

C L A N B O O K :

Giovanni



A Sourcebook for VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®



Clanbook:
Bloodlines
Sins of the Father

By Justin Achilli

but apparently the document (which turned out to be part of the Khazar's Diary, but I'll talk about that later) stated that "ten thousand ten thousand souls" were required to perform the ritual successfully. Yes, that's a hundred million souls. And exactly how does one go about harvesting the ghosts of 100,000,000 dead people? Very slowly, and with the patience that only immortality can give you.

The Stupidity of Others, and Abstinence from the Jihad

Now, I bet I don't have to tell you that once you start to talk to other Kindred about "invoking the Eternal Night," they get all up in arms and start shrieking about Gehenna. No matter how much you try to allay their fears and tell them, "No, it's cool; we know what we're doing," they don't believe you. So we naturally met some resistance from the few Cainites we tried to enlist for our goals. Before long, that resistance turned into outright hostility, and the members of the other clans called us "Devil Kindred" based on our desire to open the world up for the return of the Antediluvians. (Never mind that paving the way for the Antediluvians isn't what we have in mind; people are basically stupid, and Kindred aren't too different.)

"Fuck 'em in the ear," thinks Augustus, and promptly shuts off the recruitment drive.

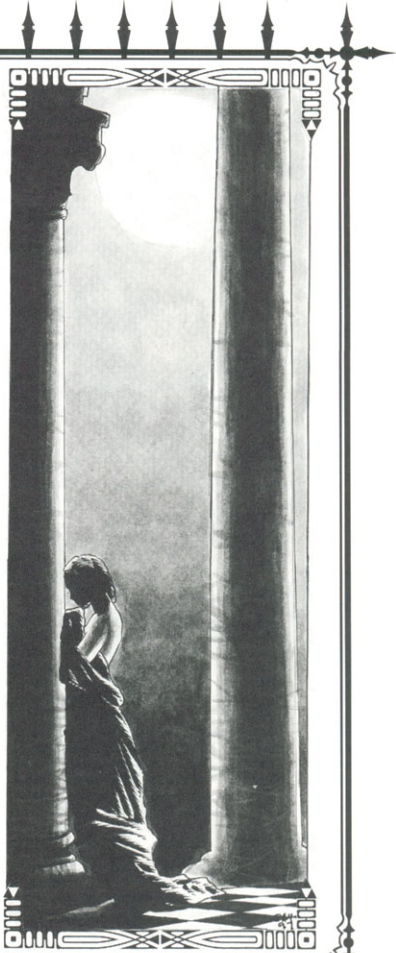
At this point, we were in a precarious position. Here stands Clan Giovanni, having just diablerized its original founder and whispering about ushering in an age of doom and terror. How the hell did we survive? By pulling out.

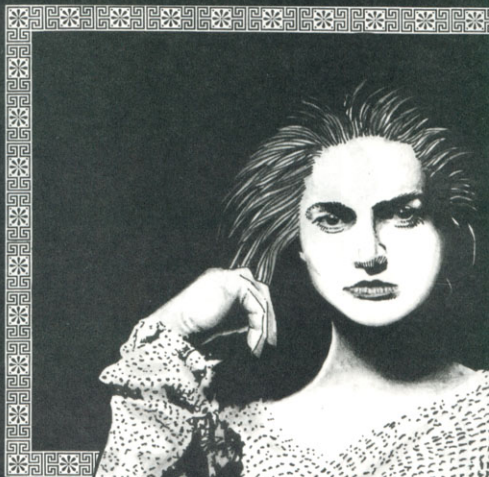
Back in the 11th century, when the Tremere attained their Kindred status, everyone was against them. The only things that kept them alive were their Thaumaturgy and the fact that the other vampires were too disorganized to do anything about them. We weren't so lucky, nor were we as proficient at Thaumaturgy, so we just vanished from the picture.

Of course, we didn't disappear entirely; we merely withdrew and took care of our own business. Augustus figured that, what the hell, he was an Antediluvian, so the clan didn't need to fear his coming. Instead of indulging in their petty little Jihad, the other vampires could get along just fine without the Giovanni.

The Promise of 1528

So some illustrious members of Clan Giovanni sat down at the table with a bunch of dried-up elders from the other clans in the winter of 1528. It took a lot of work to get the other Kindred to come meet with us "Devil Kindred," but they decided to get ahead and put the whole issue to rest. By the end of the 10-night






Behold the monster with the pointed tail.

Who cleaves the hills, and breaketh walls and weapons.

Behold him who infecteth all the world.

*— Dante, *The Inferno*, verse 17*



*Veril Kindred, Necromancers...
Masters of the Dark Soul Names
and epithets falling fearfully from the
tongues of vampires who deride us. They
pretend that we are of no consequence,
that we are weak and have no influence.*

*Tell me, then, oh great lords of the
night: How is it that a clan of independ-
ents, hated by every other child of Sane,
has managed to survive through the years,
regardless of your ferror and persecution?*

*Take heed, princes and priests —
were you ever to see the truth, you would
blind yourselves in order never to look
upon it again. And in your blindness, we
would consume you.*



Chapter One: Family Matters



I gotta get me one of them Jew accountants. I hear they really know what they're doing.

Not that I can afford to be picky; that's the irony. Seventeen fucking million dollars a year that I can't just sink into a bank. You think they'd be sucking my dick just to get me to talk to them, but no, they don't want "dirty money." I ask them how my money is any dirtier than some slumlord's or some insurance agent's, but they're not interested in my polemics.

Anyway, that's the upshot of why I have to use these guineas instead of a nice FDIC institute. The profit margin is really nice, but it's not insured, and that's what a fellow like me needs is the insurance. I never know whether or not my operation's gonna get all busted and I'm gonna have to run; I'd at least like to know that my money's somewhere nice and accessible. Using these wops, I have to call Oscar, who handles my "investments," and get some kind of sit-down with one of the bigshot goombas. Then I gotta justify why I need the money.

Can you imagine? I gotta tell them why I need my fucking money. It's not that they give me any lip, but when I need large amounts, they really bust my balls about it and call me a "filthy lucker." I don't even know what the fuck a filthy lucker is. I'm just a producer. Sure, they're snuff films, but what the fuck, you gotta do what you're good at, right?

So, like I was saying, you've got to have a meeting with these motherfuckers to get your money, and those old guys that are in charge are really spooky. Now lemme say that I'm not the squeamish type. It takes an iron gut to grab some bitch off the street, drag her into a warehouse, poke out her eyes and fuck her skull. I've seen my fair share of the wet work, but these guys creep my ass out.

Like this one time, my studio gets shut down, right? And I'm all, "Oh, shit, I got this fucking John wanting a tape tomorrow and I got no place to do it." It's not like I can film this shit at my house or anything. I call Oscar up at, like, nine fucking o'clock at night and I'm practically



hysterical. These shitbags that buy snuff art aren't the forgiving types, and most of them are powerful enough in their day lives to squish you like a bug.

So Oscar shows up, driving that big fat Benz S-600, with this look on his face like, "Get in the car, Charlie." I get in, over on the passenger side, and I see there's this girl all crumpled up in the back seat. She looks maybe 19, 20, dolled up like this was prom night or something, except she's pale and unconscious. Oscar himself is wearing that nice black suit, the one that has no vents in the jacket and smells like money, and I'm thinking maybe I called at the wrong time, like I broke up their dinner or something. I mean, here I am, 17 million bucks a year looking like a bad day on the *Miami Vice* set and feeling like half a fag with these two.

"Is she gonna be all right?" I say, looking in the back seat.

"Probably not, Charlie; now shut the fuck up before I pull off your head and spit down the hole."

Yeah, I must have interrupted something. Oscar's always holier-than-thou, but, shit, I'm not interested in that kind of talk from my fucking money manager. The rest of the trip passes the same way, with the tension so hot I feel like I'm gonna sweat to death. I can't help but wonder, if she's not gonna be all right, why the hell are we going and doing business while she's all fucked up?

Oscar pulls off down that spooky-ass rural road where the big chief (I call him the Grand Goomba) keeps the "estate." There's all these sick-looking trees and big piles of moss and shit on either side of the road and you can't even see the sky because of all the tangled branches. It feels like you're driving in the Batcave, except Batman's pretty much a good guy and these motherfuckers are straight-up villains. But what the fuck, I'm thinking; it's not like I'm Gandhi or Mother Teresa or any of that shit, right?

So we get up to the house, which is fairly grim in and of itself. It's all tall and pointy with long, skinny windows and shutters and shit. I'm all used to apartments and boxy houses and housing developments with neighbors that work at State Farm and IBM. These motherfuckers don't even have a neighborhood; they're, like, the only ones out here. It's pretty fucked up; they've even got tombstones and crypts and shit in their backyard. I've never seen that, but you know how they say these rich eccentrics are, right? This whole place looks like the Kennedy Mansion except Jackie O. was Dracula instead.

We get out after Oscar parks in back and walk around to the front, where this Lurch motherfucker answers the door. I'm all "You rang?" but nobody's laughing and I feel like I just walked into a time machine. There's about six people hanging around this sitting room and they all look

sick as fuck, like pale and sunken eyes and all that. One of them is this kind of pretty girl with long dark brown hair that curves at the end, but she's looking like she hasn't been to a mall or the store ever. Her clothes are all old-timey and she's got this super-sad look on her face with these great big, really dark eyes. I guess I shouldn't be so upset that she looks sad, I'm thinking, 'cause these guinea bitches usually have mustaches and shit; I'd better like her as she is.

Some other woman's in the room, too; the mother or grandmother I guess. The women don't stay too long, though, as this guy in a big old overstuffed chair says, "Excuse us, ladies, while we talk about business?" The women take off, and this little rat-looking kid leaves as well; he must be too young to be in the family industry.

This wop giving orders, I've dealt with before. His name's Michael, except he spells it all queer like "Michel" and I'm thinking, yeah, like Michael Corleone. He's pretty tall and built and he could probably kick my ass, so I don't mess with him; I'm all "yes, sir" and "no, sir." I get the sense that he's some kind of middle manager or something, but whatever he's middle managing is way successful. I gotta wonder, though, if they're so fucking rich, why the fuck do they live in this rundown shit-hole of a house? They probably don't want to leave behind the remains of all their dead dago grandpas, maybe.

"Oscar tells me you're in a bit of a bind, Charles. Your 'studio' is under police scrutiny?"

That's one fucked-up thing about Oscar. I never see him on the phone. I've got this number that I call that he always answers, but I never see him carrying a cell phone or nothing. And the bigshots at wop central here always seem to know what's going on before I get there.

"Yes, sir," I said, looking at my shoes. Italian leather loafers. Damn.

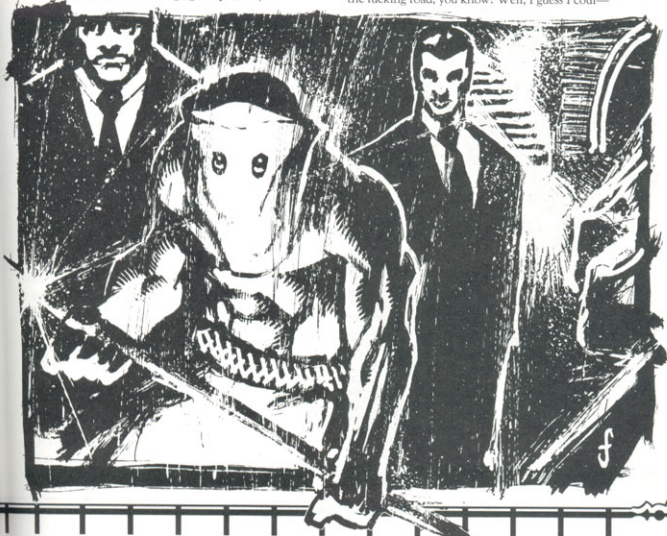
"And you need some money?"

"Yes, sir," again.

"Well, Charles, what would you do with money at this time of night? Run down to a real-estate agent and rent out an abattoir?"

That's, like, a place where they kill cows to make them into hamburger. The guineas in the room think it's real funny, but I'm not laughing. Shit, I've got my pride as an artist, right? Slaughterhouse, my ass.

"Uh... No, sir, I was going to... You see, there's this guy, right? He's got this... Fuck it, man. I was gonna ditch town and get away from this John. I owe him a film tomorrow and if I got no studio, I can't make the movie, right? I mean, it's not like I can just grab some bitch and rape her on the side of the fucking road, you know? Well, I guess I coul—"





"That's it!" the motherfucker says. "All you need is space? Well, Charles, I'm sure you understand that you've asked for a lot of money. We're not an ATM, my friend, and you must know that every cent of yours is very dear to us." It's really creeping me out that he's getting closer and closer to me, leaning out of his chair and eventually standing up right in front of me. "I'll tell you what. Why don't we let you make your little film in the basement?"

Now I'm sure everything is fucked up beyond repair. This isn't the kind of thing your accountant normally has you do, right? I'm sure I'm gonna walk into that basement and Grampa Munster's gonna be down there and they're gonna fucking whack me. But they just said my money's good for them; I'm a valued customer or something, right?

"Uh, okay... I guess. Um, I'm going to need a camera...and a costar?" This is way fucking sick. I'm trying anything I can to get out of this damn house with these zombie wops who want me to fuck dead chicks in their den.

"Already taken care of. Gio!"

I turn around, where Michel is gesturing, and there's this thick ape-looking guy in one of the same expensive suits as these guys in the room with me. He's got a camera on a tripod slung over his shoulder and the girl from Oscar's car in his hand. She's dangling like a sleeping kitten.

"She's not already dead, is she?" I ask Oscar, and my eyes are as wide as saucers. No, no, Oscar shakes his head, lighting a cigarette and not even looking at me. Fuck.

"Uh... Let's get to work, then." Fuck this. Get it over with and get me the hell out of here.

