MIND'S EYE THEATRE

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

VOLUME 2

ISSUE 1



STORYTELLERS VAULT

Credits

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction 9

Chapter Two: Errata & New Rules 13
- Updates to the History of the World of Darkness 14
- Updates to Character Creation 15
- Revisions to Backgrounds 15
- Updates to Disciplines 15
  - Auspex 15
  - Chimerstry 16
  - Daimoinon 16
  - Dominate 16
  - Protean 16
  - Temporis 17
  - Thanatosis 17
  - Necromancy 17
  - Thaumaturgy 18
- Elder Powers 19
- Techniques 19
- Updates to Merits and Flaws 20
- Updates to Core Systems 21
- Updates to Dramatic Systems 22

Updates to Allies and Antagonists 23
Updates to Influence and Equipment 23

Chapter Three: Alternative Clan Merits 25
Greater Clans 25
Assamite 25
Brujah 28
Followers of Set 29
Gangrel 31
Giovanni 34
Lasombra 35
Malkavian 36
Nosferatu 39
Toreador 39
Tremere 41
Tzimisce 42
Ventrue 44
Caitiff 45
Lesser Clans 46
Baali 46
Cappadocian 47
Ravnos 49
Salubri 51
Rare Bloodlines 52
Daughters of Cacophony 52
Gargoyles 53

Chapter Four: Techniques 55

Chapter Five: Core Rules & Dramatic Systems 87
Updated Skills 87
Updated Backgrounds 88
Expanded Beast Traits System 90
Quests 98
Tracking 111

Updated Stock NPC Rules 113
Stock Locations 117

Chapter Six: Storyteller Essays 136
Cooperative Conflict and Advanced Narration: Expert Tools for Story Creation 136
Creating the Game You Want 142
Creating Memorable Plots & Scenarios 147



A DANCE WITH THE BEAST

The gentle pulse of the tide beating against the rocks woke Lorelei. She slithered from her cave, leisurely swimming to the musky water's surface. The wind brought the scent of brine, booze-laden sweat and tears, and the terrible funk of a trashy weekend at the boardwalk.

Prey passed above her — humans laughed and caroused, completely ignorant of the monster that lurked beneath the waves. The Nosferatu swam towards one of many partially submerged pillars; barnacles had consumed the wood, marking the water-level of high tide. She clawed and scraped the wood, releasing a high-pitched hiss that echoed off the rocks.

Her Beckoning brought a host of rats forth from the shadows and crevices of the dock. The creatures chittered and clambered over one another, each desperate to receive her words. She whispered to them in a honey-sweet voice, like a mother cooing to her children. "You know what I seek."

They scattered to the ends of the boardwalk, and she was once more left with the sound of the waves. Each pulse of the ocean reminded her of her task, and the carefully laid plans it required. She was not a capricious creature; she planned every action carefully before the wheels began turning.

A triumphant harrumph of screeches and whispers filled the dark as the creatures returned, sharing all the tidbits of information they had gathered with her. "Thank you, friends," Lorelei nodded. "That sounds like a perfectly delightful way to begin this night."

She glided along the dock's underbelly to one of her many hidden entrances, perfect for pulling herself out of the water and into the brisk air. Drawing on the power of her blood, Lorelei hid herself from prying eyes. No mortal would know of her presence, save for a faint brine scent of the sea and an occasional creeping dread. She crept through the carnival, slipping between families, friends, and lonely wanderers seeking some sort of comfort in the night. The cattle never even realized that a monster walked among them.

The crowd's muffled whispers faded as she ventured through an alley behind stores and amusement rides. Gone were the vibrant lights and calliope music, replaced by a heavy darkness filled with secrets and despair. Those of the light could not exist without the creatures of the dark.

A single angry, slurred voice filled the alley, drowning out whispered secrets from the stones and the ecstasy of the crowd alike. "Oh, come on! I spent half my check on you tonight."

Tonight, one performer would take his last bow, Lorelei thought.

She slid around the corner; her eyes fell on the night's victim: the man her children had located for her. Lorelei noted the easy way he balled his meaty hands into fists, his stained white undershirt, and his uneven beard. Her children did well in finding this one. The lout loomed over a young woman, who might have been attractive if she'd grown up with proper nutrition and a mother who cared enough to teach her not to venture into shadows with a man who would bring her nothing but pain.

the Nosferatu licked her lips as her Beast rose to the surface. She wanted to hurt this man. She would relish in it, wallow in the inflicted pain, but she would not kill him. Oh no, this man would live to suffer. It would take months, perhaps even years, to recover from the beating she planned to inflict on him.

She watched the all-too-typical scenario, never blinking once as her bloodlust built to a fever pitch. Any pretense of empathy with the victim fled as her Beast began to take hold. The young woman pulled away from her attacker, finally sensing the danger. "Please don't. I want to go back to the others."

Lorelei scoffed. This foolish twit did nothing to dissuade the man from thinking she was anything but prey. She had seen this scene play out a thousand times; it wouldn't be long now. The brute flashed the blade of a knife and a cold, ruthless smile. In the span of a heartbeat, Lorelei inserted herself between the girl and her attacker, revealing the monster that she kept hidden in the shadows. As she wrapped a clawed hand around the terrified man's throat, her Beast surged to the surface. Her words came cold and cruel, "I took my name from a beautiful place on the Rhine: a series of rocks that were blamed for the countless deaths of sailors. Let's see if we can add another, shall we?"

And then another chain that restrained the Beast shattered.

* * *

Lorelei came to court bearing the weight of her deeds; the titillation of her hunt pushed her to carry her plan forward. She wore a kind face designed to express matronly concern, a mask cultivated to hide her intentions. Few could pierce her Obfuscate, but even the power of her blood could not hide her tangled wet hair, festooned with seaweed-colored ribbons.

She spotted her catspaw almost immediately – a young Toreador, Basil McPhee, noted for his booming passionate voice and born for the stage. Lorelei moved across the room as though she swam through water, weaving her way through the gathered Kindred with smiles and kind words for those she encountered. She couldn't help but keep moving, like a tide caught by the moon – always pressing forward until it was time to return to the depths.

The Elder Nosferatu circled Basil thrice; her gaze never strayed from her target. The neonate swallowed, trying to circle until he caught up with Lorelei. He gathered his courage and spoke. "Murmur of Lorelei. I'm honored that I'd attract the notice of an Elder such as you. What can I do for you?"

She flashed a shark's smile and opened her hand, revealing a small, sparkling seashell. "I see a favor. A minor one. That only you can do for me. This night."

Basil sucked in his lips; his eyes flashed with excitement. A chance to earn a boon from an Elder was a rare opportunity, one she knew he could not resist. "What might you ask of me?"

"You've studied Richard III, yes?" Years of intrigue in Camarilla courts allowed her to maintain a mask of kindness, holding back the vengeance she held in her soul. "I would hear a performance of one of the soliloquys during a lull in the evening, as per the Prince's Protocols. It would do my Humanitas well to hear the words from my own mortal days."

Basil's wide-eyed innocent expression told Lorelei everything. He knew nothing of Elder Vivek's personal experience with that tainted piece, or the political implications it held for Prince Morgan. He gingerly accepted the seashell, just as she knew he would.

"Shall we register this with the harpy?" Lorelei asked.

If the newly anointed Harpy of Detroit understood the implications of the boon, her face did not show it. Darla Wilkerson held her own grudge against Vivek. His actions against her ill-fated childer, Sophie, and his attempted manipulation of Clan Toreador to work against her ascension to Harpy had raised her ire. "I am pleased to see this patronage of the arts, as per the Prince's Protocols."

The Elder Toreador wouldn't care that Lorelei paid for this performance. Basil would suffer the

consequences of her actions. Perhaps for years, if Vivek lived past the night. And yet, so long as it served her purpose, the suffering pleased her.

And then another chain that restrained the Beast shattered.

Lorelei couldn't have scripted the performance better. Vivek visibly trembled at the first few words of the speech, his discomfort clear for anyone to see. With the immortal line "A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" the Elder leapt from his seat in the upper balcony, slapping the hapless neonate to gasps of outrage from the court. The force of his blow dislocated Basil's jaw and nearly knocked him into torpor.

Harpy Wilkerson leveraged the justification of her office, as a Guardian of the sect, to warn the shaken Toreador Elder that any further outburst would have dire consequences and to mind his behavior, lest he find himself disgraced.

Prince Morgan refused to allow Vivek to leave the gathering, preferring the entirety of the court to witness his shame. Lorelei presumed the Prince was still angry over the affair with the orb at the museum and for allowing the Independent Alliance to temporarily gain an advantage over the Camarilla.

Trapped at the gathering and unable to publicly defend himself, Vivek was ripe for her next machination. Basil's triggering performance had merely been an opening gambit, the first in a relentless salvo intended to destroy Vivek and his carefully cultivated reputation. She timed each new strike to maintain the pain, extending the torture, and yet he never realized who orchestrated his downfall.

She revealed in the Elder's humiliation; each blow further fueled her vengeance. Vivek's fall gave strength to her Beast, until all the chains holding it in check melted away. The Humanitas she once struggled to maintain simply died, melting away into obscurity. The vampire took hold. She could remember her previous concerns, but they faded with each stroke of her vengeance. It would take years to recover what she lost, but in the moment, she was too busy reveling in her hate to carry any concern for her Humanity.

An hour before dawn, the gathering began to disperse, as each vampire sought the security of their havens. Lorelei offered her farewells, leaving Vivek for last. "The sound of the sea is everywhere," she said to him, her hated enemy. "Think of this the next time you betray one of the Nosferatu."

A lesson was delivered and witnessed by all. The story of this night would be told forever in whispered warnings. Few would dare cross the Nosferatu of Detroit now, much less sell them out to the Sabbat. All it took was a dance with the Beast and the sacrifice of her Humanitas.

Chapter One: Introduction

"The whole is greater than the part."

— Euclid

It's been a while, hasn't it? We, the writers and developers of By Night Studios, are excited to bring you this much-awaited supplement to **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade**. There's a lot we're eager to share! Some of the pieces and concepts presented here were years in the making, now ready to emerge from their creation rites. This document includes the results of our experiences playing in this system, in addition to development based on engaging with you as our fans, on both the troupe level and at various events. Suffice it to say, we're anxious to revisit the **Vampire** setting, and we think readers will like what we have to share.

We changed our format. While we initially envisioned our first **Vampire** follow-up book (referred internally as "V2") as a Kickstarter release, the nature of the business landscape prompted a change. As the Storyteller's Vault became a success, releasing V2 through that medium readily became the best option, allowing us to deliver this content to you as quickly as possible, with the fewest restrictions. We can also engage a little more candidly with players than we could with a more formal release.

Where We're Headed

We intend to deliver the entirety of V2 in a serialized format through the Storyteller's Vault. Think back to the days of the *Mind's Eye Theatre Journal*, and you have a good idea of what we have in mind. We will release material a little at a time, in a format that gives you some of everything. Each installment contains a mechanical offering, updated systems, essays, and fiction. We currently have enough content for at least three installments for V2, and it's our intent to release the entirety of that work.

If this format is successful, we can evaluate where to go from there. We *may* have some **Werewolf** content already written that we could package into its own release. There's also plenty of room to expand on **Vampire** and **Mind's Eye Theatre: Changeling The Dreaming** will also be made available through the Storyteller's Vault. Having the option to provide additional material for that setting in a serialized format allows us to publish content that wouldn't fit into a core book. At present, we have no plans to expand into systems beyond **Vampire**, **Werewolf**, and **Changeling**, but they are not ruled out either. We see a lot of potential in this medium, and our future plans

depend on its reception. To that end, we thank you for supporting us by purchasing this content.

A Little Bit About Us

The writers, developers, editors, and business team of By Night Studios are all genuine fans of the **World of Darkness**. We work on this material in what is ultimately a labor of love for fans of the **World of Darkness** and for the LARP community. At present, every member of the creative team plays our games in some fashion. Some of us are Storytellers and game administrators, and while others quietly play PCs that you may or may not know. Some of us are members of various networked gaming clubs, but we don't create our material with a preference for any single organization. Rather, we create with a mind towards the community as a whole.

Why We've Made Extra Content

At the time of this writing, it's been six years since **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** was released. It's played in chronicles around the world, in both troupes and various networked games. We're very pleased with its reception, but we also believe in keeping things fresh. The original rules left plenty of room to expand, and we hope to improve the quality of the game with additional material.

Primarily, this content provides additional powers, chiefly disciplines and merits, to support additional build options and promote game balance. We want to round out the "optimal" character builds with alternatives. This expansion gives players more choices as they select powers, and it showcases different character concepts using a variety of mechanics. While no one's character choices are ever wrong, by adding more options, we also add heterogeneity. A Toreador fencer and a Giovanni mook do different things in combat, and we strive to support both concepts. We also want to support characters that fall into niche categories. We built options for social Gangrel and Lasombra clergy, and we made playing a True Brujah scholar mechanically different from a Tzimisce Loremaster.

We also offer additional rules to round out both core and dramatic systems, though we produce this content sparingly. We avoid adding complexity into the game unless we feel it's genuinely worth it. Many of our system updates stem from player and organizer feedback, identifying areas where they struggle to adapt the existing rules to their gameplay.

Our Design Philosophy

It's no secret that By Night Studios likes to experiment. Our combined years of experience in organizational play — more than a century — told us our games need to be designed specifically with the live-action experience in mind, rather than merely adapting tabletop rules for a live setting. We believe in the Economy of Cool: the doctrine that states if you spread around the opportunity to shine, everyone's experience collectively improves.

The **World of Darkness** is more than 25 years old, and it continues to evolve; this evolution is part of what keeps us coming back. While we're huge fans of the legacy material, our audience responded very favorably to the new systems, powers, and setting updates we've created solely for **Mind's Eye Theatre**, and we shaped our direction around that feedback. Our goal maintains the soul of the game while offering nuances in mechanics and play experience. That said, we're very fond of callbacks, and if a new power, term, or rule seemed like a close match to a legacy item, we did our best to repackage it for the current generation of players. We also brought back a few items that older players may find familiar, which we felt the system lacked.

How to Use This Material

We think the material provided here makes an exciting addition to any game. While the timing of this release may not align with the reset date of your chronicle, we did not write anything that might upend a game's continuity. With some administrative support, this material can be incorporated into any ongoing chronicle.

Remember, from your characters' perspective, this material isn't suddenly dropping on them. For them, some of the following powers are new tricks and magical breakthroughs; others are things they heard about but never encountered, and some of them

represent old methodology coming back into fashion.

Here are some suggestions on how to introduce this document's material into an existing chronicle:

Limited Release or Case-by-Case

We fully respect a Storyteller's right to determine what content works for her game. In this model, the Storyteller determines the material she allows, either approving portions of it in advance in batch form (limited release) or approving it as a case-by-case scenario.

Hotfix

The material contained here works just fine as a "hotfix:" a patch added to an already live system. In this scenario, players are allowed to purchase new material moving forward using XP. This method of introduction is perhaps the simplest.

Hotfix with Respec

Similar to a hotfix, in this scenario, Storytellers give players a fixed window of time in which they can receive an XP refund and build characters anew. This method undoubtedly requires administrative support, but allows characters to select merits they feel would have made more sense for their character concepts.

We Love Hearing from You!

As writers and developers, we obsess over the feedback we receive, and we read every single email. While it is difficult for us to respond to any single item, we compile your opinions and gauge fans' overall feelings when choosing our direction. Indeed, the high percentage of original material contained here, content new to the **World of Darkness**, is based on the support and positive reception we received so far.

Our plan is to collect errata and hot fixes for this material for the first 60 days after release, make the edits directly to the PDF, and upload it as a new updated edition (free to those whom already purchased it). Afterward, all of the feedback will be added to the MET: VTM, Vol. 2 Omnibus edition.

While we enjoy reading your thoughts and comments on social media (and may occasionally respond), the best way for you to notify us of a bug or an issue is via email to jenni@bynightstudios.com. We look forward to hearing from you.





Chapter Two: Errata & New Rules

"The young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions."
— Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

Changes from Previously Published Books

Vampires may be unchanging creatures, forever trapped by the stagnant nature of their undead blood, but thankfully, **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade (MET: VTM)** is a vibrant, living product, benefiting from the input of hundreds of players who regularly use its rules and provide thoughtful suggestions to improve our shared live-action roleplaying experience.

This chapter provides updates and corrections to material from MET:VTM rulebooks previously published by By Night Studios. This information expands on or supersedes the material found in older publications. In addition, answers to frequently-asked questions and the most recent errata can also be found on our website: www.bynightstudios.com.

Updates to the Setting of the World of Darkness

Lexicon Updates

Here are some additional words and terms that may be useful to new players of **Vampire: The Masquerade**:

Game Terminology:

- **elder power:** a powerful supernatural ability, demonstrating mastery of a given discipline, only possessed by elder vampires, denoted with six dots
- **feral combat maneuvers:** fighting strategies that give a character an advantage, these maneuvers can only be used when a vampire takes on an animal's shape
- **luminary power:** an extremely powerful supernatural ability, the pinnacle of power

within a given discipline, only possessed by elder vampires, denoted with seven dots

- **minor transformation:** a supernatural power that partially transforms a specific segment of a character's body
- **major transformation:** a supernatural ability that completely alters the shape of a character's body. A character cannot typically have more than one transformative power active at one time.

In-Character Lexicon:

- **courtesies:** Local laws and traditions specific to a single Camarilla prince or domain
- **Imperator, the:** The vampire responsible for acting as military commander of the Camarilla sect. This position is currently held by the Gangrel, Karsh.
- **Independent Alliance, the:** A sect of vampires initially formed in 2011 and officially recognized in 2015. Its members reject the authority of the Camarilla and Sabbat. Comprised primarily of the Followers of Set, the Giovanni, and the Lasombra *antitribu*, the sect values pragmatism, capitalism, and opportunism, while also permitting its members freedom to follow practices normally considered taboo among mortals.
- **Myrmidon:** A vampire empowered by the Imperator of the Camarilla to act as his agent and enforcer.
- **Promise, the:** A specific bargain made between the Giovanni clan and the Camarilla in **1528** (errata update superseding p. 23 of MET:VTM denoted in bold)
- **symbel:** A sponsored competition or contest, allowing vampires to compete in safely structured environments. Winners often earn status or tangible prizes.
- **Treaty of Alliance, the:** A formal document signed by elders of the Followers of Set and the Giovanni, setting forth the terms that all members of the Independent Alliance are expected to obey.

Updates to the History of the World of Darkness

The Schism of the Assamite Clan During the Week of Nightmares

Inside the mountain stronghold of Alamut, the Assamite clan underwent harrowing changes. A sorcerous Methuselah awakened after nearly 2,000 years of torpid sleep. After conquering the clan's modern leadership, this fearsome ancient proved his magical potency by shattering the curse that afflicted his clan and prevented the practice of diablerie.

In the wake of this triumph, Sabbat Assamites left their sect en masse to return to Alamut, breaking their vows to the Sword of Caine. Only the youngest, those who had never seen Alamut, remained loyal to the Sword of Caine.

With ultimate authority, the Methuselah demanded the Assamites return to the ancient worship of Haqim. He forbade the practice of any other religion, and destroyed those who would not give up their mortal beliefs. The resulting philosophical schism tore the clan in two. **One of the clan's foremost sorcerers, Al-Ashrad, took a splinter faction composed mostly of Viziers and escaped the mountain.** Calling on centuries-old boons to allow them entry, the Assamite Viziers joined the ranks of the Camarilla (errata update superseding MET:VTM, pages 34 denoted in bold).

Updates to Character Creation

Changes to the Quick-Start Character Creation Guide:

Spending Initial XP: Clarification Regarding Common Disciplines

The common out-of-clan disciplines are:

- Animalism
- Auspex
- Celerity
- Dominate
- Fortitude
- Obfuscate
- Presence
- Potence

You may purchase up to 3rd dot of these disciplines at character creation. You may also purchase additional dots of your in-clan disciplines. The list of common disciplines above is not intended to define a given character's in-clan disciplines. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 85.)

Revisions to Backgrounds:

Generation: Clarification Regarding Rate of Blood Expenditures

In every case where the rate at which a vampire of any generation can spend points of Blood is referenced, the limits listed refer to a given turn, not a given round. This change effects both the text descriptions and the Generation Chart. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, pages 100-101, and page 108.)

Herd: Clarification Regarding Downtime Action Frequency

Characters with the Herd background do not have to spend a downtime action feeding each **game session**. If plot, influence actions, or other circumstances require vampires to spend more than 1 downtime action feeding, you reduce the number of downtime actions required by a number equal to your dots in Herd. If you have more dots in Herd than you must expend for downtime actions to feed, you may allow other individuals to feed on your Herd, thus using the dots to supplement their downtime actions in the same manner (errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 103 denoted in bold).

Retainers

Clarification Regarding Discipline Specialties

There are two types of specialties: skill specialties and discipline specialties....

- **Discipline Specialty: Characters who have access to vampiric or ghostly retainers may give their underling a discipline specialty.** Retainers may use one (and only one) of their specialties to learn a discipline that is in-clan for their domitor. A discipline specialty allows the Retainer access to one power per dot of the Retainer. ... (errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 105 denoted in bold)

Clarification Regarding Retainers' Rate of Blood Expenditures

Similar to the changes mentioned above regarding the Generation background, in every case where the rate at which Retainers can spend points of Blood is referenced, the limits listed refer to a given turn, not a given round. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 105.)

Updates to Disciplines

Auspex

Additional Function of Telepathy

...You may also ask the following question in addition to the other options listed:

- **"Is there another entity or consciousness within this body?"**

(Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 120 denoted in bold.)

Chimerstry

Apparition: Clarification Regarding Illusion Size

...Apparition cannot be used to make an illusion with **any dimension larger than 10 feet in any direction, e.g. no larger than 10 feet wide by 10 feet tall by 10 feet deep.** (Errata superceding MET: VTM, page 124, denoted in bold)

Horrid Reality: Change to Activation Cost

...Spend 1 Blood **and a simple** action to augment one of your already existing Apparitions with Horrid Reality. For the next five minutes, that illusion cannot be disbelieved and is imbued with the power to physically interact with people.... (errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 125 denoted in bold).

Daimoinon

Fear the Void Below: Clarification Regarding Target's Willpower Limitation

...An individual who willingly breaks a promise bound by Fear the Void Below must make a static challenge using her Mental attribute + Survival skill against a difficulty equal to your Mental attribute + Academics skill. Because this is a static challenge and your character is not directly involved, you cannot use retests. Your victim may retest, as per a normal static challenge. If your victim fails this challenge, she loses a point of Willpower and must immediately repeat the challenge. Losing again incurs another lost point of Willpower and another static challenge. This chain of static challenges continues until the target wins a challenge (either by tying or winning the appropriate tests) or until the target runs out of Willpower. **If the effects of Fear the Void Below cause a character to lose Willpower when she has no remaining Willpower**, infernal spirits descend. The target's soul is drawn out of her body and dragged forever into hell. The character immediately dies. Such a character can never be resurrected (not even temporarily), nor can any supernatural power or ability make contact with the damned soul.... (errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 127 denoted in bold).

Dominate

Mesmerism: Clarification Regarding Commands Related to Discipline Use

...Mesmerisms cannot string together multiple unrelated actions. You cannot use Mesmerism to force another character to, "Tell me where your ghoul lives, and give me your car keys, then go punch that Brujah, and finally, sit in the corner for the rest of the hour." You may imply more than one action in a single command, such as, "Show me where your ghoul lives." In this case, the recipient will likely lead you to the location (which could require leaving the building, getting into a car, and driving there).

Mesmerism cannot be used to prevent a character from using a discipline, although it can be used to prevent a victim from acting in certain ways. For example, you cannot use Dominate with the command "Stop using Celerity," although you can Mesmerize a target by saying "Stop attacking me."

In all cases, your Storyteller is the final arbiter of what is or is not appropriate for a Mesmerism. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 133 denoted in bold.)

Protean

Shape of the Beast: Clarification to Wits Focus

...All flight forms receive the same bonus and have the same detriments; you gain a +3 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools and can fly at your normal movement speed. However, due to your relatively small size, your Physical attribute is reduced to 3 for the purpose of Physical attacks.

You may also apply one of these templates even if you choose to keep the visual appearance of a wolf;

these templates simply make your particular wolf more unique. **When you choose your fight form, you may apply one of the following templates as appropriate for the animal you choose, in addition to the standard bonuses and detriments of the wolf template**.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 155 denoted in bold.)

Temporis

Additional Function of Patience of the Norns

...This suspension lasts for one hour, unless Patience of the Norns is released prior to that duration.

Alternatively, if you are targeted by a ranged or thrown attack and you have an unspent standard action available this round, you can immediately spend 1 point of Blood and your standard action to activate this power, targeting the source of the projectile. You can even do so before your initiative, spending your action before you would normally have an opportunity to act. If you succeed in the opposed challenge, both the projectile and the object that fired the projectile (if there was one) are affected by this power. The projectile is suspended at any point you designate between you and your attacker. If you lose this challenge, your attacker's challenge proceeds normally. (Errata update superceding MET:VTM, page 163 denoted in bold.)

Thanatosis

Necrosis: Limitation Regarding Use of Power with Other Powers

...The damage normally dealt by a Grapple does not convert to aggravated damage by this power. The damage dealt by Necrosis is not reduced by the effect of the Grapple combat maneuver**. Necrosis cannot be used with other powers that require you to touch or grapple your target.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 165 denoted in bold.)

Necromancy

Bone Path, Death's Puppetry: Limitation Regarding Spending Blood

...Corpses have no disciplines and cannot spend Blood. Further, a character cannot use any of her own disciplines while using Death's Puppetry. While inhabiting this corpse body, a character uses her own Mental attributes and focuses, Social attributes and focuses, skills, and backgrounds. You must use the corpse's Physical attribute, rather than your own, for all Physical challenges while using Death's Puppetry. **While possessing a zombie, you cannot spend Blood points, but can use the zombie's Fortitude and/or Potence.** If you use Death's Puppetry on a Stock NPC, the subject's Physical attribute is equal to double that NPC's rating. You cannot utilize the target's Physical attribute focuses.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 176 denoted in bold.)

Ash Path, Ex Nihilo: Limitation Regarding Targeting Across the Shroud

...You cannot bring anyone with you through the Shadowlands, other than your zombie minions. This power can be particularly dangerous if there are hostile wraiths, such as spectres, in the Shadowlands. Such creatures can attack you while you are on their plane. This encounter is treated in all ways like a normal conflict. **While in the Shadowlands, you cannot use powers (including Necromancy powers) on targets in the real world.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 178 denoted in bold.)

Level 3 Necromancy Rituals, Rise, Cerberus Quantity Limitation

...You cannot have more than one Cerberus Hound in existence at a given time. Should you create another, the first one immediately dies. (Errata update superceding MET: VTM page 183 denoted in bold.)

Level 4 Necromancy Rituals, Bastone Diabolico: Change Regarding Amount of Damage

...The Bastone Diabolico deals **1** normal damage. This weapon is an improvised weapon, possessing the Fast quality.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 184 denoted in bold.)

Thaumaturgy

Path of Blood, Blood of Potency: Clarification Regarding Blood Pool Increase

...Spend 1 Blood and use your simple action to activate Blood of Potency. This power lasts for the next hour. While Blood of Potency is active, your **maximum** Blood pool increases to half again its normal size (rounded up). In addition, you can spend 2 additional points of Blood per turn while the power is active. You are considered to be three generations lower than normal for the purpose of waking another vampire from torpor. You can use Blood of Potency once per night. Once this power ends, any Blood you contain over your natural Blood pool dilutes, leaving you at your regular Blood pool maximum.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 188 denoted in bold.)

Path of Blood, Theft of Vitae: Change Permitting Multiple Reattempts on Target

...Needless to say, this rather unsettling power is considered a breach of the Masquerade when used openly.

You may use Theft of Vitae on consecutive turns even if you fail a challenge. This is an exception to the rule that prevents you from immediately reattempting a Mental challenge on the same target. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 189 denoted in bold.)

Path of Conjuring, Reverse Conjuration: Clarification Regarding Perception Focus

Focus [Perception]:

You can use a simple action to determine if an object within your line of sight is natural or conjured by Thaumaturgy. After determining if an object is conjured or natural, you can spend 1 Blood and use a standard action to attempt to dispel it, as stated in the rules above. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 190 denoted in bold.)

Movement of the Mind, Flight: Clarification Regarding Use During Celerity Rounds

...Spend 1 Blood and use your standard action to activate Flight. For the next five minutes, you can fly at normal speeds. While flying, you can carry up to 10 pounds of equipment for each dot of Movement of the Mind you possess. **Because Flight is a Mental power, it cannot be used to move during Celerity rounds**.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 197 denoted in bold.)

Level 2 Thaumaturgy Rituals, Machine Blitz: Changes Regarding Activation Cost and Power Limitations

...Once the ritual is complete, all machines targeted by your focused hatred start to malfunction. **Spend 1 point of Blood and** use your standard action to stop any machine or electronic device that you can clearly see. For the next hour, this ritual can be used to kill car engines, render flash drives inoperable, drain the battery of a cell phone, stop life-support machines, etc. Essentially, Machine Blitz stops any machine more complex **than a standard firearm**. This ritual only stops machines; it does not grant any control over them. The effects of this ritual are invisible and appear to be coincidental. Repairing an object targeted by Machine Blitz requires an appropriate skill, such as Computer, of 3 dots or more and roughly an hour of work. (Errata updates superseding MET:VTM, page 205 denoted in bold.)

Level 5 Thaumaturgy Rituals, Blood Contract: Clarification Regarding Language

...Blood Contract creates an unbreakable agreement between two parties who sign it of their own free will. The contract must be written in your blood. All clauses in the contract must be understood by all parties and responsibilities must be listed **explicitly**. Each party referenced directly in the contract must

sign her agreement to the stipulations in her own blood.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 209 denoted in bold.)

Elder Powers

Dominate, Tyrant's Gaze: Clarification Regarding Permanent Alterations

...You do not need to speak to use Tyrant's Gaze, but you must have your target's focus (see Gaze and Focus, page 113). The victim of this power immediately identifies the individual who has affected her with Tyrant's Gaze, and she is also aware which power she has lost. **Tyrant's Gaze cannot reverse permanent physical alterations. For example, Tyrant's Gaze may be used to rob a target of the ability to use Heart of Darkness or Fleshcraft, but it cannot undo existing instances of Fleshcraft or return a removed heart.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 216 denoted in bold.)

Techniques

Animal Swarm: New System

System:

When you activate Shape of the Beast, you may choose to turn into a swarm of animals instead of one creature. You transform into slightly smaller versions of the same animal you would normally become by using Shape of the Beast. If your Shape of the Beast allows you to turn into a bat, you can turn into several smaller bats using Animal Swarm.

This swarm consists of one animal for each dot of Celerity you possess. Elder powers and Celerity-based techniques do not increase the number of animals created by Animal Swarm. Each animal can act independently and can take one simple and one standard action each turn. While using Animal Swarm, you cannot spend Blood and lose access to all other powers. Even powers that were activated before using Animal Swarm stop functioning while in this form. Activating Animal Swarm does not reverse permanent physical alterations. For example, if your heart is removed it will not reappear when you activate this power.

Each of your animals has your Mental attribute, Social attribute, focuses and skills. By default, these animals inflict 1 point of aggravated damage with a successful Brawl attack. If your character possesses any Potence powers, your animals' attacks are armor-piercing and inflict 2 points of aggravated damage. Each creature has 5 health levels (1 Healthy, 2 Injured, and 2 Incapacitated). Your merits, flaws, and powers do not affect the health levels of your animal swarm. If your character possesses any Fortitude powers, each of your animals automatically negates 1 point of normal or aggravated damage each time they suffer damage. If your animals attempt to retest in combat, each animal must spend Willpower separately; they use your Willpower pool to do so.

While swarming in your flight form, each animal gains a +1 bonus to Dodge-based defensive test pools and can fly at your normal movement speed. In flight form, your Physical attribute is considered 1 when you are attacking.

While in fight form, each of your animals has a Physical attribute equal to half of your own Physical attribute (round up). Other bonuses from Shape of the Beast do not apply while using Animal Swarm.

Animals created by Animal Swarm can separate and perform individual tasks, but must remain within one mile of each other. You can use a standard action to return to your human form at the location of any animal created by this power. When you revert to human form, you automatically reabsorb any of your animals that are within your line of sight. Animals not within your line of sight crumble at the same moment, turning into ash. When Animal Swarm ends, you take 2 points of aggravated damage for each animal that was destroyed, 1 point of aggravated damage for each animal that was injured or incapacitated, and you lose 2 Blood for each animal that was outside of your line of sight when you reformed. Damage taken from reverting to human form cannot be reduced or negated, but may not kill your character (although it may result in torpor). If all of the animals in a swarm are destroyed, the power's user dies.

Animals created by this power are considered to be one entity for the purpose of powers that modify an individual's behavior. If one animal is Dominated, all

of the animals in the swarm suffer the effects of that power. If one animal cannot break an individual's Majesty, none of the animals in the swarm can attack that individual. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, pages 225-226 in entirety.)

Echo Psychosis: Clarification Regarding Use with Majesty

...Any time someone spends a point of Willpower to ignore your Awe, you can reflexively target her with Passion on the same initiative. If you have Majesty and a character attempts to break your Majesty and fails, you can immediately target her with the Haunting. To successfully use Passion and the Haunting with Echo Psychosis, you must make all of the appropriate challenges, but you are not required to spend Blood or use an action to activate those. **Using Passion or Haunting through Echo Psychosis does not break your Majesty.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 227 denoted in bold.)

Retain the Quick Blood: Change Regarding Rate of Blood Expenditure

Once per turn, when you spend Blood to activate a Quietus power, you immediately regain 1 of the Blood points spent to activate that power. Blood recouped with Retain the Quick Blood does not count toward your maximum Blood expenditure per **turn**. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 231 denoted in bold.)

Updates to Merits and Flaws

Changes to General Rules Regarding All Merits

How to Determine When Merits are Considered Supernatural Powers

...Any merit effect that requires the expenditure of Blood counts as a supernatural power. For the purpose of powers like Possession, clan-specific merits count as 1-dot in-clan powers; general merits are not considered in-clan. It is possible to lose access to part of a merit without losing access to the entire merit. For example, while using Possession, a Giovanni's wraith Retainer will not disappear, but without the proper focus, the Giovanni may not be able to spend Blood to summon it. (Errata update added to MET:VTM, page 235 in entirety.)

Clarification Regarding Use of Physical Merits Outside of One's Own Body

...Merit effects that alter a character's physical form (permanently or temporarily) are not available while that character is not in her real body. For example, while using Possession, a character loses access to merits such as Rugged, Unnatural Adaptation, and Shape of Beast's Wrath. (Errata update added to MET:VTM, page 235 in entirety.)

Changes Regarding Rarity Merits

Clarification Regarding Restricted Clan Merit Cost

...With this merit you can portray a clan that is not listed in your chronicle's setting. Check with your Storyteller before choosing this merit. The Storyteller may not allow you to purchase this merit if she wants to completely forbid certain clans or bloodlines that do not mesh well with her setting. With your Storyteller's permission, you may use this merit to portray an unusual clan's bloodline, even if the total cost for playing that bloodline (rarity merit cost for the base clan plus bloodline merit cost) **would otherwise total more than 6 points of merits**. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 237 denoted in bold.)

Changes to Clan Merits

Brujah: Scourge of Alecto: Clarification Regarding Majesty

...When another character spends 1 or more points of Willpower to ignore your Awe, or attempts to overcome your Majesty, your Beast responds with spiteful rage. The sheer force of its anger rips into your rival's spirit, tearing her apart. The target of Scourge of Alecto takes 1 point of aggravated damage; this damage cannot be reduced or negated. This effect

does not require an action or a challenge to activate **and does not break your Majesty.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 239 denoted in bold.)

Lasombra: Angelic Visage: Change Regarding Focus Benefit

...Your innate connection to the Abyss shows in every movement of your body and every shadow of your face, lending you an unnatural grace and sexual attraction. **You gain your choice of either the Appearance or Charisma Social attribute focus in addition to the normal Social attribute focus selected during character creation.** Additionally, you always appear attractive and dignified, even when you are injured, dirty, or have low Humanity. Even if you are on a path or at low Humanity, your moral degradation lends you a porcelain, alien beauty rather than a monstrous, feral visage. Adherance to a path is still unmistakably visible, despite this exceptional beauty, but rather than evoking fear or disgust, your dark radiance is intense and **supernaturally attractive** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 241 denoted in bold.)

Lasombra: Born in Shadow: Addition of Limitation to Shroud of Night Benefit

...Your spirit is particularly attuned to the dark depths of the Abyss. Once per turn, you can activate one of the first 2 dots of Obtenebration without spending Blood, though you must meet all other requirements. **Alternately, once per turn you may use this merit to increase the radius of your Shroud of Night up to 12 steps without spending Blood** (see Chapter Four: Disciplines, Shroud of Night, page 148). **Afterwards, you may continue to increase your Shroud of Night, but you must spend Blood to do so.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 241 denoted in bold.)

Cappadocian: Necromantic Insight: Clarification Regarding Samedi Bloodline

...You can purchase an additional path of Necromancy in addition to the Mortis Path. This additional path is learned without a teacher and is purchased at in-clan costs, but is not considered an in-clan discipline. For example, when using the Dominate power Possession, these Necromantic paths cannot be brought along. You can purchase this merit multiple times, allowing you to learn multiple paths of Necromancy. **Members of the Samedi bloodline who purchase this merit may select Mortis Path.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 246 denoted in bold.)

Changes to Morality Merits

Path of Night

...You do not gain Beast traits when performing a sin, as long as you commit that sin while attempting to shock others with your evil, undermine another's authority, or pointedly violate the orders of someone who thinks she's in charge of you. If you voluntarily fail to act on an opportunity to spread evil, tempt others to damnation, or terrify the faithless, **you gain Beast traits as though you've committed a level 1 sin**. If you voluntarily follow another character's orders or repent of your evil, you gain Beast traits as though you committed a level 4 sin. This merit encompasses all roleplay variants of the Path of Night, including Righteous, Allied, etc. Followers of this path are called "Nihilists...." (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 257 denoted in bold.)

Updates to Core Systems

Changes to Complex Scenarios

Clarification Regarding Surprise Actions

...When your character starts a combat, take one action, either your simple or standard action, outside of the initiative order. This action (often called a surprise action) **is resolved before anyone else can respond**. Your remaining action resolves normally, when your initiative comes up.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 278 denoted in bold.)

Changes to Combat Maneuvers

Clarification Regarding Grappling as a Prerequisite for Supernatural Powers

...As long as your character is grappled, she is considered the target of a Physical challenge each round (allowing others to only target her with one additional Physical attack per round). (See Maximum Attacks Per Round, page 282.) **With the right equipment or supernatural power, it is possible to Grapple at range, but a Grapple cannot be used as a prerequisite for a supernatural attack unless you Grapple with your hands. For example, you can't throw a net at someone and then use Cauldron of Blood, because you have not grappled the target with your hands.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 280 denoted in bold.)

Changes to Blood Points

Boosting Physical Attribute: Clarification Regarding Blood Expenditure Limits

...A vampire may spend Blood to boost her Physical attribute, raising her rating for the duration of one challenge. Each point of Blood spent in this way boosts a vampire's Physical attribute rating by 1. Blood spent to increase your Physical attribute does not require an action, and this expenditure can be done at any time. It may even be done before your initiative. Note that the amount of Blood a character can spend per **turn**, and eventually her overall Blood pool, will limit how much a character can boost her attribute. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 294 denoted in bold.)

Changes to Ghouls

Clarification Regarding Blood Expenditure Limits

In every case where the rate at which a ghoul can spend points of Blood is referenced, the limits listed refer to a given turn, not a given round. (Errata updates superseding MET:VTM, pages 298-299.)

Updates to Dramatic Systems

Changes to Blood Bonds

Clarification Regarding Immunity Provided by Full Blood Bonds

...**Third drink:** Full blood bond. At this level, the drinker is completely bound to the vampire **and is considered fully blood bound, for the purpose of adjudicating powers that interact with blood bonds.** He is the most important person in her life; lovers, relatives, and even children become secondary to her all-consuming passion. A thrall must spend a point of Willpower anytime she wishes to do something that she believes her regnant would disapprove of, and she must spend 3 Willpower per hour to attempt to directly harm her regnant. Additionally, defensive Social and Mental test pools to resist her regnant's powers suffer a -3 penalty. A drinker can experience lesser (one- and two-drink) bonds toward several individuals, but upon the formation of a full blood bond, all lesser bonds are wiped away. **Additionally, the vampire is immune to other blood bonds until her full blood bond drops to a two-drink bond or less.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 295 denoted in bold.)

Camarilla Setting Updates

Updates to Setting–Specific Flaws

Forgiven Diablerie: Clarification Regarding Status Ban

...You either committed diablerie during a blood hunt as a result of a Trophy or committed diablerie before the formation of the Camarilla. You have a writ of approval signed by a Prince or a Justicar. Although you cannot be openly punished for this past indiscretion, you have undoubtedly made enemies, and there are many elders who would delight in your ultimate downfall. **Members of the Camarilla with this flaw suffer the sect's Greater Status Ban, but cannot be openly executed, banished, or given negative status for their forgiven diablerie.** (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 405 denoted in bold.)

Sabbat Setting Updates

Changes to the Vaulderie

Vinculum Ratings: Clarification Regarding False Sabbat

...Successfully participating in a Vaulderie requires a basic belief in Caine and in the doctrine of the Sabbat. Only willing individuals can participate in the Vaulderie. A character cannot be forced to take part, or the ritual will fail. **False Sabbat who drink but do not contribute blood receive Vinculum ratings to others without those characters developing a Vinculum rating to the false Sabbat member in return. This is an exception to the rule that Vinculum ratings are always mutual**.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 434 denoted in bold.)

Vinculum Ratings: Clarification Regarding Blood Bond Reduction

- ...The first time you participate in a Vaulderie with someone, you gain a rating of 1. This rating is permanent, no matter how long it has been since you participated in the Vaulderie together. You feel a sense of kinship and are neutral-to-friendly with the subject. There is no mechanical effect.

Anyone who participates in a Vaulderie automatically has all her blood bonds lowered by one step. This reduction cannot occur more than once per night. (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 434 denoted in bold.)

Updates to Allies and Antagonists

Changes to Stock NPCs

Werewolves: Clarification Regarding Rate of Healing

...**Werewolves automatically heal 1 point of normal damage per turn.** Additionally, a werewolf may spend 1 point of rage to heal a point of normal damage or 3 rage to heal a point of aggravated damage.... (Errata update superseding MET:VTM, page 494 denoted in bold.)

Methuselah Generation NPCs: Clarification Regarding Blood Expenditure Limits

In every case where the rate at which a methuselah Stock NPC can spend points of Blood is referenced, the limits listed refer to a given turn, not a given round. (Errata updates superseding MET:VTM, page 503.)

Updates to Influence and Equipment

Changes Regarding the Equipment Generation System

Protective Gear, Ballistic: Change Regarding Protection from Thrown Attacks

...**Ballistic:** This type of protective gear applies a +3 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting ranged attacks from firearms. Further, it applies a +1 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting Brawl, Melee, **and thrown weapon attacks**. (Errata updates superseding MET:VTM, page 519.)

Protective Gear, Hardened: Clarification Limiting Protection from Ranged Attacks to Only Firearms Attacks

...**Hardened:** This type of protective gear applies a +3 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting Brawl, Melee, and thrown weapon attacks. Further, it applies a +1 bonus to your defensive test pools when resisting **firearms** attacks. (Errata updates superseding MET:VTM, page 519.)



Chapter Three: Alternative Clan Merits

"All Ventrue carry unique privilege in our blood. To fail to live up to our distinctions and squander our talents is a worse crime than to dare."

— Cornelia Mowebary, Ventrue Elder

Each clan has a list of merits published in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade (MET:VTM): Chapter Five: Merits and Flaws**, page 238. The merits listed below present alternatives that may be purchased with Storyteller permission. Unless otherwise stated, you can only purchase a single merit of each price point per clan. For example, if you are playing a Tremere character, you could only purchase one of the following merits: **Talisman (3 point merit)** or **Spellslinger (3 point merit).** Conversely, you could choose to purchase both **Thaumaturgic Expertise (1 point merit)** and **Ritual Master (1 point merit),** because the description of **Ritual Master** explicitly states that you may do so**.** Bloodline merits are the exception to this rule; they do not prohibit you from purchasing another clan merit of the same cost.

Clan-specific merits are only available to vampires Embraced into that clan. These merits are not available to adopted members, allies, revenants, or ghouls, even if the ghoul's domitor is a member of the clan. In addition, some of the alternative merits below may only be purchased for characters that also possess a corresponding Bloodline merit. Merits available to members of a bloodline are still subject to the rule limiting your clan merit selections to only one of each cost. For example, a Toreador Ishtarri who purchases Jack-be-Nimble cannot also purchase Immortal Beauty or Artist's blessing.

Greater Clans

Assamite

Assamite: Warrior

The following merits cannot be purchased by characters that possess any Assamite bloodline merits.

The Blade Whisperer (1 point merit)

You have trained for many years to strike with unerring accuracy, using your speed and grace to circumvent all obstacles. Whenever you initiate an opposed challenge against a target, she cannot benefit from the Assist Defender mass combat tactic. If another character attempts to use the

Assist Defender tactic, that character loses any action spent to attempt that tactic.

Bane's Blessing (2 point merit)

In pursuit of your mastery of Quietus, you've spent time exposing yourself to all kinds of poisons. This harsh conditioning has granted you immunity to the effects of all mundane poisons; they have no effect on you whether they're ingested, injected, or applied topically. In addition, you are immune to any effects or damage dealt through use of the Quietus discipline. This immunity includes any damage converted to aggravated damage, such as through the power Baal's Caress; such damage is instead inflicted as normal damage. In addition, you take no bonus damage from effects such as those conveyed by the power Baal's Bloody Talons, and the traits granted by that power do not apply when used against you.

With difficulty, you may also expel other supernatural poisons from yourself. If you are affected by a supernatural poison such as that conveyed by the powers The Slow Knife or Blur of the Weeping Eye, you can spend one simple action and 1 point of Blood per supernatural poison to expel them, vomiting them in an inert pool of blood.

Web of Knives (3 point merit)

You belong to an elite and secretive cell among the Assamite clan, known for its exhaustive training and devotion to Assamite orthodoxy. As part of your training, you spent seven years as a ghoul serving at Alamut, the Assamite fortress, and another seven as a newly Embraced vampire. Due to your rigorous training as a ghoul and study with the Web of Knives, you gain Potence as an additional in-clan discipline as if you purchased the Additional Common Discipline merit. Furthermore, due to your intense indoctrination in the principles of assassination, you gain the Morality merit Path of Blood for free.

