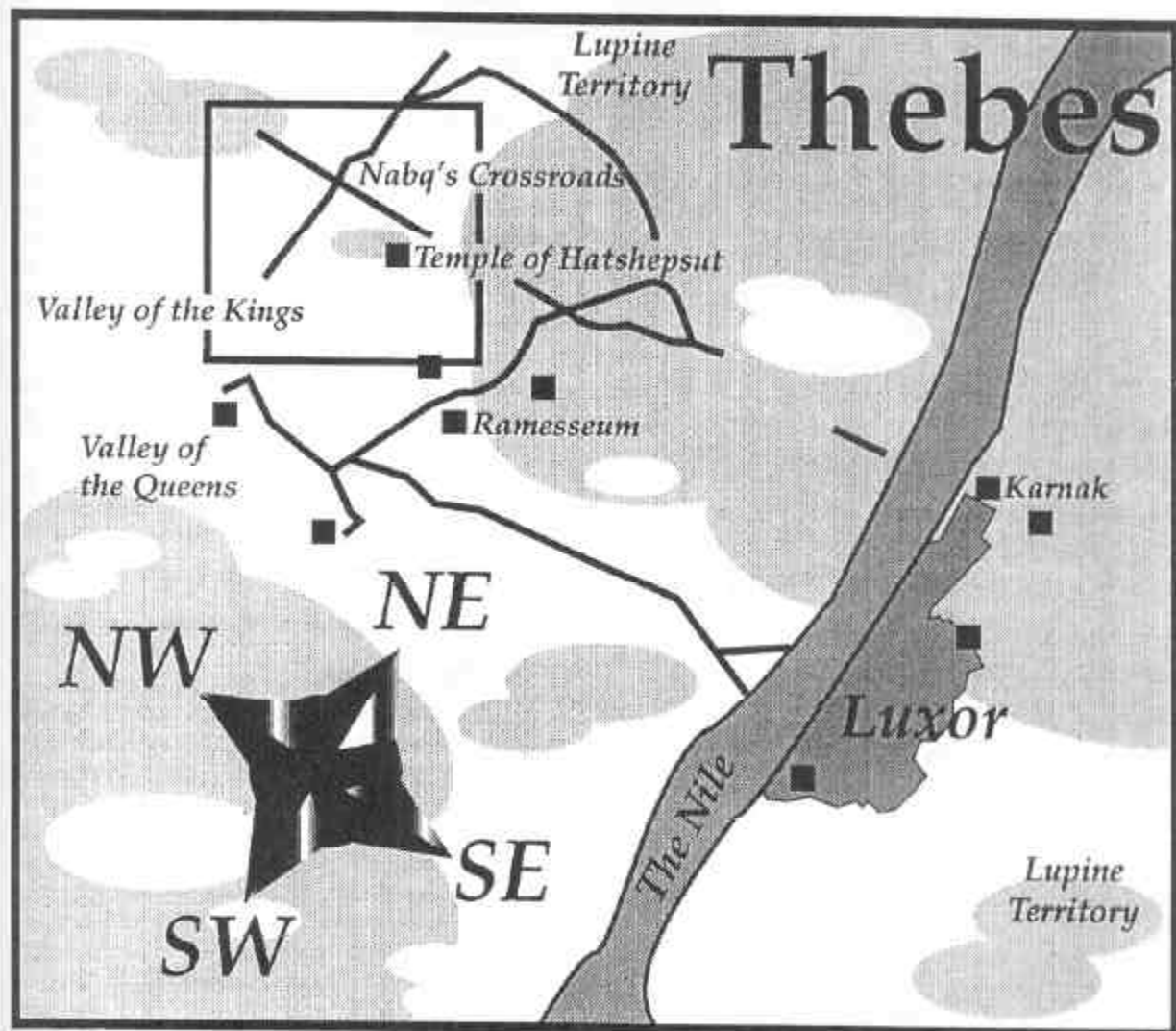
The Road to Luxor

There are two ways to reach Luxor from Alexandria. The first is to travel southeast through the Western Desert. Travel is difficult along this route: There are no roads and no river to guide the characters for much of the way. Furthermore, the Western Desert is Lupine territory, and there are also rumors of an Assamite temple in the region. The only advantage to this route is that it makes tracking the characters difficult for the Giovanni and Setites. Make the path dangerous indeed, with savage Lupine attacks, endless wastes and freak sandstorms.

It is more likely that the characters choose to return to Cairo and then head south to Luxor along the Nile. This is the route that Marianna seems to have taken in

her hunt for Lazarus' tomb, as revealed by the Lillim. If the Giovanni continue to pursue Marianna, the characters are a few days behind both parties. The characters must move rapidly to close the gap.

The journey to Luxor is over 300 kilometers as the vulture flies, but closer to 400 kilometers if the characters follow the river. There is a thin strip of arable land along both sides of the Nile, though such "temperate" climes disappear for long stretches as the river winds inland. The only main road along the river is on the east bank. Travel on this side is quick, while the west bank offers more anonymity. The journey south may be eventful — or not — as you decide. Encounters can involve anything from a haunted mosque to Lupine attackers. The Setites no doubt learn of the characters' approach through their agents abroad, but they do nothing to impede the foreigners' progress.





Luxor

The East Bank

The characters see great ruins on both sides of the river as they approach Luxor — a sleepy fishing village on the river's east bank, built on the 4000-year-old ruins of ancient Thebes. The town has a single inn and no apparent vampire population. If the characters stay in town for more than a night, the villagers notice their presence and become suspicious (especially because the villagers see the characters at night). The only other strangers in town are two Cairo merchants.

The villagers have seen an increasing number of archaeologists pass through in recent decades, but none is here currently. The villagers do not recall seeing anyone who fits Marianna's description, but a "large party" (the Rossellinis) passed through a few nights ago. They did not stay long and the villagers give varying accounts of the direction in which they departed.

There is a certain dread chill to Luxor. Characters who don Japheth's cloaks realize that the entire area is a vast necropolis, and they feel watched constantly.

The only major road from the village continues along the Nile and is called the "Comiche." The villagers say it is quite ancient but that there is an even older road that runs parallel to it on the other side of the river, near the Valley of the Kings. The natives avoid this road, though; they believe it is haunted and used by bandits. The villagers add that two archaeologists set out for the older road months ago and disappeared.

Characters who start their search for crossroads, as detailed in Nabq's story, find a number near the village. None of these intersections forms an perfect cross like the one described in the story.

Four temples stand on the east side of the Nile, on the same side as Luxor: Karnak, Amun, Mut and the great Luxor Temple. Any attempt to find "lost roads" among the ruins or farther out in the desert proves to be futile; the characters probably conclude they are searching on the wrong side of the river. The only easy way across the Nile is by boat.

The West Bank

The west bank has many more ruins than the east bank does, the closest of which are three kilometers away in the desert. There are a few scattered homes along the west bank, but none is more than a half-kilometer inland.

Characters who head northwest toward the Valley of the Kings see the great Temples of Ramesseum and Medinat Habu looming on the left. There are a number of old roads in the area that all wind wildly, and none comes to Nabq's crossroads. The characters pass through a series of steep hills as they make their way further into the interior. Some of

these mounds reveal entrances to the forlorn tombs of old nobles that were plundered long ago. Characters also see signs of an abandoned archaeological dig.

As the characters emerge from the hills, they come across the massive temple to Hatshepsut, Egypt's first female pharaoh. The temple is partially freestanding, the remainder is carved into the side of a great cliff face. The cliff itself extends less than a half-kilometer in either direction; the characters are better off going around it than over it.

Nabq's Crossroads

Immediately beyond Hatshepsut's cliff is the Valley of the Kings. The terrain is difficult in places, but an old road runs parallel to the Nile at the bottom of the valley. The characters see several intersecting paths, one that bisects perfectly, thus fitting the description in Nabq's story.

The main road continues past the crossroads toward the southwest and brings the characters farther into the Valley of the Kings. The opposite length runs northeast straight into the desert, toward Cairo. The intersecting road runs northwest into open desert and southeast back toward Luxor.

The characters must now choose a direction in which to travel in hopes of finding Lazarus' tomb — presumably, the road represented by Lazarus himself, which is one of the paths that Nabq refused to take in his story. The characters have no idea which direction Nabq was traveling, and, thus, they have a one-in-four chance of picking the path they seek.

Northeast (Toward the Desert)

This road leads the characters into the desert over several nights of traveling.

You have the option of staging an encounter between the characters and the Giovanni in one of two places: here, in the desert, or in the Serite Fire Court (see the Giovanni in the Fire Court sidebar).

If the Giovanni are clashed with in the desert, they have taken this road in pursuit of Marianna, but they have lost her. The Rossellinis and their retinue seek shelter at one point in caves that line this road. The Giovanni are highly paranoid; over half of their wraith servitors have disappeared. They are not taken easily by surprise, so any ambush attempts must be planned masterfully.

The Giovanni try to avoid the characters at this juncture (though Baldesar is inclined to attack). Rosaura recognizes the need to find Marianna before destroying the characters. The siblings have posted guards who reconnoiter by day and ghosts who are vigilant by night. If the characters are spotted, the Giovanni send their ghoul



retainers to unearth the elders during the day. A daytime battle may occur between the Giovanni's ghouls and those of the characters. The Setites arrive shortly thereafter to collect the survivors and take them into the Fire Court.

Alternatively, the characters may detect that a large party was recently in this area; there are remains of campfires and signs of excavation. A character who finds a personal possession left behind by the Giovanni may gain a clearer picture of his enemies. There is little else of interest on this road.

Nabq used this road to approach the crossroads in his story.

Southeast (Toward Karnak Temple)

This road runs for a few hundred yards and then ends abruptly at a cliff, near the Temple of Hatshepsut. The lights of Luxor burn in the distance. The path points almost directly to Hatshepsut's temple. However, characters with keen eyesight (Perception roll, difficulty 5) see that it actually points toward Karnak Temple on the other side of the Nile.

The path continues at the foot of the cliff and ends at the ruins of a washed-out bridge over the river. Characters who cross toward Karnak also pass Luxor on their right. A long avenue of sphinxes lies to the north of Karnak Temple, and the elders pass through a Roman ruin.

Characters who wear Japheth's cloaks notice that there are no ghostly presences in this area. However, those elders do realize that they are sloshing through black, icy-cold water. The moon dances madly across a hundred ripples as the surrounding ruins (and any characters not wearing the cloaks) fade into blackness.

As far as elders in the real world are concerned, nothing has changed; their companions walk quietly on the group's path. Characters who have entered this other world cannot contact the others that they have left behind.

A cold rain batters the dream-world characters; not even *Auspex* nor *Gleam* of the Red Eyes cuts through the downpour. Amorphous shapes leap and spring about, and the characters suffer a sudden nausea. Elders who push through the inky water come to raised, grimy stones.

A corpse of thorny black trees bristles from the dry land. A figure seems to step suddenly from one of the thorny pillars. A black rope is tied around his neck and seems to hold him upright as he literally floats a few feet above the ground. The apparition appears to consider the characters with his bulging eyes, and it grins crookedly.

This vision is the Hanged Man, one of Rosaura's remaining Spectre servants. The Giovanni had tracked Marianna to the region of the crossroads but didn't know which path she had taken. Therefore, Rosaura commanded the Hanged Man to guard over this one to waylay Marianna

should she appear. The Spectre doesn't care that another enemy of the Giovanni has arrived; the spirit is happy to torture characters who enter its realm.

"It is unseemly for the dead to walk as you, encased in rotting flesh," the spirit moans as it points at the characters. "I will strip away such pretensions and make you pure!" The Spectre holds his hands out toward the characters, and the protrusions extend into monstrous, bladed pinchers, like those of a praying mantis. The claws make the sound of swords being unsheathed.

The elders can confront the Spectre with whatever Disciplines or strategies they wish. The creature is fast to attack and uses its control of its realm to confuse and disorient the characters. The Spectre becomes increasingly spiderlike as the battle progresses, but it retains its human visage and mocks the characters with their imminent "purification."

If the Spectre manages to "kill" a character, she loses two points of permanent Willpower and her real-world body enters torpor for the remainder of the night. After she recovers, the victim suffers ongoing nightmares about the Hanged Man flaying her alive.

If the characters defeat the Spectre, it dissolves slowly. Characters return to their bodies and are disoriented by their change of surroundings.

A daring or perverse character may try to drink the Spectre's blood before it fades completely. The vampire feels infused by some thick, cold venom. She senses Japheth's cloaks and molt and drop from her body like a dead cocoon. The character falls into torpor as does a vampire who is killed by the Hanged Man. However, a character who fed on the Spectre realizes over the following nights that she can now see wraiths without Japheth's cloaks.

Karnak Temple

Karnak is monumental and impressive. The temple honors Amun, Thebes' sun god. Characters who enter feel a burning sensation that grows more intense by the moment. If the characters do not leave soon after, they lose one Health Level per turn until destroyed.

Characters who observe the temple through Japheth's cloaks see a flurry of motion. Large ghostly figures appear on all sides, seemingly from thin air. The apparitions are hooded in heavy cloaks and cloying shadows, but black jackal heads are apparent. The creatures rush about in apparent confusion as they seem to battle unseen assailants. They do not notice the characters, and any attempts at contact are futile. The beings are the mindless spirits of werewolves who have been bound to the area as wraiths, forever denied their rightful afterlife.

Characters who interpret Nabq's story may take these images to represent the jackal-headed figure that Nabq accompanied from the crossroads. Thus, they may guess that Lazarus' tomb lies on the opposite, northwest road — in the direction in which Lazarus stood in the story.



The Hanged Man

Background: This Spectre was a murderer and heretic in life who killed seven priests before being sent to the gallows. The Hanged Man is now a powerful and malignant Spectre that serves Rosaura Rossellini.

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 5

Skills: Melee 3, Stealth 4

Knowledge: Occult 3

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Chimerstry 4, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 1, Vicissitude + (Spider Form)

Willpower: 5

Image: The Hanged Man wears a simple black robe. His head lolls horribly on his shoulders. The rope that "hangs" him reaches into the air and ends abruptly; it is attached to nothing. The Spectre can also assume a huge, sickening spider form with a human face, and it spins hanging rope instead of webbing.

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5. Incapacitated

Southwest (The Fire Court)

If the characters travel into the Valley of the Kings, their road breaks into a number of winding paths through a maze of ravines. High cavern walls rise on all sides and the moonlight casts eerie blue shadows. A few paths have tombs along them, like huge black mouths gaping from the cliff sides. These openings may reveal fantastic paintings on the walls of tombs, but nothing else. The characters' route comes to a dead end as they round a corner. The walls are higher here than anywhere else in the maze, and the cul-de-sac is cast into pitch-black darkness. Suddenly, the sand at the elders' feet begins to glow a pale blue and a cold breeze whips up.

Two figures emerge from the darkness and confusion. One is an athletic bald man in an orange robe. His face is alert, and he has a large red scorpion tattoo over one eye. His longbow is aimed at the lead character. The other figure is a tall, regal woman wearing a gold and lapis headdress. Her skin is like polished black onyx; she has red lips and glowing white eyes. The two are Glycon and the Messenger of Count Jocalo. If the characters met face to face with Jocalo in *Blood & Fire*, they may have seen these two in his coterie. (Such a meeting probably occurred just before the Setites beat the characters senseless.)



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If the elders do not attack immediately, the woman speaks, "I am the Messenger of Count Jocalo. Who are you and why do you trespass on our lands?"

Characters present during the Great Fire might consider this question a little rich, considering that Jocalo and his minions trashed large sections of London in 1666. If this occasion is brought up, the Messenger pronounces that they were merely retrieving their "property" and does not elaborate.

The Messenger smiles — not unpleasantly — at characters who introduce themselves politely. If they explain that they are looking for something, she inquires as to what it is. The characters may ask about Marianna or the Giovanni, to which the woman confirms that they are both nearby. If the characters tell her that they seek Lazarus' tomb, she says it is also close by, adding almost as an afterthought that it is on Setite lands.

This last revelation raises a disturbing concern: If the characters want to continue their mission, they have to deal with the Setites in one way or another.

Characters who simply turn back as if to leave Setite lands (located to the southwest and northwest of the crossroads) are free to do so. The characters may also attack or make a deal with the Setites to continue their search (see Northwest, below, for details on both options).

Northwest (Lazarus' Tomb)

The northwest trail leads into open desert. Moon-lit sand dunes ripple out before the characters like waves frozen in mid-swell. This road leads to Lazarus' tomb, though reaching the place is not a matter of walking.

The characters are confronted by Jocalo's agents again (or for the first time, if they were not encountered before). This meeting is similar to the one described above — the characters are faced with a major obstacle.

The elders have several options: They can retreat to plan their strategy, they can attack and risk the consequences, or they can negotiate with the Setites. The Setites let the characters retreat. The Followers of Set do not harass the intruders as long as they stay out of Setite territory.

Fighting past the Setite agents is a difficult, if not impossible, task. The characters actually face three highly potent vampires: the Messenger of Jocalo, Glycon, and an expatriate Tzimisce named Alexei, who hides nearby. The Messenger of Jocalo disappears in battle and uses her Disciplines to distort the characters' sense of reality. (She casts illusions so that they mistake each other for enemies.) Meanwhile, her companions move in and attack according to their specialties.

Victorious Setites do not kill the characters, but they take them as prisoners to the Fire Court. It's possible that the Setites may capture some characters while others escape. Those outside the Fire Court may have to attempt a rescue mission. If the characters begin to win a battle, their

opponents retreat back to the Fire Court. The characters may now travel in any direction they choose, but they soon face the wrath of the assembled Fire Court. The characters may have time to reach Lazarus' tomb, but it is unlikely that they have the opportunity to explore it before the Setites arrive in great numbers.

The characters can also attempt to negotiate with the Setites. Jocalo's messenger tells them that any talks must take place in the confines of the Fire Court. She guarantees that the elders may leave the haven at any time. Agreeable characters are given black leather hoods to wear. The hoods bear strange hieroglyphs and have a slight acrid smell that grows more intense with time (assuming that characters breathe). Characters who put these on discover that they cannot project mentally or use telepathy. Characters who enter the Fire Court voluntarily are asked to leave their retinues outside to be tended to — without harm — by the Setites. The Serpents lead blind characters gently. The elders experience a flurry of sensations — blowing winds, innumerable turns, animal sounds. Some of these are real, others are illusory.

The Setites roughly bind characters who attack and lose. Prisoners are also taken to the Fire Court in hoods, which contain strong metal mouth restraints that prevent the prisoners from biting through the cloth. Alexei molds prisoners' hands together behind their backs with their own skin to prevent escape. The Setites brutally suppress any attempts at rebellion and drive characters who resist into torpor by hammering wood stakes through their hearts. Alexei and Glycon are adept at causing great pain to Kindred. Alexei, in particular, takes delight in draining the characters of their blood. The Messenger stands aloof.

The Fire Court

*I'm very well acquainted with the seven deadly sins
I keep a busy schedule trying to fit them in
I'm proud to be a glutton and I don't have time for sloth
I'm greedy and I'm angry and I don't care who I cross.
— Warren Zevon, "Mr. Bad Example"*

The Fire Court is the centuries-old haven of Egypt's Setites. It has been dedicated to Set and corruption since its creation. The vampires who reside there use it as a nexus from which to foment dissent, to undermine the efforts of other Cainites, and to spread their own influence.

The Setites are fully aware of their haven's surroundings; of the riches that may still be stolen from the tombs of the pharaohs; and, of the potential power that lies within Lazarus' tomb. Rather than claim these prizes for themselves, the Setites leave them be, to let them serve as temptations for other vampires to dare the desert and be lured into the Serpents' nest. Thus, it is that the characters, Marianna and the Rossellinis come to Egypt and find themselves at the mercies of the Followers of Set. The desert

vampires tease the foreigners with secrets, prizes and games, learning the characters' natures and tempting them to compromise themselves. Only the elders' moral resolve can keep them from falling to the Setites' foul taint, while others may sell what's left of their souls to gain the gifts that the Followers offer.

Entering the Fire Court

Characters who enter the Fire Court of their free will hear a great metal door swing open and clang shut behind them with an echo of finality. The characters are then led through a maze of hallways before their masks are removed. They are in a dark stone cavern with no indication of how deep underground they are. Alexei has disappeared. The Messenger of Jocalo and Glycon remain for only a brief time, though, as they pass the characters on to a young woman in a simple white robe who carries a torch and bids the elders to follow. The torch casts an eerie orange light over many paintings on the walls. These paintings' images are mostly cryptic, but one depicts a great black serpent devouring the sun. After a few more twists and turns, the characters finally see pale firelight at the end of the tunnel.

