

GHOULS FATAL ADDICTION



A Sourcebook for Vampire: the Masquerade

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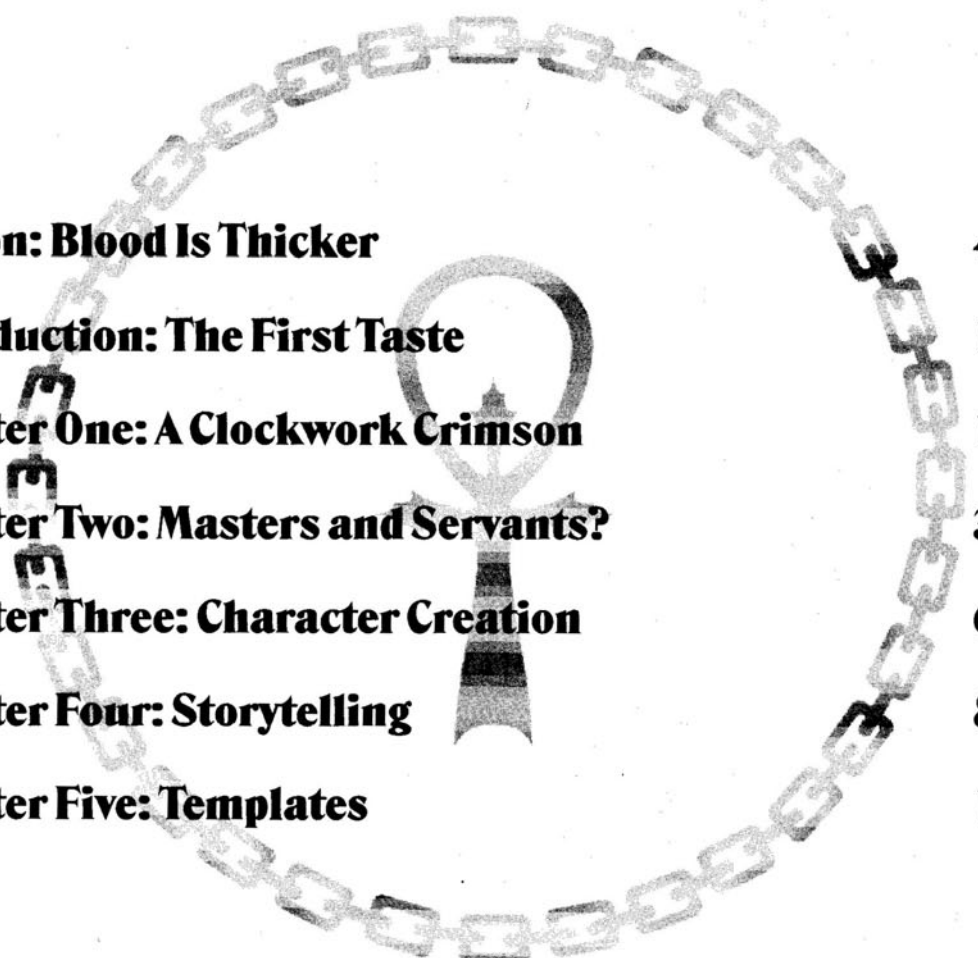
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PRINTED IN THE USA.

GHOULS FATAL ADDICTION™



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Blood Is Thicker

*He laid his troubles out to me like a deck of
playing cards*

*Well don't you know that I can tell the
kings and jokers well apart*

—Concrete Blonde, "Your Haunted Head"

I must have the worst job in all of New York.

I ram the plunger into a commode overstuffed with Nathan's Famous Frankfurters napkins and Marlboro butts. *Thank God for union wages.* I strip a stall wall of graffiti that proclaims that Jeanette has the biggest tits in Brooklyn. Time for me to leave if I want to catch the B Train back home. What a day it's been.

The park shut down about an hour ago, but as I exit the men's room I can still hear the dull neon hiss of the Cyclone sign. Carlos must be here still, doing some closing-time ride maintenance. I notice a Pepsi can on the cracked sidewalk. It seems the more I clean this place, the scuzzier it gets.

A humid August wind blows, choked with sausage, urine, saltwater and diesel. I cross Stillwell Avenue by Katz's Kandy Shoppe — Home of the World's Greatest Kotton Kandy — fumble in my jeans pocket for my token, and head to the dank subway station. A teenaged boy with greasy black hair and gold braces bums a quarter from me by the turnstile and, other than him, it looks like I'm a lone soul in this station. I take my position on a piece of blackened gum that's been squashed onto the platform, glancing anxiously at my watch.

It's going to be a long ride tonight. Usually Carlos takes the same train I do, so I have someone to chat with. Not this time. No — tonight I'm the only passenger. I close my eyes, knowing I can nap for awhile; the ride to Manhattan takes about 35 minutes, and there's nobody on this train for me to be scared of. My head bobs back and forth, and I can barely doze off because the train is squeaking so loudly. Damn MTA always runs the rickety trains to Brooklyn. I force my eyelids open and fixate on the sign above the window advertising an abortion clinic where the nurses all *Habla Español.*

The train rattles into the next stop, and the doors clack open, and I don't know whether it's the sight or the stink of the new passenger that draws my attention first. I try not to stare, but he's so gross that I can't help it. Looks like a homeless guy, judging by his piss-stained chinos and Mondale for President T-shirt. I figure he'll probably try to sell me a copy of *The Street News*, but he avoids my stare and quietly takes a seat across from me.

The train squeals louder than before, sending a knife through my eardrums. The homeless guy sorta looks at me and grins. "Loud train, huh?" he says.



"Mmmhmm," I grunt, staring down at my shoes, not wanting to look him straight in the eyes. I notice that the man is barefoot, and his feet are covered by little reddish warts.

I've got a headache now, and the noise is becoming louder and louder as we enter the tunnel beneath the East River. And then I hear another ominous creak, and I look up at a crack in the roof of the subway, from which small droplets of the dirtiest river in America are slopping to form puddles on scattered seats in the subway car. Odors of mildew and fecal matter fill the air. Goddamn, I have to smell it at work all goddamn day, and now the whole train is exuding the stench of shit! My fellow passenger just glances at me, gives me a yellow-toothed grin, and says, "Yep, New York sure does have the world's cleanest subway system!"

I want to vomit. I can see the goosebumps crowding the surface of my forearms, my face is covered in a cold sweat, and...

The hyenalike squeal finally ceases, but a deluge of river water begins to flood the train. There is a moment of rigid calm, in which all I can hear is the steady drip-drip-drip of water on the plastic orange seats. The homeless man just sits across from me in the same oblivious position, kinda twiddling his thumbs nervously. A sudden buzzing hum fills the subway car, the greenish hue of the fluorescent lights fades to black, and the subway stops dead on its tracks.

I can't scream; what would that accomplish? But, Mother of Jesus, what am I gonna do? I rub at my temples as if that will help me come up with a solution, but my hand slips on my own sweat. My stomach is tied in a Boy Scout's knot. Oh Jesus, I don't want to die like a roach in a toilet! I want to get up, walk to the next car, but the fear has me in a viselike grip, and the remains of my dinnertime slice of sausage pizza make their way to the back of my throat. All I can do is cry. I can't see a thing, but I feel the cuffs of my jeans soaked with East River residue. I flinch in disgust and put my knees to my chest, thinking I can prevent the murky slime from covering the rest of me.

Something touches my right shoulder, and I nearly jump out of my skin.

"There's nothing to worry about, sweetie," says the stranger, now sitting beside me, his arm extended around my shoulder. "I'll take care of you," he whispers, and I feel his cold breath warming my lips, as he grabs me by the back of my neck and forces a long and snaky tongue into my mouth. I gag as he kisses me, my mouth still tasting faintly of vomit, and then I bite his tongue so he'll stop, but he continues on with even more fervor, ignoring the gobbet of his tongue floating on my saliva. A viscous, bitter slime — his blood? — curdles with the chunky vomit in my throat.

I try to reach for my purse, get my Swiss Army knife, but he cuffs my wrists with his strong, knobby fingers, and more of his blood oozes into my mouth. Then he finally stops

kissing me, picks me up, and aims me toward the subway window. Shards of thick Plexiglas blanket my eyes, and all I see is red.

I struggle to open my eyelids, feeling cold, damp cement beneath me. Something is squirming on me, and I hear another squeaking sound...God, it sounds like the train!! I shudder, finally able to get my eyes open, and it's just a rat...two rats...no, three rats...and they're about three feet long each! My heart races. Last night's events slowly enter my mind, in little Technicolor vignettes, and I search my body for the blood and cuts, but nothing is there! Not a scar! No fucking evidence! I must be going out of my mind! How can I tell a half-baked story like this to the NYPD? (A sudden shudder — what if the guy had AIDS?)

I muster the strength to prop myself up, and I survey my surroundings. I'm in the Stillwell Avenue station, and I can see the orange sun coming up to greet a new day.

They say nothing's new in the Big Apple. Well, I'll tell ya, after work tonight I'm not taking the subway home alone!

I somehow get through another Coney Island evening, though my hands are shaking nervously even as I plunge the last stinking toilet of the night. Carlos tells me he's going to escort me home, and he'll be on the lookout for my attacker. But just the thought of stepping off the platform and onto the subway scares the living daylights out of me, even with Carlos by my side.

I lock the bathroom door and head over to the Cyclone; Carlos flicks his last switch of the evening, and the neon buzz erodes into silence. He takes my hand and assures me that everything is going to be okay. He gives me some cotton candy to comfort me; he says he always ate it as a kid, and nothing is more soothing than dandy candy, even though it's true that liquor is quicker.

We cross the avenue, and Carlos is all gentlemanly and lets me through the turnstile first, paying my fare. I feel so much better having him around.

So, everything seems all right now with a strong man by my side. I doze off in his arms, slouching in my seat for the long haul to Manhattan. Nobody else on the train, but like Carlos said, everything's gonna be okay.

About a half-hour into the ride, I open my saggy eyelids. I gotta get off soon, and then Carlos goes all the way to Spanish Harlem.

When I lean over to give Carlos a hug good-bye, I shut my eyes, aiming for his mouth to give him a friendly kiss for being such a good protector. His lips are so soft and wet.

Then Carlos intertwines his tongue in mine, giving me a wet, juicy soul kiss. I open my eyes, shocked.



"You looking for me?" he says, grinning slackly, the blood dripping from his half-eaten tongue.

Jesus fucking Christ! I...didn't think *he*...Carlos?! I feel a pounding in my temples, and...something isn't right...oh, fuck! I think my goddamn head is gonna explode. I...gotta do something...hurt...spill some blood! I need it...NOW!

I shove, and I'm 100 pounds sopping wet, but Carlos goes crashing into the aisle three seats down. I rummage through my pocketbook for my knife before he has a chance to stop me.

"You sonofabitch! What the fuck is wrong with you? Whattaya, in some cult or something? Why the fuck did you attack me?" I plead with him for an answer, my voice cracking as I yell. "I thought you were my friend!"

He gets up, snarling, lunging. Before I'm even aware of it, my fingers flick open the knife to its sharpest serrated blade, my arm extends, and the steel edge pierces his jugular. It's like stabbing a pillow. I don't feel like I'm actually hurting him. It's someone else — I don't hurt people — I don't freak out like this — I'm not Bernie Goetz!

I look into Carlos's eyes, and he looks as if he's already dead — there's just nothing there. He gasps, clenches his jaw, then falls to the subway floor. For a moment I actually feel remorse.

And then I feel something else entirely. I straddle his chest and bend down to...lap up the blood from the collar of his Cyclone T-shirt?

Asshole just about raped me...why the hell should I feel bad about this? This blood...I don't know why I'm drinking it, but something about it just...wow! I guess it just feels good to hurt him back — and this blood is slimy and bitter but does something better than a hundred bottles of bourbon. As it oozes like molasses down my throat, I feel like I could throw the motherfucker clean through the wall of the train.

I remove the knife from his neck and lick it clean, then polish it with his bloody shirt. Still nobody on the fucking train, so I just leave Carlos there to rot. When I get off the train, I give the knife to some drunken amputee who's propped up against the Citibank building. "Use it for protection," I tell him, smirking, waiting for the light to change so I can cross the street to my third-floor studio. "Never know what you're gonna find out here on the street."

4:33 a.m. and I wake myself up with my own shrill scream. My sheets are soaked with sweat. What the hell is wrong with me?! I can't stop trembling. I dart out of bed and pace the floor of my 600-square-foot hovel. What have I done?! I've killed a man!! I was molested!! I run to the



bathroom and quickly start a hot shower. I strip naked and get in the stall, violently scrubbing my whole body like one of the characters in *Silkwood*. Ouch! Fuck — I scrubbed too hard. My leg...

I watch the pink blood-and-water mixture seep into the drain. My leg...I'm covered in boils! The thought of AIDS knots itself in my gut again. I've gotta figure out what the hell is going on!

I dry myself off and get into some sweats and a tank top. There's an all-night clinic...no. I don't care what time it is; I'm going to Harlem to get to the bottom of this shit. I'm gonna tell his family what he did to me the other night — I'll even tell 'em what I did if I have to. I'm not gonna be arrested for something I did in self-defense. His family oughtta know. Mama Fernandez should know that her son was a rapist!

I dash to the subway station in record time. The amputee is still propped up against the bricks of the bank, but he's out cold, a bottle of white-grape MD20-20 lying beside his stumps. The knife I gave him is gone. Some bum must've stolen it from him. God, I'd hate to be homeless in New York.

Back on this rickety old train again. It gives me the creeps. At least I'm not in the same car as Carlos's corpse. I get the chills thinking about it. Ugh! His tongue...the blood!

But I'm not scared to ride the subway by myself anymore. I can handle anything. My whole body trembles with energy, like I'm a rubber band waiting to snap at someone. God, I can't quite remember the Fernandez's apartment number. 568B? — or is it 586B? — or—

I get a whiff of stale blood, and there's Carlos, suddenly in front of me like a stage magician's trick, my Swiss Army knife in hand. All the power I feel seems to evaporate, puddling onto the subway floor.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk, Mary! Ya know, my kind doesn't kick the bucket too easily, and we sure don't forget when some stupid ghoul tries to off us. But I knew you'd be back — betcha you were gettin' the shakes, huh, honey?"

"I...I...yes...I mean, wh-what's going on?" I stammer.

"Welcome to the Sabbath, dearie. Shit — no wonder you're nothing but a fucking janitor at Coney Island! You haven't figured out what I am?"

"No, I...I...just thought—"

"That I was some sicko with a blood fetish who's been wanting to get in your pants?" he winces. "Shit, I don't want no piece of your working-class Irish-Catholic ass! And you're the one with the blood fetish now!" He slices his own wrist and shoves his hand into my mouth. "This is what you've been waiting for, isn't it? Now drink up, junkie! Nothin' like a little Nos blood when ya need a fix...."

Oh, God! Oh, God! I don't want it! I want him to get his wrist outta my mouth! I let out a muffled, half-assed, "Stop!"

But I cave in. God, it's so fucking good! I feel a sudden burst of energy, like I just sniffed a line of coke. I want more!

He jerks his — claw? — away. "Now, that's enough. Don't wanna spoil you or anything. After all, you gotta discipline your servants. Now, what I want you to do tomorrow at work is go down to—"

I don't let him finish. I paw and claw at him, and kick him in the balls till he's down. Some adrenaline-type wave comes over me, and I push him to the ground so hard that his impact cracks the tiles, and then I pry my knife out of his clenched fist. "Listen, you sonofabitch, and you listen good! I'm not doing any favors for some rapist nutcase!" I pin him down on the subway floor, waving the blade in front of his face. I hold my breath for a second, then cut deeply across his neck. A small thread of jaundiced skin still holds his head to his severed neck, and a geyser of blood spurts out of his throat. And I drink and drink and drink to my heart's content, until I can no longer see his wart-covered little toes twitching. And this time I am not crying or gagging as I exsanguinate the bastard. Nope. This time I'm laughing like a maniac!

Yep, I must have the worst job in all of New York. But I think it's about to get a little bit better.



Introduction: The First Taste

*They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls*
— Edgar Allan Poe, “The Bells”

Ghouls.

The very word conjures images of pale, malformed creatures skulking among headstones and crypts, scrabbling through graveyard dirt and scratching at coffin lids, **ever** seeking to unearth and devour the fetid remains of humanity's deceased.

And yet, in the World of Darkness, the term “ghoul” refers to a creature, usually an innocuous human or animal, made suddenly supernatural by a diet of vitae — the blood of the vampire. Unhindered by the Kindred's driving thirst,

no more vulnerable to the noonday sun than the next person, they hardly seem like the corpse-eating bogeymen from which they take their name. For some, it may seem like an attractive life: A ghoulish never ages, can heal almost any wound, has twice the strength he once did — hey, that sounds great!

It isn't.

A ghoulish isn't a watered-down version of a vampire. Ghouls may not be Damned, but in many ways their lot is worse. The Blood changes many things when it enters a living

being. The vampiric curse of frenzy haunts all ghouls, driving them to extremes of anger and desire — extremes often focused on their still-present human needs. Other taints can take root as well: deformity, madness or worse. Perhaps worst of all, most ghouls become shackled by the Blood Bond. These hapless addicts become obsessed with their masters, or *domitors*. It becomes all too easy for a ghoul's personality to be subsumed by the force of her domitor's will. You're a slave — maybe initially by choice, but no longer. Once you've tasted the Blood, you don't have any choice at all.

So why would you want to play a ghoul?

First, tragedy is an inherent part of Vampire stories. The themes of alienation and inner struggle are not the exclusive provinces of the Kindred. If a Cainite is a tragic figure, then doubly so his ghoul servant. Ghouls have no biological dependence on vitae — at first. But once you taste those first few drops of sheer bliss and distilled power, it's hard to go back. And soon enough the Blood Bond catches you, and your very existence revolves around this wonderful, horrible person without whom you're sure you couldn't survive. Every day you may live the life of a normal human. You hunger, you thirst, you bleed — but for all that, you're not quite human anymore. You can frenzy, and might unintentionally hurt someone close to you. Your biological processes are augmented — but so are your biological urges, and living beings have many more urges than the undead. You no longer age as humans do. You're walking directly on the edge of a deadly fall, and all it takes to push you over the edge is a single drop of blood.

Second, the horror of Vampire becomes even sharper when you are not the vampire. As a ghoul, you are part of Kindred society, but an expendable part. No sire is obligated to instruct you; you know little of the clans, friend or foe. Tremere sorcerers and Malkavian psychotics are doubly frightening when you *know* they're more powerful than you. Terrible powers like Obtenebration and Protean are all the more horrifying to a ghoul's eyes. Vampires are frightening beasts, especially when you know just enough about them to become truly afraid...and who says you're going to know anything? There's absolutely no reason that your domitor has to tell you *anything* about vampire culture. You may not know what a clan is — or even a vampire. All you know is that this fabulous person has come into your life, and she gives you this stuff that makes you feel like Samson, and maybe you have to do some strange things for her every now and again, but it is so worth it. All you have to do in return is survive in the World of Darkness while unseen, powerful figures move in the shadows around you. Not an easy task for a Cainite; for a mortal, it's all but impossible.

Running a ghoul character in a coterie of vampires can also be rewarding. You can travel during the daylight, and might even become a valued member of your group in this way. Yes, you're the weak one in the group; whoever said life was fair? But you can walk in the park on a sunny afternoon, enjoy a good white wine with your chicken Caesar salad, even raise a family. The vampires may wind up envying you more than you envy them. This is, of course, never a good thing.



Ghouls: Fatal Addiction is a supplement for **Vampire: The Masquerade**, meant to provide players and Storytellers with insights and ideas into what it is to be a ghoul — from aberrant psychologies to simple physical facts, from the social games they play to what awaits a ghoul without a master. Although the material herein can be used to flesh out any **Vampire** chronicle, hopefully it'll inspire you to try roleplaying a ghoul, hapless or headstrong, for a while.

Chapter One: A Clockwork Crimson deals with the biological details of what exactly “ghouling” entails, and what changes it works on the body, as well as offering a glimpse into the mind of a ghoul. Also included here is most of the “rulespeak” concerning ghouls' physiology.

Chapter Two: Masters and Servants? discusses the manner in which ghouls fit into Kindred society, as well as the societies they form on their own.

Chapter Three: Character Creation offers rules for running ghouls as player characters, as well as offering specific Merits and Flaws to add more variety to the run-of-the-mill vassal.

Chapter Four: Storytelling offers advice for working ghouls into a **Vampire** chronicle, ideas on running all-ghoul chronicles, and details on some of the more notorious figures in ghoul society.

Chapter Five: Templates provides four ready-to-use ghoul templates, which can be dropped into a chronicle as supporting cast, antagonists, or even quick-start player characters.

Enough said. The tenuous and fragile immortality of the Blood awaits.

Don't drink it all at once, now.



Guy Davis '11

Chapter One: A Clockwork Crimson

*You were born into a society which spelled out
with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible,
that you were a worthless human being.*

— James Baldwin, "My Dungeon Shook"

The Physiology of the Ghoul

My noble and terrible liege, greetings! Here as requested is the summation of my research into the biology of our vitae-fed servants. The past two years have been of especial progress, and I feel that my findings are complete enough to satisfy all but the most exacting of domitors.

I must reiterate how honored I was to receive your bequest, as well as the most generous supplies of vitae to further my experimentation. I only hope that my studies prove of use to you.

It in fact surprises me that so few vampires take any more than a passing interest in the biological aspects of their ghouls. Many Kindred would simply water them, like houseplants, and then leave them to their tasks. However, the prudent Cainite knows the importance of properly managing one's resources, and ghouls are among our most productive resources. Central to utilizing one's ghouls properly, of course, is precise knowledge of their capabilities and shortcomings. Such was my reasoning before your offer, as well you remember, and I am pleased to report that your bequest has furthered my studies a hundredfold.

Here follows the synopsis of my past two years of study, as well as my findings previous to your request. I'm sure that you will find them intriguing and informative, and, I dare to hope, perhaps even surprising in places.

Considerations of the Blood

First and foremost, to explore fully the physiognomy of the ghoul, one must discuss the Blood itself. Even the most luckless Caitiff outcast soon discovers that the seat of all his power lies within his vitae. Without it, his Disciplines are nothing more than quaint but impotent mental exercises; without it, his flapping wounds never close. And yet, the vitality of the Blood is not entirely predicated on the uses our undead forms have for it.

Human blood (and, to a lesser extent, that of other animals) has variable nutritional value, depending on the metabolism of the animal that feeds upon it. But vitae is nourishing to its drinker, regardless of the ingestor's species. Even herbivorous animals, once given a taste of vampiric blood, gladly drink as much as is given. This thirst becomes even more fascinating when produced in the most domesticated of animals; I have witnessed animals as docile as sheep rip at mundane flesh and lap up mortal blood in the hopes that vitae might be present. In no case did they convert to a carnivorous diet, however. Ghouling may override an herbivore's instincts somewhat, but cannot alter them completely.

Through extensive observation of ghoul servants, one can soon determine how much of Caine's power is transmitted through the Blood alone. For convenience, I will list the pertinent details first, and elaborate anon.

First and foremost, a ghoul with a steady diet of vitae is capable of learning the arcane powers which are passed from sire to whelp among our kind. Of course, the more "instinctive" abilities come most naturally; a ghoul innately learns the ways of superhuman strength almost instantly. More specific arcana require intense training, and often blood from a particular clan.

Second, vitae has a preservative effect on living tissue. Much as the Blood prevents our dead tissue from decaying, it likewise inhibits cellular breakdown in a living body. While the vitae courses through a host, human or animal, it halts the process of cell division and decay. Consequently, a ghoul will not age a biological day so long as she is fed Cainite vitae.

Third, ghouls are still living beings, and heal themselves at the natural rate (given rest and nourishment, of course). However, they are also capable of utilizing their ingested vitae as we do, to regenerate wounds far more quickly than Nature would normally permit. This even extends to the regeneration of severed limbs, provided enough vitae is available.

(As an interesting side note, I have discovered superficial similarities between enzymes found in ghoul vitae and those found in invertebrates such as planarian flatworms; our own regenerative processes, however, stem from no identifiable biological catalyst, as our tissue is quite dead. This leads me to speculate that the ghouling process may well be the culmination of a sort of proto-Discipline, one allowing the sporadic augmentation of living tissue, perhaps similar to those eldritch arts displayed by the dreadful Tzimisce.)

Finally, the ghoul is able to metabolize the Blood in order to quicken her physical capabilities, temporarily boosting her strength, speed, stamina, endurance or agility over and above any supernatural enhancements she may already possess. The process is already quite familiar to you, I'm sure; I presume I need not elaborate further. (Again, this process demonstrably utilizes the ghoul's natural hormonal secretions, mitochondrion output, etc. — a process distinct from our own capabilities. Curious.)

Of course, such capabilities come at a price; the maddeningly potent elixir we call vitae confers on the ghoul a capacity for berserk anger nearly rivaling our own. (The legend of Heracles comes to mind; did not this preternaturally strong "demigod" kill his own family in a fit of rage? One wonders...) However, the drawbacks of ghoulness seem to be purely psychological in nature. They may be contained through discipline and strength of will, much as the Blood-related psychoses of such clans as the Toreador may be resisted for a space.

These, then, are the characteristics exhibited by the typical ghoul. Common knowledge, I know. But the truly fascinating data lie in the particulars.

Disciplines

The nature of our vampiric powers is indisputable: They are the powers of the Blood. More specifically, they are those exotic talents which may be learned by any who possess vitae in their veins. The emphasis here is on the word "learned": These arts are not so instinctive as, for example, regenerating lost limbs, nor are they autonomic processes such as the arrest of cell decay. Science itself is still at a loss to define precisely the methods in which these talents work — it would take long centuries of study (uninterrupted by the wars we nightly fight among ourselves, of course)

to learn the exact nature of each. But every Cainite is capable of achieving mastery of the arts of his clan or, given time, even more foreign talents. I myself have learned something of that art by which such clans as the Brujah and Toreador evoke emotional auras; the study and concentration were difficult at first, but the skill did not lie beyond my ability.

Ghouls are rather more at a disadvantage where these powers are concerned — though each ghoul has an almost instinctive grasp of the half-physical, half-telekinetic focus for superhuman strength. (This instinct apparently stems from a chemical stimulation of the still-living brain. It is inextricably tied to a functional endocrine system; the proof lies in the fact that not all Cainites manifest this instinctive strength upon the Embrace, as I will gladly affirm from personal experience. This power manifests in animals as well, so I am forced to discard any theories of psychosomatic cause, unless the psychological trigger is so primitive in nature, such as the “fight or flight” adrenaline response, that it exists even in invertebrate animals.)

Strength comes easily enough, and the newly ghouled individual may more than double his lifting capacity with no training. However, any arcana beyond this level (with the obvious exceptions of rapid healing, quickening and so on) are intensely difficult for a ghoul to master. In one case, I began simultaneously training a local neonate (a rather dull-witted Gangrel) and my ghoul assistant in the rudiments of cloaking oneself in shadow. Although the neonate was intellectually quite inferior to Dr. Reage, he learned the trick in roughly half the time it took her.

It seems that ghouls have more facility for physical arcana — the enhancement of speed, endurance and so forth — than for more specialized talents. However, the subtler abilities are not out of reach. My assistant, for example, has learned not only great strength and endurance, but also the basics of stealth, hypnotism and other, more complex arts. She has demonstrated an adequate aptitude, but seems incapable of learning anything more complex than aura scrutiny or walking unseen. I believe that the potency of the domitor's blood has a direct influence on the powers a ghoul may attain — my late child (whom I shall not mention again) similarly believed in teaching his ghouls vampiric arts, but the luckless servants could progress no further than the most childlike basics. Certainly, his vitae did not carry enough of Caine's vigor!

Finally, it is my contention that for a ghoul to learn certain clan-specific abilities, she requires blood from an appropriate donor. I base this on Case Study 19-2, wherein I bade a Gangrel lackey instruct three ghouls (each chosen for similar levels of mental acuity) in the art of form-shifting. One ghoul was battered on the Gangrel's own vitae; another was nourished on that of a Toreador neonate; the third drank of my own vitae. (I should here note that I had at the time learned some skill in this Protean art.) Although the period of instruction was typically slow, the Gangrel's ghoul learned the art of nightvision first. The ghoul fed on my own vitae learned the same in approximately 175% of the time, and the Toreador-fed ghoul never managed to pick up the art at all. Our bloodlines are strong indeed!

Preservation of the Flesh

I have yet to isolate the enzyme or other vitae-borne agent which prevents cell decay; perhaps I never will. Caine's very nature transcends science as we know it, even today. But it is my theory that the process of entropic arrest is electrochemical in living beings, where the vitae “programs” cells to cease division and decay. The energy necessary to maintain this is provided by an innate, as yet unquantifiable element in the Blood. Apparently, the metabolic processes that work on vitae produce not nourishment, but energy to fuel this state. The conscious mind can override this process — for instance, commanding muscle cells to reproduce in order to heal a wound. However, if the Blood is not consciously cannibalized to produce a supernatural effect, by default it maintains tissue integrity.

The Blood, once properly diffused through our flesh, staves off the process of cell decay indefinitely. In fact, our bodies do not decay even when we have not drunk for years — only Final Death robs us of agelessness. (A possible exception would be that grotesque bloodline known as Samedi — apparently some peculiar condition of the Embrace or their Blood accelerates decay into their wretched, half-rotten state, but then holds them at said state of decomposition indefinitely. I believe this deformity to be cosmetic in nature; the single Samedi specimen I observed demonstrated no significant deterioration of physical or mental prowess, short of a gruesomely perverse personality.)

However, if vitae is delivered to living cells via a working circulatory system, its preservative effects are less permanent. Ghouls do not age biologically so long as they retain the Blood in their veins; wean them, and aging resumes within the month. Just as with a dead vampire, an ex-ghoul rapidly advances to the biological age befitting her chronological age. This can be traumatic and often gruesomely fatal when the Blood has preserved an individual beyond her natural life span. I am still unsure why a ghoul's body (or a vampire's corpse) does not begin aging in the usual fashion from the point of weaning. The perversity may stem from Caine's curse; another likely possibility is that an allergic reaction takes place upon the purgation of the last drops of vitae.

A final theory suggests that a chemical- or even energy-based carrier agent present in vitae is flushed from the system fully only over the course of a month or so. (Again, experiments suggest that this duration is almost exactly equal to an actual lunar cycle, the implications of which are quite interesting.) Tissue detached from a living ghoul does not begin decay immediately; when compared with tissue removed from a human subject, putrefaction is indeed delayed. The difference is minimal, and hinges on the size of the severed portion of flesh; at sizes of an ounce or so, the difference can be noted only with preternaturally close observation.

On a related note, your beneficence and puissance have afforded me the opportunity to study a ghoul of great age — yes, one among your defeated rival's batch was an "heirloom" of sorts. According to her rather unlettered account, she was 800 years old. Such prolonged existence had worked a number of curious effects on her psychological makeup, including rather aggrieved paranoia; what's more, she seemed to have overcome the majority of the Blood Bond's power, but remained slavishly submissive to her dead domitor, fearing the sudden and hideous death that weaning would undoubtedly grant. Physically, her digestive system had adapted quite nicely to ingesting vitae. She seemed able to process the Blood into a more economical form, granting her a capacity for vitae 140% that of a younger ghoul.

The "immortality" of ghoulness, however, does not affect the glands or other bodily processes. Ghouls still manufacture saliva, phlegm, digestive acid and the usual fluids. Females continue to menstruate unless impregnated (see below for specifics), and their hair and fingernails grow at the usual rate. In effect, it is as if a ghoul relives the same day over and over again: His beard may grow, his body may become unpleasantly odoriferous, he becomes hungry, but no deterioration of the body or mind takes place while the Blood runs in his veins. A ghoul who is given vitae and nothing else to feed upon becomes malnourished and weak, and may lose some supernatural efficacy as his system metabolizes the Blood to run the most basic life processes.

Pathology

Despite their immunity to the ravages of time, ghouls may take sick as do any other mortals. Vitae conveys no innate immunity to disease, and a ghoul may well be stricken by a blood-borne ailment such as HIV, transmitted by a careless domitor. I would humbly advise caution in feeding, my lord, if only to prevent unnecessary attrition of one's household!

Of course, ghouls are not defenseless against pathological threats. They may use the Blood to heal themselves of the physical symptoms of many ailments, much as they might heal lacerations or contusions. However, diseases that cause prolonged deterioration may prove more difficult to resist. For example, most cancers cannot be undone by a judicious use of vitae. Happily, a cancer is halted in its progression while its host is ghoulded, becoming effectively benign. If the subject is weaned, however, the cancer resumes growth at the same (often frustratingly unpredictable) rate as that of renewed aging. Again, this may prove fatal.

Hemophilia and other inherited blood diseases are easily countered by ensuring that one's ghoul retains no blood of her own in her circulatory system. Of course, this requires constant feeding if she makes use of vitae often, and can be troublesome. Each domitor must judge whether or not a particular servant is worth the inconvenience.

Bodily Requirements

This "immortality" is naturally contingent not only on a diet of vitae, but also on more basic requirements, such as food and drink. The Blood may sustain our forms indefinitely, but it is not in itself sufficient to fuel a living being! I'm certain I need not dwell overmuch on the base needs of the human body; the subject certainly seems distasteful to many Kindred. But even the haughtiest Ventrue, glad to be free of the onerous demands of biology, should take pains not to distance herself overmuch from the human experience. Food matters little to us Cainites, naturally, and most vampires prefer to leave their ghouls to the business of feeding themselves however they must. However, I recommend taking an interest in the diet of one's servants — after all, nutrition is nutrition, and a healthy body can make more use of the Blood. A frail child with supernaturally enhanced physical prowess can make a surprising assassin, but if the same child is given a nourishing diet and appropriate exercise, her potential is vastly increased.

On a similar note, ghouls of sexual adulthood (and particularly adolescents) do indeed feel sexual desire (perhaps even more so than before beginning a diet of vitae). I feel this requirement should at least be considered by the wise domitor. I myself have provided ghouls with the occasional incubus or succubus, so to speak, so that they might appropriately slake their lusts. The closer the partner matches the ghoul's fantasies, the more satisfied the servant. Of course, I by no means advocate catering to a retainer's every desire — the ghoul is, of course, there to serve the domitor's wishes, and not *vice versa*! A spoiled ghoul is a useless ghoul, and best destroyed. But the occasional carrot added to a tradition of discipline obtains most gratifying results, and reinforces a ghoul's loyalty beyond even the Blood Bond.

Healing

Science, I believe, is currently at a loss to explain thoroughly the healing processes the Blood makes possible. The biblical quote, "The blood is the life," seems to sum it up best. Vitae is distilled life — it fuels our activities, it preserves our bodies in the semblance of health, and it even simulates the biological processes of healing.

With the ghoule, simulation is not necessary. The regenerative capabilities of a ghoule seem at first identical to ours, but such is not the case. Remember that a ghoule is still mortal, and as such, his body will naturally repair all but the most grievous wounds in time.

When a ghoule metabolizes vitae to heal an injury, he is in fact quickening his own healing process, much as he might enhance his speed or strength. The familiar processes of clotting and cell repair take place as usual, only at a remarkable rate. This is quite unlike our own regenerative capabilities, which imitate life's healing procedures, but much more loosely. As evidence, I proffer this question: You have never healed an unfortunate injury, only to discover that scab tissue formed on the wound and then fell away, have you? Of course not. Our dead flesh merely regrows, reverts to the familiar shape it held at the time of the Embrace.

The only marked difference in a ghoule's improved healing process is the speed at which it takes place, with one exception. Given an adequate supply of vitae and time, a ghoule may actually regenerate lost organs or limbs. (Naturally, this is not automatic, and requires deliberate concentration. Weaker-willed or younger ghoules often prove incapable of such regeneration.) But even this improvement is not without precedent in Nature; consider the amputated starfish, if you will. It is, of course, remarkable that vitae allows a ghoule to regenerate her own flesh (which is at a much more highly evolved level of cell structure and biological complexity than any invertebrate's), but this only further attests to the truly miraculous properties of the Blood, a subject upon which I'm sure we may all wax most poetic. I shall leave such elaboration to the Toreador, however, and return to the subject at hand.

Quickening

The process of metabolizing vitae to augment one's physical capabilities is rather instinctively familiar. The nature of this quickening is not entirely unlike the metabolization of caloric energy; to wit, the ability to draw energy from food. However, this cannot be ascribed to simple digestion. We are able to command this extra surge of strength or speed at will, not as an automatic function occurring some time after the intake of blood. What's more, the atrophy of our unused digestive systems quite rules out that possibility — for us Kindred, of course.

The flood of energy provided by said quickening does not appear to be measurable by scientific instruments. Although the results are quantifiable (see attached notes on progression of lifting capacity and reaction speed), the process itself has thus far proved perceptible only through the enhanced senses granted by Caine's legacy. Though loath to do so, the scientist in me must give way to the vampire and cite the supernatural as the origin of said power.

Blood Within the Veins

We vampires, of course, do not store our blood within our circulatory systems; there is little need for that. Our dead tissue absorbs blood into itself of its own accord. But the living must conduct their circulatory affairs in the usual way.

Once vitae is ingested, it passes very quickly (like alcohol) into the circulatory system. Plasma and all, it saturates the interior walls of the digestive tract and quickly finds its way into the veins, back to the heart, and from there throughout the body. Naturally, the human circulatory system has a finite capacity; one cannot feed a ghoule overmuch vitae without first letting some of his own blood. Regular feeding, however, increases the vitae/blood ratio. If fed nightly (a cumbersome burden, but potentially useful), a ghoule will eventually assimilate enough vitae that nothing remains of the human blood; however, if such regular sustenance stops, then the body will eventually metabolize the vitae (while manufacturing more blood to keep levels at a steady whole) to stave off the aging process.

Naturally, using the Blood to quicken one's prowess or to fuel one's arcane abilities consumes vitae all the faster, even more quickly than the body may replace it. Overexuberant ghoules often find themselves gasping for breath like beached salmon, wondering why their strength has failed them. The symptoms of rapid blood loss are familiar to any Cainite; I recommend one train more valuable ghoules to conserve their abilities, and leave the last-ditch struggling to more disposable servants.

I have observed that the human body replaces the vitae in its system with actual blood in about a month's time. In fact, it appears that said metabolism takes almost exactly the same time as a lunar cycle. While some Philistines may scoff and make crude jokes *apropos* the menstruation process, I think this timing may in fact reflect something deeper. Much of supernature has been linked, deservedly or no, with the moon. The possibility that our own salty tides are likewise regulated by Hecate's silvery face does not seem all that far-fetched.

Animal Ghouls

My research into the physiognomy of animal ghouls has been less extensive. My degrees do not lie in the field of veterinary medicine, and regardless, the majority opinion among Kindred maintains that human ghouls are far more useful. However, I have conducted some perfunctory zoological research in the interim since your grant.

First, I must note that ghouling is ineffective in animals below a certain body weight. Even tripling a songbird's strength affords very little practical application, and further, the animal metabolizes the Blood in a matter of weeks. True efficiency comes only from ghouling a creature five kilograms or greater in weight. (As a side note, I have discovered that repeated ghouling effects an increase in size among some animals, perhaps 5% of test subjects. Nosferatu and [I am told] Tzimisce vitae seem to be most conducive to this increase; a sample rat tripled its body mass over the period of about a year. This is assuredly something to research further.)

Ghouled animals, even the higher primates, are rather limited in their supernatural efficacy. They gain the increase in strength common to all ghouls, and also undergo the requisite halt in aging. They may indeed learn to heal their wounds more rapidly, but apparently some instruction from the domitor must come before they realize that such a thing is possible. It is frankly impossible, however, to instruct a ghoul beast in arts more complex than quickening its physical abilities. A vitae-fattened dog may rend steel with its jaws, or endure high-caliber bullet wounds, but asking it to learn anything more is futile, even if you can converse with it via a Gangrelesque trick of the Blood.

Personally, I attribute this to the nature of evolution, and present it as evidence that we vampires are an evolutionary step above the still-biological kine. The greatest gifts of Caine are available only to us, most likely owing to our advanced states of thought and perception. A ghoul, even granted the gift of the Blood, does not possess the mental, even spiritual, sophistication to master the powers available to the weakest neonate. Lesser animals are even more handicapped.

In the future, I fully intend to expand on the thoughts presented here and further investigate the heights of mental acuity and perception available to us, the better to explore my theories of evolution beyond the biological. I am happy to say that my sire has agreed to be of some assistance in this endeavor, and I am certain that his insights will be invaluable.

Blood of the Clan

But what, I understand you may ask, of the characteristics shared by a clan? Of the horrid disfigurements of the Nosferatu and Samedi, or the rarefied tastes of the Ventrue? From what I have observed, I believe that these may be passed to a ghoul by regular feeding, although never to the extent that a Cainite might demonstrate.

Obviously, the "flaws" of each distinct clan are not casually passed along with their vitae. (Otherwise we would have any number of paired Cainite "lovers" of indiscriminate clan; a Brujah would display not only his innate tendency for rage, but the solipsistic hedonism of his Toreador companion, to say nothing of the pair's aptitudes for the skills and arcana of each clan! Our society would soon decay into a seething cauldron of Caitiff — ah, but I beg your pardon for my digression.) But the mortal form is somewhat more susceptible to change than the undead frame. Even as we revert nightly to the hairstyle and fingernail-length we wore in the Embrace, our forms are "locked," if you will, more tightly into the characteristics of our clans. The blood of our sires has seeped into every cell of our beings, and so we are eternally Ventrue, Malkavian, Gangrel and so on. (Certainly this is a great disadvantage to the dreadful Lasombra and Tzimisce, who cannot strive for the perfection that their Antediluvian sires never attained!)

But the remarkable adaptability of living tissue will not be so easily shackled. Feed a healthy Cainite a steady diet of Nosferatu vitae, and (apart from a possible physical nausea) she will remain as fresh and fair as ever. Place a mortal on the same diet, and eventually his complexion will begin to worsen. A ghoul may never achieve the same physiological extremes as his domitor (imagine the sorry luck of the Samedi if this were otherwise!), but he may well evince recognizable characteristics of his "clan."

This is, interestingly enough, not always the case. Some mortals display a certain resistance to the vitae-inflicted "flaws" of many clans. My extended studies suggest that perhaps one ghoul in seven evinces such immunity to specific bloodline characteristics, but please do not hold me to this conjectural figure. I presume that such resistant humans are more desirable as ghouls, and therefore more likely to be kept on indefinitely. My studies suggest that this immunity

is primarily genetic in nature, and a recessive trait, I believe. However, it also seems possible, given the variable characteristics of clan vitae, that this immunity might be an acquired trait for some ghouls. The specifics elude me for the nonce. I believe a prolonged study over some generations of ghouls may be the only way to answer this question with certainty. Suffice to say that this immunity exists, and I encourage you to make what use of this information you can, until time permits further clarification.

