

LARP 201

Second Edition

**The World, Combat, and Other Miscellaneous Rules of Carpe Noctem, a
Vampire LARP at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.**

Last updated Summer 2018

Disclaimer

The ruleset defined in this document is heavily modified off of Laws of the Night (Revised Edition) for Vampire: the Masquerade, a rulebook published by White Wolf Game Studio as part of the old World of Darkness line of products. This document and its companion, LARP 201, are the primary references for the rules of this game. This document is not intended to challenge the copyrights or other intellectual property rights of White Wolf Publishing, Onyx Path Publishing, or By Night Studios.

The World of Darkness line contains a large number of rulebooks, but most of the material contained in them is not used by this game. The contents of this rulebook take precedence over any other published book, up to and including modifications made to the setting itself. Information from the most central sources of the game (the core rulebook and the Storytellers', Player's, Camarilla, Sabbat, and Anarch Guides) is most likely compatible with this game. Do not assume any material from the clanbooks, city books, or other supplements are used in this game. We are unlikely to accept anything from books predating the Revised edition. When in doubt, ask.

There are weekly Storyteller meetings, typically held from 7-9 PM in the Foreign Language Building (the room changes from semester to semester). We are open to meeting with players during the second half of our time (8-9 PM) if you have concerns or ideas you'd like to discuss. We appreciate advance notice if you'd like to join us so that we can arrange our own discussions accordingly. On rare occasions we may not have time to meet with players in a given week, in which case we'll work with you to find an alternative.

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Chapter I

A Gazetteer of Our World of Darkness

In the broadest sense, *Carpe Noctem* is set in the old World of Darkness (all trademarks and rights White Wolf Game Studios). This means the setting is superficially like our world, but there are and always have been supernatural creatures, dark conspiracies, and the like, competing behind the scenes to reshape the world to their own ends. However, as we hope we have made abundantly clear by now, there are significant differences between the canonical old World of Darkness and our version.

Metatropolis

Our game is set in Metatropolis, Illinois, a fictional city best described as a larger version of Champaign-Urbana. We haven't set exact boundaries, population size, or anything like that; assume it's smaller than Chicago but larger than anything else in Illinois. Urbana and Champaign are the major boroughs of Metatropolis, so they can be used as locational references. (In the game history, the two cities merged in 1959.) The other biggest change to the map is that the Boneyard Creek is a sizable river, and only a small section of it runs underground. In addition, it can be assumed that surrounding smaller cities and towns are part of the greater Metatropolis area, including (but not limited to) Rantoul, Philo, Savoy, and Bondville.

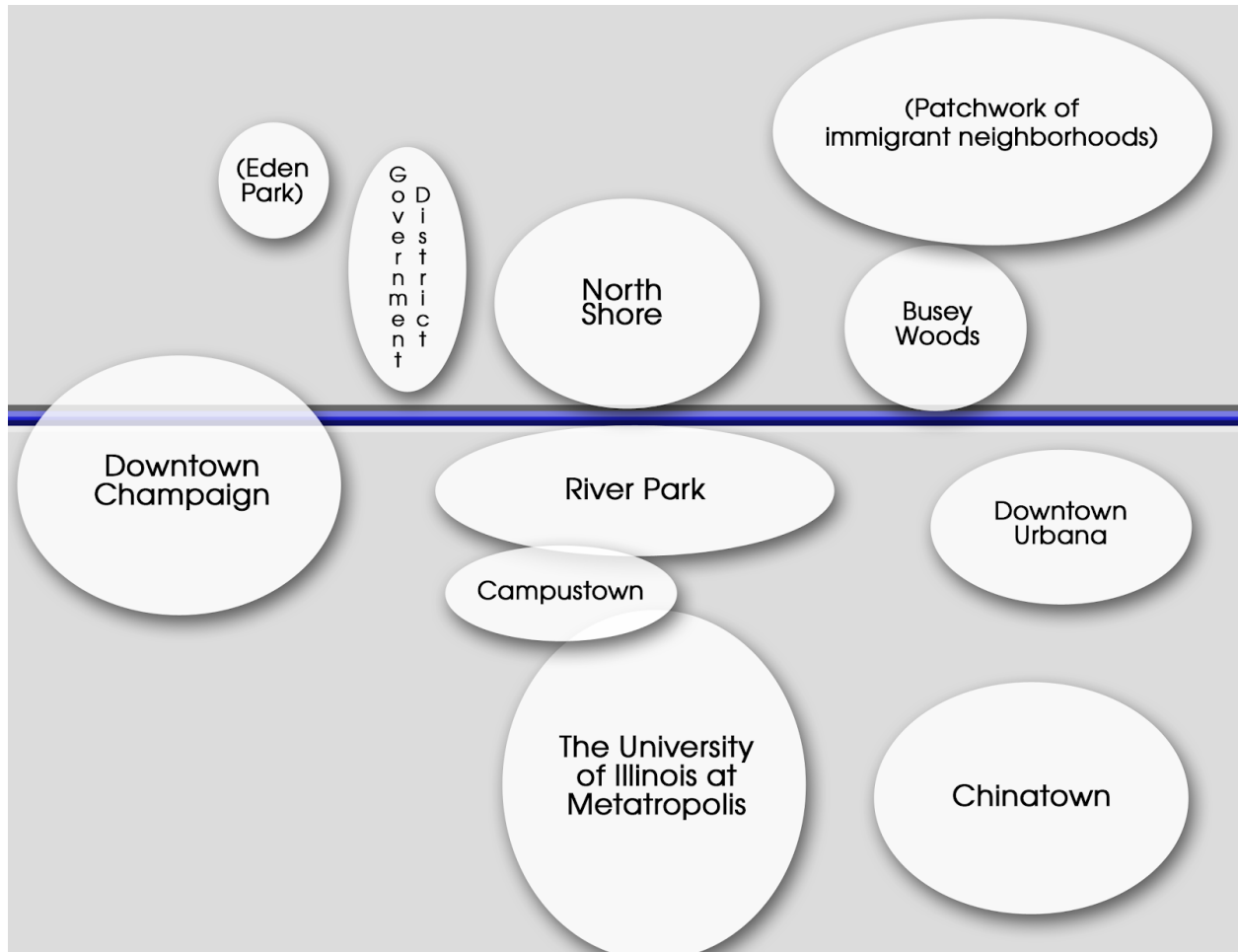
In general, if a building, business, or other location existed in the real Champaign-Urbana in this era or would logically be in a city this size, it—or something like it—probably exists in our game. Even though they have yet to come up in game, it's safe to assume that you can find a tire store, synagogue, or public pool if you want one. If you're unsure, or if you want to include something large that hasn't been there before (like a minor-league sports team or a science museum), talk to a Storyteller. The main newspaper is the *Metatropolis Sun*, and there's also an alternative weekly called the *Pulse*. We produce a mini-edition of both before most games.

The mortal history of Metatropolis, apart from the merger of the cities, is much like its real world equivalent. Its supernatural history is much stranger, including a band of alarmingly effective hunters around the turn of the century, the abandonment of the city by the Camarilla for a few years, and the arrival in 1923 of vampires who claimed to be from the future. Just a couple of years later, some kind of metaphysical disaster left the city empty of Kindred and exceptionally full of ghosts. The Giovanni moved in to clean up the situation (or control it, or exploit it, depending on who you ask) and have ruled ever since.

The present day of our game is 25 years before the real world date. That is, September 2016 is September 1991 in game.

Map

This shows the relative locations of noteworthy neighborhoods and other sites in Metatropolis. They, and some other places, are described below.



Places to know in Metatropolis

Bright Horizons Addiction Treatment Center: A serene and soothing environment where those struggling with the disease of addiction are helped to understand and overcome their illness. Housed in a beautiful historic facility.

Carle Hospital: The largest (though not the only) hospital in the city.

Eden Park: A former amusement park, closed in 1982. The ruins are protected from trespassers by fences and barbed wire.

85 Speedway: An arena that hosts professional auto races monthly, and other special events from time to time.

The Galleria: A glittering new mall, located where Marketplace is in the real world.

Metatropolis Rapid Transit: A subway system, newly opened in Fall 1991. It consists of three lines: the G Line (serving the Government District), the P Line (running between downtown Champaign and

downtown Urbana via River Park), and the U Line (serving UIM and Campustown).

Metatropolis Zoo: A medium-sized zoo, with a solid if not terribly exotic collection.

Neighborhoods: Like any city, Metatropolis is a patchwork of areas defined by history, present use, economics, and ethnicity. Among the ones you should know are **Chinatown** (in SE Urbana, now a mix of Asian groups but retaining the old name out of inertia), **downtown Champaign** (home to the financial district and numerous glitzy clubs and restaurants), **downtown Urbana** (declining retail district), the **Government District** (where City Hall, the county courthouse etc. are, east of downtown Champaign), **North Shore** (a not-so-nice residential neighborhood north of the Boneyard), **River Park** (across the river from North Shore, formerly dangerous but rapidly gentrifying), and an area of northern Urbana that is a patchwork of small immigrant communities, largely Slavic and Latino), and **Prospect Lawn** (a wealthy residential area of large homes, golf courses, stables, etc. in southwestern Champaign, not pictured on the map).

The Petrokov Clinic: A complete senior care center: assisted-living facilities, nursing home, and a small hospital. Residents enjoy all the amenities, even a nine-hole golf course.

The University of Illinois at Metatropolis: This large and bustling state university should look familiar to players, for obvious reasons. Assume that the campus is much like UIUC, though the people differ.

Who (or What) Else Is Out There?

Though our game is focused on vampires, there are many other supernatural beings. Everything from were-spiders to ghosts that possess mortal hosts can be found in the books of the old World of Darkness. This does not mean they are necessarily found in our game.

Even if they are around, they might not work exactly as they do in canon. This goes for player assumptions as well as character knowledge. If you happen to notice that the mortal dude who is in town to give a lecture on Neo-Primitivism has a sparkly aura, don't immediately jump to "Mage. Almost certainly Verbena, probably Moon-Seeker. That means he can..." Really. Don't. We make stuff up to suit ourselves and the needs of our game. Without an appropriate *Lore* Background or, in some cases, *Arcana* Ability specialization or *Thanatology* Ability, you're pretty much limited to the introductory paragraph of each section below and anything you learn in game. Without the *Arcana* Ability, even what is mentioned below isn't certain. You won't know, for example, whether silver or wolfsbane have an effect on werewolves, or whether you can drive away fairies by turning your clothes inside-out. If your character has a *Lore* Background, check the packet we give you or see the appropriate numbered items below, and ask us questions rather than making assumptions.

There may be things out there that we don't tell you about, or that we tell you inaccurate information about. That may be because it's really obscure and your character has no way of knowing of it, or because we just now decided to include it.

You are free to conclude that your character doesn't believe in a particular thing, even if they have heard of it. It doesn't pay to believe everything you hear, after all.

That said, here is an overview of how our game handles some of the most prominent supernaturals in the World of Darkness. The specific information at each level of *Lore* is provided here for out-of-game reference purposes. Please be careful to only act on what your character knows.

Fae

These creatures of European legend range from elegant nobles with magics that can sway mortal hearts to strange, twisted creatures that can only pass for human through the use of powerful glamours. For the most part, they seem to avoid vampires.

Fae Lore

- 1 The fae are a loosely affiliated group of mortal, magical beings who hide within modern society.
Their magical capabilities focus on emotional and mental manipulation, called glamours, and some physical manifestations
Though supernatural, they appear human to the naked eye.
Originally endemic to Europe, the fae spread to North and South America and Australia during colonization.
The terms “fairies” and “changelings” are considered insults.
The fae are organized into two different “Kingdoms.” The fae call them the High Court and the Low Court.
- 2 The fae appear to loathe “cold” (i.e. pure, un-alloyed) iron and fear its touch. You now know how to make it. (Doing so also requires an appropriate *Craft Ability*. You cannot, at this level, “lend” your knowledge to another crafter.)
Those aware of the fae and some fae themselves use mythological terms to describe commonalities within their culture. Thus, the Low Court fae include goblins, hobgoblins, gnomes, dwarves, salamanders, trolls, brownies, bogarts, sluagh, and so forth.
High Court fae are often elves, undines, pixies, sprites, dryads, satyrs, and so forth.
There seem to be some non-sapient creatures, more beast than person, associated with the fae and similar to them in nature.
The ruler of the fae of a given court in a given city is usually termed the “king” or some similarly royal title.
The Courts do not seem to enjoy each other’s company.
Physical manifestations of fae powers, and perhaps the fae themselves, seem to be elemental in nature.
The fae seem to be associated with four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. The association of a given fae represents what type of magic they can use.
- 3 The High Court generally seems to be more closely associated with powers which manipulate the minds (i.e. thoughts and memories) of others.
The Low Court generally includes those who are adept at manipulating others’ emotions.
In North America, the Low Court holds the Western states and provinces, the High Court holds the East, and they overlap in the Midwest. (These are general trends; individuals of

either court may be found anywhere.)

Fae of the High Court seem most likely to be associated with air and water. Low Court fae prefer earth and fire. They can have powers not directly associated with their element.

Fae magic seems to be fueled by the human mortals around them. Humans seem to enjoy being with the fae and, apparently, don't mind being used in this capacity.

Most fae are heavily damaged when they are struck with cold iron, though not all.

- 4 Low Court fae used to be much more common in Europe than they are now, as the old stories show.
Your knowledge of the techniques required to make cold iron is now such that you can actively supervise a crafter who does not themselves have at least 2 Dots of *Fae Lore*, enabling them to make cold iron items.
There are fae that cannot pass for human. They typically stay far away from mortals.
Low Court fae seem more resistant to cold iron than High Court fae.
Some fae choose which court they attend based on personal preference.
Fae unassociated with either Court are often called "the Twisted". They're rumored to be more violent, harder to speak with, and difficult to handle.
The fae often organize large assemblies of people to fuel their magic.
The agreements that fae make with outsiders almost always seem to have some hidden catch or wording that can be twisted to the fae's benefit.
- 5 The Courts have been waging a hidden war for centuries. The High Court is winning; it has been systematically pushing the Low Court out of Europe and steadily westward in North America.
The Twisted may drive a human to suicide, using their death to fuel potent magics.
The fae can store magical energy for later use. Some will gather human emotional energy very slowly over time in order to produce stunning magical effects when necessary.
Enchanted objects can be used to store this emotional energy as well.
Individual humans that are overused by the fae are often depressed, isolated, and suicidal.
Your knowledge of fae ways and fae tricks is now such that you can strike a bargain with them which contains no hidden downsides for you.

Demons

Demons are bad, bad things, whether they correspond to the Judeo-Christian concept of agents of Hell or not. They can be very powerful. According to the stories, the intelligent ones offer people power in exchange for services and/or souls, while the others seem to be little more than ravening beasts. Whatever else is true, it seems clear they don't have your best interests at heart.

There is no *Demon Lore*. *Arcana* Ability with a specialization in demons can give the opportunity to chop for more information. For more information from a player perspective, see the *Merit Infernalist* in *LARP 101*.

Ghosts

Under some circumstances, mortals (and perhaps other things as well) can leave behind some wisp of themselves when they die. Most of the time they are invisible and intangible. Sometimes they haunt a location or a person, though most hang out in a metaphysical realm called the Shadowlands unless called to this plane. Some vampires can communicate with them, whether through the Merit *Medium* or certain Paths or rituals of *Necromancy*. Some occultists say there are also ghost-like entities that do not seem to be remnants of once-living beings.

Players familiar with *Wraith: The Oblivion* should note that most ghosts in our game are nowhere near as powerful as wraiths, and that we do not use any of that game's setting or backstory.

More details about ghosts can be found in *LARP 101* under the Discipline *Necromancy*. Since there is no *Ghost Lore*, further information requires a chop with *Thanatology* or *Arcana* (the former being more relevant).

Hunters

In the sense of “humans who hunt vampires and/or other supernatural beings,” they certainly exist. Some have advantages that make them dangerous: skills, knowledge, or *True Faith*. Hunters with greater powers are rarer, and poorly understood by vampires. There is no *Hunter Lore*.

Spellcasters

Some mortals can cast spells and imbue objects with magic. Beyond that, not much is known. Certainly the Tremere would like to have a monopoly on magic, so it's possible that the clan suppresses knowledge of these people and/or hunts them down to offer them a choice between the Embrace and destruction.

Strange rumors exist of mages who live out in space, but that sounds awfully silly, doesn't it?

The Walking Dead

Some vampires (and perhaps others) can raise zombies, mindless shambling servants. And of course vampires themselves are once-living beings. Some ghosts are apparently able to possess the flesh of corpses, their own or others, becoming creatures known as Risen. Since there is no relevant Lore, further information requires a chop with *Thanatology* or *Arcana* (the former being more relevant).

Unfamiliar Asian Vampires

Some say they exist, but others say the continent is simply occupied by vampires of familiar clans operating under different cultural rules.

Werewolves

These creatures, also called Lupines, are known and feared by vampires. They can look like humans,

wolves, or huge hairy beast-men. For the most part, they are found in the wilderness rather than urban areas. They seem to collectively loathe vampires, and are often good at picking them out of a crowd. It is sometimes possible for individual vampires to get along with individual werewolves, and urban werewolves seem to be more tolerant than their more feral cousins. All have powerful and unpredictable tempers, however. Rumors exist of other sorts of shapeshifters, but they are unconfirmed.

Werewolf Lore

- 1 Werewolves are beings that can transform between human, wolf, and man-wolf forms. Their exact nature is unclear.
 They can be hurt but not killed by normal weapons. According to folklore, they can be repelled by wolfsbane and can only be killed by silver.
 During the full moon, they transform into their monstrous forms and rampage through the countryside.
 They gain size, strength, and speed while transformed, but they seem to lose their reason and become killing machines when in their intermediate forms.
 According to folklore, werewolves can be identified by markings somewhere on their body. These may include hair on the palms, united eyebrows, or a widow's peak.
 Werewolves are often found in packs in the countryside, which destroy any vampire they see on sight. It's unclear if this applies when they're in their human form.

- 2 According to reports, silver weapons are particularly effective against werewolves. Other weapons can hurt them, but are less effective, and may not be able to kill.
 Werewolves can change any time at night but are forced to change during the full moon. Reports vary on whether they can transform during the day; very few surviving vampires have firsthand knowledge one way or the other.
 Wolfsbane may be effective against some but not all werewolves; it's considered best not to rely on it.
 The werewolf's human and wolf forms are generally similar to a normal human or wolf; their intermediate form is larger and more powerful than a human. When transformed, they retain a level of cunning instinct.
 Identifying werewolves in human form by looking for specific markings is unreliable; it's not known if every werewolf possesses them, or if they can be removed.
 It is unclear if the lycanthropic condition is passed on by the werewolf's bite or by some other means.
 Werewolves seem to exist in an organized society, generally on the pack level. It's unclear how they divide their time between human (or wolf) and werewolf society. While they don't always attack on sight, werewolves seem to be fairly uniformly hostile towards vampires.

- 3 Silver can injure and kill werewolves in all their forms; other attacks can incapacitate or kill them with persistence. They heal from most attacks quickly, but a sufficiently powerful attack can incapacitate them long enough to escape or finish them off. Wolfsbane and other herbs

are largely ineffective against them.

They seem to be able to transform at will, but the moon may cause them to do so involuntarily.

There doesn't seem to be a direct correlation between being bitten by a werewolf and transforming into one.

The most reliable cues for identifying werewolves in human form are behavioral, not physical; they may exhibit animalistic behaviors in unguarded moments.

Apparently, humans tend to forget what they've seen around enraged werewolves, probably due to traumatic amnesia. This doesn't seem to affect vampires; whether ghouls are affected is unclear.

There are reports of werewolves disappearing and appearing from out of nowhere; it's not clear if they possess a power similar to the Discipline *Obfuscate*, or possess some other unknown form of transformation.

Werewolves retain at least some intelligence in all forms, but they tend to live simple, rural lives and eschew technology. Their nature seems to make it more difficult to live in normal human society, as they seem to be subject to a state similar to vampiric frenzy.

Werewolf-inhabited areas sometimes contain strange markings on buildings or sidewalks, but their exact nature is unclear.

Werewolf society seems to be based around a tribal, shamanistic tradition, similar to a mix of pre-technological human society and wolf packs. Leadership seems to be based on strength. Werewolves are sometimes willing to have non-hostile interaction with vampires, but this is rare.

- 4 Werewolves seem to be affected by silver, and possibly fire, in a manner similar to the way fire, sunlight, and claws affect vampires; it hurts them more and is harder to heal. There are rumors that they may not be affected in human form, however. They seem to heal from most injuries more quickly than vampires. Other forms of attack are less effective; for a vampire who can't match their speed, strength, and power, direct confrontations are best avoided.

Most werewolves that a vampire encounters (outside of combat) seem to prefer human form, although they may not have all their powers in this form. The moon may have some psychological effect on them, but does not compel their transformations. Werewolves retain human intelligence in all their forms, but are subject to powerful instinctual urges that can overwhelm their reason.

In man-wolf form, werewolves are terrifying berzerkers, and most humans are frightened by them beyond rational thought, to the point that they forget the experience as a mental defense.

There are definite reports of werewolves escaping from physically enclosed areas; their escape ability appears to go beyond simply disappearing from the senses.

Werewolves have a shamanistic, spiritualistic culture, and can perform magic based around spirits. Different werewolves have different powers based on their role in their society.

Although wolves in the wild don't have as strict a pecking order as pop culture likes to depict, werewolves do. It may be a side effect of their human nature. Their leaders are known as

“alphas.”

Werewolves possess their own language and system of writing.

They may also live in human society, and seem to retain contact with human families; there are signs that the lycanthropic conditions runs in families. They generally seem to avoid polluted or overpopulated areas; those who live in cities prefer clean areas near natural spaces. Whether any werewolves live within wolf packs is outside the sphere of vampiric experience.

Werewolves consider vampires to be the result of an irreversible spiritual taint; positive social interactions with them are rare, but some werewolves may be able to overlook this for certain vampires.

- 5 Silver definitely affects werewolves in a manner similar to the effect fire and sunlight has on vampires. While they are apparently unaffected by silver in their human forms, they don't seem to be able to regenerate in this form. Few vampires have enough long-term, firsthand knowledge of werewolves in wolf form to know if the same applies to them.
- Most packs have a male and a female alpha. The male typically deals with matters external to the pack while the female deals with internal affairs. Other roles in the pack include the leader of the rites, the keepers of history, and the arbiters of the law.
- Werewolves consider themselves guardians of the spirit world, and the spirit world can be negatively affected by pollution and corruption in the real world. They spend much of their time tending the remaining spiritually pure areas, which tend to be in the wilderness. While they can live in cities, they often find it to be an uncomfortable experience for any length of time. Some are able to overcome this reaction, although they still prefer natural areas. They don't hate all technology, but tend to find that mass-produced technology has a negative effect on spirituality.
- Werewolves are able to physically enter the spirit world.
- The werewolf view of the spirit world seems to be based on a set of three entities called “the Triat”: the Weaver, representing technology, the Wyld, representing nature, and the Wyrms, representing corruption. Vampires are considered to be tainted by the Wyrms, and irreversibly corrupt.
- Werewolf language includes a system of signs they use to warn other werewolves of danger; those unaware of it tend to confuse it for graffiti.
- Werewolves often have relatives among humans. Their lycanthropic state appears to be hereditary, although the exact way it is passed on is unclear.
- In man-wolf form, werewolves cause a reaction they call “Delirium”, which causes humans to forget or rationalize the sight of them; they cause a panic reaction among all but the strongest-willed humans. Ghouls seem to be similarly affected, although not always as strongly.

Lore versus Arcana versus Common Knowledge: What You Know

Within the game there are varying degrees of knowledge and rumor regarding what goes bump in the night. We represent these levels of knowledge with *Lore* Backgrounds and the *Arcana* Ability.

If you have an appropriate *Lore*, you have a reliable knowledge about a specific area. This level of knowledge represents extended study of a subject with sources that are able to provide accurate information. The information you know is based on truth at the worst and accurate most of the time. In addition, you may ask if you know additional details that are relevant to a situation. Please be careful to only act on what your character knows.

If you have invested in the Ability *Arcana*, then you are a student of the bizarre. You've heard lots of rumors and know where to find even more of them about additional subjects. Your knowledge is significantly more accurate than the average horror film viewer, but that isn't saying a whole lot. You are armed with a wealth of information that is mostly wrong, but has a few tidbits that are accurate.

With *Lore*, you know that vampires can be killed with fire, sunlight, or decapitation. With *Arcana*, you've read that a stake through the heart, followed by stuffing their mouth with holy wafers and garlic, followed by decapitation, followed by burning the body at a crossroads, followed by leaving the ashes to smolder for a full day followed by burying the ashes on holy ground will kill a vampire. That's technically correct, but there's very little that *wouldn't* kill.

Without *Lore* or *Arcana*, you are left with the worst of popular culture to base your mystical knowledge on; that is, you've got no idea. *Occult* Influence means that you know people who know the folklore rather than knowing it yourself.

Vampiric Lores

As with other Lores, please be careful to keep in mind the distinction between what your character knows and what you know. Most characters begin with 1 Dot of *Clans Lore* and 2 Dots each of *Kindred Lore* and *Camarilla Lore*.

Clans Lore

- 1 You know the basic natures of the core clans of your sect.
 You are familiar with the Disciplines of your clan.
 You are broadly familiar with your clan's internal organization (if any).
 If you are of an Independent clan, you know the basics about how your clan runs cities (if/when it does) and how its members do or don't fit into cities run by others.

- 2 You are familiar with the clan-specific Disciplines of your sect's core clans.
 You know the basic natures of the core clans of the opposing sect.
 You know the strengths and weaknesses of the core clans of your sect, and the basic natures of the common bloodlines of your sect.
 You know rumors about the Independent clans.
 You know the common legends of your clan's Antediluvian.
 You have detailed knowledge of your clan's internal organization (if any).
 If you are of an Independent clan, you know the rules and offices of a city run by your clan in

some detail.

If there is a Path of Enlightenment strongly associated with your clan, you are generally familiar with it even if you do not follow it yourself.

- 3 You are familiar with the Disciplines of the core clans of the opposing sect, and of common bloodlines of your sect.
You are broadly familiar with the internal organization (if any) of your sect's core clans.
You know the basic natures of the Independent clans.
You know the basics of how Independent clans run cities they control.
You know the strength and weaknesses of the core clans of the opposing sect.
You know of variants of the clans in your sect.
You know of more obscure bloodlines of your sect, and the basic natures of common bloodlines of the opposing sect.
- 4 You are familiar with the Disciplines of the independent clans.
You know the strengths and weaknesses of the independent clans.
You have detailed knowledge of the internal organization (if any) of your sect's core clans.
You are broadly familiar with the internal organization (if any) of the core clans of the opposite sect.
You know in some detail the rules and offices of cities run by Independent clans.
You know of obscure bloodlines of the opposing sect and unaffiliated bloodlines.
You know of variants of the clans.
- 5 You know of clans and bloodlines that are lost to history.
You are familiar with the Disciplines of obscure bloodlines and lost clans.
You have detailed knowledge of the internal organization (if any) of the core clans of the opposite sect.
You are broadly familiar with the internal organization of the Independent clans.

Kindred Lore

- 1 You have a general sense of the Embrace, although you may not be clear on all the details.
You know the most basic requirements and weaknesses of the vampiric conditions (e.g. blood, sunlight, fire).
You know the basic natures of the core clans of your sect.
You are familiar with the most common Disciplines (those possessed by more than one clan).
- 2 You know the details of how the Embrace is performed.
You know the basics of the blood bond and creating ghouls.
You know more details of the vampiric condition (e.g. the Beast, Rötschreck, stakes, and torpor).

- You know the basics of how diablerie is performed.
 You know that holy water hurts vampires... sometimes.
- 3 You know the details of the blood bond and the nature of ghouls.
 You know some obscure details of the vampiric condition.
 You know how diablerie is performed and its potential side effects.
 You know the broad outlines of the legends of Caine and the Antediluvians.
 You know the broad outlines of Kindred history and politics.
 You have heard vague allusions to a kind of vampiric redemption or perfected state known as Golconda.
 You know that some vampires follow philosophical systems called Paths of Enlightenment rather than human-derived morality, and you've heard of a few of these Paths.
- 4 You know some obscure details of the nature of ghouls.
 You know the legends of Caine and the Antediluvians in some detail.
 You know Kindred history and politics in some detail.
 You know that only a priest with particularly strong faith can make "real" holy water (that can hurt vampires.)
 You have heard many stories and rumors about Golconda, which disagree on many points: what it is, how it can be obtained, and whether it even exists at all.
 You are familiar with the names and core concepts of most Paths of Enlightenment practiced today. (You would still require a mentor to guide you if you wished to change to a different Path yourself.)
- 5 You know some obscure details of the legends of Caine and the Antediluvians.
 You know some alternate legends of Kindred origins (such as Lilith).
 You can determine that a particular Discipline being used is an Elder Discipline with a successful *Awareness* Test.
 You know some obscure details of Kindred history and politics.
 You are familiar with the names and core concepts of even obscure, ancient, and lost Paths of Enlightenment. (You would still require a mentor to guide you if you wished to change to a different Path yourself.)

Camarilla Lore

- 1 You know the six Traditions and what they mean.
 You can name the clans that make up the Camarilla.
 You know the general structure of the Camarilla and the major offices found in a Camarilla city.
 You can name the prince and major office-holders of your city.
 You know some of the official history of the Camarilla.
 You know the practice of Praxis and how office holders are commonly chosen in Camarilla cities (by appointment).

- 2
 - You know how the Traditions are generally interpreted in Camarilla cities.
 - You know the general beliefs and philosophy of the Camarilla.
 - You know the roles and capabilities of the clans of the Camarilla.
 - You can name the major bloodlines affiliated with the Camarilla (e.g. the Daughters of Cacophony, Samedi, etc).
 - You know the structure of the Camarilla and the offices in general use in Camarilla cities.
 - You can name the officers and primogen of your city, and princes of major nearby cities.
 - You can name the justicar of your clan, if applicable.
 - You have a good sense of the official history of the Camarilla.
 - You know that Giovanni-run cities are led by a capo (roughly equivalent to a prince) and a group of respected individuals who combine some of the functions of officers and primogen.

- 3
 - You are familiar with the general rulings of the Justicar Council.
 - You know the philosophy of the Camarilla in some detail.
 - You know the roles and capabilities of the clans and bloodlines that are affiliated with the Camarilla.
 - You know minor and little-used offices that have been used in Camarilla cities.
 - You can name the princes and major officers of significant nearby cities, and the princes of smaller nearby cities and distant major cities.
 - You know the sect affiliation of most major cities in your country and smaller cities in your local region.
 - You can name the current members of the Justicar Council, and noteworthy archons of your clan.
 - You know the official history of the Camarilla very well, and have heard some stories that aren't in the official history.
 - You know the names and responsibilities of the common offices in Giovanni-run cities, as well as the rules of such domains.

- 4
 - You have a good general knowledge of the rulings of the Justicar Council.
 - You are familiar with how the philosophy of the Camarilla has developed over time.
 - You have some familiarity with the variant versions of the Clans and bloodlines that have been affiliated with the Camarilla.
 - You can name princes and some officers of major Camarilla cities.
 - You can name some past justicars and some noteworthy archons of other Clans.
 - You know a fair amount of information that isn't in the official history of the Camarilla, and have started to notice discrepancies between the official version and the stories you've heard.

- 5
 - You have a detailed knowledge of the rulings of the Justicar Council, including some that are no longer on the official record.
 - You are familiar with the inconsistencies between the philosophy of the Camarilla and their actual practice.
 - You can name princes and some officers of a wide range of Camarilla cities.

You know the sect affiliation of most cities in your country, and major cities elsewhere.
You have heard of most of the noteworthy archons.
You are familiar with which parts of the official history of the Camarilla are invented or highly slanted propaganda.

Sabbat Lore

- 1 You know the basic outline of the Vaulderie ritual and some basic *ritae*.
You can name the clans and *antitribu* that make up the Sabbat.
You know the general structure of the Sabbat and the major offices found in a Sabbat city.
You know the most common positions in a Sabbat pack.
You can name the bishop of your city or region.
You know some of the official history of the Sabbat. You have a general sense of the Sabbat's stated philosophy (if you are a Camarilla character, the above two points are partially based on Camarilla propaganda).
- 2 You know of less well-known *ritae* and the ins-and-outs of the Vaulderie ritual.
You know the general provisions of the Code of Milan (the basic code governing the Sabbat).
You know the general beliefs and philosophy of the Sabbat, including some basic Noddist lore (the legends of vampire origins found in the Book of Nod).
You know the powers and weaknesses of the clans and *antitribu* that make up the Sabbat.
You can name the major bloodlines affiliated with the Sabbat.
You know the structure of the Sabbat.
You can name the archbishop and cardinal of your region and bishops of major nearby cities.
You have a good sense of the official history of the Sabbat.
- 3 You know of obscure or obsolete *ritae*, and obscure details of the Vaulderie.
You are familiar with the Code of Milan.
You know the philosophy of the Sabbat in some detail.
You know the powers and weaknesses of the clans, *antitribu* and bloodlines that are currently or formerly affiliated with the Sabbat.
You know the proper forms of address for Sabbat title-holders.
You can name the bishops of major nearby cities, bishops of smaller nearby cities and distant major cities, and archbishops and cardinals of nearby regions. You can name leaders and ducti of major packs near your city.
You know the sect affiliation of most major cities in your country and smaller cities in your local region.
You know the official history of the Sabbat very well, and have heard some stories that aren't in the official history.
- 4 You are familiar with how the philosophy of the Sabbat has developed over time.
You have some familiarity with variant versions of the clans, *antitribu* and bloodlines that have been affiliated with the Sabbat.

- You can name bishops of major Sabbat cities and archbishops of the regions in your country.
 You can name leaders and ducti of major packs in your region.
 You know the sect affiliation of most cities in your region of the country.
 You can name noteworthy templars.
 You know a fair amount of information that isn't in the official history of the Sabbat, and have started to notice discrepancies between the official version and the stories you've heard.
- 5 You are familiar with the inconsistencies between the philosophy of the Sabbat and their actual practice.
 You can name bishops of a wide range of Sabbat cities.
 You know the sect affiliation of most cities in your country, and major cities elsewhere.
 You have heard of most of the noteworthy templars.
 You are familiar with which parts of the official history of the Sabbat are invented or highly slanted propaganda.

White Wolf Metaplot, and What We Ignore

As we said earlier, there are large chunks of Vampire: the Masquerade metaplot and background that we do not use. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but covers matters we have been specifically asked about which are not covered elsewhere in our rulebooks.

- We are not defining much about **major cities** outside the Midwest. Do not make *any* assumptions based on setting books like *Chicago by Night*. Our Chicago is entirely different, and none of the other such books are relevant to our game.
- The “**Great Trick**” whereby most Malkavians set aside *Dementation* in favor of *Dominate did* happen. Most of those unchanged defected to the Sabbat. In recent nights, *Dementation* has begun to appear in the Camarilla once more. Please note: most of the affected Malkavians, even those that were present at the inception of the Great Trick, remain unaware that any of this ever happened.
- The **Red Star** has not been seen in the sky. None of the other Gehenna/Time of Judgment events have occurred, except as outlined here. There are rumors and prophecies that the end is near, but there have been such rumors for at least a thousand years.
- The West Coast has never been invaded by **Kuei-jin**. If they even exist in our world, they have never been reliably reported in North America.
- **Thin-blooded vampires** of the fourteenth and even fifteenth generation do exist (and are allowed as player characters), but they are extremely rare and not everyone believes in them. Reports of the fourteenth generation first reliably surfaced in the early 20th century. Prior to that time, vampires of the thirteenth generation were believed to be incapable of siring children. The fifteenth generation is still newer, arising within the last decade or so. Some also speak of **Dhampires**, the offspring of thin-blooded vampires and humans. They are said to have strange powers.
- The Assamite clan did spend centuries bound by the Tremere **Blood Curse**. That curse no longer affects them, though exactly when or how they were freed is not known. (The clan does not discuss this matter with outsiders, and nobody else with reliable information is talking either.)

Chapter II

Combat

Combat is an important part of the game, but one that can largely be avoided with care and good roleplaying. It's also one of the more complex parts of the rules system, as it involves all of the information from the section on Conflicts in *LARP 101*, most of the Disciplines, a variety of Merits and Flaws, and many Abilities, not to mention the statistics of weapons and armor. Mashing all of these rules together means a heap of stuff to be aware of when you get into combat. The Storytellers do their best to try and streamline things, but the best way for you to help combat run smoothly is to be sure of how to use your capabilities to their fullest extent so that you're prepared when your turn arrives.

These rules cover most situations. However, there will be times when the Storytellers will need to make spot rulings. Please understand that we need to keep both fairness and scene momentum in mind. If you want to raise concerns with one of these rulings, we ask that you wait at least until after the scene. We prefer that you bring up these concerns in a message to us on the boards or at one of our Storyteller meetings. (See the beginning of this document for more information about our meetings.)

Due to the complexity of combat and the possibility of Final Death, any combat between player characters should be supervised by a Storyteller. If combat arises suddenly in a scene without a Storyteller, stop the scene and go find one. If you're planning to ambush another player character, it is acceptable to lie to other players about the reason you want a Storyteller present in order to preserve the surprise.

Combat Time, Rounds and Initiative

When combat begins, play changes from real time (actions take as long for the characters as for the players) to **combat time** (what takes only a few seconds for the characters may take far longer for the players, and events are adjudicated in strict mechanical order. Combat time is divided into **rounds**. A combat round is divided into four phases: **preempt**, **normal**, and two **bottom of the round**. The preemptive phase and both bottom of the round are usually the domain of the *Celerity* Discipline, so if your character does not have it you probably only need to worry about acting during the normal phase. However, you might be involved in the other three if someone else engages you in a challenge during them. Once the Storyteller moves through all the phases of the round, a new round begins and the process repeats.

Your initiative during any given phase is based what type of action you wish to perform and how many Traits you have in the appropriate Attribute for that action. Every action in combat is linked to one of the Attributes. For example, punching, kicking, and using a sword would all be Physical actions (and these are the most common actions taken in combat). However, many Disciplines are linked to

Mental or Social Attributes, and it may be also appropriate to take other Mental or Social actions, such as assessing the situation as a Mental action or catching someone's attention as a Social action.

When a combat round begins, the Storyteller running it will give everyone a moment to determine their actions. Once you know what you're going to do, check the number of Traits that you currently have in the appropriate Attribute. That number is your initiative score. The Storyteller will begin calling out numbers starting at 13 and moving downward from there. When they arrive at your initiative score, you get to act. You can choose to hold your action (act later in the round than your initiative score would dictate).

For larger combats where many people act on the same initiative score, Mental actions always precede Social actions, which always precede Physical actions. If two people are performing the same type of action on the same initiative score, the actions are considered to be simultaneous even though we will have to handle them one after another mechanically.

Note that some weapons possess the Merit *Quick*. The bonus Traits gained for using these weapons may also be applied to your initiative score. This may allow your initiative score to exceed 13; if so, tell the Storyteller running the scene and they will adjust. For more information, see [Chapter III: Weapons](#).