The greaseball patrol and I go down into the basement and it's even more like the Twilight Zone. No Munsters, but damn, I wish there were. At least the Munsters were sort of funny. This is like I'm underneath some castle or old church or something, all cut out of rock and cold as a hooker's pussy. There's some nasty shit leaking down the walls and the whole place smells like dust and dead stuff. The furniture's all old as hell and covered with those white sheets to keep you from fucking it up. I'm looking at the staircase, wondering whether I should bolt for it, but it must have been, like, a good five minutes walking down the fucking stairs. I'm starting to sweat, getting those cold trickles of perspiration like needle junkies have.

Some of the guys move all the furniture aside, while Oscar and one of the other wops tie up the Jane and wake her. She's all groggy, and I'm glad she's not more aware. This shit is even worse than normal. What do the women upstairs think of all this?

And we cut the film. I've got this old pillowcase over my head with just some eyes cut out and I'm hardly at my best. I do the act and finally split the girl's head open with a fireplace poker. What a fucking mess. Head wounds

always bleed tons of that thick, black blood. The worst thing about it is these fucking dagos standing around like a pack of starved dogs, with these looks on their faces like someone's fucking them up the ass. One of the motherfuckers is even drooling. This shit's like *Deliverance* meets *The Godfather* on the set of *Beetlejuice*.

So there I am, with my dick in one hand and this fucking tape in the other. Oscar gets all my clothes together and lets me get dressed. I guess some little woplet'll come down and clean up the mess, but I don't even fucking care by now. With any luck, the cops will bust down the door and drag my ass to jail, way the fuck away from these sick sons of bitches.

Then Oscar and I go upstairs and out the front door. We get in his car and he takes me home.

• • •

The next day, I meet my contact, I give him the tape and he gives me a half a million dollars in a Kenneth Cole briefcase. Half a million more, to invest with Oscar and the Giovanni family.

"I'm proud of you, Charlie," Oscar says that night, and we're back at 1313 Mockingbird Lane. I haven't seen any of the nonbusiness types this evening; I guess Lydia Deets and the Grandmother of Frankenstein have knitting to do. Michel's there, though. He's got blood under his fingernails — not a good fucking sign.

"You operate well under pressure." Real fucking funny, Oscar.

The ape-dago, Gio, pours everyone a glass of wine, and things get weirder again. The whole room toasts me, and wishes me health and success. I get that fucked-up sense again that they're laughing at a joke that I don't understand. And damn if this red wine isn't the richest shit I've ever had. Who the fuck wants wine that tastes salty, for chrissakes?

As I drink, I see Michel rubbing those bloody fingers. He looks at Oscar and gives a little nod of *salud*. This wine tastes like getting punched in the nose... All metallic and bitter and oddly sweet and...bloody. Fuck.

I don't feel so good. I gotta get me one of them Jew accountants. I hear they really know what they're doing.





Chapter Two: The Giovanni Revealed



Our name is spoken in tremulous whispers and snorts of derision. We are simultaneously feared, loathed, suspected and envied. We harvest great power and knowledge, and we reap vast wealth from ventures only dreamed of by other Kindred.

Kindred.

That very term holds a double meaning for us; not only do we share the blood of Caine with the other vampires of the world, but we also share the blood of a family that has existed outside the flow of time for more than one thousand years. We are the Giovanni, by mortal contrivance and by descent from our father, Augustus.

From Cappadocius Onward

Augustus Giovanni entered the Embrace over 900 years ago in the decaying Cappadocian temple at Erciyes, under the watchful eyes of the Antediluvian, his lackey Japheth and some bitch called Constancia. Augustus took the blood against the wishes of these petty yes-men, who

tried to shoot down the whole thing from the start. In fact, some suspect that it was a curse whispered by Japheth that gave our Kiss its deadly effect, and not the blood of that whore Lamia.

In any event, we got the best of the deal, because we've still got our unives to this night. Once Augustus realized that Cappadocius had lost his mind (Jesus Christ, the guy wanted to become God — I say we did the world a favor, you know?), he discussed with his childe Claudius what must be done. Cappadocius had to die, as the world faced serious repercussions if he were to complete his quest.

One night the shit came down, and Augustus knew he could wait no longer. I'm sure you've heard of the Founders — those self-important douche-bags who established the Camarilla. Anyway, the Founders came into conflict with some group of crackpots known as the Conspiracy of Isaac. As it turns out, Augustus had arranged for Claudius and the conspiracy to be foils for the Founders — while they were preoccupied with shutting down the conspiracy, Augustus could slip in and slaughter Cappadocius, and no one would be any wiser until after it was too late.

Long story short, it didn't work out that way. Augustus shows up at St. Timothy's, and who's there? The fucking Founders, and they're very upset at this vulgar display of treachery. (I can just imagine that pompous Blue Blood Hardestadt wagging his finger like he's somebody's mother.) Not that their presence stopped Augustus from drinking Cappadocius, it just complicated matters, and made things a bit difficult for us Giovanni afterward.

The Curse of Lamia

Though they've vanished from the world (the last one got waxed by the Camarilla, of all things), the Lamia have left their mark on the Kindred. Originally a bloodline of Cappadocian watchdogs, the Lamia followed their Graverobber parents into oblivion when we took up the crusade against them.

In a grand gesture of defiance, Augustus Giovanni himself diablerized Lamia, though it seems they had the last laugh. You see, the Lamia, as a bloodline, was the vampire equivalent of Typhoid Mary; their inherent weakness was that they spread disease wherever they went. Most of their Discipline specialized in revealing the teachings of the mother Lilith (though if you believe in that kind of crap, I've got some oceanfront property in Arizona that you should take off my hands, cheap!), but part of it involved bestowing a blood-based, agonizing Kiss.

That Kiss of Death stuck with Augustus after he slaked his thirst with the "hereditary" leader of the bloodline, Lamia. (Every one of their high priestesses was known as Lamia; if you were picked to be it, you assumed the name or something.) Ever since then, almost all Giovanni brought into the Embrace have borne the Kiss, which causes excruciating pain in whomever we feed upon.

Some of the more eschatological Kindred (most of whom are outside the Giovanni clan, mind you) believe that it was Japheth Cappadocius' curse which caused the Kiss of Death, but that's fairly disputable. After all, if that was the case, wouldn't it have manifested when the curse was placed?

The Renaissance

Almost immediately after Crappadocius got the Big Bite, the world entered the phase of history called the Renaissance, and I can't help but feel that we're partially responsible. In school, they only ever teach you about those di Medici pussies, but believe me, there were other merchant families involved.

Basically, the rundown is that merchant families popularized the classical knowledge of the Greeks and Romans, thereby bringing the world out of the Dark Ages and into a new era of learning and prosperity. This

is pretty much bullshit, as the merchant families didn't give half a toss about the classes below them (it's all about profit, baby), but it's a nice story.

Anyway, some big shit went down for the brand-spanking new Clan Giovanni during the Renaissance.

The Endless Night

Maybe it was the little bit of Cappadocius' soul still fluttering around in Augustus', but long about the Renaissance, the big chief started getting these weird ideas. He dug up a bunch of dusty old Cappadocian literature related to the defunct Death Clan's "ascension into Heaven" bullshit, and immersed himself in it. After studying for a few years, he decided that all those Cappadocians had been entirely wrong.

You couldn't bring Earth to Heaven, but you could sure drag it into Hell.

You see, a lot of this old Babylonian, Gnostic and Egyptian lore talks about the "other world" and the "home of the spirit" and "life beyond life." It's plain to see that they're not talking about Heaven (though I guess the Cappadocians were a little deluded and I can't fault them for being ignorant); they're talking about the Underworld. When Crappadocius thought he could diablerize God, he was taking literally what was supposed to be a metaphor.

These documents also talk about "invoking the great darkness" and "putting out the light eternal." The way Augustus read it, these ancient writings could teach him to peel back the Shroud, the layer of disbelief that separates our world from the land of the dead. Once this is accomplished, those who hold dominion over the ghosts who wander the dead world (i.e., us Giovanni) will be masters of it. You see, Cappadocius thought he could become God, but the way it really works, he would have become as a god among ghosts and men.

Determined not to make the same mistakes that Cappadocius did, however, Augustus never forced any Giovanni to undertake the quest. The way he sees it (just like the rest of us), the more success the clan and family garner, the closer they are to achieving any objective they wish. It's kind of a long cause-and-effect string: We make money to fund our studies of Necromancy to harvest the power of souls to open the "Portal of Night Everlasting" (or whatever) to bring the Endless Night upon the world. Simple, right?

In truth, though, it's a little trickier. You can't just wake up one night and decide "tonight's the night I'm going to wreck the Shroud." Digging deeper into the growing assortment of philosophical necromantic literature, Augustus and company discovered that rending the Shroud would require a fuckload of spiritual energy — more than any Giovanni had any access to. I don't know what kind of math they used,



conference, Claudius Giovanni had signed a formal agreement which guaranteed Giovanni nonintervention in all Kindred affairs. We would shut up, go about our business, and not bother anyone. We promise.

One of the best things about this document was a rider-type clause pushed through by that stupid faggot Rafael de Corazon. He was already solidifying the foundation of his shiny, happy, rainbow coalition of vampires (you know, the Camarilla) and one of his demands was that, once every 13 years, Venice would be visited by a council of elders from each of the clans signing the pact, with the exclusion of the Giovanni. For security, of course.

Claudius thought about it for all of two seconds before agreeing (though he made his agreement appear laborious — he didn't want to seem too excited). So let's see: Every 13 years, the biggest and baddest of you guys are going to come here and check up on us? Uh, okay. Would you be kind enough to wash your necks before your visit? This agreement floors me to this very night. They want to come here and talk about all their affairs at the highest level of executive decision-making. How do you think we stay out of their way so effectively? *We know their every fucking move!*

New Evidence

During the 17th century, some Giovanni studies in Belgrade turned up references to some crackpot Jew and his diary from 2,000 years ago. Known in the vernacular as the Khazar's Diary, this book supposedly had substantiating information on invoking the Endless Night. Of course, the problem was that no one had seen this book — other than six pages or so that had materialized during the Renaissance — since before the whole Cappadocian purge. Undoubtedly, the Graverobbers had a copy, but who the fuck knew where they kept it?

Augustus did. Back at the Cappadocian mountain temple, Erciyes, there was a huge library untouched since the last time we were there. Augustus told Claudius to go and get the book, so go he did, along the same route the Crusaders took that made the family rich in the first place.

When Claudius and his party got to Erciyes, they sacked the place. They turned over every bookcase, looted all the subterranean libraries, broke into all the prominent Cappadocians' sanctums and generally turned the temple over. But they never found the Khazar's Diary.

Frustrated, Claudius ordered the temple burned after they had salvaged everything they could. With a caravan full of books and talismans, they set off back down the mountain while the flames consumed Erciyes behind them.

Rescued Knowledge

Among the books salvaged by Claudius Giovanni at the Ereives temple were numerous copies of various sought-after Kindred apocrypha. The group managed to acquire the complete (by 11th-century standards, which is when the Cappadocians had compiled it) *Book of Nod* as well as the well-worn and fragmented translation of the *Guarded Rubrics*. To this night, Clan Giovanni controls arguably the most complete copies of these two books known to exist (though the Black Hand may feel otherwise).



A Strange Guest

It was about this time that this shady character known as the Capuchin caught up with the clan. He was some kind of wandering monk who was apparently a vampire or something, and he knew a great deal of Kindred lore. The Capuchin had some allies in the Church and cut a deal with Augustus: In exchange for access to all the forbidden texts in the Vatican library (the Giovanni had pretty much lost most of their Church ties with the purge of the Cappadocians), the Capuchin would receive instruction in the Discipline of Necromancy.

Well, of course Augustus agrees to the deal, and the Capuchin learns quite quickly. True to his word, he starts sneaking books out of that big vault they got under the Vatican (even though nowadays it's just full of pornography), some of which had *wraiths bound to them*.

Now that last part was a great discovery, because a lot of the guys who had written these old books had bound themselves to their books. It sounds really stupid to me (I'd never stick myself to a book forever, but I guess it takes all types), but sure enough, they were there, and they shared their knowledge of the Black Magic with us Giovanni. We made some great leaps in Necromancy around this time, but a lot of what the dead book-ghosts were telling us was stuff we already knew or was straight-up false.

The Capuchin keeps coming and going, though, always at night, with a steady supply of these books. One night he comes in with this strange aura about him, like he's excited. You can never see his eyes, but I'm sure they were wide open when he met Augustus for an audience.

It turns out that the Capuchin had dug up some chunk of Japheth Cappadocius' journal relating to the Embrace of Augustus. Back when Uncle Augie got the Embrace worked on him, there was apparently a little bit



of Cappadocius' blood left over. Japheth and Constancia kept that blood and sealed it in a jar (called the True Vessel) with beeswax, and left it, guess where? *Hidden in the Erciyest temple!*

Augustus went berserk. Claudius had destroyed what remained of the temple after rifling it for the Khazar's Diary, and now it turns out that there's a fucking bottle full of Cappadocius' blood there!

Now, I don't know how much you know about the Graverobber purge, but Augustus swears to this night that a little bit of Cappadocius' soul got away when he was diablerizing the crazy old guy. Most people say that that's not possible, as you have to consume the whole soul for the diablerie to be effective, but Augustus maintains otherwise.

Anyway, here's this opportunity to finish the job if he ever had any doubts about it, and Claudius fucked it up!

Now, I've seen Augustus Giovanni angry, and it leaves this picture in my mind of what he looks like, right? Well, I just cannot imagine the look on his face when he finds out that his own childe's short temper has just ruined his chance of alleviating his fear that Cappadocius is still out there, cruising the wraith zone somewhere.

Needless to say, Claudius didn't make it through the night. Augustus summoned his childe, who immediately knew something was wrong. It's said that the Capuchin smiled when he saw Claudius blanch at the news, but no one else was there, so I don't know who started that story. So Augustus grabs Claudius, who fights back with all the fury a member of the fourth generation can muster. There are big cracks down in the catacombs of the Mausoleum (our central *loggia* in Venice) that are rumored to have been made by these two vampires crashing against the walls in their struggle. In the end, of course, Augustus won out, and he crushed Claudius' head in his own hands and drank the black blood as it ran through his fingers.