Overdosing

While we are discussing diet-related quirks of ghoul biology, I feel it necessary to provide a word or three on overfeeding. Yes, ghouls can drink too much vitae. This is logically an uncommon phenomenon — the majority of Cainites do not possess a surplus of vitae such that their ghouls are given opportunity to drink to their gluttonous content. Among those who possess the means, the intent is rarely present. (Again, what use is there of spoiling one's retainers?)

If a ghoul happens to overdose — that is, to inject until his veins are thoroughly filled with vitae and then to fill his belly to capacity — some peculiarities result. First, the capacity for frenzy is heightened even further, as if the ghoul now possesses a Beast akin to our own. Second, the oversaturation of vitae affects fluid generation; the ghoul's tears, sweat, saliva, mucus, semen and other secretions become permeated with vitae, displaying a reddish tint and faint odor of the Blood. Third, if the vitae is largely that of a single clan, the ghoul will adopt in full any disfigurements that the bloodline bears. Finally, his blood becomes very oxygenated, which affects brain functions. The benefit is that his reaction speed becomes slightly heightened, allowing for superior results in dangerous situations. However, the overdosing ghoul also becomes subject to hallucinations, and may prove dangerously erratic. In some ghouls, I have also noticed that overdosing causes a condition similar to caisson disease (or, less formally, the bends). The transitions of oxygen and nitrogen in the Blood cause intense pain and paralysis in these wretches; those who lack the presence of mind (or stamina) to immediately metabolize enough vitae to undo the overdose may even die.

Withdrawal

An equally interesting phenomenon, of course, is that of withdrawal: the state induced by the deliberate withholding of vitae. It is this state, the subject of much lurid rumor but little concrete analysis, that leads me to conclude that recalcitrant or inefficient ghouls are best off simply destroyed, and that the majority of one's servitors should be rewarded and punished by means other than the Blood.

The Blood is not, to the best of my understanding, physically addictive in the manner of nicotine and heroin. The psychological ramifications of withdrawal, however, can be deleterious, for the ghoul and for others in the vicinity. Lacking the substance that has become the crux of his existence, the erstwhile ghoul becomes as pathologically, desperately cunning as a "dope fiend" denied his fix; he will wheedle, demand and in some cases try to force vitae from his domitor or other known vampires. Such pathetic spectacles are, of course, generally laughable, but the wise domitor will nonetheless realize the expediency of taking precautions against a retainer spurred.

It is the extreme cases of withdrawal psychosis that provoke such bemusement on the part of Kindred, and which might well have led to the negative connotations surrounding the word "ghoul." The withdrawn mortal, sensing an emptiness, a need, and denied the "legitimate" means of satisfying his craving, often sublimates the lust for vitae into a lust for substances garnered in similar predatory fashion. Remembering the increased carnal appetites stoked in his Blood-permeated brain, the ghoul embarks on a wild and somewhat totemistic spree, desperately attempting to "glut" his emptiness on the bodies of his fellow mortals. This phenomenon is, of course, reminiscent of certain primitive tribal societies whose members ate their foes in order to siphon their courage or power. Fortunately for our Masquerade, of course, American society has grown inured, indeed somewhat blasé, to cases of "cannibal rape fiends" and the like.

Ghoul Reproduction

As I mentioned before, the reproductive capabilities of the average ghoul are in no way stunted by a steady diet of vitae. In fact, evidence suggests that the stimulation of blood flow during coitus enhances the experience, although not always in a manner that the participants find suitably pleasurable (see Case Studies 33-1, 33-2, 33-3, 33-4, 33-5, 33-6, 33-7). However, orgasmic pleasure is hardly the most relevant subject to a Cainite master. Of far more interest are the particulars of conception: specifically, the details of pregnancy and childbearing. (Although male ghouls are certainly virile enough to make adequate stud animals, the vitae in their veins does far less to influence the characteristics of their offspring.)

If a ghoulish with regular access to vitae is impregnated, her child will almost certainly be ghouled as well. Interestingly, the positive influences of Kindred vitae are passed through the placental transfer, so the ghouling of the child takes place almost immediately after the fertilized egg attaches to the wall and begins to develop. Now, as I've mentioned before, the retardation of the aging process centers on the Blood, hampering the process of cell replication and decay. Yes, this effect holds true for fetus as well as mother — so long as the mother is fed a steady supply of vitae, the embryo cannot replicate its cells, cannot grow, cannot age. Unless the mother is removed from her diet of vitae, she cannot bring the child to term.

Naturally, this poses something of a problem when one intends to breed one's ghouls. Certainly, one cannot hope to use one's oldest ghoulish servants as brood mares, especially when they have outlasted their natural life spans. This complication leads many a vampire to prefer male ghouls exclusively, as they can be bred regularly without impediment to their regular duties. (If the ghoulish is part of a human culture that encourages having many children, all the better. One's pet breeding programs can be socially viewed as the model of family virtue — both maintaining the Masquerade and providing a delicious sense of irony.)

Ghouling a gravid female can have other difficulties. The fetus, for one, may well develop the typical ghoulish's affinity for superhuman strength, often with gruesome results. The approach of ghouling the mother to imbue her with supernatural endurance during labor is another chancy proposition. The mother's affinities would lie first with gaining Potence, and during the stress of labor she might well lose control of her newly supernatural strength and miscarry.

One option some domitors exercise is that of reghouling a retainer during the eighth month, then inducing labor shortly afterward. I consider this course risky as well; it often hinges on how quickly the mother is capable of relearning the ways of Fortitude (as well as her self-control). I personally recommend allowing the mother to give birth in the usual manner, ghouling her before delivery only if labor proves intensely difficult. The risk of miscarriage is a trivial thing; better to save the cow and spill the milk than *vice versa*.

The Revenants

Naturally, no discussion of ghoulish reproduction would be complete without turning to the subject of the horribly misnamed revenants — the ghoulish families of the Sabbat. Certainly these cannibalistic, necrophiliac wretches exemplify every inch the connotative meaning of "ghoulish," but the observation is a psychological one, rather than physiological. Hence, I shall keep my opinions to myself and proceed, pausing only to wonder at the reasoning behind the term "revenant" (the original meaning, "one who returns," seems to apply more to a Cainite than to a living being). However, for the sake of continuity, I shall refer to these hell-kites as "revenants" hereafter.

From what I have learned to date, at least three ghoulish families serve the Sabbat. I have discovered the surnames of two, the Bratovitches and Zantos; the identity of the third eludes me. Many of these ghouls are quite inbred, and often manifest the genetic deformities one would expect. The result of an intensive breeding program begun centuries ago, the revenants have lived so long with vitae in their veins that they have actually become capable of manufacturing the Blood themselves, although it is certainly of lesser potency.

(Upon sampling blood from several revenants of various breeds and ages, and comparing the taste to the Toreador vitae with which you have thoughtfully provided me, I can honestly say that the revenant blood is far inferior. If, metaphorically speaking, vampiric vitae is nectar, and human blood mere ale, then revenant blood is akin to wine of varying quality. It cannot compare to vampiric blood, but has a definite strength and character. However, the blood of more inbred revenants tends to be identifiable by a tannic aftertaste. Certainly, avoid supping from those whose parents were too closely related.)

Although revenants are still reliant on ingested vitae to halt their aging processes, their natural reserves suffice to grant them many advantages. Their Blood is sufficiently powerful to accelerate their healing processes, as usual. They may learn and use the arts of the Blood with great facility, and the subject I examined showed a level of arcane mastery comparable to that of a fledgling Cainite. They may also use their Blood to fuel these arts, although this practice may weaken them if they metabolize too much of their own vitae. Their aging processes have been retarded, and I believe that a revenant, even without ingesting Cainite vitae, ages at roughly one-quarter the rate of a normal person.

I can anticipate your next question. If their breeding years are so extended, why have we not been overrun by Zantosa whelps? Simply put, the retarded cell growth and decay afforded by their vitae similarly affects their young. The gestation period I observed in one Bratovitch mother lasted for three years, roughly one year per trimester. It takes a revenant child almost 50 years to reach puberty, from what I understand. Obviously, such children are never

reared in public schools for more than a few years at a time. Presumably, a fleshcrafting patron may change the outward form to give a cosmetic appearance of adulthood (grafting on flesh if needed), but the endocrine system bestows true maturity at its own pace.

The psychological effects of such a long childhood are equally fascinating, but I believe that my assistant is more qualified to explore such a conundrum.

Ghouling the Prodigies

Finally, you may ask, what comes of ghouling magi, Lupines, or other supernatural creatures? I regret to inform you that, at this time, my studies in this field are still far from complete. However, I have made some progress in recent years.

Owing to the difficulty of taking Lupine prisoners alive, I was forced to resort to extreme subterfuge to experiment with ghouling the wolves. The advantage of having one of these killing machines Bound to oneself, and suffused with Potence besides — but alas, it is not to be so easy as that. Lupines seem to be violently allergic to vitae, vomiting immediately upon ingestion of the Blood. At least such was the case with the Lupines I observed; perhaps this allergy is a genetic trait and would not be present in werewolves of different ancestry. Once more, the inaccessibility of tractable subjects, even to Cainites of my resources, limits experimentation.

Of course, continuing any genetic studies would require more time than I have available. Instead, I invested my research time in other parallel endeavors, including the possibility of ghouling one of the “wise ones.” The magicworker I observed (an associate of a local Toreador, and from something of an epicurean, Dionysian school) responded much as any other mortal would to the Blood. This merely reinforced my opinion of magi as nothing more than mortals, albeit ones possessed of some arcane knowledge.

I had originally considered the concept of ghouling a ghost to be laughable, much like attempting to catch mist in cheesecloth. But a Samedi ancilla was able to convince me that some ghosts may take physical form for a short time, and might well eat and drink as others do. Suffice it to say, however, that even a materialized spirit does not possess the biology of a living being. An ectoplasmic form may mimic the flesh only so far, and accurately reproducing the digestive system would seem to be inefficient, if not impossible. Ghosts, it seems, lie entirely outside the biological realm, my pet area of interest, and I shall leave it at that.

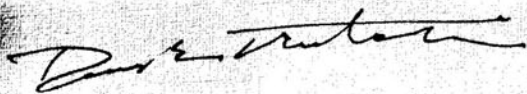
And of the fae, you may ask? Or the demonic lackeys of the Sabbat Infernalists? I am afraid that with no real access to identifiable specimens of such, or even sufficient proof of their existence, I must simply confess ignorance.

Postscript

Such is the abbreviated version of my findings. If you require more specific examples and instances, please inform me and I shall provide them. I have hereafter enclosed portions of a document composed by my assistant, Dr. Nancy Reage, detailing the psychology of the ghoul. Her perspective is quite refreshing (and accurate in no small way), and I believe you will find that none is more qualified to discuss ghoul psychology than the literate, educated ghoul. Her occasional lapses from objectivity, I believe, make her work all the more informative.

I hope that this information is useful to you, and that you will henceforth be able to elicit more efficient results from your own retainers. Again, I thank you for granting me the resources and opportunity to explore this subject further for the convenience of our kind.

I remain most humbly and respectfully yours,



Dr. Douglas Netchurch
Childe of Trimeggian
Childe of Addemar
Childe of Lamdiel
Childe of Malkav

An Excerpt from "Current Perspectives on the Psychology of the Ghoul"

by Nancy O. Reage, Ph. D.

...Psychological characteristics of individual ghouls are largely determined by two discrete factors: the original personality of the ghoul prior to the transformation, and the psychological traits possessed by the ghoul's domitor ("master") when the blood is initially transfused into the ghoul's veins. These factors are further complicated by new ghouls' reactions to their "heredity" and "environment." The heredity to which I refer is the blood that the ghoul inherits from the initial domitor, while the environment comprises the social and emotional situations in which the ghoul finds herself immediately after the transformation takes place.

The transformation into ghoulness itself plays an important role in a ghoul's psychological makeup. Most vampires ghoul humans without prior consent

from the person involved. When a human becomes a ghoul, he experiences a reaction similar in some respects to an abbreviated version of puberty. Physiologically, the ghoul must cope with profound stresses related to a sudden chemical imbalance, as the vampiric vitae bathes the endocrine system, spinal column and brain.

While all this takes place, the human must contend with a purely psychological dilemma: His betrayer (the monster who tricked him into servitude) becomes his savior (the provider of "the elixir of life"). A devil's bargain of sorts has taken place: great powers provided with little or no consent. This mixed reaction to the transformation, coupled with the aforementioned endocrinal stresses, often leads to dramatic emotional fluctuations similar to those displayed in manic-depressives (see Case Study 66-2).



E. V. Rosta

Upon receiving a third dosage of blood from a single vampire, a ghoul demonstrates a tangible and profound emotional attachment to this vampire and sometimes to her domitor's vampire family, or "clan." (It is always the third dose, regardless of body weight, emotional makeup, or other factors; a 265-pound bouncer assumes this "Blood Bond" no more or less readily than a 50-pound child.) Although Blood Bond is characterized by such symptoms as increased heart rate, rapid breathing, sexual arousal and secretion of testosterone/estrogen, the catalyst for these symptoms seems to be a purely psychological trigger. In other words, the Blood Bond is, strictly speaking, psychosomatic.

In persons who experienced difficulties with compulsions or addictions in their mundane lives, the effects of the Blood Bonding process can prove emotionally traumatic. Upon receiving the first and second doses of blood, a ghoul feels what can best be classified as an amphetaminelike hysterical intoxication, caused wholly by the chemical interaction of his blood with his vampire host's. He displays extreme amounts of energy and feels supernally vibrant and robust. However, due to the dilution of the dosage in the human's body, these effects dissipate within two to four hours after transfusion.

After receiving the third dosage of blood from an individual vampire, the ghoul is rendered more or less "addicted" to the blood of his domitor; whether this addiction is psychosomatic or otherwise is, in practical terms, irrelevant. He will go to great lengths in order to inject or ingest larger, more frequent and more concentrated doses of vampiric vitae. In laboratory testing, ghoul mice gave up food pellets and water, needing only vampire blood to sustain themselves. After ingesting three trace dosages of the Kindred blood, the mice also gave up sleep and exercised on their wheels for periods as much as 10 times longer than before they were Blood Bound.

In Blood Bound humans, the need for Kindred blood becomes so urgent that the ghoul becomes absolutely obsessed with pleasing her domitor. Often this dependency on the domitor's approval and blood evolves into what many ghouls consider a love relationship, albeit a rather codependent and often masochistic one. It is not uncommon for a ghoul to disregard any flaws her domitor may have and "put him on a pedestal." To the Blood Bound ghoul, her domitor can do no wrong; he has gifted her with his transcendent vitae, a gift for which she

owes him eternal devotion and love, even if the domitor routinely punishes her in exceedingly harsh corporal fashion (see Case Study 66-4).

Most domitors do not treat their ghouls with such negative reinforcement. They realize that in order to have a ghoul obey their orders, he must be consistently rewarded, or at least so addicted to vampire vitae that he salivates with anticipation at the mere hint of being assigned a tedious task. This is the Pavlovian method of ghoul discipline and conditioning to which most domitors subscribe for general purposes.

Certain domitors, however, employ sterner disciplinary procedures. Some of these vampiric masters — usually themselves suffering from neurological disorders or psychoses (compare Case Studies 14-2 and 14-5) — use ghouls as "human pincushions":

Derangements

Ghouls are just as prone to Derangements as are vampires — indeed, some are even more likely to flip, given their subservient status and abusive masters. Ghouls can gain Derangements in the same ways vampires can — and the Storyteller can simply assign a Derangement by fiat if, for example, the ghoul suffers particularly severe abuse, is forced to betray his loved ones, or kills his own child in a frenzy....

Derangements common among ghouls include Obsession, Manic-depression (Renfield Syndrome), Regression, and Perfection. Ghouls also suffer from Derangements unique to their kind; these conditions are described below.

sentient beings whom they can subject to physical and emotional tortures. Notwithstanding the distressing "supernatural" fixation common in the Kindred community, I have hypothesized that these domitors are most likely cursed with chemical imbalances. They commit such acts in order to release an overabundance of vitae-borne hormones such as testosterone, which can incite volatile behaviors when reacting negatively with neurotransmitters such as endorphins, dopamine and serotonin. As indicated by my research, this overabundance of hormones in the domitor abusers nearly mirrors the hormonal composition ordinarily found in human child abusers, serial killers, rapists, etc. In many

cases where a domitor suffers from such a chemical imbalance, it can be passed on to the newly created ghoul through the transfusion of blood.

But Kindred psychosis is a topic for another time. In any event, this succession of stimuli contributes to the rather dichotomous personality of the typical ghoul; one moment she is submissive and slavish, the next she has a violent tantrum and feels a tremendous need for physical release of some sort. (As most readers are doubtless aware, a ghoul who displays such outbursts must often be locked away until her domitor sedates her or the intensity of the transfused blood dissipates.) It can take anywhere from a few days to three weeks for the effects of freshly transfused vampire vitae to diminish in intensity. The ghoul often suffers from feelings of abandonment during this period, and when the outbursts subside, she commonly experiences a period of severe depression until she is given another dosage of blood. Domitors must feed their ghouls blood at least once monthly; at the end of a third week with no proverbial "fix," the ghoul displays suicidal tendencies if he feels he is in danger of not being tended to.

This manic-depressive cycle in ghouls, known colloquially as Renfield Syndrome, is not really very rare, as even domitors who do not have chemical imbalances seem to enjoy the feelings of power they possess when they treat their "bad" ghouls harshly. Obviously, Renfield Syndrome will never grace the pages of the *DSM-IV*; I will, however, take the liberty of classifying the disorder as a form of biogenic psychosis (a psychosis associated with known physical conditions).

Dr. Netchurch has informed me that vampires among the Camarilla's rival sect, the Sabbat, have been known to espouse highly aberrant but unquestionably advanced theories concerning the study of ghouls. In particular, he makes mention of a Sabbat vampire clan, the Tzimisce (zuh-MEE-see, d'ZY-muh-zee), which has refined the study to a science unknown among its Camarilla enemies. Unfortunately, hostilities between the sects, as well as the cultural practices of this Tzimisce clan itself (which are by all accounts exceedingly antisocial), render the possibility of data exchange highly unlikely.

Other Disorders Prevalent Among Ghouls

- **Severe Dysmenorrheic Psychosis (SDP)** — This disorder manifests itself in approximately 30-40% of "healthy" female ghouls who continue to have regular menstrual cycles after

the transformation into ghouthood. Aside from painful menstrual cramps, the victim suffers from bouts of severe depression and paranoid delusions during her period. These episodes usually last from five to seven days, depending on the average length of the ghoul's menstrual cycle and the amount of blood lost during the cycle. If a ghoul has not yet ingested her required monthly dose of vampire vitae by the time her menstrual cycle begins, the blood loss that occurs during her menstrual period has traumatic psychological effects. The ghoul feels that she is about to die, and she becomes extraordinarily paranoid about not being tended to by her domitor. During the onset of SDP, the ghoul bursts into hysterics at every perceived slight, literally deathly afraid that her domitor will fail to replenish the dwindling supply of vampire vitae in her bloodstream. There is no known cure for Severe Dysmenorrheic Psychosis, although Dr. Netchurch has formulated a serum that alleviates some of the disorder's symptoms. This drug has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration and is currently available only on the black market or through the express permission of Dr. Netchurch.

(As a Derangement: Whenever the appropriate conditions exist, the ghoul loses two points of temporary Willpower; these points return at the end of the menstrual cycle.)

- **Animalistic Hysteria** — Animalistic Hysteria — the vaunted "frenzy" so often spoken of in Kindred circles — poses a constant threat to many ghouls, even those who seem to retain control of their half-vampiric natures. This behavioral disorder can strike a ghoul at any time — often, embarrassingly enough, when he is in the company of mortals. It is thankfully only a temporary condition in most ghouls, but it becomes much more difficult for the half-mortal ghoul to interact with humans when he is in the throes of hysterical rage. The ghoul, often not realizing that his "Beast" (vampiric nature) is taking over, feels tremendous shame and guilt when he succumbs to Hysteria in front of humans. After such an episode occurs, he often grows fearful of punishment by his domitor, who may instinctively know that the attack occurred even if she is not present (see Case Study 15-4, involving myself and Dr. Netchurch).

Animalistic Hysteria is triggered by sensory, environmental, physical or emotional stimuli that the ghoul construes as negative: feelings of inferiority to his domitor; abandonment by his domitor; his domitor becoming injured; overdose or lack of

vampire blood; unrequited romantic feelings for his domitor; grave physical endangerment; or being forced to commit acts in violation of his moral, cultural, or ethical codes. Really, any stressful situation may cause the ghoul to enter frenzy; the triggers vary according to the individual ghoul's perceptions and past experiences.

Electroconvulsive therapy — ECT, more commonly known as “shock treatment” — has been utilized more effectively in the treatment of severe frenzy attacks than have various drug treatments. Because 80% of ghoul study subjects' hysteria symptoms cease within five hours of the initial attack, the best treatment may be none at all. In cases where ghouls experience frenzy for more than 48 consecutive hours, however, they may prove unresponsive to anything short of lobotomy or hypnosis. Drug treatment is often to be avoided because many of the psychopharmaceuticals presently available have adverse effects when introduced into a vitae-permeated bloodstream. These drugs can, in fact, increase the intensity of the symptoms evident during hysterical episodes.

(As a Derangement: All ghouls run the risk of frenzy, but a ghoul who gains Animalistic Hysteria as a specific Derangement must check against difficulties equal to those of vampires. Bratovitch revenants automatically suffer from similar afflictions and thus may not gain Animalistic Hysteria.)

• **Self-defeating Personality Disorder** — More commonly known as masochism, Self-defeating Personality Disorder appears routinely in ghouls, particularly those ghouls in vassalage to Cainite “elders.” The servitors in question seem compulsively drawn into situations or relationships that they know will cause them intense pain (often to the detriment of their mortal liaisons). They make numerous sacrifices, often needless ones, in the names of their domitors. These disturbed ghouls often have difficulty relating to other ghouls, mortals or vampires who treat them with respect.

Contrary to common opinion, many ghouls who display signs of Self-defeating Personality Disorder do not necessarily enjoy pain and suffering; most sufferers of this disorder simply fear to assert themselves to their domitors. Others were abused or sexually molested as mortals, and do not know how to be treated any differently. Still others deny that they are being abused, as they feel sacrifices must be made in exchange for the eternal life provided by their domitors. Finally, a few ghouls rationalize that they are being rightfully punished for “sinning” against the God in which they believed during mortal years.



Self-defeating Personality Disorder usually goes untreated, as many domitors prefer their ghouls to be somewhat submissive. Often this disorder is accompanied by promiscuity in the ghoul, who may receive sexual gratification from pain, feeling that this is the only form of attention she gets from her domitor.

(As a Derangement: The ghoul's Nature changes to that of Masochist or Martyr. Fulfilling the conditions of the Nature is the only way this ghoul can regain Willpower [i.e., he does not regain an automatic point per story, etc.]

• **Dependent Personality Disorder** — As the name of this disorder implies, a ghoul possessing it displays tremendous dependence on others, namely the domitor or any remaining human contacts he may have after the transformation into ghoulness takes place. A ghoul affected by this personality disorder is usually extremely indecisive — if it were up to him, his domitor would tell him what to wear, what to eat, whom to associate with, when to go to sleep and what to enjoy. Most of this behavior is brought on by excessive fear of abandonment. Fearing disownment, the ghoul instead tolerates constant abuse. The more the ghoul tolerates others' control over him, the more he feels helpless and stupid, and so

he is further discouraged from taking any actions that would ease his situation. Thus, this disorder often goes untreated as long as the dependent ghoul's clingy behavior is reinforced by his domitor.

(As a Derangement: The victim must make a Willpower roll [usually difficulty 6] to refuse an order or suggestion from his domitor. The ghoul's Nature often changes to that of Sycophant.)

Pick Your Poison (Optional Rules)

The following rules for blood intake add a highly desirable degree of realism to the ghouling process, but add greater complexity and bookkeeping. We recommend these rules for chronicles in which the players run ghoul characters, or in which ghouls play important roles.

A ghoul has a potential Blood Pool of 10, just like a human or 13th-generation vampire, but this is normally presumed to be filled with human blood. A ghoul can't simply ingest five Blood Points in a single sitting. A human ghoul may comfortably drink two Blood Points of vitae (this is the amount that fits in the digestive tract). This stomach-borne vitae suffices to empower the ghoul, but only two Blood Points may be absorbed through the stomach lining in this fashion. Further drinking does no good unless the ghoul wishes to risk an overdose (see below).

If a ghoul wants to store more blood immediately, she must give up some blood from her circulatory system. Usually the domitor drains the ghoul appropriately (an automatic feat); independents may need to make a trip to the Red Cross or do it themselves at home (Intelligence + Medicine, difficulty 6). A successful roll allows the ghoul to drain her blood and replace it with the domitor's blood in such a manner that she loses no Health Levels from the process; failure indicates that the ghoul loses one to three (Storyteller's call) Health Levels from blood loss before the transferral is effected.

It should be noted that not all ghouls display such erratic behaviors, nor do all ghouls have personality or behavioral disorders. Many ghouls maintain healthy relationships with their domitors, and many domitors show respect and admiration for the work of their ghouls. I myself know of a particular female ghoul whose life was saved from mental and physical deterioration because of a humanitarian vampire domitor who ghouled her before the onset of a genetically inherited disease.

Human-ghoul, vampire-ghoul and ghoul-ghoul relationships are as complex as relationships among various species of the animal kingdom. In order to advance our knowledge, more study and experimentation must be conducted. Funds and support are greatly needed if the Kindred community wishes to advance its insights into the mysterious nature of the ghoul.

Hard-and-Fast Rules

The following alphabetized list gives pertinent game mechanics for ghouls' powers and suggests how to handle various situations that arise in play.

Aging and Elder Ghouls

A ghoul's immunity to aging is naturally contingent on her supply of vitae. If she misses her monthly feeding, she could be in real trouble. As long as she is still within her natural life span, she resumes normal aging. But if she's lived from 100 to 250 years, then she begins aging at 10 times the normal rate — a year becomes a decade, and so on. Ghouls who have lived more than 250 years crumble instantly to dust if their supply of vitae falters.

On the other hand, elder ghouls gain some benefits — in many ways, such prolonged exposure to vitae metamorphoses them into something not quite human. Elder ghouls and revenants gain additional "storage capacity": For each century of life, an elder revenant gains one extra point in his Blood Pool, while an elder ghoul can comfortably drink one extra Blood Point (i.e., a 150-year-old ghoul can hold three Blood Points in the stomach, a 210-year-old ghoul can hold four, etc.). Elder ghouls who are not revenants may also gain additional Blood Points

beyond their 10, but at the rate of one per two centuries of life (so an 850-year-old ghoul has a Blood Pool of 14, 10 of which can be drunk without bloodletting).

Additionally, the difficulty to effect regeneration decreases by one per century.

Animal Ghouls

See the Storytelling Chapter, pp. 103-105.

Blood

Ghouls are much more limited in their use of the Blood than are vampires. They can burn vitae to enhance Physical Attributes (up to a maximum of twice the original Attribute) and heal wounds, just like vampires. Aggravated damage affects ghouls in the same manner it affects vampires.

Once vitae is spent, it is gone until replaced (the exceptions being revenants, who manufacture their own quasi-Blood). Without any vitae in their systems, ghouls heal as do mortals (see the chart on p. 191 of *Vampire: The Masquerade*). Ghouls may learn the basics of Disciplines, but are limited in their mastery of such.

No ghoul can spend more than one Blood Point per turn. In addition, ghouls suffer if they lose too much blood, just as humans do. If a ghoul loses more than five Blood Points (whether vitae or his own blood) at any time, he grows weak



—each additional Blood Point lost is treated as a Health Level of damage, although this is instantly cured as soon as he gets more blood in his system. If he loses more than seven, he must make a Stamina + Fortitude roll against a difficulty equaling the number of Blood Points lost (8 or 9); if he fails this roll, he dies. A ghoul who is completely drained of blood dies, but can become a vampire if fed vitae within a minute or so. An Embraced ghoul keeps whatever Disciplines he already knew, but progresses as a vampire thereafter.

If fed nightly for longer than a month, a ghoul will begin to assimilate vitae into her bloodstream. After the first month of such feeding, assume that one Blood Point of human blood transforms into vitae per additional night of continuous feeding. This vitae osmotically permeates the body without the need for draining the ghoul's human blood.

This conversion process continues at the rate of one Blood Point per night, until the ghoul holds a full 10 points of vitae. However, a ghoul who wishes to maintain this state must continue to feed nightly. If she misses more than three nights of feeding, her body begins to reconvert its vitae to blood at the rate of one Blood Point per three nights. Once the reversal has started, the ghoul may halt it by resuming nightly feeding, but it takes a full month of nightly feeding for the body to begin the conversion process once more.

No matter what, though, the body always retains one Blood Point (the minimum required to power the ghoul). This last Blood Point is lost only after a full month.

Blood Bond

Ghouls are still biological entities, and so the mechanics of Blood Bonding them differ from those used to govern vampires. For a ghoul, a Blood Bond is not a sudden plunge into love, but a gradual slide into an emotional abyss.

After the first drink, a ghoul displays strong feelings toward the donor (no mechanical effects, but the feelings or battle to suppress them should be roleplayed). Most independent ghouls, especially ones dealing with charismatic or attractive Kindred, prefer to take one drink and move on.

After the second drink, things aren't so simple; the ghoul is considered to be under an effect equivalent to a Vinculum score of 5 (see *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*, pg. 47).

Ghouls with Willpower scores of 5 and below may have to make Self-Control rolls to avoid taking a third drink, and even ghouls with high Willpower scores may have to roll if (in the Storyteller's opinion) the temptation to drink is strong.

Unlike vampires, ghouls may actually "wean" themselves of a Blood Bond by refusing to accept blood from the domitor. Kindred folklore claims that a year is required to become fully

"emancipated"; in actuality, the time required depends on the ghoul. After a "dry" period of (12 months minus Willpower), a ghoul drops one level on the Blood Bond chart (i.e., a ghoul who was fully Bound is considered to be two steps toward being Bound, etc.). Each such interval of withdrawal reduces the Bond by one level, until the ghoul is "clean."

However, it is by no means easy to refuse the "stuff": At the Storyteller's option, a ghoul may have to spend Willpower points to

avoid the enticement of an ex-domitor's vitae until she is completely free of the Bond. If the ghoul has an addiction-prone personality (a Conformist or Child Nature, for example), she may never completely shake the craving.

Derangements

Ghouls are certainly susceptible to Derangements, and there are Derangements specific to ghouls. Ghouls' Derangements are covered as an addendum to the psychology notes earlier in this chapter (pp. 26-28).

Disciplines

Ghouls have much more difficulty learning Disciplines than Kindred do. The powers passed down from Caine reach their full potency only in his childer; they are practically alien to the human system.

As a general rule, a ghoul may learn only those Disciplines known by her most recent "donor." (The exceptions are the "physical" arts of Potence, Fortitude and Celerity, which are instinctive enough to be accessible to any ghoul.) An independent wishing to learn Obtenebration must spend some time feasting on Lasombra vitae; similarly, a Malkavian's vassal is unlikely to pick up Necromancy. However, once she's learned a Discipline, any form of vitae will allow her to use it; revenants may even use their own vitae to fuel foreign arts such as Serpentis.

| Provocation | Difficulty |
|--|------------|
| Scent of domitor's vitae (when hungry) | 3 |
| Sight of domitor's vitae (when hungry) | 3 |
| Taste of blood | 3 |
| Threatened verbally by domitor | 3 |
| Use of narcotics or hallucinogens | 3 |
| Beaten by domitor | 4 |
| Domitor endangered | 4 |
| Domitor showing favor to another ghoul | 4 |
| Not administered dosage of vitae | 4 |
| Sight, smell or taste of human family member's blood | 4 |
| Attacked by a Lupine | 5 |
| Overdose of domitor's vitae | 5 |
| Humiliation in front of mortals | 5 |
| Humiliation in front of domitor | 6 |
| Abandonment | 6 |

Once a ghoul has learned a Discipline, the knowledge will likely stay with her even if she doesn't practice for a while (if her vitae supply is cut off, for instance). Once her diet is restored, she may typically use her Disciplines as usual. Of course, any unused talent will eventually atrophy — after six months without drinking vitae, a ghoul loses a dot in a Discipline. Each month after that, she loses another dot in a Discipline until all are gone. If the ghoul has any Discipline levels above 1, due to drinking vitae from low-generation vampires, these are lost first. What's more, if she has multiple Disciplines at the same level, the more unfamiliar ones are lost first; the instinctive Disciplines of Potence, Fortitude and Celerity are retained the longest. No matter what, the beginning dot in Potence is always the last to go.

(This rule also applies to ghouls who have a steady supply of vitae, but don't have access to the vitae of low-generation vampires to sustain their more powerful talents. A ghoul with Fortitude 2 who has been restricted to feeding from 11th-generation Cainites will eventually drop to Fortitude 1.)

For instance, Raoul's sixth-generation domitor was slain six months ago, and Raoul hasn't had a drop since. He had gradually mastered Potence 2, Fortitude 1 and Auspex 1 in his domitor's service, but the glory days are at an end now. First, Raoul loses a dot of Potence as his highest-rated Discipline. A dry month later, he loses his meager control of Auspex. Two weeks later, Raoul finally gets a drink of vitae. He is now considered to have Potence 1 and Fortitude 1; to regain his lost Discipline levels, he must learn them anew through long study and experience-point expenditure. He cannot relearn Potence 2 unless he has a steady diet of vitae from a vampire of at least seventh generation.

No ghoul may use any Disciplines without at least a Blood Point of vitae in her system. Although she may retain knowledge of how to utilize the Blood, this does little good for a mere human.

Frenzy

It is the Storyteller's duty to decide what situations might provoke frenzy in a ghoul character. While any *individual* stimulus is relatively unlikely to send a ghoul into frenzy (on average, ghouls' frenzy difficulties are three less than vampires'), ghouls experience provocation *much* more commonly than vampires do. Ghouls' human natures battle constantly with their Beasts, and most are not given instruction in how to prevent their vampiric natures from taking over. Therefore, in a chronicle involving ghouls, many more frenzy rolls must be made than in a chronicle involving only vampires.

In order for a ghoul character to resist frenzy, the ghoul's player must make a Self-Control roll, the difficulty of which varies. The player must score five successes before frenzy is overcome completely. With each success rolled, frenzy is prevented from taking effect for one turn. The player may not roll more dice than there are points available in her character's Blood Pool. Difficulties are determined at

the Storyteller's discretion; a chart showing (adjusted) difficulties for some more common provocations is provided on the previous page. (More on frenzy is found in *Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 195-198.)

These difficulties take into account ghouls' three-point bonus to avoid frenzy. Ghouls suffering from advanced Animalistic Hysteria increase these numbers by three (3 becomes 6, etc.).

Overdosing

Ghouls can intake more vitae than their stomachs or veins can comfortably handle — but this often causes dangerous side effects. For each point of Stamina a ghoul has, she can "cram" an extra Blood Point into her gullet or veins. If a ghoul imbibes more vitae than she can contain, she must make a Stamina check (difficulty 8). If she succeeds, she may use the excess blood normally. If she fails, though, she suffers a Health Level of damage per Blood Point above her maximum. Moreover, the excess blood can't be used to increase Attributes or heal wounds. It takes a full scene of nausea and purgation to burn off such "useless" Blood Points; until this takes place, the ghoul cannot use any Blood Points whatsoever.

While a ghoul is overdosed, her chance to frenzy becomes equal to that of a vampire's (though certainly the ghoul will not hunger at this point). Reaction time increases (the ghoul temporarily gains a dot in Dexterity), but the overdosed ghoul must make a Perception + Self-Control roll each scene or suffer from violent hallucinations (effects up to the Storyteller's discretion). Finally, ghouls who OD on the vitae of one particular clan automatically suffer the full side effects (if any) of that vitae.

Regeneration

Ghouls can regenerate limbs, though not automatically. To make a regeneration attempt, a ghoul must spend a Willpower point, spend an appropriate number of Blood Points (one for a finger or eye, two for a foot or forearm, three for an entire limb) and make a Stamina roll (difficulty 8). If the roll fails or is botched, the ghoul may never regrow the limb. Elder ghouls find regeneration easier; for each century of age, the difficulty of the roll decreases by one.

Revenants, Vitae and Blood Pools

Revenants manufacture their own vitae, though they may drink vampire vitae as well. (If using the optional "Pick Your Poison" rules for blood intake, a revenant may hold only a finite amount of blood in the stomach and must drain himself normally to intake more.)

A revenant begins with a Blood Pool of 10, gaining +1 to the Pool per century of existence. Revenants may spend their vitae normally and replenish their vitae supplies at the rate of one Blood Point per day. This renewal presupposes that the revenant in question is healthy and properly nourished.



So long as revenants maintain themselves with vampire vitae, they are as ageless as any other ghouls. Even without such enhancement, they are exceptionally long-lived; revenants live to ripe old ages of (150 years + 50 years per dot of Stamina).

Vitae of the Clans

A few clans' vitae possesses contagious properties. Ghouls imbibing/injecting five or more Blood Points from certain clans must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 5) or "inherit" a lesser form of the domitor's weakness; this lasts until the vitae has been purged (i.e., the ghoul holds fewer than five Blood Points from one clan).

The clans for which this rule most commonly applies are: Brujah (a ghoul "pumped" on Brujah blood frenzies at difficulties equal to those of a non-Brujah vampire); Malkavian (ghoul gains a mild Derangement); Nosferatu (Appearance drops by one or two points, but no lower than 1); Ventrue (ghoul gains a marked preference for Ventrue blood — possibly endangering the domitor); Setite (ghoul

develops painful [-1 to Dice Pools] rashes when in direct sunlight; furthermore, many Setites have the Addictive Blood Merit); and any Sabbat (no mandatory effect, but remember the possibility of contracting disease via the Vaulderie). At the Storyteller's discretion, vitae from other clans may cause similar effects.

Withdrawal

Withdrawn ghouls suffer symptoms for a period of weeks equal to six minus the ghoul's Stamina. Whenever the opportunity to gain vitae arises, the ghoul must make a Self-Control roll (difficulty 7) or attempt to "score" however possible. Additionally, each week of withdrawal requires the ghoul to make an Intelligence + Self-Control roll (difficulty 6); if this roll fails, the ghoul begins to sublimate her cravings for vitae into a desire for *human* blood, flesh or sex. A Willpower point may be spent to resist these cravings. If the roll is botched, no Willpower may be spent, and the victim *must* act on her urges.



Chapter Two: Masters and Servants?

*Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts, and this must be
Our chastisement or recompense.*

— Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Julian and Maddalo"

Relationships between Kindred and ghouls are as complex as interactions among the Kindred themselves. This chapter details some of the myriad ways ghouls deal with vampires, mortals, and each other.

Beckett:
Here's something that isn't quite the
Gaiinite lore you collect; however, it may be
different enough to catch your interest. The
manuscript I've enclosed was transcribed by my
associate Carmellia from an audiotape I dis-
covered in a Denver hotel. Although I wasn't
able to discover the name of the speaker (the
tape's owner didn't seem to know), the tape is
presumably part of the initiation package for
ghouls without domitors. I hope it intrigues.

Yours,

Lucita
Lucita

Ghouls vs. the Rest of the World

As you requested, Lucita, here's the complete transcript. The speaker is apparently a rough-voiced male, presumably in his biological midlife. Background noise occurs infrequently, and would seem to suggest that the speaker keeps pets of some sort - the clicking of claws on linoleum occurs at least twice. There are no extraneous sounds to suggest either urban or rural surroundings - presumably the recording took place in a secure locale. The brackets indicate my notes on voice tone or ambient noise; as you've pointed out, this information is valueless. Hope this is of use. - C.

[Tape begins. Some clicking; heavy sigh.]

So. You're free.

I don't care how it happened - everybody's got a different story. Most of you come to us wailing and pleading because your Dearly Beloved Master's recently taken the Long Sunbath and you don't know what to do. Or maybe she kicked you out - hard to believe, huh? You knew she was ruthless, but you always thought she'd care about you.... Ha. A few of you actually broke on your own, gradually mustering the strength to run. And a very few were never lapdogs at all.

Well, none of that matters anymore. If we're all lucky, none of you is going to see your precious benefactor ever again.

Now don't get me wrong, we need to find vampires if we're going to support ourselves in "the style to which we are accustomed." And you'll be taking part in a few hunts if you want to keep the vitae coming in. But it's *never* as if a Lick's a pushover, and we have to go after the weak ones if we want to see the next sunrise.

On Vampires

[slow release of breath] The first thing I traditionally say to you new applicants is a few words on vampires. Every time, back when I was still stupid enough to meet you people in person, someone would always give me this look when I started talking. You're probably wearing it now. It's the look that says, "I know vampires. I've been enslaved to one for some time. Nobody understands vampires better than I do."

Wrong.

You don't understand vampires. If you had understood the *Kindred* [emphasis mine; the word is pronounced bitterly/sarcastically?] back when you made your devil's deal, you'd never have signed on the dotted line. If you understood vampires and were okay with what they were like, you wouldn't have left their society; better the evil you know than whatever is on the outside, right? If you left voluntarily because the abuse was just getting to be too much - okay, now you're starting to get it.

There's a reason that I'm the one doing this. Yeah, I'm not recording this because of my golden tones. You see, I've played Renfield since before Bram Stoker was an itch in his daddy's knickers, and I've seen a lot during that time. Fact is, I probably know more about vampires than your average neonate Lick, and I damn well know more about them than you do - if I didn't, you wouldn't be coming to my group for help. We'd be coming to you.

So first off, assume I know what I'm talking about, and this recording'll be a lot easier to take. [clears throat] Right. Now the first piece of advice I have for you isn't real reassuring. It's simple enough, though: Be afraid.

Fear is a very healthy instinct. I can't count the number of times that flesh-crawling terror has kept my skin intact. Of course, it's always good to be able to act on your fear, or even to act in spite of it. But if you aren't afraid of what's out there, you're going to die. Or worse, depending on who you cross. We are talking about *vampires* here: virtual

demigods who've lived for centuries. They are for damn sure stronger, sharper and meaner than you, and anyone who isn't terrified by the thought of being caught by an angry vampire is out of his mind. [minor pause]

But they can be killed.