Under ordinary circumstances, you may **move three steps** in addition to the other thing you are doing. This can be reduced by some Flaws, battlefield conditions, etc. A few things you might want to do in combat, such as speaking a short sentence or so, activating certain powers, or voluntarily entering frenzy, are designated as **free actions**. This means you can do them and also take a regular action. Many free actions can only be done on your own initiative score.

Some Discipline powers require a **full round action**. When using one of these powers, you may not move any steps during your action, nor can you take any free actions (except for speaking briefly) or simultaneously activate any other powers that have an activation cost. You may not gain any extra actions from any source (such as *Celerity*) in that round.

Using Blood in Combat

Using blood in combat happens for a variety of reasons. You may use it to heal or to increase your Physical Traits (blood buffing), or even to fuel certain Disciplines. Many uses of blood have a clear moment in which they take place. Thaumaturgy, for example, can only be used on your action, and therefore the blood is also spent on your action.

You may also spend blood at the top of a combat round. *Celerity*, for example, is usually paid for at the top of a round. Most healing and blood buffing also takes place at this time. Extra Physical Traits gained by blood buffing to no more than your Physical Trait capacity (13 for almost all characters) last until the end of the scene. Extra Physical Traits gained by blood buffing above that cap only last until

the end of the round.

Bear in mind that, unless your character has the *Sanguinist Merit*, they may only spend one Blood Trait per round.

Entering and Leaving Combat

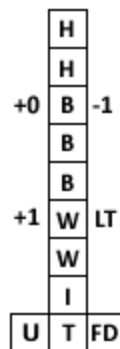
Combat takes a long time to figure out. There are a lot of details, and there may be quite a few characters involved. This complexity becomes daunting very quickly. The difference between combat time and real time also causes scenes to become un-synchronized from each other. Therefore, it is unlikely that your character will have a chance to enter combat if you're not there when it breaks out. Mechanically, this helps keep things less complex and thus more under control. Thematically, since each combat round is merely a few seconds long from the characters' perspective, you are very unlikely to have the time to get involved unless you are extremely close to the combat.

When attacked, you cannot make a phone call or summon help. We understand that it makes sense for your character to do this, but if you call a friend and ask for their help, it ties up another player who won't be able to get into the combat but feels as if they ought to respond to your pleas. If you are trying to call or message someone who is in combat, write your message on an index card and hand them to the recipient. They will be able to read and act upon it after combat (assuming they still can!). Likewise, if you are in combat and wish to call or message someone who is outside that combat, they will not be able to receive and act upon that message until the combat is over. Index cards can be found in the out-of-character room.

When a combat begins, characters may elect to leave the combat and not get involved if it is feasible to do so.

Taking Damage

Since we can't actually have players duking it out when their characters are in combat, we represent the damage using the **Damage Track**, as seen below.



Don't worry if you don't quite understand this all right away; after you do it in-game a few times, it

becomes second nature.

Wound Levels

Pictured above is the basic Damage Track for a character. When a character takes damage, it is represented by placing a mark in a box on the track. As a character is hurt, they find themselves in one of six wound levels, five of which have penalties which affect subsequent challenges:

	Level	Penalty
H	Healthy	None.
B	Bruised	-1 Trait when you tie on symbols.
W	Wounded	You must bid an additional Trait, and you lose ties on symbols.
I	Incapacitated	Your character drops prone and cannot move for 10 minutes.
U	Unconscious	Your character is unconscious for 1 hour.
T	Torpor	Your character suffers from torpor of varying length.

Endurance (Fortitude 1) allows you to ignore all wound penalties other than Bruised or Torpor (and of course Final Death). You may spend one Willpower Trait to ignore all wound penalties up to and including Incapacitated for one action.

In addition to the above wound levels, there is **Final Death (FD)**. If you reach Final Death, your character is lost, and you must create a new character to continue playing. As long as you haven't reached your Final Death, however, your character may heal and return to play.

Note that the times in the table above are in-character. It's likely that far less than that amount of time might take place out-of-character. No one wants to actually sit alone in a room for an hour when their character has become unconscious.

There are notations on the right and left of the Damage Track to assist in remembering which each wound level means. The left side shows you how many additional Traits you have to bid as you take damage. The right side shows you how many Traits you're down on ties, or, when you're wounded, that you lose on ties regardless of how many Traits you have at the moment.

Types of Damage and Healing

There are three types of damage, each of which is healed by a different number of Blood Traits.

Damage Type	Explanation	Blood to Heal
Bashing	Bashing damage happens when someone is hit with a blunt object like a club or fist. Vampires who are shot also suffer bashing damage. Falling significant distances causes bashing damage at a	1 Blood Trait heals 2 boxes of bashing damage.

	rate of roughly 1 bashing/floor.	
Lethal	This occurs when someone is injured with a bladed or cutting tool like a sword or chainsaw. Mortals who are shot suffer lethal damage.	1 Blood Trait heals 1 box of lethal damage.
Aggravated	Vampires who are burned or exposed to sunlight suffer this. Vampire fangs, certain Disciplines, and some other supernatural powers also cause aggravated damage.	See below

Healing aggravated damage is non-trivial. These wounds are so serious doing so requires three Blood Traits. Furthermore, this healing only occurs over the course of a vampire's dormancy during the day. Once per night, you may spend three Blood Traits and a Willpower Trait to force the body to heal one level of aggravated damage during a game session, should you need to do so.

If a body part such as a hand is lost to injury, it may be regrown by healing one level of the damage. Both eyes may be regrown by healing a single level. If you wish to disable one of your own senses, it takes an action and at least 1 level of damage must be done. For example, you can crush your own eyes for 1 bashing, or pierce your eardrums for 1 lethal. In certain cases it may take certain special tools to disable your ears with bashing.

Recording Damage

A character almost always starts a game session with a clean Damage Track; the downtime between sessions is more than enough time to heal all wounds suffered during the previous sessions. There are some Flaws which cause a character to begin with some damage, and it's possible that other circumstances may cause the same.

As a character suffers damage, a mark is placed in a box on the Damage Track starting from the top and working down. Each type of damage has a specific mark:

- Bashing damage is represented by a slash (/)
- Lethal damage is represented by an x (X)
- Aggravated damage is represented by an asterisk (*)

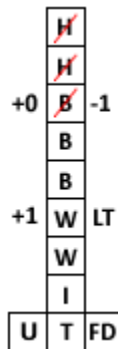
In other words, bashing is a single line, lethal is two lines, and aggravated is three lines in the same box. When a character suffers different types of damage over the course of an evening, the more problematic the damage, the higher on the damage track it's recorded.

Some Disciplines or other circumstances may allow you to halve the damage that you take. If this would result in you taking half a box of damage, you keep track of that half until you take another one. When you do, you record it on your sheet as described above. If you take two different types of half-damage (e.g. half a box of bashing and half a box of lethal), you take a full box of the more

serious damage. In this example, you would take a box of lethal.

Example: Taking Damage

Alice and Bob are engaged in combat. Both start with empty Damage Tracks; it's the beginning of the night and neither of them have been injured yet. Alice is a much better fighter, and throughout the combat (and this example) she takes no damage at all! Bob, on the other hand isn't so lucky. Early in the fight, Alice is unarmed, and after she punches Bob a few times he is suffering from three bashing. This means he's now Bruised (since the first box labeled "B" is filled in) and he suffers a 1 penalty if both he and Alice throw the same symbol on subsequent challenges.



Bob takes three bashing.

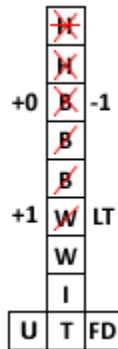
But, at this point, Alice draws a dagger and continues to attack Bob, inflicting two boxes of lethal damage. Notice, that in the second damage track pictured below, we've added the lethal boxes to the top. We do this simply by adding a backslash in the top two boxes marking them as lethal and then making sure that the damage track continues to include the three bashing taken earlier by adding them to the bottom. This is what we meant when we said that more problematic damage sits higher on the damage track.



Bob takes an additional two lethal.

Now, to make matters even worse, Alice has the *Lure of Flames* Path of *Thaumaturgy* which can let you conjure fire. She uses a Basic power of that Discipline to ignite her hand and grip Bob. This causes him an aggravated damage. We add this to the top of Bob's damage track pictured below and, just like before, make sure that we still have two lethal and three bashing damage under the new aggravated

one.



Bob takes one aggravated.

Unconsciousness, Torpor, and Final Death

The process described above continues until one of the squares in the row with three boxes is filled in. Exactly how this row is filled in is determined by the type of damage taken or “pushed” into that row when more egregious damage is added to the top of the track.

If a box of bashing damage is the first to be placed in that row, the character becomes Unconscious. Lethal damage skips Unconsciousness and moves directly to Torpor, and aggravated damage skips both Unconsciousness and Torpor and leads directly to Final Death.

A vampire who is unconscious and/or staked cannot be fed blood. Blood can be dribbled into their mouth, but they will not swallow it. Mechanically, this means the blood is not added to their Blood Pool, nor is any blood bond formed.

Once a person is unconscious, doing further bashing to them will—after repeated attacks—put them into torpor. This is handled by adding a backslash to represent new lethal damage to every box of bashing damage on the track until we reach the bottom and Torpor. However, no amount of bashing damage will cause someone to reach Final Death during combat. Similarly, once a character is put into torpor, further lethal damage will cause aggravated wounds until a character is finally killed.

The duration a character spends in torpor is determined by their current Morality. A character with five Dots of Morality remains in torpor for one week, and each Dot fewer increases the duration by one week, up to a maximum of 5 weeks for a character with 1 Morality. Weapons with the *Staking* Merit ignore this timeframe; more information can be found in **Chapter III: Weapons**.

A character can also be awakened earlier by being fed the blood of a vampire at least two Generations below them. This creates (or enhances) a blood bond between the characters as normal. Since this mechanic can be easily used by anyone to justify feeding a torpid character blood, whether or not they are capable of waking them, we allow the victim’s player a certain amount of out-of-character control. They may find out (strictly out-of-character) whether the blood they are given is powerful

enough to awaken them, and then decide whether or not their character swallows the blood. Whether or not the blood has been swallowed is not obvious to other characters, though the awakening is.

Mortals and Damage

Humans, of course, lack both the resistances and the special vulnerabilities of vampires. They cannot be put into torpor, and they take lethal damage from fire, bullets, and stakes. Bashing damage can kill them. They heal much more slowly than vampires, and can be permanently maimed. There is no entirely reliable way to induce unconsciousness in a mortal without the risk of killing them, whether with drugs, head blows, chokeholds, or the like.

Chapter III

Weapons

Even vampires with super strength and speed sometimes need a little edge over their equally strong and fast opponents. Weapons can be that edge. In our game, weapons follow the same rules for Durability (and Attractiveness) that all items have. These rules can be found under [Item Crafting](#) in **Chapter V: Downtime Actions and Influence**.

Weapon Traits

As well as Durability and Attractiveness, weapons have additional statistics: bonus Traits, damage value, and Weapon Merits and Flaws. Hand-crafted weapons can also have unique extras categorized as Gimmicks. (Again, these rules can be found under [Item Crafting](#).)

Bonus Traits

Weapons grant bonus Traits which you add to your current number of Traits when you tie on symbols. In this way, wielding a weapon may give you an edge over an opponent with whom you are equally matched. These Traits do not increase your initiative score unless the weapon has the Merit *Quick*.

Damage Value

Each weapon possesses a damage value, which replaces the base damage your character could do with their fists. Without the Discipline *Potence*, the average character does bashing damage when unarmed; with *Potence* you may choose to deal lethal if you prefer. Most weapons will either provide you a way to do multiple boxes of damage or deal damage of a more serious category.

Weapon Merits and Flaws

Weapon Merits and Flaws are characteristics of a weapon that provide enhancements to your combat capabilities or make it more difficult for you to succeed in your goals.

Weapon Flaws can sometimes be counteracted, though you might not always have the means to do so. For example, a weapon that has the Flaw *Slow* might require two Traits of the Ability *Melee* to wield effectively. If you do not have two Traits of *Melee* at the time you use the weapon, you must take an action to “reset” the weapon every time you use it.

Common Weapon Merits and Flaws are described later in this chapter.

Weapon Damage

The normal operation of a weapon does not damage it; simply shooting a gun or bashing someone with a club will not reduce its Durability. However, if an opponent specifically targets your weapon with an attack and successfully hits it, then it may be damaged or destroyed. More information can be found under [Item Crafting](#) in **Chapter V: Downtime Actions and Influence**.

Potence and Weapons

The power *Puissance* (*Potence* 5) adds an extra level of damage to attacks. If this power is used when wielding weapon (it is not required, as the character may choose to “pull their punches”), it will cause a single level of damage to the weapon as well. An exception may be made if the target is too soft to possibly damage the material, such as a hypothetical demon construct made entirely of marshmallow.

Statistics of Common Weapons

The table below lists the common statistics for most weapons in our game. The Merits and Flaws listed in the table are described below it. The damage values are for those without the Discipline *Potence*; those with *Potence* can choose to deal lethal damage instead of bashing with unarmed or clubbing attacks.

Just because rules for a given weapon appear in this chart does not mean it is necessarily easily available for player characters. Obtaining some weapons requires Influence Actions rather than simply money. In some cases this is because of legality, but archaic items simply aren't commonly sold.

Weapon (# of hands)	Traits	Damage	Merits	Flaws	Standard Durability
Axe (2)	3	2 lethal	<i>Destroy Shield</i>	<i>Slow (3), Unconcealable</i>	3
Club (1)	2	1 bashing		<i>Slow (2)</i>	3
Large Club (2)	3	2 bashing		<i>Slow (3), Unconcealable</i>	3
Crossbow (2)	2	2 lethal	<i>Armor Piercing, Staking</i>	<i>Slow (4), Unconcealable.</i>	3
Flare Gun (1)	-1	1 aggravated		<i>Single Shot</i>	3
Knife/Dagger (1)	2	1 lethal	<i>Quick</i>	<i>Short</i>	3
Knuckle-dusters (1-2)	1	Same as the user's punch			3
Long Bow (2)	2	1 lethal	<i>Armor Piercing, Destroy Shield, Staking</i>	<i>Slow (2)</i>	2
Pistol (1)	2	Vs. mortals: 2		<i>Slow (1)</i>	3

		lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing			
Pistol (High Caliber) (1)	2	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing	<i>High Caliber</i>	<i>Slow (2)</i>	1
Rifle (2)	3	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing		<i>Slow (1), Unconcealable</i>	3
Rifle (High Caliber) (2)	3	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing	<i>High Caliber</i>	<i>Slow (2), Unconcealable</i>	1
Short Bow (2)	2	1 lethal	<i>Armor Piercing, Staking</i>	<i>Slow (2)</i>	2
Shotgun (2)	3	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing	<i>Mass Trauma*</i>	<i>Slow (2) Unconcealable</i>	2
Shotgun (Sawed-Off) (2)	2	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing	<i>Spray*</i>	<i>Slow (2)</i>	2
Stake (1)	2	1 lethal	<i>Staking</i>	<i>Short</i>	2
Stake (Improvised) (1)	2	1 lethal	<i>Staking</i>	<i>Fragile, Short</i>	1
Stun Weapon (Contact) (1)	1	Vs. mortals: <i>Stun</i> Vs. vampires: 1 bashing	<i>Stun</i>	<i>Short</i>	3
Stun Weapon (Ranged)	2	Vs. mortals: <i>Stun</i>	<i>Stun</i>	<i>Slow (3)</i>	3

		Vs. vampires: 1 bashing		(also note that it is as loud as a pistol since it uses a charge to fire the contacts)	
Submachine Gun (2)	2	Vs. mortals: 2 lethal Vs. vampires: 2 bashing	<i>Fully Automatic, Spray</i>	<i>Slow (3)</i>	2
Sword (1)	2	1 lethal	<i>Quick</i>	<i>Unconcealable</i>	3
Spear (2)	3	1 lethal	<i>High Caliber (if metal tipped)</i> OR <i>Staking (if wood tipped)</i>	<i>Slow (3)</i> <i>Unconcealable</i>	2

Note that firearms have no ammunition costs. The only weapons which require reload actions are those with the Merit *Fully Automatic*, as described in the text for that Merit, or bows and crossbows, which do not have magazines.

*The listed Merits given for shotguns describe the default ammunition type that comes with that type of gun: *Mass Trauma* (slugs), or *Spray* (shot). If you get or make ammunition of the other type, you may use it in that weapon and switch the Merit accordingly.

Weapon Merits

Armor Piercing

This weapon's damage ignores non-magical armor. Cost: 1 Durability.

Deadly

+1 trait on ties. Cost: 1 Durability. A single item cannot give more than +5 traits on ties.

Destroy Shield

If a defender uses the *Block* retest to successfully avoid an attack, the attacker does damage to the defender's shield as though the attacker had been targeting the shield. Cost: 2 Durability. For more information, see [Item Crafting](#) in **Chapter V: Downtime Actions and Influence**.

Fully Automatic

If you empty the entire clip into a target, you deal an additional box of the appropriate damage. You do not have to use your weapon in fully automatic firing mode. You must take an action to "reload".

Handful

Allows you to make multiple small items with only 1 Basic Downtime Action. You will receive a single item card for the stack of items. As long as you have the card, you have more of that weapon on your person. You may also draw as many *Handful* items in a single action as you have dots of the relevant Ability minus 1, minimum of 1. Cost: 3 Durability. Cannot be applied to

weapons with the *Unconcealable* Flaw or weapons that do fire damage. Example: With *Craft Swords* 5, you make a bandolier (with Durability 2) of many daggers that you can throw or attack with. If you wish to throw them, you can pull out as many daggers as you have *Athletics* dots minus one. If using them in close combat, the Ability is *Melee*.

High Caliber

After a successful attack, make a Simple Test to deal an extra box of damage. Cost: 1 Durability.

Mass Trauma

Adds an additional box of damage to the weapon. Example: One lethal goes to two lethal. Cost: 2 Durability.

Mini

REDUCE the damage of a weapon to 1 box. A *Mini* item has a damage cap of 1. It loses the *Unconcealable* Flaw. *Mini* may also reduce other Flaws depending on the weapon it is applied to. Cost: 0 Durability.

Quick

The weapon's bonus traits apply to the user's initiative score as well as on ties. Costs: 1 Durability. Cannot be applied to weapons with the *Unconcealable* Flaw.

Special Material

The item has the appropriate properties of the special material. The material in question must be specified at the time of crafting. Cost: 1 Durability (or more, depending on the material) and decreases overall damage by .5 (round down.)

Spray

The weapon can hit up to three targets as long as they are within three steps of each other and more than six steps away from the user. Cost: 1 Durability. Available on ranged weapons only.

Staking

If you put a wooden weapon with this Merit through the heart of a vampire, they enter torpor regardless of how much damage they've taken. This torpor lasts until the stake is removed from the heart. To determine if you've struck the heart, you make up to three Simple Tests with your opponent after successfully wounding them. (These are referred to collectively as "Staking Tests.") For staking with melee weapons, you must win 2 of 3 tests on symbols in order to stake them; at range, you must win all three on symbols. A staked vampire is not aware of their surroundings in any way. This Merit cannot be added to weapons of categories other than the following: stakes, bows, crossbows, wooden-tipped spears.

Stun

A Stun weapon has a special effect on mortals, temporarily incapacitating them by electric shock. There is a small chance such a weapon will not put a mortal target down, and a small chance it will cause injury or even death (especially when used repeatedly on a single target). To determine this, you must make up to three Simple Tests with your opponent immediately after successfully striking them. If you win 2 of 3 tests on symbols, you have injured or killed them (ST's discretion). If you lose all three tests, the weapon has no effect. Stun weapons do the listed damage to vampires and have no special effect on them. Stun weapons can only be bought, not made or modified with *Craft* Abilities.

Weapon Flaws

Weapon flaws represent difficulties you might have when using a weapon. In the *Statistics of Common Weapons* table, you may see flaws represented as *Flaw (X)*. The X represents the number of Traits you must have in the Ability listed in the Flaw description to completely counteract it.

Fragile	Weapons with this Flaw break the first time you use them in a failed challenge. This Flaw cannot be counteracted.
Short	Weapons with this Flaw require you to be within one step of your opponent, which is roughly arm's reach. This Flaw does not require you to bid an additional Trait.
Single Shot	Weapons with this Flaw are projectile weapons that cannot be reloaded, or cannot be reloaded in combat time. This Flaw does not require you to bid an additional Trait.
Slow	Melee weapons with this Flaw are hard to control in combat. You must spend an action "resetting" the weapon to a useable position. This Flaw is offset by the Ability <i>Melee</i> . Ranged weapons with this Flaw are harder to reload. It takes one action to reload the weapon, and another to fire it. This Flaw is offset with the Ability <i>Firearms</i> .
Unconcealable	Long or large weapons are too obvious to conceal. Even hiding them under a long coat only tells observers that you have something hidden.

Weapons without the Flaw *Unconcealable* can be concealed fairly easily, but doing so may make it difficult to ready them for combat. For example, a shortbow could be unstrung and "concealed" by making it look like a thin, bendy staff. However, you would have to re-string it to use it in combat. A pistol could be hidden in a jacket pocket, holster, or the waistband of your pants, but you would have to draw it before you could fire it.

Other Weapon and Offense Rules

Strength in Numbers

A maximum of four people can attack someone in melee combat before the target is considered surrounded. While surrounded, no additional melee attackers can join the combat unless one of those already engaged bows out or is removed in some way (e.g. thrown aside with *Potence*).

There are no benefits for "friends in melee" (flanking) as there are in some other games. Getting to beat up the target four times as fast is a benefit in and of itself.

Firing a ranged weapon into a melee of this nature does not impose any penalties.

Surprise Attacks

There are two ways to “get the drop” on your opponent: attacking while using the Discipline *Obfuscate*, or when a Storyteller deems it appropriate.

If you have surprised your foe, you do not have to bid a Trait for your challenge. (In effect, you are bidding a “Surprise Trait” rather than an Attribute Trait.) Your target must still bid to defend themselves. Thus, if you lose your surprise challenge, you do not lose an Attribute Trait. You may only get a surprise challenge against a given opponent once in a given scene, even if you vanish a second time in the course of the scene. More information on surprise attacks can be found in **Chapter III: Character Creation** in *LARP 101* under the rules for *Obfuscate*.

Weapons on Fire

Considering the severity of aggravated damage, weapons that cause it are desirable when facing vampires. Since Röttschreck can easily remove someone from combat at potentially little to no risk to yourself, fire is a very useful tool in any vampire’s arsenal. Since fire also deals aggravated damage, it’s somehow even *better*.

However, while fire is dangerous, it isn’t too hard to extinguish in normal situations. Thus, weapons like flares (either fired from guns or wielded as a melee weapon), burning arrows, and flaming crossbow bolts are guaranteed to do a single aggravated wound when they strike the target. Since that target is unlikely to just stand there burning, they may quickly move to deal with the problem. The Storyteller will determine whether they have to stop-drop-and-roll, or simply remove the burning projectile and toss it aside. If the character struck with such a weapon enters Röttschreck, they will extinguish the flames immediately rather than run around on fire.

Burning arrows or crossbow bolts require an additional action to fire. Thus, in addition to the normal loading and firing actions (which can be combined with the appropriate Traits of the Ability *Firearms*), you also must take an action to ignite the projectile before firing it. Flaming projectiles/weapons cannot stake a target.

Many flaming weapons, especially improvised ones, pose a threat to the wielder as well as their opponent. Accelerants may drip and splash, potentially settings things aflame that you didn’t intend. While fire under your control does not force you to test for Röttschreck, incidental fires do.

Special Ammunition

Some firearm Gimmicks can be applied to ammunition rather than the weapon that fires it. Silver ammunition (using the *Special Material Merit*) is a common example.

Special ammunition is tracked by scene rather than by bullet. Each “clip” lasts one scene and is emptied at the end, so long as at least one bullet is fired. When you want to have one of our guns

loaded with special ammunition, give the ammunition card to the Storyteller at the start of the scene. If you don't use it, we'll give the card back. If you use it at all, you've used it up.

Changing from one type of ammunition to another during a scene requires time, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

Strategic Attacks

There are no called shots in our game. You cannot attempt to hit a vulnerable point to do more damage to your opponent. However, you can still make a strategic attack which will not damage your opponent but instead achieve a situational change. These attacks are retested with an appropriate combat Ability (usually *Brawl*, *Melee*, or *Firearms*), or sometimes with a Physical Ability like *Athletics*.

There are far too many possible strategic attacks to list here, but the most common is an attempt to disarm your opponent. Such an attack, as noted above, will not damage your opponent, but winning the challenge will achieve your desired result.

Touch Attacks

A number of Discipline powers require you to touch or grasp your victim. Skin-to-skin contact is only necessary if the description of the power specifies it. For example, *Dagon's Call (Quietus 3)* requires skin-to-skin contact, while *Quell the Beast (Animalism 4)* does not.

A touch attack is a combat maneuver requiring a Physical Challenge. It can be retested with the Ability *Brawl*. If the attack does not require skin-to-skin contact, it can be done through a successful grapple. In that case, both parties may retest with *Might (Potence 2)* as well as *Brawl*. Attacks that upgrade your damage type, such as *Hands of Flame (Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames 2)*, can be delivered through a punch or similar strike; touch attacks that have a more esoteric effect cannot. When a touch attack is delivered through a strike, the attacker may use *Might* but the target may not.

You cannot have multiple types of non-physical Discipline powers coming out of your hands at once. Either the magics interfere with each other, or the aggravated damage prevents any real skin contact, as the target's arm burns away as you try to grab it. Combining physical and non-physical Disciplines does not cause aggravated damage to stack. In other words, flaming claws do a total of 1 level of aggravated damage. *Puissance (Potence 5)* would add 1 level of lethal damage to that highly hypothetical case.

Subtlety (Potence 3) does not let you bend the above rules.

For touch attacks in grappling, see the corresponding maneuver under the Grapple rules below.

Two-Weapon Fighting Styles

In our game, there are no off-hand actions, and thus using a two-weapon fighting style does not give you an extra attack. However, it can give you the ability to use the *Block* Ability (see the below section

on Blocking). You can also specialize in two-weapon fighting styles to give yourself the 1 Trait bonus on ties while wielding your weapons if you choose to do so.

Weapons and Legality

All of the weapons listed in the table above are legally restricted with the exception of knives and clubs. Further, Metatropolis has had a long history of violence and, as a result, the climate in the city is fairly authoritarian. Walking around outside with an exposed weapon is likely to draw the attention of the public and, eventually, the police.

It is possible to get a permit for pistols, rifles, and shotguns, though not sawed-off shotguns. These can be acquired through legal means (a *Bureaucracy* action) if your character has a non-compromised legal identity and wishes to risk the exposure of a background check. Some Influences may also be able to provide you with forged permits. Once you have a permit, you can purchase pistols, rifles, and shotguns with cash. Without it, you can only acquire firearms through *Influence* Actions or other characters.

Even with proper documents, acting inappropriately with your weapon will get it confiscated. Sure, it may be returned after the legal proceedings, but can you really trust a weapon that's been so thoroughly examined by the authorities? Concealed carry permits are **not** issued for handguns in Illinois in our setting.

Grappling

Grappling is a combat maneuver that lets you inhibit or control your opponent. In a grapple, both parties may use all the powers of the Discipline *Potence*. Thus, grappling is limited in several ways.

First, a grapple requires at least two actions to become truly effective. The first action is a Physical Challenge done against a defender within reach. You may move as normal to place this defender within reach. For this chop, the offensive character may use *Brawl* as an Ability retest and *Might* (*Potence* 2) as an extra retest, if the offensive character has that Discipline power. The defending character may use *Brawl*, *Dodge*, or *Block* as a retest, but only one Ability retest is allowed. They may also use *Might* as an extra retest, if the defensive character has that Discipline power.

If the defending character wins the first challenge, the attack is a failure and is treated like any other failed attack. If the offensive character wins, then both characters enter a grapple. They are considered to be in some form of wrestling or hand-to-hand combat where they are very close together. Without further actions, neither is able to leave the grapple, but neither is specifically incapable of doing anything. Both characters may still draw weapons, cast magic, use almost any Discipline (including *Celerity* and *Vicissitude*), and so on.

You may only initiate a grapple against one character. Once you are in the grapple, you cannot initiate a new grapple. However, it is possible for more than one person to grapple the same target. When more than two people are involved in a grapple, it is vital to keep track of who is grappling who.

Once a grapple has been initiated, each player has the option of performing any grapple-only maneuver from the list as their action—although some grapple-only maneuvers limit what maneuvers the other character can do. Taking the grapple-only action follows the same rules as the challenge outlined in the previous paragraph. You can, as a free action, release any maneuver. In fact, many maneuvers cannot be performed unless you release the one you have active. You may attempt to *Dodge* or *Block* attacks that the other grappler attempts to use on you, within the following limits: you must be able to use your legs in order to *Dodge*, and you must have a shield and the use of your arms to *Block*. Grapple-only maneuvers may be used on an unresisting opponent without first initiating a grapple.

The maneuver to escape a grapple cannot be performed if your opponent has any active maneuver inhibiting you. You must first make a “Break Maneuver” action, then use a second action to escape the grapple.

If both players agree, any grapple may be ended by a single action and the other character relents, but doing so still takes an action by one of the two grapplers.

Grapple Maneuvers

Pin Arms

You use your arms to pin both of your opponent’s arms. This maneuver keeps both of your arms busy, but does not cause you to drop anything you are holding. Your opponent cannot do any actions that require full arm motions, such as attacking with a melee weapon, attacking with a large ranged weapon, blocking with a shield, and so forth. Your opponent also cannot move their torso around, limiting how far they can reach with the rest of their body. You can choose whether you are “on their front” or “on their back.” If “on their back,” they cannot make eye contact with you. (They can still point enough of themselves at you to activate *Dread Gaze (Presence 1)*.) You are similarly unable to make eye contact. Your opponent *can* do simple things with their hands that don’t require full-arm motion: pressing a button, drawing a small object, aiming and firing a small ranged weapon, touching you, or touching you with an object in their hand (like a torch).

Pin Hands

By holding someone’s wrists, you can keep them from doing anything useful with their hands—including touching you to perform a touch attack, using a melee weapon against you, or using a ranged weapon (large or small). Both of your arms are kept busy with this maneuver, and you must drop anything you are holding. They can still do things with their arms, and can move their body about much further than if you used Pin Arms (providing no protection to you from eye contact).

Gag

Your opponent cannot vocalize more than a muffled mumble. Both your arms are kept busy with this maneuver, and you must drop anything you are holding.

Detongue

If you have your opponent Gagged, you can attack their ability to speak with your next action. If successful, you deal one level of lethal damage and remove their tongue or crush their trachea. If you can deal aggravated damage with your hands, this maneuver instead deals one level of aggravated damage. Healing the damage returns the ability to speak.

Control Head

Your opponent cannot turn their head toward you. This eliminates their ability to use *Dread Gaze* (*Presence* 1) and *Dominate* (except for *Tactile Induction*) on you. This keeps both your arms and hands busy.

Control Mouth

Your opponent cannot use the Bite maneuver on you. This keeps both your arms and hands busy.

Blind

Your opponent cannot see anything more than your arm. This inhibits most spellcasting that requires a target unless that target is you. This keeps both your hands and arms busy.

De-oculate

If you have your opponent Blinded, you can attack their ability to see with your next action. If you are successful, you deal one level of lethal damage and remove one eye. If your opponent has no eyes, they cannot see. If you can deal aggravated damage with your hands, this maneuver instead deals one level of aggravated damage. Healing the damage returns the eye.

Carry

By lifting your opponent off the ground or otherwise manhandling them, you are able to move both of you two steps. On subsequent actions, you may continue making Carry actions, but you no longer have to chop with your opponent unless they successfully break your Carry maneuver. If your opponent has used a Carry maneuver on you, a successful Carry maneuver will break their maneuver. This maneuver keeps both your arms and legs busy, but you don't have to drop anything you are holding.

Shield

By succeeding on a Physical Challenge against your opponent, you may move your opponent between you and danger. They count as a shield for the purposes of using *Block* against incoming attacks from other opponents. If you succeed, your grappled opponent takes the damage that was intended for you. Like other maneuvers, Shield remains active until broken.

Bite

You may bite your opponent to deal aggravated damage.

Drain

If you have an active Bite maneuver, you may drain one blood from your opponent as your action.

Pin Legs

Your opponent cannot make Carry maneuvers, or attempt any other maneuvers that require the use of the legs. This maneuver keeps both your hands and arms busy, or it keeps both your legs busy instead.

Thrash

You may attempt an unarmed attack against your opponent as long as any leg or arm or head is free. If you are being grappled by several opponents, you may also declare that you make an unarmed attack against all the other grapplers; you may not specifically avoid attacking any of them.

Takedown

Both you and your opponent end up on the ground. While on the ground in a grapple, neither you nor your opponent may use *Dodge* as a defensive retest. Takedown breaks any Carry maneuver, and even if the grapple spontaneously ends, you and your opponent will still have to spend an action getting back up. Breaking this maneuver means both of you are standing again, although still in a grapple. This maneuver keeps both your arms and your hands busy, or it keeps your legs busy instead.

Break Maneuver

You break whatever maneuver your opponent has on you.

End Grapple

You end the grapple. This cannot be done if either player has any active maneuvers, although you may end any of your own maneuvers for free at any time.

Throw

If neither player has any active maneuvers, you can throw your opponent an appropriate distance based on your physical strength. They will move at about three steps per round through the air. This maneuver ends the grapple.

Touch Attack

You make light physical contact with your grapple opponent with a specific body part or item. If you have a power or situation that activates as a touch attack, you can use that power as per normal touch attack rules. This maneuver is most commonly used with powers like *Dominare 5*, *Quietus*, and *Thaumaturgy* and with certain handheld objects (like torches). If your opponent has no active maneuvers against you, using this maneuver requires winning a Physical Conflict (with standard hand-to-hand combat rules). If your opponent has the Pin Hands maneuver active against you, you *cannot* use this maneuver. If your opponent has the Pin Arms maneuver active against you, using this maneuver requires winning a Physical Conflict (with standard hand-to-hand combat rules). If your opponent has *any* other maneuvers active against you, your attempt at a touch attack *automatically succeeds* and no Conflict is required.

Handshake Grab

A common handshake is nice and all, but what happens when one party says they don't let go? Combat time starts, and both parties are in a grapple with the Handshake Grab maneuver active. The person who said "I don't let go" is assumed to be the one who activated the maneuver (the attacker) who can therefore "end" the maneuver without a chop. *However*, this maneuver is unique in that if the attacker wishes to use their action to end the maneuver (at any point), the defender may say "I don't let go" and require the attacker to succeed in a Physical Conflict as part of their action to end the maneuver. (Essentially, both parties have to agree to end the maneuver for it to happen Conflict-free).

Either party, as their action, may choose to activate a different maneuver (without going back to neutral grapple state first). The exceptions are Touch Attack, as described below, and Thrash, which doesn't break other maneuvers. If they succeed, this grapple maneuver is broken. In other words, the Handshake Grab is broken if either of the parties activates a Control Head maneuver, a Control Hands maneuver, etc.

While in a Handshake Grab, BOTH parties may make Touch Attack maneuvers (using their handshake hand) (as an action) against the other and automatically succeed at the "touch" component of the power (and they only touch their opponent's hand, nothing else). Neither party's handshake hand can be used to make touch attacks anywhere other than their opponent's hand.

Using your free hand to touch or strike at your opponent's handshake hand requires a Conflict as per usual. Any damage done by your free hand to your opponent's handshake hand is also done to your handshake hand. Attempting to use your free hand to touch or strike something that's *not* your opponent's handshake-hand requires a Conflict as per usual.

Either party may still cast Thaumaturgy, draw weapons and items, and use single-handed weapons and items with their free hand. With their handshake hand, neither party can do anything other than make touch attacks. Neither party can use two-handed weapons.

Knuckle Crusher

This is one of the few maneuvers where you can get hurt during your own action. You may only initiate this maneuver while a Handshake Grab maneuver is active, and initiating this maneuver counts as your action. The aggressor initiates a Physical Conflict. The winner of the Conflict does whatever damage their handshake hand would do to the loser's handshake hand. (Yes this means that the person who took the action might take damage.) Normally, this is 1 bashing damage to the loser. But in cases where one party has *Potence* 1 (1 lethal), *Potence* 5 (2 lethal) or *Feral Claws* (1 aggravated), the amount of damage the loser takes can be very asymmetric.

If the loser takes aggravated damage in this manner, their hand is removed (they will have no hand until the damage is healed.) If either of the parties in the Knuckle Crusher loses their handshake hand, the Handshake Grab is ended, and both parties are reduced to a regular grapple (and the winner counts as the person who initiated the grapple, for purposes of "releasing" the grapple on their action). At the end of the Knuckle Crusher maneuver, the *loser* may declare that the Handshake Grab is broken by the Knuckle Crusher maneuver. If this is declared, the Handshake Grab is ended and both parties

are reduced to a regular grapple (and the winner counts as the person who initiated the grapple).
Note: this declaration doesn't count as the loser's action.

Yes, it's possible for someone to initiate this maneuver as their action, take damage, and then their opponent gets an action.

Armor and Defense

We have it from our ancestors, and they from theirs, that having pointy things shoved or shot through your inner bits makes for a bad day. This might be less true for vampires, but it's still worth avoiding. Therefore, there exist a variety of ways to try and make sure you don't bleed out all over the upholstery.

Fair Escape

The first (and usually safest) way to not get hit is to flee before the first blow is even landed. As was mentioned under **Entering and Leaving Combat**, before the first combat round, the Storytellers will give those who would simply leave rather than get involved the chance to do so. It might be, however, that you cannot leave then or that you want to escape after combat has begun.

In order to declare a Fair Escape, you just have to announce your intent to leave the combat scene. As long as no one objects, including the Storytellers, you are pretty much free to go. Combat is a chaotic and confusing situation, and not everyone can keep their eyes on everyone all the time. Thus, if you see your chance to escape and you take it, as long as no one chases you down, you have left the area.

The rules against calling for help and tying up other players hoping to penetrate the fog of war surrounding the combat applies here. Escaping and then calling for reinforcements is a wonderful idea in theory, but in reality it only makes other players sad when they are called to help with a combat that the Storyteller won't allow them to get involved with due to the time difference between traveling across town and how long combats actually take.

If someone does object to your escape, it might be that they are doing so because they intend to chase you down. There's no way to represent the speed at which someone runs in our game, so in most circumstances, we assume everyone runs at approximately the same speed. A Physical Test, retested by *Athletics*, with a difficulty based on the terrain you're running across can be made to try and speed up. Flaws like *Child* or *Short* mean you cannot move quite as quickly due to your smaller stature.

The long and short of running away is this: the Storyteller running the scene will determine who is able to run faster by taking into account things like Physical Challenges, Flaws, Disciplines (mainly *Celerity*), and so forth. This will determine the results of your attempt to run away. If you can't escape your pursuer, usually you are forced to remain in the same combat scene, or sometimes you lead them on a merry chase and end up in a new combat scene nearby.

