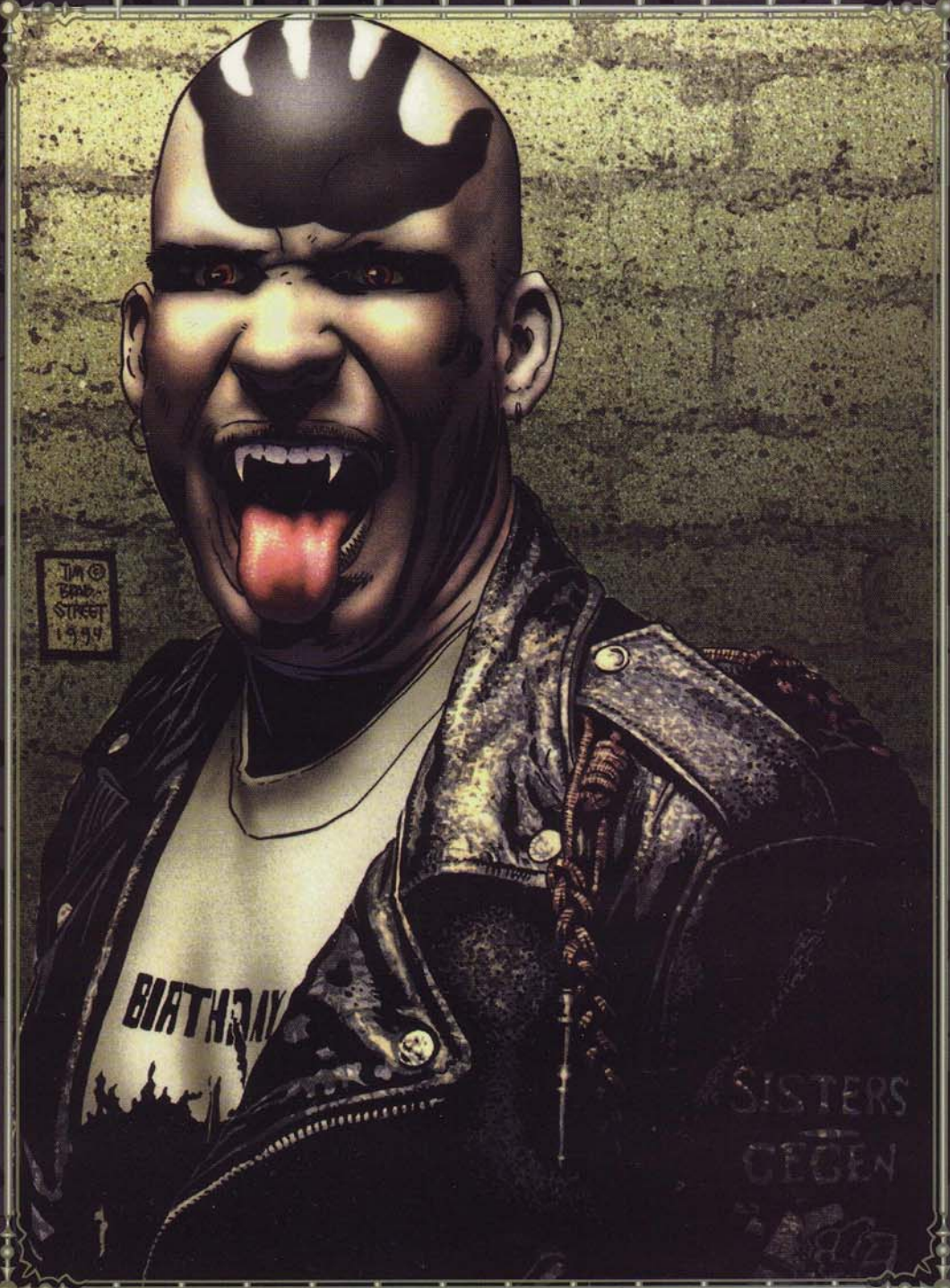
CLANBOOK:

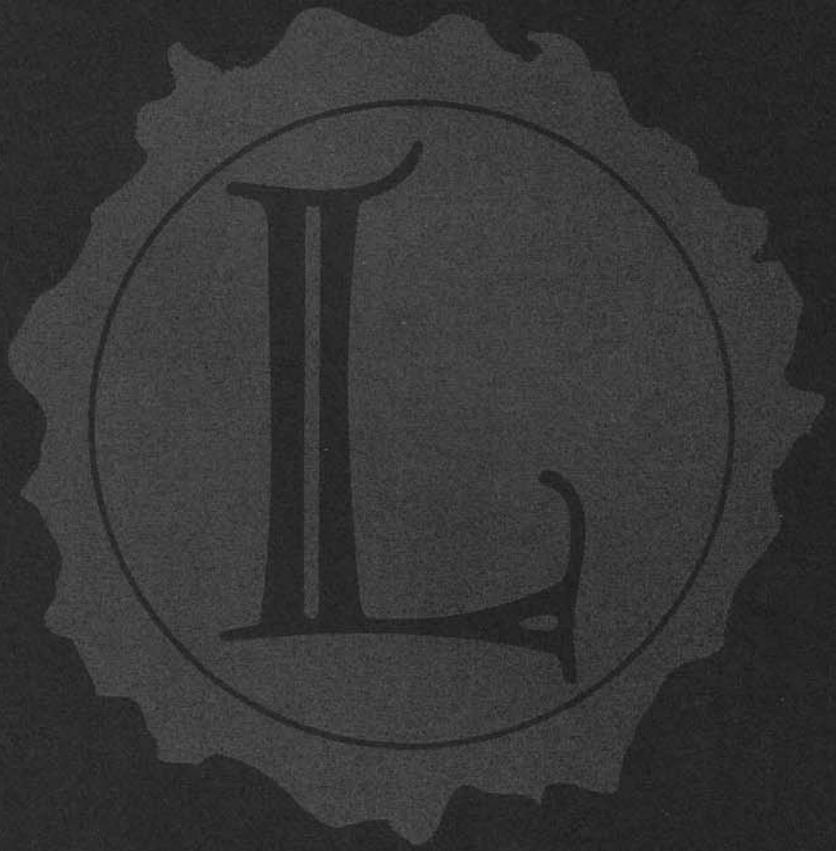
LASOMBRA™



A Sourcebook for VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

LASOMBRA

CATHEDRAL OF DARKNESS



BY RICHARD E. DANSKY AND ELIZABETH DITCHBURN

Swallow darkness, boys, give up your year.
– Ray Bradbury, *The Halloween Tree*

I do not need to explain myself to you. I exist; that is enough reason for me to rule. I have the noblest blood of our kind in my veins, and soon I shall have yours on my lips. I was born to command and reborn to dominion, and no matter how far you run, you cannot hide from me.

The kine would laugh if you told them about vampires who were afraid of shadows. You and I know better.

I'll give you to ten.

Start running.

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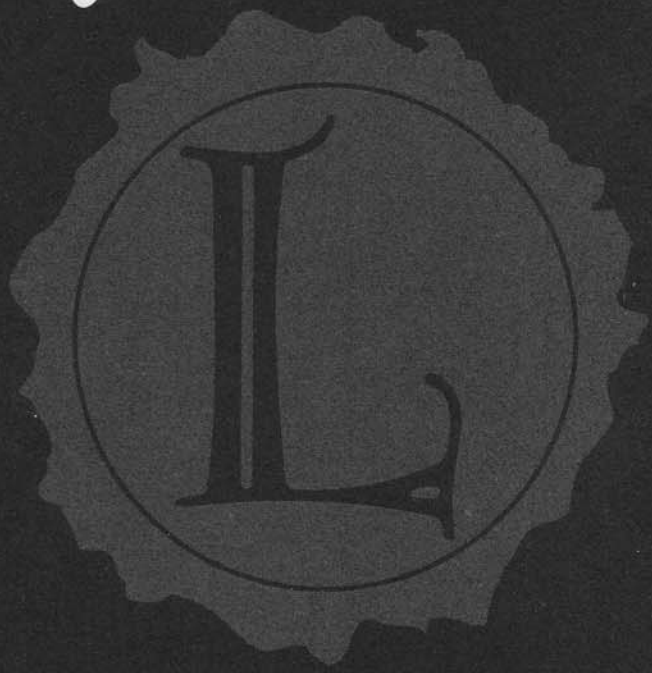

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LEIF JONES
1996

Chapter One: Dusk in Marrakesh

She said it was just a little game — hide-and-go-seek. I've led a pack long enough to know better; games with us are just a way to disguise tests or exercises. The rules of this one were simple: I was to track her through a marketplace full of kine. She didn't bother to say what would happen if I lost her trail; it wasn't her style. She just slipped into the thickening shadow of a building, but I could hear her voice as if she were walking beside me as I headed after her, or at least what I hoped was her.

"I hope you are enjoying Marrakesh, childe. It is one of my favorite cities; so much shadow to work with, especially here in the bazaar. The sights, the fragrances, the smells… ah, it is like nowhere else on earth."

Never mind the market's smells; it was her fragrance on which I centered. She'd transformed the area behind a row of stalls into an inky void. Only the scent of her perfume (and underneath it, her vitae) gave me any indication of which way she was headed as she continued to speak. Her voice seemed to flow out of a dozen different shadows, and it was hard not to follow the sound instead of scent.

Then again, this wasn't supposed to be easy.

"As with some few of the others, my dear protégé, you were chosen for the Rites because of your potential. The rest were mere cannon fodder, but you — you were worth keeping. You have proved yourself time and again since your initiation, and it has been positively heartwarming to watch. Incidentally, I was truly impressed with the way you handled the scout who tried to go over to the Camarilla. I was gratified that you realized that he needed to be made an example of. And making his Toreador, ahem, 'friend' participate in the Blood Feast — that was an inspired stroke. I trust you heard that the Camarilla called a Blood Hunt on her for diablerie. Such nonsense! They would keep all weak, just to protect their paranoid elders."

I caught a glimpse of her ahead of me as I left the dark stalls behind. She was moving through a crowd, coming toward me; her oval face looked as pale as the moon in the desert night. Then I saw her in two other places in the crowd, and realized it wasn't her at all, just a nightshade. I hate those things.

The first one walked beside me as I hurried through the crowd after her. She still spoke to me, though the voice didn't emanate from the shadow creature beside me. It was there as a mockery, so I did the sensible thing and ignored it.

"No matter how promising the pupil, there is always the danger that he might be captured by the Camarilla. Let the Brujah brutes and Toreador fops wag their tongues in front of their babes. It suits them well since their words are so much more impressive than anything else they do. We Lasombra prefer to be certain that our newer members cannot be forced to reveal anything truly important if captured.

"I know what you think of the Camarilla's skills, especially when it comes to locating spies and interrogating prisoners. The members of the seven clans are foolishly sentimental, but do not underestimate them. They would not have survived this long if they did not have *some* strength and cunning."

Her image beside me disappeared, replaced by a tendril of shadow that wrapped itself around my ankle. I fell heavily to the ground as it pulled my leg out from under me. Damn! Not even time to roll with it, and I knew how much emphasis she put on grace.

Well, damned if I would hobble along after her. I stumbled to my feet and willed vitae into the twisted ankle. It took only a second, but in that time her scent grew fainter. I suppressed the urge to curse at the loss of time; it would only encourage her.

"You know enough about the Camarilla to make up your own mind about them, though I will listen to you rant about them later if you wish. For now, I think I would like to make a purchase. From where I stand, I see a lovely bronze mirror which would make a nice addition to my collection."

She was close, then. I could see the mirror too, at a stall not 20 feet away. This was my way out of the game. She was obsessed with mirrors; she had three rooms full of them in her mansion. Like an itch she couldn't scratch, she couldn't help peeking into mirrors. I couldn't understand it myself. It's not like she ever saw anything there. Hell, it's not like *any* of us ever see anything there.

But that didn't matter. Right here, right now, I could use a mirror to distract her and buy the few precious seconds I'd need to catch her.

"Don't try to hide your smirk; I know what you think of my little perversion. Perhaps when you no longer remember what color your eyes are you won't find it so amusing. People tell me mine are everything from blue to hazel. Childe, you are too fond of protesting that looks do not matter. As your sire and elder, I tell you they most certainly do. Try that 'it's what's inside that counts' line on a Nosferatu sometime, if you're feeling adventurous. Physical beauty, childe, like any other quality, has its importance, and more than you think. If you survive this

night's work, you will eventually be expected to create a childe of your own, and you must learn to weigh all of her qualities. I know you better than to think you will Embrace a man. No, it will be a woman, and an attractive one — perhaps one who looks like me?"

Her little cosmetics commercial gave me the break I needed. She wasn't the only one who could manipulate shadows. With a moment's concentration, I called forth a tendril of shadow and used it to grab the mirror. The tentacle slithered its prize to me, and I was rewarded with a fleeting glimpse of her as she melted back into the darkness behind a stall. Her monologue, though, continued as if nothing had happened.

"Do you remember when you asked why the Lasombra chose a 'little lady' like myself to join their ranks? Having heard so much talk of strength, you thought you had been chosen for your physical prowess. I believe at the time I merely disabused you of the notion that I was quite so frail as I look. It was an important lesson, I think, reminding you that physical strength cannot compare with strength of will."

She was still nearby, then, if she caught my involuntary wince at the memory. Even being turned into a vampire, hit over the head with a shovel and buried alive hadn't prepared me for all the realities of unlife as a Lasombra. It took two weeks of getting my ass whipped regularly by a five-foot-tall woman who could (and did) break every bone in my hand for calling her "little lady" before I even began to catch on.

"Our clan realizes, more than any other, that the greatest strength of a vampire comes from the darkness within. It was the ability to harness and control my inner darkness as a mortal that brought me to the attention of our leaders, and, as they predicted, it is what brought me through the Rites. It was for the same reason that I chose you, much as you tried to deny it at first.

"I remember the moment you first realized just what it means to know the darkness of your own soul. It came out the night your old college friend came across you feeding. He was intelligent and willful — strong friends are the sign of a true leader, you know — but nevertheless he had to die. I know it was not easy for you, but I was quite proud that you realized so quickly that he must die. You didn't whine or try to pass the responsibility to another. You drained him yourself, with but a slight hesitation. You realized then that you would do whatever was necessary throughout all of the dark centuries stretching before us. I would not have expected less of my childe.

"To be Lasombra is to know yourself capable of anything. If you must slay a friend, a lover, a child or parent, then you will do so, and do so without hesitation. We expect no less, for we know our worth. This is a knowledge that we embrace rather than shrink from, and this is why we lead our kind."

"From the very beginning, *Les Amies* were the best of our clan, the real leaders. Mind you pronounce it properly, childe — your accent is atrocious. To be introduced to the order means that you are a true Lasombra and can appeal to *Les Amies* for support in your endeavors. As for those Lasombra who are never introduced to *Les Amies* — well, they have no destiny, though I'm sure the Ventrue would think them dangerous."

It didn't take much brainpower to figure out that if you weren't friends with *Les Amies* you'd probably find yourself short on buddies, amigos or whatever at a critical time.

"It is my sire who will preside over the meeting of *Les Amies* tonight, and trust me, you will need your strength. Oh — did I not mention you would be tested? Many of his other childer have lost promising pupils when they brought them to Marrakesh. I warn you now that this is no simple ceremony, no cotillion as the Ventrue throw for their pink, spoiled childer. No, this is a true rite of passage, and it will test both your will and courage. Do not fail me. You will make me proud of your performance tonight, or your ashes will blow across the dunes when the sun rises."

She didn't sound sarcastic, so she must have had more confidence in me than I did in myself at the moment. I was having only limited success with my tactic. The main problem was that there really wasn't any place in this stinking maze that was free of shadows. Perhaps if I could at least get her closer to one of the lights I could improvise something.

"I am glad to see that my words have not shaken your outward resolve. I am certain now that we will hunt together again tomorrow night. After all, I only choose the very best, and only the very best have the privilege of becoming and remaining Lasombra. We are harsh because we need to be. And you, my dear, favorite pupil, will learn to become harsher still."

I couldn't get her close to a light; she was far too good a chess player. Then it struck me: I could get the light to her with the mirror. I'd been Lasombra too long, I guess; I'd almost forgotten what mirrors were good for.

"I know I have often hinted at these things, telling you of your destiny and of our rivals. I have told you that the Ventrue have nobility but no purpose, and the Tzimisce have purpose but no nobility. We Lasombra are superior because we have both."

I was ready. I was fairly certain I knew which shadow she'd pop out of next. I waited, counting under my breath, and then pointed a beam of reflected light directly at the shadow, catching her in it just as she stepped out.

She stood there as if she were standing in the spotlight on a Broadway stage. Smiling, no less. "It was a clever way to end, childe, and a good run." She walked over and took the mirror from my hand, glancing into it

as she always does. I keep wondering if she expects that somewhere, somehow, there is a mirror that will show her what she looks like. I doubt it.

She must have caught my frown, for her lips pursed shut and she handed the mirror back to me. "It shines like a bronze lantern, and reminds me of one more story you should hear." We walked together out of the marketplace as she finished her lecture.

"There was a time, some two hundred years ago, when it seemed all the world was being turned on its head, from one side of the Atlantic to the other, that I chanced across one whom I shall never forget. I was in Hispañola, dealing with business relating to the sugar cane plantations some of my comrades controlled in the West Indies. Don't frown so, childe — trafficking in kine is at least as old as Caine himself.