We need their blood to survive, and there are a bunch of ways to go about getting it - violent or otherwise. All of those methods require we learn as much as we can about the Licks: where they're strong, and where they're weak. Now listen up, even when I mention a name you already know. There won't exactly be a written exam later, but there'll be tests sure enough.

Sects

[clearing throat; sounds indicating drinking from a glass]

Okay, there are two major political groups of vampires, and I'm pretty sure you know the difference between the two. For the uneducated, the Camarilla is the party that advocates secrecy; they're the ones with the feudal social structure. The Sabbat are the savages who want to take a more direct hand in their environment. Of course, I don't presume to claim that this is the end-all, be-all of their purposes. I saw a bit more of vampiric politics than most ghouls usually do, but I'm aware that I saw damn little of what was really going on.

The Camarilla

So which organization is better? Neither, really - vampires are vampires, regardless of whether they wear funerary shrouds, Victorian ballgowns, black leather or custom-fit Armani. "Better" depends on what you're looking for.

Camarilla vampires are more subtle. This is better in some ways, sure. For one, they try to behave themselves, to preserve their Masquerade. [tone of voice indicates sarcasm] For another, Cam vamps tend to be more interested in maintaining an un lifestyle that actually resembles, well, a lifestyle. They go to the theatre now and then. They dabble in politics. They at least seem to pretend that they're still in touch with what it is to be human - well, for as long as it suits them. They're still inhuman, mind you, and can be subtly cruel in ways you'd only figure out after a few years of expensive therapy. But they don't go batshit as often, as that endangers their little secret, and violating this Masquerade is something that usually earns a vampire a death sentence. So they smile while they're around outsiders or other Licks, and maintain a feeling of control. All this leaves one with the distinct impression that the Camarilla are the civilized ones, and therefore far more beneficial to be around.

Here's the catch: Ghouls are automatic violations of the Masquerade. We're mortals who know about vampires. Therefore, if we show the slightest amount of defiance, they are perfectly within their vampiric rights to drain us dry, throw the corpses in a wood-chipper and mulch their rosebeds.

[cough] There's a good chance some of you knew that already.

The Sabbat

There's no hidden catches with the Sabbat. These bastards pride themselves on being honest. And what are they, honestly? Bloodsucking monsters from beyond the grave, so goddammit, they'll damn well act like it!

The Sabbat are the drunken, sadistic frat boys and sorority sweethearts of the Kindred. That analogy was actually made by a friend of mine, but it holds up really well, so I stole it. You see, most of them are simply out to have a good time and get wasted. On blood, of course, and they get real playful at their keggers. All the while, they make a lot of noise about freedom and brotherhood, fighting for your right to party and standing up for your brothers or sisters. Anybody who's ever lived in a college town knows exactly the kind of person I'm talking about.

But for every washout who never gets beyond street-thug level, there's another who makes good. Hell, they've got organization, and that's where all the smart vampires end up. I won't say that their leaders are world-dominating masterminds, every one, but the Sabbat has the Camarilla good and worried. But hey, you had to guess there were some brains in the outfit, otherwise they'd never have lasted as long as they have. Just like the college Greeks.

[low rumble/growl] Now listen very carefully: You better be aware that not one of those lofty political ideals means a fucking thing, as far as you're concerned. You're dogshit as far as the Sabbat is concerned - you might get thrown at an enemy, but most of the time you're just something to be scraped off their damn boots. Just about all of the Sabbat clans look at us as a waste of good vitae; they don't bother to ghoul somebody unless they have a very explicit purpose in mind. There's one exception, but... [minor pause] I'll mention them later. Don't get your hopes up, either. It isn't good news.

So there you have it. Life among the Sabbat stinks. They don't even need an excuse to chop you to bits and feed you to German shepherds. They'll just do it whenever they like - wahoo, are we having fun yet?

[low growling sigh] If you live where the Sabbat do, you're going to be in for a lot of fighting and hunting. Diplomacy is all but useless with them. So if you're more the intellectual type, or if you want a prayer of peacefully coexisting with the local Licks, you may want to head for Cam country.

Know Thine Enemy

So much for politics on the general level. Now let's talk about family values. The lineage of a vampire means an awful damn lot, and their clans get into feuds just as readily as any human families ever did. A vampire's ancestry influences her powers, her politics - hell, even her personality to a certain extent. And it can influence her ghouls, too. Right. Enough about why knowledge of the clans is important - let's get to it.

I know there are 13 clans. I know there are other bloodlines, too. It's amazing what happens when ghouls get together and talk...and borrow a few books from a vampire or three who won't be needing them anymore. Let's start at the beginning and work our way through the alphabet. [sound of rustling paper]

Assamite

Hate to start this briefing on a sour note, but we don't know a damn thing about the Assamites. They're allegedly this shadowy clan of vampire assassins who get paid only in blood, but nobody I've talked to has ever met one. If they keep ghouls, none ever get away.

This leaves us cold about how to hunt them, but don't worry about it. If you ever see one, you probably won't be at leisure to analyze his defenses anyway.

Brujah

The Brujah, now... [soft chuckle] The Brujah we know plenty about. There are a few in every city, and they don't mind recruiting ghouls at a moment's notice.

I'm of two minds about the Brujah. For one, they include the vampires most likely to treat you like a person...hell, even an equal. They're a pretty egalitarian bunch - at least some of the younger folks are - and they don't really give a rat's ass about social mores. They don't mind being seen with a ghoul buddy, and they're always looking for allies in their fight against "The Man." Damned if I know what that means from a Camarilla clan.

You knew there was a catch. This is it: The Brujah lose their tempers damned easily. I don't have to tell most of you what going berserk is like; you may have been there yourself. But a Brujah can be set off by just about anything. Hell, you name it. Somebody tries to card 'em when they go clubbing? A bum is just a bit too persistent asking for a nickel? A televangelist comes on the box and they don't like his tie? [short, rising whistle] That's it. Reason goes to hide in the basement, and the Brujah is tearing somebody's arms off and stuffing them in a Fed Ex drop box. This may be their weakest point, you see. A frenzied Brujah may well not notice the heavy guns across the street, but baiting one into a mindless frenzy is a bit like kicking a bear in the nuts so you can lead it into an ambush. The plan may work okay, but you're lucky if you still have all your vital body parts at the end.

They're damned scary fighters - possibly the most ferocious the clans have to offer - and they fight a lot. Some Houston Brujah learned about our sect once and decided they'd like to help us. I had the Houston cell closed down and didn't send anybody back to the city for three years. I just didn't trust them, no matter how serious they sounded about the kinship between our cause and that of the anarchists.

The anarchists, for those of you who've been completely left in the dark, are the Kindred who don't care much for the secret government and want to tear it down. What they want to replace it with, I'm not sure; their name suggests anarchy, but I'm too old and scarred to take a vampire's word at face value. They know a thing or three about terrorist tactics, and some of them are actually fairly decent to our kind - but again, read the fine print. They may not be as rarefied or deliberate, but never assume that chaotic behavior equals stupidity.

Caitiff

Which leads us nicely into the Caitiff.

Just to set the record straight for those of you who're a bit confused, the Caitiff aren't a clan. They're more of a social group, a sect within sects. That's where you find a random cluster of vampires from all the clans who are tired of following the party line. They're not real organized, and they allow a lot more individualism among themselves, so I don't really have anything to say about "Clan Caitiff," except that their lack of organization makes them easier pickings than most.

Followers of Set

Somebody once told me the Followers of Set were a big fat joke, a cult of bloodsuckers worshipping some dead god who's got PBS picking at his bones.

That's not what I saw.

[slow release of breath] The Followers of Set are real trouble - I think. You see, the other vampires don't like them, but for some reason don't treat them as much of a threat. Most figure the Snakes are antiquated relics, fanatics who haven't realized that animal-headed gods went out of fashion some millennia ago. Yeah, it sounds pretty easy to dismiss.

But when you aren't talking to Licks, but to people on the streets, you hear something different. Yeah, the Followers are into organized crime, drug trafficking, all that. But they seem to inspire respect and loyalty something fierce. You know how most Licks like denying you what you want, all the better to keep you lean and hungry like a prize falcon? Not the Followers of Set. They let you go after whatever you like; hell, they give it to you if you've been doing well. You don't even have to be one of their ghouls to merit treatment like this. I hear sometimes one'll notice if you're having trouble with the local loan sharks, and send somebody over to talk to them for you. Maybe they'll float you a little extra cash to keep your kid in daycare. All this without even asking you for any favors. How do you refuse something like that?

And that's something the other vampires don't seem to realize. I guess it's because they don't have the worm's-eye view we do. But your average Follower of Set has a lot of ghouls, and a lot of human friends who are so damn loyal you'd swear they were Blood Bound. To most of these people, their new friend is the best thing that ever happened to them. They'd kill and die for their benefactor. [pause]

The Followers of Set are pretty easy to dismiss when you're a rich, powerful vampire sitting in your penthouse, reading *Forbes* or something. But in the worst areas of town, they're usually the main power - often the only power. And they're not satisfied with keeping to the slums, either. [pause]

They've offered their help to our group before. No strings attached. And you know, if we take it, our lot's going to get better, and those vampires that cross us are going to have a much worse time of it. [long pause]

We're going to refuse their help for now, so that's the official word. Don't agree to accept any free lunches from anybody. [soft cough] I think that about covers the Followers of Set.

Gangrel

The Gangrel, now, are a hard clan to pin down. They run around between cities, for one thing. I understand that's usually suicide for any other clan, even the ones who can turn invisible. Furthermore, there honestly aren't a lot of ghouls who join us after leaving a Gangrel's service. From what I've heard tell, the Gangrel prefer the company of animals. [snort] There'd be a good vulgar joke there, if there was anything left in a vampire's genitalia.

They don't tend to run in the cities too much, and they're near impossible to track down in the wilds. They avoid politicking, and they don't care much for making deals. All in all, I'd say they aren't worth dealing with. They sure as hell aren't usually worth the effort

of stalking; no other vampire, not even a Brujah, turns into such a savage animal when it's riled up. The only saving grace is that you don't have to worry about them having a lot of friends - they're almost exclusively solitary, which works out fine for us.

Mean, stubborn and half-animal. I've only ever met a few Gangrel, and that suits me fine.

Giovanni

The Giovanni, on the other hand, have the clan unity going so strong they're practically inbreeding. These Italians keep vampirism in the family, so to speak - I don't reckon I've heard of any of these Licks who didn't have the last name Giovanni on their credit cards. I guess they keep their ghouls in the family, too - or at least I've never heard different. They're the vampire Mafia, pretty much. Scorsese could take lessons on how it's really done from the local Giovanni capo.

[rhythmic sound, presumably drumming fingers] And as if it couldn't get worse, these creepy bastards are nicknamed "Necromancers" by those vampires who know of 'em. Does that mean they raise the dead? I don't know. I don't want to.

Don't try to take one in his haven. They're interested in wealth, but more importantly, they're interested in information nobody else has. So, like a lot of other clans, they can be drawn out if you pick the right bait. Just watch out for their servants, and whatever you do, don't get up close with them. [clearing throat] You have to drop a Giovanni from a distance, or he'll take you apart. And you have to make sure he's yours - if he escapes or gets word to his clan, they'll come down on you like the wrath of Heaven itself. These are not the people to idly piss off.

Lasombra

And on that note, we get to the Lasombra. They seem to be Sabbat-only; the sect suits them. The second-best way to recognize one of these freaks is to check him out with a mirror. That's right - they don't cast reflections. I used to think that was just a folktale, like that business about running water; after all, people figured vampires didn't reflect 'cause they didn't have souls. That sums up the Lasombra pretty nicely. Cold, cold bastards.

But that's the second-best way to recognize a Lasombra; it's only second because they don't like mirrors and might pull your face off if you flashed any sort of reflector around them. The best way is to find out whether you're in Sabbat territory or not, and then find out what vampires don't have much in way of ghouls. The Lasombra hate us, God knows why. The few ghouls they keep take a lot of abuse. Hypersensitive bastards, those "Shadows." [capitalization and quotation marks mine; tone indicates bitterness/contempt] The old boys dress like Spanish nobility; the younger kids could be Brujah, with all the leather 'n' metal they favor.

I'd tell you to watch yourself around them, but frankly, you should never get that close. They like to play games, and they love edible game pieces. Some of the younger ones get too cocky for their own good, but the elders are always three steps ahead of everybody else. If you want to trap one dead to rights, set up a place and fill it with floodlights. I'm not kidding. It may not be stealthy, but when you hit a Lasombra with light from every direction, eliminating all shadows, he winds up at a loss. Then drop him with high-powered rifles. Don't get too close until he's no longer twitching; then he's yours. But if you want to keep him captive, rig a cell with the same bright lights. No shadows. Got it? Trust me on this. It'll probably save your lives. [pen scribbling on paper]

Malkavian

[Sound of page turning; speaker releases a deep breath] Now you may have heard of the Malkavians.

God, they're terrifying.

One of my employers once told me that they're harmless, that they just fool around, trying to play stupid pranks on everyone. She was wronger than anyone I've ever listened to. Every last one of the Malkavians is crazy in some way or another. I'm not talking "funny crazy," like Daffy Duck; I mean "psycho crazy," like Charlie Manson or Jeffrey Dahmer or those homeless bums you see on the street yelling at an invisible Jesus. Doesn't help if they're polite and sane-seeming, either. They like to pretend they're harmless. Abso-fucking-lutely love it.

And once you turn your back on these lunatics, they start in. Maybe they cut your best friend to bits just for giggles. I've also heard of them driving people around the bend by invisibly whispering things like "God hates you" or "Kill your boyfriend." Guess they like company. I know for a fact that they get it, too - just about all the ghouls they create wind up going just as insane as they are. So watch what you drink, got it?

Identify your target. If you know he's Malkavian, identify his madness. Find a hole, and exploit it. Hit a manic-depressive when he's depressive, or nail a multiple-personality Malk when she's in transition or a weak personality. They aren't great in hand-to-hand combat, but they can slip almost any trap if it isn't tight enough. Hit fast and hit hard - if you give a Malkavian time to react, you've probably just lost then and there.

Nosferatu

[coughs] The Nosferatu aren't a lot better, but at least you can usually tell one for what it is. When you can see one, that is. They're stealthy bastards, and it's usually easier to smell one than to see him. Good thing. Once you've seen a Nosferatu "unplugged" [presumably meaning *sans* Obfuscate], you'll never forget it. They look like mutant lepers and smell like a sewer - appropriately enough, 'cause that's where they live. The first time you meet one, you'll probably be scared out of your wits. I was.

You've got to be careful when dealing with one of these, especially if you happen to be the pretty sort. Lots of 'em resent beauty. The bright side is that many Nosferatu are willing to sell their vampiric brethren down the river for the right price. This can mean favors, information, or what-have-you. They're usually...creatures of their word, too - but not often enough that I recommend newbies dealing with them.

[soft chuckle] So the real question is: Is their vitae worth the revolting process of getting it? Hmm. That's a real toughie. I've got a friend who says it's good, potent stuff. Swears by it, he does. Of course, these past few years his looks have been running hot and cold, depending on whether or not he's had his leper-juice recently. If he's coked to the gills on Nosferatu vitae, he looks like a mandrill's butt with a case of diaper rash. Otherwise he ain't that bad. So I guess it's mostly an acquired taste, but hey, if it's Nosferatu blood or nothing, a few extra boils don't seem all that bad.

Nosferatu are as hard to trap as Malkavians: just about as sneaky and a lot fiercer in a brawl. They also have better information networks than most, so they're hard to lure out. Go for the young and dumb, the ones who haven't had much of a chance to establish themselves. What's more, every Nosferatu has enemies - it's easy to resent the ugly, intelligent bastards, so maybe you can get some allies to work against the leper for you. With any luck, the Nos will be trying to get your Lick buddy off his back while you slip up behind with the stake.

Ravnos

[pause, turning page] I guess I could've talked about the Ravnos when I mentioned the Gangrel, because the two clans have a lot in common. They aren't team players, they wander around a lot, and neither group bothers with ghouls all that much.

But the Ravnos are pariahs for a different reason, and they aren't Gangrel by any stretch. I think no matter who you are, you always hear about them long before you meet one - some wild rumors about the Gypsy-kin Cainites coming to town and stealing away the prince's favorite toy. Or maybe a friend has a domitor who has a sire who had to drive the Ravnos from his domain.

Whether you're warned or not, you're never quite ready when you meet them. They come whirling into the city, dancing on the fringes of the prince's territory and teasing the locals. Maybe you meet one while you're going about your errands at night. She seems normal enough, although a bit exotic - and then the world drops out from under you. Walls bend, your body melts, the sky splits open, and then - bam! You're back where you started, grabbing whatever's handy to reassure yourself that the world's still working, and then she smiles and maybe gives you a message to pass on. She just had to get your attention first. And, mind you, that's assuming she decided she needed a reason to play with you. [sounds of drinking]

I understand they rarely keep ghouls. Makes sense. Nobody could keep pace with them. [faint scratching, pause] They can be baited quite nicely, though. Sort of like the "world's best thief" syndrome - spread some rumors of something that sounds interesting and is "impossible to steal," and you'll have Ravnos lining up on your doorstep.

Better deal with them quick when they get there, or else they'll walk away with your lungs.

Toreador

[sounds of drinking; clears throat] Now the Toreador have got to be one of the most famous clans there is. Very pretty, very sophisticated; these are the ones you see across the room and swear to God that nothing that beautiful can possibly exist. But you watch out, 'cause these lovelies have a sharp edge to them.

[soft sigh] I don't know if we have a unified opinion on the Toreador, because if you've ever met one, you know how hard it is to be objective about them. They usually pick pretty ghouls, and sometimes they have sweeping affairs with their chosen companions. The ending can be good or bad. [tapping sound: metal on wood?] Maybe there are vows of eternal love, and the ghoul gets the gift of immortality - the vampire way. Or maybe the Toreador shreds the ghoul to weeping gobbets, shrieking about betrayal. It can happen any number of ways.

[clears throat; voice is deliberately(?) dry] They're decent fighters, but not unstoppable. They're also more easily distracted than most - must be a side effect of those oh-so-sharpened senses. Not my first pick for game, but you could do worse.

Tremere

[cough; moderate pause] Seven clans make up the Camarilla. Two of those are very hard to get any solid information on. One's the Gangrel; I talked about them already. The other's the Tremere.

When you play word association with a Lick, and you mention the Tremere, the word you usually get is "warlocks." Well, that's the G-rated word, anyway.

The Tremere are this creepy neo-Masonic lodge of a clan, for what I can tell. They seem to be big on formality and tradition, ritual and dogma. No other clan likes them, apparently - they don't even have informal allies outside of their own blood. Of course, they make up for that by being about as tight-knit as it gets. Most of 'em are willing to come to a clanmate's assistance pretty readily. Their servants take triple-layered oaths of secrecy and aren't seen away from the haven all that often. Tight, very tight.

But the real kicker is that the Tremere have mysticism on their side, and I mean mysticism that works. Voodoo, mojo, juju, medicine, Great Magick - I don't know for sure what they call it and I don't think it matters. The results are the same; they can lay hexes, call up storms, make cows' milk go sour, all of that. Think about that the next time you pass one of those occult bookstores where all those pale, friendless kids hang out. Some of that magic stuff is real, and I guess nobody has a better library of spells than Clan Tremere. Never try to catch one at home; that's pretty much sticking your hand in a rattlesnake pit and trying to grab one safely. If you have to deal with the Tremere, try to draw them out to neutral ground, if you can make such a thing exist. They're powerful in their lairs, and their magic can kill you dead. Just so you know. [sounds of drinking]

Tzimisce

Next in line, according to the ol' notes, are the Tzimisce. [Here a long pause follows, punctuated by faint background noise. After an eventual sigh, the narrative continues:]

From everything I've ever seen and heard, these are the absolute worst. You can be serving them aperitifs one evening and the very next night you're strapped to a lab table, being pulled apart by their flesh-shaping talons and reassembled into something that they happen to like better. Mutated like some Frankenstein monster or radiation accident, or fed to the latest creations. They like torture, too - positively delight in pulling you apart nerve by nerve just to hear what pitch you scream in. No, that's not right. The worst part is that they don't delight in it. They just hang back like some doctor or something, curiously watching the raw mass of manflesh on the table squirm and twitch, like they're running some goddamn experiment.

I've heard that some people go to them willingly. "Make me beautiful," they say. "Make me muscular." "Teach me to do what you do." [Shorter pause. The speaker resumes in a choked tone:]

Never go to the Fiends. If you ever see one, or even hear there's one around, run. Try to get away, even if it kills you.

Ventrue

[Here again is a pause, and the sound of papers rustling. When the speaker resumes, his voice is clearer.]

Finally, we have the Ventrue. They're the Camarilla's opposite number to the Sabbat's Lasombra; the two hate each other, probably because they're both control freaks. The most you can say for the Ventrue is that they're better about the *noblesse oblige*, and always try to act the part of the civilized aristocrat. Well, not always, but they're fashionable enough to keep their brutality "in the family," so to speak.

Anyway, the Ventrue are to all appearances complete control freaks. They're the archetypal princes, apparently because they have more contacts and such than anybody else. They call a lot of shots, and are very big on protocol. If a Ventrue prince even suspects that a ghoul is endangering the Masquerade, pfft! [sic] Good-bye ghoul, thank you for your years of service, and try not to spill any blood on the carpet. But they keep a lot of ghouls, and they boss their servants like proper lords and ladies of the manor should. As long as everybody behaves themselves, they've got quite an organization going. In fact, a Ventrue will often ghoul his mortal descendants and family, effectively becoming the patriarch of his own little miniclan. Talk about your "Old Money" families....

The Ventrue also offer liquid immortality to a number of old and powerful pawns who are too useful to let go. It's a hell of an offer, particularly when you're getting on in years and don't have much to look forward to. Not all of a Ventrue's ghouls are necessarily part of her household staff, so be careful! The desk sergeant at the local precinct might not only be in a Ventrue's pocket, he may also have learned a few supernatural tricks of his own.

[coughs] The one good thing about dealing with Ventrue is that with as many ghouls as they have, there's a lot of jockeying for attention. Those games for the master's favor - you probably know them pretty well already, right? Those games are pretty common among Ventrue households. And not everybody can share the domitor's good graces at once, so we recruit more than a few malcontents out from under the Ventrue's noses. What's more, with the help of a mistreated household ghoul or two, you can even wind up with a fair amount of Ventrue blood to boot.

But that's tricky work, and I really don't recommend trying it until you know exactly what you're doing.

Others

[soft thump, presumably notebook set aside] That covers most of what we know about the vampires. But although they've been the focus of our lives for a while - and will continue to be - they aren't the only creatures with power out there. Real power, I mean: Politicians are hardly boogymen compared to some of the urban legends I've heard. And since we're none of us getting any younger 'cause the tall tale of vampires happened to be true, I figure these other stories are worth a listen. And I know for a fact some of 'em are true.

Werewolves

All right, the most obvious place to begin is the Lupines. You might've heard of them. I doubt any of you have fought them - you're still alive, right? But they're one of the reasons some Licks create ghouls like us: as cannon fodder. You see, werewolves are out there, between the cities. From what I've heard, they're one of the reasons vampires hang around in the cities in the first place. Lupines hate vampires, and they're just fine with walking around during the day. So a lot of Licks create a small army of ghouls, hand 'em guns with silver bullets and set 'em out there to keep away the Lupines. Some even force their ghouls to hunt the dogs down.

Why don't they do the work themselves? Sure, we're more expendable. But from what I've seen, most vampires are afraid of the Lupines. This from undead who can rip sheet metal like cloth!

So if the Licks are afraid of the Lupines, what does that make us? In my case, too damn attached to my hide to go looking for them. Sure, if they hate the vampires, maybe we could get a positive arrangement going. But nobody's yet volunteered to be the one to find the Lupines and offer 'em terms. A couple of my associates who've learned the Gangrel way of animalspeak are thinking about trying...but they're taking their time about getting started.

Like I blame them.

Witches and Warlocks

Somehow or another, normal people can get power, too. We're used to the Blood as a ticket to supernatural strength and weird talents; seems that there's another way.

I mentioned the Tremere earlier. Well, they aren't the only ones who can take a spell out of some old Egyptian curse-manual and actually make it work. You see, some witches and warlocks out there have actual power. No, I'm not talking about those New Age neopagans who hang around

Renaissance festivals, selling flower wreaths and massage oils. I mean sorcerers who work magic in all sorts of freakish ways. Some of them keep their formulas and chants on computer; some of them use rituals that require some blood to be spilled. [low chuckle] I didn't press those last too hard to explain their thinking.

Well, the obvious question, the one that we're still looking to answer, is whether or not these folks can teach us magic, too. Those few that I've met get real dodgy whenever I bring up the subject of instruction. I guess they want to keep their cards close to their chests. The best thing to do if you ever run into a real witch or warlock - and it's hard to tell - is to be patient. It's not real easy, though. If they'd share the edge of real magic with us, we'd have a lot better chance of survival. We don't have the time to start from scratch and hit all the smelly old bookstores looking for the genuine article. We have to convince them to help us.

Ghosts

What else? [pause; presumed sound of drumming fingers] Hmm. Do you believe in ghosts yet?

Funny enough, but most people seem to find it easier to believe in ghosts than in vampires. Or at least so I've gathered. But after you've been a ghoul for a while, ghosts don't seem all that scary, do they?

Yes and no.

Vampires are monsters. Once you've seen one go berserk, or chastise a ghoul by shedding her blood, or kill someone without even twitching an eyelid, it doesn't take that much imagination to be scared by a vampire. Ghosts, on the other hand... Well, you have to use your imagination a little more to picture a ghost doing you serious harm. No matter how scary the spirit, the Licks are worse. Right?

Well, I've felt my share of cold flashes in my day, and I've seen bursts of St. Elmo's Fire where there shouldn't have been any. I've felt flashes of warmth close by my cheek that I knew, just knew, were bursts of anger from something I couldn't see. This usually happened when I was on my rounds for my old domitor. And after thinking about it, this nagging thought came to me.

Vampires kill a lot of people. And a lot of those people probably didn't think of themselves as ready to die.

I'd say ghosts exist. So be careful.

The Rest

Yeah, if all these others exist, then who's to say what else is out there? I don't know for sure. I wouldn't say that it was just like some Universal Studios tour, though, with the Creature from the Black Lagoon, the Mummy, all that bullshit...no. Elvis and Bigfoot are not necessarily living with space aliens in Area 51.

But I've heard stories of corpses dragging themselves out of the grave, and I heard these stories from people who knew full well what vampires are really like. So maybe zombies are something else we have to worry about. And some say that there are creatures out there that are born as animals, but can change into humans, the better to walk among us and kill us for food.

[muffled cough] A Louisiana cell disappeared completely once, and the last we heard from them was - and I am not lying - something about a dinosaur, or a dragon, or something, coming out of the swamp to kill them. We never found a scrap of them afterward.

What does all this mean? It means keep your ears open, your eyes sharp, and don't dismiss everything you hear out of hand. How can you tell the rumor that can save your life from the deliberate con-job? [chuckle] You've got me. In the end, the thing that'll save your ass most is instinct. Don't ignore it.

Finis

[pause; sigh] That covers the basics of life among the creatures of the night. You'll likely learn more as you go. If you need more specifics, then check with the senior member of your cell.

I don't have anything more to say. You'll be contacted again in the next three days. Welcome aboard, and...try not to get us all killed. [soft thump; cough]

[Here the recording ends.]

Among the Damned

Although vampires' opinions of ghouls vary widely by clan, they generally think of ghouls as subservient, indebted creatures. Of course, Kindred believe themselves to be of "preferred stock," and therefore morally, physically and mentally superior to ghouls, but the limitations placed on vampires struggling to maintain the Masquerade give ghouls the upper hand in many situations. Often the relationship between a ghoul and his domitor becomes a power struggle. For example, a ghoul who does not get sufficient attention or vitae from her domitor may make veiled threats about going to the authorities or a rival sect if she does not get her blood or love or sex *now*. To avoid such conflicts and fully exploit a ghoul's power, an intelligent vampire treats her ghoul with equal doses of respect and discipline.

Not surprisingly, the Camarilla and Sabbat have extremely different outlooks on their ghouls' roles. Unaffiliated clans also have their own unique perceptions of the value of these creatures. Though each domitor-ghoul relationship is unique, over the course of centuries the various clans have evolved strategies for employing ghouls — and ghouls have learned exactly what sorts of masters they have allied themselves with.

The Camarilla's Two Cents

First I taught them that they could not unseat me, and even rapped them sharply between the ears to impress upon them my authority and mastery.

— Edgar Rice Burroughs,
A Princess of Mars

Camarilla vampires simultaneously rule and fear the actions of their ghouls. Ghouls are useful, but their manic-depressive moodiness can instill a great deal of anxiety in Camarilla Kindred. While a ghoul can pry information from local mortals and take care of a Kindred's nine-to-five business, she can also spill the beans about the Masquerade.

Brujah Ghouls

Brujah ghouls are as diverse as individual Brujah, but there are some basic commonalities. In urban areas, Brujah ghoul society tends to be composed largely of street people and gang members, with a radical activist or poli-sci scholar thrown in for good measure. The latter are often considered for the Embrace, while the former are considered little more than extensions of the domitor. Ghouls typically serve in combat capacities; while agitators and leaders are useful, Brujah prefer to fill these roles themselves or with childer. Therefore, the life of a Brujah ghoul commonly centers on such activities as "beat up X" and "blow up Y."

Notable exceptions are mortals whom the domitor befriends; Brujah tend to be generous with their Blood, at least at first, so a Brujah often supports one or more ghoul cronies or "drinking buddies." As the years drag on and the idiosyncrasies start to annoy, though, these ghouls tend to end up in either the "lackey" or the "tattered corpse" category.

Brujah are generally charismatic, and their ghouls tend to be people drawn toward strong, magnetic leaders, who then subsume their lives into "the cause." (With regard to ghouls, Brujah seem to use the words "free will" to mean the free acceptance of whatever propaganda the domitor dishes out.) Relatively few ghouls are coerced or tricked into ghouldom — the "rush" of super strength and endless life generally proves irresistible for the young, headstrong and powerless. Such fervor often leads to violent outbursts between groups of Brujah ghouls, whose individual domitors may subscribe to diametrically opposed ideologies.

Brujah ghouls are typically young and temperamental — relatively few survive to become old and restrained. Brujah vitae is as heady and dangerous as PCP, and ghouls rabidly fight for the clan until their bodies are tattooed in black and blue — they are fully aware that cowards will not be considered for the Embrace. Those ghouls who do survive to "maturity" seem superficially more controlled than their fledgling counterparts. Having wised up to the fact that they're simply being used, these oldsters forego the hope of Embrace in favor of their own ambitions in mortal society. This



disparity in attitudes can lead to friction between “gullible” younger ghouls and “complacent” centenarians-plus.

Brujah ghouls, particularly those recruited from street gangs, maintain contact with mortals after their transformation into ghoulnood, often becoming subjects of gruesome urban legends. Such ghouls tend to dominate mortal gang hierarchies, usually due to the uncanny muscle power the ghouls can supply for the gangs.

Brujah Domitors

As domitors, Brujah generally sway their ghouls with liberal amounts of rhetoric and Presence; ghouls cynical or intelligent enough to question the Fearless Leader seldom survive the subsequent frenzy. Neo-Carthaginian rhetoric aside, few Brujah actually Embrace their ghouls, thinking them unworthy of such a high honor.

As a rule, Brujah tend to ghoul only loyal humans and animals with great physical strength. Particularly in more isolated or turbulent regions, Brujah sometimes recruit entire armies of ghouls, forming their own private militias and bringing more mortals into the Brujah purview. More mortals means more potential ghouls and, at the very least, more people on whom to feed. (Ironically enough, this last “perk” becomes a dire necessity — the more ghouls a Brujah creates, the more blood she must ingest in order to feed her hungry servitors.)

Idealist Brujah value intelligence more than brutality when deciding whom to ghoul. They believe that ghouls are best used to infiltrate the Camarilla in subtle ways; therefore, elders look for humans with superior Social and Mental Attributes: charismatic union leaders, outspoken agitators and brilliant, charming philosophical revolutionaries. Overthrowing a prince is not easily done with fists; it takes a lot of mental prep work, and the wiser Brujah see ghouls' potential to help with such matters.

Gangrel Ghouls

Gangrel ghouls, what few there are, tend to be a very unhappy, lonely lot. Their masters treat them like “fair-blooded”

friends, often abandoning them just as their craving for vitae reaches its peak. On the other hand, such ghouls often prove capable of satiating this craving, having learned a bit about hunting from their erstwhile masters — a disproportionate number of independent “stalker” ghouls come from the ranks of displaced Gangrel “mistakes.”

As Gangrel tend to be loners, Gangrel ghouls have little or no contact with other ghouls or vampires. Those who try to return to their mortal lives are often left destitute, homeless and sick, unable to cope with “normal” mortal society; they usually die or are killed, unless a vampire of another clan snatches them up. But only a handful of survivors wish to remain ghouls after their horrible experience with the Gangrel, and these ghouls usually buy vampiric vitae from ghoulnood dealers, or simply steal it.

The ghouls most likely to remain loyal to Gangrel domitors (and receive reciprocal loyalty) are animal ghouls. Animal ghouls typically stay faithful to their domitors until the night the domitor decides he needs a snack and can't find a sentient being to sate that hunger; the animals must suffice, and they are usually drained to death by the remorseful Gangrel.

Gangrel Domitors

Natural wanderers, Gangrel don't want too many ghoulnood servants tying them down.

Most of the time, if they need something, they're not afraid to venture into the Barrens to claim it for themselves. Frankly, Outlanders find few uses for ghouls — and Gangrel rarely ghoul frivolously, as do the Brujah and Toreador.

When a Gangrel does decide to ghoul a mortal, the ghoulnood is often abandoned after her domitor realizes the tremendous responsibility inherent in tending to the vitae-craving servant.

Occasionally a Gangrel ghoulnood someone just before a long journey, thereby providing himself with “extra food in his rucksack,” but Gangrel generally



prefer to travel light. A Gangrel is therefore much more likely to ghoul an animal, as they make great traveling companions and enjoy venturing into the wild woods. The clan's Animalism Discipline allows a Gangrel domitor to communicate with his animal ghoul better than he can communicate with a human. Elder Gangrel often have centuries-old (and correspondingly powerful) animal ghouls, whom they love better than any "sentient" being.

Occasionally, a rural Gangrel takes on the role of "protector" (i.e., supreme predator) of an isolated village or territory, sporadically creating ghouls over the centuries to "administer" (i.e., terrorize) the locals. Such fiefdoms are exceedingly rare in modern times; what few remain are often the subjects of grisly legend, shunned by their neighbors, who whisper of the "strange goings-on in the village in the hollow."

While Gangrel have a sort of empathetic respect for ghouls, they do not treat any ghouls save animal ghouls particularly well. Perhaps this is due to the presence of the Beast or the clan's association with the Lupines, perhaps to the Outlanders' general lack of regard for humans who are not of Gypsy descent.

Malkavian Ghouls

Malkavian ghouls can be anyone and anything, except forgettable. The vitae in their systems knocks them around like mice in a cat's paws; they change moods constantly and unpredictably, often becoming more and more manic as they drink more and more blood. Of course, the ghouls are not to blame; having a Malkavian as a domitor definitely takes its toll. Some of these ghouls are even abducted from institutions or hospitals, and their preexisting mental conditions are only exacerbated by the "care" of their equally psychotic masters.

Some Malkavian ghouls retain relations with humans; others do not. It all depends on the domitor's whims. Kooks sometimes commit their ghouls to asylums, where they can find more mentally aberrant human playthings for their masters — either among the patients or (after a little tweaking) in the ranks of institution administrators.

A Malkavian ghoul's loyalty to her domitor may prove particularly perilous, since the object of affection is psychotic. The ghoul may allow herself to be partially dissected by her domitor to prove her loyalty, and then find herself abandoned, rapidly deteriorating and not knowing quite why. Smarter ghouls, though, may con their domitors into becoming dependent on them for research assistance or affection. These ghouls remain closest to the vampires' hearts, so to speak, and the other servitors are usually too insane to be jealous of them.

Malkavian Domitors

Malkavian vampires create ghouls frequently: on whims, to advance their pet projects, and to enact whatever bizarre tableaux their Derangements dictate. Showing neither preference nor dislike for ghouls, Malkavians see ghouls as fun and interesting guinea pigs on whom to experiment. Ghouls are treated as three-dimensional, breathing Malkavian playthings — and some Malkavian ghouls are nothing more than human shot-puts to hurl gleefully at rival vampires.

Kooks' attitudes toward ghouls change as much as the moods of individual clan members. Malkavians often forget that they've created particular ghouls, leaving the poor victims deranged, yearning, utterly disoriented,

and wondering where they'll get their next bloodfixes (if they even remember that it is Kindred blood they crave). Furthermore, each individual domitor's treatment depends significantly on the type of Derangement the Malkavian in question has. For example, a domitor with Delusions of Grandeur treats her ghoul as either an inconsequential underling or a protégé, depending on her mood. And a ghoul can become something of a babysitter to a Malkavian with a Regression Derange-



ment. Talk about role-reversals.... (For more information on Derangements, see *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 201.)

After a ghoul is Bound to his Malkavian domitor, a rather classic model of a dysfunctional relationship develops — one in which the vampire is obsessed with mental and physical game-playing, and the ghoul is awestruck by the mental powers and charisma of his Kindred **slaver**. A Malkavian can become addicted to this sense of power, just as the ghoul becomes addicted to the domitor's blood. Long-term Malkavian-ghoul relationships exemplify the word "codependency." Contrarily, short-term Malkavian-ghoul relationships are intense, melodramatic and often fatal for one or both parties.

Malkavians don't necessarily seek to make ghouls of people with similar mental conditions; how would a human with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder benefit a vampire who has this problem himself, aside from making sure the vampire locks the door to his haven by checking it 17 times? (Much to the Malk's chagrin, however, the ghoul usually inherits her domitor's Derangement anyway.) Kooks tend to ghoul humans who display qualities that they themselves lack, only occasionally transforming those people who "feed" their Derangements. But if a vampire has the Obsession Derangement, for example, he may ghoul someone who has a similar fetish or obsession in order to validate his Derangement. After all, lunacy loves company.

Nosferatu Ghouls

Sewer Rat ghouls are recipients of a classic mixed blessing. At least Clan Nosferatu gives its ghouls a bit of respect and consideration for their good work. Unfortunately, Nosferatu vitae tends to produce similar, though lesser, deformities in its ghouls.

By and large, mortals ghouled by the clan tend not to be the most popular people in their old circles anyway. Still, many Nosferatu ghouls, forced into isolation by the transmogrifications of the Blood, wind up becoming very lonely and tormented souls.

Nosferatu prefer to ghoul humans who don't quite fit in with the corporate milieu. While professional types benefit the clan tremendously, Nosferatu prefer those professionals to be the peons of their respective workplaces. Diligent workers who are never praised, sexual harassment victims, wage slaves who go years without raises, and workers who are mocked because of physical disabilities often welcome the feelings of belonging they get from service to the Nosferatu. Ghouling, to a Nosferatu, should be performed with the same amount of fore-

thought one would put into creating progeny, and Nosferatu ghoul only those whom they would consider for the Embrace.

Accordingly, this tight-knit clan treats newly initiated ghouls as the "new childer" in the Nosferatu warren. The vampires train their ghouls to become bold, resolute and, above all, competent, nourishing them and teaching them the clan's history in the process. Very often, Nosferatu warrens resemble "communes": Each ghoul works for the good of all Nosferatu, not just her domitor; and the Nosferatu treat all ghouls, animal or human, with equal amounts of esteem.

Animal ghouls are common among the clan. They are easily created, and they communicate well with their domitors, for clan members possess the Animalism Discipline. The clan's animal ghouls consist mostly of slimy, unsanitary urban critters. Most of these ghouls are lured in to serve the clan after tasting the luscious vitae of a Nosferatu who shed her blood to fill up a Spawning Pool (see *Clanbook: Nosferatu*, p. 38). After just one taste, the animals have to come back for more and more of the scrumptious vampiric blood; potent Nosferatu blood is allegedly harder to kick than heroin or nicotine. After becoming Blood Bound, the Nosferatu's animal ghouls take on many of the clan's characteristics, growing to extreme sizes and developing freakish deformities.



Despite their “perks,” Nosferatu ghouls had best not grow complacent, no matter how well they are treated by the clan. And Heaven help the Nosferatu ghoul who sells out her benefactors for, say, the sweet blood of a beautiful Toreador. Laziness and rebellion alike are noticed and dealt with in poetic fashion. Ghouls who betray the clan are strapped to subway tracks to meet their deaths, or else immersed in pools of sewage to drown.

Nosferatu Domitors

The Sewer Rats are big fans of ghouls — animal ghouls, that is. Human ghouls can be of great help to Clan Nosferatu, but they are much more difficult to create; after all, to ghoul a mortal, a Nosferatu must coax or coerce the mortal to remain in the vicinity.

Nosferatu find reliable human ghouls by looking on the subways. The vampire uses Obfuscate to stand among the after-hours crowds, searching for professionals in the construction, urban planning, sanitation, transportation and city maintenance fields who are heading home after their exhausting second- and third-shift jobs. Overheard snippets of conversations with other passengers usually clue the Nosferatu in on the potential ghoul's profession. Only humans who can benefit the clan in some manner are ghouled; many Nosferatu have neither the patience nor the desire to associate with the mortals who shunned them so during their own lives.

Toreador Ghouls

Toreador keep cliques of suave, sophisticated ghouls; some of these ghouls actually prove useful, and all cater to the domitor's ego. Toreador tend to select their ghouls from among the mortals they socialize with at parties, art openings, theatrical productions, musical performances and poetry readings, picking and choosing for “artistic” (i.e., no particularly logical) reasons.

Like the Brujah, Toreador ghoul often and frivolously. A Toreador might ghoul someone just to have an eternally adoring fan of his work. It's nice to be worshipped, after all.

Being a Toreador ghoul is far from easy, but lavish rewards await those whom the domitors favor — for exactly as long as the favor lasts. “In” ghouls are showered with designer clothing, invitations to high-society parties and, most importantly of all, adulation and respect in cliquish Toreador

circles. Naturally, ghouls in service to the domitor are the *creme de la creme* — and naturally, ghouls in service to those other...leeches are too gauche for words.

But pity the poor waif ghoul model when thin is no longer in and the Rubenesque look is back in style. Status disintegrates in a tidal wave of humiliation, and the former beloved is tossed to the wayside by her fickle Toreador domitor. After all, Toreador don't like to show off ghouls who aren't in vogue!

