

Giovanni Saga I



The Last Supper
Blood & Fire



GAME FACTORY
FOR ADULTS ONLY

GIOVANNI CHRONICLES:

T H E

L A S T

S U P P E R

*The party was getting under way,
Stiffly, slowly.
The way they drank was unholy.
They hovered round the glass-filled tray
Ravenously,
Like birds of prey.
White, intense;
With mask-like faces
Frozen in rigid, gay grimaces.
They chattered and laughed
Stony-eyed:
Impatient:
Hasty:
Preoccupied.
They drank swiftly, as though they might
Drop dead before they were perfectly tight.
— Joseph Moncure March, "The Wild Party"*

by Daniel Greenberg and Teeuwynn

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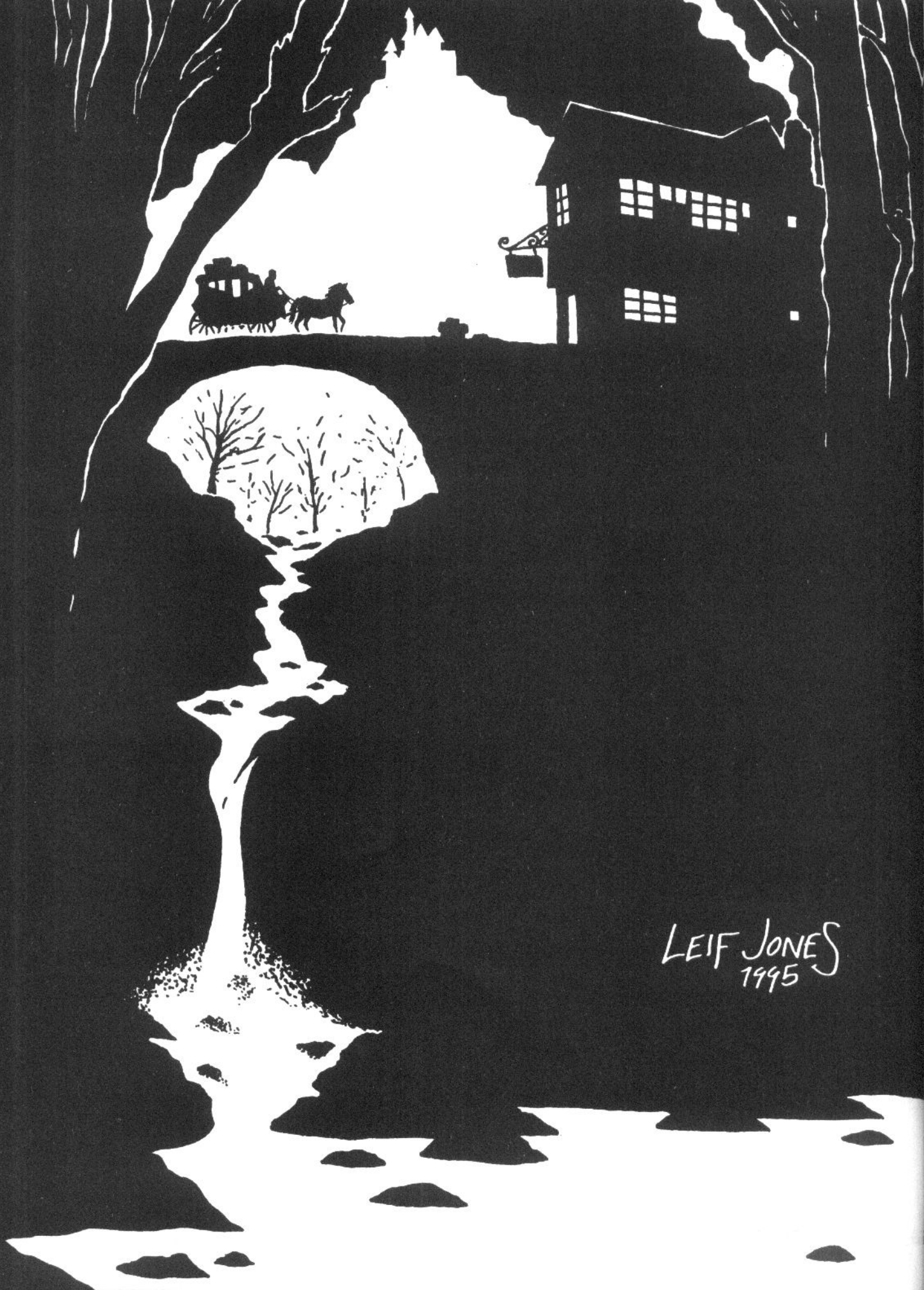
Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised. PRINTED IN CANADA

Word from Black Dog Game Factory

This book is the second from Black Dog, White Wolf's mature readers line. In this case we do not expect the book to offend as much as we hope it will invigorate. The worry here is not that someone will be offended by the words or illustrations; rather that the players and Storytellers will have a chance to go further into character than they've ever gone before. Submerge yourself in your role. Use all those nasty tricks from acting school. Remember, it's only a game — but what a game it can be.

T H E
L A S T
S U P P E R

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LEIF JONES
1995



Introduction

*This is my last supper, please come and eat with me,
I want all my old friends to dine here by the sea.
This is my last supper, how come it's come so soon?
Where are the merry makers? Where are the red balloons?
Do you think it's ending? Did you think it was good?
Then drink and be merry, we still have lots of food...*
— Jacques Brel, “My Last Supper”

The Giovanni Chronicles

The Last Supper, the first book in the Giovanni Chronicles, begins in the Middle Ages. The characters begin as the lowest of pawns, bred for slaughter. If they survive, grow and take advantage of their precarious position, they can become powers in a game much greater than any they have ever known.

Each book in the Giovanni Chronicles is a complete story that can be enjoyed even if the players have not have not played through the previous stories. Together, these books form an interlocking chronicle that sweeps through history and recreates some of the most tumultuous periods in human and Kindred lore.

Creating Medieval Characters

The players create medieval characters using the instructions in the Appendix. Inform them that their characters will begin play as mortals, and will have their Preludes during the actual play of the game. They may choose their clan from the ranks of the (as yet unfounded) Camarilla. They may not choose the Giovanni clan, which does not yet exist, or the Cappadocian clan, which will abruptly cease to exist during **The Last Supper**.

Like most other mortals, the characters know little of vampires, but would most likely believe that they exist — along with chimera and sea serpents. The players may assign their freebie points to their characters now, but they may not use such bolstered Traits until after their characters are Embraced.

The following information is for the Storyteller only. Turn to the Appendix for further instructions on creating the characters for this game. That information may be photocopied along with the medieval character sheet and given to the players. The characters should be from different clans, but this is not crucial. For example, if there are two Tremere, then make sure the Tremere conspirator Embraces both of them during the attack scene.

Make sure you've read the whole book and are familiar with the whole story arc before running the game. The plot can take many twists and turns as the story progresses, and the players can take a wide range of actions. Staying on top of the plotline is crucial to running the game well.

Dark History

The date is April 4, 1444. It is a time of chaos and death. The New World has not yet been discovered, and the Old World is awash in blood. The Crusades have come to a disastrous end for Christendom. The final Christian stronghold in the holy lands fell 150 years ago, and subsequent Crusades have been utter failures. Suffering deep humiliation, Christendom turns inward. Like a trapped animal desperately gnawing on its own flesh, it unleashes a torrent of new Inquisitions, attempting to purge itself of unwanted elements.

The Italian Renaissance has not reached the dark heart of Europe, and the Protestant Reformation is still almost a century away. As the Holy Roman Empire declines, the Turkish Empire ascends. The Moslem religious wars meet with triumph, and solidify the Turks' power base in the holy lands. In 1453, less than a decade after this story occurs, the Turks will topple the Eastern Orthodox Church and capture Constantinople, the holiest city in Christendom. They will be indirectly aided by the calculated indifference of a Western papacy eager to see the fall of its only rival for authority over the Christian world. From the newly seized holy city, the Turks will threaten all of Europe: a land devastated by the Hundred Years' War, the Wars of the Roses and the Black Death.

But that is still 10 years away. For now, in 1444, Western Europe is a fool's paradise, and the people enjoy a false sense of security. But in Central and Eastern Europe, tension and fear are part of daily life. Just south of the setting for this story is Wallachia, the center of the bloody no-man's land between the Moslem and Christian worlds, where Vlad Dracul, Prince of Wallachia and father of Vlad Tepes, struggles with conflicting demands and impossible loyalties. The more he fails at his hopeless task, the more he must watch his people suffer the wrath of two warring factions of God's soldiers.

In the vampiric world, the anarchs are on the move, breaking old shackles and asserting their right to rule their own destinies. Elders who have ruled for centuries grow uneasy as they feel their reins of control begin to go slack. The Tzimisce and Lasombra Antediluvians have been destroyed by the anarchs.

The Inquisition has taken a deadly toll on the Kindred, as many powerful elders have fallen to human hunters. The elders also feel the sting of the ceaseless holy wars, many of which other elders have spurred on. More than a few Kindred have had their holdings overrun by mortal soldiers in the service of other vampires, sometimes from their own clan.

As a result, their cries for greater organization, coordination and protection have grown loud. The first meeting of the two dozen elders who will form the Camarilla occurred 50 years before this story begins, and in the intervening years they have presented their case well. But many elders resist the notion, preferring the perils of autonomy over surrendering authority to a group. What the founders of the future Camarilla need is a decisive event which will bring elders together to enforce a new set of rules.

Partial Timeline of Kindred History

- 1394 Pre-Camarilla: First inter-clan meeting to deal with the anarchs
- 1395 Tyler's attack: anarch revolt begins
- 1405 Lasombra dies at the hands of his child
- 1413 Tzimisce Antediluvian is attacked by anarchs
- 1420 Anarch movement solidifies: Vinculum comes into common use
- 1444 Giovanni dinner party
- 1450 Camarilla officially forms
- 1486 Malleus Maleficarum distributed and Inquisition reinvigorated

Story Background

Book One of the Giovanni Chronicles is the tale of the diablerie of Cappadocius. Though it starts with the dinner that seals his fate, the real story begins long before that, even before the birth of Cappadocius. It begins with the confluence of forces that fight for the destiny of mankind and all life on Earth. It is rooted in the mysteries of vampirism and the relation of the human and Kindred to the universe.



Life and Death

The processes of both life and death are mutable. The mysteries that regulate the arrival of fresh incarnate souls on Earth and the exit of souls from the realms of waking consciousness are not governed by inflexible cosmic laws. Knowledgeable entities, from mages to wraiths to vampires, have learned to peer into the mysterious realms of life and death, manipulating their processes to their own advantage.

In the dimly remembered days of prehistory, the Antediluvians were consumed with the mystery of their own existence. With all the time in the world to ponder their place in creation, many of them sought to commune with primal powers and gain esoteric knowledge beyond all but the wisest mortals. Due to the inherently vicious nature of the Jyhad, they kept many of these secrets from their progeny.

One of the most tenacious seekers among the 13 Antediluvians was Cappadocius. Said to have been a rebel priest in his mortal life, his conversion to the ranks of the undead only intensified his quest to unearth the secrets of life, death and what lay beyond. Indeed, his childer said Caine himself sought out their ancestor because of the single-minded determination with which he pursued these questions, and entrusted Cappadocius with a duty unlike any he gave his other grandchilder, though none speculated as to what this onus was.

Because of Cappadocius' unique passion, the Book of Nod refers to his lineage as the Clan of Death (though this is often mistakenly interpreted as referring to the Giovanni). He sent out his progeny, led by his son Japheth, to comb the world for esoteric wisdom from every source. Japheth returned with fascinating information.

Lilith

Due to the veil of secrecy between the Antediluvians and their progeny, many Kindred elders assumed that their vampiric powers were bestowed by God as part of the curse of Caine. The scholars of the *Book of Nod* believed that Caine's power emanated not from the curse of Jehovah, but from the love of Lilith. Cappadocius suspected that Lilith herself held the secrets he sought. In his search, Cappadocius found ancient texts that revealed Caine's former bride to be not simply a lesser god, but an equal of Jehovah. They described Jehovah as the half of God that dwells in light, and Lilith the half of God that dwells in darkness. Both halves bring souls to the living world and both deliver them to the next. Together, Jehovah and Lilith make up a God who is greater than both halves and incomplete without one or the other, though the dual sides do not always act in concert.

Necromancy

Cappadocius reached out from torpor to contact necromancers, who he heard held the secrets of the lands of the dead. Many of his progeny, including Japheth, warned against the idea, since the fanatical death-worshippers were unreliable and dangerous. But Cappadocius was determined to open their crypts and gain access to their hidden knowledge. Shortly after the beginning of the second millennium A.D. he had his childer kidnap Augustus Giovanni, the head of a Venetian family of wealthy merchants and necromancers. They drained the necromancer's blood and replaced it with some drawn from Cappadocius. Augustus Embraced his family in turn and became third in command of the Cappadocians, right after Cappadocius' own son Japheth.

Cappadocius' action caused friction between the Giovanni and the elder Cappadocians, who feared that the insular Venetian necromancers would never take orders properly. Cappadocius visited his Methuselahs in their dreamless sleep, telling them that the exciting new lore the Giovanni brought more than made up for the problems they caused.

Apotheosis

The necromancers also upset the elder Cappadocians with their views on life and death. They did not view humans and vampires and spirits as separate beings, but as a single race in the process of becoming something new. They believed that this evolution could be controlled by clever beings, who stood to gain so much power that they would evolve into gods. The Giovanni hoped that if they mastered the mysteries of death, they would gain total power over life and death and everything in between. The Giovanni are not simply being melodramatic when they refer to their "god-like feeling" that accompanies power over death.

Cappadocius told his childer that this was the time of the Anointing, an elaborate ritual he said would unite him with the unified powers of dark and light, thus giving him infinite authority. He intended to use his apotheosis to freeze the mutable process of life and death in stasis, giving all living beings the gift of full immortality. No soul could ever be destroyed or whisked away from Earth. Cappadocius believed that with death forever locked away, all creatures would live a perfect, unending existence under his benevolent care. With full control over life and death, Cappadocius would then sit in judgment on all the souls.

The Giovanni

But the Giovanni family had a very different agenda. They too believed that comprehending the mysteries of death would make them divine, but they saw the power as something for themselves alone, not as a gift to the world. The Cappadocians were nothing but a stepping stone to their goal.

Since the vampiric state is so much closer to death than human existence, they chose to become undead. They picked Cappadocius to give them the gift of unlife with all the cold-blooded efficiency of merchants selecting a large and vulnerable company to take over from within.

Once the insular necromancers incorporated themselves into the Cappadocians, Augustus Giovanni made a great show of personal loyalty to his new masters, but set his son and childer, Claudius, about the task of destroying Cappadocius.

The Ventrue

Up till then, the Ventrue and Cappadocians had worked together throughout history to consolidate temporal and material power. The Cappadocians appreciated the Ventrue's distate for chaos and rebellion, while the Blue Bloods liked the Death Clan's desire for order. The pragmatic Ventrue deplored the driving concerns of the other clans (art, revolution, animal lore, madness) as fatuous excess.

In the last few hundred years, however, the Cappadocians had become consumed with their mystical quests and had neglected many of their joint enterprises with the Ventrue. The Ventrue had considerable difficulty working with the Cappadocians through most of the Middle Ages, blaming the change on Japheth. They enthusiastically approved of the Cappadocian merger with the Giovanni, believing that an alliance with the greatest shipping house in Italy would restore a healthy dose of sound business sense and reestablish a materialistic and stable ethos within the Cappadocian clan.

Claudius found an unlikely ally in Lady Jadviga Almanov of Bohemia, a Ventrue elder who admired the business sense of the Giovanni family. To improve the chances that Cappadocian interests would shift back to issues of stability, Jadviga proposed to the Ventrue council of elders that she destroy Japheth. It would teach the Cappadocians a lesson, she argued, and solidify Giovanni power within the Death Clan, for Cappadocius would surely replace Japheth with Augustus Giovanni. The council approved, and Jadviga cautiously approached Claudius Giovanni with the plan. She was pleasantly surprised at his eagerness to betray his own clan.

Jadviga and Claudius hatched their plot together but kept dark secrets from one another. Jadviga did not reveal the Ventrue council's involvement in the scheme. She looked on Claudius as a useful dupe who would be forever grateful to her and therefore forever in her debt. If he decided not to grant her boons, she could threaten to reveal the conspiracy to Cappadocius, who would likely destroy both Claudius and his father out of anger. This revelation would not hurt the Ventrue alliance with the Cappadocians, since Jadviga told Claudius that she was acting alone, giving her clan plausible deniability in case the plot went awry.

But Claudius Giovanni was no dupe, and kept even bigger secrets. He realized that the Ventrue were not trustworthy and intended to beat the master businessmen at their own game. Like Jadviga, Claudius pretended he was acting alone in betraying his clan. He did not tell her that Augustus Giovanni knew of the plot to destroy his rival, for his family would also need protection if the scheme were discovered. He also hid the fact that Augustus was not about to settle for second rank in the Cappadocians, but intended to commit the ultimate crime of diablerie, consuming the clan founder. The Ventrue plot simply made it easier for him to launch his patricidal attack. The Giovanni knew that after such an audacious act the Ventrue could never blackmail them.

In this atmosphere of mutual deceit the two conspirators sealed their pact in blood.

The Conspiracy of Isaac

To increase their chance of success, Jadviga and Claudius decided to form the Conspiracy of Isaac, inviting 11 other Kindred elders to assist with the attack. They promised their ancient co-conspirators a share of Japeth's vitæ, as well as other, even darker rewards.

At this point the clans comprised the Brujah, the Gangrel, the Malkavians, the Nosferatu, the Toreador, the Tremere (who had by then virtually destroyed the Salubri and diablerized Saulot), the Ventrue, the Lasombra, the Assamites (who had not yet been stripped of their ability to commit diablerie), the Tzimisce, the Followers of Set, the Ravnos and the Cappadocians.

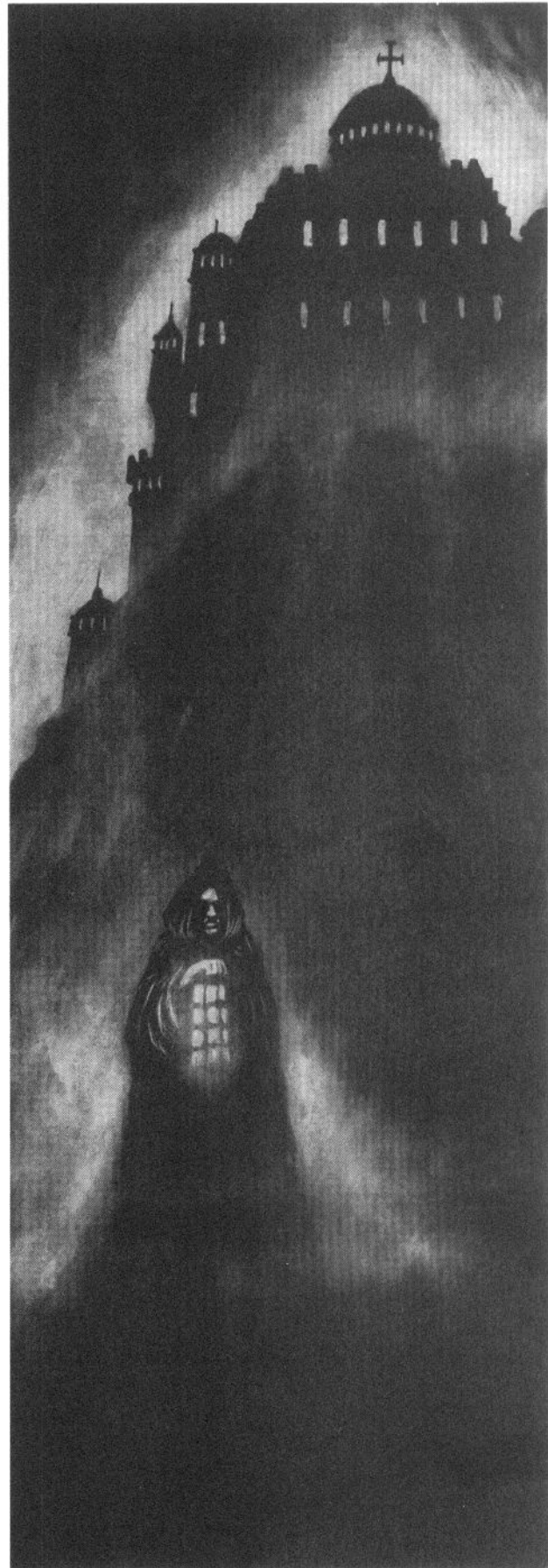
The conspirators were all aristocratic, debauched vampires with jaded notions of pleasure. As a special gift to seal their membership in the conspiracy, Claudius promised to feed each of them a mortal carefully selected to please her individual palate. The Giovanni family searched far and wide, and spared no expense to provide these human aperitifs.

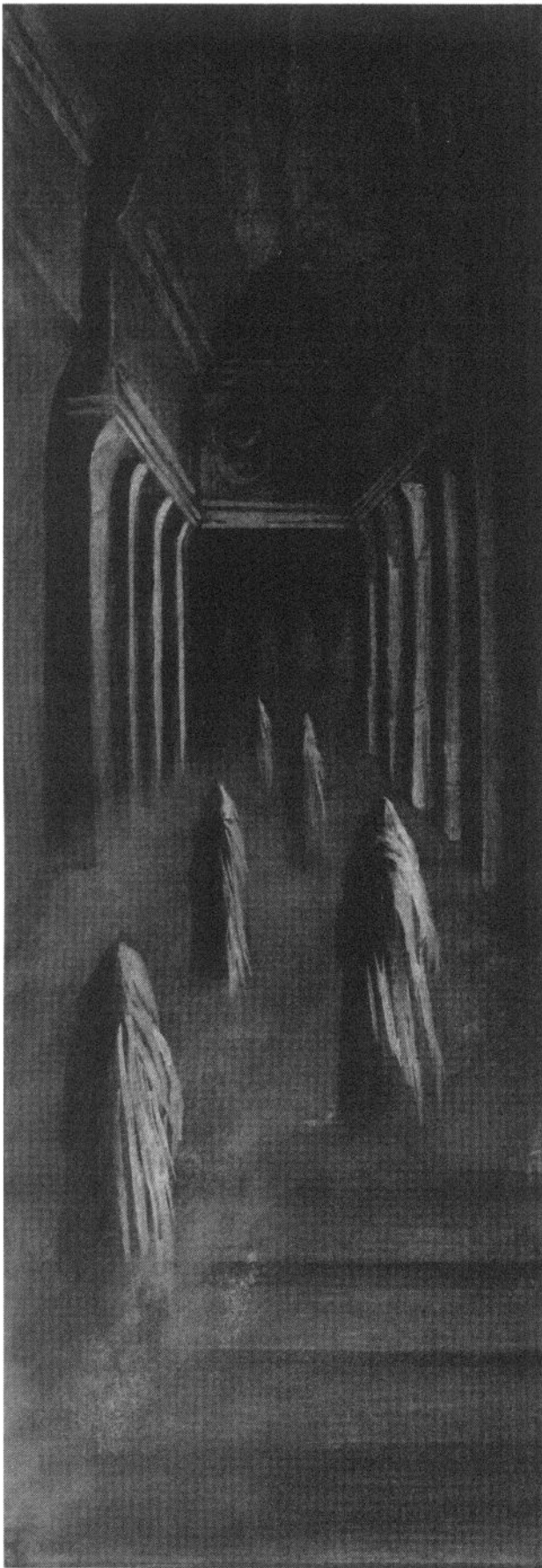
That's where the characters come in. They have been invited to Claudius Giovanni's manse "for dinner." The vampires plan to Dominate them into staying and torment them with their impending fate, then feed on the misery and suffering they stir in the mortals as much as on their blood.

The Founders

Another group further complicates the situation. A large number of Kindred, led by the Ventrue Hardestadt, seek to unify the clans against all enemies, external and internal. They call themselves the Founders, because they seek to found an inter-clan council that would be more powerful than any single clan.

This pre-Camarilla group has heard rumors of the conspiracy against Japheth Cappadocius, and seeks to nip it in the bud. The Founders have put together a posse to





rein in any wayward clan members who would dare to conspire against their elders. Saving Japheth is entirely a secondary concern for them, though they would like to gain the undying loyalty of the Cappadocians. Their primary interests lie in catching the conspirators and exploiting the situation for their own gain. They believe that this will make undecided Methuselahs and elders unify when they see such an extensive conspiracy against another Methuselah.

The Founders are not above exploiting the paralyzing fear of destruction that is unique to immortals and preying on that peculiar paranoia as a means to power. They seek to use the conspirators as dupes to inflame elder dread of Kindred anarchy. The Founders see unification as a means to greater personal power, and do not believe they are in any real danger from so small a conspiracy. None of them believe that it has a hope of succeeding, and none of them have even considered that it could result in the destruction of an Antediluvian. They are in for a frightening surprise.

The Ventrue leadership first secretly sanctioned Jadviga's attack on Japheth Cappadocius. Then they authorized Hardestadt's counterattack on the conspirators, knowing that a successful counterattack will ensnare Jadviga Almanov. The council believes that the Ventrue win no matter what happens. If Jadviga succeeds in killing Japheth, the Ventrue still meet their goal of teaching Cappadocius a lesson and helping the Giovanni rise in the Death Clan. If Jadviga is stopped, the Ventrue will disavow her, and point to Hardestadt's bringing down a member of his own clan to save Japheth. The Cappadocians will then owe the Ventrue a life boon.

Hardestadt and the Founders also believe that they win no matter what happens. If they don't stop the conspirators from killing Japheth, the elders will truly fear the power of lawless progeny and will want to organize. If they stop the conspiracy, they conclusively demonstrate why inter-clan Justicars are essential to stability. Either way they come a step closer to cementing the formation of the Camarilla. That goal is easily worth the betrayal and loss of one Ventrue operative. Of course, they do not tell Jadviga Almanov that she will be destroyed no matter what happens.

Durga Syn

There is one final player in this dark and dangerous game. The mysterious Ravnos gypsy Durga Syn has been monitoring all the players in this deadly little game, and plans to step in after the Founders launch their preemptive strike on the conspirators. She has foreseen that the Giovanni-Cappadocian clash will unleash destructive forces that will reverberate for half a millennium.

She does not know how to ensure the safety of life (and unlife) on Earth, but she has prophesied that the characters are at the heart of a solution. They are in a unique position

to stop the Earth-shaking plans of both the Giovanni and the Cappadocians, so she intervenes to have them kept alive. Because she is unsure of the outcome, she is unable to tell the Founders exactly why the characters should be spared. Nevertheless, she will take steps to protect the characters, and arm them as best she can for the gathering storm.

Story Synopsis

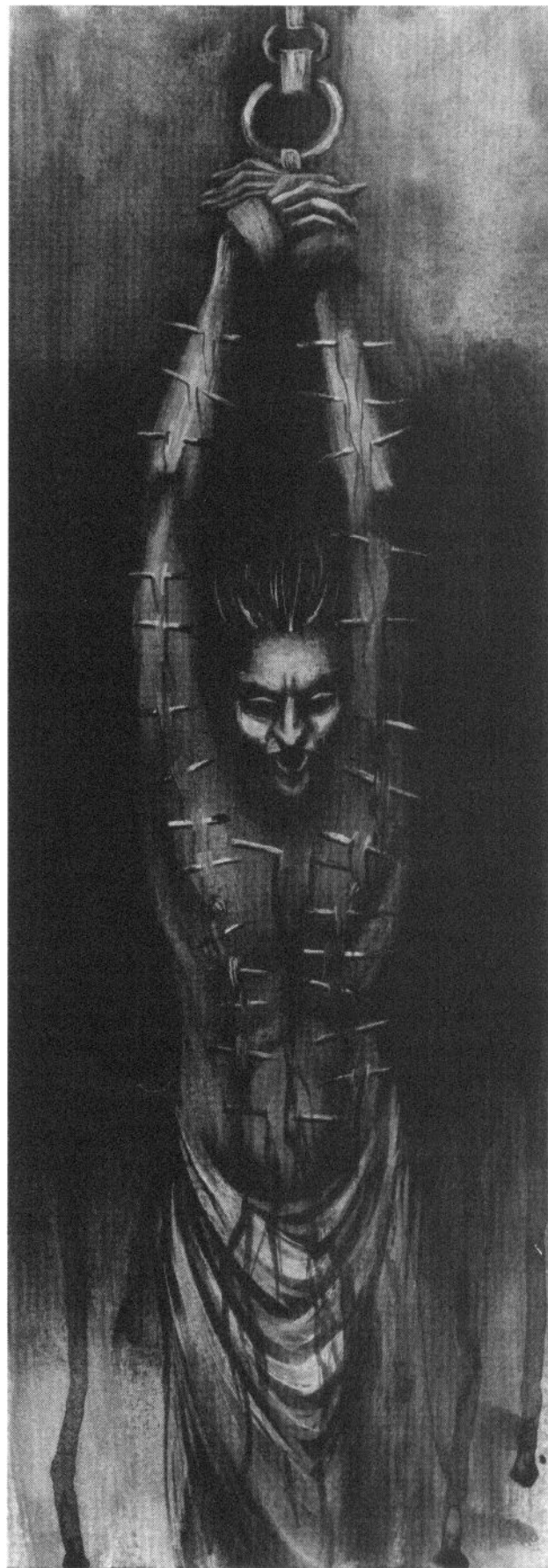
Act I begins with the characters preparing for a banquet given by the powerful and feared nobleman, Lord Claudius Giovanni. They have each received exclusive invitations to a lavish dinner far above their station, and they assemble at a nearby inn to await a carriage to the Giovanni manse. (There are 13 in the group, regardless of how many players there are. The Storyteller should play the rest of the characters.)

The chosen kine meet their hosts, who are actually elders of the 13 vampire clans and conspirators against Giovanni's elder "brother," Japheth Cappadocius. Each elder takes a personal interest in one of the members of the dinner party, and the hosts get to know their human meals. After a harrowing experience, the characters are told they are to be sacrificed to the unwholesome appetites of their hosts. They were selected for having blood of exquisite taste and quality.

But before the characters are completely drained and killed, the Giovanni manse is attacked by the Founders. To defend themselves, Giovanni and his coterie Embrace the sacrificial lambs, leaving them to stave off the attack and buy the coterie more time to flee. When the Founders arrive, the characters must decide whether they are to fight, surrender, or try to escape.

In Act II, the surviving characters are subjected to a harsh interrogation and must justify their continued existence to the Founders, who are eager to destroy them. Fortunately, they are defended by Durga Syn, who suggests that they be used as spies against the conspirators. She persuades the bloodthirsty Founders to spare them, and the characters are charged with infiltrating the conspiracy. They also meet the Cappadocians.

The conspirators, on meeting the characters again, are eager to kill them, but seek to avoid bloody strife that has no profit. So they offer the characters a chance to join the plot against Japheth Cappadocius, explaining that they are involved in far more than a naked power grab. The conspirators insist that Japheth has discovered forbidden texts from the era before the Flood, and that it can make Cappadocius an all-powerful god. They offer compelling evidence that the Death Clan plans to kill death itself, locking the Earth in an undying Hell that Cappadocius believes is Heaven. They challenge the characters to go to Cappadocius and learn for themselves.



Now that the characters are vampires, they are grudgingly admitted into the exclusive fraternity of Kindred, and are welcomed by Japheth Cappadocius in his austere monastery. Japheth freely confirms that his Sire plans to ascend to godhood and create Heaven on Earth. He offers the characters a role in that Heaven. The characters even meet a disembodied astral projection of the Antediluvian. The Founders warn them later that Giovanni wants to bring death to all creatures on Earth.

At this point the characters have to decide which side to take. In Act III, they must choose between Giovanni and death in life, or Cappadocius and life beyond death: destroy God or become God.

If the characters side with the Founders against the conspirators, they must counterattack Claudius' group during the attack on Japheth. In that case, Augustus takes advantage of the confusion to diablerize Cappadocius. The characters are to blame for the diablerie. If the characters defend the Cappadocians from the Conspirators, their actions give away the Antediluvian. If they side with Giovanni, they take part in the raid on the Cappadocian monastery, and are directly responsible for abetting the horror of diablerie on an Antediluvian.

Cappadocius will die, either as a result of the characters' actions or in spite of them. But his death is not like that of Saulot at the hands of the Tremere. Saulot died in a state of tranquility, and found a transcendent peace. Cappadocius does not.

After the climactic battle comes the painful dénouement, in which the characters learn that they caused the diablerie of Cappadocius. The players don't know that they cannot avoid this outcome, and the Storyteller must keep this secret throughout the game — longer if she intends to run the following chapters of the Giovanni Chronicles to maximum effect. Good roleplayers could still convincingly have their characters act on terror and guilt if they know the truth, but why not let them put their roleplaying skills to better use?

What the characters also do not know in advance is that a Maelstrom occurs at the time of Cappadocius' termination, and whisks his soul away. If the characters take advantage of every resource, they can prevent Augustus Giovanni from gaining control of the soul, making him an incomplete Antediluvian.

After the death of Cappadocius at the hands of the Giovanni, the small cell of remaining Cappadocians go underground to plot their revenge. They do not believe that the rest of the vampires will help them exact justice, and have little faith in the burgeoning Camarilla.

Live-Action

This story is designed to work well as a live-action game as well as a tabletop storytelling game. Some adjustments must be made in the story for live-action play, and those are spelled out in sidebars throughout the text.

The most important change is in the number of players. The game works best with 12 characters — the number of "lambs" that Giovanni invites to the slaughter (not counting Marianna, the Giovanni sacrifice). They should all be from different clans, with no character selecting a Giovanni. However, the game can work with even more players. Just assume that Claudius was being generous, and gave more than one "lamb" to some of his fellow conspirators.

How to Use This Book

The Last Supper starts with tight control over the destinies of the player characters, and casts them in the role of desperate victims in the hands of powerful, malevolent creatures who trifle with lesser beings for their debauched amusement. This provides some of the flavor of life for most people during the Middle Ages, and gives both the players and characters powerful motivations and strong emotional involvement in the outcome.

The Storyteller needs to make sure Act I moves quickly, because players grow restless during long stretches of monologue. There is plenty of Storyteller information in this section, and it is comparatively easy to run. Feel free to improvise on the material, and allow the characters lots of room to act up, mouth off and be provocative to their hosts. And feel free to let them face the consequences of their actions, as their vampiric hosts knock them out or Dominate them to restore decorum. The vampires hold all the power, and can do as they please.

In Act II, the characters get a taste of freedom, but are pulled between all the major power groups: pawns in a larger game. Nonetheless, they have a chance to make their own way in the world, including settling some scores. The Storyteller must be careful that the game does not lose momentum here — the characters must always have a sense of where they can go next. This is seldom a problem with experienced roleplayers, but novices may need prodding. Keep the help minimal and the hints subtle. This section is more challenging for the Storyteller, since it adds more opportunity for player choices. It is important to keep thinking one step ahead of the players here.



By Act III, the characters have a large amount of freedom. There is no single scripted path and predetermined ending for this story. Rather, the players and Storyteller must find their way through together. The major possibilities are spelled out, along with some alternate choices. This calls for maximum Storyteller flexibility, and challenges your creative resources. If done properly, though, the game is completely wound up and ready to spin on its own. When this goes right, the Storyteller can sit back and watch the game run itself.

A good game is a skillful blend of the tactical and the interpersonal, combining creative use of Attributes and Disciplines with imaginative characterizations and interactions. Some games tip too far to one side or another: little more than a slugfest, or a meandering session of improvisational theatre where little gets accomplished. Neither style is wrong, but a blend of both tends to make for a more satisfying experience.

Motivations of the Main Antagonists

Acting as Storyteller for a preprogrammed game in which players are kept to a single plot track is relatively simple, since the characters simply fail or die when they leave the sanctioned path. But in the Giovanni Chronicles, in which the players decide the direction of the story and

can navigate through a multitude of plot twists and turns, the Storyteller's job is considerably more complex. You must keep a firm grasp on the game environment while allowing players to take the plot in a variety of directions. The best way to do this is to have your Storytelling style become less plot driven, and more character driven.

Since you don't know ahead of time which direction the players' characters will take, you must be prepared to have the characters you play react to just about anything. By carefully considering the motivations of the major antagonists, you will be able to quickly ascertain their reactions to a rapidly changing set of circumstances. Even if the precise reaction is not immediately obvious, a range of options will suggest themselves, all fitting a character's central motivation. The more the Storyteller takes into account the complex urges that impel these powerful characters, the more she can allow the players to influence the direction of the story.

Cappadocius

Cappadocius the Antediluvian is striving to rise above his vampiric status and grow to a state far beyond human and Kindred. In the apocalyptic fervor of the day, he passionately believes that he can literally consume God, and thereby become God. He seeks nothing less. These beliefs are not simply the crackpot ravings of a power-mad undead. They are rooted in wisdom he has gained from secret research and private meditation.

Other Antagonists

This book provides the Traits for most of the characters the Storyteller will have to play. Others should be taken from the **Vampire** rulebook, generally by using the Traits given for a police officer. Just turn Firearms into Melee and Drive into Ride.

In recent centuries, the Antediluvian has infiltrated the Holy Mother Church and gained unprecedented access to the forbidden texts hidden within the Vatican's vaults. While searching for the hidden lore of Caine, his legion of scholars discovered a treasure trove of suppressed wisdom from other faiths. Separate Zoroastrian and Gnostic texts confirmed wisdom embedded within the Christian faith: that consuming the "body" of God literally transforms one into divinity.

The Giovanni

Claudius Giovanni is out for personal power for his family. He is willing to betray all his allies to get it, starting with his new "brother," Japheth Cappadocius, his grandsire Cappadocius, and his allies in the Conspiracy of Isaac. He makes very reasonable-sounding appeals to the characters about the dangers of Cappadocius' research.

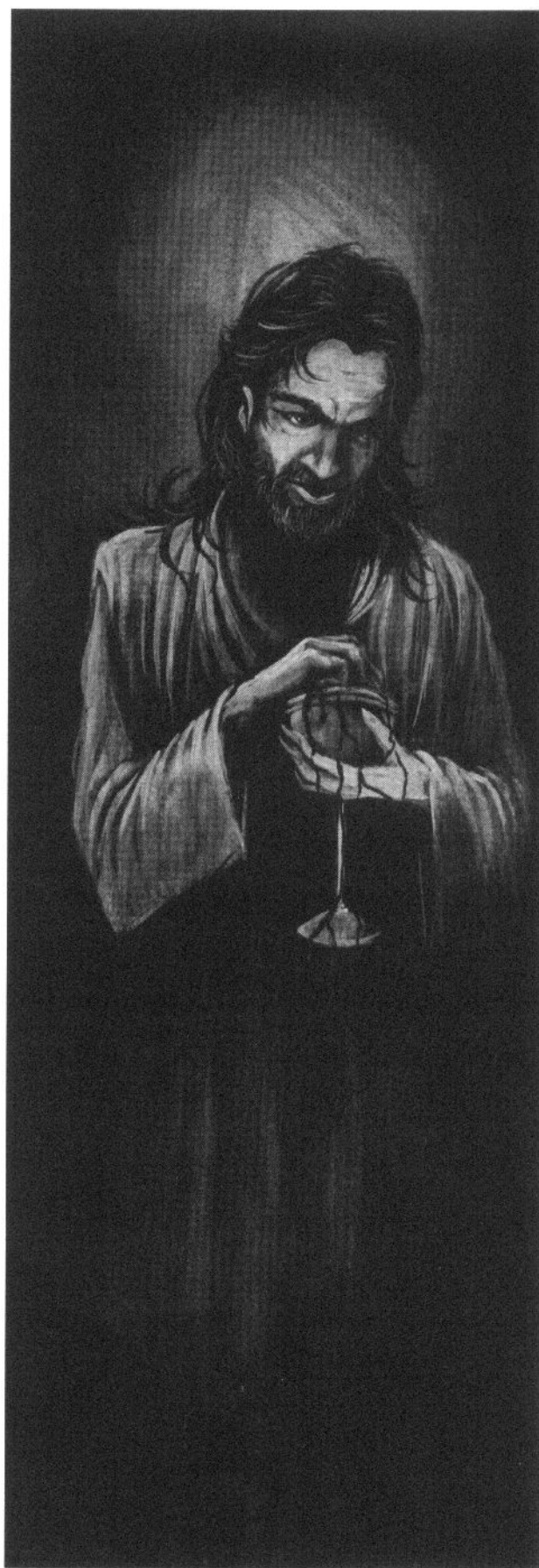
Augustus Giovanni seeks to destroy the wall between the worlds of the living and the dead, to gain power over both. He will stop at nothing to gain this prize.

The Founders

In the ages when vampires were strong and humanity weak, the clans engaged in open warfare against one another for rule over the Earth. But as humanity gained power and numbers, the Kindred found themselves on the losing end of many battles. Though they still despised one another and nursed centuries-old wounds, they sought to band together in a common need and against a common enemy. This was the foundation of what was to become the Camarilla.

Durga Syn

The Gypsy is the X-factor in this drama. Since she makes decisions based on strange portents, her actions are usually unpredictable. She is seeking to protect humanity, however.



Advanced Roleplaying

The cycle of the Giovanni Chronicles has several features unique to storytelling games. The characters may choose sides in the war between the Giovanni and the Cappadocians. Their allegiance is not predetermined by the story, but may be freely chosen in each of the books that make up the cycle. They can change allegiances from one book to the next. (Doing so successfully is critical to the optimal resolution of the War of the Ages.)

As a result, the characters' actions can have a profound impact on the course of this story and the history of your World of Darkness. The chronicle adapts itself to fit their choices.

To make this work, it is best if the players do not know that their characters have a free choice in making their allegiances. They can then make decisions from a more "pure" set of role-playing referents. Otherwise, the players may feel inclined to exploit their unique position in a way that their characters normally would not. While it will not ruin the game, this risks tainting the characters' motivations with the players' knowledge.

The downside to this is that the players may assume that their characters' course of action is prescribed. This could cause them to spend time and effort searching for a path that does not exist instead of blazing a new trail through uncharted, virgin territory.

This is a fine line which Storyteller and players must walk together for a successful game.

Theme

The Last Supper is a complex story, and yet it is only the beginning of a vast chronicle spanning centuries and reaching pivotal events in Kindred annals. Throughout the Giovanni Chronicles the characters must make important choices, creating new situations that require more choices, and so on down through time. The characters must learn to understand the ramifications of their actions within the sweeping flow of history. Every person has a unique part to play, for if we all play the same notes there can be no music.

Why Black Dog?

Black Dog Games is dedicated to going beyond the "bleeding edge" in roleplaying game design. Although to some a "mature" label means smut and gore, for the Giovanni Chronicles, this means advanced game play that cannot be appreciated or performed by immature players. It means more player options and new tools for experienced Storytellers, with no artificial limits or constraints on ideas. Players should be encouraged to delve deeply into their characters' minds and personas, and identify with them as strongly as any method actor. Players who cannot handle this intense level of characterization should not play this game.

The themes of **The Last Supper** are personal responsibility and the need to do what is necessary, not always what is convenient. If we do not move against the tide, we are swallowed up in it. It is no simple matter, yet in order for change and renewal to continue, some individuals must be willing to move against the prevailing current. Otherwise, stultification and decay set in, and entropy wins the day. Those who turn against the tide and make their own way stand out to each other, and to history.

Mood

The mood of **The Last Supper** is one of grandeur and decay. The story should evoke a number of operatic, even religious emotions. Awe, wonder, despair, corruption and more are all lurking within **The Last Supper**.

Players should feel as if they are drawn into a perverse passion play, one in which they take on key roles, but they do not know whether they are the heroes or the villains of the piece. They should be aware that their characters are taking part in an historical drama, one which may affect Kindred and kine alike. Yet their characters, caught up in the moment, are only as aware as any other person of their potential for greatness or ignominy.



Act I: The Art of Fine Dining

*There's no way to describe how you feel
When you're talking to your meal!*
— Stephen Sondheim, "Hello, Little Girl"

In this first of three Acts, the characters meet one another and visit the Giovanni manse. Their delightful time turns ugly as their initially genteel and polite hosts quickly turn vicious. After harrowing cocktail conversation, they sit down to dinner and hear their deaths described in lurid detail by their hosts, who are conspirators against the rest of the vampires. The characters are saved from a grisly fate by a very timely invasion by the Founders, but are Embraced and ordered to fight while the conspirators escape.

Scene 1: In the Company of Strangers

To eat is to appropriate by destruction.
— Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

The Gathering The Common Room

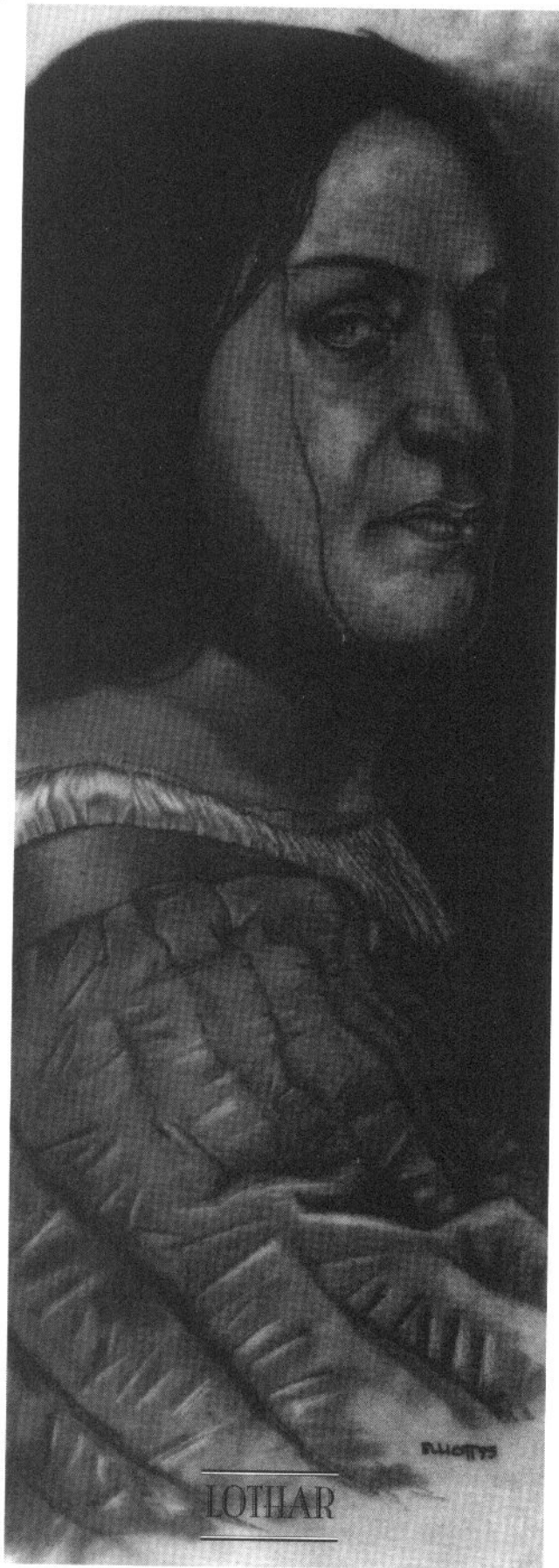
A roaring hearth fire banishes the night's chill and gloom from the spacious common room in the Red Lamb Inn in the Carpathian wilderness near the Giovanni Manse. Each of the guests of Lord Giovanni is announced as he

arrives. The only other people at the inn are the innkeeper and his servants, a young soldier, an old beggar woman and a monk.

The adventure begins with the characters arriving late on the night of April 3. Let the players describe their characters to one another, and engage in some free-form storytelling. Experienced players will jump right in and define their characters in conversation. Less experienced players may need encouragement.

This scene is an entirely gratuitous bit of roleplaying designed to establish the scene, bond the characters and introduce a few contacts. It will also give the characters a sense of the nearby land so that when they flee the Giovanni manse they will know where the inn is and not feel entirely isolated. This is the first meeting of a group that will be together throughout history, so give them a chance to get to know another.

There are 13 guests in all: the players' characters and enough Storyteller-run characters to round out the rest of the baker's dozen. If you wish, you may have the players' characters arrive first and have time to get to know one another before the rest show up. Since these other characters will not survive the dinner party and are far less important to the story, you do not need to have to spend a lot of time characterizing them, unless you wish to elicit maximum horror and sense of loss when they die. The only one important to the ongoing story is Marianna, the sacrifice for Lord Giovanni.



The Innkeeper

The innkeeper, Sigismund, gets the conversation rolling by asking questions about the characters' homes, their professions, their recent pilgrimages, etc., as he serves them.

He brings them food, saying, "Beggin' yer forgiveness for this simple stew. It's nothin' like what Lord Giovanni serves, ye lucky devils. But it will fill ye until tomorrow."

If asked about Giovanni, Sigismund says, "Ar, that Lord Giovanni. Tch tch. I wouldn't say a word against him. But he's an odd one." If a character spends a lot of time winning his trust, Sigismund will add, "I don't want to speak ill of Lord Giovanni, but since he's come here, the wasting sickness has come with him. Some in these parts do say it's the evil eye. Him and all his foreign friends. He even has Turks to visit."

The Soldier

The young soldier, Paul, is an earnest young man eager to tell his story to any who will listen. He is fresh from crusader János Hunyady's battles against the Turks, where he was crippled by a deep wound in the leg. He has heard that Lord Giovanni is hiring a large number of household soldiers to defend his manse. Household defense is one of the few jobs a partly crippled soldier can perform, so he is eager to be accepted into the ranks of Lord Giovanni's guard.

Paul humbly entreats the characters to put in a good word for him with Lord Giovanni, so that he may get the job and secure his future. "I have no learning, nor skills at farming, nor a trade. I know no other life than soldiering, and I cannot travel on long marches. I am told Lord Giovanni is hiring many men. If he will not have me, I know not where to turn."

Paul's part in the story is to get hired by Giovanni, preferably with the characters' help, and then join with them or be horribly killed by the Founders. The cycle of culpability and direct reward and punishment for actions begins early.

The Monk

Brother Clement is a middle-aged man with a wild mane of hair and rough robe. He individually approaches each of the 13 guests, starting with any holy person in the group. He spits on the floor every time he, or anyone else, mentions Giovanni's name.

"Listen to me, brother/sister. An evil has entered Christendom from the lands to the south. An ill wind from the land of the heathen. Know ye the wind I mean?"

"It is the wind of the devil. Tell me. What know ye of your host?"

Whatever the character says, Clement will dismiss it.

"Tomorrow ye enter into the abode of evil! Shun it! Reject it! Cast it out! Go ye not! Claudius Giovanni (*spit*) is the very Devil incarnate!"

The characters may well choose to have nothing to do with Brother Clement. If they do talk to him, though, and ask him for specifics, he weaves a wild tale of diabolical sacrifices in the Giovanni manor where the Devil is raised by a mockery of the Last Supper. He's completely wrong on most details except for the Last Supper reference.

If any character actually decides not to go to the manor, Brother Clement will be proud and congratulate her. But if she refuses to board the coach the next day, Lothar will have her kidnapped and secretly brought to the manse as soon as the coach leaves.

Brother Clement's part in the story is to act as a portent of doom, revealing the evil in the manse. He later attacks the characters in the name of divine retribution.

The Old Woman

The old woman sits by herself in a dark corner of the inn, with a small begging cup on the table. She does not trouble the characters, but watches them all evening. If the characters give her money, she will thank them and offer them fresh-picked wildflowers in return. If asked, she says her name is Synovea, and adds that her home was burned and her village destroyed in the Turkish-Christian fighting. Sigismund gives her Christian charity in the form of a small cup of soup and a warm place to sleep, but she may not beg in the inn and must let others have the places near the fire. He is adamant that she not be allowed to sit near the fire. "I'll have every beggar and refugee this side of Palestine upon me head," he'll complain.

The old woman is really Durga Syn, a powerful Ravnos. She is here to spy on Lothar and the sacrifices, and learn more about the terrors to come. She has Dominated Sigismund to make sure he keeps her far from the hearth fire.

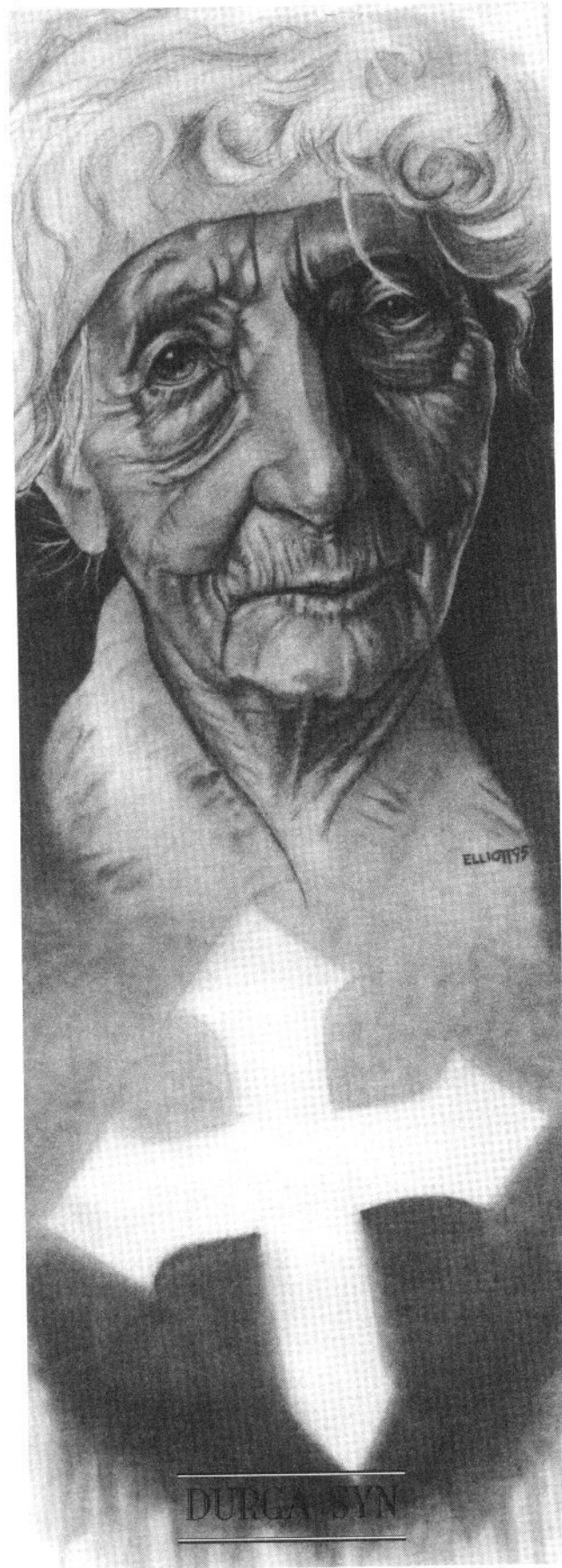
Lothar Enters

Before the characters finish the food, they are visited by Lothar, Giovanni's haughty steward. He is accompanied by Roderigo, the head coachman, and two armed soldiers wearing the Giovanni crest.

Lothar is a slightly built, well-dressed man whose aristocratic features are marred by a deep scar that runs down the right side of his face from his hairline to his chin. Roderigo is a tall, ruddy-faced young man who wears coachman's leathers and a large wooden cross around his neck.

Lothar introduces himself. "I am Sir Lothar, steward to Lord Giovanni. I am he who selected the 13 of you from among all the great masses of folk to meet the Lord. This is Roderigo. He is the coachman, whose duty it is to bring you to the Lord's manse on the morrow."





He then walks over to each character and welcomes her. "Welcome to Lord Giovanni's holdings. I am pleased you have graced us with your company. I hope your stay is an agreeable and memorable one."

As he says this, Lothar takes each character's hand and holds it for entirely too long to be appropriate, stroking it and caressing it. As he speaks, he lifts each hand to his nose, almost as if sniffing for something. He is — blood quality. He is ensuring that each person's blood is still as good as it was the last time he scented it. Act out this bit with relish, taking each player's hand in turn and lingering over it, sometimes licking a palm, and inhaling deep wafts. That will intensify Lothar's creepiness, and the unsettling nature of the scene.

When he finishes the greetings, Lothar says, "It is good that you are all assembled. Our lord is eagerly anticipating the joy of serving you tomorrow. You are most fortunate to have captured his attention. This is a day your loved ones will long remember." If asked why even serfs have been invited, he angrily snaps: "Are you questioning the wisdom of your betters?" He then recovers his composure, saying, "Even members of the lower orders may find favor with the lord of the manse."

Have the characters make Perception + Awareness rolls (difficulty 6) or make the rolls in secret for them. If any character scores three successes, he remembers seeing Lothar in his village once before. On four or more successes, he recalls Lothar inquiring about him. If questioned, Lothar will acknowledge that he did visit the character's village to find him, but will not reveal why he chose the character. The most he'll say is a wicked "Because you are a being of rare taste. You have savory inner qualities of which you know nothing."

Lothar will continue this pattern, answering questions with polite non-answers and occasional slips of viciousness. If pressed for real answers, he says, "Kindly direct any further questions to my master at dinner. He will entertain your curiosity with far more patience than I can."

Paul's Hiring

The characters may intercede at this point on Paul's behalf, which Lothar tries to brush off. If they persist, he agrees to recommend the young man to Claudius Giovanni, and takes Paul with him when he leaves that evening. Paul collects a small bundle of his worldly goods and profusely thanks the characters who helped him before he leaves.

Paul will remind the characters if they forget to ask. If the characters do not bother to help him, or only put forth a half-hearted effort, the soldier is not hired at this time. Instead, he sits alone, dejected, as he watches the upper-crust revelers enjoy themselves. He shakes his head at the characters' recalcitrance, and says, "I have seen cruel Turks impale a man from arse to mouth for no reason but to affright their foes, but never have I seen cruelty as senseless as this." He will later apply for the position without their intercession.

Roderigo

Roderigo keeps to himself, but if approached is affable and charming. He knows the fate of the characters and pities them. Roderigo would like to see them survive, but as a secret ally of the Founders, he will do nothing to help — for now. If any character makes an effort to strike up a friendship with him, or does anything to prove herself noble and trustworthy, it will motivate him to intervene on the characters' behalf after the Founders have attacked and subdued the party.

The Accusation

When Lothar enters the room, Brother Clement visibly seethes with anger. Part way through the scene, he has had enough. He stands up on his bench and shouts: "Evil! Evil incarnate! Lothar is but a toady and bootlick to the Devil, Claudius Giovanni!" He spits. "I warn you good people! Your very souls are in danger! Flee this accursed place!"

Lothar glares at the monk. "Get out!" he scowls.

"Your Hell-born wizardry cannot compel a man of God!" Clement shouts back. "I expose your evil to all the world!"

Lothar snorts derisively, and mutters, "I need no Hell-born wizardry, fool." He motions to his guards, who grab the monk and wrestle him to the ground. They drag him kicking, screaming and biting from the common room.

Should the characters intercede on the monk's behalf, Lothar will rage against them for being fools. A character who insists that the monk not be manhandled will be

warned that such attitudes will cause her to lose her invitation. If she persists, Lothar tells her she is no longer invited to the manse and will be sent home first thing in the morning. Then, as soon as that character is alone, Lothar has her kidnapped and dragged unconscious to the manor. She will revive facedown at the dinner table in Scene 3.

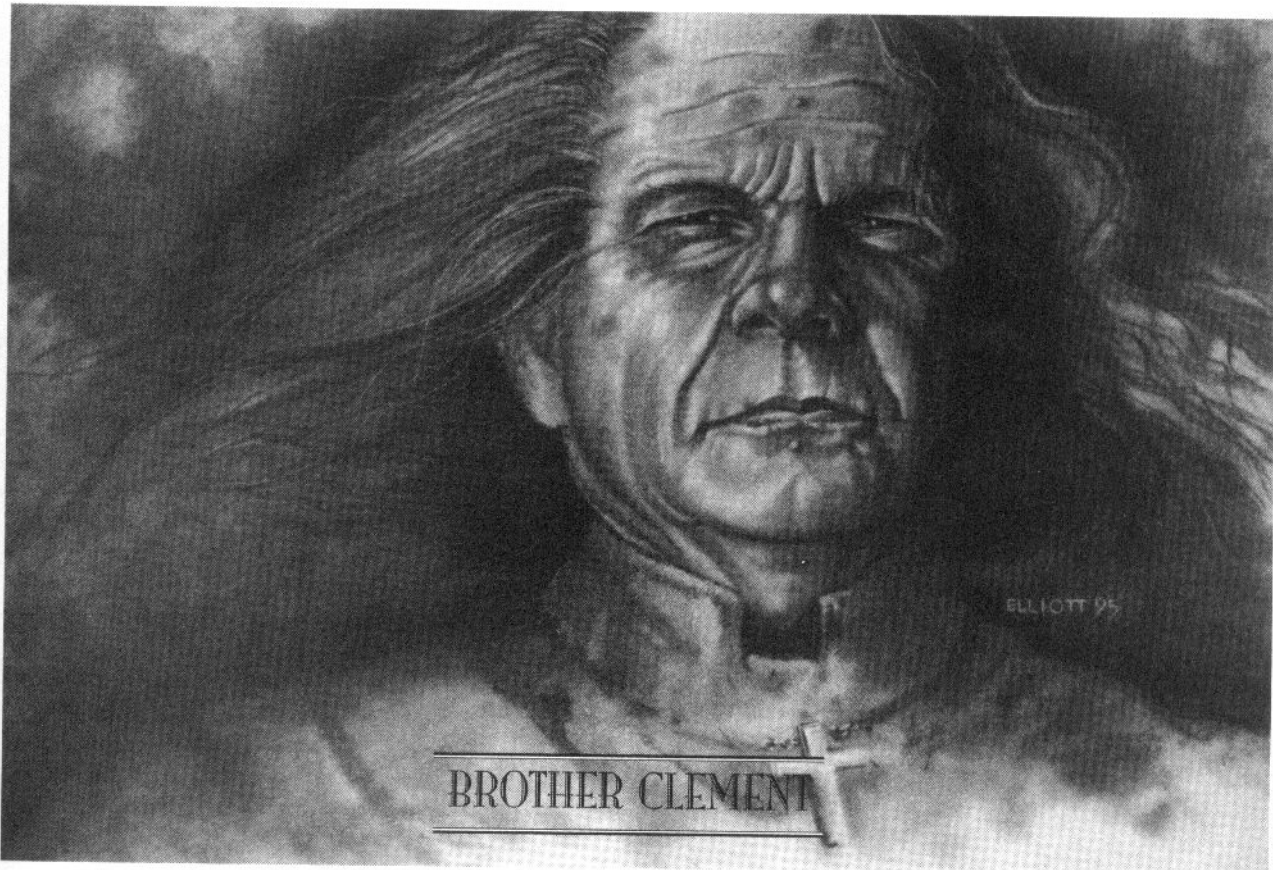
The soldiers hog-tie and gag Clement, and leave him in the barn. Lothar demands an apology from the innkeeper, who does so profusely. If the characters complain, Lothar scowls and says, "Lord Giovanni is master in these lands. The monk has transgressed. Only his position in the holy orders keeps him from the lash." If untied, Clement will run back into the inn, and begin his tirade again. Lothar will again have him tied and ejected.

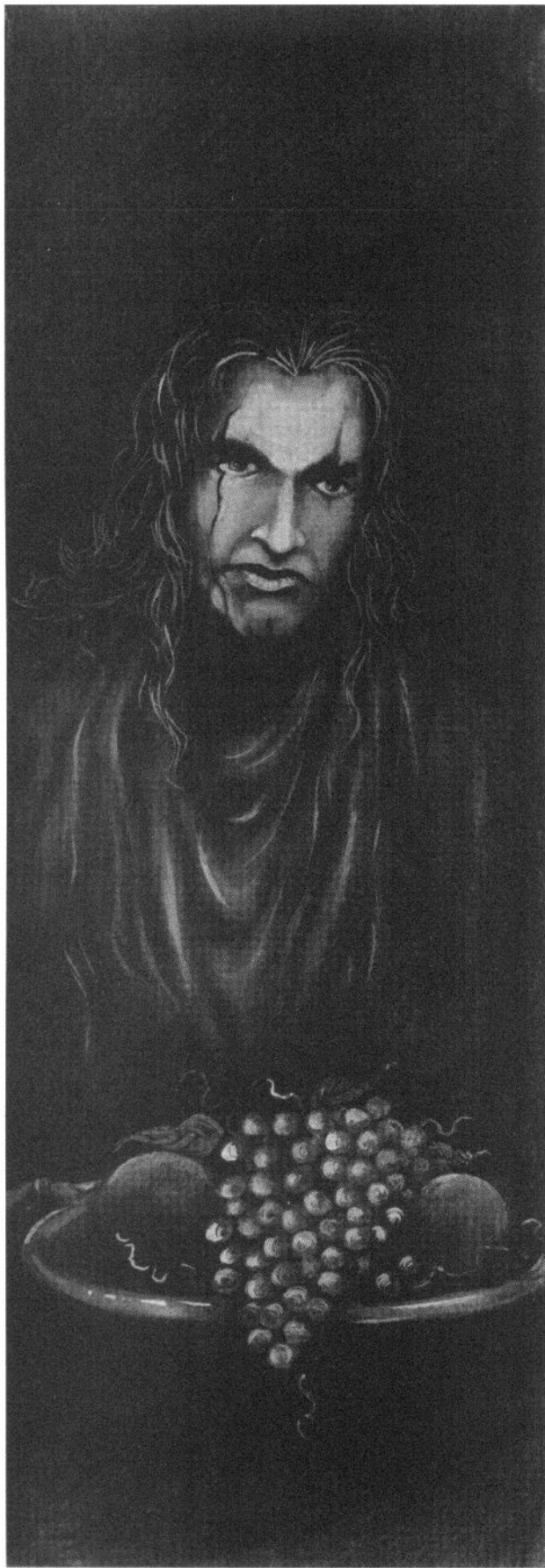
This incident is a source of potential conflict between the characters and their host.

Wrapping up Scene 1

Once the players have had a chance to get to know one another and make any plans they wish, finish the scene with a toast by Lothar. "I drink to all of you: some of the finest specimens it has ever been my pleasure to find. To your robust good health." He drains his glass and says, "Be ready for the coach tomorrow afternoon. Roderigo will transport you. If you need anything, inform him." He departs.

Unless a player has something else she wants to do or say, go on to Scene 2.





Escaping

If any of the characters try to escape from the inn or spy on Giovanni's manse, Lothar will hunt them down and knock them out. He will have them bound and brought to the manse, where they will not recover consciousness until dinnertime the next night. If they try to escape or spy during the day, a band of Giovanni ghoulish soldiers will capture them.

Live-Action Notes:

This scene works very well in live-action. Make a big show of each character's introduction, with the Storyteller playing the coachman and announcing each in a loud voice. This helps the players learn the characters' names and personalities quickly. The Storyteller playing Lothar needs to make his character decidedly unlikable; Roderigo must be distant but likable; and the person playing Sigismund must be friendly, though a little slow. Paul, Brother Clement and the old woman can be set at different stations, where the guests can go to talk to them.

Antagonists

Lothar

Faithful steward to Claudius Giovanni, Lothar is a supercilious ghoul who holds all of humanity in contempt. He treats his fellow mortals with utter disdain, and likens dealing with them to carrying on a conversation with swine. Lothar has some *Auspex* and can distinguish the quality and flavors of human blood with just a single sniff, just as a connoisseur of fine vintages can distinguish much in the bouquet of wine. He travels extensively to find the finest blood for his master, and he was the one who originally sniffed out the player characters as having the very best.

Born: 1278 A.D.

Apparent Age: Late 30s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intrigue 2, Scrounging 5

Skills: Debate 1, Etiquette 4, Melee 4, Ride 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Heraldry 4, History 2, Kindred Lore 2, Occult 3, Theology 1

Disciplines: *Auspex* 1, Celerity 1, Potence 1

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 3, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: A slightly built, well-dressed man with a deep scar from his hairline to his chin.

Roleplaying Hints: You are arrogant to those beneath you, and beneath your master's station. However, you treat your master and those of higher rank than yourself with exquisitely precise respectfulness. Your face often betrays your cruelty, and a sneer is seldom far from your lips.

Roderigo

Coachman to Claudius Giovanni, who made the young Italian a ghou. Roderigo has been bribed by the Founders into serving them, and, unbeknownst to Claudius, has been feeding information on the conspiracy to them while he feeds off the blood of the Giovanni.

Born: 1378 A.D.

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intrigue 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Training 3, Etiquette 2, Melee 3, Ride 4, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Heraldry 2, Kindred Lore 2, Occult 2, Theology 3

Disciplines: Potence 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 2, Resources 1

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 8

Image: A tall, ruddy-faced young man wearing coachman's leathers and a large wooden cross around his neck.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a gentle man, one who finds horses far more honorable souls than most men. You respect those few people who show compassion and concern for others, and you attempt to extend kindness to others as well.

Durga Syn (Synovea)

She knows that Cappadocius is planning his apotheosis, and that Claudius plots diablerie against Cappadocius to gain necromantic power. She does not know which fate would be worse, but is closely monitoring the situation.

She was born Synovea, but took the name Durga Syn when her Embrace turned her into an ugly hag. She has sworn to reclaim her birth name if she overcomes the curse, but sometimes uses it as an alias.

Clan: Ravnos

Generation: 5th

Embraced: 932 (born 857)

Apparent Age: Mid-70s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Fortune Telling 4, Instruction 3, Leadership 3, Sense Deception 5, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Cooking 3, Debate 4, Disguise 3, Herbalism 6, Lip Reading 3, Meditation 3, Melee 2, Ride 2, Sleight of Hand 7, Stealth 6

Knowledges: Astrology 4, Faerie Lore 5, Gypsy Lore 5, Kindred Lore 6, Lupine Lore 4, Naturalist 3, Spirit Lore 4

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 3, Chimerstry 5, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Necromancy 2, Obfuscate 4, Presence 2, Thaumaturgy 6 (Weather Control 5, Lure of Flames 3, Elemental Mastery 2)

Backgrounds: Age 3, Allies 6, Contacts 5, Elder Status 3, Influence 2, Status 3

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

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 9

Image: A twisted, bent old woman with thin hair and pinched features.

Roleplaying Hints: You usually pretend that you are senile, perhaps even doddering, and your appearance often lulls even those who should know better into believing that this is true. Whenever you choose, though, you speak brilliantly. You are always mysterious, and no one is ever certain where they stand with you. You still occasionally use archaic language when you speak, perhaps because you long for days of yore.

Notes: See **Who's Who Among Vampires: Children of the Inquisition** for more information on Durga Syn.

Paul

The crippled soldier is exactly what he says he is.

Born: 1421

Apparent Age: Early 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 1

Skills: Melee 2, Ride 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Politics 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 1

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

Humanity: 8

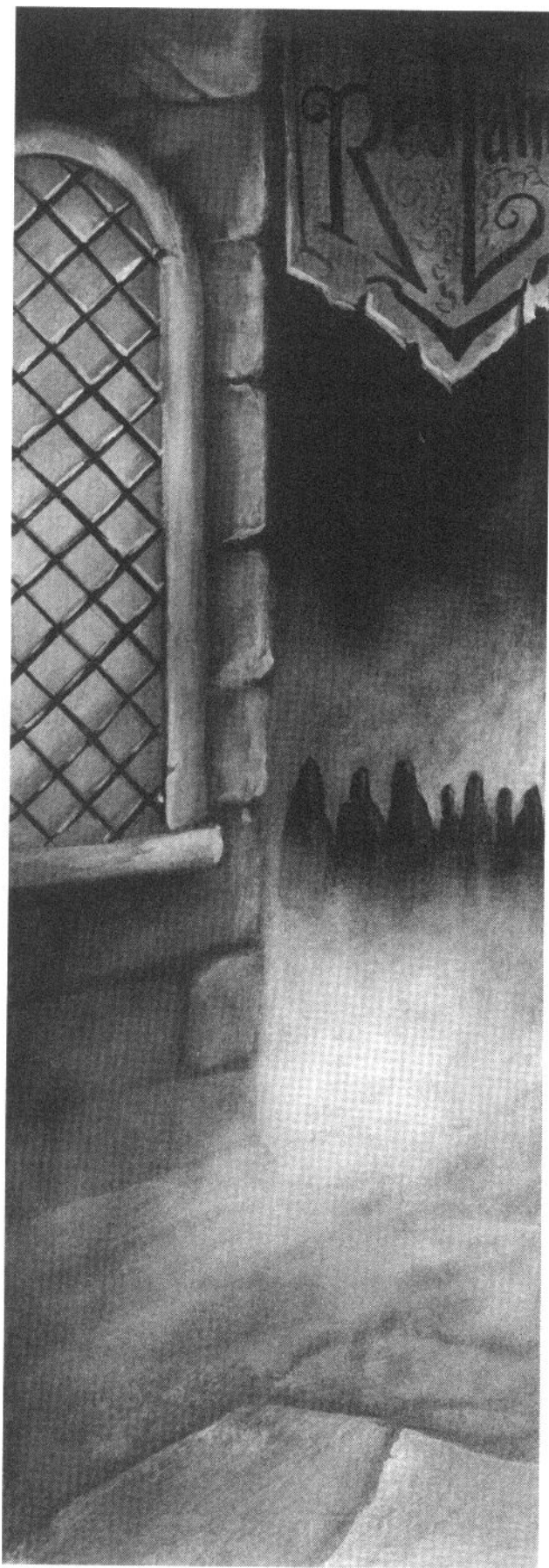
Willpower: 3

Image: A young man just beginning to show the worry plaguing his life.

Roleplaying Hints: You live to serve, and only friendships mean more to you than service.

Sigismund and Brother Clement

These characters have little direct influence on the story and their physical characteristics are not important. Sigismund is a Lumpenprole innkeeper with a good heart and a deep fear and mistrust of Lord Giovanni. His trust can be won with persistence. Brother Clement should be considered your normal, run-of-the-mill fanatic.



Scene 2: Cocktail Conversation

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.

— Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

The Coach Trip

The next day the guests assemble, and in the early afternoon, Roderigo and an assistant come to the Red Lamb Inn to transport all 13 guests to the Giovanni manse in two crowded coaches. The carriages are ornate, with gilded trim, but the expensive look is marred by heavy shutters fastened over the windows. "For protection in case of brigand attack," the coachman explains, as he unbolts and forces open the shutters to let in light and air.

Once the group is loaded into the coaches, he says "I will take great pains to ensure that the journey is as comfortable as possible." True to his word, Roderigo carefully sees to their comfort during the long ride, slowing the carriage over rough patches of road.

During the trip, a Wits + Awareness roll (difficulty 7) reveals three crucified bodies in the woods. If the characters inquire about it, Roderigo says, "Lord Giovanni is a stern master." If they persist, he adds, "Those people plotted against Lord Giovanni. Probably tried to avoid paying their rents."

After three hours, they arrive at the Giovanni holdings. It is twilight, just before sunset.

Casa Giovanni

The characters arrive at Lord Giovanni's manse just as the last blaze of sunlight fades into flickering embers. It is a massive, craggy manor house with an overgrown garden to the right and a graveyard to the left. The house is well fortified, with a single stout door and very few narrow windows, all protected by inner shutters. Four lightly armed sentries stand guard on the parapets. They wave to the coaches as they rumble up.

A soldier opens the massive oaken door, and Roderigo leads the 13 guests into the forbidding manor. They enter a long, narrow hallway, lit by tapers encased in strong, iron, cage-like housings. The candles provide only very dim light, and cast long, flickering shadows upon walls and faces. The soldier remains at his post and slams the door shut, closing Roderigo and the characters in with the gloom.

As the guests move down the darkened hall, they see that the right and left walls are fitted with arrow slots designed to catch invaders in a deadly crossfire. Evil gargoyle faces line the walls, leering stone-faced at the guests; they



appear to twitch ever so slightly in the flickering candlelight. (Storyteller note: these gargoyles are not supernatural, they are just carved stone. But why let the players know that?)

At the end of the long hallway, the guests find themselves facing another stout door. Roderigo pauses at the door, then raps loudly upon it. The door does not open. There is silence in the stale air of the shadowy hall. Roderigo raps again. Still no response. At this point the Storyteller may ask what the characters do. Although it is likely they will (and can) do nothing but wait, asking will build suspense and heighten the sense of being trapped in a dark and claustrophobic space.

After several minutes, the door creaks open as it is unlocked by a second soldier, accompanied by Lothar. The two men are standing in a large reception hall, also dimly lit by tapers, and furnished with oddly delicate furniture. Two successes on an Intelligence + Etiquette roll (difficulty 6) reveal that it is of Italian design. Three successes pinpoint it as a style that is the height of fashion in Venice.

Lothar glares at Roderigo and, without a word of greeting, sternly says, "You are early."

Roderigo doffs his hat, and says "A thousand pardons, Steward Lothar."

Lothar strikes Roderigo across the face with a riding crop. It draws blood, which Roderigo wipes from his face. "Bear keenly in mind the source of that blood," Lothar snaps.

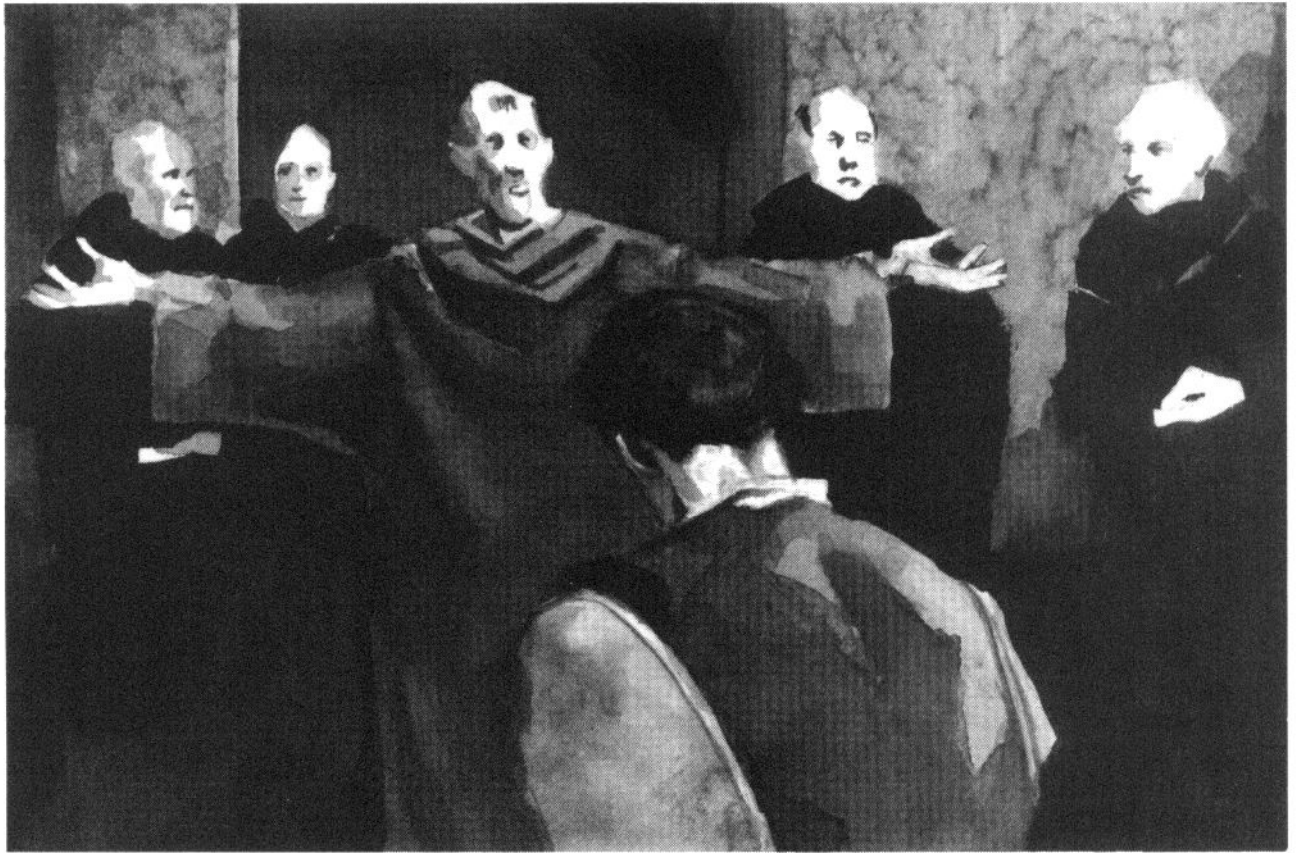
It is possible that one of the characters will stick up for Roderigo against this appalling treatment. If so, Roderigo

will be even more favorably disposed toward him and all the characters in general. Any intercession will not change Lothar's mind, however. He will scowl at the character for the rest of the scene, and take great delight in his torment during the upcoming scene.

"Now enter," Lothar says, gesturing to Roderigo and the guests. Once they are in the room, Lothar stops Roderigo. "As punishment, you will not partake of tonight's bounty. You will eat nothing but scraps. Now go," Lothar commands, pointing his blood-spattered riding crop toward the door. Roderigo turns and walks back down the hallway. The soldier then slams and locks the inner door.

Lothar stares after Roderigo for a moment and then turns to the guests and says, "Welcome to Lord Giovanni's manse. I have preparations to finish. Wait here." He departs, leaving the 13 guests with the soldier.

The characters are on their own for a few minutes, but are not allowed to really do anything. They are unable to leave the room, and stand in awkward silence. If they try to leave, the soldier will demand they return. If one successfully sneaks off, he will be caught by one of the ghouls, hog-tied, and not seen again until the dinner sequence. It should be made clear to the players that the guests are completely locked in. If the characters peer into the gloomy room, they can make out two more soldiers armed with crossbows standing on an upper balcony. This builds even more suspense and dread.



