

C L A N B O O K :

TREMERE



A Sourcebook for **VAMPIRE: The Masquerade™**

*From end to end with labor keen;
And here, poor fool, with all my lore
I stand no wiser than before.*

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; *Faust*

Yes, we know the truth. The truth is that knowledge is not power— it is the prelude to power. Knowledge lets us see what is really important and, most importantly, how to attain it.

Power is, after all, what really matters. Power is not a means to an end— it is the end. Power is what makes our unlives worth living. Power is what gives the night meaning.



CHAPTER ONE: THE BEGINNING

*A crumpled future in your fist
The killing streak ascends sun-kissed
And the firestarter from within
Pokes out from fever-blistered grin*

— Stouxsie & the Banshees, "Burn Up"

Rebecca heard a voice calling to her, calling her back from the darkness. Feebly, she groped through her clouded mind, gathering and pulling together bits and fragments of memories. Darkness. Her eyes were still closed; had she awakened from sleep?

A voice shouted insistently: "Repeat them! Repeat the words!"

Words came at her through the dark. She knew not who, she knew not why.

"Repeat after me!" the voice commanded. "I, Rebecca Thompson, hereby swear my everlasting loyalty to House and Clan Tremere and all its members."

What? she thought to herself.

"Say it!" the voice kept insisting. "I, Rebecca Thompson, hereby swear ..."

Now she could feel someone shaking her. Where was she? She still couldn't find the strength to open her eyes. Still the voice demanded. Helpless to resist, she attempted to comply.

"I, Rebecca ..." She weakly began to repeat the words, and then she gagged, nearly overcome with nausea. Something liquid lay in her mouth. Burning, it was trickling down her throat. She choked on the coppery fluid, spitting most of it out.

"Repeat the words!" raged the voice from the darkness.

"I, Rebecca Thompson, hereby swear ..."

"... hereby swear my everlasting loyalty to House and Clan Tremere and all its members," the voice repeated.

She stumbled over the words, helped along by the disembodied voice.

Tremere? What's that? she asked herself.

Something was forced to her lips, a glass filled with a warm liquid, and someone poured something viscous into her mouth. She tried to spit it out, but a hand grabbed her face, sealing her lips shut.

"Swallow!" the voice commanded.

She tried to force the stuff down, but still had trouble. She retched most of it back up, though this time some of it managed to trickle down her throat. The effect was like that of hot rum on a cold winter day, and she shook involuntarily.

The voice continued. "Now repeat after me: I will not deprive nor attempt to deprive any member of House and Clan Tremere of his magical power. I will not slay nor attempt to slay any member of the House and Clan except in self-defense, or when a magus has been ruled outlaw by a properly constituted tribunal."

Fighting her exhaustion, Rebecca managed to open an eye and tried to focus on the face before her. She saw a man wiping



his hands on a towel. Where on earth was she? His face was familiar, but she couldn't place it. Why was she here?

The man set the towel down. "Say the words!" he kept demanding.

Continually coached along, Rebecca mumbled her way through phrase after phrase, gradually coming to recognize the man before her. It was her anthropology instructor, Professor Gatlin. She was in his home. Bits and pieces of her memories came flashing back to her.

More swallows of the vile liquid. She found herself hating the taste, but the feelings it caused were indescribable. With her eyes now open, she could see it: thick and red, like blood. She was sure it was blood.

"Continue," commanded Gatlin. "Repeat after me. I will abide by the decisions of the tribunals, and honor the wishes of the Inner Council of Seven. The tribunals shall be bound by the spirit of the Code of Tremere, supplemented by the Peripheral Code ..."

The recitation went on and on through most of the night. Oaths spoken one after another, interspersed with increasingly larger draughts of the rapidly cooling, coagulating blood.

Rebecca had no idea what was happening to her, nor could she muster the will to resist. Lying on the hard cold floor of the basement of the professor's townhouse, she felt there was little she could do but follow his commands.

"I will not endanger House and Clan Tremere through my actions," he said. "Nor will I interfere with the affairs of mundanes

and thereby bring ruin upon my House and Clan. I will not deal with devils..." and so on.

Rebecca realized she was being initiated into something, some organization or another, but what kind? What, exactly, was "House and Clan Tremere?" And why was the professor so interested in her anyway? In her night class, he'd singled her out for special attention—she'd recognized that right away. She thought he was after sex, and the truth was that she found him interesting enough. A little odd, perhaps, but he exhibited a dangerous sort of dominance she'd found not at all unattractive.

He'd asked her to stay after class a couple times and, agreeing, she had been disappointed to find out that he only wished to conduct some tests on her. It seemed he had an interest in parapsychology, which he claimed tied in with his anthropological studies.

She'd scored well on the tests, which seemed to please him, and when he'd invited her to visit his townhouse that weekend, she'd readily agreed. Dressed in what she thought was a correctly provocative manner, she'd arrived at the appointed time, but was disappointed when he seemed to pay little attention to her. He was more interested in eliciting her thoughts and beliefs about magic and other phenomena than romancing her.

When he finally offered to show her his "laboratory" enclosed in the basement behind locked doors, she was sure he was finally making his play. She'd been right—but the play turned out to be something other than what she'd expected.

Allowing him to take her in his arms, she'd lifted her head back, anticipating a kiss. Instead, he lunged at her neck and sank his teeth deep into her throat. She struggled briefly, but could not budge against his strength—or against the pleasure that came. As he lapped the blood flowing from her throat, she relaxed, giving herself over to him and the supreme bliss of death. Little did she realize, it was the last comfort she would ever know. As she faded, she was sure she hallucinated, for it appeared as though a tiny, grotesquely deformed version of Garlin flew around her head.

For now, Garlin kept at her, forcing the liquid down her throat, forcing her to repeat the words of this strange oath.

"I demand that, should I break this oath, I should be cast out of the House and Clan," he droned on, demanding her compliance. "If I am cast out, I ask my brothers to find and slay me that my life may not continue in degradation and infamy."

She tried to drift off, suddenly feeling too sleepy to continue, only to be awakened by Garlin yanking at her hair.

"No sleeping now. Repeat the oath!" he demanded.

She managed to mumble her way through it, barely comprehending the words she spoke. She began to worry about what kind of weirdo she'd hooked up with. More of the fluid was forced down her throat. It still burned, but the pain was fading.

Garlin continued: "I recognize that the enemies of the House and Clan are my enemies, that the friends of the House and Clan are my friends, and that the allies of the House and Clan are my allies. Let us work as one and grow hale and strong."

Again she repeated the words, mechanically, exhausted from the ritual which now seemed like it had gone on for hours. At least now Garlin was taking the time to explain to her a little about what was going on: she had been "recruited," and now she would now be one of the undead.

"But what if I choose not to become a vampire?" she had asked.

"The time for choice is over," he had explained.

"Repeat this final line," he told her. "I hereby swear this oath on the fifth day of April, 1994. Woe to anyone who tempts me to break this oath, and woe to me if I succumb to temptation."

Rebecca, relieved, spoke the final words of the oath. Garlin helped her up off the floor and into a nearby chair, where she nearly collapsed, exhausted by the ordeal. Still, she was brightened by the prospect of her new life—as she understood it. There were so many things she could learn, and so many things she could do.

"Is that all there is to it?" Rebecca asked Garlin. "Have I really changed into a vampire now?"

"Yes, you are now undead," Garlin answered her. "You are an apprentice to the noble House Tremere, and apprenticed as well to your master. You are one of the chosen ones. Your fate is to discover the true meaning of power, and to explore depths of space and time that few imagine exist. You are now one of the great immortals, one of those destined to inherit the earth."

"Really?" Rebecca asked, almost elated, still not sure what to think.

"Yes, really," was Garlin's answer. "Now get a mop and bucket and clean up this mess. When you're finished, meet me upstairs and I'll outline the rest of your chores for you."

THE CODE OF TREMERE

Notable for their cold attitudes and lack of affection for one another, the Tremere prefer to foster clan loyalty rather than loyalty between individuals. Blood given to a slain initiate to cause rebirth is dispensed from a container, rather than the embracing magus, further distancing the vampires from one another.

Most important to the initiation process is the swearing of the Code of Tremere. This oath was instituted by Tremere himself in the early 15th century. Parts were based upon the ancient Code of Hermes, which it replaced after the vampirization of House Tremere and the eventual collapse of the old Hermetic Order. All initiates into the clan must swear the oath, which renders them bound to the Tremere for the rest of their existence. Although the Tremere published the Code long ago, making it known to the other vampire clans in an attempt to ease their concerns, it is believed by many that upon gaining higher ranks, such as Regent, Lord or Pontifex, candidates swear to different versions of this Code, which may contain additional passages. No physical evidence of these supposed "modified" codes has ever surfaced, and the truth of the matter is unknown. However, some Tremere have been known to alter the oath they administer to their initiates. This practice is against the Code, but the Tremere cannot fully investigate this criminal activity.

The following section reproduces the proper oath as spoken by an initiate being inducted into the House. The actual text of the Code is given first, followed by a generally accepted interpretation of the passage.

"I, [initiate's name], hereby swear my everlasting loyalty to House and Clan Tremere and all its members. I am of their blood, and they are of mine. We share our lives, our goals and our achievements. I shall obey those the House sees fit to name my superiors, and treat my inferiors with all the respect and care they earn for themselves."

MAGUS VS. MAGE

Tremere often use the term "magus" to refer to themselves, but would never think of using that term to refer to mortals with occult powers. Instead, they call the mortals "mages." Magus is an ancient term and during the Middle Ages, it referred to all practitioners of magic. The plural of "magus" is "magi."

Indeed, with the decline of Latin as the language of the occult, many of the terms the Tremere prefer have disappeared from use. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, the Tremere prefer Latin as their common tongue. Many of their tomes are written in this language, and most Tremere have some knowledge of it.



The most important part of the oath. This is a lifetime bond: in the case of most vampires, a very long time. A member is expected to respect the hierarchy of the clan, deferring to those of higher rank and, in turn, receiving deference from those of lesser rank.

"I will not deprive nor attempt to deprive any member of House and Clan Tremere of his magical power. To do so would be to act against the strength of our House. I will not slay nor attempt to slay any member of the House and Clan except in self-defense, or when a magus has been ruled outlaw by a properly constituted tribunal. If a magus has been ruled an outlaw, I shall bend all efforts to bring such magus to justice."

A direct attack against another magus, either physical or magical, is strictly forbidden unless it can be proven it was done out of self-defense or in the greater interests of the clan. Although outright hostilities between rivals are forbidden, character assassination is permitted and, if done with finesse, often admired. Minor skirmishes between magi and chantries are tolerated, but only so long as they do not bring danger to the clan.

"I will abide by all decisions of the tribunals, and respectfully honor the wishes of the Inner Council of Seven and the wishes of my superiors. The tribunals shall be bound by the spirit of the Code of Tremere, as supplemented by the Peripheral Code and interpreted by a properly constituted body of magi. I have the right to appeal a decision to a higher tribunal, if they should agree to hear my case."

In cases of dispute, the decision of a properly constituted tribunal is considered final, although a magus may appeal to a higher tribunal, even as high as the Inner Council itself. Disturbing members of the Inner Council with matters of less than the greatest importance to the clan can severely damage a Tremere's prestige.

"I will not endanger House and Clan Tremere through my actions. Nor will I interfere with the affairs of mundanes in any way that brings ruin upon my House and Clan. I will not, when dealing with devils, or others, in any way bring danger to the clan, nor will I disturb the faeries in any way that should cause them to take their vengeance on the House and Clan. I also swear to uphold the values and goals of the Camarilla, and I will maintain the Masquerade. Insofar as these goals may conflict with my goals, I will not pursue my own ends in any way that would endanger the Masquerade. The strength of the House and Clan Tremere depends on the strength of the Masquerade."

The Tremere are closely involved with the affairs of mankind, but all members are charged with the responsibility of keeping the secrets of the Tremere away from mundanes.

Although experimentation and the furthering of the borders of magic is of paramount concern to the Tremere, certain limits are imposed. The warning about dealings with devils dates from the old Order of Hermes, though it has been updated to reflect the goals of the Tremere. Although the faerie world seems even further away today than it was when the code was written, treating with the faerie world in any way that creates problems for the clan is expressly forbidden. The final lines were amended

to the code at the urging of Etrius shortly after the founding of the Camarilla, intended to reassure the other vampires about the motives and intent of the universally distrusted Tremere.