Now, the fucked-up thing here is what happened next. Supposedly, Augustus didn't drink Claudius' soul, so it wasn't a true diablerie, and enough of Claudius remained (at least for the time being) to necessitate someone carrying it away. Augustus was pretty much beyond reason, but he apparently gave his childe's corpse to the Capuchin, glad to get away from the whole incident.

What the Capuchin did with that corpse, no one will ever know, because he doesn't say anything about it. Maybe you wanna ask him?

The Industrial Alge

By the time all of this soap-opera shit is drawing to a close, it's, like, the beginning of the 19th century and Augustus is way behind the times. He's still going through unlife like a merchant prince while the world has moved on inexorably without him.

Fortunately, though, he didn't make the same mistakes that Cappadoctus did — he let his clan grow independently to pursue family aims. All that time he was spending chasing ghosts and mythical blood, we were building the clan into a progressive legion of industrialists and upper-middle-class (you gotta watch the switch from upper-middle-class to lower-upper-class — one minute they're safely ignoring you, and the next minute you're the in-vogue beautiful people) traders speculating on the growing global economy. And it's a good thing, too, because Augustus didn't know shit about Gross National Product, laissez-faire economics or wage labor.

That's when it first sinks into all of us — we're doing this for ourselves as well. We're not the puppets of some shadow-dwelling, mind-controlling corpse scabbling out a miserable unlife and drinking from lepers. We're the up-and-coming industrialists, good to make of our unlives what we will, whether we choose the spirituality of the Endless Night or the temporal bliss of infinite cash.

As time progresses, the world moves into a state of global economy as well. That's the big kicker for us, and it's a good thing we're as good with finances as we are. You see, by slowly exerting more and more influence in the global market, we put ourselves in the position where we need to be. About this time, we start to create dependencies on our own ventures. Giovanni presence becomes vital in key locations, and the more we have, the more powerful we become.

The end result, of course, is the ability to destroy the global economy. Crashing numerous stock markets, bankrupting established financial leaders, forcing governments into default and driving the prices of essentials skyward all serve one purpose — chaos. I don't have to tell you that with chaos comes violence and with violence comes death. As near as we can figure, if we arrange things to happen all at once, we should easily be able to exceed that 100,000,000 mark. And that's when we'll really come into our own.

More Curious Visitors

So here we are, set up to make handfuls of money, when who should come a-knocking at the Mausoleum door but the colored servant of some Haitian vampire calling himself the Baron. Naturally, the attendants refuse entry to this guy, but he's persistent. After hours of knocking and being ignored, he finally goes away, claiming that "the master" is going to be very upset. I'm thinking to myself, how bad-ass can this Baron be if all he's got is some dolled-up nigger knocking on doors in Venice, right?

I have never been more wrong. The next night, the Baron comes to the door.

Now, I have seen a lot of things. I've seen children with their eyes poked out and their tongues severed, grown men with their cocks removed and sewn into their mouths,



unidentifiable bodies turned inside out, and all manner of fucked-up Necromantically enhanced ritual killings designed to capture the soul as it flees the body. I've even seen zombies made from corpses weeks and months old.

But this Baron takes the motherfucking cake.

"I am Baron Samedi," he says, and I've got no idea how the doorman didn't retch all over the sonofabitch, 'cause I'm all the way across the fucking room and I can smell the rot on this guy. He's about five and a half feet tall, the Baron, and dressed in formal wear that looks all the more

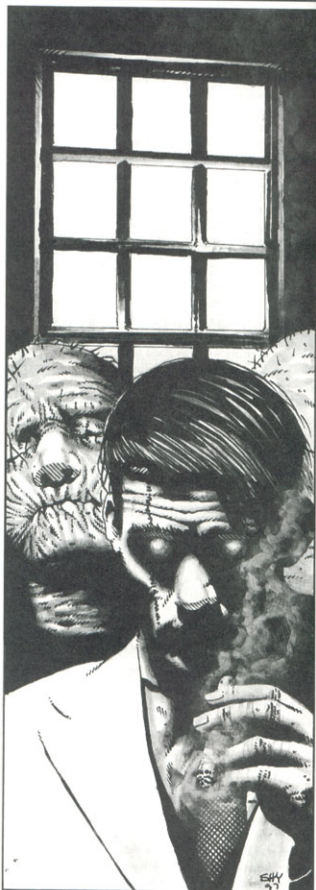
"Uncle Augie"

Many Giovanni neonates, having never seen the progenitor of the clan, are not fully convinced that there actually is an Augustus Giovanni. As such, he has become a kind of myth among these fledgling vampires, and they typically refer to him as "Uncle Augie." Of course, this type of disrespect doesn't sit too well with the established elders of the clan, and they have subsequently devised a consistent punishment for those who speak so contemptuously of the clan founder.

The offending neonate is taken into a room with one of the family ghouls who has fallen into disfavor (and there are many, for the Giovanni are demanding and passionate masters). The ghoul is then instructed to remove the Kindred's tongue with a pair of pliers, placing in its stead the finger of a freshly killed corpse. From there, the vampire's unnatural healing takes over, which often results in the remaining tendons of the tongue reknitting themselves to the finger (though this is unreliable, it is still disgusting and reminds the fledgling of his place), leaving an unusable appendage and a mute whelp. The finger remains in the vampire's mouth until it is removed (remember where the ghoul puts the pliers!) or bitten off and spat out.

Needless to say, the punishing elder is generally far more powerful than the fledgling, who tends to take out his ignominy and humiliation on the blackballed ghoul.

A popular variation on this punishment is reminiscent of the "Sicilian Necktie" employed by Mafiosi and South American *trafficanes*. The offending neonate has her throat sliced (again, usually handled by a ghoul on the outs) and her tongue threaded backward, down her trachea, where it is then pulled through the throat wound. The wound heals in a matter of time, leaving the vampire hideously disfigured and mute, until she cuts her own throat and places her tongue back where it should be. Maybe she'll hold it next time....



horrific because he's a decaying fucking corpse. This guy's eyes are running down his face, he smells like an open mass grave, his exposed muscles are all gray and ratty and hanging off him in shreds, and he wants to see the boss?

What could the doorman do? The Baron met Augustus Giovanni that night, and they've hated each other ever since.

The True Vessel Appears

Well, the reason for the visit was the Capuchin. Apparently, the Baron and his shitbag zombie-corpse friends came across some old-ass jar sealed with beeswax and making a sloshing sound. None of his guys can get the thing open, but the Baron's seen some magic before and he figures that it's mystically warded.

He drops a line to his friend *the Capuchin*, who says that he might have a buyer. Stop at One Dracula Way in Venice and say hello, won't you, Baron?

Well I'll be damned (again) if the Baron doesn't manage to "lose" the fucking True Vessel on the trip — a band of Setites, he tells us — but he thought it was his duty to come calling anyway. I don't know about you, but a statement like that sets my bullshit sensor in motion. Anyway, I guess Augustus must have wanted to kill him then and there, but thought better of it, because the Baron left without a word a few minutes after meeting Augustus.

"Bring me 20," says Augustus, and I know right away that he means 20 fucking *people*. He's in one of his moods, but he's the boss, so we indulge him. I went in to check on

things later, and he's just sitting there, his head in his hands, with these 20 wretches hanging upside-down from chains in the ceiling. Some of them are in better shape than others (who are missing parts of their heads, limbs, you know the deal), but it's obvious that he isn't done yet. I ducked out of there as quietly as I could.

2nd Forward

And that's how it's been since then. Quiet. Augustus is starting to show his age, and has been fading in and out of torpor for the past century. In fact, he's sleeping the long sleep now and has been for the past 30 years or so.

But we keep going on, doing what we're doing. Some of us fall in with the Endless Night camp, digging up dirt on the Khazar's Diary and the True Vessel. Others keep the family going, earning cash and setting up investments to maintain our status quo. Still others just hang out, studying the old Necromancy and working things as they come up.

It won't be that way for long, though. I feel pretty safe in saying that, though I'm only 200 years old, I can see the cycle in things. The future has a lot in store for Clan Giovanni, and I'm not talking about a future that's too far away. Though we're not quite ready to flex that financial muscle on a world-wrecking scale yet, we're getting there. And when we arrive at that point, you can bet there will be some changes made around here. We haven't built an 800-year-old power base for nothing.





Chapter Three: More Than We Seem



Life and Unlife Among the Giovanni

As you might imagine with a family of such size, diversity and ill repute, life and unlife among the Giovanni are delicate things. More than any mortal family, ours is rife with internal politics, long-standing sibling rivalries, treacheries and shady agendas. Though our loyalty to the family prevents us from ever “selling out” to someone outside the clan, we Giovanni are notoriously self-motivated and always sweating our status within it.

Mortal Family

Some say the Giovanni kinda resembles those ghoulish families of the Sabbat. This is true, but only on a very basic level. For the most part, mortal relations realize that there is something greater going on than what they are privy to, but many are wholly in the know while others are entirely ignorant (and innocent — wink wink, nudge nudge).

For the most part, mortal Giovanni are good Catholics (except those Presbyterian Milliners and the “heathen” Pisanob — but I’m getting ahead of myself). We tithe and attend Church regularly. It is also through these “good Catholic” ties that Clan Giovanni extends its empire

through other families. Some few Giovanni actually end up within the folds of the Church, though these are invariably the useless or hopelessly moral ones who are kept deliberately out of the loop. As the old story goes, a Giovanni ghoul once found himself in the service of the Lord, and could not, in good faith, continue serving the family. Needless to say, that particular ghoul was removed from his position in the Church, and he guards the entrance to a clan *loggia* in Padua, as a wraith.

Family members commonly work in some part of the Giovanni business, as you would expect, and often know that they serve someone else's goals (namely the whims of their masters). Efficiency and profitability get you great respect among the upper levels of Giovanni operations, and slick performers often find themselves brought into the next echelon of family society, as ghouls. Certain wimpier members of the family complain that this produces an atmosphere of brutality and backbiting. Fuck that. Way I see it, everybody knows that success is rewarded, and I for one'll be fucked if Cousin Santino ever gets his dirty paws on what I worked so hard to achieve.

"Family business" covers any of the bazillion pies we've got our thumbs in. Mortal agents of the Giovanni come from any background and maintain both blue- and white-collar facets of family business. "The world needs ditch-diggers," is a common saying, though it is usually reserved for those schmucks who have to do the "dirty work" that some bigshot hands down to them.

At this level, most members of the family are also devoted to the day-to-day shit of the clan (though most frequently in subtle ways that they do not understand). The family's gotta eat, or the stock from which new Kindred are drawn would die off, you know? Giovanni homes (and the underground tombs where we vampires sleep) must be kept, and all mortal bullshit (water, electricity, etc.) has to be taken care of. On rare occasions, mortal family members get stuck with some of the uglier aspects of "family business." They might have to go graverobbing, so that we have fresh subjects to use in our research; they might be middlemen between the family and those who are in our pockets, responsible for paying off the authorities whose curiosity would cause trouble if it came our way. They might even be assistants, manservants and "companions" to important kine, ghoul or vampire members of the family, and subject to the will of their immediate superiors.

Many Giovanni spend the majority, if not all, of their mortal lives toadying to superiors. That being the case, is it any surprise that we have more family members offing each other than a production of *Hamlet*? This treachery is looked down upon but not typically punished when it occurs—if a Giovanni isn't smart enough to outwit his little brother, how can he expect to hold his own in the real world? In the cutthroat world of clan biz, those who want to succeed are commonly blocked or beaten to the punch by other relatives and must rub out the opposition if they wanna achieve their goals. We don't like it so much, but hey, I've added a few plots to the family cemetery in my nights. What can I do? I always send lilies.

Rising Cousins

Course, not all family relations are so chilly. In fact, the insular and secretive nature of the family sometimes produces relations that are downright steamy. Love and lust among family members are realities of life within the Giovanni. One part decadence, one part degeneracy and one part the simple urge to fuck (though I guess there are probably some of us who really love our sisters and brothers), these incestuous relationships are hardly condoned by the family as a whole, though they aren't as discouraged as they maybe should be. Children of these lust-fests are considered full members of the family and are given responsibilities accordingly. That is, if they're capable and aren't gonna have to ride the short bus all their lives.

Most of these relationships don't occur between immediate sisters and brothers or parents and their kids (although it does happen, just like in "normal" mortal families). The most frequent "consanguineous unions" are between cousins. (And don't tell me you haven't thought about bagging your cousin.) The Giovanni don't permit marriage between siblings, parents and their children, or first cousins, but anything else is considered fair game. Having had access to vast amounts of money since way the fuck back when, we're no strangers to the "alternative" behavior of our kind, which may range from indulgent curiosity to rampant deviance. Believe me, I've seen some pretty fucked-up shit.

Mortal Death

Though Clan Giovanni rarely allows its members to die (we'll turn 'em into ghouls, unless they deserve to die), it does happen. Death claims a fair number of Giovanni scions: perhaps at the point of an assassin's (or sibling's) knife; perhaps from old age or natural death at the end of an uninspired life; perhaps from hideous and cruel inbred deformity (like with Nine-Fingers Nunzio) or aberration; perhaps from random violence or any other event that ends up killing the poor fool.

That ain't no excuse to be a bum. Upon death, Giovanni are expected to continue contact across the Shroud with the family if they become wraiths. Lemme say that, as few mortal Giovanni know what's truly going on with our Kindred grampas, some of us aren't aware of this postmortem commitment until they're made vividly aware of it via Necromancy.