Even ghouls in favor with their domitors walk on eggshells most of the time, knowing full well that they could be thrown away like last season's evening gowns at any given moment. Compounding this fear is the constant internecine feuds endemic to Toreador cliques, as rival servitors use innuendo, nails, and whatever else it takes to maintain “Ghoul Number One” status. This catty competition often leads to violent frenzies and stalkerlike behavior among the ghouls — anything to please the master, and anything to knock the competition down.

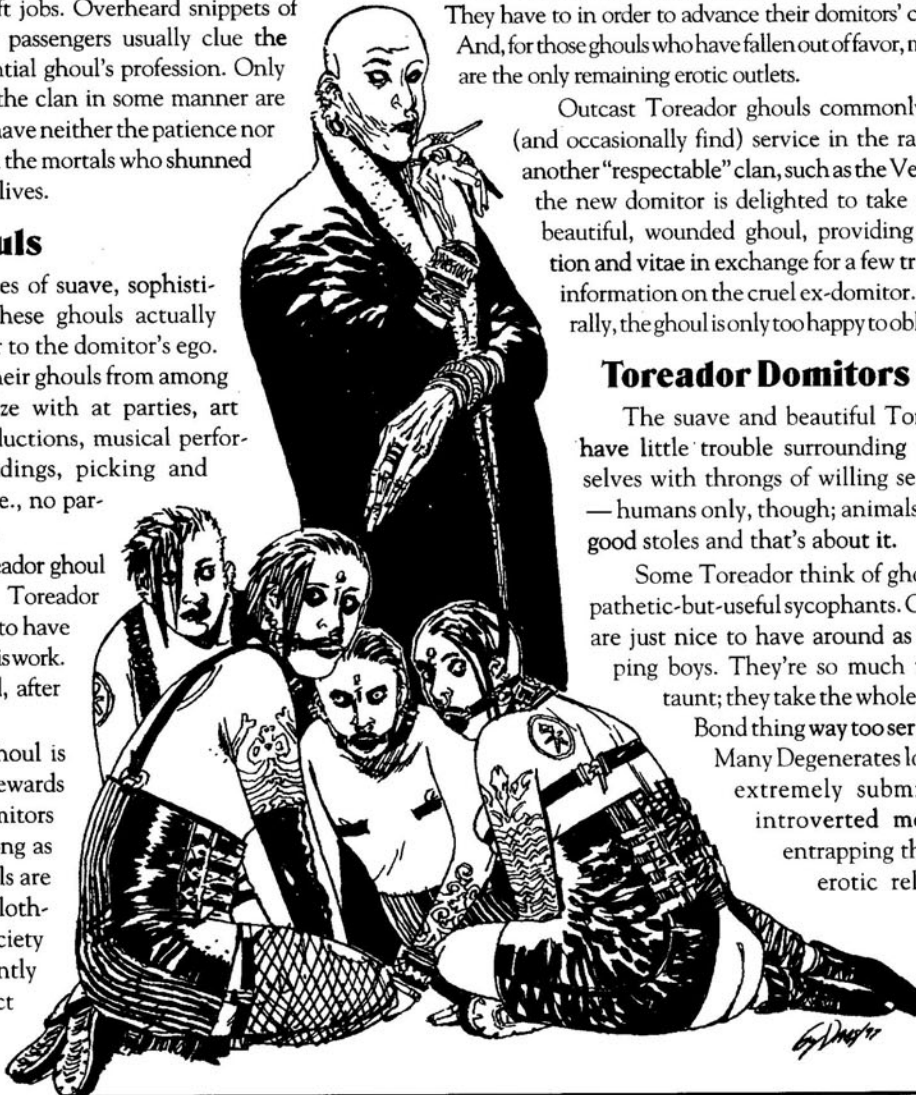
Most Toreador ghouls still keep in touch with mortals. They have to in order to advance their domitors' careers. And, for those ghouls who have fallen out of favor, mortals are the only remaining erotic outlets.

Outcast Toreador ghouls commonly seek (and occasionally find) service in the ranks of another “respectable” clan, such as the Ventruie; the new domitor is delighted to take in the beautiful, wounded ghoul, providing affection and vitae in exchange for a few trifles of information on the cruel ex-domitor. Naturally, the ghoul is only too happy to oblige....

Toreador Domitors

The suave and beautiful Toreador have little trouble surrounding themselves with throngs of willing servants — humans only, though; animals make good stoles and that's about it.

Some Toreador think of ghouls as pathetic-but-useful sycophants. Ghouls are just nice to have around as whipping boys. They're so much fun to taunt; they take the whole Blood Bond thing way too seriously. Many Degenerates look for extremely submissive, introverted mortals, entrapping them in erotic relation-



ships. For a couple of wickedly fun 15-minute B&D sessions and a few drops of blood per month, a Toreador has a loyal servant who idolizes her domitor, drives him everywhere, acts as a bodyguard, serves drinks at parties, and works as his booking agent.

Not all Toreador are so cruel to their ghouls. Some actually feel a semblance of love for their Blood Bound slaves. Other clan members love the adoration they get from their special fans, and so they coddle their ghouls. Devoted ghouls stay forever by their Toreador lovers' sides, trying to be more and more helpful with each passing year in hopes of eventually being Embraced by their lithe, creative-genius masters. Requests for the Embrace are usually futile, however; a Toreador would much rather have a parasitic little helper (whom she can let age if he acts up) than another annoying vampiric "friend" who'll compete against her in all the art shows.

Tremere Ghouls

Ironically enough, many Tremere ghouls do not even realize they are ghouls. Their masters shroud the truth from them until absolutely positive that the ghouls will not leak arcane secrets to rival clans or break the sacred Masquerade.

This deception, like so much about the Tremere, is practiced under a guise of ingenuousness. Tremere ghouls are often recruited from religious orders, Freemason groups — even fraternities and sororities — and the initiation rites into Clan Tremere do not differ much from a cult's or secret society's. Typically, initiates are not informed that each sip of vampire's blood (or, more likely, several vampires' blood) from the ceremonial chalice draws them closer to being Blood Bound to the clan. The Warlocks subscribe to the "ignorance-is-bliss" theory of enlightening their ghouls, and share only half-truths about the transformation. Only after a ghoull demonstrates complete loyalty to "the order" does he learn the truth — and even these lucky "consors" receive ample demonstration of what will



happen to them should they divulge secrets to newer initiates.

And once a Tremere consor is fully recruited, life is far from easy. The Tremere have even more enemies than most clans do, and while a consor's introduction to the Tremere may be gradual and mysterious, his introduction to the Assamites, Gangrel and Tzimisce is usually sudden indeed.

Tremere ghouls perform a variety of functions. A disproportionate number serve merely as chum to be thrown to the clan's numerous foes. Many other ghouls are used as research assistants, keeping the clan up to date on such arcana as the Internet. Finally, Tremere ghouls make effective "living scrolls": They have rituals of various sorts placed on them (often without their knowledge) and are sent about their business; this business often takes them into the fold of a rival or enemy, where the "inscribed" spell takes effect.

Tremere Domitors

Because the clan already employs numerous Gargoyles, homunculi, demon-bound, and corpse minions as servants and guards (see **Clanbook: Tremere**, pp. 33-35), Tremere are quite hesitant to create ghouls, who could conceivably break the Masquerade, disrupt the clan's order, and leak closely guarded secrets to mortal and Kindred alike. A vampire must obtain permission from a superior before a ghoull can be initiated into the clan.

Any Tremere wishing to create ghouls must abide by strict criteria during ghoull selection and creation. Ghouls must either be obvious "one-shot" weapons (i.e., a cell of ghouls created to be thrown at the *szlachta* of an oncoming Sabbat siege) or potential neonates. The former must be demonstrably liquidated at the end of use, while the latter must be carefully evaluated and made to swear all manner of secret and binding oaths.

Because they are under extreme pressure from the highest clan authorities, Tremere domitors are not, in general, a very pleasant lot. In particular, younger domitors who have personal gripes with their elders often take out their frustrations on obsequious ghoull students. The ghouls, sworn not to defy their domitors, often receive humility lessons in the form of canings, whippings, razor cuts, bruises, and severe verbal abuse. The Tremere Embrace only those ghouls who persevere against all odds, and these leechlike students must be kept in line somehow.

Ventrue Ghouls

On first impression, Ventrue ghouls often seem suave and in control; as any Ventrue knows, however, it is the domitor who exercises complete control over her ghouls.

Much of this control stems from the fact that Ventrue recruit many ghouls from their mortal families. Certainly, a Ventrue who ghouls her own grandfather expects nothing less than obedient gratitude for saving the old bastard's life. Many Ventrue ghouls are transformed in their late mortal years — often just before succumbing to cancer or the like — and Ventrue domitors constantly remind these older ghouls of the long, painful deaths they've been spared.

Ventrue ghoulnood is a rather hierarchical existence. Indeed, some elder Ventrue maintain "castes" or "ranks" of servitors, complete with titles and insignia. These strictures make for some vampire-pleasing ghouls; ghouls who win their domitor's favor are given a higher "ranking" than ghouls who don't bend as far for their masters, and many who perform well become (or *think* they become) probable Embrace candidates. Needless to say, ghouls commonly "rat" on one another in attempts to gain status.

Because many Ventrue ghouls negotiate important clan business deals, they maintain a great deal of contact with the mortal populace. Many servitors continue to hold the same jobs they had in mortal years, as their masters like to have allies who can serve as spies.

Only the most naive Ventrue ghouls dares to show allegiance to another vampire domitor, especially one of a rival clan. The Ventrue do not take kindly to sharing. Ghouls who are aware of this rule know to stick with their own kind, so a Ventrue ghouls is rarely seen conversing with another clan's ghouls, save at the business end of a 9mm.

Ventrue Domitors

Jaunty and controlling, the Ventrue prefer to surround themselves with ghouls who aren't afraid to do a little dirty work for their domitors. It is perhaps Clan Ventrue that has the most

respect for its workers...er...children...er...ghouls; the ghouls are the doers rather than the dreamers, and unlike other Kindred, they always follow their orders. Or else they get what's coming to them....

Generally speaking, though, the Ventrue clan gives a lot of credit to its ghouls; ghouls put up a very believable facade for the mortals, and the clan seeks beyond all other goals to maintain the Masquerade.

In addition to ghouling sycophantic worker-types, Ventrue often seek to ghouls mortals of political, legal or professional importance. The Ventrue are natural infiltrators, and many clan members gain control over mortal affairs through clever use of influential ghouls. Judges, minters, bankers, accountants, lawyers, mayors, newspaper publishers — these are the types of mortals many Ventrue wish to recruit as ghouls.

Particularly noteworthy is the Ventrue's predilection for creating ghouls in their rivals' organizations. These are often lower-echelon employees, as upper management is usually closely watched by the rival vampire and lower-level workers are the employees most likely to be disgruntled by the "crappy working conditions"

(often the result of the rival vampire's corporate piracy or what have you). It is laughably easy for the domitor-to-be to approach such a potential ghouls and, through a combination of Presence and promises, mold him into a walking virus to use against her rival.

Ventrue frequently ghouls their loved ones in order to protect the Masquerade and maintain open, "honest" relations with their relatives. Sometimes this leads to an almost paternal relationship between the domitor and his ghouled family members. However, familial ghouls who abuse their privileges or shirk their duties are often punished much more severely than nonfamilial ghouls (how dare your own flesh and blood betray you after all the strength and life you have given her?). On the flip side of the coin, preferential treatment of a domitor's family members often leads to vicious squabbles among ghouls. After all, it's not so far a step from "who gets the



Edmund

biggest slice of pie" to "who gets the most vitae" — and though blood may be thicker than water, it is hopelessly tepid compared to Ventrue vitae....

The Sabbat's Perspective

If the objects who serve us feel ecstasy, they are much more concerned with themselves than with us, and our own enjoyment is consequently impaired. The idea of seeing another person experience the same pleasure reduces one to a kind of equality which spoils the unutterable charms that come from despotism.

— Marquis de Sade, *120 Days of Sodom*

While the Sabbat hate mortals, they *love* to hate ghouls. Many Sabbat consider ghouls to be something of a joke, like a poodle wearing a pink dress and trying to walk upright; still, some Tzimisce and Lasombra would be bored if they didn't have the little action figures to bend and play with.

The Lasombra and Tzimisce have very different opinions of ghouls, while most *antitribu* superficially treat ghouls much as their Camarilla clan counterparts do. It should be noted, however, that *antitribu* rarely succumb to emotional bonding with their ghouls; that codependent bullshit is for mortals and wimpy Cam vampires only. Most *antitribu* think ghouls are **trash**, and refuse should be disposed of properly after use.

Being a Sabbat ghoul is like walking a razor-wire tightrope over a bottomless pit. All manner of draconian punishments await ghouls who step out of line: A ghoul who is disrespectful to a Sabbat, or who divulges sect secrets, faces such "disciplinary" ractics as drawing and quartering or death by fire. Sabbat domitors are also punished if their ghouls betray the Sabbat, so ghouls are subject to all manner of preventative abuses heaped on them by paranoid domitors. Then, too, some Tzimisce adopt the approach that betrayal is impossible if a ghoul is rendered too unsightly to interact with anyone, or if its tongue is reshaped into something more aesthetically pleasing than functional....

Lasombra Ghouls

Mortals unfortunate enough to be ghouled by a Lasombra vampire are in for serious abuse. The leaders of the Sabbat tolerate ghouls only because their fellow Sabbat members in Clan Tzimisce find them to be interesting diversions. Lasombra have no time or patience for interesting diversions, and so they make their ghouls work brutally hard for every drop of blood. Even so, few survive for long; the only diversion the Lasombra really enjoy is chess, and ghouls serve as disposable pawns.

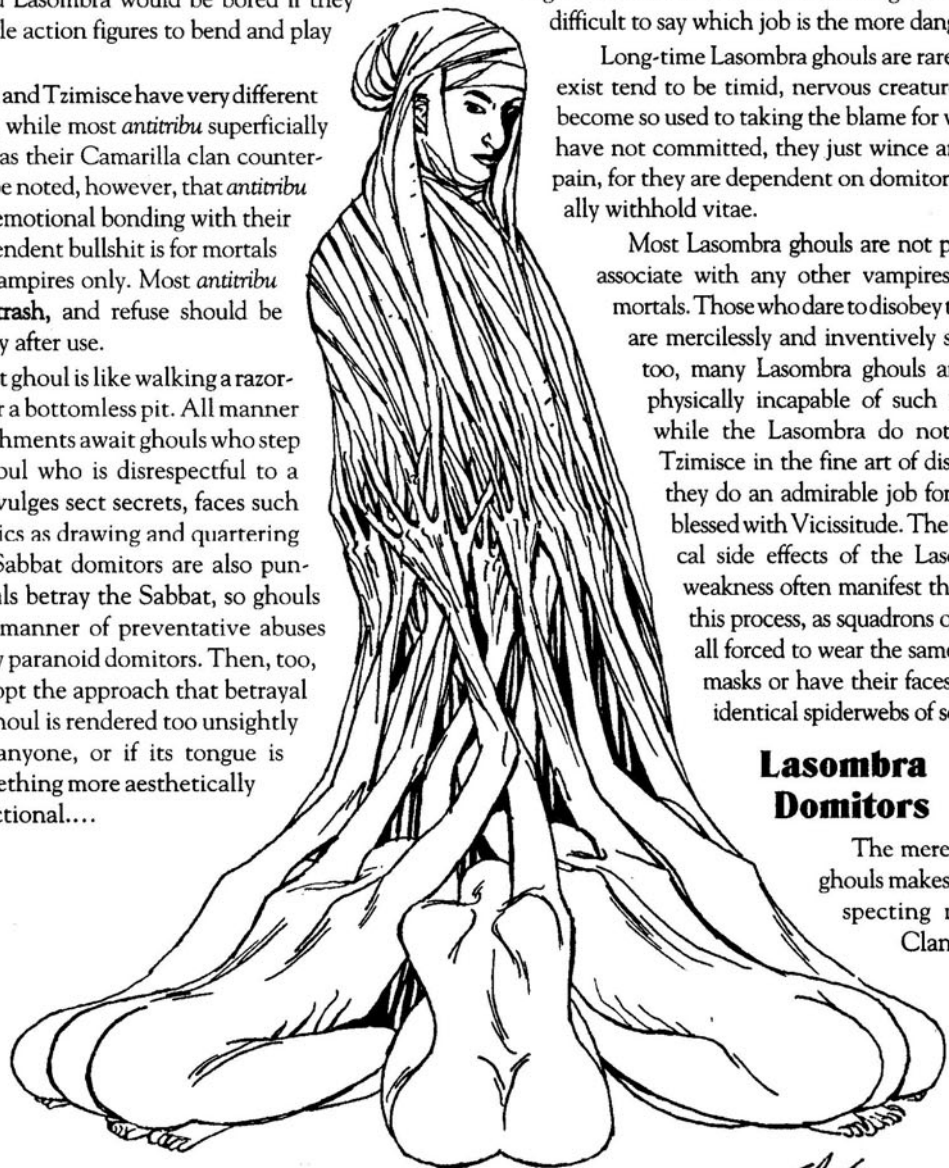
Few Lasombra ghouls are given a choice about whether to accept the domitor-to-be's "gift." A Lasombra will ghoul anyone or anything, so long as the creature has a skill or talent sufficiently useful to be worth the bother, yet sufficiently menial that the vampire would never consider the ghoul for Embrace. Squadrons of suicide shock troops and staffs of personal grooming assistants are most common among the Keepers; it is difficult to say which job is the more dangerous one.

Long-time Lasombra ghouls are rare. What few exist tend to be timid, nervous creatures. They've become so used to taking the blame for wrongs they have not committed, they just wince and bear the pain, for they are dependent on domitors who casually withhold vitae.

Most Lasombra ghouls are not permitted to associate with any other vampires, ghouls or mortals. Those who dare to disobey this stricture are mercilessly and inventively slain. Then, too, many Lasombra ghouls are rendered physically incapable of such interaction; while the Lasombra do not equal the Tzimisce in the fine art of disfigurement, they do an admirable job for beings not blessed with Vicissitude. The psychological side effects of the Lasombra clan weakness often manifest themselves in this process, as squadrons of ghouls are all forced to wear the same featureless masks or have their faces reduced to identical spiderwebs of scar tissue.

Lasombra Domitors

The mere thought of ghouls makes any self-respecting member of Clan Lasombra



winced with disdain. Ghouls are nothing more than abhorrent sub-Kindred who can't do much more than comb hair without having emotional breakdowns. Accordingly, Lasombra probably employ the fewest ghouls of any clan — Camarilla, independent, or Sabbat.

Though they cannot stand ghouls, the Lasombra also cannot stand the fact that they are unable to admire their own beautiful Caine-given features in the mirror. Some Lasombra employ ghouls as personal-hygiene assistants for this reason. But that hair must be brushed for at least 100 strokes, or 100 bruises will decorate the inattentive ghoul's body. And should the servant fail to apply the skin lotion properly, the outraged Lasombra may well apply a "moisturizer" of muriatic acid to the ghoul's skin....

Although some Lasombra are rumored to make ghouls of number-crunching mortals to help with clan finances, most clan members do not feel that they can trust ghouls with matters of such import. Besides, it's more fun to manipulate some glib Ventrue — or, better yet, a sniveling Ventrue ghoul — into doing one's books.

Tzimisce Ghouls

And you thought Lasombra ghouls had it rough.... Tzimisce ghouls often understand quite literally the meaning of the words "spinless toady." Mercifully, many of these ghouls don't realize how miserable they actually are, having been toyed with to such an extent that they aren't even conscious of their own existences. By far the most wretched Tzimisce ghouls are those whose brains and psyches are left intact.

About the only thing Tzimisce ghouls have going for them is **sheer power**. *Antitribu* who actually give a damn warn their servants to steer clear of the brutal Tzimisce ghouls. Mortals Blood Bound to the Fiends seldom use their power for self-advancement, though. Tzimisce ghouls live, eat, breathe, fight and kill for their domitors, and their domitors only.

For a clan so dependent on ghouls, Tzimisce are surprisingly indiscriminate in whom they choose to ghoul; on the other hand, Tzimisce reason that their choice of

subjects is little more consequential than the choice between red or blue Play-Doh. Ghouls are useful for war and menial tasks; anything requiring skill or intellect can be delegated to a power-hungry, sycophantic revenant.

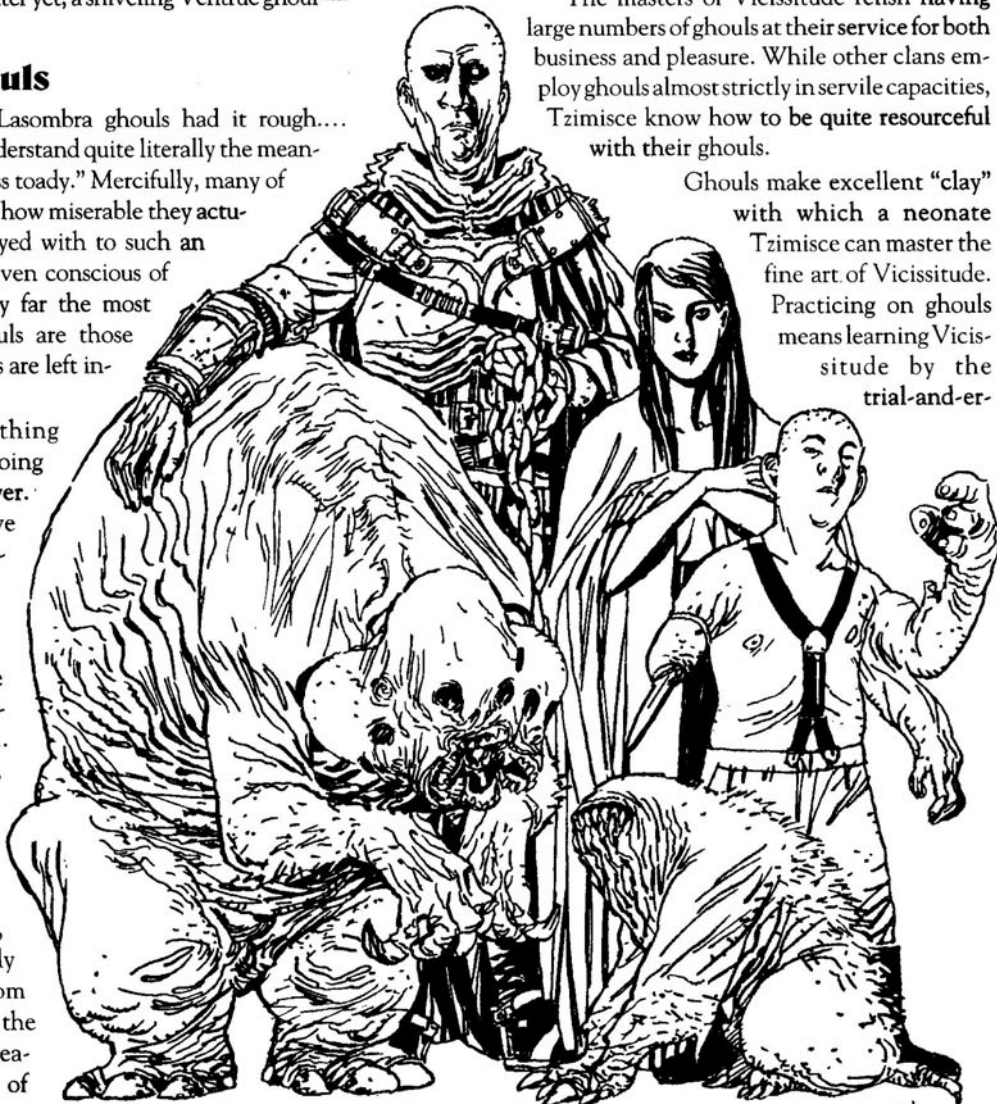
Those few ghouls left in an approximation of human shape live in constant fear — not only that the master will use them for spare parts, but also that a bored or hungry *szlachta* will attack them without any provocation while the master looks on and titters. Ironically enough, it is this very paranoia that often leads them to make that one self-defeating and painfully fatal mistake.

Tzimisce Domitors

Though not exactly respectful or tolerant of the sad little *krevni oddats* (blood addicts), the Tzimisce despise ghouls to a lesser degree than do Lasombra and other *antitribu*. After all, more than a few Tzimisce vampires were created from the revenant families' offspring.

The masters of Vicissitude relish having large numbers of ghouls at their service for both business and pleasure. While other clans employ ghouls almost strictly in servile capacities, Tzimisce know how to be quite resourceful with their ghouls.

Ghouls make excellent "clay" with which a neonate Tzimisce can master the fine art of Vicissitude. Practicing on ghouls means learning Vicissitude by the trial-and-er-



***Szlachta* (Guardian Ghouls)**

In addition to their use of “normal” ghouls and revenants, Tzimisce also employ ghouls known as *szlachta*. Combinations of scarecrows and combat machines, *szlachta* are bred and trained to serve as bodyguards, soldiers and sentries. Most guardian ghouls’ bodies are altered through Vicissitude, to strengthen their fighting skills and make them as fearsome as possible; *szlachta* often scare the fight out of their enemies with just the wink of a pus-filled eye. Many *szlachta* are protected by bone armor, and most are armed-and-dangerous war machines complete with such ingeniously bonecrafted features as Ginsu-sharp razors for teeth.

More on *szlachta* can be found in *Clanbook: Tzimisce*, p. 40; *The Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat*, pp. 80-81; and September ‘97’s *Libellus Sanguinus: Masters of the State, for Vampire: The Dark Ages*.

ror method. Mistakes can be killed and/or sucked dry of blood, which makes for a quick and zesty midnight snack; minor blunders can also be (quite literally) tossed onto the pile to be later used in the creation of a *vozhd* (war ghoul). In many Tzimisce manses, promising Vicissitude students display their creations in the forms of porous skin wallpaper, internal-organ tapestries, intestinal lamps and breathing, bone-constructed bric-a-brac. (The Fiends inhabit only the most aesthetically pleasing environments possible, as they usually spend eternity in one place.)

Of course, Tzimisce don’t restrict the use of Vicissitude on ghouls to neonate students of the Discipline. Judicious disfigurement ensures that ghouls cannot betray the clan to live normally among mortals. Tzimisce domitors also use the threat of further bodily modification as a deterrent, ensuring that ghouls behave properly and obey all commands without question. More than one ghoul has had her legs amputated after a mere utterance of the word “but.”

On occasion, a more sympathetic Tzimisce domitor will reshape a Vicissitude-worked ghoul body part if his servitor performs every duty perfectly for a set period of time, maybe 10 years or so. Such mercy is rare, though; some Tzimisce don’t even think they themselves are perfect. And ghouls had best not even dream of getting Embraced — not unless they are descendants of one of the revenant families.

Clan Tzimisce’s Revenant Connections

Blood alone moves the wheels of history.

— Benito Mussolini

Not quite kine, not quite ghouls, and most definitely not vampires, revenants are a rare breed in this age. Originally created by the Tzimisce, revenant families have historically served as guards, spies and sources of childer for the Fiends. These nights, they are little more relevant than dodoes — and would be just as extinct were the Tzimisce not so heritage-conscious.

Revenants differ from ghouls in a few ways; first of all, and perhaps most importantly, revenants do not need a steady diet of Kindred vitae to maintain their powers, as revenants manufacture their own internal supplies of vampirelike blood. Revenants also practice hereditary vampiric Disciplines. And these Disciplines are indeed “hereditary”: Revenants can reproduce, although it takes about three years to carry a revenant child to full term, and the



Vozhd (Tzimisce War Ghouls)

Leave it to the Fiends — if an exquisite ghoule is to be created, it will be created by the Tzimisce. One particularly monstrous Tzimisce creation is known as the *vozhd* (war ghoule).

Each *vozhd* is composed of approximately 15 to 20 individual ghoules (humans, animals, or combinations) soldered together through Vicissitude into one colossal, terrifying monstrosity. *Vozhd* are created in a variety of sizes to fit their domitors' needs; the largest *vozhd* on record measured approximately the size of a tyrannosaurus rex.

In centuries past, Clan Tzimisce used the beasts to attack rival vampires and mortals. *Vozhd* are notoriously intractable, however, and the rituals used to "ensure" control are unreliable; the creatures are more trouble than they're worth, and dangerous to boot. Few have been created since the 17th century.

Some younger Tzimisce have been exploring new ways to create *vozhd*, ones that would make the creatures easier to control; however, fledgling attempts to implant computer microchips into lobotomized ghoules before melding them together have caused more chaos than good. Then, too, the Sabbat tells horror stories of one Briareus, a *vozhd* that retained its sentience and learned vampiric Disciplines from the Fiends it devoured. Supposedly, this Briareus stalks the world's wastelands, cloaked by Obfuscate and consumed with hate for the vampires who gave it its present hideous form.

offspring often display numerous deformities and birth defects from centuries of inbreeding. (See Chapter One for more information on ghoule childbirth.)

Though revenants do not need Kindred blood to sustain their powers, they do need it if they desire eternal life. While their own blood contains trace amounts of Kindred vitae, it does not have enough to sustain the revenants' systems agelessly. But revenants do have greatly extended life spans; many live for centuries.

Originally, there were many different revenant families; most of those families are now extinct. Witch-hunters, non-Tzimisce Sabbat, independent clans and Camarilla Kindred wiped out the majority of the revenant population long ago. The four remaining families — the Grimaldis, the Zantos, the Obertuses and the Bratovitches — are closely guarded by paternalistic Tzimisce. The Tzimisce feel that the families are integral parts of the clan's culture and reminders of the clan's origins, and the Tzimisce are very proud of their heritage.

Unbeknownst even to Clan Tzimisce, certain revenant families, namely the Bratovitches and Zantos, have formed rapidly growing cultist societies among the human underground. Revenants barter with mortals and other ghoules, and administer their blood in exchange for sexual favors, drugs and protection.

For more information on the revenant families, see the Character Chapter, pp. 76-81.

The Domitors and Ghoules of the Independent Clans

That special someone. The jack of diamonds. The king of hearts. The grave digger. He who possesses an elixir not unlike that of a paregoric or a soothsayer. One night he came over. He was beautiful. He was a mess. He stepped out the gutter and into my arms....

— Lydia Lunch, *The Right Side of My Brain*

If the Camarilla — or, for that matter, the Sabbat — knew how frequently the independent clans use ghoules, they would undoubtedly grow alarmed. The relatively specialized vampires of the independent clans rely on extensive networks of ghoules to administer their herds and holdings — and these, particularly for the Assamites, Setites and Giovanni, are considerable.

Assamite Ghoules

Ghoules inducted into this clan don't suffer nearly so much as their counterparts in rival clans — at least they don't think so. Brainwashed into believing their work is of paramount importance, many Assamite ghoules fanatically serve the clan in any way possible. After all, they figure, they're going to be Embraced after seven years, right? (Not always.)

Surprisingly enough, many Assamite ghoules are employed in "civilian" capacities, as spies and religious recruiters. Though Assamites, as a rule, lack their rivals' more direct powers of mind control, over the millennia they have woven an intricate tapestry of influence in their home regions. Wealthy Bombay gem merchants, imams, ambassadors, urchins, and ordinary families: All have their purpose, all have their place. Seldom are these ghoules ever bestowed the Embrace. The Assamites need for them simply to continue with their mundane services, and the ghoules do so with alacrity. Camarilla and Sabbat, stereotypically viewing the Assamites as a homogenous mob of scimitar-and-Uzi-wielding murderers, often overlook the humble rug dealer or glamorous film star. This proves their undoing when the Assassins themselves, alerted to their enemies' havens, come calling at midnight....

Mortals chosen as potential Assamites have a finite "life span." Selected primarily for combat expertise, they are rigorously trained for seven years. They become ghoules in the process and learn how to tap the power of the Blood. At the end of the training process, all such ghoules must undergo a test of merit. If they pass, they are turned into vampires; if they fail, they are turned into dinner.

As recruiters and spies, many Assamite ghoules continue to maintain relations with mortals, though elder ghoules often demonstrate distressingly reactionary attitudes toward Westerners and "upstart" women. Even among the already Blood Bound ghoules, women and those of neither Hindu nor Muslim lineage can be treated with thinly veiled disdain.

Recently, it seems, some sort of internal upheaval or purge has gripped the clan. Though no stories come back from Alamut, Assamite recruitment activity seems to have increased in the past few years. How this affects the ghouls remains to be seen.

Assamite Domitors

Before being Embraced into the clan, all Assamites go through rigorous seven-year "training periods" as ghouls, performing numerous chores for the clan while they learn the fine art of assassination. Because of this enforced period of ghouldom, the Assamites — as former ghouls themselves — are more empathetic to their ghouls than are many other clan masters.

Now, empathetic certainly does not mean lenient. To the contrary, serving as a ghouls for the Assassins is strikingly akin to going through basic training in the Marine Corps...for seven years. And after those seven faithful years, there is no guarantee that ghouls will be granted the gift of immortality. Assamites who rule over dutiful ghouls sometimes get a bit possessive and insecure — why should one Embrace a ghouls and lose a devoted assistant?

When seeking ghouls, clan members tend to select Semitic males, although recently more females and men from areas other than the Middle East have been chosen as potential Assassins. Assamites demand honor, honesty and pride from all their ghouls, and in return the ghouls have a chance to live forever among a superior clan.

Setite Ghouls

The Followers' ghouls come from a variety of sources. Usefulness is the only criterion, and even this can be waived if the domitor-to-be is in a particularly good (or bad) mood. Setites use ghouls extensively, for business, pleasure or (most commonly) both.

Surprisingly, Setite ghouls are often people considered morally upstanding or innocent in life. The clan's work requires numerous mortal ties, and while drug dealers and the like have their uses, it is far less obtrusive to work through politicians, priests and social workers. Then, too, it is so easy to

lure in the kinks by presenting an angelic child, ripe for violation, then watching the perverts' horror as the "victim" stuns them with a hypnotizing stare and lunges at them with superhuman strength....

Of course, Setites need more traditional followers as well. Like Nosferatu, they recruit in lower-income areas, preying on individuals with little to lose. Indeed, some enterprising Setites market their devil's elixir so seductively that mortals actually perform favors merely for the privilege of obtaining "the juice." Naturally, Setites refrain from mentioning the side effect of the Blood Bond until it's too late.

Like Assamite ghouls, Setite ghouls are often manipulated into thinking that their work is of utmost religious significance. Most Setite ghouls band together in underground cults. Setite ghouls are administered bizarre ritualistic tinctures as well as blood when Bound to the clan. Then they are told to *Recruit! Recruit! Recruit!*

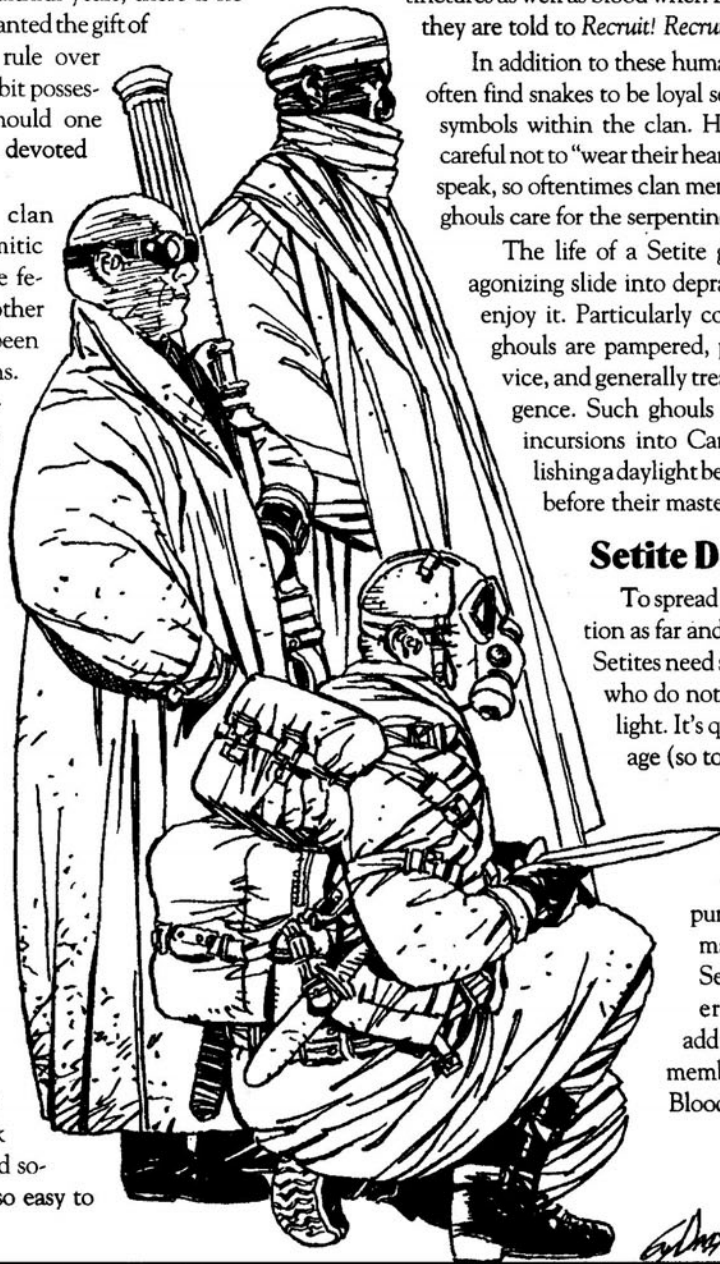
In addition to these human ghouls, the Followers often find snakes to be loyal servitors, as well as status symbols within the clan. However, the Setites are careful not to "wear their hearts on their sleeves," so to speak, so oftentimes clan members have their human ghouls care for the serpentine ghouls.

The life of a Setite ghouls is an ecstatically agonizing slide into depravity, but most learn to enjoy it. Particularly competent, centuries-old ghouls are pampered, permitted to wallow in vice, and generally treated with amused indulgence. Such ghouls often spearhead Setite incursions into Camarilla territory, establishing a daylight beachhead among mortals before their masters close in for the kill.

Setite Domitors

To spread their message of corruption as far and as wide as possible, the Setites need some help from mortals, who do not live in constant fear of light. It's quite simple for the average (so to speak — the Followers

are all far from average beings) Setite to find qualified candidates for ghoulings; both pure and wicked mortals make faithful, obedient Setite ghouls. The Followers' blood is a highly addictive nectar, and clan members are masters of the Blood Bond, especially vam-



pires who possess the Addictive Blood Merit (See *Clanbook: Setites*, p. 39).

For most vampires, the ghouling process is simple routine; for Setites, it is art. Some Setites gleefully spend years setting up the degradation of a particularly uptight or righteous slave-to-be — perhaps even secretly guiding him to the heights of financial and romantic success, then stripping it all away in one fell swoop. The Setites are well aware of the story of Job. Then, too, there are few more effective ways of demoralizing a slave than making him aware that all his previous worldly success was given to him at a Setite's whim.

Setite ghouling practices are perverse, as befits the clan. Clan members gain status for recruiting new ghouls into the clan's coils, particularly ghouls who were considered prudes among the human populace. Such ghouls rarely remain prudish for long, as Setites abuse the Blood Bond at whim and out of sheer perversity. Forcing one's ghouls to commit degrading acts and violate loved ones is not only fun, but respected among the Followers of Set. Ghouls also make ideal "test subjects" for new forms of pleasure; a ghouls' superhuman vitality enables him to withstand chemical or erotic titillation that would kill a normal mortal.

Giovanni Ghouls

If you can't keep it in your veins, keep it in the family. That's what the Giovanni say. The family unit is the best recruiting ground for new Giovanni ghouls.

Many Giovanni disregard or are unaware of the trouble this causes in ghouls circles, however. It's not uncommon for a child to murder her own mother if the competition for the Embrace is keen enough.

From birth, many Giovanni are steeped in the politics of the supernatural, hungering for the endless life of their Kindred relatives. Accordingly, Necromancer ghouls constantly fight battles of one-upmanship in often-futile attempts to be Embraced. This competition pleases the vampires: Drop a mere hint of the possibility of the Embrace, and the youngsters'll do all the shit work one could ever want.

More than one ghouls has sought out and killed innocent victims merely to guarantee the domitor a steady supply of blood or bodies. Others get involved in petty (and not so petty) crimes in order to bring in the most money or information to their masters. Some of these unfortunate ghouls are caught, however, so they either perish bloodless in prison or are forced to strangle the cops and informants to death.

Although Giovanni ghouls are mostly family members, sometimes a Necromancer Blood Bonds other people to advance the clan's interests — medical students, morticians, priests, nuns, financial wizards, spiritualist psychics, coroners and stockbrokers all prove extraordinarily useful to the Giovanni.

Giovanni Domitors

The Necromancers love their ghouls. And they love plenty of them, too. The Giovanni want power above anything else, and how better to achieve that power than by using pawns? It becomes even easier for a vampire to attain high status when the vast majority of his ghouls are members of his own



mortal family; with throngs of subservient *schiavos* (slaves) indebted by blood and family ties, it's not a difficult chore to act superior.

Approximately 60% of the clan's ghouls are members of the Giovanni family itself — while an astounding 100% of Giovanni are former ghouls. Uncles, grandchildren, second cousins, brothers, sisters, mothers — all have a shot at being Embraced later if they perform adequately as ghouls. It's not easy for them, of course; it's never easy for a father, stubborn and domineering in life, to take orders from his own Embraced son. But even if these ghouls are family, they must learn to be obedient, especially if they'd like to be candidates for Embrace. And perhaps it is more difficult to serve a loved one than just "any old vampire." Family pressure often rises to above the boiling point when money and power are involved. The Giovanni are familiar with the old proverb, *It's better to swallow both.* And nobody should respect you more than your own flesh and blood, right?

It is wise for Giovanni ghouls to remember one rule: *Respect above all else.* If a ghouls should forget this adage, her domitor is capable of reminding her with a few broken bones or amputated appendages.



Ravnos Ghouls

Ravnos ghouls don't really have it all that bad, but they are often insecure, knowing full well that if their capricious domitors piss off the wrong monster or get annoyed at some minor misstep, the *putshiv's* over. Ravnos vampires make sure not to get too attached to their hired help, and getting rid of extra baggage is considered to be good housekeeping. Besides, Ravnos who need to replace dead ghouls have no trouble stealing them from other clans. Other than that, ghouldom is mostly merry and simple for the Ravnos' servants — just do your work, divert angry enemies away from your domitor's fleeing butt, and line up to get your red soup.