The Hosts

Five minutes later Lothar returns, smiling broadly. “Come with me. I shall introduce you to your hosts.” He leads the guests through the house. Walking through several more elegantly furnished rooms staffed with soldiers, the characters hear music ahead.

Lothar opens two ornate doors to a great dining hall, also dimly lit by a few ensconced tapers. Inside, 13 people sit around a large table, with an empty chair next to each.

Music

The Last Supper features two types of music. Giovanni has musicians Dominated into playing music of the Italian Renaissance on the most up-to-date instruments. If you wish enhance the mood of the dinner party, you can play this in the background. Since recordings of authentic 15th-century chamber music are often hard to find, you can get the same effect by playing anything by Montaverdi or Palestrina. Cappadocius has his followers sing unaccompanied Gregorian chants. The Storyteller may wish to begin playing chants to set the mood. One recent favorite called “Chant: The Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos” appeared on pop charts and should therefore be very easy to find.

They are a strange collection of men and women: well-dressed and slovenly, highly attractive and appallingly ugly, locals and foreigners alike. A short, paunchy, finely dressed man sits at the head of the table. Five servants (two butlers and three maids) stand motionless against the far wall.

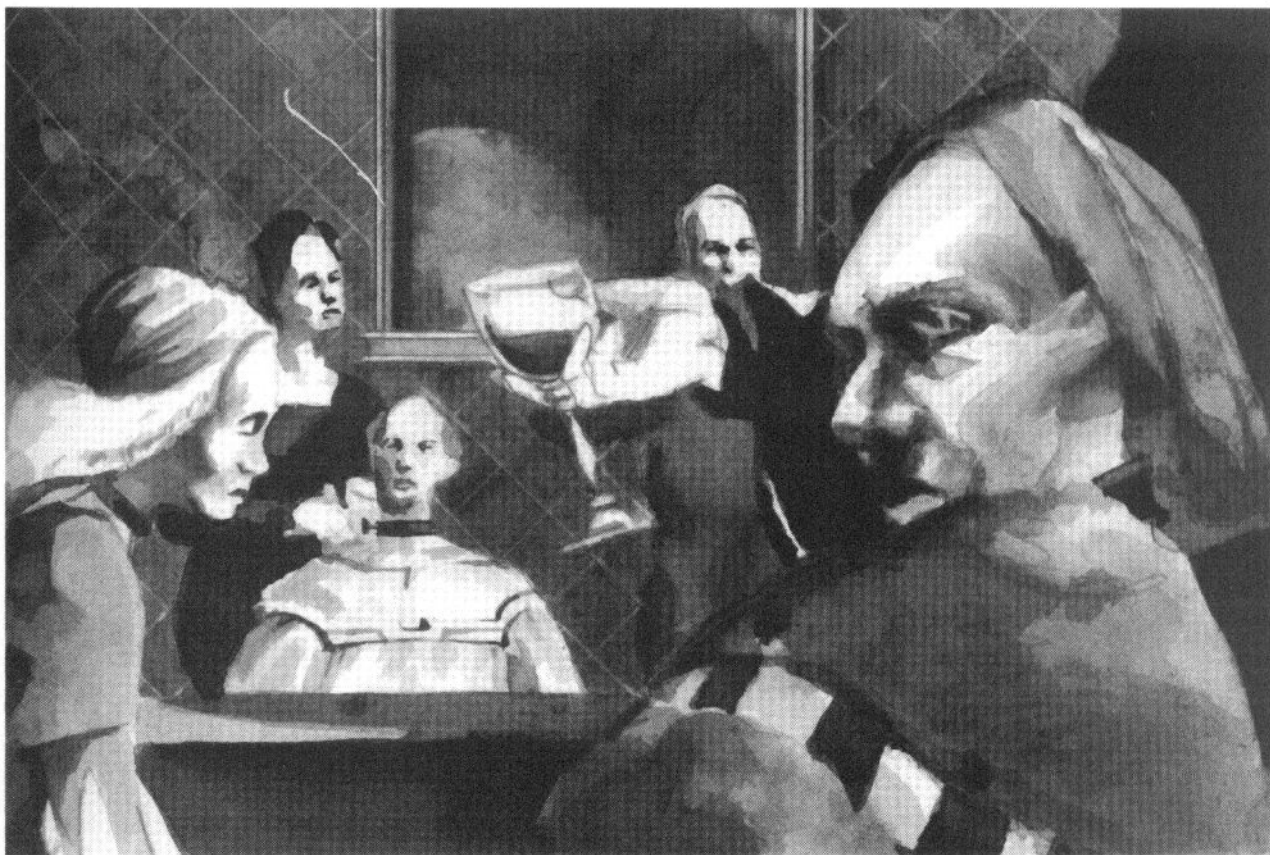
Lothar doffs his hat and bows low before the assembled hosts, saying, “Lord Giovanni, lords and ladies, it is with surpassing pride that I present to you the fruits of my long search. Here are 13 of the purest samples in the land!”

The man at the head of the table rises. “Dear friends, I am Claudius Giovanni. Welcome to *la bella casa* Giovanni! You are my guests, and while you are here, my home is your home. Come, come! Join us.”

As the characters step forward, the servants offer them glasses of wine. Giovanni says, “Let us toast the most memorable meal of your lives.” As the characters lift their goblets, he continues: “Here’s to the finer things in life.”

After the characters drink, Giovanni introduces the other 12 nobles. (Use the handy reference list provided, which summarizes each conspirator’s name and appearance. Do not mention their clans.) The hosts rise and advance to greet their guests.

“We would know you better. Conversation is like fine wine. It enhances the appetite. Let us converse while we anticipate our dinner,” Giovanni says.



The Conspirators

Claudius Giovanni: Short, stout man with elegantly tailored clothes and skull pendant. Giovanni.

Marchettus the Bold: Tall, broad-shouldered man with a thick red beard and battered but well-oiled leather armor. Brujah.

Lady Dimitra: Tall, sinewy woman wearing a traveling cloak and man's breeches. Gangrel.

Matron Violetta: Hideous woman, partly hidden under a thick gray leper's cloak and hood, wearing a full face mask with ragged eye-holes and a smelly wet spot in front of her mouth. Leprous scabs can be seen around her eyes. Nosferatu.

Lady Theophana: Slender, tall woman-child, about 16 years old, with waist-length blonde hair and torn, soiled, silken gown. Decayed floral arrangement in her hair. Malkavian.

Sire Wenceslas: Stern-faced old man dressed in royal purple tunic, leggings and feathered cap. Dripping with elegant, expensive jewelry. Toreador.

Lord Casmir: Portly man with a large white beard, wearing black robe with silver trim. Tremere.

Lady Jadviga Almanov: Heavyset woman with dark red hair and a completely black dress. Ventrue.

Lord Leopold Valdemar: Bald middle-aged man dressed like a prosperous merchant in brocaded velvet. Lasombra.

Lord Mieczyslav (pronounced MEE-cha-slav): Handsome young man wearing a simple black monk's robe with white surplice. Tzimisce.

Lord Bajazet Al-Nasir: Dark-skinned man with angular, chiseled features, in fine, silk Turkish robes. Assamite.

Lady Amisa: Swarthy woman draped in silks of foreign design and an elaborate gold headpiece. Follower of Set.

Gabrin: Short young man dressed as a Gypsy, with lots of flashy gold jewelry and a coarse tunic and leggings. Ravnos.



Predators and prey may now mingle and talk. These conversations can overlap, with the Storyteller switching between the Kindred he is playing. This scene works particularly well in live-action, because the Storyteller does not have to switch roles and the conversations can join one another.

The Harrowing

The vampires are interested in studying the guests, and play sadistic parlor games with them. They approach hungrily, like Casanovas relishing a calculated seduction. The Kindred casually talk to their prey, tantalizing themselves and building their anticipation, bringing their appetites to a peak. The idea is that the longer they restrain themselves, the greater their pleasure will be upon finally feasting.

The hosts quickly choose favorites — guests for whose blood they most hunger. Their decision is not based on actual blood taste, of which they have no evidence, but rather on personality and behavior. So the Kindred try to find out all they can about their prey, in a corrupt social ritual that perversely combines measures of flirtation, cocktail conversation and wine tasting.

As the vampires begin to pair up with their prey, they interact with them based on mutual interest. It is likely that the characters have some relation to the clan chosen by their player, but this is not necessary. The vampire of the

appropriate clan will seek them out all the same. Note that the elders are not seeking compatible humans as potential progeny, but in hopes that the blood of a similar person will taste sweeter.

The vignettes that follow describe the particulars of the harrowing used by each vampire to torment her prey. They may be played out one by one with all the players present, but for additional mystery and suspense, the Storyteller may wish to sequester each player, so no one has an inkling of what's in store.

Each vignette ends when dinner is ready. Run them in turn, but do not resolve them all are completed. Leave each player in suspense about the final outcome while you run the next. After all have been resolved, a servant comes to collect each vampire and guest for dinner.

For best results, plan the vignettes ahead of time and tailor each vignette to each character. The better you plan, the more flexible you can be with player input, and the more fun you can have in each vignette.

Optional vignettes detail the efforts of some vampires to compete for the attention of the same characters. Some get greedy and seek to sample the merchandise ahead of time. You can portion out these additional vignettes as you see fit to add color to the encounters.

If any character tries to stop the harrowing or complains to Lord Giovanni, the necromancer just laughs and tells her to behave herself. This gives the characters a taste of the viciousness to come.

Clan Vignettes

Use the vignettes that correspond to the clans of the characters and ignore the rest. Non-player characters will return to the dinner table shaken and upset at the end of the scene.

Brujah: Marchettus the Bold

At the start of the conversation, Marchettus seeks to determine if the character has the heart of a revolutionary. "I think all kings need to be fed the entrails of their ministers and the testicles of their heirs, and then have their hearts cut out. They are canker sores on the arse of the world, don't you think?" If the character disagrees, Marchettus launches into a long diatribe likening kings to parasites. If the character shows any sign of sympathy, Marchettus engages him in conversation about rebellion and techniques for the destruction of the established order. Note that this sort of conversation is blasphemous to the medieval mind: though many people held such attitudes, it is an act of breathtaking heresy to freely voice them, especially in the company of nobles. You may wish to remind the player of this.

In the midst of the conversation, Marchettus looks around the room and scowls, saying, "Look at this pack of false-hearted fops! Their pretension and insincerity leave a foul stench that lingers in the room like flatus. Let's inflict

some damage on this gaudy, gilded trash." His eyes twinkle with wicked intent as he leads the character off to other rooms to smash delicate vases, carve rude sayings into furniture, etc.

If the character refuses to vandalize the place, Marchettus taunts him: "Coward. Don't you detest these elitist swine? Don't you think they deserve it?" He is willing to forestall this destruction for a good conversation about rebellion, but if the character does not comply, Marchettus will go off on his own. Before dinner, the soldiers will approach the character and bring him to Lord Giovanni. Marchettus accuses the character of vandalism and says "I tried to stop him, but he was adamant."

Giovanni pretends to believe Marchettus, and says to the character, "Why should I not tear your heart out where you stand and feast on your life's blood?" The character must beg for his life. Regardless of what he says, though, Giovanni declines to kill him. "I'll wait till after dinner to decide," he says coldly.

If the character goes along with Marchettus, he must make two standard Stealth successes to avoid being heard by the guards and getting caught; otherwise, the above conversation with Giovanni will occur. If he's not caught, Marchettus begins to gain respect for him — but not enough to keep from wanting to drink his blood.

The harrowing ends when a servant walks in on them, ignoring the destruction, and intones "Dinner is served."





Gangrel: Lady Dimitra

At the start of the conversation, the Gangrel tries to find out if the character loves the outdoors. “Nothing do I love more than galloping through a wood in full pursuit of game. Do you like hunting? Do you savor the chase and the kill?” If the character shows any interest, she talks about the joys of the rugged, outdoor life.

Partway through the conversation, Lady Dimitra says, “These narrow walls and cramped ceilings are poor surroundings after the endless expanse of the wilds. What say you we climb the roof of this place and howl at the moon?”

If the character refuses, Lady Dimitra overpowers and muffles her, then carries her swiftly to the roof. There the Gangrel chases the character over the sloping roofs of the manse, growling and laughing. If the character does not try to evade, Lady Dimitra will cuff her until she runs. The more the character tries to flee, the happier the Gangrel is, and the less damage she will inflict.

Regardless, Lady Dimitra will not cause serious harm. She enjoys watching the character’s misery. If necessary, she will move quickly to prevent the character from plummeting to her death. If the character enjoys the chase, the Gangrel will begin to have respect for her. Not enough to resist draining her blood later, but enough to begin to trust her in Act II.

The harrowing ends with a servant popping up from a narrow window in front of the character, saying “Dinner is served.” Lady Dimitra says, “Come along,” and leaps into the window. If the character tries to escape the manse, the Gangrel runs her down and drags her back inside.

Malkavian: Lady Theophana

Lady Theophana’s actions depend on the Malkavian-to-be character. If he is described as already being deranged, Lady Theophana will draw him aside and attempt to trigger the Derangement. For example, if the character has a phobia, she will trigger the phobic reaction by creating a frightening situation. She will do the same with delusions, split personalities or whatever the character suffers from. Once the character’s Derangement takes over, Lady Theophana laughs hysterically until Giovanni’s servants come to collect them for dinner. The character must find a way to pull himself back together before the meal.

If the character does not yet have a Derangement, Lady Theophana will try to create one in him. She stares, bug-eyed, into the character’s eyes, saying, “You are a fraud, aren’t you, my friend? You are an utterly false, black-hearted villain. I can see how you counterfeit to appear true of heart, but you do not fool me.” She then hits him with her Dementation Discipline. The victim goes unconscious and has nightmares of blood, death and an eternal agonizing afterlife, until he is awakened for dinner.

Nosferatu: Matron Violetta

The Nosferatu seeks out her quarry on the basis of similar attitudes, and tries to find common ground with the character by establishing whether she is a loner or an outcast. When she reaches the Nosferatu-to-be, she says, "All these lovely people with their lovely perfumes and lovely clothes are an abomination. Their prettiness is wretched and ugly in my eyes. Wouldn't you agree?"

"They're all in disguise, every one of them. None of them are willing to appear as they really are. All of them know that their true selves are horrors, but they will not admit it."

If the character agrees, Matron Violetta leads her away from the crowd to a side room. If not, she Dominates the character into going. Either way, she continues the conversation.

Once she has privacy, she says, "I would tear out my eyes and peel off my skin to keep from looking like those preening dandies. Wouldn't you?" The character will likely decline. Matron Violetta remains undaunted, and presses forward. "Beauty is a mask. A deadly mask. Your soul boils with ugly sores and deep, festering wounds. Why hide them from the world?"

She closes in and grips the character's face. "Don't hide your disease. It is too lovely to disguise under a flawless face. Wear your vile inner self on the outside!" Using the Thaumaturgy power of Disfigurement (Corruption), she smears her hand over the character's face, which melts under her touch and then solidifies in a horribly distorted manner.

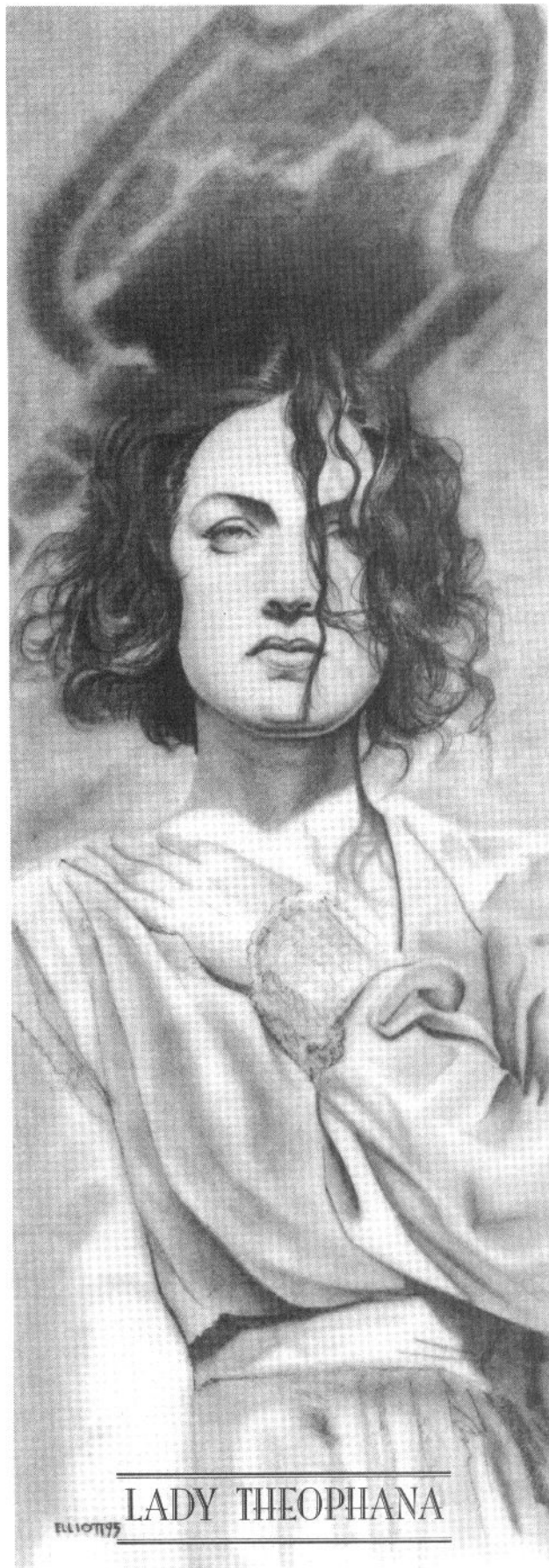
The vampire holds up a mirror, to taunt her guest with her new looks. If the character runs away screaming, the Nosferatu will leave her disfigured throughout dinner. But if she stays, Matron Violetta continues to make the character's face more and more grotesque. Several times she makes the character very attractive, and then takes great delight in turning her hideous again.

Finally, a servant enters and says, "Dinner is served." Matron Violetta restores the character's original features and escorts her, arm in arm, to dinner. "I hope you now understand how fleeting and transitory beauty is. And how worthless."

Toreador: Sire Wenceslas

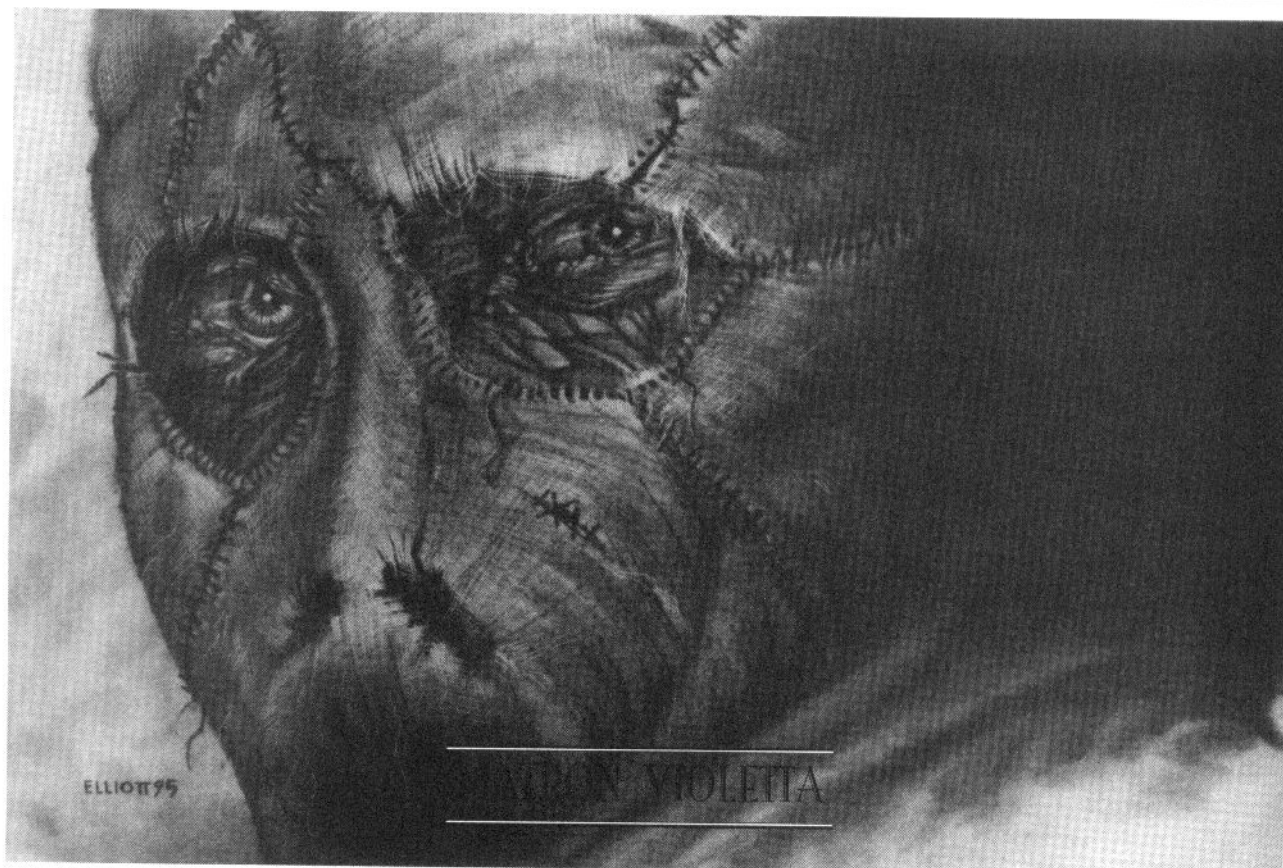
The Toreador character attracts Sire Wenceslas, who draws him aside, casually chatting about art. His approach is a combination of domineering mentoring and sexual come-on, regardless of his quarry's gender.

Wenceslas cups the character's face in his hands and says, "You are most lovely. You have special qualities that call to me. Are you an artist?" He attempts to persuade the character to admit to and show off artistic talents. "Well, show me what you can do. Come, dazzle me! Sing for your supper."



LADY THEOPHANA

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He gives the character a chance to perform, providing any artistic supplies needed, like paint and canvas, stone and sculptors tools, or any necessary musical instrument. If the character refuses, Sire Wenceslas uses Entrancement (Presence) to compel him.

Unless the character is brilliant, Wenceslas is unimpressed and berates the character mercilessly. "You call that great? You haven't the right to call yourself an artist. You are a disgrace. A pretender in the halls of the Muses!" Then he again cups the character's face and draws him closer. "But I could make you GREAT!" he says in an intense whisper. "Would you like that?"

Regardless of the character's answer, Wenceslas commands him to begin again. While the character is performing, Wenceslas smashes the wine goblet in his hand. He then cuts the character with the jagged shards. For example, he may throw the glass beneath the bare feet of a dancing character or slash his legs, or cut the neck and lips of one who is singing. If the character is painting, he replaces the brush with a handful of broken crystal, so the character ends up finger painting in his own blood and bits of glass.

Wenceslas laughs and raves "More! MORE! Commitment! Commitment and pain! That's what makes great art! Embrace your pain! It glorifies the Creator! God created the Earth in pain. Mothers issue forth their get in pain. And you must bring forth your art from the depths of pain and anguish! I could make you GREAT, but first I must make your suffering even greater!"

If the character objects to this treatment, Wenceslas uses Entrancement to keep him going. But if the character actually allows himself to be cut, Wenceslas has renewed respect for him.

Eventually Giovanni's servants end the art session with a call to dinner. They impassively bandage the character before any serious blood loss sets in, but he is weakened for the rest of the scene.

Tremere: Lord Casmir

It is likely that the Tremere-to-be has some affinity for, or interest in, magic. Remember that such interests were very common in the Middle Ages, if not always expressed openly.

Lord Casmir stares intently into the character's eyes, and says in a loud whisper, "Art thou knowing? Art thou wise in the ways of the other world? Dost thou follow the left-hand path?"

He soon clarifies this. "Dost thou ken magic? Dost know of the powers Thaumaturgical?"

The character may agree enthusiastically, or she may profess ignorance. Lord Casmir continues. "Dost thou seek knowledge of the forbidden arts? The black road? I can show thee the way ... "

If the character is not interested, Lord Casmir hits her with the Thaumaturgy power of Cripple (Corruption). While the character is paralyzed from the waist down, Lord

Casmir says, "That is the price of thine ignorance, thy pathetic, sniveling ignorance. Wallow in it like a swine!" He gloats over the helpless character until dinner.

If the character expresses interest in Lord Casmir's offer, the vampire says, "The black arts are perverse and corrupting. I will show thee. Walk across the room and turn left." When the character attempts to do so, Lord Casmir uses the Contradict power (Corruption) to make her turn right.

Next, Lord Casmir holds up a large bowl of water and says, "Do not plunge thy head into this bowl." He then compels the character to do so until she nearly drowns, but pulls her out at the last minute.

Lord Casmir then leads the character up through the mansion to one of the upper windows and opens the casement. He places her on the narrow ledge and laughs. "If thou wouldst know of the Mysteries, you must trust me!" If the character refuses to go or tries to flee, he Cripples her until dinner. If the character trusts him, he has her stare down into certain death until dinner, saying, "I could compel thee to jump at any time. Thy life is but a flickering candle flame in my hands."

Leave Lord Casmir and the character there and run all the other vignettes, then return to this scene. The vampire says, "Now it is thy time to leap into the yawning-" A servant appears behind him, saying "Dinner is served." Lord Casmir smiles and says, "Perhaps thou mayst leap after dinner."

As an optional encounter, Lord Casmir and the character may see Lady Dimitra savagely chasing the Gangrel-to-be across the rooftops. He shakes his head in disgust. "Coarse, savage simpletons. No imagination."

Venture: Lady Jadviga Almanov

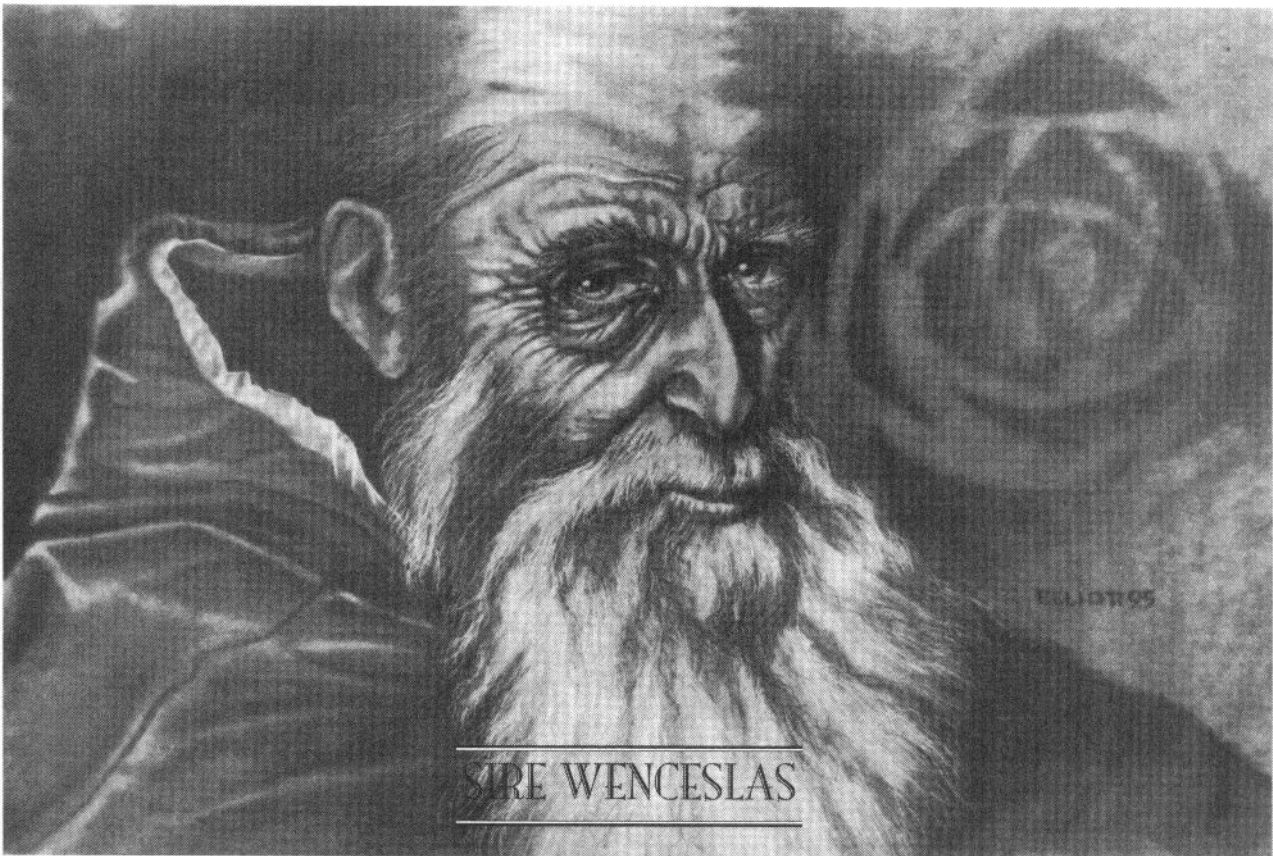
Lady Jadviga offers the character expensive brandy. "I import it from the Orient. Quite delicious and rare. Leaders deserve only the best. Don't you agree?"

She continues, "You seem like a man among men (or woman among women). A leader. Are you of good breeding?"

After the character answers, she says, "High birth and genteel breeding are not the most telling virtues, though they are important. Inner nobility and the will to command others are far more important. I have met many an ineffectual, useless noble and more than a few fine leaders who were born of mean station. Which are you?"

The character must make a case for his own worth as a leader. "We shall soon see," Jadviga says. She fetches a young servant of the opposite gender from the character, and commands the servant to kneel. Jadviga then hands the character a whip and says, "Show me you are fit to command others."

If the character refuses to beat the servant, Lady Jadviga becomes enraged. "Then you are one of the sheep, and not a lion at all!" She Dominates the character into accepting the servant's punishment, and will not stop until he is injured.





LADY JADVIGA ALMANOV
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If the character accepts, the servant looks at him piteously, silently imploring the character not to do this thing. Lady Jadviga shouts “More! More!” as the servant moans in pain, as blood seeps through her thick blouse. Eventually the servant slumps into a miserable heap, bleeding profusely. The vampire becomes highly aroused at the sight. Finally, after a good 20 minutes, the servant falls unconscious. Nevertheless, Lady Jadviga insists that the character deal out seven more blows.

At the end of the beating, the servant lies very still, as if dead. (The character must make a Perception + Medicine roll (difficulty 7) to know for sure that he has not murdered the servant.) Lady Jadviga then hands the character a bit of bread. “Dip it in the blood, and taste. A commander of men must not fear the spilling of blood.”

If the character refuses, or stops the beating at any time, Lady Jadviga commands the servant to flog the character instead. If the character changes his mind at this point, she refuses to give him a second chance, saying, “In this vale of tears one must flog or be flogged. Compassion is weakness that must be beaten out of you.”

Almanov has him beaten.

The character will have to make up to three Conscience rolls during this sequence to avoid losing Humanity — once if he beats the servant, once when the servant passes out and once for consuming the blood.

Once this is over, a servant comes to fetch them for dinner. Lady Jadviga either respects the character’s sadism and compromised virtues, or loathes him for cowardice. Either way, she will enjoy the taste of him.

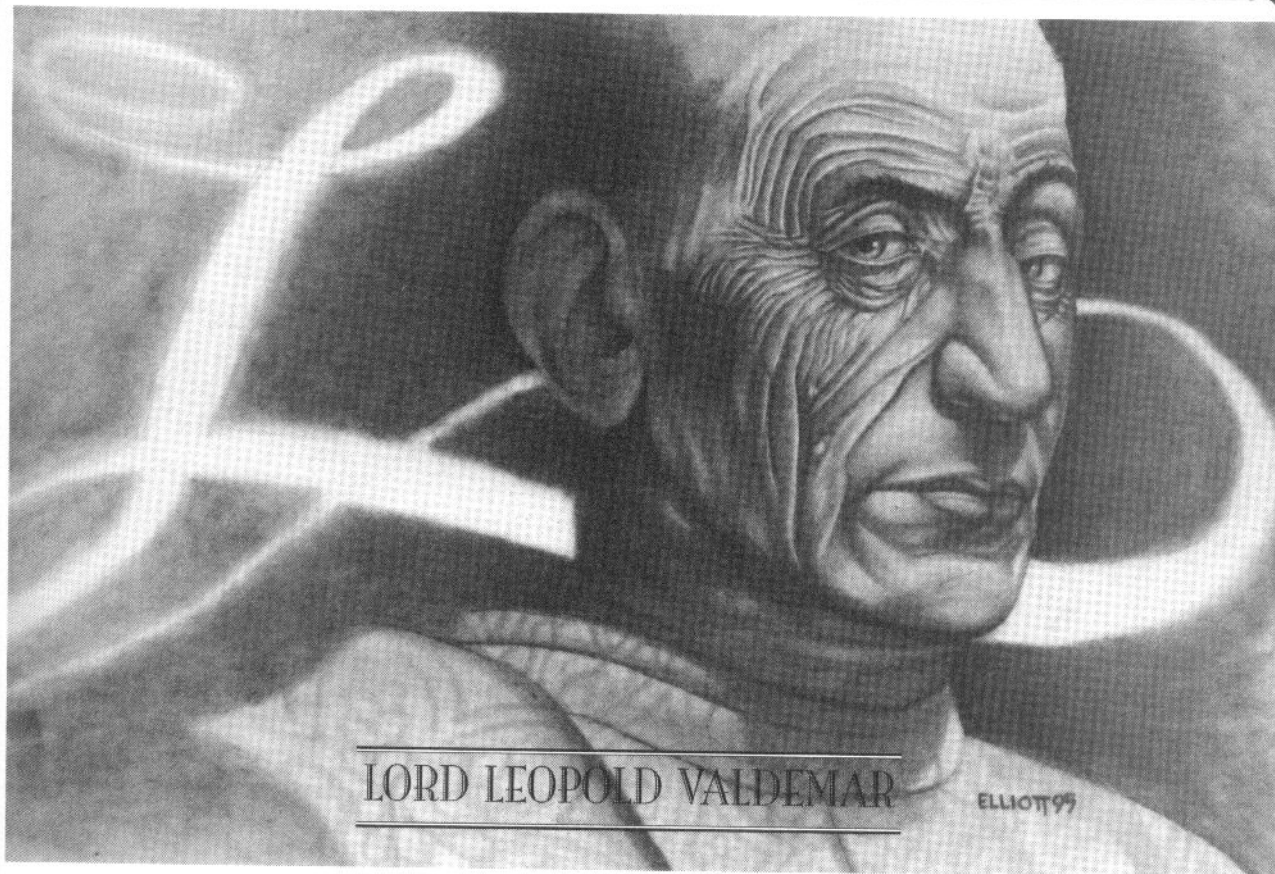
Lasombra: Lord Leopold Valdemar

Lord Valdemar corners the character somewhere away from the others, using his body to block the character’s return to the party. He begins questioning the character, asking a series of seemingly irrelevant questions. “What makes the sun rise? What do you think of Aristotle? Why do birds sing? Is it better to be feared or abhorred? What is life?”

The player may answer these in any way she likes, but she must make a Wits + Stealth roll (difficulty 7) to notice that the shadows are slowly creeping up around her. Valdemar refuses to let her leave the area, and as his questioning continues, the shadows move over the character’s feet, up her legs and over her chest, finally covering her completely and leaving her unable to see anything.

During this process, Valdemar’s questions become more Zen-like. “Is light more than the absence of dark? Who is your shadow? Why is darkness?”

If the character becomes flustered during this process and gives less-than-satisfactory answers to the questions, Valdemar uses Arms of the Abyss (Obtenebration) to hold the character in the darkness and walks off. She will not be released until dinner is ready.



Tzimisce: Lord Mieczyslav

(MEE-cha-slav)

Lord Mieczyslav takes the character aside and says, "Tell me how you believe your enemies should be treated." If the character doesn't understand, or asks for clarification of this odd request, Mieczyslav adds, "If you have your enemy at your mercy, what do you believe should be done with him?"

The vampire is trying to determine if the character believes in forgiveness. If the character shows any hint of forbearance, he snaps: "Mercy is a trick that great men invented to keep the weak from interfering. No truly great man is merciful. Enemies must be crushed. Potential enemies must be kept wounded and weak. Don't you agree?"

If the player defined his future Tzimisce character as already corrupt, he will likely agree with Lord Mieczyslav's bloodthirstiness, and suggest tortures.

Whatever the response, the vampire leads the character down into the wine cellars. In one dank, cold room, a naked man is chained up against the wall, his body covered with old and new wounds. Torture devices surround him.

"This is a spy for my enemies. Show me how you would deal with him."

If the character tries to avoid torturing the stranger, Lord Mieczyslav uses Dominate to force him. The only way the character can stop the process is to discuss dealing with

enemies, perhaps arguing something Machiavellian like "great men need to be feared, but must avoid being hated." The only thing Mieczyslav likes more than inflicting pain is arguing, and he will allow the torture to stop for as long as the character can keep his interest. Roleplay it out. In the end, Mieczyslav leaves the stranger alive.

If the character tortures the stranger, the man begs for mercy, crying out that he is innocent. He insists that he is a simple peasant who was captured by the guards for the sport of the powerful. "They are demons!" he insists. "They are not living men!" The character must make a Conscience roll to avoid losing Humanity.

The stranger is in fact a spy for the Founders. He will appear in Act II when the characters are interrogated. If the character kills him now, he will later be held accountable for the death by the Founders.

Assamite: Lord Bajazet Al-Nasir

Lord Bajazet Al-Nasir walks slow circles around his quarry as he talks, and asks her, "Do you like death?" The character may not know how to answer this.

Al-Nasir continues, "Have you made your peace with her? Can you kill without fear? Could you die without fear?" The character must come up with a quick answer. Stalling will just draw Al-Nasir's wrath.

If the character answers in the negative, the vampire says, "Then there is only one way to assist you in reaching that greatest of goals. We must play the game of death." If



the character answers by saying yes, Al-Nasir says, "Then let us play the game of death. And I hope, for your sake, that you spoke the truth."

The assassin continues, "Our game shall be in two parts. First, you must hunt me. I shall enjoy this little celebration, and stay in only the public rooms. You must come close enough to me to kill me without my seeing you. If I see you, you must leave my sight immediately and try again.

"We shall play for 15 minutes. If you can reach me in any way within that time, you have won, and the game stops. If you fail, it is my turn to hunt you. You are not restricted to the public areas, but may travel as far as you can. I have only five minutes to reach you unseen. If I come close enough to kill you within that five minutes—" he smiles "—then kill you I shall."

He turns over a massive hourglass, and the sands begin running. "Now go!"

The sand will continue to run if the character asks questions. Al-Nasir will restate the rules, but will not clarify them further. If the character complains to Lord Giovanni or one of his staff members, the necromancer and his associates will not stop the game, but merely laugh at the character's plight.

The Assamite then wanders from room to room, watching other harrowings and mingling with the soldiers and servants. It is all but impossible to sneak up on Al-Nasir, but there is a simple way to win. If the character has

a servant or another character help her, she can deliver a message to the assassin saying, "I have just poisoned you," or "The bearer of this note has stabbed you in the back." She could even leave a package in a room labeled: "This is a cannon which has killed you."

Any imaginative solution will please the assassin enough to call off the game, and spend the rest of the pre-dinner time laughing with the character.

However, if the character fails, Al-Nasir quickly finds her. He pulls a small hourglass from his robe and says "You have five minutes to live. Now go."

No matter what the hapless character does or where she goes, Al-Nasir will catch her in a minute or two, by Obfuscating. If the character creates an uproar by insisting that she is about to die, Al-Nasir uses Cloak the Gathering (Obfuscate) to spirit her away. He chokes her to unconsciousness, but does not kill her. She will wake up at dinner, facedown at the table.

The Followers of Set: Lady Amisa

Lady Amisa wants to corrupt her prey before she feasts on him. She wants to make him abandon his connection to life and goodness. If he is already corrupt, she will tempt him with the ultimate perversity: his own death wish.

Lounging on velvet cushions, she offers her prey wine, and strikes up a conversation about that which is good and holy. She uses Entrancement (Presence) to ensure that the

character tells the truth. She says, "I do so abhor trivial conversation at these celebrations. The hour has grown too late for talking falsely. Don't you agree?"

She waits for agreement, then asks, "What do you find good and worthwhile?" The character can choose from a range of answers, from religion to kindness to greed. Lady Amisa listens carefully, asking questions designed to draw out more information about her prey. "What do you mean by that?" "What about love for another?" "What about survival?" "For what price would you compromise each one?"

Once she has established what is valuable to her prey, Lady Amisa says "Let us put that to the test." Rising from her pillows, she leads the character down into the basement to one of the lowest rooms in the manse. It is pitch black, save for the meager light from a small, flickering candle on a table. The character can barely make out large shapes in the dark of the room.

If the character has previously expressed reverence for life, Lady Amisa draws forth from the darkness a cat and a mallet. She hands the mallet to the character, and says "Would you care to bludgeon the cat?" She does not use Presence to compel obedience. If the character declines, she offers him a gold coin. If he continues to refuse, she offers him a bag of gold coins.

If he refuses the gold, she snaps her fingers, and a very attractive servant of the opposite gender from the character steps forward. "This servant is adept at pleasure. You may have the use of his/her charms. Forever. Just for striking the cat."

If the character still resists, Lady Amisa smiles, saying, "You tantalize me. I have never beheld one who is so formidable a challenge. I give you one final offer. I have recently inherited a duchy in Austria. I care not for the climate, and will soon give it away. You may have it, the land, the treasury and the title of duke. In return for one cat."

If the character still refuses, she scowls. "Foolish mortal," she whispers. "Your purity disgusts me. Your regard for other life has cost you your own." She grabs the character and drags him to a coffin. Sealing him in, she throws the coffin into a dank hole in the center of the room. The character can hear heavy clods of earth landing on the lid. He character remains buried alive for another 20 minutes and must make a Self-Control roll (difficulty 6) to avoid gaining a claustrophobia-related Derangement. Finally servants dig him out, saying, "Dinner is served. The honor of your company is requested."

If at any point the character agrees to kill the cat, Lady Amisa gives him the prize — the gold, the servant or the promise of the duchy. She is not sincere, and will not let him keep or use the gift.

Lady Amisa then increases the stakes. She drags a coffin out of the darkness. A servant lies inside, bound and gagged. She hands the character a shovel and says, "Bury him alive." If the character objects, she says, "Why do you hesitate? He's no more than a cat, after all." If the character still refuses, she asks, "What would you require? What is your price?" Lady Amisa will agree to just about any price other than her own death, since she is not sincere about





keeping any promise. If the character continues to refuse, Lady Amisa forces the character into the coffin and buries him, as described above.

If the character agrees to bury the servant alive, Lady Amisa laughs while he drops the coffin into the hole in the floor. When he is finished, she caresses him, saying, "You have tasted a hint of death twice this evening. You must hunger for the real thing. The main course. You must be ready for your own death. Would you like to know what it is like?" If the character refuses, she uses *Obsession* (*Serpentis*) to give him a fixation on dying, and then buries him alive. He stays there until the servant comes for him. The *Obsession* wears off once he has been buried alive.

If the character actually agrees to taste death, she buries him alive with his cooperation. She is developing respect for him, and digs him up for dinner herself, rather than having a servant do it. She tenderly takes him by the arm and leads him upstairs, saying "You look exquisite with the shadow of death upon you!"

Ravnos: Gabrin

Gabrin glides in circles around his prey, smiling crookedly at her while casually flipping a small eating dagger back and forth between his hands. If the character is of Gypsy heritage, Gabrin begins the harrowing by asking about her family, her *kumpania*, and her heritage. He listens carefully to her answers, but does not respond to any of the character's questions about his own Romani background.

Gabrin speaks quite glibly as he maneuvers the character into a small, enclosed courtyard, saying, "Don't call me Lord Gabrin. I do not need titles to give my life meaning. Do you think titles give life meaning?" If the character answers in the negative, Gabrin laughs heartily and bites her sensuously on the mouth. If the character answers in the affirmative, he brings his dagger smartly down against her lip. Either way, Gabrin draws blood.

"And what do you think of the mysterious substance dribbling down your chin, my friend? Do you think of it as your most intimate, most sacred possession? Do you?" Gabrin wipes some of the blood from the character's chin as he speaks, rubbing his fingers back and forth until they are wet and sticky with the substance. If the character is a Gypsy, she should find this act extremely shocking.

Regardless of the character's response to his question, Gabrin continues to contemplate the blood smearing his fingers. "We Gypsies don't believe any mortal can own anything. We...humans...merely borrow from the Earth's bounty. No one has a superior claim to anything. Do you feel you need your blood? Well, what if I feel that I need your blood? What if we *all* have need of your life's fluid?"

As the character responds to Gabrin's words, the Ravnos uses *Horrid Reality* (*Chimistry*) to create images of ravening animals appearing over the walls, out of the ground and down from the sky. Lions, snakes, hawks, wolves, rats and more surround the character, all slaving for her blood. As Gabrin laughs, the animals begin, one at a time, to peck, nip and otherwise attack the character in a growing blood frenzy.

Just as the character feels she is going to lose consciousness, that the last of her precious flesh and blood are being torn from her, she hears the voice of a servant standing directly over her. "Dinner is served," the maid says, offering a hand to help the dazed character from the ground.

The character is not actually physically injured, although she has difficulty believing that she is actually undamaged. For days, perhaps even months, she will have sudden flashbacks in which she believes her flesh and blood have been torn away, and that she is about to die.

Optional Vignettes

The following vignettes are not clan-dependent. Use them as you see fit to further enrich and complicate the clan vignettes.

Competition for Affection

Choose a conspirator of the same clan as the character, and another who is of a clan not chosen by any of the players. Those two vampires both decide that all but one of the sacrificial lambs that Lothar has selected are sadly lacking in spirit. Unfortunately, they both focus on the same character. The Kindred compete for his affection, and each tries to charm that character into choosing her for a patron.

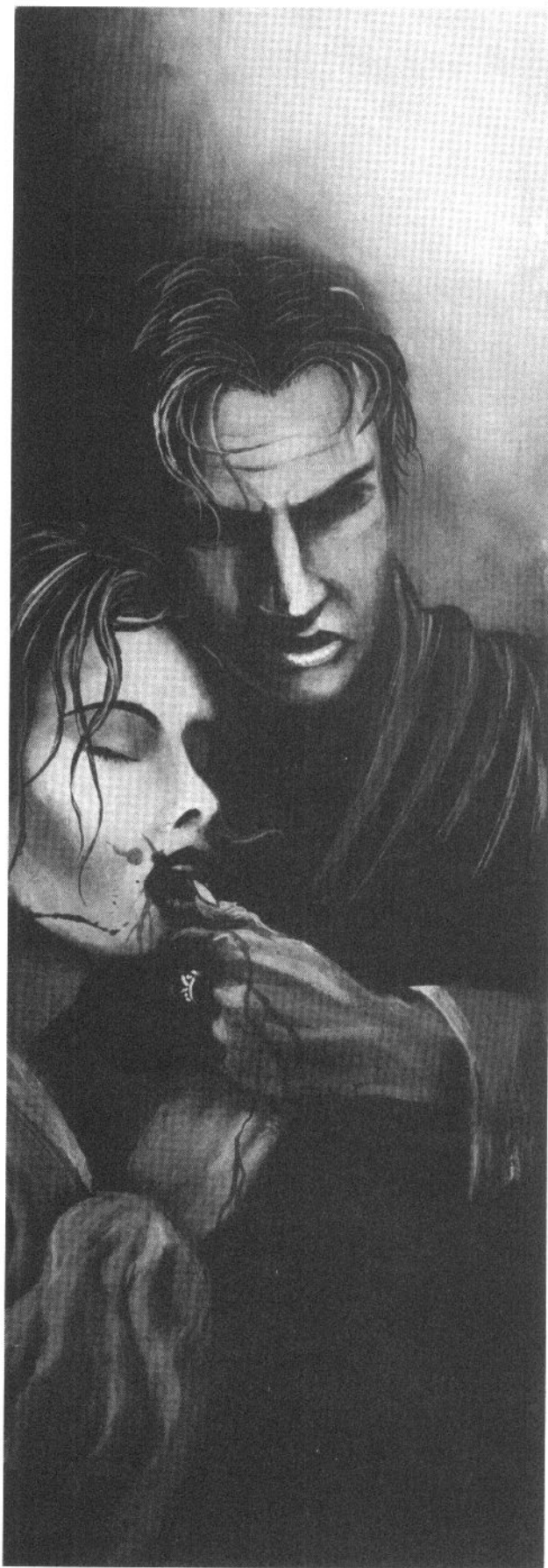
Trouble flashes between the two, and they make veiled threats. The character can try to defuse the tension by picking one, or by taking control and saying that he will decide later, based on how well they both behave.

If the character does not stop them, the vampires come to blows. Lord Giovanni quickly breaks up the fight, but the violence casts a pall over the evening. Three successes on a Perception + Brawl roll (difficulty 6) means the characters see that the fighting hosts moved with nearly impossible agility. The character being fought over sees this on one success.

The character might end up selecting the elder who is not of his own clan-to-be. After all, the player does not know the clans of the conspirators. This doesn't matter, however, because the elder of the proper clan will end up Embracing the character when the Founders attack.

The Overly Ardent Suitor

One vampire gets carried away with enthusiasm for her chosen sacrifice, and suggests a tryst. (The vampire and prey may be of either gender.) She seduces her chosen guest and suggests that they discreetly retire upstairs. If the character refuses, she offers bribes and riches. If the character continues to resist, she Dominates him and leads him up to an opulent bedroom. While they are removing their clothes, Lord Giovanni bursts in and stops the proceedings. He gently reproves the vampire, and apologizes to the character. He then escorts the two back to the dining hall. (This would be a good time for the fight in the "Competition for Affection" vignette to begin.)



Customized Harrowing

If a character has a unique history, a strange quirk or an interesting background, the Storyteller is encouraged to change details of the harrowing to fit the circumstances, or even create a custom-tailored harrowing to fit the character.

Also, if one of the unused vignettes sounds more interesting than the one designated to a player's clan, feel free to use it if it appeals to you more.

Wrapping Up Scene 2

Most of the harrowings end with the vampire and his victim summoned to dinner by a servant. In each case, the servant does not seem to notice or care about the horrifying scene. By this point, some characters may be unconscious: they are dragged to the table by servants and placed in their chairs with their heads on the table. Scene 2 ends when all the harrowings are over and all the characters are seated (conscious or unconscious) at the elegant dining table.

Scene 3: Dinner is Served

Dining-out is a vice, a dissipation of spirit punished by remorse.

— Cyril Connolly, *The Unquiet Grave*

Summoned to Lord Giovanni's Table

The table in the dimly lit dining hall is laid with expensive crockery in a manner befitting a prince. The room is abuzz with excitement. The hosts are very animated following the harrowings, and chatter eagerly with one another. If they were favorably impressed by qualities displayed by their victims, they also talk to the characters. The Kindred revel in the fun they have had thus far, and eagerly anticipate the revels and feasting still to come. Lothar scurries about the chamber, fussing over the settings and making sure everything is in order.

Bloody Mess Hall

As the hosts and victims assemble, the musicians play Claudius' theme. Lord Giovanni enters to a great chorus of cheers from the 12 lords and ladies. He takes his place at the head of the table, next to Marianna, a young woman from the traveling party.

(Marianna is the prey Lothar chose for Giovanni's dinner. She'll be drained first, and left for dead. But after the attack, Giovanni will give her blood to fight for him. She'll survive the Founders' attack, and go on to be the only Giovanni who was not born into the family, and a

major pain for the necromancers to boot. She will not join the coterie, but she may help it later.)

The hosts take their seats next, each seated next to his or her prey. Unconscious characters begin to wake up now. Any attempts to flee or fight (now or later) will be met with quick response, and the character Dominated into behaving properly. The Storyteller must keep track of who is Dominated, because the character who bides his time and resists the temptation to fight will have free will later in the story, when the Founders attack.

Lothar leads three servants pushing huge, steaming carts heaped high with platters of delicious-smelling food. Roast duck, suckling pig, haunches of beef and legs of lamb all produce a mouth-watering aroma that fills every corner of the room.

Toastmaster Claudius

Lady Jadviga rises and calls out above the clamor, "A toast! A toast to the brilliant one who brought us together for such a delightful evening! A toast to the leader who knew how to add flavor to our dining. A toast to the one clever enough to attack his own kin for our benefit! To Claudius Giovanni, and to the destruction of Japheth, son of Cappadocius!" A great cheer arises from the crowd. "Speech!" they cry.

Claudius rises, and motions for silence. The festive crowd takes its time in quieting, but soon the roar subsides.

"Welcome, welcome, my true friends," he begins. "Another year has passed and the Conspiracy of Isaac now stands on the threshold of victory. Your unflagging devotion to our cause has brought us to the brink of seizing Cappadocian power and wealth! I am in awe. Tonight I intend to reward that fidelity. Which brings us to our guests."

He gestures toward each of the characters. "Welcome, you who are new to our ranks. Let us talk about sustenance. Let us talk about the draught of life that sustains us.

"The smell of fine food entices and excites the palate, and makes the consumption all the more gratifying. Can you smell it? Does not the growing anticipation make the meal more and more desirable? This is the difference between the boorish peasant who devours his barley like a beast and the refined palate requiring cultivated sustenance. Anticipation. The circumstances of the meal are as important as the food itself. Consumption is a holy act, and each drop should be memorable.

"Only the finest food should be selected. The food should be tenderized. Prepared. The eater must have a relationship with his meal. Then when you bite a shred of flesh from your food, it's worth the blood you shed. Wouldn't our guests agree?" He looks pointedly at each character and awaits their reply. He will allow them to answer, and even give their opinions, before continuing. The more they say, the greater the impact from the imminent revelation that they are dinner.

Lord Giovanni glances toward the kitchen, and Lothar ushers in two servants dragging a large and noisy sheep to the table by a silken leash. The sheep pulls stubbornly against the servants. "He has spirit," says their host. "How unlike his breed. Well, my guests, here is your dinner." Take a moment for character reactions.

He takes a large ax from a servant, and holds it out to the guests. "Who among you shall have the honor of the kill?" (None of the non-player guests volunteer. It's up to the players' characters.)

"Come, come, did you want a temperate, bloodless dinner? Eating is destruction! Eating is death! And death is holy, as our Savior reminds us. Come!"

If no one volunteers, Claudius raises the ax over his head. "Then if none among you offer to create our dinner—" he swings the ax, smashing the head from the sheep in one blow, and spattering the assembled guests with blood. He looks up. "—then you shall become dinner." He continues with the speech below in "Revelations in Blood."

If any character volunteers, Lord Giovanni hands her the ax. She must inflict four Health Levels of damage to kill the sheep; any less causes it to scream piteously. A botch results in a bloody mess with the sheep running around and spurting blood.

When the sheep is dead, Claudius scoops an elegant goblet under the spurting neck and fills it. "Taste your kill!" He hands the goblet to the character who killed the sheep. If the character drinks, Lord Giovanni smiles a devilish leer. If any character refuses to drink, Claudius abruptly drenches him in the blood, shouting, "Wretched ingrate! How dare you! If you will not eat my dinner, then you shall become my dinner!" He continues with the speech below in "Revelations in Blood."

If all the characters drink, Lord Giovanni smiles evilly. "You are now one with your prey!" he says. "That connection is all there is! The relationship between predator and prey creates the flavor! The link between death and life creates the flavor!"

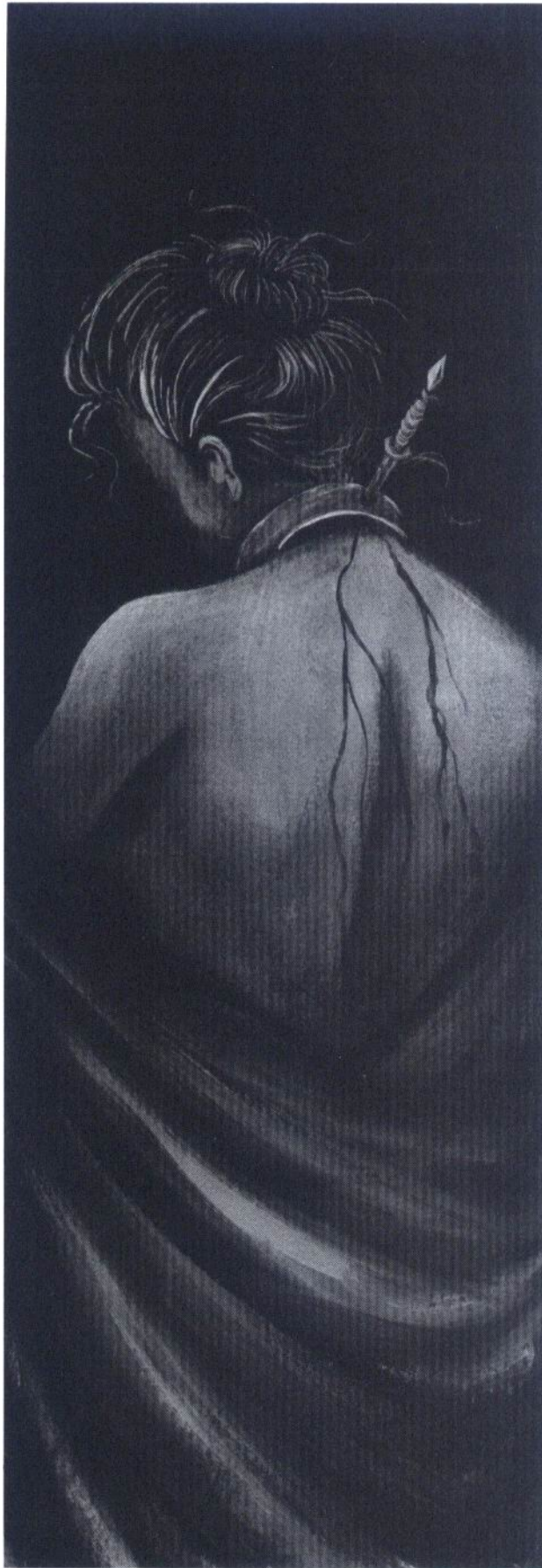
He puts his hand on the shoulder of the character who killed the sheep, saying, "And now I am hungry!" In one fast move, his fingernails rake along the character's neck, cutting ragged slashes in the skin. Blood begins to drip.

If the characters try to resist or run now or at any time, the rebellious ones are Dominated or otherwise forced into cooperating.

Revelations in Blood

"It is time we told you, our guests, our secret. *You* are *our* lambs. You are as food to us. You are not here to be served. You are here to be *served* to us!" He laughs heartily, and the other hosts titter politely. "You guests don't understand yet? You are to be our meal!" Pause for dramatic effect.





"We have tenderized you before dinner, and now you are ready to be eaten." He gazes into the eyes of the woman at his side (the guest Lothar chose for him) and says, "Marianna, ascend to the table." As if in a trance, Marianna steps up, shedding her gown as she glides, hypnotized, onto a huge, empty platter at the head of the table.

"The circumstances of the feeding impart a great flavor to the blood. How tawdry to violently attack our food before the kill. When prey is startled, its blood fills with a bitter acid that, in large amounts, is most distasteful. And yet to dull the victim into a submissive stupor creates a sluggishness of the blood. The blank-eyed prey whose soul has been crushed makes for a boring meal, one without spice."

Lord Giovanni clamps a metal collar around Marianna's neck. The collar has a single hole in it.

"So what is the solution to this epicurean dilemma? I thought to myself: a mere drop of the acid. A mere tinge of poison. Ergo: not shock, but a mild, sustained dread followed by sweet surrender. It excites the blood of the prey as it stimulates the soul of the predator. As terror builds without total panic, a drop of this savory zest is added to blood."

Lord Giovanni thrusts a jeweled dagger into the hole in Marianna's metal collar. As her crimson blood begins to flow, he inserts a keg tap into the hole. The flow stops. He neatly dabs the spilled blood off her neck with his embroidered linen napkin.

"Also, you must wait until the appetite comes over you, but before the ravaging hunger overwhelms you. Eating when full dulls the mind and senses. The eater must be prepared, and the eaten must be prepared as well. We are ready. Our food is ready! My friends, let us eat!"

Claudius turns the tap, and blood flows smoothly from the woman's neck into his goblet. He swirls the blood and smells it, deliriously happy. He then raises the goblet to the guests, and drinks a heady draught. When he lowers the cup, his eyes bulge with the rapture of a fanatic, and a huge smile spreads across his blood-soaked lips. The guests cheer, saying "It's our turn!" and "Enough anticipation!"

Paul's Dilemma

"Wait!" shouts Claudius. "Before we gorge ourselves, we must test the loyalty of our newest household soldier." Two guards enter, escorting the limping Paul, who is wearing the regalia of Giovanni's soldiers. The lord says, "Now, soldier, the time has come for you to prove your loyalty to us. Are you truly a hardened crusader wounded in battle, or a farm boy who fell on his own pitchfork? Come, my faithful Roman legionnaire. Pierce the side of our sacrificial lamb." He hands Paul his jeweled dagger, and points to one of the characters. (Pick one at random.) Paul blanches.

This vignette can go one of two ways. If the characters interceded on Paul's behalf, he summons all his courage and refuses, saying quietly, "Milord, I cannot. Such wickedness is against God."

The hosts laugh uproariously, but Claudius is not amused. He roars, "I do not believe you fought with the great crusader Hunyady, crippled coward! Pierce him or die!"

Paul again refuses. Marchettus rises, walks over to the terrified soldier, and in one blow spins Paul's head around. The soldier's legs buckle, but Marchettus holds him up and beats him until the young man's face is a mass of blood. Finally Marchettus lets him crumple into a heap on the floor and strides back to his seat.

Lord Giovanni says, "Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you. Soldier Paul wishes to thank you for interceding on his behalf to join my troops." The other Kindred laugh appreciatively. (Paul is not dead, but the characters do not know that. He will live and could become a loyal helper to the characters, possibly even a ghoul.)

If the characters did not intercede on Paul's behalf, he pauses. Claudius says, "Go on. After all, what did they ever do for you? Interceding on your behalf would have cost them nothing, yet they could not bestir themselves to do even that. You owe them nothing, and you owe me everything."

Paul nods. He attaches a collar to the character's neck, then inserts the dagger and tap. Lord Giovanni applauds, saying, "Welcome to our ranks, crippled soldier. You have a master and home for your entire life."

Tapping the Vein

The servants clamp metal collars onto the rest of the characters' necks, and affix keg taps into the hole in each collar. When a tap is turned, blood flows. By this time, most of the characters will have been Dominated. If any submit willingly, make a note of this.

The vampires excitedly move from character to character, turning the taps and sampling the different vintages. They animatedly compare tastes, and even the most reserved among them becomes gleeful and aroused. They reel like drunkards, talk too loudly, and wave their arms like madmen. They tap the neck of a low-born character, taste the blood, and say, "It's a naïve domestic vintage without any breeding, but I think you'll be amused by its presumption!" and then laugh.

During the drinking session, the vampires toast "To the eternal destruction and damnation of Japheth Cappadocius," and "To the continuing, blessed ignorance of Hardestadt and his motley mob!" Claudius says, "My friends, we must be bold! We must take great risks! How else will we win anything worth the winning?"

During the evening, if any of the characters ask what is to become of them, Lord Giovanni replies, "Why, you will die, of course. In a few months we shall send word to your

provincial homes that you were set upon by brigands. Or monsters. Or TURKS! Your loved ones—"he pauses to look at a character who is an outcast, poor or mad—"if any, shall grieve and resolve never to set foot out of their muck-encrusted hovels." If there is a wealthy character, he looks at her and says, "Excuse me. Your muck-encrusted palaces.")

If the characters try to reason with Lord Giovanni to let them go, he says, "The superior being never yields to the lesser." If the characters plead with him, he merely laughs patronizingly. If they call him a monster, he responds, "I am more refined and cultivated than you could ever have hoped to be...even when you were alive!" He laughs evilly.

The Warning

By this time, the characters are starting to feel dizzy, weak and cold from blood loss. Just when things look the bleakest, a loud crash shakes the whole manor. All the hosts freeze in mid-revel, panic on their bloodstained visages.

Suddenly an alarm goes up. Guards shout, footsteps clatter and warning bells jangle. Another crash from the southern wall shakes the building.

A sentry comes running in. "My lord! My lord! We are under attack! A century of men at arms! Hardestadt's troops! We are overwhelmed!"

The hosts leap up from their meal.

Claudius rages, "The Founders! Damn their eyes!"

Lord Mieczyslav shouts, "We're trapped!"

Matron Violetta scowls: "Someone has betrayed us!"

Al-Nazir cries, "It must have been that Malkavian madwoman Theophana! We should tear out her deceitful heart!"

"Impossible!" shouts Sire Wenceslas. "You are just saying that to throw us off the track, Assamite! It must have been you! I have never trusted you!"

Lord Leopold Valdemar says, "More likely the Lady Jadviga is behind it! Scheming Ventrue always put clan before allies!"

Lady Jadviga retorts, "You are an addled-pated old Lick, Leopold. I hate Hardestadt and have often attacked his holdings. I say we stay and prove that we are doing nothing to merit an attack!"

"Stay?" Gabrin says with a laugh. "And entrust my fate to that madman Hardestadt? Never!"

Lady Dimitra shouts, "Giovanni betrayed us! We were fools to believe he would attack his fellow Cappadocians!"

Claudius bellows: "Silence! I forbid this infighting! Follow me NOW or we are all dead!"

"There's nowhere to go!" Marchettus shouts. "Let's fight them!"

"This is not the place! We can go to the reliquary! They cannot follow us there!"

"Yes," says Lady Theophana. "We can go."

"Come!" Claudius insists. "I have a way out through the crypts below! Come quickly!"

"But they will follow us!" Lord Casmir says coldly. "Your soldiers will fall like the pathetic mortals they are!"

Giovanni thinks. "Aye. They will. We must slow Hardestadt. Ah! Embrace your prey! They are drained and will quickly Change. That will slow our pursuers and buy us time to escape before our children are destroyed in the onslaught."

"What if one survives?" Lady Amisa asks.

"Ha!" Giovanni snorts. "I remind the gentle lady that our attackers are the fanatical Founders. Hardestadt would never suffer one to live! Now do it! It's the only way!"

The Panicked Embrace

Each vampire quickly drains the remaining blood from and then feeds a measure of his own blood to the character he spent the evening tormenting. This will cause each character to become a vampire of the clan the player chose before the game. Some of the vampires disdain giving their precious vitae to unworthy vessels, but they grudgingly agree.

When they finish, they command the characters: "Fight the invading troops to the death!" and flee. All characters who have been Dominated are compelled to fight. But those who did not resist can do as they please. However, Claudius will not allow them to join with the hosts in their flight, and will Dominate anyone who tries into staying and fighting.

Dominated characters cannot see how the hosts escape, but the others can. On a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 7), they see the vampires flee into a secret passage in a storage room in the basement. After the hosts leave, a Dominated servant closes the passage, pours oil on the boxes stored in the room, and sets them on fire. He locks the door to the room and leaves.

The characters are now vampires. They each have two Blood Points and cannot yet use Disciplines. In addition, the Nosferatu spends the first few turns writhing on the floor in agony as the Change sets in. When she gets back up, she will be horrendously ugly but not under anyone's Domination.

The Attack: Eat or be Eaten

As the hosts disappear, sounds of melee approach. Soon the door splinters and a group of armored troops pour in. Their leader is a giant of a man with gleaming fangs. The troops all wear the standard of a single red rose, and many of them also have bared fangs. The second-in-command is familiar. He's Roderigo.

The leader bellows to his troops: "Destroy them, my hearties, but leave at least one alive for torture!"

Roderigo shouts, "Surrender, you traitorous dogs! My Lord Hardestadt will spare you if you surrender now!"

The characters can try to defend themselves from the onslaught. If Paul did not get his job with the aid of the characters, he is still conscious and fights to repel the invaders. But his bad leg prevents him from dodging properly, and the characters watch in horror as he is struck down, his organs spilling over the marble floor.

If the characters try to flee, they are easy targets for troops who lie in ambush along all escape routes. The characters see the other guests, now turned to vampires, die all around them. During the fighting, they hear Roderigo say to the troops, "Try to keep as many alive as possible."

Any characters who are not Dominated may try to talk their way out of the fight. Roderigo seems very sympathetic. He accepts surrenders without Hardestadt's approval, and then pleads their case to Hardestadt in the midst of the battle. On Roderigo's recommendation, Hardestadt accepts their surrenders, especially if the characters promise to reveal what they know of Giovanni and the conspirators.

Surrendered characters will be chained immediately. Hardestadt says "We shall talk further when we reach my castle." Award an extra experience point to the unDominated characters who implore that the other guests be spared as well. Hardestadt will decide to spare them on the characters' recommendation. (He'll end up sparing them anyway, but this gives the players a stronger sense of involvement.)

The Storyteller should be try not to destroy the characters, but make sure they are rendered unconscious. Still, if someone meets the Final Death, too bad. They can come back as one of the other victims.

Wrapping Up Act I

Once the characters are pacified, Roderigo insists that they be kept alive, and Hardestadt ultimately decides not to destroy the new vampires. Instead he has Roderigo and his men chain them and take them back to his lair for questioning. The remaining guests (the non-player characters) are completely destroyed, except Marianna, who cannot be found. Most of Giovanni's household staff and soldiers are also killed. If Paul got his job with the characters' help, he is beaten but alive.

The curtain falls on Act I with the characters unconscious or surrendered.

The Conspirators

Claudius Giovanni

Clan: Giovanni

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1035 (born 988)

Apparent Age: Late 40s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Hagglng 5, Intrigue 6, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Public Speaking 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 5, Melee 4, Ride 2, Stealth 3

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

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Dominate 5, Necromancy 5, Obfuscate 3, Potence 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Elder Status 2, Herd 6, Influence 6, Military Force 3, Resources 6, Retainers 4

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

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Derangement: Obsessed with power.

Image: A short, stout man draped in elegantly tailored clothes and wearing a large skull pendant.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a hearty, powerful man who knows that he will soon have more power than others could ever dream of. You enjoy your own witty *bon mots*, and you constantly grandstand in front of others. You have no pity or respect for those who cannot take care of themselves.

Marchettus the Bold

Clan: Brujah

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1234 (born 1198)

Apparent Age: Mid-30s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Throwing 4

Skills: Blind Fighting 3, Etiquette 2, Fast-Draw 4, Melee 4, Ride 5, Stealth 3, Torture 4, Traps 3

Knowledges: Clan Knowledge 3, Kindred Lore 2, Military Science 5

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Dominate 3, Fortitude 1, Obfuscate 3, Presence 3, Potence 3



CLAUDIUS GIOVANNI

Knowledges: Area Knowledge 1, Gypsy Lore 3, Kindred Lore 2, Lupine Lore 3

Disciplines: Animalism 6, Celerity 2, Fortitude 2, Protean 4

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Elder Status 1, Herd 3

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Notes: Her extra level of Animalism makes her extremely attractive to animals.

Image: A tall, sinewy woman wearing a traveling cloak and man's breeches.

Roleplaying Hints: Like most Gangrel, you adore fresh air and loathe the squalid buildings most people insist on spending time within. You talk rapturously of the joys of the kill, tracking, herbalism and other such matters, but you have no patience with any subject not relating to the wilds. You often growl, purr and interject other animal noises into your conversation.

Lady Theophana

Clan: Malkavian

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1173 (born 1157)

Apparent Age: Mid-teens

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 5, Mimicry 5, Poetic Expression 2, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Dancing 3, Debate 3, Etiquette 5, Herbalism 3, Melee 2, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Art History 4, Kindred Lore 2, Literature 4, Theology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 6, Dementation 5, Dominate 2, Obfuscate 3

Backgrounds: Age 2, Contacts 5, Elder Generation 4, Elder Status 1, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 7

Derangement: Obsession (insanity), among others

Notes: Her extra level of Auspex lets her communicate telepathically.

Image: A slender, tall woman-child, with waist-length blonde hair. She wears a torn, soiled, silken gown and a decayed floral arrangement in her hair.

Roleplaying Hints: You long to delve into the minds of all those around you, picking them apart in the search for the sweetmeats of madness that lie within. You do and say anything to extract these morsels, laughing gleefully at the delightful insanity your antics releases onto the all-too-sane world.

Matron Violetta

Clan: Nosferatu

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1078 (born ?)

Apparent Age: 70 or older

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Blind Fighting 2, Etiquette 4, Melee 4, Stealth 7, Traps 5

Knowledges: City Secrets (Vienna) 4, Kindred Lore 3, Sewer Lore 5

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Dominate 2, Obfuscate 6, Potence 2, Thaumaturgy 4 (Path of Corruption 4)

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Elder Status 1, Influence 4, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Notes: Her extra level of Obfuscate allows her to make her mind invisible to telepaths.

Image: A frighteningly ugly woman whose face is only partly hidden under a thick gray leper's cloak and hood. However, she wears a full face mask with ragged eye-holes and a smelly wet spot in front of her mouth. Hideous, leprous scabs can be seen around her eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: Your rough, slightly muffled voice disgusts most listeners. Perhaps they are imagining pustules breaking within their own mouths, perpetually leaking foul fluids onto their tongues and lips. You loathe this attitude and all the falsities exterior beauty allows. You believe true purity of the soul is only attainable when such unhealthy frivolities are stripped away.

Sire Wenceslas

Clan: Toreador

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1032 (born 969)

Apparent Age: Early 60s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 3, Artistic Expression 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Style 3, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Dancing 5, Debate 4, Etiquette 5, Falconry 5, Melee 3, Music 6, Ride 2, Stealth 4



Knowledges: Architecture 4, Art History 5, Kindred Lore 2, Literature 5

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 1, Presence 6

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Elder Status 1, Resources 5, Retainers 6

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Derangement: Pedophilia

Notes: His sixth level of Presence means he can create feelings similar to the Blood Bond in people while he is near them.

Image: A stern-faced old man dressed in a royal purple tunic, leggings and feathered cap, and wearing copious amounts of elegant, expensive jewelry.

Roleplaying Hints: You constantly press those with whom you speak, bullying and flattering in turn. You particularly enjoy the company of young children. Their physical and spiritual purity excites your interest and aesthetic appetites in a way no other beauty does. However, you search for true artistry in all things, demanding it of others. You deal harshly with all those who disappoint you.

Lord Casmir

Clan: Tremere

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1097 (born 1037)

Apparent Age: About 60

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Instruction 5, Intimidation 3, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Debate 6, Etiquette 3, Melee 2, Ride 2, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Alchemy 5, Biology 3, Kindred Lore 4, Faerie Lore 2, Metallurgy 4, Naturalist 5, Occult 6

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Dominate 4, Thaumaturgy 5 (Lure of Flames 4, Weather Control 3, Movement of the Mind 2)

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Elder Status 1, Resources 4, Retainers 3

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 7

Image: A portly man with a large white beard, wearing a black robe with silver trim.

Roleplaying Hints: Your eyes and voice radiate an extraordinary intensity, one others seldom expect from a man of your comfortable build. You adore the complex

paths of black magic, especially the infinitely corrupting sacrifices and other tortures required in such rites. You have no patience for those who do not share your interest in corruption and power, yet you jealously guard your knowledge of the dark paths from all save your Blood Bound progeny.

Lady Jadviga Almanov of Bohemia

Clan: Ventrue

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1223 (born 1186)

Apparent Age: Late 30s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Diplomacy 2, Dodge 4, Intimidation 2, Sense Deception 3

Skills: Dancing 4, Debate 3, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Fast-Talk 5, Lip Reading 2, Melee 2, Ride 4, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Alchemy 2, Clan Knowledge 4, Kindred Lore 2, Law 4, Metallurgy 2, Occult 3, Politics 5

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

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Elder Status 1, Influence 4, Resources 4, Status 3

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Image: A heavyset woman with dark red hair who always dresses in long, black gowns.

Roleplaying Hints: You respect power wielded with authority, and you feel that you have both the skill and the temerity to rise to a position of true leadership in the Ventrue. As your current mission shows, you are not unwilling to take risks to achieve your goals, and you have little respect for others not willing to do the same.

Lord Leopold Valdemar

Clan: Lasombra

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1113 (born 1074)

Apparent Age: about 40

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Interrogation 3, Intrigue 6, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 3, Melee 3, Ride 2, Stealth 5, Torture 4, Traps 3

Knowledges: Finance 4, Kindred Lore 2, Literature 3, Occult 3

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Dominate 2, Obfuscate 2, Obtenebration 7, Potence 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 5, Elder Status 1, Influence 6, Resources 5, Retainers 6

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 7

Notes: His extra levels of Obtenebration allow him to use the darkness to suck blood from others and give his own shadow substance.

Image: A bald, middle-aged man dressed like a prosperous merchant in brocaded velvet.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a hearty fellow, who does many things to excess — even things that would give other Kindred “nightmares” for months on end. You seldom, if ever, give credence to the idea that limits should be applied to your behavior.

Lord Mieczyslaw

Clan: Tzimisce

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1066 (born 1042)

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 6, Wits 5

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Herbalism 3, Melee 3, Ride 2, Stealth 3, Torture 6

Knowledges: Kindred Lore 3, Law 4, Medicine 5, Naturalist 4, Occult 5

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 4, Dominate 3, Presence 1, Vicissitude 5

Backgrounds: Contacts 5, Elder Status 1, Resources 5, Status 3

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 8

Derangement: Compulsion (torture)

Image: A handsome young man with high cheekbones, wearing a simple black monk's robe with white surplice.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a blunt-spoken man who believes in one thing, and one thing only. Power. Compromise is not in your vocabulary. The weak must be kept that way, and the strong have an obligation to remind their lessers of their lowly position in the world. You particularly enjoy using torture to make your points, and often get carried away with such activities. Even in simple conversation you often find yourself wishing to push one long nail into the soft flesh of a servant, or otherwise exercise your immense power.

Lord Bajazet Al-Nasir

Clan: Assamite

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1011 (born 976)

Apparent Age: Mid-30s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 6, Athletics 1, Brawl 5, Dodge 6, Scan 4, Subterfuge 3, Throwing 5

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Blind Fighting 4, Etiquette 2, Fast-Draw 3, Melee 5, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Kindred Lore 2, Theology 3, Toxicology 3

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Celerity 2, Dominate 1, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 4, Presence 2, Quietus 6

Backgrounds: Clan Prestige 4, Contacts 5, Elder Status 1

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

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Image: A dark-skinned man with angular, chiseled features, dressed in fine, silk Turkish robes.

Roleplaying Hints: You speak softly yet quite animatedly when in conversation with others. Your movements are always quick and silent. You enjoy your dance with death, and respect only those who can face death with cleverness and panache.

Lady Amisa

Clan: Followers of Set

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1073 (born 1049)

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Brawling 1, Dodge 2, Interrogation 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Masquerade 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Blind Fighting 2, Etiquette 2, Fast-Draw 4, Hypnotism 3, Ride 1, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Kindred Lore 3, Naturalist 3, Theology 2, Toxicology 5

Disciplines: Dominate 3, Obfuscate 4, Presence 2, Serpents 6

Backgrounds: Contacts 5, Elder Status 1, Herd 4, Resources 4, Retainers 5

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 9

Notes: With her extra level of Serpents, Amisa can tempt people to act out their darkest fantasies merely by talking to them about it.

Image: A small, swarthy woman draped in silks of foreign design and an elaborate gold headpiece.

Roleplaying Hints: You often remind others of the spider or the snake, fascinating and extremely dangerous. Even in your most casual conversations you instinctively search for moral weaknesses in others. You enjoy leading others onto the well-worn paths of corruption, a task which is so often all too easy to accomplish. You especially enjoy laying bare the corruption of the "holy" monks and priests who infest this area of the world.

