Damnation City™

Who Rules Who

by Robin D. Laws

I: Airbox

He tromped along the pier, its sodden planks springing beneath the soles of his motorcycle boots. "I don't believe this." He glanced down into the dark water. Reflections of distant street lights distorted themselves on the surface of the water's lazy wave pattern. There was something transfixing about it. Airbox imagined that if he stared into this water long enough, he could see all the bad things he'd ever done, replayed for him at ghostly speed. "Try him again."

Rasha sighed. She shook her painstakingly curled and highlighted hair at him. "I tried him three minutes ago, Airbox."

"Well, try him again, okay? Maybe he'll have reception now."

Slim, manicured fingers pressed the glowing buttons of her streamlined new phone. "If he hasn't left yet, he's not getting reception in that basement of his."

"You try his landline?"

"Out of service."

Airbox resumed his pacing. "I told him to get the landline restored. It's imperative now that we be able to reach him at all times. I told him."

Rasha leaned up against the warehouse wall. She could lean up on anything and seem perfectly balanced and comfortable. "He did get the landline put back in. And then he didn't pay the bill again, and it got yanked."

Airbox punched the misty air. "Fucking Jimmy! How many times have I told him we have to step up our game from here on out?"

"Countless," said Rasha, letting a note of her own annoyance creep in.

He stopped himself short. Counted out a bunch of steamboats. It was not good leadership, to let himself appear rattled. Even in front of Rasha.

This place wasn't right.

"Okay," he said. "Here's something funny. An observation of the unusual. What are we walking on, here? Boards. We're on a wooden pier. Wooden. The waterfront district of a modern city. How long has it been since concrete piers were invented and put widely into place? World War Two? Earlier than that? Yet in this instance, in the twenty-first century, we're standing on planks. This shouldn't exist."

"Rainfold stuck us with inferior turf, is that what you're saying?"

"No, I mean, I'm looking at it, I believe what my eyes see." A scuttling sound came from the collection of aluminum garbage bins

by the warehouse door. He restrained himself from investigating. A rat, undoubtedly. "It's just that – before it happened to you – doesn't the city look different to you now?"

"Since I got bit?"

"Yeah, since we got bit. I mean, when I was a breather, this seemed like a normal city to me. Nothing peculiar about it. Now all around me I constantly behold fundamental wrongness."

"The fact that this is a wooden pier and not concrete – that's supernatural now, is it?" Rasha flipped open her cell phone, hit redial and watched the display. Shook her head.

"I'm not saying supernatural. I'm saying weird. Like the way the streeters shuffle along the sidewalk grates up in Westmoreland, like they're hypnotized. The number of doors on walls with no doorways, most of them painted red. The same metallic paint. Did you notice that before? And there's coyotes in Blount Park now."

"There were coyotes before we got bit. I remember reading about it in the news. What are you really saying, Air?"

"Maybe we're not ready for a slice of this. Maybe it was better to be fancy free."

"I don't know about you, Airbox, but I don't want to be on the downhill side of the perpetual shit-slide forever."

"We raised the stakes. We got infeudated. And who are we still relying on? Jimmy. Dude's gonna get us Who Rules Who. Okay. There. I said it."

"He's our friend."

"In my case, since we were kids. And the whole time, me apologizing and smoothing the waters. Covering his ass." He pulled out a pack of cigarettes and worried the cellophane off it. He couldn't smoke any more. But he still liked to have them, just to handle. "It's a simple matter of him picking up a truck and bringing it to a predetermined address. Where the hell is he?" He shoved an unlit cig between chapped and peeling lips.

"He's late but on his way. I'll bet you a ticket to the Viva Voce show."

Okay, he had to pace. "That's the thing. That's what burns. I sincerely believed when I went through this with him just the other night, when I impressed on him the gravity of our – his – new circumstances, I thought I'd gotten it through his thick head. It. Has. To. Be. Different. Now."

A dead fish floated by. Its head was eaten off, but it looked to Airbox like a species that ought not to be there. A barracuda or something. It fell off a boat, he told himself. Catch of the day, posthumously escaped.

He continued. "But that's what I always think, isn't it? At the conclusion of one of our talks. He's got the charming carefree sociopath thing going on. When he says he's sorry and he's finally gonna shape up, he believes it. And so you believe it, too." He checked his watch, a gift from Rainfold. Orange street lights over the warehouse picked out the scratches on its face. "Look. You have the number for the guy with the van?"

"He's not supposed to know us."

"Screw that. Call him anyway. See if Jimmy's at least got the vehicle."

Airbox checked on the package while Rasha placed the call. It seemed like it would keep. He pulled out his newly laden keychain and fished through it. Each unfamiliar key had a bit of masking tape wrapped around the head, with a notation in faded, scraggly ballpoint. Air wondered who had been the custodian of the keys before him, and whether he'd moved up the food chain or gotten himself eaten. Finding the key marked Brear. Ware., which meant "warehouse on Brearly Street," he punched it into the lock, twisted and opened the door. He picked up the package by its carrier handle and slipped it inside.

As he locked up, Rasha approached, shaking her head.

"Guy's still waiting with the van. Says he's only gonna be there another half hour, and then he's got to vacate."

"Shit. OK. Where's the guy?"

"Up near Ninth and Dennison."

"That's Raker territory. Our asses are banned there." Airbox slapped the fingers of his left hand into the palm of his right. "Lundquist's never beefed with them, right?"

"He keeps his head down."

"OK. Call Lundquist. Tell him he's picking up the van from the guy and then coming here for the package." He twisted the key off the ring and stuck it under the garbage bins. "Then give him directions here and tell him this is where the key is. When he's here, he calls you for the drop. Then call the guy –"

Rasha nodded. "– tell him to sit tight. Give him Lundquist's description. And us?"

"We go find Jimmy. This is not another screw-up. This is a pedagogical opportunity."

They hoofed it to Rasha's '78 Mustang. As she got in, Air saw that the latest paint job matched her nail polish. As to why they weren't transporting the package themselves in her car, there was no need for discussion. Rainfold had been crystal clear on that – there had to be at least one degree of separation between the item and any vehicles registered to his people. Preferably more. It was an issue with possible DNA leakage.

They had to go the long way to Jimmy's place. A cruise up Central was out of the question; the Postmen had their cops running heat scans on drivers who fit the profile. The Zone was Raker territory now. And, for unspecified reasons, Rainfold had put Gorham off-limits for the entire op.

His face lit by the glow of his handheld, Airbox acted as navigator, consulting a map of the city with territorial borders color-coded by degree of danger. The Mustang weaved through the CBD, detoured through Chicken Town, rounded the circle and redoubled down to Jimmy's picturesquely fraying residential nabe.

"You should move him somewhere more accessible," Rasha said, pulling into his driveway.

"Can't pry him out of here with a crowbar." With firm deference, Airbox closed the passenger side door of Rasha's precious car. "This was his mother's place. She made the best peanut butter cookies in the Western hemisphere." He pointed to an upstairs window. "Two of us used to sit up there playing Atari all day long."

"He was an angel once, is what you're telling me?"

"At seven years old, he ripped off homemade wine from Mr. Ianucci next door and got the two of us puking hammered."

Motion detectors activated a floodlight as they hustled to the basement door around the back. It threw a low, slumping shadow across the crumbling brick wall of the rooming house next door. Airbox thrust his hand into his pocket, finding his blade.

A fat raccoon ambled nonchalantly past them down the paved laneway.

"Aren't animals supposed to shrink from us in terror?" Airbox asked.

"Raccoons in this city shrink from nothing."

Air banged on Jimmy's door. "If he's still in his box, I swear I'll –" He stopped short. Jimmy's alarm system had been jiggered. Rasha pulled out her LED flashlight. Airbox kicked the door in.

The place was a disaster area, but that was nothing unusual. It stank of mold and cat feces. Stroke mags carpeted Jimmy's living room. A pile of shoplifted game cartridges lay in a heap by his gaming rig. He'd hung a cheapie plush blanket of a tiger's head on the far wall, to cover up the blood spatters left on the masonry from his go-round with Chicago Bob. That had been four months ago.

Banging noises and a muffled cry came from the other room.

Airbox rushed in, Rasha behind him.

Jimmy's box had been disturbed. He was inside it all right, thumping on the lid, calling out their names. Fresh screws held the lid fast to the coffin. Airbox ran to Jimmy's utility closet, dug out his power drill and fumbled for the Philips head. Six minutes later, they had the lid off.

It smelled crimson in there.

Jimmy popped a panicked and bleary head up past the sides of his box. His hair was matted into a lopsided pompadour. A sticky substance had dried in it.

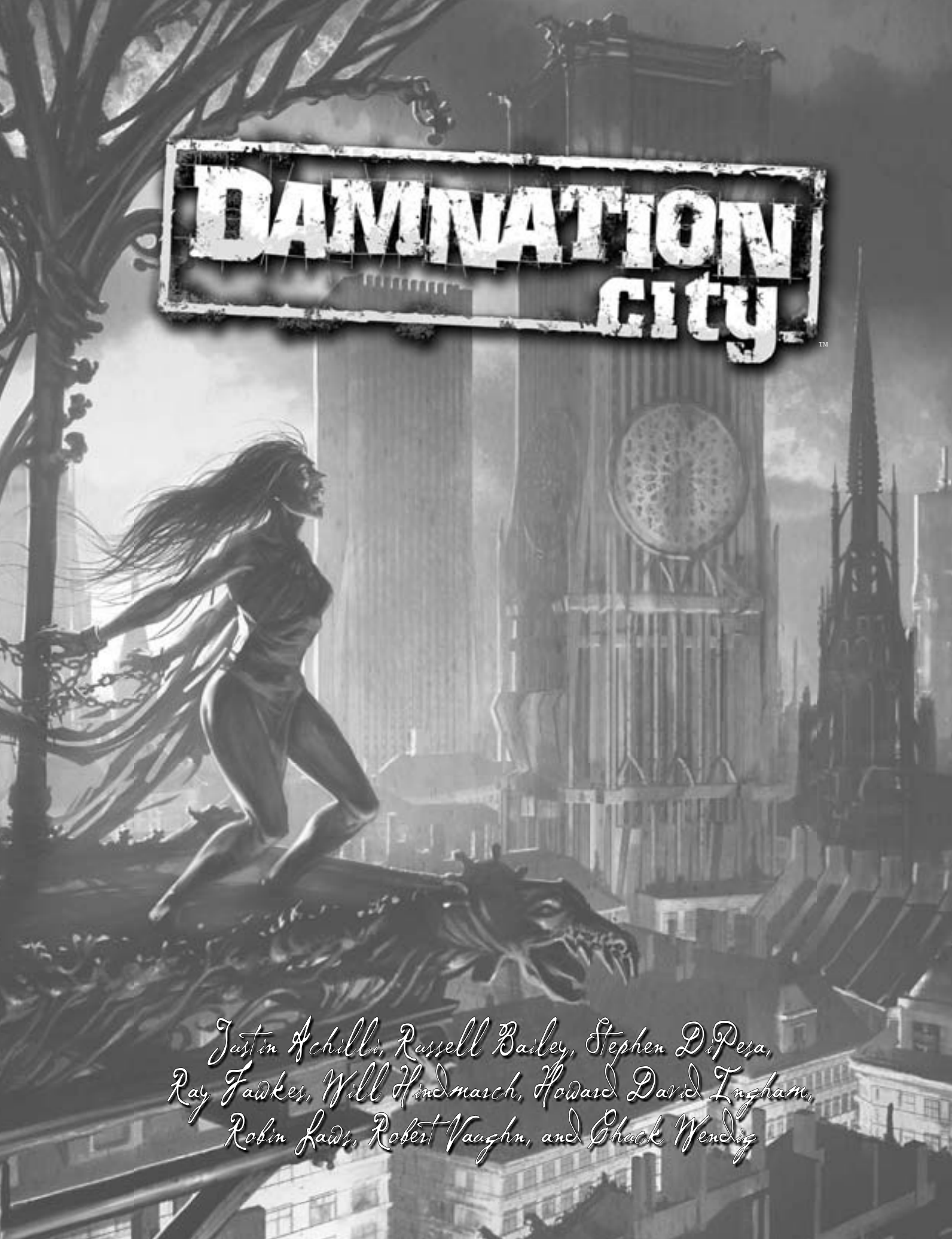
"Took you long enough!" he complained.

"Who'd you piss off this time, Jimmy?" asked Rasha.

"Oh, nice. Excellent welcome. I been in here forever," he said. He looked down. "Oh no."

Airbox kicked out a path between the porn mags and gun catalogues, and paced its length. "Always keep your mobile inside your box with you, Jimmy. That's just basic stuff. How many times I have to go over it for –"

Jimmy wasn't listening. "Holy shit. Holy shit, Air. Lookit this!" He held up his right arm. The hand was missing,


DAMNATION
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Special Thanks

This book was cursed. It sailed a crooked sea-road through green waters and broken rocks, taking on water and losing sailors overboard almost every night. A few brave souls had the stomachs, sea legs and hands to work the rigging and coax her out of the jaws of the coiling blue snake that grabbed hold of her amid the ice flows — these souls are memorialized elsewhere on this page. The writers worked the rigging. The artists toiled below decks. matt milberger kept the lanterns lit. Rich Thomas manned the lighthouse, as only he can.

Special thanks, also, to Craig Grant, who had no idea what he was getting into.

Thank you all.

— Will Hindmarch

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Introduction: City of the Damned

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."
— Proverb

The Breathing City

Vampire is a Storytelling game, but it's also a roleplaying game. That means players often expect the freedom to explore a boundless world. Sometimes the players just send their characters running off down an alley, into the night, looking for adventure. Sometimes the story wanders out of the playground the Storyteller prepared, and he just needs something exciting to happen.

This book helps you Storytellers tackle that by helping you determine what can happen in any neighborhood, how stories can arise from travel through feudal territory (ever see *Judgment Night* or *The Warriors*?) and what "random encounters" befall the protagonists (though they're never really random outside of the imaginary action of the game — Storytellers decide what happens and what doesn't).

Some gamers like their play space — in this case, the city — to feel like it's a living world, a complete city where every night has to be tracked and things happen only because the players' characters collide with other characters in the play space, not because of a plot turning like fate underneath it all. The sense that the whole city exists out there, in your imaginations, whether the characters go down those streets or not, is exciting. It feels like verisimilitude. It's not what we advertise, exactly, in our Storytelling games, but it's a way to play, and by helping to deliver that sense to the players who covet it, Storytellers can focus more on Storytelling and less on brainstorming stories or managing encounters.

But that's all it is: a sensation. The cities of the World of Darkness exist, in part, as stains on paper, but they really come alive in the imaginations of all you players telling stories in them. Only at the moment when your characters are taking action — speaking, pleading, chasing, bleeding, screaming, fighting, dying — in that world, does that world exist.

The more life you breathe into a city's history and people and atmosphere, the more real the city seems. Eventually, describing it becomes easier, imagining what its inhabitants do becomes intuitive, the way back to the imaginary old neighborhood becomes familiar. The city's own character emerges.

It sucks, but there are no shortcuts to the place where an imaginary city comes alive. We can't just print a few pages of building descriptions and promise that they'll start breathing air and pumping blood when you read them aloud in a game session. No secret arrangement of city streets and rivers will transmute a map into the place it represents.

A quantity of information does not guarantee depth. Don't mistake pedantry for detail. Don't confuse what's authentic and what's provocative. When you have to choose, go with what's provocative.

This is a Storytelling game. Drama is king. Facts are not better than feelings. It doesn't matter if the details that make up the features on your city's face are true or not. All that matters is that they are compelling.

The City as Play Space

In **Vampire**, the city isn't just the background. It's not just another character, either. It's not just subtext presented through history or a physical manifestation of mood or the themes of your stories transformed into buildings and bridges.

The city is all of those things. And it's more, besides. The city is your play space.

One of the other things we're doing here is zooming out a bit from the intimate focus of **Vampire** and looking at some of the game's bigger elements. With this book, players can experiment with regency for their characters, with some of the intrigue and power plays that vampires are known for, with the whole city as their playground. The neo-feudal structure keeps these schemes and struggles personal, even when they're about conflicts between territories. This isn't city council stuff — you don't run for office, you get it dropped on your shoulders, owed to you, surrendered to you by a broken foe, or you get shackled to it by gold chains on the order of the Prince.

When the urban play space is seen from above, from the cold remove of the Damned, territories and turf become spaces on a board. On the one hand, Storytellers can use this zoomed-out point of view for adjudicating travel within the city — for example, to get from Northtown to Southtown, you have to go through either Benedict's domain or Edgar's domain and deal with the consequences if you get caught trespassing where you're not welcome. With the city divided into zones like this, Storytellers can pull back on the scale of action and easily manage stories in which characters embark on city-changing missions for their lords or engage in intrigues involving complex webs of scheming vampires.

But the setting of a roleplaying game isn't a cold and static thing, like a game board. Every city is different, and the circumstances that are *important* about any city can vary from one night to the next — what's important certainly changes from one story to the next. A Storytelling city needs to be characterized, with a personality and atmosphere all its own. More than that, a city's moods — and a story's needs! — must be respected.

This is the basis of an important guideline. Don't forget it. It's this: **Storytellers design a city at the start, but the players' characters act in it.** By taking action in the city, the characters change it. A Storyteller who tries to keep his city from changing at all is straight-jacketing his chronicle.

At the same time, the player who expects the rules and consequences of the city to be the same night after night is in for a shock. Most nights you cross the street, no problem. But some night you're going to step off a curb and get hit by a van. Nothing ever changes, but nothing ever stays the same.

Theme

The illusion of control. Mortal men and women have the courses of their lives altered by the selfish machinations of an invisible society of bloodthirsty monsters. Lethal predatory vampires declare themselves masters of this dark alley and that burnt-out building, but their dominion stretches only as far their undead landlord says it does. The Prince is the source of all power and authority among the Damned, but even if his control is enough to resist the influence and politicking of the Primogen, he is still a slave to the Blood. Around it all, the ever-changing city manipulates everyone and everything through unpredictable collisions of lives and Requiems — the chaotic interactions of a million animals struggling to get through the night in the same teeming and haunted forests of brick.

All control is temporary. Influence is the best any man or monster can really hope for. Control is possible only when kine and Kindred surrender it to the creatures they think already have it — police, politicians, landlords, parents, experts, thugs and monsters.

Tangled desires and hidden connections. The cities of the World of Darkness are layers of tangled cellars and streets capped with labyrinthine towers of glass and steel, dressed in gargoyles and grime. Hidden rooms are everywhere, whether they're secret caches of drugs and kidnapped children or forgotten buildings where squatters and addicts dwell in the dark. Secret connections run between rooftops, underneath streets, between subway tunnels, up in private elevators and down through moldy stairwells. Unseen connections link strangers, from the addict whose money gets filtered through dealers back into the hands of thieves who steal his car to the businessman in the whorehouse who doesn't realize his daughter is turning a trick in the room next door. Your landlord is in league with your enemy, and the Prince, it turns out, is your grandsire.

Every move made touches someone or something else in the city. The car accident kills the groom, which cancels the wedding, which is where the vassal was going to capture the party guest, who was to be given to the Prince as rent, who was going to name a new Primogen, but now it's all come apart.

The bonds run everywhere in the city. They're the veins carrying blood. They're the pipes funneling sewage. They're the chains binding families together. They're the power lines collapsing in the storm and starting the fire that burns down the house. They're the garden hose that washes the blood way. They're the clotheslines used to garrote the informer and the police tape that keeps his widow away from the scene. They're the phone lines that carry the call back to the Prince to report the job is done.

Everyone gives and everyone takes. In every relationship, in one given night, someone's losing and someone's gaining. The landlord gets paid, the tenant goes broke.

The Prince gives up a slice of his city, the vassal takes possession. Some nights you get to take, and some nights you get taken.

There's no such thing as breaking even. That just means the deal isn't done yet.

The Over-Theme: Characterization

Throughout this whole book, from the Storyteller advice through the background information and into the mechanics, another overarching theme influences everything: characterization.

Some people told us not to call it that, because this use of the word "character" might be confusing in a roleplaying game book where the word is already being overtaxed. We messed around for a while with other fancy terms for this idea, but none of them are as accurate, intuitive and to the point as *characterization*. Besides, you're smart people. We trust you won't be confused.

The goal of this book is to help you characterize the game world where your stories are set, to give personality and attitude to the play space. The settings where your stories play out aren't just backdrops. They're elements of gameplay, essential to good Storytelling and scenario design. The decrepit church where the climactic shootout takes place is a thematic device, but it's also a telling characteristic of your chronicle's city. It's also the equivalent of the "level" or map (to borrow video game terms) where the action takes place — it should affect the choices the players make in the scene just as their characters' traits and equipment do.

Throughout this book, we strove to imbue systems and mechanics with elements of character. When you put all this stuff into action in your own chronicle, strive for the same thing. Characterize the setting.

Mood

Silhouettes with shining eyes crawling through steaming alleys, skyline lights like gems on black felt, burnt-out cars rotting for days on street corners, oil stains and old blood splatter soaked into gas station pavement underneath bright fluorescent light, a tenement hotel room changing colors in a cycling neon glow, the chain-link fence curled away from a stinking canal with castoff clothes stuck to its sides, an abandoned house with strangers sleeping through the noon hours in every room.

Byzantine schemes and wary conspirators: Lovers, lying in bed, plot to kill their spouses. The minion on one knee, kissing his lord's ring, but with one hand on his dagger just in case. The valet leans in and whispers something to the Prince, who then changes his mind. Black-jacketed glit-

terati gather in a weedy parking lot in a ring of headlights and make a pact to break up the Primogen.

Debts owed, favors promised, loyalties tested and ranks bestowed. A fanged coke addict drags another sedated body into the back of his van for delivery to his landlord. "Go to the motel on Eighteenth Street," says the white-haired Seneschal across his desk, "and bring me the hands of the doctor in room nine." The Prince, holding the rediscovered pendant up to the light, says, "You've just bought yourself half a dozen Kindred and a knighthood, young thing."

A Tour of Damnation City

The organization of this book is, admittedly, a little strange. Reading through it, front to back, feels a little scattershot. This arrangement of information and chapters is intended to facilitate reference over the course of a chronicle (some information is essential at the beginning of play, but would just be in the way later), but it's also meant to emphasize the piecemeal nature of this book's components.

The chase system, the Ambience mechanics, the city-building advice, the Districts and the Subjects — these are all meant to be used only when they're useful, and ignored when they're not. Some of these mechanisms interact, but each runs by itself, as well. You don't need to use the Trespass system if you're using the rest of the Barony mechanisms. You don't need to use the Ambience systems if you're building a city out of Districts. You don't need to use the Domain Merit to use the Sites Merit.

To help you find and identify everything in this book, it's broken down here for you. This way, you'll know what you're getting into.

You're reading the **Introduction** right now. Before this, and between the chapters, are new stories by Robin D. Laws, showing different ways that different Requiems unfold within the same city.

Chapter One: Storytelling in the City covers narrative and dramaturgical topics, from new meditations and explanations of the neo-feudal society of the Damned to an essay on the life cycles of modern metropolises, from an exposé on the secret marks of the urban vampire to detailed advice on bringing your chronicle's city to life through description and characterization.

Chapter Two: City Works presents several short systems — not all of them relying strictly on game mechanics — for bringing any World of Darkness city to life. If the previous chapter was about making urban gameplay meaningful, this chapter is about making it fun and easy. This chapter also contains advice on designing cities for use in your chronicles, whether you're starting from scratch to create a fictional metropolis or adapting a real city for your World of Darkness.

Chapter Three: Barony details a style of **Vampire** gameplay called Barony. In a Barony chronicle, the characters are rising participants in the Danse Macabre — vassals and lords striving to win and keep a part of the grim city for themselves. This level of gameplay is a richly nuanced and compellingly complex playground of conflicting agendas, internecine plots and moral dilemmas. Beneath it all, **Vampire**'s signature style of personal horror gives everything a bloody tint.

In **Chapter Four: Primacy**, the gameplay of **Vampire** "zooms out" again, to the cold altitudes of power where the Primogen and the Prince dwell. From these heights, the nightly business of the Danse Macabre is reduced to a few simple traits and actions. Month-long plots unfold in a single night of gameplay. The mortals and young Kindred manipulated by elder vampires are little more than dots on the players' character sheets — because at the Primacy level of play, the players portray the Primogen, sometimes cooperating and sometimes undermining each other, for the privilege of manipulating the Prince into ruling according to their own will.

Another gigantic section of the book, **Chapter Five: Districts, Sites & Subjects**, presents dozens of Districts, Sites and Subjects for use in any **Vampire** chronicle. Each of these new mechanical elements is also designed to work specifically with the Barony and Primacy styles of play in the previous chapters. Using these elements as building blocks, you can build an imaginary World of Darkness city of your own design or reconstruct a version of your favorite real-world city shadowy enough for **Vampire: The Requiem**.

Chapter Six: Newcastle offers you a detailed starting place: a fictional city of darkness built using the blocks in Chapter Five and ready for you to activate with Princes, conflicts, people and schema from the previous chapters, or to populate with your own cast of vampires.

The appendix, **Prince of Damnation City**, contains adaptations of cards from the **Vampire: Prince of the City** board game, so you can use them to enrich or expand your **Vampire: The Requiem** chronicle.

Finally, the book closes out with the dense **Index**. (Yes, an index — in a book this size, how could we not?)

Sources and Reference

Here are some of the materials we read, watched and listened to while working on this book. Some are as valuable as imaginary hammers and nails for building imaginary cities. Others just make for good background. Each of these sources offers Storytellers something to

learn about using environments to reinforce the stories we play. In some cases, we've tried to highlight these lessons, so what follows is as much Storytelling advice as a bibliography.

Books

Get your hands on a book by Jane Jacobs. Practically any one of them will do. What you need to get out of these books is a critical appreciation for cities and the ways that they expand and take on character both through organic, chaotic collisions of individual plans and choices (neighbors independently renovating their buildings, private sales turning libraries into condos, a Starbucks changing the traffic in a neighborhood without the locals' intent, etc.) and through carefully designed and implemented city planning.

Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets, by David Simon. This book takes you on a ride-along, shoots the shit with you, tells you stories over beers and occasionally fucks with you just to amuse itself. Besides being a magnificent book in general, it does a remarkable job of creating a complex, lovable, contemptible and tangible facsimile of Baltimore inside your imagination. Long after this book, which was the foundation for the *Homicide* television series, Simon went on to create *The Wire* for HBO.

The Mole People: Life in the Tunnels Beneath New York City, by Jennifer Toth. Despite being a little too polite in its language, a little too delicate with the material and a little too tolerant for the World of Darkness, Toth's personal trips into subterranean urban villages and the dried-up arteries of New York is frank, informative and well traveled. Through conversations with "houseless" underground New Yorkers and "topside" people who work with or around them, she turns a light on a subculture that's startlingly foreign but instinctively familiar. The shadows cast by that light fall on creepy people both above and below street level.

How the Other Half Lives, by Jacob A. Riis. This sensational exploration of the crooked corners of 1880s New York changed the way popular America looked at its urban centers. (Inspired by Riis's book, Jack London later wrote a similar exploration of London's unspoken urban hell with the sterling melodramatic title, *People of the Abyss*.) The extreme disparities between polite metropolitan society and the real urban poor may be dramatically exaggerated here, but the of grim contrast of this Gothic age suits the modern World of Darkness just fine. Think of this as a kind of Gothic nonfiction and update it for your modern chronicle as you would any Gothic novel of the age. If nothing else, look here for precious urban details and memorable place names, such as Blindman's Alley.

London: The Biography, by Peter Ackroyd. This tome is sometimes meandering, usually dense and packed with more straight-up information and revealing tales than your head can hold. See how a city sheds cells and changes clothes without losing its identity.

The Annals of London, by John Richardson. More or less a giant timeline, this book is packed with little details, anecdotes and factoids that demonstrate how a handful of small ideas and events can go a long way toward characterizing a neighborhood. This, and other books like it, is also a great resource for reminding yourself to think about what your city was like in different eras. All those streetlights and train tracks had to get installed by somebody, back when.

The Devil in the White City, by Erik Larson. You have probably read this already anyway, but look at it again and take special note of all the different things happening at once in Chicago, without any one truly defining what Chicago *is* at the time.

Movies

Batman Begins and *Se7en* are both set in cities that don't really exist, but feel as if they do. Look at the details and atmosphere of those cities. Watch the special features about designing and building Gotham and, uh, Se7en City that are on those DVDs. (Check your library. Seriously.) *The Matrix* movies do this, too, but with even less concern for realism.

Constantine, Rounders, Stay, The Game, Fight Club, The Shield, The French Connection, The Fugitive, Chungking Express, Blade, Blade Runner, Narc and a million other movies all have nice exploratory atmospheres of different cities. Cities always look rad when David Fincher's walking us through them, and the stuff in *Constantine* when he's eating at the all-night diner or dealing with Papa Midnight and all that have a nice, dirty, lived-in feel.

The underappreciated (and misdiagnosed) movie *Stay* does a remarkable job of showing only very carefully selected portions of New York to create an environment very different from that of, say, *Rounders*. Where *Stay* is all glass and concrete with subtle hints at subtext and characterization in every environment, *Rounders* is colorful, with deep shadows and disparate, detailed backdrops screaming summaries of the people who live and play in those spaces. Look at how the environments for each location in *Rounders* are so different, to help the audience immediately identify the style and intent of the characters who dwell there, from the brothel hallway walls papered with naked pictures to the oily hardwoods of the Judges' Game, from the painted metal and broken-down brick walls of Teddy KGB's place to the smoky air and worn orange fabrics of the chesterfield.

Narc, meanwhile, brilliantly tangles up the characterization of its Detroit locations (both genuine and imitated) with that of its actual human characters. What we see over the shoulder of Ray Liotta's Detective Oak is almost never the same thing we see over the shoulder of his partner, Jason Patric's Detective Tellis. Let the environment in your stories reflect your characters, and reflect on them, like this.

Despite being an excellent model for a **Vampire** chronicle in general, Shawn Ryan's powerhouse *The Shield* also shows how much dramatic mileage you can get out of just one neighborhood in a city, even if that neighborhood is fictional, like the show's made-up Farmington district.

Several of Scorsese's movies take us on trips through corners of cities we might otherwise not get to see. (More of than not, that city is New York.) The overrated *Gangs of New York* gives us an idea how much cities can change without losing their inherent character. *Goodfellas* shows us how a wide range of settings can affect the themes of familiar gangster drama — how a murder in the street can feel so different from a murder in a residential basement. *Bringing Out the Dead* is a surreal trip through nighttime New York's hurting populace alongside several overworked paramedics; this is a great example of how cities can be haunting, frightening and weird without even adding in the supernatural influences. *The Departed* shows us how a single city's people can become tangled and damaged when our personal problems and ambitions collide.

Panic Room does not go very far from its brownstone, but look at how much the character of the surrounding city adds to the vice tightening on that house throughout the movie. The city presents real consequences for the action within the house, giving everything its essential, repressed tension. (Again with the David Fincher movies.)

Sam Mendes's *The Road to Perdition* is, in its way, a fine (if somewhat sedate) **Vampire** movie, especially for getting the vibe of tangled loyalties, personal vendettas and feudal turf. Tom Hanks's tough-guy character, Mike, is a vassal and soldier of Irish mob boss Rooney, whose son will inherit the throne due to tradition and in spite of his failures as a man. Rooney rules his domain of Rock Island, Illinois, but is himself a regent of Capone in Chicago. To get revenge against Rooney's son, Mike climbs the feudal ladder, putting pressure on Rooney's superiors to get what he wants. But as long as Rooney is alive, his lords won't dispose of Rooney's son. It's a tale of monstrous people navigating their own Byzantine social networks to pursue bloodthirsty ends — all good **Vampire** material.

Music

Let's Get Killed, by David Holmes. Irish DJ and film-score/remix maestro David Holmes built this album out of conversations he recorded on the streets of New York with his DAT. Great urban verve, blending super-stylized funk and a moody ambient-house atmosphere with a collection of memorable characters.

After that, every kind of music has its place in a **Vampire** city. Use any song you like as "source music" — the sounds being heard by characters in the game world. Let music work for you as a description of the place where the scene is set.

Car stereos blare classic-rock choruses or shake the street with gut-thumping bass. Sedate voices and soft jazz crackle through the AM band and out an open apartment window. Mariachi music echoes out of an open garage down the block. The chants from a televised ballgame drift out of an empty bar. Thundering darkwave synth rattles the black boards of a sealed warehouse, betraying the nightclub within. Some Frantz Ferdinand tune, shuffled into the speakers, gets dialed all the way up to cover the sounds of the impromptu interrogation going on in the kitchen. The rising crescendo of theme music coming out of the movie theater muffles the screams coming from the alley on the other side of the red EXIT signs.

Practically every city has some kind of defining sound, whether it's big band or synth-pop, New Wave or house, rap or tango. Seattle had grunge for a while. Chicago and New Orleans have their own kinds of jazz. Paris always seems to get represented by accordions. LA and Atlanta are capitals of rap. Find a catalog of sounds that suit your city, whether real or imagined, and then don't be afraid to go beyond those sounds to suit the moods and themes of your stories.

If you use Los Angeles as a symbol of fallen grace and corrupted faith, use choir music or nu-metal or death metal or whatever else fits the tone you're after. If your story is about pagan witches influencing the Prince's Court in London, and Garmarna or Miranda Sex Garden evoke what you want, then don't let whatever Europop is playing in London right now deter you. Your stories and your cities should sound the way you want.

Glossary

For all its glorious titles and lofty claims, vampire society remains secret. Subcultures build their own vocabularies. Cloistered societies develop their own jargon. Closed social networks lead to arcane alterations of language. Complex social networks inspire shared metaphors to make complicated or difficult concepts easier to understand intuitively.

Over the millennia, vampires have found many ways to talk about enslaving each other, hiding from the sun and supping on the living in ways that make them all sound better than they are. These words disguise some of monstrousness behind the Requiem and the Danse Macabre, both for the purpose of protecting the vampire Masquerade and for the sake of comforting their own souls. They echo the centuries of custom that underlie Kindred society and the archaic patina that eventually covers all vampire inventions. But these terms also show how these concepts have been absorbed, adapted and regarded by neonates brought into the antique network of the Danse Macabre in recent decades.

Not all of this language is suitable for all audiences, however. The following terms are categorized in four broad categories:

- **Formal:** These are terms used at court, in ceremonies or in front of important Kindred, when presentation and poise matter. Using these words properly makes a vampire seem formal, respectful and civilized. Using these words incorrectly may be insulting to the speaker or his listeners.
- **Traditional:** These are terms used at court in polite discourse, without seeming too familiar. Using these words makes a vampire look informed, cultured and polite. Misusing these words is crass.
- **Jargon:** These words are used only within certain circles of Kindred society — within particular covenants, among certain tiers of feudal society or by vampires of a certain age range. Many of these words are polite, but informal. Use of these words at Elysium may seem elitist or confusing; many (most?) Kindred don't know all these terms. Using them can make a vampire seem "in the know" or unconcerned with delicate niceties. Misusing them makes a vampire look like a poseur, wannabe or has-been. Using them with the wrong lord or superior Kindred can be social suicide.
- **Slang:** This is common talk — frank, familiar and often rude or vulgar. Many Kindred have heard these words, but not all vampires can pull them off. Using these words makes a vampire seem hip, experienced, street or authentic. Misusing these words makes a vampire look uncultured, brutish, simple or low class. Using these words with one's superiors may be a painful social gaff or a serious insult with dreadful repercussions.

Kindred Parlance

acreage: (n., jargon) The feeding grounds bestowed to a Kindred by an overlord; also, one's feeding rights in general. *"I've got acreage from Benedict, but there's nothing there to eat most of the winter."*

avail: (v., formal) To subsist on granted land; to feed in territory granted by an overlord, especially a Regent or vassal, rather than the Prince. In modern nights, this term carries a connotation of low status or common demeanor, such as Kindred who feed by preying on random strangers. *"I'm not some neonate, availing on the street, sire! I have a herd of my own."*

black rent: (n., jargon) Service or taxed labor owed to a lord, typically in exchange for granted lands, that involves murder, skullduggery or betrayal; less commonly, any *corvée* (q.v.) demanding shameful or illegal behavior on the part of the vassal. (In this case, illegal is subjective, possibly referring to Kindred Traditions, the Prince's laws or mortal laws.) *"These streets look all right, but some nights, I swear, this place isn't worth the black rent."*

blood rent: (n., traditional) Payment due to a lord in blood, traditionally in exchange for granted lands or titles. Blood rent may require a vassal to escort a lord on the hunt, to deliver a living vessel or to give up Vitae from the vassal's own veins, depending on the contract of fealty between them. *"I'll give you everything between the expressway and Shadowgate Avenue, and in exchange you pay me a blood rent of one boy, no older than 19 and no younger than 14, for feeding, twice a month."*

blood tax: (n., traditional) *Blood rent* (q.v.). (v., slang) To demand a payment of Vitae from a subordinate, especially outside the terms of a feudal contract; e.g., to order a vassal's vassal to provide *wheat* (q.v.). Also, less commonly, to punish or fine a vassal with bloodletting, violence or a forced drink toward a Vinculum. *"The Viscount's driving down here tonight, and I just fucking know he's coming down here to blood tax me."*

bond: (n., traditional) The official relationship between a vassal and his lord. *"My bond with Lawrence isn't so stiff and formal, like yours and Benedict's."*

burrow: (v., slang) To make one's haven outdoors or underground; to dwell like a vagrant or make haven in an insecure, often public, location, such as a subway tunnel or city park. (n., slang) Any haven, usually but not always temporary, or site where a vampire burrows. *"She's been spending her days under old bottles in some Southside burrow for the past year."*

chapter house: (n., traditional) An Ordo Dracul meeting place, possibly (but not necessarily) a *lodge* (q.v.). Often abbreviated simply, "chapter." *"There's a Dragon chapter upstairs of the card room behind the Broken Bottle, but I don't think their landlord knows about it."*

charge: (n., formal) A vassal's official responsibility to her lord or the Prince; her duty. One's charge is often, but not always, the act of her *corvée* (q.v.). For example, a Herald's charge is to spread the Prince's word, though she could owe a monthly corvée to her lord (who may or may not be the Prince) in exchange for a domain. *"You are charged with keeping the border of 7th Street closed, Gough, and we'll both be sorry things if you fail."*

citizen: (n., jargon) Among Carthians, a participatory member of society (as opposed to one who resides within the government area but does not serve, attend court or otherwise participate), especially a participant in the Carthian *State* (q.v.). Among the Carthian Movement, the word "Kindred" is synonymous with *citizen*; vampires who do not contribute to society are called, simply, vampires. The term *citizen* is often reserved for those Kindred who have little or no formal status in the Carthian covenant; covenant-member citizens are called Carthians. *"We expect something a little bit more than that from our citizens, Kindred."*

contract of fealty: (n., formal) The contemporary version of the historical oath of fealty (which is still common among the Invictus), renamed as a matter of custom in the 18th century, following the French Revolution, and gradually adopted throughout *masquerading cities* (q.v.). This modernized form is meant to emphasize the two-way exchange of authority and land in exchange for loyalty and servitude, without necessarily implying a solemn or divine component. Though they may be ritually distinct, in truth a contract of fealty and an oath of fealty are functionally identical. *"Remember your contract of fealty to me, childe, before you speak that way again."*

corvée: (n., formal) A tax or rent of service owed to a lord by a vassal. Corvée may be limited to a predetermined routine, such as the monthly collection of graft from local drug dealers, or it may be a number of nights of servitude due every month, involving any errand or mission the lord devises each term. Tonight, the grammar surrounding this word is quite confused; all of these are common uses: "to corvée," "to perform (his) corvée," "to pay a corvée," "to do corvée." *"Go down to Ashton Park and break up the Acolyte rituals there, get them off my ground, and we'll count this as the first night of your corvée."*

court: (n., traditional) Per the traditional definition of a sovereign and his retinue and councilors. Among the Damned, court may also be used to refer to the place where court is held ("the 6th Street court"), to a specific instance of audience ("last August's court"), or all Kindred with direct formal *bonds* (q.v.) to the Prince. (n., slang) Derogatorily or in jest, any Kindred who routinely attends court. *"You're not the boss here, court, so keep your mouth shut."*

croft: (n., formal) Broadly, the land or domain a vassal receives from his lord; especially land that is surrounded by the lord's own domain. Specifically, a low-status in-

stance of such a domain. Whereas a domain may or may not require a lord to perform *corvée*, a croft always does. Customarily, *croft* is never used to describe the domain of a true Regent; the term is sometimes restricted to indicate only the domains of *tenants*. *"Lassiter has given out six tiny crofts to know-nothing Carthian neonates in as many months, and I have to wonder what sort of rent they're paying."*

crofter: (n., formal) The vassal who receives a *croft*. Casually, the Kindred who actually pays the croft's rent in blood or service. *"How much time would we save if we didn't have to sit here and ignore these crofters and their problems?"*

dead emperor: (n., slang) A lord whose power has waned or become obsolete; a lord whose vassals are dead, lost or disloyal. *"When tonight is done, Edgar will be a dead emperor and we'll have the Duke by the throat."*

domain: (n., traditional) The physical territory claimed by or granted to a vampire, especially when that territory is officially sanctioned by the Prince; also, a conceptual purview of authority or responsibility wherein the lord has control or unique rights, such as the "domain of medicine" or "domain of theater." *"I don't care what your Prince says, asshole, this is my domain, and every monster around here knows it."*

dominion: (n., traditional) Sovereignty, authority or control over an area, or category of areas and ideas. Among the Damned, dominion especially refers to a lord's authority over unconnected territory, such as "dominion over hospitals" without any associated dominion over the grounds between hospitals. Kindred use this word in various ways that would typically be ungrammatical, such as "on [his] dominion" or "into dominion." *"Come out of there and let's see if you feel so strongly under my dominion."*

drudge: (n., jargon) A socially acceptable disparaging synonym for one's *corvée* or rent, especially when the labor involved is tiresome or unglamorous. (Customarily, it is rude to refer to another Kindred's feudal service as drudge.) *"I've spent the last three nights doing drudge for Sycorax, and now I want to remind myself why I bother."* (v., slang) To do the labor that makes up one's corvée or feudal service. *"You're going to spend the rest of your Requiem drudging or fighting off your overlords, and now's the night to choose which."*

fallow: (adj., traditional) Overseen or claimed by Kindred, but exempt from interaction with mortals; especially, any domain where feeding is prohibited. Traditionally, only physical territory is said to be fallow, but in modern parlance, people and ideas may also said to be fallow. *"Westbrook's been full of fallow kine for a decade, and it don't look likely to change."* (n., jargon) A domain

where feeding from mortals is not allowed, but feeding from animals may be. *"There's a shitty fallow off the highway where I bet no one would know it was us."*

fealty: (n., formal) The sworn loyalty between a vassal and a lord; also, the oath itself. Among the Damned, the oxymoronic phrase "secret fealty" sometimes is used. Although, formally, fealty requires some degree of open declaration (typically *homage*) or acknowledgement (such as a land grant or title), in practice some devoted but clandestine relationships are also described as fealty. *"My fealty is to you, sire, not that Prince."*

fields, the: (n., traditional) A domain where vampires without dominion over the territory may feed on the local mortals. Also, an unaware (and typically unthreatening) population of kine that are legal for feeding. Note that not all domains are "the fields" for all Kindred — one vampire's legal feeding ground is another's *fallow* (q.v.). *"Hounds are patrolling the fields tonight, which means somebody's been poaching, I'll bet."*

fortify: (v., jargon) Traditionally, to protect a site, domain or subject against attack or coercion; this may involve arming local minions, sealing or disguising a building or bribing assets. In modern nights, this term is more often used to describe efforts to protect something's anonymity or secrecy. Thus, in some domains, fortifying a person may mean hiding him away or smuggling him out of the city. *"You saw today's paper — we've got to fortify the whole operation before somebody goes poking his nose around the garage."*

freeborne: (adj., jargon) Not involved in feudal politics beyond tenancy; not subject to a rent of servitude (but not necessarily free of rent by payment). Sometimes, a vassal without *bonds* to any covenant (even if the subject vampire maintains membership in one or more). *"It's the freeborne Kindred who have real freedom, but they pay a price in power for it."*

gat-errant: (n., slang) A gunman (or sometimes any thug), whether mortal or Kindred, who serves a lord without vassalage to motivate him; a violent minion who resides outside the feudal structure. In use, this term sometimes implies a basis for service outside of money or material compensation (such as fear or idolatry), but not always. *"Romeo's another one of Culver's gat-errants keeping wannabe witch-hunters off the royal lawn."*

grippe: (v., slang) To cause or allow a domain's mortal population to fall sick or otherwise succumb to infirmity. To spread, or allow to spread, a disease or drug epidemic. Often paired with *gutter* (q.v.). *"Call it what you want, but if you let the cattle grippe themselves with STDs and smack, the Prince is going to call it you been gripping them."*

gutter: (v., slang) To cause or allow a domain to fall into financial or social ruin. To drive down property values, to break up families, run stores out of business or render families homeless. *"You want to let your childer run rough over the place, then you're going to have to gutter it so it don't look so suspicious to the police when people get cut and robbed in there."*

homage: (n., traditional) A public display of a vassal's subservience and dedication to his lord or the Prince. Also, the formal ceremony of homage in which a Kindred ritually gives himself to be his lord's "man." In the Byzantine dealings of the Danse Macabre, the public declaration of a vassal's fealty is the essential element of homage. *"If you are still loyal, then kneel now and pay me homage here where your Sanctified cousins can see."*

investiture: (n., formal) The formal, often ceremonial, investment of a vassal's title and domain by his lord. The vassal pays his lord *homage* (q.v.) and the lord bequeaths him authority and status in the ritual of investiture. *"I attended your investiture, so I know how much the Prince expects of you and how loathe you are to let him down."*

knight up: (v., slang) To arm oneself, dress impressively and prepare to intimidate, posture impressively and possibly do violence, especially in service to one's lord; to summon one's courage and poise. This is a low-class expression calling the listener to prepare for a more high-class kind of violence (or the threat thereof). *"As long as they think we weak, they ain't going to stop coming here, so shut up, knight up and let's show them we're not boys."*

landlord: (n., traditional) A lord whose authority includes land or some other physical territory, especially if that territory is granted to vassals or tenants through sub-infeudation. (See also *lord*.) *"The landlord says we're not supposed to hunt on this street anymore."*

liege: (adj., traditional) Concerning the feudal relationship, such as the lord to a vassal, usually in regards to the superior of a pair, especially in relation to one's immediate lord (the "liege lord"). *"There's some liege Haunt here requesting audience on behalf of his tenants, should I let him in?"*

lodge: (n., traditional) A place that serves as a dedicated meeting place, laboratory, *chapter house* (q.v.) or refuge for a chapter of the Ordo Dracul. Traditionally, only a whole structure controlled by the covenant qualifies, but in practice portions of larger buildings (such as cellars, attics or attached wings) are often called lodges as well. *"The Dragons have kept a lodge on my ground since before it was mine, but I have no real control over the place."*

lord: (n., formal) A vampire with power, authority or territory granted, especially if granted to him by a feudal superior (though any Kindred with a *domain* (q.v.) is said to be lord of that domain). The superior in any feudal *bond* (q.v.). *"I am Benedict, Viscount of the Lawson Projects, Lord of Bucktown, and you are on my lord's land."*

loyer: (n., formal) A more formal, more polite term for a vassal's or tenant's rent. (This is, literally, a French word for "rent.") (v., slang) To pay a rent of money or materials to a lord. *"I'd rather find a way to loyer over cash every month, like the living, than have to fetch another girl for Delacroix."*

masquerading city, the: (n., jargon) Any city with a Kindred court or government, especially one with a feudal organization; the vampire population and its associated happenings; vampire society. (Also, *the masked city*, *the mask-city*) *"Benedict's a weak liege lackey, and every common lord in the masked city knows it."*

mobcap: (n., adj., slang) A lord whose territory is completely granted out to subordinate vassals such that none of it remains under his direct control. (In the 17th century, *mob* meant "slut" or, later, "prostitute." A mobcap is a kind of hat once associated with such persons.) *"Can we even call that mobcap a lord anymore if he doesn't even know what's happening on his own turf?"*

outlaw: (n., adj., traditional) Among the Damned, the term *outlaw* retains its archaic connotations. Rather than broadly describing a subject as a criminal or fugitive, this term indicates a kine or Kindred to whom the laws of the land do not apply. Thus, he is outside the law. Taking an outlaw's things is not stealing, because laws do not apply to him or his property. Killing an outlaw is not murder. Feeding from an outlaw does not violate hunting laws. Naming a subject as an outlaw is thus a profoundly dangerous act, not only for the outlaw but for the people around him. *"I'm here to tell you, then, that the Prince has deemed all Bruja to be outlaws should they set foot in this city again."*

overlord: (n., traditional) A vampire lord who oversees one or more vassals; especially a lord whose vassals are themselves lords. *"Sometimes I think he granted me this land just so he could call himself an overlord."*

paravail: (n., adj., traditional) The lowest individual on the feudal ladder; the subject who "lives off the land." (Literally, he who avails himself of it.) Customarily, the paravail is a tenant or low vassal who feeds on the local population on the street while higher vassals and Regents feed on vessels brought to them through more civil means, or on herds. In practice, whatever Kindred is at the bottom of a particular chain of *bonds* (q.v.) may be fairly said to be a paravail, even if he is a Regent. *"Regent Carlyle's a paravail monster, but he's not some filthy gutter trash."*

parish: (n., jargon) Any domain belonging to the Lancea Sanctum. In a strict Sanctified diocese, only those domains belonging to Kindred of the cloth in good standing are called parishes. More commonly, any domain wherein power resides with a Sanctified vampire or is linked to a ministry of the Spear may be called a parish. *"Tonight we'll hear sermons written by Priests from three parishes."*

peasants: (n., traditional) Vampires who fall under the purview of the formal hierarchy but do not hold any power. Only those Kindred known to the powers that be qualify as peasants — the uncounted vampires who actively avoid covenant contact and dodge courtly oversight are not considered peasants but, more often, foreigners. (See also *scots*.) (In practice, such vampires may be implicitly regarded as outlaws, because what Kindred will pursue justice for a vampire he's never heard of before?) *"The Carthians swell their numbers by bringing peasants under their roof, but they're still doing us the favor of putting those creatures in line."*

pigeon: (n., slang) A layabout; a homeless vampire; derogatorily, a vampire who travels the city via "uncivilized" means, such as by climbing or swimming. *"I'm not going to Edgeville, man, that place is nothing but pigeons and peasants."*

plastic bottle: (n., slang) A cheap, disposable vessel for feeding, whether animal or kine. Often, the corpse of such a vessel. (Sometimes also called an "empty can.") *"Get this plastic bottle out of here before we make the papers again."*

pleb: (n., traditional) A common vampire, whether a *tenant* (q.v.) or a *peasant* (q.v.). *"If enough of the plebs won't stand for it, though, we could be watching the sunrise tomorrow."*

poach: (v., traditional) To feed on another Kindred's turf; to drink from another Kindred's *fields* (q.v.) or herd; especially when the turf or vessel belongs to one's feudal betters. *"You're caught poaching on my lands, which is the same as drinking from me directly, so now you must do that – twice."*

Prince: (n., formal) The ruling vampire of the city. The role of the Prince, and the manner in which the position is won and held, varies greatly from city to city. Some Princes are appointed or awarded by the Primogen, others win through consummate politicking, some are puppets, many hold supreme dominion through fear, violence and presence. *"This city is the Prince's, and so are you."*

puissance: (n., traditional) Power; especially the respect (or fear) of one's equals or betters. Archaically, any Vitae passed between vampires as part of a feudal ceremony, such as *homage* (q.v.). *"You shouldn't even be talking to Donovan – he's got puissance and you have bloodstained shoes."*

red rent: (n., traditional) A payment of service (see also *corvée*) involving the acquisition and delivery of a vessel to one's lord. Alternately, any tax paid in Blood. *"I can't be seen bringing you bodies when I owe the red rent to Gibson."*

Regent: (n., formal) The lord of any domain who receives his authority, territory and/or title directly from the *Prince* (q.v.), even if he is not strictly the Prince's vassal. In cities with especially strict feudal codes, the Prince may only appoint Regents directly below his own station in the feudal hierarchy; he may not appoint Regents as vassals of other lords. In practice, the overlords directly subordinate to the Prince, whether appointed by him, a predecessor or some other body (such as the Primogen) is also called a Regent. *"You may be my landlord, Haunt, but I am a Regent now, and you will be careful how you speak to me."*

roost: (v., jargon) Among vampires, to spend the day nested in public lands or in another Kindred's territory without permission; especially in an undesirable, shameful or vulnerable place. (n., jargon) The place where a vampire roosts; alternately, a vampire who roosts. *"He's fled into the Hopkins Projects and, as I hear it, taking to roosting in tenement basements and storage lockers."*

sang: (adj., jargon) Relating or pertaining to blood; especially in regards to business or politics. This terms seems to have originated among the Damned of Montréal and spread throughout the United States during the 1970s and '80s. Often, the term is used in a faux-French style, after the noun it describes. *"Edgar, you'll stay away from that bloodsucker and his sang plans if you know what's good for you"* or *"He only leaves that house sang standing for one reason, and it's not so you can sleep there."*

scots: (n., jargon) Informally, Kindred who dwell outside the feudal society or any recognized feudal hierarchy; derogatorily, synonymous with barbarian. This is not a hold-over from Roman times or medieval England, as some believe. Rather, its use as a term for "outsiders" originated in the 18th century as an allusion to the times when the people of Caledonia (Scotland) were kept out of civilized lands by Hadrian's Wall. *"Don't go down there without cash or blood to buy off the scots past 74th Street."*

serf: (n., slang) A low-ranking *paravail* (q.v.); a tenant who pays a *corvée* to his lord; a mortal or ghoul who knowingly serves a Kindred lord; any unappreciated vampire in the feudal hierarchy. *"You're making a fucking serf out of yourself, running all these errands for him."*

shadowgraft: (n., slang) Money paid by a mortal subordinate to a vampire lord, especially by a mortal who does not know the lord is a vampire. Also, any money or material paid in secret by one lord to another, regardless of status. This word seems to be an example of malapropism — among London Kindred in the 1800s, evidence of illicit behavior between lords (or indeed any evidence that could potentially result in a violation of the Masquerade) was sometimes referred to as a shadowgraph.

Shadowgraft may be a derivation from that term. *"He's been getting shadowgrafts from Councilman Thompson for close to a decade now."*

sluice off: (v., slang) To draw kine from another Kindred's domain through deception, persuasion or bribery, especially in secret and usually for purposes of feeding. For example, bribing a gang to move its makeshift headquarters out of a rival's domain or luring homeowners into new properties over a period of many months would both be sluicing off another's territory. Moving kine by force is not. *"The Duke still thinks those people have been moving out on their own, but when he finds out that Benedict's been sluicing off from his fields for a year, there's gonna be fire, trust me."*

Society: (n., with *the*; adj., jargon) Of or pertaining to feudal culture and hierarchy among the Damned; of or regarding the Invictus; with *the*, the Invictus (e.g., *"He's in good standing with the Society"*). *"The Duke's a Society lord with secret allies in every covenant."*

squire: (v., slang) A ghoul. Derogatorily, a lackey or toady; any obsequious kine or Kindred in the feudal hierarchy. *"On your feet, you squire."*

State: (n., with *the*; adj., jargon) With *the*, all the Carthian turf in the city, even if noncontiguous; the Carthian body politic. (*"When you find him, take him past Manigault Avenue and exile him from the State."*) Also, anything of or pertaining to the Carthian Movement (*"He's a State pleb looking to get ahead"*).

statuary: (n., slang) Unflatteringly, any Sanctified congregation. Also, any vampire who attends Lancea Sanctum ceremonies without truly contributing to the covenant. *"Let's get to Elysium before all the statuary gets out of mass."*

tenant: (n., traditional) Any resident of a domain who pays the landlord money, blood or service in exchange for a dwelling. A tenant has no vassalage outside of his own haven and no authority to subinfeudate the space he rents from the lord. A tenant's feudal rights vary from one city to another (sometimes, from one domain to another) but are always few. *"Jude is just one of my tenants – I don't like the way it looks if he gets broken within my borders, but I'm not going to war with the Church over him."*

turnstile: (n., slang) Any vampire who spends much of her time underground, especially a tunnel-dweller or subway rider. Among surface-traveling Kindred, this term is faintly derogatory; among those vampires who might likely be called turnstiles, it's a common informal form of address. *"Where you been, turnstile?"*

underneath: (preposition, adv., jargon) Among the feudal Kindred, the notion of being "underneath" is seldom negative. A lord may describe a vassal as being "underneath my title" as a way of saying the vassal is under his protection and authority; thus the lord protects him like a roof. In contrast, a grateful Kindred might declare his trust in a lord (or even the Prince) by saying "the lord underneath our feet," in reference to the feudal adage, "The lord is the land." Thus, "underneath" implies sturdiness or an unshakable foundation. (To insult a Kindred, one should say or imply that she is "beneath" or "below," rather than underneath.) *"We're Hounds underneath Sycorax, asshole, so you put that thing away unless you want it cut in half."*

vassal: (n., adj., formal) A Kindred who receives territory (and sometimes title) from a *lord* (q.v.) through feudal tenure on conditions of homage, allegiance and sometimes *corvée* (q.v.). Casually, any directly subordinate Kindred in the feudal hierarchy, or any vampire at the "lower" position in a feudal *bond* (q.v.). In practice, all Kindred in a city's feudal hierarchy are vassals to some lord, except for the Prince from whom all *vassalage* descends. *"I am Delacroix, vassal in Edgeville to citizen Carver, vassal in Druid Hills to the lady Sycorax, and Hound to our Prince."*

vassalage: (n., formal) The feudal arrangement of *lords* and *vassals*, based on *fealty* and *homage* (q.v.), and servitude in exchange for power. The state of being or having a vassal; also, the vassal-liege relationship in general, or in particular; a particular vassal position or territory. *"Every vassalage on the West Side seems to be coming apart, ever since the rumor of Regent Lars's torpor got around."*

villein: (n., traditional) An uncommon feudal position between that of a *tenant* and that of a *vassal* (q.v.), a villein has territory (just as a vassal) but lacks authority over it (just as a tenant). Traditionally, a villein is a Kindred with responsibilities to a lord or the land on which the villein makes his haven, but without any infeudation granting him authority or the right to grant portions of his own domain out to other vampires. A villein is bound to his territory by the lord, and cannot move his haven away from that territory without permission. Some Kindred endure a period of villeinage prior to being granted vassalage, as a test of their mettle. *"They give us villeins a fancy French name so we'll feel like we're better off than any other tenant, but I feel like I'm just paying black rent for the right to get blamed for what happens on the block."*

wheat, the: (n., traditional) Mortals. *"Why is it that the Prince gets to say who eats who, but we're the ones down here with the wheat?"*

Player Parlance

Here are a few game-specific terms you'll want to be familiar with when reading this book. These are defini-

tions as we, the players of **Vampire**, use them. These aren't part of the parlance of vampires. When a vampire says "influence," he means the same thing that word usually means, not a ranking of one's overall agency in the masquerading city.

agent: A mortal, ghoul or Kindred character that a player controls only during certain scenes in a chronicle using the Primacy style of gameplay. An agent is a supporting character created as a playable asset of a character with dots in the optional Advantage, Influence.

Ambience: The underlying atmosphere of a particular area within the city, which affects the way supporting characters act and react to the characters.

asset: Any mortal, ghoul, Kindred or other agent that acts on behalf of a vampire lord. Assets are usually just the anonymous contacts, operatives and minions that an influential Kindred moves around like pawns. As an asset becomes more important, it may graduate to the level of an actual character to be defined with traits, description and its own backstory.

Attitude: The altered, surface atmosphere and behavior of a particular area within the city, describing how supporting characters and crowds act and respond based on the attempts of characters to change their demeanors.

District: A District is a unit of city building in game terms. A District may be as small as a single compound and its surrounding streets or as large as a whole neighborhood. Multiple Districts are assembled to create a fictional city or to represent a real one. Districts may be described with traits that affect their behavior in the game, though it isn't essential. A District serves more as a setting for your stories than as a resource belonging to a character.

domain: The territory or territories a Kindred oversees, whether formally or through *de facto* control, as represented by the Domain Merit (p. 200). Domains may be as small as a single building or as large as multiple Districts. Domains are typically a collection of Sites and Subjects.

Influence: A new Advantage, rated from one to 10 dots, that serves as an abstract measure of a Kindred's authority, dominion, respect and agency within the city. This optional trait reduces many complex social dynamics, political relationships and business of secret governance into one simple trait. This sacrifices a great deal of nuance and strategy to gain simplicity and accessibility — "zooming out" from the street-level grit and blood of the traditional **Vampire** chronicle to the point that individual minions are reduced to dots on a character sheet. (See p. 233 for more.)

Loyalty: The measure of an asset's or agent's dedication and allegiance to a Kindred lord in the Primacy style of gameplay. Loyalty is, in Primacy, a counterpart to Health and Willpower.

schema: A diagram or schematic describing power dynamics, authority, territory or feudal control in a city or domain. A schema is used by Storytellers to define the social network that characters navigate as part of the Danse Macabre. A schema is the shadowy, creepy structure of passions and lies that vampires explore in stories of intrigue and espionage — the political map explored through socially driven stories. Players create schema to visualize the plots and relationships of their allies and enemies, and to reveal the political machinations at work in the city.

Site: The smallest scale of Kindred dominion, ranging from the walls of a single building to the boundaries of a large compound, and described by the Site Merit (p. 202). Sites are essentially a combination of tools and resident Storyteller characters (who may or may not be Subjects), described simply through traits you already know, such as Skills. A Site is as much one of your character's resources as it is a setting in your stories.

Subject: A Subject is a Storyteller character in possession of a resource such as a Site, and suitable for manipulation or coercion by a player's character. Subjects are the handles by which a vampire grabs hold of a Site and takes control of it.

"First Rule of Acting:
Whatever happens, look as if you intended it to happen."
— Paul Dickson

Chapter One: Storytelling in the City

There is no place here that is not open to me. My options are endless.

I wake every night to a kaleidoscope of taste and color, a glorious riot of sensation.

Pale neon light hums over fluttering eyes and gasping, parted lips painted with hot blood.

Muscled toughs tremble and lean into my ivory arms while sirens blare and fade.

Murderers pledge themselves to me, their veins pounding with mad fire.

Soft, wealthy mothers open their arms on the balconies, whispering my name. None here can resist my touch, my call. I rise, and the city blooms, a crimson, million-petaled blossom waiting for my kiss. This is my city.

– The Right Honorable Belinda de Havilland,

Marquise of Richmond and Councilor of the Invictus

"And when, considering that the city's deceased might be reluctant to tell their secrets to a provincial, he tried to conceive of his own dead faces, Frank found that the white rectangle of the page had become like a boarded-up window behind which we could imagine only empty rooms."
— Paul LaFarge, *The Artist of the Missing*

Before anything else, think about what the city — any city — is in the story. It's the place where everything happens. It's the visual, textural, sensual palette that colors the imaginary "look" of your chronicle. It's a representation of theme, a body of moods, a thing of atmosphere. It's the embodiment of a long history. It's home to thousands or millions. It's the background and the details, the satellite image seen online and the green street signs on the corner, the midnight lights of an untouchable skyline and the cracked asphalt that runs with blood. It is everything, everywhere, all the time.

The city is the playground, the game level, the chain-link wilderness and concrete ruins where anti-hero vampires explore and hunt. It is the collection of recurring settings that feel familiar to the chronicle's characters — Elysium, court, havens, the Rack, a favorite club, a graveyard, a vampire temple — and the unfolding streets and unexpected spaces that reveal themselves only when those same characters strike off down unfamiliar streets into the dark. It's where you play.

The city is a character speaking with a million voices, a character with a face of steel and brick and glass, a character with a body of asphalt and pipe and black water, a character that insinuates itself into every scene.

The city is an instrument of gameplay, but it's also a narrative tool.

This chapter is about narrative, atmosphere, theme and style. Storytelling ideas and dramaturgical notions run through this whole book like pipes running through a building, but this chapter is focused on these ideas. Game systems crop up here only to help these narrative elements manifest in play.

The archetypal city of the World of Darkness is a stylized doppelganger of a real-world city, seen through a gothic lens and run through with a neo-feudal style. What is this "neo-feudal" style? Why is it a good fit for the horror, Byzantine intrigue and internecine drama of **Vampire** and the World of Darkness?

How does a city grow and change, like a person? What is a city's character arc? How does this affect your chronicle?

What does a city inhabited by a secret society of the undead look like? How do their occult intrigues mark the ordinary spaces visible to the public at large? What parts of Kindred culture are visible on the surface of the city? How can your character make her mark?

How does the city's Prince play a part in the themes of your chronicle? How does your choice of Prince change the way you play **Vampire**? How can pairing a vampire lord with a real-world city create an immediate setting for your chronicle, complete with stories to tell?

How do you pick a real-world city for your chronicle? What might that city look like in the nighttime gloom and flickering fluorescent lights of the World of Darkness? How might that city's unique style alter the Danse Macabre?

Read on and find out.

The Neo-Feudal System: An Overview

The World of Darkness presents a stylized setting, one intended to conjure certain romanticized notions of a modern Dark Age. We deliberately created the World of Darkness, for **Vampire** at least, so that each city or each domain would be considered an island unto itself. Part of the haunting, fearsome legacy of gothic literature is the sense that the protagonists of the story are far removed from any external salvation or even the comforts of home. Communication doesn't occur between domains, and cooperation certainly doesn't. Similar to the visiting Victorian gentleman trapped at the crumbling Carpathian monastery, you're all alone but for the mad monk plotting your death.

This translates into a few precepts that make **Vampire** a distinct experience. Indeed, it even deliberately ignores a great many of the modern conveniences we expect in the world. Those are all conscious choices, though, and we have the opportunity to shed a little light on them here. After all, if you're building a city for use in a **Vampire** story, it makes sense to be able to highlight or at least understand the same themes and ideas we put in place at the level of basic design.

Loose Terms

We admit up front that we're using the term "Dark Ages" a bit liberally. We don't refer to any specific time period with this phrase, and we acknowledge that we're using it in a popular sense as opposed to an academic one. The phrase is just too perfect to eschew, though — the concept of an entire period of time being without light (or enlightenment) fits the conceit of a "World of Darkness" wonderfully.

When we use the term neo-feudal, we're describing a peculiarly **Vampire** social structure. Mortal feudalism is a system of government based upon the relationship of lords to the vassals beneath them, with all land owned by that vassal and worked on by the tenants who occupied it. The neo-feudal society of the Kindred is an adaptation of that government model to a social structure. The preeminent figure of the Kindred's neo-feudal society is the Prince, who "owns" the domain, which he ostensibly governs in the best interest of all Kindred. The Prince can bestow or revoke benefits within the domain, much as a feudal king could grant rights to land. While land is the resource of ultimate value to feudalism, domain is the resource of ultimate value to Kindred neo-feudalism.

"Domain" is similar to land, but eclipses it — a Kindred granted domain is entitled to whatever the land within that domain generates (provided he can claim it from the mortals therein, which is an entirely different issue and outside the scope of relationships between Kindred), as well as any other resources that domain generates. A Kindred whose domain is the downtown neighborhood is the master of that domain, answerable only to his neo-feudal superiors, and has the right to take whatever downtown generates, and act against anyone who would usurp that right from him.

Of course, what seems simple in theory is complicated in practice. The Kindred are a treacherous lot, and even a Prince's grant to domain is no guarantee that the Prince's favor won't fall somewhere else soon, resulting in domain shifting at a whim. Currying favor with one's undead superiors is just as important as capably managing the domain.

The popular modern image of the vampire is a direct outgrowth of the Romantic movement. Romantic literature sought to create a strong emotional response as an aesthetic experience. Gothic literature, following in the footsteps of Romantic literature, expanded upon that strong emotional response to specifically focus upon horror, terror and the like. While horror and terror aren't traditionally considered positive experiences, the emotional response people have to them is indeed strong, and a sort of catharsis occurs when we read about them as an audience or otherwise partake of them secondhand. Consider the thrill of watching a good horror movie or reading one of the short stories of the genre's masters. It's fun to be scared, especially since we don't really have anything to fear from just a reading or viewing anyway — it's a safe way to experience the strong emotional response to the strange and terrifying.

To ensure the integrity of the setting, **Vampire** occasionally ignores or lessens the effects of certain aspects of our modern world. With technology widespread and travel both cheap and reliable, we've made a few changes in the World of Darkness that help maintain

the setting elements of isolation and decrepitude. What follows is a discussion of how and why those occur, with a bit of advice on how to work with those ideas in your chronicle's city.

To highlight the gothic feeling of a society lapsed into barbarism, **Vampire** acknowledges that certain things don't work as they do in the real world. Indeed, the World of Darkness is a world in which every generation isn't automatically assumed to have a better life than its parents.

This makes for a beautiful feeling of loss, a bittersweet longing for what once was but won't be again in a modern lifetime. In fact, if you want to be a bit post-modern, the idyllic past the world believes is lost might never have occurred at all. The lost halcyon days might never have existed in truth, and might instead be nostalgic fabrications of people who suddenly find that they are monsters.

Just as the collapse of the Roman Empire paved the way for the provincial, isolated times known as the Dark Ages, so, too, does becoming a vampire send the individual into a decline, withdrawing him from society at large and placing him within the crumbling confines of an incestuous society of monsters largely beholden to the traditions of the past.

Keeping all of the action local also keeps the scope of the game personal. The concept of making the players' characters the monsters and making them morally accountable for their actions means that there's going to be a lot of attention paid to individual characters' actions and motivations. While those things are certainly possible in a globe-trotting chronicle, characters in larger-scale stories also have to compete with exotic locations, the vicissitudes of travel, huge networks of conspirators and the action itself. In keeping stories focused locally, the characters and their immediate environs are always at center stage.

Modern technology presents a conundrum to many Kindred. The rate at which technology progresses baffles all but the most recently Embraced Kindred — and even that statement changes almost daily in scope, as a vampire 10 years into his Requiem has much more difficulty keeping up with modern technology than a Kindred Embraced six months ago. The learning curve and acceleration of innovation inherently leaves static creatures such as the undead behind.

In the World of Darkness, information comes to most Kindred via traditional channels: print media, broadcast news and word of mouth. A select few Kindred are young enough or diligent enough to know how to operate technology.

Computers are the first and most obvious avenue in which to roughen the edges. With the near omnipresence of the World Wide Web in modern culture, information

travels almost as quickly as the events that spawn it occur. A butterfly flaps its wings in Brazil, and the price of tea in China plummets as YouTube burns up with sensational video of the insect.

To mortals, finding this information is as easy as opening an Internet browser on a home computer. To many Kindred, however, a computer is effectively a magic box that sits atop the desks of the world's modern techno-wizards, into which people funnel an indecipherable array of keyboard clicks and miracles issue forth. Vampires may "live" longer than mortals, but vampires certainly don't age as gracefully, and a Kindred Embraced as an engineer 40 years ago won't even know where the vacuum tubes *are* in a modern computer, or where the punch cards go to enable them to run programs.

Telecommunications

Mobile phones are another point of contention, and potential suspension of disbelief. The modern image of the sleek, sexy vampire as a desirable urban predator all but depends on the mobile phone. Kindred call their connections at nightclubs to get them on the guest list, their dealers to provide them with enough blow to "share" with their vessels, their informants on the police force to see when a sting might be lined up for their slavery rings and their ghouls to come clean up the horrific messes they've just made. Invariably, vampires of the same coterie made up of players' characters call each other numerous times each night, forming plans and locating each other. In this sense, the cell phone is a fine tool. (As a lark, though, go back and read *Interview with the Vampire* and marvel at how these characters all interacted with each other without being able to speak to their allies and enemies at the push of a button.)