Tremere are authorized to feed where and when they like, in whatever manner they deem fit, as long as they keep within the boundaries set by local chantries and the ruling Prince. Aside from that, all Tremere are expected to gather their sustenance in a way that brings neither attention nor disgrace to the clan.

"I will not use magic to sry upon members of the House and Clan Tremere, nor shall I use it to peer into their affairs. It is expressly forbidden."

In the course of events, this precept is often violated. Many magi make a regular practice of srying other members, and senior magi are almost expected to do so in order to keep tabs on their underlings. If caught srying, the usual recourse is to demand compensation from the guilty party: money, power or perhaps a promising apprentice. Only rarely are such cases referred to a tribunal, usually only when they involve interests of great importance. If a matter comes to tribunal, the offender can expect to be treated harshly. Non-magical means of spying on rival magi or chantries are, according to strict definition, perfectly legal and acceptable.

"I will train only apprentices who will swear to this code, and should any of them turn against the House and Clan, I shall be the first to strike them down and bring them to justice. No apprentice of mine shall be called magus until he first swears to uphold the code. I shall treat my apprentices with the care and respect that they earn."

A magus may only take an apprentice after the act has been approved by an immediate superior. The Tremere strictly limit the number and distribution of clan members throughout the world. This portion of the code demands that a magus must initiate any new apprentice according to the precepts of the clan. A magus is considered wholly responsible for the actions and behavior of any apprentice living under his chantry, and he is charged with dispensing justice as he sees fit. Potential apprentices sometimes come searching for the Tremere, but more often, a magus who has been given permission to initiate a new apprentice simply chooses whomever seems to best suit his purposes and needs. Although Tremere still seek out those with evidence of extra-normal powers and abilities, it is not necessarily the prime requisite when choosing an apprentice. The Tremere have their fingers in everything, and apprentices adept at dealing with different aspects of the mundane world are just as highly prized.

Although magi are allowed great latitude in the treatment of their apprentices, an abused apprentice can appeal to a tribunal. Questions of improper or unethical treatment of apprentices is defined by rulings derived from the complex Peripheral Code.

It is strictly illegal for one Tremere to Blood Bond another. Such offenses are punished by death.

"I concede to my elders the right to take my apprentice should it be found that my apprentice is valuable to an elder's





work. All are members of the House and Clan and valuable first to these precepts, I shall abide by the right of my superiors to make such decisions."

This is crucial to the workings of the Tremere clan. Apprentices are regularly shuffled about different chantries, assigned new responsibilities, and given the opportunity to learn new magics. The Tremere claim this method ensures that skills and knowledge are disseminated throughout the House. They claim that apprentices are given the opportunity to indulge in a variety of activities. They then discover which endeavors suit them best and which endeavors will aid the clan the most. In actuality, trades are usually negotiated with other goals in mind. Regents trade apprentices among themselves (with the approval of superiors) so that they can attempt to learn magics they do not know and shuffle in spies to watch rivals. Sometimes a Regent will unload a flawed apprentice in the hope of getting a better one. Trades are often ordered from above. Seniors sometime mix Tremere to obtain unspecified clan goals, but more often, apprentices are traded to break alliances or friendships that may be growing between an apprentice and his master. Loyalty to House and Clan Tremere, and to the Pyramid, is paramount. Friendship works against the clan.

"I shall further the knowledge of the House and Clan and share with its members all that I find in my search for wisdom and power. No secrets are to be kept, or given, regarding the arts of magic, nor shall I keep secret the doings of others which might bring harm to the House and Clan."

All members of the clan are duty-bound to report any important information or discoveries to their superior. In actual practice, Tremere are famed for the secrets they keep. Building up a mental file of secrets, contacts and other avenues of information is a sure way to garner power and gain promotion.

"I demand that, should I break this oath, I should be cast out of the House and Clan. If I am cast out, I ask my brothers to find and slay me that my life may not continue in degradation and infamy."

Joining the Tremere means joining forever. The initiate swears that if she breaks her oath, or is discovered working against the interests of the clan in any way, she will willingly forfeit her life. Once ordered to report to Vienna, most resign themselves to their fate and heed the call. Some, however, choose to flee, trying to escape the wrath of the Inner Council. Labeled "outlaws," such magi are fair game for any other Tremere. Although slaying an outlaw is technically permissible, it is preferred that she be captured alive. After she is sent to Vienna, she will be held prisoner until the next regular meeting of the Inner Council, when her fate will be decided. Few, if any, ever return from Vienna, giving rise to the popular euphemism, "called to Vienna," used when referring to any tanking Tremere that has suddenly dropped out of sight without explanation.

Capturing and returning such an outlaw results in a gain of clan prestige commensurate with the crimes and personal power of the outlaw.

"I recognize that the enemies of the House and Clan are my enemies, that the friends of the House and Clan are my friends, and that the allies of the House and Clan are my allies. Let us work as one and grow hale and strong."

Though written in earlier times, this passage is now generally agreed to refer to the Sabbat as enemies and the members of the Camarilla as allies. Tremere are quick to point out that they stand as a bastion against all types of anarchy.

"I hereby swear this oath on [current date]. Woe to they who try to tempt me to break this oath, and woe to me if I succumb to such temptation."

A final reiteration of the initiate's devotion to the clan.

THE BLOOD BOND

Immediately after being Embraced, an apprentice must drink the combined vitae of the Council of Seven. This means that the character is one step closer to being bound by her sire. It also means that the Council also has a hold over her.

While the clan originally considered binding all its members completely, the other clans reacted vehemently against this. Thus, the clan needs some justification to Blood Bond its members, and forcing neotates to drink the blood of seven Tremere is a common punishment for crimes.





CHAPTER TWO: THE TREMERE CHRONICLES

Witchcraft is so enduring that it admits of no remedy by human operation.

— St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententiae*

Unlike the history of most vampire clans, the history of the Tremere is well-known, documented, and even within the memory of certain undead witnesses. Whereas most clan histories are lost in the mists of time as subjects of rumor and speculation, the first vampires of the Tremere clan were not embraced until the Middle Ages.

THE ORDER OF HERMES

Tremere was once a powerful magus, the head of House Tremere and one of the founders of the ancient Order of Hermes—a vast league of magi that once stretched across Europe. House Tremere was only one of a dozen or more Houses in the Order, but it was also recognized as one of the most powerful and treacherous Houses. The House was often accused of committing espionage and sabotage while attempting to achieve its aims. It is interesting to note that although Tremere was among those who argued most ardently for the formation of the Order of Hermes to put an end to the sometimes vicious inter-House rivalries, it was this same Tremere who, in A.D. 848, was only narrowly prevented from taking over the entire Order by means of force and deception.

After the turn of the millennium (A.D. 1000), the Order identified a disturbance in the raw material of magic—called *vis*—and detected tremblings in the very fabric of reality. Scribing and portents foretold a massive disruption of magic as the Order knew it, some coming shift in the magical axis. Some speculated that this shift was linked to the forces of *Dominion* and *Reason*, forces of science and theological religion undermining man's belief in the supernatural.

This shift, combined with a loss of *vis* in the Order's homelands, threatened the power and immortality of the magi; most magi lived lives greatly prolonged by magic potions and spells. Without *vis*, Hermetic magi were doomed to mortality.

THE FATEFUL EXPERIMENT

The main chantry of House Tremere, Ceoris, was located in the Transylvania mountains of Eastern Europe, a land still stalked nightly by demons, werewolves and the undead. According to Tremere legend, it was tall, handsome Goratrix, one of Tremere's most loyal followers, who, as part of his search for immortality, first began to study the Damned. Previous experiments with rare herbs, ancient prayers, animal parts, virgins and babies had produced little.



Discovering the lair of a Tzimisce elder, Goratrix made the vampire captive, binding him with chains and spells, and used torture and fiery magics to force the monster to tell him all it knew of vampiric life. Promising the Tzimisce its freedom, Goratrix forced it to Embrace two of his unsuspecting, and unwilling, apprentices before reneging on his word and slaying the monster. The two former apprentices, now vampires themselves, were carried back to Goratrix's chantry, and serious experimentation began.

A year or more later, in 1022, Goratrix was able to announce to his master, Tremere, that he had discovered the secret of the vampires' immortality and, furthermore, had discovered a method of inducing it among the magi of the covenant. Gathering six of his closest followers, Tremere hurriedly set off to the mountain chantry of Goratrix. Preparations for the ritual began almost immediately, and within hours, the suffering Goratrix the Experimenter inflicted on the two captive vampire-apprentices came to an end. The blood drained from the slaughtered pair was prepared in the prescribed manner and, after lengthy rituals, the vitae was ingested by Tremere and his seven closest followers.

The potion struck them like hammers, burning their throats with fire. When they regained consciousness, they were changed. Although, as Goratrix had promised, they had gained immortality, it had been at the cost of their souls—they had become full-blooded vampires. Most were shocked by the change; some, like Etrius, were even horrified by what they had become, but Tremere remained calm and philosophical. It was later whispered amongst some of the followers that their master had known all along what the outcome would be, and that he and Goratrix had conspired together to convert the covenant of magi into a nest of undead vampires.

After recovering, and learning what they needed to know, the magi-turned-vampires returned to their chantries, vowing to keep their new identities a dark secret. But rumors soon began to spread through the Tremere chantries and the rest of the Order. House Tremere's role in the Schism Wars a decade earlier, which had caused the deaths of dozens of magi and hundreds of mundanes, came under new scrutiny. Some said the druidic-based House Diedne was destroyed so that the Tremere could get their hands on something that had helped them bring about this change.

THE ASCENSION OF HOUSE TREMERE

Gradually, Tremere and his seven followers spread the curse of vampirism throughout the House, but internal feuds were soon developing: Goratrix was at one extreme, pushing for full infection of the House as quickly as possible; the other position was represented by Etrius, who worried about the moral and ethical implications of forcing vampirism upon unsuspecting victims. The bickering turned to open argument, then attacks. Etrius particularly suffered from a series of psychic assaults launched at him by the openly venomous Goratrix. The stability of the entire House was soon threatened, and Tremere was forced to call the

seven followers to his chantry to put an end to their quarrels. It has long been rumored that Tremere forced the Blood Bond upon the seven at this time, a rumor consistently denied by the clan to this day. Blood Bonding is expressly forbidden by the Code of Tremere. Although this council put an end to open feuds, rumors of the House's activities continued to spread through the rest of the Order. The secretive Tremere were accused of many things, not the least of which was Diabolist. Tremere fervently denied the charge. Continuing to steadily spread the curse of vampirism through the members of their covenant, the Tremere took great pains to hide the true nature of their activities from their fellow magi.

But others, outside the Order of Hermes, were also concerned about the activities of the Tremere. The Trimisce vampire clan, long the nominal undead rulers of these parts of eastern Europe, had long been at odds with the Tremere magi. Now that these wizards had embraced vampirism, the Trimisce feared the Tremere would grow more powerful than they were. Allying with local Nosferatu and Gargel vampires, the united undead began staging raids against the more isolated Tremere chantries. The magi proved difficult to capture or kill, and quite a few of them—vampires or not—managed to escape. The human guards and servants, however, proved to be easy prey. Raided chantries, more often than not, were left abandoned; the Tremere realized that they were unable to defend them properly. Steadily, the Tremere's realm was pushed back as chantry after chantry fell to the relentless attacks led by the Trimisce.

The chantry of Goratrix, well-defended and hidden high in the mountains, held out longer. Alone, and under siege, the indefatigable Goratrix worked feverishly in his alchemical laboratory, running experiment after experiment on captured Trimisce and Nosferatu vampires. The long siege was finally broken when Goratrix unleashed the "Gargoyles," semi-intelligent vampire monsters created by the magus from select components of the unfortunate captive vampires. Instilled with a hatred for those vampires from which they were born, the vicious Gargoyles proved to be sufficient as watch dogs and guards, protecting Tremere chantries from future undead attacks.

DIABLERIE

With his domain once again stabilized, Tremere turned his attention to the study of vampires and their history, learning much about blood and the dark inheritance it carries. He had been surprised at how powerful the elders were compared to other vampires; next, he learned how vampire blood weakens from generation to generation. He uncovered lost clues about powerful vampires hidden in secret places around the world, beings so ancient that they were called Antediluvians. Destroying such a creature and drinking its blood would bring him all its strength and power and, the magus reasoned, would put his clan of vampires on an equal footing with the others. Tremere resolved to become an Antediluvian himself.