Gabrin

Clan: Ravnos

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1195 (born 1167)

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

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

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Dancing 3, Etiquette 2, Fast-Talk 6, Gambling 3, Melee 2, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Gypsy Lore 4, Kindred Lore 2

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Chimerstry 5, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Herd 3, Resources 3, Retainers 5

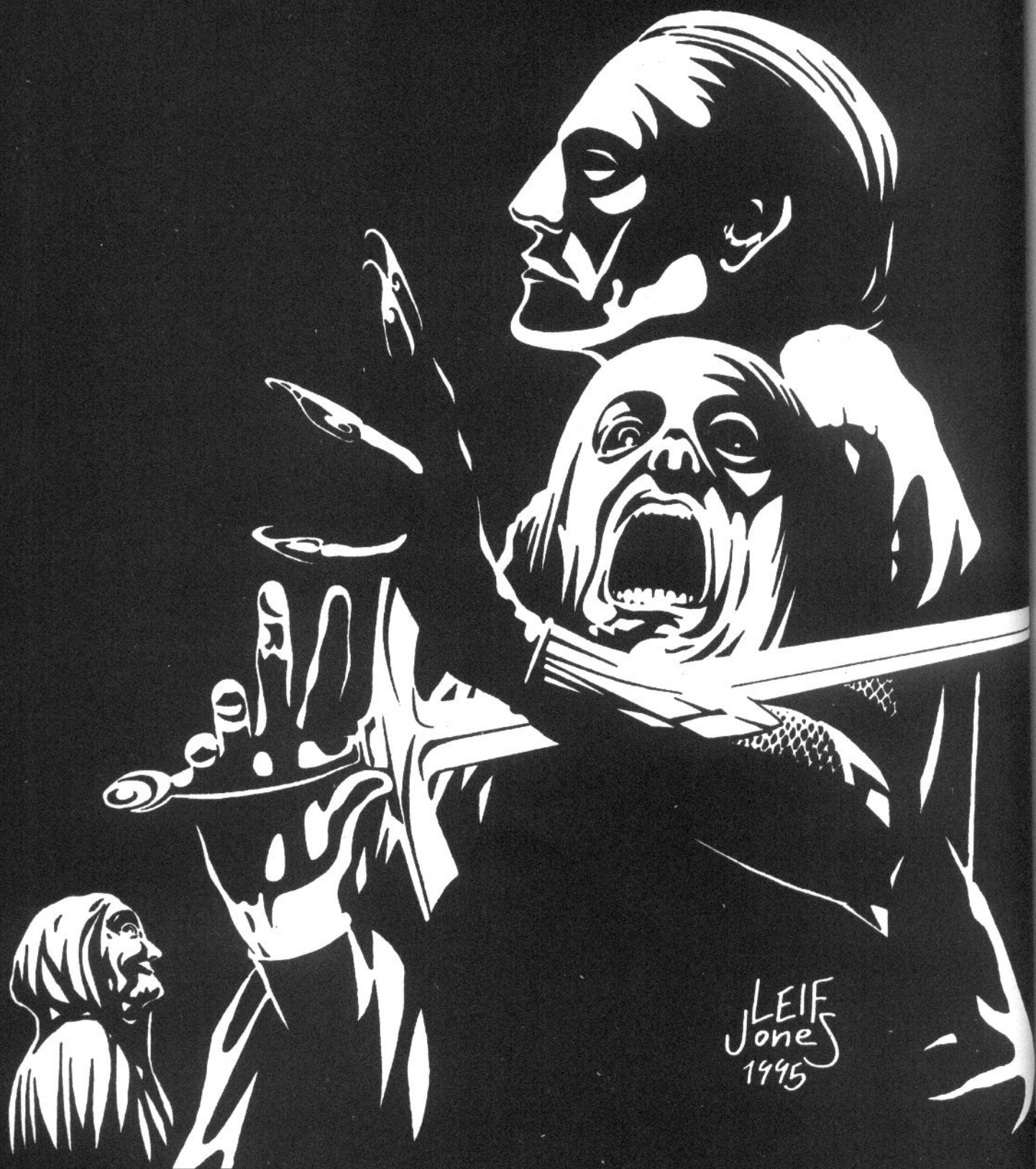
Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 7

Image: A short young man dressed as a Gypsy, wearing lots of flashy gold jewelry and a coarse tunic and leggings.

Roleplaying Hints: Your manner is smooth and welcoming, and you almost always have a ready smile on your face — even when carving someone's heart out. You care little for non-Gypsy conventions of clothing or manners, and thus stand out almost everywhere you go.



LEIF
Jones
1995



Act II: In the Halls of the Dead

*The smile that breaks so gently belies a troubled head,
Like a voice that holds the secrets of a life you might have led.
Eyes with pale indifference in danger and in grace
But the glance that knows the death-knell left its shadow on your face.
In the deep, enduring darkness as your loyal friends go down
Touched by the violent crown til their hunter's hunted down.*
— Donagh Long, “The Shadow”

In this second of three Acts, the characters are interrogated, almost killed, and saved by a very timely intervention by the mysterious Ravnos, Durga Syn. She requires that the characters spy on their former masters. They visit the secret lair of their sires, and also visit the mysterious Cappadocius to speak to him, deliver a message and possibly warn him of his childer's treachery.

Scene 1: The Interrogation

Cruelty would be delicious if one could only find some sort of cruelty that didn't really hurt.

— George Bernard Shaw, *Heartbreak House*

Journey in Chains

Once Hardestadt and his fellow Founders have searched the rest of the manse and determined that the other conspirators have fled, the Ventrue elder orders his minions to chain the characters (most of whom are probably unconscious at this juncture) and bring them along for questioning. After all, Hardestadt wishes leisure to make the most of his little interrogation, and he has a nearby castle prepared for just such activity.

Roderigo places the characters in one of the same large, shuttered carriages he used to bring them to the castle in Act I, Scene 1. This time he closes the heavy shutters. It is clear that the carriage is specially crafted to allow not even a shred of daylight to penetrate within. Roderigo says, “I regret that this journey will not be as comfortable as the first.” The characters remain shackled for the lengthy, very rough journey, which takes the rest of the night and all of the next day to complete.

As an added precaution, Hardestadt places three of his strongest, heavily Dominated ghoulish soldiers in the carriage. Each is instructed to run the others through should any begin to behave against orders (for example, attempting to unchain a prisoner).

As yet another precaution, the soldiers are also provided with “bleeding sticks:” five-foot-long metal rods ending in sharply honed knives. The soldiers are to drain the captives — just enough to keep them groggy, yet not enough to bleed them dry. Each of the soldiers has experience in this area (on humans and vampires alike), and they are expert at judging just how much to bleed a prisoner to keep him quiescent and alive. They carefully save the

blood in stoppered jugs. If any characters managed to retain their free will in the last scene and surrendered to Hardestadt, they will not be bled unless they cause trouble. If all else fails, the guards can open a window and flood the carriage with deadly sunlight.

Should any of the characters be awake for the journey, they may attempt to talk to the guards. The men are quite taciturn, however, and will say nothing to the new Kindred save that they faithfully serve Hardestadt. If the characters press too hard with questions, the soldiers will more vigorously apply their bleeding sticks to the offending prisoners.

The journey is bumpy and hot, but most of the characters will be asleep or still in shock at their sudden Embrace and its result. Early the following evening the carriages arrive at their destination, Castle Deverick.

Castle Deverick

Castle Deverick is a small, twisted fortress clinging tenaciously to a steep hillside. Hardestadt uses this castle as his headquarters when away from his native Germany. It is the ancestral home of the Devericks, of whom the current family head is Baron Rudolph Deverick, a bleary-eyed, dissipated mortal completely Dominated by Hardestadt.

When the darkened carriages pull up to the castle's rear portal, the still-disoriented characters are dragged out of their cramped quarters and escorted briskly inside by a dozen guards with brightly blazing torches. The characters do not know if it is night or day (it is evening).

Should any of the characters attempt to make a break for freedom, the guards will quickly swing their torches at them. If a character somehow manages to escape the circle of guards, one or two of Hardestadt's Kindred compatriots should easily find and recapture the runaways (most probably the Gangrel Milov Petrenkov and the Nosferatu Josef von Bauren).

Once the characters are inside the castle, they are quickly escorted down a narrow, winding stairway leading to the deepest reaches of the structure. Monitored by Hardestadt and the Tremere Mistress Fanchon, the guards place the characters in a large, airless cell strewn with moldering straw and near-petrified feces. Once chained to the wall, the characters are left to ponder their fate until the following evening.

Any characters still unconscious at this point, from the events at the Giovanni manse or from being bled excessively by overzealous guards, will wake up shortly after dawn. Although the cell is on the lowest level of the castle, there is a small slit of a window high up in the wall across from the characters, running the length of the cell. (The cell is on the outermost wall of the castle.)

As the morning progresses a slim beam of sunlight knifes through the room's dusty air. Although at first the beam lands far above the characters' heads, as noon approaches it slowly inches down the wall, in a malevolent

wave, towards them. Although they are not particularly endangered by the beam, this should be very disturbing to the characters, and they may need to make Courage rolls. The sunbeam will fade and disappear shortly before noon, stopping its progress a good five feet from the cell's floor. Of course, taller characters will have been forced to slump down uncomfortably in their bonds for an hour or two, but they can easily avoid harm (although the players have no idea where exactly the beam will stop).

The characters are free to talk in whispers throughout the long, long day. Should they speak any louder, or make any other sounds, the guards will yell for them to be quiet, "or else we'll take the fire to you, you Hell-damned bloodsuckers!" If the characters persist in their noise several guards will enter the cell armed with torches. They will immediately shove a torch into the belly of the loudest character, charring her for one Health Level of aggravated damage.

A Long Day's Night

After the long day finally ends and the moon has risen over Castle Deverick, Hardestadt and his fellow Founders again confront the hapless characters. Slamming the door open to announce his arrival, Hardestadt strides smugly into the cell to examine his prisoners. He bows ironically, saying, "Well, well, well. Behold the grand conspirators. You will not live to plot against your betters again. The punishment for your crime against the Traditions of Caine is a slow, agonizing death by sunlight. But if you truthfully answer my questions, I can offer you a quick and painless death instead. A truly admirable offer, and one I suggest you accept."

Hardestadt's speech will likely baffle the characters, since they are not conspirators and know nothing of the Traditions of Caine. If any of the characters attempts to assert her innocence Hardestadt roars with laughter, even as he slaps her across the face with the back of his glove, a heavy gauntlet encrusted with razor-sharp metal spikes. "You conspirators are such pathetically amusing little liars!" he finishes with a chuckle.

Walking down the line, Hardestadt solicitously comments on each character's predicament. "My, but those oozing pustules must take some getting used to — but you wear them well, really you do.... Oh dear, were my guards just a trifle overzealous when they drained your blood? Perhaps you should have stood up to greet the sun this past morning and had done with it?" And so on.

After he has dispensed with initial pleasantries (cruelly slashing any character who talks back to him across the face or neck with the back of his spiked glove), Hardestadt selects the first victim for his interrogation. Hardestadt, with the other Founders following along curiously, will take the character to a nearby torture chamber for interrogation.

The Storyteller may either conduct each interrogation in full view of the players not participating in the scene, or separately, away from the others. If she chooses



the latter option, it is more likely to increase tension among the nervous players (and their characters), but she must then be certain that each interrogation does not drag on for too long lest the waiting players grow restless or bored. A third possibility is to have players whose characters have finished their interrogations take on the roles of the other Founders, and help interrogate the rest of the characters, as described below.

Advanced Interrogation Techniques

If the Storyteller wishes, and feels her players are up to the challenge, she may have them take on the roles of Founders over the course of the interrogation. By doing this, the players will participate far more actively in a scene in which their own characters are essentially at the mercy of others. While playing an active part is always more interesting than sitting around waiting for others to decide your fate, here the players will have to play individuals who want to harm or destroy their own characters. Not all players are willing or able to actively roleplay such a contradictory part when it is their own characters' fate that hangs in the balance.

If the Storyteller goes with this option, she should have Hardestadt choose as his first victim the character whose player she believes is the most mature roleplayer in her troupe. She should then roleplay out the interrogation

scene in private with the player. Once Hardestadt has finished his initial interrogation of the character, the Storyteller should assign one of the other Founder characters to that player, and explain quickly what the character is like. The Founder is to help Hardestadt in his interrogations. The Storyteller should then have Hardestadt collect the next best roleplayer's character for interrogation, and so on.

The interrogations should get more and more interesting as other players take on the Founder roles. When selecting the order, the Storyteller should be sure to place anyone who she feels is not an experienced roleplayer in the middle. That way, the player can get a good feel for what the others are doing with their temporary Founder characters, but also gets a chance to participate as a Founder herself.

Once the initial interrogations are over, and the Founders are arguing with each other and Durga Syn, the Storyteller may again want to have the players take on the role of some or all of the Founders (save Hardestadt). However, this part of the scene calls for even more advanced roleplaying as the players are called upon to debate their characters' fates. The Storyteller should be certain to hand each player a card or piece of paper with his Founder's debating style and initial goal (Blood Bonding or death in most cases) on it. Use the handy Players' Notes on page 62. The Storyteller should also inform the players that they must follow her instructions if she passes them a note

during the scene. This way she can still steer the overall course of the debate should the action begin to get away from her.

Live-Action Notes

This scene makes an excellent live-action piece. Simply conduct the initial interrogations in separate areas, and then have your group come together for the final debate between the Founders and Durga Syn. In order to keep the action going, the Storyteller may wish to have a different Narrator in charge of each individual interrogation, so that there is no lag time while players wait for the Storyteller portraying Hardestadt to get around to them.

The final debate scene can get quite interesting when each role (including that of the characters) is being portrayed simultaneously. However, the Storyteller should be certain that all Narrators know what the final outcome of the debate will be. Of course, the poor player characters will have to sweat out the argument over their fate....

Individual Interrogations

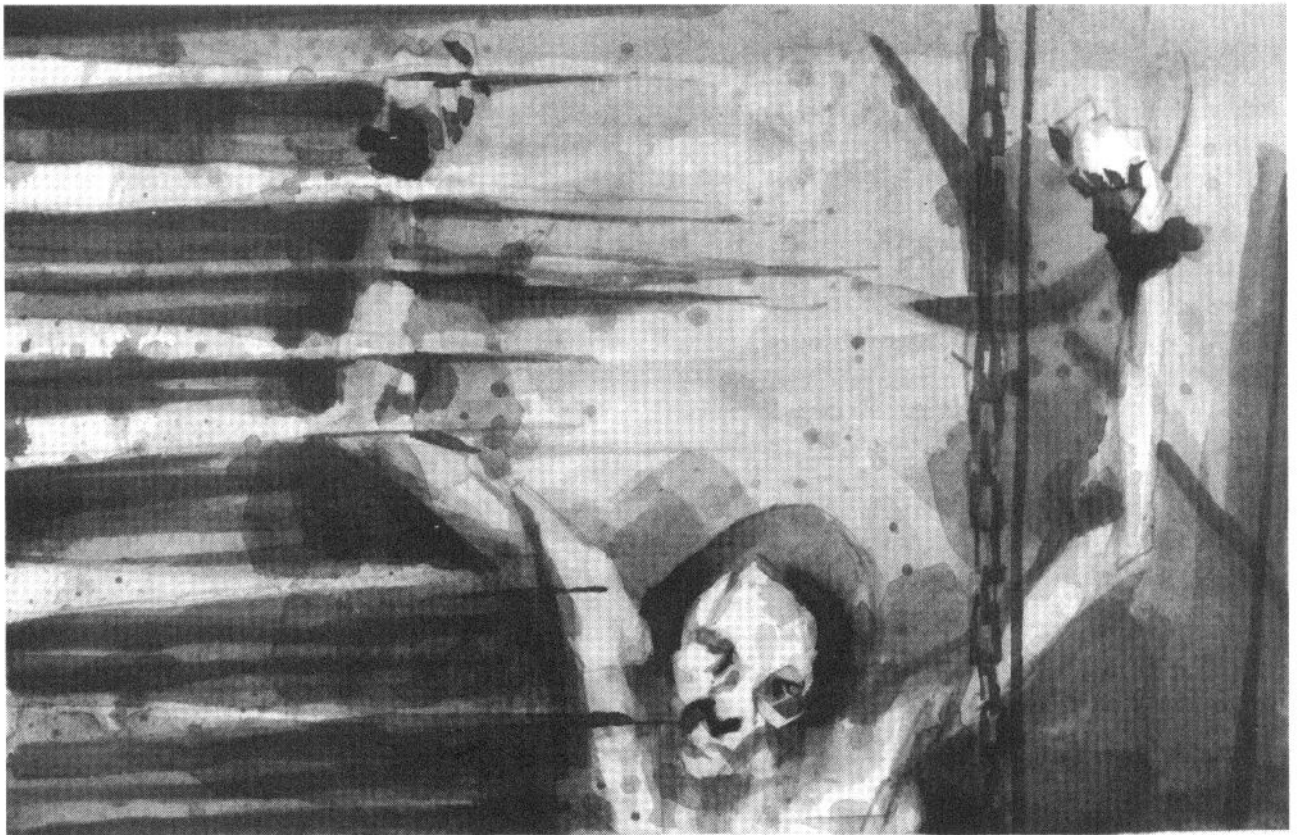
During each intimate, individual interrogation, Hardestadt will make an effort to determine his subjects' inner terrors. In order to do so, he will judiciously utilize a variety of torture implements, all of which are displayed within the claustrophobic confines of the torture chamber. Also in the chamber, sitting on a small stool in the corner, is a wizened old woman in heavy skirts and shawls. This is

Durga Syn, the ancient Ravnos who as Synovea observed the characters while they were still naïve mortals waiting to be taken to the Giovanni manse. She sits quietly throughout, observing all with her preternaturally bright eyes.

During the interrogations, Hardestadt vacillates between a quiet, almost tender questioning style and an all-out roar. Although his roar is frightening, he inflicts the most pain on his victims when he is whispering sensually. Other Founders may assist with the interrogation (particularly if the players are taking on their roles), but Hardestadt is always the chief interrogator.

While interrogating his victims, Hardestadt will demand over and over again to know the details of the conspirators' plot and the identities of their fellow conspirators. The characters can actually provide Hardestadt with some names (if they manage to remember anything from the hellish dinner party); however, they know nothing of the conspirators' plot — save that there is one — and can tell their interrogator little or nothing on this score. They may remember that Giovanni and company conspired against someone called Japheth Cappadocius, and wanted Hardestadt to remain ignorant of something unspecified.

If a character makes up a story about the details of the "plot," Durga Syn will casually toss a pair of dice onto the stone floor, which come up snake eyes, indicating the lie. Hardestadt will immediately fly into a rage at the character's effrontery, applying an even greater torture as punishment for lying.



Tzimisce Pain

If there is a Tzimisce character in the group, he was required by Lord Mieczyslav to torture a man during his harrowing. Hardestadt now brings in the man that the character was required to torment, saying, "You tortured one of my spies, witless fool!" He asks the man, "Is this the vicious dog who harmed you?" The man says "Yes." If the character only tortured him when he was Dominated, the man will add: "He had to be forced to do so." Hardestadt will dismiss him. However, if the character hurt the man of his own free will, Hardestadt allows the man to torture the character.

If the character killed the man, Hardestadt says, "You tortured one of my spies to death. Would that I could call up his spirit for vengeance. I shall take delight in your interrogation." And he does so.

If there is not a Tzimisce in the group, this same idea can be used for any of the other characters who was called upon to injure a servant in some way.

Group Interrogation

At the finish of the individual interrogations, Hardestadt will have all the characters brought into the torture chamber and chained to the walls. If they have continued to insist on their innocence, he gruffly asks Durga Syn: "Old one, what do you make of this rabble which has provided such poor entertainment this night?"

Durga Syn carefully approaches each character in turn, clucking and muttering to herself in a language none of the characters understands. When she reaches the first character she asks "if the little babe knows aught of the details of a conspiracy against the Cappadocian? Tell old Durga Syn true now, tell her true, my dove." Once the character has answered (probably in the negative), Durga Syn suddenly lashes out with one twisted fingernail, deeply scratching the character's hand or cheek. She then scoops a few drops of blood onto her nail, sniffs, and then dabs a drop or two of the fluid onto her tongue.

After she repeats this ritual with every character, Durga Syn turns to Hardestadt and says: "Well, my young giant, it seems none of your little chicks is a rooster! They are blank slates, *tabulae rasae*, knowing nothing of our world. Why, they don't even have the sense to recognize that they have been hatched anew — let alone what to do with their new wings!"

Hardestadt disgustedly tosses a bloody riding crop to the ground before casually reaching out and drawing a nearby servant to him for a quick feeding. As the servant collapses at Hardestadt's feet, the Ventrue sighs wearily. "Then let's have done with it. Off to the roof with them I say! Sunrise is only a few short hours away, and we have much yet to accomplish this evening."

"But Milord Hardestadt," Mistress Fanchon interrupts smoothly, "I do not believe in wasting resources, even ones as...trifling...as these. I would be happy to Blood Bond each of these to myself so that they may do us no harm. They could then serve us, helping to track down their errant sires who have knowingly broken the Traditions of Caine."

Hardestadt laughs loudly at Mistress Fanchon's suggestion, and several of the other Founders join him. "Do you think this night's exertions have knocked the brains from my body, Mistress Fanchon? No, no, you shall not Blood Bond these neonates to yourself, Tremere. If their masters come calling for them they could betray us!"

"They are powerful though, Hardestadt. They would make most excellent slaves," Josef comments, picking absently at a particularly pustulant wart.

"They are ignorant and could unmask us all," Rafael says, his voice dripping with disdain. Then he softens, points to the youngest or most attractive male and says, "Although I could be persuaded to take this one for a slave."

"Perhaps I could take a few and Blood Bond them to me! They would be my children, my own dear hearts!" Camilla chimes in rapturously. "Then I could eat of their flesh, drink of their marrow, and you shall both be satisfied!" She finishes gaily.

After a slight pause, the debate begins anew with Hardestadt, Rafael and Milov arguing for the characters' deaths. Mistress Fanchon and Josef von Bauren favor Blood Bonding the neonates, while Adana de Sforza remains undecided and Camilla leaps from one side to the other of the debate.

The Storyteller should conduct this argument for as long as the tension builds (it will undoubtedly go on longer if the players are taking on the Founders' roles). The characters can interject comments, but none of the Founders will take their prisoners' feelings into account on this or any other matter.

Ancient Intervention

Just as the debate is reaching a head, and tempers are really flaring, Durga Syn speaks with a quiet authority that temporarily silences the room. It goes like this:

Founder 1: "You are a blind fool!"

Founder 2: "You are the fool!"

Founder 1: "I say you are the fool!"

Durga Syn: "Fools all!"

Pause.

"Do not interrupt us, ancient mother," Mistress Fanchon warns.

"I warn you not to overreach, Gypsy," Hardestadt says. "You are here at our forbearance."

Durga Syn continues undaunted. "You waste even the middling opportunities and precious resources God hath set before you. Do you not see that cowering before you are the perfect spies?"



"But they are unknown and undoubtedly weak! They could turn on us at any time, old one!" Hardestadt scoffs.

"And risk facing the wrath of this newly minted assemblage of the legions of all the Kindred? They would have to be madder than the conspirators, who are barely strong enough to stand against you when in hiding."

After a brief pause, Hardestadt continues in a more reflective vein. "But why would the conspirators even trust these pathetic creatures? Were I the traitor Claudius Giovanni, I would strike them down ere they crossed my threshold."

"What if he does? If they die, they die, and you lose nothing you would not lose in killing them yourself," Durga Syn replies.

"You are mad as a Malkavian!"

"Mayhap I am madder yet. But I have foreseen that these unworthy fledglings have an important role to play in our tangled schemes. Behold, an egg newly laid at dawn!" Durga Syn brings forth a large hen's egg with a flourish.

Walking once more down the line of prisoners, Durga Syn passes the egg over each character's head and bids them kiss it. Taking up a small bowl, the Methuselah cracks the egg open and pours out the contents. Even Hardestadt looks faintly surprised to see blood spilling from the innocent egg. "I am not unskilled in the arts of my people, and I can tell you that this is a sign that these chicks are meant to play a part in this long and bloody drama. Just what that part is, has yet to be seen. But they must be allowed to play it!"

Hardestadt and the other Founders look long and hard at the curdled blood and egg shells in Durga Syn's bowl. Finally Hardestadt speaks. "Your Gypsy divinations have not been wrong yet, but I do not fully trust you. Still, the hour grows early, and I weary of this. You had best be right about so crucial a matter, ancient one. So be it. We shall allow the craven neonates their lives, so that they may serve as dogs tracking down those who would break the Traditions of Caine."

Hardestadt turns to the still-chained characters and fixes each of them with his chilling gaze as he speaks. "This evening, the fifth day of April, 1444, I declare Giovanni and his fellow conspirators anathema! Never more will the other children of Caine give them succor. They shall be hunted to the ends of the Earth, and where they are found they shall be slain in fire for their sacrilege!" He smashes his armored fist into his mailed hand.

"And you shall be our dogs! You shall hunt down your fathers and mothers, destroying those who unlawfully gave birth to you. And if you do not, you shall join your begetters as anathema, and no devil or god known to Kindred or kine shall save you from my wrath!"

He turns on his heel and stalks from the room. His retinue follow him. When they are gone, Durga Syn smiles and says, "May you justify my faith in you. Return and tell me of your efforts." She then leaves as well. The room is empty.

A moment later, Roderigo enters with two servants. He says "Well done, lads and lasses." He begins to unchain them. "I'm rather glad he spared you. I feared when I delivered you to that hellish place that I should never see you again. Now, let's get you cleaned up."

The servants bring buckets of warm water and fresh clothing into the cell, and help the characters clean themselves. They are covered in blood and dirt — unfit company indeed. Roderigo binds any remaining wounds and gives the characters new clothes to wear. The clothes are fit for tradespeople. Nobles in the party will have to dress down for now, and peasants dress up.

When the characters are clothed, Roderigo leads them through the catacombs of the castle to a room with a long table. He feeds them human blood from great casks to slake their ravening Hunger. During this process, he will answer questions. If the characters do not ask questions, he begins by saying, "I must tell you what you have become. You no longer live. You are now among the ranks of the Damned. You are the walking dead. You have the powers of Hell at your command, and, unless you are destroyed, you will continue forever. According to some, you have forsaken your soul and cannot reach salvation. According to others...well...the Kindred have many rumors..."

He answers all the standard questions about vampires, including information on torpor, stakes, Blood Bonding, sunlight, ghouls, the clans and creating progeny. He knows nothing of Gehenna or Golconda, or any esoteric wisdom from the *Book of Nod*. Note that the Camarilla does not exist yet. He'll say that Hardestadt seeks to create a confederation of all vampires, to protect against inter-clan fighting and resist the Inquisition. If asked about himself, he answers, "I am not undead, and I pray God never to be one. But I serve them, and live on their blood, which gives me the strength of the Devil himself. I am content that the blood does not poison my soul, and that my Savior keeps me yet."

This is also the point when the characters begin to realize the strength of their new powers. If the players have not already assigned points to their Disciplines, they should do so now.

After Roderigo finishes telling the characters what it is to walk the Earth as one of the Kindred, he invites them to sleep through the approaching day in a large, underground common room filled with cots. He makes sure the characters are tucked in and says, "We can talk more tomorrow evening. Sleep now, and I pray it be the untroubled sleep of the angels."

Any character who tries to sneak out will have to face ghoulish guards who rouse the Founders.

Durga Syn's Egg

Theatrical Storytellers can easily add drama to Durga Syn's mysterious prophesies by taking a little bit of time before the gaming session to create a "bloody egg" of their own. When Durga Syn passes the egg over the characters' heads, the Storyteller takes an egg from a small basket she places on the table, passing it over her players' heads and cracking it open just as Durga Syn finishes her prophesying. As the bloody fluid spills out into the bowl, the Storyteller can enjoy her players' shock. Of course, this effect works even better when this scene is done as a live-action event.

In order to make the "bloody egg," the Storyteller needs to obtain a few large eggs and some red dye, fake blood or tomato juice. Carefully poke a hole in the large end of the egg wide enough to allow you to pierce in the yolk and pour a large amount of red food color (the kind used to dye Easter eggs) into the egg. Once you have squirted in a fair amount, place a bit of white tape over the hole, painting the tape with typewriter correcting fluid if necessary to hide your handiwork.

If you want to go all out on this trick, you must remove at least the egg whites (and perhaps the yolk as well) from the egg. You can do this by poking a tiny hole in the small end of the egg with a needle. Make a slightly larger hole in the wide end and, holding the egg over a sink or bowl, blow into the small hole. This forces the white out the larger hole at the opposite end. Once you have some space inside, put a scrap of white tape over the small hole and turn the egg over. Wiping the large end clean, take an oral syringe or eye dropper and fill it with tomato juice or fake blood (you may have to carefully widen the hole to do this). Carefully drip or squeeze the "blood" into the egg until it is full, then cover the hole with white tape and use typewriter correction fluid to cover the tape.

You'll probably have to practice this several times before you get it right, and be certain to check the effect of a prepared egg before "show time." If possible, only bring one prepared egg in the basket. That way if one of the characters wants to break open another egg and catch Durga Syn (and you!) at her trick they won't be able to do so. If you make certain to have the large end of the prepared egg facing you during the game, you should be able to tell which one to grab.

The Founders

The following Founders are the Kindred who capture the characters at the Giovanni manse, and then participate in their interrogation at Castle Deverick. Although other Founders are working to establish a vampiric organization, these are the ones placed in charge of stopping the conspiracy against Japheth Cappadocius.

Each Founder's debating style and initial position on the characters' fates is also given. If the Storyteller chooses to have the players take on the roles of some of the Founders during the interrogation, be sure to give each player a card with their Founder's initial position and debating style written on it.

Hardestadt

Clan: Ventrue

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 947 (born 904)

Apparent Age: Early 40s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 6, Leadership 5, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Etiquette 3, Melee 6, Ride 5, Security 2, Stealth 3, Torture 3

Knowledges: History 2, Kindred Lore 4, Law 4, Linguistics 4, Literature 5, Occult 2, Politics 6

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Dominate 5, Fortitude 4, Potence 4, Presence 5, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Allies 7, Contacts 6, Elder Status 5, Herd 5, Influence 4, Military Force 4, Resources 6, Retainers 7

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 9

Image: A tall, strapping man with dark hair and intense eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are an arrogant man who accords others the respect due their station in life. Of course, almost all others are far beneath your vaunted status, and you treat them accordingly. Your manner tends to vacillate from one extreme to another, from quiet politeness to raging insults, from tender questions to vicious threats.

Adana de Sforza

Clan: Brujah

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1093 (born 1068)

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 6, Carousing 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Seduction 3, Streetwise 3, Style 4

Skills: Blind Fighting 2, Dancing 3, Melee 5, Music 2, Ride 2, Stealth 3, Torture 2

Knowledges: Clan Knowledge 3, Kindred Lore 2, Politics 4

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

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Elder Status 1, Herd 3, Influence 3, Military Force 2, Resources 4, Retainers 5

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Image: A petite, blonde woman with narrow blue eyes and sharp features.

Roleplaying Hints: Change is necessary in all things, and you are most decidedly a force for change in the world. However, you do not believe change need be blind. You often test others by offering up radical statements of all kinds, listening to their reactions with interest. Sometimes you will even go so far as to subtly encourage them to take a position with which you disagree, just so that you can appear the dissenter.

Milov Petrenkov

Clan: Gangrel

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 974 (born 948)

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 6, Brawl 7, Dodge 4, Intimidation 2, Mimicry 2, Scan 3, Swimming 2

Skills: Animal Ken 6, Animal Training 4, Blind Fighting 2, Herbalism 2, Melee 3, Survival 6

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Carpathian Mountains) 4, Kindred Lore 2, Linguistics 5, Lupine Lore 3

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

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Elder Status 1, Status 4

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 7

Notes: His sixth level of Protean allows him to make his skin as hard as marble, halving the damage he takes in combat.

Image: A slim, dark young man with shaggy brown hair and wide, innocent brown eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a very quiet person — the very image of contained power. Your large eyes take in every movement and sound, and you often recognize far more than others give you credit for. Your world is divided neatly: you are one of the hunters, a vampire, and all other creatures are your rightful prey.

Camilla Banes

Clan: Malkavian

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1063 (born 1029)

Apparent Age: Mid-30s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 6, Intimidation 2, Intrigue 3, Mimicry 2, Subterfuge 3, Ventriloquism 4

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Debate 2, Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Melee 1, Ride 3, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 2, Occult 3, Faerie Lore 3, Kindred Lore 6, Literature 3, Naturalist 1, Toxicology 3

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

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 3, Elder Status 1, Herd 3, Retainers 2, Status 2

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Derangements: Perfectionism, dual personalities (one mothering, the other sadistic).

Notes: Her sixth level of Auspex allows her small glimpses of the future.

Image: An exceedingly tall, rosy-cheeked woman with glittering, dreamy eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are by turns beatifically nurturing and violently cruel. A constant stream of images pours through your head: some of you brushing out your children's hair and playing gently with them, others of you taking that same brush and smashing it again and again into their bloody bodies. Both images fill you with horror and glee. This distracting drama often causes you to make strange, seemingly non-sensical statements to others.

Josef von Bauren

Clan: Nosferatu

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1006 (born 943)

Apparent Age: Early 60s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 3, Empathy 3, Leadership 2, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Blind Fighting 4, Debate 3, Meditation 3, Melee 4, Stealth 6

Knowledges: Kindred Lore 3, Occult 3, Sewer Lore 4

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Celerity 1, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 6, Potence 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Elder Status 2, Influence 5, Resources 3

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Notes: His extra level of Obfuscate lets him hide large inanimate objects.

Image: A stooped, wizened man, no more than four-foot-nine in height with huge, suppurating warts covering most of his skin.

Roleplaying Hints: You never speak in haste, always weighing options before speaking your mind at crucial moments in debates. Your words always carry weight. Above all else, you hate wasting resources, be they gold, Kindred or kine.

Rafael de Corazon

Clan: Toreador

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1182 (born 1154)

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 7

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Diplomacy 4, Dodge 3, Intrigue 3, Public Speaking 4, Subterfuge 2, Seduction 4, Style 6

Skills: Dancing 2, Etiquette 4, Fast Talk 3, Melee 3, Singing 6, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Art History 7, Kindred Lore 2, Linguistics 2, Literature 3, Occult 4, Politics 1, Theology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 2, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Elder Status 1, Influence 6, Resources 4, Retainers 5, Status 2

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 9

Derangement: Obsessive vanity

Notes: For more information on Rafael de Corazon, see **Who's Who Among Vampires: Children of the Inquisition**.

Image: A gorgeous, medium-boned man with a mellifluous voice.

Roleplaying Hints: Although your beauty is radiant enough to make other Kindred forget the lost sun, your manner is cold and calculating. However, you are eloquent and adept at influencing others when you so desire. You surround yourself with lesser beauty, but as you are exceedingly vain you loathe the few things and people more beautiful than yourself.

Mistress Fanchon

Clan: Tremere

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1223 (born 1186)

Apparent Age: Late 30s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 2, Dodge 2, Instruction 1, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Dancing 2, Etiquette 2, Falconry 3, Melee 1, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 6, Astronomy 5, Kindred Lore 3, History 4, Naturalist 2, Theology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Dominate 3, Thaumaturgy 6 (Movement of the Mind 5, Lure of Flames 5, Weather Control 3)

Backgrounds: Influence 4, Resources 3, Retainers 5, Status 3

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 9

Image: A handsome, middle-aged woman with very long, dark hair and bright green eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You shower the world with your golden words and clever rhetoric. Your words form an oft-mesmerizing shield, which few are skilled enough to penetrate. In contrast to your sparkling conversation, your movements are languid. You aim for control in all things, and you usually succeed.

Player Notes

These can be copied onto index cards for the players' use if they are taking on the roles of Founders in the debate.

Hardestadt: A tall, strapping man with dark hair and intense eyes. Ventrue. Hardestadt believes the characters should be put to death at sunrise. He usually attempts to use his strength of will and conviction to bluster through a debate.

Adana de Sforza: A petite, blonde woman with narrow blue eyes and sharp features. Brujah. Adana has mixed feelings on the characters' fates. She appreciates the desire to rebel, but believes the conspirators have performed poorly. Adana prefers to throw a number of verbal gambits into the debate ring and see who seizes which of her ideas. Once she has determined how most of her fellow debaters feel, she usually chooses the opposing stance.

Camilla Banes: An exceedingly tall, rosy-cheeked woman with glittering, dreamy eyes. Malkavian. Camilla continually fluctuates between a desire to slowly strip the characters' flesh from their yet-living bones, and the wish to Blood Bond them all to her bosom where she can treat them as her children. Camilla has no debating style *per se*, instead conducting her own internal conflict.

Josef von Bauren: A stooped, wizened man, no more than four-foot-nine in height, with huge, suppurating warts covering most of his skin. Nosferatu. Josef would like to Blood Bond the characters if there is a way to do so that will not jeopardize the possibility of a unified vampiric group (the future Camarilla). Josef is a quiet man who always waits until a crucial point in the debate to speak his mind, nudging the argument towards his desired outcome.

Milov Petrenkov: A slim young man with shaggy brown hair and wide, innocent brown eyes. Gangrel. Milov strongly prefers to release the neonates this evening, then hunt them down and kill them in the time-honored fashion. He is a blunt-spoken young man, who expresses himself most elegantly through his body language.

Rafael de Corazon: A gorgeous, medium-boned man with a mellifluous voice. Toreador. Rafael is in favor of killing the characters and having done with them. He believes they are too dangerous to allow to roam about free. The likelihood that they are unwitting dupes is of no concern to him. Rafael speaks eloquently and wittily in debate, using his gorgeous looks to devastating advantage on anyone swayed by such considerations.

Mistress Fanchon: A handsome, middle-aged woman with very long, dark hair and bright green eyes. Tremere. Mistress Fanchon believes that the characters should all be Blood Bound, in particular to her. After all, as a Tremere she is an expert. Mistress Fanchon uses a circular and convoluted debating style, attempting to confuse her opponent with all manner of verbal trickery.



Scene 2: We Are the Revolution

The first duty of a revolutionary is to get away with it.
— Abbie Hoffman, attributed

Marching Orders

The following evening, Roderigo summons the characters and brings them to Hardestadt, who waits for them in a room filled with military maps marked with trade routes and vampiric boundaries.

The Ventrue tells the neonates his plans for them. “You are puny, immature and naïve. However, there is little we can do about these most unattractive qualities. I shall therefore aid you immeasurably in your hunt for the conspirators. Listen closely, for I become...choleric...when I am forced to repeat myself.

“Claudius and his Conspiracy of Isaac meet in any number of places, huddling together to plot and scheme like the scofflaws and vagabonds they are. They think they are safe in their little havens, because they are so adept at scurrying away like rats when their betters come calling,” Hardestadt continues. “Yet, like rats, they seldom fear their own.”

Hardestadt pauses to look at the characters and take a sip of blood from the nearest servant before continuing. “Therefore, you shall present yourselves to the anathema at the Inn of the Lion, where my sources say they often cower after being routed from more comfortable nests.

“Do not attempt a frontal assault on the anathema, for you have no hope of destroying them. Instead, sue for peace. Present yourselves to them, and beg they take you back. Tell the vile traitors that you escaped from my clutches by overcoming Roderigo. Bring him with you as proof and say he is Dominated by you, but do not let them kill him for betraying them. Tell the conspirators that you found them by asking Roderigo to take you to all the places where he had seen them.

“Watch and learn all you can. Find out when they intend to attack Japheth and tell me. And if you can, destroy them, one by one. This will remove the burden your unlawful sires placed upon you at the moment of your rebirths.”

If the characters ask Hardestadt why he and the other Founders do not merely raid the inn and destroy their foes, he snaps: “Fools! Do you think I could not catch them if I wished? Do you think Claudius and his fellow rats have escape routes I cannot block? I allowed them to slink away, tails between their legs. It is not enough to wreak righteous

retribution upon them. I must prove their guilt, and demonstrate the need to band together against such renegade Kindred. But I have said too much. All you need know is that I must catch them bloody-handed trying to kill their Cainite betters."

If they ask why he attacked the conspirators at the Giovanni manse, when they were clearly not "killing their Cainite betters," Hardestadt rages, "I need not explain myself to you." But then he scowls and adds, "Sometimes my spy is not very well informed. Sometimes I think she is — but no matter. This is not for your ears."

Rafael's Admonition

Once Hardestadt tells the characters how to reach the inn where he believes the conspirators may be hiding, he tells Roderigo to take them away. "Deliver these serpent childer of the anathema unto the bosom of their family." Before Roderigo can do so, however, Rafael steps up and whispers in the Ventrue lord's ear. After a moment, Hardestadt grunts, nods and leans back against an ancient rack, boredom on his craggy face.

Rafael smiles beatifically at the characters and begins to address them. The Toreador tells them about the Masquerade, an idea of Rafael's that almost all Kindred now uphold. He admonishes the characters in his soft, beautiful voice to keep the Masquerade at all costs. "Humans fear what they don't understand, and they will now fear you. Priests...priests, who are supposed to be the embodiment of Christian love and charity, will spit upon you. They will consign you to the fires of Hell merely for existing. Even if you were the noblest soul since our Savior they would destroy you, even as the Romans destroyed Him. So take care, younglings. If it was only your survival that hung in the balance, then I am certain Hardestadt would not care if you flaunted your natures."

Rafael pauses as Hardestadt snorts derisively. He then finishes his little speech: "However, it is the survival of all the Kindred that depends on you. We all must uphold the Masquerade, lest we all fall to the Inquisition's flames. No Kindred, not even the anathema, will applaud you for bringing the Inquisition down on them."

The Founders now give the characters an opportunity to feed from the servants, something which may feel awkward, since they have never fed from living vessels before. Should any of the characters grow too entranced by her bloodlust, the Founders will make certain to stop the feeding before she wastes a good servant.

A Final Assignment

As the characters are preparing to leave, Hardestadt approaches them once more. The other Founders are conversing animatedly a little apart from Hardestadt and the party. While servants place traveling cloaks on the characters' shoulders, Hardestadt tells them that they should be

certain that one of the first conspirators they slay is Lady Jadviga Almanov. He insists that Lady Jadviga is a very dangerous woman, and that the characters very well may not succeed in their task should they not soon destroy her.

As Hardestadt well knows, Lady Jadviga is the agent who has been leaking information (including the location of the inn) to the Ventrue. However, Hardestadt now feels that she has given him as much information as he needs to destroy the conspirators. He does not want to share the glory that bringing the anathema to ground will bring him among the Ventrue, especially since Lady Jadviga is due to receive the greatest share of that glory. After all, she is the one risking herself nightly, while Hardestadt has so far merely served as a clean-up man. Thus, he feels it would be best if Lady Jadviga suffered an unfortunate death "due to her own incompetence," allowing him to win the day despite Lady Jadviga's appalling mistake.

Once Hardestadt finishes his instructions, the characters are free to head off into the early evening air. The Founders provide the characters with horses and a carriage, driven by Roderigo. He says, "Well met, my lads and lasses; shall we go?"

The Welcome

As the coach rumbles through the night, the party finds the way blocked by a fallen tree just a quarter-mile from the inn. As Roderigo stops the carriage, six brigands leap from the woods, brandishing swords. "Stand and deliver!" they shout, charging toward the carriage.

The brigands should be no match for the well-fed and healed neonates, and will likely fall quickly. If any characters stealthily went ahead on point, they could easily have found the ambush before the carriage reached it. If they search the brigand camp, they find dozens of oil-soaked torches and stakes.

On interrogation, the brigands admit they were hired by a stranger to attack the carriage. The stranger told them to use the torches and burn or impale any travelers, but they feared the fire would alert the ambush and ruin any silks in the treasure. The brigands describe the man who hired them as a nobleman with a scar along the right side of his face. They did not follow his orders because he would not pay them in advance.

The characters must decide what to do with any living brigands. They can bring them to the local sheriff, release them or simply kill them. If they take the brigands to the inn, though, they can confront Lothar with them.

Hospitality

When the characters finally arrive, they find a large stone structure more reminiscent of a small manse than an inn. However, a large sign reading "Inn of the Lion, established 1378" assures the party that this is indeed their destination.

A vaguely unstable-looking wooden barn stands against the inn's western wall. Several stablehands move listlessly back and forth between a nearby well and the barn. The characters may leave their horses with the stablehands when they enter the inn.

The inn's interior is poorly lit by small fires burning in immense fireplaces on either side of the gigantic hallway serving as the common room. A number of large, dark trestle tables rest on the fresh reeds and straw scattered across the broad stones of the floor. Small tallow candles burn fitfully on a few of the tables.

The only persons immediately visible inside are a young serving girl spreading new straw on the floor, and an elderly man working at a desk placed so as to take full advantage of the weak light filtering through the high windows. The old man is Geppen, the innkeeper, and the young girl is his granddaughter, Megan. Geppen's widowed son, Alban, also helps run the inn, but he is currently on a trip to pick up supplies in the nearby town.

As soon as the characters enter, Geppen looks up, then quickly glances at one of the empty tables before turning back to his work without greeting the characters. Both he and Megan are thoroughly conditioned to the orders of Lord Giovanni and the rest of the conspirators. Geppen is Dominated by Claudius himself. If the characters attempt to talk to Geppen he will ignore them.

Megan will also ignore any of the characters' conversational gambits, although she will accept candy or any

other treat offered. She is a sweet-faced girl with dark blonde hair and large brown eyes, and currently a favorite of Sire Wenceslas. He has already drained her blood several times, and is currently toying with the idea of making her one of his ghouls, so that she might entertain him in this pretty 10-year-old form for a long time to come.

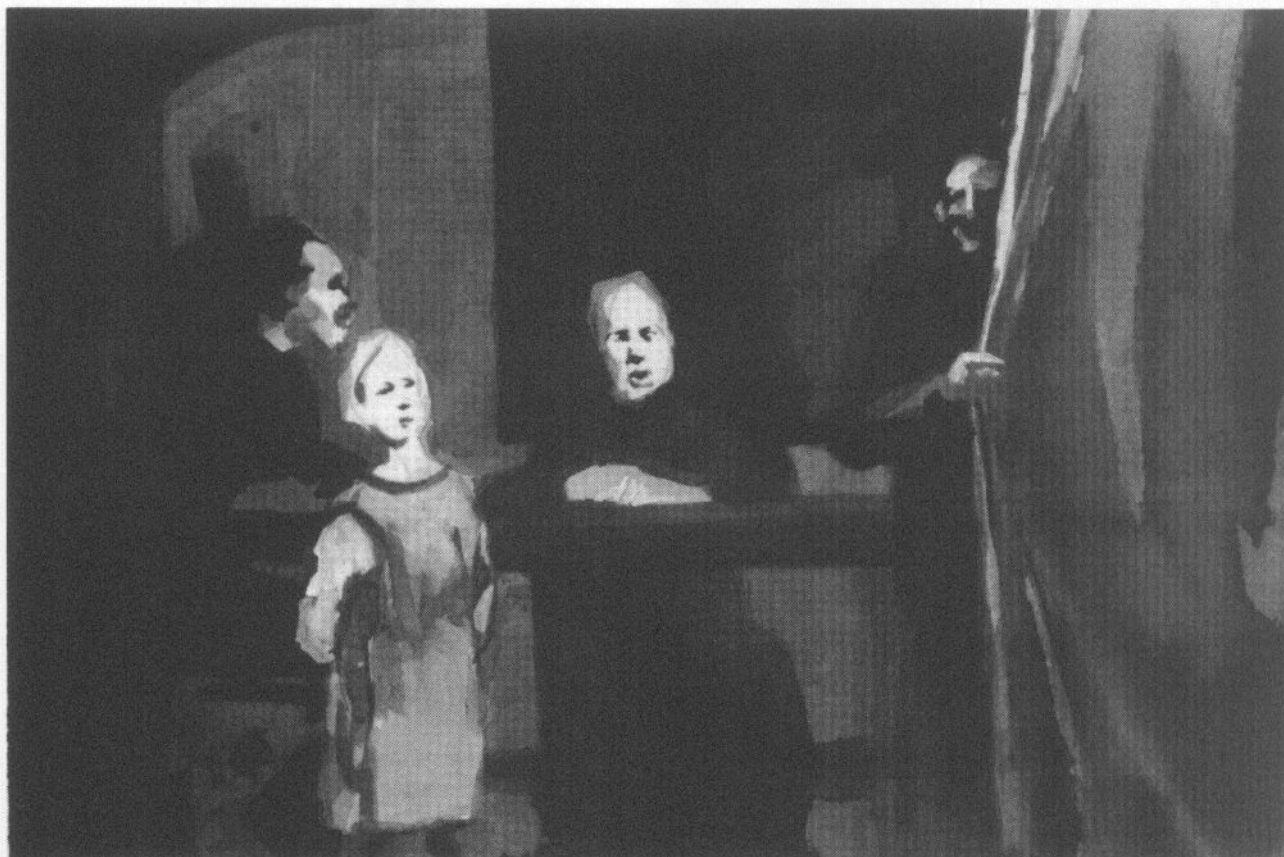
The Lord Appears

Unless one of the characters attempts to see Obfuscated beings, they find themselves "alone" in the common room with the two kine for a few minutes. Once Claudius believes the tension has mounted sufficiently he will unmask himself, seated calmly at one of the long trestle tables in the center of the room. One by one the other conspirators show themselves: those Obfuscating appear seated at various tables while the rest step out from behind curtains, or wherever else they secreted themselves.

Chuckling maliciously, Claudius asks the neonates to "Please take seats, that we may discuss like civilized folk whatever business you have with the Conspiracy of Isaac."

Claudius and the rest of the conspirators will brook no poor behavior on the part of the characters. Should the characters be rash enough to attack the conspirators, the anathema should have little trouble beating their progeny into submission.

Once the characters sit down at the table, Claudius will ask them how they have fared since last the two groups met. As the characters talk, their particular sires move



close to their new progeny, treating them with remarkable solicitude. Since the characters are now Kindred, and indeed are their childer, Claudius and his fellow conspirators wish to cajole them into helping them in their plot against Cappadocius. The characters should notice the radical difference in the way the elders treat them now that they are Kindred.

The conversation between the members of the Conspiracy of Isaac and the characters may run along a number of lines. However, unbeknownst to the characters, the conspirators had a hasty conference when Lothar returned after the bandit skirmish to report that the characters were headed towards the inn. At that time the vampires decided that they would use the characters' timely arrival to their advantage.

The Plot

Claudius does not deny plotting to destroy Japheth Cappadocius. He explains that he recently decided that the best way to attack Japheth and his hangers-on is to arrange a meeting with the powerful Cappadocian at a time and place of Claudius' choosing. Once there, he believes he can get Japheth to drop his guard long enough for to be successfully attacked and destroyed. Claudius considers giving the characters the opportunity to deliver his missive to Japheth to be the perfect test of loyalty. If the characters prove untrustworthy, little is lost since Japheth is unlikely to believe the word of neonate outsiders — coerced by the Founders — over the word of a member of his own clan (even Claudius).

When the characters ask of Japheth's crime, the conspirators sadly tell the neonates that Japheth Cappadocius is lost to a terrible madness. Claudius, a high-ranking member of the Cappadocian clan himself, now feels it is his duty to destroy Japheth before his sickness destroys the rest. "That is why I have agreed to be the 13th in our unholy cabal, and plot against Japheth. I know I shall become anathema to some, but Japheth must be stopped. He literally believes he can become God on Earth. His madness must be checked before it can do great harm."

If the characters ask for details, Claudius says, "His mind continually grasps for things beyond our ken, for concepts God does not mean us to contemplate. I believe it is for his hubris that God has punished him. I am afraid that Japheth's blasphemous ideas have progressed to such a point that he believes the Cappadocians can rise o'er our Lord God himself to rule the heavens," he finishes breathlessly.

"We few here tonight are but a small number of the Kindred who understand that at times you must stand against the tide in order to do what is best for all. Our eyes are open. God is on our side, and we shall not fail."

The Appeal for Loyalty

The conspirators attempt to secure the characters' loyalty with a number of other ploys as well. Each character's sire will speak to him of the importance of the childe-sire bond in the world of the Kindred. Claudius nods sagely during these lectures and admonitions, murmuring, "Even the so-called Founders must agree that this bond is sacrosanct. If they truly hold the Traditions of Caine dear, how could they begrudge any childe his duty, his right, to serve his sire?"

If these arguments do not seem to sway the characters towards the conspirators' viewpoint, Claudius will speak to them of power and greed. He holds forth a carrot to the neonates: "Once we have excised the disease, Japheth, from the Cappadocian clan, I shall wield great power among Kindred and kine alike. My family contains powerful vampires, skilled necromancers, and the shrewdest businessmen in Venice. Any who bask within my favor shall surely reap great reward. No one, certainly not the so-called Founders, shall be able to do my favored ones harm."

Giovanni pauses before continuing: "I should like to count you among my favored ones. Of course, those upon whom I and my family frown shall undoubtedly perish in unimaginable pain and ignominy. I am certain you have heard whispered tales of the powers that necromancy grants the skilled practitioner? Of how she can twist the soul and anchor it forever, bleeding and screaming, to this mortal coil? Folk tales are so often true! We can do that, and more, to any who earn our wrath." Giovanni's eyes narrow as he speaks, until they are no more than slits. Fire dances in his pupils as he finishes in a low growl: "You have dominion over your own immortal souls. Choose wisely, childer. Your time of trials is nigh, and I would not have you found wanting."

The Message

Once the conspirators have finished their arguments, Claudius asks the characters to take a message to Japheth at the Cappadocian monastery. The note asks Japheth to meet with a contrite and heart-sore Claudius, who claims to be in the throes of a crisis of conscience. Conducting his family's business dealings no longer excites him; color and meaning have left his life. Knowing how wise Japheth is in matters spiritual, Claudius craves audience with his clan brother to speak at length about his immortal soul.

If the characters readily agree, Claudius will smile on them and offer them a small token of his affections (a golden watch, or a flagon of sweet blood). If they refuse the mission, the conspirators will quickly become hostile, reminding the characters that their unives are still very fragile things. However, the characters likely will accept, whether in hopes of earning their sires' favor, or to gain Claudius' confidence.

The Return of Paul

If the characters helped Paul get his soldiering job, he did not die at the Giovanni manse. He is beaten but alive, and the Storyteller can reintroduce him at her convenience and in a manner that is natural to the story.

For example, if the characters go back to the Red Lamb Inn, or even to Giovanni's manor, they can find him trying to heal. A dose of vampiric blood would cure his wounds, and even help his crippled leg. He trusts the characters more than any other person, and will willingly serve them as a ghoul.

Once the characters agree to take the message to Japheth, Claudius gives them directions to the Monastery of St. Timothy, half a night's journey distant. If Claudius is pleased with the characters' attitude, he asks if they would like to spend the day at the inn before traveling to the monastery. The characters are free to accept or refuse this offer as they see fit.

Stealth Attack

It is possible that the characters will succeed in a stealth attack on a single conspirator. If they do, and they get away with it, reduce the number of conspirators by that one. However, if they attack Jadviga or Claudius, the vampire is able to escape without dying.

Hardestadt

If they accept Lord Giovanni's offer, the characters can return to Hardestadt with the message or go on to Cappadocius. If they go to Hardestadt, he is positively gleeful. He rubs his armored hands together, saying, "This shall be the proof to the Cappadocian clan that they must join us. It will be proof to all!" He dispatches them to take the message to Cappadocius.

Scene 3: Visitation

Every time that I think of the crucifixion of Christ, I commit the sin of envy.

— Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*

Brother Clement's Ambush

When the characters draw within an hour's ride of the monastery, they are attacked by Brother Clement and six holy templars. They have set a pit trap in the road that catches the carriage wheel, which must be lifted out to continue the journey.



When the carriage rumbles to a stop, the templars begin firing lighted arrows into the coach. As the characters spill out, the templars hurl "Goliath slayers:" rags dipped in holy water and wrapped around stones. They swing these over their heads like sling bolts, and release them toward the vampires. If they score a hit, the damage is aggravated.

Brother Clement screams, "I warned ye! I told ye to shun the lands of the dead! Now ye have partaken of their evil! Ye would not heed the voice of the righteous! And now ye are damned!"

The templars are fanatic, and fight to the death. Their blood courses with holy water and anyone who attempts to feed from them will suffer one Health Level of damage for every Blood Point taken. If the characters manage to take one of them alive for questioning, he can be forced to reveal that they work for the Inquisition and received their training in Rome. He does not know that the Monastery of St. Timothy is run by vampires.

It is quite possible many of the vampires will be badly injured by this encounter. If they are all subdued, they awaken in the monastery, their wounds bound, and are taken to Japheth.

The Clan of Death

The Monastery of St. Timothy sits amidst a beautiful garden that looks lush even at night. All the colorful buds are silver and white in the moonlight. The air is heady with the scent of healing herbs and flowers. Solemn in the midst of the flora, the modest building is silent at night, except for the sound of crickets, and dark save for a few candles. As the characters approach the still monastery, they hear deep voices raised in reverent chant.

There are a dozen monks in the inner courtyard engaged in nocturnal prayer. If the characters ask to see Japheth, a young monk will beckon them to follow him. He leads them into the monastery and down stone stairs to the catacombs below. The characters pass rows of coffin slots in the walls.

They reach the lowest level of the monastery and are ushered into a room that is lit with a warm glow that does not seem to originate from any single point. There are no tapers or fire. In the center of the room is an altar on a raised dais. At the far end are three chairs. The chair in the center is empty, as is that to its left. Seated in the chair on the right is a very tall, thin man in a monk's robe and tonsure.

The tall man rises and says, "I am Japheth Cappadocius, foremost son of the great Cappadocius, abbot of the monastery of the martyred St. Timothy." If the characters are wounded, he has his monks bind their wounds.

If the characters announce the plot against Japheth's life and reveal the matters they witnessed, Japheth says, "Those are grave charges. I warn you, the Lord's penalties for false witness are severe. I shall commune with my

The Templars

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Leadership 1, Throwing 2

Skills: Etiquette 1, Falconry 3, Melee 3, Ride 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Knowledges: Linguistics 1, Occult 1, Theology 2

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

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 5

Notes: Slings have a difficulty of 7 to hit, a base damage pool of 1, a range in yards of the character's Strength multiplied by four, and can be used every turn. The holy water means their damage is aggravated against vampires. The templars are also armed with swords and wear armor, which gives them three extra soak dice but reduces their effective Dexterity by 1.

father." If the characters deliver Claudius's message, Japheth does not look pleased. He frowns and says, "I must seek wisdom. I shall commune with my father." His eyes roll upwards, and the glow in the room grows brighter. Japheth orders the characters to bring Claudius to him a week hence, then tells them that his father wishes to speak with them directly.

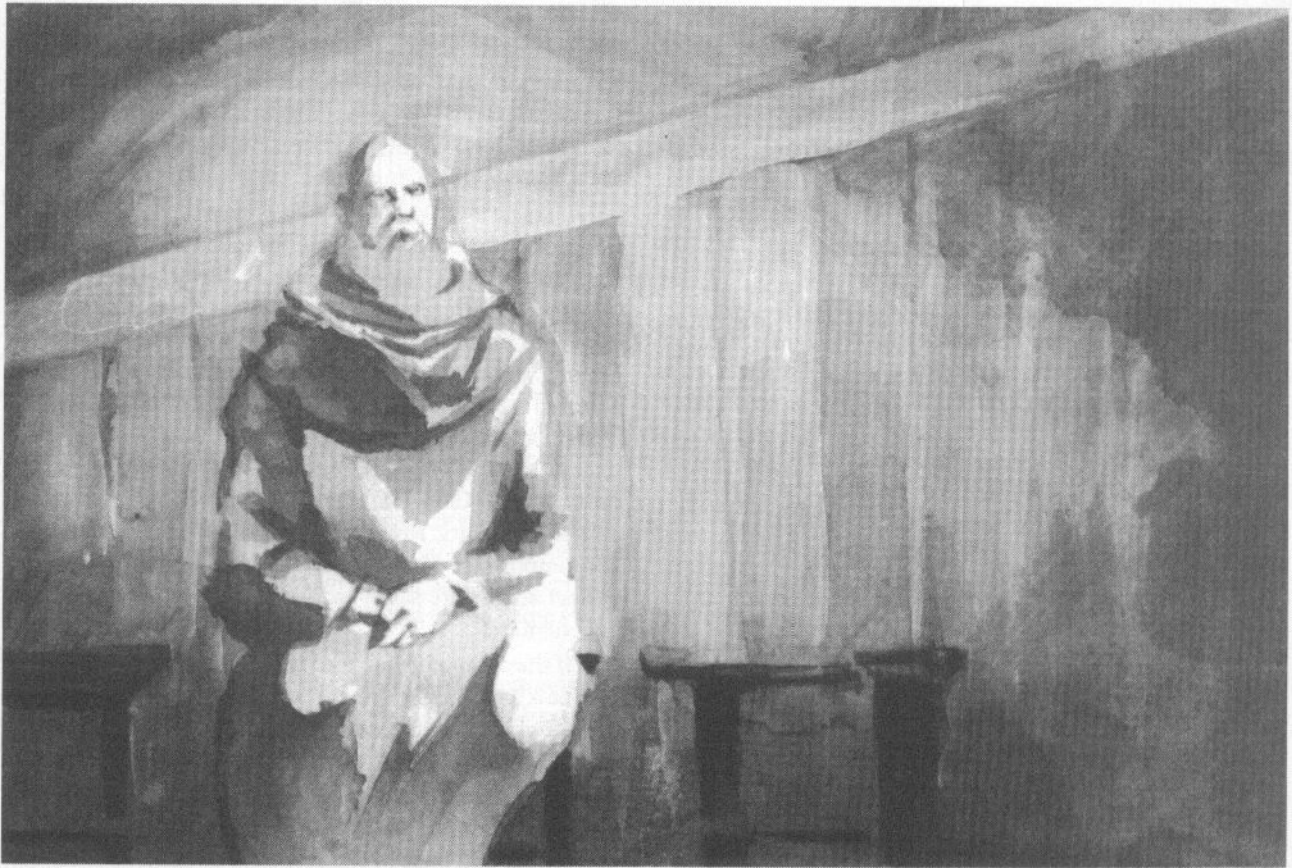
Clan Founder

A glow emanates from the center chair. A man with a long beard and hair appears as a luminous, translucent presence. He is wearing a white monk's robe and a beatific smile. While he seems to be sitting down, characters can make a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 8) to notice that he is floating less than an inch above the chair. He speaks in a strong but gentle voice.

"Welcome, my children. I am he who was once Cappadocius. I am Son of all Kindred. Unburden your hearts unto me."

After they tell their tale (whichever one they have chosen), Cappadocius says, "To understand these things requires a wisdom beyond that which you possess. You need the teachings of the *Book of Nod*. To possess wisdom is to have life beyond life; to lack it is to perish even in life. Do you wish this wisdom?"

If they say no, Cappadocius replies, "Many turn from the Word. It is the most difficult path. Go forth from here." He fades away. Japheth will escort them from the monastery. Go on to Act III.



However, if the characters earnestly ask to hear his advice, Cappadocius says, "This then do: return to those very templars who attacked you. Forgive them and bless them. When you have done as I say, return to me, and you shall become wise." Go to "Return to the Ambush."

If the characters did not kill any of the templars, Cappadocius instead says, "As you showed mercy unto your enemies, you have proved worthy of wisdom. You shall learn." Use The Lesson section below.

Return to the Ambush

When the characters return to the ambush site, they find it as they left it, with dead bodies scattered everywhere. If the characters do not forgive and bless the dead, nothing happens, and Cappadocius will know it. If the characters make an earnest effort to bless and forgive them, the dead begin to stir. Their wounds close, and they arise. They all appear to have been struck mute by the experience, and do not take up arms again. If the characters bring them to the monastery, the monks will take them to help with their rehabilitation. If the characters leave them, the monks will go get them. Either way, the characters will see the templars and Brother Clement working at the monastery in their visit a week later. What they will never realize is that the templars have become zombies.

The Lesson

When the characters return (or if they did not kill the templars), Cappadocius receives them and says, "Because you have harkened, you shall hear." He sits them at his feet and begins:

"There is an old Malkavian tale. 'When I made a sacrifice of plants and fed upon them, I rose above them to become lord over plants, and like unto a god. When I made a sacrifice of animals and fed upon them, I rose above them to become lord over animals, and like unto a god. When I made a sacrifice of men, and fed upon them, I rose above them, to become lord over men, and like unto a god.' The Malkavians know more of these vital matters than the other clans. They understand that spirit has risen from plants to animals to man to Kindred. We are not accursed by God. We are blessed with life everlasting.

"You know that our Saviour did say 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' and 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' But did ye also know that the Gospel of St. Luke says of our Saviour, 'And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' Blood for sweat, as ye have blood for sweat. What make ye of these portents?"



If the characters conclude that perhaps the Saviour was a vampire, Cappadocius corrects them. "Our Saviour was far more than man or Kindred. But we Kindred are a step on the path. We are not Damned. We are a step closer to God through Caine. God's redemption is even for such as us. But we needs must have our own sacrificial lamb of God, to redeem the blood of all Kindred."

If the characters ask if he intends to be that martyr, Cappadocius says, "Our Saviour said, 'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' I shall come to Him, believe in Him, consume Him and become Him. As Kindred feed on man, I shall make a sacrifice of God and feed upon Him, to rise above Kindred. I shall become Lord over all. Just as I had to die to become Kindred, so must I die to become God. I must die to my current state, as I once died to humanity. My "death" must be a crucifixion — my consumption of God must be a sacrament. It must be a perfect act, a pure act of sacrifice for the good of all, even my enemies."

If the characters ask who those enemies are, or if there is to be a Judas in Claudius Giovanni, Cappadocius says, "I do that which God intends." Japheth looks pained throughout this discussion.

Cappadocius finishes, "We are the clan of life after death, life beyond death. Death not as an end, but as a beginning, and I am to become the ferryman of souls. Let them that have ears hear. Let them that have minds understand. And let them that have souls know. Amen. I bid thee farewell." He fades away.

Japheth is visibly shaken by the event. If the characters ask him about it, he is not very forthcoming, but will allow that he heard more of his father's plans than he ever heard before. "Be exceedingly glad," he says. "My father rarely appears before us, almost never to other clans, and never to fledglings. Ye are truly blessed."

If the characters ask further questions about the merger with the Giovanni, Japheth will stop short of saying his father was wrong, but makes it clear that he finds it disturbing. "We need to focus on matters of the spirit, not of usury and greed. The moneychangers have entered the temple. We have taken tax collectors into our bosom." If the characters point out that Jesus accepted tax collectors, Japheth scowls and does not reply, rhetorically beaten. Should they ask if he intends to drive the moneychangers from the temple, metaphorically speaking, Japheth says, "I shall do as my father bids."

Wrapping Up Act II

The characters can return to Claudius to announce that Cappadocius will have audience with them. If they do, Giovanni will take them with him. They can also return to Hardestadt, and tell him. They have a week to make their plans.

Home Away from Home

The characters are strangers in a land that is now far stranger than it was in their mortal lives. They have no home, and no friends. They may try to return to their old homes for another look at their loved ones. This is dangerous, since anything more than a glance from afar invites the kind of questions that can lead to the Inquisition. Also, straying too far from the monastery can cause the characters to miss Giovanni's attack. That would bring about the default ending, causing a massive Blood Hunt called on the characters and a highly unsatisfying end to the game (and characters).

A larger problem looms, and that is how to remain safe during the dangerous hours of daylight. The characters can barricade themselves in the carriage, but that is risky. They

can go into torpor. The best solution is to find a small settlement with lots of underground storage rooms, and no Inquisitors about. Roderigo can look after them, and any other ghouls they create can help as well. If they return to the Red Lamb Inn they will possibly find Paul, as explained in Act II, Scene 2, and he will be loyal to them without any coercion.

The Decision

Act II ends with the characters on their own and with the freedom to make some big choices. They must decide which side they support, and they must make this decision without clear direction from the Storyteller. They know that the decision is important, but they are probably unclear on which is the choice sanctioned by this story. Of course, if they are sure they know what the "correct" choice is, that's even more amusing. If they are on their toes, they have realized that there is no one right answer.

The path to ultimate victory is not clearly spelled out from the story, because there is no such thing: just actions and consequences. This may leave some players floundering, but others will be excited and energized by all the possibilities.



LEIF
1995

JOES



Act III: The Choice

Round and round the spirit tumbles,
With half a chance it still believes
That cities fall but minds don't follow
And goodness hides up someone's sleeve ...
And what will be our secret beacon?
With only time to only try
To search our hearts for what's been taken,
While leaders eye their conquered sky.
And stomachs roll while church bells toll the crime.
The rose is crushed, the dove flies past, it's time.
It's time, time, time, time.
— Ferron, "Phantom Center"

In this final Act the characters must make a fateful choice and live forever with their decision. They have a chance to revisit all the warring factions and must choose between seriously divided loyalties or no loyalties at all. Some results are preordained, but the paths to those endings make all the difference in the world. In the end, Cappadocius will die, but the way he dies will have repercussions in the World of Darkness right up to the 20th century — and possibly beyond.

Scene 1: Immortals in a World of Slaves

*When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something.*

— Robert Browning, "Bishop Blougram's Apology"

Shrewd characters will realize that information is power and will attempt to get as much as possible in the week until the meeting. They can do this by interviewing the three main groups.



Visit the Founders

After the meeting at the monastery, the characters could go directly to the Founders to ask advice. Hardestadt will tell them to go to Claudius and deliver the message of Cappadocius' acceptance of the meeting, and then return to plot an ambush at the monastery to catch the conspirators.

If the characters go to Giovanni first and the Founders second, Hardestadt finds out and erupts in anger. He furiously questions the characters' trustworthiness, saying that they should have come to him for instructions first. If the characters ask what he would have instructed them to do, he grudgingly allows that he would have had them take the message to Giovanni, just as they did. This shows Hardestadt's mania for control.

The Founders are still suspicious and disdainful of the characters because of their inauspicious begetting. If the characters persist in earnestly seeking guidance, wisdom and lore, however, the Founders will be flattered into providing it.

General Information from all Founders

Once the characters have gained a measure of trust, the Founders speak from the heart about their goals. They speak first of something akin to altruism: unifying the clans out of mutual self-interest and self-preservation. Unified clans can react to the mounting threat of humans, who are shockingly populous despite the recent Black Death and Crusades. Claudius Giovanni must be exposed and stopped because he threatens this union.

If the characters keep up their interest, the Founders explain motivations that go a level deeper. They talk with cruel eyes about punishing their enemies. They gloat about crushing self-willed elders and wayward anarchists and of destroying entire lineages of their mortal enemies. Claudius Giovanni must be exposed and stopped because his destruction will be thrilling.

After that, a third motivation appears: naked lust for power. The Founders want to rule, and they see the proposed federation as a means to get the clans to play by their rules, under their jurisdiction, and support their efforts to crush dissenters. Claudius Giovanni must be exposed and stopped because he is also trying to make a grab for power.

At the conclusion of these talks, the Founders trust the characters more. Sharing their secrets has forged tentative bonds, and will make it easier for the characters to get the Founders to accept their advice later.

If the characters ask about the conspirator's fears that Cappadocius is out to bring heaven to earth, the Founders will scoff. They say that such rumors cannot be countenanced.

Personal Motivations of Individual Founders

Hardestadt

The leader of the Founders continues to stress the need to kill Jadviga. He asks if it has been done yet, and if not, when it will be. Otherwise, he is too busy to bother with the characters, apart from laying plans for the ambush.

Adana de Sforza

Adana is glad the characters survived. She possesses a Brujah's affinity for their struggle against impossible odds and will tell them much. She reveals that the Founders fear Claudius Giovanni ascending to Japheth's place in the Cappadocian clan because the necromancers are rumored to have dark aspirations to bring death to every living person. With the backing of a clan's second-in-command, they may gain the power to carry out that threat.

Camilla Banes

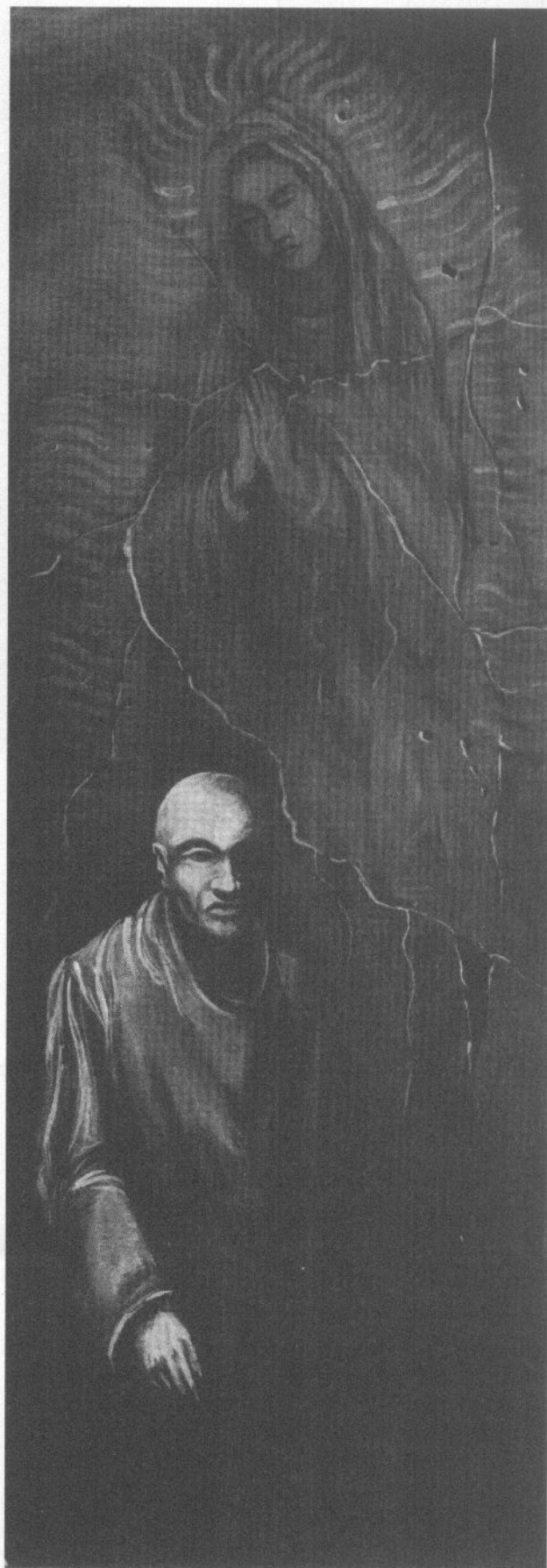
The Malkavian is difficult to talk to, because she consistently switches between gentle mothering and violent hate. But if the characters endure her for awhile, she'll say, "The voices tell me that a soul storm draws near. The day we tear out Claudius's withered heart, the heavens will open and a Maelstrom will deluge us. You must get yourselves to safety, my precious darlings. You must bundle up your souls with a unraveled cloak of purity, hold fast to the white-hot heart of the storm, and wear stout boots of courage — or you will lose your footing and fall into Hell where you belong, you spiteful wretches!"

Josef von Bauren

The diminutive Nosferatu has little interest in talking to the characters: "Ye were born bastards and bastards ye shall be as long as we suffer ye to live." But if they persist, he will warm to them and share his lore. He confirms that the Founders fear Claudius' necromantic powers. "The Giovanni seek to destroy the wall between the worlds of the living and the dead. This will give them the power of each realm in the other. If Claudius brings the infernal realms into this world, all will be lost. He must be stopped at all costs. This Camarilla be hanged. The important thing is to stop these foul abominations."

Milov Petrenkov

The Gangrel does not like to talk to any but other Gangrel or well-traveled characters. He will say, though, that as the time draws nearer for the meeting, animals become more and more skittish, as before an earthquake. He doesn't know what to make of it, but fears it, since he saw something similar during the millennial frenzies of the year 1000 A.D., when spirits walked and a Maelstrom of dark forces lashed the Earth.



Rafael de Corazon

The influential Toreador feels the characters are beneath him. An attractive young male character can get him to talk, though.

He insists that all Kindred must sever their close ties to mortals and that the Giovanni made a severe mistake in revealing their newfound vampiric state to their entire extended family. Such an egregious violation of the newly formed Masquerade is unforgivable to him. The Masquerade is his life's work, and he enforces it with relish. He does not care about necromancy, the Cappadocians or their religion, despite his religious background. All he wants is to punish the Giovanni and prevent their further rise to power.

Rafael is not afraid to reveal that he feels the rest of the Founders are not his equal in status. He does not serve Hardestadt but travels with him as long as it serves his purpose. A character who wins his trust can also learn that the Ventrue are secretly eager to see the Giovanni join the Cappadocians and even move up in its ranks. Rafael speculates that the Ventrue are very likely in league with the conspirators as well as the Founders, playing both sides against the other to ensure a win regardless of the outcome. Rafael suspects that the Ventrue would like to both results: they want to see Claudius Giovanni as second-in-command of the Cappadocians with the Clan of Death active in the world of commerce, and they want to see Claudius' conspiracy used to rally Methuselahs to form the Camarilla.

Mistress Fanchon

At first the Tremere does not want to talk to the characters except to tell them that they had better play their part properly, or die. If they ask her about Maelstroms she looks startled, but will not reveal what she knows. If they ask about the other Founders and the organization they wish to start, though, she becomes quite talkative.

She thinks it's a good idea, if for no other reason than to prevent the very means by which her clan gained power. The human wizards called the Tremere committed diablerie upon Saulot and created their own lineage of Blood Bound Kindred. Now they must make sure no one else can duplicate such an event.

Visit the Conspirators

When the characters visit Claudius, he gratefully accepts the news that Cappadocius will meet with him and requests that the characters accompany him to the monastery in a week's time. If the characters went to visit him first and the Founders second, they must invent an excuse to leave to see Hardestadt.

The characters may also decide to ask questions to try to gain insight into the motivations of the conspirators. In this case, Claudius tries to win them over to his Conspiracy. "Though you were misbegotten, you may yet grow

into real progeny, and be recognized by us." The conspirators will be just as forthcoming as the Founders, eager to expound upon their secret cause and gain support — or at least pawns they can use and discard.

The conspirators explain that if Claudius can kill Japheth, he will become second-in-command of the Cappadocians and use that power to advance his family. "He has always wanted to become the speaker for his clan, and he does not care if he gains it through betrayal." The conspirators will reap rewards of Methuselah blood, riches and the eternal gratitude of one of the world's most powerful Kindred.

Cappadocius

They also reveal that they fear Cappadocius' research into Cainite mysteries. His obsession with ascending to godhead and the world he envisions is frightening to the vampires. "If he makes all mortals immortal, on what shall we feed? Vampires are the Damned. We have been cast out of Heaven. God has turned his back on us, and we shall return the insult in kind."

The Founders

All the conspirators have a hatred of the Founders and their attempts to organize the Kindred. Asking about the Founders unleashes a torrent of bile. "Such vile communitarian impulses must be crushed. How dare they try to tell us who we can and cannot kill?" "How dare they say we cannot terrorize mortals when we desire?" "I am not my brother's keeper! Caine would not wish us to acknowledge obligation or responsibility to anyone!"

If the characters point out that the result of that logic is that any of the conspirators could betray one another in a moment, they all look uncomfortable. "Well, as long as we have a common cause, we need not fear one another," they say uneasily, and change the subject. "But that Hardestadt is just a powermonger seeking to hide his own weakness behind large numbers of others!"

Maelstroms

If the characters inquire about Maelstroms, Claudius demands to know where they heard of such a thing. A plausible excuse will get them off the hook. Otherwise, Claudius is very suspicious of them and questions them relentlessly. If they say that they overheard a Founder mention it during their captivity, he will be satisfied. So long as the characters steadfastly act calm, and do not betray a hint of wrongdoing in their acquisition, he will say, "Such matters are over your head. Stay far from them, if you value the blood in your undying veins."

The other conspirators are all unfamiliar with the term, except for Lady Theophana, who absently says, "The voices say that all Hell breaks loose in the Maelstrom: the dead rise, and all our sires roam at will. All are weak. All are powerful. All can fall. All can rise, and... what were we talking about again? Hmmm. No, I know nothing about any Maelstrom."



Lord Giovanni Speaks

If the characters ask Claudius about necromancy, the rise of the Giovanni, and separating the wall between the living and the dead, he grows serious and asks where the characters have heard such talk. He admits to being a necromancer but denies wanting to bring death to all life. “Our power comes from dying mortals. How would we gain new power if they were all dead?” he reasons. Since the characters have proven themselves resourceful enough to find this crucial information, Claudius raises his estimation of them and decides to try to convince them of his intentions.

“I admit we Giovanni rose to prominence through guile. Who hasn’t? Before we were Kindred, we summoned the souls of vampires and learned their ways. That made us clever enough to know what to offer the Cappadocians to secure a place in their clan. We bring esoteric knowledge of the afterworld. We can help them gather souls. We may have a different purpose for the use of those wandering spirits, but our means are the same. Cappadocius gives us a place at the table, and we take a higher place. What ambitious person would not? Japheth’s soul will make a lovely addition to the collection.”

If asked what the Giovanni will do with the spirits, Claudius enigmatically says, “I’m sure we’ll find some purpose.”

If the characters say that they think sundering the wall between the living and the dead is a great idea, Giovanni will be intrigued. “It would be a source of great power, wouldn’t it?” he asks with a wicked smile.

The characters may ask the conspirators about necromancy when Claudius is not around. The elders say that they have heard rumors that the Giovanni are plotting a cataclysmic demise of all life, but insist that such rumors are false. They don’t know why, but they are sure there is no truth to them. “What good would that do? If everyone were dead, how could you have servants, slaves, pawns and *vitæ*? No, such things are but an attempt to demonize necromancers.”

Delaying the Attack

If the characters attempt to delay the meeting with Japheth beyond a week, they will be argued down by the conspirators, and Claudius will find new messengers. He will make the connection with the Cappadocians without the help of the characters, who will be marginalized in the final confrontation and have less influence. As in all storytelling games, this requirement is flexible as well. If the characters come up with a brilliant stratagem and make a persuasive case, the time can be delayed — but not by much.

Lady Jadviga

If the characters tell Jadviga that Hardestadt took pains to secure her death, she will be enraged, but thanks the characters for telling her.

"That dung-hearted villain! He wants the glory for himself! If he gets rid of me the Ventrue will reward only him! He seeks to kill me for doing my duty!" She is so angry that she is willing to reveal the truth about her mission being sanctioned by the Ventrue to make the Cappadocians more useful.

If the characters ask about the original attack, she sheepishly admits that she deliberately leaked false information to embarrass Hardestadt. "I told him that we would perform a ritual at the Giovanni manse that would kill Japheth. He barged in and could not catch us. That humiliated him before the clan. Now he seeks to kill me, and use you to get information for the assassination. Well I am not so easily disposed of!"

She rewards the characters with blood, and a boon. She is even capable of getting a Giovanni's blood, if the characters ask for it (as per Durga Syn's instructions, below).

Visit Durga Syn

Finding Durga Syn makes a lot of sense, since she was the only person who ever really helped the characters out. If they ask for her at Hardestadt's castle, the Founders report that she stays at in a Gypsy village two hours to the south. If they summon her, she will arrive six hours later. If they visit her village, she invites them into a hut, asks them of their progress, and answers their questions. She asks why the characters wish such information, but will provide them with answers if they make it clear that they want to make wise decisions.