Rom, particularly members of the mortal Ravnos family, are the most commonly created ghouls. Such ghouls are generally mistrusted by their mortal kin, but grudgingly allowed to participate in the rituals of the *kumpania*. Gypsy ghouls prove especially useful, for they often know tricks of their own in addition to the powers of the Blood. Such servants make a Ravnos' daylight hours far more secure.

Georgio also create ghouls, but few of these are Embraced. Their masters merrily con them into believing it'll happen "one

night" — and might even believe it themselves from time to time — but as a rule, *georgio* ghouls either die from their domitors' negligence or act as second bananas until their domitors find them unnecessary.

Because the clan possesses the Animalism Discipline, it is common for Ravnos to create animal ghouls, such as mules, camels, horses and dogs. Not only can animal ghouls facilitate travel — as is the case with horses — but they can often perform tricks for mortals and vampires, diverting attention from their conniving domitors who are looting the local boutiques, banks and back pockets.

Ravnos ghouls have minimal contact with other clans' ghouls, but maintain ties with mortals of quality and character (i.e., wealthy people with jewels or other valuables). Many ghouls also engage in a little daytime thievery for their masters.

Ravnos Domitors

Ravnos do not have many uses for ghouls. (What a drag to have the annoying little things around cramping one's lifestyle.) Sometimes ghouls make good patsies, though, and they're gullible as can be.

While the freedom-loving Ravnos do not like to have "babies" around to tie them down, it is common practice for Ravnos to ghoule members of their own mortal families. Ravnos never forget their roots, and many share the gift of eternal life with their loved ones, in hopes of eventually Embracing them into the clan.

Ravnos do not hate or systematically mistreat ghouls, especially those who were previously members of their mortal families. When a ghoule is Bound to a Ravnos, though, he'd better watch his step; if he makes a mistake or otherwise displeases, he may find himself the butt of a killing joke. The Ravnos just love a good laugh....

The Clanless and Their Ghouls

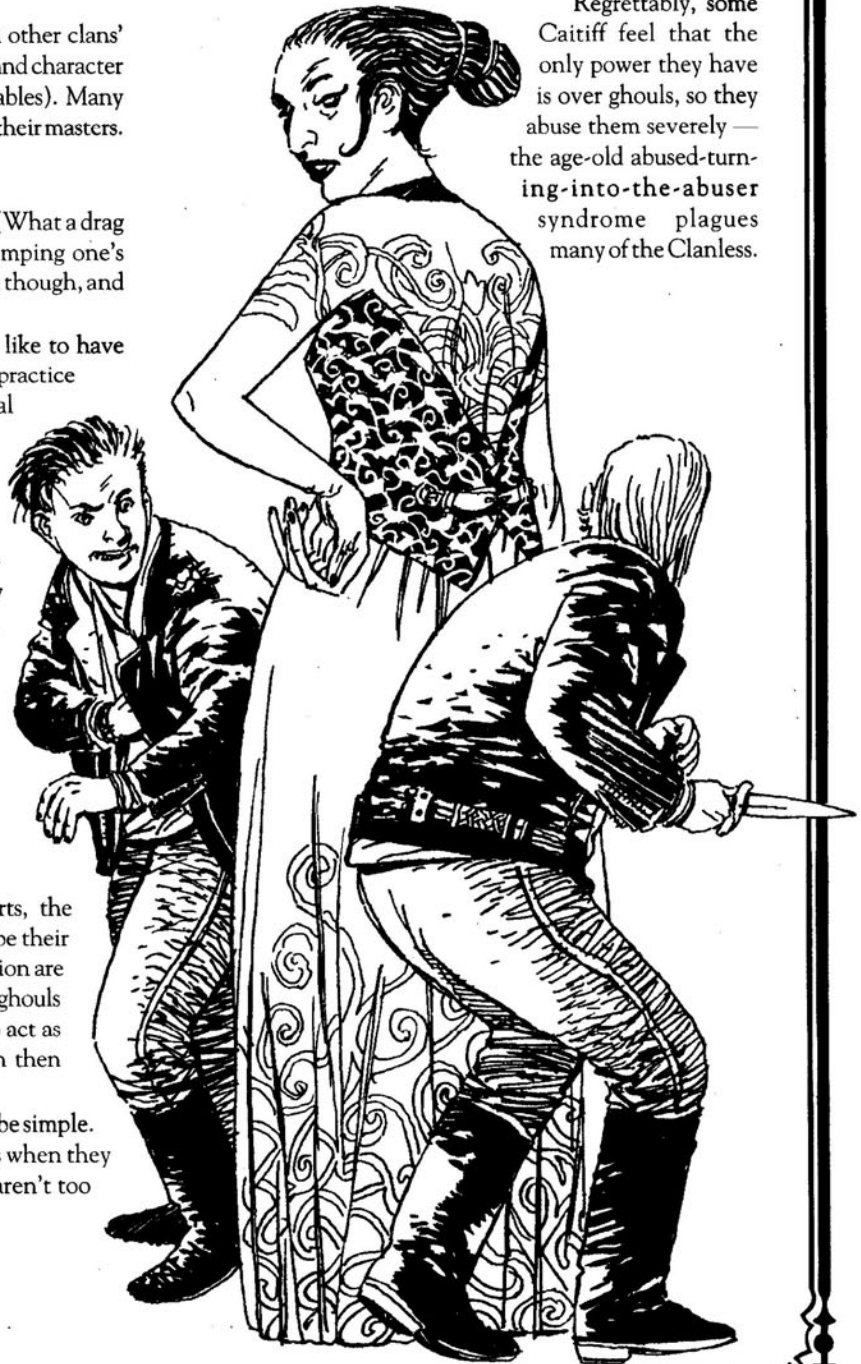
The Caitiff and their Sabbat counterparts, the Panders, often have trouble coaxing mortals to be their ghouls — and when they do, the ghouls in question are in for a bumpy ride. Caitiff and Panders employ ghouls to spy on Camarilla and Sabbat Kindred and to act as lures to Caitiff havens, where the outcasts can then attempt to diablerize their Kindred foes.

Some Caitiff and Panders find ghouling to be simple. Many don't even know they're creating ghouls when they feed their blood to others. And the Clanless aren't too

particular about whom they choose as recipients of their mongrel blood. Anybody is good enough to be a friend, and a friend in need (of blood) is a friend indeed.

Caitiff and Pander ghouls may have more difficult obstacles to overcome when working for their domitors, but in general the Clanless empathize with their ghouls; accordingly, ghouls are treated with much more respect by Panders or Caitiff than by, say, the Lasombra. This can, of course, be taken to extremes: Ghouls are sometimes deluded by Caitiff domitors into roles as worshippers in elite blood cults.

Regrettably, some Caitiff feel that the only power they have is over ghouls, so they abuse them severely — the age-old abused-turning-into-the-abuser syndrome plagues many of the Clanless.



Caitiff domitors may abandon their ghouls or refuse to Embrace them even after years of continued service. Some even drain their ghouls completely during the long dry seasons between feedings.

The Age of Reason or the Age of Innocence?

Just as a human being's grandparents treat their grandson differently than his parents treat him, ghouls tend to be viewed differently by domitors of different ages and generations. Age has a bearing on how a vampire sees the world around her, and on how she treats those who serve her.

• **Methuselahs** — In order to sustain their immortality, many Methuselahs retreat from vampiric society and keep their noses out of the Jyhad, much like members of the Inconnu do. But sometimes a guy's got to eat, so Methuselahs often retain a few ancient ghouls who can procure tasty mortal and Kindred treats for their masters.

Many Methuselahs, after multiple centuries of unlife, have little desire or need to discipline their ghouls. At this point, having performed the same rituals since the rule of Charlemagne, the ghouls know exactly what the master wants and when he wants it. Indeed, Methuselahs often become somewhat emotionally attached to their ghouls, welcoming ghouls into their unlives in order to feel a bit of warmth in their later years. It greatly saddens a Methuselah ghoul when her domitor asks her to kill him; it happens, though, because some Methuselahs can no longer bear immortality after they reach a certain age.

A few suicidal Methuselahs Embrace their ghouls, then have them commit mercy killings. After the Methuselah's Final Death, the newly Embraced vampire then takes over his former master's role.

• **Methuselah Ghouls** — Older and more powerful than many vampires, these centuries-old ghouls have survived the turbulence of the ages. Many of these ghouls, having served multiple domitors during their existences, know more about Kindred society than most Kindred do. Ghouls "in the know" view Methuselah ghouls with as much awe as vampires display toward their clans' Antediluvians — yet they are equally afraid of these enigmatic creatures, who are rumored to stalk Kindred and lesser ghouls.

Kindred also fear these cunning, survivalist ghouls. Methuselah ghouls' vast knowledge, ability to move in daylight and skill at masquerading as mortals make them nightmarish foes.

Despite their often chilly facades, Methuselah ghouls are among the most emotionally erratic ghouls around. Their outlooks are more alien than many Kindred of tender years. Their awareness of philosophy and the "ghoul" con-

dition comes from ancient tomes and their domitors' lips. It is common for them to abuse "lowly" ghouls without feeling an ounce of remorse or pity — after all, this is how they've been treated forever.

Nonetheless, ghouls of this age are lucky, relatively speaking. By this age, the master has had countless opportunities to kill them and has decided against it, so many Methuselah ghouls are treated with leniency and allowed to do as they please so long as they carry out their duties. After all, at this point, servitude is so ingrained that the thought of freedom is quite alien to them.

• **Elders** — Elders can make the most sadistic or the most lenient domitors, depending on personal experiences and clan affiliations. Toughened and jaded by centuries of unlife, most elders couldn't give a human's backside about their ghouls. Ghouls were made to be servants, and servants should not attempt to rise above their stations. Some elders, though, have kept the same ghouls for centuries. Such "heirloom" ghouls are usually given preferential treatment, serving their domitors as chambermaids and personal servants. (For more information on elders, see *Elysium: The Elder War*.)

• **Elder Ghouls** — To sum it up in one word, elder ghouls are "extreme": extremely submissive, extremely conservative, extremely codependent and extremely unfortunate. Elder vampires rarely Embrace their loyal ghouls, and elder ghouls came to terms with this fact long ago. Most are content to be blood addicts forever, destined to an immortality serving a tyrannical vampire. Of course, these ghouls typically have little choice in the matter, as they've passed the point at which they can survive without vitae.

Strangely enough, many elder ghouls treat their domitors' childer like their own flesh and blood, acting like hideously indebted nannies. Most elder ghouls don't have much contact with humans, and caring for their domitors' childer is one of the few things that keeps them in touch with their neglected human sides.

• **Inconnu** — Most Inconnu are fourth- and fifth-generation vampires who want nothing to do with "lesser" Kindred. As Inconnu believe they can escape the Jyhad by hiding away from the world, they don't tend to create many ghouls. Still, Inconnu Monitors must occasionally meddle in the affairs of their inferiors, so, like Methuselahs, they use powerful ghouls as *agents provocateurs*.

Inconnu ghoul humans who, though competent, are deemed unlikely to maintain emotional ties with mortals or vampires. All Inconnu ghouls are immediately Blood Bound, and Inconnu prefer to ghoul mute humans who cannot leak a word of the sect's secrets.

• **Inconnu Ghouls** — Inconnu ghouls are feared by vampires and fellow ghouls alike. This is partly because of the mystery that surrounds their hermitlike domitors, and partly because they are not swayed by human emotion like

most other ghouls. Of course, mute ghouls (approximately 70% of Inconnu ghouls) can't express their dissatisfaction or angst even if they want to.

These Blood Bound recluses exist solely to serve their vampire masters, and their masters treat them well, for the ghouls conduct all of the domitors' "business," which consists mainly of hunting for Golconda lore and fresh blood. Inconnu ghouls often leave their masters' sides for extended periods, traveling on one errand or another, and this lack of supervision makes them quite dangerous. The heady status of being a "noble" Inconnu ghoul, combined with the power inherent to serving a fifth-generation Cainite, often results in a cold-hearted, snobbish killing machine. Vampires and ghouls who know anything about Inconnu ghouls know to keep the hell away...or die. Mortals, unfortunately, die anyway, due to their ignorance.

- **Ancillae** — Ancilla vampires can be the cruelest vampires of the lot. After all, they're at that awkward age — Embraced before World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam and the Equal Rights Movement. Furthermore, their reactionary attitudes are stoked by the frustration of not being powerful enough to throw their weight around as they please. This disappointment often vents itself on an unsuspecting ghoul.

In ancillae's eyes, ghouls are useful couriers, servants, pawns, cannon fodder, and bits of glue to cement a power structure; certainly eternal life and the power of the Blood are enough for such creatures. Ghouls should be seen and not heard, except when offering flattery.

On the other hand, wiser ancillae realize that a few loyal ghouls can make the difference between a weak power base and one strong enough to challenge the lesser elders. These ancillae often form cadres of organized, fanatical ghouls, deploying them expertly against lesser and greater Kindred alike.

- **Ancilla Ghouls** — The main difference between elder ghouls and ancilla ghouls is that elder ghouls are resigned to serving their domitors; ancilla ghouls do the same dirty work for their masters, but are more resentful and prone to rebellion when mistreated, which is quite often. While ancilla vampires are generally too powerful to worry about an open rebellion, they must keep their ghouls close at hand, lest their ghouls form secret cliques with other disaffected servitors. Of course, not all ancilla ghouls know how to express their anger through the usual human channels; many kiss undead ass until they're Embraced, then turn completely on the vampires who Embraced them.

- **Neonates** — Depending on the circumstances, neonate ghouls might consider themselves lucky or unlucky; domitor behavior among this bunch can be quite unpredictable. Many neonates are still learning to master their vampiric Disciplines, and ghouls often become the most convenient practice tools for students of such Disciplines as Dominate, Vicissitude, Potence and Thaumaturgy. Though many ghouls



suffer harsh treatment at the hands of the neonates, a lot of these servitors were seduced into servitude by these suave and still humanlike young Kindred, and so “puppy love” is still common among this set. Neonates love the power they wield over their ghouls, and the ghouls generally love serving their domitors, as it gives their lives purpose and meaning.

- **Neonate Ghouls** — Neonate ghouls must constantly contend with their angst-filled, recently Embraced domitors’ troubles. Many don’t mind, however; the Blood Bond is still a novelty, and so these ghouls tend to be hopelessly devoted to their hip young domitors. Still, ghouls who serve neonates have to learn (often the hard way) how to be versatile; those who can’t cope with their masters’ fickleness and emotional tribulations don’t tend to last long. Then, too, many neonate ghouls serve as guinea pigs for their domitors’ “Discipline experiments”; such physical and mental violation often drives vassals into shrieking frenzies.

Neonate ghouls are more technologically savvy than other ghouls, giving their masters an unexpected edge in Kindred machinations. Neonate ghouls also tend to be better at interaction with mortals, as they still retain a good deal of their natural human empathy. This usefulness, however, can be a double-edged sword; older ghouls often become jealous of their younger brethren, doing everything they can to frame or ruin them.

Ghouls’ Roles in the World of Darkness

While ghouls differ according to clan affiliation and age, they also take on specific societal roles in the World of Darkness. Ghoul vassals, independents and revenants all serve different functions in their collective society. Some more common functions are described below.

Vassals

These ghouls are the most loyal to their domitors, for most of them are Blood Bound. Vassals readily perform any and all tasks for their domitors, even if they must humiliate or hurt themselves in the process.

- **Bodyguards** — The strongest, ugliest vassals are chosen to be bodyguards for their vampiric masters, guarding their domitors at all times and acting as bouncers and door staff at havens. Most of these ghouls are happy performing their duties; their domitors usually feed them more blood than other ghouls, in order for them to maintain high levels of physical prowess.

- **Specialists** — Brainier vassals with special talents and skills are used as specialists. Vampires rely heavily on such ghouls to conduct business practices with which they are unfamiliar, such as accounting, computer hacking, mortal investigation, stock trading and drawing up (often bogus) contracts. Sometimes these duties include killing off a few nosy mortals or rival ghouls, but the specialists aren’t too concerned as long as they get their vitae.

- **Paramours** — Paramours consider themselves the luckiest ghouls of all; after all, they reason, they don’t have to fight or otherwise endanger themselves for their masters.

How wrong they are.

Paramours are chosen purely for their companionship. On good nights, they are showered with affection and dosed up with enough scrumptious vitae for a whole cadre of ghouls. On bad nights, however, paramours are beaten nearly to death, mentally raped, and casually drained of blood — and they are expected to smile through the intolerable abuse, because, of course, they are their domitors’ best buddies, and that means constantly reaffirming their loyalty to their masters.

A different sort of paramour is the lure. Lures are ghouls chosen for physical attractiveness and charm; these vassals are sent out to cruise the Rack, picking up likely victims and bringing them back to their domitors’ havens.

Independents

The polar opposites of their vassal counterparts, independent ghouls are exactly what their moniker implies: independent. Independent ghouls roam the streets, working “freelance” for various vampires or finding their own blood through unsavory methods.

- **Stalkers** — Fed up with vampiric rules, and far from submissive, these ghouls hunt Kindred to attain their own stocks of blood. Successful stalkers also act as blood dealers, selling or trading Kindred blood to other ghouls in exchange for money and favors. Such a lifestyle is exceedingly difficult to maintain; few stalkers survive more than a year or two, but those who do are among the toughest mortals around.

- **Brokers** — Brokers serve as freelance contractors for many vampires, but are careful never to become bound to any particular domitor. Vampires typically use brokers when they and their servants are under foes’ scrutiny and cannot act directly. They carry out orders and do lots of behind-the-scenes dirty work in exchange for vampiric vitae.

Smart businesspeople, brokers typically become stronger and more well-rounded than other ghouls; after ingestion of many different clans’ vitae, they can inherit more Discipline knowledge than other ghouls can.

A particularly repulsive type of broker is the slaver. Slavers conduct a thriving underground trade in human flesh, abducting mortals and selling them to vampires. A few slavers (those with enough influence in mortal society to cover up missing-persons cases and provide victims "to order") have become extremely wealthy and powerful.

• **Cultists** — The World of Darkness fosters many strange practices, and so a number of fringe religious cults based on blood worship exist in the societal underground. Ghoul cultists worship Kindred for their blood, yet are lucky enough not to be Bound to any particular vampire. Such cults often maintain a symbiosis with their "gods," taking "sacrament" in exchange for favors.

Vampires treat the cults as they would shrubbery: occasionally nurturing them, but pruning them to the roots when necessary (for example, when the cultists' peripheral activities threaten to violate the Masquerade).

• **Pedants** — Few and far between, ghoul pedants are occasionally hired by Camarilla vampires as "obedience instructors" to train more defiant, troublesome ghouls. Fewer than a dozen such ghouls exist in the United States; most are former servants of the Inconnu who were allowed to leave. They are prized by Camarilla vampires, for they show no mercy toward their ghoul pupils.

Revenants

Loyal to the Sabbat, yet not serving any particular vampire, revenants are not so useful as they were in less civilized times. Still, many serve Clan Tzimisce as spies, and revenant families are spawning grounds for potential neonate Tzimisce. A growing number of revenants are becoming much like their cultist ghoul counterparts, worshipping nomadic packs and fleshcrafted Tzimisce "icons."

Stupid Ghoul Tricks, Or, Games Vampires Play

*The dark horse will bring glory to the jailer and his men.
It's always much more sporting when there's families in
the pit and the madness of the crowd is an epileptic fit.
In the colosseum tonight.*

— Tom Waits, "In the Colosseum"

Aside from serving vampires in a multitude of capacities, ghouls appeal to more playful vampires as well. One must treat oneself to a little recreation now and then, and it's no longer a challenge to be evil when everyone is already afraid of you. To combat apathy, Kindred have, over the centuries, used ghouls as gamepieces in the deadliest of contests.

The games test a ghoul's willpower and strength the old-fashioned Darwinian way: *Survival of the fittest*. Ghouls who perform consistently well are usually rewarded with higher status, extra doses of Kindred blood, decreased duties, and a better chance of being picked for the Embrace. Conversely, ghouls who fail to perform up to par during the heated competitions risk Derangements, abandonment, brutalization, increased duties, and even execution by other ghouls or shamed domitors.

• **The Main Event** — One of the most popular games is a variant of cockfighting, known in vampiric circles as "The Main Event." Generally speaking, such bloodsports are limited to Nosferatu, Brujah and independent clans, though the occasional Toreador-serving fencer or *szlachta* pit fighter participates.

Main Event tournaments can involve weapons or bare hands, but they are generally lethal; the vampiric spectators find the bloodshed erotic. Nosferatu often enter masked ghouls reminiscent of *lucha libre* fighters, while more brutal clans prefer their ghouls to fight with spiked cesti or other weapons. In any event, gladiators' Potence and healing capabilities make for lengthy, interesting fights.

A few enterprising vampires have even entered their fighters in pro wrestling circuits or Ultimate Fighting Championships, though various unfortunate accidents usually curtail the careers of such rising stars.

• **Pin the Tail on the Lackey** — Only Tzimisce domitors commonly participate in this Sabbat mainstay, for it tests a vampire's skill with Vicissitude. Generally speaking, this game is played by younger, "adolescent" Fiends; Tzimisce elders find the competition somewhat undignified. Still, Panders, Brujah and Nosferatu *antitribu* love to watch, and so the *ad hoc* contests will likely continue for nights to come.

Prior to the actual competition, each Tzimisce master selects five newly ghoulled humans, then proceeds to alter them in a fast-paced body-reconstruction showdown. The domitor is given 15 minutes to make each member of his ghoul quintet look as inhuman as possible, using only his mastery and knowledge of various Vicissitude techniques. The winning Fiend is determined by a panel of Tzimisce judges as the vampire unveils her new Vicissitude-worked "animal" creations.

• **The Frenetic Frenzy** — In this event, ghouls compete with each other to resist frenzy for as long as possible while faced with horrifying situations. There are different categories in this event, each relating to a different ghoul weakness.

Past categories have included the following: pumping up the ghoul with 10 times as much vitae as he is given normally; forcing the ghoul to watch the torturous exsanguination of a mortal child; strapping the ghoul to an



operating table and forcing an IV into his veins, slowly but steadily draining blood from his system; and force-feeding the ghoulish bits of flesh from his mortal loved ones' bodies.

Winners of this event — those ghouls who resist frenzy for the longest amount of time, or those who resist it completely — are deemed more powerful than their fellows, and they are often marked for possible Embrace.

• **Sex Tableaux** — This game is a particular favorite among Toreador domitors, but elders from most Camarilla clans have been known to force their ghouls' participation in this humiliating spectacle. It's simple — whether or not it's feeding time, a defiant ghoulish is forced to overdose on vitae, then directed to a "stage" with several other pumped-up ghouls. It usually takes only minutes for the ghouls to frenzy, libidiously clawing at each other and sampling each other's blood. The domitors sit at the sidelines, cackling like hyenas, as their ghouls go about the pornographic yet interesting process of satisfying their base biological needs.

• **Twisted Trysts** — This particular game requires much more forethought and planning than the others, but bored Elysium vampires who set up the Trysts get ample satisfaction from witnessing their ghouls' pain and heartache. Basically, Camarilla Harpies subtly steer their ghouls toward nervous breakdowns, then make it look as if things are the ghouls' own fault. The Trysts always involve fellow ghouls or domitors on whom the ghouls have developed crushes. The vampires orchestrate grandiose gestures, attribute them to the pining ghouls, then watch from behind the scenes as the ghouls fail in their attempts to find happiness and romance. This "Melrose Place" of a ghoulish game is the soap opera of choice for crafty domitors who have extra time on their hands...what's a few months' planning to an immortal, anyway?

Stuck in the Mortal Coil: The Human Side of the Ghoul Equation

Ghouls are still mortal. This simple statement embodies a host of relationships and responsibilities — from babies to bosses — that the alienated Kindred simply don't think about. The inevitable dichotomy that occurs within each ghoulish can metamorphose into a devastating battle.

Some ghouls deny the presence of their supernatural abilities, fearing that they will be labeled witches, lunatics or addicts. A few ghouls, suffering from the nocturnal visitations of Cauchemars, treat the whole incident as a recurring dream or nightmare. Indeed, domitors with Obfuscate and/or Psychic Projection sometimes deliberately foster this delusion; they visit their drowsy servitors in the guise of "visions," ordering them to commit various acts over the succeeding days.

Other ghouls, particularly those who suffered from emotional handicaps in their mortal lifestyles, revel in their status. These ghouls quickly (and often violently) lift themselves up in the mortal pecking order, becoming abusive bullies (behavior often reinforced by the domitor). Such ghouls swiftly become dependent on vitae to maintain their Potence and power over mortals, who may have abused them previous to their transformations.

Most ghouls, however, wind up as alienated as their masters. As they move deeper into their weird nocturnal world, they find themselves unable to confide in their mundane friends, out of fear of the Masquerade or fear of ridicule. As a ghoul grows more and more distant from his daylight world, friends, loved ones and relatives disappear — not in one fell swoop, as with the Embrace, but with heartbreaking slowness. A date broken in favor of some errand for the domitor; a friendship cast aside, as the ghoul refuses to reveal why she's "been acting so weird" lately; a child suffering the wrath of a Potence-boosted frenzy...all too often, ghouls find suicide to be the only way out.

An especially troublesome phenomenon is that of the abandoned ghoul, a mortal who was fed vitae but subsequently neglected. These wretched ghouls often have no idea what is happening to their bodies and minds; they crave *something*, but can't quite put their fingers on it. Many such ghouls, feeling odd sensations in their blood, seek out drugs from street gangs and dealers, thinking they need injections of some sort. Coupled with the recent resurgence of heroin's popularity, this longing has led numerous ghouls to messy deaths from overdose, as they inject more and more smack in a desperate attempt to quiet the craving. Some ghouls share needles with humans, spreading their vampire-tainted blood to mortals, while others contract AIDS and other potentially fatal viruses from the unsterilized needles. In the last few years, this phenomenon has ravaged lower-income communities. Indeed, the Setites have taken notice and are considering using similar tactics as part of subversive wars of attrition against Camarilla vampires' herds.

Sex and the Single Ghoul

Even after their transformations, ghouls retain the desire to give and receive affection. Not surprisingly, many ghouls, physically and psychologically traumatized by the transformation, become obsessed with sexual activity as a way to feel human (and to work off all that Potence they've inherited from Kindred vitae). In some ways, vampire blood can be looked at as a gateway drug, one that leads the ghouls to obsess about matters such as sexuality.

More often than not, ghouls want only their beloved domitors. Unfortunately, though vampires may be sensual creatures, they are far from being sexual creatures, and ghouls want more than quick kisses or emotionless romps in the coffin.

Since the nights of the First City, vampires have struggled to deal with their ghouls' overeager libidos. Many Kindred ask their ghouls to find people whom they consider attractive, then bring them home to the vampire's haven to be ghouled as communal concubines. This doesn't always work out, as each ghoul has different tastes and desires, and many ghouls' predilections are seen as "perverse" by other servitors.

Vampires, no longer understanding sexuality but abstractly realizing its usefulness as a carrot/stick, often use sex as a motivator. Typically, a vampire finds a pleasing victim and Blood Bonds him, offering this ghoul's services as reward for the more productive members of his entourage. Star performers may even be granted a half-hour or so of sanguinary pleasure with the master, though such ecstasy is typically limited to oral pursuits. And for those ghouls who are not so productive...well, there are always the hellhounds.

Ghouls who enjoy sadomasochistic activity tend to be the luckiest of the lot. Although vampires don't enjoy intercourse, many find that beating and whipping their ghouls into shape is an excellent catharsis for the Beast, and sexually submissive ghouls experience the orgasms of their lives when their domitors "punish" them for pleasure. And healing their own wounds is half the fun.

A Confederacy of Ghouls: Secret Societies and Ghoul Cults

After too much time spent as victims, many ghouls decide to seek enlightenment and tranquillity in religion — or to seek vengeance on the monsters who created them. Some younger ghouls, sick of being bossed around by older vampires, escape the clans and seek refuge in ghoul cultist compounds or underground ghoul societies, where they can call the shots. Ghoul societies and religious cults existed during the Dark Ages (the Priests of Set and the Order of the Sable Rose being two examples), but modern-era ghouls have formed numerous new underground societies and cults, some of which are detailed below.

The Sanguinaries

This extremely secretive society was set up by an angry Caitiff ghoul known only by the code name "Adam." Frustrated by his fellow ghouls' dependence on cruel domitors, Adam teamed up with an influential Zantosa revenant, who managed to get enough Tzimisce blood to "set up shop" with the Caitiff ghoul. The pair began selling vials of blood to other defiant ghouls, in exchange for favors of various sorts.

The Sanguinaries exists primarily in the United States, though a few cells extend into Canada and Central America. It is a small sect, and most of its power is concentrated in the hands

of Adam and the Zantosa — which is exactly the way they like it. Though Sanguinaries doctrine espouses the lofty ideals of liberation and enlightenment, the sect is basically a business, and thrives on the desperation of the ghouls who come to it.

Rumor has it that an escaped Tremere ghoul has recently joined the sect — one who knows enough about Thaumaturgy to transform mortal blood into vampire vitae. If so, the Sanguinaries may well face summary extermination by a wrathful Clan Tremere.

The Disciples of Set

The Disciples of Set was initially formed in 1989 by two disillusioned Setite ghouls: Aziza Mohareb of Egypt, and Steven O'Malley of San Francisco. Aziza had been turned into a ghoul by Farouk, a Setite elder who, in typical Setite fashion, forced Aziza to sexually entice mortals into the Setites' clutches. Aziza was disgusted by his orders, but could do little against the power of the Blood Bond.

Farouk and Aziza traveled to San Francisco, where the Followers thought they could find easy converts. Farouk met O'Malley at a gay bar in the Castro District. Steven was a bouncer there and had numerous contacts in the local leather community. Seeing great potential in the young man, Farouk decided to ghoul Steven and take him back to Egypt, in preparation for Embracing the young man.

Unfortunately for the Setite, Steven's enraged lover Timothy heard through the grapevine what had happened to Steven, and he and his biker friends set out to kill the vampire. Much to the bikers' dismay, they were unable to find Farouk, who had fled town after a horrifying run-in with an Asian vampire. But in his haste, Farouk had abandoned both Aziza and Steven.

The two ghouls banded together with the bikers to search for Farouk. The group caught up with the erstwhile domitor in Seattle, where he had established a ramshackle temple and created a few new ghouls. Armed with stakes and razor blades, Aziza, Steven, and their biker allies stormed the temple. Farouk's ghouls went into frenzy, and, in the chaos, Farouk was slashed and staked into torpor. Aziza and Steven drained him of most of his vitae, then fed the leftovers to the bikers and the worshipping ghouls. The various factions united into a group known as the Disciples of Set, a society formed to worship Aziza and Steven as the true prophets of the Dark God Set.

The Setites, of course, find this extremely amusing. For now, they are willing to let the "Disciples" run their course, realizing the group's usefulness as a red herring. In a few years, after they have evaluated the usefulness of the organization, they will decide whether to bring it into their coils or simply strike it down.

The Unmastered

This society is covered in depth in the Storytelling Chapter of this book, pp. 94-98.

The Young Bloods

This gang of vicious mercenaries was formed in 1994, when a group of werewolf fomori attacked a Nosferatu *antitribu* who was dumb enough to explore the ugly landscape surrounding the East River one cold night. The fomori ripped the vampire apart with their sharp talons, but captured the dead Nosferatu's ghoul, Judas. The ghoul and the fomori came to an arrangement: The Wyrmspawn would provide Judas with his fix, and in return Judas would help the fomori hunt down and destroy other vampires.

Judas leaked word of the deal to his friend Dave, a Malkavian *antitribu*'s ghoul who suffered from Multiple Personality Disorder. Judas figured his new Bane allies would welcome a fellow ghoul who had 26 different personalities (13 of them psychotic); Judas was right. For his part, Dave was elated at the chance to escape his vicious domitor, who abused him on a nightly basis. Dave informed the fomori of his domitor's whereabouts, and they messily destroyed the Malkavian. This pattern continued, and Judas and Dave recruited more and more fed-up ghouls into the renegade group's fold, luring them in with promises of vitae and revenge on their domitors.

Eventually, the Young Bloods (as the ghoul gang dubbed itself) became such a powerful force that the Wyrms-corrupted corporation Pentex took the group under its wing. Pentex provided the Young Bloods with motorcycles; now the ghouls roam from city to city, destroying Lupines and vampires alike. Packs of Young Bloods travel throughout the U.S., and rumor has it that some of them have even migrated to Europe.

For more information on the Young Bloods, see *World of Darkness: Midnight Circus*.

The Sacrament of the Reborn

This faction of abandoned ghouls believes that by worshipping the Kindred and chanting from *The Book of Nod*, a new, messianic domitor will appear to give its members the precious blood they desire. Primarily composed of former Gangrel, Ravnos and Caitiff ghouls, the Sacrament zealously adheres to the teachings of its leader, the mysterious Reverend Kam. Kam and his close followers dwell on an expansive private compound in Brazil; from here, the charismatic Kam broadcasts his messages of salvation and prayer to all members of the Sacrament.

In reality, Reverend Kam is a Setite ghoul. He administers blood to the ignorant ghouls from his own private stock of addictive Setite blood, and after three prayer sessions, the ghouls are effectively Blood Bound to the Setites. Reverend Kam is being considered for the Embrace, and the ghouls are blissfully happy to have new domitors and steady supplies of blood. Prayer really works miracles.



Chapter Three: Character Creation

Jody: Shit. Why you think we gave you such a hard time growin' up here, boy? Trynna toughen you up.

— Garth Ennis, *Preacher*

Ghoul characters are built in a fashion similar to vampires, but there are a number of key differences. The most important, of course, is that ghouls get fewer dots to distribute among their Traits. However, although they may be weaker than the average beginning Vampire character, ghouls have a number of advantages all their own.

This chapter presents full rules for creating ghoulish characters usable in a Vampire chronicle, in an all-ghoul chronicle, or even in other Storyteller System games such as *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*. A ghoulish character's Traits will for the most part be identical to those presented in the *Vampire: The Masquerade* rulebook. However, to properly play Sabbat ghouls or revenants and their inhuman Virtues, the *Players Guide to the Sabbat* may be useful. If you don't have this rulebook, go ahead and wing it.

Of course, the rules presented here are optional. They've been chosen to maintain the spirit of the World of Darkness while keeping play fairly balanced, but if you have difficulty with a certain ruling, change it. Nobody knows your game better than you do, and your group is always the final arbiter of what works best around its table.

Note: In some chronicles, being a ghoulish character may require a five-point Merit. If so, any player who pays the point cost for the Merit may generate a character per the rules below.

Character Creation

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept: Vassal, Revenant or Independent

(Revenants only) Select ghoulish family:

Bratovitch: Monstrous and bizarre hunters and deviants.

Grimaldi: The most human of revenants, they live among mortals.

Obertus: Reclusive scholars who seek forbidden knowledge.

Zantosa: Hedonist dilettantes who serve themselves.

• Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize categories: Physical, Social, Mental (6/4/3)

Choose Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

• Step Three: Select Abilities

Prioritize categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (11/7/4)

Choose Talents: Your natural aptitudes

Choose Skills: What you've been trained to do

Choose Knowledges: What you've studied

• Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (5), Disciplines (Potence 1, + 1 other Discipline) and Virtues (7, or 5 for Sabbat ghouls and revenants)

Vassals: Choose a Discipline known to your domitor

Revenants: Choose a family Discipline

Independents: Choose any Discipline

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Virtues, Humanity/Path of Enlightenment, Willpower and Blood Pool

Spend "freebie points" (21)

Step One: Concept

Character concepts cover a lot of ground. A ghoul can be anybody, who's been ghouled for any reason. Let's face it; if a Toreador catches sight of a pretty face in a crowd, ghouling said darling is far less risky than giving her the Embrace. If you grow tired of her, no one will complain if you neatly dispose of her. A child is forever — a ghoul is only for as long as it suits you. What's more, anybody who's good at anything, whether it's car maintenance, secretarial skills or street combat, might be ghouled by a Cainite who has use for that particular skill. So what if a Brujah is only interested in Embracing someone as sexy as she is — hell, her ghoul could look like Mr. Whipple and Martha Raye. Since the standards for ghouldom are less exacting, your basic concept could range anywhere from an Indiana Jonesish archaeologist to "that quiet guy next door."

Your concept includes your basic image (and self-image), Nature and Demeanor. It also defines your role in the chronicle. Generally speaking, your character begins the game either as a vassal under the Blood Bond to a domitor, as a member of a revenant family, or as an independent with alternate means of obtaining vitae to preserve her powers. Whichever way, you should at least think about the following questions, the better to flesh out your character.

- **In General:** How did you first find out you were twice as strong as before, and what did you do with your newfound power? What's your day job; do you have trouble there these days? Have you ever been driven into a frenzy, and how? Do you know you're an addict, or do you fool even yourself? How do you rationalize your "habit"? What sorts of problems do you have in your everyday life — your boss, significant other, relatives? Do you hate anybody enough that you now feel like doing something about it — or have you done it already? Do you know that you can heal yourself from near-mortal wounds, and how does that knowledge affect your behavior? How would you describe the Blood; what metaphors best sum up that incredible rush? Do you know that other ghoul exist; how do you feel about them? Would you let a loved one become a ghoul; would you encourage her or try to prevent it?

- **Vassals:** What sort of person were you before you became a ghoul? How have you felt your personality change since you began your service? Do you define yourself solely in terms of your relation to your master? Why were you chosen; what do you have to offer your domitor? Were you tricked into becoming a ghoul, or did you go willingly? Are you treated fairly, or is your liege abusive? What clan is your master, and what role does she play among the city's Kindred? Is she of high status, an outcast, or something else? Are you *szlachta*; if so, do you ever go out in public? Have you ever felt anything as powerful as the Blood Bond?

- **Revenants:** What family do you belong to? How strong is your loyalty to your family? How did your extremely prolonged childhood affect you? Were you abused by your family? Do you have any sibling rivalries? How much do you know

about the Sabbat? Were you immersed in Sabbat politics early on? Have you been abused by the ghoul-hating members of the sect? Why are you active away from home? Will you ever go back, and if so, how do you think you will be received?

- **Independents:** How did you receive your first taste of vitae? Did you know about vampires before you became a ghoul? How do you maintain your supply of the Blood? Do you interact with Kindred on their own terms, or do you deliberately avoid becoming entangled in their politics? Do you know anything about the clans? Are you an escaped ghoul? If so, what was your role: paramour, *szlachta*, aide? Have you been contacted by the Unmastered? Do you know about any other denizens of the World of Darkness? Do you want to?

Step Two: Attributes

Mortals begin play with less raw potential than vampire characters do. A ghoul has fewer dots to divide among her Attributes, as her capabilities are more mundane — at the start. You begin play with one free dot in each Attribute, of course. After prioritizing your Attributes, you may then spend six dots among your primary Attributes, four among your secondary, and three among your tertiary.

Your concept helps define how you arrange your Attributes; for more information, see the two-page spreads on ghoul types.

Step Three: Abilities

Again, ghoul start with fewer dots than do Kindred characters. After prioritizing your Abilities, you have 11 dots to divide among your primary Abilities, seven for secondary, and four for your tertiary Abilities. As usual, you may not spend more than three dots in any Ability during this stage of character creation.

Step Four: Advantages

Although far weaker than Cainites, ghoul still have an edge over ordinary men and women. All ghoul begin play with one dot of Potence, which is instinctively learned almost immediately. Each ghoul also has one dot in another Discipline, which should be chosen according to the character concept. If you're playing a vassal, you must pick a Discipline that your domitor knows. Check with your Storyteller; your domitor's clan will usually be a guide. If you're playing a revenant, you should choose your second Discipline from the traditional Disciplines of your family. Independent ghoul have no "clan" restrictions, but if you are creating an independent character, the Storyteller may require you to choose your second dot from among the "instinctive" physical Disciplines (Celerity, Fortitude and Potence).

Two exceptions to this rule are Protean and Thaumaturgy; these highly specific Disciplines are available only to Gangrel and Tremere vassals, respectively. And while the indepen-

dent and Sabbat clans' Disciplines are not "off limits" as such, ghouls who know Quietus or Obtenebration (for example) had better have a good reason for their knowledge.

Ghouls (and revenants) are typically limited to learning only the first level of any Discipline; their borrowed vitae simply isn't potent enough to bestow more powerful abilities. However, they can exceed this limit by consuming blood from more powerful vampires. The potency of said blood is directly connected to the donor's generation — the closer the vitae to Caine, the more powerful the Disciplines a ghoul may learn. The ghoul must drink this blood for a considerable period of time (i.e., long enough to gain the requisite experience points to buy such advanced Disciplines).

The chart below gives the standard correlation between a donor's generation and the level of Disciplines a ghoul may attain. What's more, there is an optional rate of progression for Storytellers who wish ghouls to be more immediately powerful. Unless your Storyteller tells you otherwise, assume that this option is not being used.

Virtues are a little more complicated and depend on whether your character follows the code of Humanity or one of the Sabbat Paths of Enlightenment. Most ghouls should have Humanity by default, and should therefore possess the Virtues of Conscience, Self-Control and Courage. Ghouls are human, after all, and their instinctive virtues are hard to set aside. Although the Blood can drive a person into madness and depravity, few ghouls bother to rationalize their dark impulses via a customized system of morality. If this makes them poor examples of humans, then so be it.

Only revenants and Sabbat ghouls who are being groomed for the Embrace should follow Paths of Enlightenment. The revenant families teach alternate morality as part of their grotesque domestic customs, and most of them care little for "weak" human virtues. Only those Sabbat ghouls with true promise would be instructed in the ways of vampiric enlightenment. Even this is quite rare — as most Sabbat see it, enlightenment begins only after the Creation Rites, and teaching vampire morality to living beings is a waste of time. Until they experience the dehumanization of the Creation Rites, they just won't get it. No ghoul, revenant or not, may begin the game with a Path of Enlightenment rating above 5.

Those rare ghouls who follow Paths of Enlightenment possess the Virtues of Callousness, Instincts and Morale. No matter what the Virtues, ghouls receive one free dot in each; ghouls practicing Humanity receive seven dots to assign as they please, while characters practicing Paths of Enlightenment receive five dots to assign to their Virtues.