Using rituals and spells, Tremere and his closest followers located the havens of several sleeping Antediluvians. In 1133,

Tremere finally chose Saulot, founder of the mysterious and mystical Salubri clan, as his victim. Lightly guarded, Saulot seemed the easiest to overcome and destroy. Tremere, accompanied again by his seven closest followers, found the elder's tomb hidden away in a mountain face. Entering, they encountered little resistance and discovered the Salubri founder asleep within a great, stone sarcophagus. With the heavy stone cover set aside, Tremere hesitated only a second before sinking his fangs into the throat of the torporous elder. The Antediluvian put up little resistance, soon succumbing and dying with an unexpected look of peace on its face. Only when Tremere straightened back up did he discover, to his horror, that a third eye had opened on the forehead of Saulot, one that now gazed peacefully up at him.

No one spoke of what they had seen. They quickly closed the sarcophagus and fled the mountain, but the meaning of the appearance of that third eye on Saulot's forehead, and whether the event really happened, has been a long-standing topic of discussion.

Not long after this event, Tremere began to show a tendency to slip into torpor himself, falling into periods of deep sleep sometimes lasting weeks or months. At these times, he would leave the responsibility for the administration of the clan in the hands of his seven trusted followers. Tremere had charged them with guiding and shaping it into a powerful, cohesive organization, and he structured his vision along the lines of a pyramid. Tremere's periods of deep sleep increased, sometimes stretching years between waking periods.

Left to their own devices, old rancor broke out among the seven, divided along old lines. The impetuous Goratrix continued to oppose the ever-cautious Etrius. Meerlinda cautioned moderation and acted as a peacekeeper between the two factions.

In order to limit their own conflicts, the group divided the known world between them. Meerlinda was chosen to administer the British Isles, Goratrix was sent to France, and the others were dispatched to various parts of Europe. Etrius, the cautious one, was chosen to direct Tremere operations in Transylvania and the surrounding area. He was to remain in the old chantry in the mountains, and was charged also with the safekeeping of their slumbering leader, Tremere. The Council at this time decided to hold formal meetings. These were held whenever called for by events, at least once per year, or by the command of an awakened Tremere.

AGAINST THE INQUISITION

In 1205, Pope Innocent III instigated the Fourth Crusade, a movement committed to rooting out the heretic Cathars of Languedoc. Spurred on by its success, the Church began a series of persecutions eventually resulting in full-blown inquisitions. Many of the remaining magi of the Order of Hermes were arrested and tried, and their chantries were burned. Magicians were condemned as evil, as consorts of the devil, a reputation perhaps partially due to the deprivations of the vampiric Tremere.



Angered by this intrusion into what Goratrix considered his territory, he infiltrated the Church, using Domination and other magics to bring them under his sway. It is thought that it was Goratrix's actions, and his lack of tact and subtlety, that eventually brought the attention of the Church and State down on a number of vampires and magi, making the Inquisition much worse.

Goratrix narrowly escaped discovery during an early morning raid on his covenant, and, hunted and tracked by the Inquisitors, he was forced to flee France at the first opportunity. An emergency meeting was called in Transylvania to consider the situation, and it was ruled that Goratrix had overstepped his bounds, risking the security of the clan. He was ordered to relinquish his authority. Goratrix argued long and loud, but to no avail. Believing the other Councilors intended to destroy him, he fled the chantry, disappearing into the wilderness of the eastern mountains. The vampire-magus Grimgroth, formerly of Mistridge, was named to replace the outcast Goratrix and was sent to France.

The Inquisition continued to gather strength, however, and many vampires of different clans were uprooted from their nests and destroyed. Childer deprived of their masters by the stakes and swords of religious zealots declared war on mankind, claiming the ancient Code of Caine obsolete. They began the first anarchy movement.

Inquisitional wars raged throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. The leaders exposed and executed undead and magi alike, destroying lairs and chantries wherever they were found. Despite the havoc, a considerable number of Tremere chantries remained untouched, leading to speculation that the Tremere were possibly in league with the destroyers.

Vampires driven from their homes blundered into the territories of other vampires, forcing them at each other's throats. Dangerous bands of anarchs roamed the nighttime streets and highways, attacking humans and vampires alike, and the nearly unknown Assamites began leaving their mountain sanctuary to indulge in their taste for diablerie. As the madness grew, the Tremere, despite their careful veils and steadily growing influence over the affairs of men, began to worry if they could weather the storm. Even their Gargoyle servants began to fail them; the creatures were beginning to exhibit signs of a stubborn self-will.

THE ROOTS OF THE CAMARILLA

The Tremere used to take credit for the formation of the Camarilla, claiming that they sent quiet messages to certain leaders of other vampire clans, suggesting that cooperation among the clans might be the answer to their problems.

In 1394, a meeting of clan elders was called. It is believed to have been arranged by Meerlinda. At this meeting, the Ventrue leader, Hardestadt, first proposed a league similar to the modern Camarilla. No immediate action was taken. Hardestadt was slain the following year after his castle was attacked by anarchs led by the Brujah Tyler, and the proposal seemed forgotten. Few knew that among those vampires slain that night was a Tremere Lord who had long been acting as a close advisor to the Ventrue leader.

After the death of Hardestadt, the idea of a league of vampires went nowhere for more than 50 years. Elders debated every aspect of its worth or, as the anarchs say, they waited for orders from their masters. The vampires did not react until anarchs destroyed the Trimisce Antediluvian. Once again, they attempted to engineer an alliance between their disparate clans. In 1450, the Toreador Rafael de Corazon finally made his famous speech, repeating over and over the Fifth Rule of the Code of Caine, which led to the Camarilla and the Masquerade.

Despite their role in the formation of the Camarilla—or perhaps because of it—the Tremere remained the most mistrusted of the clans. Stories were told of how Tremere had helped form the earlier, similar Order of Hermes. Rumors spread concerning the clan's later attempts to take over the Order. Even when the Tremere cast the enchantment forcing the Assamites to abandon their diablerie, it was whispered that the Tremere had used the opportunity to take magical control of the Assamites. Indeed, the Tremere soon stopped claiming to have been responsible for forming the Camarilla, seeing how their altruistic motives were being twisted and maligned.

Nonetheless, the new Camarilla proved effective, uniting the clans in common action against the anarchs and the Sabbat, and allowing it to avoid the worst effects of the Inquisition. The Tremere took advantage of the calm and began infiltrating the institutions of mankind: politics, commerce and the Church.

THE END OF THE ORDER

As the decades wore on and vis grew less and less plentiful, the old Houses of the Order of Hermes slowly disappeared. Some mages blamed the growth of Reason for the decline in magic, and they pointed to the Tremere as the cause of this. After all, the Tremere had openly supported universities and fought superstition, all to further the Masquerade. The more people trusted science, the less they would believe in the superstitions associated with vampires.

The surviving magi, however, saw a more sinister purpose. As the world's magic dried up, they became less powerful, and soon the Tremere would be the only magi able to work any of the old magics. The Order later became one of the most powerful Traditions of mages, but it has only a fraction of its former might. By this point, all Tremere magi had become vampires, and none joined the new Tradition. Indeed, a number of mages claim the Tremere were in league with a force known as the Technocracy. Some claim that the two forces are still allied...

THE MOVE TO VIENNA

Strange rumors began to surround the main Tremere chantry in Transylvania at this time. The worst of these rumors claimed





that a certain change had occurred to the sleeping figure of Tremere. Regardless, within the next few years, Errius moved the clan's headquarters to his own old chantry still standing in Vienna, where he felt he could better protect the slumbering leader.

THE NEW WORLD

By the early 16th century, many countries began exploring the New World, and some Tremere predicted that certain portions of it held a great wealth of vis. Meerlinda, working through Dr. John Dee, encouraged British exploration of the new lands. By the 17th century, the first permanent colonists arrived on the New World's shores. Of English descent, these Pilgrim and Puritan colonists fell under the responsibility of Councilor Meerlinda.

Xavier de Cincas, who ruled the Tremere in Spain, had less success, even though Spain led the colonization drive. Toreador and Venture had already taken control of the New World, and Xavier found himself battled at every turn. Thus, the Tremere have never been as powerful in South America as in the North.

Still, over the next 100 years, the potential wealth and power of the two western continents became apparent and a reapportioning of the responsibilities of the Tremere Councilor became necessary. A new rank, Pontifex, was created, falling between Councilor and High Lord. The Councilors themselves were given vast territories to manage—in some cases, entire continents. North America was given to Meerlinda. At first viewed by some of her peers as an outcast exiled to a primitive land, she has since proven the wiser of the lot in accepting the position. Her position of control in the U.S. has brought her great power.

Europe was divided into the East and West, with responsibilities given to Errius and Grimgroth, respectively. Others were sent to South America, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. At the same time, the Councilors changed their formal meeting from an annual event to one that took place only once every ten years.

THE RETURN OF GORATRIX

By the mid-18th century, it was noticed that a number of younger Tremere had inexplicably gone missing. Only through diligent effort was it learned that Goratrix, hidden deep in the mountains of Eastern Europe, had joined with the Sabbat and was perhaps responsible for these defections. He is the head of his own covenant, House Goratrix, and his loyal *antiribus* followers now act as counsels and advisors to Sabbat leaders in both the Old and New Worlds. Since the discovery of House Goratrix, the Tremere Councilors, led by Tremere himself, have branded the followers of Goratrix with a sigil marked on their foreheads, readily visible to any Tremere magus.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A recent crisis has resulted in the seven Councilors being called to Vienna for an emergency session. No formal announcement has been made regarding the cause of the meeting, although an increase in activity in and around chantries indicates that something is up. Rumors are rampant, of course. The worst rumor claims that Etrius, who guards the sleeping Tremere, has discovered that the coffin no longer contains the body of the vampire wizard, but instead holds a great white worm of singularly disgusting aspect. Some claim this thing is not a worm at all, but merely the pupa stage that foreshadows an even worse transformation yet to come.

FLOATING RUMORS

No other clan is as distrusted and suspected as the Tremere. As a result, rumors about the clan spring up constantly, and all find some believers. The Tremere have been blamed for everything from World War II to bad television shows. Some of the more popular rumors are listed below.

—Etrius, of the Vienna chantry, has viewed what lies in Tremere's coffin. Some say it is a huge worm.

—The sleeping Tremere exchanges his mind with various members of the Council of Seven, acting and perceiving through their bodies.

—The insane Tremere is magically bound in the catacombs beneath the Vienna chantry. Some say it is for his own good.

—The sleeping Tremere has grown a third eye in his forehead.

—The Gargoyles are secretly laying plans to attack and wipe out the Tremere in Europe. Some say the Sabbat is behind it.

—The great pyramid scheme is part of a secret called "the rule of sevens." When each Lord rules seven chantries, and each chantry has seven magi, the time for the Tremere to emerge as rulers will be at hand.

—Tremere sent to Vienna are slain and devoured by Tremere himself.

—The Gargoyles hiding in the mountains have been breeding. A great clutch of eggs lies hidden in a cave, awaiting the time of the great hatching.

—The spell cast upon the Assamites allows the Tremere to control them.

—The mysterious St. Germain has perfected a potion that does away with the vampire's need for blood.

—There are Giovanni spies in the ranks of the Tremere.

—Satan has recruiters working within the ranks of the Tremere.

—In working with the Sabbat, Goratrix is only following Tremere's orders, and the clan plans on one day controlling both the Camarilla and the Sabbat.



CHAPTER THREE INSIDE THE TREMERE

*The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.
— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Ladder
of St. Augustine"*

CLAN STRUCTURE

The Tremere are fond of using symbols. The internal structure of the Order is compared to a pyramid in its simplest, strongest form, representing the strength available to the Tremere if they only hold together. The external structure is compared to a web: strands reach out in all directions, touching all things. By deftly pulling these strands, one can change the course of events and thereby benefit the clan.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE — THE GREAT PYRAMID

The Tremere comparison to a pyramid likens every member to a single block that helps support, while being supported by, the whole. Respect for the structure is expected at all times. Although not above rewarding the occasional rebel whose actions and initiative prove beneficial to the clan, the clan is quick to punish those whose behavior weakens the structure.

Each level of the pyramid contains Seven Circles of Mysteries. Each must be mastered before the vampire is eligible for advancement to the next rank.

APPRENTICE

Apprentices, sometimes called neonates, are the lowest blocks in the structure. A newly-made vampire is initiated into the clan by being forced to drink the blood of the elder mixed with a tincture supposedly made from the mixed blood of the Inner Councilors and Tremere himself. Apprentices are bound to follow the dictates of their Regent, the magus heading the chantry into which they have been inducted. Apprentices are expected to show deference to any magi of higher level, and any failing to do so are quickly educated otherwise.