However, these benefits come with a cost. You have taken a blood oath of loyalty to the Web of Knives. If you choose to leave or betray the order, it will send your former brothers and sisters after you to reclaim your heart's blood, causing you to gain the Hunted flaw (see **MET: VTM, Hunted, page 263**). You cannot purchase this merit after character creation.

Assamite: Vizier

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Assamite bloodline merit: Vizier.

Obsessive Study (1 point merit)

All Viziers feel within themselves a burning drive to pursue learning and education: the relic, they say, of their founder's first commandment to them. Your obsession consumes you and crawls through your skin like an old, welcome friend, pressing you to always further your studies. While you may not have access to the vast library of Alamut, the reformed Council of Scrolls was able to retain much of its accumulated knowledge. Due to your obsession and your inclination for perfection, the potential maximum number of dots you may purchase of all your skills increases by 1.

Blood Secrets (2 point merit)

The discovery of DNA was a scientific breakthrough, a realization that information can be stored biologically at a sub-cellular level. The Viziers, however, have been aware of this possibility for centuries, and they are capable of using it to great effect. You've experimented and studied for years, and you've mastered the art of distilling blood to extract its donor's essence. By binding a portion of her knowledge, you can brew a potion capable of imparting her skills to others.

First, you must collect 1 point of your target's Blood. If you spend a standard action to examine it, you determine if your target possesses any skills at 4 dots or greater, and if so, which skills those are. This ability does not give you the exact score for each skill; it only tells you which skills are 4 dots or greater.

To brew the potion, spend 1 downtime action

and choose a skill identified in the previous step to distill from the blood and create into a potion. This process wholly consumes the point of Blood. Create an item record to represent the potion, noting the skill chosen.

Drinking the potion takes a simple action. After consuming it, for the next 10 minutes, or for the next two turns if combat takes place, you receive a +2 wild card bonus to the skill chosen when the potion was created.

You may only benefit from the use of one of these potions at a time, and you cannot benefit from a potion made of your own Blood. Drinking a potion counts as drinking the blood of the original donor for the purpose of establishing blood bonds, etc. You may only have as many potions in existence as you have dots of the Occult skill. Potions remain virile for three months before they become inert.

Trials of the Blood (3 point merit)

Through extensive meditation and mystical journeys fueled by Kalif-infused blood, you have transcended the Station of Ultimate Rapture and seen glimpses of the truths that lie beyond. You may purchase a single Auspex technique or elder power that would otherwise normally be restricted by your generation. For example, a Neonate with this merit is able to purchase a single Auspex elder power. Pretender elders may purchase a second Auspex elder power. Elders and Luminary elders may purchase a technique that requires Auspex. Elder powers purchased with this merit cost 20 XP, and techniques cost 12 XP. Any additional discipline requirements for techniques must still be met; similarly a character must possess the necessary precursors in order to purchase Auspex elder powers. This merit cannot be used to purchase an Auspex luminary power.

Assamite: Sorcerer

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Assamite bloodline merit: Sorcerer.

Thaumaturgically Gifted (1 point merit)

You've become especially attuned to the ebb and flow of the magic that has flowed through your veins since the time of your Embrace. This connection has given you special insight into the arcane ways, allowing you to buy two additional paths of Thaumaturgy. This merit may only be purchased once.

The Judge's Resilience (2 point merit)

The breaking of the Tremere clan's curse was a godsend to the Assamites, ending centuries of subjugation and restoring the clan's honor. Since then, Assamites have conducted exhaustive research, searching for a means to further inoculate the clan against further assaults. You've managed to achieve some degree of success, honing your own mystic defenses to a remarkable degree. You gain a +2 wild card bonus when defending against all forms of Thaumaturgy. In addition, provided you are able to spend Willpower to retest when you are defending against a Thaumaturgy power or ritual, you do not have to spend a point of Willpower to do so. This merit applies to all forms of Thaumaturgy, but does not work against Necromancy. This ability does not provide an exception to the rule that only one Willpower retest may be made per challenge.

Talismonger (3 point merit)

Cultures throughout the world understand the power of a token or keepsake that carries a portion of spiritual or divine energies. Even those who place no stock in the occult carry images of saints or good luck charms. You have the skill necessary to create a talisman, an object that contains a level 1 or level 2 Thaumaturgy ritual. Using this power, you can imbue a part of your magic into a small trinket, such as a crystal or stone, a small stone or wood carving, or a small pouch of herbs. To create one, spend one downtime action (in addition to any other cost and/or requirement for the target ritual) casting the ritual and 1 point of Blood to infuse the item with the ritual. The Storyteller then creates a record noting the item, the ritual, and its

expiration, as well as your test pool to be used, if applicable to the ritual.

To use the talisman, its bearer spends a simple action to activate its magic. The user does not need to know the ritual to activate the talisman, but the user must interact with the talisman in a meaningful way, such as by consuming the herbs or saying a special prayer. In all cases, using the talisman requires you to expend one simple action to activate it. You can only benefit from the effects of a single talisman at a given time, and you cannot benefit from the same ritual twice, if you use a talisman to activate that ritual. You can have as many of these talismans in existence as you possess in dots of your Occult skill, and they remain virile for three months before they become inert.

Brujah

Breaking Point (1 point merit)

Every Brujah has her limit: a point where the mask of a gentile predator drops, and the fury that boils within comes to the fore. Your rage may be a liability, but it gives you tremendous power. Whenever you are in a frenzied state — rage frenzy, hunger frenzy, or fear frenzy — and you succeed in an opposed challenge using your Melee or Brawl skills, you automatically achieve an exceptional success on that challenge. If a power or effect automatically grants you a normal success, this merit still turns the result into an exceptional success, If another power prevents you from achieving an exceptional success, determine the results of an exceptional success normally.

Iron Heart (2 point merit)

The inscription "Know Thyself" was famously chiseled above the entrance to the Oracle of Delphi: a reminder to those who would seek counsel on their road to greatness. Through many trials, both physical and spiritual, you have come to understand your higher self with a certainty not easily challenged.

Your sense of self grants you a special resistance to the Dominate and Presence disciplines, as well as any power or magic that seeks to compel your behavior (such as Thaumaturgy: Path of Corruption). Provided you are able to use Willpower to retest an opposed Mental or Social challenge when resisting one of these effects, you can do so without paying the required Willpower cost. This ability does not provide an exception to the rule that only one Willpower retest may be made per challenge.

In addition, whenever you use the Assist Attacker or Assist Defender mass combat tactic to support another individual, she gains the benefit of Iron Heart as well for the remainder of the turn, but she cannot share the benefits of Iron Heart with others. You can use the Assist Defender tactic solely to give someone this benefit in response to another character's use of a Social or Mental power against them, though you cannot use the Assist Defender tactic to intercept the power or become its target.

Fervent Iconoclast (3 point merit)

Brujah Iconoclasts devote themselves to exposing false ideologies, tearing down failed leadership, and smashing broken systems. Their ideology, they maintain, is more than simple rebellion; they believe that anything that can burn should, and that which is worthwhile will survive.

Your rage can burn through the structures of power others hide behind, shaking your opponent to her core. Whenever you achieve an exceptional success in a Physical attack, you can tear down one of your target's active powers. Select a power. All instances of that power immediately cease, as if your target had ended it herself. The target can reactivate that power again on her next action, if she chooses. You cannot select any of the following powers when activating Fervent Iconoclast: any power that is considered a transformative power (either major or minor transformations) or any of the powers within Celerity, Potence, Fortitude, or Fleshcraft.

When choosing a power, you select a single power within a discipline (or blood magic path, etc.) but not all powers within a discipline. You don't need to know the power's name, but you must be somewhat aware of its effects in order to target

that power with Fervent Iconoclast. For example, you can end the effects of Mask of a Thousand Faces (or a similar disguise power) only if you suspect the target has such a power active. You can only cease the effects of disciplines in this way; rituals, merits, and other sources of power are not affected.

Brujah: True Brujah

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Brujah bloodline merit: True Brujah.

Timely Intervention (1 point merit)

The power of Temporis courses through your body, giving you an innate knowledge of the flow of time and making your natural state one of calm readiness. Where others may flounder and hesitate, you are calculated and precise, having learned that true speed is more a function of decisiveness and efficiency than rapid movement. For every Temporis power you possess, add a +1 wild card bonus to your initiative.

Renaissance Mindset (2 point merit)

Many wonder why True Brujah spend so much time in study, but as a dedicated Sage, you understand that learning is a lifelong process without beginning or end. Knowledge is a living body, constantly growing and evolving, and you attach no sense of permanence or unnecessary affection to that which has been outgrown. When your knowledge has served its purpose, you can discard it, pursuing studies more relevant to your needs.

Provided you have sufficient means to conduct research, you may spend one downtime action to switch one of your Academics, Linguistics, or Lore skill specializations for another one of your choice. In the case of Academics, simple internet access will suffice for the purposes of determining access to research. However, more obscure Languages or Lore requires access to a Haven with the Library specialization, at your Storyteller's discretion. If you have the Natural Linguist or Loremaster merit, you cay switch the bonus specializations it provides.

Borrowed Time (3 point merit)

Of all resources, time is perhaps the only one that's doled out in equal measure. Though this tends to be the case, you've found a way to cut in line.

Once per hour, when someone else has declared their action during a combat scenario, but before the related challenge has been performed, you may expend this merit's power. If you do, you may interrupt and take your next action immediately, setting aside the current action. After you have acted, the individual you interrupted is still obliged to take her action exactly as she declared. If you have interrupted her movement, she is obliged to take identical steps. If she attempted an attack that tested against your Dodge skill defense test pool and you stepped out of the way, her attack strikes at empty air. However, she is still able to target you normally with Social or Mental powers.

If you have already acted during the round in which you opt to use Borrowed Time, you may still use this merit; however you lose your action in the next applicable round, e.g. the next initiative in which you have an action.

Followers of Set

Bane of the Aeons (1 point merit)

You have known fear and pain, craving and despair, and you passed through the Gate of Eternal Night. You regain 1 point of Willpower any time you force another character to spend a point of Willpower resisting your own efforts at tempting them, coercing them, or binding them to your will.

Shedding the Snake's Skin (2 point merit)

The Dark Father has taught you the secrets of shedding your skin, allowing you to be reborn anew and fool the soulless minions of the Aeons. Expend a standard action to rip the outer layer

of skin from your face. Afterward, your body renews, and you automatically heal 3 points of damage, starting with aggravated damage first. The effects of any powers active on you when you use Shedding the Snake's Skin, such as Summon, Clairvoyance, or the Thaumaturgy ritual Blood Contract, immediately end, canceling them. The user of any powers broken in this manner know that her hold over you has been rebuked by Set's glory. This power resets any previous Familiarity others have established with you (see **MET: VTM: Familiarity with Target**, page 114). Just as a snake infrequently sheds its skin, you are likewise limited to using this power only once per game session, and afterwards your maximum Willpower pool is reduced by 1 for 30 days or two game sessions, whichever is shorter.

Voudoun Master (3 point merit)

Set's children revere the Loa. Many believe that practitioners of this art can secretly commune with their Dark Father. When you acquire this merit, you gain access to Necromancy. You may purchase Necromancy: Bone Path and one other Necromancy path of your choice (except for Mortis Path). These paths are learned without a teacher, but are considered out-of-clan powers for all other purposes (including XP costs).

Followers of Set: Tlacique

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Followers of Set bloodline merit: Tlacique.

The Heart of the Matter (1 point merit)

The religions of the area where the Tlacique call home relied heavily on blood sacrifice, an offering of the heart's essence to gain divine favor. Through centuries of preserving these old ways, finding a victim's heart is second nature to you. You can attempt to use the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver on a vampire who has at least 1 level of damage in her Injured wound track, instead of the normal requirement that the target have damage in her Incapacitated wound track. You must still pay any applicable costs in order to use the Pierce the Heart combat maneuver.

Blood Knows the Way (2 point merit)

The Aztecs believed that all blood belongs to the gods as part of a debt incurred by the initial sacrifice that allowed for the world's creation. The ritualistic shedding of blood, therefore, was a sacred act, returning blood to the divine. You have learned the sacred rites that grant you power to complete this sacrament, attuning yourself to a target through her blood.

Spend a simple action to spread at least 1 point of your target's Blood over your face and hands while reciting ancient invocations. This action expends the point of Blood, rendering it inert for all other subsequent uses. Afterward, you receive a +2 wild card bonus to all Physical, Social, and Mental attack test pools against that target for the remainder of the game session. The blood must be visible on your person to use this advantage; if you conceal the blood in any way, such as with Obfuscate, a mask, or gloves, or if the blood is deliberately washed off, the effects of Blood Knows the Way immediately end. As part of this merit's power, your target will immediately recognize that her blood is upon your body when seeing you.

Obsidian Claws (3 point merit)

Though not as durable as metal, obsidian can be remarkably sharp. It saw a variety of uses, both practical and religious, throughout Mesoamerica before the European invaders arrived. You have the power to turn your claws into black, razor-sharp obsidian arrowheads that you can use from range by swiping at the air. When using Feral Claws, you may make Brawl skill attacks from a distance up to to three steps for each dot of the Athletics skill you possess. You may use this effect to enable other powers and standard combat maneuvers, except for Grapple, Trip, Pierce the Heart, and Disarm. Using this ability disengages the claws from your hand. If you use them in this manner, you must spend a simple action to regrow them before using them again.

Followers of Set: Viper

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Followers of Set bloodline merit: Viper.

Serpentine Embrace (1 point merit)

Large snakes are unique because they prefer strangulation as a means of killing their prey: a slow, yet gentle process that avoids unnecessary bloodshed and damage. When an opponent is in your grip, they are helpless against you, and you can crush them with ease. Whenever you use the Grapple combat maneuver, you do not reduce the damage. In addition, once per hour, you may use the Grapple combat maneuver without paying its Willpower cost.

Iron Scales (2 point merit)

The scales of a serpent are strong yet supple, much more so than the skin of amphibians or mammals. Certain species like the calabaris enjoy especially dense scales, providing greater protection without compromising flexibility. Likewise, you are unusually tough among Followers of Set, and you have the ability to shrug off blows and bullets in relentless fervor. You gain Fortitude as an additional in-clan discipline, as though you had obtained it via the Additional Common Discipline merit (**MET: VTM,** page 248).

Typhonic Beast (3 point merit)

You are blessed by Set, allowing you to take on a form akin to his sacred animal, which resembles a canine with a forked tongue. When doing so, you remain in a humanoid shape, but with an animal head, much like the way Egyptians depicted their gods. Your body sprouts sleek, black fur, your nose extends to a curved, fanged snout, and your ears extend like those of a jackal. Your eyes and tongue remain decidedly serpentine.

Whenever you utilize the Serpentis power Form of the Cobra, you may instead opt to take the form of the Typhonic Beast instead of a serpent. In this form, you receive the benefits of Form of the Cobra and Skin of the Adder simultaneously, and you may use Tongue of the Serpent freely in this form. None of these powers can be further activated for additional bonuses.

In addition, whenever you use a Serpentis power in this form, you can benefit from that power's attribute focus, even if you do not normally possess it.

Typhonic Beast is a major transformation and cannot be combined with other major transformations, except for Divine Image. Activating Divine Image while in the form of the Typhonic Beast is an exception to the rule that prevents you from combining transformative powers. You can end this transformation at any time by expending a simple action. Typhonic Beast's transformation is close to human, allowing you to use weapons while in this form.

Gangrel

Seasoned Traveler (1 point merit)

You've got a knack for going places: an expertise cultivated from long nights on the road and spent shoe leather. You've seen it all, from fairies in Fresno to Sabbat in Saskatchewan, and you know how to avoid attracting undue attention. The potential maximum number of dots you may purchase of the Survival and Streetwise skills increases by 2 (normally this raises your potential maximum to 7). In addition, you gain the first 3 dots of either the Streetwise or Survival skill for free. If you already purchased the selected skill, your XP for that purchase is refunded. If you assigned creation points to the chosen skill, you may reassign those points to a skill in which you have no points assigned.

When you are traveling, provided you are simply passing through, you can move unmolested through any area, automatically avoiding any patrols. Only parties who have been tipped off to your arrival, actively pursuing you, or have a supernatural way of tracking you may attempt to stop you. You can extend this benefit to a number of characters traveling with you, up to a maximum of the dots you possess of the Survival Skill if passing through the wilderness, or up to the

dots you possess of the Streetwise Skill if passing through an urban area.

Sanguine Indulgence (2 point merit)

While the Beast's urges are perpetual, you have learned to satiate them, albeit temporarily. By spending a number of Blood points equal to the current number of Beast traits you possess and five standard actions, you may feed your Beast, lowering your Beast traits by 1. Note, should you accumulate 5 Beast traits in total, you cannot use this ability before your Humanity diminishes.

Rending (3 point merit)

You practice a secret fighting style developed by Gangrel during the Anarch Revolt to combat other vampires. *Rending*, as it is known, utilizes fangs and claws in ways ordinary fighters would never consider, making use of your supernatural gifts to deplete the your prey's reserves of blood.

Whenever you succeed at making a Physical attack that uses your claws or your fangs, you may choose to rend and tear, causing your target to lose 1 point of Blood in addition to any damage the attack causes. If you achieve an exceptional success, you may cause the target to lose an additional point of Blood as well, for a total of 2 points lost. This Blood loss occurs even if your target took no damage due to use of powers such as Fortitude. If your target is not a vampire, this merit has no effect.

Gangrel: Ahrimanes

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Gangrel bloodline merit: Ahrimanes.

Seekers of the Hidden (1 point merit)

The shamanic rites of the Ahrimanes are shrouded in the secrecy, glimpsed only through whispers echoing in their enemies' blood and ash. As one of the Ahrimanes, you have learned to tune your mind to the elements, the spirits, and the natural world. This merit grants you Spiritus as a fourth in-clan discipline. (Spiritus will be in MET: VTM, Vol. 2, Issue 3.)

You do not start with a free dot (or dots) of this fourth in-clan discipline; you can teach this discipline; powers that affect in-clan disciplines (such as Possession) affect it; and you pay all costs to learn this discipline as if it were native to your clan. This merit cannot be combined with other merits that give your character additional in-clan disciplines.

Spirit Guide (2 point merit)

The spiritual nature of Ahrimanes leads them to bond closely with animals and spirits of land and sky. You enjoy an especially strong connection to a spirit that serves as a guide in the form of a personal totem. You gain 2 dots of the Totem background, a background normally only available to shapeshifters. Build this totem according to totem creation rules of **Mind's Eye Theatre: Werewolf The Apocalypse (MET:WTA), page 201**. You can purchase up to a maximum of 5 dots of this background with XP using your normal cost for backgrounds. You must obtain Storyteller permission to purchase each additional dot greater than 2. This permission typically requires some act of service for your totem or implementing its teachings in a meaningful way.

This totem grants benefits nearly identical to a shapeshifter's totem benefits, with some exceptions. Any totem benefits that cost or provide Gnosis instead cost or provide the same quantity of Blood points. Should you purchase more than 2 dots of Totem background, you are exempted from the Pack Diversity requirement, allowing you to receive more than 2 totem bonuses. In addition, the Gift Affinity totem benefit instead grants you a single use of a 1-dot power from one of the following disciplines: Auspex, Animalism, Dominate, Obfuscate, Presence, Thaumaturgy, or Spiritus.

Sage of the Spirits (3 point merit)

Ahrimanes have a deeper connection to spiritual matters than most vampires, reflecting their long history as shamans. Through extraordinary

action or happenstance, you have earned the service of a powerful spiritual ally who serves you from beyond the spiritual plane. This spirit will typically be an animal spirit or another manifestation of nature, and it can intervene on your behalf. Construct this Retainer as a rating 5 Jaggling NPC Spirit Retainer, using the spirit rules in **MET: WTA**; **Chapter Twelve: Allies and Antagonists**, page 623.) Should your Retainer be destroyed, you may undergo a level 3 Heroic Quest to find another.

Gangrel: Coyotes

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Gangrel bloodline merit: Coyotes.

The Man in Black (1 point merit)

Whether due to a mortal life of crime or a mean streak a mile long, you know how to handle yourself on the other side of the law. You may amass a reputation as a troublemaker, but you wear your notoriety with style. Should you be afflicted with a status ban, reduce its effective severity by one degree. For example, if you are affected by a greater ban, you only suffer the mechanical effects of a lesser ban. If affected by a lesser ban, you suffer no penalty. You are also immune to the *Censure* effect of any negative status trait you possess.

In addition, you have a keen insight for when the jig is up. Should anyone spend downtime actions investigating an Alternate Identity background you possess, the Storyteller will make you aware that someone is looking into your persona, though she should not tell you which character is investigating you.

Luck of the Damned (2 point merit)

They say the devil looks after his own, or at least, that's probably what people say right when you slip through their fingers. You've got a sixth sense for danger, and you always keep an eye on the exit. Once per game session, you can spend a standard action to declare a fair escape that cannot be contested, defying all odds in order to avoid conflict. This escape may involve a particularly daring stunt, an unexpected burst of speed, or a lucky break. If you are successfully grappled, staked, or contained in a sealed area, you cannot use this merit's benefit.

Skullduggery (3 point merit)

Coyotes are among the most opportunistic hunters; they'll gladly make a meal out of anything they can catch. You receive a +2 wild card bonus to your attack test pool when engaging in a challenge against a target that has a lower initiative score than you. In addition, you receive a bonus equal to the number of dots you possess of the Streetwise skill when determining if you achieved an exceptional success against the target. This merit does not grant you an innate knowledge of your opponent's initiative score; this must be discovered through the course of combat or with the use of other powers.

Gangrel: Noiad

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Gangrel bloodline merit: Noiad.

Aquatic Predator (1 point merit)

Your predatory drive has adapted to marine life. Should your character purchase the Protean discipline power Shape of the Beast, you gain another animal form, your swim form, in addition to your flight and fight forms. Your swim form is an aquatic animal of your choosing, and it gains the Aquatic template for free. If you have the Wits focus, you may apply an additional template to your swim form, per the standard rules of the Shape of the Beast power. When you activate Shape of the Beast, you may change into your choice of form, including your flight, fight, or swim forms.

Blood in the Water (2 point merit)

You share a kinship with the ocean's most dominant predators, sharks, and you respond to the scent of blood with a fervor similar to those aquatic beasts.

You may use a standard action to sniff the air. If you do so, you can detect any open wounds within your line of sight. If you are underwater, you may use this ability at a range of up to 1 mile. If you use this ability in conjunction with the Auspex discipline power Heightened Senses, you can extend Blood in the Water's range to 1 mile on land and to 10 miles underwater. If you have identified a source of blood, you may attempt a tracking challenge to find its source. Should you identify multiple sources with open wounds, you gain a vague sense of distance and direction for each, and you may choose which one to pursue. Blood in the Water does not convey an ability to know the identity of a target; you are only aware of the presence of open wounds.

Mechanically, a character is considered to have open wounds if she has 1 or more points of damage in her wound track that was gained within the past hour. Should you attempt a damage-dealing attack against a target with an open wound, you gain the Brutal and Deadly melee weapon equipment qualities. These qualities apply to any attack that deals damage, including Physical attacks or damaging powers, such as Psychic Assault. Note that Blood in the Water does not grant an exception to the rule preventing you from benefiting from the same equipment quality twice.

Sea Witch (3 point merit)

Gangrel are often explorers by nature, but you are among the select few whose journeys to watery depths revealed inexplicable wonders. You know of sunken shrines to dead gods, and you can read portents in the northern lights. When you call out, the sea listens, and it has shared its secrets with you. You may purchase Thaumaturgy: Path of Neptune's Might at out-of-clan costs.

Giovanni

Ritual Master (1 point merit)

You have delved deeply into the theory, design, and art of hermetic rituals, and you have mastered them. You can purchase twice as many Necromantic rituals as you possess dots in Necromancy as described in **MET: VTM, Chapter Four: Disciplines, page 172.** You may purchase this merit only once, but you may purchase it along with the Giovanni merit: Necromantic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Power Broker (2 point merit)

You've got a nose for business and a knack for networking. Where others struggle to get things done, if you can't handle something yourself, you know a guy who knows a guy. Once every month, you can temporarily switch out any or all of your influence specializations. The next month, your normal specializations return.

Soul Economy (3 point merit)

Your spiritual assets survived the last Great Maelstrom better than most. When you summon wraith Retainers using Necromancy: Sepulchre Path, create them at 1 rating higher than the power normally permits. For example, if you possess the Sepulchre Path power Summon Soul, and you also possess the Appearance focus, you summon a rating 4 Stock NPC wraith.

Giovanni: Premascine

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Giovanni bloodline merit: Premascine.

Death's Virtuoso (1 point merit)

You have a powerful connection to your necromantic abilities, courtesy of Cappadocius' blood flowing through your veins. Age and

extensive experience with the dead allows you to cut the casting time for all Necromantic rituals to 5 minutes total. In addition, you gain a +3 wild card bonus to all Necromantic ritual challenges. You can purchase this merit along with the Giovanni merit: Necromantic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Blood of the Ancients (2 point merit)

For centuries, you have watched your fellow Giovanni gather power through their necromantic abilities: aptitude that you also possess. Few understand this power as well as you, and your special knowledge grants you some resistance to those who would direct their necromantic abilities against you. You gain a +2 wild card bonus when defending against all forms of Necromancy. In addition, provided you are able to spend Willpower to retest when you defend against a Necromancy power or ritual, you do not have to spend a point of Willpower to do so. This merit applies to all forms of Necromancy, but does not provide protection from Thaumaturgy. This ability does not provide an exception to the rule that only one Willpower retest may be made per challenge.

Scion of Death (3 point merit)

Your avatar of death is extraordinarily powerful, granting you additional gifts when you summon it. When you activate your Fourth Horseman transformative power, you also call forth a demonic steed with a Stock NPC rating of 4, which you may immediately mount with no action cost. This Stock NPC is immune to the powers of Animalism and Necromancy. While astride this steed, the radius of your Fourth Horseman power extends to five steps, rather than the standard two steps, and when you expend an action on movement, you may take a number of steps up to double the normal amount of steps you usually take. Only you may ride this steed; it will not abide another rider.

In addition, while in this form, your heightened connection to the avatar of death allows you to use any Mortis Path powers without expending Blood points to fuel them.

Lasombra

Social Elite (1 point merit)

Regardless of which sect they belong to, Lasombra have a knack for rising to the upper crust of vampire society. True to form, you have carved out a niche for yourself among your sect's elite. You automatically gain the Reputation merit, as well as one of the following sect-specific merits of your choice, depending on your sect:

- **Anarch**: Moniker or Wild One
- **Camarilla**: Machiavellian Prodigy or Social Nobility
- **Sabbat**: Black Hand Membership, Inquisition Membership, Keeper of a Sacred Text, Sanctified, or Scholar of the Sword

Trusted Confessor (2 point merit)

Since its inception, many Lasombra have held deep ties to the Catholic Church, occupying a number of its influential positions and directing its growth throughout their territories. As part of their duties, these vampires have become especially adept at hearing confession: the ritualized admission and absolution of the confessor's sin. Whether part of a spiritual tradition, a secular one such as psychotherapy, or simply by being a repository of good advice, you are able to help others unburden themselves of their spiritual weight.

By spending at least 10 minutes in discussion, you can cause a character's Beast traits to reduce by 2, provided she gives you an honest account of what she did to incur them. If you possess the Animal Ken skill, you can use it to remove a third Beast trait, as per the standard ability of the Animal Ken skill.

In addition, having heard her confession, you may offer centering and guidance to the target character. If you do, the next time the recipient

would incur a Beast trait, she incurs 1 fewer trait. A character may only benefit from a single application of this ability once per game session. You cannot use this ability on yourself.

Flexible Morals (3 point merit)

When you live in a world of shadow, morality becomes just a shade of gray. You are no stranger to sin, and your study into the nature of darkness has allowed you to reach an accord with your Beast. When you purchase this merit, if your Morality rating is above 3, it drops to 3. However, instead of decreasing your Morality rating when you accumulate 5 Beast traits, it takes 7 Beast traits before you decrease your Morality. You are still affected by frenzy stimuli at the regular stages as per normal. In addition, any circumstance or behavior that would cause you to lose an entire rating of Morality, such as diablerie, still affects you normally.

Lasombra: Kiasyd

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Lasombra bloodline merit: Kiasyd.

Fae Blood (1 point merit)

You have the ability to see past Fae Meins and glimpse the Dreaming as if you were one of the fae. However, this is not your world, so it can be discomfiting and chaotic to view.

In addition, you are considered two steps lower on the Banality scale when interacting with changelings, and anyone who drinks your blood immediately becomes Enchanted, allowing her to glimpse the Dreaming (see **MET: Changeling: The Dreaming: Chapter Eight: Dramatic Systems: Glamour, Spending Glamour**). This effect persists for the remainder of the evening.

Humble Abode (2 point merit)

There's no place like home, and you have made your haven into the perfect sanctuary for research and rest. Thanks to your organizational talents and a bit of fae magic, you gain 2 free bonus advantages for your Haven background, which do not affect the total number of dots you possess of the Haven background. You can only apply these bonus advantages to a single haven, regardless of how many havens you may possess. When making a Research or Lore skill test within your haven as part of the Library advantage, you gain the standard +3 wild card bonus after spending only 10 minutes in study, rather than the usual 1 hour. You may share your extensive Library with any visitors to your haven, also granting them the reduced-time benefit. In addition, thanks to the fae magic you possess, you may change the advantages of a Haven background you control as you see fit, and if your chronicle uses the Stock Locations rules, you may also change the location qualities of any building you control. To do so, expend one downtime action to focus your magic on a haven or location in which you have invested, and then denote which qualities and advantages you wish to change. This merit may be used on shared locations and havens.

The Friendly Folk (3 point merit)

You have extensive experience with changelings, either through study or direct contact with one of the fae. This experience, combined with the power of your blood, has granted you the ability to expand your studies and learn changeling arts. Choose one of the following Arts: Dread, Metamorphosis, Skullduggery, or Soothsay. You may purchase up to the third-level cantrip of this art for that same XP cost as an out-of-clan discipline. You must choose the art at the time you purchase this merit, and you cannot change this choice at a later time. When using this art, you expend points of Blood in place of Glamour to pay all costs. This merit does not grant you the benefit of bunks, allow you to purchase realms, or any other changeling benefits, aside from what is granted by the cantrips themselves.

Malkavian

Strength of Madness (1 point merit)

Madness is in your blood. Anyone foolish enough to taste even a drop of it becomes infected by

all of your derangements for a full 24 hours. If someone dares to drink your blood for three consecutive nights, she gains your derangements permanently, though they may be removed with XP, using the normal rules for removing flaws (**MET:VTM**, page 236). In addition, the presence of others' madness strengthens your power over them. You gain a +2 wild card bonus to your attack test pools when targeting a character that possesses at least one Derangement trait.

Malkavian Time (2 point merit)

Some believe that all Malkavians are connected on a psychic level in a vast web. Whereas most of your clanmates merely perceive this link as nonsensical cacophonic babble, you've learned to locate specific information — a mental needle in the chaotic haystack — but finding it comes at a price. If you pause to concentrate, doing nothing else for five turns, you can project your consciousness through this network to seek specific information or lore that another Malkavian knows.

You can ask questions like:

- Is the vampire in front of me a Malkavian?
- How many Malkavians are there in the city? (The total you receive includes both Malkavians and Malkavian bloodlines.)
- You can ask a question that is typically covered by an Academics, Science, or Lore skill specialization, and receive a short answer.

You can't learn personal information like the location of someone's haven, or who murdered the Prince. However, you can glean information about a specific blood magic ritual, learn the general history of the Camarilla, or uncover anything that is answerable by a Lore skill specialization. Once you do so, for the remainder of the game session, you gain a new derangement selected by the Storyteller to represent touching the heart of madness.

Alternatively, you can spend one standard action to broadcast a single five-sentence message to the Malkavian Madness Network or create a special beacon flagging a location as a special place of interest. Any Malkavian, including associated bloodlines, can perceive such messages or beacons, even if they lack this merit.

This merit can only be used up to three times during a single game session.

Method to the Madness (3 point merit)

Malkavians are feared for their ability to see signs and portents, drawing meaning from seemingly meaningless occurrences and then reacting before anyone is the wiser. The form this power takes is indeterminate; it might be that tarot cards speak to you, or you may see patterns in the extended digits of pi.

You must reserve a number of unspent downtime actions between game sessions to use this merit. At the beginning of each game session, inform the Storyteller how many downtime actions you reserved. Anytime you encounter a scenario where you would have benefited from previously spending a downtime action, you can do so at that moment, retroactively recalling that you previously already took care of what you needed because of a hunch.

This merit allows you to do anything that would normally take place in a downtime action. For example, you might have suddenly decided to patrol Elysium grounds, investigate the activity at a church, or sculpted a masterpiece. Once a downtime action is spent via Method to the Madness, treat it like a normal downtime action; it may be traced, tracked, or otherwise observed as per normal.

Malkavian: Ananke

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Malkavian bloodline merit: Ananke.

Power Object (1 point merit)

You've discovered an object of unspeakable power. You guard it jealously, and though

curiously few others take much interest in it, you keep it safe just the same.

When you purchase this merit, choose an item to serve as your Power Object; the Storyteller must approve your choice. The item must be unique in nature and sufficiently interesting to catch your attention. Though it possesses no actual powers, you believe it does, and you manifest additional abilities when you have it at your side.

The Power Object grants its wielder a +2 wild card bonus in challenges using a specific skill; you must select this skill at the time the merit is purchased. You must be holding or wearing the Power Object to benefit from this merit.

Should you lose the item, you immediately lose access to its power. You must spend a minimum of four downtime actions to either secure a replacement, which must have all the same characteristics of the old one, or you may create a new one, tying it to a different skill. The process of obtaining a new Power Object involves severing your connection with the old one. If you reclaim your former Power Object afterward, it provides no benefit.

Memento Mori (2 point merit)

You have a supreme collection of trophies, macabre occult items, and bizarre gruesome things that make even other Ananke blush. This collection grants you insight into Necromancy rituals. You may purchase a single Necromancy ritual for every dot of Dementation you possess, including techniques, elder powers, and luminary powers. For the purpose of purchasing rituals, Dementation serves as your primary path, instead of a Necromancy path. For more information, see **MET: VTM: Necromantic Rituals**, page 172.)

Death Becomes You (3 point merit)

You can trace your lineage to the dread Ankou, known to Kindred scholars as the first serial killer, a Malkavian embraced by Malkav himself. You gain strength from the presence of death. If you are present during the moment of someone's death, you immediately regain all of your spent Willpower, even if you are in the middle of a combat scenario.

Malkavian: Knights of the Moon

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Malkavian bloodline merit: Knights of the Moon.

Quixotic (1 point merit)

In an era where all may seem hopeless, you maintain a world view to which you cling romantically. When all may seem lost and the whole world appears against you, you find a way to persevere, ready to level a mighty tilt against even the most daunting of windmills. In the event your total points of Willpower should drop to 0 points, you suffer no penalty. In addition, if your total points of Willpower drop below 3, you may use a value of 3 in place of your actual Willpower score for your defensive test pools.

Preternatural Awareness (2 point merit)

You've developed your power of intuition to the point that it is as reliable as your other senses. Where others are limited to their mundane perceptions, your psychic abilities grant you extraordinary versatility.

In any situation that calls for you to use the Investigation, Stealth, or Dodge skills, you may instead substitute your Awareness skill (using its value for forming test pools, and using modifiers that affect your Awareness skill instead of the substituted skill). This benefit applies to test pools as well as circumstances where specific knowledge is required. In those situations, your Awareness skill helps you to arrive at a correct solution through worldly wisdom. However, you cannot use the system effects that come from possessing these skills, unless you purchase them normally.

Madness Hunter (3 point merit)

Centuries ago, it was the Knights of the Moon who first proposed the Greatest Prank, the widespread suppression of Dementation, allowing the Masquerade to take seed. Though the prank

itself has ended, Knights have learned the secret of containing the spread of insanity, and they have dedicated themselves to safeguarding its threat to the Masquerade. If you are targeted by Dementation powers ranging from 1 to 5 dots, including techniques that require Dementation, these powers automatically fail with no effect. You also receive a +3 wild card bonus when defending against elder or luminary Dementation powers.

Nosferatu

Beneath Notice (1 point merit)

Seemingly everywhere and nowhere at a whim, Nosferatu embrace their fate to be regarded as freaks among monsters, finding comfort in the anonymity that's granted to society's outcasts. The obscurity in which you revel affords you the ability to travel without interruption, as you're able to use a combination of sewer tunnels and secret routes to move about. This secret network gives you the ability to travel to the exterior of any location with which you are familiar in half the standard travel time, provided the target location is within the same urban center. You cannot be intercepted or caught unless one of your pursuers has this merit as well. You may bring a number of individuals with you up to the number of dots you possess of the Streetwise skill.

In addition, your Obfuscate powers Mask of a Thousand Faces and Conceal are empowered by your natural obscurity, allowing them to function fully against machines.

Painfully Shy (2 point merit)

All Kindred hide behind masks, but for many Nosferatu, theirs hide more than a wretched appearance. The act of being seen against your will so fills you with revulsion that your Beast lashes out against anyone who infringes on your privacy. Should anyone succeed in breaching your powers of Obfuscate, you can choose to cause them to immediately take a single point of aggravated damage which cannot be reduced or negated. In addition, should you immediately enter combat against an opponent who triggered the activation of this merit, you receive a +3 bonus to your initiative for the duration of that combat scenario. Attempts by your allies to pierce your Obfuscate powers cannot trigger this initiative bonus.

Ardent Companion (3 point merit)

It's lonely living life as an outcast. Friends are few and far between, and you can seldom trust them. You, however, have found someone you can truly count on. Whether a pet from your mortal life you refused to abandon, an animal that befriended you, or even a reptile buddy you found wandering through the sewers, you have a loyal companion who always has your back. Build your Ardent Companion as a ghouled Animal Retainer with a Stock NPC rating of 7.

Toreador

Immortal Beauty (1 point merit)

Beautiful people are often given more: more gifts, more permission, and more attention. Good looks can open many doors that would otherwise remain closed. You know how to use your appearance to your advantage, and you have few qualms using your pretty face to influence others. Whenever you are involved in an opposed challenge for a discipline that calls for you to use your Social attribute to build your test pool, you can benefit from that power's focus benefit, even if you do not possess the appropriate attribute focus. For example, you may use Immortal Beauty to gain the focus benefit for the Animalism power Quell the Beast, which involves an opposed challenge, but you do not gain the focus benefit for Drawing Out the Beast, since it does not require an opposed challenge.

Greater Colors (2 point merit)

For some individuals, the entire world is a place of wonder and new sensations. It is a place to be reveled in, a display of pleasure to be discovered with all five senses. You are one of these people. When you succeed in an opposed challenge using

an Auspex power (excluding techniques, elder powers and luminary powers), you are considered to always achieve an exceptional success.

Ephemeral Rhapsody (3 point merit)

All true beauty is like a flower—blooming and fragrant on the vine, only to wither into dust with time. Its transitory nature makes its existence all the sweeter. You are able to instill your art with your very essence, doubling the dots you possess of your Crafts skill, when you are specialized in the area of expertise relevant to the art you create. Such pieces must be wholly created by you, such as a painting, a piece of fine jewelry, a statue, or other item. Only three of these items may exist at a time, and that maximum cannot be exceeded. You may gift these items to another creature, but your creative limit remains, even if you no longer possess the artworks. You cannot create another item unless less than three of your art pieces exist.

Pieces created via Ephemeral Rhapsody are so imbued with the essence of life that vampires may feed from them. Treat the artworks as though they contain 5 points of mortal Blood. This Blood may be drained in part or in whole, consumed at the normal rate at which you typically drink Blood. In most cases, such as with a statue or painting, this act involves physically biting into and "drinking" its essence, however, in cases where this action doesn't make sense, you may instead destroy the item, ravaging it for its creative essence. In either case, you may bite into and consume the Blood in these items by expending a simple action. The act of doing so effectively destroys the item, robbing it of its beauty, craft rating, and soul. Any who view such a piece see it as a violated work, one that was once truly spectacular.

Toreador: Ishtarri

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Toreador bloodline merit: Ishtarri.

Jack Be Nimble (1 point merit)

Being able to resolve a conflict is about more than brute strength. Weaving in and out of a fight is often more important than hitting the hardest. For deft Ishtarri, this skill is vital. You can perform the combat maneuvers Burst of Speed, Quick Draw, and Pierce the Heart without spending Willpower to do so.

Furthermore, when you spend Willpower to use Blinding Attack, Disarm, or Knockdown, these combat maneuvers do not count against the total number of Physical attacks a target has received. You must spend Willpower to receive this bonus; if you have a benefit that allows you to circumvent the Willpower cost, this bonus does not apply. An individual can only be subjected to a single extra attack beyond their normal limit each round via Jack Be Nimble, regardless of how many characters attempt to use this merit in a given round.

Master of Vice (2 point merit)

The Ishtarri are more than graceful dancers and sword masters. Long before they honed their more delicate arts, they were masterful degenerates and purveyors of vice, watching the corruption of their mortal herds with more than a little glee. You may purchase the Herd background for 1 XP per dot, regardless of your generation. You can also spend your Herd background as if it were the Contacts, Retainers, or Allies backgrounds.

Itty Bitty Living Space (3 point merit)

Flexible and limber, Ishtarri are capable of moving in ways even the Tzimisce envy. You are able to contort your form, going so far as being able to dislocate limbs without damaging yourself to aid in your flexibility. This ability provides you with the Reach weapon equipment quality when you make a melee weapon attack. In addition, you may expend a simple action to automatically escape a grapple, and you can fit yourself into spaces that are no smaller than 18 inches in length per side. You do not take any damage from contorting yourself in this way.

Toreador: Volgirre

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Toreador bloodline merit: Volgirre.

Prodigy of the Flesh (1 point merit)

Before they departed the Sabbat, many Tzimisce were willing to share their secrets with the Volgirre, as these Toreador held undeniable passion for the beauties of the corporeal form. Whether you benefited from a skilled mentor during your time in the Sabbat, or you possess a special talent for study, you are able to learn up to 5 dots of the Vicissitude discipline without a teacher.

Visceral Artisan (2 point merit)

Art is subjective, and beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. While other Toreador focus on their paintings or their voices, your talents are a little more grotesque. When using your Crafts skill test pool, you may incorporate your Vicissitude powers to create objects that are shockingly and disturbingly alive. These objects are fully functional and are imbued with a horrifying biological capability. For example, a book may have a mouth and the ability to read itself to you, a harp may have arms to pluck itself, or a piece of furniture may have moving legs to arrange itself when commanded.

To use this merit, declare your intent to use it to the Storyteller and select a single function to imbue into a crafted item. Using this merit causes you to enter the next game session with a number of Beast traits appropriate to killing an animal or human donor, subject to any modifiers, such as those granted by Morality merits. In most cases, a human donor is required to craft an item using Visceral Artisan, but some simple functions can be accomplished with animal components. Donor specimens cannot be supernatural creatures other than ghouls; the physiology of supernatural creatures simply does not work with your methods.

Once you have gathered sufficient materials, make a static challenge using your Crafts skill test pool against the difficulty of the object you're creating. If you succeed, the object takes on the intended characteristic. If you fail, the Storyteller determines if you must either start again, or if the object is created, but with a darker functionality or consequence.

Objects created in using Visceral Artisan require some trivial degree of maintenance, such as feeding it an occasional bit of raw meat; these objects do not require any downtime actions to maintain. If fed your Blood, they survive indefinitely, and they can be subjected to the blood bond. However, if these objects are abandoned, not cared for, or lack the functionality to feed themselves, they will die. These objects are undeniable breeches of the Masquerade and are typically hidden away, even when lovingly cherished by their owners.

Old Habits (3 point merit)

When the Volgirre became part of the Camarilla, not all of them completely wiped their hands clean of the Sabbat. There are those that still enjoy certain benefits of their previous identities. When you purchase this merit, you may choose up 3 points of merits typically limited to the Sabbat sect. You gain the benefits of these Sabbat merits without spending additional XP to purchase them. Your Storyteller can limit these merits to those that are compatible with her setting style document or forbid ones that require you to actively hold a Sabbat sect position.

Tremere

Ritual Master (1 point merit)

You have delved deeply into the theory, design, and art of hermetic rituals, and you have mastered them. You may purchase twice as many Thaumaturgical rituals as you possess dots in Thaumaturgy as described in **MET: VTM, Chapter Four: Disciplines, page 187.** You may purchase this merit only once, but you may purchase it along with the Tremere merit: Thaumaturgic Expertise. This is an exception to

the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Quick Caster (2 point merit)

You have memorized and practiced the paths of Thaumaturgy, allowing you to quickly and efficiently cast spells. During a combat scenario, if you declare your intention to spend one of your actions using a Thaumaturgy power, you gain a bonus to your initiative equal to the number of dots you possess of the Occult skill.

Spellslinger (3 point merit)

You have trained in order to cast Thaumaturgy for the express purpose of battle. Select a single path of Thaumaturgy when you purchase this merit. You gain a +4 wild card bonus to all of your attack test pools when using powers from this path during a combat scenario. This bonus only applies to the challenges involving direct uses of the chosen path. It does not apply to indirect uses, such as attempting a challenge to establish a grapple in order to use Cauldron of Blood.

Tremere: Telyav

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Tremere bloodline merit: Telyav.

Ritual Supremacy (1 point merit)

Of all blood magicians, Telyav are especially focused on rituals, drawing upon centuries of pagan tradition to augment their studies. You can purchase rituals at an XP cost of the ritual's rating x 1. You may purchase this merit in addition to Thaumaturgic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Ritual Fluency (2 point merit)

Compared to Clan Tremere's traditional blood magic, the eclectic approach the Telyav take when practicing Sielanic Thaumaturgy gives you more flexibility in its use than its stricter, hermetic analog. You can learn any ritual from any blood magic paradigm, including Necromancy, Koldunic Sorcery, and Abyss Mysticism. These rituals count against the total number of rituals you may possess, regardless of their paradigm.

Forge of the Soul (3 point merit)

Telyavel, the Lithuanian god from whom all Telyav derive their name, is a god of smiths who can commune with the dead. You seek to emulate him in your devotion to the old ways, which has earned you his favor. You gain the benefits of the Medium merit and the Thaumaturgic Expertise merit at no additional XP cost. The Thaumaturgic Expertise provided by Forge of the Soul grants access to Path of Conjuring only, and cannot be used to select any other thaumaturgical path.

In addition, any equipment you conjure via the Path of Conjuring gains the additional equipment quality Strange Composition (Spirits), as your tie to Telyav imbues these items with spiritual power. This quality allows ghosts, wraiths, and spirits to interact with the item, including being harmed when attacked with it.