Where mobile phones become an issue is in their global utility. What's to keep a Kindred from calling an ally in New York City or finding a place to lay low in San Diego when he finds himself in deep shit in LA? Theoretically, nothing. In practice, though, it's much more difficult for secret societies to cold-call each other than it is for public citizens. Worse than that, the signature gothic isolation unravels a bit when help is just a phone call away.

Hidden Societies Stay Hidden

What's the phone number for the Invictus? How about the Prince? How can a Regent call up a member of the Invictus in Detroit and ask him to send covenant Knights out to Pittsburgh to support him? If that Regent doesn't already know some important Society vampire in Detroit, how's he going to get in touch with them? The Invictus isn't in the phone book.

The covenants are secret societies serious about keeping themselves hidden not only from mortal eyes but from each other, to whatever extent they're able. The Prince of one city doesn't want to import the problems of some other city. The Kindred of Madison might be glad to hear that Milwaukee's court has fallen apart — whatever vampire gets that message might go and make a power play for himself in the ruins of Milwaukee's court, but why would he inform a bunch of would-be rivals of the opportunity?

Kindred may colonize a city when word gets out that it's vulnerable, and the pilgrims who dare to head across the World of Darkness's wilderness at night to establish their own rule in these new cities may maintain ties with their old sires or allies in their city of origin, but these are special advantages cherished by the few vampires who enjoy them. They are not the scaffolds of Kindred society. When Damned colonists reach their destination, they're like lions walking into the lair of other lions. Will the local predators come back? Are they really gone? The colonial Kindred don't even know *who* the local vampires *are* — they're now on foreign turf facing an unknown enemy no doubt determined to defend their territory.

Plus, newcomer Kindred have to worry about whatever it is that tore the local court apart. If the city's Prince and Primogen were shown the sun by a bunch of revolutionary punks or insane VII, why would other vampires want to walk into that situation? How bad must things be to brave that kind of risk in the hopes of getting a new start?

The vampire who calls for help is broadcasting his vulnerability to attack. The coterie he asks for help is just as likely to dispatch would-be conquerors to take control of the place and develop stronger, more trustworthy ties between the two cities — ties that inevitably erode and break, over time. How can any territorial, predatory monster trust another one if they cannot keep their eyes on each other? How can any deceitful, blood-sucking bastard trust another one not to betray him?

Distance destroys trust, and the Damned don't have a lot of it to begin with.

Gothic Isolation

Storytellers can address the issue of gothic isolation by bringing into focus the peculiarities of the vampiric condition. Working backward from the point of Kindred origin, vampires don't often maintain long-distance relationships because they rarely have chances to make them. By and large, they stay in their own cities. They don't have the same sort of worldwide contact mortals do with the rest of the world because of the technological issues explored above. On top of it all, they're vampires, and they have to watch out for their own interests. If they're

smart, they cut off as many ties to their living personas as they can — it's a problem when your friends come over to watch the Cincinnati-Pittsburgh game at your place and you burst into flame because they dropped by while the sun was still up. Such being the case, long-distance relationships tend to atrophy before local ones (which is actually a blessing in disguise, because they're also less likely to follow up on a character who suddenly drops out of contact).

Going all the way back to the point in contention, a character who suddenly makes contact with a long-distance ally and asks for a favor is going to be considered rude or neglectful at best. At worst, the long-distance contact is going to tell someone else about him, and that someone may have a unique *interest* in the character. Even if the character isn't offended at being dialed up out of nowhere, he may attempt to renew frequent contact with the character, which may encourage other, local people with whom the character has severed relationships to look him up again. Is it worth the risk?

Reinforce with players that this isn't intended to punish those characters who wish to have a technological bent. It's to emphasize that the static Kindred have difficulty keeping up to date with mortal trends. Indeed, as fewer Kindred will know the ins and outs of these particular Skills, it creates a premium on that knowledge, making those vampires who do have a contemporary grasp of the Skill in question valuable allies. As well, having vampires remain largely ignorant of technology's function maintains that gothic distance between places. Even though the distance initially vanished only in the virtual sense anyway, the isolation is key.

Systems: Storytellers who want to highlight the inertia of Kindred technological progress may choose to charge an additional experience point cost per increased dot for technology-related Skills (Computer and Science, and possibly certain applications of Medicine and Craft). A casual nod to this idea might cost an extra experience point per dot, while a more severe gulf between vampire understanding and mortal technology might see the costs to increase these Skills double.

Storytellers should also monitor Merits that involve people in other places very closely. Unless the intent of the chronicle is to allow vampires contact with a wide variety of contacts all over the place (as in **Nomads**), Social Merits should remain local, and, as always, subject to Storyteller approval.

The Kindred find it difficult to leave their isolated domains. We knew we wanted this design precept in the game. (Rather, we decided that we wanted **Requiem**'s vampires and their concerns to remain local because we had already done a game about the undead and their globe-spanning conspiracies, and we'd already explored that story arc for 13 years.)

As well, the seminal vampire stories in the gothic tradition limit travel. In their harkening to medieval, barbarous times, travel was something fraught with peril — if the journey didn't present enough danger, the destination surely did. Recall Jonathan Harker's haunted travel by train and wagon to Dracula's castle, or the count's own travel by a ship that became plagued and abandoned in *Dracula*. The titular castle provides the only locale necessary for the horror and madness of *The Castle of Otranto*. The hardships of the journey and the ultimate new terrors of each locale punctuate Louis and Claudia's journey in *Interview With the Vampire*.

As well, we designed the World of Darkness as a greater entity in which even the monsters present didn't understand all of its secrets. The vampires of a given domain, at the top of the food chain as they are, are as often prisoners of their own domains as not. These population centers themselves sometimes spawn inchoate mysteries, but at least the Kindred understand their own city streets. Once they move out from their home territories into the mysterious no man's land that lies beyond, they don't have the comparative comforts of home to succor them.

The technology mentioned above also plays an estimable role in the locality of stories. Quite simply, many vampires don't trust travel because of the vagaries of technology involved. It's one thing to break down on the side of the road with a flat tire. It's wholly another to be a Kindred trapped 90 miles from anywhere with a flat tire and the sun due to rise in just under an hour.

Certainly, one could arrange to have oneself shipped in a casket or similar method, but then who comes to load the casket onto the plane or boat? How does the casket get to the dock or airport to begin with? All of these scenarios involve immense trust in one's own retainers, assuming one has them, and then additional trust on behalf of the pilots, porters and dockhands who will handle the cargo-class vampire as she leaves and arrives at her destinations. This doesn't even take into account the added security concerns of nations that have protections in place against travel-related terrorism at any given time.

Surely, these aren't overwhelming difficulties to face, but neither are they infallible. If a Kindred chooses to travel, sooner or later that Kindred is going to face the endemic troubles related to travel. His casket — or whatever method he contrives by which to travel — is going to end up at the wrong place, or at the wrong time or be opened by a hapless clerk after he's been forgotten

in it and rerouted for a month. The Kindred who drives himself back and forth along some travel route is going to run out of gas at an inopportune time, or run afoul of a pack of Lupines or simply be lost in some ineffable fog that seems to rise out of nowhere and leave him hundreds of miles from where he thought he was.

Again, all of these serve to keep the focus on isolated communities, where the characters' actions in the locale have the most immediate and demonstrable repercussions. This is all in keeping with the gothic tradition, and the crumbling, medieval imagery iconic of the genre.

Systems: Truly, it's beyond the scope of a few dice rolls to determine the hazards that travel poses for vampires. Such complications are themselves the stuff of story developments and plot complications on the part of the Storyteller. The potential well-being of characters is too much to trust to mere dice — one bad roll might effectively mean the death of a character — so the great difficulty of travel is built into the setting.

That's not to say a chronicle focusing on a traveling pack of vampires isn't possible. Such a chronicle simply needs to focus on different themes. For more information on such a chronicle, see the **Nomads** supplement for **Vampire**.

Gothic architecture abounds with hallmarks: soaring spires, leering gargoyles, flying buttresses, semi-circular vaults, stained and leaded glass, the seminal pointed arch called an ogive. Fusing any one of these classic features with a more modern element can create a moody new image in the players' mind. Consider flying buttresses traced with neon, gargoyles clutching stuttering fluorescent lights in their mouths, a churchly row of arched alcoves each housing a lone payphone, modern office buildings with wired rose windows, chain-link portcullises, elevators climbing up the sides of towering pillars in the nave-like lobby of a modern corporate castle.

When building the city in which your chronicle takes place, don't be afraid to stylize it a little bit. In fact, especially if your chronicle is taking place in your troupe's hometown or a city you know well, stylize the holy hell out of it. You have, essentially, an infinite set-building budget governed only by your imaginations, so take your local geography and architecture and make it your own.

Cosmetic changes are easy to make, but can go a long way toward casting the city in an altogether different light by night. Your best friends here are gargoyles, buttresses and ruin. Take a prominent local landmark, place a few ominous gargoyles on its cornices (but don't

overdo it, lest the lampoon aspect of gothic literature rise to the fore) and suddenly your library is a much more foreboding place. The flying buttress, architecturally speaking, served to draw the eye heavenward. Typically found on churches and cathedrals (naturally), flying buttresses kept the peasantry's minds on Heaven, which would be their ultimate reward for an earthly life lived in service to God. That theme works well for the World of Darkness, too, where many people place their hopes in a rewarding afterlife because the temporal world is so corrupt and dangerous.

Although ruin isn't necessarily an architectural design, it can feature prominently on local buildings as well, suggesting moral decay, physical corruption or the passing of the structure into anachronism. Imagine if your local mayor's mansion has fallen to ruin, yet he still occupies the home. Likewise, what about the crumbling manor on the outskirts of town, still the ancestral home of an old-money family with rumored connections to the undead... and worse?

Ruined churches suggest an absence of faith, or perhaps its tenacity (depending on whether it's populated or not), both of which have a place in a tale of the modern city. A ruined city hall suggests a failure of local government to represent its people; a ruined police precinct suggests the inability of the city to protect its citizens. However, a ruin need not be an all-or-nothing affair. A building might be in its first stages of decrepitude at the chronicle's onset, worsening or undergoing renovation as the storyline dictates. A few lichens on an otherwise pristine condominium development symbolize the onset of some malfeasance. A small civic auditorium on the point of collapse that has investors behind its renewal all of the sudden represents redemption, or a bulwark against encroaching doom. And these are simply cosmetic changes.

Adjusting the architecture on a larger scale gives a Storyteller even more thematic and plotting room to play with. Additional cornerstones of architecture in gothic literature include catacombs, abbeys and cathedrals and castles. While castles are, sadly, uncommon in North American contexts, there's no reason one can't have been transplanted into a new location by a wealthy European lord at some point in history. Don't be ashamed to drop a castle wherever you'd like one (again, so long as you don't overdo it). If your chronicle takes place in Europe, well, you're lucky: Europe abounds with cool castles. Simply install a vampiric lord of the night, and you're good to go.

Churches and cathedrals obviously represent faith, but modern takes on them can juxtapose that faith with some earthly concern, they can highlight the absence of faith in an area or they can outright represent the abandonment of faith in favor of more vulgar concerns. One need look no further than the archetypal North American city for an example of this: New York's notorious Limelight nightclub was practically designed to be adapted to a **Vampire** story, considering the club's infamous history of drugs, sex, money-laundering and even murder. A Storyteller might even place a blasphemed church into his local geography to represent overt evil, perhaps as the place of worship for a cult or a haven for a vicious gang.

Tunnel networks practically beg for inclusion. In fact, incorporating them into local geography might not even be that much of a stretch. Simply declare that a certain (perhaps fictitious) subway line has been abandoned and is now home to a weird faction of Kindred or other monstrous beings. Perhaps the service tunnels beneath your city's downtown were originally built by the city's founding civil engineers to connect to one another, providing the vampire who finds those 18th-century maps in the gargoyled library with a veritable skeleton key to all the important locales of the business district. The city might even have its own unique subterranean constructions, such as *les carriers des Paris* or the yellow fever tunnels of Savannah, Georgia. Whatever the case, whether they're authentic or manufactured, use your city's underground infrastructure for a dose of gothic veracity.

Systems: Architecture and locale don't have a system all their own, but they certainly affect the flow of events in the story. Certain circumstance bonuses and penalties may apply to specific situations at the Storyteller's discretion. For example, a gargoyle protruding from a rooftop might provide an extra bit of space for a character to jump to the next roof, and thus offer a +1 die bonus to that dice pool. The crumbling ruins of a murdered Kindred's manor might hold footprints well, offering a +1 die bonus to anyone tracking intruders there, as well as a –1 die penalty to anyone attempting to obscure his passage in the area.

While this section is too small to detail an all-inclusive list of architectural modifiers to every scene they might affect, a good collection of other examples can be found in the "Hot Pursuit" section of Chapter Two (p. 163).

Architecture and location also play an important part in the Haven Merit. We have no need to reiterate the system here (it appears on pp. 100–102 of **Vampire: The Requiem**) but remember that location is an important aspect related to a Kindred's home. You can characterize a haven, just as any other site, but you can also use a haven to symbolize and add dimension to your character.

The way **Vampire** treats territory is unique in comparison to the other World of Darkness games. **Werewolf**

deals in broad swaths of territory, with the protagonists of the story bound by function to patrol the borders of the physical world and the spirit realm. **Mage** opens up the borders of space so that they're limited only by the capacity of thought — the physical world is merely the scholar's library, while his intellectual work is the true measure of his achievement. **Promethean** characters fear no boundary, as theirs is a quest of discovery, both internal and external. The grim, fairy-tale feudalism of **Changeling** is its own beautiful mire.

Vampire, though, yields a very different sort of territorial experience. Vampires can't leave their cities. God only knows what's out there, and the only thing that's certain is that it's damnably hard to find vessels once the population density decreases. Vampires are likewise threatened by the sun, so long-distance travel is precarious and requires more preparation than it's often worth. Once the Kindred finally does manage to relocate himself to a different domain, he's faced with an entirely new set of problems in the form of the Predator's Taint. The vampire in question probably knew many of the other Kindred in her old domain, but when she's faced with a burgeoning frenzy anew every time she meets someone in her adoptive new domain, the potential for disaster goes through the roof. It's no wonder, then, that most Kindred resign themselves to playing out their Requiems in a single domain.

That isolation is part of the point, after all. Being a vampire is a curse, and curse is no easy thing to bear. Effectively, vampires are trapped in their home domains, again similar to the protagonists of gothic fiction who find themselves kept against their ultimate wills in alien environments. If Sartre were a vampire, he'd no doubt describe hell as other Kindred.

That trap, miserable as it is for vampires themselves, is a wonderful tool for the Storyteller's use in creating conflict. Territory is the primary and obvious impetus by which vampires further subdivide themselves.

This also makes territory an immensely valuable resource for the Kindred to manipulate. A grant of domain yields not only the right to the land (in a Kindred context) but the right to glean from it whatever that domain has to offer. That most obviously includes hunting grounds, but a domain can offer other benefits, tangible and intangible, as well. A Kindred whose domain includes the city's most august library symbolically controls a great deal of knowledge. A Kindred whose domain includes the headquarters of the *City Tribune* likely has ties to the media; a vampire whose only claim is the Oldtown Barrens is probably politically on the outs, but he still has a better domain than the landless Kindred with no domain to her name.

So there you have it: that tells you why we've made vampires the way they are in that sense. Now how do you use it in a story?

In most Princes' cities, even the lowliest Kindred is master of her own haven. That is to say, almost every time one finds the Kindred, one finds each Kindred holding a small bit of domain, whether it's a squalid mausoleum or a veritable palazzo.

In her domain, the individual Kindred's word is effectively law, so long as it doesn't contradict any greater custom of the domain. Indeed, even this last is a bit flexible in most Princes' cities. What a Kindred gets up to in his own haven is a private affair, as long as it's not doing anyone else any harm. One example of this might be feeding in one's haven — the Prince may have decreed it against local law to feed in certain sections of town, but a Kindred can feed in whatever part of his own haven he damn well wants to, even if his haven is located in one of the *verboten* parts of the city. Likewise, a city under a Sanctified Prince might outlaw diabolism, but a Kindred in the safety of her own haven can venerate all the devils she wants (though, realistically, she's probably going to get herself into eventual trouble with the Powers That Be if she pursues faith of that nature).

Only the most heavy-handed Princes restrict practices in personal domain, for the simple reason that it's the proverbial slippery slope. The Prince's subjects may favor cracking down on that devil-worshipper, but who's to say that their own faith won't be outlawed tomorrow night, if that's made the case? And who's to say forbidden practice would stop at religious choices. What if it's suddenly outlawry to belong to the Ordo Dracul? Or to merely be a Gangrel? Granted, these seem like extreme examples, but they do happen — and they're almost exclusively the characteristics of paranoid, power-mad Princes in crumbling domains. It's great, gothic stuff to use in a city for a story, but it sets a tone that not all players will appreciate.

Princes, for their part, enjoy the idea of personal domain for two main reasons. First, their subjects practically demand it as a right, and it's a small enough concession to a city's Kindred to acknowledge that they're the masters of their own holdings. It makes a martyr out of no Kindred, and no vampire gets to make a melodramatic soliloquy on the pyre about dying for basic freedoms that would galvanize the other Kindred into action against the Prince. Second, a personal domain gives each vampire a taste of what responsibility is. Sure, any Kindred can make the rules in her own haven, but she then has to enforce them, balancing their importance against the benefits of their commitment. If it's against the rules for

a woman to wear the color green in the Nosferatu Lono's lair, well, it's up to Lono to make sure females observe that custom. It's essentially a small-scale taste of being a greater Kindred noble.

Personal domain is a custom observed with a sliding scale of reverence in most cities. Some populist Princes swear by it, and adhere to the hospitality of a haven's host even when their august personages visit the lowliest, lime-crusted hovel in town. Other times, any officer of the Prince's court effectively trumps personal domain by dint of being, literally, more important than a lesser Kindred. That's not a explicit excuse for any of them to be boorish, but some are. In the end, regard for personal domain is one of the attributes of a city that speaks volumes about the fates of the Kindred who dwell there. If personal domain is nonexistent or constantly under siege, the city's Kindred probably lead vicious or beleaguered Requiems. In cities where it's sacrosanct, the Kindred probably have a comparatively comfortable degree of privacy, even if they hate their Prince.

System: The character's investment in her Haven Merit reflects the sanctity of her personal domain. For each dot she has committed to the Merit (cumulative in whatever sub-attributes of the Merit the player has purchased), the character can establish one custom of her own personal domain that other Kindred of the city know about and/or respect. So long as these aren't blatant dismissals of the greater laws of the domain, Kindred visitors to the character's haven will observe these customs, or at least know that they're breaking them when they do so.

For example, Lono has three total points invested in his Haven Merit. The customs of his personal domain are "females may not wear green within the haven," "visitors must leave the haven when asked to do so" and "the haven must remain empty on nights of the new moon." When the Gangrel Vanian visits Lono at his haven and upsets his host, Lono asks him to leave. Vanian sneers and bares his fangs, but he heeds the custom. (If the Storyteller decided to have Vanian attack Lono in his haven, that would be fine, but it would signify to both player and Storyteller that Vanian was beyond observing the mores of the local Requiem. Assuming Lono and Vanian survived the attack, Lono could bring Vanian before the Prince or Seneschal and have him answer to charges of violating the domain of another, assuming the Prince was enlightened enough to provide such forms of redress to his subjects.)

Observance of hunting grounds varies by domain as well, which most Kindred expect. The most common arrangement is for most of the city to be available to all Kindred for the purposes of hunting, with a few regions

where only certain Kindred have hunting rights, and a few regions where hunting is forbidden altogether. As always, some extremely liberal domains and some very conservative domains buck these trends. In the liberal domains, all Kindred may well have the right to feed anywhere, possibly with the exception of a few zones off-limits to all Kindred. On the other end of the spectrum, some domains might literally assign each Kindred a feeding ground and then punish him if he's caught straying from it. In the most draconian domains, certain Kindred are deliberately overlooked when it comes to hunting grounds, and then hauled before the Prince and his court when they're finally caught breaching the rules for their very survival. It goes without saying that these are distinctly unpleasant domains.

Feeding grounds represent an excellent feudal asset for Princes and lesser nobles with the ability to grant such rights. Naturally, they mean a great deal to the Kindred who receive such rights. Given that the urge for Vitae replaces all other mortal desires in the Kindred, being granted hunting grounds is like a mortal being given his own mint, brothel, steakhouse and amusement park. They're easy for Princes to grant, as well — all but the most vicious Prince acknowledges the right of the Kindred to sustain themselves, and being given esteemed permission to do so makes the Kindred happy to have what they really should expect anyway.

Feudally, many nobles keep certain hunting grounds to themselves, along the lines of a "king's forest" in which only the eminent lord may hunt. These tend to be the most bountiful or most prestigious hunting grounds, naturally.

By way of reward, many Princes allow lesser nobles to bestow hunting grounds privileges on lesser Kindred. It makes those nobles feel empowered to be able to grant significant boons, and it again reinforces goodwill on the part of the common Kindred, all for very little expense on the part of the Prince.

The threat of revoking hunting grounds also serves as a strong crime deterrent for the Kindred. Since Vitae is so all-important, losing an exclusive line to that Vitae isn't something any Kindred wants to consider, and this ensures the best behavior of the ruck and run of Kindred society. As well, a hunting ground revoked can easily be bestowed upon someone else, which is a subtle benefit to clever Princes and nobles. After all, the Kindred who lost the hunting ground is likely to bear the grudge against the Kindred who just had it bestowed upon her, rather than the Prince who took it away. That method of deferring grudges also works on ennobled Kindred, and two feuding Primogen will turn their attentions upon each other, allowing the Prince to dodge their scheming vendettas.

As a resource, feeding grounds are perhaps the truest representation of feudal materiel in the neo-feudal social model. Land represents the ability to grow food in the feudal system, and the ability to extract that sustenance directly from granted domain is the greatest asset to a neo-feudal Kindred.

System: Exclusive hunting grounds grant a dice pool bonus to hunting attempts made therein. That bonus should range from +1 to +3. Each increasing bonus in hunting dice pools should be proportionally rare, at a rarity determined by the Storyteller to represent the scarcity or bounty of easy Vitae in the domain. For example, there may be four hunting grounds of +3 value in the domain, 12 of +2 value and 36 of +1 value. These values are not cumulative; time spent hunting in one feeding ground precludes time spent hunting in another (see p. 202).

As an option, the player may choose to "cash in" a hunting ground in order to cultivate a number of Herd Merit points equal to the original bonus. This effectively reduces the bonus of that hunting ground to +0 permanently. (Kindred may continue to hunt there, but they simply don't gain the benefit of the bonus anymore.)

Multiple Kindred may share the benefit of a plentiful hunting ground, but overtaxing the local vessels is a quick way to scare people off and thus reduce the bonus. Each time in one month that more than a single character takes advantage of the bonus in a specific hunting ground on a single night, make a note of it. If such occurs more than the value of the bonus in that single month, the bonus is negated completely until the Storyteller deems otherwise.

Precious few Kindred ever receive full grants of domain from the Prince, and even fewer are given unilateral grants that establish them as Regents. In this sense, the neo-feudal world of the Kindred is very similar to the mortals' feudal system, in which 3% of the population controlled 97% of a country's land, wealth and other assets.

A grant of domain effectively establishes a given region as one Kindred's private property. The rules for this private property are largely the same as those described as customs in the personal domain section, above, only they apply across a broader area. Most of the time, they still keep in line with almost all of the city's other policies, but every now and then a powerful elder can push through a radical change in one or two local customs. This happens when the elder in question has something on the Prince, or when the Prince sees the benefit of a given custom but doesn't want the hassle of enforcing it himself. For example, a Nosferatu elder might run a literal slave market once a year in his private domain. Modern slavery is about as dangerous to run as criminal side ventures can

get, so naturally, the Prince wants nothing to do with it. Under the table, though, the Nosferatu elder gives the Prince a significant cut of the profits, and if it ever comes to light, whether to mortal eyes or some Kindred authority, the Prince can disavow himself of it.

It's not always heinously illegal activities that occur in private domains. Sometimes they're known for the best parties, where the Kindred elite hobnob with mortal celebrities, while in other domains, high-profile contact with mortals is frowned upon. A Kindred with a private domain might offer succor to vampires on the outs with nobles of lesser stature than herself in exchange for promises of servitude or profit. An Ordo Dracul elder might have his own domain, where none but the Dragons may be present.

Grants of domain in this manner are similar to feudal fiefs in a mortal sense, with all of the profits or benefits of the region belonging to the Kindred who claims the domain. Obviously, that doesn't mean that the Kindred in charge (necessarily) barges into every bodega or coffee shop in the domain and empties the tills, but it does provide a certain degree of regional influence over industries located in the domain. For example, a Kindred whose domain consists of the 13th Precinct (see **World of Darkness: Tales of the 13th Precinct**) probably has some influence within the police, or at least an informant behind a shield. A Kindred whose domain is the docks probably takes a cut from any import/export happening on the river, or else the shippers might have their vessels quarantined, or manifests go missing or an inconvenient 20 kilos of Colombian coke turn up in the captain's quarters. Domain represents an interest in the micro-scale local economy. The Kindred still need to operate with the secrecy of their nature intact, but they're certainly allowed to and even encouraged to wet their beaks therein.

Subinfeudation is an even grander grant of domain, effectively allowing a Prince to declare a certain region the nigh-sovereign domain of a sub-Prince, known as a Regent. While this reduces the area over which a Prince's own pure domain extends, the sub-domain offers several benefits. First, the sub-domain established, known as a tenurial domain, literally answers to the Prince in a feudal sense — the Regent is similar to a duke and the Prince remains his feudal superior. Thus, the Prince can reap some portion of the benefits belonging to the Regent. Second, the tenurial domain is the Regent's to police and protect. Problems with the mages? Take it to the Regent. Police strike in the domain? Take it to the Regent. Acolytes poaching the hunting ground? Take it to the Regent.

The benefits to the Regent are considerable, however, easily offsetting the feudal duty to the Prince that remains. The Regent has the greatest leeway in establishing customs that negate, bend or exceed those of the city proper. So long as the tenurial domain remains operational under the Regent's direction, what the Regent says goes. (Of course, a Regent in direct opposition to a Prince will likely have his tenurial domain retracted, unless some specific arrangement or circumstances explain why such a vast difference between the traditions of the two domains exists.)

In many cities, anyone granted domain, whether tenurial or private, can further grant nobility within that domain. While this ennoblement doesn't necessarily grant any power or place among a Prince's court, it's often the first step in a Kindred's political career, presaging some degree of local influence and probably a distinct domain of her own at some point. Within a private or tenurial domain, one granted sub-domain therein has rights over his own, smaller domain, as described in this section. Domains can be subdivided almost infinitely in this manner, down to individual streets and buildings in some cases. As the dividends become smaller, so, too, do the profits, and feudal obligations grow greater, as one then owes fealty to everyone up the chain of domain grants. It's no surprise, then, that as domain grants shrink in size, they grow greatly in political viciousness surrounding them.

Rogue Claims

What's to prevent a Kindred from claiming a given domain as his own and challenging anyone, Prince or otherwise, to prove him wrong?

Nothing. A Kindred with enough sway to claim his own domain and shirk any presumed feudal obligation is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

In practice, Princes rarely allow these rogue domains to garner much attention among the Kindred. The Princes will either grant the rogue claimant the domain he wants anyway (so it all looks on the up-and-up), or they'll negotiate with him to keep the issue under wraps as much as possible.

If such a bold and public claim ever occurs in a domain, it's usually quashed immediately by a Prince who knows that showing weakness is not the way to keep a domain. If the Prince is unable to bring the rogue into line, his nights as a Prince are probably numbered, because there's always somebody badder out there who can put the rogue in his place.

System: The full mechanical benefits of domain are greater than can be summarized in this brief space. For more information on the benefits as represented by the Domain Merit, see pp. 200-202.

We've mentioned before that the Kindred are slow to adapt. Cursed as they are in the stasis of their Requiems, the same mystical force that returns their bodies to the state in which they were Embraced also affects their minds somewhat. The Kindred almost inherently become conservative upon their Embrace — what worked for them in life should work for them in death, and if the Kindred have *always* done things a certain way, well, then, who's the lone vampire to challenge those time-tested societal structures?

At least among Kindred scholars, that's the prevailing wisdom as to why Kindred society has remained largely unchanged since the nights of ancient Rome and the Middle Ages that followed antiquity. Certainly, the most annuated of the elders might remember when lieges answered to lords and the greatest lieges could call upon their subjects to aid them in their causes. That's what the elders would have the young Kindred think, anyway. Since precious few Kindred are more than a few centuries old (and even those are considered venerable by their contemporaries), it's unlikely that anyone's bringing the experience of Charlemagne or the chivalry of Chrétien de Troyes to the council of Primogen.

Still, feudal customs persevere. The preeminent Kindred of a given domain is often a "Prince," and she often maintains a "court" of advisors, populated by a "Herald" and a "Seneschal" and a select, quasi-aristocratic body of lords, chamberlains and viziers. The practice of "subinfeudation" allows Princes to appoint "Regents" of specific territories, much as a king would award a parcel of land to be governed by lesser lords. The "Sheriff" — from the Middle and Old English words for "shire-reeve" — enforces the edicts of the Prince as an extension of her authority.

Beyond that, many of the covenants and local structures adopt neo-feudal practices of their own. The Invictus observes oaths, the Circle of the Crone and Lancea Sanctum support religious hierarchies and the web of promises and prestige overseen by the Harpies and their ilk is like a dark counterpart to courtly intrigue and chivalry.

That's all fine and good, and the roles of the Kindred who are part of the local power structure are made plain in their titles and actions, but what does this all mean in practice? What does a Seneschal do when he rises each night? Certainly the Herald has more to do with

his Requiem than follow the Prince around and wait for her to tell him, "Go say some stuff in my name." The Sheriff who exists solely to enforce the Prince's will is a poor model for the office, as he'll soon lose the respect of the Kindred he's supposed to keep in line as well as neglect the contacts and informants whose secrets he requires to stay a step ahead of the scofflaws among the undead.

That's what this section investigates. To what extent do feudal roles dictate a Kindred's affairs? What might a Kindred's specific duties be? How do key Kindred in these roles affect the city's mien? What might a Kindred possessed of a feudal title be found doing on any given night? To this end, each office or practice receives a bit of description of its responsibilities in practice, as well as 10 possible activities that characters who interact with the "noble" might find her doing.

Feudalism versus Manorialism

Strictly speaking, Kindred society has as much in common with manorialism as with feudalism. Manorialism is the system whereby the lord in his manor parcels out land to the villagers who dwell in the town nearby. The town is served by a church, which ministers to lord and peasant alike. These are the traditional three estates of the realm from the Middle Ages — the nobility (the Invictus or, sometimes, the Carthians), the clergy (the Lancea Sanctum or, sometimes, the Circle of the Crone) and the commoners (all the low-status vampires).

In manorialism, the lord doles out responsibility for farming tracts of his surrounding lands to the peasants and vassals beneath him. Traditionally, peasants are responsible for providing food from the land for their lord, and military service when called upon. Among the modern Damned, vampires making havens in the lord's shadow are responsible for maintaining order and the Masquerade within their little yard, night to night. Some of the surrounding ground remains public, for use by the peasants (in this case, the common vampires) in general. Other ground remains the unique and sacrosanct property of the landlord. Similar to the medieval crofter, the modern vampire is a subsistence farmer, eking out enough sustenance from the surrounding fields to survive another cold, dark winter.

Kindred are the lords, priests and farmers. The living populace is the field. The crop is blood.

The most august of titles among the Kindred, the Prince is the final authority over what passes for policy among the undead of a given domain. Effectively, the Prince is the King of the Vampires in his domain — or, at least, that's what the position signifies. A weak Prince may rule at the whim of a council of his seeming counselors. In any case, the Prince represents final authority in all matters of the Requiem.

That authority stretches as far as the Prince can maintain his supremacy. Oftentimes, that distance is assumed to be a city simply because the region is assumed to be a domain. Few kings ruled part of a kingdom, so most Kindred in town regard all of Baltimore as the Prince of Baltimore's domain, for example. In practice, handling the Kindred affairs of a domain is as effective only so far as other vampires believe the Prince has the authority to enact his will. Few Kindred are bold enough to cross a Prince openly within his assumed domain, though, so even Princes with little actual authority sometimes have formidable practical authority.

Among vampires, the role of Prince is as much social as it is governmental. That is, the prevailing social contract places the Prince in the role of enforcer and arbiter. The Kindred, owing to the fact that they remain hidden from the world at large, have no authority beyond the Prince to appeal to when a matter requires his attention. Thus, its important that the Kindred have respect for and trust in their Prince.

Easier said than done, of course. Too often, the Kindred bemoan tyrant Princes and their overbearing decrees, fool Princes propped up by some power behind the throne or partisan Princes who favor certain covenants or clans over others. It doesn't help that many Princes are indeed corrupt (as follows Lord Acton's assertion that power corrupts), or instead invoke the gravity of the office when the wisdom of their reign is found lacking. "Because I'm the Prince!" is the justification of a monarch likely facing his final nights holding that title.

This makes the office of Prince somewhat precarious in practice, in seeming contradiction to the tenure-for-life that mortal feudal societies observe in all but the most dire circumstances. Cities may have a new Prince every 25 years, every decade or even every year — it all depends on the political climate. In a city where many young Kindred don't buy into the feudal model, a would-be Prince is going to have a difficult time exerting his authority. In cities such as these, a tyrant Prince is as likely an outcome as a democratic council. Indeed, when the "enlightened" whelps clamor for such foolishness as "equal representation," the entrenched elders often approve of radical, bloody demonstrations of Princely power that show the rabble in just whose hands the power of the night resides.

Example Actions: On any given night, a Prince might...

... hear an appeal from a Kindred he's declared outlaw. The outlaw originally assumed that he'd be a martyr for his cause by openly rejecting the Prince's rule, but since

the outlaw's been ostracized, he has no hunting ground, no recognized haven and no allies who want to risk their own asses lending their aid to the anathema.

... host a dinner for mortal luminaries in town. With so many of the city's movers-and-shakers secretly answering to him, the Prince wields a great deal of political power that local authorities recognize but don't quite understand. The dinner is a chance for them to meet the enigmatic power broker who has so many members of the financial community (or the local art scene, or the local cultural clique, or organized labor or...) deferring to his judgment.

... host a sit-down with the various organized crime elements in the domain. Particularly in violent cities, a Prince's feudal right may literally stem from his physical might and his willingness to spill blood, even on the steps of City Hall when necessary. These "robber Princes" are the modern legacy of medieval warlords, taking their brutal armies to the streets and operating outside mortal law to make their own political mandates when necessary.

... enjoy a concert given at a local venue. A Prince needn't be a stuffy, untouchable archetype relegated to back-room meetings and great hall decrees. The Prince has to find something in the Requiem that gives him personal pleasure, because the ones who do it solely for the political power are often driven mad or depressed utterly by the seemingly endless responsibility.

... adjudicate a dispute between two rival Regents. Although many young Kindred believe it to be so, "those in power" are rarely a unified cabal. In fact, most of the time, the halls of power are rife with treachery and duplicity. The sensible Prince tries to keep all of his subjects, especially the politically powerful ones, complacent and thus able to focus on the needs of the domain. In practice, this often takes the form of *appearing* neutral but actually inciting further hostility between his feuding lords, thereby keeping their destructive urges turned toward each other and their treacheries against *him* from fomenting. There's a reason so many Princes swear by the work of Machiavelli that shares the same title.

... cruise the Rack for a tempting vessel. True, many Princes have extensive herds of their own from which to feed, but even the most paranoid Prince desires a change of tastes in his nightly repast every once in a while.

... hold an informal meeting with newly emancipated Kindred and Kindred who have recently come to the domain, so that he can learn who's in his domain. Many Princes ignore young Kindred or automatically treat them as subservient, but the wise Prince knows that his domain is literally the Kindred who make it up. The more he knows about young Kindred — especially if other prominent Kindred ignore them — the more he knows what's happening on the streets of his domain and not just at the formal events.

... bestow a new title on a Kindred who has earned distinction in the domain. This may be an honorific title, or it may be a transferal of power. If the old Sheriff, for example, had too many ties to the Circle of the Crone for a Sanctified Prince, that Prince might grant a different Kindred the office of Sheriff. If the Sheriff is exceptionally cagey, he might grant it to a different Acolyte, thereby keeping the position filled and causing some distracting rivalry among the Circle itself.

... entertain an envoy to hear offers of future cooperation between the Kindred and whatever interest the envoy represents. This may be a financial advisor looking to develop an investment relationship with the Prince himself, a mage seeking out a troublemaking Kindred who won't leave the mages' interests alone or a vampire-hunter who knows he'll never defeat all of Kindred society by himself so he proposes a deal by which he can handle the vampires the Prince "recommends" the hunter destroy.

... offer a grant of personal domain to a Kindred who has served the Prince loyally (or at least *apparently* loyally) and distinguished herself. This effectively makes the character a "knight" in the Prince's service, as her granted domain can be taken away, and probably comes with expectations of future loyalty and service.

Variants: The office of Prince might actually be the penultimate Kindred title in a given region. An exceptionally powerful vampire might style himself as an emperor, claiming multiple domains under his authority and granting local dominion over each to local, tenant Princes (who may then subinfeudate as they wish — or not, depending on the emperor's will).

On the other end of the spectrum, some domains might not have a Prince at all. Such domains may be governed by a council of vampires who establish policy democratically. A domain might be a commune, in which each Kindred serves the community as he is able and take from it as he needs. A mercantilist domain (or an approximation of one based on temporal power and information rather than tangible capital) might emerge in cities where many different supernatural types are present, with the "Prince" taking on the role of eminent liaison to other supernaturals.

The neo-feudal hierarchy need not restrict the Prince to a purely temporal role. A Sanctified Prince or Acolyte Prince might well be a spiritual leader of the domain's Kindred as well as their political authority. A Kindred priest of a mortal faith might join one of the more secular

covenants and rise to Princedom, effectively making him a political clergyman not unlike a papal legate.

The office of the Seneschal combines a number of archaic duties with an equal amount of modern responsibility. In a sense, it is the title most affected by modernity — the Prince still rules, his advisors offer counsel and the Sheriff cracks heads when told to, but the Seneschal has all the duties of the medieval master of coin and the modern Secretary of the Interior. Historical examples of people who might have made excellent Seneschals in a **Vampire** context are Niccolo Machiavelli, Francis Walsingham, Thomas Becket, Cardinal Richelieu and even Joseph Goebbels. Whether for good or for ill, each of these individuals was extremely effective in his role, and ultimately answerable to someone else. Indeed, some were more capable than their sovereigns, as is occasionally the case in some Kindred domains!

In the most feudal context, the Seneschal is the office of the chamberlain. Domains vary so widely, however, that what the Seneschal actually does rarely is exactly the same from one domain to the next.

Some domains are extremely organized and well run, providing Kindred society with funds and other resources from hidden accounts managed all over town. In these domains, no single Kindred can be the beneficiary of such resources, but when it's in the best interests for the Kindred to have a quick end to the "Vampire Killer Stalks Downtown" issue in town, that money turns into bribes, hush funds and allocations to other civic needs so that the Kindred can get on with their Requiems without undue attention. In domains such as these, the Seneschal manages those funds, tasking individual Kindred and mortal contacts with disseminating the money.

Other domains are far less organized. Whether that's an intentional laissez-faire policy, or the byproduct of a corrupt Prince or Seneschal or even the result of a lack of Kindred infrastructure, Seneschals in domains such as these probably take a different approach. They may operate for the good of themselves out of their own pockets, they may divert funds from the Prince's own holdings or they may not bother with it at all.

Even this, though, suggests that there's a spectrum in which Seneschals operate, which isn't quite the truth. A Seneschal may be responsible for literally anything the Prince decides the Seneschal is in a given domain. If a single, unifying rubric is appropriate to the office of Seneschal, it's that the Prince decides on policy and the Seneschal makes it happen. Whether the Seneschal is good at making these things happen and how he does them depends on each individual domain.

The feudal reality of the office is that the Seneschal is intended to be the Prince's right-hand man, his first lieutenant, his major domo. The Seneschal may be the Kindred who grants you audience to discuss a matter of local concern with the Prince, or the Seneschal may handle the issue herself. She may be an eloquent master of politics, or she may be a vicious thug. Whatever her demeanor, she's the one who makes things happen in the domain, and you're probably answerable to her.

(Of course, in some domains, the title of Seneschal and, potentially, the other singular offices, might be one held by a figurehead. Despotic or paranoid Princes, who trust no "lesser" Kindred to handle the affairs of the domain, sometimes bring the duties of these other offices back into their own bailiwick. These Princes often have short tenures, as their own mistrust turns back upon them and their subjects rebel against the lord who makes all decisions in secret and with only his own counsel.)

Example Actions: On any given night, a Seneschal might...

... convene a meeting of Primogen or Prisci in the absence of the Prince. Young Kindred commonly believe that every convocation of city leaders has to involve the Prince. Indeed, the opposite is just as often true: the Prince very frequently leaves the "lesser concerns" of the domain to the infrastructure of mid-level feudal lords to adjudicate, handling only matters of critical import or unilateral concern. If the Prince doesn't have to hear about the small-scale conflict between the Ordo Dracul archaeologist and the Carthians' contacts among the import offices at the docks, why bother him with it when the parties in question and their representatives can solve the issue themselves?

... spend time collecting for and arranging her rare insect collection. Giving the Seneschal a compelling interest or hobby outside Kindred politics goes a long way toward making her a complete character and less of a generic vampiric politician. As well, the vaguely menacing accouterments of the insect collector — a bell jar, tiny pins and needles, shadow boxes filled with hundreds of minuscule, transfixed creatures — lend a reinforcing air of horror to the pastime.

... visit with a Regent and discuss a matter of policy that differs greatly in the Regent's tenurial domain from that of the larger domain of the city. This may be an attempt to bring a maverick Regent into line, or it may be a tour to the "other side of town," where it's an established tradition that certain other citywide customs don't necessarily work the same way.

... seek an "independent" coterie of Kindred to help gather intelligence or research data on a particular cov-

enant, faction or singular Kindred that has come under official scrutiny. The Seneschal wants to make sure that the Prince has all the relevant details on the matter before taking the issue to the Prince and asking for a ruling.

... conduct interviews seeking evidence of collusion between a coterie believed to be independent and a covenant, faction or Kindred under an official investigation. Perhaps the party under investigation is bribing the independent researcher to provide favorable information to the Seneschal. On the other hand, both the party under investigation and the researching coterie might be on the level, and some other saboteur is working behind the scenes to queer the deal.

... coronate a new Prince who has recently risen to prominence. The Seneschal might be trying to ensure the security of his own title under the new Prince, or he might be conducting a time-honored tradition in the domain of ushering in the era of the new ruler.

... meet with a literary club, where he and fellow enthusiasts of a given author read and discuss that author's works. This is another good way to develop the character outside the context of the Seneschal's official duties. The types of books he enjoys can speak volumes as to his personality — he may be a devotee of modern political theory (which no doubt helps him in his duties as Seneschal), he may enjoy the formal wit of Regency literature or he may just like the protagonists in pulp noir fiction.

... spend time in his studio, where he paints portraits and still lives under an assumed name. This can simply be a defining characteristic, or it can be the foundation for a more complicated chronicle theme. For example, the Seneschal's work might have earned a certain degree of critical interest in the mortal art world, putting the Seneschal into a potentially Masquerade-threatening position of local fame.

... take to the streets at the head of a blood hunt. While this might be expected of a Sheriff or a warlord Prince, nothing tells the Kindred populace of a domain that *everyone* is hunting the anathema like a Seneschal who girds himself for battle and hunts down the number-one enemy of the local Kindred.

... oversee an event at which the local Kindred will mingle with a number of mortal guests, such as an immense Halloween party thrown by the Kindred (perhaps in conjunction with a local radio station) or a fund-raising dinner party hosted by the "Citizens for Cultural Integrity," a Kindred front intended to keep the current mayor — an ally of the Seneschal — in power.

Variants: The Seneschal need not always be presented as a flunky of the Prince, or even directly attached to

him. It makes the most sense from a feudal perspective to keep the Seneschal beholden to the Prince, but history has provided numerous examples of aides-de-camp who exceeded the ability of their lords.

One example might be a political split in power between factions, not unlike the feudal power schism that often existed between the crown and the Church. A Seneschal might also represent a shift in power from the dictatorial power of the Prince to a more divided model in which the Seneschal becomes a figure similar to Oliver Cromwell (with all the concomitant controversy).

A Seneschal might work as an interim Prince-Regent as well. If the city has no Prince (due to abdication, treachery or any other vicissitude of the Requiem), the existing Seneschal would likely reign in the Prince's stead until a viable candidate for the Princedom arose. Of course, that candidate might be the Seneschal himself....

The Herald is a particularly archaic office, but none are so emphatically feudal as the "town crier" whose job it is to make sure that everyone knows what the lord of the domain has decreed. Granted, many modern Heralds take advantage of contemporary methods of communication, but the function of the office remains true to its origins even if the details have changed.

Different domains accord different degrees of import to the office of the Herald. In some domains, she is like unto the Prince herself, the voice of the domain, a minister of propaganda and potentially even a secret police. In these domains, the Herald makes sure the common Kindred know everything they *need* to know, and not an iota more. On the other end of the spectrum, some Heralds are little more than lickspittles, capering before their Princes as they tell the "peasants" what the Prince has decreed while sneering at them from behind the precarious protection of the lord himself. These sorts of Heralds obviously earn little respect for themselves, but manage to coast on the importance of the office and their proximity to the Prince.

Most Heralds, naturally, fall somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. In such cases, the Herald is a much more ceremonial and much less time-consuming title than that of Prince, Seneschal or Sheriff. Indeed, the Herald may see little more duty than as a page at Elysium or an official record-keeper at gatherings of influential Kindred. Heralds open and close these gatherings, keeping the minutes of the discussions and then passing on all relevant information to the untitled Kindred whose Requiems may be shaped by the change in policy.

Honesty is a quality valued in Heralds, or at least situational honesty. It does a Prince no good to have his Herald selectively disseminating the customs of the domain to suit his own ends. On the other hand, it greatly aids a Prince and his court to have a Herald who knows when to shut up and not let anyone know that those august personages seriously discussed revoking the custom of hunting grounds and placing all rights to feeding in key regions in the hands of a select few officers of the court.

Example Actions: On any given night, a Herald might...

... seek to "deputize" a group of Kindred to help pass the word on a new policy that the Prince and Primogen have just put into order. Especially among a community of monsters whose society depends upon remaining a secret from the world around them, word-of-mouth is still a very effective method of communicating information. Storytellers, it also sets up the potential for miscommunication, upon which an interesting story or plot twist might hang, not unlike an undead version of the old "telephone" game.

... let it leak a few nights early that an individual Kindred is about to be the subject of the Prince's wrath. In this case, the Herald has some kind of connection to the individual, or is perhaps paying off a favor to her by giving her a few nights' head start before local policy declares her a criminal or worse. On the other hand, this may be a grudge in effect, and the Herald knows that the individual will be exculpated among the lords of the court, so he tells her she's in for it in hopes of forcing her to flee or condemn herself.

... blend his official decrees with a bit of gossip among the Kindred at Elysium. This might be a Herald who's also a Harpy (or wants to be one). It might also be a Herald who's about to be relieved of his office because he can't seem to confine himself to heralding only what he's supposed to.

... take her sports car out for a spin at a local track. The Prince chose this character as a Herald because the other Kindred see her as leading a sort of dashing Requiem, which her racing reputation supports. This is good for the Prince's credibility with younger Kindred, as someone outside the traditional, stuffy, blue-blooded ranks of the Kindred is among the halls of power. It's also convenient for the Prince in case the Herald becomes a bit of a problem, as "accidents" are all too common at the track.

... seek corroboration for one of the changes in policy he's about to announce at the next gathering of all Kindred. The Herald believes that the change in local tradition is going to upset many of the local Kindred, so he considers that he has a few weeks to learn everything he can about the situation that caused the elders to adopt a new course of action. This is a chance for

Storytellers to involve a "race against time" plotline, in which the Herald comes to the characters and asks for their help in his sleuthing. (We deliberately left specifics out of this so that it's easier to work into an existing chronicle.)

... look for an outside Kindred whom she can enlist to expose a Primogen's plot to usurp the domain of one of the Prisci. The Herald can't take any action herself because she overheard the Primogen plotting with her co-conspirators at an assembly of Kindred lords, and she can't reveal the plot to the Priscus without outing herself as the one who learned of the Primogen's treachery. At best, it would be considered a conflict of interests among the Prince's court; at worst, she could be opening herself up for revenge on the part of the Primogen.

... hunt for a vessel in a feeding ground that's specifically not his. In this case, the Herald is trying to set up the fall of the Kindred to whom the hunting ground actually belongs by leaving a murdered vessel for mortal authorities to find. The Herald's plan is to use his connections at the Prince's court to suggest punishment for the murder, hopefully having the hunting ground taken away from the Kindred to whom it belongs and granted to him instead.

... begin his information campaign in the tenurial domain of a Regent currently at odds with the Prince. This is a plan on the part of the Prince to demonstrate to the Regent who wields the actual power in the domain, and the Prince is using the Herald to strike the first blow in what will probably become a war of influence.

... serve as a barker at a midnight carnival that has come to town. The carnival offers a variety of freak-show-type exhibits that seem to occur beyond the laws of the natural world. The mysterious ringleader of the carnival plans to auction off several mystical artifacts and belongings of local Kindred who didn't even know they'd been plundered.

... hide in the shadows to keep an eye on a mortal relative who's just moved to town. Naturally, the Herald doesn't want anything bad to befall the relative, but neither can he step out from his secret world of the Kindred and act as a benefactor. If someone found out that a person dear to the Herald had moved to town, that person would be a great tool by which an unscrupulous individual could leverage the Herald's access to the Prince's court and even the information he's charged to disseminate.

Variants: The role of Herald is a fairly straightforward one, and variations of the duty often fall under the responsibilities of other offices. Exceptions do exist, though, such as the propagandist described at the beginning of the section. Such a propagandist might actually monitor a network of spies and informants, either for the Prince, or even for whomever offered the highest price.

Heralds in highly spiritual domains might be revivalist preachers, sage hermits who venture forth only to issue religious decrees or "holy" knights who convert the "heathen" enemy on pain of death.

Primogen suit a combined role similar to that of feudal lords and members of an advisory council. It's a bit more modern than the Dark Age model that neo-feudalism suggests, but think of them in terms of a Kindred parliament. In most domains, the Primogen are the "landed" aristocracy, the lords and ladies who are owed respect and (occasional) fealty by those below them, but who still answer to a higher authority in the form of the Prince. They are the dukes, barons, counts and earls of the Kindred's world.

The authority of the Primogen is somewhat different from that of true feudal lords, however. Where those medieval lords and ladies essentially ruled their own domains in the name of their king, the might of the Primogen is more social than agrarian in nature. A baron collected taxes from his peasants; a Primogen collects very little formally, but had all of the diplomatic and para-government duties inherent to the domain. While they don't necessarily *make* traditions — that's the job of the Prince — the Primogen instead suggest how customs might change, how Kindred of their clans or covenants might react to changes in policy, suggest alternatives and wield their own influence to the betterment of Kindred society (and themselves, of course). They ostensibly represent an interest among their council of peers, whether that be a clan, a covenant or some more esoteric distinction.

As might be expected, the true extent of the Primogen's power varies by domain. In some domains, Primogen are merely figureheads, existing only to give the illusion of a representative court while the Prince (or Seneschal...) plucks the true strings of power. Indeed, sometimes an effectively powerless Primogen doesn't even care about its impotent nature, preferring to leave the governance to those who care about such things and instead basking in Requiems of privilege and comfort.

On the other hand, an empowered Primogen council might have authority that exceeds that of a weak, foolish or simply outgunned Prince. Such institutions challenge the cornerstones of the neo-feudal system, placing the power over Kindred society in a body that exists to check and balance its own performance. Luckily for neo-feudal realities, though, these empowered Primogen rarely espouse such radical concepts as "democracy" or anything

so dangerous. Instead, they're more like Houses of Lords, forming policy and keeping the power to do so in the hands of the established peerage.

Again, most Primogen fall somewhere in the middle of this political spectrum, acting as the aristocracy that has influence with the Prince and leading Requiems of comparative comfort. It's not all soirees and prestige, however. The duties of the Primogen are manifold. Since Primogen usually have some purpose for which they hold the title, they represent the interests of that purpose, meaning that not only do they have responsibility in some important faction of Kindred affairs, but they also have to diplomatically advance the agendas of that purpose. A Kindred might be considered "the Mekhet Primogen," or "the Carthian Primogen" or "the Law Enforcement Primogen." In many cases, these titles take on a gravity of their own, such as "Ambassador to the Ventrue," "Pontiff of the Sanctified" or "Minister of Finance." Instead of feudal fiefs, Primogen have dominion over factions or ideals.

Example Actions: On any given night, a Primogen might...

... seek insider information on the positions of other Primogen members as they pertain to an upcoming issue of discussion. On the one hand, the role of the Primogen is to play Devil's advocate, putting forth questions as to how a given decision might affect local Kindred. In Kindred realpolitik, however, no Primogen wants to be seen as a loser, and to continually back unpopular programs, or principles that the Prince shoots down, can erode a Primogen's base of influence. Thus, the Primogen in question here wants to find out just which way other Primogen might be leaning, so he can adapt his position accordingly.

... entertain a liaison with a member of another supernatural type. From the brazen rages of the Lupines to the enigmas of the mages, wise Kindred understand that they share the night with innumerable other creatures beyond mortal ken, and if those other creatures are plentiful and sensible enough to form their own societies, such fellow "monsters" surely have secrets of mutual benefit. Of course, it's in the idiom of the undead to give as little as they possibly can in return for the mysteries of others, so such a meeting is going to be a tense interplay of hidden agendas and mutual concerns.

... spend time cultivating contacts among the local media. It's always good to be able to cover up news of one's own mistakes or shed light on the schemes of another, and what better way to do it than to drop a hot tip into the lap of some up-and-coming member of the Fourth

Estate who can use it to bolster her own career — and then listen to what the character has to say next time something interesting comes up.

... pore over the veritable museum of vintage movie memorabilia a local collector has gathered. The Primogen himself is interested in the relics of Tinseltown and wants to see what flagship curios his unknowing rival has amassed.

... look for an available third party who can collect a mysterious journal that a Kindred who has recently gone missing alluded to before his disappearance. The Primogen isn't sure what's in it, but the details surrounding the missing Kindred's vanishing suggest something other than Kindred foul play — something more arcane and malignant.

... spend time brushing up on the field of botany. The Primogen was once an ardent gardener and plant scholar, but the realities of a Requiem spent in politics have unfortunately pushed outside interests to a low priority. Now, with a relative lull occurring in the Kindred's political arena, the Primogen has time to look into a few periodicals and heady books on the subject.

... make an appearance before a cult of ghouls and blood-slaves the Primogen has secretly sponsored. The poor mortals believe the Primogen to be an ancient demigod incarnate, whom their black prayers have woken from millennia of slumber. The Primogen, of course, indulges them, as their reverence of him, reinforced by the cravings they have for his Vitae, makes them fanatical servants willing to do almost anything to curry favor with their patron.

... visit one of the sites of the illegal gambling ring the Primogen runs in order to find out just who's been skimming money off the top of the proceeds. The Primogen suspects the Gangrel courier, because that would be the easiest way to take it, but the Ventrue who manages all the logistics and locations turned out to have ties to the local Carthians, who have long been a thorn in the Primogen's side.

... publish an underground newspaper dealing with the vagaries of local Kindred Requiems. The Primogen does this to incense the other members of the council (so that they might be distracted from their duties) and to undermine the influence of the local Harpies, with whom the Primogen has a longstanding grudge.

... prepare a site for the next convocation of the Primogen council, as that task rotates duties among the Kindred of that august body. The host of the meetings has to provide for security and any unique tastes the other members of the Primogen may have, in addition to making sure that the Herald knows whom to invite, when and where.

Variants: Similar to the Seneschal Prince-Regent who rules in the absence of a formally recognized Prince, a parliamentary Primogen council might rule until an adequate Prince arises from a field of contenders.

Primogen themselves might have a variety of sub-classifications, much as feudal ranks had different layers of distinction. For example, a Duke might have greater sway than a Baron — say, more votes on the council's electorate or a greater domain of responsibility. Primogen themselves might be able to ennoble lesser Kindred, though only to a certain height of rank based on their own eminence. In such cases, meetings of the Primogen council might be large, indeed, and there might literally be too many chiefs and not enough Indians in some top-heavy domains.

The office of the Sheriff is as quintessentially feudal as that of the Prince itself, and it's difficult to imagine one without the other. Among the titles of Prince, Seneschal and Sheriff, a domain has effectively all it needs to exist. Not every domain needs advisors, after all — with the Prince to decide on policy, the Sheriff to make sure everyone's heeding those policies and the Seneschal to handle logistics, all the infrastructure necessary to run a domain exists.

From a Storytelling perspective, the office of the Sheriff offers almost as many archetypal options as that of the Prince, and much of a domain's personality can be expressed through its Sheriff. Some Sheriffs are phobic and provincial, enforcing the Prince's will to the letter of the law and taking no lip from any punk-ass bunch of neonates who think the domain has to put up with their fledgling crap. Other Sheriffs would never dirty their own hands with the duties of office, preferring instead to do what amounts to detective work among the halls of power and turning their Hounds loose on anyone who needs to be beaten into complicity. A Sheriff might be a holy terror, her power and authority rivaling that of even the Prince (who fears to decommission her for fear of bloody retribution). On the contrary, a Sheriff might reluctantly hold the title, doing his duty because it needs to be done and resenting the fact that the other Kindred gradually come to resent *him* and not the office of the Sheriff or the decrees of the Prince that he only enforces. A Sheriff might be idealistic, operating with the interests of the domain first and foremost and ruing the secretive, treacherous nature of the Kindred as he stakes out the latest transgressor. If the Prince's position is *l'état c'est moi* — "I am the state" — then the Sheriff's position forms a coda to that statement, "and you will comply." How the Sheriff ensures the domain's cooperation is as important as any policy the Prince decides upon.

A Sheriff does more than crack heads, however. The Sheriff typically keeps order, and may officiate at local functions, such as opening an assembly of the Prince and his court if a Herald doesn't do that duty. A Sheriff may suggest blood hunts instead of the Prince, and all the Prince need do is ratify the Sheriff's suggestion. A Sheriff may have the power to select his own deputies as Hounds, or they might be appointed by the Prince or Seneschal. Indeed, the exact nature of the Sheriff's duties almost always depends on the nature of the issues the domain faces. A violent domain likely has a Sheriff ready to stake first and ask questions later. A domain rife with more political intrigue than beatdowns probably has a Sheriff who operates more as a bailiff or sergeant-at-arms than a sanctioned brute.

Varying as well by the state of the domain is the range of the Sheriff's powers. The Sheriff may have the ability to ignore customs of domain when he's on official business — if you're suspected of harboring a Kindred fugitive, you may well return to your haven one night to find the Sheriff conducting a search of your premises. A Sheriff in a very courtly domain might have to observe several elaborate gestures of etiquette before he renders justice or even questions a Kindred in an official capacity. A Sheriff might have a jurisdiction that ends at a Regent's borders (with the responsibilities of the tenurial domain falling to the Regent there, or even a Sheriff she appoints).

In short, the Sheriff as a Storytelling tool is an excellent character by which to illustrate the state of the domain. As a role attained by a player's character, it's a title that illustrates the complications and formalities of the feudal world.

One particular worry for Sheriffs is that so many of their duties consist of potentially Humanity-draining tasks. This is likewise a good opportunity for Storytellers to depict the very gothic device of descent into madness. As the Sheriff conducts more and more unpleasant operations in the name of the Prince, the Sheriff slowly loses his conscience and his ability to feel remorse.

Example Actions: On any given night, a Sheriff might...

... tear past a group of hapless Kindred in hot pursuit, only to return to their presence a few minutes later to question them as to whether or not they'd seen the fugitive. Only the most headstrong (or amazingly competent) Sheriffs try to ensure the integrity of the domain with no help from any outsiders. Wise sheriffs, just as good detectives, enlist the aid of their domains' citizens, appealing to the need for civic order or feudal duty in order to obtain evidence or testimony.

... restrain a Kindred at the point of frenzy who has just been introduced to a Kindred she hadn't known before at a local Elysium. Sheriffs don't have to wait for a crime to occur before invoking the responsibilities of their title. A sensible Sheriff is proactive, and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure among the hot-blooded Kindred.

... accept a contract on another Kindred at the request of a vampire who isn't the Prince. Not every Sheriff is entirely honest, and too many title-bearing Kindred are all too willing to abuse the breadth of their powers in order to suit self-interest.

... "knight" a character or coterie "in the field" in order to enlist the members' aid against a particularly powerful enemy. This may be a fugitive of exceptional physical power, or might be an elusive Kindred who has a habit of evading the Sheriff's own attempts to apprehend him. If the deputies in question prove to be capable, they may have their status increased permanently as a reward, or they may be dragged into an entirely new feudal responsibility that they earned through their competence.

... serve as a bodyguard to a prominent Kindred of the court while off official duty. If the Prince has no immediate need for the Sheriff's services, the Sheriff is of course free to pursue any of his own interests in the Requiem, and earning some cash or a favor is acceptable so long as he doesn't invoke his courtly title while on the freelance assignment.

... travel with the Prince and Seneschal to apply a little pressure to those uppity mages, who refuse to accept the fact that the Kindred claim of territory over the ruins of Darlington House means that they're not allowed there. The Sheriff's responsibilities, after all, include the domain, and not just the Kindred themselves.

... "disappear" a fledgling whose sire isn't as enamored of him as she once was and whom the Seneschal regards as trouble just waiting to happen. Whether this elimination is official business or not depends on the context the Sheriff can establish, and it may indeed turn the sheriff from a noble of the court into an outlaw in one bloody stroke.

... force a Kindred to drink the Sheriff's Vitae in order to establish a Vinculum in exchange for keeping that Kindred's transgressions off the books. The Sheriff has designs on establishing as many of these Vinculums as possible, hoping to use his influence to sway the populace into support for him when he aids another Kindred in ousting a Prince the Sheriff hates.

... accept a the gift of a herd vessel in exchange for destroying evidence that would cause a Kindred to lose a grant of domain if the case were brought against him.

... continue working at a construction site, which the Sheriff's construction company has taken on contract. The Sheriff earns only a small stipend for his title among the Kindred, and the construction company provides the Sheriff with both money and a personal interest, because he's always liked building things and working with his hands. Who knows how many rogue Kindred's remains have been secreted within the foundations of newly constructed homes all over the city?

Variants: The duties of the Sheriff are typically straightforward enough that her purpose is clear no matter what ornaments the regime in power chooses to hang upon her. An enforcer is an enforcer, whether she's a high priest's assassin, a union strike-breaker, a noble paladin or a mystic's snarling beast.

The function of the Sheriff's title can change a bit from domain to domain, however. Some Princes are loath to put authority over the enforcement of their word in the hands of any single Kindred, fearing corruption and what might happen behind closed doors in his name. Such Princes might appoint a "star chamber" of Sheriffs, all with equal authority and whose personalities serve as checks and balances to one another. A Sheriff may emerge as more of a barrister, with the duties of apprehension and enforcement falling to appointed Hounds and the Sheriff's responsibility being one of making a case before the Prince against transgressors. A Sheriff might even be little more than a warlord, a Kindred who eludes the Prince's authority so the Prince has granted him a title in order to foster the illusion among other Kindred that the Prince has everything in order.

Among the aristocratic society of the undead, some titles don't have direct analogues to the feudal offices of Dark Age origin. Some are modern, some are potentially even older than the Middle Ages and still others are wholly creations of the undead.

All that being true, however, doesn't affect their existence alongside the neo-feudal model that is the modern world of the Kindred. Indeed, since most of vampire society has so many underpinnings of a Dark Age society, these incongruous titles have inextricably become a part of the neo-feudal structure.

Priscus: This title stands out as distinct from other Kindred offices for two primary reasons: It seems to be older than the feudal conventions otherwise adopted by most of vampire society, and because it's simultaneously informal and definable. This title often corresponds to a Kindred's age, which surely afforded a degree of significance long before the Middle Ages among Kindred society as it did among mortal cultures. Priscus is informal in that it's not a title truly acknowledged by many Princes' courts, and

it's definable because it's a role to which certain Kindred specifically suit themselves — they become "shepherds" of their clans or perhaps "big sisters." Prisci interact with the feudal world in the context of "wise elders" and the like. That is, simply being old or esteemed doesn't grant a noble title, but the age and/or position of the Kindred who styles himself a Priscus often speak to a certain degree of wisdom and insight that a wise Prince would acknowledge, even if he ultimately chooses to rule against it. Prisci often have places of honor among a Prince's court, even though they may not sit at the nobles' table itself. As well, many Primogen are also Prisci as well.

Whip: The Whip is an odd position, as no Kindred can say for certain when it actually evolved or where. This title obviously has its analogues in legislative political systems, and its duties correspond rough to those, in that the Whip ensures members of clans present a unified face to opposition. They fit imperfectly into the neo-feudal model, as the position is another informal one and thus not directly subject to the relationship of lord and vassal. They're more like union bosses or other organized figures. That's not to say they don't have their place in neo-feudal society, though, as a Whip inciting his clan to rebellion is something no Prince wishes to face. Indeed, many Princes try to keep local Whips in their favor, as those Whips can ostensibly incite their clans to heights of pro-Prince fervor when necessary. In some domains, parallels to Whips have arisen within covenants, but this is another informal development, as covenants have hierarchies that implicitly suggest party-line adherence, so the job may just fall to a suitable ranking member of that covenant as an extant duty.

Harpy: Since feudalism is a non-democratic form of government, it doesn't really matter what a king's subjects think about their liege. Neo-feudalism, though, is a government principle grafted to a social contract, so the people's opinion does indeed matter. A Prince with no popular support — whether engendered by respect or fear — is often a usurped Prince in short order. Thus, the public-relations and spin-doctoring efforts of social luminaries such as the Harpies are paramount to effective rule. The difficulty is that the Harpies aren't official offices themselves, and those who are often reek of the propaganda for which they're designed. Therefore, nobles of the neo-feudal system actually need to curry favor with Harpies in order to procure their patronage. Kickbacks are the order of the night when dealing with the Harpies, but they need to be substantial and discreet enough to seem like something other than what they are.

Hound: Hounds are odd titles because they operate as extensions of the Prince's court, but they offer little more than a sanction in certain circumstances. In addition, some Princes don't even bother appointing Hounds, instead preferring to let the Sheriff grant and withdraw the title as she deems necessary. In modern parlance, Hounds are Black Ops, doing what needs to be done with as little attention as possible. In a neo-feudal context, the Hound is the Prince's assassin. Thus, it's no surprise that Hounds are on infrequently recognized formally. Nobody wants to be at court where a remunerated killer stands ready to literally murder dissent.

Master of Elysium: Although this position interacts closely with the Prince and his entourage, little formal accord belongs to the title. Certainly, it's a prestigious position, because it reflects the Prince's trust and even favor of the individual. Just because the Prince trusts the Master of Elysium, however, doesn't mean the Prince thinks that the Kindred has a savvy political mind. Indeed, in a Dark-Age sense, it's similar to being the publican at the public house where the Prince chooses to convene court: sure, it's an honor, but that doesn't mean the innkeeper gets to decide who's made an outlaw or what sort of blood tithe local Kindred need to make. Such being the case, those Kindred who are particularly disillusioned with vampiric politics often look at the Master of Elysium as the position of a hanger-on, a brown-noser or a lapdog. In practice, being Master of Elysium is often a precursor to some greater (that is, valid) political position, whether in the form of a grant of domain or a place at the Primogen's table. After all, the Prince is more likely to ennoble someone she trusts as opposed to just any random Kindred.

Some neo-feudal offices may be local phenomena, arising in only a single domain. Others may have fallen from common Kindred practice and exist only in a rare few domains. Some may be corruptions of older Kindred traditions or even imperfect understandings of feudal institutions of the mortal world brought into the Requiem. Whatever the case, Storytellers would do well to consider bringing their own feudal offices into their chronicles. The anachronistic or even barbaric feel of unique titles emphasizes the gothic nature of the world of the Damned. These might not be positions that require as much time and attention devoted to them as the greater offices of a Prince's court, but nonetheless they convey a feudal feel and suit key roles in the domains that support them. A few examples follow, but Storytellers and players are encouraged to create or adapt their own.

Fool: The traditional jester of feudal courts served two purposes. First, he entertained, providing any degree of entertainment from slapstick to juggling to reciting poetry. Second, jesters lampooned members of the court,

thereby "keeping them honest" lest they be mocked for excessive greed, harsh justice, wantonness, or other declivities of character. A Kindred Fool might not be known by such a derogatory title, but can certainly serve the same role. In the former role, a performer might be called upon to entertain assembled Kindred at formal affairs at the behest of some greater noble. In the latter role, the Fool becomes a sort of officially appointed Harpy, casting sanctioned aspersion on those who have made transgressions.

Kennel Master: In the Middle Ages, hunting was a common pastime, and having a kennel of able dogs to aid in the hunt was paramount. Indeed, some nobles paid more attention to their dogs than their fiefs, so great was the esteem held for a good kennel and capable hounds. In a modern context, a noble might appoint an individual to raise dogs for the noble in a revival of this archaic practice. The animals need not even necessarily be dogs — a rookery might house hunting falcons, a stable master might raise horses, etc. In the case of dogs, they may be purely ornamental or they may be functional. Imagine a Sheriff taking to the streets, pursuing a renegade Kindred with the Kennel Master at his side, leading a pack of literal hounds on the blood hunt....

Gaoler: It may be the policy in a given domain to imprison or even temporarily stake those Kindred who have breached local traditions, but whose crimes aren't so great as to see them cast out of the domain or destined for death. In such cases, the Prince himself probably doesn't have the time or inclination to do the dirty work, and the Sheriff's job is to enforce the Prince's edicts, not oversee the criminals once they've been brought to justice. In this case, it's the duty of the Gaoler to make sure that the prisoners are where they're supposed to be and tended to as much as their punishment allows. This justice can be exceptionally brutal or barbaric, which of course suits a feudal model and a gothic setting — perhaps staked rogues are walled up in an abandoned local ruin or left to starve into torpor for a period is a suitably constructed prison.

Knight: The Knight differs from the Sheriff in that the Knight's purpose is more external. While the Sheriff polices the Kindred, Knights may fight Lupines, ambush mages or hunt down ghosts. Knights are somewhat military in purpose, insofar as a secret society that needs to remain invisible can mobilize a military force. It's their charge to pursue whatever martial, outward-facing goal their Prince sets for them, whether that's direct combat or wary protection of the Kindred as a whole. In a more literary sense, Knights might also be charged with quests, such as finding an artifact or rescuing a hostage, that could conceivably turn into combative ventures.

Court Magician: In domains where Princes or other nobles value the arcane or the esoteric, a Court Magician might be a Kindred well versed in the occult, or who can otherwise solve enigmas and questions related to the inscrutable metaphysics of the World of Darkness. He might be a charlatan — perhaps akin to the Fool, above, or he may legitimately have the Kindred aristocracy fooled. On the other hand, the Court Magician might be a true mystic, wielding powerful sorcerous arts or mysterious Disciplines otherwise unknown to the undead. Tarot reader or astrologer, diviner or witch, John Dee or Aleister Crowley, the Court Magician can serve many cryptic roles, from spouting gibberish to doomsaying on the eve of a supernatural holocaust.