The Prophecy of the Bloody Egg

Durga Syn has little more information on the prophecy, other than to say that the fact that the characters have not been destroyed by now in a sea of enemies is some proof of its veracity. She admits she downplayed the power of the prophecy to the Founders. She allows that the only time she has seen greater portents were for a vampire yet to come; one who will become a vampire by his own hand and bargain with demons to deliver all the Kindred from damnation.

She then turns the question around and asks them what they would desire the prophecy to be and what outcome they would like to see.

Maelstroms

She says a Maelstrom is a backlash of souls from the lands of the dead. She does not know what to do about it. "That's something known only to those who walk the paths of the dead, like the Cappadocians and the Giovanni."

Cappadocius and Apotheosis

The Gypsy says that Cappadocius is a "most dangerous Antediluvian, since he is tampering with forces beyond the grasp of mortals and Kindred. But his research shows

promise, since the *Book of Nod* fragments he recovered were written by Irad, son of Caine, and explain how to lift God's curse from the Kindred. The results of such a ritual are unknown, though Cappadocius believes that he will bring Heaven to Earth, where mortals and Kindred alike live eternally in God's bliss. It may destroy us all. Or both."

Giovanni and Necromancy

Durga Syn reveals that the Giovanni have indeed been "summoning and hoarding the spirits of vampires and mortals alike. And the spirits of creatures beyond your ken. On that day, spoken of in whispers even among Kindred, when the Antediluvians rise up to eat their progeny, the necromancers could be more powerful still. Even Hardestadt does not understand this. But I say the Giovanni must be watched. And stopped. They must especially be kept from making mischief with Japheth's captured soul."

Stopping Claudius Giovanni

If the characters declare that they wish to stop Giovanni from capturing Japheth's soul, she says, "Make sure you know the dangers, and agree with a clear heart. Interfering with the necromancers will earn you powerful enemies!"

If the characters insist, she says, "You must keep them pulling Japheth's soul from his body. This is what you must do. You must find the vessel in which Claudius seeks to capture Japheth's soul, and cover it with the blood of a Giovanni to ensure that it cannot trap the fleeing soul."

If they ask where they can find a Giovanni, Durga Syn says, "I do not know. Then again, Claudius himself is Giovanni..." She smiles mysteriously.

Visit the Cappadocians

If the characters return to the Cappadocians, Japheth is disturbed to see them. If they explain the plot against Cappadocius, he is even more upset.

"My father will not accept any of this. He will allow his new grandchild to come here, regardless of Claudius' intention. I am forbidden to intervene. I may only forgive," he says, trying to disguise his distaste.

Marianna

If the characters ask about Marianna, Japheth looks startled. If the characters convince him they are not out to kill her or bring her back to Claudius, he will arrange a meeting with her in the monastery garden. Japheth says that she has taken a vow of silence in an attempt to purify herself of the vampiric curse upon her. If the characters ask Japheth what a woman is doing in a monastery, he tells them to get their minds out of the gutter. Marianna will not speak to the characters, but she agrees to give up a measure of her blood, which she has only occasionally fortified with just a bit of animal blood. She looks weak and pale from her fasting; almost ethereal. She has little interest in communicating with her kin.

Maelstroms

In response to questions about Maelstroms, Japheth says "A Maelstrom of great power is coming to the dead lands, so strong that it will be felt on Earth as well as the other realm. Only those whose souls are protected can resist the raging spirit winds. Only those whose feet are protected can gain purchase enough to walk in that land."

If the characters strongly indicate that they wish to keep Japheth alive, he adds, "I cannot go against my father's wishes and fight any who would attack me. But I can always aid those in need, and you have need of these." He opens an austere wooden box, and draws out shrouds and ragged cloth boots.

"Mayhap these will help you survive in the Maelstrom, as they helped Noah." Once they have the shrouds and boots he sends them away.

Other Options

Assassinate

If the characters attack and try to destroy any of the important figures, like Japheth or Claudius, they survive and become sworn enemies of the characters. The plot goes on. (However, an attack on Claudius could yield his blood, for Durga Syn's spell.)

If they kill secondary characters, those characters stay dead — though killing Hardestadt, Rafael or Durga Syn should be nearly impossible.

Fight Lothar

If the characters have not killed Lothar, the ghoul continues to follow them, trying to catch them red-handed. He has a retinue of six ghouls. Lothar cannot hide himself well, and is spotted on a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6). The characters can revenge themselves on him, misdirect him or try to trick him into furthering their own schemes. However, if he is not stopped, he might learn of their plotting. The stakes are very high. Getting caught betraying any of the groups is death. Only the most brilliant of acting can stay the hands of the aggrieved parties.

Create Progeny

If the characters begin creating progeny for protection, they will attract the attention of both the Inquisition and Hardestadt. Hardestadt will get to them first. Even in the days before the formal Camarilla, this reckless disregard for the Traditions is punished with the swiftest possible sanctions. This may even give Hardestadt the proof he is looking for — evidence that anarchs will turn to selfish breeding if allowed to live freely.

Hang Out with Mortals

If the characters return to the Red Lamb Inn, they may find Paul (as described at the end of Act II). They also hear a lot of gossip.

"The land is crawling with outland foreigners and God doesn't like it."

"The end of the world is at hand!"

"Lord Giovanni has been cruelly attacked by foreign invaders and is in exile until he can return and wipe the grins off the faces of the outlander army."

"Lord Giovanni has lost his estate gambling."

"The monks of St. Timothy's are hiding a sinful red-haired woman in their private quarters for their pleasure."

"Monsters walk the land by day as well as night now."

"The Inquisition is coming and we'll all be safe."

"The Inquisition is coming and we'll all perish as heretics."

"The Pope has forsaken the Crusades!"

Decision Time

Eventually the characters will have to pick sides and plunge in. They are in too deeply to wait out the consequences. Doing nothing is deadly. Once the characters decide who they support, they must take action quickly. Their only hope of survival is to bring matters to a swift and decisive resolution. They have little to lose except their newfound immortality. The more they risk, the more they can win.

Choose No Sides

Since the characters now have the freedom to travel, they have the option to try to escape the entire burgeoning crisis. Though most of their options are bad, flight is the worst. Neither the Founders nor the conspirators trust them, and both will hunt them down and destroy them if they try to simply run away.

Indecisive characters may not pick a side, and decide to make play it by ear when they get there. This could be dangerous, because it might prevent them from getting vital clues.

Support the Founders

The Founders arrange to be at the monastery in hiding before the characters can arrive. They will hide in the caves in back of the grotto.

Hardestadt orders the characters to bring the conspirators to the meeting as planned. When Claudius makes his move to attack Japheth, the Founders will have all the proof they need of conspiracy, and leap to the attack. They invite the characters to join in the fray to get revenge on their sires.

Support Claudius

If the characters support the conspirators, and do not go back to Cappadocia, Claudius takes them to the monastery and tells them to fight the Founders if they show up.

The Founders will attack when Claudius attacks Japheth. The Founders curse the characters for traitorous dogs and leap on them as well.

Support Cappadocius

If the characters support Cappadocius, and seek to defend Japheth, Japheth says that he does not want them to fight in his name — his sire has forbidden it. The game could take some interesting twists if they become Cappadocian zealots, because Japheth and Cappadocius will resurrect Claudius and Augustus if the characters try to kill them.

Scene 2: The Offering

A lot of people say to me, "Why did you kill Christ?" "I dunno. It was one of those parties, got out of hand, you know."

— Lenny Bruce, *The Essential Lenny Bruce*

Launch the Scene

One way or another, the characters, the Cappadocians, the Founders and the conspirators all end up in the garden of the monastery for the climax. If the characters backed Hardestadt, they know the Founders are lying in wait for the conspirators. If they managed to keep Claudius believing they were loyal to him, he brings them with him. If not, they can lurk in the garden with the Founders. If they have alienated both, they will have to convince the Cappadocians to let them stay there, in sight or out of sight, whichever they prefer. The monks give sanctu-

ary to all and won't turn the characters away. However the characters have to get there on their own and sneak in.

The following section details events that happens without the characters' influence. Reveal as much of it as they see and hear.

The Garden in God's Hand

The monastery's inner garden is surprisingly large for a courtyard sanctuary. Shielded from the elements, it lies cradled between the monastery's high walls and three large, upthrusting rocks on its north side. The monks believe the vaguely humanoid rocks are a sign that this spot is blessed, and they call them the Trinity.

The garden is surrounded on three sides by gray stone walls. Only the rock formations delineate its northernmost side. That winding "wall" includes several hidden grottos, a small cavern complex (the cave opening is located beside the smallest member of the Trinity) and a natural spring.

The monks have collected a number of thorn- and spine-covered plants, planting them in the garden to remind them of the pain all people must suffer before they can reach the perfection of God's eternal embrace. Roses also cover the garden's grounds.

The garden's largest grotto is cradled gently by a semicircle of rock. The monks chipped away at the rough stone for centuries until they had carved benches and seats into the rock face. Three rocky seats stand out as particularly impressive, with the largest flanked by the two smaller. The grotto is large enough to accommodate over three dozen individuals comfortably, and the monks sometimes use this space for open-air worship services.



In this largest grotto, Japheth and several monks (his childer and ghouls) await Claudius Giovanni. Marianna is with them, clad in a monk's robes. (Some of the resurrected templars may also keep a midnight vigil.) Japheth sits on the rock seat to the right of the center seat, which is empty. A hard-faced old vampire with a deformed right arm sits in the left-hand seat. This is Augustus Giovanni, Claudius' father and sire.

Nearer God's Heart in a Garden

Claudius and the other Conspirators of Isaac boldly enter the garden and "meekly" confront Japheth. If the characters are siding with Claudius (or pretending to), he has them take a dove as a peace offering to Japheth. (The dove is in fact the vessel intended by Augustus to trap Japheth's soul.) If the characters are there as faithful followers of the Cappadocians, he will give them the dove to offer to Japheth, but sneer at them as they do so. If the characters have lost Claudius' trust, but are in the garden, he ignores them and has a ghoul present the dove (Lothar, if he's still alive).

Japheth rises and accepts the dove. Augustus remains seated. Japheth gestures to the dove deliverer to stand aside. (The characters can remain close at hand, however — closer than the monks.) Japheth beckons to Claudius to come forward.

Claudius strides up, a mock penitent smile on his arrogant face. His pack of conspirators stay at a respectful distance. He kneels before Japheth. "Forgive me, brother, for I have sinned against you."

"Aye, that you have, brother," says Japheth. Long pause. "But my sire forgives all, as does my Sire in heaven. And so I forgive you."

Claudius rises, making a show of flicking dirt off the knees of his silken hose.

Japheth clasps Claudius' with one hand, holding the necromancer at arm's length. He holds the dove with the other in front of his chest, almost protectively.

"Go forth," Japheth says, "and sin no more."

"What's this? No kiss for your brother?" Claudius taunts. "No kiss of peace and forgiveness?"

Japheth releases Claudius's arm. Claudius moves in toward Japheth's chest. Suddenly, Japheth catches Claudius' head in his hands, saying "Hear me well, 'brother.' I am he who sits at the right hand of our Father. I obey his will and his word. Remember well the fate of those who forsake his path!"

Sighing, he releases the necromancer. "Come, Claudius. I await your kiss of peace. Let us know each other's souls and have done with it."

Claudius grabs Japheth and pulls him near in a single violent motion. The dove is caught in between. It falls, its neck broken, as Claudius plunges his fangs into Japheth's thin and pallid chest, shredding the monk's robe and sending a cascade of blood flying. The blood leaks from Claudius' thick, greedy lips and spills down in bright red gobbets across Japheth's once-pristine robes. Japheth's mouth tightens in a grimace, but his body remains impassive, arms flung wide to accept his brother's "kiss." Only Japheth's his fists, and the

blood running in rivulets down his chin from his own fangs biting into his mouth, betray even a hint of unwillingness.

All the monks but one sink to the ground and intone a prayer. (The "monk" still standing is Marianna.) The Founders burst from the caves and charge up to the center of the grotto, shouting "Death to the betrayers! Death to the necromancer! Death to the conspiracy!" Hardestadt smiles broadly. He has what they need. He's caught Claudius in the very act of disobeying one of the founding Traditions of Caine.

Japheth gasps, "Stand ye back! Let no blood be shed in the name of the Cappadocians!" as he convulses. Claudius continues to drink.

The Founders sweep down upon the conspirators, who quickly form a protective ring around Japheth so that Claudius can finish his dread deed. The battle is joined. A chill wind kicks up, and howls through the garden. A storm is brewing. Founders and conspirators clash as the wind moans, but Hardestadt can't quite reach Japheth. He shouts, "Childe! Coward! Pacifist! Defend yourself!"

The characters may join the fight at any time on either, neither or both sides. If they have offended people in both camps, they may be attacked by members of both groups.

The Battle

If Jadviga and Hardestadt are both alive at the start of the scene, they will fight each other with a vengeance that transcends the rest of the battle. Without help from the

Handling the Climax

The Last Supper began with a linear storyline to ease players into the action and make sure they have all the exposition and background material that they need. The climax stretches the Storyteller's improvisational and creative powers. You must use everything you know of the antagonists to craft responses to the characters' words and actions — responses that can barely be predicted by this story.

The Storyteller will have a real chance to shine in this scene. The scripted responses answer all the questions necessary for the plot, but they cannot possibly cover every range of conversation. Use the antagonists' motivations to create new dialogue. If you get stuck, remember that they can usually tell the characters to get lost. And when really in doubt, fake it!

Live-Action Notes

At this point the story begins to get less coordinated and more chaotic. Make sure that all the Narrators know their parts well, and are prepared to improvise quickly. Keep up the lines of communication between Narrators, especially if the characters split up. They need to know what's going on in the rest of the game to make the best decisions in a split second. If you have set things up properly, the game should run itself. Sit back and enjoy the ride.

characters, Hardestadt will not be able to stop Claudius from diablerizing Japheth.

Mortal monks run out into the garden, their bare heads gleaming in the moonlight. They implore their guests: "Cease your violence in this most holy and serene of places!" However, the monks do not interfere physically in the battle, even if they are attacked.

Intervention One

If the characters help Japheth, they may actually be able to interfere with Claudius' feeding. Japheth will force them aside, saying, "This shall not be done." A bewildered Claudius resumes the diablerie.

If the characters try to attack Augustus instead of Claudius, they find their attacks go right through him. He is a ghostly presence and not a flesh-and-blood vampire.

If the characters have found a way to get Giovanni blood onto the dove, nothing happens when Japheth finally expires. This is because the vessel is not intended to house Japheth's soul, but Cappadocius'.

It is possible that with effective tactics, the characters may be able to get Claudius away from Japheth. In this case, Japheth will live, but will not be able to stop Augustus from making his move when Cappadocius appears (below).

Antediluvian Blood

When he finishes committing diablerie upon Japheth, a triumphant Claudius, bloated with blood and power, exults to the raging heavens as winds whip around him. Lightning crashes and he cries out mockingly "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day!"

At that point Cappadocius arrives.

The Antediluvian appears in front of the center rock seat, next to Augustus. Though he glows as in Act II, observant characters who make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8) notice that he is not as transparent as before. In addition, those who earlier saw him floating can make a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 7) to notice that he appears to be solidly in contact with the chair. He looks very angry and bursting with power. Fierce winds roar down the rock face, and drive everyone back from him.

"Claudius Giovanni, what have you done?" he calls, his voice booming even above the roaring wind.

Claudius freezes in the midst of the growing tempest, a look of guilt and shock on his face. He looks fearfully toward Augustus.

Augustus says, "He did as I bade, Sire. He has taken the place of your own son. As I shall take your place! I want your blood, 'Father!'"

"My blood is not mine to give. It belongs to God."

"Then I hope he forgives me for spilling it."

"His forgiveness is for all. Even the likes of you."

"Sanctimonious sot! I will destroy you!" Augustus charges forward, but finds it hard to move, as if the wind or the radiance of Cappadocius prevents him.

"Think on what you do, my son," Cappadocius says. "Grandsire Caine himself has spoken to me and told me: become an eternal sacrifice, that all may have life eternal. I am to create Heaven on Earth, delivering us all from God's curse, and delivering mortals from the grave."

"Heaven on Earth? Never!" With great exertion, Augustus reaches his sire.

"You cannot stop me. I have given myself freely, and my soul shall continue even if this form is extinguished."

"Then I shall have your soul as well as your power!"

As Augustus leaps at his sire, he too begins to glow. He bares his fangs and drinks from the translucent chest of the Antediluvian. Cappadocius closes his eyes and gently cradles the necromancer's head to his bosom. Rivulets of blood leak from around Augustus' mouth as he gasps: "Ahh! His blood burns!"

Hardestadt howls, "No! Blasphemy! It must not be!" He tries to attack Augustus, but he cannot get past the whirling winds that swirl around the pair and scream like lost souls.

Intervention Two

If the characters try to intervene at any time during the confrontation, they must first get past the Maelstrom. The swirling winds that are its physical manifestation keep tangible objects and the effects of Disciplines from coming near the pair.

However, if the characters have been given the shrouds and boots, they can enter the spiritual dimension of the Maelstrom. Suddenly the winds become visible as groaning spirits, hurtling through the air in a frenzy. They cry in pain as they streak past. The shrouds allow the characters to see where the streams of disconsolate spirits converge and diverge. With the boots, the characters can literally walk between streams of spirits, enter the spiritual realm, and approach Augustus and Cappadocius. They must succeed on both a Courage and a Self-Control roll to arrive before the diablerie ends. They do not have time to get there before it begins.

After they successfully navigate the Maelstrom, the characters are in the spirit world with Cappadocius and Augustus, and can interact with and even harm them. If they attack Cappadocius, Augustus fights them, saying "He's my kill!" They may even try to diablerize Cappadocius themselves. Despite the fact that Augustus has already drained a great deal of vitæ, Cappadocius still has 50 Blood Points left. If they do so, though, the blood burns them. While it causes no damage, the characters must make a Humanity roll for every Blood Point they take. Other than the Humanity loss, Cappadocius' blood acts no differently from any vampire's.

If the characters attack Augustus and defeat him, Cappadocius shakes his head sadly and says, "If a man smites your cheek, offer him the other to smite. Only then

can I bring Heaven to Earth and life everlasting to all." He resurrects Augustus, who completes the diablerie.

Augustus hisses, "I shall remember your interference. When we bring the dead lands to Earth, your souls shall be first to be pulled shrieking into the abyss!"

Antediluvian Soul

When Augustus finishes the diablerie, Cappadocius' body melts away to nothing. (Characters with shrouds see it reduce to a small spark, which flies toward Claudius.)

Light radiates from Augustus' eyes, ears, nose and mouth, as if a great light filled his head. He reels like a drunkard. He manages to cry out "Claudius! His soul flies! Get the dove! Catch it!" before he vanishes.

Intervention Three

Characters with shrouds see the tiny spark become engulfed in the Maelstrom and pulled inexorably toward the broken dove. At this point one of three things can happen.

If the characters have already placed the blood of any Giovanni on the dove, they see the spark reach it, turn, then fly in a direction counter to the Maelstrom. It ascends the stone wall and into the heavens.

If the characters have not yet placed Giovanni blood on the dove, they have three turns to do so before Cappadocius' soul reaches it and is trapped. If they manage, making their way through the Maelstrom by brute force or guile, then the spark turns and leaves, as described above.

Forcing their way through the Maelstrom requires that the character make Strength + Athletics rolls (difficulty 8) and accumulate eight successes. Each point of Potence adds one automatic success to these rolls. Working their way through the souls is easier but may take longer. It requires Wits + Survival rolls (difficulty 6) and 12 accumulated successes.

If the characters fail to put blood on the dove in three turns, they see the still-standing braving the Maelstrom. The monk's face is hidden under a heavy hood. The monk approaches the dove, slices his hand and pours his blood onto the dove. This is Marianna, wearing a shroud she obtained from Japheth, placing her own Giovanni blood onto the dove to stop the soul transference.

The Soul Escapes

As Cappadocius' soul-spark disappears into the sky, the heavens finally open, and rain pours down on the garden. Claudius Giovanni looks in horror at the bloody dove. "Come back!" he cries to the soul.

The screaming winds slow as the rains come. Those with shrouds see the spirits sail away into the night. The Maelstrom is gone.



If the characters were responsible for keeping Cappadocius' soul free, they should have the opportunity to raise their Humanity after the story ends.

The Aftermath

The Founders

If the characters fought against Hardestadt, the Founders continue to battle the characters until one group is destroyed or flees. If the characters flee, they can live to fight another day. If they gain the upper hand, the Founders will break and run, so the most important members will remain to carry on their work.

The Conspirators

If the characters did not fight against Hardestadt, the Founders have beaten the conspirators, most of whom have fled. A few are prisoners (at the Storyteller's discretion), along with Claudius Giovanni.

Hardestadt is fuming. "Diablerie! Diablerie most foul! Claudius Giovanni, I should disembowel you where you stand!" The Founders argue over what to do with him. If the characters fought against the conspirators, they also have a say in the outcome. Whatever the result, Hardestadt will not allow Claudius to be killed, but he does take him into custody.

Marianna

Marianna tries to sneak away in the confusion, but the characters can spot her if they make three successes on a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6). If the characters try to talk to her, they must do so quickly. She still has her vow of silence and will not speak, but she will write notes, which literate characters can read. She writes that she is dedicating her unlife to the destruction of the Giovanni, and that she has little need for her "brothers and sisters in shame." If she put the blood on the dove, she will explain how she was able to stop the soul from being caught. If they ask her where the soul went, she says she does not know.

If the characters impress her with their nobility and honor, she will agree to meet them at a later date to discuss future plans. Otherwise she leaves abruptly.

The Cappadocians

The Cappadocians, their ghouls and the human monks are wailing and grieving. If the characters kept Japheth alive, he cries, "Would that I were dead ere I lived to see such a night."

Jadviga

Unless the characters specifically targeted Jadviga for extermination, she is still alive and free.

Wrapping Up Scene 2

The characters can stay to console the Cappadocians, leave to celebrate with the victors, or go their own way.

Major Players

Japheth

Clan: Cappadocian

Generation: 4th

Embrace: 7225 B.C. (born 7248 B.C.)

Apparent Age: Early 20s

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 9, Stamina 8

Social: Charisma 7, Manipulation 6, Appearance 8

Mental: Perception 8, Intelligence 9, Wits 8

Talents: Alertness 7, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 9, Empathy 7, Intimidation 6, Leadership 5

Skills: Animal Ken 7, Etiquette 8, Melee 5, Music 6, Ride 5, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Investigation 5, Kindred Lore 6, Law 7, Linguistics 9, Occult 8, Politics 6

Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 8, Celerity 5, Chimerstry 3, Dominate 8, Fortitude 4, Necromancy 6, Obeah 4, Obfuscate 6, Obtenebration 6, Potence 6, Presence 7, Protean 5, Serpents 2, Thaumaturgy 9 (Weather Control 5, Elemental Mastery 5, Movement of the Mind 3, Lure of Flames 1)

Backgrounds: Allies 9, Contacts 8, Elder Status 6, Herd 8, Influence 4, Resources 6, Retainers 9

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

Humanity: 9

Willpower: 10

Notes: Japheth has a plethora of powers, many of which are unique to him. He will not use them in most situations, but the Storyteller should feel free to give him any Traits he needs.

Image: Though he is a short, slight man, those who meet him are usually struck dumb by the aura of peace that surrounds him. During this story, however, he is exceptionally nervous, and his fears are beginning to affect those around him.

Roleplaying Hints: You have spent thousands upon thousands of years seeking self-knowledge, but now you have no idea what is to come. In any case, you follow your father's requests without question.

Augustus Giovanni

Clan: Cappadocian

Generation: 4th

Embrace: 1005 (born 945)

Apparent Age: About 60

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 8, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Intimidation 7, Leadership 8, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Etiquette 8, Melee 4, Music 2, Ride 4, Security 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Law 6, Linguistics 5, Occult 9, Politics 6

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Celerity 3, Dominate 6, Fortitude 3, Necromancy 9, Obfuscate 3, Potence 6, Presence 5, Thaumaturgy 3 (Movement of the Mind 3, Lure of Flames 2)

Backgrounds: Allies 6, Contacts 7, Elder Status 5, Herd 8, Influence 7, Military Force 6, Resources 8, Retainers 9

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 10

Notes: Augustus' extra level of Dominate allows him to Dominate anyone he touches or who touches him. His extra levels of Necromancy allow him to create zombies, battle spirits, exchange people's souls and place spirits in the bodies of the dead. These Traits are accurate before he commits diablerie upon Cappadocius. Afterward...

Image: A craggy man whose intense eyes seem to leap around in their sockets.

Roleplaying Hints: You are completely caught up in what is to come, fighting with all your might to keep your excitement hidden. Nothing must get in your way.

Cappadocius

To provide Traits for Cappadocius would be ridiculous. No one in this story could affect him without his permission.

Scene 3: The Still After the Storm

The world dies over and over again, but the skeleton always gets up and walks.

— Henry Miller, *The Wisdom of the Heart*

Loose Ends

There are a lot of loose ends, and not all will get wrapped up tidily. Cappadocius is destroyed. Or is he more than dead? The Giovanni own the Cappadocian bloodline. What will they do with it? The threat to all clans is clear. How will they respond?

The Conspirators

If the characters helped the conspirators rout the Founders, and did not interfere with either diablerie, Claudius invites them to return with him to the Inn for a celebration. He is now fourth generation, but still bewildered over the loss of Cappadocius' soul. If the characters learned that it was Marianna's doing and tell him this, he charges them with finding and destroying her.

The Founders

If the characters sided with or helped the Founders (or can make the Founders think they did), they are invited to a planning meeting the following night.

The Founders are furious. Some direct their fury is at the characters, who they feel have no right to live, because their interference doomed Cappadocius. But other Founders think the neonates have proven themselves.

Interrogation

If the characters did not interfere in Giovanni's capture, Hardestadt and the Founders grill the necromancer. He does not give them answers.

"We will never accept your clan!" Hardestadt says. "You shall be renegade always, and we shall hunt you to the ends of the Earth!"

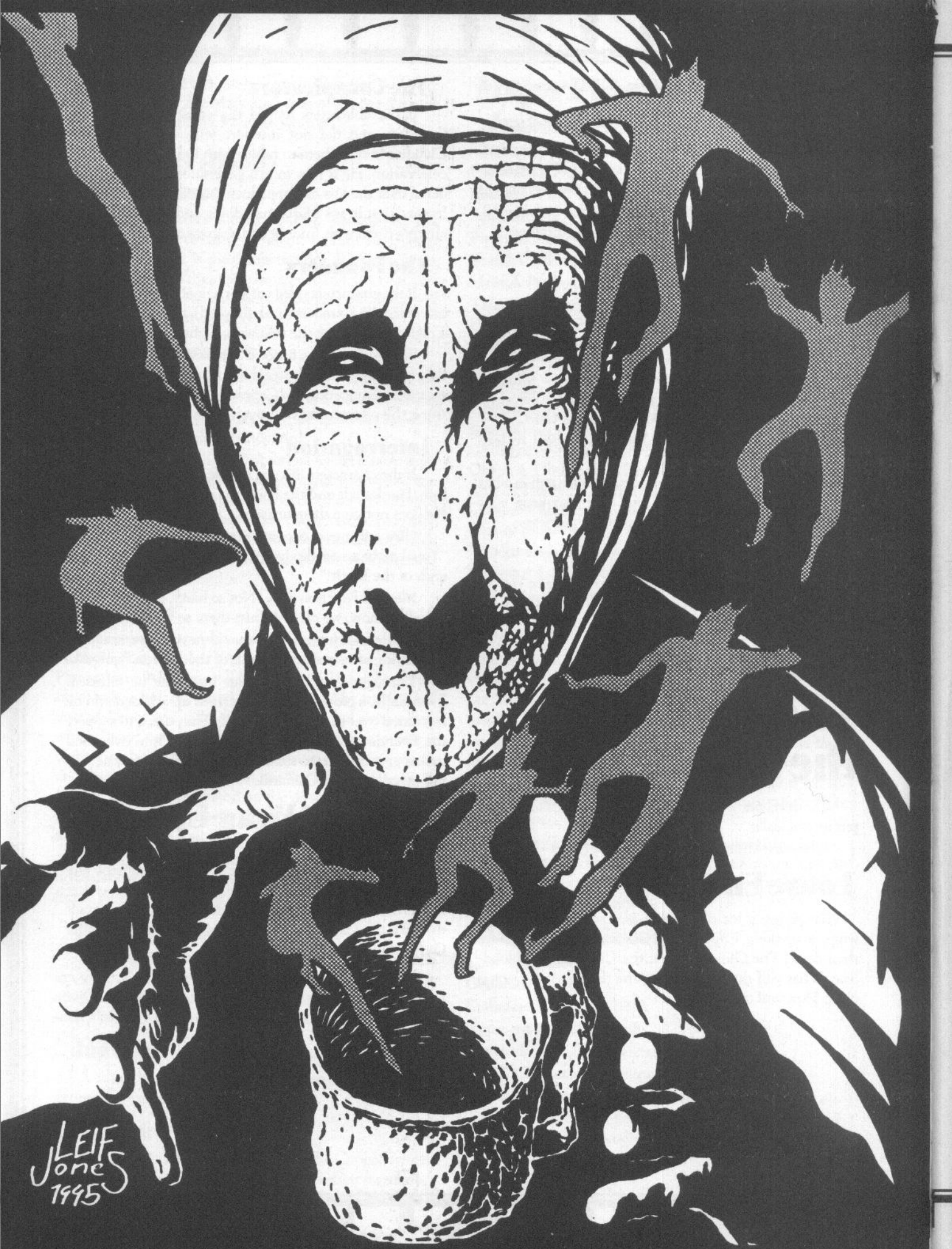
Mistress Fanchon says, "Not so hasty. If they rule the bloodline now, we can't dismiss them so easily."

Hardestadt fumes, "We should never have accepted you either, after your Amaranth of that moron Saulot!"

Throughout it all, Claudius insists he be released. Eventually, a group of Giovanni show up and demand he be turned over to them unharmed. They agree to support the Founders in return. Hardestadt turns him over, and makes preparations to summon all clan elders for the first full meeting of the Camarilla.

The Final Wrap-Up

The Conspiracy of Isaac is broken, but in losing the battle the Giovanni won the war, and control the Cappadocians. This is the start of the chain of events that makes the Giovanni such an outsider clan. For Hardestadt to make the Camarilla work, he may have to invite the Giovanni into its ranks.



LEIF
Jones
1995

Appendix: Beginning the Game

Creating Medieval Characters

All the material in this Appendix is for players and may be freely copied and given to them.

The Last Supper offers a unique opportunity to **Vampire** players. Your character will begin the game mortal, and will be Embraced during play. You may pick your clan now and even assign freebie points. However, you must not use Disciplines or the benefits of the freebie points until after your character is Embraced.

This story gives you the chance to play period characters in an historical World of Darkness setting. You may create a mortal character from any medieval background you choose. Sample character backgrounds include: peasant, noble, clergy (nun, priest, or zealous lay person eager to drum up men and resources for another Crusade), crusader (Christian or Moslem), weary deserter from the Hundred Years' War, foreign mercenary, Gypsy, prosperous trader, trailblazing merchant, itinerant peddler, Jewish moneylender (Christians are prohibited from lending money at interest during this time), innkeeper, scholar, courtesan, troubadour, revolutionary, doctor/barber.

Having players know one another at the start of a game is a good way to build bonds between characters quickly, and is generally a good idea. It should only be discouraged (or forbidden) if real-world pals decide to make their characters buddies so they can snub the others. Hopefully you're totally unfamiliar with this sort of problem.

If everyone is in agreement, your character may know one or more of the other characters before the game begins, or they may begin the game as strangers to one another. The only common feature is that all the characters have to begin the game in Northern Romania, at the foot of the Carpathian mountains, and they all must speak Italian. If your character is not a native of the area, you must create a rationale for them her there. She may be a sightseeing noble, a traveling merchant or scholar, a runaway serf or even a refugee fleeing the lands to the south, where Turks are successfully besieging Christian cities.

As you would with any **Vampire** character, keep in mind the link between your character and your clan (or in this case, clan-to-be). You are not required to make an obvious connection, but some connection helps. This still leaves a wide range. For example, a character of Clan Brujah may be anything from a rebellious peasant youth to a firebrand cleric in the still-nascent Reformation. A Nosferatu can be anything from an unwanted immigrant fleeing the wars to a leper from the holy lands. A Malkavian might be the village idiot or a painfully inbred member of a royal family. A Ventrue can include a noblewoman, a silk merchant and an enterprising poacher.

New Traits

Players can use the standard **Vampire** character sheets during character creation, but they should make a few minor changes to the Abilities section. First of all, the Drive Skill should become Ride and Firearms should be Melee. Under Knowledges, Theology replaces Computer. Also, characters need to spend one point in Linguistics in order to be able to read and write their native language.

Advanced Roleplaying

You know that your character is destined to become a vampire during the story, but he does not. You are required to keep this information separate from your character and not have him act on this basis. This can be a real challenge: for example, your character would know nothing of the politics or clans of vampires.

Playing Medieval Characters

The world was a very different place in 1444. Customs, manners and personal habits were quite different from today, though the fears and hopes were much the same. The players do not need to be Medieval Studies majors to do a credible job of roleplaying people of this era if they keep a few key elements in mind.

Inflexible Social Positions: Upward social mobility was not common in the Middle Ages. Some merchants gained great wealth, and the clergy or military service sometimes offered enterprising youths a chance for advancement, but these were the exception. Most people lived their lives in service to an acknowledged master and behaved respectfully even if they hated him. Deferential behavior toward one's acknowledged "betters" was common and considered vital to survival.

Unless a player chooses five dots of Influence for her character, the vampires in **The Last Supper** will be of a higher social class. For the characters to behave any way but respectfully (and perhaps with a bit of awe) would be a shocking breach of protocol.

Nevertheless, there is a strong undercurrent of rebellious, anti-authority thinking among some in the underclass. This attitude, encouraged by the Brujah and some Lupines and mages, erupted in peasant uprisings and sometimes brought down kings. Characters with this sort of background would be the exception to the general rule of submission.

Rigid Sex Roles: Though there were notable exceptions, women had few opportunities to gain economic power or education and hence had very low status. Female characters chosen from the general population would be expected to be demure, reserved and submissive. This limits the pool of female character backgrounds somewhat. However, audacious mistresses, domineering wives and



bold widows were often able to buck the system and behave independently. Creative players can put together fascinating female characters, from the rare (but very real) female warriors to rebellious peasants to educated women disguised as high-ranking clergymen. (In the Middle Ages, gossip of female priests and even female Popes was rampant.)

Fear of Travel: Most people in the Middle Ages did very little traveling. Setting out on the road was often considered a perilous venture. For the characters, the trip to the Giovanni manse may be one of the longest trips, if not the longest, in their lifetimes.

Deeply Ingrained Superstitions: Modern humanity has a strong skepticism of the supernatural world. Much of this was cultivated by vampires seeking to remain hidden among humanity. But in the Middle Ages, everyone knew that evil spirits in many guises roamed freely over the land. Due to the slow ebbing of magic and the incipient Masquerade, many people had little or no first-hand experience of the supernatural, but most people believed in it strongly.

Though reason and scientific thinking are on the rise during the period in which **The Last Supper** is set, the strong technocratic forces actively seeking to debunk the supernatural have not yet succeeded. Emotions run stronger, passions are more easily inflamed, and blatant contradictions are not always considered improper, or even strange. People do not subject everything they experience to reasoned, critical analysis — and they do believe in monsters.

Starting the Game

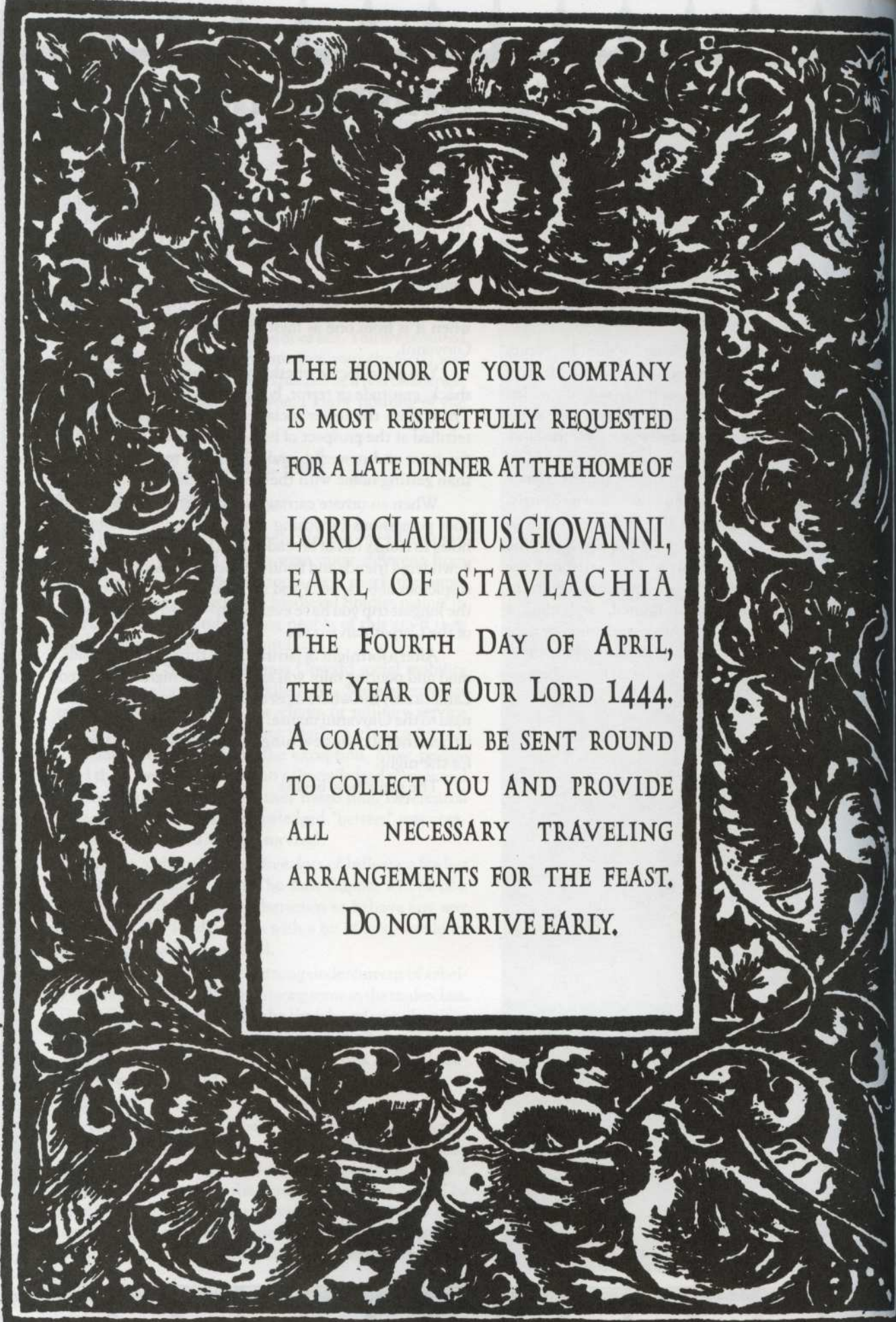
Several weeks ago you received a visit from a richly dressed messenger. He brought you a perfumed invitation to a sumptuous dinner at the manse of Lord Claudius Giovanni. Giovanni is from a wealthy Italian trading family and is as feared as he is respected. Such an invitation is a high honor, and one not lightly turned down, even when it is from one as mysterious and distrusted as Lord Giovanni.

You get to decide whether your character reacted with shock, gratitude or terror, but your character chose to go. Those from the lower social orders may conceivably be terrified at the prospect of being called upon to dine with the great and powerful, and may aspire to nothing more than getting home with their heads intact.

When an ornate carriage arrived for you, you packed your possessions (anything from your tunic without the holes to trunks full of brocaded silks), said farewell to your bewildered friends and family (furiously jealous husbands, suspicious abbots, etc.) and set off on what may likely be the longest trip you have ever taken — into the dark wilds of the Carpathian woods.

After a fortnight of jarring travel through rough roads, mud and pouring rain, you arrive late at night at the Red Lamb, a cozy inn where most of the travelers are also on the road to the Giovanni manse. The dinner at the manse is to be held the following evening, and you are to stay at the inn for the night.

The game now begins.

The page is framed by a highly detailed, black and white woodcut-style border. The border is composed of intricate, symmetrical floral and foliate patterns, including large, stylized roses and scrolling vines. At the top center of the border, there is a small crest or coat of arms featuring a crown and a shield. The overall style is reminiscent of 19th-century decorative arts.

THE HONOR OF YOUR COMPANY
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED
FOR A LATE DINNER AT THE HOME OF
LORD CLAUDIUS GIOVANNI,
EARL OF STAVLACHIA
THE FOURTH DAY OF APRIL,
THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1444.
A COACH WILL BE SENT ROUND
TO COLLECT YOU AND PROVIDE
ALL NECESSARY TRAVELING
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FEAST.
DO NOT ARRIVE EARLY.

Giovanni Chronicles II:



By Richard E. Dansky, Cynthia Summers and
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You will all be missed.



WHITE WOLF
GAME STUDIO

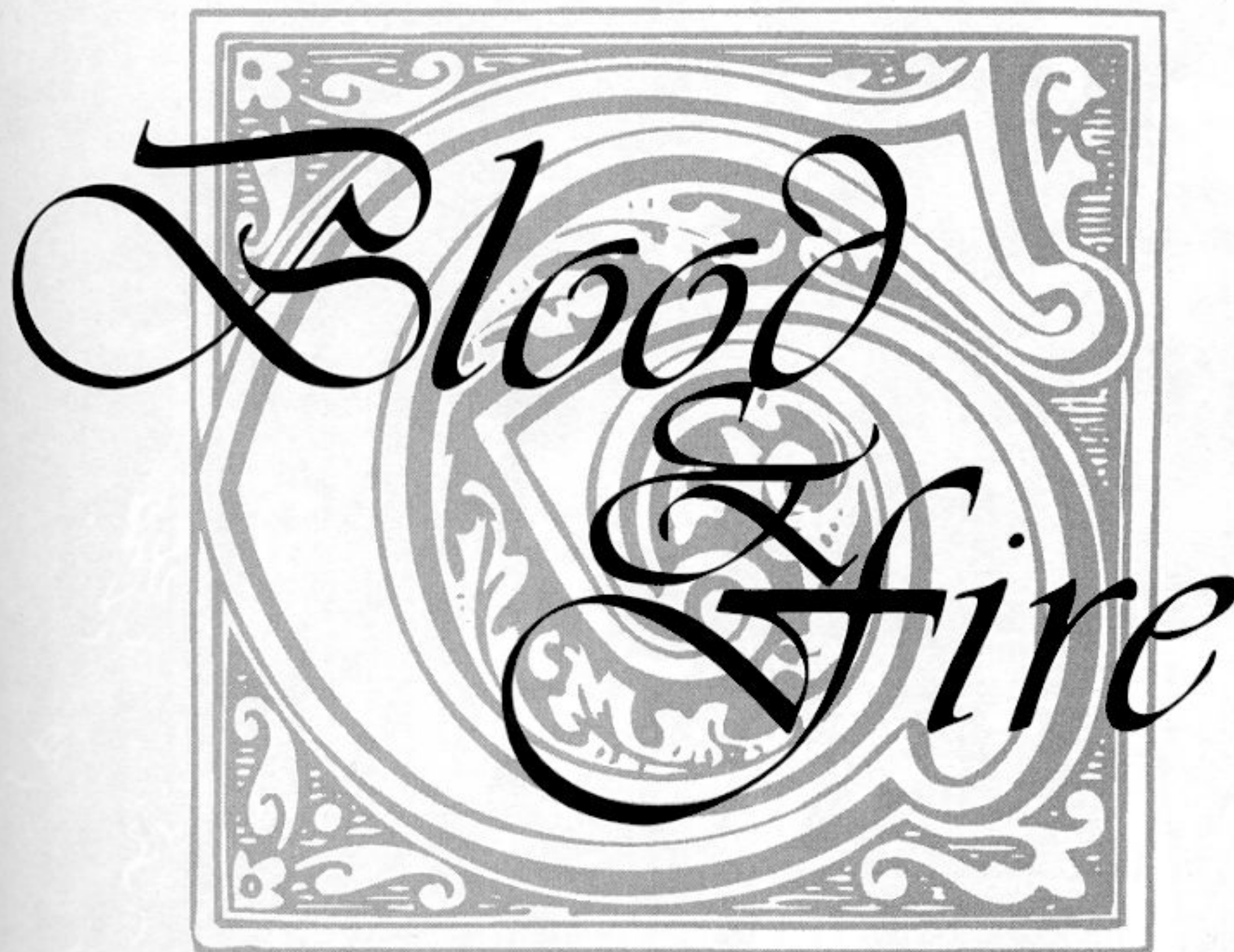
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Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised. PRINTED IN CANADA

Giovanni Chronicles II:



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ERNEST



Introduction

Blood and Fire is the second book in the Giovanni Chronicles and it continues the story begun in **The Last Supper**. Characters from the first story may be used during this story; in fact, such is preferable.

Two centuries have passed, and the characters are no longer the raw neonates they once were. They have gained understanding of Kindred society and may well have a modicum of power in the newly formed Camarilla (though not too much, or they won't be able to be "persuaded" to help the Founders). The year is 1666, and characters are presumed to be familiar with the

customs and institutions of the Renaissance world. (Characters may be "updated" by giving them 30 additional freebie points to spend as the players choose or as logic dictates.)

Blood and Fire may also be played with new characters created specifically for the story (**Blood and Fire**, like all the Giovanni volumes, may be played as a stand-alone story). Characters are created per the normal character generation procedure, but the Storyteller should give each character 25 additional freebie points, the better to handle the perilous tasks ahead.

What Has Gone Before

Giovanni Chronicles One: The Last Supper dealt with the death of the Antediluvian progenitor of the Cappadocian clan and the ascendancy of the Giovanni necromancers. Characters created during that story began as the food, and then the pawns, of the Conspiracy of Isaac, a group of vampires committed to helping the Giovanni attain supremacy in the Cappadocian clan. The characters were created as cannon fodder against the Conspiracy's enemies, the Founders of the Camarilla. The characters came into conflict with both the Founders and their erstwhile masters. In so doing they learned two secrets: The Antediluvian Cappadocius sought apotheosis, and Augustus Giovanni sought Cappadocius' blood. Ultimately, Augustus Giovanni slew Cappadocius and drank his blood, leading to the demise of the Cappadocian clan and the rise of the Giovanni in its place.

Creating a Character for Blood and Fire

The world of Blood and Fire is not the world of today's Cainites; it is far more Gothic than Punk. To create a character for this world requires a basic understanding of its vagaries, as well as recognizing the differences and similarities between the 17th century and today. There is far more to a Renaissance character concept than hose, a floppy hat and an outrageous accent.

Picking a Concept

The first step in creating a Renaissance character is deciding on a character concept. Certain ones that add spice to a modern Vampire campaign (hacker, gangsta, mafioso) have no place in the 17th century. On the other hand, that world offers some unique opportunities for roleplaying.

While the roles on the bottom (street criminal, escaped slave) and the top (noble, lord of the church) are easily defined, there are new possibilities in the middle. Merchant princes and guild artisans are examples of middle-class character concepts; explorers are another. There also exists an entire domestic servant class from which to draw, as well as the subculture of carriage drivers, grooms and whatnot necessitated by a culture that travels by horse. It's a brave old world, and your character concept should reflect and grow from that, instead of being a modern character awkwardly forced into an older setting.

Renaissance Technology

The only firearms available are flintlock pistols and muskets. Both must be reloaded with every shot. Flintlock pistols may be fired every turn by anyone with Firearms Skill, every other turn by an untrained wielder; they are otherwise treated as heavy revolvers, but with halved range. Muskets may be fired once every three turns by a trained user and may not be used without training; otherwise treat them as rifles, but with halved range.

Spending Points

Several abilities have a great deal more importance for Renaissance characters than modern ones. Esoteric abilities from the *Players' Guide*, such as Falconry, are of increased importance. Knowledge of Heraldry is the difference between seeing a carriage go by and knowing, by the coat of arms emblazoned on the outside, precisely who is in the carriage. You should select your character's Abilities and emphasize them accordingly.

A male noble character without a solid understanding of Etiquette is unthinkable, unless he is specifically designed to be a boor. Similarly, most (if not all) nobles have a good knowledge of Riding, but Driving is left to carriage drivers and servants. Pistols are becoming common, especially for dueling, but every noble worth his salt still knows how to use a rapier. French is the *lingua franca* of the continent, and not being conversant in *la Francais* is equivalent to having dung on one's shoes.

There exists a curious dichotomy for female characters; noblewomen of the period are in many cases expected to spend their days in needlepoint and harpsichord practice. Such characters would likely know several languages (French, English and Latin especially), as well as having extensive networks of Contacts and Allies in the salons of Europe. This is not to say that noblewomen would never know anything pertaining to a more active life, but rather that these characters would be rare, and have to deal with social consequences of their "unladylike" behavior. On the other hand, possessing such knowledges would provide quite an ace up the sleeve for a supposedly demure and retiring Viscountess who was faced with sassy ruffians....

Lower-class female characters, however, are fully expected to have a full knowledge of more physical and earthy skills. Such characters might well have a few points in Brawl (and almost definitely ones in Dodge); it would not be surprising for such characters to possess knowledges relating to commerce and other such traditionally "male" arenas. (See *Moll Flanders* by William Defoe for a perfect example.)

Lower-class male characters, like their female counterparts, are unlikely to know how to read or write, leaving such things for their betters. Knowledges are rarely possessed, though there is a definite emphasis on Talents. Most men cannot afford fencing masters, ergo Melee is unlikely to have more than a dot or two unless the character comes from a military or mercenary concept.

Equipment and Rules of Association

While upward mobility is slowly gaining acceptance as a social concept (so long as wealthy merchants have daughters to marry off to bankrupt nobles' sons), class delineations in 1666 are very strong and very real. Upper-class characters will not, except under great duress, voluntarily associate with characters from lower-class backgrounds. They may expect obedience or even outright servitude from them, depending upon their upbringing, but egalitarianism is unthinkable. For a noble character to be addressed as an equal by a commoner would be regarded as a deadly insult. Horsecwhipping a peon who dared address his betters with familiarity would be regarded as proper behavior on the part of a noble, or even a wealthy merchant, and social opinion would be solidly on the side of the noble.

Many weapons are impossible to conceal, and formal dress for the day is not conducive to action. One cannot hide a rapier under a trenchcoat (as such do not exist) or even a traveling cloak. Even pistols tend to be too bulky to conceal easily. Remember, also, that there are no mail-order catalogs or 24-hour stores available. Broken equipment is difficult, if not impossible, to replace. If a pistol is lost in the Alps, there is no convenient gun shop around the next *coulé* with a sale on flintlocks and no seven-day waiting period. Theft and barter are common ways to acquire property, but failed thieves are punished with mutilation or death. Money is a real concern, and those who have it do not associate with those who do not.

Story Synopsis

The characters are called together by the Founders for a very important task — to reclaim certain manuscripts belonging to Cappadocius. These manuscripts basically amount to the Dead Sea Scrolls for Kindred society. The papers in question were part of the necromancer's extensive library, believed to have been lost when the Giovanni destroyed their sire. But recently, the Founders have linked the disappearances of a number of rare manuscripts with the Giovanni clan, and they fear that the Necromancers are attempting to use the information in these fragments to grant themselves godlike powers. Knowledge is power, and if these manuscripts do contain information superseding that in the **Book of Nod**, this could make the Giovanni very powerful indeed. Will the characters retrieve the manuscripts for their masters, assist the Necromancers or do something else entirely?





Act One

The adventure begins in Italy, as the players are brought together by the Founders. The characters are asked to report to a manse in Rome. Should any of the player characters refuse, the Founders will not hesitate to Summon them, or, in the unlikely event that that fails, drag them in via brute force.

A manuscript, or rather, a collection of manuscripts have disappeared. The Founders explain that Cappadocius had come into possession of a number of fragments believed to have been lost from the main religious canon for centuries (see *The Last Supper*: p. 7, "Lilith," p. 8, "Apotheosis"). These included excerpts from ancient Christian, Gnostic and Zoroastrian manuscripts stating, among other things, that consuming the "body" of God may literally transform one into divinity — something alluded to throughout the Christian tradition. These manuscripts also postulated Lilith as the equal of Jehovah and outlined a process by which a ritual called "The Anointing," could unite the powers of light and darkness in one being. Cappadocius sought to possess deific powers by unlocking this mystery, and obtain ultimate power over life and death.

Through extensive investigation, characters learn who has made off with the manuscripts — one Ambrogino Giovanni, a favored son of the family, who was asked to obtain and make several copies of the manuscripts in question to ensure that they would not be lost again. Characters deal with many of Ambrogino's agents, but the culprit himself has fled Rome for the Swiss Alps. Characters undoubtedly give chase, which leads to Act Two.

In the course of their investigations in Italy, particularly astute characters may realize that someone has apparently already come before them, interrogating many of the same witnesses and following the same clues they possess. At this point it is not possible for them to ascertain who it is, but it should unnerve them slightly to know they are racing against another investigator as well as the Giovanni.

Act Two

In this act, the characters travel to a remote section of the Alps, where they discover a monastery, of sorts. It is here that some of the newly formed Sabbat's wisest members have gathered to try to discover a way to reconcile their inhumane passions with the Beast. The Paths of Enlightenment, as they would come to be known, are for the most part developed here, as vampires try to find meaning and spirituality in their damned existences.

It is to this enclave that the characters trace Ambrogino Giovanni. The elders here will insist that before they will speak with any of the characters about their search for the missing manuscripts, they must first agree to spend some time at the enclave. Here, they will each go through a vision

quest of sorts, in which they must decide for themselves what they truly value in life, and what their own morals are. For some, this may be the beginning of a search for Golconda; others may realize surprising truths about themselves.

It is here that they will encounter the other individual tracking the missing manuscripts. It is none other than Marianna, the young woman who was among them when they were brought to Giovanni's manse in Act One of *The Last Supper*. She too seeks to find this manuscript, but for reasons of her own. She is doing everything in her power to block the advances of the Giovanni, but she is unlikely to support the Founders either. She may become an ally of the player characters for the final two acts, or she may try to get the manuscript for herself, depending on the opinions and actions of the player characters.

Ultimately, characters learn that Ambrogino has fled the scene once more — this time for London, to obtain the services of a translator.

Act Three

In Act Three, the characters, having tracked Ambrogino to London, attempt to acquire the manuscript once more. Ambrogino has come here to obtain the services of one Andre Mallotte, a vampire scholar and one of the few beings who understands Chaldean, the tongue in which Ambrogino's manuscript is written. The power-hungry Mallotte obtains a portion of the manuscript and attempts to use it for his own gain, but brings about his demise in the process.

This scene also heralds the arrival of other "interested parties": the Followers of Set, who attempt to obtain Ambrogino's manuscripts for themselves. To this end they employ Count Jocalo, one of the clan's star operatives.

Through cleverness and luck, characters should end up with part of the manuscript — an apocryphal tale known as the *Lilith Fragment*. Unfortunately, the act ends with the Great Fire of London, which totals the better part of the city. In the ensuing chaos, the players will likely see their prized manuscript go up in flames, regardless of who possesses it at the time. Thus, a stalemate is reached — the Founders fail to obtain the manuscript, but it is kept out of Ambrogino's hands.

Dramatis Personae

Ambrogino Giovanni

This renegade wishes to continue Cappadocius' research, seeking apotheosis through diablerizing God Himself. Ambrogino is a wily foe and is never personally met during the story, although characters must deal with many of his agents and servitors.

The Founders

On the surface, the Founders wish Ambrogino's plot stopped, though some among them seek the Necromancer's knowledge for their own ends. They will provide some aid to the characters, but primarily serve as the "stick" goading the characters onward.

Marianna

Claudius Giovanni's "dinner" has matured considerably since the events of *The Last Supper*. She now seeks to stop the Giovanni's plots while garnering their knowledge for herself.

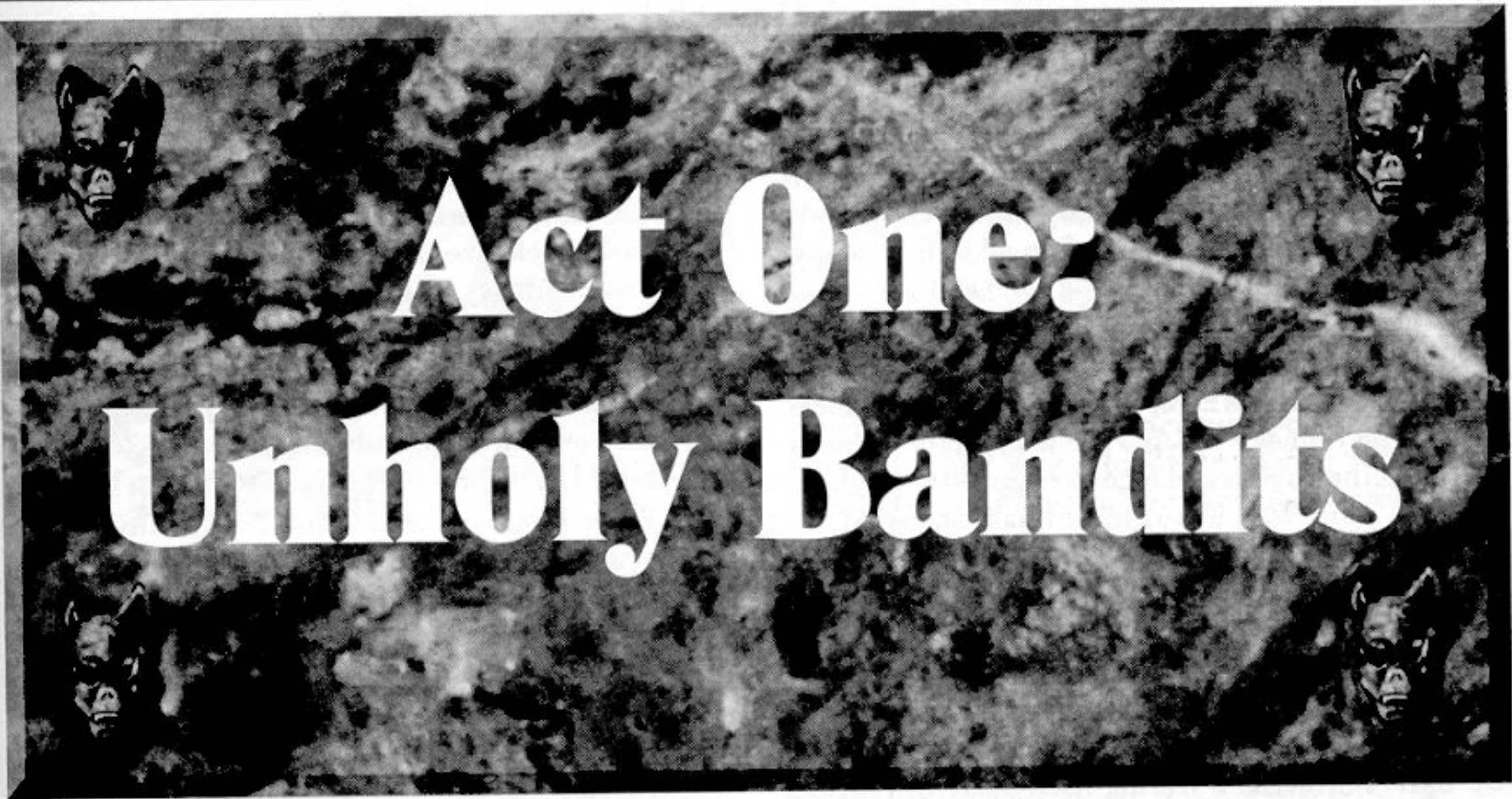
Count Jocalo

The Setites make their interest known via the shadowy Count Jocalo, a Setite agent of vast power. Jocalo works from the shadows and is almost never met personally. The Setite serves as a plot device and source of character terror.

Andre Mallotte

A Tremere scholar consulted by Ambrogino, Mallotte attempts to use the Necromantic knowledge of the manuscript for his own gain. He is unequal to the task, however, and is ultimately destroyed by the manuscript's secrets.





*The coachman smiled down at me when he saw I was behind him.
He said "Your brother Raven lives, but I think you'll never find him.
And Owl still watches all around but he listens more than speaks
And he'll never understand that it isn't you he seeks."*
—Steven Brust, "Raven, Owl, and I"

Before beginning *Blood and Fire*, one must remember that the Rome of 1666 is not the Rome of today. The streets are narrower and dirtier, and one must step carefully in certain quarters or else receive an unceremonious dousing of slop. A hodgepodge of languages is spoken in the streets: Italian, English, German, French and Spanish. The wealthy rattle by in the carriages from palace to palace while the poor die in the streets, and the Tiber serves as the entire city's dump. It is here that the characters must pick up Ambrogino Giovanni's trail, amidst the squalor and the splendor of the Eternal City, Rome.

History

Much has changed in Europe since the events of *The Last Supper*, and the world has become smaller. Copernicus and his spiritual children have literally reinvented the universe; behind Galileo, Brahe, Kepler and countless others, the Technocracy has extended a stranglehold on reality. The Age of Reason and the Age of Exploration have erupted hand-in-hand, and many of the European powers have turned their attention abroad. The Americas, Africa and the Orient have been ruthlessly exploited, with

European flags flying on every continent. The English, French and Spanish have carved up North America, while the regions to the south are primarily Spanish. Africa is a patchwork quilt of claims and unexplored territories, and lions roam freely across veldt where the Sahara will one day sprawl. To the east the Dutch have saturated Japan with more guns than all of Europe possesses, and Macao and Hong Kong are bustling ports for European traders.

At home, two centuries' worth of military blunderers have stampeded across Europe in ever-changing alliances. Even as the Founders charged the mansion of Augustus Giovanni, the English and French staggered through the Hundred Years' War; that conflict finally staggered to a close with neither side gaining any advantage. Since then the English have allied with the Dutch against the Spanish, then turned on the Dutch over conflicts regarding trade. Industrialization is creeping in as the sceptered isle attempts to shake off Cromwell's heirs.

France, when not battling the English or the Spanish, has spent decades tearing itself apart in religious strife and the Huguenot War. The passions and horrors of the witch burnings are still present, and old women and friendless girls are still being put to the stake.

The German states are still warring amongst themselves and with the rest of the Continent. The Low Countries, having only recently shaken off the Spanish yoke, find themselves in trade wars with England.

Spain's star has risen and fallen multiple times. The Moors and Jews have been expelled, but this ethnic cleansing has hardly solved all of Spain's problems. Philip II's spectacular failures in the Netherlands and with the Armada essentially wrecked his country for decades, yet the *conquistadores* have managed to hang on to Italy for over 150 years. The Papal States generally managed to maintain their independence, but most of Italy was a prize to be handed from conqueror to conqueror for as long as they could hold it.

The Inquisition's heyday has come and gone, and the transformation into the so-called Society of Leopold is well underway. Still, there are more witch hunters in the world than previously, and even if the faith of the masses has started to dim, that of the fanatics burns even more brightly.

In the world of the Kindred, the Convention of Thorns in 1493 ended the anarch uprising, but gave true birth to the Sabbat. Over the past 170 years, the wars of the Kindred raged across Europe even as the wars of their mortal pawns did, but it has become clear that the Camarilla's numbers and resources have given it the upper hand. Already the exodus to the New World and the long, slow retreat to Scandinavia have begun for the Sabbat. Hardestadt and his fellow Founders have nearly achieved their dream, or so it would seem.

The Eternal City

This is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to the geography of Rome or a sort of 17th century *Rome By Night*. Rather, it is a sketch of the major regions of the city, including those areas in which the characters are likely to stalk during their investigations. Remember that this Rome is not our Rome, but a darker one, at the same time grander and more sinister. The Vatican looms higher in this world, with the shadow of St. Peter's creeping across the River Tiber come late afternoon. The streets of the Jewish quarter form their own little labyrinth, and there are notches in the swords held by the heroes of Roman statuary.

Rome is laid out around the Seven Hills, with the River Tiber bisecting the city. The northern part of the city consists of exclusive residential districts, as do the Seven Hills. The heart of central Rome is the Piazza Venezia, and from this forum the Corso, Rome's most famous road, runs to the north. It passes through the Piazza Colona, which is dominated by a statue of Augustus, and ends at the Piazza del Popoli. The church of Santa Maria del Popolo, an obelisk and several fountains are here.

Extending from the south of the Piazza Venezia through the heart of ancient Rome is the Via dei Fori Imperiali. It is along this road that the Colosseum rises and the endless series of Roman forums can be found. The Arch of Constantine and the Baths of Caracalla are also accessible from the Via dei Fori Imperiali. Many of the pieces of classical statuary here have been literally defaced, if not decapitated; many of the buildings have been mined for stone to raise Christian monuments. The rape of antiquity is on full view here.

Also to the south are the Palatine and Capitoline hills, which afford spectacular views of the ancient city as well as an exclusive site on which the wealthy can dwell. In contrast, to the west of the Capitoline are the narrow streets and crooked houses of the Jewish quarter.

The so-called Field of Mars is a maze of small squares and streets that contains much of the hustle and bustle of Rome in 1666. The Piazza Navona (formerly the Diocletian Circus), once flooded for mock naval battles, is a new center of commerce. Also of note is the Roman Pantheon, which has been looted of gold but little else, and which stands south of the riverside tomb of Augustus.

The Trastevere is another Tiberside area of the city, crammed with artisans, tenement-style buildings and small shops.

On the right bank of the Tiber, north of much of classical Rome, is the Vatican. The skyline is dominated by St. Peter's Basilica, as well as the innumerable papal palaces. There are many gardens here, perfect places in which to stroll and discuss matters of faith. Also along the river but further north is the Castel San Angelo, a defensible, turreted medieval fortress. From beneath its frowning walls, a secret passageway leads to St. Peter's. Even further north is the Aurelian Wall, which stands between the heart of Rome and the Pincian Hill.

To the east of the Corso are streets lined with fashionable shops, which are patronized by the wealthy and pretentious. Notable are the Vias Condotti, Borgognona and Frattina, which lead to the Piazza di Spagna. Another one of the streets running through here is the Via Sistina, while the Piazza itself is the center of the potent Spanish presence in Rome.

Scene One: An Impolite Invitation

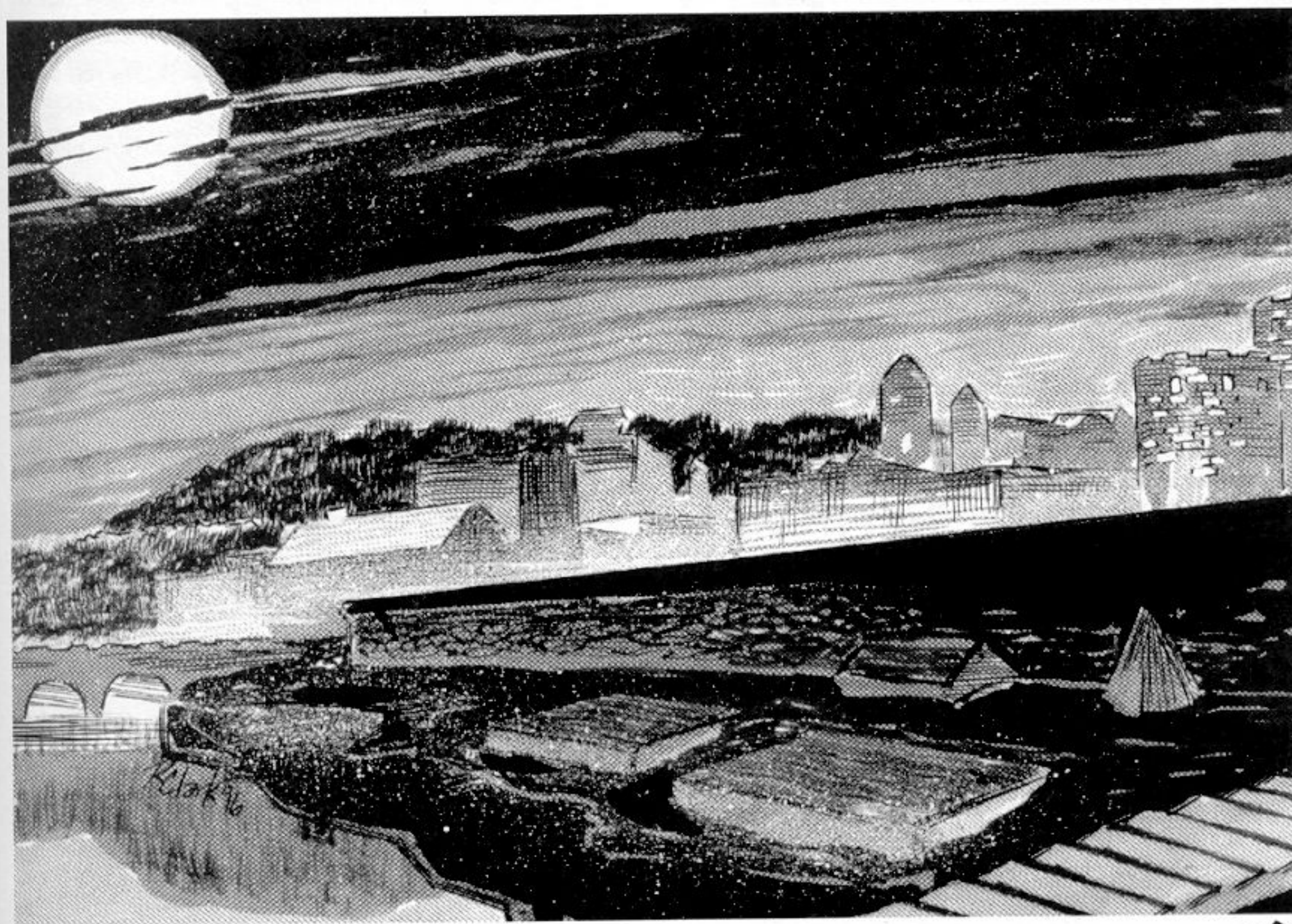
It is not necessary for the characters to begin the chronicle in the same coterie, or even in the same country. Each, at some impossibly inconvenient moment, will feel an irresistible urge to journey to Rome. The need may not be verbalized as such; it could be a direction given to the footsteps of Gangrel wanderlust or a sterling business opportunity for a Ventrue. No matter why the characters journey to Rome, however, they will eventually arrive in Rome and find themselves before Casa Hardestadt, a sumptuous manse done in neoclassical style and guarded by pink stucco walls and heavy iron gates. Characters nearer to the Eternal City may find their summons delayed or perhaps weak enough to

be ignored for awhile; characters starting in London or the colonies will find the call almost sexual in its urgency. Somehow, prepared as much as they could possibly be, the characters will find themselves standing on the rain-slicked streets of Rome on the night of February 13, 1666.

It is not recommended that characters roleplay their journeys to Rome, unless it affords an opportunity for the characters to get acquainted (or reacquainted) with one another.

Before the Gates

The compulsion to journey further on will weaken for a second at the very gates of the manse, allowing the characters to take a second to examine their surroundings and new companions. The casa is on one of the broad avenues on the Capitoline Hill, and is surrounded by other manses of equal size and opulence. Each is on a sizable parcel of land and is bordered by walls surmounted with iron spikes; each has gates of iron that are bolted and chained against the perils of the night. Lamplight can be seen in many of the windows and the strains of a minuet can be heard from far away; it would appear as if a party was in progress. Carriages rumble past on their way uphill as footmen with powdered wigs and immaculate livery cluck at their horses; each coach is marked with a coat of arms. Students of heraldry will recognize noble crests from all over the Continent, and the figures that are glimpsed



briefly will be richly accoutered and masqued. No one will stop to converse with the characters or even comment about them. An occasional disdainful look from a footman or other liveried servant is all that will be sent the characters' way, and perhaps an idle speculation on someone's part as to whether or not they should call the Guard.

It is foggy out, and the mist has crept as far up the hill as the gates of the manse. It has obviously rained earlier in the day, and the stones are slick with moisture. The air is so cold that one can see the breath of the passing mortals. Just above the rooftops of the city, the bulbous moon shines brightly through veils of thin clouds. There is no sound from the city below, as the fog muffles all but the revelry of those even higher up the hill.

Characters examining the gate of the manse will note that a heraldic motto has been fashioned into the intricate metalwork of the bars. The Latin reads: "Regere sanguine regere in veritatem est," literally "To rule through blood is to rule in truth." Older characters will recognize this as the venerable motto of Clan Ventrue, and a second look at the ironwork will reveal the telltale clan symbol cunningly hidden within the curlicues and twists of fine smithcraft. Below the first motto, smaller, is a second: "Vincam etiam ab inferis," which can be translated a number of ways. The most likely, however, is "Even from the grave I shall conquer," and any characters who lived through the events of **The Last Supper** may remember that phrase. They will recall — should they flog their memories enough — that the phrase appeared on the coat of arms of the renowned Ventrue, Hardestadt.

Characters looking through the gates at the grounds will note that the manse appears to have been recently renovated, and the ironwork itself certainly looks new. The grounds are immaculate, dotted with small topiaries. A small fountain, carved into the shape of a Cupid with slender wings and barbed arrows, burbles quietly into its basin. The path from the gate to the house is graveled, and the lawn to either side is smooth enough to serve as a green for croquet or *bocce*.

Broad steps lead up to the heavy wooden front doors of the mansions, each of which has a heavy iron ring set into it. The windows are all curtained and faint silhouettes can be seen pacing to and fro behind them, but there is very little illumination in the house itself, and the upper floor is entirely dark. It is as if the beings dwelling in the manse need no light in order to see, or they prefer blindness.

In plain sight yet isolated, this is the perfect opportunity for the characters to take a moment to introduce themselves to one another, should introductions be necessary. Ignored by human society and not yet deemed worthy of the attentions of those who called them here, the characters stand on an uneasy middle ground. They can not pursue any inclination they might have to join the party so tantalizingly close, for they are leashed tightly enough by the Summoning to preclude that option. However, the silent iron bars of the gate clearly indicate that the invitation to proceed further in has

Impatient Guests

If the players attempt to scale the walls, leap the fence or otherwise burrow their way onto the manse's grounds before they are invited in, the consequences will be startling. For any attempt to trespass, the player must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) the second they cross the perimeter of the grounds or else they will fall sound asleep immediately. This will occur even if the character is in mid-leap or mist form, and any falls or other accidents incurred cannot be Soaked. Someone who falls victim to this protection will remain asleep for a full hour, and may well end up being dragged to the meeting with the Founders. Nothing short of feeding the victim a point's worth of Cainite blood will serve to awaken the sleeping would-be burglar earlier.

Mistress Fanchon of Clan Tremere has warded the grounds with a particularly powerful inversion of the ritual *Wake With Morning's Freshness*. The ritual has actually been cast on two perimeters, one slightly inside the other, so if the characters assume that the "protection" has been brought down by the first characters' intrusion, the next to attempt to cross will receive quite a surprise. After the second breach, there are no more protections on the grounds themselves. However, the breaching of the wards will certainly alert anyone inside the mansion that an intruder is on the grounds, and all of the Founders' ghoulish servants are quite proficient with both pistol and crossbow if the characters prove to be a threat.

If the characters act in a threatening or vandalistic manner, they will quickly discover that the term "crossbow bolt" is synonymous with the phrase, "stake traveling at high velocity." Characters who are staked by the house staff will be brought into the drawing room to sit and watch as the other characters are treated as honored guests. Such intruders will only have the stake removed after being physically carried down into the catacombs. Characters who are polite, however, will be shown to the drawing room with all due respect by a black-clad servant, and any companions still outside the gate will be invited to join them. Depending upon the Founders' mood, the characters have displayed either remarkable persistence or blatantly demonstrated their utter lack of sense; such observations will go a long way toward determining the mood of the conference to come in the catacombs.

not yet been issued. In essence, the characters are left for a brief time with nothing but themselves, a situation which their travels will bring them into time and again.

Eventually a short, thin man wearing black livery will come to open the gates and formally invite the characters into the mansion. The invitation will be reinforced by a sudden emphasis from the Summoning. The servant, who will not speak other than to offer the invitation and formally welcome the characters to the house, will lock the gates behind the last character (including those who are Obfuscated) and silently bring them into the manse. The massive doors will swing open at his light pull, and the characters will be escorted into a dimly lit drawing room.

The furnishings are rich, but not ostentatious, and the decoration is classical in its motif. Greek vases and *kouros* statues abound, and the paintings adorning the walls all depict scenes from Adriatic mythology. On one wall Laocöon struggles in the serpent's coils; opposite him Prometheus writhes as the eagle tears at his liver. The furniture consists of low tables and couches with overstuffed black and gray silk cushions. The characters will be invited to seat themselves by the first servant, who will then leave the room. Another servant, dressed identically to the first, stands in the center of the room holding a silver tray. On the tray are a number of crystal glasses one greater than the number of characters and a hand-cut crystal decanter full of blood. The servant will offer a glass to each of the characters; when quizzed about the extra glass he will simply say "We had been expecting one other," and speak no more about it. The blood is not human, but Kindred, and from a vampire of 6th Generation. Should any of the characters demonstrate displeasure with this, the servitor will hasten to reassure her that the individual whose blood is being served is dead, and that her hosts would never be so crass as to serve the vitae of one still living who might seek to Bond her. A reading of the servant's aura while he gives this recitation will indicate that he is perfectly sincere in his statements.

The characters will be given time to savor their rare meal. The vitae is intended to be both a bribe and a warning, and wise Kindred will recognize it as such. Working for the unnamed masters of the mansion obviously holds the potential for great reward, but on the other hand, a Cainite of the 6th Generation is obviously of little moment to the powers that dwell here.

Should the characters wish to discuss their situation, continue any conversations they began before the gate, or simply rant about the whole situation they should be given time to do so. Eventually, however, a line of servants will appear, led by the man who opened the gate, and he will announce that the characters' hosts are ready to receive them. Two of the servants will roll back a rich Persian rug on the floor, revealing a flagstone with a ring set in it; two more servants will lift the stone to reveal darkness below. An anonymous servant will step down into the darkness, beckoning the characters to follow him.



Regere sanguine
regere in veritatem
est - Vincam etiam
ab inferis ♦♦♦

Exploring the Manse

Should the characters either sneak inside the mansion or skip away from the drawing room during the evening, they will find that the upper floor is almost completely shut down. Drop cloths cover furniture and dust is deep in the rooms that are not opened to serve as servants' quarters. A broad spiral staircase leads down to the first floor, where unlit but exquisitely furnished rooms wait in the darkened corridors. The entire manse should give the impression of a shell, a sham resurrected for public consumption. There is something old and dead here, and the atmosphere should be so riddled with discomfort that the characters should be glad to return to the main drawing room to sip their aperitifs.

Sample statistics for servitor ghouls in the Casa Hardestadt:

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Archery (special crossbow training) 4, Etiquette 5, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Security 1, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Linguistics 3, Occult 2, Politics 1

Disciplines: 2 points in any of the following: Auspex, Celerity, Fortitude, Potence or Thaumaturgy

Willpower: 8

Note: All ghouls have access, depending upon the situation, to loaded crossbows, a brace of loaded hunting pistols or a rapier. They will not use their weapons unless attacked or provoked by the characters (see above).

Into the Catacombs

The characters will be led by the unsmiling ghouls in black livery down narrow, nitre-encrusted steps into the catacombs that burrow and twist for hundreds of miles beneath Rome. The ghoul leading the way, a middle-aged man with a hatchet face and spiderlike hands, has obviously been taught the rudiments of Thaumaturgy; in his hands dance flames barely bright enough to illumine the way. The ghouls seem sure-footed on the slippery stairs, giving the impression that they have been here many times before. They will escort the characters through a dizzying series of twists and turns with the clear intent of completely disorienting them. Any attempt to mark a trail will be politely but firmly foiled by the ghouls; likewise, any efforts toward escape will be aborted by the grim-faced escort. In the depths the only sound that can be heard is the snare drum drip of water onto stone.

These are undoubtedly among the characters' hosts' most trustworthy ghouls, and killing or injuring any of them will certainly enrage the ghoul's master. If a character does manage somehow to escape, she will find herself wandering lightless tunnels full of bones, stacked neatly or crunching underfoot. The tunnels are also a well-populated Haunt, with literally dozens of wraiths making their home here. Such spirits are likely to take this golden opportunity to torment a lone Cainite wandering the dark. The unlucky character will be flung bodily against walls, have the scent of fresh hot blood maddeningly wafted at her, feel invisible fingers testing the strings that bind soul to body and see phantasmal monsters leaping from every corner. Of course the characters' assailants are invisible and noncorporeal, making any efforts to frustrate their assault futile. Eventually a black-clad ghoul, bearing a palm full of flame, will stalk into view and offer to lead the wandering character back to her companions. If the character has any sense, she will accept the offer gladly.

Sepulchre

Eventually the characters will find themselves led into a larger chamber, lit with sconced torches. Closer examination of the brands burning so brightly along the walls will reveal that they are not wood but bone, each torch a femur that has somehow been conjured into flame. The walls themselves are gray stone, honeycombed with beds for the beloved dead. Skulls, spines, ribs and knucklebones are stacked neatly in the corners of the room, each bone sorted with each. In the center of the room is a round table with a slate top, with intricately carved chairs around it. Seated at the table are the Founders, those lords and ladies of the Camarilla whose will has drawn the players here. They do not look pleased. With an unspoken command the ghouls are dismissed and the players are left in the imposing presence of their elders.



Storyteller Note

If you are running *Blood and Fire* as a sequel to *The Last Supper*, it is recommended that you modify the scenario to accommodate your chronicle's unique continuity. Feel free to remove any of the Founders who were killed off during your *Last Supper* sessions; anything they impart can easily come from the mouth of one of the other Founders.