Passive Defense: Wearing Armor

Sometimes, you don't want to get away from your opponents, but you also don't want the hits to hurt too badly. That's where armor becomes useful. In the modern day, this may mean Kevlar or other high-tech protection measures, though many vampires might still feel more comfortable with chain mail.

Regardless of what type of armor you're wearing, the mechanics behind armor are simple: your opponent has to reduce the Durability of your armor to zero before you start taking damage yourself. More information on item Durability can be found under [Item Crafting](#) in Chapter V: Downtime Actions and Influence, but the short version is that bashing and lethal damage reduce an item's Durability by one, while aggravated damage reduces it by two. From a certain point of view, this Durability acts like extra health levels that must be filled in before you start to take damage.

We recognize that modern armor differs greatly from ancient armor in the way that it protects the wearer. But, combat is already complicated enough when you factor in all of the variables of weapons, Disciplines, Abilities, offense, and defense. Thus, while it stretches belief to say that Kevlar and steel plate armor will defend against the same sorts of attacks, this is the easiest way to represent armor without adding complicated rules regarding the types of attacks that damage each different type of armor.

Some armor is concealable in that it can be worn under clothing and not be seen by a casual viewer. However, it can still be detected by the trained eye. While you might hide your armor from John Q. Public, Sally Q. Police-Officer is likely to notice it and keep an eye on you as a result. The right Influence connections (*Police 4* or *Underworld 2* action) can get you such concealable armor of Durability 1.

Purchased armor is limited to Durability 2. Crafted armor can have higher Durability but cannot be made concealable; the materials necessary to make it so require industrial processes rather than a home workshop. No armor with Durability higher than 1 may be worn under clothing.

Active Defense: Dodge and Block

Dodge and *Block* are two Abilities that are very useful to have. *Dodge* is more versatile as it is less restricted, but blocking an incoming attack with a shield or your weapon displays more style. Plus, by learning both Abilities, you maximize your opportunities to avoid being hit.

Dodging is simple: if you've lost a challenge in combat and you're about to take damage, you can call for a retest by spending a Trait of *Dodge*. Alternatively, if you've won the challenge and your opponent retests, you can spend a Trait of *Dodge* to block the retest.

The Ability *Block* works in the same way mechanically with respect to calling for retests or blocking them, but you may only use it if you meet either of the following two criteria:

- You have a shield in your off hand or are wearing forearm guards

- You have the Merit *Ambidexterity* and a weapon in your off hand.

For convenience, when we refer to shields below, forearm guards, weapons, parry daggers, and other personal defenses work the same unless otherwise noted.

When blocking, the item you use to block with takes no damage unless your attacker has *Puissance* (*Potence* 5), their weapon has the Merit *Destroy Shield*, or they choose to strategically attack your shield/weapon instead of dealing damage to you. Attackers with *Puissance* can deal a single point of damage to your blocking item when you use it in defense. For the other two options, attacks reduce your item's Durability. For more on Durability, see [Item Crafting](#) in **Chapter V: Downtime Actions and Influence**.

Shields (not parry weapons used via *Ambidexterity* nor forearm guards) can be used to block incoming ranged weapons. The act of having a large surface between you and a ranged attacker provides the safety of a defensive retest. Forearm guards and parry weapons are too small to reliably deflect or stop a ranged weapon.

Statistics of Common Shields

The following table lists common types of shields and other defensive items. The Traits column specifies the modifier to your traits when attempting to use the Ability *Block* during a challenge. These modifiers only come into play if you must chop following the use of *Block* on a retest.

Item/Shield	Traits	Examples
Forearm guards -1		Martial arts equipment, mostly
Small shields	0	Bucklers, pot lids, large tomes, frying pans
Medium shields	1	Heater shields, manhole covers, car doors
Large shields	2	Kite/tower shields, doors, table tops

Chapter III

Paths of Enlightenment

While many, if not most, vampires cling to the remaining vestiges of their moral moralities as represented by the Path of Humanity (see **LARP 101**), others cast off these ethics and adopt a different philosophy. These alternatives are collectively referred to as Paths of Enlightenment. Several have been developed throughout Kindred history, and while others may still be found, it is outside the scope of our game to create your own Path.

Because these Paths represent alien world-views and systems of morality sometimes far different from what most functioning societies would allow, we suggest that most first-time players avoid them. Characters of clans with a long tradition of a single Path may begin play on that Path. The Merit *Unusual Worldview* allows a character to begin on one of a limited set of Paths. Other characters may attempt to change to a Path in the course of play, as described below. In general, members of the Sabbat or of the Independent bloodlines are far more likely to walk one of these Paths, but you can find a few amongst the Camarilla who do as well. Paths are viewed with deep suspicion by most of the Camarilla, who assume anyone turning their backs on Humanity is dangerously alien at best and Sabbat at worst.

Changing to a Path

Adopting an entirely new and inhuman moral system is not something that can be done lightly. A character clinging to their Humanity cannot make such a change; only someone teetering at the edge of Wassail (in other words, at Morality 1) is desperate enough for a way to stave off the Beast that they are willing to radically reshape their worldview.

Paths cannot be learned from books or “absorbed” from mystical principles; a guide is necessary. That guide must be another vampire who is a faithful (Morality 3 or higher) adherent of that Path. Any player character who has the requisite Path rating may teach it. If you wish to find an NPC to teach your character a particular Path, you must make a Simple Test. The Storytellers will determine if you win on ties, but as a rule, Sabbat characters win on ties as well as characters seeking a teacher for a Path strongly linked to their clan. If you lose, no mentor for that Path is available. You may ask another character to find a mentor for you, but you cannot look again for a period of time determined by the Storytellers.

Before you may actually switch to your new Path, you must purchase that teacher as a 3 Trait Mentor (this requirement is waived when the teacher is a player character). There will likely be roleplaying requirements as well. The Storytellers will tell you how long this process will take. You must make an Intermediate (2 point) Downtime Action the downtime that you change paths to represent the time and concentration required.

Paths and Interacting with Mortals

Mortals instinctively sense that there is something wrong, something disturbing and predatory, about a vampire that follows a Path of Enlightenment other than Humanity. This is a matter of subtle behavioral “miscues,” and is not something you can consciously control. A Path follower takes a 5 Trait penalty on all Social Challenges with mortals, except for those of intimidation.

Vampires on Paths appear unnaturally pale and cold, unless they have the Merit *Blush of Health*, and cannot spend blood to make themselves look human.

Alternative Virtues

The Virtues of *Conscience* and *Self-Control* are covered in *LARP 101*. The Paths of Enlightenment below will sometimes use one or both of the alternative Virtues *Conviction* and *Instinct* in lieu of the others. Regardless, the difficulties of Conflicts involving *Conviction* and *Instinct* are the same as for their counterparts and can be found in *LARP 101*. If you begin game on a Path that uses them, these alternative Virtues start at 0 rather than 1. (They are inhuman and thus require more conscious effort.)

Conviction

Vampires who hold *Conviction* to be a Virtue do not suffer the pangs of guilt for sinning in the same way as those who continue to abide by their *Conscience*. Instead, *Conviction* informs a vampire how they should have acted and drives them to redouble their efforts to avoid sinning again in the future. Their moral quandary is not so much about the results of their action (e.g. sadness over having killed someone), but rather simply that they lost control and actually performed the act. Vampires with *Conviction* do not have to roleplay guilt or sadness while succeeding on a *Conviction* Test. Instead, they should evidence the fact that they regret their action and will endeavor to avoid it in the future.

Instinct

Instinctual vampires see no reason to avoid frenzy. They understand that it is a natural and powerful part of the vampiric existence. Instead, they seek to direct themselves while frenzied in ways that those who value *Self-Control* would not be able to do even if they were interested in doing so. The section on frenzy in *LARP 101* explains how the condition is different for vampires on *Instinct* Paths.

Many Paths which value *Instinct* over *Self-Control* consider it a sin to fail to direct your frenzy. In this case, “failure” would be defined as the inability to succeed at your *Instinct* Test prior to the ending of a frenzy.

Available Paths

As mentioned above, there are other Paths in the world and some Paths that continue to be developed. Not all Paths are available to player character; only the ones listed in this rulebook are. Each of these Paths come with their own Hierarchy of Sins. This, and the Virtues that they hold, are included below. Further, some of these Paths are most common among specific clans or bloodlines.

As necessary, these will be specified as well.

The Path of Blood

The Path of Blood is followed primarily—almost solely—by Assamites. Its history tells followers that the precepts were set down by Haqim, the legendary father of the Assamites.

It teaches that vampires are a curse, a blight upon the world that will someday be eradicated. This eradication will be facilitated by followers of the Path of Blood. However, it is understood that the numbers of those who walk the path are far less than the sum of all those who do not. The Assamites have already tried to war against the other so-called “lower” clans and failed, resulting in the Blood Curse placed upon them by the Tremere. Such open methods have proven too dangerous in the past. This does not preclude overt action, but it does stress the need for careful deliberation and planning before such an undertaking is attempted.

Instead, adherents of the Path have turned themselves towards the protection of mortals. In essence, by protecting mortals from other vampires, they can slowly over many years create a situation where the lower clans—those which feed on mortals—will eventually be starved to the point where they fall upon each other and bring about the sought-after eradication without the obvious involvement of the Assamites. In fact, the most devout followers of this Path eschew even the consumption of human blood, considering it to be beneath them. Plus, taking the blood of other vampires furthers their destruction.

Members of this Path are extremely loyal to each other. It is unlikely that you can pick a fight with one of them and not end up on the wrong side of the rest. Further, it is understood that their covert war against the other clans is furthered by becoming as powerful as possible before any overt actions are taken. Thus, the Path of Blood considers diablerie an acceptable act.

The Path of Blood uses the Virtues of ***Conviction*** and ***Self-Control***.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Feeding on a mortal; failing to pursue lesser blood for others on the path.
Four	Breaking your word to a mortal; placing personal desires or ambition above duty.
Three	Breaking your word to another on the path; killing a mortal, for blood or otherwise; teaching <i>Quietus</i> to an outsider ¹ .
Two	Failing to assist another on the path; revealing Assamite/Path secrets to an outsider; revealing Path secrets to an outsider.
One	Failing to take a chance to lower your generation ² ; revealing Assamite secrets to an outsider; acting against another on the path.

¹ For the purposes of determining sins, anyone not falling into either of the following

categories is an "outsider": 1) an Assamite on any Path, 2) a non-Assamite who is also on the Path of Blood and has an Assamite mentor.

² This does not mean your character must try to diablerize low-generation vampires at great risk to themselves. But, if you happen to be in the room with the torpid body of an elder...

The Path of Bones

Those on the Path of Bones see themselves and other vampires as a unique opportunity to study life, death, decay, and all that these processes encompass. This Path is found primarily among the Giovanni and some of the Samedi. It drives its followers to try and unravel the mysteries of death, to understand why and how it occurs, and to figure out why vampires exist outside of this normal cycle.

In keeping with their scholarly pursuits, most of those on this Path study *Necromancy* in some way. Many have other supernatural capabilities that allow them to traffic with the dead or use their necromantic might to speak with ghosts. While these vampires might be quite scholarly in their own right, their area of study often results in a separation between them and the others around them that they study, mortal and vampiric alike. In their quest for understanding, they step outside the normal rules of society, quell their very emotions in order to remain objective, and do their best to observe and record without influencing the events around them.

Diablerie, for those on this Path, remains a sin. The study of death requires the study of the remains left behind when mortals and vampires expire. Diablerie, which destroys the remains of its victims, is thus orthogonal to their scholarly goals.

The Path of Bones uses the Virtues of ***Conviction*** and ***Self-Control***.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Showing fear of death; failing to study death ¹ .
Four	Accidentally killing; failing to feed when hungry.
Three	Succumbing to frenzy; refusing to kill.
Two	Heeding emotion ² ; showing compassion.
One	Preventing the occurrence of death.

¹ It is not a sin to fail to study a death that your character did not witness

² This does not prohibit your character from *having* emotions, only allowing them to be the basis for their actions.

The Path of Caine

Most vampires have encountered the mythology that Caine was the first of the Kindred and the progenitor of all other vampires. However, some take this mythology a step further and cross over into reverence for their shared patriarch. Followers of the Path of Caine believe that Caine was not

only first but that he was perfect. All weaknesses and flaws evidenced by later generations of Kindred are the result of their distance from the potency of Caine's blood. Thus, the followers have two primary goals: to learn all they can about Caine, and to use that knowledge to push themselves past the bounds of normal human limitations in order to achieve vampiric perfection.

In their quest for perfection, scholarly efforts and research can only take them so far. There is something else, however, that they can utilize to expand their understanding of the vampiric condition: diablerie. During the moment of diablerie, one vampire consumes the essence of another and briefly has the opportunity to achieve full understanding of what the other knows and understands. You can see their memories, feel their thoughts, and know what they learned. While these understandings fade quickly, followers of this path ritualize the act of diablerie and include a record of what they see as part of that ritual. These records are then closely and carefully guarded for the information they contain.

There are not many within the Camarilla who can stomach this path. The acceptance of diablerie is something so alien to the structures of that sect and the disdain for mortals and mortality that these vampires show become something that few can overcome. At any given time, there are few followers of this path, and, in these nights, they have often abandoned the life of a scholar to lead war parties and explore the world, all the better to understand Caine's life as a warrior, leader, and wanderer.

The Path of Caine use the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Instinct**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Failing to engage in study (academic or active) each night; failing to instruct others in the Path of Caine.
Four	Befriending or associating with mortals; showing disrespect to others on the Path.
Three	Resisting frenzy rather than controlling it; succumbing to Röttschreck.
Two	Failing to diablerize "humane" vampires; failing to test one's limits.
One	Neglecting to follow a lead about vampirism; denying vampiric needs.

The Path of Cathari

Followers of this Path hold that there are two gods: one purely good and the other purely evil. This philosophy crops up throughout mortal history in the teachings of Zoroaster and Manichaeus, who both preached that these gods were equal and opposite. Christian and Jewish scholars later held that the darkness would eventually lose to the light. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe, this philosophy was shared by the Cathars in southern France. When the Albigensian Crusade destroyed the Cathar heresy, some of its followers accepted the Embrace from local vampires.

These new vampires—those who didn't give themselves to the sun—went about defining their new

existence within their religious worldview. Clearly, vampires were the perfect servants of the darkness, and as such, it was their duty to test those who followed the light and reveal their weakness. To do so, Cathari indulge in every form of vice and entice others to do so as well, although they do not do so capriciously, as their indulgence is not without purpose. Anyone—even a vampire—that can be corrupted has been shown to be weak or uncommitted to the light. They must then be destroyed so that when the light and the darkness are finally pitted directly against each other, only the strongest and the most pure will remain on either side.

Despite this, the Cathari do not kill lightly. Death (and diablerie) interrupts the process of a soul's corruption and precludes further corruption. As it is their purpose to determine the fitness of others' souls, destroying them is antithetical to their practices. Thus, Cathari practice mastery over their own emotions and their frenzy to avoid strengthen the forces of the light with their untimely demise. When a follower of this path does determine that another has to die to further the cause of this cosmic battle, they kill deliberately and coolly, deriving as little pleasure from the act as possible. It is, after all, better to corrupt than to destroy.

The Path of Cathari uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Instinct**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Self-destructive behavior ¹ ; showing trust.
Four	Withholding the Embrace from passionately wicked or virtuous mortals; resisting frenzy.
Three	Acting against another Cathari; killing with passion.
Two	Refraining from indulging in an interesting vice with others.
One	Arbitrary killing; encouraging others to restrain their impulses ² .

¹Self-destructive behavior is a sin because the Cathari believe their actions in the service of the darkness are imperative to strengthen both sides of the cosmic war. If they are all destroyed, no one may be left to temper the forces on both sides for their eventual and final confrontation.

² While it is a sin to encourage restraint in others, this does not imply that you need to force them to indulge or to sin. It is far better to let them corrupt themselves; a forced indulgence can be forgiven but a choice to fall from the light can never be undone.

The Path of Death and the Soul

According to those on this Path, the heart is the anchor of the soul in its body. Under normal circumstances, the soul extends beyond the heart in order to keep functioning the normal bodily processes of respiration, digestion, circulation, etc. However, at the moment of the Embrace, a vampire's soul contracts within the heart and is purified therein by the simple fact that it no longer needs to spend its energy on those processes. This philosophy explains, at least for followers, why a simple stake in the heart incapacitates a vampire; it pierces their very soul.

A follower seeks to isolate the manifestations of their soul—of their heart—by making them pure and intense. There is no moderation; rage must be all-consuming, love should not cease, reason should be without any influence of emotion or intuition, and pain should be incomprehensible. Followers usually devote themselves to the obsessive study of one facet of these extremities at the expense of everything else before moving on to the next. As a result, they usually exist on the fringes of vampiric society unless concerned with a more social facet like leadership or torture. Unless experimenting on themselves to understand pain and emotion, most blanket themselves in the security of rationality and detachment in order to more fully study their chosen field.

This Path is most attractive to the Tzimisce; history indicates that this clan invented the Path thousands of years ago. It also calls to members of the Malkavian and Toreador *antitribu* as well as necromancers of all stripes. It is found more often among the Sabbat and Independent clans where an antisocial personality is less damaging.

The Path of Death and the Soul uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Self-Control**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Showing fear of Final Death; maintaining attachment to the mortal world.
Four	Succumbing to frenzy; being guided by emotions other than the ones you currently study.
Three	Failing to kill when it would be useful; forsaking the pursuit of enlightenment for other satisfactions.
Two	Showing an aversion to death in any form; showing compassion.
One	Needlessly preventing a death; killing without studying the death and its aftermath.

The Path of Entelechy

The origins of this path are in much dispute. Some claim that it is very old while others believe that it is quite new. Regardless, European Brujah seem to have either developed or rediscovered it in recent nights. This philosopher's path promotes the protection of one's fragile humanity in the decay of morality found throughout the world in mortal and immortal society alike. It holds that the soul is eternal and that vampirism holds it hostage in base matter after the death of the Embrace. But, some good can be performed as a vampire. Some believe that God has a plan for them; others without such faith simply recognize the knowledge that vampires can hold and share with others. Regardless, followers act with a purpose: to expand their intellectual understanding of their world and to refine and distill that understanding for others. In this way, vampires are uniquely suited as repositories for that knowledge and understanding.

This path is very similar to the Path of Humanity; however, followers of Entelechy believe that Humanity is too passive. Simply avoiding sin is not enough. Instead, one must actively strive against the Beast with purpose and forethought. To this end, followers have three essential concepts on

which they base their philosophy: *enkrateia* (inner strength), *reie* (courage), and *saphrosyne* (self-control). These concepts are essential to followers and Path elders often bemoan the state of new followers who have so much left to learn.

The Path of Entelechy uses the virtues of **Conviction** and **Self-Control**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Ill-defined or idle thoughts ¹ ; allowing others to frenzy
Four	Acting on impulse ² ; theft, robbery or vandalism
Three	Causing deliberate harm to a mortal; feeding from an innocent by force
Two	Succumbing to frenzy or Röttschreck; allowing a crime to go unpunished
One	The murder of innocents; aiding a monstrous act ³

¹The sin of ill-defined or idle thoughts is meant to keep followers of this Path active. To simply day-dream or debate about inconsequential things is useless and one's time should be spent otherwise.

²Impulsiveness is also a problem. If activity does not have purpose then it is wasted effort. At least a basic understanding of the current state of affairs and a defined goal are necessary in order for right action.

³A monstrous act should include pretty much anything that mortal society would deem so. If you'd face life in prison and/or the death penalty for your actions in a mortal court, then aiding others in such an act would be considered a problem.

The Path of the Feral Heart

So many other paths focus on control of the Beast. They teach that the Beast must be subsumed beneath logic, reason, scholarly activity, and an understanding of the vampiric condition. To those on this Path, however, the Beast *is* the vampiric condition, and it should not be controlled but rather savored.

Vampires are the ultimate predators, and therefore stand outside mere mortal concerns like morality and civilization. These are the chains of the weak and those who need the support of others. Vampires should respond to the needs of their form and hunt when hungry from those who sustain them. The Beast can tell a vampire when to act and when to remain calm. It is not the mindless uncontrolled rage that others seem to feel it is. Instead, it is the very soul of a vampire.

However, foolishly risking one's safety is stupid. Even the rudest of predators understand the need for caution and a careful stalking of one's prey. As sentient predators, vampires should be held to an even higher standard. A hunt can be made more exciting and its inevitable conclusion more satisfying with planning and forethought, after all.

This path rejects the trappings of civilization, including technology, particularly while on the hunt.

Vampires have all the technology they need at their very fingertips, encapsulated within their most powerful form. Relying on tools invented by their prey makes a predator even more dependent on them, makes them more like prey, and makes them more prone to failure.

This path is most common among the Gangrel, but can also be found among the Nosferatu and Ravnos *antitribu*. Other clans who value structure and hierarchy find it difficult to walk a path so totally focused on the self.

The Path of the Feral Heart uses the Virtues of ***Conviction*** and ***Instinct***.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Not knowing the target of your next two-legged meal; refusing to kill to survive (an immediate threat).
Four	Tolerating an ally ¹ who doesn't directly act in your Beast's interests; not supporting your allies.
Three	Engaging in politics or debate; engaging in unnecessary cruelty. ²
Two	Refusing to follow your instincts (even in frenzy, including trying to resist any attempted murder within that frenzy); remaining near fire or sunlight except to promptly capture your target.
One	Killing a natural creature (mortal, animal, or werewolf) or vampire without feasting on their blood; hunting with anything other than your own capabilities.

¹In the Sabbat, allies are likely restricted to one's own Pack, but elsewhere it can be a temporary coterie (circle of regular associates) or even a less formal group of people to whom one is loyal.

²A predator isn't cruel. It kills dispassionately out of its own need rather than anger.

The Path of Harmony

Everything has a destiny, even vampires. To meet that destiny, a vampire has to carefully navigate between the similarities that they have with mortal humans and the Beast. The Path of Harmony teaches that it is best to remain true to one's human side while not neglecting the needs of the Beast. To move to the extreme in either direction is to court disaster. On one hand, to be too human is to neglect the Beast and fall prey to frenzy when hungry, but on the other hand, to indulge the Beast is to become a monster that all—even mortal humans—will seek to destroy.

However, it is not enough to seek self-harmony. Those who walk this Path feel it is their duty, a part of their very purpose, to help others reach the same balance that they seek. To that end, followers proselytize their beliefs upon others and actively seek to prevent extreme acts by those around them. Killing, and by extension diablerie, are both considered sins on this path. If an individual dies before finding their purpose and completing that which they are required to do, then an irrevocable loss is

the result.

As a result, this Path is far more likely to be found among those clans whose social make-up promotes working well with others. Toreador, Ventrue, and Tremere make up the majority of this Path's followers, though you can find the odd Malkavian seeking to make peace with their insanity. The activities of the more extreme members of the Sabbat make this Path hard to walk within the sect. Often, followers of the Path of Harmony are seen as a nuisance within the Sabbat for their sanctimonious belief that everyone will eventually agree with their views and join them on their Path.

The Path of Harmony uses the Virtues of **Conscience** and **Self-Control**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Killing an animal for any reason other than survival; feeling guilty about something you needed to do ¹ .
Four	Acting in an overly cruel manner; showing mercy to an enemy ² .
Three	Killing a mortal for any reason other than survival; succumbing to frenzy.
Two	Allowing yourself to act too human or too bestial; failing to provide safety for your loved ones and comrades.
One	Refusing to kill when it is important for your survival; allowing an ally to complete an extreme action ³ .

¹ If an action was truly necessary, than to feel guilty about it is pointless. For example, if you kill a mortal who was hunting you, there is no need to feel guilty about that death. It was your survival or theirs, and you know your purpose; to allow yourself to die would not have served it.

² Those two seem contradictory, but remember this path is about balance. Both mercy and cruelty endanger you.

³ An extreme action is anything that would be considered too unbalancing. Essentially, if it is a sin elsewhere on this hierarchy, then it is likely too extreme to allow others to perform. It is only a sin if you are present. If someone commits murder and you are not there at the time, it is not something you could have prevented.

The Path of Honorable Accord

The knights of the Path of Honorable Accord seek to reduce their personal ambition and individualism as much as possible. It is their belief that if left unrestrained, vampires would destroy each other given time—a viewpoint that may be entirely too accurate. Additionally, immoderate action would expose vampires to the wider and now globally connected mortal society and result in the destruction of all Kindred. As a result, the needs of the self need to be weighed against the needs of the many.

To restrain themselves, followers allow no room for sentiment or mercy. Instead, honor is held sacrosanct and pursued with calculated rationality both because it can hold the Beast in check, and because it acts as a limiting force against one's other, baser instincts. Followers generally lose interest

in friendship and society, and instead focus on allies and regular associates; trust plays no part in rational, honorable choice.

The Path of Honorable Accord breeds reliable Sabbat leaders as long as their superiors administer oaths carefully. Followers serve with less treachery than almost anyone else in the sect, as doing so would promote individualistic wants over those of the sect. However, if oaths are not carefully worded, followers will not restrain themselves from working around them, rationalizing their treachery as providing negative examples regarding the importance of carefully defining what honorable society truly means. However, most followers stop short of killing (or diablerizing) their opponents. After all, if you kill someone, they cannot learn from their mistakes, and revenge is a fairly personal concern.

While primarily a Sabbat path, in recent nights, members of the Camarilla—especially within the more rigidly hierarchal clans like Ventrue and Tremere—have begun to walk this Path.

The Path of Honorable Accord uses the Virtues of **Conscience** and **Self-Control**. However, the Path of Honorable Accord's version of *Conscience* does not include remorse, only concern for one's integrity.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Failing to uphold the precepts of your sect; failing to show hospitality to your allies.
Four	Associating with dishonorable individuals; failing to participate in the rituals of your sect ¹ .
Three	Disobeying your leader ² ; failing to protect your allies.
Two	Placing personal concerns above duty; showing cowardice.
One	Breaking your word; killing without justification.

¹ For the Sabbat, sect rituals are fairly well defined, but for the Camarilla, this could include Elysium, Primogen meetings, and so on.

² Your leader is the person to whom you have sworn allegiance. This person can change—especially if your original leader is slain—but it must be rigidly defined at all times.

The Path of Metamorphosis

Just as vampires are superior to humans, Metamorphosists believe that there is a state superior to vampirism that they can reach through a process of personal change and evolution. As a result, this Path focuses on the needs of the individual. The process that one follower undertakes to find this enlightenment may be very different from another's.

The only thing that most if not all followers share in common is *Vicissitude*. The flesh-altering Discipline provides the toolbox used by Metamorphosists to reach their enlightenment. Additions and subtractions to the body act to create something new and different with challenges different from those posed by other forms. Overcoming these challenges teaches followers about themselves and

helps them evolve towards their sought-after enlightenment.

This focus on the self often makes followers divisive within the more rigidly defined sects. Tzimisce followers in the Sabbat, however, are often too useful for the creative ways that they deal with their opposition to be expunged. Among the Camarilla, followers are extremely rare and are usually quickly identified and dealt with. Oddly, while this path sees few adherents amongst the family-oriented Independents, the form-altering powers of the Gangrel and the malleable philosophical beliefs of the Anarchs have provided fertile ground for the precepts of this Path. However, like the Camarilla, others within even these organizations find Metamorphosists to be a thorn in their sides.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Postponing feeding; indulging in vices.
Four	Asking for or sharing knowledge with another.
Three	Refusing to kill for knowledge; failing to control a frenzy.
Two	Considering others; failing to experiment.
One	Neglecting to practice alteration and evolution; showing compassion.

The Path of Night

In some ways, this Path is similar to that of the Cathari described above. However, while the Cathari feel that their agency for the powers of darkness and chaos that they believe in is justified in order to strengthen the forces of the light, followers of this path seek only to tear down and destroy. As such, these vampires tend to be some of the most depraved and Beast-ridden members of Kindred societies.

It is almost unheard of for members of this Path to be found within the Camarilla. In the Sabbat, most of its followers are among clan Lasombra. Within that clan, the most fervent adherents of this Path of Night are sometimes referred to as “Abyss mystics.” They believe that their signature Discipline, *Obtenebration*, allows them to reach beyond the normal boundaries of space and time into a different dimension composed entirely of shadow and chaos. They maintain that this plane, this Abyss, predates the creation of this universe by God; it was into the Abyss that God created light. Thus, these mystics believe that by using *Obtenebration* to tap into this plane, they are wielding a force more ancient than creation itself.

Regardless of whether or not this is true, the sense this mysticism creates within its followers makes them believe themselves to be beyond what other vampires claim to be. As a result, most followers of the Path of Night have more than a little bit of a superiority complex.

Because of its anti-social focus, this Path was dwindling until the modern nights as physicists’ theories of dark matter and black holes began to mesh well with the Abyss mysticism of this path’s core followers, Sabbat Lasombra. As these individuals twisted modern scientific thoughts to meet their own ends, more and more neonates have been enticed by not only the teachings of the Path, but

also the nihilistic indulgence of the baser nature of vampirism.

The Plan

As the list of sins on path of Night makes clear, it is very difficult for one on this path to lie or deceive others. The situation may arise, however, where it is highly desirable for a Path of Night character to let another character *think* they've won, are better, have authority, or have provided necessary assistance. These situations would normally call for the Path of Night character to make morality chops. If the player approaches the Storytellers beforehand and outlines their amazing plan, and the Storytellers deem it worthy of the label "The Plan," the character will be given some leniency on certain morality chops that would be necessary by-products of the plan. The Plan needs to be sufficiently grand, and must have a fairly quick turnaround; that is, The Plan cannot be used to get out of chops for months on end.

Questions about the mechanics of The Plan can be answered by the Storytellers.

The Path of Night uses the Virtues of ***Conviction*** and ***Instinct***.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits

Violations

Five	Killing a mortal for food; acting altruistically
Four	Failing to be innovative in one's depredations; asking for assistance ¹ .
Three	Accidentally killing; following another vampire's will ² .
Two	Intentionally killing rather than prolonging suffering; showing compassion.
One	Accepting another's claim to superiority ³ ; repenting your evil.

¹ Just because you can't ask for assistance doesn't mean you won't accept it if it arrives. Followers of this Path still want to live, they just want to do so on their own terms.

² Following another's will implies that they are somehow superior to you. Since that can't possibly be the case, their will doesn't really matter. This doesn't mean that you won't do what another vampire wants, only that if you do so it had better also be what you wanted in the first place.

³ This sin is similar to the "following another vampire's will" sin at level three. However, there is a subtle difference between that and accepting another as an authority figure. In other words, followers of this Path do not believe they should lower themselves beneath any other person. To do so would allow them to control you and your actions.

The Path of Power and the Inner Voice

If there ever was a soul, it is lost along with the need to breathe. Usually, when one stops breathing, one is also dead, but for vampires this is obviously not the case. Therefore, all abstract concerns of humanity like nobility, honor, friendship, compassion, and love are discarded in favor of a single all-encompassing goal: power. Vampires, after all, exist to rule the world, but until then they will rule whatever they can control.

The ability to give orders and have them obeyed is what matters to followers on this Path. They aim to control everything around them from politics to social norms to spiritual authority. While this megalomaniacal focus would seem to preclude followers from working well with others, the opposite is actually true. What use is giving a command if there's no one around to follow it? Instead, followers seek to understand the motivations of others and to twist those motivations to their own benefit.

Followers receive a great deal of respect from members of the Sabbat, but receive even more fear. Each successful follower of this Path represents someone who has accumulated enough power to become nigh untouchable and has shown that they are willing to go to any lengths to maintain that power. Failure is not acceptable from those whom they command. They constantly work to supplant their superiors and control even greater spheres of influence. This impulse means that multiple followers of this Path will usually end up in conflict with each other.

Novices usually focus on control through fear and punishment. The truly terrifying followers are those whose leadership precludes the possibility of treachery. Willing subordinates, after all, are far more effective and will perform tasks not suitable for slaves and prisoners.

The Path of Power and the Inner Voices uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Instinct**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Denying responsibility for your actions; treating loyal underlings badly.
Four	Failing to respect your superiors (except when they err) ¹ .
Three	Accepting defeat ² ; failing to kill when it is in your interests.
Two	Submitting yourself to others' errors; not using every effective tool of control.
One	Tolerating failure; declining an opportunity for power.

¹You can respect your superiors while simultaneously working to undermine them. After all, an opponent you can respect represents potentially the greatest danger to your control, and all such obstacles must be overcome.

²Accepting defeat doesn't mean that you cannot ever be defeated, only that if you do fail in some endeavor, you must try again to succeed. Otherwise you will have accepted that defeat and, thus, sinned.

The Path of the Scorched Heart

The Path of the Scorched Heart seeks to reject the Beast in all its forms and thus transcend the vampiric condition. Rumors indicate that this path was practiced in ancient times by Brujah, but in these nights, the path is followed only by an extremely small number. That said, it rejects the ideologies of the various sects and has found a few followers within the Independents and within the more independently-minded clans.

Emotions are the fuel that the Beast requires in order to survive. In order to transcend the Beast,

followers believe that they must transcend emotion and by doing so starve the Beast of what it requires to survive. Doing so requires that followers be willing to separate themselves from those around them in order to avoid irrational attachments which tempt the Beast. Hence the name of the path—to separate oneself from all others is to scorch one's own heart.

Without these attachments, however, there must be something else out there which anchors followers to this world, and that anchor is the search for the unvarnished and definable Truth. Ambiguity is, after all, the result of emotional constructs and wishful thinking. Thus, if these can be avoided, ambiguity can be resolved, and the Truth might become ultimately discoverable.

A criticism of the followers of this Path is that lacking an emotional, sympathetic attitude toward those around them indicates that they lack any social morality that could be of benefit to society. Followers argue this is not the case. Those of the Scorched Heart act when necessary based on their search for Truth, but otherwise understand that careful investigation and a clear assessment of the situation at hand will show them the appropriate action to take.

The Path of the Scorched Heart uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Self-Control**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Making assumptions of any kind; relying on others.
Four	Acting rashly; passing up an opportunity to learn a new skill or Discipline.
Three	Failure to kill a destructive mortal ¹ ; failure to end an overt supernatural threat (if possible without undue risk).
Two	Killing a non-destructive mortal ² ; falling to frenzy or Röttschreck.
One	Emotional outburst; feeling strong emotion.

¹It is perhaps clear why others might want to kill a destructive mortal, but for followers of this Path, such individuals are destroyed because they have succumbed to their basest of natures and act in extreme ways towards others. Their emotions may tempt others around them, including vampires, to act similarly. This tempts the Beast.

²Similarly, others might see non-destructive mortals (e.g. Gandhi) as truly good and worthy of praise. However, to be non-destructive means that one has given in to emotional attachments like love, empathy, and compassion to a degree that is equally dangerous to those around them when one considers the possibilities of the Beast being tempted to emulate the social success of these individuals.

The Path of Self-Focus

The Path of Self-Focus owes quite a bit of its development to Eastern thought and practice. The Taoist concepts described by the philosopher Laozi as “conscious inaction” or “non-doing” are the core of its teachings. To the Western mind, the phrase “you cannot change the world; you can only change yourself” is, perhaps, the closest equivalent.

To followers of this Path, the Universe is working toward a specific goal or purpose. Individuals must go with its flow or the flow is impeded in some way. To work in harmony with the Universe is to avoid conflict with it. Personal goals are illusory if they are not in congruence with the Universe, and the only way to find that congruence is to wander without purpose and see what one learns during the journey rather than focusing entirely on the end of it.

The Path also teaches that to interfere with others is to interrupt their wanderings. This too creates conflict. This does not mean that followers will never assist, only that they need to be asked first. Once asked, it is right to provide the assistance that one can because the wanderings of those two (or more) vampires have now merged, even if only temporarily.

Followers know that there is no future. What will be simply will be, and we have little control over that. Further, the past is dead and gone, never to be seen again. Events may be similar, but they are never the same. Thus, the only way to live is to focus on each moment and live for that moment in a way that is in harmony of the Universe.

To do this, followers seek all answers within. To know yourself, as the Greeks charged, is to understand everything about the world that you could possibly know, since we can only experience the Universe through the filter of our own senses. This requires a self-awareness that many other vampires would shun; in other words, followers frequently court the Beast as a friend and companion along their wanderings rather than an entity to be shunned and controlled.

The Path of Self-Focus uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Instinct**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits	Violations
Five	Overconfidence; laziness of mind or body.
Four	Failing to treat others as you would be treated; relying on others.
Three	Manipulating or controlling others (through Disciplines or the blood bond); struggling to overcome a weakness rather than turning it into a strength.
Two	Restraining the Beast unnecessarily; failing to spend some time each night in meditation.
One	Allowing outside forces to goad you into frenzy; being a willing slave.

The Path of Typhon

Note that this Path is almost a religion to the Followers of Set. Its mysteries are a closely guarded secret and thus, while we describe it here for your information, understand that it is extremely unlikely that your character has any information regarding this path if they are not among the Followers of Set. Even Setites, if they don't follow the Path, probably don't know specifics.

Followers of the Path of Typhon are mistrusted by almost all others, and with good reason. All Setites

keep their motives carefully hidden to use the resources of others toward their own goals. Followers of this Path are masters of subtle control and the corruption of others. To this end, they carefully learn the weaknesses of others and exploit them while holding themselves aloof from petty indulgence at the same time they promote the reckless actions of others.

Other Paths share with their followers methods to control the Beast. This Path holds that this control is a fool's errand. Considering the limitless lifespan of a vampire—barring forced destruction at the hands of the self or another—it is a guarantee that at some point the rational mind will slip up and allow the Beast its time in the spotlight either temporarily, or permanently in Wassail. Therefore, this Path teaches a twofold dogma: an understanding of the weaknesses of the self so that you can delay this inevitable fall, and an understanding of the weaknesses of those around you so that you can help them to fall first.

There are other paths which promote monstrous acts (Night), or the temptation of others (Cathari), but even those stop short of the willful manipulation of others to bring about their own eventual destruction at the hands of their colleagues. This Path holds no such limitations. To use a metaphor, the worldview of this Path indicates that all vampires are in a drinking contest, and the Beast is their alcohol. Abstaining from all alcohol means only that your tolerance for it is weak, and that your eventual drunken binge will be that much worse. Followers of this Path believe that it is better to drink a little here and there to build your tolerance while also getting others to drink with you, and then drink them under the table.

Setites hold that the Egyptian god Set tricked Caine into Embracing him. Set was an immortal being even before the Embrace, but afterwards became even more powerful. After the Embrace, he went about working with vampires to reshape all existence in his image and under his control. It is a tenet of his mysteries that when the Age of the Sun ends and the Sun-God Ra is overthrown that his eldest sibling, Set, should rule over the rest of eternity in the Endless Night to come. However, before this goal could be reached, other immortal beings of the time plotted to destroy Set to avoid his rule. This story was passed down in mythology not only by the Egyptians but also by the Greeks in the myth of how the Olympians banded together to destroy the thousand-headed serpent king, Typhon. It is from this tale that the Path draws its name.