Tzimisce

Polymorphic Demeanor (1 point merit)

Fiends are capable of twisting themselves inside out, all for the goal of transformation and surpassing their original limits. For you, fluidity and change are your natural state. At the beginning of each game session, you can change your archetype and one of your attribute focuses. At the end of each session, your archetype and focuses revert to their original ones.

Emptiness of Faith (2 point merit)

Those with True Faith are a danger to any vampire; their holy righteousness burns through ancient blood and bone. You, however, do not fear these vessels of god's wrath. Whether due to a devotion to your clan's pagan traditions or a resolute denial of all spirituality, you are immune to the effects of True Faith, rating 1 and True

Faith rating 5. You still may be affected by True Faith ratings 2-4.

Vozhd (3 point merit)

One of the most terrifying Tzimisce creations is a *Vozhd*, a gruesome conglomeration of bits and pieces of other ghouls transformed into a siege engine of flesh and bone. For Tzimisce, wars have been won or lost due to the presence of these monstrosities.

You are a rarity among Fiends: one of the few able to create these creatures. To do so, you must start with one of your Retainers. As it becomes a Vozhd, it gains 3 bonus levels of Stock NPC rating in addition to its current levels. These bonus ratings do not affect the XP cost to further increase the Retainer's level. You may then give it one Animal Retainer trait. It also gains 2 Physical attribute focuses: an exception to the rule preventing Stock NPCs from having Physical attribute focuses. Lastly, it grows one size category for every 3 levels of NPC rating it possesses, up to a maximum of Delta. This merit can be combined with other merits or disciplines for ghouls, but you can only make one Vozhd every six game sessions or three months, whichever is shorter, due to the difficulty of gathering components and growing specimens. Creating a Vozhd requires you to expend 1 downtime action per level of the Retainer at the time of its transformation.

Tzimisce: Carpathians

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Tzimisce bloodline merit: Carpathians.

Knowledge is a Sword (1 point merit)

Carpathians are ancient, and their knowledge is vast, giving them an insight into things other vampires have forgotten. You can use your knowledge to adapt to any situation, calling on your age-old education to ensure you are always prepared. If you can spend three standard actions to prepare, you may immediately use your total dots of your choice of either the Lore or Academics skill in place of any other skill in a static challenge test pool. For example, you could substitute either your Lore or Academics skill for Security in order to pick a lock, relying on your broader understanding of clockwork or engineering for this task. This substitution applies only to a single opposed challenge; once you have attempted the challenge, you must once again prepare in order to use this merit's benefit again. Once you begin preparing, you must use the benefit immediately or lose it; you cannot store or maintain this benefit over time.

Flower of Kupala (2 point merit)

The Blood is more than sustenance for some vampires—via the blood bond, it is a method by which one may feel again or exert a level of control otherwise impossible. Clan Tzimisce learned how to break blood bonds with the help of a demon, and though the Carpathians dissented from using this power at the time, they have since learned to apply this knowledge– a useful tool for maintaining their valued independence.

You are able to lower the blood bond or viniculum rating of either yourself or another character by expending a downtime action to do so. Your target must either be willing, torpid, or restrained to receive this benefit. You cannot selectively choose which blood bonds or vinculum ratings to lower; a single application of this ability lowers all blood bonds and vinculum ratings by 1.

Scholomonariue (3 point merit)

Bits and pieces of history speak of an academy of the devil: a place where dread scholars were educated in dark magics and sent into the world. Famously, Dracula himself was said to be a student there. You, too, were one of these scholars. While you cannot possess any dots of Thaumaturgy, you may purchase a number of Thaumaturgy rituals for every dot of Auspex you possess, including techniques, elder powers, and luminary powers. For the purpose of purchasing rituals, Auspex serves as your primary path, instead of a Thaumaturgy path. (For more information, see **MET: VTM: Thaumaturgic Rituals**, page 187.)

Tzimisce: Koldun

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Tzimisce bloodline merit: Koldun.

Kupala's Bounty (1 point merit)

All Kolduns draw their magics from an ancient pact their clan made with *Kupala*: an ancient and powerful being tied to the Tzimisce homelands, rumored to be anything from a spirit to a bound angel to a demon. You deepened your ancient connection to Kupala in order to expand on your knowledge of old magic. This connection allows you to buy two additional paths of Thaumaturgy. This merit may only be purchased once.

No Place Like Home (2 point merit)

A Koldun's haven is their respite—a library, a research laboratory, and a safe place to experiment. Your haven, in particular, empowers you and your magic, improving your skills as long as your feats occur within its walls. You are able to add a Supernatural quality to your haven, using the Stock Location rules. In addition, you can also use a quantity of your home soil as a replacement for any component in a ritual as long as the ritual does not call for a component that is specific to your target, such as blood or hair. You can also purchase one additional ritual for each dot you possess of Thaumaturgy.

Spiritual Animist (3 point merit)

Cultures throughout the world have come to identify and venerate the spirits of the natural world. While some entreat the spirits with deep respect, their devotion is but a shallow understanding compared to your ability to command these apparitions.

When using Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery, you are not required to pay any Blood costs to activate those powers. In addition, you may choose to double the duration of any Path of Elemental Mastery power. Lastly, any spirits you summon or objects you animate receive a +2 bonus to their Stock NPC rating.

Even if you do not yet have the ability to summon spirits with Path of Elemental Mastery, you can still summon a simple spirit by spending 1 point of Blood and using a standard action to do so. This spirit acts as Stock NPC with a rating of 2, but it does not have any special powers (or receive an additional +2 bonus to its rating).

Ventrue

The Duty of Kings (1 point merit)

Command is the natural right and duty of a king. Provided you are able to use Willpower to retest an opposed Social challenge, you can do so without paying the required Willpower cost. This ability does not provide an exception to the rule that only one Willpower retest may be made per challenge.

Ventrue Royalty (2 point merit)

Ventrue are the sovereigns of Kindred society. They often lead a charmed life with money and influence beyond that of a typical vampire. By merit, or perhaps via luck of your Embrace, you are one of the clan's chosen, given special access to your lineage's private coffers.

You can assign 9 total dots between the following backgrounds: Allies, Contacts, Fame, Haven, Herd, Influence (Underworld or Elite), or Resources. You must assign 4 dots to one background, 3 dots to the next, and 2 dots to the final background.

These dots do not require you to expend XP to purchase. If you previously purchased dots in an applicable background, the XP is refunded. If you assigned dots during character creation to an applicable background, you can move those dots to another background in which you currently have no points.

In addition, the life of luxury you live allows you to surround yourself with the best material goods, from your clothes to your electronics. You can

add either the Antique, Artisan, Flashy, or Stylish qualities to any miscellaneous gear you possess without additional difficulty or cost. Adding a quality to an item in this way does not count toward the maximum number of qualities that a piece of equipment can possess.

Primacy of the Blood (3 point merit)

Some believe that the Ventrue clan was favored by Caine, born to enforce his laws. The blood of the Clan of Kings is mighty and stretches into the dim remembrance of antiquity. Vampires of weaker generation than yourself automatically fail if they attempt to use any Dominate discipline powers on you (including techniques, elder powers, and luminary powers).

Ventrue: Crusader

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Ventrue bloodline merit: Crusader.

To the Manor Born (1 point merit)

Crusaders insist that the Ventrue were once the Clan of Kings—born rulers destined for greatness—who later sacrificed their nobility for filthy lucre. Their sires and grandsires declined to soil their hands with trade, refusing to bend the knee to these merchant princes. Ventrue historians claim that the Crusader bloodline is descended from petty nobles, knights errant, and robber barons who could not or would not adapt to the Masquerade's new standards, which preserved the clan's power. You gain the Code of Honor merit, set to a code of your choosing. You may also optionally receive the Morality merits Path of Honorable Accord or Path of Chivalry at no cost.

Strength of Honor (2 point merit)

Once, knights and members of the nobility ruled by the sword and the strength of the hand that wielded it. This faith in the divine strength and right of true kings grants you Potence as an additional in-clan discipline, as though you had obtained it via the Additional Common Discipline merit (**MET: VTM,** page 248).

Hard as Steel (3 point merit)

The righteousness of your cause and your faith in it lends you resilience beyond others of your clan and generation. You may buy a single Fortitude technique or elder power that you would normally be restricted from purchasing due to your generation.

A Neonate with this merit is now able to purchase a single Fortitude elder power, but not the Fortitude luminary power. Pretender elders with Hard as Steel can purchase a second Fortitude elder power which must be a Fortitude elder power. Elders and Luminary elders may purchase a technique that requires Fortitude.

Elder powers purchased with this merit cost 20 XP, and techniques cost 12 XP. You must still meet any additional discipline requirement in order to purchase a technique, and you must also possess the necessary precursors in order to purchase Fortitude elder powers. This merit cannot be used to purchase a Fortitude luminary power.

Caitiff

Adaptive (1 point merit)

The other clans call you "trash," and even within the ranks of your fellow Caitiff, there's little to no loyalty to be found. Since your Embrace, you've made peace with the fact that you needed to be your own problem-solver, and you have made sure you're reliant only on your own skill set. When you purchase this merit, select a single in-clan discipline you possess. You always benefit from the attribute focus for that discipline, even if you don't possess the correct attribute focuses. For example, if you select Fortitude, you gain its focus benefit of extra health levels, even if you do not possess the Stamina focus; or if you select Presence, you may use the focus benefits for each level even if you do not possess the applicable attribute focus.

Piece That Remains (2 point merit)

Just as other Caitiff show vestiges of their lineage through their disciplines, an atavistic trait of your blood shines through. When you select this merit, you may also select a 1 or 2 point clan-specific merit from another clan, which you receive at no cost. You cannot select a merit that makes you a member of a bloodline, nor can you select merits that grant access to additional disciplines (including additional paths of Thaumaturgy or Necromancy), such as Seekers of the Hidden or Prodigy of the Flesh. However, you can select merits that are typically only able to be purchased by member of a bloodline, such as Rhythm of Battle or Jack-be-Nimble. This merit remains fixed for as long as you have Piece That Remains, and should you lose this merit, you also lose access to that clan-specific merit.

Inceptor (3 point merit)

Hated equally by elders of the Camarilla and Noddists of the Sabbat, Caitiff often find themselves hunted or used by Gehenna cults. Paradoxically, you are called "craven" and "thin-blooded," while you are capable of spontaneously developing powers of the blood that send fear through their hearts. When you select this merit, you may also select either the Kineticism discipline (see **MET: VTM, Vol. 2, Issue 3**), or your choice of one Necromancy or Thaumaturgy path as one of your three in-clan disciplines (you can choose Mortis Path). If you select a Necromancy or Thaumaturgy path, this choice does not reflect aptitude for actual blood magic, and you cannot purchase rituals. Rather, this path represents a spontaneously generated pseudo-discipline that shares the mechanical effects of the path chosen. It has no mechanical interaction with Thaumaturgy or Necromancy powers or effects; however, your power is not considered a Physical power and cannot be used during celerity rounds. You can only select this merit during character creation.

Lesser Clans

Baali

Infernal Acolyte (1point merit)

Regardless of the clan into which you were Embraced, you have chosen the path of the Infernal. Choose a clan that is common in your game's setting. You were a member of that clan before you converted to Baali, wholly reborn through dark magics. Replace one of your prior clan's disciplines with Daimoinon. The three disciplines that remain after you make this substitution become your in-clan disciplines, as opposed to the default Baali disciplines. For mechanical purposes, you are considered fully a Baali. You are not subject to your former clan's weakness, and you cannot purchase your former clan's merits. You must purchase all appropriate rarity merits for your game's setting. Infernal Acolyte may only be purchased during character creation.

Subtle as Hell (2 point merit)

Your demonic master prefers subtlety and guile, allowing you to obscure the source of your powers. The flames of your Demonic Fire, Profane Contract, or Unholy Regeneration gifts burn the color of normal flames. In addition, when your Infernal Power gifts are in effect, your aura does not show signs of infernal taint. Anyone who examines your aura while these gifts are in effect does not detect any infernal abnormalities.

Moloch's Heir (3 point merit)

The Baali Methesulah Moloch was said to have revolted against his fellow Baali, preferring to use his arcane methods to steal power, rather than serve the infernal to obtain it. Whether inspired by his example, or simply due to a refusal to yield, no demon is your master. Your soul remains firmly your own, and you have instead bound a demon to siphon its power. You gain the Infernal Power merit without having to pay its XP cost, but you owe no allegiance to a demon.

You need not follow orders or worry about being killed by a demonic master displeased with your actions. In addition, you are exempted from the rule that states you become further corrupted by the infernal when you learn additional dots of Daimoinon, and you do not need to enter into a pact with a demonic entity in order to learn the 5th dot of Daimoinon. You are still stained by the infernal power you possess, however, and few people will quibble about the details when hunting you.

Cappadocian

Chosen of Cappadocius (1 point merit)

In the city of Kaymakli, you stood before your Antediluvian with your brothers and sisters. While many others were denied sanctuary from the coming pogrom, you were spared, thanks to your natural intelligence and academic acumen. You have never forgotten that night beneath the mountain, and since that time, you have dedicated yourself to study and research. The knowledge of the ages grants you the following: two Lore skill specializations, two Linguistics skill specializations, and two Academics skill specializations. These free specializations are bonuses; they do not raise your total dots of these skills. In addition, you can purchase rituals at an XP cost of the ritual's rating x 1, subject to your maximum number of rituals. If your chronicle is set in a pre-Kaymakli time period, you can still purchase this merit, in which case, it represents superior ability with these skills and rituals. You can purchase this merit along with the Giovanni Merit: Necromantic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Blood Deceit (2 point merit)

When the traitorous Giovanni turned on Cappadocius, you and your fellow surviving Cappadocians were forced to improvise and devise new methods of hiding from the necromancers. Some even sought refuge among the very Kindred seeking to destroy them. Since the medieval era, a select number of remaining Cappadocians have excelled at forging family records. You possess one such record, indicating that you are an upstanding member of the Giovanni clan and family. You gain Alternate Identity background at 4 dots, allowing you to successfully integrate into Clan Giovanni. In addition, you gain a +2 wild card bonus to resist any attempts to determine your true nature, whether those attempts are mundane or supernatural.

Not My Time (3 point merit)

At the moment of your Embrace, you experienced a vision of the future wherein you witnessed the circumstances of your Final Death. Though this vision was vague and dream-like, with little indication as to where and when it will occur, you are confident that you will recognize the moment when you finally face it. This awareness of the future provides you a sense of serenity, knowing that it is not yet your time to perish. You may choose to relent to any challenge. If this challenge does not kill you or put you into torpor, you may choose to regain 1 point of spent Willpower. However, this merit fails to activate if the challenge is not hostile in nature, or if it is being attempted solely to recover Willpower.

Cappadocian: Lamia

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Cappadocian bloodline merit: Lamia.

Beauty of the Beholder (1 point merit)

Since the dark times when the high priestess herself captured the eye of the Cappadocian Antediluvian, Lamia have been blessed with an uncanny beauty that captivates onlookers and befuddles their minds, weakening them in the presence of members of this legendary sisterhood. Blessed by the strong blood of your Mediterranean ancestors, you epitomize these qualities and gain the Appearance attribute focus. Further, you can use a simple action to automatically gain the Gaze and Focus of a target within six steps of you (see **MET: VTM,**

Chapter 4: Disciplines: Gaze and Focus, page 113). You can purchase this merit along with the Giovanni merit: Necromantic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-sprcific merit of the same cost.

Not On My Watch (2 point merit)

Lamia have a staunch tradition of serving as bodyguards and fierce protectors for their Cappadocian counterparts. You carry an especially strong sense of purpose, and you are capable of delivering swift punishment to any who would harm those under your protection. Whenever you defend another character via the Assist Defender mass combat tactic and the attack fails, you may opt to make an immediate Physical attack against the attacker, provided they are within range. This counterattack does not cost you an action to attempt. If you use Not On My Watch to make a counterattack, that attack does not trigger another instance of Not on My Watch, or a similar power, if your target also possesses it.

Blessing of the Gorgons (3 point merit)

Lamia were often referred to as "Gorgons," compared to creatures believed to have snake-like lower bodies and serpent-like tendrils within their hair. Greek legend tells tales of Gorgons gathering in temples very similar to those maintained by the Followers of Set, engaging in barbaric rituals, occult studies, and keeping the sisterhood's secrets deep within their temples. When you acquire this merit, you gain Serpentis as a fourth in-clan discipline, as though you had obtained it via the Additional Uncommon Discipline merit (**MET: VTM,** page 248).

Cappadocian: Samedi

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Cappadocian bloodline merit: Samedi.

Whispers from Beyond (1 point merit)

You enjoy a unique spiritual connection to Loa: powerful Vodoun spirits that can offer you aid. For each dot of the Occult skill you possess, you can ask for their assistance once per game session. As you call upon the Loa, they seize control of your body, and they guide your actions. For one turn, you may choose one skill and increase its value to 5 dots. This ability may be used at any time, even before your turn in the initiative order, but not once a challenge that you are participating in has begun. You cannot summon the Loa more than once per turn, and this ability cannot benefit any actions that take longer than one turn to complete. Skills increased by this ability do not gain specializations or areas of focus. For example, you may use this background to temporarily increase your Lore skill, but it will not grant you additional Lore skill specializations. You can purchase this merit along with the Giovanni merit: Necromantic Expertise. This is an exception to the rule preventing you from purchasing more than one clan-specific merit of the same cost.

Walking Dead (2 point merit)

Your experience with death and innate connection to Loa has taught you one thing in particular: death is not the end, just the beginning of a new existence. With this knowledge, you have potent power over the dead, allowing you to raise an especially powerful zombie Retainer. This zombie is created using rules for the Shambling Hordes power (see **MET: VTM: Chapter Four: Disciplines: Necromancy, The Bone Path, Shambling Hordes**, page 175). However, this servant becomes a 5-dot Retainer. This Retainer has your choice of either the Fortitude or Obfuscate specialization. Create it as a rating 5 Stock NPC (see **MET: VTM, Chapter Three: Character Creation: Background Descriptions, Retainers**, page 104). Unlike most zombies, your Retainer is an intelligent creature that can assist you with downtime actions, when appropriate. You may only have one of these Retainers at a single time. If your zombie Retainer is lost, destroyed, or no longer desired, you may spend 1 downtime action to create a new zombie Retainer,

at which point, the previous Retainer reverts to a normal zombie. In addition, your understanding of death allows you to gather and maintain a healthy supply of bodies for your necromantic rituals, with one always at your disposal if needed.

Loa's Rebirth (3 point merit)

You have a special connection to the Loa and Baron Samedi. At some point in time, you have done the Baron a favor, and he owes you one in return. If you are wounded to the point of death, your body crumbles to ash before your opponents, and you are immediately resurrected at full health, surrounded by a cold fire with vibrant blue flames. You awake in your choice of either your haven or the last Elysium you visited, with all memories of your demise fully intact.

During your brief period of death, however, you must make a deal with the Baron. After your resurrection, you have one full lunar cycle to find whoever dealt the killing blow to you and kill them in your stead. Should you fail to kill your opponent and give the Baron the soul he is due, he returns to collect the soul from you, instead. You meet your Final Death, consumed by eldritch flames, regardless of your current health levels or use of supernatural powers. This merit can only be used once. Afterward, remove this merit from your character's sheet without receiving an XP refund. Once lost, you can only repurchase this merit after succeeding at a Heroic Quest to find Baron Samedi and perform some task for him, gaining his aid for the future once more.

Ravnos

Mind Games (1 point merit)

You are adept at creating especially twisted chimerical effects that prey upon the minds of your targets. When you use the Chimerstry power Horrid Reality, your illusions no longer affect your target's physical body; they instead directly attack the target's psyche. If your illusions attack your target's psyche, your target must use a defense test pool consisting of her Social attribute + Willpower to defend against any attack made by Apparitions augmented by your Horrid Reality. Your attack test pool consists of your Social attribute + Subterfuge skill, as normal. You may choose not to use the benefits of this merit; if so, your target uses the standard Horrid Reality defense test pool consisting of her Physical attribute + Dodge skill.

Shady Dealings (2 point merit)

Your connections are boundless, and when you wish to accomplish a task acting from behind the scenes, your abilities are unparalleled. Whenever you use a targeted influence action to attack another character's influence level, you need only spend 1 influence action for each point you wish to remove, instead of the normal 2 actions per point. In addition, you may leverage this merit when attempting to undermine Stock Locations. Reduce the difficulty by 2 when you participate in any quest to undermine a Stock Location, to a minimum of 1.

Jaded Existence (3 point merit)

The Week of Nightmares, a time when so many of your clanmates were destroyed as they fought against the urge to tear one another apart, marred your blood. Clan Ravnos saw many of its ideals die that day, losing its illusions of family and support. This event has left a permanent mark on you.

Whether you survived it or someone in your lineage did, you have been traumatized by the horrific visions and actions that took place during that time.

If you are targeted by Chimerstry powers ranging from 1 to 5 dots, including techniques that require Chimerstry, these powers automatically fail with no effect. You also receive a +3 wild card bonus when defending against elder or luminary Chimerstry powers. You still see the illusions presented by Chimerstry, but you can immediately tell what is real and what is not.

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Ravnos bloodline merit: Brahman.

Abstract Awareness (1 point merit)

Many Ravnos profess to uniquely understand the nature of *maya*, the web of deception that envelops reality. You have the ability to peek through strands of maya, catching a glimpse of other planes of existence.

Whenever you activate the Auspex power Heightened Senses, you may choose to project your senses into a different plane, instead of using Heightened Senses' standard abilities. You may choose to look into the Shadowlands, the Umbra, or the Dreaming. If you look into the Shadowlands, you can see any wraiths in the area. If you look into the Umbra, you can see any spirits nearby, including the presence of any werewolves currently within the Umbra in the area. If you look into the Dreaming, you perceive any chimerical entities, including the seemings of any nearby changelings.

When looking across planes, you may freely converse with any entities you can perceive, and you may target those characters with any Auspex powers you possess. Unless you possess an appropriate Lore skill specialization, these creatures seem bizarre and alien to you.

Chimerical Templar (2 point merit)

As a member of the Ravnos clan's priestly caste, warriors of the clan are beholden to protect you. The illusions you conjure obey this natural order, and they fight on your behalf with increased ferocity.

Whenever you use the Chimerstry discipline to create illusory defenders to aid you, they gain 2 additional Healthy health levels. In addition, should you choose to have your creations appear with weapons, you may assign two weapon equipment qualities to each. Whenever you command these illusions to attack via the Chimerstry power Horrid Reality, you may choose to use the bonuses from those weapon equipment qualities as part of your attack. For example, if you create an illusionary guard bearing a rifle with the Accurate and Ranged equipment qualities, you may add the +2 wild card bonus from the Accurate quality to your Horrid Reality test pool, and you may also target defenders at an extended range, as per the Ranged equipment quality rules.

Pierce the Veil (3 point merit)

You have accomplished revelatory breakthroughs during your study of illusion and reality. You possess a deep understanding of the nature of maya, existence, and space. Freed of mundane limitations, you wield your powers more effectively, targeting your foes' consciousness, rather than simply their senses.

You are always considered to have a character's Gaze and Focus, unless that character possesses a power that limits or prevents you from attaining it. If so, determine Gaze and Focus normally, as though neither character had a power affecting Gaze and Focus.

In addition, whenever you use a Chimerstry or Auspex power (including techniques that use either of these disciplines) to target another character, that attack does not count against the maximum number of attacks that character can receive during that round of combat. For example, if you targeted a character with a Chimerstry power, which would normally prevent that target from receiving another Social attack, that character can still be targeted by an additional Social attack during that round.

A target can only be affected by one application of Pierce the Veil in a given round. For example, if two Brahman Ravnos possess this merit, the first Brahman may use Pierce the Veil to make a Chimerstry Social attack against a target, allowing the second Brahman to target that same character with another Chimerstry Social attack, but the second Brahman's attack counts against the maximum number of Social attacks the target can receive that round.

You may also use Pierce the Veil to target a character who normally could not be targeted due to having reached the maximum number of attacks possible in that round. For example,

if another a character targets your intended target with a Social attack using the Presence discipline prior to your initiative in a given round, you could still use Pierce the Veil to attempt a Chimerstry Social attack on the same target.

Salubri

Salubri: Warrior

The following merits cannot be purchased by characters that possess any Salubri bloodline merits.

Sight Beyond Sight (1 point merit)

Your third eye cuts through clutter to expose reality around you, even if you may not like what you see. Once per game session, before you attempt a challenge using your Auspex test pool, you may spend a point of Blood to exude a flash of light from your third eye. You automatically succeed at the challenge, achieving a normal success. Alternately, after winning a challenge using your Auspex test pool, you may spend 1 point of Blood to automatically convert your normal success to an exceptional success. However, seeing the truth beyond the curtain is a taxing experience. For the next hour after using Sight Beyond Sight, you gain the Death Sight flaw, as your eyes are opened to the toxic reality of the world. Sight Beyond Sight can be used in conjunction with powers corresponding to dots 1-5 of the Auspex discipline; it cannot be used with Auspex elder powers, luminary powers, or techniques.

Demon Slayer (2 point merit)

You've devoted yourself to serving as a hand of vengeance, swearing oaths to stand as a bulwark against the corrupting influence of infernalism. When fighting demons, Baali, or creatures that possess the Infernal Power merit, the Profane Contract gift, or the Daimoinon discipline, you gain a +2 wild card bonus when you attempt a challenge using your Valeren test pool. In addition, when your Armor of Caine's Fury is active, it provides you with the Rugged protective gear quality in addition to its standard bonuses. Should you lose any of the health levels provided by Demon Slayer, they return at the rate of 1 per hour, even if you repeatedly activate Armor of Caine's Fury.

Sanguine Anointing (3 point merit)

You possess a fragment of the Code of Samiel that details a ritual of retribution. By spending 1 point of Blood and using a simple action to trace runes of divine empowerment on a weapon, you may add an additional equipment quality to your weapon according to its category:

- **Melee Weapons**: Accurate, Armor Piercing, or Brutal (all targets must be within melee range to use this quality).
- **Ranged Weapons**: Automatic, Fast, or Long Range.

Once empowered, this effect lasts for an hour. Only you may benefit from the empowered weapon's third quality; should another character attempt to use your weapon, she is only be able to access its standard qualities. You can only have a single weapon empowered with Sanguine Anointing at a time.

Salubri: Healer

The following merits can only be purchased by characters that also possess the Salubri bloodline merit: Healer.

Lifegiver (1 point merit)

The remnants of life still run strong within your blood. You may target a willing character with your Obeah discipline powers if the target is within a number of steps up to the number of dots you possess of the Medicine skill. In addition, whenever you spend a point of Blood to heal using the Obeah power Corpore Sano, you heal one additional point of damage beyond the listed amount: 2 points of normal damage instead of 1, or 2 points of aggravated instead of 1, if you possess the correct attribute focus.

Touched by an Angel (2 point merit)

The healing powers of the Salubri are a boon to their Kindred allies, but these powers are miraculous to everyday mortals suffering from pain, injury, and disease. You've become especially adept at aiding them while still blending in and maintaining the Masquerade.

Whenever you use an Obeah power for the benefit or defense of a non-supernatural mortal, the target automatically assumes you are a lesser figure associated with whatever religion the target practices, and she keeps your actions and existence secret. In the case of secular or atheistic witnesses, they acknowledge you (perhaps grudgingly) as a benign supernatural creature or perhaps as an extraordinary human with psychic powers, preserving the Masquerade as well. This benefit does not apply if targets witness you acting to harm another character, excepting circumstances when you are obviously acting in someone's defense.

In addition, you have built up goodwill to the point that your community not only keeps your secrets, but also actively assists you above and beyond expectations. Each game session, the first time you use your Contacts and Allies backgrounds, you do not expend them, allowing you to use them again. You may also seek refuge in your community by spending a downtime action to gain the temporary use of the Haven background. Treat this background as though it had a 1-dot rating, with the Location advantage. This haven lasts until the next game session.

The Master's Path (3 point merit)

You are in possession of some portion of Saulot's ancient teachings about reaching Golconda, and you have spent time diligently studying the way to Suspire. You receive the benefits of the Golconda Seeker merit, and you may pick two benefits from that merit's list, instead of the usual one. If you drop below the Humanity threshold required by Golconda Seeker, you do not lose this merit, but you do lose all benefits associated with it until you regain your lost Humanity.

In addition, these teachings have given you an innate ability to resist your Beast to a degree. You receive a free retest on any test to resist frenzy, and you gain a +2 wild card bonus on any degeneration challenge. You gain no benefit from this merit when losing Humanity or gaining Beast traits if you commit diablerie. To purchase this merit, you must have a minimum of 4 dots of the Lore skill, and you must possess a Lore skill specialization in Golconda.

Rare Bloodlines

Daughters of Cacophony

Rhythm of Battle (1 point merit)

The music of the spheres manifests differently for every Daughter of Cacophony. For some, it is a woeful dirge, for others, a passionate aria. For you, it is especially rhythmic: a song that naturally falls in line with the rhythm of combat, regardless of the form it takes. You can use your Social attribute to determine your initiative, instead of using the greater of your Physical or Mental attributes. When comparing ties among these three categories, your initiative falls after characters with equal Physical and Mental attributes.

Diva (2 point merit)

More than a few vampires have sought some measure of fame for themselves, reveling in the glamour and privilege that comes with celebrity status. You, however, are a true diva: one who wields her status and talent to her best advantage. You gain the first two dots of the Fame background for free. If you've previously purchased dots of that background, all of the XP you spent on it is refunded. If you assigned free dots to that background during character creation, you may move those dots to another background in which you currently have no dots.

In addition, you have cultivated an especially rabid following that obsesses over your every move, eager to be service. Once per game session, you may use your dots of the Fame background as a substitute for the Allies, Contacts, Herd, Haven, or Resources backgrounds. If you already

possess these backgrounds, add your dots of the Fame Background to your existing rating in these backgrounds, to a maximum of 5 dots.

Songs Beyond Mortal Ken (3 point merit)

From banshees to sirens, mortal mythology is filled with stories of magic intertwined with song. Whether due to a kinship with a creature of legend or perhaps from singing lessons with one of the fae, your voice carries a trace of primordial magic capable of interfering with hostile effects. Whenever you use the Melpominee power Madrigal to bolster others, you can offer your targets a +2 wild card bonus when defending against hostile blood magic, including all Thaumaturgy and Necromancy powers. Your targets still gain the normal benefits of Madrigal as well.

Gargoyles

Arcane Branding (1 point merit)

During the Omen War against the Tzimisce, many Tremere experimented with ways of manipulating the Gargoyle ritual. One of the most horrific experiments involved branding the newly formed creature with mystic runes. These binding runes made these creations powerfully resistant to magic not imbued with the potency of Tremere blood. You possess these runes, and as a result, you gain the benefits of the Magic Resistance merit; however, these benefits do not apply when attempting to defend against blood magic cast by a member of Clan Tremere or its bloodlines. This merit still protects you against Thaumaturgy learned from Tremere sources but cast by characters who are not of the Tremere clan. You cannot possess both this merit and the Magic Resistance merit.

Bonds of Stolen Vitae (2 point merit)

One of Clan Tremere's darkest secrets is the ritual that created Gargoyles. The Tremere blended vitae from Gangrel, Tzimisce, and Nosferatu, willing and unwilling alike, to form perfect guardians. This abhorrent act has managed to remain largely unknown through the modern nights. Your blood carries within it a fraction of the power from the clans from which you were created in the Middle Ages. Select one of the following disciplines: Auspex, Animalism, Obfuscate, or Protean. You gain the chosen discipline as an additional in-clan discipline, as though you had obtained it via the Additional Common Discipline merit (**MET: VTM,** page 248). Once chosen, this discipline cannot be changed. You cannot purchase this merit after character creation.

Art Imitates Life (3 point merit)

While a Gargoyle's stoicism and quiet mannerisms could be referred to as statuesque, you are imbued with an especially chiseled set of features. Whether horrific grotesquerie or awe-inducing beauty, something about the Embrace has granted you a striking supernatural appearance.

When you purchase this merit, you gain the Appearance attribute focus, and you must choose one of the following two features. Once chosen, this decision cannot be changed.

- **Grotesque**: Your visage is horrifying to all who see you. You receive a +1 wild card bonus to any attack test pool using the Intimidation skill. In addition, you may purchase this skill at a cost of the new level x1 XP, if you cannot already do so.
- **Angelic**: Your countenance is beauteous to behold. You receive a +1 wild card bonus to any attack test pool using the Leadership skill. In addition, you may purchase this skill at a cost of the new level x1 XP, if you cannot already do so.



Chapter Four: Techniques

"Elders' power makes them lazy. They've never needed to learn the finesse or skill to survive on the streets. Versatility and quick thinking will save your ass much better than the same old trick you've been pulling for the past century."

— Samuel Hayne, Nosferatu Anarch

Much about techniques, and their development, remain a mystery to Kindred scholars. Everything about these powers seems to break the known rules of vampire physiology or upend current theories about how disciplines work. Once a vampire masters a new technique, knowledge of its creation spreads instinctually across the world, occurring nearly simultaneously even in disparate factions of vampires that lack any known communication.

Theoretically, any vampire capable of learning a technique can discover and create a new technique, but scholars have only been able to trace the creation of new techniques to Neonates.

Techniques cost 12 XP for Neonate and Ancilla vampires. Vampires of the 8th generation must spend 20 XP per technique, rather than the standard 12 XP. Luminary and Master elders cannot purchase techniques at all. Techniques have no attribute focuses and typically do not gain magnified results if you achieve an exceptional success while using one.

For more information about techniques, see **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade, Chapter Four: Disciplines, Techniques**, page 224.

Minor and Major Transformations

To clarify which shapeshifting powers can be used in tandem with others, a new distinction has been added to transformative powers: *major* and *minor transformations*. as All powers labeled "transformative powers" in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** are considered major transformations. A character cannot have more than one major transformation active at a given time.

Powers that alter a character's form, but not overwhelmingly so, are categorized as minor transformations. For example, using the Protean power Feral Claws is an act of shapeshifting, but it is not substantial enough to prohibit additional modifications, and it is considered a minor

transformation. A character can have multiple minor transformation powers active at the same time, and she can also utilize minor transformations at the same time as major transformations. This supplement and future publications from By Night Studios will denote if a power is a major or minor transformation, if applicable.

Vicissitude and Transformations

The Vicissitude powers Malleable Visage, Fleshcraft, and Bonecraft are not transformative powers. However, you may only use these powers' effects in your natural form, unless otherwise stated in the text of that power. Minor transformation powers may be used in tandem with Malleable Visage, Fleshcraft, and Bonecraft.

Errata Regarding Transformations

Note the following rule updates regarding major and minor transformation powers:

The Thaumaturgy ritual Stone of the True form affects both major and minor transformation powers.

The Protean elder power Shape Mastery only affects major transformation powers.

The following list notes which powers from **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** are considered transformation powers, according to type:

Major Transformations:

- Obtenebration: Black Metamorphosis
- Obtenebration: Tenebrous Form
- Protean: Shape of the Beast
- Protean: Form of Mist
- Serpentis: Skin of the Adder
- Serpentis: Form of the Cobra
- Thanatosis: Ashes to Ashes
- Vicissitude: Horrid Form
- Vicissitude: Blood Form
- Visceratika: Stone Strength
- Necromancy, Mortis Path: Masque of Death
- Necromancy, Mortis Path: The Fourth Horseman
- Thaumaturgy, Path of Elemental Mastery: Elemental Form
- Elder Serpentis: Divine Image
- Technique: Animal Swarm

Minor Transformations:

- Protean: Feral Claws
- Serpentis: Tongue of the Asp
- Visceratika: Armor of Terra

New Techniques

Abrupt Internment

Prerequisites: Protean ●●● and Fortitude ●

The ability to immerse one's self into the ground is more than mere transformation – it mystically attunes you to the soil beneath. Through your mastery of this process, you have the power to meld others into the earth, immobilizing them via partial submersion.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Survival skill versus target's Physical attribute + Dodge skill

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and spend a standard action to target a character standing on any type of ground covering, including dirt, concrete, rock, metal, plastic, or wood. If you succeed in the opposed challenge, you cause your target to become grappled, as she sinks into the ground to a depth reaching just below her knees. While your opponent is grappled in this way, you can move and act normally without ending the effects of the grapple; this is an exception to the rules limiting your ability to move farther than one step or target other characters while maintaining a grapple. If an individual grappled by this power attempts to escape, she must succeed in a static challenge using her Physical attribute + Brawl or Melee skill, (if appropriately armed) versus your Social attribute + Survival skill. You cannot use Willpower to retest an opponent's challenges to escape grapples established via Abrupt Internment.

In addition, you can target inanimate objects with Abrupt Internment provided they do not contain living or undead creatures. Expend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to cause an object, or a cache of objects no larger than a small car, to sink completely into the earth. You may spend a simple action to return the melded objects to the surface. While melded, the objects exist in a semi-tangible state. If returned to the surface or manually unearthed, the objects show no ill effects for having been interred.

If Abrupt Internment is used on a target who possesses the Protean power Earth Meld, that character can activate Earth Meld normally, effectively escaping the grapple. This use of Earth Meld functions normally for targeted characters, even if the target has been encased in a hard substance she normally could not affect with Earth Meld. This technique is not a transformative power; characters using or successfully affected by Abrupt Internment who are also currently using transformative powers are not forced to assume their true forms in order to activate or when targeted by Abrupt Internment.

Alchemical Attunement

Prerequisites: Visceratika ●●● and Fortitude ●

In Jewish folklore, golems were creatures animated from inert material and charged with protecting the innocent. Gargoyles, by comparison, were created to protect chantries and wage war for the Tremere clan. It is unclear whether gargoyle sightings inspired stories of golems, or if the creator of this power drew inspiration from lore. Using this technique, you can assume the form of one of the seven traditional alchemical metals, gaining a special measure of protection.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use three standard actions to trace the symbol for one of the seven alchemical metals upon your body in blood. Once you have done so, choose one of the metals listed below. For the next hour, your skin takes on an appearance similar to the metal chosen, and you gain the Strange Composition equipment quality for the material you chose. Each type of metal also confers a benefit while active, according to the following list:

- **Copper**: This metal bears a connection with the planet Venus, embodying grace and beauty. It is a reflective metal and was used to fashion the earliest mirrors. You receive a +2 wild card bonus when defending against Presence powers. In addition, due to your reflective skin, as long as you have the Gaze and Focus of a character, all other characters within three steps who are able to see you are considered to have that character's Gaze and Focus.

- **Gold**: Gold represents the Sun and purity of spirit. When you inflict damage against shapeshifters vulnerable to gold with an attack that uses your Brawl skill to form the test pool, your damage is aggravated. If a shapeshifter who is inherently vulnerable to gold targets you with a supernatural power that costs gnosis, that character must spend 1 additional point of gnosis to target you, or that power fails. In addition, you don't have to spend Blood points when activating your own Presence powers.

- **Iron**: Iron represents the planet Mars and embodies aggressive energy. You receive a +2 wild card bonus when defending against Animalism powers. Once per turn, when you receive a Physical attack that scored an exceptional success, you may reduce that attack to a normal success. When you inflict damage against changelings vulnerable to cold iron, your damage is aggravated.

- **Lead**: This metal shares its symbol with the planet Saturn. You become immune to the Knock Down combat maneuver and the Knockback equipment quality, and you may spend a simple action to increase your weight up to four times your normal weight. In addition, you receive a +2 wild card bonus when defending against Temporis powers.

- **Quicksilver**: Also known as mercury, this metal shares its symbol with the planet of the same name. You gain the Fast equipment quality, and if you spend both your simple and standard actions on movement, you may take three additional steps. For example, a

character who normally takes three steps per action used for movement could move a total of nine steps while using this benefit.

- **Silver**: Silver represents the Moon and clarity. Your attacks that use your Brawl skill to form your test pool gain the Silver equipment quality. When you inflict damage against shapeshifters vulnerable to silver, your damage is aggravated. If a shapeshifter who is inherently vulnerable to silver targets you with a supernatural power that costs gnosis, that character must spend 1 additional point of gnosis to target you, or that power fails. In addition, you don't have to spend Blood points when activating your own Auspex powers.

- **Tin**: The metal of the planet Jupiter, this metal carries the energy of sovereignty. You take 1 fewer point of damage from electrical or lightning sources. Apply the damage-reduction benefit of this power prior to calculating damage reduction from other powers, such as Fortitude. In addition, you do not have to spend points of Blood to activate your own Dominate powers.

Use of this power is a major transformation, and it cannot be used in conjunction with other major transformation powers.

Badger's Hide

Prerequisites: Protean ●●● and Fortitude ●●

A badger might not be the strongest animal, but it's known for its tenacity and endurance. You've learned to control your body and gnarl your skin until it becomes a tough, hardened hide evolved to withstand even mighty blows from another vampire.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to activate Badger's Hide. Once activated, your skin takes on a slight discoloration and becomes rough and knobby to the touch. The next time you receive damage, reduce the amount of damage you suffer by 2 points of normal damage or 1 point of aggravated damage. When you are damaged, you may decide which type of damage to reduce. Apply the damage-reduction benefit of this power prior to calculating damage reduction from other powers, such as Fortitude.

This power persists for 15 minutes, or until you receive damage, whichever comes first. Once used to reduce damage, Badger's Hide immediately ends. You must apply Badger's Hide the first time you are damaged during its duration; you cannot save it for a later instance. Use of Badger's Hide counts as a minor transformation (see **Major and Minor Transformations, page 55**).

Beast's Vigor

Prerequisites: Animalism ●●● and Fortitude ●●

The process of transforming animals into ghouls creates more than animal thralls – their life-force is directly entwined with your soul. With an animalistic hunger and a servant's devotion, these servants desire both your vitae and your approval: a connection you can exploit to preserve your existence. When you are gravely wounded, you may transfer injuries to animals who have tasted your blood.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to activate Beast's Vigor as you shriek or call out to an animal Retainer. For the next five minutes, you may expend a simple action to transfer up to 3 points of damage (normal or aggravated) to a single animal ghoul Retainer of yours that is located within 15 steps of your current location. Each time you use Beast's Vigor to transfer damage in this manner, you to gain 1 Beast trait.

Your Retainers cannot reduce the damage transferred to them through Beast's Vigor by using their own damage-reducing powers, such as Fortitude. If your Retainer dies or no longer has health levels, it cannot absorb damage for you. For example, if you seek to transfer 3 points of damage, but your Retainer only has 2 health levels remaining, you can only transfer 2 levels of damage to it.

If you gain enough Beast traits to cause you to make a degeneration challenge, resolve the challenge after

the present scenario concludes. When using Beast's Vigor, you gain Beast traits regardless of any Path of Enlightenment you possess, even if such activities wouldn't normally give you Beast traits.

Bestial Allure

Prerequisites: Animalism ●● and Presence ●●●

Ask any zookeeper – exotic animals and apex predators exude power and allure, drawing crowds titillated and fascinated by the sense of danger presented by such beasts. You can draw on the striking presence of such animals; when in close proximity to such a creature, others cannot help but be impressed by your association with the animal kingdom.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. Whenever you are within three steps of a creature you have summoned via use of the Animalism power Beckoning, you do not need to spend Blood to activate the Presence power Awe, although you must still expend an action to do so.

In addition, as long as you are within three steps of one of your beckoned creatures, that creature can utilize special applications of the Assist Attacker and Assist Defender mass combat tactics to assist you or defend you in challenges utilizing your Social attribute. This is an exception to the rule limiting Stock NPCs to assisting only in Physical challenges. You can only use this benefit of Bestial Allure once per turn.

Note that such animals are Stock NPCs, and utilize the mass combat tactic rules for Stock NPCs, providing bonuses to applicable challenges. The amount of the bonus provided is equal to its Stock NPC rating; this bonus cannot exceed the number of dots you possess of the Animal Ken skill. This is an exception to the Stock NPC mass combat tactic rule limiting bonuses to +1.

For example, Zeke has summoned a large mountain lion using Beckoning; that large creature is treated as a 5-point Retainer for the duration of Beckoning. A combat scenario begins, and Zeke wishes to use the Presence power Dread Gaze, which utilizes his Social attribute for his test pool. Confirming that his Retainer is within three steps of his location, Zeke's player declares his intent to use Bestial Allure and have his mountain lion use the Assist Attacker Stock NPC mass combat tactic to assist him with the challenge. The mountain lion does so, providing Zeke with a +5 wild card bonus to his Dread Gaze challenge. Later in the turn, Zeke is targeted by Eyes of the Serpent, which also utilizes his Social attribute. Because he has already benefitted from Bestial Allure once this turn, Zeke cannot benefit from it a second time.

Black Mist

Prerequisites: Obtenebration ●● and Dominate ●●●

The entropic energies of a Shroud of Night are the Abyss made manifest: a combination of otherworldly energy and a vampire's inner darkness. Clever Lasombra have realized that this energy carries power even when diluted, and perhaps due to the clan's ancient ties to the sea, it can also take on the properties of weather patterns. The dark mist created in this manner has the power to confuse and befuddle mortals.

System

Expend 2 points of Blood and use two standard actions to conjure a Black Mist; a Shroud of Night of variable size, power, and concentration. Choose one of the following types:

- **Dreadful Gloom**: You create a supernatural gloom that afflicts the minds of any mortals who linger within it, filling a single room or area up to 100 square feet in size. Once activated, this function takes one minute to fully manifest, and visibility within it is reduced to 10 steps in any direction. Immediately after the gloom has fully manifested, any non-supernatural human who breathes within it is placed in a semi-hypnotic state. They will continue the activities they were taking immediately prior to the gloom's manifestation, acting as if the gloom or anything they see or experience is perfectly normal, so long as they continue to breathe it in. As soon as any non-supernatural humans cease to breathe in the gloom, they forget anything they experienced while under its effects.

- **Tenebrous Haze**: You summon a murky haze that befuddles the minds of mortals trying to escape its reach. Each application of this power fills a single floor of a building. Once activated, this function takes five minutes to fully manifest, and visibility is reduced to 20 steps in any direction. Any non-supernatural humans who breathe within it enter a state of mild agitation that turns into panic if they are startled. When that happens, they become frightened and confused by their surroundings, seeking to flee, but unable to find any exits. Any frightened, non-supernatural human who seeks to leave an area affected by Tenebrous Haze must succeed in a static challenge using their Mental attribute + Investigation skill versus your Mental Attribute + the number of dots you possess of Obtenebration powers, including any techniques or elder powers, before she can locate an exit. Humans who succeed are able to lead other humans to escape, should those mortals agree to follow.

- **Fog Bank**: You conjure a dark fog that enshrouds an area roughly equal to a square mile. This power can only be used outdoors. Once activated, this function takes 10 minutes to fully manifest, and visibility within the fog is limited to 100 steps in any direction. Within the fog, damage caused to vampires by sunlight is reduced by half (round up). This is an exception to the rule that prevents a vampire's powers from reducing the damage she receives from sunlight. A vampire who is wholly covered in clothing can attempt a brief exposure, suffering 1 point of aggravated damage for each total minute spent in sunlight within a Fog Bank. In addition, the fog is mildly distorting to the senses. Anyone attempting to track another character through the fog receives a -5 penalty to their tracking challenge.