Covenants as Feudal Constructs

The covenants themselves map roughly to a feudal model of society. The Invictus assumes the role of nobility, the Carthians vaguely suit the role of those who toil, the Lancea Sanctum and Circle of the Crone are those who pray — albeit not without their own dynamic differences. The Ordo Dracul, fittingly, is an odd man out, not unlike the "wise hermit" or "outcast witch" (whom the peasantry sneaks off to visit when they need a love potion or charm against some other foe). The unaligned serve the role of vagrants, vagabonds and outlaws, by fate or choice outside the protective roles of society.

That's just a cursory, by-design placement of those groups, however. As Storyteller, you can adjust that placement to suit whatever your purposes or themes for the story are (see p. 11). Perhaps in your chronicle you'd like to make the Invictus more like the clergy — perhaps they have themselves set up as leaders chosen by God rather than temporal artifice. Perhaps the Lancea Sanctum is more of a "church" than a spiritual leader, rife with politics and paying only lip service to the notions of Longinus as a figure of veneration. Perhaps the Carthian Movement has achieved a social revolution in your chronicle, elevating the covenant from the "working class" represented by their definition as peasants, and have seized the reins of the governing class.

These are all within the realm of reason, and manipulating the covenants' purposes in this manner is a great way to keep **Vampire** fresh and keep your players from relying on too-easy stereotypes of expectation over the course of the chronicle.

The unique and solitary nature of each domain provides a perfect opportunity for creative Storytellers to come up with their own local traditions that reflect a

neo-feudal mindset. Whether the local Kindred truly believe in their significance or they're just there for pomp and circumstance (or set dressing), drawing attention to such customs is a perfect way to emphasize the gothic timbre of the **Vampire** setting.

We suggest a few examples below, but of course Storytellers and even players are encouraged to add their own to make the chronicle unique.

Madrigals: A form of music for three or more voices without accompaniment, madrigals were a form of secular music that became popular during the 16th century before being replaced by more theatrical forms of music. (Your local library or music store almost certainly has a collection of them.) One of the accomplished Kindred composers may have created a madrigal specific to the domain, or the current Prince in power might simply like to have one sung before convening a gathering at Elysium. They're especially appropriate to the noble connotations of the Invictus and the secular Kindred-ism of the Ordo Dracul.

Symbols of Office: Characters who hold titles may carry physical representations of them, or may don special garments when operating in the capacity of their feudal title. A Prince might wear an ermine collar while rendering a judgment, for example, while a Sheriff might carry a baton symbolizing the imposition of order or a Seneschal might carry a set of scales.

A Favor: Vampiric lovers — or perhaps simply Kindred affecting medieval fashion — might wear a favor given to them by the other, such as a garter given by a lady to the knight championing her at a tournament. These can be symbolic of commitment between two Kindred, or they can be tokens of some other affiliation. For example, perhaps it's local Daeva custom to wear a favor given by another Daeva (and shame falls upon the Succubus whom no clan-mate chooses to adorn with a favor), or maybe Lancea Sanctum Hierarchs reward their faithful with crosses fashioned from palm fronds.

Tonsures: The archetypal "monk's haircut" so often depicted in medieval imagery can symbolize both an allegiance to the Church (thus making it appropriate to the Lancea Sanctum, though the Celtic tonsure might be appropriate to certain Circle of the Crone cults) or a less denominational attitude of asceticism. The tonsure is so archaic that it's certain to turn heads in a modern world, but it's no more outrageous than a Mohawk, dreadlocks or other overt hairstyles.

Seals: Used in place of or in addition to signatures, seals represent the authentication of an authority. A member of the Primogen, for example, might have to stamp his seal in wax on the written version of any motion he wishes to bring before the assembly. A Prince may need to affix his seal to any change in domain policy before it becomes effective. It may simply be that seals are a showy fashion among elders, who mark all of their written correspondence with them as a reminder of their own (perhaps inflated) importance or prominence.

The Cycles of the Living City

The "Gaia" theory has taken hold lately in everything from academic journals to manga. This theory suggests that the Earth isn't simply an inanimate object with many separate life forms existing on it; rather, the theory purports that the Earth itself is a living being, or at least the thin layer of its biosphere is, and that all of the flora and fauna within that biosphere are parts of the living being. The weather patterns and water cycle are this being's circulation, the soil is its flesh and all animal life are merely cells or perhaps symbiotic organisms that help maintain its systems.

Most Kindred know this is New Age bullshit.

Some coteries latch onto the idea, and those vampires who have dealt with Lupines may have heard the theory in its connections to animism, delivered with the stink of dog breath. But where in this theory is there room for moving, thinking, feeding creatures that do not breathe, who do not grow old? In the metaphor of Earth-as-organism, what role would vampires play? Hair follicles? Dead skin cells? Those aren't exactly the most dynamic portions of an animal body, and yet the Kindred can effect sweeping change on the "organism" that is the world, at times seeming to control it. No, the Gaia theory does not hold up in the World of Darkness, at least not without the theory being altered to include new types of organisms that are neither living nor dead, man nor animal, of this world and of another.

The Circle of the Crone finds one of its ideological footholds in this disparity between Gaia figures and the reality of the vampire. The notion of a living world is not necessarily wrong so much as incomplete. If the world is a being, then it is not a natural one but a supernatural one.

One place that an "environment as creature" theory does hold resonance for more secular Kindred, however, is at the smaller scale: the city. This is only appropriate, as for most vampires, their cities are their entire worlds. Just as all organisms, a city behaves differently in the dead of winter than it does at the height of summer. And finally, although the point can be moot to most Kindred, a daytime city and nighttime city may share the same location, but they are in truth very different places. The way a city changes throughout the course of the night, or as the seasons change, is very dependent upon the specifics of that environment. Some neighborhoods come truly alive at the stroke of midnight, while others are swallowed by despair as the sun's last light fades away. The joy that is summer in one northern city might be a time of despair and drought in southern climes. But there is one thing about cities that can be described universally: Just as all organisms, a city exists in cycles of birth, life, death and sometimes rebirth.

The Life Cycle

Some cities are young and full of promise, but have not yet "found their feet." Others are in their primes, working with the energy of idealism but the efficiency of experience. And of course, some are in decline, their infrastructure rotting and their residents falling into despair. Unlike living organisms, however, cities never truly die. Short of a nuclear assault or geological catastrophe, a city retains a semblance of life for as long as humans (and therefore Kindred) continue to live there, producing goods and propping up an economy, however pitiful. Rather than die, cities past their prime tend instead to simply persist, the memories of their previous economies, events and ideals looming over them in the form of derelict factories, abandoned fairgrounds and overgrown parks. There is a poignant similarity of this persistence, this unlife formed of memories and shadows, to the Requiem of the Kindred; it does not go unnoticed by those vampires who once had poets' souls.

The following segments each describe a stage in a city's life, and present ideas to the Storyteller for how to convey the feeling of those stages in her descriptions as well as use them in her story's narrative.

Becoming

The beginning of a city's existence is a time of fresh ideals, new possibilities and hope. In the life cycle of a city, the "becoming" stage is that short-lived period during which anything can happen, and during which the burgeoning community's citizens are united in common purpose.

Or rather, that's the way it used to be.

That's the way it used to be when there was room to grow, when the nation in which the city resided was still forming, when the world's existing cities didn't already

have a stranglehold on the area's precious resources and economic options. Now, things are far less idyllic.

Similar to vampires, cities tonight are not born. Rather, they become, transforming from one thing into another species entirely. They begin as something entirely different, whether an underfunded town whose growing population pushes it into city status, or a string of communities that become an urban sprawl or even rural villages that are bought up by developers and turned into suburbs. What was once a positive development in a city's life cycle is now an unlooked-for, confusing event for nearly all of the residents of the area. All of them, that is, except the Kindred.

For the hunters in the night, the transition period during which a new city is being formed is, as it once was for mortals, a time of possibility. New domains are likely to become available for the ambitious. Corridors of urban travel may connect pockets of civilization that were once isolated from one another. And, best of all, the infrastructure of the new community is likely to fall behind as the city finds its feet. The police of a city in the becoming stage might not know the ins and outs of their expanded domain, or may be unsure where their jurisdiction begins and ends. Public transportation is irregular and unreliable, leaving easily taken meals waiting at lonely, poorly lit bus stops. Some homes may exist in primarily industrial areas, far from witnesses or potential help; others may be newly built in developments that are not completely occupied, making them just as isolated.

On the other hand, similar confusions and risks exist for the Kindred of a city during this phase of the cycle. It may not be clear which Prince lays claim to the new area, if any, and tensions can run high as vampires hungry for territory make heavy-handed power plays there. Boundaries must be redrawn, feeding areas found and alliances made or broken, all in light of how this new territory affects the nearby domains.

A nearby city area in the "becoming" phase is ideally introduced after characters have become quite comfortable with the ins and outs of their home city. They have established their relationships with the ruling Prince (whether sycophantic, cold or somewhere in-between), have made a few friends and enemies among various factions and have found a few favorite feeding grounds. They have either stepped into the Danse Macabre wholeheartedly or have done their best to stay out of it. Some of the characters may, having exhausted the exploration of their new existence, be on the verge of becoming introspective and despairing. Others may have encountered a problem that cannot be solved with the city's current resources, or may be beginning to make noise about wishing to find some tenurial domain to earn as their own. Regardless, the addition of a nearby "becoming" area throws the status quo into chaos, and allows the characters to revisit their priorities, explore a new locale, make their own power grabs and of course, get into more trouble than they may already be in.

Prime

This is the default life cycle phase for most urban environments in the World of Darkness. The city has a working economy, substantial and well-funded infrastructure and established neighborhoods and communities. The city is likely to be growing slowly, absorbing nearby communities and creating sprawl, but not so dramatically as a city in the "becoming" phase.

Note that a World of Darkness city in its prime does not have the clear shine, the feeling of hope and possibility that a real-world city might have. As with all things in the World of Darkness, things here are not quite as bright, not quite as clean, not quite as safe. And a major reason for that, of course, is the presence of the Kindred.

This phase is the ideal environment in which to overwhelm neonate characters, in which to allow ancillae characters to shake up the status quo, or in which to force elder characters to defend their hard-won positions and resources from up-and-comers. The ups and downs of humanity and their daytime world are barely noticeable during this phase, and the narrative of the story focuses almost exclusively on the Kindred and the ways that they move against each other. Mortals are more likely to be seen as part of the environment than as actual Storyteller characters; they are food or tools, something to be manipulated or something to be avoided. Mortals' bustling activities make them seem like a never-ending flow of insects, mindlessly trundling about their daily lives. Most are dreary or anxious, perhaps a few are happy; almost all are afraid deep down inside, but have been trained and socialized not to show it. They wear masks of disdain, lethargy, even a sort of comfortable, hopeless neutrality. The Kindred do not care. All that matters is that the herd continues to operate the machine that is the city, so that the Damned may feed off what it produces and battle over its benefits.

Whereas the mortals of a city in its prime are comfortable and subdued in their element, unlikely to truly notice the world around them or to ask too many questions, life "as normal" for the Kindred is not so sedate. A city in its prime may be the default hunting ground of the Damned, but that means that they must always be on the alert that they do not become the prey. Long-established communities protect their own, and organized,

well-trained emergency response units can make life very difficult for a vampire trying to escape the scene of a crime for which he was responsible. Records are kept, streets are well lit, murder patterns are made note of and investigated and outsiders are always coming through and asking questions. This may be the normal way of life for most Kindred, but that does not mean that it is easy.

Decay

If a World of Darkness city in its prime is akin to a real-world city in decay, then a World of Darkness city in decay is barely habitable. The closest thing we might compare it to is the capital of a Third World nation with a government on the verge of collapse; there is a semblance of order, and things look almost as if they might have very recently been normal, but something is missing. Shops are empty. There's no running water or electricity. People do not congregate in public, unless they do so armed and with the intention of preying upon others. The city is a corpse, and the kine living there are the maggots trying to scrape sustenance from the decaying flesh. This analogy leaves the Kindred as little more than scavengers themselves, digging through the refuse to feast on the mortal worms.

Setting a story in this phase gives the Storyteller an opportunity to highlight the fact that vampires truly feed on misery. To them, an unlit street is like a bountiful food shelf. Neighbors who mind their own business and keep to themselves mean that victims' screams can be savored, even encouraged. As those above the poverty line move out, they leave ideal havens for the Damned. And as the city goes further into debt, services such as police protection and reliable public transportation begin to suffer, making a vampire's hunting that much more worry-free.

While the city falls into decay and despair, the lives of the Kindred there become decadent, bloated and indifferent. Few of the remaining mortals are worth corrupting or manipulating, so why bother? The nightlife of the kine is sorely lacking, and nothing approaching culture or high society survives in this phase, so the Kindred who persist here simply lower their expectations and increase their debauchery to try to ignore the unpleasantness of their surroundings. Lower-class Kindred may take on the appearance of the nouveau riche, throw parties from dusk to dawn in abandoned mansions or garishly redecorated warehouses, serving drugged and comatose children as hors d'oeuvres. Wealthier Kindred move on, following the social class they once preyed on, leaving hollow positions of power behind for less competent or less experienced vampires.

Yet the Kindred are as much a product of their environment as they are of their own making, and they, too, must eventually descend into, if not physical decay, then at least mental despair. Similar to the cabarets of Europe on the verge of World War II, the revelers dance, sing and laugh in desperation, offering feeble death's head grins to ward off the inevitable despair of the eternal night that waits for them in the shabby streets outside. With nothing worth fighting over, the Danse Macabre devolves into a half-hearted game of slow-motion chess; the surprise moves and thirsted-for vengeance, when they come, seem barely rewarding. Just as the humans around them live in squalor, so, too, must the Kindred, foregoing electricity and plumbing, heat and creature comforts. Even the food supplies eventually affect the Damned. The prey here are more likely to carry diseases, which may be fine for the Morbus, but other Kindred find such meals disgusting... until their tastes, by necessity and habit, become less refined. Finally, drug and alcohol abuse are extremely common in a city in decay, and many Kindred find themselves addicted to the substances simply because so many of their victims have them coursing through their bloodstreams.

Rebirth

No phase of a city allows the Storyteller to more dramatically contrast the Kindred and kine communities than that of rebirth. Whether a city in decay or one that is in danger of becoming sprawl, a city in rebirth comes back from the brink with new investors, population growth, special government programs meant to encourage the opening of small businesses and, of course, the "gentrification" of previously industrial areas. In smaller communities, the entire citizenry joins in on the project, pitching in to clean up parks, patrol neighborhoods, improve property values and streamline the efficiency of local governments or organizations. In larger cities, the involvement is less grassroots but is no less dramatic, as large corporations subsidize the cleanup of entire districts or non-profits, celebrities and politicians take a personal interest in the area's revitalization. Regardless of the scale, things as a whole improve for the community. Physically, everything seems cleaner, safer and better lit. Emotionally, the populace seems willing to give of their time, to organize and help one another, to congregate in large numbers in public places and to give free rein to hope.

In short, the city becomes a nightmare for the Kindred.

In neighborhoods that were once easy hunting grounds, finding prey becomes next to impossible. Politicians, business owners and city workers seem so infected with idealism and courage that they are difficult

to approach, much less corrupt. Abandoned buildings, derelict factories and vacant lots (the places that vampires use as havens and gathering places) are retaken during the daylight hours, turned into condominiums, museums, parking ramps and well-lit parks. The happier, safer and more organized the city becomes, the harder life becomes for the Damned. And things become more difficult, not just in terms of practical matters such as havens and hunting, but in terms of the mental state of the undead, as well. A vampire who sees mortals working together can think only of his own kind's inability to do so. A creature of the night who passes a new children's museum or a playground is reminded that she can never bear children of her own. The construction zones around new homes being built, the litter and trampled grass after a daytime concert in the park, the "Grand Opening" sign of a daring new business... as the Damned walk the darkened streets of a city in rebirth, these signs all serve as mockeries of their inability to enjoy the time of hope and promise that has come to the mortal world.

The Marks: Kindred Graffiti

So vampires are a bunch of feudal thieves and smugglers, which makes them not unlike many different mortal organized criminal societies, except Kindred traffic in blood. But the Damned are also similar to modern gangs in the sense that they want a degree of respect and fear from other gangs, but the Damned don't want to be so visible that ordinary people or the police can find them when they're hiding. How do vampires communicate with each other when they're all hidden in the dark, dwelling in secret lairs, lying to each other and off the grid?

They do it with *the marks*, sometimes called "the vampire cant." Similar to modern gang tags, subvertisements and graffiti, the marks are public works of art or vandalism that contain jargon or coded and cliquish language, so that passersby who are in the know can understand, but the common chaff of society — the plebs — cannot. This public language is an ancient staple of vampire society. Elders say it's been around since the Roman nights.

The vast majority of Kindred marks have evolved from graffiti and art popular with the mortals of the age. The marks must blend in well enough with ordinary urban tags to avoid too much attention. Some marks are mistaken for old posters, some blend in with guerilla art, some resemble the most simplistic kinds of amateur taggings.

The only real thread common to all of the Kindred marks is their secrecy. If any other trait is common in the cant of the Damned, it's anachronism. Vampires love their many years of accumulated knowledge and experience, and they love to lord it over the youthful living.

Kindred marks borrow from ancient and modern trends, mixing old imagery with new styles and vernacular to create an arcane pastiche that communicates without giving too much away. The marks are about keeping secret and being heard at the same time.

Keep Your Eyes Open

The marks are everywhere. That paper skull pasted to the wall of the train tunnel. The yellow hieroglyph spray-painted on the old water tower. The downward-pointing red triangle and star put on the side of a white van with a fat red marker. The words "red teeth" written on the stairwell wall in black ink. The spear airbrushed on the boarded-up windows of a burnt-out church.

The marks tell Kindred whose turf they're on, what covenant controls the block, what clan of vampires is prowling around, who the wheat belongs to and more. To understand it all, a vampire must be current on the local culture of the undead. But, of course, no vampire is meant to understand it all.

Even the bloodsucker who knows that those spidery red tree branches are a mark of the Invictus may not know what they mean. The Acolyte who knows to look for green circular mazes stenciled on the sidewalk when he's searching for that night's cult ceremony may not know why tonight's maze is different from last week's, or what the mazes signify. The Dragon who paints a yellow numeral 9 on the crumbling brick walls of a Ordo Dracul meeting place might not know why his sire picked that number.

Savvy Kindred eventually learn to interpret the tags and marks of their neighbors, both mortal and Damned, after years of eavesdropping, observation and guessing.

Real-World Graffiti

Don't break the law. Lots of cities have dialed up their punishments for vandals and graffiti artists. Even if a tagger says his mark is just a joke, even if a painter thinks his work is public art, the police won't. Cities with especially high levels of gang activity have dedicated anti-graffiti squads (often with names like GraffitiBlasters) whose job it is to interpret graffiti (to glean gang intel), destroy it and put a stop to vandalism.

(Yes, they also put a stop to — and destroy — work that it can be argued is legitimate art. The point is they bust people. Even though graffiti can be admirable art, even if you think you're the next Banksy, if it's illegal where you live, expect the consequences. We're not telling you to break the law.)

In the World of Darkness, these kinds of anti-graffiti measures exist only when the Storyteller wants to use them to create dramatic conflicts for the characters. In the game, these groups might be the source of an investigation that eventually leads a few open-minded and ballsy cops to start poking their noses into the possible existence of vampires. In the game, urban resources may be too few and public apathy too much to do anything about decades of paint and markers on the sides of buildings, trucks, train cars and anything else. In the World of Darkness, the marks are even more effective than gang tagging and guerilla art are in the real world.

Smart vampires keep it a secret when they decipher another's marks, so that no one updates their styles and renders moot all his hours spent code-breaking. Very smart vampires may keep using some secret marks even after they've been successfully figured out, as a means of spreading disinformation.

Of course, what's the point of marking at all if *no one* is going to understand the message? Teaching the secret language of private marks to allies without accidentally sharing it with enemies is a balancing act that never ends. Teaching the public cant of vampire graffiti to neonates and newcomers without giving it all away to mortals is a whole other balancing act.

Game Mechanics

The marks are part of the imaginary world of the undead who lurk among us, but they are also elements of gameplay. These are not simply a colorful bit of setting detail; they serve a purpose. The purpose of the vampire cant in the game of **Vampire** is threefold.

• **Add verisimilitude to the unlikely secrecy and society of the Damned.** How does a vast culture of legendary undead monsters manage to stay hidden from the eyes of the larger world? The dramaturgical answer is simply that they do it through our suspension of disbelief — we accept that they do, just as we accept that the undead exist in the World of Darkness, for the sake of good stories — but part of the answer in the fictional world of the Kindred is that they rely on the same tools mortals do to maintain secrecy without sacrificing a cultural identity. They communicate in code, through cryptolect and a secret patois. The marks are part of that.

• **Give Storytellers a simple tool for inserting Kindred culture throughout the city.** With vampires being so secretive, it can be difficult to maintain the atmosphere of **Vampire** throughout the game world where your chronicle is set. Even worse, it can be *easy* to fall into the bad habit of confusing the World of Darkness for a visually identical duplicate of the real world. Including vampire marks on the walls and windows of local, mundane buildings reminds players that their characters live in a world shadowed by hungry monsters. Mentioning meaningful tags and symbols in setting descriptions helps create the illusion that other characters are moving through the game world when the players' characters aren't there; somebody is painting all that stuff, somebody has something to say.

• **Give characters a method for participating in Kindred politics even if they are not experts in Social Skills.** So much of **Vampire** (and this book!) is politics that all those characters without dots in Persuasion, Intimidation, Socialize and Subterfuge can feel left outside the action of intrigue. The marks make Intelligence, Craft, Expression, Streetwise, Occult and even Survival into useful — though still not quintessential — parts of the political game. This alternative political expression isn't a substitute for those traditional political Skills, but a complement to them.

Plus, the ability to use their Skills to interact with the game world adds value to the dots players put in their abilities and meaning to the descriptions of the game world they're given. Is the graffiti in this tunnel just a bit of background detail, or does it have some lurking meaning?

Dice Pools for the Vampire Cant

You have a lot of options when it comes to using and interacting with the vampire cant through game mechanics. Rather than provide some kind of complex system for the marks, however, we'll simply offer you a few ready-to-use actions and dice pools for interacting with Kindred cant. These aren't strict rules, remember. The flexibility of combining different traits into all sorts of meaningful dice pools is one of the strengths of the Storytelling System; finding the right dice pool to describe a particular action is part of the fun of being a good Storyteller.

Seeing the City: Lots of Actions

If it seems like that list of actions is an awful lot of attention paid to something as simple as looking as graffiti, it is. This is also an object lesson for you players and Storytellers when thinking about how characters can perceive and understand the city surrounding the characters. Don't be stiff. Don't be a tight-ass about Skills and knowledge.

What you see with all these Skills is how different Skills may describe different approaches to getting the same information, and may describe the different ways that the character understands her world. They also describe how different Skills can access and interact with the same kind of information, the same parts of the game world. The character without Streetwise isn't necessarily left out of the loop when dealing with the secret marks of Kindred society (of which she is presumably a part).

Sometimes the tension or dramatic outcome of a scene hinges on whether a character spots something, recognizes what she automatically notices, or can truly puzzle out the meaning of the object in front of her. If a scene's drama doesn't hinge on the success or failure of an action — if she fails to spot the mark she won't discover the secret entrance to a rival's haven, if she misinterprets the mark she'll accidentally lead the coterie in to hostile territory, etc. — then don't roll for it. Focus on just the part that's important.

Alter these dice pools, and create your own, to reflect the unique knowledge of the players' characters and the unique circumstances of your city.

Skills don't have exclusive authority over particular knowledge or abilities. While some things might be known only by experienced craftsmen, doctors or drug-dealers, even a character suffering the untrained dice penalty can use an Attribute to see if he knows what's what. Likewise, some knowledge and abilities lay in the areas where two Skills overlap.

Drug markets and gang activity are clearly covered by Streetwise, but they're also matters of Politics in cities where these issues are important to councilors and voters. Pairing Streetwise with Intelligence can describe what a politico knows about the street and its art, even if he isn't going to say the right thing when he's face to face to a 'banger. Presence and Politics can describe a gang member's ability to convincingly put across her ideas about the government's shortcomings, even if she doesn't know the customs of City Hall.

Here are a few actions characters might take to interact with the marks. Don't think of this as a step-by-step guide, as if characters first have to spot marks, then recognize what they are, then decipher them. Reduce the character's essential action down to one dice pool and then move on with the story.

Spotting Marks

Dice Pool: Wits + Streetwise + equipment. As an alternative, Politics may be used for recognizing propaganda or radical commentary if its symbols or motifs have come to be known signs of political organizations. An Invictus Knight with no experience with street vampires (and no dots in Streetwise) might spot the symbol of a Carthian revolutionary brood, for example.

Action: Instant or reflexive. A character experienced with the vampire cant (who, for example, has one of the Cant Merits detailed in Chapter Five) may be entitled to a reflexive roll when entering a marked area. (She walks in and, without really thinking about it, takes in the Nosferatu tags on the walls.) For a character who specifically looks around for Kindred marks (even if she has already failed a reflexive attempt) this is an instant action. (She peers around the chamber, scanning with her eyes from one corner to another, looking for telltale symbols.)

This is essentially a perception action for characters that already know something about the marks. It's not about seeing paint on the wall, it's about seeing specific

marks that the character already knows. The character simply has to catch sight of them in the gloom, on the crumbling concrete, or in layers of graffiti.

If successful, the characters spots meaningful marks. If not, the character misses them.

Equipment: A scrawled copy of the mark on a scrap of paper (+1), a photo of relevant marks from another site (+2), a photo of the marks from the character's present site (+4)

Recognizing Marks

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Streetwise + equipment. As an alternative, Politics may be used for recognizing propaganda or radical commentary if its symbols or motifs have come to be known signs of other covenants or coteries. A stuffy Sanctified missionary may recognize the pagan symbology of the Acolytes only because he knows about the politics of the Kindred court.

As another alternative, a character might recognize the work of a particular artist and not just the symbols she's painted. Either Expression (to recognize a style) or Crafts (to recognize a method) could be used this way. A savvy Kindred tagger might be able to tell that the new marks on the sidewalk near his haven aren't just the work of territorial Carthians, but of a neonate Daeva they call Left Hand.

This dice pool can be modified by the Cant, Connections and Contacts Merits. (See Chapter Five.)

Action: Instant. The character must inspect the marks, but either she recognizes them or she doesn't.

This is an investigative (but not an Investigation) action, useful when marks are obvious but the Storyteller want to draw suspense out of their uncertain origins or purpose. Unlike deciphering marks (see below), this is an action based on a Social Skill, so it's also a good way to spotlight a character with experience and contacts on the street. This is about recalling information (Intelligence) and exposure to the ways of the street (Streetwise).

Example: *Dirge, a Mekhet on the trail of a thieving vampire, visits the abandoned factory where his target has recently been seen. Graffiti and tags are everywhere, covering the inside walls and widows of the building like wallpaper. Seeing them is easy, but recognizing the gangs, coteries and covenants these marks belong to requires some experience with the vampire cant – experience Dirge doesn't have. Later that night, he brings a streetwise Nosferatu in the know down to the factory to have him sort out what tag belongs to what coterie or covenant. "This is all South Street Kings paint," says the Haunt, and now Dirge has a new lead.*

Equipment: A crib sheet (+1 to +3), a photograph for reference (+2 to +4)

Deciphering Marks

Dice Pool: Intelligence or Wits + Expression or Streetwise or Investigation + equipment opposed by the artist's successes.

Use Intelligence when memory, cognitive power or comprehension is more important than noticing a detail or bit of nuance in the mark being examined — when the character is puzzling out a mark's symbology and references. This should be the more often used Attribute for this kind of action. Use Wits when details or broad elements of style need to be noticed to be appreciated through the accompanying Skill.

Use Expression to interpret the meaning (or double meaning) behind a tag or other written bit of cant; Expression helps a character appreciate the difference between the traditional and subversive meanings of the "Sovereign" tag (p. 62), for example.

Use Streetwise when an understanding of urban or subculture references makes the difference between success and failure. This is a substitution for Expression, though, which can do the same thing, to reflect the fact that plenty of people can understand cultural references and subtext without being able to employ such techniques themselves.

Use Investigation to turn old-fashioned puzzle-solving and raw logic on the decryption. A character using Investigation compares a mark to earlier examples of the form, contrasts the mark with others in the vicinity, and seeks out ways to make sense of it through psychology, history or some other intellectual method.

Action: Extended, modified by the artist's success at disguising meaning. The target number of successes is determined by the original artist. (see Creating Cryptolectic Graffiti, below). Each roll may represent a number of hours (typically two hours) or a complete night of work; specific instances depend on the kind of scene the Storyteller is creating.

This action is meant to dramatize the conflict between a thinker and a cunning puzzle. Picture the scholar crouched in an underground chamber, staring up at a wall of old graffiti lit by flashlights laid out on the floor. Picture the investigator pouring over piles of ill-lit Polaroids, trying to piece together the meaning of tags and paint in the background of the crime scene.

When the graffiti is a riddle, a hurdle to be overcome on the way to some other destination, this is the right action to use. When the graffiti is a treasure map, revealing the hidden location of some secret covenant chamber, this is the right action to use.

Example: *Dante sits cross-legged on the roof of the tenement, his sketchpad laid out across his lap. He's drawn the graffiti and*

transcribed the tags painted all along the brick ledges around him. He's broken apart the images on the page, turned the tags around in his mind and on paper. His ass aches from sitting on the gravel all night. The turncoat priest told him these marks pointed the way to the burial site of Dante's torpid sire, but for a week now they've kept their secret. Dante is in a battle of wits with the vampire artist who painted on this site forty years ago, and the only way he can lose is to quit.

Example: *"What're these birds?" Dante asks Rafael. "They represent the four elements of the South Street Knights' philosophy," says Rafael. "Enlightenment, Respect, Endurance... and Wrath." Dante looks at him. "Really?" Rafael nods. "Yeah. Took me forever to figure that out."*

Communicating Through the Marks

Dice Pool: Intelligence or Wits + Expression or Crafts + equipment. This is a basic extrapolation of the dice pools for the Create Art action and for composing works using Expression (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 58 and 80). Fundamentally, whether the public audience regards it as graffiti or vandalism, the core purpose of tags and marks is expression.

The dice pool for this act becomes more interesting when the *intent* of the artist's work comes into play. Is the artist trying to cajole, rattle, inspire, pressure, scare, inform or warn? How well does that come across to the viewer?

In game terms, the artist can choose to either get his idea across through Crafts or Expression alone using the dice pool above, or he can attempt to influence viewers and contribute to the Danse Macabre by making an Intimidate, Persuasion or Subterfuge action through the work. This is how subvertisements undermine the company line, how pop culture cracks the façade of the powers that be, how viral memes infect the body politic. Naturally, the majority of graffiti, Kindred or other, doesn't result in real change. Only those works that strike a nerve and get carried through the culture of the Damned like a bug are profound and unforgettable enough to be considered real power plays.

The system for communicating this kind of message through the marks is simple: The dice pool for the Intimidation, Persuasion or Subterfuge roll (paired with Intelligence for penetrating or bold insights and with Wits for cutting or comedic statements) is made with a –3 penalty (or more) for communicating through an indirect medium. That creates the message.

Then the character makes the Crafts or Expression roll to create the work that will carry the message; the successes on this roll limit the successes on the roll to compose the message. Thus, even if a character crafts an exceptional bit of fear-mongering propaganda with five successes on an Intimidation roll, the message only comes across as vaguely effective if the Expression roll nets just one success. That image of the city populated with burning vampires doesn't accomplish much if nobody can figure out what those orange shapes are.

Action: Instant or extended; possibly contested. Whether or not an extended action is possible depends on the importance of the work in the story or the artist's character arc. An extended action represents the long, laborious pursuit of the kind of work the artist wants to be known for. It's climactic. Each roll may represent a night's or even week's work. At the Storyteller's discretion, the total possible rolls may be limited to a number equal to the character's Resolve or Stamina. The total number of successes are limited only by the character's abilities.

Instant actions are much more common. If the artist is unhappy with his result, he simply tries again. (The Storyteller is free to impose or excuse the cumulative –1 penalty for retrying an action depending on the circumstances.)

How these successes affect the audience depends on the kind of roll attempted. An extended action doesn't represent a hit-or-miss statement but a complex and nuanced work. The more successes, the longer the work's meaning stays with the viewer, the farther word spreads of its quality, the greater the number of eyes that see it. In general, consider each success to be about equal to the number of nights the piece maintains its initial impact. These are the nights when it is cutting edge, spoken of at court and fawned over. For another period of nights equal to the successes, the work is remembered and referenced. After that, the work's popularity levels off, either sinking into the forgotten shadows of a busy culture or becoming a familiar bit of the background.

Whether or not the work has long-term admirers or becomes a touchstone for Kindred or mortal culture in the city depends on the happenstances of individual actions and characters in the chronicle. As a rough guideline, though, the Storyteller may declare a work to have significant resonance if at least one exceptional success was rolled during its creation. (This resonance may be merely cultural, the stuff of mundane popularity, or it may even have an impact on the landscape of the spirit world. See **Werewolf: The Forsaken** for details about spiritual resonance and the Shadow Realm.)

A hit-or-miss work is a simple contested action, comparing the artist's successes on his Intimidation, Persuasion or Subterfuge roll to the successes of the viewer's Resolve + Politics or Streetwise roll. (Resolve + Composure may be substituted rather than impose

untrained penalties for characters too ignorant to be profoundly effected.)

Failure means the work may be clearly received and even appreciated, but doesn't drive the viewer to action.

Success means the work has real impact, changing minds and potentially driving people to act. Storyteller characters may be rallied to a cause, inspired to act in accordance with a particular Virtue or Vice, or motivated to take a stand on some issue. Players' characters are effected to a degree they can plainly appreciate — possibly more than they'd like to admit rationally — but the real ramifications of their reactions are for the players to decide. It's art; it isn't mind control.

Equipment: Spray paint (+1 to +3), brushes (+2 to +3), quality paint (+1 to +3), airbrush (+2 to +4)

Creating Cryptolectic Graffiti

Dice Pool: Wits or Intelligence + Crafts or Expression + equipment. This is, fundamentally, an action to Create Art (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 58 and 80), with modifications. The distinct purpose of the vampire cant is to share information with some Kindred and hide it from others, and this action represents the pursuit of that unique goal. It's not hard to adapt this action to model the creation of coded letters or a closed patois.

Action: Extended; one roll equals 30-60 minutes of work. The total number of successes is up to the player to decide; the artist character keeps working until she (and the player) is satisfied. To prevent abuse or a long tangential action, the Storyteller is may limit the number of rolls to the better of the artist's Resolve or Stamina.

This action describes the work of the original artist creating a new mark. The character is devising the numerology, symbols and style that will hold meaning for her comrades and hide some of that meaning from rivals or enemies. This is not the simple act of reproducing established imagery.

The total number of successes generated by the artist is the total number of successes a viewer needs to accrue to decipher the mark.

The artist can further stymie the decryption of a work by disguising even the symbols themselves where they are included in the work. An onlooker can't puzzle out the meaning of the numeral 4 in the work if he can't even see the numeral for what it is. The lower of the artist's Wits or Subterfuge is applied to decryption rolls at the artist's discretion (when the work is created).

Once the work is done, other artists can reproduce the work with an extended action. The target number to reproduce the work is based on its complexity: a number

of successes must be accrued equal to the total number of rolls the original artist made to create the work.

Equipment: A sample of the artist's previous work (+1 to +2), an already-deciphered sample of the artist's previous work (+2 to +4)

Marking Territory

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Crafts or Expression or Streetwise + equipment. This is an extremely flexible dice pool, though. The Storyteller might substitute Strength for Intelligence if the matter in question is successfully cutting a mark into a nice solid substance like granite. Dexterity might be used to represent a mark placed in a hard-to-reach spot, like a sign jutting out over the expressway.

Action: Extended (2-5 successes, representing just the simple work of cutting in a basic mark; each roll represents one minute of work).

This isn't the roll to determine the quality or meaning of a mark. This is a simple representation of a character's ability to scratch out a bare-bones symbol without nuance. If a vampire wants to scratch out a quick notice that this territory is claimed, without revealing the covenant or the particular lord, this is the action to use. If a vampire wants to etch a quick warning to other Kindred before the hunters searching nearby find him, this is the action to use.

Equipment: Knife or screwdriver (+2), hammer (+1), oversized marker (+3)

Stock Penalties

These penalties may apply to any of the above actions:

Situation	Penalty
Site exposed to elements	–1 to –4
No time to work	–1 to –5
Lousy tools	–1 to –5
Cracked or rotten surface	–1 to –3
Surface crowded with other graffiti	–2 to –4

Propaganda and Protest Tags

Some messages circulate beyond the expectation of any tagger. Here are some commonly seen messages in Kindred graffiti, as well as their origins and meaning:

• **"The Prince Is Dead, So Bury Him"** A classic example of rebellious neonate slogans. This one started somewhere around New York City in the 1960s and has resurfaced a few times in cities through the US and Canada. These nights it's seen more ironically — all vampires are dead, after all.

• **"This Is the Future, Let's Act Like It"** A Carthian rallying slogan, meant to encourage and inspire and rather than tear down particular opponents. This one came out of a West Coast city ruled by a Citizen Prince and spread quickly through Carthian-controlled cities thanks to foolhardy revolutionary nomads.

• **"Fear Not"** Used tonight by the Ordo Dracul as a vague statement about the confidence Kindred should have over their own powers and Beast. It started, centuries ago, as a mark of the Invictus, indicating an area was overseen by Knights of the First Estate (or, later on, Invictus lords). In many cities the Invictus usage persists.

• **"It's Your Blood"** A Dragon tag from the Pacific Northwest. Though seemingly innocuous, vampires in the know understand this to mean that supernatural and philosophical aspects of the Requiem should trump all political and societal concerns. Less well-known is the phrase's origin in a 1924 text by an Illuminated Dragon of Montreal who used it to lure Kindred to the Ordo Dracul by promising them control and dominion over their own blood. The whole quote is, "Do not drink the secular aristocracy lies; the oaths and promises and territory are illusions, distractions, false idols. It's your blood."

• **"Fuck Prince Gorman"** This is one of those weak political catchphrases used by wannabe rebels or ironic politicos. Who Prince Gorman was, and what city he claimed, is lost to urban legend. This is now just a pop vampire idiom used to describe weak politics, poser radicals and juvenile rhetoric. "I'm not worried about the Duke," you might say, "'cause all he ever does is stand up at court and tell us all to fuck Prince Gorman." As a tag, this is used to mock or ruin other tags. It's like scratching "sucks!" after someone's name on the bathroom wall.

• **"Burn Down the Estate"** Another bit of anti-Invictus propaganda, though its origins are lost. Urban legends among the Kindred claim the phrase originates from the American South, where unaligned vampires were Embracing runaway slaves and sending them back to slaughter and burn their former owners. The phrase is also common the UK, though, where it is seen as a call to rebellion against English Invictus by Irish Carthians. Whatever its origins, its modern usage is simple: Fight the power.

• **"You are the grandeur"** Sanctified missionary marks from Europe, based on a quote from the *Testament of Longinus*. The original quote, attributed to Longinus himself, reads, "I am not the godless beast who stalks beneath the dark grandeur of sanctity. I am the grandeur. I am sanctified." It is from this quote that the Sanctified take their common name. It is with this tag that they

recruit the young Damned longing to make the Curse into something glorious.

• **"Not Dead Yet"** Historically this was a mark used to declare the survival of the Prince of Edinburgh in the face of an attack by mortal hunters (or, in some versions of the story, VII), sometime around 1720 AD. Since then, it has been used throughout the United Kingdom and Europe as a kind of Kindred roll-call, marked into a wooden post or carved into soft stone every few years by all the city's vampires, as a kind of ritual census. (The customary style is to start off the tag with initials, like "S.Y. Not Dead Yet.") In the Americas, an urban myth that the tag is a defiant Acolyte proclamation of endurance in the face of catholic pseudo-Christian religions has led to its adoption by the Circle of the Crone. (That the Prince of Edinburgh in 1720 was both an Acolyte and an Invictus vampire may contribute to the myth.) Secular American vampires also mark the sites of ambushes, attacks and betrayals with this tag, meaning "I survived, you bastards!"

• **"Sovereign"** This simple tag is used by many Kindred courts to mark Elysium, neutral ground or simply turf overseen by Harpies, Hounds or other agents of the Prince or Primogen. The origin of the mark is uncertain, but may date to the Dark Ages, as it (or translations of it) have been found in ancient sites of Elysium and Kindred power. Modern usage sees this tag also applied ironically or even derogatorily — tagging another vampire's turf as "Sovereign" gives local Kindred the go-ahead to enter and act as if it were common ground, while tagging a vampire's hang-outs (or even her haven!) with this implies she's a toady, crony or tool of the Prince or his court.

• **"Castle 1"** The culture of the Invictus has come to be absorbed by a surprising number of vampires Embraced from the ranks of modern gangs and cartels. The philosophy of lordship by merit and undefeatable majesty jibes nicely with patriarchal gangs driven by personal achievements and street rep. This tag is a 21st-century take on the mystique of the Invictus, a label that says, "The First Estate is strong," and, "Show some respect." In some circles, the First Estate is called the First Castle; with this tag becoming more and more familiar to neonates, the covenant is sometimes even called "Castle One."

• **"Established 1811"** This tag declares a building to be the turf of local Carthians. (1811 is the generally accepted year when the covenant was founded.) What makes this tag something other than simply a covenant brand is its use by other covenants — it was commandeered as a political tool against Carthians so long ago that any other purpose is practically forgotten. This phrase is often tagged on buildings where Carthians have been seen (or suspected to meet or sleep in) as a means of exposing them and ruining their illusion of secrecy. Rather than saying, "We want you to know this belongs to us Carthians," the tag says, "Hey, Carthians, we know you're here."

Graffiti Styles

Graffiti is a tricky word. It covers a lot of things. The most basic are the simple marker tags favored by teenage wannabes, hacks and gang members without the time to work. More involved are colorful but basic "throw-ups," quickly painted (i.e., just thrown up onto the wall) words and pictures that stand on the border between murals and typographic vandalism, which are often big but seldom detailed. Those complex, often 3D-styled, serpentine tangles of extreme angles and arrows twisting together to form names and words are called wildstyle; they can be simple and ugly half-assed attempts by poseurs, they can be full-on marvels of graphic design and they can be anything in between.

Next to graffiti (some would say beyond) is guerilla art. Sometime done using stencils or pasted-up paper images, guerilla art is maybe more likely to use pictures than words. In theory, it's also more often composed with the deeper meanings of satire and fine art than the bare declarations associated with graffiti, but in practice that's all debatable. The difference between graffiti and guerilla art is, all too often, whether the painter ends up being praised or pissed on.

Vandalism that defaces (or comments on) public advertisements such as bus-stand posters, billboards and taxi-toppers is sometimes called subvertisement, though that's not technically accurate. In theory, subvertisement is a kind of anti-corporate commentary and public satire accomplished with guerilla art techniques. The best subvertisements get mistaken for actual, legitimate ads from well-known companies at a glance, and are revealed as satires only with a real look. Scratching out a corporate logo, scrawling over a poster's text or pasting a word balloon onto a billboard is more properly called culture-jamming. Subvertisement is subtle and insidious; culture-jamming is blunt and raw.

The Grammar and Vocabulary of Tags

Many of tonight's neonates learned the basic grammar of tagging from the vernacular of the modern street. Kindred have adopted numerous elements of gangland graffiti as a means of blending in with the herd. Sometimes vampires even throw up fake gang tags to keep local bangers away from their turf. (This is sometimes, stiffly, called "mis-graffiti," as in "misinformation.")

Here, then, is a rundown of some basic grammar and vocabulary of modern tagging. Some of this is based on actual (that is, real-world) trends, though gangs and coteries of the World of Darkness deviate from this stuff however you like.

187: In the radio codes of Californian police, a 187 is a homicide. When rolled into a tag, 187 means a murder has happened on the site… or will soon. Pairing 187 with a name (or names) is a kind of public announcement that the people named have fallen in battle (accidental deaths aren't 187s) or that they have been "greenlit" — approved for murder by gang leaders. Understanding the difference between a memorial 187 and a "notice" usually requires a reader to already be up on news from the street.

Dollar Signs: Dollar signs, usually used in place of the letter S or the numeral 5, mean drugs are being sold in the area. This can indicate something as large as an open-air drug market, or something as small as a lone dealer on the lookout for loitering buyers. Among the Damned, dollar signs mean drugged blood may be in the area, and is, ironically, free for the taking. Vampires who deal drugged vessels to other Kindred don't use this tag because they don't want to draw mortal drug-seekers.

Crossed-Out Letters: Letters that are a part of some other gang's name often get crossed out of tags drawn by rival gang members. There's no other secret meaning here — this is straight-up disrespect.

Numbers: Gangland numerology is always changing. Among mortal gangs, numbers often stand for letters of the alphabet (A equals 1, B equals 2, etc.), which in turn stand for tenets or mottos memorized by the gang's troopers and lieutenants (e.g., 12 = L = Loyalty). Among the Damned, numbers can signal lots of other meanings, depending on their context. Sanctified marks may refer to chapters and verses in the *Testament of Longinus*, which serves as a kind of codebook for those vampires trusted enough to have access to it. In many cities, the number 1 indicates the Invictus (the First Estate). Permutations are endless. (See p. 67 for an example.)

Letters: Letters usually stand for a gang's core principles or tenets memorized by the gang's membership. For example, RRB can stand for Respect, Retaliation and Brotherhood. This is not so far off from much older trends in secret societies. Abbreviation marks such as these are easy to find on lodge buildings and the tombstones of past society members, secret or not (e.g., OOO for the Order of Owls, SCV for Sons of Confederate Veterans). The Damned use these codes in pretty much the same way, referencing tenets and knowledge known only to their kind. MAP, for example, sometimes stands for the three Traditions: Masquerade, Amaranth and Progency. So does TTT.

Names: Kindred with street names may share them freely in tags and graffiti, since no paperwork or other Masquerade-breaking links should connect those names to their days among the living. More than a few vampires maintain multiple street names throughout the city, to accompany their multiple circles of contacts and agents (often facilitated by Majesty, Dominate or Obfuscate). Other Kindred retire old street names and resurrect themselves behind new identities as their old contacts age and die. Other vampires concoct street myths about how their name gets passed from one man to another — when really they're all just the same undying monster refusing to give up the name.

Marks of the Covenants

Every local instance of each of the covenants has its own distinct style (or styles!) of graffiti and marks. The local Acolytes don't want the Sanctified to understand every message the Acolytes send to their fellow pagans through public tags. Some messages are meant to be understood by all the city's Damned, others are intended just for fellow covenant- and coterie-mates "in the know."

Factions within the covenants may even use their own unique cants to communicate behind the backs of their rival brothers. Some of these faction-specific marks are intentionally designed to blend into mortal graffiti and go unrecognized by their fellow Kindred. Others aren't meant to be covert at all, but are simply so "inside," so cliquish and mutated from the covenant's common marks as to be unrecognizable by comrades.

Though every city's covenants have their own unique customs and styles of marks, a few overarching trends and traditions inform the baseline tags of the covenants. Use these examples for your city's covenant tags or just use them as inspiration and design your own from these starting positions.

Invictus

The First Estate has a long tradition of public markings centered on medieval crests, heraldry and coats of arms. Buildings erected under the influence of the Invictus sometimes even have traditional Invictus symbols included in their architectural flourishes and finishes. Whether the Society's marks are worked in marble or chalked on the pavement, they're always noble, antiquated and handsome.

The marks of the Invictus are typically easy to spot but complicated to interpret. The placement of individual images is essential to their meaning. Inverted symbols are being dissed. Images to the right of a central icon are considered "visible" while those to the left of a central

icon are considered "hidden," even though both may be perfectly obvious. Half-images — such as half a mask, a tower instead of a castle or a blade without a hilt — are pleas for caution, composure and poise.

Motifs: Crowns with three or four points (five-pointed crowns are reserved for Invictus Princes), coats of arms, *fleur-de-lis*, masks (in carnival, masquerade or any other style from surgical masks to gas masks), flowers, swords, knight imagery, castles, helmets, lions.

CARTHIANS

The Kindred of the Carthian Movement have adopted marks from two primary sources: urban American gang tags and mid-20th-century Soviet propaganda. Countless secondary sources emerge in Carthian States across the globe, each drawing from unique local trends. Carthian marks are spray-painted, stenciled, pasted or airbrushed. Carthians, in general, do not favor nuance in their covenant cant. Large, bold and simple messages are the most common.

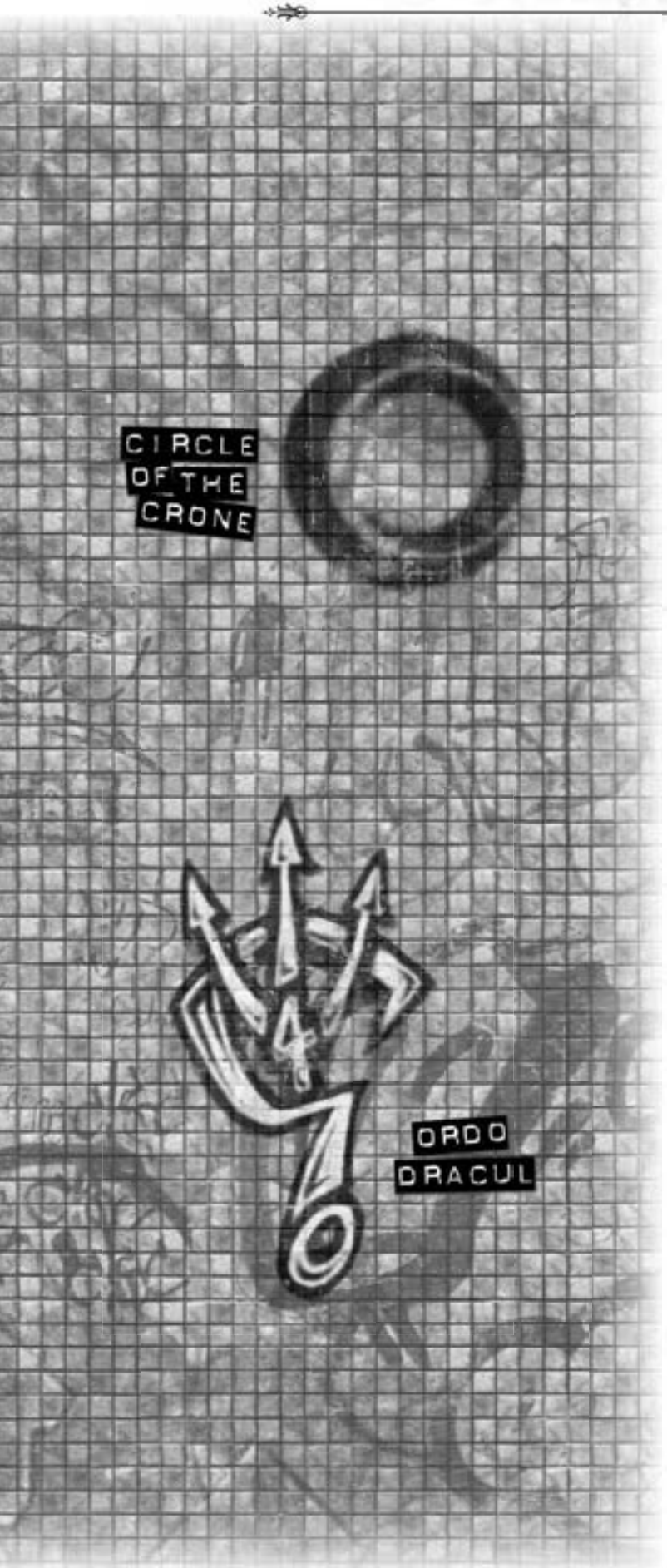
In some Carthian domains, the right to tag is given out only to certain Kindred. Free speech is one thing, but the privilege of speaking out on behalf of one's people is something more. Carthians, contrary to Old World Kindred customs, are the most likely to mark territory that isn't theirs with subversive messages or outright vandalism.

Motifs: Triangles, hammers, eagles, stripes, stars, suns and sunrays, bullets, guns, bombs, missiles, construction equipment, wrecking balls, clocks, coins, syringes.

Lancea Sanctum

The marks of the Sanctified have undergone cycles of massive rejuvenation during the past 50 years. Where once the marks were stale, obvious and perilously easy to decipher, tonight they are much more varied and mysterious. What they have always been, and continue to be tonight, is severe and imposing. The Lancea Sanctum's marks may be complex, but they are rarely subtle. Many hardliners of the Spear complain that the covenant's evangelical graffiti reaches too far into the view of the kine — and yet it continues to spread.

Sanctified marks may be as impermanent as any graffiti, but can also be much more substantial. Some of those neon crosses perched atop dark churches are the work of the Sanctified; they say, "These doors are open after dark." Look for flyers stapled to telephone poles or taped up in store windows that have misprinted dates or phone numbers that don't make sense — the American Sanctified are trying to get the attention of vampires mingling too much with the kine. More often than not, those numbers on the flyers aren't typos but



references to the *Catechism* or the *Testament of Longinus*, chapter and verse.

Motifs: Spears, lances, crosses, Roman eagles, cathedrals, blood, wolves and sheep, steeples, church bells, monks, priests, nuns, Egyptian architecture (especially Thebes) , the crescent moon, stars, six-pointed stars, numerology, scales, fire.

Circle of the Crone

The Circle of the Crone may have the most difficult marks to categorize of all the covenants. Individual cults within the covenant devise their own unique visual vocabulary of religious symbols and media. Different cults often use the same imagery in very different ways — for one, a thunderbolt may indicate a holy place, for another, an enemy for smiting.

Acolyte cults encourage a balance between innovation and reverence for custom. Revising or alluding to old symbols is always better than inventing than new ones. Individual cults and vampires often inherit core imagery from parent factions, cults and sires, too. So those stenciled goat heads with the hourglasses for eyes may mark the territory of a coterie related to those vampires who chalk goats with clocks for eyes on the sidewalks across town.

Acolyte customs, more of than not, favor tags that last. Stencils, spray paint, airbrushing and glued-on sculptures are favored over chalk and markers.

Motifs: Greek frets, goat heads, stag heads, breasts, phalluses, hooves, footprints, handprints, birds, blood, fire, chains, circles, bowls, urns, many-armed women, cows, mountains, trees, mazes.

Ordo Dracul

Dragon marks are arcane, sometimes convoluted and often needlessly complex. Though many of the Order's tags have their origins in secret societies, both benevolent and sinister, from the 19th and 20th centuries, the modern Dragons incorporate as many modern elements as classical ones. Where one chapter of the Order Dracul might mimic crests and animal symbolism from a mortal fraternal order of free and accepted foresters, another might sketch out tags meant to evoke computer desktop icons or spray-paint a nonsense URL.

More often than not, though, marks of the Order blend the old and the new, the scientific and the mystic. Look for chemical structure diagrams with numerical clues or occult symbols in place of atomic abbreviations. Look for pentagrams or magic circles with computer code in place of ancient languages. Look for two seemingly unrelated tags and make sure they're not part of a larger, trickier mark.

The Ordo Dracul is prolific in its use of the marks. Dragons mark their own territories, sites of note, sites to avoid, sites to be investigated, sites they claim, sites they forbid, sites they fear, sites they wish to claim in the future, sites they are finished with and on and on.

Motifs: Dragons, spirals, diamonds, cups, rods, spikes, minarets, blood, impaled figures (including animals or visual puns), axes, skulls, setting suns, black circles, concentric circles, clubs, spades.

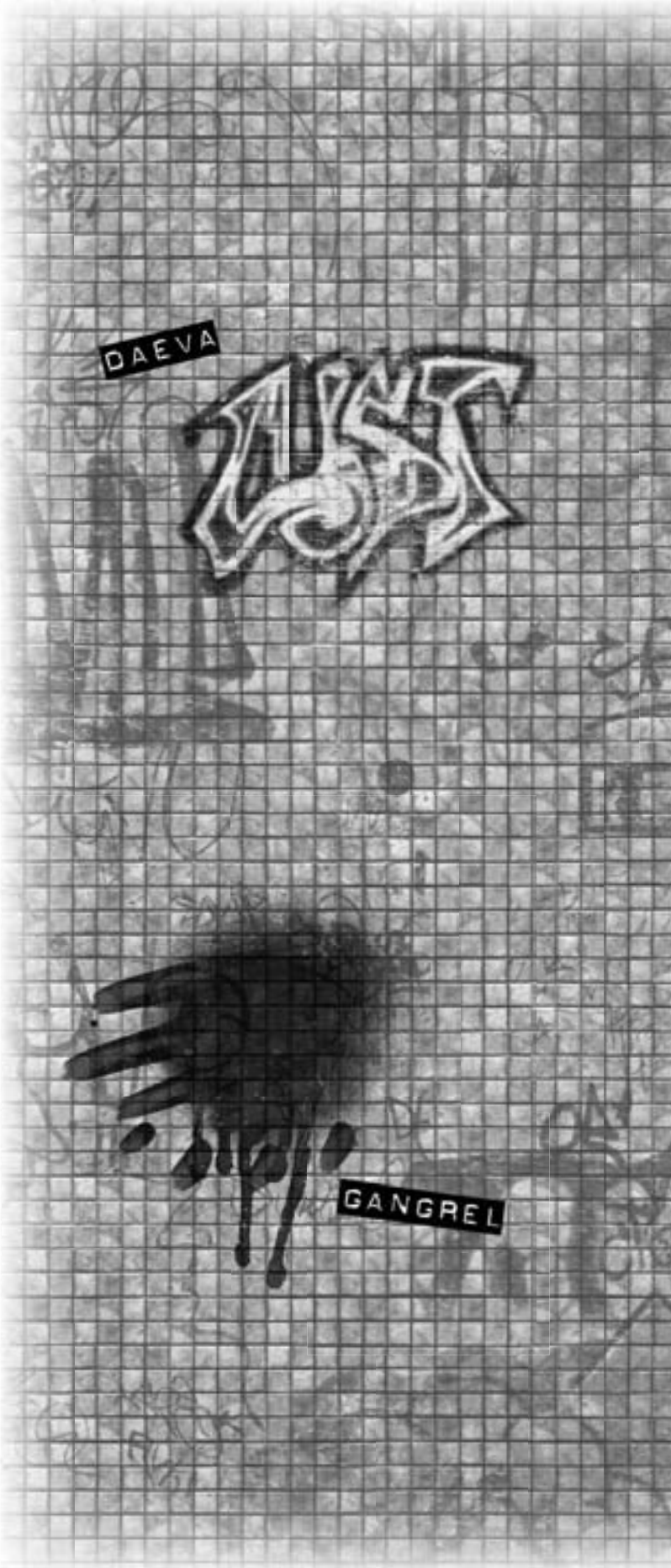
Tags of the Clans

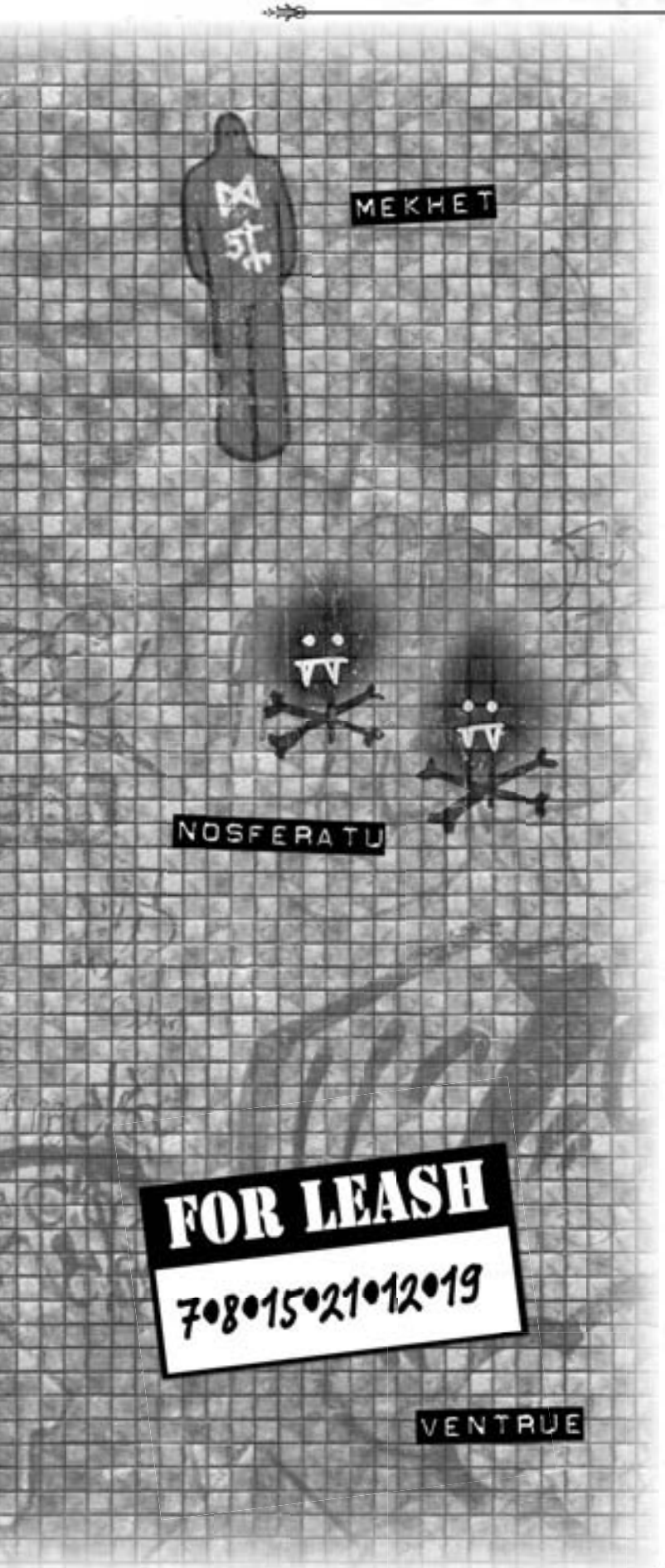
The Kindred clans have their own customs of territorial marks. Many vampire scholars speculate that clan marks predate covenant marks, in fact. Presumable the early, primal Damned in the nights before Rome and the Camarilla marked their hunting grounds and the homes of their mortal herds to keep other vampires away. In modern nights, when vampires no longer nest and hunt by clans as they once did, the marks of the clans have taken on another meaning.

Kindred cannot always easily identify each other by clan, but some vampires take great pride in the traditions and heritage of their undead race. With Kindred of every clan in virtually every city, mingled and intermixed, the secret cant of the clans is sometimes the only underlying communication Kindred cousins have with each other. If the city's territories are divided by covenant allegiance rather than blood ties, clan values may fade. Some vampires may mark their territory with tags for both covenant and clan, to advertise to undead neighbors what kind of trouble is being invited when that turf is violated. "Trespass here," the tags say, "and you'll be making enemies of both the Sanctified and the Ventrue."

In cities where the Damned organize by clan as much, or more, than by covenant, clan marks serve much the same purpose as covenant marks — signifying turf and allegiance. A roadside wall may be painted with clan-specific marks letting other vampires know that supernaturally hidden Kindred may be about (and watching them). A telephone pole with a flyer pinned to it bearing marks of the Gangrel may be meant to make visitors paranoid about every wisp of fog or smoke in the neighborhood, or might simply give fair warning that lesser predators should be careful not to cross the path of a potent local lord. An abandoned building spray-painted with defaced Daeva marks says, "the Daeva aren't here anymore," or maybe, "Succubi stay out."

Similar to the covenant examples described above, the clan aesthetics mentioned below just scratch the surface of cultural trends among the Damned. Local clan marks are whatever you want them to be.





Daeva

The marks of the Succubi are trendy, hip and short-lived. Defaced posters, intentionally bad logo mimicry and overwrought or clichéd declarations (such as "John loves Ruby" or "We All Die Alone") may be signs of Daeva in the area. Painted roses, bloody lip-prints, thorn images and wildstyle marks with words such as *lust* or *succubus* or *drink* are also common. References to popular culture are a Daeva favorite. Daeva are also passionate and brutal, though, so vandalized public art or torn, bitten or stained advertisements may also be a tip-off.

The specifics of clan imagery are always difficult to generalize, though. To know the marks of the local Daeva, you'd have to know the local Daeva. Look for signs of them outside nightclubs, in bathrooms, in parking lots and garages, near transit stations and outside stadiums.

Gangrel

Savages use simple, straightforward marks. Many Gangrel mark their turf with crude, even obvious tags such as, "Get Out" or "Victor's Block." Others play the game and incorporate some kind of code into their marks, but it's seldom much. Gangrel tags are likely to include scratched or damaged public property, simple spray-painted words or even cardboard signs. Look for Savage tags in train tunnels, parks, empty lots, empty buildings and overgrown ruins.

MEKHET

The cant of Shadows is subtle, clever and dry. Sometimes, the allusions one Mekhet uses to communicate with another are so obtuse that the message never gets received. The marks of Shadows are often too subtle to be appreciated, and so an untold number of them go unnoticed and, thus, wasted.

Mekhet tags include biblical citations, eyes painted on walls, eyes circled or blacked out or torn out of ads, broken light bulbs, light bulbs painted dark, black plastic over windows, black stripes on buildings or sidewalks and chalk outlines of bodies. Every Mekhet's marks are different, but few are obvious enough to use outright words. Expect Mekhet marks to be farther from the Mekhet's haven, turf or property than other vampires' marks — Mekhet are often wary and untrusting.

NOSFERATU

Similar to Gangrel marks, the signs of the Nosferatu are often brutish and obvious. Haunts rely on human apathy and fear to keep their secret cant hidden. Not many mortals will brave abandoned buildings with hazmat

warnings on them, and the suckers who wander past the Beware of Dog sign probably have it coming to them anyway. Plain language is a hallmark of the Nosferatu cant — they rely on their ability to hide themselves more than their language.

Nosferatu are ultimately as vulnerable as any vampire, however, so they're not stupidly careless. A Haunt may label areas around her hunting ground with ominous spray-painted warnings such as "Abandon All Hope" or skulls and crossed bones, but she'll mark other decoy spots, too. Look for Nosferatu marks to be hard to miss, but scary to reach.

Ventrue

The tradition of Ventrue marks is complicated and growing ever more diverse. Individual Lords make use of very different styles from one another. Ventrue culled from the ranks of gang leaders and criminals use the codes and traditions of their living days, modified regularly for safety's sake. Ventrue from boardrooms use stiffer, more formal styles resembling business jargon or email abbreviations.

If the Ventrue have any frequent customs when it comes to clan markings, it's signage. Lords love to hijack existing mortal signs and slip their own messages into whatever negative space they can manage — peoples' eyes are going there anyway, why not take advantage of it? Look for Ventrue marks on For Lease signs, billboards, marquees, bus ads and store logos.

Tags for Coteries

Coteries are like gang sets — small crews budding off a larger whole. Many coteries develop their own tags and marks to identify themselves and communicate with peers or enemy coteries. More than any other kind of Kindred mark, these are the tags that resemble gangland graffiti. No small number of modern Damned have been inspired by gang tags they learned in life or in their Requiems.

A coterie tag is often less arcane than a covenant or clan tag, and may not even be regarded as secret knowledge by area Kindred. Coterie tags might be revealed to mortals or other supernatural territory holders in the area, such as Lupines, without revealing the truth of the coterie's membership or goals. Dozens, perhaps more than 100, of American coteries pass themselves off as simple street gangs to the kine, granting the coteries the respect, fear and word-of-mouth enjoyed by local gangs, without technically breaking the Masquerade.

Older vampires and more mature coteries are more likely to pass themselves off as gentlemen's clubs, poker groups or even bands of musicians as a means of publicly explaining their symbols and signs without revealing the truth about Kindred. Where a mortal sees a back-alley doorway tagged with a gang star or stenciled band logo, the Kindred see a public announcement of coterie turf — or even an address.

Regardless of how commonplace it is for coteries to tag their turf and spread their names like this, the Invictus, in its constant defense of the Masquerade, seldom approves. Coteries that attract unwanted attention, whether it's from mortals or other vampires, may find themselves blamed by the Invictus for whatever befalls them. "If we find the Kindred who broke into your haven," says the Invictus Sheriff, "we'll punish them. In the meantime, let's talk about your breach of the Masquerade."

Smart vampires tag only those places that they're willing to lose. A building marked with a coterie tag may be a meeting place where other Kindred, such as agents of the court, can try to find them. But it is also a target. A coterie's enemies start by busting down tagged doors.

Sample Coterie Tags

Throughout this book, you'll find several examples of coterie tags. These are designed to represent certain archetypal coteries, good for antagonists or even the troupe's characters' coterie. Use them however you like.

Here, in brief, is the kind of coterie that inspired each tag:

- A warrior coterie of fearless thugs (see p. 174)
- A crew of shadowy watchers/spies (see p. 110)
- A coterie of occult scholars or mystics (see p. 330)
- A Sanctified parish or church, with skull and spear imagery (see p. 244)
- A pagan cult, with modern heathen, metal imagery (see p. 122)

Vampire Cant and Coded Argot

- Closed Turf/Get Out (see p. 12)
- Open Season/Free Feeding Ground/"Feed On" (see p. 272)
- This place is haunted (see p. 185)
- Hunters here/Cover blown/Enter at your own risk (see p. 165)
- This is werewolf turf (see p. 81)
- Hexed/Cursed (see p. 26)
- Elysium tags/Neutral ground (see p. 130)
- This house/these mortals are spoken for (see p. 386)
- You are being watched/Guards here (see p. 224)

Selecting Your City

What's Real?

In the World of Darkness, cities are as much fiction as fact. The cities of every country look very much like their real counterparts, but only for as long as you want them to look that way. Folklore, urban myth and the creepy ideas lurking under the stairs in your own twisted imagination transform the cities you already know into the cities your players know and fear.

Player Awareness and Fear

The unknown is a vital part of fear, and the supernatural is just one tool you have for adding new elements of the unknown to your city. It's a powerful, colorful tool, to be sure, but if your city is simply your hometown plus vampires, then its mysteries quickly become predictable. ("Something's killing hookers in the old warehouse district," says the player, "and who wants to bet it's vampires?") The darkness is lightened by what the players have read in **Vampire** books when it should instead be accompanied by scratching sounds, wet noises and the smell of blood stirred into the mix by their imaginations.

You can add elements of the unknown into your city by subtly altering its familiar aspects — its architecture, its history, its mayor — and gradually revealing those changes to the players not only through descriptions you give them about what their characters see and hear in play but by dropping little hints to the players themselves when they buy dots in a Skill or Merit, even after character creation.

Example: *Oscar's character is a surgeon-turned-vampire who used to be active in a lot of social circles with other doctors. He was a member of the country club, he played in a poker game with some private-practice guys and he sold some drugs to get laid in the back rooms of expensive but nasty clubs. He still has one ear in those circles, even since he died. So, when Oscar buys an additional dot in Medicine, the Storyteller tells him that his character has heard word through the grapevine that five or six private-practice surgeons have sold their offices in the past two months. Somebody is buying up a chunk of the city's surgeons.*

Example: *Jeff's character, meanwhile, buys a new dot in Streetwise to reflect his growing knowledge of the city's drug dealers and black-market culture. The Storyteller tells Jeff that, unlike what gets reported on the news in their real-world city, in the World of Darkness the local drug dealers are winning the war on drugs. Apparently, beleaguered police have surrendered certain buildings to the dealers as de facto legal drug dens, which is causing dealers in other neighborhoods to lose money. Now they're looking to disrupt the unofficial police truce.*

When you first reveal these bits of information, they won't really be scary. New information can be intriguing or tantalizing, it can pique an interest, it can even be eerie, but just finding out that some neighborhood burned down in 1974 in your version of the city isn't frightening in and of itself. You're just planting seeds at this point, so that's fine.