The eventual resurrection of Set and the continuance of his plans for all creation is the primary goal of all followers of the Path of Typhon. It is their belief that when Set rises again, he will judge those who are worthy and use them to reshape the world into a dark paradise for those who are not culled. To return to the drinking metaphor, the more Kindred that a Setite can drink under the table, the better their odds are of being judged worthy by Set to live in this paradise.

The Path of Typhon uses the Virtues of **Conviction** and **Self-Control**.

Hierarchy of Sins

Morality Traits

Five

Violations

Pursuing your own values; failing to aid another on the path.

Four	Failing to destroy a vampire in Golconda; failure to observe a Setite ritual.
Three	Failing to undermine the social order in favor of the Setites; failing to do what is necessary to bring another to ruin.
Two	Failing to pursue occult knowledge; hindering another Setite.
One	Failing to take advantage of another; failing to aid in raising Set.

Paths of Enlightenment and Diablerie

Each Path of Enlightenment, including Humanity, has an interesting relationship with death, life, unlife, and through these, diablerie. Most treat it as a level 1 sin, rather than the automatic Morality loss faced by a diablerist on Humanity. Some consider it a sacrament under limited conditions (such as eating someone of lower generation), and a level 1 sin otherwise. The Paths of Blood, Caine, and Night do not see anything wrong at all with the forceful conception of another's soul for the betterment of your own corporeal existence.

Chapter IV

Additional Mechanics

Blood Bonds

Blood bonds are mystical connections between two vampires based on the drinking of blood. (Mortals who drink vampiric vitae are also subject to the bond, but become ghouls at the same time, as explained later in this chapter). The person who is bonded is referred to as the **thrall**, while the bonding party is the **regnant**. To create a bond, the prospective thrall must drink a Trait—roughly a pint—of the soon-to-be-regnant's blood. This drunk need not be voluntary. You can force someone to drink, or they could forcibly drink from you. Either way, a bond is formed. In most cases, there are three levels of the bond. You can only drink once per night to form a bond.

Level One You think favorably of your regnant. You might daydream about them or find ways to cross their path during a night. There's no mechanical limitation on your actions at this point, but you should roleplay your bond appropriately.

Level Two While you aren't quite your regnant's slave, they are definitely a person of supreme importance to you. You care about their opinion of you, and will try diligently to stay on their good side if they are right. If they are wrong, you would probably try to bring them over to your side. You can do what you like, but you must win or tie a Simple Test to take actions that would harm them. Further, you are down a Social Trait in any such challenges with them.

Level Three At this point, you are basically a slave to the will of your regnant. Your other friends and associates can burn in the sun for all the time you would spend to save them if your regnant was in danger. Your bond to your regnant crosses the line into unhealthy infatuation, and can have negative consequences on your relationships with those around you. This can also manifest as an intense jealousy if your status in your regnant's eyes is challenged by others. While you are not "instantly crazy" when level three bonded, your attempts to justify/rationalize/serve/preempt your regnant's wishes can lead to a slow degradation of your sanity. You can be *Dominated* by them without eye contact, and are down two Traits to resist their *Dominate*. To act against your bond, you can spend a Willpower Trait per scene that you wish to control your own destiny. If you wish to attack your regnant, a Willpower Trait must be spent each round.

Blood bonds are sometimes initiated without the knowledge or understanding of the thrall. The thrall might know they drank another's vitae but be ignorant of that aspect of vampirism, or the thrall's memory of drinking vitae might be removed, or the vitae might be presented in a container to an ignorant Kindred and described as mortal blood (vampiric vitae tastes distinctly better than mortal blood, so a clever lie would be required), or the vitae given to a mortal thrall might be mixed with a strong-tasting beverage. This leads to the question of when a character does or does not know they

are bound. (The *player* should always know, however.)

A Level One bond is not readily apparent. If you have an in-character reason to suspect you might be bound to someone specific, you may make an *Awareness* Check the next time you meet your suspected regnant. The same applies at Level Three, but you aren't likely to be bothered by it or rat them out.

It is not unheard of for two vampires to voluntarily enter a mutual blood bond, usually as an expression of deep love or profound alliance. It is perhaps slightly more common for a superficially similar arrangement to be made between one sincere party and one manipulative individual who secretly has the *Unbondable* Merit.

A blood bond can be broken in one of four ways:

- For every period of 12 months that a thrall spends separated from their regnant, the bond's strength is reduced by one level. Each dot of Willpower possessed by the thrall reduces this period by a month.
- A thrall is released from the bond immediately if their regnant dies, and they are aware of this breakage.
- A character can only be bound at Level Three to one regnant at a time. Being thusly bound breaks any former bonds to others. This means that you can only have one Level Three bond at a time; and while you are Level Three bound, you will have no other blood bonds of any level. If that bond is allowed to degrade to a Level Two, or the bond is removed by the regnant's death, that character can be subject to new bonds.
- A thrall is released from all prior blood bonds if they enter a *Vaulderie*.

A regnant cannot sense the breaking of a thrall's bond.

Vaulderie

In their effort to throw off the perceived shackles that the ancient creators of the individual clans have on their descendants, the Sabbat created a ritual called the *Vaulderie* designed to manipulate blood bonds. Little is known about the specifics of the *Vaulderie* outside of the Sabbat, and even within the sect itself, only the priests have all the details. The *Vaulderie* breaks all former bonds—even those created by former *Vaulderies*—and creates new ones within each pack that participates. And it is expected that all packs participate, or its very likely the others will hunt you down as infiltrators and spies.

The bonds created by the *Vaulderie* (called **Vinculi**, singular *Vinculum*) are exactly the same as the ones listed above except where noted. However, the *Vaulderie* has two additional levels:

Level Zero	Sometimes, the <i>Vaulderie</i> just doesn't seem to work on someone for a particular occasion. Their former <i>Vinculi</i> break, but new ones don't form. Priests are reluctant to admit this weakness within the cornerstone rite of the
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Sabbat; some will violently deny such a thing can even occur. Regardless, it has been rumored to happen.

Level Four

Meanwhile, sometimes the Vaulderie works too well. The Sabbat is not interested in slaves; or rather, it does not want everyone to be a slave. In the case that the Vaulderie works too well, you have all the weaknesses of a Level Three Vinculum to your regnant, but you cannot spend Willpower to resist your Vinculum in any way.

When the Vaulderie is performed for a Sabbat pack by its priest, the Vinculi within the pack are reshaped and somewhat random. In our game, a Vaulderie is performed prior to every night of a game, and those Vinculi last until the next game when it is performed once more. The ceremony performed by the priest requires all members included in the Vaulderie to put two to four Traits of their blood into a ritual chalice that has been blessed by the priest. This blessing removes impurities, including cleansing the blood of diseases and drugs. At the conclusion of the ritual, each member takes back the same number of Traits to cement the pack bonds.

The level of your Vinculum can be different from member to member of your pack. For example, if you're in a pack with Alice, May, and Steve, you could have a Level Three Vinculum with Alice, a Level Two with May, and a Level Zero with Steve. Further, the Vinculi need not be equivalent. Your Level Three Vinculum with Alice might be returned as a Level Four bond from her to you. While this is fairly confusing, the generator does calculate this out and the results will be on your character sheet when they are printed for the game.

The effects of the Vaulderie protects participants from the formation of new blood bonds outside it as well, which means an outsider cannot force you to betray your packmates because of a new artificial loyalty to them. It might seem there is little to hold one pack to another, since one cannot be bound to multiple packs. However, there is an additional form of Vaulderie that binds all Sabbat priests to each other without interfering with the Vinculi each one has to their packmates. The details of this are not well known; indeed, non-priests may not even be aware of it at all.

Because packs spend so much time together and participate in the Vaulderie so frequently, it's very unlikely that members will be separated long enough for the Vinculi to fade. However, packs have fallen apart when the Vaulderie fails for one or more of their members. Not all packmates are your friends and some might simply piss you off. Sometimes, when a pack members finds out they feel no real attachment to a different member after a Vaulderie, they take that opportunity to do away with that packmate. It has also been rumored that destroying the chalice used by the priest to perform your Vaulderie will break all the Vinculi that were cemented using it, but to do so is considered a heinous crime.

The death of one member of a Vaulderie will not be felt by their packmates through the Vinculi.

Blood Bonds and the Tremere

For reasons that are likely lost to time (or known only to the eldest of the clan), the Tremere suffer a vulnerability to blood bonds that others do not. For Tremere, there is no Level One bond. The first drink moves a Tremere directly to a Level Two bond, and the second results in a Level Three. For Tremere *antitribu* in the Sabbat, Vinculi only stretch from Level Two to Level Four.

Ghouls

As it says in *LARP 101*, ghouls are mortals (human or animal) who are empowered by the consumption of vampiric vitae. The effect begins with the first drink; thereafter they must be fed more vitae once per month. This ingestion also creates a blood bond. (Note that becoming a ghoul is an automatic effect of ingesting vitae; a mortal cannot be blood bound without also becoming a ghoul.) A domitor (one who has a ghoul) who wishes to have their new ghoul fully bonded as quickly as possible need not wait two more months to give the second and third drink.

Once fully bonded, ghouls are deeply devoted. In fact, the blood bond can take the form of passionate obsession. In addition, they are addicted to the rush and power they gain from vitae, whether or not they understand where it is coming from. It can be dangerous to come between a ghoul and their fix. A ghoul deprived of their regular vitae may search out a new source, whether that means offering their services to a known associate of their former domitor, or hunting vampires to drain them by force.

The Camarilla often considers ghouls “within the Masquerade” and thus permitted to know of vampires and of their own nature. Not all domitors choose to tell their ghouls the truth; many feel that lies or half-truths are safer. On the whole, the Sabbat scorns the use of ghouls as they do other mortal tools, though the Tzimisce are an exception. They have access to revenants, mortals who come from bloodlines that have been ghouled for so many generations that the condition is now hereditary. It is impossible to generalize about the Independent clans’ attitudes towards ghouls.

Each separate instance of the Background *Ghouls* (whether it represents one ghoul or a group of them) costs you one Blood Trait per month. (Tzimisce characters do not have to pay this cost). These Traits are automatically removed from your starting blood when your character is printed by the Storytellers. If you have too many ghouls, you may begin the game with a negative pool and, if so, you will be forced to feed prior to attending the opening Gathering. You can feed from your ghouls, but doing so frequently or egregiously may permanently injure your ghoul, represented as a reduction of the Dots that ghoul possesses.

Mechanically, a ghoul provides you with all the benefits of a Retainer. Beyond that, their capabilities are somewhat augmented by their supernatural status. As long as they receive their regular vitae, they do not age. (If a ghoul is not fed they lose their supernatural qualities, which may be fatal if they have exceeded a normal mortal lifespan). They heal more readily than normal mortals, and may spontaneously develop the ability to use a Basic Discipline or two at the discretion of the Storytellers. These Disciplines are limited to common Disciplines that their domitor has in clan. In addition, any ghoul can develop *Potence* regardless of their domitor’s clan. They cannot be taught Disciplines.

Rather than having sheets with fixed states, ghouls are handed in a nebulous manner. A ghoul has a number of Traits equal to twice the number of Dots in the corresponding *Ghouls* Background their domitor possesses. Each Conflict they attempt requires them to bid a Trait. When they have no more Traits, they are exhausted and cannot attempt any more Conflicts for the rest of the night. (Note that this nebulousness extends to their Disciplines. A given ghoul will not reliably have access to any particular power.)

Because ghouls do not get full sheets, they are not meant as combat troops. If they are involved in combat, they will be more effective than mortal humans, but not nearly as effective as vampires. The Dots of the Background possessed by the domitor serve as a ghoul's health levels. If a five-dot Ghoul suffers one health level of damage, they now function as a four-dot ghoul and can bid a maximum of eight Traits. If the ghoul is injured but not killed, they will heal back to full capacity during the downtime following that session.

Animal Ghouls

Any vertebrate that is capable of ingesting vitae may be transformed into a ghoul, although the process is generally more effective with birds or mammals above a certain body mass. The process for an animal to become a ghoul is the same as that of a human; the animal must ingest the vampires' blood at least once a month, and gains a small degree of vampiric abilities and an addiction to vitae. It will not age and will heal more readily than a normal animal. It may become more intelligent, though not greatly beyond the normal limits of its species. It may, at the Storytellers' discretion, gain limited access to one or more Basic Physical Discipline powers and/or *Heightened Senses* (*Auspex* 1.) As with human ghouls, this capability is spontaneously developed rather than learned from their domitor's teaching. These Discipline powers are not mechanically identical to those used by vampires, but are thematically related (being unusually strong, fast, etc.) Also like human ghouls, they are mechanically nebulous enough that a given individual will not reliably have or use a given power.

Rarely (about a 5% chance), an animal ghoul not created from a spawning pool may grow to gigantic size; it is more common among those fed *Nosferatu* or *Tzimisce vitae*. (Spawning pools are sites where *Nosferatu* use vitae to partially ghoul large numbers of animals. The resulting creatures are warped as well as powerful. The secret of creating such pools is jealously guarded and not available to player characters.)

A single instance of the *Ghouls* Background can represent a single animal or a limited swarm or flock of very small ones (say, rats or sparrows). When you increase the number of Dots, you are making a single animal more powerful or increasing the number of individuals in the swarm, depending on how the instance was originally defined. (In other words, if you add dots to a swarm ghoul, you must increase the number rather than making the ones you have tougher.) Like human ghouls, animal ghouls have a number of Traits equal to twice the number of Dots in the corresponding Background possessed by their domitor. Each Conflict they attempt requires them to bid a Trait. Not all animals can attempt all Conflicts; some may be prevented at Storyteller discretion. When they have no more

Traits, they are exhausted and can attempt no more Conflicts for the rest of the night.

A vampire that does not possess the Merit *Inoffensive to Animals* will find the process of creating an animal ghoul difficult until enough vitae is ingested to form a blood bond (that is, three drinks on three separate nights). Even so, if the domitor does not possess at least Intermediate level *Animalism*, the ghoul's feral nature will assert itself and it will eventually turn on its master or flee.

Concentration

Certain Discipline powers require the user to focus their attention for a time. The Storytellers may also rule that some other actions (like trying to memorize information under distracting conditions) also require this focus, called concentration. While you are concentrating, if circumstances make you chop for frenzy or Röttschreck (difficulty same as trigger, chop made after you've succeeded in not going off), and you succeed in not succumbing to the Beast, you must then make a Concentration Check. That is a Self-Control or Courage Challenge of the same difficulty as the trigger. If you lose, you are distracted. The power fails or you are unable to complete your task, as appropriate.

Feeding Scenes

There exists a standardized system for handling feeding scenes quickly that can be used if the Storytellers are pressed for time or the player does not wish to commit to an extended scene. These abridged scenes are often referred to as “the three chops”, and work in the following manner:

- The player of the feeding character selects a Trait to bid representing their method¹ of separating a victim from their associates. This Trait can be from any Attribute, and this Test can be retested if desired. The difficulty of this Test is eight minus the number of Dots of Humanity the character possesses. (A character on another Path of Enlightenment has no Dots of Humanity to reduce this difficulty.)
- If the Test is successful, the character begins to feed. A character can take an amount of blood from a victim equal to eight minus the number of Dots of Humanity they possess. Drinking more than that may require a *Conscience/Conviction* Test depending on the Hierarchy of Sins for the character's Path.
- A hungry character (Blood at four or fewer) must succeed in a *Self-Control/Instinct* Test to cease feeding. Failure to cease feeding forces the character to drink two more blood and chop again. The difficulty of this Test is equal to five minus the amount of blood in the vampire's system prior to the most recent drink.
- Finally, the player makes a Test with a difficulty of five (seven if the victim was killed) to determine the outcome of the feeding scene. This Test, sometimes called a “consequence chop,” can be of any Attribute, but does not require the player to bid a Trait. This challenge represents how the character covers up their actions, and this explanation must be appropriate to the Attribute selected². Succeeding on this Test indicates that the feeding went largely unnoticed, while failure indicates there may have been witnesses to the scene. The specific outcome is up to the discretion of the Storytellers, and the Attribute selected will be

considered when determining the outcome.

¹ The “method of separating a victim” is dependent on the Attribute used. Bidding a Physical Trait may mean you pop out of an alley and grab a passerby, while a Social Trait may mean you approach someone and ask for their help changing a flat tire just around the corner.

² This might mean you drag a woozy victim behind a bar if attempting a Physical Test, or that you more cleverly hide the victim by pour vodka over them if attempting a Mental Test. This test is designed to mediate between ties; you likely want to bid in your strong category.

Please note that the individual scenes and the actions within them will be different, but the initial and final chops will always take place. The *Self-Control* Test only matters if a character is hungry; to be safe, feed when you're low, but not *too* low.

Status

Status defines a character's standing in the city. Those with more Status have greater standing and are, thus, worthy of respect, while those with little to no Status are frequently looked down upon by the more powerful elites. Status is granted by higher level members of the city, usually as a means of recognizing a job well done.

The exact means of handling Status varies between sects. For simplicity, rather than have set rules for each sect, we provide one set of rules that applies to all sects. The exact culture of each sect may differ slightly from this generalized system. The exception is the Giovanni, who tie their Status directly to a boon system. (See [Boons](#), below.)

Status is automatically granted to holders of sect titles. The exact amount will be covered under the specific sect and position below. This Status cannot be permanently removed as long as the individual holds that position.

An individual can grant Status to others, up to the amount they have available. If this comes from someone in a leadership position, this is considered a permanent gain and does not reduce the leader's available Status. A general member of the sect can temporarily loan another a Status as a vote of confidence, lowering the giver's available Status. No one can gain more than one Status from a single source on one night.

Anyone with higher Status can strip a Status from another. If this is from a leader acting within their sphere (such as a Camarilla officer acting in their sphere of authority), this is rarely questioned. Other attempts to strip Status will be closely scrutinized.

Status may be added to your Social Traits in non-Discipline challenges at a rate of 2:1, rounded up. Opponents may elect to ignore your status, but doing so is almost always considered a *faux pas*. The Camarilla consider ignoring Status to be a tremendous breach of etiquette and possible grounds for the stripping of Status, while the Sabbat consider it a challenge to authority and may consider it

grounds for a duel. Anarchs also see it as a challenge to authority, but less a cause for violence than a parting of ways. Independent clans have their own individual ways of handling challenges. These reactions are only expected within the same sect. (See [Cross-sect Status](#), below.)

Status rules are not concretely defined, as they represent a social contract that requires its participants to acknowledge it to work. If an individual gives twice as much Status as they possess to one individual and can convince everyone in their sect to accept the gift, then it is considered to stand. There will be traditionalists in every sect who follow the rules as written, however, and they are unlikely to accept Status granted through questionable means.

Status Terms

Rather than be presented as a single value, Status is given as named Traits. These provide flavor as well as a guide to the individual's nature, as an individual with *Feared* x5 is clearly quite different than one with *Just* x2 and *Wise* x3. These Trait names differ by sect.

Each sect has a basic level of Status that is granted when a member joins them. The Camarilla grant *Acknowledged* when a Kindred is accepted as independent from their sire and presented to the Prince. The Sabbat grant *Initiated* when a Cainite passes their Creation Rites and becomes a full member of the sect. These Status Traits can only be taken away by a high-ranking member of the sect; stripping them means the subject is no longer considered a member of their sect.

The Camarilla use the Status terms of *Admired*, *Adored*, *Capable*, *Cherished*, *Esteemed*, *Exalted*, *Famous*, *Faultless*, *Feared*, and *Honorable*.

The Sabbat use the Status terms of *Battle-Scarred*, *Blessed*, *Blooded*, *Confirmed*, *Devoted*, *Enlightened*, *Enriched*, *Feared*, *Hunted*, *Infamous*, *Loyal*, *Ominous*, *Proven*, *Respected*, and *Undefeated*.

These lists represent standard terminology, but are not the limits of what is available. Other sects' terms may be used if appropriate, and other terms may be invented if appropriate, although traditionalists may not accept non-traditional terms.

Camarilla Status and Positions

The Camarilla are the most concerned with formal status out of all the sects, treating it as a key element of their hierarchy. The Status system among the Camarilla is considered an important means of holding together the social order, although those who fall outside it may see it as a way for the "haves" to keep the "have-nots" in their place.

Positions in the Camarilla often have assistants, whose traditional titles are given in the entries below. These individuals do not gain any Status with the position, but are generally empowered to act in the stead of their superior. A given officer may have one assistant, several, or none, depending on the needs of the city and the availability of suitable candidates.

A smaller Camarilla city may not have the complete power structure represented in its ranks. Almost all cities will have a prince. The prince will assign position as needed (seneschal, sheriff, and keeper being the most important, in roughly that order). If the city is large enough, a Primogen Council will form to advise (and keep an eye on) the prince. Smaller cities are more likely to have a Council consisting of prominent individuals, rather than leaders of the clans.

Justicars are representatives of a clan on the Inner Circle (a.k.a. the Justicar Council), the ruling body of the Camarilla. Justicars are considered to have as much Status as they might need.

Archons are traveling agents of the Justicars. Archons are considered to have status on loan from their justicar as needed.

The **prince** (the term is considered gender-neutral) is the ruling Kindred in a Camarilla city. They are the ultimate arbiter of Camarilla law, as the Traditions put them in charge of all territory, feeding, and Embraces in the city. The prince gains the Status of **Exalted**, **Well-Known**, and **Famous**. The assistant of the prince is the seneschal.

The **seneschal** is the prince's assistant, although the position is important enough to carry Status in its own right. The seneschal acts as the prince's proxy while they are away from the city or unable to attend to a situation. The seneschal gains the Status of **Cherished** and **Esteemed**.

The **primogen** represent the Kindred of the city. Primogen are in theory selected from the most powerful or outstanding individuals in the city. While larger cities may have a primogen representing each clan, this is not required, and smaller populations may not have enough individuals to make this practical. The Primogen Council varies widely in power between cities, from the true power ruling through a puppet prince to a rubber stamp for the prince's decisions. They also select the harpy. Each primogen gains the Status of **Revered**. The assistants to a primogen are the **whips**.

The **harpy** is the arbiter of social status within a city, as selected by the Primogen Council. In addition to the positional Status, they are given one temporary Status by each primogen. They are responsible for recording Status in the city, and can remove permanent Status from an individual by declaring they have been the focus of a scandal or broken a boon. Harpies are very powerful, and often act as mediators between princes and Primogen Councils. The harpy gains the Status of **Influential**. The assistants of the harpy are the **investigators**.

The **sheriff** represents the prince on matters of law and order. They may demand that an individual accompany them for questioning, and can strip a permanent Status from those who fail to comply. They are immune to the powers of the keeper (but must still follow the Traditions). The sheriff gains the Status of **Feared**. The assistants to the sheriff are the **deputies**.

The **keeper** of Elysium (often simply called the keeper) controls the rules of Elysium, and may declare the conditions under which it is held. In some cities, they are responsible for finding a place to hold Elysium as well. They may outlaw carrying weapons, using Disciplines, and so forth. They may strip a

permanent Status from any individual they catch breaking the Masquerade. The keeper gains the Status of *Honorable*. The assistants to the keeper are the **guards**.

The **scourge** guards the city against intrusions from unapproved Kindred, and thus upholds the Traditions of Hospitality, Domain, and Progeny. They may destroy any unauthorized individual they find within the domain, whether they were Embraced without permission or entered without presenting themselves to the prince. They may strip a permanent Status from anyone abetting these individuals. In medieval times, most cities had a scourge, but the office fell out of use in most places for centuries. Feeling the need of a scourge was considered the sign of a weak prince or a city actively at war. In the mid-20th century, scourges again became more common in North America as the Sabbat pushed into Camarilla territory. With the weakening of the Sabbat in the last few decades, the office arguably became a relic once again. However, many princes have chosen to leave their scourges in place. The sort of Kindred chosen for the role are not people to be lightly stripped of status and positions. The scourge gains the Status of *Feared*. The assistants to the scourge are the **rangers**.

Sabbat Status and Positions

The Sabbat treat Status less as a means of social control and more a matter of determining their pecking order. Their approach to Status is thus less determined by seniority and position and more by deeds and actions.

Sabbat positions do not have assistants, as Camarilla positions do. Status Traits for positions above the city level are not listed.

The organization of the Sabbat is more bottom-up than that of the Camarilla, and does not have the variety of enforcement positions the Camarilla does. A Sabbat city consists of several packs, each led by a ductus and pack priest, and is overseen by a bishop or small group of bishops (for smaller cities), or an archbishop (for larger cities).

A **ductus** (plural *ducti*) is the leader of an individual pack. They are usually the most powerful, experienced, or skilled individual in the pack. They are considered a member of the pack, not above it, as they still take part in Vaulderie with the rest of the pack. They may appoint the pack priest, and remove Status from members of the pack. Ducti gain the Status of *Feared*.

A **pack priest** is responsible for conducting *ritae* (the rites and ceremonies of the sect, singular *ritus*) including the Vaulderie, and oversee the spiritual development of their pack members. They may grant the Status of *Blessed*, *Devoted*, or *Enlightened* to pack members to represent their spiritual growth. Pack priests gain the Status of *Enlightened*.

An **abbot** is responsible for maintaining a pack's haven and food supply. Not every pack has an abbot. They may ignore one Status held by a pack member whose actions directly threaten the pack haven. Abbots gain the Status of *Loyal*.

A **bishop** oversees packs in smaller cities or regions that do not have an archbishop. A region may be

overseen by a council of bishops answering directly to a cardinal. Bishops may appoint pack priests, ducti, and templars. They may conduct certain *ritae* and lead packs in their area into combat. They may remove *Initiated* status from an individual, and set the terms by which nomad packs enter the region. Bishops gain the Status of **Feared** and **Proven**.

An **archbishop** is the overseer and spiritual authority of a larger city (roughly equivalent to the prince of a Camarilla city). They have several powers in addition to those of a bishop. They are responsible for creating bishops and lower-level positions in their city, as well as templars. They may declare Cainites in their territory *Hunted*, and strip pack priests of Status for improperly performing their *ritae*. Archbishops gain the Status of **Feared**, **Proven**, and **Relentless**.

A **priscus** (plural *prisci*) is an advisor to sect leaders at the archbishop level or higher. They are often responsible for coordinating military crusades.

A **templar** is a bodyguard and traveling enforcer for higher level Sabbat officials (roughly equivalent to Camarilla archons). In the line of duty, they are allowed to ignore orders from those ranked lower than the official who appointed them to their position. Templars gain the Status of **Respected** and **Ominous**.

A **cardinal** is the overseer of a region, such as a state or small country. They are responsible for appointing archbishops. They have as much Status as they need.

The **regent** is the head of the Sabbat, although they are dependent on their subordinates for carrying out their orders. They are responsible for appointing cardinals. They have as much Status as they need.

Independent Positions and Status

Independent clans arrange their affairs in their own way, as befits their clan organization. The Giovanni and Assamites, for example, are much more organized than the Ravnos. Details are listed in each clan's writeup. Status may be assigned within the clan, with accordance to its practices.

Giovanni Positions and Status

Giovanni governance is based around an oligarchy rather than an autocracy: the officers of the city run things, and the capo provides oversight, direction, and arbitration. Unlike a Camarilla city, the officers don't have descriptive status telling others how to treat them: No one is required to lick boots and consider the officer "Wise" and "Feared." Most Giovanni political events are "just business," so there is an expectation of politeness and respect. Citizens aren't required to think an officer is "right" when they make a final decision; the other vampires just have to accept "they're an officer, so that's what we're going to do now."

There is also a deliberate vagueness in the Giovanni rules about when they apply to mortals and not just (as the Camarilla Traditions) vampires. The clan is an extended family (or more precisely, set of

families) of mortals, vampires, ghouls, and contacts, and each can have value to each other. Rules like *Secreto* give mortal agents a reason to tell a nosy vampire "I shouldn't tell you that; I should go," and *Impero* means that their life isn't forfeit for such insolence. That doesn't mean the refusal won't cause a grudge, but the mortal isn't completely without legal defense. And there are several instances where a mortal can come forward and bring charges *against* a vampire who has wronged them.

Another major difference between the Giovanni and the Camarilla is that, apart from official positions, an individual's standing in the city is intimately tied to the boon system. (See [Boons](#), below.)

The officers in a Giovanni city vary, but there are some common positions. While the head of the city still uses the Mafioso-inspired title of **capo**, the officer titles reflect the clan's evolution toward a modern business model. *Direttore* is a traditional title, and is often translated to "Director" or "Vice President" in English. The Giovanni are a network of mortals and vampires, and not all Giovanni are intimately aware about just how "senior" some of the senior family members are. All of the titles could be used in the presence of mortals without raising huge red flags. The English titles below are the common use/translations of the traditional Italian titles in parentheses. The people they appoint to help them are simply called *assistenti* (singular, *assistente*) in Italian; the usual English titles are provided.

The **Director of Internal Affairs (*Direttore d'Affari*)** is like a sheriff, but more concerned with tracking down loose secrets and protecting the Masquerade. They appoint **special investigators** to do the dirty work. This can sometimes get secret-police like, but is mostly open.

The **Director of Accounting (*Direttore della Tesoreria*)** is mostly responsible for regulating trade in a good or service protected by the capo through the Right of First Taste. In modern nights, this officer is the central distributor of Luna (see [Luna](#), below) and also buys it back from people who would rather have a boon from the Accounting Department. The Director of Accounting doesn't handle all the boons themselves (that would be way too many Silver boons floating around). They instead appoint a **chief teller** who handles all the day-to-day transactions.

The **Director of Safety (*Direttore di Sicurezza*)** is a leg breaker, plain and simple: part scourge, part sheriff. They handle problems that can't be solved diplomatically, and the people who solve things diplomatically keep the Director of Safety's number on speed dial. Was formerly called the Director of Security, but as modern corporate lingo has advanced, so has the name of this office. The title of the people appointed to assist them also changes. Right now, **safety officer** is a popular one but it elicits more than a few eye rolls.

The **Director of Marketing (*Direttore della Diplomazia*)** coordinates interactions with outside entities and organizations. Some will try to handle everything themselves, but most will appoint **project leads** to handle specific issues. For example, the project lead for "Project Wolf" is in charge of figuring out why werewolves are poking around town, and the project lead for "Project Springfield" is meeting with a delegate from that city. A project lead is smart to have at least someone who works for the Director

of Safety around as a backup, but project leads aren't expected to bust heads.

The **Director of Records** (*Direttore di Archivio*) organizes investigations into the strange and unknown problems that could be or are occult or necromantic in nature. They appoint **archivists** to look into strange happening, and advise on the next course of action. If it turns out to be a dangerous monster, the matter is often handed over to the Director of Safety. If it's a vampire causing problems, it goes to Internal Affairs. If it's a faction that can be negotiated with, it goes to Marketing. But if it's spooky, Records and the archivists take care of it. The Director of Records also "officially" manages any and all anchors of *spiriti* (ghosts) that belong to the city.

A number of Camarilla offices lack direct parallels in the Giovanni system. The duties of a harpy are mostly handled by the capo. There aren't any primogen, but the above officers have a lot of leeway to "run the city," so they fill a similar role. There's no keeper of Elysium, either. Internal Affairs investigates rule-breaking as a keeper would, and gatherings are usually hosted by one of the officers to show off their power and their "service to the capo." There's also no seneschal: the capo doesn't have so many active responsibilities that they need an authorized agent.

Cross-Sect Status

Sects are under no obligation to recognize another sects' Status, and generally do not. There are no official penalties for ignoring the Status of a member of another sect, although if the individual is personally powerful enough it may be unwise to offend them in any event.

Officially, Status cannot be granted between sects. However, as with all matters of Status, this depends on what individuals can be convinced to accept. The very act of attempting to give Status to or accept Status from a member of another Sect may be considered offensive to traditionalists. Regardless, characters will only have one Status pool, even if they somehow obtain Status from another sect.

Someone who switches sects will lose all their existing Status, and start fresh as a new member of their new sect.

Boons

Much of vampire society runs on the trading of favors. These favors, called **boons**, cover virtually everything one vampire might do for another, from the smallest loan to aid at the risk of one's own unlife. Different groups of vampires approach these obligations with varying degrees of formality. The two most codified ways of handling boons are **Prestation** (the Camarilla system) and **Vantaggi** (the Giovanni system).

Prestation

Prestation is the system of boons that ties Camarilla society together.. While it is not inconceivable that a Camarilla Kindred might speak of having a "boon" to someone outside the sect, it would not

truly be a part of the system of prestation because it is a social construct within the sect.

There exist two circumstances in which a boon may be incurred. First, two parties may agree that one will do a specific thing for the other, and the benefiting party will owe the providing party a boon of a pre-specified level. This is a straightforward trade of a favor for a favor-to-be-named-later (or even a future-favor-named-now). Second, one party may provide a service for another without a prior agreement, either because of time limitations or guile, and then attempt to force the benefiting party to agree that they owe a boon for the action that has already occurred. This can get tricky, and may require the adjudication of the harpy. Either party can wind up looking bad as a result, either for demanding too much or for being too reluctant to make fair repayment.

There are five levels of boons: trivial, minor, major, blood, and life.

Trivial boons are one-time favors, such as protecting someone for the evening, using a Discipline to aid someone, or supporting another's political move.

Minor boons can last more than one evening, and they usually entail some sort of inconvenience, such as allowing safe passage through a hostile city, revealing crucial information, or disposing of a threat.

Major boons usually entail a great expenditure of time or resources on the bestower's part. The effects of the favor usually lasts for many game sessions, such as teaching the receiver a new Discipline, or purchasing a nightclub to serve as the receiver's haven.

Blood boons occur when the bestower places themselves in a potentially dangerous situation in order to help the receiver. Thus the name "blood boon": the bestower is willing to shed their blood for the receiver.

Life boons involve the bestower actively risking their immortal life for the receiver so that the receiver may live.

It is the job of the harpy to keep track of boons. Obviously, this requires those involved to bring the debt to the harpy's attention. Depending on the harpy, they may simply take note that one party owes the other a specific boon, or they may demand to know the circumstances; in the latter case, if the other two want to keep secrets, they will have to decide whether they have enough Status to risk the harpy's displeasure. Some Camarilla Kindred do make informal deals without involving the harpy, but this is not "prestation" and does involve a couple of risks. First, without an official record one cannot use the power of Status and the threat of the harpy calling a scandal to force a reluctant debtor to pay up. Second, if the matter comes to light, the harpy may take it as a personal insult that they were excluded from the very thing with which they are intended to be most heavily involved.

Vantaggi

The Giovanni clan ties status and boons together into a single currency called *vantaggi* (singular *vantaggio*). The more you are owed, the higher your standing in Giovanni Society (with special exceptions made when someone important owes you a boon). The people whom the capo owes are at the top of the heap (Gold). The people whom the capo's officers owe are in a level just below that (Silver), and everyone else is in a tier together at the bottom (Copper).

The most important boon you can be owed is one from the capo (a Gold boon). Having one is the primary method of determining who is an officer. If you have a Gold boon, you have higher standing than anyone who does not. Any other boons owed to you are just "tie breakers." Boons owed to you by officers (or anyone with a Gold boon) are the second most valuable (Silver boons). If you are owed one, you have higher standing than people who don't (except for people who have more Gold boons than you, they're still cooler). Any other boons are just Copper.

Just as Gold officers *became* that way by helping the capo, Gold officers will often appoint sub-officers (*assistenti*) to aid them in their duties, usually giving them a Silver boon for the long-term help. If an underling is forced to call in this boon that granted them a title, they may find that they no longer have that title, either. And if a Gold officer is forced to call in that Gold Boon from the Capo, it's usually because they've messed up very badly and are "turning in their badge" to avoid a more fatal punishment.

Yes, this status system can be represented by a pile of coins or other tokens in your hand, or *thunked* down on a table during a negotiation.

As in the Camarilla system of prestation, Copper boons are ranked as minor, major, etc. to represent how much someone owes them. However, Status is based on how *many* people owe you. At the higher end, Gold and Silver boons, people often don't specify what level of boon is owed. Just owing a Gold or Silver is enough. It is assumed that when you call in a Gold or Silver boon, you aren't going to do it for something trivial. Copper boons will also "condense" so as not to become too numerous (rather than owing you a second trivial Copper boon, the ower will upgrade that trivial to a minor). Silver and Gold boons don't condense in that way. It is possible to end up with several Silver boons from one person.

While there might be a public list of who is owed a Gold boon by the capo, and whom the officers have given a Silver boon to as a second-in-command, other boons aren't as publicly tracked. If people want to throw around Status, they will make sure people know how much they are owed, and if people want to be quiet about it, they don't. And since these are still boons, they will be spent to make things happen. A Kindred's Status will fluctuate over a night, although as long as they don't spend and Silver or Gold boons, it won't fluctuate too much.

If someone gets upgraded from common Kindred to officer (by picking up a Gold boon), then any trivial Copper boons they owe people are discarded. Any *other* Copper boons they owe suddenly become Silver boons. "Betting on the right horse" can be very profitable.

The capo acts as dispute negotiator and has the power to redistribute boons when a situation calls for it. He is also able to redistribute boons in the event of a death or disappearance. Vampires can petition to have boons be reassigned to be paid by someone who isn't ash, and the capo will weigh how much the petitioner has been an asset to the vampires around them (i.e., how much people *should* owe the petitioner) and will redistribute some or all of the boons proportionally. Yes, this process benefits people the capo likes much more than people the capo doesn't like.

In any Social Challenge (even Disciplines), either party may "show" their Status. (The exception is that Status does not aid in pacifying the Beast. It can, however, be used in challenges to bring out another's Beast.) The other party may then choose to reveal their current Status. The person who revealed the lower standing gets -1 on ties for that challenge. There's no ability to "reject" their standing to negate the penalty. The capo is immune to this Status penalty, and it does not work on people who do not know anything about the *vantaggi* system.

Example

Marco is owed a boons by two different Gold officers, and 3 minor boons from other people in the city (one of these other people is Jenny). This means he has 0 Gold boons, 2 Silver boons, and 3 Copper. You can think of his status as "0.2.3"

Jenny is owed boons by two different Gold officers, and 3 minor boons from other people in the city (one of these other people is Marco). You can think of her status also as "0.2.3"

Sam is owed two boons from Gold officers, 2 minor boons from other people in the city, and 1 trivial boon from Jenny. His status is also "0.2.3"

Jenny has impressed the capo. The capo asks her to help manage security and safety in the city for him, and owes her a Gold boon for taking care of this for him. This makes her an officer in charge of safety (called the Director of Safety, most likely). The trivial boon she owes Sam will be discarded, and the minor she owes Marco will upgrade to become a Silver.

So what started as three vampires with equal standing has now become this: Jenny is well above the others with "1.2.3", Marco in second with "0.3.2" and Sam trailing behind with "0.2.2"

If Sam had earned a few extra trivials from Jenny before she was promoted, his trivial boons might have been counted as a minor, and that minor would have upgraded to Silver, and then he would still be tied with Marco. But Marco had been staying handy to Jenny, making sure that she didn't have any reason to ask Sam for assistance.

Captive Player Characters

In our game, it is not uncommon for a player character to be taken prisoner by one or more other player characters. To avoid forcing the player of a captured character to sit around bored (not to mention averting potentially unpleasant scenes of graphic torture), there exist limits on the duration

of captivity and the way such scenes are handled.