"But you divert me. It was there, on the road to the port just where it bent to hide the manor house from view, that I saw him. I could tell from the bones in his face that as a mortal he had been Castilan, perhaps, or Aragonese, and undoubtedly a noble. His velvet suit was of a modern cut, but the rapier at his side must have been older than I was, judging by the workmanship and the cut of the gems in its hilt.

"At the time I wondered who he could be. I knew him for a vampire, and for old blood at that, just from the way he carried himself. If you have trained with the sword for hundreds of years, it shows in your every movement. I wondered at his name, for here was someone who was not of the Camarilla, yet I felt I was acquainted with all the Sabbat of note. He had me mesmerized, this vampire; I could feel the power singing within him, that dark knowledge, free from any pretense of false beneficence.

"It was then a mortal passed him carrying a bronze lantern, and I knew what he must be. My sight has always been keen and quick, and in that instant my eyes darted from the polished side of the lantern, which reflected only the wooden railing behind him, to his face. I caught a hint of a knowing smile as my eyes met his. In the next moment I fled, for an unknown ancient of our blood could only be one thing.

Sometimes I wish she didn't know so much about me. Killing a friend should be a private matter. On the other hand I was glad she knew what I would do for her, for our clan and sect. I could see her now, her dark hair streaming out behind her as she slid into a shadow. Out of the corner of my eye I saw her emerge from a different patch of darkness 40 feet away. Desperate to keep from losing her as she jumped from shadow to shadow, I filled the area ahead of her with flickering shapes, hoping they would slow her down.

"It is because you have acquired such knowledge of yourself that you are here tonight. As you might imagine, adding to our clan is more than a matter of simply biting a few necks. The Creation Rites were always meant to be a violent transformation, and they serve their purpose well, leaving those who survive with no illusions about what they are. The process is not without its risks, however, and can often lead to certain undesirable psychological flaws. Homicidal mania, image obsession, aversion to authority — all of these are desirable only in moderation.

"After some watching it becomes apparent which new Lasombra will achieve greatness, and which will not. Those whom we find trustworthy come here to Marrakesh, or to Cadiz, or to Sao Paulo, for their testing. Those who don't — we shall not concern ourselves with them tonight.

"I have brought you here to meet and to be accepted by certain of the elite order of the clan. That such a group exists is not something that we share with those of other bloodlines, and we do divert the inevitable speculation. I am certain that by now you have come across dozens of rumors about secret groups within our sect. I myself have three file cabinets full of tales about the Black Hand, and accept not a single one as entirely true. Like a wilderness of mirrors, these tales reflect the truth while misplacing it and thus hiding it. You are here, my handsome childe, to learn a piece of the truth."

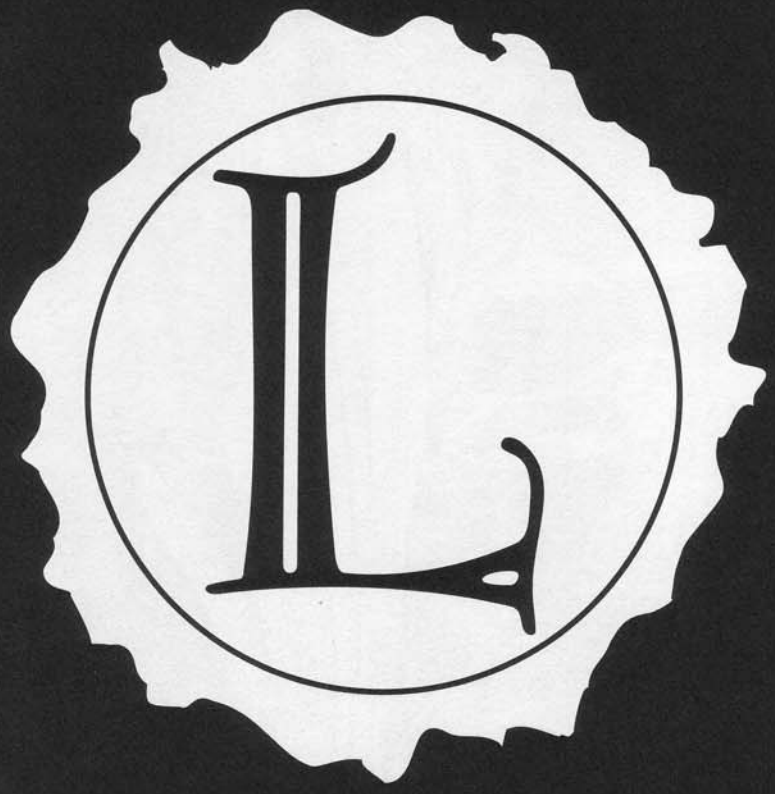
The flickering shapes didn't cause her even to pause. There were simply too many darkened areas; if one were too much trouble to pass to, she would simply choose another. Maybe I could use this diversion to edge her into a better-lit area. I hoped I could — I was running out of other ideas, and I had a feeling that if I didn't end this quickly I'd be seeing the Hand soon enough.

"The elite order of the Lasombra is called *Les Amies Noir*, and those who prove themselves loyal, trustworthy and capable are invited to join. The name, my dear childe, is French for a reason. Did you think it would be in Spanish, perhaps? They teach too little history to mortals these days; the name was chosen during a period of time when every court in Europe spoke French.

"It has troubled me ever since, childe, for though I knew I would have been destroyed had I stayed, I despise backing down more than anything else. In a clan that until all too recently was overpopulated by males, I hate to do anything so passive. Of course our clan needed warning, and they would have gotten none had I been his meal that night, but that knowledge does little to comfort me.

"Be ever wary of other Kindred, but it is the ancients, especially the few remaining ones of our own bloodline, that you must fear most strongly. And do not get so caught up in the affairs of our kind that you forget that there are equally deadly creatures that we share the shadows with, and they can be a far greater menace than a dozen ravening Gangrel. This is a dangerous world I've brought you into, my childe, and what I do, I do to ensure that you will survive its perils.

"There is so much more that I wish to tell you, my protégé, but it must wait until after your testing. We should not keep *Don* Ibrahim waiting. Come, my dear, soon you will prove to the best among us that you are a true Lasombra. I have every faith in you."



LEIF
JONES
1996

Chapter Two: An Evening's Discussion with Monsignor Alfonse

Come in, sit, sit a while. You seem surprised to see a *paisan* here, my daughter. Why should that be? The *Dons* and *Doñas* are not all there are to the Lasombra heritage. Not every Cainite from Italy is a Giovanni — we were there long before the Cappadocians and their usurpers slithered into Venezia. There are Moors among us as well, respected and honored, save by those who still bear grudges from Ferdinand and Isabella's reconquest. There are more than a few of those, alas. And your own visage, it reflects the mysterious East. Forty years ago we'd never have Embraced you, you know. Forty years can change a great deal, even for our kind.

But you are the future, childe. You are what the Lasombra are becoming, and you did not come here tonight to hear me ramble about your part in all of this. At least, not yet. No, you have come because your sire told you to go hear dim and dusty stories of the ancient past from Monsignor Alfonse. And I am certain that you looked forward to this evening in much the same way you might have looked forward to a visit with an elderly uncle while you were alive. Dutifully, you would have gone, but never permitted yourself to enjoy the evening. A pity, that. The old often have much useful knowledge to share, but the young refuse to listen out of principle.

So, make yourself comfortable. You are about to hear the history of our lineage, as it is, or was, or might have been. The facts themselves do not matter. What we believe to be the facts, that is what matters. Never make the mistake of thinking that I am telling you the truth. I am telling you what we believe to be the truth, and all the difference in the world lies there.

So, where do I begin? The beginning? No, the tales of commoners begin at the beginning. Our tales begin wherever we choose. Close your eyes, childe. Listen, and know your blood.

Pax et Bellum

Listen. Can you not hear the tread of nailed boots, the cries in Latin as each night's *castra* is arrayed? The legions of Rome are marching, marching to our com-

mands. Yes, Rome was our city, at least for a while. Scipio, Pompey, Tiberius, Trajan — these are the names of our servants.

Of course, it was not always ours. The Toreador and their Etruscan servants, they held it first. Of course, in those days it was a hovel on a hill, complete with a lovely view of fetid swamps and cowering from the oh-so-cultured Athenians in *Magna Graecia*. Then we arrived, and displaced the Tarquin kings, and suddenly the city was a place of power. The glory days of the Republic, when our lands expanded, and expanded again. The Ventrue came to us, and the madmen of Malkav, and the city grew and prospered.

You look confused at the notion of our sponsoring the Roman Republic. That is because you are thinking in today's terms, not yesteryear's. Lose yourself in that time, not ours. Consider a place where only the finest citizens were permitted to go to war. "Return home with your shield, or on it" — these are words that our clan lives by to this very night. Why, to run for office, a man needed to show his battle wounds in the Forum before the rest of the citizenry. This was a Republic of merit, not of toadying politicians, where strength and mettle earned one power and spoils. Now tell me, how very different is that from our creed of today?

That Republic, alas, grew weak. It became overextended, and we permitted our Ventrue guests to drag us into pointless conflict with the Brujah of Carthage. Elephants in the Alps and all of that aside, we triumphed handily, as could be expected. The fields of Carthage were sowed with salt, the city laid waste, and Scipio Africanus awarded a hollow triumph. And ever our legions marched onward, pushing into the lands of the Assamites, the brutish Gangrel, the twisted Tzimisce. We cracked their castles and our bronze-shod phalanxes watched those monsters burn in the sun. We made those lands ours, and had we kept them, they would be ours to this very night. Unfortunately, we gave them to the Ventrue to administer, and thus we lost them.

Oh, sometimes not for centuries, but Ventrue hand-wringing and Ventrue inefficiency cost us province after province. Ventrue laxity and Ventrue backbiting left our borders undefended, so that when the Fiends finally regained enough of their strength to incite the barbarian tribes, the only opposition to the Huns and Visigoths were old men and beardless youths. Meanwhile, we trusted the so-called Blue Bloods to administer our city, and what was the result? Bread and circuses! An Emperor as changeable as a tunic. Do you know that at one point the Ventrue and Malkavians were swapping Emperors? One after another... the Year of Four Emperors, it was called. Of course, the Ventrue won this petty game, staying at home with their puppets in the Praetorian Guard. The troops, our troops who made Rome great,

were furloughed to farms across the Empire so that they might not muster and pose a threat to the incompetence of the Ventrue.

By the time Rome fell, we, of course, had long since abandoned the city and moved to the provinces. Indeed, once the Praetorian Guard began auctioning off the Imperator, we abandoned Rome as lost. We would have healed her, but the Mad Ones and the Ventrue opposed us. "Wait," they said. "This is temporary. A correction. An adjustment. Soon, all will be right again and we will retake Africa, Parthia and Britannia." Liars. Well, the centuries proved us right. In Iberia, in Gallia, in other places, true Roman culture persisted long after Rome itself had declined from Matron of Cities to abandoned whore. The best parts of her lived on in us, a thousand miles or more from the Tiber.

Montano, once greatest of Lasombra's childer, did make one last attempt to salvage our treasure. It was he who brought Christianity to the Empire. Not out of faith, for he had none save in his own word, but in an attempt to inspire and unify. Eventually, of course, it failed. The Christian Empire split in two and warred upon itself. Unifying faith became dueling heresies, and Montano retreated once again to the service of his sire.

Lasombra himself sojourned to Sicilia, with many of his closest childer. In Siracusa he built himself a castle, and what transpired there is of great interest to you, I am sure. That remains, though, another story. We shall not move on unless I hear from you the lessons that the story of Rome ought to have taught you.

Yes, the first is never to delegate to those whom you cannot destroy and replace. Another is to rely on no force save your own will to unify others. And the third?

Exactly. Never trust a Ventrue farther than you can throw him.

The Great Fall

Lasombra's fortress in Siracusa was less of a castle and more of a tomb. I have seen its ruins, venerated to this night by some of the weaker-minded of our clan, and I shudder. It was built as much to keep the unwilling in as to keep the unwanted out. Eventually, of course, it did neither.

You must understand, Lasombra made a mistake. Well, he made many mistakes, but there was one in particular, compounded and left to fester, that finally proved his end. We regard his end as fitting, in a way. He proved himself unworthy, no matter how great his power, to continue with us in our journey to greatness. Just as if you were observed making a blatant tactical error on the street tomorrow night and were laid low by some arrogant Brujah, you would be mourned, but not missed. So it was with Lasombra. By allowing Archbishop Gratiano to live and by ignoring Montano's warnings, Lasombra made a grave error in judgment.

One is supposed to keep one's friends close and one's enemies closer. Gratiano was kept too near for one and too far for the other. Thus, Lasombra died. Other consequences followed as well, but you'll hear of them in due time.

So, the tale of Lasombra's fall. It is simple, really. Arrogance and ignorance in equal proportions, mixed with just a touch of hearing what one wishes to hear. It's a tragedy as well, the story of the good son spurned for the bad. It is much like *King Lear* in a way, save that nobody conveniently dies at the end. It is a messy story, and one that has not yet ended.

Picture the great ruined castle of Siracusa in the nights when its dark stone lived. See its buttresses shoring the towers against the uncaring sky. Gaze down through a hundred murder holes on the town that once provoked Cicero to such eloquence. Feel yourself in its dark corridors, smothered in rich tapestries, as you wend your way to the bed where Lasombra slumbered. Here the troubles began, on a carved frame of wood and a mattress stuffed with the feathers of Hera's sacred geese. For here our forefather slept, and in his sleep, his dreaming mind wandered the world.

He did not always sleep, even in his last nights. Though his hours of waking were few, they were frequent, and he took keen interest in the doings of his progeny. He observed them even as he slumbered, and constantly searched for new sons and daughters to add to his brood. He had grown bored with the old ones, perhaps. This would explain his dismissal of Montano's warnings.

One that he settled on, after centuries of searching, was a noble youth of *paisan* blood. Prideful and ambitious was this Gratiano, and arrogant in his worth. Sent north to stall the invading armies of the Teutons, he instead went over to his house's enemies and agreed to trade his ancestral lands for some already within the Holy Roman Empire's borders. His dealings attracted Lasombra's admiration, and our forefather set a trap from which the only escape was the Embrace. In those nights, you see, we did not Embrace any save those who desired it — if, of course, they met our standards. These nights, we have grown more selective in some ways, less in others.

But it was within the cell of his ancestral home that Gratiano received Lasombra as a visitor and haggled with him over the terms of his Embrace. Such arrogance! Not since Abraham dared bargain with God over the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah has such hubris been seen! And such arrogance on the part of Lasombra, not to see the danger.

Eventually, though, the bargain was struck. Gratiano received the Embrace and followed his sire to Siracusa, there to take his place in the endless hierarchy of progeny. For two centuries and more he was patient, but to a man of such boundless ambition, they must have been two centuries of torture! Prevented from acquiring what

I do not know if I myself believe this legend. It explains a great many things, but I am not sure if the explanation is satisfactory.

That hour, of course, was the true birth of the Sabbat. The fall of the greatest Antediluvian gave hope to the anarchs and struck fear into the elders. The Tzimisce struck their own little blow for freedom, led by Archbishop Gratiano's disciple Lugoj, and soon war was joined in earnest. Those Lasombra who were but captured during Gratiano's raid were among our sect's true founders.

Word of Lasombra's fate quickly spread among our kind. Most had our innate respect for true inner strength and threw themselves into the Sabbat cause. Our beloved Archbishop Monçada of Madrid was one of these, and he, in consultation with Archbishop Gratiano, created the Sabbat as it is known today. There is more than mockery in our series of bishops and archbishops, childe. There is profound respect.

Some few had too much love for their forefather, or too much fear of freedom, to walk our new road. These became *antitribu*, even as Montano became *antitribu*. Most, in their daring, went to ground in Granada or among the Moors. Most have long since been destroyed. Montano still lives, though even among the weak-willed vampires of the Camarilla he is regarded as unlucky to follow. His forays against his clan, you see, tend to end with Montano returning in triumph — *sans* any who followed him out to battle.

Now, the lessons you should have learned. One, Embrace those you intend to keep for a reason, and allow nothing to alter your plans. Two, never give a Tzimisce more knowledge, or more credit, than is absolutely necessary. Even now, they prance around their Carpathian fires claiming to have created the Sabbat. Three, avoid like the plague any excess sentimentality. At worst it will get you destroyed, at best hunted. You have not Montano's strength or power. You cannot hope to emulate his feats.

Finally, remember that the tragic hero always dies in the end. Stop trying to emulate him and discard your sympathy for his plight. It is counterproductive, inefficient and likely to earn you poor marks from your humble teacher.

The Purging of the *Antitribu*

Now, the lessons of war. We fight endlessly against the Camarilla and its masters. Were the Antediluvians not part of the equation, I am sure that there would be far less conflict between our Sabbat and the seven clans, but circumstances dictate otherwise. A disarmed opponent is less dangerous, do you not agree? Ergo, we must take the tool from the Antediluvians' hands.

It sounds simple. In reality, it is war, a war that has raged unceasingly since the simpering anarchs signed the Convention of Thorns. Of course, the fools and historians of the Camarilla have declared the "Sabbat Wars" ended four centuries hence. These idiots have obviously not visited Philadelphia, Toronto, Baltimore or Tenochtitlán recently. Eh? My apologies, I was using the old form. Mexico City, it is called now.

