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SPECIAL THANKS, RAVE EDITION

Oh, never mind. Like I remember.

YARBLOCKOS!

That nasty, villainous puke seat.

C L A N B O O K :

TEIMISCE™

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: WINTER FIEND	4
CHAPTER ONE: A RABBLE OF FIENDS	8
CHAPTER TWO: EGO AND EVOLUTION	38
CHAPTER THREE: AMONG FIENDS	74

WINTER FIEND

November 22nd, 1942 - Sunday

The landscape was a white vastness, a world without a horizon to separate the earth from the choking mist of the flat Russian steppe. *Obergefreiter* Dietrich Walling, officer in Hitler's vaunted Wehrmacht, surveyed the once-proud siege engine of the 22nd Panzer Division. His whitewashed *Panzerkampfwagen IV* lay alone and half-buried by snowdrifts. The OKW recruitment posters never showed the soldiers standing around tanks, watching them burn for the brief moments they pushed away the cold.

The remnants of the panzer division ran out of petrol about 150 kilometers west of Volgograd, near the indentation of the River Chir. The Russian counteroffensive in the Stalingrad campaign began three days ago when a thick mist strangled visibility from the air and biting cold scattered warmth to the four corners. Artillery flashed and thundered in muffled fury, and engaging tanks collided with one another in a clumsy ballet of the blind. The air was thicker than milk, but the Russian 8th Cavalry still surrounded the beleaguered 22nd Division and picked away with their snipers, the T-34 tanks. Dietrich's group finally smashed through the blockade yesterday and vanished into the steppes. Now, broken and dying, they waited for the Russians. The artillery and tank thunder, however, drifted away with morning, leaving the landscape unerringly silent beneath a pissy soup of white.

Kanonier Holden — Dietrich's gunner and the only other survivor from his Panzer IV — stumbled out from the snow-burdened curtain of air. He looked fresh out of Hitlerjugend, with only a tuft of unshaved fuzz on his chin and an oil-smearred face soiling his youthful Aryan looks. A thigh-length overcoat of brown sheepskin hung loosely from his bony shoulders. He was unraveling a towline from a large spool.

"What are you doing?" Dietrich asked. Grizzled with facial growth and dirt that highlighted premature wrinkles, he wore a black field jacket and sheepskin cap. Otherwise, he could have cut a handsome figure, civilization permitting.

"I found this on a Tiger about 20 meters northeast of here. I hooked the other tanks together, in case we needed to find each other in this squall. *Leutnant* Habsmann ordered me—"

"Habsmann? Is that rat-faced bastard still alive?" Dietrich spat. "I'm surprised they didn't ship him out to Poland with the rest of the Jews."

"Sir, he's not—"

"I know what he says, you idiot!" Dietrich raged. "But he's not Aryan either. He may have fooled the Reich Agency for Genealogy, but you can see the Semite blood in him. It's in his sloped brow, his frizzy black hair and his hooked nose. Didn't they teach you that in Hitlerjugend?"

"Yes, sir, they did, but I can't... I can't disobey Habsmann. He outranks us both. Also, he wants us to gather at his Tiger. He says if we share the warmth, we'll less likely freeze."

"You go if you want, but I won't make it easier for the Russians to find us. I'm staying here."

Holden's expression betrayed all his concerns. Still, he said nothing and tethered the towline to the panzer's forward cable hooks.

"Continue with your report. What else did you see out there aside from that mongrel Habsmann?"

"Well," Holden continued nervously, "I finished cataloguing the condition of the tanks around us, but I don't have paper to write on."

Dietrich ignored his subordinate. It was likeher the *Kanonier* stuffed whatever paper he had into his pants to keep himself warm.

"...five tanks scattered throughout the area..."

This was a war of unspoken truths.

"...no petrol in any of them..."

Dietrich said nothing about the Balkan sheepskin cap Holden had lifted from a dead Romanian officer, and Holden said nothing about Dietrich's black field jacket decorated with an *Unteroffizier's* chevrons.

"...one Panzer III is carrying dead soldiers..."

This was a far cry from the proud German phalanx that swept through the Ukraine, freeing places like Izyum and Svatovo from Communism. The villagers, winnowed by famine, heralded the Wehrmacht's arrival as the new Crusade come to sweep the Antichrist Stalin from his throne of bones. They took the German black crosses to mean hope, and Dietrich took their hope to mean victory. That belief died at the altar of Stalingrad.

"...face torn off."

"What? Repeat that!" Dietrich ordered when he realized he'd missed something important.

"I found a Panzer III covered with dead Romanian soldiers. They blocked the hatches. I tried removing the soldiers to get into the tank, but they were frozen to the metal. I pulled too hard on one. I... I think I tore his face off."

"You think?"

"Well, yes. I mean, he couldn't have looked that way before, sir."

"Who was in the tank?"

"I don't know. Frozen corpses covered the hatches and storage bins."

"So? Pull the corpses off."

"I... but... Won't I tear off their faces, sir?"

"Have you ever skinned a rabbit?"

"Uh, yes... yes, sir."

"This is no different. At least rabbits serve a purpose. Go back, pull off the corpses, and scavenge what you can. Don't forget to check the fuel tanks under the floor. We can't serve our *Führer* by dying here."

Holden was shocked a moment, then nodded blindly before setting off into the curtain of white.

"And Holden," Dietrich added, "say nothing to Habsmann. If you find anything, we'll barely have enough for ourselves. Understood?"

Two hours had passed since Holden had left, and now, *Obergefreiter* Walling suspected his subordinate had abandoned him in favor of Habsmann. Dietrich rested in the commander's chair and stretched his legs against the main gun's recoil guard. He sat in dried blood, but the thought never bothered him. *Oberleutnant* Westermayer deserved that sniper bullet when he stood on his chair and stuck his head out from the turret hatch. He was already dead when he tumbled back through and

spattered the interior with thick clots of blood. At the time, Dietrich ignored the crimson gore on his overalls and continued steering. That was a lifetime ago, last week. Dietrich found he grew more injured against the violence with each minute. Not even the bits of flesh or blood encrusted on his clothing bothered him anymore.

A bitter night chill had settled over the region, forcing Dietrich back into the black interior of his tank for shelter. Although the hatches, pistol ports and cupola's vision slots were all closed, the heat still escaped like water through a sieve. Dietrich marveled at how this blade of the Wehrmacht could resist Russian bullets and shells but couldn't keep out the Soviet Empire's greatest soldier, "General Frost." Dietrich didn't want to freeze, but he'd long run out of canned heat and had nothing to burn with his lighter. If he wanted to survive, he'd have to leave the sanctuary of his panzer and search the nearby vehicles. Holden mentioned something about five other tanks; one of them probably had something worth scavenging, but he'd have to take care not to approach Habsmann's Tiger.

Dietrich checked the clip on the Sturmgewehr .44 machine pistol and was about to open the hatch when something darkened the turret's glass vision blocks. Instinctively, Dietrich backed away into the low-ceiling forward compartment, where he bumped into the driver's seat. *It couldn't be Holden or any other soldier in the division*, Dietrich thought. They all knew to rap their wrenches or gun butts on the hatch before entering lest they find their heads blown off by edgy panzer crews. Someone peered inside, but it was too dark to see anything.

A hiss of cold air slipped into the tank, along with a faint wash of winter white — the intruder opened the cupola hatch. Dietrich felt the pit of his stomach drop away and his blood plummet along with it like a waterfall. Some primordial instinct in the back of his skull screamed for Dietrich to run. This wasn't the enemy; this was a hunter.

Carefully, Dietrich reached behind him and ran his fingers along the recess in the ceiling. The cupola's hatch was completely pulled back. Small eddies of fine frost drifted through the opening and settled over the reddish-brown interior. Dietrich's questing fingers snagged a latch. He pushed it gently, painfully aware of the low groan it made, but the driver's escape hatch finally opened with a satisfying pop. More cold air slipped through and filled the forward compartment. Quietly, Dietrich positioned himself beneath his exit. He could see a pair of milky-white... hands... that tapered off into serrated claws slip past the cupola's hatch. A bear? A clever wolf? Whatever was coming in was doing so head first. Dietrich didn't wait around to see the creature's face; he pushed off the driver's chair, through the hatch and into the bristling, cold air.

With visibility nearly gone, the howling wind swept away all noise and claimed it as its own. Dietrich looked back at the white-washed turret just in time to see black jackboots slip through the hatch. Dietrich leapt off the tank and grabbed the towline linking him to the Tiger. Holding on, he pushed his way through the knee-deep drifts, into the worsening storm.

The drifts grew deeper, slowing Dietrich down, but he pushed through the cold. After what seemed forever, Dietrich arrived at the Tiger. It was a petrol guzzler and ungraceful. It wasn't called a "Furniture Van" for its elegance. Even now, half hidden in a growing snowdrift, it looked unwieldy and ugly. Patches of zimmerit, anti-magnetic mine paste, had fallen away, revealing a mottling of gray. The turret's side-hatch stood wide open. Dietrich pulled himself out of

the snow and onto the Tiger's skirt. He peered inside the empty tank. *The crew must be dead*, thought Dietrich, but he had little concern for them now, wherever they were. Dietrich exited and unhooked one of the four towlines that led him furthest from his own panzer. He took the loose towline and pulled himself through the snow while winding the excess cable around his shoulder.

Whatever stalked him would probably go after the other vehicles still tethered to the Tiger, leaving Dietrich safe and alone in his isolated tank. He knew his actions would cost the lives of his allies, but that was a sacrifice he was willing to make on their behalf. Besides, not a one was loyal to Germany anymore. Since Stalingrad, the soldiers privately scoffed at the weekly propaganda reports from the Ministry for Public Enlightenment. If the war faltered, it was because Hitler allowed lesser species to fight alongside the German Volk and because weak men with weak blood fought on the frontlines. Indignant and angry, Dietrich struggled through the snow, cursing the Reich for betraying its own dreams.

The Panzer III was six tons smaller than Dietrich's *Kampfwagen*, but it had been refitted with a 50mm gun. Still, snowdrifts washed up on its skirt, miring it until next spring. Painted white, it was nearly lost against the blizzard. The only feature that stood out against its surface were 10 Romanians covering the tank like maggots on a corpse. They were all facedown, dead and stuck to the exposed metal, blocking the four major hatches, Dietrich realized, along with the air intake and exhaust ports. Somebody positioned them deliberately, and for a moment, Dietrich found himself appreciating the cold and barren logic that required such action.

"I've walked into the lion's den," Dietrich muttered. Whatever was stalking his division had made his home here, but with the storm already covering his trail, Dietrich had no hope of finding his way back. This panzer was his only salvator. "Besides," Dietrich continued to himself, "whatever barred the hatches did so for a reason." If it was protecting something, then it was worth Dietrich's attention.

Dietrich dropped the cable and scrambled up to the soldier hunched over the commander's hatch. With a firm grip on his shoulders, Dietrich tried prying him off the tank. The corpse's face came off in stiff strips, leaving behind patches of flesh on the metal, but the body remained stuck; something had mauled his face beyond recognition, ripping open his jacket and winter clothing as well. The soldier's exposed stomach and chest were likewise frozen to metal, but not in the way Dietrich expected. The soldier appeared anchored to the metal, with his exposed flesh hooked or melted into the hatch lining. Dietrich didn't care. They were only Romanian.

Dietrich took out his knife and cut away at the flesh, separating the corpse from the hatch. Just like skinning rabbits. After a few moments of cutting and sawing, he used the knife point to dig out the flesh in the lining before finally opening the cupola's hatch. A wave of warm air and the smell of butcher-shop viscera washed over him. The interior was humid. Half-frozen and minutes away from frostbite, Dietrich dropped into the tank, slamming the hatch shut with a loud clang on his way down. Warmth enveloped him.

A noxious mix of offal and innards filled the pitch-black interior, but that didn't bother Dietrich terribly. He'd spent his summers on a Kümmeritz sheep farm south of Berlin and was inured to the smell of death. It was the low mowling and sobbing all around him that grated on his nerves. Dietrich fumbled for his lighter and lit it up. The shadows danced into flickers, darkening

the nooks, crannies and corners of the panzer's guts. That's when he found the other survivors.

The interior of the tank was the Devil's abattoir. Holden, Habsmann and at least four other soldiers lay stretched out over the equipment, chairs, ammunition bins, walls, ceiling and floor. Their bodies had the consistency of warm tallow — drooping and limp. It was as though Satan had smeared them across Creation's face with his thumb. Five different intestines braided around each other and snaked through the interior like Christmas tinsel, while flayed flesh stretched over the walls. More shocking, perhaps, was that the soldiers had all been turned inside out, yet they still seemed to live. Organs pulsed and pumped their precious fluids while they hung from the recoil guard and lay draped over and around the chairs. The mewling came from the flattened faces of Holden and the others. With deflated mouths and vocal cords stretched like washed linen, they could do no more than cry and gurgle. Annunciation was a lost gift.

Dietrich shook his head in amazement and muttered, "Magnificent." Despite the carnage, it possessed a functional aesthetic often lost on the battlefield. Dietrich had seen his share of severed limbs and shrapnel-eviscerated comrades, but that was fate alone. This was pure function and cold-hearted brilliance. Dietrich's father told him stories about how ancient hunters split open deer and slept in their innards for warmth when trapped by blizzards. This was practicality taken to the extreme. The tank's interior had been covered with gutted but living soldiers whose exposed innards and blood vessels provided warmth. The soldiers outside sealed in any escaping heat. This was calculated and perfect pragmatism. This was what the German army lacked to carry out the Thousand-Year Reich.

"Aren't you going to salute a superior officer?" a voice asked. It was languid, almost slippery.

Dietrich spun around, nearly killing the lighter's meager tongue. Sitting in the radio operator's chair and shadowed by a low ceiling, sat an SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor. Darkness covered the man's face, but Dietrich could see the white undershirt beneath the black uniform, the wet field-gray great-coat with black collar, double-lightning bolt lapels, the flared breeches and wet, black jackboots. On his lap rested a field-gray cap with a silver skull and crossbones pin.

"I would," Dietrich ventured, "if I didn't think you were going to try and kill me. Or should I say tried?"

"You're an eel, I'll give you that. Sneaking out of your panzer was wise, but I was impressed with the way you took the line to this tank. You were hoping I'd go after the others, weren't you?"

"You saw me?" Dietrich asked doubtfully. "How? I left you behind."

"Well, you didn't summon this storm, did you?"

"And you did?" Dietrich sneered.

The Generalmajor leaned forward, allowing the light to touch his face. He was stunning, nearly painful in Aryan perfection. His hair was gold silk against alabaster skin, his nose and lips thin and imperial, his cheeks were cut of marble, and his Rhine-blue eyes carried the wolf's glare. His face was perfect and without deficiency; he embodied the idealized Nordic warrior Himmler so proudly espoused in his elite Schutzstaffel. His stare whittled Dietrich to the bone; it was an intrepid and cruel heart

that cast that gaze. Suddenly, Dietrich realized that there was nothing this creature couldn't do.

"The new man is among us!" Dietrich mumbled, quoting Hermann Rauschning's *Hitler Speaks*. "...I will tell you a secret. I have seen the vision of the new man — fearless and formidable..."

"...I shrank from him," the Generalmajor concluded.

"You read *Hitler Speaks*?"

"It was... entertaining," the Generalmajor allowed.

"I remember a time," Dietrich ventured, "when I would have followed the Führer into Hell."

"And now?"

"I've seen what it looks like.... Russia has been one defeat after another because of Hitler. He's betrayed his promises to us."

"You speak treason."

"Then we are both on the firing line," Dietrich grinned with a look to Holden and the others. "What are you?" he finally asked.

"Can you not see it in my face?" the Generalmajor exclaimed with a feral smile. "I am the spirit of your ancestors given blood. I am Nordic heritage brought to the fore."

"There's more to it than that," Dietrich ventured.

"Yes there is, but that will come in due time. I've decided to spare you. I appreciate your cunning. It might just help us both survive."

"What do you mean?"

"Hitler's war isn't our war. Ours is more ancient in the remembering. This advance into Russia was an attempt to regain soil lost to us since the red storm swept Russia. Unfortunately, we relied on your kind to fight for us, and that misplaced trust has cost us. Now I must return empty-handed. You're right; Hitler, Himmler and the rest of them have betrayed you, but they are of no consequence. They served their purpose."

"But why are you here, in this desolate place?"

"I was fighting my enemies when the Russian counteroffensive began," the Generalmajor proclaimed. "I protected this place for the while it took me to rest, stay warm and regain my... strength. I'm ready to leave. You were going to be my last meal, but you make a worthier *Unteroffizier*."

"Willingly, though I don't know who I serve or why."

"That too will come in time, but I'm offering you the chance for a purity you've never known. You can be like me, without impediment or soiled body, I offer perfection of thought. That is all you need know for now."

"If I abandon the army, I will be shot as a deserter."

"No," the Generalmajor offered. "As far as they know, you died here, tonight. As far as you're concerned," he added with a fanged grin, "they are right." The Generalmajor moved with a speed that killed Dietrich's flame, dousing the tank in darkness. He slammed the *Obergefreiter* down on his back hard. Hot needles ripped into Dietrich's neck, and he felt his blood explode through the wound in a burning — but horrifically thrilling — torrent. Holden mewled in his ear, but Dietrich could hear only the waterfall rush of blood thunder in his head. The thunder drifted away like Russian tanks in the mist, however, and Dietrich realized he was shivering from the impossible cold that gripped his bones — he was dying. That's when the Generalmajor pressed his lips against Dietrich's and spit in his mouth. Dietrich's world exploded in a scream.



CHAPTER ONE: A RABBLE OF FIENDS

It is a grave tragedy to die young so we pray, "May we be sufficiently ripe before we are eaten up by death..."
— Baba Ifa Karade, *Odu Ethics of Edi: The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*

We are Tzimisce...

What a bucket of shit! We were united for as long as it took Tzimisce to Embrace his first progeny. After that, all bets were off. You'll also hear the clans talk about Enoch and how we all existed "as one," like some Disney take on Cainites. Christ, Enoch was Caine's petting zoo filled with mortals and nothing more.

You think you know the Damned. You don't know shit. What you're about to learn isn't a lesson, it's a correction. Forget the ankle-grabbing Carthaginians or the imperial glory of Rome; they died for a damn good reason. Our history has little to do with the mundane world and everything to do with the Tzimisce. We're called Fiends for a good reason. Face it Brothers and Sisters in Caine, that's what we are. It's time you understood why.

— The Eye, priest of the Seven Hands pack

TZIMISCE LEXICON

Learn these terms well, for many Fiends remember their usage even in the modern nights.

Azhi Dahaka: Azhi Dahaka is Persian for the three-headed dragon of the demon Ahriman. To the Tzimisce, it is the Metamorphosist's Holy Grail, an enlightened and

ultimate state of being, possibly brought on by extensive use of Vicissitude.

bogatyri: "elder valiant champions," or a reference to Tzimisce's quest-knights.

boyars: nobles or nobility.

knezi: a lesser landowner than a Tzimisce *voivode*. Knezi supplied the main fighting force against the clan's elders during the Anarch Revolt. In the modern nights, it is a title for any Tzimisce who makes claim to nobility. As such, it is no longer as respected as it once was.

koldun: Tzimisce spellcrafters who employ elemental and spirit magic.

manse: a Tzimisce aristocrat's keep or place of power from which he rules. In modern parlance, a manse may simply be an opulent (or especially morbid) haven.

szlachta: although the specific term means "gentry," *szlachta* are soldiers, spies, bodyguards and protectors of the Tzimisce. Modified to serve, these ghouls are tough, smart and deadly.

tirsa: land or domain.

voivode: typically, a Tzimisce landholder or lord, the term is strangely nebulous. Tzimisce of any significant

power or territorial holdings often use this title, though young clan members shy away from such epitaphs.

vozhd: a fading practice among contemporary Tzimisce, *vozhd* are lobotomized amalgamations of many lesser ghouls. Through Vicissitude and *koldunic* rituals, the ghouls become one entity with the simple duty to maim and destroy whatever stands in its way.

zadruga: "joint family," whereby all the relatives of the ruler live together under strict familial bonds. Also, the ancient name for revenant families, still used tonight by elder Tzimisce.

zulo form: a Tzimisce's monstrous form, brought on through an advanced understanding of Vicissitude. The Fiends employ this shape in battle or to intimidate their enemies.

THE PROGENITOR'S LEGACY

As told by Titus Villicent, consultant to the consistory

So you wish to know your past, back to the Eldest's part in this divine dance? It began in Enoch, the city of Caine's making and his attempt at reparations to the Almighty. He had already sired thrice in a fit of loneliness and watched his blood scatter further into the nascent clans. Perhaps he foresaw the inevitability of his actions, but if he didn't, then [Tzimisce] itself certainly noticed.

Regardless of their claims and popular *outsider* accounts, the Eldest and, thus, its childer emerged from between the harlot legs of the Tigris and Euphrates and not the Carpathians. In Enoch's early nights, when skeletons of builder's wood served as the city's crude battlements and the Great Flood echoed in the distant millennium, Caine had just Embraced Ynosh the Lawgiver, the first of his childer. Ynosh, also known as Enoch, nearly swallowed by the howling of his heart, sought to rid himself of chaotic impurities that he believed bound him to the Beast. Without the tethers, the Beast's grip would weaken, and it would perish.

Through effort and force of will, Ynosh focused the most protean and primordial seeds of his flesh and spit them into a mortal vessel — [Tzimisce], a magician and seer of some repute. Ynosh intended to kill the Eldest as carrier of his accursed seeds, his most wild and fierce aspects. Instead, the Eldest emerged intact and not the feral Beast Ynosh feared. In a fit of compassion, the Lawgiver spared the Antediluvian, while reasoning out the error of his assumptions. Certainly, the Beast howled in both their hearts, but the Eldest was not the monster Ynosh anticipated, at least not visibly.

To its sire's surprise, the Eldest suffered no greater avarice or degeneration than that of its siblings. Already strong, it possessed a fluid nature and perception and controlled flesh

like living clay — full of potential within the sculptor's hands. More so, the Eldest realized it held no anchored physical identity. Like quicksilver, its countenance flowed from one mask to the next. Ynosh, in his attempt to excise his own weaknesses, transmogrified the Beast's marks upon his body and spirit into physical form, but the Beast also brought with it gifts like intuition, whim, expression, imagination and, most importantly, growth. Tzimisce, whether one or all, bore these successfully.

The Eldest counted itself among the first Antediluvians, though it remained apart from them. In its eyes, the other Cainites stagnated in development. They possessed no potential to grow or become greater than when their sires Embraced them. The Eldest, on the other hand, an oracle in its mortal days, expressed the gamut of evolution's whims with wondrous flourish. It became the yesterday, now and tomorrow of humanity's progress, becoming instead of foretelling. It saw where destiny intended them to go. Caine's childer and grandchilder, however, possessed no such promise. Mortals grew stronger, while we remained stagnant or grew weaker. Eventually, mortals would rule, forcing the Damned to hide in their shadows. That was inevitable.

Conversely, the Eldest sensed the change in itself and in other Cainites, one of minute metamorphosis goaded by the Beast. At first, the Eldest's thirst allowed it to sup from the necks of mortal and beast alike. Then, its thirst demanded more. No longer satisfied with one vessel or a score of herds, the Eldest longed for thicker and richer blood; it knew only its progeny would eventually satisfy it. The Eldest realized the burden of drinking blood would only worsen with each decade. Eventually, the thirst would preclude the blood of animal vessels and that of mortals. Only the infanticide of progeny could sustain the Eldest, and when that time ended, the Eldest itself would perish.

Distraught over its tethered existence, the Eldest spent a mortal's age in seclusion and meditation, shifting

THE AVATAR OF CHANGE

Azhi Dahaka, Dracon, Illuyankas, Dracula and Leviathan; all dragons. You wonder why this beast in particular factors so heavily in our mythology. It's simple, really. Since humanity's infancy, dragons have plagued its legends. The kine feared these great serpents, but to the Tzimisce, they represented grand change. Dragons are harbingers of transformation at the edge of chaos and forever in motion with spiraling and sinuous forms. It is not their appearance that appeals to us, but their potential for chrysalis — and beyond. They are living embodiments of a change we have yet to truly realize.

and flying through shapes of mortal and legend alike, seeking out a form free of the accursed thirst. It studied the scrolls that once gifted it with spellcraft, hoping to find answers within its fading mortal gifts. It mattered little, however, for the thirst came of the Beast, and it drowned all considerations. The Eldest could not escape, for while it changed forms, it could not change its essence. Cruel fate deprived it of that one saving grace mortals possessed: adaptation as a tool of survival.

LEAVING ENOCH

Unlike its growing flock of cousins, the Eldest had no interest in guiding the mortal masses or glorifying Caine's name. More so, it did not aspire to protect the kine, not when they were both food and canvas to it. The others frowned when the Eldest demonstrated how easily it played, wove and laced their flesh and sinew like yarn on a loom. They bemoaned its gifts after it twisted [Nosferatu's] flesh into the hideous mockery of beauty now shared by the entire clan. They secretly consorted with it as [Toreador] had done to earn her uncanny elegance. The Eldest existed among the unimaginative, while its siblings [Brujah] and Mekhet played shadow games with mortals, delighting in their own cunning and agendas.

The Eldest knew of the kine's potential and grew angry that the others stubbornly defined themselves in mortal terms without understanding humanity's greatest strength, mutability. Only it appreciated kine as both meal and inspiration, and thus, only it deserved humanity for itself. The Eldest wished to delimit itself according to its destiny, as opposed to what it might be now, and mortals were key to that expression. The Eldest shifted through physical forms easily, but it lacked that final adaptation to save it from its thirst, its Beast. To that end, the Eldest abandoned Enoch, knowing its answers lay in the primordial world, where Caine possessed no influence and where mortals were not protected like lovers or herded like sheep. It needed to witness humanity's struggle for survival and even be responsible for humanity's hardships. Only then, the Eldest believed, would it understand what it lacked to escape its fate.

The Eldest journeyed the lands before humanity named them, following where its atrophying gifts as seer nudged it. It first ventured east, to the birthplace of the sun, where it cursed Kartariya with unlife. It Embraced not from loneliness (in itself, it had all the company it wished), but because it needed vessels through which to explore the infinite possibilities and forms of adaptation. With Kartariya, the Eldest discovered its ability to share its progeny's senses. Thus, in each of its offspring, the Eldest bestowed a multitude of curses beyond damning them with unlife. It divested in them a portion of its mutable spirit in the form of a sacrament, its own flesh. Its

A RANT

This is bullshit. Are you telling me we're actually jealous of mortals? Fine, we're still looking for that pure seed of creativity that allows for true growth, but this defeatist attitude is totally Camarilla. Do we even know if this "seed" actually exists, or is this another Antediluvian ploy to keep our wheels spinning? We're Damned Brothers and Sisters... why the hell are we wasting time with "evolution?" We don't grow! We decay! We're fucking dead!

— The Spine, abbot of the Seven Hands pack

vitae hid its essence, which granted the powers of flesh-shaping and bestowed the Antediluvian's childer with the ability to make what they would of their physical forms. In turn, this bond allowed the Eldest expression through each of its most-gifted childer. The Eldest secretly became legion-fold, allowing it to take host in chosen descendents and reap the knowledge of their exploration.

On the Eldest's return journey through the Fertile Crescent, it took a second progeny in Gallod, a tribal chieftain, to monitor the events in the Enoch. During its subsequent journeys, however, the Eldest discovered the tribes of humanity thinned in the western forests, thus depriving it of sustenance. It a fit of hungered frenzy, the Eldest revealed the last of its malignant curses when, from leagues afar, it consumed Gallod inside out. The sacrament that bestowed unlife and allowed the Eldest to take root in its progeny also allowed it to devour its childer, scouring them out like an undead consumption. This is the clan's greatest curse, for should the Eldest fall to the Beast's thirst, then it will devour its childer from afar like an unseen demon.

KUPALA

Having learned its lesson from Gallod, the Eldest gathered tribes of mortals during its travels, so that it would never want for vitae again. Along its journeys, it Embraced those who best fit its own questing spirit. It made a childer of Yorak in the forested foothills of the Carpathians and Byelobog in the northern wastes of Europe. Along Africa's coast, it took a warrior named Demdemeh, who subsequently vanished into the primordial African heartland to pursue his fate; whilst in Cypriot isle, the Eldest welcomed the creature known only as the Dracon into the fold.

The world may have been open to the Eldest, but it eventually favored the lands of Yorak, deep within the Carpathians' bosom. It did not know why the mountain chain proved so alluring, but this domain entranced the Eldest with its siren call. It even returned to studying mortal magics again after a century of disuse, even though its gifts remained a pale shadow of Cainite potential. To

PLANTING THE SEED

A warning to you Sabbat Tzimisce. Within in us all is the Blood of the great sire itself. It grants us a most mutable essence coupled with the greatest responsibility. We are Trojan Horses for our master, and if you ever attain a new understanding of our existence, the Antediluvian may rise within you and take form. This is not a loss, but a blessing, for you are returning to the gestalt existence of One Flesh that existed before the Eldest made you or any of us. You are blessed to return into the whole. The other clans breed like a disease, but we all come from [Tzimisce]. That is why we claim no real fealty to Caine, who did no more than doom mortals with a Kiss. That is God's curse and not Caine's gift! The Eldest willingly created us of its own flesh and endows each of us with its essence. Where do you think the fleshcrafting art comes from? It is [Tzimisce] sharing its wisdom with you. Perhaps that is why some of our more ancient members have abandoned the mutable way. They know the art but are fearful of it, lest they stir the slumbering Antediluvian within their breast.

the east, Enoch still flourished, and its host childer remained close enough to touch Caine's shadow. Europe was arena to the Tzimisce alone. Hence, the clan knew these domains as its own before others did. It spread across the Great European Plain that stretched from Eastern Siberia, across the Urals and the Volga Basin to finally touch the virgin shores of the Atlantic. The Tzimisce chose their lands well, for the tribes spreading west used the European Plain and Danube Basin to disperse across the continent. In particular, the plains south of the inviolable Pripet Marshes and those north of the Pindus Range became the twin arteries for kine tribes moving through the region. The fist of the Carpathians provided a chokehold on the traffic with the Pindus Mountains in Greece and the icy shores of the Baltic.

The Tzimisce "tithed" the mortal flood flowing past them. All was not blest, however, for the Fiends did not claim sole kingship over the lands. Lupines, still potent from the chaste wilderness, fought the clan for every forest corner and mountain peak. As powerful as the Tzimisce were, they still suffered greatly. The Lupines even harried the great Antediluvian itself and threatened to rout the entire clan back to Caine's feet. The Lupines could not deter the Eldest, however. The Tzimisce progenitor felt an affinity with the Carpathians, for something within them touched upon its atrophied gifts as mortal seer, empowering its dreams once again.

The Eldest refused to abandon whatever whispered to it while it slumbered, and eventually, learned how to speak to the spirit of the mountains, the great beast known as Kupala.

Kupala and the Lupines were enemies from the most ancient of times. The Lupines eventually entrapped it within the Carpathians, verdant forest grew up around it. Now Kupala wished for release and spoke to the Eldest through its dreams. The spirit of the land offered its hand in allegiance against their common enemies in exchange for the Tzimisce releasing Kupala from its prison deep within the Carpathians' spine. The Antediluvian agreed and spent the next year exploring the mountain's forgotten crags, while Kupala taught the Eldest magic it thought lost following its Embrace. The Eldest, in turn, passed the lessons on to its most powerful childer and used them in the great congress that freed Kupala itself.

The Lupines fought hard and would not allow Kupala easy escape. In the twisted cavern where the demon lay, champions of the Lupine clans fell upon the Antediluvian and its fleshly brood. Eventually, however, the Tzimisce triumphed when Kupala broke free and fled. The demon-spirit did not escape completely, however, for it had been interred in the mountains for so long that it remained bound to the soil. Kupala could not retire to the courts of the spirits or to whichever hell it once claimed as home. Instead, it took the Carpathians as its new domain and shared its existence with the Tzimisce. The region's Lupines, while still formidable in the centuries to come, never recovered from this devastating blow. They lost the lands they sought to protect and watched Kupala's black blood twist the soil and forests.

THE LEGEND OF KUPALA

You wish to know of Kupala? Very well, but you will discover a price in the telling. Such is always the case with legends. The whispering spirits tell me that Kupala numbered among them, but it possessed the power to blight all it surveyed. In the days when Caine still suckled at Eve's teat, it fought the Lupines repeatedly until, finally, their most potent shamans trapped it. They surrounded it from the north and south, and gripped the earth with their terrible claws. They peeled the lands back like onionskin, forming two great walls, then clapped them together in one mighty heave. Their herculean effort formed the Carpathians and the Alps and trapped Kupala deep within their heart like two clasped hands holding a fly. Thus it remained, until [Tzimisce] found Kupala centuries later.

FLOOD, CURSE AND EXODUS

While the Tzimisce prospered and continued to watch the mortals mill about beneath their mountain peaks, all was not well in Enoch. Caine's childer rebelled against him, just as he had done against the Almighty, and reddened the streets with their blood and that of others. Then, in the Almighty's divine act of retribution against mortals, the Great Flood engulfed the world. In Europe, it was no different; the mighty rivers that fractured the land invited the Deluge across such low-lying plains as the Danube Basin, the Po Valley and the Rhineland. Those who survived the swift rise in waters fled to the highlands. Mortal and Cainites alike sought refuge on higher and higher grounds, turning the Carpathians in particular into an island ark ruled by the sovereign Tzimisce lords. The Fiends extended hospitality to their new arrivals, taking in payment a sacrifice of one child from each family. To show their compassion, they rarely took the first-born son. Instead, they claimed the youngest for feast, experiment or servitude. In some cases, Tzimisce *voivodes* claimed entire families from the larger tribes. Thus came the indentured servitude that would eventually give rise to the revenant families.

Following the flood, the Fiends noted the passage of mortal tribes under the influence of solitary Gangrel and Nosferatu from Enoch. The new tribes refused to pay fealty to the Fiends and drifted through the Tzimisce's mountain passes without offering amends. The Tzimisce claimed preeminence over the region — not unreasonable considering that they ruled the land in the centuries before the fall of Enoch. They alone freed Kupala from its prison and kept the Lupines at bay. The intruding Cainites, in their arrogance, held that the world and all mortals came of Enoch and were, thus, by right, theirs. They could go where they wished, and that included the domains of the Tzimisce, whom they'd rarely encountered.

When the floodwaters receded, the Tzimisce lost vast domains to new mortal tribes who rushed into the void and took territory once held by Fiend-indentured families. The Gangrel were of little consequence, since they wandered and rarely stayed in one location long enough to threaten the local blood-stock. It was the Nosferatu and the occasional Malkavian patrons who proved difficult. The Fiends dealt with these interlopers and their servants harshly, whether through mortal tribal skirmishes or torture. They littered their borders with still-living forests of bodies impaled on bone trees or fleshcrafted messengers to the backs of their horses before sending them riding back to their masters.

The Tzimisce eventually realized they couldn't slaughter everyone journeying through their domains lest the mortals unite against them. They allowed their

cousins passage through to the western lands thick with tribes so long as nobody broached their territory. Other Cainites recognized the Tzimisce claims to domain, but only for the while it took the warring clans of the Second City to call Caine's anger upon them.

Caine's curse took the Tzimisce by surprise. Their dealings with the soil-bound Kupala, as well their territorial nature, became the clan's anathema when the curse forced them to sleep upon their native soil for true rest. Even the Eldest nearly perished in the journey back home to claim indigenous "dead water" from its birthplace. Its return to the Carpathians, however, heralded a greater flood of mortal herds and Cainites who had left the Fertile Crescent in shame following Caine's edict. Knowing they faced a threat to their territories, the Tzimisce fortified their domains and fell into isolationism. As a unified front, they might have survived both mortal and Cainite claimants to their territory. Divided, however, they allowed their brothers and sisters to fall while protecting their own havens through harsher measures. The Eldest was the sole tie the clan's members had to any others of their bloodline. Self-evolution, like the quest for truth, proved a solitary path for many. The Tzimisce ruled from their isolated manses like tyrants over the mortal communities blossoming at their feet. The Antediluvian, however, knew a time would come when its clan would drift apart like flotsam. Already, its childe Byelobog had retreated into the Pripet Marshes while Yorak meditated deep within the Carpathians, taking counsel directly from Kupala itself.

THE ELDEST VANISHES

An addendum by the Prince of Paupers, priest of the Bloodfoot pack

I completed my interrogation of Silas, a Salubri *antitribu* believed fallen with the remainder of the Sacrifice Covenant pack of New York. As we've suspected, the Salubri *antitribu* are privy to information that we've only suspected until now. Our eldest Cainites

KOLDUNIC SORCERY

We speak of Kupala and claim our *koldunic* rites stave off its infestation. We say it quiets our sleep when we rest in its soil. Ha! Our sorcery is of Kupala, surely, for that spirit is sovereign over all others in our cursed homeland. It hounds those who know not its craft, hoping to drive us to it. And driven we are. We learn its spells and its way with spirits to earn tranquility. Our knowledge of *koldunic* rituals is not a bulwark against Kupala; our rest is not a victory achieved. It is the demon's gift to us for being good and blind little sheep.

always claimed that [Tzimisce] itself went into torpor shortly after Caine's curse against us, but we lacked a reason, given that Yorak's historical treatise was strangely incomplete. We now know why. Through Silas, one of the *Salubri antitribu's* premier historians, I've uncovered the following. Although some claims lacks a degree of credibility, I include them for the sake of the bishops and their superiors. It is not my place to judge.

The Salubri, once healers, saw the formation of their warrior sect through the efforts of Samiel, their first knight; this much we know. Samiel, in turn, launched a crusade against "the forces of black magic" and Cainites tainted by the seed of heresy. From what I gather, someone betrayed us to the Salubri. Samiel learned of the Eldest's bargain with Kupala and deemed the exchange infernal. The "great war" the Salubri spoke of was not against the mythical "Baali" (if they even existed at all), but against us! Samiel and his band of 15 (or seven — Silas is truculent) warriors made their way along the *foot of the Carpathians*, remaining hidden among the mass of mortal tribes streaming into the European continent and raiding the occasional Tzimisce stronghold to uncover the Eldest's haven. Along the way, they secretly slaughtered our kind, mistakenly identifying our *szlachta* for demonic familiars and using that as irrefutable proof of our concourse with Hell. Silas' tale, unfortunately, mixes legend with fact liberally, making truth all the more difficult to uncover.

According to Silas, Samiel and his knights attacked the Eldest in his haven. After fighting past his "legions of fiends and devils," Samiel brought a blazing sword to hand and slaughtered the Eldest with "righteous fire." The Eldest, in a final act of defiance, smote Samiel by tearing his skull from within his head, leaving but one knight to recount the tale afterward. The Salubri later realized their mistake, if they made a mistake at all, and quietly claimed Samiel died fighting the clan's eternal enemy during their great war. Obviously, while some portions of the legend ring true, especially Silas' description of the Eldest's haven and the servitors that Samiel fought, we know the Progenitor survived long enough to fall to Lugoj's fangs. While it is possible that Samiel attacked the Eldest and injured it enough to place it in torpor, Samiel did not destroy the grand Fiend itself.

DRIFTWOOD TZIMISCE

by Bashtani Koudye of Tripoli

Lambach Ruthven is fairly righteous, but part of me thinks he's been smoking crack out of babies' asses. I got a



THE ELDEST'S FATE AND THE CHILDREN OF DRACON

Rise, Child of Dracon, for I speak of our Progenitor. The Eldest did indeed "perish" during Samiel's attack, but what is destruction to a creature of its power? The Progenitor survived through each seed that it implanted within its progeny upon the Embrace and within the progeny of its progeny. It no longer needed its own form, for it could take shape within each of us, if it so wished. On Cyprus, the Dracon felt the Eldest awaken and grow within his belly. The Dracon took care to nurture the newly risen Progenitor. After birthing it, the Dracon smuggled the fetal Antediluvian back to the Carpathians and placed it under the Methuselah Yorak's care, deep within the bowels of the mountains.

While the torpid embryo slept and grew in the befouled soil like a seed, the demon Kupala whispered into the Eldest's ears, as it had done with Yorak. To what avail, I know not, but few can withstand centuries of discourse with demons and come away untouched. Suffice it to say that our understanding of *koldunic* ways became far greater. As the soil and flora rotted further, our familiarity with the demon's paths grew effortless. That is why the Children of Dracon do not tap the fetid magics of Kupala. That was not a gift of [Tzimisce] itself and came only through a malignant demon whose touch never left the Romanian soil.

look at his precious journal when he wasn't around, and there's some wild shit in there. He claims he saw Lugo Blood-breaker commit Amaranth on the Eldest itself before the Antediluvian went ahead and pulled a fast one on him. That means that Lugo, who's in torpor somewhere in the Carpathians, is actually Tzimisce now. All right, cool, whatever. Later, Lambach tells me the Eldest's a mutated fucking patch of out-of-control cannabis living beneath New York and spreading through the sewers like a weed. I know, to you this sounds like moist and runny shit, but you got to respect the fact that we can do some scary-ass stuff. Lambach's tale means one of two things. One, he took a big hit off that baby butt, or two, the legends our sire told us were true.... What!? You know which one. I'm talking about where Tzimisce can manifest in any of us and turn us into it. If that's true, then there's at least two Tzimisce Antediluvians running around right now, and we're doubly screwed. What? What d'ya mean "Be a good lad"? What the fuck are you talking.... Holy sh—

—Kaleel Bratovitch, Tzimisce kennel master, deceased

With the Eldest under the sleep of ages, its childer withdrew from the world. The Carpathians and the east-

ward Volga Basin remained Fiend territory, but the clan still pursued isolationist agendas and private vendettas. The Antediluvian's fear that its progeny would surrender to wholly esoteric pursuits proved correct. Even Yorak and Byelobog retreated into their respective realms and had little to do with one another. With safer passage available around the Carpathians by way of the Mediterranean Sea, Greece and Rome flourished into expansive empires influenced by the other clans. Rome witnessed some Tzimisce patronage under the Dracon, while other Fiends trickled out from the black deeps of the Eastern forests. The fact remained, however, that the Carpathian Cainites isolated themselves from the world. This is why they lost territory to their rivals.

First Mycenaean, then Hellenistic Greece ruled over portions of Europe, but they never advanced toward the Carpathians. The Romans, in turn, expanded their empire further, prostrating themselves at the feet of the mountain chain. Even they stopped from ascending her slopes, however. From the Celts to the Slavs and Goths, the Carpathians remained untenable. This isn't to say the Tzimisce stayed dormant or idle during this period. In truth, they ruled the land as near gods and came to influence the surrounding tribes with growing proficiency. As individuals, the Tzimisce accomplished much, thanks to the Dracon, Shaagra and Radu, but as a clan, they rarely worked together to any real conclusion. Yorak's disinterest in leading the Fiends as the regional *Voivode* among *Voivodes* didn't help either.