When a character is captured, the captive's fate *must* be resolved in some manner during the downtime immediately following that game. This might involve killing the captive, releasing them during the downtime or at the start of next session, or publicly bringing them to Gathering. Alternatively, it might involve the captive's allies arranging a start-of-next-game rescue mission. No player should ever have to wonder about whether they can play their character at the next game session the night before game. If no one is planning or capable of a start-of-game rescue mission, the captor must decide to either kill the captive, release them, or publicly bring them to Gathering. There are no long-term player character captives.

If a player character is taken captive early during a night of game, they have the option of demanding resolution by end of game. If resolution is demanded:

- The captors must make time to run any interrogatory scenes that night. Any interrogation scenes that have not been run do not get to happen.
- By the end of the night, the captors must choose to either kill the captive or release them.
- Rescue attempts must happen by the time the captor makes the decision to kill or release the captive.

If a player character was captured during the previous game and brought to Gathering as a public prisoner, they have the option of demanding resolution that game at any time.

Disciplines can be used to pry information from a captive. Other methods of interrogation only work if the captive character's player wishes them to. Player characters are as immune to non-Discipline interrogation as their players wish them to be. If a player does allow their player character to "crack", it is an out-of-character decision, not an in-character one, and may play as though they were not cooperating with their captors.

Downtime interrogation scenes will be run narratively, rather than chop-by-chop. The Disciplines and Traits used by the captor will be compared to the captive, and a decision will be made as to how much information is pulled forth. This makes the interrogation scenes run faster at the sacrifice of technical accuracy. A captive may spend Willpower to increase their defensive ability in a relative manner.

Detailed descriptions of interrogation scenes, whether in downtime or at game, are unnecessary and rude to both players and Storytellers. Avoid going into the excessive details about torture techniques, equipment, rooms, and so forth; a brief description works fine.

Diablerie

Diablerie is the drinking of the soul of another vampire. The Camarilla considers it one of the most heinous crimes a vampire can commit, and it is taboo in many other parts of vampiric society as well. It is the only way a vampire can permanently lower their generation, so the temptation is quite clear. It is a major sin on Humanity and most Paths of Enlightenment.

Diablerie can only be performed on a vampire that has been drained of all their blood. The perpetrator continues drinking to metaphorically “consume the heart’s blood”, which initiates a struggle over the victim’s soul. This is resolved with a series of three Checks, with the attacker winning on ties.

If the attacker wins three chops, the diablerie is successful with no side effects. If the attacker wins two chops, the diablerie is successful with minor side effects. If the attacker wins one chop, the diablerie is successful but with major side effects as determined by the Storytellers. If the attacker wins no chops, the diablerie is unsuccessful; the victim dies, but their soul escapes.

When diablerie takes place between games, it is an Intermediate Downtime Action.

Results of Diablerie

Drinking a soul is quite a rush. As soon as the act is complete, the diablerist must make an immediate Frenzy check. Even if this check is successful, the diablerist finds herself in a euphoric state. If this takes place during game, this state should be roleplayed. The diablerist also has the sensation of experiencing the victim’s entire existence—thoughts, memories, and knowledge—an instant. It is up to the Storyteller whether any coherent information or images are recalled afterwards. Diablerists who follow some Paths of Enlightenment (notably the Path of Caine) consider any such fragmentary memories highly significant.

Successful diablerie leaves no body or ashes behind. The victim vanishes, leaving only their clothing. An unsuccessful attempt at diablerie leaves a corpse which will crumble to ash just as if the victim had been brought to Final Death any other way.

If the diablerist is of higher generation than their victim, the diablerist’s generation is lowered by one. If the difference in generations is five or greater, the diablerist’s generation may be lowered by two instead, at the Storytellers’ discretion. Exceptionally powerful souls may leave behind fragments of personality, again at the Storytellers’ discretion. If a character’s generation becomes seventh or lower, that character is no longer playable. They immediately become an NPC, and the player must make a new character in order to continue playing.

Regardless of relative generation, the diablerist gains two Experience. This benefit can only be gained once per calendar month, no matter how many times the act is committed in that time.

There is no benefit to diablerizing vampires that were Embraced less than a year ago. Similarly, infernalists cannot be diablerized, as their souls are already in the keeping of another.

A diablerist on Humanity automatically loses one level of Morality for committing an act so horrible. A diablerist on a path must chop for a Level 1 Sin (*Conscience/Conviction*) unless their level and path dictate that *not* committing that particular diablerie would be a sin. Diablerie is always a conscious and

deliberate act; a frenzied vampire may drain another's blood, but will not continue on to take their soul.

Diablerie leaves black veins in the perpetrator's aura that can be detected through *Aura Perception* (*Auspex* 2) for a period of three months. The *Auspex* user can choose to look for veins, or may accidentally see them while looking for something else. If they win their test on symbols the first time (not with a retest or winning on Traits), they will see the black veins (if present) in addition to whatever else they were looking for. The Thaumaturgy power *A Taste for Blood* (*Sanguine Mastery* 1) can detect diablerie without a time limit, though it cannot tell when the act was committed. Neither power reveals whose soul was eaten, nor how many times the perpetrator has committed the act.

Luna

In the modern world, vampires have finally found a drug that works on them. It's called Luna, and it has grown in popularity since it was discovered in the early 1970's. It has a pearly opalescent color and comes in a small vial that doubles as a syringe. Given to a mortal it acts like a mild opiate, dulling the senses and instilling a quiet calm. But when taken by a vampire, it sharpens and focuses the Kindred, like a stimulant. People who are using the drug have a slight magical tinge on their aura, as though they were under the effect of a small spell.

While the details are guarded, enough people are involved in the production of Luna that its source isn't a perfect secret. Luna is distilled from certain oases deep in the heart of the Sahara. It is slightly magical, and reads as such to people using *Auspex* and other powers. The main exporting clans are those based around the southern Mediterranean (the Giovanni and the Setites) though the Tremere also have a well-hidden source. The Assamites seem to have access to the drug, but aren't in the exporting business.

Luna has mechanical effects on vampires who use it, depending on the "grade" of the dose and the method of ingestion. There are only three mass distributed grades (Grade 1, 2, and 3), but other grades and variants are rumored. The typical method of getting high is to feed the drug to a mortal, and then feed upon the mortal. Luna dissolves into most drinks to be almost tasteless and invisible (water doesn't have a strong enough taste, nor weak tea, but most other drinks are fair game). It can also be injected into the mortal (mid-feeding, if desired). When done in this manner, Grade 1 gives +1 on ties for a chosen Attribute Trait category (Physical, Mental, or Social) for one scene. (If the drug is ingested during a short feeding scene, the bonus can apply to the NEXT scene rather than the feeding scene.) Grade 2 gives +2 on ties for a chosen Attribute Trait category, and the user marks off one Attribute Trait from a different category of their choice. Grade 3 gives +3 on ties for a chosen Attribute Trait category, and the user marks off 2 Attribute Traits of their choice (not from the category in which they get the bonus). Luna does not affect blood buffing, so these lost Traits may be buffed back normally.

A vampire can also "mainline" Luna in the middle of a scene for an immediate effect, not requiring an mortal intermediary. (Luna is the only known drug that can be taken directly by a vampire for any effect.) If mainlined, Luna gives the bonus-on-ties appropriate to its grade, but you lose 1 extra

Attribute Trait (Grade 1 loses 1 Attribute Trait, Grade 2 loses 2 Attribute Traits, and Grade 3 loses 3 Attribute Traits). The two methods of "mainlining" are either direct injection or biting the vial and drinking the drug. Mainlining takes an action, and either requires a free hand or the ability to grab a handy vial with your mouth. The latter also gives you a mouthful of glass you'll need to get rid of.

Some rules minutia: A character can't have a bonus on ties for multiple doses going at once, and they don't stack. The highest grade dose takes precedent for the scene. Taking more doses DOES mark off more Attribute Traits, so the only reason to "take another hit" mid-scene is to increase your bonus from +1 to +2 or +3 with a higher grade of drug.

Dosing a mortal will give the drug to the next Kindred who drinks at least one Trait of blood from that mortal that scene. The blood tastes a little strange to a vampire, but not so strange that a vampire would notice the difference BEFORE drinking a full trait. Unless Auspex 1 or some other appropriate sensing power is activated, it is possible to "spike" someone's mortal and trick them into ingesting a dose of Luna. The magical effects of the drug will wear off at the end of a scene, so a mortal cannot be prepped in a previous scene and brought to an unsuspecting victim.

The three main grades of Luna being distributed by the Giovanni have no known long-term addictive properties.

Since Luna doesn't do a whole lot for mortals, it's not very popular outside of Kindred circles, but some mortals might have heard of it.

Income and the Treasury

The Giovanni's trading of Luna has integrated itself into the economy of the whole Giovanni clan. The Capo is the officially recognized owner of all Luna imported into a city (a tactic mirrored by many Princes when feasible), and it has sufficient value to become a method of rewarding officers. Most officers in a Giovanni city will be given an "income" of Luna every few weeks, and those officers will sometimes "pay out" to their most loyal underlings. A specially appointed officer of the Capo sets a standard price in boons for each grade of Luna. For example, the starting prices (which may change over the course of the game) may be a Copper boon for Grade 1, a Silver boon for Grade 2, and two Silver boons for Grade 3. This officer then acts as a Treasury for Luna in the city. People can come to the Treasury (a Kindred, not usually an actual building) and can pay the Treasury boons for additional doses of Luna OR turn in doses of Luna for boons. Some habitual users keep themselves useful to the city to fuel their fix, and others use Luna as a way to convert boons they consider undesirable into a more useful form of currency (with the permission of both parties, of course... or at least the permission of the Capo). Doses of Luna may be traded between members of the city for any agreed upon price, and can work as a method of payment when one party does not trust the other's boons.

Chapter V

Downtime Actions and Influence

Downtime Actions

These rules represent the non-Influence actions that can be taken by your character between sessions, with or without assistance from their retainers and ghouls. Influence Actions, as explained later in this chapter, are completely separate from this mechanic.

During each downtime, every character receives a total of five Downtime Action points. If your character has the Backgrounds *Ghouls* and/or *Retainers*, you receive an additional point for every two Dots in those Backgrounds, up to a maximum total of ten Downtime Action points.

The actions you can take are separated into three categories: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. Basic actions cost a single point, Intermediate actions cost two points, and Advanced actions cost three points. Any number of actions can be performed during a downtime provided that the sum of your points spent does not exceed the points available to your character.

The level of an action is based in part on the amount of work required for the Storytellers, not solely the difficulty or amount of time it takes your character. Saying “I spend every night of the downtime reading an encyclopedia” is a Basic action because it doesn’t require adjudication, even though it takes up a good deal of the character’s time. Conversely, “I phone the Seneschal of Vancouver and get a list of all the Brujah in Canada” might take your character no more than five minutes, but could require a great deal of work on the Storytellers’ part.

Most of the time, actions requiring the use of your character’s Abilities will succeed automatically because you are assumed to have enough time to make multiple attempts if necessary. However, if the action is one where a failure could make further attempts impossible (such as repairing a particularly delicate item), we may require a chop.

Sometimes a complex Downtime Action will require playing out an actual scene with a Storyteller. Given the complexity of scheduling such scenes, we don’t allow them often. We especially try to avoid running scenes before the start of game on a Friday, as they can interfere with the rest of the game. Downtime Scenes run on the board or over instant messenger are a standard alternative to face-to-face.

You cannot initiate new Downtime Actions after 6 PM on the Wednesday before game. If you are doing a combined action with other people, it is okay to submit your portion of the task before theirs with a contingency (“If she does X, I’ll do Y”). If they don’t submit the action before the deadline, it won’t happen, but it won’t be your fault. If something that is our responsibility, such as a forum outage, makes it impossible for you to complete your task before the deadline, we will not enforce

the deadline.

It is not our intention to be jerks about this. If you've had a true emergency keeping you from the boards, we'll likely be flexible. However, "I had a busy week" and "I've had computer trouble" are not considered emergencies. You can either find time or borrow a computer, or just not complete all the tasks you had planned for a given downtime.

The following list provides examples of Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Downtime Actions. More complex and specific actions than those listed here may be attempted, but if an action is on the list, it is always assumed to be that type of action.

Basic Downtime Actions

- Purchasing goods or services within the means of the character (as based on expenditure of the cash provided by the *Resources* Background).
- Visiting with or sending a message to an NPC not requiring a scene with Storyteller support.
- Any use of a character's capabilities requiring neither a scene with a Storyteller support nor Storyteller approval, though the staff must still be notified of an action. This includes crafting items you already know how to make (that is, those that don't require consultation with the Storytellers).
- Mundane research.

Intermediate Downtime Actions

- Traveling outside the city to a destination less than 200 miles away.
- Any use of a character's capabilities requiring Storyteller approval, though not requiring a full scene.
- Building a new ritual with the Storytellers, or planning for a "complex" use of a character's capabilities, such as designing a complex weapon or authoring a paper.
- Purchasing goods or services outside the means of the character (as based on permanent expenditure of Dots of the *Resources* Background).
- Acquiring Lores (1-3 Dots).
- Committing diablerie on a captive taken during game or a previous downtime scene.
- Creating a ghoul.
- Gaining access to a new Influence field.
- Learning an out-of-clan Discipline power.
- Teaching a Discipline power.
- Changing to a new Path of Enlightenment.
- Guiding another onto a new Path of Enlightenment.
- Making a copy of a mortal magic spell in your possession.
- Sending a message to an NPC to which you request a response.

Advanced Downtime Actions

- Traveling to and from a destination more than 200 miles away. (Some distant travel actions may be vetoed as outside the scope of the game.)
- Any action requiring a scene with Storyteller support (subject to Storyteller availability). This includes lengthy back-and-forth exchanges of messages with an NPC.
- Use of a character’s capabilities representing a long-term investment of time, such as designing an Elder or combo Discipline
- Perfecting a new ritual, after working with the Storytellers for one or more Intermediate Downtime Actions to create it.
- Purchasing goods or services for which a loan must be secured (that is, exceeding all *Resources* capability of the character).
- Acquiring Lores (4-5 Dots).

Item Crafting

Making weapons or other items with an appropriate *Craft* Ability is a common type of Downtime Action. There are many things you could possibly craft; however the rules are primarily concerned with combat-related *Craft* Abilities. Each item is a separate Basic Action. (Stacks of small items with the *Handful* Merit can be made in a single action; see below.) The total Craft level may not be higher than your level in that Ability. For example, if you have *Craft Sword 4* you can make four Craft 1 swords, two Craft 2 swords, a Craft 3 and a Craft 1 sword, or one Craft 4 sword. Each separate item you make costs a Basic Downtime Action (1 point). If you make items during a downtime, remind an ST at the start of the next game and we will give you item cards for them. Without the signed item cards, they don’t exist in game.

The Craft Abilities used to make weapons and protection in our game are as follows:

- *Craft Sword* covers swords, knives, and similar non-hafted cutting weapons.
- *Craft Axe/Mace* covers axes, maces, warhammers, and similar hafted melee weapons, as well as blunt weapons like knuckledusters.
- *Craft Spear* covers spears, javelins, and stakes. (Basic stakes may be made without this Ability; it is only required if you wish to make stakes of higher than default Durability/Appearance or with Gimmicks.)
- The *Craft* Ability for firearms is broken into two categories: *Pistol/Rifle* and *Shotgun*. The latter includes beanbag guns and flare guns. Each includes the ability to make the relevant type of ammunition. Making other types of firearms (SMGs and other military hardware) is outside the scope allowed in this game.
- *Craft Bow* covers bows, crossbows, and the relevant ammunition.
- *Craft Armor* is for making protective armor that can take attacks for you
- *Craft Shield* is used to make protective devices so that you may defend yourself better. There are four types of shields you can make, discussed below.

Items have two attributes that must be assigned when they are created: Appearance and Durability. These may be assigned in any combination totaling the Craft used to create them. Appearance determines how attractive the item is (for purposes such as the Toreador clan disadvantage), while

Durability determines how many health levels it has. If you use *Craft Sword 4* to create a cutlass, it may be a Durability 4, Appearance 0 item, which means it is highly functional but ugly, or Durability 0, Appearance 4, which would be pretty but nearly useless as a weapon, or any combination in between. You may spend a second Downtime Action (in a later cycle) further increasing these attributes, up to the limits of your *Craft Ability* (in the example above, up to a Durability 4, Appearance 4 sword). Note that any crafted item with Durability 0 functions as a 1 bashing weapon that gives no bonus traits or Gimmicks.

Crafting Requirements

Characters who wish to use the crafting mechanics will need access to a suitably equipped workshop. Building one requires a one-time payment of \$3000 or an *Industry Influence 2* action. Maintaining one requires *Resources 2*. Alternatively, an *Industry 2* or *University 3* action can get temporary access to a workshop for a downtime.

In addition, crafting requires supplies for the base materials. This costs \$1000 for basic parts or \$3000 for more expensive parts. Exotic materials cost extra.

Weapon Durability

Weapon Durability determines how many health levels an item has (which becomes relevant if the weapon is attacked directly or used with *Puissance (Potence 5)*, for example). The Storyteller will write the health boxes on the item when creating the card. Bashing or lethal damage does one box of damage to items. Aggravated damage does two boxes, though common sense does apply; while the bite of a vampire can do aggravated damage to other fleshy beings, biting most items doesn't do much to them at all. The default Durability of an item that is purchased or found (as opposed to crafted by a PC) can be found on the common weapons chart.

Weapons have three states as their Durability is reduced:

- Above 0: Weapon works as intended; user gains full Trait benefits and all Gimmicks.
- At 0: Weapon is badly damaged but fixable; acts as a 1 bashing weapon that gives no bonus Traits or Gimmicks. Weapon can be repaired as normal to full Durability.
- Below 0: "Broken" item has been smashed beyond repair, and is in pieces too small to be usable or repairable.

Damaged items may be restored with the appropriate *Craft Ability*. It is a Basic Downtime Action and you may use your *Craft Ability* to regain any attribute loss. Repairing items costs the difference between the item's final Durability and its current Durability, but you must have enough dots of *Craft* to be able to craft the item in the first place. For example, someone with *Craft Sword 3* cannot repair a sword created by *Craft Sword 4* or 5.

Crafting Gimmicks/Adding Merits

Sometimes you want your item to do something special. Maybe you've crafted an extremely durable container but you also want to make sure that it has an obscure or difficult to manipulate locking

mechanism. Or, you've recently been reminded of Blade's katana which was beautiful to behold, nigh unbreakable in combat, and had a trap that would damage your hand if you didn't know how to disable it. Get creative and surprise your foes!

These sorts of additional bonuses that you may wish to add to your item are collectively referred to as Gimmicks. In addition to creative ideas like the examples above, you can also use Gimmicks to add Weapon Merits from the standard list in the Combat section. Weapon Flaws cannot be removed.

When adding a Gimmick to an item, it reduces the maximum Durability of that item by one for each Gimmick you wish to create. (Some Gimmicks reduce Durability by more than 1.) For example, Blade's katana as described above would have a maximum Durability of 4, assuming it was crafted by someone with 5 traits of the appropriate Craft Ability. If you are so inclined, you may add Weapon Flaws to crafted items for zero Durability cost. If you wish to hide the Flaw from others, ask an ST.

Remember when creating items, they already gain the standard Weapon Merits of their type, as given in the chart of common weapons. For example if you have a Craft 5 Sword, it already has the Merit of *Quick* along with the Flaw of *Unconcealable*. You do not need to spend Durability to add those Gimmicks.

Chapter III: Weapons contains a list of common Weapon Merits and their Durability costs. If you wish to know what Gimmicks or Weapon Merits can be applied to certain weapons, ask.

For balance's sake, a single weapon cannot have *Mass Trauma + High Caliber + Staking*.

And in all cases, the following is a GUIDE to creating a weapon, but not a guarantee that the STs will allow a given design. There are likely other combinations of Gimmicks in addition to the one listed above that would not be acceptable for game-balance reasons.

Crafting Ammo

Specialized ammunition takes the form of 1-scene-use Ammo cards that temporarily add a Merit (or Merits) to a gun or bow. It takes 2 points of the appropriate *Craft Ability* to make ammo for that type of gun or bow. For example, you can use *Craft Bow 2* to create special arrows ammo. An Ammo card may have several Merits on it, but it may not break the damage cap for ranged weapons. To represent use of special ammunition, give the Ammo card to the Storyteller at the start of a scene (to represent loading your firearm). If you do not fire the weapon, the Storyteller will return the card to you at the end of the scene. If you do fire it even once, you have used up the Ammo and the card will not be returned. Changing the type of ammunition you have in a given firearm during a combat scene requires an action. When Ammo is used, it deals that amount of Durability damage to the weapon IMMEDIATELY. If that would break said weapon, it is broken and the effect is wasted. If you have ideas for Ammo types, speak with an ST.

Example: Silver bullets would have the *Special Material* Merit, and would do 1 Durability damage to the gun when used (and reduce the damage done by the gun by .5).

Example: High caliber silver bullets would be *Special Material* and *High Caliber*. They would do 2 Durability damage to the gun when used (and the +.5 and -.5 would cancel out, so the gun would do normal damage).

Crafting Armor and Shields

Crafting armor and shields uses the same rules as crafting anything else. The armor's Durability or Appearance is limited by the amount of *Craft Armor* points you have. Armor gains the Flaw *Unconcealable* if it has at least 2 Durability. There are four basic types of shields, described in [Active Defense: Dodge and Block](#). When crafting a shield, you can spend Craft points to make better versions with higher Durability.

Adding Merits/Gimmicks to armor and shields can be tricky so let us know if you have any ideas you want to throw around. An example could be that aggravated damage only does 1 box of damage to your armor/shield, which would cost 1 Durability.

Damage Caps

These are the damage caps of any created weapon. These caps do not include damage added by *Potence*. The damage amount of ".5" is shorthand for "make a Simple Test; if you win you deal 1 additional damage" (i.e., the *High Caliber Merit*.)

- One-handed melee: 2 boxes base
- Two-handed melee: 2.5 boxes base
- One-handed ranged: 3
- Two-handed ranged: 3.5
- Ranged lethal: 2
- Ranged aggravated: 1

Influence

Influence can be thought as an abstract measure of the strings that a character can pull to make changes in the mortal world. If you have enough *Politics* Influence, you can probably change the outcome of a small election, or ensure that legislation that favors your interests is passed by City Council. The so-called "Influence Game" is mostly (though not entirely) played out during the downtime between sessions. Please be aware that Influence Actions are independent of other types of Downtime Actions.

Each Influence field within the city has a certain "health" that determines exactly how much power the field currently has. This limit affects what can be done at a given point in time within that field. It can be affected by player characters through both Influence Actions and other activities.

As with other Backgrounds, Influence Dots range from zero to five. Each Dot within a field represents two Influence Points that you can spend on your actions. Influence Actions are divided into two types:

Points spent on **actions** are in use and cannot be reused until the beginning of the next section unless the action is cancelled, as explained later in this chapter. Influence actions are any expenditure of points within a field intended to carry out a specified task.

Points spent on **Watches** allow you to learn what actions were taken by other characters in the given Influence field.

You can never have more Influence Dots than the sum of your Attributes. The Backgrounds *Retainers* and *Ghouls* each raise this limit by one for each Dot.

Acquiring Influence

Player characters can enter the game with Influences other than those granted automatically as a clan advantage. After character creation, buying the first dot in any Influence field requires an Intermediate Downtime Action or an appropriate Influence Action. The action should explain how you are finding, getting to know, and otherwise gaining access to the “pullable strings” in the field. If the Storytellers feel that the action would not work or is too dangerous, they will let you know.

Taking Influence Actions

Every action that you take must be backed by a number of Influence points in the respective field to represent that a sufficient amount of your power and control is being exercised to carry out the action. Some common actions, as described at the end of this chapter, have predetermined point values. If a player wishes to carry out actions beyond those described in this chapter, they may describe the intended action and assign it a number of points that they expect the action to require. If the Storytellers feel that the number you chose is too high or too low, they will tell you to adjust it. For example, if May wishes to borrow a book from a professor’s private collection, she might submit an Influence action called “(2 points) Borrow the Necronomicon from Professor Stephenson.” If the Storytellers decide that Professor Stephenson is sufficiently hard to reach, they might request May increase the number of points she is spending on this action.

You cannot submit more points worth of action than you have total Influence points in a single downtime. Additionally, you cannot perform an action with a point value higher than the number of Influence Dots your character has in that field. You must have at least one Influence Point in a given field in order to take an action within that field. That is, you cannot spend Influence of one field to take an action in a different field, no matter how connected the two fields might be.

Two or more characters may work together on an action or Watch larger than either could make alone. Contributing players, whether putting points into the base action/Watch, the Conceal (see below), or both, all receive the results of the action. If there are material rewards from an action, all players *know* about the rewards, but the exact distribution is up to the players.

Watches are placed upon the entire field. Whenever you submit a Watch, you gain information on the other Influence Actions taking place in that field, limited by the number of points you spend on the

Watch. You can enhance a Watch action, as described later in this chapter. Simply by having points in an Influence field, you receive a “passive Watch” that sometimes makes you aware of noteworthy events and trends within the field. This information can be found in the relevant Influence forum on the boards.

Points refresh at the start of each session. Points spent during a session are not available during the following downtime. Influence Actions do not carry over between sessions. If you want to have a regular allocation, please resubmit your actions every downtime.

Any money gained by Influence Actions cannot be saved for a following downtime.

Influence Actions and Time

Influence Actions take a nebulous amount of time as determined by the Storytellers. Calling around to get some information might be fairly quick, but getting obscure ritual materials from across the globe isn't going to happen any faster than shipping will allow for.

You cannot initiate new Influence Actions after 6 PM on the Wednesday before game. If you are doing a combined action with other players, you may submit your portion before theirs with a contingency (“If she does X, I'll do Y”). If they don't submit the action before the deadline, it won't happen, but it won't be your fault. If something that is our responsibility, such as a forum outage, makes it impossible for you to complete your task before the deadline, we will not enforce the deadline.

It is not our intention to be jerks about this. If you've had a true emergency keeping you from the boards, we'll likely be flexible. However, “I had a busy week” and “I've had computer trouble” are not considered emergencies. You can either find time or borrow a computer, or just not get complete all the tasks you had planned for a given downtime.

The only Influence Actions handled at game are those with immediate effects. We cannot reliably handle general Watches at game. While we understand that people may want to be immediately aware of other people's actions during the session, we don't have the time and attention to ensure that information is distributed promptly and uniformly. Watches input during the downtime will catch items that happened at game. Actions to look for specific actions or events are still alright. (For example, you cannot initiate an overall *Transportation* Watch during game. However, you could enter an action to “watch” for a specific thing you expect to happen that night, like the hijacking of a city bus. If a bus is hijacked during game and you input a *Transportation* Watch during the following downtime, that Watch will also turn it up.)

Concealing Influence Actions

You can add **Conceal** to any action, allowing you to hide it from others. If you do not conceal your actions, they will be known to all characters who possess any Dots in that field.

Unconcealed actions will be posted to the appropriate Influence boards, and any character with that Influence will see those actions for free. It is important to note that the mortal populace of *Metropolis*

doesn't get to see these unconcealed actions. Some wily NPCs might, and a few more NPCs might know that "someone is putting pressure on the City Council to approve the measure," but your character's name won't be ascribed to it unless it is appropriate for the action, or the NPC does some serious digging.

Unlike taking actions, you can hide an action with out-of-field points. All out-of-field points spent to conceal an action suffer a 50% penalty; that is, every two out-of-field points spent is worth one point of Conceal. If you use points from more than one field, the total points are added together to determine the total value of the enhancement.

You may also Conceal other people's actions. If a member of the city needs your help with Influence, you can spend your points to enhance their action just as you would for your own.

The total Conceal on an action cannot be higher than twice the cap for that action's field. This applies both to one-person actions and multi-person actions.

When one person has a Watch action in a field where another person has an action enhanced with Conceal, the Watch points are compared with the Conceal. If the Conceal is stronger than the Watch, the watcher does not see the action. If the Watch is stronger, the watcher sees the action and knows the identity of the individual who performed it. If the Watch is equal to the Conceal, the watcher learns what is happening but does not know who is responsible. If they want more information, they must spend more points.

Investigations into past Influence Actions are actions in their own right; that is, you must spend Influence Points to perform an investigation. If you spend more points than the Conceal of the original action, you succeed on your search.

Reallocating Influence Actions

If you find yourself short on points, you may reallocate them. All points reallocated suffer a 50% penalty; this penalty stacks with the penalty for out-of-field-points, so reallocated out-of-field points are worth 1/4 of a point. You cannot reallocate points more than once each downtime. If you reallocate points away from an action, that action ceases. If you reallocate points spent to enhance other actions, those enhancements are removed.

Blocking Influence Actions

A special type of Influence Action allows you to inhibit the actions of others. When you attempt a block, you select a type of Influence Action at least two levels lower in the same field. For that downtime, neither player characters nor NPCs may make actions with that effect. This action may be concealed like any other. A block will not inhibit normal functions of the field, but only people working through back channels (that is, using Influence). For example, if you use a four point Bureaucracy action to prevent anyone from disconnecting a resident's utilities, you won't stop the power company from cutting off somebody who genuinely hasn't paid their bills. You will, however, stop anyone from using threats or favors to achieve the same effect.

Characters may voluntarily add extra points to an Influence Action to circumvent a block, whether or not they know about the block beforehand. This does not increase the effect of the action; it only makes the action better at circumventing blocks. Likewise, the blocking action can be increased to also block actions inflated to overcome a small block.

Watches may be blocked. The Nosferatu clan advantage does not help them overcome such blocks, as the action size is defined by the number of points spent rather than the final total adjusted for the clan bonus..

Blocks may be made for actions not included in the examples given at the end of this chapter, but they must be described fairly specifically.

Block actions may be made at game, and the Storytellers will prevent characters from making actions of the blocked type both at game and during the following downtime. Blocks made during downtime are not retroactively applied to the previous game.

Blocks themselves can be blocked by sufficiently high (five or more point) action. A six point block would prevent anyone from making a block in that field with four points or less.

Example: Blocking Actions

As a one point Industry Action, a character may gain access to small tools and supplies. Steve wishes to place a block on “gaining small tools and supplies”. The minimum number of points he must spend on the block is three points; the base value of the action plus two. In this case, he decides to place a three point block.

A player character making a one point *Industry* Action to gain a sledgehammer will spend their points to do so, but will be informed that their action has failed once the actions for that downtime have been processed. To circumvent the block, the hammer-seeking player character would have had to make a two point action. Alternatively, Steve could place a four point block on “gaining small tools and supplies.” This action would block both the one point and the two point hammer-gaining attempts. If a player wished to circumvent this block, the hammer-seeking character would have to make a minimum three point action.

This example block would not affect any other type of one point actions.

Identities and Influence

Logically speaking, it would make sense to attach one’s Influences to specific identities. However, it would create excessive complications and game balance problems if we had to track cases like “My police contacts know me as John Doe, but to the gangsters I’m Richard Roe.”

As a result, your Influences are your Influences, full stop. Using a given identity (or a mortal patsy) has no more effect on Influence Actions than simply calling yourself “Mr. X”—which is to say, no effect at

all. Anyone able to break the Conceal on an action will correctly identify who is behind it, regardless of what name you use.

Contacts and Influence

The *Contacts* Background represents nebulous informants and confidants that you can lean on to get things accomplished. It works in one of two ways: during game and during downtimes. During downtimes, you may spend a dot of *Contacts* as part of an Influence Action to add one Conceal to that action. This does not allow the Conceal to exceed twice the Cap for that Influence field. *Contacts* is not affected by out-of-field penalties.

During game, *Contacts can* still be used to increase the Conceal on actions as per the "during downtimes" rules. Additionally, during game, when making a one point, zero Conceal Influence Action, you may *instead* of spending one Influence point spend one dot of *Contacts*. The action in all ways functions as a one point action with zero Conceal, except that you paid for the action using *Contacts* instead of your regular pool of Influence points. The action cannot be a Watch or any action that directly provides money to your character. You cannot use additional points of Influence or *Contacts* to increase the action size or the Conceal. You cannot make actions in fields that are not listed on your character sheet, but you *can* make actions in fields on your character sheet where you have already spent all your Influence points.

Note that whether used as Conceal or used to make an action, each dot of *Contacts* is worth one point, not two as with *Influences*.

Resources and Influence

Greasing palms never hurts. You may spend a Trait of *Resources* to gain an additional Influence point to use for any enhancement.

Reach of Influences

In most cases, Influence is considered to be limited to local use. Unless the specific level of the Influence states otherwise, they refer to use only in the character's local area; player characters are not considered able to maintain the level of involvement necessary to, say, fire a police officer in another city. The principal exception is the *Transportation* Influence, which by its nature governs interactions between different locations. It may be possible to carry out long-distance actions with the aid of an NPC.

Influence Field Caps

Each Influence field has a numerical measure of its "health" called the Cap. This number represents the strength and capabilities of a field (now well it is funded, how many people it can help, how rapidly it responds, etc.) as well as how willing the people in that field are to bend to the will of the player characters. As a matter of in-game flavor, the reason a field is capped at a particular number may be described in various ways. The flavor determines what sort of actions will be most effective at changing the cap, but for all other purposes only the number is mechanically significant.

Caps can be manipulated through actions taken at game, Hub powers, player Downtime Actions, and player Influence Actions. NPCs, other events, and consequences in game may also have some effect on the Caps of various Influence fields. It usually takes several actions to increase or decrease the Cap of a field.

You cannot purchase Dots of Influence higher than the Cap for that field. The Cap does not limit the number of players who have Influence, just the maximum Influence any single player can have. If the Cap is lowered for any reason, players will not lose their Dots in that field, but Dots in excess of the Cap cannot be used until it has been raised again. The maximum size of Influence Action any single player may make in a field is equal to its Cap. The maximum Conceal on a single action is limited to twice the Cap. When multiple people work together to make a combined Influence Action, the maximum level of that action is equal to twice the Cap.

At the beginning of each game, the Caps for all fields will be publicly posted. All changes to Caps will occur at this time and will be immediately effective. A plus or minus next to a field indicates that the Cap is increasing or decreasing. The current Caps can also be viewed on the boards during downtime, displayed next to the relevant Influence forums. However, you can only see the fields your character currently has access to.

Each downtime, we will post a brief description of the current status of each field to its respective Influence forum to indicate what factors you would need to work on in order to change that field's Cap. For example, if we say that the *Police* are on the take, but are underfunded and ineffectual, you would need to take steps to find them more money and power. If we say that *Bureaucracy* is very efficient, but there have been major crackdowns on cronyism and favoritism, you would instead need to erode those ethics somehow, whether by bribery or extortion.

Example: Changing a Cap

The *Bureaucracy* Field has a Cap of 2. In this case, it represents a large governmental structure with strict regulations, miles of paper and documentation, and the power to change lives. However, it also had a decent checks and balances system and a vigorous internal affairs department. Steve purchased 2 *Bureaucracy* Influence a while ago, working hard to find those few people in the various departments who had gambling debts, drug addictions, etc., and getting them under his control.

He wants to buy more of that Influence, so he arranges an in-game action. He and several allies break into the Department of Motor Vehicles' Internal Affairs office and dilute all the ground coffee with decaf grounds. At the following game, he and his allies break in again, lace all the coffee grounds with depressants, and increase the ratio of grounds in favor of decaf again. After two games of devoted actions to create depression and lethargy at the Internal Affairs department, there has been noticeable decrease in their efficacy. They no longer respond to all the complaints, people take more sick days, and so forth. At the start of the next game, the Storytellers announces that the *Bureaucracy* Cap is now at 3, and Steve knows he can purchase a third dot of *Bureaucracy* Influence after game.

Meanwhile, May, a vampire with considerable *Politics* Influence, doesn't like that Steve has 3 Dots of *Bureaucracy* Influence. May arranges a *Politics* Influence action to push a "government austerity" measure through City Council. It takes a few weeks to get all the council members on board (that is, several Influence actions over several weeks), but the measure is approved, and major budget cuts roll through the departments. This reduces the size and efficacy of the departments, so at the start of the following game, the Storytellers announce that the *Bureaucracy* Cap has been reduced to 2.

This was a sneaky maneuver since the departments weren't affected at all before the bill passed, and thus there was no minus next to the Cap at the previous game (though there was an article in the paper about it). Steve notices this, and crosses off his third dot of *Bureaucracy* Influence. It's not removed from his sheet, but until that Cap increases again, he effectively only has 2 Dots. He read about the austerity measures in the newspaper last week, but didn't realize what effect it would have. He does realise, however, that he has a bone to pick with someone.

Manipulating Caps

The least direct (and usually negative) way to manipulate a Cap is to take actions in-game that change people's perceptions in the city. The field descriptions will give you an idea of the current strengths and weaknesses of that field so that you can choose the most appropriate course of action. It is far more effective to take an action that will shore up a weakness or tear down a strength than to further enhance a strength or pick away at shortcoming.

Example: Manipulating a Cap

It is difficult to work with law enforcement because they are sticking too close to the law. (In other words, the *Police* Cap is low.) By finding the best cops on the force and framing them for minor abuses of power (taking some small drugs, getting rough with a perp in the field, etc.), a PC can force those officers' superiors to cover for them as "good cops doing a tough job." This creates an atmosphere where cops can get away with breaking the law while their bosses look the other way, thus making them more manipulatable and raising the Cap of *Police*.

These sort of in-game actions can also be done as Downtime Actions, as long as the action isn't too dangerous. Since Downtime Actions represent your character personally handling problems, some actions would have repercussions that require significant roleplaying. In those cases, we will require the scene to occur at the next game instead of during the downtime.

The most direct approach is to make Influence Actions. Unlike an in-game action (which are small in number and can likely change little more than opinions), an Influence Action actually changes the fabric of the city and how it operates. If the new method of operation is more powerful or corrupt than the old method, the Cap will change to reflect that.

When making an Influence or Downtime Action to affect a field's Cap, mention your goal in your description of the action. Sometimes, Storytellers will read the action and interpret a different outcome than you expected. If you state your goal, it gives the Storytellers the opportunity to open a dialog with you regarding how we interpret your action and how the action might be tweaked to

better reflect your goal.

Influence Hubs

Influence Hubs are a select number of secret locations around the city that represent a locus of influential people for a small subset of fields. Each one can be claimed by one player character, or two player characters in cooperation, at a time, and grants them the following two abilities:

- The Owner(s) can add a static +1/-1 to the Cap of one of the fields associated with the Hub. If the Hub is jointly owned, both players must be in consensus to activate this ability. Either player may deactivate it at any time without the consent of the other. This power can be used during downtime, taking effect at the start of the next cycle (the next game). Doing so does not require spending Downtime Action Points. Alternatively, the Owner can make the change at game.
- An Owner can use the special powers of the Hub. Each Hub has two or more unique powers. Upon successfully gaining control of a Hub, the new Owner(s) will receive a printed sheet detailing its powers. There will be at least one power associated with each of the Influence Fields related to the Hub. Two of a Hub's powers may be used each cycle. A specific power cannot be used twice in the same cycle, however. Powers are available on a first-come, first-served basis. You do not need permission from your Hub partner to use a power. Once a power has been used by either Owner in a given cycle, it cannot be used again until the next cycle.