The war still rages, childe. Jyhad, Crusade, whatever you wish to call it, it goes on night after night. It is merely the most overt phase that the scholars of the enemy call "The Wars." They chose a moment when they had the upper hand, arbitrarily declared it a finishing point, and sat bloated and sassy on their supposed triumph. As you know, things are not quite that simple, and even their great victory in this supposed "war" was not quite the spotless triumph the Ventrue wish it were.

You see, even as the butchers of the Camarilla drove us back, we succeeded in one of our most important goals. The *antitribu*, few to begin with, were extinguished by the time the 16th century staggered to its close.

The "War" itself is hardly worth mentioning, save to a student of tactics. The memorandum sent over announcing your visit indicated that you were a, ahem, "telecommunications expert," so I won't bore you with the details. The stories of how that imbecile Hardestadt was chased from his castle in the Schwarzwald, and how we subdued Zutphen and Naarden in the Netherlands — well, they are for another time. Let it suffice to say that superior tactics and skill are a match for numbers only to a certain point. That phase of the conflict was not one where we achieved overwhelming success.

Where we did succeed, though, was in Granada. It was here that many of our *antitribu* went to ground, particularly those of Moorish or otherwise Islamic extraction. Moriscos, those Spaniards who clung to the faith of the Prophet were called. Even as we fought the Camarilla, we sought out the traitors of our blood and destroyed them.

It was a matter of some debate, you know. Many of our noblest scions were unwilling to give up the independence of their fiefdoms, valuing the pride of their living heritage over the demands of their blood. Aragon, Castile, Sevilla — these were once *kingdoms*, childe. Damnation, do you think it was easy achieving consensus? Only pride saved us from humiliation then. It was pride, true, that demanded that the kingdoms remain separate, but it was greater pride in the blood of Lasombra that demanded that we destroy these walking insults. It was agreed that all measures necessary to remove these traitors, these *antitribu*, would be taken, regardless of the cost to Castile or Barcelona.

We began moving troops and arranging marriages the next night.

he might by accidents of birth and Embrace — for Lasombra's elder childer stood before him in all manner of things, this being only proper — he chafed under the restrictions imposed by his older siblings.

It is foolish, I think, to suppose that a man who has betrayed his blood once will not do so again. When the whispered tales of the so-called "Anarch Revolt" made their way to Sicily, they wandered first to Gratiano's receptive ear. He spoke with these anarchs, made plans and contacts with them. Through meetings and exchanges with a Fiend called Lugoj, he learned the secret of shattering the Blood Bond, and of the power that the Vaulderie could bring.

Montano, ever dutiful, watched his youngest sibling with alarm. He shared his concerns with his drowsy father, but was ignored or dismissed. Shamefacedly, for he knew a great doom was to come upon Lasombra, he made preparations against the night when flight would be necessary. Gratiano he watched more closely than before, but he dared not act and incur his father's displeasure.

Aware of Montano's surveillance and his impotence, Gratiano laughed. With the aid of an Assamite ally, he chose several sacrifices from the anarch ranks and planted false memories within their minds. Memories, of course, that spoke of meetings with Montano and plans made to slaughter the great and mighty of the Lasombra within their own halls.

The bickering began immediately, and did not end until two moons had passed and the floors were slick with blood and gritty with ash. Through it all, Montano remained aloof. His strength would have ended the bloodshed, but his honor did not permit him to use it. Gratiano knew his enemy well.

When the tide of blood had ebbed and few still walked the halls, then did Gratiano and his allies strike. Smuggled onto the island from the port of Ostia, they stormed the halls and slew or subdued all they found within. Montano, faced with the choice of betrayal or death, chose instead to escape. None there, not even crimson-faced Gratiano, his visage a mask of blood, had the strength to gainsay him in this.

Lasombra had died before Montano fled. Only the fact that his sire would not see him flee allowed the *antitribu* to move. Yes, he is *antitribu*, more potent and more dangerous than Tepes himself. What, did you imagine him the hero of this piece? He *lost*, childe. Lost utterly. We do not sing the praises of the defeated.

There is a legend among certain of our elders. The legend goes that at the last, Lasombra opened his eyes and saw his fate. He smiled then, for this was what he had Embraced Gratiano to do. Glad was he to give his essence to the son strong enough to take it, and he went down into the endless dark with that smile still on his withered lips. It was a father's benediction to a prodigal son who has, at long last, come home.

Ferdinand and Isabella, now there was a triumph to savor… you look confused. There is far more to their reign than the voyage of Cristobal Colon, my student. 1492 was a year of great doings. The Jews, many of them allied with the Ventrue, were expelled from Spain. Colon, or Columbus as you call him, set sail on a mission for Archbishop Monçada himself. And finally, the Moors were driven from Spain. It was made a truly Christian country, even as those whom the un-Christian elements had harbored were expelled.

You see, many of our Moorish brethren of treacherous nature had taken refuge among the communities that had given them birth. Granada and the northern coast of Africa held most of them, but wherever the Moors held land in Spain, there were *antitribu*. We, with the full assent of those Moorish Lasombra whose loyalty was unquestionable, began at once to drive the Moors from the face of Iberia. In 1492, we finally succeeded.

It was not easy, no. Ferocious and wealthy enough to enlist the support of the Assassins, our *antitribu* fought as well as one would expect. Their mortal pawns were of such quality that many of the best were Embraced and turned upon their former masters. It was a nearer thing than it should have been, yes.

In the end, though, there was no doubt of the outcome. We had learned the secrets of their steel, and our will was iron. They broke and fled, and we turned our attention back to the seven clans.

It was not until 1566 that this threat, thought extinguished, reared its head again. The rumors ran like smoke, like wildfire. "Montano has been seen," the gossips whispered. "Montano has returned," the soldiers swore. "Montano has come to Granada to raise the *antitribu*," the spies reported.

The last, that we believed. And so, we acted. We do not permit our mistakes to haunt us, childe.

It was Philip II, in so many ways such a poor tool, who served us well here. Summoning the Inquisition to Granada, he flushed our *antitribu* into the sun's light even as he forced the hidden Mahommedans from Spain. There were two years of bloody revolt and conflict, and 40 more of piracy and retribution, but when it ended, Montano had been beaten. In a mere two years Granada was cleared of his supporters, and he was forced to flee to Tangiers.

Admittedly, that was just the end of the midgame. It took us four more decades to eradicate the last of Montano's Moriscos, but eradicate them we did. I remember those nights, fighting ship-to-ship under a bloated moon. Imagine it! Cutlasses shining in the pale moonlight, the muzzle flash of the cannons, the scuppers pouring blood into the uncaring sea — it was a time like none I have seen since. The screams of the defeated as the blazing hulk of their ship consumed them — that was sweet music to our ears.

The look of fear in their eyes as the black banner of the Lasombra bore down on the skull and crossbones — that was more precious than blood to us.

No, we will never see those nights again. The *antitribu* are mostly gone, save Montano and any he spawns. The nights of sailing for blood under a crimson moon, they are gone, too.

Now, the lessons. Simple ones, this time. Service to the Lasombra comes before city, before home, before pack. If you do not understand this, then you are a detriment to the clan. Of course, you can best serve the clan through your triumphs, so do not throttle your ambition out of misguided loyalty.

Second, eradicate your mistakes, whatever the cost. This way they, unlike Montano, cannot come back to haunt you. And at the last, it is permissible to wax nostalgic, but only about victories. Losses are only remembered to be learned from. Once the lessons have been taken from it, the defeat itself should be forgotten forever.

Some Questions

I see my accounts thus far have not completely satisfied you. You have some questions you feel I have not answered? Ask away, student.

The Armada? We do not speak of that here, except to say that it was not nearly so great a defeat as the historians of the phthisical English would make it seem. We have learned all the lessons it could teach us, and we speak of it no more.

Scandinavia? Obviously the lie has taken on a life of its own, and the Camarilla is a clutch of fools to be so easily taken in. Yes, we let it be believed that we fled north after the "Wars" ended, but consider the logic of the matter. We are lovers of warmth, and always have been. Even when we cannot gaze upon the face of the sun, we are accustomed to feeling his caress in our gardens of the night. Spain, Italy, Morocco — these are the lands that have traditionally given us succor and birth. As pleasing as the long nights of Oslo and Køvnhagn might be, can you imagine *Don* Ibrahim of Marrakesh attempting to "blend in" in the land of blond-haired, blue-eyed giants? Even if one does not follow the pitiable Masquerade, a reasonable amount of caution is necessary.

No, we sent the *antitribu* of the seven clans north. They fit in well there, our Gangrel and tame Ventrue servants. From that comes the legend that the Sabbat broke and fled to the frozen lands of the north. We of the Lasombra, however, could never stomach it. Spain is ours, and it always shall be ours.

Yes, there is much faith within the clan, and always has been. Many Lasombra still take Communion regularly, and it is considered a great honor to make confession to Archbishop Monçada himself. I myself have been

given the pleasure twice. Of course, there are certain changes that must be made in the ceremony — the wine and wafer are necessarily replaced. It is not so much of a sin, I think. Remember what they stand for.

Enough with the questions! You will drive me mad, asking about this and that when there is so much that must yet be told. Now hush, childe, and hear of how we came to this continent.

The Taking of the New World

It was the Archbishop's idea, of course. He controlled so many royal confessors and abbots that it was easy to convince kings and princes that exploration was the key to riches. We, however, were not seeking wealth when we had De Gama and Magellan outfitted. What did we wish?

Land, free of the troublesome Camarilla. A place where the Sabbat could grow and then grow strong, where we could demonstrate the superiority of our ideas. A place where our ideals would have room to develop out of the crucible of combat. We were *not* fleeing the Camarilla when we came west, childe. Never believe that.

It started with, appropriately enough, the Spanish. One Italian navigator, backed by Spanish money, was all that it took to establish our empire in the New World. One by one, our elders moved across the sea. First to Spanish and Portuguese possessions, then into the English and French. There were many of our kind still in the Netherlands when New Amsterdam was founded, and they came with the first *patroons*. Did you ever wonder why the Swedes, of all races, founded a colony in what they now call Delaware? It was at the suggestion of our followers stranded in Scandinavia. And once the colony was founded and our kind had been ferried over, we withdrew our support and those lands were subsumed by the English. The same happened with the Dutch, the Portuguese and eventually even the French. It only makes sense, dear student. One government is much easier to direct than five. Redundancy is wasteful.

There were local powers to be dealt with, of course. The Incas, the children of the Toltecs — the *conquistadores* took them to task without any encouragement from us. Sometimes a tool is so well crafted that it performs its function automatically.

As for the British colonies that eventually dominated the continent, well, we made them ours. Initially, the plan was to divide the Americas between the English in the east and the Spanish in the south and west, with the French in the north and center to be phased out as rapidly as possible. Things did not work out this way, obviously, but there have been compensations.

When first the British came to America, we targeted those of their cities that seemed most likely to become citadels against the wilderness. Philadelphia was deemed more important than New Amsterdam, and with good reason. Baltimore, Charleston, Boston with its polluted waters — all of these were secondary targets. Rather than spread thin our resources, we concentrated on those we felt would be keys to the new lands. So we invested them strongly and held them, and hold them to this day. No city that the English or French established, however, was free of us. Many Camarilla vampires who came in hopes of establishing themselves as "princes" instead became prisci, coming over to our cause when they saw our strength in this land of blood and honey.

To the south, we took Tenochtitlán — Mexico City, again my apologies — and made it ours. There is no greater concentration of Lasombra anywhere else in the world, childe.

There is a legend that says that the grandfathers of the Aztecs founded Tenochtitlán when they saw, on a cactus, an eagle devouring a snake. They, wisely, took this for a sign. Now consider why this matters to us. We are the eagle, free of the rule of our elders. Tzimisce is dead and Lasombra has been devoured. Who is there now to clip our wings? The Camarilla, on the other hand, crawls in submission to the Antediluvians. As God condemned the serpent to crawl forever in the dust after the Fall, so does the Camarilla grope on its belly endlessly.

With such potent auguries, is it any wonder that we have made Mexico City (you see, I am capable of learning from mistakes) our stronghold. There we take counsel with the other clans of the Sabbat. There dwell many of our most potent warriors and cunning strategists. I am told even Medina Sidonia lairs there now. We entered the city with Cortéz and have never left it. The pelts of the Garou who dwelt with and protected the Aztecs are now rugs for the floors of our great leaders, and to possess one is a token of high status indeed. Indeed, the entire land of Mexico is ours, and even if our grand dream of using all of North America as a place of growth for the Sabbat has not come to fruition, we have at least made Mexico such a place.

Of course, we would have had the rest of the continent as well, were it not for the short-sighted Tzimisce. But that is another story.

Lessons to be learned from this? Only one: There is always another game to be played. If given the choice between a game with high stakes that you may lose, and a game with higher stakes that only you can win, the choice should be simple.

The War of Tzimisce Aggression

There is always a fly in the ointment, and in our case, the flies spoke with Transylvanian accents. The Ventrue had driven the Toreador and their French servants from Canada (the Plains of Abraham — hah! They should have been called the Plains of Lot, for all the corruption in the city behind them) and incited the American Revolution. It was easy to convince the French and their masters to aid our struggle across the Atlantic, and suddenly the tawdry tradesmen of the Ventrue were beset on two fronts. Wisely, they chose the easier target: the Toreador. We and our noble servants won freedom from the Old Country, and the future looked to be golden.

A pity certain of our "allies" had not won their freedom from the Old Country's antiquated ideals. The Tzimisce saw America as another Carpathia, to be divvied up into miniscule demesnes for them to lord over. Every home a brooding castle, every mountain a Wallachia in miniature. They took our infant America and nearly broke it to pieces. Read the original Articles of Confederation, childe. They would have made your America a feudal collective that would have splintered endlessly into smaller and smaller states. No, far better that we stepped in and demanded both unity and leadership. Remember, the first capital of this country was in Philadelphia, our second-greatest stronghold in this hemisphere.

So, we struck at the Tzimisce, and those of the *antitribu* whom they'd duped into following them. The overt phase was, as always, a mere ripple on the surface which hinted not at the depths hidden below. Shays' Rebellion, I believe they called it. A mere footnote in history texts, known only to devotees of the dusty past. Under cover of night, however, things were very different.

The conflict was dark and bloody, and quickly spread back across the ocean to those of our sect who remained in Europe. Of course, by the time word of the fighting reached Stockholm and Castile, things had gotten somewhat garbled. What was a war of ideals in the New World became a free-for-all in the Old. Senseless diablerie reached epidemic proportions, and to sire a childe was to sign one's own death warrant. Laughing, believing we'd destroy ourselves, the Camarilla sat back and watched. Thus, they missed their greatest chance to shatter the Sabbat.

In the Americas, the sides in the conflict stayed reasonably clear, and relentlessly the Tzimisce were worn down. There was a cost to this victory, though. The forces turned on the Fiends were not available to prevent the encroachment of the seven clans. All the while America was growing, and we had not the resources to exploit her because we were too busy making war upon those who ought to have followed us to our very own manifest destiny.

Instead, our casualties in the conflict with the Tzimisce forced us to surrender territory. Florida in 1819, later California, Texas and, by 1855, most of what became the American West. The American West, nonsense. The *Camarilla* West is a more truthful way of putting it, yes.

Eventually, the Fiends and their followers were convinced of the long-term benefits of central organization, but by the time they did so the Sabbat was nearly in ruins. It could have been destroyed, childe. One blow from the Camarilla could have swept us out of most of Europe; another would have swept the sect off the map entirely. Yet they did not act, convinced that we would create our own ruin. It was their mistake, and a twofold one.

First of all, they did not break the Sabbat when they had the chance. Mind you, even if they had, we of the Lasombra would have survived and even prospered. However, they left us our greatest tool. I think, sometimes, that they did so in order to have an enemy whom they might conjure up to create crises and consensus at a moment's notice. It matters not — they let the Sabbat live.

Their second mistake, of course, was not taking what was ours. By not making the effort to take Baltimore and Philadelphia, they gave us a dagger pointed at their America's capital. By not driving us from Montreal and the cities along the St. Lawrence, they allowed us to control traffic into the Great Lakes. They let us keep such vital strategic points, and when the war finally ended, the reunified Sabbat had citadels to defend and call its own. It took us less time than you might imagine to rebuild our strength, and to rein it in more tightly this time.

So what was the dreaded Sabbat Civil War? In the Old World, it was a rugby scrum cleverly disguised as a political struggle. There were no sides there, only appetites. In the New World, a philosophical exchange that devolved into a useless waste of resources. There was no glory to be found, not in either side's edition of the conflict.

As for the dreaded Black Hand, the fiercest warriors of our sect, do you know what they did through our Civil War?

Nothing. They did nothing. They sat, and they watched, and they waited for the winner to be determined. Then they quietly went back to business as usual, for the Black Hand is missing a certain something in the

initiative department. Give them a target or an objective and one could wish for no finer allies. Ask them to make a policy decision, however, and the stars will fall before you see them budge. Fanaticism has its limitations, yes.

Yes, that might be considered a lesson of this tale. Another would be that internal dissent is far deadlier than an external foe. Yet another is that the Sabbat goes whither the Lasombra will it. The rest I leave as an exercise for the student.

The Modern Nights

So, my student, where does that leave us? It leaves us in the present, more or less. What is a century and a half to our kind? Very little, I assure you, very little, and the question was intended to be rhetorical.