The eldest of the region's Tzimisce, Yorak assumed the *Voivodate* following the Progenitor's fall into torpor. He stayed in the caves where Kupala whispered loudest and concentrated on other matters, such as enslaving tribes of Slavs, Celts and the occasional Thracian clan for his experiments. He fully believed in *Azhi Dahaka*, the ecstatic state that the Eldest itself sought to uncover. He spent his lifetimes within the labyrinthine Carpathians, exploring the world through his mental Disciplines, even though he'd long ago abandoned interest in the outside realms.

Over the centuries, Yorak constructed his Cathedral of Flesh. Rivaling the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Christian monuments to come later, this magnum opus to pain and suffering became the center of Metamorphosist thought and worship. Yorak built it over the course of centuries, through dozens of caverns and with thousands of victims. For a while, the Tzimisce pursued their agendas and paid little heed to the world growing on the horizon's edge. When Yorak and the others learned that Rome owed its glory in part to Cainites, however, they realized they could no longer lurk in the shadows like the *Lasombra*. Certainly, the Roman Empire did not expand beyond the Danube

Basin, but empires would contest the might of the Fiends. In turn, these new sovereignties would bring with them Cainites hungry for the clan's domain. As it was, the Romans were uncomfortably close because few Tzimisce did anything to halt their incursions.

Yorak wisely realized that politics and kingly matters were far outside his expertise or skill. Both the *koldun* and he preferred their studies to affecting mortal affairs and stemming Cainite incursion into their lands. Instead, he chose to Embrace the influential members of the regional tribes and task them with that which did not interest him.

SHAAGRA: THE NEW DIRECTION

Yorak's decision to strengthen his brood's domains in the region came at a fortuitous time. Change gripped the known world. To the farthest East, the Hunnite Empire fell to the Chinese at the start of the Christian calendar, sending the Huns into nomadic exile. They swiftly spread west, so that, by AD 375, they arrived in the Ukraine, where they displaced the Ostrogoths and Visigoths with their lightning-fast raids. The Ostrogoths petitioned Emperor Valens for settlement in Moesia, but when he demanded they surrender their wives and children, the inevitable clash resulted in a stunning Roman loss. The story later repeated itself with the Visigoths.

THE CATHEDRAL OF FLESH

It was magnificent. Thick stalagmites and stalactites formed the pillars, with bone trusses over which limestone grew and formed an osseous mix of liquid architecture. Either skulls — with their eyes and surrounding musculature still intact — or cartilage — thin enough to behold the sea of viscera and floating organs comprised the walls; scores of ghouls moistened the eyes so they could blink properly. Even more revenants conducted the ritual tattooing by drawing charcoal-dusted threads through their victim's skin with bone needles. Later, Yorak and his childer would carefully slough the flesh from their screaming sacrifices, treat the fresh canvas in a preservative and stretch it over the windows like a mosaic. The cathedral had so many wonders, like the blood pool lined with sitting victims whom you could use as chairs, the pillars of grafted bodies, the walls of mouths that sang a wailing chorus as you passed them or the open gallery where corpses remained impaled on stalactites.

Such wonders. It's a pity the modern nights could not support such beauty openly. Truthfully, nobody knows where the Cathedral of Flesh is anymore; it's apparently vanished. Where once it stood, I'm told, rests naught but a gaping hole.



Meanwhile, any hope that the Roman Empire could rise from its ashes died with Constantine's ill-chosen heirs. Rome was on the decline, and its resident Ventrué, Toreador and Malkavians had lost control to a squabbling host of Cainite detractors and to the unlikely strength of a Hebraic cult. The city's eldest fled in droves, sending Europe into a decaying spiral. The periphery of the Roman Empire crumbled and regional Damned panicked. They knew the Germanic tribes prepared for massacre and pillage, and many sought diplomacy with the previously isolated Tzimisce. For once, the other clans treated the Fiends as potential allies and not an Eastern frontier threat.

The Tzimisce, in turn, noticed the flood of humanity streaming through their northernmost borders. The tribes and federations of Hun-displaced nomads fought and intermingled, as was expected, but the Gangrel of the steppes and disenfranchised Brujah accompanied them. Yorak met with several Gangrel chieftains and promised them unmolested passage through the Carpathians' Tihuta Pass; in return, they promised to incite warfare against the Roman settlements along their routes. Yorak sought to regain the territory the clan lost with the arrival of the Ventrué and Malkavians. The spread of the tribes turned into a wave that tainted everything ahead of it. In the wake of that chaos, Yorak sent in Tzimisce to reclaim their former estates.

Shaagra's Embrace heralded the Tzimisce's golden age and centuries of the Fiends' dominion over Eastern Europe. Yorak understood that the wandering Hun, Slavic and Goth tribes would eventually become the new landholders of whatever territory they settled. It had happened before with the Scythians and Hallstatt in the centuries preceding the White Christ's birth, and it would happen again, given Europe's virgin expanses. Theoretically, by influencing the tribes now, the Tzimisce could establish themselves as the preeminent clan of the region.

The Slav Shaagra came from the Vroi tribe and ruled as their goddess, leader and mystic. Her people fled westward after her tribe had suffered under the harsh ministrations of a larger tribe. When they reached the Carpathians, Yorak took notice of Shaagra. She held concourse with potent spirits and possessed a beacon soul. Yorak sensed Shaagra's potent magic and the supernatural creatures she entertained as counsel. Shaagra commanded strong respect from her people, and possessed the vision as shaman to appeal to the Tzimisce's sense of *Azhi Dahaka*. Yorak accepted her for the Embrace, but he did not take her.

Although he was the *voivode* of the region, other Tzimisce *Methuselahs* shared Yorak's age. While Byelobog remained aloof, both Triglav the Three-

Headed — who earned mythological reverence among the regional tribes — and Lambach Ruthven wanted Shaagra for themselves. Yorak, however, chose Triglav as second in line among the local Fiends and allowed him the Embrace. Lambach would never forget that slight, and its repercussions would certainly echo down history's corridor.

Shaagra never knew her sire. Once educated in the craft of the Tzimisce and forced into the blood oath, she and her tribe followed her granddaughter and favored ghoul, Libussa, into the Danube Plain. Traveling in the century-long wake of marauding tribes and bands, the Vroi eventually settled upon land that would become Prague, the westernmost point of Carpathian Tzimisce influence. It would serve as a border against Western interests and become one of many flash points in the Tremere-Tzimisce conflict. Shaagra herself slept in fitful torpor, growing steadily insane in the blackened soil of Kupala's violation. Her Embrace, however, precipitated the Tzimisce practice of claiming stock from noble families and tribal leaders to better influence the region's mortals. This brought a new breed of Fiends into the clan's hierarchy. Tzimisce like Radu, Wladymir Rustovitch and *Dracula* provide but a sample of the dozen who played the parts of nobility and engaged in games of political intrigue against the regional Ventrué and Brujah at the time better than their sires had. The clan broke its mold of cackling fiends and incomprehensible Metamorphosists and emerged from its isolationism, albeit fractured and of opposing agendas.

THE ZADRUGA

Eli Dragsky, Priscus of Moscow

Sorry if I'm not poetic, but I'm a scholar, not a writer. You'll also note that I'm against the concept of revenant families for a variety of reasons. We all know that, for centuries, Tzimisce such as Yorak and the Dracon bound entire families into tortured slavery under the euphemism *zadruga*, or "joint family." Convenience first forged this practice because it proved easier to raise servants in an environment of horror than to train continually relative newcomers to accept what they saw. Eventually, these ghouls, whether through the haunted soil of the Carpathians or from centuries of weathering the blood bond, managed to pass their half-Damned state on to their children, thus forming revenants. Yorak's childer spoke of ancient ghoul families predating the Great Flood, though their fates before Christ's birth are a little nebulous. Given the deformities that we're seeing emerge from our own families, however, I think they simply became too genetically polluted to breed anymore. Sorry, but if the Bratovitches are an indication of what we can expect, then they pose a danger to our existence. They're becoming wild and unpredictable; the suicide/murder rate among the Bratovitches alone is



BOGATYRI

Before the revenants, the *szlachta*, the *vozhd* and the ghouls came the *bogatyri*, the Eldest's champions. Yorak asserted the *bogatyri* were not kine, Lupine or Cainite. Although they appeared mortal, they claimed lineage from Meru, a mystical mountain in India and supposed birthplace of the Arioi (what occult-scholars would later call the mythical Aryan race). Metal refused to cut their unblemished skin while stone and wood foreswore never to bruise them. The *bogatyri* came into [Tzimisce's] service when the Great Flood washed a band of them against the Carpathians. In return for the Eldest's hospitality and succor, they offered their allegiance.

Each *bogatyri* possessed a skin pouch holding the flesh of the Antediluvian — when they fought for it,

the skin pouch crawled over their faces and gave them the countenance of the Eldest. Their forearm bones extended into blades, while their tongues darted out like daggers. When the Eldest fell to Samiel, the *bogatyri* scattered to the four winds to find it. They never returned, even after Yorak sent them messages that the Dracon had carried the Eldest to term.

Lambach believes the *bogatyri* split and now guard the different manifestations of the Eldest itself. Certainly, Lambach saw someone of indescribable purity watching over the Eldest (in its guise as Lugo) and again caught glimpse of another beneath the tunnels of New York. Certainly....

staggering, and more than a few revenants have accidentally attracted hunters and, sometimes, the media to our doorsteps. They're walking time bombs, and frankly, that's the least of our worries from them.

The modern revenant lines trace their history to the tribes of Slavs and Celts once living in the Danube and Volga basins. The eldest known family, the Basarab, claimed joint lineage from Dacian royalty and Roman legionnaires. The

Basarab retained their nobility and land holdings during their existence as revenants. Unlike the other families, they later married into Szekler stock and forestalled the onset of deformity. As warriors and strategists *par excellence*, they could have served the Sabbat as near equals, had "great" Dracula himself not been born Basarab and Embraced. The mortal Dracula murdered a number of us in his quest for immortality and greater influence over regional politics. He even forced his way

into the clan by threatening Lambach with destruction. Because of Dracula's actions, we hunted down the entire revenant line and destroyed them to the last ghoul, just to make a lesson of them. If you think this was an isolated incident, think again. This isn't the first time we've Embraced revenants, and it isn't the first time they've threatened to betray the clan or sect. We often fail to realize that these creatures possess a dangerous degree of knowledge and many even hate us. We've made slaves of these families for centuries, and then, we Embrace them and offer them stakes? Just how foolish are we?

The Basarab aren't the only fallen lines—what about the Danislav? These former kin to the Lupines betrayed and destroyed Count Florescu before we annihilated them. The Krevcheski were our greatest traitors. As clockwork masons and siege engineers, they broke their oaths and allied themselves with the loathsome Tremere. We thought we destroyed them during the Renaissance, but now, I'm hearing conflicting rumors that some still serve the Council of Seven or that they've betrayed the Tremere as well and formed a minor bloodline of sorcerers skilled in both Thaumaturgy and *koldunic* ways. What about the albino Khazi who served the "White God" Byelobog? We've heard continued allegations that one of them betrayed their master to the Teutonic Knights, which weakened him enough for Lugo to diablerize him later. Unfortunately, we can't confirm this because the Khazi died at the hands of the Teutonic Knights during the fighting or in subsequent Crusades by the Christian Church. How many more families must betray us before we smarten up?

Look at the revenants that survive into the new millennium; they are a fucking pitiful lot, numbering the Bratovitch, Grimaldi, Obertus, Zantosa and Oprichniki. The hedonistic Szantovitch (Zantosa, if you prefer their modern incarnation) may have been great spies once, but the nights of noble Poland and Bohemia are gone. Even then, they were too independent; now, they're close to extinction and useless in the modern nights. That makes them desperate and dangerous. The Bratovitches have always been our dogs of war, and unfortunately, they're acting like it too. Only the Italian-born Grimaldi and the scholarly Obertus have managed to serve us loyally, while still staying hidden. Still, you don't think the Giovanni haven't been trying to woo the Grimaldi from us or that the Obertus don't still spy for the Dracon from their nights in Constantinople? It won't take much for either family to betray us, you know.

Of final note are the Oprichniki; this lot troubles me. The Oprichniki are the youngest of the revenants, with a history dating back only to the 16th century, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. This Russian dictator ruled over Oprichnina and used his secret police to ferret out dissidents, detractors and anyone he

MILK AND BLOOD

I once witnessed how the revenants blood-tied their own children in service to their lords. The mother, her breasts heavy with milk, partook of her lord's vitae, then fed her child. As the infant suckled at her teat, she withdrew a knife and made a tiny incision just above her nipple (amid a sea of scars). Her blood flowed freely over her breast and into the child's mouth, while it lapped the muddy mixture of the two.

considered an enemy of the state. Called the Oprichniki, these mortal agents sowed fear and discord throughout the countryside in a campaign of legitimized murder. Eventually, the insane Ivan even turned his men against each other. We were wise not to Embrace this syphilis-induced madman (leave him for the Ventrue!), but we did bring the surviving Oprichniki under our sway. After all, the horrors of Ivan's torture chambers had already inured them to violence.

My problem is this; the Oprichniki served us well until Communism usurped White Russia. Afterward, they stayed behind the Iron Curtain, hidden from the Sabbat until the collapse of the USSR. Since then, they've stayed in Russia and Romania, serving our "comrades" within the Oradea League (essentially, the non-Sabbat Tzimisce). That means we don't have the full loyalty of these ghouls, and that makes them potentially dangerous. Additionally, we might suffer swift reprisal from the Sabbat should it learn we kept this line hidden from the sect. They pose a danger to us, one we should eliminate immediately.

THE REBELLION

by Devin and Alison Markbury of London

Before the Sabbat came, the elder Tzimisce always abused their authority over their progeny. Being a Fiend meant surviving 100 hells and 1,000 degradations, just to claim some measure of autonomy. Unfortunately, from the time the Ventrue under Nova Arpad came to influence the Carpathian nights, the elder Tzimisce thought of their progeny as nothing more than nocked arrows ready for the flight. The inter-clan conflicts alone claimed their score of neonates, to say nothing of the Tzimisce-Tremere enmity.

— Velya the Vivisectionist, Cardinal of the Land Beyond the Forest

Cainite scholars say Patricia Bollingbroke started the Anarch Revolt under the name Tyler and led her band of berserks against Hardestadt of Clan Ventrue in 1395. Actually, the Anarch Movement began earlier by a few centuries. The appearance of the Usurper Tremere

sparked a hidden war against us for control of the mystically infused Carpathians. Both sides wanted a slice of Kupala's power, and the only way to gain that was to squat on his territory. Despite our efforts to stop them, the Tremere forged alliances with the Ventrue and other clans to dispose of us politically. Transylvania, at this point, fell into seven "unofficial" domains that the clans claimed as theirs. By 1197, the number dropped to four, with three realms left to rot without *voivodes*. Although we still held the greatest power over Transylvania, internal bickering pretty much kneecapped our efforts. I'm surprised we stayed in control at all. The Tremere hooked up with the Arpad Ventrue, who claimed lineage from the Magyar tribes that invaded the Carpathian basin in AD 948. Staking land in the heart of Tzimisce territory, Nova Arpad proved a pain in our arse and outplayed us politically. Of course, when diplomacy and alliances failed, the Tremere bushwhacked our keeps with their Gargoyles. Our elders countered with their *szlachta* and even sacrificed a thrall or two to save their *arses*. Cainite ash rolled with the Carpathian mists in those nights, and the lucky neonates survived a week.

Internally, we screwed ourselves over bad. A host of Tzimisce marked their territories in blood and tolerated little interference from their own kind. Radu, Marelle, Razkolina and Darvag played gods in their domain and felt no obligation to help each other. Yorak didn't care enough to help the situation, and when he did, he nominated Vladimir Rustovitch as his "successor," whatever that meant. The other Tzimisce ignored Rustovitch's shiny title *Voivode* among *Voivodes* because it didn't mean shit without Fiends like Yorak or Byelobog to back up the claim. It's also noteworthy that he never claimed that title for himself — somebody called him *voivode*, and it stuck, but not with the recognition of the older Fiends. In the middle of all this, naturally, the Nosferatu master mason Zelios caught us by surprise after he built a series of castles across Transylvania. The first of them, overlooking the precious Tihuta Pass in the Carpathians, acted as a floodgate against the Mongol tide sweeping through the East. We didn't realize it at the time, but the castles actually formed a geomantic web of ley lines that tethered the castles together and trapped Kupala.

Actually, I say we didn't know, but some of us did. Zelios had the support of the Tzimisce Methuselah, Dracon, who'd been butting heads with his Carpathian brethren since settling in Constantinople. The Dracon, a principle founder of the city, regularly spoke out against Kupala and our use of *koldunic* sorcery. What started as civil arguments and debates broke into open conflict between the Carpathian Tzimisce and the

FINAL REVENGE

You want to know why I'm laughing? Cause this shit's hilarious. I'd been hearing rumors saying that some Tzimisce pointed the Tremere Goratrix toward the Embrace. At first, I wondered why somebody would be that stupid, then it hit me; it was pure genius. The Tremere took their *first blood* from a Tzimisce before Tremere himself drained Saulot. That means the entire clan has portions of the [Tzimisce] in them. When the Eldest emerges from torpor, both clans are going to be eaten inside fucking out... And who says we don't have patience or cunning when it comes to revenge?

Obertus flock in Constantinople. Matters finally hit rock bottom when the Dracon Embraced a young man named Gesu (who sired his own brother Symeon, thus leading to the Embrace of Myca Vykos, an esteemed *priscus*). Prior to all this, Gesu had nightmarish visions concerning the "evils of the land" (read: Kupala), and upon "Becoming," he fell into an odd torpor. The Dracon blamed Gesu's condition on the Balkan Tzimisce and left Constantinople to attack his Carpathian cousins. In a fit of fury, he bushwhacked Triglav the Three-Headed, an accomplished *koldun*, and following a fierce battle that decimated the *tirsa*, deprived Triglav of his namesakes. The Balkan Tzimisce retaliated by destroying Byzantine-Akoimetai monasteries outside Constantinople. This is how the Obertus revenants found themselves as lock, stock and property of the entire clan. The rift between our *koldun* siblings and the Children of Dracon never healed. Oh, they're civil to each other now, but I don't want to be there when these two factions meet in an isolated alley.

Meanwhile, in the mortal world, where the vast Roman Empire failed to conquer, Christianity boldly marched. The northern lands of Denmark, Norway and Sweden fell to the martyr's religion. The local Tzimisce, such as the Fiend-witch Gunnhild, found their *hlaut* blood magic of little use against the papal champion Olaf Tryggvason. Christianity was the most effective siege engine Cainites had ever encountered. The Toreador borrowed or influenced its artistic and architectural development. The Ventrue embraced the language of the litany before all others had and assumed positions of power when the Church converted kingdoms and standardized the state language to Latin. The Lasombra also touched on the Church's hierarchy from the top down, while the Malkavians inspired heresies with their conniving tongues. To add insult to injury, the great Byelobog nearly fell to Teutonic Knights who braved the Pripet Marshes, and weakened the

Methuselah enough for Lugoj Blood-breaker to take him down later on.

The Mongols arrival in 1241 didn't help much either. Like a tide, they swept through Eastern Europe and back out again in just a year, leaving Transylvania broken and easy pickings for other Cainites to claim. The Mongols shattered our holdings throughout the region and nearly destroyed Darvag Grozny, the Butcher of Rus, who remained in Torpor till the rise of Baba Yaga and the fall of Communism. The old guard changed, especially after the attack on Byelobog, and the young Tzimisce had good reason to hope their indentured servitude was near an end. Their masters, however, seeing the same changes happen to the world, tightened their grips over their thralls. It didn't take long before violence erupted.

Lugoj Blood-breaker, the first voice of Tzimisce dissent, traced his lineage back to Noriz, the so-called Corrupter of Legions. Although Noriz strode across Moldavia, conquering the *tirsas* of rival Cainites, he built his ladder to power from the spines of his childer and grandchilder. After he avoided destruction once too often, Lugoj and his siblings vowed never to be anyone's pawns again. Unfortunately, the Tzimisce anchored their loyalties with a million different hooks, and freedom often took planning.

It took another century before the time was right, if not critical. Tyler, leading the Anarch Revolt, attacked the Ventrue potentate Hardestadt, while the Ottomans (who brought with them the rapacious Assamites) ate away at the borders of Eastern Europe. The Inquisition ensured that Western Europe fared no better and claimed scores of young Cainites. Then news came that the Lasombra, under the leadership of Gratiano, had not only joined the anarchs but also managed to diablerize their Antediluvian as well. Young Tzimisce had already spent decades searching the Carpathians for the rare and profane bloom known as Kupala's sacred fire-flower, an artifact that Fiends hoped would help shatter their ties to their elders. When two Tzimisce, Lugoj and his ally Velya the Flayer, finally found the sacred fire-flower, they gathered on Kupala's Eve and broke the blood-oaths hanging over everyone's heads. The Tzimisce revolt was under way.

THE ANARCH REVOLT

If you want to know more about the Anarch Revolt and formation of the Sabbat, talk to Lambach Ruthven. He had a hand in both events and isn't as likely to rip your head off as Velya and that psychotic babbling harridan on his back. Lambach, the product of ancient Carpathian nobility, is the guy you have to watch out for though. The older Sabbat consider him a goof and

screw-up, but frankly, I'm not saying that to any Fiend who's been around longer than most organized religions. Sure, Lambach plays the fool, but I think he's playing other folks even more. He attended Kupala's Eve when the Tzimisce broke the ancient blood oaths and made everyone equal. Not once did he consider himself the enemy, and in truth, neither did the anarchs. Lambach never abused his power or esteem as Methuselah. Frankly, without his vitae, many Fiends doubted they could have broken their blood ties. Lambach was like the catalyst of the entire process.

While the anarch Tzimisce took their sweet time getting into the revolt, when they did, they did it with both feet. Oh, did I also mention they did it disorganized as hell? Once free of the blood oaths, the young Tzimisce decided to try out independence at breakneck speed and scattered in a dozen different directions. Yes, I know Sabbat history recounts the glorious war in more reverent terms, but the truth is, we acted like wild teenagers more than Fiends. I'm surprised the Tzimisce elders

MAD RAMBLINGS?

I know what history says, but I don't believe its lies so easily. I knew the sycophant Lugoj, and he served his masters eagerly. He claims Velya and he discovered Kupala's treasure in a forgotten and desecrated mountain monastery. It grew through the crack of the chapel floor, and degenerate creatures, once monks, later Tzimisce and then Kupala's minions guarded it jealously. Lugoj claims they barely escaped with their unives. Lies. Lugoj played the lackey for his master, the Eldest, and found Kupala's heart only because the Eldest so guided him. I tell you this because Yorak shared the truth with me ages ago. Had Lugoj and Velya followed the flower's winding veins through the crack of the monastery's floors, they would have chased it into the deepest intestines of Yorak's domain, into his Cathedral of Flesh.

Why foster this duplicity when it eventually destroyed a score of Tzimisce, you ask? Because Kupala's sacred "fire flower" was, in fact, a portion of the Eldest's newest form, a precursor to the horror dwelling in the sewers of New York. Don't believe me, but ask Lambach what he witnessed in the sewers, and watch him stutter. The Eldest allowed Lugoj to take of itself so that it could shatter any former alliances shared by its progeny. It imparted its seeds in new generations of Tzimisce, binding them to it alone when it so chose. Ironically, the Tzimisce shared of their blood in a subsequent *ritus*, thus turning the Sabbat (as opposed to the clan alone) into the Eldest's harvest. And when the thing beneath New York grows hungry, who do you think it will summon to feast upon?

didn't slap down the entire movement, but they weren't any better organized and didn't take the revolt seriously enough. They did later, when the anarchs attacked several Carpathian keeps in the span of a few months and burned down those they couldn't breach.

Tzimisce elders retaliated through the various avenues open to them. Some bribed the anarchs to look the other way, others defended themselves behind walls of *szlachta* or used their revenants on suicide missions to eliminate particularly truculent childer. Again, the efforts to fight the anarchs proved too little, too late, too scattered. At this point, Mehmet II laid waste to Constantinople, the Christian bastion. During the Tzimisce's civil war across Europe, they ignored the real-world problems thundering around them. The Turks threatened Europe, and only the continued struggle along the eastern borders kept them at bay. Whenever the Christian and Muslim empires collided, however, the anarchs stepped into the chaos and rode the mayhem. Unfortunately, they substituted one master, in the form of their sires, for another, in the form of the Ventrue and Assamites.

The Fiends' rebellion did more to destabilize the region than any Mongol horde had ever done. They foolishly allowed lesser and often weaker nobility to escape retribution whether because boyars bribed them or suddenly shifted allegiance. Meanwhile, the anarchs destroyed many of the potent elders who often protected the clan's ancestral domains against the depredations of the Tremere and Ventrue. The final blow to the Tzimisce came when both Byelobog and the Eldest itself fell to diablerie. Yorak had already reputedly fallen, though the culprit remains a mystery, while the Dracon was nowhere to be found. While this seemed like a victory at the time, the truth is, by destroying our strongest members or driving them into hiding, we made it easier for the other clans to walk all over us. Sure, the Ventrue and Tremere say we should be held accountable for our crimes, but the fact remains that they benefited more than anyone else did.

By this time, the anarchs suffered a series of defeats at the hands of the nascent Camarilla and its potent elders. The Inquisition swung its scythe with renewed vigor following the release of *Malleus Maleficarum* (the so-called Hammer of Witches) and reaped season upon season of Cainite crop. Meanwhile, we discovered that our peers and even elders were ready to listen to reason, if only because over the last four centuries we'd lost many of our Carpathian demesnes. Pushed back at every front, we did poorly in the struggle against the now-legitimized Tremere; we squandered territory and *szlachta* on the Ventrue and watched Christianity destroy our pagan followers. Eastern Europe served as nothing more than a bulwark against Oriental aggression, and any Tzimisce still in "power" was the lord of flotsam scattered across a huge ocean. Worse

yet, the Camarilla had appropriately risen like a phoenix from the Council of Ashes that tried to extend its influence into Transylvania and mandated a policy of Masquerade.

The final blow came at the Convention of Thorns in the year following Columbus' discovery of the New World, when the anarchs surrendered their grievances and the Assamites accepted the blood curse. The terms of acquiescence would have seen Transylvania fall from the Tzimisce and into the hands of their rivals, the Tremere. Was it any wonder the Convention of Thorns alienated us and the aristocratic Keepers? I even think the Camarilla did this deliberately to isolate the two clans because we dared to destroy our Eldest. In the end, it didn't really matter; we never would have joined the Camarilla for various reasons. Our elders hated the Tremere, and the very fact that they stood as equals in this new alliance served as an affront to us (not to mention that joining the Camarilla meant giving up territory and their rights as nobles). Conversely, our young members fought too hard and for too long to abandon their cause.

Fortunately for us, the same predicament bothered the Lasombra. Because we both destroyed our elders with such abandon during the revolt, that made us *Caimites non gratae* in the esteem of the Camarilla's clans. A coalition of Tzimisce met with as many Lasombra on the island of Mallorca, and after arguing over statement of purpose and ideology, we agreed to support one another. While the Convention of Thorns' delegates signed their legacies away, we denounced the Camarilla and formed the nascent Sabbat in defiance of both the seven-clan alliance and the mortal Inquisition.

THE SABBAT

When we first started this little venture known as the Sabbat, I think we romanticized our struggle a bit too much. We played the rogue and renegade generals seeking to wrest the kingdom from the control of the evil emperor. If any solemnity came into play, it was thanks to the surprising recruitment of some of our former enemies, the elders. Not everyone signed up, but when one of the eldest Fiends — Rustovitch — joined the Sabbat, he brought with him the respectability of the entire clan. Slowly, our war against the elders ceased, and both sides came to an understanding. Those who did not join us generally excused themselves from our affairs and paid for their independence by turning their revenant families over to the Sabbat cause. It was a small price to pay for their safety, and we benefited greatly from the Bratovitch's kennel masters and the Obertus' disquieting skill with occult matters. In return, we didn't bother the elders anymore. This was not

LAMBACH'S PURPOSE

[Tzimisce] saw something in Lambach Ruthven to consider him worthy of Becoming. Lambach has reputedly seen the Antediluvian twice in recent times; once when Lugoj "drained" it and a second time beneath New York's streets. Both times, he survived, even though he saw things he should not have. The question, however, remains: Why? Unbeknownst to anyone, including Lambach himself, he is the Eldest's chronicler. He is the eyes and ears of his master and documents the clan's actions while the Antediluvian remains in torpor. Occasionally, when danger is about to befall Lambach, the Eldest imbues him with a portion of its strength or power to allow him to escape and run. Lambach will survive until the end times; he will be the last Tzimisce to fall to the internal scourge of his sire's million-fold teeth. Until then, he is truly immortal; the Eldest will not let him perish.

solidarity so much as an acknowledgement that we had to stop bushwhacking each other.

Meanwhile, the Sabbat-aligned *koldun* and Metamorphosists understood the Tzimisce's importance in this new rebellion. If the Lasombra offered structure and cohesion to anarchs, then the Tzimisce had to strengthen the alliance in some capacity. While this never manifested as an open statement of purpose, various Fiends did direct the Sabbat (through their packs) toward the spiritual nature of Cainite existence and twisted the Inquisition's piety into the sect's new standard. When packs met, they exchanged ideas and rites, and soon, the more popular practices proliferated throughout the Sabbat. The Befouler pack of Worms helped foster mass Embraces, a precept where no one vampire claimed patronage over another. The Carpathian War Dogs introduced a nascent form of Creation Rites (what they called "blood baptisms"), where, like the old axiom that an entire village raises a child, each neonate is childer to the Sabbat as a whole. Other Tzimisce packs introduced various Trials by Ordeal and War, the two methods by which Fiends settled their disputes in centuries past. They borrowed from the notion of survival of the fittest, and this idea played heavily in Creation Rites as well; the Embrace did not guarantee subsistence. Soon afterward, we refined the *Vaulderie* and ensured its practice throughout the Sabbat. Even later, we fostered the new Paths of Enlightenment, those contemporary and mutable guideposts in a quickly evolving world.

Following the Convention of Thorns, the Camarilla foolishly believed they'd settled the anarch issue. In the following 50 years, however, we, along with the Lasombra and the newly christened *antitribu*, launched a series of raids against "Kindred" holdings. It was nothing short of war, and while the Camarilla reeled from blow after blow against the Masquerade itself, we still lost territory to outsiders, especially the barbaric Assamites. Finally, the Camarilla grasped the nature of the conflict and turned the tables on us. Using their extensive mortal influences, the Camarilla besieged Transylvania with diplomatic censure, trade embargoes and mortal politics. Tzimisce lords suddenly found themselves bereft of kine allies or the support of neighboring villages that once feared them. We prided ourselves as being above mortal concerns, so we certainly didn't expect the blow to wound us so grievously.

Domains that had belonged to us for millennia in the counting now went to others. Several of us fled the Carpathians to the northern wastes of Scandinavia. We were not alone either. The Camarilla had routed the Sabbat across Europe. By the beginning of the 17th century, Europe was a new place, and if we had any doubts as to our loyalties, they evaporated when we bid our havens farewell.

THE SABBAT'S STRUGGLE

By Andrea Leehorn, *priscus*

Dracula? Ooh, honey, and where's the rest of his friends? You know, Booberry and Frankenberry? Girl, I'm just too damn funny.

— Mr. Misster, pack priest for the Sacred Band

The Sabbat, still young by the measure of Cainites, found an unusual ally in Gunnhild and her progeny who'd survived in the Baltic lands for centuries. Accustomed to the lap of Carpathian luxury, we did not realize that in other places, we did not master all we surveyed. This provided us with the catalyst to stop seeing the liberation of Transylvania as our sole end within the Sabbat. Until now, we, as Carpathian Tzimisce, believed ourselves the sole contributors to the sect, but with our exile into Scandinavia, we encountered our forgotten kinsmen.

Gunnhild, the "Mother of Kings" and Fiend-witch, and her brood had found acceptance among the wayfaring Gangrel Vikings centuries ago. Originally a Finnish witch, she married Eric Bloodaxe and fought the Christian advance of Olaf Tryggvason before her Embrace. Although her struggle and use of blood magic eventually failed to stop her people's conversion, she survived well



THE PUPPET ROOM

It's in some mansion just outside the city. It invited my pack over for a private *ritus* one night, but I'm telling you, I'm never going back. Grating covered the entire ceiling and they never showed us the second floor. In fact, it stayed upstairs as well and spoke to us through the grate. I still remember that foul smelling shit that dribbled through the metal lattice. The servants who lead us around were all connected to umbilical cords like animated puppet strings that snaked up through the ceiling. When it came time to feed, we were supposed to tip our heads back and accept whatever dripped down. Fuck that, we bolted.

past the fall of Uppsala, the sacred royal lands of Freya herself. Because of Gunnhild's standing among the local Gangrel who still called upon Odin in battle, the Sabbat entered Scandinavia with little difficulty, and we gained valuable allies in the fight against the Camarilla.

During our internment in the frozen lands, the Scandinavian Tzimisce introduced the Sabbat to the notion of the *Jomsvikings*. These warriors once ranked among the Fiend-witch's entourage, but Gunnhild lost them in the war against Christianity. Still, the notions of *Jomsborg*, the training camp erected by the Danish King Harald Bluetooth, proved sound. The *Jomsvikings* swore a blood oath (as the Sabbat had done) and followed strict codes, rigorous training regimens and various rites to strengthen solidarity. While the notion of a "Sabbat training camp" did not work well with the nomadic existence of our sect, new *ritae* could effectively incorporate the training of fledglings. In fact, each pack became a training ground for recruits; so long as one member survived, the Sabbat survived. Thus far, we'd done well to introduce various *auctoritas ritae* for the benefit of the sect as a whole. We failed to make the packs cohesive beyond the *Vaulderie*, however. With the help of *koldunic* and *hlaut* rituals, and the precepts of the *Jomsvikings*, the *ignoblis ritae* evolved. These rites later compartmentalized the entire Sabbat movement, allowing the sect to function like the mythical Hydra.

Despite Gunnhild's hospitality, we knew the Sabbat could not remain in Scandinavia. While the Turks prepared to sate their gluttonous appetites on the Tremere stronghold of Vienna, the Sabbat knew this provided the brief distraction it needed to escape its frozen home. We looked elsewhere and cast an eye to the New World.

THE LAND OF PLENTY

Again we stood at the prow of the Sabbat while history's storm raged about us. Young sect members fled to the New World, hoping to earn the freedom that their elders and the failure of the Anarch Revolt denied them. Certainly, many Lupines plagued the Americas' virgin expanses, but at least the Sabbat could fight that threat. The sect could not wage the so-called revolution in Europe openly. Instead, the Camarilla played games of politics and intrigue deftly, frustrating the sect by depriving us of supporters and eating away at our territories. Many *antitribu* left first, followed by young Fiends.

The elder Tzimisce could not stand leaving their ancestral homes behind, regardless of their commitments to the Sabbat. Instead, they encouraged us, the younger Fiends, to traverse the Atlantic first and offered us large retinues of revenants. It was the least the European Tzimisce who didn't want to risk the journey could do. This shortsightedness cost us, however, for we couldn't trust revenants loyal to masters hundreds of miles away; this allowed a fair number to escape into the wilderness. Still, those of us who survived the two-month journey by boat scattered across our new home and carried the Sabbat initiative with us. It was a vibrant and violent world, from the native conflicts to the eventual colonial independence. We were there for it all, and we even formed several packs to help rout the British Cainites during the American Revolution. Heartened by our victory over the English and hidden Ventrue agendas, the Sabbat in Europe helped foment the insurrection that toppled the Paris aristocracy. Meanwhile, we, who once prized our isolation in the secluded Carpathians, realized we preferred the burgeoning American cities. (At least, the young Fiends did — some elders still clutched with ever more desperate talons to their crumbling castles and inbred boyars.) The wilderness crawled with Lupines and potent spirits, and the modern cities bore more in common with our sprawling keeps (as well as providing stable food stock).

REMEMBERING GUNNHILD

Christ, I remember that old witch. She scared the hell out of me. I remember when she invited us to watch her perform the *rista orn* — the blood-eagle. It's called that because it looks like you're carving eagle wings into the victim's back. What you're actually doing is cutting the ribs away one by one down to the loins. Not enough to kill you, but enough to keep you alive and howling. After removing the ribs, the torturer reaches in and pulls out your lungs. That's when you slowly choke to death.

Unfortunately, while Cardinal Radu and a few other elders crossed the Atlantic, the younger Sabbat who'd made the effort to colonize it considered it home and protected their domains fiercely; I didn't blame them either. After claiming we're all equal, Radu and the others stepped in to take advantage of our hard work. The older Sabbat, Fiends included, suddenly discovered sect members no longer welcomed them in this so-called "Land of Opportunity." To further aggravate the matter, most cities were less than a century old and not large enough to host a coven of Cainites looking to strike out on their own. The Sabbat-Camarilla conflict swiftly degenerated into the sect's first civil war, with young Tzimisce leading the charge. The Americas should have been our hard-earned prize for the work we put into settling her. Instead, we fought over space and resources in struggles reminiscent of contemporary gang warfare. Mortals became precious commodities when feeding thinned the herds. Oh, the history books say that cholera and smallpox decimated the smaller cities, but we did not help by overfeeding and serving as plague carriers. While we fought one another, the Camarilla stepped in and entrenched itself in the United States even further. Such a slap in the face! The Camarilla pushed us out of the cities, forcing us to take refuge among the Native American tribes or in the precarious wilderness.

While the Purchase Pact settled the internecine fighting, the damage had already been done. The Camarilla took root in the United States, with only New York remaining firmly in Sabbat hands. The Sabbat fled into Mexico, Canada and the southwest United States, where the Camarilla held little influence. Ironically, the Tzimisce found shelter outside the cities, with groups of subjugated mortals. While we fed from the enslaved populace brought over from Africa, our strongest and youngest packs remained hidden among the southwestern tribes of Apache, Navajo, Zuni and Hopi Indians. The peaceful Hopi, in particular, treated our kind as manifestations of their *wuya*, their Kachina spirits. We, in turn, played the parts of their avatars. We became the White Ogre who demanded food lest we steal their children. We played the Badger as healer and advisor, the Vulture who brought them winds with our *koldunic* rituals, the Eagle who guided them out from the Underworld of their creation myths, and most importantly, we assumed the role of the Star Whippers, their chief Kachinas and sacred wisemen. In turn, they never questioned our appearance as *wuya* and protected us while we rested in their *kivas* (subterranean chambers below each house that they thought were portals to the Underworld).

This arrangement served us well for decades and influenced how we treated pack members and conducted our rituals. Later, we strengthened our hold in the region



during the mortal Civil War. The Dineh, more commonly known as Navajo, earned the attention of the United States when growing conflicts between settlers and the natives turned violent. After the Union drove Confederate forces out of New Mexico, they launched a campaign of repression against the Apaches and Dineh. For the latter tribe, it culminated when Union forces blocked them up in *Canyon de Chelly* and starved out thousands of Dineh natives. The army then relocated them in a forced march to the Pecos River Valley, leaving the canyon's *pueblo* homes abandoned. Several Fiends moved into *Canyon de Chelly* with their revenants, turning it into a Tzimisce enclave. It's remained such since then, even after the Dineh returned to their ancestral homes.

The Dineh are currently the largest North American tribe, with 28,803 square miles allocated for their reservation. Because of this, the Camarilla exerts little influence over the area save through its limited connections on a federal level. Meanwhile, the Tzimisce existing here constitute the largest gathering of Fiends in North America. Don't mistakenly believe them full-fledged Sabbat, however, for the Tzimisce here are mostly Dineh now and have little to do with the sect's conflicts. They do maintain regular discourse with Mexico's Cainites and California's few anarch Tzimisce, but they keep to themselves mostly.

INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

By Salem Justice, Bishop of Miami

Ever hear of the Boys from Brazil? You can't tell me that Doktor Totentanz or Landulf didn't try cloning "Der Führer." I hear you guys have a secret camp in Ecuador where old Nazi doctors sit around all day getting served by blond Aryan boys in Speedos. C'mon, you can tell me. Did you guys clone Hitler? At least tell me you got Himmler, man.

—Boo, member of Atlanta's Lawdogs pack

When the Sabbat earned its name, many Tzimisce remained neutral in the conflict, despite threats to their unives by overzealous sect Fiends. These independent Tzimisce forestalled any oaths of sect allegiance by surrendering the first- and second-born of their revenant families to the Sabbat as a show of good faith. Everyone realized such promises bore little weight in reality. Still, many young Tzimisce knew they could ill afford protracted conflict with their elders. They settled on the gift of revenants and left their oldest members to rot.

Landulf II earned his legacy in the 9th century as a black magician in the Arthurian grail legends. Named the third most important man in the kingdom of Emperor Louis II, he controlled land from Naples to Calabria until the Vatican excommunicated him in AD 875. Rather than suffer under Carpathian influence, Landulf II

FLESH MASKS

The Sabbat could claim responsibility for the murders, *patroun*, but the truth is, nobody in Mexico City knows who's committing them. From what I understand, it's a vendor who wears and sells colorful masks to people in stopped cars at traffic lights. As soon as a person puts the mask on, it turns out to be alive and digs into his head with bone hooks. It chews the wearer's face off, then spits out the chunks through its mouth. The mask controls the wearer, forcing him to rampage through the streets in an orgy of violence. I really don't know why this Tzimisce is hiding though. I know a few Sabbat who want to shake his hand.

allowed an African Fiend who claimed lineage to the Methuselah Demdemeh to Embrace him. As Tzimisce, Landulf maintained the castle Calot Enbolot in Sicily, where he studied *koldunic* sorcery and earned a reputation as a torturer among the local populace. Landulf II fostered these false accusations, if only to keep the curious away from his haven. Like his peers, he swore fealty to neither Transylvania nor the Sabbat. Instead, he consorted with North Africa's Cainites, and after the Convention of Thorns, enjoyed the protection of the Giovanni. The Sabbat and Camarilla could not reach him.

Landulf reemerged from hiding in the twilight of the 19th century when the German Order Walvater of the Holy Grail used the swastika, his heraldic device, as their standard. While the symbol itself appeared in other cultures, the combination of anti-Semitism, occult rituals and the belief in a race of "pure" humans proved too enticing to ignore. Landulf encouraged the society and helped foster its atmosphere of racial superiority by claiming members as ghouls. Truthfully, Landulf considered one kine sect as inferior as the next. Whether the GOWHG spoke out against Jews or Catholics made little difference to him. Their drive for purity and thirst for occult enlightenment interested him more.