Truly insipid, loathed or worthless Giovanni are not permitted death's respite. Those who earned the old familial disfavor are often bound to ward certain areas under clan surveillance or security, while others are tied into "oracular devices" and divination talismans and all that shit. One of the best Giovanni-after-death stories is the one about that shithead cousin Vittorio, whom we bound to his own mausoleum, where we get to desecrate his remains as it takes our fancy. Doomed to an eternity of watching his mortal body spat and shit on, Vittorio has gone mad and uses his ghostly powers to make the air in the sepulcher chillingly cold to "visitors." Wooow, I'm scared!

Ghouls

The majority of the Giovanni family is actually composed of a vast network of ghouls; almost 75 percent of the family is in thrall to some Lick or another. While this number may seem large to Camarilla sympathizers and their pathetic "Masquerade," keep in mind that, of all Kindred, we Giovanni are the most intertwined with the affairs of John Q. Daylight Public. So we've practically got an army of ghouls maintained by the family, who serve as our "liaisons to the world." After all, there are only so many deals that can take place after dark, and your enemies will ignore your exclusively nocturnal affairs for only so long.

The Proxy Kiss

The act of making ghouls is known as the Proxy Kiss. We call it this because, when a Giovanni ghoul is created, the intricate web of secrets surrounding the family and its Kindred nature is parted; it's as if the new ghoul is brought into the world of the vampire, but only by proxy, as she's not yet one of us. We perpetually hold the Embrace (God, that sounds so faggy) above the ghoul's head; if she serves her master faithfully and effectively, she gets the Embrace as reward. If she serves all right but never offers any real promise, she gets to remain a ghoul in servitude forever. If she performs dismally, she gets dusted.

When we decide to bestow the Proxy Kiss, we're exceedingly clever in its execution — it's said that no two Proxies have ever been delivered in the same manner (though this just ain't true in practice, as certain "copycat" Proxies come in and out of style like fashion). This gives us a shitload of opportunities to assert our own ingenuity over each other and one-up the hell out of ourselves, and at the same time defines the nature of the vampire and his thrall. Most of the nastier Giovanni force their prospective ghouls to abase themselves before the Kindred (I've heard that Clement Giovanni forced his mortal sister to take blood from his...ahem, member...when he gave her the Proxy Kiss), while compassionate (that is, gay) Giovanni make the Proxy Kiss as "tender" as possible. Pass the tissues, honey.

I guess I should mention that all Giovanni have to undergo the Proxy Kiss and serve under a domitor before they receive the Embrace. You gotta pay your dues, you know? Though it's physically possible to simply Embrace anyone you want, much as any other Kindred would, the Proxy Kiss is universally honored within the clan. It not only gives the vampire an opportunity to test her minion's mettle, but also makes sure that the ghoul-turned-vampire stays loyal to his original master.

Among the Vipers

Giovanni ghoul society is sort of like vampire society and mortal family society combined. Each ghoul (yeah, each Giovanni vampires typically keep bevvies of these minions) constantly strives to outdo her "classmates,"





because the Embrace is only given to those whose "star shines most brightly." These cadres of ghouls under one master are called covens, emphasizing their multilayered structure — the vampire is universally the head of the unit, with various ghouls making up the ranks beneath him. The greatest Giovanni bigshots control vast legions of ghouls; in his heyday, Claudius Giovanni kept a stable of over 100 fucking ghouls, though how he managed to deliver blood to all of them without endangering his own ass is beyond me.

Ghouls usually manage various aspects of the boss's affairs, and family members are selected for their utility in this regard. While a vampire may select a whole slew of stewards and attendants, she probably needs only one accountant or chauffeur. The most powerful ghouls are those whose masters keep their counsel; indeed, there are some weird and ancient ghouls who prefer ghoulhood to the Embrace, reasoning that, as mere ghouls, no one will ever come after them, instead preferring their masters. No one ever goes after the power behind the throne, right? Of course, this isn't entirely true, given the hotbed of politics and nepotism that forms the crux of Giovanni family relations, but there's a grain of truth to it. Some Giovanni do enjoy "stealing" outstanding ghouls from their Kindred siblings, after all....

If such a thing may be said, ghouls get to handle the "glamorous grunt-work" of their masters. No longer mere breadwinners for their branches of the family, ghouls get to touch and account for their masters' money, personal affairs, business affairs, Necromantic needs ("Bring me another body, this time with a head!"), feeding needs, transportation, social agenda, *et cetera ad infinitum* blah blah blah. In truth, we Giovanni are so dependent on our ghouls to manage menial work, I wonder whether the clan could survive without that vital ghoul infrastructure. I bet the ghouls themselves wonder this (but never aloud, eh?), but they shut the fuck up about it, or they'll end up out of favor and resigned to shoveling horse shit in Palermo while their little brother takes over Uncle Giorgio's affairs.

New Distas

Following the Proxy Kiss, the ghoul's indoctrination in the propaganda of the glorious Giovanni family begins. In addition to the Potence that every ghoul inherits, we Giovanni frequently teach our ghouls the basics of some of our other arts. Not too much, though. Servant's gotta keep his place.

In business endeavors, ghouls often handle managerial or administrative positions within the master's realm of the family finances. By day, they ensure that daily operations progress smoothly (those who are involved in the financial end of things, that is — many ghouls deal exclusively with the well-being of their dusty old boss as he naps during the day, and some "lucky ones" pursue other, darker directions). By night, ghouls involve themselves ever more in the Necromantic and, ahem, "esoteric" studies of their masters and the *Melrose Place*-y affairs of clan relations.

Zombu

Some elder Giovanni, present during the nights before Cappadocius met his end, still practice the vanishing Discipline of Mortis. These ancient vampires occasionally create shambling servants called *zombu*, animating them from rotting corpses they purloin in the dead of night. While not as clever as true ghouls (they are simply animated corpses), *zombu* nonetheless serve their masters with grim and mindless resolve, following their instructions to the letter. *Zombu* are devoid of souls and motivation (Mortis does not concern itself with the spiritual aspects of death, which is why the Cappadocians had so much interest in Necromancy), so they never frenzy, enter Röttschreck or suffer any effects that target a victim's mind. Treat them as mortals with no Mental Attributes and Physical Attributes of 3 (on average).

This is also possible to a lesser degree with the Level Six Necromancy power, *Zombie*. Giovanni Kindred with this level of knowledge can create similar creatures, but they are neither as durable (they only last eight hours) nor as widespread as the *zombu* created through the Vigor Mortis power of Mortis.

Giovanni Kindred

Ghouls who demonstrate exceptional brawn, balls or brains may finally catch that dangling carrot and receive the Embrace. Though Giovanni don't offer the Curse of Caine lightly, we do maintain numbers roughly equal to those of other clans (though these numbers are often overlooked, as stupid Kindred tend to believe that all Giovanni are named Giovanni).

Out of the Sying Pan

Finally "getting" to be a vampire ain't a ride in the park, though.

Newly Embraced Giovanni find themselves among the most vicious, sadistic, debased and straight-up fucking vile of all vampires: us. No tenure of ghoulhood, knowledge of the Black Art or villainous service can adequately prepare a fledgling for the aftermath of the Embrace. To be among the Giovanni vampires is to truly be one of the most vehemently Damned. Gotta love it.

Not all Giovanni are driven by the Cappadocian überquest that inspires Augustus, though they don't oppose it with any unified front. Some surround themselves with the witchery of Necromancy while others flex their monetary muscle in the burgeoning global economy. Yet

others have become entirely disillusioned by both of these and embrace the depravity that Kindred sensuality practically begs to offer. Of course, each of these factions believes itself to be the hub of the clan, and each is constantly recruiting new pats — er, converts into its ranks. You know, sometimes I think the only thing standing between us and total domination of the night is our own infighting. On the other hand, unlife just wouldn't be as fun without it.

A New Blood

Beneath this soap-opera political BS lies an older, festering wound: that greatly bemoaned split between the elders and the ancillae. Most visibly divided by the pre-and post-Cappadocian lines, the Kindred of Clan Giovanni continuously butt heads on the grounds of propriety and respect. Just as in the "great Jyhad," the elders maintain an air of superiority based on age, nigh-anachronistic merit and generation, while the younger Giovanni vie for recognition based on innovation, continued success and personal achievement. Maybe it's the fiery Italian blood that courses through our undead veins, or maybe it's the residue of the "Beast" or what have you; whatever the case, this centuries-old war still continues nightly.

The elders naturally don't want to give up any of their ages-old power, so they cultivate familial guilt and veritable ancestor-worship among the ranks of the ancillae and neonates. The descendant of a black sheep cons dead is still the descendant of that black sheep, and his Embrace is marred from the outset, while the golden-boy childer of the elders' lineage bear charmed existences (so long as they knuckle under to their masters). Ironically, the only thing that keeps us Giovanni from utter ascension to our ideals is the same thing that keeps us from getting whacked at the hands of the other Kindred.

Giovanni Morality

Though some folks would claim Giovanni morality is a contradiction in terms, we're actually pretty stand-up folks. The Kindred of the Giovanni clan have codes of belief which, while not rigid, encompass our entire paradigm of existence, or something like that.

Most Giovanni, given our extensive dealings with the mortal world, still retain at least a little of our human sides. Though the horrors we witness and commit nightly make this a constant struggle, we nonetheless accept the challenge. You see, to do anything less is to acknowledge the mastery of the Beast, at which point we'd just become Gangrel or Sabbat or some other worthless, urge-driven animals. Most Giovanni have relations with the mortal world to such a degree that accepting the loss of humanity inherent to the vampire condition would make us less effective in our business. Empathy with customers, rapport with clients and good relationships with financial partners

are all vital aspects of a Giovanni's performance. And as every Giovanni knows, if you let your performance slip, there are hungry up-and-comers waiting in the wings to prey upon any failure.

Some Giovanni, however, accept the darker prospects of the Sabbat's Path of Death and the Soul (in game terms, these Giovanni exchange their Conscience and *Self-Control Traits for Callousness and Instincts*, respectively). No longer bound by the whiny emotions of the kine, these vampires quickly become alien to the rest of us, rejecting human passion for the cold and inevitable prospects of death. The sooner one understands death, these Giovanni figure, the sooner one's fear of it abates.

A very few Giovanni, mostly the really crusty ones who predate the Cappadocian purge, still follow the founding principles of the Path of Death and the Soul, known as the Road of the Bones or Via Ossis. While not as starchy as the Sabbat Path, the Via Ossis involves "giving oneself over to the comprehension of life's inevitable end." These vampires are more concerned with understanding just what the hell death is rather than its significance in the big picture; they are coldly scientific whereas followers of the Path of Death and the Soul are spiritually inquisitive.

A Family Matter

The Giovanni have long been depicted as an inbred, incestuous family overrun by decadence and decay. While this may be true of our intraclan politics, it is not wholly true of the family itself. Both the mortal families and the vampire clan have truly diverse interests, though we do tend to capitalize on the ignorance in which other clans hold us.

There are a lot of misconceptions about us Giovanni. You see, by pulling ourselves out of the Jyhad (one of the smartest damn things Augustus ever did), we don't deal with much of the bullshit that the Camarilla and the Sabbat do. I mean, we're not here to safeguard the world against the coming of the Antediluvians or to pave their way. Hell, our clan head is still undead and kicking and not buried underneath some mountain in the Shadowlands or any crap like that.

And yes, I said "families." Think about it. Would we be able to hold onto our uncles if our last names were all Giovanni? Please! After that Cappadocian thing, we weren't real popular and we had to, shall we say, diversify our interests. That's not to say that we're not proud of that Italian heritage; it's just that we're not stupid. That's what fucks up those Camarilla princes more than anything else — they just don't get it. They figure that they can just loose their Brujah bloodhounds on every Giovanni in the phone book and be rid of us. That's not how it works.

For every Giovanni who bears that surname, there are a half-dozen Giovanni vampires elsewhere around the world with a different last name. We're just the first and most prolific.

The Dunsirn

These creeps hail from haggis-laden Scotland. Except their haggis isn't made from sheep guts; it's made from their neighbors. That's really fair. Cannibals.

That's not the right fair. I should have told you that they're an old-ass banking family first, and that's why they came to Uncle Augie's attention. The Dunsirn can collect on more favors across Britain and the Emerald Isle than Puerto Ricans have cousins, all because they're rich.

And they have been for hundreds of years. These guys know how to do things right, at least where money is concerned (and isn't it always?). Everyone owes them money and, more importantly, everyone trusts the Dunsirn with their money. They make profit hand over fist in the grand banking tradition. What you deposit, they invest, earn money on, and sink back into their ventures. They're also the most miserly motherfuckers you've ever seen. Ebenezer Scrooge had nothing on the Dunsirn, and the profit margins prove it.

But then there's the cannibal part. Somewhere back in the mists of history, one of the Dunsirn got a little sketchy with his dietary practices. Naturally, the family didn't want to sully their name or reputation with this cretin, so they disowned him. He didn't give half a toss, so he moved out into the countryside, took a wife and raised a litter.

They all grew up following their father's practice, but did their business secretly and were able to prosper. Finally, this little offshoot of the Dunsirn decided that they were tired of living in peat bogs. They went back to the good part of the family, rubbed them out and took over. You know how traditional those stuffy Scots are. Their debtors kept paying them out of respect for the age-old ways, though I'm sure they had to threaten to eat more than one welsher.

And before you ask, yes, they ate the "untainted" ones. I think this is why Augustus likes them so much.

They fit into the Giovanni scheme primarily by being moneymakers. For a long time, Clan Giovanni had a hell of a time getting established west of Europe. Since these guys practically owned all of the ships leaving port from England, Ireland and Scotland, they knew who was on board and when a ship needed to have an "accident." In many ways, they were our foot in the door here in the US of A. They still do a lot of business with people who won't touch the Giovanni, and that's where they're strongest — picking up where we leave off.

Interests and Influence: The Dunsirn stick fairly exclusively to their native Scotland, but more than a few have made the trip across the pond. They are universally bankers, moneylenders and interest sharks — Necromancy isn't real high on their list of priorities. They do own a great deal of the land in England, Wales, Scotland and even Ireland, though, and more than a few royal cemeteries and churchyards are on this land, so if they ever get the whim, they'll have plenty of available resources.