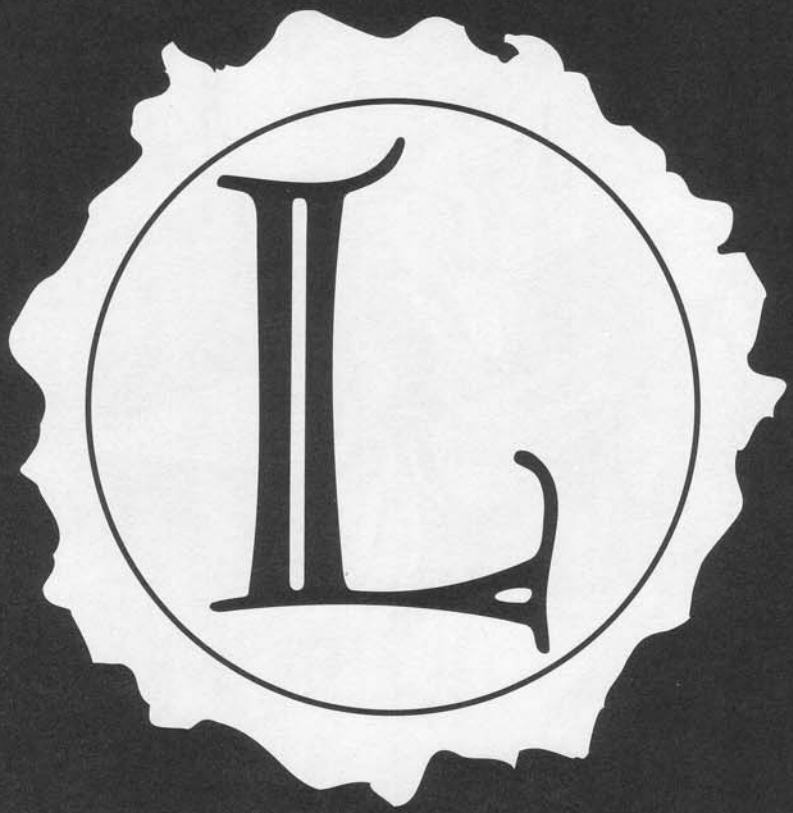
Today we are stronger than we have been in centuries. We control our Spain as we always have, and my home of Milan is ours as well. Here in the Americas, we control all of Mexico, and drain the Ventrue's dollars into it with carefully manufactured economic "catastrophes." The Mid-Atlantic region of America is carefully under our thumb, and we still control the gate from the Great Lakes to the sea. New England, with its resources of money and the mind, will be ours soon — Boston perhaps in months. We hold Detroit as well, and through the automotive manufacturers there gently squeeze the life from the Brujah's beloved trade unions. We have seen setbacks in drug-infested Miami, but considering that we shall soon retake Cuba from that bearded buffoon Castro, I will gladly make the trade. Yes, it is a good time to be a Lasombra. Then again, it is always a good time to be a Lasombra, and a very bad time to be one of our enemies.

Final Questions

Are there any final questions before I send you packing into the dawn? Just one? Go ahead; ask.

The beginning, eh? You want to know the very beginnings of our clan. Well, childe, it is with the utmost respect for your curiosity that I turn to you and say, "Who cares?" Lasombra himself is ash on a Mediterranean wind. Anything I tell you would be a lie, or at best a legend. We both know that legends are just lies cloaked in antiquity, anyway. So worry not about the origins of our kind, or of our blood. Talk to members of the other clans. Hear their self-aggrandizing fables. Compare your notes from tale to tale, read the *Book of Nod*, and I can guarantee that you will come to the same conclusion I reached long ago: it doesn't much matter. Knowing the Antediluvians exist is enough without worrying about petty squabbles buried for millennia. One rarely learns anything of strategic value from legends, anyway.

Simply be proud that Lasombra's blood flows in your veins, and let that be enough. Good night, childe. I will speak well of you to your sire, should our paths cross again.



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Chapter Three: An Evening at the Feet of Don Miguel

Good evening, class. Seat yourselves. We have much to cover tonight, and fewer hours of dark left than I'd like. Are you all comfortable? Good.

Tonight begins your education in what it truly means to be a member of Clan Lasombra. Through your actions on the field of battle, you have proved yourselves worthy of being trained for advancement within the clan. You will not be taught all of our secrets tonight — only the first hints of the first few. With time will come more knowledge, and patience is something we cultivate in our childer.

Still, you will be taught many things, and you will be expected to retain them all. I suggest you pay careful attention to my words; taking notes would not be amiss. Should an elder of our clan ask you to repeat any of what you hear tonight and not receive perfection as a response — well, it would reflect poorly upon me as a teacher. I do not enjoy being made to look unprofessional.

You're all going to take notes after all? Splendid. Allow me to begin.

To Be Lasombra

Just as vampires are nobility among mortals, we are nobility among our brethren. None can compare to us. Each of the other clans can be seen to reflect but one aspect of our glory.

We have brought down Lasombra himself. We have fought the hordes of the ill-named Camarilla for centuries, and ever we wrest their cities from them. We have dueled with the Ventrue for time out of mind, and ever have we been victorious.

You will learn, by the by, that being confused with the Ventrue is a deadly insult. I expect none of you to sit still for it.

But I digress. We are the epitome of our kind. That is why we lead the Sabbat unquestioningly, while those simpering Ventrue struggle merely to hold their precious Camarilla together. Rest assured, had we the numerical advantage over them that they hold over us, the sun would rise on a world free of the Camarilla.

Ah, the Camarilla. Misguided, mistaken, and frequently even mispronounced — what further proof is needed of their buffoonery than that provided by their own tongues when they butcher our beautiful *español?* And such as they would speak for all of us. Pathetic, is it not?

Now, the difference between the Camarilla and our Sabbat is very simple. Their organization exists to oppress our kind, ours to exalt it. Examine carefully their tenets. This Masquerade — what is it but forcing exalted vampiric nature to submit to the delicate sensibilities of humankind? The vaunted consensus of their Conclaves — this is nothing more than the will of the leaders being shackled by the voices of the less-talented masses. And there is always the dark secret behind the Archons and Justicars and Traditions — the whole show is but a sham, a way for the Antediluvians to enforce their antiquated wills upon a world that no longer needs them! Submit and submit again, and let us tell you when it is time for you to die at our masters' pleasure — *this* is what the Camarilla preaches. Never mind this sad fumbling after lost humanity, never mind the pathetic mumblings of Traditions and hunters — the Camarilla asks you to bind yourselves in shackles of blood and steel, and to seek the torch or the stake at the pleasure of another.

Our Sabbat, and I do say "our" with deliberation, is dedicated to the notion of exaltation. We are dedicated to fulfilling our potential as superior intellects in superior bodies, to achieving all that our minds and frames allow. To be free of the shackles imposed by preconception and the rules of any save the cold universe itself — that is what the Sabbat strives toward under our tutelage. The youngest of our sect misunderstand this striving for ultimate freedom as permission to rant and rave in the streets, playing their asinine little games. We allow this to flourish, for even these ragtag rebels play their part in tearing down the artificial strictures of a society spawned by Antediluvian fever dreams. Those of us who are enlightened, though, as to our true aims, know that the Sabbat is dedicated to something infinitely nobler than the right to pluck pedestrians from the streets at will.

Yes, what is the question? Why do they hold such a numerical advantage over us, you ask, if we are supposed to be such sublime specimens? My dear Miss Sforza, ponder this: quality versus quantity. They have the latter.

Dr. Fatima Saieed's Notes on Psychology and Other Matters

It has for some time been my duty and pleasure to observe those of our blood in hopes of finding some revelations of self-discovery, for both the clan as a whole and myself personally. What I have uncovered is of supreme interest to the psychologist as well as the strategist. Even along the closely tended stalk of our bloodline, some surprising variations and fixations have bloomed — or withered. A few might be worth cultivating; others should be culled.

Mirrors

It is something of a truism among our servants that if one wishes to discover where the master is, look in the mirror. Some theorists posit that our inability to cast reflections is a byproduct of our association with shadows, a.k.a. our talent for Obtenebration. I find this explanation unsatisfactory, having taught several Toreador *antitribu* basics of Obtenebration while still remaining able to observe their reflections. Ergo, it is something unique to us.

Certain Giovanni to whom I spoke during the course of my research indicated that our peculiar handicap may in fact be something spiritual. They made a correlation between the abyss into which we can reach with the greater powers of Obtenebration and what certain of their ghostly servants refer to as the Void. Apparently this "Void" is a sort of spiritual nothingness wherein dwell the dark reflections of the Restless Dead. Perhaps as the price for our dealings with it, we have given our reflections unto it. In truth, I do not know.

What I do know are the precise limits of our clan's distinguishing feature. We do not produce images in any sort of reflective surface. This includes mirrors, pools of water, polished metal, glass, puddles of mercury or anything else. Anything we wear or carry likewise does not appear in reflection, as amusing as the notion of a free-floating briefcase might be.

We do in fact partially appear on mechanical media for recording images (as opposed to those based upon capturing reflections). Video cameras, color photography, security monitors, motion sensors and any other forms of mechanical surveillance pick us up, albeit as shadowy flickers. Black-and-white photography, however, is the exception to this rule. Perhaps because this particular form is based upon the absorption of light by a silver-based compound (a form of reflection, perhaps?), our images do not appear in any black-and-white photographs. Again, I am not sure. It is my duty to report my observations, not to hypothesize explanations.

In any case, our peculiar relationship with mirrors has led to certain interesting behaviors and abilities. I note a growing tendency toward **Image Obsession** (1 - 5 point Flaw) among the Lasombra. As we cannot see our appearance, a large number of our kin find themselves hypnotized by the vagaries of their own appearance. The compulsive behavior may be small at first (1 point), manifesting itself as a repeated questioning of others as to one's looks ("Does my hair look all right? Really?"), to obsessive behaviors such as brushing hair, adjusting clothes and the like. The symptoms occasionally run the gamut to full-fledged mania (5 points), wherein the afflicted Lasombra are constantly attended by ghouls intent on grooming them and can speak of little save their appearance. Fortunately, such cases are rare and are usually fatal in a matter of weeks.

A great many Lasombra, incidentally, find that they can harness this obsession by wearing masks. This allows for some manner of control over the appearance the mask wearer presents to the world, as well as granting each Lasombra the opportunity to create a sort of iconic visage to display. Indeed, there seems to be a developing fetishistic competition among our younger clan members as to the complexity and ferocity of their masks. Older Lasombra who tend toward masks, on the other hand, prefer plainer or even featureless vizards.

Some few of our kind have somehow mastered the art of actually producing a **Faint Reflection** (2 point Merit). Those with this talent, which I feel is well worth cultivating, can actually appear in mirrors, albeit in extremely pale, ghostly guises. Objects moving behind a Lasombra casting a faint reflection will be clearly seen through her form. However, often even a faint reflection is enough to allay the suspicions of kine or Camarilla.

Shadows

Our very name, Lasombra, is synonymous with shadows. We rule from them, we dwell in them, and we use them as our most fearsome servants. Why? It seems almost ironic, considering the long association our blood has had with Iberia, Italy and northern Africa, places known for their sunny climes.

Apart from inclination and talent on the part of our late, illustrious forefather, I espouse the idea that a psychological root governs our fascination with and control over shadows. It is precisely because we were creatures of the sun once, far more than the pale Ventrue or Gangrel, that we have turned so completely to the night. Denied the light, we embrace the dark with a passion and a vengeance. It is a textbook transformation reaction, and one to which we have

been subject for centuries. I would even go so far as to venture that when we Embrace new childer, among the qualities we look for is the sort of obsessive-compulsive nature that, denied a thing that is loved, will rebel against that thing viciously.

Remarkable advances have been made in the uses of Obtenebration. It is only natural to expect such variations to develop over time, though some unfortunate side effects have manifested as well. For example, a few unlucky Lasombra are afflicted with an **Enmity of Shadows** (4 point Flaw), wherein the shadows that the unfortunate Lasombra summons may well turn and attack him without provocation (a Lasombra with this Flaw must make a Willpower roll [difficulty 6] each time he uses an Obtenebration power of Level 3 or above. A success indicates that the power functions normally; with a failure the summoned shadows attack their putative master).

Then again, an increasing number of us are blessed with **Strength of Shadows** (4 point Merit), which permits us to strengthen the shadows we call so that even daylight will not immediately dispel them. Even Strengthened shadows dissipate after four hours in the sun (according to one of my most trusted research assistants), but it certainly does provide a nasty surprise to enemies when, even after sunrise, shadows hound them.

The most interesting new use of Obtenebration I've found is almost Tzimisce-esque in its brutality. Called, somewhat melodramatically, **Shadow Parasite** (Obtenebration Level Six) by its creator, this vile attack is startlingly effective. Based upon **Arms of the Abyss**, **Shadow Parasite** (required cost: three Blood Points) allows one of the **Arms** to insert itself into the target and then expand (Dexterity + Brawl, difficulty 7 to insert itself, Stamina + Brawl to expand each round. Damage is Strength + successes and can only be soaked with Fortitude), literally ripping the target open from the inside. Of course, one must concentrate on expanding the tendril of darkness during this time, indicating that it is perhaps more effective as an assassin's weapon than a warrior's.

Not nearly so terrifying, but perhaps as effective, is **Darksight** (Obtenebration Level Seven), a useful power for eavesdropping and scouting. Perhaps a refinement of Eyes of the Night, **Darksight** allows its possessor to "choose" a specific shadow as a listening post. The vampire may then see and hear (if she wishes) what would be seen and heard if she were standing within that shadow. Both blood and Willpower (one point each) must be invested in each shadow used thusly, but the affinity between vampire and shadow remains until the shadow is dispelled by sunlight. Nor is there any distance limitation on this ability; I have seen Lasombra in Philadelphia pause in midsentence to monitor a conversation in Canberra via **Darksight**.

This is hardly a comprehensive catalogue of the new neuroses and abilities developing among our kind. A fuller report will be made at a later date, when adequate funding makes more in-depth researches possible.

Dr. Fatima Saieed

Harvard University Extension School

The World and All It Holds

We shall inherit the earth, have no doubt of that. When the last twitching Garou has been made into a rug to rest in front of a crackling fireplace; when the last mage has been burned alive, the pages of his grimoires serving as kindling; when the last restless ghost has been laid in its grave — then will the earth belong to our kind. I have no doubt that night will come soon, but in the meanwhile these others must be dealt with. There are many dangers walking the world and it is best that you be aware of them all.

The Future

Look at yourself. Consider what you are. Then look on others, and realize that you have achieved a control, a perfection of psyche to which they can only aspire. You are the pinnacle toward which they blindly strive, the goal which they can but dimly see. It is our duty to assist those who have the potential to achieve that goal whilst culling those who clearly never will; this is why we have earned the sobriquet Keepers. Don't be fooled by the atavisms' illusion of competence through physical prowess. They will never achieve the mental clarity necessary to plan the strategies that will ensure our survival even in the face of enemies terrible and ancient. Only with clarity of mind and purpose will we be able to take our kind to the stars and beyond.

You heard me correctly. Let the meek inherit the earth; we shall keep it as a giant ranch or breeding preserve. To us belong the heavens. Once we have united our kind and aided them in achieving their fullest potential as the rightful lords of humanity, once we have cleared the earth of others who would challenge our supremacy, once we have established the vast cowering numbers of kine as herd in deed as well as name, then shall we climb to the eternal shadows between the stars and, laughing, exist there forever.

The Jyhad

Some of you look surprised. What, did you not have the vision to look past the Jyhad, seeing only eternal struggle until the last two vampires in the world sink down with their fangs in each other's throat? The werewolves would applaud, I'm sure.

No, you fools, we are engaged in a war, not a suicide march. One enters a war with one purpose: to win. There will be no Gehenna for us, no final nights of blood and terror. Half a millennium ago, we were potent enough to destroy Lasombra himself. If we were capable of that, what are we capable of destroying now?

The Inconnu? The Antediluvians? Caine himself? Why not, I ask you?

Again, I have digressed. You seem to have a talent for making me do that, class. In any case, we look past the Jyhad. It shall be fought, yes, and it shall be won, and when it is won every last vampire will be united under our banner. The Necromancers will come from their graveyards, and the Ravnos will obey, and the once-proud Ventrue will be glad to shine our boots as we assign each their proper role. Then will the real struggles begin.

Yes, Enrique. You are correct. The Lupines. We shall have to war on them some night, and the human wizards as well. The struggle among our own kind is merely the beginning, a preliminary to the real wars. The Jyhad is merely a necessary step in our assumption of dominion over all of our kind, not just the Sabbat. Then we shall lead all of Caine's children into a glorious new age, when our kine are kine in fact, when we have no enemies and no reason to war among ourselves. This will be true freedom, the freedom to *be* without worrying if the dawn and its servants will find you. Can you not see it?

Don't look too far ahead, Idina. There are still dangers in the world, and the ones you should most fear are of our own kind. I know you have faced some on the streets or in the skyscrapers, but those were their childer, just as you were ours. You will be joining the adults soon, and much of what you have learned will prove deadly if you do not temper it with new knowledge. Listen carefully, childer. Much depends on it.

Tzimisce

Boogeymen and relics, forever brooding on the lost glories of the Old Country. If you can get them out of their workshops, they can be civilized, but they have regrettably medieval social tendencies. Their transparent attempts at playing *eminence grise* should be watched for, noted and contained. Their arrogance and ambitions are the keys to making certain that they're as productive as possible.

Oh, a final warning: they carry grudges. If you annoy one, kill it quickly. It will save you decades of aggravation.