Although Landulf helped, the German Order and its successor, the infamous Thule Society, needed little to fan the flames of their fanaticism and blind hatred. By the time the Bavarian elite adopted the GOWHG's principles, Landulf and a small number of Tzimisce had ensconced themselves in the organization. Most other Fiends, already sensing the growing fires of hatred even before WWI smothered Europe in choking poisons, steered clear of the conflict. Humanity's proficiency with war had grown considerably, and each conflict not only thinned the herds, but threatened the unives of regional Cainites. Wars and Inquisitions proved the only storms capable of cowing the Damned. Meanwhile, the list of bigoted mortals grew; a defrocked kine monk by the name of

Adolf Lanz demanded imprisonment and sterilization of "socially inferior elements" and anyone who indulged in sexual relations outside of their "race." Another man, Liebenfels, established a temple for his New Templars on the Danube and advocated neo-paganism and the abandonment of Christianity. Secret societies and cults proliferated in the Germanic states and provided a handful of shortsighted Tzimisce with a new nobility from which to draw members from and improve their own standings.

The introduction of tanks and mustard gas turned WWI battlefields into a perpetual night of chaos and smoke-shielded skies. This mortal-borne Gehenna proved little deterrent to the Fiends themselves. Many younger Tzimisce slipped deep into the earth when they knew of an approaching battle. When they awoke, they rose from the blood-soaked soil and found themselves in a forest of the wounded or dying. If the Slavic tribes had once provided an unending supply of victims and test subjects, then WWI was a Renaissance of pain and cruelty. The Tzimisce left many a corpse twisted and sheared right on the battlefield, forcing mortals to wonder what terrible weapon inflicted such cruelty. The Masquerade held, if only because death had become so bizarre and alien in the new century, thanks to kine advancements.

Meanwhile, in Anatolia, the first of the 20th century's genocide-trends began with the massacre of two million Armenians by the doddering Ottoman Empire. Eastern European Tzimisce, such as Sascha Vykos, were well in position to pilfer 100 victims here and there to strengthen their ghouls, restock their dwindling supply of *szlachta* and fill their kennels with new experiments. The Tzimisce also agreed to create new revenant families, since only four known lines survived the recent centuries. Ghouls such as the Armenian Kindairjan, however, ate, at best, decades away from becoming revenants, if the process works at all.

To the east, the Bolshevik Revolution gripped Russia and sealed the Tzimisce behind the Iron Curtain. Truthfully, this proved advantageous to the Old World Fiends of the Rus. With the borders heavily monitored and protected, Tzimisce such as Piotr Krezhinsky (childe to Darvag, the Butcher of Rus) did not answer to the Sabbat and went about enjoying the new political air of repression and terror.

EARLY AMERICA

World War II erupted in Europe, which goes without saying. Fiends, such as Landulf II and Nazi proselytizer Doktor Totentanz, waded into the bloody battlefield with their pant legs rolled up, tarnishing our name by associating with the Nazis and wasteful programs like genocide. Stateside, our clan had an entirely different set of problems. Without the crucible of war to threaten their borders, the Americans fluctuated politically and morally from one generation to the next. The Sabbat, trying to tap into the pulse of each generation by Embracing their

youth, discovered that sect members of one generation became anachronisms the next.

At first, America lived up to its reputation as the land of plenty. Immigration into the US saw the arrival of over 450 million European refugees between 1845 and 1914, providing Cainites with a surfeit of vitae. Perhaps foolishly, we threw ourselves into the hedonism of the Roaring 20s and allowed our numbers to grow unchecked. The sect war with the *Camarilla* had quietened for the moment, and many Tzimisce pursued their private agendas or basked in the festive atmosphere of America's Golden Age. The First World War saw thousands of jobs in northern industrial factories open up, resulting in a large population shift of black Americans from the south. Large communities developed in Chicago, Detroit and Buffalo, with Harlem itself becoming a mecca of prosperity for hundreds of blacks from around the US. Although the Toredor *antitribu* might proclaim themselves as the only patrons of art, the fact remained that a number of Tzimisce shared their interests. Harlem, styled the "New Negro Capital," saw the birth of Afro-centric art forms, including jazz. This in turn drew many soon-to-be-great musicians including Duke Ellington, Fats Waller and Cab Calloway. Ethnic Tzimisce went so far as to sponsor nightclubs or throw rent parties to promote the festive atmosphere and liberal stance toward sexuality (and, naturally, to draw their herds from). Of course, the local Tzimisce often clashed with Toredor over "proprietaryship" of Harlem's mortal talent, but the fighting rarely erupted in the open. Instead, it manifested as nightclubs like Gumbo's Bookstore and the Daisy Chain quietly competed with one another for clientele or in the occasional "gangland" hit.

Unfortunately, the Great Depression saw to the demise of Harlem's promise. The government's so-called *laissez faire* policy gave rise to a disparity between the economic classes (with one percent of the populace wielding 40 percent of the wealth) and upended the social standings of many Tzimisce. A fair number of elders who'd enjoyed nobility and unprecedented wealth in the Old World, suddenly found their assets nearly depleted or gone, while younger Fiends, savvy to the economy of the time, used their mortal influences to jockey into a position of financial security. Still, this didn't help the Sabbat, which prided itself on its independence from mortal concerns. The *Camarilla*, taking advantage of the thoroughly corrupt administration of President Harding in the early 1920s to buy off key officials and politicians, used their new friends to harry the Sabbat. Police launched daytime raids against our communal or private havens under orders to clear out the squatters, while bankers foreclosed on our assets under the broken terms of forged loans. We fought back, but remained on the defensive well past WWII.

The Sabbat-*Camarilla* conflict turned into a paper war, and many old-guard Tzimisce, affiliated with the sect or not, could not defend themselves in these forums. Instead, they continually relied on Embracing newer generations of mortals to serve as their vanguard, inadvertently creating a vast generation gap between them and their progeny. The elders used the young Fiends as their contemporary proxies but not without staunch resistance. Young Tzimisce wanted to explore their own unives and not be burdened by their anachronistic sires. As a result, these neonate Tzimisce gravitated toward the independent-minded Sabbat and adopted its more violent precepts as a means of "threatening" their elders. After all, the Tzimisce young did rebel once before in the name of freedom and could easily do so again.

WWII'S AFTERMATH

Hitler's rise to power brought a twofold invasion across Eastern Europe's soil — the German advance, followed by the Russian pursuit. When the Nazis stormed the continent, Sabbat Tzimisce feared little. They took advantage of the reign of terror and used the chaos to strike at weakened *Camarilla* holdings. Their prime advantage lay in the fact that Hitler despised aristocracy, thus barring many elder *Camarilla* Kindred from influencing the regime. Conversely, the Old World Tzimisce fit the description of nobility to the letter. Rather than risk calling down the entire German Wehrmacht, they allowed the Nazis to plunder their keeps for trinkets while keeping their havens, true treasure and *szlachta* hidden.

If the Tzimisce suffered little from the Germans, then the Russians offered plenty of misery by comparison. The Red Army fought its battles by saturating their targets for days beneath a barrage of artillery. Then they advanced across the smoldering terrain, dispensing with the remaining opposition. The retreating German army fortified itself within the ancient keeps between Russia and Berlin. The most powerful Tzimisce managed to obscure or hide their fortresses using arcane sorcery, but many met Final Death when the Russians shelled their occupied manses from a distance. The torpid Shaagra, one of the eldest of the Old World Tzimisce, burned to ash along with Prague, sending shockwaves through fractured Tzimisce society.

The havens of many elder Tzimisce also fell under Communist rule. Old World Tzimisce had lost much during the war, and Stalin's madness threatened to take away even more. Realizing their precarious positions, the elder Fiends sent envoys to their cousins trapped behind the USSR's borders. Their efforts toward solidarity created the Oradea League, a mutual defense agreement and statement of purpose (autonomy from the Sabbat) among Old World Tzimisce. Ironically, the league flourished because of Communism; Stalin's xenophobia protected



them from the sect by way of restricted travel, and the Tzimisce were reunited with Russian Fiends like Darvag and Piotr Krezhinsky for the first time in decades. By the fall of the Soviet Union, the now stronger Oradea League resisted the Sabbat's bullying without falling prey to its thirsty packs. In a show of solidarity, however, many of the

league's members joined the sect as "diplomats," advisors, honorary bishops and prisci in the modern nights.

RUSSIA'S FIENDS

Piotr Krezhinsky, a survivor of Ivan the Terrible's rule over Russia, played *voivode*, while Darvag, his sire, slipped in and out of torpor. The collapse of Czarist rule to the Bolshevik Revolution severed the lines of communication between the Russian Tzimisce and our European clanmates. Still, we survived, finding Stalin's paranoid regime much better suited to our collective temperament. While the Brujah focused on their grand designs and aspirations for Communism, Stalin destroyed churches and persecuted the religious. This, in turn, robbed the mortal populace of their faith and destroyed much of what was once holy ground, thus allowing many Damned to act with greater impunity. Meanwhile Piotr busied himself by ensconcing a few Fiends in the Cheka, or secret police, because it allowed us unprecedented intelligence on affairs both within and outside the Soviet Union's borders.

By the time the Cheka finally became the OGPU (United State Political Directorate), we had a steady flow of hundreds of unaccounted-for prisoners and victims for our herds from the millions thought murdered and buried in unmarked pits. WWII proved that our clan remained as vulnerable as our weakest link: mortals. To prevent an-

THE ATRIUM

It isn't bullshit; I've seen it. The old Fiend owns the high-rise hotel and had it built to her specifications. It's posh and upscale, with a beautiful rooftop garden. What nobody knows is that the garden sits atop a hidden atrium that runs the building's length and is packed with the Tzimisce's native soil. She sleeps where it's deepest, far from harm. Supposedly, she's got emergency exits from the atrium into certain rooms. The hotel concierge directs lone travelers into those suites and never registers them as having entered. The old Fiend uses her... well, I guess they're arms... to snag these guests from their beds and pull them into the dirt with her. Meanwhile, the cleaning service steals all their possessions when they clear the room out....

other vitae shortage because of the underfed and winnowed populace, many Fiends maintained private herds for feeding or vassalage should another war ever devastate Europe again. Ironically, many mortals entered these arrangements willingly, because we fed them well and even ensured them some measure of comfort compared to Russia's abject poverty.

Additionally, some clever Tzimisce also arranged for a handful of small gulag concentration camps and KGB prisons out of the 2000 facilities across Arctic Russia to fall into the hands of their Bratovitch majordomos. By estimates, the early Russian regime incarcerated close to 10 percent of its population in the gulags. Vorkuta Camp alone killed more prisoners than Auschwitz, though admittedly over a longer period of time. These facilities became unrestricted havens for the Tzimisce to exist openly without fear of discovery. Unfortunately, as we've often discovered, when there are few restrictions, some of our brethren can take their proclivities to extremes. Conversely, Russia possessed no state agencies to ensure the well-being of gulag prisoners. Thus, the Tzimisce still speak excitedly of *Tmu Tarakan*, the Kingdom of Cockroaches, where prisoners are a diet of their fellow inmates, slept on beds of decaying corpses and drowned in a soup of their own entrails. If this had happened anywhere else in

the world, we would have suffered apocalyptic repercussions for drawing such attention to ourselves.

Not all Tzimisce took interest in the gulags, however. Some young Tzimisce found interest with *Biopreparat*, the Soviet Union's biological warfare initiative. Many of us knew about the Eldest's essence within our own bodies, and the study of bacteriological warfare spurred on arguments of whether we could isolate portions of the Antediluvian within ourselves. Piotr lead the camp of Fiends who sought a way to attack these cancerous invaders before the Antediluvian awoke. Many also feared that biological programs could devastate our feeding stock if they progressed unchecked. So, to better protect our interests, a number of our brightest members infiltrated the Soviet Union's Ministry of Medical and Microbiological Industries, a quiet euphemism for their bioweapons program under the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU). Called *Biopreparat*, the Russians worked to develop new strains and vectors for diseases ranging from typhus to Ebola. Some young Fiends even played at developing Cainite pathogens that targeted specific clans, blood viruses that could turn entire populations into our ghouls or even methods of turning viruses into microbial ghouls. We insured that nearly three generations of Obertus revenants learned a dizzying array of the new sciences



including biochemistry, epidemiology, virology and microbiology. Soon, our spies found work in hidden facilities at "Rebirth Island" in the Aral Sea and at Solovetsky, the nexus prison camp of the gulags.

Unfortunately, while our ghouls made some advancements, particularly in the field of recombinant DNA and so-called chimerical viruses, the Soviet Union collapsed. Suddenly scientists, viral material stored in the Moscow Institute of Health, ex-KGB agents and weapons-grade plutonium all appeared on the international black market. Several key ghouls also vanished with their research, sending us scrambling to find them. To date, we've had little success....

TOMORROW'S TZIMISCE

By Jackrabid, *ex-templar*

Hear about the trailer-home caravan roving up and down the Eastern Seaboard? It's a traveling haven for a Fiend and her entourage of Bratovitches. From the outside, it looks like a caravan of retirees with tinted windows, Florida bumper stickers and Jesus fish plaques. Inside, it's a mobile abattoir and freakshow museum. They're like nomadic serial killers, traveling the country and never leaving behind enough evidence to get caught. It's true. It's true.

— Bartholomew Diggs, member of the Road Kilt nomadic pack.

Hitler still lives, or at least his malignant message does. Only a handful of elder Tzimisce participated in the rise of pre-WWII mysticism, but some Fiends Embraced in the post-war era came to see this as the Sabbat's acceptance of the Holocaust. Certainly, these individuals didn't help the situation when they Embraced *glatzen* ("baldies" or German skinheads) to "continue the struggle." Unfortunately, these same fucking Tzimisce have supervised a rise in racist Brothers and Sisters in the decade following the collapse of the USSR. The wave of Eastern European refugees instilled venom into the youth of Western Europe who, to this night, remain bitter over unemployment and degrading social conditions. That anger exploded into racial violence, bringing the Tzimisce new generations of followers.

Among the new breed of Tzimisce *glatzen* is Weissrarech — White Vengeance — a leader of a European neo-Nazi pack. She took the time to explain to me this new trend emerging among some of our younger clanmates. She is also child to Doktor Totentanz, a WWII holdover of Nazi "values" and, frankly, an embarrassment to our clan. Although she's barely existed for a decade, Weissrarech's seen Europe burdened beneath 750,000 refugees escaping ethnic cleansing and poverty. The Soviet collapse proved a godsend for elder Tzimisce,

who could finally reclaim their former aristocratic mantles and titles within the Carpathians' keeps. To Weissrarech, however, Communism's fall brought about Egypt's Eleventh Plague: the refugee flood.

Weissrarech concentrates her efforts on the dispossessed population, a group of kine everyone ignores. Whether her packs raid slum apartment towers in Marseilles and Berlin, attack West African harvesters in the Italian

THE COMMUNIST LEGACY

The West always knew that Communism made little consideration for environmental concerns, but the full scope of that knowledge did not come to light until after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The USSR turned Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany into toxic pits. Now, factories spill sulfur into the air, creating acid rain so potent that it strips entire forests of their foliage and branches. All that remains of some forests are blackened poles and mountains topped in sulfuric mists. Mining and smelting operations release clouds of metallic particulate into the air, afflicting generations of children with a variety of lung diseases and mental disabilities. Even after all of this, it is far worse in Romania, where coal strip mining turns the air black thanks to places like Copsa Mica's Carbosin Plant. A thick layer of soot covers buildings and trees, creating a landscape devoid of colors. It snows black flakes in the evening, carbon particles saturate the mists and clouds, soiling the very sky, and even sheep are of night's hue.

Environmental advocates scream pollution, but the various governments act too slowly. Both Old World Tzimisce and elder Sabbat Fiends find their once rich and proud landscapes drowning in physical and psychological oppression. Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu kept his people broken and poor while ravaging the countryside in the name of industry. Now, ironically, the Tzimisce advocate change, if only because pollution taints their herds through cancer and mercury poisoning, while acid rain destroys its fair share of monuments, including the many ancient Carpathian keeps that Fiends still dwell beneath. The Old World crumbles away, literally, and the Tzimisce once again find themselves broaching a new arena of experience, that of environmental concerns. Ironically, their opposition is a mixture of mortal bureaucratic leviathans (holdovers from the Communist era) with a vested interest in the factories and the greed of Kindred who seem to sing the name of Kupala in their sleep.

and English countryside or assault Bosnian Refugee Camps in Croatia, Weissrarch brings with her an impressive crusade of young Sabbat Tzimisce and *antitribu glatzen*. To my understanding, the Camarilla assigned two archons to locate and eliminate Weissrarch's pack, but they've had little success thus far. The Sabbat, in turn, supports Weissrarch's war.

Racism is not the purview of Weissrarch alone. It echoes across the Atlantic in the cries of some American Tzimisce. During the 18th century, some packs developed an interest in prejudice after it evolved from religious and ethnic intolerance into "scientific" racism. Hatred adopted a new form. Although notions of racial purity and genetic cleansing were older than harlots and tax collectors, humanity learned how to apply rapidly advancing technology toward the industry of genocide. Still, most Fiends remained uninterested in the *white-hooded hate-mongers* who rode into public attention following the Civil War. The Camarilla, duped by their own propaganda, assumed their enemies would relish hiding behind masks and "hangin' niggers," but few Sabbat wanted to be around a group of furious mortals wielding flaming crosses.

Advocates of scientific racism later increased their numbers by embracing a group of rioters from the Detroit Race Riots of 1943. President Roosevelt had issued an executive order prohibiting racial discrimination in factories with military contracts. The influx of 60,000 blacks from the southern states looking for work in the more progressive North sparked riots in cities such as Detroit, where 35 people died, 500 were injured and another 500 arrested for the murders of African-Americans. Excuse me; blacks. Fuck Jesse Jackson, not for his skin color, but for his politics. But I'm getting carried away.

I use pack priest Abraham Jensen as an example of a growing substrata emerging within our clan. Arrested during the riots, Jensen claimed membership in the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan, a hate group whose fellowship dropped significantly between the 1920s and its temporary disbanding in 1944 due to lack of interest. Although the Klan resurfaced during the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 60s, Abraham came to see genetic purity as something that existed beyond the limits of his five senses. He understood how racists could mistake "white" for pure and appreciated the hatred that prejudice sparked. What at first appeared to be a minor movement, however, quickly grew. Many Tzimisce believed Hitler's ideals died with WWII, but when a returning American GI named George Lincoln Rockwell formed the American Nazis, the Fiends realized this was just the beginning. Cainites, like Abraham, were in a position to capitalize on these nascent movements.

WWII served as catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. After all, if the government could draft blacks in

service to their country, why couldn't this minority enjoy equal rights? Of course, this proved a watershed issue for the nation, with extremist camps forming on all sides of the color barrier. Groups such as the White Aryan Resistance and the National Association for the Advancement of White People called for strict segregation, while behind the scenes, more insidious cells formed like blisters. The more pseudoscience justified racism, the more outlandish respective claims became. Some groups adhered to the Nazi principles that the Aryan race originated from the mythic island of Thule. Others adopted a strange fusion of Hindu-Aryan philosophy, claiming civilization's cradle was Aryavarta in India. On the other side of the argument came black militants calling Caucasians an albinoid mutation of the African people or "Yaccub's children." A smaller segment claimed that since melanin was a superior absorber of energies, then white people were further from God (the source of all energy) because they were lacking in skin pigment.

Militant Tzimisce involved with these movements stayed away from the public marches and press-staged events; instead, they frequented the packed underground concerts of *Storm und Drang* and *Africa X*, plying their craft among the thick and angry young crowds. Some Tzimisce even allowed events to take place on their private property, immersing themselves in hatred and reaping the guests at the end of the evening. Fiends, Abraham included, dominate the small cults and cells that search for the purity of their ancestors. These kine willingly undergo any body augmentation suggested by the Tzimisce in the mortals' quest to emulate Tzimisce ideals, leaving the Fiends more than happy to impose their visions of perfection. The Blood Brothers formed thanks to such physical tampering and mixing of ideologies. It's why they've all got those fucking bald heads.

MODERN PRIMITIVES

The various hate groups are not the only movements enjoying Tzimisce attention. While one group plays on racist ignorance, another is far more interested in approaching those of genuine Metamorphosist inclination. We find that in one mortal subculture of particular interest: the modern primitive.

Modern primitives are displaced individuals who find difficulty reconciling their existence in these neoteric nights. Where once tribes and villages provided these people with a sense of belonging and spirituality, they now stalk those circles dealing with sex fetishes and body alterations (a feeble substitute at best). They haunt places like Greenwich Village's underground flesh trade and the darker alleys of Castro Street, where S&M circuit parties and piercing and branding clubs push the limits of pain tolerance and impart some sense of accomplishment. The

phenomena of body alteration and pain tolerance have grown over the last 20 years. Experts attribute the movement to the need for a simpler existence like that found in primitive cultures, where one celebrates adulthood with tests and rites of passage. To these individuals, tattoos, brands and piercings are not only decorative, but also trophies of endurance and perseverance. It is this state of mental alteration that shamans and sadhus experience, the point where pain becomes irrelevant and even necessary to induce insight and euphoria. We Tzimisce, long acquainted with such principles in the search for transcendence, occasionally encountered mortification cults worshipping the various Cainites-turned-gods. Modern primitives, however, represent a new breed of mortals, willing to endure extreme purgation as a show of strength in life.

Through these rare and often marginalized individuals, we have uncovered a segment of Western society deliberately searching for torture and unusual punishments to better test their own limits. They use torture as a test of mettle and view scars as the ultimate badges of honor. More than the trendy teens who go for the tribal tattoo around their arms, these individuals seek a primitive state of existence in which suffering defines humanity. Amusingly, most mortals also expect their sessions to last an evening and no more. We, being far more patient than that, draw out their ministrations over months. We Embrace those who survive or have the fortitude to endure week and after week of torture and still return for more.

No longer limited by the constraints of flesh, some of our new childer seek to redefine their very existences by mixing their unives with neo-native and Asian mysticism. They partake of vision quests using pain as their drug, hoping to find their totem animals. Others apply the Taoist quest for biological alchemy and personal perfection through meditation and internal alteration. Whether they realize it or not, these neo-pagans, body artists, modern primitives and human pincushions are fast becoming the new Metamorphosists among the latter-generation Tzimisce. Their quest for change is genuine, and their own alterations hold deep significance for them. Unfortunately, many slip through the Sabbat's hands because they believe violence serves a function (like a signpost on their vision-road) and simply killing for the sake of killing is an affront to spiritual quests.

DEMDEMEH

*By Molly 8, chronicler for the Librarians pack
Africa has Tzimisce?*

— Dezra, Sabbat flunky

Africa's history is one painted in words, and it is therefore difficult to strain the truth from embellishment.

Ancestors become gods, and the gods are the spirits of everything. As a result, we know little of the African Tzimisce, but the nights still echo with portions of their tale if you listen closely. What I know comes from Landulf II, the very same *koldun* sorcerer in league with the Giovanni. Unfortunately, we have no way to confirm his tales, since Africa remains an enigma. While undoubtedly Fiend, the African Tzimisce (or *eggun*) seem to pursue their own agendas and myths. They consider our presence a slight to their dignity for some strange reason and as easily attack us as bid us greetings.

[Tzimisce], the Eldest, deliberately Embraced a multitude of peoples and tribes when it first left Enoch. It chose Yorak because of her—*her*—shamanistic wisdom; Lambach proved a survivor in the purest sense, as attested by his presence in the modern nights; the Eldest took Byelobog, as wild a mortal as the Eldest had ever met, to see how that influenced “the White God’s” evolution. It chose Triglav the Three-Headed because he already believed himself a deity; he cursed the monk Dracon because of his introspective and hermit nature. The Eldest allowed the brutal and inhuman warrior Kartariryra to act upon its whims. Demdemeh, however, puzzled the Eldest. As the first African it had ever met, Demdemeh earned the grand Fiend’s terrible attentions. For every harm or injury the Eldest introduced to Demdemeh, however, the mortal turned the tables.

The Progenitor would later recall to Yorak and Lambach that he turned Demdemeh inside out, with his organs and bones on the outside and his eyes facing into his head. When the Eldest asked him what he thought of the view, Demdemeh calmly replied that such a feat was nothing, given that all wise men had the ability to see within themselves. Impressed with such a strong mind, the Eldest Embraced Demdemeh and parted ways. Demdemeh returned to the land that would one day be the Sahara, which, in those nights, was still heavy with swamp and jungle and not yet ready to surrender to the encroaching desert. The tales say he traveled among the immortal-tribes of the Sao, Tibesti, those who followed the Kagn and the sun-eyed Bachwezi. Known as a fair and wise shaman, Demdemeh gathered his herds of followers till his too numbered among the larger tribes.

Africa of this epoch is not the place the world knows tonight. The great Ticonis Sea covered much of what would become the Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Southern Algeria. Africa looked like a shepherd’s crook or question mark that began at the Atlantic coastline (just above the Gulf of Guinea), ran across the Mediterranean shoreline and down the eastern coast upon hitting the lands of Egypt. Set in this fading sea were the Algerian Ahaggar peaks, which formed an island mass in the Ticonis Sea connected to the rest of Africa by a thin isthmus. Demdemeh chose these lands as

TOTEM

Aboriginal Tzimisce? Yeah, they're rare around New Mexico, but I did meet one once. He looked normal till he opened his shirt up. A line of faces ran down the length of his body and jabbered on incessantly. We called him Totem, for obvious reasons.

his domain and settled there with his growing tribe, to better learn his new nature.

Demdemeh's rule was not easy, for the Nile had its own monsters that challenged the Tzimisce's presence. Still, he learned to speak with the marshland crocodiles and form hulking reptilian beasts called *mokele* and their baboon servitors, the *naglopers*. Protecting the people of the Ahaggar, Demdemeh built the great city of Khamissa to humble the Egyptians. Unfortunately, the Eldest's touch afflicted Demdemeh over the centuries with a hunger for more than just blood. He feasted on banquets of flesh and became strange and alien to his own people. A row of gills covered his face like a grill, and he possessed no eyes, nose or mouth. Only his childer understood the whispered, incoherent sentences that he spoke.

By this time, the great Ticonis Sea was drying up and becoming swampland, while the Sahara swept into the land. The people of the Ahaggar fled, following those tribes who'd abandoned the fleeting paradise of the northern coast. The *mokele* rebelled against Demdemeh and escaped into the soft mud; they slipped into the swamplands after nearly decimating Khamissa. Meanwhile, the *naglopers* vanished into the night and traveled south, far from the clan's reach. Demdemeh finally retired to a haunted mountain city of virtually no inhabitants save loyal ghouls and his childer.

SYCORAX

Demdemeh fell into the sleep of ages in a lake deep beneath the Ahaggar Mountains. Finally free from his watchful eye, his preeminent childe, the witch Sycorax, led the remaining *eggum* south across the now-dried Ticonis seabed. She left her sire in the care of his last loyal ghouls, the fierce Tuaregs, whose descendents remain in the region into the modern nights.

Sycorax intended to rule over the Nok cultures and the already established city of Ile-Ife as queen. She found her ambitions blocked by the arrival of nomads called the Yoruba, however. These people had lived in Egyptian lands for some centuries already and knew about the depredations of Cainites. Their leader, King Oduduwa, believed in the one-god Oludumare and his servitors, the Orisha. Unluckily for Sycorax, while King Oduduwa's faith proved a strong foil to her ambitions, she had greater

enemies in the Orisha who existed as spirits but could inhabit kine to fight her.

The Yoruba followed a system of singular devotion, mighty faith and even stronger ethics. As a monotheistic belief, it proved as compassionate and upstanding as any Christian ethic. Before slavery ripped Africa's heart out, the *ajogun* Yoruba warriors fought Sycorax and the cultic "followers of the Kagn," harrying them across Africa. The *ajogun* proved troublesome (and still do) to the local Fiends. Unlike Sycorax and the *eggum*, the *ajogun* are entirely of African heritage and despise the interference of Cainites, even if they are of African extraction.

Forced into centuries of wandering and little peace, Sycorax eventually received satisfaction when European slavers tore West Africa asunder for their trade. After the Portuguese kidnapped 1.3 million slaves from the Angolan coast alone, Yoruba was in shambles. Slavers captured her people by the village-load, who could do little against the white locusts. If the *ajogun* despised outsiders before, the slave trade deepened their hatred greatly.

Sycorax and her ilk may have survived their woes with the Yoruba, but the *ajogun* proved a greater enemy. By this point, Demdemeh had awoken from torpor and came to the aide of his daughter, but even he couldn't turn the battle in favor of the Fiends. The *ajogun* commanded the very spirits of the land and turned the jungles against our brethren. The conflict forced Demdemeh and Sycorax into treaties with "white" Cainites who traveled with the traders, but these alliances were rarely to the *eggum*'s benefits. Tired of fighting a divisive war, Demdemeh and a small number of followers retired into Kenya's Great Rift Valley, just east of Lake Victoria. While Sycorax eventually fell to the *ajogun*, the remaining African Tzimisce ensconced themselves into regional pockets close to the coastal strips and cities, where they survive to this night. While Landulf II claims the conflict with the *ajogun* is less severe, however, these native undead still prove troublesome to our interests. Whether they are Cainites or otherwise has yet to be ascertained.

KARTARIRYA

By Devinder Bhalla, priest of the Split Lip pack

Ratti-Ben? I believe it means "Sister of Blood." She's the childe of Kartarirya. I met her recently and was stunned by her appearance. She's covered in skin swatches with a different tattoo on each patch that she's collected from her victims. She's a quilted beauty.

— Laika, Tzimisce koldum

Kartarirya's existence extends the length of the Indian subcontinent's history, making it among the eldest and most powerful of our clan. It spent its earliest centuries with the Harappa culture and later with the Vedics who



brought Sanskrit into the region. It did not coexist with them peacefully, however, for the bloodthirsty Kartariya drew the hostilities of the growing Rroma people and a Nosferatu Methuselah who'd settled into the region.

Despite some conjecture, the region's Tzimisce never inspired or emulated the multi-limbed avatars of the Hindu gods, though not for a lack of trying. Kartariya tried impersonating Karttikeya, the god of war, only to discover the Brahmans wielded their faith as weapons and saw through such artifice. Surprisingly, in its search to find worshipers among the growing Vedic pantheon, Kartariya came to understand and appreciate their religion. The multi-limbed divinities represented multiple states of beings, interpretations and personalities. While the divinities were certainly terrifying to behold, the Indians accepted the complex and often conflicting gods and precepts as natural. Everything and everyone had their place and moment in time. Enamored with the concept of multifaceted existence and perception, Kartariya geared its transcendence toward that effort. Instead of seeking worship, Kartariya sought to remold itself into a creature that could exist in multiple states of awareness simultaneously.

Kartariya fashioned the *yakshi*, demons by kine perception but horribly altered *szlachta* in reality. In the millennia following its arrival into the Indus Valley, Kartariya's childer and *yakshi* schemed and fought against

the growing Cainite presence. The Brujah, already familiar to the region through their influence in Mesopotamia, first arrived en masse when Alexander the Great's armies swept through Hindu Kush and the Afghan Plateau. When Alexander died on his return journey, the Greek garrisons found themselves cut off from their homes and remained behind. A few Brujah stayed as well, eventually Embracing from the indigenous people. The Gangrel who rode with the Mongol hordes proved troublesome with their continued raids against the regional villages and towns, but eventually, the Indian culture absorbed them as well. The Toreador came with the French colonization of India in the 17th century, though later, a French-Indian Tzimisce by the name Grandmere Kale ousted the Toreador from the island of Reunnoinnais and came to live deep in the heart of its dormant volcano. Her domain became *tsy laosana*, a Madagascar phrase for "a place from which you never return."

The Ventrue came well after the East Indian Company had established her monopoly over the region, but they proved of little concern to the local Fiends until the British suddenly went from a trading company to the ruling oppressors. The one place that remained beyond all outside influence, however, was opulent Hyderabad, a city blessed with Indo-Muslim heritage. From the 19th into the early 20th century, Hyderabad played the exotic port

of call for the world's richest mortals and Cainites. Toreador aristocracy who'd seen their world shattered by the French Revolution flocked to the City of Palaces and its unique architecture that drew Muslim and Indian influences together effortlessly. High society, both sophisticated and exotic, intrigued vampires of all persuasions. Even the Ventrue couldn't resist attending her courts and processions. Some even suspect the Khazars finally settled in what became Hyderabad, lending an air of timelessness to its mystery.

Of course, such beauty never lasts. Hyderabad's patron was Omasam, a Rroma of *Paigah* nobility and among the richest of the maharajahs. Omasam fought against Tzimisce inclusion in the local courts at every turn and even employed local *murshad* magicians to cast spells on families with Tzimisce affiliations. This forced the Tzimisce's hand in the region, relegating them to Embracing low-caste members after Omasam had their aristocratic ghouls murdered in their beds. Nobody realized the full repercussions of his actions until well after India's independence, when the caste system itself degraded.

RATTI-BEN, "SISTER OF BLOOD"

Ratti-Ben represents a changing consciousness in India, one Mahatma Gandhi would have mourned had he known the future. It began in August of 1947, during India's partition into two nations: India and Pakistan. The previous years saw friction and outright hostility between Hindus and Muslims, and Kartariya and its childer anticipated the worst. When arbitrators announced the borders at the last minute, 12 million Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus scrambled to find their respective sides of the borders using the only form of available mass transit, the train. Unfortunately for these travelers, these aging locomotives passed through the territory of one side or the other. Often times, trains would arrive at stations like Lahore — that served as the prime artery for travel both ways — with all its passengers butchered and massacred. Over one million people died in the Independence Day rioting, and while this was a mortal issue, the Tzimisce certainly contributed to the chaos with night's arrival.

With Kartariya in torpor, it fell to Ratti-Ben, Kartariya's childe and a practitioner of *baha mati* black magic, to continue its agenda. Unlike many within her brood, Ratti-Ben could best be described as a terrorist trying to usurp the rule of the Rroma and oust the Ventrue and Toreador from the Indian subcontinent. Her clan, long the underdogs in India's political games and power plays, often resorted to blatant acts of violence to keep the other clans preoccupied with the backlash. With the other clan's attentions diverted elsewhere, the Fiends used the diversions to launch a flurry of coups and assassinations to undermine the authority of adversarial Cainites.

THE FATE OF DEMDEMEH AND AFRICA'S TZIMISCE

I think we realized something was strange back in 1967, when seven people in Marburg, Germany died of a new and mysterious infection. As it turned out, a vaccine manufacturer called Behring Works used contaminated African green monkeys taken from the border near Uganda and Kenya for research. In 1970, the University of Marburg published a paper on the bugger and the world gets its first taste of filoviruses and this little bastard called Ebola. Russia's Main Directorate of the Council of Soviet Ministers, better known as our boys in *Biopreparat*, immediately jumps in with both feet. They send virologists to Mount Elgon and the Rift Valley, looking for the host species that originally vectored this disease. Not only do they find nothing, but the team also vanishes. That's when some of Piotr's boys put two and two together and remember the legends of the Methuselah Demdemeh and how he vanished with a few followers in — you got it — the Great Rift Valley.

Over the years, the CDC, USAMRIID and *Biopreparat* are running around hot zones whenever Ebola suddenly appears. With the fall of the Soviet Union, I finally get a chance to talk to Piotr and find out what he knows about these hemorrhagic viruses cropping up. Long and short of it is *Biopreparat*, after mapping out local hot zones and doing extensive groundwork in the region, thinks the virus originated in Mount Elgon's Kitum Cave on the Uganda-Kenyan border. One case actually involved a British expatriate getting sick and dying from Ebola after visiting the cave. Kitum is the remnants of a petrified forest — I've been there — with hardened trees making up part of the rock walls. Elephants fucking go there to die. It's the creepiest place I've seen, and I'm pretty sure I didn't see it all. Something was hiding in those caves. Something hidden, but... tangibly strange. Anyway, getting back to Piotr; his specialists think that the Ebola they've found in various outbreaks is a poisonous by-product of something larger. Piotr called it ghoulish bacteria, but he couldn't be sure. What they found in Kitum Cave, however, is fluid and won't stay locked down. They're not sure what it is exactly, but they have a fair idea.

Here's what our Russian friends think, and remember, I'm just the messenger. They think Demdemeh transcended all right, but not in the way we'd expect. Piotr believes he obliterated himself into viral form, then used his own childer as petri dishes. They found that protean viral sample in Kitum on a dying elephant. Piotr thinks the Methuselah is infecting the local wildlife ("riding elephants" he called it) and occasionally vectoring Ebola into the populace. This elephant graveyard shit is Demdemeh reuniting himself with part of the whole. He's becoming part of the Eldest, mark my word.

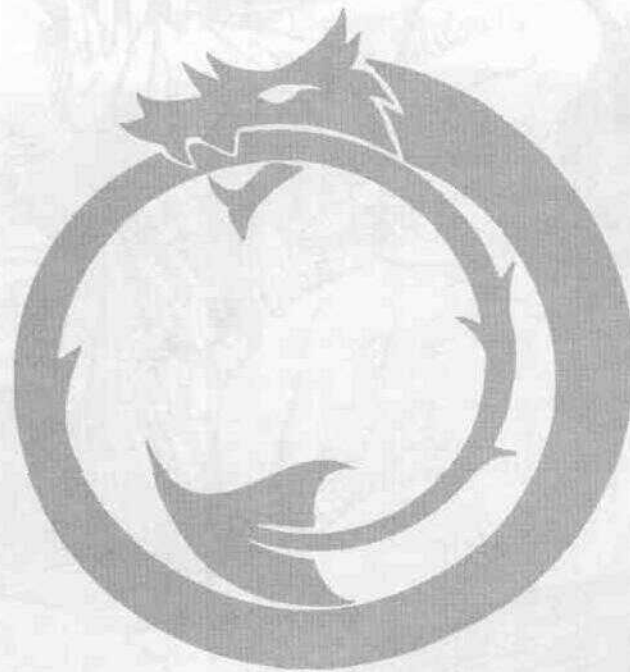
During the Independence Day rioting, for instance, the Fiends used the night trains as mobile butcher shops. They traveled the length of the country, stopping long enough to take on new passengers, before murdering them en route to their destinations.

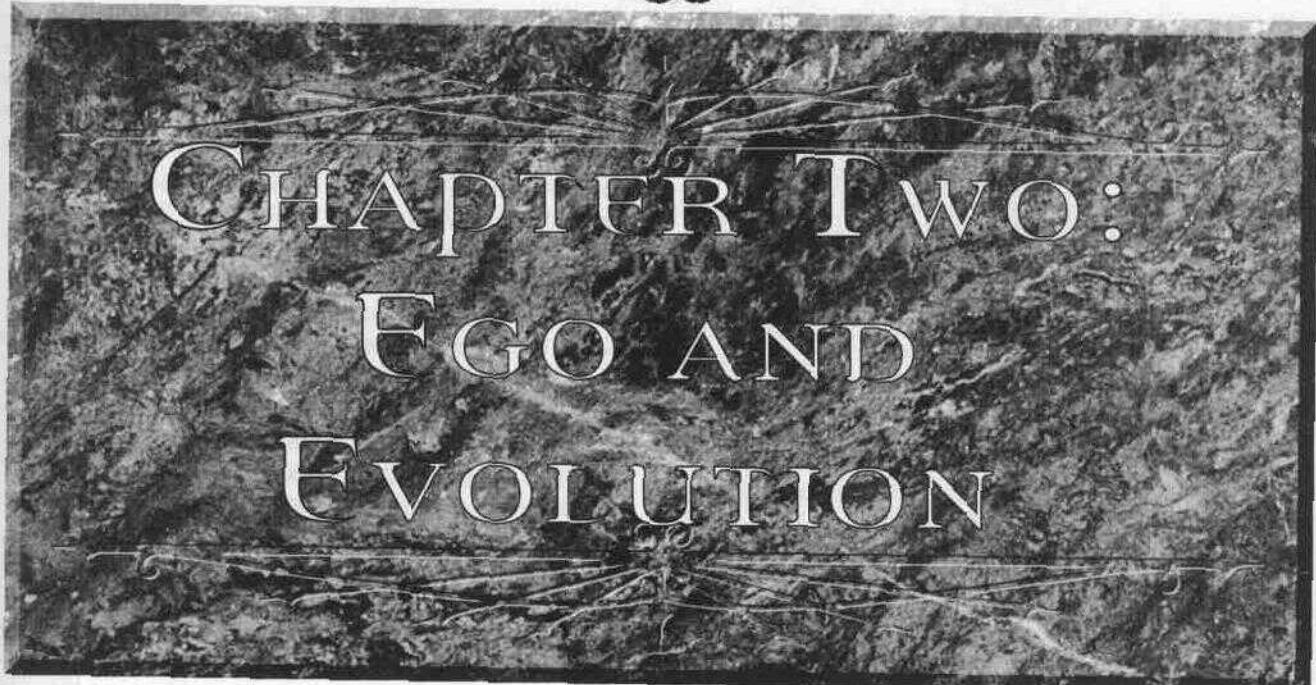

In the 20th century alone, Ratti-Ben and her progeny ensured that states in Northern India stayed violent and dissatisfied, to undermine regional Rroma rule. With the destruction of the ancient Rroma, however, the Fiends started a trend that is reversing India's advancement. The Tzimisce supported the Dalits, once known as the untouchables, in attacking the Raj Brahman caste throughout this past decade as evidenced in states like Bihar, where the caste-strife resulted in the murder and massacre of entire villages. Ironically, the lower castes are acutely aware of the changing world around them, thanks to television and newspapers. Now they want more, and over the last two decades, they've been getting it. The Dalits can elect their own candidates into national parliament, and their influence grows steadily. Much to the dissatisfaction of the populace, however, these low-caste individuals

are often members of organized crime. Some political candidates have criminal records a mile long, employ armed *goondas* thugs to protect them from assassins and even use the police to off their rivals. Bribery is the most effective method to gain the support of a village chief and all the voters in his district. India's politics suffer from systemic corruption, and the local Tzimisce, long the supporters of campaigns of terror, gained substantial political presence thanks to their patronage of the Dalits. As result, the Fiends have destabilized the holdings of political enemies and grow as India's preeminent clan.

With the Ravnos gone, the Tzimisce possess unprecedented influence and prestige in India. As result, many Tzimisce employ envoys to negotiate with their distant cousins in an effort to use India as the staging ground for the Sabbat's crusade into Asia. With Kartarirya in torpor, Ratti-Ben may well join the Sabbat, bringing many Fiends with her and giving the Sabbat both a nation ranked seventh as an industrial power and with a population of 843 million potential vessels — or Cainites.

Welcome to Kali Yuga. Welcome to the Age of Kali.





CHAPTER TWO: EGO AND EVOLUTION

In these circumstances I decided that the only safe thing for me to do was go for myself. It became clear that it was possible for me to take the initiative: instead of simply reacting I could act. I could unilaterally — whether anyone agreed with me or not — repudiate all allegiances, morals, values — even while continuing to exist within this society. My mind would be free and no power in the universe could force me to accept something if I didn't want to. But I would take my own sweet time. That, too, was part of my new freedom.

— Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*

Methuselah:

Let me say, at first, that I resent this task. I have better things to do than play encyclopedia to senile corpses. Many things have happened while you were asleep, ancient one — our kind has associated itself with the *Lasombra* against the servants of Caine's grandchilder, and the Old World is no longer our home. Clan means less than a family surname in these times — even the *Caitiff* are now a clan. With Cainites from every line, even a few of those licentious *Tremere* until a few years ago, we maintain a league of Cainites called the *Sabbat*.

I regret that I consumed the soul of my sire. Only because I am your descendant of the fullest Blood does this chore fall to me. I have sent Ezra to guide you in the mundane necessities: My childer will teach you how to hold a phone and watch a television. Ezra speaks English and Spanish, the lingua franca of the *Sabbat*, and will teach them to you. The lessons will doubtless take many years, and I have no time for such arduousness. I personally honor my duties in the most limited sense: I will apprise you of the state of Clan *Tzimisce*.

If this summary does not suffice... well, I do not fear your power, though it has deepened through centuries. Do you know what an airplane is? Have you heard of New York City? Did you know that we hide from mortals now? No doubt you believe that the living mean nothing to us. The times into which you have awakened will prove you wrong.

The mortals can destroy the world now, old one.

Do not waste another century on learning history — too much has happened during your 700-year slumber. You must understand our world as it is now or else my lessons will be lost on you. Listen closely to Ezra, and keep it for as long as you wish.

Without wasting more ink on you, on to the first lesson.

— *Troilus Cressida*

THE NIGHTS OF THE YOUNG

A Fiend in California Embraces and diablerizes serial killers, collecting their murderous souls. The regent destroyed a pack in Mexico City for burning down a Grimaldi estate. A Tzimisce sire and childe sold their souls to Hell in exchange for the location of a sleeping Cainite with old blood in his veins (perhaps this is why you have awakened, old one?). The clan you once knew, the clan of *voivodes* and *koldun*, is a dusty painting hanging in some elder's closet. Even Cezar Satnoianu's brood huddles in the alleys of the New World like beggars. Some Tzimisce keep the old ways, but most of them now squander eternity on dancing through bonfires, gorging themselves on ostentatious blood-rituals, and then going about whatever business they please, clan and sect be damned. They call themselves "Fiends."

These are your clanmates in the Final Nights.

How will you deal with these childer, old one? Even as mortals, they wielded power that you would consider miraculous. They can talk over continents — the *voivode* in Mexico City can speak to the Cardinals of the Lands Beyond the Forest as if they stood face to face. They have access to a book called the Internet, a book that allows modern folk to search, if not directly access, the whole of their accumulated knowledge. Through their public schools, the modern masses understand their world better than the wisest seneschals of your time.

And they conduct themselves in the most informal ways. Kings are rare in this time. The Greek's democracy is the rising vogue. Corporations control economies. Their weapons are the province of gods. They possess things that will burn you, your haven and your city, old one, in one foul conflagration. Be careful where you take your sustenance — the mortals have eyes that watch the most hidden places. The mortals who now join you in undeath were born into this world; you will never learn even half the truths they have always assumed.

Although they are young, the modern generations sustain two sects larger than the undead population your Old World ever achieved. A charter of Traditions binds the Camarilla, a league that claims to speak for every Cainite in the world. How could a relic from our fractious past even conceive of that?

Both sects contain legions — whatever laws you followed in the Carpathians, when our numbers were small and every childe knew his great-grandsire, are obsolete. While the Sabbat lacks the strictures of the Camarilla, it also maintains something like loyalty among its members. Because of a blood-sharing ritual called the *Vaulderie*, most of your cousins are now more Sabbat than Tzimisce. The Mongol horde still threatens to overtake you, old one. They share your Blood.

In a way, these modern nights are the logical consequence of our Father's outlook. He sought to become something great, a being on par with the Creator perhaps or a being enlightened enough to be free of His rules. The young ones call this "ego." Ego is Tzimisce's ideal, pride as a way of being, the elevation of the one above the rabble. The mortals of the past few centuries have co-opted our ideal as their own. They have declared God dead. Their governments make a show of treating citizens like "individuals," entitled to certain rights. It is not some academic subject for them, but a way of mortal life; still, the bounds of pride, which a Germanic doctor named "ego," have been described and debated by their scholars for almost a century. In their new self-importance, these generations understand little of convention, status or protocol. Rude childer, blood-smeared surgeons and fire-dancing witches have replaced *voivodes*, *zhupans* and *koldun*. Undeath is no longer a curse or an obligation; it is a punishment. For the active, it is a challenge. A threat.

Although the modern generations of Tzimisce reflect the mortal world, they still reject it as uninspiring, mundane, naïve or metaphysically inferior. Humans, to most Fiends, are little more than food. But the progress of the mortal world makes more demands on the Children of Caine than it did when it wielded swords and feared demons. We rely on our breathing servants more than ever, as you shall see.

THE FACTS OF UNLIFE

If you find any advantage to awakening in these vulgar times, it may be that the manners of these reckless childer are unsophisticated and simple to learn. As I suspect it was in your time, demeanor means more than one's words when dealing with another Cainite. I'm sure you knew when to play the wolf and when to play the cub, old one? Still, most of the young Tzimisce, those not stuck in the ways of your time, rely on few formalities when conducting their affairs. Those few who could recite their lineage do not, and no *voivodes* are available to hear oaths of fealty.

I will offer you examples of their informalities. If they anger you, remember that few teach our ways in this time. Remember that they would snuff you en masse for standing against them, as we did with the Eldest.

HEADFIRST INTO UNDEATH

Tzimisce don't "select worthy mortals" for the Embrace. No such thing exists. Family name, education and status remain considerations, but they are no longer the prerequisites you remember. The Fiends pick mortals with the potential to become something great in undeath — to become a leader among their kind, tear down the Camarilla or uncover a new principle of Metamorphosis. Fiends Embrace for the same reasons other Cainites do — companionship, assistance, prestige — but most of them require that spark, that predestined ego. Genius isn't enough.

To become Tzimisce, a person needs the drive to do something impressive. Some Fiends might have become presidents, inventors, artists or entrepreneurs if their lives weren't cut short by the Embrace. Yes: The history of the world might have been very different without our kind.

But ego expresses itself in other ways — the serial killer who murders 13 people to accommodate his abuse as a child. The pervert with the courage to indulge his taste for blood, despite society's taboos. The scientist who creates a new disease to wipe out particular tribes in spite of his profession's ethics. The atheist who writes screeds against the faith of others to subdue his own skepticism. The heroin addict who hates the world for driving him to the needle. Each is your grandchilde, eight generations removed.

Following the Embrace, some Tzimisce childer spend many years under the wings of their sires, sometimes their entire unlives. Traditional Fiends instruct their childer in every aspect of the Curse of Caine and in the conventions of the Sabbat and Clan Tzimisce. After the first few years of this wicked education, most Tzimisce see the concerns of their mortals lives as irrelevant memories and stand ready to destroy the Antediluvians and their Camarilla proxies.

Tzimisce sires often number among the most objective of teachers. While some Cainites tell their childer exactly what they want them to know and lie about the rest, most Fiends prefer honesty — *brutal* honesty. Survival leaves no time to make up stories. Tzimisce sires quickly destroy childer who can't deal with the truth or fail to realize their potential.

Exceptions — Tzimisce who come into undeath through mass Embraces usually learn the facts of unlife from their packs. And the dangers of being Sabbat — crusades, Fire Dancing, Monomacy — orphan many Tzimisce. Far too many Panders — the Caitiff clan, old one — can blame the Fiends for their plight, most of them failed experiments or luckless bastards who somehow survived the suicide missions for which they were dragged into undeath.

Finally, the Tzimisce Embrace has a way of changing people. Even those Embraced haphazardly during crusades tend to enter unlife somewhat distorted. What is it that turns a mortal — an animal that uses religion and morality to convince itself it's not an animal — into a blood-bathing demon who seeks evolution through Metamorphosis? Perhaps it's a quality of the Blood, but more likely it's the intensity of the Tzimisce unlife — aside from the fact that they're undead, having a blunt sire explain the war against the ancients while bonecrafting their skulls is enough to make most mass-Embracees want to crawl back into the ground. Loss of identity is an understandable fear, but some find it preferable to viewing unlife through human eyes. Regardless, even the best people can emerge from the experience ready to diablerize their way to Caine.

TWO HANDFULS OF DIRT

I have felt the soil of the Old World in my hands, old one. At first, it seems cold and viscous. Then you squeeze it between your fingers, and you realize that it is wet. Not wet like mud, not some weak ooze, but like sandy clods of red dirt that have consumed 10,000 years of rain. As it crumbles, you realize that your gloves are wet, and later, they will smell a bit rotten. The soil resembles our clan, old one. It is fallow. We remain attached to it, though these modern Tzimisce rest most easily in the soil of whatever *homeland they claimed as a mortal or a place important to their ego* — the soil at their childhood home or the dirt of their intended grave.

But they do not call this addiction a weakness — it symbolizes the Fiend's connection to their so-called homeland. At least, that's how some Tzimisce regard their dependence on their native soil. Does one as old as you recognize this curse? Without at least two handfuls of dirt from a place important to them as a mortal, Tzimisce grow weaker until they spend a full night surrounded by their precious soil once more. Wise Tzimisce keep much more than two handfuls around. Some don't feel safe unless they have a dozen crates of the stuff hidden all over town.

Perhaps you could answer a question for me, Methuselah: Are the Tzimisce territorial because their weakness complicates migration, or is it a punishment for their possessiveness? Noddists cite myths in which Caine curses the entire line for the feudal outlook of its founder. Koldun believe the weakness is a debt to the land-spirits of their native domains, whose power affects all that falls under the shadow of the Carpathians. Few truths arise where myths and spirits are concerned.

Some Tzimisce have it worse than others. A very small number, born continents away from Eastern Europe, actually need dirt from the soured lands of their ancestors. In the modern nights, few Tzimisce realize what such childer require and destroy them for their apparent weakness. Those sires who know the old secrets of their clan or discover the truth in time to help a fading childe actually revere their progeny for their special connection to the Old World. Can you imagine, a Tzimisce sire serving his childe? With the modern reemergence of Koldunic Sorcery, ancient *koldun* often seek out these young Cainites in order to teach them the ways of their art. They keep plenty of Old Country soil on hand to entice potential apprentices.

BLOOD, OUR JAILER

According to our own legends, the Eldest was the first Cainite to discover the blood bond. In some versions (in which the Crone is conspicuously absent), Caine himself is ignorant of the power of his own Blood until his grandchilde teaches him its use. Whether this is truth or propaganda, throughout history, some Tzimisce have considered themselves masters of the blood bond, with the revenants and ghouls to support those claims.

That our clan was responsible for the greatest innovation in the use of blood bonds is more than a myth. When the young Tzimisce of the Old World rose up against their elders, packs of rebellious childer sometimes pooled their blood into a bowl liberated from a wealthy *voivode* or the skull of a fallen elder. Each member of the pack drank from the container as a sign of solidarity. Packs that engaged in *this practice displayed decidedly unvampiric tendencies*: loyalty to their fellows and even willingness to sacrifice their unives for their brothers. When combined with *koldunic* magics in a ritual that foreshadowed the Sabbat *Vaulderie*, these packs destroyed their blood bonds to their sires and proved immune to attempts to restore it.

Even before the Anarch Revolt, Tzimisce with advanced understandings of the Paths of Enlightenment could cause those enthralled by their blood to experience particular emotions or desires. These Tzimisce understood how to subdue their Beasts to such a degree that they could sometimes master the base impulses of their thralls as well.

Most regnants have little say in how the thrall expresses the *mockery of love* instilled by the blood bond. Those of our kind who knew how to influence the bond, however, could make their thralls feel violently jealous, obsequious, reverent or even fearful. In the Final Nights, a few Tzimisce sufficiently stalwart in their Path of Enlightenment can create the same effect.

Perhaps I want something from you after all, old one.

NEVER EAT YOUR OWN

Many Tzimisce refuse to diablerize members of their own clan, if they indulge in the Amaranth at all. This perplexes other Sabbat, who widely regard diablerie as a vehicle to power. It could not be, they say, that the clan has such internal loyalty.

When questioned, some Tzimisce relate the story of Luther Wexler, a diablerist who met an unenviable Final Death. A year after Wexler consumed the soul of his sire, he bragged about the destruction of his sire to his pack while they shared blood. Before the bowl made its way back to the pack priest on the other side of the fire, Wexler and all the packmates who had tasted his blood stood up at once. Their eyes widened like those of frightened animals. Bloody specters climbed out of their mouths and sloughed off their skins, which fell away in neat puddles like dropped robes. The specters met in the fire and became flesh, then ran off into the night.

The survivor who spread the account was supposedly a fledgling who had yet to partake of the *Vaulderie* with her new pack. The rest of the Sabbat remains unconvinced.

The Tzimisce distaste for diablerie might be attributed to several factors. Traditional Tzimisce sires often warn their childer that when they drink a Cainite dry, they also drink her soul. Strong souls can linger after the Final Death, and some want a say in how their potent blood is

OPTIONAL RULE: FLAVORING BLOOD BONDS

If a Tzimisce attains a Path rating of 8 or more, the Fiend can manipulate his blood bonds to instill particular desires or emotions within his thralls. At the time of the third sip, the Tzimisce must have a specific quality in mind, but the quality seldom manifests unless the circumstances of the relationship, and perhaps the blood sharing itself, could logically result in the intended dynamic. A ghoul who's been locked in the dungeon of a domitor who never leaves his lab, for example, probably can't be made to feel especially jealous.

If the situation allows, roll the regnant's Path rating (difficulty equal to the thrall's Willpower). The number of successes indicates how fully the thrall's bond has the quality desired by the regnant. One success indicates a vague feeling that occasionally influences the thrall. With five successes, the quality is the defining element of the thrall's relationship with his regnant. This context lasts until the bond lapses or the regnant instills a new emotion. On a botch, the regnant assumes the emotions meant for the thrall.

Although most Fiends who possess this ability consider it a power unique to Tzimisce blood, Cainites who have diablerized a Tzimisce or even shared a significant quantity of blood with a Fiend could conceivably develop this control over their thralls, at the Storyteller's discretion.

used. Some Metamorphosists fear that such an arrangement might lead them astray from *Azhi Dahaka*. Tzimisce who eschew Vicissitude almost never diablerize Cainites with the disease for fear of contamination. Other Tzimisce, protective of their egos, recoil at the thought of another entity dwelling inside them, influencing their thoughts. Fetishes aside, most Tzimisce prefer remaining a weaker but self-made Cainite to becoming someone's mighty puppet. The fact that mass-Embraced Fiends who lack the knowledge of our clan's values and diablerie's true nature don't share their brothers' compunctions lends credence to this theory.

This is not to say that Tzimisce never practice diablerie. Some accept the teachings of their sires but attempt to avoid complications by destroying all sources of their intended victim's self-worth; when they finally diablerize the victim, his soul is broken and longs for obliterating quiet. Others actually relish the idea of becoming eternal prisons for the souls of their enemies. Some accept the risks, hoping the power is worth the price. Few of the youngest Tzimisce, which is to say much of the Sabbat, see any danger in diablerie.

LOYALTIES OF THE CLAN

If not for your torpid absence from the world, I have little doubt that you would have been destroyed during the Anarch Revolt. Those as old as you cling to the past, and judging from your descendants, I suspect that you would have preferred Final Death to equality with your childer. Still, your slumber has saved you, and wisely, you have accepted the clan's new loyalties, though I doubt you understand them. Blood such is yours is too valuable to our cause, even if it slushes through the veins of a creature that cannot turn on a computer or read a clock.

THE SOUL OF THE SABBAT?

"If Clan Lasombra is the heart of the Sabbat, Clan Tzimisce is the soul." Sabbat members resort to this trope so often that I would not be surprised to learn that they were the first words you heard upon awakening. Do these often-repeated words actually mean anything?

To dissect this metaphor: Clan Lasombra lends the necessary hierarchy to the sect. It's the "heart" because without it, the body, the sect, could not function. In this way, the Lasombra live up to their self-proclaimed role as their "brother's keepers."

But even if the Lasombra literally keep the blood flowing, the Tzimisce make continued existence worthwhile. We're the "soul" because we attend to the higher spiritual and intellectual demands of that continued existence. The Lasombra keep the Sabbat alive, and we tell the sect what it should do with that vigor. If the Lasombra tend to be ducti, cardinals and archbishops, Tzimisce tend to be prisci, pack priests and members of the consistory, the group that advises the regent.

But the difference isn't that practical. The "soul" is just as necessary to the functioning of the body, or sect, but in a way that's less concrete. The Tzimisce have accomplished much in their spiritual role.

The Packs: The Sabbat organizes itself into small packs united by the Vaulderie, a blood-sharing ritual that bonds packmates to one another. When they rebelled against their elders, Tzimisce formed the first crude packs and invented the process that later became the Vaulderie. The pack structure is responsible for whatever unity the sect enjoys despite their lack of laws or common heritage. And Cainites are nocturnal predators unnaturally suited to isolation. That we have cobbled a semblance of society among such creatures ranks among the greatest accomplishments of the children of Tzimisce.

The Paths of Enlightenment: It's easy to think of the Paths as abstract moralities, but they serve a very practical function: preventing Cainites from succumbing to their



Beasts. Back when even Cainites looked to Heaven or Hell to preserve their souls (to which did you look, old one?), a few Tzimisce sought Metamorphosis. Individuals who made a point of transcending their former humanity had to develop ways to stifle their Beasts while still becoming inhuman. Those who didn't turn to Metamorphosis borrowed philosophies developed by other Cainites and turned them into full-blown Paths of Enlightenment. While most Sabbat wallow in the worst of their former *humanitas*, we have developed more useful approaches to undeath for the enlightened few. Without the moral instruction of the Tzimisce, the entire Sabbat would be a slaving, monstrous horde. More so, anyway.

The Rites: Many of the Sabbat's *rites* have their origins in Tzimisce practices. A ceremony that was used in your nights of relevance to confirm new *voivodes*, for instance, inspired what is now the Blood Bath. When a new *voivode* annexed a demesne, those of or dependent upon the Blood who existed in that region — Cainites, revenants and presentable ghouls — attended a coronation. The new lord sat before a large bowl, and each of his subjects approached him, attested that he was the undisputed ruler, then filled the bowl with as much of her own blood as she could without losing consciousness or self-control.

After all of his subjects made their contribution, the new *voivode* held up the bowl and issued a warning to those who would question his power. Mirroring an even older pagan ritual, when the new *voivode* reached the violent peak of his ceremonial threat, he threw the bowl into the air, drenching his assembled servants in the collected blood — a demonstration of what would happen if they defied his rule.

When the Tzimisce adapted this ritual for use within the Sabbat, they reversed its intent and mocked the original. When a new Cainite fills a high position within the Sabbat — cardinal, archbishop or regent, perhaps — she bathes in the collected blood. If the original splashing represented the price of insurrection, the Sabbat's Blood Bath represents the assumption of responsibility for poor leadership. The ruler threaten the ruler. Although the assembled still swear their loyalty in the modern nights, they receive praise and advice from the newly titled vampire rather than swearing never to question her leadership.

The Sabbat has surely profited from our hand-me-downs. The *rites* (despite the bastard Latin preserved by ignorant Lasombra and young Tzimisce's lazy tongues) provide unity within the sect, maintain morale and allow Cainites to experience fully what undeath has to offer in spite of its curse.

THE TZIMISCE HIERARCHY

Although the modern incarnation of the clan defined itself in the rebellious fires of Kupala's Night, we Tzimisce hardly discarded our right to rule, even if the word means something different in the context of the Final Nights. My

generation didn't object to the elder's power on principle, as some vainglorious Brujah do. We objected because we *didn't hold power ourselves*. As such, the clan resurrected on Kupala's Night (if not all of its members) still acknowledges the hierarchy of the Sabbat and retains a semblance of its former organization as well.

The *Voivode* of the clan is traditionally the most powerful active Tzimisce in the world. This was the role of the Ancient itself — in the first nights, its authority was unquestionable. When Tzimisce fell into torpor, Yorak assumed the position of *Voivode*. He set the standard that all succeeding *Voivodes* must meet. In the modern nights, this standard is interpreted as an advanced understanding of both Koldunic Sorcery and a Path of Enlightenment... and the unreserved endorsement of the clan elders.

Why would our clan's figurehead rely on such esoteric principles? Perhaps you can answer this better than I, old one. Few Cainites follow the Paths of Enlightenment, and *koldunism* is almost unheard of outside our lineage — why then do we demand such unconventional prerequisites?

If they are not some lingering dictate of the Eldest, then I am inclined to blame history. I have heard that Yorak was a *koldun*, perhaps the first *koldun*. It could be that he knew his art would dwindle as the world aged and established a precedent that our clan would need in the Final Nights. Then again, it could be that other *Voivodes* merely seek to prove to their followers that they are like the venerable Yorak. Despite what the medieval Metamorphosis texts record, I doubt that the Tzimisce profited so greatly under his guidance. His rule was long past even before the European Dark Ages. Only an ancient creature like yourself could give us a more accurate account...

As for the requirement that a candidate follow a Path, my own theory is that it was added after a technical disagreement among the Tzimisce elders who must support any aspirant. You may have heard the name Sascha Vykos — did news of the Tremere-Tzimisce conflict reach the mountains under which you hid? Even before your 700-year leave, Sascha worked against the Antediluvians; the siege of Atlanta was its latest contribution — or was it Washington, DC? In any event, it told me that advanced understanding of a Path became a precedent after a dispute among some elders about whether the previous *Voivode* was fully in control of his Beast. Many Tzimisce from the Old World regarded frenzy as base, uncouth, animal-like. Elders from the Old World saw the New World "elders" support of this ravenous *Voivode* as proof that the New World could not pick a worthy *Voivode*. Although perhaps only five Cainites were involved in the dispute, those few were the eldest of Mexico City, a cabal that can still blackball any potential *Voivode*, even if they can no longer seat one on their own. The preference for a *Voivode* to follow a Path of Enlightenment was proposed by the New World contingent — an effort to correct their earlier mistake and complicate the Old World's argument against

them. As Sascha says, it was a way to prove that a future candidate was master of his Beast, proof against the Old World Tzimisce's accusation that the New World elders were appointing another rabid dog to the post.

Adopting a Path requires the will and rigor to oppose your baser urges. It is, therefore, a rare act for a Cainite. Then, as now, most Tzimisce want a *Voivode* who is disciplined...

...and obscure. In the Final Nights, most Tzimisce regard their *Voivode* like lapsed Catholics might regard the Pope—they get furious if they hear him insulted, but they don't exactly agree that he's infallible. The current *Voivode* may be the last. Her name is little known within the clan, almost unheard of within the larger sect. Her voice does not carry beyond Mexico City. And she is ignorant of *koldunism*. If the Ancient still exists, it is surely dissatisfied.

No doubt this news distresses you. At least the *zhupans* still exist—they bear the duties once expected of our titular leader, maybe because their status is earned rather than ordained. These are the wisest (not necessarily oldest) members of the clan—in the Final Nights, they remain the most conversant in the lore of the Tzimisce. Their knowledge, as well as their prowess in battle, proves they deserve their title—before a Fiend can be considered a *zhupan*, he must first master the *zulo* form. At least one of the ancient ways still endures, Methuselah.

Some Tzimisce still claim the title of *voivode*, though the ritual of formal recognition no longer exists. These *voivodes*, not to be confused with the *Voivode* of the entire clan, appoint themselves and enforce their claims as best they can. They fulfill an obsolete function that was the heart of the Tzimisce feudal ideal—oversight of a demesne, or domain.

Most Tzimisce who claim the title enforce domain over a particular stock of mortals, usually a neighborhood or small city. The *voivode* of Athens, Georgia (surely a laughable title to the Old World Fiends) claimed domain as the only Cainite who makes his haven in that town after the siege of Atlanta. The *voivode* of Miami can enforce his claim only in Little Havana.

FACTIONS AMONG FIENDS

Not every childe of Tzimisce aligns himself with some faction, the Sabbat included. Aside from dozens of packs, Metamorphosist schools and Gehenna cults, the Tzimisce have also organized themselves into several large factions within our clan.

THE OLD CLAN

Does this branch of the clan cling to the oldest ways of the Tzimisce, or are they something akin to puritan radicals? Accounts conflict, but at some point in the ancient past, a segment of the clan either refused or denounced the "defilement" of Vicissitude. Some mem-

bers of the Old Clan are exceedingly ancient—perhaps they know some lore of which the rest of the clan is ignorant. Scholars have contrived all manner of unlikely theories to explain why these "Old World" or "Old Clan" Tzimisce reject the fleshcrafting arts, but the Fiends in question aren't talking. In fact, they'd prefer never to talk to their clan at all, but holding their noses and joining the Sabbat seems preferable to fending off the fangs of our hungry cousins.

As the name applied to their branch of the clan implies, many of the Old Clan Tzimisce maintain demesnes in Eastern Europe and continue to manage their holdings in the medieval fashion (if less openly). The Cardinals of the Land Beyond the Forest hesitate to make many demands on this uneasy relationship, but the Sabbat can rely on occasional assistance from the Old Clan, particularly in Romania—that is what the world now calls your homeland, old one.

Old Clan Tzimisce have mastered Caine's gift of mental domination in place of Vicissitude. They consider themselves to be the clan's aristocracy, a family that still conducts its affairs in the ancient Tzimisce way. Their witches still know the most obscure ways of *koldunism*. The Old Clan still practices the ceremonies of coronation and rites-of-passage for childe. The *ritae* are abhorrent to them. Perhaps you would find more identifiable company among their ranks, old one.

CHILDREN OF THE DRACON

The Children of the Dracon trace their roots to Constantinople, though Noddist scholars disagree on whether this history is genuine or was later co-opted to lend credence to the group. Members of the Children, also called "Dracons," claim to be descendants of the first childe of Tzimisce.

This knightly order of Fiends exists so that Clan Tzimisce may atone for its sins. Dracon's Children believe that the clan as a whole committed some grievous error at a critical point in its history. The Dracons reject Koldunic Sorcery—maybe Kupala's Night was the error in question. If so, why did they join the Sabbat? Perhaps because their founder instructed them not to abandon their clan. Instead, they now oppose almost every decision made by the clan *Voivode* or enacted by several influential elders, seemingly for the sole purpose of being contrary, but this seems unlikely. They voice this opposition through their continued involvement in the Sabbat. The Children of the Dracon produce legions of templars and claim a few European bishoprics. They are excluded from the Black Hand, however, and no Dracon has ever served as the *Voivode* of Clan Tzimisce.

The rather arbitrary opposition to any policy endorsed by the clan troubles many Tzimisce because the Children's motivations are not entirely clear. One rather

ancient Metamorphosist suggests that evolution is a response to a threat — perhaps the Children spur the entire clan's advancement by providing the requisite resistance. Another popular theory is that this perpetual opposition is a punishment for the clan's great mistake. Sascha Vykos, a former resident of Constantinople, will tell me only that "Dracon is dead to me. His so-called Children make a mockery of their purloined heritage."

The Children of the Dracon organize themselves much like a monastic order, with "scions" establishing monasteries made up primarily of their own broods. The monasteries coordinate their activities through the Hagia Sophia, a Dracon Vatican of sorts somewhere around the Mediterranean. The scholarly wing of this order, the Akoimetai, is drawn almost exclusively from a branch of the Obertus revenant family, though this family produces some knights as well. Tzimisce not descended from a scion are rarely allowed to join, and even those who do are referred to as "carrion" and never granted full understanding of the meaning of the 12 legacies that this sect-within-a-sect abides. Children of the Dracon also tolerate the existence of thin-blooded Cainites within their ranks, a trend that disgusts conservative elements within the clan.

Before the Embrace, the Children leave the monastery to study the "12 legacies" — precepts of the order — with various enclaves across the globe. Then, they return to their monastery of origin to be Embraced. If the initiate is an Akoimetai, he is entrusted with one volume from the Library of the Forgotten. If a knight, he is charged to carry a letter in an envelope he is forbidden to open, sealed with the mark of Dracon himself, to some other Fiend elsewhere in the world. Confirmed in the order, the new Child of the Dracon departs to establish himself within Sabbat society.

In the modern nights, the haven of the scion is the "monastery" for any given cell, and no one but the scion and perhaps a member of the Akoimetai makes their permanent haven there. The Children prefer that their ranks remain involved with the sect rather than cloistering themselves. Some Dracons aspire to follow the Path of Metamorphosis or the Path of Honorable Accord, though elder members and a few young prodigies claim to follow a different Path unknown to the Sabbat at large. The Akoimetai observe a variety of *ignoblis ritae*, but most Children refuse to take part in any *ritae* they believe to be derived from *koldunic* practices.

Prominent Children are sometimes granted unique titles and serve specific functions within the order. Some educated Tzimisce may recognize the titles Keeper of the Faith and the Gesudian, though more obscure titles exist as well. My own knowledge fails here, as well; I have no idea what duties or benefits the Keeper of the Faith or the Gesudian perform or enjoy.

THE ROMANIAN LEGACY FOUNDATION

You may recognize some of the names on this foundations' board of trustees: Bratovitch, Obertus, Grimaldi, Zantosa. The last you know, though you might not immediately recognize it — a corruption of the name Szantovich.

These names represent the four remaining revenant families of any size. During your slumber, they came to serve the Sabbat. I will explain this later. For now, it is enough to know that our clan still draws many neonates from the ranks of these four families.

The Romanian Legacy Foundation is composed of Cainites who sprang from our revenant houses. Although the board of trustees is composed of proven ancillae, the foundation is made up mostly of young Tzimisce. Those who still draw childer from the revenant houses rarely welcome their chosen to undeath with a shovel in the face. The Romanian Legacy Foundation gives these new children a more cultured introduction to undeath. Foundation members from all over the world fly to cities like Boston, Rio de Janeiro, Amsterdam or Oradea for "conventions." These conventions are actually rites of welcome for these Cainites-to-be.

Fifty or so members meet at the haven of the host, or at a revenant estate, and engage in the bloodiest of Sabbat bacchanalia. Mortals hang from the ceiling, dripping blood into enormous urns that are later overturned at the tops of stairways, the host's demonstration that blood is available in abundance. The blood is usually consumed before the stroke of midnight. Relatives who haven't seen each other since the last convention share the Vaulderie. No entertainment is excluded, if it strikes the host's fancy. Even if no revenants are inducted through the foundation one year, various members host at least two or three such gatherings to maintain ties with the organization.

Just before morning, the new childer are Embraced while they are drunk, exhausted and, quite likely, weak from loss of blood. If they do not leave with their sires the next night, the fledglings are assigned to a sponsor, a member of the foundation who's probably no more than a few years dead herself. Because the fledglings are of revenant blood, they probably understand quite a bit more about undeath than their once-mortal peers. If they are to be instructed by a neonate, only a former revenant will do.

Although these sponsors can teach their students how to deal with the undead condition, they give their charges something far more valuable: an introduction to the society of the Damned. Sponsors show their charges around the city, introducing them to their fellow Tzimisce and perhaps other members of the Sabbat as well. The sponsors show their students the best areas to feed and the locations where *significant ritae* take place. The new Cainites receive the welcome to undeath that a worthy revenant should strive to earn.

Why does this family affair require such a misleading name? The foundation requires a degree of publicity, since another of their purposes is to locate branches of their families or of the families that supposedly vanished or no longer serve the Tzimisce. The name is for the sake of America's tax collectors, to whom the foundation represents itself as a "nonprofit genealogical organization." Mortals who see their classified advertisements for "conventions" or find the right page in the book of the Internet can petition for membership. They must submit their family trees to be considered. The scholars affiliated with the foundation scour these submissions for any relatives to our revenant families.

Somewhere, a child bearing an Anglicized name grows with our blood coursing through her veins. Her blood may be too watery for her to be considered a revenant, or maybe not. Regardless, the Tzimisce blood within her no doubt makes her an exceptional mortal. If she is like most of the cousins located by the foundation, she is emotionally disturbed in some way, given to fits of depression or indulging in the torture of cats, perhaps. Despite her haunted life, she could grow up to be a bold leader, a fiery priest or an ingenious scholar like many of our distant relatives. If the foundation locates her in time, she may be fit to receive the Embrace rather than die as an exceedingly old and talented mortal.

The majority of revenants brought into undeath aren't associated with the Romanian Legacy Foundation. Still, some of our clanmates see the organization as a way to maintain our old traditions, even though our revenant aristocracy is spread so thinly across the world. Even revenants who weren't inducted into the foundation at their creation can join, provided they survive the remedial initiation rite, about which the less said, the better.

NEOFEUDALISTS

More a sensibility than a movement, the neofeudalists are those Tzimisce who seek a return to the nights when the we ruled kine as kings ruled serfs. They often claim vast tracts of domain, sire large broods of childer and defend their possessions with a territorial fury that would do their Ancient proud. For neofeudalists, relying on their own resources rather than the Sabbat's is a point of honor, especially since they find themselves at odds with their own sect as often as they do the Camarilla. Some Fiends regard neofeudalists as anachronisms. Others see them almost like folk heroes reclaiming some lost native pride. Most archbishops, however, would prefer Lupines infesting their cities to having a neofeudalist move in next door. Few survive in the Final Nights, and fewer still survive for very long.

EXSANGUINISTS

A blood cult exists within Clan Tzimisce. Unlike most such cults, awash in oceans of vitae, the Exsanguinists



have invented a dozen or so *ignoblis ritae* to avoid drinking blood for as long as possible. They consider feeding the act of an animal, not a deathless being on the threshold of something greater.

Thought to be an offshoot of a school of Metamorphosis, the Exsanguinist cult teaches methods of meditation meant to build up their endurance as they go for increasingly longer times between feedings. They seek to distract themselves from their hunger by any means, usually by leaping headlong into whatever Sabbat cause strikes their fancy. Some proselytize, but most Sabbat are too blood-thirsty for the ascetic existence.

Exsanguinists perpetually skirt the edge of ravenous frenzy. They're given to making wild, fanatical declarations about the nature of undeath and reacting extremely to changing circumstances. Upon the capture of a Camarilla infiltrator within the city, one Exsanguinist bishop in Tijuana declared that Central America would fall within the hour, set his robes on fire and consumed the spy and himself in a flaming embrace to emphasize the dire nature of the predicament. While a few Exsanguinists are placid buddhas, most are lip-biters ready to frenzy at the slightest provocation.

TZIMISCE ANTIIRIBU

Those Cainites who have broken with their parent clan, especially those whose cousins have joined the Camarilla, fancy themselves *antiribu* and refer to themselves as such. Tzimisce have no need for such vanity. Since your time, most Tzimisce have regarded their clan as an unlife-style, rather than a family to appease. Tzimisce have a reputation as ruthless, inhuman deviants because some aspire to be just that, not because we bear some affiliation with our brothers. As such, more of the clan exists independent of the Sabbat than we like to admit. Some rule demesnes and acknowledge no authority but their own. Groups of Tzimisce descended from one ancestor, like the ever-shrinking Oradea League, associate only with the same few relatives. Most, like the Old Clan, give lip service to the Sabbat and go about their business without regard to sect.

Even though many Fiends are independent, few associate with the Camarilla. While most of us are ultimately beholden to our dwindling humanity, the sect's emphasis on *humanitas* does not suit us. Truth be told, old one, most Cainites are too proud to acknowledge that we hide from mortals, abuse their institutions in the gentlest ways and do not harm our fellows lest our cities become disorderly. Every Cainite must do these things to survive for long, but most Tzimisce would be embarrassed to admit it. I would have it no other way, ancestor — why prattle on about weaknesses when immortality is at hand?

PREJUDICES OF THE TWICE-DEAD

You missed generations of descendants in your slumber, old one. My sire for instance—he was an anachronism

much like yourself, though even he understood enough to fear the power of men. He was an impatient, bitter corpse who saw the Jihad in everything, much as I'm sure you do now that you've reawakened to this alien time. His paranoia led him to be an impatient Cainite. Now that it is time to discuss the other lineages of Caine, I quote from my fondest remembrances of my twice-dead father — his rants — rendered as best I can remember them.

ASSAMITES

Do not speak to me of the Assassins! I despise them and their filthy *paynim* ways! Oh, how they fright my heart with their lethiferous stares! Are they Cainites at all? The Children of Assam have more in common with the soulless dead of the Orient, I say, and their nature convinces me that the Black Hand will betray our Great Effort. Why suffer them at all? If some unpleasantness demands expendables, do the Lasombra not suffice?

And when they enter a home, they forget to wipe their feet. Perhaps you are an Assamite, childe?

BRUJAH

After dealing with them — a labor regretfully necessary given the prominence they attained since the Third Civil War — I am inspired to sponsor missionaries to their wastelands, to teach them that immortality is more than dancing in filth and feeding indiscriminately. The Beast rules them utterly. A clan in need of discipline, these Brutes. It must reassure them to reinvent their mighty domains of old in every urban wasteland to pollute.

SERPENTS OF THE LIGHT

Despite our nature, we must be honest with one another: Tzimisce is a clan of rarefied tastes. Passions such as we know are only available in a seller's market. I know that you are not religious. Then hie to your Path, and eschew their seductions!

At the *Palla Grande*, I am often disposed to lecture the young. I implore them to feed often, forbid their ghouls to touch their dinners and never believe the Serpents of the Light are any different from the bastard line which spawned them! Their ultimate ambition is everything the Sword of Caine would prevent. Can we chance that the Cobras are sincere in their devotion to the cause?

GANGBEL

Did you know these dogs come in two breeds? What new face will Caine's curse show us next? Ah, but you flatter me. No, I cannot claim the credit for this bifurcation — that belongs to another of our line. But you asked me what I think of them, and the answer is "little."

Yet, I would suffer a Hunter willing to teach the rudiments of his earthy gifts.

HARBINGERS OF SKULLS

I have met only one, and at first, she seemed delightful company. Very knowledgeable about our kind. I advise

you to seek one out in all haste. You are inexperienced with them? Well, do not make my mistake — when supping with a Lazarene, never offer to repair her visage. That *faux pas* has depleted my kennels and led to some unfortunate complications in the conduct of my *ritae*. I fear I shall never lead another Vaulderie.

LASOMBRA

Was it not the Tzimisce who built the Sabbat? Did we not bring our elders low? Did we not shatter the blood bond? Who, do you think, conceived the packs? Why, we even gave freely of our sorcery that any True Sabbat might know the *ritae*! And from the shadows, they stole the throne on which we should rightfully sit. Yes, it's true they vanquished their Ancient first, but damn it, we showed them how—

Well, no, I can't say they've done a horrible job, merely an inadequate one. But we are a clan of lords. Why, then, are we content to play advisors? It is for me a most unpleasant rumination, and I would rather focus on my experiments. Their domination frees us to pursue our curiosities, after all.

MALKAVIANS

The Malkavians were the architects of the Tower of Babel, I believe. They built an edifice that revealed the world from on high, as Heaven sees it. But the kine-god, ever jealous of the Children of Caine and their power to exist without Him, destroyed the tower and garbled the tongues of its creators. The Malkavians have seen Heaven, but they cannot describe it to others. Each speaks his own language, which we call madness.

NOSFERATU

My skin seems to have come off in the bath. Could you fetch my robe? Yes, the Nosferatu would be jealous of me indeed. Sadly, there is no helping the poor creatures. I would cure them were I able, but their curse proves so tenacious. Perhaps it comes from Tzimisce itself, so old and powerful is its nature.

How could it be that they joined the Camarilla at all? Surely, their cause is ours as well. When the most ancient creatures of their line resurface, I have little doubt that they will flock to the Sabbat like rats escaping a flood. I have an unerring intuition of such things.

PANDERS

Oh, I see their use, but something within me sickens at the tolerance they now enjoy. Would a mortal mother allow a child to live if it were simple or deformed? Of what use would it be? In older nights, we treated the misbegotten with that same objectivity. Now we call them "Panders" and recognize them as a clan. I do not understand these sentimental times.

Did you know that one is now bishop of some city in the New World? Gehenna draws nigh indeed.

RAVNOS

A shame, really. Too much has been made of the antagonism between our clans. I think of them fondly, myself. Yes, they are renowned as rude guests, but they aren't stupid. Our power was once so great that even the Gypsies asked permission to pass through our lands, and the villagers were too busy running them out of town to rally mobs against us. A pity they are so far spread now — imagine altering your surroundings to match the alterations you've made in yourself!

SALUBRI

They despise the Usurpers, and that is enough. I will offer them any aid I can.

TOREADOR

I would set myself ablaze if I knew that one of these errant children would nurse me back to health. If the Vaulderie did not prevent it, I would bind myself to one of the *antitribu*, for they are exceedingly good at certain acts I'd like to experience regularly. After my visit to Montreal last winter, you cannot convince me that the Toreador do not seek their own form of Metamorphosis.

TREMERE

The strongest clan of the modern nights — proof of the utter depravity of our times if ever I saw it! Thieves! Usurpers! They are so strong only because our blood colors *their veins*! *Seeing their preeminence*, do you wonder why the Tzimisce feel as though they've been robbed? Do not suffer a witch to live!

VENTRUE

Were we in charge of their ostentatious league of "Kindred," our subjects would praise us as worthy leaders, not share our table and whisper curses when we turn our backs! They understand the duller portion of governance, and I would have one as my seneschal, but they weary me with their "consumptive choices" and "considered political judgments." Fetch a bucket! The blood within me rises!

A final gem for your edification, old one:

THE LUPINES

I have undertaken quite an extensive study of the shapeshifters. Their classification proved difficult, since they breed like Brujah sire. We have, however, isolated several species: The North American Glassnawer clan, for instance, is known to populate the cities, but their offspring invariably begin life deformed. Such cubs are universally infertile. How do they propagate? It is a mystery.

The Black-Star Walkers, kin to the Shadowed Lord clan that harried us in the Carpathians, mate with no such complication, arising as they do from packs of ordinary wolves. A colleague believes that an offshoot of their line, one indigenous to the Scandinavia, worships the trickster

god Loki. I reject this theory, for I find it inconceivable that such beasts practice anything resembling a religion.

PATHS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

In these modern nights, old one, most Cainites don't survive undeath for more than a decade. They have little time to learn anything of importance. These reckless, unlucky youth earn no understanding of our state — too many fall to their Beasts within nights of their creation. Among the few who survive, and the fewer still who come to understand something of the Curse of Caine, the most determined follow tenets based on understandings of undeath that they claim checks their Beasts.

Do you remember the Metamorphosists? They are the clearest example that's within your arthritic grasp. They seek to undergo some transformation that dwarfs even the change from mortal to Cainite. Their methods spread like curses among black magicians. Masters teach students, childer imitate sires, zealots preach to any who would listen, and the curious always find a way to learn. Some believed the Metamorphosists were possessed, mad or foolish. Some feared their intimidating forms. But my sire's sire, your great-grandchilde Conrad Bukouskei, once told me that their numbers were small. Few Tzimisce had the discipline to seek *Azhi Dahaka*.