The Dunsirn have a great deal of the British Isles under their thumb, or at least in debt to them. Classic mercenaries, they are known to have interests among Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, playing both sides of the war for maximum profit. Obviously, their deals are as often under the table as they are above it, but so many political and governmental bodies owe them so many favors that they will never be touched by ethical or criminal laws.

Profit is the driving force behind the Dunsirn; money is the be-all and end-all of any undertaking. Their inclusion among the Giovanni vampires was a voluntary act for them, and some whisper that when Augustus brought them into the fold, they negotiated an exit treaty, which they may exercise if they ever grow unhappy with clan conditions. Their numbers include approximately 100 Kindred, with the rest of the family being either ghouls or mortals.

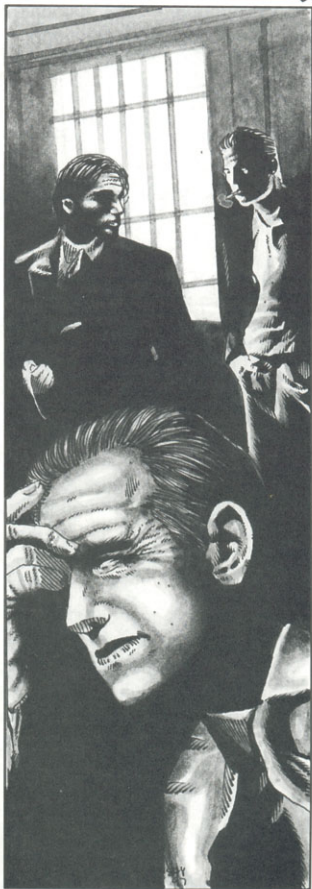
Their cannibalism is looked on as an urban legend among the people in contact with them. The Dunsirn have an air of respectability which protects them to some degree, and it's not as though they exclusively eat people. They have as broad a diet as any human being — and maybe a little broader, if you catch my drift.

Dunsirn Characters: Players may take Dunsirn characters if they wish, at the Storyteller's discretion. Mental Attributes are favored among the Dunsirn, with Social Attributes following as a close second (though few Dunsirn have Appearances of greater than 2). Knowledges are likewise favored, and it is unheard of for a Dunsirn not to have at least two dots in Resources.

The Dunsirn in the World of Darkness

Long ago, before the Dunsirn were brought into Clan Giovanni, they were actually a family of Garou Kinfolk. Though they had fallen into disfavor among the proud Scots Fianna, the cannibals nonetheless carried the Garou gene in their blood. By the time the family was usurped, the Fianna had all but washed their hands of the Dunsirn, though the gene still circulates to this day. Approximately one out of every hundred Dunsirn children is a Garou, though Dunsirn isolation from werewolf society often causes them to grow up as ronin. That is, they grow up as ronin if the rest of the family doesn't destroy them first.

A few Dunsirn have also shown a propensity for working hedge magic, and certain Giovanni scholars speculate about the Dunsirn's connection to the mages of the Verbena Tradition. Again, their numbers are extremely rare, but they often meet less antagonism than their Garou cousins, and have become productive members of the family and clan.





The Pisanob

Back in the early 16th century, Hernando Cortez took a bunch of Spaniards over to the "New World" to destroy the indigenous people and steal their shit. A few of our people went along for the ride (keeping tabs on the competition, you know), and found the Pisanob among the heathens, as it were.

The Aztecs, whom Cortez "discovered," had religious ceremonies that involved a whole mess of human sacrifice. The Pisanob were a loose-knit group of clerics who regulated and conducted these functions. They supervised the ceremonies, often killing the victims themselves, and told the people that these were sacrifices made to the gods.

What the Pisanob *didn't* tell their followers was that they were trapping the souls that fled the mortal bodies. They confined the trapped souls in the skulls of previous sacrifices and forced the ghosts to do their bidding. They built quite a network and quite a fortune during their religious reign, and we managed to make contact with (i.e., Embrace) a few before Cortez waxed the whole culture in 1520. At the height of Pisanob power, they were involved with the Incas in addition to their own people. A few of the spirits in the skulls they preserved have even hinted that some proto-Pisanob activity took place among the Toltec culture as well, at least 300 years prior to us getting our hands on them.

Our neonate Pisanob continued their ancestors' work, spreading throughout the Central American cultures like smallpox through Indians. Unlike ourselves and the Dunsirn, the Pisanob were not a true family prior to their inception into the Giovanni clan. They started out as a loose confederation of priests who later adopted familial ties as we took them under our wing. Now, over 400 years after their induction, they are truly a family, and extend the Embrace only to family members.

The word *pisanob* itself is actually Mayan, and means something like "ghosts of the dead that walk the earth." According to Mayan mythology, these ghosts taunt the living, plague their dreams and do all the other stereotypical ghost bullshit. The Giovanni family branch takes its name from these spirits, and is composed of those who can trace their roots back to the early sacrificial priests. Nowadays, of course, it's a lot easier — if your dad's a Pisanob, you're a Pisanob. Within the line itself, however, lineage is a bit of a stumbling block. Rumors and accusations run rampant about so-and-so being a full-blooded member of the line and Joe Blow not being a "real" Pisanob. I figure, what the fuck; if the guy can work Necromancy and isn't a threat to the clan as a whole, he's all right by me. You know how these spics are, though; they live in such squalor and poverty that honor's all they got left.

Interests and Influence: The Pisanob, having only recently become a true "family," are united by their common interests in Necromancy. They use relics and implements that are hundreds of years old; many branches of the family have bones or skulls that still house ancient spirits. They continue Necromantic practices to this night, and many have become involved in the medical profession, where the lax laws and ramshackle hospital practices of Central and South America can hide a few more casualties and operational complications.

The Pisanob also tend to use their power more for the advancement of knowledge than for temporal benefit, and for this reason Augustus has great faith in them. (Actually, it's not faith — he's milking them for all they're worth.)

On a more pragmatic level, members of the family have historically been able to locate untapped veins of gold through information they coax from ancient spirits. The *conquistadors* didn't find everything, I guess....

Pisanob Necromancy works a little bit differently from the regular Necromancy that the rest of us practice. For some reason, they've grown really attached to all the dead religious rigmarole and mumbo-jumbo that they invented to keep the savages happy. So, Pisanob Necromantic rites get *really* involved. It's not like they jump around and holler and pull the legs off chickens or any of that crap, but they do perform various elaborate ceremonies. For example, if they need to kill a sacrifice to capture his soul, they'll use the knife that their father used and his father before him. They invoke weird spirits with names like Xipe Totec and Ometeotl and whatnot, and they tend to wear black robes and fancy headdresses. The rest of us have no idea why this is, but apparently it facilitates their skills, so they're welcome to it.

Pisanob also tend to be really adventurous. They like climbing around their old dead ruins and wandering through those swampy jungles in search of those elusive mysteries. I understand that they go on visionquests and get all hopped up on hallucinogens (or rather, they drink the blood of vessels who are all hopped up on hallucinogens) in order to better commune with the spirits. Whatever floats your boat, I guess.

Pisanob Characters: Pisanob typically have high Physical Attributes, as they are a hale and hardy people. They also favor Mental Attributes, to better learn and study their black magic. They are frequently destitute or impoverished (they're interns and orderlies even when they work in hospitals), and rarely have any contacts outside their own industry. As the Embrace has only recently been bestowed upon them (at least from a vampiric perspective) and their nominal leader, Pochtli, is of sixth generation, very few Pisanob are lower than 10th or 11th generation.



Pisanob Necromancy

Due to the elaborate ceremonies involved in the Pisanob brand of death magic, many of these Giovanni have developed a dependency upon physical trappings of the art. A Pisanob without access to his ritual religious implements suffers a two-point increase in the difficulties of Necromancy rolls. Pisanob will overcome this penalty by spending a point of Willpower, which negates the penalty for one scene.

The Milliners

Wanna hear a Kennedy conspiracy story that's not bullshit? Once upon a time, in New England, there was a smuggler and Prohibition-buster named Joe. Joe had a lot of enemies, and some friends, but in the long run ended up reversing that situation. It wasn't enough to keep his son's head in one piece, but you'll have to go to the movies to catch that little tale.

Anyway, one of those early friends ended up becoming one of those enemies, and here's how that went:

Joe Kennedy and Francis Milliner were once business associates at the Columbia Trust Company in Boston. Milliner was lined up to be the next president of the company, after P.J. Kennedy turned it over to him. Lo and behold, it didn't happen; Joe Kennedy got the presidency (thereby becoming the youngest bank president in America at the time) and Milliner got fucked.

Now, Milliner didn't let it end there. He wanted to get away from the sick and incestuous den of Irish-Catholic vipers while he still could, before he ended up getting dragged into P.J. and Honey Fitz's political ambitions — Francis didn't give a toss about power, only money.

Milliner had made a few contacts among the Italian immigrants in New York, the most notable among them one Andreas Giovanni. Left out in the cold, Milliner nonetheless had connections with the old money in New England. While the Kennedy War Machine moved ever upward in the eyes of America, more and more of its base found its way back into Milliner's hands. And just where did Milliner come up with the money? Giovanni, of course. We never did like those Sunday Catholics, anyway.

From there, Milliner's revenge became obsession. He wasn't satisfied with merely buying the Kennedy ancestral home out from under them (you didn't know that the Kennedys still pay rent, did you?); he wanted to destroy them as they had tried to destroy him. Unfortunately, by the time Francis was in a position to exercise his muscle, Joe Senior was dead. "No problem," Milliner

figured, "I can still crush his legacy, no?" And that he did, little by little. Now, I'm not going to say that Milliner and the Giovanni are behind JFK's disappearing head act, but I'm also not going to say that we had no stake in the claim. (Most people assume Italian equals *Mafioso*? Bobby Kennedy sure incited a lot of anti-Mafia sentiment. More on that later.) I will say, though, that maybe, just maybe, Carlos Marcello (the *dago* whom Bobby Kennedy had deported and dropped into the middle of fucking Guatemala with only the shirt on his back) had some friends among the Sicilian Giovanni. And that he ate dinner more than once at the Milliner estate.

In any event, Uncle Augie liked Francis Milliner; he had the capacity to hate, to right a wrong, to do whatever it took. And he bore a grudge like an Italian. The Milliners came into the fold in the mid-1950s, and were instrumental in our behind-the-scenes operations in America for 50 years before that. Like the Dunsin, they aren't too heavily into Necromancy, but they are a hell of a power base.

Interests and Influence: The Milliners have followed in their great-grandfather's footsteps, hanging out behind the scenes and putting money in profitable places. They are always on Forbes' "Richest Men in America" lists, but you've never heard of them, you know what I mean? Their investments specialize in pure-profit arenas — they don't typically take risks. As such, they've got big stakes (no pun intended) in banks, construction, gambling, marketing and holdings diversification companies. They're nice and clean; everything a Milliner does is above the table (except, of course, killing people to drink their blood), though they do know people on the other side of the law.

Milliner Characters: The Milliners all range from 10th generation on upward, as Augustus didn't trust them completely and took them on as a pet project. I've even heard talk about a few 14th- and 15th-generation Milliner Giovanni vampires, which is pathetic — they breed like rabbits in winter. Milliner vampires almost

The Fate of the Milliners

Augustus Giovanni has special plans for the Milliner family, if it proves in the end to be an investment worthy of greater involvement. Francis Milliner is to be allowed to dilberize the upstart Giovanni, Geneva, thereby lowering his generation to a level of power befitting one of the most calculating minds of the century. This accomplishes two ends for the Giovanni clan: it removes the treacherous Geneva from any future events, while rewarding the loyalty of the Milliner family. Naturally, Geneva knows nothing of this, as Augustus has told no one of his plan.

For more information on Geneva, see *Who's Who Among Vampires: Children of the Inquisition*.



universally favor Mental Attributes and Knowledge, though they do have a few "schmoozers" in their ranks who specialize in the Social end of things; after all, who wants to talk business over dinner if the guy you're going to dinner with is a real bore?

The Minor Families

Since our success with Crusades profiteering and the merchant-class explosion of the Renaissance, we Giovanni have subsumed many lesser merchant families. Instead of leaving them to their financial ruin, these families have become minor yet integral aspects of the main Giovanni family. Though they are not typically accorded a great deal of freedom or respect (they did fail in their actions against the Giovanni, after all), they may nonetheless attain power and prestige within the clan.

I say fuck 'em — they're all losers to begin with, but they do give us extra "breeding stock" to keep the old family tree from losing all its branches.

The della Passaglia, a family of Marco Polo-like traders to the East, is probably the largest and most respected of these lesser families. The family's early

inroads to Chinese and Japanese ports made it a useful addition to the clan (opening new avenues of profit and exotic wares). Its leaders readily accepted our hostile takeover of their family, and actually welcomed the additional income and security we offered them. In return, we gained access to their trade routes and (perhaps more importantly) access to Eastern culture. Giovanni and our della Passaglia consorts are among the few Western vampires who have made any contact with those freaky Cathayan vampires. The della Passaglia establishment in the East has also opened up to us new opportunities for Necromantic studies, as the death paradigm is different in those Asian places. Della Passaglia are considered experts on Asian Necromancy and thanatology, and all of our forays into the East involve them heavily. One of their bigwigs, Martino, and his family branch are over in Beijing right now.

The Ghiberti, by the same token, have made extensive contact with sub-Saharan Africa and the weird vampires called Laibon that live there. Again, the native concept of death is different there (though some of their concepts of spiritual "recycling" are kind of similar to what we're working on). The fucked-up thing about the

Ghiberti is that they interbreed with the indigenous people. These mulatto half-breeds are not popular among the main body of the clan, and they stay in Africa where they belong. The Ghiberti are useful, however; they have led our research into those Nubian aspects of death and have established lots of valuable trade contacts in the Dark Continent. For all their new knowledge and research, though, they're not widely trusted — you can't have too much faith in a family that drinks the colored water, if you know what I mean.