The Founders sit, staring with weary contempt at the players. It would appear as if the centuries have not been kind to them. They have gained power and seen their dream come to fruition, but their power came at great cost, and the dream was realized in debased and bastardized form. The Founders are:

Hardestadt

Clan: Ventrue

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 947 (born 904)

Apparent Age: Early 40s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 6, Dodge 5, Intimidation 6, Leadership 6, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 3, Melee 6, Ride 5, Security 4, Stealth 4, Torture 4

Knowledges: History 3, Kindred Lore 5, Law 5, Linguistics 6, Literature 5, Occult 3, Politics 6

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 5, Dominate 7, Fortitude 5, Necromancy 1, Potence 6, Presence 5, Protean 4

Backgrounds: Allies 7, Contacts 6, Elder Status 7, Herd 5, Influence 7, Military Force 6, Resources 6, Retainers 7

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 9

Image: A tall, broad-chested man with an aristocratic bearing, Hardestadt has typical Teutonic features and dark hair with a shock of gray. He wears a general's uniform from one of the countless German states and he is visibly armed.

Roleplaying Hints: Status and rank is everything, and you outrank almost everyone. Treat them with the proper noblesse oblige, except when it becomes necessary to point out how inferior they truly are. The iron fist is always ready, but you're expert with the velvet glove. If flowery words and a smile will get you what you want, there's no need to get blood on your uniform. You've lost some major battles to the Sabbat over the past two centuries, and anyone expressing the slightest sympathy for them in your presence should be treated as a traitor.

Adana de Sforza

Clan: Brujah
Generation: 5th
Embrace: 1093 (born 1068)
Apparent Age: Mid 20s
Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 5, Brawl 7, Carousing 4, Dodge 5, Intimidation 5, Seduction 3, Streetwise 4, Style 4
Skills: Blind Fighting 3, Dancing 3, Melee 7, Music 3, Ride 4, Stealth 3, Torture 4
Knowledges: Clan Knowledge 5, Kindred Lore 4, Linguistics 4, Politics 5
Disciplines: Celerity 4, Dominate 3, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 2, Potence 7, Presence 4, Protean 4
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Elder Status 3, Herd 4, Influence 3, Military Force 4, Resources 4, Retainers 5
Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 5
Humanity: 3
Willpower: 8

Image: Like a dagger, de Sforza is small yet gives the impression of being honed to a deadly edge. Her hair is so blond it is almost white, and her features are elfin and sharp. Adana wears men's clothes of a rakish cut; one expects her to speak with a swashbuckler's accent.

Roleplaying Hints: Born to the role of devil's advocate, you enjoy debate for the sake of debate and for what it tells you about those with whom you are debating. Very few of the positions you toss out to discussion are ones you support. Rather, they are decoys and tests, allowing you to see who snaps at what bait. There is much that needs doing in the world, but you see no need to charge ahead into action without first testing the terrain you're charging onto.

Milov Petrenkov

Clan: Gangrel
Generation: 6th
Embrace: 974 (born 948)
Apparent Age: Mid 20s
Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 3, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 6, Athletics 7, Brawl 9, Dodge 5, Intimidation 4, Mimicry 2, Scan 3, Swimming 2
Skills: Animal Ken 6, Animal Training 4, Blind Fighting 4, Herbalism 2, Melee 4, Survival 6
Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Carpathians) 4, Kindred Lore 4, Linguistics 5, Lupine Lore 3
Disciplines: Animalism 6, Auspex 2, Celerity 5, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 3, Potence 3, Presence 2, Protean 6
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Elder Status 3, Status 4

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 7

Image: Petrenkov is a slender, youngish-looking man with eyes that seem far too old for his face. His complexion is milk-pale, and he wears poor huntsman's garb. A long knife is constantly in evidence around him, and he twirls, throws or sharpens it constantly.

Roleplaying Hints: You do not look at something, you assess it. All others are prey, to be classified as dangerous or harmless. Speak infrequently; act quietly. If drawn into debate make your point and then attempt to end the conversation.

Camilla Banes

Clan: Malkavian
Generation: 6th
Embrace: 1063 (born 1029)
Apparent Age: Mid 30s
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5
Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 7, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 4, Mimicry 5, Subterfuge 4, Ventriloquism 4
Skills: Animal Ken 2, Debate 2, Dancing 3, Etiquette 4, Melee 2, Ride 3, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 5
Knowledges: Alchemy 3, Occult 4, Faerie Lore 3, Kindred Lore 6, Literature 4, Naturalism 3, Toxicology 5
Disciplines: Auspex 7, Celerity 3, Dominate 5, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 6, Presence 4, Protean 3
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Elder Status 3, Herd 5, Retainers 3, Status 3
Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 1, Courage 5
Humanity: 4
Willpower: 7

Derangements: Perfectionism, Multiple Personality Disorder (one persona mothering, the other sadistic) and the delusion that Cappadocius was both a saint and her lover.

Image: Camilla is tall and thin, looking almost fey with her dreamy eyes and slender frame. Wearing a simple shift of white, she appears to be out of place in the catacombs, an angel trapped in an outpost of Hell.

Roleplaying Hints: All is madness, all. Your children stand before you, awaiting your approval and love, which you would gladly give if they didn't deserve punishment, didn't deserve to have you smash their little leering faces so that they wouldn't haunt your dreams any more, the blissful dreams of your little lost ones whom you miss so much, now long dead....

Another face intrudes on your dreams: Cappadocius. He is angel and saint, lover and teacher, and you know intuitively that he awaits you in Heaven.

Note: Camilla has been prone to infrequent attacks of prescience ever since the events of **The Last Supper**. The other Founders, when not attempting to garner advantage by deciphering her ramblings, find the situation disturbing to the extreme.

Josef von Bauren

Clan: Nosferatu

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1006 (born 943)

Apparent Age: Early 60s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Diplomacy 5, Empathy 4, Leadership 3, Steetwise 6, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Blind Fighting 5, Debate 3, Mediation 4, Melee 4, Stealth 7

Knowledges: Kindred Lore 5, Linguistics 4, Occult 4, Sewer Lore 5

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Celerity 3, Dominate 3, Fortitude 5, Obfuscate 8, Potence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 6, Elder Status 4, Influence 5, Resources 4

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Image: Bent and twisted, von Bauren's skin is covered with greenish warts which give him the appearance of a gigantic toad. He stands just under five feet tall, but carries his left shoulder higher. Ironically, he wears the cowl and robe of a medieval monk, sparing the characters the worst.

Roleplaying Hints: Let others pour forth a torrent of words; you shall be the one who directs the stream. Never speak first if you can help it; let others hang themselves if they seem inclined to do so. Haste makes waste, and you abhor waste.

Rafael de Corazon

Clan: Toreador

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 1182 (born 1154)

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 5, Appearance 7

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 5, Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 4, Dodge 4, Intrigue 5, Public Speaking 5, Seduction 5, Style 7, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Dancing 5, Etiquette 5, Fast Talk 4, Melee 4, Singing 7, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Art History 7, Kindred Lore 4, Linguistics 5, Literature 4, Occult 5, Politics 3, Theology 3



Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 4, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 3, Presence 7

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 3, Elder Status 4, Herd 4, Influence 6, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 4

Virtues: Conscience 1, Courage 2, Self-Control 5

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 9

Derangement: Obsessive Vanity

Image: Medium boned and of average stature, de Corazon is beautiful in a way that seems almost angelic. He wears the garb of the Spanish conquerors, his finery almost peacocklike amidst the drabness of his fellow Founders.

Roleplaying Hints: Every night you thank God that you were not Embraced as a Lasombra, for that would deny you the pleasure of seeing your own visage in the looking glass. Others are useful in helping you achieve your ends or in confirming your own opinion of yourself, but in the end, they are merely flawed mirrors held up to your perfection.

Mistress Fanchon

Clan: Tremere

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1223 (born 1186)

Apparent Age: Late 30s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Diplomacy 5, Dodge 4, Instruction 3, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Dancing 4, Etiquette 5, Falconry 4, Melee 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 7, Astronomy 6, Kindred Lore 5, History 5, Naturalism 5, Theology 4

Disciplines: Auspex 6, Celerity 3, Dominate 5, Fortitude 1, Necromancy 2, Thaumaturgy 6 (Movement of the Mind 5, The Lure of Flames 5, Weather Control 4)

Backgrounds: Influence 6, Resources 6, Retainers 5, Status 4

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Image: Mistress Fanchon is an attractive, mature woman with a fair complexion and ice-green eyes. She wears a robe of simple black, and her long, dark hair is plaited.

Roleplaying Hints: A master manipulator, you understand speech and its uses far better than any of the other Founders, that blustering fool Hardestadt included. Move slowly and languorously, but your mind and wit are razor-sharp and rapier-fast.

Old Allies

If the characters helped the Founders during the events of **The Last Supper**, their reception will at least be reasonably warm. Mistress Fanchon will rise to greet them, saying how pleasant it is to see them again and how fortunate it was that time seems to have borne out the Founders' decision not to annihilate the characters upon the Embrace. This will earn her a black look from Hardestadt, which she will ignore.

She will continue by praising to the skies the characters' ingenuity, courage and skill in their efforts to bring the traitors to justice during the unhappy events of April 1444. However (and here her tone will turn regretful), it would seem that the events of those horrific evenings are not quite finished.

Hardestadt will interrupt here, attempting to bluster into control of the situation. He will mellifluously apologize for his error in judgment regarding the characters during "those heady days, so long ago," and comment on how glad he is to see them well after over two difficult centuries. However, it would appear that those events that everyone had thought to be laid to rest once and for all have not truly been laid to rest.

Old Enemies

If the players fought against the Founders, de Sforza will begin the conversation. "It has been two centuries since we last met. Don't look so surprised to see us. Your pitiful attempts to burrow your way into anonymity were precisely that: pitiful. Did you think you could hide from us? Did you think that two piddling centuries would wash away the stain of what you've done? No, we've kept an eye on you, waiting for a moment when such as you would finally become...useful." If necessary, she will rattle off the details of how one or more of the characters spent the past two centuries, concisely demonstrating the futility of attempting to hide from the Founders.

"Idiocy," Petrenkov will interject. "I said we should have hunted them down for our amusement then, and I repeat it now. What good are these scurrying rats?"

"Now, now," Hardestadt says, rising and pacing about the chamber. "These unfortunates made a mistake two centuries ago. Now is their chance to make good on it. And I am quite sure," he says, standing quite close to the characters, "that they *will* make good on it. Otherwise, my dear friend Milov will have some new playmates. Briefly."

The Gangrel will laugh, but no one else will. Disappointed, the Ventrue continues, "Listen very carefully to your one chance at salvation, little vampires. We have kept your patrons — those who have survived — walled up for two centuries. They are in a donjon in a castle in France, chained to a wall and fed only the blood of plague-ridden rats. Every day the sun rises and its lovely golden rays come through the window opposite where

they are chained. Every day that rectangle of gold slides down the wall, inches from their wrists. A few years ago, Lady Jadviga actually summoned up enough strength to break her manacles and attempt to hurl herself into the sunlight. Fortunately, her guardians were able to subdue her before she did herself serious injury, and it only took seven months for her burns to heal properly. Do you think any of your former patrons has enjoyed the last two centuries very much? Would you like to sample their pleasures and see if your opinion differs? I think not.

“Two centuries, two decades and two years ago you were willing accomplices in one of the foulest crimes our kind has ever seen. There is more than enough evidence, more than enough reason to condemn you to torment and Final Death. Yet you have a chance to repent and seek absolution. This is your one chance to wipe the slate clean. I suggest you take it.”

New Pawns

If the characters were not involved in the events of *The Last Supper*, the Founders will attempt to overawe them with their position and personal power. These are the legendary Founders of the Camarilla, and they expect due deference from the relative neonates who stand before them. Van Bauren will open the discussion, informing the characters that they have been brought to the Founders' attention through the reports of their respective clan elders as potential candidates for resolving a most vexing situation.

The fact that the characters were “recommended” by their clan elders can be used for good or for ill. Perhaps the characters have rendered extraordinary service and have demonstrated unusual aptitude for dealing with problematic situations. In this case, the Summoning should be played up as the route to a reward for exceptional service, and the Founders' rude method of gathering the characters can be seen as a regrettable expediency necessary for assembling the optimal team of operatives.

On the other hand, the characters could well be in hot water with their clans for reasons real or imagined. It is hardly difficult to manufacture evidence of a breach of the Masquerade or worse crime, and the resources at the Founders' disposal make the matter trivial. The Founders' attitude toward the characters will be that the mission is a penance for crimes against the Camarilla that the characters had damned well better perform or else risk being summarily removed from existence altogether.

Of course, the ideal mix is for a combination of motivations, with the favored children of the Camarilla forced to work cheek-by-jowl with the equivalent of vampiric juvenile delinquents. There should be marked difference in how the characters are treated by the Founders depending upon their status, but alternately they will be flattered, cajoled or bullied into accepting the mission that Hardestadt reveals.

The Die is Cast

Hardestadt will pontificate here, outlining the bare bones of the situation. It would appear that a text has been stolen from the Vatican library, a work written in Chaldean. Part of the library of the late, lamented Cappadocius, it (as well as many others) was placed in the Vatican stacks for safekeeping after Augustus Giovanni's crimes.

It is Hardestadt's suspicion that the missing book contained the keys to Cappadocius' forbidden researches into the nature of godhead itself. Furthermore, this theft comes on the heels of other crimes of a similar nature. Mages' libraries have been ransacked, chantries burgled and churches and monasteries looted of manuscripts – all concerned with a rumored ritual called “The Anointing,” which supposedly has the power to grant divinity – or demoniac power – to the soul who

Why the Vatican?

At first glance, there would hardly seem to be a worse place to store Cappadocius' manuscripts than in the heart of the Eternal City. The darkest secrets of vampiric existence surrounded by men and women of Faith, and within easy reach of those servants of the Church and Inquisition who seek to eradicate the Kindred; why, the situation seems almost comically dangerous.

However, there is logic to the Founders' madness here. After Augustus' act of diablerie upon his sire, it was unanimously agreed that the contents of Cappadocius' library should be hidden for safekeeping. The safe alternative would have been to destroy the collection *in toto*, but it was felt that the knowledge contained within might someday prove to be of use. Still, once the agreement to save the books had been reached, all consensus vanished. None of the Founders trusted any of the others to merely protect the deadly texts, and a neutral storage site was needed.

It was the Nosferatu von Bauren who finally suggested the Vatican, pointing out that the concentrated Faith of those dwelling within would serve as a potent barrier against vampiric thieves, whilst more moldering texts of medieval metaphysics would hardly be noticed amidst the piles and stacks that the Vatican already owned. The other Founders acquiesced, the transfer was arranged, and through the eras of the Avignon and multiple popes, the manuscripts remained safe...until now.



performs it. Theoretically, the ritual merges the notions of Transubstantiation and the Amaranth, essentially allowing the individual performing it to Diablerize God Himself. Theoretically, such an individual would then become God after a fashion, and possess such power as to dwarf even that of Cain. The ramifications of this possibility are terrifying.

"You can see why we're concerned," Corazon will interject here. "It would seem that someone wants to follow in Cappodocius' footsteps."

"The difference being," says von Bauren the Nosferatu, "Cappadocius was a pacifist. A potent fool, but a passive one. Whoever has stolen this book will, if he discovers a way to perform this ritual, use his new-found powers and *act*. None of us, not all of us combined, could stand against that. The thief must be identified, found and apprehended, and his prizes either locked away or destroyed."

"Not destroyed," the Tremere murmurs. Using Telepathy (Auspex 4), she will implant in the minds of two of the characters the following offer: If the stolen book is returned to her personally, she will provide the means for the character bringing her the prize to commit Diablerie not once, but twice, raising her Generation by two. If the characters refuse, she will warn them telepathically to keep their silence and try again on two more characters. If it looks as if the characters are going to accuse the Tremere, Mistress Fanchon will Dominate them into silence under the cover of averting an interruption.

"In any case," Hardestadt comments, "this is a matter of grave importance. The lot of you have demonstrated, singly and together, your supreme fitness for this task. Do not think to refuse; we have no time to gather another band to do what you are eminently suited to do. Retrieve or destroy the book, it makes no difference. Unmask and destroy the thief. I hereby call Blood Hunt upon him. Do any here gainsay my right?"

There will be some unhappy nods at the table, but all will acquiesce. Hardestadt will nod once in tight-lipped satisfaction, and continue. "So be it. The thief's life is yours, and if it turns out to be one of Augustus' childer, we'll finally have the excuse we need to wipe that foul brood from the earth once and for all." Observant characters will notice that certain of the other Founders, de Sforza and Petrenkov in particular, do not look particularly pleased at the prospect of war with the Giovanni. "Your own resources should be more than sufficient to track down this ravager of libraries. Go, my servants will lead you back to the manse. Be circumspect in your investigations, but be also swift. I can see some of you chafing under what you consider to be my harsh authority. Consider how much infinitely worse it would be if one like myself – only less merciful – were made into God Himself." Hardestadt pauses a minute for effect. "I thought so. Go, and may the Lord of Hosts Himself have the enlightened self-interest to aid you on your quest."

The ghouls will stalk back in at this point and politely escort the players back to the villa via another convoluted route. As the players walk out, the Malkavian Camilla

Banes will suddenly burst into high-pitched laughter. She has been completely silent until this moment, and her outburst comes as a shock even to the other Founders. "500 years," she will shriek. "A half a millennium before the dead saint rests. Oh, my poor darling Cappadocius, only three more centuries before you can rest in light." The tinkle of psychotic laughter will trail the characters into the dark.

Discussion will be allowed freely on the trip back, but even the most reflexive rebel among the Brujah will be forced to agree: Life under the Camarilla could not possibly be one-hundredth as confining as life under a Cainite made God. The question remains, however, what other options there might be.

It is highly unlikely that the characters will be overly familiar with the Giovanni. While the Cappadocian bloodline has been known as the Giovanni for over two centuries, the necromancers have been both censured and secretive. Unless a character has Kindred Lore or a particularly good in-character reason to know about the Giovanni, he will be unaware of much beyond the fact that the clan is rumored to dabble in necromancy, and that they are fabulously wealthy.

After the players return to the surface they will be offered refreshment, then courteously shown the gate. The heavy iron gates of the manse will clang shut behind them with a sound like a churchyard bell, and from far off through the evening mist will come the tolling voices from the steeples of Rome.

Scene Two: The Trail of the Thief

There is no linear path to discovering Ambrogino's identity and destination. Rather, a series of clues lies strewn throughout Rome for the characters to find, piecing them together as best they may. Some may be missed; such is the way of things. The following settings are not intended to serve as any sort of a linear plot, instead use them as touchpoints. The characters should be free to wander from each to each in any order they choose, gradually acquiring the information they need to unmask their prey and the direction of his flight.

Eventually, the weight of evidence should point inescapably to Ambrogino Giovanni as the culprit. A little more digging yields the fact that Ambrogino has fled to Switzerland, leaving behind his servants among the dead to protect his trail.

Most of the informants whom the characters will be dealing with in this section of the chronicle are mortals. The characters will have to act circumspectly, as blundering in with blatant uses of Disciplines is likely to alert both Ambrogino's restless servants and the city guard to the characters' existence. Breaches of the Masquerade will be extraordinarily costly in the shadow of St. Peter's Basilica, for even if the Society of Leopold does not attempt to track

down the supernatural disturbance, the city watch is likely to have a great many members with True Faith. The players must demonstrate extraordinary restraint, even when their quarry and opponent does not.

Starting the Ball Rolling

After the meeting with the Founders, the characters are likely to have no idea of where to go. Most of them are probably foreign to Rome, and as the very soil of the Vatican is permeated with the power of the Faith of millions, examining the scene of the crime is an impossibility. Instead, the characters must find their way to their clues, a task which with all of Rome yawning before them, can be daunting indeed.

The focus of the characters' investigation should be the occult nature of the theft, and should the characters follow up on this idea, any contacts the players have in the local mystic underground should be able to point them to Adonijah. Conversely, they may wish to pursue the fact that it was an ancient text that was stolen. In that case, anyone of quality (or a ragged street urchin) can lead the characters to Alfonse's book shop. Should the players be stuck for a starting point, an encounter with the beggar woman is a possibility, as is a quick stop into the Three Lions for a bite.

Of course, the Founders have a vested interest in the characters' success, and may well point them toward Alfonse's book shop as good a place to start as any. However, the order in which the characters visit the various sites is essentially immaterial; nor do they necessarily have to visit all of them. Still, each offers vital information not available elsewhere in Rome.

The Bookseller's

Located on the elegant reaches of the Via Frattina, Alfonse's is frequented by many of the learned of the Church's most erudite scholars. The owner, one Alfonse D'Sarcina, has an almost miraculous ability to obtain copies of works that are either locked away in the vaults of the Vatican library or are otherwise incredibly difficult to locate. Many times has he been able to provide for some Frater or Pater the very text that they needed, and for a modest sum as well. Truly, it is a mystery how Alfonse manages to stay in business with the prices he charges.

Of course, religious texts aren't Alfonse's only stock in trade. A select clientele, consisting primarily of higher-ups in the Church hierarchy, also comes to Alfonse's book shop for Islamic, Gnostic, Qabbalistic and even overtly Pagan texts, many of which could get the possessor burned for witchcraft. These books, much more difficult to obtain than the Christian texts which provide Alfonse's cover, are priced much more dearly. Furthermore, each comes with admission into Alfonse's little conspiracy of silence; should he wish, the bookseller could topple some of the most powerful men in Rome.

The shop itself is a pleasant little place, its shutters and windowboxes painted a cheery yellow. Golden light glows from the windows; apparently the bookseller is working late this evening. Inside books by the hundred line the shelves which cover the walls, while Alfonse's latest printings sit proudly on a sturdy table in the center of the room. A separate section for scrolls, some supposedly from the Great Library of Alexandria, takes up most of the east wall to the right of the door. All the rest of the wall space save some windows is covered in immaculate shelves bursting with leather-bound books.

From behind the stout door in the back of the room waft the smells of the printer's trade; some pleasant, some not. A long counter of polished oak runs along most of the back wall; behind this Alfonse usually sits with a brace of pistols within easy reach in a drawer. Alfonse also keeps his cash behind this counter in a locked iron box; he wears the key on a chain around his neck. Books line the counter as well, as do pamphlets, plays and other printed materials.

The back room is larger than the front and is sparsely furnished. In addition to the door leading to the main shop, there's also a door in the back that apparently leads to an alley. Windows are everywhere and wide open, apparently in an effort to combat the smells. The walls are bare wood and the entire chamber is positively spattered with ink. A drying rack for paper is in the back of the room, the front contains a monstrous printing press currently in the midst of the typesetting process. Close examination of the letters already in place will yield that Alfonse is apparently producing a version of the Decameron, and the type box is near the press. A small boy, Alfonse's nephew Sigismundo, is hard at work at setting the type, but is making frequent mistakes. A large jug of ink rests on the floor by the press; Sigismundo's frantic efforts bring him close to kicking the jug over on several occasions. A stair winds up in the corner, leading to the richly furnished rooms on the floor above.

If the characters ask Alfonse about books on Lilith, Gnosticism, Apotheosis or any related topic, he will smile a simpering grin and tell them that he is most sorry, but all of his texts on those subjects have been purchased, and that his contacts have been unable to locate any duplicates. At this point he will attempt to usher the characters out of the shop.

The characters have several choices here. They can leave the shop and whatever clues it might contain, in which case they may well hear the songs wafting from the Three Lions Inn down the street and wander off there to investigate. Or, they can remain and attempt to cadge further information out of Alfonse. Depending on the tactics that the characters use, the following are likely results:

If the players attempt to question Alfonse further without using any physical force or Disciplines, he will let slip that a "young thing of a girl" was in just the

previous day asking for books on the same topics as the players. Of course, it filled his heart with regret to send such a lovely lady away empty handed, so he instead sold her a travelogue, written in Latin by a soldier who helped defend Vienna against the Turkish hordes, of his journeys from Paris through the Swiss Alps and on to Austria. If questioned on the "young thing's" description Alfonse will get a bit hazy, but he will remember her piercing gaze and coal-black hair; perhaps the vague flounces to her apparel will be memorable enough to be mentioned; the young lady in question of course being Marianna.

If the players use violence and attempt to beat the information out of Alfonse, he will scream bloody murder and the boy will tear out of the back of the shop to fetch the local guard. As Alfonse is either owed favors or has blackmail material on many Vatican potentates, the guard will come in a hurry, and at least half of them are likely to have high Faith ratings. As the players either flee or are forced out of the shop, they will hear the bookseller ranting about "the whole damned lot," and how he'll never deal with any of them again no matter how much Giovanni pays. The players may well mistake Giovanni for a first name; if this occurs help them down the primrose path of their incorrect assumptions. Should the players be chased off in this manner, they may well wish to return later in the evening to continue their interrogation. If they attempt this, they will find that four guards, all with Faith 6 or above, have been posted in front of the book shop. As stated earlier, Alfonse has some powerful friends within the Church.

Should the characters use Disciplines such as Dominate or Presence to extract the information from Alfonse, it's a whole other story. Depending upon how successful the characters are (and how well they phrase their questions), Alfonse will reveal the following:

- The aforementioned information on Marianna
- The fact that he sold all of his religious texts on Gnosticism, the Cult of Lilith, some Qaballistic text on a ritual called "The Anointing," and other related books to a young man of swarthy complexion and rich clothing.
- That he was instructed on fear of death not to mention whom he had sold the texts to, or any details of his appearance.
- That the "young lady" had also asked after the man who had bought all of the books.
- That Sigismundo has been complaining of strange noises in the shop ever since the wealthy stranger came and purchased all of those books (at a dreadfully inflated price, it should be added).

Characters with level 2 Auspex may attempt to spot any wraiths currently lurking in the shop; most if not all will be in the back room or upstairs waiting for the players to leave. If the characters choose to investigate the "strange noises," Sigismundo will talk about type rearranging itself on the press and ghostly moans and whispers. The wraiths

that Ambrogino has commanded to keep watch over Alfonse's silence may well decide to play with the characters, offering a creaking floorboard here and a snuffed candle there to raise the characters' paranoia levels to unbearable heights. However, they will offer no concrete proof of their existence, and eventually the players should grow bored and leave the shop.

If real information has been forced out of Alfonse, once the characters have left the shop the ghostly guardians Ambrogino left behind him will strike. Walking away from the bookstore, the characters will hear a strangled scream from inside the house, and then the sound of several titanic concussions. If they rush back into the shop, they will find nothing in the front room. In the back, Sigismundo can be found rocking back and forth in wide-eyed shock. On the floor next to the printing press is Alfonse's body. A veritable storm of heavy lead type pieces has been brutally flung against his countenance with such force that his nose has been broken, his teeth have been shattered and his larynx has been crushed. To add insult to injury, the jug of ink has been upended over Alfonse's face, and the last bubbling remnants of his breath pop even as the characters storm into the room. The empty jug rolls across the floor hollowly; then as the characters take in the scene, they will receive another shock.

From Sigismundo's mouth will come the voice of an aged, gravel-tongued man. The voice will distinctly intone the words, "Silentium sapientia est," then the boy will collapse into a quivering heap. Characters who understand Latin will know the phrase to mean "Silence is wisdom." Sigismundo is unconscious and can not be revived, and the watch will probably be arriving soon. Should the characters attempt to search the store and the living quarters above, they will find nothing of use upstairs save some money and some items of jewelry they might sell. The print room is rapidly being flooded in spilled ink, and they may not wish to stay there for long. If the front room is searched, a pile of bills of sale will be found behind the counter next to the iron box of cash. A successful Wits + Investigation roll (difficulty 7) will uncover a bill of sale matching the list of texts that Alfonse sold to the mysterious gentleman; the initials on it are "A.V.C.G." The bill is for an unbelievably large amount, reinforcing the notion that Ambrogino has far better resources than the characters do, particularly if he can drop this much money in one purchase.

By this point the wraiths are long gone and there's little left of interest in the shop. Should the characters dawdle, the sound of the approaching Guard should speed them up. At the Storyteller's discretion, the players could possibly be pursued by the Guard throughout the remainder of Act One, adding a certain urgency to their quest for information.





When the players do leave the book shop, the street offers them the distant sound of singing from the Three Lions Inn, while the back way promises foul stench and the remnants of the printer's art in the alley.

Alfonse

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Appraisal 3, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 1, Law 2, Linguistics 4, Occult 3, Politics 2, Science 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Resources 3

Willpower: 7

Image: Alfonse is just starting to go to fat. His black beard curls in ringlets, almost covering up his incipient jowls. His skin is dark and pockmarked, as if he had a pox in his youth. Alfonse wears expensive clothes, preferring Dutch fashions in the mistaken impression that they make him look more dignified.

Roleplaying Hints: If your customers look like they have enough money for your wares – your real ones – act as unctuous as humanly possible. The sooner you pull them into your little conspiracy, the sooner you'll be protected by whatever power they have. Rub your hands frequently and wax rhapsodic over the qualities of whatever text the characters are looking at, and be sure to sprinkle every sentence with a compliment or three of the person you are addressing.

Sigismundo

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Intimidation 1

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Acting 1, Alertness 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Streetwise 2

Skills: Printing 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Linguistics 2

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Mentor 1

Willpower: 5

Image: Sigismundo is a little boy with enormous brown eyes and a dark complexion. He wears an ink-spattered tunic and pants and no shoes, and it's obvious that his uncle is working him too hard.

Roleplaying Hints: Don't speak unless you're spoken to. Uncle Alfonse told you about speaking to the customers, and you don't want him to beat you like that again. Check with Uncle Alfonse before you tell anyone anything, because sometimes he gets angry when you say things.

Wraiths

An accomplished necromancer, Ambrogino has set multiple wraiths to guard his trail. While they will generally not interfere with the characters, they will attempt to silence witnesses and the like. Alfonse's book shop is the only place where the wraiths will directly move to actual violence, but at Storyteller discretion, they can make their presence felt at other times and places in the story.

For the sake of ease of use while playing **Blood and Fire**, it can be assumed that wraiths are driven off after they are struck, and that they can possess the equivalent of any of the following disciplines: Auspex, Chimestry, Dominate, Obfuscate, Presence and Thaumaturgy (especially Movement of Mind and Lure of Flames). Wraiths are capable of movement through closed doors and windows, but not through walls unless they wish to go incorporeal. Furthermore, most wraiths are both invisible and inaudible, so the only way characters will be able to detect them is through the use of Auspex.

It is a common feature of ghost sightings that the ambient temperature in the region surrounding the sighting drops dramatically, and Storytellers may wish to relate this fact to their players.

For more information on wraiths, see **Wraith: The Oblivion**.

The Three Lions Inn

From the street the sounds of merriment can be heard from the Three Lions Inn, as well as the occasional crash of earthenware crockery smashing against an unyielding cranium. A low-class establishment with delusions of gentrification, the Three Lions is a clearinghouse for mercenaries, caravan guards and all other forms of hired muscle and steel. The owner, one Tomas Frascatore, has a strict "no firearms or steel" rule within his establishment which he maintains with a brace of loaded pistols kept behind the counter. However, mere flesh-on-flesh mayhem is tolerated if not encouraged, and many prospective employers come here to select their hires based upon the casualty lists of the evening's revelry.

From the front, the Three Lions seems to be a place for gentry; the facade is gray stone while a gilt-lettered sign showing a trio of red heraldic lions tumbling together in play swings over the heavy doors. A balcony projects above the sign, and from beneath its white canopy a beautiful woman or three can usually be seen waving. Strains of foreign conversation come wafting onto the street: Spanish, English, German and especially French.

The illusion of class slowly fades once one enters the Three Lions, however. Booted, bladed and pistoled mercenaries slouch at the bar or around the thick oaken tables. Attractive women, many of whom are obviously prostitutes, flit about the room or drape themselves across patrons. Serving women, silhouetted by the fireplace against the back wall, flit back and forth carrying trays of earthenware mugs and ducking the unwanted attentions and groping hands of lecherous drinkers. To the right, a polished staircase reaches up to the second floor. Characters observing this will notice couples ascending, usually with some urgency; usually the men who rise with a companion will stumble back downstairs alone.

Behind the bar is the towering form of Signore Frascatore, a great bear of a man with a curling black beard and arms like tree branches. Wearing a wine-stained apron, he surveys the relative peace and quiet of his establishment, at least when circumstances do not force him to reach for the weapons stored below the bar. It is fitting that Frascatore smiles, as he gets 20% of the price of every hire that takes place in his establishment, no matter what the job being contracted might be. Over the years, various mercs and merchants have attempted to avoid paying Frascatore his commission and invariably have been found floating face-down in the Tiber the next morning.

The Drunken Guard

Sitting alone at a table in the center of the room is a tall, thin man with receding brown hair and a weathered, angular face. His movements, though blurred by alcohol, are astonishingly quick, and he will move to cradle his mug possessively if any of the characters move toward him. He is wearing a dirty white shirt and black breeches, with a pair of pistols stuck through his belt and a wicked-looking knife tucked into the top of one mud-spattered black boot. Sufficiently observant characters may be able to discern that the man's boots and pistols, at least, appear to be British army issue. As he sits pondering his drink, one of the serving women will approach him and ask if he wants another; he will refuse and admit that he barely has the coin to pay for his current round. The barmaid will tsk concernedly and chastise him for not taking the Switzerland job, then wander off to a better-heeled client.

This is the characters' opportunity to speak to Toby; if they offer to buy him drinks he will gladly tell the tale of his woes. A former English soldier, he deserted some five years back and has since alternated between careers as highwayman and caravan guard. Even in the civilized year of 1666 there are still bandits on the road, particularly in the wilds and forests of Europe. Toby will complain endlessly of both of his professions. As a guard, he risked his neck to help fat rich merchants get fatter and richer, and as a highwayman he had to sleep out with the wolves and bears, just to risk getting shot stealing some noble brat's snotty handkerchief. Toby is a melodramatic, if amusing storyteller, and should at least keep the players from wandering off in disgust immediately until someone has the presence of mind to bring up the "Switzerland job."

At that, Toby will shudder and look hopefully at his mug. If the players take the hint, he will gulp down the contents and, with increasingly slurred words, recount how he was approached here by an agent who was hiring guards for a so-called "milk run" to Basel. The amount the man offered was ludicrous, but the trip had some special conditions attached. Travel was to be by night, and the cargo was delicate æ books, if he remembers correctly. The owner of the books would also be part of the party, and while he was never named, the way the factor smiled when mentioning him made Toby's skin crawl.

Besides, Toby had seen this particular factor hiring for the same run earlier in the year, once or twice, and Toby couldn't remember seeing any of the men who'd signed on ever again. Now they could well have found other assignments in Basel, but surely at least one of them would have returned to Rome, and hence to the Three Lions. If pressed, Toby will admit that the factor was having a hard time finding men; the mercenaries' grapevine is efficient, and that could well have been the source of the exorbitant offer of pay. However, as Toby will remind the characters, you can't spend money once you're dead, can you? He will also detail the other oddities of the trip: Travel in the Alps at night is still tantamount to suicide, there's something fishy about the way the factor made the books sound more important than their owner, the road from Rome to Basel is crawling with bandits, and so on.

If Toby is pushed for a description of the factor, he will describe a man who is short and swarthy, wearing red and black, with blue eyes and a black beard. A rapier swung at the man's hip, his clothing was very rich and he bore a thick silver ring on his left hand where a wedding band should have been. With the help of Dominate or Presence, he will be able to remember that the insignia of the ring was a stylized "G," though he will not be able to reproduce it. The man's accent was northern Italian, though he spoke excellent French.

One of the other bar patrons will call out that every time Bernini was in the bar, it somehow always got colder, but he will be shouted down by good-natured ribbing. Should the players ask around the bar for more information on this mysterious Bernini, what will come to light is that he has been hiring for the past three years; before that no one remembers seeing him. His nickname among experienced mercs is "Old Suicide," and no one in the room will be able to remember anyone who had ever signed on with him coming back healthy. The survivors, and there have been some, were invariably sickly and sometimes took months to regain their strength. Most, however, never returned at all.

Toby Entwhistle

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Streetwise 2

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Security 1, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (the road) 2, Bureaucracy 2, Law 1, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 4

Willpower: 6

Image: A storklike man with impossibly long arms, Toby seems to be made of stilts and straw. Possessing an angular, scarred face and a shock of brown hair, the mercenary looks to have seen all the barbarity that this world has to offer. His boots are black and scuffed, his gear of good quality but worn. There are wine stains on his shirt and breeches, and many rents in his clothing have been stitched up carefully.

Roleplaying Hints: You'll say anything to anyone, if they fill your mug first. Basically a decent fellow at heart, you're starting to feel the years and the miles, and you're not quite as fast on the draw as you used to be. You're afraid to go back out on the road again, but even more afraid of staying in Rome and drinking yourself into an alley.

For a prospective employer (or anyone buying you a drink) be informative while making certain to warn them about the dangers of what they're heading into. Examples from your own hard past should serve — Lord knows you've got enough.

Note: Toby will make an excellent hire—or ghoul—for the trip northward. His presence will reduce travel time and enable the party to protect itself better from bandit attack during the day. He has heard rumors of the "Black Monastery," and will tell endless horrific stories about it if requested. It will take an extra-large commission for him to approach the place, but his financial straits are desperate enough that he will sign on.

Upstairs at the Three Lions

Characters may wish to indulge their appetite at the Three Lions. If so, the prostitutes frequenting the establishment will serve quite well for an evening's meal. Should a character express an interest in retiring upstairs to partake of refreshment, he will find himself dealing with a winsome blond child by the name of Lucinda, whose pale skin and blue eyes proclaim that she is from somewhere in the northern Po valley. Fragile and delicate, she will quickly strike a bargain and lead the character upstairs. It is impossible to mistake her for more than 15 years of age, a child first coming into her womanhood. Should the character seek a somewhat older companion, he will find the other courtesans deliberately hanging back until Lucinda has acquired a client; her situation is poor at best and this is a gesture on the part of the other prostitutes to make certain that she can at least find lodging for the night.

The rooms upstairs are tacky rather than expensive; they are decorated in a poor man's idea of what a rich man's home looks like. A half-dozen rooms line the hallway, three on each side. Lucinda will lead the character in the one at the end of the hall on the left. As the couple passes the other door, strange sounds can be heard from within; cries of pleasure or pain, the occasional crack of a whip against flesh or the breaking of glass.

Once inside the candlelit room, Lucinda will immediately shrug herself out of her clothing and stand, pale and yet somehow modest, before the rumpled bed. She will always attempt to cover up the left side of her neck; characters somehow finding a way to look at the shameful area will find that it has been savagely bitten and shows signs of scarification. The tooth marks are indubitably human; if questioned Lucinda will haltingly lay the blame at the feet of one Bernini, who had promised to beat her if she told anyone of his "taste." He would purchase her attentions for the evening and proceed to rape her, forcing her to bare her throat to his dull teeth. When the blood finally did flow, he would lap it up greedily and then proceed to take his physical pleasures from her. But the blood always came first, she will claim without emotion, and the one time she refused Bernini's attentions, Frascatore forced her to go upstairs with the little factor. Apparently the little man's employer was a man of extraordinary means, and Frascatore did not want to lose the riches that would come from commissions that Bernini facilitated.

Lucinda knows nothing of Basel or any shipments of books, and even after her revelations she will pathetically attempt to tempt her employer to the bed. It should be noted as well that the other prostitutes are protective of Lucinda, and while they are unable to exact any revenge on Bernini, they will certainly act against any character who causes Lucinda distress. Such characters will find doors of informants closed to them, taverns filled with unwelcoming stares, their horses stolen and suchlike.

Any attempt to make Frascatore pay for his complicity in the factor's brutality will bring the entire room full of mercenaries to the bartender's defense. Should the characters wish to tackle such odds they are welcome to attempt it, but doing so without seriously breaching the Masquerade is impossible.

Lucinda

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 1, Athletics 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Streetwise 3

Skills: Melee 1, Music 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Linguistics 1, Medicine 1

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Mentor 1

Willpower: 6

Image: Still a child in many ways, Lucinda is fine boned and blond, with a complexion so pale that her veins can be traced through her skin. Her hair hangs down to cover the ruin Bernini has made of her neck, and she will resist any attempt to brush it away. Lucinda wears a simple brown gown that shows off her charms more by accident than by design.

Roleplaying Hints: If possible, preserve what shreds of dignity you have left while acceding to your client's wishes. Nothing anyone else might want to do could possibly be as foul as what Bernini already does to you. Someday, when





you work up the courage, you're going to kill him and Frascatore. Until then, keep your silence and grip the knife you've bought tightly.

The House of Adonijah

Tucked away in the twisted streets and tottering houses of the Jewish Quarter is the house of Adonijah, a would-be Hermetic mage and scholar of the Qaballah. Hidden in the narrow alleys west of the Campidoglio, the house is ramshackle, with a tarnished silver *mezuzah* (a small box containing inscriptions in Hebrew, posted in every doorway to a Jewish home) hanging from a single nail in the door frame. Through the windows, papers of every description can be seen strewn in disarray. From inside, a man's voice can be heard in sing-song chant in a language that can be identified as Hebrew. Close examination exposes dried bits of potter's clay in front of the door, but little else. There is no sign over Adonijah's establishment, nor will he come to the door before his prayers are finished.

When Adonijah does at last answer the door, the characters are confronted with a bowed and wizened man, dressed in black with a white prayer shawl draped over his shoulders. A black *yarmulke* is pinned to his mass of white hair. His beard is an explosion of white, his nose sharp and hooked, and his hands obviously arthritic. There is clay under his fingernails that matches the clay on the ground outside, and his eyes are piercing in a birdlike sort of way. Indeed, his very movements should remind the characters of some monstrous sparrow as he hops from foot to foot, never standing still.

Adonijah will ask the characters their business with him warily. He will invite them inside and clear places on his rough wooden benches for them to sit, yet keeps his distance. The Qaballist obviously recognizes the Kindred for what they are, and yet seems willing to listen to them. If the players cannot explain why they have sought him, he will offer to cast the *gematria* (a form of Qaballistic numerology) for the character who spoke last.

Adonijah Ben-Reuven

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Intuition 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Meditation 3, Research 5, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Qaballah) 5, Science 2

Willpower: 9

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Resources 2

True Faith: 7

Image: Adonijah is bowed and bent by his years, but his green eyes are still bright and his wit is still keen. His hair is unkempt and tangles down to join his bird's-nest beard, and he wears all black. Over his shoulders is a prayer shawl, and a black *yarmulke* rests on his head.

Roleplaying Hints: Is someone asking you a question? Why shouldn't you answer with one? Study is precious to you, as is knowledge, and you do not give away the fruits of your labors lightly. You have had dealings with the Sons of Caine before, and do not fear them as much as others might. Indeed, certain signs and portents have told you that these vampires, as much as their feeding habits revolt you, are essential to defeating a serpent that gnaws at the roots of the Tree of Life. With that in mind you are more kindly disposed toward the players than you might otherwise be.

The golem is your pride and passion, and you gave much for the materials necessary to complete it. While you have no wish to actually raise it, you fear that such an action might well be necessary, and far too soon.

Note: Adonijah has a very strong Faith, as is fitting for a scholar of Talmud and Qaballah. However, he has no wish to bar the characters from his residence, and the normal aversion Kindred have to characters with True Faith does not come into play here unless the old man is attacked. Adonijah is also adept at the hedge magick Path of Warding, Binding and Summoning (See *Ascension's Right Hand* for more information) and has laid certain protections on his mind and soul. Any attempts to use Dominate or Presence on him are automatically at a difficulty of 10, and if they fail Adonijah will be aware of the efforts directed his way.

Gematria

When Adonijah casts the *gematria*, he will ask the character their full name, translating it into Hebrew and adding up the value of the Hebrew letters in their name. He will also ask their date of birth, and not be surprised no matter what the year offered. He will seem insulted if the character lies about their date of birth, and such characters are unlikely to receive his full cooperation.

Once the *gematria* is cast, Adonijah will rummage around the sea of papers for a scrawled chart, referring back and forth between the scribbled numbers and the chart. Eventually he will look up with a frown and offer the following:

"The sword of Uriel waits for you, I am afraid. I see it here; fire, a conflagration, and in the center of it pages burning. Avoid the numbers 16 and nine; be kind to old women and young girls. Take the taste of blood from another's mouth where it is an abomination but beware the chalice that will be offered you. Beyond that, I can see no more."

If the players cannot come up with further questions for Adonijah, he will shoo them out.

The only line of questioning that will be fruitful for the characters will be following up on the mysterious clay, of which scattered bits can be found on the floor. A look at the paper-enshrouded table will reveal anatomical charts and texts written in what appears to be a Slavic tongue. Any character with Occult can make a roll of Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6) to recognize what the old man is doing.

Specifically, Adonijah is attempting to build a golem, an artificial man of clay animated by magic and given a semblance of life. If confronted with this, the Qaballist will defiantly announce his intentions. Yes, he is building a golem, and at great personal cost. Many of his most treasured scrolls, some of his oldest works, had to be traded for the notes of the great Rabbi Loew of Prague, who built a golem in 1523 that saved the Jews of that city from those who accused them of using the blood of children in religious rites. Such times are coming again, Adonijah fears, and he is resolved to do for Rome what Rabbi Loew did for Prague. He will offer to show his work to the characters, obviously proud of his creation. If the characters agree, they will be led into a dank basement, lit only by flickering torches in rough sconces. In the center of the room stands a stone table; on the slab rests a titanic figure with a face like the roughest outline of a visage. Fully eight feet tall, the golem is still very much a work in progress, but a majestic one. The golem cannot yet be animated, but its heavy limbs promise strength and endurance beyond that which mortals know.

Of course, it is not the golem but the books that were traded for the notes from Prague that should interest the characters. Oddly enough, Dominating Adonijah will prove useless (he has laid certain protections on himself for his dealings with Kindred; his earlier mention of Uriel, the angel of the sun, was not a coincidence) but asking him will yield a bounty of information. The texts he traded were almost exclusively in Chaldean and Aramaic, many of them touching on the question of Lilith or on magic and blood. The only relatively modern piece bartered away was a list, quite recent, of the titles in the Vatican library stacks and rare collections.

The trade was conducted with the factor for a certain wealthy patron, one who had sent the information many times for the casting of his *gematria*. The factor was named Bernini, or Roselli or some such, and only came after sundown. What that made him is anybody's guess, Adonijah will conclude, and bid his guests good evening. If they have impressed him, he will recommend that they speak to Alfonse the bookseller. As the characters leave, they will once again hear his voice rising in prayer and, if they listen closely, perhaps an echo from beneath the house.

Should the players physically attack Adonijah, they will easily be able to defeat him. Any mystic protections he has laid on himself are for his mind, not his body, and indeed too much rough handling will cause the old man to die. The golem will not rise to rescue Adonijah should his creator be assaulted; as yet it is still only clay.

The Beggarwoman's Tale

As the characters traipse along, they will be accosted by a beggar woman mummified in rags. She will insert herself into the characters' path, crying "Alms! Alms for Madame Cloaca!" Her name means "sewer," and she certainly smells as if she were named with odor in mind.

Such forward behavior is exceedingly unusual for a beggar in this period, and should be enough to attract the players' attention. What will be even more unusual is that the character with the lowest Willpower will find himself reaching into his purse to bestow largesse upon the hideous creature before him.

Madame Cloaca is in fact a Nosferatu, and a quite a wealthy one at that. Preferring to ambush wealthy kine and Dominate them into handing over the contents of their purses, she has amassed an astounding cache of coin, which she uses to purchase information from all over the city.

If the characters resist Madame Cloaca's Domination, she will immediately Obfuscate and flee. The best way to get her to remain is to call out, loudly, that the characters are willing to pay handsomely for information. To get the Nosferatu to reveal herself once again, a sizable amount of coin must be laid on the cobblestones. At this point, Madame Cloaca will reappear and, parodying a merchant, proceed to offer her wares.

If the characters ask about rare books, the beggar will direct them to either Alfonse's or Adonijah's. Should the inquiry be about food, the Three Lions tavern will be proposed. Madame Cloaca has no direct information about the theft itself, but she does know the following, which she will reveal at her leisure and for her own price.

- The catacombs beneath the city have become unfriendly to Kindred of late. The increase in hauntings began some six months ago, immediately after a certain great merchant house opened its doors in the city. The name of the house: Giovanni. Then again, the hauntings have started to decrease in the past two weeks or so....

- Something called the Black Monastery is tucked away somewhere in the north. Rumors have placed it in the Schwartzwald, the Swiss Alps and on the slopes of Mount Doré. It is said that the monks are all vampires, that they sodomize each other and spit on the Cross, and that they practice the Black Mass and have signed the Black Man's book.

- The Giovanni in residence in the city are, to the best of her knowledge, Pietro, Ambrogino, Vincenzo and Mario. Pietro is the eldest and serves as the head of the household. Vincenzo was just recently Embraced and is serving an apprenticeship under Mario, the most recent arrival from Venice. Ambrogino is perhaps the black sheep of the family and hasn't been seen much in business dealings with the family.

- The factor for the House of Giovanni, one Bernini, is currently at one of the family's warehouses, overseeing the unloading of a cargo of valuable spices.

- It may well have been a member of the family going back and forth to Basel; the carriage that was taken on the past three trips was the one that bore the family crest and arms.

This is all of the information that Madame Cloaca will sell, and she may not sell all of it. It depends on how well the characters treat her, as well as the depth of their purses. When she has wrung the last coin from the characters, she will mockingly bow her thanks and vanish into the night.

Should the characters need further guidance later in the evening, it can be assumed that Madame Cloaca is in fact following them, suspecting that their doings will make for vital information indeed. At a dramatically appropriate moment, she will reappear, cackling at the high-and-mighty Camarilla lords' inability to get along without her. The cost for assistance or direction at this point is humiliation, not cash. Besides, she's already extracted an evening's worth of coin from them, so the rest of her night is quite free.

Madame Cloaca can direct the characters to any site they need to reach. However, if they come to rely on her directions she will take full advantage of that dependency by misdirecting the characters or worse.

Madame Cloaca

Clan: Nosferatu

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 356 (born 321)

Apparent Age: Indeterminable

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Stealth 5

Knowledges: History 3, Kindred Lore 3, Linguistics 3, Sewer Lore 3

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 3, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 5, Potence 3

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

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 3

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Image: A shambling mound of rags and scraps, pierced by a bright eye and an extended claw. From somewhere within the mass (approximately five feet tall) can be heard the jingle of coin and the slow shuffle-slide of a dragged foot.

Roleplaying Hints: Knowledge is wealth, and you have both. Oh, the pretty young things need your help, do they? Well, maybe you'll help them and maybe you won't. Depends on if they're nice to you now, don't it?

Note: Madame Cloaca spent better than a 1000 years in torpor at the bottom of a mass grave, and as such is something of a bizarre anachronism. There are curious gaps in her knowledge, and she does prefer to converse in Latin.

Scene Three: The Giovanni Manse

Some of the characters may feel that it would be a good idea to pay a visit to the House of Giovanni, attempting to verify who of the family might be available. This is pure foolishness, and the wraiths guarding the Giovanni residence will alert the residents to the characters' approach long before their arrival. Furthermore, those wraiths will harass the characters as they wend their way back up the same hill that they earlier ascended at the Founders' request. However, every so often Fate demonstrates a fondness for fools.

The House of Giovanni dwells even further up the hill than Hardestadt and his compatriots, their house larger and more ornate. There is no gate, however. The characters are free to trundle right up to the door. The wings of the house will seem like great shadowed arms, ready to crush the characters within a stony embrace. Always, the characters will have the sensation that they are being observed. This is, of course, because they are.

Waiting at the door is a servant, a plump, balding little man in red and black livery. He will invite the characters into the house in the name of his master, Mario Giovanni, who has been expecting them. The very soul of courtesy, he will walk the characters into Mario's receiving room and then vanish.

Mario Giovanni

Clan: Giovanni

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1503 (born 1477)

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Hagglng 5, Melee 3, Music 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Finance 4, Investigation 1, Law 2, Linguistics 4, Occult 3, Politics 2

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Necromancy 4, Potence 3

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Herd 2, Mentor 3, Resources 2, Status 3

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

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 9

Image: A slender, black-haired man in subdued finery, Mario radiates a quiet air of danger. Everything he wears is obviously costly, but this is demonstrated through quality, not flash. Mario is clean shaven, and his hands are encased in black gloves.



Roleplaying Hints: Isn't Providence kind to send you hounds to send after your overly ambitious cousin? It must be Fate, and who are you to gainsay Fate? They are putty in your hands, but you must take care to mold them carefully. After all, if you work them too quickly they may break.

Mario is quite aware of Ambrogino's doings, and has no love for his cousin. It is not that Mario objects to Ambrogino's aims, but rather to the fact that it is Ambrogino who will receive the glory for accomplishing them. With that in mind, he intends to drop enough information for the characters to find Ambrogino's trail. With luck, they will regard Mario as either an ally or at least an information source, and they check back with him as to their movements in regards to his cousin.

When the characters are seated, Mario will introduce himself and apologize that his cousin, Ambrogino, whose duty it is to greet guests who are...kin, is away on a business trip. If asked about this, Mario will off-handedly refer to Basel, and possibly even drop in a comment about chasing those wild rumors of the Black Monastery again.

Assuming he hooks the characters' attention with this, Mario will proceed to spin a story as to how his poor cousin Ambrogino is "not quite right in the head," always looking through moldy old books and chasing off all over Europe to find standing stones or ghostly towers. His latest obsession is the so-called Black Monastery, which he's sought diligently for the last two months, and which he's bound to seek diligently until the next mania hits. It's a bit of a disgrace, Mario will confide, the way in which Ambrogino derelicts his duties to the family business in order to pursue his own interests. If the party seems particularly gullible, Mario will ask them a favor: to take a short trip north to look after poor Ambrogino. He'd go himself, you

see, but business calls and he has so many responsibilities. Of course, he does have a map of Ambrogino's route, and to ascertain his cousin's safety he'd be willing to pay quite well....

If the characters agree to accept Mario's offer, they will immediately be handed a map, as well as a large pouch of gold coin by a servant who seems to materialize in the room. Another will appear and whisper something to Mario, who will stand and apologize, claiming that business calls. The butler will show the characters out as Mario strides briskly into another room. The door will slam behind them with a sepulchral thud, and the players will find themselves on the chilly street once again.

At this point, the characters have the map to the monastery, as well as the wherewithal to hire transportation to the site. Of course, they are also beholden to Mario Giovanni, who will set wraiths upon the players to observe their progress. Included in the bag of coins are a good half-dozen that are Fetters for various wraiths in Mario's employ, meaning that the watching wraiths will be able to find the characters no matter where they go, so long as they keep the coins with them.

Should the characters not get the map from Mario Giovanni, their best bet is to hire Toby the mercenary (see the Three Lions Inn), who has some idea where the so-called Black Monastery actually is. Should they not hire Toby, they at least have Basel as a lead to go upon, and a few nights' diligent searching near that city will turn up the proper path to the monastery. There is only one bit of unfinished business: If the characters have already visited the Three Lions Inn, there is still the matter of the Masquerade-shattering rapist, Bernini.

Scene Four: The Warehouse

Only at the Giovanni warehouse do the men work all through the night; the other great houses' stores are quiet under the moon. Not so the one overseen by the legendary Bernini, whose speed at unloading a wagon is legend among the factors and taskmasters of Rome. When the characters approach the warehouse Bernini oversees, the man will be instantly recognizable as he stands atop a wagon full of boxes marked with the name of various spices, bellowing orders. Around him sweating, hustling men curse and shove as they off-load boxes with remarkable precision. The ballet of the unloading seems like it's about to fall into disaster at any moment, but somehow the imminent collisions are always averted by a hair's breadth.

If the characters approach Bernini, he will ignore them in favor of his work. If they persist, he will have several of his workers attempt to remove him. Should the characters mention Basel, Ambrogino or missing books, Bernini will demand that they leave and enforce his request with most of his workers. Conversely, if the characters subtly attract his attention, Bernini will notice that his visitors' breath does not steam in the night air. A long-term servant of the Giovanni, he is quite aware of what this means and will quickly find an excuse to find his way over to them.

The Mysterious Map

The map that Mario's servant produces is a detailed depiction of the route to the Black Monastery, located just outside of Basel. It also pinpoints Kindred-safe inns, known bandit hideaways and monasteries and churches that might pose a threat to a traveling party of Kindred. All in all, it is precisely what the characters need in order to continue their quest.

Of course, the detailed nature of the map does not jibe at all with Mario's story. If pressed on the issue, the necromancer will shrug diffidently and say that the parchment is a copy of the map that Ambrogino himself took on his travels, and that he thought it might serve as a starting point for their quest. If the players uncover the inconsistency between story and map after leaving Casa Giovanni, they may well come to the conclusion that they are being set up.

If the characters have met with Lucinda, they may know of Bernini's fixation with becoming Kindred and can use this desire as a means to extract information from him.

Bernini

Clan: Ghoul

Apparent Age: 31

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

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

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Drive (wagon) 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Melee 5, Security 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 2, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Potence 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Mentor 3, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Image: Bernini is short but powerfully muscled, with a black beard and piercing blue eyes. An earring dangles from his left ear; the weight appears to be a silvered baby's knucklebone. Wearing black and red, Bernini is heavily armed with both pistols and blades. He is expert in the use of either; managing a crew of ruffians he has to be.

Roleplaying Hints: They hold out the promise to you and they snatch it away. They offer you immortality and then tell you that you are not of the right blood, that you are not Family. You shall show them. You, who knows their secrets, you will find a way to use those secrets to achieve the eternal life they have denied you! No matter what it takes, the Embrace will be yours. When dealing with others, always look for the edge. If this means being more ruthless than the other fellow, so be it. Your driving ambition is to become Kindred, and you will do anything to achieve that end, but in the meanwhile there are cargoes to unload, bargains to strike and wenches to tumble. One eye is on eternity, yes, but the other is peeled and focused on the here and now.

Sample Laborer Statistics

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2

Skills: Firearms 2, Melee 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Occult 1

Willpower: 5

Image & Roleplaying Tips: The laborers are dressed in poor but reasonably intact clothing. They are honest workers, generally large physical specimens, and not terribly interested in anything other than unloading these damned crates. The workmen are armed with a variety of blunt weapons, knives and the occasional (but rare) pistol. There are a dozen of them, half of whom will be in the warehouse at any given time.

Bernini is desperate to become Kindred, and he knows that he is not of the right family to become Giovanni. As he has already downed Kindred blood while still remaining mortal, the factor is convinced that human blood is the way to the transformation; hence his repeated assaults on the prostitute Lucinda. Once he is off with the characters, he will begin trying to convince them of how much he deserves to be made Kindred. He will rattle off all of the depraved things he has done on Ambrogino's behalf, from obtaining small children off the streets for the master's "appetites" to slowly torturing men to death to make certain their deaths are agonizing enough to make them wraiths to recruiting friends as guards for Ambrogino's trips north, knowing that they are to be murdered. His treatment of Lucinda is his *piece de resistance*, and he will lovingly describe everything he has done to the prostitute. Bernini's tone is hungrily lascivious as he describes how he tore at the tender flesh of the girl's neck, the sweet copper taste of her blood and how exciting her screams were. The recitation ends with a sexual flush in his cheeks; if there are any female characters present Bernini will look at them with a violating animal hunger. He will look to the characters for confirmation of his behaviors, and if it is not forthcoming he will be exceedingly confused.

If the characters offer to Embrace him, he will give them literally anything they desire that is within his power: Ambrogino's location, what he took with him, how long ago he left the city (a scant two weeks), how many guards he had with him (four, barely enough to last the trip) and so on. If the characters renege on this bargain, he will become infuriated enough to attack the character who lied to him, and his men will attack with him. The characters are faced with the choice of engaging in a potential full-scale melee in the streets (in which they are heavily outnumbered) or fleeing and allowing the threat to the Masquerade roam free.

Should the characters kill Bernini, they will have not more than a single round to flee before the laborers notice what has happened to their factor and, using the tools at hand, move in to punish the characters. On the other hand, should the characters Embrace Bernini, his initial frenzy will take him right into the workers, there to wreak bloody mayhem. Regardless, the situation ends disastrously, with only the knowledge of their prey's identity and hiding place serving to give the players hope for victory.

Leaving The Eternal City

When the players finally do take themselves out of Rome, it is suggested that they hire a coach (or two) to take them north. Not only does a coach afford protection from the sun, so the journey can be continued by day, but it also confers upon its riders a certain assumptive status which the characters may find desirable. Coaches can be easily purchased or, if necessary, stolen; however a stolen coach is often easily recognizable if it has a coat of arms upon it, and will lead to unwanted attention from soldiers. While a coach is a slightly slower mode of transportation than mere horseback riding, the added benefits make it worthwhile.





Act Two: The Black Monastery

In this second act of *Blood and Fire*, the characters trace Ambrogino Giovanni to Switzerland and a mountain monastery where a group of Kindred elders have gathered to assist the fledgling Sabbat sect with the creation of Paths of Enlightenment. Upon their arrival at the enclave, the characters are informed that before the elders will discuss Giovanni, they must spend some time at the monastery learning about the elders' mission. During this time they may discover contradictions with what they have learned about the Sabbat, the Camarilla and vampire nature. While at the monastery, they encounter the person who has been tracing them since Italy and learn that Giovanni has given them the slip again, his trail leading to London.

Into the Old Country

In 1666, Switzerland looked forward to a little peace for a change. Over the past century, it had harbored some of the most passionate thinkers and artists of the age, but some equally passionate hatred and terror. Cities like Basel and Zurich enjoyed a rich intellectual flowering during the 16th century, providing homes to universities and luminaries like Erasmus and Hans Holbein.

But Switzerland suffered considerably from the religious struggles that rocked Europe during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In some places, serious divisions of religion and language occurred where Catholicism and Protestantism met and often clashed.

Worse, Switzerland also enjoyed the dubious distinction of being the geographic center of the witch hysteria of the 14th through the 16th centuries. Basel was

home to one well-known trial where a rooster was charged with witchcraft for laying an egg (such eggs were said to hatch the dreaded basilisk, a creature that could kill with a single look or breath); for said crime, the unfortunate fowl was burned at the stake. The witchfires raged out of control until 1662; while they slowed somewhat after that, the embers would not die out until 1728, with the last legal witch execution.

Characters traveling through Switzerland to the Sabbat enclave near Basel will have a number of things to worry about from the locals — religious fervor and the witchfires. Nowhere will it be more important or difficult to preserve the Masquerade than during the travel time.

Travel itself during this time, while somewhat improved from the days of *Last Supper*, was still not undertaken lightly. Bandits were still a problem, and now they wielded firearms in addition to swords and knives. Switzerland was also a dangerous country geographically. Mountain roads were frequently narrow and treacherous for a carriage, and threatened with rockslides. In the winter, many such roads became impassable until spring thaw, and any who dared the mountain roads on foot or horseback had to worry about sudden avalanches.

However, it was for just such reasons that the Hospice of St. Bernard was constructed. Located in the Swiss Alps and maintained by Augustinian monks, it is here that the famous St. Bernard dogs were first bred. This traveler's refuge could provide a possible stopping point for the characters, but the dogs may have objections to the presence of the undead. The monks may also have Faith that the Kindred could find objectionable.

The City of Basel

This beautiful medieval city is nestled between France and Germany, with the Rhine running through it and the Jura Mountains as its fence. It enjoyed relatively easy contact with Italy and was home to a fine university staffed by such luminaries as Erasmus. When the religious fervor of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation finally cooled, Basel was a predominately Catholic city. During the 17th century, it was known as a center of industry for the production of stockings, silk ribbon, tobacco and snuff, as well as home industries like woodcarving. The Rhine literally runs through the middle of it, allowing commerce and travel.

Basel in the World of Darkness is suffering from a serious lack of the supernatural, as the witch-hunts have driven away many shadow denizens. The Kindred population has been decimated by the witch-hunts; only 12 vampires exist here. Their "prince" is Brujah Manfred von Schorr, who is virtually a figurehead. The rest of the vampires defer to him out of necessity: Manfred is a fair leader, a skilled warrior, and has made some small headway with the area's Lupines.

And Lupines abound here; the surrounding terrain is glorious by their standards. A pack of eight has taken up residency and patrols the forest surrounding the monastery and the city. They are well aware of something unnatural in the monastery, but they are reluctant to confront 15 vampires. However, should someone venture out by himself...

A Grim Reminder

Some characters may well forget that the witchfires are only about four years cooled, and Switzerland was one of the true hotbeds of the witch trials. If a character forgets the Masquerade one too many times (and once is one too many), or even if the characters have been as good as gold, the Storyteller may wish to use the following scene as a means of reminding them just where they are.

As they pass through a smaller town on the way to the enclave, they see torches lighting the square and a mob clustering. Even if the characters don't want to stop, they will see this eventually: if not here, then in another town. Either way, they see two women: one a middle-aged, motherly looking matron; the other an old grandmother type. Both wear shifts and are barefoot, and look as if they were just yanked out of bed. The old woman needs to be helped along by a guard. Both are led to the center of town where two pyres and stakes await them. The elderly woman accepts her bonds quietly and begins to pray fervently as she is tied to the stake. The matron, however, screams and thrashes in terror, and it takes several men and a few slaps to get her to stop struggling long enough to be tied.

A grim-faced man wearing the robes of a judge reads off the charges: These women are hereby charged with witchcraft, for consorting with devils and demons, for the keeping of familiars, for certain unnatural acts, to wit — copulating with Satan and participating in his unholy rites, etc. If the

Storyteller wishes to embellish here, Sprenger and Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum*, Montague Summers' *History of Witchcraft* or Time-Life's *Witches and Witchcraft* will provide any number of "crimes" to attribute to these women.

The charges read, a priest declares them to be beyond God's mercy. The old woman bows her head and clasps her hands tightly, and the matron begins to sob hysterically. The villagers stare at them, some with dispassion, some with hate. Those characters who scan the crowd for other reactions may see a few who look sad or frightened. If they attempt to engage the villagers in conversation, they will be mostly ignored.

The pyres are lit. Those characters standing closer to the woodpiles will need to make Courage rolls (difficulty 8) to avoid Röttschreck. The smell of burning wood engulfs the characters, and the fires burn brightly for five minutes. Suddenly, the dry wood flares in the old woman's pyre, and flame begins to engulf her. She continues to pray frantically, but as the flames lick around her shift and legs, she turns her face upward and lets out a guttural scream of agony. She is soon joined by the matron, whose shrieks are ear-piercingly shrill. The smell of wood is now mixed with the odor of cooking flesh. If Self-Control or Courage rolls are needed, the difficulty is 8.

After 10 minutes of this hideous chorus of screams, the old woman's chin drops to her chest, and the flames cover her. The matron continues to shriek until the flames are around her chest; then she too falls silent. The crowd watches, many murmuring or praying softly as the bodies slowly blacken and lose their human shape. The roar of the fire is the loudest thing here.

If someone has managed to stay near the forefront all this time, he or she notices a young woman enveloped in a black cloak standing on the other side of the pyre. The woman holds her cloak shut with one hand, the hood mostly covering her face. Her expression is masklike, her grief betrayed by the hand tightly clutching her cloak. She meets the gaze of the character for a few seconds. A character who is continuing from *The Last Supper* will think her face seems vaguely familiar, like something seen in a dream. Suddenly the flames leap, and when they die down, she is gone. If the character wishes to pursue, he will not be able to get through the crowd fast enough to catch her. By the time he gets through the crowd, she is gone, vanished into the night that hems in the village.

The villagers disperse to their homes as the flames die down. The blackened bodies on the stakes look nothing like human beings as the bones slide down the charred stake. A character moved enough to approach the pyres will be accosted by one of the stern-faced village elders. He will inform the character that the women were witches, tried and found guilty by the letter of the law, and executed accordingly. He will not hear it if a female character attempts to argue otherwise, and may even turn and accuse her of witchcraft. A male character who attempts the same will be asked to shut his mouth, as he is not a member of this village. This should be suitable encouragement to leave.

Arriving in Town

Town information is added for those who may want to check here first, meet the prince or lodge their ghouls.

As mentioned before, Basel is a medieval city, with cobblestone streets and half-timber buildings. The evening streets are lit with the occasional lantern, although the wealthy who need to be out have lantern-bearers to light their way. Mortal activity has decreased considerably with nightfall, but taverns, inns and some households are still awake with laughter and snatches of conversation from behind the shuttered windows.

Those wishing to ask after booksellers or dealers of antiquities will be directed to four places, nearly all of which are closed for the evening. The exception is along the Rhine in the northern half of the town. This news is given with a distinctly ill-at-ease expression and quick over-the-shoulder glances.

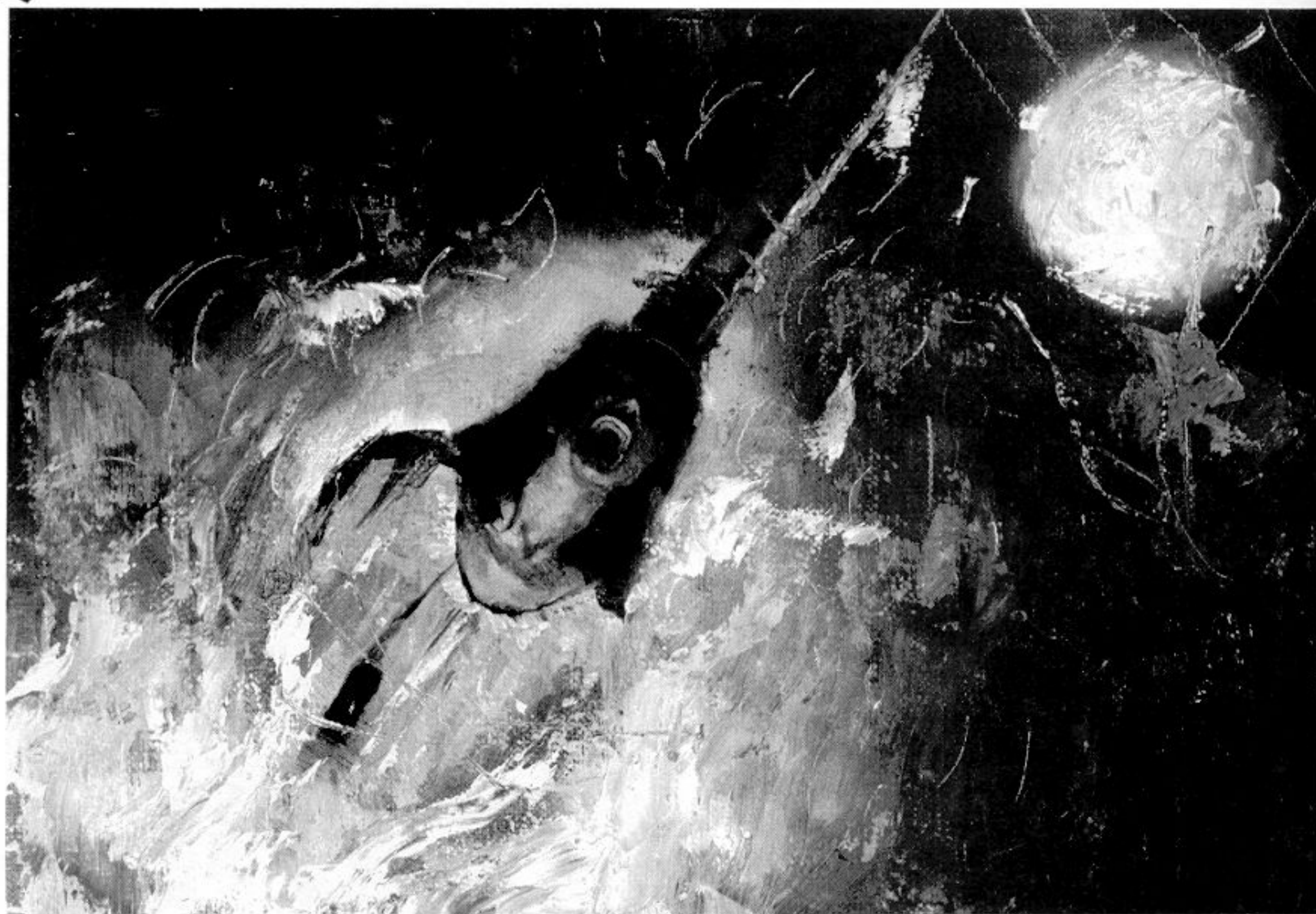
Said book shop is run by Herr Dieter Frankel, a Nosferatu. His shop door is locked, but a faint candle-glow from inside suggests someone is still about. After some persistent knocking, Dieter will be motivated to grumble to the door and demand, "What do you want? Who sent you?" (He is wearing Mask of 1000 Faces). After listening to their answers (hopefully polite ones) and checking their vampire natures through Auspex, he lets them in and closes the door behind them.

Dieter is a curmudgeonly old cuss who answers with politeness only when given in kind...maybe. He looks like an old man in dressing gown and slippers. A disk around his neck bears the heraldic device of a black rose being drawn through a golden bow. He received a written inquiry from Italy's Giovanni concerning the Chaldean language, but he had to decline on the basis that he did not deal with that language. (He may get sidetracked expounding on his own work with Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but will get back on track if reminded.) Since then, there have been no other inquiries. Have the characters introduced themselves to Prince Manfred von Schorr down at the Black Coq? It doesn't matter if they're just passing through, but it's a good idea, what with the Lupines and such. If the Black Monastery is mentioned, Dieter orders them out of his shop.

The Black Coq is a noisy, smoky tavern, with pipes and rowdy evening gambols greeting the characters. The tavernkeeper will point Manfred out if asked, indicating the shadowed back area.

The noise level seems to diminish considerably in Manfred's presence. A tall, thin man with a tired, bearded face, he sits with his back to the wall, surrounded by three of his "court": two men and a young woman in blue, all wearing the same disk as Dieter. The men will block access to Manfred until the characters state their business. He acknowledges their introductions and inquires as to their business. Manfred does not know of a Giovanni passing through here, nor is it his business. He's too busy keeping tabs on the Lupine activity, which he warns is more brisk than usual. Whatever's going on up in that "Black Monastery" has the werewolves skittish and looking for targets. If





the characters indicate they're going that way, he answers, "If any of them ever deign to come out of their ivory tower and walk among the rest of us, please convey to them that they should introduce themselves post haste, or I cannot be responsible for what happens."

Elysiums are designated as the University, all churches and the Black Coq. Also, the Eagle and Child Inn is to be avoided, as those Lupines who venture into town go there. The tavernkeeper is his ghoul, and the inn across the street is ghoul housing. Unless the characters have anything else pertinent, the interview is at an end.

Fox Hunt

Between Basel and the monastery, the characters hear the sounds of baying dogs and whinnying horses. A man is spotted on the edge of the road, pale and terrified, gasping for breath. His clothes are torn and mud-spattered. He attempts to flag down the characters' carriage, screaming, "For love of God and pity's sake, help me!", but the coachman does not stop, even if the characters order him. Seeing that's he's not going to get help here, the man takes off running again, crosses the road and disappears into the forest.

A few yards up the road, a cloaked figure on horseback approaches, and the coachman stops. The figure asks in a low female voice, "How far back did you see him?"

The coachman answers promptly. If the characters attempt to interject verbally, they will be ignored. *Auspex* or *Heightened Senses* reveals that the woman is *Kindred*, with a magnificent aura of green and purple. Fine black threads seem to snake through it. The woman trots beside the coach to get a good look at the group. Her face is too deep in her hood to be seen, and she will not answer any questions. Her long black cloak is trimmed with crimson cutwork that looks like flames licking at the edges of the garment.

Satisfied with the information, the woman turns her horse and crosses the road to the forest, where she spurs the animal into a gallop. The sound of a huntsman's horn echoes distantly as the coach starts to move again. More riders cross the road behind the coach, following the sound. One is a man in fancy, night-blue hunting gear, followed by another rider in "highwayman" clothes, most of his face muffled beneath a scarlet silk scarf. Both are *Kindred*.

The characters, if they saw the riders pass behind them, will recognize Lord Alexandre, and Julian Sanders respectively when they reach the enclave, mostly by that duo's fancy gear. The speaker was Vadislava, recognizable by her distinctive cloak.

After this, the rest of the journey will be uneventful as the characters pass through the forest and into the foothills of the Jura Mountains.

Arrival

The coach will stop about halfway up the mountain, as the road has become too dark to traverse safely. At the same time, characters see a glow from approaching lanterns, and six men walk down the path, all carrying lanterns and armed with swords. Three wear black and green, the others scarlet and black blazoned with a silver fish. The men state that they have been sent by the masters of the monastery, to guide the characters. The characters will have to walk from here, as this is the best way up the mountain. They are assured their luggage will follow, and the men set off back up the road.

The wind whines eerily at this altitude, and the late autumn night is full of sweet, chilly air. The men are silent and do not respond to questions about Giovanni except to say that Lady Meridie will explain everything. At that point, the wind seems to moan, suspiciously like a low howl. The men in scarlet and black cross themselves quickly, but do not say what they heard. The Storyteller should do her utmost to convey that the characters are going into very unfamiliar, very scary territory. The entire trip takes about 20 minutes walking time.

The monastery looms on an Alpine crag, gates thrown open despite the Lupine threat. A dry fountain carved to look like a woman in Greek garments stands in the middle of the courtyard. As the characters approach the front door, a woman in a long green cloak steps out and stands at the top of the stairs. This is Lady Meridie de Chancie, one of the leaders of the elders. Her green eyes study the group intently. Her voice is level and pleasant. "I was wondering when you would arrive. Vadislava mentioned that there was a group of our kind on the road, and out here they can only be going one place."

If the characters begin their questions immediately, or attempt to leap right into searching for Giovanni, Meridie steps into their way and speaks in the same measured tones. She never overreacts or shows any sign that she is being ruffled. "Urgency should never be a reason for one to forget his manners. Is it not meet that first that you should introduce yourselves before you begin tearing up our house?"

If necessary, she will continue browbeating the characters about manners until they comply. The balky will be restrained by one of the escorts. When everyone is settled, Meridie leads them into the monastery.

The Monastery

The compound of the elders is a former Augustine monastery, similar to its more famous brethren, the Hospice of St. Bernard. Built to withstand the harsh winters, it looks more like a fortress than a monastery, taking advantage of the terrain to serve as a first means of defense. The place has been further fortified by ghoulish guards.

Three entrances lead into the monastery. The first is the front gate, wide enough to admit a coach, where ends the mountain road. Beyond the gate is a wide courtyard with the monastery on one side, a stable for animals and a chapel. The second entrance was built to ensure escape during siege and can only be traversed on foot. A path diverges from the main road, leading through some treacherous ground before reaching an ironwork gate set into the rock face below the west facing of the monastery. This is kept locked at all times. The tunnel leads below the mountains and up into the monastery proper, where travelers exit through a vast, empty wine cask. The third entrance is found on the north facing, another escape route in times of war. This tunnel is also secured with a locked gate and ends below the chapel in the ossuary.

Inside the walls, one finds a comfortable, if austere, setting. The stable houses a number of horses, all of very fine breed and obviously expensive, and a couple of pack mules. Across the courtyard is the chapel, a simple structure with few fancies on the outside. Beside the chapel rests the main building.

This severe-looking structure has been partially renovated to facilitate better living conditions. Originally housing over 30 monks, it now serves as the temporary headquarters of the new Sabbat sect. There is no second floor, only a ground floor and cellars below it. On the ground floor are the main hall, the private chambers of the various elders, a small dormitory for guests, another for ghouls, the library and a number of unused rooms. Any windows are shielded with bolted shutters and thick black draperies. The monastery was quite large, and the rooms being used now are clustered in one portion, leaving the rest unused.

Ghouls are guards and servants and nothing more. Any ghouls arriving with the characters will either be sent back to Basel or told to stay in the ghoulish dormitory. Socializing with ghouls is frowned upon by most *antitribu*, while Sabbat clans outright forbid it and deride anyone foolish enough to be caught doing so.

Down in the subterranean portion is a wine cellar with a number of dusty bottles and clay jugs corked and sealed. These contain wines, most of them left over from the monks' departure. Also, there are many earthenware jugs, much newer looking and sealed tightly. These are filled with blood with some strange weed floating in it (Perception + Herbalism, difficulty 8, to figure out it's burdock). A few chambers, which might have been root cellars and pantries during the monastery's use, are now mostly empty. One is being used by Vadislava as her "workroom"; another is used by Lord Mendel as a ritual chamber; and the third, in the bowels of the earth, is being used by Intisar for her own purposes.

The Chapel

Simple in taste and design, the chapel has little in the way of the fancies and niceties of the Gothic or Renaissance churches. Rough wooden benches, some broken, are all that remain of the pews. The stone altar is still intact and covered with a rotting cloth. There are some suspicious-looking stains on the cloth, too old to identify. The leaded glass windows have remained remarkably intact, but allow little light into the chapel. Someone has thrown a rock through the large window over the door, and moonlight filters through to a single pool on the floor. The Faith in here is old, but there is enough residue to cause discomfort to the very monstrous (roll Willpower, difficulty 9).

Below the sanctuary is the ossuary. Here, neat piles of bones from monks long dead rest in their own jars and cubbyholes, with the most grisly prize saved for last — a pyramidal stack of cleaned and polished skulls resting in the corner. A wooden door bound with iron is in the back of the crypt. This is the third entrance described above.

Meeting with the Elders

A ghoul takes the characters' cloaks, and Meridie leads them into the main chamber.

Said chamber is large and lit primarily by a fireplace, with a few candelabras near those reading or otherwise engaged. The infrequent light only serves to deepen the pools of shadow in between. A few fraying but still splendid tapestries showing Esther and Asherus cover the bare walls. The furniture runs the gamut from Italian Renaissance to Elizabethan to the new Baroque styling.