Ghouls may choose many of the same Backgrounds as vampires, but there are some marked differences. Obviously, ghouls cannot take Generation and have no need of Herd. The Mentor Background is normally restricted to independent or revenant ghouls. A domitor usually does not permit an outsider to become close to her servitors, and almost never acts as a mentor herself. The master/servant relationship does not blos-

som into friendship except in the most extraordinary cases. Similarly, domitors do not usually permit their vassals to keep retainers — that is the role of the ghoul, and servants are not in

| Sponsor's Generation | Maximum Discipline Level | Optional Maximum Discipline Level |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13th-11th | 1 | 1 |
| 10th-9th | 1 | 2 |
| 8th | 1 | 3 |
| 7th | 2 | 3 |
| 6th | 3 | 4 |
| 5th | 4 | 4 |
| 4th | 5 | 5 |

need of servants. Finally, ghouls possess no Status among Kindred; they are considered chaff at best. A character may earn the respect of the local Cainites, but such a thing is rare, and must always happen in play.

However, vassals may purchase the new Background of Domitor, to represent their relationship with their master. For details, see p. 82.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

The finishing touches are pretty much the same for ghoul and vampire characters. Your beginning Willpower rating equals your Courage or Morale. Your Humanity is equal to the sum of your Conscience + Self-Control ratings, unless you currently follow a Path of Enlightenment. In that case, generate your Path score as usual (maximum 5).

Your beginning Blood Pool is usually at the standard level; roll a die to determine how many Blood Points you possess. (Storytellers may allow vassals to reroll a result of a "1," as they should logically begin play with a decent supply of vitae.) The exception here is the independent ghoul, who must halve the result (beginning play with one to five Blood Points).

Finally, ghouls get 21 freebie points to spend as they choose. You may use these points to raise any Trait you like, or to purchase Merits. You may also take up to seven points of Flaws to add to your freebie point total (which cannot exceed 28).

Freebie Point Purchases

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Disciplines/Paths: | 10 per dot |
| Attributes: | 5 per dot |
| Abilities: | 2 per dot |
| Virtues: | 2 per dot |
| Willpower: | 1 per dot |
| Humanity/Path: | 1 per dot |
| Backgrounds: | 1 per dot |

Vassals

When most vampires think of ghouls, by default they picture the vassal. Many Cainites find it inconceivable to create ghouls for any other purpose; indeed, to most Kindred, any ghouls other than vassals are blasphemies.

By and large, vassals are the “normal people” among ghouls. Most of them didn’t ask for their new power or immortality, although few complain too much once the Bond takes effect. Scant few of them know even one-quarter what a neonate does about Kindred society. Somewhere along the line, they were just singled out by something old and powerful, something that wanted another pair of hands.

Although a vassal’s supply of vitae is pretty much assured, that’s really all she has to look forward to. In fact, she’d better be on her very best behavior if she wants to keep her liquid strength coming regularly. She also has to come to terms with the fact that she’s in love — truly, passionately, in a way she didn’t think she’d ever feel again after her first love left — with a person who treats her with passing kindness at best and draconian cruelty at worst.

And the sad thing is that the great majority of vassals really have no idea what’s going on. They don’t know why they feel the way they do; they don’t know what’s in that miracle drink their new friend gives them. But they’re loyal, if for no other reason than they don’t want the magic to stop. They don’t want to go back to the monochromatic, tasteless lives they knew before. And you know what? They’re the lucky ones. Because once a ghoul’s been dragged to the other side of that mystery, once the Masquerade’s been broken, she exists entirely at the sufferance of her domitor.

Vampires often select vassals with families, particularly when they choose to ghoul the servant clandestinely. Domitors prefer ghouls who can handle responsibility, and what better choice than a reliable parent? The conflicting loyalties of family and the Blood Bond usually end in the same way — the vassal chooses the domitor and the incomparable passion she feels for the Cainite. Interestingly, many

domitors enjoy selecting vassals for whom the choice is unbearably difficult; they see this as proof that their ghouls take the relationship seriously.

Role: By definition, vassals play a role in Kindred society, whether they know it or not. Why else create them? Many are chosen as simple guards, either to protect the master’s haven during the day or to make sure that there’s always someone to cover his exit. The more versatile bodyguards usually see better treatment, while those with few skills other than fighting ability wind up as *szlachta* or cannon fodder.

Other vassals may be chosen for particular skills. Certainly, this includes the computer whiz and the chauffeur who lend their 20th-century know-how to the tragically anachronistic Cainite. But it can also include the starving yet talented artist whose work is passed off as a Toreador’s own, or the prince’s diplomat to the Brujah (“About time he sent somebody who understands us!”). Finally, a vassal may serve no purpose save window dressing — and why should it be otherwise? Mediterranean “concubines” may be all the rage this season....

Character Creation: A vassal’s Abilities and Attributes should reflect the reason she was chosen to become a ghoul. A Toreador consort, for example, will usually have high Social Traits but not quite as much mental facility. *Szlachta*, bodyguards, stalkers and other fighting ghouls usually have primary Physical Attributes, while scholars, pet scientists and hackers would more likely have primary Mental. Vassals with primary Social Attributes are typically negotiators, politicians, concubines or showpieces.

Weaknesses: Vassals begin play Blood Bound to a domitor of the Storyteller’s design. The player may purchase the Domitor background to represent a more amiable relationship with her character’s master, but in no case is this relationship wine and roses.

Quote: *No, you listen to me. I don’t care who you are or who you’re with; the lady asked not to be disturbed. And she isn’t going to be. Capisce?*

Stereotypes

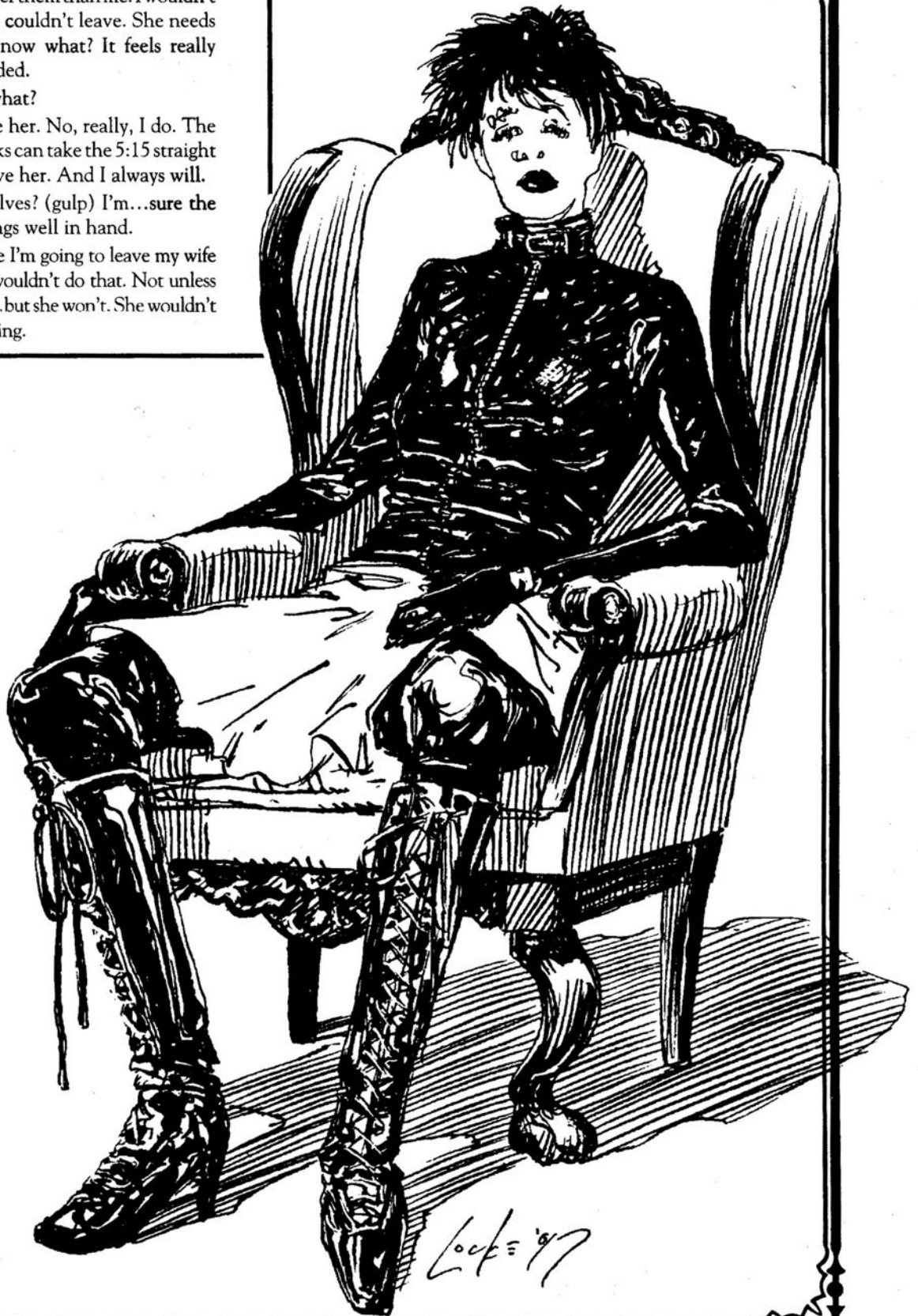
Independents — Better than me. I wouldn't mind...no, **but** I couldn't leave. She needs me. And you know what? It feels really good, being needed.

Revenants — Rev-what?

Vampires — I...love her. No, really, I do. The rest of those freaks can take the 5:15 straight to Hell, but I love her. And I always will.

Lupines — Werewolves? (gulp) I'm...sure the mistress has things well in hand.

Mortals — What, like I'm going to leave my wife and kids? No. I wouldn't do that. Not unless she asked me to...but she won't. She wouldn't do that sort of thing.



Independents

You think being an addict is rough? Try doing it when the dealers want to shoot you on sight.

An independent's road is a hard one. Kindred view these masterless ghouls as dangerous and uncontrollable — and a vampire very much resents what he doesn't control. Usually, the only recourse is to trap and kill vampires in order to gain their blood. And sure, you can always rationalize it to yourself — vampires *are* unnatural, blood-drinking parasites, after all — but the fact remains that now you kill for your fix. But hey, it's not like you're the first addict to do so, right? And it isn't like you're killing *people*...

Independent ghouls come from all places, but they put a bit of distance between themselves and ordinary people. They aren't pawns; they do what they do deliberately. Usually, they're orphans — a domitor dies, and his enemies are careless enough to let a servant or two get away. Sometimes the orphan's been a ghoul for so long that he knows he'll wither away to old age in a month if he doesn't get some vitae. Desperation gets a lot of independents started down this road.

Of course, some independents have more complicated stories. Some may have stumbled across Cainite society accidentally, and eventually discovered the power that vitae contains. Others may have been cultists who discovered that there was a variety of blood that worked much better in rituals. Some few might even have been cannibalistic killers who picked an unusually strong victim — and learned the source of that strength. But even without the Blood Bond, the addiction remains, and only a handful of those who've tasted vitae never try to taste it again.

Role: Independent ghouls play at least some sort of role in Kindred society — they have no choice. They have to get their vitae from somewhere. Independents may serve as low-rank predators, weeding out the stupid and careless among neonates. (Certainly, some vampires are of the opinion that any Cainite foolish enough to fall prey to *ghouls* deserved exactly what he got.)

Other independents may barter their services to vampires, acting as daylight assassins or worse in exchange for a modest supply of the Blood. These ghouls tend to run the fringes, dealing mostly with anarchs and neonates. A rare few might go deeper into Camarilla society as freelance tutors, teaching vassals how to use their abilities (for what domitor has time to waste instructing *ghouls*?) or even how to obey orders properly. After all, if a Malkavian has never picked up a gun in her life, a little blood might be a small price to pay to have her new bodyguards fully trained.

Character Creation: To eke out a living on the fringes of vampiric society, a ghoul needs to be pretty quick on her feet. Most independent ghouls have primary Mental Attributes, to reflect the lore and low cunning they rely on to scrape by. Skills also tend to be primary, as actual hands-on training is pretty vital to most independents. Independents often maintain extensive Allies and Contacts, the better to keep up a reliable information network. Many times, an independent's Humanity isn't *quite* as high as it could be, depending on what he has to do to get his monthly drink.

Weaknesses: Independents pay a price for their freedom: They don't get vitae as reliably as do vassals or revenants. An independent ghoul's less-than-certain blood supply means that he begins play with a much smaller Blood Pool. To reflect this lack, an independent ghoul's player should roll a die as usual and halve the result, rounding up (giving a result from one to five Blood Points). What's more, the ghoul may have to ration his vitae carefully, as he can never be quite sure where his next fix is coming from. Needless to say, such thrift is never easy.

Quote: *You know just as well as I do that you can't do everything yourself — or have you forgotten that you're exclusively nocturnal? Trust me, I'm reliable help, and my price isn't hard to pay at all.*

Stereotypes

Vassals — Been there, done that. Never again.

Revenants — Everything that's rotten and loathsome in a vampire, without even the saving grace of the Blood. No sense wasting time on them.

Vampires — I hate them, but I need them, too. I'd have quit by now — no, really — but I got in over my head a while back. Might as well see it through.

Lupines — I've got enough to worry about. I don't want to have to start carrying silver bullets, too.

Mortals — You can never go home again.



Revenants

Although the perverse and often inbred revenants aren't the most heroic of characters, they may prove interesting to roleplay over the course of a chronicle. These long-lived, decadent ghouls are almost always found in service to the Sabbat, but there are exceptions.

All the perverse urges and dark drives that boil up in the average ghoul are magnified in the revenant. Revenants hold curious family revels, typically of the sort that involve debauchery, drugs or victims (or all three). They see themselves as superior to humanity, and therefore exempt from society's mores. Some worship vampires as virtual gods, while others aspire to vampirism themselves. Humanity, on the other hand, receives nothing but contempt from loyal revenant scions.

Revenants are a clannish, insular lot, and different families are unlikely to trust one another very much. In particular, the Grimaldis and Zantosias have feuded too often to consider each other friends. Although revenants work with ghouls from rival families when necessary, they rarely like it.

Role: The revenant families were bred to serve the Sabbat in general and the Tzimisce in particular. However, the Sabbat's loathing of ghouls on general principle means that revenants don't actively serve vampires all that much (with the exception of the Grimaldis). Mostly, the revenants keep to themselves, although the Tzimisce (and, very rarely, other Sabbat clans) call them in for special tasks from time to time.

When the Bratovitches are called off their family estates, it's typically because a Tzimisce wants some talented, low-maintenance trackers and hunters. They also breed powerful hunting dogs and freakish, fleshcrafted hounds for their patrons' use.

The Grimaldis are much more active, however. They use their myriad connections among mortal society to cover up Sabbat activity, maintaining a lesser Masquerade of sorts for the sect. Grimaldis can also often be found blackmailing local figures or running daylight errands for bishops.

The Sabbat calls on the Obertuses infrequently, and then only to take advantage of the lore these revenants have compiled. They are useful mainly as loyal scholars; when a

priscus needs a certain tidbit of lore, but doesn't have the time or inclination to do the research herself, a reliable Obertus proves sufficient.

The Zantosias are rich, and that's about all they have to offer. The Tzimisce dip into Zantosa funds when necessary, and ignore these decadent hedonists the rest of the time.

Character Creation: Revenants generally follow their family's lead when it comes to picking a profession. Bratovitch trackers and brawlers typically have primary Physical Attributes and Talents; Grimaldis usually specialize in Mental Attributes and Skills. Obertuses almost always take primary Mental Attributes and Knowledges; Zantosias prefer primary Social Attributes (particularly Vicissitude-enhanced Appearance) and Talents.

Unlike ghouls with domitors, each revenant gains Disciplines according to her family. The "specialty" family Disciplines are treated like clan Disciplines for purposes of learning them with experience points. Similarly, revenants suffer a family weakness, much as clan vampires do — this is often the result of their intense inbreeding or depraved family practices.

Revenants produce their own vitae, at the rate of one Blood Point per day. This is fairly weak stuff compared to vampire blood, and cannot be used to create Blood Bonds or to give a drained corpse the Embrace. A revenant's Blood Pool maximum rises by one point with every century she survives (a 240-year-old Zantosa would have a Blood Pool maximum of 12, but would appear to be about 60 years old). However, the rules given in this book are meant to simulate revenants no more than a century in age; older revenants would likely have more freebie points to reflect their increased experience.

Weaknesses: Each revenant has a family weakness, due to intense inbreeding. Revenant blood has taken on strange qualities over the centuries, a trait that has piqued the curiosity of more than one Sabbat scientist.

Quote: *What? What's wrong? You look...disconcerted. Please, don't be. Come inside. I want you to...meet the family. I think they'll like you. You have such a wonderful...spirit.*

Stereotypes

Vassals—Poorthings. They must feel so...unappreciated. Perhaps they and we, sometime, might reach an...arrangement.

Independents — They're deluding themselves. If the Kindred cared about them at all, they'd be dead. As is, their days are...numbered.

Vampires — We owe everything to our masters the Tzimisce. Without them, we would be...human. The very thought...

Lupines — The enemies of our lords are our enemies as well. Of course, I am a bit...frail, and shall leave the physical combat to those more...suited.

Mortals — As persons, contemptible; as playthings...delicious.



Bratovitch

The depraved Bratovitches spend most of their time breeding ghoul-hounds for the Sabbat and pursuing their own hobbies. Although no other revenant family or vampire clan cares for their company, they tend to receive a grudging respect for their stalking and fighting abilities. They constantly seek to better themselves; this desire typically translates into excessive Vicissitude body modifications and the devouring of fallen enemies to gain a measure of their foes' strength. Some have dabbled in dark rituals, trying to find a way to siphon some of their Lupine foes' power. The Bratovitches have always been a bestial breed, but this trait serves them well on their hunts.

Bratovitch player characters are likely to be young ghouls out for a taste of the real world. They tend to be brutish, perverse monsters who delight in torture, self-mutilation and strange little "games." They have little grasp of subtlety, and are usually uninterested in any politics apart from the struggles for power inside their own family. Living among humans for too long reflects badly on a Bratovitch, and a social creature who does so is usually in for a bad time when he returns home. Some Bratovitches leave the household on prolonged Lupine hunts, but very few of them return successful — if at all.

Humanity is an unfamiliar thing to the Bratovitches. All are raised on various Paths of Enlightenment, although no one path is dominant throughout the family. In their practice of alternative moralities, the Bratovitches have even preserved some of the ancient Roads of morality, and may follow the more debased of these codes of conduct (for more information on Roads, see **Vampire: The Dark Ages**). Naturally, as revenants, they can never attain the pinnacle of vampiric enlightenment. But the Bratovitches really don't care about true enlightenment, anyway — rules were meant to be broken, after all.

Disciplines: Animalism, Potence, Vicissitude

Weakness: Bratovitches are easily angered, and frenzy as if they were Brujah. Their terrible tempers prevent them from interacting often with humanity.

Quote: *Smell that? Smell 'im, boys? Yeah! He went down thisaways! C'mon, boys! Sic 'im! Go get 'im! Let's go get that dinner!*



Stereotypes

- Grimaldi** — What the hell? Those pussies ain't revenants, not by a long shot. Can't hunt, can't fight, can't howl — what good are they?
- Obertus** — Goddamn know-it-alls think they're so goddamn superior. 'Least they know enough to leave us alone.
- Zantosa** — Why the hell are they even still alive? If my boy was that layabout useless, I'da fed him to the dogs a long while back!
- Vassals** — Sorry-ass fuckers. Bend over and squeal for Daddy, little ghoul.
- Independents** — They got balls, yeah. But without family, they're nothing. Some of 'em put up a good last fight, though.
- Vampires** — Yeah... That's the way to be. Old, powerful, and meaner than Grandpa. I could get used to that kind of power.
- Lupines** — Any one critter that can tear apart half a family before goin' down is worth some respect. Its heart makes for potent eatin', too.

Grimaldi

The ever-devious Grimaldis take great delight in their facade of normalcy. They act as go-betweens for the Sabbat, quietly carrying out the sect's goals in mortal society. They are horribly wealthy, and possess influence almost rivaling that of the Giovanni or Ventrue. Many Grimaldis grow up in human society, being quietly moved from private school to private school before anybody notices how slowly they're growing up.

Actually, the Grimaldis have a secondary agenda, one that the Sabbat is unaware of: survival. The family knows full well that its members exist only at the sufferance of the Tzimisce, and should the Fiends withdraw their support, the Sabbat would surely exterminate them to the last cousin. Therefore, the Grimaldis work for a twofold goal: to humbly convince the Sabbat of their utility, and to find a possible escape route should things turn sour. Some Grimaldi elders have even gone so far to suggest offering their services to the Camarilla should the Tzimisce withdraw their support, but this motion has met with little approval. If the family did indeed turn its allegiances, the vengeance of the Fiends would be sure and slow....

Grimaldis can come from almost any walk of life, but most often are contributing members of society. They usually have extensive influence within their home city, with Backgrounds as appropriate. Some Grimaldis may have broken ranks with their family in order to pursue the elusive goal of Humanity; these tragic self-exiles usually end up with more than their share of enemies, but can make for interesting characters.

Most Grimaldis prefer to walk the Path of Honorable Accord, although some prefer the Path of Harmony or the Path of Caine. A surprising number of Grimaldis have developed more sociable morals, upholding the virtues of Humanity; however, these revenants do so extremely quietly.

Disciplines: Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude

Weakness: All Grimaldis are Blood Bound to Sabbat bishops and archbishops. Their covert talents and penchant for dallying in mortal society bother the Sabbat, who fear that the Grimaldis might become irresistibly tempted to defect. Ranking Sabbat members rarely call upon their Bonded Grimaldis; the Bond is mostly a formality signifying fealty and respect.

Quote: *Another missing-person case in Southside? No, I'm sorry, Jimmy, but that just isn't news. I'll have to bump your piece in favor of covering the parade. You understand.*



Stereotypes

Bratovitch — Primitive, crass, unsubtle and foolish; too long bred for war, and it shows.

Obertus — Their penchant for crypticism is annoying, but one can't fault their scholarly capabilities. A shame they know so little about living in the real world.

Zantosa — Disgusting! These parasitic tramps haven't been of any use in centuries. Why does anybody still tolerate them? Perhaps a subtle hint or two to the bishops is in order....

Vassals — Had the Sabbat more sufferance for ghouls, we might be as they are. Still, I doubt one of these isolated wretches could do my job half as well.

Independents — These fools endanger us all. How long before their antics drive the Kindred to rise up and put an end to ghouls *en masse*? I must work doubly hard to prove myself useful, thanks to them....

Vampires — Only an idiot cannot see that their tolerance for us is wearing thin. I hope it doesn't run out in my lifetime — for the life of me, I can't think of anywhere I could hide.

Lupines — No, thank you; I think I'll avoid the national parks, if it's all the same to you.



Stereotypes

Bratovitch — Little more than *szlachta*. They may have their uses, but not to me.

Grimaldi — They play at being human, but they really aren't fooling anybody but themselves. At some point, the Grimaldis will snap, and then they will be devoured.

Zantosa — Yet more proof that material wealth means nothing. I suppose the Tzimisce must be fond of their old toys, no matter how worn and outdated.

Vassals — I suppose the Camarilla must pine for the days of feudalism. Perhaps keeping a serf or four about boosts the ego.

Independents — I don't see how the comings and goings of a few orphaned ghouls should concern me.

Vampires — There is much to be learned from the ongoing war between Camarilla and Sabbat. Perhaps in their struggles, we shall find the key to our own ascension.

Lupines — Fascinating creatures, with a remarkably unsullied form of primitive goddess-worship. Like sharks, they have managed to survive without adapting. So far, that is....

Obertus

The Obertuses tend to distance themselves from Sabbat affairs, preferring to spend their time absorbing as much arcane knowledge as they can. The heads of the family are almost always great scholars or researchers who have spent the better part of their long years accumulating wisdom from ancient sources. The small New England villages the family founded centuries ago still stand, and people who come to visit such places often leave with a feeling of grave unease — if they leave at all.

An Obertus character will usually be pursuing further knowledge, whether occult, scientific or even trivial. Many are the very models of the Lovecraftian scholar, obsessively seeking knowledge that they subconsciously dread. To this end, Obertuses often attempt to research Lupines, magi, the Underworld, history, demons, Kindred and Caine himself. This quest for learning may take the revenant to places where ghouls are unwelcome, but an Obertus pays little heed to personal safety when a tidbit of undiscovered information is at stake.

Although ostensibly researchers for the Sabbat, the Obertuses actually have another, very secret purpose in mind. Convinced that their revenant status is the next step in human evolution, the Obertuses want to find a way to progress one step beyond, becoming something greater than human, vampire or ghoul. So far, they have found only the vaguest hints of something more.

Obertuses tend to prefer the Path of Death and the Soul, the Path of Harmony and the Path of Honorable Accord. These codes of morality best reflect the family's intellectual concerns and the introspection so common to the bloodline.

Disciplines: Auspex, Obfuscate, Vicissitude

Weakness: The Obertus family is known for its single-minded dedication, and each Obertus tends to become obsessed with a specific goal or aspect of her life. All possess the Obsession or Perfection Derangement. An Obertus may become obsessed with multiple things during her many years, but tends to focus on only one item at a time.

Quote: *Yes, I was fortunate enough to obtain a transcript of the Book of Nod. Look here, under this passage dealing with Lilith. I've found a clue to something even greater than I had hoped for....*



Zantosa

The Sabbat tolerates the presence of these decadents, and that is about all that can be said for the Zantos. Although still disgustingly rich, this family has squandered what was left of its once-proud reputation. These nights, it is a desperate Sabbat vampire indeed who relies on the dilettante Zantos. Sabbat archbishops often question whether or not the Zantos should simply be cleared away and their assets seized once and for all, but the consensus they always reach is that the Zantos just aren't worth the effort.

Zantosa characters are almost always dilettantes out for some illicit thrills, or criminals indulging themselves in the pleasures of the underworld. Despite their "rarefied tastes," they rarely insinuate themselves into the upper crust of human society. Their depravity is difficult to hide for long, and the Zantos confess they understand very little about humanity anyway. Many set out on long, dangerous ventures, the better to have stories with which to regale their family. If a Zantosa crosses paths with a Grimaldi, then the Zantosa will feel obligated to honor the family grudge in some fashion. At best, an unfriendly rivalry develops; at worst, the Zantosa makes plans to dispose of the annoying Grimaldi when convenient.

Almost all Zantos follow the Path of Cathari, which complements their debased nature quite nicely. Some are reputed to follow the Path of Caine, but given the temperament of the family, this seems unlikely.

Disciplines: Auspex, Presence, Vicissitude

Weakness: The hedonistic Zantos are easily addicted to the pleasures they seek. Whenever a Zantosa experiences extreme pleasure (such as from sex, drugs, indulging in sadism, being fed on, or even a really good steak), she must make a Willpower roll (difficulty varies with the intensity of the pleasure) or become obsessed with or addicted to the sensation. An obsessed Zantosa will do almost anything to re-create the experience, and many have drifted away to their deaths as a result.

Quote: *Pah! Next week, next month, next year... whatever! Always time for shop talk. Right now, though, I want another drink. Care to join me?*

Stereotypes

Bratovitch — Ucchh. What's the point of excess if you don't have the taste to appreciate it? Mouth-breathing, slack-jawed yokels, all of them.

Grimaldi — Brown-nosing assholes! I'd come over there and kick all your flabby human asses, but you aren't worth the trouble.

Obertus — Come on, man, you're a revenant, aren't you? Come down off Mount Big-Stick-up-My-Ass and join the party!

Vassals — Really? Blood Bound, you say? Gee, what a shame. Must be tough to be them.

Independents — These poor bastards are too caught up in getting their vitae to enjoy it. Sad.

Vampires — Why, I plan on being Embraced one day myself, but I think I'll wait until I'm bored with sex and food. Hmm...this could take a while.

Lupines — What? Where???

New Abilities

The following Abilities add to those in the main rulebook and *The Vampire Players Guide*. They are intended for ghouls, but Storytellers may approve them for other sorts of characters. As always, let common sense guide you.

Talents

Masquerade

Vampires manage to feign mortality; this Ability allows you to turn the tables on them by pretending to be a vampire. Most ghouls have little reason to learn this Talent, but there are exceptions. Certain domitors may call upon their more subtle servants to indulge in a little espionage. Independent ghouls may find that posing as vampires can lengthen their lives. The masters of this talent are the bizarre and ancient ghouls of the Methuselahs; these servitors are often as powerful as (or more powerful than) younger Kindred, and they move among the lesser vampires in search of prey for their masters.

The only ghouls who may not purchase this Talent at character creation are revenants; aping one's masters is viewed poorly in the Sabbat, and those who try are quickly (or not so quickly) disposed of.

- **Novice:** "Ruddy? Oh, I fed recently. That must be it."
- **Practiced:** Another vampire's ghouls would recognize you as Kindred.
- **Competent:** You receive invitations to Elysium.
- **Expert:** You can just about fool the ancillae who have Auspex.
- **Master:** You can sup with the prince without raising suspicion.

Knowledges

Steward

You have studied the art of managing a household and mastered the various intricacies of such a task. You make a serviceable butler, valet, seneschal or major-domo for your domitor. What's more, you keep up with her affairs among the local Kindred, the better to serve her. You can run every aspect of your master's haven if need be, and might be targeted by enemies who would appreciate your knowledge. Of course, should you ever defect, your master will almost certainly make your death or recapture top priority.

- **Student:** You can keep an apartment in order.
- **College:** You're considered reliable if not sparkling.
- **Masters:** Practically one of the family

- **Doctorate:** You keep the manor running smoothly and remind the master of his appointments with the prince.
- **Scholar:** Alfred Pennyworth

Vampire Lore

Unlike Kindred Lore (*The Vampire Players Guide*, p. 63), this Knowledge can be taken at character creation. It represents the amount of lore you know about vampiric society. Without this Ability, you may not even know your domitor's clan. This Knowledge covers most of the basics that a sire teaches a fledgling childe, as well as any local political tidbits that the Storyteller wishes to impart.

- **Student:** You know roughly what vampires and clans are.
- **College:** You know most of the Traditions.
- **Masters:** You know the name of the prince.
- **Doctorate:** You know that the Malkavians are named after Malkav.
- **Scholar:** You can name all 13 clans and give their nicknames.

New Background

Domitor

You are Bound to a vampire who provides you with blood and may offer you protection. Of course, you cannot think to abuse your domitor's generosity. The purchase of this Background does imply, though, that your master has at least a passing interest in your continued well-being. The level of this Background implies two things: the general generation and power of your domitor (which influences the level of Disciplines you may learn), and how well he favors you. The more ancient and powerful the domitor, the less likely he is to care about the welfare of an all-too-replaceable servant. Conversely, less powerful vampires tend to take better care of their ghouls, as they possess fewer resources and usually value what they have.

- Your domitor is 11th generation or lower, and considers you a valued confidant.
- Your master is ninth or 10th generation, and is passing fond of you.
- Your domitor is eighth generation, and will sometimes let you get a word in edgewise.
- Your domitor is seventh generation, and expects you to do your job — nothing more.
- Your master is sixth generation, and remarkably has not yet grown sick of the sight of your face.

Recommended Merits and Flaws

The *Vampire Players Guide* provides numerous Merits and Flaws for Vampire characters, and it would be a shame to ignore the possibilities they offer. However, not all of them are appropriate for ghoul characters. The following is a list of recommended and prohibited Merits and Flaws for ghouls.

Recommended Merits and Flaws are generally those that provide insight into why a Cainite chose a retainer or reflect the changes that the Blood worked in the hapless ghoul. (Some are listed simply because they make for particularly interesting characteristics in a ghoul!) Disallowed Merits and Flaws are just that: They cannot be taken by ghouls, only by vampires. The Storyteller is free to override this list if she sees fit, but should make exceptions with good reason.

Psychological

- Recommended: Berserker, Dual Nature, Compulsion, Short Fuse
- Disallowed: Prey Exclusion

Mental

- Recommended: Lightning Calculator, Eidetic Memory, Weak-Willed
- Disallowed: Deep Sleeper

Awareness

- Recommended: Acute Hearing, Acute Vision
- Disallowed: None

Aptitudes

- Recommended: Computer Aptitude, Pitiable, Natural Linguist
- Disallowed: Eat Food

Supernatural

- Recommended: True Love, Medium
- Disallowed: Inoffensive to Animals, Taint of Corruption, Repulsed by Garlic, Repelled by Crosses, Can't Cross Running Water, Light-Sensitive

Kindred Ties

- Recommended: Enemy, Twisted Upbringing
- Disallowed: All Others (Ghouls are not Kindred, and are treated accordingly.)

Mortal Society

- Recommended: Most Ties Merits
- Disallowed: Anachronism (not appropriate for player characters, but possibly for supporting cast), Hunted

Physical

- Recommended: Double-Jointed, Efficient Digestion, Huge Size, Allergic, Short, Disfigured, Child, Monstrous
- Disallowed: Selective Digestion, Permanent Wound, Thin-Blooded

Merits and Flaws

The following Merits and Flaws are meant for use with ghoul characters only. Some duplicate certain Merits or Flaws found in *The Vampire Players Guide*; in all cases, this book is assumed to take precedence. Ghouls are not subject to all the limitations or prerequisites Kindred may be, and the rules governing ghouls should be appropriately different.

Pale Aura (1 pt. Merit)

Due to some quirk of fate or your reaction to the Blood, your aura is naturally pale. Vampires reading your aura via Auspex assume you to be Kindred unless they have strong reason to suspect otherwise. This Merit can be of great use if you wish to impersonate a vampire, but can also cause some very dangerous misunderstandings.

Blood Flaw Immunity (3 pt. Merit)

For some reason, you are resistant to the bloodline flaws of any vampire from whom you drink. You can guzzle Nosferatu vitae until your stomach bursts, and your complexion won't suffer a whit.

Benevolent Domitor (3 pt. Merit)

You must purchase the Domitor Background to buy this Merit. For whatever reason, your domitor is actually rather fond of you. Perhaps your service has been exemplary, or perhaps you simply remind him of someone in his past—given the alien nature of the vampire mind, you may never know for sure. Your domitor treats you with some measure of compassion and does not casually endanger your life. Of course, he still expects you to give your life for his if need be, but until that night, the two of you are something akin to friends.

Kinfolk (4 pt. Merit or 4 pt. Flaw)

Whether you know it or not, you are kin to a werewolf tribe. You carry the blood of the Garou in your veins, and your own children may be Garou.

For ghouls, being Kinfolk can be an advantage or a hindrance. If purchased as a Merit, then you are still on amicable terms with your relatives (Garou and Kinfolk alike). Although they will never allow you to bring any vampire "friends" into their territory (and may well use lethal means to enforce their privacy), they have an interest in your well-being and give you aid so long as this doesn't compromise their principles. Of course, your kin do not want you to be a ghoul forever, as they would like you to return to their society and raise a family of your own. Typically, only independent ghouls may purchase Kinfolk as a Merit.

However, it's more likely that the Garou consider a ghoul Kinfolk to be a serious threat. If bought as a Flaw, then your extended family believes you may compromise their security. They seek either to remove you entirely from your diet and/or domitor's influence, or to kill you as a favor to your corrupted soul. This Flaw earns you dangerous enemies, one from whom your domitor (if any) is very unlikely to intercede and rescue you. This Flaw is more appropriate for vassal ghouls, as no werewolf would agree to let one of their precious Kin be sworn to a vampire.

Revenants cannot be Kinfolk, either as a Merit or as a Flaw.

Supernatural Companion (4 pt. Merit)

You are allied with a supernatural being, but not a vampire. This may be a werewolf comrade, the ghost of a relative, or even a friendly mage. You may ask for her help in times of need, but she may not always be able to help. She may also require your help at inconvenient times (such as the cost of friendship). It is highly improbable that your allegiance is looked on favorably by her kind, and any Kindred who discovered your relationship would almost certainly disapprove. The Storyteller will create your companion, be it werewolf, wraith, mage or something else entirely, and won't reveal her full capabilities.

(Note: This Merit supersedes those of Werewolf Companion and Spirit Mentor in *The Vampire Players Guide*.)

True Gypsy (5 pt. Merit)

The blood of the Rom runs true in your veins. Perhaps you have a Ravnos domitor who chose you for your potential, or perhaps you simply acquired a taste for Kindred blood in your travels. You may purchase Blood Affinities, or other Gypsy-only abilities from *World of Darkness: Gypsies*. Your relatives may or may not approve, depending on the whys and wherefores of your ghouling.

Revenants may not purchase this Merit under any circumstances.

Unbondable (6 pt. Merit)

You cannot be Blood Bound to a vampire, no matter how often you drink from his veins. This Merit is obviously very useful for one whose powers depend on vitae, and its cost is accordingly high for ghoul characters.

Vicissitude Modifications (Variable pt. Merit)

Although you may not be talented at the Tzimisce forms of fleshcrafting and boneshaping, at some point you have been...modified into a more warlike form. Generally speaking, you're a *szlachta*, and most modifications necessitate the purchase of the Flaw: Monstrous (*The Vampire Players Guide*, p. 19). As a rule, the Tzimisce make sufficient cosmetic alterations to ruin the looks of all their battle-ghouls, even those whose modifications are not in and of themselves hideous.

These modifications are permanent unless shaped away by further Vicissitude. Although dangerous, any weaponry causes normal damage only; despite its horrid appearance, your arsenal is still only mortal flesh and bone. You may purchase as many modifications as you can afford, but your social abilities are probably doomed.

- **Circular Vision (1 pt.):** One of your eyes has been moved to the back of your head, granting you the ability to see at a wider angle. This is a difficult operation and can be performed only by masters of medicine and Vicissitude. In addition, your depth perception is poor at any angle, and you suffer a two-die penalty to any rolls that involve gauging distance, including use of missile weapons. You must take the Monstrous Flaw.

- **Fangs (1 pt.):** Your teeth have been lengthened and sharpened; your smile may resemble a shark's or cat's, or may be unlike anything found in nature. You may use the Bite maneuver, but lose two dice from any Manipulation Dice Pools that do not involve intimidation or causing fear.

- **Digestive Modifications (2 pts.):** You are able to digest any organic material that you can break up and swallow. Your Stamina is treated as two points higher for purposes of resisting ingested poisons.

- **Spurs (2 pts.):** Long bone spurs protrude from your forearms, back and/or legs. You may slash with these for Str + 2 damage; however, they are hard to conceal, and you must subtract three dice from any Social Dice Pools save those involving intimidation.

- **Carapace (3 pts.):** You are covered with bony or horny plates that protect you from attack. You may add two soak dice to your pool, but you must take the Monstrous Flaw.

- **Patagia (4 pts.):** Your bones have been hollowed, and flaps of skin (from yourself or another hapless soul) have been grafted onto your arms, giving you the appearance of a human pterodactyl. You may use these flaps to glide, though you may not actually fly. While gliding, you may not use your arms. Furthermore, you subtract one from all soak pools to resist strikes from fists and blunt weapons, or any other forms of concussive damage (your bones are hollow). You must take the Monstrous Flaw.

Note: Ghouls may never heal Vicissitude modifications, not even with vampire blood. In this respect they are as helpless as mortals. The exceptions are ghouls who themselves possess Vicissitude, though a lowly Zantosa may well find herself helpless to repair the mutilation inflicted by a seventh-generation Tzimisce (to repair Vicissitude alterations, a ghoul must have a level of Vicissitude superior to that of the vampire who inflicted the mutilation).

Virulent Strike (7 pt. Merit)

Through strange Thaumaturgical sorcery, unknown rituals or even an odd quirk of your ghoul physiognomy, you have been imbued with the power of the supernatural. You can cause aggravated damage to supernatural creatures by striking them, biting them, raking them with bonecrafted spurs — whatever. This is considered standard Brawl damage against mortals, and should normally apply to only one attack form (bite, bone claws, etc.). You should work with the Storyteller to find an explanation for this Merit, and the Storyteller may disallow this Merit entirely if she so chooses.

Artificially Aged (2 pt. Revenant Flaw)

You have been fleshcrafted to look like an adult, although true maturity is still some time in your future. Although you can pass as older than you actually feel, you have difficulty dealing with complex situations. Your difficulty to resist frenzy is only one less than that of a vampire (or one more than normal, in the case of Bratovitches); tantrums come easily to you. You must also subtract one die from all Social Dice Pools that involve subtlety or sophistication.

Domitor Pariah (2 pt. Flaw)

You are Bound to a vampire who, for whatever reason, is unwelcome among or even hated by the other Kindred of the chronicle area. Without Cainite allies, she finds herself relying on her human and ghoul associates to get by. You will likely find yourself given additional responsibilities, which may present opportunities for you to further ingratiate yourself with the master. However, if other Kindred discover whom you serve, your life might well be in danger. The Storyteller will

determine why your domitor is so despised; you are welcome to offer suggestions, but the Storyteller is under no obligation to tell you the cause of such antipathy. You might not even know that your beloved liege is hated at all; after all, who could dislike such a wonderful creature as she...?

Romantic Notions (2 pt. Flaw)

You believe your entire existence as a ghoul to be head and shoulders above your previous life. You feel that your domitor needs you, and that every feeding is nothing short of an act of purest love. Revenants with this Flaw want nothing more than to serve the glorious ideals of the Sabbat, and leap to indulge any Sabbat vampire's whim.

Your Willpower is considered to be two points lower when the object of your romanticism attempts to use Dominate or Presence on you. For a vassal, the domitor triggers this penalty; for revenants, any vampire known to be Sabbat may easily influence a ghoul with this Flaw. Independents may not take this Flaw unless the Storyteller approves a common sort of vampire whom the ghoul idolizes, and with whom the ghoul puts herself at a disadvantage in dealings, due to her romanticized ideas.

Vitae Sink (3 pt. Flaw)

For whatever reason, you metabolize vitae more quickly than other ghouls do. You must be fed every two weeks, rather than every month, or lose all supernatural traits and revert to a human once more. Few ghouls with this Flaw last beyond their natural life spans; at this rate, missed feedings do happen....

Experience Points Chart

| Trait | Cost |
|-------------------------|---|
| New Ability | 3 |
| New Thaumaturgy Path | 20 (Tremere ghouls only) |
| New Discipline | 20 |
| Willpower | current rating |
| Humanity | current rating x 2 |
| Virtue | current rating x 2 |
| Ability | current rating x 2 |
| Attribute | current rating x 5 |
| Thaumaturgy Path | current level x 15 (Tremere ghouls only) |
| Clan/Family Discipline* | current level x 15 |
| Other Discipline | current level x 25 |

*As a general rule, a vassal gets a cost break on the actual Disciplines of her first domitor's clan (so, while a Toreador may know Dominate, it is not considered a clan Discipline for purposes of experience points). A revenant gets a cost break on the Disciplines of her family, while an independent gets a cost break on Potence, Celerity and Fortitude.