Why Augustus brought the Putanesca into the fold, I don't know. Nothing more than pimps and pushers (their name means "of the whore"), they tarnish our

Ghiberti Necromancy

The wraiths of the Ivory Kingdom differ from their counterparts in other Dark Kingdoms. *Abombo*, or African wraiths, are entities composed of not only the "dark" and "light" aspects of the soul (Shadow and Psyche, respectively), but also their emotional presence ("Dreamself") and their connections to the Skinlands via Fetters ("Heartlife").

The Ghiberti (and, to a lesser degree, the Beryn) have discovered and optimized this knowledge, though they have not shared it with the clan proper. The reason for this is simple; they still pursue the Endless Night as do the rest of the Giovanni, but they wish to reserve a niche for themselves in Africa. When the Shroud finally vanishes and unites the Skinlands with the Shadowlands, the Ghiberti will have an edge over the other Giovanni in their adopted regional home.

Mechanical Differences

Necromancers unfamiliar with the control of Ivory Kingdom wraiths often have difficulty bending the wills of African ghosts. Unless the Kindred has previous experience with or preparation for working with wraiths of this type, she suffers a +2 penalty to difficulties of Necromancy rolls dealing with *abombo*.

The effects of Necromancy in the Dark Continent do not vary from "mainstream" Necromancy. The differences lie in the *implementation*, which utilizes the additional aspects of the Ivory Kingdom wraiths' compositions. The Necromancy available to Ghiberti Giovanni is no different in its game effects from that of other Giovanni, although the "Ivory Kingdom" specialization, which is available once the Necromancer achieves the fourth level of mastery of the Discipline, allays the penalty.

already sullied reputation. I guess they're happy being street thugs, drug dealers and "solicitors," and they do more than their fair share of the shit work, so I won't badmouth them too much. The Putanesca don't know a goddamn thing about Necromancy (but they sure know where to get material for research); they're only here to make us money in those not-so-legal-but-way-profitable vice trades. If you're dealing with blue-collar crime and the Giovanni, you're probably dealing with the Putanesca branch.

Finally, there's the Rossellini branch. Though they've practically married all their children back into the Giovanni branch, there are still quite a few full-blooded Rossellini left. Necromancers on par with the "true" Giovanni, the Rossellini might well have been absorbed by the Cappadocians if the Graverobbers hadn't discovered us first. We got involved with them during the late Renaissance, when a coven of their members ran afoul of Claudius Giovanni in Rome. Claudius rent the Rossellini's souls from their bodies, returning them only once the family had sworn fealty to him and the clan. Obviously, they know the value of compromise. Rossellini Necromancy tends to be a bit grislier than Giovanni Necromancy, though the effects are the same (it's not a different Discipline). The Rossellini are fucking sadistic and twisted at heart; they like to mutilate their subjects, "wringing" a spirit out by mortifying its mortal host.

Minor Family Characters: Members of the minor families do not differ significantly from "stock" Giovanni and share many of the same Traits. There are subtle idiosyncrasies in each of the families, however (very few Putanesca have Necromancy, Ghiberti often exhibit African features, etc.), and these should be kept in mind when designing characters with these lineages.

Family by Marriage

Most Giovanni, even those of the subsidiary families, are quite stodgy — er, traditional in their outlooks on marriage. That being said, our daughters and sisters almost always take their husband's name if they marry outside the family. Though these "expansions by marriage" give us new stock from which to draw resources, they don't always have the same kind of loyalty that the Giovanni family upbringing instills. Most of those who become associated with the Giovanni by marriage remain wholly mortal, though some become ghouls. A handful have become full-fledged Kindred, but these are rare — there are probably only 50 or so worldwide.

The clan is always working on expanding its horizons, however. A few marriages and the benefits that followed have caught Augustus' eye. We've got about six prospects if we need to "acquire" any more families. These include the St. John (English Freemasons), the Rothsteins (Jewish-American Kabbalists and their Las Vegas ties), the Li

Weng (Chinese geomancers in San Francisco), the Koenig (German industrialist death-cultists), the Hidalgo (Spanish-Mexican necromancers behind that whole Chupacabra media scare) and the Beryn (complicated — Flemish merchants centered in Luxembourg with African influence similar to that of the Ghiberti).

Giovanni-by-Marriage Characters: The rare and random Giovanni vampires hailing from outside the established families may have any Traits, though there should be some underlying reason why the Giovanni would want them as full-fledged Kindred. A Kindred from one of these families is typically the sole vampiric member of his family; he is rarely permitted to sire childer himself. The six “breeder families” are exceptions to this, but even so, their numbers are hardly prolific.

The Premascines

Here’s something that not everyone knows: Venice is actually two cities. Most people, when they think of Venice, think of flooded canal-streets and gondolas navigated by those cartoon guys in striped shirts singing “O Solo Mio.” Venice has two distinct regions; the one you see above the surface of the water, and the “old city” beneath it.

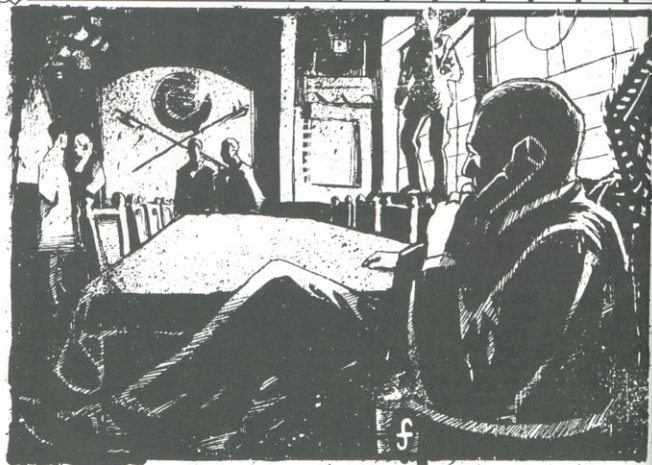
Venice has always been victim to random and violent flooding, and the water level rises every year by just a bit. At some point in the future, the water will probably overtake the buildings where they are now. This has happened before as Venice flooded, leaving the city in that wet state for which you know it today. However, under the charming, honeymoon-friendly buildings, there’s a watery graveyard of the city that was there before. You see, rather than moving, the Venetians built their new city on top of the old one.

In itself, this is no big deal — stories abound of industrious kine building new structures over the decrepit remains of older places. The really spooky part about it is that the old Venice, the one below the canals, is still inhabited.

A handful of fourth- and fifth-generation Giovanni vampires make their havens in the submerged streets of Old Venice. Old beyond belief (at least 450 years, though nasty rumors imply they’re much older), these vampires are known as the Premascines, and they’re still active below the canals.

The Premascines were Embraced before the diablerie of Cappadocius, so they are, by definition, still Cappadocians if the strictest sense of the word is to be applied. They followed Augustus and supported him in his deed, though, and they are still Giovanni at heart — they were Embraced from the mortal family, after all. However, in these nights of Camarilla and Sabbat, vampires of truly great age need to lie low, out of the view of most neonates, who tend to get excited when they hear about those of low generation and their havens. It’s also worthy to note that, as they are Cappadocians, rumors persist that they don’t have the Lamia Kiss of Death.





Nobody else knows about these guys. We keep their existence a secret — not because we're friends with them or anything, but because we don't want gangs of power-hungry Kindred poking around and trying to kill our grandparents. Think about it: If you were sitting on a bunch of fourth- and fifth-generation blood, would you tell everyone where it was? While it might be cool to see what the Premascines would do to those punk-asses who try to steal their vitae, it's just not worth the risk.

Now, understand that I've never seen any of these near-mythical Aquadiluvians (I made that word up — aren't I clever?), but I have heard multiple stories about them and they agree on a number of issues. First, there's that generation thing. These guys are all — and by all, I mean all five or six of them, even though Giuseppe Giovanni says there's an even dozen — fourth or fifth generation. I guess they figure there's safety in numbers, and none of them really wants some whippersnapper fledgling to drink them dry, so they watch each other's back down there.

Next, they're all utterly vile to behold. That's a pretty simple one to figure out. Imagine a dead body hundreds of years old that has spent most of that time underwater. I mean, these fuckers have to be all bloated and wormy and blue-lipped, you know?

They feed either on fish (and fish blood is way disgusting), or by dragging mortals into the canals — either from the walkways at night or from gondolas they overturn. I think that last part is bullshit — it sounds like some bad tabloid story — but Giuseppe and Lupo both say it's true. The way they look at it, it's not like they can just crawl out of the water and seduce some tourist, right?

Lastly, they know their way around the old Necromancy, if you know what I mean. After all, they've been down there for hundreds of years, and you know they don't have books or a TV or anything like that. Which means that they've been down there doing nothing but *learning by experience* for the entire time they've been below the water. You can't imagine the things these monsters know — and it's not rote memorization either, as they have to learn everything the hard way (by doing it).

They are said to be able to conjure up the wraiths of sailors who have shipwrecked at sea, soldiers who died on war vessels and suicides who drowned in the briny ocean. Giuseppe says that they can even call forth the Kraken, but when I said "a Kraken isn't dead, it's a giant squid" he just shook his head.

He also told me a story about the last time anybody talked to one of them, in 1966. Apparently, whoever went down there disturbed one of their rituals, and things

went a little awry. Above the water, a gale-force wind kept the morning tide from leaving the lagoon, but the swell came in anyway, and the backed-up water burst the city's fuel oil tanks. The whole city was covered in oily sludge (it's a miracle some anarchist didn't set the whole thing alight) and hundreds of homes washed out to sea. I don't want to know what it was they were doing that caused a "side effect" like this.

Whatever the case, if you want to die, go out looking for them, and I'm sure they'll oblige you.

La Cosa Nostra

As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster.

— Henry Hill, *Goodfellas*

People are pretty stupid, even vampires. Television and movies have numbed society's brains so much that they're not too capable of thinking for themselves. Everybody has dissociated themselves from the facts, instead choosing to believe what television and the movies tell them.

It's this very dissociation that serves us best. When most Kindred hear "Clan Giovanni," they immediately think "Italians." And when they immediately think "Italians," they make the mental leap to the Mafia.

It's not really like that. But we've got no problem letting those fools think that way. It draws their attention away from us.

Early Endeavors

The Mafia has been around almost as long as we have. I don't know what its real roots are, but it's mainly a bunch of thugs and extortionists jacking stuff from airports and shooting each other in the streets. They know how to put people in their pockets, though, and that's why we started working with them.

In the early days, when it was a purely Sicilian organization (and believe me, I use "organization" lightly), some of the Sicilian Giovanni naturally ended up falling in with them. They specialized in robbery and blackmail, with little long-term planning and even less vision. They went out and worked only when they wanted something immediately — they never put anything away for a rainy day or planned their next caper. They lived pretty much hand to mouth, and often ended up sleeping on rocks or in ruins outside the cities, because if they hung around, they'd get killed by an overzealous constable or some other *Mafioso* whom they had crossed earlier.

By the time they started splitting up into "families" who actually tried to live among society, we knew that the clan didn't want anything to do with them. They





were so concerned with fucking each other over, so concerned with getting a bigger piece of the pie, they couldn't see that if they put all their shit together, they could do whatever they wanted. That's the one thing that keeps us Giovanni together, through thick and through thin, through rivalry and alliance. In everyone's eyes, we're the enemy, so we watch each other's backs and it makes us richer and richer.

So we left them to their own affairs. It's not like you can just walk in and declare yourself the boss of the Mafia, but that's what we would have needed to do to make it a realistic investment for us. The mob is too fractured and too decentralized to be profitable for Clan Giovanni, but it's ironically what keeps them going.

Modern Relations

Today, the Mafia hosts several parasitic Ventrue, Lasombra and Brujah out to make a quick buck. Sure, there are a few Giovanni vampires working within it, but I'll tell you a secret: *They're moles.* You don't think we'd have loose cannons like *La Cosa Nostra* running around without knowing their movements, do you?

Our guys on the inside turn good money, and they usually get to keep it because they're the ones doing the work. They do have to keep us fed with information, though.

Necromancers and Thaumaturgy

We Giovanni heartily embrace Thaumaturgy, teaching and practicing it as a close second to Necromancy. Unlike Necromancy, Thaumaturgy is flexible and may be used to create a wide variety of different effects, as long as you have enough time to learn how to define them.

Most Giovanni learn Thaumaturgy at some point during their unives, though we don't learn it in the same manner as the Tremere (that spiritually retarded pack of uninspired dullards). Instead of the basic "blood hoodoo" path, we tend to learn Spirit Thaumaturgy as our primary Thaumaturgical Path. Our rituals typically focus on the warding and control of wraiths and other nether shades, while our studies try to break new ground in combining the mutability of Thaumaturgy with the ends of Necromancy.

Other Paths popular among the Giovanni are the Paths of Conjuring and Elemental Mastery. Certain Giovanni, particularly those still based in Venice or other aquatic locales, often learn the Path of Neptune's might. I don't even want to think about the Paths that the Premascines study.

The Others

Brujah

The Old World Brujah are all right, I guess. But the American ones are a sorry lot. They fight against those twin evils of Western culture: "oppression" and "conformity." Of course, I have a little difficulty swallowing the crusade against conformity led by a legion of Draculas who all wear leather jackets, tattered jeans and biker boots. "I'm a nonconformist, just like all my friends!" Sorry, guys, but I've already graduated high school, and I don't want to go back.

Gangel

I guess if I had no appreciable skills, no aspirations and no money, I'd pretend I was an animal, too. I don't deal with many of the beasts, but those I have dealt with make me glad I'm not one of them.

Malkavian

You know, it's a modern conceit that insanity should be pitied and safely contained until it can be remedied. I miss the good old days, when lunacy was a sign of demonic possession and the insane were lynched by superstitious mobs.