What the player *doesn't* know is *why* it happened or *how* it will all affect his character. Those are the questions you explore to create suspense and, in turn, fear.

Ultimately, the Storyteller doesn't have to know in advance how these details will affect which characters, but this much is essential: The answers to these mysteries must affect the players' characters personally. If the characters are not personally involved in the emerging details of the city (which is to say, if these background details don't threaten to hurt or promise to help them) then the players have no real investment in the details or what they mean. A player may be interested, but she won't be *afraid* because nothing is at stake for her. Players fear for their characters.

Five Ways Background Details Affect Characters

- They Foreshadow.
- They Reveal Your Secrets.
- They Take Away What's Yours.
- They Hurt the Ones You Love.
- They Change the Status Quo.

Damned Cities

What you'll find in the following write-ups are ideas for gameplay environments tangled with provocative information designed to spark character and chronicle concepts. Whichever fictional city you might devise, the real-world cities you've seen in movies or with your own eyes will color the process. For every skewed or exaggerated play

space we can suggest, there's a city somewhere that will make the idea seem more real more immediately.

You're looking for a city to use. Maybe it's in the next couple of pages, maybe it's not. Whichever city you choose to adapt for your World of Darkness chronicle, keep the following things in mind:

• **Adapting cities is about gut reactions before facts.** The only facts that are of real use to you are the ones that help bring attention to the themes of your story. A city with a high murder rate can provide great context to a story about human frailty or wrath, but you don't have to follow that fact any further than you want to; if the crime stats say most of those murders are drug related, but you want to say that they're related to police-on-gang warfare to create a backdrop of factional warfare in your chronicle, do that. Facts are a starting place. They can make a story *feel* realistic, which is the only kind of realism that matters in the game, or they can spoil the aura of mystery. The fact is that there are no vampires in any of these cities in real life, but you're not letting that stop you. Use only the data that inspire and let the rest fall into the far distance.

• **Drama is more important than fidelity.** You're not delivering a report on Karachi, you're dramatizing a story set there. The play's the thing, so don't fret details that won't enrich your story. A city's first job in **Vampire** is to facilitate play, to reinforce the mood and atmosphere you're after and to alter the play dynamic in new ways, as mentioned earlier. You don't owe the city anything. It shouldn't matter if you get street names and demographics wrong.

• **This is the World of Darkness. It's not flattering.** No city looks good through the cracked and smoky lens of this game. Even when a city is beautiful, it is high contrast and washed out, fogged by rain and sparkling like broken glass — pretty the way the bare and beaten wood behind waterlogged old wallpaper is pretty.

What's Official

What's presented in the following write-ups may or may not be the official state of these cities in your World of Darkness. They may not represent what you'll find in later World of Darkness books (though we haven't included in this list any cities with their own books, such as **Boston** or **Chicago**) because that's not the point of these city sketches. These are tools for brainstorming. Each city sketch combines ideas for setting up cities with some data based on real-world facts, to inspire your own take on the city. Use these two parts together to play in the city as it's described below or pull them apart and recombine them to create the play space you want.

Addis Ababa and Axum

The capitol of Ethiopia constantly moves, its 80 or more nationalities and language groups co-existing in a constant flow of traffic and movement. Addis Ababa was built by Africans. It has none of the paraphernalia of former colonialism that so mark the city's sister cities across Africa: no mock classical architecture, no European street signs.

Although the Imperial Prince of Addis Ababa has banned Kindred predation on the "blue donkeys," Addis Ababa's public bus system, nowhere else is a mortal more likely to become a meal, or worse, collateral damage in the ever-raging war between Christian and Muslim Kindred. The Prince is losing his grip. Certainly, he has no control over the vampires who inhabit the vast shanty towns that lie to the north of the city. The factions are further divided by the divide between young and old, the oldest of whom hail from Axum, some way to the north. The object of their conflict is none other than the Ark of the Covenant, which the humans believe and the Kindred *know* lies in seclusion in the Church of Our Lady Mary in Zion. No faction can agree on what secret the Ark holds. His Holiness the Imperial Prince claims to be neutral in these matters, but his agents, while attempting to improve matters, always seem to incite more conflict than they defuse.

Amsterdam

The Randstad, a near-unbroken urban spread, stretches across the western coast of the Netherlands and is home to something like two-thirds of the Dutch population. The largest of the Randstad cities, Amsterdam's reputation for wild license is only part of the story. A very European sense of decorum governs the attitudes of its citizens; there is a time and a place for everything. The things that go on in De Wallen, Amsterdam's notorious red light district, stay there.

The Lancea Sanctum Prince of Amsterdam would rather his constituency remains small. De Wallen's flesh pits and hash bars might seem an ideal hunting ground, but the Prince forbids feeding in the district without a written license. Testing the Prince's rule isn't wise: his

command of blood magic is enviable. He has ways of knowing. Near-mindless vampires slumber below the canals that run through De Wallen and wait for the sign to punish offenders. Facing them is terrible. Joining them is worse. The Prince's laws interfere in the Requiems of all of his subjects, with the exception of the five old vampires who once dwelt among Amsterdam's Jewish community, who by tacit agreement have the freedom to act however they wish, within reasonable limits.

Anchorage

Anchorage's quarter of a million people live in an area larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. It's a no-nonsense kind of place, with no-nonsense people. The petroleum industry and the military dominate here. Most tourists in Alaska travel through the city, and in the summer, Anchorage comes alive, transformed by a swarm of outsiders. In the winter, the city goes quiet, but for the wind that gnaws at flesh and freezes bone.

The Kindred who live here are few and, given the city's northern latitude, it's perhaps unsurprising that their activities are seasonally dictated. The influx of tourists make for excellent feeding, but the short length of summer nights in Alaska means that few Kindred have the time to hunt properly. In the winter, the nights belong to the Kindred. The Prince of Anchorage leads a small brood, mostly Gangrel, and all originally of Russian extraction. Rumors pass around the handful of Damned in Anchorage that the Prince is sitting on a hoard of gold from some long-abandoned claim. The truth is, the Prince does have a secret hidden in a mineshaft three hours' drive from the city limits, but it's not gold. Gold doesn't eat your enemies; gold doesn't leave charred bones and cooked blood strewn across the tundra.

Athens

A third of the people of Greece live in and around this most ancient of European cities, this first seat of Western democracy. This fine tradition, this long and detailed history would create a rarefied atmosphere of tradition — if the Athenian smog didn't choke it out. The Acropolis overlooks the city, but few of the people who flock to the nightspots in Psiri and drink until dawn pay much attention to the ruin on the hill.

A more tasteful *taberna* in Psiri has been the site of Elysium for more than a century. This causes the Prince, a stalwart polytheist Acolyte, some discomfort: traditions are important, but the region in which his court meets has changed in ways that upsets him. This tension informs everything he does; old forms of protocol delay the need for urgent action. Paranoia rises among the Damned of Athens, as loyal Kindred meet Final Death at the talons of creatures described only as *vrykolakas*. It doesn't matter who they are —vampires, Lupines, witches or something else entirely — they don't pay attention to Kindred tradition, and they're winning because of it.

Atlanta

The "City Too Busy To Hate" is all too often the City Too Busy to Get Along; the civil rights movement had its strongholds here, but Atlanta learned the hard way that although laws might change, it doesn't mean the problems go away. Atlanta grows every year, and new blood brings new opportunities and new conflicts. Bullets decide the balance of power on Atlanta's streets; to many people, the police aren't much better than the gangs.

The Carthian Prince of Atlanta was a slave who witnessed the burning of the city, back in 1864. When he began his Requiem, he soon discovered that there were some things in Atlanta that were better burnt; more than a century later, he is the only one remaining who knows what was burnt then, and what may soon need to be burnt again. He's a figure respected and feared in equal measure. He keeps a keen yellow eye on the politics of the growing Kindred broods that run with the gangs and knows exactly how to cut a deal. The result: they all think he's on *their* side.

Baghdad

Once, despite the city's oppressive ruler, Baghdad had a fast-moving night life. The curfew was lifted some time ago, but no one goes out at night; who wants to fall victim to an American's tracer bullet, an insurgent's mortar or, worse, a kidnap gang who'll take the ransom and

kill you anyway? Baghdad's ancient history is vanishing; Baghdad's history lies under the rubble to be taken away by the light-fingered.

A Ba'ath loyalist's firebomb brought the Night Sheikh to his Final Death; the Kindred who remain here have had to change their feeding habits. Plenty of easy prey walks on the streets of Baghdad, but the Night Sheikh's last edict was that the Damned keep away from the Americans and the British. The Kindred keep few laws these days, but beheading awaits those who break that rule. Feeding is hard. Insurgents have more means than bullets and a better idea of what to with a vampire than the Americans. Meanwhile, the underground cache in which the Night Sheikh kept his stockpile of potent occult artifacts lies undiscovered... so far.

Bangkok

The waters once flowed through Bangkok; its canals carried goods from East and West toward the bright pagodas of Krung Thep. Concrete and asphalt fill the canals now and motor traffic follows the routes once traversed by sail junks, but the money still comes here. The temples still shine; richly-colored blossoms still bloom in heat experienced by no other city. It's a backpackers' haven, a place where the traveler can rest and experience a truly vibrant city. But the flowers need something to grow in, and for many rich Westerners, the sight of golden Wat Phra Kaew is no reason to come here.

The Kindred survive like flies on the food of Bangkok's industry. They understand the purchase of live flesh, and many of the broods who co-exist here without a Prince take full part in the sex trade in Bangkok. Bloodlines and ghoul families have developed within the brothels of Bangkok. Buying a girl or a boy from the bar for a night risks more than sexual disease. People disappear here. Some of the Kindred keep herds of slave-whores, and have the means to keep them forever. AIDS hasn't changed this. It just means that a growing number of the Damned carry this most feared of blood diseases within them, passing it on to whomever they choose to feed on.

Beijing

Chairman Mao's picture still smiles down from 100 or more places in the first municipality of the People's Republic, and every bookshop carries the Little Red Book, but as time has gone on, communism has given way to a different kind of rule, and China plays the game of the market. Movies and TV and pop music and the minutiae of modern life fill the air in Beijing, and the trappings of communism become just that: trappings. But dealing with the dollar doesn't make a government change its methods, and there are holes in history here, memories suppressed, things not ever mentioned. The memorials in Tiananmen Square won't mention that night in 1989; the hundreds of young lives ended on that night might as well have not existed.

Long before Deng Xiaoping sent the tanks in, the Kindred knew how to forget what needed to be forgotten. The politics of covenant and brood here seem at fist sight to have long ago calcified, to be trapped in a sticky web of formalities and rituals. In truth, change happens, but it happens through double-edged conversations; decorous Kindred communicate complex messages through the briefest of pauses, the smallest of smiles, the intonation of one syllable over another in a word. Vampires who are uncultured enough to rock the boat vanish in screams and fire, and things return to normal. Offenders cease to ever have existed.

Berlin

In the celebratory hysteria of the last weeks of 1989, the people of Berlin tore down the wall, literally and symbolically, and West and East were reunited. Communism had lost. The flood of propaganda ended. Lenin's image vanished from the city; the once-dreaded Stasi simply evaporated. A flood of new life came to Berlin, dozens of cultures and communities converging on the capitol of the reunited Germany. But the wall is still there. There are no concrete panels, no snipers, no checkpoints, but the barriers remained, as affluent Westerners stayed in their own districts, and poverty-stricken Easterners remained in their own. Some divisions need more than just bulldozers and pickaxes to tear them down.

What had been a time of hope for mortals was a time of disaster for the Damned. Two Princes, an old Prussian campaigner from the West and a newly minted Carthian zealot in the East, claimed the city; the conflict, fought out in the midst of reunification street parties, ended both of their Requiems and left no one faction

in control. Now, factions of every covenant stake out small territories across the city, and no one even tries to negotiate any more.

Birmingham, Alabama

Birmingham, Alabama, is an economic miracle made solid in concrete and steel, a "Magic City," where the civil rights movement came good and where a family can bring up children in the sure knowledge that there are few more pleasant cities in which to live. This "Pittsburgh of the South" has its share of poverty, and the social problems are there, but no more than anywhere else, and if its skyline is all rust and foundries and boxes made of concrete, the quality of life here makes up for it.

A nice place to live for humans is — almost by definition — not such a nice place for the undead. During the 1960s, mistakes made by the vampires led to the breaking of the Masquerade and the destruction of huge numbers of the Damned by church-led groups. The mansion that for 100 years served as home to one of the most respected and wealthy Princes in the United States was burned down by a group of Baptists. Their pastor may have died some years ago, but those Baptists still know, and their children are still on the hunt. Elysium will meets tonight in one of five empty factory buildings. New Kindred aren't made welcome: the Kindred work out their Requiems with fear and trembling — fear of a handful of ordinary people with Bibles and blowtorches.

Birmingham, England

The reputation held by Britain's second city for grim, smoking industry and friendly openness has remained constant for a century or more. In recent decades, however, even the ugliness of Birmingham has been smoothed away, replaced by massive ultra-modern developments such as the Bullring and the National Exhibition Centre. Much is made of the multicultural nature of "Brum," of the ethnic communities that exist side by side in apparent harmony. But there are undercurrents. Every so often, the police in Birmingham stumble across a terrorist plot growing in suburbia. The gray, moldy towpaths that line Birmingham's numerous canals are no place for anyone to go after dark. The gangs make their homes here; it's one of the few places in the United Kingdom where being shot is a realistic danger.

The Kindred of Birmingham, led by a Carthian Marchioness with 200 years of rule behind her, know the value of viciousness all too well. The Marchioness's court is direct and brutal. Although, just as the city, the Damned have improved their image and dress as well as any "Pansy Southerner," the Damned settle arguments here with fists and claws, crowbars and meat cleavers. Brief, bloody atrocities punctuate the Kindred gatherings, although at Elysium, the form is to take disputes outside the building.

Buenos Aires

The vibrant *barrios* of Buenos Aires, the birth of the *tango,* the metropolitan nature of the city have rightly given it the reputation of being the "Paris of the South." The city's narrow streets are labyrinthine, like the corridors of a vast library, where every brightly painted home tells the story of a family or community.

Ireneo Funes has been the Prince of Buenos Aires for 80 years, and yet few of the Kindred in the city have seen in person for decades. He communicates through letters and agents. He's an indistinct face in the shadows, a hand reaching from a dark corner, a quiet voice in the dark. Rumors that Ireneo Funes doesn't exist at all are perhaps inevitable; many of the court suspect at least one or two of their contemporaries of really being the Prince. Whoever he is, Funes is adept at maintaining control. Would-be rebels find themselves drawn into tormented labyrinths, wild goose chases whose existence only become apparent to Funes's victim moments before the death-blow falls.

Cairo

Egypt's Triumphant City is really several cities, all rolled into one, a wild brew of architecture: from medieval mosques and modern Coptic churches to skyscrapers and, just outside the city, the pyramids and the Sphinx. Cairo is the largest city on the African

continent, and, more importantly, in many ways the cultural center of the Middle East. Affluence is mirrored by poverty: thousands of the homeless poor have set up shantytowns in the cemeteries that make up Cairo's City of the Dead.

The Mekhet Prince of Cairo leads a strongly Islamic brood, albeit one in the tradition of Salahideen, who founded a tolerant Islamic kingdom in Egypt and who, the Kindred say, knew of and made peace with the Kindred, allowing them quotas by which they could feed in moderation — which the Kindred still hold to, although they have lapsed on the mortal side. The quotas are more generous to some than others. Islamic vampires gain the right to more favorable and fertile areas of the city than infidels, and the Prince's cronies get the City of the Dead. Maiming, branding or destruction awaits those accused of breaking the quotas.

Cardiff

The shining metal of Cardiff's Millennium Centre, the bright colors of the Millennium Stadium and the polished glass of the Welsh Assembly dazzle visitors to this city, and serve as a metaphor for a city with an opinion of itself that far outstrips its importance in the greater world. To the inhabitants of the decaying industrial towns and impoverished former mining villages that pockmark the rolling green countryside all around, Cardiff is all there is. All roads lead here.

Kindred in the know are well aware that the Carthians are ashamed of the Beggar Prince of Cardiff, but even so, he holds unchallenged suzerainty across the Welsh capitol and its outskirts, through the Rhondda Valley and as far west as Bridgend. It's a wide, mostly rural domain, but the Kindred, just as the humans, converge on Cardiff. It's the only place that matters. The recent and expensive regeneration of the city has benefited the Kindred, too. In a city where even the smallest achievement is cause for massive self-congratulation, cronyism and corruption get overlooked by mortals and Kindred alike. The formation of the first stable Kindred court for more than a century has, similar to the foundation of the Welsh Assembly, elicited mixed reactions, but most of the elder Kindred in the area agree that a city with a Prince is better than a city without, even if he is an ill-mannered, avaricious, self-aggrandizing thug. The younger Kindred aren't so sure.

Dallas

Dallas and its sister city, Fort Worth, epitomize the American Dream. Caught between the mythology of the Old West and the myth of the oil baron, this smoke-belching metroplex still believes itself to be a pioneer town, a tough, no-nonsense kind of place. Perhaps this is why Dallas is the destination of so many Mexican immigrants, illegal and otherwise, at least the ones who make it past the checkpoints and the heavily armed good old boys who patrol the border, imagining themselves as latter-day Minutemen.

Henry Midwinter, the Invictus Prince of Dallas, owns a downtown penthouse and a controlling share in one of the smaller oil companies of the region. His schemes are grandiose and explosive; he imagines himself able to engineer a meeting with the President of the United States through his contacts and slaves, and through a meeting, to take control with all the implications that entails. He's so set on working through the top echelons of Texan society, he has forgotten the existence of the little guy, not least the large brood of newly arrived Mexican Kindred gathering its numbers in Oak Cliff and preparing to oust him.

Delhi

Nearly 15 million people choke in the ever-present fumes of this vast capitol. In Old Delhi, serpentine lanes lead to surprising examples of Moghul architecture. The slums seem to go on forever. In New Delhi, taxis, auto-rickshaws, ancient buses and brand-new Japanese cars swarm through the streets, survival and speed the only rules of the road. Haggling is a way of life, art and etiquette combined. The age-old caste system here is collapsing under the pressure of legislation and social change; so it is with the Kindred.

Clans and covenants have their own sometimes contradictory caste system: and each caste has its brood. Neonates bring new ideas and strife results; the old caste-broods crumble. Sikh, Muslim, Jain, Baha'i and Christian broods intermingle with the Hindu majority and confuse things further. The Ragged Maharajah of Old Delhi and

the First Minister of New Delhi pay their respects to one another on the first day of every month in a hotel in Paharganj (where tourists flock and feeding and conflict are forbidden). At each meeting, the pretense of civility becomes harder to maintain. Soon, their mutual hatred will bring the vampires of the two Delhis to war.

Detroit

The automotive production lines still don't stop in Motor City, even while other industries get outsourced abroad. Still, the factories empty, and the buildings get left behind. The blue-collar population falls into unemployment and discontent. The city is divided by 6 Mile, 7 Mile and 8 Mile Roads into the haves and the have-nots. On the (literal) wrong side of the tracks, the city has the worst crime rate in the United States. Nearly half of Detroit's people are functionally illiterate.

The Carthian Prefect, still new to the job, sees the opportunities for the undead in a city where the living are lost to decay and crime. Still, this doesn't explain why so many of the empty buildings that pepper the city's surface serve as temporary havens for neonate Kindred who only just came here. It's as if some force is drawing people to Detroit, some of whom have no idea why they are here, only that they had to come.

Dublin

Until recently, Dublin was the beating heart of the Celtic Tiger, an economic powerhouse. The affluence of the '90s is still very much in evidence; even the poorer districts to the north of the River Liffey aren't really all that bad. The tradition of storytelling and drinking continues in the teeming pubs of Dublin, even if these days the price of a good draught of stout tends toward the prohibitive.

Carmilla has been the Lady of Dublin since the days of Le Fanu and Wilde, and although she looks to be no more than a willowy red-haired girl of 17, she exerts a dark fascination over Kindred and mortal, a demon lover, an inamorata. She is at the center of every movement of the Damned in Dublin, and yet always detached. For the glimpse of a smile from her perfect lips, for a flash of her green eyes, vampire and mortal alike throw themselves into conflict and destroy themselves. Once every decade or so, Carmilla takes a mortal girl as her lover and, eventually, as her childe. A few of Carmilla's discarded lovers still survive as the Harpies of Dublin, fighting amongst themselves and deciding who should be in the favor of the court, while, all the time, Carmilla looks on and smiles.

Glasgow

Glasgow is a city where great ideas are invented and from where great men come. This is probably because it's such a miserable place to live, a grim aggregate of stone, steel and smoke. The number of books about the city are a testament to the heart of its people. It's split between Catholic and Protestant communities, and sectarian quarrels still sometimes happen, channeled between the supporters of Glasgow's two great soccer teams, the Rangers (whose fans are mainly Protestant) and Celtic (whose fans are mainly Catholic).

The Lancea Sanctum Laird of Glasgow is a Catholic monster whose edicts have in recent years become increasingly sectarian and increasingly crazy: he forbids feeding on Celtic supporters, for example, and he had one of his Hounds destroyed for failing to attend confession. The tension is that in this city, the Laird is the Laird, and it will take an extreme upheaval — or an accident — to cause the removal of a Laird, even a crazy one.

Hong Kong

Life goes on much the same in Hong Kong since the British gave the island back to China, thanks to the Joint Declaration, but in 2047, the city becomes part of China forever. The future may be far ahead, but it still brings uncertainty with it. The police still operate along the lines of the British colonial police, whose work they continued; the mobs, whose operations have stepped up with each passing year, work along similarly Western lines. In Kowloon, high, shining towers loom above the mob's victims and peons: prostitutes, drug dealers and homeless. At night, the city glitters and moves. Hong

Kong doesn't sleep, and all life, high and low, can be found on its streets.

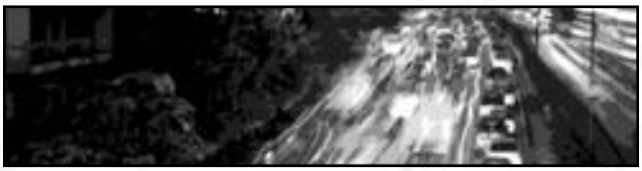
The Kindred organize themselves along the same lines they have used since the British first arrived. Then, the Kindred had their talons in the opium trade; now it's heroin. The names have changed, the people are more heavily armed and the money's better, but the flow of income toward the top of the Kindred ladder is the same, and the Night Governor of Hong Kong, to whom the Damned look for guidance, has the ear of many powerful and shady individuals. There's always a place for a loyal and ambitious neonate in the employ of the Night Governor, although the things the neonate might be asked to do often require a strong stomach and a willingness to leave other loyalties behind.

Istanbul

Istanbul is not the capitol of Turkey, but might as well be. Hipsters walk through ancient streets. Ultra-modern arcologies stand alongside buildings that date back to the Ottomans, the Byzantines and the Romans. The cries of the muezzin ring over the city every morning; by night, the clubs and bars sing a different song.

Ancient even at the time of his Embrace, the Prince of Istanbul claims to have seen the fall of Constantinople. The Prince has not been challenged for centuries. This may soon change. A virulent strain of extremism has begun to affect the Kindred of Istanbul. Grim, humorless individuals with cut-and-dried attitudes toward right and wrong now dominate the Prince's court. The new guard has already destroyed several prominent Kindred who failed to tow the new "traditional" party lines. As these undead fundamentalists grow increasingly shrill, the Prince's patience wears thin. He has ordered purges before, but even so, such an extreme response to the problem may harm his position and throw the balance of power even further off-kilter.

Jakarta



Jakarta isn't a city with a mayor; it's a province with a governor. Jakarta spreads across the Western tip of Java, its roads full of gridlocked traffic, its air clogged. Its landfills overflow. The population of the Indonesian capitol has tripled in the last 40 years, and grows even more at weekends, as people flock from across the country to enjoy the bright lights. The removal of the rainforest has caused floods to swallow much of the city every year. The homeless are everywhere, living in Jakarta's tumescent garbage dumps.

Despite the disease and the flooding, Jakarta is in some ways a vampire's paradise. Millions of people could vanish, and no one could care. Anyone in authority, no matter how highly placed, can conveniently forget an unusual or illegal event for only a small fee. Not really harmed by floods or bullets, the Kindred have nothing to fear here — except each other.

Jerusalem

The fundamentalists believe that the return of Christ will happen in the skies above Jerusalem, heralding the final battle of Armageddon. Religious or not, a lot of people believe the end of the world starts right here. It's in the air, everywhere you go, from the Wailing Wall to the Holy Sepulchre to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It's a three-way Holy City. They're all represented here: Jews, Muslims and Christians, all with their own agendas and own ancestral reasons for wanting control of this city. The city moves like any other, the traffic, stores and bars full of people, the roads busy, the police doing their thing, but it's in the air, the anticipation held in the dust and the wind that something's going to happen at any moment.

While the majority of the Kindred in Jerusalem belong to one of three Lancea Sanctum broods — representing the flipside of each of the three religions — the Regent of the city belongs to the Carthians. He's a compromise figure, a vampire with no real power who was, for all concerned, the least unacceptable of the plausible candidates after the last Prince vanished during the 1967 war. The Regent has nothing more than the illusion of control; the factions use him as a reason not to engage in a direct assault with one another. His control is going to be put to the test when the Ordo Dracul neonate turns up to the next Elysium claiming that he's found the location of the bones of Jesus Christ.

Las Vegas

It shines like a vast, kitsch neon beacon in the desert, this shrine to lust and greed. In a town where tackiness is the true religion, the dollar its talisman and roulette its sacrament, even the church ministers wear rhinestone suits. Elvis still conducts weddings. Great concrete pyramids draw people to vast casinos. Cabarets that cost more in one night than the GDP of small African nations play forever. At the edges are the trailer parks and the motels, the places where some go when the hotel bill gets too steep, where others go to live when they've finished working the door and where some go to disappear.

There are too many vampires for the population of Las Vegas to support. In the 1960s, a group of Carthians engaged in a wave of mass Embraces. The dozens of showgirls, croupiers, waiters and tourists who joined the Damned never left, and if it weren't for the tourists, the city couldn't support the Kindred's depredations. In any other city, the Masquerade would have collapsed long ago, but Vegas is so strange already that somehow things stay the same. This may not last: the Boss of Las Vegas has a cut in the Vegas mob, and he'd like a cut in the police department, too. He doesn't know it, but some mortals within the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department have begun to suspect that many of the city's disappearances and murders are somehow connected.

London

For the 10 million or so people who live within the bounds of the permanently congested M25, there is nowhere else in the world. Many people don't ever leave. In London, the British Empire still exists in the hearts of many who simply can't see how any other place in the world can matter. There is no such thing as a typical Londoner. Slum tenements and dilapidated tower blocks stand in a city that has within its boundaries Buck House and Mayfair. In the West End, the homeless are simply the people over whom one steps on the way into the theater. Tightly knit ethnic communities survive as best they can, while right-wing groups make capital on foreigners living right on the doorstep. The Underground is a kingdom in its own right, a sunless parallel world where distances between places don't follow the rules of the surface.

The Lady of London holds court over the hungry dead, a Regency whore transformed by time and the Requiem into a beautiful, dignified, psychotic stateswoman. The intrigues of her court are baroque and ever-shifting, and everything is permitted, save one thing: mention of the Cull. Nearly 250 years ago, some agency annihilated all but five of the city's Kindred. The signs suggest that it's going to happen again; the alleged re-awakening from torpor of one of those five survivors adds a further element to the mix. Outwardly, the Lady and her court are keeping calm and laughing off rumors of catastrophe. Behind the scenes, they're flailing around for the salvation of their skins.

Los Angeles

To many, Los Angeles is something of a disappointment. Hollywood Boulevard isn't nearly as dilapidated on TV. Mann's Chinese Theater is under a mall. The highways are choked with oversized, fume-belching automobiles. The sprawling conurbation is a study in wild contrasts. A visitor can pass from the stained towers of downtown LA to bleak, run-down tenements in the space of a few blocks, but it's all laid out in lovely sunshine beneath lively palms, which are caged in by a brown ceiling of smog. Safe streets are only a few steps away from gang country. Everyone is scared of the LAPD, whose very presence threatens all kinds of violence.

LA doesn't have a single Prince. Similar to the mortals, the Kindred in LA keep to their territory, and many work out their Requiems without ever encountering vampires from other neighborhoods. The oldest vampire in the region inhabits a sub-cellar beneath the Church of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels, off Olvera Street; this bloody nun leads an Hispanic and Catholic Lancea Sanctum brood whose members range from gangbangers to bloodsucking priests. Hollywood's vampires have no real leading elders at all; these Kindred throw themselves into the bright lights and the partying. In Hollywood, it's difficult to tell the dead bloodsuckers from the living ones. The Invictus may claim control over the San Fernando Valley, but the endless uniform suburbs are hardly an ideal place for a vampire to hunt, and few of the Damned make their homes there. Likewise, the

Carthians appear to have gang country, but for many Kindred in the tougher parts of the city, gang colors mean more than covenant.

Madrid

Madrid operates on a different timescale from much of the rest of the world: it's a nocturnal city, a place where the people are up all night until it's time to go to work, only sleeping in the afternoon, and waking up to start the day again. It's home to the world's biggest bullfighting ring, and many of the busiest bars and clubs in the Iberian peninsula. The people drink with their friends as if they'll never see them again, and according to past form, there's the chance they won't: Madrid was a battlefield during the Spanish Civil War and it has been a target for both Al-Qaida and, closer to home, the Basque separatist group ETA.

The bullfighting tradition survives among the Damned, who set up underground arenas. Taking a kidnapped drunken mortal onto the sandy circle, they give him an axe or a broadsword or a sledgehammer and face him against a damned *matador.* The fate of the mortal is the same as that of the bull. During the Spanish Civil War, Carthian broods supported the rebels, and Invictus broods supported Franco. Most still exist. The Carthians are in control now; the Invictus' own fall — rather neatly, perhaps — more or less coincided with Franco's death, and while the Carthians may pay lip service to words such as "largesse" and "mercy," they're doing all they can to humiliate their former tormentors.

Mexico City

Eighteen million or more people and a constant flow of traffic make Mexico City the most populous and most polluted city in the world. The air reaches into the lungs. It makes people breathless and cranky and miserable. There's a homeless child on every street. The wise know not to take an unregistered taxi, because there's the ever-present danger of being kidnapped and forced to go to cash machines on successive days until there's no more money to take. Most people take the problem of crime in their stride, assuming by default that the police aren't going to do a damn thing without a decent bribe.

The Kindred aren't afraid to make their own kidnaps. It's easy to disappear here, and if someone ends up dead on some slum street far from his destination, who's going to ask questions? The Prince of Mexico City doesn't have a problem with this sort of practice. He's blasé about the Masquerade, and, in his own way, extraordinarily corrupt, favoring the Kindred who can give him the most and happily abandoning alliances if a better offer finds him. It's said that he'd sell his own mother, if she weren't 100 years dead. It's how he's managed to be Prince for so very long, as long as the city has been here.

Moscow

The city was gray and austere 20 years ago, and it's still gray. But there are lights now. Fake fur in leopard print has replaced the once ubiquitous black overcoat. Where once the KGB stalked the streets, dollar prostitutes and white pimps with diamond rings stake their claims. The grim-faced leaders of the Party are gone, replaced by those the last few oligarchs who didn't get out of the country. Russia is alive at night now, its bright lights and wild abandon the antithesis of the Soviet years. The city's Metro, the busiest in the world, is packed full of bright lights and loud people. Even the Kremlin, which once seemed forbidding and cold, now, in the light of capitalism's victory, is simply a bit tacky.

Beneath the Kremlin, things are very different. The catacombs below the seat of government go down nearly forever, and under there are things that the Russian people should never know about. The vampires who meet down there are only one thing to fear. The Carthian Diktatorat — two male vampires, one female — rule Moscow's Damned along Soviet lines. They still try to hold onto power, passing increasingly repressive laws from their council chamber in one of the upper layers of the catacombs. They become increasingly irrelevant as more and more neonates, influenced by the new freedom and corruption of the living, simply ignore those austere ideologues in that bleak concrete room.

Mumbai

In this, the brightest, loudest and most populous of India's cities, trash culture and high culture collide in a heady *masala*. It's a city where the dreams of a billion people are made, and where idols walk the streets and live glamorous but restrained lives. In Bollywood, anyone can get a part in a movie. A bright smile, a strong voice and a pretty face are all anyone needs. Riches are there for anyone — at least, that's the hype. The dreams don't extend to the people crammed into the slums.

The Nosferatu Rani of Mumbai is a figure larger than life or death, a corpulent, blue-skinned figure who presides over her Elysium like some obese, smiling Kali. The Rani's Harpies and toadies play out games of brightly colored horror on their victims. They rub shoulders with movie stars. They handle prostitution, and drugs and the slave trade. She forbids the Kindred of the slums to enter her territory, leaving them to gorge on the blood of the diseased and starving. They may be well fed, but their exclusion from court is a wound to the pride of a lower-caste vampire. Some are making plans to unseat the Rani, to make Mumbai a place where monsters ragged and glamorous alike can feed where they will.

New York City

New York carries on as usual; it carried on as usual when the towers fell, and it'll carry on no matter what happens, and no matter who's standing there. The skyscrapers, the yellow cabs, the brownstones and apartment blocks are all so very distinctive, and they seem to go on forever. But nowhere is it easier to be alone in a crowd than in this greatest of Western cities. It's a city of potential killers, with a million Patrick Batemans and Travis Bickles and Sons of Sam waiting to emerge.

Inasmuch as any city can be typical, New York exemplifies the environment in which the Kindred thrive. Sometimes people just vanish here. Sometimes they go to bars and never come home. Sometimes, people who live alone vanish from their apartments; one day someone else moves in. The Kindred are all too happy to be the agents of that — but sometimes the Kindred are the ones who vanish. Soon, every vampire discovers that she is not at the top of the food chain, that the monsters whose territories border hers vanish, too, and no one knows where they go.

Paris

Paris is known across the world as a city of romance, of soft evening lights, of the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower and Versailles and the Louvre. It's also a city of hostility: Parisians are notoriously unfriendly to outsiders, finding excuses to be rude the moment they open their mouths and reveal themselves not to be Parisian. It's a city where riots happen at a moment's notice, and ghettoized areas grow and fester in poverty. There are so many beautiful things here. Sometimes it seems that everyone is so obsessed with all those beautiful things, they forgot the people.

The vampires, at least, do not make this mistake. For them, the people *are* the beautiful things, a fine cattle stock that needs to be bred and savored. There are whole movements of Kindred in Paris who meddle with successive generations of mortal families, breeding them and guiding their lives unseen until the point, when, like a fine vintage, they're ready to drink.

Prague

Prague remains. Prague endures. Through more than 1,000 years of history, the castle and the city of 100 spires around it have stood and survived. It may be a bright, beautiful city to inhabit, full of old alleyways and ornate bridges, but just as any survivor, the Czech capitol has its ghosts. The Jewish quarter is gone, damaged by the 19th-century pogroms and destroyed by the Holocaust. Rabbi Loew's *golem* still stalks the back streets and the nightmares of Prague's children. Prague has a bleak, magical kind of atmosphere in its streets. In Prague, it almost seems possible that a man could wake up one day as a bug, or that someone walking on the streets could hear the distant strains of a mouse singing a sad, forgotten song.

Samsa, the Kindred's Carthian Governor, organizes the vampires he ostensibly serves in a kind of nightmarish bureaucracy, buried in application forms and permits: the Application to Alter Territorial Bounds, the Explanation Statement for the Breach of Certain Standard Protocols of Concealment, the Committee for the Investigation

into Irregular Dietary Practices. It's his madness. He manages a staff of Dominated bureaucrats and a ghoul family entirely made of functionaries, all of whom create a tortuous bureaucracy. And the Kindred submit to it, knowing full well that he's mad, but that he's lived for many hundreds of years, and could destroy most of them at a whim.

Rio de Janeiro

The great statue of Christ the Redeemer smiles beatifically down on the city of Rio de Janeiro, his hands open, promising grace to all. For the thousands of street children who try to scrape by in Rio, that grace is withheld, as death squads — possibly police-sponsored — periodically scour the *favelas* and slaughter the homeless. Most street kids in Rio don't expect to make it to 18. Some join the drug gangs and get guns — their best hope. If the people who dance until dawn in affluent Ipanema and glamorous Copacabana don't have a clue about the grim state of the shanty towns, is that their fault?

The Damned don't know the answer, but they do know that it's the rich whom the police care about. So, while the Ordo Dracul and the Invictus have some of the affluent areas, and the Acolytes, Carthians and Lancea Sanctum have equal share of the *favelas*, the vampires from the richer areas try to feed from the slums, risking territorial incidents from those monsters who make such places their homes.

Rome

These days, the Eternal City is caught in eternal gridlock; traffic fumes discolor the ancient monuments of the empire, the symbols of Rome's soul. The dirt penetrates further. Ancient dignity and modern glamour carry a whiff of corruption. The Vatican, meanwhile, moves in reverse to the rest of the city; as modernity takes the rest of the city, the pronouncements that come from within those hallowed walls grow increasingly medieval.

The broods of Invictus and Sanctified who still describe themselves as the Camarilla have controlled this city with subtle viciousness for fewer centuries than their leaders believe; still, the Prince is old, and few care enough to challenge the claim. An ambitious neonate would do well to know that the right alliances can serve him well, but the wrong ones will never be forgotten.

Sarajevo

The Bosnian war ended more than a decade ago. Sarajevo has since been rebuilt. Communist concrete has been replaced with the trappings of an ultra-modern city. Still, this city remembers the siege. It's not something easily forgotten. Sniper Alley is still there, and the ghosts of the 1,000 or more people who died there haunt the people. The mortar scars borne by much of the city's concrete, the "Sarajevo Roses," commemorate the deaths of people. Much of the outer fabric of the city may be new, but at its heart, Sarajevo carries scars that will take a long time to heal.

The Kindred suffered hugely during the war. The Prince of Sarajevo, who had reigned here since Ottoman days, vanished in 1993. A firebomb landing on the building housing Elysium wiped out most of the prominent figures among the Damned. Those remaining were the misfits, no-hopers and outsiders. Now they're all there is, and they're staking out new domains of their own. Opportunities for the expansion of territory abound, and if these newly elevated vampires have heard the rumors of something old and worse than a hungry dead man awakening beneath the city, they're not acting scared. Yet.

Seoul

Seoul and the area surrounding is home to more than 23 million people. Only Tokyo is more densely populated. Seoul is a self-made city full of self-made people, a metropolis that worked its way from poverty to immense riches in the space of only a few decades. Wealth, or the desire for wealth, defines the city. Wealth defines the architecture, bright and shining and reaching for the sky. The desire for wealth defines the media: polished and professional. The desire for wealth defines religion: Korean Christianity promises good health and financial success in this world as well as the next, and

treats churches as big business, with 100,000 people or more attending every Sunday.

Many of the Kindred of Seoul have been left behind by Seoul's transformation; the Red Lama, the most influential vampire in the city, is no exception. This venerable Buddhist fiend, who considers it his *dharma* to be an agent of sin, counts the transformation of Seoul as an offense. He seeks to undermine the stability of the new ways. His increasing enthusiasm for the murder of Christians and venture capitalists have led some to panic, as the Masquerade stretches to breaking point, and coverups become harder and harder to effect.

Tokyo

No city moves faster than Tokyo. No city is more tightly packed. No city looks more like the future. The city flashes by, and the visitor's only hope is to dive in. Subway trains disgorge waves of anonymous city workers. The flashing neon stores of Shibuya sell high-tech toys to moneyed hipsters. In Harajuku, the kids look like nothing else on Earth. The temples and geisha girls who still exist here look less and less like historical artifacts, and more like wild anachronisms, beamed here in some sort of time machine. The traditions holding together Tokyo's criminal groups seem just as out of place, although they keep up to speed with the their violence.

The balance of power among the covenants (and the broods within the covenants) changes almost nightly. Every night, there's another Embrace, and for every Embrace, a Final Death. Tonight, the Acolytes might be under the control of the Nine Devil Men; tomorrow night, they'll be gone, and the Thousand Whispers Brotherhood will take their place. The crazy violence of change makes the real dead restless. In otherwise new buildings, countless unreasonable ghosts rise, bearing grudges against the walking, whether they're breathing or not.

Venice

It lies on 118 islands and its world-famous canals serve as the main source of transport in the old city after walking. But the wood piles on which the city was founded are beginning to sink into the ground, taking the whole city with them. The city goes on, putting on a mask to hide any fear it might feel: it's the City of Masks, and the masks that cover the faces of everyone during the carnival season.

The vampires of Venice, in traditional fashion, wear masks and "slashed" cloaks — which reveal bright colors or corruption beneath — to Elysium, but the beautiful masks of mortals are grotesque and leering for the Kindred. Once, this was intended to preserve some anonymity, the contrivance of a very early Carthian Prince. Now, the Kindred compete, with increasingly macabre and individual garb. An individual can enter Elysium anonymously, but the rules against trying to find out identities are widely ignored, and few vampires can remain anonymous for very long.

Ten Princes

The Prince of the city defines the laws of the Damned. The Prince is the lord of all the city's land — it is his to dole out and take away. The Prince steers the culture of the Kindred by interpreting and disseminating whatever truth he chooses. In a very real sense, the Prince *is* the city.

Thus, when designing or adapting your own city, give careful thought to the characteristics of the Prince you put in power. Whatever vampire you put in control of the masquerading city affects local culture, local law and local politics. The Prince casts her shadow over the whole of the city. She may be loathed or loved, feared or mocked, supported or toppled — but whatever is happening with the Prince affects, on some level, every vampire below.

Consider the way your Prince affects gameplay in the chronicle. A Prince who rewards scheming politicos with coveted dominions drives players either to impress him with their own Byzantine gambits or to work hard at avoiding his attention. A Prince who prizes ferocious might above all else creates a Kindred culture in which physical might trumps everything else, and so players can expect a lot of combat (and maybe short Requiems). A Prince who follows strict (if simple) legal procedures of his own devising creates an environment in which the most savvy vampires win the night.

The Prince, perhaps more than other tool, can define the mood and themes of your chronicle, as well. If the Prince is a symbolic characterization of the city itself — which is not a necessity by any means — then what does it mean when he is beheaded by a swarm of petty neonates? If the Prince is a totalitarian dictator who dresses her Hounds in black leather and arms them with actual damn swords, what kind of classic dramatic questions about free will versus security or bravery versus oppression can you tell? If the Prince is an ancient pagan Acolyte who regards himself as the incarnation of a god, the role of the Circle of the Crone — and the way your players regard that covenant — changes dramatically from **Vampire**'s default mode.

Laws of the Prince

The Prince's laws have a profound affect on gameplay. The heart of all gameplay is choice, and the drama in **Vampire**'s choices comes from the potential consequences stemming from every decision, good or bad. Laws are, simply, predetermined consequences for particular actions.

If the Prince decrees that *any* violence against vampires is illegal, then the players must make difficult choices every time they want to use their characters' dots in Weaponry, Firearms or Brawl. This kind of severe dictum diminishes the relative value of those Skills, because having more dots in them may just make a character more likely to get into trouble — or because those simply won't see much use. On the other hand, this law might simply mean that, in practice, characters can no longer engage in scuffles because no attacked vampire can be allowed to stick around and press charges. Every fight has to end with one party destroyed or both being trusted to remain silent. Vampiric healing and Disciplines such as Auspex take on different qualities, too: can you prove you've been attacked after you've healed the wound? Or does the best bullshitter win every case at court?

Laws that ban certain objects (such as guns or swords) or learning (such as Theban Sorcery or Protean) change the consequences of decisions, creating tension around such choices as what to carry and where to spend experience points. Tired or obvious decision points can be given new dramatic weight. If only the Prince's Hounds are supposed to be able to practice Celerity or Vigor, the choice to put dots in those Disciplines becomes more complex — is it worth spending five or seven experience points for dots that have to be used with extreme discretion, or is it essential to buy them so as to not be outmatched by the Prince's grunts?

Laws prohibiting certain actions add value to such Skills as Stealth, Larceny, Streetwise and Subterfuge, which can help criminal vampires avoid being caught by the Prince's Hounds. Skills such as Investigation, on the other hand, might become more valuable because the Prince has need of Kindred to determine what vampires receive his severe punishments.

Many (maybe even most) Princes don't have to filter their laws through any committees or advisory bodies. The court of "public" (among Kindred, anyway) opinion and the social pressures that his Regents put on him may alter the Prince's edicts, but not necessarily because any government procedure exists to allow that to happen. If the Prince is strong enough to enforce a law, he can put it into effect. If the populace is afraid enough that the consequences are real, they will obey it. A Prince without quality investigators can declare it illegal for Kindred to study the occult or use

computers, but plenty of Damned citizens will continue reading books and surfing the web in private. A Prince who's not afraid to stake and bury vampires caught with cell phones — and has the loyal followers to do it — can actually keep the city's Kindred obedient.

Laws and Game Mechanics

Strictly speaking, a Storyteller could institute mechanical consequences of the Prince's laws. For example, if the Prince demands all Kindred but his Regents and the Primogen remain poor, to keep from attracting attention from mortal authorities, the Storyteller can forbid any player from buying more than two or three dots of Resources. Maybe this rule applies only to character creation (because major decisions such as choosing to break the Prince's laws should happen during play) or maybe it applies for as long as the law is on the proverbial books.

Alternately, if the Prince has had most of the city's occult texts rounded up and burned (or stored in her own private vault) over the last 50 years, the Storyteller might decree that Occult dots after the second cost four or even five experience points times the new rating, rather than the usual three. This kind of ruling illustrates an actual detail of the game world: insufficient resources are around for learning the Skill.

This is a fair trick for Storytellers to use, but it's prone to misuse. Putting a cap on Resources feels artificial — it's not as if a proclamation from the Prince actually causes vampires' wallets to reject $100 bills. The kind of change implemented for the Occult Skill in the latter example is better, but c an still be troublesome. That ruling makes Crúac more expensive than every other Discipline, and may discourage players from creating characters interested in the occult, rather than creating a kind of heightened mystique around the subject (if that was the Storyteller's intent).

Most of the time, it's more interesting to leave the game mechanics in place and let consequences emerge from the game world organically. Modern law doesn't actually prevent guns from firing or cars from being stolen — laws promise consequences. This is a more interesting gameplay option because it requires the players to make more difficult decisions, weighing their options and estimating the consequences, before committing to action. Just having an action be actually prohibited or undermined in the game mechanics removes options from the players and cancels out an important dramatic option in an intrigue game such as **Vampire**: getting away with it.

The right time to restrict gameplay options is when your troupe is trying out some kind of off-the-wall chronicle style and you want to change the play dynamic. Maybe you all just want to play a chronicle about pauper vampire vandals because the idea interests you — so you all agree that no character will buy more than one dot in Resources. In that case, when the mechanical alteration is what you're really after, then the Prince's laws are a fine tool for explaining, in the language of the fictional game world, why this ruling is what it is. The Prince becomes a way to characterize and explain your design choice.

The Sample Laws

All of the following 10 Princes come with examples of the laws they pass in their domains (which is to say, the cities where they rule). These laws are almost never all the laws that Prince has for the city, but they give you an idea what sort of things this Prince chooses to care about and that Prince chooses to ignore.

These also help to define gameplay boundaries in the city. In the city of the Chieftain, it's acceptable to slay any vampire you can take down on your own. In the city of the Archbishop, it's illegal to practice the religion of the Crone in secret. In your city, it may be illegal to learn a certain Discipline or join a particular bloodline. These laws don't make it impossible for players to have their characters pursue these actions, but the laws do inform the players' decisions. Is it worth risking the Prince's wrath to cut through a forbidden domain? Is learning Crúac worth the trouble of keeping it secret?

Remember, though, that most cities don't have the kind of communication channels necessary to keep too many laws in play (see p. 27). The Kindred are a hidden subculture of outlaws and monsters who must share most information orally, both for security and simplicity. Some of these laws may be incorporated into the public marks of the court's Heralds (see p. 55).

Without activists and lawyers to constantly refine and pick at the Prince's edicts, the law remains pretty simple. Instead of a complex, four-page legal definition of murder and its repercussions, the Kindred get something clearer and more severe. Something like this:

The Prince Alone Decides What is Murder.

The Covenant Archetypes

The first five Princes in this book are exaggerated examples of covenant ideals personified through iconic vampires. Whether these rulers are truly representative of their covenants in your city is for you to decide.

• The Premier may be celebrated for her strength and vision by the Carthians of her State, or she may be regarded as a dangerous autocrat headed for unacceptable tyranny. Is she the necessary evil that must be accepted to keep the Carthian Movement in power in the city, or is she only another sad and scary lesson on the corruption that comes with power?

• The Archbishop may be hailed and revered by the bloody clergy of the Spear and fearfully respected by the secular lords who kneel and kiss his ring when he's around and curse his name when he's gone. Or he may be seen as a mutable figurehead, usable by the Priests of the Synod as an instrument of political distraction and rule.

• The King could be saluted as a bold revision of Invictus courtliness and primacy, a prodigy in the art of compelling and leading monsters, a savvy and charismatic balance between Machiavelli and Genghis Khan. On the other hand, the King might be seen as a dangerous deviation from covenant custom, tolerable only as long as he keeps up his fearsome posture in front of the other covenants but a potential liability when his close-knit and inexperienced counselors begin to turn on each other... as all vampires inevitably do.

• The Oracle is an inspirational religious figure admired for her dedication to her faith and her bizarre but brilliant way of seeing the world — but is she regarded as an idiot savant blessed with a vision that cannot be rationalized or is she a laughing stock elevated to a kind of ridiculous celebrity simply to maintain the prominence and strangeness of the covenant?

• The Master is ingenious, but is he right? His metaphysical and pseudo-scientific pursuits may be the esoteric work of an intellect too deeply invested in its passion to be understood by outsiders, or it may be madness. In a world where vampires turn out to be real, how will the average Kindred decide their Prince has gone crazy? And if they do, how will they challenge and replace him... if he really is the master of a mystical geomantic network spanning the whole city?

The Premier

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Description: Not quite a bureaucrat and not quite an executive, the Premier is the epitome of severe, matte-black style. She's a black Frenchwoman with a model's posture and a gunfighter's stare. Her hair is as short as it can be without being gone. Her mouth is wide and elegantly arced, like a leaf. Her eyes angle up on attention-grabbing cheekbones. In her couture suit, with her lawyer's attaché, she looks like an African Amazon ready to sue you to death between the lobby and the limo. With her sure-footed stomping stride, her muscular arms and her scanning gaze, she looks like a woman who might be happiest in her platform boots and a wife-beater, kicking the shit out of you the old-fashioned way.

Reputation: The Carthian pundits say she's a brilliant strategist and visionary, tormented by the distance she must place between her citizens and herself for the sake of maintaining objectivity. She views the State — the portion of the city under her vigilant care — as her house and the citizenry as her family. The number-one job of the Premier is to protect her Kindred. Her secondary job is the protection of the State. After that falls the contentment and enlightenment of the citizenry. Only when she can be sure that the State is safe and protected from the eyes of the uninitiated kine and those monsters who mean her Kindred harm can she afford to unlock the vault in which she keeps your freedom. Liberty lost to ancient tyrants and hateful hunters is liberty wasted.

You've certainly heard vampires call her an ice princess — not such a bold claim, considering she is both undead and a politician. Word from those who have attended a session of her so-called Senate (it's a riff on an idealized Greek forum) claim that she's remarkably sympathetic, even-handed and well spoken. She looks you in the eye. She listens when you talk. She nods along with you.

In her head, she's measuring you, cataloging you and assessing what service you can be to the State. Her flavor of democracy, though, depends on the appearance of honesty. If she thinks you're a fool, she tells you. If she thinks you're dangerous, you find out right away. Vampires have gone missing since she took over. Some say they've been forced out of the State, into the fringes of the city where hunting is hard and the midnight hours are empty and lifeless. Others say the missing have been driven into sleeping exile, interred in secret prisons throughout the city, buried beneath the havens of the State's great Primogen — the Senators.

Background: Make no mistake, she wasn't always like this. She was nearly lost from the first night of her Requiem, left starving in a Parisian park beneath a slivered moon. The Beast had her by the throat from that first moment, throwing her headlong into the hunt — and leaving in her wake a trail of bodies that nearly got her incinerated by the ruling Invictus.

Her sire a mystery, she should've ended up on a funeral pyre of sun-baked bones, but somebody saw something in her — a knife's gleam in her eye, maybe, or a vicious ferine sensibility, perhaps. They broke her as one breaks a horse: testing her limits, shackling her, bringing fists and boots to bear upon every inch of her body. She learned soon enough that she was, at least for now, theirs. When she bit the hand that fed her, they cuffed her muzzle with a stinging and humiliating hand.

For a long time, she served as an enforcer. A pipe-hitter. A cold bitch in a dirty suit with steel-toed boots (better to break ribs) and a nine iron (even better to break ribs). Those who spurned the Invictus found themselves face-to-face with those dark eyes.

But somewhere along the way, she didn't just find a measure of control over her Beast; she believed that she had truly shackled it, chained it up and made it to serve her instead of vice versa. This realization helped her crawl out of the blood and away from the Invictus, where she found a natural home among the fellow Carthians. No longer would she server as an enforcer for a selfish covenant, punishing vampires for perceived slights against invented mores. She's found a kind of serenity as Premier, a calmness that is only rarely disturbed by that mean, bloody-fisted bitch from years past.

Storytelling Hints: She's more dog than cat — loyal, never aloof, concerned (perhaps overmuch) about the

safety and sanctity of those vampires beneath her vigilant stare. And stare, she does. When embodying her, lock eyes with players. Stare them down. Speak clearly and concisely, but not with a lot of emotion. She isn't entirely without emotion. She isn't cold, not exactly; there's a fire in there, stoked only rarely by fools and troublemakers. When her anger rises, make sure that it does so swiftly and surprisingly. Like a pit bull, she goes for the throat fast and without warning. Also like the pit bull, if characters are loyal to her as she is to them, they have a defender for the rest of their Requiems.

In this game, she can easily represent the best friend or the worst enemy the coterie has. Her actions and words have tremendous weight, more than many Princes because of just how clearly the Kindred here recognize the potency — and honesty — of the Premier.

Laws and Customs: She's reached a pivotal time in her reign. A great deal swings on these next few months. See, the Premier has long walked a careful line of power. Balance is critical. She giveth to the deserving, and she taketh away from those who represent any kind of danger to the State. She invites liberty and derides tyranny, and yet is able to so far justify the "disappearing" of problematic Kindred. Justice? Perhaps. Totalitarianism? To some.

It's beginning to boil over, though. Enough of the Damned have heard the rumors, and worse, enough believe them. She's always been in the spotlight; she's the Prince. But now, added scrutiny is upon her, not just from the citizens, but from her own Senators. Will they nick her, spilling just enough Vitae in the water to summon the sharks? Will she react with an even heavier hand, turning the State into a cruel regime? Or will she find a way to mitigate the rumors and turn them to her favor?

This Premier supports some unusual laws and customs, especially compared to other Princes. The first she simply calls "The Law of Grievances." Vampires are allowed to — and in many cases, expected to — attend monthly open-air forums. There, attendees are welcome to air any grievances they have against humans, other vampires or regarding territory, havens or the Premier's own laws. She and the Senate vote on such matters after an open discussion; the matter is resolved then and there. The word is final, at least for the period of one year. If the offended party believes the matter "fixed" unsuitably, he may return to the Senate a year hence, recycling the grievance in some hope that circumstances demand a change in judgment. A vampire can only bring an issue back once. After it has been voted upon a second time, the issue is considered closed forever, known as "seconded."

Another anomaly in the city is the Market. The Premier believes that open commerce is healthy; competition for territory, blood, ghouls is critical to the health of a stable Kindred "ecosystem" (her word). The Market is held once under every full moon at a new location (defined and announced at the Senate). Kindred bring tents, tables, dusty logbooks of favors, briefcases of contracts and chits. Some come in limousines, selling exotic wares out of the trunk while cutting curious deals inside the car, while others simply pile shopping carts high with whatever mad junk they care to peddle. The Market, for the night of its occurrence, is considered Elysium. Etiquette is key, and to maintain order and propriety, the Market is scrutinized by a Maven (see below, under "Followers").

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: The Senators are key to the Premier's hierarchy. The Senators comprise the city's Primogen, the eldest among the clans. They, and she, vote on any and all matters that come before them. They decide what laws go into effect, what laws should be repealed and who deserves to end up in the dungeons and prisons beneath their estates. The Senators are, inarguably, the Premier's greatest weakness. They've been with her since the dawn of her reign, and she trusts them immensely. She shouldn't. They see the writing on the wall, and just

as most Damned, have grown hungry for more than just blood as their Requiems deepen. The Premier, stubborn and too-trusting, now spends so much time measuring and judging others that she forgets to turn the gaze toward her own supposed allies. If at any time she seems to be turning scrutiny toward them, they often concoct (from behind the scenes, of course) some new danger against the State that demands all her intensity and attention.

They also represent a weakness to her in another way: the city's Kindred grow tired of the unchanging array of Senators. They vote the same way. They grow fat with blood and power. And the guard never changes. It stirs the citizenry to frustration. They seek change — something in which the Premier supposedly believes.

Places of law and commerce tend to mark Elysium: the city's venerable old bank buildings, courthouses and marketplaces. The Premier believes these places pump a different kind of blood — money and justice — through the city's arteries, and are crucial to the State's health. (Worth noting is that, generally, the monthly Senate and airing of grievances takes place in the courthouse in the center of the city.)

Followers and Agents: Outside the normal, expected positions one might find in a Prince's employ, the Premier makes use of two individuals unique to her reign.

The first, as noted earlier, is the Maven. The Market is not a free-for-all, even though it appears to be from those looking in from the outside. While any deal can be brokered, deals must be brokered fairly to the agreement of both parties. To ensure this, the Premier has employed a Maven chosen by the Premier alone, without the Senators' input. The current Maven is a tough old bird, a fierce-eyed vampire from the American South who looks cobbled together from old leather, spit and rusty nails. Her word is final; if the deal is good, she declares it so. If it isn't? Woe to those who try to pull one over on her. She's cunning and can be quite cruel, and has the abilities (and Disciplines) to back up her word.

The other unusual position — unusual more for how it's filled — is that of Bailiff, a kind of Sheriff. Curiously, the Premier maintains that the role be filled by her own personal *ghoul*, not a vampire at all. Reportedly, this gives the position the proper "distance" needed from Kindred society — though, as critics have noted, it ensures a certain addiction on the part of the Bailiff to vampire Blood, and more specifically, the Premier's own Vitae. Still, the city's vampires would be fools to believe this ghoul without the power and *savoir-faire* to compete with them — he's been alive for more than a century, now, and was with the Premier even before she became Prince of the city. Only the oldest vampires in the State are truly a match for the Bailiff, and he's wise enough not to let himself get into confrontations with those who clearly outmatch him.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: Justice and Pride are what comprise this Prince's dead heart, and thus are the same themes that the city (and State) reflects, as well. These two elements are in many ways at war: true justice requires that a vampire be able to set herself out of the equation, repudiating her own personal judgments in favor of what's "best" for the State. But increasingly, the Premier's own pride has blocked the proper balance of justice, and the State's health — and the health of her reign — hang in the balance. Further complexity and irony comes from the fact that this is a city and government that theoretically support change, but arguably haven't seen nearly enough change in the government's own ranks for a while. The Kindred, staid and stale creatures for the most part, have found some cold comfort in this, but the winds are shifting. Opportunity lies in shaking up the old guard (even though the Premier would never believe herself part of an "old" guard).

The mood of the city is, for now, the calm before the storm. It's like the opening moves of a larger chess match. Pawns are moving. Shadowy hands are at work. Can the Premier — the Queen of the board — outmaneuver her enemies? Does she even realize that she, and the State, is in danger from others... and perhaps herself?

The Law of Grievances:

The Prince and the Senate shall hold monthly courts for the settlement of disputes between citizens or between citizens and the State. In said courts, the judgment of the Prince and the Senate, as determined by an informed vote, shall be deemed binding. After a period of one year, petitioners may resubmit previous grievances for an appeal vote. Motions so appealed (called "seconded") shall be judged again by the Senate and Prince convened at the time of appeal, with verdict decided by an informed vote. Seconded motions are final; there shall be no further appeals.

The Market Act:

One night per month, the city shall be host to a market, open to all Kindred, wherein all property, titles, chattel, assets and services of participating Kindred shall be legal for sale. Prices at market shall be determined by verbal contract between seller and buyer. This Market will be held on a night of the full moon at location to be named by the Prince. The Prince shall declare the site of the coming Market on the night of the current Market, if able. If not able, the Prince shall declare the new site through Heralds or written proclamation at least seven nights before the next Market. The site of a Market shall enjoy all the benefits, security and laws of Elysium for the duration of that Market.

The Archbishop

Clan: Nosferatu

Covenant: Lancea Sanctum

Description: The Lancea Sanctum is not the Catholic Church. One look at the Archbishop proves it. He resembles something more like the sun-bleached corpse of a priest of the Church of England than any proper archbishop of the Vatican. He is decorated by short, straw-like white hair and a stiff white beard. His tiny black eyes are nested in wrinkles of sore, red flesh. His skin is dry and cracked, like a desert floor. His mouth has gone leathery and split at the corners, revealing too many pointed teeth. His fangs are widely spaced and long like nails. When he talks, his wrinkled fingers reach out for your arm. He whispers into ears and cranes his head around to look into your eyes.

Despite his dead appearance, he is sturdily built and confident in his own skin and the black cassock jacket he wears. He sermonizes without self-consciousness, singing and lamenting and revering as the mood carries him. Some sermons end with him singing praises in Latin, others with him splattered in a supper of blood.

Reputation: You've heard him called the Demon-Pope. The joke among the secular Damned is that he wasn't Embraced, but recruited out of Hell by Longinus to train Sanctified Bishops. The Archbishop exemplifies the Beast That Preys on Man, one of his favorite sermon metaphors.

What catches a lot of casual worshippers by surprise, though, is his demeanor around his parishioners. The way the churchgoers describe it, he's gentle, supportive and usually the funniest bastard in the room. He laughs, and he means it. He genuinely wants what's best for those Kindred who come and kneel on the concrete floors for mass. He genuinely believes that separation from the mortal flock — except for hunting — is essential to Kindred tranquility. If you can't abide that, and can't get your ass to mass, then you're nothing more than an unwilling convert he just hasn't gotten to yet.

He has lines you do not cross. Make jokes about Longinus if you want, but do not blaspheme and do not make light of God. He knows you're not perfect, but if you can't manage the humility to make confessions then your judgment isn't worth considering. He doesn't care what your religion was in life, because all that is over. You don't have to join the priesthood, but you'd better join the congregation.

Background: The Archbishop has gone through the ranks, and it wasn't always a pleasant affair. He's seen every damned dark side of his covenant, thank you very much, and he's come to his own decisions about his people. A lot of them are confused. Some babble in tongues, as if that'll help. Others cobble together labyrinthine tomes of writs and laws and behaviors, as if somehow God cares whether or not you drink a woman's blood on Sunday or walk barefoot into one of His churches.

What the Archbishop has decided on — after tasting the many varietals of God's faithful grape — is that it comes down to a "faith versus works" argument, and he's strongly on the side of works. Not that faith isn't important, but it's work that often gives fruit to faith. It's about *doing* God's work, not simply believing in it. It's about bloodying one's hands to build the tabernacle, about pounding the rain-slick streets with handwritten copies of the Catechism (see **Lancea Sanctum**). It's about talking. Converting. Convincing.

That's not to say he doesn't believe in confession. But confession is a kind of work, and he doesn't allow the confessed to come in and simply shrug off their sins. The resulting penance requires *effort*. It's not a free pass: it's a chance to do right by yourself and God the Father, a chance to embody the reversal Longinus himself suffered when he realized his true purpose in the Lord's hands.

Storytelling Hints: You're an old man intent on having others hear you. Not just listen, but *hear* you — it's why you grab them, hold them, stare into their eyes when you talk. You sometimes fall into patterns of lecturing for hours, and you know that's a bit of a weakness. When you catch yourself doing it, you stop. You don't always catch yourself, though, and so the fools will just have to suffer your presence.

Of course, that's only when you're consumed by matters religious and spiritual, and that isn't 100% of the time. The Requiem is too long and hard to be perpetually

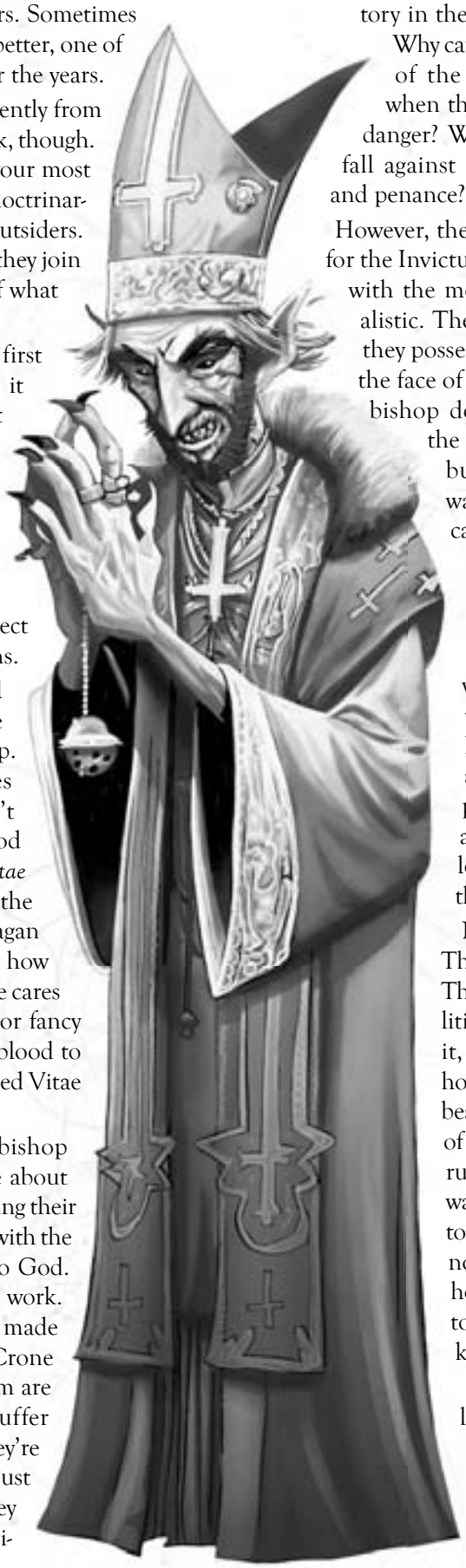
consumed with such weighty matters. Sometimes you like to tell a good story or, even better, one of the many jokes you've collected over the years.

You treat your congregation differently from the way you do those outside the flock, though. Those outside the flock get you at your most intense, seeing your most plodding doctrinarian side. You don't joke with the outsiders. They only receive that reward when they join the faith, when they see the truth of what you already know.

Laws, Tenets and Customs: The first custom — and this isn't a law, but it might as well be — is that if you want to be heard and hope that the Archbishop will help you in any way, you'll go to midnight mass. You just will. Or he won't even let you through the door. He knows that just going to mass is lip service, but it's lip service you best pay if you expect even the most meager considerations.

Curiously, many of the normal Sanctified rituals fall by the wayside under the hand of the Archbishop. He doesn't like zealous neonates parading around a fire and doesn't care for the Anointing of the Blood Bath (he knows that some of these *ritae* are geared toward bringing aboard the heathens, flavored liberally with pagan elements, and he isn't quiet about how much that disgusts him). The rites he cares about are humble affairs: no robes or fancy hats, nothing more than a drop of blood to Anoint and a taste of transubstantiated Vitae to honor God and Longinus.

As one might expect, the Archbishop thinks the cultists of the Crone are about the worst corruption out there. Exalting their condition is fine, but only if done so with the proper reverence and respect due to God. Without that, it's all just the devil's work. He hasn't outlawed them, but he's made the Requiem most difficult for the Crone worshippers. Every tenet and custom are stacked against them, and they suffer mighty prejudices under his rule. They're technically allowed the full freedom just as every vampire... except, why do they only have little hunks of meager territory in the most god-fucked parts of town? Why can't they get even a minute's worth of the Archbishop's attention, even when their immortal Requiems seem in danger? Why does every judgment always fall against them, demanding punishment and penance?



However, the Archbishop doesn't care much for the Invictus, either. They're too concerned with the mortal world, greedy and materialistic. The power they possess — or think they possess — is ultimately meaningless in the face of faith and God's rule. The Archbishop doesn't judge against them, not the way he does with the Cronies, but he certainly treats them as wayward stepchildren who simply can't learn their lessons.

One other custom worth mention is the restrictions on learning Theban Sorcery. Only the most devout and proven can learn it, which almost exclusively means that it's held only for the Priesthood. Once in a blue moon, he allows another to learn the Discipline, but if he hasn't "cleared" it and someone demonstrates some learning of Theban ritual, then there's always hell to pay.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: The Archbishop despises politics. That's not suggesting he can't be political, but mostly he tries to eschew it, aiming directly for bald-faced honesty and an effort to do what's best for the sanctity of the city, and of God's vampires. The city, and his rule of it, is something he sees as a way to do God's work, to pay tribute to the Lord and the Requiem. It's not about mortal power. It's about homage. About the work necessary to please God. About making a kingdom for God's predators.

Hierarchically, the Archbishop listens to a Synod, or council, of handpicked Priests. These Priests have no territory to directly call their own, but they do each watch over — and have free

reign within — select territories of parishioners. The Archbishop listens intently to his Priests, valuing their opinions sometimes higher than he values even his own. Of course, this trust can be dangerous, and the Archbishop is given over to an old man's naïveté. He sometimes doesn't see when a fox has entered the henhouse, and has been betrayed a couple of times by power-hungry Priests intent on using the Lancea Sanctum to forward personal agendas and gain (or reclaim) temporal power. When he does discover such treachery, however, he's not kind in demonstrating God's wrath.

Elysium is, first and foremost, the churches and cathedrals found in the old immigrant neighborhoods (and Elysium extends behind these sacred places into some not-so-sacred places, too, such as Irish pubs and Polish bakeries, thus speaking perhaps a little bit to the Archbishop's once-mortal heritage).

Followers, Minions and Agents: Unbeknownst to most, the Archbishop considers his personal Herald his most favored servant. His Herald is a simple man, some would say addled as if kicked in the head by a horse, but the Archbishop finds a great deal of simplicity and profoundness in such a vampire. It doesn't hurt that the Herald is also a creature of powerful strength, with a work ethic as stubborn as 10 mules. The Archbishop wiles away many hours sitting with the Herald, teaching him, talking to him, telling the fool man old stories, proverbs, fables. If others knew of how much the Archbishop listened to the Herald — and how much he cared for him, as much as a vampire can "care" for another — it could present a great vulnerability for him and his reign.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: Faith is not the Archbishop's chief Virtue. Certainly it's a part of him, as much a part as an eye or a hand, but it's not exactly what drives him. Prudence, however, is. He is an ultimately pragmatic man, oft-concerned (or over-concerned) with matters of sound judgment and basic wisdom. Faith is a flashy thing, alive like a fire, and that's not what this Archbishop espouses most. It's not about brimstone sermons, it's about hammering nails. It's not about the pomp and circumstance of ritual, it's about acting right in the face of God.