Assamite

Ah, what a blade we point at our own breasts! Were there any sense in the world, we would be glad to give them our vitae as a gift while they went out to make war on our foes. Can you picture the sheer spectacle of the sons of Hassam silently clearing the forests of cowering Lupine atavisms? The blood sings at the thought. Unfortunately, the world is not a sensible place. Until that night, use their talents with discretion and show them respect. Oh yes, and never, ever seek to cheat them of their payment. We've invested too much training in you already.

Brujah

So-called egalitarians, they have no real interest in bettering the lot of others. Rather, they want us brought down to their level so that they can lord it over the rest of us in the democratic mire. Fortunately, their chances of success are nil. In the meantime, those who serve us make superb cannon fodder, and those who do not die easily.

Gangrel

Every time I look at a Gangrel, I am half-convinced I am going to watch him climb a tree and begin to gibber for blood-coated bananas. They are evolution in reverse, Rousseau's noble savage in the flesh. Consider them a failed experiment and allow them to die off with dignity.

Giovanni

Were there more of them, they'd be a danger. As is, they're an annoyance with potential. They have breeding, refinement, resources and direction, much as we do, and are working to an end much as we are. Their fascination with what was instead of what is will be their fatal weakness, though. Relying on the dead as allies ignores the logical fallacy inherent in that strategy: were those allies more competent, they would not be dead.

Malkavian

You have seen, I'm certain, certain households among the wealthy where the smallest child of the family is the absolute master of the house, and the rest of the family are slaves to the brat's whims? In such households, you see men who regularly shake the pillars of the financial world forced to their hands and knees, babbling baby-talk and being ridden like beasts of burden. In such households, you find strong and beautiful women reduced to abject slavery and degradation by juvenile tyrants whose ice cream is too runny or whose porridge is too hot for their delicate palates.

Think carefully on that image the next time you consider listening to the word of a Malkavian.

Nosferatu

In some ways, they are more like us than any other clan. Like ours, theirs is an aristocracy of merit. Like us, they look to survival past today's petty squabbles and proto-Jyhads. Unlike ours, their vision is limited from too much time in the tunnels, and their petty gossip-brokering continually undermines our work. If they would be so sensible as to unite under our leadership... but no, it will never happen.

Panders

"To pander" is a polite way of saying "to pimp." Our precious gift was prostituted when it was bestowed upon this ragtag lot, and I find their name fitting.

It is somehow conceivable that any vampires who emerge from the seething sludge of Panderhood will have demonstrated talents and survival characteristics that elevate them into civilized society. Still, the strongest and fastest mongrel remains, irreducibly, a mutt.

Ravnos

Consider them God's little test of our patience. Those who can bear their company often profit; those who cannot suffer their depredations. If you don't let them see how much they annoy you, they will grow bored and seek a new target — perhaps one that you suggest.

Serpents of the Light

There's something refreshing about pure, unadulterated evil. Their philosophy is a plainly demarcated dead end, while their single-mindedness borders on psychological disorder. They may call themselves Serpents, but they move predictably, and in straight lines. Merely direct them and make sure that you're not in their way, and all will be well.

Toreador

The victims of a fine distinction, the Toreador fail to realize that art is an expression of a cultured mind, not the culture itself. Whether they work in metal, music or flesh, all have this limitation in perception. However, we are sufficiently cultured to support their delusion; by allowing them to live out this psychosis, we reaffirm our nature as civilized beings.

Tremere

Foul sorcery, bubbling cauldrons and dark and stormy nights: these are the toys of the Tremere. I strongly suspect that in private, they all wear those ridiculous dunce caps with moons and stars on them. They are

treacherous little vipers, far more dangerous than any save the Tzimisce. Never let one escape from under your thumb, else you will never pin him down again.

Ventrue

They lead out of a sort of repressed desire for martyrdom ("Oh, we shall take up this burden and assume leadership of the Camarilla else all will fall to ruin. Oh, woe..."). We lead because we are superior to those we lead, and now you see why I consider it an insult to be compared to them. Most Ventrue seem to be looking for someone to drive in the last nail in their self-crucifixion. Should the opportunity present itself, by all means assist them.

Black Hand

I have heard many whisper fearfully about the Black Hand. Remember, the Hand is directed by the Mind and the Will. So long as we use our minds and have sufficient will, we can bend the Hand to our purposes.

If that sounds too pompous and philosophical for you, Enrique, consider this: even in the depths of the Sabbat's Civil War, the Hand did not move. Some call this restraint. I see it as fear.

Camarilla

At its most basic level, the Camarilla is a social experiment, like communism or a slave-based economy, that will eventually prove itself unworkable. It is our duty to hasten the night when the experiment is declared a failure, so that as much of the raw materials that went into it as possible can be salvaged for our own purposes. Of course, keeping those materials out of the hands of the Antediluvians is of prime importance as well. We must break the Camarilla and then build the edifice Sabbat even higher with its pieces.

Inconnu

Their very existence is a threat to our survival as a species. They are the heralds of cannibals; on this we agree with even the Tzimisce. They have power, yes, but they do not understand how to wield it in the modern world. Treat them the way you would treat some prehistoric beast loose on the streets of your home city. It most certainly has the ability to devour you, but only if it catches you. After all, you know the terrain much better than it does, and you can think faster. Furthermore, dispatching the creature might almost be looked upon as something of a civic duty.

Antitribu

Some few of these exist. So do some few two-headed calves and coelacanths. The parallel is precise.

Fortunately, the dupes of the Antediluvians are so eager to hunt down any with the lineage Lasombra that they take great delight in exterminating these friendless, hopeless oddities. It is almost amusing, wouldn't you agree, that they are doing our work for us? And therein lies another lesson for you, class.

Others

Lupines

Dangerous but shortsighted, they are prone to attacking shadows. With that in mind, practice your Obtenebration. This will give them plenty of targets at which to fling themselves, until they lie panting with their tongues hanging out.

At this point, it is a matter of individual discretion whether to administer the *coup de grace*, or to offer a bone and a good scritch behind the ears.

Mages

Aside from the thrice-bedamned Tremere, I'd not worry about wizards. They spend their time squabbling among themselves so long as no external threat presents itself. Be very careful to avoid providing that external threat, and the mage population will regulate itself quite nicely.

Wraiths

Try to avoid creating too many of these, as they can prove a remarkable hindrance. Other vampires who become ghosts are the worst of the lot, and they have more power in the physical world than you'd think. Show reasonable caution in killing, and you should avoid having any spirits attach themselves to you. Any Lasombra who is so unfortunate as to become personally haunted tends to find himself on the fringes of our society. Ghosts have no place among us, and a clan member reeking of the dead has one foot in the grave himself.

Changelings

The fae still walk the world, though now they tend to dress like the rest of us. I'm told the days of blousy poet shirts and outrageous baggy pants are gone, more's the pity. If you must deal with a faerie, be very careful. Most are fragile, but given an instant they can summon their magics and create the most disturbing effects. Still, there are sweet dreams to be had in their blood. I'd save them for a special occasion.

Enough of the other denizens of this world of darkness we dwell in. It is time to return to a more fitting topic of discourse: the Lasombra.

The Rarest of Vintages

One might expect that a clan as dedicated to the proposition of survival of the fittest as we would have certain problems with what they delicately call "the Amaranth." Other clans, even without our predilection for culling the weak, are rent with dissent by this little matter. Consider this example from the oh-so-civilized Camarilla: sire suspects childe of tendencies better suited to Œdipus on a narrow road outside Thebes, so he begins distancing himself from his progeny. The childe, no doubt concerned that her sire has acquired rarefied tastes, comes to the conclusion that he is about to devour her and decides to do unto him first. Both mobilize their ghouls, their allies and their pawns to do war upon each other, and an unnecessary bloodbath ensues. When the dust settles, valuable resources on both sides have been squandered, and the survivor now sees the beady eyes of vitae-hungry anarchs and elders in every shadow. Naturally, she immediately begins rebuilding her resources in anticipation of the next confrontation. In a matter of years, months, or even weeks, the whole wasteful process begins all over again.

Witness the Brujah; were they not so busy battening on each other we'd no doubt be up to our ears in Rabble.

No, contrary to what you might think, we have no problems with diablerie and its attendant symptoms. The matter is quite thoroughly controlled, and with that control ends the chaos that marks the Camarilla and the lesser clans of our Sabbat.

By now I'm sure you've heard of *Les Amies Noir*. Don't even try to tell me what you think it is; it's quite beyond your comprehension. However, one of its lesser functions is the Court of Blood, the body to which all Lasombra seeking to perform culinary exsanguination on another must appeal. Trust me, receiving permission to perform the unthinkable removes a great deal of the pleasure from the process.

Still, there are those Lasombra resolute on drinking the blood of others within the clan. Such a matter is not taken lightly. One cannot request the Final Death of another of our kind over personal matters — dislikes and insults and so on. No, it must be a situation where the intended prey has conclusively demonstrated that he or she is unfit to bear the proud name Lasombra. The Lasombra who proposes herself as hunter must gather evidence, and that evidence must be conclusive to bring before the Court when petitioning for a warrant of execution. The Court, consisting of anywhere from three to 13 members in good standing of *Les Amies Noir*, deliberates upon the evidence and then grants its ruling

as to whether or not the petitioner may begin her hunt. The intended prey is never made aware of the proceedings while they are occurring; no defense can be mounted. Indeed, all of the Court's operations take place under the strictest veil of secrecy. It's the only way to be fair. Yes, little one; you could be under consideration by the Court as we speak. As far as I'm concerned, the uncertainty adds a certain zest to life.

The rulings vary, based solely on the merits of the case. It's strictly apolitical, I assure you. Sometimes the prospective hunter is granted immediate permission to begin stalking her prey; other times the Court dictates that a warning must be issued, a sort of formal declaration of enmity. In many cases permission is refused, and the petitioner is shown how her perception of another's activities as "incompetence" is merely an inaccurate interpretation of the facts. You'd be surprised at how many young Lasombra take a quick look at one phase of a decades-long plan, decide that matters aren't proceeding fast enough for them, and petition the Court for the right to remove their superior so they can take over and, ahem, "do things right." Fortunately, this sophomoric phase tends to pass quickly, at least in those who survive.

In all honesty, permissive rulings from the Court are less common than restrictive ones, and we take this as a token of pride. It means that there are few incompetents among us to be weeded out. Still, a petition to the Court of Blood is a serious matter, and a youngster who brings a spurious petition to the Court's attention is often punished by having her intended target notified of her ambition. Poetic justice, is it not? Mind you, most of those notified do not immediately turn around and hunt down their accusers. Imagine the terror these arrogant youngsters must feel when informed by their betters that they are not even considered enough of a threat to be worth the effort of reprisal. It keeps wastes of the Court's time at a minimum.

As for those Lasombra who have not yet been thoroughly enough initiated into the mysteries to be aware of the Court's existence — well, any Keeper who *has* been initiated should be more than capable of defending himself against such a stripling. If he's not, then some thin blood gets itself excised from the Lasombra heritage. Evolution in action, as it were.

Conversely, dealing with those outside our clan does present a certain dilemma. Yes, the Camarilla must be broken to our will, and that often involves destroying its more potent members. The nonaligned clans must be brought into line, and again a certain number of their most powerful representatives will be necessary casualties of the struggle. As for our own dear Sabbat, well, the Tzimisce and others must be kept in line and that means the odd example being made. Still, we try to remove the bare minimum of these obstacles on the way to achieving

our aims. After all, they represent the prime flowering of other vampiric talents, ones that must be cultivated for the coming conflicts with those not of the Blood. It's not as if we can squander them. However, if it comes down to them or us, there is no real choice to be made.

What was the question? Must we receive permission from the Court to feast upon those outside the clan? Don't be naive.

The Making of a Lasombra

We are very particular when it comes to choosing new members of our clan. You can take some pride in this; you were the end products of a most rigorous selection process. Some of our younger members have generated what they call a "profile" for our newest generation of childer. According to these budding social scientists, we tend to Embrace people with, and I quote, "proven leadership qualities, a history of financial success, and a capacity for ruthlessness." Those of us who make our choices without consulting the sociologists prefer to say we look for grace, wit and determination. We take pride in preferring a sharp mind to dull strength, and ruthless persistence to a pretty face. After all, any ogre can command. It takes skill to *lead*.

It is an unfortunate fact that some of the older Lasombra from the old Iberian stock are regrettably racist, and in fact would prefer that only those kine with the proper — how shall I put this? — *breeding* were given the privilege of the Embrace. Most of us under 400 years of age, however, have moved past such antiquated notions of "racial purity" and whatnot. A woman of Kenyan descent and a man of Laotian blood who have demonstrated undeniable superiority to their fellows are infinitely preferable to a man of purest Castilan stock with the manners and drive of a sheep. Let the latter feed the former; we need less hidebound arrogance and more hungry blood if we are to bring the Jyhad to a successful, swift close.

As you may have noticed, we have no compunctions about winnowing out the weak among you. How many of you lost packmates, not to the enemy, but to those of the Sabbat? All of you raise your hands. Do you realize what a compliment it is to your natures that we bothered to separate you from the chaff? You are wheat, each and every one of you. Were you not, you would not be sitting here tonight.

We take only the best, and we keep only the best of the best. Only those of you who have proved yourselves trustworthy have survived to learn our secrets. Now, little ones, do you recognize the magnitude of what lies before you – and the depths of the abyss over which you have just crossed?

The Mentoring Period

As you no doubt remember, upon your initial investment with our blood you were treated the same as the other new recruits. You were not coddled, and were forced to learn the ways of the Sabbat along with the rest. We did, however, attempt to make certain that your packs were led by your sires. It was your sires, each of whom was given the chance to observe you in battle and negotiation, who brought you here. You have proved yourselves to your packs and your makers, and have earned the right to these lessons. No doubt your sires began them. That is expected, so that you do not disappoint by being totally unprepared when brought here.

Our mentoring process differs from that of the ineffectual Ventrue in several key ways. Beyond starting later in the childe's unlife, it is much less like a formal apprenticeship. It is considered the sire's responsibility to earn the respect of her childe, and the childe is allowed to learn from his mistakes, however dangerous the process might be. Those who do not learn, or who make mistakes too grievous to be recovered from, were obviously unworthy.

As each of you grew in power and knowledge, your sire began to exert more control over your training. Think on this. Remember how she took more and more interest in you, perhaps ignoring those of your pack whom you believed more deserving than yourself? Idiots. False modesty is something that will not be tolerated here.

But those of you who knew your worth were given as much of our knowledge as you could hold until tonight. Tonight, you are brought before *Les Amies Noir*. Tonight, you are ready to become Lasombra in truth. Tonight, you are no longer our childer; tonight you are Lasombra.

Les Amies Noir

And now, the moment you no doubt have been waiting for, those of you with wit enough to anticipate it. Yes, my students, this is your introduction to *Les Amies Noir*. Be honored that you have been selected to join our ranks. You have brethren centuries old who have never been permitted to hear the words I will speak tonight.

But what ranks are those, you ask. Very well, I shall tell you. *Les Amies Noir* is an order of those Lasombra deemed trustworthy enough to hear and implement the details of our great stratagem. Its members are sworn to protect the best interests of the clan and to defend the sect against those who would destroy us all. All true Lasombra are members; any of our clan who are not of *Les Amies* are nothing more than children or cases of arrested development. Bear in mind, though, that there are many more of our clan who are not members than who are. Even among the Lasombra, some are fit to lead and some are fit to follow.

Being An Account of the Chess Match Between Don Ibrahim and Doña Isadora

It must first be noted that there were several irregularities about this match. The stakes were very high, with *Don* Ibrahim's status as a Grandmaster of the Lasombra depending upon its outcome, and *Doña* Isadora having wagered not only financial considerations, but also certain territorial matters. In addition, there was difficulty in obtaining the proper pieces for the game. *Doña* Isadora was willing to play with a substitute set for the sake of expediency, but *Don* Ibrahim was most firm in insisting upon the standard set: eight kine (pawns), two Brujah (rooks), two Gangrel (knights), two Nosferatu (bishops), one Toreador (queen) and one Ventrue (king) per side. In the end, the *Don*'s insistence on maintaining the traditional set resulted in two Gangrel *antitribu* and one Ventrue *antitribu* being pressed into service. As a punishment for his obstinacy, the judges forced *Don* Ibrahim to take these substitute pieces on his side. The *Don* took this with very poor grace.

The game initially proceeded along surprisingly traditional lines. *Don* Ibrahim, playing white, began with the Brixton opening, while *Doña* Isadora, playing black, countered with a Sicilian defense. However, using a Karpov variation on the Brixton, *Don* Ibrahim blundered on move 9 (N-KB6 ch?, followed by B-QB3!) and cost himself one of his knights. It has been speculated that, as the knights were in fact the *antitribu* substitutes, the *Don* was in fact attempting to rid himself of the offending piece. However, less charitable observers commented that the *Doña*'s habit of referring to the knights as "horsies" so infuriated the *Don* that his game suffered.

I have it on very good authority that the *Doña* is well aware of the proper terminology, and used the diminutive explicitly to subvert her opponent's concentration. There is precedent for this sort of behavior in previous Grandmaster-level matches, so the *Doña* was not censured by the judges.

Regardless, the *Doña* abandoned the Sicilian to press her advantage, while the *Don*'s attack was crippled by his insistence on leading with his remaining knight (16 N-KN4, followed by 17 N-KR6?). It was not until the *Doña* removed *Don* Ibrahim's remaining knight from the board (19 N-KR3!) that the *Don*'s game returned to its usual style and excellence.