Such things change slowly, but Metamorphosis is not the only Path walked by our kind. Others see enlightenment in the eyes of a fresh corpse or in the catholic pursuit of Caine. Some drown their Beasts in dutiful supplication, like the knights of your time. A few succumb to heresies like soul-pacts with the Devil or the emulation of Lilith.

THE PATH OF METAMORPHOSIS

How best to explain the modern Path to someone who's never read Darwin...? Those who follow the Path of Metamorphosis seek to climb closer to Heaven and farther from humanity, though few of them believe in such a place. Unlike the Eastern Buddhists imitating Siddhartha, Metamorphosists have few role models in search of *Azhi Dahaka*, the name given to this higher state by the eldest of Fiends. *Azhi Dahaka* is not some Nirvana where the Metamorphosist achieves oneness with the universe, but rather the opposite — to undergo Metamorphosis is to completely separate oneself from Creation, to be a self-sufficient will in a universe that holds no more power over the ego.

Some believe so, anyway. Metamorphosis is a lonely pursuit. Many Fiends on the Path refuse to share their wisdom or even mislead those who seek it. Can you imagine a paranoid sire teaching his childer "secrets" that invite their own Final Deaths? My own sire once told me, "Anger is the judge among the undead. If another Cainite enrages you, he offends the



VIEWS ON METAMORPHOSIS

Eat, sleep, shit, fuck, die — what a list of chores! The Embrace delivers us from this drudgery, but still, we have our bad habits. Blood for one, and betrayal. Metamorphosis surpasses the Curse of Cain. Metamorphosis is the end of necessity, the unfettering of the ego.

— Peter Plogojwitz, Exsanguinist

The Path has no definite end. Metamorphosis is a sojourn. It's perpetual transition. Most people die like they live, waving their impotent little fists in the face of the universe. Not me. I've got places to go, metaphysically speaking. I don't look up to the stars in the sky. The stars look up to me.

— Arnod Paole, advisor to the Voivode

When you're safe in your own haven, surrounded by furniture you've built yourself — that's Metamorphosis. Right now, I'm into working with lots of different materials. Children's bones are very malleable, but they don't bear much weight, so you have to use a lot of them. I'm very happy with this fainting couch I just finished; it cries when you sit on it, but I'll show it to you if you like.

— Ahriman Berney-Scott, feng shui enthusiast

No one can show you Metamorphosis. The condition is, by definition, lofty. And once you achieve it, I can only imagine that describing it would be like explaining parliamentary procedure to a murder of crows. I hesitate to call such a state "transcendental," since the word bears so many limited mortal notions. But I assure you — Metamorphosis is utterly inhuman.

— Troilus Cressida, ductus of the Golgotha's Nails pack

After discarding all vestiges of humanity, one becomes Tzimisce itself — Azhi Dahaka.

— Laika, Tzimisce koldun



predator within you." That was the least of his lies, though I hope he found *Azhi Dahaka* under my fangs.

Some Metamorphosists aren't so stingy with their discoveries. A few traditionalists still remember the times when Metamorphosists were the roving sages of the clan and met at "Black Churches" to consult their enlightened fellows. Noddists have since usurped the learned reputation of the Metamorphosists — among the youngest of Cainites exploring the modern Paths, self-mastery is less popular than the power of Caine. But teachers still exist in the more populous cities; some followers have even formed "schools" of Metamorphosis to test their theories, learn from their peers and transmit their techniques to the young.

For most Metamorphosists, physical change precedes spiritual change. Some believe, despite the obvious evidence of their undead existence, that no creature possesses a soul and that the Curse of Caine represents flesh run rampant, flesh liberated from the obliterating cycle of life and death. Others hold that the soul is just the body summarized. The diehard evolutionists (ask Ezra) believe that they must suit their bodies perfectly to their environments, usually to the nighttime metropolis and their suspicious prey — human and Cainite alike. Regardless, most Metamorphosists rely heavily on the *fleshcrafting* arts of our clan to affect their transformations.

I do not know what these Metamorphosists were like in your day, ancient one, but in the Final Nights, they seem to take whatever form they please. My sire, himself the child of an Exsanguinist, saw self-sufficiency as the precursor to enlightenment — a lofty goal for a creature that depends on the life-blood of kine. He made increasingly esoteric attempts to mold himself into a being that sustained itself efficiently. At first, he fashioned... tentacles, that's the closest word to what they really were, from his lower intestines, each with its own mouth full of incisors. He kept himself attached to three ghouls at all times, constantly ingesting their blood. He quickly abandoned this form — even the hardest ghouls dried up under his ravenous appetites. Instead, he crafted leaky membranes in the backs of his childer. Each night, he sent us out to feed. When we returned, he attached his hungry tentacles to us and claimed our blood for his own. Though the regular infusion of our blood made him a dotting sire, I showed him that his offspring were not mere extensions of his undead organism. Such is but one example of the changes Metamorphosists inflict on themselves.

Metamorphosists see potential in the undead form. They strengthen their bones to weather crushing blows or sharpen them into pikes for impaling enemies. They relocate their vital organs to make their digestion of blood more efficient. They improve their eyes and ears to make them more sensitive to changes around them. Others rearrange themselves to conform to more esoteric con-

cepts, imitating many-armed Hindu gods or molding their bodies into forms accordant to *feng shui*.

Others ignore the physical element and, instead, seek to exploit the peculiar nature of undeath. Some such Metamorphosists feed only on their fellow Cainites, believing that an aversion to mortal blood is a sign of metaphysical superiority. Some believe that following certain precepts, such as "learn the characteristics of all stages of life and death," will lead them to a reward similar to that mythic Golconda.

Metamorphosists often face a different problem from those who walk other Paths: Rather than struggling to uphold the tenets of their Path, Metamorphosists struggle to discover just what those tenets are. *Azhi Dahaka* is a poorly lit road. While many Fiends encounter similar difficulties, the forms these difficulties take depend on the Metamorphosist. A Fiend attached by bloodsucking tentacles to his ghouls interprets the denial of his feeding urge differently than a Fiend with no mouth would. Metamorphosist philosophy is so diverse that informal schools have sprung up all over the world. These schools debate the matter eternally and instruct their students in their findings, each espousing a slightly different Path of *Metamorphosis*.

THE LESSER PATHS

Metamorphosists constitute but a small portion of Clan Tzimisce. The vampires of the Sabbat know other Paths of Enlightenment. We Tzimisce invented them, or so we say.

Actually, there must be some truth to this claim — Tzimisce, more than any other clan, tend to discard their humanity in undeath; the conditions we're Embraced into often make it irrelevant — what's human about searching the spirit world for slumbering elders or performing experiments to determine what happens to the souls of aborted fetuses? But Tzimisce bow to nothing, not even the Beast, so the most tenacious turn to various Paths to deal with unlife. "Invented" is hyperbole, but inhuman packs of Tzimisce were probably among the first practitioners of these ethical monstrosities. My research suggests that you missed this development by less than 200 years.

A few ignorant or abandoned exceptions exist, but we Fiends have the fewest adherents to Humanity of any clan. If not Metamorphosis, then, as some Exsanguinists call them, one of the "Lesser Paths."

THE PATH OF CAINE

Many Tzimisce Noddists take a particular slant toward their investigation into the unlife of Caine — they do to theories what Vicissitude does to flesh. To an outsider, it might seem like they value the esoteric and the implausible over the accurate so that they may outdo competing scholars (the Tzimisce who gain the highest

understanding of this Path must be patient indeed, given their low opinion of Noddists from lesser clans and the Path's tenet of sharing what one knows with fellow scholars). Usually, the unlikely nature of their conclusions is a product of their particular outlook. The Fiends aren't playing word games or trying to amuse anyone. They seek nothing less than the power of Caine itself.

While some Noddists squander eternity digging in the dirt or squinting at fragments of ancient scrolls, Tzimisce in search of Caine favor diverse approaches — conversations with elders or spirits, memories stolen through diablerie, bloodletting vision quests, the composition of dramas and stories to explore their history, sojourns to the Middle East and, yes, when appropriate, archaeology and library research.

One circle of Tzimisce Noddists known as the Reclamationists contradict some Fiends' preference for cautious diablerie. Not content merely to know Caine's nature, they "reclaim" it by diablerizing their way through the generations to reach the stature of the Dark Father. The Reclamationists consider Cainites who rely on mortal blood to be weaklings. They drink only Cainite vitae if they can. Reclamationists take any opportunity to sate their appetites and often find themselves leading Wild Hunts or War Parties. Some spend their unives in the *zulo* form, more comfortable in their "natural" state, ready to partake of the Amaranth with but a moment's notice.

THE PATH OF CATHARI

Tzimisce who follow this Path set out to become the most potent material agents of the evil creator of reality. They craft themselves into forms as powerful and twisted as any Metamorphosist but don't concern themselves with the spiritual baggage of their transcendental relatives. To Albigensian Fiends, Auspex distracts Cainites with the ephemeral qualities of the good creator, but Vicissitude is an end in itself, not some road to a higher existence. Physical power suffices. Fleshcraft allows them greater influence of the material world, which, according to the Albigensians, is the Cainites' milieu.

Fiends walking the Path of Cathari all but worship the *zhupans* for their mastery of the *zulo* form. Becoming strong and intimidating beasts also ensures their survival. Many Albigensians believe in reincarnation, and if anything disgusts the Tzimisce, it's the prospect of becoming mortal again.

The Path of Cathari has much to recommend itself to childer raised by traditional Tzimisce sires — utter selfishness, vice and wealth for its own sake and revelry in the abandon of frenzy.

THE PATH OF DEATH AND THE SOUL

In a way, the Tzimisce have always been Necronomists. Since their first nights, the Fiends have had those among them who made a study of death and limits of pain. The



FROM THE GROUND UP: STORYTELLING METAMORPHOSIS

Given the possibilities of Metamorphosis, Storytellers should approach this Path a bit differently than others. In game terms, Metamorphosis isn't about starting with a high Path rating and avoiding descent into the jaws of the Beast Within. It's about starting near the bottom and hunting any information or developing any technique that will allow the Cainite to progress. In one sense, be flexible with the Hierarchy of Sins, because seekers of *Azhi Dahaka* find different ways to implement its abstract ideals. But don't let them get away with anything — their progression along the Path should build upon what they have learned before. They can unlearn some elements but not without questioning their actions (i.e., making many Virtue rolls).

Finally, Storytellers and players should keep in mind that a rating in the Path of Metamorphosis doesn't necessarily represent how close a Cainite has come to the *Azhi Dahaka*. All it represents for sure is how well their beliefs subdue the Beast.

AN INFERIOR GOLCONDA

If the Path of Metamorphosis ends in *Azhi Dahaka*, then a Storyteller might wish to explore a story in which a character attains this state. What happens? Rules-wise, higher existences are tricky because hard-and-fast guidelines rob the accomplishment of its mystery ("If the character sees God, she may ask him 1d3 questions").

Metamorphosis raises the same issues as Golconda: If it's possible in your chronicle, how does a character accomplish it? By some accounts, undeath allows for only one definite state above vampirism. By others, it depends on the individual. What if *Azhi Dahaka* is just a metaphysical dead end, some change that confers a few benefits but is ultimately just advanced vampirism?

However the Storyteller decides to handle this question, achieving Metamorphosis should be more than earning a Path rating of 11. Certainly, any candidate for Metamorphosis must adhere faithfully to the Path, though some Tzimisce consider its precepts limiting. The character might gain higher ratings ceilings than his generation normally allows (maybe 7 rather than the 10 allowed by Golconda). He might acquire advanced understanding of Tzimisce Disciplines. Maybe Golconda isn't just a myth, and Metamorphosis is Golconda.

Keep in mind that that the Path predicates itself on being utterly inhuman and, ultimately, unlike the Curse of Cain — does the character still need to drink blood or fear sunlight and frenzy? A final note: Since the state is so alien, it almost certainly causes several derangements and may well make the character unsuitable for play. Would a Cainite who just achieved a higher state of existence have anything in common with her former pack? If you're playing a character who might achieve Metamorphosis, talk to your Storyteller and discuss whether it would enrich the story or just snatch your character away at the moment of his ascension.

modern form of this study, codified into the Path of Death and the Soul, bears the mark of these ancient experiments. Most Cainites have little doubt that Fiends conceived this Path — its design is unmistakably Tzimisce — although every Cainite ponders death in his own way, the Necronomists regard it so... scientifically.

Necronomists tend to disregard conventional moralities in their study of death. In the most violent Sabbat cities, the local Necronomists are more than happy to collect any corpses left over after a Blood Feast or indiscriminate feeding. Some aren't above trading a favor to a Cainite skilled with Necromancy in exchange for the chance to ask their cadavers a few questions. The most knowledgeable seek out Noddists for information on the Cappadocians, an extinct clan that supposedly understood the mysteries of life and death.

Though small in number, the Necronomists, the majority of whom are Fiends, have enjoyed increasing power in recent nights because of their association with the Harbingers of Skulls. Few Cainites had anything of

worth to give these skull-faced warlocks when they escaped their imprisonment. Such old Cainites had more to offer the Sabbat than the Sabbat had to offer them. Certain Necronomists had an understanding of the soul that impressed even this clan of death. Many Lazarenes, versed in the oldest philosophies of the undead, converted to the Path of Death and the Soul.

The exchange of knowledge between the two groups has yielded more than academic benefits. With the threat of such venerable Cainites behind them, some Necronomists, formerly regarded as distracted intellectuals, have risen to become ducti or bishops. One was even confirmed through the Blood Bath as a priscus, who now exploits his travels as an opportunity to study fatal calamities all over the Western Hemisphere. He's dug through collapsed buildings in earthquake-shattered Mexico and picked smoldering skulls from forest fires in Colorado. I spoke to him at the last *Palla Grande*; he now seems bent on persuading the regent to form closer ties to the Giovanni clan — his investigations have lead him to believe that the

family has some grand design that could benefit all of Caine's children.

THE PATH OF EVIL REVELATIONS

Soul, self, identity, ego — whatever it is, it's precious to the Tzimisce. Few, then, throw away their most valued possession — the essential freedom of their existence — for whatever temporal power Hell's con men are pushing this week. Nothing's worth a Tzimisce soul. A Fiend desperate enough to resort to infernalism is beneath contempt.

Of course, making a deal with the Devil is not always the same as selling him your soul. Kupala's Night comes to mind....

THE PATH OF THE FERAL HEART

The Path of the Feral Heart demonstrates the generational divide that grows between Tzimisce neonates and elders. Although older Fiends cannot believe that younger Cainites can master the Beast without a moral education, Tzimisce Embraced in the Final Nights — especially those nomadic packs that move from city to city — embark on the Path of the Feral Heart under the tutelage of many different Beasts who, like itinerant preachers, seek converts during *ritae* or crusades. Fortunately, most of their would-be students are too young to exist by such an esoteric philosophy. Some learn to act like Beasts, but few master the Beast Within.

But to the young urban predators who do take up the Path in earnest, the Metamorphosis espoused by their elders is superstitious nonsense. These neonates believe that being a Cainite is already, in itself, a higher state of existence. The secret is not to transcend the Curse of Caine, but to master it.

Only the rare Tzimisce advances far along this Path. But in some cities, particularly in Mexico, gangs of Tzimisce, most of them veterans of the Second Sabbat Civil War, embrace the Feral Heart. They remind me of the packs that razed Thorns on the night of the infamous convention. They share their blood with Assamites and Brujah and all manner of mongrel Cainites.

THE PATH OF HONORABLE ACCORD

Few Tzimisce outside the Children of the Dragon follow the Path of Honorable Accord. Those who do are usually neofeudalists or the childer of traditional Fiends who joined the Sabbat out of necessity rather than sympathy. To some Fiends, bravery, hospitality and punishment of the dishonorable are assumed behaviors, not a philosophy that requires great focus to uphold. But voicing this opinion to Tzimisce Knights can be perilous — the small number who still exist are usually very well connected to older powers within the clan.



THE PATH OF LILITH

Cast out of Eden, you say? Pain is the greatest teacher, you say? Ultimate freedom and self-discovery, too? If not for the fact that the Path is considered heretical even within the Sabbat, and that the Path rejects temporal wealth and power, Clan Tzimisce might have become Clan Bahari by now. Still, is it any surprise that individuals from a clan characterized as a bunch of mad scientists, Metamorphosists, pervers and scholars of eldritch lore might be attracted to the Path of Lilith?

Lilin Tzimisce are the eccentric vanguard of our eccentric clan. These Fiends usually combine the most respected pursuits of the clan with their maligned following of Lilith. They hunt down lore with a curiosity to rival any Noddist, raise their childer with the care of the most dutiful sire and seek an understanding of the universe that exceeds the ambition of all but the most obsessive Metamorphosist. To date, bloody disagreements between Lilins and those who revere Caine keep the numbers of heretics to a minimum.

THE PATH OF POWER AND THE INNER VOICE

A Lasombra named Lord Marcus claims to have developed the Path of Power and Inner Voice in the 16th century. Is there anything the Lasombra won't steal from the Tzimisce?

Look at the tenets of the Path—what Keeper has ever respected a superior or waited until he faltered before usurping him?

Although some Tzimisce Unifiers are neofeudalists, most Fiends who follow this Path preserve the outlook rather than the trappings of the Transylvanian *voivodes*. Driven by their Path, Fiend Unifiers are among the most powerful Tzimisce in the Sabbat. They seek any position of authority, whether secular or spiritual. The numbers of pack priests and *prisci* who follow this Path rival the numbers of Unifier bishops and ducti.

A noteworthy portion of the clan's strength lies in the Unifiers — it is a great innovation of the Sabbat's that their most power-hungry members are also bound to respect their betters and treat their underlings well. While our clan is hardly the meritocracy that some make it out to be, the Unifiers keep the Tzimisce tough and lean. Acquiring power isn't enough — one must also keep it.

REVENANTS

At least one aspect of our clan has endured: the servitude of the revenant families, those mortal lines that have borne our blood for so long that they no longer require its constant infusion. If the mortal world frightens you, old one, seek protection from the revenants. Though their numbers are far smaller than you may remember,

their loyalty to our clan remains unquestionable, excepting the odd rebellious child.

Since your time, at least, revenants have served the Fiends as caretakers, advisors, warriors and potential childer. Though the mortal life span has lengthened during your slumber, revenants still live far longer than mortals — some revenant children know their great-great-great-great-great grandmothers. The members of each family still share a particular weakness of the blood. Different families exhibit different aspects of Caine.

Perhaps you can tell me how these revenant families come to be? We have little to go on in these modern times. According to Wallachian folklore, some families were so evil that anyone who shared their name was cursed to serve devils. Since these families owned and cultivated so much of the tainted soil of the "land beyond the forest," some *koldun* believe that that they became bound to their holdings by greed or obligation. More scientific Fiends, like myself, believe that the constant ingestion of Tzimisce blood from birth to death for so many generations created the revenants. But Assamites and Giovanni, with domains in lands untouched by indigenous land-spirits, have supposedly created their own families; how many ways can one make a revenant?

The mystery of their origins pales next to the mystery of their name. "Revenant" means "one who returns." When do revenants ever "return"? Perhaps they do so each generation without needing new Blood.

The standard explanation from the patriarchs of the families is the tale of a servant. His last name depends on who's telling the story. He was so useful to his lord that the noble wanted him to "return" again and again until the end of the world so that he would always have a capable servant. His descendents were the servant's vehicle to immortality. Some heretical Bratovitches tell a slightly different version of this story in which the family receives the Blood in exchange for teaching the Tzimisce *Vicissitude*.

Though some of our clanmates have grown tired of the revenant experiment and would see them destroyed as a threat to our sect's secrecy, the families still have their uses: They provide reliable hospitality to traveling Fiends. They produce the most suitable agents for dealing with the daytime world — *szlachta* are too warped, *vozhd* are useless outside their capacity as behemoth war machines, and ghouls unfamiliar the clan's ways are young and ignorant — they require too many years of remedial education. Revenants can exploit un-Blooded relatives of their families as well — though they are not revenants, their heritage makes them exceptional mortals (more than a dozen members of the 143-seat Romanian *Senat* are rumored to be related to a Bratovitch or Zantosa). Given enough time, who knows how advanced a species they can become? Finally, the revenants record the history that most of our clan is unconcerned with. In the ignorant Final

Nights, a few Obertus know more about the clan than many Fiends themselves.

Four revenant families and several minor lineages have endured to the Final Nights. Some of the families have met their fates, old one. Larger families absorbed the Narov and Ruthvenski. The Obertus, fearing a similar fate, use a surprisingly primitive method to ensure balanced numbers of male and female offspring so that too many daughters won't marry away the family name into obscurity. The last names Vlaszy and Khavi aren't entirely lost, but they are preserved only in revenants who received the Embrace. Another three families are so hated that the few Tzimisce who remember them refuse to speak their names. It pains me too much to even write them — no doubt you already suspect their names.

BRATOVITCH

Colorful as peacocks, unclean as swine, mean as rabid dogs — the Bratovitches in a nutshell. They live out their extended lives on their dilapidated plantations in the South and rural estates in the hills of the North. Surrounded by quaint but dusty antiques, families of Bratovitches work together, eat together, fuck together, tend the hellhounds together and serve our clan together. Family is everything to the Bratovitches, even if all that togetherness leaves a few of them paralyzed and/or knocked up.

The history of our clan is the history of the Bratovitch family. In feudal Europe, Bratovitches ruled many eastern demesnes. If the land was at war with its neighbors and the serfs smiled when they died, chances were a Bratovitch held power. Though more Tzimisce in those nights bore the name Szantovich, Bratovitch Fiends constituted the majority in what is now Poland and along the border between Transylvania and Wallachia. By their own account, they were the first revenant family, or at least the first the Tzimisce didn't destroy within a few years of its creation.

When the Tzimisce anarchs rebelled against their sires, the Bratovitch revenants sided with the *voivodes*. It really wasn't a tough decision to make — some of the clan's most powerful elders were Bratovitch, and every child of the family had been told from birth that disobeying their masters was the only sin they were not allowed to commit.

But the Bratovitches hadn't reached such stature through suicidal obedience. When it came time to switch loyalties to the anarchs, they knew how best to make amends. They slaughtered every Bratovitch child who had been born since the revolt began. No young revenant would remember that the family had served anyone other than the anarchs.

Even in the Final Nights, the family serves the rebels, who now call ourselves the Sabbat. Although Bratovitches are rarely lords of demesnes any longer, they have retained the bestial features of their ancestors — heads too big for their hunched bodies, mouths with too many teeth, tiny eyes arranged a bit too close together to avoid notice but that nonetheless warn of a cannibal intelligence.

While the Bratovitches have forever lost the noble status of nights past, they remain useful to us. Many estates harbor kennels of hellhounds. Their keepers breed dogs for size and ferocity, then feed them meat laced with Tzimisce vitae. The Bratovitches fleshcraft the resulting monsters to meet the needs of their clients, usually the Tzimisce who donates the blood or high-ranking Sabbat in need of loyal and alert guardians.

Not every Bratovitch tends the hounds. Although most traveling Fiends would rather dig their own temporary grave than take shelter at a Bratovitch estate, the revenants of this family also serve as guides and trackers through the countryside. In the modern nights, few Tzimisce traipse through the woods. When they do, they want someone at their side who knows how to avoid

*TREASURE THOSE WHO GUARD YOU,
WHO BEAR YOUR BLOOD AS THEIR STRENGTH.
PROTECT THEM FROM DANGER,
AND CHERISH THEM AS YOUR OWN.
FOR WITHOUT THEM
YOU ARE NAKED BEFORE THE SUN
AND HELPLESS BEFORE YOUR ENEMIES.*

Lupines. And when it comes to a rural manhunt, the Bratovitches and their bloodhounds are bred for the job.

GRIMALDI

I'm not sure that you've dealt with the Grimaldi — they became a Blooded family only a century or two before you fell into torpor. But I'm sure you dealt with Radu Bistri, the spokesmen for the Old World *voivodes*. Radu brought the family into the Blood to strengthen the clan's ties to the mortal world, and they continue to fulfill that role today. They understood the new economy that was overtaking Europe at the time. A few of Radu's contemporaries wanted to use the Giovanni family instead, but — oh dear. Ask Ezra what happened to the Cappadocians while you slept — Radu insisted on the Grimaldi because the Giovanni had a reputation as thieves and double-dealers while the Grimaldi were regarded as upright and honest merchants.

Even in the Final Nights, the Grimaldi continue to involve themselves in the mortal world where we would find it distasteful. Within the cities that house their compounds, the Grimaldi have access to the highest mortal powers — positions in government, industry or the media. Though some Grimaldi claim this authority directly, more often they advise it. Grimaldi advise mayors, editors in chief and board members of corporations.

They marry those they can't advise. Grimaldi and Kennedy mingle their blood in America — Grimaldi and Duckworth in England. The high positions of the Grimaldi revenants are useful to the Sabbat, but far more useful is their connection to those who share just a bit of our blood, the distant relations who profit from their superior breeding but remain ignorant of their august heritage.

The Camarilla upholds a Tradition known as "the Masquerade" — a pact among Cainites to keep their existence hidden from humanity. Though some factions in the Sabbat find the Camarilla's obsession with hiding to be distasteful, we maintain our own Masquerade out of good common sense. Since you survived the Inquisition, I'm sure you understand this better than I.

This revenant family's most important service to us is to keep mortals ignorant of the Curse of Caine. The Grimaldi sustains our Masquerade whenever some reckless child threatens to reveal us to the mortal world. An injudicious rumble with another pack, a sloppy feeding or a sighting of a Cainite using a Gift of Caine — the Grimaldi have concealed these and other truths from the kine.

They bury the most obvious evidence of Cainites in the most mundane ways. A few years ago, a mortal in Boston witnessed one of our clanmates assume the blood-form and wash over a car, drowning those inside. A respected reporter who does not go by the name Grimaldi but is of the Blood nonetheless received the police report within an hour of its filing from her lover in the police department. She called her contact at a national tabloid (a disreputable town crier, old one). The tabloid ran the

story two days later, and the world viewed it as a sensational fairytale. Her police contact "misfiled" the report. When it resurfaced several weeks later, the story was already old and, because it appeared in a tabloid first, already dead.

Still, some of the moral uprightness for which the family was Blooded has withered under our care. Though their children are often sent to the best private schools, they are expelled far too often for aggravated incidents ranging from ear biting to hostage taking. And a few upstart children reject their family's purpose, denouncing their family's fortune and their Tzimisce masters. They try to live as true mortals and make a great show of just how human they are by helming charitable foundations or becoming doctors or cut-rate attorneys that speak for the poor. Their parents are sometimes too sentimental to deal with them properly, though, thankfully, even the most rebellious Grimaldi understands circumspection.

Despite a few errant children, I have no doubt that the Grimaldi are the most loyal of the revenant houses and that they will serve us until Gehenna arrives. Although they work in the interests of the Tzimisce first, the family is at the disposal of the Sabbat at large. Every Grimaldi is blood bound to a member of the Sabbat, not necessarily a Fiend, at an age convenient to the Cainite. These Sabbat usually hold some authority — a bishop, archbishop, priscus or the odd ductus or pack priest of a famous pack. The regent even keeps a dedicated Grimaldi *retinue* in Mexico City to apprise her of goings-on in the mortal world.

If anything will challenge the Grimaldi's loyalty in the next few years, it will be the regent. One of the patriarchs of the family, bound to me 200 years ago, reports that the regent no longer bonds the children of the estate and refuses to feed her blood to the older *retinue*, though she has been far too eager to do so for the past several years. My revenant suspects that her blood has turned to water, perhaps, or that she has contracted our clan's particular disease and wishes to keep it a secret.

OBERTUS

The smell of a clean room always takes me back to the first time I visited an Obertus estate. I remember that the air riptides over untextured hardwood floors that offer no sanctuary to dirt. This dry air (the Obertus regard humidity like we regard an uninvited guest) surfs over texts stolen from the Library of Alexandria, sold or donated to monasteries in Old Byzantium, again stolen from Orthodox cathedrals — in that unmentionable time when the family fled Constantinople to places like Bucharest and Oradea and Sibiu — centuries later shipped in watertight trunks to the New World, packed with the care of a family that has witnessed history through a looking glass. These texts adorn the libraries of the Obertus — dustless, preserved, eternal despite their ancient origins. Not even the Children of the Dragon may touch these perfect works

unless they wash their hands and their servants surrender their cigarettes. In these matters, Obertus are obedient but insistent. Their estates are very clean.

Most Fiends know that a fourth revenant house serves their clan, some house of scholars that occasionally research obscure subjects for their masters. The *koldun* scratch their heads — they don't remember instilling the Blood in them; the lineage must be an obscure one. (Mexico City hosts a Bratovitch estate, a Zantosa estate and two compounds full of Grimaldi, but no House Obertus.) A few Tzimisce — the *Voivode*, the *prisci*, some Noddists, Metamorphosists and the odd Lilin — know this family as the Obertus, revenants who serve as keepers of books, texts, artifacts and records that the clan has accumulated over the centuries. Toward the end of their lives, some Obertus write books of their own to add to the collection. The Children of the Dracon know the Obertus even more intimately — the family serves them not only as archivists, but servants, protectors and their primary source of childer.

Dracon or no, the dutiful Obertus assist any Fiend who may have need of them. Such aid is a necessary distraction that devours centuries. Most of these revenants, in the family's obsessive way, would rather reread tomes they've already studied 50 times, playing cat-and-mouse with details they didn't know to look for a decade earlier.

Most members of the Obertus family develop an obsession to which they dedicate the centuries. Most, instructed in the barely explainable nuances of the world of Cainites since birth, fixate on supernatural studies — many explore the Curse of Caine, studying ancient genealogies or writing treatises on why certain clans are more adept at subduing minds than others. Many investigate more obscure topics: wizards, Lupines, extinct mystery cults and the end of the world.

Do not think that their loyalty is universal: A member of my pack, an Obertus in life, tells me that a few of her relatives, not the youngest or the oldest but a group that came of age when Social Darwinism was an acceptable topic for Sunday dinner conversation, prepare the way for *Homo sapiens* to become *Homo obertus*. Evolution results from climate changes and other selective pressures, but these Obertus foresee no great calamity — no Armageddon, Gehenna or World War III. Thousands of small calamities will suffice. Smog, AIDS, democratic capitalism, crank, automobiles, asbestos and super-sized McDonalds meals already cull the weak. This environment favors the hearty. To survive the modern nights, it helps if your mother and father can offer you the Blood of Caine. In that regard, the Obertus have what it takes to endure. The sages shall inherit the Earth.

For the conceits about being a well-Blooded family, it's doubtful that their ancestors were related at all. The "Obertus," or "the hidden," have served the Tzimisce

since the nights of Constantinople as monastic clergy, keeping the faith that the Byzantine Cainites had built around themselves. Only the family itself knows how it came to Eastern Europe. Although they weathered the early Tremere-Tzimisce struggles, isolated scholars were of little use in the nights of the Anarch Revolt. The eldest revenants of the Obertus, erudite historians of generational conflict among the undead, must have known that history favored the childer. They sided with the nascent Sabbat against their elders and, a bloody century later, abandoned their manses and monasteries in favor of the New World. When the Sabbat began its migration to the Americas, their learned servants were at the docks to welcome them.

Throughout New England and both South and Central America, estates of Obertus prosper in quiet fishing villages and out-of-the-way hamlets, home schooling their children in the names of our hoary clan and its history. The older generations, weary of child rearing, continue the family's studies. The younger Obertus, the doting parents, await the night when their child finally "sets her mind on something." And if a few wayward progeny cannot find a study worthy of obsession... well, someone's got to do the wash.

ZANTOSA

Sex on rooftops. White slavery. Heroin injected under the tongue because most of the veins — fucking revenant veins — collapsed. Penthouse snuff films. Murders of the rich and famous. Highballs and piano wire. Children mowed down by hit and run. Working girls taken by the ears. A thousand in cash for the cop to look the other way. The most powerful men in America gone totally sideways for a week and three days. Football in traffic and an appetite for horse meat. STDs passed around like joints. Dance to death.

These sins are more familiar to you than they may sound, old one. Sins of excess dominate the New World, and the Zantosa are addicted to them all. They are the Szantoviches you may remember, the aristocracy of the Old World that never met a temptation it did not succumb to. If the book of the nailed kine-god condemns it, somewhere, a Zantosa treats it as sacrament.

Although I no longer see the appeal of such a lifestyle, I know that mortals enjoy such things. Perhaps it is a weakness of the Zantosa blood that they form habits so quickly.

Although some of my peers believe that their usefulness to our cause has passed, their playfulness endears them to me. They have already taken the first step to transcending their humanity. They discard the usual mortality that most kine bear chained to their ankles. Some of them even follow the Path of Cathari, a debauched road that few Cainites can traverse with such success as these demi-undead.

Many of my fellow Sabbat would prefer never to deal with humanity. Then let the Zantosa deal with the kine, I say. Although they often succumb to addiction, they maintain valuable connections to the mortal world. I have often found it true of humanity that the more powerful the kine, the more he is ruled by unusual passions. The Zantosa know such people; they throw parties for them at their estates in New York and Mexico City — the jet-set Arab sheik that snorts a significant fraction of his country's GDP up his nose every year. The Viacom CFO who always has that *thing* up his ass. The mob *capo* who offers a share of the rackets in exchange for a mistress named Zantosa. The editor of the *New York Times* who collects photos that his paper would never, ever print. The Senator who staffs his meth lab with young girls from Indonesia and Paraguay. Allow these humans to indulge their passions discreetly, and you are their most valuable association: their dealer.

I have heard that in your time, old one, more Tzimisce bore the name Szantovich than any other. Although some of our clanmates still grant the Zantosa undeath, the family now produces neonates for several clans of the Sabbat. The Toreador *antitribu*, the Serpents of the Light and a few of the Hungarian Ventrue *antitribu* lineages now draw childer from the family that was once practically synonymous with our clan. The Toreador *antitribu* appreciate the smoke-it-or-fuck-it lifestyle of the Zantosa. The Serpents of the Light, like their parent clan, are hypnotized by corruption and vice, and the Hungarian Ventrue are reminded of their Old World nobility whenever the Zantosa release more peasants for the hunt.

GHOULS

Although a vocal portion of the Sabbat views reliance on mortals as a sign of weakness, as I'm sure Cainites of your time did, many of the sect's members share their blood with humans and even less impressive species. The Tzimisce are no exception — although most of us prefer to use revenants for more complex tasks, the clan has a long history of relying on mortals as soldiers, bodyguards, butlers and test subjects. Given our mastery over the animal kingdom, we are not above using beasts, especially predators.

It is a common conceit that few Tzimisce ghouls escape their servitude unaltered — that their modifications forever distinguish them and fit them to their tasks. While this is certainly true of some of our brethren, the entire Cainite enterprise would be uncovered and extinguished if every Fiend lead an army of *szlachta* howling through the night. Some Tzimisce fleshcraft their ghouls, but this is notable in that we are the only Cainites, as a clan, capable of performing such modifications.

That said, the arts of Vicissitude have not been lost while you slumbered, old one. When it comes to our ghouls, not even the youngest Fiends have been able to completely discard our

traditions. Although, to my knowledge, none has been seen for at least a century, some children of Tzimisce still know (instinctively, my sire once said) the name *wozhd*.

GHOUL TEMPLATES

Below are templates for the most common types of ghouls that serve Clan Tzimisce. Some ratings differ slightly from those published in other supplements. Different Tzimisce build different ghouls. Besides, if the player or Storyteller has time, individual ghouls should probably be customized — a “generic” ghoul is no more realistic than a “generic” Cainite. In a pinch, use whatever templates you prefer.

HELLHOUND

Hellhounds are large dogs, mostly mastiffs, made ghouls to serve the Tzimisce. In the Dark Ages, Tzimisce took advantage of the hellhound's animal awareness and bred ferocity to protect their havens. Bratovitch revenants continue to breed them and sometimes use their fleshcrafting skills to give their dogs larger fangs, stronger muscles and, through a technique known to the oldest Bratovitches, keener eyesight and sense of smell.

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Not applicable

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 4, Stealth 2

Disciplines: Potence 2

Willpower: 6

Blood Pool: 4

Attack: Bite/5 dice, Claw/3 dice

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

SZLACHTA

In the Final Nights, *szlachta* has become a catchall term for ghouls fleshcrafted for use as bodyguards. Fiends mold these creatures to be soldiers or guardians, so they have any number of spikes, claws, serrated protuberances and other bodily implements of destruction. The template below describes just one variety of *szlachta* — most Tzimisce with any skill at fleshcrafting give their ghouls signature deformities. Some also mark their property like a rancher marks cattle.

Humanoid *Szlachta*

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Melee 1, Stealth 2, Survival 4 (Tracking)

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 1

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

Morality: Humanity 2

Willpower: 4

Attacks: Most *szlachta* have bony protrusions, spikes or teeth that cause lethal damage.

Health Levels: As per the mortal stock from which they were drawn. This is typically the normal seven health levels possessed by any (once-) human being.

Animal Szlachta

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Not applicable

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Stealth 3

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 2

Willpower: 2

Attacks: Bite/5 dice, Claw/3 dice

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated.

VOZHD

Vozhd are gigantic amalgamations of ghouls, at least two stories tall and weighing almost six tons. Their very bodies are implements of destruction, covered as they are with mouths full of razor-sharp teeth, six-foot bone spikes jutting out at every possible angle and tentacles to draw prey into their reach. These creatures have little intelligence, are notoriously too enraged to control reliably and have but one use: to destroy everything in sight.

The creation of such a monstrosity requires at least 15 creatures, though some include well over 30. The Obertus library in New York City houses an account of a *vozhd* created from 100 ghouls contributed by six different Fiends.

Animals, as well as humans, can be used to create these beasts. In the Old World, most Tzimisce who knew the proper rituals used wolves, goats and falcons, even the horses and livestock of their subjects when other animals were scarce. Few Tzimisce know how to create *vozhd* in the modern nights, but among the packs of Mexico City, rumors persist of titanic monstrosities composed of human bodies mingled with household pets, sea creatures or thousands of smaller animals such as rats or snakes.

To create a *vozhd*, the Fiend fleshcrafts the ghouls together into something like a cohesive entity. Perhaps she forms all the ghoul's skeletons into one structure then wraps it with the ghouls' flesh and organs. Though the process can take months, the Fiend must hurry because these broken creatures, not yet one entity, require constant infusions of vitae to prevent death from shock. Still, a certain amount of prolonged suffering is necessary to give the resulting *vozhd* the proper rage.

Once the construction is complete, the Tzimisce feeds the ghouls a concoction of blood drawn from each of them, in effect creating a blood bond among all the minds that will eventually become the *vozhd*. Building upon this bond, the Fiend must coalesce the Beasts Within into a single, albeit mad and imperfect, Beast. Traditionally, a *koldunic* ritual creates this effect, though the ritual is almost unknown in the modern nights. A few Tzimisce have gained such a sophisticated understanding of the Animalism Discipline that they can bring about the same result.



Even at the height of the clan's dominance in the Old World, few Tzimisce knew the proper ritual and fewer still resorted to the creation of such uncontrollable wrecking machines. In the modern nights, even the most learned Tzimisce elders can count the number of *vozhd* they know to exist on one hand.

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6

Social: Not applicable

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Disciplines: Fortitude 4, Potence 6 (Note: immune to all powers of Dominate, Presence and Animalism below five dots)

Willpower: 10

Blood Pool: 20/2

Health Levels: OK (x5), -1 (x5), -2 (x5), -5 (x3), Incapacitated

Attack: Strike/8 dice + Potence; Bite 8 dice, automatic on the turn after a grab; Crush/6 dice + Potence, constrict thereafter

Multiple Attacks: *Vozhd* receive 10 extra dice to divide among multiple attack dice pools, though no individual attack may exceed the *vozhd*'s usual Dexterity + Brawl dice pool

Abilities: Alertness 5, Brawl 2, Intimidation 6

Note: At the Storyteller's discretion, the sight of a *vozhd* may call for a Willpower or Rötshreck roll or a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 10) to avoid a spontaneous derangement.

DERANGEMENTS

Many Tzimisce treat their ghouls like painters might treat canvases if they were free and available in unlimited supply. Few Tzimisce consider the psychological damage their experiments cause. Serving the Tzimisce, or worse, serving as their labrats, causes some ghouls to develop severe mental disorders. **Ghouls: Fatal Addiction** lists some ghoul-specific derangements. Included below are three derangements that Tzimisce ghouls have a particularly high risk of developing. With the exception of Sexual Dysfunction, these derangements are also appropriate for Cainites.

Revenants have a high risk of developing these derangements, not only because of their contact with Tzimisce but their abusive childhoods as well. A revenant who grew up knowing that her father would bite off one of her fingers every time she misbehaved might become histrionic in the search for affection. Or she might have flashbacks of the night daddy bit off her pinkie for dropping a plate. She might be unable to trust a lover because of her father's mistreatment. If she eventually becomes a Cainite, she will most likely carry these scars even into undeath.

HISTRIONICS

Some ghouls sublimate their urge to escape or believe that their new powers entitle them to a certain amount of attention. Ghouls who develop histrionics must be center stage in all situations. They affect extreme but shallow emotions or behave and dress provocatively. Each scene, a histrionic ghoul must spend a point of Willpower to avoid seeking the spotlight

SERVANTS OF THE BLOOD

Below are the Disciplines that the various revenants have access to and the weakness that afflicts each family. For more information on revenants, see the **Guide to the Sabbat** (pp. 216-219) and **Ghouls: Fatal Addiction**.

Bratovitch

Disciplines: Animalism, Potence, Vicissitude

Weakness: The Bratovitches are a temperamental bunch. Their impatience rivals that of the hotheaded Brujah. They tend to upset or offend well-adjusted mortals with their rabid demeanor. Raise their difficulties to resist frenzy by two.

Grimaldi

Disciplines: Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude

Weakness: Grimaldi serve not just the Fiends, but the Sabbat at large. To ensure their loyalty, every member of the family is blood bound to a True Sabbat of some authority.

Obertus

Disciplines: Auspex, Obfuscate, Vicissitude

Weakness: A family of unbalanced intellectuals, most Obertus have obsessive/compulsive disorder (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 222) or a similar intellectual derangement.

Zantosa

Disciplines: Auspex, Presence, Vicissitude

Weakness: Zantosa make easy marks for temptation. Members of the family cannot spend Willpower to resist supernatural enticements to pleasure. Regardless of the source of the temptation, a Zantosa must succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty determined by the Storyteller) whenever he particularly enjoys an experience. Failure indicates that the Zantosa becomes addicted to the experience and obsessively seeks to relive it as often as possible.

in some way. If his quest for recognition is unsuccessful, he cannot spend Willpower; raise his difficulty to avoid frenzy by three for the rest of the scene.