Characters who are brought into the Fire Court by force see none of these things. Their hoods are not removed, and they're probably unconscious until they're roused in the haven's throne room.

The Throne of Neferu

The tunnel leads to a great room carved from sandstone. Six huge statues of men and women with snakes coiled around them serve as pillars, holding the vaulted ceiling aloft. The statues' expressions are of either ecstasy or agony. The ceiling is veiled by shadows that seem to ripple with a life all their own; characters with keen eyesight realize that carved snakes cover the entire ceiling. Dozens of real snakes slither around the room as well.

Torches sputter fitfully along the walls, their brightness unequal to the task of lighting the great hall. Over 30 human figures — guards and slaves — stand around the throne room's perimeter. The Messenger and Glycon appear here again, as do five others who seem to be vampires.

A large, circular fire-pit is near the center of the room. Its fire burns a ghastly green and emits an intoxicating fume. Behind the fire is a dais. Stairs lead from the dais to a coiled stone cobra that spreads its hood over a golden throne. In front of the throne is a powerful bald man in the green and gold ceremonial robe of a vizier. A young girl sits behind him. She can be no more than 14 years old in mere appearance, but she radiates an aura of unimaginable age and power. Her unearthly beauty insinuates itself into the characters' minds, and players of Toreador must roll for the clan weakness (difficulty 6) or stare fascinated at her. The girl wears a white robe bound in intricate designs by black

and red brocade. A graceful golden cobra wraps around her left arm. A silver necklace with a single red stone adorns her throat.

The vizier beckons the characters forward, saying, "I am Sobek, third vessel of Princess Neferu. Welcome, honored supplicants. You have traveled far to find us." His tone mixes even measures of lordly disdain, polite welcome and suspicion. Even characters with low *Etiquette* can guess that the Setites expect them to bow. If they do so, Sobek beams with pleased superiority. If they do not bow, the Setites do not pursue the issue, but the characters initiate the poor treatment that they may receive thereafter.

Sobek asks the characters their reasons for coming to Egypt. If they are in the court voluntarily, they have discussed their quest with the Messenger already. Sobek explains that if the characters want the court's "assistance," they must stay a night and pass a test for each favor they desire. The princess entertains no more than four requests and the characters must also spend an additional night before the tests, "in accordance with Set's traditions."

The characters' primary mission is probably to find Lazarus' haven. The Setites tell them the tomb is close by and long abandoned. If the characters ask why the Setites have not broken into the tomb themselves, Sobek scowls, "Lazarus played and won, curse his bones!" The Setites do not expand further on their relationship (if any) with the Cappadocian other than to say, "If not for such a place, we would not have guests such as yourselves."

Characters' secondary motives that they may pursue here include finding Marianna, the Giovanni and clues to the *Sargon Fragment*. Some characters may have other things they want as well, but the Setites reject ridiculous requests out of hand. Characters must stay with the Setites one night for information on each subject that they pursue. Sobek promises "we know of them all too well."

If the characters come to the Fire Court against their will, they suffer rough handling by their captors (the characters were trespassing, after all). The elders awaken in the court's throne room, the taste of blood on their lips. They still wear the hoods — so they are still blind — but nothing obstructs their mouths. The floor around them is soaked with enough spilled blood to clear their minds (assuming characters deign to lick the floor), but there isn't enough blood to heal their wounds.

A character who refuses to drink from the floor is forced from the wrist of Glycon. The blood surges through the character like fire and she snaps to complete awareness.

Sobek booms, "Bow before the queen of Serpents!" If any of the characters refuses to assume a kneeling position, Glycon hacks off their legs with his scimitar. Sobek makes the same offers as he does to voluntary guests, but the captured characters are playing a game of life and death, not simply one of wits.

Corrupting the Characters

The Setites' sole purpose in bringing the characters — and all that they capture — to the Fire Court is to corrupt those individuals. The Setites seek pawns to spread their influence throughout the world and hope to turn the elders to their favor. The corruption process occurs magically over the nights that the characters spend at the Fire Court. Hieroglyphics on walls throughout the place bend the characters' wills Thaumaturgically. This effect, combined with poisoned blood that the Setites feed the characters during their stay, operate to break the characters' spirits.

The Corrupt Soul Ritual sidebar details the effects of the Setites efforts; characters' *Natures* or *Paths* may change to be more in keeping with Setite philosophy, and they may lose *Humanity*. All of these effects can be temporary or permanent.

Voluntary Guests

The Setites say it will take the remainder of the evening to prepare the tests, so the characters may entertain themselves in the interim. Slaves show the visitors to opulent guest chambers. Entertainment from books to musical instruments is available, but the hosts instruct the characters not to fraternize — feed, that is — too much with the slaves. The Setites claim that the characters must remain "pure" for the tests, and all non-Kindred retainers are cared for in a separate wing. The Setites promise to treat them well and to not tamper with mortals.

Strange occult hieroglyphics cover the walls of the Fire Court, and a skilled Thaumaturgist (rated 3 or higher) may realize that the place has a magic energy to it. An educated character who studies the markings carefully — *Intelligence* + *Occult* (difficulty 9) — realizes that they are signs of corruption.

The Setites allow the characters to wander their guest chamber. It consists of a series of personal apartments in a single wing overlooking a large common room. In the center of the communal area is a golden statue of a muscular, jackal-headed man (Set) holding a long spear. Small fires and a spring-fed pond surround the statue.

The characters may relax or bathe in perfumed waters, washing off the grime of the road. The rooms and the common area are opulent, but distressingly full of large snakes. The serpents slither through holes in the walls, traveling freely from room to room. Snakes also rest lazily around the statue of Set and warm themselves by the fires.

The characters are the only guests, other than the snakes, in this area, though they can summon a servant by ringing a bell. A single slave appears and performs his task, never looking up to meet the elders' eyes. The slave answers



some questions, but he seems to have limited knowledge. He brings blood — four points' worth — if it's requested (you may want to give a little more if the characters are badly injured). The blood is in gold cups and has a strange, spicy taste.

Characters may think twice about drinking Setite-offered blood, but without retainers, this is the only blood available for the duration of their stay. If asked about the strange taste of the blood, the servant explains that it is a flavoring necessary for the coming tests (true, as far as he knows). The blood is actually tainted by Setite poison and is used to corrupt the characters, whether here at the court or over the course of time (see *Corrupt Soul Ritual* for more information).

The servant can also explain that the snakes are holy and may go wherever they please. Protesting characters may persuade the Setites to remove snakes from the bedchambers, but the hosts do not empty the common area.

The characters are not allowed to leave their guest wing or see any retainers, according to the rules of the tests. If the characters demand to see someone in charge, the Messenger of Jocalo arrives. She reiterates the rules of the test and welcomes the characters to leave if they wish. She remains calm and reasonable at all times.

One of the characters may decide to explore the court with *Psychic Projection*, or may use *Vicissitude* or *Form of Mist* to escape the area. The investigator discovers that there are three other guest wings around an immense central hall.

The first wing contains the characters' retainers (and perhaps ones that the investigator has never seen before if the Giovanni have entered the court, too [see the Giovanni in the Fire Court sidebar]). The retainers look scared, but they are unharmed.

The second wing is similar in most respects to the characters', except that instead of a statue of Set, this area has a grotesque centerpiece of a man contorted in agony, suspended in a column of multicolored glass. This centerpiece is not the room's main attraction, though. Marianna sits on the floor in deep meditation.

How Marianna reacts to an intruding character depends largely on past encounters, though she is obviously surprised by his appearance here. The rogue Giovanni is reserved, but open to negotiations. Marianna does not confide her complete thoughts on everything, but she answers the character's questions and has a few of her own. She doesn't know any more (and possibly less) than the character does about the Setites. (For more on Marianna's role, see the Marianna in the Fire Court sidebar.)



If you decide that the Giovanni are guests of the Setites as well, having pursued Marianna and been captured, they are in the third wing. The exploring character sees Baldesar pace angrily, while Rosaura seems contemplative. Baldesar is hostile if the character reveals himself, and Rosaura is more receptive. The Rossellinis have learned through their own means that the characters and Marianna are in the court. Rosaura admits openly that her wing's centerpiece—plain, black-basalt column—repels her wraith agents. She is therefore inclined to discuss any alliances that she and the characters might make against their hosts. (For more on the siblings' role here, see the Giovanni in the Fire Court sidebar.)

The exploring character may also see a room with many human slaves, a row of coffinlike cells (which, rather than the third wing, could contain the Giovanni [see below]), and she may search the now-empty throne room. Strangely, the character does not find a Setite anywhere.

A dark hallway leads to a large onyx door. If the character tries to pass (mentally or physically), she experiences a soul-numbing sense of cold and violation. The intruder reels back with the image of two female eyes with snake's pupils burning in her skull. The character may also follow a hallway to a maze, which similarly repulses a trespassing character with the same burning image.

Otherwise, there seems to be no way out that the characters can find. Therefore, it appears that leaving the Fire Court without Setite permission is difficult, if not impossible.

Involuntary Guests

Characters brought involuntarily into the Fire Court are held in vertical, coffin-sized cells after they are brought before Princess Neferu. The characters are left near torpor, their hood still in place and their hands still fleshcrafted together. The cells are airtight to prevent vampires from escaping through mist form, and the masks stop them from roaming telepathically. Low blood reserves prohibit use of many Disciplines, so the characters probably have little chance to escape at this point. Any character who manages to free his hands suffers four non-soakable Health Levels of damage.

However, if one of the characters is a Trimisce, she notices that her hands have been bound, but that they are not forged into one; they are simply connected through meshed skin that can be broken with only some minor pain. Alexei Fleshcrafts the character's hands and does a superficial job of it for any other character who has spoken of the *Sargon Fragment*. Indeed, Alexei may even telepathically offer to help the characters if they have revealed an interest in finding the *Fragment*.

Alexei is an agent of the Setites, but he is interested in working with them only as long as it serves him. Finding the *Sargon Fragment* and gaining its power is much more

important to him than any deal he has made with the Setites. If a character exposes Alexei's overtures to the Setites, the Serpents refuse not to believe her.

Imprisoned characters each receive a visit from the Messenger of Jocalo on the first night. She firmly puts down any attacks a character makes, but she does not cause undue pain. She removes the metal mouthpiece and tilts the character's head back so that he may receive blood from a gold cup. The Messenger is quick to seal each character up again. Each player must make a successful Self-Control roll (difficulty 10) or her character undergoes a futile frenzy in prison.

Each character receives only one Blood Point, unless he is missing limbs, in which case, he receives enough blood to grow the limbs back.

If a character refuses to drink, the Messenger promises that the blood is not drugged (it isn't). If a character still refuses to drink, she splashes the vitae under his mask. The player must make a successful Self-Control roll for his character to resist drinking.

Otherwise, imprisoned characters hallucinate in their tombs and hear menacing laughter and the sounds of snakes coiling in their brains.

Giovanni in the Fire Court

Baldesar and Rosaura Rossellini tracked Marianna to Egypt before the characters even arrived there. Marianna was in search of Lazarus' tomb and the secrets of the Sargon Fragment, just as the characters are. Marianna's search led her right into the clutches of the Fire Court, and the Rossellini siblings followed her into the same trap.

You have the option of making the Rossellinis "guests" as the characters are, or of having the Giovanni still abroad in the desert in search of the missing Marianna. If the Rossellinis and their entourage are still free, the characters may meet them in the vicinity of Nabq's crossroads, as detailed previously. That encounter undoubtedly leads to a fight — one that the Setites are aware of. The Serpents bring the weakened victors or both combatants (your discretion) into the Fire Court by force. Giovanni or characters brought in this way are considered prisoners and are held in the coffin-tombs for disturbing the peace on Setite lands. The Serpents outwardly seek to settle the dispute that the characters have, but they secretly strive to corrupt one or both parties.

If you decide that the Rossellinis have arrived at the Fire Court before the characters do, they are treated as "welcomed guests." The Setites already have Marianna, the Giovanni's quarry, and they use her as bait to corrupt the Romans, as well as the characters.

Indeed, if the Giovanni are in the Fire Court, the Setites subject them to the same tests that they do the characters. The Giovanni's prize is Marianna. If the characters find out about the Giovanni's presence, the Setites confirm that they are undergoing their own series of tests, and even convey that the Giovanni vie for possession of Marianna.

To heighten their entertainment, the Setites measure the characters and the Giovanni simultaneously — in the same tests. Not only do the characters have to impress the Setites on the Serpents' own terms, but the characters have to outdo their Roman rivals.

If the characters' first prize was not Marianna, and they learn that the Giovanni are present and are contending for her, the characters may change their prize. The Setites don't care; they just want to keep the foreigners around as long as possible to corrupt them to the clan's ways. The Giovanni might even stay after the first test if the Setites mention Lazarus' tomb and the chance to gain access to it.

You must decide how the Giovanni deal with the Fire Court. Baldesar is brash enough to believe that he can engage the Setites on their own turf and win. (He and Glycon hate each other at first sight.) Baldesar may also try to eliminate the competition — the characters — if he has the opportunity. He could attack them in any of the tests in which the vampires compete. If Baldesar strikes, Nefem and her court appear from nowhere, subdue him and apologize to the characters. They then throw Baldesar into Duat (see below) to enjoy Alexei's ministrations. If Baldesar challenges a Setite (most likely Glycon), the Serpents open an impromptu court and permit him to fight for his freedom in their arena (see *The Arena*). The Setites invite the characters to watch this spectacle.

Rosaura is cautiously diplomatic in the court, and she tries to gain her objectives by playing the Serpents' game. She is receptive to discussion of an alliance that will free herself and her brother, and Rosaura is loyal to the characters only as long as it suits her purposes.

Marianna in the Fire Court

If the characters manage to contact Marianna, she is happy to see them if past relations were good. If she hasn't met them before, she is cautious but listens to what they have to say. (She is suspicious that their overtures are a Setite trick.) Marianna is not a contestant as the characters and the Giovanni are, but she relates with bitter irony that she is a "prize" to be won.

Marianna explains past events to characters who can make contact with her. In 1847, she discovered that Monsieur M. of Barcelona had access to information about Lazarus' tomb. She went to Spain, with the Giovanni on her heels, to "persuade" the magician to part with the information. He was uncooperative and she forced the papers from him. She fled Spain with her prize, but not before meeting with the mad prophet, Anatole. The Malkavian foretold the characters' coming (assuming they went through *The Anexhexeton* prelude), and Marianna entrusted a letter to him in hopes of meeting them in a year's time.

Ambrogino himself stalked Marianna in London and forced her to flee the city before she could meet the characters. She then journeyed to Egypt with a companion to explore further leads on the *Sargon Fragment*. She ran afoul of the Cairo Ghiberti, who killed her companion and hurt Marianna severely.

Discouraged by her defeats and constant flight, Marianna went deep into hiding for decades, until she hoped that the Giovanni would lose track of her. They didn't lose her completely and picked up her trail when she avenged her friend's death by killing the leader of Cairo's Ghiberti.

Marianna finally fled to Luxor to find Lazarus' tomb, but she was taken captive by the Setites, who anticipated the arrival of the Giovanni and the characters. She cautions that the eiders should not trust the Setites.

Marianna is knowledgeable on many subjects and is less cryptic than Durga Syn. She explains that Lazarus lived for centuries in a Coptic monastery on land traditionally held by the Setites (who claim the entire west bank of the Nile). Lazarus reportedly entered the Fire Court for five nights several centuries ago, but Marianna knows nothing of what transpired.

She also recounts a dream in which a black bird carrying carrion flesh flew to Lazarus' Coptic monastery. Marianna interprets this dream to mean that Lazarus returned to his haven recently. (Marianna is correct — Lazarus, posing as the Capuchin, returned to the church with none other than Augustus Giovanni to inter the Antediluvian's murdered child, Claudius. (See *Clanbook: Giovanni* for details on these events.)

Marianna may be a font of information on other matters as well, but she cautions that not even telepathy may be a safe form of communication in this "den of vipers." She delays any serious discussion of Cappadocius, the *Sargon Fragment* or apothecis until they leave the Fire Court — the characters must, therefore, play the Setite games to win Marianna in order to continue their personal quest.

The Five Tests

Characters who agree to undergo the Serpents' tests to gain the information they want must spend at least two nights — and five at the most — in the Fire Court.

The rules established by the Setites are straightforward and deceptively simple. If the characters came to the court voluntarily, they may leave at any time they choose. The Followers of Set have designed each test to explore and exploit the characters' moral strengths and weaknesses. Refusal to finish a test by any character means they all fail and must all leave. There is no prize for the first night, which is the ceremonial preparation night "in accordance with Set's traditions."

In general, any additional requests that the characters make along the way require another night's stay. No matter how many favors the characters request at the beginning, the Setites try to increase the number by offering additional incentives for them to stay (see *Incentives*).

Characters who are kept in the court against their will are kept in coffinlike cells. The Setites keep them drained and near torpor, giving them only small amounts of blood before each test.

The fact that the characters and the Giovanni compete in the same tests does not mean that the sides are equal. If the Giovanni are there willingly and the characters are not, the Giovanni may acquire what they wish and depart long before the characters can earn their freedom. If the circumstances are reversed, the characters may rack up their prizes and go before the Giovanni can escape. Otherwise, it is a horse race and a guessing game.

Although the Setites lay down certain "rules" for the game, they have great respect for characters who find ingenious ways to cheat. Despite their deserved reputation for guile, the Setites keep their word in most instances (at least as it pertains to the tests) and seem almost frighteningly honest.

The order in which the tests are run depends on how many favors the characters ask of the Setites. All characters undergo the events of the first night, which seem like bizarre entertainment offered to the characters, but the events are actually indicators of their natures and virtues. If the characters intend to stay for just two nights — they want only one favor — run the events of The Fourth Night (Duat) as their test. If characters stay three nights or more, you can run any of the tests described below, as long as The Fourth Night is staged before the characters leave.

Player Options

The five tests are high-stakes games. Running the characters through all five nights may have story and character implications long after events at the Fire Court are passed. Decide how far you want to take the tests. Downplay the games if you want the overall plot of this book to proceed; the characters can leave in a night or two. Play up the tests if your game is a venue for roleplaying; the tests certainly offer an opportunity for players to strut their stuff. Indeed, the players may make the decision for you, deciding to get what they need and leave immediately, or to undergo all of the tests — doing the latter as an act of defiance against the Setites, or out of sheer greed.

Characters who compete against the Giovanni to win Marianna and other prizes have a few options available to them. The Setite rules are flexible. If winning a prize means making the competition look bad, then characters can use their Disciplines to "cheat" or confound the Russellinis. The actual ploy the characters use is up to the players, but you, playing the role of the Setites, should overlook almost any underhanded tactic short of outright combat.

The Giovanni certainly plan to cheat. However, Baldesar resorts to violence when guile proves too slow, and he is taken away by the Giovanni as discussed in the "Giovanni in the Fire Court" sidebar. Rosaum is more cunning and uses her Disciplines to make the characters look bad whenever possible. She might, for example, demand that one of her wraiths attend her in the court. It probably means losing the services of the spirit forever (due to the proximity of the basalt column in the Giovanni's quarters), but it might mean learning the characters' plans in advance, and undermining them.

Fortunately, for all contestants, the Setites respect creativity; cheating to make a competitor look bad also raises the status of an opponent in their eyes.

The First Night

The festivities of the first night are not officially part of the tests. They are described as "hospitality" by the Setites, who allow the characters to meet and speak with the Serpents' slaves, and to otherwise entertain themselves and gain strength before the actual tests. In truth, the Setites watch the characters' activities on this night to learn their moral strengths and weaknesses.

You must decide whether the Giovanni are present for these festivities. If they are, this is an opportunity for the characters to scheme with them to attack the Setites, or a chance for the characters to match wits with the Russellinis.

Guests and prisoners of the Fire Court are treated differently on the first night. Guests' experiences are described here. Prisoners' experiences are described under "Unwilling Guests."

Characters who are in the court voluntarily are attended to by a slave in a ceremonial robe shortly after they awake. The slave brings them to the main hall where two rows of beautiful men and women await them in modest white robes and gold sashes. A Setite woman of surpassing beauty introduces herself as Scyla. She wears a form-fitting, silken yellow dress with a Chinese dragon pattern on it. She smiles at the characters, her eyes lingering on them hungrily. Her voice sends a sensual shudder down their undead spines.

"This is not a test, but a refreshment before the tests begin. Each of these slaves is highly skilled in bringing pleasure to our kind. In addition to fleshly delights, they are well-versed in many subjects. Some sing. Others are of a more scholarly bent. Go among them and choose as many as you desire. If you must kill, choose only from the second row."