Regardless of the type chosen, Black Mist dissipates in one hour, or sooner if there is a significant wind in the area. Black Mist dissipates in 10 minutes under full sunlight. You may layer the various types of Black Mist within each other, and you may also summon a regular Shroud of Night within them as well. The effects of such layered powers are cumulative (apply the most restrictive visibility). You may choose to conjure Black Mist in an area smaller than its maximum limit.

Unlike Shroud of Night, you cannot move your Black Mist, nor can you increase its size. You can have only a single instance of each of the three types of Black Mist active at a given time.

Blood Tempering

Prerequisites: Quietus ●● and Fortitude ●●

The Vizers of Alamut have worked in silence for centuries, preparing tools and equipment limited by the resources available in their fortress's isolation. In their resourcefulness, they've learned to leverage the power of their vitae to repair broken equipment and damaged weapons.
The coming of the schism prompted knowledge of this technique to spread to the Camarilla and Anarchs, among whom this technique has become popular.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend your standard action to make a piece of equipment function as you need it to for the next hour.

When you activate Blood Tempering, choose one of the following applications:

- **Damaged or Old Equipment:** This application of Blood Tempering allows you to operate nearly any equipment, as long as it is mostly intact. For example, if your truck has an engine and gasoline, it runs for the next hour, even if half the spark plugs are missing and there is a two-inch hole in the radiator. If your computer has a processor, keyboard, and a monitor, you can make it work like a high-end machine for one hour.

  When using this application, assign the target item two equipment qualities of your choice —excluding Flashy or Masterwork. The chosen qualities must logically suit the equipment, as though it were new or undamaged. For the duration of this power, you cannot use the object's original qualities, if it had any.

- **Improvised Weapon:** Almost anything is

a weapon in your hands. This application of Blood Tempering allows you to give an improvised weapon the qualities of a real weapon for the next hour. For example, you might make a nail gun that is as effective as a rifle, a broom handle that works like a mace, or a piece of scrap metal that functions like a sword.

When using this power, assign the target improvised weapon two weapon qualities of your choice — excluding Flashy or Masterwork. The chosen qualities must be vaguely logical for your improvised weapon to possess, and you cannot assign supernatural qualities or qualities that do not match the form and function of the weapon. For example, you cannot make a baseball bat function like a pistol, and you cannot make a piece of steel behave like a silver weapon. For the duration of this power, you cannot use the improvised weapon's original qualities, if it had any.

- **Incorrect Equipment:** This application of Blood Tempering allows you to force a target piece of equipment to work for one specific situation for the next hour. For example, you might scrape at a random key until it fits the lock you are trying to open, or you might jury-rig a ½-inch wrench to work on a ¾-inch bolt. As long as the tool is similar to the specific item you need, you can make it work.

- **Unbreakable:** This specialized application grants a weapon or object extraordinary durability, albeit temporarily. For the duration of this power, you can grant the Unbreakable quality to a piece of equipment. This item loses this quality if another individual handles or attempts to wield it. For as long as it possesses this quality, both mundane and supernatural effects are unable to break this item or compromise its physical integrity.

Bonecraft Prodigy

Prerequisites: Vicissitude ●●● and Fortitude ●●●

Young Tzimisce maintain attitudes about Vicissitude at which their elders often scoff. While an elder may spend decades seeking to perfect her body's form, a Neonate may change hers to suit her mood. It is no surprise that young Tzimisce are far better innovators. Through numerous experiments, you have mastered a variety of techniques expanding your practice of Vicissitude.

System

When you use the Vicissitude power Bonecraft on yourself or another individual, you can choose to assign one the following effects to your target:

- **Defensive Quills**: Sacrifice 2 health levels to create a network of defensive quills that emerge from your skin whenever you spend a simple action to do so. When your quills are extended, anyone who succeeds in challenge against you using the Brawl skill, takes 2 points of normal damage as their flesh is torn by the quills. In addition, whenever you successfully grapple another character, your target takes 2 points of normal damage.

- **Deformed**: You may inflict a punishing disfigurement on a target, which renders her hideous. When you apply this Bonecraft effect, you may remove the Appearance focus from your target. You may also reduce her Social attribute by up to 3 points, if you desire. The Deformed effect does not reduce your target's mobility.

- **Elongated Gait**: Sacrifice 1 health level to enhance your running physiology. This alteration can be accomplished through a variety of means, such as by permitting quadrupedal running, or extending your ankle and forefoot similar to a kangaroo. Whenever you expend an action on movement, increase the number of steps you can take by one. For example, a character who normally takes three steps per action used for movement could move a total of four steps per action while using this benefit.

- **Second Stomach**: Sacrifice 1 to 3 health levels. For each health level removed, increase your maximum Blood pool by 2. As a marvel of Vicissitude, you retain this additional capacity even if you should assume a different

form. This is an exception to the rule limiting Bonecraft alterations only to your natural form.

These modifications are adjudicated by the rules for Bonecraft (see **MET:VTM**, page 168). Selecting any of the above augmentations counts against the maximum number of modifications a character may apply with Bonecraft. Note that Bonecraft is not a transformative power.

Bullet Time

Prerequisites: Temporis ●●● and Auspex ●

Time is not constant – with sufficient power, one can warp and mold it, causing one's perception of speed and one's actual speed to desynchronize. Normally such power is reserved to celestial bodies, but you have honed your perception of time to a finely-tuned resolution, allowing you to sidestep bullets and avoid blows with ease.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood to activate Bullet Time; this point of Blood can be spent prior to your Everyman initiative and persists through the remainder of the entire turn, including all Celerity rounds. While Bullet Time is active, you gain a +5 wild card bonus to tests using your Dodge skill for the remainder of the turn.

Should you expend any of your actions on movement, this power immediately ends. Movement that does not require you to expend an action but instead moves you forcibly, such as being successfully targeted by a weapon with the Knockback ranged weapon quality, does not cause your Bullet Time to end.

Call Upon the Changeling Soul

Prerequisites: Mytherceria ●●● and Obfuscate ●●●

Vampires have long been fascinated by the ethereal and elusive fae: delicate and beautiful creatures formed of dreams and creativity. Some vampires have dedicated the entirety of their existence to seeking the Fair Folk, though few have found any measure of success. Through research and dedication, you have mastered the ability to adopt a changeling's form, allowing you to move among the fae unnoticed.

System

As long as you do not possess a Path of Enlightenment merit and you possess a Humanity rating of 3 or more, you can fool changelings into believing you are one of them. When one of these creatures uses a power to determine your supernatural creature type, you show all the signs of being a changeling.

If you wish to precisely copy the Fae Mien of a specific changeling kith, you must possess the Lore skill specialization: fae in order for your chosen disguise to stand up to scrutiny. If you possess the correct Lore skill specialization, you may choose to take on the characteristics of your selected kith, and your false Fae Mein becomes visible to changelings.

Call Upon the Changeling Soul only allows you to disguise your true nature; it does not provide your character with any knowledge of changeling society. While using this power, you do not possess a Glamour pool or any other characteristics of a changeling character. This technique only prevents detection via supernatural powers; you must behave in a convincing manner to maintain believability.

Crazy Like a Fox

Prerequisites: Dementation ●●● and Presence ●●

Insanity is just another way of looking at the world around you. By surrounding yourself in a mantle of paranoia and supposition, you are able to conceal your true self in a cover of madness, shielding you from any who may seek to strike at you.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use a standard action to cloak yourself in thoughts of madness and insanity. Anyone who previously established familiarity with you instantly loses it and must reestablish it to gain it again (see **Familiarity with the Target, Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire: The Masquerade,** page 114). In addition, for the next hour or until this technique's effects otherwise end, no one can establish familiarity with you, as madness shields your true persona.

While this technique is active, if anyone attempts to use a power on you that requires familiarity with their target, that power fails. In addition, whenever you activate this power, you gain the Derangement: Extreme Paranoia (Belief), and truly believe that everyone, including friends and allies, are actually out to get you.

Death's Caress

Prerequisites: Thanatosis ●●●● and Potence ●

Death doesn't always grab a person by the throat. Sometimes, it taps you on the shoulder or softly caresses you. With this technique, you have honed your mastery of Thanatosis so that mere contact with your flesh causes your victim intense physical pain.

System

After succeeding in a Physical challenge against your target while using the Brawl skill, you may choose to apply Withering, negating the need to grapple your target in order to use this power or spending Blood or an additional action to activate it.

Displacement Aura

Prerequisites: Fortitude ● and Obfuscate ●●

The essence of dodging is being somewhere other than where you're anticipated: a property not entirely restricted to the fleet of foot. Your skill with Obfuscate allows you to confound your assailants' senses, provided you have your wits about you.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. When threatened, you project a passive aura of displacement, making it more difficult for attackers to target you.

Whenever you are defending in an opposed challenge that requires you to use your Physical attribute + Dodge skill as your test pool, you can substitute your Mental attribute for your Physical attribute and/or your Stealth skill for your Dodge skill. You benefit from this technique as long as you are not grappled.

Should you possess the ability to act during Celerity rounds, each round, you are free to alternate between using Displacement Aura and initiating opposed challenges. In addition, you still benefit from any defensive bonus you receive from Celerity when using this technique even if you use your Stealth skill in your defense pool. Any other effects or merits that grant a bonus to challenges involving your Dodge skill apply normally when using your Stealth skill to defend with this technique, such as those granted from the Dancer's Grace or Slippery Customer merits. Use of Displacement Aura does not prohibit you from using the assist defender mass combat tactic, nor does that tactic prohibit you from using this technique.

Dynamic Form

Prerequisites: Protean ●●●● and Animalism ●●

Legends tell of vampires who possess the ability to shift into any creature, taking on a different form every evening as they navigate the dangers of the night. By melding the powers of Animalism and Protean, you have mastered the ability to change your form into an innocuous animal, allowing you to pass unnoticed. While other vampires are limited to taking the form of bat or wolf, you can mimic a wide array of creatures.

System

Expend 2 points of Blood and use your standard action to transform your shape. When activated, Dynamic Form allows you to take on the fight or flight form of any creature, at the Storyteller's discretion. The creature you select must be larger than a bat and smaller than a lion. You may choose to change into a different form each time you activate Dynamic Form. In addition, while Dynamic Form is active, you may change your form again at any time by expending 2 additional points of Blood and using a standard action.

Your Dynamic Form gains the standard bonuses provided by your Shape of the Beast power, including your attribute focus benefit, if applicable. If you have the Wits focus, you may select a new focus benefit appropriate to the form you assumed. These forms retain significant physical qualities and notable appearance-based flaws of your humanoid shape, such as lacking an eye, possessing a shock of white hair, or any other distinctive features. For example,

vampires that possess Path of Enlightenment Morality merits still seem monstrous, and Nosferatu or other disfigured vampires become ugly animals.

Dynamic Form is a major transformation power and cannot be combined with other major transformation powers.

Earworm

Prerequisites: Melpominee ● and Dementation ●

Having a song stuck in one's head can drive a person to distraction, leading them to follow the sound of the music wherever they hear it. The song becomes all-consuming, much like the music Daughters of Cacophony hear in their own minds. Younger Sirens have wielded this ability to give others a taste of the constant, inescapable melody that marks their nightly existence.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Subterfuge skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action singing to a target. Make an opposed challenge with your Melpominee test pool. If you succeed, the song you sing gets stuck in the target's head, and they temporarily gain the Derangement: Obsession, the trigger of which is the song. The effects of Earworm last for 10 minutes, plus an additional 10 minutes for every dot the user possesses of the Performance: Singing skill.

Enervation of Psyche

Prerequisites: Auspex ●●●● and Dominate ●●

Most perceive a battle of will as a test of nerve or resolve – a measure of one's spiritual strength against another. Engaging in such a contest with you, however, carries a much more dire consequence. Your talent for Auspex grants you the power to reach deep within a psyche, shredding your target's strength and resolve.

Test Pool

Mental attribute + Investigation skill versus target's Mental attribute + Willpower

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to scourge your target with psychic energy. If you succeed in an opposed challenge using your Auspex test pool, you inflict 2 points of normal damage on your target, which cannot be reduced or negated. In addition, your target loses 1 point of Willpower as you drain her spirit. If the target has zero points of Willpower in her pool, she cannot regain Willpower for 10 minutes instead of losing a point of Willpower.

Enhance the Wild Ride

Prerequisites: Protean ●● and Animalism ●●●●

The bond you share with your animal thralls is absolute. By tracing a series of intricate blood markings and sigils over its body, you can imbue a servant with a measure of your physical power as you bond with its soul. Vengeful Gangrel are known to use this power to pursue their quarry even during the daylight hours, giving rise to stories of animals possessed by dark powers.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use three standard actions preparing a target animal by tracing your blood over its surface. Once complete, if you target the prepared animal with the Animalism power Subsume the Spirit during the next turn, the animal absorbs the blood markings into its skin and gains access to the powers you currently possess from your choice of one of these disciplines: Celerity, Fortitude, or Potence. The animal only gains the powers provided by dots 1-5 of the selected discipline with no techniques.

Should the animal already have access to the selected discipline, use your own powers from the selected discipline, instead of the ones to which the animal normally has access. For the duration of the related use of Subsume the Spirit, you may use the selected discipline freely. Any activation costs, such as points of Blood used to fuel Celerity, are paid from the targeted animal's Blood pool, and the animal must have access

to a Blood pool in order to do so, such as the Blood pool possessed by ghoul animals.

Enhance the Wild Ride lasts until your use of Subsume the Spirit ends, and it does not end if the animal takes damage. While Enhance the Wild Ride is active, your physical body cannot access or benefit from the selected discipline, including Fortitude.

Escape Clause

Prerequisites: Daimoinon ●● and Dominate ●●●●

Fools and weaklings claim that infernalism means sacrificing one's freedom, yet they're the ones bound by petty morality and the power structures to which they bow. Access to power – true power – is the only way to achieve real freedom, and you've cut a deal to ensure you'll never be controlled again.

System

This power allows you to draw on a demonic pact to thwart the effects of hostile powers that limit your free will. Whenever a power's effect compels you to do something you wish to avoid, such as Dominate, Dread Gaze, Majesty, or a Blood Contract, you may activate this power without spending an action to do so. When you do, a demon or infernal entity issues you an irresistible compulsion that circumvents the triggering effect for a single turn. The triggering effect immediately resumes after the turn is over, but you do not suffer consequences for having acted against it.

However, this service is not free. Each activation of this power inflicts 1 point of normal damage that cannot be reduced or negated, plus 1 additional point of damage that cannot be reduced or negated for each previous time you've used this power that game session. For example, if you activate this power for the third time in a game session, you suffer a total of 3 points of damage. Using this power can cause your character to enter torpor if you lose exactly all of your remaining health levels. If you activate this power and the damage it inflicts exceeds your remaining health levels, you enter torpor and your soul is immediately ripped from your body and brought before your demonic master. Whether you return from such an encounter is up to the Storyteller's discretion, as are the conditions of your return.

This power only works against a single effect at a time. Should you wish to avoid multiple effects at once, you must activate Escape Clause multiple times. This power does not work if you attempt to use it against any infernal entity you serve, or its designated subordinates, if it desires.

Evil Eye

Prerequisites: Thanatosis ●●●● and Auspex ●●

Various cultures have legends describing the ability to convey a powerful curse with nothing more than a baleful glare, the effects of which can bring misfortune or ruin to an unfortunate victim. You can convey the effects of Thanatosis using only the power of your gaze, projecting its entropic forces onto your victims.

Test Pool

Mental attribute + Medicine skill versus target's Mental attribute + Willpower

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to glare at your target, using the force of your will to project your powers of decay. Choose one of the Thanatosis powers you possess, either Withering or Necrosis, if you have it active. If you succeed in an opposed challenge against your target, you convey the effects of a single application of the selected power without having to establish a grapple or use any additional actions.

Eye of Unforgiving Heaven

Prerequisites: Valeren ●●●● and Auspex ●●●●

Many Warrior Salubri believe that they are chosen to be implements of divine wrath, sent to punish the most abhorrent of abominations: usually demons, infernalists, and Tremere. With this power, you become a conduit for the unforgiving light of judgement, a burning, glaring light that sears both the living and the dead. In modern nights, Furies favor this power as a means of stylistic execution, insisting that it lacks the power to burn the truly innocent.

Test Pool

Mental attribute + Investigation skill versus target's Physical attribute + Dodge skill

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to open your third eye as it emanates with vengeful light. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, your target suffers 3 points of aggravated damage, and she is blinded, as though you had used the Blinding Attack combat maneuver; the damage dealt by Eye of Unforgiving Heaven is not reduced by this effect. Afflicted characters must use the Fighting Blind combat maneuver, or another power that mitigates blindness, to initiate attacks.

You can choose to target up to three characters located within one step of each other when you activate this power. However, you can only choose one of those three targets to receive the Blinding Attack effect. When targeting multiple enemies with Eye of Unforgiving Heaven, you must make a separate opposed challenge against each of the defenders. Should you spend a point of Willpower to retest any of these opposed challenges, you also gain that retest for the remainder of the opposed challenges without spending further Willpower. If you spend Willpower to retest after some challenges are resolved, you cannot go back to previous challenges you've lost and apply that Willpower retest retroactively.

Familiar Faces

Prerequisites: Visceratika ●● and Auspex ●

Gargoyles have often enjoyed the company of statues, regarding them as similar in form and stature, and finding them refreshingly less demanding than Tremere. You have the power to enlist your friends as sentinels and allies. By painting their eyes with your blood, you can borrow their vision for a time. Keepers of Elysium have conflicting thoughts regarding whether this power should be allowed on Elysium, though some are known to endorse it.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action as you rub a small quantity of your blood over the eyes of a statue, or any stone carving of a face or an eye. If you wish to observe an area that lacks such décor, you may carve your own, either with mundane tools or by using the Visceratika power Bond With the Mountain, should you possess it.

For the next 30 days, you may spend a simple action to shift your perceptions to that location. You cannot perceive your physical body's surroundings while doing so. You can move the statue's eyes, and you can even twist its head to a limited degree (which will appear bizarre to onlookers). You may also use the Auspex power Heightened Senses in conjunction with Familiar Faces.

Suspicious parties examining the statue's area with the Auspex power Aura Perception notice a bizarre aura surrounding the target statue, if you are actively surveilling when they examine the area. Should the statue's eyes be destroyed, you lose the ability to shift your perceptions to it.

Feral Ichor

Prerequisites: Protean ●● and Quietus ●●

Insects, reptiles, and even mammals use venom both in predation and defense. You can mutate your glands into a network capable of exuding the powerful and deadly ichor accessible to users of Quietus, allowing you to administer it through your claws and fangs. This technique is believed to have been developed by a Web of Knives cell stationed in Addis Ababa, although others credit its creation to a Camarilla Gangrel known as the Spider.

System

Whenever you activate the Protean powers Feral Claws or Shape of the Beast, you may choose to also activate the Quietus power Scorpion's Touch. Activating Feral Ichor does not cost an action or require you to spend a point of Blood, although you must pay any normal costs to activate the related Protean power. When you activate Feral Ichor, your claws extend coated in potent venom. Use the rules for Scorpion's Touch **(MET: VTM,** page 157) to adjudicate the use of this venom.

If you have the elder power Baal's Bloody Talons, you may instead choose to use it in conjunction with this power, as opposed to Scorpion's touch. If you do, you

gain a +2 bonus to your Brawl skill test pool, and your attacks do 1 additional point of aggravated damage, instead of using the rules for Scorpion's Touch.

In addition, for as long as you have either Feral Claws or Shape of the Beast active, you may replenish your Scorpion's Touch or Baal's Bloody Talons by spending 1 point of Blood, without the need to spend a simple action to do so.

This technique is an exception to the rule limiting Quietus powers to application on bladed weapons. Once activated, the power functions normally, as if it had been used on a bladed weapon, poisoning the targets of your successful Brawl attacks while you are using your fangs or claws.

Feed the Blighted Wolf

Prerequisites: Animalism ●●● and Potence ●●

The struggle for morality is often explained as a fight between two wolves: one good and moral, the other base and evil, forever at odds with each other. You can draw power from your Beast, the blighted wolf, using a portion of its strength to overcome adversity. The cost, however, can be high. In the struggle for morality, the wolf that wins is the wolf you feed.

System

Whenever you have the opportunity to expend a point of Willpower to retest a Physical challenge, you may choose to gain a Beast trait instead of spending a point of Willpower, as you call upon the Beast's power. Using this ability counts as your Willpower retest for the purpose of determining whether a retest is possible; if you cannot retest using Willpower, you cannot use this ability. You cannot mitigate the Beast trait gain with a degeneration challenge, nor can it be avoided with a Path of Enlightenment morality merit. If an effect requires you to spend multiple points of Willpower to retest a challenge, you must gain an equal number of Beast traits to achieve the retest. Note that the use of this power can result in Humanity loss if used too often in a scene.

You can only use this power until you gain enough Beast traits to lose a point of Humanity, after which your beast is sated and will not aid you for the remainder of the game session.

You can use this technique again normally after sleeping for a full day.

Final Strike

Prerequisites: Temporis ●●●●● and Dominate ●●

Time itself bends to your will. You have the chance to shape your destiny, even after you've been incapacitated, entered torpor, or are killed.

System

If you become Incapacitated, enter torpor, or are killed, you may expend 1 point of Willpower to take a single standard action. You may expend this Willpower outside of your normal turn in the initiative order. Chronologically, you take the standard action provided by Final Strike a fraction of a second before the action that triggered this power. This action is exempted from the effects of the triggering attack, such as torpor, death, or incapacitation due to staking.

You might use Final Strike to attempt to damage your enemy one last time, trying to take her with you; to pull a stake from your heart, preventing staking; or to run out of the way of a speeding train. This extra standard action can be used to activate a supernatural power, provided you have the Blood to power it. Once you complete your additional standard action, the action that triggered the use of Final Strike occurs exactly as before with no additional challenges thrown. If you manage to somehow negate the original action or event that caused you to trigger Final Strike, such as by stepping out of range of the triggering attack or using Dominate to cause your attacker to leave, the remainder of the scene or scenario progresses normally. If you activate Majesty, your attacker must immediately attempt to break it. If she fails, the attack is considered to not have happened; if she succeeds, the scenario unfolds as it did originally.

Give 'Em Hell

Prerequisites: Auspex ●●● and Presence ●●

In the throng of battle, even well-rehearsed tactics and strategies can fall apart. Whether due to your enthusiasm,

grit, or ability to navigate chaos, you have the power to direct and inspire others to feats of tactical coordination, striking repeatedly in rapid succession.

Test Pool

Social attribute +Leadership skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a standard action to call for an attack against the target of your choice. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, for the remainder of the current turn and the next two subsequent turns, you and your willing targeted allies can attack a single target as though the target were one size category larger than its current size, allowing your allies to target the designated character with additional Physical attacks. (For more information, see **Chapter Five: Core Rules and Dramatic Systems: Updated Stock NPCs**, page 113.)

In order to use this power, your allies must be able to hear your directions and encouragement. For example, it does not function if you are affected by silencing powers such as Silence of Death or the werewolf power Silence the Slain.

Multiple applications of this power do not cause additional effects beyond the first instance. If a target is affected by this power a second time, the power's duration resets.

Guardian's Vigil

Prerequisites: Auspex ●● Celerity ●● and Fortitude ●●

Through careful concentration, you can attune your perceptions to a fixed location, gaining a hyper-awareness of any alterations to the environment. This power is a favorite of sentries, bodyguards, and mercenaries, and it is believed to have once prevented an attack on Justicar Lucinde by an assailant who later escaped.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use three standard actions centering yourself through meditation to activate Guardian's Vigil. So long as you remain within three steps of the spot where you activated Guardian's Vigil, you automatically detect intruders or active threats that come within five steps of you. Guardian's Vigil does not allow you to see the appearance of someone who is supernaturally concealed; however, you know someone is present and can still target her as if she was visible.

As long as you maintain your Guardian's Vigil, you cannot be surprised. Any attempts to surprise you resolve in the normal initiative order. In addition, you can perform the Assist Defender mass combat tactic once per turn without using an action to do so. This mass combat tactic can be used during Celerity rounds, but it can only be used once per turn.

This power ends if you move or are moved more than three steps away from the spot where you activated it.

Harbinger of Grace

Prerequisites: Obeah ●●●● and Obfuscate ●●●

Those scattered few Healers remaining are divided as to their purpose in this world. Some believe their existence is transitory: a finite span to be spent in contemplation of Golconda's mysteries, while others wonder if they may yet have a role to play. With this power, you can assume the bearing of a divine messenger: a relic of a time when Healers intervened more directly in the world's affairs.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action to assume the appearance of a divine embodiment of mercy from a culture with which you're familiar. For example, you may choose to appear as a merciful angel, a djinn, or a kindly animal spirit. For the next 10 minutes, all who observe you believe you to truly be a genuine manifestation of the creature you selected.

While you have this power active, Stock NPCs of rating 4 or lower cannot attack or interfere with you. Even if they are not religious, they believe that you are serving a divine purpose. In addition, you may beatify a target by spending a simple action to make a noticeable gesture of blessing toward her. Thereafter, for as long as you have this power active, you do not

have to spend Blood to activate beneficial powers that target her, such as Corpore Sano or Shepherd's Watch. You can only affect one target with Harbinger of Grace at a given time. Should you target another character with this power, the effects of this power on a previous target end immediately.

When selecting your form, you cannot appear as a named entity or specific deity, but you may attempt to pass as one of a deity's unnamed servants. You may take on additional features, such as wings or additional arms, but they are not functional. If you have the appropriate Lore skill specialization, you may choose to appear as a spirit or other creature relevant to another supernatural creature type.

Anyone who sees you activate this power retains their former awareness of your nature. Others may attempt to pierce this illusion using Auspex or similar powers (see **MET: VTM, Auspex And Obfuscate/ Chimerstry**, page 118). Stock NPCs that pierce the illusion may act normally. If a target you have beatified pierces your illusion, you may still use the other benefits of Harbinger of Grace, such as using beneficial powers on that target at reduced cost.

Harbinger of Vengeance

Prerequisites: Valeren ●●●● and Obfuscate ●●●

Archetypal conceptions of divine vengeance exist in a variety of forms, across a variety of cultures. Many Furies feel a spiritual kinship to a number of these icons, believing their goal of purging this world of infernalists and Tremere is right and just. This power draws on that kinship, changing your outward form to embody the vengeance you carry in your heart.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action to assume the appearance of a divine embodiment of vengeance from a culture with which you're familiar. For example, you may choose to appear as a vengeful angel, a fury from Greek mythology, or a onryo (a vengeful ghost). For the next 10 minutes, all who observe you believe you to truly be a genuine manifestation of the creature you selected.

While you have this power active, Stock NPCs of rating 4 or lower cannot attack or interfere with you. Even if they are not religious, they believe that you are serving a divine purpose. In addition, you may condemn a target by spending a simple action to make a noticeable gesture of denunciation towards her. Thereafter, for as long as you have this power active, you do not have to spend Blood to activate any powers directly targeting her. Powers that enhance your ability to act against her, such as Celerity or Armor of Caine's Fury, do not receive this benefit. You can only affect one target with Harbinger of Vengeance at a given time. Should you target another character with this power, the effects of this power on a previous target end immediately.

When selecting your form, you cannot appear as a named entity or specific deity, but you may attempt to pass as one of a deity's unnamed servants. You may take on additional features, such as wings or additional arms, but they are not functional. If you have the appropriate Lore skill specialization, you may choose to appear as a spirit or other creature relevant to another supernatural creature type.

Anyone who sees you activate this power retains their former awareness of your nature. Others may attempt to pierce this illusion using Auspex or similar powers (see **MET: VTM, Auspex And Obfuscate/ Chimerstry**, page 118). Stock NPCs that pierce the illusion may act normally. If a target you have condemned pierces your illusion, you may still use the other benefits of Harbinger of Vengeance, such as using direct powers to oppose that target at reduced cost.

Healer's Intuition

Prerequisites: Obeah ● Auspex ●●●● and Fortitude ●

A good physician seamlessly blends medical expertise, an empathetic bedside manner, and a willingness to take decisive action. Likewise, you maintain a watchful eye on your allies, absorbing the pain of their mishaps even when you're not directly involved.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. Whenever you participate in a connection via the Auspex

power Telepathy, you can choose to exude a soothing mental presence. Both you and any character sharing a direct telepathic connection with you receives a +3 wild card bonus to their test pool when attempting challenges to resist frenzy or degeneration. This bonus is not cumulative with other instances of Healer's Intuition. In addition, any characters with whom you are telepathically connected are also considered valid targets for the Obeah power Sense Vitality, even if they are not within the power's normal range or within your line of sight. Characters under the effect of your Healer's Intuition may use Sense Vitality as if they had purchased that power themselves.

You are also able to remotely use your blood to heal any vampire or ghoul in direct telepathic contact with you. If both you and your targeted telepathic contact are willing, you can expend points of Blood from your own pool to heal the target. This use of Healer's Intuition counts against your maximum Blood expenditures per turn, not the target's.

Inertial Tampering

Prerequisites: Temporis ●● and Presence ●●●

The study of time has tangential applications: some scientific, others more martial in nature. Drawing on the power of Temporis, you can afflict your target with a powerful lethargy, inhibiting her ability to respond to threats.

Test Pool

Physical attribute + Survival skill versus target's Physical attribute + Willpower

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to dull your target's reactions. If you succeed in an opposed challenge using the Inertial Tampering test pool, your target receives a -2 penalty to her initiative score for each dot of the Temporis discipline you possess, plus any Temporis-based elder powers or techniques you possess, for the remainder of the current turn and the next four turns. This technique cannot reduce your target's initiative score below 0. If your target has already acted at a higher initiative during the round before this power is used, she does not gain a second action once the initiative order reaches her new, lower total.

Illusory Augmentation

Prerequisites: Chimerstry ●●● and Potence ●

Many Ravnos fortunate enough to have survived the Week of Nightmares owe their survival to their capacity to fight, rather than their mastery of chicanery or dharma riddles. Placing faith in tools over trickery, they've nonetheless managed to blend their illusory arts with their martial skill in unexpected ways.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and a use simple action to enhance a weapon you are using with a potent and potentially harmful illusion. You may select an equipment quality of the appropriate type for your weapon from either the melee or ranged equipment quality lists. This quality can be applied even if it would normally break the mundane rules for that quality. For example, using Illusory Augmentation, you can grant the Spread quality to a ranged weapon with an Ammo Capacity of 6. For the next hour, your weapon has the quality granted by Illusory Augmentation in addition to its normal qualities.

As with other Chimerstry powers, this illusion may be pierced by use of Auspex or similar powers (see **MET: VTM, Chimerstry and Auspex**, page 123). If the illusion is pierced, you cannot utilize the augmented quality against the individual who successfully sees through your illusion.

As this power is illusory, it has no effect against a non-living target. For example, a sword with the Flaming equipment quality cannot ignite anything, and a pistol enhanced with Ammo Capacity II won't make for very effective target practice once its actual ammunition is expended. The weapon retains the illusory quality as long as it remains in your hands; should you be disarmed or attempt to hand it to another, the effects immediately cease.

No weapon can benefit from more than a single application of this power. Should you activate this power while it is already active, the previous application ends. As a reminder, you cannot benefit from the same quality twice, regardless of the source.

Using this power in combination with your attacks does not enable the use of the merit Clear Sighted.

Manic Episode

Prerequisites: Dementation ●●● and Celerity ●

Those who suffer from mental disorders often report that their episodes of mania are addictive, giving their victims a sense of boundless energy, causing thoughts to race, and urging one to move and respond rapidly. You can use your own Derangements to induce similar feelings and infuse yourself with energy – although using madness in such a way can be dangerous, and often brings one to the brink of losing control.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. Whenever you activate Celerity, your initiative increases by the sum of all of your current Derangement traits. This benefit is cumulative with any benefits gained though the Celerity power Alacrity. You may also choose to pay the activation cost of Celerity discipline powers by gaining a Derangement trait, instead of spending 1 point of Blood; you may do so even before your turn in the initiative order. You can only activate the first five dots of Celerity in this manner; you cannot gain Derangement traits to activate Celerity elder powers or techniques.

Mass Hypnosis

Prerequisites: Serpentis ● and Presence ●●

The terrifying presence of a snake often causes those who see it to freeze in place, unable to direct their eyes elsewhere. You have mastered this effect to such an extent that you hold crowds hostage with your gaze and the power of your blood. As long as you remain still, they find themselves firmly fixed until freed of your hypnotic eyes.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Subterfuge skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Whenever you activate the Serpentis power Eyes of the Serpent, you may choose to target up to three supernatural characters whose Gaze and Focus you currently possess. Alternatively, you may choose to target a number of non-supernatural mortals equal to or less than twice the number of dots you possess of the Subterfuge skill. Resolve the Eyes of the Serpent challenges normally. If you expend a point of Willpower to retest at any point during the challenges, you gain a retest on all subsequent challenges without needing to spend additional Willpower.

You must remain still to maintain Mass Hypnosis. You cannot use actions for movement or activate any supernatural powers (unless allowed by your attribute focus benefits). Doing so causes Mass Hypnosis to immediately end for all targets you have affected. Should you lose the Gaze and Focus of any of your targets, the effects of Mass Hypnosis immediately ends for that target. Mass Hypnosis lasts for five minutes, or until broken, whichever comes first.

Master of Illusion

Prerequisites: Chimerstry ●●●●● and Celerity ●●●

Ravnos occupy a difficult niche in Kindred society, afforded little respect beyond what they can maintain through force of personality or threat of force. Neonate Ravnos have it much worse, often vying for status among Anarch gangs or bellicose Sabbat. You've learned to wield Chimerstry more forcefully than most practitioners, attacking in deadly succession, allowing you to keep pace with faster opponents.

System

This power grants you a limited capacity to control your illusions in conjunction with your Celerity powers. Whenever you have Celerity active, you may use your standard action during the first Celerity round (Rapidity) to direct an illusion. This benefit includes the ability to make an attack with the Chimerstry power Horrid Reality. You can only do so on the first Celerity round; even if you have additional Celerity actions in future rounds, you cannot use them in this way. This is an exception to the rule prohibiting the use of Social powers during Celerity

rounds.

Maw of the Anaconda

Prerequisites: Serpentis ●● and Potence ●

The jungle anaconda offers many teachings to Set's warriors. As they follow his example, they learn to overpower their quarry with crushing, inevitable strength, devour it wholly, and then slip away with silence and grace. This technique bestows a portion of the anaconda's power, granting you the use of its powerful bite.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to activate Maw of the Anaconda. Once you do so, you gain the ability to distend your jaw into a crushing mandible capable of inflicting grievous wounds and quickly consuming your prey.

Your bite attacks gain the Brutal and Deadly equipment qualities. In addition, whenever you are draining or consuming blood, you drain 1 additional point of Blood per action spent doing so. You must still establish a grapple in order to bite or drain blood, unless you possess a power or benefit from an effect that exempts you from the normal rules for biting attacks.

Use of this power counts as a minor transformation (see **Major and Minor Transformations,** page 55), and it can be used freely in any form that has a discernible jaw.

Martyr's Defiance

Prerequisites: Obeah ●●●● and Fortitude ●●●

The preternatural instinct to heal rather than wound allows one to protect others from harm. Healer Salubri are known to use this power when caught by a surprise attack or in an unavoidable combat, using this ability to defend others, in an effort to show that they are honorable.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a simple action to activate Martyr's Defiance. For the next five turns, you extend a layer of mystical protection over willing allies within three steps of you. Whenever one of the allies within your sphere of protection is harmed, you may choose to voluntarily accept all of the damage from that attack without the need for the assist defender mass combat tactic. If you do, you can reduce or negate that damage with supernatural powers you possess, such as Fortitude, as appropriate. Any damage-reducing powers the original target possesses do not apply towards reducing or negating this damage; you must use only your own protections. This protection only allows you to heal damage after it is received; individuals under attack still use their own defensive test pools in opposed challenges. You cannot accept a portion of the damage; you must take all of it or none.

Mortal Terror

Prerequisites: Animalism ●●● and Presence ●●

Of all the emotions, fear is perhaps closest to one's psyche at any given time: a primordial relic to ensure vigilance against predators. It is unsurprising, therefore, that vampires have two disciplines that readily manipulate it. You have perfected the ability to incite a flight response in your victims, sending them into a panicked state. Archons and Templars favor this power, relishing the ability to drive their quarry into a panicked state before the kill.

System

Whenever you target someone with the Presence power Dread Gaze, you may choose to announce your use of Mortal Terror. If you succeed in the opposed challenge to activate Dread Gaze, in addition to the normal effects of that power, your target also responds to rage, fire, and hunger as though she had 2 additional Beast traits above her current level. For example, a vampire with 1 Beast trait responds to rage, fire, and hunger as if she had 3 Beast traits.

While this power may prompt a target to commit acts during frenzy that lower her Humanity score, the effects of Mortal Terror do not apply when determining Humanity loss. For example, if a vampire has 3 or 4 Beast traits, she does not automatically lose a point of Humanity for reaching 5 or more Beast traits due to Mortal Terror. She does, however, make degeneration challenges and tests to resist frenzy

including the penalty from Mortal Terror in addition to her current number of Beast traits.

In addition, your target must attempt to resist frenzy if her new Beast trait total causes her to meet the conditions for a frenzy check. For example, if a target of Mortal Terror is considered to have 3 Beast traits and she is also in the presence of a large flame, she must test to resist fear frenzy. Likewise, if her total number of Blood points is less than half of her total Blood pool, or if she receives 2 or more points of damage in a single blow, she must test to resist frenzy as well.

Mortal Terror augments Dread Gaze. Other powers that affect the use of Dread Gaze, such as Pavis of the Foul Presence or Tyrant's Gaze, affect this technique also, including any attribute focus effects or when re-exerting the power as part of an exceptional success. This power may be used in conjunction with Fearful Blow or other powers that augment Dread Gaze. A target can only be affected by a single application of this power at a given time; multiple applications are not cumulative.

Mortician's Secret

Prerequisites: Thanatosis ● and Fortitude ●●

Although your exterior may be slick with putrescence, you are able to use this flexibility to shore up your form, embedding durable objects within your skin. Often, such enhancements are inspired by or replicate the hidden supports that morticians use to restore corpses to a semblance of life for an open-casket funeral.

System

Once learned, this power is always active. By using Hag's Wrinkles to fortify your undead flesh, you gain the Chest Plate protective equipment quality, and your choice of one other quality from this list: Ballistic, Hardened, Impact Absorption, or Rugged.

If your protective enhancements are damaged (by expending the Rugged quality, for example), or if you wish to make alterations to the selected quality, you must expend three consecutive standard actions repairing, readjusting, and replacing components to achieve the desired effect. These standard actions may be spent across multiple turns, but they must be expended consecutively.

In addition, after you activate this power, whenever an opponent achieves an exceptional success against you in a Physical challenge, you can downgrade it a normal success. You can use this benefit only once, but you regain it by spending the aforementioned three standard actions readjusting and repairing yourself.

Ominous Premonition

Prerequisites: Daimoinon ●● and Auspex ●●

Few things terrify Baali as much as the power of True Faith and those who wield its power. By calling upon ancient pacts forged with dark, forgotten gods, you can sense the presence of such dangers in your immediate vicinity, offering you the opportunity to avoid them before they can harm you.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend three standard actions meditating to extend your senses throughout the immediate area. Once finished, you supernaturally sense how many characters with True Faith, followers of the Via Caeli, or members of the Salubri clan are within 100 feet of you at the time of your power's completion. You learn the total number of these individuals, without knowing the specific category to which they belong. If a character falls into multiple categories, she is only counted once by this power. You also become aware of whether holy relics exist within the area.

A Storyteller should moderate the use of Ominous Premonition. Discreetly inform the Storyteller that you are using this power; she should take care to keep your query a secret. If you become aware of a character or object's presence via Ominous Premonition, you do not know exactly where it is located, nor are you certain of what or who it is.

In addition, if you possess the Haven background, you become immediately aware if objects or individuals that can be sensed with Ominous Premonition enter your haven at any time.

This effect wakes you if you are asleep, or it otherwise alerts you to the presence of danger.

Poisonous Will

Prerequisites: Quietus ●●● and Animalism ●●●

Both the cunning assassin and the patient hunter understand that undermining your opponent's strengths can lead to an easy victory. Vampires are known for being especially strong-willed: a byproduct of the Beast that drives their hunger. You have mastered the art of poisoning your prey's psyche as well as its body, denying your quarry a resource with which to resist.

System

Whenever you successfully afflict your target with the Animalism power Quell the Beast or the Quietus power Dagon's Call, you may immediately apply the effect of the other power as well, as if you had achieved a standard success. Apply the second power's standard effects, even if you scored an exceptional success applying the first power. Apply the second power's effects as if you had also simultaneously succeeded in using the other power, but the second power does not count against the maximum number of attacks for that target. To apply this second power, you need only meet the requirements for the power you're using. For example, if you're using the focus benefit to use Dagon's Call remotely, you may still apply the effects of Quell the Beast, even if you cannot see your target or do not have her Gaze and Focus. However, if you are using Quell the Beast, you still require your target's Gaze and Focus.

Thereafter, these two powers function separately. You may choose to maintain Dagon's Call, and the effects of Quell the Beast occur normally. If the effects of Quell the Beast end while you're maintaining Dagon's Call, and you wish to use Dagon's Call again to apply Quell the Beast, the effects of Dagon's Call end, should you fail in its opposed challenge.

Predatory Senses

Prerequisites: Protean ● and Auspex ●

In the ongoing arms race of the animal kingdom, certain species have evolved senses completely outside the realm of standard perception. As an adaptive predator, you have the power to do the same. By combining the pliable nature of Protean with the power of Auspex, you can further enhance your perceptive gifts.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and spend your simple action causing your sensory organs to shift and adapt. Choose a single means of animal perception that humans lack; you manifest the necessary biology to achieve this sense. Examples include: sonar, electromagnetic sensitivity, thermal vision, the scent-imagery of a bloodhound, or the sensitive whiskers of a cat. This outward change is apparent in the form of animalistic features, but they may be concealed, such as through the use of Obfuscate.

For the duration of Predatory Senses, you may choose to activate your Heightened Senses power in tandem with your new sense, allowing you to ask the Storyteller what additional information you are able to detect. If you have Predatory Senses active when you are using Heightened Senses to attempt to pierce concealment powers, such as Obfuscate, Chimerstry, or Blur of the Milky Eye, you receive a +2 wild card bonus to your test pool.

If you possess the Acute Sense merit, you can activate Predatory Senses without spending a point of Blood. This power is a minor transformation power and may be used in conjunction with other transformations.

Primal Grace

Prerequisites: Protean ●●●● and Presence ●

Gangrel are often dismissed as terrifying brutes or simplistic creatures prone to flight. Through this power, members of Clan Gangrel embrace these assumptions and prejudices, weaponizing them. Wearing the skins of beasts, these predators stalk the halls of courts as easily as they stalk the night.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. You have mastered the ability to integrate leadership and animal cunning with your ability to shapeshift. If you use the Protean power Shape of the Beast to assume a fight form, you can choose to appear as an especially commanding specimen of your creature type, gaining a + 3 wild card bonus to test pools using your

Leadership and Intimidation skills. When in flight form, you gain a wild card bonus equal to the number of dots you possess of the Subterfuge skill to your Dodge skill-based challenges.

Press-Ganged Coven

Prerequisites: Thaumaturgy ●●● or Necromancy ●●● and Dominate ●●●●

Ordinary acolytes have a limited ability to assist a blood magician, often completing mundane tasks such as the collection of ritual ingredients or the lighting of candles. You have found a way to pull such servants to a higher purpose. By eliminating their ability to deviate from instruction, you can draw upon their training to assist you while performing blood magic, incorporating their power into your own.

System

To use Press-Ganged Coven, you must successfully implant a Mesmerism into your targets via the Dominate power: Conditioning. This Mesmerism instructs your targets to speak arcane words of power when you use a Thaumaturgy or Necromancy power, aiding your magical abilities. When this Conditioning is triggered, each affected character must expend a standard action to use the assist attacker mass combat tactic as if those characters were Stock NPCs, granting you a +1 wild card bonus to attack test pools using your Occult skill. This is an exception to the rule limiting assist attacker bonuses from Stock NPCs to only Physical challenges. You can receive a number of +1 bonuses equal to the number of dots you possess of the Occult skill, regardless of how many conditioned acolytes you have. To any observers, including the targets of any magical attacks, it appears as if the Thaumaturgy or Necromancy power's effect originates from characters involved in the Press-Ganged Coven, including both you and your conditioned acolytes, obscuring the source of the blood magic's effects.

Pulse of Undeath

Prerequisites: Auspex ●● Celerity ● , Fortitude ●, and Potence ●

Even among the most cooperative predators, there exists a hierarchy. Everyone, from the strongest to the weakest, knows their strength relative to the others. Typically, this knowledge is gained by participating a series of subtle tests taking the form of anything from a direct challenge to simple horseplay. Using this power, you are able to test the mettle of those around you, finding their strength relative to yours. Pulse of Undeath is a favorite power of Brujah, who often use it as an implicit threat.

Test Pool

Mental attribute + Investigation skill or Physical attribute + Athletics skill versus target's Mental attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend your standard action to glare at your target and make a simple show of force. This act could take the form of growling softly, brandishing of a weapon, or pounding your fist into your open hand. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, your target becomes instantly aware that she is the object of your attention, as well as a potential target. If you are concealed by a supernatural power, such as the Obfuscate power Unseen Presence, you immediately become visible when you activate Pulse of Undeath.

You immediately learn if your target has fewer, equal or more dots than you currently possess of the following Physical disciplines: Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence. For the purpose of this comparison, possessing any elder power equates to a 6th dot of a discipline, and a luminary power equates to a 7th dot of that discipline. This power does not reveal if your target has any techniques using the listed Physical disciplines, nor can you determine the relative quantity of elder powers she possesses.

In addition, you automatically gain your target's Gaze and Focus for five minutes, as long as your target is able to see you. (See **MET: VTM: Chapter Four: Disciplines: Gaze and Focus**, page 113.) It is impossible to hide the use of this technique with the Subterfuge skill.

Challenging another vampire in this fashion might trigger a frenzy test. Most Camarilla elders consider the use of this power an insult upon their person.

Quick Hands, Quick Work

Prerequisites: Auspex ●● and Celerity ●●

Toreador artists are famous for their precision and speed when inspired. Likewise, the Assamite Viziers are known for the blinding speed at which they process information, complete their experiments, and research their enemies. This technique is one of the secrets to their success.