The midgame, from move 19 until move 32, belonged to the *Don* unquestioningly. While *Doña* Isadora's attack had been superbly conceived, the need to divert some of her pieces to deal with the annoyance of the second "horsie" left her with too much of her offense relegated to the corner of the board. This allowed the *Don* to seize the center, and he began to systematically dismantle the *Doña*'s defenses. In particular, 24 B-K5 ch! necessitated a response of K-KN1 and produced 25 B-KR3, removing one of the *Doña*'s rooks. At this point, it was loudly whispered in the gallery that black was in a resignable position.

However, the game had one final turn left. Rushing the endgame, and perhaps distracted by the incessant noises made by his king[1], the *Don* made the fatal blunder of 33 Q-Q6, moving his queen into jeopardy. The *Don* recognized his error almost as soon as it was made and demanded to be allowed to recast his move, but even as he began his protest *Doña* Isadora responded with N-K3!, removing the *Don*'s queen from the board.

The *Don* immediately made vociferous opposition, but was overruled by the judges, who felt that his move and his opponent's had been fairly made. It was then, I must in shame report, that the greatest irregularity occurred.

There are certain chess players among the living who, when they find the game going against them, will overturn the board in a rage. Inevitably they are regarded as having forfeited, but it saves them the humiliation of seeing their king mated. I regret to say that *Don* Ibrahim displayed the tendencies of this sort of player and, in his own fashion, made a most shameful display on the board itself. Eventually, he was restrained by the judges, but was regarded as having lost both the match and his Grandmaster rating. He also lost a great deal of standing in the eyes of many of his peers, and there is a motion before *Les Amies Noir* not to permit him to compete in the chess competition the next time we gather in Madrid. *Don* Ibrahim, of course, has registered a formal protest.

As for the surviving pieces, the pawns were served to the spectators, while the remainder were staked and returned to storage to await the next competition, as the tournament was suspended in the wake of the *Don*'s outburst.

Diego Luis Alvarez Ramirez
July 17th, Madrid, 1995

[1] The *antitribu* had been unwilling to participate, and as such, both of his feet were, of necessity, spiked to the board. This produced minor delays when *Don* Ibrahim first castled, but this miniscule disruption of play was infinitely preferable to forcing one of the spectators to Dominate the offending king into quiescence. It was felt that invoking Entombment would have been undignified.

Oh, do stop whimpering, Enrique. Wheels within wheels, plots within plots, you say. Nonsense. *Les Amies* is the "inside," and the members of the clan who are not inducted are "outside." Within the Sabbat, all Lasombra are "inside" and all others are "outside." In the Jyhad, all members of the Sabbat are "inside" and all others are "outside." Is that diagram simple enough for you?

But back to the subject at hand. There are some who claim that *Les Amies* dates back to the 1600s; others say that it is one with the founding of the Sabbat itself. I have found reference to it, or its ancestors, in various of our texts going back to the nights of the Merovingian kings — and I daresay it is even older. The name is French simply for the sake of compromise. When the order was crystallized, French was the only language besides Latin that our Italian and Spanish elders shared. As *Français* was the language of trade and diplomacy — where do you think the term *lingua franca* came from, Omar? — it seemed appropriate. Yes, there have been many attempts to change it to something that would, as they say, play better in Cadiz, but we do have a regrettable tendency toward the traditional.

Those of *Les Amies* are the knights and protectors of our kind. Just as we are to guide the destinies of the other clans, they shepherd our less talented members. They are the protectors, the great ladies and lords of the Lasombra, and your induction into their ranks is perhaps the greatest thing you will ever accomplish.

Of course, this does not mean that you can rest on your threadbare laurels. Ever onward, ever upward you must strive, lest you be deemed unnecessary. This will inevitably bring you into competition with others of the Lasombra, yes, but it is for the good of the blood that the cleverest, most talented of us must ascend.

The first thing that you must learn is that *Les Amies* must never be discussed among those not already inducted. Not other Lasombra, not your packmates, not your ghouls or your mothers. Should you be discovered to have revealed the secret of *Les Amies Noir*'s existence, no power under Heaven can save you.

Forgive me for the nature of that pronouncement, but it is simple fact. Consider the sad case of a childe of a dear friend of mine, one Pablo daCosta. While *Señor* daCosta was a young vampire of boundless promise and potential, he was unable to maintain even the healthiest of silences. One night, his tongue loosened by the wine in the veins of his dinner companion, he rambled of *Les Amies Noir* for over seven minutes. A Court of Blood was convened that evening, permission granted almost instantaneously, and his sire, my dear friend *Doña* Isabella, was the first to sink her fangs into his throat. We reward success; we do not tolerate failure.

Currently, those outside *Les Amies* think of it – if they know enough to think of it at all – as a sort of appendage of the Black Hand. I see nothing wrong with fostering this illusion, and even (for maximum effect) orchestrating the occasional "disappearance" of one spreading it. As for the Black Hand itself, it is less of a threat than one would imagine. Many of its members follow the Path of Evil Revelations and fancy themselves majestic scourges. In reality they are far less impressive.

Why, Enrique, you seem flustered. No? Very well then, I shall continue.

Membership in *Les Amies* is a heavy responsibility. One must safeguard the clan, make the decisions called for while seated on the Court of Blood (oh! the agony of the first time you grant permission! It is beyond words. The bliss of the second time, however…) and steer the Sabbat itself willy-nilly where it would best be served to go. But there is recompense. There is the respect that can only be earned, the knowledge and power that being a friend of the dark brings.

And, of course, there is Madrid. Once a decade, we gather in Madrid, under the auspices of our beloved Archbishop Monçada, for a revel that shakes the pillars of Heaven. All the amusements one can devise: dancing, chess, fencing, seduction, hunting, all the courtly games of blood and power. The finest wine is poured into the finest vessels for us to drink from. Musicians are brought in from all over the world. Even the Toreador vie to play for us in Madrid.

Yes, Enrique, games of seduction. While we cannot indulge in the carnal act, there is certainly pleasure to be gained in the sharing of blood, and in the power that desire grants one over another. The trick in these games, you see, is to be the pursued and not the pursuer. He, or she, who admits desire is but putty in the hands of their paramour.

Oh, yes, there are many great *Doñas* of our kind, ladies great, beautiful and cruel. Catherine di Medici and Lucrezia Borgia, were they living today, would be like children dressing in their mothers' finery among them. Our *Doñas* have played these games for centuries, and will play them for centuries yet. Sometimes a pursuit takes a hundred years to complete, but in the end the coup is counted, *ne c'est pas*? The female of the species, after all, is far more deadly than the male.

We do have lesser celebrations, most notably *Palla Grande* and *Festivo dello Estinto*. The two are very different, but are both derived from the masques and revels of our breathing days — though they serve very different purposes now.

Palla Grande is our little joke, our Grand Masquerade. It is the one time of the year when we know the faces we wear, the one night when we can present the visage we want to the world. Yes, I know some of you have taken to wearing masks at other times, but that dulls the enjoyment. To have one night, just one night, when your face is of your own choosing… and to mock the Camarilla even as we do so, that is a pleasure indeed. Just as the single kiss is ineluctably more erotic than repeated pecks on the cheek, so too is one night of false guises more riveting than workaday masks, dulled with the soot of each night's fires. *Palla Grande* is a celebration of sophistication and deliberation, and it calls us to look to the next gathering in Madrid.

Festivo dello Estinto, on the other hand, is sheer revel. It is Saturnalia and Carnival for us, a time for abandon. There are no masks here, just blood and bodies in motion. A week they give us, and that is sufficient. Any more would be degenerate, any less insufficient. There must be a time, you see, when the plots are laid aside and the machinations abandoned, when even our vigilance can be relaxed, ever so slightly. Not too much, however. Drunk on blood is one thing; drunk by others who watch for your weakness is entirely another.

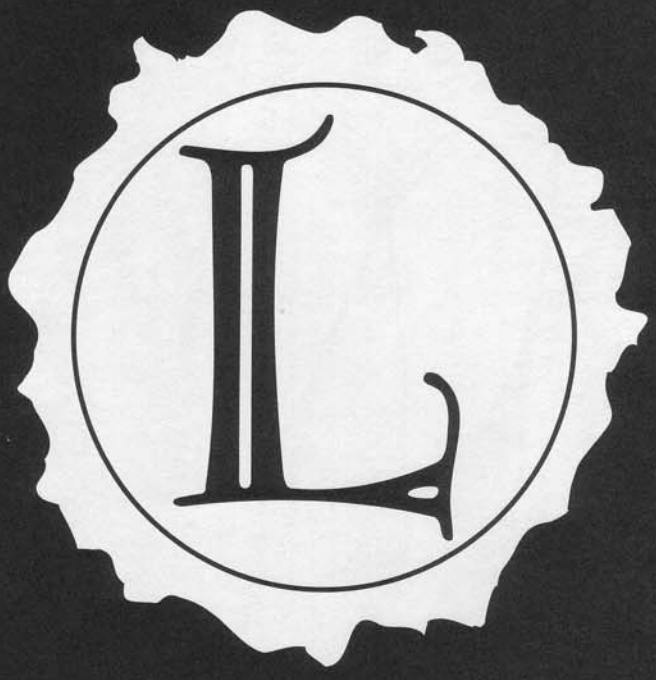
Denouement

I see I have been talking for hours. You will have barely enough time to return to your havens. No, Enrique, do not leave; you shall remain. Good night, students. I will see you once the sun sets tomorrow.

Now Enrique, I have observed you most carefully this evening. Your questioning, your attentiveness, even your very stance bespeak that you are destined for a very special role within *Les Amies Noir*.

What role is that, you ask? Let me respond by saying that the Court was convened before class, and it was agreed that you show not the slightest spark of that flame which illuminates the true member of *Les Amies*. Your transparent attempts to spy for the Black Hand are amusing, considering your ill-disguised favoritism. What did they expect to gain from employing you, I wonder.

However, you do not wish to waste your last few seconds with political discussion, I am sure. We shall, as they say, cut to the chase then. I have been granted permission to slake my thirst with your thin blood, Enrique. I would appreciate it if, as I fed, you were so kind as to avoid making a mess of your vitae. Most courteous of you, Enrique, most courteous.



LEIF
JONES
1996

Chapter Four: Acceptable Modern Lasombra

Not all Lasombra are from Barcelona and Cadiz. In these days of the shrinking planet and global community, Keepers can come from any background so long as they have the proven potential for success. Of course, there are still certain preferences within the clan — sometimes it's not even whom you know, but whom your great-great-grandfather knew in the days of the galleons.

The templates that follow are ready for immediate use, or can be suitably altered to fit your needs. Of course, it is wise to ask their permission before altering them — they are proud, and may take offense if their approval has not been sought. The consequences of offending a Lasombra, we all know, are not light at all.

Antitribu Pirate

Quote: *All I ask is a tall ship and a star to sail her by. Of course, a few freighters loaded with electronics would be nice too.*

Prelude: You always loved the sea. As a child you lived on the coast, playing on the rocks as the waves splashed against them. You started sailing as a teenager, winning several races by the time you entered college. As a successful manager in the insurance industry, you soon bought your own boat, spending as many weekends as you could alone with the waves and wind. That was your undoing.

You were out alone one night when you saw the ship. She was a sight to behold: a hundred feet from stem to stern if she was an inch, with the sleek lines of the Cutty Sark. Figuring that she must have been affiliated with some beer company or other, you sat back to enjoy the spectacle instead of trying to escape. By the time you realized your mistake, it was too late. You sire boarded your ship and Embraced you that night, then took you home to where the ships he used in his real work were docked.

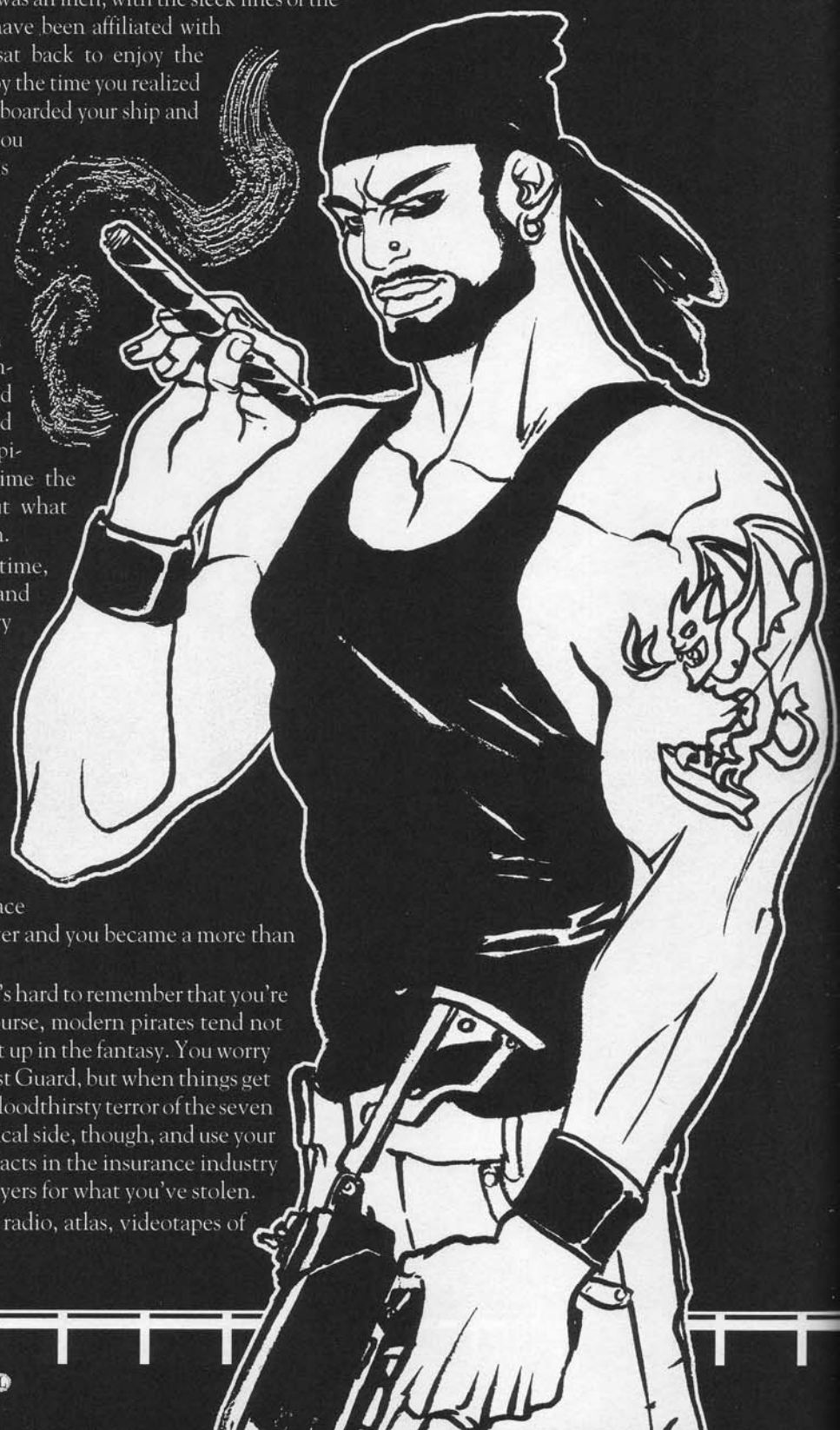
You hadn't realized that there were still pirates on the high seas, but as a member of your sire's crew you've captured cargoes that would have turned Blackbeard green with envy — Japanese electronics, Colombian cocaine, South African gold and diamonds, and American chips and software. Nobody else thinks there's pirates out there either, so by the time the pigeons on the freighters figure out what you're up to, it's far too late for them.

You stay out at sea most of the time, where you are safe from the Sabbat and pretty much anyone else. It's every childhood fantasy you've ever had come true, except the vampire part, but you always liked sailing by moonlight best anyway.

Concept: You were Embraced by a Lasombra *antitribu* who wanted a capable childe for policing the crew of one of the pirate ships the non-Sabbat Lasombra still maintain. After the initial shock of the Embrace wore off, your love of the sea took over and you became a more than enthusiastic pirate.

Roleplaying Tips: Sometimes it's hard to remember that you're not the hero of *Captain Blood*. Of course, modern pirates tend not to use rapiers, but still, you get caught up in the fantasy. You worry more about the Sabbat than the Coast Guard, but when things get tense you drop into character as the bloodthirsty terror of the seven seas. You do have a very strong practical side, though, and use your knowledge of business and your contacts in the insurance industry to help find potential cargoes and buyers for what you've stolen.