Pride is the Archbishop's primary Vice. He can be kind and gentle, but one will never see the Archbishop admit to wrongdoing. His confidence in himself — fueled almost entirely by his association with God — is bottomless, and he can draw on it at any time (which also helps to explain his abnormally high Willpower score).

Why use him as a Prince in your game? He brings another level to a **Vampire: The Requiem** game, where it needn't be merely about the temporal power and nightly struggles. There's a greater level present here, a kind of blood-soaked reverence. Of course, it can go the other way, too, in which the coteries represent the more mortal concerns of a group such as the Invictus, thus establishing a conflicting dichotomy between immortal and mortal concerns, between an eye on the divine and an eye on the earthly. Fundament versus firmament.

The Traditions are thy Laws. The Church has purview over thy Laws before any secular estate.

The Synod, as named and anointed by the Archbishop, shall have his ear come Sundays. The Archbishop shall have the Synod's audience and counsel at his call.

None shall speak or learn the ways of the Spear's miracles, the mysteries of Thebes, without the blessing of the Archbishop.

No Damned shall practice the idolatry of the Crone or tempt the Beast with her witchcraft outside of the Archbishop's knowledge. All those of the Crone shall declare themselves as such and wear the mark of her.

The Oracle

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Circle of the Crone

Description: When she is before the eyes of her people, she is a woman out of time. Loose, draped blankets barely cover her body, which is hugged tight by jewelry made of large gold coins, serpentine bands and dangling beads. She is the virginal oracle, listening for the words of the gods and unaware of the allure of her body. She is the clever harlot, her luring eyes ringed in black, her bare shoulders daring eyes to look. She is the wise witch, casting stones and lapping blood from a dead bird. As the nights go buy, her same body is home to many residents — each change in the moon brings another goddess into her blood.

Some nights, she is a mad woman. On other nights, she is a serene medium. Every night, she is a compassionate but fierce queen.

Reputation: She is not a political figure, not really. She doesn't run the city that way — no, her reign is greater, the reign of a goddess given flesh, the rule of divine whim made manifest.

Of course, some of the rumors say she's crazy. Not just mad, but the textbook definition of multiple personality disorder. She has a number of personalities that seem resurgent, and it seems easiest to believe that they're a part of a clinical problem. Of course, does it matter? She has enough believers, and they follow her word as if it's been handed down to them from above (or handed up from the Underworld). And of course, maybe they're right.

Some vampires — even unbelievers — report that she's far too prescient to be just crazy or faking it. Sometimes it's simple things, like how she can tell you what's in your pocket right now, or how she knows one odd intimate detail from your mortal childhood (even if it was 100 years before). Other times her prescience is downright spooky: she can predict betrayals, Final Deaths, accidents and other things that should be impossible to know.

And then there's the way her eyes change color depending on the personality. Blue, gray, green. Sometimes black. Other times red. That can't be just clinical, right?

Background: She sometimes seems so peaceful and divine that it's hard to believe the hell through which she's been dragged. The Oracle is a broken woman, shattered into many parts by decades of ritualistic abuse and torment by cultists half a world away. They took the idea of tribulation to a truly disturbing and lengthy level, never relenting on the raw torture brought against her. Of course, those few in her inner circle who know of her history suggest that maybe, just maybe, those mad cultists had it right. They tortured her to the brink of madness (and then perhaps beyond it), and a powerful Oracle resulted. She is proof that creation only comes from such tribulation.

Sometimes, she seems to remember what happened to her, and other times she doesn't. When she's in one of her "less divine" personalities (such as the Witch or the Handmaiden), she seems more cognizant of her past. When acting as a goddess (such as the Blind Valkyrie or the Lady of the Corn) she seems to have zero memory of her past as vampire or mortal.

Storytelling Hints: You've a great deal of freedom when playing the Oracle. As this mad prophet, you're afforded the chance to wear many skins in a single character, as she assumes so many guises from night to night, from moon phase to moon phase. Of course, that can also be frustrating — after all, it's trouble enough to keep track of a whole city's worth of Kindred, much less having to handle some lunatic, multiple personality "divine mouthpiece," right?

If you need something that links all her personalities, here it is: a flicker of compassion in her eyes. Whether she's wearing the mask of a wrathful Fury or some lusty mooncalf, she always has her original personality — the girl abused, before she was broken — living in there somewhere. She's not at the forefront, no, but you can offer glimpses from time to time. She might break her own mold for a second here, a minute there, tugging back the blood-dyed curtain to show her "real" self.

Otherwise, our only advice is to have fun with it. She is the embodiment of divinity, a caricature of holy and unholy archetypes. The potential for how she can change and subvert a scene (or entire story) is limitless.

Tenets and Customs: In this city, you don't have to belong to the Circle. Most don't, honestly. But you have to sit through some of their rituals, simply because the Oracle demands to be heard.

The Oracle's Liturgy is topmost among those rituals that require attendance (if not participation). Periodically — and not at any kind of scheduled intervals — the Oracle calls for the Liturgy to be heard. The night-long ritual involves her singing the tales of various gods, goddesses and heroes, of glorious monsters and bloody feasts. Sometimes, she performs other tasks at the ceremony: demonstrations of martial talent, prognostications of the city's future, lusty dances that are both sensual and embarrassing. It all depends on what personality she wears on that given night — a battle-hardened War Queen might demonstrate her might by splitting an offender's head open like a hunk of firewood. A wise Owl-Woman sings soft prayers and blesses the gathered masses for safe and fulfilling hunting.

She doesn't demand that the city's Kindred believe in the Crone, or accept the Circle's tenets. She only insists upon their respect. Those who have been caught vocally spurning the Circle to another — or worse, to *her* (some are foolish enough to let their Beasts speak for them) — do not fare well in this good night.

Curiously, while the Sanctified of the city generally note their opposition to her, her religion and her policies, more than one Priest has been caught going to her chambers to beg for her divinations.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: This is a theocracy. Little is traditional about her reign. She has few political skills (though some of her personalities seem more regal and queen-like than others), and seems instead to have earned her position by dint of being held in religious and sacred awe. That's not to say there aren't political machinations about, it's just that they generally don't involve her. They swirl around her in eddies and whorls of political currents, stirred about by her various advisors and enemies and the clan Prisci. She doesn't even hold court all that often, leaving most of the true rulership of the city in the hands of the local Crone Hierophant (and also a zealous adherent of her divinity, for he holds her as a true mouthpiece of many Crone goddesses and monsters). He translates her will when appropriate, and enacts it into being.

What's curious in this city is just how many vampires accept her will and judgments as somehow provident. Of course, there are those within the city — younger vampires, mostly — who are fomenting rebellion against this reliance on an unpredictable moon-calf like her. Even if she *is* right, they consider her dangerous. They point to their future success by suggesting that, if she's so prescient, why hasn't she seen them as the danger they represent?

Her choices for Elysium are scattered and as unpredictable as her moods and personalities. The city park, the empty lot beneath the water tower, a nexus of tunnels beneath the city, a local lesbian bar — none are near one another, and they seem to have little theme to unite them as Elysium, but Elysium they remain.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The Hierophant of the city, a broad-shouldered man who looks more like some kind of bronze-skinned gladiator than a wise leader or High Priest, is the Oracle's direct servant. When in the company of anybody but her, he is all puffed-up chest, all knuckled fists and boastful declarations. When in the company of the Oracle, however, he is visibly cowed — unashamedly so, actually. When outside her presence he is the blustery Voice of the Goddess, but in her presence, he carries her, brings her blood, cleans her

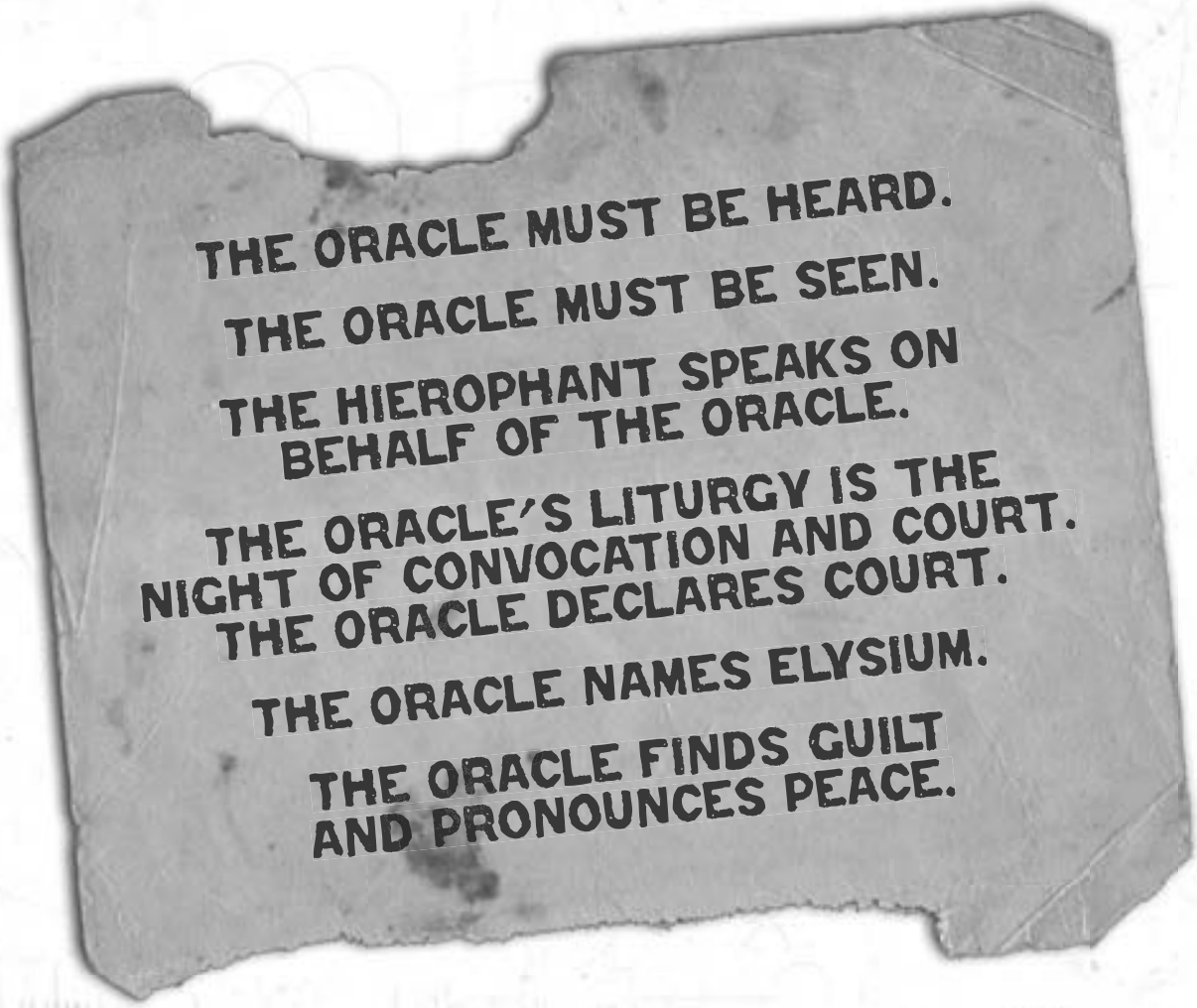
body with scented olive oil. He is the perfect picture of a powerful man made to serve. (For him, assume a few higher stats: Presence, Intimidation, Strength. In fact, these three particular statistics probably form the very basis of his character.)

The Oracle also has a number of sycophants who don't serve her or the Hierophant directly. These cultists worship her much as any fragmented group in any fractured religion: each little group interprets her words through their own filters, poring through her declarations and divinations and using them as their own personal inkblot tests. These cults would bow to her will, would she give it — but, left alone, they interpret her "will" in varying ways, which can put them into competition. It isn't always healthy for the city, but some reason the Oracle has not deigned to stop it.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: Vampires are generally unchanging creatures, but the Oracle is the opposite of that. In many ways, she represents dynamism out of control. Her Virtue and Vice are not set, and these fluctuating priorities tend to apply to the city, as well. There are those with enough distance who suggest that this is healthy for the city, in a strange way: because the vampires don't have the luxury of settling into a changeless, static city, they are kept at a certain level of alertness and tension. Some argue that boredom — and the long lull of the Requiem — is what leads the Kindred to internal and external corruptions ("idle hands," and all that), and with the Oracle in power the chaos keeps them in line.

That said, the theory doesn't always prove true. The younger contingent of vampires enters the Requiem and sees absurdity: a bunch of older undead bowing and scraping to the supposedly divine judgments of what appears to be a batty Prince. Yes, sometimes her divinations hold water. But how many times have her divinations been brought to bear by the will of those who wish them true? The people fulfill the prophecies, then, robbing them of their predictive powers.

Using the Oracle allows you to play a city that experiences some degree of flux from night to night, and also allows you to see what the metropolis is like under the tutelage of both a Circle of the Crone member and what some feel is an *actual* Crone. The city's vampires do not belong to a purely political hierarchy: this is what happens when they become borderline cultic.



The King

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Invictus

Description: The King is solid and wide, squared off and cut. His face is made up of big features — a wide square nose, a fat chiseled mouth, shadowy cheeks and a jaw trimmed by a sculpted, angular beard. In life, he was mistaken for Creole, though in truth he's an American-born child of Puerto Rican parents. Naturally large, the King built himself muscle to avoid being simply fat. He used to bench-press his girlfriends.

Tonight, the King is the gangland leader of an undead empire built on drug money, and he looks the part. Gang tats, gold rings and a wife-beater are his uniform. He holds court in a plush basement crib with polished concrete floors, deep sofas, heavy bags and high, warehouse-style ceilings. In his dress and demeanor, he reflects the philosophy that has made him Prince of the city: excellence above appearance. Be the best and don't worry about the show. Deliver the goods and everything else falls into place. He doesn't need a wardrobe to make him look regal. It's in the way he stands.

He's been on the Earth for less than 50 years. He's been a vampire for fewer than 30. And the city is his not because he was born to it, but because he is bolder and more savvy than those who would keep it from him.

Reputation: You've heard he's the perfect mediator, a peacemaker on par with no other. Of course, you've also heard that everybody chooses peace because the only other choice is to experience his anger, and the stories of his anger are *profound*. He's all calm nods and low tones until something triggers it — at which point, it's over. Rumors of severed hands, of vampires being tossed into a pit with a pack of blood-addicted Rottweilers, of a propane torch pressed into a held-open eyeball. The guy's fucking Solomonic in his judgments. Can't come to a decision? Can't make peace? Fine, he'll carve the baby in half just so everybody gets a share.

Don't think the Kindred haven't tried to take him out. Even some of his own in the Invictus have tried to make him a greasy ashen smear. It never works out, obviously, because the King is still walking tall. One story has him and his cronies trapped in a warehouse, all the exits blocked by vans. Molotovs through the window — and the resulting Red Fear — should've left him as little more than soot. His boys died, but the King? Cut his way out of the place with a chainsaw (where he got a chainsaw, nobody knows), and then went after the car full of ghouls parked nearby. Left his enemies in bloody gobbets, and the Town Car in a pile of gore-soaked scrap. And he walked away with nary a scratch on him, the ultimate survivor.

Background: The King is a self-made man and vampire. Rumors have him Embraced in prison, having been tossed in the cage for auto theft, and those same rumors always have him getting out of prison and away from his sire all on his own. And that's the theme of the King: "all on his own." Nobody handed him any favors, because nobody thought he'd amount to anything more than a thug. What he lacks in learned intelligence, the King makes up in keen intuition and street smarts, and they allowed him to rise the ranks of both the local gangs and his so-called allies within the First Estate. They tried to tame him, sure, put him in a suit, teach him some of their tricks, but he wasn't going to have it. He didn't need their dance, and knew he could make it all on his own. Power isn't about what clothes you're willing to wear. It's about what you're willing to do.

And the King is willing to do anything, long as it doesn't fuck with those who've held loyal to him. He makes bold moves, striking hard against enemies. Even those within his own covenant who've stood in his path either fell in line, or "fell" in front of the midnight train. The King literally pulled himself through the muck, dragging his ass up the ladder with gritted teeth. And now he's Prince, newly so, and he intends to hold on to his rung with hard knuckles.

Storytelling Hints: Speak with potency. What does that mean, exactly? Every word counts. Forget adjectives. Screw adverbs. Short sentences, declarative, brief, lots of meaning packed into as few words as possible. In playing the King, you have the ability to see things from all

sides, and then once all avenues have been considered, you can afford to take the boldest and most unexpected path.

You carry yourself with pride, but not arrogance. You're not averse to talking, but action is what counts most. You don't smile a lot, but when you do, it means something.

Don't bring the King into play easily or lightly. He doesn't just see anyone. While he's all about the personal attention, he also knows that his presence has to mean something — if he shows up at every crisis, nobody will believe he can really lead. Sure, that's how he used to do it, handling everything himself, but now he's got to have the right people, and delegate to them. So, when he *does* show up, it's important. His presence is measured in megatons, and the coterie — when faced with it — should feel the power. Stories will precede him. Legends of his even-handedness come together with tales of his sheer willpower and vengeance made manifest. He's a myth, but a myth that gets up and walks around and might pat you on the back... or beat you into Final Death with your own boot.

Laws and Customs: The elements of gang life have bled into the city, per the King's wishes. For one, it's all about territory and loyalty. You must own turf, and you must respect others' turf above all else. And in the process, you have to be loyal to those who are loyal to you; if a hungry grab for turf leads a vampire to betray an ally, that vampire can kiss any respect or clout he has with the King goodbye.

A vampire's identity is therefore tied to whom he runs with and what domain he calls his own. Tagging one's territory is key; while street life reflects this through graffiti, that's obviously not something that flies downtown or in the corporate center. Other forms of tagging are therefore expected: anything from pink Chinese takeout menus on every car on the block to certain sculptures or pieces of art hung in the ritzier corners of the town.

So, too, should a vampire's dress and appearance reflect his loyalties. The King demands that such symbols be present to keep a certain clarity of association. The Invictus tends to wear heavy rings, while the Lancea Sanctum carry rosaries or wear simple silver crucifixes. It's not just about covenants, either: the Damned of the Mekhet often wear somewhere on their persons something to identify them; so, too, do some coteries (the Fifth Street Baggers wear red shoelaces to distinguish their group).

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: The King runs his city as if it's under the competition of a number of gangs — and, in a way, it is. The only difference here is, he wants it to be as it was in prison: there, the gangs were more likely to work together on the inside than they were on the streets, because it was an "us against them" principle. The gangs against the guards, the gangs against the *system*. That's how the King makes politics work for him here — trying to get everybody, even from different "gangs," on the same page against the system. If that means setting someone up as a common enemy, so be it. Orchestrating and crafting an enemy out of a nobody doesn't take much; in doing so, he unites uncommon forces, keeps tenuous alliances from snapping like too-tight wire.

Far as general hierarchy is concerned, the King maintains a real *La Familia* kind of deal: if you're in with him, you're family. If you're family, he's loyal to you and you're loyal to him, and a breach of that loyalty is

anathema. His "family" includes vampires from all the echelons, and while most of them are Invictus, he's got a handful who come from other covenants, too (which doesn't make the First Estate Damned all too happy, but he's not in this Requiem to please them). At the bottom are the "Pee-Wees," neonates who are given a chance to act as muscle or mules, and at the top are the Lieuts, the enforcers who lord over the thug-life fiefdoms that now comprise the city, thanks to the King. It's a gang, but it's not unlike a corporation: a pyramid of power with him at the top, and everybody scrapping for a spot somewhere in between.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The King makes use of human gangs with some regularity: of course, gang life is forever in flux, and the King refuses to bet on just one horse. Whoever can help will help and will receive his blessing and aid in return. Whoever can't pull their own weight doesn't deserve to sup the sweet rewards and will be kicked swiftly to the curb. By also ensuring that some gangs work together, he keeps a tight control on the streets, which is where the preponderance of his power is already concentrated.

That's not to say he doesn't make use of other Kindred. At present, he has five Lieuts, three of whom are Invictus, who serve beneath him having pledged the uttermost loyalty to the King. Each Lieut (or Lieutenant) is favored for one skill set different from the others; one might be a potent negotiator, while another might be a sheer physical force with which to reckon.

One real fucked-up rumor keeps circulating, though. The story suggests that the King actually has the previous Prince of the city shackled up in a secret room in the King's haven. Some say that the old Prince — now bound by Blood to the King — is his most valued agent, a subverted authority brought down from power and made to heel. Some say that the King still solicits advice from the deposed ruler, which is maybe how the King learned to unite the city's Kindred with such alarming speed.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: The King's Virtue is Fortitude, his Vice is Wrath. This doesn't speak so much to the overriding mood of the city, but it does speak to the King's own nature: he has survived time and time again, and part of his survival is due to his policy of keeping his friends closer and his enemies in body bags.

Using the King in your game is truly about vampires being more than mere men; it's about legends both bloody-handed and bloody-minded. Legends not mythical in an antiquated sense, but in an "urban mythology" style. The King embodies all that a vampire can be when young, forceful, active. Other vampires can be staid, slothful, unchanging — and the King is the dead opposite of that.

KEEP YOUR TURF. EVERY KINDRED GETS HIS GROUND. EVERY KINDRED MUST KEEP HIS GROUND IN ORDER.
MARK YOUR TERRITORY. IF YOU DON'T MARK IT, THE KING WON'T CALL IT AS YOURS.
REPRESENT. SHOW YOUR COLORS.
BEAR THE MARK OF YOUR PEOPLE.
THE KING CAN KILL.
THE KING CAN LET YOU KILL.
LOYALTY IS LAW.
FAMILY ABOVE ALL.

The Master

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Description: He is the classic gentleman mystic. If he stepped off the stage of a spiritualist's stage show at the turn of the century, he could not look more like the storybook magician. With his black suit and 18th-century sideburns, he sometimes comes off to younger Kindred as something like a grandfatherly butler, but that is just a trap he lures them into. The Master is a cunning and merciless monster, a manipulator whose fascination with human and vampire behavior has degenerated into a state bordering on sociopathy. He is an evil-eyed, sinister mastermind scheming behind his pince-nez.

He stares. His human body language is wearing off over centuries of academic seclusion and predatory stalking. The Master behaves like a person trying to fit into a foreign culture, like a person alone at a party full of strangers. He is only pretending to have humanity.

Reputation: This is all one big experiment, his detractors say. You've seen the evidence, maybe having found some of it yourself. It's all little stuff, but it adds up to an odd and, frankly, inexplicable picture. You found a symbol carved at the bottom of the outside of your haven door. Others have found similar. Books, old books, have gone missing from the city's libraries. The Master has declared a number of locations as Elysium, and if you look at them on a map, they form a symbol (just like the one carved into your haven door, you notice, and it looks more than a little like a dragon's head).

Other rumors swirl about what happens when a Master of the Ordo Dracul becomes lord of the city. About how it ties him to the land, its people and its vampires. Some say that it's just part of his own personal transformative plan, a necessary step on the way to overcoming some of vampirism's damning curses. (Or becoming something far stranger than Kindred.) Worse, whispers suggest that while it costs him to do so, it costs all others far more. Are souls truly in the balance? What kind of sick shell game is he playing, anyway?

Background: It really is all one big shell game writ large, an act of prestidigitation (or, as some call it, a "long con") that takes decades to unfold. The Master has been playing everyone against each other for so long, he's just used the wreckage that he slowly causes as a stepping stool to the next rung. And nobody really notices because they're far too attentive of the short game when he sees the long, long run. He's got the chess game figured out before he nudges his first pawn forward. He has long used illusion and distraction to keep everybody focused away from the endgame, when the endgame is all he sees (and he's thrown many allies to the lions over the many nights in support of the far-flung future).

It doesn't hurt that he's been studying the Coils with religious (or perhaps scientific) intensity, and probably knows more about them than anyone within 1,000 miles. He's given himself over to a number of oaths in support of the covenant, and rumor says he's given these oaths well above anything he'd dare to offer the city proper — which means, and this is not particularly surprising, that he's far more invested in the success of his own people than he is the safety or sanctity of the city's other Kindred.

Storytelling Hints: You know how Nikola Tesla was reported to be this weird scientist, eerie to be around and mingling with society as if he only peripherally belonged? Far too genius to be real? Far too genius to be *human*? Well, that's the Master, and that's how to play him. Stand stock-straight. Don't blink. Feign humanity (and poorly). You scrutinize — hell, you *over*-scrutinize — everybody and everything that comes in front of you. Characters who are dealing with you should feel like still-living bugs pinned to a board somewhere, already labeled with a jar of formaldehyde nearby.

Don't confuse the Master with an omniscient being. He's capable of being wrong and being in the dark, but that doesn't stop him from acting (and thinking) as if he knows everything.

Laws and Customs: It's all about sacred places and ley lines, about "mystically protected sites" and "consecrated geometries." Elysium and other guarded sites are

all around the city at strange places — the statue of the horseman in town that sometimes cries black tears, the cigar club that's supposedly haunted by seven murdered boys, the defunct water tower said to leak precious blood from its rusty bolt-holes. They form an odd symbol on the map, a symbol others have seen on or around the Master's person. It means something to the Ordo Dracul, but so far, few know just what it is.

These places are protected, highly so, though it doesn't stop them from being in tight competition with mad-eyed warlocks and mean-as-fuck Lupines. What's weird is how every 10 or so years, this map shifts and changes — not in its entirety, of course, but in bits and pieces. One site drops off the map, replaced by another. Why? What purpose does this serve?

One law worth noting, too, is called Gifts for the Master. It's the law, not a suggested custom, that requires the city's vampires to provide gifts for the Prince once a year. Nobody knows exactly what these gifts are supposed to be, or what they even mean in the grand scheme — he doesn't take them personally, but expects them to be left at certain sites around town on a predetermined night. Does the right gift curry favor? Well, maybe, but just what is the right gift? Why was it that, one year, a vampire who gave a single red apple earn the Master's trust, while another who left a pouch of blood rubies found himself rebuked?

Politics and Elysium: First, Elysium. Elysium is weird, at least for this Prince. The Master is antiquated. Although some Dragons are keenly comfortable with modern ways and technology, this Prince isn't one of them. So why has he declared Elysium to be a number of places representing technological superiority? Why the Science Museum? Why the space around the cell towers? And what about all those mystical sites (noted above under laws and tenets).

Second, politics. The politics of the city are intensely frustrating to most vampires, because the Master has established his own "inner circle" of Ordo guardians and mystics, and it's increasingly difficult to crack that nut. It's as if he's walled himself away from the larger body politic, content to do... well, whatever it is he and his Dragon friends are doing. When one *does* manage to get his attention, it's all just another shell game. He distracts, feints, sets up phantom concerns and steers the problem away from him. By the time you've realized what he's done, he's gone back into his domain with his advisors, and you won't see him for another month or three.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The Master's most trusted servant is the Kogaion, the keeper of the maps, the vigilant guardian of the Master's many strange treasures. The Kogaion is an obsessive little man, more Renfield than Dracula, and the Master often retires into his chambers with the Kogaion for nights at a time. Whatever it is that the Master is up to, the Kogaion knows. He might even be the primary orchestrator of the plan.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: The Master represents the utmost of vampiric manipulations, a creature who is perfectly willing to use time (read: eternity) to win his battles. He's also the symbol of dying, even dead humanity (and Humanity with the capital H is surely on the way out for him, as well). He's rigid. Still as a spider waiting for the fly to come bumbling by. Everything is clinical, an experiment, a trick.

Using him in the city allows you to grab hold of that weird

Victorian pseudoscience that informs a number of Requiems. Think of *The Prestige* or *The Illusionist*, or some old-school Blavatsky-meets-Crowley type of stuff. This is occult science, dead pursuits by spidery men.

He's also a Prince who doesn't care about the vampires. He doesn't even really care about the power it affords him in the night, but only seeks the transformative power it gives him in the very long run. Everybody's a pawn in his game whether they realize it or not.

His Virtue is Prudence, because he refuses to give into the easy gains, the short miles. His Vice is Greed, because all he does is acquire things at the expense of others.

I. The Traditions are mine alone to pardon or excuse.

II. Let the map be your law. Spill no blood at the sacred sites. Do no harm to the sacred sites. Speak nothing about the sacred sites. Do not cross the sacred lines when under the Beast.

III. Let no Other trespass on the sacred sites. Let no other law trump this.

IV. Every lord shall share responsibility for a sacred site. Lords have authority beyond age when protecting a sacred site.

V. Reveal no law to Others. Reveal no site to Others. Make no Other your enemy. Let me name your emissaries and your enemies.

VI. Every Kindred shall dwell within a distance of one mile of a sacred site. That distance shall be your radius. One hour out of 12 must be paid in service to the site in your radius.

VII. Pay me your annual offering at the sacred spot in your radius. This gift must be paid in the 11th month of the year.

The Oddities

These next five Princes represent five ways that the exaggerated beliefs of a vampire overlord can define the themes and moods of your chronicle's city. Beyond that, these Princes directly affect the kind of gameplay you can expect in the cities they rule. What's verboten in one city is essential for survival in another. These monsters represent archetypal **Vampire** conflicts or themes, but they can also deviate from your expectations of the World of Darkness to lend a new tint to a city your players only think they know so well.

• The Chieftain is a monster roaming unchecked through the night. His power appears to come from his fearsomeness, but in fact it comes from his toughness. No Kindred has been able to best the Chieftain's childer and cohorts to challenge this alpha predator himself. He rules through raw, animal might.

• The Cipher represents the secrecy and deceit that so often come with power at the highest ranks of the Danse Macabre. He is a riddle to be solved. Or is his whole image the bait in some sinister scheme? He is a symbol of the fear of the unknown authority.

• The Pawn is the puppet Prince. Everyone knows he's being manipulated by powers behind the throne — but what else does anyone fucking expect? Of *course* the Prince is being manipulated. Of *course* the real powers that be are staying out of the view of the common Kindred. Until these puppet masters or their Pawn do something worthy of a coup, the idea that politicians are corrupt liars is not yet enough to get the average vampire to revolt.

• The Tyrant is the fierce autocrat who keeps the populace in line not just through the lion-like King of the Jungle attitude of the Chieftain but through the law and might of a dictator. She is magnificent and fearless in her control — her followers love her and may everyone else be crushed underneath.

• The Phantom is the pure enigma — a mysterious and haunting ruler that only the strange ways of the Danse Macabre could make possible. For years, he has not been seen. he communicates through written edicts issued in response to the intelligence he gets from spying on the Kindred populace. He represents not the power of raw physical force but the might of subtlety, stealth and guile.

The Chieftain

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Unaligned

Description: Going by looks, the Chief might be mistaken for Alan Moore. He is a wild-eyed, howl-at-the-moon, old-school lunatic surrounded at all times by his pack of childer and grandchilder. He was homeless in his last living days, as he is tonight. He wears what the city provides, what he finds on his kills, and he gets first pick of anything found, for he is the Prince.

His power comes not from his genius or politicking but his raw might, his fanatical followers and a knowledge of the city and its sinners that borders on omniscience. He is everywhere. He rises up from the asphalt and concrete. He sleeps in the waters of the canal or the pillars of the underpass. He rules a wandering court like a Mongol warlord from a roving tent city made of cardboard and rain-flattened rugs. His vassals are his childer and theirs and none others.

Reputation: Let's be clear: everybody knows the Chieftain is a scary beast. The stories about him are wild, almost unbelievable (though those who've met him sometimes suggest that even the wildest tales are too tame and are probably far worse than remembered). Some are relatively mild, suggesting the obvious: he's crazy, a little feral, obsessive about his "kin" and so on. Other stories amp up the weirdness factor a little bit: he wears armor under his coat made from the bones of his enemies, he belongs to some heretofore unheard-of bloodline of wild-men, he's able to gain sustenance from bone marrow as well as blood. Then you have the stories that leave the listener's mouth agape: he can turn into a flock of ravens or a three-headed dog; he met the Crone (as in she from "The Circle of the") and spit in her eye; he is literally part of the earth and knows every person, animal and insect that sets foot in his domain.

Nobody comes away from meeting the Chieftain feeling good. It's all hell and horror with this one, punctuated with grisly laughs and weird tales from 200 years ago.

Background: Here's a recommendation, and it's going to sound like a strange one: assume that the Chieftain doesn't have a background. He's not about the past. He's about the present. Dissecting his history only makes him human, and that's one thing he's not. Assume that his history is choked with blood and punctuated with animal screams — everything beyond that is myth, the stuff of nightmare or the goriest episode of *Wild America* you've ever seen. Hell, maybe he wasn't Embraced, but was somehow born out of blood and mud, or maybe he pulled himself free from a wolf's womb or perhaps the wildest gods in the skies above sent a lightning bolt down to earth that transformed a single beast into the Prince of the city...

Storytelling Hints: You're not a person. You're not even a vampire. You're a tempest given legs and arms and a contorted face. You rage, you sweep in and make sudden declarations, you howl like the wind and dance like dust caught in a sirocco. You're as unforgiving as a force of nature, too, seemingly possessing of very little sympathy or understanding of your fellow vampires.

That is, except when it comes to your childer. Your *kin* are everything. They're part of your pack, as important to you as your own fingers and teeth. They help you eat, they help you hunt, they *are* you and you are them.

When playing the Chieftain, too, remember that he'll use his senses to a creepy extreme. As him, you'll smell the stink of blood on other vampires, can taste one's identity in a lick of dried gore, can tilt your head toward the forest and hear a snap of a twig a half-a-mile away. Your eyes are only one part of the equation.

Laws and Customs: Tooth and claw. That's what it takes to survive under the Chieftain's watch. It's not like that every night, of course — the Chieftain disappears for long enough periods of time, and these periods are marked by a kind of tense peace. But when he's present? When matters need solving? It's about the fierce, snarling competition between animals, about who can manifest the strongest desire to survive, eat and ultimately win. Everything else, every other so-called custom and law, is purely ephemeral. Sure, sometimes the Chieftain invents a self-serving rule, but it's gone by the end of the month

(and those who still adhere to it, thinking it proper, often end up getting left behind).

What this means is *high tension*. Ever have one of those nightmares where you're running, chased by some killer or monster or wolf? Hounded through a dark and wretched wood? That's what spending your Requiem beneath the Chieftain's rule is like. He's just as likely to leave you alone as he is to hunt you down and use your chest cavity as a place to store his ragged deer-leathers. And his childer are free to hunt whomever and whenever. Killing them is a crime punishable by a visit from the Chieftain himself, and so all one can truly do is flee.

One fragile law might keep a vampire surviving to the next night, though: the Chieftain, while not vain, is a hungry beast. If a vampire poised to earn the brunt of his gluttony can offer up better and more interesting prey, he may listen. Such a reprieve is rarely permanent, but it might give a vampire just enough time to secure passage out of this godforsaken city.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: Here's the deal: the city *sort of* has a second Prince. The Chieftain seems uninterested or unable to detail with the nightly matters of lording over a city and its vampire population. He can be gone for long stretches of time: weeks, months, maybe a year. A second Prince maintains authority over such "little details," working for no one covenant but attempting to balance all. So, what makes the Chieftain the "true" Prince? Why doesn't this proxy figure simply snatch control?

Because it has so far proven impossible to do so. If anything happens in his stead, upon his return the Chieftain and his gaggle of kin simply *take* the authority necessary. They're like a storm, rolling in with blasts of lightning and never-ending rolls of thunder, meting out wild godly justice. As it stands, the proxy Prince acts more as a liaison between the vampire populace and the Chieftain's brood. This proxy has suffered for his role (the Kindred tend not to wear their scars, but the Chieftain has forced the proxy to bear his publicly), and stories suggest that he's either addicted to the Chieftain's Vitae or is — secretly — one of the Chieftain's own childer.

His childer form the basis of the Chieftain's own brood, his "wild court" that roves nomadic across the city, holding no territory (or all territory, depending on your perspective). The number of the Chieftain's brood is never what the local Kindred expect; if they think there's only 10 of them, they'll see 12 the next time the Chieftain holds court. The time after that, only five of them will remain present, with the location of the others remaining a mystery. His childer are also the only other ones allowed to have any kind of voice in the Chieftain's decisions. Any other who feels the urge to speak up and try to sway the Chieftain may find his tongue bitten out and spit against the rocks.

Curiously, the Chieftain refuses to name any part of the city Elysium. He hews closely to the laws of the wild, and in wilderness there are no "safe places," and so he won't allow such places of weakness to enfeeble the strength of his city. Certainly the vampires themselves have found some kind of peace in certain places, places that the Chieftain is unlikely to visit (particularly various museums). Still, though, these areas are only unofficially declared Elysium — should the Chieftain decide to sweep in, the violence he brings certainly negates the notion of keeping concord and harmony.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The guy has a secret army, and it's massive. Aside from his childer, the Chieftain also has made ghouls out of anything he decided not to eat — predators, mostly, such as dogs or cats, but he's also thrown several carrion creatures in there, too (crows, buzzards, rats). Rumor has it that somewhere deep in the city park the guy has set up a massive garden full of blood-fed plants, too — roses that gently tilt toward fresh blood, vines of kudzu that rustle and creak as they grow toward anything with a pulse. He also enthralls any mortal who seems to possess some kind of potent survival instinct: survivors of accidents or killers, victims of molestation, murderers enacting revenge upon the world. Those who impress him continually are given the Embrace, something that the Chieftain seems far too willing to do (and some say this could be a road to his downfall for those with the courage to exploit it).

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: As a character, the Chieftain espouses the Virtue of Fortitude and the Vice of Gluttony. He's a survivor, and his survival is largely based on his keen ability to feed himself and his kin. He's a force of nature, a wild animal, and his stats should reflect that.

Narratively speaking, the Chieftain represents the dominance of the Beast. Think about it. The Beast is all about the hunger, the ferine snorts and the drive to cruelty (or as the Chieftain might think of it, "playing with my food"). The Beast works on a vampire's psyche night in, night out. Sometimes the Beast chews in her brain like a rat, other times it leaps at the cages like a predatory cat. Some say that, in the end, the Beast always wins out and gains power, and the Chieftain is the physical and political manifestation of that happening. He *is* the Beast, unfettered by human mores, and he is strong enough to gain and keep control of the city.

As such, he also serves as an object lesson to the Kindred: be careful, or this is what you could become.

Ultimately, the Chieftain is a villainous Prince. He's not malicious, not really. And certainly characters can work with him (though he'll never work with *them* — it's purely a one-way street). But in the end, he's an obstacle to sanity and stability. A safe city is a city where the Chieftain does not exist.

The Cipher

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Unknown

Description: On his face, he is an archetypal vampire Prince: suave, sophisticated, wealthy and dangerous. He wears European suits and says European things. He could play James Bond or Dracula and be a star. And, in a way, that's just what he's doing in the city: playing the spy and the vampire lord.

He says the right things. He smiles fangs and makes you feel important. He has eyes that are cold and blue and hair that is cold and black. He's too good to be true. What's he hiding?

Reputation: It's gone beyond rumor. Everyone says he makes strange choices. Word is he let a coterie get axed by VII back in the '80s. Some say he's in with Belial's Brood, and is planning for some large-scale Masquerade-breaking event.

They say his bodyguards have had their tongues cut out, for security's sake. They say he's used the Blood to ensorcel covenant leaders. The nomads who leave the city are hunted down once they're out of earshot and burned to dust. He's not the Prince of this city, he's the warden and we're all his prisoners.

But if everyone knows he's secretly working with these most wicked monsters, why haven't the Primogen done something about it? Are they in on it? Is he controlling them? Are they all secretly agents of VII, positioning all the pieces in the city for one terrible purge? When is the inevitable night of long knives, and whose end will it bring — the Prince's or ours?

Background: The Cipher is compromised, and he has been since the first night of his Requiem. His sire was part of the conspiracy, and so, too, his grandsire.

But we're not going to tell you in what way this Prince is compromised. Not because we don't have an answer, but because your story might require a *specific* answer from the many possibilities. Is he a part of Belial's Brood? Has his mind been tweaked and programmed so that he's unknowingly a part of VII's mysterious ranks? Does he belong to some clandestine bloodline hell-bent on some mad purpose like awakening an ancient beast slumbering beneath the city or engineering some out-of-control Kindred disease?

Alternately, maybe he's just terribly deranged. The façade of his sanity is just a house of cards — it looks good from a distance, but a stiff wind could knock it down (and one assumes that the players' coterie represents that stiff wind). Maybe he *thinks* he's a part of VII, but in reality, he's just a Prince given over to schizoid delusions, who acts the part of mystery man, but whose only real mystery is just how deep his madness goes.

Storytelling Hints: In bringing the Cipher to the table, keep in mind the potential dual meaning of the term "cipher." One meaning suggests a secret missive, some manner of coded writing. Another meaning, however, is a person who is for all appearances a non-entity, an unimportant figure, a total *tabula rasa*.

See, this Prince *seems* normal. He's a somewhat traditionally suave bloodsucker, a well-dressed, definitely handsome creature of the night. He's almost too stereotypical to be real — and, therein lies the second meaning of the term. He is a code to be unlocked, a configuration of seemingly mundane characters that, when deciphered, becomes something else, something far weirder and much worse.

In playing him, remember that you're all chilly smiles and gestures, a Prince so in love with himself and his confidence that it's hard to believe he has much depth. But then, you should surprise them sometimes. Just when you're feigning ignorance, pretending to just "let them eat cake," you say something or make a move that should give a glimpse of just how smart you are... and just how much you've seen.

And it's those glimpses that should make the Cipher frightening. You're building a mystery, here. Think about odd little things you can have him do to perplex the characters and punctuate a seemingly normal conversation. This shouldn't be played for comical effect, but for creep factor. Did he just literally peel a fingernail off in front of them? And why? Why did he just pin red dahlias to their lapels? Why did he just wink at one of the characters when none of the others could see? Little things you do as the Cipher will amp up the mystery and deepen paranoia.

Laws and Customs: What's most disconcerting for the city's Kindred is that, for the most part, everything *seems*

normal. The Cipher seems to be what could be described as the stereotypical Prince. From night to night, the laws stay the same as they do most other places, and the Masquerade maintains. But the Prince is under intense scrutiny: many watch him for some sign of allegiance with darker forces, or at least some indication of madness. There have been glimpses, brief appearances of the inexplicable: Why did he have an 'X' carved into the skin betwixt thumb and forefinger the night of the last gallery showing? Why did someone overhear him speaking Hebrew into a cell phone? Why do his servile thralls keep disappearing? The reality of the Requiem is that vampires are secretive and strange. But the Cipher is more secretive. He is stranger. For some, this is fearsome. For others, they accept that as long as they're safe and the Masquerade holds strong, what does it matter if he's weird and keeps secrets? "We all do it," they say.

Those worried Kindred have begun to refer to the city as the Panopticon, similar to the Bentham-designed prison architecture that allows the warden to spy on those jailed without the prisoners being made aware of it (and, in this case, without the prisoners even being aware they're imprisoned in the first place). It's deepened the paranoia levels of a number of Kindred — a few have become obsessed with the Cipher and his reign, working at the Gordian knot of this mystery with bloody fingers.

And all the while, the Cipher goes on smiling, playing diplomat, dressing to the nines. The laws are the same, as are the standard customs in place for a Prince and politico. But many know that something's wrong, and they intend to find out just what it is.

Politics and Elysium: Again, "seemingly normal" is the theme here. The Cipher's reign appears to be the most basic feudal monarchy. It's all default. He makes use of the standard roles, continues the traditions, and upholds all the trademark laws. When he's too busy doing... well, anything else, he makes use of a Seneschal and Herald to deal with the concerns of the city.

Questions of the Primogen's allegiances continue to bubble up. Which is, of course, exactly what the Cipher wants. The reality is, only one of the city's five Primogen is in any way compromised. The other four, however, worry so intently about the allegiances of their fellow Primogen members that they fail to unravel the mystery of the Cipher Prince. Should any come close, he simply uses others to stir the suspicions against the vampire who has begun to "peel the onion," and voilá. The paranoia again turns them inward. Even better, because the Primogen fail year after year to do anything about the Prince, the city's Kindred either ignore the problem entirely or now believe that the Primogen are clearly compromised, as well.

The Prince has established Elysium at all the trademark places in an apparent effort to give everybody a taste: university lecture halls, art museums, the stock exchange and so forth. All elements — educational, financial, cultural and artistic — get their place in the sun (so to speak).

It would be wrong to assume that his smiles and appeasement tactics ring hollow. He's a cunning politician, able to doubletalk anyone. He could convince even the wisest elder that the elder himself is somehow part of the problem and not the solution, and then make it seem as if it were never the Prince's suggestion to begin with.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The rumors are true: nomads are burned, the city's populace is under intense clandestine scrutiny and some "big plan" is in the works. How does one man achieve it all? By not being one man, of course.

The Cipher has a handful of servants — ancillae vampires — whom he calls his "Birds." Nobody know who the Birds are, at least nobody still up and walking around. Reportedly, they're either total shadows who have managed to remain unseen and unknown for decades, or they're sleeper agents

under the control of the Cipher Prince, awakened to duty periodically whenever he so requires it.

The Birds do the dirtiest of his work. They "disappear" Kindred. They detain. They spy. They set up elaborate schemes and traps — as convoluted as some political Rube Goldberg machine — so that the Cipher's enemies hurt themselves and their own allies instead of him.

Yet again, the Birds represent a way that the city works against its own best efforts. Vampires who think they've caught the scent of the Birds often end up hunting — many times erroneously — their own allies, thus once again pitting the Kindred against each other instead of against the Cipher Prince.

It also makes individual vampires sometimes worry: *Did he just wink at me because I'm secretly compromised? Is that why he shook my hand and nobody else's?*

Worth noting, too, is the rumor that the Cipher bows to a vampire still older and more powerful than he. (Or maybe a creature that is not a vampire at all.) Some have claimed that they've heard him talking to someone in his chambers close to morning sunrise, and that they've sometimes seen a pool of shadow retreating under the doors of his haven.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: The Cipher is a creature of Faith and Sloth. While one might not expect that a vampire could ever become Prince with Sloth as a Vice, this one certainly did. Think of him as the handsome spider content to sit lazily in the center of a web, a web he probably didn't even manufacture. The Prince lets others do his work for him. He's not particularly active. His Birds are the ones who get their hands dirty, and far as a political model goes, he's accepted the feudal pyramid as his default hierarchy.

But it works for him, and he has quite a bit of faith (hence the Virtue) that it all goes toward a larger purpose (see "Background" for help in deciding just what that larger purpose happens to be).

In the story, this Prince serves as the ultimate mystery. While many World of Darkness and **Vampire** chronicles are about mystery, this one puts the Cipher as the central figure of the enigma. All investigatory purposes go toward unraveling this mystery. And it puts the characters in danger, which throws a great deal of paranoia into the equation, as well.

Also, the Prince represents the fact that not all vampires are easily categorized. Yes, many are "Mekhet of the Lancea Sanctum" or "an unaligned Ventrue," but the reality is, some fail to manifest such easy classification. Many are true mysteries. Many, such as this Prince, are ciphers.

FW: The Rules!

Subject: FW: The Rules!
From: Bird25663
Date: 2:04 AM
To: Walter

Bird01 wrote:

> The First Law:
> The Prince is your judge for all laws.
>
> The Second Law:
> The Traditions shall be the law of the land.
>
> The Fourth Law:
> Elysium is sacred. Violation of Elysium is as heinous as the violation of any Tradition.
>
> The Seventh Law:
> A Kindred's haven is her own. Violation of a haven is the same as violation of Elysium.

The Pawn

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Invictus

Description: Dull brown suit. Horn-rimmed glasses. Dead eyes, like glass. More professor than Prince. He speaks as if he means it, but everyone knows he doesn't. He's a vessel. He's the Pawn Prince. But the players moving the piece are masterful. Underneath the calm surface of the Prince, bloodthirsty monsters coil and battle, clouding the waters with ink and sanguine smoke. The Pawn is the weapon everyone's wrestling over in the dark.

Reputation: You feel at least a little bad for him. He is not his own. His rule is false, at least in the fact that it's not really *his*. The few times you've spoken to him, he seems more human than others, maybe kinder, calmer, more sane than you'd expect him to be. Which is all the more damning, really, because it's all a sham — and if it's not precisely a sham, then you can at least be assured that it's temporary.

Just who or what controls the Pawn Prince? There grows a grotesque garden of rumors, all without substantiation. The most common stories say that he's under the control of some secret cabal of elders, some ancient and long-past-human creatures with mad ideas of what constitutes power. This makes the most sense, and frankly offers at least a little hope: vampires can be destroyed. Or maybe the fog will overtake them and leave them addled or sent into torpor for a couple of centuries. Maybe he's the childe of one of these eldritch creatures, or maybe he was just a hapless fool who accidentally sold his soul to them. But if that's the case, maybe there's a glimmer of optimism in there somewhere.

Problem is, some suspect it's something else, and far worse. Some have claimed that they saw something in the dark of his eyes — like the slow shifting of tentacles or a flash of scaled light like a fish darting into some craggy grotto. And others have noted how he takes a dinghy once-monthly out to the old abandoned lighthouse, and he refuses to take anybody along with him, even his closest advisors. (Weirder still is how, when you follow him, a heavy mist overtakes you and the boat and before you know it, the bow of the vessel is bumping up against the docks you left — and it's three hours later than it should be.)

Background: It's been a life of propitious misfortune, which sounds impossible — but for the Pawn Prince, that's just how it is. He was Embraced into a life of servitude to darker forces, and those forces have moved him quietly and slowly through the various stages of power. He wants to be his own man, a fact with which he struggles nightly. But he's a pawn, always has been, and it certainly looks as if he always will be.

The identity of what controls him is up to you (we wouldn't dare rob you of the pleasure found in creating some ancient and hoary conspiracy of vampires or other eldritch fiends). Whatever it is, it's big, and it wants something. Maybe it wants to eat. Maybe it wants a taste of temporal power. Maybe it wants to put all the proper elements in place so it can come through to this world, using the Pawn as a doorway made of dead flesh and an unbeating heart.

Storytelling Hints: Here's what's interesting about the Pawn Prince: he's ostensibly far more human than he should be at his age and level of power. Why is that? Because he's never really had the chance to make his *own* decisions. The loss of one's Humanity (both as a trait and as a metaphorical thing) necessitates the slippery slope of choosing the loss. It's not necessarily a willing loss, but in choosing to drink someone dry, in choosing to torture an enemy, a character knocks himself further down the spiral. The Pawn Prince has never done that. The choices have generally been made for him, and the Powers That Be cannot have him mucking that up by giving into the instincts of the Beast.

Thus, when you're him, you're going to be able to play him more humanly, which gives him a greater level of sympathy. He's a poor bastard who just wants to be left alone. He's woefully unprepared for this role, and would be happier being off somewhere under a library

lamp reading an old book. But They chose him, and here he is. In the middle of a tug-of-war between powers on the ground and unseen forces. Characters should probably relate to this "rock and a hard place" position, as so many vampires of a younger age and modernity do.

Laws and Etiquette: Two strange laws on the books separate the Pawn's reign from the sovereignty of other Princes: the first is a feeding restriction that states how none shall feed from any mortal belonging to the Wrenwood family. (The Wrenwoods own a great deal of property in the city, and even have a few college wings, libraries and avenues named after them. Their descendents are numerous.) Nobody knows why this is — the Wrenwoods seem to have no vampiric ties at all, and they seem like just a family with quite a lot of old *and* new money.

The second is that no vampires shall go into the Ashbrook Heights neighborhood, a rundown no-nothing neighborhood at the north end of town. It's worthless for feeding, territory, money, any of that. Why does it matter? Nobody knows.

With these two laws though, who will question the Prince? Once in a while, someone speaks up against the Pawn Prince, and he seems compassionate, sympathetic even... but then the vampire inevitably goes missing, or is found burned up on a rooftop somewhere.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: The Pawn is at the center of a shitstorm (hell, he's the eye of a *shit hurricane*). Enough of the older vampires in the city are aware that he's the puppet at the end of somebody's strings. They know he either has tremendous power himself or represents forces that do possess such power. So, they work tirelessly to appease him. Moreover, they work in competition with one another, meaning that the political scenario here involves a great deal of deception and backstabbing, all in an effort to gain his favor over another vampire. Wading into his circle, or getting anywhere close to him, ensures that a character will find herself exposed to game she is perhaps unprepared to play.

Hierarchically, the Primogen serves beneath the Prince, but does far less counseling than appeasing. They hate one another. They toss invective back and forth, they off each other's servants, they misdirect and play one another off the others. The Pawn just has to sit back and watch — and when he makes a declaration (fed to him by the Powers That Be), they listen. It keeps him safe. He's like a toy or a weapon that everybody wants a chance to play with.

Elysium is one of the few declarations in the city that the Pawn was allowed to choose himself. It didn't seem to matter to the forces tugging his strings, and so he made Elysium all the halls of academia he loves so dearly: universities, libraries, bookstores. And few vampires care. Most don't even pay attention, leaving Elysium like a ghost town. It is, however, where one might find the Pawn Prince, taking a much-needed hour or two away from the voices, away from the political firestorm, away from his own helplessness.

Followers, Minions and Agents: Sadly, he has no agents of his own. Oh, he has vampires who pretend to be his agents. A Seneschal who plays at humility, a Herald who is all nods and smiles. But they casually "urge" him one way or the next, and if he resists they're sure to give him the subtlest of signs (a whisper in the ear, a faint shake of the head, a telepathic hiss) to make clear that the Powers That Be have decided that he serve the so-called servants.

(This might be a good place for the characters in a story involving the Pawn Prince. They could easily become his servants, whether publicly or on the down low. In doing so, they enter into a battle against invisible powers, helping the Pawn struggle against an unseen conspiracy. Of course, the characters don't need to know that going in. It's all the better if they're unaware of his Pawn nature going into the game.)

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: A game involving the Pawn Prince is a game examining the nature of power: how one gets it, to whom one becomes

indebted upon getting it, whether it can be earned instead of stolen or given. Moreover, it's a story about slavery. Vampires are slaves. They are slaves to instinct, to vice, to hunger, to other vampires. Some are shackled by power or the lack thereof, and that's what ties these two themes together: the Pawn doesn't want power, but he has it because he's the slave of darker forces. Others want the power he has, or want access to those darker forces (and, in a roundabout way, are willing to offer themselves as slaves to both the notions of power and the unseen forces). It's a sick circle, and it's causing a bit of a feeding frenzy.

The characters serve one of two ends in a game like this: they either end up in the circle, participating in the frenzy, or they attempt to break it. Can they help the Pawn become something more than just a lowly playing piece? Will they destroy him (in effect freeing him and the city)?

Feeding into this theme is the fact that Prince represents (and possesses) the Virtue of Hope and the Vice of Sloth. Hope is what keeps him holding it all together, of not balking in the face of what may very well be eternal servitude. Sloth comes from his unwillingness to make any active strides in breaking his shackles. The characters will have to essentially choose a side: do something, or do nothing?

The Tyrant

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Unaligned

Description: She's a svelte maiden in iron armor. She's the velvet glove and the bloody gauntlet. She's the mistress and the master. To look at her, you might not guess. Her puckish haircut and small frame imply youth and fun. She was like that once, in the 1920s, when the Requiem was new to her. She wears that witty girl on her surface, but the roots of that flower are starved dead — there's nothing left inside but cold, black dirt.

Tonight, her heart has been tempered by hurt. She's had her heart broken, and dead hearts don't heal. If you do as she says, she smiles at you and praises you and takes your hand in hers. If you lie or cheat or trespass on her laws, she cuts and scorches and takes your skin and bone as hers. She can commiserate, but she cannot forgive. She can appreciate your reasons, but she cannot pardon anyone. She is the keeper of monsters, the moral tyrant, and if you cannot keep a leash on yourself, she will have you put down.

Reputation: Her unpredictability is renowned. One of the Harpies tells a story about being in her presence as her advisors rattled on about a fire at the pawnshop on Fifth Street, and who controls Fifth Street, and who *wants* control of Fifth Street and blah blah blah. She didn't even seem like she was listening; just bouncing that pixie cut to some early Madonna tune, pursing her smeary red lips at herself in a broad bronze mirror. And then, just like that, she whirled around. She giggled. She pointed at the advisor who was doing the speaking and said, "I blame you." And then she cut his head off with a pitted broadsword that — a half-second before — was 10 feet away.

Everybody knows that she takes lovers, too. They don't last long. Oh, she doesn't send them to their Final Deaths, no. But they never come back quite… right. They don't speak about it. They seem to have fond memories of their "time together," even though they shudder and cry a little bit of blood when recalling it with fondness claimed but not exactly evidenced. There's a hollow stare in their eyes, as if maybe she hollowed them out just like she herself was hollowed out one day, sometime in the past.

Oh, and she always collects a trophy from her lovers. It's different for every one, so the story goes. A toe here, a tooth there. Sometimes it gets more personal: a cherished picture of a lover's family from when he was alive, an engagement ring with a beloved inscription. Nobody knows what she does with this trophies. Maybe she keeps them in a case. Maybe she throws them in a sewer grate just to watch something beautiful and intimate disappear in a slurry of trash and human waste.

Background: She was once the slave to a Prince. That's how she got her heart broken. She fell in love with the Prince, a handsome man with kind eyes and a sadistic streak as wide and cold as a river. He took her. He bound her.

They went everywhere together. She was at his side, never on a physical leash, but always on an emotional one. It was love, she said, even though it probably wasn't. It was some dead mockery of love, an emotion reconstituted from old feelings and once-living memories, like a shambling limb-stitched zombie made to look alive, made to look human. But her love wasn't human.

And then the day came that he discarded her for another. She was with him for 10 years or more, and then it was like a switch flipped inside of him and he no longer cared for her. He closed all doors. He refused to see her, never giving her closure. She wailed and gnashed her teeth, clutching at her chest as if to sink her fingers into her heart and fling it up at his manor house window.

It took her years to find some kind of sanity, and even then, it wasn't sanity. Like the love she felt it was a hollow thing cobbled together and held in by a girdle of lies, but it was enough to keep her going, to keep her looking sane.

And from there, she orchestrated a slow, decades-long process of revenge. Both the Prince and his new paramour suffered mightily, tortured in isolation. And with them gone (as it happens, sealed up as torpid, desiccated bodies behind a wall down in the sewers), the Tyrant was free to herself become Prince of the city.

She won't admit that she became Prince just to take from him the most precious thing he had — power — but

it's the truth. It wasn't power she wanted, but vengeance. And now that she's had it, the last thing that was maybe a real emotion inside of her has up and died, leaving only a cold blackness, only shadows bleeding.

Storytelling Hints: You know how, in some vampire movies, the creature of the night seems human, cheeks flushed with pink, eyelids batting? And then suddenly, the human veneer drops, and the thing is now a hissing, pale monster, hungry fangs dripping saliva or blood or some other horrid fluid? The Tyrant is like that — metaphorically.

See, she's all about playing at humanity. Except, her idea of humanity is all wrong. She thinks it's about fashion. About music. About being immersed in human culture and being savvy enough to talk about the new Killers album or who won the Golden Globe for Best Hair in a Shitty Movie. Sometimes, she pretends to "feel" something, and she laughs or she cries, but it's all mimicry. Like being around an actress feigning sorrow or levity, everyone in her presence feel ill at ease when she plays pretend in this way. It's all the more discomfiting because *she* seems to believe she's really selling it.

So, have fun with it. But remember that the fun is only going to precede the terror, like a light and airy giggle before a methodical disemboweling.

Laws and Customs: Masques and costume balls and synth concertos: the Tyrant loves her parties. Doesn't matter how well or poorly the city is doing on a given night, she will celebrate, and by the gods, all the vampires will celebrate with her (leaving many using phrases such as "bread and circuses" or "fiddling while Rome burns"). Really, though, every party ends up a monster's parade: the truly gruesome discard their oft-held social propriety and feed noisily on whatever human sustenance is provided while the less gruesome (i.e., most of the city's Kindred) watch and try to hide their Beasts.

From the ground, it's like having a child in charge — a child with a gun and a fickle temper who will glibly put a hole in whomsoever would disagree. And yet, most vampires don't know what to do about it. Certainly the city's holding together. Certainly if you play along and stay out of her way, the Tyrant is all smiles and winks and kissy-noises. Of course, she has 100 little laws (that most suspects she makes up on the spot), a Byzantine tangle of bylaws and clauses that mostly orbit around her always being right and nobody disagreeing with her or displeasing her. Betraying these invented laws is a surefire way to end up hanged by the neck from a lamppost at *just the spot* where the sun shines its light down the canyon of skyscrapers.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: The political situation is this: she is the number one authority, everybody else be damned. Does she have advisors? Yes. Does she sit and listen to the Primogen, or advice from the Sheriff or take into consideration the opinions and positions of Bishops, Hierophants or other covenant heads? Absolutely. Problem is, she's aloof and dangerously capricious. One minute, she seems to be taking the Primogen's counsel with the utmost seriousness, but then it turns out she's just lying or leading them on. They'd move against her, but she always has enough allies who'd rather be on her *good* side than her bad, and the city is home to more than a few powerful sycophants (who value their Requiems). Here's what the Tyrant wants: yes-men. (And really, she prefers men over women, likely a throwback to her need for revenge over the male Prince who scorned her.) She is more likely to take the "advice" of those who basically are parroting her opinion back to her. She nods. She smiles. And it looks to outsiders as if maybe she's taking outside counsel, when in reality she's just listening to vampires who are already her mouthpieces.

What this means is, essentially, there is no hierarchy. Sure, there are positions beneath her. But they squabble for power amongst themselves, and the only real route to that power is gaining the Tyrant's favor.

As far as Elysium is concerned, she's established Elysium in the hippest, more cult-like part of the

city — where all the grimy rock clubs lurk, where the cool bookstores and tattoo parlors linger, where the Tyrant likes to bask in the neon and the smell of exotic fried foods and remember, if only for a moment, what it was like to be truly human.

Followers, Minions and Agents: The Tyrant really only gets along with those who are as hollow and cold as she is. She flocks to cruelty (birds of a feather, and all that), and makes allies of those who exhibit her breed of icy brutality. Therefore, her primary servants are the Harpies, who know that mocking her is just another way of signing their own death warrants. And so they point their fingers and wicked tongues at the enemies of the Tyrant, which gives her great pleasure, or at least a reasonable facsimile of it. Her Harpies (all armed with abnormally high Social stats and somewhat egregious levels of Dominate, Presence and Nightmare) are her social weapons — whips, razors, hand grenades — that she sends out in her stead to social functions. If the Tyrant isn't there, the Harpies will be. Tearing down those who have ever said "boo" to the Prince.

Her other close minions are those commonly referred to as her "Paper Dolls." The name seems a bit inappropriate, because this cadre of vampires are her personal interrogators, torturers, inquisitors. The name, however, comes from the fact that she loves dressing up her torturers, garbing them in the guises of some bygone era of fashion or some future retro couture. These aren't merely black-clad investigators, but an odd coterie of torturers who might one time have pink hair and pinstripe suits, and another time might carry canes and wear white seersucker. Whatever her whims, she applies to this coterie as if they are — hence the name — her own personal paper dollies.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: The Tyrant's Virtue of Charity is perhaps what helps keep her in power. To those who appease her, she can be very charitable. Territory, slaves, precious favors: all rewards to those who give her what she wants. Those who don't, well, find her less than generous (unless one counts generosity by strokes of a whip). In fact, those Damned who displease her often find their own spoils taken away and handed to whomever has satisfied her.

While one might expect that her Vice is Wrath, the fires of revenge have long gone cold, leaving little more than icy coals behind. Envy is what pushes her forward, and truthfully, it always has. When the previous Prince spurned her, the vengeance she sought against him was born out of jealousy, of someone else sitting by his side, of envy created out of lost human possession. This carries through to the city, too — those vampires who should worry the most are those who stir this envy within her. If a vampire seems to be gaining favor, or is the "flavor of the week," that's something the Tyrant cannot abide. She wants to be the center of attention, and those callous enough to steal the limelight from her will end up with an eternity of tortures visited upon them.

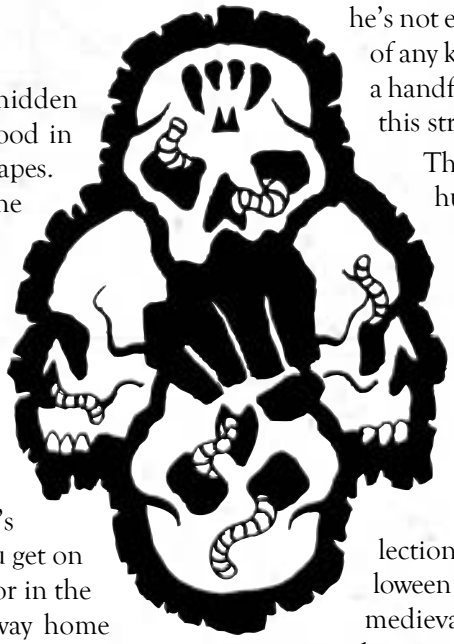
Dramaturgically, the Tyrant represents that kind of "glam" vampire myth, the narcissism and vulnerabilities offered by the vampires in a film such as *The Hunger* (also a book by Whitley Strieber). Vampires play at being humans both because they're attempting to reclaim a memory (similar to wearing an old coat for the smell) and because dressing like a sheep helps the wolf to hunt. The Tyrant is the epitome of a vampire who isn't quite willing to admit she's a monster, even though her cruelty is all she has left of her humanity — thus, in effect, making her wholly monstrous.

The Phantom

Clan: Nosferatu

Covenant: Unaligned

Description: He travels the city hidden by a mystic shroud, sampling the blood in the streets like a vintner testing his grapes. He's crouched out of the rain, near the Dumpsters, listening to everything you say. He's perched on the fire escape, watching you hunt and fuck and kill. He's the shadow walking on the side of the expressway. He's on the other side of the glass, peering in at you; but if you look back, you see right through him.



What does he look like? Tonight, he's the hairless addict bugging you as you get on the bus. Tomorrow, he'll be the doctor in the bloodstained scrubs riding the subway home from the hospital. But underneath it all, he's a bone-white Haunt, hairless and blank. Does he even have a face? You can't remember. No one can.

Reputation: They say the Primogen haven't seen him in years. The court has been running along in his absence, receiving only written instructions that turn up at dead-drop locations throughout the city. He rules through anonymity and observation, moving like a ghost through his city, learning who's being naughty and who's being nice.

Whispers through the city say he's a master of vampiric Disciplines. If you're a Kindred in this city, you've probably had your memory altered by the Phantom Prince at least once. You've certainly come into contact with him and just not known it. He's definitely got something on you.

But you heard someone suggest that the Prince vanished a long time ago — decades, maybe — and has since been replaced by a handful of secret usurpers writing messages in his stead. They might be his childer, or they might be traitors who have murdered the invisible Prince and taken his crown. Maybe there never was *a* Prince. Maybe it's always been this covert coterie of posers, liars and sneaks. Maybe they're listening. Maybe they can hear you thinking about it right now.

Background: The Phantom's entire background will never be known. He remembers little of it himself, and he's not exactly keen on leaving behind evidence of any kind. Characters may learn a few things, a handful of supposed facts that may illuminate this strange Prince and his behaviors.

The first is that he doesn't believe himself human or vampire. He believes himself something more, something greater (or, by some accounts, something lesser). Some evidence exists that he belongs to a particularly rarified Nosferatu bloodline, a lineage that has taken knowledge of Auspex and Obfuscate and honed it to a whisper-sharp edge.

The second thing is that he has a collection of masks. Anything from rubber Halloween masks, porcelain *Noh* masks, red-beaked medieval plague masks — he wears them all, and sometimes incorporates them into his various mysterious guises when he spies. Sometimes such masks accompany his various signs and missives.

The third and final thing known about him is that his sire left town about 110 years ago, having said to an agitated Primogen, "I have sired a monster, and for this I exile myself." He left that night, walking out into the winds of a wicked summer storm, and has not been seen since.

Beyond these facts, the Phantom remains, appropriately enough, a mystery. His background is as insubstantial as evidence of his passing.

Oh, and there's one more rumor going around about him. He's this way because he's no longer a vampire, or at least, not as everyone thinks of them. No, he's reached Golconda, becoming the perfect predator and puppeteer. Truth? Maybe, maybe not. Scary nevertheless.

Storytelling Hints: Here's your chance, as a Storyteller, to have some fun. This is a different Prince, and warrants a different approach. He's not just one character; he's many (whether or not he *technically* is separate characters, or simply assumes the guise of many different characters, is entirely up to you). He really is that weird addict on the subway, twitching and mumbling secret instructions for those smart enough to hear it. He really *is* the big sonofabitch in line behind you at the club or the prostitute with

torn fishnets standing under the neon fish market sign. This is how he's going to communicate with the coterie (and he should at some point communicate with the characters — why use him in a game if you can't bring him to their attention in a creepy and prominent way?).

Though, you can use another way — his weird epistles and instructions. Type them up, or handwrite them, then literally hand them to the players as props for their characters. His messages are likely very curt, clinical, almost like a telegraph ("You are being watched. STOP. Your havens have been compromised. STOP."), and should sufficiently spook the players and their characters.

One thing to be careful with, though, is that this Prince is arguably very perceptive, and that grants him a level of omniscience. This is good to a point; you *want* him to be that way, because that's what's eerie about him. But, if players start trying to outmaneuver and outguess him, remember that he's *not* omnipresent. He tries to be, and at times, he is. But characters should be rewarded for the best efforts of their players. The Phantom is not perfect. It's just that vampires often *assume* that he is, and that is his strength.

Laws and Customs: The city has no set laws. It has laws of the moment, tenets of the Phantom's whim. Whatever he deems necessary on a given night, a note goes out or he visits a vampire personally and ensures that it happens.

How does he ensure this? Why don't the Kindred simply refuse him? Because refusing him always comes with a steep price. The various costs of denying the Phantom read like a laundry list of terrors: a jar filled with a beloved childe's ashes, a mobile made from the jaws of the manor's ghouls, a whole territory suddenly besieged by gangs or locusts or communicable diseases. You deny him, and you pay. And over time, the vampires come to accept that it's easier to heed his notes and do what he asks, because it at least affords them some kind of power in this night. It's only when he tries to mitigate or remove one's power that the rebukes some strong and sharp regardless of cost.

One Primogen was said to resist the Prince over and over again, with ceaseless horrors visited upon the Primogen as if he were the vampiric version of Job. The Primogen never relented, and lost everything, including his mind. In this way, the Phantom still won. Some even say it's what the Phantom wanted all along, and knew what would happen.

One custom worth noting is that it's easier to draw his attention — and his rare favor — by giving him gifts. Leaving out a mask of some kind on your haven door sees the mask gone by night, and a note or word from the Phantom within the week. Of course, that scares most Kindred because it's just a reminder that he knows exactly where they sleep, and he seems to have hands or servants who gladly operate for him in the light of day.

Politics, Hierarchy and Elysium: Politics under the Phantom are simple: the city's reign is largely fragmented. It's broken up into little fiefdoms, similar to gang territory or ethnic neighborhoods. Most of these domains see lordship by the Primogen, who are Primogen by ability, not by any kind of declaration from on high (in other words, the Phantom didn't select them, but they are Primogen by dint of their holding powerful and somewhat large territories). Each domain has its own politics and hierarchies based on whatever drives that particular Primogen — it might be hierarchy along Clan lines, bloodline "family trees" or covenant pecking orders.