The apprentice rank, like all ranks, is divided into seven levels called the Seven Circles of Mysteries. The apprentice must be gradually initiated through each of these Seven Circles before he is considered worthy of possible promotion to Regent. As they progress, apprentices gain influence and freedom. First Circle neonates are required to meet with their elder once a week when the local chantry holds its convocation. Apprentices who have reached Seventh Level are nominally independent. Tremere of



this level who dwell in their chantry often enjoy nearly as much influence and power as the Regent himself.

REGENT

Regents rule individual chantries. They are responsible for the activities of all apprentices dwelling within a specific area surrounding the chantry. This area is known as a Province. Almost any large city will have at least one chantry, and often more.

Regents are required to formally meet with their Lords, at their Lord's chantry, once a year.

LORD

A Regent who has attained the Seventh Level is eligible for the rank of Lord, sometimes referred to as High Regent. A Lord usually commands a number of chantries and is responsible for the actions of all Tremere within this area, called a Realm. Realms can be defined geographically, such as small portions of large countries or even small continents. Other Realms may be concerned with such matters as industry, commerce or government. These are not necessarily restricted to a certain territory.

Although frequently in contact with their Pontifex masters, Lords are required to formally meet with their superiors once every three years at the Pontifex's chantry.

PONTIFEX

Forty-nine Tremere vampires hold the title of Pontifex. Each is either responsible for a vast geographical territory or concerned with the monitoring and manipulation of a certain segment of government, industry, religion or another sphere of influence. Their areas of responsibility are called Orders. There are seven Pontifexes in North America. Five are responsible for large geographical territories, and of the remaining two, one is held accountable for political concerns, while the other affects business and commerce.

Pontifexes are required to travel to the chantry of their Councilor once every seven years to pay formal obeisance and discuss future plans.

COUNCILOR

The Inner Council of Seven is made up of some of Tremere's oldest followers. Among them are some of the first magi to become vampires. Each Councilor is responsible for a vast geographic area, often an entire continent, including all commerce and politics within the region. Supposedly, they are in constant telepathic contact with one another, but the truth is unknown.

The Inner Council meets formally once every ten years. The location is always the ancient Tremere chantry of Etrius in Vienna, Austria.

ADVANCEMENT

Promotion through the Seven Mysteries of each rank is more a matter of clan prestige than magical proficiency. Efforts that bring rewards to the clan are highly valued, and gaining higher ranks calls

for more spectacular achievements. Initiation into a higher Circle of Mystery requires a tribunal composed of the candidate's immediate superior and at least two other ranking magi. The candidate's qualifications are discussed, and a personal interview is usually conducted. A candidate awarded promotion passes through a short, formal initiation rite and receives a medallion identifying his rank. The medallion is worn on formal occasions or as the magus chooses, and the names of the those awarding the rank are magically interwoven into the medallion's design.

Advancement through the Seven Circles of any rank can sometimes be accomplished quickly, depending upon the skill and cunning of the individual, but promotion to a higher rank can take longer. Although an apprentice of the Seventh Circle may be technically qualified for promotion, it may be years before the opportunity to take over a chantry is available. A potential Regent might receive permission to establish a new chantry, but it is more likely that he will have to wait for one of the Regents to die or be promoted to Lord. In a hierarchy populated with immortals, openings only appear infrequently, and potential candidates are often bitter rivals for these positions. Jockeying for position is all-important, and a thorough grasp of internal clan politics is a must. Exposure of past transgressions is a favorite means used by candidates to disqualify each other. Trickery of this sort is admired, but such tactics must never be allowed to endanger the clan. Those caught fabricating untruths, or in any way risking clan unity, are severely punished.

Competition among Lords and Pontifices is even more fierce. Although unproved, there is a common rumor among the apprentices that the elders indulge in a form of wizard's duel called "certamen." Regardless of whether this is true, a Regent who has lost his position as head of a chantry is usually allowed to return to non-Regent status. Those who lose higher positions, however, are rarely heard from again, giving rise to the whispered expression "called to Vienna," used when speaking of a ranking magi who has suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

EXTERNAL STRUCTURE — THE GREAT WEB

More than any other clan, the Tremere have enmeshed themselves in the world of the herd. Through a carefully structured network of chantries spanning the globe, the Tremere exert control over the spheres of commerce, business, politics and religion, using them to fulfill the ends of the Camarilla, and, of course, the needs of the Tremere themselves.

A NORTH AMERICAN EXAMPLE

The North American continent, excluding Mexico, is under the control of a single Councilor: Meerlinda, formerly of the British Isles and one of the original seven followers of Tremere. Although Tremere chantries had been established early on in the New World, it was not until the late 18th century that North and South America were established as new territories, separate





and distinct from the European countries that colonized them, and assigned to individual councilors. These assignments were once almost viewed as forms of banishment, but the rapid growth of these new lands—particularly North America—has brought an immense amount of power to those who control them.

Meerlinda makes her main headquarters in Dallas, Texas, but she has travelled across the continent. She has also begun spending a great deal of time in Europe. Allowed seven Pontifices, she divided her territory into seven Orders. Five are territorial: the Eastern and Western Orders of Canada and the Eastern, Central, and Western Orders of the United States. Commerce, trade and business were established as a fourth Order while the directors of politics and religion formed the fifth.

These latter two Orders have no territorial boundaries, and they may establish chantries wherever the Tremere agree they are needed. Although chantry cooperation is a basic rule of the Tremere, their naturally competitive attitudes makes this combining of territorial and non-territorial Orders in a single area a never-ending source of disputes over rights and responsibilities. Pontifices are expected to resolve their own problems, but often need to call upon their councilor for arbitration.

To add to this confusion, territorial Pontifices are encouraged to establish what are known as "mission chantries"—chantries located outside their own geographic territories. These mission chantries are accorded a special set of rights and regulations, similar to those accorded to diplomatic embassies from foreign countries. Although such mission chantries have resulted in additional disputes, the elders have encouraged the practice, playing upon fear and paranoia, using one group to spy upon one another, and keeping any one faction from garnering too much power. As complicated as this arrangement is in North America, the cross-chantry ties created across Western and Eastern Europe are nearly beyond comprehension.

Each Pontifex commands seven Lords. Lords of the geographic Orders command specifically demarcated areas. In North America, these usually cover several states. Non-territorial Orders assign their Lords responsibilities as the ruling Pontifex sees fit, frequently altering them to reflect the changing tides of government and business.

AMERICA'S PONTIFICES

Meerlinda controls seven Pontifices. Although efforts were made to balance the power and responsibilities of these Orders, events have proven otherwise. As suited the times, preference was given to physical territory, and five Pontifices were awarded vast tracts of land to maintain and develop. Although growth and expansion were rapid, the unforeseen increase in long-distance trade and international politics has shifted the balance of power into the hands of the two Tremere controlling business and government: John Diamond and Peter Dorfman, respectively.

The failure of Canada to develop along the lines of the U.S. led to the decision to remove control of the Canadian government from Dorfman and transfer joint control to the two

Canadian Pontifices. They are, however, expected to cooperate fully with the demands of the much more powerful and influential U.S. government. The two have, so far, showed a willingness to acquiesce on nearly all major issues.

JOHN DIAMOND

Diamond is probably the most powerful American-born Tremere. He received the Embrace directly from the hands of Meerlinda shortly after her arrival in America. A native of Marblehead, Massachusetts, Diamond was a well-known "wizard" often called upon by people in the town to solve mysteries and petty crimes. He once used his powers to force a man accused of stealing a widow's firewood to walk around the town all night carrying a huge log. When storms came, Diamond would climb to the top of old Burying Hill and, alternately muttering to the headstones and bellowing at the sky, direct the boats of Marblehead's fishing fleet to safe harbor. Meerlinda realized his potential, sought him out, and brought him into the clan.

Diamond is in charge of North American industry and commerce and dwells in a chantry in Bridgeport, Connecticut—as close to the New York Stock Exchange as he feels he can get. Rumor has it, however, that he frequently visits New York City, despite its Sabbat controllers.

Long envied by other North American Pontifices—who view him as Meerlinda's pet—he has been under fire in recent years, due partially to a constantly sluggish American economy. Diamond claims he is still unable to penetrate the corporate veils obscuring the real power behind Japan's sudden growth and the subsequent weakening of the U.S. economy.

Diamond's network is divided into seven categories of industry and manufacture, with various chantries scattered about the continent. He has had particular problems in the last decades with the many new chantries established on the West Coast. Perhaps influenced by anarchists, the Lords rule over such responsibilities as the aerospace industry, computer companies, and the film and communication industries. These rulers are difficult to manage. Cross-country travel is difficult, and the more isolated Lords tend to follow their own paths. Diamond has repeatedly requested aid from the Western U.S. Pontifex, Abe Powell, who lives in the state capital of Sacramento, but Powell claims his hands are tied. He claims strong influence in the agricultural central valley, but has trouble controlling the coastal areas, including Los Angeles and San Francisco.

PETER DORFMAN

Dorfman keeps his chantry in Washington, D.C., the seat of the U.S. government, where he exerts his influence over politicians, media and the like. Controlling the strings of the federal government, he has powerful control over even global affairs, and his superior, Meerlinda, has been told by the Inner Council to keep a careful watch over him. Dorfman's chief rival is Powell, Pontifex of the Western United States. Powell's headquarters are in Sacramento, California. Territorial Pontifices are awarded the right to control state and local governments. Powell has direct control over the government of California—a state with

30 million inhabitants, one-eighth of the entire U.S.—and he has proven difficult for Dorfman to deal with in the past. Again, anarch influence has been blamed.

THE CHANTRY

Individual chantries are found in most large cities in America. Each chantry is ruled by a Regent. Usually, only the Regent, and possibly a high-level apprentice, will actually live in the chantry, while others are required to establish their own residences. There are, of course, numerous exceptions to this rule. A chantry is responsible for any apprentices currently under its tutelage.

Rules of hospitality apply, and chantries are required to provide a haven—even sanctuary—to Tremere from outside their territory. However, the Regent is allowed to refuse hospitality if he has reason to believe that such an act would endanger the security of his chantry or the clan.

Chantries are of various description, though most attempt to avoid drawing unnecessary attention. Ostentatious chantries occupy large mansions, often enclosed in compounds. Urban chantries frequently purchase small apartment buildings, renovating them to fit the chantry's needs.

Once established, a chantry is rarely moved. Aside from the usual problems associated with relocating a vampire's safe haven, the Tremere must also move vast amounts of magical and alchemical equipment, libraries and records. Some European chantries have been continuously occupied for centuries.

A typical chantry provides living space for as many as three or more resident magi, plus guest rooms. Laboratory space is often located in basement floors, away from the sight of trespassers. Specific areas of the laboratory are assigned to different magi and marked with special sigils identifying them as such. One is not allowed to enter another's sanctum unless specifically invited. A magus's sanctum is inviolate, and even invited guests relinquish certain rights upon entering. Although not always possible, resident magi prefer their laboratories to adjoin their living space.

RECRUITING APPRENTICES

Tremere are bound by the clan's code and may Embrace apprentices only when specifically allowed by the magus's superior. Although, by tradition, preference is shown for those with signs of "the gift"—extra-normal powers—the Tremere are pragmatic, frequently embracing humans who show no particular facility or interest in the magical arts or in paranormal abilities.

Initiation is cold, matter-of-fact, and without any hint of gentleness, much less love or tenderness. Quite often, initiates are not even consulted as to whether they wish to become vampires and are taken by the magus without warning or explanation. The Tremere look with disfavor upon personal relationships, preferring to emphasize the clan as the individual's family.

TREMERE LAW AND THE TRIBUNAL

Tremere law is intricate, governing disputes between individual magi, chantries, Lords and even Pontifices. The clan generally encourages Tremere to settle their own disagreements in a peaceable manner, but for those unable to find a compromise, the tribunal offers arbitration. A normal tribunal consists of twelve magi of Regent status or higher, though in time of emergency, as few as seven may constitute a legal body. Members of different regional tribunals are chosen by the ruling Councilor and are expected to represent a balance of the Tremere found within the territory where the dispute has occurred. Tribunals normally meet once per year to hear general cases. They are also called when disputes requiring prompt attention occur. The senior mage present assumes the role of Praeco, serving as the leader of the tribunal. He does not vote except to break ties.