A vassal who leaves a vampire's service is treated as an independent from that point on, while an independent who becomes Blood Bound to a domitor is treated as a vassal. So, yes, it is possible for an enterprising player to "minimax" this system — but the dire ramifications of dealing with the Kindred in this fashion should make the point moot.

Ghouling the Supernatural

In the constant quest for bigger and more effective servitors, a vampire may decide to try transforming other supernatural creatures into ghoul servants. Players may also be interested in crossing over characters, using a ghouled werewolf or changeling with the rest of the group. This doesn't work in all cases, however.

- **Werewolves:** Garou are unlikely to be willingly ghouled. Most of them suffer allergic reactions to vampiric blood, and cannot stomach it for long. Only a few can drink vitae without vomiting immediately, and even they tend to avoid putting themselves in debt to their traditional enemies.

Perhaps the only reliable way to ghoul a Garou (or other werecreature) is to do so before her First Change, before the allergies reach their peak. The main difficulty with this method, however, is that an unaging ghoul will never reach adolescence, and thus may never Change. Add to this the difficulty of detecting a pre-Change Garou at all, and it's easy to see why so very few ghouled werewolves exist.

- **Mages:** Being ordinary mortals in almost every way, mages can be ghouled normally. A mage may break the Blood Bond through a judicious use of Mind magick, although she wouldn't be likely to try unless she knew she was being supernaturally controlled. Similarly, Life magick can be used to transmute the vitae in the system into ordinary human blood. Both cases are relatively tricky, however, and shouldn't be attempted by novices.

- **Wraiths:** The Restless have passed beyond the need for biology, and therefore have no metabolisms to process vitae. Even when Embodied, wraiths do not digest food or drink as usual, and cannot benefit from being ghouled. This is just as true for the Risen, whose lurching cadavers are bereft of anything vaguely resembling life. Pouring vitae into a Risen's mouth is wasting good Blood.

- **Changelings:** Vampires are generally unable to perceive changelings as anything other than mortals, although some Malkavians and Ravnos find themselves strangely drawn to the dreamers. Although a changeling can be successfully ghouled, he gains a point of Banality each time he drinks a vampire's blood. Worse, extended ghouldom tends to lead to permanent Bedlam.

- **Mummies:** For some reason, vampiric blood has no effect whatsoever on the Reborn. They cannot be ghouled, and would generally find the process distasteful to begin with.

- **Fomori:** These twisted hybrids of Bane and human are as easy to ghoul as anyone else. In fact, most make very serviceable vassals, gladly performing atrocities for their domitors in exchange for heady vitae. However, vampires who know of fomori are usually reluctant to ghoul them. For one, a fomori is often a deteriorating creature, and the spiritual decay fomori suffer cannot be halted by the temporary immortality of ghouldom. Also, one can never tell exactly whether a fomori's loyalty to his domitor is total, or whether it will be countermanded by a darker, previous pledge....



Chapter Four: Storytelling

*Let those who serve be named greatest of the
Children of Seth, and most privileged.*

— The Book of Nod, “Of Those Who Serve”

This chapter provides information on running chronicles for ghouls, or incorporating ghouls into **Vampire** games. It is intended primarily for the Storyteller’s use. A few surprises lurk here, so players should avoid reading further.

Theme

As stated in the **Vampire: The Masquerade** rulebook, a good chronicle benefits unreservedly from the presence of a unifying theme. Although the themes provided there work equally well for vampire or ghoul stories, the following concepts are especially appropriate for stories and chronicles that focus on ghouls.

- **Dependence:** In a ghoul chronicle, the theme of dependence is almost inescapable. Vitae is better than drugs: It’s eternal youth, super strength and unadulterated love all in one. The rush of liquid perfection coursing through a ghoul’s veins is not physically addictive, but it certainly shackles the psyche. The question of dependence and independence certainly comes up in every game involving ghouls. Exploring what it’s like to be at the mercy of the Blood can make for some intense roleplaying.

In the words of addicts everywhere, “I can always quit when I really want to.” Yeah. Right. Ghouls are as adept at fooling themselves as are ordinary people bound by mundane drugs. Most ghouls don’t even know they’re trapped—they know they’re in love, and they know they can do amazing things ever since this wonderful stuff came into

their lives. Once a person takes her first pull of vitae, her old life goes away and a new one takes over. Now she **can** do anything. *Anything.*

But she still needs the juice. She can’t risk displeasing the Master, or he may cut her off. And then it’s back to being weak, defenseless, mortal. Back to the old, miserable, useless wretch she once was. So maybe the Master asks her to do strange things now and again. Maybe she has to kill some little old man running a corner bookstore. She doesn’t want to—but she needs the stuff. There’s really no contest. There never is. She may not like living with herself, but the alternative is not really living at all.

- **Manipulation:** Vassals are never in full control of their lives, and revenants only rarely are. Independents allegedly walk their own road, but they cannot prey on the Kindred and hope to avoid Cainite politics completely. Can the players ever be sure that they aren’t some elder’s catspaws? Even if they have domitors, can they be certain that they aren’t being manipulated by an unseen hand to achieve goals even their domitors don’t understand?

Hell, will they even know the truth about their situation—or what they *are*? The hands that create the ghouls may be unseen from the very beginning. If the sponsors are subtle enough, the characters may simply find themselves suddenly host to unbidden urges, flooded with unasked-for power. As their sponsors quietly nudge them in the proper directions, the players’ flesh may crawl with paranoia. True,



the characters have gained power and immortality — but what have they lost in return, and who is going to call the debt due?

- **War:** Face it: Ghouls are the quintessential cannon fodder. Almost all clans readily create numbers of competent ghouls when they're expecting trouble. The common ghoul is typically the first line of defense, and so a war chronicle can provide several tense stories.

Like the protagonists in most good war movies, the ghouls are rarely the ones who start the conflict (although they may be, depending on the nature of the chronicle). Typically, they find themselves in the midst of a violent struggle, and have to start fighting or be eradicated themselves. There's no real time for hesitation in a chronicle of this sort — move quickly, or you're fertilizer. And it's *much* easier for a ghoul to die than a vampire — with maybe one die of Fortitude at most, and the danger of killing themselves from blood loss if they try to heal their own wounds, ghouls tend to be closer to the “eggshells with hammers” archetype than vampires are. There is no torpor to save a ghoul — once his Health Levels run out, he's history. An “unfortunate but unavoidable” casualty to his masters, if even that.

War stories can range from blatant series of gun battles against Sabbat thugs in abandoned wrecks of buildings, to subtle campaigns of assassination, rumormongering and sabotage. If you prefer, you can begin the chronicle with an explosion or an attack, putting the players on the defensive

from the very beginning. The attempts on the characters' lives (or their domitors' or friends' lives) gradually escalate, and each bullet or bomb could have the characters' names on it. The group will probably have the nailbiting time of their lives as the war heats up. Finally, they'll be pressed to go on the offensive and start doing some damage of their own. The plot's seen a thousand incarnations, but it still makes for a good story.

Alternatively, the characters may be the aggressors from the very beginning. Being the ones who kick the anthill can be deliciously satisfying, especially if you're so subtle that your enemies don't know who's hitting them. Even better, when a character gets to count coup on something higher up on the food chain than herself, the sense of accomplishment can be exhilarating. Of course, this is an extremely dangerous game to play, but the adrenaline rush should be nothing short of intoxicating.

When running war chronicles, remember the ghouls' major advantage: their ability to operate in daylight. A frantic race through an enemy elder's haven, battling desperately to reach and stake the monster before sundown, can provide a nerve-wracking and thrilling story.

War chronicles have an almost endless supply of variations: clan vs. clan, Sabbat vs. Camarilla, ghouls vs. vampires, ghouls vs. Lupines, rebels vs. the prince...the list goes on and on. If the players are ready for some visceral roleplaying, then it shouldn't be too much trouble to design a conflict in which the characters have a strong stake.

• **Romance:** Vampires lose touch with their feelings more easily than ghouls do; the urgency of hormones fades with the death of the flesh. Although still capable of strong, often distorted passions, the childer of Caine often seem detached or blasé in comparison to their ghoul servants. Ghouls feel a natural obsession with vitae, an obsession that can easily transfer to the vampiric source of their beloved elixir. What's more, the charged, enhanced feelings of being *alive* tend to stir lusts in a ghoul that can't be easily slaked. These lusts can easily push a chronicle in horrific directions — but what if a ghoul focuses his powerful emotions in a more idealized way? What if a ghoul falls in love (or at least what he thinks is love), over and above Blood Bonding? The Blood Oath becomes all the more intense when coupled with the biological urge to take a mate, and many ghouls languish in a state of "love" they know full well will never be requited.

But what if a vampire actually returns that affection? True, this is hardly likely, but an...affectionate...domitor can lead to many possibilities, including the Embrace. What if another ghoul, or even a mortal, falls in love with a Blood Bound character? Or what if the player's character, an independent, falls hard for the vassal of an enemy? What happens if a ghoul becomes involved with a mortal he really cares about? Will he kill her in a violent fit, or will his domitor see her as a threat to the ghoul's loyalty? What if a revenant finds herself drawn to someone outside the family (a definite no-no!)? And just what are those revenant

courtships like, anyway? The answers may prove tender or foul, warm or cold. Although the ghoul may hope for a happy ending, the grim reality of the World of Darkness is a nigh-impossible obstacle to surmount.

• **Mortality:** Yes, ghouls are unaging creatures. But they're still mortal, something that is easy to overlook. A person pumped up on the Blood is like a PCP addict with Herculean strength, but all the vitae in the world can't save a ghoul from AIDS. If a ghoul and her domitor are shot to bits by machine-gun fire, the domitor goes into torpor — but the ghoul is dead.

Some ghouls, naturally, tend to think of themselves as immortals; revenants, thanks to their long life spans, are already a step in that direction. But all it takes is a car wreck to remind a ghoul how fragile she really is. Sure, she can regenerate most wounds — if she has a full Blood Pool, and if she hasn't suffered significant blood loss from the wounds themselves. And remember, she has to burn the Blood in her veins to do so — she may repair the structural damage, but she won't be in much shape to defend herself. To an independent, this becomes especially frightening. Say a ghoul's been carefully rationing his vitae until his next hunt, and then right out of nowhere, a car mauls him. He uses what's left of his hard-earned vitae to keep himself going, but now he's got to get some more doubly fast. And if he loses a leg? Ghouls can regenerate limbs with enough





vitae, but the characters don't have to know that. Even if he manages to regrow the limb, he may never look at himself the same way again.

Combat is the obvious way to play on ghouls' mortality, but it's by no means the best or only way. Disease, particularly a slow, wasting disease such as AIDS or cancer, can't be permanently excised with vitae. For some ghouls, their Blood-fueled power may be their way of going out in a blaze of glory.

Finally, nothing plays up the fragility of a ghoul's existence more than withdrawal. Without Disciplines, special healing powers or eternal youth, a character becomes all too human—even more so because she knows what she's missing.

Mood

Ghouls are very emotional beings, much more so than Cainites. Immerse your players in the mood you select for your story. Appeal to their every sense. Because the players are less powerful than the vampires from whom they feed, their survival is a tenuous thing. This can sharpen the senses, allowing an experience possibly more vivid than one vampire characters might offer.

- **Horror:** First and foremost, *Vampire* is a horror game. The terrifying inhumanity of the Kindred is thrown into even sharper relief in a ghoul chronicle. The characters are part of a deadly world—and not a terribly important part at that—and they are constantly in danger of being casually slain by an indifferent Cainite. The power they gain has a terrible price: loss of control. Vassals must fight to retain their individuality in the all-consuming tide of the Blood Bond. Revenants are slaves to their dark desires, if not directly to their families. Even independent ghouls must resist their urge to frenzy, and all ghouls have to cope with their dependence on vitae. Indeed, the Blood is the only thing keeping older ghouls alive—but it also prevents them from being truly human.

More importantly, vampires become far more frightening when the characters are inferior in power—and both sides know it. The Toreador assassin who might have been a mere rival for a coterie of vampires becomes a terrible, implacable monster in a ghoul chronicle. As natural predators, vampires tend to become *far* more sadistic with those who don't threaten them; the obvious analog is the cat toying with its frightened, injured prey. Ghouls' knowledge of Kindred is imperfect and subjective; the less they know, the more they have to fear. Even finding out specifics, such as linking the Samedi with the walking dead, is unlikely to lessen the dread.

Finally, the deepest horror should always come from within, not from without. Picture the ghoul who wakes up after a drunken binge, with only hazy memories of shouting and flashes of color, his hands soaked in blood...and gradually he remembers that his son was crying, but the house is very quiet now....

• **Ambition:** Many ghouls join a vampire's service in hopes that one night they will be elevated to Kindred themselves. They view their domitors with longing and envy, dreaming of the night that they too will be masters. A chronicle might recount the aspirations of a group of ghouls: Will they eventually attain what they seek, or will their quest for power end in tragedy? Will they sacrifice too much to attain their ends, and, if so, will they ever realize their mistake? Will they throw one another to the wolves as they struggle to the top? "There can be only one" is a catchy sound bite until you think about the implications — better not get too close to anybody.

Even if a ghoul cares nothing for the Embrace, she may still aspire to be her domitor's favorite. Trapped by the obsession of the Blood Bond, vassals often struggle to outdo their rival servitors, risking their status, their ghouldom, even their lives and sanity to gain the master's favor.

Ambition can also serve as a vital element in revenant and independent chronicles. Most revenants wish to gain respect from their Sabbat masters and distinguish themselves in the sect's eyes. Their pursuits may lead them to act as efficient agents for the Sabbat, or may tempt them to clandestinely destroy or discredit sect members, thereby making themselves shine all the brighter. Politics among the Sabbat is a gruesome business, but who's to say a clever revenant can't go all the way to the top? Of course, the Sabbat and its associated families are a hungry lot, just waiting to devour those who step a touch too carelessly. Similarly, independent ghoul characters should usually have goals more far-reaching than nightly survival. Do the characters crave revenge? Power? A nobler goal, such as peace with the Kindred? Whatever the characters' intentions, pursuit of ambitions can lead to several good stories.

Ghoul Characters in Vampire: The Masquerade

Although a ghoul character in a coterie of vampires appears to be at a serious disadvantage, this isn't always true. To be sure, the ghoul has far less physical prowess to begin with, and cannot as readily increase her supernatural skills. However, a ghoul can go abroad in daylight, which offers a tremendous advantage. She can operate as usual during normal business hours, making deals and purchasing special equipment. If the other characters locate an enemy's haven, the ghoul is a perfect choice to slip past the guards and decapitate the Cainite by day.

The imbalance of power between Kindred and mortal may affect the game most during combat or similarly flamboyant shows of strength. If a ghoul's vampire companions have trouble resisting an elder's centuries-honed Disciplines, what can a near-mortal do? However, a clever ghoul

is capable of surviving (often by avoiding) situations like these. Lacking that alternative, another recourse is to make oneself less of a target; it takes some doing to divert an elder's attention to a more convenient victim, but it's possible. It certainly won't be easy, but what else is new? At the very least, the character may earn extra experience points for enduring such adverse conditions.

Troupe Play

Another option is to have each player generate two characters, one ghoul and one vampire. Each player's characters may simply be linked to each other (such as a domitor and vassal), or the group may choose to interconnect one another's characters in a more complicated web. As the chronicle progresses, the players take turns roleplaying the band of ghouls (during daylight hours) and the coterie of vampires (after the sun sets). There's ample room for switching between characters, even if the vampires are stuck with the night shift.

One of the more rewarding facets of such a chronicle is the shift in mindset. As the sun sets in the game, each player moves from roleplaying an emotionally supercharged mortal to taking on the personality of a true predator. Few other combinations allow a troupe to explore two personalities at nearly the same time with such a natural transition.

The difference in perception is equally admirable. Here, the coterie's Kindred rivals take on the form of frighteningly powerful adversaries when seen through the eyes of the ghouls. Conversely, the players may not be so cavalier about having their vampire characters offhandedly tear apart a rival's vassals; the fact that these retainers have feelings as well may haunt them after having walked for a time in the ghouls' shoes.

All-Ghoul Chronicles

Of course, it's equally possible to run an entertaining Vampire game in which not a single player roleplays a vampire. Kindred society is just as Byzantine and sinister from a ghoul's worm's-eye perspective, if not more so.

In fact, you may want to run a Vampire chronicle in which all the characters start as ghouls. At the climax of a certain story, or perhaps at various times throughout the run, the characters are Embraced and step into Kindred society as full members. Such an "initiation" can be far more satisfying than ordinary preludes. In fact, this form of two-step chronicle produces savvier, stronger Cainites; they have already seen how vampiric society works, and have the edge of experience. They've spilled blood and had their own spilled as well. Although still neonates, they are more formidable than fledgling vampires who didn't know about the Kindred until they were Embraced.

Of course, you should keep a careful eye on group dynamics when designing a ghoulish chronicle. Just as a mix of Camarilla and Sabbat vampires usually leads to a disastrous end, the difficulties arising between vassals, revenants and independent ghouls can strain the game. You may want to guide the characters away from setting up too many conflicts of interest. Certainly, it can be fun having some players secretly working at cross-purposes, but too much of this activity causes the story to devolve into a petty show of one-upmanship. It might be best to have the players be all of one sort — independent, vassal, or revenant — or encourage them to develop emotional ties between characters. There's nothing like the Blood Bond for breaking up a friendship, though, so be warned.

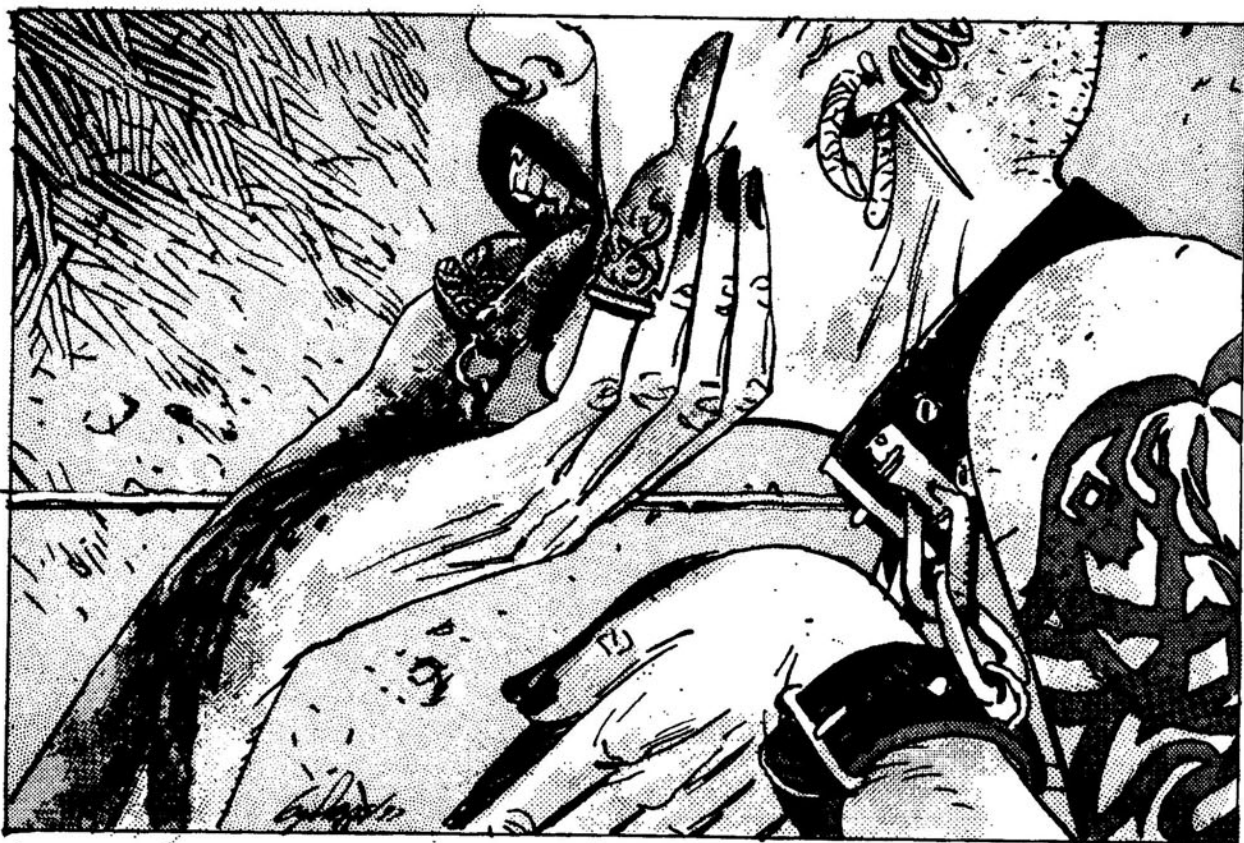
It may be tempting to set up a chronicle in which one player runs a vampire and the rest play her ghoulish servants. However, this should be tried only by practiced troupes. It's all too easy for the chronicle to focus entirely on the vampire, treating her servants as extensions of her. Also, with all the characters technically subservient to one player, the temptation to abuse that power can become irresistible.

The following are just a few possible ideas for ghoulish chronicles. Bear in mind that these chronicles can shift dramatically with just a little effort: A domitor is killed, an independent ghoulish is Blood Bound, or a revenant flees the

Sabbat. Orchestrate matters to a fittingly exciting conclusion, or let the story go where it will and see what happens. The results can be fascinating.

- **Servants of the Master:** The characters are all retainers of the same domitor. Although they might have been chosen for different reasons or to perform different tasks, the group is (usually) expected to work together to achieve the master's ends. These ends may range from covert espionage (in the interests of furthering the domitor's status in Kindred society) to acting as a daylight hit squad. The characters can readily develop powerful emotional ties with one another; if all are in love with the same abusive, playful or generous domitor, they have a strong emotional common ground. The chronicle can also take an interesting turn if the domitor is killed, forcing the characters to either take service with another vampire or go independent. This is probably the most basic form of ghoulish chronicle, and is hard to beat for simplicity.

- **Brothers in Arms:** Although not vassals to the same domitor, the characters serve the same ends. They might be vassals to a coterie of allied vampires, or possibly even independent ghouls who seek the same goals. The ties between characters are not as inherently strong in this sort of chronicle, but a common purpose can do much to unite the group. An additional bonus is that of variety; in serving different domitors, the characters are likely to have more diversified skills and Disciplines.



• **Sabbat Demipack:** The characters are an assorted group of revenants and vassals who report to the sect rather than to a single master. They probably have a sponsor of some sort (whether a pack, a bishop or something else), who has overcome the natural Sabbat hatred of ghouls to try a new band of servants. The ghouls exist only at this sponsor's whim, so they must justify his faith in them or be messily disposed of. Unfortunately, it's very unlikely that the rest of the Sabbat will be so open-minded as their sponsor. The characters will often have to defend themselves from abusive vampires — not an easy task in a sect where killing other Sabbat is taboo. Some of the ghouls may aspire to being Embraced, but for now they must serve the Sabbat's needs. Whether social climbers or not, the group must strive for victory on all its missions, and may pursue other projects on members' free time.

A Sabbat ghouls game usually centers on violence and assassination, although the Sabbat is certainly capable of subtlety. If they distinguish themselves, the characters may well find themselves as part of the first or second wave of a siege. This stage of the chronicle is as "do or die" as any other, if not more so. Success may bring rewards enough to satisfy even the highest ambitions; failure is certain to be punished.

• **Unmastered:** In this chronicle, the players generate a cell of the Unmastered (see p. 94). Each ghoul may have a different reason for joining, but all are united by the organization. Obviously, independent ghouls are the most likely characters, but a few revenants may enter into the mix. It's even possible that a character or two are still vassals, but have resisted the power of the Bond long enough to contact the Unmastered. Their extraction may make an excellent first story. By the story's end, the characters may have had to kill several of their fellow vassals, and even betray or destroy their domitor.

Many Unmastered stories deal with day-to-day survival. Are the characters lucky enough to have a regular source of vitae? Probably not. Just acquiring monthly nourishment will be a real struggle. In addition, the group must be exceptionally careful to avoid compromising the organization's secrecy. The characters may choose to dabble in politics or may attempt to

exterminate the vampires of a given city — the possibilities are, if not endless, certainly considerable.

• **Wild Children:** One of the trickier chronicles, this game assumes that the characters are all independent, with no allegiance to anyone but themselves. What's more, they may well have discovered the remarkable qualities of vitae on their own. How did such a group encounter its first vampire? What made the characters think to drink its blood? Merely answering these two questions can provide the beginning of a truly unique chronicle. The Wild Children may be a crass biker gang like the Young Bloods, or a secretive, neo-Masonic cult. They may guzzle vitae from the slashed wrists of their prey, or ritualistically share the Blood in a perverted communion. It all depends on the mood.

Naturally, most stories in this chronicle revolve around gaining vitae. More than that, stories should also center on the group's pursuit of vampire lore. Without any "in" to Kindred society, the band will have to learn the hard way who's easy prey and who should just be left alone.

• **Test Group Alpha:** An even more bizarre approach is the idea of ghouls who gained their power in a "scientific" procedure. A Kindred is caught by a small research facility, and the nature of her blood is discovered; the characters, then, begin as volunteers in a peculiar experiment. It's most advisable that one of the characters be the scientist in charge of the project; otherwise, the group may never leave the lab. But once Test Group Alpha begins to look for other vampires in order to prolong their powers...look out.

Ghouls in Vampire: The Dark Ages

Ghoul characters offer as many new possibilities for a **Dark Ages** troupe as they do for a modern-day chronicle. Since almost no humans do business at night, ghouls are invaluable to the clever coterie. This is doubly true when the group needs to travel; on the road, the presence of a clever ghoul can easily mean the difference between unlife and Final Death. If one or more of the ghouls in the group are run by players, then the fate of the coterie doesn't lie entirely with Storyteller characters. The king's guardsmen may want to know what's in the long, canvas-covered boxes on those wagons, after all. And it's more satisfying for a player to distract, bribe, threaten or fast-talk the guardsmen out of a quick search than for the Storyteller simply to say, "Some guards threaten to open the boxes you're in, but your ghouls talk them out of it."

In addition, a mortal character is in for a far more dramatic time during the Long Night. Here, vampires are terrible and frightening figures; they are the undisputed masters of the night. When the sun sets, and the only light comes from a guttering lamp, the ever-present threat of Cainite marauders becomes even more grim. Here, ghouldom is a Faustian pact struck with deadly fiends; the characters are damned for their deals with the devil, and they know it. They have strength, health, eternal youth — the soul is a small price to pay.

For information on how ghouls of the clans were treated during the 12th and 13th centuries, we heartily recommend the **Dark Ages** supplement **Book of Storyteller Secrets**. The dirty tricks concealed therein can only improve a chronicle set in the Long Night. A ghoul character is in for a rough time, to be sure, but she can prove immeasurably valuable to her Cainite companions.



The characters are at a severe disadvantage from the very beginning, as many or even all of them might not believe in the supernatural. As they gradually practice their new capabilities, they should simultaneously begin to gather hints concerning the true nature of the Kindred. Of course, their ties to the scientific community make them attractive targets — they present a dire threat to the Masquerade. If the local Cainites learn of their existence, life could become very dangerous indeed.

An interesting variant on this chronicle might be to make the characters unwitting test subjects, quietly ghouléd by Pentex or a similar group. Once the characters learn the nature of the experiments run on them, they may well cut their ties and flee their sponsor — only to find themselves compelled to learn more about these “vampires” in order to preserve their powers. Or maybe they don’t run at all, but willingly take up arms for Pentex....

The Unmastered

The Unmastered was formed in the 1950s as a sort of underground railroad for newly orphaned or escaped ghouls. Although the fledgling group numbered perhaps 20 at its start, the four pivotal founders were Gregory Winter, Ginevra Salamanca (Obertus), Enrico Sagunto and Philip Marshall. Each had extensive experience in dealing with the Kindred, and each was willing to share knowledge with less fortunate members. Within a period of two years, the cellular structure of the Unmastered was formed and the Core was established.

Sagunto, a former member of the Society of St. Leopold’s Gladius Dei, was never a ghoul. He had gone rogue from the Inquisition some years earlier over a methodology dispute, and devoted himself to assisting the victims of Kindred manipulation. Although he acquired at least 12 confirmed vampire kills to his name during his time with the Unmastered, he was finally slain by a Malkavian in the Anarch Free States.

Philip Marshall was an independent ghoul who’d run into his first vampire while working as a photojournalist. He soon learned of the beneficial properties of Kindred blood, and began hiring himself out as a sort of mercenary investigator, paid in vitae. He learned about the Blood Bond the hard way, but was freed when Sagunto slew his domitor at the climax of an auto-da-fé. Marshall continued to uncover Kindred secrets for the Unmastered, but vanished sometime in the late ‘60s while tracking down information on the Inconnu. A few rumored sightings trickle in every year, but none seems to be anything significant.

The remaining two, Salamanca and Winter, are still an integral part of the Core, and have gradually increased their influence across the world. They’ve learned from their mistakes, and are largely responsible for the present efficiency of the organization.

Today the Unmastered is a fairly large sect. Its methods of recruitment are often very convincing, but its numbers are kept in check, both by the available vitae supply and by attrition at the hands of more powerful supernaturals. It is secretive enough that neither the Camarilla nor the Sabbat has learned of the Unmastered's existence, although certain princes have begun to piece together the rumors of the "ghoul underground railroad."

Goals

The sect's goals are simple enough: to serve as a safe place where renegade or orphaned ghouls can flee; to preserve its own existence by acquiring vitae however possible; to maintain its members' independence and freedom; and to keep its existence a secret from vampires in general (which also helps in preserving its members' existence and freedom).

Of course, individuals often pursue their own agendas in addition to these goals. The sect tolerates this so long as nobody threatens to compromise Unmastered security. Those who (knowingly or not) betray the sect are not given a second warning.

Global Influence

The Unmastered operates mainly in the United States; the combination of personal freedoms and lax criminal investigation allows it to operate comfortably from the shadows. It tends to set up equally large cells in Sabbat and Camarilla territory. The Unmastered steps up its activities in areas contested by Camarilla and Sabbat; the war between sects gives it ample opportunity to pick off stragglers on both sides. The Anarch Free States serve as an excellent staging ground for Unmastered activities; in this war zone, one more missing vampire tends to attract little attention. One or two Unmastered ghouls have been careless enough to attract FBI attention (in particular, the SAD; for more information, see **Project Twilight**). The Core's official policy is to bury the offender in deep cover for some time — or, if the wayward ghoul has been flamboyant enough, simply to bury her.

Canada is a slightly different story; generally speaking, the Unmastered has a minimal presence there. Although the Sabbat territories make for interesting hunting grounds, the low crime rate does tend to mean that bodies get noticed.

Some cells have moved into South and Central America, but the Unmastered finds it slow, dangerous going there. Mexico City swarms with Kindred who enjoy the easy prey, and the fat and lazy among them often find themselves hunted in turn.

The Unmastered has spread into Europe, where it has established cells in London, Paris, Berlin and Barcelona. It avoids Italy for the time being, based mostly on the advice of the deceased Sagunto; the stronghold of Giovanni, Lasombra and the overzealous Society of St. Leopold makes for dangerous hunting grounds. What's more, the

Unmastered has yet to send anyone into Russia; the fact that nothing has been heard from Russian vampires in years disturbs the Core greatly.

The Middle East is a volatile place, and to date only two cells have proved strong enough to survive there. Australia is a similarly low priority; apart from two or three cities, it hasn't enough Kindred to spare.

The sect has little influence in most areas of the Third World, and little reason to go there. The only real exception is the vampiric paradise of the Caribbean; with so many vampires jockeying among themselves for control of the region, the Unmastered realizes it would be foolish to overlook such an opportunity.

The Unmastered has tried to establish cells in Asia twice. Both times, a few reports of the hideous and powerful Cathayan vampires filtered back to the Core before the Asian cells vanished completely. With the reversion of Hong Kong to China's control, the Core has abandoned plans for a third attempt. The sect simply knows too little of the vampires of the East, and considers it too risky to try learning more.

Methods

Although Unmastered methodology is still evolving, the Core has established a few basic tactics that hold up well in practice. Part of the reeducation given to recruits involves teaching them to think on their feet; members are expected to be able to abandon a failing plan and improvise ways to salvage a situation. However, the Unmastered usually goes by the playbook first, making things up only in times of crisis.

When the sect has gathered enough new recruits to justify a new cell, the Core picks a target city based on intelligence reports. Obviously, the preferred cities are those with high Kindred populations, and it's all the better if the vampires there are fighting among themselves. Then the Core assigns a base cell of four or so operatives, split evenly between seasoned hunters (reassigned from their previous locales and replaced with fresh recruits) and newcomers.

The cell is armed with as much information as possible about its new home, and given a small backup supply of vitae. Once the cell moves in, its members immediately set to work verifying their information and gathering new data. Some cells send members directly into Kindred society, either under the guise of mercenary ghouls or (less commonly) disguised as vampires themselves. Their goal is not to earn the local Cainites' trust (which would be practically impossible), but to learn the local Cainites' names and habits.

Generally, the Unmastered hunts only when it is well informed. True, once the cell's vitae supply runs low, it may seek targets with abandon; for the most part, however, it prefers picking fights as carefully as possible. Hunting parties (or individuals, if skilled enough) try to capture prey, either by using compound bows or crossbows to stake their target, or by gunning a vampire into torpor and letting her heal herself only in

captivity. Captured vampires are blindfolded, fed enough to replenish their blood supplies, and drained of their vitae. The most experienced cell member may interrogate the captive in order to learn more about the city's Kindred, but this is usually done only when the cell is sure the prisoner is quite secure. The cell typically drains enough from the vampire for all members to drink their fill twice, then destroys the captive with fire or sunlight. The fewer loose ends, the less chance the cell will be compromised.

The Core

Almost all Unmastered activity traces back to the Core, the founders of the group. There are only three active members of the Core (though there are plenty of rumors about shadowy figures who drift in and out of Unmastered politics, none of these individuals have made themselves known). These three — Ginevra Salamanca, Gregory Winter, and the mysteriously mutable Carter — share a command of Cainite lore that would make many Obertus elders envious, although it is far from perfect.

Although the Core cannot govern every facet of Unmastered activity, it does call a lot of the shots. The three direct many cells and constantly coordinate information on Kindred from cities around the globe. In recent times, they have learned of the existence of something called the Black Hand and have begun to filter through rumors of the sect called Inconnu. Their combination of vast experience, unmatched espionage skills and remarkable intelligence makes the three a dangerous group to cross, and a more than adequate authority for the Unmastered.

Ginevra Salamanca

Ginevra Salamanca was in fact born Ginevra Obertus, to the Obertuses of Haverhill, Massachusetts. She was subjected to her parents' demented experimentation at an early age — the two were trying out alternate methods of speeding a revenant's mental and physical maturity. The process worked fairly well on Ginevra, possibly better than her parents had expected. She developed an astonishing intelligence at an early age, and became aware of their manipulations long before they expected her to do so. This knowledge filled her with contempt, and once she had biologically aged to adolescence, she left.

Ginevra's increased intelligence served her well in the outside world, allowing her to evade the pursuers sent to drag her back home. Eventually, she found herself living with a small band of Zantos. She was growing quite bored with them when the Zantos began dropping left and right, killed off one by one by the ex-Society of Leopold hunter, Enrico Sagunto. Ginevra picked this time to betray her companions, siding with the mortal and quickly gaining his confidence. She never told him her real name.

Sagunto's passion for fighting the good fight was unlike anything Ginevra had seen from revenant or mortal. At first, she couldn't have cared less for his cause. But his emotion enticed her, flooding her with sympathy and a passion of her own. The two eventually became lovers, and soon after joined with Winter and Marshall to form the Unmastered.

Ginevra's revenant-born predilections, however, eventually drove Sagunto away from her. When he died, she never mourned him. But the passion he'd kindled within her was the strongest emotion she'd ever felt. To keep it alive (and, some might say, to keep her *feeling* alive), she has redoubled her activities in the Unmastered, living vicariously by making the impossible happen.

Salamanca is a beautiful young woman, having been fleshcrafted into an almost faelike, exotic appearance. Like the other members of her family, she is reclusive, single-minded and mildly perverse. She finds it hard to trust Carter, particularly whenever the enigmatic being changes faces again.

Recently, Salamanca has been tempted by the allure of the Embrace. The thought of true immortality, of a life span long enough to see every other Cainite either dead or subdued, dances in her subconscious. Naturally, she is carefully considering the issue, and may not act on it for another 50 years or so. She also finds herself attracted to the strength of Winter's character, and is coolly contemplating whether or not any good would come of a carnal relationship with the veteran ghoul. Again, nothing may come of this notion for some years, but the thought is something else with which to occupy her busy mind.



Gregory Winter

Winter is perhaps the archetypal Unmastered. He has been vassal to a cruel domitor, and he has scabbled after vitae to maintain his powers. In the process, he has become one of the most skilled ghouls ever to draw breath. Without his experience, it's possible that the Unmastered might never have survived as long as they have.



Nobody knows who his first domitor was, or even what clan. From listening closely to Winter's occasional sardonic anecdotes, the other Core members have guessed that he served as a powerful Camarilla vampire's right hand for some time, probably on the American East Coast during the 19th century. He severed his ties sometime after the Civil War and managed to survive as an independent for a few years. Eventually he was forced to join another Cainite's retinue, but during World War I he swapped domitors almost as often as a Toreador changes outfits. Nobody's quite sure how he managed it, but the other two Core members have their guesses. For one, Winter is amazingly skilled at personal subterfuge; he may not be a Machiavellian schemer on a grandiose level, but he can fool almost anyone almost all of the time. For another, his long years as a ghoul seem to have built in him an innate resistance to the Blood Bond. He's destroyed more than one Cainite who staked her unlife on her servant's blind devotion.

At the close of World War II, Winter found himself fleeing England with the orphaned retinue of a powerful Ventruue. In his efforts to provide for his inexperienced companions, he wound up making a slew of contacts that soon blossomed into a full-fledged support network. When he met Philip Marshall, they discovered a common purpose and, more out of enlightened self-interest than anything else, they formed the Unmastered.

Winter seems to be a man in his late 40s, with short-cut gray hair and nondescript brown eyes. He has a very dense build; his musculature isn't so much defined as rough-carved. His knowledge of Disciplines is quite extraordinary for a ghoul, but he prefers to rely on more mundane methods to fulfill his tasks; he needs no Obfuscate to pull off a disguise, and his hunches rival his skill at Auspex. Winter has made the most of his extended life span, and has mastered many skills, all practical. He now spends most of his days sharing this knowledge, tutoring Unmastered recruits in the fine arts of lies, hunting and sabotage.

The other Core members are beginning to worry about Winter's extended age. They know that he's nearing the age when missing even one month of vitae might kill him. Although Winter has been the model of steadfast loyalty to date, it's hard to dismiss the possibility that desperation might one night drive him to sell out the Unmastered if there is no other way to save his life. Consequently, they have seen to it that the sect regularly sends portions of vitae his way, and try to coerce Winter away from any field projects in which he feels like getting involved.

Carter

Carter is perhaps the most enigmatic Core member, even to her fellow founders. She joined soon after Sagunto's death, following a meeting with Winter and Salamanca in which she convinced them that she would be invaluable to their efforts. When tested, Carter demonstrated a grasp of Kindred lore that rivaled even Winter's, handing the sect secret information about the princes of three major cities. Soon after, Carter was inducted to the Core, the better to tap her uncanny reservoir of knowledge.

Although Carter's loyalty was demonstrated time and again, in 1960 she shocked the other Core members by appearing after an extended absence — with a completely different face and build. Intensive questioning revealed that this was indeed the same person who'd aided in the capture of a fledgling Sabbat pack mere weeks before. Gradually, the





others came to accept Carter's change of form, which was good: A year later, she did it again. Carter has now changed her physical form no fewer than 15 times, often changing race and — on at least three occasions — gender as well.

In actuality, Carter is not a living being at all. She is actually a wraith, one who uses her powers to inhabit the bodies of living humans in order to communicate with her physical allies. Her voluminous store of information comes from her practice of abandoning her physical host to spy invisibly on her targets, who seldom have any reason to suspect a wraith's presence. Only Salamanca and Winter know of her true nature; her odd tendencies to leave her body behind are explained to lower-ranking Unmastered as a talent for out-of-body experiences.

The mortal who was Carter died in the Depression, the victim of a jaded Toreador prince who sought to lighten his spirits with a bit of gameplay. After running the young girl through a series of emotional hurdles, he casually had her executed to suit his decadent pleasure. The furious girl's spirit refused to pass on and was trapped in the Underworld seeking revenge. She spent years mastering the arcane powers of her new form, and further years learning all she could about the Kindred. (Part of her education was the practical lesson that some vampires can indeed deal with wraiths; to this night, Carter avoids Giovanni and Samedi with a passion.)

Once she learned of the Unmastered, Carter immediately resolved to join them. Her hated Toreador was overthrown but not slain several years ago, and she has thus far been unable to locate him again. Therefore, she uses the Unmastered as a means for her ultimate goal — utterly humiliating and then destroying the creature that had her degraded and slain. Along the way, she takes a certain amount of pleasure from getting revenge on any vampires she may, but also enjoys helping ghouls battle free from their sick masters.

These days, Carter uses her expertise in Puppetry to leave a trail of false identities. She does so by repeatedly possessing a person until the host's personality is completely submerged, then utterly taking control of the body. However, Carter can only maintain a given body for a short period of time before she must abandon it and return to the Underworld, for reasons she refuses to discuss. (As near as Winter can figure, this has something to do with "working off her karmic debt one piece at a time.") She typically leaves her comatose host in the hands of an Unmastered underling with orders to care for it, but accidents can happen, and often Carter finds herself in search of a new face. At such times, she usually tries to pick someone as vile as her original tormentor, but she is sometimes less discerning when ruled by her passion for revenge.

Conflict

Ghouls come in many varieties, and they can find themselves in the midst of all sorts of possible conflicts. A chronicle may involve several of the following ideas, particularly if the characters defect to or from multiple sides in the course of their careers.

- **Independents vs. Kindred:** There are two basic ways to get vitae: trapping or killing vampires and hiring oneself out to them. Of course, the latter usually involves the former to some degree. Independent ghouls seeking to sustain their power without becoming Blood Bound are going to have to pick their targets and employers carefully, or else the city's entire Kindred population may be at their throats. But you do what you must to survive....