System

You may choose to activate this technique when spending your downtime actions. If you do, you receive two additional downtime actions between game sessions. However, using this power comes at the great cost of Blood. If you use this technique, you are unable to use any downtime actions to feed, nor can you use other benefits that provide or replenish points of Blood, such as supernatural powers or the Herd background, representing the speed at which you are using Blood to fuel this technique. You begin your next game session with a number of Blood points equal to half of your normal Blood pool maximum. Once the game session begins, you may attempt to feed, leverage your Herd background, or use other means of replenishing blood normally.

Rend Flesh

Prerequisites: Vicissitude ●● and Potence ●●

The majority of Vicissitude practitioners regard Fleshcraft as an art – a delicate practice whose mastery is worth a lifetime's practice. The Bratovitch revenant line is a notable exception, having few qualms about weaponizing their talents. With this power, you can bring your strength to bear as you tear at your foes' flesh.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a simple action to activate Rend Flesh. For the power's duration, you can attempt to make a Brawl skill attack, similar to the attack made with the Vicissitude power, Fleshcraft. If you succeed in the attack challenge, the attack deals 1 point of damage on a normal success and 2 points of damage on an exceptional success. However, if you possess the Potence power Might or the attribute focus for Fleshcraft, that attack deals 2 points of damage on a normal success and 3 points of damage on an exceptional success. If you possess the Potence power Might and the attribute focus for Fleshcraft, that attack deals 3 points of damage on a normal success and 4 points of damage on an exceptional success. In addition, if you possess the Potence powers Prowess or Vigor, or the attribute focus for Potence, the benefits of those powers apply to your attack as well. Any damage dealt by Rend Flesh cannot be reduced or negated.

To attempt an attack with Rend Flesh, you must physically touch your target with your hands as you pull to separate her skin. The damage from this power cannot be augmented by other powers, such as Potence powers other than those listed above, and it cannot be converted to aggravated damage, such as by using the Protean power Feral Claws or the Vicissitude power Horrid Form. All damage, including additional damage from Might, is considered to be damage from a single source.

Resplendence of the Supple Form

Prerequisites: Vicissitude ●●● and Fortitude ●●

You've refined the use of the Vicissitude discipline into an art form, with you as its premier model. Your body adapts to alteration like a fish to water: a corpus of soft and supple clay made pliant in the hands of a practiced sculptor. Mastery of this technique can prove a double-edged sword, as practitioners find themselves sought after by doting elders in need of fodder for their experiments.

System

Whenever you are targeted by Vicissitude powers such as Malleable Visage or Bonecraft, you may choose to limit the penalties applied by any applicable Vicissitude power to a single attribute trait or health level. For example, gaining the Appearance attribute focus from Malleable Visage only results in a -1 penalty to your Social attribute, and using Bonecraft to add an extra limb only requires you to sacrifice a single health level. If you receive the Tough effect from Bonecraft, you receive up to three health levels by sacrificing only 1 dot of your Physical attribute. You benefit from Resplendence of the Supple Form whether you use Fleshcraft

or Bonecraft on yourself, or if another character targets you with their use of Vicissitude. This power does not work in conjunction with the Vicissitude power Horrid Form.

Savage Provocation

Prerequisites: Animalism ●● and Presence ●●

Even the most docile of Kindred hosts a powerful Beast: an angry, prideful creature that craves power and despises control. The key to enraging any vampire, therefore, is to speak loudly enough that her Beast hears you. With this power, you can provoke your target's baser urges, forcing her to answer your challenge.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Animal Ken or Leadership skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to taunt or verbally challenge a target within six steps of you. You must be able to audibly challenge her and be heard for this power to function. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, your target must answer the challenge issued. For the next 10 minutes, she cannot initiate an opposed challenge against anyone but you until she succeeds in an opposed challenge against you. The nature of the challenge is up to her, but most responses take the form of a Physical attack or the use of a discipline. If your target succeeds in her challenge, the effects of this power immediately end. Should she fail, she remains unable to target anyone but you, but she may try again. Alternatively, she is free to leave or simply ignore you, but she cannot initiate an opposed challenge against anyone else for as long as this power is active.

You must also remain in place for this power to remain in effect. Should you move or be moved away from her, or knocked prone, the power's effects end. You can only affect one target with Savage Provocation at a given time. Should you target another character with this power, the effects of this power on a previous target end immediately. Use of Savage Provocation is considered horribly uncouth in polite company and a violation of the spirit of Elysium. Most consider its use to be a provocation that justifies a Physical response.

Scalpel Tongue

Prerequisites: Celerity ● and Presence ●

As a culture, Kindred are prone to pettiness and one-upmanship, and Toreador are no exception. In retrospect, it is entirely unsurprising that they found a way to weaponize repartee. Like a scalpel, you are darting, precise, and above all, sharp. Your words have the power to infuriate your hapless victim, rendering them nearly speechless for a time. This power is originally credited to a Toreador Primogen, though it soon found widespread use after its creation.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Leadership skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action as you make a biting remark. To use this power, you must have your target's Gaze and Focus (see **MET:VTM, Chapter Four: Disciplines, Gaze and Focus,** page 113). If you succeed in an opposed challenge, your target is flabbergasted, full of rage and rendered unable to speak coherently for the next five minutes. She may still use powers such as Melpominee that utilize song, but she can scarcely articulate more than a single word. If a power requires only a single spoken word for its activation, such as the Dominate power Command, she may still utilize it. A target affected by this power can also use all forms of blood magic.

Harpies and Keepers of Elysium are known to turn an occasional blind eye when this power is used against characters currently out of their favor, or if the remark is sufficiently amusing. The use of Scalpel Tongue is not looked upon favorably when it is used against Kindred of greater station, however.

Setting the Tempo

Prerequisites: Melpominee ●●●● and Dominate ●

A Daughter of Cacophony's voice can raise emotions to the highest crescendos or drive listeners into depths of despair. The most expert performers, however, can control not only another's feelings, but her actions as well, creating a dance in which the singer always takes the lead.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Subterfuge skill versus target's Social attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend your standard action singing aloud. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, you force your target to dance to the beat of your song. For her next three opportunities to act on her initiative during the everyman round, she must spend a simple action on movement, taking up to her maximum number of steps in any direction you choose for her. This movement takes place before the target can use her standard action during her initiative. If your target does not have a simple action available to her, she must use her standard action to move as you indicate. While she is dancing, she is still able to defend herself, albeit with some difficulty. If she does not possess a Performance skill specialization related to dance, she receives a -2 penalty to her Dodge skill test pools while she is under the effects of this power. Your target is free to use her remaining actions, including those taken during Celerity rounds, to attempt to correct her location or act as she desires.

Sloughing the Serpent's Skin

Prerequisites: Serpentis ●●● and Fortitude ●●

When a serpent sheds its skin, the process allows both growth and renewal, divesting the creature of the trappings of its former self. You, however, can shed your skin for a more utilitarian purpose, offering protection to an acolyte or a devotee, or tasking a servant with carrying out duties in your name. It is believed this technique was developed by a Viper devotee who received a vision of Apophis.

System

Once per game session, you can spend 10 standard actions wriggling out of your skin. The resulting mass can be worn by another individual, conferring one of two benefits to her, depending on the nature of the skin, as follows:

- **Serpentine Skin**: If you shed your skin while you had the Serpentis power Skin of the Adder activated, anyone who wears your skin gains the benefits of that power as if it were active, including the bonus from the Charisma Social attribute focus, if either you or she has it. While wearing your skin, the wearer appears lithe and serpentine, as if she had activated the power herself. The skin conveys no additional benefit if the wearer activates Skin of the Adder on her own.

- **Humanoid Skin**: If you shed your skin in while in your natural, humanoid form, anyone who wears your skin takes on your appearance, seeming to all onlookers to be a perfect physical copy of you, including your height, weight, and presented gender.

At the next sunset after you shed it, the skin desiccates and becomes unwearable. Except as explicitly stated in the benefits listed above, your skin does not confer your Social attribute focus to the wearer, nor does it change the wearer's aura. If a mortal or ghoul wears your skin, she can wear your skin during daylight hours.

Wearing the skin created by this power is a major transformation power and cannot be combined with other major transformation powers. The skin itself is flexible, but it does not stretch to accommodate other major transformations. Should the wearer assume such a form, the skin either tears irreparably or hangs uselessly, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Smile Through the Pain

Prerequisites: Dementation ● Fortitude ● and Presence ●●●

Psychotic maniacs and reckless daredevils often delight in danger, laughing in the face of harm. Observers can find such behavior both disturbing and captivating, as you seem

nearly invulnerable and utterly committed to your madcap fearlessness.

System

Once per turn, when you are the target of a Physical attack, you can respond by laughing manically and relenting to the attack, accepting any damage or effects as if you had lost the challenge. If you do, and you remain able to act, you may immediately target your attacker with your choice of Presence powers: either Dread Gaze or Entrancement. You can use the power without spending a standard action to do so; however you must meet all other criteria for using the selected power, such as paying the Blood cost, and you cannot modify the selected power with any additional powers or effects. You can activate this power reflexively, even outside of your turn in the initiative order.

Snake Den

Prerequisites: Serpentis ●●●● and Obfuscate ●●

Those who master Serpentis rapidly find that taking on a serpent's shape has immense potential, allowing one to slither and writhe out of an enemy's grasp or infiltrate through the tiniest of gaps. Some vampires take such studies even further, learning to split their forms to maximize their ability to both fight and escape as the needs of a situation demand.

System

When you activate Form of the Cobra, you may choose to turn into a nest of snakes instead of one creature. The nest consists of one snake for each Obfuscate power that you possess. Elder powers and Obfuscate-based techniques do not increase the number of serpents created by Snake Den. Each serpent can act independently and can take one simple and one standard action each turn.

While using Snake Den, you cannot spend Blood and lose access to all other powers, except where noted below. Even powers that were activated before using Snake Den stop functioning while in this form. Activating Snake Den does not reverse permanent physical alterations. For example, if your heart is removed, it does not reappear when you activate this power.

The snakes resemble natural snakes typical of the average in size for their species. Each of your snakes has your Mental attribute, Social attribute, focuses and skills. Each of your serpents has a Physical attribute equal to half of your own Physical attribute (round up). While under the effects of Snake Den, your snakes retain the immunity to grapple and the ability to make venomous bite attacks provided by Form of the Serpent. By default, these serpents inflict 1 point of aggravated damage with a successful Brawl attack. If your character possesses any Potence powers, your snakes' attacks are armor-piercing and inflict 2 points of aggravated damage.

Each snake has 5 health levels (1 Healthy, 2 Injured, and 2 Incapacitated). Your merits, flaws, and powers do not affect the health levels of your serpents. If your character possesses any Fortitude powers, each of your snakes automatically negates 1 point of normal or aggravated damage each time they suffer damage. If your serpents attempt to retest in combat, each creature must spend Willpower separately; they use your Willpower pool to do so.

In addition, your snakes can squirm into narrow spaces and writhe out of reach; as a result, unless you are physically confined in a specially secured location, such as a watertight tank, you may declare the nest's intent to fair escape. Each snake in the nest must be involved in a suitable challenge in order to successfully prevent your fair escape, according to the normal rules of fair escape.

Snakes created by Snake Den can separate and perform individual tasks, but they must remain within one mile of each other. You can use a standard action to return to your human form at the location of any serpent created by this power. When you revert to human form, you automatically reabsorb any of your snakes that are within your line of sight. Snakes not within your line of sight crumble at the same moment, turning into ash. When Snake Den ends, you take 2 points of aggravated damage for each animal that was destroyed, 1 point of aggravated damage for each animal that was injured or incapacitated, and you lose 2 points of Blood for each animal that was outside of your line of sight when you reformed. Damage taken from reverting to human form cannot be reduced or negated, but it cannot kill your character (although it may result in torpor). If all the snakes in a Snake Den nest are destroyed, the power's user dies.

Snakes created by this power are considered to be one entity for the purpose of powers that modify an individual's behavior. If one serpent is targeted by a Dominate power, all the snakes in the nest suffer the effects of that power. If one snake cannot break an individual's Majesty, none of the serpents in the nest can attack that individual. Note that each snake in the nest must still be targeted by separate challenges in order to prevent fair escape, however. Snake Den is a major transformation power and cannot be combined with other major transformation powers.

Shadowcrafting

Prerequisites: Obtenebration ● and Potence ●

Ancient and petty philosophers once equated shadows with falsehoods, citing their fleeting and intangible nature. To you, such narrow epistemology is irrelevant; after all, the philosophers are dead and you are not. Indeed, you have the power to refute their misguided notions through a means to infuse natural shadow with the power of your blood. This process grants it form, substance, and permanence, allowing for the creation a variety of useful objects. These items serve equally well as objets d'arte and weapons of war.

System

You have the power to solidify shadow into solid substance, making a variety of useful and artistic objects. To do so, you must expend a measure of your vitae as you craft an item from a natural source of shadow.

Spend 1 point of Blood and expend a standard action to create objects small enough to lift or wield with one hand. Creating objects that require two hands to lift or use require you to expend 2 points of Blood and two standard actions. Crafting person-sized objects, such as a suit of armor, require you to spend 3 points of Blood and three standard actions. You may choose to create even larger objects, spending Blood across successive turns if necessary, provided there is a natural shadow of comparable size on which to draw.

This solidified shadow is cool to the touch, durable, and sharp enough to be used as a weapon. Items created with Shadowcrafting are impressive in appearance; however, they appear obviously supernatural, and if viewed by mortals, could cause Masquerade problems. Objects created during game sessions last the remainder of the night. However, you may choose to use this power in conjunction with your downtime actions to create objects out of more enduring shadow in accordance with the crafting rules (see **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade, Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems, Downtime Actions, Crafting**, page 307).

When creating objects using this power, you determine the object's form and equipment qualities using the normal rules for equipment selection; however, you cannot use this power to create anything mechanical in nature, such as a computer or an automobile. All objects created using Shadowcrafting also gain the bonus quality Crystalline, which does not count toward its maximum number of equipment qualities.

Spawning Pool

Prerequisites: Animalism ●●● and Fortitude ●

Masters of traps and preparation, the Nosferatu clan is credited with developing the Spawning Pool. Since then, others have learned the knack of feeding vitae to their retainers, giving them abilities exceeding that of normal ghouls. Retainers blessed with these gifts go to great lengths to protect the source of power-enhancing blood.

System

Expend 3 points of Blood and use three standard actions bleeding into a pool of water. The water becomes infused with the power of your Blood, attracting various animals to its location. Any of your Animal Retainers (see **Chapter Five: Core Rules and Dramatic Systems, Animal Retainers**, page 113) that drink from this enriched water gain the Rugged merit, in addition to their normal Animal Retainer benefits, for the next 30 days. You may also choose to increase your Animal Retainers' size category by one level (see **Chapter Five: Core Rules and Dramatic Systems, Giant Monsters**, page 113). Your Retainers must ingest the water at least once every 30 days to retain the benefits from Spawning Pool.

Animals that drink from the enhanced water do not consume enough Blood to become ghouls, though you may choose make them into ghouls using the normal process.

Stealth Vehicle

Prerequisites: Auspex ● and Obfuscate ●●●

To nomadic vampires, often neonates and Anarchs, a vehicle is the most important tool available. With your hands on the wheel, your transportation becomes an extension of your will, allowing you to channel your supernatural abilities into and through it, providing mastery of the road few others can match.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use a standard action to activate Stealth Vehicle on any vehicle you are currently driving or piloting.

While Stealth Vehicle is active, you may expend a simple action to extend a portion of your Obfuscate ability to the single vehicle you are currently driving, making you exceptionally difficult to tail. Your vehicle does not become unseen, merely difficult to recognize and follow, and other drivers instinctively move out of your way, making it even easier for you to catch up to a target or lose a tail.

In addition, you can expend a standard action to change your vehicle's appearance, forcing onlookers to perceive it as a different color, condition, or model. Such visual alterations are limited to your vehicle's general make; you can make your four-door pickup into a two-door work truck, but you cannot make a compact car appear to be an SUV. You cannot use this power to alter the apparent number of inhabitants of the vehicle you are driving, but you can obscure or tint the vehicle's windows.

Stealth Vehicle allows you to deeply attune to the vehicle you are driving, enabling you to adapt to minute changes in performance or traffic. You gain the appropriate Drive skill specialization for the vehicle you're operating. If you already have that specialization, you gain an additional +5 wild card bonus to Drive and Streetwise skill test pools while this power is active, and you can benefit from the Streetwise skill while driving a vehicle, even through suburban or rural areas. The power lasts for one hour or until you cease driving the vehicle, whichever is shorter.

Stony Retribution

Prerequisites: Visceratika ●● and Potence ●●

Gargoyles were created to be protectors and soldiers during the War of Omens. Noting their own lack of physical talents, members of the Tremere clan sought to instill their servants with an instinctual need to fight and protect. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Gargoyles have managed to turn the act of protecting others into a weapon in its own right.

System

Whenever you incur damage while using the assist defender mass combat tactic, you may immediately activate this power without spending an action to do so. To activate Stony Retribution, you must take at least 1 point of damage; you cannot activate this power if you reduce the damage entirely, such as by using Fortitude powers. Alternatively, you may activate this power if you take damage while you also have the elder power Bulwark activated.

While Stony Retribution is active, the next time you succeed in an opposed challenge while making an attack against the individual who injured you, that attack is automatically converted to an exceptional success. Once you achieve an exceptional success using Stony Retribution, the effects of this power immediately end. You may activate Stony Retribution again if the conditions for activating it are met.

You can only have a single instance of this power active at a given time, even if multiple targets injure you or you take damage from a single target multiple times. This power lasts for 10 minutes if you do not win an opposed challenge against a character that injured you.

Symbiotic Possession

Prerequisites: Daimoinon ●●● and Dominate ●●

Stories of demonic possession exemplify why demonology is dangerous. To you, however, such concerns are trifling matters for weaker souls. Your mastery of the infernal arts grants you power over lesser demonic entities, and it is you *who commands* them *to inhabit your form.*

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use five standard actions to summon a minor demon and bind it to your will. For the remainder of the game session, or until you enter torpor, it resides within your body and can augment your abilities. During the everyman round, on your initiative, the demon can use your infernal powers on your behalf. You gain an additional standard action that can only be used to activate dots 1 through 5 of the Daimoinon discipline. You must still pay any Blood point costs associated with the power activated, but this expenditure does not count against the maximum number of Blood points you can spend per turn.

While Symbiotic Possession is active, you are not wholly immune to the demon's influence. You gain the Derangement: Obsession triggered by one of the seven deadly sins — Envy, Greed, Gluttony, Lust, Pride, Sloth, or Wrath — depending on the demon's nature. The Storyteller determines which of the sins is tied to your demon's nature. In addition, should another individual establish contact with you using the Auspex power Telepathy, she may discover the presence of a second consciousness. To do so, she must specifically search for one, by asking the following question, provided as a new choice to other options Telepathy provides when interrogating unwilling subjects:

- "Is there another entity or consciousness within this body?"

Tempest Form

Prerequisites: Protean ●●●●● and Potence ●

Many Nordic Gangrel feel a kinship with the Norse Gods that exert power over storms and winds. With this power, your Form of Mist becomes a swirling torrent of air, capable of summoning powerful gusts. The Einherjar believe this technique is a gift from Thor, allowing them to punish those who take cowardly forms in battle.

Test Pool

Physical attribute + Athletics or Firearms skill versus target's Physical attribute + Dodge skill

System

Whenever you activate the Protean power Form of Mist, you gain the ability to buffet your foes with a gust of wind. To do so, you must succeed in an opposed challenge using the Tempest Form test pool. Characters that have the Wits Mental focus can choose to substitute their Mental attribute for their Physical attribute if they are using the Firearms skill for this challenge. If you succeed in the opposed challenge, your target is knocked back, using the rules for the Knockback ranged equipment quality (see **MET: VTM, Chapter Thirteen: Influences and Equipment**, page 518). Other than the benefits provided by Knockback, this attack cannot be augmented or improved in any way.

While this attack does 0 points of damage to individuals in solid form, this attack is devastating to semi-solid bodies. If your target has the powers Form of Mist, Tenebrous Form or Blood Form active, or if she is in any other non-solid but still corporeal state, this attack deals 3 points of normal damage instead of applying Knockback. This is an exception to the rules that limit the damage those forms can take to certain sources. Wraiths or vampires using the elder power: Ghost Body (available in the upcoming MET: VTM, Vol 2, Issue 2) do not count as semi-solid targets, but embodied spirits or entities conjured by the Thaumaturgy: Path of Elemental Mastery power Summon Elemental may be affected by this power, depending upon the composition of their forms, at the Storyteller's discretion.

In addition, you may harness Tempest Form to aid in

self-propulsion. While you have Form of Mist active, you may take one additional step for each action spent on movement. This power is a major transformation and cannot be used with other major transformation powers.

Terror of Tentacles

Prerequisites: Obtenebration ●●● and Potence ●●

The discipline of Obtenebration has the power to blend the line between shadow and substance, but you have learned to craft masterpieces of terror. The strength of your bond with shadows allows you to shape your dark arms into anything conceivable – a grinning likeness, a faceless amalgamation, or any object you can imagine. Some Magisters have used this power to play a wicked game of chess, flaunt their shadowy power, or imbue their Arms of the Abyss with twisted irony.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a simple action to harden and transform one or more of your Arms of the Abyss into vicious weapons, adding a single melee weapon equipment quality from the list below to them. You may use this power up to three times on one or more tentacles, but each additional equipment quality costs 1 point of Blood and a simple action to shape. Tentacles cannot benefit from the same quality more than once.

You may choose to transform the affected tentacles into different shapes, such as chess pieces or statues. In addition, these transformed tentacles can spend their standard action to move up to three steps in any direction, as long as they remain within your line of sight.

You can select from the following melee weapon equipment qualities when using Terror of Tentacles: Accurate, Armor Piercing, Brutal, Deadly, Disabling, Fast, Trip, Impaling, Reach, and Quick Draw. Affected tentacles naturally meet all the qualifications to possess the selected qualities, even if they lack the normal requirements, such as having two hands.

That Damn Cat

Prerequisites

Dementation ●● and either Animalism ●●●● or Protean ●●●●

By channeling a hint of madness into your animal form, you can compel another individual to follow you wherever you please. This journey can take your target to the precipice of an ambush or keep her occupied for a short while. However, those who follow you might not truly understand or appreciate where they are led.

Test Pool

Social attribute + Empathy or Animalism skill versus target's Mental attribute + Willpower

System

This power can only be used when you possess an animal using the Animalism power Subsume the Spirit or while you are in your flight form while using the Protean power Shape of the Beast. Engage in a test with your target using the Dementation test pool. If you succeed, you gain the target's Gaze and Focus (see **MET: VTM**, page 113) and she feels compelled to follow you wherever you go, as long as you remain in animal form. Your target justifies her reasons for doing so, such as due to fascination, infatuation, or outrage at your presence.

The target must spend at least one action during each round in which she is able to act, following you for the next 15 minutes, or five rounds if used during combat. During this time, your target can only take steps in your direction, but she avoids hazardous obstacles and obvious attacks. If your target can touch you, possibly requiring an opposed challenge to do so, the effects of this power immediately end. If it becomes impossible to follow you without your target directly harming herself, the effects of That Damn Cat immediately end. If you do not maintain an animal form while That Damn Cat is active, or if you leave the target's line of sight, the effects immediately end.

Translocation

Prerequisites: Protean ●●● and Celerity ●●

The ability to move unexpectedly can mean all the difference in combat. You have refined your ability to meld into the earth, allowing you to maneuver rapidly across a battlefield, disappearing and emerging out of harm's way. You can even employ this technique away from open soil, temporarily discorporating in order to move beneath your foes.

System

Expend 1 point of Blood and use your simple action visualizing your desired location. Your body immediately discorporates and reappears up to nine steps from your original location. You must have line of sight to the location at which you wish to reappear. You can use this power while standing on any type of soil or flooring, even indoors. Translocation can be used during Celerity rounds. You cannot use this power if you are grappled.

Vanishing Act

Prerequisites: Chimerstry ● and Obfuscate ●●

A daring escape relies on three things: precise timing, a good distraction, and a little luck. Through these means many Ravnos earned a reputation as effective escape artists. Indeed, with just the basics of Obfuscate and a little luck with Chimerstry, you can distract your target just long enough to vanish from sight.

System

You are particularly adept at the art of distraction. Should you succeed at creating an especially dazzling illusion, you can slip away as your mark's focus is elsewhere. Whenever you achieve an exceptional success in a challenge using a Chimerstry power, including any techniques or elder powers, you may immediately activate Unseen Presence without spending an action to do so. You can use this power in conjunction with the Obfuscate power Vanish from the Mind's Eye, if you possess it. Any individuals against whom you scored an exceptional success are considered to not be looking at you. Any other characters who were looking you are unaffected per the normal rules for Unseen Presence; you must find another way to elude them, such as using Vanish from the Mind's Eye.

If you are using a Chimerstry technique that does not typically provide the opportunity to earn an exceptional success, you may still determine one normally, using the rules for opposed challenges. If you score an exceptional success in this manner, you may benefit from Vanishing Act.

Venomous Beast

Prerequisites

Quietus ●● and Animalism ●●

In the depths of their warrens, Nosferatu use their uniquely adaptive blood to breed vicious predators using animals others might consider unassuming. This technique gives these creations an even more terrifying edge in a fight: sprouting venomous sacs or oozing pustules on the animal's body. This dangerous deformity makes even the most hardened Kindred hesitate to fight them, but the Sewer Rats love them just the same.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and a use a standard action to imbue an Animal Retainer, or an animal you currently control using the Animalism discipline, with a single application of potent venom. Choose one of the following powers you possess: Scorpion's Touch, Baal's Caress, or Taste of Death. The animal can use the selected power a single time, utilizing your attribute focus bonus, if applicable.

The application of your Quietus venom lasts until the next sunrise. You need not be present for the venomous animal to use the conferred power, though any points of Blood it conveys are considered yours for the purpose of activating other Quietus powers. This technique is an exception to the rule limiting Quietus powers to application on bladed weapons, as the animals apply it through their fangs, claws, hooves, or whatever means they have of making an attack.

Vexing Hecklers

Prerequisites: Mytherceria ●●● and Dominate ●●

Interest in fairies often becomes a bizarre fascination that cures itself. Indeed, many once-curious parties who run afoul of fae go to great lengths to avoid them after a dangerous encounter. Whether it's due to their strange customs or their potentially fatal sense of humor, being the center of attention for a group of fairies is a dangerous place to be. With this power, you can make your victim a subject of great interest to a troupe of piskies, making her the object of their preoccupation.

Test Pool

Mental attribute + Academics skill versus target's Mental attribute + Willpower

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use your standard action to condemn your target as a subject of ridicule. To use this power, you must have your target's Gaze and Focus (see **MET: VTM,** page 113). If you succeed in the opposed challenge, your target is plagued by an invisible troupe of mischievous piskies. These creatures deride her every failure with heckling voices, causing her tremendous frustration. For the next hour, whenever she loses an opposed challenge, your target receives a -1 penalty to the attribute category used in that challenge, as the piskies interfere with her efforts in a fit of laughter and insults. This penalty can be applied cumulatively, up to a maximum of -5 in each attribute category.

These meddling creatures cannot be reasoned with, fought off, or otherwise deterred, but an individual with a Lore skill specialization related to the fae can attempt to pay them to go away. This negotiation cannot take place during combat. If the target does not have fae lore, another party may attempt to negotiate on her behalf. The Storyteller determines what the piskies might want; for example, sums of money may suffice, or they may want her car keys for a joyride, depending on the piskies' current mood.

At the end of the power's duration, the piskies get bored and move along, causing the penalties to end immediately. Your target can only be affected by a single instance of this power at a given time. Additional applications extend the power's duration, but they cannot raise the maximum cumulative penalty.

Warrior's Bond

Prerequisites: Valeren ● Auspex ●●●● and Fortitude ●

Seasoned soldiers are often also skilled tacticians, maneuvering their squads as if they were an extension of a single being. You have the power to deepen the bond of Telepathy, creating a sense of mental alertness and allowing you to support your coterie, gang, or pack by having them work as one.

System

Once purchased, this power is always active. You and any character sharing a direct connection with you via the Auspex power Telepathy receives a +3 bonus to her initiative (not cumulative with other instances of this power), and she is considered a valid target for your use of the Valeren power Sense Vitality, even if the target character is not within the power's normal range or within your line of sight. Characters under the effect of your Warrior's Bond may use Sense Vitality as if they had purchased that power themselves.

You are also able to infuse others who are in telepathic contact with you with the power of your will. If both you and your target telepathic contact are willing, the target may expend points of Willpower from your pool instead of hers to retest a challenge. Any restrictions that affect the recipient still apply, such as effects that require her to pay additional Willpower to retest. Any effect that prevents her from spending Willpower to retest a challenge cannot be circumvented with Warrior's bond.

Weakness of Steel

Prerequisites: Quietus ●● and Auspex ●●●

The science of metallurgy teaches us that too much hardness can result in brittle steel, and too little can make a piece soft. Each type has its own benefits, applications, and weaknesses. Developed by Assamite Vizers, this technique grants the ability to focus your keen senses towards rapid analysis of your enemies' weapons and armor, allowing you to calculate

the best means of shattering them.

System

Spend 1 point of Blood and use a standard action studying your target and her armaments while simultaneously fortifying a weapon you are currently holding with a special application of Scorpion's Touch. After successfully striking your target with the designated weapon, you may select a single item in the target's possession and automatically destroy it. If you do so, your attack deals no damage and conveys no additional effects, such as combat maneuvers or other Quietus power applications. Weakness of Steel conveys its effects once, after which it immediately ends.



Chapter Five:
Core Rules & Dramatic Systems

"There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."

— Aldous Huxley

Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade (MET:VTM) launched the foundation of the Mind's Eye Theatre system from By Night Studios. Subsequent books, such as **Mind's Eye Theatre: Werewolf The Apocalypse** and **Mind's Eye Theatre: Changeling The Dreaming**, upgraded the core foundation of these rules and systems to meet the ever-changing needs of our audience.

The rules and information found in this chapter represent updates, additions, and revisions to the following **MET:VTM** chapters: **Chapter Three: Character Creation**, **Chapter Six: Core Rules**, **Chapter Seven: Dramatic Systems**, and **Chapter Twelve: Allies & Antagonists**. This information expands on or supersedes the material found in older publications. In addition, answers to frequently-asked questions and the most recent errata can also be found on our website: www.bynightstudios.com.

Updated Skills

Science

System

...A character with Science receives **1 additional downtime action, which can only be spent on a downtime action somehow relevant to one of her fields of study. For example, a character with Science: Mathematics might be able to spend this additional downtime action to solve an equation, or a character with Science: Botany might be able to genetically splice two plants together. However, neither skill would generate an additional downtime action to investigate a spooky house. For every additional field of study that the character possesses at a rating of 3 or more dots, she gains another bonus downtime action, which can only be spent on a task relevant to one of her fields of study.** (New rules superseding **MET:VTM**, page 96 denoted in bold.)

Updated Backgrounds

Shared Backgrounds

(This new subsystem is a supplement to rules found in **MET: VTM,** page 98.)

Kindred who are in a coterie, pack, or gang may pool certain backgrounds together. Shared backgrounds should be noted specifically on your character's sheet, listing your individual contribution as well as the total among the group.

The following backgrounds may be shared:

- Haven
- Herd
- Allies
- Contacts

Shared backgrounds cannot exceed the maximum of 5 dots for the shared group, no matter how many dots are contributed by the group's members. Shared group backgrounds may be used by any character within the group until the background has been expended. For example, if a member of group uses the shared Herd background and depletes it, the other members of that group can't access Herd until it refreshes. Remember that any member of the shared group may access any background shared by the group, including the Haven background. Many Kindred have met their Final Death from the betrayal of a disgruntled former coterie-mate leading enemies through their Haven's defenses.

Characters can purchase individual levels of the above-listed backgrounds in addition to contributing to a shared group; however, each background must be purchased separately. When a group member dies or leaves the group, all contributed backgrounds are lost after 30 days or two game sessions, whichever is greater, unless other members spend XP to repurchase them.

Example

Clint has 3 dots in his own personal Haven background, but also wishes to contribute to the coterie's Haven. He notes that the second Haven is the coterie's shared Haven, and he purchases 2 dots of that background. Apryl is also in the coterie with Clint, and she contributes 1 dot to the shared Haven background. The coterie members consult and choose which benefits these 3 total dots provide from the shared Haven background. Every member notes them on their character sheets for future reference.

Alternate Identity

(This system replaces the one found on **MET: VTM**, page 98.)

You maintain an **Alternate Identity**, complete with papers, birth certificates, or any other necessary documentation. This **identity is normally applicable to the mortal populace, although it may be used to infiltrate supernatural groups, such as other clans, if you possess 4 or more dots of the background.** You may buy this background multiple times, with each instance representing an entirely separate cover identity. **Lineage merits may hinder any ability to successfully infiltrate other clans or supernatural groups, at the Storyteller's discretion.**

System

In order to determine if a character is using an Alternate Identity, you may choose to spend a number of downtime actions investigating a character you suspect of having an Alternate Identity, researching your target's bona fides. After you have spent your chosen number of actions, make a challenge using your Mental attribute + Investigation skill versus the target's Mental attribute + Subterfuge skill. If you succeed in this challenge, and you have spent a number of downtime actions equal to or greater than your target's dots of that Alternate Identity, you discover the target character's true identity.

If you fail the test, if you have not spent a number of downtime actions that equal or exceed your target's dots of Alternate Identity, or if your target is not using an Alternate Identity, the identity appears legitimate. Storytellers should conduct the test in secret to avoid indicating whether or not someone is using an Alternate Identity. In addition, a Storyteller should not tell a player in advance how many downtime actions are needed to thoroughly investigate someone, or if such an investigation is even warranted.

• Your identity is very shallow. You have a driver's license or other minor documentation, and it can survive a perfunctory internet search.

•• You have a well-grounded identity that could withstand the scrutiny of a minor criminal investigation. This identity might include birth certificates and social security numbers.

••• Your identity is very well established and stands up to all but the toughest scrutiny. This persona has a long and believable history, including friends, family, and character witnesses.

•••• Your identity is designed to infiltrate another clan **or supernatural organization**. At this level you've established a rudimentary identity as a new (or fairly new) **member of the chosen organization**.

••••• Your identity is a respected member of society; it holds powerful office in the mortal world **or among your chosen supernatural group**. You have a long **and in-depth** history, and your cover is solid. Note that this **veracity** doesn't prevent your character from being "found out" if you make a mistake, and other players catch on.

Even the strongest Alternate Identity will fail if you can't keep a secret**, display proper etiquette for the identity, or if you are directly observed breaking your cover. While your cover story and paperwork can withstand inspection, some supernatural powers that directly examine you may lead to your alternate persona becoming compromised, at the Storyteller's discretion.**

(New rules superseding **MET:VTM**, page 98 denoted in bold.)

Updated Combat Maneuvers

Grapple

(This system replaces the one found on **MET: VTM**, page 280.)

If you succeed with a Grapple attack, your opponent takes 3 **fewer** damage (minimum 0) and is *grappled*. While grappled, she can't move and cannot use her standard action to initiate a Physical **challenge until she has broken free. For example, a grappled character could not make use of a Physical attack using the Firearms skill, but she could use the power Shape of the Beast. She can still initiate Mental and Social challenges normally.**

She can escape from your Grapple by using a simple action and besting you in an opposed challenge (Brawl or Melee)**, or if she chooses, she can also use her standard action to try and best you in a second opposed challenge.** Upon escaping, the target regains full use of her standard action**, unless it was used to escape.** (She doesn't have to wait until the next round to use it.) You relinquish your Grapple if you take any action that targets anyone other than the character you're grappling, or if you move more than one step per round. **Having your grapple broken or tested in this way does not count against the limit on the number of people who can attack the character you have grappled (see Mass Combat: Maximum Attacks Per Round, MET: VTM** page 346**).**

Characters who are grappled can make use of all form-changing powers. If a character who is grappled changes forms, this act does not cause the Grapple to break, unless the new form cannot be grappled, such as those granted by the powers Form of the Cobra or Form of Mist.

If a single character is being grappled by more than one opponent, she need only best one opponent to escape. If the grappling characters cannot decide who will resist the attempt to break out, the Storyteller decides.

As long as your character is grappled, she is considered the target of a Physical **attack** each round. **As a result, she normally can only be targeted with one additional Physical attack per round. This situation means that if the character who has grappled you also attacks you on her initiative, you will have been**

subject to two Physical attacks that round. (See **Mass Combat:** Maximum Attacks Per Round, **MET: VTM** page 282.)

With the right equipment or supernatural power, it is possible to Grapple **from** range, but a Grapple **maneuver** cannot be used as a prerequisite for a supernatural attack unless you Grapple with your hands. For example, you can't throw a net at someone and then use **Withering**, because you have not grappled the target with your hands.

(New rules superseding **MET:VTM**, page 280 denoted in bold.)

Feral Combat Maneuvers

(These combat maneuvers supplement the combat maneuvers located in **MET: VTM,** page 281.)

Feral combat maneuvers take advantage of the animal instincts, quadruped speed, and other advantages inherent to wild animals. These attacks help a vampire outmaneuver opponents by controlling an enemy's mobility and maximizing her own. Feral combat maneuvers can only be used in an animal form, such as those granted by the powers such as Shape of the Beast, Form of the Cobra, or another other power that allows a character's physical body to be transformed into an animal form. The Animalism power Subsume the Spirit cannot be used to gain access to feral combat maneuvers; it only allows you to possess an animal, not transform into one.

- If you possess the Strength attribute focus, you can perform Mangle Fur or Savage Leap once per combat without spending Willpower.
- If you possess the Dexterity attribute focus, you can perform Dart Behind or Feral Dash once per combat without spending Willpower.
- If you possess the Stamina attribute focus, you cannot be affected by Mangle Fur, unless your attacker has a higher base Physical attribute than you. This defensive bonus applies even if you are unable to make use of feral combat maneuvers.

Dart Behind: Drawing on your compact size, you are easily able to skirt past your opponent. When using this maneuver, you can take your movement action directly through your opponent, as if she wasn't there. When using this maneuver, other players are obliged to move to let you pass, though they should retake their same positions afterwards, as their characters continue to occupy the same space. You can only use this maneuver if your final step takes you beyond the physical space your opponent occupies.

Feral Dash: This maneuver requires both a simple and a standard action to perform. Drawing on the strength of your animal form, you tear off in a blaze of speed. You can move a number of steps as though you had spent both actions on movement, plus an additional three steps.

Mangle Fur: Modify your test pool by -2. If you succeed in an opposed challenge, you are able to pry, tear, and mangle your opponent such that her armor is compromised. Until she spends a total of two simple actions readjusting her defenses, any bonus she receives from mundane armor is nullified.

Savage Leap: This maneuver requires both a simple and a standard action in order to combine your movement with an attack. Your animal form provides you with the balance and speed necessary to make impressive attacks while leaping through the air. Move up to six steps leaping in one single direction. You can perform a Brawl attack to claw or bite a foe anywhere along this leap. If you have not completed your movement when you attack, you must afterward continue in the same direction until you have taken all six steps.

Expanded Beast Traits System

"The Edge... there is no honest way to explain it because the only people who really know where it is are the ones who have gone over."

— Hunter S. Thompson

Each human holds the capacity for right and wrong, good and evil. A tentative balance exists between the two, with both virtue and vice ruling emotions and actions. To some, life is simply a matter of looking at the moral implications of each situation and deciding which course of action is the best, while others act without considering the consequences they might incur. For centuries, philosophers have debated the existence and purpose of the human soul, and

considered how this nebulous concept defines our morals, actions, and how we relate to one another. Some claim that humanity's entire existence has been an intrinsic, existential search to define the soul and explore its functionality, while seeking the true purpose behind life.

Vampire: The Masquerade is a game that focuses on the internal struggle between darkness and light, right and wrong, virtue and vice. This daily inner turmoil is mirrored in the conflict between Humanity and the Beast. As in real life, every action and choice made within the scope of the game carries consequences. At times, these outcomes may be social sanctions or physical encounters, but there is also a possibility that they will stir a vampire's Beast. This dramatic system uses two unique traits to simulate and showcase this struggle:

- *Humanity* is defined in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade** as a metric determining how much of a character's mortal soul remains, despite the Curse of Caine. Humanity represents a vampire's tie to morality: an endless struggle to some and a shield to others.

- *Beast traits* represent the relative potency of a character's Beast, increasing as it actively strengthens or emerges. Incurring a Beast trait represents a moment of weakness, surrendering to the seductive and destructive nature of the Beast.

The chart listed on page 300 of **MET:VTM** was designed to be a broad, quick-and-dirty guideline for Storytellers and players to easily determine how to assign Beast traits during the course of a game session. Using it, a vampire should be able to feel the slip of her Humanity on a nightly basis, taking a walk on the wild side without random significant loss. Losing Humanity is a long, slow grind—a story of true terror.

The following expanded system reorganizes and reimagines the previous rules, broadening them from the narrow perspective of engaging in violence to opening a character up to the depravations of the Beast. This system should be used by players and Storytellers alike as need arises to start a discussion. Astute observers will note that the lower levels of the following chart showcase multiple ways to earn Beast traits.

Tracking and Applying Beast Traits

The death of Humanity is achieved through a thousand cuts: a string of choices, each more important and dangerous than the last. Storytellers (and players) should observe and track the most severe sins committed by each character in a scene (or in a complex scenario, such as combat). Afterwards, the Storyteller should assign Beast traits accordingly and resolve degeneration challenges.

Example

Maria, a neonate Brujah, has spent months cultivating her powerbase in Atlantic City. Slowly but surely, she has gained Allies and Contacts within the homeless population and local women's shelters. As a street rat when she was still human, these were the people who saved her life time and again. Even though she has lost her breath of life, she still feels some loyalty to this community, and she has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to ensuring the forgotten of humanity receive care.

When she discovers a powerful investment banker's plan to gentrify her territory, she feels her Beast stir. She knows that with enough time, money, and boons, she could find a way to bury this man, Benjamin Reed, before his project comes to fruition. However, she isn't willing to wait and watch her people suffer while she attempts to navigate the muddy waters of politics among the Kindred.

Maria utilizes her Contacts and Allies, seeking any information she can find on the man. Unfortunately, her influence doesn't garner anything of value, but she does find one of his Contacts: a person who, she is certain, knows more than he's letting on. She might not be able to get to her real target yet, but his lackey will do in the meantime.

She arrives at his home shortly past midnight, and from the lack of lights in the modest townhome, he's already in bed. Using her considerable Potence-enhanced strength, Maria breaks the lock on the front door and creeps inside. As she makes her way towards the stairs, she pauses—the golden bust on his mantle would fetch a nice price with one of her Contacts, money that the shelters desperately need. She grabs the heavy statue and tucks it into her bag before continuing up the stairs.

Maria knows this is a delicate situation; keeping her Beast in check is important. She has questions about the project, and this guy just might have some answers. That doesn't stop her from grabbing the target and dragging him out of bed, flinging him to the ground. As he startles awake, Maria uses her Presence to sway his mind, affecting his feelings by entrancing him. The terrified man calms slightly, and Maria gets down to business.

She presses him for nearly an hour, digging for as much dirt on Benjamin Reed as she can get. It isn't much: not nearly enough to topple the empire the banker has slowly been building in her city, but it's a start. Now she knows where to find him, and how to get to him.

As she feels the power of Entrancement beginning to wane, Maria considers her options. She could leave the guy and hope he doesn't tell Reed everything he told her. Or she could make an example out of him.

It's not a hard choice. Maria's Beast roars with satisfaction as she twists off the informant's head, wrapping it in a plastic bag before tucking it into her bag along with the statue. Yes, this will make an excellent statement to Mr. Benjamin Reed. One wrapped head with a warning note, coming right up.

After the scene concludes, Maria's Storyteller tallies up her sins. She broke into a home and stole an expensive piece of art, dragged a man violently out of bed, and used Entrancement to affect his emotions. These are all level 1 sins. Then, she murdered him, a level 4 sin. Though she committed multiple sins during the scene, she only gains 4 Beast traits, the amount determined by her highest level sin: the death of her victim.



Self-Policing: Players Assigning Their Characters' Beast Traits

Sadly, it is impossible for a Storyteller and her narrators to be everywhere at a game. Sometimes, it's better for immersion if players voluntarily award themselves Beast traits. Each Beast trait self-awarded in this fashion replenishes a single spent Willpower, equivalent to the refresh players can grant one another for good roleplaying and embodying a very difficult aspect of the game. Players earn this bonus only when voluntarily assigning a Beast trait to their characters in response to their actions. Powers or effects that cause a character to gain Beast traits cannot incur this bonus. This bonus cannot be earned more than once during a game session.

Expanded Beast Trait Chart

Level of Sin	Description	Common Examples
1	A thoughtless action that's either cruel or harmful to others, no matter how fleeting, rousing the strength of the Beast, even for a moment.	• Significant theft that actively harms someone. Examples: stealing a family's home, armed robbery, stealing a harmful (but nonlethal) quantity of blood. • Striking or otherwise physically harming a mortal or a vampire, even if they can recover relatively quickly, such as through supernatural healing. Examples: punching a mortal or feeding on her, shooting a vampire, or striking a werewolf with silver. • Using a supernatural power to cause harm to someone, either directly or indirectly. Some uses of disciplines, such as Entrancement, Forgetful Mind, Passion, or Voice of Madness, fall into this category, subject to Storyteller discretion.
2	You've fed the Beast by inflicting lasting harm on another. It's not much, but every slip could potentially lead to disaster.	• Committing major felonies that actively harm mortals. Examples: selling drugs to children, or enacting white-collar fraud that causes large-scale economic damage. • Inflicting a lasting injury on someone, from which they can recover, but with difficulty. Examples: breaking a mortal's arm, inflicting a level of aggravated damage on a vampire, or drinking a life-threatening amount of blood from an unwilling victim. • Using disciplines or powers to enslave the will of others temporarily. Examples: Conditioning, or insidious uses of Voice of Madness, Love, or Path of Corruption, subject to Storyteller discretion.
3	You've indulged the Beast and allowed it to force others into subjugation, or inflicted cruelty and misery onto others. These are wounds from which it may be impossible to recover.	• Inflicting a permanent injury on someone. Examples: ripping a mortal's limb off, staking a vampire and encasing her in concrete, or stealing someone's heart without consent. • Causing the enslavement of others. Examples: human trafficking, forcefully causing someone to attain a three-point blood bond to your character against her will. • Indulging in destructive rampage that inflicts harm, chaos, and pain on others.
4	You've wallowed in the pleasures of the Beast, but there's still a sliver of a hope that your Humanity will win out this night.	• Committing murder. • Torturing another character. • Participating in acts of cruelty or debasement; taking pleasure in the pain you inflict, relishing in your dominance over others.
5	You've committed inhuman acts that can never be excused or rationalized. Your Beast has won the night and the cost is a piece of your Humanity.	• Participating in mass murder. • Committing diablerie. • Enacting inhuman, heinous acts of terror and sadism.