Although the Oath of Tremere, sworn by all initiates coming into the clan, serves as the primary law of the Tremere and covers the basic responsibilities of a clan member, it is only one facet of clan law. Disputes falling outside the scope of the oath are decided by prior rulings found in the vast and often contradictory Peripheral Code: a collection of past tribunal rulings dating back centuries. From this complicated morass, the tribunals draw past precedents and interpret them in light of contemporary circumstances. Tribunals are free to make whatever ruling they see fit, always keeping in mind the future well-being of the clan. Although a Councilor has the power to overrule a tribunal decision, in practice, it is rarely done.

POLITICAL AND UNDERGROUND ORDERS

Existing within the clan are any number of internal orders. Some are fairly well-known to the Tremere and are fraternal or political organizations generally approved by the clan. Others are of a far more secret nature and only known well to their members.

Some Tremere wish to abolish all internal orders, arguing that they generate alliances that contribute to House disunity and, because of this, are forbidden by the Code. Others disagree. Over the years, there have only been minor efforts made to eliminate them. Some think the elders encourage these groups, or even instigate them to destabilize or distract dissatisfied factions within the clan.

Belonging to an internal order may provide a Tremere with political leverage and increased clan prestige, or possibly even access to new types of magic. Increased prestige is usually the result of secret machinations on the part of the order, providing members with opportunities to excel and/or gain notice. New magics are usually taught over a period of time, beginning with lesser rituals and spells. The more powerful variations are taught only after the member has proven himself. Because the spells are often unique, members of orders are careful not to cast them in the presence of others. If they must use them, then they try to disguise them as something else.



Of course, being a member of an internal order brings with it certain responsibilities and duties that are likely to pose problems at one time or another.

TRADITIONALISTS AND TRANSITIONALISTS

These two groups are the major political factions within the clan. The Traditionalists are more conservative and still practice the dark rituals the clan began many centuries ago. The Transitionalists are more liberal and support the use of new rituals and the elimination of many of the older, "less useful" ones. The Traditionalists oppose the elevation of any Tremere who does not follow the slow, plodding route up the pyramid, while the Transitionalists believe ingenuity and exceptional effort should be rewarded.

Although both orders are nominally secret, there are few Tremere who do not know who they are and what they believe. Prominent members of either party are well-known throughout the clan. Although they both make use of secret signs of recognition, these two parties operate fairly openly, forming voting blocs, canvassing supporters, etc. It is believed that as many as one-third of all Tremere have sworn allegiance to one party or the other.

Membership in either group increases clan prestige; strong allies are made, and equally strong rivalries are created. Although both parties' oaths of allegiance require lifetime membership, in practice, magi are allowed to quit either faction if they no longer support it. Unlike most internal orders, members are not necessarily barred from joining one of these two secret orders.

SECRET ORDERS

The remaining orders operate underground, and their membership, goals, methods and secrets are kept carefully guarded from the prying eyes and ears of outsiders. The existence of these various orders, however, are widely known, though their aims and goals are often misunderstood. Most Tremere apprentices will have heard of most or all of them at one time or another.

An apprentice or other magus interested in joining one of these groups only needs to let his interest be known to a few friends. Word travels fast, and the potential candidate is, at a later date, quietly contacted by a representative of the order. This magus carefully feels out the candidate, judging the apprentice's intent and personality before letting his true purpose be known and inviting the candidate to apply for membership.

Underground orders always require the initiate to swear an oath of allegiance—an eternal commitment to the order's goals—and almost all forbid membership in other underground orders. Despite these prohibitions, a good number of Tremere have managed to become members of more than one order. Penalties for breaking this restriction vary from case to case, but expulsion from the order is standard. Other penalties may be extracted later.

Most of these orders have a secret sign whereby one member may recognize another. Symbols are often chosen by orders and also used in this manner. Most are standard alchemical or occult images subtly altered and recognizable only by the initiated: a serpent that winks, a skull with a missing tooth, etc. These special symbols will be woven into clothing or modeled into jewelry in such a way as to make them unrecognizable to most Tremere who are not actually members of a particular order. Only those looking for a specific symbol are likely to find it.

All secret orders claim complete loyalty to the clan, though the orders themselves are often at odds with one another. Other than the particular philosophy and basic goals of the order, initiates typically know little about its actual membership, structure or operations. Operating in much the same manner as the Tremere clan itself, members are told only what they need to know to accomplish whatever task is placed before them. Promotion through the ranks will result in increasing knowledge of an order's internal workings.

BROTHERS OF THE ABSINTHE

The mystically inclined members of this order regularly partake of a green, drug-laced liquid that brings on a deep sleep while producing vivid, dream-like hallucinations. Some claim the Brothers make mystic voyages through other worlds; others say that they merely explore their inner selves. The Brothers themselves fail to see the difference.

Initiates are expected to experience the effects of the fluid—compounded of human blood and other secret additives—before they are considered fit for initiation into the order. Once a candidate has proven himself, he is ready for induction. An initiate imbibes a huge draught of the liquid and falls into a deep sleep often lasting as long as a week. During this time, the candidate suffers wild visions and, if lucky, a visitation from the secret masters of the order. These presences will present themselves to the candidate in his dream and impart certain secrets about the order. Upon awakening, the candidate must repeat this information to his contact. If he is able to prove that he was visited by the secret masters, he is initiated into the Brothers of the Absinthe. If not, he is rejected, and all contact with him is broken off.

It is rumored that the leaders of this order are addicted to the green liquid and spend almost all their time asleep and dreaming. They visit their followers in their dreams and direct their actions in this manner. The Brothers never meet or discuss their business physically—only in dreams. The motives of the masters are never made clear, and the apparent aims of the order seem to lurch from one extreme to the other.

The Brothers are believed to have refined a variety of clairvoyance and prophecy magicks. Some say the secret masters are even capable of manipulating events of the past and future.

THE GUARDIANS OF TRADITION

An extreme right wing faction of the Traditionalists, this order is dedicated to cleansing House Tremere of the computers and other high-tech devices currently relied upon by many magi.

Claiming that these machines make the mind lazy, the Guardians are sure that too heavy a reliance on these devices will weaken the clan, eventually bringing its doom.

They actively campaign against technological expansion and have been suspected of occasionally sabotaging equipment in an effort to prove their theories. In fact, a good many naturally-occurring breakdowns have been unfairly laid on the Guardians' doorstep. Regardless, it has been established that the Guardians are capable of conjuring spirits that, when released into a computer system, wreak havoc with data bases, inhabiting them and subtly altering data as the unsuspecting magus works, maliciously invalidating research and derailing projects.

There is even an extreme faction of this group, extremely racist and misogynistic in outlook, that opposes Embracing anyone who does not measure up to its twisted standards. While few members of the Guardians have much power, some fear that this super-elite is made up of Lords and one or two Pontifices.

ORDER OF THE NATURISTS

This order embraces druidic principles, claiming that even the Tremere are part of the great scheme of nature and must recognize their place within this scheme. They are said to worship, or at least revere, a sacred tree bough of inestimable age.

The rumored leader of this order is Lord over several chantries in the country of Ireland. Although this magus denies any connection with the order, it is known that he was among those who first looted the main covenant of House Diedne after it was destroyed in the Schism Wars of 1003-1012. This war was prosecuted by the allied Houses of Tremere and Flambeau, and it has since been rumored that the whole affair was instigated by the Tremere, who merely wanted to get their hands on specific information held by the Diedne. Though unproved, this knowledge supposedly led to the conversion of the Tremere to vampires.

Members of this order are believed to have knowledge of old druidic magics, including communicating with animals, creating swarms of locusts, and altering weather. They are said to have close contacts in the faerie world.

While they would seem to be outside the norm of Tremere magic, no one dares move against them. On two occasions when members have gotten in trouble, the Inner Council has pardoned them. Some whisper that the Naturists protect some great secret from ancient times, and others say that they hold the secret to all Tremere immortality.

HUMANUS LEAGUE

Ostensibly, this group is dedicated to close cooperation with the mundanes and even consideration for the goals and hopes of the human race. They speak of the need for humans in this world, and how it is the duty of vampires, and especially the Tremere, to manage them well.

Many say that the League's true aim is to discover a path that will eventually lead them back to full mortality. They are said to claim a kinship with the elusive St. Germain, an elusive figure who has cropped up all over Europe for the last several centuries.

He is thought by some to be an elder Tremere who has discovered a way to at least partially escape the curse of vampirism.

Initiates must prove their "love" for normal humans by demonstrating good deeds, lives saved, disasters avoided, etc. Some say that to become a member, one must swear off the drinking of human blood, feeding only from animals thereafter. Others claim that only higher levels within the League's hierarchy require such sacrifice.

The Humanus League is believed to have developed magics imparting a partial ability to withstand exposure to sunlight, as well as methods to aid in quelling the Hunger and subduing the Beast. In fact, at least a few members of the League have advocated the possibility of helping all other vampires to become mortals again, leaving the Tremere to rule the world unopposed.

CHILDREN OF THE PYRAMID

The Children of the Pyramid have carried the allegory of the Tremere pyramid to extremes. Revering the form almost as some would worship a god, they claim the Pyramid, highly respected for so long a time, has attained an actual spiritual reality. The Children tie personal spiritual achievement directly to one's standing within the Tremere pyramidal hierarchy. Followers preach a Puritan-like work ethic designed, they say, to help promote one's own interests, as well as the interests of the Tremere clan in general.

The Children hold great store in an ancient tome, *The Travels of Fedosa*, written long ago by a magus of the Order of Hermes. They interpret Fedosa's climb to a mountaintop as an allegory for attainment within the hierarchical pyramid. Initiates are expected to be able to quote freely from this book, and certain passages and events must be committed to memory. Passing this first test is essential to membership in the order. Once in the order, hard work is the only path to increasing one's station. If not involved working directly for the clan, one should contact one's superior within the order and be assigned a task. Those capable of finding and completing their own tasks are especially favored by the order. Initiates, once they have assured the order of their good intentions, are encouraged to seek out new members and enlist them to help the initiate perform tasks, thereby broadening the base of the order's pyramid and promoting oneself to the next level.

Specific magics known to this order are few. They prefer to work through normal channels to attain their goals. It is claimed that new members often receive better House tasks and assignments, allowing for faster gains in prestige and rank. Few doubt that clan leaders promote this society, but its membership seems limited to apprentices and Regents.

ILLUMINATED BROTHERHOOD

Sometimes called Seekers, the members of this order believe in an ancient legend about those called "the Old Ones." These Old Ones are supposed to have been ancient beings of immense power, last known to our world as the gods of ancient Egypt and Greece. The Brotherhood believes these Old Ones will someday

return to rule the world, though they may require the aid of some of their followers.

Most disbelieve the claims of this order, claiming instead that they are thinly-disguised followers of those who would hope to profit from the approaching Gehenna. Some even say they are traitors to House Tremere and the Masquerade who intend to sell out both of them out when the time is right. These accusers point to ties between the Brotherhood and the Arcanum, and at least one member of the Brotherhood used to be part of the Arcanum.

THE GOLDEN PATH OF HARMONY

This order seeks to quell strife within the clan. Members, discovering disputes, are expected to act as arbitrators, finding compromises and soothing ruffled feathers. They are a somewhat innocuous group that preaches a belief in brotherhood and cooperation. Members are supposedly chosen for their cool heads and disinterested attitudes.

The worst rumors claim the order is a front for spies and recruiters from House Goratrix, although there is no real evidence to support such a charge. Some go so far as to say that this order practices magics that subtly control the emotions of others, and that over a long period of time, their spells can actually be used to turn someone against the House and the Masquerade.

THE ELITE

This organization is tightly-knit and very secretive. They believe completely in the superiority of the Tremere vampire clan and are convinced that the other clans plot to destroy them. Their distaste for vampires of other bloodlines is on a level with the worst human racism. They annually celebrate the destruction of the Salubri elder under the fangs of the magus, Tremere, and promote the idea that other clans should be dealt with in a similar way.

Following direction from the mysterious heads of the order, members secretly work against the goals of other vampires, exposing them, uncovering their lairs, and feeding information to the Inquisition and other vampire hunters. It is said that the order operates secret gangs of vampire hunters who actually discover and destroy vampires of the Camarilla. This is, of course, denied, and defenders of the order are quick to point out that even if this were true, the further rumors of diablerie would be totally out of the question.

The Elite are believed to have secretly developed a number of magicks to aid them in hunting down and destroying other vampires, including medallions that can track sleeping vampires and specially prepared stakes capable of killing. They also still have ties to the Inquisition and often use the Church against their foes, even those within the clan.