Vampires develop this derangement as well. A child might subconsciously rebel against the indifference of a sire. An old Cainite who lacks the status implied by his age might become obsessed with being noticed. A Nosferatu might overcompensate for his hideous appearance or even for spending too much time Obfuscated.

Players beware: This derangement isn't a license to hog every scene, then write it off as roleplaying. Histrionics are hypersensitive to the opinions of others, not oblivious to the glares of the crowd as they enact some slapstick melodrama. Histrionic cases are pathetic, and most people recognize them as such the first time they flash their shit-eating grins or refuse to leave the stage. A histrionic might latch onto one person the entire evening and pester her for every ounce of attention. He might become sullen or leave in a huff if he believes that someone has upstaged him. If your Storyteller allows this derangement, roleplay it as the emotional disorder it is rather than an excuse to be obnoxious.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) arises in response to severe trauma such as combat, rape or servitude to a Tzimisce. A ghoul who has been the subject of his master's latest experiment with superdermal bone art or witnessed his hungry master devour his mortal family might develop this derangement. PTSD can even afflict vampires, perhaps those who survived a Lupine attack or awoke one night to find their havens on fire.

Symptoms manifest as recurrent, debilitating flashbacks and extreme avoidance of situations likely to recreate the initial trauma. The player of a ghoul or Cainite afflicted with PTSD must spend a point of Willpower for her character to enter such situations. If compelled by a blood bond or other forms of control, the sufferer's player cannot spend Willpower to gain automatic successes on any rolls, and all of the character's dice pools are halved (round down). In any circumstances, botched Willpower rolls or other stimuli deemed appropriate by the Storyteller induce flashbacks of the traumatic episode with the same penalties described above. Ghouls laboring under this disorder are typically disposed of by their domitors. Clan Tzimisce requires servants made of sterner stuff.

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

A ghoul who spends any time in the thrall of a Tzimisce domitor is likely encumbered with a variety of sexual dysfunctions. Female ghouls typically develop vaginismus, involuntary contracting of the vulval and rectal muscles preventing penetration, or dyspareunia, severe pain during intercourse. Males, if not rendered completely impotent, sometimes fixate sexually on acts favored by their domitors. All such conditions are likely to instill an extreme aversion to sex, further separating ghouls from the lifestyles they lead prior to their servitorship.

Before allowing this derangement, Storytellers should consider whether its inclusion will make any players uncomfortable. Many people prefer not to explore such personal issues in detail, especially during a game. Although the setting is a suitable venue for such unpleasantness, you can challenge your players without resorting to poor taste. These caveats in mind, this derangement can be played without mentioning graphic details — Storytellers can extrapolate the likely effects

such a condition might have on a ghoul's relationship with his or her partners.

KOLDUNIC SORCERY

Koldunic Sorcery used to be the province of a few Old World *koldun*. Now, the art trickles down through the generations. Even a few neonates know the ways.

Why have we resorted to teaching children our magic?

It depends on whom you ask. The current *Voivode* believes that the old *koldun* did not volunteer their wisdom. Instead, a pack stole their secrets and disseminated them haphazardly, perhaps to deprive some elder the fearsomeness he wielded as the proprietor of forbidden knowledge. Members of the consistory think that the destruction of the clan's most powerful *koldun* prompted the surviving sorcerers to find students, lest their craft disappear just as Gehenna unfolds.

Koldunism has always been a young Cainites' art, though when it was last widely practiced, long before you fell into torpor, the youngest Cainites were members of the Sixth Generation. Neonates, wide-eyed and newly undead, cling to no myopic opinions about the nature of reality and have yet to fortify their emotional walls against the spirit world. The voice of the land speaks more clearly to the young, as it did to Lugo and Velya.

Koldunic Sorcery hinges on five major paths, or ways: the Ways of Earth, Fire, Water, Wind and the Spirit. The "obscure ways," the paths known to few *koldun* even in blood magic's nights of prominence, have resurfaced amid the *koldunic* revival of the Final Nights. As far as the clan *Voivode* and other Tzimisce elders know, no ancient *koldun* has risen from torpor to teach these ways anew. Rather, it the neonates, the dwindling legacy of Caine, that have resurrected these dead arts. Some Fiends believe that the young *koldun* learn from the spirits themselves.

As the number of *koldun* grows, their ritual repertoire grows as well. Noddists unearth forgotten rituals every few months, but even this pace fails to satisfy some of the new *koldun*. A few prodigies now work to inventing rituals of their own.

THE WAY OF SORROW

From Kruchina, a goddess of mourning depicted as a perpetually weeping woman, to Likho Odnoglazoye, the emaciated one-eyed hag who represented privation and suffering, the pantheons of Eastern Europe brim with deities overseeing starvation, misery, misfortune, bitterness and death. Whether the gods hear their names or the spirits merely attend their mention, a *koldun* who understands the obscure Way of Sorrow can invoke the most dismal powers of the divine. This way pays no heed to gods of revelry or plenty, only those whose attentions promise tragedy.

Like the Way of Fire, the Way of Sorrow is governed by the *koldun*'s Manipulation, but the difficulty for each of the powers is the victim's permanent Willpower rather than the

usual 4 + the level of the power. In addition, a victim may spend a point of Willpower to overcome a particular effect of this way but is still vulnerable to subsequent uses of the Discipline.

A final note: Dealing with forgotten gods requires propriety, especially those who govern such bleak concerns. If invoked incorrectly, the Way of Sorrow turns on the koldun. On a botch, the Fiend suffers the effects of his own power as if she had scored five successes.

MET Systems: When you invoke any level of the *Way of Sorrow*, you spend one Willpower Trait and make a Social Challenge against your opponent (and use the *Koldunism* Ability for retests). If your enemy successfully overbids against you, though, you suffer the effects for five full turns. Generally, if an effect lasts for a number of turns, it takes effect as soon as you use it and lasts based on your turns—that is, if you invoke a power on an enemy for one turn, it takes effect as soon as you finish the challenge and lasts until the beginning of your next turn. Count based on full turns, not on actions, just in case you have multiple actions in a turn (such as from *Celerity*). The opponent may expend one Willpower Trait to resist an emotion-influencing effect of the *Way of Sorrow*, but this does not grant immunity to the Discipline; that is, the target may shrug off a given effect, but could be attacked with it again in the next turn.

• THE FRUSTRATIONS OF NESTRECHA

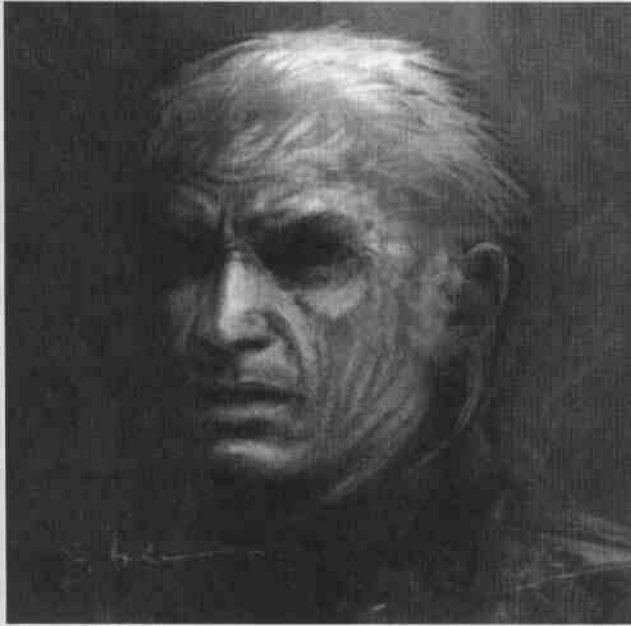
Named for the goddess of grief and failure, this power allows the *koldun* to rob an opponent of his resolve. The *koldun*'s stare saps the target's will to struggle. Although the victim is overcome with a resigned pessimism or feelings of defeat, he can still take action to resist the *koldun*, including combat, but only in a half-hearted or fearful way. He musters none of his usual passion or determination.

System: The *koldun*'s player spends a Willpower point. Roll the *koldun*'s Manipulation + Koldunism (difficulty equal to the victim's Willpower). For one turn per success, her target's player can't spend Willpower points to activate Disciplines or gain automatic successes. In storytelling terms, the victim might also lack strong motivations or convictions for the power's duration ("What difference does it make?" or "I just don't care anymore"). For this power to be effective, the *koldun* must make eye contact with her victim.

MET System: Make eye contact with your subject, and perform the usual expenditures for the *Way of Sorrow* (if you have problems with people going to ridiculous lengths to avoid eye contact, you should look into whatever solution you've opted for *Dominate*). If you best the target in a Social Challenge, then the victim can't use any Willpower Traits to activate any Disciplines until your next turn. When your next turn comes, you may (as a reflexive action) expend a Social Trait and test again to sustain the power against the opponent (assuming it succeeded the first time); you don't need eye contact to maintain the power in this fashion. Once you fail a successive Social Challenge or decide not to maintain the power, it ends immediately.



OPRICHNIKI



The Oprichniki, the vassals of Russia's Tzimisce, can trace their origins down to the year. It was 1565 when Ivan Grozny — Ivan the Terrible as history would later lament — divided his Russian kingdoms and named his secret militia after his principality Oprichnina. During those years, these mortal mercenaries served as cutthroats to a mortal devil; only Vlad Tepes could match Ivan's reign of blood. The Oprichniki, in turn, carried out Ivan's orders, performing acts of terror against the populace, flaying anyone who complained too loudly and boiling the czar's enemies.

The Oprichniki barely survived the reign of Ivan the Terrible, for they suffered his ministrations as well. He turned them upon each other in his final years, and only the vilest of their lot survived. The

Russian Tzimisce took them in and used them as vassals over the remaining century. Surprisingly, the Oprichniki eventually became revenants, even though they never once served upon the Carpathians' blighted soil. Fiends theorize the Oprichniki cursed themselves by serving Ivan the Terrible, though this is more fable than fact.

Even before the rise and fall of the Iron Curtain, the Oprichniki were a well-kept secret, especially from the younger Transylvanian *voivodes*. The Russian Fiends desired the Oprichniki to be their henchmen and major-domos, whether they served as vassals, intermediaries, mouthpieces, bodyguards or cutthroats. As such, the Tzimisce train the Oprichniki from birth to fulfill a variety of assignments and duties.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Tzimisce are finally free of both Brujah idealists spouting proletariat rhetoric and the superstitious elders of the Camarilla casting dubious eyes toward the obviously exceptional skulkers in darkness maintained by the Fiends. With the borders relatively open, the Oprichniki remain hidden from the majority of the clan, serving independent Russian Tzimisce and those affiliated with the Oradea League.

Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Vicissitude

Weakness: The Oprichniki drawback manifests more as a curse than a weakness. All revenants from this family, regardless their ethnic background, suffer at the hands of at least one ghost as per the 3-pt. Supernatural Flaw Haunted (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 302). Russian *koldun* believe the ghosts are the victims of Novgorod, a Russian city that the Oprichniki decimated in their mortal years. Ivan's assault against Novgorod resulted in the murder and torture of thousands of innocent civilians, a crime the revenants carry with them. Even if an Oprichniki finds a way through Disciplines or magic to rid himself of his ghost, another always takes its place. Thus, the curse forever follows the revenants.

•• THE INSULTS OF KRIVDA

Any Fiend worthy of the name can spit out a telling insult. But with this power, Krivda — a goddess of hatred and bitterness — ensures that the remark offends, enraging the recipient. In the Tzimisce-Tremere conflicts of nights long past, *koldun* carried Krivda on their tongues, inciting their Usurper opponents to frenzy. They preferred to deal with angry fangs instead of calculated Thaumaturgy. This is a dangerous power to use, but it can unbalance a physically weak opponent who has access to powerful Disciplines or could be used to embarrass a Cainite by causing him to frenzy in public.

System: After her player spends a Willpower point, the *koldun* insults the target in the most offensive and humiliating way she can conceive. The *koldun*'s player rolls Manipulation + Koldunism (difficulty equal to the victim's Willpower). If the roll is successful, the target flies into an uncontrollable rage and assaults the *koldun*. If the target is a vampire, he must immediately roll to resist frenzy (difficulty 5 + the number of successes on the activation roll).

MET System: Address your victim with some sort of offensive curse as you expend your Willpower and make your Social Challenge. You *must* roleplay some form of insult and offense — if you do not, the power fails automatically. Older Tzimisce might lay out positively Biblical-sounding curses, while young Tzimisce could flay the ears with a gangbanger's lingo. If you perform appropriately and win the Social Challenge, your target immediately flies into a rage and attempts to attack you. In his next turn, your victim *must* make some sort of physical attack against you if at all possible. If the foe is a vampire, he may resist with a *Self-Control* Virtue Test (difficulty of 4 Traits), but if this fails, enters frenzy (which typically lasts at least five minutes).

••• THE WEEPING OF KRUCHINA

The glare of a *koldun* can make someone so miserable that they do nothing but cry. This power does more than spill a few tears — it causes hysterical bawling, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Some depressing notion overcomes the victim. Vampires might mourn their lost *humanitas* or the passing of lovers who died long ago. Sometimes the source is more nebulous — *koldun* believe that it imparts the collected sorrow of their demesnes' sickened soil.

System: The *koldun*'s player spends a Willpower point and rolls the *koldun*'s Manipulation + Koldunism (difficulty equal to the victim's Willpower). For one turn per success, the target is overwhelmed by intense misery and cries uncontrollably. Actions that require concentration are impossible for the power's duration. Cainites lose a blood point each turn as copious amounts of vitae stream from their eyes.

MET System: Make your *Way of Sorrow* test against one opponent; if you win, the subject is overwhelmed with misery and breaks into hysterical sobbing. Although the target might still be able to run away, defend himself or the like, the concentration required for initiating any Mental or Social

Challenge becomes impossible. You may extend the power with additional reflexive Social expenditures and tests, as described for *The Frustrations of Nestrecha*. Each turn that a vampiric opponent spends under this power results in the loss of one Blood Trait due to copious weeping of vitae.

•••• THE MISFORTUNE OF CHERNOGOLOV

With a declaration that a person is doomed or destined to fail, the *koldun* summons the attention of Chernogolov — the silver-mustached god of misfortune — to her victim. Under Chernogolov's unlucky gaze, he is hindered in everything he does. If he fails, he does so spectacularly.

System: The *koldun*'s player spends a Willpower point and rolls the *koldun*'s Manipulation + Koldunism (difficulty equal to the victim's Willpower). For one turn per success, the target automatically loses two successes on every roll he

THE QUICK AND DIRTY GUIDE TO CREATING GHOULS AND REVENANTS

Here's an abridged version of the character creation process for ghouls and revenants. For complete information and new Abilities, Backgrounds, Merits and Flaws specific to ghouls and revenants, see **Ghouls: Fatal Addiction**.

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept: ghoul or revenant.

(Revenants only) Choose a revenant family.

• Step Two: Select Attributes

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

• Step Three: Select Abilities

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

• Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (5), Disciplines (Potence 1 and one dot in another Discipline, see below) and Virtues (7, or 5 for Sabbat ghouls and revenants).

Ghouls: Choose a Discipline known to your domitor.

Revenants: Choose a family Discipline.

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

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

Spend freebie points (21), all freebie costs are the same as for vampire characters except that Disciplines cost 10 per dot.

Note: Revenants produce one point of vitae per evening. This blood cannot create vampires, ghouls or blood bonds. Revenants have a maximum blood pool of 10, plus one for every full century she's existed.

attempts. Botches experienced under the effects of the Misfortune of Chernogolov should be especially disastrous.

MET System: When you call down *The Misfortune of Chernogolov* and speak an appropriately doom-saying phrase, your opponent immediately suffers a two Trait penalty on initiating and resolving any challenge. Thus, the enemy must risk *at least* three Traits just to enter any challenge and loses every additional Trait risked on a failed challenge. Furthermore, the subject is more likely to fail any test due to the penalty Traits. This is cumulative with injury or other penalties that inflict the victim.

••••• THE STARVATION OF MARENA

By invoking the wife of Kupala, the *koldun* summons the cold and starvation that is the domain of Marena. A frosty gale blasts the victim and leaves him emaciated as if he had just survived the coldest of winters. The frostbitten and starving victim clings to (un)life, usually in no condition to contradict the *koldun*. The cold symbolizes of the passage of time in harsh conditions.

System: The *koldun*'s player spends a Willpower point and rolls her Manipulation + Koldunism (difficulty equal to the target's Willpower). For each success, the victim takes two levels of bashing damage that can be soaked normally. In addition to this damage, vampires lose one blood point for each of the *koldun*'s successes — healthy prey was scarce in the Eastern European winter.

MET System: Invoke the name of Marena, and make your *Way of Sorrow* challenge against the victim. If you win, the subject suffers two levels of bashing damage (one in compressed scale) and, if a vampire, loses one Blood Trait. Additionally, if you have more Social Traits than the opponent, your effect may be more lethal: For every two current Social Traits that you have over your victim, score another two health levels of damage and one Blood Trait loss. (If your opponent has more Social Traits than you, there is no penalty other than the possibility of an overbid.)

Enough, Methuselah. I have said enough. I leave you to the fate the modern nights hold in store.

OTHER DISCIPLINES

Troilus Cressida:

Oslo is a shithole. After receiving your letter, Methuselah wished to reply. He dictated, I translated. I've cleaned up his idiom where I could. His fangs are so dull, sire.... Please send for us soon.

—Ezra

Descendant:

In the fulfillment of your Blooded duties to me, you have denied this youngest generation their due. You wrote of them with such contempt. I have moved among them and witnessed their ways. They are hardly the "Mongols" you describe. I have met doctors and men of science, a pack priestess who

spoke until the Sabbat's cause sang through my veins — though I am one this jealous generation would destroy, had I revealed my age. Even your Ezra has impressed me. Its craft would make the Black-Churchers jealous.

But such is the extent of my generosity with others. I shall be far less generous with you. You treated me contemptibly as well and wrote in such familiar tones. Do you think this is my first time to awaken from a long sleep? For this shabby treatment, I keep your childe. Next time, I will feed you to it piece by piece. Those who suffer undeath after my Blood should treat me well.

You have many things to do, grandchilde. I have always known that a Cainite's years are measured in the mastery of his Disciplines. Mortal vogue means nothing to those who can walk the spirit world and subdue the hunger of wolves. You have responsibilities as my descendant. First among them is to be worthy of my Blood. Until your mastery matches my own, you would do well to fear me.

In answer to your question, I looked to Hell.

—Methuselah

ANIMALISM

When Tzimisce became master of the beasts, it became master of the land. So do not greet the animals like a fellow animal. Greet them like a king coming to court. So too the Beast Within, which every Tzimisce should master. I have read of your Paths of Enlightenment and find them too demanding for most of our kind. What the few can accomplish with obscure philosophies, the many can accomplish with this gift from Caine.

Our own Animalism eases truck with peasants. Those who have practiced it are soothing to animals, and such soothing is the stuff of mortal terror. Animals are inconsistent things, accustomed to fright at anything because that is their nature. Even a child can scare a cat. Far more terrible is the man who bends down so the wolf can lick his face. Mortals are more consistent. If no animal avails itself, find the haughty man among them, the one that mortals fear, and Cow the Beast within him. His entire village becomes docile as well.

Cainites do not bow so easily, and such power is useless against them. If you can, call beasts to your aid, but mind that wolves do not scare them. Far better to escape in the flurry of 100 birds and leave the wolves to harry trespassers away from your lands.

Ezra tells me that you seldom leave your haven. As it tells me, your many mouths leave you unpalatable to the mortals you hide among. Then use the beasts to be your eyes in the living world. Ravens are clever observers, and any dog can follow a scent. If you can Subsume the Spirit of the creature, then you will have no need to extrapolate from the simple reports that animals by nature give. But when you ride a beast, ensure that you have ghouls or childer to watch your slumbering form. Ensure that they do not want to taste your blood.

AUSPEX

When Tzimisce learned to see the world as it is, he became a seer worthy of Caine's notice. The blood of the greatest prognosticator sustains every Tzimisce, and when last I awoke, those of us with the sight were given to visions as our Founder was.

Our ability to see is what lends us advantage against the lesser clans. You will understand that it is the greatest gift Caine bestowed on us the first time a shadowed Nosferatu intrudes in your manse. And disturbances in the secret forces around us confuse Toreadors and Malkavians. Their brains are awash in madness, and the swirls of secret forces overwhelm them. A Tzimisce, naturally focused and aware by Blood, can use this confusion for escape or a final blow cheaply earned. Beware that Tremere are similarly focused and aware.

Ezra has told me that your lab overflows with experiments in progress. If so, you have no doubt already realized the benefits of sensitivity. One needs to feel the texture of one's sculpture's skin and hear the discordant pitches of a tortured scream. Likewise, any gaps in your learning can be filled over time by scouring the thoughts of those who already know the methods, adding their knowledge to your own. Embolden your will — most things worth knowing reside in the heads of Cainites.

Long, long ago, before my first slumber, the childer of Tzimisce's childer held duels among themselves in the spirit world, wagering their own blood on the outcome. I have always regretted that this practice did not endure beyond the rise of the Muslims. Although too few possess such mastery, the spirit walker must be prepared to answer when a Tremere comes slicing after his silver chord.

VICISSITUDE

When Tzimisce achieved enlightenment, it became the vitae that now rests in your veins.

So don't be sloppy with it. Our clan alone was gifted with this power because Tzimisce hands are never untrained. We alone possess the resolve to move beyond competence to mastery. But one must be fast as well as capable — a crude rending of flesh is a distraction, a rib through the heart is as good as Final Death.

In these modern nights, even the youngest has access to the most complete anatomical understanding; though our clan sometimes learned such things long before the mortals and understood some truths that mortal science is not yet of a mind to accept, the crafters of my early times lacked this precision. They understood how muscle attached to bone, but even I gawk at the simple intricacy of the your lately discovered "nervous system." In this regard, I almost envy the young....

On to a more practical matter: Vicissitude is the best whip that a domitor can brandish at his ghouls. The threat of alteration suffices for most. If some offense requires punishment, mar the vain and shorten men of stature. When a ghoul persists in its attachment to the world of mortals, your craft can

render him a pariah among his kind. Likewise, a ghoul that is too weak to tote your bales, remold him for strength. In such a way is the master kept happy and the servant allowed to live.

I have survived through times when I had Tremere blood in my mouth every night. In those nights, the fearsome fared better than the beautiful. Serrated bones to saw through the chest into the heart and fat padding the vulnerable places looked unseemly, though I owe my continued existence to their use. But I do not understand the modern enchantment with twisted monstrosity. I have seen creatures of such beauty that they inspire worship among mortals. Do you realize the glory of perfect symmetry? The best Tzimisce find symmetry of another sort — forms built for both beauty and destruction. But when one has mastered the *zulo* form, one can err toward beauty.

No matter how prepared for love or war, Tzimisce should strive to become simple blood. If a Tzimisce can achieve the bloodform, no stake can pierce his heart. The smallest crack is an open doorway. A Tzimisce trapped or imprisoned for weeks can sustain himself on his own form. To wash over a mortal can inspire a whimpering panic, if not death from sudden fright. A Cainite likely frenzies.

The young ones I have spoken with tell me that "V-positive Licks" develop the Eldest's own reliance upon his "ego." I prefer my own terms: How much greater is the Cainite who bears an Antediluvian!

Get to work, Troilus Cressida. The time approaches when I come to test you myself.

DISCIPLINE POWERS

ECSTATIC AGONY (VICISSITUDE LEVEL SIX)

For a Tzimisce who can experience Ecstatic Agony, pain becomes power. The more wounded he is, the more potent he becomes. The Fiend delights in every slash, punch, bullet or burn and channels his pain into physical prowess or incredible displays of Caine's Gifts.

System: After the player spends two Willpower points, the character becomes even more powerful when experiencing pain. For all non-reflexive actions involving a Physical Attribute or use of a Discipline, add his wound penalties to the dice pool. For example, add two dice at the Wounded health level. As the character heals, this bonus wanes. Treat Incapacitated and Final Death normally. This power lasts for one scene.

MET System: You must spend a Willpower Trait to activate Ecstatic Agony. For the duration of a scene, you gain two bonus Physical Traits for each health level of damage you suffer in combat; you can raise your Physical Trait pool above your normal generation limit. Heal yourself, and you will lose any and all bonus Traits earned through this power. If you possess any ability to ignore the wound penalties you receive in combat, you gain no added benefit from Ecstatic Agony.

EYE OF THE SZLACHTA (ANIMALISM LEVEL SIX)

Any Fiend who's been around for a while knows how to possess a lowly beast, but a few can ride any ghoul who shares their blood. By locking eyes with the ghoul (and yes, both parties must have eyes), the Fiend can transfer his soul into the creature, while his body falls into a state resembling torpor. Although some Tzimisce consider such intimate contact with their servants distasteful, sometimes it's necessary to calm a rampaging *wozhd* in a disposable vessel or to "fleshride" a ghoul who can speak and open doors.

System: Use the system for the Animalism 4 power Subsume the Spirit (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 148-149).

MET System: You can impose your indomitable will onto one of your ghouls by spending a Willpower Trait, thereby merging the two souls together. Each Mental Trait you spend increases the strength of this connection, lasting for one night.

1 Trait	Simple Possession
2 Traits	Can use <i>Auspex</i>
3 Traits	Can also use <i>Animalism</i> and <i>Dominate</i>
4 Traits	Can also use <i>Vicissitude</i>
5 Traits	Can also use <i>Koldunic Sorcery</i> , <i>Necromancy</i> and <i>Thaumaturgy</i>

MERITS AND FLAWS

Whether Tzimisce like it or not, they carry a germ of the gestating Antediluvian inside them. Between it, Vicissitude and their often-strange habits, there are unique Merits and Flaws to personalize each Fiend. As always, this section is entirely optional and pending Storyteller approval. This information is not gospel or dogma.

PAIN TOLERANCE (2-PT. PHYSICAL MERIT)

Maybe you've deadened your nerves through Vicissitude. Maybe you're a tough bastard. Maybe it turns you on. Regardless, you ignore one-dice wound penalties. That is, at Hurt or Injured, you suffer no wound penalties. You still suffer full wound penalties at Wounded and below. You must have a Conviction or Courage rating of 3 or more to take this Merit. If you possess the advanced Vicissitude power Ecstatic Agony, you gain no additional dice until you are at least Wounded; your indifference to pain deprives you of its power.

MET System: Your body is hardened to pain, possibly because your nerves just don't convey these adverse feelings or simply because you've experienced suffering and torture beyond comprehension and it has pushed you beyond the average tolerance. As such, you ignore penalties at the Bruised Health levels.

DRACON'S TEMPERAMENT (3-PT. MENTAL MERIT)

Taking the notion of *Azhi Dahaka* to new levels, you've emulated the permutable nature of change and evolution into

your very psyche. Like the protean Dracon, you are a whirlwind of temperaments. Unlike multiple personalities, which gives you more than one identity, you are the same person but with different and changing Natures. Essentially, you either have no anchored sense of self, or you're so mutable that you can be anybody. At the beginning of each story, until its conclusion, you may choose one Personality Archetype to function as your Nature. This doesn't change your identity; it simply alters the way you perceive situations and how you deal with others. You also regain Willpower according to your new Nature and may be affected by other effects or Discipline powers as per your new Nature as well.

MET System: At the start of each game session, you may choose a new Nature. However, the Storyteller may, at his leisure, call you over and swap your present Nature for a new one to act out.

HAVEN AFFINITY (3-PT. SUPERNATURAL MERIT)

Caine's curse resonates strongly in your bones, but it possesses a proven advantage. You are connected to the soil of your prime haven, granting you an extra die to all dice pools when you operate there. It also acts as a mystic beacon to you, allowing you to home in on its location with a standard Perception + Survival roll (difficulty 6), +1 difficulty when a state or country separates you; +2 if you're halfway across the globe. This applies only to your prime haven and to none of your auxiliary shelters.

MET System: You must first spend a Mental Trait and engage in a Simple Challenge with the Storyteller. If successful, you will earn a bonus Trait in all challenges initiated within your haven, as well as feeling a spiritual tug from the direction of your haven. If your haven is a goodly distance away, such as in another city, then the Storyteller may decide to have you make a Hard Test and spend a Willpower Trait rather than a Mental Trait, to reflect the strong mystical connection you share with your distant prime haven.

REVENANT DISCIPLINES (3-PT. SUPERNATURAL MERIT)

The ties to your revenant family stayed with you well past the Embrace. As such, the Disciplines that were innate to you as a ghoul have remained so as Cainite. At character creation, select the ghoul family from which you hail. Instead of the Tzimisce's standard complement of Animalism, Auspex and Vicissitude, you instead draw from your three family Disciplines for your starting allocation (though you may buy other Disciplines with freebies, as normal). Also, you learn your family Disciplines at the cost of a clan Discipline. It's either or, however, meaning you cannot buy both the Tzimisce and family powers at clan cost unless they both share a particular ability like Vicissitude.

MET System: You must first clear the heritage of your revenant family with the Storyteller before purchasing this merit. With Storyteller approval you may, at character creation, take the three innate Disciplines of your revenant

family instead of those of the Tzimisce. Any Discipline not of your revenant family, even ones passed on through the blood of the Tzimisce, must be purchased as is out of clan.

ANCESTRAL SOIL DEPENDENCE (2-PT. SUPERNATURAL FLAW)

Dependence on their native soil hampered the Tzimisce's flight from Eastern Europe. Even a few childer sired elsewhere required the soil of a homeland they had never visited, making them particularly vulnerable to enemies who knew of this weakness. In the modern nights, rapid transportation makes such a threat much less severe, but even childer sired generations after their ancestors relocated occasionally manifest this Flaw.

The will of the spirits from the ancestral Tzimisce homeland weighs heavy on your blood — soil from a place important to you as a mortal won't do. You actually need two handfuls of the tainted Eastern European soil of the Tzimisce homeland. *Ancestral Soil Dependence* most commonly manifests in the childer of *koldun* and the branch of the clan thought to be descended from Yorak. Characters Embraced in Eastern Europe can't take this Flaw (they're already dependant on the local soil).

MET System: Your dependence on the magically rich and diseased soil of Eastern Europe is so severe that, until you are in possession of two handfuls, you will suffer a two-Trait penalty to all challenges.

SCARFACE (2- TO 4-PT. PHYSICAL FLAW)

You're a walking mess of scars. Although you heal damage with Cainite efficiency, the manner in which you do so is all too human. For some reason, the regenerating flesh returns as scar tissue. Vicissitude doesn't help; in fact, it aggravates your condition with stretch marks and cicatrices anywhere your skin breaks. While this doesn't hamper you physically, it does affect your interactions with other people. For 2 points, all Social roll difficulties increase by one.

If you purchase Scarface as a 3-point Flaw, your face and body are so horribly blemished that your Appearance rating can never exceed 2. This is in addition to the limitations mentioned previously. As a 4-point Flaw, the swath of scars is thick enough to hinder your actions through skin-resistance. All Dexterity roll difficulties also increase by one, in addition to the other penalties this Flaw imposes at lesser levels. You can ignore this penalty for one specific action by taking one level of (unsoakable) bashing damage; essentially, you're tearing the scar tissue for greater range of motion. Once you heal that damage, however, the penalty returns.

MET System: As a 2-point Flaw, you suffer the negative Social Traits: *Scarface* x2 that must be open and notoriously presented, on a badge or post-it. As a 3-point Flaw, your Social Traits may never exceed five Traits, and as a 4-point Flaw, you suffer the negatives of the lesser levels, as well as suffering a one Trait penalty to all Physical Challenges.

REVENANT WEAKNESS (3-PT. PHYSICAL FLAW)

You were once part of a revenant family. Following the Embrace, you suffered the double-whammy of your clan's weakness and your revenant family's limitation; whether it's the Bratovitch's propensity to fly into a rage, the Grimaldi's blood bond to the Sabbat, the Obertus' instability or the Zantosa's weak will. The Storyteller might also let you manifest a weakness from a lost or destroyed revenant line. This could add mystery to your background and allow for a bit of genealogical detective work.

MET System: As stated above, you suffer both the weakness of your clan as well as your revenant family limitation. You should work with your Storyteller if you decide to manifest a limitation of a lost or destroyed revenant line.

CONSUMPTION (5-PT. PHYSICAL FLAW)

Portions of the Antediluvian are not only within you, they're active and act like a cancer that devours you from the inside out. Your very blood is wrought with a corrosive, flesh-eating bacteria. At the beginning of each evening, you suffer one health level of bashing damage that cannot be soaked nor healed with blood. The only way to counteract the effect is by ingesting one-tenth of your body-weight in flesh to supplement your depleted carcass. Whether you kill and devour the skin from humans or raid the biohazard containers of liposuction clinics for siphoned fat, you need your ration of human flesh in order to survive. If you try and ingest this macabre meal before damage is done, you'll simply vomit it out like any other food — this does not impart the benefits of the Eat Food Merit.

MET System: When testing for blood at the beginning of each game session, you suffer a level of bashing damage that can only be healed by ingesting mortal flesh, enough to replace the fleshy tissue depleted from your body as a result of this Flaw. You cannot pre-empt the effects of this corrosive bacteria by ingesting human flesh before the damage is taken; without the Eat Food Merit you will vomit out this flesh like any other food.

SICK IN THE HEAD

The unlifestyle of the Tzimisce puts them at high risk of developing various derangements. Botched experiments, repeated indulgence of their perversions and the intensity of their Embraces conspire to twist their personalities. When the Storyteller determines that a Tzimisce should gain a new derangement, consider the lists in *Vampire: The Masquerade* (pp. 222-224), *Guide to the Sabbat* (pp. 161-163) and the list included below. If the Storyteller allows, many derangements from *Clanbook: Malkavian* or even *Clanbook: Tremere* might also be appropriate.

AGORAPHOBIA

Agoraphobia literally means "fear of open spaces," but the translation is misleading. Called "Mad Scientist's Disease" by younger Tzimisce, agoraphobia manifests as an extreme aversion to places the sufferer fears he will panic. Sometimes the



derangement is attached to a few locations, but generalized agoraphobics avoid situations in which escape is difficult (an airplane at 30,000 feet) or embarrassing (making a speech).

Agoraphobics don't volunteer for situations that they fear might cause anxiety. Unless supernaturally compelled, agoraphobic vampires must succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) to leave their havens each evening and must spend a point of Willpower to enter a situation from which escape will be difficult or embarrassing. If the character fails any Willpower roll during a scene that takes place in such a situation, the character must spend a point of Willpower or flee. Vampires can ignore these constraints while in frenzy.

The territorial nature of many Tzimisce makes this derangement relatively common within the clan. No doubt the world is scattered with at least a handful of agoraphobic Cainites driven into torpor from lack of blood.

ACUTE SANGUINARY AVERSION

This derangement, unique to the undead, involves a persistent fear that any source of vitae is dangerous. Explanations vary — some vampires fear drugged or contaminated blood, the wrath of God or the presence of a blood-borne Antediluvian. Regardless, unless the vampire is frenzied, the player must succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) each time he feeds. Willpower cannot be spent on this roll, and a botch indicates that the vampire is so revolted by the prospect of feeding that he vomits up half of his blood pool.

Acute sanguinary aversion usually leads to a starve-and-frenzy pattern, with the vampire avoiding feeding until he loses control. Instead, the vampire might develop highly ritualized feeding methods that involve obsession with repeated, largely arbitrary behaviors that must be observed before the Kiss is performed on a particular source of vitae. He might read a passage from the Book of Nod before feeding or drink blood only from a particular individual.

In any case, if the feeding results in a Conscience or Conviction roll, increase the difficulty by one.

THE NAMING OF FIENDS

Here's a list of some typical Slavic names, along with a few ideas for surnames, many of them Romanian. When naming Fiends, keep in mind that the higher the generation, the less likely the Tzimisce was born in Eastern Europe.

Males: Andrej, Boleslaus, Conrad, Dimitri, Florian, Ivan, Jan, Karel, Ladislav, Marika, Nikolas, Orel, Pavel, Rurik, Sandor, Tibor, Volodya, Wenceslaus, Zarek

Females: Chessa, Dannika, Fanya, Gavrilla, Hana, Ikla, Jan, Katarina, Ljudumilu, Miesha, Nadezhda, Radilu, Sonja, Terezia, Valeska, Zorana

Surnames: Cerveni, Constantinescu, Cunesco, Diaconescu, Iliescu, Ionescu, Manolescu, Marko, Mohora, Patriciu, Roman, Tabara, Vasile

COMBINATION DISCIPLINES

Some Cainites competent with two or more Disciplines can combine them to create new powers. Tzimisce rarely learn these techniques spontaneously. *Koldun*, innovative Metamorphosists and survivors of the bitter rivalry between the Tremere and Tzimisce — and their childer, too, perhaps — might be convinced to serve as teachers.

SOUL DECORATION (AUSPEX ●●, OBFUSCATE ●●, VICISSITUDE ●●●)

The aura is a byproduct of the body. Change the body, change the soul. The body's experiences can be summed up in the aura, but this phenomenon is the product of physical forces. By fleshcrafting certain locations on the body — *chakras*, joints, erogenous zones — a Tzimisce with this power can "paint" whatever aura he chooses. Auras summarize the individual, revealing mood, the stain of diablerie and the Curse of Caine. When under the gaze of perceptive eyes, sometimes it's better to conceal such things.

System: After spending three Willpower points, the player rolls her character's Perception + Empathy. The difficulty of this roll is equal to the subject's Willpower — stronger personalities resist alteration. The number of successes indicates how completely the aura can be changed to the Tzimisce's specifications.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1 success | Can alter shades (pale or bright) |
| 2 successes | Can alter the main color |
| 3 successes | Can alter psychological state (frenzied, psychotic, etc.) |
| 4 successes | Can conceal or falsify diablerie and magic use |
| 5 successes | Can conceal or falsify natural condition (vampire, shapeshifter, ghost, etc.) |

The deception lasts one night per success. During this time, the aura doesn't change to reflect new conditions in its owner.

Keep in mind that these are changes only to the aura, not the subject herself. At the Storyteller's discretion, the subject may feel token emotions to match her new colors. She might feel somewhat distrustful if her aura was painted light green, for instance.

This power costs 20 experience points.

MET System: You must spend a Willpower Trait in order to alter the color of your own aura. Each Willpower Trait you spend in this feat of deception grants more control over the conditions of your aura. You can change one aspect of your aura when spending a single Willpower Trait, whereas you can go all out and change five different facets with five Willpower Traits.

The changes made to your aura are undetectable in Auspex Challenges; the appearances of Soul Decoration last for a night.

You may also manipulate the auras of other Kindred or kine by spending a Willpower Trait and succeeding in a Static Willpower Challenge.

In MET, this power costs 6 Experience Traits.

PATER SZLACHTA (PROTEAN ●●●●, VICISSITUDE ●●●)

Some Tzimisce combine the Protean power to turn into an animal with the possibilities of Vicissitude. Forces of chaotic change surge through the Fiend's body, forces he must direct while experiencing bone-breaking pain. When the Tzimisce can bear the strain no longer, the body settles into the *Pater Szlachta* or *bogatyri* form — so named by Tzimisce anarchists to insult either their servants or the "elder valiant champions" who served the anarchists' sires. In the modern nights, this power is still known to a few Tzimisce, who sometimes use it in contests of improvisational fleshcrafting.

System: Spend two blood points and roll Stamina + Medicine (difficulty 7). The change takes (5 - the number of successes) turns to complete, during which the Tzimisce can only howl, drool vitae and writhe. The character can rearrange his Physical Attributes (one dot per success), but no Attribute can exceed the limit imposed by generation. The player can describe what sort of alterations he wants to make, but the process is difficult to control. In the end, the Storyteller is the final arbiter, choosing one physical state for the character in *bogatyri* form or certain Vicissitude modifications such as bone spikes, spine-saws, etc. Botches earn whatever physical Flaws the Storyteller chooses, maybe permanent ones. The change lasts for one scene.

Example: The player of *Csikos Thesz* spends two blood points and earns four successes on his Stamina + Medicine roll. *Csikos Thesz* spends one turn changing into the *bogatyri* form, during which he struggles to rearrange his muscles and body fat to better absorb impacts; he also concentrates on drawing forth bone mass to his knuckles, visualizing them coming to thick, knobby studs. After the change, his player can rearrange four dots of Physical Attributes. Before the change, *Csikos* had Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2. He moves a point from Strength and two from Dexterity into Stamina and doesn't use the fourth success, leaving him with Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 5. Since four successes indicate an "exceptional success," the Storyteller decides that *Csikos* has grown bony nodules on his knuckles that inflict lethal damage.



CHAPTER THREE: AMONG FIENDS

*"The throat must be mine," said the Count. "I claim the throat as my privilege."
"It should be mine," muttered August. "I am the eldest and it is long since I fed. Yet I am content to have the breast."
"The legs are mine," croaked the third monster. "Legs are always full of rich red blood."
— Frederick Cowles, "The Vampire of Kaldenstein"*

Velya—

A Modest Proposal: Let's sheath the Sword of Caine, awaken our Father and be done with the whole thing. No, I have not defected to the Camarilla (hiding in fear does not suit a diplomat). Rather, I have just had the most unpleasant interaction with a fresh pack that supposedly shares our blood. The fire in their bellies betrayed them as Tzimisce, and I am glad that the Blood hasn't thinned to nothing just yet. But their fire blazes unchecked. Where is the discipline, the measured ingenuity that made us sovereigns of the Old World? Where is the inclination to greatness? Where is the respect? The voivodes are gone, and I fear that we shall never see their like again. Have we wasted too much of the old blood on sieges and Monomacy? These young ones, I do not understand them. This newest generation lacks... protocol. Although I cherish the ideals of our sect, it tries me to

uphold them in the face of this modern impetuosity.

Were we like these upstarts, when we were young? I do not remember.

Forgive my fit. Our correspondence has been a comfort to me during my travels abroad, and I must apologize for the lateness of this letter. Sadly, I was preoccupied with some confusion within the consistory. Our august regent is acting more like herself than ever and persists in refusing me an audience. How fare the Cardinals of the Land Beyond the Forest? Have you learned anything more about the incident at Cernavoda? Send Elaine my love.

—Your Homesick Radu

Note: Template characters have been created using the Sabbat character generation rules from the Guide to the Sabbat.

LORD OF THE GHETTO

Quote: *You are no longer welcome here, but the time for you to leave safely has passed. I would not be voivode very long if my subjects saw me as merciful.*

Prelude: Your pack formed like the packs of old, driven from your native land by Tremere Usurpers. But this new country is not so different from your home. Even in the modern metropolis, the peasants understand authority. Your impoverished demesne isn't much to look at — nine city blocks of high-rise projects, decrepit shotgun houses, graffiti, drug dealers and gang warfare. Still, you have chosen it as your domain, and it suits your needs. Your neighborhood is not some suburb full of coddled buffoons. The people are smart here — they still respect a monarch. But the rulers of this land have discarded them. Yours is the only power they know.