The characters may question the slaves, who are genuinely eager to serve. No matter what a character's interests, it is likely that one of the slaves shares it to a certain degree. Some of the slaves are ghouls, others are human. The oldest among them is Hector, a 300-year-old ghoul who appears to be a 17-year-old.

Characters may refuse to mingle with the slaves; the Setites do not force them to. However, that refusal tells the Serpents as much about the characters as does interaction with the humans — the characters are resolute and determined.

Scyla explains that she is not allowed to partake of the characters' entertainment, but that she might enjoy their company another night (if they stay). Rather, she calls forth two beautiful Egyptian children, a boy and girl, who wear the golden robes of favored slaves. They appear to be only slightly younger than Neferu herself and look almost feline, with high cheek bones and slightly tapered ears. They have luxurious black hair and light-brown skin that glows like burnished bronze in the low firelight. High, thin brows

frame eyes that flicker gold and orange as the children regard the characters with an unbearable serenity. Those who read their minds discover that the children are in a state of ecstasy, virtually above the world itself. Toreador must receive successful Willpower rolls (difficulty 7) to divert themselves from the fascinating children.

Scyla explains that the twin slaves' blood courses with a potent drug known as soma; the drug has a mystical component that may reveal certain truths. She claims the substance is harmless. Some, all or none of the characters may choose to drink from the delicate young slaves. Even the most vicious of Sabbat are overcome by the pleasurable rush of the blood and cannot ravage the children's throats. Scyla has the pair issued away after all the characters have had a chance to drink. (See the Soma sidebar for the drug's effects.)

Scyla departs after the children do, leaving the characters to their leisure. The area is partitioned into a series of opulent rooms of varying size and decor, apparently affording characters privacy if they desire it. The rooms and halls are lined with tapestries and great works of art by human and vampire masters. Eunuchs stand guard, but their role is strictly decorative. The pleasure slaves comply to even the most outrageous demands. They seem to genuinely love their Setite masters, though they feel some fear as well. (If a character forces a slave to act against the Setites, the slave has violent seizures.) Slaves answer questions about the Setites, but their responses are somewhat limited. They believe they are the beloved Children of Set and that the Setites are their gods.

The slaves are of the Setites' highest caste; their greatest fear is of demotion to the lower ranks, or of going to Duat (the Underworld). If the characters ask where Duat is, they tell them it is beyond the great onyx door. None of the slaves knows what is actually there: No one ever returns.

Characters who drink from the slaves discover that their blood has the same spicy quality as did the blood fed to them in cups earlier.

The Setites do not interfere if the characters mistreat the slaves, even if they kill a ghoul from the first or third row. (The insight the Setites gain from the test far outweighs their slaves' value.) Anything is open game, and Sabbat characters may take this opportunity to follow some of their less humane instincts.

Characters who decide to enjoy the fleshly pursuits offered by the Setites find that the slaves are everything that was promised and more. The elder vampires are accustomed to the idea of humans as playthings, but the Setites' slaves exceed anything they have ever experienced. The characters may be tender or brutal, according to their whims. It is also possible that the night's entertainment awakens the Lover in any character who is possessed by the Spectre. After 400 years, most vampires are long

beyond caring what their human partners feel. Others, however, may use the experience as a chance to reacquire themselves with the beauty and fragility of mortality.

Characters bent solely on pleasure may gain more than they bargained for. The slaves are well-versed in pleasuring vampires. They can employ techniques and rare oils that bring a flush of life back to the grayest skin. Nosferatu and other less "aesthetic" characters note that all of the slaves are beautiful and may decide that the entire exercise is a hollow one. Ironically, the uglier the character, the more that some of the slaves seem to be attracted to him. Most of the slaves are versed in the most perverse of sexual practices, human or vampiric. Others are young, inexperienced or even virginal. Characters may feel their long-dead hearts beat again and sense a hot blush freckle their skin.

A great wash of nostalgia accompanies reawakened senses. Flashes of the characters' human lives, long buried in darkness, pass through their minds. These flashes may delight some and repulse or disturb others. The characters also find that the slaves are highly receptive to the use of Disciplines (-2 difficulty on all rolls involving the slaves).

Several partitioned rooms are filled with erotic clothing and sexual paraphernalia. Toreador attuned to the fashion world may recognize several Madame Marcón originals among the outfits. Many of the tools are designed to heighten a slave's desirability to an undead lover. Various devices control blood flow; some of the sexual devices are deviant; some look (and move) like snakes. Others are translucent, with various-sized spinal columns within. Even more exotic — and disgusting — are perfectly preserved, truncated human and animal genitalia. These may do little for the characters, but several slaves gravitate toward the items and show obvious signs of addiction. Many of the sexual instruments have a mystical or alchemical component that increases the user's pleasure (or pain) to an unnatural degree.

Alexei's contribution is a mechanical blood pump. The device is encased in a decorative lapis box with gold trim. It draws blood sensuously or agonizingly from a subject and stores the vitae in dark-red ceramic vases. A character may use this device on slaves for various forms of entertainment, or on herself — a certain amount of hunger excites the palate.

A slave dons a special apparatus with gold clamps that facilitates or constricts various portions of his vascular system. The slave's hot blood gushes into a feeding vampire's empty veins at an unbelievable rate. The pleasure is immense and the character may be hard-pressed to stop before she drains the slave dry (he dies at the end of two turns). The first slave to don this garb is from the expendable row, but slaves of any row gladly wear the blood-flow device.

Characters who decide to be cruel discover that the slaves can endure vast amounts of physical pain, and they even beg the characters to hurt them. The slaves seek pain and degradation to validate their sense of worthlessness, or to feel emotions of any kind. Other slaves fear pain and go to great lengths to avoid punishment. Yet, all slaves derive some spark of pleasure from harsh treatment, no matter how hard the characters hurt them. This factor may prove to be quite maddening to any sadists in the group.

However, some slaves are fragile psychologically. Characters may implant nightmares or phobias that the humans may never recover from. The slaves are so receptive to these nightmares that a character implanting them may suffer a form of psychic backlash. The character may become caught in his own creations if Telepathy is used to experience a slave's pain. The undergoing is frightening — the character is trapped temporarily in his victim's mind — but is unlikely to cause permanent damage.

The slaves may also provide characters with intellectual entertainment, in tandem with or instead of carnal delights. Some slaves are talented musicians and can serenade the characters with a wide range of instruments and musical styles. The slaves' scholarly pursuits run the gamut from history, science, philosophy, folklore to the arts. All of the slaves are multi-lingual; communication is not a problem.

One room contains a library with a modest, but highly representative collection of common and rare books. Bibliophiles are likely to find a few volumes that they have sought after for a long time. Almost half of the collection is of a provocative nature and covers everything from the volumes of the Marquis de Sade (*Justine* and *The Misfortunes of Virtue*) to Leopold Masoch's *Venus in Furs* to the writings of the recently deceased Baudelaire. There are also books on Tantra and blood-curdling pornography by notorious Toreador and Malkavian deviants.

The remainder of the books are of a more general nature. There are various histories, works of fiction (anything from Homer to the latest by Twain) and scientific texts. There are several books on the occult, including *The Book of the Dead*. This book may be disappointing to the characters at first; the text seems to be primarily descriptions of ancient mortuary techniques. However, a character who studies the tome comes across a passage describing a "simple" ritual, The Eye of Apophis, that allows the caster to see wraiths. The Green-Eyed Venus, one of the slaves, is a highly accomplished occultist and may be valuable to the characters who want to know more about the ritual. The slave states that the spell is practiced by her masters. The Setites later volunteer to teach a character the ritual if the guests stay another night (see incentives, as well).



Soma

Characters who drink from the two favored slaves soon feel the effects of a drug unlike any they have ever taken. It causes hallucinogenic effects that adapt to a drinker's desires. The character also experiences synesthesia (crossover of the senses; the character sees sounds and feels smells). As the drug's effects climax, the character sees (or believes she sees) the central truths and paradoxes of vampiric existence. The world becomes whatever she wishes for the remainder of the night and she may fancy that this is part of what the *Sargon Fragment* could do for her.

Those who abstain from the children and study their drugged companions' auras see deep-red hues and the fiery flickers of subdued magical force. Using Telepathy to read drugged characters' minds is challenging (difficulty 7, two successes needed). If the telepath succeeds, his mind blends with that of the subject and essentially forms one entity with control of the two separate bodies.

Characters who undergo the effects of this drug may change Natures or take the Dual Nature Merit, permanently (Storyteller's choice whether one or either effect takes hold). You and the player must agree on the character's new Nature, though it should be significantly different from the old one. The character perceives this change as spiritual growth, but the Serpents know it to be the complete destruction of the old personality — and its replacement by a corrupt new one. The drug may even be addictive, depending on a character's new Nature. The Setites are, of course, willing to supply the character with the drug in the future for a "reasonable price."

Slaves

The Setites' slaves run the gamut of human experience. Half of them are Egyptian, and the others come from Europe and exotic climes. They are multifaceted individuals with their own passions, dreams and flaws. Yet, it is clear that each is driven by an unnatural desire, typically carnal. If characters choose cerebral pastimes, slaves try to steer proceedings to more base pursuits. Slaves become flustered if characters resist these actions, as though the servants are forced to act contrary to their true natures.

Denying slaves physical or sexual acts throughout the night causes them anguish as morning approaches. They shudder. Their skin becomes ashen and their lips turn blue. Some of them even spit up foam and die if they're spurned. The Setites vent their displeasure on the slaves if they fail to engender the "appropriate response" in the characters.

The slaves are aware of this danger, but they do not speak of it to the characters. (Though the elders can gain this information easily if they search the slaves' minds.) A slave who fails the Setites may appear as a victim in Duat on the fourth night (or whenever the test in Duat is staged).

The slaves are obsessed with sexual deviancy. Some show an eagerness to dominate or hurt their peers, but then turn on a dime and become quite submissive. Genuine bonds of fraternity and friendship also appear to exist between many of them. They aid and abet each other in mass-seducing the characters, and they seem to share a natural, almost empathic rapport.

There is a definite hierarchy among the slaves, including a king and queen. The harem's social order seems predicated on age, beauty, wit and sexual expertise, and it mirrors Kindred society in odd ways. Some of the slaves are emotionally dead, while others are vibrant and alive. All are highly accomplished at two or more skills. Most of the ghoulish slaves have at least one point of Fortitude to withstand the rigors of the court. You may wish to create more slaves than those described here.

The Three Dreamers: The Setites call three special slaves "the dreamers." Characters who read these mortals' minds discover extremely vivid thoughts and imaginations. The dreamers interact with the outside world, but they are ultimately lost in worlds of their own creation. The dreamers' fantasies even apply to the room; every detail of the hall has a surreal aspect from these slaves' perspectives.

The characters may explore these private realms, going along for the ride or taking control of a host's mind, creating compelling images of almost any kind. Mindreading characters can even experience vivid memories of the sun without sustaining harm. Characters with Telepathy may also link the minds of several humans to the dreamers, orchestrating their thoughts into symphonies of pleasure or terror. The dreamers may be used to re-enact past events or for the characters to become gods of their own private universes.

Each dreamer is marked with an asterisk (*).

The First Row (Favored Slaves)

The Setites protect the slaves in this row to a certain extent, though these humans are ultimately expendable. The characters may use torture or may degrade these people in any way they wish. The Setites intervene only if the characters begin to slaughter the favored ones. A character may kill one of these people "accidentally" in the throes of passion. The Setites admonish the murderer but do not impose any penalties.

Akhdar Husayn: Akhdar is a handsome Egyptian man, seemingly in his late 20s, with brown skin and dark-brown eyes. He is a brilliant musician and composer, worthy of any Toreador retinue, and is Scyla's favorite minstrel. He generally appears cheerful and full of life, but his 100 years

of playing for the court have destroyed his will to live. He urges characters to "free him" through death, but he is in the wrong row for such release.

The Green-Eyed Venus*: The "Green-Eyed Venus" is a valuable prize from a distant land — an Irish woman with no memory of her past before meeting the Serites. She displayed remarkable occult knowledge and the Serpents allowed her to continue her studies and gained some interesting insights from her. The characters may profit similarly if they recognize her as more than just a pretty face. Her dreams are the most potent (and dangerous) of the three dreamers.

The Venus conveys the feeling that she was once something greater than she is now. She succumbs slowly to the monotony and degradation of the court, and she is dying emotionally. She encourages the characters to handle her roughly in trade for her expertise in hopes of firing her emotions.

The Green-Eyed Venus is favored because she is a dreamer and because her red hair marks her as chosen by Set. She is not a Necromancer, but she is widely read on the supernatural (Occult 5), and may even teach a few hedge spells.

General Ahmad Ibn Tabari: The "General" is a chiseled Egyptian man in his early 40s. He has a pointed black beard and a friendly demeanor. Military historians among the party find him highly knowledgeable about almost every battle ever fought. He discusses military history, theory, weaponry and his "erotic encounters in times of war" with equal facility and charm. And yet, he is a fraud. Ahmad was a clerk in the Ottoman Army. He never saw a battle and fell into the court's clutches by pursuing prostitutes.

The Serites have created grandiose memories for the man, and they are amused by the presumptions of their "paper general." (Ahmad considers himself Glycon's valued confidant.)

The General is less physical than are most of the other slaves, and extreme sex acts seem to degrade him more so than they do the other slaves. Characters who expose the fraud damage the General's psyche.

Tuya*: Tuya is a pretty Egyptian girl in her late teens. She has straight black hair and moves with modesty. Tuya was born to a wealthy Cairo merchant family. An enterprising Toreador discovered her vivid dreams and spirited her from her home, and he subsequently sold her to the Serpents. Tuya was introduced to a strange and frightening new world only three months ago, and is slow to adapt to her new role as a toy.

Tuya takes great solace in the arms of the court's third dreamer: Jaffa. He seduced her when she first arrived, but he has tired of her already. Love still clouds Tuya's eyes, and the characters' presence may affect the couple's relationship in any number of ways. If the characters are kind to her, she

entreats one of them to help her and Jaffa escape the court. This plan is highly unrealistic, but the humans' freedom might be won if the characters agree to stay another night.

Hector: Hector appears to be a Greek young man, but he is really 300 years old — the oldest of the slaves. Hector seems disinterested in the court's power games, but he looks after the other slaves. He's a contemporary of Scyla and has considerable influence over her. He uses this power to intercede with the Serites on the slaves' behalf.

Hector's good-natured charm and easy going manner make him a favorite among the slaves and their vampire masters. Characters who speak with him realize that he has developed a sense of inner peace, incongruous with the Serpent court. Hector is an athlete and a talented musician, hunter, mathematician and philosopher. He is highly adept at *Obfuscate* and *Presence* to a lesser degree.

The Black Pharaoh: The "Black Pharaoh" was a highly acclaimed young actress on the European stage at the turn of the century. Despite the woman's undeniable talent, her lover and mentor abandoned her when she showed her first signs of aging. She turned to drink for solace and prostitution for survival, and she was on the verge of insanity when the Serites discovered her. The vampires halted the Black Pharaoh's aging, gave her new purpose and introduced her to a new life.

The actress took to the court with a passion. She was a skillful manipulator and soon rose to the top of the slaves' ranks. She currently manipulates Tuya and Jaffa (third row) for her amusement, but she has been unable to impress the third dreamer into her service. A personal favorite of Scyla, the Black Pharaoh fears that the vampire's eyes now shift to Tuya.

The Second Row (Expendable Slaves)

The slaves of the second row are fodder to lure the characters into extreme acts. These slaves realize they are expendable and deal with that knowledge in various ways: Some seek out death carelessly, while others do everything in their power to please the characters to save their lives.

Helena: Helena is an attractive, blonde woman in her mid-20s. Her eyes have a hollow, haunted look. She is addicted to extremes of sensation, pleasure and pain, and seeks death in one last moment of passion. Helena clearly once had other interests (she is a skilled historian and linguist) but is now little more than a sexual zombie. She moves from one physical encounter to another with not much distinction between partners. Helena manipulates the characters into killing her, whether through pleas or offenses.

Horus (The White Pharaoh): Despite his ostentatious title, the "White Pharaoh" is one of the more inconsequential members of the harem. He believes himself to be the god Horus. He dresses in regal robes and sometimes wears an

elaborate jeweled-falcon headdress. He addresses the characters as though they are his equals, or even his subordinates.

The Pharaoh was "crowned" mainly by virtue of his sexual prowess. He is inordinately proud of his member and waves it around like a scepter. The White Pharaoh prefers to dominate sex, and his enthusiasm fades if he's forced to be submissive.

The Setites have sculpted the man into a parody of Horus, the son of Osiris, Set's enemy. The White Pharaoh is in the expendable row, and the characters realize that he is low in status among the slaves. The others have good-natured fun at his expense, but few slaves seem to dislike him. The Pharaoh is a 150-year-old ghoul and has the Disciplines Celerity 1, Fortitude 3, Potence 2 and Presence 1.

The Third Row

Slaves in this row sense the tenuousness of their existence in the Fire Court. Their actions or natures deny them the protection of the first row in the various tests that the Serites stage, and they fear falling too far out of favor and being reduced to little more than food for strangers. Therefore, these slaves go to great lengths to ensure that their masters are pleased.

Celeste: A high-class Parisian courtesan, Celeste accepted an offer from a wealthy foreign merchant in 1750 and has been in the court ever since. Celeste left a daughter behind and is obsessed with her long-dead child. The Setites have allowed her to conceive a child out of perverse sympathy. Celeste believes the father is the White Pharaoh, but this belief is not true.

Celeste confides that she seems to have been pregnant for a very long time. Use of Telepathy indicates two consciousnesses in her body: her own and a primal one with a low intelligence and a malignant intent. A character who uses Telepathy on the Setites to investigate further discovers that the vampires (probably Alexei) implanted Celeste with a bizarre "mortuary embryo."

Celeste is a painter and promising playwright, in addition to her sexual talents.

Jaffa*: The spoiled son of a rich Ottoman nobleman, Jaffa is a liar and self-described "thief of hearts." His previous life was pampered and he attended prestigious schools in Europe and America. His fantasy life was even more decadent than his real one, though. His violent dreams of sexual conquest turned into acts of murder, and he fell easily under the Setites' sway.

The vampires have given Jaffa the freedom to explore his fantasies. He has also become the private vassal of the Black Pharaoh who allows him to indulge his brutal cravings on the other women of the harem. The

Black Pharaoh bade Jaffa to seduce Tuya upon the girl's arrival. He now finds the innocent newcomer dull by comparison to the rest of the slaves. Jaffa continues his courtship to further degrade Tuya and also out of obedience to the Black Pharaoh.

Jaffa enjoys the court immensely and believes he can leave at any time. He has no desire to "escape" with Tuya, but he hasn't told her that. Jaffa has a strong, undisciplined mind; his dreams are of animal passion and violence, with him as the perpetrator.

The Lover

A character who was captured by Ambrogino in London and possessed by the Lover may experience the Spectre's emergence during this night's activities. The character is hard-pressed to resist the Lover's influence, even if he tries to abstain from the carnal festivities. The slaves look incredibly desirable to the character, and every instinct urges him to sate his darkest desires. If the character resists, the player should roll Willpower against the Lover's to determine who takes control.

If the player wins, the Lover goes quiet and the character can refuse the Setites' enticements. If the player loses the roll, the Spectre takes over and guides all of the character's actions. The vampire is overcome by lust and may believe that his actions are still his own.

The Lover seeks gratification for itself and its host. The spirit doesn't care about the slaves' well-being and apportion pleasure and pain in unequal measure. The Lover tries to avoid arousing the other characters' suspicions, but it is unable to resist the lure of the Serites' diversions and may lose control. (It wants to sample both the soma and the dreamers.) Slaves are killed unless the possessed character's companions intervene. Whether the other characters notice that something is amiss depends on how uncharacteristically the Lover makes its host behave.

The Spectre may also speak directly with the character and tell him that it can provide greater pleasure and power if the vampire "stays with me forever." The wraith may even answer a few questions, though it portrays itself as a fellow victim of the Giovanni. It professes to hate the clan and says the fetters that bind it to the character are permanent. The Lover promises to help the elder against the Giovanni, but it distrusts the other characters as well. It knows the character's opinions about his companions and seeks to reinforce the host's suspicions about his allies. If the character reaches some sort of agreement with the Spectre, he can call on it at will for advice in the future. The Lover claims to be weak now, but it promises, "I will grow stronger." If the character rejects the Lover, he might convince the Setites to remove the Spectre, though such a difficult task certainly demands another night's stay.