Equipment: AK-47, short-wave radio, atlas, videotapes of Errol Flynn pirate movies



LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Bon Vivant
Demeanor: Bravo
Concept: Antitribu Pirate

Clan: Lasombra Antitribu
Generation: 8th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obtenebration ●●○○○○○○
Potence ●○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Generation ●●●●●○○○
Mentor ●●○○○○○○
Resources ●●○○○○○○
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_____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●●○○○
Instincts ●●○○○
Morale ●●●●○

Other Traits

Boating ●●●○○○○○
Navigation ●○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Path of Harmony

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Willpower

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Blood Pool

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Health

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

Weakness

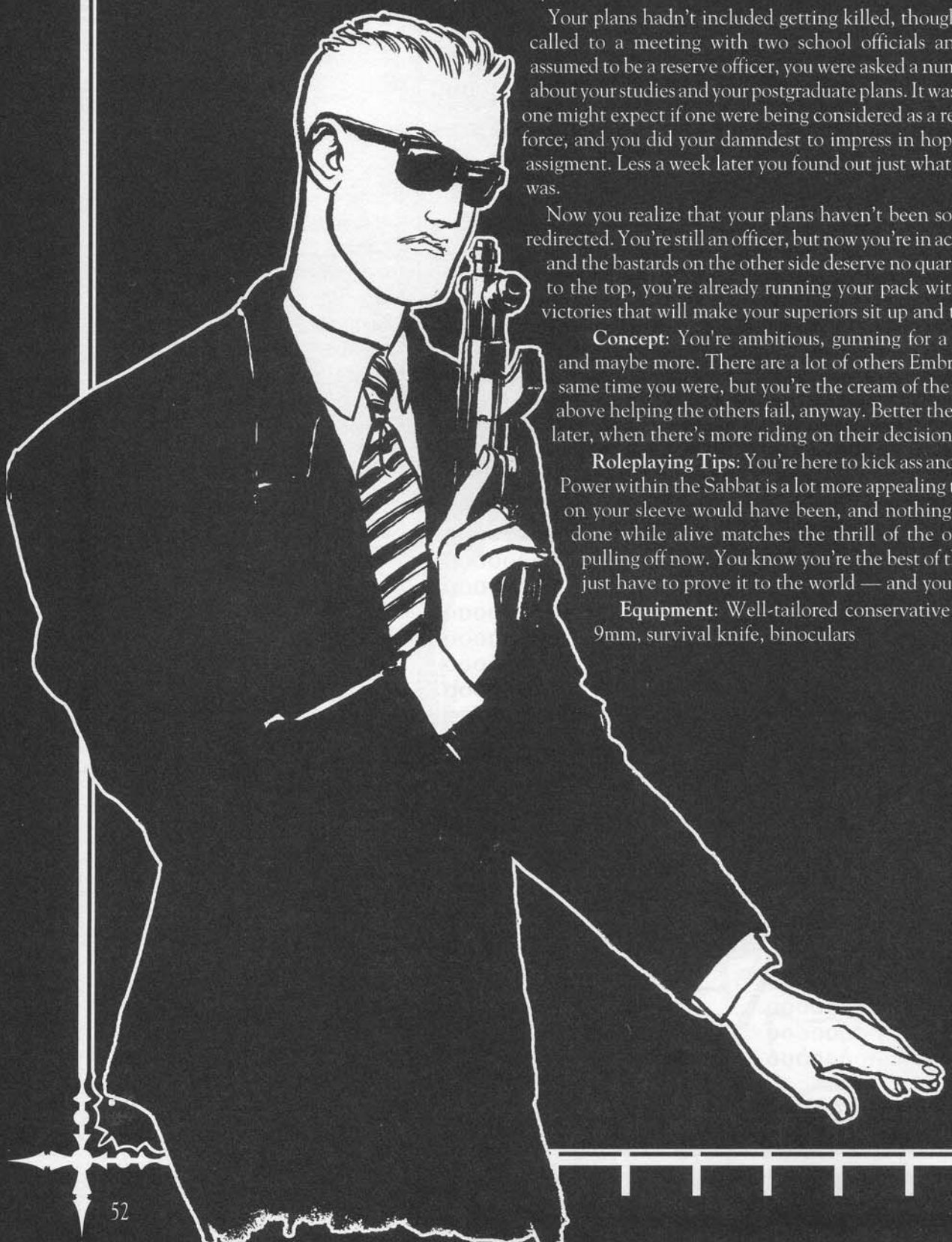
Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

Cadet

Quote: *With all due respect, sir, your courier was accidentally rendered permanently nonoperative after a failure to identify himself properly. I will, of course, accept full responsibility.*

Prelude: You were so happy when you were accepted at a top military college. You thought you had no illusions; you had prepared yourself for four years of tough training, psychological hazing and challenging classes. Three years in, things were going just the way you planned. You were at the top of your class and about to get a commission, just as you'd always dreamed.



Your plans hadn't included getting killed, though. Unexpectedly called to a meeting with two school officials and someone you assumed to be a reserve officer, you were asked a number of questions about your studies and your postgraduate plans. It was the sort of thing one might expect if one were being considered as a recruit for an elite force, and you did your damndest to impress in hopes of getting the assigment. Less a week later you found out just what that assignment was.

Now you realize that your plans haven't been so much ruined as redirected. You're still an officer, but now you're in action every night, and the bastards on the other side deserve no quarter. On your way to the top, you're already running your pack with an eye toward victories that will make your superiors sit up and take notice.

Concept: You're ambitious, gunning for a field promotion and maybe more. There are a lot of others Embraced around the same time you were, but you're the cream of the crop. You're not above helping the others fail, anyway. Better they do it now than later, when there's more riding on their decisions.

Roleplaying Tips: You're here to kick ass and...well, kick ass. Power within the Sabbat is a lot more appealing than another bar on your sleeve would have been, and nothing you could have done while alive matches the thrill of the operations you're pulling off now. You know you're the best of the best; now you just have to prove it to the world — and your clan elders.

Equipment: Well-tailored conservative clothing, H&K 9mm, survival knife, binoculars

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Conniver
Demeanor: Director
Concept: Cadet

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 13th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obtenebration ●○○○○○○○
Potence ●●○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Black Hand ●○○○○○○○
Resources ●○○○○○○○
Sabbat Status ●○○○○○○○
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Virtues

Callousness ●●○○○

Instincts ●●●●○

Morale ●●●●○

Other Traits

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Path of

Honorable Accord

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Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○

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Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Weakness

Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

Cat Burglar

Quote: *Seems a shame to keep a diamond this beautiful locked in a vault where no one can see it, doesn't it? I should do something about that....*

Prelude: You were always getting into places you weren't meant to go, and it was a point of pride that no lock could stop you. When you were a kid you did it for kicks, but soon enough you realized the profitability of what you could do. Shopping in a store with abysmal security, you noticed that a Master Lock and a poorly placed security camera were all that stood between you and the jewelry cases. You came back after the store was closed, and within a week you were off the Ramen-and-water diet permanently. From then on you made a career out of relieving overconfident stores and individuals of their jewelry. As your skills grew, you occasionally returned one of the items you had stolen to your victim, along with a note explaining why it wasn't good enough to keep. Then came the night of your Creation Rites.

Your sire had been watching you, and plucked you off the side of a building down which you were rappelling in anticipation of a relaxing evening's B&E. Mind you, once you dug yourself out of the ground, you found that your Embrace could be looked at as a positive for your career. Your increased dexterity and sensitivity allow you to pick even the toughest locks, and as an extra bonus there isn't a heat sensor in the world that can pick you up. Better yet, you now get tips on where the Ventrue and Toreador of the Camarilla stash their goodies. It's always more lucrative to rob from other vampires, and those Camarilla fools have it coming. You share your profits with your pack members, and you occasionally get kicks out of taking art you've appropriated and returning it to its Toreador owner, once your pack has...improved...it.

Concept: You are a professional cat burglar and an expert with security systems. The Sabbat Embraced you because they wanted someone who could retrieve items from the havens of Camarilla vampires, and because they liked your sense of humor. You don't put too much stock in the latter, though, and perhaps that's wise.

Roleplaying Tips: You are the best at what you do. You don't brag too much about it, but that's because you don't need to. You don't take risks, but you enjoy adding a certain flair to your exploits. Deep down you are a practical joker, but you don't let it interfere with business.

Equipment: Lock picks hidden inside a pen, climbing gear, L slide, small allen wrench, glass cutters, black clothing

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Jester
Demeanor: Competitor
Concept: Cat Burglar

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 13th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Obtenebration ●●●○○○○○
Potence ●○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Resources ●●●●○○○○
Contacts ●○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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_____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●○○○○
Instincts ●●●●○
Morale ●●●●○

Other Traits

_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Path of

Cathari

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Weakness

Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

Child Prodigy

Quote: *"I mean," she said, "that one can't help growing older." "One can't, perhaps," said Humpty Dumpty, "but two can. With the proper assistance, you might have left off at seven." That's from* Alice. *Most grownups don't get it.*

Prelude: Everyone told you what an exeptional child you were. It was fun at first. Classes at the special school, a computer of your very own when you were four, classes at the university when you were seven. You didn't even mind not having friends your own age; other children didn't understand anything you tried to talk to them about.

It was when your parents kept putting off the promised trip to Disney World that you realized they were using you and your mind. There was always one more class, one more seminar, one more science fair or one more talk show. What really brought it home was they way they reacted when you wanted to take classes that weren't hard sciences. They wanted you to concentrate on being a world-famous scientist, they gave you a line about the good you could do for mankind — but you knew that what they really wanted was to bask in the glory of raising a child genius.

That's when you realized what you had to do to get your way. For a year you played them off one another, getting them to compete for your affections. They were well on their way to divorce when the Lasombra took you. It seems that they needed someone with that special knack for manipulation, and your other talents were an unexpected bonus. Vampirism has some serious limitations, not the least of which is an eternity of being four and a half feet tall, but at least your new family appreciates your entire personality rather than treating you like a performing monkey.

Concept: As a child prodigy among the kine, you became bitter about the lack of respect your family and others had for you as a person. Among the Lasombra, you intend to use your intellect to become an important power broker within the sect, and you are certain that nothing, least of all your child's body, will stand in the way.

Roleplaying Tips: On most levels — especially decision-making and strategy — you function as an adult. Psychologically, however, you are still a child. Under normal circumstances you can be as cold and calculating as any Lasombra (though you may feign innocence to encourage people to underestimate you), but when badly frightened you look for reassurance from your mentor.

Equipment: Loaded computer, teddy bear, Mace, copy of *Alice in Wonderland*

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Child
Demeanor: Director
Concept: Child Prodigy

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 13th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Auspex ●○○○○○○○
Dominate ●●○○○○○○
Potence ●●○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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_____ ○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Resources ●●○○○○○○
Retainers ●●○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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_____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●●●●●

Instincts ●○○○○

Morale ●●○○○

Other Traits

_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Path of

Power / Inner Voice

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Weakness

Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

Consultant

Quote: *So you want help taking out that Toreador who owns the nightclub you adore. There's a rate card for my services on the dresser. And stop dripping blood on the carpet; it's Persian.*

Prelude: As a mortal, you were a consultant in the telecommunications industry. You had a promising career, but you grew disgusted by the other young professionals in their skyscraper offices who ignored the stench of urine from the homeless in the subway stations below. Had you been in Camarilla territory the Ventrue may have tried Embracing you, but it wouldn't have changed the fact that you are Sabbat to the core. You see and understand the inner darkness of the power you wield, and you do not flinch from the knowledge that a cut on a firm's balance sheet can drain kine dry as surely as a pack in frenzy.

Concept: Embraced to handle some of the clan's interests in the high-tech and telecommunications markets, you find that the ideals of the Lasombra resonate well with the disgust you feel for the hypocrisy of kine financiers and their Ventrue puppeteers. You are a crucial part of the more subtle Lasombra plans, and could even pass yourself off as Ventrue if necessary, so long as no mirrors were brought into play.

Roleplaying Tips: Among mortals and those outside your immediate circle, you are the picture of the high-powered businessperson, saying all the right things and smiling in just the right way as you deal with those dedicated enough to work long hours. Those whom you trust know that beneath your pleasant exterior lurks something unimaginably dark. No one has yet seen you get angry. A few unlucky souls have, however, seen you get even.

Equipment: Laptop computer, briefcase, tailored suits, cellular phone, sharpened silver letter opener

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Curmudgeon
Demeanor: Architect
Concept: Consultant

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 13th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate	●●○○○○○○
Obtenebration	●○○○○○○○
Potence	●○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Contacts	●○○○○○○○
Influence	●○○○○○○○
Resources	●●●●○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness	●●●●○
Instincts	●●○○○
Morale	●●○○○

Other Traits

	○○○○○○○○
	○○○○○○○○
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	○○○○○○○○

Path of

Power / Inner Voice

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Weakness

Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

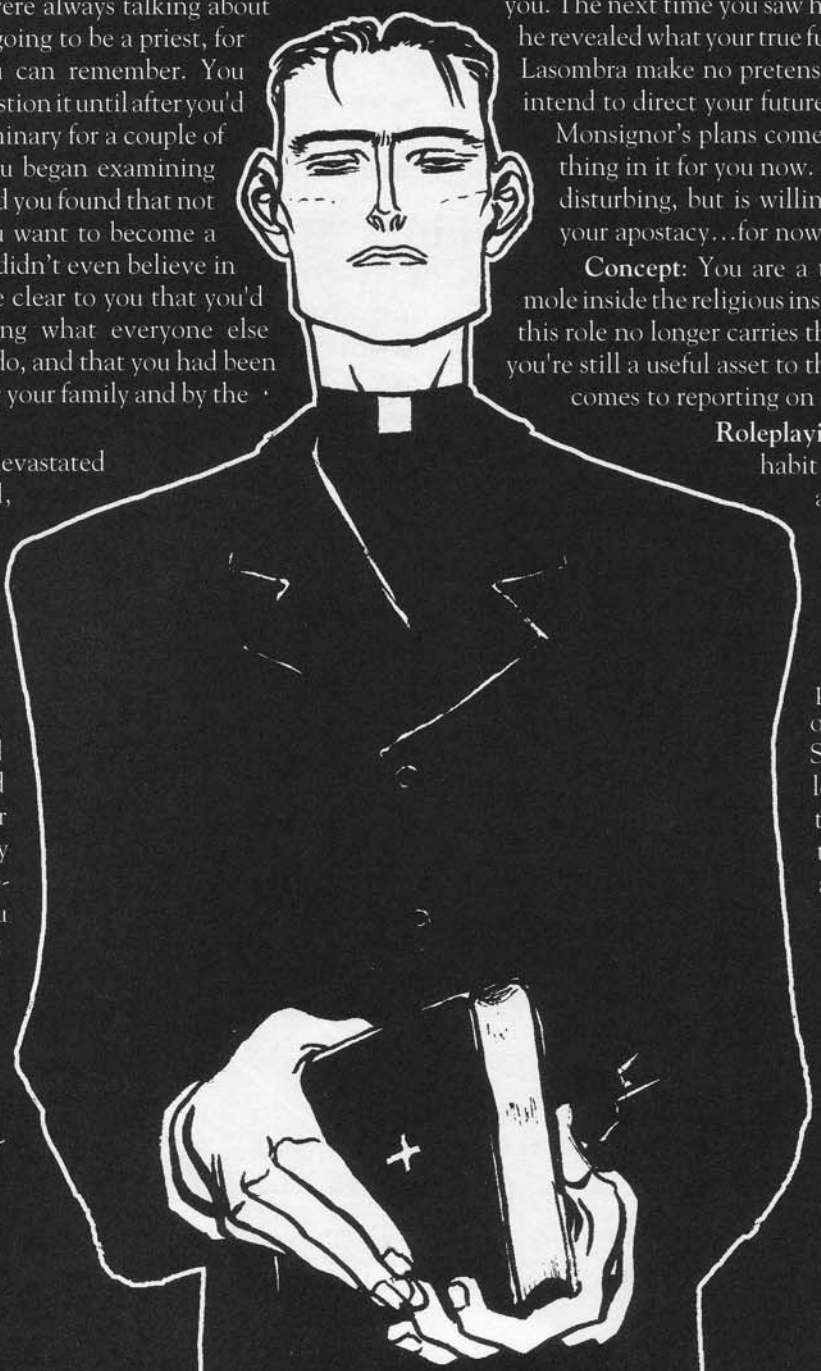
Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

The False Priest

Quote: *In nomine Patri, et Filii, et Spiritu Sancti, amen.*

Prelude: It seems that you spent all your life preparing for the priesthood. It was expected of you. Your parents, your aunts and uncles and both sets of grandparents were always talking about how you were going to be a priest, for as long as you can remember. You didn't even question it until after you'd been at the seminary for a couple of years. Then you began examining your beliefs, and you found that not only didn't you want to become a priest, but you didn't even believe in God. It became clear to you that you'd only been doing what everyone else wanted you to do, and that you had been manipulated by your family and by the Church itself.

You felt devastated and betrayed, and were on the verge of taking your own life. Suddenly, something within you snapped, and you were filled with an anger that swept away the fear and depression. You decided that you would find a way to get back at those who had manipulated you. The only question was how.



You were still at the seminary a few months later when the foreign priest visited. You were intrigued by him. You couldn't quite place his accent, and while he spoke to all the students, you felt his eyes lingering on you. The next time you saw him, about two weeks later, he revealed what your true future was to be. At least the Lasombra make no pretense about the fact that they intend to direct your future, and should your sire the Monsignor's plans come to fruition, there's something in it for you now. He finds your lack of faith disturbing, but is willing to nurture you through your apostacy…for now.

Concept: You are a traditional Lasombra, the mole inside the religious institutions of mortals. While this role no longer carries the importance it once did, you're still a useful asset to the clan, especially when it comes to reporting on the activities of hunters.

Roleplaying Tips: You are in the habit of playing the serene prelate in front of others, but inside you are not calm at all. You may still have unresolved feelings about your experiences with the Church, but they are tempered with you knowledge of the harsh realities of life. Still, it would never do to let your flock see your inner turmoil. Comfort and guide them as best you may, for are you not your brother's keeper?