THE ASTORS

Supposedly set in motion by the Inner Council, this ultra-secret group is believed to be charged with the responsibility of ferreting out traitors and spies within the clan. Like an Inquisition, they operate free from the restrictions of tribunals and other legal apparatus, answering only to Tremere and the Inner Coun-



cil. The Astors have the right to convene secret "Astor Councils" where they exercise the right to summarily hold trials and execute offenders as they see fit. Those found guilty of major crimes are sent to Vienna to await appearance before the Inner Council.

The Inquisition recruits its members from the Tremere ranks, choosing only those that seem fit to shoulder this great responsibility. Absolute secrecy is required, and a member is expected to be able to answer summons to Astor Councils without revealing his activities to anyone.

EYE OF THE SERPENT

This order is one of the more secretive societies, and only the vaguest rumors are spoken about it. Followers supposedly revere the form of the serpent, which they regard as a symbol of wisdom. Their secret symbol is a serpent swallowing its own tail. Stories are told about initiates swallowing living snakes to become members of the order. Dark rumors connecting them with the Followers of Set are vehemently denied by their few defenders.

Although little is known of this order, it is believed they have developed a great many rituals involving snakes and snake-like abilities. Adepts are supposedly able to freeze an opponent motionless with their gaze; others can conjure fountains of poisonous serpents from the ground.

ORDER OF THE WYRM

This order holds apocalyptic beliefs interpreted from the *Book of Nod* using an ancient manuscript they are said to possess. This manuscript, written in medieval Arabic, is titled *Al-Azif* and is believed to be the product of an mad prophet and poet named "Abd al-Azrad." His book postulates a belief in a universe more vast than most have ever guessed. As a mendicant, al-Azrad supposedly spent years wandering deserts and ancient ruins in search of the secrets his book reveals. It is thought that, while in Yemen, he discovered the tomb of a sleeping elder and was embraced there. In any event, he soon after returned to Baghdad, where, by the light of the moon, he wrote his massive tome. He later disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Although loyal to the clan, the Order of the Wyrms fears that the sleeping Tremere has been "replaced" by something else—something other than Kindred, something far more powerful. Believing that this is the sign of approaching Gehenna, they preach that one should start paying obeisance to the Wyrms now or prepare to face a doom beyond imagining.

It is believed that the Brothers have, through the agency of the *Al-Azif*, gained access to new worlds formerly unknown to the clan. From these worlds, they have been able to call and command a new host of demons and devils, most with names that are nearly unpronounceable.

THE ORDER OF QUAESITORI

Some believe that the Quaesitori were banned by the Inner Council and are now living as outlaws; it has not been established whether the Quaesitori actually exist or are only a rumor.



They act as independent judges and executioners, eliminating Tremere magi their superiors have judged unfit to hold their positions. They are viewed as a supreme danger to the House, and all efforts have been made to remove them.

This Order traces its descent from the Quaesitori of the old Order of Hermes. Formerly the interpreters of the clan codes and laws, their presence was once required at all tribunals. The original Quaesitori were members of a specific house, but with the fall of the Order and subsequent rise of the vampiric Tremere, some of the Quaesitori were subsumed into their organization.

An initiate pledges a special Quaesitor Code binding him to the Order and promises that he will always perform his functions in the best tradition of the Quaesitori, upholding the ancient Code of Hermes, which they presume takes precedence over the Code of Tremere. Joining the Order of Quaesitori is a decision for life, and membership in any other internal order is strictly forbidden. Violation of any of the Order's principles usually results in a death sentence judged against the offender.

All sorts of rumors fly concerning the Quaesitori, including worries about mage infiltration, Inconnu pawns and more. Operating above and outside the law of the Tremere, any suspected Quaesitor is immediately sent to Vienna for a hearing before the Inner Council.

MINIONS OF THE TREMERE

Small in number, and trusted by no one, the Tremere have found it necessary to provide themselves with artificial guardians, slaves and servants. The Gargoyles created in the Middle Ages are only one example of Tremere handwork.

GARGOYLES

Gargoyles were originally created to serve as guardians of Tremere chantries, and they served their function admirably for many centuries. The first Gargoyle was really an artificially created vampire. An alchemical blend of Teimisce and Nosferatu yielded the first of these monstrous creatures. Told to "go forth and multiply," the Gargoyle began feeding on villagers, creating more Gargoyles to help guard the Tremere. The newly-made Gargoyles forgot their past lives as humans, falling wholly into line with the dog-like loyalty shown to the Tremere by the other Gargoyles.

After centuries, however, the Gargoyles began exhibiting signs of a growing consciousness. Some say this was a result of the unrelentingly harsh treatment shown to them by their masters. Knowing that they would have an element of surprise, they waited for an opportunity to strike back. The first rebellion against a Tremere chantry left nearly all the magi dead or gravely wounded. Like wildfire, a general Gargoyle uprising resulted in the deaths of many vampires, Tremere and Gargoyles alike. The surviving Gargoyles, hopelessly outmatched by their former

masters, fled to the mountains in packs, or hid out singly in large cities such as Paris or Hamburg. Many rumors have been told about the Gargoyles' activities since that time, not the least of which is the claim that they have learned how to reproduce naturally by means of egg-laying.

A number of Gargoyles have adapted to life with other vampires, often serving as guards, or "muscle," for the Tremere, Camarilla and Sabbat.

HOMUNCULI

Long a favored companion of wizards, the Tremere homunculus requires a sacrifice of blood and flesh to make its creation successful. The magus must add a small portion of his body to the alchemical mixture, usually a finger, to create this small monster. The wound is daubed with a swab dipped in the mixture, preventing the lost digit from ever regenerating.

Homunculi resemble small animals of various types. Made from the very flesh of the magus, they are bound to their masters by feelings of blood relationship. Homunculi are vampiric, but must feed from their masters, usually through a nipple that is punctured and sucked. Homunculi prefer to stay close to their masters and usually sleep with them, during which time they usually feed.

Mischievous and simple-minded, homunculi often serve as little more than a distraction, roaming the laboratories of a magus. Their curiosity and cunning create a never-ending series of problems. Still, most magi feel a kinship toward these small offspring and tolerate them as best they can.

Although only semi-intelligent, homunculi make good messengers and spies. They report back to their masters, squeaking an incomprehensible gibberish into the magus's ear in a language only the magus can understand. The magus shares an empathic relationship with the homunculi and can sense when it is in danger, or if it is injured or killed. The magus can not normally see or hear what his homunculus senses, although it is rumored that certain magicks render this a possibility.

There are notable differences between these homunculi and those resulting from the seventh-level Protean Discipline of the same name. When a homunculus created by a Tremere dies, its master suffers two levels of aggravated damage. Although the types of homunculi are infinitely varied, depending upon the magus's desires, there are four types most commonly used.

THE FLYER

A flyer is a small, anthropomorphic, winged creature with reptilian skin and a demonic visage. Some resemble the larger Gargoyles in this respect. They are quick and nimble, moving like monkeys, and can inflict a nasty bite. Some are rumored to be venomous.

THE SLUG

Slugs are legless and worm-like, usually anywhere from one to two feet long and covered in pale, translucent white skin. Although slow, they are nearly silent, capable of burrowing



through all but the hardest soil. Slugs make excellent spies. The head of the creature usually resembles the face of the magus who created it.

THE HOPPER

These tiny homunculi are usually no larger than a large mouse or small rat. Equipped with large, staring eyes and opposable thumbs, these fur-covered creatures resemble long-fanged tarsiers or marmosets. Again, the face of a hopper often resembles that of its maker.

THE DEMON-BOUND

Demon-bound are created by fusing a malignant spirit—or “demon”—into the body of a normal human. The host body must be first rid of its human soul, which is normally driven out by slow torture. This process, incidentally, also creates a more enticing “home” for the spirit. The spirit must be called, then lured into the corpse, at which time the magus must quickly seal the host body with magical signs. Once sealed in the corpse, the spirit remains within until freed by the magus, or until the corpse is inadvertently destroyed.

A demon-bound corpse at first appears human, but the skin is too smooth, too glowing, and far too warm to the touch. The eyes are the most startling: two glowing orange orbs, lacking both pupil and iris.

Demon-bound are used as servants, slaves and guardians. Although they never speak, they are capable of following even complex directions. Behind their impassive faces, there lurks a great intelligence—or consciousness. Three or four times as strong as humans, they can accomplish tasks so demanding that frail human bodies can be damaged or destroyed. Some are crushed by the very weight the demon-bound is capable of lifting.

The most common demise is by fire. Demon-bound corpses are normally quite warm, several degrees higher than normal human temperature. This heat increases with their activity and, if the creature is not allowed to periodically rest and cool down, the body eventually reaches a degree of heat where the very corpse containing the demon begins to boil, then smolder, while the interior is reduced to ashes by incineration. Final combustion of a demon-bound can set fire to anyone or anything nearby. Such an event, or any massive damage inflicted upon the corpse containing such a spirit, allows the spirit to escape.

Although the spirits seem to desire their freedom, they have never been known to purposely destroy a corpse in an effort to escape. The thought process of these creatures are probably not sufficient to foresee such possibilities.

CORPSE MINIONS

More than mere zombies, corpse minions are humans resurrected after death. Although further decay and disintegration is magically suspended by the same rites that invoke these unfortunate souls, they are usually frail and therefore unsuitable as guards. Most serve as assistants, slaves or servants.

The corpse minion retains most of the memories from its human existence, and most of its reasoning power as well, but their willpower is totally lacking. Despite what seems to be an agonized existence, few seem to find the urge to destroy themselves. Perhaps they realize that their masters would most likely find a way to bring them back once more.

Not all serve merely as servants. Many professors, scholars and others have been resurrected by Tremere and used as laboratory assistants. Although they lack the willpower that would allow them to initiate any ideas of their own, they are capable of carrying out complex experiments and routine research. Many serve as walking libraries of information gathered from years of specialized research. It is said that some of the oldest and most powerful of Tremere possess the remains of ancient scholars and others. Sometimes these remains are no more than skulls and bone fragments imprisoning living souls. The souls spend their existence sealed in moldering caskets and dark urns, only occasionally visited by a magus in search of an answer to a specific question.

THAUMATURGY

THE PATHS

Unique among the vampiric Disciplines, Thaumaturgy mixes ancient magics with the incredible potency of vampiric blood. While the Paths this amalgamation can take are almost without end, this unholy combination places severe restrictions on the power of any one Path.

Blood magic illustrates the nature of Thaumaturgy, and it is the first Path all Tremere learn. Indeed, it is so basic that most Tremere stop thinking of it as a separate Path and regard it as the essence of the Discipline. The five levels include powers of perception, the ability to manipulate others and one's self, techniques of stealing blood, and methods of attack. Some apprentices have noted that this is the Tremere doctrine for defeating a foe. This strategy consists of spying, taking advantage of the enemy's weaknesses as well as one's own strengths, using the enemy's strength against him, and then launching the attack.

Of course, not all Paths follow this format, but younger Tremere like to fantasize that when they have learned all the powers of all the Paths (as they imagine their elders have), they will uncover the very essence of power. Until they reach that point, they plod along, studying and practicing for years before advancing the least little bit.

What these neonates do not realize is that the number of Paths is not fixed. New ones can be developed and expanded for





all eternity. The most common ones are the Lure of Flames, Movement of Mind, Weather Control, Path of Conjuring, Neptune's Might, Spirit Thaumaturgy, Elemental Mastery and Corruption. Others exist, and more will be invented.

Each level of a Path increases the magnitude of power a great deal. Thus, while one level of Weather Control only allows its owner to summon up fog, four levels would allow her to call up a full-fledged thunderstorm. Each Path is limited to five levels. More extreme results, such as using Weather Control to summon a hurricane, would require the use of rituals.

Some Tremere have theorized that this limit is linked to the source of their magic. Thus, while mages use the magical nature of reality manifested in Quintessence to work their rites, vampires get their power wholly from within themselves. Rituals simulate that tie to the universe, however, and vampires cannot work the most powerful spells without them.

More knowledgeable Tremere have also suggested that this means vampires avoid the problems associated with "magick." Since they do not require the external ties that mages have, they avoid the paradoxes mages sometimes create when they warp reality. In the words of the mages, vampires carry their own reality around with them and are not bound by anyone else's limits.

NEW PATHS

Storytellers should feel free to allow characters to create new Paths, but only if they devote most of their time and energy to these efforts. A good rule of thumb is to require that the character have at least Thaumaturgy Five, spend 10 experience points for the first level of the new Path and then spend (current level x 5) for each level as they progress.