Unwilling Guests (The First Night)

Characters who entered the Fire Court by force and who are prisoners have a simpler (if less enjoyable) first night in store. The Setites drag the prisoners into a room and seat them in chairs. Their captors remove the metal mouthpieces so the elders may speak, but they still cannot see.

A hushed murmur washes around the room, and then Sobek speaks. "Thieves and infidels, you have intruded on our solitude. If you would see the night sky again, you must earn your freedom by furnishing us amusement. They say that the Camarilla (or Sabbat) embodies the epitome of vampiric existence. As such, you are no doubt gifted conversationalists. Speak among you for us to hear, on any subject you please. Tell us a tale or spit your righteous venom at us."

The Setites stay silent and the characters must speak. They may talk about any subject: art, religion or politics. They can tell the Setites in gruesome detail what they promise to do to the Serpents some night. This scene probably shouldn't last more than 15 or 20 minutes unless the players are enjoying themselves.

The Serpents applaud and share appreciative comments if the characters are particularly entertaining. The Serpents frown if the characters are boring, un-

imaginative or resistant. The prisoners are returned to their cells when they are finished. The Messenger of Jocalo is there, removes their masks, and feeds them another point's worth of unscented blood before interring them for the night. Those who have sufficient blood and Auspex 5 may take the short opportunity of being fed to survey the Fire Court, as detailed previously.

If the characters refuse to speak before the Setites, the Serpents return them to their cells. The Messenger warns that the characters have two nights to choose more wisely and feeds them incredibly potent vitae from a golden cup; it is clearly from a powerful vampire (Neferu); it seems that the Setites intend to force the characters to behave under threat of Blood Bond.

The Messenger returns the next night to give the characters another opportunity to take a test. If they comply, you should probably stage the events of The Fourth Night (Duat), unless the characters prove resigned to undergo more than one test. Stage The Second Night (The Arena) if characters decide to seek prizes other than their freedom.

Characters who refuse even a second night of testing are fed another taste of Neferu's blood. They are then forced to undergo the Duat test on their third night under threat of completing the Blood Bond.

The Second Night (The Arena)

The second test is virtually the same for both voluntary and involuntary guests. They are taken to a large sunken arena with a mosaic of a black and red scorpion across its floor. If the characters are there unwillingly, Alexei steps forward and grabs their bound hands. The elders feel flesh and bone unknit and separate.

The Setites watch from a gallery above as the characters enter the arena. All of the Setites who were in the throne room when the characters first arrived, and more — eight in total — are here. The only one missing is Neferu. Slaves walk among the Setites, who feed languidly from the vessels.

Glycon steps forward and addresses the characters plainly, "We of the Serpent are warriors and honor those who know the code of war. There are no lies or half-truths in the arena, only existence or destruction.

"We have driven many Lupines from the Nile, but a few of their number remain to harass all Kindred. Three of these beasts were captured on our lands, in defiance of our sacred law. Kill them and claim your prize. Fail the test and die under the beasts' fangs." Glycon adds, "Fight and be free," if the characters are there involuntarily.

The fight is resolved based on the characters' status in the court. Elders who attend voluntarily must choose a single champion from among them (this could even be Baldesar or Rosaura if the characters can silence any dissension against their choice). The champion may drink from one of two large bowls. Each contains 10 points worth of blood: The blood in the gold bowl is scented, while the blood in the silver bowl is not.

Characters who are there involuntarily are probably direfully weak and can barely stand. There is a collective effort. Enough unscented blood is provided for each character to restore six Blood Points, although the characters may share the blood in any way they wish. They may choose to give almost all of it to one of them, but they must all fight. (The Setites are amused if the characters squabble amongst themselves for the vitae.)

Glycon insists on a "true fight" and forbids the use of Presence or Dominate. He shows the characters a collection of weapons (swords, spears, knives, axes) and lets them choose.

The arena is a broad, round dish. It is surrounded by high walls that are topped with razor-sharp spikes. The skulls of previous gladiators line the interior wall. The skulls are mostly vampiric, though there is a massive wolf's skull encrusted with gold and precious stones. There is no cover anywhere in the ring, only the black and red scorpion mosaic, whose jagged contours seem to distort space in the arena, making it difficult to judge distances (Perception

Dice Pools are reduced by two dice). Use of The Gleam of the Red Eyes reduces this penalty to one die, and the Lupines are immune to the scorpion's effect.

The portal on the other side of the arena opens. The arena stretches and distorts. The characters' vision shifts in and out of focus in a maddeningly random way. Two massive brown and gray wolves burst through the suddenly all-too-close portal. One of the animals is male and the other is female. The beasts are larger than normal wolves and have long, sharp claws and sleek, streamlined bodies. They wear collars with silver studs, and they are mad with pain and rage. The Lupines attack directly but have some tricky moves (including a 10-meter backward jump). The characters' weapons are not silver and the beasts heal one lost Health Level per turn.

Ultimately, perhaps the only way to win is to remove the werewolves' heads or to hack them into small pieces. The Lupines do not parley, though they dimly register more hatred for the Setites than they do for the characters. At some point in the fight, one (or both) of the enraged Lupines leaps into the stands and injures itself on the wall's iron spikes. The jump's sheer height seems to surprise even the Setites. The bottom two rows of the audience are occupied by the Serpents' human pets, who freeze with terror or flee screaming. Sobek rises and utters a harsh syllable, stopping the beast in its tracks. The Setites throw the animal back into the arena and wound it with a silver blade (one Health Level that cannot be regenerated) as a penalty.

Characters may notice that the wolves fight more savagely if the melee moves close to their entryway. The portal has a strong animal smell. Entering the chamber beyond drives both werewolves berserk. The only light in the room radiates from the arena, which is a square chamber with no discernible exit and is adorned with the same evil-looking hieroglyphics that the characters have seen elsewhere in the Fire Court.

A pile of torn tapestries serves as a nest in the far corner. A frightened one-year-old wolf cub bares its teeth and growls from the nest. The cub is too young to change form or defend itself adequately, but it is fast and elusive. The cub's defenders fly against the intruders in insane fury. If a character actually manages to grab the cub as a hostage, the parents pause long enough for the characters to escape the den. Taking the hostage results in little more than a temporary stand-off, though. The parents pace the characters as long as they have the cub. Despite their survival instincts, the wolves would kill their cub rather than let it remain in the character's clutches.

If one of the characters manages to rip a silver collar off one of the beasts (or if a character spares the cub when he could have killed it), the creatures show crude gratitude and avoid attacking that character. If there is only one foe, the beasts may spare him, but only if he no longer presents a threat. The werewolves hurl themselves against the

Setites instead, who slash the creatures to pieces with abandon. Otherwise, it is up to the characters to dispatch the Lupines. The characters win their prize if the Lupines are killed, whether by the elders or the Setites.

Another character may replace the champion if the warrior falls. Characters who fight the werewolves as a group have little recourse if their numbers dwindle. You might have the Setites grant the characters more blood if the fight has proven entertaining thus far.

After the battle is over, the Setites give injured characters enough blood to heal their wounds — about six points' worth each. The Setites kill the Lupine cub if it still lives, but they toy with it for a long time before drinking it dry.

The Lupines

Background: The three Lupines are a family, outcasts from a pack of Lupus werewolves that ranged along the southern Nile. The wolves entered Setite territory and were captured by Glycon and his men. They have suffered ill treatment at the Serpents' hands and have been fed human flesh, among other things.

Nature/Demeanor: Fanatic/Fanatic

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 3

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledge: Investigation 1, Occult 2

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Auspex 2 (Sense Corruption), Celerity 1, Protean 4

Willpower: 7

Image: All three wolves have dark-brown fur with gray streaks. The male has patches of sable black on his back and long muzzle, appearing related to the jackal-headed creatures at Karnak, if the characters witnessed those. The wolves assume Hispo (prehistoric wolf) form in combat. The female is larger than the male and has a white crescent marking between her eyes. The cub has a bent paw and the distinctive markings of both of its parents. All three of the animals turn into normal wolves when they die.

Roleplaying Hint: You were exiled from the great tribe for mating with each other. The monsters who keep you chained here will kill you in any event, so you might as well kill as many of them as possible before you die.

Storyteller: The werewolves can heal one Health Level every turn automatically, except for wounds inflicted by silver weapons or by the teeth and claws of Kindred, which do permanent harm. Werewolves cause aggravated damage with their teeth and claws. The animals are Dominated by the Setites and cannot flee to the safety of the Umbra.

Aftermath

Victorious characters win their prize (which might simply be their lives if they have been prisoners up to this point). They are free to leave the Fire Court, although the Setites want them to stay longer to ensure the characters' corruption. Three iron boxes full of gold are delivered to the characters' chambers (or are tossed to the arena floor if the characters demand their freedom immediately), with promise of more if the characters remain another night.

Glycon and the Messenger of Jocalo may also take the characters aside and say, "You have won your prize, but you may be no closer to achieving your goal than when you arrived here. There are a great many things that you may learn from us about Lazarus' tomb — but these must be won."

Characters who decide to leave are escorted to the surface, but without any of their weapons, possessions or entourage if the Setites are disappointed with the characters' performance. (See If the Characters Leave for more information on departing from the Fire Court.)

The Third Night (A Game of Chess)

If the characters stay for a third night, a slave summons them to a large, four-sided theater with tiered seats and a low, square stage. The stage is made of red stone and is partitioned into 64 equal squares. Thirty-two ragged slaves stand in fearful rows. Most of the slaves look Egyptian, but two are European. Each wears a fetish identifying him or her as a chess piece. They all carry short daggers and look at the characters with blind fear. The characters are invited to take seats at one end of the "board"; the Setites recline in a higher row at the opposite end. The only hosts missing are Alexei and Neferu.

Sobek grins and says:

"You of the Camarilla (or Sabbat) are reputedly great tacticians, so I am sure you are familiar with the fundamentals of chess. These wretches before you have stolen from us or defiled our temples. We have condemned them to death and you must aid in their just execution. I only hope you are more entertaining than my last opponent." This comment evokes laughter from a few of the Setites, but not from Sevla, who the vizier looks at with obvious and unrequited lust.

The characters may have moral difficulties with this test, or none at all. Sabbat might not blink at the prospect of condemning humans to their deaths — some Sabbat might even find it tame. Those who strive to maintain their humanity may face a dilemma. While all of the characters have killed before, this game is cold-blooded murder. The apparent fact that the Setites have already sentenced the prisoners may make playing a little easier for Kindred, but

hardly palatable. Humane characters must also weigh the worth of these human strangers against the greater good of stopping the Giovanni.

If the characters protest or move to walk out on the game, the Setites are magnanimous and make a counteroffer. They will spare the lives of those who survive the game. If the characters still quit, Sobek hisses and curses them for their false pretensions to humanity and taunts them with the prize they have just surrendered. The characters are free to leave the Fire Court.

If Rosaura is still in the Fire Court, she may volunteer to play in place of hesitant characters. However, she might stipulate that winning the game means freedom for her and her brother, leaving the characters to fend for themselves another night.

If the characters agree to play, they must succeed at a resisted and extended Intelligence + Game Playing roll to beat Sobek (first player to five successes wins). You could also set up a chess board and compete with the players — allow a good chess player to assume the role of Sobek if your chess strategies are rusty. Sobek is an audacious, but hardly unbeatable, player.

If any of the characters speak with an English accent, one of the European's "pieces" seems to awaken from his trance. He staggers forward and stares into the shadows at the characters and gasps, "No. No. No. It cannot be. An Englishman? Here? Good lord, help me, sir! I am Sir Richard Tuffton, an archaeologist. These barbarians — my mind!" The other European, a Frenchman, mutters to himself. There is general laughter from the Setite gallery as the vizier silences the "piece" with a stare. The characters may request that the two Europeans be added to their prize if they win.

The human chess pieces kill each other on command, though a few balk and run frantically around the board before guards hack them to pieces to the applause of the assemblage. The characters pass this test regardless of whether they win or lose the game. Sobek is scornful if they lose badly, and he scowls at them darkly if they win. A narrow loss by the characters evokes a "good game, well played," from the appreciative winner.

Participants with Humanity 5 or higher must succeed at a Conscience roll (difficulty 7) or lose a point of Humanity. This difficulty is reduced by one if characters negotiated to save lives, or by two if they secure the archaeologists' release.

The Setites agree to award the characters their prize for the night. The characters may be thinking of taking their winnings and running by this time. The Setites offer them further prizes to keep the guests there another night (see the Incentives page).

The Fourth Night (Duat)

This event is staged on the fourth night if the characters stay that long. If they do not, run this scene on the characters' last or second-to-last night at the Fire Court, depending on how you want events to unfold.

Slaves wearing black robes and burial wrappings awaken the characters. They carry a small funerary boat and bid the elders to climb aboard. (Characters who attend the court unwillingly may be dumped aboard and overseen by guards on the "vessel" to ensure that the weak vampires remain there.) The servants carry the group through the throne room and toward the massive oryx door on the other side. Rows of slaves stand in silent vigil outside the door, holding candles. The humans are impassive, frightened or look at the characters with compassion.

The Messenger of Jocalo stands before the portal, in front of Sobek and Glycon. A young boy stands with them, holding a reed brush in one hand and a small gold pot in the other. The Messenger speaks as the characters are carried forward, "This is the hardest test of all, for to claim your prize you must travel to the Underworld and stand judgment on the scale of Anubis. Fail this test and the cost is death. This is your final chance to turn from this path." The Messenger waits while the characters confer. If they turn back here, the slaves carry them from the hall and they may leave the court at any time.

If the characters agree to proceed, Jocalo's messenger takes the brush from the boy's hand, dabs it in the gold pot, and paints a straight black line over each character's eyes. She smiles again as she warns that the elders are going to see strange sights in Duat. They may speak with those they meet, but they are not allowed to interfere with the activities of the Underworld. She explains further that once they have passed a room, they must move on and may not return to a chamber behind them. The Messenger then waves her hand before the portal, which slides open in eerie silence.

Sobek gestures for the characters to walk inside. They find themselves in a hall carved from black stone. Torches sputter under a cold, damp breeze that blows from somewhere in the darkness. A dense fog covers the floor. None of the Setites or slaves joins them.

Room One (The Dungeon)

The black hallway leads to a stone arch before a cavernous, medieval torture chamber. Characters with tastes for such places may feel a wave of nostalgia as they see familiar torture devices, some having gone out of use centuries ago.

Two men go about their work here. One speaks in a casual, friendly manner with a haggard victim stretched thin on a rack. Although clearly in pain, the prisoner craves almost any kindness, and responds with the same. Other

prisoners lie in various agonizing positions around the room. Most of the machines are empty, though, which gives the dungeon an almost forlorn appearance, if that is possible.

Characters who investigate the room (rather than walking right through it) discover that the first torturer is a friendly Spanish man. He introduces himself humbly as Samuel and relates that he has been a torturer to (and of) kings; he clearly considers his profession a legitimate and necessary one. Most of his justifications revolve around "keeping the order." Samuel is a little rough around the edges, but he is well-educated in his own way on philosophy.

Characters may find the apparent dichotomy between Samuel's demeanor and job chilling or amusing. He trades hints and anecdotes about the profession if the visitors show an interest. Samuel is clearly not an inspired torturer, but he goes about his work in a cheerful and efficient manner. He may epitomize the banality of evil to some.

If the characters ask what lies beyond, Samuel claims with a certain degree of distaste that a group of "doctors" occupies the next room. He admits to disliking their scientific detachment and is resentful because they have "stripped the heart from the business."

If the characters return Samuel's hospitality, he appeals to them to put in a good word with "Anubis" for him but does not elaborate. If the characters express contempt for the torturer, he is servile throughout their visit and tries to hurry them from the room.

Two prisoners, other than the man on the rack, are under Samuel's care. One is a young temple slave who has been sentenced to a month's torture and then death for his crime (smiling in Sobek's presence). He is semi-conscious in a coffin similar to those that the characters may have been kept in after their arrival; unwilling guests may be sympathetic to the young man's plight. The slave regains consciousness temporarily when Samuel grants him some water.

The third prisoner is less friendly to his torturer; he hisses "monster" at Samuel's approach. The man's face is badly distorted, bearing the tell-tale scars of Vicissitude. His jaws grind past each other to croak out each syllable. His beard has been plucked out in places and he has burn marks. The man is a Coptic priest.

The priest is initially more concerned with the characters' well-being than his own and mistakes the elders for mortals and fellow victims. The priest's demeanor changes significantly if the characters reveal their vampiric nature or approach more closely to expose any vampiric curses. The prisoner calls to God to "abjure the demons." The priest lost faith long ago, so the prayer has no effect on the characters. Samuel, embarrassed by the outburst, burns the priest by way of apology and snarks, "Calling on God again? He won't hear a miserable old sinner like you!"

The second torturer is a thin, silent Chinese man of indeterminate age. A patchwork of vices has etched evil lines across his face. The man does not seek commiseration with the characters but prefers to be left to his work. However, he is convivial if they inquire about his craft.

The characters soon identify this torturer as the creator of the flesh-and-glass sculpture in Marianna's chambers (assuming the characters have managed to visit her). The artist is a favorite slave, given Neferu's own blood to pursue his calling. His eyes sparkle with an inhuman clarity (*Auspex*) as he explains his vision. He applies colored, molten glass to his living subject over a period of days or weeks. The glass drips, streams or sprays in a fine mist from a collection of impressively engineered brass and gold nozzles. The artist explains that an alchemical solution keeps the subject's skin from charring.

He sprays a swirl of orange glass across a subject's bare stomach as a demonstration. The victim moans fitfully, but she shows no other sign of consciousness. Her body is pinioned in a graceful arc by metal braces. Whoths of multicolored glass spread out behind her like gossamer butterfly wings. Her face is already half-encased in green glass that reflects her unblinking right eye into a dozen terror-stricken facets. As the glass cools, the characters note that the skin is bright red, but it is otherwise undamaged. (Nothing short of another night's stay wrests the secret of this formula from the Setites.)

The artist continues to explain that the victim's consciousness, or "ka," is trapped in the body after the piece is complete. The body may be preserved in a pristine state forever or be allowed to rot, depending on the mortuary process involved. He enthuses that a displayed, decomposing body gives his masters fresh insights into corruption and decay. Despite the horrific nature of the art, Toreador (especially *antitribu*) may see genuine merit to the work.

Samuel produces an iron key whenever the characters are prepared to move on, and he shows them into the hall leading to the next chamber.

Room Two (The Hospital)

The characters may be aghast by the next chamber. Painted white walls and smooth gray floors give the room an air of clinical sterility. The characters are startled initially by the room's electrical lighting. It is very likely that they have never seen electric light before (the first commercially available bulbs have been around for only three years). Characters using *Auspex* find that the lights glimmer and flare in odd ways, burning strange and disorienting trails of light in their eyes as they seek to adapt. Those who keep abreast of technological advances note that the equipment in the room — operation devices — is on the cutting edge. These modern wonders are particularly incongruous and sinister in backwater Luxor.

There is more activity here than in the first room. Three busy "doctors" (two men and a woman) move with efficient precision between long tables that hold microscopes, beakers and four patients. One of the doctors — an old man with a benign face and tufts of white hair framing his bald head — steps forward to greet the characters. He introduces himself as Doctor Helmut Strieben of Vienna. His voice is calm and confident, but characters may recognize fear behind his intelligent eyes.

Characters who tour the facility learn that it consists of three adjoining laboratories, including a series of personal living spaces for the doctors. The doctors have collected blood from their patients and offer the characters an aperitif if events warrant it.

Doctor Strieben's two assistants are both younger than he is. One, Doctor Kal, is a tall, gangly Semitic man with a thin mustache. The other, Nurse Bliznyak, is a pleasantly plump Russian woman in her late 30s. The relationship between the three seems professional, but it is one of disguised professional jealousy. The doctors are exceedingly polite and helpful as they offer to answer anything the characters wish to know about their work. They explain that their sponsor, Alexei, has selected them to work on a very important experiment, though none knows exactly what Alexei's intended result is (and they don't dare ask).

The experiments are like something out of a fantastic novel's mad-scientist laboratory; Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger" come to mind. A patient lies prone on a table. None of his features is discernible; his face and skull have been skillfully removed. His spinal column remains intact and is still connected to his brain, which is suspended in a jar in a green solution. Copper wires lead from the brain to an electrical generator. Nurse Bliznyak demonstrates how she is "mapping" the brain and its responses to electrical current. An electrical pulse induces spasmodic movement in various extremities on command. She apologizes if the characters have a negative reaction to the experiment, explaining that such advances serve the scientific good. A character who reads the patient's thoughts discovers a dim mote of consciousness. The brain begs feebly for death.