Politics in the city tend to be all over the place, with each little "tribe" warring for some kind of supremacy. It balances out in a way, forming a strange ecosystem of Kindred pushing and pulling and trying to constantly shift the equilibrium this way and that. And this seems to be what the Phantom wants. When the Phantom sees some kind of unbalancing effect, he sends out his messages (or meets with a vampire or two using an unexpected face and body) and forces the shift back to what he perceives as some kind of balance. It doesn't always work. Inevitably a vampire tries to buck the system and go against the Phantom, but the Phantom usually gets his way in the end.

The dead heart of the city serves as Elysium for the Phantom. Certainly, each Primogen member maintains his own Elysium characteristic of his individual fiefdom, but the Phantom himself has declared a single portion of town as Elysium. It's the part of town that has gone to rust and rats and spiders — factories looking like buildings bombed in World War II, train trestles that haven't seen a train in 30 years, claustrophobic avenues left to madmen and monsters. It's here that a coterie has the best chance of communicating with the Phantom. Upon entering Elysium, it's best to understand that you don't find him, he finds you.

Followers, Minions and Agents: It seems as if the Phantom hasn't a single soul working for him, and that's part of the mythos. To the Kindred, it's all that more frightening (and, hence, more effective) when they believe one single creature is capable of this. Now, to be fair, it's close to that. The Phantom's agents are not other vampires. They aren't even ghouls for the most part. They're humans. Blood-addicted humans, to be sure, thralls to the last one, but they're just ordinary humans.

The Phantom has a network of addicts so far-reaching its penetration into the various vampiric fiefdoms would send several Primogen on extermination sprees. The Phantom maintains several mortals within each territory, all of whom spy for him, deliver messages, monitor havens and even pretend to *be* him. So, sometimes that homeless guy and his three-legged Jack Russell terrier might be the Phantom, other times it might actually be that very homeless guy (whose identity the Phantom at times "borrows").

How does the Phantom feed all these blood-hungry mortals? Certainly he's only got so much Vitae to go around? Thus enter the Phantom's other "servants" — his childer. The Phantom has sired several progeny over the decades, and he keeps them weak and shackled in the heart of his territory (also Elysium, see above). He farms them for their Vitae, using their blood to widen his network of addicts.

Theme and Mood, Virtue and Vice: Temperance is key to both the Phantom and the city he distantly rules. It's all about moderation, balance, the delicate equilibrium of a metropolis full of undead predators. It's not really a *sane* temperance, mind you, and he keeps it by odd little scissor cuts here and scalpel slices there. But, can the balance of blood predation really *be* sane? The Phantom sees this as a corrupt, awful, shit-mired place, and he feels that he's just acting accordingly in an effort to keep it all from drowning in its own excess.

Of course, that means the Phantom is given over to a kind of megalomania, which feeds into his Vice of Pride. He believes himself a nigh-ubiquitous arbiter with a sense of judgment so keen that no other could truly be trusted to fulfill the role.

When using the Phantom as the Prince in your game, you're going to be creating an overt mood of paranoia and controlled chaos. The city is hacked up into its feudal provinces, which makes it dangerous to leave the area around one's haven (and actually makes it all the more perilous for neonates, as they simply don't have the clout to possess a meaningful hunk of territory). The paranoia comes into play in that there is ever the pervasive sensation of being watched. (And you can play this up to, with both truly and seemingly mundane humans staring at the characters as they pass. Describe how they're being watched from a third-floor window or how all the heads of those bums around the barrel fire turn in unison to watch the coterie as it passes.)

But, there's a subtler theme at work beneath all that, and it's balance. The Phantom has a pretty elaborate plate-spinning act going on, and when it's viewed impersonally and at a distance, characters may come to realize that it's almost an act of genius. A story using the Phantom should reveal what happens when this perhaps unseen and unrealized balance goes awry: Does the Phantom go missing? Does he stop caring? Does someone out him and depose him? The controlled chaos ceases to be under control. That is not an environment in which vampires thrive, because it means Masquerade breaches left and right. And that means judgment will come calling.

NEVER GO BACK TO EDGEVILLE. NEVER.
FORGET ABOUT ANGELINE.
NO MORE GHOULS. TELL EVERYONE.

II: Lundquist

He'd never seen so many fangs, ever. There had to be 15, 20 of them, gathered all around the park, each one surrounded by a small posse of ghouls and groupies. At least, he had to assume they were fangs, from the way they carried themselves and the evident power relationships and all that. Lundquist shuddered. This was distinctly not his scene. He just wanted to be left alone to play his music. But to persist in this city, sometimes you had to pay a toll. And tonight Lundquist was paying off Rasha, in the form of a favor.

He was getting a pat-down from a big black dude in a fringed buckskin vest and snakeskin cowboy hat. This was the drill. First they'd check him out for weapons and wires, then he and Cowboy Man would go back to the van together, and he'd complete the handoff and get the hell out of there. He'd be back at the home studio before four.

"We were expecting Jimmy," said Cowboy, who had not provided any actual name.

Lundquist shrugged, as if to say, don't know, don't want to know.

"When I say expected, of course I use the term poetically," said the Cowboy.

Cowboy gestured toward the van. They walked together. Lundquist had never been to the park before. It was a huge bowl in the earth, surrounded on all sides by thick trees and reaching briars. Fixtures atop brutal concrete towers cast pallid, intermittent light across the patchy grass. There were swing sets and teeter-totters, but they were covered in cobwebs. He and Cowboy passed a wading pool, its concrete cracked and unable to cradle so much as a puddle.

A bald Amazon vamp in full BDSM sashayed past, leading a pair of leashed, pudgy men, who were sweating into their Brooks Brothers suits. She clocked Lundquist shrinking back from her, and flashed a wide mouth of sharky teeth. "B versus D!" she cried, pumping her fist, pulling the leashes tight on the men's throats. "B versus D!"

Cowboy paid her no heed. "Your boy Jimmy, he still residing at the corner of Fuck-Up and Crazy?"

"Barely know the man," Lundquist mumbled. They were nearing the van.

"Just the messenger boy, huh? I know how that is, yo."

They reached the van. Cowboy kept a coolly wary eye on Lundquist as he opened its back door.

"Your instinct is correct, to steer clear of that Jimmy," Cowboy said. "I saw that boy grab the Dowager's ass, once. The Dowager! Boy thought he was having himself a joke. Saw him take on three Gangrel at once, on the dance floor at Smashclub, just because one of them called him a tool."

Lundquist reached for the item and held it for Cowboy to take from him. It was a beige dog carrier with a hard vinyl top, big enough for an overfed beagle. A hiss emerged from it.

Cowboy held up open palms. "No, no, my man. Deal is, you carry, I escort."

Lundquist fought the urge to shove it into his arms and flee. He would stay cool, look small and ride this out. As long as he could get out of this without learning what the item was, exactly, he'd be fine.

They walked together down the park's sloping, mossy greenery. Lundquist nodded with feigned interest as Cowboy regaled him with further stories of this Jimmy character and his loose cannon reputation. Lundquist did his best to forget each name, each set of details, as soon as it left Cowboy's lips. On the periphery of the park, he spotted several squad cars, clearly guarding the gathering from unwanted human intrusion – and vice versa.

Ahead, dogs snarled and yapped.

At the park's lowest point was an old bocce court. Scuttling functionaries in sweats and jeans unrolled a bright blue tarp, laying it across the court's graveled lanes.

Cages at one end of the court contained a pair of pit bulls. They pressed themselves angrily against the wire squares of their cages, whining for a vicious moment of freedom.

Cowboy took Lundquist to another obvious vamp, a withered walking stick of a man sporting reddish muttonchops. He wore a plaid shirt, jeans and work boots.

"You're not Jimmy," he observed.

"Jimmy flaked," said Cowboy.

"Tell me a surprise, Lloyd," replied the other man. He reached for the item. "Shall we inspect it?"

Lundquist eased off.

Cowboy moved to block. "Uh-uh," he grunted. "Nobody leaves B versus D till a winner is declared."

The withered man opened the front door of the dog carrier and reached boldly in, as if attempting to safely grab a venomous snake. The creature inside thrashed, shaking the dog carrier away. The withered man had it by the back of the neck.

It was an infant, some weeks old. Its eyes flashed red. Pinprick fangs jutted from its otherwise toothless gums.

The baby had been Embraced.

The assembled Kindred pressed tight, jostling one another for a good look at the baby. The bald woman tried to grab a pinch of his arm muscle, to appraise its fiber. Cowboy glared at her till she withdrew. Wallets opened. Money clips were brandished. Wagers made.

Lundquist recoiled. He felt a wave of acute dissociation wash over him. If he were still living, he'd be nauseous, but now he was incapable of it.

He knew what blood sport this was. B versus D. Baby versus Dog.

They opened one of the cages. Set the baby down on the blue tarp.

Lundquist couldn't run. Cowboy was all over him.

But he didn't have to watch. Lundquist clamped his eyes shut.

A wave of guttural cheers rang out.

Lundquist heard the telltale gush of squirting blood, something wet slapping on a plastic tarp and the wet squish of rent flesh.

To exist in this city, sometimes you had to pay a toll.

Chapter Two: The City That Works

Christ. In a place like this, you gotta wonder sometimes. I mean you and I, we just push through the mass of stinking meat, plucking out the next fat animal for dinner while the rest roll on around us, fucking and eating and shitting and chattering away, never a clue we were even there. We just step up and pull 'em right out of their crummy apartments like sausages from a barrel. A hundred years of this, I done so far, almost a hundred and ten. Christ. They're packin' in tighter and tighter, and things are getting easier and easier for us. But you gotta stop and think. Why? What for?

– Terrence,

Ancilla of the Carthian Movement

"Summer is . . . a nightly promise of yet another pool of blood on the dirty linoleum in yet another Federal Street carryout. Summer is a barroom cutting up on Druid Hill, a ten-minute gun battle in the Terrace, a daylong domestic dispute that ends with the husband and wife both fighting the cops."
— David Simon, *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*

Most players have to manage the actions of a single character. They worry just about her feelings, her motives, her traits. The Storyteller has to play the role of an entire city and the people within it.

This part of the book focuses on play mechanisms to make that job easier. These are not mandatory systems. They are tools. Use them for the jobs for which they're best suited and in the ways with which you're comfortable. For some jobs you want an electric screwdriver. For other jobs you just want a damn screwdriver.

The Hot Pursuit system (beginning on p. 163) is good for set-piece chases, in which the environment of the pursuit is as important as getting caught or getting away — but it doesn't replace the basic Foot Chase action on pp. 65-67 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The City of Millions creates random combinations of character traits to inspire countless neighbors, bystanders, passersby, and supporting characters, but it's not a substitute for carefully crafted Storyteller characters that speak to the chronicle's themes — use this to save time and your creative energy, and ditch the random aspect if you like and put together characters á la carte.

• **How Cities Work** contemplates the physical makeup of the modern city by looking at a single slice of it that's cut out from sky to sand and considers how the moving parts impact the Requiem.

• **City of Millions** provides a simple but robust method for populating your city with vivid and motivated background characters, any of which might be ready to grow into something more meaningful to your chronicle.

Not Just Vampire

Though these mechanisms were designed with **Vampire** in mind, most of them are simple fits for any World of Darkness game. Werewolves chase through crowds of mortal bystanders, sometimes colliding with them hard enough to shake a Storyteller character out of the background, in pursuit of spirit-ridden killers. Mages keep an eye out for Sleepers on the street who can channel the smothering chill of the Abyss through their own skepticism — and is that guy across the street open-minded or crazy enough not to freak out when the spell is cast? The rebuilt freaks called Prometheans must be aware of who is around, and how they might react to the chaotic influence of Disquiet. Changelings sometimes need a crowd to vanish into when running away from hunters from Arcadia.

• **Attitude and Ambience** presents an optional game mechanism that gives the Damned direct influence over the attitudes and atmosphere of their corner of the city. With this mechanic in play, the Kindred become an insidious force in the neighborhoods they haunt by turning the hearts and minds of local kine to sin or submission with guile and blood.

• **Hot Pursuit** gives you a model mechanism for playing desperate, harrowing chases through detailed and textured urban environments and taught by example with a ready-to-play pursuit.

High and Low and Always Dark

How Cities Work in the World of Darkness

Somewhere in the city, it's always dark. In the windowless bathroom of a grandiose penthouse, in the water-damaged sub-basement that smells like piss, behind the secret door of a high-tech panic room, or under the rusty husk of a dead train car it's always dark somewhere.

They come for the dark places and the plentiful prey. They settle in the cracks of the city and pick off society's stragglers. The homeless, the wasted, the forgotten, the ignored, the vulnerable, and the ones who look over their shoulders when they walk alone in the stretches without lamplight go first.

The shining black glass and the rain-streaked stones, the roof-top gardens where the wind snaps like a whip, the crawlspace under the burned-out tenement where the crack-heads lay piled up like dirty laundry, the electric blue and lipstick-red flickering neon of reflected on wet sidewalks, and the orange streetlamps blotted out by overgrown trees — the cities of the World of Darkness are a decaying wilderness that the living shares with the undead.

What the most successful, most dangerous, and most savvy among the bloodsuckers say is: The best way to stay ahead of the prey, ahead of the hunters, ahead of the turncoats, and ahead of the sun is to know the city better than any of them.

What You're Doing Here

A city is more than a skyline. Behind the façades of the skyscrapers, under the sidewalks littered with wet newspapers, and above the square lights of office windows people are moving, fighting, fucking, dying.

Generations of labor and machinery underlie everything that's put into place by people whose names and faces you'll never know. Unseen utilities give out the light that reveals the thief and the vampire, deliver the water that washes your wounds, and give off the heat that carries the stink of your sweat to the nose of stalking monsters. The city, the public city where the living grind out their lives, we walk through is the space in between private places and secret places and forgotten places where so much drama waits to be tapped like a pocket of explosive gas.

This is a contemplation of all that the goes on above and below the sidewalks, and how it's all connected.

A Terrible Bias

People are scum. The ones who live in the glass great halls at the top of the towers are rich, corrupt, and out of touch and are more concerned with money than decency. The ones who live on the street in roach infested apartments and decrepit rowhouses are nasty, brutish, and hardened by pain and want, or rather are more concerned with a quick fix than with decency. The ones who live in between and in the water-damaged apartments with the screaming neighbors are victims.

We have not chosen a happy patch of city to cut out and examine here. This is the World of Darkness, the realm of fearful symbolism.

Layers Upon Layers

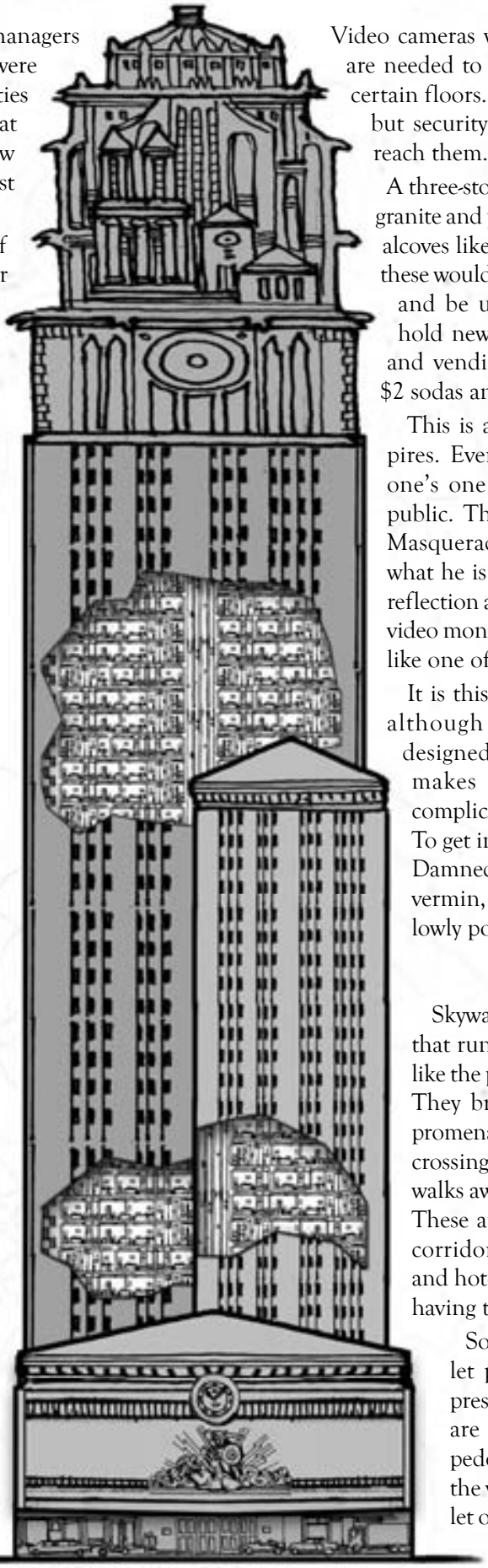
Cities build up over time. When people rebuild, renovate, and expand, they seldom sweep away what's old to make way for what's new. More often, the new stuff gets set up right in the ruins of the old.

Remember that most buildings are put up privately by citizens and contractors. Urban planning is done at a remove and not only of distance and social connections but also of time. People put up towers that block the windows of neighbors and sink a block of apartments into shadow for ten hours of the day. Builders digging foundations come upon gas lines laid down decades before by strangers. They find bones from another century because the people who might remember that there used to be a cemetery there don't know the people who are building the building.

In New York, landscapers recently found one of the old city walls from the days when Manhatten was protected by stone fortifications and cannons. In Chicago, contractors drove a steel pylon through the roof of the old coal tunnels, leaking the Chicago River through those bankrupt passages into the basements of prestigious

downtown office buildings whose managers didn't even know that the tunnels were there. Transit authorities in half the cities of the world built subways stations that turn out to be badly placed just a few years later or become obsolete and just leave them there.

Then the people who knew this stuff die and nobody reads the notes or schematics they leave behind — or nobody knows where to find them — and all this man-made stuff becomes wilderness to be rediscovered.



70 Stories Up

The tower stretches up away from you and the sidewalk through the rain into the hovering fog, where it becomes nothing more than weird orbs of orange light and a pair of blinking red lights in the haze.

Skyscrapers define a city. The skyline is part of its identity. A city without at least one high-rise tower to pin it down in the popular consciousness hardly exists.

The tower is a town of its own with shops and housing, utilities and government, peasants and overlords. At the highest levels, the outside city can be given the comfortable disguise of mere scenery, but no tower is city-proof. The outside seeps in.

On the Ground

The ground floors (a clear misnomer) of the tower are those places that pedestrians can access: the lobbies, the elevators, the cafes, the convenience store, the hair salon, the pay phones, the bank branch offices. This is where the outside city leaks in like water through the foundation, and with it comes common people and plebian brand names. Uniformed security and receptionists with wireless headsets make sure these people keep their place.

Video cameras watch everything. Keycards are needed to make the elevators stop at certain floors. The bathrooms are public, but security doesn't let the unwashed reach them.

A three-story atrium of dark, polished granite and potted plants is pocked with alcoves like orderly caves. In a church, these would have stained-glass windows and be used for prayer. Here they hold newsstands, cell-phone kiosks, and vending machines stocked with $2 sodas and iPods.

This is a dangerous place for vampires. Everything is polished, everyone's one camera, and everything's public. The unnatural effects of the Masquerade reveal the monster for what he is to anyone who notices his reflection and whoever is watching the video monitors. A vampire doesn't feel like one of the living here.

It is this kind of public space that, although cold and calculated, is designed to corral the living that makes access to mortal society complicated. These are the hurdles. To get into one of these towers, the Damned must enter like a thief, like vermin, through unseen cracks and lowly portals.

Skyways

Skyways are quiet, glassy passages that run from building to building like the plastic tunnels for hamsters. They bridge the inside worlds of promenades and multi-story lobbies, crossing streets above the dirty sidewalks away from the rain and wind. These are the socially quarantined corridors that let conventioneers and hotel guests visit a city without having to set foot in it.

Some cities have skyways to let pedestrians get out of oppressive weather. Other skyways are designed to cut down on pedestrian traffic by segregating the villagers of the towers. Most let out near food court like "res-

taurants" or hair salons and boutiques, so that shopping and food will draw their money across the bridge.

In the World of Darkness, skyways are moody interstitial environments hovering in the space between buildings and above the streets. They're great symbolic settings for illicit meetings or hand-offs. They can be suspenseful straight-aways in foot chases, where the pursuer chooses between sprinting ahead or firing a shot to bring the runner down.

Access to skyways is usually open to the public at all hours. Moving through them at night is like walking through a museum exhibit of What Life Was Like During the Day. The lights are off, the doors are locked, and the steel gates are down. The only sound is footfalls and the drone of refrigerated coolers in the convenience store.

From up here, the predator can look down on the fields. He can watch the living mill about through the eerie silence of weatherproof glass and steel. He can pick out his prey.

The Labyrinth

Above the public spaces of the ground floors are the lowest reaches of the exclusive spaces the lobby is meant to protect. It's a repeating maze of surreally identical corridors and glass doors leading to offices with uninformative labels. They have names like Glass Industries, Voss & Yelk, Silver Fox Limited, and Telegrant, but none of them reveal what their business is. The lobby is the guarded gatehouse, the keep at the city gate, and this is the confusing tangle of streets designed to confound invaders.

This is not a place where the living feel alive. It's a cold, white, carpeted netherworld where the grime and noise of the city are kept at bay by a corporate quarantine.

Dramatically, it's about soulless anonymity, cold manipulation, and fearsome uncertainty. Fluorescent lights and uninspired suits make the office workers look like identical corpses who climbed out of their open caskets. Conversation is minimal; the clattering of keyboards and the ringing phones are louder.

A place like this makes the Damned feel powerful. They've escaped this Sisyphean monotony for an existence of profound passion and a supernatural rush. The poor mortals in these sandwiched floors are practically undead, too.

Once on these floors, surveillance is minimal. A vampire can mystically coerce the weak living who are staying late to fatten their commissions and stalk unseen through offices and the cattle pens of cubicles while siphoning off information and gathering fuel for blackmail. Up here, the Damned are parasites of a different sort.

Where the Glass Ceiling Meets the Sky

This is the reachable bottom rung of luxury where the bourgeois and the pretenders can sit at the feet of wealth, stare up and imagine what it's like to be better, or at least forget what it's like to be miserable.

These floors are accessible from a special elevator in the lobby. Instead of numbers, its buttons bear the names of expensive restaurants and swank lounges.

Up here, the service is good, the portions are small, and the ingredients are top shelf. This is where the offices downstairs take important clients for business dinners and where the offices upstairs pop down for casual lunches. The pictures on the wall show the same city outside the windows and there are postcards for sale by the host's station. This is also where tourists come to indulge and locals come when vacationing in their own city.

The bars and lounges up here range from classy but bland affairs with ferns and live piano players to stylish Euro-lounges with severe furniture, loud music, and foreign liquors. Clusters of people sit and smoke and drink. In the old people's bars, the evening gets quieter as it goes on, welcoming intimate conversations, drunken confessions, and heartfelt reminiscence. In the more posh lounges, people lean over too low tables and shout over lounge groove beat while chasing conversations from politics to philosophy to footwear to how drunk they got this one time in Prague.

For the Kindred, this is a place for seduction and subtlety and where the living can be coerced and charmed. Up here, Majesty and Dominate pair with drinks and drugs to create bonds more genuine than Disciplines alone can manage and more insidious than carousing can allow. Candid talks reveal precious information for leveraging other vampires in the Danse Macabre. Impulsive sex in a bathroom stall turns into bloodsucking without the prey feeling or thinking beyond the Kiss.

Puking in a Stainless-Steel Toilet

But of course it's not all comfort and glamour up here. Posers and wannabe debauchees come up to the high-rise bars to look and feel classy or important. They drink like careless heiresses, talk loudly about shit they don't understand, and end up clutching the bowl of a stainless steel toilet in a public bathroom.

For these carousers, this is the top. The golden floors and lofty penthouses above are glorious perches for filthy

rich gods that are as legendary, inaccessible, and unreal as Olympus. The earthly bars of this middle level are where the mortals come to carouse beyond their means and in sight of the gods.

The posh settings and lush accoutrements of these lounges provide valuable bonuses to Carousing actions (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 85-86) on their own. Just the city view, sexy bartenders, and the bankroll necessary to keep up with this crowd can provide up to a +3 bonus when Carousing. But it can all be overwhelming too when luring visitors to drink and revel more than they can handle can possibly impose penalties as severe as –3. For the groundlings, it's often better to stay on their own turf.

A Cold Spine with Cracking Veins

Elevators crawl up and down the long steel spine of the building. Electrical cables, water, fiber optics, and air taste like metal run up from the building's subterranean heart and sprawl out into its body like pumping, climate-controlled veins. Get inside this long, deep pit and you have a building by the throat.

At the bottom, the building's core is littered with Styrofoam cups and cigarette butts. Oil and grease from 70 floors of elevator mechanisms drops down like black spit. The entrance is a steel fire door. The room is a cinderblock dungeon rattling and buzzing from fans, generators, surge protectors, gears, and cables. It is a long, impossible climb to the top — for the living.

At the top, the core is a precarious network of metal rungs, textured steel precipices, exhaust fans, breaker boxes, and vents. There is no real floor up here, just a concrete lip and branching I-beams leading from maintenance hatch to maintenance hatch and from panel to panel. The chamber is a cramped nest of architectural rigging. It is a long, lethal fall to the bottom. Even the undead body of a vampire is unlikely to survive the dozens of tiny collisions that lead up to the bone-splintering impact that smashes blood and flesh out through tears in his skin. A 70-story fall can turn a skull to dust and liquefy a heart.

The Gilded Labyrinth

As below, so is above. Above the posh restaurants and rented ballrooms are two dozen more layers of bewildering corridors and dead ends. But here the carpets are deeper, the floors are shinier and blacker, the potted plants are more rare, the offices are bigger, and the locks are stronger.

This is where the condos begin. This is the hill at the heart of the medieval town where the burghers and vassals reside.

The customers at the restaurant and lounge downstairs can reach those floors and glide there for a time, but they cannot maintain the lift necessary to fly this high. This is where the richer and more beautiful people pretend to take the finer things in life for granted. But at night, when they're alone with their mortgages and association fees, they feel soft and fleshy and vulnerable and they fear that they will lose it all. The thick concrete walls and sealed windows make the place so quiet that all they can hear is the refrigerator making ice and their percolating fear. The view out the tinted floor-to-ceiling windows reveals that the city is lit with unbearable beauty by an almost incomprehensible vastness of humanity, and that it is a long, lonely, unstoppable trip down to street level.

Private Heights

The top floors of the tower make up the castle on the hill of the medieval town. Up here are the penthouses and precarious castles where the distant rich retreat from the earthly world. From inside these unique penthouses, it's easy to believe you live in a Brownstone or villa floating in the sky over the city. Outside the French doors are a patio, garden, and grassy yard. Past the hedges is the stretching glittering grid of the city below.

The lowest of these extreme retreats are accessed by elevators and keycards and the doors opening into locked private foyers. Above these homes are the fortified keeps with private elevators and hired staff. These are multi-story estates with the whole city as their grounds.

A few private clubs and cigar rooms are tucked into the spaces between the villas here. These are the heights of casual opulence. The paneling is imported Irish wood, the furniture is from Spain, the food is from France, the wine is Italian, and much of it is appreciated, but none of it is rare to the types who dwell up here.

These are not places for carousing. These are places for withdrawn scheming, conspiratorial agendas, trysts with imported courtesans, and oaths of fealty. Overindulgence is taken back to one's penthouse, and the prostitutes are slipped out discreetly in the morning in taxis or ambulances waiting in the tower's private garage.

For the Kindred, these heights are the pinnacle of achievement and strategic positioning. Up here, in quiet seclusion, the Damned can make partners or slaves of the most powerful figures in the city. They can stage a coup, usurp the castle, and convince the aristocrat that it's his idea.

Havens at this height are among the most difficult to reach. The eccentric security measures that prestigious

vampires need to protect themselves don't seem so outlandish in these places. So far from the streets and common populace, screams can go unheard in the midst of millions of ears.

Gardens, Helicopters and Machinery

Above it all are private gardens and greenhouses, aviaries, and patios tucked weirdly between utility sheds, exhaust vents, antennae, and machine boxes. Catwalks and overlooks cling to the architecture and dangle over the sides of the building. Massive lamps cast white light up the stone façade of the crowning castle and push long shadows across the faces of rooftop gargoyles.

Here, at the true pinnacle of the tower, the core of the building juts out like a spear and spills machinery amidst the luxury and finery of the rooftop. All of the opulence and all of the labor necessary to keep all of this going converge where it is easiest to appreciate how precarious it all is. The statues and grills and furniture of these rooftop retreats could so easily be sent down to earth, where they seem more logical, and any rooftop visitor could easily follow.

How remarkable and how astonishing is it to the old dead that mankind can manage such a colossal thing? How grand is it what money and ingenuity over time can make real in the world? How frightening must it be for the Damned to compare the mystical powers of the Blood, for which they have given up their souls with the ability of the living to shape the world with days' work?

70 Stories Down

The city you see is the skin and the clothes and the attitude. Its blood and its organs are underground.

Hundreds of feet of city guts sit in the dirt beneath the sidewalks. Imagine a ten-story building the width of the whole city laying hidden beneath you. In some cities, deep-system drainage and overflow tunnels are being dug out more than 70 stories below the asphalt. That's about as far down as the Chrysler Building is tall.

The surface world trickles down into these subterranean places. It comes down in the form of houseless refugees (called Mole People in New York), trash, rainwater, flushed toilets, and monsters fleeing the deadly light of the sun.

For the Damned, the city beneath the city is an obvious destination — if there are people down there. Security from the sun and accidental discovery is all some vampires need to feel nested, but they must still come out of their caves to hunt. Other vampires need constant contact with the living so they can maintain their grip on Humanity and their kinship with the Man. For these monsters, the underground city is a basement of gross food or a perilous maze braved only for the sake of the Danse Macabre... or the soul.

Heat and Power

Between the sidewalks and the subways are bundles of pipes, cords, cables, wires, and conduits. Nobody knows where they all are. Nobody knows where they all came from. Some of them are more than a century old and still carrying natural gas, water, or steam like blood through decaying veins.

These are the lines running through the dirt and clay beneath the asphalt; the stuff revealed when municipal crews dig up the water main or private technicians put in fiber optic cable. With a heavy modern city operating nonstop above, obsolete and rotten pipes go unreplaced until something goes wrong. Abandoned conduits and piping crisscross the city grid and poke up inside the basements and walls of buildings across town. Once discovered, these rotting lines can carry minion rats or the mist body of a powerful vampire as far as they go.

Access

Outside of pumping stations or municipal junction rooms, there are really two ways to access this level of the underground infrastructure: Dig or get lucky. Pounding open walls may reveal service lines running out a building, revealing where they run underneath a yard or street. Breaking into a maintenance and utility shed under the sidewalk — possibly by ripping wide grates out of the sidewalk with a burst of Vigor — is a roll of the dice. Maybe the right pipes run through that particular sub-basement, or maybe they don't.

Understanding how the city's pipes, conduits, and wires work is a full-time job for specialists. Knowing where they all run is impossible. City engineering is a difficult skill to master.

For one of the Kindred, finding and using a city engineer is easier and more satisfying than developing expertise (and lots of dots in Crafts). Other vampires seek out (with Politics, Stealth, or Subterfuge) the municipal documentation kept by the city in the hopes of extending its institutional memory and make do with what they can gleam from that.

Knowledge of public works or vulnerable city engineers is valuable information among the Damned. A vampire can earn his keep with such commodities, selling his services (or the services of his pet engineer) to other

Kindred with schemes to hatch but revealing or abusing this kind of information risks losing it. Eventually some Haunt shadows you to your contacts and steals your exclusivity.

The City That Was

Intermixed with the shallow layer of utilities and the deeper layer of sub-basements, subways, sewers, and pumping stations are pockets of an older world. The cellars of buildings that no longer exist lay next to parking garages and modern basements. Steam tunnels and coal-delivery tracks may run through old trolley-car tunnels, crypts, or cellars.

When municipal workers are affixing pipe, they don't have much time to stop and look around. Whatever time they take goes to curiosity, not exploration; either way, they're not archaeologists. Sharing information about these places with the public just encourages teenagers to go down there, deface everything or get killed. In many cases, these workers are private hires on the part of contractors working for City Hall, and the utility company wants to avoid shut-downs by historical societies or lawsuits for old estates, so they keep their mouths shut about what they find down there.

What used to be ground level is many feet below today's sidewalks and avenues. Abandoned lots get filled in, roads get repaved, and concrete patios get put down on top of whatever was there before. The ground floors of old buildings may still wait beyond those boards and behind those bricks or under a short layer of dirt.

For the Kindred, these are prized havens — secret, sunless, and full of character. For **Vampire** Storytellers, these underground ruins are wonderfully evocative tools. Half of an old church with dirt and rebar falling through broken stained-glass windows is a fantastic setting for a Sanctified chapel. The rediscovered factory floor of a steel plant trapped underneath a new parking garage makes for a nice Marxist-style Carthian rally. Where better to find an elder's haven than in a building as old as she and buried like a corpse?

The Underground

The bulk of the world beneath the city falls into the category of the Underground. This is where the subway tunnels, sometimes in two or more layers beneath the highest stations, run. This is where, lower still, the main sewer lines carry city waste away. This is where pumping stations send gas, steam, water, and electricity up to the surface world. This is where huge generators rumble behind chain link fences in low concrete caverns. This is where forgotten trains lay on their sides in old service docks. This is where ore cars still filthy with coal dust are piled up in front of looming steel doors and welded shut.

Some places in the underground are as bright as day and alive with human activity. Subways stations bustle. People pass through the under city without fear or awe.

Other places are workspaces for city workers like workshops or basements. Subway tunnels and underground loading docks are often well monitored and well trafficked.

But most of the underground spaces are unlit and bare. If they had ever been anything more than concrete pillars, cinderblock walls, stagnant pools, and ladders to nowhere, they could be called ruins. But this is what these places have always been.

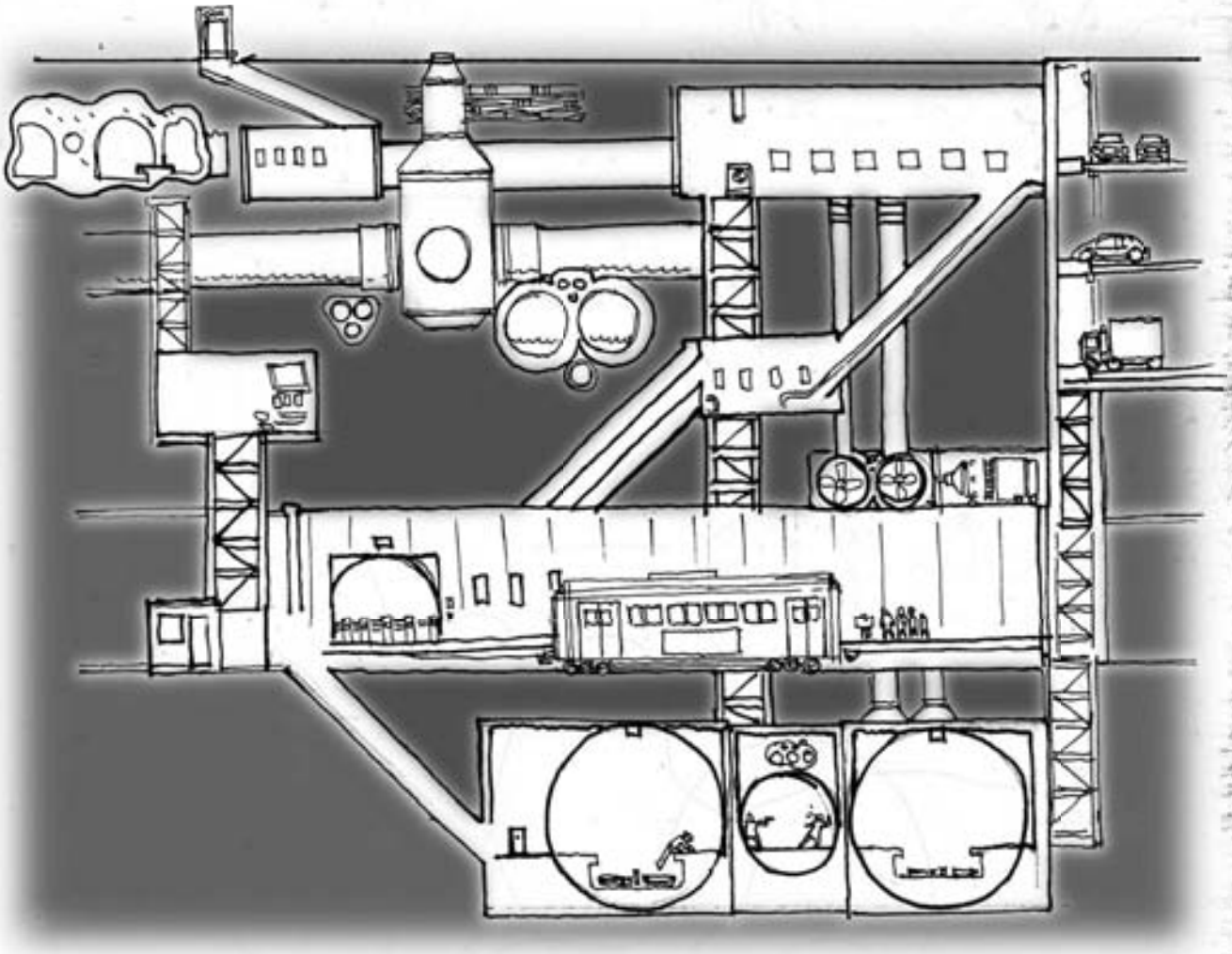
The number one thing that keeps people out of the scariest underground places is nerve. Access is not only easy for those motivated, but the trail has already been blazed. The chain link fence is already cut and rolled back near the ground. A sleeping bag lies across barbed wire like a path. The padlock has already been cut.

Graffiti is everywhere and been put up by tribal "mole people" and territorial vampires (and worse). Camps of blue tarp tents and sleeping bags are gathered around fire pits; space heaters and a coffee maker run off an extension cord fed through a hole in the ceiling. A parking lot of shopping carts sprawls nearby. Dogs wander free, some of them domesticated, but they belong to no one. Birds, trapped down here maybe for the rest of their lives, flutter between I-beams and alcoves in the concrete.

Some of the tunnels are narrow and short with smooth angled floors for drainage. Some are wide enough to accommodate four or six rail lines carrying freight underneath the city. Rooms with hinges but no doors sit at the bottom of stairwells leading up to blank walls. Construction equipment sits forgotten and without fuel in a concrete box the size of a house under the city and forgotten by a municipal government so vast and distracted that it doesn't notice three missing lifters. A bank of showers with half-finished tile and littered with broken bottles were set up for subterranean workers and then forgotten; they still work.

Dirty faces look out from dens made of stacked palettes and cardboard. Teenagers sleep in a pile of magazines. Couches and beds sit on enormous concrete shelves reachable by metal rungs pounded in like rebar. Oil lamps give these little dorms a warm, cozy glow. The concrete walls thrum with the sound of an expressway far above.

And at the end of a wide, bare tunnel blanketed with gravel and dead flowers lays a cemetery for the under-



world. Makeshift gravestones of concrete chunks, wooden boards, plastic slabs, a car door, and more stick up from the earth without a pattern. Some of them are painted or etched with names, dates. Some have Polaroids taped to their faces. Some are blank. One is encrusted with broken CDs. A handful of the graves are broken, or dug up with the gravel and clay beneath them scattered as if a landmine had exploded inside, but there are no human remains.

The River of Waste

The sewers. They're layers of waste tracts running from the pipes fed by household toilets to larger pipes running underneath the streets to the large canals running beneath the subway system. Those canals may be hundreds of years old. Some of them are old catacombs or service tunnels. They sag, they leak, and they sometimes hook down in waterfalls of filth.

By day, a city full of living people can produce enough human waste to fill the sewers neck-deep with cesspool fodder. But by night, with the populace asleep, the sewage level falls. Water rushing in from upstream reservoirs dilutes the sewage dramatically. In New York, the sewers are 99% water in some places.

In other places, where companies dump chemicals (legally or illegally) into the sewers, they are not nearly so clean. The waste chemicals from pharmaceutical labs can be poison. Industrial drainage can burn even the skin of the undead; get it in the eyes and it blinds. Oils, solvents, and sludge can clog together around bends and corners, forcing passage underneath and through water. Some of that sludge is too thick to swim or climb out of; currents pushing it along the bottom can pull a person under the surface, where he drowns in ordure.

All that sewage and water is headed somewhere, either by running down hill or being pushed along by a current generated in the flushing reservoir. It all rushes past metal screens of long sharp teeth designed to catch large objects and break up soft ones. (Not surprisingly, these screens are sometimes called shit eaters.) Not much bigger than a rat can fit through one of these screens, but many are broken or missing teeth just to make passage possible. Unbroken screens are a good place to go looting; everything from watches and wallets to jewelry and appliances pile up on them.

Most sewage comes out in a treatment plant somewhere near a body of water. In some cities it runs into long open air or indoor pools of sterilizing chemicals, where it sits stagnant and reeking until it becomes inert slop. Follow the sewage that far and you come out in a manned municipal facility running 24 hours a day; get caught and get arrested for trespassing. (On the other hand, put the sewage treatment workers on the take and win a precious asset — a body comes apart in the treatment chemicals like a chicken in a stew.)

Some city's sewer lines empty out into huge tanks that can be six or seven stories deep after being funneled into an open tank at a bottleneck of automated hatches. The muck in these takes bakes at 100° for up to a month. When it's dry, it's sold as fertilizer. It feeds crops that the living eat down the road, and the city makes a buck on their shit.

Deepest

This part of the city is so far from the street that even the urban legends don't make it down here.

Beneath the largest cities like Chicago and New York decades-long engineering projects are producing vast underground tunnels for overflow drainage and sewage channeling. These are not man-sized passages a hundred feet down. These are tunnels big enough to drive cranes and dump trucks through, and they may be more than 700 feet below the surface.

Despite the enormous size of these tunnels, they can still fill with water during major storms. A few secure retreat stations are built into the length of the tunnel to protect workers in the event of a sudden flood, but most have never been tested. If they work, laborers could be trapped 70 stories down, behind a wall of water, for days.

Reaching these depths is all but impossible for the surface citizens. Even the Mole People don't make it down to New York's City Tunnel Number Three, which runs for more than 60 miles through exposed clay and rock held at bay with intermittent concrete panels. (Chicago's Deep Tunnel passages are more than 100 miles long.) Construction equipment is lowered down through enormous, reinforced shafts by layers of massive cranes — the kinds used to build skyscrapers. Personnel descend along a cargo elevator past multiple levels of multi-story monitoring stations and equipment landings.

But supernatural creatures have found other ways down. Some have the patience and endurance to climb. Some travel down in changed shapes. Some descend through the power of witchcraft or wizardry.

Some come to seek escape. Some come in search of Atlantean ruins. Some come to hide. Some come to nest.

If not for the difficulty of hunting, many Kindred might migrate this deep to escape the painful echoes of human contact and the perils of the surface Requiem. In some cities, where smaller scale attempts at Deep Tunnel style projects have been started and abandoned, vampire populations may be double what they seem to be on the surface. These subterranean vampire societies have their own customs and hierarchy. Can the surface Prince really call himself the ruler of a population he's only heard about through rumor?

Vampires only make up a portion of the monsters down in these deepest tunnels. If the whispers of those Kindred who have braved these depths — or even make their havens in the forgotten nooks and unfinished tunnels — the tunnels are stalked by creatures never seen on the surface. What weird chthonic creatures and strange breeds of spirits or bloodlines might lurk in the tunnels after thirty or forty years? The Kindred can only guess and dread.

City of Millions

One of the hardest things about being a Storyteller is the constant management of an enormous volume of personalities, and all of whom aid the flow of the story. The players have it easy. Each player has only a single character to portray. The Storyteller, however, has to believably convey the actions of everyone from the trembling junkie to the Prince's Seneschal to the terrified mother to the nonplussed cop.

The "City of Millions" section of this book is an aid for Storytellers to do just that. It's primarily intended to help when Storytellers need characters on the fly but can serve to spawn longer-term support characters as well. Our intent with this section is to present several character ideas suitable to the modern horror genre but to deliberately move past those archetypes considered "automatic."

The "City of Millions" is divided into three sections. The first offers a number of basic ideas for characters — adjective-noun descriptors that serve as a foundation for the type of person appearing in the story. The second presents several things a person wants to achieve or goals a character might be pursuing in whatever fashion. The third section presents some actions or ideas in which characters who adhere to certain Virtues or Vices might be engaged.

Taking one entry from each section results in a brief character synopsis that the Storyteller can flesh out inventively or in the time between game sessions. Simply combine the character seed with the motivation and define it within the context of a Virtue or Vice and essentially you have the core of a character ready to go and interact with the players' characters. Mix and match these to your heart's content, and you'll have an enormous cast of potential characters with which to populate your city streets.

(Storytellers, use exactly what you need from each of these sections and no more. These entries are by nature broad, and if you have a specific story role for a character to fill and just need a little help in coming up with a fresh character with whom to present it, stop when you feel the character is concrete enough to serve the purpose.)

What follows, then, are those three character information entries. Don't worry, though; we won't leave you to just grab a handful of ideas and fend for yourself. At the end of the section, we'll offer a few hints and tips on how to integrate these home grown characters into a chronicle so they come off as natural as they should.

One Hundred People You Haven't Met Before

It's inevitable that over the course of time and innumerable **Vampire** chronicles, certain patterns emerge in Storytelling. One of the most recognizable of these is the "stock character," the character who's intended to be poignant and timely but instead operates as more of an archetype conforming to a standard suggested by the game's gothic, *noir* themes. Think about: How many times over the course of telling **Vampire** stories have you interacted with a violent biker? A crazed but knowledgeable bum? A gun-brandishing gangster? A crooked cop? A scheming city councilman?

That's not an indictment of those character types. Surely, there's a place for them amid the stylized World of Darkness. That same World of Darkness is a cosmopolitan place, though, and it's populated by many more characters who don't fit those genre archetypes. Playing in a horror game shouldn't necessarily be a comfortable experience, and once the players' characters' coterie becomes such a collective of hard cases that the usual suspects don't spook them anymore, a rotation of the roster might be in order

To that end, what we've done below is collected a variety of non-standard characters who can be dropped into your chronicle whenever they're appropriate. If you need a cryptic message delivered or a physical obstacle posed, you don't necessarily have to resort to the Bum Who's Seen It All or the Bat Swinging Skinhead anymore — it can just as credibly come from one of the following sources, and the new character's unfamiliarity with the characters may even catch them a bit off guard... which is a good part of what you're after when you take the role of Storyteller.

The format is straightforward. We present a brief description of the character that the players' characters will notice at first blush, and then we offer a synopsis of the character's situation or purpose. It's a fairly easy feat to work him into the story and even potentially generate a set of traits for him if he becomes a recurring character in your tale.

In most cases, these characters' dispositions are neutral, or at least they're neutral toward the players' characters to

begin with. Actual interactions with the players' characters may change this, and they might find a new, helpful ally or short-term antagonist based on how they conduct themselves as regards to the individual. These aren't automatically "friends and foes," rather they're whatever the characters (or the Storyteller) make of them.

Note also that any of these characters can work in a Storyteller's pre-planned chronicle. You don't have to turn to this section only when you're put on the spot for a Storyteller character (though the list is certainly helpful for that). Our goals here are to provide a convenient list of characters who aren't staples of the genre. How you use them and in which situations is up to you.

The Rookie Vagrant: Tonight is his first night on the street as he's just lost his job and been kicked out of his home for failing to control his drug abuse.

The Bitter Evangelist: She's had enough of these sinners on the streets of the pleasure district ignoring her, and she's going to make some unforgettable face-to-face impressions on those people traveling to their dens of iniquity tonight.

The Student Journalist: He's overzealous in his pursuit of this story that's taken him far out of his depth, and the combination of his relentlessness and the sensitivity of the situation is going to make it hard for him to write a credible story, even if the facts are true.

The Hyperactive Bike Messenger: Hey, not everyone works a nine-to-five and these packages gotta get to Dean, Burns, and Cannery, LLC because they're working late tonight, and hey, she drinks only five or six energy drinks on shift to keep her up because she has a second job, and there just aren't enough hours in the day, man, there just aren't enough hours in the day, and those student loans aren't going to pay themselves.

The Off-Duty Bartender: Tonight's her night off, and she wants to spend it doing something other than hanging around the same bunch of drunks she sees every other night.

The Amateur Filmmaker: He's in the planning stages of his next film, so right now he's scouting out potential locations that have a good presence on the screen but don't detract too much from the drama occurring between the actors.

The Awed Tourist: She's here so she can finally have some time to herself, and she's always wanted to see the landmarks of the city in question.

The Anxious Salesman: It's already the 15th of the month and if he wants to make his mortgage on time, he's really going to have to get it together to pick up another few decent commission sales.

The Raucous Bachelorettes: The wedding's not until next week, but the bride-to-be's friends wanted to take her out for one last hurrah, so they're making it happen with enough time to recover from the inevitable hangover so the bags under her eyes won't show at the ceremony.

The Diligent Jogger: Three more miles to go tonight and six more pounds to go in the long term before he can scale it back to just five miles every other day.

The Put-Out Pizza Guy: This is the third time he's been to this lousy apartment and dammit, if they don't like how it's cooked this time, they can wear it on their heads for all he cares, tip or no tip.

The Abused Intern: She took the job directly out of college and she knew there'd be some long hours involved, but this is almost enough to make her wish that she'd stuck with her first major instead of getting into business law.

The Bored Convenience Store Clerk: Not even the junkies or the transvestites or the perverts are interesting anymore, and they all think that just because he's behind the counter, he can magically fix their problems with some miracle product on the shelves of aisle three. Losers.

The Distracted Commuter: He's on his way home from a late night at the office, but he's got his nose buried so deeply in his paperback that he's not watching where he's going, so oof — !

The Vending-Machine Stocker: He's an amiable guy, spending 10 to 12 hours a day refilling soft drink and snack machines, with a long route and he'll always give you a freebie if you're near the machine when he's got it open.

The Distracted Shopper: She's on her way to the grocery store because earlier she forgot to pick up a green pepper for the pot of red beans and rice she's making.

The Addled Visitor: The bus just arrived at the depot and he retrieved his bags from it, but he can't make heads or tails of this downtown map and he's looking for someone who knows how to get to the motel.

The Rookie Cop: Dispatch just called something over but he doesn't remember what the radio codes means and he can't ask his partner because he went for a bathroom break, so he's nervous about what he might be missing.

The Noisy Break-Dancer: He's just out practicing his moves on the street, but that boom box is probably going to get him a ticket because it's so damn loud.

The Unhappy Couple: They're having a protracted argument in some language other than English, and the man keeps walking back and forth while exaggeratedly putting his head in his hands while the woman shakes her head and points up at the building they're standing next to.

The Broadway Enthusiast: He probably couldn't answer you as to why he's carrying an umbrella even though it's not raining but can certainly sing any Andrew Lloyd Webber show tune you ask for practically on command.

The Nervous Kid: This little guy sneaked out of his house for some excitement, but now that he's out here, he doesn't really have any idea about what he wants to do.

The Genius-in-Training: Although her walking pattern is erratic, she's got a good brain in her head because she's absolutely blowing through her little book of sudoku puzzles at an astounding rate.

The Trivia Master: So long as it's not an arcane secret or information only the characters would know, this guy has the answer to whatever issue they are discussing, which he gladly shares with them as he overhears them discussing it on his way to... wherever he's going.

The Karate Kid: This young lady just earned her brown belt today, and she's walking home from her karate studio tired and sweaty but proud.

The Bluetooth Savant: This fellow comes ambling down the street seemingly talking to the characters about the very topic they're discussing, but it so happens that he's actually on a hands-free cell phone discussing something eerily similar with the person on the other end of the line.

The Stranger in a Strange Land: Here stands a broad shouldered man with a face full of Victorian whiskers, wearing a plaid ulster, and looking expectantly about as if in anticipation of something about to happen.

The Eloquent Crusty: He wears skinny pants, a torn-up Cramps T-shirt, and creepers with inch-thick soles, but he's quoting William Blake poetry to a group of similarly aging punks, who all regard him with rapt attention.

The Hurried Meter Man: This uniformed fellow reading the gas or water meters and taking sedulous notes as to what they display and having little time for anyone who would speak with him, travels from building to building,.

The Major Domo: An attractive woman in her early 30s, the major domo has been tasked with numerous important jobs by her prominent employer, and she carries a variety of cases and gadgets to aid her in fulfilling those duties — none of which seem to make her happy or give her life meaning, and she knows it.

The Optimistic Refugee: He just moved here from a Third World country where military service was manda-

tory for all men, and he truly sees his new home as a land of infinite opportunity.

The Righteous Cyclist: She travels all over town on her bicycle while unfailingly observing bicycle traffic-safety laws, and she becomes agitated when others don't, such as by using bicycle lanes as turning lanes or standing in the bike path when the sidewalk is much better suited to the purpose.

The Gregarious Mother: This young mother pushes a stroller occupied by a cooing infant, and she wants everyone around her to notice the pride of her life.

The Neo-Hippie: This young fellow, wearing a Phish T-shirt and patchwork pants, sits on the curb or against the wall as he plays three-chord riffs on a ratty acoustic guitar.

The Prodigal Lurker: This young girl presses herself into an alcove, apparently to avoid notice, and if anyone looks at or talks to her, she berates him for ruining her excellent hide-and-seek spot.

The Overheated Clerk: This overweight man wears a short sleeved white button up and gray slacks and beneath which he is sweating profusely as he mutters to himself about needing to get back "there."

The Helpful Mechanic: "Burt" is still wearing his oily coveralls as he heads home from his garage job in his pickup truck, and he's only too glad to offer a jump or assistance with changing a flat tire.

The Bloody *Vampyr*: It's not even Halloween, but that doesn't stop this quirky young lady from wearing a getup reminiscent of Bela Lugosi's Dracula, which is complete with prosthetic fangs and fake blood dribbling down her chin.

The Flustered Virtuoso: This young man runs down the street with his awkwardly large and heavy cello in his faltering grip.

The Valiant Skater: He's been practicing the same trick for well over an hour now and he still hasn't mastered it, but he's going to stay here until he gets it nailed.

The Shocking Nurse: With all the confusion down in the ER and the fact that she just worked 24 consecutive hours, neither this nurse nor anyone around her noticed that when she left the hospital, she was still wearing her bloodstained scrubs.

The Smoking Barista: In his apron and visor, he stands in the street enjoying a cigarette before he has to go back behind the counter and take another thousand orders before he can go home.

The Vigilant Watchman: He hasn't been on the force for more than 15 years, but his cop's training and keen senses still serve him well as he keeps an eye out for any funny business on his street from the vantage of his third-story window.

The Mousy Ex: This poor, bedraggled girl just caught her boyfriend cheating on her and broke up with him on the spot, and she's walking briskly down the street with her arms crossed, already wondering if she made a mistake and should just accept him for who he is.

The Self-Made Mogul: He stands outside a bar or nightclub well dressed and groomed, but he's talking so ostentatiously and obnoxiously into his cell phone about some deal or another he has in the works that any charisma he might have erodes beneath his tidal wave of self aggrandizement.

The Queen of Diamonds: Carrying her bat, glove, and cleats, she's walking home from a vigorous game of softball that serves as her only avenue of physical activity.

The Absent-Minded Manager: Dressed in a business suit with his tie undone and collar open, this flustered man of about middle age keeps going through a ring of keys, wondering, *Where the hell is it?* and *I know I didn't take it off here.*

The Standoffish Gofer: Perhaps in his late teens or early 20s, this casually dressed kid with mussed hair carries a to-go box towering with sandwiches, coffees, and soft drinks precariously between his arms and defiantly stares at anyone who might even think of getting in his way and spilling the whole mess.

The Alt-Country Dynamo: She's tall and rangy, and she wears a cowboy hat and a man's sleeveless undershirt as she ambles randomly around the area while playing the most kick-ass version of "Back in Baby's Arms" you've ever heard on the harmonica.

That Guy from That Thing: You know you've seen him before, you just can't remember from where, but you're pretty sure it was on TV show, maybe the news or a car dealership commercial.

The Thirsty Baller: He dribbles his basketball down the street in his oversized jersey and shorts while chugging down a sports drink.

The Overzealous Vendor: If it weren't for the tray of trinkets in front of her that she's trying to hawk to people, the people around her would think she's a dangerous extrovert, but little spark-spitting Godzillas attest to the fact that she's just trying to make a buck.

The Incorrigible Victim: He's between eight and 12 years of age and the way he's running down the street with tears in his eyes and peanut butter in his hair suggests that there's a big brother, grinning evilly

and looking for a magnifying glass so he can go burn ants, somewhere.

The Sneaker Enthusiast: Everybody likes collecting something, but she takes the cake with $300 athletic shoes on her feet and another pair of the exact same shoes in a box she's carrying, so she can keep one pair pristine.

The Street Interview: Just outside a service door opening onto the street, a portly chef in an apron and wearing a ponytail is asking a middle-aged Hispanic woman if she thinks she'd be comfortable working in a male dominated kitchen, where the language can get a little vulgar.

The Cordial Dandy: He's simply too much with his bespoke suit, anachronistic bowler, and pewter-topped walking stick, but when he talks about what a shame it is that men don't wear hats anymore, something charming overtakes him.

The Young Lovers: This is obviously their first date, and it's going well, so rapt are they while looking into each others' eyes and paying only the faintest attention to the other people walking on the street.

The Dashing Stuntman: He's on a motorcycle or a bicycle or even a skateboard, and he's gathered a crowd of onlookers as he performs daring tricks and feats of dexterity while they look on and cheer.

The Vain Dude: He's got bad skin and oily hair, which he keeps pushing back into a pompadour that almost draws the attention away from his thrift-store suit and long, pointed shoes.

The Beer Runners: It's halftime, and these two guys drew the short straw on who had to go get more beer, so they're caught between making it back for the beginning of the next half and making their buddies wait for something else to drink.

The Street Hustler: Anyone who favors a game of three-card monte would certainly do better than to play this guy, whose inside man appears to be taking a beating at the game of dubious skill.

The Trusting Cabbie: It must be his first night on the job because he's patiently waiting outside his fare's front door because she told him she just had to run inside and get her purse, so he obviously doesn't realize he's never going to see her again.

The Vibrant Actress: Although she appears to be hailing the characters out of nowhere regarding some outlandish non sequitur, she's actually just rehearsing her lines for a local production of *The Three Sisters*.

The Stalwart Survivor: She's beaten her cancer into remission and even though she's sick almost every day,

she's walking to meet her support group to prove to herself that no matter what the illness throws at her, she's going to win.

The Beaten Nihilist: He's haggard and sallow with gin blossoms that look like a map of Illinois, and the reek of brown-bag alcohol is so strong on him you can practically smell his lack of will to live.

The New Jack: Today's his first day on the corner and it's been all about the Benjamins so far, but the distributor up the chain didn't tell him that this is the Jamaicans' neighborhood, and they don't look too favorably on the other crews playing their territory.

The Naïve Starlet: She came to town because she knew she could make it here and that her hometown had nothing to offer her, but her outdated clothes and hairstyle are just going to make her a patsy or worse.

The Cold Sufferer: The poor woman is rubbing her temples and holding a crumpled tissue as if they possess the ability to abate the horrendous head cold she's laboring under, which makes her head feel as if it weighs 600 pounds.

The Late Celebrant: He's dressed in elaborate parade drag and goes running by as quickly as his costume will let him, but he doesn't know exactly what route the parade's supposed to take.

The Jittery Promoter: Dressed in nightclub finery, she paces back and forth in front of the club's entryway while stalking off her nervous energy in hopes that enough people show up to her night that she'll actually be able to pay the club and the bartender and the security guys and the DJ and maybe make a little money for herself.

The Veteran Promoter: He waves people over confidently while promising a garden of earthly delights inside, and it looks like it's true because he's got a line of people backed up around the building with only a velvet rope to keep them in check, and each is ready to pay $20 just to get in the door.

The Halfwit Shine Boy: Calling him boy is probably a bit insensitive since he's been doing this for 30 years at least, but what else are you going to call a slow-witted clod who can't even remember that he's already shined the other shoe?

The Model *Au Naturel*: She's in all the local designers' shows and print ads, but she's here without her makeup and the photo editor's airbrush, so now she just looks like a clumsy teenager who just had a gnat fly into her mouth.

The Drunken Teamster: The union can make him pay his dues and they can make him be there on the days they tell him to, but he'll be damned if he's going to listen when they tell him that drinking on break will get him sacked for OSHA violations.

The Oblivious Telecommuter: There he sits at his coffee shop table while clicking away at his laptop computer while completely ignoring the rest of the world as it goes by.

The Inconvenienced Heiress: She's the scion of a wealthy, local newspaper family, and she's on the phone with someone who has earned her ire for not having the flowers delivered to a friend of hers when he said he would.

The Pedantic Townie: This woman has lived here all her life, and not only does she know what store used to be in that building they're turning into condos and who stayed at that hotel during the 1962 scandal, she wants everyone else to know it too.

The Disorganized Writer: His pockets overflow with cocktail napkins and store receipts with scribbled notes all over them, and even now he's writing hastily in a spiral-bound notepad to keep a hold of the ever-elusive thought that will elevate his book from airport fiction to true literature.

The Wrecked Pledge: He's so stoned he has no idea how drunk he is or that he lost his shell necklace two blocks back or that the Sig Eps filled the pockets of his cargo shorts with dog shit.

The Sketchy Scalper: The tickets he's offering seem like a good deal, especially for third row, but if they're no good, how likely is it that this guy's going to offer a refund?

The Youthful Commandos: The little girl is so cute as she asks passersby if they'd like to buy a popsicle while her fiend of an older brother waits on top of the roof of the brownstone with a cooler full of water balloons.

The Guilt-Ridden Miscreant: As this rat-like individual leaves her house, she catches a glimpse of what the characters assume to be them, and then she turns right back around and lets herself back into the building.

The Head Case: As he walks in his filthy overcoat past the characters and rubbing his eye with one hand, he asks them if they've got his pills ready or if he'll have to get the doctor to call the prescription in.

The Sob Story: He claims that his car broke down on the highway and that he and his wife are en route to a family reunion, but he only had $156 cash and the mechanic's shop wants $300 to get his water pump fixed, and could someone please loan him the rest of the money as a good Samaritan (as he produces a tattered receipt from garage work already paid for six weeks ago).

The Fake Badge: He looks like a security guard and he gets all in people's faces like a security guard, but he's

really just a joker in a rented uniform trying to get some spoof footage with his friend who's hiding and running a video camera.

The Clumsy Waiter: While bringing a platter full of food out to a trio of guests dining on the patio, he trips and sends the plates and drinks clattering to the ground.

The Field Researcher: This woman wears a skirt and a silk shirt and really wants to know whether people in the neighborhood think there's enough parking available and their opinions on the prices for street and covered parking for a transportation department study.

The Genial Doorman: He knows his is the first outside face many people see during the day and it may well be the last, so he tries to be especially friendly in order to make people's trips that much more pleasant.

The Ersatz Con Man: He's not very good at running ruses of confidence, but he doesn't exactly have a top notch résumé that qualifies him for more legitimate lines of work.

The Disingenuous Reporter: On television, she's all smiles and sociability, but when the camera's not rolling, she's a shrew and apt to let someone know his shortcomings, whether he wishes to learn them or not.

The Unfortunate Epileptic: She's dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt and is on her way to run an errand when the fit hits her and leaves her convulsing on the sidewalk.

The Contagious Laugher: A cluster consisting of this fellow and his friends stands joking just outside the storefront on the corner, and as he laughs, his mirth carries to everyone who hears him.

The Grudging Charlatan: While she professes to forecast fortunes, what she really does is read her clients' tells and cajole them with what they want to hear in hopes of cadging a few extra bucks on the tip, but she's just not very personable and she's been doing this so long that she just comes off as an old crank.

The Greedy Panhandler: He asks everyone who passes by, "Hey, got any change?" and if they do deign to give him a handout, he indignantly asks for more.

The Fretful Sorcerer: He knows a soul-blanching number of secrets men should never come to know and they've made him a nervous wreck, who's always on the lookout for creatures from the nether hells who seek to claim his soul and retreat to their lairs.

The Harrowed Veteran: He fought for his country in an unpopular war and the only gratitude he got for it was to be spat at and called a baby killer when he returned home from his tour of duty.

The Unctuous Analyst: His dialogue consists almost solely of innuendo and double entendre, and the guy's about two genital references away from a sexual harassment suit, but it's the only way he knows to conduct himself around women.

The Flustered Clock-Watcher: She's got the job she's currently on and then the one at the ad agency two weeks from now, but after that it's just her and the girls on an all-inclusive cruise to the Cayman Islands, but if she gets fired again for putting the wrong paperwork in someone else's file, she's not going to have money for rent, much less the trip.

The Has-Been All-Star: Twenty years ago he was a local sports celebrity who basked in the accolades of his team's ninth-inning comeback, but these days he slugs more women than home runs, and the cops are on a first name basis with him down at the precinct.

Fifty Things People Want

The idea for a character — whether it's a player's character or a Storyteller character, whether it's a central character or supporting character — isn't enough to sustain interaction with other characters in a story. Every character in the World of Darkness from the lowliest ghoul to the most august congressional candidate wants something.

What a character wants dictates how he behaves toward other characters. Can he use them to achieve his goal? Can he help them in hopes of them helping him? Do they want the same things? Does wanting the same thing make another character a rival or a comrade?

These motivations need not always determine how the character in question views other characters. Sometimes, other characters don't have anything to do with the individual's goals. That doesn't mean the character's outlook isn't shaped by his goals when he deals with other people. Say you've got a character whose driving passion is to become more successful than his overbearing parents. Your average group of vampires wandering the Rack don't have a damn thing to do with his parents, but his drive and focus will surely come across to them when those Kindred meet him. He'll have a fiery look in his eye and a competitive edge. He'll want to know benefits and the risks of his participation in... well, whatever the characters talk to him about. He's not necessarily using them to trump his parents, but the way he's lived his life and tried to satisfy his motivations will color how he reacts to people.

Some of the following goals are long-term goals and some are short-term goals. That's important in portraying a character as well. What the character wants *right now*

and what the character wants eventually can often be two different things and might even be contradictory. Bear that in mind when using these motivations: a character with these wants on his mind is capable of having additional motivations as well.

You can mix any of these motivations with any of the character snapshots above. Indeed, you'll find some to be similarly specific and directed while others are broad and open to interpretation. For the greatest range of usefulness, we include discrete motivations such as "find his car keys" as well as general applications such as "find someone to acknowledge his success." Alternatively, you can apply one of these motivations to characters of your own creation. Just as certain characters are stock examples of the genre, some motivations often become part and parcel of **Vampire** as well ("become Prince," "rise to prominence in the Invictus," "free myself from my sire's overweening attentions"), and this list can provide fresh new outlooks.

Note that some of these motivations are vampire specific or otherwise seemingly "monstrous" while others aren't. That's intentional. We aim to illustrate that not only vampires have wants and needs. As well, a clever Storyteller can turn a Kindred motivation into a mortal (or other...) one with just a few changes of verbs and nouns. Obviously, these motivations are intended as a foundation and not an exhaustive list of mortal and Kindred purpose.

To Find His Way Home: The character is lost, disoriented, or otherwise confused about his location and wants nothing more than to find his way back to a place he finds comfortable.

Venture Capital: The character has an idea for what may well prove to be the "next big thing," but he doesn't have the financial backers to put the project together.

Information on the Infrastructure: The character is a vampire new to town and seeks to know who the Prince is, which covenants prevail, where the common hunting grounds are, and various other details relevant to the local Requiem.

An Important Artifact: The character has a few clues leading him to believe that an artifact of great significance exists somewhere in the city, and he pursues these clues in hopes of finding the relic before anyone else.

Someone to Follow: The character is a born conformist and is looking for a charismatic leader type to give his life direction.

A Way to Move Contraband: The character has a large quantity of black market technology that he needs to move before the wrong people start asking questions for which he's the answer.

Just to Make Ends Meet: The character works two jobs for substandard pay and has little time to himself, but he's got bills to pay and "I'm trying" holds the creditors at bay for only so long.

A One-Night Stand: With his pockets full of this week's pay and a bit of cutting loose on his mind, this character is on the prowl for a bit of no-strings-attached sexual activity.

The Next Vessel: The character, seeking only to feed and then sleep, has regressed to an atavistic state.

Security: The character has been facing long odds and danger for as long as he can remember, and he's willing to trade his highs (and certainly his lows) for some stability in his personal life and professional achievement.

A Fix: The character needs to score his drug of choice and the sooner the better, or he's going to get the shakes or maybe even ill.

To Get Clean: The character has had enough of life in thrall to substance abuse and has finally hit rock bottom so decisively that he has made the decision to leave that life behind — if he can muster the willpower to keep the drug out of reach.

A Misplaced Heirloom: The character has lost something of great sentimental importance that belongs to him, and he's willing to go to great lengths to find and retrieve it.

A New Job: The character is good at what he does and enjoys his choice of careers; he just doesn't like the company he's doing it for and wants an opportunity to do what he loves for someone else.

The Next Rush: The character is a thrill-seeker who is always on the lookout for a risky gamble or a dangerous turn of events for the spike of adrenaline that it provides him.

A Cab: The character needs to go somewhere and is trying unsuccessfully to catch a cab to get there.

A Family: The character and his wife have been trying for just under two months to conceive a child, but they haven't met with any luck yet, and if nothing happens in the next two weeks, they'll probably try to meet with a fertility doctor.

To Stop This Nosebleed: The character is afflicted with a nosebleed that just won't stop, and before he can do anything else, he needs to stanch the flow and clean himself up.

Character Assassination: The character has a rival whom he wants discredited and brought low as this rival not only stands in the way of the character's other goals but has also embarrassed the character among their colleagues.

Money for Money's Sake: No doubt repeating the *Scarface* mantra to himself, this character's primary motivation is money and lots of it, though he's heedless of the fact that he won't know how to spend it effectively once he does acquire it.

Sweet Oblivion: The character has a pessimistic outlook on life but lacks the conviction to kill himself, so he seeks the presence of dangerous company in hopes that they'll ultimately prove his undoing.

Someone to Believe Him: The character has a tale to tell that seems outlandish upon first consideration but that actually reveals one of the city's sinister secrets, if parsed out fully, and the character wants desperately to pass the information on so he's not the only person who knows the terrible truth.

To Be Married: The character seeks a soul mate and someone with whom to pass on his family name.

To Kill the Undead: The character knows about the existence of vampires and seeks to destroy one — at first, only to see how it's done, but if he's successful, he may turn it into a higher purpose.

His Friends' Approval: The character never felt like he lived up to the expectations of family or authority figures in his life, so he seeks the validation of his friends in both social endeavors and his professional accomplishments.

A Meal That Doesn't Taste like Hell: Every meal he's eaten since he met that weird guy down at the subway station has tasted like ash in his mouth, and he just wants to get over this... sickness or whatever it is and be able to enjoy dinner again.

A Protégé: The character isn't necessarily cut out for leading a family, but he possesses a great deal of knowledge and acumen and he'd like to pass these on to someone who might benefit from a mentor.

Someone to Share the Secret with: The character has a bit of dangerous or forbidden knowledge but is also about to die, and he seeks "the right person" to whom to pass on the privileged information.

To Keep Up with the Joneses: The character has little ambition beyond reaching the same benchmarks for success that other people establish for themselves, so he holds himself to the same standards as his culture at large.

To Get Over an Ex: The character has recently left a relationship that had gone sour and now seeks new company among people who don't remind him of the days spent with his lover.