Most of the elders are present, absorbed in their own tasks until they hear the characters come in. Melisande snaps open her fan and gazes over the edge at each one in turn. Master Frazier, absorbed in a book, slips a finger in to mark his place frankly appraises them. Intisar is reclining on cushions near Melisande, whereupon she rises unhurriedly to look at the characters. Veradis slips out from the shadows behind her, her face impassive unless she spots an obviously Assamite character. Her stony expression flickers over him before moving on.

"Where are the others?" asks Meridie.

As if to answer her, Theron comes rushing in like a freight train and bounces into a chair, turns around kneeling on the seat, and stares at the characters with wild pop-eyes. "So who are these fools?" he demands.

"They are brethren of ours and guests," Meridie replies without missing a beat. "Where are Mendel and Mateusz?"

"The library, I think," says Intisar. "They will not hear you from down here."

"And the rest of them?"

Melisande closes the fan. "Out hunting. They were going to see what prey they could scare up on the other side of the river."

From outside echoes a clatter of hooves and a loud male voice singing a bawdy song. A door bangs open from farther down the hall, and a group of vampires clad in hunting gear strides in. Those who looked out the carriage windows recognize the party from the road. Lord Alexandre enters first, wearing night-blue gear and twitching off his gloves. He does not pay the characters much attention beyond a glance. Julian, the singer, springs in, checks out the characters in a moment and takes the hand of the nearest lady character to kiss.

Vadislava does not enter farther than the door. Characters will recognize her from the cutwork around the borders of her cloak. She leans against the door frame, taking in the whole thing with eyes as dark as flint. Haakon passes her, wearing rougher peasant garb in comparison to the rich clothes of the others.

Meridie turns to the characters and says, "As I said when I learned of your travels, those of our kind on this road have only one destination. Welcome to the Black Monastery."

The name should send a ripple through those "in the know." Rumors of an enclave of vampires up in the hinterlands have been rife, but no one really knew pertinent facts. Now the characters are about to find out.

If one of the characters blurts out the above information, the room chills a little. Alexandre replies, "It would seem our reputation precedes us then. Tell me, little one, what do you know of us?"

Any answer from the characters brings scattered chuckles from the elders. Alexandre smiles at Meridie, "Then our secret is safe for now. Still, you appear to have an unfair advantage — you know something of us, and we know nothing of you. I should like to remedy this."

If no answers are forthcoming immediately, he gets impatient. "Oh, come, come! Surely there must be some reason for you to be traveling to our little enclave. One does not risk the Lupines out of sheer curiosity."

Those who tell him about following Giovanni's trail to this place are answered with collective confusion. "Say who?"

Demands to be allowed to search the place are met with disdain by Alexandre. "And just what variety of fool do you take me for? Do you really think that I would allow you to come barging into my house like highwaymen, with apologies to Master Sanders—" he nods sardonically at Julian, "—to simply search and then leave, without having ever discerned what prize you've truly passed over?"

The curious are rebuffed with more such barbs until he "agrees" to tell them outright what he has been intimating, with assistance from Meridie.

The group present are nearly entirely elders of the Sabbat sect, the exceptions being Meridie, Frazier and Intisar. True, the Sabbat wars are over, but the sect is in need of help. In unshackling themselves from both Camarilla and Masquerade, the sect is discovering how terribly easy it is to fall prey to the Beast. The call went out for a group of Sabbat

with the will and talent to find new ways for the Sabbat to avoid the insanity of the Beast without falling to the stifling chains of the Camarilla.

Alexandre notes that each side has something the other would like. The elders have information on Giovanni; the characters have fresh new voices and thoughts. He proposes an exchange: Contribute to their mission, and they will contribute to the characters' knowledge. This is his first, last and only offer.

The characters can refuse and attempt to barge their way through, but Julian, Veradis, Vadislava, Alexandre and Haakon are all fighters of some skill and will make hash of them without second thought. The characters can attempt to hold out, but things will grind to a stalemate.

Once the characters agree to see things Alexandre's way, house rules are laid down: No ghouls are to be tampered with without permission from its master; no diablerie (sharing, yes; cannibalism, no); any grievances are settled peacefully between the parties or mediated by him and Meridie; any dueling is done in the courtyard.

The matter is sealed with a Sabbat "prayer," as Vadislava calls on Caine to witness their strivings that all may find what they seek, "...even if they do not yet know they seek it." She stands reverently for a moment in silence before uttering, "Caine hears us, and we are blessed." A Vaulderie may be passed among the Sabbat also.

Group Dynamics

The Sabbat of the group have formed a temporary pack among themselves while at work here. They perform the Vaulderie just as any other pack, and are equally close-knit. A character who arouses the ire of one will incur the wrath of the rest. The non-Sabbat characters tend to cluster among themselves for similar reasons, although they would never call it a pack. Despite the friction among certain members concerning someone's competency or ideology, things rarely come to blows. The attempt here is for egalitarianism in the interests of productivity, which succeeds...some of the time. The educated, courtly or sharp-witted engage in exchanging verbal zingers, as is the fashion of the times. A character who can keep up will certainly be drawn further into their circle.

Lady Meridie's Garden

Lady Meridie will gravitate toward a character who seems intelligent and appears to have a genuine interest in the business of the enclave. She will meet up with her in the hall not long after rising, and invite the character to take the evening's refreshment in the old garden. If the character begs off for other business, she will simply reschedule it for later.

The garden is old and somewhat unkempt, but one corner appears to have been recently trimmed and salvaged. One bush is a shrub variety of rose, and a few blossoms still cling, emitting a light scent. Meridie offers the character a seat on a nearby stone bench and pours out blood from an earthenware pitcher into goblets. The vintage does not taste



Storyteller Notes

The various encounters staged between the Sabbat elders and the characters are intended to be thought-provoking springboards for roleplaying and introspection on the characters' parts. The Storyteller and any assistants are advised to go after this with gusto. Also, the various characters are not limited to their own clanmates by any means; additional notes are made as to what type of characters the elders may look for if their own clans are not represented. And as always, feel free to use different scenes with different clans or to make up a scene if there is not one to your liking.

What's to keep the characters at the monastery? For starters, they're out in the Jura Mountains, surrounded by wilderness. While Basel is nearby, it's not quite close enough to travel freely back and forth. And in between Basel and the monastery lie the woods, and its indigenous Lupine pack.

If the characters do wander out into the wilderness, sic the Lupines on them. Someone may come to the characters' rescue if they scream loud enough. Of course, if they survive, they are in deeper debt with the Sabbat.

The Sabbat intend to hold very stringently to their exchange. Those who attempt to circumvent it are met by the threats in "Something in the Shadows...".

The forthcoming harrowings are explained as a means to an end. Those nervous about being separated from the group are told that one-on-one really works best for this sort of thing.

at all stale or foul, although there is a hint of some plant (burdock, used in the Preserve Blood ritual). Meridie proposes a toast "to our success," and drinks. After some polite small talk, she steers the conversation toward the enclave.

"How much did you know of us before you came?" she begins. It is unlikely that the character knows much beyond the facts that a group of Kindred have set up shop here. "I saw how disturbed you were at the terms of the exchange. Would I be correct in suspecting that much of this comes from ignorance?" If the character says yes, Meridie immediately launches into the section below. If the character says no, Meridie asks what exactly she does know, so she doesn't cover old ground, and tailors her words accordingly.

"The Camarilla is so interested in maintaining its precious humanity that it frequently embraces humanity's flaws as well as its virtues. Humankind fears what it does not

understand. So it is with the Camarilla. If they but understood our mission and that of the Sabbat, perhaps they would be less inclined to war with us. I am considered Camarilla because I have not taken the Sabbat's Creation Rites, but I do not serve the sect's interests. I was requested to come at the invitation of certain allies and elders who felt that my talents would be of use during this time.

"In seeking to understand the Beast, in shucking Humanity as the Sabbat have done, the Beast is given freer rein. We do not seek to shackle the Beast, merely to place it on the appropriate leash to ensure that we do not lose our intellect, our passion, our essence, to mindless animalistic urges. If the Camarilla has anything to fear from us, it is that we are right. The Sabbat is perceived as evil largely due to bad propaganda... although those like Vasilava do little to enhance our reputation."

She continues in similar vein, describing the Camarilla as being foolish, cowardly and unwilling to examine what made them what they are. Meridie believes that the Beast can be harnessed and its passion channeled into personal strength of soul, provided it has the right means. To this end, the cardinals of the Sabbat made an open call that any with the wisdom and strength to undertake the task meet in Switzerland at this monastery to create such means for the Beast. Following the work of their forebears, they chose to envision the "harness" as a road, as means for traveling beyond the barriers of sheer mindless bestiality or paralyzing fear of it.

"Our discussions have been...lively, concerning the means to the end of the road," Meridie remarks with a wry smile. "Haakon is certain that peace can be found in our Beast's connections with the animals from whence it sprung, while Lord Alexandre believes that power, harsh enforcement of it and refusal of frailty is a muzzle for the braying soul." If pressed about her own beliefs, she will demur, but a patient character or one who suggests Meridie has no opinion of her own garners the answer, "I have listened to all, and find Haakon's beliefs to be most sympathetic to my own. However, all are valid in their own way."

Now Meridie attempts to learn about the character's thoughts on the Sabbat here, her thoughts on the Camarilla and authority, her thoughts on the nature of the Beast, God, good and evil. In so doing she employs a Socratic, question-for-question method. For troupe play, such a conversation would be a good time to hand Meridie off to another player.

If the character shows some leanings toward notions of free will, open thought or moral relativism, Meridie springs this question when the character is unlikely to be thinking about it: "Would you stay, given the chance?"

Meridie seeks a blurt-out answer. If the character hesitates, Meridie asks her to be honest, as she has been. If the character says "yes," Meridie nods and says, "Then perhaps you should learn a little more. I suggest you visit the library. Ask for the Red Book of Westmarch. It may help to clear up some of your questions. If you need to talk, you know where to find me."

If the character is ambivalent, perhaps over conflicts of completing the mission, Meridie suggests, "Think on it. The Sabbat hold freedom in high esteem, and the freedom of choice is one we all, no matter our sect, value most highly. Perhaps read the Red Book of Westmarch — you will find it in the library. We would certainly understand if you felt you had to complete your mission. Come to me if you have questions."

If the character says no, Meridie probes further, trying to understand what the character objects to and pointing out inconsistencies or fears based on falsehood. She suggests that her reasons may bear deeper examining: "Is it our passion, or your own which frightens you?"

She pauses to look up at the night sky and determines from the stars that it's time for a meeting she planned with Lady Intisar. She excuses herself and departs.

The Red Book of Westmarch

This large book, bound in tooled red leather, is a handwritten account of the Sabbat, written by Robert of Westmarch, Ventrue *antitribu*. It describes his own rebellion against his elder, gives an account of his Creation Rites, and provides descriptions of Jyhads he has fought in and impressions of the Camarilla and vampires in general. Robert has little respect for the elders, deviates from his original points into diatribes against the Camarilla, and occasionally does not finish stories; but the historical information is credible in regard to *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*, albeit with a strong Sabbat slant.

Campaigns for Marseilles, Bremen, Krakow, Lisbon and Cardiff are described in florid language, extolling the Sabbat as Crusaders, while the current retreat to Sweden is written with an eye toward viewing the Sabbat as wolves lying in wait.

Master Frazier's Chamber

Master Frazier has performed espionage for many cliques, and those characters who move in lower-nobility circles (barons, counts) or merchant guilds may recognize him. He also has an excellent memory and may recognize a character from a prior encounter, even if the character doesn't remember him (in case there are no Ventrue or the Storyteller does not like a particular clan harrowing).

Master Frazier invites the Ventrue character or his remembered acquaintance out for a little falconry. He carries a hooded, white goshawk, while a ghoul servant follows with a second hooded peregrine. If the character does not have the Falconry Skill, he can make an attempt to work with his bird by rolling Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 9; three successes for the bird to launch and three for return). If the character is female and having difficulty with her bird, Frazier will make a polite venture of taking her arm to demonstrate the proper launch, flirting in courtly fashion.

Talk falls into the current state of Europe, how things are moving along in trade, and into the character's own current affairs. Frazier's opinions on politics are strongly but never profanely voiced, especially in the presence of a lady,





and he jokes frequently. After some time of this, he invites the character to his chambers for a glass.

Frazier's chambers are elegantly spartan, hung with a number of tapestries. As he pours out the blood, he remarks, "If one is going to be brilliant, like any fine jewel, one needs the proper setting." If asked why is he here, he replies, "One must answer the call to duty, my friend. The Sabbat had a need, and I offered to fill it. Having walked on both sides of the fence, I have found I would rather be on this side, but with one eye toward hopping over if need be." He describes his involvement with events as being primarily business acumen — he wished to find out what the Sabbat elders were planning to do, not so much concerning the Beast, but how were they going to conduct business afterward. "I found there to be a frightful lack of discussion of honor. Rabble like that Scarlet Pumpnickle, Julian Sanders, are apparently quite content to run roughshod across the terrain without a thought for order of any kind. While I can respect their wish for freedom, this does not and should not preclude the need for someone with a head on their shoulders."

If someone chooses to indicate Lord Alexandre at this point, Frazier's reaction is not complimentary. He rails at Alexandre as a blue-blooded hypocrite who hasn't the first idea of nobility and who only respects Machiavellian power. "Someone should take the time to inform him, if he ever lets down his nose from the clouds, that this world is not his chessboard. He has his own honor, but I do not want his kind."

He will be unlikely, if at all, to ask the character questions about conversion to the Sabbat. If the character brings it up, Frazier is noncommittal, saying the current options do not favor conversion. "However, I am not opposed to a clearly thought-out decision of such a personal nature, and while the rest of the clan might consider it a blasphemy on my part, I would heartily support any such decision on your part."

A Taste of Blood

Lord Alexandre will gravitate toward a character of noble blood if there are no Lasombra in the party, or may settle for one who has the hallmarks of nobility but no pedigree. Alexandre chooses a location where they can have any length of uninterrupted time. This may be in his chambers or in one of the less-traveled halls.

Alexandre engages the character in conversation on current politics, or perhaps a game of chess, and things seem to be going smoothly. At some point, he begins to draw the character into a discussion of the enclave. At what would seem a strange place in the conversation to do so, he holds out his hand and asks, "Your hand, milady, if I may?" If the character places her hand in his, Alexandre kisses the back and palm, places another kiss on the wrist...and bites so quickly that the character has no time to pull away. He drinks about one swallow's worth.

If the character is frightened or reacts badly, he closes the wound and apologizes with a half-concealed look of disappointment. If she is fascinated or otherwise unrepulsed, Alexandre cradles her bleeding wrist, watching the blood bead up like rubies, and murmurs, "Pardon my forwardness, milady. You seem so very at ease that I find myself forgetting that you are not one of us."

He closes the wound, and offers his own wrist with, "If you like..." If the character refuses, Alexandre simply nods and answers, "As you will," but will ask why. If the character bites, he reacts with subtle pleasure, an indrawn hiss of breath and closed eyes, but nothing more overt. The blood stings the tongue a little, and the character can taste something like different spices running through it, little darts and hints of flavor. If the character notices this or reacts with pleasure to the taste, Alexandre replies, "That is the taste of the Vaulderie, my dear. The blood of my brothers and sisters runs through me as surely as my own courses through them. Exciting, is it not? Imagine it, if you can. Bound to your own coterie as surely as if you were family, yet without the slavery of chance or Blood Bond. No child may choose her parents or siblings, yet they are family by mere dint of blood. We are family both by blood and by choice. No Regnant, no Thrall, no masters and slaves. Only a loyal band of brothers and sisters who will stand by you until the Gehenna itself ends. Would you like that?"

Should the character become nervous about where the discussion is heading or wish to leave, Alexandre will catch her arm for a moment. "Do think on it," he whispers, and releases her. She may leave without hindrance.

If the character is Blood Bound, Alexandre will taste it in her blood. He looks up, eyes bright in the low-lit chamber, mild interest in his face. "You are Bound, my dear. I can taste it. May I ask to whom?"

Any struggle by the character to give a name or to indicate her true feelings about the Bond (she needs to spend a Willpower point to force herself through the Bond) will see Alexandre grow grim, his eyes dark with rage. His voice is soft as he brushes her cheek. "Oh, my poor childe, what have they done to you? Such monsters... The Vinculum is too sacred to be used as a shackle of the spirit." As his hand comes away, he clenches his fist tightly, perhaps drawing blood from his palm.

If the Bond was made willingly, Alexandre will not believe it, and the character may need to do some hard persuading to convince him otherwise. After listening, he replies, "If it was truly made willingly, then what person would willingly shackle herself to someone who is left free to hold the chains? That is the hound putting himself on a leash, and my dear, you are no mere animal."

If the character is willing or interested, Alexandre will continue for some time to describe pack bonds, using the character as an example of how things are *not* done in the Sabbat. This may potentially spin off into further roleplaying,

so the Storyteller should consider how she wishes to handle this. She may hand Alexandre off to a troupe player, have Alexandre arrange for a second meeting (a one-on-one player session) or simply cut things off for now. A clock chimes, and Alexandre becomes aware of the time. "Forgive me, but there are matters I must see to before the end of the night. Think on what I have said. Perhaps we shall meet again?"

A character who insists on following and continuing will be dismissed with a polite but firm, "No, my sister, not now. I insist that you first give what I have said some thought. There will be time for questions later."

As a sidenote: If the character is Bound to another member of the party, Alexandre will make the Regnant's life...unpleasant, for a while. He may use his Obtenebration to sneak up on the offender and verbally harangue him as a "slavedriver" and "the one who would be Beast." He may demand the circumstances behind the Bond and threaten that perhaps he should see how life is on the leash.

Where Do Angels Come From?

Lady Melisande makes friends with a Toreador character or one who attracts her attention through physical beauty, sparkling conversation or courtly manners. She suggests they retire to her chambers for private conversation (Master Frazier and Lord Alexandre are at it again about honor down in the main chamber).

Her chambers are quite luxurious for the surroundings, hung in rich burgundy velvets with fine wood furniture. She offers blood in glass goblets and proposes a toast: "To Love and Beauty!"

Melisande's early conversation revolves around the courts of England and France, current arts (opera is her favorite subject) or gossip on the elders. Melisande is a skilled courtier, versed in etiquette and the nuances of reading body language. She offers very few clues concerning herself, well aware that a snap of a fan at a certain crucial moment or an ill-timed smile may mean the difference

Desire and Vampires

For vampires, the taste of blood and the Kiss replace desire as humans know it. Thus, a male vampire might choose to drink from another male vampire without connotations of homosexuality. The ecstasy is in the Kiss and taste, giving pleasure to both vessel and drinker. For the Sabbat, drinking from each other is seen as strengthening the ties between each other. The result is a bond like that of siblings or lovers, but even stronger.

Scenes such as Lord Alexandre's or Melisande's that hinge so highly on this blood-drinking or courtly flirting do not require the player characters involved to be of the opposite sex. Things can be just as highly charged (even more so) with same-sex characters.

between success and disaster. On the other hand, she watches the other character's body language like a hawk. The character who is her guest should take care to describe what she is doing while talking, such as rustling a fan, fingering a handkerchief or making facial expressions.

Melisande then moves the conversation into talk about pleasure and hedonism. Where does pleasure cross the line into hedonism, if at all? What constitutes pleasure, and what determines when pleasure is no longer so pleasurable? Melisande is a firm adherent of the belief that without pleasure, life is worthless. Likewise, she believes that nothing is inherently evil, only perceived as such. Because of this, no form of pleasure is inherently evil, and that includes feeding on mortals or flexing one's vampiric powers on mortals. She will have little time for one who argues otherwise, calling her the Baroque equivalent of "square." One who does agree with her will have a jolly time of it, as she asks the character what sorts of pleasures she indulges in. Her pet delights are angels, opera and how to combine the two. The castrati are a favorite point of reference for both.

At various points during the talk, Melisande offers different diversions/pleasures for the character to sample, such as art, music (she has four instruments — lute, harp, harpsichord and viol), physical beauty (she calls in four ghouls of both sexes, all strikingly beautiful), the Kiss (the character may select the ghoul), pain (self-inflicted, given to a ghoul or inflicted by another), poetry (Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson) or something more cerebral. As the discussion progresses, Melisande's tastes start to run a little to the dark side, including what in modern times would be called Gothic and sadomasochistic.

At some point, Vadislava enters, carrying a small sack. She presents it to Melisande, claiming that she found it while hunting. Melisande seems delighted with the gift, which seems to be an unremarkable sack with nothing in it, and invites the character to share her joy.

The Tzimisce wishes good fortune and leaves. As she departs, Vadislava turns just enough to catch the character's eye. She smiles lightly, and her expression is a skin-crawling, "Now you're going to get it."

As the door closes, a muffled catlike noise rises from the bag. Melisande quickly opens the sack and begins to murmur platitudes like, "It's all right, darling. What a precious little love!" Slowly a blond head emerges, and a little girl of about six years looks up with dazed blue eyes. She is very pretty, with a cherubic face. Melisande picks her up and begins to comfort her, occasionally feeding her sweets and cooing to her. The little girl does not answer questions at first, apparently too stunned by the change in surroundings. After a few minutes, the ice partially thaws, and she begins to cry that she wants her mama. Melisande merely answers, "But, darling, your mama's in heaven now. She went to be an angel."

Abruptly, she turns to the character and says, "Now who does this precious one remind you of? Isn't she a perfect little angel?" If the character voices any objections or demands to know what Melisande plans to do with the child, she replies,

"Oh, stop it! All I want to do is love her. Is there anything wrong with that? What does one do when you're all alone up here with no one to love?" She begins caressing the child's hair, and her expression seems to grow more thoughtful, as if seeing something beyond normal sight.

Melisande sits down on the couch with the child, reiterates that her mother is now an angel and begins to ask her what she knows about angels. The answers are typically childish, such as angels being people who live in Heaven who wear long white robes and the like. The little girl begins to cuddle closer to Melisande, despite her shivering, her thumb slipping into her mouth. She is not at ease, but seems to be merely accepting the situation. As the child talks, Melisande's gaze seems to travel even farther.

If the character attempts to wrest the child from Melisande, the vampire will pull away from her and summon ghouls to "bounce" the offender. As the character is dragged away, she shrieks, "She is my angel! Find your own, spiteful wretch!"

If the character does not intervene or becomes interested in the exchange, Melisande invites her to join the conversation by asking, "What do you think the angels say?" or some such.

When she is satisfied with the child's answers about angels, Melisande kisses her curls and whispers, "Would you like to be an angel?"

The little girl nods silently. Melisande slowly strips the child to her shift, whispering that since angels only wear long white gowns (the little girl's very words), then she won't need her stockings, her shoes, her pinafore. Each article of clothing is thrown into the fireplace. This done, she cuddles the child close, singing sweetly about flying away to Heaven. As the song winds down, she begins to trail kisses down the child's face, ending at the throat, where she bites and drinks. The child whimpers with pain, but Melisande rocks her throughout the drinking.

As the last blood leaves the child's body, Melisande whispers, "Now fly away." As if her soul is released at that moment, the little girl goes limp in Melisande's arms.

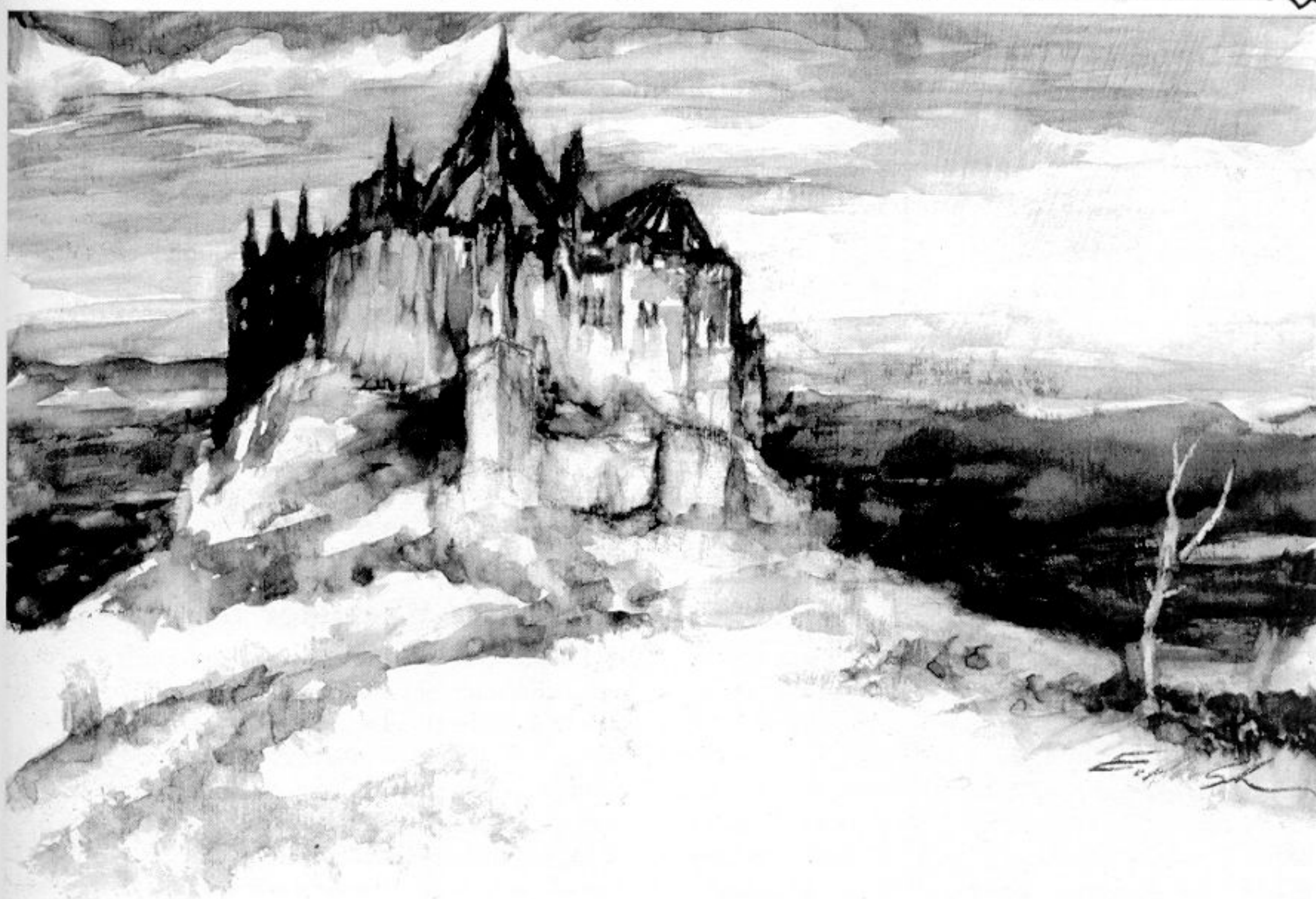
Melisande looks up at the character with a smile. "All should create something to give to this world. I create angels."

Many a Quaint and Curious Volume...

One or more characters is bound to go looking for the library in the hopes of speeding things along or under pretext of finding information. In this warren of corridors and unmarked doorways, such a search could take a while, not to mention giving the character a view of various chambers. Optionally, the Storyteller might have him glimpse one or two encounters between the party and various enclave residents.

At last, the character comes upon a set of large double doors, with the words "Illuminatus Veritas Domine" in the center of each. After a mighty tug on the brass ring handles, the doors creak open.

The library is a jumble of large, illuminated books, folios of print works, scrolls and various scribbled notes. Large, wax-hung candelabras adorn shadowy corners, and a number of



old copying desks line the walls. The massive shelves are mostly empty, except at eye-level and waist-level. The smells of dust, parchment and ink permeate the air.

A pool of dim light glows over one corner of the mounds of books jumbled on the table. An investigation finds Lord Mendel behind one of the old copying desks, with an illuminated book in front of him (sharp eyes will notice the name Meridie de Chancie), several candles hovering in the air around him like fireflies, and doing his best not to be noticed. Realizing he has been “caught,” he sizes up the character. “Who let you in here? I don’t remember seeing you around here before.” (Remember, Mendel did not meet the characters when they arrived. The Storyteller may wish to cobble a quick previous introduction for him if she wants him to dive straight into the harrowing.)

The character may tell Mendel that he came in with the party from Italy, and the man nods in remembrance and asks the character’s business in the library. The character can also try to lie about his Sabbat status, a fact that can be tested by tasting the character’s blood (See “A Taste of Blood” for results). Lying puts Mendel on his guard and makes him far less likely to talk with the character.

If the character asks about Giovanni coming in with scrolls, Mendel looks puzzled, thinks back, and says that he has not seen him. However, Mendel does recall coming into the library a few hours after sunset and finding the books and other materials disarranged.

In truth, Mendel honestly can’t remember. He speculates that perhaps someone was looking for something, although he’s uncertain who. A character who attempts to extract information via force or rudeness will be Dominated and sent on his way, waking up after he’s returned to the main hall.

In spite of being unable to recall the information the character wants, Mendel will be helpful if the character expresses a genuine interest in books and learning. The character may ask questions about Giovanni’s scrolls if he has something to go on, such as the Chaldean language or the like. Mendel shuffles the books here and there, apparently having his own system of classifying. He has two books on the subject, both of which are largely unreadable: The first is written in Latin, primarily describing the Chaldean astrologers; the second is an historical treatise written in Persian.

If asked about the Giovanni clan or the Cappadocians, Mendel will present a large tome that recounts information about the Cappadocians (some of it patently untrue) and the Maelstrom Scene in Act Three of *The Last Supper*. (If the characters are in a continuing chronicle, describe the scene as it played out for them; if not, use whichever option appeals to you.) A character with experience in printing may determine that the ink is fairly new, so the account was given recently. Mendel goes on to describe his conversation with his source, but with few specifics, the most notable being that his informant was a lovely young woman he encountered in Nuremberg. He

describes a red-haired woman in her early 20s with brown eyes. The book in front of him with Meridie's name is a sort of Who's Who among Kindred women.

Unable to help further, the librarian suggests reading material: perhaps one of Mr. Shakespeare's plays, or some of Mr. Donne's wondrous poetry, or even something by Lady Gemma Vachon, a delightful new vampire poetess he recently discovered. He will studiously dodge questions about why he is at work at the enclave, except to say that he was requested to come by Master Frazier by dint of his scholarship. If the character starts to demand for answers, Mendel goes back to his work and lets that be the end of that. If the character takes his suggested reading, Mendel asks that the character come back with a review of it, and goes back to work.

If the character attempts to pull rank or Camarilla status or (realizing Mendel is Tremere) threatens to tell the elders in Vienna, Mendel collects the candles floating around him into a glowing cluster and mutters softly. Suddenly the character is aware of heat licking at the hems of his garments, and his skin begins to sting as if burning. If he looks down for the heat source, he sees nothing. Mendel's eyes reflect the candle-glow eerily as he snaps, "That, whelp, is why you should not go to the elders. I could incinerate you if I choose, and I may very well choose to. Should I consider it?" By now, the heat is intense, and the hems of his clothes are smoldering, giving the character a very interesting look at how a garment burns without flames to hamper his view. He'll take aggravated damage if he continues to balk (treat as normal fire damage). Any other characters attempting to aid their companion get similar treatment.

When the character, now hopefully chastened, apologizes, Mendel claps his hands with a verbal command. The heat vanishes, and the character is left with any damage, plus the need to change clothes. Mendel returns to his studies with a grumbled, "Take care, then, how you demand of your betters. Pity—you had promise," and ignores the character until she leaves. The character is unlikely to get any further unless he makes some atonement, such as treating Mendel as an elder, taking his suggested readings or acknowledging him as the greater magician.

If the character is respectful and polite from the beginning, treating Mendel as a clanmate (if Tremere) or elder, he will warm to the character and invite him to return for discourse after he has finished his work. (For the discourse/harrowing, go to "The Raven.")

The Raven

Mendel is pleased to see the character return and asks how he liked the reading. He gladly leaves his book aside for the moment to discuss literary matters. He's actually rather garrulous when he has someone worth talking to, and suggests they walk about. He eventually steers them to a window or some outdoor area.

On the matter of his betrayal of the Tremere, Mendel sighs and shrugs. "What would you have done? I was but inches from the final drink that would have enslaved me to the Council forever. The Sabbath offered me a choice for the first time in my unlife—even my Embrace was decided for me. I ask you, what would you have done?"

He listens to the character's argument, but pokes holes in such things as unquestioning obedience. "Would you destroy yourself if they asked? That is what they want, my friend." He also brings up his studies of new rituals, citing *Preserve Blood and Power of the Invisible Flames*. "There are things they forbid you to learn. Can't you guess why? To keep you weak, dependent on them for the golden showers of knowledge. Here, we are free to pursue our own studies, without the elders forever looking over our shoulders."

Mendel finds out through careful, leading questions what the character most dislikes about her clan and being Tremere, and proceeds to salt that wound, eventually coming to, "It is NOT done that way among us." The lure should be getting out from under whatever irritations the character has in her present life.

As the conversation winds down, a raven abruptly lands nearby and preens his jet plumage. Mendel glances at the character and smiles. "The harbinger of death, it is said. Perhaps, new life instead?" He rises and departs, leaving the character to digest this.

The Bold Marauder

Julian picks the Brujah or any obviously action-oriented character for his morsel. He finds this character and taps him on the shoulder, whispering, "I can see you're as bored with all this as I am. Do you want some real excitement? Then let's get out of here!" He wears hunting gear and carries a brace of pistols in his belt. He also slings a number of bags around his neck. Something chimes, and one falls partially open to reveal several metal spikes. He also carries a wicked-looking spear, similar to what is used in boar-hunting. He brushes aside the character's questions, saying, "You'll learn soon enough. If you ask too many questions, adventure loses its bite, which is danger." This done, he leads the character out of the monastery on foot.

The night is filled with sounds of all kinds: insects, birds and the murmurings of wind through the pine boughs. If asked what sort of prey he's after, Julian smiles, "Only the most worthy." Human? "Oh, please! I have better in mind!" Boar? "Only savagery." Bear? "Good, but better than that." He keeps the guessing going until the character guesses—Wolf? "Ah, a man after my own heart. Yes, wolf, and only the best wolf, because if one's going to hunt, one must hunt something that will hunt you in return. That improves the chase."

If the character brings up the Fox Hunt scene, Julian ignores the questions deliberately, finally snapping, "He was snooping around the second entrance! He deserved what he got!"

By now, the character should have some suspicions about where they're going and what they're hunting. If he says the magic word, "Lupine?," Julian crows with delight. "Well, you're not as thick as I was starting to think! As I said, only the best."

If the character objects, Julian becomes petulant. "You may have brains, but you lack spine. You've been taught to hunt nothing but weaklings. That proves only how much stronger you are, and that proves nothing. Is this what that precious Camarilla and Masquerade has done for you—turned you into a coward afraid of yourself and your own strength? I know how strong I am, and I prove it time and again against equally worthy foes."



If the character continues to object on the grounds that they prove nothing by getting killed or similar, Julian loses patience quickly. “You’re nothing but one of those willy-nilly philosophers like ‘Lady’ Meridie. Well, then, let’s see how well your philosophy serves you outside the hall.” He throws back his head and issues an almost perfect-sounding wolf call. After a few minutes, three answering calls reply. He turns back to the character, mocking. “Now then, the rules are this: The Lupines know that someone is here. If you’re still here when they arrive, you won’t be for much longer afterward. They’ve been looking for a target ever since they knew we were here. I led you from the monastery. Were you paying attention? And lastly—” he leans in close to give the character a sharklike smile— “since you’ve been such a poor sport, I think I should like to find out what you’re made of.”

The howls are closer now, perhaps seeking an answer. Julian replies, and whispers, “If I were you, I’d start running now.”

He abruptly vanishes into the night with shocking Celerity. The character can try to return to the monastery as quickly as he can without running into either foe; can attempt to turn the tables by hunting Julian; or can stay put and wait for the Lupines, who will not be pleased to see him when they show up. No amount of persuasion will convince them that it was not the character making the wolf howls.

The character who turns and hunts Julian finds that the “bold highwayman” is clever, but too cocky. Certain of the

inferiority of his partner, Julian leaves clues strewn hither and yon, such as broken plants, the ribbon from his hair hanging on a branch, or even a few drops of blood (Make a Perception + Tracking or Investigation roll, difficulty 8). Julian accepts being caught with good grace and thanks the player for an enjoyable hunt. He drops the all-important question as, “Wouldn’t it be great if we could do this every night? Oh, I forgot — you’re one of them. Never mind.” If the character manages to get back to the monastery before dawn, Julian carries only grudging respect, if that, for him. He considers him the 17th century equivalent of “wimp.”

If the character does not object to a Lupine hunt, Julian leads him out for the time of his unlife. During the interim while waiting for the wolves to show, he says, “You know what everyone’s doing, with the Paths and all. I’ve been thinking — what if there was a Path that more or less gave the Beast what it wanted? You let it out to play by doing risky things to keep it sated. The others talk about finding proof, philosophy and all that, but you and I know that it doesn’t take that to prove the worth of something. What do you think?”

The actual Lupine hunt can be glossed over as having little luck, or the two can find a Lupine worth taking down. Said werewolf can be as weak or tough as the Storyteller wishes. Julian is armed with silver spikes, a silver-headed spear, and his own teeth and claws. He could probably take down this Lupine on his own, if he didn’t mind losing some valuable body parts in the process.



An Evil Below

Intisar tends to keep to herself, although she seems amiable enough with Melisande. If there is no Setite in the party, she will have little or no interest in the group.

If one of the characters is a Setite, Intisar will question him relating to his beliefs in corruption, how much he believes in Set, etc. Typical Setite reasoning and proselytizing evoke little interest, indeed almost disappointment, from Intisar. When asked why she is here, she replies, "They needed me for a perspective on evil, having none of their own."

She speaks of the Setites as evil, but more in the third person, almost as if she is not one of them herself. She refuses to answer questions about herself. After a largely unsatisfying conversation, she excuses herself.

A character wanting to talk with her further will not get much out of her. She seems bent on keeping to herself and travels swiftly down to the lower reaches of the monastery.

The lower chambers are cold stone and seemingly alive with all manner of strange sounds. One is currently in use, the door slightly ajar, and as the character passes, he sees Vadislava busily working at her art — she is tattooing a ghoul who is almost completely covered with body art. Whatever she's doing looks painful; the ghoul is gripping a pole and biting down on a stick until he nearly breaks it. She, on the other hand, seems quite serene with her work, even humming a little as she pauses to consider it like an artist holding up his thumb for perspective. Unless the character knocks, she will be unaware of his presence, and indeed seems oblivious to all around her.

The second chamber is dim, almost dark, but enough light creeps from under the door for the character to know that it is in use. This is Lord Mendel's ritual chamber. The floor is covered with a myriad of mystic circles and arcane symbols. It smells strange in here, like something burned (Heightened Senses picks out more definitive odors — herbs, some incense and wood). There are a couple of charred-looking spots on the floor, and half-melted candles form part of one warding circle. Otherwise, the chamber is barren, not even a table or chair.

As the character approaches the third chamber, he hears whisperings and the occasional soft cry. Light, much brighter this time, streams out from beneath the door, which has been shut. A Wits + Security roll will determine if it is locked (it isn't, but the door will not budge; it has been bolted shut from the inside). However, it is one of the massive, old key-locks, which has a large keyhole to peer through. The character looking in will see the following.

Intisar is tracing patterns on the floor, murmuring words in a strange language that does not sound like anything familiar (a character who lived in ancient Egypt will recognize it as spoken Egyptian, a chant to Osiris). She traces in the air with a wand of incense and a golden rod topped with the symbol of a disk between two horns (roll Intelligence + Occult — it's the symbol of Isis). By shifting position, the character can see a small altar decorated with the figure of an Egyptian woman (if the person made the first roll, no need for one to identify the figure of Isis). Beside Isis sits a strange, lithe figure with green skin; folded, spiny wings; and a tall white headdress (Intelligence + Occult, difficulty 8 — it might be the figure of Osiris, but you know he doesn't have wings; something's not right here).

Her ritual done, Intisar bows before the altar and begins to whisper again. Within a few minutes, the light in the chamber dims subtly. The character should roll Perception + Alertness here. If he succeeds at least once, he is suddenly filled with unease. More successes, and the unease increases to dread, even the sense that something just brushed past him. If he fails, he feels nothing. If he botches, nothing happens...yet.

A voice that conjures images of dust and darkness seeps around the stones. The altar seems peculiarly shrouded. If the character scored particularly well on his Perception + Alertness roll, he is struck by the note of pure evil in the voice. "Faithful one, what say you?" the voice intones.

"Much news, exalted one," she replies, her face still downcast. She begins to describe the recent events, suggesting that perhaps the characters so newly arrived might be worth his while to explore as avatars. She mentions the listening character in particular.

Now would be a good time to recognize two things: One, Intisar is apparently involved in demonic worship of some kind. Two, the others would probably appreciate hearing that they've been earmarked for sacrifice. If the character chooses to stay, he will hear the voice whisper its approval and say that the Falcon will feast on the Serpent soon, thanks to its faithful one. It merely needs a suitable body to serve as host for the avatar that will fill it. If the character botched the earlier Perception roll, the creature, abruptly pauses and there is a gathering sensation of rage. Suddenly it hisses, "Beware the ears that hear too much!"

If the character attempts to leave and botched his earlier roll, he hears the same message. Intisar sits up, and her Serpent's Eyes seems to pierce straight through the keyhole to the character. If he makes eye contact with her, he will need to make a Willpower roll to resist and get away.

The character who made all of his earlier rolls or merely failed can make a Dexterity + Stealth roll to sneak away without notice. Success means a clean, but nerve-racking getaway. A failure means Intisar lifts her head slightly, apparently suspicious, but nothing further occurs; make another roll to see if the character can finish his escape. A botch is bad news — an unfortunately timed noise or tripping over one's hem right when it is least convenient.

If Intisar catches him, she fights with a dagger and her darting Serpent's Tongue, which causes aggravated damage. The noise will certainly attract the attention of Vadislava, who breaks up the fight and demands the character's story and quickly. Since Intisar did not have time to put away her toys, Vadislava becomes suspicious and "suggests" that they all go visit Lord Alexandre and Lady Meridie.

If the character gets away without incident, he can go to Vadislava in the next chamber with the news. She is unimpressed with the story unless the character can relate some specifics, such as the altar. She follows the character to see for herself and does her own peep through the lock. Suddenly she turns and stalks silently down the hall, eyes smoldering with rage.

The character who decides to confront Intisar later may want to have ammunition for that fight. If he stands up and starts railing at her, everyone's going to look at him like he's crazy, Intisar will put on her best "injured-innocence" look, and nothing will happen. If he attempts to confront Intisar alone in a hall, she Dominates him into forgetting the event occurred. If he speaks privately with another elder, such as Meridie, Frazier or Haakon, and provides proof (taking them to the chamber is an excellent idea), that elder will accuse Intisar. The Sabbath demand the right to interrogate and punish her, which is granted by Master Frazier and Lady Meridie with little further discussion.

The characters are allowed to be present at Intisar's torture. This should be brutal, with Vadislava using her Vicissitude and Alexandre displaying his intimate knowl-

The Path of Evil Revelations for Storytellers

As *The Players Guide to the Sabbath* warns, player characters should not follow this Path, and for good reason. To do so is to accept a lopsided bargain of temporary power until death, whereupon a monstrous evil will devour both body and soul. Both Camarilla and Sabbath loathe Infernalists, though for different reasons. The Camarilla views Infernalism as a completely selfish act that threatens the lives and sanity of all around them, while the Sabbath sees it as the surrender of the freedom they prize above all else. One of the few times they would agree on something is to snuff this scourge out of existence. On a Storyteller level, Infernalists throw the game off balance and make life unpleasant for everyone.

If there are no Setites, Intisar's evil may be revealed alternatively. The presence of a demonic entity would unnerve the "sensitives" among the group who venture toward the cellars. Theron has been raving about "rats in the walls," but the others believe this is madness wrapped in fear. Other strange omens may be used to raise suspicions about something strange invading their sanctuary, such as strange cries or shadows that move alone (and are not products of Obtenebration). A subsequent search of the monastery and chambers reveals the lower hall where Intisar has been holding her rites, followed by her punishment, described above.

edge of pain. The Storyteller is encouraged to go whole hog, but remember that such scenes may cause Humanity loss for some Camarilla characters. Intisar is compelled to give her reasons for following the Path: As a priestess of Isis Embraced by her very enemies, she sought Infernal assistance in a misguided attempt to corrupt the Setites even further from within in revenge. While such a response might garner a little sympathy, the fact remains that she committed a crime and must be punished. After some debate (which the characters may contribute to), it is decided that she'll watch the sunrise from a nearby mountaintop, although a few Sabbat seem a little disappointed that she won't be a Blood Feast.

Riddles Wrapped in Enigmas

Theron will most amuse himself with his Camarilla kin, but any character who does not seem to fit in or fill any obvious molds in the group dynamics will do. The method to Theron's madness is chilling lucidity wrapped in the trappings of starkest insanity. His habits of changing costume and manner at the drop of a hat are all means to an end — *his* end, which only he understands.

He begins his night's work by learning his prey's Derangement, if she has one, through Eyes of Chaos (Dementation Level 3), something he will most likely do on the first night of the players' arrival. Then he sets about doing whatever is necessary to provoke that Derangement to its fullest passion. He has a lot of time, a lot of props and a very cunning mind. In the end, he will have something to show for his efforts.

If the character manages to maintain some level of sanity despite Theron's efforts, he begins deriding her as a coward taught to be good by the establishment. Madness wants to be free! If the character fights back by trying to provoke Theron's Derangement, he reacts freakishly, with bizarre tics and rapid, low-pitched chatter, muttering about Gehenna and the Antediluvians. He throws in bits from the Book of Nod's "Chronicle of Secrets": whatever it takes to get the character's attention. When this is done, he mutters, "What are you going to do when the night comes? And it will come. What will you do? Where will your Camarilla be then?"

No matter how the character answers, Theron replies, "You don't understand." Depending on the character's Nature and reactions, Theron tailors his speech accordingly and plays up voice and mood to wring the most from the moment. Eventually he says, "Do you want to understand? Then come with me." If the character says no, he says, "Do you remember how it felt to let your madness have its way with you? That is what the Beast does to me, what it does to us who have been taught to be afraid of it. I can show you how never to be afraid of it again. Would you like that?"

If the character said yes to Theron's original question, he starts to lead her through the monastery, headed for the outside. He's on his way to taking her for Creation Rites. Before he can get all the way out the door, he and the character are intercepted, either by Lady Meridie or by one of the character's coterie. When asked where he's going, Theron says he's just walking with his new friend. Meridie puts a halt to the activity and reminds Theron that the Sabbat is about freedom. The character must choose freely if she wants to go. The character will probably be a little dazed and certainly not know where she's going. If the character's party member attempts to stop Theron, he befuddles the offender with Confusion (Dementation 4). This failing, he will release the character with a pout.

If he manages to bypass everyone, Theron takes the character to a graveyard for Creation Rites. The Storyteller may want to throw obstacles in Theron's path to stall for a rescue. Two potential helpers might be the characters who left with Haakon and Julian; one might return in time to see his coterie member being led away.

Night of the Hunter

Haakon approaches the Gangrel character or any who show an interest in nature by clapping him on the shoulder without fanfare and saying, "Come. Let us go outside and leave this fancy talk for the weak."

Outside the outer walls, he pauses to breathe deeply of the night air. "Ah, now that is perfume, my brother. The smells of earth and pine and the tang of animals. I pity those who have never experienced it, for truly they walk among the dead. Just because we have surrendered to the darkness does not mean that the world has died around us. But now, we are free from the endless talk. Let's use it well."

He starts running, and the character will need to make a Stamina + Athletics roll or employ Celerity to keep up. Haakon is unlikely to slow down for the character. He does not stop until he reaches deep forest, where he pauses to take long draughts of the scents around him. Around them, the night sounds of animals echo. Haakon takes a seat under a nearby tree and invites the character to join him.

Haakon believes that he must still be human in many ways. He was once human; his spirit feels essentially the same to him. The only thing that has changed is his physical being, and that too has been a natural thing. Though vampires must prey on humans for blood, don't humans do the same thing with cattle? One must live, but asserting one's life does not justify mindless slaughter. "The wolf is one such wise hunter. He does not kill for sport — such waste feeds nothing except the ground, and the earth does not care. We hunt because we need to eat. If one wishes sport, there are others less hurtful." The Camarilla, Haakon continues, aren't bad people, just very confused. If they can be reasoned with and made to see the light of pure and true freedom, that's wonderful. If not, well, then, maybe they just need to be led if they won't go willingly.

He asks the character's views and will listen until the character has said his piece completely before asking his own questions. He is interested in the character's view of his own humanity and life and will work at understanding exactly how the character feels. After hearing the character's piece to his satisfaction, he will ask the character for suggestions for new sport. A tracking expedition, rock climbing or something that will not involve killing (it's assumed they've already fed) will earn the character bonus points in Haakon's eyes. It should be noted that Haakon does not track like a human, but gets down on all fours to study a trail and take scent. He won't drop the question now, but if the character shows himself as potential Sabbat and still-developing Path of Harmony material, Haakon will ask him about it as they return back to the monastery, a simple, "I would greatly enjoy your company were you to stay. You would make a worthy brother/sister."

Lessons Learned

The Assamites in the party are Veradis' concern. She is unlikely to be interested in others, unless they show real Sabbat leanings from the beginning.

When the character is least expecting it, have him roll Wits + Alertness (difficulty 8). If he scores two or more successes, he becomes aware that someone is sneaking up on him and may take any appropriate action. Any lower and he remains unaware.

Suddenly, Veradis has her knife at his throat. If he prepared for her, she nods with some satisfaction. "Good. You've learned your lessons well." If the character did not prepare or was unaware, she looks very displeased and digs her blade a little more deeply. "Idiot! You should have heard me coming from a mile away." Either way, she releases him. The character can try to grab her (Dexterity + Brawl, difficulty 7), and if he manages, she smiles. "Better. Now let's try that first part again."

For the next few hours, she pulls further sneak attacks like this. If the character doesn't start improving his score, Veradis kidnaps him and drags him to a disused outbuilding, where she proceeds to deliver a stern lecture concerning his obvious failures. "I did not endure the Anarch Revolt and those posturing fools at the bargaining table to preserve dullards like you who cannot seem to tell which end of the dog will bite!"

As one of the original Assamite *antitribu*, Veradis is proud of her decision and her circle, and cannot understand why her clanmate is so clueless. "They have made you a dupe, a spineless sheep who blindly follows instead of watching out for yourself! Even your own leaders, once OUR leaders, forget all that we once stood for. Do you know what we once were?"

She pauses to describe her work on the Path of Caine and how far she has proceeded. "The Mighty Father of us all longs to gather us back to His bosom, but only if we are worthy. This is the true holy war: Caine's great brood fighting the enemies who would deny Him. Are you worthy to return? I wonder."





Veradis will continue to berate him in this fashion, even cuffing him, unless he stands up for himself, either by lashing back verbally or challenging her to fight. She takes him down, but the fight is swift and hard. If he manages to scratch her or gain the upper hand for a moment, she is pleased and fights all the harder, since he has shown he can obviously handle it.

Unless he shows some really brilliant moves, she takes him down, but doesn't kill him, just scolds him and tells him to go practice. If he shows creativity, she's impressed. "You waste your time and talents with them. I could find many uses for such talented ones as yourself." She lets him up and suggests that they go somewhere more private to talk, the subjects being the ethics of the new Path of Caine, assignments and travels. Creativity and intelligence on the character's part bring the question, "So, when are you going to join us?"

In Halls of Bone

Vadislava keeps to herself a great deal, seemingly reluctant to participate much in group discussions and absorbed in her own work. A clanmate or the very curious may go searching for her and eventually discover her in the ossuary, apparently deep in contemplation of the bones of the former monks. A character who attempts to interrupt her is ignored for his trouble, unless he does something like grab her arm. She has an intense dislike of being touched and responds with a withering look and a touch of searing Vicissitude on the offending hand. Further disruptions will make the offender her newest guinea pig for a little practice with Bonecraft.

A character who chooses to sit quietly beside her in meditation, hoping to catch her attention, is rewarded when she remarks, "Lovely, aren't they? Such preparations the living make for themselves and the dead. Do you think it matters to them?"

She refers to the dead if the character asks for specifics. "Would it matter? After all, why should the spirit care what happens to the flesh after death? The spirit is no longer bound to it. Does it matter?"

Vadislava leads the character in a discussion about life and death, such as what happens to the spirit after death, whether ghosts exist and the possibility of reincarnation. Whether the character agrees with her or not, he had better have some arguments handy to support his statements. She listens intently, her very silence and motionlessness an unnerving factor.

If the character brings his own history into the discussion, or mentions being tortured or a prisoner, she will ask him how he survived, what did he do to stay sane, does he have scars, etc. If his answers are suitably impressive (i.e., he was tortured, but survived by imagining his revenge on his tormentors), she slides off her gloves to study any scars. It may startle the character to see a number of beautifully worked tattoos on her hands (much like henna patterns on women of India, except hers are black ink). Asked about it, she is reluctant to bring up too much, but can be persuaded to say that they were the product of time spent as a mortal captive

of the Turks in the 1400s, during which time two of her fellow hostages were Vlad Dracula and his brother. Her touch is surprisingly gentle as she studies the character's scars through her fingers. "I could erase these for you, if you like."

If the character refuses politely, with reasoning like, "They remind me of the evil I have done," or "I wear them to remind myself that it really happened," she nods and replies, "As you will. You are far braver than many I know."

Should the discussions go well, she studies the character intently as he answers, finally murmuring, "You have been so close all this time. All that would remain is that final step: to return you home, where you truly belong. Too long you have lived without your heritage. Perhaps you should come home." Frustration or poor discussion on the character's part brings a stinging lash of rage, calling him coward, too frightened to hold his own history in his hands. Vadislava gashes open his palm and her own, comparing the blood. "I know where mine comes from. I know, and I will spill every last drop of it against the Antediluvians and the monsters who titter behind their lace handkerchiefs. Earn those scars again, my brother. But this time, earn them for the best reasons of all."

If the character performs Spirit Touch on one of the skulls, he is suddenly assailed with images of someone play-acting the *Hamlet* soliloquy. Age, gender, appearance and the overwhelming sensation of mockery suggest Ambrogino Giovanni, and recently enough that the image is fresh.

The same images may be acquired at the wine-cask door in the cellar, albeit without the skull.

A Man of the World

Mateusz seeks out the coterie's Nosferatu at first opportunity. If the other Nosferatu is wearing Mask of 1000 Faces, he dons his own, appearing to be a middle-aged man with a full beard and mustache. "Greetings, brethren. Forgive me that I was not here to greet you earlier. I trust you are enjoying your respite?"

The character may complain about having to wait for information about Giovanni or being cooped up. He may also try to pump Mateusz for information about Giovanni, which Mateusz refuses to give. "Now if I were to do that, you would leave without learning our own little secrets. Surely the doings of the sect would be of great value to others, wouldn't they? For that matter, are you even aware of our mission? Perhaps you should care."

Here, Mateusz and the Nosferatu may feel free to have at it haggling for information. If the Storyteller is working with troupe players, this would be a good opportunity to give Mateusz to another player, leaving her free to work with other players. How the scene is worked is up to the two players, but they should end up with the following results.

While neither learns everything about the other's business (hopefully), they may have exchanged information about Mateusz's work at the monastery (where he may extol his contributions to the Path of Caine while deriding Veradis'

own work as "half-baked") and the pursuit of the Chaldean scrolls and Giovanni. Mateusz immediately becomes interested in the scrolls, saying that isolated as he is up here, he has not heard much of late, and steps up pumping the character for everything he can. If the character holds out for more information on Giovanni's presence here, the Nosferatu grumbles and hems, but finally agrees to see what he can learn.

Mateusz, in an effort to drive up the price, may mention that the character is not the only one interested in Giovanni — that certain other interested parties have recently come to the enclave looking for the same information. He will not say more until the price comes into his acceptable range, whereupon he will agree to arrange a meeting with this second party. (Go to "A Mysterious Source.")

Something in the Shadows...

At some point, the characters will become restless about how much time is being lost from the search for Giovanni and the scrolls and may decide to take matters into their own hands. Some will decide to investigate the corridors and disused chambers to try to hasten things along.

The monastery is quite large, and while the chambers of the elders and guests have been refurbished to make them habitable, several places remain as spartan as they were during the Augustinians' day. (See the description of the monastery for potential settings.) Many places are unlit altogether.

Somewhere in the older, dark section, the character feels something brush her arm, like cloth. If she turns her light in its direction, there is nothing to be seen, not even a curtain, and Heightened Senses reveals nothing. If she continues further, she's frequently assailed with an unpleasant sensation of scrutiny.

Suddenly, she hears a whisper in her ear: "Oh, where are you going, where have you been?" Something brushes her cheek. No matter how quickly she tries to turn her light or senses, the thing seems to be always just out of reach. The character can turn back, or persist and go forward. If she does persist, she is greeted by the sight of Veradis stepping out from the shadows into the circle of light from the character's candle. She smiles like a predator and balances a throwing knife on her fingers. "Unwise, oh my beloved," she smiles, toying with the knife.

A character who decides to challenge Veradis will regain consciousness in the guest dormitory, on her bed, with a knife across her chest. One who does not will receive a "suggestion": "I won't tell if you won't." Veradis melts back into the shadows, leaving the character to find her way back.

If more than one character attempts the search, then Lord Theron and Lady Vadislava join the "hunting party," each with his or her own brand of persuasion. Lord Theron will play "haunted house," jumping from dark corners to drive the character deeper into the old section and using Mind Tricks (Dementation 2) to frighten her further. Lady Vadislava will take advantage of an opportunity to hunt, eventually chasing the character back to the main chambers with as much terror as she can inflict along the way.

Characters who avoid the chase or who search less obvious areas will be rewarded. Spirit's Touch used in the corridors around the wine cellar or in a certain less-used hallway (placed at the Storyteller's discretion) shows that both have been used quite recently, and by Ambrogino Giovanni. Characters without Auspex will nearly be run over by a serving-maid carrying two empty goblets on a tray. She pales and stammers her apology, but waits for dismissal. The goblets contain blood. The girl makes clumsy explanations about where she was, saying she was attending to a gentleman elsewhere, but then she starts saying "gentlemen." Pointing out the evasion causes her to become even more frightened.

If the character wishes to search the girl's memory or person, he should bear in mind the house edict that no ghouls may be tampered with without permission. The ghoul wears a plain blue dress and white cap, with no sigil or device of arms. If asked, she says she belongs to Meridie. A character with Forgetful Mind (Dominate 3) may attempt to dig into the girl's memory for the information and cover his trail with the same Discipline. A botch either way results in harm to the girl, and she may remember that it was the character who tried to harm her.

If asked, Meridie grants permission to probe, and asks someone with a decent command of Dominate to do his best. Success nets the information that the girl came up to serve Master Frazier and a guest with a strange accent. The girl can imitate the accent fairly well, and a Perception + Investigation roll (difficulty 6) suggests that it's Italian. She can even take the character to the chamber, but it is long empty.

The Tide Turns

About two nights into their enforced stay, a character venturing out with one of the elders or simply out for a breath of night air hears the clatter of hooves in the courtyard. If she goes to inquire, she sees Master Frazier watching a rider depart. The horse is moving too fast and the courtyard is too dim to permit anything to be seen of either horse or rider. If she asks him who just left, he replies that it was a ghoul of his that he sent off to Nuremberg for business. An elder with the character may add, "But, Frazier, then who was that who left just before the arrival of our guests? I understood you had sent your ghoul to Milan for that very purpose."

Frazier's reply is, "I keep my business in more than one city, I keep more than one ghoul, and the rest is none of your beeswax." At that, he turns and departs inside.

If the character did not investigate, one of the elders enters the main hall, looking puzzled. "Did any of you send a ghoul out recently? Then who just left?"

The ghoul in charge of keeping the stables is with Lord Alexandre's retinue. He will consent to answer general questions, but if they grow too specific, he starts to get nervous and says that he must have his lord's permission before speaking further. If asked who left earlier, he'll ask them to specify how much earlier. Within the last week? "A number have left, my

lady. They are usually servants on business into the city for their masters." What about very recently (specifying the time)? He scratches his head and seems genuinely puzzled. "Just a ghoul. I told you, my lady." Frazier's ghoul? He starts counting off the horses. It was one of Master Frazier's horses, although one of the better ones, not usually given to the ghouls. Also, the saddle was one of the better ones, again not usually given to ghouls. Now he's confused — was it or wasn't it?

If the characters suspect that his memory has been tampered with, they will have to ask permission from his master before delving into his mind. If approached, Lord Alexandre will be curious about the reasons behind this. He may even question the ghoul himself. When it becomes obvious that there seem to be inconsistencies in the story, he will attempt to uncover the missing memories himself. Characters who do not ask and simply go ahead with their work risk Alexandre's wrath. If they botch, the man remembers who tried to harm him and goes to Alexandre, who may decide that a yank-and-tuck on the characters' minds might better teach them right from wrong.

If recovery succeeds, the man begins to describe how Master Frazier came out and ordered that one of his best horses be saddled up. A man wearing a dark cloak came out to join him. He spoke with a thick "foreign" voice, saying something about "their agreement," which Master Frazier consented to. The man got up on the horse and started out. His hood fell away from his face a little, and the ghoul describes a man resembling the characters' description of Ambrogino Giovanni. After that, Master Frazier apparently Dominated him.

Alexandre is obviously furious over events, particularly his ghoul's being tampered with, and he goes to Lady Meridie with this. She agrees that this is not the way to do things, especially after learning that one of her own ghoul serving-maids has been meddled with, and they send several ghouls out to look for Frazier. He is found in his chambers.

The situation is laid out thusly to Frazier: He can either tell them himself, or they can Dominate him and force it out of him. Frazier feigns innocence through hauteur, nearly provoking Alexandre into a duel with him, until the characters point out that they know Ambrogino was here and how they found out. Frazier makes an ironic bow. "Well played, my friends," he replies. "It would seem that I will need to find other occupation."

"Yes, Ambrogino was here. He arrived about a night before you, seeking information from our own Lord Mendel. Apparently our friend was not quite so clever about covering his tracks as perceived, and the Nosferatu of Milan were quite happy to exchange his name for certain prizes. At any rate, he arrived, but found our friend sorely out of temper, and himself being followed. He too received the 'invitation' to bide awhile, and it made him quite choleric. Seeing an opportunity to advance certain interests within the Giovanni merchant house, I presented myself and my services to him. In exchange for certain concessions for my merchant house from the House of Giovanni, I agreed to assist him.

“He was carrying certain scrolls, I recall, written in... Chaldean, that was it. A tongue completely unfamiliar to me. However, I believed that Lord Mendel had some familiarity with the language. I was able to grant him access to the library while the others were at the Vaulderie. Whether or not he found anything of value, I do not know.

With your arrival, things became...difficult. He was forced to stay in hiding, a proposition he liked not. I received a small bonus for keeping you occupied and out of his way. As soon as things were able, he left, although I know not where he was bound for. Already he knows that you pursue him, and you came far closer to him than he would have liked. And that is the end of my knowledge.”

A Mysterious Source

Mateusz comes to fetch the Nosferatu character later in the evening, saying that the meeting has been agreed upon a half-hour hence in the library. No provision was requested concerning how many might come.

A half-hour later, the character arrives with Mateusz at the library. Mateusz knocks and enters first, blocking the character’s view of the interior. “My lady, per the agreement...” he announces, and steps aside to allow the character in.

A slim young woman in a plain, black Tudor dress sits at the table, her head bowed. Her long red hair is pinned up away from her face. As the character enters, she looks up. A continuing character from *The Last Supper* will recognize her as Marianna. Marianna likewise recognizes the character and starts back in fear. “You?!”

It will take some fast persuading for the character to convince Marianna he is not coming to drag her back to the Giovanni or otherwise do her harm. She asks whom he works for now, and that the character recount his story in explicit detail. She refuses to continue the conversation if the character makes any overture about helping the Giovanni. However, if the character can convince her of his sincerity, she will agree to talk. The character can ask to put a pause on the proceedings while he fetches the others (whereupon Marianna will say, “More of us survived that terrible night?” and ask who among the characters survived the Maelstrom), or he can continue things on his own (go to “Discussions”).

If the character and Marianna are unfamiliar to each other, she will not startle as before, but will be uneasy. She introduces herself and asks what business the character has with her. She listens to the story, but makes no comment one way or the other if she believes it. Mentions of the Giovanni make her nervous, betrayed only by her hands, so tightly clasped as to draw blood. When asked about her interest in the scrolls, she guardedly mentions that she understood that they were very powerful, and anything so powerful should not be in the hands of the Giovanni. If the character presses her or becomes imperious with her, he will get no more from her, and will also have to deal with Mateusz, who informs the character that this meeting was



arranged in good faith and that this is an insult to him. The character can either apologize or get thrashed if he balks, which ends the meeting. If the character apologizes, negotiations must begin all over again.

If the character makes an offer of help with whatever he or his companions know, Marianna will warm to him. The character may now run to fetch the rest of the players (Mateusz will remain to observe), or can continue things on his own. Any characters who recognize Marianna and vice versa from *The Last Supper* will have a similar scene as above of convincing her that they're not going to take her to the Giovanni, they're not helping the Giovanni, etc.

Picking up the Fight

Marianna tells those continuing from *The Last Supper* that she remained with the Cappadocians for a short time after the Maelstrom, long enough to learn the rudiments of her Disciplines. Despite Japheth's offers to allow her to stay as long as she wished, she worried about the Giovanni and what they would do to those who betrayed them. She left the monastery in secret one night and resolved to travel to the East, dedicating her unlife to finding a way to defeat those who had created her. During her travels, she spent time studying in the lands that had been the ancient country of the Cappadocians. There she first heard of the Chaldean scrolls and their reputed powers.

Knowing that the Giovanni would be after them as soon as they heard of them, she set herself to finding them. By the time she had, they were already in Ambrogino Giovanni's hands. She resorted to following the characters, since they seemed to know where they were going. Mateusz was a contact of hers from days spent in Krakow.

Marianna will do her utmost to convince the characters that the scrolls do not belong in Giovanni hands. For those characters not created during the events of *The Last Supper*, she will recount the Maelstrom and Claudius' horrible diablerie of Cappadocius. Bloody tears run down her cheeks at Cappadocius' name.

In the end, it is a matter of whether the characters believe and agree with Marianna. One of the following conclusions will be reached:

- Marianna agrees to help the characters, but prefers to work alone (if the Storyteller doesn't want her in the party);
- Marianna agrees to help the characters and joins the group as they leave Switzerland;
- If the characters declare their loyalty for the Giovanni or accuse her of lying, she will do everything she can to hinder them;
- Both sides agree that the scrolls are dangerous, best left out of Giovanni reach and that they should be repossessed. However, Marianna's ideas about what to do with the scrolls and what the characters want to do are two different things. She makes a nonaggression pact that neither will actively hinder the other.

Food For Thought

After all the talk has gone round and round, and the character has been through at least one "harrowing," she may find herself with questions about the Sabbat, her unlife and her very self. An "inner-self" voyage may become necessary (and offers intense roleplaying possibilities) and a character may decide to go to a particular elder or other character she trusts.

On the whole, the rule of thumb with the Sabbat is freedom, and thus the characters must ultimately make their own decisions; the elders will emphasize this tenet. A Sabbat vampire made unwillingly is no good to the sect right now, but once the decision is made, it is done and there's no turning back.

On the Road to London

The characters can make their next step depending on whom they're more interested in serving now. There are several ways they can learn where to go in London.

Lord Mendel

If a character has taken the time to know him, Mendel will pull her aside for a word of advice. "I heard about Giovanni. My apologies for the poor luck. However, in gratitude for your company and by way of reparation, I believe I may have something of use to you. I recall you asking about the Chaldean language. I mind that there was a scholar of such things in London — a Kindred by the name of Mallotte. It was no doubt the name which Giovanni tore apart my library for — may crows feast on his bones for it! If he wishes his precious scrolls translated, he will certainly visit there. Good fortune go with thee."

Mateusz Gryzbowsky

He passes his friend a scrap of parchment. "In payment for services rendered. Always remember, brother (sister): Whatever you seek, another will seek it from you. There are other forces at work," he murmurs and bows before departing. The character unrolls it and finds a name in badly cramped handwriting:



Mallotte,
Alfonse's
London



If a Character Converted to Sabbat

She may receive the information as a reward of sorts, plus an admonition to return post haste. The character will be invited to take the Vaulderie before leaving, giving her a Vinculum rating. She'll spend the rest of the trip anxious to return to her new pack. This may affect her relations with the rest of her party.

For the Camarilla Characters

They could receive the name as speculation from Lady Meridie, who knows of Mallotte's presence in London and his scholarly abilities (having had occasion to inquire about books at his shop), but little else. She wrinkles her nose when mentioning him, but will not say why he's such a bad taste in her mouth.

If the characters were instrumental in discovering Intisar's diabolism, the information may be presented as a reward.

Marianna

If she's helping the characters, she may give Mallotte's name as something dug up by a contact of hers.

Characters at the Enclave

Note that some of these characters have no Humanity Trait. This is a dangerous time for them; they have shed their resistance to the Beast, but have no Path to protect them.

Lady Meridie de Chancie

Clan: Brujah

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1257

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Leadership 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Dancing 3, Debate 3, Etiquette 4, Falconry 2, Game Playing 2, Melee 3, Music 3, Research 4, Ride 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Clan Lore (Brujah) 4, Finance 1, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 4, Linguistics 4, Literature 2, Medicine 3, Occult 3, Politics 4

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 2, Potence 3, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Resources 3, Retainers 2, Status 4

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 7

Image: A grave, lovely woman in her late 20s with waist-length brown hair in a single, long plait and clear green eyes. Her expression is thoughtful, and her emotions are subtle. She usually wears long, simple gowns of an earlier era.

Roleplaying Hints: You speak with quiet authority and rarely raise your voice. Your movements are equally conservative, all reflecting education, noble birth and good upbringing, but you do not use this to pull rank, though you have been tempted. You will not tell someone what to do, but give your opinion, bring up the options, and allow the person to make her own decision.

Role at the Enclave: Lady Meridie is one of the leaders of the enclave and is instrumental in developing what will become the Path of Harmony. The characters should go to her for information about the enclave's mission, and she may have a sympathetic ear for questions about the Sabbat or their own course.

Master Frazier

Clan: Ventrue

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1409

Apparent Age: Mid-30s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 3, Leadership 2, Seduction 2, Sense Deception 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 4, Falconry 4, Game Playing 3, Melee (sword) 4, Music 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Camarilla Lore 2, Clan Lore (Ventrue) 2, Finance 3, Heraldry 3, Law 2, Linguistics 4, Occult 2, Politics 2, Sabbat Lore 1

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 3, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Alternate Identity 3, Contacts 4, Resources 2, Status 3

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 8

Image: A very large man with a curling gray beard and graying brown hair. His blue eyes frequently rove around the room, and when they linger, he means to focus on that person or thing to its minutiae. He wears the lace cuffs and furred cloak of a Dutch merchant. His deep voice and booming laugh carry to every corner of a room.

Roleplaying Hints: Your massive build and booming voice sometimes intimidate without meaning to, and as a means of correcting that, you behave with exquisite politeness to all. You will readily engage in the occasional flirtation if the lady is willing and intelligent. If necessary, your wit and sword are kept razor-sharp for whatever emergency might arise. Your jolly manner makes a good foil for the sharp wit and savvy that got you where you are now.

Role at the Enclave: One of the elders at work on the Path of Honorable Accord; approachable, friendly, but may not be kindly disposed to smart-asses or Lasombra.

Lord Mendel

Clan: Tremere

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1492

Apparent Age: Late 50s

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 4, Instruction 1, Interrogation 2, Intrigue 2, Search 2, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Debate 2, Etiquette 3, Game Playing 3, Music 2, Research 5, Ride 1

Knowledges: Alchemy 2, Astrology 3, Clan Knowledge (Tremere) 2, Faerie Lore 2, History 4, Kindred Lore 3, Literature 4, Linguistics 4, Mage Lore 2, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Spirit Lore 2, Theology 3

Disciplines: Auspex 6, Dominate 5, Thaumaturgy 5 (Movement of Mind 4, Lure of Flames 3, Elemental Mastery 3)

Backgrounds: Retainers 3, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 1, Instincts 2, Morale 3

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Image: An older, graying man dressed in long, fur-trimmed robes. His long-fingered hands are adorned with two rings, one a seal ring and the other with a Tremere sigil. His forehead is usually covered.

Roleplaying Hints: A man more used to the company of books than people, you withdraw in social situations and get nervous when forced to join in. You were called in as a favor to Master Frazier, and while working on the library has been a true exercise in scholarship, you're not as thrilled about socializing with your "brethren."

Role at the Enclave: He seems to be the only one who knows how the library is organized, and he will be the one to talk to concerning the manuscripts.

Lady Vadislava

Clan: Tzimisce

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1460

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Artistic Expression 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Interrogation 4, Leadership 2, Sense Deception 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Body Alteration 4, Etiquette 4, Hunting 3, Melee 3, Ride 4, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Clan Knowledge (Tzimisce) 3, History 3, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Medicine 3, Occult 2, Sabbat Lore 2, Torture 4

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Dominate 3, Necromancy 2, Vicissitude 5

Backgrounds: Resources 4, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 5, Instincts 3, Morale 4

Willpower: 7

Image: A very beautiful Slavic woman with curly dark hair and intense dark eyes that seem to glitter like a predator's. She usually wears long gowns of crimson or black, but has been seen in mens' attire to go "hunting." Her hands are usually gloved, covering a network of fine henna designs tattooed in black.

Roleplaying Hints: A proud woman of long heritage, you carry yourself as one of the true nobility of the night, with all the manners instilled in you thereof. However, few who first meet you would suspect that as you accept their greetings and kisses on your hand, you are appraising them for their pain tolerance and imagining the pitch of their screams.

Role at the Enclave: One of the elders developing the Path of Death and the Soul. She is one of the terrifying Sabbat—beautiful manners and gracious, but she is very much in touch with her Beast, and the Sabbat lack of Humanity is personified in her.

Haakon Mortensen

Clan: Country Gangrel

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1385

Apparent Age: Mid-40s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Blind Fighting 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Search 3, Sense Deception 3

Skills: Animal Ken 4, Camouflage 3, Escapology 3, Herbalism 3, Hunting 4, Leatherworking 3, Meditation 3, Melee 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Tracking 5

Knowledges: Astronomy 1, Linguistics 2, Lupine Lore 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Disciplines: Animalism 6, Fortitude 4, Protean 4

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 2, Instincts 5, Morale 5

Willpower: 6

Image: This tall, golden-bearded son of Vikings bears a striking resemblance to a wolf in the lean lines of his face and his muscular frame. His eyes in particular betray his Gangrel heritage—they have turned a vivid silver and look nothing like a human's.

Roleplaying Hints: A plain-spoken man, descended of the old Vikings, you have little time for this silly discussion of Paths and philosophy and whatnot. You would much rather be outside, allowing your Beast to run with others of its kind. Your blunt manners are seen as rude and brusque by others, which you could care less about. You are most comfortable in the wild and can deal more easily with people there.



Role at the Enclave: Developing Path of Harmony, more or less. You are a true "common man," with little time for nobility, their games or anything else of theirs. You attach to Gangrel characters to take them hunting and talk about nature.

Julian Sanders

Clan: Brujah *antitribu*

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1485

Apparent Age: Late 20s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

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

Skills: Blind Fighting 3, Fast-Talk 3, Firearms 3, Gambling 4, Lockpicking 3, Melee 4, Ride 4, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 3, Tracking 3, Traps 2

Knowledges: Investigation 3, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Occult 1

Disciplines: Celerity 4, Potence 3, Presence 4

Backgrounds: Alternate Identity 2, Fame 2, Resources 1, Status 2

Virtues: Callousness 2, Instincts 3, Morale 5

Willpower: 7

Image: A roguishly attractive man with long brown hair and brown eyes that reflect intelligence and cunning. He frequently dresses in the blousy shirts and trows of the Cavaliers, with swirling cloaks and long riding boots that come to mid-thigh.

Roleplaying Hints: You have little time for the upper class, and Lady Meridie is the worst of the lot. How dare she call herself "lady" and Brujah in the same sentence? You personify the rebellious nature of the Brujah and change sides in any argument at the drop of a hat to play Devil's Advocate. You've taken some outrageous risks, including trying out the "highway robbery" act with your home pack back in France.

Role at the Enclave: Developing Path that won't go anywhere; an arch without a clue, and pain in the ass for many of the elders. He will gravitate to those with any form of rebellious streak or Deviant Demeanors.

Mateusz Gryzbowsky

Clan: Nosferatu *antitribu*

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1397

Apparent Age: Early 30s (??)

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Hagglng 2, Scrounging 4, Sense Deception 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Melee 2, Security 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Astronomy 2, City Secrets (Krakow) 3, Clan Lore (Nosferatu) 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics 4, Mathematics 2, Medicine 2, Metallurgy 3, Occult 3, Science 3, Sewer Lore 3

Disciplines: Animalism 5, Obfuscate 5, Potence 6

Backgrounds: Contacts 5, Influence 2, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 3, Morale 5

Willpower: 7

Image: As Nosferatu go, he's truly hideous. His greenish skin is a mass of ugly burn scars, and his eyesight is notably poor, forcing him to get very close in order to see a person's face. He emits a strange odor that reminds some of charred flesh.

Roleplaying Hints: You're straightforward, blunt to the point of tactless, with no time for attempts at intrigue or court niceties. You were nearly burned for witchcraft because of your scientific studies, and being in Switzerland hasn't done much for your nerves. You barter your information carefully and do not share without a fair exchange (personal information will do in a pinch if there's no gossip to be traded).

Role at the Enclave: Working on Path of Caine, though not without some friction with Veradis. Will stick closely to any Nosferatu PCs.

Lady Melisande

Clan: Toreador *antitribu*

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1506

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 1, Carousing 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intrigue 5, Masquerade 2, Seduction 5, Sense Deception 3, Style 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Dancing 2, Etiquette 5, Music 4, Ride 3, Singing 3, Stealth 1, Torture 1

Knowledges: Area Knowledge (French and English courts) 4, Art History 3, Linguistics 3

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 5, Presence 5, Dominate 2

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 3, Fame 1, Herd 2, Resources 4, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 2, Morale 2

Willpower: 6

Image: Her blond hair is like the tip of a flame, and her ice-blue eyes and flawless skin are too perfect, almost like a doll's. She wears Cavalier fashion in vivid colors and rich fabrics, and always has a fan within reach.

Roleplaying Hints: Your beauty got you Embraced, but your tastes got you Created. Few realize that behind the beauty lurks a Beast; you have some very interesting surprises waiting for those who accept your invitation to “come up and see you sometime.” Others always look so surprised when you haul out the cat o’ nine tails.... Your favorite means of discarding the useless or otherwise unwanted is to shut them off with a maze of the most intricate courtly maneuvers until they’re forced to retreat.

Role at the Enclave: Making contributions to both Path of Death and the Soul and the Path of Cathari. She is a witty, pleasure-loving lady, very much 18th century in her outlooks, and highly concerned with fashion. Has Goth/bondage-type leanings, very shocking for the times.

Lord Theron

Clan: Malkavian *antitribu*

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1490

Apparent Age: Early to mid-30s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Carousing 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Mimicry 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4, Ventriloquism 2

Skills: Etiquette 2, Fire Eating 3, Melee 3, Music 3, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Faerie Lore 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 4, Psychology 3, Spirit Lore 2

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Dementation 4, Obfuscate 4

Derangement: Schizophrenia

Backgrounds: Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 4, Instincts 3, Morale 3

Willpower: 7

Image: Tall and scarecrow-thin, with a light fringe of beard at his chin and over his lip. His bicolored eyes glitter maniacally. He changes costume like a conjurer, wearing anything from current fashion to his own demented creations.

Roleplaying Hints: The Camarilla has been out to manipulate the vampire youth from the beginning, and you can’t stand to see others being blindly led down the primrose path of destruction. Sometimes the childer need to be shown the way to go (after all, what child ever knew what was best for himself?), but they are usually quite happy once they reach the other side. It’s up to you to show them — preferably by driving them down the road in front of you.

Role at the Enclave: Scary prankster-type figure; another example of the “evil” side of the Sabbat. He will be out to convert from the beginning.



Lady Veradis

Clan: Assamite *antitribu*

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1439

Apparent Age: Mid-30s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Interrogation 2, Intimidation 3, Intrigue 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Blind Fighting 4, Climbing 2, Etiquette 2, Escapology 3, Melee 4, Ride 3, Security 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Torture 3, Tracking 3, Traps 2

Knowledges: Black Hand Knowledge 3, Chemistry 1, Investigation 4, Occult 1, Sabbat Lore 2, Toxicology 3

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Obfuscate 2, Potence 3, Quietus 6

Backgrounds: Black Hand Membership 2, Contacts 4, Status 3

Virtues: Callousness 2, Instincts 3, Morale 3

Willpower: 8

Image: Her Middle Eastern features are striking in this chilly place. She usually dresses in male Middle Eastern garb, a scarf covering her deep brown hair, and a dagger within easy reach at all times. (NOTE: She has about 10 daggers concealed on her at any given moment.)

Roleplaying Hints: Your quiet is not that of reflection like Lady Meridie, but the silence of the patient predator. Currently engaged in covert work for the Black Hand, you are always aware of everyone and everything around you. No change escapes your notice.

Role at the Enclave: A secret member of the Black Hand, she is engaged in work on the Path of Caine. She is not out-and-out scary, but is the quiet shadow in the background that will unsettle all but the most iron nerves.