Each Path should have a consistent theme, and Storytellers should not allow the character to develop a hodge-podge of powers. For instance, should a character decide to create the Path of Magical Resistance, the first level might increase the difficulty for those who use magic against him by one. The fifth level, however, might allow the character to spend Blood Points to nullify another vampire's Discipline or a particular sphere of a mage.

Storytellers should never feel forced to let a character develop a new Path and should always be ready to make one a double-edged sword. For instance, the Path of Magical Resistance might prevent another character from being able to Telepathically communicate, blocking out critical pieces of information.

RITUALS

Vampires get around the limits of Thaumaturgy through rituals, which allow them to do almost anything they can imagine. While vampires have separate levels for each Path and are limited by their overall score in Thaumaturgy, their rituals are only limited by their overall Thaumaturgy score.

Thus, when a seventh-generation Tremere buys his sixth level of Thaumaturgy, he can still only learn five levels of any Path, but can cast sixth-level rituals. Members of the clan have developed a huge number of rituals through the years, and characters can create still more.

While many of these rituals have been exceptionally focused, useful only in very specific situations, others have found more general uses. There is no experience cost for rituals, and characters could theoretically learn an infinite number. The only limits are those set by the Storyteller, and she can set entire stories around the quest for a new ritual.

Keep in mind, however, that rituals do take time to learn. As a rule of thumb, a level one ritual can be learned in one week, a level two ritual can be learned in one month, and a level three ritual will require about three months (approximately the length of a season). A fourth level ritual usually takes about half a year to learn, and a fifth level ritual will take at least a year. Storytellers may feel free to adjust this, taking into account such factors as the intelligence of the magus, his dedication in training and the quality of instruction he receives. Learning rituals from a book is also harder than learning from a teacher.

If characters want to develop their own rituals, the Storyteller should set strict limits on what they can or cannot do. First of all, she might insist that the character have a Thaumaturgy of four and knowledge of at least three Paths. Additionally, the character must have an Occult Knowledge of five and, depending on the ritual, Alchemy, Astrology or a specific Lore.

The *Vampire Players Guide* and this book can give the Storyteller an idea of what sort of rituals can be created at each level, but there are other factors to keep in mind. First of all, the Storyteller can put limits on other aspects of the ritual besides its power. For instance, it could require a certain alignment of the planets, a rare or dangerous ingredient or the willingness of its target.

Even more enjoyable are rituals which cause their caster severe wounds or an expenditure of blood or Willpower. Also, remember that especially foul rituals can cause their casters to lose Humanity—especially when the ritual to have the earth swallow a group of Inquisitors requires the life blood of an innocent.

Finally, the Storyteller should use rolls to control what the character can do with a ritual. While most rituals go off automatically once the vampire has fulfilled the necessary conditions, a Storyteller is certainly within her rights to have the character make an Intelligence + Occult or similar roll first.

While the ritual may not require a roll, its effects may. For instance, if the ritual allowed the character to identify mummies, he might have to roll Perception + Mummy Lore (difficulty 7) every time he tried to do so.

TREMERE RITUALS

LEVEL ONE

SCENT OF THE GAROU'S PASSING

By sniffing a strange herbal mixture containing milkweed, wolfsbane and some other more noisome materials, a Kindred can detect the presence of a Garou by smell on a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty of the werewolf's Willpower). The thaumaturgist must actually be able to smell the werewolf in question, and three successes are required to identify a particular Garou. This ritual lasts for one scene.

LEVEL TWO

THE OPEN PASSAGE

By spending a point of blood and taking an hour to trace an intricate pattern, the vampire can cause a barrier to become insubstantial. This will allow anyone to pass through it during the next turn without affecting the individual or the barrier. For instance, if a character cast Open Passage on a cell wall, she (and anyone else) would be able to walk through the wall for the next turn, but the wall would still retain its ability to hold up the ceiling, as well as any posters taped to it, and it would continue to look like a normal wall.

LEVEL THREE

RUTOR'S HANDS

An ancient Tremere ritual, Rutor's Hands, requires that a vampire cut off one of his own hands and pluck out one of his eyes. This causes five levels of aggravated damage, though these can be healed normally. He then works the ritual, which will animate the hand, allowing it to move about and serve its owner. The eye rests on the back of the hand, and provides both sight and hearing. The hand makes a useful spy or messenger, and a magus can create as many of these as he likes (as long as he regenerates his hands and eyes). Each one must absorb a point of blood each week, although it does not matter where this blood comes from.

LEVEL FOUR

SOUL OF THE HOMUNCULI

Magi find that there are few they can trust, and their homunculi often make up the heart of this group. A homunculus is more than just an animation doing the vampire's bidding. It is an extension of the vampire, much like his arms and legs. It bears

her physical features and does her bidding as though she herself were inhabiting the tiny form. A homunculus takes weeks, if not months, to create, and requires an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty of at least 8). There are many different kinds of homunculi, and Storytellers can require characters learn a separate ritual for each version. Homunculi are further described earlier in this chapter.

LEVEL FIVE

UMBRAL WALK

There are innumerable planes of existence. The astral plane, where creatures with astral projection walk, is known to many Kindred. Tremere have also learned to enter a land of eternal night, known as the Umbra, although this is hardly a safe place for them. Entering the Umbra requires the sacrifice of an intelligent being. The success of the vampire's ritual also depends on the magnitude of the being's supernatural power. The vampire can also bring others into the Umbra, though each person brought along requires a separate sacrifice. The Tremere appears in the Umbra naked, though any magical items she may have come along. For more information on the Umbra, see **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**.

TREMERE AND THE WORLD

THE MUNDANES

The one reliable means of maintaining temporal power. They are tools in our hands, the flesh of our spirit. We are their keepers and their lords. Treat them as you would treat prize livestock.

THE ARCANUM

Generally harmless, if fed the proper information, they always perform as we would wish them to perform. They have sources of information not available to us which, with their cooperation, could be of value to us. Rumors that they have a deep, mysterious knowledge we fear are not true, and we will deal with those who spread such lies!

THE INQUISITION

Dangerous fanatics who fear knowledge and achievement. Their methods are sometimes effective, but they are far too crude and obvious to pose us any serious threat. Lead them astray with false trails and minor rewards.

THE CAMARILLA

A blessing bestowed on the Kindred by the wisest among us.

Within the Masquerade, we can all achieve our own ends and live in peace.

THE INCONNUI

That shadowy group of Kindred who pose behind the falsehood of a spiritual quest in order to disguise age-old schemes of dominance. Trust not their words or their deeds. They would destroy us, if they had the means.

THE SABBAT

We have always stood against them. They would destroy the rest of the Kindred, overthrowing the Masquerade in their mad quest for irresponsible dominance. Listen to their enticements, but report them immediately to your superior.

THE CLANS

ASSAMITES

Followers of a code, and trustworthy to that degree, although they are blind to other possibilities and impossible to deter from a set course. Handle only with caution; they are quick to anger and difficult to appease. They have special reasons to hate us and are more likely to take contracts against us than work for us.

ANTI-RITUALS

The anarchs and Tremere have been at odds since the beginnings of both groups. Many anarchs refuse to have anything to do with Thaumaturgy due to its ties with the Warlocks. They have instead created the anti-rituals, designed to leech power from the Tremere through ridicule and disdain. The following is a sample of their work, excerpted from the secretly published **Grand Compendium of Discordian Regurgitals** by Omar Khayam Ravenhurst.

WONDERFUL WANDS

Next you will want a magic wand. These can be made cheaply from such ordinary items as pea shooters, cattle prods and curtain rods.

Curtain rods are particularly potent. Lee Harvey Oswald took a package of them to work on the morning of November 22, 1963. During his lunch break, he produced the famous magic bullet, which killed John Kennedy, wounded John Connally, promoted Lyndon Johnson, made a liar out of Earl Warren and, most unfortunately, brought Jim Garrison to Oliver Stone's attention. After all that, the slug still remains in pristine condition, so that it can, if necessary, be used again.

And cynics say the age of miracles is over.

All magic wands utilize the power concealed in rods. Point the right kind of rod at your neighborhood banker and he will give you money.

But the notion that wands are surrogate penises is a phallacy.

BRUJAH

Rebellion is a manifestation of the spirit of change, but all change leads back to the beginning. Provide them with challenges to test their prowess and other pointless tasks in order to keep them busy. They are easily neutralized.

FOLLOWERS OF SET

A dark sect based on the faulty premises of a forgotten religion. No matter how much they claim otherwise, they have not infiltrated us and made the entire clan their pawns. The reverse is closer to the truth.

GANGREL

Admire their independent strength, but never trust their motives. They stand for disorder and all that we are against. Promise them anything, but give them nothing.

GIOVANNI

Potentially our worst enemy. All Tremere should devote themselves to the eventual elimination of these degenerate and incestuous creatures. The Giovanni and their undead magics constitute a veritable crime against nature and the Camarilla.

MALKAVIAN

At times entertaining, but generally disruptive. Reverse psychology is most effective with members of this clan, but they are quick to reverse their own. Be on guard against the pitfalls of indiscriminately applied logic, and beware the feint within a feint.

NOSFERATU

Do not allow appearances to deceive. These deep thinkers harbor knowledge that may be of use to us, or may be used against us. Rewarded properly, they make good agents.

RAVNOS

Although independent and unpredictable, as groups or individuals they are easily manipulated. Allow them the freedom to choose to do what you want them to do. The more powerful ones seem to take a special pleasure in annoying us, but even they are but gnats around a tiger.

SALUBRI

Destroy any you encounter.

TOREADOR

Flattery and respect is all that is needed to please the Toreador. Compliment all of them, and leave them to argue about who was complimented most.

VENTRUE

The Ventrue are in favor of order, as we ourselves are. They desire control, so give it to them, but reserve the real power for ourselves.

PRINCES

Those who strive to gain the good graces of a prince are accustomed to come before one bearing such things as he holds most precious, or in those things which bring him the most delight. Honor and obey them, for they rule where we do not.

ANARCHS

Those misguided ones who seek to tear down the only existence this world offers them. Convert those who would listen to the voice of reason, and slay those who refuse.

FAERIES

Keep a safe distance from such creatures, and never trust them. They are of use to us, but extremely unpredictable.

GHOSTS

Easily manipulated, if properly handled. Those known as wraiths are considered the most dangerous and intractable; approach them with caution.

LUPINES

The true manifestation of the Beast in all its horror. They are committed to our destruction. They must be eliminated as the body eliminates a disease. Disregard their conceit that they understand the spirit realms better than we do.

MAGI

Descendants of the ancient and now disbanded Order of Hermes. Given the chance to join and stand with us, they chose expulsion. They are untrustworthy, and many stand firmly against us. Some might be of value, if recruited into our ranks.

THE BLOOD BOND

Although a useful tool for building unity within the other Kindred clans, it is expressly forbidden among ourselves. We are to demonstrate our superiority by showing united allegiance to an ideal, rather than by being physically and emotionally bound to one another by ties of blood.

GOLCONDA

A fabrication of the sinister Inconnu, and nothing more.

NEXUS

Quote: "They're heere..."

Prelude: The problems began when you were 14 years old. First it was small things: pictures that inexplicably tilted on the wall, doors that would swing open and refuse to stay shut. Then it got worse. Objects floated about the room, and objects were swept from tables with such force they smashed against the walls. These events terrified you, and they often grew in intensity, as though matching your mounting fear.

Your parents tried everything, to no avail, and after they were forced to surrender, they got in touch with a "parapsychologist" referred to them through a friend at work. He arrived at your house one night, a powerful but reassuring presence, carrying a handbag full of odd instruments and tools. Although he spent a good deal of time exploring the house, testing various walls and floors with his equipment, he also spent a large portion of his time talking with different members of the family—and, in particular, you. Although he visited a few more times, the suspected poltergeist would not manifest in his presence until he confessed to you how disappointed he was that he'd never heard any actual evidence of the entity. He was in-

stantly rewarded by a spectral tapping from within a nearby china cabinet. He looked up at you and smiled broadly.

On his next visit, he carried you away. You remember seeing your parents for the last time, sitting frozen on the living room couch, entranced and unaware of your abduction. Your face appeared on some milk cartons three weeks later, but no trace of you or your kidnapper was ever found.