Taking Over a Hub

Every Hub has an NPC who is your ticket to running the place from behind the scenes. This person is called a "Lock". The Lock is well respected in the Hub (though they may not hold a formal position or even be an obvious leader) and knows how to talk to in order to make things happen. If you've solved the Lock's problems, you run the Hub.

The Key is a problem that the Lock has which they need solved or a task they need performed in order to get back to the business of being influential in the Hub. Simply ghouling the Lock will most likely not give you the Hub. A ghouled Lock will end up begging you to solve the Key problem so that they can run the Hub for you. Until the Key problem is solved, the Lock is too preoccupied to be useful. Solutions can be completed through in-game actions, Influence Actions, or even Downtime Actions. You do not need to buy Influence to become the Owner of a Hub, but it may help. Solving the Key only gets you the Hub if the Lock knows you did it.

The Owner(s) of a Hub may give it to someone else by sending a request to do so to the Storytellers. This is not a casual trade; all requests to transfer Hub ownerships are permanent. It is not possible to loan ownership for a limited time. Repeated switching will likely cause problems as the mortals no longer know to whom they should answer.

As a matter of flavor, it is possible to control a Hub through a proxy mortal, contact, ghoul, etc. However, when people take actions to find out who runs the Hub, they are looking for the player

character owner. As with Influence, using a false identity or a puppet does not protect you from an action that successfully reveals ownership.

Hub Competition

Competition between Hub Ownership is handled using the following rules:

- If two people are competing to solve the Key problem at the same time, the best solution wins. Once someone is the Owner, no one else may solve that Key problem and take it over, even if their new solution is better.
- Ownership of each Hub is checked at the beginning of every game.
- To take a Hub from someone, you must make a new Key. This can be done by unsolving the original Key, or introducing a new problem into the Lock's life that overshadows their old ones. (Sometimes the Lock of an owned Hub will develop a new Key spontaneously as well.) The Owner(s) will be notified that this new Key needs to be solved, and you will know about it as you just made it. At the beginning of next game, the Hub will become unowned. Anyone who wishes to own the Hub will try and solve the new Key the best they can, and at the beginning of the game after a successful solution is implemented, the new Owner(s) will be announced.
- If two competing players are solving the Key equally well, the Hub stays unowned, and we will ask everyone to try again before the next game. If a player character wants the Hub, they may need to revise their solution before submitting it, and maybe proactively hinder their opponents. (This situation, however, is rare, Because there are a wide variety of approaches to solving Key problems, it is unlikely two will be exactly equal.)
- A Lock may have multiple problems at one time, but only one will be severe enough to be the Key. Once it is solved, the other problems may still exist but will not affect Hub ownership. After a few months, if a secondary problem persists, it might become a new Key.
- The Lock can be destroyed, either by killing them or ruining their life. Once a Lock is destroyed, the Hub becomes unowned at the start of the following game, and cannot be owned until a new Lock is created. A new Lock is created by the actions of players, or will develop naturally if left alone for enough time. The new Lock will also be given a Key by the storytellers. If a player character is responsible for placing the new Lock, they will also be able to influence what sort of Key the Lock will likely have (although their request is not guaranteed).

Discovering Hubs, Locks, and Keys

To find a Hub, you may either search at game or carry out an appropriate Downtime (Intermediate) or Influence (two point) Action. It is not possible for the Owner of a Hub to use an Influence Action to hide the Hub itself. However, they may hide their ownership by making a concealed Influence Action to do so. The level of the action determines the number of points an action must be to reveal the ownership. The Conceal hides the effort to hide.

Once you find a Hub, you may carry out another one of these three types of actions to find the Lock. If you use Influence, it is once again a two point action. Once you know the Lock, you may either get them to tell you what the Key is or ask around the Hub. A Key isn't usually a big enough deal to determine via Influence, so poking around in a downtime or in person will be far more effective.

A two point action in any Influence field will tell you the current Owner (if there is one) of that field's Hub. This action will not tell you what the Hub is. The point level necessary to get a result from this action is raised by 1 for every point spent on an action to hide the Owner.

Hub special abilities

These are the powers granted by the Influence Hubs to their Owners. Note that there are often details and limitations not described here.

- ***Media/Occult***
 - Put a general idea into the heads of the NPCs in a scene, like "Bid high at the auction" or "Confront interlopers." They will have gotten this idea from some article or broadcast.
 - Get a clue to your current scene by asking the ST (representing consulting with an NPC). The ST will help you go over the information you have and provide a kind of "plot common sense."
- ***Health/Underworld***
 - Free ambulance ride for one person, whisking them out of their current scene (even police custody) and dropping them off elsewhere.
 - Get a "cleaner crew" to dispose of evidence up to the scale of a single-car accident (body included) and cleaning up all but the most subtle traces.
- ***Church/Neighborhood***
 - Make an area into holy ground for the rest of the night.
 - Choose an item that will be common among NPCs for the rest of the night. The item must be legal, not too expensive, and not a weapon.
- ***Bureaucracy/University***
 - Stall mortal investigation into an incident for about two weeks, buying time for an effective coverup.
 - Be the temp who is supposed to be working at a particular location, allowing you to move around without being questioned as long as you don't look suspicious or act outrageous. You can bring a few people along.
- ***High Society/Transportation***
 - Obtain the services of an expert with a particular Ability for a scene.
 - A traffic jam hinders others briefly, allowing you to get to a scene before anyone else.
- ***Industry/Politics***
 - You have janitor's keys for a particular building for the night.
 - Make a political stink that will delay a public works project or one that depends on city permits.
- ***Finance/Police***
 - Get the use of a helicopter and pilot for one trip for up to three people.
 - Insert a group of firefighters into a scene, even combat time.

Influence Guidelines

Keep in mind that Influence is a matter of favors, threats and inside information, rather than official power. Mortal police officers don't need *Police* Influence to get their jobs done, for example, but a veteran officer with a lot of connection might have a couple of Dots they could use to get someone to run the plates on that suspicious van hanging around their neighborhood without having to go through the official channels. Player characters will not have access to official power in the mortal world outside of unusual and limited circumstances, so Influence is the way for you to get things done.

Some of the one and two point Influence Actions listed below work a little differently. When you spend the points, you get the benefit instantly. For example, a one point *Police* action can let you declare that the cop on the beat in your current neighborhood isn't nearby. The in-game explanation is that your character has the foresight to set the situation up in advance, even though you, the player, didn't realise you were going to need to do so. These are designed to make Influence easier to use during game, though they are not the only actions you can take.

Bureaucracy

You can manage various government agencies and bureaus. By dealing with social programs and public servants, you can spin red tape, bypass rules and regulations, or twist bureaucratic regimentation to your advantage. *Bureaucracy* is useful in operating or shutting down businesses, faking or acquiring permits and identification papers, and manipulating public utilities and facilities. It also covers some functions of the legal system, making it useful in covering one's own questionable deeds as well as harassing an enemy's assets. Contacts and allies affected by *Bureaucracy* Influence would include government clerks at the city and county level, court officials, utility workers, road crews, surveyors, and other civil servants.

Cost Effect

- 1 Trace utility bills to or for a single house or similar location
Get a lawyer, immediately and for free. Will represent you for minor cases, or give some advice.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Fake a birth certificate or driver's license.
Obtain identifying documents (birth certificate, driver's license, passport, FOID) tied to your non-compromised legal identity. [See Identities in 101 for more information.]
Disconnect a single small residence's utilities.
Close a small road or park.
Access public or court funds (\$250).
Avoid bail for some charge.
Have a bureaucrat look over documents you provide (like a company or organization's books).
- 3 Fake a death certificate, passport, green card, or handgun permit.

- Close a public school for a single day.
- Shut down a minor business on a violation.
- Lock down two points of another person's *Bureaucracy* at the start of the next game.
- Manipulate legal procedures (minor wills and contracts, court dates).
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Initiate a phone tap.
- Fake land deeds.
- Initiate a department-wide investigation.
- Issue subpoenas.
- Tie up court cases.
- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Start, stop, or alter a city-wide program or policy.
- Shut down a big business on a violation.
- Rezone areas.
- Obliterate records of a person on a city or county level.
- Create a complete legal identity for one person.
- Lock down four points of another person's *Bureaucracy* at the start of the next game.
- Lock down two points of another person's *Influence*, any single field, at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of three point action within this field.

Church

Though the modern church holds arguably less control over temporal society than it did in the Middle Ages, its policies still exert considerable influence over the direction of politics and communities. Knowing the appropriate people allows insight into many mainstream religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Shinto, and Buddhism. (Fringe or alternative groups, such as Scientology, are considered *Occult*). When you exercise *Church Influence*, you can change religious policy, affect the assignment of clergy, and access a variety of information and resources. Contacts and allies affected by *Church Influence* would include ministers, priests, bishops, church-sponsored witch hunters, holy orders, and various attendees and assistants.

Cost Effect

- 1 Identify most lay members of a given faith in the local area.
- Pass as a member of the clergy.
- Peruse general church records (baptism, marriage, burial, etc.).
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this *Influence*. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
- Identify higher church members.
- Track regular church members.
- Suspend lay members.
- 3 Open or close a single church.
- Find the average church-associated hunter.
- Dip into the collection plate (\$250).

- Access private information and archives of a church.
- Lock down two points of another person's *Church* Influence at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Discredit or suspend high-level church members.
- Manipulate regional branches of the church.
- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Organize major protests.
- Access ancient church lore and knowledge
- Lock down four points of another person's *Church* at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of three point action within this field.

Finance

Manipulating markets, stock reports, and investments is a hobby of many Cainites, especially those who use their knowledge to keep hidden wealth. Though your actual available money is a function of your *Resources*, you can use *Finance* Influence to start or smother businesses, crush or support banking institutions, and alter credit records. Clearly, such power over money is not to be trifled with—fortunes are made and destroyed with this sort of pull. Contacts and allies affected by *Finance* Influence would include CEOs, bankers, stockbrokers, bank tellers, yes-men, financiers, and loan agents.

Cost Effect

- 1 Learn about major transactions and financial events.
- Raise capital (\$1,000).
- Learn about general economic trends.
- Learn real motivations for the financial actions of others.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
- Trace an unsecured small account.
- Raise capital to purchase a small business (single, small store) that is willing to sell.
- Renovate one small business to a different type of business of similar scale.
- Get a detailed report on the financial health of single business.
- Get an expert opinion on whether a proposed transaction is likely to be profitable.
- 3 Purchase a large business (a few small branches or a single large store or service) that is willing to sell.
- Have a small building built.
- Lock down two points of another person's *Finance* Influence at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Manipulate local banking (delay deposits, some credit rating alterations).
- Ruin a small business.
- Have a large building built. (Note that a very large or elaborate building may require more at Storyteller discretion.)
- Lock down four points of another person's *Finance* Influence at the start of the next game.

- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Control an aspect of city-wide banking (shut down ATMs, arrange a bank “holiday”).
- Ruin a large business.
- Purchase a major company.
- Lock down five points of another person’s *Finance* Influence at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of three point action within this field.

Health

Some vampires rely on connections in the medical community to acquire blood. Necromancers and practitioners of the arcane arts may also require body parts or medical data to further their studies. Furthermore, maintaining the Masquerade often calls for alteration of medical records or faking of particular diseases; some Cainites even specialize in the study of blood-borne ailments. All of these sorts of research and development fall under the purview of *Health* Influence. Contacts and allies affected by *Health* Influence would include coroners, doctors, lab workers, therapists, pharmacists, specialists, and veterinarians.

Cost Effect

- 1 Access a person’s health records.
- Fake vaccination records.
- Use public functions of health centers at your leisure.
- Get a single Blood Trait of mortal blood.
- Get medical advice.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
- Access some medical research records.
- Have minor lab work done.
- Get a copy of a coroner’s report.
- Instigate minor quarantines or inspections.
- Get two Blood Traits of mortal blood.
- Get a cadaver.
- 3 Corrupt records of tests.
- Alter medical records.
- Get three Blood Traits of mortal blood.
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- Get a human skeleton.
- 4 Completely rewrite medical records.
- Abuse grants for personal use (\$250).
- Have minor medical research performed on a subject.
- Institute large-scale quarantines.
- Shut down businesses for “health code violations”.
- Get four Blood Traits of mortal blood.
- Lock down two points of another person’s Influence, within the following fields: *Church*, *High Society*, *Industry*, *Occult*, *Neighborhood*, *Transportation*, *Underworld*, and *University*.

- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Have special research projects performed.
- Have people institutionalized or released.
- Get five Blood Traits of mortal blood.
- Block a type of three point action within this field.

High Society

The glitterati at the top of society move in circles of wealth and elegance. Many Kindred find such positions alluring, and they indulge in the passions of the famous and wealthy. Access to famous actors, celebrities, and the idle rich grants a certain sway over fashion trends. Combined with *Fame*, a modicum of *High Society* Influence turns a vampire into a debonair darling of the most exclusive social circles. Contacts and allies affected by *High Society* Influence would include dilettantes, artists, old money families, models, rock stars, sports figures, and jetsetters.

Cost Effect

- 1 Learn what is trendy.
- Obtain hard-to-get tickets for shows, or entrance for one to a social event.
- Learn about concerts, shows, or plays well before they are made public.
- Someone at the event where you are has heard of you. (This improves their disposition.)
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
- Track most celebrities and luminaries.
- Be a local voice in the entertainment field.
- “Borrow” idle cash from rich friends (\$1,000).
- 3 Crush promising careers.
- Hobnob well above your station.
- Lock down three points of another person's *High Society* Influence at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Temporarily gain minor celebrity status.
- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Ruin a new club, gallery, festival, or other posh gathering.
- Lock down six points of another person's *High Society* Influence at the start at next game; they will also gain minor celebrity status as a figure of scandal.
- Block a type of three point action within this field.

Industry

The grinding wheels of labor fuel the economies and markets of the world. Machines, factories, and blue-collar workers line up in endless drudgery, churning out the staples of everyday living. Control over *Industry* Influence sways the formation of unions, the movements of work projects, locations for factories, and the production of manufacturing concerns. Contacts and allies affected by *Industry* Influence would include union workers, foremen, engineers, construction workers, manual laborers, and all manner of blue-collar workers.

Cost Effect

- 1 Learn about industrial projects and movements.
Immediately have some random supply-type item.
Have a repairman assess something or tell you how it works.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Have minor projects performed.
Have a repairman perform immediate minor repair on an item.
Dip into union funds or embezzle petty cash (\$500).
Send some union boys to go do a minor task immediately. Can include causing problems, but not murder.
Arrange small accidents or sabotage.
Get temporary access to a complicated crafting space (a forge, a gunsmith shop, etc.).
- 3 Organize minor strikes.
Appropriate machinery for a short time.
Lock down two points of another person's *Industry* Influence at the start of the next game.
Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Close down a small plant.
Revitalize a small plant.
Lock down three points of another person's *Industry* Influence at the start of the next game.
Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Manipulate large local industry.
Select an Influence field and three people. If those people have that Influence, they each have two points of that Influence locked down at the start of the next game.
Block a type of three point action within this field.

Media

Directing media attention away from the vampiric activities is a key component of the Masquerade. Putting specific emphasis on certain events can place an enemy in an uncomfortable spotlight or discredit a rival. With *Media*, you can crush or alter news stories, control the operations of news stations and reporters, and sway public opinion. At Storyteller discretion, *Media* Influence may extend to other, more technical areas of television, radio or movies. Contacts and allies affected by *Media* Influence would include editors, reporters, cameramen, photographers, DJs, and broadcasters.

Cost Effect

- 1 Learn about breaking stories early.
Submit a small article (within reason).
Have a line inserted into a message broadcast on a radio station (that is, send a code message to all players immediately). The message must be radio-appropriate; that is, Masquerade-safe and non-vulgar.

- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Find out what has been published in the media about a public figure or recent event.
 Suppress (but not stop) small articles or reports.
 Get a hold of investigative reporting information.
 Control one narrow aspect of the news reporting on one event: demonize a specific person, leave out a name, imply a connection between events X and Y, etc. The Storytellers will still write the article, but abide by the limitation given.
- 3 Initiate news investigations and reports.
 Get project funding and waste it (\$250).
 Ground stories and projects.
 Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Lock down one point of another person's Influence in any field at the start of the next game.
 Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Broadcast fake stories on the radio (local only).
 Kill small local articles or reports completely.
 Lock down two points of another person's *Media* Influence at the start of next game.
 Block a type of three point action within this field.

Neighborhood

Just because people don't have power through "official" channels doesn't mean they have no power at all. People look out for those they consider their peers, whether through street gangs, book clubs, activist groups, or loose networks of the homeless. When calling on *Neighborhood* Influence, you use your connections to "the little people," both criminal and upstanding.

Cost Effect

- 1 Open an ear for the word on the street.
 Identify most gangs and community groups and know their areas of influence and habits.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
 Live mostly without fear on the underside of society.
 Fit into middle-class neighborhoods without raising eyebrows.
 Keep a contact or two in most aspects of community life.
 Access small-time contraband.
- 3 Get insight into other areas of Influence.
 Arrange some services from street people, gangs, or community organizations.
 Get pistols or uncommon melee weapons (from gangs or the neighborhood watch).
 Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Mobilize the residents of an area.
 Panhandle or hold a "charity collection" (\$250)
 Have a word in almost all aspects of some community group's operations.
 Select an Influence Field. All people with that Influence will find one point of it locked up at

the start of the next game.

Block a type of two point action within this field.

- 5 Control a single medium-sized community group or gang.

Arrange impressive protests.

Select an Influence Field. All people with that Influence will find two points of it locked up at the start of the next game.

Block a type of three point action within this field.

Occult

The hidden world of the supernatural teems with secrets, conspiracies, and unusual factions.

Obviously, a vampire is aware that there are strange things out there by the very fact of their existence (after all, if vampires exist...) but hard knowledge of such things is a function of Abilities and Lores. By using *Occult* Influence, you can dig up information to improve your knowledge, get inside the occult community, and find rare components for magical rituals. Even parts of the elusive Book of Nod are available to those with the right connections. Contacts and allies affected by *Occult* Influence would include cult leaders, alternative religious groups, charlatans, occultists, New Agers, and some more dangerous elements.

Cost Effect

- 1 Contact and make use of common occult groups and their practices.

Know some of the more visible occult figures.

In conversation, give a secret hand signal. If the person you are talking to is at all involved in the occult, they will return a secret signal.

- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)

Know and contact some of the more obscure occult figures.

Access resources for most rituals and rites (basic materials can be had immediately).

Have an occultist look at something (book, amulet, etc.) for you.

Locate an Occult spell (by name).

In conversation, give an even *more* secret signal. If the person you are talking to is more than a dabbler, their reaction will betray that they know what's up... and they know you know what's up.

- 3 Know the general vicinity of certain supernatural entities and (possibly) contact them.

Access rare or vital material components.

Milk impressionable wannabes for money (\$250).

Access occult tomes and writings.

Locate an Occult spell (by effect).

Block a type of one point action within this field.

- 4 Block a type of two point action within this field.

Persuade a small cult to target someone for sacrifice. (Note that incautious use of this can endanger the health of the field by triggering authorities to crack down.)

- 5 Access minor magical items. (This counts as your "one unique thing" for the month.)

Locate an Occult spell (result randomly chosen by the Storytellers. This counts as your

“one unique thing” for the month).

Block a type of three point action within this field.

Know and contact a supernatural entity for information regarding a specific subject. (They have the equivalent of Lore 5 for their own group.) The contact will probably be in the form of a letter or similar indirect means, rather than a meeting. The individual has no obligation to advise you or betray their own, but simply to give information. .

Police

“To protect and serve” is the motto of the police, but these days, Kindred and kine alike may have cause to wonder who is being protected and served. That said, *Police* Influence can be very handy to assist with the *Masquerade*, to protect one’s holdings or to raid the assets of another. After all, attitude won’t save the Anarchs whose haven is the target of a daylight raid. Contacts and allies affected by *Police* Influence would include officers, detectives, clerical staff, dispatchers, prison guards, special divisions (such as homicide or SWAT), and local highway patrol.

Cost Effect

- 1 Learn police procedures.
 Hear police information and rumors.
 Avoid traffic tickets.
 Ensure the beat cop isn’t in the vicinity.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
 Have license plates checked.
 Avoid minor violations (first conviction).
 Ensure that a cop you’re talking to doesn’t have time for you. If there isn’t a major crime like murder going on, they will wave you away. They will not wave away your friends, however.
- 3 Get copies of an investigative report.
 Have police hassle, detain, or harass someone.
 Find departmental secrets.
 Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Access confiscated weapons or contraband.
 Have some serious charges dropped.
 Start an investigation.
 Get money, either from the evidence room or as an appropriation (\$1,000).
 Get a Kevlar vest (armor of Durability 1 with the *Concealable* Merit).
 Lock down two points of another person’s *Police*, *Neighborhood*, or *Underworld* Influence at the start of the next game.
 Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Institute major investigations.
 Arrange setups.
 Have officers fired.
 Lock down two points of another person’s Influence in any one field other than *Police*,

Neighborhood, or Underworld at the start of the next game.
Block a type of three point action within this field.

Politics

Deal-making is second nature to most vampires. It helps them get along very well with the mortal bloodsuckers called “politicians.” Altering party platforms, controlling local elections, changing appointed offices, and calling in favors all falls under the purview of *Politics* Influence. Well-timed blackmail, bribery, spin doctoring, and similar tricks are stock in trade on both sides of this fence. Contacts and allies affected by *Politics* Influence would include pollsters, lobbyists, activists, party members, spin doctors, and politicians from rural zoning committees to the mayors of major cities or Congressional representatives.

Cost	Effect
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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Minor lobbying of politicians and parties.
Identify real platforms.
Become “in the know.”
Have a button for the same political affiliation of someone in the group you’re talking with, improving their disposition towards you. |
| 2 | Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Meet small-time politicians and the like.
Gather inside information on processes, laws.
Use a slush fund or fund-raiser (\$1,000).
Have minor criminal charges dropped.
Rabble-rouse. A little politicking gathers up some boisterous people. |
| 3 | Sway or alter political projects (local parks, renovations, small construction).
Lock down two points of another person’s <i>Politics</i> Influence at the start of the next game.
Get representation in most court cases.
Block a type of one point action within this field. |
| 4 | Enact minor legislation.
Dash careers of most politicians.
Have most legal charges dropped.
Cancel or arrange parole.
Block a type of two point action within this field. |
| 5 | Get your candidate in a minor office.
Enact encompassing legislation.
Have deportation proceedings held against someone.
Lock down four points of another person’s <i>Politics</i> Influence at the start of the next game.
Block a type of three point action within this field. |

Transportation

Most Cainites make their havens in defensible parts of cities. Traveling across the wilderness is difficult, with the problems of daylight and marauding Lupines. Without this Influence, the vampiric

world shrinks into island of “civilization” with dangerous wastelands in between. Getting access to special supplies and services can also take a measure of *Transportation*. Contacts and allies affected by *Transportation* Influence would include truckers, harbors, railroads, airports, taxis, border guards, pilots, as well as mundane aspects like shipping and travel arrangements.

Cost Effect

- 1 Know what goes where, when, and why.
Travel locally in a quick and free manner.
Have a small handcart left nearby for you.
A taxi is nearby, and the driver will drive you where you need to go.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Track an unwary target if they use public transportation.
Arrange passage safe (or at least concealed) from mundane threats, like robbery, terrorism, sunlight, and so forth.
An unattended taxi has been left nearby for you.
- 3 Seriously hamper an individual's ability to travel.
Avoid most supernatural dangers when traveling (such as Lupines).
Lock down two points of another person's *Transportation, Industry, or Neighborhood* Influence at the start of the next game.
Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Shut down one form of transportation (bus lines, ships, planes, trains, etc.) temporarily.
Route money your way (\$500).
Block a type of two-point action within this field.
- 5 Reroute major modes of travel.
Smuggle with impunity.
Lock down four points of another person's *Transportation, Industry, or Neighborhood* Influence at the start of the next game.
Block a type of three point action within this field.

Underworld

The world of crime offers lucrative possibilities to strong-willed or subtle leaders. Guns, money, drugs, and vice—such delicious pastimes can be led by anyone talented or vicious enough to take them. Contacts and allies affected by *Underworld* Influence would include the Mafia, drug dealers, bookies, Tongs, Yakuza, hitmen, fences, and other criminal gangs.

Cost Effect

- 1 Locate minor contraband (knives, small-time drugs, petty gambling, scalped tickets).
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
Obtain pistols, serious drugs, stolen cars.
Hire muscle to rough someone up.
Fence stolen loot.

- Prove that crime pays (and score \$1,000).
- Get a Kevlar vest (armor of Durability 1 with the *Concealable Merit*).
- 3 Obtain a rifle, shotgun, or SMG.
 Arrange a minor hit.
 Meet someone in “the Family”.
 Lock down two points of another person’s *Underworld* or *Neighborhood* Influence at the start of the next game.
 Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Make white-collar crime connections.
 Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Arrange gangland assassinations.
 Hire a demolition man or firebug.
 Supply local drug needs.
 Lock down three points of another person’s *Underworld* or *Neighborhood* Influence at the start of the next game.
 Block a type of three point action within this field.

University

Institutions of learning and research are the purview of the *University* Influence. Access to the halls of learning can help you with any number of resources, from ancient languages to research assistance to many impressionable young minds. Contacts and allies affected by *University* Influence would include college, graduate students, teachers, professors, deans, Greek orders, and a variety of other staff that fill the ivy-covered halls.

Cost Effect

- 1 Know layout and policy of local schools.
 Have access to low-level university resources.
 Get records up to the high school level.
 Get some academic knowledge on any subject at hand.
 Know where an academic’s office is, or know in what university building and where in that building something is usually kept.
- 2 Get more information about a hotsheet item in this Influence. (This is primarily intended as an at-game action.)
 Know a contact or two with useful knowledges or Abilities.
 Have minor access to facilities.
 Fake high school records.
 Obtain college records.
 Know where a student lives.
- 3 Call in faculty favors.
 Cancel a class.
 Fix grades.
 Discredit a student.
 Lock down two points of another person’s *University* Influence at the start of the next

- game.
- Block a type of one point action within this field.
- 4 Organize student protests and rallies.
Discredit faculty members.
Lock down three points of another person's *University* Influence at the start of the next game.
- Block a type of two point action within this field.
- 5 Falsify an undergraduate degree.
Block a type of three point action within this field.

Chapter VI

Disciplines

Additional Paths of Necromancy

Break the Inner Ghost

The Giovanni, realizing that *Necromancy* lacks the variety that *Thaumaturgy* possesses, have worked to develop it in new directions. One area that proved fruitful was channeling their necromantic energies against other vampires, enabling their leg-breakers to attack in unexpected ways. The powers of *Break the Inner Ghost* can only be used against corporeal undead unless otherwise stated. This Path is only practiced by Giovanni.

Basic

Sever the Anchors

By spending a Blood Trait and succeeding in a Mental Challenge against a target, the necromancer twists and bends the mystical connection that binds their soul to their body. This attack causes 1 level of lethal damage to both mortals and vampires, and can be performed in melee or at range.

Chain the Spirit

By spending a Blood Trait and succeeding in a Mental Challenge against a target the necromancer is touching, the necromancer appears to bind the target's soul within their own. For the remainder of the scene, neither the target nor the necromancer can spend Willpower except to fuel Disciplines. This effect ends if the necromancer loses consciousness. The necromancer can only release the spell early if the target also agrees to end the effect early.

Intermediate

Grip of the Reaper

By spending a Blood Trait and succeeding in a Mental Challenge against a target, the necromancer seems to reach out and grab hold of the very strength within their target's limbs. For the remainder of the scene or an hour, whichever is shortest, the necromancer can negate Ability retests or blocks of the target by expending one Trait of the same Ability. For instance, if the target attempts to retest a punch with *Brawl*, the necromancer can expend a Trait of their own *Brawl* to block that retest. If the target attempts to block a *Melee* retest with *Dodge*, the necromancer can negate that block by expending a Trait of their own *Dodge*. Using this power does not affect what retests a necromancer can use in the same combat (a necromancer can negate the target's *Brawl* retest with this power and defensively retest with *Brawl* in the same conflict). This effect ends if the necromancer loses consciousness or releases the spell, and cannot be used if the necromancer and target are not in the same scene.

Touch of the Grave [changed from Chill of the Grave]

The necromancer's use of *Sever the Anchors* is now enhanced, giving the necromancer the ability to harm the soul more directly. The necromancer may add one of the following effects to their use of *Sever the Anchors* for free. The necromancer must declare which effect, if any, is being added to the attack before the chop is made.

- The necromancer may give that use of *Sever the Anchors* the equivalent of the weapon Merit *High Caliber* (that is, the user makes a Simple Test following a successful attack, and if they win or tie the chop, the attack inflicts 1 additional level of lethal damage)
- The necromancer may have that use of *Sever the Anchors* bypass Disciplines that offer damage resistance or reduction, such as *Resilience (Fortitude 3)* or *Resistance (Fortitude 4)*, excluding any Advanced or Elder Disciplines.
- Instead of dealing damage, the necromancer may instead convert one level of lethal damage the target has taken into aggravated damage.

Advanced

Soul Rend

By spending a Blood Trait and succeeding in a Mental Challenge against a target, you inflict on them a penalty of -10 on ties in all Offensive Challenges against you. While this power is active, you also suffer the same penalty on Offensive Challenges against them. The target suffers from this curse for a scene or an hour, whichever is shorter. A given user can only have this power active on one target at a time.

Geist Path

Normally, ghosts that manifest to mortals are weak, feeble remnants of themselves, with ghosts of true power being limited to a relatively few strong-willed individuals. With this path, the necromancer can strengthen a ghost, lending them powers they do not normally possess.

Note that this path does not grant the ability to perceive ghosts. The necromancer must use *Summon Soul (d'Uso 2)* or *Shroudsight (Path of the Shadowlands 1)* to see a ghost before it can be granted powers, unless the ghost is able to manifest under its own power.

Two powers of this path can enable ghosts to attack at the caster's direction. No more than one ghost controlled by a single caster may attack a given target in a single round.

This Path is taught by Giovanni and Samedi.

Basic

Ghostly Whispers

You may empower a ghost as a spectral messenger, taking advantage of its ability to travel unimpeded by mortal obstacles. You must spend a Mental Trait to implant your message and

the identity of your target (who must be known to you) in the ghost's mind. The ghost will be unconsciously drawn towards the target, traveling as quickly as possible until they reach them. (It will not know the target's location consciously, and cannot be followed except in the Shadowlands.) It will visibly and audibly manifest long enough to deliver the message, which should be no more than two or three sentences, then fade out again. The ghost will be perceptible to everyone in its vicinity.

If the target is unconscious or otherwise unable to receive a message when the ghost arrives, it will wait until the next sunrise or sunset, whereupon the spell will be broken.

Spectral Guardian

A ghost empowered by this ability will serve as a guardian of a location for a night. Using this power requires the expenditure of two Mental Traits; upon doing so, you may give the ghost either the role of defender or messenger. The ghost will remain at the location to watch for unapproved intruders. When an intruder is detected, a messenger will be drawn to your current location; when it reaches you, it will manifest only to you, and do so long enough to warn you of the intrusion. A defender will be able to manifest visibly and audibly to them, attempting to frighten them off with a Social Challenge. The ghost is considered to have seven Social Traits for the purposes of this challenge, and will make a total of three challenges to intruders in an attempt to scare them off, starting upon the first intrusion, and continuing every 10 minutes that the intruder remains. The challenge may not be retested on either side, and should the ghost succeed, the intruder faces an equivalent of a level 1/2/3 Röttschreck chop, depending on which number attempt this is on the ghost's part.

Ghosts' ability to determine if visitors are welcome is not perfect. They can be given descriptions of those on the approved list, a password for friends to use, or told to watch for specific individuals if given a description, but they cannot discriminate enough to follow instructions like "Only vampires may enter. Do not allow mortals," or "Anyone of my clan is welcome". More than one ghost may be the designated guardian of a given location. This power ends at the next sunrise.

Intermediate

Rattling Chains [changed mechanics]

You may give a ghost the ability to affect the physical world in a limited manner. You must spend two Mental Traits to empower the ghost for a scene; if the ghost leaves your room, this effect fades after two rounds.

The ghost may carry and lift objects of up to a few pounds. It may break fragile objects by dropping them, but it cannot give them enough force to directly damage a living (or undead) target. Its precision is limited; if it attempts to deliver a dangerous object (such as a live grenade), it is considered to have three Physical Traits for the purposes of Conflicts. Fine manipulation of objects, such as the tumblers of a lock, is likewise beyond a ghost's capacity. However, they can use a writing implement or type imprecisely.

Spiritual Assault [changed mechanics]

By spending a Willpower Trait and a blood, the necromancer may give a ghost the ability to affect a target directly, by partially manifesting and interacting with the target.

During that round, the necromancer makes an Opposed Mental Challenge against the target, retested with *Thanatology* offensively and *Dodge* defensively. If the necromancer succeeds, the target loses half of their remaining Physical Traits, rounded up, as the ghost drains them of a portion of their life force.

This ability can only be used once per target per scene.

Advanced

Poltergeist

A ghost enhanced by this ability can throw objects with enough force to cause injury. You must spend a Willpower Trait to empower a ghost with this ability for one night. This effect ends when the necromancer loses consciousness or leaves the vicinity of the ghost. Only two ghosts per night may be empowered by a given necromancer.

Objects of up to ten pounds can be thrown with force, but not much precision. The ghost is considered to have three Physical Traits when throwing, but it does not lose Traits when it loses a challenge. The ghost may retest, but doing so expends the necromancer's Abilities. Thrown objects deal one lethal damage on impact; as is standard, burning objects deal one aggravated damage but stop burning on impact. Stakes cannot be hurled with enough precision to pierce a vampire's heart.

Path of Rebirth

The granting of the semblance of life to dead flesh, or vitality to the undead, is an important branch of *Necromancy*. While those who practice this path are often considered disturbing even by other necromancers, the services of those who have mastered it are much in demand.

This path is taught by Giovanni and Samedi.

Basic

Life's Mimic

This power allows the necromancer to give a dead body a brief sign of life, by giving it a small rush of spiritual energy. By spending a Mental Trait and a Blood Trait while in view of a dead body, the necromancer may have the body briefly perform an action as if it were alive, such as granting the body a heartbeat, having the body sit or stand up temporarily, open its eyes and look around, or flail its arms. The body is not actually alive or sentient, and does no other actions other than the one that the necromancer decided. If multiple signs of life are granted,

the necromancer must spend multiple Mental Traits for them. The body cannot move from its location, nor speak, though it can be made to breathe heavily. This ability lasts for a minute or until the necromancer dismisses it.

Servant of the Dead

This power allows a necromancer to enchant a human skull and a pair of human skeleton hands into a small Servant. By spending a Blood Trait and three Mental Traits, the necromancer brings the Servant to life. It can then serve the necromancer in a number of ways, obeying their mystical commands (which need not be verbal). The servant has 1 Physical, 0 Mentals, 0 Socials, and 1 health box, and is immune to Mental and Social Disciplines. The Servant moves at a speed of 1 step per round, and can bite targets (no retests) for 1 level of bashing, if the necromancer commands it to do so.

Additionally, if the necromancer possesses *Shroudsight* (*Shadowlands* 1), they may activate the Discipline to instead see through the eyes of the Servant, so long as the Servant is close by (i.e., within the same scene). If they choose to break this connection to observe their own surroundings, they must re-activate *Shroudsight* to return to seeing through the Servant.

A tether within the Shadowlands links the Servant to the caster, which can be seen leaving the servant and the caster if using *Shroudsight*, or trivially followed through the Shadowlands if using *Ex Nihilo* (*Shadowlands* 4).

The enchantment lasts until dismissed, until sunrise, or until the necromancer and Servant are more than a scene's distance from each other.

Intermediate

Death's Bargain

A necromancer using this power can postpone the effects of harm to themselves or another Kindred, temporarily. By spending a Blood Trait and a Willpower Trait, and choosing a target in sight, the necromancer may heal up to three health boxes of damage (any kind) on the target. If the target is unwilling, the necromancer must succeed on an Opposed Mental Challenge, retested with *Thanatology* offensively, and *Thanatology* or *Survival* defensively.

After a scene or an hour, whichever comes first, the target takes an upgraded version of all damage healed. That is, all bashing damage that was healed returns as lethal, all lethal returns as aggravated, and all aggravated returns as an aggravated and a bashing. When this damage attempts to return, it may be reduced by methods such as *Fortitude* if applicable.

This power cannot be cast on the same target more than once per night.

Enchant Corpse

By spending a Mental Trait and a Willpower Trait, the necromancer may force a ghost to enter a corpse. The corpse will then rise and follow the commands of the necromancer for one

night before decaying into a rotting pile of flesh at sunrise. If the zombie is exposed to sunlight, not only does the body rapidly decay, but the soul is destroyed.

The zombie is capable of performing small, simple tasks (including combat) for the necromancer, but complex plans are beyond it. Mechanically, these zombies are considered to have:

- 4 Physical Traits
- 2 Mental Traits
- 0 Social Traits
- 4 Health Levels

Zombies are immune to any power that requires a Opposed Social Challenge, such as *Majesty (Presence 5)*, though other Disciplines, including *Dominate*, will affect them. They also ignore wound penalties, and continue to carry out their orders regardless of injury, including loss of limb or head.

Additional zombies can be enchanted in this manner, but for each one after the first, the necromancer has a 2 Trait penalty on all Mental Conflicts, representing the attention and focus that must be spent to keep the zombies ambulatory. If this penalty would reduce the necromancer to zero Traits, no more zombies can be enchanted. Further, the necromantic link between the Giovanni and their zombie minions require that the animator remain within line of sight of their zombies. If they do not, the zombies will cease to move and wait for further orders. If the Giovanni returns to their stench of zombies, they will again respond to their orders. The necromancer may disenchant any or all of their zombies as an action, and doing so removes the Trait penalty associated with that zombie.

Advanced

Reincarnation

The epitome of a necromancer's control over death is the ability to cheat death itself. When the necromancer is preparing a corpse for enchantment as in *Enchant Corpse (Path of Rebirth 4)*, the necromancer may spend two Blood Traits and a Willpower Dot rather than the normal Willpower Trait cost. The corpse does not rise and follow the necromancer, but instead remains dormant as the soul compelled to reside within it keeps it from decaying for one year and one day.

The blood sacrificed during the use of this power ties the necromancer's soul—such as it is—to the soul within the corpse. Should the necromancer reach Final Death at any time of the 366 days during which this power is active, their soul does not depart but is instead compelled to enter the enchanted corpse, destroy the soul therein, and animate the flesh once more. In doing so, the necromancer returns to unlife. If the necromancer is successfully diablerized, the reincarnation fails as the vampire's soul is consumed; if diablerie fails, the soul “survives” and reincarnation is possible.

The experience of *Reincarnation* is traumatic. Firstly, the necromancer often suffers insanity after being reincarnated. The character must succeed in a Willpower Test with difficulty 7, or gains a derangement of the Storytellers' choosing. This difficulty is increased by 2 for each additional reincarnation undergone by the necromancer. Further, when the necromancer rises, they find their potency reduced. After reincarnation, a character's generation is increased by 1, to a maximum of 15. Fifteenth generation vampires cannot reincarnate. Any Elder Disciplines that the necromancer knew become inactive until and unless they become an elder again through diablerie.