The other human and animal subjects have long since passed the point of communicating. They have been reduced to their component parts; they provide only autonomic responses and are used as tissue donors. One patient, pinned to a specimen table, has been peeled back, layer by layer — probably by use of *Vicissitude*. If the characters ask about Alexei, the three doctors independently describe him as the most brilliant surgical mind of the day.

The Doctors

Each of the surgeons is highly intelligent, but characters who watch them carefully (*Perception + Awareness, difficulty 5*) may detect certain idiosyncrasies that seem "pre-scripted" or ingrained by another source. They speak to

each other in repetitive phrases and seek nods of reassurance from the other two before doing anything on their own. The doctors are as much a part of Alexei's experiment as the patients.

Doctor Strieben: Helmut Strieben is cold, methodical and monastically detached from the pain he causes. A quiet, "rational" man, he nevertheless entertains the paranoia that Doctor Kalb is sabotaging his research in hopes of ruining the senior's reputation with Alexei to become head doctor. Strieben fears he is on the way out and seeks a way to kill the younger scientist. Doctor Strieben is almost a century old, but he appears to be in his 50s. He has a weakness for poetry, Rococo paintings and Handel's *Water Music*.

Nurse Bliznyak: Nurse Bliznyak is probably the most "evil" of the three doctors. She resents that her sex prevented her from becoming a doctor in the outside world, yet she has fared little better here. She is a glorified assistant to the two male doctors, despite her superior intelligence. She vents her spite and frustration on the patients and delights in hurting others as she has been hurt. Those who read her thoughts discover highly romanticized images of a handsome Alexei. She believes he will embrace her as a reward for her work, but the characters may imagine a much darker fate in store for her.

Doctor Kalb: Doctor Kalb is indeed trying to sabotage Doctor Strieben's experiments, though not for the reasons that Strieben suspects. Kalb is a genuinely humane man trying to do what small good he can. Discovered for his ground-breaking biological studies, Doctor Kalb was seduced to join the Fire Court by Alexei's academic lures. The biologist initially refused to take part in the hospital's grisly work. A few hours under Alexei's tender ministrations changed his tune, though. He has worked secretly to subvert the hospital's experiments ever since.

Doctor Kalb has been in the court longer than the other two have, and he undermined the work of previous doctors to the point where Alexei killed them. Thus, "evil destroys evil," as Kalb believes. Kalb has become unhinged by his experiences and believes himself to be an angel of mercy — sometimes killing subjects surreptitiously, so they can escape further pain. He eases his own pain through heavy drink. Kalb buries his true thoughts to the best of his abilities, but *Telepathy* uncovers them. Alexei probably knows of Kalb's merciful predilections, but he allows the doctor to continue his ways as a random element in the *Trismisce's* experiment.

Room Three (Alexei)

A long, dark hallway leads from Duat's second chamber. Guttering oil lamps emit a feeble light and thick smoke. There are bones of every description set into the tunnel's cavernous walls, and they glisten with a shiny black residue. Human and animal skulls stare dumbly. Mosaics of spinal

columns, distended ribs and intricate geometrical spirals of knuckle bones shimmer in the dim firelight. Pelvis bones exude a viscous, reddish-black protoplasm. Swarms of large, subterranean flies buzz hungrily around the fetid topiaries.

A heavy door at the end of the hallway swings open with a tortured groan. Observant characters (Perception + Awareness, difficulty 6) notice that a distended human face is adhered to the door and forms the opening mechanism. A single bloodshot eye regards the group with a pure and perfect hatred.

The door leads into a circular room of rough-hewn stone, with a sheer, 10-meter drop just inside. A large and cluttered torture chamber sits below. There are iron maidens, racks and a host of evil-looking machines of unknown function or origin here. A hulking body with three shrunken human heads appears to reside in a large wooden pen. One head is dead, but the other two stare at the intruders with ravenous intensity. The torso of a man is strapped to a specimen table. His internal organs have been pulled out and pinned down, but they writhe in knots. The deformed man moans softly.

The only visible means to the chamber floor is by stepping on the plate of a huge scale that hangs from the ceiling and then stepping onto a stairway beyond. Another dish is suspended on the other side of the room — the counterbalance to the plate before the characters. A large white feather rests on the distant plate.

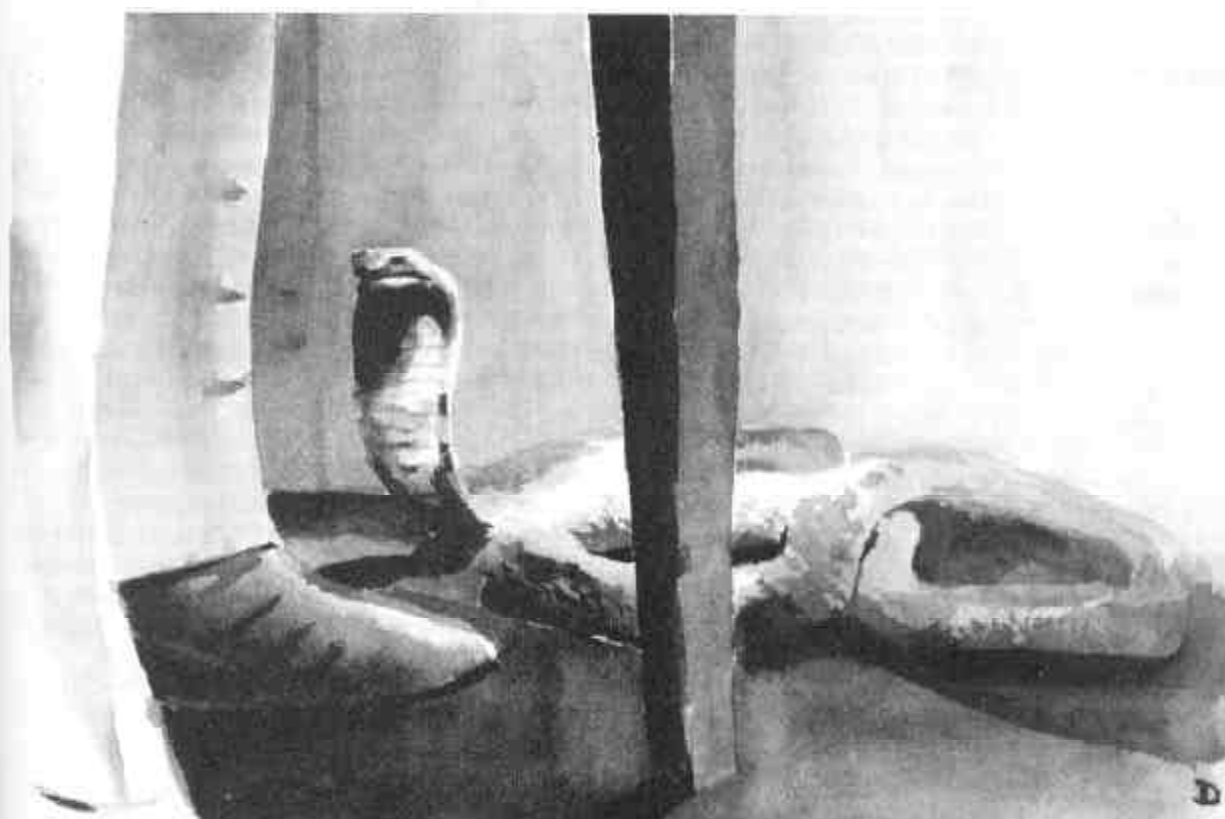
Alexei stands on the chamber floor. He wears a simple black robe and a black, iron Anubis mask. "Anubis" strokes the corner of a stone mortuary table. Large sluices, apparently intended for blood, line the table's recessed surface. Neferu sits near Anubis on a small gold throne and smiles benignly at the visitors. Alexei points to the large plate at the characters' feet, and they recognize his voice:

"Come hither, lost shades, but step first upon the scale and weigh your soul against the feather of Maat. Do not be afraid. Only the truly guilty need fear the judgment of this celestial court."

If the characters walk over the plate toward the staircase, the scale holds for all but one. The feather of Maat inevitably rises and the plate beneath an unfortunate character drops slowly, depositing him before Alexei and Neferu. The scale tips under the weight of the character who has the highest Humanity rating, under a Tzimisce or under the character who appeals most to Neferu's aesthetic sensibilities (one who seems particularly corrupt).

Anubis responds, "Alas, it seems the justice of Maat has found you wanting. Be of good cheer, though. Some may know an eternity of pain in their final hells. You need enjoy but one night of my genius. Come down, let us begin, you and I."

The Tzimisce appears to expect the character to take his place willingly on the torture table. The characters may certainly object. Alexei reminds the characters of their



bargain. If they forfeit at this point, they will all be killed. If the "chosen one" refuses to take his place on the table, Neferu pronounces all the elders to be oath-breakers. She uses her awesome powers of Presence and Dominate to command the character to take his place on the table and for the other characters to remain where they stand.

Despite their references to the "justice of Maar," neither Neferu nor Alexei really cares who goes on the torture table. If another character volunteers to take the chosen victim's place, Anubis, "in his cosmic wisdom," accepts.

It is also possible that the characters dawdled in the first two rooms for most of the night. If so, the Tzimisce asks that Neferu give him an additional night to practice his art on the chosen character. (She denies this request.) Thus, Alexei tries to fit an entire night's session into the time remaining before dawn.

If the character takes his place on the table, the others are left to watch as the jackal-headed Tzimisce tortures their comrade. They may decide to attack but go up against a Methuselah and a sixth-generation Tzimisce — odds of surviving are unlikely. Neferu may also use her Presence to compel the horrified characters to remain where they are and watch the impending operation.

Left to his devices, Alexei restrains the character with heavy iron chains and begins his gruesome work. Alexei is an inhuman, master torturer. He combines the clinical detachment of a surgeon with a cruel and sardonic wit. He depletes conventional tools and uses Vicissitude on the flesh and bone of the unfortunate victim — kneading and twisting him into a pain-wracked mass of independently twitching organs and extremities. Those watching may recognize an eye here, a contour of flesh there, but otherwise, their companion no longer exists. One or more of the characters may try to anchor the victim telepathically, but doing so subjects the telepath to the victim's agony (five dice are lost on all actions until mental contact is broken).

The patient loses control of his body within the first few minutes of torture. He may try to maintain his sanity in any number of ways; he can try to escape reality by dwelling on past experiences or he may concentrate on his path. In either case, five Willpower must be spent and a Derangement still develops if the character survives.

As the characters witness their companion's dissolution, a boiling black morass of ropy flesh flows up through the table's sluices and intermingles with the tortured character. A shiver of pleasure shoots through Neferu's slender body as the plasmic entity smothers the victim. The patient is enveloped by a wave of blackness. Those who monitor their comrade's thoughts feel a dark undertow pull their minds downward. A successful Willpower roll (difficulty 9) is required to escape. A Tzimisce may recognize the fleshy mass as a masterfully crafted *wozhd* (see *Clanbook: Tzimisce*).

The consumed patient (and any minds trapped with his) loses all sense of identity. A hot, humid feeling and the smell of rotten meat close in. An angry insectlike buzz emanates from all around, as if made by dozens of hostile creatures. Alien sensations, memories and primal hunger, as if from other hideous minds, invade the character's. The other beings are dim and dead, with little independent sentience.

If one of the slaves displeased the characters on the first night and was condemned to punishment, the character meets her disembodied mind here. The slave may mistake the character's purpose in coming to Duat and may beg forgiveness for her past transgressions. Alternatively, the wronged slave may attempt to drag the character down with her into the depths of the *wozhd*-mind.

Moments after the character is consumed by the *wozhd*, Alexei's mind seems to crackle and scintillate around him. The Tzimisce's presence coils through the void like thorny vines made of black glass. His voice cuts into the character like a knife (and can also be heard by any characters whose minds are trapped with the character's): "Tell me, little vampire — for the Serpents will not — what is it you seek? Speak truthfully, for I am your only salvation. Set's minions will not blame me for your death." If the character resists, the *wozhd*-mind encroaches ever further and erodes away one point of Willpower per turn. When the character's score is reduced to zero, he reveals his goals to find the *Sargon Fragment*. If and when the character's will breaks, Alexei proposes an alliance.

Alternatively, Alexei may try a more diplomatic approach from the beginning of the torture, particularly if the character is a fellow Tzimisce, or if the characters have mentioned the *Sargon Fragment* in his presence. Alexei appears to the character in his human form, saying, "There. Even that viperous child cannot spy on us here. I rule this domain." He proposes an alliance to acquire and study the contents of Lazarus' tomb. Alexei then claims to have special expertise that could aid the characters and also hints at imminent Setite betrayal, "They seek to keep you here only to destroy your souls."

If the character agrees to the offer, Alexei warns that the characters must leave the Fire Court before the end of the fifth night, even if it offends the Setites. The character may wish to impose conditions to this "partnership," and the two can make a deal. Alexei claims that the rest of the night's torture will go painlessly. As his mind withdraws, Alexei warns the character not to betray his overtures to the Serpents and threatens that the Setites cannot even imagine the pain that he can inflict.

If the character rejects Alexei's offer, the Tzimisce curses him and tells him to prepare for death. The *wozhd*'s mind crushes in on the character's, as described above. The

character can resist only as long as his Willpower holds out, at the end of which Alexei proposes his alliance again to the defeated character.

Neferu watches silently throughout the procedure with a mixture of pity, amusement and arousal. She doesn't appear to perceive the Trimisce's perfidy. As dawn approaches, Alexei grudgingly returns the character to his former shape at Neferu's bidding. The Methuselah then orders the characters to return to their apartments through a hidden door in the torture chamber.

The tortured character awakens the next night in the guest wing, wearing a black and red robe. He is extremely sore, but otherwise, he seems unharmed. A stake of gray, worm-riddled wood lies on his chest—a gift from Neferu for providing a good night's entertainment. This gift is a mystical totem that reduces the difficulty of necromantic rituals by one.

The characters undoubtedly decide to leave the Fire Court as soon as possible. The Setites entice the characters with riches or secrets now more than ever to compel them to stay one more night. Indeed, Jocalo's messenger appears and congratulates the characters on their successes. She tells them that they have seen the worst that the Fire Court has to offer and that they will spend a night in great luxury if they stay for just one more. She nods and promises to see them the next night if they agree to remain. She responds, "You are wise" and departs if they refuse to stay.

Storyteller: Alexei is interested in the contents of Lazarus' tomb but is trapped in the Fire Court by his agreement to work for the Setites. He violates that agreement only if the prize outweighs the risks. The *Sargon Fragment* is sufficient inducement and Alexei may become an ally in achieving the formula but then a serious contender for possession of it.

Alexei follows the Path of Caine and desires to serve and diablerize the Father. He believes the *Sargon Fragment* is the means to achieving that end. He has no intention of sharing the knowledge imparted by the *Fragment* with the characters, and he seeks to betray them once his prize is within reach.

If the characters betray Alexei's overtures to the Setites, Neferu orders the Trimisce to her quarters to "await her pleasure." He stiffens somewhat and shoots the characters a murderous glance, but he complies. Any discussions between Neferu and Alexei on this score are out of the characters' earshot (and other senses).

The Fifth Night

Characters who are foolish or desperate enough to stay a fifth night wake to the sight of the temple's pleasure slaves, who take them to a rectangular room. The walls are a golden-brown marble and the floor is deep blue. Columns and fine curtains partition a large portion of the room. Scyla awaits the characters and smiles at them sweetly. "You have

been fine and diverting company; the Children of Set are not ungrateful. The princess tenders her regrets for any discomfort you have felt at our hands and conveys her gratitude."

Many of the pleasure slaves from the first night, and a few more, are also in the room. The slaves' reactions on the fifth night depend on how the characters treated them on the first. Each curtained room contains the pleasures that the characters enjoyed most the first night. The Setites have no agenda this night except to keep the characters from leaving, though the characters probably search for hidden schemes throughout. The Storyteller may wish to take this opportunity to introduce the first night's entertainment to those who were prisoners and missed it. The Setites have had several nights to prepare this time, and the pleasures are even more fulsome. If one of the characters invites Scyla to join them, she agrees.

The slaves take their leave shortly before dawn, and the Messenger of Jocalo arrives. She states, "It is an hour before dawn and you have completed your final test. You may depart if you so desire. However, you may stay the rest of this night and the princess will see you off tomorrow eve with honors as befit your stature."

The characters have a final choice. They can run like hell now and risk the disfavor of their offended hosts, or they can stay until the following evening. They must consider how close it is to dawn, how far it is to the nearest shelter, and how fast the Setites will let them leave. There are also three more heavy iron chests full of gold in the characters' guest wing. The combined nights' treasures are enough to increase everyone to Resources 4 (or 5, for those who are already at 4).

Scyla

Scyla is charming company in whatever activities the characters pursue, and she relates that she is on the "Path of Ecstasy." Scyla has no shame whatsoever but displays a strong sense of ritual propriety. She complies with any of the pleasure demands that characters make of her but expects them to keep up. Her vampiric kiss is exceedingly pleasurable and is in many ways reminiscent of the characters' Embrace. Scyla is also a talented musician, historian and hunter (she often joins Glycon on his excursions).

She may impart court gossip; the Fire Court is a thoroughly enjoyable place from her perspective. She does not seem terribly touched by the plight of its victims, though Scyla shows empathy for the characters' suffering. She has a rich and humorous contempt for "that fat fool Sobek." Scyla may even promise to make contact with the characters in the outside world at some point, if they so request. She does so only if she believes they mean her no harm. Scyla is slightly younger than the characters, and she is eighth generation. Her Disciplines are *Auspex* 2, *Celerity* 1, *Fortitude* 2, *Obfuscate* 3, *Presence* 4 and *Serpentis* 4.

Incentives

The Setites want the characters to remain at the Fire Court for as long as possible in order to corrupt the visitors fully. The Serpents use the characters' goals and needs to entice them to remain; one secret will be revealed or one gift will be provided for each night that the characters remain to undergo the Setites' tests. The following are some items that might be used to bribe the characters into staying longer.

The Magic Lantern: If the characters have already won the right to excavate Lazarus' tomb, the Setites bring in a large, plain, clay urn. Sobek explains, "This simple vase once belonged to Lazarus, who was not a stranger to this court. He seemed to think it important but lost it to us on his third night. I am sure it is but a trifle, but perhaps you would care to play for it!" The characters may examine the urn through various mystical means and find it normal in all ways.

However, the best way to examine the vase physically is under a bright light. If the vase is brought near a torch, the shadow cast by it shows thin lines of light that form a cruciform shape, like that of Lord Camden's map. The Setites show genuine surprise when they see the image (the shadow-dwelling Setites don't usually use light as a tool) and rush to take the urn from the characters so that they must win it in order to study it further.

If one of the players makes a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8) or a character has Eidetic Memory, the elders have seen all they need to know; the characters do not need to compete to win this treasure's secrets. They learn that there is another secret chamber in Lazarus' haven beyond the one suggested on Camden's map. (See Lazarus' Tomb for more information on the second secret chamber.)

Lady Amisa: If one of the characters was Embraced by the Setite Lady Amisa in *The Last Supper*, Neferu appears before the character as if from nowhere and offers him her hand and intones, "Come, there is someone I would reacquaint you with."

The Methuselah leads the character through a secret passage and into a rich apartment. The character's long-lost sire reclines comfortably in a chair. Lady Amisa appears much as she did when the character first met her in 1444, though there is a distant look about her (long imprisonment by the Founders has unbalanced her mind). The sire appears happy to see her child as she hugs him warmly and kisses him chastely on the forehead if he allows it. Lady Amisa assures the character that she bears him no ill will for his role in her centuries-long imprisonment, and she apologizes for any discomfort she caused him in the past.

The character may actually be moved to forgive and forget; Lady Amisa is but a shadow of her former self and it has been over 400 years, after all. After a short reunion, Neferu dismisses the woman, who then leaves in a haze.

Neferu addresses the character, "The precious Founders didn't reveal her escape because they feared it would encourage you to seek us out. When we discovered where she was held, we sent agents to liberate her, substituting another in her stead. A Follower of Set in chains like a common criminal! Intolerable!"

Pride, not any genuine concern for Lady Amisa's well-being, seems to have been the impetus for her rescue, and this suspicion is verified as Neferu continues: "She is not what she once was. After her liberation, she steeped herself so deeply in her own vices that she is of no further use to us. You, however, beloved child, have proven your competence and worth. Despite her decline, Lady Amisa still has one thing to offer — her blood."