After your Embrace, your sire exposed your notions of democracy as nothing more than a passing mortal vogue. Power is that which endures, he said. Ironic that he came to such a bad end. His lax governance proved his Final Death. In his last nights, Usurpers walked among his very subjects. A lesson learned — even in this thoroughly modern land, which worships freedom and convenience. You will not be so foolish.

Concept: You run the ghetto like a Transylvanian *voivode*. While only a few of your "subjects" — gangbangers and addicts, mostly — realize your true nature, almost everyone in the neighborhood knows you as the majestic gentleman who walks the streets after dark, halting at porches to admonish the children to behave morally, strolling by the block parties to give an approving nod. Your subjects fear you, but even those who suspect you are more than you seem find your presence comforting. You've made an example of

LEIF JONES
2000




VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE		
NAME:	NATURE: Architect	GENERATION: 11th
PLAYED:	DEMEASOR: Director	HANDS:
CHARACTER:	CLASS: Tzimisce	CONCEPT: Lord of the Ghetto
ATTRIBUTES		
PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	MENTAL
Strength ●●●○○○	Charisma ●●●○○○	Perception ●●●○○○
Dexterity ●●●○○○	Manipulation ●●●○○○	Intelligence ●●●○○○
Stamina ●●●○○○	Appearance ●●●○○○	Wits ●●●○○○
ABILITIES		
TALENTS	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGES
Alertness ●●○○○○	Animal Ken ●●○○○○	Academics ●●○○○○
Athletics ●○○○○○	Crafts ●●○○○○	Computer ●○○○○○
Brawl ●○○○○○	Drive ●●○○○○	Finance ●○○○○○
Dodge ●●○○○○	Etiquette ●●○○○○	Investigation ●○○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○○	Firearms ●●○○○○	Law ●○○○○○
Expression ●●○○○○	Melee ●●○○○○	Linguistics ●○○○○○
Intimidation ●○○○○○	Performance ●●○○○○	Medicine ●○○○○○
Leadership ●○○○○○	Security ●○○○○○	Occult ●○○○○○
Streetwise ●●○○○○	Stealth ●○○○○○	Politics ●○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○○	Survival ●○○○○○	Science ●○○○○○
ADVANTAGES		
BACKGROUND	DISCIPLINES	VIRTUES
Allies ●●○○○○	Animalism ●●○○○○	Conscience/Conviction ●●○○○○
Contacts ●●○○○○	Auspex ●●○○○○	Self-Control/Prudence ●●○○○○
Fame ●○○○○○	Vicissitude ●○○○○○	Courage ●●○○○○
Generation ●●○○○○		
Resources ●○○○○○		
Retainers ●○○○○○		
POINTS/FLAWS		
	HUMANITY/PATH	HEALTH
	●●●●●○○○○○	Bruised -1 □
		Hurt -1 □
	WILLPOWER	Wounded -2 □
	●●●●●○○○○○	Mauled -2 □
	□□□□□□□□□□	Crippled -5 □
		Incapacitated □
	BLOOD POOL	EXPERIENCE
	□□□□□□□□□□	□
	□□□□□□□□□□	

several trespassers, and the streets are safer for your passing.


Roleplaying Hints: You are definitely old school. Though you consider yourself a patient and cultured ruler, you expect your authority to be recognized, particularly within your own demesne. Despite your neofeudalist leanings, you realize that the children of Caine cannot rule as openly as in nights past. Let your power speak for itself.

Equipment: Antiquated aristocratic clothing, heavy overcoat, liberated switchblade, flowers given to you by neighborhood children



<p>CONSCIENCE/Conviction ●●●●○</p> <p>SELF-CONTROL/Instinct ●●●●○</p> <p>COURAGE ●○○○○</p> <p>BLOOD ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●○</p> <p>WILLPOWER ●●●●○○○○○○○</p>	<p>NAME _____</p> <p>CHARACTER <u>Siamese Twin</u></p> <p>CHRONICLE _____</p> <p>CLAN <u>Tzimisce</u></p> <p>GENERATION <u>10th</u></p> <p>Age _____</p> <p>NATURE <u>Eye of the Storm</u></p> <p>DEMEANOR <u>Pedagogue</u></p>
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<p>BACKGROUNDS Generationx3 Resourcesx2</p> <p>INFLUENCES</p> <p>Steady Energetic Dexterousx2 Tough Beguilingx2 Expressive</p> <p>MENTAL Alert Observantx2</p> <p>ABILITIES Disciplined Creative Attentive Alert Observantx2</p> <p>Academics Occultx2 Crafts Empathy</p>	<p>PHYSICAL Part/HUMANITY</p> <p>Disciplines Animalism (Feral Whispers) Auspek 2 (Heightened Senses) Aura Perception Vicissitude (Malleable Visage) MERITS & FLAWS</p> <p>SOCIAL Steady Energetic Dexterousx2 Tough Beguilingx2 Expressive</p> <p>MENTAL Alert Observantx2</p> <p>ABILITIES Disciplined Creative Attentive Alert Observantx2</p> <p>Academics Occultx2 Crafts Empathy</p>
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<p>CONSCIENCE/Conviction ●●●○○</p> <p>SELF-CONTROL/Instinct ●●●○○</p> <p>COURAGE ●●●○○</p> <p>BLOOD ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●○</p> <p>WILLPOWER ●●●●○○○○○○○</p>	<p>NAME _____</p> <p>CHARACTER <u>Lord of the Ghetto</u></p> <p>CHRONICLE _____</p> <p>CLAN <u>Tzimisce</u></p> <p>GENERATION <u>11th</u></p> <p>Age _____</p> <p>NATURE <u>Architect</u></p> <p>DEMEANOR <u>Director</u></p>
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<p>BACKGROUNDS Alliesx2 Resourcesx1 Contractsx2 Retainersx1 Famex1 Generationx2</p> <p>INFLUENCES</p> <p>Steady Energetic Dexterousx2 Tough Beguilingx2 Expressive</p> <p>MENTAL Alert Observantx2</p> <p>ABILITIES Disciplined Creative Attentive Alert Observantx2</p> <p>Academics Occult Crafts Empathy Etiquette Subterfuge</p>	<p>PHYSICAL Part/HUMANITY</p> <p>Disciplines Animalism (Feral Whispers) Auspek 2 (Heightened Senses) Aura Perception Vicissitude (Malleable Visage) MERITS & FLAWS</p> <p>SOCIAL Steady Energetic Dexterousx2 Tough Beguilingx2 Expressive</p> <p>MENTAL Alert Observantx2</p> <p>ABILITIES Disciplined Creative Attentive Alert Observantx2</p> <p>Academics Occult Crafts Empathy Etiquette Subterfuge</p>
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MOST EUGENIC BABY, 1929

Quote: *I'm the seed Mendel should've studied.*

Prelude: They scoured your family tree for alcoholics, imbeciles, syphilitics and Negroes, and, finding none, awarded your parents a prize at the 1929 Minnesota State Fair for the "Most Eugenic Baby." Eugenics was the dominant scientific fad among American pseudo-intellectuals in those days, and your genealogy seemed ideal by the prevailing standards.

Your parents put on a good show for the judges. It took superior breeding *and* superior rearing to create a superior child.

From then on, any hint at mediocrity — middling grades, only scoring a single touchdown in a game — led your mother to punish you for not living up to your "goodly heritage." Ashamed of squandering the precious gift of good breeding, you learned her obsessive/compulsive behavior and avoided failure at all costs.

You eventually earned a degree in genetics. Your work was undeniably brilliant, but certain factions of the scientific community complained that your conclusions "reeked of Social Darwinism."

By the time of your Embrace in the late 1980s, the eugenics craze had long since been discredited. But your diehard sire attributed its unpopularity to the modern penchant for racial apologetics. Turns out he'd been keeping up with award-winning eugenic children all over North America and England. He said you were the pick of the litter but that as a human you were merely a seed. With that, he inducted you into the most prestigious lineage of all.

Concept: While your sire is abroad seeking others of good stock, he's set you to work learning about the generations of your new family. You've been sidelined from your genealogy of Clan Tzimisce by an interest in the

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUEBALL

NAME:	NATURE: Sadist	GENERATION: 11th
CLAW:	DEMIANIC: Autocrat	HAVOC:
CHARISMA:	CLAN: Tzimisce	CONCEPT: Most Eugenic Baby, 1929

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	MENTAL
Strength: ●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●	Perception: ●●●●
Destiny: ●●●●	Manipulation: ●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●	Will: ●●●●

ABILITIES

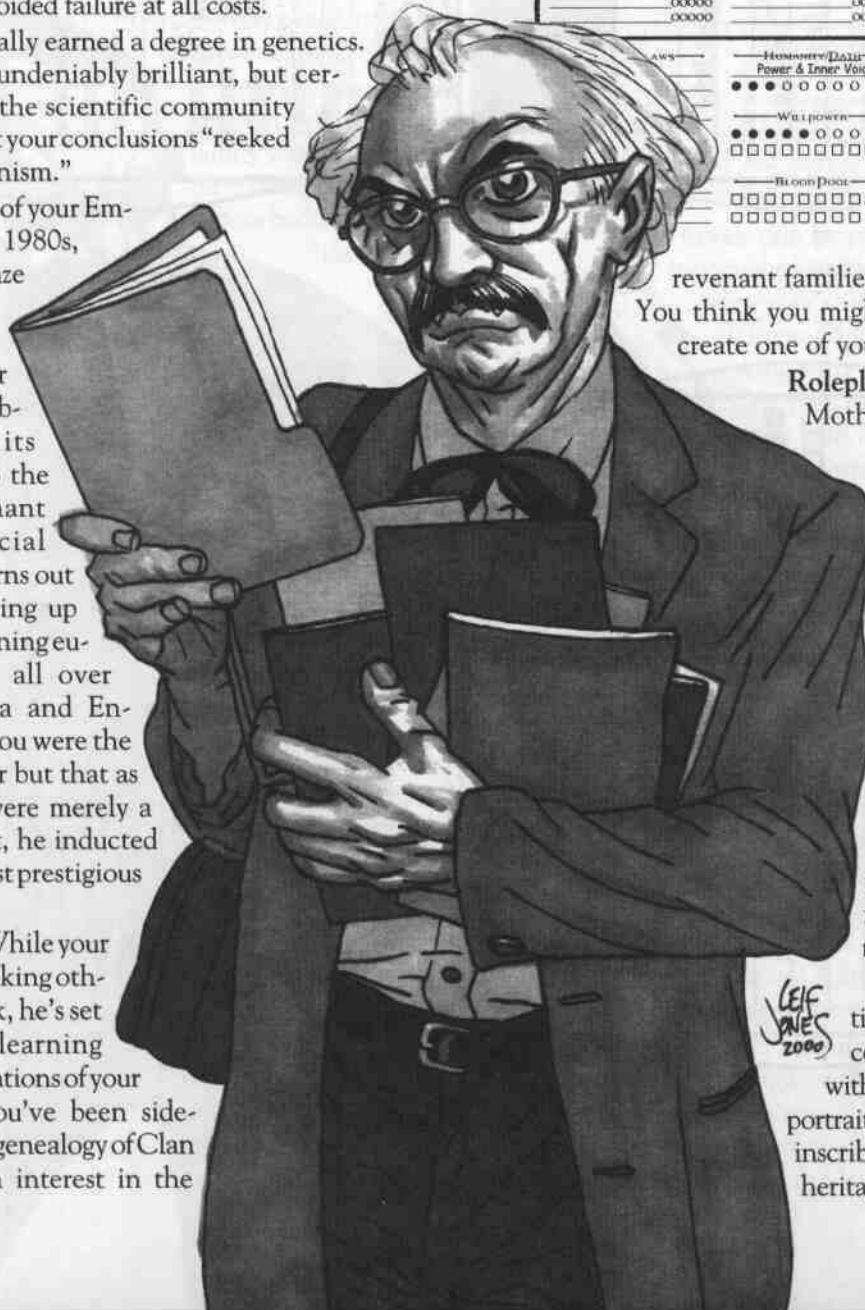
TALENTS	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE
Alertness: ●●●●	Animal Ken: ●●●●	Academics: ●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●	Crafts: ●●●●	Computer: ●●●●
Brawl: ●●●●	Drive: ●●●●	Finance: ●●●●
Dodge: ●●●●	Etiquette: ●●●●	Investigation: ●●●●
Empathy: ●●●●	Firearm: ●●●●	Law: ●●●●
Expulsion: ●●●●	Melee: ●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●
Intimidation: ●●●●	Performance: ●●●●	Medicine: ●●●●
Leadership: ●●●●	Security: ●●●●	Occult: ●●●●
Steerwise: ●●●●	Stealth: ●●●●	Politics: ●●●●
Subterfuge: ●●●●	Survival: ●●●●	Science: ●●●●

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUND	DISCIPLINES	VIRTUES
Contacts: ●●●●	Auspex: ●●●●	Conscience/Corruption: ●●●●
Generation: ●●●●	Vicissitude: ●●●●	
Hard: ●●●●		
Resources: ●●●●		
		Self-Control/Intinct: ●●●●
		Courage: ●●●●

STATUSES

Homogeneity/Unity: ●●●● Power & Inner Voice: ●●●●	Willpower: ●●●● Blood Pool: ●●●●	HEALTH Bruised: <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt: -1 <input type="checkbox"/> Injured: -1 <input type="checkbox"/> Wounded: -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Mauled: -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Crippled: -5 <input type="checkbox"/> Incapacitated: <input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCE <input type="checkbox"/>
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revenant families that serve your kind. You think you might even know how to create one of your own.


Roleplaying Hints: If only Mother could see you now!

Your superior breeding has finally earned you more than just a prize coin, and you intend to prove worthy of the honor. Cainites of other clans lack the refined Tzimisce heritage, but you've learned to stop pointing that out. Their feeble minds can't accept that you're not insulting them; it's not their fault they're mongrels.

Equipment: Collection of old genealogies and census records, DNA lab with abutting ghoulish kennels, portrait of Mother, bronze coin inscribed "Yea, I have a goodly heritage"

LEIF JAMES 2000

NAME	Koldun Nuevo	CHRONICLE	Tzimisce	CLAN	13th	GENERATION	13th	AGE	Child	NATURE	Survivor	DEMANOR	Visionary
COURAGE	●●●●○	BLOOD	●●●●●●●●●●	WILLPOWER	○○○○○○○○○○								
CONSCIENCE/CONVICTION	○○○○●	SELF-CONTROL/INSTINCT	○○○○●										
													
PATH/HUMANITY Metamorphosis ●●●○○				BACKGROUNDS Influence (Occult x1)									
PHYSICAL Energetic Graceful Steady				INFLUENCES									
SOCIAL Charismatic x2 Witty Expressive Persuasive				DISCIPLINES Auspex (Heightened Senses) Animalism (Feral Whispers) Vicissitude (Malleable Visage, Fleshcraft), Koldunic Sorcery 1									
MENTAL Attentive Observant Clever Reflective Creative Wise Knowledgeable				MERITS & FLAWS									
ABILITIES Linguistics (Spanish) Medicine Rituals x3 Occult x3 Science													

NAME	Kennel Master	CHRONICLE	Tzimisce	CLAN	12th	GENERATION	12th	AGE	Survivor	NATURE	Deviant	DEMANOR	Deviant
COURAGE	●●●●○	BLOOD	●●●●●●●●●●	WILLPOWER	○○○○○○○○○○								
CONSCIENCE/CONVICTION	○○○○●	SELF-CONTROL/INSTINCT	○○○○●										
													
PATH/HUMANITY Metamorphosis ●●●○○				BACKGROUNDS Generation x1 Retainers x1									
PHYSICAL Brawny Tireless Enduring x2 Tough x2 Quick				INFLUENCES									
SOCIAL Commanding x2 Empathetic				DISCIPLINES Animalism (Feral Whispers) Beckoning, Quell the Beast Vicissitude (Malleable Visage, Fleshcraft)									
MENTAL Cunning Shrewd Discerning Intuitive Patient				MERITS & FLAWS									
ABILITIES Animal Ken Empathy Brawl Medicine Crafts Occult													

STAR, FUCKER

Quote: My autograph? Yeah, sure. Thank you, I'm glad you liked my last movie. Listen, I'm late for a private party... sry, you wouldn't be interested in joining me, would you? Tom, Nicole, Matt and a few other celebs will be there...

Prelude: As class clown in high school, you had a knack for impersonations and a quick wit that made you popular. You had flair and talent that would turn you into the next... well, whoever it was that everyone else liked at the moment. You were going to be famous; everyone said so. Unfortunately, talent without drive or connections leaves you nowhere. You didn't know that until you discovered how hard it was to break into the film business. The highest point in your career was making pornos to make ends meet, and even then, you enjoyed little success.

After smut flicks, you could hardly fall any further. *Hardly*... you started with drugs, and that only stopped with your Embrace. You were diagnosed HIV positive and became involved with the underground live-performance pornography scene. Some freaks would pay big money to anyone willing to perform degrading sexual acts for an audience of bored socialites. So, when your "arranger" involved you in increasingly demeaning shows, you readily agreed because of the substantial pay-offs. Your last gig was for a freaky-looking crowd who got off on watching razor blade foreplay. Unfortunately, you cut your partner too deeply during your performance and spilled too much of her blood. The audience, however, simply tossed hundred-dollar bills to the ground and said the money was yours if you bled your partner out. Within seconds, at least two grand lay on the floor. You gutted your partner without even blinking. That's when you got to know the Sabbat.

Concept: You may not be a star, but you can certainly look like one. You party at the best nightclubs, dupe young fans into doing whatever you want and have the occasional paparazzi hound snapping away at your indiscretions. You even host Hollywood *faux*-parties, where other young Tzimisce and Nosferatu *antitribu* don the faces of contemporary stars and intermingle with mortal "guests" (before dropping their disguises and devouring the poor kine). You may not be famous in the mortal world, but you're certainly establishing a rep among the Sabbat as a consummate entertainer and *bon vivant*.

Roleplaying Hints: Everybody you know is nothing more than a collection of habits, idiosyncrasies and

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUEBARD

NAME:	NATURE: Conformist	GENERATION: 13th
PLAYER:	DEFORMATION: Rogue	HAVEN:
CHRONICLE:	CLAN: Tzimisce	CONCEPT: StarFucker

ATTRIBUTES		
PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	MENTAL
Strength: ●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●	Perception: ●●●●
Destiny: ●●●●	Manipulation: ●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●	Wit: ●●●●

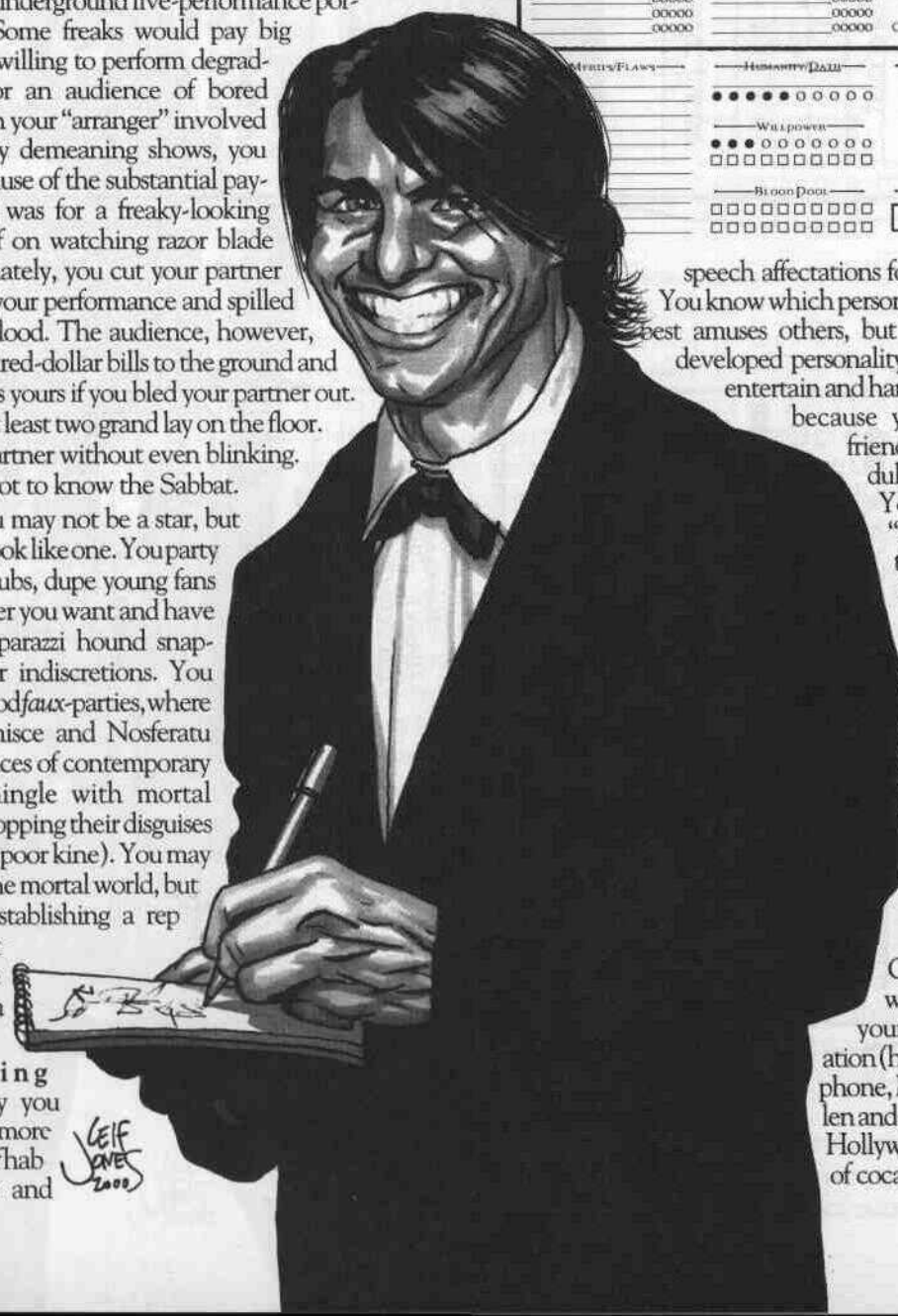
ABILITIES		
TALENTS	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGES
Alertness: ●●●●	Animal Ken: ●●●●	Academics: ●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●	Crafts: ●●●●	Computer: ●●●●
Brawl: ●●●●	Drive: ●●●●	Finance: ●●●●
Dodge: ●●●●	Etiquette: ●●●●	Investigation: ●●●●
Empathy: ●●●●	Firearms: ●●●●	Law: ●●●●
Expression: ●●●●	Melee: ●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●
Intimidation: ●●●●	Performance: ●●●●	Medicine: ●●●●
Leadership: ●●●●	Security: ●●●●	Occult: ●●●●
Streetwise: ●●●●	Stealth: ●●●●	Politics: ●●●●
Subterfuge: ●●●●	Survival: ●●●●	Science: ●●●●

ADVANTAGES		VIRTUES
Backgrounds: ●●●●	Auspex: ●●●●	Conscience/Conviction: ●●●●
●●●●	Vicissitude: ●●●●	Self-Control/Instinct: ●●●●
●●●●	●●●●	Courage: ●●●●
●●●●	●●●●	
●●●●	●●●●	
●●●●	●●●●	

HEALTH/FLAWS	HUMANITY/DIZZ	WILLPOWER	BLOOD POOL	HEALTH	EXPERIENCE
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Bruised: <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Hurt: -1 <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Injured: -1 <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Wounded: -2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Mauled: -2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Crippled: -5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Incapacitated: <input type="checkbox"/>	
●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Experience: <input type="checkbox"/>	

speech affectations for you to play with. You know which personality or mannerism best amuses others, but you don't have a developed personality of your own. You entertain and harangue other people because you're afraid your friends might realize how dull you actually are. You haven't even "looked" like yourself this last month. You've always been somebody else, pretending at an existence not your own, playing for the appreciation of others. In public, you're the unlife of the party. In private, you bore yourself to blood-tears.

Equipment: Chic clothing — always in the style of your latest impersonation (huge wardrobe), PCS phone, Mercedes Benz (stolen and unregistered), latest Hollywood gossip rag, pony of cocaine for the fans.



JEIF JONES 2000

JEIF JONES 2000

THE NEW PROMETHEUS

Quote: *We are a gestalt rarely given to consensus. We've decided that we don't like you, however. Wha'dya know; we've agreed to kill you!*

Prelude: You don't really remember who you were before the Embrace; none of you do. Your memory begins with horrible pain, at the moment Cainite vitae spilled over your exposed organs. You were all a puddle of heterogeneous goo; melted flesh, partially liquefied bone and a molasses of organs from nine people all mixed together. You pulled and pushed, tearing yourself away from the others, but accidentally taking pieces of them with you. You heard your soon-to-be-pack chanting and betting at who'd emerge first. Your body formed slowly; your arm was missing, so you sloughed somebody else's arm away; your left eye was gone, so you stole that from your neighbor as well. Before you knew it, you emerged from the viscera stew, a Cainite lost-and-found of other people's body parts and organs. That's when you turned on the other victims and fed on them blood and soul.

You have no past save for the whispering echoes and flashes of insight from the eight others you emerged from. It's taken a while to assert a single personality and identity, but the voices never diminish. You were a banker, an orderly, an eating disorder therapist, a pusher—yet none of these histories fit you. Some skills and temperaments come easily and seem natural, while others are completely incongruous. That matches your appearance perfectly. You are a hodgepodge of races and oddly grafted flesh; you are a Neo-Frankenstein's Monster of the modern nights.

Concept: Your pack calls you an unwilling Renaissance man and an undead jack-of-all-trades. You're a magician's hat; nobody knows what'll come out of you next, not even yourself. You're a party trick for your pack, a curiosity among freaks, and you hate your existence with a passion. You want one solid identity, one personality and look.

LEIF JONES 2000



VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE		
NAME:	Nature: Penitent	Generation: 13th
PLAYER:	Disposition: Martyr	Having:
CHARACTER:	CLAN: Tzimisce	Concept: The New Prometheus
ATTRIBUTES		
PHYSICAL		MENTAL
Strength: ●●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●●	Perception: ●●●●●
Dexterity: ●●●●●	Mastipulation: ●●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●●	Wis: ●●●●●
ABILITIES		
TALENTS		KNOWLEDGE
Alemtess: ●●●●●	Animal Km: ●●●●●	Academics: ●●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●●	Crafts: ●●●●●	Computer: ●●●●●
Brawl: ●●●●●	Drive: ●●●●●	Finance: ●●●●●
Dodge: ●●●●●	Etiquette: ●●●●●	Investigation: ●●●●●
Empathy: ●●●●●	Fixation: ●●●●●	Law: ●●●●●
Expression: ●●●●●	Melee: ●●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●●
Intimidation: ●●●●●	Performance: ●●●●●	Medicine: ●●●●●
Leadership: ●●●●●	Security: ●●●●●	Occult: ●●●●●
Streetwise: ●●●●●	Stealth: ●●●●●	Politics: ●●●●●
Subterfuge: ●●●●●	Survival: ●●●●●	Science: ●●●●●
ADVANTAGES		
BACHORONIM		VIRTUES
Sabbat Status: ●●●●●	Animalism: ●●●●●	Conscience/Govemment: ●●●●●
●●●●●	Auspex: ●●●●●	Self-Control/Memery: ●●●●●
●●●●●	Fortitude: ●●●●●	●●●●●
●●●●●	Potency: ●●●●●	Courage: ●●●●●
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
MEREITS/FLAWS		
HUMANITY/PLAC		HEALTH
●●●●●●●●●●		Bruised: <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Hun: -1 <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Injured: -1 <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Wounded: -2 <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Mauled: -3 <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Crippled: -4 <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Incapacitated: <input type="checkbox"/>
●●●●●●●●●●		Experiences: <input type="checkbox"/>

Instead, you've got eight voices buzzing in your head with edged memories that dice you any-time you remember one.

Roleplaying Hints: You have one dominant personality but refer to yourself as "we" because it feels right. Your past is a montage of scenes pasted together from the cutting room floor of nine movies. As such, you've stopped focusing on who you were and search for who you want to be. Unfortunately, that's proven difficult with both your pack and the Sabbat treating you like a freakshow. How can you become someone else when everyone keeps reminding you of what you are?

Equipment: Wallets from the nine people you emerged from, mirror, copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, black book and debit card (banker's), apartment (therapist's), run-down Volvo (baker's), badly coordinated ensemble including jacket and tie, green scrubs and black boots

NAME _____
 CHARACTER The New Promethius
 CHRONICLE Blood
 CLAN Tzimisce
 GENERATION 13th
 Age Willpower
 NATURE Penitent
 DEMANOR Martyr

CONSCIENCE/CONVICTION
 SELF-CONTROL/RESTRAINT
 COURAGE
 BLOOD



PATH/HUMANITY

●●○○○
 PHYSICAL
 Brawny x2 Tenacious x2
 Ferocious Vigorous
 Steady
 SOCIAL
 Commanding
 Intimidating x2
 MENTAL
 Attentive
 Patient
 Rational
 Vigilant x2
 ABILITIES
 Animal Ken Melee
 Brawl Occult x2
 Intimidation Survival

BACKGROUNDS

 INFLUENCES

 DISCIPLINES
 Animalism (Feral Whispers, Beckoning, Quell the Beast)
 Auspex (Heightened Senses)
 Fortitude (Endurance), Potence (Prowess)
 MERITS & FLAWS

NAME _____
 CHARACTER Oprichniki Man Friday
 CHRONICLE Blood
 CLAN Tzimisce
 GENERATION 9th
 Age Willpower
 NATURE Perfectionist
 DEMANOR Conformist

CONSCIENCE/CONVICTION
 SELF-CONTROL/RESTRAINT
 COURAGE
 BLOOD



PATH/HUMANITY

●●●○○
 PHYSICAL
 Agile Tireless
 Dexterous
 Stalwart x2
 SOCIAL
 Charismatic Diplomatic
 Charming Persuasive x2
 Eloquent Magnetic
 MENTAL
 Clever
 Knowledgeable
 Observant
 ABILITIES
 Academics Etiquette
 Computer Occult
 Drive Survival

BACKGROUNDS

Allies x3
 Contacts x3
 Generation x4
 Resources x3
 INFLUENCES

 DISCIPLINES
 Animalism (Feral Whispers)
 Auspex (Heightened Senses)
 Aura Perception
 Viscissitude (Malleable Visage)
 MERITS & FLAWS

OPRICHNIKI MAN FRIDAY

Quote: Yes, sir, your Prague haven will be ready for your arrival next week. Yes, sir, I know, three young men to feed on, I've already seen to it. Sir, about the auction; I have it on good authority that two bidders may pose a threat. Should I turn up a little dirt on them or go ahead and steal the item in question from the auction house?

Prelude: You were always of Clan Tzimisce, as were your parents and the generations that preceded them over the centuries. Although history remembers the Oprichniki as cutthroats and sadists, you are far removed from their legacy. From your mortal infancy, your Tzimisce lord saw to your training in a variety of skills. Whether he versed you in matters of the occult or sent you to the best school of business and finance, you never doubted that you would eventually serve your benefactor as major-domo or man Friday. You did not foresee the Embrace, however. The Russian Tzimisce rarely offered the Kiss to your family, if only because they needed you in a servile position. When the Iron Curtain fell, the Rus Fiends knew they could no longer hide from the world behind the protection of their borders, but neither were they willing to risk their unives to venture beyond their comfortable familiar domains. That's why your lord Embraced you.

Same job, different circumstances. You still serve your lord, but you are now a Fiend as well. This entitles you to a certain independence that none of your mortal family enjoys, including the privilege of traveling the world. Unfortunately, you've already encountered the loutish Sabbat during your brief existence and must pay them the same "respect" that your lord does. Sometimes, this means participating in their backward rites or gatherings, but you need them. They are your only hope in breaking your blood ties to your sire. Without them, you'll never enjoy complete freedom and true independence.

Concepts: Some Tzimisce might say you're the right hand of your sire, but you know you act as both hands. The centuries turned him into an anachronism, and he spends his evenings sequestered in his manse like an impotent spider that can longer spin its web. You are one of your lord's tethers to the modern nights. He relies on you to oversee his financial security, to travel where he refuses to go and to deal with people he will not see. This is dangerous, for you are intermediary, negotiator,

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE		
NAME: Nature Perfectionist	GENERATION: 9th	
PLAYED BY: Debra Ann Conformist	HAVEN: Prague	
CHAROCCLE: Clan: Tzimisce	CONCEPT: Oprichniki Man Friday	
ATTRIBUTES		
PHYSICAL	SOCIAL	MENTAL
Strength: ●●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●●	Perception: ●●●●●
Dexterity: ●●●●●	Manipulation: ●●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●●	Wits: ●●●●●
ABILITIES		
TALENTS	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGES
Alertness: ●●●●●	Animal Ken: ●●●●●	Academics: ●●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●●	Crafts: ●●●●●	Computer: ●●●●●
Brawl: ●●●●●	Drive: ●●●●●	Finance: ●●●●●
Dodge: ●●●●●	Etiquette: ●●●●●	Investigation: ●●●●●
Empathy: ●●●●●	Firearms: ●●●●●	Law: ●●●●●
Expression: ●●●●●	Melee: ●●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●●
Intimidation: ●●●●●	Performance: ●●●●●	Medicine: ●●●●●
Leadership: ●●●●●	Security: ●●●●●	Occult: ●●●●●
Streetwise: ●●●●●	Stealth: ●●●●●	Politics: ●●●●●
Subterfuge: ●●●●●	Survival: ●●●●●	Science: ●●●●●
ADVANTAGES		
BACKGROUNDS	DISCIPLINES	VERTUES
Allies: ●●●●●	Animalism: ●●●●●	Conscience/Conversion: ●●●●●
Alternate Identity: ●●●●●	Auspex: ●●●●●	Self-Control/Immune: ●●●●●
Contacts: ●●●●●	Vicissitude: ●●●●●	Courage: ●●●●●
Exposition: ●●●●●		
Resources: ●●●●●		
Sabbat Status: ●●●●●		
MEREVS/PLAYS		
HUMANELY/FORM		
	●●●●●○○○○○	
WILLPOWER		
	●●●●●○○○○○	
BLOOD POOL		
	○○○○○○○○○○	
	○○○○○○○○○○	
HEALTH		
		Bruised: <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt: -1 <input type="checkbox"/> Injured: -1 <input type="checkbox"/> Wounded: -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Mauled: -2 <input type="checkbox"/> Crippled: -5 <input type="checkbox"/> Incapacitated: <input type="checkbox"/>
EXPERIENCE		
		<input type="text"/>



mouthpiece and messenger for allies, rivals and, occasionally, enemies of your lord. You know this might cost your existence, so you plan and scheme for your eventual liberation from servitude.

Roleplaying Hints: You are goal-driven and determined, but your Embrace allows for certain freedoms you never knew as a ghoul. Coupled with the fact that you are among a select few in your family to be given the Embrace, that fills you with a blossoming arrogance about your new existence. With the taste of limited independence fresh in your mouth, you want more. Your lord depends on you greatly, and that is his weakness. A time will come when you will no longer need him. Until then, you use the Sabbat to break the blood ties to your sire, and you familiarize yourself with all facets of his acquisitions and properties. After all, you know them better than he does, and eventually, it will all be yours.

Equipment: Armani suit, Rayban sunglasses, briefcase, PCS phone, laptop computer, beeper, Glock 17

SAMPLE PACK: THE CHALICE OF OSSEOUS DELIGHTS

My eyes burn meltdown red from the feeding but the cops think I'm some stoner or something.

"No, officer, just tired I guess. I don't usually stay up this late."

"What was all that screaming about?"

"Girlfriend's on the rag. She doesn't like it when I have friends over."

"Mind if I take a look?"

"Hey, if you want. Enter freely of your own will, and... yeah, come on in."

Officer Bloodbag steps into the stairwell, and before I can shut the door, Sunshine's on him like a starving dog. She wasted most of her juice dealing with that thing down by Turner Field earlier tonight. I guess she's still hungry even after the bum and all those Oasis girls. How does her little body hold so much blood?

Damn, but she's a messy eater. Zaljko's already taken up the stairwell tarp so blood's everywhere. Now that I think about it, maybe I'm a little thirsty myself.

Upstairs, they're screaming again. Better to wade in past Sunshine now because there's not going to be anything left for tomorrow. No one licks around here. For real though, I love 'em, but I stay with a bunch of slob. I'll need juice — Blood Feast, tomorrow, the Clarkston brownfield. No way Ashanti's outdoing me this year. Jumping over the fire, that's bullshit. But I'll show her some bullshit. It's a new year, Ashanti. Not even you can avoid the flames.

We were there on Kupala's Night. We were there when Lugoj drank our Father dry. We signed the Code of Milan. We brought down the city of Atlanta. And we are Tzimisce. Do not fuck with us.

They have inherited the legacy of a founding Sabbat pack. They can say the words, but they do not know what they mean. In the Final Nights, the Chalice of Osseous Delights is brought low, as all things must be — ignorant and weak, howling for blood and a history that is forever lost to them.

MY CHILDREN ARE MY BONES

In the Old Country, some Tzimisce *voivodes* Embraced "prestige broods" — large broods of childer with little purpose but to demonstrate that vitae was plentiful in the sire's demesne. The pack that came to be known as the Chalice of Osseous Delights began as one such ostentatious brood.

Cezar Satnoianu was not a bad sire. He taught his childer the virtues of Metamorphosis and, in his dismissive way, encouraged them to seek *Azhi Dahaka*. He kept them full and fat with blood.

But Cezar regarded them as pretty dolls to pose and prod. The brood was not meant to share Cezar's great legacy. Not even Dimka, the first among his childer, had a more trying task than to stand still while his sire crafted his bone structure in novel ways. The skeleton was Cezar's fascination. He used his childer as showpieces and experiments. Every few years, he told his brood the story of an ancient *koldunic* ritual that had inspired his

fleshcrafting curiosities, and, borrowing the name of the ritual, told his childer that they were "a chalice of osseous delights that, for eternity, shall never run dry."

But the Tzimisce blood filling their dead veins would not allow Cezar's childer to suffer that for long. While Cezar slumbered in the dirt of his crypt, Dimka told his brothers and sisters of Lugoj and that Cainite's designs to break the blood bond. They resisted such heresy at first, but their hesitation grew distant as they shared blood in the minutes before dawn.

On Kupala's Night, Cezar and his brood traveled to visit another *voivode*, as custom decreed. After he paraded them about, Cezar released his childer to enjoy themselves in the village beneath their host's fortress. Dimka and his siblings rode to the feet of the Carpathians. They beheld Kupala's crimson flower, and Cezar's blood could indenture them no longer.

Cezar and his host were among the first Tzimisce elders to fall on Kupala's Night. His childer, dubbing themselves "the Chalice of Osseous Delights" as a final denunciation of their sire, moved through Transylvania and Wallachia with their fellow packs, destroying elders in the night and sharing blood with other "sabbats" in the wee hours of the morning. Sometimes, they were merciful — they spared an ancient Fiend, a sorcerous pagan named Bogescu, in exchange for his art. His craft alone saved them from the ghoul swarm when the pack stormed the church of the Tzimisce Ancient. Dimka wept bloody tears as they retreated. He could not witness Lugoj's triumph.

When the Sabbat sprang from this revolutionary mire, the Chalice of Osseous Delights was one of the founding packs. It rampaged through Thorns the night the Camarilla drew its charter and returned to Eastern Europe thereafter. The Old Country was bloated with Tremere, far too dangerous for a pack that counted a *koldun* in its number. But where angels feared to tread, the childer of Cezar leaped.

For the next 400 years, the pack aided Cardinal Bistri and his successors in the futile effort to repel the Usurpers. Numerous Cainites were Embraced into the pack. Many of the original members of the pack met Final Death — a Usurper of such power that he could only have been the Founder himself destroyed Bogescu. Dimka fled to the New World. Throughout its various incarnations, however, the Chalice of Osseous Delights kept its *koldunic* lore and the techniques of Vicissitude that had earned the pack its name.

In the end, it took World War I to expel the pack from their ancestral homeland. They fled to France, crossed the channel, and their ghouls smuggled them to New York in boxes of dirt.

Their exploits in America proved no less audacious. They destroyed Lasombra "conscripts" by the dozen in the Second Sabbat Civil War and signed the revised Code of Milan in 1933. In the Third Sabbat Civil War, Brujah *antitribu* and their Caitiff lapdogs destroyed the final member of the original pack. Only childer, grandchilder and great-grandchilder remained, but still, a *koldun*, a Romanian named Zaljko Petrescu, existed among them.

In the late 1990s, the pack left New York to escape what its members saw as certain destruction at the hands of the Camarilla, only to join in the crusade to take Atlanta. In the end, only Zaljko and a few neonates, only months dead, remained....

USING THESE DESPICABLE BASTARDS

Not all Sabbat packs are roving street punks who get loaded on spiked blood, run through bonfires and worship the devil, but some come pretty close. Although they don't fall too far from the most panicky Camarilla stereotypes, the *Chalice of Osseous Delights* represents the new face of the Sabbat, especially that of the Tzimisce: non-nuclear families united by shared hardships and the *Vaulderie*, ignorant of their august history, suspicious of elders, skeptical about the existence of the *Antediluvians*, eager to attend the parties and spill blood in the crusades but unwilling to swallow most of the bullshit their sect feeds them. In that regard, they're an easy fit for any Sabbat chronicle, whether as fellow soldiers in a siege or as another pack to challenge in the struggle for territory or prestige. For the Camarilla sellouts out there, a Storyteller can use these characters when his players' coterie runs into another one of those seemingly faceless Sabbat packs.

SHOVELHEADS UNITE!

The *Guide of the Sabbat* describes some of the Natures, Demeanors, Abilities, Backgrounds and Paths of Enlightenment in the profiles below. For more information on Koldunic Sorcery, its ways and the related Knowledge, see *Blood Magic: Secrets of Thaumaturgy*.

AMERICA JOHNSON, THE RICH GIRL

Background: Forget the stereotype of the spoiled little rich girl who runs away, then comes crying back to daddy when she sees how bad life on the street really is. America ran away and stayed on the street because that's where she belonged. At 17, she left her Highland Park home in Dallas and took a bus to Athens, Georgia to pursue the shabby-chic lifestyle with her friends. Too much time at the 40 Watt Club, a paranoid unwillingness to spend the \$100,000 she'd stolen from her parents and a variety of addictions conspired to make her homeless.

Over the next few years, America slept wherever she could, wearing out her welcome with a dozen friends, crashing with acquaintances and one-night stands, sometimes sleeping on the streets. On the coldest night of 1997, she withdrew 40 bucks for a room at the Ramada. Whenever her growing heroin addiction gave her the elbow, she preferred sucking dick to a trip to the bank.