Lord Alexandre

Clan: Lasombra

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1350

Apparent Age: Early 50s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 4, Interrogation 4, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 3, Leadership 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 5, Game Playing 3, Melee (sword) 4, Music 2, Ride 3, Torture 3

Knowledges: Alchemy 2, Camarilla Lore 3, Clan Lore (Lasombra) 4, Finance 2, Heraldry 4, History 3, Investigation 4, Linguistics 4, Literature 2, Occult 3, Politics 5, Sabbat Lore 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 2, Obtenebration 5, Potence 2

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

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 2, Morale 4

Willpower: 9

Image: A tall, bearded, olive-complexioned man wearing black velvet adorned with white lace and a large teardrop pearl on a chain. His fine hands are adorned with a single large ruby ring on the left pinkie. His expression is frequently one of disdain, which he displays quite openly.

Roleplaying Hints: You will not acknowledge a character who is low-born or non-Lasombra. You came from true Spanish nobility and never let anyone (least of all yourself) forget it. You frequently assume a patronizing air, even with your Sabbat compatriots, but your savvy about politics and the Camarilla is undeniable.

Role at the Enclave: Refining the Path of Power and the Inner Voice (already mostly developed by Lord Marcus in 1530).

Lady Intisar

Clan: Follower of Set

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1399

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 2, Dodge 4, Interrogation 2, Intimidation 3, Intrigue 3, Sense Deception 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Etiquette 4, Melee 3, Music 3, Ride 2, Snake Charming 3, Torture 2

Knowledges: Alchemy 3, Chemistry 3, Clan Knowledge (Setites) 2, Investigation 3, Occult 5, Stealth 2, Theology (Egyptian) 4, Toxicology 4

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Obfuscate 3, Potence 1, Presence 3, Serpentis 5

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Resources 3, Status 3

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

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 6

Image: Darkly beautiful with a penetrating gaze that's unnerving, if not violating, even without Serpentis. She frequently dresses in lush silks of dark colors and Egyptian or Middle Eastern designs with a number of chiming gold bracelets.

Roleplaying Hints: Your speech is languorous, as if you savor your words before you speak, and you frequently choose to focus your unnerving gaze on someone just to gauge his reaction. You like carefully picking someone

apart — so carefully that most do not know that anything's wrong — in order to learn about his convictions, beliefs, etc. Anyone stupid enough to arouse your wrath deserves what he gets, which will be unpleasant.

Role at the Enclave: If there's a snake in the grass anywhere, it's here. A signatory to the Path of Evil Revelations who practices her dark arts in the hidden chambers of the monastery, she may be spotted by a wandering player. A character with such knowledge had better have a friend among the elders, or he's going to be snake food.

Marianna

Clan: Giovanni

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1444

Apparent Age: Early 20s

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Hagglng 2, Interrogation 2, Intrigue 3, Masquerade 2, Search 2, Seduction 3, Sense Deception 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Dancing 2, Etiquette 3, Fast-Talk 2, Game Playing 2, Melee 4, Meditation 3, Music 3, Research 4, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 2, Tracking 2

Knowledges: Alchemy 1, Camarilla Lore 1, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 3, Law 2, Linguistics 4, Medicine 1, Occult 4, Spirit Lore 3, Theology 1

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Dominate 3, Necromancy 2, Obfuscate 4, Potence 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5

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

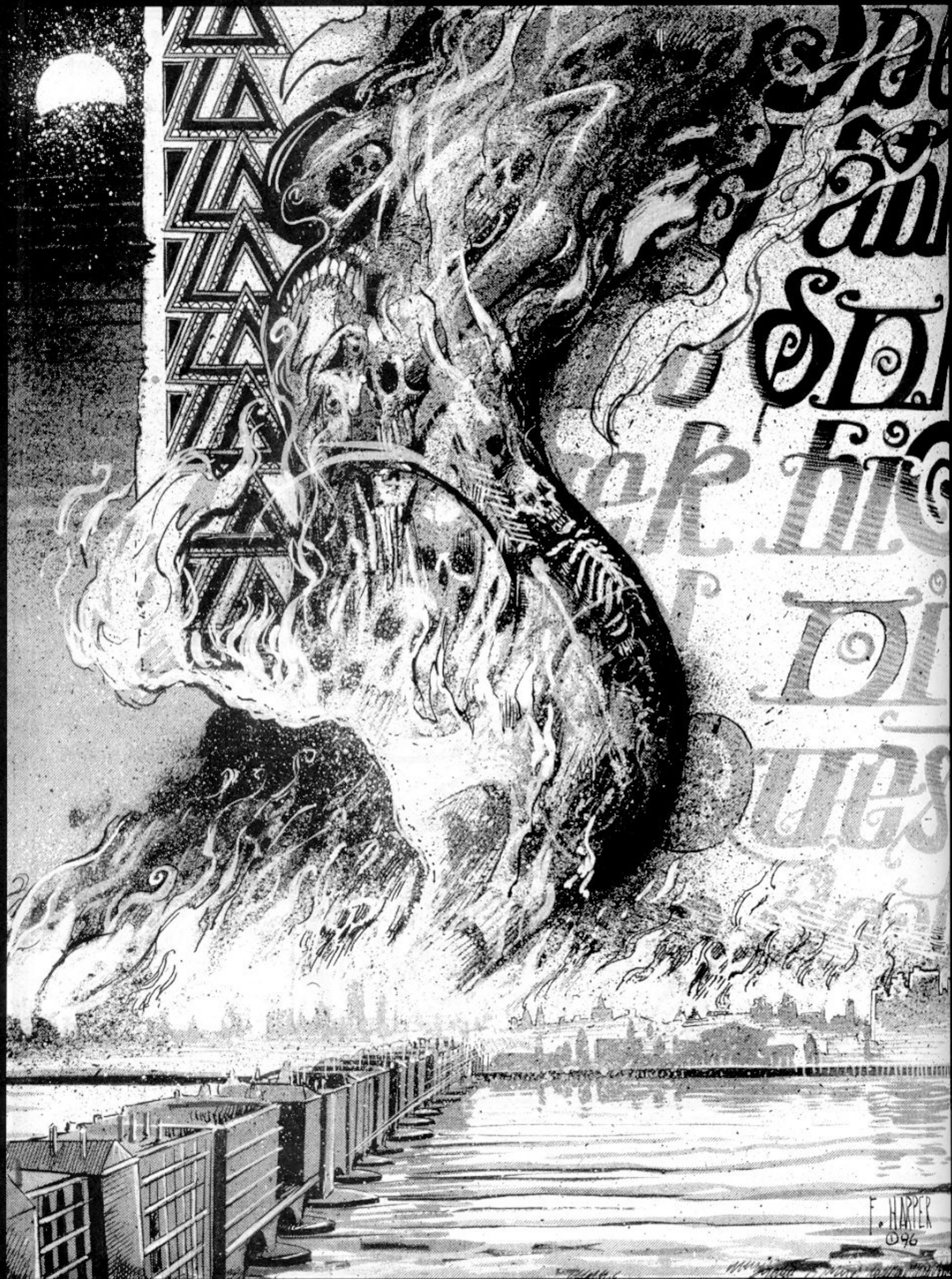
Humanity: 8

Willpower: 7

Image: A slim, beautiful young woman with flame-red hair and brown eyes. She usually wears plain gowns in black or other very dark colors. To see her is like seeing an avatar of anguish.

Roleplaying Hints: The years of your hated existence have taken a toll on your spirit. You are determined, perhaps more so now, to prevent the Giovanni from succeeding. You were under a vow of silence for some time, and it is still your more natural condition. You've also become slightly paranoid with the Giovanni hunting you.





F. HARPER
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Act III: Flash Point

*Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.*

*— Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest burning*

—T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”

“Flash Point” is a fast-paced explosion of violence. The characters in this Act will have little time to get their bearings and to weigh some of the difficult and important choices that they must make. Events may at times overwhelm them, and all decisions may seem ill. Still, there is opportunity for gain, if the characters keep their wits about them as they race toward the Act’s climax.

Prologue

The characters hear that there is a vampire in London who is an extremely adept scholar and possibly one of the few people who can translate the manuscript. The characters learn his name — Mallotte — and hear

that he frequents London’s opulent Strand district. From Switzerland, the shortest route to take is through France, to the port town of Calais. If the players have gained allies throughout the adventure (such as the Founders), they contact Captain Burr in Calais. Burr gives them passage on his ship, the *Sailor’s Moon*. If the characters are not associated with the Founders, the Storyteller should put them on the same ship, for plot purposes, though the voyage may run slightly differently. Through his wraith allies, Ambrogino is aware that the characters have been asking questions about him. He now considers them to be a threat and has allies waiting in ambush on the English Channel.

Scene One (August 29th)

The Death of an Archon

The Sailor's Moon

The *Sailor's Moon* is a fast and sturdy passenger ship, capable of much more arduous voyages than the jaunt across the Channel. The ship is a lightly armed caravel and has twelve 24-pounder cannons for defense. She has four decks and was a top-of-the-line craft about 15 years ago. She is 175 feet long, 45 feet in breadth and weighs in at 1900 tons. She is sleek, fast and in excellent repair. Her three sails are blue and triangular, with white crosses on each of them. The masts and decks are ornately carved and inlaid. The ship's masthead is a whalebone masterpiece, a woman sitting on a crescent moon.

Captain Burr (Captain of the *Sailor's Moon*)

Captain Burr is a ghoul of indeterminate clan affiliation. He is a jovial man in his mid-30s and a veteran sailor. He has orders to get the characters across the Channel as quickly and quietly as possible. Burr has their descriptions before they arrive. He shows all due deference to the characters and will follow their orders up to the point of sacrificing the ship. He has several bottles of blood below deck (12 points worth), which the characters may have if they request it. Captain Burr is also to let the characters drink from him if an emergency arises.

Nature/Demeanor: Director/Confidant

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Leadership 4

Skills: Firearms 3, Melee 3, Sailing 5

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Fortitude 2, Potence 2

Willpower: 5

Image: A weathered man in his early 40s, Burr has a ruddy complexion and a dark brown beard which is going gray. His most noticeable feature is his intense gray eyes. He wears a dark blue top coat with silver trim.

Equipment: Pistol, saber

The Archon

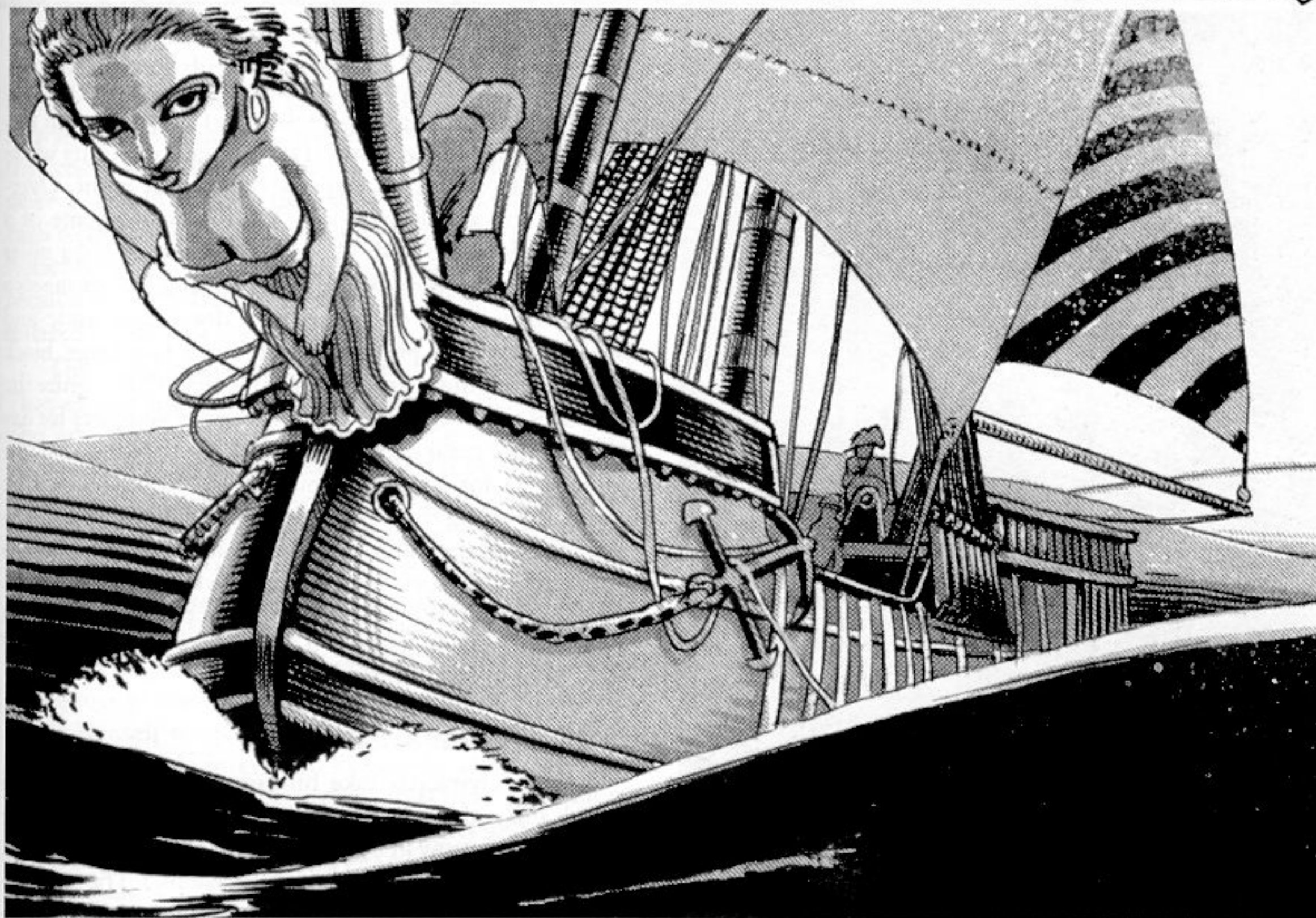
The characters are not the only Kindred aboard the ship. Once they board, they will meet Lester Vance. Vance is a quiet, but ingratiating person. He tells them that he is a scholar and that he is going to London on "personal business." If they show any interest, he will engage the characters in vivid conversations on most subjects, though he tends toward matters of philosophy and poetry. He is a rough contemporary of the characters (if they were embraced in *The Last Supper*) and he becomes very convivial if they reveal that they are of his century. He seems almost the stereotype of the Toreador Artiste, but he is not. If badgered, he eventually confesses to being of Clan Tremere, though he seems slightly embarrassed by the fact. If the characters are still working for the Founders (or pretending to) he also admits that he is the childe of Mistress Fanchon. He will not pry into any of the characters' secrets.

A quiet, scholarly young man one minute and a whirling dervish the next, Lester Vance is thin (almost anorexic), with a shock of strawberry blond hair and faded freckles. He dresses in clothes common to the continental universities. Vance wears cool colors only (ocean colors) and is of English heritage. He wears spectacles and is rarely seen without a book. The Tremere is a master of water Thaumaturgy and can use it to great effect, especially on the ocean. He has two ghouls (Iago and Gretchen), who are both loyal and competent.

Midnight Gambit

Fog lies heavy over the Channel and visibility is rarely more than 100 feet. There is a slight breeze and the ship makes headway. The fog billows around the ship and muffles all sound. It is so thick that the characters cannot see from fore to aft. Lanterns drench the deck in a flickering orange light and crazy blue shadows leap maddeningly in the halo's periphery. Burr curses a colorful and imaginative litany against the cloying "Hell-sent fog." The Storyteller should be evocative in her description of the phantom vessel. Describe how the ship's prow slices through the water, invisible from the top deck, spinning streamers of orange-gray in its wake.

If one of the vampires attempts to use the Thaumaturgy Path: Control Weather to dispel the fog, she will find her magies resisted. Since fog of this sort is natural to the area, dispelling it is difficult (Manipulation + Survival, difficulty 8). Two successes increase visibility by about 50 percent, while four or more successes disperse it completely. The resistance encountered while trying to dispel the fog should send up a flag of warning. The fog is controlled by a Tremere weather wizard, who is on a craft well out of the characters' sight. The Tremere is an ally of Ambrogino's but will not interfere in the coming battle.



About an hour out to sea, the muffled roar of cannons breaks the silence. Out of the fog, guns blazing, appears the Dutch galleon, the *Osprey*. The first two shots go wide, but the third catches the *Sailor's Moon's* fore-mast. Wood splinters as the mast, with its load of canvas, topples to the deck. Two sailors die instantly.

The characters may do whatever they wish during this battle. The *Sailor's Moon* is hopelessly outgunned and initially takes heavy damage. Norge is a hothead, however, and not a particularly talented commander. He is supposed to stay at a distance and bombard the *Sailor's Moon* until it sinks. Instead he orders his men to attempt a boarding, allowing the characters a chance to board his ship in return. Burr would prefer to retreat, but will follow the characters' orders if they tell him to stay and fight. Lester Vance completely sheds his scholarly demeanor and successfully rallies the crew. As the *Osprey* bears down on them, the characters may also notice that a spout of water is swiftly climbing its side. (This is Vance employing his Thaumaturgy spell, Neptune's Might.)

The Storyteller should make the battle as freeform as possible and not weigh it down with too much dice rolling. The crew of the *Sailor's Moon* are badly outnumbered, but they are better trained and are fighting for their lives. If the

characters take the lead during this combat, they should be able to turn the tide of battle. Vance uses his Thaumaturgic abilities to wash enemy sailors over the side.

The battle itself should be short, but brutal. What is initially a boarding action by the crew of the *Osprey* quickly becomes a rout. Despite the violence of the clash, there is still something very dreamlike about the battle, with its billowing fog and muffled screams. The players may sate their bloodlust here, if they are so inclined. If the characters win (a likely outcome), they may decide upon the final fate of their enemies and their ship. The surviving crew of the *Osprey* will sue for mercy, claiming that they were only acting under orders (which is true). If Norge is captured, he refuses to talk, and knows little of worth if forced. (The players may be able to squeeze his master's description out of him, if they are persistent enough.) The *Sailor's Moon* is badly damaged and Burr insists on leaving a skeleton crew on the *Osprey*, so that his master may recoup some of his losses. Vance backs him strongly on this point. Burr indicates that his master will almost certainly pass on some of the profits to the characters, though he will still not divulge his master's identity. If the players did not violate the Masquerade to the crew of the *Osprey*, Vance will spare them if the characters wish it. This is the only "easy" victory that the characters will have in this Act.

The Osprey

The *Osprey* is a much larger ship than the *Sailor's Moon*, but also older and slower. She is a heavily armed galleon and has thirty 32-pounder cannons for defense. She is about 30 years out of date. The *Osprey* is 225 feet long, 55 feet in breadth and weighs 220 tons. She is in poor repair and shows some recent battle damage, probably from the ongoing Anglo-Dutch War. The *Osprey* has five decks, but is not carrying much in the way of cargo. Her powder magazine is nearly exhausted.

Elijah Norge (Captain of the *Osprey*)

Captain Norge was turned into a ghoul by Ambrogino, solely for this attack. He is not powerful as ghouls go. He is, despite his other faults, a ferocious fighter and will be in the thick of the fray. He wields a cutlass with considerable skill and has a brace of pistols. Although he is a ghoul, he is unfamiliar with vampiric abilities and will be very surprised when one of the characters gets up after he shoots them.

Nature/Demeanor: Bravo/Bravo

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Leadership 2

Skills: Firearms 3, Melee 3, Sailing 3

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 1

Willpower: 5

Image: A huge hulk of a man in his late 20s, Norge has fiery red hair and a bristling beard. He gets most of what he wants through intimidation. (His crew dislikes him.) Norge wears a Dutch naval captain's uniform with a yellow sash.

Equipment: Two pistols, cutlass.

Dover

The rest of the voyage is relatively uneventful and the *Sailor's Moon* reaches the English port of Dover with two hours to spare before dawn. Dover is famous for its white chalk cliffs, which are impressive, even at night. Overlooking the sizable harbor is Dover Castle, home of a powerful Ventrue lord. Dover is approximately 65 miles southeast of London. While disembarking, Vance meets a withered old man (a ghoul) who draws him aside and speaks with him privately. There are two large black carriages waiting nearby. The characters will recognize the carriages as the lightproof variety used by vampires for day travel. After speaking with the man, Vance insists that he must leave for London immediately, even though that means traveling through the day. He will not reveal why it is so important, but he is clearly distraught. He offers the characters transportation, if they wish to accompany him. In either event, Burr wishes the characters well and again promises to get their share of the *Osprey's* sale to them (if they went along with this plan).

The Assassination

If the characters take him up on his offer, Vance's ghouls make them as comfortable as possible for the ride ahead. (If they stay in Dover they miss the following scene, but must still deal with its repercussions.) The carriage drivers are quiet, deferential ghouls. Vance's ghouls ride lookout with the drivers. The carriages are well appointed and comfortable. Despite Vance's sudden trepidation, the players are probably still flying high from their recent victory and the miles spin by rapidly. Vance is a congenial traveling companion and offers to show the characters the sights of London, once his business is completed. Vance also mentions that their destination is the Rosewood Inn in London's Piazza district. Shortly before dawn he draws the shutters and the carriage's interior plunges into darkness. One by one they fall asleep.

The characters are awakened by the noonday sun gently dappling through the carriage and searing their flesh. (All characters instantly take two dice of aggravated damage. The sunlight is not direct, since they are protected by the carriage.) The door is open and several pairs of strong hands swiftly pull Vance into the direct sunlight. As they do, his flesh bursts into flames and threatens to set the carriage on fire. If the abductors manage to get the Archon clear of the carriage before the characters interfere, the door swings shut, plunging the carriage again into darkness.

Characters who have the Merit: Light Sleeper, or cast the Ritual: Wake with Morning's Freshness awaken before the door flings open, as the carriage crashes onto its side in a ditch. They may attempt to defend themselves and prevent the Archon's abduction. This attempt should be difficult, dangerous and ultimately futile. The

characters are already injured and continue to take damage every round the door is open. (Two dice aggravated damage per round, unless they hunker down under blankets and stay very still. They take even more damage if they encounter direct sunlight.) Furthermore they must make both Humanity and Courage rolls (difficulty 6) each round to stay conscious and to prevent going into Röttschreck. All characters are -2 to their Dice Pools because of the general situation, as well as any minuses suffered because of their injuries.

The eight abductors are masked and well armed. They expect some resistance and fire on any character who attempts to stop them. They are ghouls and thus used to dealing with Kindred. This is not their first time doing this. If, by some miracle, the characters manage to keep Vance in the carriage, or capture a ghoul as a hostage, the other ghouls move to a distance and start shooting holes through the carriage. This action fills the carriage with more and more sunlight, until the characters either acquiesce or are too weak to defend themselves. Vance may at some point leap from the carriage, surrendering himself to spare his traveling companions. The ghouls show little interest in killing the characters, unless they get in the way. The characters hear the Archon scream twice, then the crackling of flames and the hoof beats of retreating horses. The characters eventually fall back to sleep and do not awaken again until nightfall. If the characters have ghouls who engage the attackers outside the carriage, they too are killed.

Ghouls

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2 (4 in this situation)

Skills: Firearms 3, Melee 2, Ride 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Investigation 1, Occult 2 (one ghoul has Medicine 3)

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Resources 2

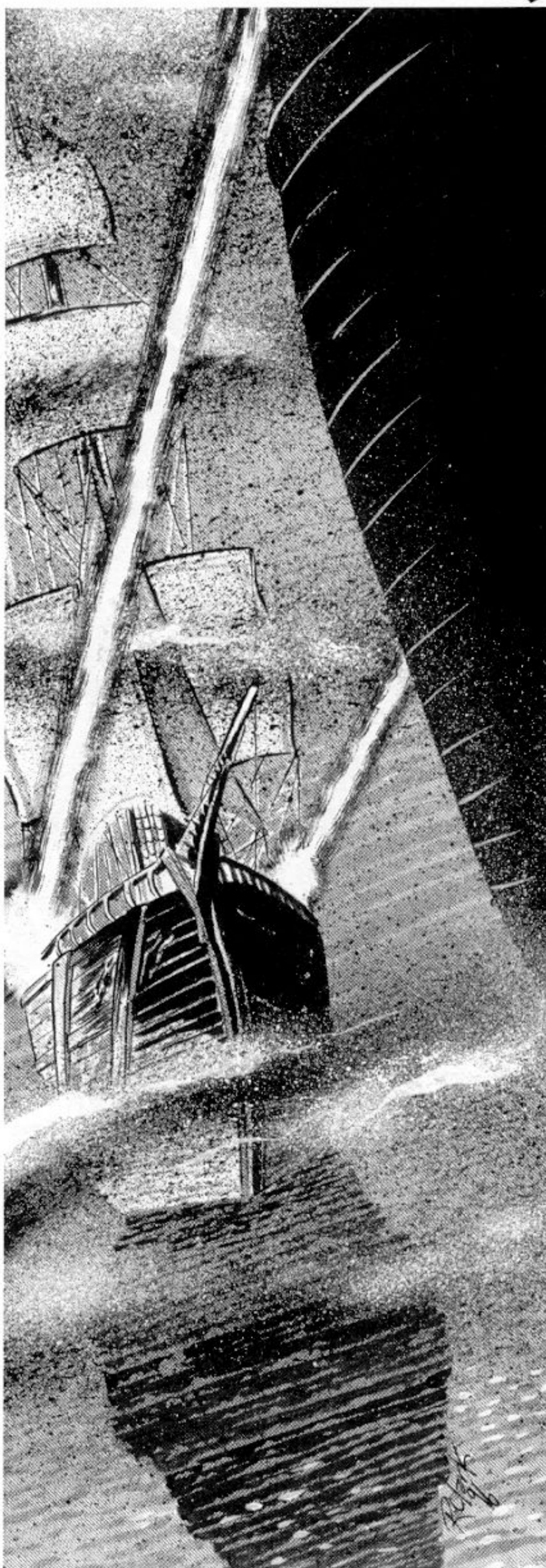
Disciplines: Celerity 2, Fortitude 2, Potence 2

Willpower: 6

Image: All eight ghouls look like masked highwaymen. Their faces are completely hidden by wrappings of black cloth and they wear brown leather jerkins. They have two pistols each and carry curved, jeweled daggers. One carries a black doctor's bag.

Equipment: Horse, leather jerkin (1 pt. armor), dagger, two pistols, mask.

Note: All five ghouls are conditioned against mental tampering. Any attempts to stop them through Presence or Dominate are at +3 difficulty. If a character manages to tear one of their masks off (Brawl, difficulty 8), she will see a brown-skinned man of perhaps Egyptian ancestry.





Nightfall

The characters have no doubt covered themselves as well as possible, if there are holes in the carriage. Unless their Fortitude protected them, they are all at least slightly damaged and some may be in very bad shape. The wrecks of the carriages are something of a mystery. Four of the eight horses somehow have slipped their bonds and are grazing peacefully nearby. Two horses lie crushed under one of the carriages, while another two are missing. The rear axles on both carriages are snapped cleanly in two. Vance's ghouls lie nearby, as do the two drivers. All of them were shot at least twice and then decapitated. Their bodies are in a surprising state of advanced decomposition. Maggots infest their putrefying flesh and flies drone busily around them.

The charred remains of the Archon lie nearby. His chest is cut neatly open, as if by a surgeon's knife, and his heart is missing. His hand grips an ornate locket, scorched slightly, but otherwise intact. Inside is a painting of a beautiful Spanish woman. Some of the characters may notice (Intelligence + Alertness, difficulty 8) that the image in the locket resembles the masthead on the *Sailor's Moon*. All of Vance's personal effects (which were in two boxes attached to the roof) are also missing. The only other artifact left is a book on the floor of the carriage. The book is filled with handwritten poetry (mostly of a spiritual or natural subject matter). Any of the characters who have poetic sensibilities will realize that the poetry is of the highest caliber.

The characters may investigate the scene of the crime and discover several clues. Both carriages' front axles are shattered, but there is no logical reason why they broke. No obstacles block the road. It is almost as if the axles just chose that moment to break. Closer examination reveals that a viscous, pungent white slime covers the break-points of each axle. The slime is rapidly dissolving into nothingness, but may be preserved temporarily by sealing it in a dark, airtight container. The Storyteller should allow the players to play detective for a while, perhaps throwing out some more clues as rewards for particularly astute detective work. If the characters use Spirit's Touch on something that the ghouls touched (i.e., the carriage door), they may discover several things about the attackers. (Perception + Empathy, difficulty 6.) The players may discover one of the facts listed below for each success:

The bandits were ghouls of Egyptian ancestry and their auras were rapidly rippling (frenzied) throughout the attack. (This fact belies the methodical, almost clinical precision of the attack itself.) If they get a "snapshot" of the scene, they see the ghoul with the doctor's bag cut out Vance's heart with surgical precision. His aura indicates that he was confused, however, and also reveals the presence of magic.

Eventually the Storyteller should remind the players that their characters have many miles to ride before they reach London. If the characters miss this scenario by spending the night in Dover, they find Vance's body on the road the next night, but they do not find any of the slime on the axles. They are already known as traveling companions of Vance's and the same parties in London (see below) will still wish to question them.

Scene Two (August 30th) Arrival

*O London is a dainty place,
A great and gallant city!
For all the street are pav'd with gold,
And all the folks are witty.*
—Anonymous

London – 1666 (Kine)

A pall of devastation shrouds London. In the past year 80 thousand people — one in six Londoners — have died in the worst outbreak of the plague since the Black Death three centuries earlier. The city is still reeling. Many blame the troubles on diabolism.

Accordingly, the Inquisition suddenly finds itself in a position of power. The Witch Finder General rides throughout London at the head of an angry mob, dispensing Godly justice on the scions of Satan.

The nation is battling through hard times. It has witnessed the execution of King Charles I by the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. Under Cromwell, Protestant morality was enforced at sword point and all “papist trivialities” such as theatres, Christmas and high art were forbidden.

Despite recent disasters, however, England as a whole is on the rise and will, over the next century, become the center of the world’s preeminent empire. This task is difficult considering the nation’s exchequer, depleted by an unpopular war with the Netherlands (the Anglo-Dutch War) and by the extravagant tastes of King Charles II. But after years of Cromwell’s dour “populism,” the people of London rejoiced at the return of Charles II in 1660. King Charles brought with him the airy grandeur and elegance of Louis XIV’s palace in Versailles (where he had been in exile).

London is still in many ways a medieval city. The main bulk of the city still lives within a great defensive wall, though the city’s population has exploded out of the wall’s confines in recent decades. The streets are narrow, winding affairs and are difficult to navigate. Much of London, especially its slums, has a cramped, claustrophobic feeling to it. Most of the city’s buildings are still wood, with thatched roofs. This is a perfect breeding ground for rats and the plague. The threat of fire also looms large.

But London is in a state of transition, from an insular English city to a nexus of world trade. Hitherto uncommon goods flood into London from all over the world, including the Far East and the American Colonies. Elegant salons spring up throughout the wealthy Strand and Piazza districts, where gentlemen drink imported coffee (new to England) and discuss modern philosophies and the issues of the day. The city’s nobility fled during the

1665 outbreak, but are now back in large numbers. A growing merchant class is gaining power to equal that of the old nobility. The recent foundation of the College of Physicians (where the circulation of blood was first studied) and the contemporary writings of such philosophers as John Locke make London an intellectual hub. London is now second only to Paris in population and as a cultural center of Europe.

Storyteller’s Note: More historically astute players may blurt out that 1666 is the year of the Great Fire, thus ruining your surprise. The best reply to this is to pronounce authoritatively that: “This is the World of Darkness and there never was a Great Fire in the World of Darkness.” This is, of course, a lie, but it should keep them guessing.

London – 1666 (Kindred)

London is one of the most strategically important cities in the world. Fortunately Prince Mithras has, for reasons of his own, been most accommodating to the Camarilla. His transition from feudal Ventrue chieftain to Camarilla prince occurred (seemingly) overnight. The Camarilla has gained a secure stronghold in London, while Mithras enjoys a strong aura of legitimacy. Mithras rigorously enforces the Masquerade and the other Traditions of the Camarilla. Kindred from all Camarilla clans (except the Tremere) are welcomed to the city, though newcomers are carefully watched for the first 50 years or so.

Of course, internecine bickering among the various clans remains rife. While the city’s kine blame the recent plague on anything from the Pope to the Antichrist, the prince blames it on the Tremere. Indeed, rumor has it that the Tremere-hating Mithras supports the recent rise of the Inquisition as a tool to be employed against the Warlocks.

The Toreador have proved a particularly thorny problem for the prince and, for a time, held sway over such British monarchs as Charles I. Now, however, the Ventrue are the unquestioned rulers of the city, though the Toreador retain control of the city’s Elysium. Other clans wield varying degrees of power and have their own agendas.

The once-powerful Brujah, through their pawns the Levellers (mortal antimonarchists), struck out against the royal interests of Charles I, only to find that they in turn were pawns of the Ventrue against the Toreador.

Even in 1666 most Gangrel avoid London proper, but maintain havens around its periphery. They are currently on the warpath because the childe of their leader was recently found headless in the Thames. (Her head was later found, with eyes gouged out and hair shaved.)

The Malkavians of London are essentially leaderless and without direction. They skulk at the edges of Kindred society, with little effect on its politics. Some rumor, however, that the powerful Sabbat Malkavian elder Vasantasena has drawn near. Rumors of her presence have placed the entire Camarilla hierarchy on alert, but so far they have little evidence to support these rumors.

Other clans populate the city in varying numbers, but have little direct influence on its vampiric institutions. For more information on the Kindred of London, see *A World of Darkness*.

The Rosewood Inn

If the characters ride swiftly after the assassination and do not stop along the way, they reach London about three hours before dawn. Since they have no other information, they will probably head for the Rosewood Inn, as suggested by Vance before his death. The inn's front door is open. The proprietor, a sleepy-eyed man named Charles Robin, may be roused from his back room by rapping on the desk. The inn is a solid, unpretentious merchant-class affair. It is clean, but unadorned. There is a tavern connected, though it currently has only one occupant.

Robin rents rooms to the characters, giving the best rooms to those whom he perceives to be of higher station. If any of the characters dress as nobility, he begs their pardon for the plainness and general unworthiness of his inn. He swears that "this honest man will make you as comfortable as these dark times allow." He assures them that he is expanding the inn to "make it fit for such lords and ladies as yourselves." He will then hint that he is looking for investors. Any character who shows an interest in his plans will immediately be in his good graces.

Robin is in reality a ghoul, working for a Ventrue ancilla named Joseph Gaiman (the tavern's occupant). The inn is a meeting place of sorts for local Kindred. Gaiman is waiting for Lester Vance and is disturbed by his lateness. He will approach the characters immediately after they check in, unless they approach him first. His Camarilla superiors have told him about the characters and he recognizes them. He politely welcomes them to his inn and then questions them vigorously about Vance's whereabouts. If the characters are forthcoming, he looks disturbed and insists that the characters must see the prince immediately. He demurs if the characters question him in return, saying only that the prince will explain all. If the characters deny knowing Vance, he will drop the subject and then covertly summon the prince's soldiers to "escort" the characters to the prince. If the characters refuse or try to flee, a detachment of Ventrue strong-arms led by Valerius and Geoffrey Leigh (see below) will bring them in by force. With a few hours remaining until dawn, the characters are whisked to the prince's haven.

The Prince and the Justicar

Mithras' haven is an opulent mansion in the Strand, overlooking the Thames River. It is ornate, but not lavish, and an almost Spartan sensibility underlies its overall effect. An elderly servant answers the door. The characters are greeted with the respect due their station (unless they are there under duress, or are blatantly hostile).

The prince awaits them in a large drawing room which contains hunting trophies from many lands. Weapons and art of all sorts adorn the walls. The most commanding sight in the room, however, is Prince Mithras himself, who stands stern-faced with eyes unnervingly fixated on the characters.

The prince is of medium height, has a warrior's physique and is surprisingly swarthy for a vampire. He has classically handsome features and dark, shoulder-length hair. An aura of overwhelming age and power surrounds him. He wears an expertly-tailored hunting uniform, and mud encases his boots.

Three other vampires — two men and a woman — flank Mithras. The first man, Valerius, has long red hair and a neatly-clipped beard. He wears garb similar to the prince's. The other man, Geoffrey Leigh, is lean, muscular and extremely large. He looks like a great cat set to pounce. He wears weathered traveling clothes, and bloodstains cake his shirt. The woman, Violetta, is all leisurely grace and has a warm, engaging smile on her lips. She wears an ornate purple gown that is the height of fashion in Paris. She is of Spanish blood and is one of the most beautiful women that the characters have ever seen. The characters may make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7) to note that she is the woman both on the *Sailor's Moon's* bow and in the locket. (If any of the characters are French or Toreador, they also recognize her as the Justicar of Paris and the childe of Paris' Prince Villon.)

Mithras silently summons Gaiman forward, and Gaiman whispers in his ear. The prince then turns toward the characters and sternly questions the characters about the loss of Vance. If the players try to bluster, evade or be anything but servile and forthcoming in their answers, the prince will explode with rage, threatening all manners of punishments if they do not cooperate.

Characters who cooperate are better treated, but not by much. The prince is abrupt, almost surly, throughout the interview. Neither of the other two men says anything, but Violetta interjects her own questions. She, by contrast, is gracious throughout. Her voice is like the finest velvet, but with a hint of iron beneath it. Her violet eyes regard the characters with a mixture of sympathy and amusement.

If the characters truthfully recount their adventures and worked to help Vance in the carriage, the prince will appear somewhat mollified. If they recount their story truthfully, but neglected to help Vance, the prince calls them cowards and question them vigorously as to why they didn't aid him. This line of questioning applies even if the characters are not Camarilla. If the characters are still working for the Founders (or pretending to), they are under orders not to reveal their mission to anyone. This presumably includes the prince.

The prince, of course, wants to know their business in London, but does not press the issue unless the characters blunder badly. Violetta uses her Auspex to read the characters' minds throughout and tells the prince if they lie. (She does not call them on minor, personal points.) Violetta asks the characters about their general origins, and some of her questions come uncomfortably close to the events in *The Last Supper* (if they were Embraced in that book), though she does not mention any names. If the characters lie to cover up the truth, she nods silently and does not contradict

them. If they begin to spill their guts, she says, "Silence, my little hens. Now is not the time to speak of such things." If the characters don't pick up on this, they may make a Wits + Alertness roll (difficulty 5) to recognize the words and inflection as those of Durga Syn.

The hour is late and the prince is tired. He questions the players on their loyalty to the Camarilla. If the characters state that they are loyal, the prince becomes somewhat more sympathetic. He states plainly that an enemy of the Camarilla's is in London, but neither he nor Violetta knows his identity. (They think Vance did.) If the characters mention Ambrogino, the prince responds with interest, but states that the enemy he speaks of is not Ambrogino (it is in fact the Setite Count Jocalo, who will cause disruptions of various sorts throughout the story). The prince then enlists the characters, using a mixture of carrots and sticks to investigate the matter. The characters may make deals at this point and get anything reasonable, up to a minor boon. If the characters ask for a haven, Violetta promises them one tomorrow night.

If the characters say that they are not Camarilla, or were brought in against their wills, the prince threatens them with death unless they agree to investigate the matter. If the characters ask about Mallotte, the prince's servant gives them his address, but the prince warns them that Mallotte is a member of the Camarilla in good standing and is not to be harassed. The prince dismisses the characters either rudely or politely, depending on how the meeting went.

The characters return to the Rosewood Inn 15 minutes before dawn. They receive lightproof rooms and are told to meet Gaiman in the tavern the next evening, for another appointment with the Justicar. If the characters question the prince about what he was doing before their arrival (regarding the mud on his boots, etc.), the prince snaps at them not to be impertinent. This actually has nothing to do with the rest of the adventure, but it may keep the characters guessing.

Mithras (Prince of London)

No Attributes are given for Mithras, since he is not an active participant in this scenario. He is, however, a fourth-generation Methuselah and not to be trifled with. He is currently concerned with "weightier matters," including the disappearance of the Ventrue Justicar. Ultimately Mithras considers himself a "plain soldier" (he is, in fact, a spectacular one) and will have little interest in the manuscript, even if he finds out about it. His primary interest is in keeping the peace in his city.

Roleplaying Notes: Seasoned veteran of 100 wars, you are usually a straightforward man. You are plain-spoken and have little patience for prevarication or unnecessary subtlety. Move with the grace and precision of a born warrior, with no flashy or unnecessary movements. Always look others in the eye and try to hold their gazes long enough to make them uncomfortable. Speak with quiet authority and in a tone that brooks no questioning. You are a strong advocate of the nascent Camarilla, which you regard as a useful tool. You enforce the Masquerade



vigorously. You are indulgent toward most of the other Camarilla clans, except the Tremere (though you tolerated Vance). Over the centuries you have gathered the Kindred of the British Isles under your banner. You rule with an undisguised iron fist. Some believe that you control (or at least manipulate) the English Inquisition to curtail Tremere activity. For more information on Mithras see *A World of Darkness*.

Valerius (Prince's Lieutenant)

Valerius was Embraced by the powerful Ventrue Bindusara (an ancient Ventrue scholar and patriarch; see *Clanbook: Ventrue*) after sustaining a fatal injury at the Battle of Hastings. Since that time he has fallen in with Prince Mithras and become quite a national power in his own right. He is capable, but cautious in most dealings. Valerius is very interested in any dirt he can get on the Ambers (see below).

Clan: Ventrue

Sire: Bindusara

Generation: 7th

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

Apparent Age: 25

Haven: North London Estate

Nature/Demeanor: Traditionalist/Traditionalist

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

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

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

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

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

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 4, Influence 5, Mentor 4 (Mithras), Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 3

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 8

Merits: Prestigious Sire, Political Ties, Judicial Ties

Image: A wiry, athletic man in his early 30s, Valerius has long red hair and a neatly-cropped beard. He wears well-tailored, conservative clothing. He usually has a long, thin rapier at his side.

Roleplaying Notes: A master with a blade, you are the prince's favorite and his strong right hand. You are the quintessential Ventrue: polished on the surface, but quick with a knife if things get ugly. You administer many of the prince's holdings and the prince's continental associates consider you a "sterling fellow." You serve the prince's interests well and view his interests as England's interests.

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



Scene Three (August 31st) Chance Meetings

The Witch Finder General

The next evening the characters awaken and may head down to the tavern. Gaiman is not there yet, but the bar is filling up with customers, mostly merchants. The tavern is raucous and a few of the men sing drunkenly. Several barmaids serve drinks and are being generally manhandled. The barmaids play this off with a jovial defensiveness. Rose, one of the barmaids, does not fit in this general milieu. She seems somewhat downcast. Before the characters can question her, however, the doors swing open.

Doctor Hopkins (a.k.a. The Witch Finder General) has had a long, hard day bringing the scions of Satan to justice. He has overseen two hangings, two burnings and one “miraculous conversion.” He is hot, tired and only wishes for a mug of beer to take the edge off the day. This tavern seemed like a nice one from the outside. The last thing he expects is to get a shower of hot coffee thrown in his face by an angry and screeching barmaid.

Several of the customers scramble for cover. Rose screams something about Dr. Hopkins murdering her father. The “doctor” smiles thinly and asks, “Do I know you, young lady?” Rose attempts to scratch out his eyes out. If the characters do anything besides restrain Rose, they are stopped by Gaiman, who has just come in the door. Hopkins’ entourage glowers angrily and one hisses, “witch.” Gaiman apologizes profusely to Hopkins (using Presence) and then summarily fires Rose and escorts her to the door. General laughter greets her exit and Hopkins is appeased.

If the characters take Rose’s side in this, despite Gaiman’s warning, they should be able to face Hopkins down or scare him away. (He is only human, after all.) Any embarrassing retreat for Dr. Hopkins draws nervous laughter from the patrons in the bar. Hopkins will become all the more fanatical for this embarrassment, however. If the characters question Gaiman about Rose, he explains that her father, a local vicar, was hanged during the plague. Gaiman owed her father a favor and took Rose under his wing. He fired her to save her from the mob, which might otherwise have convened an impromptu hanging court. He adds that Hopkins is not to be molested, by order of Prince Mithras. (Why create martyrs?) Gaiman adds that the Justicar awaits them at the city’s Elysium.

If the characters follow Rose, they hear a much more tearful version of the same story. Rose thanks the characters for their concern, but says that she only wishes to be left alone.

Dr. Hopkins

Dr. Hopkins, the Witch Finder General, makes quite a good living in the fearful, rural climate of Restoration England. A losing war with the Dutch, paired with the recent plague, has incited a mood of fear and hysteria throughout the land. Rumors of French and papist conspiracies run rampant and the works of Satan are seen in almost everything that goes wrong. A year ago, during the zenith of the Poor’s Plague, Dr. Hopkins and his “satellite” Mr. Stearne rode into town. The plague, they said, was not a divine punishment, but rather the work of Satan’s agents. As proof of his words, Dr. Hopkins showed how the Vicar of Ludgate (a known papist) was, in truth, a witch. After a few hours alone with the general, the warlock confessed to all manners of perversities. He told how he and seven others (whom he had named) sent Satan, in the form of a black cat, to loose plague upon his parish. He hanged the vicar and the grateful parish paid him 100 shillings for his divine aid. The Witch Finder General has been living in high style since then. Unfortunately, plague deaths are rapidly dwindling (along with the general population’s fear of this type of death). Doctor Hopkins realizes that he must find something else to frighten them.

Elysium

Storyteller’s Note: Skip this scene if the characters are not working for the Founders.

The characters arrive at the new King’s Theatre on Drury Lane. The theatre was built after the death of Cromwell and is one of the city’s main cultural centers. The aristocracy of London currently favors a new play by the French playwright Moliere (one of Violetta’s favorites).

The carriage drops off the characters at the stage door. An actor ushers them inside. The actor produces an ornate key and lets the characters into a plush conservatory backstage. The conservatory contains plants of every description, and its walls are bedecked with paintings. Four musicians play a soft period piece, and amber oil lamps provide a pleasant glow.

The Justicar greets them warmly and asks if they require anything to make them comfortable. She will supply up to two points worth of blood if they request it. Geoffrey Leigh stands quietly nearby and appears uninterested in the proceedings.

Once the characters are comfortable, Violetta repeats her questions of last night, cautioning the characters to tell only the truth. If the characters relate the entire truth, she listens with interest and interjects probing questions. If the characters demur or lie, she suddenly launches into a rather melodramatic recounting of their doings in *The Last Supper* (excluding the Blood Egg)



and, to a lesser degree, the first two Acts of this book. There seem to be few holes in her knowledge. She then compliments the characters for their diligence, but assures them that no further deception is necessary. If the characters still profess ignorance, she sighs and reveals that she is an ally of Durga Syn's and mentions the prophecy of the Blood Egg. (She does not know Durga Syn's current whereabouts, however.)

She reiterates Durga Syn's belief in the characters' predestined roles in this unfolding drama, and says that she can help them if they desire it. She then freely answers most of the characters' questions, though she will not reveal any of the Founders' inner workings. She also professes to know little of the nature of the characters' destiny, except that she believes it is for the good. She confirms that Ambrogino and the Giovanni clan are central to the outcome, but that they are not the only forces at work. She professes ignorance of the identity of Mithras' target, but states that she believes he is also a major factor. She suspects the attack on Vance might have been instigated by this "enemy."

If the characters give her Vance's locket or poetry book (either now or last night), she looks wistful and thanks them. She gives them the address for their haven, if they requested one (a swanky home on the Piazza). The Justicar tells them about several Elysium safehouses around the city, which they may use in emergencies. Violetta warns them that she cannot become directly involved at this time, but that they may reach her through the actor they met earlier. If the characters show her proper respect, they now have a powerful, though erratic, ally and advocate. Before they leave, Violetta warns them that Mallotte is more dangerous than he seems, but is still not to be molested.

If the characters ask about Ambrogino's whereabouts, she says that she does not know (he is very hard to track). She suggests beginning their search at the Venetian banking houses on Lombard Street. Geoffrey Leigh ushers the characters out the door and reveals that he is the owner of the *Sailor's Moon*. He promises the characters their cut in the sale of the *Osprey*, once it occurs. Violetta dismisses them and they may now pursue their own ends.

Violetta (Camarilla Justicar of Paris)

The daughter of nobility and changeling kin, Violetta flouted convention at an early age by becoming an actress. (Females were not allowed on the stage at this time.) Despite the sensation this caused, she became successful throughout France and Spain. She quickly came to the attention of Francois Villon (now Prince of Paris), then little more than a neonate himself. The two conducted a torrid love affair before Villon Embraced her. Despite their initial sire/childe relationship, Violetta quickly proved herself Villon's equal and has even surpassed him in some ways. The two are no longer lovers, but maintain a cordial relationship. Violetta took up with the Gangrel Geoffrey Leigh during the late 1400s and he remains her most permanent and consistent lover. Violetta is something of a vampiric prodigy and quickly impressed the Founders with her abilities. She is now one of the primary forces within the European Camarilla.

Clan: Toreador
Sire: Francois Villon (Prince of Paris)
Generation: 6th
Embrace: A.D. 1250 (born 1231)
Apparent Age: 19
Haven: The King's Theatre (Drury Lane)
Nature/Demeanor: Architect/Bon Vivant
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 7
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 6
Talents: Acting 5, Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 5, Empathy 6, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5
Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 5, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Music 5, Security 5, Stealth 5, Survival 2
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Faerie Lore 4, Finance 4, Investigation 6, Law 3, Linguistics 4, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Politics 5
Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 4, Chimerstry 5, Dominate 5, Fortitude 3, Mytherceria 2, Obfuscate 4, Potence 2, Presence 7
Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 6, Fame 2, Herd 5, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 6
Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 5, Courage 5
Humanity: 8
Willpower: 9

Merits: Iron Will, Eidetic Memory, Faerie Affinity, Prestigious Sire, Political Ties, Baby Face
Image: Violetta is captivating in every way and is easily one of the most beautiful Kindred in the world. She is of Spanish heritage and is slightly olive in complexion. Her straight black hair has purplish highlights. Her eyes are perhaps her most compelling feature and are a light violet hue. She wears only the finest and most expensive clothing and is always at the forefront of fashion. Some whisper that she has faerie blood. She also appears more human than most Kindred. She exudes a great air of authority and few challenge her opinion on anything. Violetta travels with her coterie, which consists predominantly, but not exclusively, of Toreador Artistes.

Roleplaying Notes: At the tender age of 400, you realize that you are new to the games of the Jyhad. Although your capabilities have launched you to one of the most powerful positions in the nascent Camarilla, you are not always as sure of yourself as you seem. You are something of a sensualist and consider this one of your greatest strengths. There are few people whom you cannot bring around to your way of seeing things. You are a great lover of the finer things in life. When occasionally pushed to questionable deeds, you comfort yourself that what you do benefits all Kindred. You also have your own private agenda that has little to do with the Jyhad.

Equipment: Fashionable clothing, poisoned dagger (aggravated damage), private ship

Note: The Justicar is under the direct authority of the Inner Circle (the Founders) and has unprecedented powers to act. She senses, however, that a greater game is afoot and will not become too personally involved in the characters' doings. She will instead attempt to engage the characters as proxies. She is not above using seduction, threat or Presence to ensure their loyalties, but prefers to win her allies honestly. She is aware that the characters have been in recent contact with the Sabbat and does not trust them. She does not bring this up, however, since she has orders not to.

Geoffrey Leigh (Camarilla Archon)

Born in the 11th century Byzantine Empire, Geoffrey Leigh (then named Justinian) was a frontier noble and a warrior against the Seljuq Turks. In one great night battle, Justinian found himself his garrison's only survivor. Resigned to his imminent death, he nevertheless fought on viciously, killing several more Turks. His prowess impressed the Turks' leader, a powerful old vampire warrior. The vampire personally attacked Justinian, letting him attack fruitlessly and goading him to greater feats of war skill. When he decided that Justinian was a worthy candidate, he Embraced him and then left him to fend for himself. Justinian changed his name when the Byzantine Empire fell and wandered Europe and Asia, eventually meeting Violetta and taking up with the Camarilla.

Clan: Gangrel
Sire: Unknown
Generation: 6th
Embrace: A.D. 1042 (born 1015)
Apparent Age: 27
Haven: King's Theatre, Country Manor
Nature/Demeanor: Rebel/Survivor
Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 6, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2
Skills: Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 2, Firearms 5, Melee 6 (Sword), Music 3, Repair 4, Sailor 5, Security 4, Stealth 5, Survival 5
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Finance 2, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Tracking 6
Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Fortitude 7, Obfuscate 2, Potence 4, Presence 2, Protean 6
Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Resources 4, Retainers 3, Status 3
Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 4, Courage 5
Humanity: 7
Willpower: 8



Merits: Iron Will, Code of Honor, Berserker, Acute Hearing, Acute Vision, Huge Size

Image: An extremely large and imposing man in his mid-20s. Leigh has a bristling mustache and long, wavy brown hair. Like Mithras, his skin is somewhat swarthy by Kindred standards. He usually wears well-made, but weathered, traveling clothes. There is something very feral about him. He walks with an imperious stride. Despite his fearsome demeanor, he is a convivial and even jovial person. He has a booming laugh and appears to enjoy his unlife to the fullest.

Roleplaying Notes: You view soldiering as the noblest of professions and stringently follow the code of chivalry, though many consider these notions *passé*. The two great loves in your life, however, are Violetta and the wild. You are especially comfortable in the wilds of the New World and spend much of your time in the American colonies. You are monogamous and have not taken a different lover since taking up with Violetta, although you know she does not return the favor. You tolerate her trysts (and even her lovers) with a blend of slight jealousy and amusement. These affairs never last long and you are always there when they end. Although you are older than Violetta, you realize that you do not possess the necessary subtlety (or the desire) to play a major role in the Jihad.

Equipment: Sword, leather jerkin (1 point armor), travel gear

Note: Geoffrey seems to have a very strong rapport with Mithras and the two men seem similar in many ways.

Choices

It is about 10:00 p.m. The characters may do what they wish. In reality, however, their choices are limited by what they know. They may go to the Venetian quarter or they may seek out Mallotte. If they decide to search for the "unknown enemy," they have little luck and waste much of the night. If they decide to escape the situation by leaving town (now, or at any time during this Act) they must accept the dire consequences (Mithras' Blood Hunt and the wrath of the Founders).

Venetian Blind

If the characters decide to investigate Ambrogino's whereabouts, they may head for Lombard Street. The Italian merchants' quarter consists of four major and several minor business institutions. The main businesses are a banking house, an import/export house (with a satellite warehouse on the Thames), a clerical office and the Red Bear Tavern. All of these institutions are property of the Giovanni, which exists in London at the sufferance of the prince. The head of local operations is a Giovanni named Gillespi.

If the characters come to the district asking suspicious questions (or just generally skulking), they quickly come to Gillespi's attention. The Giovanni population

of London consists of only four Giovanni: Gillespi, an accountant and two enforcers. Gillespi's retainers are lesser vampires of the 8th and 9th generation. Seven ghouls are at his disposal. Gillespi does everything he can from behind the scenes, hoping to discourage and mislead the characters.

Characters may gain audience with Gillespi by several means; allow them to roleplay this out. (Perhaps the players pretend to be merchants or local Camarilla officials.) If it is unavoidable, Gillespi will meet the characters in the warehouse and tell them that they have no business in the district. He politely but firmly insists they leave. His entire coterie is with him, as are five heavily armed ghouls. Additionally, an eerie ambience taints the place. (If the Storyteller has **Wraith: The Oblivion**, it is a Level 3 Haunt). If pressed, Gillespi will confess that he knows of Ambrogino, but will deny that he is in the city. This is, of course, a lie.

The Storyteller should try to discourage the characters from becoming violent at this point, but they may feel that this is the only way to gain answers. Any such fight will almost certainly be loud and attract local kine attention, thus endangering the Masquerade. If his retainers are losing, Gillespi will attempt to escape through one of the warehouse's many secret passages. (Perception + Investigation, difficulty 8; two successes needed to detect.) If they capture Gillespi, he will not talk, even under torture, though he might break down at a point. He is fiercely loyal to the Giovanni and knows the penalties that he will face if he betrays either them or Ambrogino. His underlings know little of worth. They may be forced to confess that Ambrogino is in town, though they have never seen him.

Ambrogino

Ambrogino, as the characters may have deduced, is in London to contact the scholar, Mallotte. He has already visited him once and the first few pages of the manuscript have already been translated. Ambrogino knows that the characters are also in town and that they have spoken with Mithras and Violetta, but he is unaware what the conversations entailed. He has even gone to external clan sources for assistance (see "The Foundlings," below). Given his limited resources, he moves cautiously and tries to avoid all contact with the characters. Although he is in the area when the characters visit, he will not move personally to intercede in any altercations between the characters and Gillespi. He will, however, pull strings from behind the scenes to provide Gillespi with anything that he needs. Ambrogino's team (except for the Foundlings) are completely loyal, but, with the exception of Gillespi, less than he prefers to work with.

Gillespi

Gillespi is the archetypal border-territory Giovanni. Embraced because of his keen business acumen and family connections, Gillespi volunteered to expand business opportunities in London and has generally succeeded. Most of this success has been at the sufferance of the local Camarilla, however, and he now fears that all he has worked for will soon collapse.

Clan: Giovanni

Sire: Ambrogino

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1435 (born 1410)

Apparent Age: Mid-20s

Haven: Lombard Street Town House

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Architect

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Security 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 4, Investigation 3, Law 3, Linguistics 1, Occult 3, Politics 2

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 1, Dominate 3, Fortitude 1, Necromancy 3, Potence 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Herd 3, Influence 2, Resources 4, Retainers 4, Status 2

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 7

Image: A somewhat handsome man in his mid-20s. Gillespi has black hair and a clean-shaven face. He affects the dress and demeanor of a successful merchant. He always displays a somewhat intense expression.

Roleplaying Notes: You don't need this. You don't need this at all. All you really wanted in life was a little power, in your own little corner of the world, far away from the cutthroat politics of Rome. Now Ambrogino is here. Ambrogino! Of course no one says "no" to him and survives, so now all your plans are at risk and your resources are at his disposal. And where do these servants of the Founders fit in? Your best hope is to do what Ambrogino says, keep a low profile and hope all this blows over soon.

Quote: *We do not have to come to violence. We can discuss our differences like civilized men.*

Equipment: Sword, pistol, merchant garb, gold

The Red Bear Tavern

The Red Bear Tavern is a loud and raucous “gentlemen’s club” (no women allowed). A female vampire may gain entrance through the judicious use of various Disciplines (i.e., Dominate, Chimerstry, Obfuscate, Presence). The club is filled to capacity until almost 2:00 a.m., and stragglers arrive until almost 5 a.m.

Despite the above appellation, not all of the club’s clientele are gentlemen. Lowlifes from throughout London gather here to carouse. The club’s main attraction is the sport of “bear-baiting.” (This sport involves chaining a bear to a stake in the middle of a pit and releasing a pack of vicious dogs to attack it.) Other attractions include “ratting” (releasing dogs to kill rats) and cockfighting. The audience gathers in a multitiered arena, making wagers and screaming for blood. The proprietor of the tavern is Raphael Giovanni (one of Gillespi’s enforcers).

Most of the clientele are human, but three are not. The characters may quickly notice the three “Foundlings” (see below). The Foundlings are observing the activities and generally mingling. One of them is only a little girl, but no one challenges her right to be there. The three recognize the characters (unless they have donned very good disguises) and eventually

approach them, though they wait to allow the characters to initiate contact. (They don’t want to appear too eager.) The three are regulars in seamy dives throughout London. They introduce themselves and appear generally friendly. They may fill the characters in on certain “below-the-salt” (lower-class) details of London Kindred society. The Foundlings won’t tell them anything useful about the Giovanni, however.

The Foundlings

Abandoned by their sires, the three “Foundlings” (not to be confused with the Founders), as they call themselves, are part of the Camarilla on a provisional basis. The Kindred community mistreats them and they have turned to each other as a family. They usually disguise themselves as a father and daughter (Snee and Catherine), traveling with their student companion (Tobias). They now make a passable income by hiring themselves out to those who are willing to pay for dirty work. They are currently in the service of Ambrogino’s underling, Gillespi. They are not above taking a higher offer to sell out their employers, but they will never turn on each other. They have an “us-against-the-world” mentality and share a rich mythology among themselves, in which they are inevitably the heroes, or the wronged and blameless party.



Gillespi has obtained their services by threatening to tell the local Gangrel that the Foundlings were responsible for the death, degradation and defilement of their chieftain's childe (which they in fact were). The Foundlings are very upset that Gillespi learned the truth about the Gangrel childe. Accordingly, Gillespi frightens them, and they are unlikely to cross him unless they are sure they can get away with it.

The Foundlings are not powerful enough to engage the characters directly, but will skulk around the periphery, waiting for moments of advantage. They are good at appearing innocent (especially Catherine) and will try to gain the characters' trust. In such an event, Catherine will play the insider and try to ingratiate herself to the characters, asking if she can accompany them. Tobias Leveler will act as a shadow, spying on the characters from a distance. Tobias is particularly good at disappearing into the woodwork and specializes in sneak attacks. Snee disappears completely after the characters meet him and does not reappear until late in Scene Four.

Snee

Even Snee does not remember his early life, though it was obviously full of abuse. He is not sure why he was Embraced, but suspects that it was a cruel joke of some kind. Nominally accepted into the Gangrel clan, he fell in love with their chieftain's childe. She did not return this favor and this, along with Catherine's psychosis (see below), led to her murder. Snee suffers perpetual nightmares, and only his association with the other Foundlings keeps him from going over the edge completely.

Clan: Gangrel

Sire: Unknown

Generation: 8th

Embrace: 1525 (born 1485)

Apparent Age: 40

Haven: Ludgate

Nature/Demeanor: Bravo/Bravo

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Talents: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2

Skills: Firearms 2, Melee 3 (Club), Stealth 2, Survival 3

Knowledges: None

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Fortitude 2, Potence 4, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 3, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 3

Willpower: 6

Flaws: Intolerance (Foreigners), Phobia (Snakes), Dark Secret

Image: A large, slow-moving man, Snee has an ill-kept beard. He wears the clothes of a day laborer and is usually dirty. He has sprouted several animal-like features, including pawed feet (hidden in boots), tufted ears (hidden under hair), snaggly fangs (passed off as bad teeth) and a musky odor (lots of people stink).

Roleplaying Notes: You are a true English patriot and distrust all foreign people and ideas. If allowed, you will spout long, rambling dissertations on why England is the greatest country in the world and relate your valiant history as a defender of the crown. (The characters will realize that these stories are of dubious authenticity at best.) The only thing that you love more than England is your family, the Foundlings. You realize that you are not too bright and are thus violently anti-intellectual.

Quote: *I had a painting of me with Queen Elizabeth, but I lost it.*

Equipment: Club, dirty clothes, oily rag

Catherine

Born to an itinerant laborer family, Catherine was abandoned at an early age. Adopted and abandoned by several alcoholic mothers, she became a permanent fixture at many London bars. Despite the abuse and neglect she suffered, she was an attractive and kind-hearted child, until she attracted the attention of one of Mad Tom's crew (see **Clanbook: Malkavian**). The Malkavian Embraced, abused and abandoned her when she no longer proved to be entertaining.

Catherine now hates everyone and everything, except for her fellow Foundlings. She aspires toward high society, but is not of it and resents those who have things that she cannot.

Clan: Malkavian

Sire: Unknown

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1122 (born 1114)

Apparent Age: 8

Haven: Ludgate

Nature/Demeanor: Conniver/Child

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Leadership 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Etiquette 1, Melee 2, Music 2, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Finance 2, Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 3

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Auspex 3, Celerity 1, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 5, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 6

Merits/Flaws: Baby Face, Pitiabile, Child, Dark Secret



Image: A pretty and vivacious girl who appears to be about eight years old. She tends toward frilly dresses and other little-girl accouterments.

Roleplaying Notes: You are the brains of the Foundlings, for what that's worth. You hate being trapped in this child's body and hate any woman who is more beautiful than you are. That Gangrel witch thought she was something with her beautiful red hair and blue eyes. She wasn't so beautiful when the boys got through with her. La, la, la, la! Now you're terrified that her sire will find out and come to get you. You encourage the boys to cooperate with the Giovanni completely, so he won't tell your bad, bad secret.

Quote: *Someday you'll leave me. I just know it.* (Begins to cry.)

Equipment: Frilly dress, doll, dagger

Note: Catherine is the only Foundling who can fit in with upper-class society.

Tobias Leveler

Tobias Leveler is a native of Ludgate and follows no clan. He lives with his companions in vacant property used as a meeting house for the Leveler movement years ago. He remembers glorious nights, influencing the former soldiers to demand reckoning from a tyrant. He has an extensive, trusting friendship with those still strong in the soot-ridden, gated section of London called Ludgate. He knows the city better than most and hires out his services to the highest bidder. Those coming under his scrutiny may find their stay in London very inhospitable. Tobias' proletarian influence extends into the lower-class constabulary, roguish elements of the Royal Navy, and various back-alley pubs across the city. His strikes, in whatever form, tend to come just before dawn.

Tobias has no memory of his sire and learned of his weaknesses in the most painful ways. An outcast among the undead, Tobias learned it all on his own — well, almost. Tobias nearly succumbed to the Beast, until Catherine gave him comfort and the knowledge to focus his anger in more "constructive" ways. Tobias now possesses more control over his "fits," though he is far from mastery.

Clan: Caitiff

Sire: Unknown

Generation: 10th

Embrace: 1615 (born 1595)

Apparent Age: 28

Haven: Ludgate

Nature/Demeanor: Conniver/Visionary

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Melee 3, Repair 1, Sailing 2, Security 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Area Knowledge 4, City Secrets 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1 (French), Occult 1, Navigation 2

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Celerity 2, Potence 2, Presence 3, Protean 1

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

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 7

Image: Tobias Leveler is a swarthy, balding man with a ring of greasy black hair and a goatee. He has leathery skin and always displays a grimace (or is it a smile?). He often wears the clothes of a laborer, preferring to remain inconspicuous.

Roleplaying Notes: You see the tyranny of scoundrels everywhere and the French receive no quarter from you. You view all other Kindred, save your companions, with outright suspicion and negotiate your demands bluntly. Your words inspire the downtrodden, for whom you harbor great empathy. You lose all rationality when your companions are faced with danger.

Note: Tobias still knows former Levelers, who are now members of the lower-class constabulary, as well as innkeepers and servants across the city.

Mallotte

If the characters seek out Mallotte, they find him in a Strand mansion near the prince's haven. If the characters somehow spy on Mallotte before going in (either by breaking in or by using the Auspex Discipline Psychic Projection), they see him hard at work over a ledger. They will be unable to decipher its contents. This paper is a translation of the *Lilith Fragment* (see below). If the characters break in and confront him, he shuffles the manuscript into the pile and demand that they leave immediately; pulling a bell-pull as he does so. (This summons his assistants Freia and Frigga; see below.) If a character tries to grab the shuffled documents, they immediately burst into flame in the character's grip and are instantly consumed. (This is not the only copy, however.)

If the characters opt for the direct approach, by knocking at the front door, a servant admits them. The characters find Mallotte in his study, hard at work over a Latin translation of Thucydide's *History of the Peloponnesian War*. His study is appointed in a tasteful, continental manner. Freia and Frigga are already in the room. There are also two other guests in the mansion (Duke and Duchess Amber; see below). They will interfere if the characters attempt to strong-arm Mallotte, but otherwise stay out of sight of the characters.

If the characters are polite, Mallotte is gracious and asks them what they want. He disavows any knowledge of anyone named Ambrogino. He is quite convincing in doing this. If the characters try to employ him as a translator, he professes interest and questions them about what they want translated. He feigns ignorance of the manuscripts, but proudly admits knowing Chaldean. If the characters have

somehow managed to copy any of the manuscript during the second act (unlikely), he agrees to translate it for them, but claims that he needs several nights to do so. This is a lie, because any scrap of the manuscript that the characters may have latched onto is, by coincidence or fate, the section that he has already translated (the *Lilith Fragment*). Mallotte is polite and stately throughout, unless the characters are rude, in which case he asks them to leave. (If necessary, he claims that a runner has already been dispatched to the prince's home.)

Mallotte will try to keep the entire transaction reasonable. He assures them that he will help them translate their manuscript, once they acquire it. Although he is charming and well polished, the characters may notice (Perception + Empathy, difficulty 7, two successes needed) that he is ill at ease. Mallotte will try to engage the characters in interesting, but irrelevant subject matter (especially ancient history). He plays the gracious host and even offers the characters goblets of blood (one point worth). Blood connoisseurs in the group may agree with Mallotte that the blood has a "piquant and ingenuous" quality to it. He also asks them if they like to hunt. If they answer affirmatively, he subtly tries to determine if any of the characters are interested in joining the Crimson Bacchanal (see below).

His "assistants," Freia and Frigga, are beautiful, blond twins of obviously Scandinavian ancestry. They pretend not to know English, but will reply to queries in German or Norwegian. They are garrulous on many subjects, but will tell the characters nothing that Mallotte does not. Their ice-blue eyes dance with derisive madness, belying their Malkavian nature.

The Crimson Bacchanal

The Crimson Bacchanal is an elite hunters' club that serves the bored and jaded Kindred aristocracy of England. The Bacchanal hunts vampires for sport and is the predecessor of the modern day "Hunts Club" (see *A World of Darkness*). The club provides the prey, who are usually young Caitiff or anarchs of lesser generation. The hunters of the club speak bravely of their hunts, but are generally cowards. They rarely hunt those who might have a chance of defeating them. The abilities of the hunted are usually proportional to, but lesser than that of the hunters. The club has never hunted anyone below seventh generation, but the guests' ennui is slowly overtaking their fear and they are beginning to press for bigger game. The club's guests this week are the Duke and Duchess Amber (see below).

Andre Mallotte (Master of Ceremonies)

The progeny of Lord Casmir (see *The Last Supper*) and minor conspirator in the Conspiracy of Isaac, Mallotte fled Italy after the conspiracy's disintegration and the subsequent Lextalionis called by the Founders. Mallotte managed to change his clan (and sect) affiliation in the colonies. He now masquerades as a Toreador in London and enjoys Prince Mithras' protection in exchange for covert knowledge about

his former clan. Mithras does not know of Mallotte's former Conspirator or current Sabbat ties, nor does the Sabbat know of his Tremere status (they believe him to be Toreador *antitribu*).

Mallotte believes that he has shaken the Founders, but is terrified by the characters' arrival in London. Ambrogino told him that they are Founder agents, regardless of whether or not this is true. If Mallotte's true nature is revealed, he will assuredly be killed by any of several parties. His true origin will prove highly embarrassing to Mithras should it come to light.

Clan: Tremere (claims to be Toreador or Toreador *antitribu*)

Sire: Lord Casmir

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1405 (born 1365)

Apparent Age: Mid-40s

Haven: Strand Mansion

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Visionary

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 5

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Music 5, Security 3, Stealth 4, Survival 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Finance 4, Investigation 5, Law 3, Linguistics 6, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Philosophy 4, Science 5, Theology 5, Vampire Lore 6

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

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Herd 2, Resources 4, Retainers 4, Status 2

Virtues: Callousness 4, Instincts 3, Morale 3

Path: Path of Caine 6

Willpower: 7

Merits/Flaws: Eidetic Memory, Fast Learner, Natural Linguist/Dark Secret (Conspiracy of Isaac), Vengeance, Enemy (The Founders)

Image: Mallotte is a squat, unhealthy-looking individual. He is fat by vampire standards and his flesh looks like something found under a rock in a bog. He has a pinched beak of a nose; rotten, yellowish fangs; and long black hair, flecked with white. He is bald on top. He dresses the part of a university don (long, voluminous robes) and is rarely seen without a book. He wears a pince-nez and carries a cane with a boar's head on it.

Roleplaying Notes: You are smarter than everyone and you know it. It is, then, a wonder to you that you have not gone farther than you have. You realize that most other Kindred are jealous of your genius and conspire to impede your great destiny. With your recent acquisition of Ambrogino's manuscript, this is about to change.

Equipment: Books, pince-nez, dagger, snuff

Notes: Mallotte is highly adept at figuring out who may wish to join the Crimson Bacchanal. He may make a resisted Perception + Empathy roll vs. a character's Manipulation +

Subterfuge (difficulty 6). If he gains more successes, he will know if that character would join in such a hunt. (The Storyteller should have a good idea which ones would.) If he fails, or if none of the characters are "his type of people," he will not pursue the subject. If he botches, he will broach the subject with the character and then try to play it off as a "Toreador's jest" when she shows her indignation. Mallotte is a fire magician (Lure of Flames 5) and can use these powers to startling affect.

Freia & Frigga (Mistresses of the Hunt)

"Created" by the insane toymaker, the Sculptor, the twins were "perfected" and then released to spread their particular brand of horror and insanity. They recognized in Mallotte a kindred spirit and they stay with him as long as he feeds their sadistic urges.

Clan: Malkavian *antitribu*

Sire: The Sculptor

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1355 (born 1340)

Apparent Age: 16

Haven: Small chateau outside London.

Nature/Demeanor: Deviant/Child

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

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

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 3, Firearms 4, Melee 4, Security 2, Stealth 6, Survival 3, Track 4

Knowledges: Finance 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 5, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Herd 3, Resources 4

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 2, Morale 4

Path: Path of Death and the Soul 5

Willpower: 8

Merits: Acute Senses, Daredevil, Inoffensive to Animals

Image: Despite their beauty, there is something almost asexual about the twins. They appear, more than anything else, like a pair of expertly crafted china dolls. When not viewed by kine, they prefer to wear men's hunting clothes. They are always accompanied by four large ghoulish wolves.

Roleplaying Notes: Lovable rag-mops, creations of your sire, the toymaker known as the Sculptor. But these rag-mops have fangs and claws. You are like the great jungle cats you have seen in Africa. There is nothing you like better than the terrified scream of your victim as you finally run him to ground. The Crimson Bacchanal offers you an avenue to express your hunting artistry.

Equipment: White stallions (ghouls), wolf pack (ghouls), riding crop, pistol, epee

The Duke and Duchess Amber (London Elders)

The Duke and Duchess Amber are members of one of the oldest royal families in England. As mortals they were polished, intelligent and active — seemingly perfect candidates for Embrace by the Ventrue. They came to Mithras' attention and he Embraced them in the hope that they would prove to be his greatest childer. The Ambers quickly lost their spark and have spent the last 900 years feeding their own monstrous, but jaded appetites. They have been estranged from the prince for at least 600 years. They are still his childer and highly-placed Ventrue, however. The prince will not tolerate disrespect toward them.

Clan: Ventrue

Sire: Mithras

Generation: 5th

Embrace: 701

Apparent Age: Duke, late 20s / Duchess, early 20s

Haven: Amber Castle (35 miles north of London)

Nature/Demeanor (Duke): Thrill-Seeker/Traditionalist

Nature/Demeanor (Duchess): Thrill-Seeker/Bon Vivant

Duke: Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Duchess: Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 4,

Dodge 5, Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 3,
Subterfuge 5

Skills: Etiquette 6, Firearms 4, Melee 5, Ride 3, Security 3,
Stealth 3, Survival 4

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 5, History 4,
Investigation 3, Law 4, Linguistics 5 (British Isles only),
Occult 3, Politics 3

Disciplines (Duke): Auspex 4, Celerity 4, Dominate 6,
Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 2, Potence 3, Presence 3

Disciplines (Duchess): Auspex 5, Celerity 4, Dominate 4,
Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 3, Potence 1, Presence 6

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Herd 4, Influence 1, Resources 5,
Retainers 5, Status 4

Virtues (Duke): Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 4

Virtues (Duchess): Conscience 1, Self-Control 5,
Courage 3

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 9

Merits/Flaws: Prestigious Sire/Overconfident, Notoriety,
Anachronism

Image: The Ambers are as withered a pair of mummies as the characters are ever likely to meet. They even smell old. While outwardly beautiful, they are emotionally dead.



They are the worst stereotype of the Ventrue and look a lot like each other. They wear moth-eaten finery that is at least three centuries out of date.

Roleplaying Notes: You are the aristocracy of English Kindred and you know it. Most are afraid to face you because of your age and generation. All the challenge long ago ebbed from your lives. The hunt is the only thing that quickens you. *And hasn't even that gotten a little routine lately?* You play the loving couple, but your affection for each other is dry as bone.

Equipment: Sword, pistol, fine but outdated clothes

Note: The Ambers, while powerful, are not interested in getting hurt. They will leave at the first sign of real trouble.

The "Guest Room"

Any Gangrel, characters with the Merit: Acute Smell, or characters using Level 1 Auspex (Heightened Senses) may smell a bitter, acrid scent coming from downstairs. They do not recognize the smell. If questioned about this, Mallotte casually mentions that it must be some meat going bad in the pantry. (He explains that he occasionally entertains human guests.) If any of the characters try to slip away to investigate without using Obfuscate, they are challenged by the twins. If they slip away using Obfuscate, one or two may sneak out to explore the rest of the manse, while the other characters distract Mallotte

The Setites

Setite interest in the manuscript is obviously both very real and very immediate. The Setites believe that they can manipulate the Necromantic secrets of the manuscript, or failing that, manipulate those who hold it. The Setites have their own fragments (they have their own Chaldean scholar), but wish to add Ambrogino's papers to their collection. To this end the Setites have sent one of their most lethal operatives, the Spanish Count Jocalo. Jocalo is a vampiric folk legend, a bogeyman to keep the neonates in line. Jocalo's tactical strategy is a blood-chilling mix of misdirection, seduction and high-wire terror. It was he who instigated the destruction of Lester Vance.

No stats are provided for Count Jocalo; he is a Methuselah-class foe and should be invulnerable to anything the characters throw at him. He is intended as a plot device and source of character terror.

and the twins. If they go to the basement they discover a well-stocked larder. They may also discover a secret panel (Perception + Investigation, difficulty 8). Behind the panel, several cages box a darkened room. The acrid stench of urine and feces befouls the air.

Three of the four cages are empty, but the fourth has a prostrate figure in it. It is Rose, the girl from the tavern. She is obviously undergoing the Becoming, the metamorphosis from human to vampire. Puddles of bodily waste cake the cell floor, and in their midst lies the still, pale form of a small girl-child. Her throat has been ripped out entirely, and shards of vertebrae jut from her wrenched neck — Rose's waking frenzy, exacerbated by her rage at Hopkins, was brutal indeed.

If the characters enter this room a small bell chimes in the study, alerting Mallotte. Mallotte asks the remaining characters to remain in the study and walks out, followed by the twins. He will not attempt to stop the characters physically if they insist on coming along. Characters who stay behind in the study may use this opportunity to search the papers piled on his desk. Most seem to be pedestrian works, mostly the classics, and are in Greek, Latin or French. One paper, however, is the *Lilith Fragment*, but it is written in code. The character may steal the document (or, if he has Eidetic Memory, attempt to memorize it).

Meanwhile Mallotte, the twins and possibly some of the characters from upstairs confront the characters who found Rose. Mallotte holds aloft an oil lantern, which casts an eerie orange light around the cell. Rose groans slightly and opens her eyes. She is now a full vampire. Mallotte demands to know why the characters have violated the sanctity of his home. If the characters castigate him for the despicable way in which he creates his progeny, he insists that it is nobody's business. (The cruelty that Rose has obviously undergone in the past few hours may well remind the characters of their Embrace in *The Last Supper*. Tempers should be running high.) If the characters rouse Rose enough to speak with her, she is incoherent, but obviously terrified of Mallotte. She begs the characters to take her away.

Mallotte again insists that she is his childe and thus "his concern." He even has the temerity to claim that he "loves his new childe," but if challenged on this, he is able to offer no explanation that won't churn the characters' stomachs. He claims to have special dispensation from the prince to sire progeny (true), but the prince doesn't know that he has used this "dispensation" to create an entire get for the purpose of hunting. The characters may realize this, if Mallotte has already mentioned the Crimson Bacchanal to them. Ultimately he will surrender her if the characters put up a consolidated front against him. (If the characters leave her with him, they are following Camarilla restrictions, but are cads nonetheless.)



If the characters attempt to punish Mallotte for his cruelty, he and the twins battle defensively while screaming for the Duke and Duchess. If Mallotte's cellar turns into a battleground, the players will almost certainly lose (once the Ambers weigh in) and be dragged before the prince. The Ambers are "friends" of the prince and Mithras will be sorely displeased with the characters, refusing to listen to their reasoning. He will, of course, not believe a word of this nonsense about a Crimson Bacchanal. He will probably not punish them too badly, however, since he still wishes their assistance. If the characters are properly contrite, they are released about an hour before dawn. If they persist in their accusations, they are released at dawn.

If the characters get Rose away from Mallotte without violence, through either reason or threat, he will not mention the situation to the prince. Mallotte quickly realizes that Rose is more of a liability than an asset at this point and is not hard to convince. In this case he writes Rose off as a loss and molests her no further. (He will now have a potent enemy in Joseph Gaiman, however.) If the characters manage to remain polite to Mallotte throughout this scene (a difficult task), he may still agree to translate their manuscript for them. (Manipulation + Etiquette, difficulty 6, to smooth things over) If the characters don't discover Rose here, either tonight or tomorrow night, she simply vanishes forever.

The Four Visitations of Andre Mallotte

Storyteller's Note: If the characters do not stake out Mallotte's house, they do not learn anything from the scene below. They may gain some of this information later, through other means.

Before the characters visit Mallotte, Mallotte meets Ambrogino and translates the *Lilith Fragment* for him. Ambrogino also leaves several other documents for him, which he deciphers over the next several nights. These include the *Sargon Fragment*. Ambrogino hints darkly that there is a band of Camarilla Archons nearby, investigating "the whereabouts of the Children of Isaac." This accounts for Mallotte's nervousness when he meets the characters. The characters' arrival and departure is noted by Tobias and one of Gillespi's vampire enforcers.