Concept: You were recruited by the Tremere because of the "poltergeist" activity in your house, generally believed to be the spontaneous and unconscious generation of telekinetic effects by an innocent and unwitting individual. The phenomenon is most often connected with the presence of young teenage girls, a rare type among the Tremere vampires.

Roleplaying Tips: Although you find much you like about your unlife within the Tremere clan, you also harbor resentment about being taken away from your family at such an early age. You feel as though you missed out on a lot of important years in your life and desperately wish that you had been given the chance to attain full adult size and form before being recruited. Your magical research endlessly explores the possibility of artificially inducing the maturation process in yourself.

Equipment: Plaid frock, tennis shoes, backpack, diary.



APPENDIX: THE TREMERE HIERARCHY

But the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

— The King James Bible, Revelations 21:8

Unlike many or most clans, clan members and outsiders alike know the identities and locations of the Tremere leaders. The rigid structure of the clan makes such identification possible. The leaders hide in chantries that are difficult to move, and their general whereabouts are common knowledge among those under them.

When the initial reorganization of the House began—shortly after the transformation of Tremere and his seven followers into vampires—each of the seven was given a certain geographic realm as a responsibility. Once established in their Realms, they were expected to carefully spread vampirism throughout House Tremere, while at the same time hiding their true natures from the general populace and other magi. Originally, Europe was the primary concern, and Realms were small, but with the discovery of the New World, the need for a reapportioning became obvious. The Inner Councilors were given huge geographic areas to develop—entire continents at times—and the rank of Pontifex was created to fill the subsequent void. Since then, this structure has remained in place.

TREMERE

Head of the clan and the House, Tremere reportedly spends most of his time in torpor, awakening occasionally to issue orders or silently roam the corridors of the ancient Vienna chantry. Tall, dark-browed and foreboding, it is said that no move is made within Tremere's clan without his fearsome undead knowing about it. His interwoven system of spies and agents, who report to him through the chain of command, is said to be implemented by clairvoyant spells cast by the magus before he slips into torpor. Others say he uses magic to see and hear through the eyes and ears of his seven Inner Councilors. Others think that he physically possesses their bodies, impersonating the Councilors and acting in their stead. The worst rumors, of course, state that the vampire Tremere has somehow changed into something entirely different.

ETRIUS

Of Swedish descent, Etrius is one of Tremere's most loyal followers, and was an apprentice of the magus in the earliest days of the Order of Hermes. As one of the seven Inner Councilors, his territory now covers most of Eastern Europe. He dwells in the Vienna chantry where he is held responsible for the safekeeping of the often unconscious leader of the clan, Tremere himself.

As a long-standing loyal advisor to Tremere, Etrius feared the possible results of Goratrix's experiment the most, and he advised Tremere against it in the strongest of terms. Failing to sway his mentor, Etrius willingly accompanied Tremere to the chantry and, along with the others, imbibed the mixture. Etrius's loyalty continues, despite the loathing and terror he experiences as a vampire.

Perhaps Etrius's greatest accomplishment was his hand in establishing the Camarilla. He was the Tremere representative to the earliest councils on the subject and, advised by Meerlinda, helped draft the original Code.

Etrius has a long-standing rivalry with Goratrix, now a member of the Sabbat. Both were early favorites of Tremere (when he was still human), and both competed for his attention. Goratrix was the more daring of the two, always ready to take a risk, while Etrius was always the more cautious. Similar to their disagreement over the wisdom of attempting Goratrix's immortality experiment, they argued opposing sides when Tremere began contemplating the diablerie that was to climax in the death of Saulor, founder of the Salubri line. Etrius had advised against it, and worries about the fact to this day.



GRIMGROTH

The morose Grimgroth is responsible for most of Western Europe, including the British Isles and Australia. Not an original Councilor, he was named to replace the renegade Goratrix after the Templars incident. His original Realm was France and the surrounding territories, but this was expanded to all of Western Europe when the New World was opened.

He seems a loyal, if somewhat pedantic, follower. Seemingly dissatisfied and restless, he has made of habit of moving his chantry comparatively often, as frequently as every century or so. His current chantry is in Rome.

Although he appears to display unquestionable loyalty, a rumor is spreading that one of the magi harbored in his Rome chantry is the secret leader of the banned and outlawed Order of Quaesitori. Of course, those who spread this rumor are the same ones who say Grimgroth met with Goratrix several times before the latter joined the Sabbat.



MEERLINDA

Meerlinda is a member of Tremere's original Inner Circle, and she shared the experience of unexpected transformation into a vampire in the basement of Goratrix's chantry. Appearing as an attractive, mature woman in her late thirties, she is one of the more sober and level-headed of the Councilors, often acting as a mediator in internal disputes, especially during the frequent conflicts that arose between Errius and Goratrix. She was also instrumental in the early formation of the Camarilla, though most of her efforts were disguised as the ideas of Errius. The wiser observers among the Kindred recognize the intelligence lying behind her placid exterior.

She was originally in charge of the British Isles, but her duties were drastically altered when Tremere, at the time of the great reapportionment, placed her in charge of the raw and undeveloped North American continent. Although it was first thought of as a bad assignment, she has since taken the opportunity to help develop this continent to its current state. To everyone's surprise, she has come to wield an immense amount of power.

Her critics had hoped to make use of several failures the Tremere have suffered in New England to bring her down, but despite the destruction of the Boston chantry years ago, Meerlinda retains her influence. Meerlinda has also been the member of the Inner Circle most likely to support renegade Tremere, and more than once, she has used such outcasts to further her own plans.

XAVIER DE CINCO

At the same time Meerlinda was reassigned from Britain to North America, Xavier was removed from his Spanish headquarters in Barcelona to take control of the South American continent, as well as Mexico to the north and the Caribbean to the northeast.

His achievements since that time, though not without merit, pale in comparison to what Meerlinda has accomplished in the North, and his envy is strong. The Followers of Set and the Sabbat have given him trouble all along, but not as much as the dark force that lurks somewhere deep in the Amazon Rain Forest. Although it has never been seen or identified, Xavier is sure it is there and that it is watching him. The present wholesale burning of these rain forests is partly due to Xavier's desire to root out this unwholesome force.

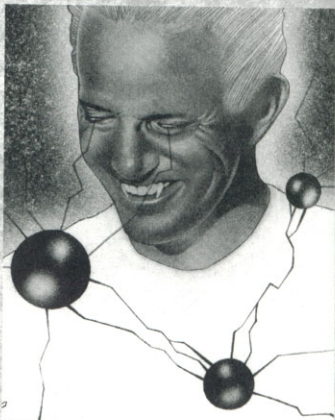
A number of unusual groups have aided Xavier in this endeavor and others. Xavier may well have more ties to non-vampiric groups than any other Tremere. He has allies among the shapeshifters, the fey and, some say, the mages. Indicators of his influence have been found in plots which have nothing to do with the Americas, and some Tremere have whispered doubts about his loyalty.



ABETORIUS

Abetorius was part of a plan to bring Tremere influence to the great and unknown continent of Asia. Abetorius was to establish himself gradually from the west while his counterpart in the Far East worked his way from the other direction. Abetorius's mission must be judged a failure. After making some initial inroads, following the same paths as the Crusaders of the past, Abetorius's chantries were wiped out when the Assamites poured down from the mountains, butchering the Tremere and indulging in diablerie.

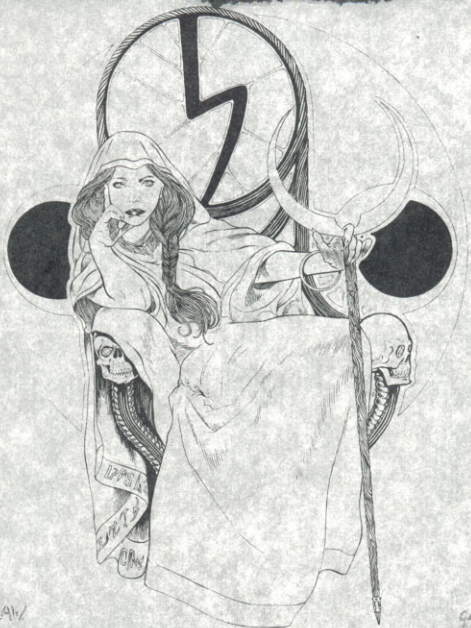
Abetorius and his closest followers were forced to flee to Constantinople, where they dwell to this day. While they were instrumental in what they call Tremere's Revenge—making the Assamites unable to drink Kindred vitae—they have made no further substantial efforts to affect the clan's goals. Of course, no one believes the rumors that someone more powerful has forced the Tremere or Abetorius to back down, but everyone wonders how Abetorius has managed to remain on the Inner Council despite his failures.



THOMAS WYNCHAM

Wyncham, a Britisher by birth, is responsible for the Far Asian Realm, the other half of the pincer plan implemented by the Tremere centuries ago. Although measurably more successful than Abetorius's attempts, results fell far short of expectations—though no one is really sure what the results have been.

Wyncham is actually the second Councilor in this position, the original having been assassinated by unknown assailants more than a century ago. Wyncham was chosen, in part, because of the heavy British presence then controlling the area. While making his home in Hong Kong, Wyncham spends most of his time "in-country" and probably knows more about the mysterious Eastern vampires than anyone else. What he knows, however, is anyone's guess.



ELAINE DE CALINOT

This 15th century French noblewoman controls Africa, and has had both miraculous successes and incredible failures. Established at the same time as the Near and Far Asian Realms, it was thought that the Tremere could begin at the northern, more civilized portion of the continent and gradually work their way south, initially along the coasts and later into the interior. Early chantries provided limited success, but with the arrival of the bloodthirsty Assamites, most advantages the Tremere had gained were lost. Nineteenth century colonization by Europe offered a second opportunity.

The Tremere have continued to fail when they relied upon European members of the clan. Elaine's main innovation was the

extremely controversial Embracing of natives who showed magical power. This plan has shown promise, but now appears threatened by a new occurrence.

Elaine de Calinot lives a precarious existence in a chantry in Algiers, but efforts to contact her in recent weeks have failed. She is not the first Councilor of Africa to have disappeared in a mysterious manner. Her two predecessors, both male, vanished under similar conditions. Unsubstantiated rumors say the former Councilors, for some reason, lost possession of their senses and now roam the jungles and deserts of the continent taking their prey like wild animals. Those few who know of these disappearances believe the old Councilors to be destroyed.



GORATRIX

This Sabbat Tremere was once part of the Inner Circle of Seven and a most ardent follower of Tremere. Named to administer the territory of France, he fell to temptation when he infiltrated the Church. Although disputed, some believe that by this time Goratrix had already made first contact with the early leaders of the Sabbat.

Appearing before the Council for a hearing, Goratrix panicked and fled. He later collaborated with the now active and visible Sabbat operating in Eastern Europe. Rumor has it that he has become an influential member of the sect and is steadily generating his own network of chantries under a new name: House Goratrix.

ST. GERMAIN

Little is known about the enigmatic Comte de St. Germain, though there are many theories. He was a mysterious figure who suddenly cropped up in Vienna in 1740. At times, he was known as the Count Rakoczi, exiled from his native Transylvania, while at other times he masqueraded as the illegitimate offspring of a union between the promiscuous Queen of Spain and a famed tenor, Mateucci. Some members of the clan believe that he is one of the original Inner Circle Councilors now turned *antiribu*. Others think he is a free agent working directly for Tremere. A few believe that he is something other than a Tremere vampire, something far older.

An accomplished alchemist and healer, St. Germain later travelled to the court of France, where he was given a residence and laboratory. For the Queen of France, he painted oils, repaired flawed jewels, and once saved a handmaiden from certain death by mushroom poisoning. He was also an accomplished violinist.

He was never seen to eat, claiming to enjoy an extended life due to a "secret elixir" that he regularly drank. Rumors that he was more than 2,000 years old were reinforced when St. Germain would refer to historical events in a manner that made one imagine he had actually been in attendance.

Although his true aims were unknown, he was very politically active. After falling out of favor with the French court, he sought asylum in England, but was refused. He was seen later in Russia, at the side of the future Catherine the Great, when, along with the Orlov brothers, she overthrew the Tsar. Later, he was patronized by Charles of Hesse, who built dye factories for him in Germany and Belgium.

Germain reportedly died in 1784, but a few years later, reliable witnesses reported seeing him in France, where he prophesied the Revolution. Later, he turned up in Vienna foretelling the advent of Napoleon. In the 19th century, he appeared before the leaders of the Theosophist movement, who adopted him as one of their "Secret Masters", and was most recently seen in Southern California, where a cult devoted to his worship presently exists.