Aggravated Circumstances: Adjusting Beast Trait Awards

Fate and morality are rarely so simple as to be easily adjudicated by a chart. Storytellers are the heart of Mind's Eye Theatre. One of their many functions is to ensure the proper narrative flow of any scene.

The Beast wants its host vampire to be cruel and strike out at others. It craves conflict and destruction. The only path to avoid enslavement to its cravings is to resist. Storytellers may adjust the number of Beast traits awarded for any sin or simply lower a character's Humanity if they feel it is warranted. Here are some examples:

- **Excessive Cruelty**: Being more savage and causing more pain than you must (+1 Beast traits)
- **Lack of Remorse**: Celebrating and reveling in the Beast (+1 Beast traits)
- **Repeat Offender**: You've engaged in murder, mutilation, or possibly worse, over and over again, such that despite your best (or worst) efforts, your Humanity has snapped. (-1 Humanity)

Example

Although Maria hoped that Benjamin Reed would cease his gentrification plans after her first warning, she knew that it wasn't likely. Men like that are rarely willing to back down from something they really want, and now she finds herself locked in a war for her territory. Her severed-head warning only drove Reed harder towards his goal; he moved up the development timeline for the area. When Maria discovered that he had organized a raid on one of the homeless encampments, arresting dozens of people and wreaking havoc on their meager belongings, she felt her bitter rage stirring once more.

Thanks to her time spent with Reed's buddy, Maria has a list of Reed's business investments. Since loss of life doesn't seem to faze him, Maria's going to hit him where it hurts—his wallet. As the sun sets, she prepares for a night of chaos and mayhem, one that will hopefully send her nemesis running from her part of the city.

The first business on her list is a high-end menswear store. Though the store is closed, Maria can see employees still milling about as they finish off their day. She considers waiting until the building has cleared, but she has a lot of locations on her list, and the night is short.

With her trusty baseball bat in hand, Maria pulls a mask down over her face and barrels into the building, barely pausing as she shatters the heavy glass doors. Chaos breaks out in the store as she starts to shout, swinging her bat around and destroying everything in her path. Expensive décor, clothing racks, cash registers—nothing is safe from her rampage. When one employee confronts her and attempts to physically subdue her, she just laughs and pushes him out of the way.

As sirens echo in the distance, Maria realizes that it's time to go, despite what her Beast craves. She looks down at the man she shoved and grins broadly, leaning close to him and summoning her powers of Presence to really catch his attention. "Tell Mr. Reed, next time, I won't be so nice."

As flashing lights swarm towards the building, Maria runs. It's time to hit her next target.

Maria continues her destructive rampage, moving from one business to the next. At each stop, she destroys merchandise, décor, and terrifies any humans who might be in the vicinity. When she has finished with each of the locations on her list, Maria's Storyteller calculates her Beast traits gained for the scene. She used powers to compel humans and physically harmed mortals, both level 1 sins. She destroyed multiple businesses, inflicting as much damage as possible, a level 3 sin. Due to attacking and destroying multiple places of business and reveling in the joy of destroying her foe's livelihood, the Storyteller declares that she has gained 5 Beast traits for the evening. She gains 3 traits for the destructive rampage, +1 Beast trait for excessive violence and pain, and +1 Beast trait for showing no remorse for her actions.

Frenzy Checks: Riding the Wave

As a vampire accumulates Beast traits, her Beast becomes more and more active. During moments of extreme stress, it seeks to assert itself, overwhelming the vampire's psyche and taking control, throwing the character into frenzy. Resisting the urge to frenzy involves a very real struggle between a vampire and her Beast; either it succeeds, or she does. However, there is a third option: *riding the wave*.

A character who rides the wave seeks to satisfy her urges before they overcome her, rather than attempt

to deny them outright. Riding the wave is an extreme reaction to a frenzy-inducing stimulus, acknowledging it as a threat in a very overt way. Riding the wave is different from frenzy. Powers or effects that rely on a character being in frenzy do not apply when she is riding the wave. Instead, she is in a state just beneath frenzy.

When confronted with a stimulus that would cause a frenzy check, players may choose instead to ride the wave. If they do, they skip the frenzy check, but must instead react in an extreme and dramatic fashion to the situation, possibly acting in a manner that others might consider embarrassing or overblown. However, to the character, the emotion she experiences is very real. When a character rides the wave, she must continue acting in a dramatic fashion until the stimulus of her frenzy is removed or resolved. This outcome may require separating her from an offending party, ingesting some quantity of blood, extinguishing a fire, or leaving a location. In all cases, the reaction should be overt. A Storyteller may rule that a character attempting to ride the wave fails if she does not sufficiently react to a frenzy-inducing stimulus, instead requiring the player to make a test to resist frenzy.

Riding the Wave in Different Situations

- **Rage Frenzy:** A character on the verge of rage frenzy is at the limits of her patience. She has been injured, and the Beast demands vengeance. She must physically attack either the source of her frenzy or a nearby enemy of her choice. Alternatively, while riding the wave, she may spend her next simple action making a show of force, possibly breaking a nearby object or acting in a provocative manner. For example, the character may yell an angry retort. (Please keep player safety and comfort in mind at all times when using this option; feel free to narrate or pantomime your actions as appropriate.)

- **Hunger Frenzy:** The onset of hunger frenzy can pose a serious threat to the Masquerade. Instead of giving in, a character may ride the wave to assume a distinctly predatory demeanor and seek out the nearest source of mortal blood, attempting to catch it unawares. The vampire continues to do so until she has successfully consumed enough Blood points eliminate the need for a frenzy check.

- **Fear Frenzy:** Fear frenzy is the Beast's attempt to preserve itself in the face of a mortal threat. Rather than flee in uncontrollable terror, a character riding the wave may shriek, yell, or recoil away from the offending source. Such a vampire adopts a protective stance, attempting to place a safe distance between her and the source of her fear, maintaining Gaze and Focus with it until her fear abates.

Example 1

Joe Barclay, a Gangrel, just made it out of a tough scrap involving the local Sheriff, gaining 2 Beast traits and spending all but 2 points of his Blood pool. As he travels to rendezvous with his gang, he passes the scene of a car accident at a highway off-ramp, crowded with paramedics and law enforcement. Amidst the wreckage is the distinctive scent of blood, causing Joe's Beast to rouse. Joe's player realizes that a losing a challenge and entering hunger frenzy would send him straight past the police officers to feed on the carnage, with his clan weakness causing him to look especially bestial as he does so. Instead, he chooses to ride the wave and selects a nearby pedestrian, who he begins to stalk. Joe waits until the pedestrian wanders off and feeds from him, drinking enough blood to bring his Blood pool up above one-third of its maximum. He's late to meet up with his gang, but he's avoided a potential disaster.

Example 2

Leonius Agrippa, a Ventrue Archon, has had a difficult night. Among other difficult tasks, his duties as Archon have included his participation in an execution, causing his Beast to emerge from quiescence. As his Justicar's retinue moves to depart, a furious Anarch standing in the crowd hurls something at the Justicar, which Leonius intercepts using the Assist Defender mass combat tactic. He suffers a point of damage, and his Beast roars in response, prompting him to violence. Leonius's player worries that losing control to the Beast could compromise his ability to perform his duties, and he chooses instead to ride the wave. He immediately roars in outrage, smashes a nearby table, and demands that the offender be seized. His outburst may be considered improper by some, but he has avoided cutting his way through a group of people by keeping his frenzy at bay.

Expanded Rage Frenzy

Vampires are creatures prone to extreme narcissism and pride. However, using the base frenzy rules, it is only possible to enter rage frenzy after taking Physical damage. While this rule allows players to determine for themselves which circumstances would cause their character to grapple with their Beasts, this specification may seem too narrow a circumstance to encapsulate the onslaught of wrath to which some Kindred succumb. Storytellers may choose to add the following additional conditions to the criteria for rage frenzy. It is strongly recommended that the following optional rules be combined with the rules for riding the wave, listed above, to mitigate social settings from frequently degenerating into mass combat.

Seduction of the Beast: Tips and Tricks for Narrating Beast Traits

Vampire: The Masquerade is a game of personal horror: an exploration of the dark side of humanity and the depravity that exists in the **World of Darkness**. There are a myriad of ways to explore these themes, ranging from interpersonal relationships, to horrors that mirror that of the real world, to acts of depravity depicted for their shock value alone. A wise Storyteller understands that a healthy game must have a combination of these methods.

While **MET:VTM** thrives off collaborative storytelling, opportunities often arise to provide personal horror for players on an individual level. This practice is often accomplished by using a character's background or emotional attachments against her, but one of the oft-overlooked options is that of the Beast. A vampire's Beast is more than just the devil on her shoulder; it is an intrinsic part of her personality, a bestial urge that everyone possesses to some extent or another. While some Kindred fight against the insidious voice of the Beast, others indulge those feelings, embracing the Beast as an old friend and companion.

Revised Frenzy Triggers

Current Beast Traits	The character must attempt to resist Frenzy if the following conditions are met:
0	Automatically resist all types of frenzy
1	*Humiliation in front of an audience (rage frenzy)* Hit by a single blow that inflicts 4 or more points of damage (rage frenzy) Blood pool reaches 0 (hunger frenzy) Engulfed by a large fire (fear frenzy) Fully exposed to bright sunlight (fear frenzy)
2	*Physical provocation (rage frenzy)* Hit by a single blow that inflicts 3 or more points of damage (rage frenzy) Blood pool is reduced to a third of maximum (hunger frenzy) Damaged by fire or sunlight (fear frenzy)
3	*Harassment or sharp accusations (rage Frenzy)* Hit by a single blow that inflicts 2 or more points of damage (rage frenzy) Blood pool is reduced to half of maximum (hunger frenzy) Three feet or closer to sunlight or a source of fire larger than a torch (fear frenzy)
4	*Biting insults or snipes (rage frenzy)* Takes any damage (rage frenzy) Blood pool is reduced below maximum (hunger frenzy) Sees or smells mortals or their blood (hunger frenzy) Sees sunlight or a source of fire larger than a cigarette lighter (fear frenzy)
5	Any of the above triggers

When a Storyteller presents a player with options, she embodies the Beast. As characters gain more Beast traits through play, that voice should subtly shift until it becomes a relentless, demanding presence. This optional system gives Storytellers the opportunity to create a more personal experience for characters.

For example, as Maria gains more Beast traits through her quest to destroy Benjamin Reed, her Storyteller has the opportunity to bring her Beast to life. As she indulges the creature that compels her to do terrible things, she gives it more power and a very real voice that echoes in her mind. Rather than simply being a feeling in the back of her mind encouraging her to give in, it becomes a constant presence in her psyche. In order to duplicate this feeling, her Storyteller opts to take on the mantle of Maria's Beast. Once she has finished her rampage through the city, Maria is left with 4 Beast traits after succeeding on her degeneration challenge. Here, the Storyteller places temptations in Maria's path—the address of the man she has been hunting. As Maria's player considers her next action, her Storyteller roleplays the voice of the Beast, whispering to her, "You know that killing Reed will stop this project; your people will be safe. All you have to do is kill him and remove him from the playing field."

At this point, Maria's player must decide which option is the best for her character. Does she succumb to the clarion call of the Beast? Or does she resist the temptation to continue down that path? She knows that the more she indulges the desires of the Beast, the more she risks her Humanity, but some risks are worth taking.

The narration of Beast traits may come in many forms, and it might vary from subtle nudges to overt demands. Each Beast is different, and Storytellers are encouraged to utilize a character's background and sheet to help formulate each Beast's individuality. She might even request that players breathe life into the Beast, as though it were a separate personality.

Some options for Storytellers portraying the Beast include:

- Roleplaying a verbal component, such as the voice of the Beast manifesting and urging the character to give in to her baser urges.
- Describing a physical component, such as the character's limbs tingling or her face flushing as she feels a rush of adrenaline that urges her on. She might feel an insatiable hunger for violence or blood: an emotion that leaves her physically pained if she refuses to succumb.
- Evoking a mental component, such as a character finding herself inexplicably drawn to a particular location or person.

Ultimately, the decisions characters make are left to the players. A Storyteller may give her options and show her the doors, but each player must make the conscious decision—on an out-of-character level—to continue a character's descent into darkness.

It's important to remember player safety and comfort during these moments. The road a vampire's Beast encourages can be a dark and terrifying path, and whispered urges might not appeal to all players. However, some players need the encouragement and permission of their Storytellers to explore the darker themes of Humanity and the Beast.

Embracing the Beast: Tips and Tricks to Roleplay Beast Traits

Vampire: The Masquerade is a game that offers players endless choices and opportunities to explore the **World of Darkness**. One of the more compelling themes is the slow, agonizing loss of Humanity as a character finds herself drifting further away from who she once was. Some characters cling to their Humanity with every ounce of their will, desperate to retain a sliver of the soul that once made them human. Others embrace the depravity of the Beast, giving themselves over to the whims of darkness. Even some venerable elders who rarely stray from Elysium find themselves faced with nightly choices that could potentially lend power to the Beast.

As a character gains more Beast traits, the creature begins to take hold inside her. Depraved acts of violence become easier, and the voice of the Beast becomes nearly impossible to ignore. Each increase in Beast traits brings with it a new set of complications and urges. This circumstance offers players an additional facet of roleplay, allowing their characters to change their mannerisms and personalities based

on the number of Beast traits they have accrued throughout the evening.

Players may wish to incorporate suggestions from the following list to enhance their roleplay throughout a game session:

1 Beast Trait

You have allowed your Beast a foothold in your soul, and you can hear the voice starting to echo in your mind. While you might feel slightly guilty about your actions, that voice urges you to ignore the feelings of remorse and embrace what you have done—and what you could still do. There is a slight thrill in indulging your Beast and allowing your monstrous side to run wild; for some vampires, this is the only time they might start to feel alive once more.

2 Beast Traits

The Beast is awake and paying close attention to your actions. You feel an occasional whisper from the creature; at times, you might not recognize what this voice is, but Kindred who have experienced this decline in the past easily identify the voice of corruption. With every choice set before you, it attempts to influence your decision, urging you to take the path of least resistance. At this number of Beast traits, your Beast begins to manifest. At first, it makes you appear both monstrous and utterly human—your cheeks flush and your dead heart begins to race as adrenaline floods your system. You feel a thrill of exhilaration at indulging your Beast, something you rarely experience.

3 Beast Traits

As you near the loss of Humanity, the Beast is fully functional in your soul. The whispers have turned into a fully understood voice that speaks to you. At every turn, you find yourself faced with suggestions that encourage you to indulge, even as your Humanity begs you to stay your hand. The physical manifestation of the Beast continues, and when you resist its call, you find your body demanding another fix, another rush of emotions. Others you encounter can see that something is affecting you—humans often suspect you are inebriated and dangerous, while vampires can clearly see the Beast beginning to manifest in your appearance.

4 Beast Traits

The Beast is fully entrenched in your soul: a constant voice that echoes in your mind. At this level of Beast traits, your soul has become so corrupted that you have difficulty determining right from wrong or caring about the consequences of your actions. The voice of your Beast is a constant presence, urging you to further indulge its whims.

At this number of Beast traits, you are on the verge of losing another piece of your Humanity—a fact that visibly manifests in your appearance. Your skin becomes pale and waxy, regardless of your level of permanent Humanity, and your eyes take on a reddish tint. Humans who encounter you in this state go out of their way to avoid you, if at all possible. Other vampires sense your Beast struggling to break free, and they might attempt to subdue you or prevent you from falling further. Only the most depraved acts bring you that rush of joy you experienced at lower levels of degeneration, and you often find yourself desperately seeking out more opportunities to feed the Beast. You know that you are on the verge of losing the battle to retain Humanity, but with the joy of embracing your Beast flooding your system, it's hard to worry about what the future might bring.

Quests

"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

— Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces

Vampiric experience is often defined by how well one maneuvers social occasions like Esbats or Elysium gatherings. However, while highly visible, these meetings barely scratch the surface of a vampire's (un) life. Vampire legends are rife with tales of legendary machination, in which Kindred bring innumerable small manipulations together to weave webs that

capture their foes and launch the vampire to new heights of personal power. The struggles of Kindred take many shapes, from simple journeys home through treacherous territory, to epic treks deep into the heart of enemy domains. *Quests* bring a vampire into contact with everyday hazards and, in rare moments, cross them with terrible dangers never before imagined. Each quest represents the personal struggle to test oneself against the universe and prove to be its superior.

The concept of a personal quest is often challenging to properly implement in a live-action roleplaying (LARP) environment, due to time constraints and limited Storyteller resources. A single Storyteller sitting at a kitchen table can weave tales of personal quests for a small group of players without too much difficulty. However, a moderate-size live-action troupe can strain Storytellers to their limits, potentially causing some players to be left out or overlooked. Storytellers with a large player population can find themselves in stressful situations where different groups of players seek information, glory, or pursuit of personal plot, causing the Storyteller to step away from the main stage of the game.

The focus of live-action games is necessarily social; players mix and mingle with each other much more than they interact with Storyteller-run scenarios. **Vampire: The Masquerade** leans towards personal interactions and socialization mixed with rapid-fire action. When players are not socializing, it can be difficult for a Storyteller to devote enough time to adjudicate such activities for every player. Few players want to simply be part of someone else's adventure—they crave their own quests and excitement. The best LARPs utilize the "economy of cool" to provide each player with a moment in the spotlight. Players need to work together and against each other to achieve their goals.

This system provides an abstract method to help Storytellers supply enough adventure even with limited Storytelling resources. It leverages players' own imaginations, bounded by Storyteller-set guideposts, to create personalized, dynamic adventures. The Storyteller can set particular requirements for each quest that help multiple characters experience their own times in the spotlight. When a Storyteller does not wish to run a quest as a normal scenario, she can turn to these rules to produce fast results, relying on the players to manage many of the details. If a quest involves multiple scenarios, the Storyteller can choose to use these rules for some (or all) of the scenarios and run the rest long-form, using normal rules.

Anatomy of a Quest

A *quest* centers on a challenge: a particular goal the players want to achieve and the parameters the Storyteller sets for accomplishing it. In addition to a well-formed goal, each quest generated with the quest system includes a category and difficulty rating, as well as a particular list of quest requirements the players must meet before embarking upon the quest.

Quest Categories

The quest generation system has three quest categories:

- A *Simple Quest* is a short-term adventure. It can be completed within a single game session and is designed to have a low-level impact; the aftermath rarely penalizes characters beyond the current session. Simple Quests have easy-to-achieve outcomes, such as successfully traveling across a dangerous city.
- A *Complex Quest* challenges your players over the course of multiple game sessions. A new component of the scenario is played each session, until the quest is completed or failed. Complex Quests typically produce concrete changes to one or more character sheets. For example, Storytellers may employ them as prerequisites to acquiring a rare Lore skill or buying off a flaw.
- An *Epic Quest* carries much more risk than a Complex Quest. It presents significantly greater dangers, and its scenarios can take several months to complete. Epic Quests represent truly epic adventures; Storytellers should reserve these quests to address important story elements of the chronicle.

Quest Difficulty Ratings

Each quest has a *difficulty rating*, ranging from 1 to 5. The difficulty rating provides important parameters for the quest, depending on the quest's category:

- For Simple Quests, each point of difficulty rating requires the characters to achieve a particular precondition for succeeding in the quest, per the quest requirements section, below. A Simple Quest never requires more than a single scenario to complete. Players may keep attempting to pass the scenario until they finish, or quit.
- For Complex Quests, the Storyteller assigns two quest requirements for each point of the quest's difficulty rating. Completing the quest also requires a number of successful scenarios equal to the points of difficulty rating. Storytellers should provide two scenarios each month or one at each session, whichever is longer, meaning that a Complex Quest can take multiple weeks to accomplish.
- For Epic Quests, three quest requirements apply for each point of the difficulty rating. Completing the quest also necessitates the players' success in two scenarios per point of the difficulty rating, two scenarios each month or one at each session, whichever is longer. Some Epic Quests take almost half a year to complete.

Quest Requirements

Quest requirements are like pieces of a puzzle the characters must assemble before the quest can begin. The more complicated the quest, the more numerous and byzantine these prerequisites are. For more details, see **Quest Requirements**, page 112.

Generating and Running a Quest

Players usually initiate quests based on their characters' goals. Often, the Storyteller generates these goals; problematic story events tend to generate quests designed to solve those problems as they arise. Some characters undertake quests for purely selfish reasons, such as to acquire fame or fortune. Whether commenced by Storyteller design or by player initiative, the following steps will guide you through the process of building and running a quest.

The quest worksheet at the end of this section can help a Storyteller keep track of the quest's parameters and outcomes.

Step One: Build Quest Anatomy

Task One: Define the Quest Objective

The goal of the quest should be specific and achievable as a narrative, like *journey across the city to visit a contact*, *patrol the grounds around Elysium for threats*, or *rescue an ally lost in enemy territory*. The Storyteller should collaborate with the involved players to ensure that their goals are reasonable and measurable. A Storyteller may elect to deny a quest or its proposed object if it conflicts with the needs of her game.

Storytellers Prerogative: The Quest Generation System

This system provides a toolkit for Storytellers to help with the management of a live-action chronicle; it is not intended to serve as a straitjacket, forcing every quest into a particular shape. The Storyteller may elect to personally run any scene she wishes, rather than use the quest generation system. Alternatively, she may elect to alter the difficulty rating of a given quest based considerations such as story concerns, environmental factors, or to challenge her players. Likewise, she may decide to change the potential consequences based on plot factors. The important thing to remember is that this system provides for collaboration and interaction, rather than a few simple equations.

Task Two: Determine Quest Category

After contemplating the characters' goal, the Storyteller must determine the quest's category, as one of the following options outlined in **Quest Categories**, above: Simple, Complex, or Epic.

Task Three: Determine the Difficulty Rating

Each quest has a difficulty rating from 1 to 5. Select a difficultly rating for the quest. See **Quest Difficulty Ratings**, above, for more information on difficulty ratings.

Task Four: Assign Quest Requirements

The Storyteller assigns a number of quest requirements the characters must achieve before they can begin the quest. For more information, see **Quest Requirements**, page 112.

Step Two: Form the Quest Party

Task One: Determine Membership

Typical questing parties range in size from one to several members. Each quest has a *quest leader*. If a quest leader wishes to bring additional participants along, she is expected to keep the party on track and working cohesively. No more than two additional members can join a quest for every dot the quest leader possesses of the Leadership skill. A character does not qualify to go on a Complex or Epic Quest if she is already participating in a different Complex or Epic quest that has yet to be resolved.

Task Two: Check Requirements

Before the quest begins (and before running each scenario), the Storyteller must confirm that the players have met the quest requirements. In lieu of directly participating, characters can also assist the quest as *patrons*, presented under Quest Requirements, below.

Step Three: Run the Scenario

Task One: Determine Success or Failure

To determine the random encounters and hardships that the questing party might face, each participant in the quest must engage in a test of rock, paper, scissors. This test is not a challenge in the normal sense; no test pool is involved, only the luck of the draw. The outcome cannot be retested with Willpower, but it can be retested with the Lucky merit.

Determine the outcome of the scenario as follows:

- **Win:** If a quest member wins the challenge, she succeeds and suffers no consequences.
- **Tie:** If a quest member ties the challenge, she succeeds, but must select one consequence from the appropriate quest category, from the list below.
- **Loss:** If a quest member loses the challenge, she fails and must also select one consequence from the appropriate quest category, from the list below.

After everyone has tested, the Storyteller totals the number of successes the group achieved. If the group has a number of successes greater or equal to half of the total number of group members, they pass the scenario. If the total number of successes is less than half of the number of group members, the group has failed and must repeat the scenario to proceed.

Task Two: Apply Consequences

Every member of the party who suffered a consequence receives it immediately, including the quest leader. If previous consequences have been suffered during this scenario, the same type of consequence cannot be selected again until all listed consequences have been selected. Consequences cannot be repaired, regained, recovered, or otherwise mitigated until the scenario is completed or the character suffering said consequences drops out of the quest. If, after all consequences are applied, the group has succeeded in the final scenario, proceed to Step Four.

Task Three: Surrender, Proceed, or Try Again

Any participating member of the quest may elect to drop out after receiving consequences, before the group tests again. If the quest requires multiple scenarios, a surrendering character cannot later return to be a part of the quest in subsequent scenarios. If the quest leader drops out, the quest fails. If, after someone leaves, the remaining group still meets the quest requirements, the quest group may attempt to test again, trying to win the scenario by returning to the *Determine Success or Failure* step, above. If the questing party runs out of Willpower or Blood, they fail the scenario.

Step Four: Tell the Tale

Task One: Player Agency

Whether the quest succeeds or fails, once it concludes, the players should collaborate to generate a story based on all of the quest factors, particularly the quest requirements and consequences. (The quest worksheet can be invaluable here, particularly if the quest stretched across many months.) This collaboration allows the players to decide how they as a group approached various problems, such as by stealth, overwhelming force, etc., and determine how they suffered their losses.

Task Two: Storyteller Review

Once the players decide on a cohesive narrative, the Storyteller should review it, make changes or suggestions if appropriate, and then sanction the story as official.

Bi-monthly Scenarios

A Complex or Epic Quest might require multiple scenarios generated by the Storyteller and several sessions to complete. The quest generation system should not be used to penalize players or keep them from actively attending game sessions, but instead should simulate the arduous nature of such a quest. A vampire on a quest can return home between scenarios as a respite between battles to heal and rest for the next stage of their personal quest. It is expected that a vampire on a quest shall take care to see to her responsibilities, especially those that come with status or position.

A vampire can only participate in one Complex or Epic Quest at a time. Her questing party must successfully complete every monthly scenario as it arises until the quest concludes. Should the questing party fail or abandon a single monthly scenario, then it must restart the quest from the beginning. If a member of the questing party abandons the quest, even for a single monthly scenario, she is no longer eligible to complete the quest. Should a quest member be absent for one of the scenarios but wishes to continue, she may designate someone else to test and choose a consequence on her behalf.

Participants on a quest can heal damage, recover spent Blood and Willpower used during games, and attend game sessions between the monthly scenarios. Resources expended during Quests are still expended when the participant attends her next game session; these expenditures are cumulative, if she misses multiple games. However, there is an associated cost for accepting such a challenge:

- **Nothing's Simple:** If the quest is Complex or Epic, each participant must spend a downtime action before participating in each of the quest's scenarios; characters without an available downtime action must drop out.
- **The Burden of Heroism:** If the Quests Category is Epic, each participant must also spend one point of Willpower at the Quest's onset: this point cannot be recovered until the character drops out or the quest is concluded.

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Consequences

The following charts provide specific consequence lists for each category of quest—Simple, Complex, and Epic—as well as a list of sample quest ideas listed by difficulty rating.

Difficulty Rating	Number of Scenarios	Quest Requirements	Sample Challenges
1	1	1	• Patrolling a large section of the city • Researching information about a clan common to your setting • Hunting during a peak travel time for mortals
2	1	2	• Traveling across the city undetected • Retrieving a mundane, but difficult-to-find item • Gather common blood magic ritual components
3	1	3	• Traveling across the state undetected • Repairing a minor breach of the Masquerade • Researching the lineage and general history of a vampire that belongs to a common clan of that setting.
4	1	4	• Traveling to unsecured areas of the country undetected • Researching the supernatural history of a building or location, such as a local Elysium or place of interest • Researching the boons owed and owned by a neonate vampire
5	1	5	• Traveling through hostile territory (enemy vampires, werewolves, other creatures of darkness) • Acquiring a rare and/or illegal item • Hunting in a de-populated area or searching for a specific type of human blood

Consequences for Simple Quests

Losses taken as a result of a consequence (including Willpower and Blood) cannot be regained or recovered until the scenario is completed or the questing party concedes failure.

- Gaining 2 Beast traits
- Losing 3 points of Blood
- Gaining a temporary derangement for the next week
- Losing 15 minutes of time
- Temporarily expending 3 dots of the following backgrounds: Allies, Contacts, Herd, Influence, or Resources. (This consequence can only be chosen if the character has 3 dots to expend among all these backgrounds.)
- Losing access to a single piece of equipment through damage, such as a laptop that needs to be cleaned or a firearm that needs to be unclogged, or a blade with a loose hilt that needs to be repaired. The damaged item cannot be used until the quest is over, and it is repaired. (This consequence can only be chosen if the character has a piece of equipment to lose in this way.)

Difficulty Rating	Number of Scenarios	Quest Requirements	Sample Challenges
1	1	2	• Buying off a 1-point flaw • Removing a nest of hunters or ghouls • Researching the boons owed and owned by an ancilla vampire
2	2	4	• Buying off a 2-point flaw • Finding someone or something in territory held by another sect • Researching the lineage and general history of a vampire that belongs to an uncommon clan of that setting
3	3	6	• Researching a new or unusual occult ritual • Buying off a 3-point flaw • Researching the true supernatural history of a relatively recent historical event, such as the American Revolution or the Silicon Valley Tech boom
4	4	8	• Buying off 4-point flaw • Earning a minor boon from a major sect leader, such as an archon, a member of the Black Hand, or myrmidon • Repairing an extreme breech of the Masquerade
5	5	10	• Learning blood magic outside of your sect or clan (You must still purchase any required merits.) • Escaping the dragnet of a local hunt, such as a Blood Hunt or a Wild Hunt • Researching the lineage and general history of a vampire that belongs to a rare clan of that setting

Consequences for Complex Quests

Losses taken as a result of a consequence (including Willpower and Blood) cannot be regained or recovered until the scenario is completed or the questing party concedes failure.

- Entering the next game session with 3 Beast traits
- Losing 1 point of Humanity
- Gaining the flaw Notoriety for 60 days
- Expending 3 points of Blood and 3 points of Willpower
- Gaining the flaw Trouble Magnet for 60 days

Difficulty Rating	Number of Scenarios	Quest Requirements	Epic Challenge
1	2	3	• Exploring the lost haven of a methuselah • Earning a minor boon from a global sect leader, such as a Justicar or the Imperator • Researching the boons owed and owned by an elder vampire
2	4	6	• Tracking down a member of the Red List • Buying off a 5-point flaw • Hunting Black Spiral Dancers, or other grave threats
3	6	9	• Clearing out the territory of an enemy sect • Escaping a sect-wide hunt • Atoning for a Blood Hunt or Boonbreaker moniker
4	8	12	• Fighting or escaping a methuselah • Evading the dragnet of an entire sect seeking you out, such as from being placed on the Red List • Researching the boons owed and owed to a methuselah vampire
5	10	15	• Earning a minor boon from a member of the Inner Circle or the Regent • Recovering a lost item of legendary power and/or great significance • Unearthing deeply guarded supernatural secrets of past events, such as what really happened at Carthage or the true origin of the Baali

Consequences for Epic Quests

Losses taken as a result of a consequence (including Willpower and Blood) cannot be regained or recovered until the scenario is completed or the questing party concedes failure.

- Gaining a derangement for the next 60 days
- Gaining the Infamous Brood flaw for 60 days
- Losing 2 points of Humanity
- Gaining the Hunted flaw for 60 days
- Gaining the Permanent Wound flaw for 60 days
- Losing half of your character's remaining Blood and Willpower points

Quest Requirements

Quests are not lightly undertaken, and require preparation and support from other Kindred. Before characters embark on a quest, the Storyteller develops a number of requirements that provide a story element for it. The Storyteller should customize the example quest requirements below to fit the theme of each individual quest.

The quest's number of requirements is derived from its category and difficulty rating, as described in the Anatomy of a Quest section, above. Quest participants must either fulfill the requirements personally or the questing group must seek out additional characters to join the quest or to provide *patronage*.

Any third party who is able to meet the requirements may elect to help a questing party through patronage, instead of directly joining the quest. To do so, they must expend some measure of their own resources. Because of this requirement, patronage rarely comes without a price.

Providing patronage requires expending one of the following:

- Submitting a downtime action, denoting time and effort donated
- Expending a Status trait, representing special sanctioning or favors
- Spending 3 points of Blood, representing the use of disciplines on behalf of the quest
- Using 3 levels of the appropriate background or backgrounds
- Spending 1 point of Willpower
- Loaning an item that's specifically germane to the quest requirement

Patronage can only satisfy a quest requirement if it can be justified to the Storyteller. For example, a patron may meet a clan aspect requirement by expending a downtime action to craft a token of representation for the quest participants to present along their way, or the same requirement could be met by simply expending an Favored status trait, representing spreading the word that this quest has the patron's approval.

Quest Requirement Categories

A Storyteller generating a quest must select quest requirements from one of the following five categories:

Aspect

The questing party must seek out a member of a specific clan, bloodline, or sect. The following suggestions provide examples of how to weave this type of requirement into the quest's story:

- When questing to locate arcane lore, you must consult with a **Tremere** in order to determine the correct placement of protective runes.
- Your quest will take you through territory claimed by the **Anarchs**, so you will need the support of that sect before you may venture forth.
- The **Giovanni** are master necromancers; you should find one to help guide you through the Shadowlands.

Skills

The quest members must seek the assistance of someone who possesses a specific specialization in a skill, or at least 3 dots of the required skill in order to proceed. The following suggestions provide examples of how to weave this type of requirement into the quest's story:

- You can only eat what you bring with you; you will need someone skilled in **Medicine** to ensure you bring the right blood supplies in the right quantities.
- When investigating the ghosts of the dead, someone with **Occult** expertise will provide valuable assistance.
- To convince your source to give you the information you need, someone skilled in **Empathy** would be an asset.
- The hidden route will be difficult to find; it would be wise to have someone well-practiced in **Awareness**.

Backgrounds

The questing characters need the benefit of specific backgrounds in order to succeed. The following suggestions provide examples of how to weave this type of requirement into the quest's story:

- The object you seek is very public and heavily guarded. You will need access to **Elite influence** to cover any possible breaches of the Masquerade.
- In order to find the man you seek, you will need information. Questioning **Contacts** could lead you to a vital clue.
- Your quest could have significant consequences for your clan; you need someone with a **Generation** of Pretender elder or greater to sanction it.
- You will be bringing many supplies with you; you should have your **Retainers** gather and organize them to ensure nothing gets lost in the shuffle.
- A little money always helps. Gather enough **Resources** to assist you.

Merits

The questing party will need the assistance of someone with a particular quirk or supernatural quality to complete its task. The following suggestions provide examples of how to weave this type of requirement into the quest's story:

- You must decipher ancient texts; you would be wise to speak to a **Loremaster**.
- You never know who you might run into while questing. Having someone with a strong **Reputation** might open doors that would otherwise be closed.
- When travelling deep into new places, having a **Natural Linguist** will be a boon to your quest.

Disciplines

The questing party requires certain supernatural powers for its task. The following suggestions provide examples of how to weave this type of requirement into the quest's story:

- Combat can lead to suffering; having **Endurance** will help power through the pain.
- You seek to uncover secrets from the past. **Spirit's Touch** will give you valuable insight for your quest.
- Your quest will lead you to wild places far from traditional structures. **Earth Meld** will allow you to sleep through the day safely.

Quest Example

Tim plays a character who is a Nosferatu named Goring; Goring is very interested in the acquisition of prestation and has worked out a deal with his Prince to clear out a hunter cell in exchange for a minor boon for each member of his coterie. Talking to Pat, Clint, Drew, and Andy, who play his coterie-mates, they agree that this exchange is worthwhile for everyone, so they go to their Storyteller, Diamond, to talk about how to proceed.

Diamond listens to the coterie's pitch about completing their objective. He agrees that it fits with the themes of his chronicle, but he has some concerns about Storyteller resources. The chronicle has more than 30 players, and one of his narrators is absent. The main plot of the game session involves a good deal of politics surrounding an upcoming meeting of the Primogen Council, and Diamond needs to be present to ensure everything proceeds smoothly and to adjudicate any challenges that might be initiated. Diamond decides that Tim's idea would make an excellent scenario for the quest generation system.

Diamond asks Tim to formally define the quest's objective: to travel to the last-known camp the hunters had used and to neutralize any hunters still there. Next, Diamond quantifies the quest's category and difficulty rating. He wants to send the coterie on an adventure that will be fun for them and that will create additional story for the current session, so Diamond sets the quest to the Simple level and gives it a difficulty rating of 5, which means it will require a single scenario to complete. He consults the chart and sees that this

quest will need 5 requirements met before it can begin, so he considers what elements would help outline the story they want to tell with this quest.

Diamond decides to assign the following quest requirements based on the story of the quest:

1. *A Brujah accidently stumbled into the hunter's camp. Tim and his coterie will need to speak with the Brujah Primogen to get its location.*

2. *Having discovered the location, they'll need someone with the Survival skill to provide details on how to approach this particular camp, as it is at the top of a cliff in a nearby wildlife refuge.*

3. *To successfully approach the camp and spring their assault, Tim needs someone with Athletics to scale the cliff and prevent any escape in that direction.*

4. *To subdue all of the hunters remaining in the camp, Tim and his coterie will need someone with Might.*

5. *A member of Tim's coterie will need Resilience to absorb the attacks made by the hunters.*

Once Diamond has completed the outline, he hands the quest proposal over to the group for review and warns them of the risks involved. The players are excited and accept the quest. This objective is Tim's character Goring's goal, so the coterie selects him as the quest leader. Tim checks his Leadership skill and sees that he has 5 dots, which means his party cannot exceed 10 people. However, since the quest is focused on the coterie's goals, with Pat, Clint, Drew, and Andy bringing the total number of participants to only 5 people, they decide to see if they can meet the requirements themselves before they engage anyone else. Sitting down, they check their list of requirements.

Andy's playing a Gangrel and has both Athletics to scale the cliff and Resilience that will let him mitigate the attacks the group takes. Drew's Brujah is well-liked by his Primogen, so he offers to get the location for the group. Pat, Clint, Andy, Drew, and Tim all have Might, so they're well-prepared to subdue their targets. Pat has the Survival skill needed to lead his coterie through the wildlife refuge without getting them lost.

The players return to the Storyteller and inform him that they have met the quest requirements. Verifying this, Diamond lets the group know their quest can begin. He runs tests with the coterie and while Clint does fail his test, the others all succeed, which means they have succeeded at the scenario and in turn have completed their quest. Knowing that Clint's failed test means consequences apply, the party decides that they will all gain 2 Beast traits and work that into their narrative about taking the fight to the hunters that night.

Tim and his coterie return to the game with an edge about them, but they also have earned prestation from the Prince, which could lead to additional intrigue in the future.



Quest Generation Worksheet

QUEST ANATOMY	
Quest Objective	
Quest Category (Check One)	❑ Simple ❑ Complex ❑ Epic
Difficulty Rating	
Quest Requirements (Check when met)	❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____

QUEST PARTY	
Quest Leader	
Party Members	_____ _____ _____ _____
Number of Required Scenarios (Check when complete)	❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____ ❑ _____

RUNNING THE SCENARIO	
Number of Ties and Losses	
Assigned Consequences	
Cost of Scenario	1 Downtime Action 1 Willpower
Telling the Tale	Players' proposed summary of events: Storyteller adjustments to proposal:

Tracking

Tracking by scent is an ability possessed by Kindred who have Shape of the Beast or Heightened Senses, allowing them to both identify and pursue an individual. Vampires are able to combine the instinctual drives of their Beasts with the rational mental processing skills of their human natures, allowing them to use the best of both worlds. By doing so, they are able to evaluate information and follow scents with an expertise that mortals lack, enabling them to find both prey and people, such as tracking an escaped target or finding dinner for their coterie.

This ability requires a vampire to be in Shape of the Beast's fight or flight form. Alternatively, vampires employing the gift Heightened Senses can track while in any form. The systems below should also be used when a character gains the opportunity to track by scent as a result of a merit or supernatural power.

To track a person by scent, you must first identify the scent. To do so, expend 3 standard actions and tell the Storyteller who you're seeking. You don't need to know the target's name; "the owner of this jacket" or "the one who was sitting in this chair" will suffice. Make a static challenge using a test pool consisting of your Mental attribute + Investigation skill versus your target's Mental attribute + Stealth skill to attempt to identify a unique scent that has passed within 5 steps of your present location. This attempt involves visibly sniffing the ground in the nearby vicinity and attempting to isolate the desired scent. For this challenge, the Storyteller may serve as a stand-in for the defender, who may wish to remain anonymous until discovered. If you succeed, you are able to identify the unique scent. If you have Familiarity with the target, you are able to identify who she is (see **MET: VTM, Familiarity With the Target**, page 114). Furthermore, if your target is in the same room, or within 10 steps if outdoors, you are able to pinpoint her location. If you fail the challenge, you are unable to detect the scent you're seeking, and must wait 10 minutes before attempting again.

If you succeed, but the target is not nearby, you may then track the target. To track a target character, you must make an extended opposed challenge using your Mental attribute + Survival skill versus the target's Mental attribute + Survival skill. If you are in fight or flight form and also employing the Auspex power Heightened Senses, you receive a +3 wild card bonus to this challenge. If you fail the challenge, you lose the trail and must wait 10 minutes before attempting the challenge again, as you try to pick up the scent again. If you succeed, you are able to track the target for an additional distance beyond her originating location. The distance the tracker is able to follow the scent is determined by the Storyteller based on several factors, including how fresh the scent is, efforts taken by the target to conceal her scent, or weather conditions. In a closed room or a sheltered clearing, scents may linger for hours. On a busy street or on a windy day, scents usually dissipate within a few minutes. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether or not a character may attempt to detect a scent.

Tracking only permits you to target characters that have travelled by foot. If your target gets into a car or flies away, the trail ends at the last place she stood. The trail also ends if she hides her scent in water or if the ground along her route is significantly disturbed, such as by a plow or a bulldozer. Targets who can teleport are especially confounding, as their trail ends at the spot from which they teleported. In a case where the target reappeared nearby, the tracker may attempt to once again identify the scent and track her target anew. Tracking cannot defeat individuals using the Streetwise skill to evade pursuit, as they can make use of the environment to confound their scents, nor can Tracking be used to pinpoint an individual who is hidden using Obfuscate or a similar power.

Pursuit

Invariably, a situation will arise where tracking characters want to catch up with the object of their search. In cases where the target is not actively evading her tracker, the Storyteller can rule that the target is close enough and the scent is strong enough to lead the tracker to her, allowing the tracker to find the target. Chasing down a target who is actively evading pursuit, however, is much more difficult. In situations where the scent only persists for a few minutes, the target can evade pursuit if she has a few minutes' head start. Therefore, in cases where the target has a substantial lead and is moving with all possible haste, the tracker can follow the trail as far as she's able, but catching up with the target isn't possible. In these cases, tracking may still be useful to determine where the target has been.

However, if the scent persists, and the tracker has managed to close within visual range of the target, she may attempt an opposed challenge to catch up to her target, using a test pool consisting of her Physical attribute + Athletics skill versus the target's Physical attribute + Athletics skill. If the tracker has anyone following her on foot, they must also test against the target to continue to accompany the tracker. If the tracker succeeds, she closes the distance, and is able to initiate combat against the target. Combat rounds begin with the two participants approximately five steps apart. If the tracker fails, the target is able to fair escape, and the pursuit ends. She manages to evade the tracker, and if she is smart, she'll find a way of hiding her trail. Meanwhile, the tracker loses sight of the target and needs to begin tracking anew, if she wishes to continue attempting to find her target.

Example of Tracking

Patrick the Gangrel is looking for his friend, Kim the Brujah. He saw her talking to the Harpy earlier in the night, so Patrick approaches the area he last saw his friend. He tells the Storyteller he's using Shape of the Beast to shift into fight form and trying to find Kim. He spends three standard actions sniffing around for her and makes a static test at a difficulty equal to Kim's Mental attribute + Stealth skill. Patrick succeeds, and the Storyteller tells him he is able to pick out Kim's scent. Patrick then initiates an opposed challenge to find Kim. He wins. The Storyteller leads him away from the gathering, along the route Kim took. Eventually, the Storyteller tells Patrick that the trail ends mysteriously at the mouth of a dark alley. Patrick is no longer able to track Kim, but asks the Storyteller if anything in the area looks out of place or could offer clues. The Storyteller has Patrick make a test using his Mental attribute + his Investigation skill, but Patrick tells the Storyteller that he is spending 1 point of Blood to activate Heightened Senses. With Patrick having the ability to automatically notice any mundanely hidden objects within line of sight, the Storyteller tells him that he notices several splashes of drying blood on the alley walls and scraps of clothing that appear to have been left after a scuffle. Suspecting that his friend Kim has been kidnapped, Patrick uses Shape of the Beast to shift to flight form and speeds back to the gathering to alert his coterie.

Tracking and Supernatural Powers

Tracking does not automatically defeat Unseen Presence or other supernatural means of hiding, but it does allow you to know the number of creatures in a given area and their general locations, even if they are supernaturally hidden.

In the case of supernatural powers that conceal the user's identity, such as Mask of a Thousand Faces, tracking does not reveal the user's identity.

If you attempt to use tracking while in the presence of someone with an identity-altering power active, the tracker identifies a scent that's consistent with the assumed identity. If the tracker has somehow pierced the disguise, such as by using Heightened Senses or a similar power, she correctly identifies any lingering scents. If a tracker pursues someone who has an identity-altering power active, the trail appears to grow cold near the target as the tracker approaches, possibly picking up farther on, if her target has cleverly doubled back.

Pursuit and Fair Escape

A character who has managed a fair escape should generally be considered exempt from pursuit in this manner, in most cases. Escaping characters are expected to be overly cautious when evading their pursuers, likely getting into a vehicle or crossing through public areas where the number of scents is confounding. Only in special circumstances should a Storyteller allow a tracker to attempt pursuit of someone who has successfully declared fair escape.

Updated Stock NPC Rules

Epic Stock NPC Rules

(This optional system supplements rules found in MET: VTM, page 489.)

Storytellers running an epic chronicle in which player-characters have a high level of XP may wish to utilize these optional Epic Chronicle Stock NPC rules. Using this system, Stock NPCs may have a rating between 1 and 10; Stock NPCs rated 6-10 provide an increased level of challenge.

For example, a Stock NPC with a rating of 10 uses a test pool of 20 for most opposed challenges.

NPC Specializations

(This specialization supplements the specializations listed in **MET: VTM,** page 489.)

Elder Specialization

NPC supernatural creatures may select the elder specialization, increasing their NPC rating by an additional 3 to 5 levels and allowing the Discipline specialization to give access to elder powers. For example, a vampire Stock NPC with a rating of 5 that specializes in elder and also has a discipline specialization in Potence not only increases its rating by an additional 3 to 5 levels, reflecting an additional level of challenge or danger, but it also gains access to the Potence elder powers Force and Flick.