Similar to how a vampire's body "reverts" to its original form each sunset, the reincarnated body will also transform itself into a duplicate of the vampire's previous form. The process begins immediately, with the vampire retaining their original body's Physical, Mental, and Social Traits, and is completed at the next sunset, when all of the vampire's visible features, Physical Merits, and Physical Flaws are also adopted. Becoming used to the new body is a troublesome process. For the remainder of the game during which a vampire is reincarnated and the entirety of the following one, they take a 4 Trait penalty on all Physical Conflicts. The session after that, they only suffer a 2 Trait penalty on all Physical Conflicts. Thereafter, they have become acclimated. During the first game (before the new body's visible features have changed), a PC with the *Empathy* Ability who knew the vampire before reincarnation may make an Opposed (Social) Challenge when interacting with the reincarnated vampire (defender retests with Subterfuge). If the attacker wins the Conflict, they recognize who this person "really is." Whether or not they know about *Path of Rebirth 5* is dependent on their level of *Kindred Lore*.

If this ritual is repeated during the "lifetime" of a corpse prepared with *Reincarnation*, the original corpse decays and is destroyed, as is the soul within it. If someone else finds and destroys the corpse, the reincarnation cannot occur, and the necromancer will not be warned of the destruction of his vessel unless he takes other measures to protect and observe it.

While necromancers hoard the knowledge of this power, it is rumored that some have been willing to perform this "service" for other willing vampires. This requires the other vampire to spend the blood, while the necromancer spends the Willpower Dot. Beyond this, the power works exactly the same, except the target of the power is whoever spent the blood rather than the necromancer.

This power does not allow the necromancer to bring someone back from death if the corpse was not prepared for them using *Reincarnation* prior to their death, nor does it work on mortals in any capacity.

Additional Paths of Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturgy is one of the most carefully guarded of the Disciplines due to its flexibility. There are numerous Paths of *Thaumaturgy* which the Tremere, and others, have developed. In *LARP 101*, we

detailed a number of these Paths; however, there exist others which are viable for use within our game. These Paths are detailed below. They are more difficult to learn and thus must be purchased at out-of-clan costs, even by Tremere, although Tremere do not require a Mentor.

Elemental Mastery

Elemental Mastery gives the thaumaturge control over the inanimate things which surround them. This allow them to alter their own basic elemental structure, or to learn from those things which are around them at any given time. At its highest levels, *Elemental Mastery* allows its wielder to communicate with the very spirits of the four classical elements.

Basic

Elemental Strength

Drawing on the solidity of the solid matter around you, you can enhance your own physical characteristics. The use of this power gives you three Physical Traits. These Traits last one round for each level of *Elemental Mastery* you have. Thus, if you have up to the first Intermediate power (for a total of three power), these Traits may be maintained only for three rounds. Every Willpower Trait spent increases the duration by a round, and these Willpower Traits can be spent at any time. You may activate this power and attack in the same round. These Traits cannot be bid in a Challenge. This power cannot be stacked; secondary uses of this power overwrite previous usages.

Wooden Tongue

Using this power gives you the ability to communicate in a limited manner with spirits of the inanimate objects around you. These spirits are simple in nature and largely unconcerned with the world around them. In fact, many who do not follow this path do not believe in them at all. You, however, know differently, and understand that even the most basic of objects is imbued at a fundamental level with at least some spirit, some energy that experiences the world around it.

Activating this power requires you to smear a Blood Trait on the object in order to draw out its spirit, which you can then speak with. Once activated, you may ask this spirit a question by succeeding in a Mental Challenge against it. The difficulty of this Challenge is relative to the complexity of the object inhabited by this spirit:

Traits Type of Object

- 1 - 3 Items made of a single classical element. The smaller the object—and thus the smaller the spirit—the fewer Traits it has. A candle's flame may only have one, while a campfire may have three.
- 4 - 6 Items of multiple classical elements. A computer, for example, could be said to be earth, air, and fire—it's physically made of plastic and metal (earth), its purpose is to share information (air), and it is powered by electricity (fire). Like the previous category, the size of the spirit you deal with may slightly alter the number of Traits it

- has.
- 7 - 9 Spirits of larger size and complexity (or both) are truly frightening in their own way, and understand far more than we expect them to. Conversely, they are less willing to share their secrets. This includes large ponds, bonfires, adult trees, buildings, cars, and so forth.
- 10+ At the Storytellers' discretion, truly massive targets, like mountains or college dorms, and exceptionally complex targets, like airplanes and supercomputers, may have ten or more Traits.

The questions you ask of a spirit must be physical in nature. They could confirm that someone else was in the room before you, or that someone specific placed them in their current position. Concepts of time and motivations are beyond them, however. A pair of scissors may know that they were used to cut, but why it was used or on what is beyond the interests of its spirit. The Storytellers will determine if your question is of interest to the spirit at the time of the asking, and you must make a Mental Challenge with it regardless of its interest.

Intermediate

Animate the Unmoving

This power allows you to control objects in the same room, within your line of sight. If you are outdoors, the Storytellers will determine the appropriate area which constitutes a "room." Activating this power requires the expenditure of a Willpower Trait. You may control one object for every level of Intermediate or higher *Elemental Mastery* you possess. These objects cannot move or perform actions that are outside their normal capacity. That is, a car can be directed to roll forward, or a chair could be commanded to "walk" across a room, but a table could not be made to play a clarinet. The largest object you can animate with this power is approximately the size of a small car (a Volkswagen Beetle or something similar).

Once you command an object to perform an action, it will do so until it moves beyond your line of sight (regardless of distance), until you command it to stop, or until you are rendered unconscious, in torpor, or killed.

Elemental Form

This power allows you to alter your very being to become an object of roughly similar mass to your own. Thus, you could become a large table or a small bed, but to become a handgun or car would be outside your capabilities. Upon activation, you become the object you wish. You retain your own Physical, Mental, and Social Attributes as well as all Abilities that are appropriate to your new form, though you must spend a Willpower Trait to retain your normal senses while in this form. You cannot, however, use any Disciplines. The object which you become can operate in any normal way. Thus, if you take the form of a television, that TV could be plugged in, turned on, used to watch a show, and so on. If you take damage in your altered state, that damage is maintained when you return to your normal form, which can be done at your whim or when you are rendered unconscious, put into torpor, or killed. In addition to acting normally, the user may continue to move as if they were controlling

themselves with *Animate the Unmoving (Elemental Mastery 3)*.

Advanced

Summon Elemental

In addition to the weaker spirits which imbue the objects around you, you know that there are greater spirits built of large quantities of the classical elements (earth, air, fire, and water) with which you can communicate. This power enables you to do so. Some thaumaturges report finding other elemental spirits, like blood, electricity, or glass, but these reports are generally assumed to be fabrications. To summon an elemental, you must be near a significant quantity of its element. A bonfire may be necessary to summon a fire elemental, for example, while a lake or river may be necessary to bring forth a spirit of the waters.

You can attempt to bring forth an elemental with a number of Traits between one and ten. Elementals have the same number of Traits in all three Attributes. By spending a Willpower Trait and attempting three Mental Tests with difficulty equal to the number of Traits you chose, you successfully summon the Elemental. You must succeed in at least one of these challenges to use the elemental, but all three challenges must be made regardless of which one you win. For each challenge that you win—including the first— you can give the spirit a command that it must follow. If you tie (on symbols and on Traits), perform the challenge again. There is no retest allowed for either the spirit or the thaumaturge on these challenges.

Once you control an elemental, it must follow your commands. You can only control one elemental at a time, though it can be placed “on standby” and summoned without the above efforts at a later time to follow your commands. An item card will be provided for you listing the number of commands you can give to your elemental. When you are out of commands, the card will be reclaimed by a Storyteller.

An elemental holds limited control over its own element. An earth elemental can displace the ground to dig a hole or tunnel, while a fire elemental can control other fires as weapons or extinguish them. Truly herculean efforts may “use up” more than one command, at the discretion of the Storyteller. Elementals are spiritual in nature, and have no corporeal form (even those “made of” earth). As such, they cannot directly attack others, nor can they be injured by them. They can, however, use their capacity to affect their own elements to attack, confuse, capture, or otherwise mess with others. The exact effects of these capabilities on others is up to the Storyteller.

Hands of Destruction

This Path was originally the purview of the Sabbat, but Camarilla agents uncovered its secrets, and today it is found within both sects. As it is focused entirely on offensive might, many of its powers can be combined with a physical attack of some sort as part of one round. In other words, if you must both cast a spell and strike your target, you do not need two actions to do so.

Basic

Decay

Touching an object or living being allows you to age it a full year for each round you maintain contact. This power can reduce organic matter to a rotting sludge, and it can weaken metal and crack plastics with enough time. The added age is permanent, but the aging effect ceases when you stop touching your target. Aging a vampire has no effect. This power does not require a chop.

Gnarl Wood

You can cause up to fifty pounds of wood to become a gnarled, useless mass of knots simply by looking at it. You can gnarl multiple targets at once as long as you can see them and the sum of their weights does not exceed fifty pounds. If you attempt to use this power on an object held by someone else, you must succeed in a Mental Challenge against them, or they notice the effect and can hide the wood from your sight.

Intermediate

Acidic Touch

This power allows you to exude your very blood out of any portion of your body, though the hands are most common. This blood is thick, black, and extremely acidic. Each application of *Acidic Touch* inflicts three boxes of damage to the Durability of an item. The power itself does not require a chop, though striking an object may require a Physical Challenge. You cannot throw the acid at a target. Your own acidic blood does not harm you, and it does not cause physical harm to living or unliving things.

If you target an object being held or used by another person, that person may engage you in a Physical Challenge to resist your blood coming into contact with the object. They may retest with any applicable retest (such as *Dodge*, but not *Might (Potence 2)*), but if they use *Block*, you deal the three Durability boxes of damage to their shield.

Applications of *Acidic Touch* last for a scene or an hour. This power does not require any additional Blood Traits; the standard one Trait required for all *Thaumaturgy* is the only cost.

Size of Object	Difficulty
Large (door, refrigerator)	3
Medium (sword, chair)	5
Small (toaster, handgun)	7
Very Small (pencil, ring)	9

Atrophy

This power allows you to render an arm or leg useless with a simple touch. Each limb atrophied in this way requires your target to bid an additional Trait in all Physical Challenges. Other secondary effects can apply as well; for example, a target with two atrophied arms cannot wield a weapon, use *Thaumaturgy*, or grapple an opponent, while a victim without

functional legs may be largely immobile. This effect is permanent on mortals, while vampires heal it as if it were aggravated damage.

Advanced

Caustic Bombardment

This power allows you to destroy an object at range, dissolving its essence. By gesturing towards an object and succeeding in a Physical Challenge, you cause your blood to surround the target, affecting it as per *Acidic Touch* (*Hands of Destruction* 3). You do not need to have an application of *Acidic Touch* ready to use this power.

If the object is being held or used by another person, they may resist as per *Acidic Touch*. This power cannot affect an object that is excessively far from you, such as the top of a building while you are on the ground, or an airplane in flight.

The Hearth Path

The Tremere have long had mystical ways to defend their holdings and chantries. Popular among regents and others who control or defend such investments, the *Hearth Path* was designed to protect the thaumaturge by enchanting their demesne either to confuse invaders, to harm them if they do not leave, or to provide a quick means of escape when necessary.

The Basic powers on this Path can be used just like any other Path of *Thaumaturgy*. The remaining powers, however, require that a magical hearth be constructed somewhere within the building. The construction of such a hearth requires ten minutes. However, familiarity with a building eases the process for the thaumaturge, and as a result, the construction is instant when done in the user's haven.

The ritual used to enchant a building, haven or otherwise, requires that a fireplace-sized, non-magical fire be built somewhere within it, and that a Trait of Blood is spilled into it. If this fire is extinguished by any means, the magical effects of the Path wear off. The magical properties of the Hearth will also end at dawn, although the fire will remain lit unless explicitly put out. The room in which the fire is built is referred to as the *Hearth Room*, and the fire itself is referred to as the *Hearth*.

The effects of this Path, unless otherwise specified, can affect a building or roughly six stories or less. If the building is larger than this, only a portion of it can be affected. The use of *Aura Perception* (*Auspex* 2) in the enchanted area can determine the existence of the enchantments, but not the exact nature of them. *Obfuscate* does not defend against this path.

Basic

Guest's Herald

This power enables the caster to enchant a specific door or other entryway, such as a window or skylight. Whenever someone passes through this portal, an audio or visual effect will alert the thaumaturge. This signal can be anything, although a bell or warning light are the most

common. The signal cannot be changed unless the enchantment is repeated. Others do perceive this signal. The thaumaturge must actually be present in the building in which this enchanted portal exists to receive the warning.

Inventory

By using this enchantment within a building, the user gains a mystical knowledge of the items contained within it. In addition to the Blood Trait required by all *Thaumaturgy*, this power requires the expenditure of a Mental Trait. If the user succeeds in a Check, they determine the item's location within the building, to some uncertainty. This ability cannot be used to determine the location of living or unliving things. Seeking additional items, or attempting to locate an item again, requires the expenditure of an additional Mental Trait.

Intermediate

Personal Labyrinth

This power begins a set of up to three mystical defenses that can be applied to a building as described above. Each of these defenses requires the expenditure of a Blood Trait to enact. When someone enters the enchanted area, they must succeed in a Mental Test with difficulty 6 (increased to 8 in the rooms directly adjacent to the Hearth Room), or they become confused and will rationalize a reason to leave. As soon as they leave, the enchantment wears off; mortals will continue to flee, but supernatural beings can then attempt to enter once more, as they realise they are being magically repelled. The thaumaturge can choose to allow individuals to pass through the enchanted area without requiring a chop as long as they have met the individual before, and they may choose to revoke this invitation at their discretion. *Personal Labyrinth* does not protect the Hearth Room.

As long as the thaumaturge is within their *Personal Labyrinth*, they may attempt to locate any of the invited individuals within it by making a Mental Test with difficulty 7. If they succeed, they instantly learn exactly where within the house the chosen individual is.

Passportal

This power allowed the thaumaturge to quickly travel within their enchanted area. When passing through a door, they may exit from any other door in the enchanted area. Others who follow are unaffected—even allies of the thaumaturge will pass through the door normally. This power cannot be used to completely exit the enchanted area, but it can be used to maneuver into a room at the edge of it. In other words, if an entire building is enchanted, this cannot be used to exit it via the front door, but it could be used to enter the foyer, thus allowing easy access to the outside.

Advanced

Madhouse

At the highest level of this Path, the thaumaturge can enchant a building in such a way that it will defend itself. Like *Personal Labyrinth (Hearth Path 3)*, the thaumaturge can choose to allow others to enter the enchanted area with suffering the effects of this power, and revoke their

invitation if they so desire. The invitation to enter the enchanted area for both this power and *Personal Labyrinth* are linked; if the thaumaturge invites a person into the area, neither enchantment functions for the invitee until that invitation is revoked.

Each room within the enchanted area will defend itself, forcing a Physical Challenge against the building with a difficulty of 6. If this challenge is lost, the intruder suffers one box of lethal damage. Any room that is directly adjacent to the Hearth Room increases this difficulty to 8. The Hearth Room itself has no traps. These defenses take the form of accidents, poltergeist-like activities, or even overtly hostile movements. Once a trap is sprung it will reset, and damages to the building as a result of traps or displacement of items within the building disappear. The Storytellers will determine the exact nature of the traps within an area. Regardless of how the building defends itself, the damage remains constant.

Passing through a room again requires additional chops. For the purposes of this power, a room is defined as a single, enclosed space within the building. Thus, a living room, bathroom, staircase, closet, or garage all constitute a room. The Storytellers will determine if other spaces within a building require a chop. *Arcana*, *Athletics*, and *Awareness* can be used to retest the Physical Challenges against the building.

Neptune's Might

For those thaumaturges who make their dwelling by bodies of water, *Neptune's Might* is a uniquely powerful path, but for landlocked areas, it has been of less interest. Regardless, the manipulation of water and other liquids is an extremely useful capacity in the modern world, where water pipes, faucets, spigots, and hydrants can be found with relative ease. These powers all require a source of water or other liquid to use. The greater the amount of water available to be used the better, but users of this Path have taken to carrying water with them in canteens or other containers to be used when necessary.

This power cannot be used on ambient humidity, nor can it be used on the fluids of a living being, unless noted otherwise.

Basic

Eyes of the Deep

Looking deep into a standing body of water, the user of this power can see events that transpired in or around it from the water's perspective. You can easily see up to one day in the past. For each additional day you wish to see, you must win or tie a Simple Test. The events of the past replay very quickly, allowing the user to hone in on events that are of importance. This power does not work on flowing water, nor does it work on water that wasn't present during the time frame. For example, if a sink is filled by the thaumaturge, then this power could only be used to see back to the point at which it was filled. Similarly, a glass of water must have been present during the event someone wishes to investigate in order to be useful.

Prison of Water

Using this power allows the thaumaturge to trap others using water as a restraint. The more water present, the easier it is to restrain the target. Bands of water spring forth from the source and move quickly to entangle the target. They must succeed in a Static Physical Challenge (retests *Athletics* or *Might*) with a difficulty based on the size of the water used as the source of this spell:

Difficulty	Body of Water Used
6	The contents of a canteen or thermos, puddles, rain runoff, running faucets
8	Small ponds, creeks, lightly flooded roads, bathtubs, broken house water pipes
10	Larger ponds, small rivers, pools, small lakes, flowing hydrants
12	Rivers, lakes, major canals, Olympic pools, cracked water mains
15	Great lakes, seas, oceans

If the target loses this challenge, they are grappled. (The water cannot apply grapple maneuvers, and maneuvers may not be applied to the water.) Attempts to break free use normal grappling rules.

A line of sight must be maintained between the water source and the entangled target. If this line of sight is lost, the entanglement ends. It also ends if the thaumaturge falls unconscious, enters torpor, meets their Final Death, or chooses to release the target.

Intermediate

Hydric Transformation

This power allows you to change other liquids into water. This can affect the blood of a living or unliving target, but doing so requires you to be touching them, possibly requiring a Physical Challenge. Every Mental Trait spent, up to a maximum of three, converts a single Trait's worth of an alternate liquid into water. This conversion is easily represented for blood; for other liquids, it is roughly one pint. Water converted by this power can be used to fuel the other powers of this Path.

Converting the blood of a mortal is almost invariably lethal in minutes without a transfusion. For vampires, for every three Traits' worth of water in their system, the victim suffers -1 on ties. While the water remains in their system, vampires cannot replace it with blood. This effect lasts until the end of the scene, at which time the water dissipates and no longer takes up space in the victim's system. Alternatively, the subject can expel the water at a rate of two traits per round. This does not take an action, but counts as a blood expenditure. (Thus, only those with the Sanguinist Merit can also use blood to buff, heal, or activate a Discipline in the same round.)

Flowing Wall

This power creates a wall that obscures vision and impedes passage. The amount of water available determines the size of the wall, though the power of this enchantment allows the thaumaturge to create a wall even with small amounts of water. The amount contained in a canteen or thermos, for example, can create a wall large enough to fill a doorway. Greater amounts of water can be used to create larger walls at the discretion of the Storytellers.

Passing through the wall requires an individual to succeed in three Physical Tests with difficulty equal to the thaumaturge's Mental Traits at the time of casting. If any of those Tests are lost, the individual cannot pass through that round. Thrown objects or fired projectiles can never pass through the wall. This barrier affects even those moving on other planes, such as those using *Astral Projection* (*Auspex* 5), but those characters make Mental Tests instead of Physical ones.

The wall lasts until the thaumaturge releases it, is made unconscious, enters torpor, meets Final Death, or until dawn, whichever occurs first.

Advanced

Dehydrate

This power allows you to evaporate water—even the water in mortal and supernatural targets. Mortals killed by this power leave behind mummified corpses. This power can also be used for less hostile purposes or to evaporate water before other practitioners can use it.

Affecting a living target requires the caster to first win a Mental Challenge against them, defended using Physical Traits. If successful, they take three levels of lethal damage if mortal, or lose three Blood Traits if vampiric. If they have less than three Blood Traits in their system, they take lethal wounds for each Blood Trait they would have lost. Victims who take damage must succeed in a Willpower Test with a difficulty equal to twice the damage taken, or are overcome with agony for that round and cannot act. (Characters at 0 Blood will frenzy automatically, but can still be affected by the agony.)

The Taking of the Spirit

The Tremere jealously guard their secrets, and have thus developed various ways to try and defend themselves against rogue thaumaturges within their own ranks. The internal affairs enforcers of the Tremere (known as the Astors) use this path to weaken others and reduce their potential when they are forced to do battle with them.

Basic

Mind Leech

This power allows the caster to temporarily affect a target's mental prowess. The target does not know what has caused their fatigue, but will recognize the effect. By succeeding in a Mental Test with difficulty equal to the target's Mental Traits, the target is forced to bid an additional Trait on all Mental Challenges for the rest of the scene or an hour, whichever comes

first. *Mind Leech* can only be used on a specific target once per scene. However, multiple targets can be affected, and more than one thaumaturge can use this power on the same target.

Stigmatize

Similar to *Mind Leech (Taking of the Spirit 1)*, this power affects a target's ability to relate to others. They do not know the source of this malaise, but they can recognize that they are under its effects. By succeeding in a Mental Test with difficulty equal to the target's Mental Traits, the target is forced to bid an additional Trait on all Social Challenges for the rest of the scene or an hour, whichever comes first. This power has the same restrictions as *Mind Leech*.

Intermediate

Drain Resolve

Upon reaching this level of mastery within this Path, the thaumaturge gains the ability to restrict their target's ability to refresh their Mental Traits during the night. The psychological effect of this power is similar to a deep depression, and, as with the previous powers, has no discernible source.

This power must be used within five minutes of successfully using *Mind Leech (Taking of the Spirit 1)* on a target. By succeeding in a Mental Challenge against the target, they lose the ability to refresh their Mental Traits unless they spend three Willpower Traits to do so. This power wears off at dawn.

Sap Will

This power enables the caster to strike at the very heart of their target and strip away their sense of self. Unlike the lesser powers of this Path, the source of this attack is obvious to the victim. If the caster succeeds in a Mental Challenge in which the caster must bid three Mental Traits to the target's one, the target immediately loses a Willpower Trait. This power cannot be used more than three times in one night on a specific target, regardless of who uses it.

Advanced

Stupefy

At the highest level of mastery, this path enables the thaumaturge to absorb the mental prowess of their target. By succeeding in a Mental Challenge against them in which the caster must bid two Mental Traits to their one, the target immediately loses a Mental Trait, and it is added to the caster's total. The caster cannot have more Mental Traits than they have Mental Dots as a result of using this power. If more Traits are drained than their maximum, these additional Traits are simply lost. The target still loses a Trait for losing the challenge, thus essentially robbing them of two Mental Traits.

The Path of Technomancy

The Storytellers are discussing this Path. It is not currently available but may be in the future.

The Path of Transmutation

Magical means to convert the very matter of existence has long been sought after by mortal magicians and alchemists, but it is the blood magicians of the Kindred world who have perfected it. These powers can only be used on matter within line of sight, and only on inanimate matter. For the purposes of this Path, vampires are considered animate matter. This means that the blood in a vampire, while a liquid, cannot be transmuted. Additionally, there is a limit to which “line of sight” extends; you can affect objects in your general area with this power, but trying to drop satellites out of the sky or affect a building across town is outside the scope of this Path.

The effects of this power last for a scene or an hour, whichever is shorter. The user can also choose to end their effects at any time. They also end if the thaumaturge is knocked unconscious, enters torpor, or meets Final Death.

Basic

Fortify the Solid Form

This power allows the user to enhance the strength of an item, turning what would otherwise be fragile into something stronger. When used on an otherwise mundane item, it decreases its fragility (gives it an additional level of Durability) and makes it viable as a weapon in combat. In addition to the Blood Trait required to use all *Thaumaturgy*, the caster must also spend a Mental Trait.

Crystallize the Liquid Form

This power transforms one Blood Trait’s worth of liquid (about one pint) into a solid. The substance itself does not change, nor do its temperature or other physical properties. Thus, solidified acid will still corrode and solidified molten iron will still burn. At the conclusion of this power, the crystallized liquid returns to its original state. In addition to the Blood Trait required to use all *Thaumaturgy*, the caster must also spend a Mental Trait.

Intermediate

Liquefy the Solid Form

By spending a number of Mental Traits relative to the size of the target, the thaumaturge melts a solid object into a puddle of liquid. Small, handheld objects may cost only a single Mental Trait, while larger objects will cost more at the discretion of the Storytellers. Targets of extremely large size, such as buildings and airplanes, cannot be melted at all.

When the effects wear off, the puddle will return to its original state unless it is thoroughly scattered.

Solidify the Gaseous Form

At this level of mastery, a thaumaturge can solidify the very air and other gasses to form hazy, semi-transparent walls. These walls must be anchored to existing features; they cannot be

created completely in space. They are also stationary, and thus cannot be moved once created.

Creating a wall requires the expenditure of Mental Traits proportional to the size of the wall. Creating a wall to seal a door would cost a single Trait, for example. The larger the space being sealed off, the greater the number of Traits necessary, determined at the discretion of the Storytellers. Extremely large openings may not be possible to seal; putting a cap on the Grand Canyon or trying to close off an airplane hangar is outside the capabilities of even the most powerful thaumaturge.

The walls are considered to have a number of Physical Traits equal to the Mental Traits of the thaumaturge at the time of casting, prior to expenditures. If someone wishes to punch through a wall, they must win a Physical Challenge against it, and suffer a -2 penalty on ties. Once a wall is penetrated, it is destroyed. It takes a personal interaction to destroy such a wall; shooting one or driving a car into it will not work.

Advanced

Sublimate the Solid Form

This power represents the greatest control over the states of matter that can be achieved with this Path. It allows the thaumaturge to cause a solid area to become a gas. Oddly, though, while anyone can pass through the targeted area, it retains other physical properties. Walls continue to support buildings, phosphorus still fizzes in water, and a boat will still float and displace water.

Using this power requires a Mental Trait to enchant an area roughly equal to the volume of a single person. To affect a larger area, additional Mental Traits proportional to the additional volume (in person-sizes) must be spent. Objects can be carried through by a person, but will otherwise be unable to pass.

This power can be used to create pits or holding cells into which someone can be thrown or fall. If a person is trapped in an enchanted area when this power's effects end or are dropped, that person suffers two levels of lethal damage and is forced out into the most appropriate open area. Keeping an area in this state requires concentration. The caster cannot perform other *Thaumaturgy* while using this power.

Weather Control

Long have tales been told of those who can control the weather. The ability to call forth a storm or befriend the mists represents a truly great accomplishment for any thaumaturge. The area affected by this power is relatively small on a meteorological scale and is usually about three or four miles in diameter.

Before using these powers, the thaumaturge must first determine how they wish to change the

weather. Each power in this Path requires the expenditure of a Willpower Trait in addition to the standard Blood Trait spent on all *Thaumaturgy*. Additionally, Mental Traits may be expended to speed the process at which the weather changes.

Traits Spent	Weather Change Delay
0	One day.
1	Three hours.
2	One hour.
3	Ten minutes.
4	Almost instantly.

Note that extremely fast shifts in the weather are considered a breach of the Masquerade, should that matter to you, and often lead to inquiries by mortal scientists wishing to understand the strange weather patterns.

You can use a Basic Downtime Action to choose the weather for the night of the following game, within the types of weather your current level in this power allows you to create. You can also use this Path within the allotted ritual time between waking and the start of play on a game night; note that this does require the usual expenditure of Mental Traits. No major disasters can be caused by this Path. If there are multiple weather Tremere in the town the night of a game, the Storytellers will determine what areas a player will influence for that night.

Basic

Fog

This power allows the caster to fill an area with thick fog. Vision is impaired, and all characters engaging in challenges to spot anything must bid two Traits unless they have basic *Auspex* or better. Any Ranged attacks suffer a -1 penalty on ties. It also allows the caster to summon a gentle wind and produced other weather effects of a similarly mild nature, at the discretion of the Storytellers.

Additionally, the caster may alter the temperature by ten degrees Fahrenheit in either direction.

Rain or Snow

With this power, the caster can create a small, localized rain or snow storm based on the ambient temperature. Like *Fog (Weather Control 1)*, this power impairs visibility, requiring to bid three Traits to spot things without *Auspex* and two Traits with it. Also, using *Aura Perception* requires that user to bid two Traits. Other problems due to the weather, such as difficulty in driving, happen at the discretion of the Storytellers.

Intermediate

High Winds

This level of mastery allows the caster to control winds around thirty miles per hour. All

characters making ranged attacks within the area must bid two Traits to do so; bows and thrown weapons require three. *High Winds* also affects *Flight* and *Mist Form*.

This power can be used to knock people prone by succeeding in a Mental Challenge against their Physical Traits, as long as the caster is within line of sight of their target and is in an area where high winds are possible. This attack deals no damage itself, but can be used in conjunction with other hazardous environments to create a more dangerous situation.

Additionally, at this stage, the caster may alter the temperature by up to twenty degrees Fahrenheit.

Storm

The caster may now combine the effects of '*Rain or Snow*' (*Weather Control 2*) with *High Winds* (*Weather Control 3*). '*Rain or Snow*' now causes magical fire attacks to be less potent. Anyone casting a magical fire attack must bid two traits when targeting anything.

Advanced

Lightning Strike

The final power of this Path allows the caster to strike their foes with bolts of deadly electricity. By succeeding in a Mental Challenge against their Physical Traits in which the target must bid two Traits to the caster's one, the caster deals the target two levels of lethal damage. Unlike other powers within this Path, the caster does not spend Mental Traits to determine the speed with which this one manifests. However, unless there are storm clouds overhead, the caster must spend three Mental Traits to pull lightning from clear skies. Striking a target with lightning may fry any electronic devices they are holding. If directed to strike an electronic device, the lightning invariably destroys it. Nearby strikes have a chance of damaging electronics as well, though ones that use vacuum tubes (such as 1920s radios) are somewhat less susceptible to such collateral damage. (They will still be ruined by direct hits.)

This power does not require the expenditure of a Willpower Trait to use.

Combo Disciplines

A combo Discipline is a way of using two powers simultaneously to produce an effect that is different from the use of those two powers individually.

A combo Discipline is considered to be at the level of its highest constituent power. In other words, if you use *Melpominee 2* and *Presence 4* to create a power that would entrance people and distract them from their other business, the combo Discipline would be considered an Intermediate Discipline. If you have a power that has an effect based on the number of powers you have within that Discipline, such as *Hemorrhage (Quietus 5)*, combo Disciplines do not count toward that total.

The first step in creating a combo Discipline is speaking with the Storytellers about your concept. In

character, this could represent a discussion with a mentor, other clan mates, or even a sire. Regardless, this requires an Intermediate Downtime Action. During this time, you and the Storytellers work together to design a power that you find cool and we feel is balanced. It should be understood that our intention, as the staff of this game, is to provide variety through combo Disciplines, not improved ways of hurting things, and we will compare your proposal against the powers listed in this rulebook and Elder disciplines to try and ensure that combinations do not become too powerful.

Once both sides agree to a power, it takes weeks of study and practice to create and master the combo Discipline. It takes two weeks to learn a Basic combo Discipline, four weeks for an Intermediate combo Discipline, and six weeks for an Advanced combo Discipline. Usually, this time is spent negotiating with the Storytellers over the exact wording of the Discipline, if necessary.

You can create a combo Discipline with any two or three powers you have (with Storyteller approval), with the exception of *Thaumaturgy*, *Thaumaturgical Countermagic*, and *Necromancy*. Those Disciplines give you access to rituals, which can be created by the character, and which are sometimes demonstrably more powerful than any combo Discipline.

The base cost of a combo Discipline is the sum of the costs of the powers that you use to create it. However, the Storytellers may alter this cost based on other factors such as the level of danger it poses to others, or how frequently useful it may be.

Designing a combo Discipline expends your one unique request for the month.

Combo Disciplines cannot be components of other combo Disciplines.

Chapter VII

Advanced Magic

Thaumaturgy Rituals

A thaumaturgical ritual is a ceremony that allows a thaumaturge to produce some specific magical effect outside those produced by any Path of *Thaumaturgy*. Rituals are not bound to specific Paths. Rituals are categorized as Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced. Tremere characters receive the ritual *Rite of Introduction* for free at character creation and also learn one free Basic ritual when they learn their first dot of *Thaumaturgy*. A character cannot learn rituals of a level higher than their highest level of *Thaumaturgy*.

Casting a ritual requires the elements and activities (if any) listed in the ritual's description, and a Static Mental Challenge (retest *Arcana*) on the part of the caster. The difficulty of this challenge is 5 for a Basic ritual, 7 for an Intermediate ritual, and 9 for an Advanced ritual.

Unless otherwise stated, Basic rituals take ten minutes to cast, Intermediate rituals take twenty minutes to cast, and Advanced rituals take thirty minutes to cast. We allow each character to cast one hour's worth of rituals become coming into game on a given night. At check-in, characters with rituals should tell a Storyteller what rituals they wish to perform upon arising and make the appropriate chops to determine if they succeed. If you wish to cast a ritual later in the night, you will have to sit out of the game for a time and chop with a Storyteller. Depending on the in-game circumstances, you may or may not have to sit out the full duration in real time.

Over downtime, it is a Intermediate Downtime Action to use an object-creating ritual if your character has not used that ritual before. If they have used it before, it is a Basic Downtime Action.

This section has been actively reworked as of Summer 2017. Please review the text of any rituals you have or plan to get.

Basic

Banish Big Brother

Until the next sunrise, those affected by this ritual automatically feel a buzzing sensation any time they are taped or monitored by surveillance devices, as well as sensing the general nature and approximate location of the machine. Once a Kindred is aware of attempted surveillance, they may attempt a Static Mental Challenge. Simple electronic devices have a difficulty of 4 and complex electronic devices have a difficulty of 9 (retest *Security*). This particular Static Mental Challenge does not risk a Mental Trait. The caster may deactivate this Ritual to automatically succeed on the Static Mental Challenge. The ritual can be recast later in the night in ten minutes as usual.

This ritual can only affect devices that are actively monitoring the caster. A cellular phone or car

phone that is off, or that is on but not currently in use, does not trigger the warning sensation. A phone being used to make or receive a call will.

Blood Mead (Vine of Dionysus)

The ritualist invokes Dionysus' blessing on a concoction of mead and two Traits of mortal blood, and then consumes the heady brew. (The mixture does not add to the caster's Blood Pool.) They immediately gain an additional Healthy health level, but also suffer a one Trait penalty on all Challenges involving dexterity or intelligence due to intoxication. In addition, they lose one Physical or Mental Trait (their choice). The effects last until sunrise and cannot be stacked with multiple castings. Since drinking the blood mead is part of the ritual, it cannot be stockpiled for later use and cannot be given to another.

Blood Rush

With this ritual, the caster experiences all the pleasures of feeding and gains one free retest to avoid frenzying over hunger or the smell or sight of blood. This ritual lasts until the next sunset.

Brand of the Paramour

After gathering two Traits of blood from a pair of twins, the ritualist and a ghoul each ingest one trait. Following the ritual, the vampire will feel a phantom pain when their ghoul is hurt. This ritual lasts until the ghoul is Embraced or killed, or 3 months have passed.

Communicate with Kindred Sire

After casting the ritual, by meditating for half an hour on an object which once belonged to their sire, the ritualist can establish a telepathic link to their sire anywhere in the world. The meditation may take place any time during the night; it need not immediately follow the casting of the ritual. The link lasts for ten minutes.

Craft Bloodstone

By imbuing a stone with three Traits of blood, the ritualist can track its distance and direction from the stone's location. This ritual takes five minutes each night for three nights. The appearance of the stone is not altered. The caster cannot have more bloodstones than the number of Willpower Dots they possess. If their Willpower Dots are reduced below the number of bloodstones they possess, the excess bloodstones are destroyed, starting with the oldest.

Dedicate the Chantry

By walking around a single building and anointing it with water, the caster creates a space in which any subsequent rituals cast on the area are at a one Trait bonus to completion. Areas larger than a single building may require multiple castings of this ritual. (Note: this is not the only ritual involved in creating a chantry in which *Thaumaturgy* may be taught. The others are not available to player characters.)

Defense of the Sacred Haven

After the user inscribes mystic sigils on the walls of a room, using one Trait of blood, all sunlight is

mystically prevented from entering the room as long as the ritualist is within.

Deflection of Wooden Doom

After sitting in a circle of wood, the ritualist places a splinter under their tongue. Until the splinter is removed or the next dawn or dusk passes, the first stake entering the caster's body turns to dust.

Devil's Touch

This ritual enchants a penny. Any mortal possessing the penny is down two Social Traits while they have the penny. This ritual lasts until dawn.

Domino of Life

This ritual allows the caster (and only the caster) to assume one physical characteristic of mortality, such as a heart beat, flesh tone, or respiration until one hour before dawn. A vial of mortal blood (less than a Trait, more than a pinprick) is required for the casting and must be carried on the caster's person throughout the time the ritual is active. The ritual may be cast multiple times for various features of mortality. Each casting requires its own vial of mortal blood. Five uses of this ritual can simulate the Merit Blush of Health.

Enchanting the Curse

This ritual is used almost exclusively to punish or torment ghouls. The ritualist draws the blood of the ghoul and speaks the words of a curse. For the following month, the ghoul suffers aggravated damage from exposure to sunlight at a rate of one per two rounds.

Enchantment Versus Ghouls

By spending ten minutes repeating an incantation and pouring one Blood Trait over an object such as a melee weapon, the caster creates a mystical glyph that injures ghouls. The object must be one that can be worn or carried in two hands for the duration of the casting by the caster without the use of *Potence*. The object may be no smaller than a knife or crossbow bolt. If cast on a projectile weapon, the enchantment does not apply to projectiles fired by the weapon.

The ritual activates the night after it is cast, and the object loses one permanent Durability. The object now causes an automatic level of lethal damage to any ghoul who touches it or is touched by it, in addition to the damage normally done by the weapon itself. If the item is placed in lasting contact with the ghoul (for example, an enchanted shackle on a ghoul's limb) it only causes the initial damage and does not keep causing further damage round after round.

If the item on which the glyph is inscribed is ever reduced to 0 Durability, the enchantment collapses. Any use of a *Craft* Ability to repair, improve, or alter the item after the enchantment is cast also breaks the enchantment. In any case, the enchantment ends after roughly two to four weeks. (In character, the duration is uncertain. Out of character, it will always end at the end of the second game, or before the second game if there's a long break between the games.) The ritual can be re-cast on the same item once the original casting has ended.

Encrypt Missive

As a message is written in blood, the caster speaks the name of the person who will be able to read it. Once the message is finished, only the ritualist and the addressee can read it. To anyone else, the message appears to be random scribbles.

Extinguish

By intoning the ritual, pinching out a candle flame, and spitting on the floor, the ritualist may at any time for the rest of the night speak a magical syllable that will extinguish one flame up to the size of a small bonfire. The ritual is spent after use. This ritual may be cast multiple times in a night.