After the characters depart from Mallotte's abode, Mallotte receives two more visitors. Ambrogino's spies do not see these next two uninvited guests to the manse (detailed below), though both pass within a hair's breadth of them. Any player character left on watch may make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9; two successes needed) to detect each new visitor.

Mallotte, flustered by the night's events, sends the twins and the disappointed Duke and Duchess away; stating that there will be no hunt tonight. When he thinks he is alone, Mallotte unwinds in his usual fashion: He dons his favorite silk robe (and nightcap) and then slowly, sensuously feeds from one of his prized animals, a border collie named Strider. It is in this unflattering and compromising position that Mallotte receives his third guest of the night.

Marianna arrives uninvited, wishing to know everything that Mallotte told the first two groups. Mallotte reacts angrily and attempts to burn her using Thaumaturgy. She quickly gains the upper hand, however, and beats him until he talks. He tells her about the first two visitors and even confesses to making copies of the manuscript against Ambrogino's explicit instructions. (He does not mention the *Sargon Fragment* under any circumstance, however.)

Marianna extracts his promise to keep her informed of future events. She leaves him wallowing in his own blood, but still conscious. If a character marks Marianna's entry into the mansion, he may help or hinder Marianna in her investigations. He will hear Mallotte's confession (and see the collie) if he aids her. If he tries to hinder her (unlikely) she will retreat rather than fight the character. She may speak with the characters, but she will not add significantly to anything she may have told them in Act Two. Mallotte will show little gratitude for the characters' help if they aid him against Marianna.

If the characters stay outside the mansion for an additional hour, they may see Mallotte's fourth, and possibly most dangerous, visitor. Count Jocalo (see the *Setites* sidebar) enters Mallotte's mansion by slithering down the chimney, showing not a speck of soot for the ordeal. He appears to be alone, but is actually accompanied by his entire coterie. He laughs at Mallotte's embarrassing predicament and then promises friendship and aid, if the scholar will only accept it. Jocalo quickly overcomes Mallotte's initial objections, alternately comforting and terrifying him. After a 15-minute conversation, Mallotte swallows a small golden scarab. *Exit Jocalo.*

If any of the characters attempts to interfere with the exchange, Jocalo may speak to them. He wears a long black cloak with burgundy fringe. A featureless ivory mask with twin, tapered eyeslits conceals his face. His eyes are like those of a snake. Any comments he makes to the characters are cryptic, and it is unlikely that the characters will be able to divine much about him, though they may guess his clan. His tone is sibilant, derisive and honey-sweet.

Jocalo will not tell the characters anything they want to know, but he calls them by their names. His general demeanor is that of a jovial, but sinister fop. He then leaves. If they try to prevent his departure, his coterie attacks *en masse*. Jocalo's party is easily more powerful than the characters, and they do not stand a chance against him. The coterie incapacitates the party, but leaves them alive.

Scene Four (September 1st) Flint and Tinder

There's a flu bug getting passed around.

And it's spreading like fire through the town.

— Squirrel Nut Zippers, "La Grippe"

If the characters stole, memorized or copied the *Lilith Fragment* at Mallotte's, they find it is written in a challenging, but not unbreakable code (Intelligence + Cryptography or Enigmas, difficulty 6; or Intelligence, difficulty 9). If they didn't manage to acquire this fragment now, they may get another chance at it.

Lilith Fragment

This portion of the *Lilith Fragment* is not a Necromantic formula like the *Sargon Fragment* (see below). It is an ancient, and possibly fictional, accounting of a meeting between the "demoness" Lilith and the angel Gabriel. The fragment's author is unknown, but is obviously Kindred and probably well traveled.

Whether the characters manage to steal this manuscript from Mallotte's or get hold of it later, their reactions may vary. Some of the less astute characters may say something like: "You mean we've chased Ambrogino across half of Europe, risking unlife and limb, for this?" Perhaps those Kindred of a less scholarly bent were expecting something more spectacular, or at least more utilitarian, than a moldy, old pseudobiblical fable about someone named "Lilitu." More perceptive characters, however, will realize that there is more to this manuscript than is initially evident. (It should also be noted that the *Lilith Fragment* does not constitute the entirety of the folio in Ambrogino's possession.)

Several salient points may be gleaned by characters in study of the manuscript. The Storyteller may simply wish to open the floor for discussion by the characters and let them reach their own conclusions. It is probable that the characters (and hopefully the players) know a little about Lilith, who, according to Hebraic tradition, was the first wife of Adam. (They may have spoken about her with Cappadocius in *The Last Supper*.) The Storyteller may also wish to read the supplement *The Book of Nod*, which examines the role of Lilith in vampiric lore. The so-called *Cycle of Lilith* is a Holy Grail of sorts for Kindred scholars, and some may decide that this fragment is a part of that greater work.

If the players (and hence their characters) are ignorant of vampiric history, the Storyteller may allow them to make a roll (Intelligence + Occult, difficulty 9). The Storyteller may then feed the characters one salient fact (see below) for each success scored.

And then did dark mother Lilitu pass out of the land of Nod, east of Eden. And she did come into the sunlit lands (1) and the Kingdom of Judah.

There she did dwell for a time with her daughters, Lamiae and Empusae. (2)

The Children of Seth (3) and old Israel saw her there and did come forth to her temple in the mountain, (4) saying "Teach us your lore, Dark Mother, that we will be slaves no more."

And Lilitu taught them many of the small secrets of the world, but none of the darkling paths did she show them. For a time the Children of Lilitu and of Seth lived in peace. Son begot son and the children of old Israel fell to squabbling. And they became weak.

Then came Lilitu to Jerusalem for the Day of Willows. (5) The city lay scattered as chaff and its people were slain by the soldiers of Nabu-kudur-usur. (6) And Lilitu came to the center of town and there was a luscious fig tree.

And lo, the tree began to burn and in it was the face of the presence, Gabriel. And before Lilitu was a great procession of gods. Old gods and new, gods long dead, and gods yet to be born. Ancient Enlil and Osiris and their upstarts, Poseidon and Aphrodite.

And behold. There were the Tuatha de Danaan (7) and the First Pack of the moon-beasts. (8) And there too was Cain. All strode by, serene in the prime of their power.

Then, as each did pass the flaming tree, they fell under Gabriel's withering gaze. And their nature did change. They became twisted and brutish. Gods of desert and oasis became ravening beastmen. The De Danaan became fainter and fainter, like the morning fog. And the First Pack became bone-gnawing curs. (9)

Then did they fall into dust. And Gabriel did turn his gaze upon Lilitu and she felt the glory of the One rain upon her. And a light that was not light lifted the scales from her eyes.

And she was transformed, like unto the withered gods. And there in her stead stood a slavering revenant, of the kind that gibbers in tombs and sups on dead men's marrow. (10)

And lo, did Gabriel speak, saying: "Ill-made creature and Mother of Monsters, (11) see not what thou hast done?"

And then she did see that she was accursed of God. And that in the moment that the Jerusalemites did make peace with her, they were accursed too.

And then did Gabriel speak again, saying: "Know thou that the children of Seth are the only true favored children of God. And they, not the children of Cain, shall make all the world. And their transgressions shall be forgiven. But all of thy monstrous children shall diminish. From muck and filth were thou created, and to it shall thou and all thy get return. (12)

Then did the light fade and the vision was no more. And then did proud Lilitu swear that it would not be so. And four saplings did she plant. One a willow (13), one an oak (14), one a vine of ivy (15) and the last of shittim wood, of which Noah and Osiris did build their arks. And each did she wet three times with her blood. (16)

And the first of these did she plant in Nod, and the second in old Jerusalem, the third in a

The central theme of the fragment seems to involve the diminution of myth. In the case of the World of Darkness, this means the degeneration of the planet's supernatural population from their older, "purer" forms (e.g., Caine, the First Pack, the Tuatha de Danaan) into their modern equivalents. The degeneration of vampiric bloodlines is, of course, a central component in the Kindred's Gehenna prophecies. Even in 1666, this issue strongly concerns the Cainites. The Storyteller may also wish to point out that the manuscript was obviously translated in haste and then retranslated from Mallotte's esoteric code. A more careful translation of the original document may render additional facts or clarification.

Salient Points

The characters may divine one fact from the manuscript for each success rolled. The Storyteller may choose which ones to reveal. Mallotte's translation is footnoted. It is reasonable to assume that he has notes revealing his take on the manuscript. (He will surrender these to save his skin.) Despite his flaws, he is an adept scholar. His interpretation is, for the most part, correct.

1) The reference to Lilith entering the "sunlit lands" would seem to indicate that Lilith is not true Kindred, as many claim. This passage may, however, merely be a general comparison between Judah and the dark lands of Nod.

2) Lamia is an ancient Libyan snake goddess, while *Lamiae* are vampiric, goat-legged succubi who seduce travelers and drink their blood. Empusae are relics of the Set cult and are sometimes called *Lilim*, or the Children of Lilith.

3) The Children of Seth are, according to vampiric tradition, the descendants of Adam and Eve's third son, Seth. (See **The Book of Nod**.)

4) Lilith's "temple in the mountain" (implicitly near Jerusalem) may prove to be of particular interest to the characters, if they decide to pursue the issue further.

5) Day of Willows (a.k.a. The Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles). A fire and water ceremony, important in the worship of Jehovah.

6) Nabu-kudur-usur (a.k.a. Nebuchadnezzar II). Historians in the party may use the reference to his sacking of Jerusalem to place the events in the manuscript to 587 or 586 B.C.

7) Tuatha de Danaan: The godlike progenitor race of the fae, according to sidhe legend (see the **Changeling** supplement **Nobles: The Shining Host**). Violetta may be able to help the characters here.

8) The First Pack: Those knowledgeable about werewolves (must have the Lupine Lore Knowledge; difficulty 10) may recognize these as the legendary progenitor spirits of the Garou (see **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**).

9) Those with Lupine Lore may recognize the reference to the Bone Gnawer tribe.

10) This reference to the divinely enforced degeneration of Lilith into a tomb-revenant may contradict Footnote #1.

11) Almost certainly a reference to Lilith's role in the awakening of Caine and her part in the creation of the Disciplines shared by all Kindred (see **The Book of Nod**).

12) In some traditions, Lilith was fashioned from muck and filth, even as Adam was created from dust and Eve from Adam's rib. This is not the only Lilith myth, however. Divergent traditions reveal her as an Assyrian demones known as *Lilitu*, and as an "original mage" by some Kindred scholars and by the mage group, the Order of Hermes. The Antediluvian Cappadocius (see **The Last Supper**) believed her to be a female aspect of Jehovah. Some changeling scholars consider her one of the Tuatha de Danaan and a progenitor of the fae.

13-15) Each of these trees has reputed mystical properties. Some of the modern (1666) properties are listed below. The characters will have to do some research to uncover what importance they had in 586 B.C.

13) Willow: Widely reputed by Western tradition to be a "witches' tree," it is also sacred to the death aspects of the Triple Goddess.

14) Oak: Symbolic of strength and endurance, it is also identified with Jehovah (as "El" or Allah).

15) Ivy: Connected to the "vampiric" rituals, or Bacchanalia, of the Maenads (female worshippers of the god Dionysus). It is also connected with the Egyptian deity Osiris and with resurrection.

16) To those knowledgeable about mages (must have the Mage Lore Knowledge), this may bespeak the Verbena (see **Mage: The Ascension**). Some Verbena claim that Lilith is the progenitor of their Life magic.

Rose

If the characters choose to "adopt" Rose, they may find themselves in a quandary. Camarilla law proscribes that no one may create a childe without the prince's permission. Since Mallotte had permission (of a kind), Rose's existence may or may not violate this stricture. Rose is, technically speaking, not the characters' problem, since they are only her "foster parents." The only two people who may bear the brunt of the prince's displeasure in this matter are Mallotte and Rose. (Unless the characters attempt to hide her, in which case the prince will blame them.)

If the characters seek out Violetta for advice, they may persuade her to act as Rose's advocate to the prince (a shocking breach of Camarilla protocol). There should be some tension on this point, since Mithras is usually very literal in his interpretation of Camarilla law. If the characters have served him faithfully to this point and swear to take responsibility for her induction into "proper Camarilla society," the prince will make an exception. If the characters have been too "willful" against the prince, he may make attach a number of stringent conditions to her continued existence. The characters may decide which clan she joins. (Probably the clan of the character she "bonds" to the most.)

Of greater concern is Rose's state of mind. Her Embrace was obviously a traumatic experience and she shows signs of mental instability. She is clearly intelligent and eagerly learns whatever Disciplines the characters teach her (up to three dots worth). If questioned, she tells the characters that Mallotte first approached her shortly after her father's death and was always kind to her, until last night. She professes to have no intentions of revenge against him. The Witch Finder General, however, is another matter. She feels out the characters on this subject before telling them about her plans for revenge. If they seem to be the kind who disapprove of vengeance, she will not mention it.

Getting Rose squared away with the prince takes two hours. Mithras also uses this opportunity to get the characters' report and asks if they know where Valerius is. The characters, of course, do not and the prince requests that they do some investigating.

Rose Chandler

Rose's mother died at childbirth so Rose was raised by her father, who doted on her. A quiet girl, she never had many friends and her father's murder has left her, except for Gaiman, alone in the world.

Clan: Caitiff (unless adopted)

Sire: Mallotte

Generation: 8th

Embrace: 1666 (born 1648)

Apparent Age: 18

Haven: None

Nature/Demeanor: Survivor/Bon Vivant

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 1, Melee 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Investigation 1, Linguistics 1 (Latin), Medicine 2, Occult 2

Disciplines: Initially none. (Subsequent Disciplines depend on who teaches her – 21 Freebie Points for Disciplines only.)

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Resources 1

Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 7

Merits/Flaws: Fast Learner/Vengeance (Avenge Father)

Image: A pretty young woman, Rose is nevertheless beginning to show some outward signs of her hard life. She has shoulder-length, straight brown hair. She dresses like a barmaid.



Roleplaying Notes: Your life was never easy, but you persevered, and even triumphed, over adversity until a year ago. You were walking toward your father's church when you saw a crowd of his parishioners swarming around the front doors. At first you thought an impromptu sermon was under way. As you got closer, however, you saw the angry faces and the frightened visage of your father. He was pleading with them, calling them by name, but they only screamed and jeered in return. That bastard Hopkins (you had heard of him, but never given him any thought before) was recounting your father's "sins," one by one. He did this in the style of a carnival barker. You screamed as they hanged him in front of the church doors. The crowd drifted away sheepishly, leaving you alone. Since that time, your one thought has been one of vengeance against Hopkins.

Equipment: Merchant-class clothing, knife

The Elder Vanishes

Valerius is the prince's right-hand man and Mithras is more fond of him than of his own childer (the Ambers). Valerius was to meet with the Archon Geoffrey Leigh last night for some unspecified business. Valerius never kept this appointment, and his haven burned to the ground. Leigh was questioned and cleared of any wrongdoing. The Justicar is promising an investigation, but the prince "wants his own people on it." This turns out to mean the characters, but the prince does not deign to say why he chooses to send them instead of his long-term Ventrue clanmates. (Let the characters speculate on this all they want once they are alone.) The prince suggests that Valerius' haven is the best place to start.

Faux Ambrogino

Valerius' haven is an estate on the northern outskirts of town. As stated by the prince, the mansion is a burned-out shell, but still standing. The moon is full overhead, and mist obscures the fen. A cold wind blows from the east. The ground is damp. If the characters search the grounds, they find nothing. If they decide to search the ruins of the mansion itself, they may find several items of interest. A glint of moonlight on silver may catch the characters' eyes in the rubble.

The glint is a locket, identical to that carried by Vance, but with no painting in it. This may immediately turn the characters' suspicions toward Violetta, which is why it was left there. Any art expert in the group may tell that this is a duplicate by rolling Perception + Art Appreciation or Finance (difficulty 6).

The characters then find, in rapid succession, a jeweled Roman ring (circa 100 B.C., and extremely valuable) and an eighth century religious triptych of

Byzantine origin. The triptych is completely untouched by the fire. Closer examination shows that it was removed from the fire and then replaced afterward. As they puzzle the significance of this, a cultured voice with a faint Italian accent intrudes:

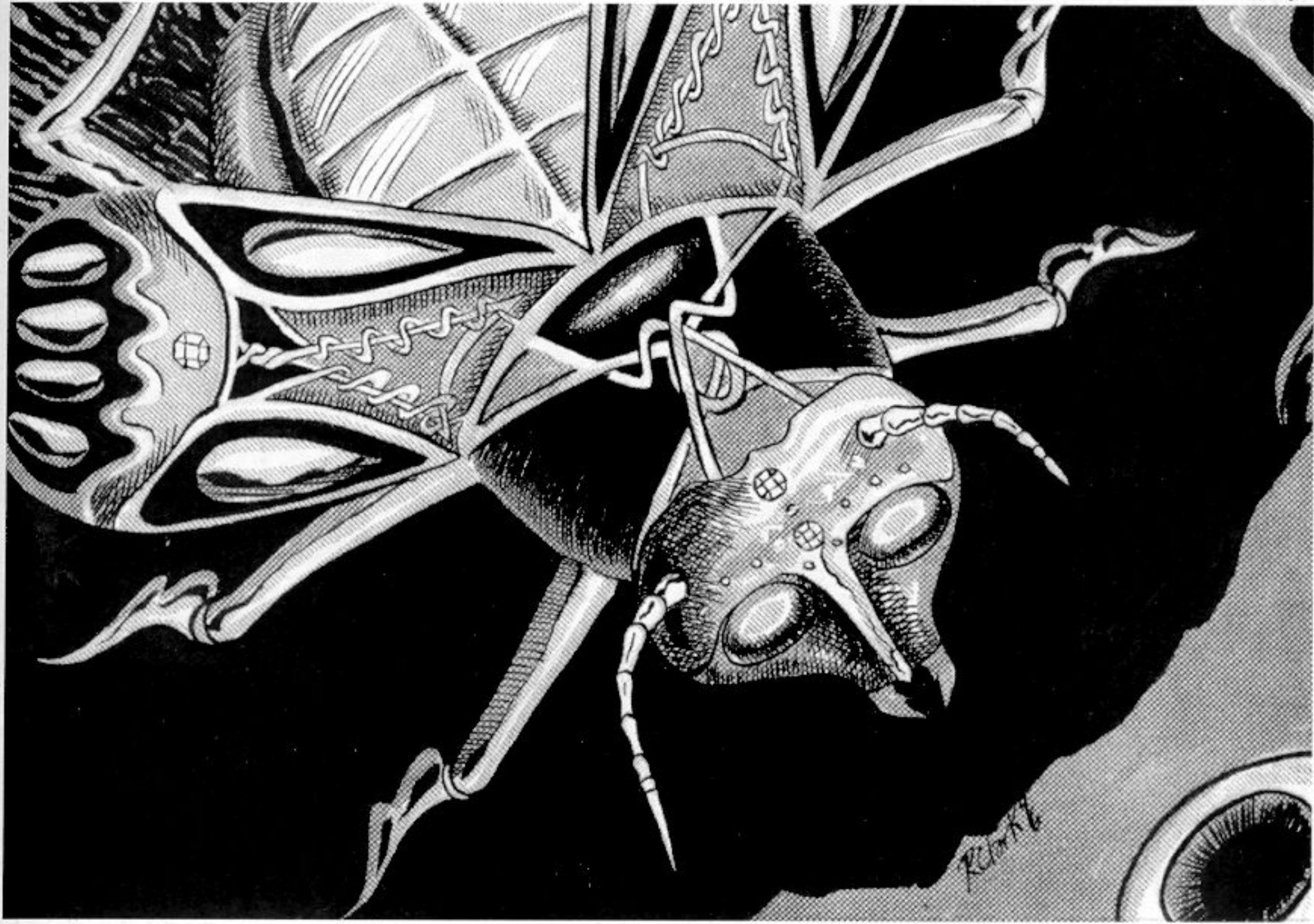
"Ah, but I do so adore fine art, and I could not bear to see such a fine piece damaged. Permit me to introduce myself. I am Ambrogino."

If the characters choose to listen, "Ambrogino" may well impress them. Of course, this is not really Ambrogino. If the characters choose to attack instantly, or at any time during his ramblings, go to "The Thrall," below.

Otherwise, "Ambrogino" confides that he has been manipulating certain events from the beginning, but that now the time has come to tell all. He has "chosen the characters for a very special destiny," and he now deems them worthy. If they will obey his strictures, "Ambrogino" promises them almost godlike power and lordship over the Giovanni. (This may send up a warning flag to the characters, since the Giovanni rarely induct outsiders.) If asked to elaborate, "Ambrogino" whispers that he has discovered a source of nearly infinite power, which "will make the gods tremble." This may sound at least fairly credible, if the characters have already read the *Lilith Fragment*. In addition, almost everything about "Ambrogino" seems to reek of power. (Toreador must roll their clan weakness or fall into a state of rapturous awe.)

"Ambrogino" is an impressive figure to say the least. The freezing wind seems to make his words crack with a grand finality. The Storyteller should play the impostor in the manner of an archvillain, confident in his power to crush the characters like insects. He promises the most dire of consequences if the characters oppose him. The Storyteller should try, through tone and expression, to create the feeling that here is a truly deadly opponent. A small pool of blood puddles about his feet, but the characters cannot tell its source (he appears unhurt).

If the characters agree to work for "Ambrogino," he has several "eminently reasonable" requirements to assure their loyalty. The first is that the characters must drink his blood, but only once. (Thus implying that he is of higher generation.) The characters must also agree to "kill a certain troublesome Brujah, bring me the heart of the prince, and spread jam on your heads while singing heidey-heidey-ho." The characters may now feel that things are going a little far here, but unless they quiet him, Ambrogino will continue to make even grander claims and more outrageous (and vulgar) demands. Eventually the characters will either leave in disgust, attempt to shut him up or take him into custody for examination.



The Thrall

If the characters leave the vampire on the hill, he attacks them, all the while imploring that they stay. If they attack, “Ambrogino” lashes out at them with all his might. He has entered Röttschreck and his attack is ferocious. The attacker is strong, fast and snarls like a rabid wolf, but he attacks with little skill or strategy.

Even up close, the vampire appears to be Ambrogino. From this distance, however, the characters may make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7) to see “Ambrogino” for a disguise expertly woven via Chimerstry. A subsequent Willpower roll (difficulty 8) dispels the illusion. Underneath the illusion is the vampire Foundling named Snee.

The Storyteller should use Snee’s attributes, as listed in Scene Two. All his Physical Attributes are at maximum (5), but his Brawl is effectively 1. His Potence (normally 4) is now 5! He is also using his claws (Protean 2) to dish out aggravated damage. Nonetheless, the characters should have little trouble in subduing the beast, since he has only five Blood Points and is already Wounded (-2 to all Dice Pools).

If the characters don’t destroy or gag him, the subdued Snee rambles incoherently about the fall of England, the “eyes of the snake” and the Gangrel child whom he and the other Foundlings murdered. He appears more and more labored and begins to convulse uncontrollably. Blood and white foam pour

from his mouth and his chattering fangs sever his tongue if the characters don’t stick a rag in his mouth. Even if restrained, he becomes increasingly frantic. Suddenly a liquid popping sound drowns out even the wind as his eyes blast from his head, dangling to his chest via optic nerves. Yellowish fluid oozes from his sockets and he continues to convulse, but more slowly than before. Then he says, in a voice like something wrenched from a slaughterhouse bucket: “Surely you realized there would be other interested parties?”

Suddenly a sharp crack rends the air as his skull explodes in a shower of blood, brain and bone shards. The body twitches slightly and then stops moving. Inside the ruins of his shattered cranium lies a small, golden scarab. The scarab is about six inches in diameter and expertly crafted. It has lapis lazuli wings and a spidery silver inlay etched throughout. (It is obviously Egyptian in design.) The insect spreads its lapis wings and attempts to fly into the night sky. If the characters can’t catch it (Dexterity + Brawl, difficulty 10), it flies into the distance, quickly disappearing (it can outfly a bat). If the characters catch it, it dissolves into the same white slime that the players found on Vance’s axles.

The characters may draw certain conclusions from this encounter. The first and obvious one is that something very sinister and alien just happened. The Storyteller should not offer anything after the description, merely allowing the characters to decide their next action. It is midnight.



Options

The characters have several options at this point. Their first instinct may be to flee town before things really get out of hand. This is really not a viable option, considering the enemies they would make by doing so. The journey back to town, then, should be a nightmarish one. Still, the characters must pull themselves together if they are to prepare themselves for what lies ahead. Characters have many options, but probably realize that they should notify the prince and Justicar.

The Prince

If they bring Snee's body to the prince's manor (the height of poor taste) they find Valerius "alive" and well there. He appears to be angry about something, but will not be drawn out on the subject. "The prince," he says "is out." He cannot be more specific on this point, but will tell the characters that a series of strange incidents (murder, rape, arson and looting) have erupted throughout the city. (These are Jocalo's doing, diversions from the Setite's true aims, though none realize it.) The Masquerade is in danger and the prince is "taking charge." The prince will be incommunicado for the rest of the evening, at least. Valerius listens seriously to the characters' assessment of the situation and examines the body (if the characters brought it). He agrees that the Justicar should be notified and asks the characters to inform her. He then appears to do (in that most stalwart of Ventrue tradition) nothing.

The Justicar

Violetta is reveling at the King's Theatre at an after-hours, bawdy version of *Macbeth*. She is with her consort, Geoffrey Leigh. She listens intently to the characters. She shows solidarity with the prince's efforts and then offers to have the remaining Foundlings (Tobias and Catherine) brought in for questioning. This takes several hours. She also seems to have at least some inkling of what is occurring (unlike Valerius). The characters may sense that the Justicar's usually polished demeanor is somewhat frayed by the news. She sends the characters around to Mallotte's to "make sure that poisonous little wart doesn't bolt."

Mallotte's

The "wart" has bolted. From outside his Strand mansion all looks well, but the insides are a shambles. Cold moonlight enters through 100 fine glass windows. If the characters start a systematic, room-by-room search of the mansion, they soon come across Frigga (one of the Malkavian Hunt Sisters) in a languid, but predatory prowl on the top floor. She radiates a quiet insanity (even more so than usual) — just waiting for the right moment to explode — but makes no immediate hostile move toward the characters. If questioned about Mallotte, she laughs and says (in German) that he left with "that Indian seductress." If the characters ask what she is doing, she will say (also in German): "Oh, my

sister is hiding. I am the huntress and she the prey. Or is it the other way around?" The characters may, at this point, decide that this is a Malkavian game of cat and mouse, best avoided. If left to their own devices the two hunt each other (never leaving the house) until dawn, or until they kill each other. (Freia is in the basement among her huntress' cages and speaks identically to her sister if approached.)

If the characters try to take the sisters into custody or in any way interfere with their game, both sisters strike against the characters like precision machines. Both women are skilled killers and masters of Obfuscate. They use this mastery to startling advantage in the darkened mansion and, unlike Snee, they retain all of their tactical sensibilities. They know the mansion and attempt to catch the characters between them for a well-administered *coup de grace*. Like Snee, neither of the sisters can be reasoned with, and all attempts to cow them into line (through Dominate or Presence) are at +3 difficulty. Neither of them sports a "skull-scarab," however.

Violetta, if present, has a fair chance to calm the twins. If this occurs she may be able to question them, though their answers are far from satisfactory. They may, however, describe the "Indian seductress" a bit more fully, claiming that the woman had jet-black skin and six arms. Reality, they claim, seemed to warp around her.

The Ambers are safe in their hidey-hole at Castle Amber. Dawn is near and there is no sign of the Foundlings.

Scene Five (September 2nd)

The Fire of London

The Foundlings are Brought to Bay

The two remaining Foundlings are not easy to catch. Tobias Leveler barricades himself in the huddled slums of Ludgate, using his neighborhood contacts to delay the inevitable. Against a hunter such as Geoffrey Leigh, however, capture is only a matter of time. The characters may accompany Leigh; if they do, he confides that he prefers a straight hunt such as this to all the weirdness of the last night.

Leigh seems to be a fairly forthright gentleman and may offer the characters some insights. He is also a truly brilliant hunter and picks up the slightest clues. He finds the Foundlings with dispatch and deals matter-of-factly with any resistance that they muster. He uses appropriate and measured force and is not unnecessarily cruel in their capture. Both of the Foundlings fight hard for their freedom and they know a few tricks, but

they also seem somewhat resigned to the inevitable. The clinging Catherine becomes entirely submissive after the "arrest" and says that she is willing to cooperate.

Catherine seems more afraid of what the Gangrel will do to her than she is of any talk of "skull-scarabs" or insane Malkavians huntresses. She admits that she and her fellow Foundlings were in the service of a certain Mr. Gillespi. She further admits (with some prompting) that Gillespi sent her and Tobias to spy on the characters, while Snee was following a dubious lead in Whitechapel. That's the last they saw of him. The characters may have their own questions, but ultimately the Foundlings know little of value. The two then huddle together and await summary judgment by the Justicar.

The Justicar may be swayed by the characters' pleas for clemency (if they make them), or may just let the local Gangrel settle accounts. She has a wide degree of latitude to offer the Foundlings a "plea bargain": one night's headstart. She will agree to this if they agree to aid the characters in their investigations. The characters must initiate this angle.

Gillespi

Violetta then summons Gillespi and cuts him little slack. She wants to know why the Giovanni thought they could bring such a dangerous (or potentially dangerous) artifact as this manuscript into London. (She calls the manuscript by its proper name if the characters shared this information with her.) Surely they knew there would be other interested parties? What *exactly* is in these manuscripts, that made the Giovanni think that they had *carte blanche* to "endanger the decent Kindred of London?" She also speculates openly about "what the ever-enigmatic Monsignor Ambrogino's interest in all this is." She delivers her queries in a staccato, rapid-fire manner. There is something definitely predatory in her speaking style, and she makes little effort to hide her enjoyment.

Her obviously superior command of the language and (as far as Gillespi knows) the facts clearly takes the Giovanni by surprise. Gillespi stutters, stammers and clumsily evades. If the characters have questions, she works them into her interrogation, but she cautions them to let her do all the talking. She is in telepathic contact with the characters throughout (Auspex 4, if they permit it) and takes suggestions as the conversation develops. Most of her questions appear ridiculous on the face of it. (What Giovanni is really going to spill the beans on Ambrogino, even if he could?) Still, the characters may enjoy watching someone else squirm for a change.

Gillespi answers that, no, he knows nothing about Mallotte and that, yes, he appreciates the gravity of his situation. He apologizes that he can be of no use on this "Ambrogino matter," but offers to deliver a message. Violetta states that Ambrogino is to immediately desist all activities in the British Isles. The characters may have



their own message for Ambrogino, which Violetta will relay if it doesn't contravene her demand or appear harmful to Camarilla interests. Gillespi protests the Justicar's "heavy-handed mandate," but quickly capitulates when Violetta's questions touch briefly on the subject of Ambrogino's (hitherto unknown) appearance. (She requests a description of the Faux Ambrogino from the characters beforehand.)

Ultimately the questioning proves too much for the harried merchant, who blurts out: "This is harassment and the clan of Augustus Giovanni will not stand for it. If you in any way invade the sanctity of our business interests, it will mean war with the Giovanni!"

At this point Violetta thanks him for his cooperation in her investigation. She is all smiles and graceful charm again. She tells him that he is free to go and that he should keep his nose clean. *Exit Gillespi.*

If the characters cooperate with Violetta and do not deviate significantly from her script, they learn several useful tidbits. Violetta used a seamless combination of Presence, Subterfuge and sheer verbal bombast to cow the lesser vampire. At the same time she probed his mind and sifted the sediments that her harangue dislodged from his memories. (She burned some Blood Points during this scene.) She learned more from what Gillespi doesn't say than from what he does. What she learned is this:

- Gillespi does not know what Ambrogino looks like, but was following orders from an intermediary (who has since disappeared).

- The manuscript, as far as he knows, is a part of Cappadocius' collection, stolen by the Giovanni after his martyrdom. He believes that the manuscript unlocks the secrets of life and death. He has overheard the phrase "Sargon Fragment."

- He mistrusts Mallotte and feels that Ambrogino is unwise to employ the outsider. (Evidently Gillespi has a somewhat inflated estimate of the number of Chaldean scholars in the world.)

- The wild-card assassin's presence has badly upset Ambrogino's usually clockwork precision. Ambrogino has shifted to a fully defensive posture and may be pulling up stakes soon. (This is mostly conjecture on Gillespi's part, but not far from the truth.)

- Gillespi recognizes the characters' likeness from a tapestry that hangs in the vaults of the Giovanni's Rome mausoleum. The tapestry predates the characters' Embrace by a good 400 years. The image (Violetta states) is unclear, however, and Gillespi has no idea as to the tapestry's significance.

- Any other tidbits the Storyteller wishes to throw in for flavor, or individual character recognition. Gillespi evidently considers the characters "monsters" of some kind, and fears them for some reason.

The Prince Returns

Mithras returns early in the evening and calls the characters in again, dispensing with the formalities. He tells them that a string of wildfire threats to the Masquerade occurred last night and that he personally spent the night dealing with them. (He slept in a barn.) He appears in ill humor, but does remark with some satisfaction that those “two mummies” (the Ambers) won’t be showing up at any of his banquets for a while. Certain measures, he assures the characters, are underway to eliminate the nest of Setite vipers who are clearly behind this travesty. It should be apparent that the prince now has matters well in hand, or at least he thinks so. All of his Ventrue “machinery of government” is purring back to life after last night. The primogen have all been alerted. Mithras has even dispatched additional retainers to look after King Charles in case he is targeted by the Setites.

With their fears at least temporarily allayed by the prince, the characters may take a moment to breathe. Give them a quiet moment with the prince. Don’t overplay it, but allow the characters a glimpse of the very real responsibilities he shoulders. He may even share a few appropriate thoughts on the Camarilla and its future prospects. By this point the prince probably considers the characters loyal Camarilla (Sabbat Vinculums from Act II notwithstanding). Certainly the Camarilla may be looking good right now, especially when counterpoised against the twisted plots of the Necromancer Ambrogino and the nightmare insanity of the Spanish assassin.

The Ascension of Mallotte

The prince, feeling that things are returning to a semblance of normalcy, requests that the characters continue to work with the Justicar. The general feeling is one of “cleanup detail.” The Justicar suggests that they try to examine Mallotte’s mansion for any further clues to his part in the recent events. The Justicar (but not Geoffrey Leigh) goes with the characters. At least part of Violetta’s intentions include procuring the manuscript for the Camarilla.

One of Violetta’s servitors (a wan ghoul named Reginald) and Joseph Gaiman have been watching over the place. They report nothing out of the ordinary. If the twins were allowed to play out their death-dance last night, their remains were removed during the day.

The Justicar immediately begins a systematic search of Mallotte’s study. The characters may assist her or carry on their own investigations. In any event, it quickly becomes obvious to everyone that they are not alone in the mansion. The walls of the study suddenly reverberate with a droning, incomprehensible chanting. The voice seems to come from everywhere and nowhere. It becomes suddenly, intensely hot. The rhythmic cadence of ancient Chaldean fills the air.

The characters can pinpoint its source by making a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9; two successes needed). Success reveals an expertly crafted secret door.

Upon discovery, the door explodes outward in a great gout of orange flame, revealing the smiling, fanged figure of Andre Mallotte.

Mallotte has invoked the ancient Chaldean magic to considerable effect. He has literally immolated himself, becoming a pyrotic fire elemental. Flames of all hues crackle from his skin. The paint peels beneath the force of the fire magician’s newfound power. The study begins to burn out of control and the characters’ undead bodies stiffen like seasoned cordwood in the blistering heat.

Mallotte (to allow a brief digression) believes he is now in possession of the “power of powers.” He is not far from the truth. His is an imperfect hold on the power, though, and he is already madder than any Malkavian. As far as he is concerned, however, he has won it all. The Storyteller may wish him to soliloquize (briefly).

You were the quiet scholar. Laughed at and abused by the Conspiracy of Isaac. Hunted by the Founders. Ha! We’ll see who the hunter is now! Lapdog to the prince no longer. What is amazing is how blind everyone else in the world really is. Like that callow, corpse-licking fool, Ambrogino. He didn’t even know what he had in his possession, but you did. He thinks the Giovanni know about magic? Idiot! This Tremere will show him what true magic really is! And, ah, to be able to see with (what did Jocalo call it?) “preternatural clarity of vision”? The true Auspex? The third eye? That will do for now. Ah, and the unhindered power to burn and burn and burn, until all the oceans of the world cannot stanch the flame!

The Sargon Fragment

Unlike the *Lilith Fragment*, the *Sargon Fragment* is actual magic — ancient Chaldean magic, in fact. The *Sargon Fragment* is from a pre-Hermetic tradition: Most modern mages will find it incomprehensible, while vampire Thaumaturgists need a rating of 5 in Thaumaturgy or Necromancy to cast the rituals therein (and even they will “burn out” if the rating is below 8).

For game purposes, the *Sargon Fragment* enables a wielder to amplify her greatest ability exponentially. The Cappadocians hoped (and the Giovanni hope) to use it to enhance their death-powers to the point of omniscience. In Mallotte’s case, the Fragment amplified his fire magic to near-deific levels. Unfortunately, the wizard was insufficiently powerful to control the magic, and thus Mallotte’s powers blaze hopelessly out of control.

Violetta and the characters will realize that they must now kill Mallotte quickly or all is lost. The Justicar lashes out with all the considerable force of her Presence Discipline (Level 7, Mind Numb). This usually devastating attack fails to affect the altered psyche of the fire magician. The characters' attacks — no matter what kind — will fare little better, blunted as they are by both the excruciating heat (-4 to all Dice Pools) and Mallotte's incandescent body. (Anyone who comes into physical contact with him takes four dice of aggravated damage. Everyone in the room takes one die of nonaggravated, nonsoakable damage per round.) Still, some of the characters' blows are likely to connect, and the Storyteller should reward particularly inventive (and devious) attacks with their intended damage.

It doesn't matter; Mallotte doesn't dodge. No matter what the characters throw at him, Mallotte still stands, an animated, cackling bonfire of a corpse.

He launches clumsy, though powerful, attacks in return. His hands hiss and spark like Roman candles. Large, slow-moving balls of fire crackle through the study, instantly vaporizing anything they hit. (Mallotte's Dexterity + Alertness, difficulty 8, to hit; seven dice aggravated damage) During the combat, Mallotte's eldritch fire begins to consume him; horrified characters see his undead flesh peeling back and his skeleton showing underneath. Despite this, he shows little sign of slowing and it is obvious that it is not blood that powers this rampage. After trading blows for a few turns (no more than three) he raises his hands to deliver a massive counterstrike, oblivious to his own deterioration. The heat becomes even more unbearable. The fire around his body intensifies into a low, royal-blue flame.

The characters become aware of two things in this instant.

1) There are faces — possibly those of wraiths or demons — in the flames. (Certainly the characters may find this scene highly reminiscent of the Maelstrom at the climax of *The Last Supper*.)

2) Marianna is in the room.

Marianna is wearing the cloak and boots given to her by Japheth (in *The Last Supper*). The raging inferno seems barely to affect her, and she leaps at Mallotte. More astute characters may notice (Perception + Alertness, difficulty 9) the fiery Maelstrom part before her, taking a brief, but measurable time to close after her. If a character is sufficiently fast, she may follow in Marianna's wake. No more than two characters may follow in this fashion, however and they must make Dexterity + Dodge rolls (difficulty 8) each turn; failure inflicts three dice of aggravated damage.

Marianna brandishes her sword in a distinctly Eastern fighting stance and then brings it down on Mallotte's head. (Any characters who followed Marianna into the Maelstrom may also strike at this point, though they subtract two from all Dice Pools.) Marianna's blade arcs downward, splitting Mallotte cleanly in two. The characters unleash their attacks. Mallotte's body hits the floor with two (or more) resounding thuds and his inferno instantly becomes a normal, though very intense, fire. Inside Mallotte's skull is another skull-scarab, also split in two. The scarab boils away into the now-familiar white ooze.

Outside, Londoners begin to peer from their windows at the burning mansion. Since all the papers in Mallotte's study (including, presumably, the *Sargon Fragment*) ignited in the first few seconds, Violetta calls for the party to reconvene at a safer distance. While Mallotte's mansion is burning out of control, it is dangerously close to only one other building (another private residence). If the characters attempt to contain the fire, either by themselves or by rallying the local populace, they may quench the fire. There is a good chance that they will not try to douse the fire, unless the topic of the Fire of London came up earlier (in which case they may be trying very hard to change history). If the fire is allowed to burn, it soon gets out of control and becomes the Fire of London.

Handling the Climax

The ascension of Mallotte is the Act's climax and a chance for the characters to realize the nature of the power they are seeking. Despite the pyrotechnics, the scene is ultimately not about combat. This being said, the characters should have an opportunity to play a major role in the battle. Marianna plays a *deus ex machina* of sorts in this scene (much like she did in *The Last Supper*). The characters, not to mention the players, may begin to resent it if they feel that they have undergone all the hard stuff just to be "rescued" by a nonplayer character. Thus, the players should have an opportunity to try various attacks and strategies. They should be able to damage Mallotte's physical body severely, but the power that animates him precludes any real chance of killing him. This makes it all the more important that the characters have a chance at him when Marianna finally appears.

The characters also own the same mystical cloaks and boots that Marianna does. It is possible, though unlikely, that they are wearing them when they go to Mallotte's. (They certainly do not know as much about them as Marianna does.) The Storyteller should take pains *not* to mention the items during the course of the story. If the characters remember them, the Storyteller should tell them that they have been dormant for the past two centuries, showing no signs of their former magic. Furthermore, although the items are powerful artifacts, they have weathered the rigors of time only slightly better than normal (though well-made) clothes. If the characters have been wearing them on a semiregular basis since *The Last Supper*, they are little more than rags by now.

If the characters do wear them during the final battle scene, they take half damage from Mallotte's powers and only subtract one from their Dice Pools. They notice, however, that the items are singed by the end of the battle. (Marianna's show no such damage.)

Marianna

In the aftermath of the battle with Mallotte, Marianna may finally be willing to talk with the characters more extensively than before. Violetta intervenes, questioning her about her origins (clan affiliations, etc.) and intentions. Marianna politely refuses to answer any of the Justicar's questions, stating that the only words she has are for the characters. The two face off briefly, sizing each other up; then Violetta laughs, saying that Marianna is free to go as "payment for services rendered." Violetta waits for the characters at a distance.

Marianna first cautions the characters against aligning themselves too tightly with any group, whether it be the Founders or the Sabbat. She states, more forcefully than before, that she bears the characters no ill will. Though she insists that she still works alone, she may be amenable to a nonaggression pact and even to rendering occasional aid. The characters, no doubt, have their own questions and Marianna will answer some of them.

Marianna reveals several facts to the characters, though she confesses that some of what she tells them are guesses on her part. She believes that the remaining fragments in Ambrogino's possession are parts of a greater whole and that they will play a major role in the characters' destinies and her own. She has been in contact with Durga Syn (as recently as 10 years ago); indeed, "Synovea" helped her uncover some of the abilities of her cloak and boots. She confirms that the items have a strong Necromantic component and that they only activate during "Maelstroms" (ghost-storms) that touch the world of the living. She suggests to the characters that they wear their own garments while sleeping in a graveyard, at least once a year. (If the characters do this, they suffer horrific nightmares.)

Marianna believes that Cappadocius' soul still wanders the world in some form, but she doesn't know how, or as what. If the characters make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 10), they notice that her eyes have much the same expression to them as Cappadocius'. Marianna's aura is a light blue, tinged with gold. If the characters didn't acquire it earlier, Marianna also gives them a copy of the *Lilith Fragment*, though she cannot add significantly to their understanding of it. (She may add some of the salient points that they missed.) If the characters demand to know more or in any way become abusive, she regards them sadly and fades from view (via powerful *Obfuscate*). If the characters pledge friendship, she thanks them and leaves by carriage. The driver, a red-haired woman, is a vampire of European descent. She wears a hooded gray cloak and appears mute.

Aftermath

Despite measures taken by both the prince and the Justicar, neither Jocalo nor Ambrogino resurfaces. It becomes quickly apparent that neither one of them is still in town. Both Mithras and Violetta show their appreciation for the characters' efforts (if the characters cooperated). If the characters particularly impressed Violetta, they may now have her as an ally. They also receive a permanent haven in London.

Denouement

In a small bakery on Pudding Lane, just north of the Billingsgate Fish Market, a baker named Thomas Ferrinor forgets to put out his oven fire. His house quickly catches fire and then spreads to the nearby Star Inn. Blown by a strong eastern wind, the fire soon spreads throughout the district. The Lord Mayor of London, Thomas Bludworth, is awakened by news of the fire, but upon seeing it exclaims: "Pish! A woman might piss it out!" He then goes back to sleep.

Most of London's North End is ablaze by morning. The fire reaches Thames Street, with its warehouses filled with oil, tallow, pitch and spirits. By Monday, the 3rd, much of the South Side is aflame, including St. Paul's Cathedral. Molten lead runs down the street. By the 4th, the destruction nears London Bridge. The city destroys many buildings to create a fire break, but the fire bursts through the city wall by way of Ludgate. On the 5th, Cripplegate and Temple burn. Due to the Lord Mayor's bungled firefighting effort, Prince Mithras moves to make King Charles II himself lend a hand in the effort. Royal intervention rallies the public, before the wind finally drops and firefighting measures prove effective.

In all, over 100 thousand people are rendered homeless (including many Kindred). About 80% of the city within the walls is razed, though miraculously only eight people die. The fire covers over 373 acres within the city walls and an additional 63 in the outer city. If the characters stay around for the denouement (it starts the same night as the death of Mallotte), they may have one piece of business left.

Doctor Hopkins (the Witch Finder General) has finally found a new money-making opportunity in the Fire of London. He and an angry mob circulate through the city, exposing the "Satanic culprits" behind the blaze and meting out summary justice. His mob soon numbers over 300 strong and, if left alone, is not challenged by the authorities until the last day of the fire. He extorts money from shopkeepers by threatening to "expose them." In the first night alone he hangs or burns 23 people. The characters quickly notice that Rose is missing (unless they keep her under lock and key). Rose shadows the movements of the mob and takes her first good opportunity to administer her own brand of justice upon the doctor. The characters may help, hinder or ignore her quest for vengeance. If they aid her, she will consider them her eternal friends and aid them in the future. Hopkins has by now outlived his usefulness to the prince, who makes no move to protect him.



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Appendices

Appendix One: The 13 Clans in the Renaissance

The Renaissance is a time of transition for vampiric as well as mortal society. In many ways, vampires have fallen victim to an even greater degree of culture shock than mortals, as conventions and institutions that have dominated their unlives for millennia are suddenly questioned or discarded outright. The Masquerade and the sects are still very new in this period; most elders remember the nights of yore, when they ruled their kine more or less outright; many bear the Renaissance's reforms with poor grace.

On the other hand, even the stodgiest vampires admit that the Renaissance is more interesting (or at least provides more diversions) than were the previous centuries. Art, literature, music and dance have blossomed, and the colonization of the Americas literally opens a whole new world for vampires to parasitize.

As the kine evolve in this age, so do the 13 vampire clans. The following thumbnail sketches of the clans are intended for players to gain an understanding of the larger structures in which their Renaissance characters operate. These notes should also provide players and Storytellers with an inkling of major trends that transpired between the nights of the Dark Ages and the 20th century.

Assamite (Turks)

The Camarilla of 1496 congratulated itself on its decisive victory over the Assamite diabolists. The once-mighty Assamites were forced to sue for peace and were swept back to Alamut in defeat. Even their ability to indulge in the Amaranth had been magically stripped from them by the Tremere. Never again, the Camarilla exulted, would the united vampires fear the Saracen blood-drinkers.

Then, in the 16th century, came the Turks. Slicing through the weakened Tzimisce like a scimitar through butter, the Ottomans and their Assamite masters entrenched themselves in the Balkans, nearly rivaling the Fiends in the cruelty of their rule. Christian fief after Christian fief was forced to bow to the crescent, while vampire after vampire fell to the Assamites' fury. Throughout Europe mortal Turks became the bogeymen of God-fearing souls, while the Musselmen's vampiric cousins assumed that role in the eyes of Europe's undead.

Having developed a sorcerous bypass to the Tremere's curse, the Assamites once again hunt European vampires for their blood. They have, however, learned from their mistakes, and often substitute cunning and diplomacy for outright assault. By exacerbating the *kafir's* own paranoia,

the Assamites trick their enemies into fighting on their behalf. Certain Assamites have even taken the unprecedented step of allying with or serving *kafir* vampires (as part of the greater scheme). The exception, of course, applies to the Tremere — nothing but the Warlocks' utter extermination will suffice, and even now the Ottomans prepare to march on the Tremere's stronghold of Vienna.

Brujah (Agitators)

On first impression one might imagine the Renaissance to be the embodiment of the Brujah dream. The nights of ignorance and orthodoxy are over, learning has become firmly entrenched (if not yet widespread), and the peasantry slowly gropes toward freedom. The universities and salons are cauldrons where new outlooks on life brew and ferment, and so the Brujah eagerly move among the scholars and students of the new era, drinking in ideas as avidly as they imbibe blood.

Alas, in this age of wars and witch-fires, nationalism and colonization, reason and revolt, no Brujah can agree with her clanmate on anything. For every Brujah who supports the English Crown, another champions the Scots. For every Brujah who backs the Holy Roman Emperor, another backs the nobles, and two more struggle to dispense with both. For every Brujah who supports the Spanish, another throws in with the Dutch. Elders and anarchs; Camarilla and Sabbat; autocrats, parliamentarians and proto-democrats: all Brujah with the One True Path and a curse of frenzy. The Brujah has long been a clan divided, and in the Renaissance is a clan shattered.

Brujah have followed the cultural explosion throughout Europe, becoming passionately embroiled in civil and ecclesiastical strife along the way. The recent Thirty Years' War certainly provided a crucible for Brujah "debate." Though the Brujah had little use for the Catholic/Protestant quarrel (Damned is Damned), they were more than willing to ally themselves with whichever contestant supported their secular ideals. The rent patchwork that calls itself Holy Roman Empire provides mute testimony to the price of Brujah discord.

Followers of Set (Serpents)

The Serpents hiss contentedly in the Renaissance. Learning has by no means decreased the prevalence of corruption; it has only increased the options. Movable type and woodcut blocks allow for mass-produced sedition and pornography. Goods from the Orient and the New World, so necessary for status-conscious kine, travel through Setite territory (and are so addictive once procured...). The rise of a "leisure class" of wealthy, influential idlers allows Setites countless inroads into Europe's politics.

Furthermore, the Renaissance's increasingly mobile mortal population only exacerbates Setite expansion. Setites have infiltrated the Ottoman Empire, and are heavily involved in the slave trade and the depredations of the Barbary Corsairs. The increasing size of Europe's cities also allows den after den of vice to settle in the West's swelling urban bowels.

Gangrel (Betes)

The Gangrel continue their gradual decline. The pagan gods, and the cultures that revered both them and the Gangrel, are gone. Europe's forests relentlessly fall to settlers' axes. Even the stealthy Gangrel (now hindered by a Masquerade prized by urban vampires) find it difficult to escape the notice of mortals — to say nothing of Lupines, with whom the clan is nightly forced into bitter territorial conflicts.

Many Gangrel, angered by the Ventrue's unresponsiveness to their pleas for intervention, have gone Autarkis, hiding among the Irish and Scots. From here these rogues assist their Celtic herds in raiding the Ventrue's host states. Other Gangrel leave Europe entirely, seeking new unives in darkest Africa and the New World.

Giovanni (Necromancers)

The Giovanni are to the Renaissance what the Tremere were to the Dark Ages. Insular and distrusted, the Giovanni keep to themselves, as much out of discretion as necessity. The memories of Cappadocius' diablerie remain fresh in the minds of Europe's elders, and the war with the "Devil Kindred" has only recently ceased.

From their Venetian lairs, the Giovanni work to develop their necromantic arts. To this end they extend their mercantile web into the lands of the Orient, seeking the ancient secrets of their race. On a more mundane level, the Giovanni are as involved as any in the burgeoning New World trade; spices, gold, dyes and tobacco fill the colorless crypts of the Giovanni's merchant loggias.

Lasombra (Corsairs)

The Lasombra have long been at war. Now formally recognized as the Sabbat's leaders, the Lasombra have turned from their courtly intrigues and chess games to more overt and bloody sports. It is difficult to say which aim they pursue more violently: the destruction of the Camarilla or the extermination of their surviving *antitribu*.

This shift of focus has weakened the clan's influence in the mortal world, much more than the clan would prefer. Lasombra puppets, neglected by their masters, attempt to serve their interests but with mixed results. And so Spain, once the mightiest power in Europe, has begun a slow but inexorable decline. Many Lasombra turn toward renewed opportunity in the New World or involve themselves with Dutch merchants and pirates.

Malkavian (Lunatics)

The Renaissance is a paradoxical time for the Lunatics — not that they would have it any other way. The spread of literature and philosophy allows many Malkavians a degree of freedom heretofore denied them, but religious backlash against this freedom is often savage. Certain communities tolerate eccentricity and innovative thought; others put eccentrics and innovators to the pyre.

Certainly the newly formed vampire sects provide fertile soil for Malkavian insights (and pranks), and the Renaissance's intricate web of secular and ecclesiastical politics furnishes fodder for many amusing jests. Indeed, Malkavians are vastly entertained by "enlightened humanity's" manifold layers of political intrigue, but less so by recent religious upheavals. (It's fun to tweak a Puritan and play with his guilt like a little finger puppet, but those Protestants are so *dull!*) Finally, Malkavians take an interest in the Renaissance's medical developments, particularly those dealing with the study of insanity. Recently formed lunatic asylums are hardly Malkavian utopias, but do make irresistible playgrounds and recruiting parlors.

Nosferatu (Crawlers)

The pragmatic Nosferatu have made effective use of the Renaissance's urban expansion. Protected by the Camarilla's code, they flock to cities, disappearing amid catacombs and cobbled alleys. In so doing they keep a lower profile than before; many Ventrue and Toreador believe the clan to be slowly dying out.

Nothing could be less accurate. Hidden by walls of mortar and disbelief, the Crawlers (as they are now called) have waxed stronger than ever. Ghettos and tenements hide far more Nosferatu than the Camarilla's ruling clans would credit, and the growing hordes of urban poor provide ample prey.

The clan has begun to manifest a distinctly dark side. Perhaps millennia of abuse have taken their toll; perhaps the Nosferatu grow bold in their anonymity. In any event, certain Crawlers have begun to display a hateful and vindictive streak. Some have even begun to Embrace mortals out of spite. The Nosferatu's inner Beasts increasingly reflect the horror of their exteriors; only time will tell if the Crawlers can rein themselves in.

Ravnos (Gypsies)

Traveling with their Gypsy bands, the Ravnos crisscross the continent just as they did a millennium ago. The wars and machinations of the other clans mean little to them, though they welcome any and all lucrative opportunities that such turns of fortune present. The Lupines and monsters of elder nights have diminished in population, and the Ravnos fear few mortal highwaymen, so they travel the roads in relative safety. The cities, with their witch-burnings, are another matter....

Some Ravnos travel with *commedia dell'arte* troupes, to which marks aplenty flock to be fleeced. Others settle in cities, finding bands of organized criminals and rogues to their liking. Wherever they stay, the Ravnos shrug off the perils of witch-hunters and rival vampires much as they always have — with a shrug, a smile and a laugh.





Toreador (Epicureans)

This time, more than any other era save Classical Greece, marks the heyday of the Toreador. With a firm stranglehold on France, the Toreador is arguably the most powerful clan in Europe. Michelangelo, DaVinci, Durer; Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Spenser; the establishment of France as Europe's cultural nexus; the reemergence of theater in England: these feats are as much a source of Toreador vanity as the mirrors before which they preen themselves. The benighted centuries are at last over, and the Toreador can sit back and congratulate themselves on work well done.

Louis XIV, the Sun King, is the Toreador's darling, and in many ways represents the beginning of the clan's decline from spiritually motivated preservationism to self-serving narcissism. The Toreador ape Louis' arrogance, and the hindsight-prone of the clan will one night curse the *hauteur* that led to the guillotine. For now, though, the spectre of revolution is long distant, France reigns supreme, and the Toreador are content.

Tremere (Warlocks)

The 17th century is also good to the Tremere. The clan's membership in the Camarilla lends it an air of legitimacy; its disreputable genesis is, if not forgotten, at least politely ignored. The ravages of the Tzimisce and Gangrel are largely behind the Tremere. Indeed, the Fiends have assumed the status of bogeymen — threatening, but distant and disunited — while the Gangrel are now the Tremere's sectmates (albeit reluctant ones).

The Tremere eagerly explore both science and magic, finding their Thaumaturgical practices little hindered (and often helped) by the rise of Reason. Under the aegis of Rosicrucianism, Masonry and other of the period's manifold occult orders, the Warlocks hone and develop their rituals and magical paths. Copernicus' and Kepler's discoveries lend themselves admirably to Thaumaturgical cosmology, and the rise of universities and learned folk provides the Warlocks a deep pool from which to draw neonates.

Tzimisce (Fiends)

Politically, the Tzimisce is a broken clan. Most of the clan's ancestral homeland is a battleground between Ottoman Turks and imperial Hapsburgs. The Tzimisce themselves are as Balkanized as their subjects, as Sabbat Fiends battle Old Clan holdouts, while both sides war with Assamites, Ventrue, Tremere, werewolves, mages and each other. Though Tzimisce evoke respect in the Sabbat and terror in the Camarilla, the glorious nights of the Old Country are a fading memory.

Not surprisingly, many Tzimisce have emigrated to less turbulent lands, turning away from politicking to focus their attention on the study of things scientific and arcane. They have proved highly talented in these fields, and the Sabbat has greatly benefited from Tzimisce research. Though all Sabbat clans assist in the development of the Paths of Enlightenment, much of the Paths'

overall foundation lies in the work of the Tzimisce. It is indeed ironic that many of the kine's scientific, medical and philosophical advances have their roots in the studies of the clan least amicable to humanity.

Ventrue (Royalists)

The Renaissance is a busy time for the Ventrue; on their shoulders fall the twin burdens of safeguarding the Kindred in the Camarilla and shepherding the kine through the period's tumultuous political upheavals. As feudalism disintegrates and nationalism rises, Ventrue increasingly turn away from fiefs and baronies to man helms of state and globe-spanning merchant empires.

Ventrue are of two minds about the Renaissance. On one hand, the comfortable stability of a centuries-old lifestyle has been thrown into turmoil, just as it was after Rome's fall. Old Ventrue aristocrats find their holdings worthless (what is this prattle of "assets" and "credit"?), and occasionally must contend with rapacious crowns if their ancestral demesnes happen to fall within one or another of the recently demarcated national boundaries.

On the other hand, Ventrue now have access to power and wealth on a hitherto unimagined scale. Innovative Ventrue welcome the solidarity of nationalism, and jockey for control of parliaments, trade fleets and armies. Young Ventrue in particular relish moving among elegant, sophisticated (and clean) courts and salons while simultaneously dismantling their elders' stagnant, obsolete power structures.

Appendix Two: *Blood and Fire* - Running Live- Action

Blood and Fire lends itself well to Live-Action gaming; meetings with Sabbat elders and the Giovanni are excellent opportunities to enact drama and passion. A gathering of seasoned troupe players who want a break from the typical modern cloak-and-dagger story may find *Blood and Fire* a refreshing change of pace, especially with the option to play the "alternate morality" of the Sabbat. White Wolf's *Mind's Eye Theatre* offers a full line of game books that details a complete Live-Action system for use with *Blood and Fire*. *The Masquerade* and *Antagonists* are the must-haves; *The Masquerade* provides basic system information, while *Antagonists* provides rules for the Sabbat, from Creation Rites to Disciplines.

The scope of events in a Live-Action game of *Blood and Fire* may seem daunting even to an experienced Storyteller: How to present a story arc that ranges from Rome to Switzerland to London's Great Fire? One suggestion might be to spread the story out over a long weekend or to simply use the

parts that appeal to you, altering the rest to fit your group's needs. Another option, particularly if your group meets on a regular basis, might be to present the acts one by one, and consider the interim as time spent traveling. The latter idea may also work best for Narrators or other Storyteller helpers who would otherwise be forced to double or triple up on parts to keep up with the story's non-player characters.

Certain events in the story may not work in Live-Action (burning down a building to evoke the Great Fire of London is not recommended!). Feel free to modify the story to make it work for you and your players.

Also keep in mind that *Blood and Fire* is a Black Dog book, and as such is meant for mature, adult players and Storytellers. As a Storyteller book, *Blood and Fire*'s options and tools involve themes and ideas that are too intense for immature players. By translating the story from tabletop to Live-Action gaming, you move images and events from the imagination and *tabletop* to the imagination and *physical world*. It is very important in Live-Action that the Storyteller be aided by mature players and assistants who are aware of what they're getting into, whether events involve a power-hungry ghoul ravaging a defenseless prostitute or an *antitribu* killing a child. Read the material carefully, decide which scenes may be too disturbing for you or your players, and always follow the safety rules of Live-Action gaming.

Above all, don't worry if everything in your Live-Action game doesn't run quite true to events in this book or to lore in Vampire books such as *The Players Guide to the Sabbat*. Who's to say what survives the passage of time from the Renaissance to the modern World of Darkness? A Sabbat game like this that's set in the past may never have modern repercussions; or, a one-time, 17th-century character may unwittingly deduce a crucial point about a Path of Enlightenment that affects the future. Ultimately, relax and let the story guide you. Keep a loose hand on the reins, tightening only when things are in danger of going stray, and remember that your players may surprise you.

Rules for Live-Action

A few basic rules should be followed when enacting *Blood and Fire*, to ensure a safe, smooth-running game. Safety should always be a primary concern.

- **Don't Touch:** A player should never strike or grapple with another player. Combat is decided by the game system. If things get too rowdy, the Storyteller should call for a timeout to allow for a cool-down or to remind players of the rules. Repeat offenders should be asked to leave or the action should be returned to the table.

- **No Weapons:** While swords and daggers add to the atmosphere and are certainly part of the story, they should never be used in Live-Action. No real weapons of any sort should be brought to a game. Prop weapons should not be used if they must touch a player to be effective or could be mistaken for the real thing. Use note cards that list appropriate stats.

• **Playing Area:** Play in your own home or in a private area. Make certain that everyone else in the area understands what you are doing; confused janitors can tell some very wild tales when they don't know what's going on. Never play where your actions may confuse or frighten passersby. You may wish to call for time-outs when nongamers walk through your area, and prepare to explain what you're doing (out of character) if someone asks.

• **Know When to Stop:** When the Storyteller or a Narrator calls for a time-out, all action stops immediately. During Live-Action, the Storyteller's word is final.

Dressing the Stage

Some players may worry about adequate costuming for the 17th century. While costumes certainly enhance the mood of the story, don't fret if you can't find the perfect period suit or gown. Many vampires tend to dress anachronistically, choosing whatever feels comfortable or what they're most accustomed to. Having seen so much of the fashion parade already, many vampires choose to ignore it. Conversely, if you're a costume maven, feel free to go hog-wild. Portraits of the period give some very good ideas.

On Renaissance nights, especially within tomblike halls of stone, be they in monasteries or the catacombs of Rome, darkness is palpable, a thing dispersed only by

the faint circle of light cast by a candle or torch. A face, no matter how familiar, suddenly becomes a stranger's, and a familiar setting is altered enough to make you uneasy. Light, or the lack of it, can significantly enhance mood to new heights, especially if that light is suddenly extinguished. If you choose to play with candles, make certain that they're placed where they can't brush against clothing or hair, or be knocked over.

To enhance certain settings (for example, if characters visit Mario Giovanni or Lady Melisande), consider draping the furniture with tapestry- or brocadelike fabrics, setting out goblets and dimming the lights. Even small touches, such as covering the table with a cloth or camouflaging the fish tank, go a long way toward helping players feel like a part of the story. The transformation of a familiar place into someplace alien is sometimes all that's needed to make the mental jump from player to character.

A variety of period music can also be used to heighten the mood. Unaccompanied Gregorian chants or Ladymasses would be appropriate in scenes set in the Black Monastery or the catacombs of the Vatican. The Anonymous Four, "Chant" and "Chant II" by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Dominge de Silos should be widely available. Soundtrack music from various movies is also invaluable for a little scene setting. Soundtrack music is specifically written to underscore





scenes, set tone and, above all, be unobtrusive. Suggested soundtracks include: *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Paperhouse*, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, *Henry V*, *Interview With the Vampire* and *Dangerous Liaisons*. You may have your own favorites to add to the list.

Although it's not historically accurate, the evocative, baroque music of Orff's *Carmina Burana* is a good choice to score your drama. Lute music or unaccompanied keyboard scores (such as harpsichord) are good choices. Lastly, an old vampire may decide that nothing is better than the music of her early nights, which may be anything from the medieval period onward.

Troubleshooting

Sometimes, despite the Storyteller's best efforts, the story gets off track, whether by players getting caught up in roleplaying or by missing obvious clues laid out on the living room floor. Live-Action provides a number of places to apply a little gentle pressure to get things moving again, whether in the form of messengers, servants listening at doors or vampires with their own motives. As a wise Storyteller once noted, "If you want to make sure the players find out something, tell them three different ways, in three different places, in three different silly accents."

Hand of Fate (a.k.a. The Plot Hammer)

What follows are some hints for keeping the action moving, particularly in Act II when things are most likely to break down.

Conversational Gambits

Be aware that not all characters can be engaged in one-on-one encounters all the time. What happens when the talk lags, things get off to a slow start, or the Storyteller informs the troupe, "Amuse yourselves while I take care of this?" The scenarios discussed below provide jumping-off points for other roleplaying when characters aren't involved in major encounters.

Remember that in *Blood and Fire* the characters frequently interrupt elders who are going about their business. While the elders frequently entertain, they still work on their Paths when possible. Library research has its place, but the most success they have toward mastering their Paths can be gained through conversation — discussion of the endless possibilities and implications of everything — and conversation can be conducted with any characters who aren't preoccupied. Talk can be staged just about anywhere and over almost any activity, whether a game of chess, a hunt or a lute performance.



Don't worry if the characters (or the elders) go off on wild tangents about Paths. All projects go through stages of winnowing wheat from chaff, and elaboration is an excellent way to delve into persona. The Storyteller may want to step in, however, if discussion wanders too far from harrowing or if debates grow too heated. On the other hand, an elder with great oratory skills may find herself with new converts.

- Lord Alexandre and Master Frazier get into a heated discussion concerning honor, liberally interspersing their debate with quotations from pieces such as Falstaff's "Can honor set a leg?" speech.

- Melisande states, "The poet says, 'The heart asks pleasure first.' Is pleasure a luxury or a necessity?"

- Vadislava speaks up: "If you had to choose your death, how would you choose to die? Why? What is so much better about that way than another?"

- From Theron: "Who determines madness? What if all sense was really just madness?" He probably argues from three sides and lets the characters follow along for the ride.

- Julian starts baiting Meridie, claiming that she has no right to call herself a lady and a Brujah in the same breath, attempting to goad her into losing her temper. Lord Alexandre, Master Frazier and Melisande leap to Meridie's defense, while Veradis and Theron throw in with Julian.

- Veradis begins, "In all your fancy talk, you leave no room for Caine. How can there not be room? Do you indeed respect the Father? How?"

Sabbat Games and *Ritae*

The Renaissance is a busy time for a new sect. The Sabbat games and the *Auctoritas* and *Ignoblis Ritae* are created at approximately the same time as the Paths. All in all, this is when the Sabbat goes through its greatest change, growth and development from a bunch of rabble playing at anarchy to a true sect with ideals, ethics and customs of its own.

The Vaulderie is practiced on a regular basis by the temporary pack formed at the enclave, and the "Fox Hunt" episode is intended as a proto-game, although there could be others. Depending on how involved the Storyteller wishes to make time spent at the enclave, certain games like "Dueling With the Enemy," "Freeplay," "Spirit Games" and "Fox Hunt" (see *The Players Guide to the Sabbat* for more) could be staged by the Sabbat as a means of building community and blowing off steam. Other games may also be created and discarded as particular periods of history pass.

Of the rituals, most are intended as parodies of the Catholic Church, but with the intent to build community. Other rituals like Blessings, Calls to Caine or Visionquests may be incorporated as well.

Non-Sabbat vampires (Meridie, Master Frazier and Intisar) do not participate in such events as the Vaulderie for obvious reasons. The lines between Camarilla and Sabbat are still a little blurred, though, so they might join in Calls to Caine or games less fatal to humans, as a means of cementing the community and giving meaning to their purpose. The characters are free to play or not, although it should be noted that characters who join in the games or are invited into rituals gain a measure of respect in the eyes of their hosts.

Food for Thought

After talk has gone round and round, and at least one character has been through a "harrowing," they may find themselves with questions about the Sabbat, their unives and their very selves. "Inner self" voyages may be necessary, and would make possible some intense roleplaying. Character may seek advice from particular elders or confide in characters they trust. The Storyteller has a number of options to ensure that the characters don't miss this golden opportunity:

- Run such episodes in troupe-style play, particularly if a number of players have harrowing questions.
- "Blue-book" sessions for those who keep diary entries in character. So named for college exam books, these sessions afford players who would wrestle their demons out on paper a chance to "roleplay" on a different level.
- If a character wants to work things out in her own mind, consider playing or having a troupe member play a spiritual Devil's Advocate.

Notes for Troupe Play in "Food for Thought"

Meridie de Chancie — Socratic question-for-question method. Lets characters work things out on their own, but helps turn the gristmill.

Master Frazier — Lays the choices out on the table and says, "Pick one." Having lived on both sides of the fence, his insight into how both lifestyles work may be invaluable.

Lord Mendel — Frequently quotes texts that play Devil's Advocate to characters' choices, to test their convictions.

Haakon Mortensen — Lets the characters say their piece all the way through and then makes them explain themselves by saying, "I don't understand," or "Tell me why," forcing characters to come to their own conclusions about their beliefs.

Julian Sanders — After listening, he usually responds, "So what's the problem? Just do it." Action-oriented, talk-is-for-bored-elders sort of advocate.

Lady Melisande — May act bored during conversations, but actually observes reactions and listens to voices. Based on what she notices, she cuts to the heart of the matter and encourages characters to follow their hearts in true romantic fashion.

Lady Intisar — She carefully picks away at any argument, whatever the side or decision, with a few "Oh, is that so?" or "Do you really think so?" comments. The idea is to wear down both argument and person. (She thinks: "Just how committed is she to this argument? If I can take her down here, what will she do later?")

Veradis — Just listens...and listens...and listens without offering much, if any, conversation. She may occupy herself while listening by flipping a dagger between her hands. Sometimes the best sounding board is one who doesn't sound off. If her companions show any sign of doubt in their convictions, she argues with them on the grounds that her course is the truest to Hassam's original teachings. "Whom do you obey — your founder or your masters?"

Lord Theron — Theron is as jumpy as a jackrabbit. He seems to change sides, perspectives and voices like clothing, encouraging characters and then disparaging them.

Lord Alexandre — He uses Socratic examination, but inserts his own logic to direct the conversation to his benefit. If his chosen harrowing comes to him, he makes references back to the event.

Lady Vadislava — In most cases she maintains the attitude, "If I only listen, they will go away." Where clanmates are concerned, however, especially ones who lack vision, she pulls out all stops to bring them back "into the fold."

Markus Gryzbowsky — Responds by describing his own introduction to the Sabbat (midway through the Sabbat-Camarilla war), and compares the benefits of the Sabbat and Camarilla.

On the whole, the rule of thumb with the Sabbat is freedom, and the characters must ultimately make their own decisions about how they live their unives, which the elders remind them. A Sabbat made unwillingly is no good to the sect right now, but once the decision to join is made, it's made and there's no turning back.

The New Sabbat

Sometimes the unthinkable comes true and a character decides to convert to the Sabbat. The *Mind's Eye Theatre* supplement *Antagonists* contains all the necessary information and systems for the Sabbat Creation Rites, which can be staged in-game. If the Storyteller believes the Creation Rites would disrupt the flow of the game, the Sabbat can choose to delay the ritual. They suggest that the initiate finish his mission or take care of any last business before crossing over. Tying up loose ends would certainly add a degree of urgency to events while the would-be *antitribu's* group travels to London.

Appendix Three: Necromancy and Wraiths

Clan Giovanni specializes in binding and commanding the spirits of the dead. Understandably, a vast majority of ghosts object most strenuously to this sort of treatment, and do anything in their considerable power to avoid it. Thus, the use of Necromancy is not quite so simple as the Giovanni would have other Kindred believe.

What follows is an integration of the Necromancy Discipline rules with the rules of **Wraith: The Oblivion**, detailing how the Discipline grants power over the Restless Dead — and what wraiths can do to fight back.

Level One: Insight

This use of the Discipline does not require contact with a wraith, being more akin to a specialized usage of the Auspex skill Psychometry.

Level Two: Summon Spirit

Summon Spirit allows a Necromancer to call a wraith back from the Underworld in order to converse. In order to perform this feat, the Giovanni must meet certain conditions:

- The Necromancer must know the name of the wraith in question, though an image of the wraith obtained via Psychometry will suffice.
- There must be an object in the vampire's presence with which the wraith had some contact in life. If the object is a Fetter of the wraith's, the chances for success in the summoning increase dramatically.

Certain types of spirits cannot be summoned with this power. Vampires who achieved Golconda before Final Death, or who were diablerized are beyond the reach of this summons. Likewise, Domems (wraiths who no longer have any Fetters), wraiths who have achieved Transcendence, and those wraiths who have been devoured by Oblivion can't be summoned. Spectres who maintain Fetters can be called back this way, but those without Fetters do not hear the call over the tumult of the Tempest.

System: To use Summon Spirit, the vampire must roll Perception + Occult (difficulty equal to the wraith's Willpower). If the object that the Necromancer uses as the focus for the summoning is a Fetter of the wraith's, the difficulty of the roll is reduced by the rating of the Fetter. The number of successes on the roll indicates how successful the summoning is and how long the summoned wraith remains in the vicinity of her summoner. Summoned ghosts are visible and audible to the vampire who summons them, and remain so until the time that the summoning wears off. Wraiths who wish to be summoned can voluntarily appear.

For each question the vampire asks the summoned spirit, the Storyteller should roll one die (difficulty 5) per summoning success. At least one success is needed on this second roll in order to keep the wraith around long enough to answer the question.

If a vampire botches a summoning roll, she calls forth a Doppelganger instead. See **Dark Reflections: Spectres** for more information on Doppelgangers and their abilities.

Level Three: Compel

When used properly, Compel permits a vampire to command a wraith to do his bidding. When used improperly, it can be perilous for vampire and wraith alike.

System: In order to Compel a wraith, the vampire must first successfully Summon it. Before the wraith has left the scene of the summoning, the vampire must roll Manipulation + Occult (difficulty equal to the target's Willpower). The wraith can spend Pathos to combat the compulsion; each point of Pathos spent increases the vampire's difficulty by one. However, the vampire is free to attempt to Compel a wraith multiple times during a single summoning. Furthermore, having a Fetter of the wraith's in the immediate vicinity makes the vampire's job easier, as described above.

For each success the Necromancer achieves on the Manipulation + Occult roll, she achieves a greater degree of control over the wraith. The breakdown is as follows:

Botch: The wraith immediately undergoes a Catharsis roll. No matter which personality emerges, she henceforth does everything in her power to destroy the Necromancer. Most wraiths simply attack at once, but others return to their Haunts to plan long-term vengeance. If a botch is rolled on an attempt to Compel, the wraith is of course free to go, and the summoning is considered to have ended.

Failure: The compulsion of the summoning ends and the wraith is free to leave. Many wraiths take the opportunity to assault their would-be masters on the way out.

One success: The wraith is forced to remain in the vicinity and not attack any creature without the Necromancer's consent.

Two successes: The wraith is bound to remain and answer truthfully any questions asked of it, though the questions had best be phrased carefully.

Three successes: The wraith is forced to remain and answer truthfully any questions, without evasion or omission.

Four successes: The wraith must remain, answering truthfully any questions asked of it. It must also perform any services commanded by its new master, though it is bound only by the letter of the command, not the spirit.

Five successes: The wraith is trapped, obeying the spirit of the vampire's commands to the best of its ability.

Compel holds a wraith for one hour per success rolled. If the vampire wishes, she can expend a temporary Willpower point and keep the wraith under a compulsion for an extra day. The expenditure of a permanent point of Willpower on the vampire's part will bind the wraith for a year and a day.

Note: Wraiths who are summoned and bound are still within the Shadowlands, and may be forcibly removed from the scene of their summoning by other wraiths. However, if bound or summoned the wraith does his best to remain until his service to the vampire is completed. Wraiths who are bound through Compel and who are subsequently ghostnapped immediately undergo a Harrowing.

Level Four: Haunting

This power functions in a way similar to Stygian chains. Specifically, it removes a wraith's ability to use the Arcanos Argos, tying her to the Shadowlands. Even worse, the wraith is no longer able to enter the Tempest or set foot on a Byway. Nihils close in front of her, Byways vanish, and paths to Stygia can no longer be found. In addition, for the duration of the Haunting the Necromancer suddenly becomes a Fetter (rating of 3) for the wraith, with all of the appropriate die bonuses that designation entails.

System: The vampire rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty is the target's Willpower if she resists; otherwise it's 4) with any Fetter bonus added. A botch immediately opens a Nihil and drops the wraith into the Tempest, while each success ties the wraith to the Shadowlands (and the Necromancer) for a day.

Level Five: Soul Stealing

This power affects the living, not the dead. It does, however, temporarily turn a living soul into a sort-of wraith. A mortal exiled from his body by this power becomes a wraith with one Fetter of rating 5: his now-empty body. A body without a spirit begins to deteriorate along the lines laid out in the Puppetry art Obliterate the Soul. Furthermore, the act of removing a soul from a living body duplicates the Phantasm art Agon, and a botch has similar results. For more information on the effects of removing a soul from a living body, see *Guildbook: Sandmen*.

Level Six: Zombie

The use of this power requires that the vampire have a Drone available to insert into the corpse to be reanimated. For more information on Drones, see below.

System: In order to create a zombie, the vampire must locate both a corpse not more than 8 hours dead and a Drone with which to animate the body. He then rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6); the number of successes correlates to how well the zombie's body holds together. The zombie functions as long as it's fed a Blood Point per day, but must be given explicit orders to perform actions. Relying on a zombie to understand the meaning of an intricate command is a fool's errand.





Zombies have one more point in both Strength and Stamina than did the bodies they inhabited in life. On the other hand, zombies' Dexterity scores are reduced to 1 and they're incapable of moving more than 10 feet per minute.

Level Seven: Torment

It is through the use of this power that elder Necromancers convince bound spirits to behave — or else. Essentially, Torment allows the vampire to strike a wraith as if the immortal himself were in the Shadowlands, inflicting damage to the wraith's Corpus; the ghost can't escape by going incorporeal. The vampire remains in the Skinlands, however, and cannot be struck in return by the wraith.

System: The vampire rolls Stamina + Empathy (difficulty is the wraith's Willpower, with Fetter bonuses in effect). Each success inflicts a level of non-aggravated Corpus damage on the wraith. Should the wraith be reduced to zero Corpus, it immediately falls into a Harrowing. Should the wraith survive the Harrowing, instead of being returned to a Fetter it finds itself in the Tempest, barred from the Skinlands for a week.

Level Eight: Soul Exchange

Soul Exchange allows a vampire to swap the spirits — or souls — of two bodies. This has an extremely detrimental effect on the souls, frequently driving the victims mad if they are exchanged multiple times. The effect is similar to that of the Phantasm art Supplant.

Human souls can be swapped into animal bodies and vice versa, but this increases the difficulty of the roll by one.

Level Nine: Possession

Possession lets a vampire insert a wraith into a freshly dead body and inhabit it for the duration. This does not make the wraith in question a Risen: Its Shadow remains firmly in its consciousness, and the body it possesses still rots irreversibly in the space of a week. The wraith can, of course, leave the borrowed body whenever it wishes, but cannot reenter that shell ever again.

System: The body in question must be no more than 30 minutes dead and the wraith must agree to inhabit it. Of course, most wraiths would jump at the chance, assuming they could be assured of a pardon for violating the *Dictum Mortuum*. Should the vampire, for whatever reason, wish to insert a wraith into another vampire's corpse, the Necromancer must achieve five successes on a resisted Willpower roll with the original owner of the body or the wraith is denied entrance.

Level Ten: Death Pact

The Death Pact, in a perverse way, is the one surefire way to ensure existence beyond the grave. By writing a note (in conjunction with the Necromancer, of course) promising postmortem service and sealing it with a drop of his blood, a mortal ensures that upon his death he will become a wraith and serve the vampire to the best of his ability.

System: When the pact is drafted, the vampire rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). The number of successes indicates the number of times the wraith created by the Pact can be called upon without resorting to Spirit Summoning or Compel.

Immediately upon death, a mortal who has signed a Death Pact becomes a wraith with two five-point Fetters: the vampire who created the pact, and the pact itself. Once the wraith's service to the vampire is discharged, his Lifeweb is rearranged; vampire and pact cease to serve as Fetters, while those people, places or things that would normally have served as Fetters upon death assume their proper roles.

Botching a Death Pact roll creates a Mortwight instead of a wraith, and the newly fledged Spectre targets the creator vampire for vengeance.

Drones

Drones are mindless, insentient wraiths with no will or personality. If they can be found, they can be Compelled or made the target of Hauntings at a difficulty of 2, and can be bound for a year and a day with just the investment of a temporary point of Willpower. Of course, the tricky part is finding Drones before ghostly Reapers do.



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