Nosferatu

They're not much good if you want stock tips, they really stink and they must have fallen out of the ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down. If you want dirt on someone, though, or you want to know who's got it in for you, talk to these guys. Their news is worth the price. Just don't let anyone see you consorting with them.

Toreador

An interesting diversion. Most are fags, though. Some of them do have money, however, because that fancy-pants society lifestyle gets expensive. If they don't think you're too scandalous to deal with, they're good investors, though I would warn against partnering with one. You know how moody those queers can get.

Tremere

Vampire Amway with magic. Learn the magic if you can.

Ventrue

I remember flipping through one of my relatives' copies of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and coming across a part about the "house nigger" and the "field nigger." The "field nigger" was the hard-working man,

true to himself and his people. The "house nigger" was the sell-out chump who kissed whitey's ass just so's he could get out of dem hot fields, massuh, an' work in de house. The Ventrue are "house Kindred."

Enitiff

Good for dock work, I guess. Or for framing when your plots go awry.

Assamites

I'd have more respect for them if they hadn't knuckled under to the Camarilla's blood curse. They're efficient at what they do, however, and hold honor in high regard. You know what you're getting into when you deal with them.

Ravnos

Take 'em or leave 'em. If they touch your shit, though, I suggest crushing their thieving Gypsy heads with your bare fucking hands and having a family member piss over their remains.

Setites

Okay. The "evil vampire" thing, I can get into. But to make it the whole point of your unlife? They're good at smuggling and they know how to get hooked up with people. Just don't get messed up in their personal politics.

Lasombra

Though we may share some mortal blood with a few of these Kindred, don't expect any family hospitality. I've butt heads a lot, because they're as interested in power as we are. Admirable rivals; they know what it means to be a vampire.

Tzimisce

Yawn. Here's a hint: It's all been done before! Get off the S&M shit and get involved in the modern world, you anachronistic relics of bygone days. When these guys turn the evil eye your way, though, pack your stuff and leave.

Samedi

Goddammit, if I hear about these worthless heaps of refuse being the remnants of the Cappadocians one more time, I'm going to vomit blood. Hello? *The Cappadocians are dead.* We killed them. End of story.

Magaraja

Are you serious? I wouldn't cross the street to spit in either one of these guys' eyes. Lock the doors of your little city, boys; I smell disaster heading your way.

The Camarilla

If vampires were ice cream, this group would be vanilla. It seems they've forgotten that the Kindred are predators, and they spend so much time pining for their lost humanity they fail to see the new vistas that the Embrace opens. Oh, and thanks for keeping us up to date with your plans. Come to Venice anytime, you morons.

The Sabbat

Of course, too much of the predator shtick can be a bad thing. This is what happens when you Embrace the Beverly Hillbillies and tell them they can kill their own dinner.

Lupines

Leave them the fuck alone, unless you *really* know what you're doing. Italy and Sicily are crawling with dogboys, and they're a lot of the reason why we don't have more rural establishments. They hate us because we're full of worms or something, and will attack on sight, so don't ask for quarter. One of their clans — the Glass Walkers — is an exception to the rule, and we work with them on some occasions. For the most part, though, it's best to let sleeping dogs lie. Pun intended.

Mages

Whatever. When they're not fighting each other, they're reading crusty old books. They're too caught up in arguments over dynamistal paradoxiclysms to be of much consequence.

Wraiths

Our bread and butter. We know all about them: their social castes, their Guilds, their rulers and their rules. We know how they function and the physics of their Underworld. Hell, we're even friends with some of them.

In the end, though, they're just tools. It's ironic: their Corpora is the stuff of which their entire realm is made. They forge tools and homes and weapons from the substance of their own bodies. Metaphorically speaking, we do the same thing to them. We will use them to build our palaces when the Endless Night arrives.

Changelings

Wow, do they break easy. You can't quite grab their spirits when you kill them, though. Apparently they get recycled back into their shiny, happy dream world. How cute.



Giovanni and Wraith Society

The Underworld, at least the part most of us deal with regularly, is set up in a kind of medieval guildlike structure. Every wraith is part of some Guild or another and it's something like Kindred society — this group hates that group, which is controlling a member of another group, blah blah blah.

Each one of these Guilds specializes in doing a different thing; they have powers, similar to Disciplines, which kind of define the role they play in the nightly affairs of their dead realm.

Artificers

They make shit from the souls in the Shadowlands. They're useful if you plan on spending any time influencing wraithly comings and goings, because the ghosts you use to do your bidding inevitably need something other than what you can provide them with.

Chanteurs

Worthless bunch of banshees. Take 'em or leave 'em.

Harbingers

Kind of like the ferrymen on the River Styx, the Harbingers help wraiths cross the Tempest, which is a swirling maelstrom of incarnate Oblivion. These guys are worth keeping under your thumb because they can quickly get to the places you need them to be.

Masquers

Flies on the wall and James Bond types. These guys are the spies who control all the secrets of the Underworld. Needless to say, they're founts of useful information, though they're used to torture and may be tough nuts to crack if they don't like you.

Monitors

These guys are best used as mere tools. They can "connect the dots" as far as other wraiths are concerned — those dots being Fetters: the things in life that are still important in the opinion of a ghost.

Oracles

What dead Ravnos become. Fuck 'em.

Pardoners

The Spanish Inquisition of the Shadowlands. These guys hunt down and exorcise the Shadows of other wraiths. Good for leaning on particularly stubborn ghosts, they're not useful for too much else besides preserving self-destructive wraiths who decide that Oblivion is better than dealing with you.

Proctors

When most people think of ghosts, these guys are who spring to mind. They're into the whole "whispered voices across the Shroud" thing and are handy for freaking the mundanes. For the most part, they're either morbid brooders or flighty individualists — neither of which typically understand the master-and-servant relationship, so be forewarned.

Puppeteers

They possess the bodies of people in the Skinlands. Obviously useful, but a testament to how boring things can get in the Underworld.

Sandmen

Ooh, pretty little ghost wanders in and out of my dreams. Unless they know their power at a really high level of mastery (in which case they're a threat in and of themselves), they're meaningless.

Spooks

Beavis and Butt-head as ghosts: Huh Huh Huh Huh — let's break stuff! They're really easy to bully, though, and can prove to be a real pain in the ass to your rivals.

Usurers

I'm not sure how the metaphysics of it work, but these guys are kind of like the Jews of the wraith world. Apparently they can lend and borrow the emotional sustenance which drives the Restless Dead. More skilled ones can even "heal" wraiths by changing that raw emotion into Corpus.

Giovanni and Haunters

One group I didn't mention is the Haunters, and that's because we work with them more than any other single Guild and they deserve more discussion. They practice an Arcanos known as Pandemonium which works just like it sounds — by making weird things happen. I'm not talking about ghostly sightings or voices from beyond the grave, I mean the full-blown fucked-up spectacular shit like bleeding walls, rains of frogs and writhing trees.

What could we possibly have in common with freaks like these? A mutual antipathy for the Shroud. In the mind of a Haunter, the Shroud is the single biggest obstacle preventing them from getting fully funky over here in the Skinlands. Their perfect world is one in which the Shroud is gone, permitting them to work their chaos and inflict their whims.

Naturally, we don't want that, but any help we get in pulling away the Shroud is appreciated. With our control of Necromancy, we can use them for all they're worth and kick them into obedience after the job is done.

Disenfranchised Giovanni neonates get along best with recently deceased Haunters, sharing common feelings of futility with their situations. Mired in the plots of the elders, each group sees no real harm in hanging out with the other (although these tend to be bully-weakling relationships at best). The old farts of the clan and Guild, on the other hand, hate each other like nobody's business. They know that they're at cross-purposes with each other, and the destruction of the Shroud is not an abstract ideal for them; it's a motivating goal.

Skilled Necromancers often use Haunters to foil the advances of their clan rivals — nothing fucks up a summoning ritual like turning a Giovanni ghoul apprentice's face into a writhing morass of maggots, you know?

21 Deviation of the Blood

A lot of vampire historians are confused by the Giovanni's transition from a bloodline of the Cappadocians to our own clan. Whereas we manifest the Disciplines of Dominate, Necromancy and Potence, the Cappadocians were known for their mastery of Auspex, Fortitude and Mortis.

Mortis fell out of use because it's a worthless, outdated Discipline. End of discussion. We replaced it with something functional — Necromancy.

Naturally, a clan of merchant lords had need of an additional "edge" to swing things our way in negotiations. Dominate came naturally to the Giovanni, as it helped us in the endeavors we undertook.

Potence is the weird one — I've got three different opinions on it. First and foremost, the Lamia had it. We got the Kiss of Death from them; it's possible that we got the Potence inclination, too. Second, I've already spent a bunch of time talking about how every Giovanni has to "learn the ropes" as a ghoul before he gets made. Put two and two together, and you see that we've spent as much time with Potence (sometimes even more!) as we have with Necromancy. Finally, it's part of our Italian heritage. Men are expected to be masculine, and Potence is a masculine, aggressive Discipline. Fortitude's based on getting hit and rolling with the punch. I don't know about you, but I'd rather be on the delivering end of a pop to the mouth than the receiving end, you know?

New Traits

Merits and Flaws

These new Merits and Flaws are included for use with Giovanni characters, in the interests of building greater complexity. They are not included for the purposes of minmaxing, so don't even think about using them in this regard. Also, the Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of which Traits she permits in her game; please consult her before taking any of these Traits for your Giovanni characters. For more information on Merits and Flaws, see the *Vampire Players Guide*.

Sanguine Incongruity (5 pt. Merit)

Giovanni manifesting this peculiar trait are quite rare — there are fewer than a dozen reported instances. Those possessing it do not bear the Curse of Lamia; their Kiss causes no more damage than the blood loss itself. However, these vampires acquire a peculiar pallor upon their Embrace — they look like corpses, and no amount of blood ingestion will flush their features (as other vampires are able to do). Giovanni with this Merit are afforded wide berth, as this Trait is reminiscent of the Cappadocian clan weakness and the Giovanni tend to be quite superstitious about it.

Inbred (1-5 pt. Flaw)

A common occurrence among the incestuous Giovanni clan, inbreeding can take many forms, and this Flaw is best discussed with the Storyteller before a player takes it for her character. The Inbred Flaw covers all manner of physical, mental and emotional defects. A one-point Inbreeding is something simple and unobtrusive, like eyes too close together or an underbite. A three-point Inbreeding is more severe: a congenital health condition (for mortals) or a crippling physical deformity. Five-point Inbreedings are grossly disabling or emotionally crippling — everything from uselessly atrophied legs to a permanent Derangement, decided on mutually by the player and Storyteller. Inbred conditions may or may not be immediately discernible, though their point costs should be relative to their magnitude.

New Giovanni Discipline Powers

Severing the Ties of Death (Necromancy Level Seven)

Severing the Ties of Death allows the Necromancer to remove a wraith wholly from the Shadowlands against the spirit's will. In essence, the Necromancer pierces the Shroud, pulls the wraith from the other side, and places her in a holding vessel. A wraith thus removed is no longer affected by events occurring in the Underworld; she no longer exists there.

This power is used to contain and store wraiths for "later use." By using this power, the Necromancer prevents the wraith from being rescued by other wraiths, carried away by the Tempest, or affected by other inconvenient eventualities.

System: Using this power requires a Blood Point if the wraith is an unwilling subject. The player rolls Intelligence + Occult against a difficulty equal to the local Shroud rating. If the roll is successful, the Giovanni extracts the wraith utterly from the Underworld, and may place her in a vessel for as long as he wishes.

While contained within the vessel, the wraith is unaffected by any environmental factors; she is essentially trapped, a part of neither the physical world nor the Underworld. Once per night, she may attempt escape by spending a Willpower point and rolling Wits + Occult (difficulty equal to the Necromancer's Willpower). Success indicates that the wraith flees the vessel and returns to the Underworld.

Note that this imprisonment does not protect a wraith from the Shadow; it is conceivable that the wraith may sink into Oblivion during her incarceration.

Inurement (Necromancy Level Nine)

Using Inurement is a last-ditch effort on the part of the Necromancer in her blackest hour. By giving up her soul the moment before Final Death claims her, the vampire may voluntarily become a wraith.

The simple fact that this power exists is a source of concern for many Giovanni, who are not convinced that the diablerized soul of Cappadocius was fully consumed by Augustus.

System: The vampire must carefully prepare some object of great sentimental value to herself. This will become the Fetter which prevents her from reincorporating once she enters the Underworld. Over the course of preparation, 20 points of Willpower must be "invested" in this object — the Kindred contemplates the meaning of the object and its value to her soul.

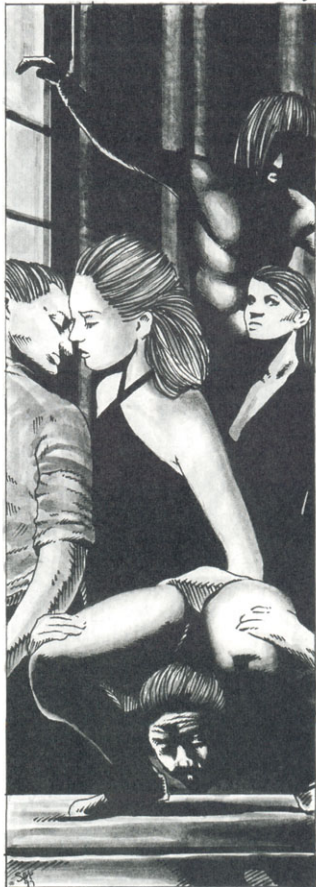
Thereafter, the vampire may spend a point of Willpower and slough off the mortal coil, becoming a wraith as her body crumbles to dust.

Becoming a Wraith

Vampires who become wraiths after suffering Final Death are rare, though stranger things have happened. The Storyteller naturally has the final say as to whether or not a player's Kindred character actually becomes one of the Restless Dead.