The Respect of Others: While he's experienced his share of success at goals he's set for himself, this character

feels as if people think he just "got lucky" or rode the coattails of others who also achieved success, and now he wants to prove his ability for its own sake.

A Place to Call Home: The character has been traveling for an extended period of time and is only now coming to a point in his life at which he feels like settling down and putting down some roots in the local community.

An Alibi: The character has done something heinous and is looking for someone who can provide him with an exonerating story, whether she actively lies for him or his time spent participating in the alibi was proximate to his crime.

The Latest Gossip: The character is an incorrigible rumormonger and seeks information about eminent people among his peer group and what they're up to at this very moment.

Apocalypse Now!: The character perceives himself or a faction with which he's associated to be in a state of burgeoning conflict with another individual or group, and he's ready to take the conflict to the next level because he's stressed about the mounting tension.

Redemption: The character has performed a disgraceful act in the past and wants to confess it before he begins to make amends.

The Object of Infatuation: The character is smitten with desire of the love-at-first-sight variety and intends to consummate his feelings of attraction with the person who's captured his heart.

To Break the Streak: Every time the character has wagered in recent history, he's lost the bet, and he wants one big, fortunate score to break the spell of bad luck.

A Safe Haven: People are after the character and he just needs a place where he can lay low for a few nights while everything blows over.

To Get This Song Out of His Head: It's been stuck in his memory since he woke up this morning and it was on the radio, and he'd really like to be free from its constant distraction.

To Find His Missing Sister: She ran with a dangerous group of friends, but he never really thought anything truly bad would happen to her until one night she just didn't make it back to her place... and that was three weeks ago.

Another Chance: He admits he was wrong — he cheated, after all — and now he realizes that she was the best thing to ever happen to him, and if he could just get her to take him back, everything wrong in his world would right itself.

More Time: People live only so long, and she spent so much of her youth locked in her bedroom and protected from the world outside that they feared and taught her to fear, that she regrets having lost all those years to anxiety and the illness of others.

Another Body: This wretched shell, reeking and leaking and gathering grime, is falling apart and if it doesn't find a new host in which to house itself, this entity is going to die and sink back into the oblivion from which the creature emerged.

A Following: He has big plans, but they necessitate more hands than he can devote to his tasks, so he entreats others to join his cause in hopes of conniving them to make his fortune for him.

To Make Them Pay: She didn't deserve to be fired, but when they repossessed her car, ruined her credit rating, and had her evicted from her apartment, they'd gone too far, and now that she's got nothing left to lose, she's going to revisit the tragedies they inflicted on her tenfold.

To Learn More: It's never too late to start over, and after being turned down for his third promotion because he didn't have that all-important piece of paper from college 20 years ago — as if 20 years of experience didn't mean anything! — he wants to take control of his destiny and make sure he's never passed over again.

To Find Out the Real Story: His wife took the kids and left him last week, and she was half-hysterical with her story about knowing that he was dealing with the wrong people and that she wasn't going to put herself and the boys in jeopardy, but he had no idea what she was talking about and wants to figure out what the misunderstanding was about in the first place.

A Better Paycheck: Oh, sure, she's comfortable, but she could be doing so much more for the company and be rewarded so much more for the doing of it that she spends much of her free time projecting new business trends and trying to open new distributors.

A Better Life: Man, if you told him 35 years ago that he'd be making the high six figures and that it would leave him empty inside, he'd have laughed at you, but today with two divorces and four kids who wouldn't recognize him if they saw him, he wants to fill the emptiness inside himself.

Broadening Virtue and Vice

The definitions of Virtues and Vices seem very clearly cut as described on pp. 101–105 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. A little creative thought, though, can open up those concise definitions to define an entirely new echelon of characters. By moving beyond rote defi-

nitions of the Virtues and Vices ("He's got Wrath as his Vice, so he slaps old ladies for kicks"), Storytellers can truly climb into the psychologies of the characters who reside in their cities and present a panoply of new supporting cast members that exceed the stock archetypes that rigid definition of Virtues and Vices imply.

The following sections take a look at each Virtue and Vice and suggest ways to broaden interpretations of them so that they might fit a wider variety of character applications. The sections offer sample attitudes or activities you might see a person who has the Virtue or Vice indulging or participating in. These suggestions aren't exhaustive — use them as written or use them to spur your own imagination to revisit your standard interpretations of key Virtues and Vices.

Virtue is a bit more difficult to work with than Vice or at least on a surface level. Virtue, obviously, is what's good in the character, and the Morality rules assume that this is what the character will ultimately be up to. A character who is acting on a Virtue is likely doing something long term as the rules reflect. A Vice, on the other hand, is a quick-and-dirty, indulge-it-now sort of motivator. It's more likely that a given scene will contain a character concisely heeding his Vice — it often takes time to act meaningfully upon a Virtue.

Note that the situations below may be broad or concise. They may be examples of a Virtue or Vice in action, or they may be the behaviors of characters who exhibit a particular Virtue or Vice. The intent is to show how Virtues and Vices might characterize an individual, so we present a variety of different examples.

Charity

Charity need not always be represented by altruistically giving something away. A charitable character might offer his time or help, give a deceitful character another chance, or even just be in a very healthy relationship that he nurtures instead of taking advantage of it.

The character is witnessed in the company of a Little Brother or Little Sister since having given his time to aid those children who don't have steady role models in their lives.

The character is patiently explaining a complicated process to a friend or coworker, and to whom he's already explained the process twice already. He's not getting frustrated, and he understands that some people understand the abstractions of the situation (whatever it is) better than others.

The character keeps numerous clippings around her home — soup can labels, old newspapers, cereal box lids,

magazines — that manufacturers use as incentives to public schools. The character doesn't necessarily devote her own time to those schools or charities, but she's conscientious about doing a little extra on her part that can pay off on a larger scale through corporate donations to those schools and charities.

The character is a regular attendee of city council meetings even though she's not on the council herself. She just wants to make sure that the "average person" has her interests represented, so she devotes her time to the community.

The character feeds ducks in the park. He thinks it makes the park a more pleasant place, and if he can do his part to make it more appealing to everyone, he's happy to bring a few crusts of bread with him on his morning walk.

The character always leaves his change in the tray at checkout registers so that people who don't have enough change to make their purchases won't have to go without. While certainly not everyone who uses the change trays in this manner is financially challenged, the character believes it really makes the most significant difference for those who are.

The character diligently researches any and all but the most minor purchases she's about to make, which is to ensure that none of them are supported by child labor or in countries that take advantage of their citizens' civil liberties. Although it's unlikely that the character will ever meet anyone who benefits from her sedulous awareness, she's making a difference in a way that she finds both easy and fulfilling.

The character devotes a few hours a week to local pet shelters by distributing literature on spaying and neutering pets. By his reasoning, if more owners would take responsibility for their pets' reproductive habits, fewer unwanted and homeless pets would have to be destroyed at the shelter.

The character makes a point of not eating the entirety of large portions she orders in restaurants. If she's got too much on her plate, she requests a take-home container and then gives it to someone less fortunate on the way home if she can. That way, she's sure of never overeating and helping out someone who's hungry as well.

The character organizes canned-food drives once a month regardless of the season. He solicits donations from co-workers, neighbors, nearby stores, and the like and drops off his collection box at a nearby soup kitchen on his way to work. If encountered during the course of the story, he probably has several seemingly out-of-place cans or boxes of food in the back seat or trunk of his car or perhaps in a bag or briefcase on his person.

Faith

Although Faith is normally perceived as having a close connection to piety, this Virtue doesn't necessarily mean belief in a divine power or regular attendance at church. Faith can be as broadly interpreted as having loyalty to an idea for which no demonstrable proof is possible, or it can be simply conviction in and of itself. A person might have faith in someone he looks to as a hero, commitment to a marriage that's apparently on the rocks, or even devotion to a wholly secular philosophy.

The character is involved in local politics and does booster works for his favorite candidates because he believes so strongly in their commitment to their platforms. His interactions with other characters often come with entreaties to cast votes for these candidates, occasionally to the point of being annoying.

The character always carries a self-help book with him because he believes that understanding one's self can lead to a more fulfilling life, and he wants to know how to improve his lot.

The character isn't particularly "churchy," but she spends a lot of her time practicing for and performing with her congregation's choir. In her mind, people who might otherwise not have an interest in her particular denomination might respond more favorably to a beautiful piece of music than a sermon or tract.

The character keeps a small shrine or section of devotional material in his home.

The character says a prayer or makes a sign of blessing before she does something important to her. In game terms, the character may make a sign of devotion when the player spends a point of Willpower for her.

The character never leaves a foe bested in combat to die as the character trusts that the opponent's defeat at another's hand will encourage him to see the error of his ways.

The character's opinion of his fellow man is so unshakably positive that he's always willing to turn the other cheek and offer a second chance, even to those who have wronged him gravely in the past. Other characters might consider this foolhardy or naïve, but the character in question simply knows that forgiveness is its own virtue.

The character sees the presence of the divine in small omens he encounters here and there in his life. This works especially well for a chronicle that involves prophecy or higher purpose, and it can be used to reinforce that thematic element over the course of several stories.

The character, owing to the faith he placed in a higher power to extract himself from it, has revitalized a previous life of vice or sin. This needn't be a "religious" higher pow-

er, rather it is only something that the character believes strongly in, such as the one espoused by Alcoholics Anonymous and its related addiction-recovery programs.

The character is an atheist and believes, however infinitesimally unlikely, that the universe and the world are all the result of a vast, fortuitous accident. She is unrelenting in this outlook and believes this with as much conviction as the staunchest member of any spiritual faith.

Fortitude

The Virtue of Fortitude represents courage, the willingness to suffer for one's purpose, or an unshakable dedication. Fortitude can ride very closely to Faith, but the focus is different — the faithful person believes in the ideal itself while the fortified person is committed to the doing of it.

The character refuses to speak favorably about a notorious neighborhood criminal at his wake even though the dead boss's goons really want people to commemorate him to the press and the rest of the assembled mourners.

The character staunchly stands his ground in combat. He wouldn't have undertaken the fight if he didn't think it was just, and he's not going to let physical pain deter him from his ideal.

The character rushes into a burning building because he hears the sound of an infant crying or an elderly man calling out for help inside.

The character pays back an outstanding debt even though settling the debt means he's going to have to find extra work or eat canned soup for the next few weeks.

The character is lame or crippled but refuses to let his physical infirmity limit him from participation in his job, his hobby, or his recreation.

The character has a public speaking engagement but refuses to change the content of his speech to accommodate a powerful special interest and instead decides to "tell it like it is" or otherwise maintain his original position.

The character finds himself charged with teaching someone something, but the student proves to have a remarkable difficulty learning. In this case, the character spends his time coming up with alternate methods of imparting the lesson and potentially even going "back to basics" and teaching the foundations of the lesson he's supposed to communicate.

The character undertakes a project that will have an immense payoff for the community but only long after she'll be able to enjoy it, such as a bestowment to a school as the character learns she has a terminal illness.

The character begins a house building project that will require a vast amount of work. In this case, the character's fortitude is required to see the project through to fruition, and the hardships he endures along the way seem less to him than the value of the house once he completes it.

The character shelters another character who has gotten herself into a spot of trouble. Note that, if this other character is actually guilty of the trouble in question, she may well be taking advantage of the fortified character's magnanimity, which may test his fortitude or see it lapse into stubbornness.

Hope

A person who subscribes to the Virtue of Hope believes that evil and tragedy are present in the world but that they aren't forces that will dominate in the long run. They're temporary things, perhaps trials orchestrated by a higher power or perhaps simply the result of bad luck. Maybe they're the result of efforts by people who have suffered difficult lives. Whatever the case, in a hopeful person' estimation, they're temporary obstacles and not lingering conditions.

The character responds to news of a local tax increase with the argument that it will make the city more money, and therefore allow residents of the city to have new amenities, road repairs, school, funding, and the like.

After seeing his sister suffer years of abuse at the hands of a boorish husband, the character volunteers his time at a battered women's shelter. He reasons that though he can't go back in time and prevent his sister's abuse, he can certainly help other people who find themselves in similar situations now.

The character decides to openly oppose a tyrannical Prince who has recently come to power and decides that if he accepts the Prince then he's accepting defeat, but if he prevents the Prince from consolidating her power, the domain won't be turned into a playground for the corrupt leader and her cronies.

The character changes his church or political affiliation since having grown apart from his previous one but not wanting to abandon the notion of spirituality or social responsibility altogether. In this situation, his hope is that his new affiliation will prove more fruitful, and that its tenets will be more in line with his way of thinking.

The character undertakes a new venture, whether a job or a side project. This isn't any grandiose hope — he simply wants to make things better for himself.

The character witnesses a crime occurring on the street and, instead of turning a blind eye to the occurrence as so many others do in the World of Darkness, he immediately telephones the police to inform them.

The character is bought out of his home under the auspices of eminent domain, and the local government has awarded the land to a retail developer. The character then plans to open a bookstore in the retail establishment in hopes of making rare books available and increasing local literacy levels.

The character joins the local chapter of the Guardian Angels so that other members of the community might feel safe walking the streets at night or going to the bank to deposit their checks.

The character attends a demonstration where protestors gather to demonstrate against a local business that observes illegal hiring practices and receives numerous financial concessions that hurt the neighborhood.

The character takes up the crucifix, bible, and stake because she's had just about enough of these goddamn vampires, and if they're going to get her eventually, she's at least going to take the fight to them on her terms and hopefully send a few of them to Hell before they can claim any more victims.

Justice

The urge to see the right thing done drives a character whose Virtue is Justice. Justice is a dramatic Virtue to play because it has its dark side and can be subsumed occasionally by a Vice — at what point does justice become vengeance? A just character wants to right wrongs and often also wants to serve as an example to others. Where those who subscribe to Hope endure the world's ills because they know good follows on evil's heels, and those who espouse Justice actively take those ills to task themselves.

The character, keeping an eye out for suspicious activity and giving detailed statements to police whenever he calls them out to the scene, serves as part of his neighborhood's watchdog group.

The character is a lawyer with a sense of civic duty that inclines her to take *pro bono* cases so long as they involve righting a wrong that some miscreant has inflicted on an innocent. She doesn't want to prosecute for profit or spring villains on technicalities; she takes her duty seriously and works only on cases that she fully believes her skills will be required to make right.

The character is part of a letter writing campaign that urges clemency for political prisoners unjustly victimized by foreign governments.

The character isn't especially proactive, but she does carry a small revolver in her purse with which to protect herself. It's just common sense to be prepared on these

city streets in a world where a predator can easily lurk around every corner.

The character belongs to a children's rights organization that ensures that government agencies keep adequate tabs on children placed in foster care, children removed from their biological parents, and children who are made the victims of crime or domestic abuse.

The character diligently writes reports to the Better Business Bureau if he feels he's been treated improperly by a company with which he's chosen to do business.

The character makes himself available as an expert in his field of study for court hearings and public speaking endeavors, and he's extremely careful to take only objective positions, so his expertise can make a difference in determining innocence, guilt, or culpability in the eyes of the court or public.

The character is a local luminary and has parlayed his success into a high-profile role challenging the inertia of local bureaucracy. He styles himself in the image of New York's Eliot Spitzer and wants to make governments accountable again to the people they govern.

The character has been fired from his job because he was considered a whistleblower for exposing his company's illegal business practices. The situation didn't receive a lot of media coverage, however, and the character's termination didn't result in a lot of public indignation. On the other hand, the character is protected by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and has undertaken an effort to bring the company up before a court of law.

The character is preparing for a run at public office, and though he lacks much political experience, he's hoping his grassroots candidacy and hard-line interpretation of local laws can win him the votes of "the little people" who are sick to death of legacy incumbencies and public servants who absolutely refuse to serve the public interest.

Prudence

Prudence is a curious Virtue, largely because Prudence is a conservative motivation, not given to flashy sacrifices or high concept philosophy. The underlying principle behind Prudence is questioning whether or not a given course of action is the sensible thing to do. Prudent people can come across as introverts or slow to anger, but that doesn't mean that they're soft or afraid to do what they need to do. After all, sometimes the wisest course of action is open revolution or standing up against a threatening force when the prudent person has had enough of a bully or tyrant.

The character can't find his keys to his house and wants to spend a few extra minutes looking for them. After all, he doesn't know what the night has in store, and it's better to find the keys now than to have to make a mad dash to his place and remember only at the last minute that he's locked out.

The character wants to take the time to stop by and talk to an acquaintance of his, who knows a little bit about the situation he and his companions are facing. Forewarned is, after all, forearmed.

The character sees that his gas tank is nearing half empty, so he stops to top off the tank just in case.

The lottery is up to $250 million, but the character foregoes buying a ticket. It's not as if he's any more likely to win when the jackpot is that big than when it's low, and the odds are even that "they're are for suckers anyway. Why not just throw a dollar in the trash?"

A hated rival has seemingly set himself up for a fall by leaving his connection to certain unsavory elements exposed. It looks like the time is right to bring the rival low. The character passes up on the opportunity, though, and it's a good thing he did because the rival deliberately left exaggerated connections to those dubious individuals visible in hopes of seeing who's aligned against them and getting them to play their hands too early.

A friend of a friend offers the character a remarkably good deal on a new laptop computer. The price is so low that the individual can't possibly have come by it legally — even wholesale laptops cost more than that. The character really wants the laptop but declines.

In preparing for a weekend long trip, the character makes sure to take a few extra changes of clothes, a suit and tie even though he has no formal plans, and a week's worth of vitamins and toiletries. He leaves contact information with his wife and at work and has a call in with the police precinct to swing by for a little extra security.

The character has a flight the next day and packs his bags the evening before. His luggage stands waiting for him by the door of his house with the airline tickets tucked into the external pocket.

The character finds a bank deposit bag in the street, and it's stuffed to near bursting. He turns it in to the bank. It's a good thing he did too because the bag contains the union dues for a local chapter of construction workers, and both the union and the Mob have been looking for that money.

The character finds a bank deposit bag in the street and it's stuffed to near bursting. He turns it in to the bank. It's a good thing he did too because the bag is full of nothing but shredded newspaper, and a local television station is doing one of their annual "honesty tests" by leaving valuable items out in the open and filming who absconds with them.

Temperance

Another comparatively conservative Virtue is Temperance, which often becomes evident by what its adherents *don't* do as opposed to the overt actions they take. Still, Temperance is evident in its practice to those who pay attention. A temperate person might not abstain from the usual evils but may choose something else entirely. He may have specific Vices that his Temperance balances. As well, he may be ambivalent or a bit of a follower who is looking for outside input when he makes his choices.

The character is known among his peers as a person who eats to satiety, not to fullness. When in restaurants that serve enormous portions, he eats half the entrée and a few forkfuls of the side and takes the rest in a to-go box.

The character knows when to say when, and while out on a bender with his friends, he reluctantly gets roped into being the designated driver. It's not the responsibility he finds so repellent, it's the fact that his friends can be so obnoxious when they're drunk, and it always takes at least half an hour each to get them out of the car at the end of the night because they keep babbling about "I love you, man" and whatever petty conquests to which the evening has borne witness.

The character is mailing a check to a credit card company that after it arrives will see her completely out of debt. Well, the student loans still exist, but those are an investment in education, not an indulgence.

The character gets lucky on a bachelor party trip and steps away from the blackjack table while he's ahead. The rest of the party ends up losing hundreds of dollars, but the character manages to pay for his whole share of the trip and the groom-to-be's, and even takes home a few extra dollars.

The character is on his way back to his hotel on a business trip because he has to be in his client's office at seven the next morning. Although the character would like to see a play or perhaps some live music, he knows that if he stays out all night, he'll be groggy and inattentive — and that's not why his company wants him here.

The character used to be overweight, but a good exercise regimen and careful monitoring of what she eats has done wonders for her figure and her health in general.

An unknown individual offers the character an exorbitant amount of money if he'll drive a car provided by the unknown individual to a street parking space near a mansion in the affluent part of town. The character refuses even though it's a lot of money for just a little bit of work.

The character purchases a car he's had his eye on for a while. As the salesman suggests a few options and upgrades, the character considers but declines. He pays the dealership upfront with the money he had instead of financing a few extra bells and whistles at an exorbitant interest rate.

The character has a design project he needs to complete for his employer by the end of the week. It's going to take a him a little more than eight hours a day during the week to finish, but he figures he can complete the project by spacing out the extra time over the five work days instead of waiting until Friday and having to pull an all-nighter to complete the design.

The character holds a public office and takes a meeting with a member of a local chemical manufacturer. The manufacturer offers a significant incentive for the character to turn a blind eye to the detrimental effects of one of its products, but the character doesn't succumb to the allure of the money or the favor.

Envy

Envy is common in the modern world, where not only do sharp divisions exist between the haves and the have-nots, but also the ready availability of information reveals who has what in up-to-the-minute lists.

The character, envious of his neighbor's luck at winning a friendly poker game, steals something small from the neighbor's house while everyone gathers his things at the end of the night.

The character indulges in a fit of jealousy after an ugly breakup with a significant other. She's already found someone who seems to be better for her than he was, so he intends to find a girl who looks somewhat like her, use her for sex, and then treat her horribly.

Someone comes to the character seeking help in straightening out a misunderstanding between his employer and himself. The character is envious of his friend's success and deliberately gives him bad advice, which the friend takes before being ultimately fired from his job.

The character resents a relationship that he sees forming between a friend of his and one of their mutual acquaintances. To keep that relationship from growing, he subtly speaks about the foibles of the friend and the acquaintance whenever he's in the company of the other.

A character who has made poor choices in his life and resents the relative stability his peer group has often laments about how it was just his bad luck to be caught, how it's not fair that he should have to pay his debts to society while others get off scot-free, and how his woes are caused by grudges carried by others, bad cops, clerical errors, and the like. Naturally, this lack of responsibility for his actions gradually puts his fellows on poor terms with him.

The character is at a party and cajoles a more popular guest into having too many drinks, which is in hopes of causing a debilitating hangover in the object of his envy the next morning.

The character, receiving a large bonus on his paycheck, finally comes into his own. Instead of treating his friends to dinner or picking up a gift for his wife, he hoards the money in hopes of always having it to look back upon when everyone else is making it big again and he's just getting by.

The character laughs at an automobile accident that occurs between a Cadillac and a Mercedes while deciding in his mind that the victims were so rich they had to have come by their wealth dishonestly and therefore deserved the wreck by dint of karma.

The character loses touch with reality and kills his sibling, who he always suspected of being their parents' favorite.

While on the way to a coffee shop, the character and her friend see a five-dollar bill blowing across the street. The friend stoops to pick it up. Then, while they're enjoying their coffee, the friend rises to go to the bathroom and at which point, the character mixes a spoonful of salt into her coffee.

Gluttony

Those who name Gluttony as their Vice are often in for a wild ride as slaking the glutton's hunger often drags a little bit of every other Vice (and even some Virtues) along with it. Sensual pleasures dominate people with this Vice from the sexual ecstasy of Lust to the excess afforded by Greed and back again.

The character can't resist buying one more round for the bar. In this case, his own thirst for liquor is compounded by the riotous atmosphere of everyone else having a good time and the character being the one responsible for it.

The character has a wife, a girlfriend, and two mistresses on the side. He's driven by the pleasure he gets from fucking them, not the carnality of the whole sordid mess.

The character doesn't go anywhere without being blasted out of his mind on speed. It simply makes him feel better than he does when he's all strung out on empty, and if it's not about feeling better, why's he spending half of his monthly income on meth?

The character takes irrational risks that range from driving in heavy traffic at 100 miles an hour to taking physical dares that he has no reason to succeed at. The character is an adrenaline junkie and is into the risk for the rush of vitality it makes him feel in the aftermath.

The character steals small objects compulsively. He doesn't even think consciously about it, and he doesn't

think it through enough to steal anything of value. He just likes the thrill of potentially being caught — and the greater thrill of getting away with it.

The character loves to fight. He relishes the pain of competition and the feeling of conquest afterward. He doesn't fight in a mindless rage like someone afflicted by Wrath, but he just loves challenging himself and the feeling of victory over another.

The character is a true gym rat with memberships at various fitness clubs all over the city. The trunk of his car is full of boxes of protein shakes and sports drinks, and he's never far from his duffel bag of gym clothes and workout gloves.

It's all about oblivion, and the character likes nothing more than to drink or dope himself insensate with booze or narcotics. He's been to the emergency room a half-a-dozen times, and he wakes up every morning feeling as if the Devil himself is trying to dynamite his way out of his skull, but that just sends the character back to those sweet substances and the nepenthean relief they bestow.

There's nothing wrong with being a gourmand, is there? It's not as if the character sits around and eats junk food all day. No, his refined tastes run more to *filet mignon au poivre*, *lapin forestiere,* and veal Florentine. He just can't get enough of them.

In the small hours of the night, the character experiences intense cravings for... human blood. He's not a vampire, or at least he doesn't think he is, but he wakes almost every night with his body crying out for the salty metallic bloom of that precious fluid in his throat.

Greed

Money is the root of all evil or it is said, and although a character need not want only money to be considered greedy, material things are the hallmark of a character driven by this Vice. Greed sometimes keeps close company with Envy as the man whose avarice overtakes him often becomes jealous of those who have yet more. Still, Greed is common of its own accord, especially in Western societies in which capitalism is the rule of the day and the difference between success and mere subsistence is the boldness to take opportunity when it presents itself. Or so *Scarface* would have one believe.

The character, upon walking through a restaurant, sees a server's tip left on the table. After pausing momentarily to cause a brief diversion, he swipes the tip.

The character's greed manifests in his incessant desire to have the most up-to-date gadgetry available on the commercial market. He has the most stylish (and expensive) mobile phone, a PDA that constantly bleeps and lights up, a pair of televisions, and a full theater rig in this year's SUV and a laptop computer that shipped to stores the day after it was FedExed to his home.

The character never buys a round when out with friends or colleagues. Whether he has the money or not, he pays only for himself. Of course, he's always happy to *join in* a round, mostly because he assumes someone else is paying.

The character gladly goes through with a merger of her company and another, despite the fact that the merger will not only put more than 100 people out of their jobs but will also result in reduced healthcare benefits for those who do have the opportunity to stay on. None of this matters to the character — she's cashing out to the tune of $20 million and she doesn't have the conscience to spare for people who don't yet know that they used to work for her. In fact, her sale has a few hidden perks in that she qualifies for additional tax breaks based on the division of her corporate wealth from her personal wealth, and she grandfathers out of having to update her company's inventory and working assets.

The character sees an overweight man withdraw money from an ATM and count through 10 or 15 bills. Looking about to make sure he's not witnessed by anyone, he shadows the man for several blocks before setting up an ambush so he can steal the money.

The character witnesses a woman pulling up to a convenience store and dashing inside while leaving her car running. The character makes a break for it, obstructing his face as he crosses the parking lot (so as to hide his identity on the security tapes he knows are being recorded) and steals the car as the woman looks on with a shocked face from inside the store. She comes out screaming, and the character smirks while looking back over his shoulder to back the car out of the lot — only to find a gurgling infant in a car seat in the back of the car.

Someone's leasing a recently unoccupied apartment in the character's building and in all the fracas of moving, the movers left a box marked "Baseball Cards (Storage)" outside the front door. The character can't help himself and steals the box and finding himself in the possession of several thousand dollars' worth of vintage collectibles.

The character is a guest at a function where a prominent local businessman plans to write a check for $50,000 in support of a local church, whose congregation plans to build a cathedral. The character is present as the businessman begins writing the check, but the fire alarm goes off, and everyone flees the area. The character, however, lingered for a moment and found the check only partially written. In effect, he has a check made out for $50,000 with nothing written in the "pay to the order of" portion. He now seeks someone through whom to launder the check.

The character threw a party over the weekend and found in his bathroom one of his guests' "snuffboxes" with a half-ounce of cocaine inside. The character doesn't know whether to move the coke (that's about a thousand dollars' worth of blow) or to keep it all for himself and hit the strip clubs.

The character had too much to drink and smoke last night and ended up going home with someone she didn't know beforehand. Today, she woke up in a strange bed with the guy passed out next to her and his wallet on the nightstand. She got up, dressed quietly, and stole out of the place with his wallet in her purse. Now on her way home, some of the details of the night are coming back to her, and she thinks a mutual friend of theirs actually introduced them, which could prove embarrassing at the very least since she stole something belonging to him.

Lust

Lust is often depicted as an intense desire for physical pleasure — specifically carnality — but that isn't always the extent of the Vice. In some cases, lust isn't a Vice at all as with a "lust for life." Let's not kid ourselves, though: most of the time, Lust is a close companion to Greed and Gluttony. Where Lust differs from those Vices, though, is in the emotional component. A lustful person wants to feel the subject of his lust.

The character is effectively co-dependent but not in the same context as a derangement of the same sort. She keeps the company of significant others she knows are bad for her simply because they respond to her for good or for ill. In her mind, her excessive care for people validates the relationship as she helps them do what they want, even if it's detrimental.

The character is a chick-flick junkie. She thrives on the contrived bathos of the over-sentimentalized victory of earnestness and love over the harsh realities of the world, preferably when it concludes neatly in an hour and a half.

The character always has a woman on his arm and rarely remembers her name. This colors all his relationships with women, and he often refers to women with overly familiar nicknames such as "honey" and "sweetheart" because he can't be bothered to learn their real names.

The character suffers from a social disease to which he was exposed during one of his frequent amorous encounters. This isn't always visible, but a character in a bathroom might hear a gasp of pain as the character in question feels a burning sensation as he urinates.

The character is a true food addict. He's not a glutton as it's not the act of eating that gives him pleasure, but

it's the feeling of consuming that fulfills him. Indeed, he considers everything "comfort food," and he eats to fill an emotional void in his life.

The character deliberately dresses provocatively in order to be seen as an object of desire by other people. This is a sort of reciprocal lust in which the character literally desires to be desired. (Before anyone gets bent out of shape, no, we're not saying that everyone who dresses a certain way is guilty of sin. Have a sense of perspective, people.)

The character is a student who is so desirous of having good grades that he puts every other aspect of his life on hold to serve his studies. He doesn't eat properly, he neglects his friendships, he skips church, and he "forgot" to renew his driver's license.

The character, forgoing even the efforts of finding an attractive partner in his pursuit of carnal satisfaction, is a chronic masturbator. While the character will certainly pursue a sexual encounter with another person if it's convenient, he often finds it less difficult (because of the lack of emotional attachment) to simply pleasure himself and not have to work toward maintaining a relationship.

The character practices incest. So distorted is his natural love for his sister that it has led him to commit (and continue committing) inappropriate expressions of it. For the most part, the character is discreet as he knows to be ashamed of this aberration, but the fact that he can't stop doing it indicates that his understanding of familial love is flawed.

The character fanatically pursues her notion of godliness. She makes an overt demonstration of attending church, leading a righteous life, and heeding the heavenly virtues. In truth, however, she justifies her own transgressions as acceptable *because* she's so pious. Some emptiness within her causes her to want to be godlier than anyone else, so she pursues her idea of that state zealously.

Pride

It's one thing to be confident in one's own abilities. It's another thing altogether to be convinced that one is just short of the Second Coming.

The character is engaged in a rousing story of "I told you so" regarding a recent risky plan of his that paid off in spades. Everyone around him is halfway interested in the particulars of the story but just as put off by the boastful nature of his tale.

The character is physically injured, but he insists on going through with an upcoming rock climbing trip because he knows he can work through the pain and still enjoy the weekend. He's equally determined to show everyone what a trooper he is and to see himself if he can meet the challenge.

The character has recently been taken to task at work for losing the Overstreet account. Ever since being dressed down, he's been standoffish and distant with friends and relatives, none of whom know how greatly the character bungled part of his job.

The character has been pulled over by a police officer for a traffic stop and is belligerently denying that he's had too much to drink to be able to drive home. The character is significantly overestimating his tolerance of alcohol and is probably going to spend the night in jail if he keeps pressing his attitude.

Although she graduated more than a decade ago, the character still displays an extreme degree of school spirit. She wears a class ring, follows her school's sports teams, and participates in alumni functions every time someone schedules one. Colleagues who have grown up and moved on think this is all a little precious, but the character shows no signs of abating her passion for her school.

The character is responsible for subordinates but also accountable to superiors. He has the habit of claiming credit for his subordinates' successes and also for dishing off his own failures as the failures of those same subordinates. Needless to say, this makes him immensely unpopular among the people who report to him, but those to whom he's responsible haven't yet seen through his duplicity.

The character dresses very ostentatiously so as to draw attention to himself. Indeed, he presents himself as more affluent than he actually is, and his credit is stretched extremely thin.

Conversations with the character tend to revolve around things that she's done or seen or heard with only peripheral interest on her part in other people's impressions. Even if the conversation doesn't offer chances for boasting, the character takes the opportunity to involve examples of her experience or area of knowledge.

The character is reluctant to stand down from his position, even when demonstrably proven wrong with facts that undermine his position. In matters such as this, the character tries to turn the argument into one of opinion, which is "softer" than fact and can be defended as a statement of preference.

The character makes a great show of exercising his Virtue in hopes of being widely recognized for his admirable morality.

Sloth

Sloth can manifest in many ways and the most obvious of which is simple laziness, but the more complex of which can seem like other Vices or even, on occasion, Virtues. A character who seems altruistic, for example,

might be avoiding some more complicated situation or might be taking the path of least resistance between two less than ideal choices. A slothful character might seem ambivalent or even enthusiastic — until the true effort required to resolve a development makes itself known.

The character always seems to have some prior commitment whenever asked for a favor that doesn't have an immediate benefit to him.

Whenever the character is assigned additional responsibility at work, he tends to want to form a committee that can oversee the new duty. He intends to delegate the additional responsibilities among the other members of the committee so he doesn't have to handle it all himself.

The character is an irredeemable procrastinator. Whatever needs to be done will continue to need to be done until the very last possible minute, and at which point the character will undertake it with a minimum of effort and a maximum of complaint that someone else couldn't address the situation.

When a group including the character and his colleagues is asked to volunteer for an event that would truly showcase the character's skills or knowledge, the character doesn't step forward to offer his expertise. When pressed about his reluctance, the character tries to divert the argument by saying that it would have been too "proud" to volunteer.

The character is half an hour late for an engagement he's arranged with another character. When the other character asks him why he's late, he doesn't have a compelling answer. The truth of the matter is that he just dawdled instead of taking a shower, shaving, etc.

The character never listens to phone messages. He finds it easier to check caller ID, see who called him, and call them directly rather than listening to the message and then talking to the caller about the exact same thing again.

The character thinks the world owes him a living. He plays the part of the unrecognized, embittered genius who goes unnoticed by the rest of the world because their tastes are so base they can't appreciate him. In reality, he just can't be bothered to finish anything he starts.

The character lives beyond his means, largely because he has a host of attendants who see to the sundry needs of life that he just can't be bothered with. Someone mows his yard, a housekeeper takes care of his home, and even his children have a nanny so that the character doesn't have to meet even the responsibilities he's created for himself.

The character always has an excuse for why a specific undertaking of his failed — the market wasn't ready, the manufacturer didn't meet specifications, distribution wasn't in place — when the truth of the matter is that as the item's designer, he didn't spend enough time researching or developing his idea.

The character is forever paying fees and past due charges on his bills and accounts because he doesn't ever pay attention to what he owes to whom, how much, or even when. He doesn't balance his checkbook, either and instead preferring to just work off rough estimates and account statements he receives at ATMs.

Wrath

Perhaps the easiest of the Vices to characterize but the most difficult to characterize meaningfully, Wrath is the Virtue most commonly assigned to "combat characters" and those who represent physical obstructions. Wrath can be more than that designation, however (and combative characters can certainly have other Vices). A wrathful character might be quietly vindictive, passive-aggressive, or simply a bully taking out his hostility on people who have nothing to do with why he's so angry.

The character is writing a computer virus targeted at an online community that recently ousted him for breaching its code of ethics.

The character, venting his frustrations with his own life on people who look different or have a different ethnic origin, is a racist.

The character distrusts authority and automatically responds poorly to anyone in uniform or who represents any kind of government agency.

The character breaks things when angry — little things, knick-knacks, trinkets — by way of expressing anger instead of using some more positive outlet.

The character is easily frustrated with repetitive or mundane tasks such as folding laundry or sorting recyclables, and as his frustration mounts, his chances of making errors in those tasks increase, which causes his frustration to mount again....

The character responds to disagreement by raising his voice. He intends to browbeat those who disagree with him or "convince them by volume," which rarely has the constructive effect talking through a disagreement needs to achieve.

The character is a belligerent drunk. When she has a drink or two to relax a bit, those few drinks turn into several, and when she's had several, she becomes abusive and potentially even violent.

The character is on his way to drop a spoonful of sugar into an ex-girlfriend's gas tank. He doesn't know if it actually works or not, but he knows that it's the time-tested revenge method of the anguished lover.

The character listens to violent, hateful music and often wears clothes that express appreciation for certain bands or ideologies associated with that musical subculture.

The character adopts some countercultural philosophy not out of belief in its tenets but for the express purpose of offending those whom he believes himself aggrieved or oppressed by.

Do's and Don'ts for Using the City of Millions

The character-defining shortcuts we've gathered here can help both in the clutch and in the long term. To use the City of Millions effectively, though, keep a few ideas in mind.

• Do let your original ideas for characters trump these collected ideas. These character notes are "quick-starts" and are good for situations in which you need a character quickly or an idea germ upon which to build a character. They're generic by design and can't take into account the specifics of your chronicle, so be sure to paint them with your own individuality and imagination.

• Don't assume these characteristics are the be-all and end-all of defining Storyteller characters. If you come up with your own quirky or insightful shorthand characterizations, keep a notebook in which to record them.

• Do keep track of which ideas you've used before, and either leave those off the list for future consideration or develop them in a different direction from previous characters. If the characters see different iterations of the harmonica-playing ingénue, they're going to think something's weird... and not the "good" weird that makes a World of Darkness story flow.

• Don't overly characterize a Storyteller character with the ideas here. For example, if you know you need to have a character deliver cryptic advice to the players' character at a few key points during the chronicle, don't lend that character one of the traits herein that runs counter to her purpose as you see it. These ideas are designed to help you, not hem you in.

• Do keep notes when you use these characters. You never know when the players will find a Storyteller character whose concept they "click" with and can then be used as a recurring cast member on your part. Although these characters are designed to be fire-and-forget, quick-and-dirty characters, they may have an unexpected kind of chemistry with your chronicle that the most carefully planned character doesn't seem to engender.

Ambience and Attitude

Role playing a Hundred People at Once

Anyone who goes back to the neighborhood he grew up in, decades later, will find the place vastly changed. Beyond simply the different memories and feelings it might evoke, the place has been altered both physically and socially. Buildings have been torn down and new ones built, parks bulldozed, or green space added. Neighbors may sit on their front porches and greet each other now, whereas everyone used to keep to themselves; or the doors that used to always be left unlocked now have deadbolts.

Cities change over time, and a Storyteller who fails to reflect that fact in his narrative is failing to convey an engaging, dynamic world to his players. But beyond simply acknowledging that one neighborhood has seen better days while another seems to be on the upswing, a Storyteller may want to keep a more detailed account of the various sites in his chronicle. On a similar note, players like to see their characters, affecting the world around them, making a difference; a system for determining the impact of their actions (beyond just the Storyteller's whim, that is) can be very gratifying.

The first system presented here, **Attitude**, is for the characters. It allows them to win a neighborhood over to their side or sabotage an enemy's territory. They can stir up trouble just for the hell of it and see the game effects that such activities create, or they can pacify those who might otherwise have caused trouble for them. In general, Attitudes affect the interpersonal relations a character may have with specific Storyteller characters in the area and in the short term, rather than affecting the look and feel of the place or changing its residents' mentality in the long term.

The second system, **Ambience**, is more for the Storyteller's benefit. Even when the characters aren't trying to do so, they affect the environments through which they travel. Are they constantly hunting within the same few city blocks? Getting in open fights with rival coteries on the rooftops? Perhaps they're not being as careful and cautious as they could be while entering and exiting their havens. This system allows the Storyteller to track the characters' behavior in certain areas and suggests the game effects that this behavior might have on the chronicle as a whole.

In essence, Attitude can be shifted in a single scene, remains shifted for a short amount of time, and modifies Social rolls. Ambience, on the other hand, can only be shifted over several scenes or even chronicles (often unintentionally), stays shifted, and modifies Physical rolls. An area's Ambience determines its Attitude.

Descriptors

Both Attitude and Ambience use the same descriptors, which are presented below. Along with each descriptor is a description of the sort of place to which the descriptor might apply, the mental state of the people there, and a list of modifiers that may apply to relevant Mental, Physical, or Social Skills performed at that location. The Storyteller's judgment must overrule these suggested modifiers, of course; just because a riot is going on in the streets doesn't mean that a character locked in a secure vault can't work on math equations just fine. On the other hand, a character attempting to hack into a rival's mainframe from inside a riot zone might have problems with power outages, thrown objects damaging his equipment, and tear gas obscuring his vision.

In general, the modifiers are best applied to extended actions performed over an entire scene, rolls attempted "off-screen" by Retainers or Allies of the characters, or rolls used to represent actions that are not described in detail. For instance, the modifiers listed should always be applied to hunting performed in the location in question and would also be ideal for keeping track of a character's success on an investigation, experiment, research project, or attempt to win over the local community to a particular cause.

Each descriptor applies to a Storyteller-defined region, whether it is an entire neighborhood, a single city block, or a particular nightclub or park. The descriptors exist on a scale from generally "pleasant" to generally "dangerous" (though to whom and for whom depends on the specific circumstances). See Table 2–1 for the spectrum of Attitude and Ambience descriptors.

Dead

There's no one here to have an Attitude, one way or the other. Aside from a few night watchmen, transients, and scavengers, the place is devoid of human life. Locations in this state cannot have their Attitudes adjusted. The Ambience is dark and depressing and is difficult to alter as there is simply no one to care about the area. The descriptor applies to most Barrens. While characters receive bonuses to most Social and Stealth rolls here (the people are so drunk, high, or insane that it's easy to sneak up on them or manipulate them), that's only when the Storyteller determines that there's anyone there to interact with at all.

Mental: –5

Physical: +3 (–5 for hunting)

Social: +3 (–5 for hunting)

Isolated

This descriptor is reserved for places that have small numbers of potential prey but that are somehow more promising hunting grounds than the Barrens. Perhaps the people in the area are less unpleasant to feed upon or are less savvy and skittish or are simply easier to track down, thanks to the clicking of their heels on the pavement; regardless, they are out of reach of their fellow mortals and far from significant aid. Locations that lend themselves to this descriptor include downtown business districts at night when over-achieving or past-deadline employees must walk alone to their cars in poorly lit parking garages or sprawling industrial complexes during the night shift.

As with the Dead descriptor, the Attitude of this environment cannot be changed. Its primary feature is the lack of people with attitudes *to* influence.

Mental: +3

Physical: +3

Social: –3

Welcoming

Welcoming locations are both more active than Accepting locations and more mercurial. Likely environments include underground raves, meetings of secret societies, impromptu drum circles, biker gatherings, and the like. Some places, which require either an invitation or some secret information to find, assume that those who are there share some common interest, ideal, or understanding, and therefore are places where one's guard can be lowered. Others, whether due to naïveté or an impressive amount of faith and trust in humanity, simply happily welcome any who find them. Both environments, however, can turn ugly very quickly when the most meager of slights is committed. Whether an accidental signal that tells others that the outsider isn't supposed to be there or a taboo behavior or simply ruining the party, all such acts are punishable with snubbing, expulsion, mockery, or even attack depending on the mood and lifestyle of those present.

Unlike the other descriptors that fall in the spectrum, once an area becomes Welcoming, it cannot be brought "back down" to the next lower descriptor. Instead, the location persists at that state until the circumstances that brought about that Attitude or Ambience (the party, secret meeting, mental domination that is affecting the crowd or whatever) are over.

Mental: +5*

Physical: –5

Social: +5*

* So long as the local customs and traditions are known and followed.

Accepting

This fairly unusual environment is reserved for places with their own set of understood laws and places where outsiders come because they are in need or in search of some kind of understanding, peace, or knowledge. Communes, churches, and homeless shelters are usually this sort of environment; they are areas that are either created to help others or whose purpose is to spread a message. Accepting environments tend toward understanding and support in the face of unexpected behavior and are not easily altered by the actions of others. This may be because the organization supports a philosophy of patience and understanding or because those who reside there exhibit wisdom and peacefulness. Along with the understanding offered, however, comes a close eye on all those present, which makes it difficult to sneak around or inflict harm upon others without being discovered.

Mental: +3

Physical: –3

Social: +3

Drowsy

Appropriate for small towns, mostly safe, residential neighborhoods, or small businesses. Most folks here know one another and are generally accepting of outsiders so long as they look and act relatively normally. Small businesses dot the area, and their proprietors are helpful and conversational. People in these environments are generally talkative, though they never have much to say that is of substance. Children are fairly open in talking

with strangers, though they are educated enough not to follow people into dark alleys or get into their cars. Neighbors don't tend to watch out for one another, here, so much as they are always around one another and can't help but notice when something unusual happens to one of their own.

Mental: +1
Physical: –1
Social: +1

Calm

This is a neutral environment. It is not particularly active but not especially lethargic either. It could swing toward aggression or alarm when given significant impetus, but it remains steady until something pushes it in either direction. Behavior and responses are reasonable, and outsiders are judged on their actions and not their familiarity.

Mental: +0
Physical: +0
Social: +0

Wary

Rundown but safe neighborhoods, dive bars, and towns with failing industries all fit this descriptor. These environments have the same level of activity of Drowsy areas but are far less friendly and accommodating. The people in a Wary environment are on guard, though not against a specific group or activity. Folks here are too wrapped up in their own problems to pay attention to each other or to outsiders, and families and friendships exist only in the loosest sense of the word. Conversation is likely to be instigated only through charity ("Hey, can I bum a smoke? Thanks, man. I tell ya, with the factory closed down and that new tax on cigs, I can barely afford my fix these days!"), overlarge amounts of alcohol, or as a prelude to the occasional fight. Children are rarely out on the streets in these environments, and those who exist are wary and generally know how to take care of themselves... after all, no one else will do the job.

Mental: +1
Physical: –1
Social: +3

Simmering

These environments are waiting for the spark that will cause fights or force people to close up shop and lock their doors. Residents either take to the streets to get a feel for what is happening, drawn there by some unconscious sense of uncertainty or angst, or remain inside while feeling nervous for reasons they can't explain. Violence is not evident yet, but it wouldn't take much to cause it. Locals' response to outsiders depends on the individuals; generally, the populace is unlikely to be antagonistic toward individual outsiders just for being there.

Mental: +0
Physical: –2
Social: –2

Unruly

The people in this environment are not likely to be unified in their behavior or motivations, but they are all angry or concerned about something. It might be something within the environment itself or perhaps something abstract such as a recently passed law or word of some decision made by organized crime. Violence against outsiders is a strong likelihood in these environments and requires little more than direct eye contact or an overheard conversation to spark it. Some property destruction has likely already been committed, and local law enforcement may already be en route to keep an eye on the environment. Subtle or socially skilled outsiders should be able to get through without provoking aggression if they play their cards right.

Mental: –3
Physical: –3
Social: –1

Riotous

All semblance of civilization has been consumed in this environment. The cause could be anything from extreme fear and a sense of impending doom to justified anger over something out of the local populace's hands. The members of the populace all react in different ways, but the one thing they have in common is the extreme nature of that reaction. Some take to the streets, others cower inside, and some attempt to flee. Children are protected and kept out of the way of violence if possible. Outsiders will almost certainly be engulfed in the waves of violence on the streets although the mobs have so little direction that the violence is only incidentally perpetrated against specific individuals. More importantly, in all of the chaos, it's nearly impossible to perform such delicate tasks as trying to search for clues, provide medical care, or find records. Law enforcement or even military forces are either en route or already at the scene and indiscriminately subduing or even attacking anyone in the vicinity.

Mental: –5
Physical: –4
Social: –3

Antagonistic

An Antagonistic environment is one in which the local residents are unified by a common cause. They may barricade themselves in and protect their own, or they may actively seek out and attack whomever they feel to be the cause of their problems. Regardless, it is hard to move unseen through such regions and difficult to win them over, given their paranoia; however, they aren't too terribly difficult to outsmart and work around. This is the most dangerous type of environment for outsiders to walk into, more so even than Riotous, because the locals are not randomly destroying and mobbing. Rather, they are organized, determined, and deadly. And odds are good that they're taking care of their problems on their own, quietly and brutally, so there are no law enforcement personnel on their way to settle things down.

Unlike the other descriptors that fall in the spectrum, once an area becomes Antagonistic, it cannot be brought "back down" to the next lower descriptor. Instead, the location persists at that state until the circumstances that brought about that Attitude or Ambience (an attack by a rival group, widespread witnesses to a supernatural event, mental domination that is affecting the crowd or whatever) are over.

Mental: –3
Physical: –5
Social: –5

Attitude

Attitude has as many uses as a creative player cares to develop. It can be a clever ancilla's way of asserting his power without directly confronting or defying the local power structure or a desperate neonate's attempt to make things more difficult for his pursuers during a chase scene. It can be the opening salvo to a territorial war among elders or the coup de grâce in such a war that sparks a riot.

The first step in using Attitude in your chronicle is to assign a default descriptor from the list above to each frequented location. It may also be helpful to assign a default descriptor to your chronicle's city or to large sections of it and such that any spontaneously created environment is likely to have that descriptor unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise.

Each descriptor is defined by its location on a spectrum that roughly determines the level of aggression toward outsiders. Specifically, each descriptor includes a modifier affecting Social Skill rolls made against residents of that environment. The same modifier applies to long-term actions made in that environment such as hunting attempts, nightly efforts at passing through unseen, and the like; these are described in more detail under "Ambience" below.

Attitude & Ambience Spectrum
Table 2 - 1

Mod	Attitude/Ambience	Mod
n/a	Welcoming Ment: +5* Phys: -5 Soc: +5*	n/a
+3	Accepting Ment: +3 Phys: -3 Soc:+3	-5
-3	Drosey Ment: +1 Phys: -1 Soc: +1	-3
+0	Calm Ment: +0 Phys: +0 Soc: +0	+0
-3	Wary Ment: +1 Phys: -1 Soc: +3	+1
-4	Simmering Ment: +0 Phys: -2 Soc: -2	+3
-5	Unruly Ment: -3 Phys: -3 Soc: -1	+2
-5	Riotous Ment: -5 Phys: -4 Soc: -3	-5
n/a	Antagonistic Ment: -3 Phys: -5 Soc: -5	n/a

Changing an area's Attitude involves moving it up or down that spectrum by succeeding at one of the tests described under "Affecting Attitude" below. Table 2–1 presents the location of each descriptor in the spectrum and possible modifiers to tests performed there. Also, to the left and right of each Attitude are the modifiers applied to tests made to change those locations in either direction, whether up the scale or down. For instance, referencing the table, we find that changing a location's Attitude from Simmering to Unruly is fairly easy (+3 modifier to attempts to do so) while changing the Attitude back from Unruly to Simmering is quite difficult (–5 modifier to attempts to do so).

Note that modifiers to Social rolls in the location are distinctly different from modifiers to rolls made to change the location's Attitude and do not combine.

Affecting Attitude

Changes in an Attitude's environment can always be dictated by the Storyteller, but the best use of this system is when the game is in need of an objective set of difficulties for effecting this change without much role playing, such as during strategic Attitude alteration as part of a turf war when the exact conversations or actions taken do not need to be described in detail or as a quick attempt to stir things up on a vampire's way through when maintaining the energy of a chase scene or an evening's montage is more important than describing the locals' reactions to the characters' behavior.

Step 1: Observe the Location

Before attempting to alter a location's Attitude, characters may wish to first observe the area and attempt to discover where pressure is best applied to effect change. This may involve simply standing about and observing who in the area is the most paranoid or defensive by sneaking in the shadows and listening to residents discuss their fears and desires when they think they're alone or even speaking with the local government and authorities to learn which issues are the most likely to spark trouble or appease the locals. Appropriate tests for observing an area, which is an extended action, might be Intelligence + Politics, Dexterity + Stealth and Wits + Empathy. The amount of time required to observe a location is shown in Table 2–2, but that amount of time and indeed the efficacy of the test varies by the method used. A political approach takes the amount of time listed but has twice the normal difficulty as interpreting real-world effects from official records can be difficult. Stealth takes twice the normal amount of time because the character must simply wait around until he overhears or sees something useful. As always, simply talking to people is the best way to find out what makes them tick, but this is not always possible for more monstrous vampires, whose sins and hunger are palpable to the living.

Before attempting to observe a location, the character must first announce in which direction he hopes to push the location's Attitude. The default number of successes necessary to successfully observe the location is five, but the dice pool is affected by the modifier for moving the Attitude in whichever direction the character is intending to push it. In addition, if the character wishes to change the location's Attitude by more than one step (see below), he must gain five additional successes per step along the spectrum beyond the first.

If a character does not have the time or inclination to observe the location before attempting to affect change (or has gained some successes but not enough additional successes to have observed the location for the number of steps of Attitude change he is attempting), the number of successes required to shift the Attitude are doubled.

Step 2: Shifting Attitude

There are as many ways to actually initiate change in a location's Attitude as there are characters and their players' ideas. Possible rolls might be Intelligence + Politics to shore up the area's economic stability, Strength + Brawl to trash the place and scare folks, or Presence + Manipulation to stir up the locals about some common cause. Attempting to change a location's Attitude is always an extended action; the time required for each roll depends on the size of the location, as shown in Table 2–2, below.

The number of successes required to change an Attitude depends on the level of change desired. Moving a location's Attitude one space up or down the spectrum requires 10 successes via an extended action with modifiers applied to the dice pool as specified on Table 2–1. Any time the character suffers a dramatic failure then all accumulated successes gained thus far are lost. Likewise, with the dawning of each new day, accumulated successes are halved.

If the character wishes to move a location's Attitude more than one step up or down the Attitude spectrum, things become more complicated. For each step beyond the first that the Attitude is to be moved, the character must gain an additional 10 successes. So, moving the Attitude one step requires 10 successes, two steps requires 20 successes, three steps requires 30 successes, and so on. The doubling effect caused by failing to get the lay of the land is applied to this total number of successes, so attempting to shift an Attitude two spots along the spectrum without getting the lay of the land would require 40 successes!

Observing Location Table 2-2

Size of Location	Time: Lay of the Land	Time: Shift Attitude	Alternate Examples
Single Establishment	Up to 10 minutes	Up to 1 minute	Nightclub, small park, large home
Large Building	Up to 1 hour	Up to 10 minutes	Office complex, apartment building
City Block	Up to 1 evening	Up to 1 hour	High-rise, shopping mall, large park
Neighborhood	Up to 1 week	Up to 1 evening	Small town, stretch of highway

Obviously, using these rules, it can be quite difficult to affect dramatic change in a location within the span of a single hour, evening, or the like. But shouldn't a character try anyway since accumulated successes still move the Attitude along the spectrum? The danger in doing so is that when using this special extended action, *any roll that generates zero successes is counted as a dramatic failure*, which means that all successes accumulated thus far are lost. Manipulating the social petri dish of the modern city is a complex task, and pushing too hard can backfire on the would-be social engineer.

Length of Attitude Shifts

Locations return to their default Attitude after an amount of time determined by the Storyteller. Everything from the thing that caused the residents' change in Attitude (was it mundane, or do they suspect something supernatural?) to the state of nearby locations (if the neighboring blocks continue to have an Attitude of Unruly, it will be difficult for the apartment building near them to move from Wary down to Calm) to the level of change (a normally Drowsy town that suddenly becomes Riotous may bear scars from the event for years to come). As a rule of thumb, however, people and places are resilient; assume that an area whose Attitude has shifted returns to its normal Attitude by moving back along the spectrum at a pace of one Attitude shift per night until it is back to its original Attitude.

Extra Effort

Given the rules presented thus far, changing an area's Attitude would seem to be the work of nights and weeks, not single scenes. And all that effort for such a short-lasting effect seems pointless. But that is before considering Merits, which can grease the wheels of the Attitude machine, and the other abilities the Kindred can bring to bear: Disciplines. These powers allow a vampire to accomplish far more in terms of social engineering than even the most determined mortal.

Merits

Who you know can affect what you know and vice versa. In the interwoven world of the city, Social Merits can give more direct insight into the pulse of a location than even the most powerful Discipline.

Allies

As with most obstacles that face the Kindred, the benefits provided by an ally depend entirely on that ally's particular abilities and skills. In general, assume that your dice pool for shifting Attitude receives a bonus of +1 per dot with a group of Allies that the Storyteller deems related to your efforts.

Barfly

Dive bars and clubs are the windows to a neighborhood's soul, both in discerning the nature of its locale and in observing how they react to outsiders. When observing a neighborhood-sized environment, characters with this Merit may do so in up to one evening rather than one hour.

Contacts

Allies provide the muscle while Contacts provide the information. In general, assume that your dice pool for observing a location receives a bonus of +1 per dot with a group of Contacts that the Storyteller deems related to your efforts.

Fame

This Merit, possibly granting a bonus to Socialize or Persuasion rolls, works as normal if he attempts such while dealing with locations' Attitudes. Using one's Fame to alter popular public opinion often means, however, that one's name is presented as one of the reasons or inspirations for that new public opinion. Using this Merit to shift Attitude is not recommended for those who wish to retain a low profile.

Resources, Retainer or Status

Money and connections can get you what time, effort, and knowledge cannot hope to attain. Characters can send private eyes to dig up information or hooligans to stir up trouble, use bureaucratic manipulation to make cops or politicians ignore a neighborhood for a night or a week, or even pay off troublesome neighborhood leaders who might otherwise rally their peers to some sort of protest or riot. While characters may be able to accomplish more by using their money, Retainers, or Status creatively As a general guideline, one dot of any of these Merits gives a character a "floating" dice pool of two dice. This pool represents people or the system working on behalf of the character and may be rolled, by itself to attempt any extended tests the character doesn't want to perform (or doesn't have time to perform) himself. Each additional dot in the Merit doubles the size of the pool to four, eight, 16, and eventually a dice pool of 32 at the highest levels of either Merit!

The character may divide up the floating dice pools on whichever tests he wishes, but he may not combine his own successes with those of his hired help. The dice pools granted by either Merit may be used once per week.

Disciplines

The Damned can strike terror in the hearts of mortal with a simple gaze, gather information by looking through the eyes of animals or even becoming them, and destroy supposedly secure doors and walls with their bare hands. That which would require effort, tools, and extreme difficulty on the part of others can be like child's play to a vampire who is willing to expend his precious Vitae for the cause.

Below the narrative description of how each Discipline might be used are two entries: automatic successes and rolled successes. The automatic successes entry refers to the number of dots that the vampire possesses in that Discipline. For each dot, the character gains an automatic success on the roll listed. The rolled successes entry describes a less surefire but potentially more beneficial way to the use the specific powers of each Discipline. The character may roll the power's dice pool and spend Vitae or Willpower as normal (if necessary); each success he gains may then be applied to a *single* lay of the land roll or shift Attitude roll as specifically described. A character may use both automatic successes and rolled successes on a single roll, assuming they both apply. However, successes may only be applied to a given location once per chapter; if a character with three dots in Animalism takes four rolls to accumulate the successes necessary to shift a neighborhood's Attitude, for instance, he can apply only his three automatic successes to the first roll and not to all four.

In the descriptions below, the phrases "or better" and "positive end of the spectrum" refer to the Welcoming end of the spectrum while the phrases "or worse" and "negative end of the spectrum" refer to the Antagonistic end of the spectrum.

Animalism

Given humans' love-hate relationship with the animal kingdom, mastery over that kingdom is a very useful skill for those who would pull at the kine's emotional strings. Animals are neither intelligent enough nor concerned enough with human behavior to help a character with the lay of the land. However, they can be commanded to harass pedestrians, break into food stores, terrorize their owners, and generally lurk and act spooky. On the other hand, they could be told to clear out, to clean up the streets, to alert humans whenever they witness violent acts, and so on.

Automatic Successes: Initiating change toward Drowsy, Calm, or Wary.

Rolled Successes (Obedience): Shifting Attitude (maximum one step) toward Drowsy, Calm, or Wary. Feral Whispers may be used instead of Obedience, but the location is treated as being one size larger for the purposes of determining the amount of time required to shift the Attitude. Using Call of the Wild before using Obedience halves the time required to shift the area's Attitude.

Rolled Successes (Subsume the Lesser Spirit): Getting the lay of the land (any).

Auspex

This powerful Discipline, granting the character insight into the residents' greatest fears and desires, allows a character to read a location like an open book. Bullies, criminals, abusers, adulterers, and other negative individuals can be easily detected and the information gained about them stored for later use in improving the area's Attitude. Meanwhile, neighborhood leaders, building supervisors, and local heroes all have skeletons in their closets and personal weaknesses, and Auspex can uncover the most deeply buried of these.

Automatic Successes: Getting the lay of the land (any method, any Attitude) and doing so in half the normal time.

Rolled Successes (Telepathy): Shifting Attitude using a social method.

Rolled Successes (Twilight Projection): Getting the lay of the land in an environment with an Attitude of Calm or better.

Dominate

Easily the most powerful Discipline for the purposes of altering the Attitude of a location, Dominate is essentially carte blanche to shape mortals' wills to a character's desires.

Automatic Successes: Shifting Attitude (any method, any Attitude).

Rolled Successes (Command): Shifting Attitude in either direction with any number of steps for which the character has successfully gained the lay of the land. For each additional level of mastery the character has, the time he must spend doing so is halved.

Majesty

Majesty allows a Kindred to convince the residents of a location that he has given them Heaven on Earth... at least, for as long as he's around. This Discipline allows for dramatic, instantaneous changes in local behavior, but they are inevitably short-lived.

Automatic Successes: Shifting Attitude toward the positive end of the spectrum.

Rolled Successes (Awe): Shifting Attitude toward the positive end of the spectrum, but the location shifts back to its default Attitude at a rate of one step per hour, rather than one step per day.

Rolled Successes (Revelation): Getting the lay of the land in an environment with an Attitude of Simmering or better.

Nightmare

Nightmare is not quite as versatile as Dominate, but it is even more efficient when it comes to driving an Attitude farther into negative territory. You don't need to figure out who the most influential members of the community are or what their darkest fears might be when you can make everyone you see piss themselves in terror.

Using this power to alter an environment's Attitude is a blatant violation of the Masquerade and is likely to bring the wrath of the city's Prince or perhaps even that of Princes from other domains down upon the head of the offending vampire.

Automatic Successes: Shifting Attitude toward the negative end of the spectrum.

Rolled Successes (Monstrous Countenance): Ten successes on a use of this power shifts the Attitude of a single establishment to Wary in 1/10th the normal time regardless of its original Attitude or the modifier usually needed to shift it. For each level of mastery the character has in this Discipline beyond the first, he may either increase the size of the environment he is able to affect or may instantly shift the environment to an Attitude one step worse than Wary. The character may pick and choose each time he uses this Discipline, so a vampire with mastery of level three (Eye of the Beast) could shift an entire city block to Wary within a matter of minutes, shift a large building to Simmering in a single minute, or instantly shift a single establishment to Unruly.

Obfuscate

The shadow slipping through your building can overhear anything he wants to and finding out through everyday conversation who the most respected, balanced, sane, and influential person is in the environment. And then, using his ability to appear out of nowhere in that person's home and destroy any sense of his security, he can drive the poor bastard stark raving mad. Once that happens, the neighborhood is sure to follow.

Automatic Successes (Cloak of Night): Getting the lay of the land using Stealth.

Rolled Successes (Cloak of Night): Getting the lay of the land using Stealth. This method requires half again the normal time investment, rather than twice the normal time investment; the Kindred must still wait around until he overhears or sees something useful, but he, coming and going as necessary to seek out the best information, may do so fairly easily.

Rolled Successes (Cloak of Night): Shifting Attitude toward the negative end of the spectrum using fear or intimidation.

Protean

This Discipline is useful only in shifting Attitude at the highest levels of mastery when the character's shapechanging abilities make him the ultimate observer. As a bat, he can hear and see in the darkest night. As a wolf, he can smell fear. And as mist, he can seep through even the smallest crack to observe residents in their darkest, most private moments.

Unlike the other Disciplines, this one does not grant automatic or rolled successes. Instead, simply having the Shape of the Beast power allows the character to get the lay of the land via Stealth with half again the normal time investment, rather than twice the normal time investment. Having the Body of Spirit power, meanwhile, allows the character to get the lay of the land via Stealth with the normal time investment, rather than twice the normal time investment.

Other Abilities

The effects of Merits and Discipline powers listed here are just a sampling of possibilities. New powers introduced in other sourcebooks, the abilities of Lupines and

mages, and even creative uses of everyday skills may be added to this list as ways to affect an area's Attitude.

Ambience

If Attitude is the micro, Ambience is the macro. It is on the same spectrum as Attitude, and the same modifiers are applied, but they are used differently. Getting a handle on Ambience and using it in your chronicle is easy, once you've mastered the complexities of Attitude.

The descriptors for Ambience have already been presented along with the modifiers they cause to various rolls or actions the characters might attempt. The question, then, is how Ambience changes.

Whenever a particularly powerful event, whether violent or peaceful, occurs in a location, the event should be rated on a scale of one to five dots by the Storyteller with those dots marked on a tracking sheet that lists the various locations and neighborhoods of the chronicle. Positive changes or events should be recorded using a symbol different from negative changes or events (x's and o's, pluses and minuses, etc.). When the number of positive dots' worth of events in a location is equal to the modifier listed for shifting its Attitude one step toward Welcoming, the Ambience shifts one step in that direction. When the number of negative dots' worth of events is equal to the modifier listed for shifting the Attitude one step toward Antagonistic, the Ambience shifts one step in that direction. Positive dots cancel out negative dots and vice versa, so an area can never have both kinds of dots on the tracking sheet at once.

Examples of events that might shift a location's Ambience, and the amount of weight they carry toward that occurrence, are presented below.

Appearance and Structures

• Volunteer or convict cleanup crews make a pass of the area (Positive)

• • New gangs enter the area and begin tagging walls and signs with graffiti, breaking windows, and so on (Negative)

• • • A property-owner coalition implements a beautification plan (Positive)

• • • • Entire new housing developments or public spaces are added (Positive)

• • • • • Accidents or acts of God such as fire, hurricanes, and flooding gut entire buildings or destroy whole blocks (Negative)

Businesses

• A new independent store or franchise opens in the area (Positive)

• • A part of a massive corporate chain opens in the area, eventually putting local independent competitors out of business (Negative)

• • • An investment group puts money into several local businesses with the specific goal of revitalizing the area (Positive)

• • • • A factory or other large employer is sabotaged, suffers cutbacks, or is exposed as using illegal processes, fraud, and so on (Negative)

• • • • • A factory or other large employer is opened nearby and brings new jobs to the neighborhood (Positive)

Funding and Infrastructure

Positive

• A successful local fundraiser is held (Positive)

• • A school, post office, or other public service must close down due to needed repairs, lack of staff, and general under funding (Negative)

• • • Politician running for office makes the area's revitalization his "pet project" (Positive)

• • • • A new highway exit leading to the area brings increased traffic and economic boom (Positive)

• • • • • Power and water lost to entire grid and police ordered not to patrol area anymore (Negative)

Non-Violent Crime

• A drug dealer stakes out the local schoolyard (Negative)

• • The head of the family that just moved in is a cop, is active-duty military or is ex-military, and he or she is one scary son of a bitch; temporary curfew is enforced by police (Positive)

• • • A pimp or drug dealer sets up shop in the area and using it as is his primary place in which to do business (Negative)

• • • • Organized crime claims the area as its own, ensuring that only *respectable* business is conducted there (Positive)

• • • • • The police who are supposed to patrol the location are crooked and have been paid to turn a blind eye to a specific criminal element's actions; the area has become a hunting ground for a child kidnapping ring (Negative)

Population Change

• Several of the residents, who are members of the National Guard or are active military, are called up to participate in an operation overseas (Negative)

• • A new real estate agent takes an interest in the area and brings new families to look at properties (Positive)

• • • Many established families are chased out by organized crime, move to the suburbs for work, or are deported because of new immigration laws (Negative)

• • • • The neighborhood or an aspect of it, such as the school, is featured in a prominent local or national publication as a "good place to buy a home" or a "good place to raise a family" (Positive)

• • • • • An entire coterie of vampires hunts at the location regularly, and they make no special efforts toward keeping their victims alive (Negative)

Social Unity

• A prominent family or community leader suffers a breakdown (Negative)

• • A new church opens and galvanizes the neighborhood's sense of community (Positive)

• • • The area receives an influx of refugees or immigrants of a race or culture that has a history of tension with the neighborhood's dominant race or culture (Negative)

• • • • A celebrity or popular official, who has chosen the neighborhood's population to champion, relocates her home or office to the area (Positive)

• • • • • A racial hate crime is committed that leads to the death of an innocent, probably a child (Negative)

Supernatural Event

• A disturbed relic or burial chamber leads to a minor haunting (Negative)

• • A faith healer travels through the area, successfully curing many local ailments (Positive)

• • • An elder vampire with a level of mastery above 5 in a Discipline begins to make regular use of that power, which has odd, if not entirely conscious, manifestations in the population around him (Negative)

• • • • The area is cleansed of a great evil that has burdened it for centuries if not millennia (Positive)

• • • • • A major occult ritual is performed that warps reality, causes the dead to rise en masse, or leaves behind vast swaths of physical evidence that cannot be explained (Negative)

Violent Crime

• A mundane brawl breaks out between a handful of locals (Negative)

• • A long-term neighborhood watch program is implemented, including gangs of patrolling Guardian Angel-esque groups; local law enforcement initiates a short-term focused patrol plan in the neighborhood as part of a city-wide sweep (Positive)

• • • A supernatural brawl including at most a dozen vampires or other creatures is witnessed by several locals; a gang skirmish erupts or a drug deal goes bad, and both sides use firearms (Negative)

• • • • A supernatural predator stakes out the area and specifically hunts down violent criminals as his prey; a vigilante mob finds, tortures, kills and then displays the body of a notorious local criminal as a warning to other miscreants (Positive)

• • • • • A no-holds-barred battle with dozens of supernatural combatants on each side takes place; an extended gang war erupts in the neighborhood with fully automatic firearms as the weapons of choice; a terrorist attack, occult sacrifice, or mass murder takes place in the neighborhood, which makes headlines and either kills a large percentage of the population outright or steals their sense of security (Negative)

Using Ambience and Attitude

If Attitude and Ambience seem to overlap a good bit, it's because they were designed to do so. They are two methods of tracking and potentially altering the same general factors. Storytellers should feel free to use both in unison or only one of them. Tracking shifts in Attitude might be too dice-intensive or board-gamey for some groups while changes in Ambience might be too vague for others to want to bother with.

Similarly, Storytellers must decide how much of this information to put into the players' hands based on how much control the Storytellers want the players to have over their surroundings. In a chronicle in which turf wars and control of domains on a large scale is the focus, the players may have access to all of the rules for Attitude at their fingertips but have a vague idea of how Ambience works. On the other hand, in a more "close-in" chronicle in which a player simply seeks to inconvenience a rival's attempts at hunting or tracking down the locals, the players might shift Attitudes by accident without ever realizing that a system exists for it.

No matter how much information is given to the players, savvy groups may recognize that the area they repeatedly use as a battleground against Lupines has changed significantly over time, or that scaring a few of the locals can make things quite difficult for their rivals. The players, seeing if they can create similar or varying results for their further benefit, may then attempt to repeat the effects in another neighborhood; if so, good for them! They just learned another step in the Danse Macabre.