Neferu offers the character the opportunity to diablerize his sire and one-time tormentor. The price, an eminently reasonable one, is that he convince his companions to stay another night. Neferu also offers the character a place of high esteem among the Setites. If the character agrees and manages to keep his companions at the Fire Court for another night, the Setites bring the character to Duat on his final night; they tie the shrieking Lady Amisa to the torture table, and the diablerist may drain her with little trouble. Her rich vitae slithers through his body, thus imbuing him with stunning vigor.

The Eye of Apophis: If the characters have revealed that the Giovanni are their enemies, the Followers of Set use this information to their advantage. The Messenger of Jocolo appears before them. "The Giovanni are masters of necromancy and you must fight them on their own terms to defeat them. You cannot continue to depend on those tattered cloaks..." She offers to teach the characters a non-Thaumaturgical necromancy ritual (hedge magic) in return for another night's stay. An Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8) must be made for those characters who agree to stay and try to learn the ritual. Once one of the members in the group learns it, he can teach it to his companions at a later date.

The Messenger gives her student a smooth black stone and instructs him to drench it in his own blood (which costs one Blood Point) while casting the rite. The stone soaks up the blood and acquires a highly reflective quality. The Messenger then summons a frightened slave who's covered with painted hieroglyphs. She slashes the slave's throat with a knife; he stares blankly for a moment and then falls to the floor. The character holding the stone can see the spirit of the dead man rise from the body. This ritual has similar effects as Japheth's cloaks, but it can be used whenever the character desires, as opposed to holding onto the thinning cloaks that cannot last much longer. The ritual requires an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 7) to cast, and it lasts for one hour per success.

If the Characters Stay

If the characters stay the fifth night in anticipation of leaving the Fire Court with honors the next evening, they are subjected to the full scope of the Setites' corruptive efforts. The spiced blood that characters may have drunk, and the hieroglyphics painted throughout the court have a corrupting effect on the characters during their stay. The Setites try to complete the characters' downfall on the last night by making the elders pawns of the Setites and spreading Setite influence.

Characters may lounge in their apartments, wander at their ease, or seek out a few final pleasures in the last hour of the fifth night. The Setites' spell (see the Corrupt Soul Ritual sidebar) takes effect as the characters fall asleep. They have troubling dreams of snakes and feel emotionally disturbed. If no successes are rolled for the ritual against a character, she wakes and suspects that something is amiss.

If even one success is rolled against a character, he awakes unaware that anything has happened. However, he is not himself. There is a feeling of fiery revelation in the air. Time seems to pass exceedingly slowly. "Alien" thoughts intrude, but in the character's voice, which compels him to act in ways that he might not have before but that do seem sensible now. He is in a fog; his reactions to events are laggard.

The Setites' spell corrupts the soul by loosening the characters' inhibitions, thus giving reign to their dark sides. The spell does not put the characters under Setite control, though. Indeed, spell victims feel no malice toward the Serpents.

The Setites thank the characters for being such gracious guests, pack their belongings, and make sure they do not forget anything. The Serpents promise that the characters' human entourage and animals await outside. Slaves carry the characters' possessions and chests of gold (if any). Other slaves lead the characters through the Fire Court's maze and out into the open desert.

The characters' human retinue and animals await as promised, though they are visibly frightened. Marianna and any other prizes won at the court are also there for the characters. Indeed, either of the remaining Giovanni may have been escorted to the surface and await the characters as well.

The humans are unaffected by the corruptive spell and are still under the characters' control. Marianna is immune to the spell, having escaped it through meditation, but she is unaware that the Setites have done anything to the characters. She is probably suspicious of

the elders anyway, simply for having stayed with the Setites for so long, and she probably doesn't know what their normal personalities are like. Marianna is eager to proceed to Lazarus' tomb and remains with the characters only as long as they offer protection and do not act against her.

The Giovanni have certainly been corrupted by the Setite spell, and they may act in any way you wish. The Giovanni may actually be helpful to the characters, because of having mended their old ways, or they may seek power for themselves — having turned their backs on their former masters.

The Fire Court's entire vampiric contingent (except Alexei) stands assembled outside. Neferu steps forward and looks into the characters' eyes. The pale moonlight caresses her and she appears like a faerie princess more than any child of Cain.

Some characters may pull themselves together enough (at the expense of two Willpower points) to ask, either rudely or politely, why they feel strange. Neferu explains that they have been given new insights into the world, "It will fade, and for that I weep."

She continues, "The crossroads lie nearby, and you must go there to resume your quest. Depart with our fond memories and take this with you to aid in your journey home." Slaves bring four large barrels of blood forward, which is enough to provide each character with eight Blood Points.

Corrupted characters may believe that they're leaving paradise and may want to stay. Neferu refuses them with: "No, it is best that you follow your own whims for a while. You must study your newfound insights for yourselves." Her eyes gleam like distant stars and characters who are still affected by the spell leave without protest.

Characters who escape the spell's immediate effects may challenge the Setites from the moment they awake and realize that *something* has happened. The Setites take this abuse up to a point, but Neferu uses Dominate or Presence to "dissuade" characters who threaten violence.

Characters get their bearings about an hour after leaving the Fire Court. Some of them may finally be able to recognize that *something* happened to them at the court, but they still feel no particular ill will for the Setites. Characters who have already succumbed to complete corruption may scheme against their fellows, depending on how this corruption takes form. Characters who were not affected by the spell may not recognize that their fellows have been changed significantly for some time — not until it's too late.

The Storyteller should not underestimate the ability of this spell to tear the group apart (at least temporarily), with different characters becoming corrupt at different times. Returning to attack the Fire Court is suicide, but the characters may entertain long-term schemes of revenge. Otherwise, they face the classic question: What next?

Corrupt Soul Ritual

Magically potent hieroglyphics cover the court walls and, in combination with the effects of the Setites' spiced blood, have a powerful influence over the characters. These forces subtly break down the characters' moral fortitude and resilience in anticipation of a final corrupting spell cast by the Setites.

For each full night that the characters stay in the Fire Court, they suffer the effects of one level of the Thaumaturgical spell *Corrupt Soul* (see *The Vampire Players Guide*). Thus, after two nights at the court, characters suffer two levels of the spell. Victims are corrupted for varying lengths of time, as per the spell's description. Characters who stay at the Fire Court for only a night or two are affected by the Setites' power to some degree, and the Serpents gain a foothold in the characters' souls.

Setites also use a Thaumaturgical path of corruption, but none in the court uses this path against the characters during their stay: The Setites want the characters to become tainted by their own deeds.

The characters may be corrupted completely if they remain at the Fire Court for a full five nights. The Setites climax the characters' accumulated taint with a ritual that literally changes the elders' identities, thus eroding their former selves and introducing new, base identities. At no point do the Setites control the characters directly; the visitors' downfall is the result of their own transformations.

System: The Setites cast their ritual at the end of five full nights. Roll 10 dice against each character (difficulty is the victim's current Willpower + 1). The number of successes rolled determines how long that character is corrupted (see the chart below).

The spell's corruption is subtle. The longer it lasts, the longer the incubation period that precedes it. Characters touched for only an hour undergo no incubation period, while those corrupted for a night do not manifest their change until an hour has past.

Characters are groggy throughout their incubation periods and have no clue that anything is wrong. (There are no Dice Pool penalties for this disorientation.) They don't recognize the Setites as the source of their puzzlement and feel no need to confront the Serpents.

The *Corrupt Soul* ritual changes a character's Nature, temporarily or permanently. The Storyteller and player should agree on the new Archetype that applies to the character, but it should contrast the character's normal Nature or should mean a drastic change of identity. (Remember that Nature is the character's true self, not the way he portrays himself; other characters may not know if or how their comrade has changed.) The ritual may also have long-term ramifications on a character's Humanity or chosen Path, depending on the actions that he performs while corrupted.

The ritual has the following durations, based on the number of successes rolled against each character.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1 success | one hour (virtually no incubation period) |
| 2 successes | one night (one-hour incubation) |
| 3 successes | two nights (one-night incubation) |
| 4 successes | five nights (two-night incubation) |
| 5 successes | permanently (several-month incubation) |

If the Characters Leave

Characters who decide to leave before remaining a fifth full night (or who leave at any time), avoid the Setites corrupting ritual. However, they are subjected to the lower levels of the Level Five Thaumaturgical spell, *Corrupt Soul* — one level per night stayed — as detailed in the sidebar. The effects imposed by the spell should still be roleplayed.

If the characters flee the Fire Court, they may pack and order slaves to recover their retainers and carry their possessions. Slaves go no further than the entrance to the maze that leads to the surface. Characters may have to abandon any possessions or treasures if they want to leave quickly.

The Messenger of Jocalo and Sobek confront the characters at the beginning of the maze. Sobek scowls, but the Messenger smiles; she gives each character a mask of golden cloth, which must be worn before entering the maze. The hoods smell pleasantly sweet to breathing vampires, not foul like the first masks. The Messenger leads the masked characters swiftly and surely

through the maze and may even help them shoulder their burden. The characters may remove their masks once outdoors and discover their nervous retinue and animals awaiting them. No sign of the Fire Court exists; even the trails that the characters have left disappear behind them under the blowing desert winds.

Characters who leave the Fire Court near dawn recognize that the sky is dark gray, with a faint purple glow on the horizon. An uncomfortable itching presages the burning that will follow if they don't find cover quickly.

Jocalo's messenger offers assistance by saying: "Nabq's crossroads is a short distance to the northeast. Go anywhere you desire, but do not return here. Shantih."

If the characters ask the Messenger why she has intervened on their part (if she has done so at all), she responds, "My master bids that you succeed." She agrees to take a message to Jocalo, though she cannot promise a reply. The Messenger then vanishes and retreats to the Fire Court. If any characters are foolish enough to attack, she still disappears. Meanwhile, the sky's purple glow lightens to a pale pink.

The characters must scramble if they are to find shelter before dawn. Nabq's crossroads mark freedom from Serite lands, and the characters probably rush there. They now have several choices: They may return to Luxor, head toward Lazarus' tomb or bury themselves here and now. If the characters are traveling light or have many retainers, they make it to Luxor with seconds to spare. If they are heavily loaded, the farthest they can expect to get is the Temple of Hatshepsut. Play up the absurd heaviness of the gold if the characters struggle to reach shelter under its weight. The temple is safe from wandering villagers, and the characters probably sleep safely.

If the characters head for Lazarus' tomb, they face open desert and realize that they must bury themselves before arriving. If the characters rescued the archaeologists, Sir Tuffton leads them to an empty tomb that is safe from the light. Marianna or surviving Giovanni may also offer guidance if they are with characters; they explored the area more than the characters did, and they have ideas on where to take shelter.



The Giovanni and Lazarus' Tomb

The Giovanni can be introduced into the story's climax in any number of ways, depending on how events have transpired thus far. Perhaps the Giovanni were contestants for the same prizes in the Fire Court and are with the characters as they proceed to the tomb. The Rossellinis don't turn on the characters until the tomb has been explored and its prize, if any, can be claimed.

Perhaps the Giovanni never entered the Fire Court and have been searching for it in vain and battling local Lupines.

The Setites don't allow intruders access to the tomb. If the characters stagger weakly to Nabq's crossroads after besting the Fire Court, the Giovanni may ambush them. However, the characters may have earned the right to seek Lazarus' tomb, while the Giovanni have not. The Serpents strike the Giovanni from out of nowhere and drag the offenders away.

If the Rossellinis cannot possess whatever lies in Lazarus' tomb, they try to kidnap Marianna as a prize for Ambrogino (and to protect their lives for failing him). Marianna joins the characters in any fight against the other Giovanni siblings.

Lazarus' Tomb

The characters may know the location of Lazarus' tomb after deciphering the legend of Nabq, or they may follow Marianna to the place if she was rescued from the Fire Court. If the characters failed to win access to the tomb from the Setites, they may have to face the Serpents again when they go there, this time in a fight. Alexei could come to the characters' aid against the Setites, but in hopes of taking the characters' prize from them.

The journey to Lazarus' tomb may be quiet, almost anticlimactic, or a desperate race to beat the Giovanni. There is little between the characters and the tomb if they have appeased the Setites. The tomb is six hours' march through hard desert, but it is not difficult to find. The majority of the journey covers rippling sand dunes, with no structures visible anywhere.

The land becomes a rocky plateau beyond the desert; it appears as if some cataclysm occurred in the ancient past, leaving only rubble. Parts of the terrain are almost impassable and the characters must leave any mounts behind. The area is preternaturally silent, and the characters' voices seem distant and dim.

The characters come to a wide, flat, circular plain. The region is free of debris, as if spared the destruction of long ago; the plain is an eerie eye in the surrounding "storm." There is a certain electricity in the air. Those who wear Japheth's cloaks do not see any wraiths.

A single, flat-topped hill rises in the center of the plain. The characters feel naked and exposed as they approach, even if they use Obfuscate. The hill is cross-shaped, similar to the image in Camden's map. The ruins of a 10th-century Coptic church lie atop the hill. Long fissures appear in the stone floor, as though a great battle

occurred here. Characters who studied or made a copy of Camden's map should be able to locate the stairs that lead underground. A large, flat rock covers the entrance, but it can be moved with combined effort.

A steep staircase winds down into the darkness to a vast complex filled with a seemingly endless maze of columns. This is the church depicted in Camden's map — the supposed tomb of Lazarus. Mosaics along the walls depict biblical scenes and are bordered by Arabic patterns. Remarkably, the structure seems to have gone untouched by the centuries.

Searching characters discover two empty sarcophagi in side rooms, a small private temple with stained-glass windows and rotted tapestries. Long-unused oil lamps are positioned behind the windows, as if to cast light through the glass. There is also a sitting room with empty bookshelves. The room's furniture looks medieval, perhaps 12th century.

Characters who look for the area that was seemingly emphasized with a bright light on Camden's map arrive at an oblique corner at the end of the transept. The wall is decorated with a mosaic depicting the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The wall can be smashed down, or a successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 8) reveals two studs hidden in the eyes of a rider. Pressing them results in an echoing clang, and stones shift aside to create an opening in the wall.

Beyond the portal is a large, round room. Its domed ceiling has a remarkably accurate depiction of the diablerie of Cappadocius. If the characters witnessed the event, figures in the fresco bear a strong (if not exact) resemblance to themselves. The walls are covered with numeric Thaumaturgical formulas and Chaldean writing. Those who have Thaumaturgy 4 and who can read Chaldean realize

that this room explains the absence of wraiths in the area: A ritual has been cast here that keeps spirits away, even to this day.

The scent of burdock and other herbs assaults the nostrils of those who breathe. A stone bier stands at the center of the room with a desiccated corpse atop it. Five baptismal fonts stand evenly around the body. A bizarre alchemical distiller straddles the corpse like a glass and bronze spider. Four small fonts are full of a thick, black blood. The corpse is naked and covered by a spiral tattoo. The cause of death is not difficult to guess: The front of the face is badly battered, with the skull split down the middle, thus exposing a dry, black powder inside the cranium.

Characters who participated in *The Last Supper* barely recognize this as their congenial host Claudius Giovanni. Use of *The Spirit's Touch* shows his last moments and the wrathful face of his father Augustus as he crushed Claudius' skull.

Characters using *The Spirit's Touch* also see a hooded figure painstakingly tattooing the body. It occurs to those who see this vision that the cloaked figure (presumably Lazarus) looks like the Gaunt from their earlier visions. (See the *Preludes* chapter.)

If the characters touch Claudius' body, the corpse's broken teeth chatter. The mummified vampire rattles out a rasping, stentorian scream and then collapses into a pile of dust.

The Anexhexeton

Characters who learned the secrets of Lazarus' magic lantern in the Fire Court know that there is another hidden chamber beyond this one. Marianna may also know lore that suggests the same.

A successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 8, two successes) reveals that a large stone in the floor just below Cappadocius in the ceiling mural is slightly lower than the rest. Pressing firmly on the stone causes it to rise above the rest of the floor with a grinding sound. It can be pulled free with a combined Strength of 6 or higher.

A steep stairway leads down through solid rock. There's only room for one person to pass at a time. An extremely small cubical room with a raised stone platform lies at the bottom of the stairs. The only thing in the chamber is a broken stone tablet with numerology and Chaldean words chiseled in its surface. Skilled Thaumaturgists (rated 3 or higher) realize that the stone records incredibly potent magic: *The Anexhexeton*, the omniscience and wisdom of the divine. Mallotte must not have invoked this part of the *Sargon Fragment* when he used his portion of the text and was immolated (see *Blood & Fire*).

A character must have Thaumaturgy 4 — and his player must make an extended Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8, 10 successes required) — to study and make



any sense of *The Anexhexeton*. There probably isn't time to do so here in the desert given the effort involved, but research may begin if and when the characters return to civilization. The formula describes a path to apotheosis with a strong necromantic component. The character unravels the steps to achieving godhead, but it soon becomes clear that something is missing from the puzzle. The scholar learns a great deal, though; her Occult Knowledge increases by two.

Alexei and the Characters

If the characters experience Dunt while in the Fire Court, they may make a deal with Alexei. He spares the tortured character in return for the elders' aid in the pursuit of Lazarus' tomb and the Sargon Fragment.

Alexei appears before the characters in the desert, after they leave the Fire Court, and asks if they planned to break their agreement. He insists on joining them in search of the tomb. The characters may fight Alexei here. He does his best to ward off their attacks without harming anyone too badly. All the while, he seeks to explain that his knowledge of the occult can help the characters immensely; and that there is strength in their cooperation. Alexei is a powerful member of his clan, and a genuine alliance with him would gain the characters a great deal of influence in Europe. Fighting the Tzimisce now might also mean the characters' end.

Alexei intends to take *The Anexhexeton* for himself if he and the characters find it. He even trades claim to Claudius Giovanni's blood for the Sargon Fragment. Alexei takes the Fragment by force if necessary. Nearly defeated characters may allow him to have it rather than meet their fate in fighting for it.

Marianna defies Alexei's claims, but even she recognizes the dangers of confronting a Tzimisce of his magnitude. Of course, there is always the option of shattering the tablet on which *The Anexhexeton* is recorded. If the characters don't think of it, Marianna resorts to the desperate measure to keep apotheosis out of reach for Alexei, the Giovanni and the characters. Alexei vents his rage on whoever shatters the tablet, leaving him or her physically distorted before he storms out of the tomb.

Aftermath

The Sun Has Set may end in any number of ways, ranging from the characters coming away triumphant, to the Giovanni or Alexei taking possession of *The Anexhexeton*. The characters may be free of Setite corruption, but some may still be under its sway.

Characters may decide that drinking Claudius' blood in Lazarus' tomb is dangerous and take some of it with them for future study. Marianna tries to claim one of the four remaining portions, insisting that she will drink it; she believes it to be a potent tool against the Giovanni. The characters may let her have a container, but that leaves only three. If Marianna is allowed to have a share, and the characters have helped her thus far, she proclaims herself their ally and promises to aid them in the future. If she is refused a share, Marianna tries to grab one and escape into the Shadowlands with the help of a wraith ally (see Marianna's profile). The portal she opens is reminiscent of that which Ambrogino might have used to escape Valerius' mansion in Book One. Marianna may proclaim antagonistic characters as her enemies before she disappears.

Rosaura or Baldesar Rossellini try to claim portions if they are still with the characters. The Giovanni are quick to drink what they can lay their hands on, in anticipation of destroying everyone in the tomb. The bid backfires, though, as the overwhelming power of the ancient vitae throws the Rossellinis into torpor.

Of course, remaining characters must also decide who among them can drink any remaining drafts. Any struggle that occurs in the tomb might also destroy some of the blood containers.

Characters who drink the blood are flooded with images. They witness Augustus Giovanni stealing the life from Cappadocius, and killing his own son. They see a black storm gather over the world as the barriers between the living and the dead collapse. Drinkers then know nothing more as they slip into torpor. They do lower their generation by one in the process.

Any remaining characters have the choice of standing vigil over their fallen comrades, or carrying the unconscious bodies back to civilization with them.

Postscript

The *Giovanni Chronicles* are an ongoing saga; you don't have to wrap up all the loose ends of this book at this point. Indeed, this story's conclusion may raise as many questions as it answers. The characters' relationship with the Giovanni no doubt grows worse. If the characters gain *The Anaxhexeton*, the Giovanni recognize them as the clan's greatest enemies. Ambrogino already has *The Tetragrammaton*, gained during the events of *Blood & Fire*. If he gains *The Anaxhexeton*, he is two-thirds of the way to godhead. Conflict with the Giovanni becomes more heated over the decades that follow.

You may even want to stage a story of your own that continues the characters' struggles with the Necromancers. The characters may try to sway vampiric opinion against the Giovanni, particularly among the Camarilla, who may recognize the magnitude of the threat that the Romans pose to the Masquerade. The characters' rallying may backfire, though, as other rivals of the Camarilla ally with the Giovanni against their common enemy.