In the spring of 1999, she hitched a ride into Atlanta for a hook-up. Her "chauffeur" turned into a groper when the E kicked in, so she told him to fuck off and spent the next few months sleeping in doorways. Meanwhile, the Sabbat crusade for Atlanta was heating up. America had no idea that the Jihad was playing out around her, but she got scared as more and more junkies disappeared off the streets. On her way to the ATM, Zaljko and his pack drove by and pulled her into a van. Her last mortal memory: a rude circle of leering faces and cheap shag carpet.

Image: America, like her namesake, banks on her attainable beauty. Unlike the rest of her pack, she refuses all Vicissitude modifications and looks much like she did in life: thin enough to look unhealthy, average enough to fit in, cool enough not to care.

Roleplaying Hints: You're resourceful — you survived for years without a stable home and only had to touch your mad money once. Although you usually go along with the pack



consensus, you throw a fit if someone wants to do something really stupid. That's the problem with this world, as you see it — morons who can't take care of their shit. You enjoy messing with the heads of such people and affect whatever demeanor you believe will exclude you from their ranks.

Sire: Zaljko Petrescu

Nature: Enigma

Demeanor: Chameleon

Generation: 11th

Embrace: 1999

Apparent Age: mid-20s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 2, Fire Dancing 2, Melee 1, Stealth 3, Vamp 3

Knowledges: Academics 2, Computer 1, Medicine 2

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Vicissitude 1

Backgrounds: Resources 1 (America has plenty of money, but she's extremely reluctant to withdraw too much at any given time.)

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

Morality: Humanity 2

Willpower: 6

SUNSHINE, THE KID ERINYS

Background: Amy Coltraine died the night the *Chalice of Osseous Delights* Embraced her and stuck her in an overturned refrigerator. The thing that came up wasn't Amy at all. It was a monster that spent all of its humanity kicking its way through the sheet metal.

She isn't sure which pack member was her sire. Maybe it was the one who started calling her "Sunshine," the one killed by that Nosferatu with the third eye. Who cares? It's America who holds



her head when she cries, and Tyrone who packs the earth around her just before the sun comes up.

The Cainites of Atlanta regard Sunshine as a True Sabbat worthy of the title — she was even a templar for Bishop Sutphen briefly. In the first nights after her Embrace, she hurled herself into the war against the Camarilla and emerged with a collection of skulls envied by Cainites 100 years her senior. Sunshine even refused an offer from Francisco Domingo de Polonia, Cardinal of the Eastern American Territories, to serve him as a paladin. Impelled by the Vinculum, she chose to remain with the Chalice of Osseous Delights — with the bony spurs on her shoulders and arms, she remains the only member to live up to the pack's name. Along with Tyrone, she's the muscle of the pack and finds mongrels, strays and rodents to guard whatever place the pack finds to sleep out the day.

Image: A little angel with the blank expression of a genuine sociopath. She pouts but stands still while America and Ashanti do her hair each night — they like to experiment. She wears whatever's handy, often stealing shirts from Tyrone. Zaljko has manipulated the bones of her forearms, shoulder blades and shins to create rows of sharp spikes for pinning food and ripping through rival packs.

Roleplaying Hints: Amy's dead. You're Sunshine. You need blood to wake up each night. Try not to cry so much. Shut up, and bear it. Put yourself in the middle of things — throw yourself into dangerous situations whenever you can. With luck, someone bigger than you will finish you off one night. In the meantime, take on as many monsters as you can, and show them the light.

Sire: Unknown

Nature: Eye of the Storm

Demeanor: Child

Generation: 12th

Embrace: 1999

Apparent Age: 9

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Body Crafts 2, Fire Dancing 3, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Academics 1

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 1, Vicissitude 1

Backgrounds: Sabbat Status 1

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 2, Courage 5

Morality: Humanity 1

Willpower: 4

Note: Sunshine's bony spikes inflict aggravated damage.

ZALJKO PETRESCU, THE LORD ORIGINAL

Background: Zaljko discovered the Chalice of Osseous Delights during his mortal career as a freight inspector in Bucovina. Skinny Danifa, a grandchilde of a member of the original pack, took him as a ghoul to oversee her transport out of the country. He performed this chore well, exploiting the holes in the easily bribed bureaucracy that employed him to smuggle the pack out of the country. Danifa kept Zaljko with her for the voyage to America.

But Danifa didn't take to the New World. First, she complained that America's immigrant blood was of an unsatisfying consistency. Then, she started waking up in the middle of the day, grabbing Zaljko and screaming in his ear that Kupala was angry at her for abandoning her native soil. She grew terrified that her sorcery would fail her. She spent most nights holed up in the pack's communal haven, refusing all company except for Zaljko, rambling to her ghoul about needing a vessel for her wisdom.

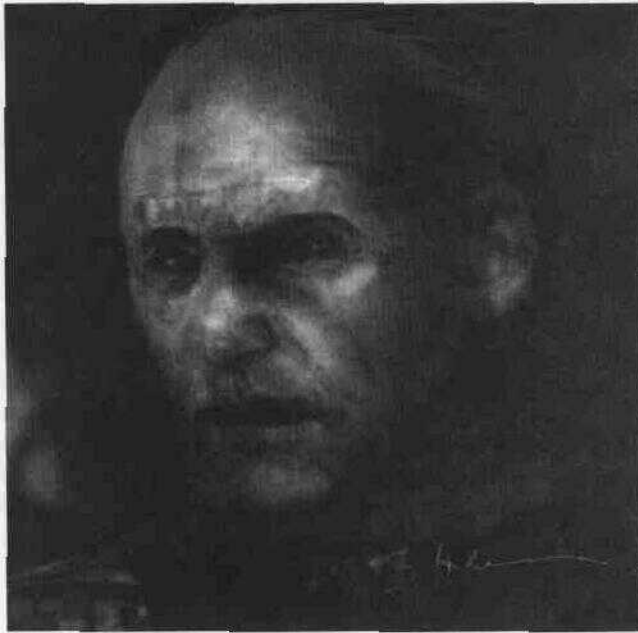
Toward the end of her unlife, Danifa only accepted vitae when she was on the ragged edge of frenzy. She Embraced Zaljko and another ghoul who served the pack. With a wild look in her eyes, she told the two she would teach them both the rudiments of Koldunic Sorcery and destroy the student who did not progress as far as the other. Zaljko won. The blood of his competitor was his prize.

Danifa fell into torpor a month later for want of blood. The rest of the pack considered her a liability. When they set upon her slumbering form, Zaljko lead the charge.

Zaljko assumed the duties of pack priest for the next 40 years. When the Camarilla made significant headway in New York, he suggested that the pack blow town for a few months and assist the crusade in Atlanta. The pack, perhaps swayed by the powerful concoction of Zaljko's Vaulderie, agreed to their priest's plan. Rather than meeting Final Death in the Big Apple, they met it in the South.

Zaljko, suddenly the ductus and priest for a pack of neonates, conducted several mass Embraces and made token efforts in the crusade for Atlanta. When the Sword of Caine was triumphant, the pack was five strong and completely ignorant of their culture except for what little Zaljko could tell them.

Image: Zaljko looks gray and tired. He rarely makes eye contact when he speaks and usually seems to be staring at



something in the distance. His whole body looks overstuffed and bulky since his bones are three times thicker than a mortal's.

Roleplaying Hints: The universe keeps a shitlist with your name at the top. It knows you have cheated death and seeks nothing more than to deny you the one or two comfortable aspects of undeath. It destroyed your pack just to show you it was serious, and now, it's saddled you with a group of worthless fuckheads to ensure your demise. Some nights, you feel like finishing the job Creation has started. Others, you want to spit in its face. Regardless, you are the keeper of your pack's sorcery, and you must pass it on to Ashanti before your imminent demise.

Sire: Skinny Danifa

Nature: Curmudgeon

Demeanor: Guru

Generation: 10th

Embrace: 1954

Apparent Age: early 60s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression 1, Fortune-Telling 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Body Crafts 4, Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Fire Dancing 2, Melee 3, Security 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Academics 3, Investigation 1, Koldunism 3, Linguistics 1 (English), Medicine 1, Occult 3, Politics 2

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Koldunic Sorcery 4, Vicissitude 4

Koldunic Paths: Way of Earth 4, Way of the Spirit 2

Backgrounds: Rituals 2, Sabbat Status 1

Virtues: Conviction 3, Instinct 2, Courage 2

Morality: Path of Metamorphosis 4

Willpower: 4

Note: Zaljko's thick bones give him the equivalent of Fortitude 2 against any damage not caused by fire or sunlight.

TYRONE, THE ZULO LOCO

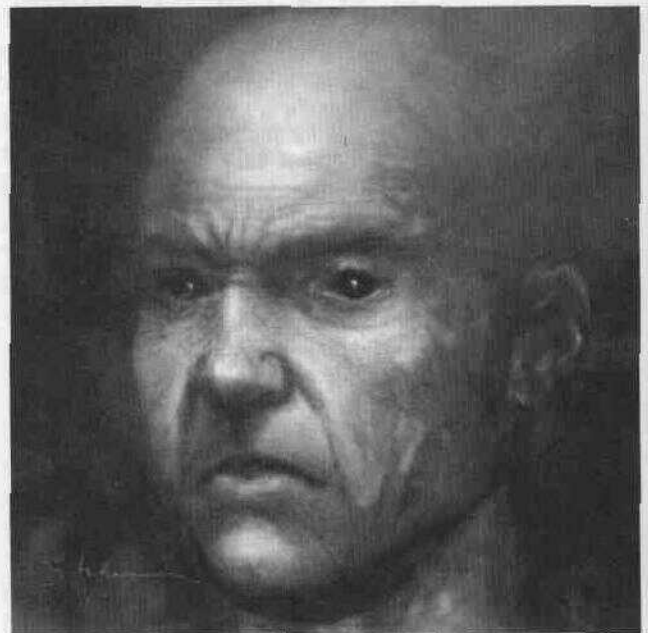
Background: Tyrone's left shoulder bears a tattoo of a skeleton depicted in an exaggerated perspective, his enlarged, bony hand flipping off the world. Tyrone calls it "Skully." Some nights, he thinks Skully's the only reason the Chalice of Osseous Delights chose him for the Embrace.

In itself, pack existence wasn't much of a change for Tyrone. Growing up in the gangs of Atlanta's Techwood neighborhood, he didn't see much of a difference between a knife in the back and fangs in the neck. Of course, some of the stuff he did with his pack — jumping centuries-old vampires, drinking blood, performing weird rituals, kidnapping people and whacking them with shovels — were a bit outside his experience. He whispered the law of the jungle, just like he had the first time he shot someone, and tried to accept what he was.

And hell, assuming the *zulo* form was better than a fat cone and a forty of Bull. When Zaljko was shocked that "such a whelp has mastered the sacred form of our kind," Tyrone felt for the first time — undead or otherwise — like a man calling his own shots instead of some monster who'd had his life screwed up by bigger monsters.

Tyrone is always the one to pacify America after she throws a fit. He's talked Zaljko down from several bridges. He watches out for Sunshine (except in a fight, when she watches out for him). But despite their healthy Vinculum, Tyrone competes with Ashanti whenever he can, maybe because they were both graduates of the same mass Embrace, maybe because she's clearly Zaljko's favorite. Regardless, the eternal contest is responsible for his greatest failures in unlife: his botched attempt to learn Koldunic Sorcery and his failure to outdo her in the Fire Dance.

Image: Tyrone's covered in tattoos, and some of them move. Jets of black ink shoot through his body, making patterns as they pass. Every few minutes, they travel through the veins of his



temples and create curled horns on both sides of his shaved head. Then, the horns fade, and the ink forms tear-shaped loops as it travels down his left cheek and back into the patterns on his body. Tyrone usually goes shirtless in order to show off his animated tattoos and rarely wears anything more concealing than a wife-beater tucked into baggy khakis. Skully rides his left shoulder.

Roleplaying Hints: Of the entire pack, you're the most beholden to the Vinculum—you love your pack, but you try too hard. You've volunteered yourself for the doomed quest of keeping everyone happy. Your packmates take you for granted, but no one else seems willing to accept the job. Still, you don't take any shit outside your pack; in *zulo* form, you're confident you can take on any Cainite in the world. You've still got a lot to learn.

Sire: Angel Mercenary

Nature: Caregiver

Demeanor: Rebel

Generation: 13th

Embrace: 1999

Apparent Age: early 20s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Panhandling 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Body Crafts 3, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Fire Dancing 4, Melee 2, Security 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Vamp 2

Knowledges: Investigation 1, Linguistics 1 (English), Medicine 2, Sewer Lore 1

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Vicissitude 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 1

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

Morality: Humanity 5

Willpower: 5

ASHANTI BEACHUM, THE DEMON DREAMER

Background: Ashanti made her last delivery for UPS the night Zaljko needed soldiers to throw against a Confederate general who persistently refused to give up the ghost. Ashanti, Tyrone and two others were the only survivors of their mass Embrace, and along with Sunshine, her sire and her *vato loco*, the last members of the pack left standing after the general was dust. While the pack swelled with each mass Embrace and shrank after each confrontation with the Camarilla, Ashanti had decided when she first opened her eyes and found herself buried "alive" that she would survive no matter what. In the closing nights of the crusade, she was confirmed as True Sabbat.

In the wake of the siege, Zaljko — increasingly paranoid about the impending Final Death he saw at every threat — spent the quiet time after the feeding and fighting to pass on his knowledge of Koldunic Sorcery to Ashanti. She had the steel to barter with demons and the passion to preside over *ritae*. In some ways, she's already surpassed her teacher. The spirits whisper to her in the dead of daylight. They've even taught her a way that her sire has never heard of.



Ashanti now serves as the pack's priest and spends most nights studying her rituals while the rest of the pack ravages Atlanta, acquiring food and settling lingering business from the Atlanta crusade. Lately, the spirits have shown her the destiny of the pack. She urges her packmates to leave Atlanta, citing the stagnation of the city rather than the pathetic end that awaits them if they stay.

Image: Ashanti Beachum is a black woman with long braids that she can tie into a topknot to reveal a turgid eye in the back of her head. Her experiments with Vicissitude have contorted her once-proud features into something resembling the face of an agitated tiger. A mouth of undifferentiated tissue dominates her belly; she's still figuring out how to make the teeth.

Roleplaying Hints: The less said about your breathing days the better. That was just the epigram before a long story that ends with you as the enlightened center of the universe. In the time between, you'll never die, you can modify your body in any way you desire and you even talk to spirits. With such power, you look at mortals and wonder how you could have ever been one of them. Seek Metamorphosis, heed your demonic dreams, and tomorrow night, you'll look at Cainites and wonder the same thing.

Note: In most cases, Ashanti's rearview eye prevents ambushes from behind.

Sire: Zaljko Petrescu

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Survivor

Generation: 11th

Embrace: 1999

Apparent Age: mid-30s

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Fortune-Telling 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 1, Panhandling 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Body Crafts 3, Fire Dancing 4, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Performance 3 (acting), Security 1, Survival 3

Knowledges: Academics 3, Computers 2, Koldunism 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

Disciplines: Koldunic Sorcery 3, Vicissitude 3

Koldunic Paths: Way of Earth 3, Way of Sorrow 3, Way of the Spirit 3

Backgrounds: Rituals 1, Sabbat Status 1

Virtues: Conviction 4, Instinct 3, Courage 3

Morality: Path of Metamorphosis 6

Willpower: 6

SUCH DELIGHTS MADE FLESH

It's almost daylight, and not one of these fuckers has what it takes to dig his way out. They've been underground for about six hours now. That's a long time to stand around, leaning on a shovel, waiting for someone to rise from the grave. Weakness just pisses me off. I don't think the pack's gonna be any bigger when the sun comes up. Maybe next time. Story of our lives... I mean—ah, fuck it.

Atlanta's finished with us. We've won the war, so we turn against ourselves. Sunshine's crying all the time, and America keeps grumbling something about Monomacy. Zaljko's got the thousand-yard stare again.

Ashanti thinks we better skip town before we get mixed up in too many more games. The Loudogs clowned me after her Fire Dance at the Blood Feast last week (jumping over the fire, that's bullshit), but I've got to agree with her: Atlanta's no good. Rich girl wants to go to California, something's just screaming at me to head to New York, and Zaljko wants to take a boat to fucking Europe! Who knows where we're headed? The Chalice of Osseous Delights — coming soon to a town near you. I swear, the first time someone calls me an "injun"....

TZIMISCE OF NOTE

A quaint phrase — redundant and wholly beside the point. It might be more instructive to list Tzimisce who amounted to nothing. A Fiend lacking notoriety would be a collector's item indeed. This is less true in these vulgar modern nights of mass Embraces and Masquerades, but even the lowliest shovelhead plucked from a dumpster might eventually offend Creation in some infamous way. Maybe Tzimisce are destined for greatness (another stupid phrase). Regardless, every Fiend aspires to become a larger-than-death character in his own right; the Antediluvian in their blood demands no less.

RATTI-BEN, THE SISTER OF BLOOD

Embraced during Alexander the Great's invasion of the Afghan Plateau, Ratti-Ben loves her country with psychotic devotion and believes it is a living, breathing organism like any other creature. She has seen India's great population assimilate invader after invader or, eventually, reject them forcibly. No matter what happens, India returns to her people and, therefore, to her, its protector.

Of course, a protector must do many things to guard her love as whole to ensure its survival. Ratti-Ben and Kartariya's other childer are therefore India's wolves. They cull the weak to ensure the herd itself remains strong. Their duty is cruel and seemingly

capricious, but it is important. Ratti-Ben influences events to a violent conclusion, thereby ensuring that the strongest and most devoted survive. By Western standards, Ratti-Ben is cold, monstrous, brutal and completely lacking in pity, hence the Sabbat's interest in her. She believes herself India's silent savior, however, and every bit a mahatma as Gandhi was. In her role as a cruel and terrible avatar, she has found a kinship with the Sabbat's Sascha Vykos and strongly entertains the notion of joining its sect.

Ratti-Ben draws her herd and her followers from India's downtrodden and often discarded populace, be they low-caste or widowed wives. She plays her hand in India's strife in places such as the Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states, where corruption upends the caste-rule. Her connections to criminals in political office currently offer her an unparalleled information network stretching from India's highest halls of power down to her darkest alleys. Her principal haven is in Vrindavan, the so-called City of Widows. Although the practice of sati (where a wife throws herself atop her husband's funeral pyre) has been largely abandoned, Indian wives are still expected to shave their heads, forsake all status, never remarry and surrender their possessions when their husbands expire. Vrindavan, Krishna's reputed home, is where thousands of these impoverished women go to live their remaining lives; most die where they sleep, either in the streets or in shanty-hovels. Ratti-Ben makes her haven in an abandoned temple in Vrindavan and employs dozens of old crones to sing her name during the day. She takes her ghouls and vitae from this surfeit of misery. When she does offer the Embrace to the rare servant, her progeny is all the more eager to strike back at the system that threw her into abject poverty for years. Thus, Ratti-Ben draws her strength from the venom of others.

SASCHA VYKOS, CAINE'S ANGEL

Honored by young Tzimisce as among the first to betray its sire to the Anarch Revolt, Priscus Sascha Vykos is the Sabbat's most terrible instrument of fear. Certainly, warriors like the Black Hand's Djuhah are deadly adversaries on the battlefield, but at least they destroy their adversaries in combat and with little cruelty fueling their intentions. Sascha, however, "studies" its victims and decides which tortures will best send them howling into destruction. Then, it begins its ministrations with a cold precision that violates their every cell.

Sascha was born Myca Vykos, heir to Carpathian royalty as his father's first and only son. Fate had him in mind for greater things, however, and brought him into the Embrace of Symeon of Constantinople. Myca found himself — for then, he was still a man — in a city and a time that would eventually rival Carthage in legend and glory. Constantinople fell under the aegis of three Cainite families, including the Obertus Fiends who took Myca in. While he despised his new existence and everyone who'd brought him to this fate, Myca appreciated the unparalleled opportunity for learning. The Obertus Athenaeum was the missing legacy of Alexandria's library and housed unique knowledge thought lost to the world. What the books did not teach, Myca learned through the complex scheming of the Byzantine courts.

When Constantinople's glorious age came to an end, Myca left with more than he'd bargained for. The city's preeminent Cainite was the Toreador Michael, who was as close to angelic

as any flesh could ever hope to be. Constantinople was his vision of Heaven's reflection on Earth, and he left nothing untouched from architecture down to the mortal populace. Michael knew of Myca's boundless thirst and appreciation of knowledge and used him as a living record to preserve and even emulate Constantinople's glory in the future. Myca, being Tzimisce and visceral in his dreams, twisted Michael's resplendent aspirations of Constantinople and fraternity into a vision of empires built with flesh instead of stone and solidarity of blood instead of spirit.

After Constantinople fell, Myca and Symeon became "guests" of the Balkan Tzimisce. They valued Myca for whatever insight he could offer about Constantinople's, and thus Alexandria's, knowledge. As history already told, this was not to last. Myca, driven by Michael's dream to help build something greater than himself, joined the nascent and promising Anarch Revolt. He proved his loyalty to the Sabbat by devouring and regurgitating his sire Symeon repeatedly before finally diablerizing him. This earned him entry into the annals of Sabbat infamy, along with his actions at the Convention of Thorns, where he sheared away his masculinity and hurled it at the Ventrue Hardestadt in disgust.

Following Thorns, Myca became Sascha, a sculpted and androgynous (if alien) beauty. In the early nights of the struggle, Sascha remained among the few Tzimisce who did not abandon their Carpathian keeps to the growing Camarilla. Unlike many of its Sabbat colleagues, Sascha appreciated and understood the necessity of employing mortals for Cainite gain. Many sect members, particularly the younger ones, scoffed at the use of kine, but Sascha knew that the Camarilla grew strong in influence and territory because of their reliance on mortal society. Sascha chose to fight Hardestadt and the Camarilla lynchpins at their own game, through mortal proxies. It sponsored the Uskoks, Senj corsairs and Habsburg-supported pirates, in attacking the Venetian and Ottoman shipping lanes. Most often, these pirates plundered for greed, but Sascha occasionally employed them to attack Cainite-sponsored vessels in the hopes of kidnapping and questioning the ghouls of rivals. Eventually, however, Sascha's interests drifted away from playing the Jihad. It withdrew to its haven and emerged only when a passing interest with the sect demanded otherwise. Few knew what Sascha was doing; fewer really wanted to know.

Sascha reemerged from seclusion during the first Sabbat Civil War. Its skills with the witchcraft of the heinous Tremere were stronger than ever, and allied Tzimisce suspected Sascha had grown in knowledge under the tutelage of Kupala. With the signing of the Purchase Pact, Sascha seemed driven in new directions with a thirst for arcane knowledge and archeology. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it sponsored (financially) dozens of expeditions into Egypt, Greece and the Middle East. On the very rare occasion, it even joined the odd dig in the Holy Land, Lebanon or Syria. This did not distract it from its duty, however, for during the Second Sabbat Civil War, Sascha served Regent Gorchist by eliminating the sect's more troublesome dissenters. For Sascha's role in the struggle, the signing of the revised Code of Milan also saw its appointment to the position of priscus. As such, it now travels the world on behalf of the Sabbat, dealing with trouble as it sees fit.

While its actions are brutal, even excessively violent, Sascha moves with cold reasoning; it is building Michael's Dream in 1,000 minute ways. Everything it does is for a design, from the way it cocks its head while speaking, to the way it sloughs the flesh from a victim like pulling a sock from a foot. Unfortunately, the complete intricacies of Michael's Dream eludes Sascha's understanding and drives him to the brink of excess. Sascha's preoccupation with archeology and the occult is not an undirected thirst for such vagaries as knowledge and power. Sascha seeks to recapture Michael's full lessons and dreams, which fade further from its thought each passing year. When Constantinople fell, its Christian (and later Muslim) invaders scattered much of its wealth and wisdom throughout the Western Hemisphere and the Near East. Sascha surmises that the full scope of Michael's vision rests somewhere with Constantinople's stolen legacy. Recently, however, Sascha has come to believe that Michael's legacy lies hidden in others such as itself. Now Sascha seeks to recapture that knowledge by diablerizing the few remaining survivors of Constantinople. This includes the Gangrel Baron Thomas Feroux, the Nosferatu Malachite and, most importantly, the Dracon himself. Whether this proves Sascha's greatest coup or the beginning of its fall remains to be seen.

RADU BISTRI, ITINERANT CARDINAL AND FATHER OF THE PURCHASE PACT

Cardinal Radu Bistri is the rarest of Tzimisce: a diplomat. Radu earned the notice of the *voivode* Visya for his advice on how to deal with the Hungarian Ventrue. Visya, a student of the slaughter-and-subdue school of politics, Embraced Radu as an advisor. Although born a revenant, Radu understood human politics well enough to negotiate with the Ventrue and their ghouls. In a time when the Hungarian Patricians did not recognize the sovereignty of the Tzimisce, Radu forced them to listen.

Even after his Embrace and his rise to *voivode*, Radu retained enough of his political savvy to serve as the spokesman of the clan for several centuries. Although he was the Tzimisce diplomat to the outside world, he had no counterpart to mediate disputes within the clan. When the younger Fiends rose up against their elders, Radu opposed them — at first. But Radu's political insight saved him. While other *voivodes* objected on principle to the rule of their childer — and fell to their fangs — Radu surrendered his demesne to the anarchs and joined their cause.

When all but the most stubborn Tzimisce *voivodes* had been toppled, Radu continued to play the diplomat. When the rebellious childer of Europe formed the Sabbat, Radu created the office of Cardinal of the Land Beyond the Forest to oversee Transylvania and the surrounding lands. In his duties, the cardinal proved far too effective: The Tzimisce under his guidance were at least coordinated, if not organized. He served as Cardinal of the Land Beyond the Forest for barely a decade before the regent suggested that his talents might be more useful in the rambunctious New World. It didn't take a diplomat to know what the regent wanted. Radu left Transylvania for the American East Coast.

The situation in America appalled Radu. While the Sabbat had escaped its elders, it had found nothing to replace them. No one could keep order, and the Cainites of the New World spent

their nights diablerizing one another rather than creating a domain where they could exist free of their sires. Radu traveled all over the new United States, talking to various Cainites who had cobbled together some semblance of authority. The 1803 Purchase Pact, which brought order to a sect obsessed with freedom, was the fruit of his years of negotiations. Although Radu felt it did too little, the pact did what elders could not — bring discipline to the unruly childer of the Sabbat.

In the modern nights, Radu still holds the title of Cardinal, though he oversees no specific region. He continues to act as a diplomat for the Sabbat. He was involved, though not instrumental, in the addition of the Salubri *antitribu* to the Sword of Caine. His current project: negotiating the acceptance of a dozen elder Gangrel who apparently abandoned the Camarilla over its inability to deal with some pressing threat. Radu now spends his nights playing at diplomacy in this unlikely alliance.

MINERVA SCHWALKE-WOJTKIEWICZ, VOIVODE OF CLAN TZIMISCE

The Voivode of Clan Tzimisce is the most powerful Fiend in the Sabbat. How is it then that Minerva Schwalke-Wojtkiewicz is *Voivode*?

Because she's just smart enough to get the job and just stupid enough to want it.

The Eldest is gone, and Yorak too. The five *Voivodes* who followed them were increasingly inconsequential. The Tzimisce *Voivode* is no longer the undisputed master of the clan. Since the Fiends joined the Sabbat, the title has carried little real power. In the Final Nights, the *Voivode* is a Winston Churchill without an army. She arouses hatred of the Antediluvians and loyalty to the Sword of Caine with immortal speeches, but she has no recourse when her words fail to inspire.

As a mortal in Poland, Minerva wrote jingoistic plays and short stories under a male pseudonym, denouncing the partitioning of Poland that ended its existence as a state in 1795. Her sire Ari Ezbet did not believe the Purchase Pact would hold and sought to relocate to Mexico City, where he would establish a foundation of sorts to crank out propaganda. Although he was disappointed that the writer who had driven him to frenzy with "his" words was really a woman, he Embraced her for her turn of phrase that could ignite nationalistic passions.

Under Ari's instruction, Minerva became a fanatic of a different stripe. Her lifetime of crafting tropes about "the realization of Polish identity" translated easily into a "realization of Tzimisce identity" that could only be achieved through Metamorphosis. She became the principal leader of the propaganda factory Ari had long ago lost interest in. In early 1848, on the night the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, she diablerized her sire after an argument about whether the American Army should garrison the city.

Her work with Ari's pack, renamed the Jagiellonians after the death of her sire "at the claws of Lupines," continued until the Second Sabbat Civil War destroyed most of its soldiers. The young Cainites of Mexico City, many of them not even Tzimisce, flocked to her for instruction in the ways of Metamorphosis. She also pleaded with the regent to encourage *ritae* of unity within the sect.

Minerva and her surviving students claim credit for spreading the *ritus* of the *Festivo dello Estinto* beyond the confines of Mexico.

After a pack of Camarilla archons brought Final Death to the previous *Voivode*, the position was held in even lower esteem. Only Minerva, a now-destroyed Malkavian *antitribu* and a handful of obviously unsuitable candidates sought the title. Minerva traveled all the over the world, visiting such luminaries as Velya the Vivisectionist, Vladamir Rustovich, Righteous Endeavor, Radu Bistri and Sascha Vykos. None of them agreed to endorse her. Although she was obviously a faithful adherent to her Path, she was ignorant of Koldunic Sorcery — a traditional prerequisite to become *Voivode*.

Undeterred, Minerva returned to Mexico City and declared that she had the support of the elders of the clan. She arranged her own confirmation as *Voivode*. Although none of her supposed boosters have publicly disputed her claim, she's only been *Voivode* for a few months, a blink of an undead eye. She has Embraced several of the Mexico City Bratoviches to serve as her honor guard. Now, she feverishly petitions the consistory to bolster the crusading efforts all over America. Minerva pushes a simple four-point plan: take North America, take South America, take Europe, take the world. She hopes her vague, ambitious plan, along with her generous instruction in the Path of Metamorphosis, will be enough to silence those who could contradict her dubious claim.

Minerva brings the same feverish indecision to her own form as she does to her fragile *Voivodate*. She completely rearranges herself at least once a month. Her current incarnation: a hairless, nine-foot-tall skeletal nightmare with two sphincter-like mouths for eyes. Her skin and fangs glow in the moonlight.

REGENT MELINDA GALBRAITH

Regent Galbraith is dead...

The annual *Palla Grande*, held on All Hallow's Eve each year, draws packs and covens from across North America into Mexico City. It is the Sabbat's Christmas Day and Halloween all rolled into one; it is a bloody celebration of Cainite pertinacity. The regent and the highest cardinals, *prisci*, bishops and archbishops also host the major events, including a Blood Feast, a Blood Bath and various immortality plays performed by the sect's artisans. The millennial *Palla Grande* celebration was supposed to be the largest yet, an affirmation that the Sabbat had survived into the 21st Century. It was a grim festival of jubilation and a warning that the Sword of Caine must be vigilant against their greatest threat, the Antediluvians. With New York lost and unknown tumult in domains to the East, the Sabbat needed a reason for these festivities. Few realized, however, that the sect was about to suffer another blow, the murder of Toreador *antitribu* Regent Galbraith herself.

The festivities began at sunset as expected, with Regent Galbraith granting audiences to select Cainites before the *Palla Grande* was underway. Zachary Sikorsky, a Tzimisce drag queen with an uncanny skill for impersonations, was to meet with Galbraith to help her construct her greatest costume yet. He was supposed to fleshcraft her into an angel, a creature of precise and aching beauty, replete with fine bone wings. Upon entering her



chambers, however, he discovered Galbraith's corpse turning to ash and an arcane symbol painted in blood on the wall.

With little time to spare and the *Palla Grande* near commencement, Sikorsky assumed the regent's form and carried on as her. It was a decision made in sheer panic; Sikorsky knew that he—as the last person to see her and as a member of a New York pack now ousted after the Camarilla's reclamation of its city—would be blamed and tried for the regent's murder. At first, Sikorsky assumed the regent's role for the evening, allowing the Sabbat one moment of celebration following New York's fall. When the evening ended, however, Sikorsky realized he couldn't confide in anyone if he didn't know who had destroyed the regent. To this night, he has remained Melinda Galbraith, Regent of the Sabbat, and scared all to hell that eventually, somebody will out him.

ZACHARY SIKORSKY, REGENT OF THE SABBAT

Background: ...Long live Regent Galbraith.

Zachary Sikorsky always knew he was different, even as a child. Call it stereotypical, but he loved dressing up in his mother's clothing whenever she wasn't around. Of course, she beat him pretty hard when she discovered the make-up he'd forgotten to clean off, but she thought she was doing him a favor by battering him into heterosexuality. When Zachary passed into adolescence, he discovered words like *fag* and *queer* were aimed at him. While that itself was difficult enough to cope with, Zachary realized he was more comfortable pretending and even acting like a woman. He enjoyed being a man physically, but emotionally, he liked dressing in women's clothing and playing feminine.

By the time he was 16, Zachary was out on the streets, hustling for a living. His mother threw him out of the house when he came out to her. Zachary was a popular commodity on the street; already slight and hairless, he played his female rolls well. When he dressed in women's clothing, it was easier for his closet-case clientele to pretend they were seducing a she instead of a he. Eventually, Zachary reached the age where he could work in bars instead of back alleys. He spent the next few years performing on the drag queen circuit and at cabarets in New York. That's when

he earned the attentions of the Sacred Band, a gay- and lesbian-predominant Sabbat pack that took a liking to Zachary's talented antics on stage.

Zachary, although young to the Sabbat, adjusted perfectly. His new nature as a Fiend allowed him to make those tiny alterations needed to make himself simply divine, but the impetus to be a drag queen remained. He loved the clothing and acting with a mix of Marilyn Monroe flash, Julie Newmar class and Bette Davis sass. This *Palla Grande*, the third of his young existence, was supposed to be his best show yet; he'd already entertained many within the Sabbat with his dead-on impersonations of Regent Galbraith (down to her Spanish temperament) and other Sabbat notables. Unfortunately, his skills have now placed him in a precarious position.

For the past few months, Zachary has been playing Regent Galbraith. During these periods, he retreats into "meditative" seclusion and allows "her" retainers to speak on the regent's behalf. Although he's grown more skilled at playing Galbraith, Zachary is also becoming more panicked and paranoid. He fears his every word and action betray his identity, but the charade continues for one more night. Zachary fears this "masquerade" will eventually come to an end once someone uncovers his ruse and slays him in righteous indignation.

Image: Galbraith is a Spanish beauty who keeps her brown hair short in that no-nonsense look. She wears the finest contemporary fashions with an eye for the conservative yet complimentary cut. She looks more like an art gallery owner than the Regent of the Sabbat. Thanks to Zachary's advanced touch with Vicissitude, he possesses a physical equivalent to the Regent's majestic bearing.

Roleplaying Hints: You are Regent Galbraith; you are Regent Galbraith. You are merciless, ruthless and stern. You put one hand on your hip in that provocative manner when you're angry; you like to roll your "r's," and oh, don't forget to turn on your heel when you walk away. Why is he looking at me that way? Does he suspect something? You are Regent Galbraith. Keep it together, and look distracted. Maybe people won't bother you then. Don't forget to flash that feral smile when someone makes a joke. No, that's too much teeth, tone it down a notch. You are Regent Galbraith... and you are scared to death... again.

Sire: Daniel Murphy

Nature: Celebrant (Director*)

Demeanor: Survivor (Judge*)

Generation: 12th

Embrace: 1996

Apparent Age: early 30s*

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5*

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

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

Skills: Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Melee 1, Performance 4

Knowledges: Linguistics 3, Occult 2, Politics 1

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Presence 3, Vicissitude 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5*, Contacts 5*, Herd 5*, Influence 5*, Resources 5*, Retainers 3*, Sabbat Status 5*

Virtues: Conviction 3, Instinct 2, Courage 3

Morality: The Path of Lilith 5

Willpower: 7

Note: All entries with the asterisk (*) are for Galbraith.

RIGHTEOUS ENDEAVOR

Background: The father of this young Fiend-to-be was a witch-hunter who was more than a little upset to learn that his wife was a witch. Every night for two months, young Righteous witnessed his mother's torture at the hands of his father and read himself to sleep with her copy of *Liber Spirituum*. Vindicating Freud, Righteous Endeavor Clay grew up to become the most notorious witch-hunter/witch of his day.

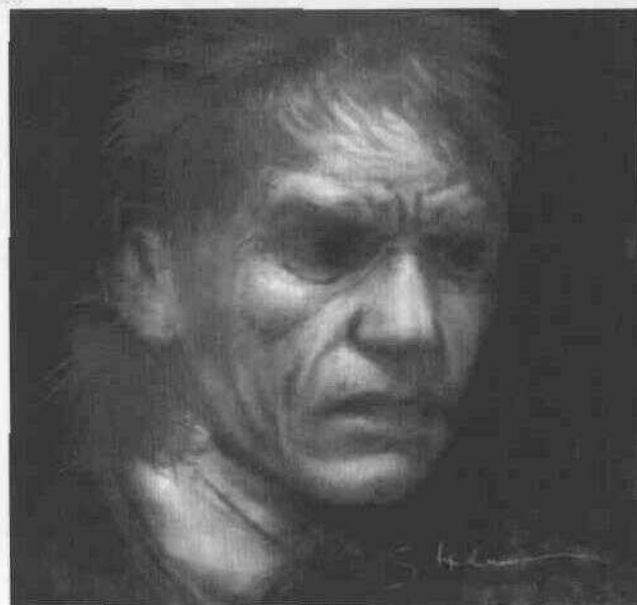
Doubtless, he was one of Beelzebub's favorites, but he had to practice his craft in private after confessing his entire coven. He visited one Sabbath after another, partaking of the Black Mass at night, then bringing the militia around the witches' homes the next morning. Eventually, his fame prevented such infiltrations. New England knew him as a persistent witch-hunter whose stature defied the horrible accusations thrown at him by the witches he'd captured. Witches behaved themselves whenever he came to town and quietly speculated about who really owned his soul.

While investigating "uncleane Ocurenses" in western Massachusetts, Righteous Endeavor Clay heard rumors of a great society of witches beyond the borders of the colony. Making his foray into "Indian lands," he quickly located the coven (he'd killed and scalped his guide about three hours into the trip, but given the size of the witches' bonfire, he discovered it nonetheless). He discerned no unholy rites, but surely their fire dance marked them as Hell's own. Though it was not the one he was looking for, Righteous Endeavor had found the Sabbath.

Through the centuries, Righteous Endeavor (having dropped his *superfluous* surname soon after his Embrace) rose, through numerous successful investigations, to become a priscus within the Sabbath. He currently travels all along the East Coast, leading *ritae* at various Cainite gatherings and inspiring the packs with speeches about the righteousness of their cause. He still conducts his witch-hunts, and his stature allows him to do so away from the auspices of the Sabbath Inquisition. Once, he relied on the "infiltrate and convict" approach of his mortal career, but now, infernalists give him a wide berth. In the modern nights, his favorite tactic is to deputize packs — usually those loitering around Blood Feasts, working to no good purpose. Assisting Righteous Endeavor is simultaneously an education in investigation and humility, but it's an enviable credential for any Sabbath to claim: His "fellow crusaders" do the bulk of the tracking and often end up capturing the witches themselves. The confession, however, Righteous Endeavor invariably claims for himself.

Image: Shoulder-length brown hair, considerate eyes and a beak for a nose — stack these on an unhealthy, gaunt frame and you'll have Righteous Endeavor. Among the undead, he wears a black wool cloak with heavy collars over a black frock coat, a black waistcoat, gray breeches and white stockings. When moving among mortals, his attire is more current but no less dismal. In any situation, he insists on wearing his tall, black felt hat.

Roleplaying Hints: As you've done since your breathing days, you've rationalized away the thrill you feel while eliciting a confes-



sion. Beating a sinner with a whip (the worse her sins, the better) sends tingles through your legs, but in your mind, you believe you're just good at what you do. No such rationalization governs your relationship with the Beast — you hope that the irony brings Lucifer three smiles.

You feel a desperate urgency whenever you're involved in a hunt, which is always. The priorities of the rest of the Sabbath must be put on hold if you need assistance during an investigation. You feel no remorse for whatever interruptions you might cause. Usually, your stature guarantees the compliance of whomever you press into service. If you ever feel frustrated, think about the Nosferatu Prudence Stone, one of the lucky few to have escaped you and continue the pursuit with renewed vigor.

Sire: Ezra Howland

Nature: Sadist

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Generation: 9th

Embrace: 1713

Apparent Age: mid-50s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

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

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Melee 5, Security 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Academics 4, Investigation 4, Law 2, Medicine 4, Occult 4, Politics 4, Science 3

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 4, Thaumaturgy 5, Vicissitude 3

Thaumaturgical Paths: Path of Blood 5, Path of Phobos 3, Taking of the Spirit 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Resources 3, Rituals 4, Sabbath Status 5

Virtues: Conviction 1, Instinct 5, Courage 5

Morality: Path of Metamorphosis 4

Willpower: 8

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NAME:
PLAYER:
CHRONICLE:

NATURE:
DEMEANOR:
CONCEPT:

GENERATION:
SIRE:
HAVEN:

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL		SOCIAL		MENTAL	
Strength	●0000	Charisma	●0000	Perception	●0000
Dexterity	●0000	Manipulation	●0000	Intelligence	●0000
Stamina	●0000	Appearance	●0000	Wits	●0000

ABILITIES

TALENTS		SKILLS		KNOWLEDGES	
Alertness	00000	Animal Ken	00000	Academics	00000
Athletics	00000	Crafts	00000	Computer	00000
Brawl	00000	Drive	00000	Finance	00000
Dodge	00000	Etiquette	00000	Investigation	00000
Empathy	00000	Firearms	00000	Law	00000
Expression	00000	Melee	00000	Linguistics	00000
Intimidation	00000	Performance	00000	Medicine	00000
Leadership	00000	Security	00000	Occult	00000
Streetwise	00000	Stealth	00000	Politics	00000
Subterfuge	00000	Survival	00000	Science	00000

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS		DISCIPLINES		VIRTUES	
_____	00000	_____	00000	Conscience/Conviction	●00000
_____	00000	_____	00000		
_____	00000	_____	00000		
_____	00000	_____	00000	Self-Control/Instinct	●00000
_____	00000	_____	00000		
_____	00000	_____	00000		
_____	00000	_____	00000	Courage	●00000

MERITS/FLAWS

HUMANITY/DATH

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

WILLPOWER

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

BLOOD POOL

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

HEALTH

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

WEAKNESS

Must sleep in at least two handfuls of native soil

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EXPANDED BACKGROUND

ALLIES

MENTOR

CONTACTS

RESOURCES

FAME

RETAINERS

HERD

STATUS

INFLUENCE

OTHER

POSSESSIONS

GEAR (CARRIED)

EQUIPMENT (OWNED)

FEEDING GROUNDS

VEHICLES

HAVENS

LOCATION

DESCRIPTION