Giant Monsters

When creating NPCs for players to face, it is important to ensure there is variety in the creatures and monsters they find themselves up against. In addition to a wide array of creatures found in **MET: VTM**, Storytellers may choose to utilize the *Giant Monster* rules. The World of Darkness is filled with wild and terrifying creatures, some of which could make a Tzimisce in Horrid Form look puny. The increased mass of these creatures often affects a combat and can add an exciting new element to a game.

Human or Horrid Form-sized NPCs use the same mass combat rules as player-characters and can only be targeted up to twice per round by Physical attacks. However, extremely large antagonists can be subjected to more Physical attacks each round. When the Storyteller creates a giant monster, she should determine how many Physical attacks the creature can receive, based on its size. Storytellers are encouraged to adjust the number of attackers who can target giant monsters based on monster's description and the needs of the scene.

Recommended Attack Limits

Monster Category	Monster Size	Challengers per Round
Alpha	A small car	May be subjected to 3 Physical attacks per round
Beta	A large car or truck	May be subjected to 5 Physical attacks per round
Delta	A semi-trailer or a house	May be subjected to 10 Physical attacks per round
Omega	A large building, such as a skyscraper	May be subjected to any number of Physical attacks per round

Animal Retainers

Some vampires choose to seclude themselves away from humanity, from elder Gangrel who make the forests their personal domains to Nosferatu in the underground sewer complexes they call home. For these Kindred, the thought of maintaining a ghoul is exhausting. The idea of a loyal assistant is appealing, but having to deal with a mortal's blood-bond-enforced infatuation is often a deal-breaker. The idea of creating animal Retainer grew from these cases.

Though these vampires trade away their Retainer's ability to serve as a middleman to the mortal world, they gain the steadfast service of a companion who can do things no human could.

Each time you purchase a Retainer, you can choose for that Retainer to be either an animal or a standard mortal. Animal Retainers are inherently limited in what actions they can take on your behalf due to their inability to reliably serve when interacting with mortals, but they are no less trustworthy and loyal to you. When you choose to take on an animal Retainer, use the rules for Stock NPCs to build it. Additionally, you may select a number of benefits for that Retainer from the list below, up to the number of dots in the Retainer background that you have purchased.

1-point Qualities

- **Brawny**: Your Retainer can carry weight equal to its body weight, or pull with force equal to its body weight times its stock NPC rating.
- **Ferocious:** Once per hour, your Retainer may use a feral combat maneuver without expending Willpower.
- **Fleet**: If your Retainer expends both its simple and standard actions to move, it can move nine steps in a round instead of the standard six steps.
- **Huge**: Your Retainer is a large, lumbering example of its type, gaining 2 additional Healthy wound levels.
- **Imposing:** Both animals and humans alike find your Retainer especially intimidating. Stock NPCs with a rating lower than this Retainer cannot attack or interfere with it unless supernaturally compelled to do so
- **Stealthy**: Due to size, natural camouflage, or ingrained hunting practices, your Retainer is naturally adept at hiding. It gains a +3 bonus to Stealth skill-based test pools.

2-point Qualities

- **Aquatic Combatant**: Your Retainer can swim at its normal movement speed. While submerged, your Retainer receives a +2 wild card bonus to Brawl skill-based attack test pools.
- **Burrowing**: Your Retainer can move underground at normal speeds. It cannot pass through materials that aren't earth, such as rock, water, concrete, or a thick tangle of roots.
- **Climbing**: Your Retainer can stick to solid surfaces, climbing up walls or even walking upside-down on a ceiling.
- **Grappler:** Whether it has the jaws of an alligator or a python's ability to crush, your animal is capable of holding onto things and not letting go. It can use your choice of either the Grapple

Animal Retainer Benefits

Note the Animal Retainer benefits listed above represent *exceptional* animal characteristics. At the Storyteller's discretion, your Retainer can possibly do a variety of things without possessing these benefits, and they can have additional limitations placed on them as well.

For example, a ghouled sea turtle can swim and a ghouled horse can carry a rider. A ghouled shark still needs water to breathe and isn't very effective on land. A bear Retainer without the Imposing quality is still terrifying.

These characteristics represent exceptional characteristics or additional tricks that provide tangible bonuses. If you want your hellhound to be a rescue swimmer or have the ability to tunnel, you can take benefits to reflect those abilities. In some cases, the Storyteller can opt to deny some qualities if they are implausible. In addition, she can assign your Retainer's benefits for you if they are truly inherent to a particular creature. For example, a black mamba certainly should be assigned Venomous, and an elephant Retainer should have Hardened.

or Disarm combat maneuvers once per hour without the need to spend Willpower to do so.

- **Hardened**: Whether by a chitinous carapace, hardened scales, or a thick hide, your Retainer gains a +3 bonus to its defensive test pools when resisting Brawl or Melee attacks. In addition, it applies a +1 bonus to its defensive test pools when resisting Ranged attacks.

- **Natural Weapons:** Your Retainer features over-developed tusks, claws, or teeth that seem to maximize its ability to inflict pain. Whenever your Retainer scores an exceptional success on a Brawl skill-based attack, it inflicts an additional point of damage.

3-point Qualities

- **Ambush Predator:** Your Retainer gains a +2 wild card bonus to Physical test pools if it attacks an opponent who was unaware of its presence.

- **Combat Mount:** Your Retainer is capable of serving as a functional mount in combat, and it can initiate attacks on rounds when it has actions. Without this ability, your Retainer is not excluded from carrying you, but it cannot both carry you and initiate attacks. To select this quality, your Retainer must be of sufficient size to serve as a mount, at the Storyteller's discretion.

- **Elusive:** Your animal is especially cunning and difficult to find. It gains a +3 wild card bonus to all Dodge-based defensive test pools.

- **Intelligent**: Your Retainer has a deeper understanding of your requests than a normal example of its type could. You can provide your Retainer with complex if/then tasks to accomplish, and it will do its best to complete them.

- **Species Alpha:** Your Retainer attracts two additional creatures of the same type, so long as it is residing in a place within one mile of them. These additional creatures have a Stock NPC rating equal to or one fewer than your Retainer, and you can buy them as additional Retainers if you choose. They do not follow your direct orders without supernatural compulsion, but they treat your Retainer as their leader and follow its lead. If one or more of these animals is lost or killed (or purchased as a Retainer), new ones arrive at a rate equal to one per month. Unnatural creatures who gain animal qualities (such as Vozhd) cannot take this quality.



Croaker, the Observant Cat
Animal Ghoul

Stock NPC Rating: 5

Animal Qualities: Intelligent, Stealthy, Fleet

Specialties: Obfuscate, Dodge, Investigation, Stealth, Survival

Blood: OOOOO

Effective Health: OOOOO

Aloof and seemingly unimpressed with the world around him, Croaker is the favored Retainer of Gangrel elder Thorfinn Haalfinson. In stark contrast to his domitor, Croaker seems to naturally avoid the notice of others, which allows him to serve as the unseen eyes and ears of his master.

Winnie, the Combat Mutt
Animal Ghoul

Stock NPC Rating: 5

Animal Qualities: Natural Weapons, Ferocious, Hardened

Specialties: Fortitude, Brawl, Dodge, Intimidation, Survival

Blood: OOOOO

Effective Health: OOOOO

Winnie is an abnormal specimen, obviously warped and twisted by her exposure to the spawning pits maintained by her domitor. Razor sharp canines and powerful corded muscles bulge from her powerful frame in a manner that betrays her unnatural origins.

Makoto, the Aerial Parrot
Animal Ghoul

Stock NPC Rating: 4

Animal Qualities: Elusive, Fleet

Specialties: Auspex, Investigation, Empathy, Performance

Blood: OOOOO

Effective Health: OOOO

Makoto was originally turned into a ghoul by his domitor so that she could hold onto an aspect of her mortal life, but the parrot has since become as much a part of her undeath as he ever was in life. Often seen perched on a shoulder or fluttering between light fixtures, Makoto casts a steely eyed glare that seems to cut through pretense and sets the tone early for any would-be visitors.

Porthos, the
Coasting Narwhal
Animal Ghoul

Stock NPC Rating: 2

Animal Qualities: Aquatic Combatant

Specialties: Potence, Brawl

Blood: OOOOO

Effective Health: OO

Little is known about Porthos outside of the fact that the local court is quick to bring him up whenever his domitor is around. The lack of vampiric investment on the coastline means that few interact with Porthos, though rumors persist that more than one adventurous neonate has returned to her haven sporting more holes than she had when she left.

Stock Locations

"You can design and create and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it takes people to make the dream a reality."

— Walt Disney

A haven is a vampire's most important location, but sometimes Storytellers and players might want to highlight other places. A LARP might take place aboard the Queen Mary, in a Las Vegas casino, or at a Southern plantation. Alternatively, some chronicles work best with sandbox-style play: where Storytellers define the important locations then step back to adjudicate the characters battling over the domain.

The *Stock Location system* is designed to challenge players and provide depth to their interactions with their environments, without getting lost in the weeds of detailed maps, descriptive floor plans, and other tabletop-style elements of gameplay. This sort of extensive detail just isn't needed in a LARP, whether visiting an abandoned warehouse, haunted house, or even a towering skyscraper of glass and steel. When creating Stock Locations, Storytellers can utilize this quick generation system.

Stock Location Attributes

Stock Locations each have their own *attributes*. When creating a Stock Location, record its attributes. Unlike items, the Storyteller retains records of a location, even if the location is controlled by a player-character (though a player should know most of the information about her locations).

Stock Location Rating

Each location has a *Stock Location rating* ranging from 1 to 5, which is used to determine the number of qualities it possesses. This rating indicates the

Stock Locations vs. Havens and Shelters

While the Stock Location rules may at first seem like a substitute for the Haven background, instead, the two are intended to co-exist, preserving the Haven background as a worthwhile purchase. While locations can be obtained without spending XP, such as by trading favors, spending influences, or succeeding at quests, purchasing a Haven with XP still offers a variety of advantages.

Perhaps most importantly, a character cannot permanently lose her dots of the Haven or Shelter backgrounds. Should a background location somehow be destroyed, the player needs only to spend a downtime action to re-establish it with the same benefits. Additionally, Havens cannot be targeted in the same way as Stock Locations can. Havens are immune to financial, bureaucratic, or reputational attacks (see **Undermining Locations**, below). A character who has invested XP in her Haven has also established some degree of secrecy, and Havens cannot be discovered or affected in the same way a Stock Location can. While nothing prevents a character from making a location into a home, until she purchases the Haven background, she does not enjoy the same standards of protection as someone with the background.

Some qualities presented here are available for purchase for one's Haven, including updated versions of qualities from previous rule sets. If a character has that quality for her Haven, she receives the updated benefits described here.

complexity of the facility, as well as its individual benefits. The rating of a location is no indication of its size; small, perfectly hidden locations can have high ratings, while large, empty warehouses can have low ones.

Location Qualities

Each *location quality* confers one of a variety of effects. Some qualities may convey certain benefits to its owner, while others make the location resistant to acts of sabotage or more difficult to infiltrate.

Types of Stock Locations

Standard Locations

Standard locations are run-of-the-mill places that serve a purpose, but are otherwise not entirely noteworthy. Warehouses, most office buildings, stores, and workshops are all considered standard locations. These locations are not widely known to the general public and have replaceable characteristics. However, they are the easiest to acquire and maintain.

Anyone can control a standard location. Supernatural creatures appropriate and discard these places as they see fit, using them for a variety of purposes. Affecting another's standard location or modifying your own requires succeeding at a Simple Quest with a difficulty equal to the location's rating.

A standard location can be assigned a maximum number of qualities equal to its rating.

Prestige Locations

Prestige locations are places considered noteworthy by the public, and they are often local landmarks. These locations have something interesting or grand to them, such as special architecture, a monument, or particular historical or cultural significance. A town's city hall, a notable skyscraper, or a state park are examples of prestige locations.

Networked Chronicles: Prestige Locations and Remote Ownership

During the course of a chronicle, it is possible that a player-character from outside the local troupe may flex her influence muscles and seek to obtain control of a prestige location under a different game's jurisdiction. Should this occur, the Storyteller is encouraged to allow the attempt, but with some caveats.

Most importantly, all location records should remain in the custody of the local game's storytelling staff. A location is a storytelling asset that remains the property of the local game, and it cannot be affected without Storyteller permission. In addition, anyone wishing to remotely control a prestige location needs someone local to hold the location in her name. Very likely, this character will be a player-character the owner trusts, though a Storyteller may allow her to place the location in the hands of an NPC Retainer also assigned to the local game.

Lastly, remotely controlling a prestige location, or any location for that matter, may provoke local supernatural authorities. Princes, Sabbat Bishops, Anarchs, or even werewolves may take umbrage at the notion of an interloper exerting control in their territory without permission. Divesting a foreign character of her assets through force or subterfuge may be grating to the disenfranchised, but there is little recourse; such control is largely the prerogative of any local ruler due to the Traditions, the Litany, or the rights of the nobility.

Controlling a prestige location is demanding. In some cases, the location cannot be owned outright. A player-character can only control prestige locations within her own city. This limitation is due to the complex requirements of ownership, such as manipulating boards of directors, creating shell companies, or securing sole access or control over what is officially a public facility. Should a non-local entity wish to assert control over a prestige location, she first needs to find someone local to maintain it, such as another player-character or a Retainer specifically committed to the task.

Affecting another's prestige location or modifying your own requires succeeding at a Complex Quest with a difficulty equal to the location's rating.

A prestige location can be assigned a maximum number of qualities equal to double its rating.

Iconic Locations

A number of truly unique and special places exist in the world, some of which may be supernatural in nature. An *iconic location* is a place well-recognized outside the local area and is possibly world famous (or infamous) in nature, such as the New York Stock Exchange, the Louvre, or The Hague. The average small or medium city may not have an iconic location, but world-famous cities may have more than one. Unique supernatural locations fall into this category as well, such as the Black Mausoleum, Ceoris, or one of the remaining Great Caerns.

Whether these locations can be controlled by a player-character is up to the Storyteller. In many cases, they simply cannot be controlled by player-characters; in other cases, they can be brought under some control. Should that happen, this control is always conditional. Any attempt to significantly modify, loot, or demolish the location invariably results in intervention from powerful forces, and thus likely earns its former caretaker a significant degree of unwanted attention from entities both mortal and supernatural. Affecting another's iconic location or modifying your own requires succeeding at a Heroic Quest.

An iconic location can be assigned a maximum number of qualities equal to double its rating. In addition, it has access to iconic location qualities.

Type of Location	Quest Required to Obtain, Modify, or Affect
Standard Locations	Simple Quest
Prestige Locations	Complex Quest
Iconic Locations	Heroic Quest

Controlling Stock Locations

Controlling a location means you have physical access to it and its qualities, which you may use or share with others. A character that controls a location is free to grant temporary access, or even confer complete control, to locations in exchange for favors, boons, or whatever arrangement suits her. A character may control up to five separate locations, plus one additional location for each dot she possesses of the Retainer or Kinfolk backgrounds.

Ownership of locations can be complex. Not every location can be "owned" in the classical sense, with a formal deed in the character's name. A variety of desirable locations are public property, impossible to be wholly owned by a private entity. However, supernatural creatures have various means to exert influence over mortals. Gaining *de facto* control of a location is just as effective as *de jure*. This power can be ascertained through indirect means, such as a vampire establishing a blood bond, a werewolf sending kinfolk to fill key operational positions, or a changeling weaving an elaborate web of seduction to ensnare a city council member. For the purpose of this system, determining the nature of the control exerted is necessary only for story, as the system treats all means as effectively equal.

In addition, not every location is obtainable. A Storyteller is free to determine as befits her game whether a particular location can be controlled. If the Storyteller decides to make a location controllable, she should create a record for it, noting who currently controls the location and what its qualities are. Characters have access to the public information for

locations they control, though certain information about them may not be known (such as if the location has been covertly compromised). A Storyteller does not need to create records for every location in her chronicle; but if a location is meaningful, and control of it is (or becomes) relevant to the plot, create a record for.

New Locations

Sometimes, a character wants a location to fill a temporary need, or a player wishes to enter play already controlling a location as part of her concept. In these cases, the players require *new* locations, ones that have not yet seen play and are relatively easy to obtain. For a location to fall under this category, it should be a non-descript standard location with no current direct influence on existing story. For example, a city building would not be considered a new location; but a player wishing for her character to enter play as the owner of a local bar creates the bar as a new location, including its name and history (which the player may write if the Storyteller agrees). When pursuing control of an already existing location, such as wanting to buy a bar, the player determines the characteristics of the location her character is looking for, passing on locations that lack the qualities she desires until she finds the place best suited for her needs.

To gain control of a new location, Storytellers should work with the player to understand what sort of location her character is looking for, and have her undertake a quest proportionate to the type and rating of the location. If she succeeds, create a record for the location, which enters play under the character's control.

Uncontrolled Locations

Once a location appears in play, it is considered an *existing location*. Prestige locations always fall into this category. These locations are handled differently, as they indicate specific places, and they require additional effort to obtain. After all, a character looking for warehouse space has a variety of options. However, a character looking to take control of a *particular* warehouse as a means of controlling the

Resources and Stock Locations

As the saying goes, *money makes the world go 'round*. Having access to substantial income makes acquiring and modifying locations much easier. The Resources background allows you to take shortcuts during quests to acquire locations or modify existing ones, pursuing your ends through legal or illicit means as you prefer. You may expend a level of your Resources background equal to the quest's difficulty rating to automatically succeed on a single step of your quest. You use this option in addition to making a standard test for success, and you may use the Resources benefit multiple times, drawing upon other quest participants' Resources or expenditures you've arranged in exchange for favors, boons, etc. If you spend an additional dot of Resources, exceeding the quest's difficulty rating, you may use these excess dots for additional successes on a one-for-one basis.

For example, Alex Giovanni is looking to obtain a medical facility that's a Stock Location with a rating of 3. He spends his Resources background to do so, which is at 5 dots. As his Resources are in excess of the quest's difficulty, he earns one success, plus two additional successes, as his Resources background is 2 dots higher than the quest's difficulty rating.

cargo that flows through it is a different story. The Storyteller determines the rating for these locations and which qualities they possess.

To gain control of an uncontrolled location, the characters must succeed at a quest proportionate to the type and rating of the location, granting a single character control should the quest party succeed.

Controlled Locations

Controlled locations are assumed to be in the hands of player-characters, or relevant NPCs, who retain ownership of them. These locations cannot be obtained through conventional means. Storytellers note, not every run-of-the-mill NPC should own such locations.

If a player-character or NPC wishes to gain control of an already-controlled location, she must first disrupt control of that location (see **Undermining Locations**, below.)

Uncontrollable Locations

A Storyteller is free to designate any location as *uncontrollable*, precluding it from player-character access or control. These may be public buildings, military bases, or tracts of public land, including any or all of the chronicle's iconic locations. When dealing with these locations, the Storyteller is free to create location records as she pleases, or not use them altogether.

Location Qualities

A location has a variable number of *qualities*, depending upon its type and rating.

Type of Location	Number of Qualities
Stock Location	Rating x 1
Prestige Location	Rating x 2
Iconic Location	Rating x 2 (may have iconic qualities)

A location may only have qualities appropriate for its type. A standard location cannot have iconic location qualities, for example. Some special locations, such as supernatural or Elysium locations, have unique qualities, which each have their own criteria to add, modify, or maintain.

Standard Location Qualities

Qualities in this category are mundane and available to any location, regardless of rating. A location cannot have multiple instances of the same quality unless otherwise noted.

- **Artistic:** This location is a work of art in and of itself. Controlling this stock location gives the character an additional dot of the Fame background so long as she is known to control it.
- **Cutting Edge:** This location is a modern marvel of technological design, with all aspects of the infrastructure built towards one goal: delivering a singularly impressive

Locations and Joint Control

Among vampires, it is common for fellow undead to go missing. Retaining control of essential sites such as a Tremere chantry, freehold, caern, or Elysium should not be an ordeal for player-characters (unless securing them becomes part of the plot). The Storyteller may decide that some locations, especially those commonly used as story settings, are controlled jointly, or can simply be picked up should the controlling character turn up missing. To accommodate this arrangement, the Storyteller may reassign control of a location to an appropriate ranking officer, the character's presumed heir, or have the location held by an accommodating NPC.

high-tech experience. Controlling this location provides a character with access to what is effectively a technologically-replicated, unfocused ability to replicate the Path of Technomancy power Analyze while within the location. Furthermore, the controlling character receives a +3 wild card bonus to challenges involving the Computers skill while at this location.

- **Dead Zone:** This building is cut off from any sort of cellular or internet service. Characters find it impossible to get online or even make phone calls without special access such as a landline or dedicated wi-fi (should the owner provide it). This area is also immune to mystical powers that control technology, such as the blood magic Path of Technomancy or the werewolf gift Jam Technology. Some speculate that there are other, hitherto-unknown factions who limit the encroachment of supernaturals at such locations. Others believe these locations may be affected by the Second Inquisition.
- **Distracting:** Due to some feature of the location, such as loud music, flashing lights, or no light at all, one struggles to keep track of details or people while present in it. The powers Heightened Senses, Wolf Senses, or any comparable sensory enhancement do not function here, even for the character who controls this location.
- **Fancy:** This location is in a spot where the wealthy and elegant love to congregate, making it easy for its controller to orchestrate backroom deals. A character who controls this location receives one additional Elite influence action each downtime cycle.
- **Firewall:** This location has been designed to prevent others from remotely accessing its data and security systems. The difficulty of attempts to penetrate computer systems at this location increases by 3. Characters with both the Computer skill and have purchased the Haven background for this location receive the Firewall benefit for free.
- **Guards:** Armed guards regularly patrol this location. Anyone who tries to infiltrate this location must contend with 5 dots of Retainers guarding it. When choosing this quality, the player may assign five level-1 Retainers, one level-5 Retainer, or any other combination adding up to five. Guards also add +1 to the difficulty of any quest to physically infiltrate the location. Location guards only protect this location, and they cannot travel.
- **Hangout:** This location is a gathering place for mortal residents from various walks of life. Its controller gains access to one additional instance of the Contacts background at 1 dot. This benefit does not raise the level of a character's existing Contacts, and it is treated as a separate background.
- **Historic:** This location has cultural or historical significance, making control of it much more complicated. Add +1 to the difficulty of any quest to take control of this location.
- **Lowdown and Dirty:** This location is a spot where underworld figures love to congregate, making it easy for its controller to orchestrate deals. A character who controls this location receives one additional Underworld influence action each downtime cycle.
- **Hole in the Wall:** This location is difficult to find unless you know what you're looking for. This location cannot be targeted or affected by other characters unless they have personally been there.
- **Isolated:** This location is isolated from mortals, and is thus relatively safe as regards the Masquerade. Only the most egregious breaches attract outside attention.
- **Laboratory**: This location contains a highly specialized research laboratory. Choose one Science skill specialization. This location confers a +3 wild card bonus to challenges related to that field of study. A location can have multiple instances of the Laboratory quality, applying to a different Science specialization each time.

- **Library:** The location features an extensive library, on a variety of subjects not accessible to mortals. Before making a Lore skill test, a character may spend one hour looking things up in the library and receive a +3 wild card bonus to her test pool.
- **Location:** The location is in an area that affords it some protection, such as being in a prestigious neighborhood, atop a lonely mountain, or at the end of a winding, private road. Anyone using downtime actions to negatively affect this facility must spend twice as many downtime actions to do so. In addition, the Storyteller may award certain story benefits relevant to the location (police respond quickly when called, nearby roads get cleared first when the weather is bad, etc.)
- **Luxury**: The location is filled with comfortable and expensive amenities, such as televisions, automatic chairs, computers, or works of art. The location owner receives a +3 bonus to Social attribute tests versus mortals in this location.
- **Off the Grid**: This location has no electronic systems as part of its workings, yet it is fully functional in all other aspects, including security. This location cannot be infiltrated via the internet or be impacted through typical bureaucratic means
- **Profitable**: This location generates income for its controller, treated as if she had an additional instance of the Resources background at 1 dot. This benefit does not raise the level of a character's existing Resources background, and it is treated as a separate background.
- **Public Property**: This location is a public facility, owned by the local government, but controlled by a vampire. Add +3 to the difficulty of any bureaucratic action targeting this facility. In addition, this location ignores the first instance of the Out of Code negative quality assigned to it. The second instance of Out of Code is treated as the first, ultimately requiring four instances before the location is rendered inoperable.
- **Refuge:** This location has an emergency power system, as well as food supplies (including blood, if controlled by a vampire). Each level of this location's rating gives it enough resources for a single individual to remain for 30 days without emerging, which the controller can divide to accommodate additional parties or combine for a longer duration for fewer characters.
- **Security**: The location has a basic security system installed. Any challenges to break in suffer a −3 penalty. In addition, the controlling character always receives at least one turn of warning if she is present during a break-in attempt (no matter how well the attacker tests). Characters with the Security skill may receive this benefit for free on locations that are designated as their Haven background, but Security must be separately assigned to multiple locations.
- **Size**: The location is enormous, with dozens of rooms, or a wide enclosed space. A warehouse's worth of goods, supplies, people, or anything else can be safely hidden away from the world here.
- **Sprawling:** Characters unfamiliar with this location find it confusing to navigate. Characters wishing to speak privately should notify the Storyteller of their intent, and they are then considered to be in a different location for the purposes of observation. Furthermore, characters who do not control this stock location may not declare fair escape while present, and a character wishing to leave the site must spend five minutes unchallenged before making her exit.
- **Staff**: The location includes several servants who see to the needs of the owner and guests. Staff don't normally fight; but if they are forced to engage, treat them as 1-dot Retainers with no combat specialties. They are available at all times, but are not entirely self-sufficient; Staff cannot be used to raise the total number of locations a character can control.
- **Sturdy**: This location is particularly hard to ruin, thanks to solid construction. Add +3 to the difficulty of any action that would

cause physical damage to this location, such as breaking down doors. In addition, the location ignores the first Damaged negative quality assigned to it. The second instance of Damaged is treated as the first, ultimately requiring four instances before the location is destroyed.

- **Venue:** This location is an excellent performance venue. Choose one Performance skill specialization. This location confers a +3 wild card bonus to non-supernatural challenges related to that skill specialization. A location can have multiple instances of the Venue quality, applying to a different Performance specialization each time.
- **Workshop:** This location is designed for making things. Choose one Craft skill specialization. This location confers a +3 wild card bonus to challenges related to that skill specialization. A location can have multiple instances of the Workshop quality, applying to a different Crafts specialization each time.

Iconic Location Qualities

These qualities are restricted to iconic locations. Qualities of this sort are truly spectacular, attracting visitors from around the world and featuring unique architecture or state-of-the-art facilities. These locations are a double-edged sword for vampires. On the one hand, the pure power and prestige that can be derived from controlling an iconic location is too alluring for most power-brokers to resist. On the other, the risk associated with these buildings is immense, as even the most potent elders can be struck down by mysterious forces if they stray too far into the light. Some fearful Kindred whisper that many governments and their secret agencies have been infiltrated by the Second Inquisition, and these groups won't hesitate to remove a vampire calling too much attention to herself.

- **Celebrity:** This location is so well-known that anyone associated with it becomes an international celebrity. A character controlling this location gains 5 temporary dots to spread among her mundane backgrounds. These dots may be exchanged once per month, and cannot combine with other backgrounds to exceed 6 dots. However, such fame comes at a cost. The character must spend 3 downtime actions every cycle to avoid breaking the Masquerade due to excessive media attention.
- **Fortified**: This location is especially resistant to external assault. It cannot be destroyed by any physical means short of a military-grade attack. Any attempts to breach it externally are considered Epic difficulty or higher (with a difficulty rating of 30 or more), and attempts to bypass its internal security have a difficulty rating of 25 or more.
- **Nationalized:** This location has been taken over by the mortal government. This level of financial, political, and legal support makes controlling or damaging this location significantly risky. All consequences acquired from quests involving this location are doubled.

Iconic Locations, the World of Darkness, and the Power of No

One of the most difficult aspects of the Storyteller's job is to weigh player agency versus the narrative needs of her chronicle. An upstart Anarch might want to bomb the capitol building and take the governor hostage. This plan might make a great personal story or an interesting plot for a troupe playing on the edge of the Masquerade; but it might strain credulity in a networked chronicle. The Storyteller, as always, has final say as to what storylines are appropriate for her chronicle.

- **Protected:** This location is protected through legal, political, and mystical means. Multiple government agencies have a direct interest in keeping this place secure. Entire sects expend influence to ensure that troublesome elements keep away. Some whisper that secret supernatural cabals have spun a mystical spell that forces reality itself to conspire against those who would do this location harm. Storytellers are encouraged to create any number of coincidental events and happenstances that prevent a breach of Masquerade or other damage to this place. In the end, this place simply cannot be harmed, violated, or breached.
- **World Renown:** This location is famously associated with a specific field and thus possesses global influence connected to that field. A character who controls this location may expend influence anywhere in the world, so long as her expenditure is directly related to that specific field. For example, the Library of Congress is one of the premier libraries in the world, and it enjoys exchange privileges with libraries across the globe. Leveraging this location to acquire rare or unusual manuscripts may be done with influence without requiring the use of Fame.

Supernatural Location Qualities

A character, with Storyteller permission, may select a *supernatural Stock Location quality* rather than a standard Stock Location quality. A location's supernatural quality does not need to have a supernatural origin *per se*, but rather its features cause a phenomenon that creates the described effect. A location may only have a single supernatural quality.

- **Barren:** This location is a terrible place for vampires to feed. Reduce the amount of Blood points received from feeding by half, rounding up.
- **Buffet:** This location is an excellent place for vampires to feed. Double the amount of Blood points received from feeding.
- **Gauntlet:** The Gauntlet is thicker here, making it difficult for shapeshifters to cross in and out of the Umbra. The time required to cross the Gauntlet, listed in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Werewolf the Apocalypse: Gauntlet Chart: Entering the Umbra**, page 585, is doubled here.
- **Haunt:** The Shroud is much weaker here, always returning to low at the start of each day. All necromancers gain a +3 wild card bonus to all interactions with ghosts here.
- **Tainted:** This location bears some sort of Wyrm Taint. Spending more than five minutes at this location results in visitors gaining a point of Wyrm Taint, and spending eight hours here can earn the character up to 1 additional point. This assignment cannot result in a character gaining a 5th point. Gaian shapeshifters cannot cross the Gauntlet here. For more information, see **Mind's Eye Theatre: Werewolf the Apocalypse: The Gauntlet,** page 584.

Adding or Altering Location Qualities

A Stock Location gains additional qualities when its owner increases its rating. Doing so requires time and investment. To raise a location's rating, the owning character undertakes a quest proportionate to the type of location and its current rating. Alternatively, a character may switch an existing quality for another by undertaking a quest one tier lower (to a minimum of a Simple Quest).

A character may freely alter cosmetic elements of her standard locations. In the case of prestige locations, the Storyteller should deny additions or alterations that are inappropriate to the facility's nature. For example, adding a swimming pool to a public art museum would likely not be possible. In the case of iconic locations, this scrutiny should be applied even more rigidly.

Type of Location	Quest Category to Add Qualities	Quest Category to Change Qualities
Standard	Simple	Simple Quest
Prestige	Complex	Simple Quest
Iconic	Heroic	Complex Quest

Upgrading Location Type

Under most circumstances, a location's type – standard, prestige or iconic –cannot be changed. Characters who wish to have access to Stock Locations will find it much easier to take control of existing facilities rather than create or upgrade new ones. However, a Storyteller may wish to allow a character to dramatically improve her locations. To do so, have the characters succeed at a quest of a difficulty equal to the location's current rating, but one category higher, as shown in the following chart:

Type of Location	Quest Category to Upgrade
Standard	Complex Quest to become a prestige location
Prestige	Heroic Quest to become an iconic location
Iconic	Cannot be upgraded further

Stock Locations and Challenges

During the course of gameplay, characters may take action that pits them against a building's security, structure, or IT systems.

Targeting Locations

It is inevitable that characters will eventually target one another's locations and holdings. Before a character can infiltrate, undermine, or destroy her rival's location, she must know some basic information about the location. For example, she may target another's location if she has personally visited it, been given its address, or if she has uncovered the identity of the true owner of a prestige location. In addition, a character may expend a dot of the Contacts background to determine what locations, if any, another character controls.

Challenging Locations During Live Gameplay

Breaking into locations can be a complex matter, providing worthwhile fodder for story. The Storyteller should feel completely free to handle infiltration as something akin to a dungeon crawl: a live-game event where characters respond to challenges on the fly. In those instances, the Storyteller should rate any challenge against the building or its security systems at a base difficulty equal to 5 times its Stock Location rating, modified by any qualities it may possess or other circumstances the Storyteller deems appropriate. This difficulty rating encompasses everything from picking a lock to hacking into a computer.

Challenging Locations During Downtime

If a character wants to infiltrate a location as a downtime action, the Storyteller can handle this request using the quest system. Assign a the character a quest proportional to the type of building, at a difficulty equal to its rating. The player(s) involved should choose a single, simple victory condition, such as stealing a particular item, planting evidence, or rescuing a prisoner, which they achieve if successful. For Standard Locations, this quest can be a relatively simple affair, but for prestige and iconic locations, security systems and plans become much more complicated, and defeating them becomes something more like a heist. The Storyteller should modify the difficulty based on the building's qualities and is further free to modify the difficulty as she sees fit based on other circumstances. Note that a location's qualities may raise a quest's difficulty rating to 6 or higher.

This system assumes players operate with some degree of finesse. Should a character decide that she wishes to bash her way into a building, such as by openly displaying vampiric disciplines or assuming Crinos form, she should expect her Storyteller to hand out severe consequences. However, should a character sneak her way into a facility without getting caught

and with minimal exposure of her supernatural nature, she is behaving as this system expects.

Undermining Locations

Direct, physical assaults are the bluntest and simplest tools in a vampire's arsenal. A much broader repertoire exists for savvy and inventive characters, capable of ruining a rival's ties to the mortal world without the incivility of a direct assault. The following list outlines means by which one may affect locations under another's control, assigning a *negative Stock Location quality*.

Negative Stock Location qualities indicate stress, distress, or a liability imposed on the owner. Inflicting negative qualities can ruin a rival's holding or allow for easier takeover. Negative Stock Location qualities are arbitrated by the Storyteller, and each carries its own set of difficulties. Unlike standard qualities, the Storyteller may choose to keep some or all of a location's negative qualities secret from the owner, leaving her to deduce or infer certain problems about the site using her skills, powers, or backgrounds.

To impose a negative quality, choose a specific quality and undertake a quest of the appropriate type at a difficulty equal to the location's rating, plus any modifiers. If you succeed, the location receives the negative quality.

Negative Qualities for Stock Locations

Negative qualities for Stock Locations function differently than standard qualities. A location may have multiple instances of these qualities, which cause cumulative penalties. Once the penalty to a location is maximized, it cannot receive any more negative qualities of that type. In most cases, this maximum will be three negative qualities of the same type, but in some cases, a location may withstand more than three negative qualities, depending on its own qualities.

Damaged

Undermining a location using this method involves causing physical damage to the location, usually through vandalism, sabotage, or other violent means. Each instance of the Damaged quality can be removed by spending dots of the Resources background equal to the location's rating.

Infiltration vs. Havens and Shelters

In live-action roleplay, Haven raids are often bad for a game's health. The potential for character death during downtime means that stories are effectively determined "off-camera," in a way that is generally unsatisfying. These sorts of deaths give a player little to no ability to roleplay, react, or have any sort of agency in her final moments.

From an in-character perspective, any attack on an individual's home or personal life should be considered a mortal threat, incurring an immediate response. After all, attacking an individual's wealth or resources is one thing, but everyone from the local Prince to the Sept Alpha needs to sleep, and targeting someone without permission is usually a serious taboo. A portion of a ruler's power derives from the assertion that all under her purview *will* be safe from assaults of this kind, and are thus known to deal with rogue actors swiftly and decisively.

In most cases in which a player wishes to stage a downtime attack against another character's Haven and murder the character, a Storyteller should carefully consider player agency when considering the request, including consideration of the game's social contract, as well as the recommendation that each game resolves major stories in a live setting.

- **Damaged x1:** This location has suffered structural damage or shows signs of vandalism. The Storyteller selects a single quality, which becomes inaccessible until all Damaged qualities are removed.
- **Damaged x2:** This place has fallen into significant disrepair. If the location has any standard qualities remaining, the Storyteller selects one that remains operable. The rest of the location's qualities are unavailable until the damage is repaired.
- **Damaged x3:** At this level, the location has been destroyed, and it permanently loses all of its standard qualities. Should the Damaged qualities be removed, the location becomes a rating 1 facility of its original type, with a single standard quality. Its rating may be improved through the standard means, outlined above.

Insolvent

Many locations operate as a business or otherwise require funds to operate. Undermining a location using this method involves attacking a location's funding, such as its financing or credit rating. Each instance of the Insolvent quality can be overcome with an Elite influence expenditure equal to the location's rating.

- **Insolvent x1**: This location fails to generate a sufficient return to offset expenses, possibly due to a disruption in its business or problems with supplies. Its controller cannot benefit from this location's Profitable quality, if applicable.
- **Insolvent x2:** This location fails to generate a sufficient return to offset expenses, and it is an active financial drain on its owner. The location's controller must forfeit the location if its rating is greater than the number of dots she possesses of the Resources background.
- **Insolvent x3:** This location is completely underwater and headed for foreclosure. Any character may undertake a Complex Quest at a rating equal to the location's rating to seize control of the location from its controller. If that character completes her quest before this negative quality is removed, she becomes the location's controller, with all instances of Insolvent removed, although other negative qualities, such as Damaged, remain.

Compromised

Supernatural beings value their secrecy more than anything else. The application of this negative quality makes the location the target of hostile forces. Each instance of the Compromised quality can only be removed through an Underworld influence expenditure equal to the location's rating.

- **Compromised x1**: This location is passively monitored by NPC forces hostile to its owner and her allies. They observe and collect information on all characters who come and go from the location. This quality can be assigned to a location without the owner's knowledge. When recording the quality, the Storyteller should note which group is compromising the site, such as werewolves, hunters, mortal authorities, etc.
- **Compromised x2:** This location is actively surveilled by NPC forces hostile to its owner and her allies. They respond forcefully if they become aware of the character's presence there. This quality can be assigned to a location without the owner's knowledge. When recording the quality, the Storyteller should note which group is compromising the site, such as werewolves, hunters, mortal authorities, etc.
- **Compromised x3:** At this stage, a character can take no actions here without hostile parties becoming aware. Any use of this location's standard qualities results in a consequence determined by the Storyteller, which may include combat or risking the Masquerade or Veil.

Out of Code

As old the adage goes, you can't fight city hall. This negative quality is the product of the location's owner being at odds with bureaucratic forces, either for code violations or licensing; or it may simply be targeted by crooked officials. Removing an instance of this quality

requires an Underworld influence expenditure equal to the location's rating.

- **Out of Code x1:** Some aspect of this location's function, construction, or zoning is not legally permitted, and the city bureaucrats know it. If a location has this quality, it cannot be assigned a second instance of Out of Code, but instead gains an additional instance automatically if the quality is not removed within two game sessions.

- **Out of Code x2:** This location is on the verge of closure by bureaucratic forces. If a location has this quality, it cannot be assigned an additional instance of Out of Code, but it gains an additional instance automatically if the quality is not removed within two game sessions.

- **Out of Code x3:** This location has been closed by bureaucratic forces, and none of its qualities can be accessed until all instances of this quality have been removed.

Shunned

This negative quality is the product of attacks upon a location's reputation within the community, spread through rumor, scandal, or bad publicity. Each instance of the Shunned quality can be overcome with an Elite influence expenditure equal to the location's rating.

- **Shunned x1:** This location has earned a bad reputation among the people who would normally frequent it. Its controller cannot benefit from the qualities Artistic, Decadent, Fancy, or Lowdown and Dirty.

- **Shunned x2:** This location is known to be infamous. Its controller subtracts the location's rating from her dots in the Fame background. If this location is an Elysium, its residents cannot gain positive status by attending court here.

- **Shunned x3:** This location has earned a horrid reputation. Its owner loses all access to her Fame background, and she cannot spend XP to increase her influences for as long as she controls this location. She may forfeit the location willingly to escape this penalty, in which case, any new owner obtains it with all levels of Shunned intact.

Elysium

"There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places."

— Wendell Berry

Elysium Stock Location Rules

Not just any old building is worthy of being designated an Elysium. For a place to be considered worthy, it must have something special about it. Very often, Elysium is a location of sufficient importance or beauty such that the Prince wishes to place it under her protection. Likewise, city officials often choose places of historical, cultural, or local significance. Vampires frown upon selecting locations solely as fortifications; these places are seen as a sign of a weak and paranoid Prince whose power is insufficient to protect any place of actual value.

Customs for each Elysium are unique, governed by the weight of local tradition and the Prince's courtesies.

When generating an Elysium location, Storytellers should use the Stock Location rules to determine its mundane qualities. From there, the Storyteller should discuss with her troupe what sort of Elysium they wish to create. With that information, the Storyteller can then determine the Elysium qualities best suited for this Stock Location.

Elysium Selection

It is the Prince's prerogative to select the location to host a domain's gathering: a subtle tool in the ruler's arsenal. Prior to any court gathering, she makes her choice known to the Keeper of Elysium, giving her ample time to prepare the site in advance. However, capricious or indecisive Princes may give less notice, leaving the Keeper scrambling to prepare.

The timing and location of a domain's gatherings offer a variety of advantages. A Prince may choose to hold court on the site of a previous victory, subtly reminding her citizens of her prowess. If the domain has had Masquerade issues, the Prince may select an isolated location; or if violence on Elysium has been a problem, she may choose a location where violence is discouraged. Should she be concerned by the possibility of an outside attack, an especially fortified location may be ideal. Most rulers, however, choose a location known for its art and aesthetics; holding a gathering free of disruption in a prime location is a tacit demonstration of the Prince's power. After all, if a Prince can retain control of and ensure the safety of a particularly impressive location, surely the she is a ruler of great skill and influence.

Laws of Elysium

The prime directive that all Elysia follow is simple: violence is not permitted on sacred ground. The courtesies of a domain define exactly which actions are considered a breach of Elysium and which are not. Because of this tradition, Keepers of Elysium commonly work with Harpies to ensure every Kindred knows the domain's particular rules regarding Elysium.

Common Elysium Prohibitions

Every Elysium is different, and thus their prohibitions are different. Ignorance is never an excuse. Visitors are expected to learn the prohibitions concerning Elysium before entering. Let the unwary trespasser beware.

Here are common prohibitions used at most, but not all, Elysia:

- The Elysium and its contents are sacrosanct and shall not be damaged. None may destroy art located within Elysium. The definition of "art" has been expanded to include the artist on occasion, making the vampires of Clan Toreador some of the greatest advocates of Elysium.
- The Keeper's word is law on these grounds, and she can traditionally punish or even execute anyone who violates Elysium without running afoul of the Traditions.
- Elysium is considered neutral, sanctified ground: separate from sect or politics. Any vampire is welcome, regardless of her sect or political standing.
- Violence of any kind is strictly forbidden upon Elysium grounds. In some cities, the courtesies extend this protection to include passage to and from Elysium.
- No supernatural powers are permitted to be used on the grounds of Elysium. This rule includes using disciplines, even gentle ones such as Dominate or Presence, on other guests. Note that Nosferatu are often exempt from this rule, allowing them to use Obfuscate in order to disguise their true appearances. Even when there is no danger to the Masquerade, they are encouraged to continue using Obfuscate to avoid disturbing the other guests.

Elysium and Your Chronicle

Players and the Storyteller should carefully discuss what sort of chronicle they want when designing their Elysium and the local prohibitions related to it. While some players might think that holding a game session at Elysium lacks challenge, it is politically more dangerous for the uninitiated and those unable to maintain control of themselves. Some rowdy players might find such restraints boring and lash out. These Elysium qualities are designed to allow for multiple play styles. Storytellers shouldn't be afraid to challenge players who wish to violate Elysium, forbidding actions if the Storyteller believes they aren't good for the chronicle. Even if a Storyteller allows a character to violate Elysium, the player should be prepared for harsh consequences.

- No weapons may be brought onto Elysium grounds.
- No one may attempt to inflame the Beast of themselves or another while on Elysium grounds.
- If a vampire brings a non-vampiric (or one who has not been acknowledged) guest to Elysium, she is responsible for that guest's behavior.
- The presence of Moon-beasts (werewolves), Wild Ones (fae), or those who have drunk the heart's blood (diablerists) are forbidden.
- All hunting is prohibited in the area surrounding an Elysium.

Unusual Elysium Prohibitions

Some domains have eccentric local courtesies that have translated into unusual Elysium prohibitions:

- Clan Toreador is forbidden from wearing the color yellow. (This Boston prohibition dates back 200 years, the result of a savage praxis struggle.)
- No ghouls or retainers may be brought to Elysium. (This New York prohibition dates back to a Sabbat incursion when several Lasombra possessed mortal bodies to gather information.)

Benefits of a Longstanding Elysium

The longer an Elysium stands without violation, the more qualities it acquires, as follows:

- All Elysia start with one Elysium quality when the Prince declares a location Elysium.
- If an Elysium survives a decade unviolated, it gains a second Elysium quality.
- Thereafter, every hundred years the Elysium remains unviolated, it gains an additional Elysium quality.

The Prince and Keeper of Elysium traditionally throw a major gala marking each milestone of an Elysium. Many cities even have local courtesies about seeking forgiveness for past crimes during such events. This is one of the rare times that a Prince may remove the Bloodhunted negative status without penalty.

Elysium Qualities

These qualities represent specialized subsystems, intended to represent thousands of years of indoctrination and faith in the idea of Elysium. While the effects might appear to be magical, vampires simply accept these qualities as a fact of existance.

- **Arena**: This quality is somewhat new, appearing in the 20th century. Some Harpies still consider it scandalous. Some traditionally-minded elders won't visit a so-called Elysium with such a quality. This Elysium has a special area dedicated to sport or combat, where supernatural creatures engage in martial contests. When and how the Prince allows such contests to occur is subject to the courtesies. This quality may not be selected in conjunction with the Elysium qualities: **Intimidating Ground** or **Traditional**.

Elysium Prohibitions

Some modern cities have dropped a few of the archaic bans, such as the prohibition against fae, which the Tremere commonly protest. The Vancouver, British Columbia Elysium expressly invites lupines to attend, so long as the creatures avoid violence and refrain from using their powers.