The Giovanni's actions in London are certainly a violation of the 1528 non-interference declaration. If the characters pursue this crime openly, the Giovanni are put on the defensive. The accord (pushed through by Rafael de Corazon) established that a council of elders visit Venice every 13 years to monitor the agreement.

The Giovanni have almost unparalleled information-gathering capabilities, and they have learned much about their enemies through the Venice gatherings. And yet, the most important players in the Jihad remain unknown to them. The Camarilla has routinely sent elders to Venice who mislead the Giovanni. Visiting elders have gained information on their hosts as well. The Venice meetings are inevitably cat-and-mouse games, with neither side gaining true advantage. The characters might have the power to join this visiting council, to the chagrin of their Giovanni hosts.

The characters may also continue their studies of necromancy and other hidden lore. Certainly their ability to see wraiths, if not communicate with them, continues to improve. Decide how much you want the characters to learn over the next few years.

It's possible that characters may learn the lowest level of Giovanni Necromancy. You could even pass characters information from *Wraith: The Oblivion* on the types of spirits and the lands of the dead. Characters' increased knowledge might also make it difficult (though not impossible) for the Giovanni to use ghosts to spy on them. The Necromancers, who are in some ways dependent on their wraith spies, may be forced to do their own legwork for once.

Characters (Egypt)

The Giovanni



Baldesar Rossellini

Background: In life, Count Rossellini epitomized the characteristics of the Giovanni noble: a thin veneer of civilization over pure brutality. The count served the family for many years and built its mercantile empire and cut out more than a few "human weeds" who sought to challenge Giovanni interests. Baldesar was a monster in his own family life as well, brutalizing and raping both his wife and sister.

Baldesar was finally granted the Embrace as reward for his role in the capture of a Cappadocian during the Giovanni Blood Hunt. Baldesar then brutally inducted his sister into the family, with the permission of his sire. As a vampire, Baldesar was adept at amassing money and inspiring fear; his influence tainted a hundred port cities around the world. Unfortunately, he proved less than adequate to the task of mastering necromancy.

Sire: Ambrogino Giovanni
Nature/Demeanor: Bravo/Director
Generation: 6th
Embrace: A.D. 1446
Apparent Age: 30
Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 5, Leadership 3, Streetwise 4
Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Melee (Dueling saber) 4, Music 1, Ride 3, Security 4, Stealth 2, Survival 2
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 3, Investigation 2, Law 3, Linguistics 3, Occult 2, Politics 2, Torture 4
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 3, Necromancy 1, Potence 6, Protean 2
Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 4, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 4, Status 4
Virtues: Callousness 4, Instincts 3, Morale 4
Path: Death and the Soul 5
Willpower: 8
Merits/Flaws: Underworld Ties/Short Fuse, Dark Secret (Questions Augustus)

Image: Baldesar is a large, handsome man in his mid-30s. He has luxurious brown hair that he usually wears in oiled ringlets. The sands of Egypt force him to wear his hair in a simpler, conservative fashion, though. He has a full beard and a slightly upturned mustache. His typical expression is that of a wolf regarding a rabbit.

Roleplaying Hints: God, you hate this country. You hate its heat, its dust and the swarms of angry insects along the Nile. You hate its stupid monkey-faced peasants, untouched by the ways of civilization. Yet, you have little choice. Your agents in Cairo were less than adequate to their task, and their failure has damaged your reputation with your superiors. You must take a more active role in matters. That bitch Marianna has more lives than a cat and is loose in this accursed place. You must capture her for Ambrogino or lose everything you have built over the past four centuries.

You inspire fear in your underlings because it eases your growing concern that you are just a pawn in a larger game. You have seen the spirits of the Void howling to be loosed upon the Earth, and you secretly fear that Augustus Giovanni plans to unleash them. You enjoy the luxuries that your wealth brings and know that you would not play a great role in the kind of world that your clan would create. You also fear and distrust your sister, who you believe would have you fail this mission.

Quote: *See you in Hell!* (Followed by gunshots.)

Equipment: Two British "man-stopper" pistols, wealthy merchant clothing, lucky bullet



Rosaura Rossellini

Background: Rosaura was cloistered in a convent after her parents' death, but it was only a temporary refuge from her brother's cruelty. Baldesar recalled her to Rome and put her through one harrowing ordeal after another, defeating her over and over again before offering her the salvation of the Embrace. Baldesar sought to impress his power of life and death over Rosaura, but the Embrace had the opposite effect. The ghosts of the dead whispered to Rosaura in the few brief moments that she hung between life and death; a sense of purpose and calm arose in her. That's when Rosaura smiled, knowing that her brother no longer controlled her destiny.

In the centuries that followed, Rosaura immersed herself in the crypts of Rome and Venice and learned the ways of the dead. She is now under the tutelage of Ambrogino Giovanni and is his agent of choice in events involving Marianna and the characters. Ambrogino allows Baldesar to command the mission, though, to recoup his favored pawn if all fails.

Clan: Giovanni

Sire: Baldesar

Nature/Demeanor: Martyr/Masochist

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 1447

Apparent Age: 30

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Etiquette 4, Music (Flute) 3, Ride 2, Security 4, Stealth 4, Survival 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 1, Finance 2, Investigation 4, Law 3, Linguistics 5, Occult 5, Politics 3, Thanatology 5

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Fortitude 2, Necromancy 6, Obfuscate 3, Potence 2, Thaumaturgy 5

Rituals: Spirit Beacon, Call upon the Shadow's Grace

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Herd 3, Mentor (Ambrogino) 5, Resources 3, Retainers 3, Status 4

Virtues: Callousness 4, Instincts 5, Morale 4

Path: Via Osis 8

Willpower: 8

Merits/Flaws: Eidetic Memory, Occult Library/Driving Goal (Serve Ambrogino Giovanni)

Image: Rosaura is a small, birdlike woman who wears her brown hair short and unadorned. Her clothes are similarly plain; she wears a conservative gray dress, or pants and boots when in the desert. Her only affectation is a small golden crucifix. Rosaura's eyes are black and moist, like orbs of onyx suspended in oil. She moves with modest, precise gestures. There is a somewhat ethereal quality to her, as though a strong gust of wind could blow her away. She has a soft, shy voice — when she speaks at all.

Roleplaying Hints: You surpassed your brother in necromantic skill long ago, and he fears you — as well he should. He has played his appointed role in this passion play and you forgive him his frailties. He will not survive the dawn of the next century without your help. Yet, you exist for one purpose only: to ensure that your master Ambrogino Giovanni may ascend to his place in the heavens. Egypt poses overwhelming difficulties, but you must steel yourself and survive whatever obstacles arise if Ambrogino is to prevail.

Quote: *I am truly sorry for the pain you are suffering at my brother's hand. Perhaps you will be more cooperative after you are dead.*

Equipment: Plain clothing, rosary, Bible



Kenneth Stahl

Background: Born into the Dutch-African Ghiberti family, Kenneth made a small fortune selling arms in the growing Afrikaner settlement on the Cape of Good Hope. His ability to open up new markets impressed a Giovanni merchant who offered him the Embrace. After being born into a new world, he traveled to Cairo. He rose quickly to second in command of the family's Cairo interests, through a combination of business acumen and aptitude for necromancy. Frederico Giovanni's untimely death at Marianna's hands left the business to Stahl, as it did responsibility for her capture.

Clan: Giovanni (Ghiberti Family)

Sire: Henry of Saxony

Nature/Demeanor: Jobsworth/Competitor

Generation: 7th

Embrace: A.D. 1680

Apparent Age: 35

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Streetwise 4

Skills: Etiquette 1, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Ride 3, Security 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 4, Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 1, Occult 3, Politics 1

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Necromancy 3, Potence 2, Thaumaturgy 3

Ritual: Spirit Beacon

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 4, Herd 2, Influence 3, Resources 3, Retainers 3, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 3, Courage 3

Paths: Death and the Soul 5

Willpower: 7

Imager: Kenneth is a tall, somewhat lanky, man in his early 30s. He has straight, reddish-blond hair, and a few freckles remain on his face. He dresses casually in khaki pants and a white shirt with rolled-up sleeves. He has a disarming schoolboy grin and seems comfortable in most social situations.

Roleplaying Hints: It's a job, isn't it? No one ever promised you that being Giovanni was going to be all money and glory. Frederico smelled Cappadocius' stink all over that crazy Marianna slut when she appeared years ago. Thing is, the dumb fucker tried to play games with her instead of just killing her. She escaped and then — bang! She reappears out of nowhere years later and takes Frederico's head clean off. Stupid bastard. The business is in good hands, though.

Of course, when you gained Frederico's position, you inherited his headaches as well. Baldesar says he wants Marianna alive for shipment to Rome. "Easier said than done," you tell him. "Do it, or I will pull out your heart," he replies. Fair enough. You're a numbers man by trade, but you have the will necessary to stick a knife in and twist. You've had to dirty your hands over the years, and you'll see your way through this, too.

Quote: *Nothing personal.* (Sound of gunshots.)

Equipment: Revolver, fighting knife, hat



Giovanni Enforcers (Egypt)

Background: The Rossellinis have four Italian and four Ghiberti ghouls with them while in Egypt. The ghouls are all highly loyal and efficient, but there is friction between the two groups. The Italians have told Kenneth to "keep his men in line." The ghouls do most of the Rossellinis' legwork. They have a cart and divide their number into day and night shifts while in the desert. The Giovanni frequently travel during the day, thus compromising safety for speed.

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mentals: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3

Skills: Firearms 3, Melee 2, Repair 2, Ride 2, Security 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Finance 1, Investigation 2

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Fortitude 2, Potence 2

Willpower: 5

Equipment: High-powered rifle, heavy pistol, camels, blood, food and water, compass

The Fire Court (Characters)



Neferu

Background: The history of the Fire Court is linked with that of its founder, the child-Methuselah Neferu. Ages ago, Pharaoh Akhenaten, who the Setites cursed as Akhenaten-light-bringer, became a heretic and cast down Egypt's traditional gods — Amon, Isis, Osiris and Set. The pharaoh insisted that the "old" gods bow before the new cult of Aton, the one god.

Neferu was a lady in waiting to Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti, but she was also a slave in a temple of Set. The people protested Akhenaten's sacrilege, but only the Setites acted to return Egypt to its rightful state. Akhenaten's vizier, the dark-eyed commoner Ay, was a ghoul and high priest in the now-hidden temples of Set. After Akhenaten's death, Ay murdered his one heir, Tutankhamen. Ay then attempted to marry the murdered king's wife to become Pharaoh.

Akhenaten's widow wrote to the King of the Hittites, requesting that he send one of his sons to marry her instead, and she had Neferu deliver the letter. The Hittite agreed, but Ay's men hacked the prince down. The grieving queen soon followed her husband into eternity, never knowing that the "dutiful" Neferu had betrayed her queen by sharing the letter with Ay.

The old gods rose again, and Ay's Setite patrons abandoned him. The traitorous temple girl gained a much greater reward: A Setite Methuselah was impressed by Neferu's treachery and Embraced her into the clan's coils.

Over a thousand years passed before the child appeared again, when Egypt was under the heel of foreign conquerors: The Greek Toreador and Roman Ventrue sought to enslave the land by using it as a treasury to fund other conquests. However, even as Julius Caesar and Mark Antony had to appeal to Cleopatra to fulfill their desires, so did the conquering Ventrue and Toreador need to deal with the Fire Court. The court was created by Neferu as the Setites' center of authority among the foreign clans. Vampire lords such as the Toreador Michael (later Patriarch of Constantinople), the Ventrue patriarch Bindusara, and the Sabbat Jalan-Aajav all reportedly visited Neferu's court in their quests for arcane lore and ancient secrets.

As foreign conquerors enslaved Egypt further, reducing it to little more than a province of their empires, foul corruption emanated outward from the land. The decay created by the Fire Court soon undermined the very pillars of the Roman edifice. Vengeful vampire lords struck at the court and supposedly destroyed it time and again. Yet, the court always arose from the ashes in another form. Neferu maintains her Fire Court even today as the place where desperate vampires must supplicate the Setites for aid — and are corrupted in the bargain.

Clan: Followers of Set

Nature/Demeanor: Autist/Child

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1352 B.C.

Apparent Age: 14

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 6

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Acting 6, Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 6, Empathy 6, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 5, Melee 3, Music 5, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledges: Finance 5, Investigation 5, Linguistics 5, Occult 7, Politics 5

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Celerity 2, Chimerstry 3, Dominate 5, Fortitude 3, Necromancy 4, Obfuscate 3, Potence 1, Presence 6, Quietus 1, Serpents 6, Thaumaturgy 6 (Corruption 5, Movement of the Mind 4)

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 7, Influence 5, Mentor 7, Resources 6, Retainers 6, Status 5

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 5, Morale 5

Path: Typhon 9

Willpower: 10

Image: The mind and power of an ancient in a child's form. Princess Neferu seemingly embodies the innocence of childhood. She wears a red and white robe that curls and billows around her as if caught in a breeze. Her movements are effortless; those who watch her realize that her feet never touch the ground. The court moves in harmony around her and caters to her every whim. Neferu speaks infrequently, but when she does, it is a melodious sound like chimes in the wind. Her musical laughter and enigmatic verse hide words of momentous importance and dark desire. Neferu never feeds from the truly innocent, despite — or perhaps because of — her corruption.

Although Neferu is immensely powerful, there is an indefinable air of something even older looming behind the court's facade.

Roleplaying Hints: These foreigners are amusing, but you will be glad when they are gone. The skeins of fate are woven tightly about them; it is dangerous to deal with them. Thankfully, that is not your task. Let Jocalo dispose of them and the Necromancers as he will; you do not relish the thought of engaging an Antediluvian, even one as young as the pretender Augustus. You have an uneasy relationship with Jocalo. He makes you laugh — a disturbing chink in your armor. You like him after a fashion, but since when was their ever trust between snakes?

Quote: *You do me an honor by coming to my court. May you find what you seek here.*

Storyteller: Neferu is extremely powerful but disdains combat. She uses Dominate and Presence to control unruly guests.



Sobek (Third Vessel of Iniquity)

Background: Sobek is the Fire Court's third high priest since its inception, and he has used his position to influence Egypt and the country's worldly interests. No one knows whether Sobek is the direct child of Neferu or if he owes his unlife to another master. He presides over most ceremonies and conveys the wishes of Neferu's supplicants to the child-princess. There are some in the court who consider Sobek a buffoon.

Clan: Followers of Set

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Director

Generation: 6th

Embracer: A.D. 850

Apparent Age: 40

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 5, Game Playing 3, Melee 3, Music 4, Ride 3, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Finance 4, Investigation 4, Law 3, Linguistics 3, Occult 5, Politics 4, Thanatology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 3, Potence 2, Presence 4, Serpents 6

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 6, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 4

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 4, Courage 4

Humanity/Path: Ecstasy 8

Willpower: 9

Merits: Church Ties

Image: Sobek is a large, bald, bull-necked man in his early 40s. His face looks as if it's carved from sandstone and is often as enigmatic as the Sphinx itself. His smile is a little sly, which is a habit he can't seem to break. His ceremonial garb is green and gold, and he carries a long golden staff with a cobra coiled around it. He wears white robes or a richly tailored European suit on the rare occasions that he leaves the Fire Court.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the third high priest of the Fire Court. Your predecessors failed because they were weak — but you are anything but that. Let the squeamish pick and choose their perversions; the only way to be strong and to be one with Set is to indulge in all vices. You engage in every hedonistic perversion, every fad and every decadent trend. You have a special love for children; the thrill of their innocence lost appeals to your warped sensibilities.

Though you believe that most perversions strengthen you, one may destroy you: The child-goddess that you serve trips through your mind, invading your every waking hour. She whispers nightly of your lusts, yet gives you no hope of realizing your dark desires. Your obsession for her will surely be your undoing.

You look upon those who come to the court with a cold, reptilian disdain, but you know how to be charming. You determine victims' desires rapidly — sex, wealth, knowledge — and use that insight to destroy them.

Quote: *Why do you complain? You knew I was a snake.*

Equipment: Priestly robes, sharp-edged cobra staff, Code of Set.



Glycon

Background: Glycon was Embraced in 12th-century Egypt, after four centuries of invasion by foreigners and Assamites. Indeed, the war to claim Egypt was fought primarily between Assamite and Setite lords, who hurled their kine forces against each other in a murderous game. The wars for Egypt became so heated that vampire masters eventually fought them themselves. The mortal Glycon stumbled upon just such a battle, fought by an apparent Mamluk invader and Egyptian holy man.

Glycon intervened on the priest's behalf. The intrusion of a human meant little given the ancient powers being wielded, but his arrival distracted the Assamite just long enough for the Setite priest to remove his enemy's head. The holy man thanked Glycon for his help and peered into the young man's pious soul. The priest took the mortal under his wing and explained the hatred between Set and his brother Osiris. Glycon was then Embraced into the Setite warrior caste, and his skill and loyalty brought him to the attention of the Fire Court, which he has served ever since.

Clan: Followers of Set
Nature/Demeanor: Competitor/Traditionalist
Generation: 7th
Embrace: A.D. 1169
Apparent Age: 21
Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6 (Dedicated)
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Streetwise 3
Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Melee (Scimitar) 5, Ride 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 1, Investigation 2, Law 2, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 5, Potence 4, Protean 2, Quietus 2, Serpents 6
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Herd 5, Influence 5, Resources 4, Status 4
Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 5, Courage 5
Path: Warrior 8
Willpower: 7
Merit: Police Ties

Image: Glycon is a lean, young warrior who moves with catlike grace. He is bald and his skin is tan, with only a hint of undead gray. A large red scorpion tattoo covers one of his eyes. He carries a curved sword and various other weapons.

Roleplaying Hints: As a member of the Brotherhood of the Scorpion, you are an instrument. You have forged yourself into a weapon, one that your masters use to destroy their enemies. This is not to say that you cannot enjoy your art, or that it is the sum of your being. You seek challenges constantly to hone your skills. You keep fit by tracking leopards, cheetahs and the predators of the desert, animal or otherwise. You also maintain connections to the Egyptian authorities, the better to learn of prey to hunt.

Most of these foreign vampires are fools, but some are dangerous. You respect those who are true warriors, Gangrel in particular, but that will not stop you from killing them if your masters bid it. You reserve the cruelest of deaths for the hated Assamites.

Quote: *You are good. I like that!*

Equipment: Sword, high-caliber rifle and pistol with silver bullets



Alexei (a.k.a. Myca Vykos, Sascha Vykos)

Background: Myca Vykos was an adherent of Constantinople's Obertus Trimisce, but he consorted with Setites and fell from the purer faith. The apostate sought dark grimoires and cultivated his Vicissitude over the centuries that followed. He spawned a thousand rivulets of terror that turned into a bloody torrent throughout Europe during the Dark Ages. Insanity and corruption sprouted like choking vines in his wake.

At the turn of the 19th century, Alexei came to the Fire Court, like so many other vampire lords of antiquity. He spoke with Princess Neferu for an entire week before leaving her chambers. Upon emerging, Alexei assumed a position as the Fire Court's chief undertaker. The previous torturer was his first victim.

Clan: Trimisce

Sire: Symeon

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Pedagogue

Generation: 6th

Embrace: A.D. 1002

Apparent Age: Indeterminate

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 6, Wits 5
Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 6, Streetwise 2
Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Repair 3, Ride 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3, Torture 5
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 2, History 6, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 5, Occult (*Book of Nod*) 6, Science 4, Thanatology 4
Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 5, Dominate 4, Fortitude 2, Potence 3, Thaumaturgy 4, Vicissitude 6
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Herd 5, Influence 3, Resources 4, Status (*Priscus*) 4
Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 5, Morale 4
Path: Caine 7
Willpower: 9
Merits/Flaws: Acute Senses, Ambidextrous, Double Jointed/Overconfident

Image: Alexei has used his mastery of Vicissitude to transform his features into a mask of sinister and alien beauty: His features are absolutely symmetrical. His expression is derisive, yet his words are polite and well-measured, almost introspective.

He wears a black torturer's robe and a mask of Anubis, or the greatcoat of a modern European gentleman.

Roleplaying Hints: Vampire lords have come to the Fire Court over the centuries for a very good reason: There is power and arcane knowledge here beyond the imagination. The Setites allow you to study their mortuary tomes in return for your services. You have garnered fresh insights into anatomy, putrefaction and fear during your stay. The Setites are Necromancers of sorts, but their greatest truths seem lost on the clan's young. You, however, have explored these dark mysteries and have plumbed the Serpents' mortuary secrets. You have delved into tomes and performed rituals that even they seem to fear.