- **Vassals vs. Kindred:** A servant often has to do quite a bit of dirty work for her domitor. The pawn may not be as powerful as the knight or rook, but she's certainly expected to do her part to win the game. If that involves sacrificing herself, so be it. If not, she's proved she can handle tough situations. The characters may be pivotal agents in their domitors' political maneuverings, completing vital tasks while their masters chat in Elysium. This sort of conflict can offer a high-stakes edge to campaign espionage. After all, if caught, their domitors will almost certainly deny knowledge of the ghouls' activities, and their captors will be free to do as they like with the upstart mortals.

- **Camarilla vs. Sabbat:** Perhaps the archetypal conflict of many Vampire games, the war between sects is just as immediate for the ghoule servants on both sides. The characters may find themselves defending their domitors against vampire and ghoul invaders from the other side, or under orders to attack their sect's rivals. What's more, the group may find ample opportunity to switch sides if the inducements are strong enough to overcome the Blood Bond. And if the other side wins, but the characters are still alive, it may be time to start over in a new city, where the whole process may begin again....

- **Vassals vs. the Unmastered:** The Unmastered is, all told, a reasonably benevolent organization, but try telling that to vampires. Furthermore, there's usually only so much vitae to go around, so an Unmastered cell may well feel the need to eliminate any local ghouls who don't look like easy recruits. The characters may find themselves in the ironic position of battling their would-be saviors, all in the name of protecting their beloved domitors. This is a particularly good conflict in that the opposition is roughly the same power level as the player characters, but is usually clever, better armed and well trained. The players will certainly have to use their brains and a bit of luck to score a victory against these veteran vampire-hunters.



• **Ghouls vs. Lupines:** It's dangerous work, which is why most domitors feel that their ghouls are the ones to do it. Hunting Lupines can be a good way for an entire group of ghouls to get killed. But if they succeed, the local Cainites may offer them a bit more respect — or notice them as potential upstarts. Vassals and revenants don't have to hog all the fun, either; independents may well wonder if werewolf blood has the same potency as vitae. And, of course, there's no reason that the Lupines can't come to the characters — werewolves have a definite bias against corruption, and a ghoul smells of the corrupt in no small way.

• **Ghouls vs. Blood Bond:** Nobody asks to fall in love. Vassals get asked to do some dirty things, and even the loyalty of the Blood Bond can only go so far. What would it take to make a vassal start straining against the greatest passion he's ever felt? What if he was in love before he was chosen by his domitor? Cautious domitors often toss the occasional carrot to their vassals, just to keep the Bond reinforced — what if a ghoul sees such a conciliatory gesture for what it is?

Don't think this is a vassal-only source of conflict, either. An independent may have to choose between drinking three times from one vampire or losing her Blood-engendered abilities. If she's been a ghoul for any length of time, this choice can be a difficult one. What if the Bond is accidental? Revenants can conceivably get into the

same fix, too, although their natural vitae reserves tend to keep them from relying on outside elixir. Love and lust are troublesome that way.

• **Ghouls vs. Mortals:** No ghoul should dismiss the local police as harmless. Even the most careful character can leave enough evidence behind on an "errand" to become a suspect. What's more, Sabbat ghouls and revenants are often murderers on the level of serial killers, and may attract the attention of the FBI. A properly run story with the law as the antagonist can impress a very real respect for law enforcement in the ghouls' minds.

Of course, anyone who's ever been part of a family knows that not all conflicts are solved by flying bullets on either side. A ghoul with any sort of normal life (which is to say, most vassals) is accountable to more than just the civil authorities. What about parents? Children? A spouse? How does a vassal explain where she's *been* for the last few days? The problem is only worsened by the Blood — if the pressure gets too high, or the baby just doesn't stop screaming, the ghoul may go berserk. A ghoul's family may somehow sense that something's *changed* with Mommy — they may fear her, cringing, recoiling and being nervously silent whenever she comes home after one of those "business trips." If the ghoul has any love left for her family at all, this distance can be heartbreaking.

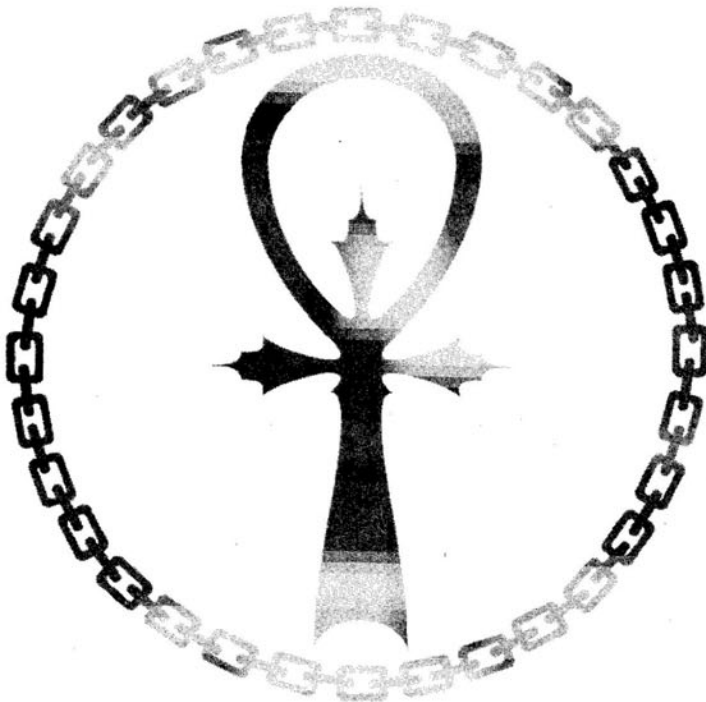


• **Revenants vs. Revenants:** Family feuds are no laughing matter where the depraved revenants are concerned. Although the Sabbat frowns on internal disruption and is likely to punish warring revenants, there are reasons aplenty for a local family to try to eliminate their rivals. They'll just have to be subtle about it, is all. The players may be loyal sons and daughters of their family, ready and willing to do some damage to their hated enemies, or they may be reluctantly dragged into a war that threatens to extinguish both sides. They may even have friends on the opposite side — which typically leads to tragedy. Capulets and Montagues, anyone?

• **Ghouls vs. the Inquisition:** The Society of St. Leopold knows little of the differences between vampire and ghoul. Anyone who draws power from blood makes a likely target in their eyes, and a character may find herself the target of an auto-da-fé. The characters may also find themselves defending an ally or domitor against the hunters; after all, the Society knows that it's best to hunt by day, and the group may be the only ones awake when the Inquisition comes calling.

• **Vassals vs. Vassals:** Few people like to share a loved one. Bitter rivalries fester in the households of most domitors, and the players may become involved in a fight for their domitor's affections. To complicate matters further, their rivals may have seniority, greater charisma, or any number of advantages to make the contest more challenging. This sort of conflict can also erupt when two rival Cainites seek to upstage one another in the prince's eyes, and the ghouls become their main tools. The characters will probably gladly leap to defend their domitor's honor ("Undo Hugo's little plot for me, darlings, and I'll be *ever* so grateful...").

For a really disturbing plot, have the characters run into an ancient, terrifying ghoul servitor of a Methuselah or Inconnu. Such a being will not only present a formidable challenge for an entire troupe, but also graphically demonstrate the fate that awaits the characters should they survive their centuries of servitude. Some ghouls might even be "scared straight" after an encounter with one of these hoary, inhuman slaves.



Templates

Ghouls may end up facing many sorts of opponents, from vampires to Lupines. However, their ability to operate unhindered in daylight means that many of their opponents will be ghouls. The following ghoul templates are designed as quick-start rivals, enemies or even allies for the troupe.

Vitae Hunter

This is the sort of hunter who has been surviving for some time by her wits, and who has more than one vampire kill to her name. She has lost much of her compassion over the years, but the constant fight for survival has given her a razor's edge.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Drive 3, Firearms 4, Melee 3, Repair 2, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 1, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Politics 1, Science 2

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Fortitude 1, Obfuscate 1, Potence 1

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 4, Resources 2

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 9



Revenant Agent

These revenants are typical Sabbat agents who serve as daylight muscle for the sect. They tend to travel in small packs, and can be a real threat for ghoul characters. However, at least ghoul enemies have a chance of being awake when they come calling...

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Repair 1, Security 2, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Knowledges: Computer 1, Investigation 3, Law 1, Linguistics 1, Occult 1

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 1; Dominate, Vicissitude or Auspex 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Resources 1

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 3, Morale 3

Path of Enlightenment (varies): 4

Willpower: 6

Szlachta

These horrible creatures are the fleshcrafted minions of the Tzimisce. Many *szlachta* are lobotomized as part of the process, making them bestial creatures who understand only how best to obey. *Szlachta* may possess any or all of the Vicissitude Modifications listed on p. 84, and are typically twisted into nightmarish caricatures of living creatures (all possess the Flaw: Monstrous). The appalling alterations they undergo serve two purposes: They become more frightening, often a crucial edge in battle; and no *szlachta* may ever

enter human society again. Without the temptation of flight, *szlachta* are among the most brutally loyal ghouls an unfortunate intruder may encounter.

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 4, Dodge 2
Skills: Melee 1, Stealth 3, Tracking 2
Knowledges: Any three at 2
Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 1
Backgrounds: None
Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 5
Humanity: 2
Willpower: 4

Vozhd

Run. These nightmarish leviathans are hybrids created from 15+ ghouls who have been grafted together through Vicissitude, Thaumaturgy and Sabbat sadism. A lobotomized *vozhd* is immune to Animalism, Dominate and Presence; a sentient one (if the rumors are true) would be even worse.

Vozhd are rarely used in this age of media and Masquerade. When they are deployed, they are treated as walking tacnukes: Sabbat point them at their targets, then run for cover. *Vozhd* are omnivorous, eating anything in their path — ghouls are as tasty as mortals or vampires.

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6
Social: All Attributes 0
Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 1 (or higher?), Wits 2 (or higher?)
Virtues: Irrelevant
Humanity: Irrelevant
Disciplines: Fortitude 4, Potence 6



Willpower: 10
Blood Pool: 20/2
Health Levels: OK (x5), -1 (x5), -2 (x5), -5 (x3), Incap.
Attack: Strike/8 dice + Potence; Bite/8 dice, automatic on the turn after a grab; Palp/6 dice + Potence, constrict thereafter
Multiple Attacks: 10 extra dice, usable only to simulate multiple attacks
Abilities: Alertness 5, Brawl 2, Intimidation 6

Animals

Almost every vampire with Animalism will at some point make a ghoul of an animal. Ghouled beasts have many advantages over human servitors: They lack dangerous ambition, they are less likely to misinterpret orders, and they are readily predictable. If a ghouled lion pride tends to be a bit more trouble to feed than humans, what of it? At the very least, a domitor doesn't have to deal with fawning flattery and pleas for attention every hour of the night.

The following statistics are for base animals. To represent ghouled versions, add a dot in Potence, plus either Fortitude 1, Celerity 1, or both, as desired. Some particularly ancient animals, or those warped by Nosferatu blood, might have additional Health Levels.

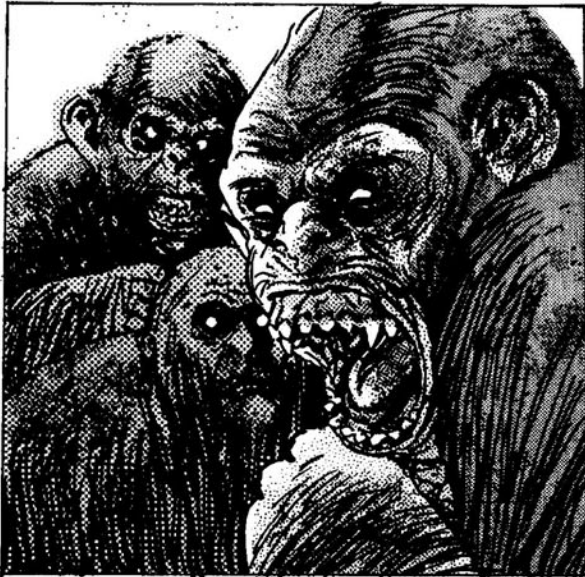
Alligator/Crocodile

Strength: 5, **Dexterity:** 2, **Stamina:** 5
Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incap.
Attack: Bite/6 dice; Tail/5 dice
Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Stealth 3



Ape/Gorilla

Strength: 4, Dexterity: 3, Stamina: 4
Willpower: 4, Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3,
-5, Incap.
Attack: Bite/4 dice; Rend/6 dice
Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimi-
dation 3, Stealth 2



Leopard/Mountain Lion

Greg Decker

Strength: 4, Dexterity: 4, Stamina: 4
Willpower: 4, Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -5,
Incap.
Attack: Claw/5 dice; Bite/5 dice
Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Climbing
4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 3



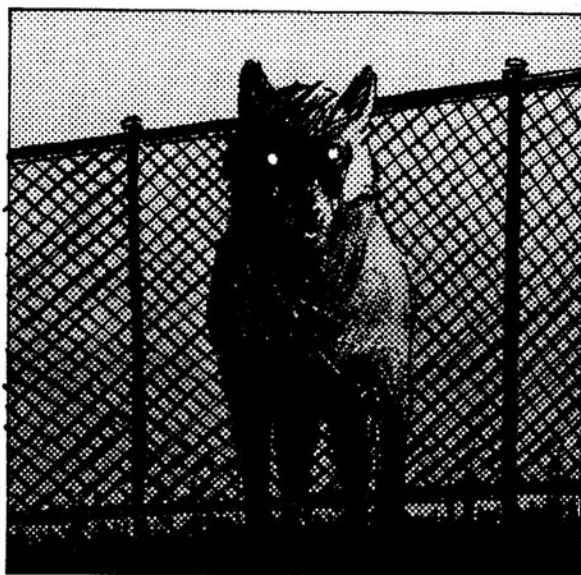
Lion/Jaguar

Strength: 4, Dexterity: 3, Stamina: 3
Willpower: 5, Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2,
-5, Incap.
Attack: Claw/5 dice; Bite/6 dice
Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2,
Intimidation 4, Stealth 3



Wolf/Large Dog

Strength: 2, Dexterity: 3, Stamina: 3
Willpower: 3, Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -3, -5,
Incap.
Attack: Bite/4 dice; Claw/2 dice
Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 3,
Stealth 2, Tracking 3



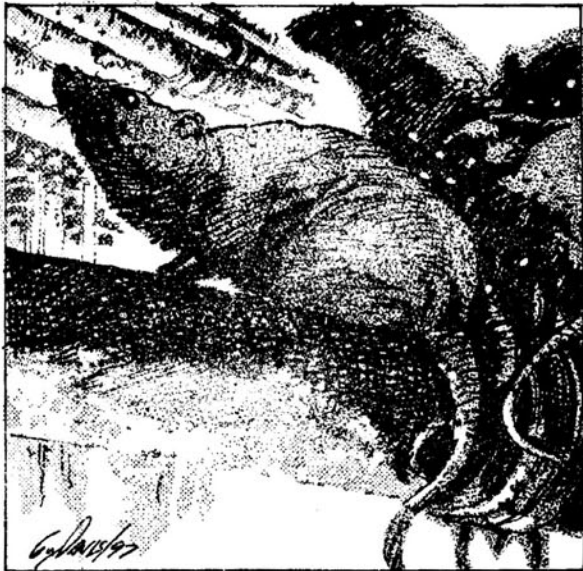
Oversized Rat

Strength: 1, Dexterity: 4, Stamina: 3

Willpower: 3, Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Attack: Bite/3 dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Stealth 3



Blood Pools for Animal Ghouls

An animal ghoul may never have more than 10 Blood Points in its system. Most animals prefer to drink only until they gorge; a ghoulish crocodile, for example, doesn't take kindly to the idea of someone draining its blood and replacing it with vitae.

A human-sized or larger ghoul can hold 10 Blood Points; smaller animals can hold correspondingly less. A table showing rates for all possible animals is impractical; assume a large dog can hold six Blood Points, a cat-sized creature can hold four, and a rat-sized critter can hold two. These estimates assume that the vampire goes through the trouble of "bleeding" the ghoul; should he simply let the animal feed, the maximum Blood Pools are halved (so a crocodile can "eat" five Blood Points, a St. Bernard three, etc.).

Sample Plots

Every story needs a jumping-off point. Preferably, this point of departure is one that hooks the players from the very beginning, presumably by offering their characters a very personal stake in the story. Although a ghoul chronicle can certainly borrow plot ideas that would be just as appropriate for **Vampire**, some stories should emphasize that the characters are *ghouls*, and address their ghoul-specific goals and concerns.

The following plots provide some ideas of where to take a chronicle, or serve as interesting stories to be played on the side, between major events. Adapt, discard, modify or ignore them as you will.

- One of the characters gets careless in procuring blood, or perhaps is tricked by a benefactor or supplier. Whatever the reasons, she becomes Blood Bound to a strange vampire, most likely without her knowledge. When she realizes the depths of her affection, she may well be unaware that she is even Bound, particularly if the Storyteller is careful to remain subtle (the vampire actually seems gentle and affectionate toward her) or if the player agrees beforehand to such a story.

The rest of the troupe must certainly take action, or their errant friend could easily compromise them all. How can they extricate her with as little trouble as possible? And what if the vampire has the potential to be an invaluable ally — do they allow her to continue spending time with him, the better to coax him over to their side?

- One of the characters is sent on a lengthy errand by his domitor. Upon his return, he finds his master's haven demolished and his master torn to shreds. The deceased vampire had no shortage of Kindred enemies, and the ghoul has no desire to be slain offhandedly by the murderer. Worse, he is now without a patron in the midst of Kindred politics; another vampire, perhaps even the prince, may well see fit to dispose of him in the name of expediency. The ghoul will be in for a few sleepless nights as the local Cainites argue over his fate; he and his friends may attempt to solve the murder in hopes of gaining leniency from the prince. After all, vampires are forbidden by tradition to destroy one another. Finding the culprit would be a service to the local Kindred, and a neat means of revenge.

However, investigation reveals that it was in fact not a vampire who slew the domitor, but a number of city-dwelling Lupines. Depending on the characters involved, they may try to destroy the werewolves in retribution (potential suicide), or they may try to negotiate with the Lupines in hopes of ridding the city of a few of their enemies. Unless they decide to leave the werewolves be, they are in for a very tense, dangerous time....

- For the space of a story, the characters face no threats from a supernatural venue. Instead, they must keep their own houses in order, trying to maintain their mortal lives. Relatives come to visit, bills arrive past due, a job is threatened or a character gets in a car accident. The characters are confronted with a number of mundane tribulations, and should feel the need to smooth these things over without too much undue fuss.

This gets difficult when their ghoul natures are called into play. Perhaps a character is forced to make a frenzy check when that screaming baby just won't shut up. A freak accident may require a ghoul to heal herself using the Blood, but she doesn't have that much to spare. One or two of the group may go on a drinking spree to drown their troubles, but find themselves craving blood far more than beer.

The tension escalates when some of their other "duties" are called into play. A Ventrue domitor may order a vassal to sabotage the factory where the ghoul's cousin works. An independent may have to shelter a fellow comrade in his house. A Grimaldi may have to discredit her journalist lover on her family's orders.

Also, who's to say that the ghouls won't try to take advantage of their supernatural powers, gaining an edge in mortal society via Disciplines and such? A Vicissitude-beautified concubine might try to land a modeling career — she's not getting any older, after all. A cocky, drunken ghoul may decide to settle his bar tab with his newfound Potence. Criminal ghouls may try getting a leg up on their enemies in a satisfyingly violent manner; drive-bys mean a bit less when you have Fortitude 1 and can regenerate your wounds!

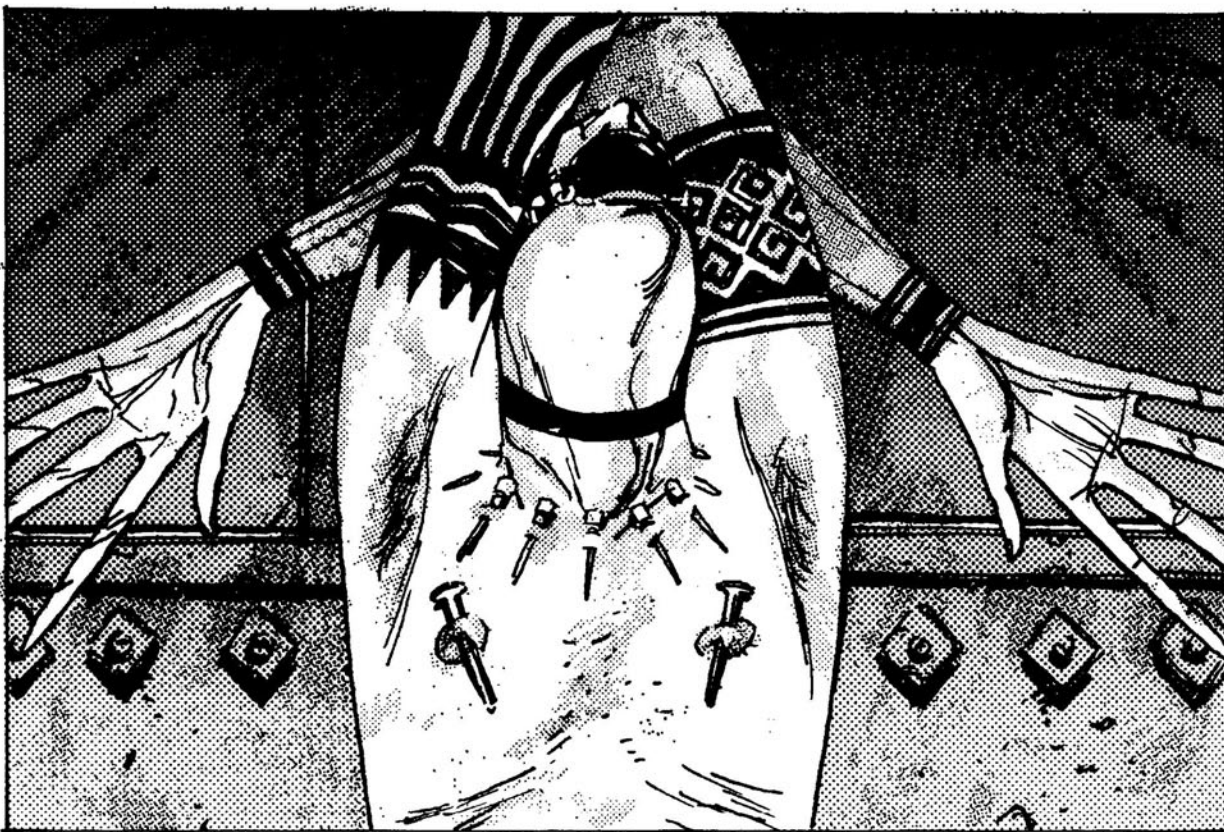
Ghouls are quite mortal, but not precisely human, and this story might be an excellent way to call this fact into sharp relief. In addition, this change of pace can be the

perfect venue for exploring underused facets of the characters' personalities and normal lives. Just how *do* you feel about your sister, anyway?

- In the interest of trying something different, two domitors agree to swap vassals for a time, including one or more of the characters. Of course, the characters aren't told that the arrangement is only temporary — their beloved domitor simply tells them that it's time for a change, and that they'll be staying with someone else now. With a final admonishment to behave themselves and do as they're told, the vassals are traded into the service of a local Toreador.

The characters should have a difficult time adjusting; their new domitor may be exacting, cruel or eccentric. What's more, their original Blood Bond still holds true. As the characters pine away for their "true" domitor, their new master may send them on errands that inconvenience or thwart their beloved mistress. Any attempt to flee or warn her will earn the ghouls a sharp scolding for their disobedience (and possibly a more serious punishment), and a return to the Toreador's service.

Eventually, both domitors grow tired of their exchanged vassals, and swap back. However, the joy the characters feel at being reunited with their mistress is short-lived. The Toreador discovers that a valuable piece of artwork has gone





missing from her collection, and naturally blames the characters. Can the characters convince their domitor of their innocence? Can they uncover the real thief in time to save their hides? Even if they're successful, will their domitor ever really trust them again?

- An experienced cell of the Unmastered moves into a Sabbat-held city, with the sole purpose of gathering vitae from young and careless locals. The characters may be associated with the Unmastered, may be thralls of the local Sabbat, or may even be in the city for their own purposes.

The Unmastered cell is well armed, and in no time manages to disable two of the more reckless packs of young pups. However, the Sabbat doesn't take kindly to a taste of its own violence, and begins combing the city for the

intruders (whom they likely believe to be Camarilla guerrillas). Both sides have access to plenty of firepower, and are ready to achieve their goals by any means necessary.

The characters may be drafted as hounds for the hunt, or they may have their own agendas threatened by Sabbat war parties. Whatever side they end up on, there's going to be some real trouble. Depending on the prevailing mood of the troupe, everybody should have plenty of opportunity to work out their aggressions on their enemies or desperately scramble for their lives. If the Storyteller feels ambitious enough, the story could have long-term effects on the political structure of the city in question. Just what happens when there's a vacancy or two for new bishops (or even the archbishop), anyway?



Chapter Five: Templates

The more infamous a man is, the more we are inclined to endow him with intellectual force and moral courage.

— Octave Mirbeau, *The Torture Garden*

Ghouls are as unique as the vampires who create them — perhaps more so, for they are still capable of experiencing (and being shaped by) the mortal world. The following templates provide examples of vassal, independent and revenant characters; they also show how Camarilla, Sabbat and independent clans shape their servitors.

Patron of the Artist

Quote: *Damned right, I shot Andy Warhol! But I was just following orders!*

Prelude: After art school, your dream came true. All the finagling with realtors and loan officers paid off; you bought your own gallery in a quaint loft downtown. Now you could host gallery openings, spoken-word performances, film festivals — the possibilities were endless. And all the rich and famous people you'd be able to hobnob with...you could discover the next Dalí or Jack Kerouac or Laurie Anderson!

Unfortunately, you didn't quite have the contacts yet, aside from a few of your old RISD buddies, a handful of professors, and the geeky guy who worked behind the counter at the local frame shop.

So you started frequenting The Jumping Bean, a hip coffeehouse where you knew the elite would hang out and name-drop. That's where you met one particularly intriguing young waif known as Corrinne. You were enthralled by her yellow-green, catlike eyes. It was strange; you'd known lots of girls back at school who experimented with bisexuality, and until the moment you saw Corrinne, you couldn't quite relate to them.

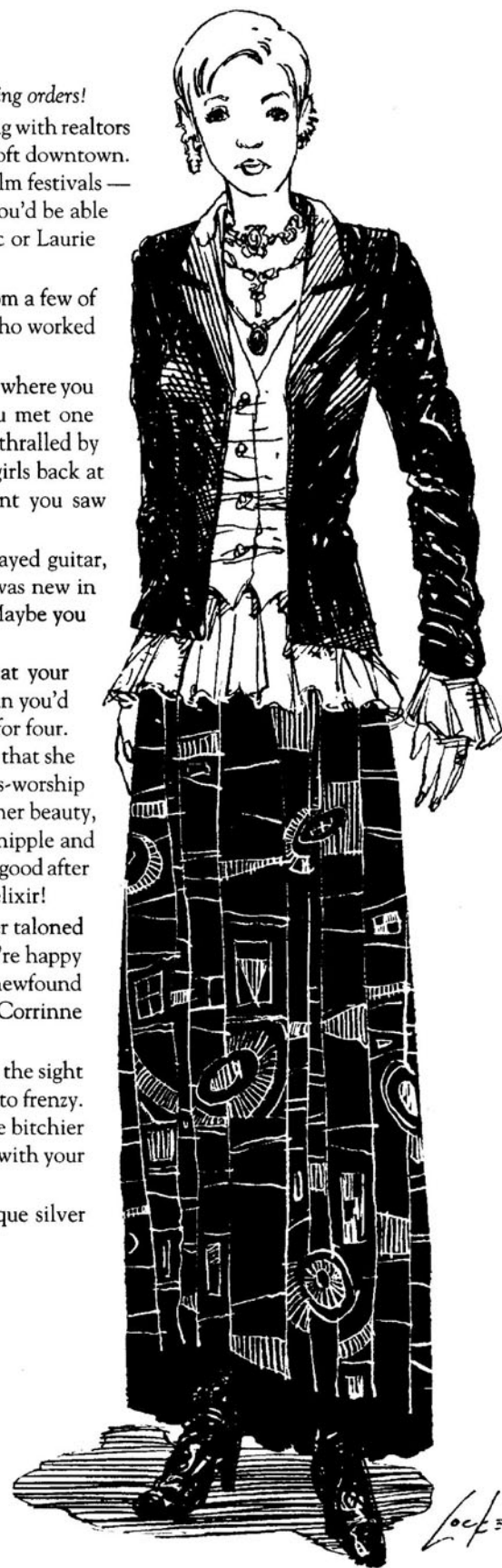
Corrinne was a real Renaissance woman; she sang sweetly, played guitar, recited poetry and was a hell of an Impressionist painter. But she was new in town, and hadn't met many important art-world folks yet, either. Maybe you could help each other out, she hinted. You could exhibit her work.

That night you invited her home with you to "take a look at your etchings"; you ended up in bed. It was certainly more passionate than you'd expected. After making love for three hours, you sat in bed talking for four. She told you that she felt as though she had known you forever, and that she wanted to be your "blood sister"; she said it was some kind of goddess-worship ritual that women who love women usually perform. Enraptured by her beauty, you obliged wholeheartedly her request that you lightly bite at her nipple and drink her blood. Her blood was sweet as honey, and wow, did you feel good after a sip! Hell, you'd give her your new gallery for a little more of that elixir!

Concept: No pain, no gain! Corrinne has you in the palm of her taloned hand, ordering you around like a gofer to further her art career. You're happy to be a lackey to Her Majesty, and you've also benefited from your newfound Presence by attracting the jetset to your ritzy new gallery, where Corrinne ghoul the prettiest and most influential patrons.

Roleplaying Tips: You are hopelessly devoted to Corrinne, and the sight of her kissing or showing favor to her other ghoul's nearly drives you to frenzy. You tolerate it while Corrinne is looking, but during the day, you are bitchier than Joan Crawford to the other ghoul's, hoping to drive them away with your callousness. After all, you saw Corrinne first!

Equipment: Black velvet beret, pack of clove cigarettes, antique silver handgun, easel



VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name: *Patron of the Artist*

Player:

Chronicle:

Nature: *Gallant*

Demeanor: *Avant-Garde*

Concept: *Vassal*

Domitor: *Corrinne*

Duties:

Revenant Family: *N/A*

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Potence ●○○○○○○○
Presence ●○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Contacts ●●●○○○○○
Domitor ●○○○○○○○
Influence ●○○○○○○○
Resources ●●●○○○○○
Allies ●○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience/Callousness ●●●○○○
Self-Control/Instincts ●●●○○○
Courage/Morale ●●●○○○

Other Traits

Art History ●●●○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
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____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○
____ ○○○○○○○○

Humanity/Path

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Blood Pool

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

Overdosing?

Health

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

Weakness/Blood Bond

Blood Bond

The Revolting Revenant

Quote: Never kiss a gift horse on the mouth....

Prelude: Mama and Papa always told you that you were their most specialest daughter. You were prettier than most of your siblings, and you seemed to have quite a way with animals. The dogs and horses on the estate just loved you; indeed, all the animals were your best friends, and you expressed your appreciation for them in no uncertain terms. For your services, they rewarded you with their utter adoration...and an advanced case of brucellosis, a virus which causes spontaneous abortion in animals and remittent fever in human beings.

As a ghoul, the infection has affected you in both ways. More than once you've had sex with male dogs, hoping to be impregnated, but whenever you think you're expecting, you miscarry spontaneously. You get fevers whenever there's a chill in the air, but your revenant blood sustains you so that you don't perish from illness. Of course, all of the animal ghouls on your family's estate are now diseased, but you wanted to share everything with them.

Concept: A semiautistic Bratovitch beauty, you've been raised by a bunch of inbred revenants who in no way find your behavior or condition abnormal. You are as strong as the oxen you love so dearly, and better at communicating with animals than Dr. Doolittle. You occasionally get drafted into service by Sabbath packs seeking guides in the werewolf-infested outdoors. Still, sometimes you dream of running away and living with a Gangrel pack or the Lupines you understand so well.

Roleplaying Tips: You have complete control of nearly every animal you come into contact with. Sometimes the animals won't listen to or play with you, so you hurt them to teach them a lesson. Dissection is actually kinda fun; you never knew that large intestines were so much fun to skip rope with.

Equipment: Studded dog collars and metal leashes, flea-infested doghouse (your "bedroom"), cattle prod, leather bullwhip



GHOULS™ Fatal Addiction

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name: *The Revolting Revenant*
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: *Child*
Demeanor: *Deviant*
Concept: *Revenant*

Domitor: *N/A*
Duties:
Revenant Family: *Bratovitch*

Attributes

Physical

Social

Mental

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

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

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

Abilities

Talents

Skills

Knowledges

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

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

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Backgrounds

Virtues

Potence ●○○○○○○○
Animalism ●○○○○○○○
Vicissitude ●○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Allies ●●●●○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Conscience/Callousness ●●○○○
 Self-Control/Instincts ●●●●○
 Courage/Morale ●●○○○

Other Traits

Humanity/Path

Health

_____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Harmony

●●●●●○○○○○

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○

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

Blood Pool

Overdosing?

Weakness/Blood Bond

Frenzy as Brujah

Rebel Without a Regnant

Quote: *The first time it's on the house; then ya gotta pay, okay? This is some good shit, man....*

Prelude: High school wasn't exactly a piece of cake for you. Pockmarked from a bad case of acne and thinner than a dime, you weren't really the prom-king type. The chicks at West Baker High weren't worth your time, anyway; it was much more fun to hang out with the other "scum" on the weekends, getting high and operating an *Anarchist Cookbook* test kitchen in Jeff's parents' basement.

Then you met Sheila. She was a friend of an acquaintance. Sheila wasn't like any girl you'd ever met before; she'd read the entire *Communist Manifesto* while tripping on acid. She was really hot, too, and didn't seem to mind your lanky frame and zit remnants.

After you'd been seeing each other for a few weeks, Sheila admitted to you that she was actually "Kindred." It kinda freaked you out, but it seemed really intriguing, too. Hell, you'd read *Interview with the Vampire* back in sixth grade; you knew all about vampires. So Sheila turned you into a ghoulish while you were really high. What a buzzkill it was when you found out what she'd done. Pot and methedrine were hard enough to quit; now you had blood to contend with.

What Sheila did really pissed you off. You broke up with her, but shortly thereafter you realized you were really Jonesin' for some good V-tay.

Concept: You were Jonesin' all right, but there was no way in hell you were gonna be some vampire bitch's slave in order to get your fix. You quit high school and now hang out on the streets at night, looking for vampires to beat up and feed on. Your increased Potence works most of the time, but now and then it fails you against particularly strong vampires, leaving you bloodied, bruised and running for your life. When you have a surplus of potent blood, you sell it to other addicted ghouls. You don't think ghouls should just sit back and do whatever their domitors say when you can supply 'em with better vitae and not fuck 'em over. It's time for a revolution!!

Roleplaying Tips: You display all the stereotypical Brujah clan mannerisms. Stand up for what you believe in! You are embittered by your experience with women, and you hate vampires. Vampires, ghouls and kine alike are surprised when they see a 100-pound weakling like you rearranging faces and breaking legs. You've got power; abuse it.

Equipment: Swiss Army knife, *The Anarchist Cookbook*, syringes stolen from the diabetics' section at Revco, plastique (for bomb making), portable CD player, feathered roach clips



VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name: *Rebel w/o a Regnant*

Nature: *Gallant*

Domitor: *N/A*

Player:

Demeanor: *Rebel*

Duties:

Chronicle:

Concept: *Independent*

Revenant Family: *N/A*

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Potence _____ ●○○○○○○○
 Fortitude _____ ●○○○○○○○
 Celerity _____ ●○○○○○○○
 Obfuscate _____ ●○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Allies _____ ●●○○○○○○○
Contacts _____ ●●○○○○○○○
Resources _____ ●○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience/Callousness _____ ●●●●○
 Self-Control/Instincts _____ ●●○○○
 Courage/Morale _____ ●●●●○

Other Traits

Area Knowledge ●●●○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
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 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Humanity/Path

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Blood Pool

Overdosing?

Health

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

Weakness/Blood Bond

No steady supply of blood

Le Femme Serpentina

Quote: *On your belly — like a snake!*

Prelude: As a teenager on South Beach, you did it all — sniffed a lot of coke, smoked a little weed, made a few nickel-and-dime deals, did the whole Timothy Leary tune-in-turn-on-drop-out thing. Until you got busted selling to some damn Miami Vice-wannabe narcs. It was only a dime bag! For a dime bag, you had to go to the juvenile detention center, and then your mother and father sent you to Shady Oaks — a rehab center far away from your friends and connections in Miami.

When you “graduated” from rehab, you were a different person. You’d followed the 12 steps faithfully — you’d even become a born-again Christian. The only drugs you did anymore were aspirin and caffeine. You decided that you wanted to spend the rest of your life fighting crime and keeping drugs off the street; it was a mission from God.

As soon as you got out of high school, you enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at the local college; after you graduated with honors, you went straight to the police academy.

Fresh out of school, you were assigned to the South Beach beat. Your superiors thought you were the woman for the job; you were so familiar with the drug scene there, they reasoned, the dealers would probably sell to you without thinking twice. They were right; your old connections came out of the woodwork, congratulating you on getting back with the “fun crowd.”

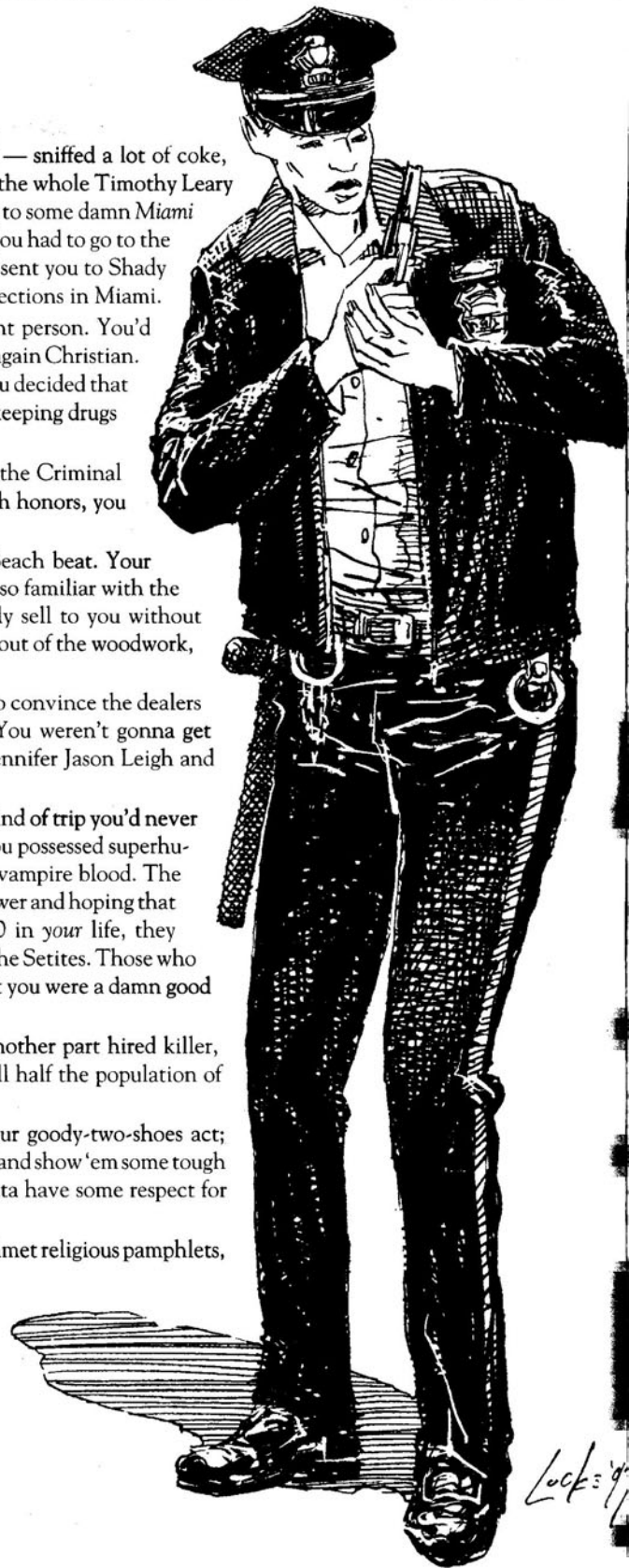
You did some buying and had to do your share of drugs to convince the dealers you were still trustworthy before you made the big busts. You weren’t gonna get hooked, though. You’d seen *Rush*, and what happened to Jennifer Jason Leigh and Jason Patric wasn’t gonna happen to you.

It didn’t. Instead, a crafty Setite acid dealer gave you a kind of trip you’d never experienced before — a drug that made you feel as though you possessed superhuman strength — a drug that you later found out was potent vampire blood. The Followers roped you into their world, luring you with more power and hoping that you’d recruit members into their clan; if you’d done a 180 in *your* life, they reasoned, you could easily persuade others to do the same for the Setites. Those who didn’t cooperate would simply have to deal with the fact that you were a damn good shot after your police training.

Concept: You’re one part persuasive religious freak, another part hired killer, with enough Potence and Charisma to either convert or kill half the population of Miami.

Roleplaying Tips: Rope people into the clan with your goody-two-shoes act; then, if they don’t listen to you, it’s time to whip out the ol’ .45 and show ‘em some tough love. Don’t let anybody get away with anything! People gotta have some respect for authority.

Equipment: .45, nightstick, police uniform, Cult of Sekhmet religious pamphlets, handcuffs



GHOULS™ FATAL ADDICTION

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name: *La Femme Serpentina*

Nature: *Fanatic*

Domitor: *Setites*

Player:

Demeanor: *Conniver*

Duties:

Chronicle:

Concept: *Vassal*

Revenant Family: *N/A*

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Potence _____ ●○○○○○○○
 Presence _____ ●○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Domitor _____ ●●○○○○○○
Contacts _____ ●●●○○○○○
Resources _____ ●○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Conscience/Callousness _____ ●●○○○
 Self-Control/Instincts _____ ●●●○○
 Courage/Morale _____ ●●●○○

Other Traits

_____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
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 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○○○

Humanity/Path

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Blood Pool

Overdosing?

Health

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

Weakness/Blood Bond

Blood Bond

GHOULS™ Fatal Addiction

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Concept:

Domitor:
Duties:
Revenant Family:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Potence ●○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

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Virtues

Conscience/Callousness ●○○○○

Self-Control/Instincts ●○○○○

Courage/Morale ●○○○○

Other Traits

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□ Humanity/Path □

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Overdosing?

Health

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

Weakness/Blood Bond