- **Easy Feeding:** This location is located within easy proximity to the one of the city's racks. Feeding can be accomplished via a difficulty 1 Simple Quest with no more than five minutes spent out of game. Characters benefitting from this quality should take care not to run afoul of any courtesies forbidding feeding near Elysium.
- **Holy Ground:** This Elysium has some sort of spiritual aura. Anyone who willingly violates this sacred ground automatically loses a Morality trait. These sites are not often primary choices for Elysium; however, a Prince might select this location to force a de-escalation of conflict among her citizens. This quality triggers the Repelled by Religion flaw.
- **Intimidating Ground:** This Elysium is so intimidating that characters who wish to take an action that would violate Elysium must spend a point of Willpower to do so. This quality may not be selected in conjunction with the Elysium qualities: **Arena** or **Traditional**.
- **Old Boy's Club:** This location is deliberately set in proximity to mortal elite society; it may possibly be a Masonic hall or revered museum. Provided the entire evening passes without a Masquerade incident, all attendees receive 1 bonus dot to their Fame background for one month or two games, whichever is longer.
- **Quarantined:** This location has been secured and thoroughly tested to ensure strict isolation from any sort of outside monitoring. Violating the Masquerade is nearly impossible when on Elysium grounds.
- **Soothing:** This location eases the tumult of the Beast. Once per game session at this location, by spending 10 minutes in a state of relative peace, such as reflecting on a piece of art or engaging in quiet conversation, any character may remove a single Beast trait. In addition, repeated visits to this location may justify purchasing Morality traits.
- **Selective:** Something about this place, such as supernatural wards, magical phenomena, or other defenses, repulses a specific supernatural creature type. It is either outright impossible or dangerously prohibitive for those creatures to enter. The Storyteller determines the mechanics for this quality, such as creeping Banality for changelings or Gnosis loss due to silver for shapeshifters.
- **Traditional:** This Elysium is known by the Camarilla as a bastion of traditional values. This location is considered an important place to be seen. All vampires who attend a gathering here gain the fleeting status trait *Courteous* once per three game sessions. This quality may not be selected in conjunction with the Elysium qualities: **Arena** or **Intimidating Ground**.
- **Universal Acceptance:** The Elysium is located on grounds that are of such historical meaning that all vampire sects treat it with equal respect. Violation of an Elysium with Universal Acceptance always results in the offending character receiving the negative status trait *Disgraced* from her own sect officers.

Spazio Creativo

"There are no rules here, we're trying to accomplish something"

— Thomas Edison

Spazio Creativo Stock Location Rules

For the Independent Alliance, function takes precedence over form when they officially open a new Spazio Creativo. Finding a suitable location that mixes an appropriately weakened Shroud with the proper resonance for Setite ritual magic, while accounting for accessibility and keeping the Masquerade safe, can be trying enough without having to worry about if the building is of historical importance. Rules for each Spazio Creativo are unique; the local Independent Alliance membership decides its limits.

When generating a Spazio Creativo, Storytellers should use the Stock Location rules to determine its mundane qualities. From there, the Storyteller should discuss with her troupe what sort of Spazio Creativo they wish to create.. With that information, the Storyteller can then determine which Spazio Creativo qualities best suit this Stock Location.

Spazio Creativo Selection

A weighted vote typically decides which location will host a domain's collective creative tool set. Prior to a formal selection, members in good standing with the local Independent Alliance put forward their personal suggestions for a new site, knowing that if the location meets the domain's needs, they'll be recognized for their good eye, both now and in the future.

Guidelines of Spazio Creativo

For the Independent Alliance, the only set rules are that all members can freely enter and use the facilities, and they cannot breach the Masquerade. Some domains may put additional rules in place if a pattern develops, on a case-by-case basis.

Benefits of Creative Growth

The longer a Spazio Creativo stands unviolated, the more qualities it may have:

- All Spazio Creativo start with two qualities.
- If a Spazio Creativo survives a decade unviolated, it gains a third quality.

Spazio Creativo Qualities

These qualities represent a complex weave of thaumaturgical blood magic, faith, and necromancy acting in conjunction with each other alongside thousands of years of Kindred political experience.

- **Arcane Resonance**: Whether through a network of magical runes chiseled throughout the facility or being placed on a ley line nexus, a multitude of factors make this location particularly suitable for the ritual magic of Thaumaturgy and Necromancy. All ritual test pools receive a +3 wild card bonus if conducted within a Spazio Creativo.
- **Easy Feeding:** This location is within easy proximity to the one of the city's rack locations. Feeding can be accomplished via a difficulty 1 Simple Quest with no more than five minutes spent out of game.
- **Fading Shroud:** This location removes the need for a necromancer to lower the Shroud around her before attempting to deal with the restless dead. Every lunar month, the Shroud rating of this location lowers by one step, to a minimum of low.
- **Grand Library:** This location has a carefully curated inventory of occult tomes and ritual components. Spending a downtime action studying the occult libraries and practicing minor rituals here provides a +2 wild card bonus to a character's test pools using the Occult skill during the next game session.
- **Members Only:** This location has been specifically enchanted to place a debilitating curse on any uninvited guests. Each game session, when a vampire who is not a member of the Independent Alliance member enters the location for the first time, she must engage in a Challenging (difficulty 20) static test using her Mental or Social attribute (whichever is higher) + her Occult skill. Failing this challenge applies the Magic Susceptibility flaw for the rest of the game session.
- **Quarantined:** This location has been secured and thoroughly tested to ensure its strict isolation from any sort of outside monitoring. Violating the Masquerade is nearly impossible while on its grounds.
- **Selective:** Something about this place, such as supernatural wards, magical phenomena, or other defenses, repulses a specific supernatural creature type. It is either outright impossible or dangerously prohibitive for those creatures to enter. Your Storyteller determines the mechanics for this quality, such as creeping Banality for changelings or Gnosis loss due to silver for shapeshifters.





Chapter Six: Storyteller Essays

""You're never going to kill storytelling, because it's built in the human plan. We come with it."

— Margaret Atwood

Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade (MET:VTM) launched the foundation of the Mind's Eye Theatre system from By Night Studios. Subsequent books, such as **Mind's Eye Theatre: Werewolf The Apocalypse** and **Mind's Eye Theatre: Changeling The Dreaming**, upgraded the core foundations of these rules and systems to meet the ever-changing needs of our audience. While these systems comprise the framework of our games, much more makes up the art of storytelling than mere adherence to the rules. Indeed, creating the right game experience involves a number of details which go beyond the core system. As administrators, storytellers must juggle complex issues such as conflict resolution, plot pacing, and player engagement, with solutions that vary depending on the situations, and the needs of their players. We provide a broad suite of options to equip storytellers in addressing the needs of their games. The suggestions here are purely optional, based upon the experiences of the authors and their respective times spent in the LARP community.

Cooperative Conflict and Advanced Narration: Expert Tools for Story Creation

By Jimmy Reckitt

"The art of living is more like wrestling than dancing."

— Marcus Aurelius

At the heart of every great story is a great conflict. Rivalries and the measures taken to succeed define many characters as exceptional. In a live-action roleplaying (LARP) experience, conflict can be character-defining as well, providing a vehicle for players to find themselves when the setting tests their values and mettle. For this reason, it is possible to take a measure of a character—and even an entire game—by

the way we present, handle, and resolve conflicts. Games high in struggle, strife, or competition between players create a different atmosphere than games that take a more casual approach. The system we explore in this essay seeks a balance between the two styles, offering methods to resolve conflict cooperatively, in addition to furthering stories through narration beyond the scope of a single scenario.

Fundamentals of Cooperative Conflict

Conflict as part of a game's storyline (often called plot) is frequently simple; Storytellers outline antagonists with morals and objectives in direct contrast to the players' own. Pursing these antagonists typically results in few or no social consequences from other players. Conflict between player-characters is more complicated. Characters have goals different from other characters, and taking action against them can result in social consequences or retaliation. Such conflicts also usually escalate quickly, with character death as a common occurrence, resulting in an unsatisfying conclusion for one party. Conflicts like this can also lead to blunt or uncreative gameplay tangents, or bleed when character conflict becomes too intense. However, just as LARP is an experience in cooperative storytelling, rival can also be handled cooperatively.

As a means of entertainment, professional wrestling is all about showcasing conflict. Every match, promo, and interview centers on conflict, with an occasional McGuffin of a championship belt thrown in. Writers must handle challenges of talent rotating in and out, and establishing the core of a character in a very short time. In preparation for premium events, the show builds rivalries which must appear both interesting and believable enough for an audience for the purpose of creating a grand spectacle of a finale.

Cooperative conflict is different than most clashes in LARP. Instead of being competitive, the purpose of cooperative conflict is to tell a story. With the competitive aspect either removed or managed more effectively, all participants gain the benefit of becoming collaborators rather than competitors. Working together, they tell the story of their rivalry, giving one another ample time to shine.

Entering into this sort of agreement is optional, of course. Neither party is obligated to pursue a prolonged rivalry with one another, nor are they obliged to adhere to a structure as part of creating their characters' stories. Rather, this method is for those who seek an amicable means of exploring a conflict involving boundaries and collaboration.

Work Out an Understanding

To begin this process, the involved parties form an out-of-character understanding. This step is important, as the process involves some amount of give and take, as well as management of pacing. This negotiation is easiest when characters start a new game and craft a rivalry for one another in their backstories, but it can also be worked out between game sessions.

Don't Rush It

In professional wrestling, the athletes never rush the outcome of a good rivalry. During weekly shows, wrestlers fume and circle around each other, participating in small matches or fighting to no conclusion, all for the sake of selling a major event. Likewise, if players want conflict as part of their story, they are in no hurry to see it resolved either. The experience is all about the conflict and the feelings that go with it. Give and expect ample time to react to the machinations of your rival before moving on to the counterstroke. Bring your reactions into the shared environment, and let others see how it affects your character.

Maintain Parity

Most importantly, some degree of parity must be maintained. This balance involves keeping your conflict within the established range of the story, and not going overboard. If you and your rival are both Tremere acolytes vying for a coveted position, then blowing up her haven would be a bit excessive. Likewise, selling her out to the Sabbat is a bit much, though if you found out *she* was collaborating with the enemy, you would no doubt do your duty. As part of a cooperative conflict, you and the other player determine the desired severity. Once chosen, both you and your partner-rival adhere to it, giving her out-of-character notice if you feel the story takes it

in a different direction. With this practice, you can effectively trade blows without worrying about your character's survival.

Degrees of Conflict

For the purposes of codifying and managing degrees of cooperative conflict, let's define three different tiers:

Tier 1: Inconvenience/Skirmish

At this tier, both parties inconvenience one another. This conflict can result from one or both parties being petty or vindictive at heart, or having a relationship as frenemies. Both parties are likely on the same side with similar goals and are possibly ostensible friends. This rivalry takes the form of acts of minor aggression or dominance that inconveniences the other. If matters become physical, things rarely escalate beyond a shove or a thrown fist or two.

Tier 2: Embarrassment/Injury

At the second tier, both parties embarrass one another. This conflict can result from competition for a position or for resources or divergent goals. The parties can be on the same side in some matters, but are unlikely to be friends. This rivalry manifests as undermining one another's plans, typically by subtle means, and a willingness to see the other lose face. If it were to come to blows, fighting could happen, but it stops short of incapacitation or significant injury.

Tier 3: Humiliation/Incapacitation

At the third tier, both parties are united in their mutual disdain and seek the humiliation of one another. They reached their limits, each bearing a history of reasons as to why they cannot abide the other's presence in the same city, let alone the same room. Both parties might pretend at civility, but gladly snipe at or undermine the other if given the opportunity. Each seeks to thwart the other in their goals, even if only for spite. Should a fight ensue, each would seek to cause the other as much injury as possible, stopping short of death.

Conflicts that go above these tiers, such as seeking the death of either party, require more work to become cooperative. Perhaps, it is the one character's time or the players can work together for a resolution with a dramatic outcome satisfying to both parties. Advanced narration usually works best in these situations, with each player negotiating the effects and drawbacks of their actions.

Advanced Narration

There are times when, for the purpose of creating a better story, it is better for one party to lose in a situation or challenge that is normally determined by game mechanics. This situation occurs when a win for the other party makes sense for a character's concept, such as being a canny manipulator or a valiant fighter. A character written as a CEO-turned-vampire usually succeed at business dealings, and a femme fatale is particularly effective at seduction. By encouraging a character's success in a situation suited to its nature, its fundamental concept is reinforced, better defining it into something more iconic. It also takes a "yes, and..." approach to story, adding to the conflict and keeping momentum going.

In wrestling, participants often make concessions to help an up-and-coming character, where one wrestler loses to the other (often in dramatic fashion) to help further the story. Giving a good performance, even when it results in deliberate loss, is called "doing the job" or "jobbing," and it helps to establish featured performers.

Though it can help advance story in a LARP situation, participants often hesitate, unwilling to lose. Players feel invested in a conflict, and are cautious of giving away any advantage, as small victories have a habit of building into larger ones. Personal pride can by a factor as well, in addition to competitive feelings. However, when it comes to cooperative conflicts in both wrestling and LARP, the most entertainment comes when both parties are at relative parity. It's no fun if someone wins all the time, and if one party *has* been winning a lot, then the other party is certainly due a win or moment of triumph to keep things interesting.

As part of managing a cooperative conflict, players handle these situations by relenting or "doing the

job" in lieu of a mechanical resolution, usually in exchange for an advantage later on. This exchange is made as a resolution to a single incident, or as part of a protracted rivalry, using *Advanced Narration*. When the players decide to cash in this advantage, the player who relented earlier chooses from a variety of story options depending on the severity of the concession given. These represent her character's retaliation at a later time and must be accepted. The players work out the exact methods with the Storyteller, who constructs the result in accordance with the retaliating character's concepts and proficiencies, with the final decision unknown to the player who received the win until it happens to their character. Additionally, the player whose character received the concession agrees to accept a reasonable degree of narration regarding how the retaliation took place. The Storyteller ensures the retaliation is within the bounds of the established parameters and appropriate for both stories. For the purpose of keeping the conflict at a managed level, both concession and retaliation is proportional, drawing from the charts below. Additionally, the advantage is cashed in within a reasonable timeframe as established by the players and Storyteller, such as within three game sessions.

For this system to work, good faith must be maintained by both parties. For example, if the player of a Brujah agrees to relent to the effects of a Chimerstry challenge, she must roleplay its effects. Likewise, if the Ravnos player who used Chimerstry finds a group of police officers raided the establishment of her criminal associates (representing the loss of a Background), she should avoid jumping to the conclusion that her rival was behind it, remembering the give-and-take agreement is entirely out-of-game. Additionally, players do not ask for or accept a concession of this sort if their intent is to escalate the conflict. For example, a Toreador seeks to use Dread Gaze on a bothersome Nosferatu. While the challenge seems to be an attempt to shoo her rival away, she cannot ask for a concession if her friends are waiting outside to attack. Doing so would constitute an escalation of the conflict. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, if you're on the receiving end of retaliation, you must roll with the scenario given, as you already had your moment to shine.

Advanced Narration Chart

First Tier: Inconvenience/Skirmish

Concession Given

- Relenting to a supernatural power challenge and roleplaying its effects during an inconvenient situation. The result is unlikely to cause a loss of status/renown or generate gossip, though it may frustrate the subject.
- Taking a premeditated loss in what amounts to a small scuffle, suffering 3 or fewer points of damage Loss of a background for a single evening

Retaliation Taken

- Loss of a single downtime action
- Moderate difficulty feeding or travails that tax the target's supernatural reserves; character begins next game at 2/3 of maximum Blood/Gnosis pool (round in favor of the player)
- Act of frustration that results in gaining a Beast Trait/Derangement Trait/Seethe Trait
- Uncovering a minor background secret, such as a 1-point flaw (with Storyteller permission)

Second Tier: Embarrassment/Injury

Concession Given

- Relenting to a supernatural power challenge and roleplaying its effects in an embarrassing situation. The result may cause a loss of status/renown or generate gossip if the subject is important enough.
- Taking a premeditated loss in what amounts to a major altercation, suffering between 4 and 6 points of damage Loss of up to 2 backgrounds for up to 2 game sessions

Retaliation Taken

- Loss of 1 month of downtime actions or 2 total downtime actions, whichever is greater

- Significant difficulty feeding or travails that tax the target's supernatural reserves; character begins next game at 1/2 of maximum Blood/Gnosis pool (round in favor of the player)
- An act of great frustration that results in gaining 2 Beast Traits/Derangement Traits/ Seethe Traits
- Uncovering embarrassing background secrets, such as a 3-point flaw (with Storyteller permission)

Third Tier: Humiliation/Incapacitation

Concession Given

- Relenting to a supernatural power challenge and roleplaying its effects in a potentially humiliating situation. A loss of status/renown is probable, and the incident is likely fodder for horrendous gossip, even if the subject is relatively unknown.
- Taking a premeditated loss in what amounts to a serious conflict, suffering between 7 and 9 points of damage, and likely resulting in incapacitation and/or capture Long-term loss of a single background due to death or removal of connected NPCs

Retaliation Taken

- Loss of 2 months' downtime actions or 4 total downtime actions, whichever is greater
- Immense difficulty feeding or travails that tax the target's supernatural reserves; character begins next game at 1/3 of maximum Blood/ Gnosis pool (round in favor of the player)
- An act of immense frustration that results in gaining 3 Beast Traits/Derangement Traits/ Seethe Traits
- Uncovering major background secrets, such as 3+ point flaws (with Storyteller permission)

Advanced Narration: Steps to Resolution

Step 1: Make an Agreement

Prior to resolving a challenge, both parties converse and offer reasons why one character likely succeeds in this situation. Both agree on the degree of conflict (tier) this situation supports. Afterward, the players make a Storyteller aware of their agreement and the advantage given to the relenting party.

Step 2: Relent to the Challenge

The conceding party "does the job" and relents to the challenge, accepting the consequences and roleplaying accordingly.

Step 3: Chose a Method of Retaliation

The relenting party meets with the Storyteller and picks an option from the right column of the appropriate chart above or another, equal option the player and Storyteller agree upon. While the relenting party is free to incorporate her character's mechanical capabilities, they cannot have any serious mechanical effect on the party they are relenting to. It is perfectly fine if disbelief needs to be suspended to achieve a desired outcome; the relenting player already "earned" this outcome as part of her earlier cooperation.

Step 4: Tell the Story

When a retaliation takes place, the Storyteller informs the player who won the previous challenge of both the mechanical and narrative results of the subsequent retaliation. That player accepts the consequences and roleplays accordingly.

Example 1

Hugo the Tremere is the ranking Archon at a conclave. During a recess, Levi the Anarch Malkavian approaches him with an exhaustive list of issues, demanding that the Anarchs be heard.

Hugo suggests to Levi that a better idea is taking the list outside and setting it on fire, and the player informs the other that he wishes to use the Dominate power of Mesmerism on Levi. As success in this challenge initiates a dramatic outcome, the player of Hugo proposes Advanced Narration. Both players are amicable, and agree that in exchange for the player of Levi relenting to the use of Dominate, the player of Hugo will agree to narration effect later on, effectively owing Levi one. Both parties also agree that the matter is an inconvenience for Levi.

The second night of the conclave, the player of Levi approaches the Storyteller. As his character has connections with various gangs, he wants to send some of them after Hugo. The Storyteller agrees, and later notifies the player of Hugo that he is accosted by a group of thugs on his way to rejoin the conclave. While he dispatches the assailants with ease, he has some difficulty feeding. He enters play at 2/3 of his total Blood pool. The player of Hugo accepts the narration, as he has given his consent in exchange for the player of Levi relenting the night before.

Example 2

Hazel the Assamite is a Black Hand operative who wants to extract some information from a particularly recalcitrant Loyalist, Vinny the Lasombra. She finds him alone, and declares her intent to initiate combat, seeking to capture him. Hazel's intentions are non-lethal, and her character is especially adept at ambushes, but her player realizes the scene could go either way. She proposes Advanced Narration. In exchange for agreeing to be captured, the player of Vinny asks for a concession later on, noting that being captured is at the third tier. Both parties agree, and begin a scene where Vinny is being held at a nearby warehouse.

Vinny is released at the conclusion of the scene, and he has an axe to grind. He approaches the Storyteller, and mentions that he has some Allies in the Order of St. Blaise. He wants to make travel difficult for Hazel, to the point that it affects her downtime actions. The Storyteller agrees, and tells Hazel after game that her travel plans as a Black Hand operative become immensely difficult, taking her much longer to get from point A to point B. She loses her next 4 downtime actions as a result. Although Hazel has some Influence pertaining to travel that she feels would normally come into play, this result is part of the agreement she made with the player of Vinny and she agrees to roll with it.

When the Story Has Run its Course

While a cooperative conflict can be fulfilling for long periods of time, it can also be susceptible to a life cycle. When a conflict ceases to be entertaining, or no longer feels right, it is best to abandon it. This resolution is often a simple matter if the conflict is cooperative. As part of the collaborative process, the participants work out an outcome together, possibly escalating matters into a competitive scenario or a storyline where differences are resolved. Alternatively, circumstances within the game as a whole can change, possibly giving both parties bigger fish to fry.

Conflict between characters is challenging and enriching. In a cooperative conflict, it's important that the cooperative story works for both participants. All parties need the opportunity to shine, but also need the right to go a different direction when it stops working. With a little cooperation from the right partner, it's something savored over the course of a storyline.

Creating the Game You Want

by Renee Ritchie

The first step to getting what you want is to have the courage to get rid of what you don't."

— Zig Ziglar

Everyone's ideal World of Darkness LARP is different. Some people hunger for a visceral experience, where the inherent danger of being a supernatural creature lurks around every corner. Others would rather ignore external hazards and play in an environment where the only real threat to their existence is other characters. Some want their adversaries vanquished with fisticuffs, others want to talk their way out of trouble, and still others want a puzzle to solve or a mystery to tease out.

World of Darkness games have a little something for everyone. The rich backdrops of each line provide social structures and status that players can manipulate, such as changeling courts, vampire sects, and werewolf tribes. Magic and lore provide cerebral challenges, revealing more about the world with each successful Quest. With enhanced physical abilities and other powers, each supernatural creature has her advantages and disadvantages in combat.

How, then, do you determine which of these elements to add to your game; to make it fun not only for you, but for your players? There is no magic bullet, or ratio of combat scenes to emotional roleplay, that is fun for every player, so toss that idea out the window right now. By creating the game that you want to run, your passion attracts players who buy in on what you're selling. From there, the process of creation becomes more collaborative; the players add to the story with their characters' motivations, and you can craft storylines and plots to feed those characters.

This essay covers creating the game you want to run, as opposed to the game you want to play. The game you want to play can be very different from the game you want to run. While you might enjoy political machinations as a player, you can prefer to run a far more straightforward game.

Deciding What You Want

The very first step to creating the game you want is deciding you want to run a game in the first place! Once you take the plunge, now take the time to figure out what kind of game you want to run. Do this work in private if you can. If you broadly announce your intention to run a game before you decide on what kind of story you want to tell, you may have players approach you with character concepts that are entirely inappropriate for the game you create.

Start with a few overarching questions, which inform more details later in the process. When you find yourself stuck on a detail while building your game world, come back to these answers for guidance.

- **How long do you want your game to last?** Do you want to run a single session, multiple game sessions, or an ongoing chronicle? For games with multiple sessions, how frequently will you run them: weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly? If you're not sure how long you want the game to run, consider this: are you comfortable with someone other than you continuing the game if you step down for any reason? If the answer is no, choose a shorter duration for your game.
- **How immersive do you want your game to be?** Do you want people to be continuously roleplaying their characters with minimal out-of-character breaks? Do you wish for hard and fast rules to govern high-risk activities, such as combat, social stand-offs, or other adversarial situations? Do you want players to continue their roleplay between game sessions, or do you prefer to avoid a '24/7' play style?
- **What are your game's themes?** What sort of

topics does your game explore? What sort of topics do you want to avoid? Do they dovetail with themes baked into the games themselves, or do they deviate from expectations set forward in rules and setting material? If someone dissected your game's stories in a high-school English class, what would she say?

- **What is your game's mood?** What do you want your players to feel when they play? What sensory aesthetics are involved? Is your vision for the game high-brow, classy, and elegant, where protocol is everything? Is it filthy and grimy, but with rays of hope filtering through the muck? Is it the primal thrumming of your heart pounding in your ears and the smell of blood and the hunt? Mood boards and music playlists work nicely to gather and define your thoughts about mood.

- **What sorts of creatures inhabit your game world, and how do they interact?** Will it focus solely on vampires? Does your game revolve around an alliance between the local werewolf sept and the nearest changeling freehold? Is there a three-way territory dispute? Are player characters from a single subgroup or multiple groups? For large-scale, networked games, such parameters are frequently already established ahead of time. However, this question can also determine what other character types are available as either adversaries or plot vehicles.

- **How lethal is your game?** This one is particularly important for World of Darkness games. Does the prospect of character death lurk behind every misstep or bad decision, or is the prospect of social ostracism or losing sanity more prevalent?

- **How do you want characters to solve problems and succeed?** Is every problem solved by killing or otherwise physically neutralizing the root cause? Do the characters (and players) need to solve various puzzles and think quickly to succeed? Are adversaries easily swayed by charismatic characters? Are the characters able to succeed easily, or do they need to put a lot of effort into achieving their goals?

- **Who will create the game's characters?** You or your staff can create characters and cast players in those roles if you prefer a higher level of narrative control over your game. For one-shot or short-duration LARPs, pre-generated characters are often ideal, as there is more urgency to incorporating the right themes into the stories you want to convey. Games with many new players may also find this system useful to quickly integrate players into the chronicle. While pre-generated characters can also work for ongoing chronicles, it puts a lot more work on the Storytelling staff. Creating characters for new players midstream that fit the existing game can prove problematic, as it requires prior notification for a character to be ready for a new player when she arrives.

With these thematic questions answered, start your world-building in earnest.

- **Where does your world differ from the published setting defaults?** Is your Werewolf game set before the Age of Apocalypse begins? Is Gehenna still a threat to vampires? What if Endless Winter was averted entirely?

- **Where will characters spend the majority of their time during game sessions?** Is the sept in a national park or skyscraper? Is the freehold in the basement of City Hall or an abandoned strip mall? Does the Keeper of Elysium maintain an old mansion or a dive bar for Kindred functions? Many World of Darkness LARPs are set in the same real-world city where the players play, or in a fictional city very similar to it. When using real-world cities, use popular landmarks and locations to root the characters firmly in the world. A little research and time with a map can make all the difference.

- **How will character groups be organized?** Which courts, kiths, tribes, factions, clans, or sects are in power? Which ones are not? Is

the pecking order exactly as it seems on the surface, or do other groups secretly hold the reins of power through puppets, infiltrators, and go-betweens?

- **Who in the game world introduces and reinforces the structures you set forward?** Does the Auspice Council brook no deviation from the laws of the sept, or do they have a lighter touch? How do Primogen treat their clanmates? How do freehold leaders gain and keep their titles? Who are the tastemakers, pariahs, and adversaries the characters face?
- **What does the population look like?** What sorts of characters are common? What sort of characters are rare? What sort of rarity Merit adjustments do those changes entail?

When worldbuilding, stick to broad strokes. This gives players scaffolding they us to flesh out their characters, and their connection to where they live. If you find yourself stuck on a particular detail, look back at the earlier questions, and they can guide you. Also, leave room for players to add their own narrative details while still keeping your world stable. Too much detail can bog things down and stifle player creativity. No plan fully survives first contact with the players, but a measure of flexibility keeps your vision largely intact.

Communicating Desires to the Setting Style Document

Now that you have a clear idea of what you want, communicate those desires via a Setting Style Document. The Setting Style Document is the Bible for you and your players to determine what is and isn't a good fit. For more details about how to write a Setting Style Document, review "Writing a Setting Style Document" (**Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire: The Masquerade** p. 333 or **Mind's Eye Theater: Werewolf: The Apocalypse** p. 462). The examples provided in the Setting Style Documents are the bare minimum to think about when putting together your game. However, with the work you already did, your Setting Style Document is nearly complete!

The Setting Style Document also covers topics not exclusive to the game world, such as expectations for player behavior. If you want to encourage certain behavior, add rewards or incentives for these behaviors—such as extra Experience Points for good costuming, a special plot cookie for contributing snacks, or other rewards for mentoring newer, inexperienced players. If you want to discourage certain behaviors, make it clear those behaviors are unacceptable and outline consequences. For large-scale, networked chronicles, a Code of Conduct can be its own document apart from the Setting Style Documents. For smaller-scale games, however, the Setting Style Document is a perfect place to communicate what behavior is and is not okay for players and Storytellers alike.

Think about sensitive topics coming up in your game that could upset players (or you) due to personal trauma. In the World of Darkness, it is easy to treat trauma related to racism, sexism, violence, addiction, sexual violence, and child harm as edgy or cool content to explore. However, you as a Storyteller have the power to veto any of that content in your game if you are not comfortable running scenes revolving around those themes. In your Setting Style Document, explicitly call out sensitive topics that are likely to come up in your game, so that players can choose to opt out. Also, explicitly call out sensitive topics that you do not want to explore in your game, and make sure players understand what themes are off-limits.

Pre-Game Logistics and Planning

Various design decisions, such as immersion level, duration, and frequency of games, will pre-determine what you need to run your game. If you want a highly immersive game, then props, décor, and lighting can transform your game space into the desired in-game location. The amount of effort you put into planning the logistics is up to you, but if organization and planning are not your strong suit, get other people to help you. For logistics, you will need a few things:

- **A play space:** Consider things like whether or not your game requires an indoor site, any accessibility considerations for disabled players, available bathroom facilities, or cost. If you choose to defray your costs with player

fees, determine a reasonable amount for what you are offering. Factor in not only the site fee, but costs for any additional décor, food, or other items used to enhance the experience.

- **Sufficient Storytellers, Narrators, and organizers to execute the stories you want to run:** If you plan to run a game with a complex ruleset, or with multiple storylines, get extra people to help. This is crucial to mitigate burnout not only for you, but also for keeping players engaged when you are not personally available to run storylines. For a game with a heavy focus on mechanics and multiple complex storylines, a reasonable ratio is around one Storyteller for every 5-10 players. For more roleplay-driven games with less focus on stricter rules, one Storyteller for every 20 players can be more appropriate. These numbers are general guidelines and can vary. However, any help you can get to manifest your vision is useful to you.
- **Costuming, décor, and props:** For some LARPs, these items are optional due to budget considerations. Some LARPs have minimal costuming by design, or are set in the modern day where street clothes are perfectly acceptable.
- **Players:** Without players, there is no LARP. Your hard work and worldbuilding could still be useful for writing fiction, but inviting players to share in your vision makes it a game. Communicating with your players clearly about what to expect from your game gives them an opportunity to decide if the game is for them, and if so, how they want to engage.

Presenting Your Game Concept to Prospective Players

Once your plan is in place, it's now time to invite players. Wait until you have your plan before communicating it to your potential player base. Give them the information they need to decide whether or not to play, but also create a space for buying in to your setting, permitting players to add to it. Some players may decide the game you want to run is not for them and that's okay. Do not force anyone, including yourself, to engage in an unfun story.

When presenting your game, you may feel more comfortable sticking with familiar groups when recruiting players. However, don't be afraid to branch out and welcome new-to-you players who also like your ideas. Social media, local game stores, and local comic book shops are easy locations to advertise your game. For ongoing chronicles, fan tables or running special events at gaming and science fiction conventions provide other recruitment opportunities.

However, only cast as wide a net as you are comfortable with. If you find yourself with more players than you and your Storyteller staff can handle, you are under no obligation to accept new players until you have sufficient Storyteller staff.

Buy-In and Reconciling Different Interpretations

Even with exact notes and clear proscriptions, no one interprets your Setting Style Document exactly the way you intend it. Many come very close, but some still want to play the character they have in their head, regardless of whether or not it's a good fit for your setting. This is the moment when the process of creating your game becomes collaborative.

If your players build their own characters, you must clearly tell players when their concept is not appropriate for play. Frequently, if you can pinpoint a specific detail about a character that could be changed to better fit the setting, you and the player can work together to build something that is both appropriate to your vision and fun for the player. Ask questions about a character aimed at steering players to backstory details or character quirks that fit your setting. Encourage connections and relationships between story characters and other player characters in service to that vision. Spread the coolness around. However, do not correct every single detail of a character submitted to your game that does not completely fit your vision. A player's slight deviations

can breathe new life into your world.

When working with pre-generated characters, with goals and stories created ahead of time, you have more control over the characters placed in your world. That said, there is a chance that players ignore any pre-written goals in favor of what they consider fun. Provide the players portraying these characters with enough roleplaying hints to steer play in a direction that not only serves your story, but is also be fun for the player. Player surveys with questions about play styles and character preferences are immensely useful in casting players in suitable roles.

Setting Reinforcement and Evolution

Once the game begins, story characters can reinforce the setting with mannerisms, opinions, and actions that fit with the established world. If a character acts in a manner contradictory to the setting, some gentle guidance from one of those story characters provides the necessary correction. Give characters and players opportunities to either adjust, or use the deviation from the setting as a springboard for plot. For example, a Brujah showing up at a black-tie event in full biker leathers may earn that Brujah ejection from the event, no matter how nice those leathers are. Clearly communicate consequences for undesirable behaviors, ideally in character, so that players choosing to violate in-character standards know what to expect. Keep as light a touch as you can with setting reinforcement through story characters, as heavy overuse can result in resentment from players and the perception of punishing players instead of characters.

Storyteller-originated storylines reinforce the themes and moods of your game. When creating these storylines, keep checking in with the themes and moods you established. A plot involving a pack of Sabbat can express itself as a stealthy ambush of an unwary elder for a theme of vigilance; a reckless, no-holds-barred attack on the local Elysium with no hope of survival for a theme of desperation; or defense of a location that holds vast secrets for a theme of exploring the unknown. The themes and moods of your game should support the motives and tactics of antagonist story characters, to the point of those characters dangerously showing their hand. Let these themes carry through in the execution, resolution, and fallout of these storylines in ways that touch the characters personally. Also, read and mine character backstories for moments that serve your themes.

That said, even with the most stringent setting reinforcement, the nature of a game changes and evolves with time. Games are living things, and the bones they're built on can (and should!) grow and change. If the themes and moods of the game change, either through your own designs or through player actions, update your Setting Style Document to reflect those changes, and explicitly communicate such changes to your player base. Just a note to your players informing them the Setting Style Document changed, with a copy of the updated version is sufficient; no detailed changelog is required.

Conclusion

Creating the game you want takes proactive time and effort on your part to set the stage, and player buy-in to flourish. By taking the time to determine what kind of game you want, and then clearly communicating your setting details, you do yourself and your players a great service. As the game progresses, those desires can change, either through your own inclinations or through your players' initiative. In the end, the game does not belong just to you but also your players. You provide the sandbox and the toys, but it's not as much fun if you're just building sand castles by yourself.

Creating Memorable Plots & Scenarios

by April Douglas

"We're all stories, in the end."
— Steven Moffat

At the heart of every character, every game session, and every epic chronicle lies a story. Big or small, simple or complex—these stories drive characters and games forward. One of the most important jobs for any Storyteller is creating rich, intriguing stories and vibrant worlds for the characters to inhabit. These scenarios and plots, the stories on which we build our shared worlds, are the difference between a successful, long-running game and one that falls apart when it fails to capture the players' imaginations.

Roleplaying is an art, and a hobby that many of us start at a young age. From playground bouts of Cops and Robbers to tea parties with our favorite stuffed animals to building castles out of cardboard boxes, we allow our imaginations to run wild and create worlds we can inhabit. The stories we tell as adults often evolve from the simple scenarios of childhood, but the same rules apply. Tell a story, create a world, and immerse yourself in something different and exciting.

In live-action roleplaying (LARP), Storytellers face the challenge of involving all the characters, or at least offering them the option for involvement. Often, a plot or scenario targets a small portion of the players rather than an entire troupe. The trick is having enough stories active to involve everyone. Stories should rotate—one month, you might focus on a combat-heavy plot, while the next month political intrigue takes center stage.

The first and most important thing in creating plots, scenarios, and stories for a game is remembering that no plot survives first contact with the players. Often, Storytellers weave an intricate tale, only to find their players unravel those carefully placed pieces in the span of one evening. In storytelling, one must be flexible. At its heart, LARP is about collaborative storytelling and creating a shared world— if the players break a plot the first night, then it's time to add something new to keep the scenario going.

Once a Storyteller makes the decision to begin leading a game, they need to determine what kinds of stories she wants to tell. The best course of action is an out-of-character meeting with the player base. Here, you can survey players and find out what stories they want to tell and what scenarios they want. Some gaming groups could want a combat-heavy game, while others want political intrigue or enigmas. Once you have a broad idea of what your players enjoy, you can begin the task of crafting your first stories.

The Art of Storytelling

Before sharing any plotlines, one must first learn how to tell a story and direct a game session. No matter how amazing a scenario is, if the Storyteller can't deliver the narrative, the plot falls flat. Likewise, a dynamic Storyteller breathes life into the simplest plots, offering players an emotional impact that sticks with them. The art of storytelling comes down to balance, and finding a happy medium between letting players do whatever they want and guiding them toward the story and their goals.

No one is a perfect Storyteller right out of the gate. Like anything in life, this skill takes time and practice to perfect. Even the most skilled narrator has off-days where nothing quite comes together. However, any Storyteller can implement a few of the following suggestions to manage their chronicles and ensure everyone walks away with a sense of enjoyment.

Here are a few suggestions to help improve your skills as a Storyteller:

- **Listen to your players.** As the Storyteller, your job is to provide your players with an opportunity for fun. No amount of previous experience exempts you from the need to sit down with your player base and listen to what they want from the game. While it's impossible to make everyone happy all of the

time, it's important that players know they have a voice in the shared world you create together.

- **Be prepared.** While most storytelling can be improvised, it's important to prepare for each game session you run. Know the story you're telling, even if it's just a vague outline. Understand the rules of the game. If you have different non-player characters (NPCs) to introduce, have some notion of their different personalities and mannerisms, and come prepared with different costuming to help facilitate immersion. A small amount of preparation boosts the players' confidence in your abilities and ensures the game runs smoothly.
- **Be responsive and set healthy boundaries with your players.** If you are running a long-term chronicle, make sure your players know how to contact you when they have questions or downtimes to discuss. However, your players need to understand your boundaries. For example, some Storytellers might enjoy casual conversations at after-game meals, while others prefer to communicate via email to maintain paper trail of their conversations. If you are a Storyteller who cannot answer text messages at all hours, be certain your players know when it is acceptable to reach you.
- **Be aware of your audience's limitations.** Know what your players can handle and what they desire in a game. While it can be fun to push boundaries and explore darker aspects of the setting, not all players want that experience. Remember you are shepherding a shared world and all players must feel comfortable in the setting.
- **Communication is key!** Don't be afraid to reach out to your players between game sessions to discuss any issues with them. Ask them how they feel about the game and the plots you run; help them feel they are truly part of the world. Healthy lines of communication keep a chronicle running smoothly.
- **Be flexible.** No plot survives first contact with players. At times, you could flounder when clever players thwart your carefully laid plans. Be ready to improvise!
- **Observe your characters in their natural habitat.** Watching your players as they interact with one another is the best way to craft compelling stories for them. Every game session has moments when no one is chasing plot, allowing the characters to simply interact while they provide insight to the game's social dynamics. Use this time to get a feel for the characters. The beauty of LARP is the portrayal of the characters rather than their written background.

As a Storyteller, you take on many responsibilities. You are not only in charge of guiding the story and crafting the world, but also for protecting and engaging your players. Although **Mind's Eye Theatre** games are set in the **World of Darkness** and intended for adult audiences, there are always topics that should not be approached with the troupe. Communication and awareness can help ensure players do not find themselves in emotionally damaging situations.

One method of ensuring your players remain safe is by employing trigger warnings. If you choose to run a plot that could be upsetting to some players, always warn your players ahead of time. If you mention problematic themes during pre-game announcements, players can ignore or opt-out of a plot that upsets them. When using this technique, players always have the opportunity to opt-out of any storylines, even if they already engaged with it.

Creating the Perfect Plot

If you ask 10 people what makes a good story, you will get a wide variety of answers. Some want more adventure and risk; others want more character growth; and others don't want any story at all, just wanting to exist and interact as their characters. No matter what a player base desires in their local chronicle, every successful story needs three key ingredients: interest, connection, and a satisfying conclusion.

Interest

Every Storyteller has a moment where they created a brilliant story for their players with rich antagonists and a compelling hook, only to have it ignored. Piquing the interest of your players is the first thing you must do with any plotline. Offered at check-in, Sinister Seeds are excellent ways of drawing characters into the story. Sinister Seeds are short, plot hooks aimed at characters who have certain qualities on their character sheets. You could distribute information for certain clans, tribes, or kiths; for characters who possess certain Allies or Contacts; or characters with appropriate levels of the Influence background. When planning Sinister Seeds for a storyline, make them target multiple groups with each Seed containing slightly different information. This diversity encourages characters to interact and share intelligence about a given situation.

If players ignore a plot, don't despair! Just because they aren't immediately interested doesn't mean the plot needs to disappear. For example, consider a plot involving a group of convincing antagonists attempting to gentrify part of a city for their own nefarious purposes. Even if the players don't investigate any Sinister Seeds you offer, the antagonists still go about their business. This consequence turns a minor threat into a larger and deadlier one.

Connection

Once your players show interest in a plot, it's time they forge a connection to the story. At its core, all roleplaying is about an emotional link and exploration of feelings that we can't find in our mundane lives. As a Storyteller, your job is fostering that emotional connection. Give the players something to care about with your story, and a reason to delve into and explore the world. If you tap into your players' emotions, they gladly join you on the ride.

As your players begin to explore the story, you can flex your storytelling muscles. Narrating scenes with vivid descriptions can elicit emotional responses from your players, and complex NPCs leave the players with moral quandaries to probe. Plot points draw characters deeper into the narrative by utilizing their backgrounds, or even knowledge you gleaned through observation. For example, in the above plot with a shady group of antagonists gentrifying the city, you could include that they acquired a building that was once a brothel that employed a character. This tidbit gives that character and her player additional emotional buy-in and a reason to work against the antagonist.

Plots and scenarios range from simple skirmishes accomplished in an hour to grand, overarching stories running for months or even years. No matter how simple or complex a plot is, some suggestions for crafting a compelling story for your players include the following:

- **Every plot needs a beginning, middle, and end.** While the characters' choices always alter what a Storyteller planned, you need to have the end in mind. Something as simple as a raid on a Pentex facility still has some build-up, a climax, and then a culmination.
- **Make sure your contingencies have contingencies.** Players often surprise you with their plans, and many times they devise a simple resolution to the most complex of plot. Be ready to adjust the story as you go along and leave room for these brilliant moments from players. Don't be afraid to let them solve the plot earlier than you planned—players find these triumphs exhilarating.
- **Keep it simple.** Sometimes, all you need is a hook and a vague idea of where the story goes. Flesh out your stories and prepare, but remember that a roleplaying game changes with little notice. If you plan out every single detail, you spend more time planning than telling the story. Leave room for the story to evolve organically.
- **Give your players agency.** Often, Storytellers embark on a plot with a set idea of how things will go, but players always surprise you with their ingenuity. Allow their actions to affect the plot—for better or worse. When you remove the ability to affect the result, players are railroaded without any real control over the shared world. Players grow frustrated if nothing they do changes the ultimate outcome.

- **Shake things up.** While every plot and scenario differ, make sure you bring new ideas and opportunities to the chronicle. If players raid the same warehouse every month, they will get bored. Vary your plots to give players a wide variety of experiences.

Every plot or scenario created for a game should have an emotional hook—a driving force drawing in players and giving them something to talk about long after game ends. Most players crave the emotional exhilaration and amplification from roleplaying. However, be careful not to depend on shock value to instill these emotions. Sensitive topics such as mass shootings, sexual assault, or attacks on children and animals must be handled delicately and respectfully. Many games elect to forbid certain aspects and plot elements, and this conversation must occur between you and the players prior to the game. Players must be able to excuse themselves from scenes or scenarios that are difficult for them emotionally manage. Remember, we want to play a game and have fun. Long-lasting emotional trauma is never enjoyable.

Bringing your Story to an End

The final element of any plot is the end. This is a Storyteller's last chance to impact players and their characters. All too often in LARP, a plot has an interesting hook and an engaging story, only to fade into obscurity without any real closure. For many players, this outcome leaves them unfulfilled, with part of the story forever untold. Of course, as Chuck from Supernatural tells us, "Endings are hard. Any chapped-ass monkey with a keyboard can poop out a beginning, but endings are impossible."

So, how do you end a story? How do you create a conclusion that is both memorable and satisfying? First, you need to acknowledge when it's time for a story to end. Often the temptation to let a story drag on destroys a memorable ending. Like a favorite TV show that goes on three seasons after it should end, players grow bored and frustrated with a lack of closure. End your plot or story on a high note, during a moment of excitement. Give the players a final battle or last conflict, like routing the evil, gentrifying cabal from their city, and let the plot come to its natural close.

Once the players achieve their final goal, lay the plot to rest. Some troupes enjoy having tell-all sessions with their Storyteller, where they can glean more knowledge about the plot or antagonists utilized in the story. The Storyteller has a chance to delve into all of the intricate details the players missed. These wrap-up sessions offer out-of-character closure to a story.

Keep them Coming Back for More

Some Storytellers worry that once a plot ends, their players won't return for the next game session. While this circumstance can be an effective way of bringing a chronicle to a close, most games prefer to continue running. Like a TV shows has a season finale, you can hook your players again before finally drawing the curtain on the previous plot. If you are an effective Storyteller who offers compelling scenarios, most players keep coming back.

One of the most effective ways to keep players engaged in a chronicle beyond a single plot is to have multiple plots and stories running concurrently. Just as in the real world, there is never just one issue in our lives that we must tackle. The **World of Darkness** is filled with different problems to constantly handle. Storytellers need to know their limitations if they plan to run multiple plots at the same time. You juggle many balls at once, and it's easy to lose track of which ones are up and which ones are down. Never take on more stories than you can handle, and if they are available, don't be afraid to recruit assistant Storytellers. This delegation eases some of your burden, as well as offers someone else storytelling experience. Since running multiple games can draw on already stressed resources, some games can only offer one scenario at a time.

Ultimately, the best way to encourage the return of your players is treating each participant with respect and kindness. Listen to their ideas and implement their desires into the game. Give their characters room to grow and space to fail. Always offer them emotional moments they will carry with them for years to come.

Conclusion

Every chronicle is comprised of stories: hundreds of vignettes forming a complex and interesting shared world. When characters first begin a chronicle, stories told by their creator define them. As a game evolves, so do these stories. The characters become more than just a background on a piece of paper. They also become active participants in the world created for them. As their actions influence the game world, the game world influences the characters.

These stories drive every troupe forward. No matter how simple or complex, how large or small, the tales told by the Storyteller and the players become part of the living history of a chronicle. Storytelling is never an easy job. It is frustrating and heartbreaking, and sometimes you wonder if it's all really worth it. Then comes that perfect moment when a plot evolves into something spectacular. It takes the players' breath away, filling them with anticipation for what comes next. These moments stick with players for years—moments that forever define a chronicle and the shared stories told there.