Equipment: Clerical garb, religious texts, four-door sedan with fake wood paneling

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Autist
Demeanor: Caregiver
Concept: False Priest

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 11th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obtenebration ●●●○○○○○
○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○
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○○○○○○○○

Backgrounds

Herd ●●●○○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○○○
Resources ●●○○○○○○
Mentor ●○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○
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○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●●●○○
Instincts ●●●○○
Morale ●●○○○

Other Traits

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Path of Caine

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Experience

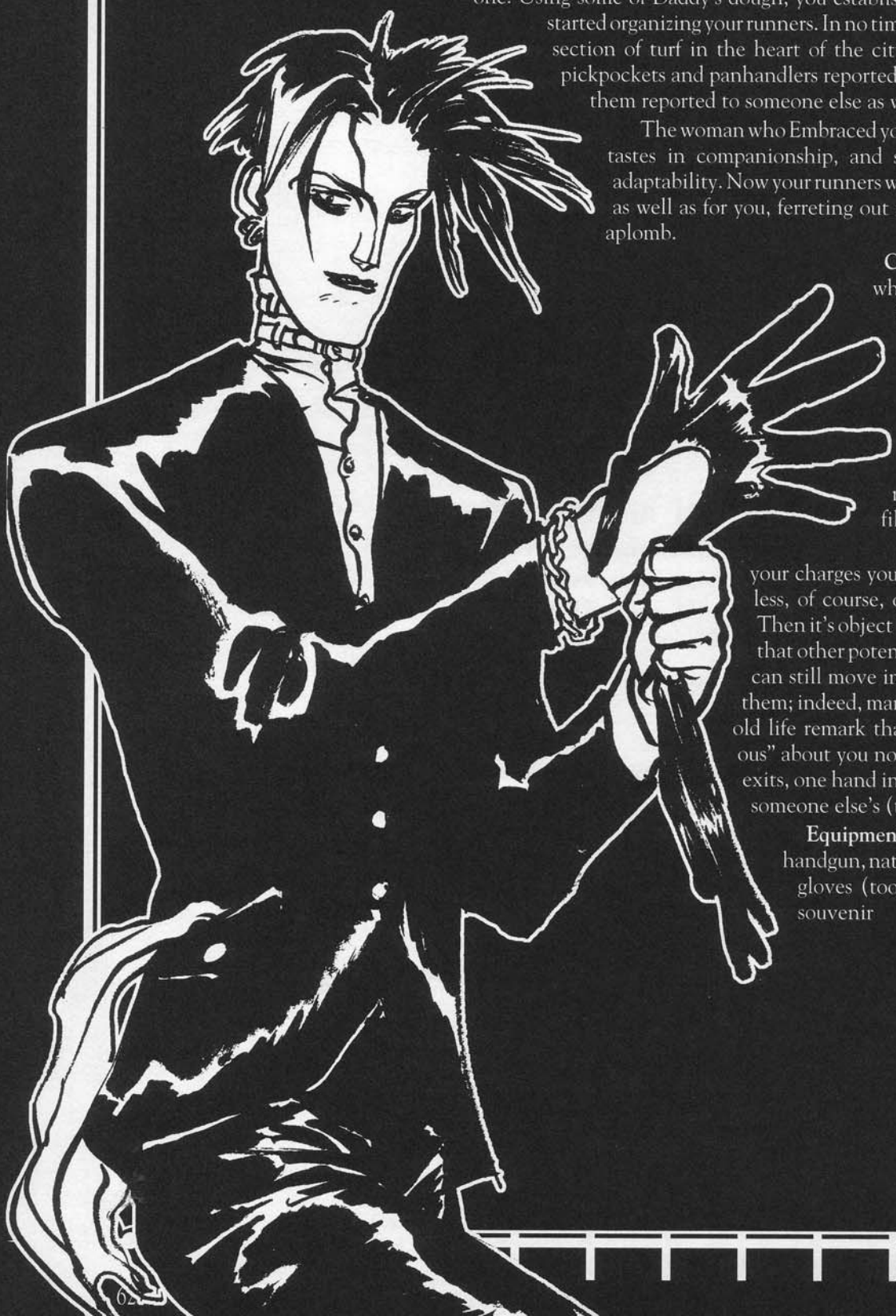
Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

King of Beggars

Quote: *Daniel, Daniel, Daniel. How many times have I told you not to hold out on me? Now which finger will you miss the least?*

Prelude: Born to wealth and privilege, you found the atmosphere of your parents' home stuffy and boring beyond belief. You began slumming, creating a "street" persona for yourself so that you'd have someplace to escape to when the dinner parties got to be too tedious. One thing led to another, and your street face became more real than your real one. Using some of Daddy's dough, you established contacts, then cred, then started organizing your runners. In no time, you'd marked off a profitable section of turf in the heart of the city. Literally dozens of thieves, pickpockets and panhandlers reported to you. Unfortunately, one of them reported to someone else as well.

The woman who Embraced you was most amused by your low tastes in companionship, and somewhat impressed by your adaptability. Now your runners work for the clan and the Sabbat as well as for you, ferreting out wallets and secrets with equal aplomb.



Concept: You're a rich dilettante whose hobby turned into a calling. Talents that should have been wielded in the business world instead blossomed in the underworld, and you're a force to be reckoned with on the streets. The clan uses you and your minions to move information undetectably, as well as filch it.

Roleplaying Tips: Toward your charges you are kind and paternal — unless, of course, one tries to hold out on you. Then it's object lesson time, and you make sure that other potential troublemakers watch. You can still move in high society with the best of them; indeed, many ladies you knew during your old life remark that there's something "dangerous" about you now. You keep an eye on all the exits, one hand in your pocket, and the other in someone else's (the better to steal his wallet).

Equipment: Cellular phone, beeper, 9mm handgun, natty silk suit, pair of black leather gloves (too small) that you swiped as a souvenir

LASOMBRA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Conniver
Demeanor: Architect
Concept: King of Beggars

Clan: Lasombra
Generation: 13th
Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Dominate ●○○○○○○○
Obtenebration ●●○○○○○○
Potence ●○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Herd ●●●○○○○○
Contacts ●●○○○○○○
Resources ●●●○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○
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_____ ○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○

Virtues

Callousness ●●●○○
Instincts ●●○○○
Morale ●●●○○

Other Traits

_____ ○○○○○○○○
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Path of

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Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

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Blood Pool

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Health

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

Weakness

Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

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1996

Appendix: Certain Especially Noteworthy Lasombra

Montano and Gratiano

Like Caine and Abel or Romulus and Remus, these two brothers are renowned for their antagonism. It is truly a pity, though, that Montano has not emulated Abel or Romulus and quietly allowed himself to be killed. So instead their strife, the strife of loyal childe against drinker of the Amaranth, goes on.

For more information on Montano and Gratiano, see **Children of the Inquisition**.

Don Medina Sidonia

Don Sidonia was Embraced more as an object lesson to King Philip II of Spain than out of any tributes to his own talents. The admiral into whose charge the Armada was given, Sidonia is unusual for a Lasombra in that he was perceived as a failure in life. In truth, the Armada failed because of Philip's insistence on attacking prematurely, despite the fleet's woeful preparation. His Majesty's waste of good Spanish lives, both in the Armada and in the endless wars in Spain's Dutch possessions, angered many Lasombra. Sidonia had failed in Philip's mad scheme in life, so certain clan elders determined he would be an insult to the wastrel king in death.

Embraced and carefully trained by *Doña* Beatriz, a Lasombra of noble Aragonese breeding, Sidonia was starved for a week and then brought to the king's chambers. Only the strength of *Doña* Beatriz' slender hand held the crazed neonate back from ripping out his liege's throat. As he slavered and raged, she calmly instructed

the terrified monarch in the proper duties of kingship. For six hours she lectured him, with Sidonia howling for blood the entire time.

Initially the intent of *Doña* Beatriz and her peers had been to dispose of Sidonia once his purpose had been accomplished, but she felt some guilt at using a Spaniard of noble blood this way. Exercising certain of her noble prerogatives, she instead gave Sidonia his true training in the ways of the clan and the Sabbat. A mild-mannered man in life, he had been changed by his experiences on the Channel and after his death. His formidable tactical ability remained, but any trace of subservience and malleability had been burned out of him. Certain of the other elders complimented *Doña* Beatriz on her perception, and *Don* Sidonia ascended the ranks of *Les Amies Noir*.

To this day, *Don* Sidonia remains one of the Sabbat's most cunning tactical minds. His accomplishments in cities as widely separated as New York and Manila have reinforced his status to the point where he is unassailable. Behind the visage of a slender and kindly grandfather lurks a mind better suited to a machine.

Only two things can upset the *Don*'s legendary calm. *Don* Sidonia is obsessed with reducing England via siege, more so than he ever was in life. So far all of his efforts in this direction have come to naught, and the frustration of the failure has taken a visible toll. Sidonia has stated that he would gladly watch the sun rise, if only he could do it from Buckingham Palace, and not one of his companions doubted his sincerity at the time. *Don* Sidonia also harbors a centuries-old grudge against the mercenary general Parma, who Sidonia believes betrayed him. Embraced by the Ventrue, Parma has spent the intervening years alternately opposing and ducking Sidonia. Should even a rumor of the mercenary's presence reach *Don* Sidonia's ears, the city that spawned the rumor will move to the top of the Sabbat's list of future targets.

Archbishop Ambrosio Luis Monçada of Madrid

Never a Pope (though not from lack of trying), Archbishop Monçada holds the same title in death that he did in life. However, in life and death he has probably had more effect on world affairs than have many men who occupied the Holy See. Once responsible for the massive abbey in Madrid, Monçada held palpable tempo-

ral power over the nobles of the city, and indeed the country, through the numbers of their bastards who were inducted into holy orders in his diocese. Through blackmail and extortion, he used his access to these illegitimates to control their mothers and fathers and the course of the warring states that would someday coalesce into a united Spain. Duels were fought, wars were initiated, and many, many estates were turned over to Holy Mother Church at Monçada's direction.

These meddlings in the affairs of the great did not escape the attention of the Lasombra, who were impressed with the mortal's talent and audacity. Sensing in him the potential for greatness, they bent what efforts they could to Embracing him. Behind monastery walls and the shield of the great Faith that surrounded him, though, Monçada avoided the Kiss for almost a decade. To this night, no other of those honored by being targeted for selection has evaded the Embrace for so long.

When he was finally taken, however — ah, what a triumph for the Lasombra that was! A man of power, Monçada had disciples and protégés in every monastery in the Iberian peninsula. These he soon Embraced, and the houses of God became home to those who would be their brothers' keepers. In no time the great abbeys and nunneries were riddled with Lasombra, all devout yet devoted to the Sabbat and Archbishop Monçada. Behind walls of Faith that other vampires could not breach, Monçada and his children plotted the course of western Europe.

It was Monçada who, through a vampiric royal confessor, suggested to Henry the Navigator of Portugal that new lands awaited his banner. Though the Lasombra of Portugal take credit for Vasco de Gama, it was Monçada pulling the strings that opened the curtains on the New World. Pizarro, Cortéz, De Leon, Balboa — these men were but instruments of his will. The Papal decision to split the new lands between Spain and Portugal was orchestrated by Monçada; it would not do for his Spanish and Portuguese children to squabble among themselves when God had provided such rich booty. Indeed, there are those who say that the Sabbat's structure is modeled on the Church as a tribute to Archbishop Monçada, though he graciously declines credit for such a thing. Less to his credit is the fact that he was among the first, and certainly the most effective of the children of Caine at using the Inquisition to deal with political opponents.

All good things come to an end, however, and Spain's power waned. The potency of the monasteries diminished as well, and Monçada found himself holding strings with no puppets attached. It was then that he truly turned his attention to the Jyhad and, stealing a march on his enemies, convinced the other elders of the Sabbat to move their base of power to the brave new world awaiting them on the other side of the sea.

Monçada himself did not venture across the seas, having grown too accustomed to his surroundings to leave. Out of courtesy *Les Amies Noir* returned to him each decade instead of causing him to stir from his beloved Madrid.

Today, Monçada sits, a spider in a razored web, watching from his ruins in Madrid. His childer and grandchilder are everywhere in the clan, and his word carries great weight even in these fallen nights. Of late, though, he has become obsessed with the accounting that God will inevitably demand of him for his sins, and as such he has begun entertaining odd guests. Some whisper that a Salubri has been seen in the monastic quarters; others claim that they have seen angels with wings of a steely sheen. The Archbishop refuses to comment on such matters, and gently encourages those who spread such rumors to lead War Parties, preferably on the other side of the Atlantic.

Lisette Vizquel

A scion of a wealthy Cuban family forced into exile by Castro's rise to power, Lisette was raised on tales of her family's noble history and curses against the man who had brought them so low. While the Vizquels hardly were destitute, they regarded their residence in Miami as an exile, not as a home.

Young Lisette dutifully ingested all of this, as well as her parents' superb work ethic, and excelled at school in both scholastics and athletics. The recipient of a full scholarship to Stanford, she was an Academic All-American in two sports while shattering long-held academic records in the classroom. It seemed that nothing could hold her back from a career of stunning successes.

Nothing, that was, except the auto accident. The wreck was so bad that her charred corpse had to be identified from her dental records. Lisette's parents bore the loss stoically; she could see their strength as she watched her own funeral.

The accident, of course, was a sham. Certain of the Lasombra of Cuba, forced with their families into exile as the Brujah-backed Castro muscled his way into power, had been paying careful attention to Lisette for over a decade. They simply chose this moment to collect her. Among the quickest initiates into *Les Amies* ever, Lisette now leads War Parties in Miami and the Florida Keys. She watches with glee as Castro's regime crumbles, and dreams of a night when she can set foot on the land that calls to her. All who know her fully expect that when Castro and his backers are finally thrown down, it is Lisette who will ascend to the seat of real power in Cuba.

Alfonso Lopez

Contrary to the propaganda put forth by the clan's leaders, certain Lasombra *antitribu* escaped the purges of the 15th century. A few fled north, to Scandinavia. Many more took refuge with the Moriscos, the hidden Muslim population of Granada oppressed by the Catholic governments under the thumb of the most holy Archbishop Monçada. Later, Philip II drove the Moriscos out of Spain, so they took to piracy. Alfonso was one of these, a daring and cruel man whose devotion to the Prophet was suspect but who could captain a vessel like no man alive or dead. His depredations grew to legendary proportions and even began to interfere seriously with the flow of treasure from the New World.

At this point, the elders of Clan Lasombra decided that enough was enough. Their attempts at using their pawns to capture him, however, merely sent more Spanish ships to the bottom. When they concentrated the fleet on the home ports, he laughed and took his ship across the Atlantic to Port-au-Prince. Never captured or even seriously threatened, Lopez became the bogeyman that the Lasombra frightened their childer with. It is highly dubious if many other of the *antitribu* have such frightful prowess with cutlass and cannon as Lopez; nevertheless, it is the image of the pirate, laughing at the head of a band of equally adept renegades, that costs many Lasombra elders more sleep than they would care to admit.

Lopez has not been seen in over 30 years. Last glimpsed in the vicinity of Dimona, Israel, he would seem to have either gone to ground or begun preparations for some new assault on his former clan on a scale previously unimagined.

LASOMBRA

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Expanded Background

Allies

Influence

Clan Prestige

Mentor

Contacts, Minor

Resources

Contacts, Major

Retainers

Herd

Status

Possessions

Gear (Carried)

Equipment (Owned)

Feeding Grounds

Vehicles

Havens

Location

Description

LASOMBRA™

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name: **Nature:** **Clan:**
Player: **Demeanor:** **Generation:**
Chronicle: **Concept:** **Haven:**

Attributes

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

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

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

Abilities

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

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

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

Advantages

Disciplines
Dominate ○○○○○○○○○
Obtenebration ○○○○○○○○○
Potence ○○○○○○○○○
_____ ○○○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds
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Virtues
Callousness ●○○○○
Instincts ●○○○○
Morale ●○○○○

Other Traits
_____ ○○○○○○○○○
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Path of
_____
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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

Weakness
Cannot be seen in mirrors or other reflective surfaces

Attributes:7/5/3 Abilities:13/9/5 Disciplines:3 Backgrounds:5 Virtues:7 Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

LASOMBRA™

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Experience

TOTAL: _____ **TOTAL SPENT:** _____

Gained From:

Spent On:

Derangements

Name

Derangements

Name

Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Conceal	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Table

Maneuver	Accuracy	Damage
Bite	5	Strength +1
Punch	6	Strength
Grapple	6	Strength
Claw	6	Strength +2
Kick	7	Strength +1
Body slam	7	Special; see Options

Armor: _____

LASOMBRA™

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

History

Prelude

Title _____

Packs Led _____

Significant Accomplishments _____

Appearance

Age _____

Apparent Age _____

Date of Birth _____

RIP _____

Hair _____

Eyes _____

Race _____

Nationality _____

Height _____

Weight _____

Sex _____

Visuals

Coterie Chart

Character Sketch

CLANBOOK: LASOMBRA™

From their webs of shadows the Lasombra guide the destiny of the dread Sabbat. Unseen even by mirrors, these lords of darkness glide through the night they rule, orchestrating the rise and fall of Kindred and kine alike. From the Sahara Desert to the Spanish Main, from the monasteries of Seville to the mean streets of New York City, no other clan so embodies what it means to be a vampire.

Clanbook: Lasombra includes:

- The history of the clan and the foul diablerie of its progenitor;
- Details on the clan's sinister rites and depraved games;
- New Merits, Flaws and Obtenebration powers.

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