Eyes of the Nighthawk

Through this ritual, the caster's perceptions are transferred into the body of a predatory bird until one of three conditions is met: 1) the caster chooses to end the ritual, 2) the caster touches the bird, 3) dawn arrives. The bird must be in the caster's line of sight during the casting of the ritual, but may subsequently leave it. Basic *Auspex* may be used while inhabiting the raptor, but no other Disciplines. While the ritual is active, the caster's own senses cannot be returned to their body without ending the ritual. This ritual does not provide any way to control the bird. The caster must blind the bird within one minute of ending the ritual or suffer temporary blindness for three nights.

Impassable Trail

Until sunrise, the ritualist can travel through even the densest terrain (e.g. debris-strewn alleyway or dense forest) without betraying any sign of passage aside from a faint scent (detectable by supernatural sensory abilities only). The terrain may still hinder your speed and must be physically passable without supernatural means. The caster must carry an owl feather steeped in vampiric vitae or the ashes of burnt toad legs.

Impressive Visage

By performing this ritual and then placing a sprig of dried mint in their right shoe or pocket, the caster gains two *Appearance* Dots for the evening. Multiple castings of this ritual in a single night have no effect beyond the first. If these traits bring the caster's *Appearance* to more than 5, they are supernaturally beautiful and may attract an unusual amount of attention.

The Imp's Affliction

This ritual works only on mortals, and infects them with an uncomfortable and embarrassing illness for one scene. It requires the caster to write the target's name on a scrap of paper and then burn it.

Iron Body

[This is now an Intermediate ritual. See the entry below.]

Jinx

[This is now an Advanced ritual. See the entry below.]

Machine Blitz

By spending one minute tracing incorrect mathematical equations on the surface of a target device with a pencil-sized bone wand, the ritualist causes the machine to instantly stop working through what appears to be a normal system failure. A skilled repairman can restore the target to function by succeeding in a Mental Test with difficulty equal to the caster's Mental Traits at the time the ritual is performed.

Mourning the Life Curse

The ritualist smears a paste of copal oil, ground eyebright, and dates onto the eyelids of the victim, who must be a mortal. The mortal then begins to uncontrollably cry tears of blood at a rate of one Blood Trait every five minutes. The process is painless and lasts until the vampire stops concentrating on the victim.

The Open Passage

After casting the ritual, by tracing a pattern with one Trait of blood, the ritualist makes a barrier insubstantial for one full round. This will allow themselves and allies to pass through vertical and mostly vertical surfaces. Anything touching the wall becomes similarly insubstantial. This ritual requires ten minutes to draw the pattern, and fifty additional minutes for the blood to set and seep through the solid area to create the passage. Thereafter, the passage is only open for a single round. This ritual cannot be used to enter or leave combat without extremely careful planning and timing.

Principle Focus of Vitae Infusion

This ritual allows the caster to infuse one small object (often generically referred to as a "blood bead") with a single Blood Trait available later for extraction and use by the caster or another person who is present during the ritual. The blood used, however, must be the caster's, and will create or reinforce blood bonds as normal if used by such an other person.

A caster may make as many blood beads in a night as time and available blood permit. The infused items last until dawn; they do not carry between sessions. Activating a blood bead requires an action, during which it is held in the hand. This does not count any action(s) required to remove it from a container or hiding place.

Purge the Inner Demon

This ritual enchants a metal pin. The caster knows whether the ritual to enchant it was successful, and if not may try again immediately. At any time for the rest of the night, the caster may use the pin to temporarily pull another Kindred's Beast out of frenzy in the following manner.

The caster uses one hand to thrust the pin into their other hand and spends two Willpower Traits. The target (who must be within the same scene) immediately stops frenzying and cannot frenzy again until one of four conditions is met: 1) the pin is no longer in the caster's hand (whether removed by the caster, by another, or allowed to fall out), 2) the caster loses concentration on maintaining the ritual, 3) the scene is ending, 4) the caster or the target leaves the scene. Once any of the conditions is met, the target immediately resumes their frenzy. The caster cannot use the hand with the pin in it for any other purpose during the time the pin is in place (the hand is occupied holding it in), but may take

actions with the other hand as long as they do not break concentration. In combat time, the action to drive the pin in takes place on the caster's Mentals. It does, however, require a physical action so it may be pre-empted by Celerity.

A given caster may have no more than one pin enchanted at a time. No one else may use the enchanted pin, and the caster must thrust it into their own hand themselves. The pin is not destroyed by the ritual and may be re-enchanted.

Purify the Blood

This ritual allows the caster to purify one Trait of blood of any diseases or drugs prior to consumption. It does not work on vampire blood or blood within a living being.

Rebirth of Mortal Vanity

This ritual allows a vampire to effectively "grow" hair. For every inch of hair they wish to have, the recipient of the ritual must pluck a hair from the head of a living human child. It lasts until the hair is cut shorter than the vampire's "normal" length.

Recure of the Homeland

By mixing one handful of earth from the area of the subject's mortal birth with two of their Blood Traits, the ritualist creates a paste that instantly heals one level of their aggravated damage per night. This paste may only be used once on an individual each night, regardless of how many different ritualists have created it. The paste lasts two weeks, but must ferment for one night prior to it becoming useful, and the application of the paste cannot be done during combat.

Rite of Introduction

Traditionally used to announce the presence of a new Tremere within a city, the caster boils a mixture of mystical ingredients in a pot of rainwater, recites an incantation into the vapors, and speaks a brief (30 second or less) message of introduction for the regent of the city. The regent may reply telepathically for up to five minutes. This ability to telepathically respond is only available to regents.

Scent of the Lupine's Passing

By enchanting and then carrying a pouch of herbs, the caster can smell out werewolves for a full scene or hour, but must be within five feet of the target and succeed in a Mental Challenge against them.

The Scribe

With this ritual, the caster's spoken words are mystically transcribed into a written document. The ritual may also be cast on another. The power lasts for one scene, or until the caster chooses to end it. (Please note that the Storytellers cannot provide an exact transcript for you. If you the player want to have one, you will need to provide it yourself.)

Trima (Vine of Dionysus)

The ritualist uses a Trait of their vitae to create a spiced wine, causing any mortal who drinks it to

become lethargic and their memories of the evening to be indistinct. Once consumed by a mortal, the vitae retains no power to create a blood bond in a vampire feeding from them. This effect lasts until sunrise.

Ward Versus Ghouls

The caster chants over one Trait of blood, which can then be painted on all inner surfaces of a doorway or similar passage such as a window frame or skylight. Any ghoul who violates the warded space by passing any part of their body through the painted opening will take an automatic level of lethal damage.

If the continuity of the ward line around a passageway is disrupted, the ward collapses.

Intermediate

Blood Allergy

By mixing a trait of their target's blood with dead rose petals and speaking an incantation, the caster forces the victim Kindred to expel all but five Blood Traits from their system. In addition, the victim's Blood Pool is capped at 5 for the rest of the night. This ritual cannot be cast on vampires of lower generation than the caster.

Blood Certamen

This ritual allows two Tremere to use two Blood Traits per round while in mystical combat with each other. The ritual's effects only work within the ritualized circle, which can only be constructed within a chantry.

Blood Mastery

This ritual uses the sympathetic principle to allow the user to *Dominate* a Kindred of lower generation. The caster must have in their possession a vial of the target's vitae, at least one trait's worth. At any time before sunrise, the caster may attempt to use *Command* (*Dominate* 1) or *Mesmerism* (*Dominate* 2) on the target one time, ignoring the generation check. The caster must have the *Dominate* power in question, must still make eye contact, and must succeed on the Opposed Mental Challenge in order for the command to take effect. The trait of blood is destroyed regardless of the success or failure of the *Dominate* attempt.

Bone of Lies

By enchanting a bone that is least 200 years old and steeped in ten Traits of blood, the ritualist creates an object which detects lies. Each lie told by the person holding the bone uses one Trait, causes a crack in the bone. Once all the traits have been used, the bone becomes useless and blackened.

Cleanse the Flesh

The ritualist may cleanse non-supernatural diseases or addictions from their body by spending an

entire night in a bathtub of water, bleeding themselves dry. The ritual takes an entire night and may be done on other Kindred but when completed the subject has only one Blood Trait remaining.

Clinging of the Insect

After spending five minutes performing stretching exercises, the caster places a live spider under their tongue. They may then move on walls and ceilings at half their normal walking speed until the spider dies or the scene ends. While keeping a live spider pinned under their tongue, the caster suffers a three Trait penalty on all Social Conflicts which require them to speak well.

The Curse Belated

By spending two permanent Physical Dots and infusing a Trait of blood into a ghoul, the ritualist insures that, the instant the ghoul dies, the infused vitae will revive them as a Kindred within ten minutes. The ghoul cannot use the Blood Trait in any way, and is marked with a sigil.

Detect the Hidden Observer

The caster drains a Blood Trait and casts it into a fire of personal documents or recordings and anoints their forehead, eyes, and ears with the ashes. Until the next sunrise, the ritualist feels a sharp pain in their forehead, eyes, or ears whenever another individual uses supernatural powers of perception to actively spy on her. The location of the pain is not a reliable guide to the form of the spying (ear pain does not necessarily indicate a listener). If the caster is using *Heightened Senses (Auspex 1)*, the pain does not have the same stunning effect as overwhelming sensory input.

Enchantment Versus Fae

By spending ten minutes repeating an incantation and pouring cold iron filings (see Fae Lore for rules about cold iron) over an object such as a melee weapon, the caster creates a mystical glyph that injures fae. The object must be one that can be worn or carried in two hands for the duration of the casting by the caster without the use of *Potence*. The object may be no smaller than a knife or crossbow bolt. If cast on a projectile weapon, the enchantment does not apply to projectiles fired by the weapon.

The ritual activates the night after it is cast, and the object loses one permanent Durability. The object now causes an automatic level of lethal damage to any fae who touches it or is touched by it, in addition to the damage normally done by the weapon itself. If the item is placed in lasting contact with the fae (for example, an enchanted shackle on a fae's limb) it only causes the initial damage and does not keep causing further damage round after round.

If the item on which the glyph is inscribed is ever reduced to 0 Durability, the enchantment collapses. Any use of a *Craft* Ability to repair, improve, or alter the item after the enchantment is cast also breaks the enchantment. In any case, the enchantment ends after roughly two to four weeks. (In character, the duration is uncertain. Out of character, it will always end at the end of the second game, or before the second game if there's a long break between the games.) The ritual can be re-cast on the same item once the original casting has ended.

Enchantment Versus Lupines

By spending ten minutes repeating an incantation and pouring a handful of silver dust (\$1,000 worth) over an object such as a melee weapon, the caster creates a mystical glyph that injures werewolves. The object must be one that can be worn or carried in two hands for the duration of the casting by the caster without the use of *Potence*. The object may be no smaller than a knife or crossbow bolt. If cast on a projectile weapon, the enchantment does not apply to projectiles fired by the weapon.

The ritual activates the night after it is cast, and the object loses one permanent Durability. The object now causes an automatic level of lethal damage to any werewolf who touches it or is touched by it, in addition to the damage normally done by the weapon itself. If the item is placed in lasting contact with the werewolf (for example, an enchanted shackle on a werewolf's limb) it only causes the initial damage and does not keep causing further damage round after round.

If the item on which the glyph is inscribed is ever reduced to 0 Durability, the enchantment collapses. Any use of a *Craft* Ability to repair, improve, or alter the item after the enchantment is cast also breaks the enchantment. In any case, the enchantment ends after roughly two to four weeks. (In character, the duration is uncertain. Out of character, it will always end at the end of the second game, or before the second game if there's a long break between the games.) The ritual can be re-cast on the same item once the original casting has ended.

Firewalker

By burning off one of their big toes (and thus suffering one level of aggravated damage, though not requiring a Röttschrek test), and smearing the ashes on their feet or palms, the caster gains a resistance to fire. For the next hour, they may make a Check for each level of aggravated fire damage they take. If they win or tie, that damage becomes lethal. This ritual may be cast on as many subjects as 1/2 the caster's Mental Traits. If the caster regrows the toe during that hour, the effects of the ritual end immediately.

Incorporeal Passage

By holding a piece of mirror and intoning a chant, the caster becomes completely incorporeal. Objects and attacks pass straight through their form. However, they can only move forward or stand still; they may not turn or back up. This ritual lasts for a scene or until the caster turns away from the fragment of mirror.

Infirm Inert

This ritual deprives one Kindred of their ability to spend blood to heal wounds. The caster imbibes a Trait of blood laced with laudanum and then must smear blood onto the victim's skin. The target may spend a Willpower Trait to negate this effect for one round. The ritual lasts one night, or for as long as the laudanum remains in the ritualist's system, during which time they must spend an additional trait in Mental Challenges. (This penalty replaces our usual penalty for the effects of alcohol and opiates.)

Iron Body

Three times over the course of the night that this ritual is cast, the caster may reduce one level of

aggravated damage from an attack to lethal. The choice to reduce the damage must be made at the time the damage is sustained; it may not be done retroactively. The caster may only use this ritual on themselves and cannot cast it more than once a night.

Mark of Amaranth

While carrying an object formerly possessed by the target of the ritual, the caster must destroy another Kindred. The caster can then invoke this ritual to cause the target to appear to be a diablerist to all forms of detection until sunrise.

Pavis of Foul Presence

By tying a blue silken cord around their neck, the caster, gains protection from the effects of Basic and Intermediate Presence powers. Basic powers are projected back to the vampire who used them; Intermediate powers are simply negated. Once a cord has had its effect, it snaps, notifying the caster. The reflection or negation of a power counts as a failed attempt for the purposes of the Presence user's cooldown requirement. The ritual works once per cord and it lasts until sunrise after casting if unused. The blue silk cord must be visible. The color, location, and material are important, but the exact configuration is not—a blue silk scarf, necktie, or security badge lanyard would be just as legitimate as a plain cord. This ritual cannot be cast on another person. It cannot be cast a second time in a night until the first has ended.

Power of the Pyramid

To combine magical power, this ritual allows a group of casters to lend Willpower to another for further rituals, Trait refreshes, and so forth. Only one caster may leave the circle at any time to perform other activities. All of the casters must know the ritual, and one must pierce their flesh with a bone pin.

Return of the Heart

By mixing a Trait of their vampire victim's blood with the tears of an infant, the ritualist forces the victim to reflect upon their past actions through the eyes of an innocent and become racked with guilt. While this does not affect a Path rating, the target behaves the rest of the evening as if they had 5 Dots on the Path of Humanity.

Rutor's Hands

After casting this ritual, the caster cuts off their hand and places their own eyeballs on top of it, suffering three levels of aggravated damage in the process. The hand becomes an animated servant for use by the creator. The creation must be fed a Trait of blood each month and can be destroyed by one level of damage. If the caster keeps it for more than a single downtime, the player must purchase it as a ghoul. Its traits are determined by the level of the *Ghoul* Background representing it. The caster's eyes and hands regenerate normally. A card is needed for each servant created. Testing the hand through magical or mundane means will reveal nothing about the creator beyond the simple fact of their vampiric nature.

Sanguineous Phial

Over two days, the caster enchants a vessel to hold a quantity of mortal or supernatural blood without spoiling until the container is opened. The blood will then rot normally unless the container is broken, in which case the blood will turn to dust. The jugs may not be reused.

Soul of Homunculi

Taking an Advanced Downtime Action to cast, the ritualist creates a servant who acts as an utterly loyal spy and aide. If the caster keeps it for more than a single downtime, the player must purchase it as a ghoul. Its traits are determined by the level of the *Ghoul* Background representing it. A vampire may only have one homunculus at a time.

Stolen Kisses

By making a small incision on their body and carrying a thistle steeped in vampiric vitae, the ritualist seals the self-inflicted wound into an undetectable mouth-like sucker which can steal one Blood Trait every other round during contact. Victims will suffer the usual health effects. They are aware of the blood loss unless they are susceptible to the Kiss. If the caster is not ordinarily able to cause the Kiss, this does not allow them to do so. (It does, however, sidestep the effects of the *Dulled Bite Flaw*.) The “mouth” lasts until sunrise. If the body part containing the “mouth” is cut off, the effects of the ritual end. Healing back the body part does not cause it to reappear.

A Touch of Nightshade

By anointing their hands with deadly nightshade, the caster causes anyone they touch to become magically poisoned until sunrise. This poison inflicts one level of bashing damage (not halved) per hour to Kindred, and one level of lethal damage per hour to mortals. The damage may not be healed by mortal medicine or by spending blood, but other mystical means of healing may work.

Ward Versus Fae

The caster spends ten minutes repeating a warding incantation over a mixture of cold iron filings (see Fae Lore for rules about cold iron) and black paint, then paints it on all inner surfaces of a doorway or similar passage, such as a window frame or skylight. Any fae who violates the warded space by passing any part of their body through the painted opening will take an automatic level of lethal damage.

If the continuity of the ward line around a passageway is disrupted, the ward collapses.

Ward Versus Lupines

The caster spends ten minutes repeating a warding incantation over a mixture of \$1,000 worth of silver dust and white paint, then paints it on all inner surfaces of a doorway or similar passage, such as a window frame or skylight. Any werewolf who violates the warded space by passing any part of their body through the painted opening will take an automatic level of lethal damage.

If the continuity of the ward line around a passageway is disrupted, the ward collapses.

Ward Versus Vitae

The caster spends ten minutes repeating a warding incantation and then uses their own blood to paint a mystical glyph repeatedly on all inner surfaces of a doorway or similar passage, such as a window frame or skylight. Any Kindred of lower generation than the caster who violates the warded space by passing any part of their body through the painted opening will take an automatic level of lethal damage.

If the continuity of the ward line around a passageway is disrupted, the ward collapses.

Whispers of the Ghost

This ritual, combined with *Astral Projection* (*Auspex* 5), enables the ritualist to speak in a whisper and be heard in the physical world. The caster must carry the ear of a still living creature during the duration of the ritual. The power lasts for one scene from the first word spoken by the caster.

Advanced

Abandon the Fetters

Extremely powerful and extraordinarily rare, this ritual allows the caster to sever a blood bond between two vampires. (While in theory the magic might break a ghoul's bond to its domitor, the ghoul would not survive the process.) The ritual requires a Trait of blood from each of the vampires in the blood bond and the caster of the ritual. The subject is chained and mystically tormented for an entire night and takes four levels of aggravated damage and loses one permanent Willpower Dot, while the caster takes one level of aggravated damage. Inflicting such suffering, even on a subject who has willingly given informed consent, is such an inhumane act that the caster must make a *Morality Test* for a Humanity 1 sin.

Cobra's Favor

After combining one Trait of their blood with a brew of toxic herbs and snake venom, the ritualist ingests the elixir and takes a level of unreducible aggravated damage. The thaumaturge's blood turns into a deadly poison, inflicting one level of aggravated damage per Trait to anyone ingesting it. This effect lasts for some weeks, though the casting character may not be certain exactly how long. In terms of game rules, it lasts until the end of the third consecutive game, counting the game at which it the ritual was cast (or the first game after the downtime in which it was cast) as the first.

Court of Hallowed Truth

The caster ritually prepares a room by placing crossed bones upon every doorway and window in a scene-sized room, completes a small incantation, and makes a ritual Test. If the Test is successful, the caster spends 1 Willpower Trait immediately to complete the casting.

For the rest of the night the caster gains great powers of interrogation within the confines of the room (the Court). Any time the caster uses an interrogatory *Auspex* (2,3, or 4) or *Dominate* (1,2, or 4) power within the Court, they have access to a "Hallowed Truth" retest on those challenges. In all ways, the "Hallowed Truth" retest functions like the *Might* retest from *Potence* 2. (It must be the last non-Willpower retest, the user must bid an additional Mental trait to activate it, and it can only be used offensively.)

The caster only gains this additional retest while on the offense while in the Court, and only against targets also within the Court. (They cannot retest while standing at the edge of the court and *Dominating* people outside—nor vice versa.) When any being enters into the Court, they get a “weird” feeling. Supernaturally aware creatures will realize they are entering a magical space (although they may not realize *what* the magic does). Entering the Court does not have to be done willingly; people can be dragged in.

Jinx

By sacrificing one Trait of the victim's blood, the thaumaturge channels bad luck unto the target. Anytime during the night, when the caster is in the same scene as the target, the caster may use “Unlucky” to block a retest in the Opposing Challenge.

Nectar of the Bitter Rose

This ritual, said to allow multiple individuals to share the benefits of diablerie, is not available to player characters, and it may not exist at all outside rumor.

Paper Flesh

The ritualist uses a Trait of their own blood to sketch the target's face, writes the target's full birth name across the image, then cuts the sketch with a silver dagger. The target is stripped of 1/3 of their Physical Traits, rounded up.

Severed Hand

Use of this powerful rite requires a half hour of casting time and prevents a Kindred's severed appendage from healing normally, ensuring that the Kindred becomes permanently maimed. The subject must be present and bound throughout the ritual. The appendage must be severed as part of the ritual; it cannot be performed on an existing injury.

This ritual can only be performed once on a given individual. While there is no in-game reason it could not be used to remove the second of a pair of appendages (say, the left hand of someone who lost their right before the Embrace), the Storytellers will declare that the ritual fails if so used. The appendage may not be regenerated by any means short of supernatural healing such as *Obeah* or *Thaumaturgical Surgery (Biothaumaturgy 2)*.

Stone of True Form

[This ritual has been removed from the game. If we come up with a balanced replacement, we will announce it.]

Stone Slumber

The caster smears their body with blood and stands completely still in an open area facing east. They then turn to stone when the sun's rays strike them. While stone, the Kindred is not aware and will wake ten minutes after the next sunset, burning an additional Trait of blood.

Necromancy Rituals

A necromantic ritual is a ceremony that allows a necromancer to produce some specific magical effect outside those produced by any Path of *Necromancy*. Rituals are not bound to specific Paths. Rituals are categorized as Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced. Characters who have *Necromancy* receive one free Basic ritual at character creation. A character cannot learn rituals of a level higher than their highest level of *Necromancy*.

Casting a ritual requires the elements and activities (if any) listed in the ritual's description, and a Static Mental Challenge (retest *Thanatology*) on the part of the caster. The difficulty of this challenge is 5 for a Basic ritual, 7 for an Intermediate ritual, and 9 for an Advanced ritual.

Unless otherwise stated, Basic rituals take ten minutes to cast, Intermediate rituals take twenty minutes to cast, and Advanced rituals take thirty minutes to cast. We allow each character to cast one hour's worth of rituals become coming into game on a given night. At check-in, characters with rituals should tell a Storyteller what rituals they wish to perform upon arising and make the appropriate chops to determine if they succeed. If you wish to cast a ritual later in the night, you will have to sit out of the game for a time and chop with a Storyteller. Depending on the in-game circumstances, you may or may not have to sit out the full duration in real time.

Over downtime, it is a Intermediate Downtime Action to use an object-creating ritual if your character has not used that ritual before. If they have used it before, it is a Basic Downtime Action.

Basic

Find the Soul's Anchor

This ritual allows the necromancer to determine whether an object is an item of importance to a ghost. The necromancer must place a drop of their blood in each eye, then focus on the item for thirty seconds and succeed in a Mental Test with difficulty 7. If successful, they receive a general impression of the ghost (or ghosts) tied to the object. This ritual may be used on up to three objects at a time.

Flatline

After incantations, ritual gestures, and the placing of a small dead insect or animal someplace in the subject's home, the ritual causes a mortal to exhibit no secondary characteristics of being alive. A heart monitor will show a flat line and, if wounded, the mortal's blood will not flow (though the damage inflicted does not change). This power lasts until the sunrise after the night it is cast and has no effect on supernatural beings.

Funeral Goods

By applying a Blood Trait to an object and destroying it, the necromancer creates a working version of it that exists in the Shadowlands. The object does not need to be completely obliterated, but it must be damaged beyond easy repair; thus, an object made of paper could be burned, while a glass object

could be smashed with a hammer or a metal object could be cut to small pieces with shears. The copy in the Shadowlands will be in the same state when the Blood Trait was applied. It cannot be brought back to the real world by any means. This power can be used to give an object to a ghost, or to make it available to a user in the Shadowlands.

Learning the Mind Enslumbered

This ritual allows the ritualist to determine the cause of a Kindred's torpor by placing a penny or other small coin on the vampire's eye. Without leaving torpor, the subject recites the cause of their current state, but will not answer questions. The ritual takes a full half-hour to perform and only works on Kindred.

Preservation

The necromancer may preserve a part of the body up to the size of a limb, whether from a mortal or a vampire; a complete torso is too large for this power to affect, but individual organs from the torso can be affected as discrete entities. The body part will not decay, but it will not contain any consumable blood. If it began to crumble into ash when removed from a vampire, it will be returned to its unliving state. The ritual can be performed on multiple body parts at once, but they must be detached from each other. This ritual costs one Mental Trait per body part preserved.

Skeleton Key

By taking the bone of a current or former resident or owner of a building and succeeding at a Mental Chop, the necromancer turns the bone into a key that lasts for the rest of the night. The source of the bone may be mortal or supernatural. This key may open a door in the building once, and is then used up. It is limited to doors and cannot be used on vehicles, padlocked boxes, or the like. You may not have more than one key made for a specific building at one time, but you can have multiple keys made for multiple buildings, at a limit of your Mental Dots.

The Soul's Pulse

By holding a personal item belonging to an individual and succeeding on a Mental Test with difficulty 7, the necromancer can determine if the individual is "alive." Since this ritual was designed to work on vampires as well as mortals, it actually determines if the individual's soul is on the plane of the living and in its original body; hence, a vampire or Risen (in its own body) will register as "alive" for this purpose. If this is the case, the item will vibrate briefly. Any other result (including the target being physically on another plane of existence, or the soul being in a body other than the original) will register an inconclusive result. The exact location or state of the soul is not revealed by this ritual, so it not will reveal whether someone is dead, diablerized, or traveling interdimensionally.

Spiritual Control

This ritual binds a spirit to observe and defend a location for one lunar cycle (two gaming sessions). It requires the necromancer to possess an anchor belonging to the ghost, and to use *Summon Soul* (*d'Uso* 2) using the standard rules for that power. The ritual also requires a pair of coins. The anchor is destroyed during the ritual, and the coins must be enchanted with one Blood Trait. One coin dissolves and bonds with the spirit during the ritual while the other remains physical and can remain with the

necromancer or whomever the necromancer deems worthy. If the bound spirit discovers a problem, it can send a warning by vibrating its matched coin.

This ritual does not negate a surprise attack; while a spirit might warn the person holding its coin about danger, it doesn't provide them knowledge of exactly when that danger may materialize or from what direction it will come. The spirit cannot be sensed without the use of *Auspex* or other appropriate Disciplines. It cannot see through *Obfuscate* or operate during the day. As these spirits are dragged closer to the material plane in order to observe it for problems, they lose the ability to detect Astral threats. However, they can still perceive and interact with other spirits.

Unholy Communication

By enchanting two skulls, the necromancer can produce a tool allowing them to communicate over long distances. Only necromancers can engage the skulls and begin a conversation, but anyone can use one after it has been engaged. Any skull can be used, though small mammals are the most common as they are sturdier than bird skulls. A paired set of skulls can be enchanted during each use of this Ritual; each skull only speaks to its partner. These skulls can be used to communicate between the Shadowlands and the mortal world.

Intermediate

Attune the Goods

By applying a Blood Trait to an object, the necromancer enables the object to be brought with them the next time they use *Dead Hand* (*Path of the Shadowlands* 3). The object will coexist in the real world and the Shadowlands as you do; if you extend *Dead Hand* past its original duration, you must spend an additional Blood Trait per object you wish to keep attuned as well. When *Dead Hand* ends, the attunement ends as well.

This power is most often used on a melee weapon. It can be used on firearms or missile weapons, but each bullet or arrow must be attuned as well. As firearms do not ordinarily work in the Shadowlands, an attuned firearm is unreliable; before firing, you must succeed in a Check or the gun fails to fire.

Cadaverous Meal

The most vile of necromancers have determined a way by which to gain sustenance from corpses, human and otherwise. By performing this ritual on a corpse and, at its conclusion, draining the blood from it, necromancers can sustain themselves as if feeding.

Blood acquired in this manner is weaker than that from living bodies, and only corpses that are less than seven days old are appropriate for consumption. Corpses must be kept free of decay or the blood drunk in this manner has no potency. Freezing or other means to reduce or remove the threat of decay will preserve the blood, though a body must be completely thawed prior to using the ritual.

Blood drunk from such a corpse is turned into vampiric vitae at 50% efficiency; for every two traits of blood drunk from the corpse, the vampire gains one Blood Trait. At the end of the ritual, the corpse is

mummified and drained of fluids.

Death Knell

By attuning themselves to the underworld, the necromancer can sense when a new ghost is formed. This ritual, once cast, lasts for the entire evening. The Storytellers will inform you when a new ghost comes into existence within roughly a one mile radius. Note that few vampires, and not all mortals, become ghosts upon death.

Forge the Soul's Anchor

The necromancer can attune an object to a ghost, making it serve as a temporary anchor to aid in summoning or controlling it. An item must be prepared in advance by leaving it from dusk until dawn in a circle of ashes formed from burned bones. When the item is brought into the ghost's presence, the necromancer may take an action to make a Mental Challenge against the ghost (with the standard anchor bonuses if the item has an appropriate connection to the ghost). If successful, the item serves as an anchor for the ghost for the next month. Only one ghost can be connected to an anchor created this way, and it cannot be an existing anchor for another ghost. This ritual cannot be used to forge an anchor for a ghost someone else controls without the controller's permission.

Ghost Mentor

This ritual establishes a relationship between an individual Kindred and a Kindred ghost that provides some of the advantages of a conventional mentor. It requires an anchor for the desired ghost.

The ritual takes the form of a séance-like communication to create the necessary connection. If you wish the prospective mentor to teach a Path of Enlightenment or a clan-specific Discipline, you must succeed at a chop just as you would for finding a regular mentor to teach those things. (In this case, failure on the chop indicates that the ghost in question cannot or will not form a bond with you. You cannot simply repeat the ritual until you win.)

Once you have successfully formed the bond, you must spend xp to buy the Mentor Background to the appropriate level for what you want to learn. A ghost mentor can teach Disciplines that they know and the Path of Enlightenment (if any) that they follow, and provide an Ability for a scene. They cannot provide physical resources or lend status. They may still demand favors just as a conventional mentor would. They can be compelled as other ghosts can, but cannot be compelled to do anything a non-mentor ghost would not do. (If they refuse to teach you something, or demand a favor in advance, you cannot simply use *Necromancy* to force them to teach you anyway.) The ghost mentor cannot *use* the Disciplines they once had, even if they can teach you those Disciplines. If learning a Discipline would require drinking a trait of blood from a vampire of the appropriate clan, the ghost mentor cannot provide the blood you require.

The Mortician's Art

This ritual allows the necromancer to restore the ashes of a corpse (vampiric, mortal, or other) to its physical state at the moment of death. This requires the necromancer to spend two Mental Traits and squeeze a Blood Trait from their body onto the ashes. As long as the ashes represent at least 50% of

the substance of the body, they reshape themselves into a whole body, in the exact physical condition they were at the moment of death. This does not restore clothing or personal possessions, and if the individual burned to death and was subsequently reduced to ash, the restored corpse will still be burned.

This ritual can be used to verify a dead vampire's identity, examine their body forensically (including with *Insight*), or provide a physical corpse for a memorial service. The vitae remains in the system, and can be drunk (causing the body to collapse back into ash), but remains that of the necromancer and retains its original properties. The restored body falls into a pile of fine dust at dawn, and cannot be restored again by this power.

This ritual has no effect on a vampire using *Ashes to Ashes (Thanatosis 3)*, but it can restore a corpse destroyed by *Destroy the Husk (Thanatosis 1)*. Note that vampires destroyed by diablerie leave no ashes.

Advanced

Pristine Mummification

Under normal circumstances, mummification requires the draining of fluids from a corpse, the removal of its internal organs, and the forced drying of the remaining body, usually in salts. Necromancers, however, have developed this ritual to allow them to quickly mummify a corpse without all the intermediate steps. Any corpse—human, animal, even plants—can be preserved using this ritual.

This ritual takes an hour and, in addition to the corpse, requires a pound of salt and a jar of formaldehyde. The salt must be poured into a circle surrounding the necromancer and the corpse prior to beginning the ritual. For an hour the necromancer must meditate and draw on the black energies of death. Finally, the necromancer must pour formaldehyde on the corpse, consuming the salt in a flash of lightless energy.

The enchanted corpse will no longer decay. In other ways, it remains a “normal” corpse, even providing sustenance for necromancers who wish to combine this Ritual with *Cadaverous Meal* or who wish to preserve bodies for later necromantic purposes.

Spiritual Guardian

This power requires an object to which a ghost is tied, an object the necromancer wishes to protect, and a copy of the object (the more exact the copy, the better). The ghost's anchor must be attached to the protected object in some way. The object and the copy are each marked with a Blood Trait, and the copy is destroyed. Doing this ties the ghost to the original object, and gives the ghost a ghostly version of the copy. If the original object would be damaged or destroyed, the damage is applied to the ghostly copy instead, leaving the original untouched. The ghost can restore the copy using its own ghostly substance, which regenerates slowly. Thus, an object that is subject to repeated damage will eventually cause the destruction of its ghostly guardian, rendering it vulnerable to damage as normal.

Temper the Soul's Anchor

With this ritual, the necromancer can make a temporary anchor created by *Forge the Soul's Anchor* permanent. The necromancer must keep the ghost in the presence of the anchor for twenty-four hours. The necromancer must be present during this time, but does not need to be conscious. After the day has passed, the necromancer must spend one Willpower Trait, making the anchor permanent for that ghost.

Visage Sharing

This ritual allows a necromancer to exchange someone's physical appearance with that of a corpse. The corpse must have two reasonably intact eyes that are still located in the skull. Two pennies are placed over the corpse's eyes and one Trait of the necromancer's blood is applied to each. The necromancer must then succeed on a Mental Test with difficulty 7. The pennies then absorb the blood over the course of the ritual and appear normal at the end. At any time within the next week, the necromancer may apply the pennies to the living or undead individual's eyes, causing the pennies to vanish and the target to take on the appearance of the corpse prior to its death (disfigurement to the corpse in the course of its death will not appear). If used on an unwilling target, the necromancer must also defeat them in a Physical Challenge.

This transformation operates in a manner similar to *Mask of a Thousand Faces (Obfuscate 3)*. The transformation is illusory rather than physical, but affects all senses. Unlike *Mask*, recordings of the illusion will remain after the effect ends.

This effect ends at the end of a scene or an hour, whichever is shorter. When the effect ends, the subject and the pennies return to normal, and the corpse rots away into a skeleton, preventing further use of this ritual.

Ritual Design

The Disciplines of *Thaumaturgy* and *Necromancy* allow their users to learn rituals which provide a variety of additional capabilities. There are many established rituals in the game, but players are encouraged to design rituals tailored to the specific needs of their characters. Ritual design is a Downtime Action, though scenes during a game session may be performed if the character requires some esoteric piece of knowledge or hard-to-find ingredient.

Ritual design occurs in two steps: planning and perfection. Planning a ritual is an Intermediate Downtime Action requiring the appropriate Ability (*Arcana* for a *Thaumaturgy* ritual, *Thanatology* for a *Necromancy* ritual). During the planning phase, you and the Storytellers will work together to design the ritual and ensure it is balanced in comparison to the other rituals in the game. During this time, the power level (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced) of the ritual will be determined.

Perfecting the ritual requires more time and is an Advanced Downtime Action. Further, it takes time, energy, and repetition to refine the ritual to the point where your character believes it might actually

function. It takes two weeks of study, contemplation, and practice for a Basic ritual, four weeks for an Intermediate ritual, and six weeks for an Advanced ritual. As a result, a Basic ritual can be designed and perfected in one downtime session, while an Advanced ritual requires three.

At the end of this time span, a Check is made with a Storyteller, retested by *Arcana/Thanatology*. If the player wins this challenge, the ritual is created exactly as they originally imagined. If the Check is a tie, the ritual works but may have an interesting side effect or require an additional, exotic ingredient when performed. If the Check is failed, the ritual doesn't work as planned and the character will need to spend more time refining it.

When the ritual has been completed and the player has won or tied the Check, the player must spend experience to add the ritual to their character sheet. Similar to standard rituals, custom rituals cost two, four, or six Experience depending on their power level.

Designing a custom ritual expends your one unique request for the month.

Mortal Magic

Not all magic requires *Thaumaturgy* or *Necromancy*. There are many traditions of non-vampiric magic that are practiced by mortal occultists. We call these magical techniques "spells" to distinguish them from thaumaturgical and necromantic rituals. Player characters with *Occult* Influence are able to locate and learn spells. (Note that there are some mortal spells that vampires cannot successfully perform, so just because an NPC spellcaster can create a particular magical effect does not necessarily mean you can replicate it. Spells discovered through *Occult* Influence Actions will always be possible for vampires to cast.) Player characters cannot design new spells.

In order to learn a spell, you must first locate a copy of it. This may be achieved through an *Occult* Influence Action or discovery of the spell in play. When making such an Influence action, you can look for a specific spell by name (Basic Action), a desired effect (Intermediate Action), or simply ask for a random spell (Advanced Action). If the random spell action seems illogically high, that's because, as with Downtime Action costs, the level is set based on how much Storyteller time and effort is required.

The Storytellers will make a secret Mental Test to determine the result of each *Occult* Influence spell location attempt. On a win, you find the spell; on a loss, you do not. The spell being sought will determine the difficulty of the Test, and you must declare in advance whether you are willing to spend a trait of *Arcana* Ability in order to retest if necessary.

Once you have found a spell, you will receive an item card describing what the spell does and what must be done to cast it. Casting a spell always requires you to have a physical copy of the spell and spend an *Arcana* Ability Trait, in addition to the tools, materials, and/or actions listed on the card. It is possible to make a copy of a spell to give (or trade, or sell) to someone else. Making a copy requires an Intermediate Downtime Action.

Many spells have one or more secondary effects that are not part of the initial description. Some will become apparent when the spell is used; others will not. After you have cast a spell several times (which cannot occur during the same downtime that you learned it), you may do an Advanced Downtime Action and post a symbol for a chop. If you win, the Storytellers will tell you one or more of the spell's side effects. Not all effects may be found through such downtime research. Some can only be found in play.

If you lose the item card on which the spell is written, your character has forgotten the spell and misplaced the physical text of it as well. As with other item cards, you are free to leave your spell cards with the Storytellers at the end of game.

Final Remarks

This rulebook is not comprehensive. Additional rulings on basic topics, including Abilities, clans, and Disciplines, can be found in *LARP 101*, the companion to this rulebook.

The contents of this rulebook may change at any time as various rules are clarified and balanced. We will attempt to make sure all such changes are clearly documented on the forums in the subforum titled "The Rule Book."

If you have any questions about the content of this book, or notice any mechanical or typographical errors, please let us know.

This rulebook is a joint collaboration of all the Storytellers involved in the running of *Carpe Noctem* since its inception.