You are also a master torturer and a charming conversationalist. You want people to understand what happens to them as you lovingly render their skin and bone into symphonies of agony.

You follow the Path of Caine and walk in the Father's footsteps. Augustus Giovanni, Set and that gentle old fool Cappadoctus all pale by comparison to Lilith's unholy stepchild. You seek power as a means of making yourself worthy to serve the Dark One. Thus far, you have been careful to ensure that your interests do not conflict with those of your Setite "hosts." Neferu

engaged your talents for a century. Only 18 years remain of your tenure, which you may see through — you gave your word, after all.

Lazarus' tomb interests you greatly, though. If the Giovanni and the other strangers court the Serpents to gain access, the tomb must be a prize beyond compare (or knowing the Setites, nothing but sand). Yet, you suspect that the Serpents have not discovered all of the tomb's secrets. You carefully weigh the risks of offending your hosts against the potential rewards of Lazarus' remains.

Quote: *That was not so bad, was it?*

Storyteller: If any characters were Embraced by Lord Mieczyslaw, Alexei may take a genuine interest in them and attempt to ally with them against the Giovanni or even the Setites. (For more on Alexei, a.k.a. Myca Vykos, read *Constantinople by Night*.)



The Messenger of Jocalo

Background: The Messenger of Jocalo is the most enigmatic of the Fire Court's complement; not even the other Setites are sure of what to make of her. She first appeared at the shadowy Court Jocalo's side in the early 13th century, and many theorize that she is his child.

The Messenger is clearly Indian by birth, and she displays a bizarre array of abilities and Disciplines. The few who know her are amazed that she seems equally at ease describing the high art of the Vedas as she is discussing military tactics with a Ventrue veteran. The Messenger appears before those that Count Jocalo uses in his power game; the Messenger can be a grim harbinger of death or a skillful diplomat. The Messenger accompanied Jocalo to London in 1666 and was responsible for spooking Mallotte from his two Malkavian companions.

Clan: Followers of Set

Sire: Count Jocalo

Nature/Demeanor: Perfectionist/Autist

Generation: 6th

Embrace: A.D. 845

Apparent Age: 20

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Dodge 5, Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 4, Streetwise 5

Skills: Etiquette 5, Melee (Saber) 4, Music 4, Ride 4, Security 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 2, Investigation 5, Law 1, Linguistics 5, Occult 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Chimerstry 6, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 5, Presence 6, Serpents 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 4, Mentor (Jocalo) 5, Resources 3, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 2, Instincts 5, Courage 4

Path: Lilith 7

Willpower: 9

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Acute Vision, Magic Resistance

Image: The Messenger usually maintains an illusory image. She appears to have skin like polished black onyx, with crimson lips and glowing white eyes. She wears a gold and lapis headdress, and she carries two curved swords in gold sheaths on her back.

If the Messenger is ever encountered in her human form, she appears as a tall woman with dusky skin, angular features and dark, jade-colored eyes. If she allows herself to be seen this way, she may even introduce herself as "Mara."

Roleplaying Hints: You are a former high priestess of Lilith, and you watch the antics of the Giovanni and the other foreigners with detached amusement. Jocalo allows you to express your love for the mother-goddess while in his service. Although the Lilim believe they are hidden from Set, your master actually discovered them almost two centuries ago. Your service to Jocalo ensures the Lilim of their lives and freedom, whether they know it or not.

You consider yourself innately superior to most Kindred and are particularly disdainful of the Giovanni, who hunted down the last of the Lamia. The Necromancers in the Fire Court are your play things; you do all that you can to make their stay a painful one, even if it means favoring the other foolish foreigners.

Quote: Strange, unearthly singing

Equipment: Curved sabers, silver daggers, poetry book

Storyteller: Jocalo's messenger is well-disposed toward the Ravens and highly knowledgeable about the Rom.



Marianna

Background: Embraced by Claudius Giovanni during the events of *The Last Supper*, Marianna has become one of the Giovanni's most intractable enemies. She is responsible for the deaths of several moderately important Necromancers, and the Giovanni have spent vast amounts of time and energy to find and destroy her. She first met the

characters in the events surrounding their Embrace, and again during the events of *Blood & Fire*. She may have even struck a tenuous alliance with the characters in 1666.

Marianna is primarily a loner, but she has made some valuable alliances over the centuries. Those relationships, combined with the arcane spirit lore she has acquired, have allowed her to evade the Giovanni far longer than would seem possible.

Marianna's occult knowledge derived from nightmares and whispered omens that compelled her to find Cappadocius' mountain fortress, Erciyes. She uncovered the dead Antediluvian's arcane library hidden at the mountain's roots; studying his tomes, Marianna gained access to necromantic secrets unknown to even the Giovanni. While far from mastering Cappadocius' lore, Marianna has learned briskly; her very existence is an increasingly painful thorn in Augustus Giovanni's side.

Clan: Giovanni

Sire: Claudius Giovanni

Nature/Demeanor: Martyr/Loner

Generation: 6th

Embraced: A.D. 1444

Apparent Age: mid-20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Dodge 5, Empathy 3, Hagglng 2, Interrogation 3, Intrigue 4, Masquerade 3, Search 3, Seduction 4, Sense Deception 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Dancing 3, Etiquette 3, Fast-Talk 3, Game Playing 3, Melee (Sword) 5, Meditation 3, Music 3, Research 5, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 4, Tracking 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 2, Camarilla Lore 2, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 4, Law 3, Linguistics 4, Medicine 2, Occult 5, Theology 2, Wraith Lore 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 3, Dominate 4, Fortitude 3, Necromancy 3, Obfuscate 4, Potence 4, Thaumaturgy 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 4

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 7

Merits/Flaws: Higher Purpose, Concentration, Medium/Nightmares

Image: Marianna is a slim, beautiful, young woman with flame-red hair and brown eyes. She seems to have aged slightly over the past centuries, however; her once-youthful features are now tired and worn. She dresses in loose-fitting and practical clothes, usually black or other dark colors.

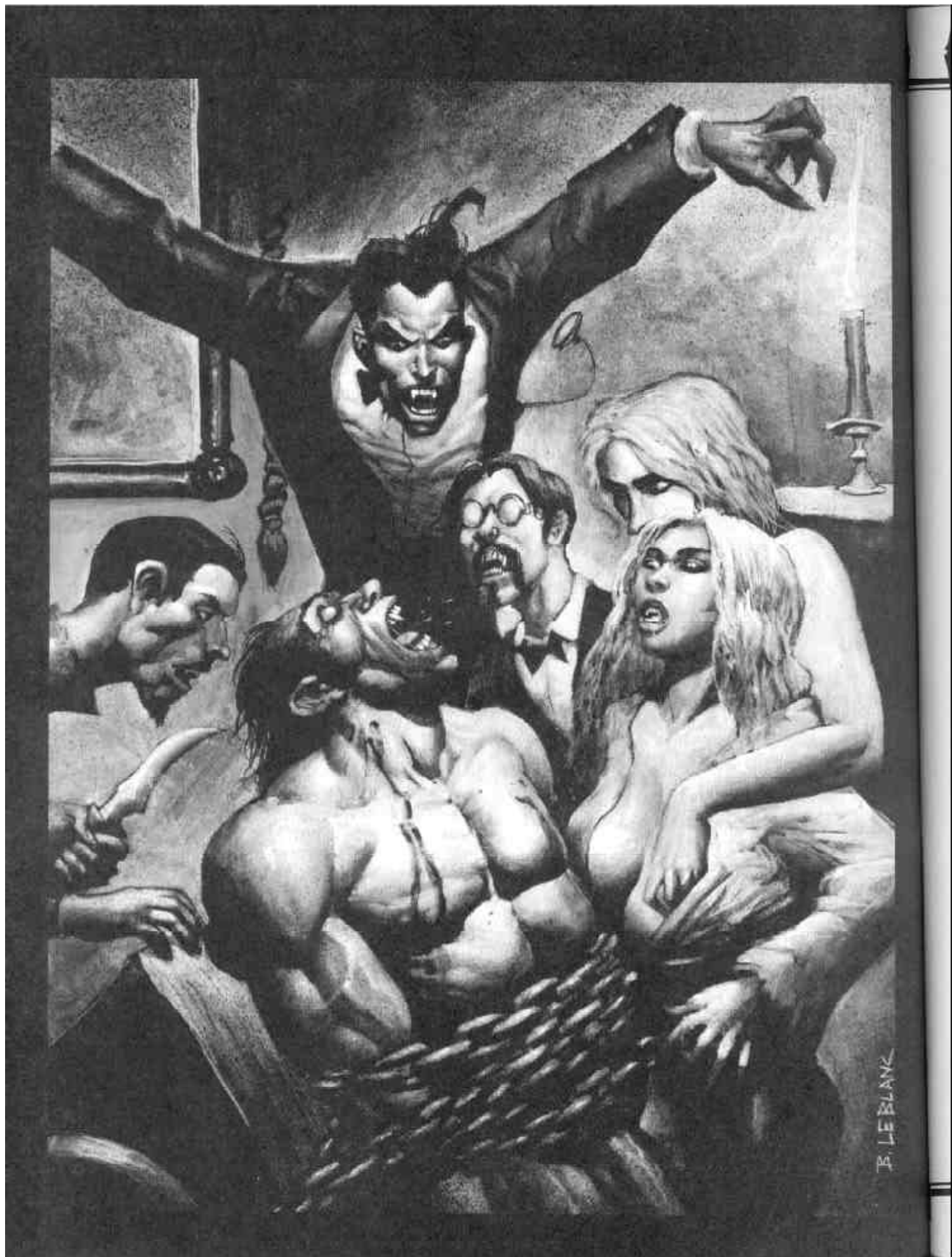
Roleplaying Hints: You are paranoid for good reason — you have been the pawn of other powers for centuries. The Giovanni created you and have hunted you ever since. You believe that Cappadocius' soul watches over you and that you are the means to his vengeance. He has taught you what you need to know to evade the Necromancers and to strike at them. Yet, your unearthly patron is enigmatic. You sometimes sense his fatherly presence; other times you feel utterly alone.

You are 400 years old and weary of the world, but you cannot die — yet. Claudius, Ambrogino and even Cappadocius have stolen your life from you. Though you pursue your current path for "higher ideals," you are not above revenge. You do not hate Cappadocius, but he controls your destiny.

You sympathize with the others Embraced by the Conspiracy of Isaac; they share part of your fate.

Equipment: Nondescript traveling clothes, robe with hood, sword

Storyteller: Marianna has learned many secrets from the *Lesser Key of Cappadocius* and has mastered certain rites unknown to all but the most skilled Necromancers. Marianna made a costly pact with a wraith before her arrival at the Fire Court; she can escape death by being led into the Shadowlands.



P. LE BLANC



Appendix One: Clan Alliances

The events of this book do not happen in a vacuum. If the characters have existed for a lengthy time, they undoubtedly have friends, pawns and agents at their disposal. This section details connections that characters might have, and how these alliances may influence the events of this story.





Camarilla Characters

If the characters were faithful to Camarilla interests in the first two books of the *Giovanni Chronicles*, the Founders may have sought to mold their young protégés into examples of "true" Camarilla vampires. Most Kindred are individuals by nature, though, and such ideological indoctrination is rarely successful.

The Founders try to influence the characters through personal relationships or clan blood ties rather than through sect loyalties. Most of the members of the Conspiracy of Isaac were members of clans that later joined the Camarilla. Over the past two centuries, the Founders may have tried to influence the characters to be active among their clans to make the characters role models for the sect's greater good.

Such patronage can be frustrating, but beneficial as well. Characters' personal freedoms (at least their public ones) are curtailed by being the Founder's representatives: "Proper" Ventrue, for example, must appear austere and fair rather than bitter and petty. However, working with the Founders and being esteemed members of their clans gives the characters access to information, resources and raw power that they might need during their feud against the Giovanni. Such influence might even be called upon abroad; the Founder's proxies certainly have some renown (or

infamy) across Europe. Of course, such standing bears little weight in Egypt's isolated nest of Serpents; that's when characters are left to their own devices.

Unfortunately, the characters' rivalry with the Giovanni doesn't command the resounding response that the characters might hope for. The Camarilla has declared Clan Giovanni "anathema," but the sect currently considers the Necromancers a peripheral threat compared to the Sabbat. The Founders show little interest ultimately in following the characters into a war with the Giovanni and they expect the lords to be "discreet" in their dealings with the Romans. Thus, close affiliations with the Camarilla's powers that be truly are a double-edged sword.

If the characters are Camarilla but were not involved in the events of the previous two books, they may still have a place of authority in the sect. They probably do not have the immediate favor of the Founders but can command some sway — and may even have more freedom than Founders' proxies do.

Sabbat Characters

Sabbat of the characters' generation, age and experience have probably obtained some rank in their sect, though not as much as comparable Camarilla characters might have in theirs. A society such as the Sabbat that's

composed of individuals demands that each earns prestige and power through her own deeds. Political alliances, favors and deals hold less weight in the Sabbat than they do in the Camarilla. Thus, Sabbat characters are somewhat on their own in the events of *The Sun Has Set*, unless they can call upon personal favors or minions.

If the characters defected from the Camarilla during *Blood & Fire*, Basel Sabbat elders may have encouraged them to maintain their Camarilla identities in order to spy on the enemy camp. However, the higher that such characters climb in the Camarilla, the greater their chance of discovery. Thus, spies probably keep out of the limelight and stay their distance from the Founders. Sabbat spies do have the benefit of drawing on support from two sources. The trick is to ensure that the Camarilla never learns the truth about the elders, and that other Sabbat do not construe the characters' Camarilla "allegiances" to be genuine.

Independent Characters

An independent group of vampires may become involved in the events of *The Sun Has Set* in many ways. Perhaps the characters experienced the events of the first two books, but have had enough of the imperious whims of the Founders and Sabbat lords and have dissolved their sect ties. Such characters might have clan loyalties, but no love for either social order. Maybe they slip slowly toward anarchy, maintaining their Camarilla or Sabbat identities as convenient fictions. Such characters are in very dangerous positions, but they have the freedom to forge their own destinies.

If the characters were Embraced by the Conspiracy of Isaac, not all of their sires necessarily belonged to the clans that constitute the modern Camarilla or Sabbat. The following options are available for characters Embraced by independent conspirators.

A character Embraced by Gabrin the Ravnos finds a home among the Rom quickly. This factor is especially true if she speaks ill of her sire, who was not popular with the clan. A

Ravnos vampire may attempt to survive the events of this book without compromising her freedom, but there will be many who want to bend the Gypsy to their will. The ability to read dreams and prophecies is highly prized among Egypt's Serites, in particular, and they might concentrate their corruptive efforts on the Ravnos character.

A child of Bajazet Al-Nazir does not find a welcome home among the Assamites. Her sire was a traitor to the clan and the Assamites try to collect his blood debt from the character. An Assamite-born character may find a home in another clan, become unto a Catiff, or join the ranks of the Assamite *awā'ilin*. (Obviously, you should ignore this suggestion if the character has already joined the Assamites during the events of the previous two books.)

The Followers of Ser have made no apparent moves to collect Lady Amisa's child, though they are very aware of her. A character who tries to initiate contact with the Serpents finds their trail to be extremely elusive. However, a persistent character might eventually have a striking dream about a hauntingly beautiful Setite girl in the desert.... A wayward Serite who travels to Egypt is "welcomed home" by the Fire Court and is given access to the court's resources, but he is expected to be more loyal to Neferu than to his own companions.

Independent characters are on their own throughout this chronicle more so than any vampires who are connected to the Camarilla or Sabbat. Characters without societal ties can expect assistance from no one. What do sect vampires gain from helping loners? Of course, that assumes the characters have nothing to offer for others' aid. Independent vampire lords are powerful by necessity; they have to rely on their own strengths to survive. Independent characters might therefore buy, trade or bully for resources, information or assistance — even from Camarilla or Sabbat vampires. Other Cainites may belong to the sects and appear to be loyal, but all vampires seek to provide for themselves in the end, and all Kindred have their price.

Appendix Two: 19th-Century Firearms

Firearms technology accelerates in the 19th century. Some rifles designed at the century's end are used throughout the 20th century with only minor modifications. Innovations in ammunition, barrel design and materials increase range, power and rate of fire. Matchlock ignition has become obsolete since 1666, having given way to pinfire cartridges. Colt patents his first practical revolver design in 1835, though hand-advanced cylinder revolvers existed as early as the 17th century.

The following lists detail the firearms that 19th-century vampires, ghouls and humans may use — some of these guns are used by characters in this book. Categories such as Rate and Range are explained in the **Vampire** rules.



1848 Pistols

Colt Paterson: Difficulty 6, Damage 4, Rate 2, Clip 5, Concealment J, Range 15

Derringer Pocket Pistol*: Difficulty 6, Damage 5, Rate 1, Clip 1, Concealment P, Range 12

Pepperbox Revolver: Difficulty 6, Damage 4, Rate 1, Clip 6, Concealment J, Range 15

Scottish Snapchance*: Difficulty 7, Damage 4, Rate 1, Clip 1, Concealment J, Range 10

US Navy Model 1843: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 1, Concealment J, Range 20

* Muzzle-loaded, one-shot weapon; must be reloaded with every shot.

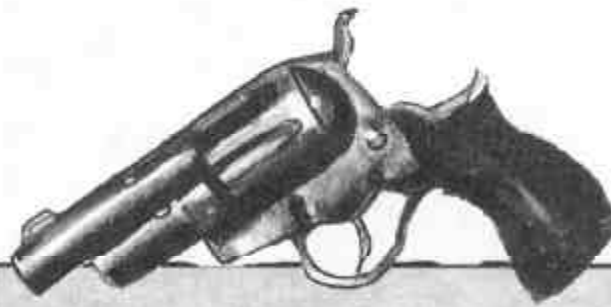
Rifles

Ferguson Rifle: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 1, Concealment N, Range 100

Flintlock Revolving Carbine: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 7, Concealment T, Range 100

Hall Carbine: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 7, Concealment N, Range 120





1882

By the 1850s, smoothbore weapons give way to rifled barrels, increasing both range and accuracy. The first self-advancing revolvers are not generally available until the 1890s.

Pistols

British "Man-Stopper": Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 6, Concealment J, Range 30

Colt Lightning: Difficulty 6, Damage 4, Rate 2, Clip 6, Concealment J, Range 30

Lancaster Model 1882: Difficulty 6, Damage 5, Rate 1, Clip 4, Concealment J, Range 40

Remington Derringer: Difficulty 6, Damage 5, Rate 1, Clip 2, Concealment P, Range 25

Sharps Pocket Pistol: Difficulty 6, Damage 4, Rate 2, Clip 4, Concealment P, Range 25

Rifles

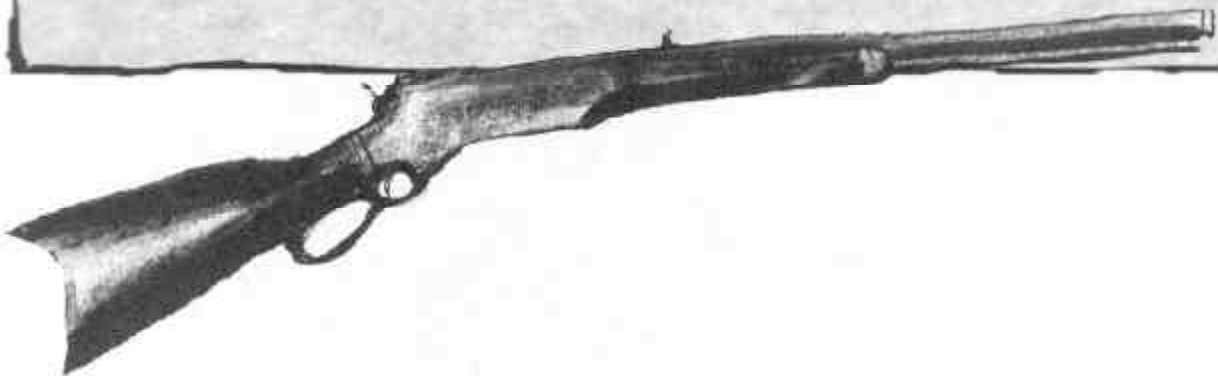
Colt Model 1855: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 5, Concealment N, Range 125

Jacob Rifle: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 2, Concealment N, Range 250

Sharps Model 1855: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 1, Concealment N, Range 100

Vetterli Model 1881: Difficulty 7, Damage 6, Rate 1, Clip 13, Concealment N, Range 175

Winchester Model 1873: Difficulty 6, Damage 5, Rate 2, Clip 7, Concealment N, Range 150



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