Vampires who permanently cross the Shroud no longer retain vestiges of their former Kindred condition; their Disciplines vanish when they join the ranks of the wraiths. Attributes and Abilities remain the same (and can indeed be quite substantive), while Arcanoi, Passions and Fetters may either be chosen as normal or determined in some other manner, according to the Storyteller's wishes. A Shadow will need to be created for the character, as well (the strength of the Shadow usually depends on the character's proximity to her Beast).

Vampires who have achieved the elusive state of Golconda may not become wraiths, nor may vampires who have met their end due to diablerie.



Rituals

Giovanni familiar with the Discipline of Thaumaturgy have augmented their abilities by creating new rituals. The use of Thaumaturgy, when combined with the necromantic knowledge of the clan, offers unique insights into the world beyond the Shroud. These rituals are activated just like normal Thaumaturgical rituals, with a roll of the caster's Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 4 + the level of the ritual).

Spirit Beacon (Level Two Ritual)

This ritual is designed to draw wraiths to a particular area. It requires the head of a man forsaken by God; this ghastly object acts as a beacon to all wraiths within the region. Giovanni who have seen these dreadful items in the Shadowlands say that an unholy radiance pours forth from the eyes, mouth and ears of the head, drawing wraiths like moths to a flame.

System: Obviously, this ritual requires a severed human head (though it is the Storyteller's discretion as to what constitutes "forsaken by God" in her chronicle). After the ritual is successfully conducted, any wraiths who view the hideous thing are almost irresistibly compelled to move toward it. Wraiths who wish to avoid the spirit beacon must make a Willpower roll against a difficulty equal to the Willpower of the Giovanni who enacted the ritual. A wraith who succeeds is free to leave (though she may be entranced once more if she looks upon the head again); a wraith who fails must attend the head and will refuse to leave. Wraiths under the sway of this ritual may try to break free of its power; Willpower checks may be attempted once per hour.

The ritual ceases to be effective at sunrise of the day following its invocation, though the head may be the focus of further uses of the ritual. Giovanni who use this power repeatedly are rumored to possess heads that have decomposed to mere skulls over their long periods of service.

Call upon the Shadow's Grace (Level Four Ritual)

Use of this invasive ritual allows the Giovanni to peer into the aura of death that surrounds all living beings. Those who are familiar with the subtleties of wraithly existence speak of the Shadow, the "dark side" of the wraith's personality. This ritual temporarily opens a channel for discourse with the nascent Shadow of its subject (which will fully emerge if the subject in question later becomes a wraith). Though not quite so powerful or malignant as the Shadow of a wraith, the Shadow of one who still walks the physical world can nonetheless reveal damning aspects of the person's actions, and may often drive the person to acts of desperation.

System: By enacting this ritual, the Giovanni brings the self-destructive aspects of her subject's psyche to the fore. If used successfully, this ritual causes its subject to reveal her darkest secrets to the Giovanni. The subject will reveal any plots in which she is involved, treacheries she has committed and lies she has told. The subject may

resist with a Willpower roll against a difficulty equal to the caster's Intelligence + Occult. At the Storyteller's discretion, a botch may result in tremendous feelings of remorse and despair in the subject, which result in the subject's attempted suicide. Naturally, nothing may be learned in this situation.



The Degenerate

Quote: How does this feel? How about when I stick it...here?

Prelude: Your family was rich and spoiled you. You never wanted for money, comfort or attention. Anything you needed, your parents had delivered by Next Day Air. You got a German sports car for your 16th birthday and you moved into the guesthouse when you were 18. You had enough money to attend the best schools, and enough money to buy your grades if you weren't interested in the classes. You had everything you needed and then some. And it was boring.

Money couldn't buy certain things, though, and these things were precisely the experiences you sought — anything to break the tedium of having your every whim catered to. You found out that other members of the family suffered from the same malaise and had turned to practicing proscribed arts for thrills. So you joined in the fun. By day you were a powerful scion of an illustrious family; by night you were a mere acolyte, abasing yourself at the feet of your dark masters.

Those dark masters took notice of your interests, but divined that you were involved only out of perversity. Your utility had reached its maximum, and you began to envision an eternity of Blood Bound servitude beneath the rooms of clan manors. But then you discovered a secret.

By combining your passionless knowledge of Necromancy with your disturbing habit of necrophilia, you discovered that you could enrage the soul of the body with which you were fornicating. The souls, angered by your treatment of their mortal shells, became easy targets for unfavorable pacts and bondage into mystic talismans. You had, essentially, taught yourself the third level of Necromancy without instruction by a teacher.

Impressed by your discoveries, the vampires of your family had you Embraced. The revelation that vampires were pulling the family strings never even came as a shock to you, and you wonder just how *jaded you may be.*

Concept: You are vile, and easily driven to things that repulse those with more traditional moralities. You think nothing of those whom you hurt in your quest for sensory experience. You have no friends, only acquaintances whom you have not yet alienated. You are frustrated by your vampiric lack of sexual ability — at least you could copulate with strange people and things as a mortal.

Roleplaying Tips: Do whatever you need to do to stave off your eternal boredom. Toe the line with your elders: Don't disappoint them, but don't be any more innovative or productive than you need to be. You are at the end of the self-interest spectrum; do nothing for others if it does not benefit you in some form. Luckily, this whole vampire thing works on the basis of who owes whom favors, so cooperating with almost anyone helps you in some form.

Equipment: Blasphemous books and pictures, bondage studio and implements, Jean-Paul Gaultier wardrobe, Porsche 930 Slant Turbo (black, of course), bevy of teenage goth Blood Dolls



Giovanni™

VAMPIRE: The Masquerade®

Name:

Nature: *Bon Vivant*

Clan:

Player:

Demeanor: *Deviant*

Generation: *13th*

Chronicle:

Concept: *The Degenerate*

Haven:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

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

Knowledges

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

Advantages

Disciplines

Necromancy ●●○○○○○○
Potency ●○○○○○○○
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Backgrounds

Allies ●○○○○○○○
Herd ●●○○○○○○
Resources ●●●○○○○○
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Virtues

Conscience ●○○○○○
Self-Control ●●●●○
Courage ●●●●●

Other Traits

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Humanity/Path

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Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Blood Pool

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Health

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

Weakness

Bite inflicts double damage



Appendix: Giovanni of Note



The members of Clan Giovanni are insular and intimate; word of exceptional members travels fast among their circle, and they are loath to spread tales among outsiders. Presented here are a few notable

Giovanni whom many Kindred have heard of or dealt with. You may wish to take these descriptions with a grain of salt; the Giovanni thrive on underestimation at the hands of others.



Ambrogino Giovanni

The mysterious Ambrogino is one of the clan's most notorious agents. Reputedly a confidant of Augustus himself, Ambrogino travels far and wide, doing the clan's bidding. His many side ventures and attempts at personal advancement have thus far been either indulged or overlooked.

For more information on Ambrogino Giovanni, see *Giovanni Chronicles Two: Blood and Fire* and *Giovanni Chronicles Three: Dust to Dust*.

Augustus Giovanni

Augustus is infamous even among the Children of Caine, and rumors of his depredations travel far and wide in his wake. By varying accounts mad, in torpor, scheming, overconfident and myriad other adjectives, Augustus is indescribable except by those who deal with him, and they are notoriously (wisely?!) tight-lipped.

Like any Antediluvian, Augustus is inscrutable, and his plots and machinations extend through the years like worms through earth. He is known to possess vast knowledge of Disciplines, and is among the few "active" members of the third generation reliably reported.

For more information on Augustus Giovanni, see *The Last Supper*.





Pochtlí

Father of the Pisanob family of the Giovanni clan, Pochtlí is hideously ugly—some say he resembles the fanged and feathered gods of Mesoamerican mythology. Pochtlí works through a network of agents and spies known as the *camozotzes*, who attend to his needs and do his bidding.

Pochtlí never leaves his sanctum (a decrepit recovered Aztec temple in the heart of Mexico), instead letting his agents do his work. He constantly wars with the cruel vampires of the Sabbat, who are a never-ending threat to the safety of the Mexican people; he frequently uses captured pack members for Necromantic and Thaumaturgical experiments. Mexican Sabbat greatly fear him, for he is known to steal their souls and trap them forever in unwilling servitude. Numerous attacks against him have failed, as he keeps legions of zombies and *camozotz* ghouls by his side.

Pochtlí has made a few recent discoveries which, upon report to the Venetian Giovanni, have caused quite a stir. Through his traffic with the wraiths and spirits of Mexico, he has unearthed information on a shadowy group of Sabbat known as the Harbingers of Skulls, and also reports that there have been mass slayings of Tremere *antitribu* by unknown forces of late. Apparently, the Harbingers of Skulls have come out of long hiding, perhaps to enforce the will of the politically impotent Mexican Black Hand, but their motives and actions are unknown.

Wraiths speak fearfully of the Harbingers of Skulls, saying that the fire of vengeance surrounds them. Pochtlí hears these warnings with grim resolve, and his contacts in the Dark Kingdom of Obsidian's House of Ix Chel and Xipe Totec all agree on the gravity of these Sabbat Kindred's presence. A few of the wraiths of House Itzam Na have even stated that the Harbingers of Skulls have some sort of power over them. This would certainly prove unpleasant for the Giovanni, as they would have yet another group of necromancers to contend with when the Endless Night arrives.

The shifting tides of the Sabbat war toll heavily on Pochtlí, and his Pisanob Giovanni, once quite numerous, reportedly dwindle by the year. The Giovanni elders reputedly grow concerned over the performance of their "cousin," though no action has yet been taken.



Isabel Giovanni

Isabel is a Giovanni spy inside the Camarilla and a primary source of information on the decisions made at Conclaves. She is a master of disguise, though she prefers the adoption of an alternate persona to the outright alteration of her appearance. Much to the Camarilla's chagrin, she has turned up on primogen councils all across the United States and Canada, and has even impersonated Sabbat bishops and priests when so doing has furthered the interests of the Giovanni.

Isabel has developed a curious obsessive Derangement which affects her feeding. So fearful of compromising her numerous disguises with the Curse of Lamia, Isabel never drinks from a living host. Instead, she drinks solely from the severed heads of her vessels, imbibing the blood from a head as a mortal drinks from a wine glass. Naturally, very few Kindred have seen her feed, but tales of her binges circulate like wildfire among Camarilla and Sabbat cities alike. Though this is far more damning and visible than the Curse of Lamia, it nonetheless settles Isabel's fears.

Isabel commonly assumes the guise of a Toreador or Ventrue, whose clan weaknesses she finds easy to fake. She typically sets up a mortal blood cult around her, wherever she settles down, and these duped mortals become her willing herd. She also finds time to advance her Necromantic studies (presumably using the spirits of her vessels, who die so horribly), and has come up with numerous leads regarding both the Khazar's Diary and the True Vessel. How she finds this information in America, when the relics' locations are believed to be elsewhere, is unknown.



Enzo Giovanni

Enzo Giovanni is believed to be the premiere member of Clan Giovanni by those outside the clan, and that's just how the Giovanni want it.

A few years ago, Enzo managed to have himself voted onto the Pentex Board of Directors at the clan's behest. As a ranking member of one of the country's most profitable holding companies, Enzo brings a great deal of money into the clan while simultaneously diverting interest away from the clan's true operations.

Kindred who dig deep into the Pentex machine will find no Giovanni influence other than Enzo himself. By that time, the clan will have been alerted to the sudden interest in its (nonexistent) Pentex affairs, and can take care of the inquisitive parties accordingly.

Enzo was the first experiment in a successful misdirection campaign which has subsequently brought numerous antagonists to the attention of Clan Giovanni. By taking relatively worthless and poorly sired Giovanni Kindred and placing them in positions of visibility, the clan may continue its agendas while the red herrings they plant turn up fruitlessly for their opposition.



The Capuchin

Long shrouded in mystery, the Capuchin is not known to be an actual member of the Giovanni clan (if he is even Kindred at all), though he has allied himself with it. He has been active within the Catholic Church as a Franciscan friar since the latter half of the 16th century, according to dubiously accredited tales of his history.

As the preeminent liaison to the Church (which knows nothing about this mysterious figure's true nature), the Capuchin is believed to have access to the huge vault of proscribed literature beneath the Vatican. It is rumored that most of the material on *nigromancy* and the Black Arts has been subtly and slowly removed from the Church's possession by the Capuchin, who turns it over to his Giovanni allies.

Zombies and ghouls form the ever-present retinue of this bizarre friar. They routinely wear the garb of priests to divert attention from themselves, though the presence of a nocturnal band of silent Franciscans actually attracts attention more often than not.

Although the Capuchin is never seen outside of Italy, he retains agents everywhere, especially in the United States, Argentina and the dead lands of Egypt. Though he does very little "commerce" with members of other clans, the Capuchin has been known to provide accurate information on Necromancy to those who pay his asking price. The nature of that price varies, though the Capuchin always asks for information or mystic artifacts, never for something so base as cash.

Recently, the Capuchin has uncovered the same disturbing "Harbingers of Skulls" rumor as Pochtli and has duly reported it to his Giovanni compatriots. His reports indicate that these Harbingers of Skulls have naked skulls instead of normal mortal or vampire heads, and that they wield death magics greater than the Giovanni can comprehend. Such chilling advice from their long-term ally has many members of the clan understandably up in arms.

Usually, the Capuchin keeps his own council, though he has been known to canvass Italian Tremere, Malkavians and the odd passing Kiasyd about any curious phenomena they have witnessed. The implications of the Capuchin's questions invariably leave the subjects of these interrogations chilled. Many Kindred are especially disturbed by the morose state in which he leaves the Malkavians, who are not often so profoundly affected by simple discourse.

Still, as ubiquitous as he is throughout Italy, the Capuchin remains a mystery. Though some Cainites label him the minion of inscrutable Antediluvians, and others revile him as a demon, the Capuchin moves through Kindred society like a ghost.

C L A N B O O K :

Giovanni



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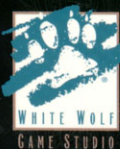
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