Hot Pursuit

Chases are exciting.

Chases are especially exciting when you're a bloodthirsty Kindred who is careening through the nightmare cityscape of the World of Darkness — whether you're the pursuer or the prey in that chase. The system presented here is designed to dovetail with the "Foot Chase" pursuit rules described on pp. 65–66 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The difference here is that the Hot Pursuit rules are intended to simulate a king-hell, balls-out, ass-hauling flight with the background blurred almost beyond recognition as whatever's in pursuit tries furiously to get the jump on whatever's in the lead. Hot Pursuit is intended to showcase the attributes of the urban landscape. It's less about a reckless dash down a sidewalk than it is about climbing up a fire escape, jumping across a gap in the rooftops, and diving into a Dumpster before sliding under a truck to evade pursuit.

It's a good system to use when you, as Storyteller, don't have every minute detail of the setting in your mind. The sample Hot Pursuit offered here fills in some blanks and tosses in some seen-while-running details, but, otherwise, it can fit anywhere the set dressing is even moderately appropriate. We're even a little vague with the opening setting — something bad happens in a general purpose downtown that results in a chase — so that you can drop this into whatever portion of your chronicle you wish.

Using the Hot Pursuit Flowchart

It's easy. The chase begins, and the quarry makes a choice as to what path he'd like to take. At that point, the quarry's player makes his roll (and any additional rolls or decisions as stipulated by the text for each choice). Then the pursuer makes his roll and handles any additional circumstances. Next, move on to the next branch of the option tree and begin the sequence again, which is modified by the different circumstances stipulated in the next choice.

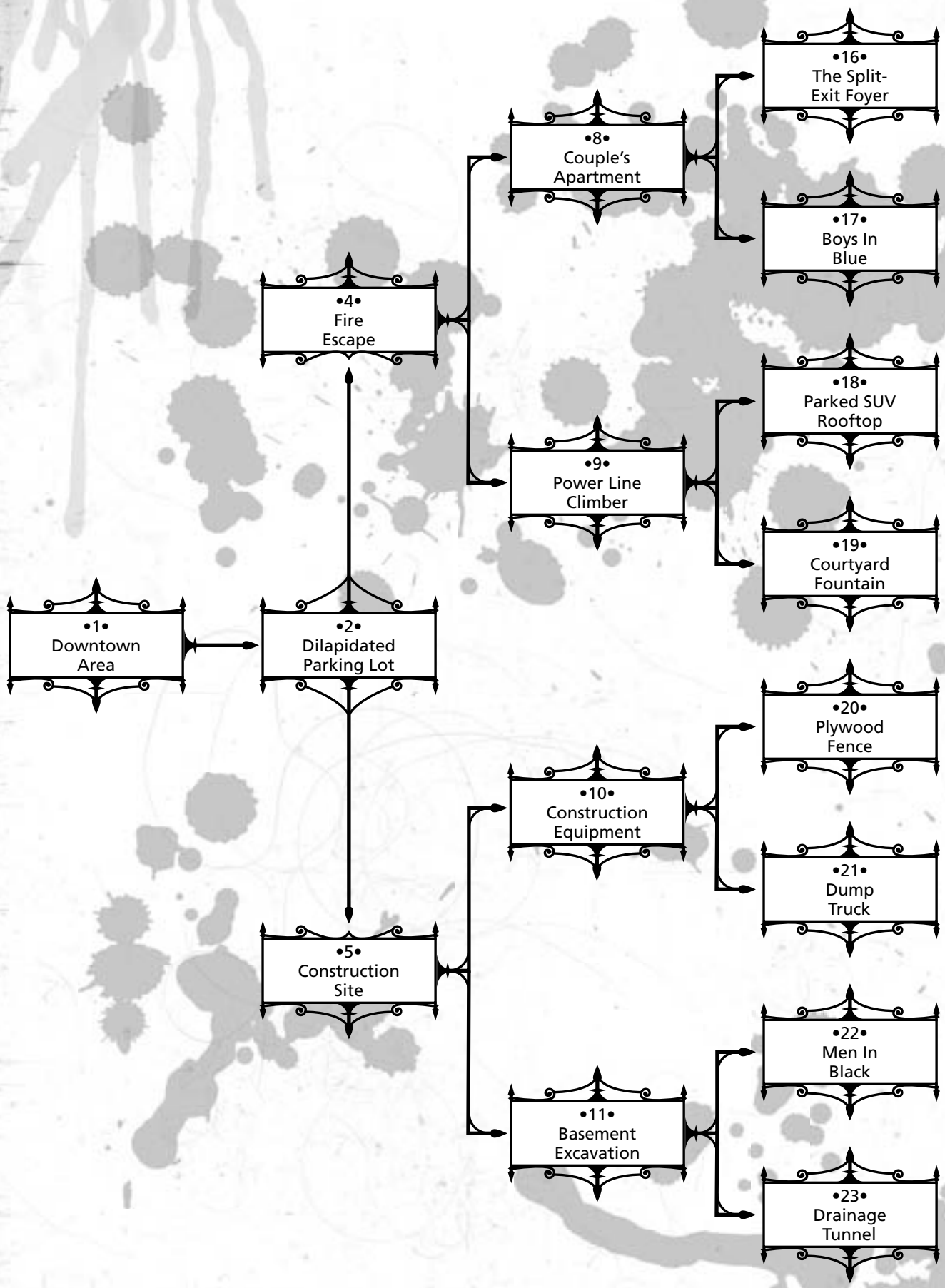
This example Hot Pursuit has five stages, each of which offers a choice. Those choices, made by the prey, augment the standard Foot Chase rules in a manner described in each stage. If the prey is still ahead at the end of the fifth stage, he's lucky. He's scrambled into some crack in the downtown façade where he can hide out, gather his wits, and hopefully slink home in one piece. If the pursuer catches the quarry before that time, well, he's free to do with her what he will as the normal rules for Foot Chases suggest.

Storytellers should feel free to use this sample Hot Pursuit as a model for their own urban chase scenes. They're easy enough to build: Simply "tree" each option up to the number of stages you wish the pursuit to last, and then fill in the neat mechanical details that serve as the spice. The model can be adapted to vehicle chases with a bit of work as well. In addition, you can change only the options the quarry took in the last Hot Pursuit to minimize the amount of additional prep work you'll have to do each time: once the character makes his first choice, he'll have a bunch of unknown options further up the tree that the player won't know existed last time.

A note on stages: The number of stages you build into the Hot Pursuit adds another level of control to the chase rules. Thus, the chase ends when the quarry puts a certain degree of distance between himself and the pursuer, when the pursuer catches the quarry, or when the number of stages of the Hot Pursuit elapses. (You'll find that this particular example favors the quarry because we want you to be able to use as many stages as possible and thus see thoroughly how the mechanics work.) You can adjust this, by having additional chase time occur after the characters make it through the city's obstacle course, but that may make for an anticlimax as the characters finish all the "cool stuff" and then simply run down the featureless center of the road. Alternatively, you can make up additional cityscape features and effects, but be sure you're being fair (or cheating in favor of who should dramatically win the pursuit).

As well, the stages of this Hot Pursuit flowchart don't have any dead ends or empirically wrong choices. You may wish to adjust that in Hot Pursuit tools you create. Remember, though, that verisimilitude is a poor substitute for fun and a good story flow. While it's certainly realistic to end up in a dead-end alleyway, if it results in the pointless death of a player's character, that's probably not the best result for a story, especially if the character had no way of knowing that the alley's dead end would also be her own.

Special options break the normal rule of not allowing additional action as described on p. 65 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. If there's an option presented as a special effect in the staged sections below, it does *not* preclude the character from making his standard flight or pursuit roll. The Hot Pursuit system plays a bit fast and loose with the standard turn actions in order to make the urban environment a vibrant portion of the chase.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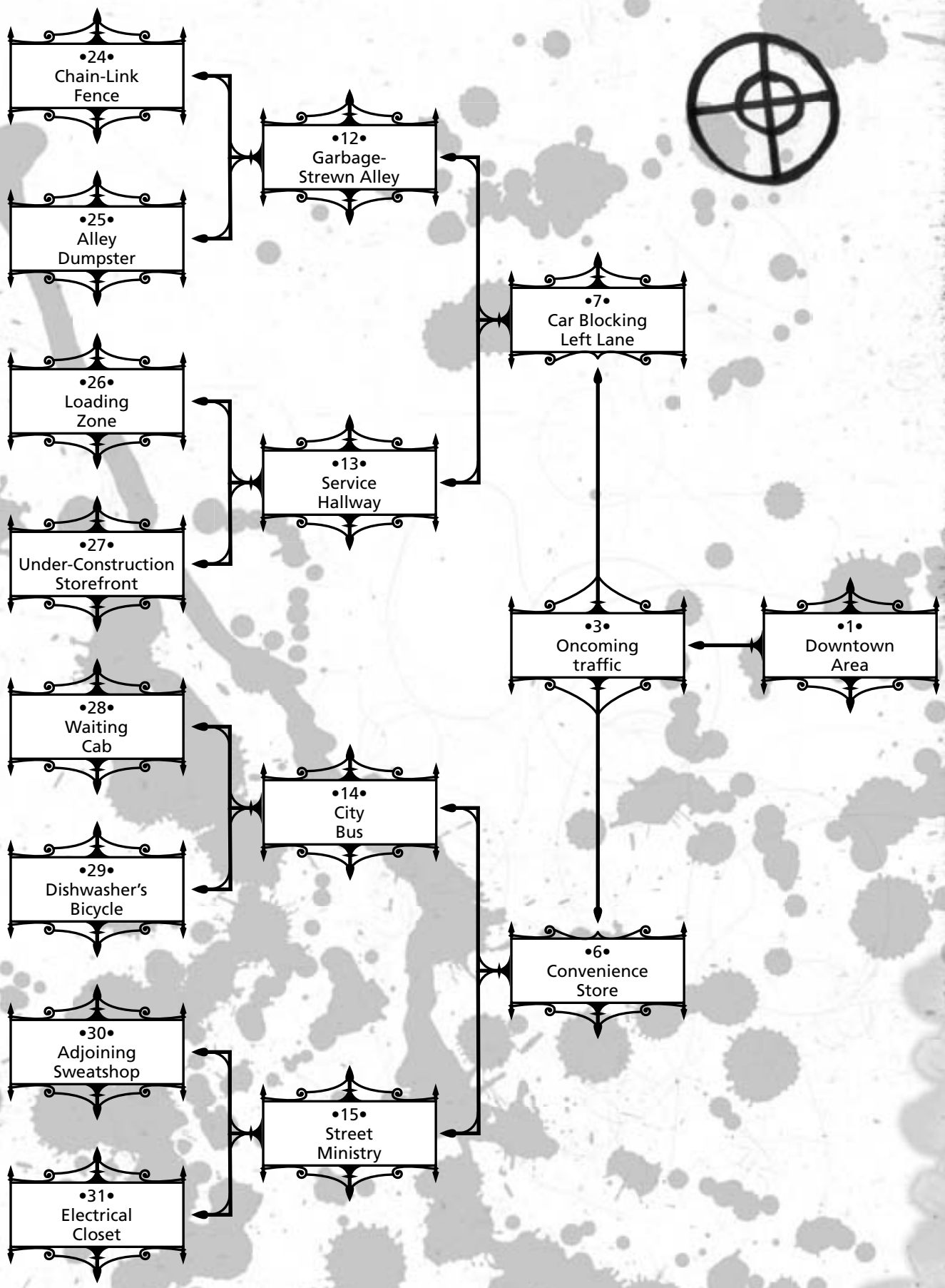
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•28•
Waiting
Cab
•14•
City
Bus
•29•
Dishwasher's
Bicycle
•6•
Convenience
Store
•30•
Adjoining
Sweatshop
•15•
Street
Ministry
•31•
Electrical
Closet

Hot Pursuit: Downtown Dash

The following sample Hot Pursuit takes place on a steamy night downtown. Exactly what puts the quarry-to-be and the pursuer there is up to you, Storytellers. We deliberately leave that vague so you can slot this into your chronicle wherever it fits best.

Descriptions, reflecting the quick pace of the chase since the character's not stopping to survey all of the details of the environment, of each segment of the chase are brief. As well, the sample Hot Pursuit doesn't take specifics of potential character resources into account (such as Celerity or Resilience or other Disciplines either quarry or pursuer might have). Again, the intent is to simulate a blurry, anything-goes sprint away from the pursuer. Remind the player of this, if necessary, noting that using Disciplines or other finesse-type abilities would waste valuable seconds of the chase. Better to get away than to gamble on supernatural charms that may or may not work.

1) The Downtown Area

It's a bit of a humid night, the air heavy with moisture, and occasional light rain trickling down from the steely sky. In a few weeks, the mortals will probably be able to see their breath in the air, and tonight feels like summer's last gasp as a far crisper autumn takes over.

The muggy air doesn't prevent anyone from going out on the town, however, and the streets are full. Revelers head to their favorite hot spots, late-working professionals turn out the lights in their offices and head home, and those who call downtown their home seem to feel something in the air this evening.

(Storytellers, here's where you introduce your own event. Whatever you've got going on should fit in the downtown environment and should provoke a fight-or-flight response. Likewise, you'll need to provide your own antagonist to serve as the menace. If the character chooses to stay and fight, well, you know how to handle that. If he chooses to flee — and if you want to use the Hot Pursuit system, circumstances should suggest that running is the best option — you'll offer the character his first set of options below.)

The street is a panic andchaotic in the aftermath of your confrontation. Tensed and aware, you see that you have only two options available to you: dodging into the oncoming traffic or dashing across a dark and dilapidated parking lot.

Special: The quarry character has the advantage here with a bit of a head start. Grant the quarry two extra successes on the first pursuit roll.

If the character chooses to dash across the parking lot, go to entry 2. If he chooses to head into traffic, go to entry 3.

2) Dilapidated Parking Lot

The lot here is poorly lit, pockmarked by potholes, and buckled asphalt. Footing is precarious, and most of the cars here look to have been abandoned with various bits of debris cluttering up the already-dangerous flat.

To the left of the lot, a broken fire escape ladder hangs down to where it would be accessible from the street. Just across the street, there's a construction site that is littered with its own obstacles.

Special: The pursuit roll for both quarry and pursuer in this stage of the chase is modified by the characters' Dexterity, which is reflecting the dodging of potholes, ducking around car hulks, and not twisting one's ankle on the bowed blacktop. Whichever character has the higher Dexterity gains a +1 die bonus to her pursuit dice pool this turn. The character with the lower Dexterity suffers a –1 die penalty to her pursuit dice pool this turn. If the characters' Dexterity scores are the same, determine the bonus and penalty by using the Athletics Skill. If the characters' Athletics are the same, grant the bonus to the character with the higher Wits + Composure and the penalty to the character with the lower Wits + Composure.

If the character chooses the fire escape, go to entry 4. If the character chooses the construction site, go to entry 5.

3) Oncoming Traffic

The rush of cars shows no sign of abating as you daringly dart into their flow. Horns honk and brakes squeal, but the cars keep coming despite your madcap dash between them. It does earn you a little bit of an edge over your pursuer, who probably thinks you as mad as a hatter.

There! There's a gap in one lane that will allow you to sprint into the corner convenience store. Your only other choice is to slide across the hood of one of the cars in the bumper-to-bumper left lane since someone up at the stoplight seems to be turning against the flow.

Special: The quarry can recklessly carom off cars in his desperate attempt to flee his pursuer. For each car he bounces off, to a maximum of three, he takes a single point of bashing damage. He gains a +1 die bonus to his pursuit roll for each car that bumps him out of the way in this manner.

If the character chooses the convenience store, go to entry 6. If the character slides across the car in the left lane, go to entry 7.

4) Fire Escape

Someone must have used this fire escape recently because it hangs broken and only a few feet above street level. It's wrought iron, wet in parts and sticky in others, but that doesn't matter now. Climb!

Once you've made it up to the platform from which the fire escape is suspended, you see two possible exit routes. You can either kick in the window of the apartment here by the platform, or you can go hand-over-hand across an electrical cable to the building across the alley.

Special: The quarry can gain a bit of distance if he spends the time to pull the fire escape up to its un-deployed position. If he chooses to do so, have the player make a Strength + Athletics roll at a –2 dice penalty (for the weight of the fire escape and the rush he's in). If he succeeds, grant him an extra success on the pursuit roll. If he suffers a dramatic failure, grant the pursuer an extra success. If the player just fails, there's no net benefit or loss to either party.

If the character goes in through the window, go to entry 8. If the character climbs across the power line, go to entry 9.

5) Construction Site

You enter the construction site through a gap in the fence while quickly scanning the area as you swerve behind a flatbed trailer loaded with girders. There's plenty of raw material here, but you don't know where a spool of electrical cable or crate of plumbing fixtures might prove impassible. Best to slow down and play it safe and use the stuff as concealment.

You see a route through the trucks, bulldozers, and backhoes that you might be able to wind through. The site also seems to include an excavation for a basement or parking garage that would certainly provide darkness and cover.

Special: The character may attempt to crawl under stacks of materials and double back around payloads of construction material. The player may roll the quarry's Wits + Stealth to create a seemingly false trail to confuse the pursuer. If the character succeeds, he gains two extra successes on the pursuit roll. If he fails, the pursuer sees him climbing over stuff and retracing his own steps, yielding a +3 dice bonus to his own pursuit roll for the stage.

If the character follows the path through the parked construction equipment, go to entry 10. If he runs to the basement excavation, go to entry 11.

6) Corner Convenience Store

The corner store is bustling at this time of night and is full of clubbers buying liquor to shotgun before go-

ing into the clubs, teenagers trying to buy cigarettes, loitering neighborhood toughs, and late-working professionals grabbing a microwave burrito before heading back to the office. It's the perfect crowd in which to ditch a pursuer.

Just outside the convenience store is a garbage-strewn alley down which the character might run. The EMPLOYEES ONLY door is also open in the convenience store, which is leading to what looks like a service hallway behind the store but still part of the larger building it's in.

Special: The quarry can aggressively push some of the local shoppers into the pursuer's path. The player should roll Strength + Athletics if he wishes to do this. If the roll succeeds, the pursuer loses one die from his pursuit dice pool for each success the quarry achieved. If the roll fails, someone in the crowded store really resents being pushed around like that and punches the quarry in the mouth, inflicting two points of bashing damage.

If the character runs to the alley, go to entry 12. If the character chooses the service hallway, go to entry 13.

7) Car Blocking Left Lane

The cars in the left lane aren't going anywhere, and they're packed so tightly that it's impossible to get between them to the sidewalk on the opposite side. Gritting your teeth, you jump up and slide across the hood of the car, landing in mid-run on the sidewalk in your rush away from your pursuer.

As you turn the corner, you see what's been causing the traffic congestion. There's a bus loading passengers in the only lane of the under-construction street here. The sidewalk is blocked on this side, so your only choices are to get on the bus or duck into the only open doorway in the building on the sidewalk down this far.

Special: The character may make a rude gesture in hopes of aggravating the car's driver so that when the pursuer tries the same leap across the car's hood, the driver will accost him. For this to work, the quarry's player rolls Presence + Streetwise to make a suitably offensive motion (probably involving his crotch). If the roll is successful, the driver gets out of the car, blustering and shouting. As the next wise-ass takes the shortcut over the car's hood — the pursuer — that fool gets a punch in the mouth backed by a roll of quarters. For the toll way, of course. The pursuer suffers a point of bashing damage in this case, in any case making his pursuit roll as normal.

If the quarry chooses to climb into the bus, go to entry 14. If he runs into the open shop door on the street, go to entry 15.

8) Couple's Apartment

As you kick in the window, you hear a startled shriek from inside. To hell with that, you figure, and you climb in and scramble through the living room. Jesus, it looks like they bought everything Urban Outfitters and Ikea had to offer in here. A hipster couple stands, goggle-eyed, in the kitchen, him with tousled hair and glasses and her wearing a silk-screened blazer and a scarf in her hair.

Muttering a brief apology, you bolt through their front door. To the left, you see a staircase descending. To the right, you see a pair of middle-aged men, one black and one Hispanic in the telltale department-store suits of detectives, knocking at the door of the apartment a few yards down the hall. Take the stairs or chance it with the cops?

Special: Brand name knickknacks and kitschy trinkets lie all over the apartment. Putting a vintage Etch-a-Sketch or battered Steve Caballero skateboard on the floor amid the broken glass right beneath the window will probably trip up the pursuer if the character wants to spend the time to do so. The player may accept a –1 die penalty on this turn's pursuit roll. If he does so, he inflicts a –2 dice penalty on the pursuer's pursuit roll for this stage.

If the character takes the staircase, go to entry 16. If he takes his chance with the detectives, go to entry 17.

9) Power Line Clamber

You shimmy hand-over-hand across a shielded electrical cable that connects the apartment building to the office building across the alley. The alley itself smells like gasoline and rotten vegetables — you don't want to spend any more time here than you have to, but you certainly can't turn back.

The power line anchors to the wall above a ledge that's just wide enough to walk along, but it's pretty high. From here, you can jump down to the roof of that SUV parked at the mouth of the alley, or you can jump down into a fountain that stands at the north edge of the office building's courtyard.

Special: The quarry may choose to shake the pursuer off the electrical cable as he traverses it or even strike out at the pursuer. Either way, represent the aggressive action with a Strength + Athletics roll on the quarry's behalf opposed by the pursuer's Stamina + Survival. Whoever gains more successes may add the margin of those successes to this stage's pursuit roll. Thus, if the quarry achieved four successes and the pursuer had only two, the quarry would roll an additional two dice on this stage's pursuit roll to escape.

If the character jumps down to the roof of the SUV, go to entry 18. If the character jumps into the courtyard fountain, go to entry 19.

10) Construction Equipment

The haphazard array of construction engines and vehicles makes a tunnel through which you can sprint and remain hidden from sight. The veritable tunnel of demolition equipment muffles sound as well.

A laden dump truck is pulling away from the end of the row of construction vehicles with part of the third-shift crew carrying on his nightly duties. A gap in the plywood wall, similar to the one you used to enter the site, leads away several yards ahead.

Special: The quarry can outwit the pursuer a bit here by using the noise of the site and the path's confusing acoustics to trick the pursuer into thinking the quarry is somewhere he's really not. If the player wishes, he can make a Dexterity + Subterfuge roll on behalf of the quarry. If the roll succeeds, he may force the Storyteller to re-roll the pursuer's pursuit roll this turn if it yields a result he doesn't like (though the second roll stands, even if the player doesn't like that roll). If the Dexterity + Subterfuge roll fails, the Storyteller can have the *player* re-roll the quarry's pursuit roll for the turn (and, again, the second roll stands if he invokes this).

If the quarry tries to escape through the cleft in the fence, go to entry 20. If the character sneaks on board the departing dump truck, go to entry 21.

11) Basement Excavation

It's dark down here in this human-made cavern opening beneath the foundation of the building under construction. The air smells earthy and stony, which is a product of all the loose dust and digging. It'd be the perfect place to hide and let the pursuer run by — it's as quiet as the grave down here. But what's that noise?

It's actually two distinct noises. Further into the depths of the darkness, the drip drip of a drainage tunnel can be heard. That other sound is at once rhythmic and erratic. It's people moving in the darkness... yes, you can see now. It's two men in black suits moving carefully and quietly and looking around because they seem to have heard you.

Special: The area is so vast, dark, and quiet, the pursuer doesn't really know where to look for the quarry specifically. The quarry's player may spend a Willpower point on his pursuit roll at this stage and receive an extra two dice

(in addition to Willpower's standard three, for a bonus of five dice), which represents a valiant effort and a location conducive to getting the hell away from someone.

If the character approaches the men in black suits, go to entry 22. If the character investigates the drainage tunnel, go to entry 23.

12) Garbage-Strewn Alley

A cross breeze stirs up a tiny vortex of discarded newspaper and plastic bags. Somewhere at the end of the alley, a dog barks. It's not pretty, but the place is such a mess, it's sure to offer a place to hide or a connection to some other street. To that end, there's a Dumpster marked INEDIBLE near the end of the alley. Behind the Dumpster is a chain link fence that might be worth climbing.

Special: If the character wants to wind up the dog, that's possible, and the beast will tear off down the alley in a rage and bite the next person he sees, which is hopefully the pursuer. The player should roll the quarry's Presence + Animal Ken at a –2 dice penalty (for the dog's Composure). If the roll succeeds, the character may add an additional success to the pursuit roll for every two successes he achieved on the attempt to aggravate the dog.

If the character scales the fence, go to entry 24. If the character hides in the Dumpster, go to entry 25.

13) Service Hallway

This must be the back hall used for deliveries to the other businesses in the building and by maintenance staff. A dozen or so big bags of trash and broken-down boxes sit in the hall next to the door to the convenience store. The hall looks as if it dead-ends to the left, so the only way to go is right.

The right-turning hallway leads to a large loading dock area, which looks like as if opens via a garage door to the street across about 100 feet or so of flat concrete. At the end of the hallway before the loading area is an open door that looks like the back entrance to a storefront undergoing some renovation.

Special: All that trash might make for a decent temporary obstacle if the character wants to drag it around the corner and leave it right where the pursuer might not expect it to be. This involves two rolls. First, the quarry's player needs to succeed at a Strength + Athletics roll to move all that junk down there quickly. If this roll succeeds, the pursuer needs to succeed at a Dexterity + Athletics roll to keep his feet amid all the spilled coffee, smashed bananas, and slick newspaper. If the pursuer fails in this roll, he suffers a –2 dice penalty to his pursuit roll for this stage of the chase.

If the quarry runs across the loading zone, go to entry 26. If he ducks into the open doorway, go to entry 27.

14) City Bus

The door of the city bus stands open while admitting passengers, who you push aside amid many shouts and quarrelsome looks. No time for that, though — you're on and off in a flash, in one door and out the other further down the of the bus side. Thankfully, it's just beyond where the barrier had blocked off the sidewalk on the street.

Luckily, there's a cab on the corner of the cross street up ahead. There's also a heavy, Hispanic man in a dishwasher's apron carrying a bicycle getting off the bus.

Special: If the quarry makes a big enough production, he can probably get the bus driver to close the door, thus preventing the pursuer from being able to get on the bus entirely. This requires the player to make a Manipulation + Intimidation roll at a –2 dice penalty (for the bus driver's Composure). The character wants to seem dangerous but not completely overbearing; he wants the bus driver to think he can trap the character on the bus and get a fare and apology out of him. If the roll is successful, the bus driver closes the door just as the character slips out the rear door. In this case, the pursuer doesn't get any pursuit roll at all during this stage. He'll simply have to make it up in the next stage.

If the character hops into the cab, go to entry 28. If he wrestles the bicycle out of the dishwasher's hands, go to entry 29.

15) Street Ministry

As fate would have it, this isn't really a store at all. It's a ministry set up to offer aid to the homeless and those with no place to go late at night when the evils of the world bear down upon them. Flickering fluorescent lights bring a jaundiced color to the room. A minister in a shabby suit and collar preaches from a peeling lectern at the front of the room. A few desperate souls hang their heads in their hands or recline passed out in folding chairs.

A heavy, metal door in the back of the one-room ministry leads to whatever lies in the adjoining space. Opposite this door, another door labeled DANGER: ELECTRICITY stands ajar.

Special: None. The congregation is too drunk and stoned to care, and it's not like this is the first chase the minister's seen in his 20 years delivering charity and hope to those who need it downtown. If anything, he probably berates the quarry for being bent on some fiendish drug.

If the quarry tries the unmarked door, go to entry 30. If he tries the door marked with the electrical warning, go to entry 31.

16) The Split-Exit Foyer (End Pursuit)

You dash down the stairs and see two exits leading out of the building, one to your left and one to your right. At this point, you've got enough distance between yourself and the maniac chasing you that you're going to lose him — he's not going to know which direction you went. Whew! Safe!

Conclusion: The chase ends, though a Storyteller who wishes to continue the chase scene could do so at his discretion by having the pursuer choose whichever direction the quarry runs.

17) Boys in Blue (End Pursuit)

You run over to the cops and hope that you can fast talk them into protecting you from the psycho on your tail... without having them haul you in for questioning (especially since you just vandalized and trespassed in that poor couple's apartment). Whatever the case, the chase ends here as your pursuer isn't going to take on two cops just to get to you.

Conclusion: The chase ends with a few options in the Storyteller's hands. First, if the pursuer is suitably riled up — say, in a frenzy — he may well fight through the detectives to get to the quarry. Second, it's exceedingly unlikely that the police will simply let the character go after they've witnessed him fleeing for his very life into their presence. This may require some graceful social maneuvering (say, achieving five successes on the character's Manipulation + Persuasion versus the detectives' Composure + Subterfuge) if the Storyteller doesn't want to assume they let the character go for the story's sake.

18) Parked SUV Rooftop (End Pursuit)

You cut the distance between your precarious perch on the ledge and the ground itself by jumping to the roof of an SUV parked at the alley's opening. Just as the rest of the alley, the SUV stinks of gasoline. That's not your problem, though, and you spare yourself a quick glance back up at your pursuer, who's still swinging his legs from the power line and trying to scramble up to the ledge you just hopped down from. The hell with that guy — you're out of here.

Conclusion: The chase comes to a close, though the Storyteller may choose to continue it if the pursuer decides simply to drop to the ground, suffer what damage he may, and hoof it after the once and future quarry.

Alternatively, someone might actually be in that SUV, such as a drug dealer waiting to do business or the detectives who are investigating in the apartment building next door (from entry 17). As well, that truck might smell of gas for a reason: someone might be waiting to set it on fire, or it might even be filled with low-grade explosives as part of an as-yet-unknown scheme.

19) Courtyard Fountain (End Pursuit)

You leap into the fountain with an undignified buy decidedly reassuring splash. You can't even see your pursuer anymore; he's no doubt still trying to pull himself up to the ledge and off the electrical cable. With water breaking your fall, you're safe now, even if a bit wet.

Conclusion: The chase ends, unless the Storyteller decides to extend it.

20) Plywood Fence (End Pursuit)

You squeeze through a crack in the security wall where the plywood is starting to spall apart and affect a casual air as might a person walking home at night who wasn't being chased by some blood-crazed lunatic. From here, it's just a few streets down and back to the downtown area you were chased out of.

Conclusion: The chase is over unless the Storyteller decides to continue it by having the pursuer climb through the crack in the wall as well.

21) Dump Truck (End Pursuit)

As the truck pulls away, you grab on to one of the climbing rails near the back while taking care to hide yourself both from the driver's rearview mirrors and the pursuer looking confusedly around the construction site. You smile to yourself in the darkness as the driver grinds a gear, the truck belches a plume of black smoke into the night air, and the pursuer looks in your direction and meets your gaze. Would it be glib to wave? Of course it would.

Conclusion: The chase comes to a close. Of course, now that the chase mechanic has come to a conclusion if the pursuer has Celerity or some other method of extremely fast movement, now might be the time he pours it on, turning the quarry's smug grin into a horrified shriek. And if he screams, he's probably going to attract the driver's attention...

22) Men in Black (End Pursuit)

You originally thought that these might be investors on a late tour of the facility or maybe police on an investigation, but that's probably not true. In fact, there's a third man on his knees near the two men in black suits, and he looks like he's been roughed up. That's when it hits you: this is a Mafia execution. On the plus side, your pursuer probably won't want to get involved with Fat Tony and Mustache Pete here. On the down side, you're a witness to what's about to be a murder.

Conclusion: The chase comes to an end, but the scene doesn't. In fact, this is an entirely new drama unfolding, and it may well result in a new chase under different circumstances of the character can't talk his way out of the situation or use some kind of supernatural edge to extract himself.

23) Drainage Tunnel (End Pursuit)

At the bottom of a pool of muck, mud, and concrete dust, a corrugated tunnel leads at a downward angle under the street to a recessed roundabout behind the bus station across the street. It's even a little wider than it would need to be to fit you. A little slimier than you were originally and you emerge from the other side, no worse for the wear.

Conclusion: The chase stops unless the Storyteller sees fit to carry it on. A vigilant bus driver might see the character emerging from the drainpipe, but whether or not he bothers to confront the character about it depends on the driver's personality.

24) Chain-Link Fence (End Pursuit)

It's a daunting climb, but that goes for the pursuer too. By the time the crazy chasing him makes it over the fence, the quarry will be long gone. Of course, saying and doing are two different things. Commence to climbing!

Conclusion: Not so fast. Climbing the fence successfully requires a Strength + Athletics roll. Succeed, and the character's home free while jumping down into an alley that switches back to where they had run from in the first place. Failure on the roll indicates that the pursuer has enough time to charge up to the fence and grab the character's ankle amd changing this from a chase scene to a combat scene. Hopefully, the quarry isn't too beaten up from being hit by cars and convenience-store customers to stand his own.

25) Alley Dumpster (End Pursuit)

No wonder this thing is labeled INEDIBLE. The Chinese restaurant on the other side of the alley apparently shares the Dumpster with a dialysis clinic that's none too vigilant about medical waste disposal. This trash bin's a hellbroth of rancid food, discarded hypodermics, and vinyl bags marked with biohazard symbols. It smells like a two-day-old car wreck in August. For the love of God, *nobody's* going to look in here if they catch a whiff of the thing from the outside.

Conclusion: The character has had prouder moments, but he hears the pursuer's footsteps become faint as he first checks out the chain link fence at the end of the alley, then curses, and leaves. The erstwhile quarry will certainly need some new clothes after this endeavor, but he's made it to see another night. Unless, of course, there's something more to this INEDIBLE meat that first meets the eye.

26) Loading Zone (End Pursuit)

A sprint across the loading-dock floor and back into the street promises safety, but can you get there in time?

Conclusion: The quarry and pursuer should each make one last pursuit roll at this stage of the chase. So long as the pursuer doesn't catch up with the quarry (per p. 66 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), the quarry bolts through the open roll-top garage door and into the city streets at night. If the pursuer does catch the quarry, he gets the free charging action as described on p. 66 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** as normal. Time to spend that Willpower!

27) Under-Construction Storefront (End Pursuit)

You duck into the back door of the storefront under construction and shut the door as quietly as you can. With clenched jaws, you press your ear to the door and within a few seconds are rewarded with the sweet sound of the pursuer's footsteps rushing past the door and into the loading area beyond.

Conclusion: The chase comes to a close as the character turns around to see the street-side storefront door that will let him out of the building on the opposite side of the pursuer. At the Storyteller's discretion, the chase might continue as the pursuer rounds the corner of the building to see the character letting himself out onto the street. As well, some *thing* might make its lair in the storefront at night, which explains why this simple retail space has been left unfinished for so long.

28) Waiting Cab (End Pursuit)

Of all the luck! Normally it's impossible to get a cab at this time of night downtown, but the traffic must have left this one outside its normal circuit. Whatever the situation, it's a welcome sight. At first the cabbie protests — something about waiting for his fare to come back — but a handful of cash pressed into his palm changes his attitude quickly.

Conclusion: The chase ends. This is probably the best way to get away: in a car while the pursuer's on foot.

29) Dishwasher's Bicycle (End Pursuit)

It's an easy enough matter to take this fellow's bicycle from him. He's spooked about the whole thing on the bus, and he's tired after working all day. While pedaling off into the night isn't the most glamorous or stylish escape, it's nonetheless effective in leaving the pursuer behind.

Conclusion: The chase comes to a close. Note that since the chase is over, other systems come back into play, such as the moral issue of stealing a bicycle from a man who obviously uses it every day to get to and from his exhausting job.

30) Adjoining Sweatshop (End Pursuit)

Kicking the door open reveals row upon row of Asian and Central American women hunched over sewing machines. They're manufacturing cheap knockoffs of high-dollar brands for street vendors to sell in their tents and kiosks, but they don't look like they're getting much of the illicit money generated for themselves. You carefully close the door as the sounds of the pursuer's footsteps clattering and fading behind you is almost an afterthought. None of them even bothers to look up at you.

Conclusion: The chase ends. In a few moments, the sweatshop manager comes over and shrieks something unintelligible at the character and attempts to hustle him back out the door. Whether the character complies with this and what he does with his knowledge about the sweatshop afterward are the stuff of an entirely different scene than the chase and may spawn a story arc of their own.

31) Electrical Closet (End Pursuit)

The closet marked DANGER: ELECTRICITY is, unsurprisingly, the electrical closet. It holds what looks like the fuse box for a good quarter of the building. It smells a little like urine in here too. Probably one of the drunks from the ministry thought this was a bathroom or used it as one even if he didn't think it was.

You hear a brief bit of argument from outside with voices raised and a few coarse words, but then the racket dies down. Carefully, you open the door and peer back into the ministry. The rundown minister is there, behind his lectern, looking at you, and all of the bums and rummies in the room leer in your direction as well.

"Do you have something you wish to say, my son?" the minister asks.

Conclusion: The chase comes to its end. Whether the priest lets the character off with a "no, thanks" depends on what you want to do with the scene. The priest may end up being a valuable Street Contact, or he may just want a decent tithe in exchange for telling the pursuer that the character went tearing ass down the street.

III: Carney

Carney was polishing the meat hooks when the buzzer buzzed. He liked a clean meat hook. He knew there was a lot he had forgotten about himself and the things he had done. Probably he had been a big wheel, once. With lots of plans on the go. Large ambitions with plenty of moving parts. There were vague mental images of sleek cars and leagues of men behind rows of mahogany desks, all of them answerable to him. Then something had happened, or more likely a series of somethings. And now this was his realm – a cold brick abattoir tucked away in the asphalt heart of a decaying industrial zone.

And you know what?

He liked this better. Simple duties. Constrained options. Within its walls, all was under his control. Through a straightforward program of sweeping, painting, polishing and minor repair work, he could keep every aspect of it under control. Chaos, entropy . . . these forces held dominion outside the walls of his tiny empire. In here, Carney was lord.

And he liked a shiny meat hook.

He stirred his generous posterior from the vintage wooden desk chair where he'd been sitting and shuffled his way toward the loading bay. With a ham-round fist, he bumped the button to jerk the metal doors into motion. They juddered slowly up into the feeder mechanism, revealing a familiar rusty pickup truck.

Carney grabbed the dolly and waddled over. Mr. Man had hoisted his skinny frame out of the truck cab and now dumped a double-wrapped garbage bag onto the dolly. He wordlessly nodded, then climbed back in the vehicle.

Carney liked Mr. Man. No unnecessary verbiage. Kept it clean and neat.

He waited for the truck to pull away, lowered the gate and got to cases. Humming a half-remembered old jazz standard, he trundled the dolly over to the grinder mixer. The vintage device, a 1947 Johnson Brothers model, had taken Carney 14 months to refurbish. It hummed proudly, like the beautiful machine it was.

A faint scraping noise echoed from the loading area. Carney stopped and sniffed the air. He toddled over a few steps to see what it might be. A torn piece of an old handbill had lodged itself under the metal door. The wind was flapping it.

Carney sighed. Always some little detail interfered. He grabbed the noisy piece of paper, balled it up and tossed it into a nearby bin.

Returning to the task at hand, Carney hoisted the delivery from the dolly up onto the marble table next to his grinder. He put on his metal apron, wrapped a fresh smock around his chest and belly and strapped on his knife belt. Taking his thinnest blade, he slit apart the garbage bags like a layer of epithelial tissue.

This time the delivery consisted of a baby and a couple of dogs. Carney felt the Beast stir inside him.

He centered himself. Pushed its roaring head back inside, to where all the memories were. No messiness was permitted here, external or internal.

There was lots to get rid of here. Much to concentrate on. He would start with the dogs. Babies' bones were soft, and the whole carcass could go into the grinder as is. The dog would require some deboning. He grabbed his cleaver, positioned the neck and chopped the head off. Carney got to it, quickly losing himself in his work. First the animals, then the other corpse.

The scraping noise came again. This time Carney listened harder. It didn't repeat. The sole of a shoe on the abattoir's concrete floor?

This time the sound seemed to have come from the storage area, to the south of the butcher's room. It was piled high with boxes and plastic tubs that Rainfold or his people had sent here for whatever reason. Carney didn't like the boxes or the intrusion they represented. Also, it was possible for someone to hide behind them.

He seized the cleaver, took a step toward the sound, then hesitated. Reconsidering his choice of blade, Carney replaced the cleaver with a six-inch boning knife. He moved toward the stacks of boxes.

Overhead, one of his fluorescent lights picked this moment to flicker and fizz. Carney made a mental note to order a ballast from the all-night lighting supply place on 29th Street.

He moved systematically past the columns of stacked boxes, until he was sure there was no one there. He stopped. Listened. Heard nothing.

Shaking his head, he moved back toward the table.

The meat moved. The pit bull's skull jittered across the table, propelled by its snapping jaw. Chunks of dog and baby flesh slurped bloodily across the table's marble surface, surging toward him. The movement was spastic, jerky, like stop motion animation from an old experimental film.

The pieces inched along the tabletop until they reached its edge, then plummeted over. Landing with a series of dull, wet slaps, the meat chunks continued their slow progress toward him.

This was madness, Carney thought. His perceptions were deceiving him. The Beast was at work.

His mind was stronger than this hallucination. This was his place. His world. He closed his eyes. Focused.

He opened his eyes.

Now all the meat was coming at him. Every dog, every kine, every Kindred, every baby he'd ever disposed of. A smothering wave of ground flesh, encompassing him. Making him part of it.

In his dimming moments of awareness, before his consciousness extinguished itself completely, Carney felt himself being lifted up. The minced flesh was pulling him up. Placing him on his meat hook.

Chapter Three: Barony

I don't want to have to do this. But this isn't just about you and me any more.

It's about this whole place, and the ancient bastard who's looming over it like a diseased shadow, swallowing up everything he gets his hands on.

Hundreds – no, thousands of people are going to suffer if he keeps getting stronger.

So yeah, I love you, and yeah, I never want to hurt you.

But he's in your house, he has to die, and right now, you,re in my way.

– Jude,

Unaligned soldier

"You? You demand money from me?" he bellowed angrily as others peered out from their camps and coves. "Do you know who I am?" he shouted, his voice echoing down the walls. "I am Bernard, Lord of the Tunnels!"

— Jennifer Toth, The Mole People

It's not a modern word: baron. Once, barons were low nobles who held land in the name of their overlords. It was a title of honor, authority, and responsibility. Even a baron who was reviled was addressed as Lord.

Tonight, the most common barons — the American barons — are plutocrats who devour or capture territory for its money. They hold it not because it is their responsibility but as a means to end: money. Money is their overlord. It's money that gets them the land and it is for money that they tend it.

These were the robber barons of the 19th century — rail barons, lumber barons, ore barons — whose heirs continue to rule by the grace of cash in the modern nights. Some of the original robber barons of the 1800s, years after they have become undead themselves, continue to twist money out of the living. They haunt the living by sucking blood and cash like specters of the feudal age.

The original robber barons were medieval Germanic noblemen who taxed merchant ships sailing the Rhine through their lands without the blessing of the Holy Roman Emperor. These men, illegally and unethically manipulating the dress and customs of legitimate business, passed their greed onto generations of copycat nobles across Europe and the world. In the 19th century when a new American strata of über-wealthy moguls and capitalists emerged as a de facto aristocracy of their own, the name of the robber barons was resurrected for them.

The title of baron is not so flattering tonight.

Among the Damned, both kinds of barons remain, and the most powerful Kindred combine the formal service and authority of a landed baron with the underhanded money-making of the modern business baron. For Kindred, money is just one part — the least important part — of the wealth that motivates the Danse Macabre. Money facilitates the acquisition of the two greater treasures for vampires: territory and blood. Territory translates to power and the freedom to hunt. Power and hunting bring in the Blood. The Blood is everything.

In **Vampire: The Requiem**, Barony (capitalized) is a style of gameplay in which the troupes' characters are presumed to actively participate in the landed politics of the Danse Macabre. They are lords of their small tract of the city while striving to grow their territory and their power. They struggle to pay homage and fealty to their overlord at court while in the streets they may be scheming to behead him and take his turf. They're like a gang fighting to take territory from other gangs — and there are no police to intervene. Every Kindred is a potential opponent, a potential rival, and potential enemy.

This chapter gives you the tools to play a Barony chronicle, but a lot of this information (particularly City-Building) is valuable for **Vampire** and World of Darkness chronicles of any kind:

- **City-Building** offers guidelines for constructing a World of Darkness city out of archetypal urban plans, whether your goal is to create a fictional city of unique gothic majesty or to model a real-world city on a level that's manageable for easy play.
- **Barony Gameplay** examines new traits and Storyteller advice for running chronicles centered on vassals and domains. At this level of play, it's easy to incorporate this book's new mechanisms and terminology into your ongoing **Vampire** chronicle.
- **Schema: Social Architecture** gives you new ways to visualize the complex relationships of the Danse Macabre. By using the techniques and diagrams demonstrated in this section, it's easy to translate a political hierarchy into fodder for stories. It's like the politics become a vast dungeon to explore.

City-Building

The goal of the City-Building method is not to create a wholly authentic down-to-the-doorknobs simulation of any city. City-Building is about translating a city — whether it started as a real city or one imported from your imagination — into a game environment with lots of distinctive settings to explore. What makes a setting into a game environment is, in part, interactivity (see "Attitude and Ambience" in Chapter Two and the District traits in Chapter Five). The environment should provoke interesting choices on the part of the players and their characters. Choices require options. City-Building turns your city into a collection of Districts and Sites that give the players (and their characters) options.

The City-Building method is not a high-definition system. The smallest unit in this system is the Site, which is about the size of a building. The next largest unit is the District, which is roughly a neighborhood, and above that is the city.

Characters don't quite fall into this mix, which is odd for a Storytelling game; you can't have stories without characters. But the World of Darkness rulebooks give a lot of attention to characters already, and Districts and Sites inherently take local characters into account. Supporting characters are one way that the protagonists interact with the city around them — the purpose of Chad the Butcher is to be at the meat factory when the characters show up so they can get clues or use him to do their bidding. Beyond that, if you need to fill the streets of your Districts or the seats in your Sites, you should use the City of Millions in Chapter Two.

Districts and Sites give you a skeleton to hang a lot of details and setting color on, but they can't do everything for you. To build an imaginary city, you need vision and tools. Chapters Five and Six give you the tools. These are the instructions.

Modeling the City

City-Building won't randomly generate a city for you. What it does is solidify your vision into a playable thing. You can use it to adapt a real-world city or the one you imagine from scratch.

It's a fairly imprecise system at first. Can a city accurately be broken up into a few stylized sections without losing some of its street-level character? Is your city's Riverside Park really just a park or a residential neighborhood or a university district — or is it all three? It's a judgment call you have to make. You could break Riverside Park into three different zones in the game-world city, even though it's all one neighborhood in the real world, or you could adjust the traits of a pre-made District until you get something that describes Riverside Park to your satisfaction. But you'll have to make peace with the abstraction.

Fortunately, City-Building has a powerfully vivid engine rendering and running underneath to provide shocking, visceral details to every part of the game world, thereby filling the spaces between game components with a palpable, beautiful, frightening world: you, the Storyteller. The tangibility of the game world still boils down to your ability to evoke it into being in the mind's eye using nothing else but words and scribbles. If the city is to be great, it must be well told.

Districts

In game terms, a District is a discrete component of the game world designed to evoke a particular atmosphere and mood or reflect a theme. The District models part of the game world with traits that let the environment affect the stories told there and the characters who act there. Think of Districts as zones within the game world, where one aesthetic (say, the sterile chill and residential blandness of a hospital zone) gives way to another (such as the rusted-metal and black-asphalt wilderness of a derelict industrial zone at night). Districts are as much a part of setting and narrative as they are a part of the game design process every Storyteller goes through when devising scenes and stories for the troupe.

All that's pretty dry, though. What does a District look like in action? To the players, it's an element of the game to be weighed carefully and used cleverly — Districts are the spaces on the game board.

Districts present new tools for presenting the dramatic choices that form the hinge of World of Darkness gameplay. Do the players choose to take a shortcut through a nasty neighborhood to get their wounded friend to the hospital sooner? Do they pursue their suspect into the unlit ruins of a burnt-out ghetto? Can they stop the rampaging Lupine before it reaches a neighborhood the police actually care about?

To the characters who live in the World of Darkness, Districts are just a fact of life in the city. They're neigh-

borhoods, municipal zones, unofficial quarters within official boroughs, and the corners of the city that may not be named or visited by average folk, but they are an undeniable part of the city's identity and operation. Districts can be as large as a whole suburb or downtown neighborhood, and they can be as small as the couple of blocks taken up by an industrial yard or hospital.

Some Districts have precisely defined borders: the banners on the streetlights change where Little Italy turns to Wickerville, for example, or a chain-link fence keeps pedestrians out of the fields of warehouses and shipping lanes around the docks. Other Districts have definite centers but nebulous boundaries, overlapping at their fuzzy edges and where neighbors speculate about whether this restaurant or that bar is actually in Calexico or Edgeville.

Using Districts

Districts are the main components of city building in the Barony and Primacy styles of play. Multiple Districts combine to make up a city — the bigger the city, the more Districts it probably has. (Or, alternatively, the bigger its Districts are.)

How many Districts are needed to make a city? That depends on your goals. If you just want to design a small Midwestern city that's home to two or three young vampires, five or six Districts might be enough. Maybe the city doesn't amount to much more than a slumping downtown, a park, a couple of industrial yards, a slum, and a couple of ethnic neighborhoods.

If, on the other hand, your goal is to replicate a major real-world city, then you'll want to break that city down into neighborhoods and zones with appreciable differences worth worrying about for gameplay's sake. If two adjoining residential neighborhoods are functionally identical except for issues of local pride, you could make them a single District — or even roll them both into a District based on the nearby university if you like. For some cities, a single waterfront District is enough to evoke the sense of the local harbor, but other cities have several distinctly different waterfront sectors. For example, there are parts of Baltimore's waterfront where you can get fresh fish worth a good long drive and stretches where you shouldn't eat anything that comes out of that water —those should probably be different Districts.

Don't worry about authenticity. Whether or not the city council would agree with your division of the city's districts doesn't matter. What matters is that you end up with a variety of Districts that you can use in many stories to evoke different moods and pose different gameplay challenges. If half the Districts in your city are just the same residential zone with the same traits that's repeated over and over again, what's the point of using Districts at all?

Think carefully about the size of Districts. They don't have to be remotely the same size. A particularly nice part of town might be just a few blocks while a sprawling rotten slum might be a mile wide. If every District is a potential domain for some vampire (they are), how many really admirable domains are there to be had? How many crappy backwater promotions are there to get? Desirable Districts need to be rare enough that the Kindred of the city fight over them — these kinds of conflicts are the meat of the Danse Macabre.

Breaking a city down into Districts can be as simple as breaking it down into neighborhoods. You could even do this on the fly, as you play while reasoning that your chronicle's city has a Chinatown and, when the characters go there, you just turn to p. 256 in this book and decide, "This'll do." What are the borders of Chinatown? How many different Chinatown Districts do you need to replicate your city's sprawling neighborhoods? If you don't want to worry about that kind of precise detail, then don't.

Even if you're not worrying about tracking the characters' movements across a map of the city, Districts are terrific tools. The trick is to find the right balance between Districts included for game effects and those used to create atmosphere or to reflect the character of the larger city. How many slums does it take to make your city feel run down, decrepit, forgotten, and rotting? How many slums do you need to create a large enough variety of hostile environments to make cross-town travel perilous and exciting for the players and their characters? How many hospital zones do you need to facilitate a vampire power struggle over the right to control them?

The answers to all these kinds of questions depend on your chronicle's specific needs. The Storyteller needs to import or craft Districts just as she does the Storyteller characters who aid and oppose the players' characters in any story. Districts aren't about realism as much as they're about satisfying gameplay and compelling drama — read that again and remember it.

Districts and Gameplay

Part of the purpose of Districts is to fuel gameplay, and gameplay requires interesting choices to make. How do Districts supply the options that combine to make interesting choices? By making characters choose where things happen and how they get there.

Districts, even before mixing in the complications of vampires, color all of the action that happens within. If

the coterie is challenged by a dozen local thugs (maybe they're mob muscle protecting a drug warehouse), the District where the scene takes place should influence the decision the characters make. Are these thugs less likely to back down on their own turf, thereby leading the coterie in a gruesome fight to the finish? If they fight here, do they risk being caught by the thug's partners before the night is through? What if the coterie backs down now and then tracks the thugs to a nearby bar in a neighborhood where the gang holds less sway — or the bar itself provides the promise of a nice, private ambush?

Things can get more complicated if the time between these two confrontations is long enough for word to get out that the coterie backed down in the face of some mortal thugs. Even if it was the smart thing to do at the time, can their rivals throw it back in their faces later? Does it bolster the gang's sense of control over the territory?

Adding the dominion of the Kindred into the mix opens a new dimension of gameplay: The coterie has to get to Milberg Heights to stop one of their ghouls from walking into a trap, but to get there in time they must either cross the turf of a notoriously defensive Nosferatu or the domain of a rival coterie. Because the Predator's Taint raises the hackles on any vampire they get near, the characters might not be able to just slip through the neighborhood? Which path do they choose? (For a deeper look at this question, see "Trespass," later in this chapter.)

Districts create contexts that add replay value to the ongoing tactical, political, and moral choices vampires must make from night to night.

District Mechanics

Districts have traits, somewhat like characters, that modify actions taken within the District or contribute to dice pools representing the background characters in the area. These traits and basic rules for Districts as well as dozens of sample Districts are found in Chapter Five.

Sites

Sites from hospitals and banks to whorehouses and chop shops are specific places with particular functions. These are where the manipulations of the Damned make contact with the world of the living.

In the secret, after hours world of the undead, the most basic services are hard to come by; the most common tasks become chores. Think of the difficulty the mob has doing business without breaking the surface of public society and revealing itself to the authorities? The Kindred are in a similarly tough spot but with the added ache of only being able to operate in the dark or through untrustworthy middlemen.

The Kindred need to cultivate their own network of servants, allies, and accomplices if they're to have access to modern power. Sites represent access and agency.

In Game Terms

Sites are tools. They grant bonuses to particular actions that take place on the premises. A hospital is the right place for surgery (Medicine), a library is the right place for research (Academics), a theater is the right place for a monologue (Expression). So Sites are equipment and are associated with particular Skills.

The major advantage of a Site is that it is not so easily lost or stolen. Also, the kinds of equipment that grant the largest bonuses (or even make certain actions possible) like modern medical equipment or industrial machinery that are often too big to lug around. A surgical suite can't be put in a backpack.

Not all Sites provide giant bonuses, though. Rather, they should negate significant penalties for trying certain actions in unsuitable places. Performing surgery in a motel room, for example, doesn't just lack the bonuses of a surgical suite but it also should impose some formidable penalties (from –3 to –5). Sites are major advantages.

Site bonuses are based only on equipment. Atmosphere plays a big part, especially for bonuses to Social Skills. In Alfonso Cuaron's terrific film, *Children of Men*, an underground group of radicals keeps a room completely covered in newspaper articles covering their activities, hiding all the exits, and creating an overpowering, inescapable environment perfect for interrogations — it's a great example of an Intimidation Site. A posh VIP room could be a Site for Socialize actions. A lushly appointed conference room can give an edge to Persuasion actions.

Chapter Five offers you dozens of examples of practical Sites.

Why Sites, Not People?

Why does a vampire need access to a hospital to have servants with the Medicine Skill? Strictly speaking, a character doesn't need a Site for such things. The Allies and Retainer Merits are there for the taking.

Sites evoke. Sites prompt the characters to interact with the city and provoke challenging gameplay questions. "Get him back to the animal hospital before he bleeds out," the Daeva shouts over his ghoul's oozing body. "I'll take this back to the bookstore and see if you can find anything like it in the Spates Catalog," says the Mekhet, bagging a severed foot.

Setting is an essential part of mood and atmosphere, and it can be a profound tool for theme. Sites give the chronicle a collection of recurring sets, making the city feel like a persistent environment; a place the players can get familiar with. As a reflection or extension of character, they can come to reveal as much about a character as clothing or dialogue — whether the character in question belongs to a player or it is someone recently revealed by the Storyteller.

The game effects of Sites give the setting real consequence. Are the characters willing to fight if it means risking their carefully appointed parlor or expensive garage? Are they willing to reveal the location of their hidden library to a so-called medium if it means saving themselves from an insane haunting?

Discovering a condemned office building is no big deal in the rusted and rotting slums of the World of Darkness, but discovering a Site that grants a +4 bonus to Stealth actions to hide people (or bodies) has a real thrill. Sites lure characters across town, into new necks of the city, or even into another vampire's territory. Sites provoke the essential conflicts that make up the Danse Macabre.

Why does a vampire intrude into the coterie's territory? He wants the occult bookstore. Why would the characters try to take a sliver of the Duke's territory for themselves? They want the abandoned church on 11th Avenue to be the chapel for their new Sanctified parish.

Subjects

Still, people are ultimately what stories are about. It's the conflicts between people that drive the personal horror of **Vampire**. A vampire can't seduce or corrupt a garage the way he can someone's soul.

Subjects are, simply, vulnerable Storyteller characters attached to Sites. These are the characters that Kindred manipulate in order to gain access to or control of a Site. A Subject, dramatically, is what makes one particular hospital, club, or garage a target for the Damned rather than another. Subjects have conflicts that a vampire can exploit to gain a grip on the Subject emotionally, psychologically, or physically. Once the Subject is in hand, the vampire's influence extends to the Site as well.

Subjects are primarily tools for Storytellers because they are part story hook and part Storyteller character. See p. 331 for guidelines on using Subjects in play. See Chapter Five for several sample Subjects to use in your chronicle right away.

Maps

Maps can be great tools. Maps can be big mistakes.

Watch some movies and television settings where the story's different settings are essential to the film's character — *Se7en*, *L.A. Confidential*, *Goodfellas*, *Road to Perdition*, *Blade*, *The Bourne Supremacy*, *The Wire*, *Homicide: Life on the Street* — and look at how little focus is really put on where any of those settings are relative to one another. The personalities of the individual settings from broken tenements to stylish hotels don't come from a street address. Only when the trip from Point A to Point B is essential to the outcome of the action does it even matter at all.

In the case of shows like *Homicide* and *The Wire*, we're routinely shown conversations taking place en route someplace. We're routinely shown how the space between these housing projects and that abandoned stretch of rowhouses is important to an investigation or a chase. All that stuff is atmosphere and exposition, though. It's important because it textures the action, but it's not mistaken for action.

Don't be tricked by maps into thinking that precise routes through the city are important. Sometimes the specific, detailed path the characters take is vital to the story. Most of the time it's not. *You* make the call, not some imaginary obligation to realism.

So what good are maps at all, then?

A map can reveal a lot about a place's personality and history. Is the place a tangle of overlapping streets biting their own tails? Is it a spacious stretch of parks? Is it an orderly grid of measured blocks? What does it say about that residential stretch of narrow streets if they're just one chain link fence away from an industrial yard?

Plotting Sites out on a map can go a long way toward describing the power dynamics and potential conflicts in a neighborhood too. If two illegal chop shops are within a couple blocks of each other, then that area can take on a reputation that police eventually catch wind of and come knocking. Rival drug markets across the block from each other lead to violence.

System: Knowing the distance between a gangland battleground and an underground night doctor is important when someone's bleeding out. Seeing the distance on a map can keep all the players in the same headspace, but doing math on miles per hour and fractions of a mile is putting the action in the wrong place. The question, most often, isn't "How long will it take them to get there?" but "Will they get there in time?"

Break the action down into a couple of instant actions based on the intervening streets. Set up the panicked drive to a doctor as an extended action with the number of possible rolls determined by the distance between the victim and death. Or boil it down to one ruthless instant action that is described as a slow motion montage of streets and rain and lights with no sound but an electronic dirge, and everything is hanging on that one roll.

All these different mechanisms are tools for the Storyteller to use and to evoke unique scenes for unique circumstances. Handle everything as a dryly realistic trip through traffic with the same actions and dice pools over and over again, and you're stripping all the drama out of the sequence and simulating the boredom of doing that stuff in reality. The troupe controls the action, not the map.

See the individual map sections for ideas on how they can impact actions taking place within them without resorting to measuring feet per quarter inch.

Map Segments

A city is a collection of neighborhoods that are built at different times by different people with different goals. This District has a different layout than that District even though they both may be "Slums" in game terms. The intersection of map segments and Districts expands the personality of your city.

The first use of the map segments is as a brainstorming aid. You've picked out a District for this corner of your city, so now think about what style of street plan you'd give it. How does your image of that District change when you pair it with an unlikely map segment? What if the University is packed into dozens of little classrooms and offices scattered throughout a Residential Grid or Slums in mid-gentrification? How does the vibe of that Gallery District change if you include it as part of an Industrial area? Does giving the Hospital District the Winding Streets map make it harder to reach it in an emergency?

Remember, not every neighborhood is carefully laid out in advance; lots of them develop organically as one local project after another gets voted up or down by a fickle public. Lots of neighborhoods are laid out more by happenstance than design, and urban planners make bad calls. Sometimes a hospital ends up in slums because a factory shuts down or catastrophic floods ruin a neighborhood. The world doesn't make sense. So create the atmosphere you want and justify it with whatever sad story you like.

Resembling the Real

Real maps are everywhere. You have access to a volume of imagery and data that would've been unthinkable to the turf lords of centuries past. Thanks to the likes of Google Earth you can look down on the real (?) world with the power of fucking Keyhole satellites. What better look at the city of your chronicle could you need?

In truth, without the specialized training that professional image interpreters get, a lot of the unique detail of a place doesn't come through the satellite maps you see online. It's a great place to start, but avoid the mistake of dwelling on accuracy over atmosphere.

The cities of the World of Darkness may not bear much resemblance to their real world inspirations, anyway. Where's the neighborhood that burned four years ago and has yet to be rebuilt? Where are the overgrown Victorian garden cemeteries in the middle of downtown? Where's the rooftop cathedral? If the city you're looking down on from the Internet doesn't have these things, screw that satellite image and draw in what you want. All those travel guides and tourist books, satellite maps, and almanacs are just places to start.

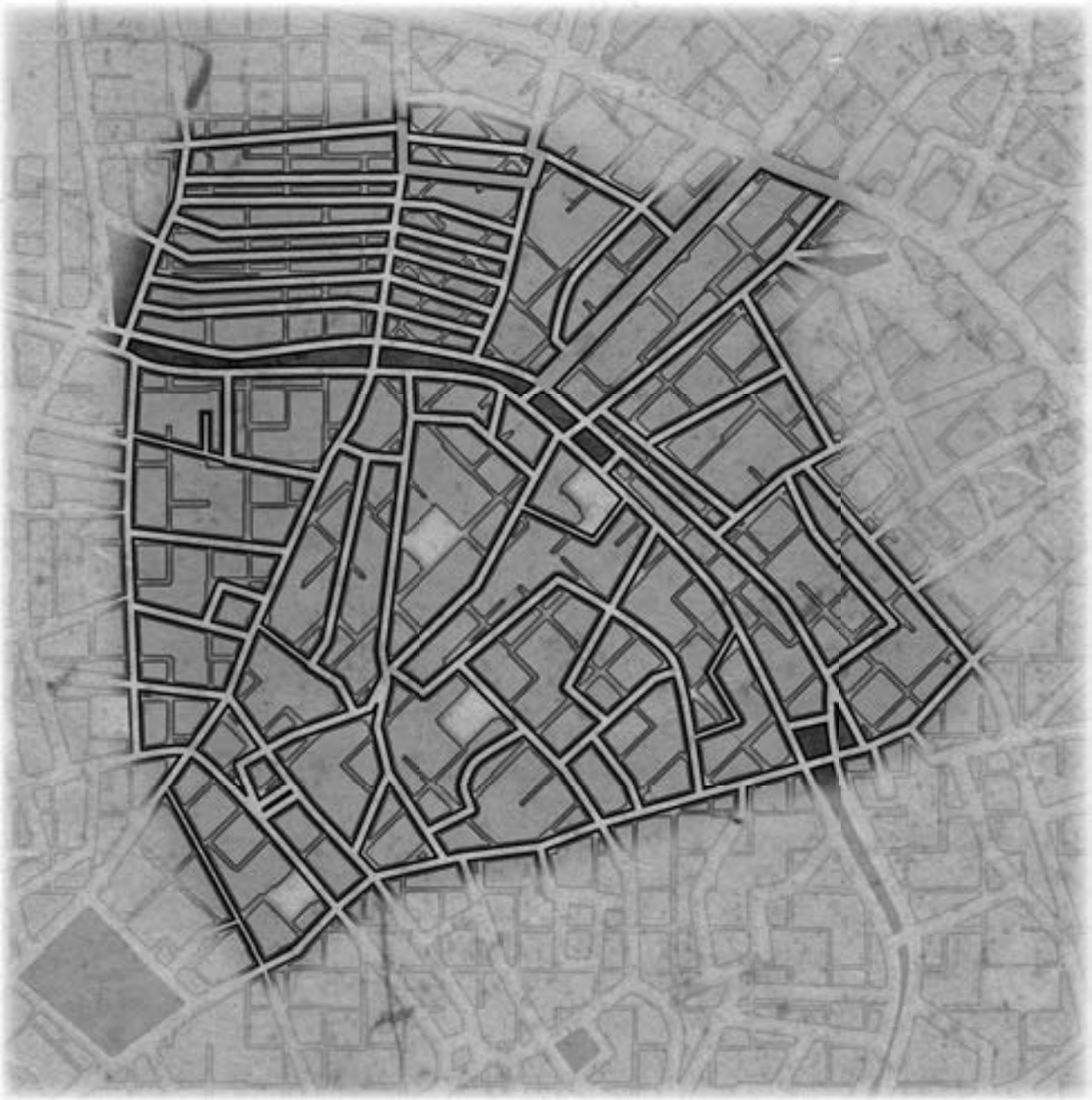
Angled

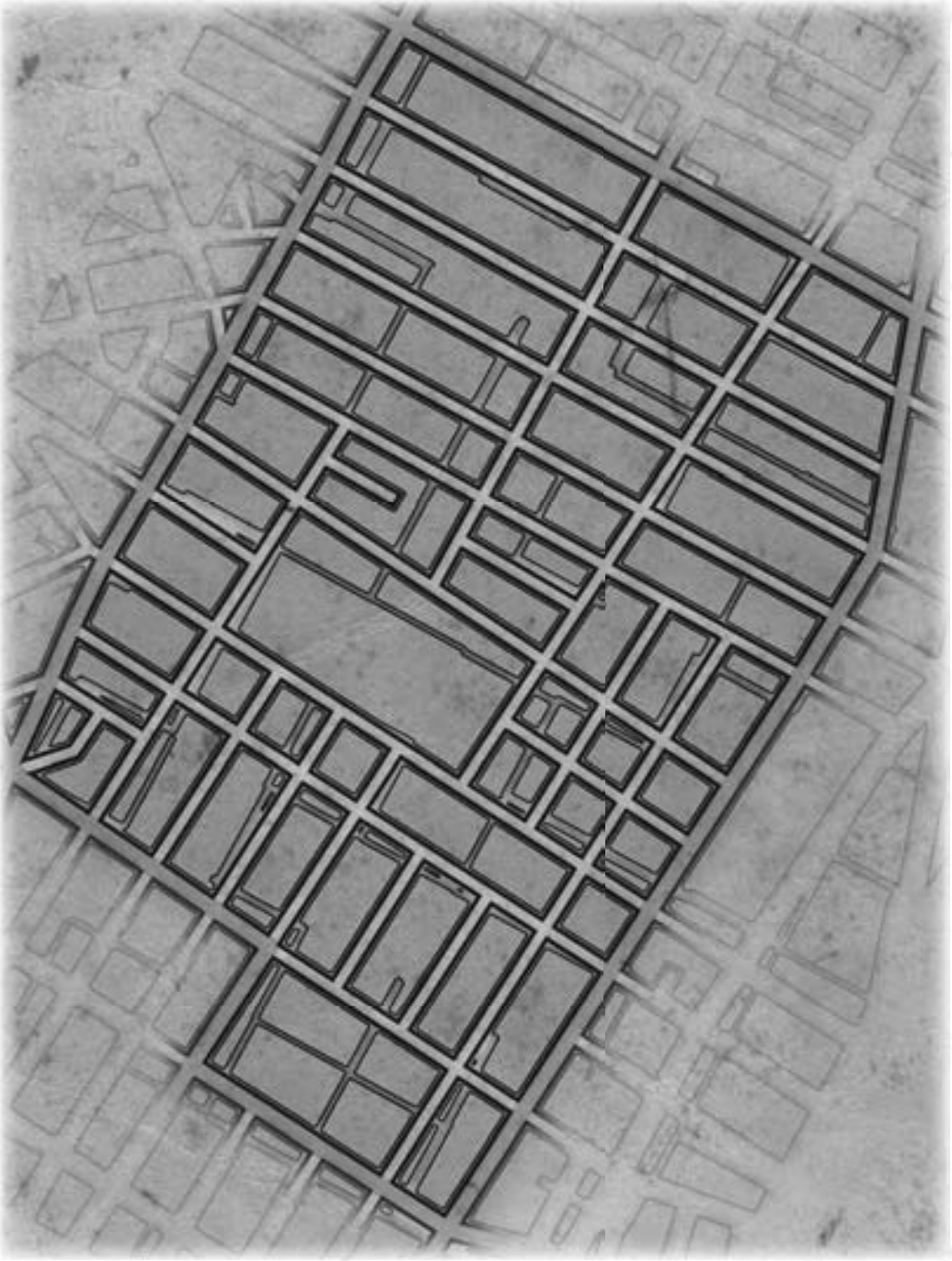
Angled street plans have been in fashion in various cities throughout history. Moscow is the classic example while Washington DC riffs on the idea in combination with its grid. Angled streets usually "point" at something, coming together at some important site like a capitol or memorial monument, though sometimes the building that radiated out the city plan isn't there anymore.

Consider the grim irony of a city whose major streets all lead toward a decrepit cluster of abandoned towering housing projects. Now they're rotten stumps infested with drug-crazed lunatics and, unknown to the public, evil spirits that are stalked by werewolves. The neighborhood has become a sink leading to a clogged drain.

Angled streets may be a little oddity in a larger city, gathered for just a few blocks around the cathedral or the train station before giving away to any other kind of street plan.

Optional System: Angled streets are easiest to navigate once you're familiar with them, but until then they lead visitors back to the same few destinations over and over. (That's the point of them, actually.) Angled streets could grant a +1 to +3 bonus to reaching a central destination, and a –1 to –3 penalty for visitors trying to get somewhere else in the neighborhood. Over time this penalty diminishes to nothing.





Big Block/Downtown Grid

This is a classic big city downtown plan. Orderly streets with occasional interruptions and numerous dark alleys make for a neighborhood that's easy to navigate for mainstream traffic but full of crannies and unexplored pockets. Stir in a bunch of one-way streets and order turns to constriction with one bad turn.

This is a good fit for the great 20th century downtown canyon of skyscrapers and elevated trains. Big blocks mean big footprints for big towers. Big buildings mean bad sightlines. Intersections are essential to making sense of one's position from ground level.

Optional System: If this is a crowded downtown area packed with pedestrians, penalties for shadowing characters can be substantial (–1 to –3) while characters engaging in Subterfuge based on a simple disguise may get a bonus for the sheer number of people around. How likely is it to find a delivery guy or a lost tourist in this kind of neighborhood? A high volume of people makes any kind of person more likely to turn up.

Boulevards

These wide and grassy streets guide neighboring traffic through the area while projecting an idyllic vibe of classy Brownstones and apartment buildings. Turn off the boulevard into the surrounding streets, though, and things may start to resemble the rest of the city after just a few blocks.

If the green spaces around the boulevards are well kept, this kind of place is expensive, sought-after, and cozy. People drive through it on the weekends and imagine what it would be like to live here.

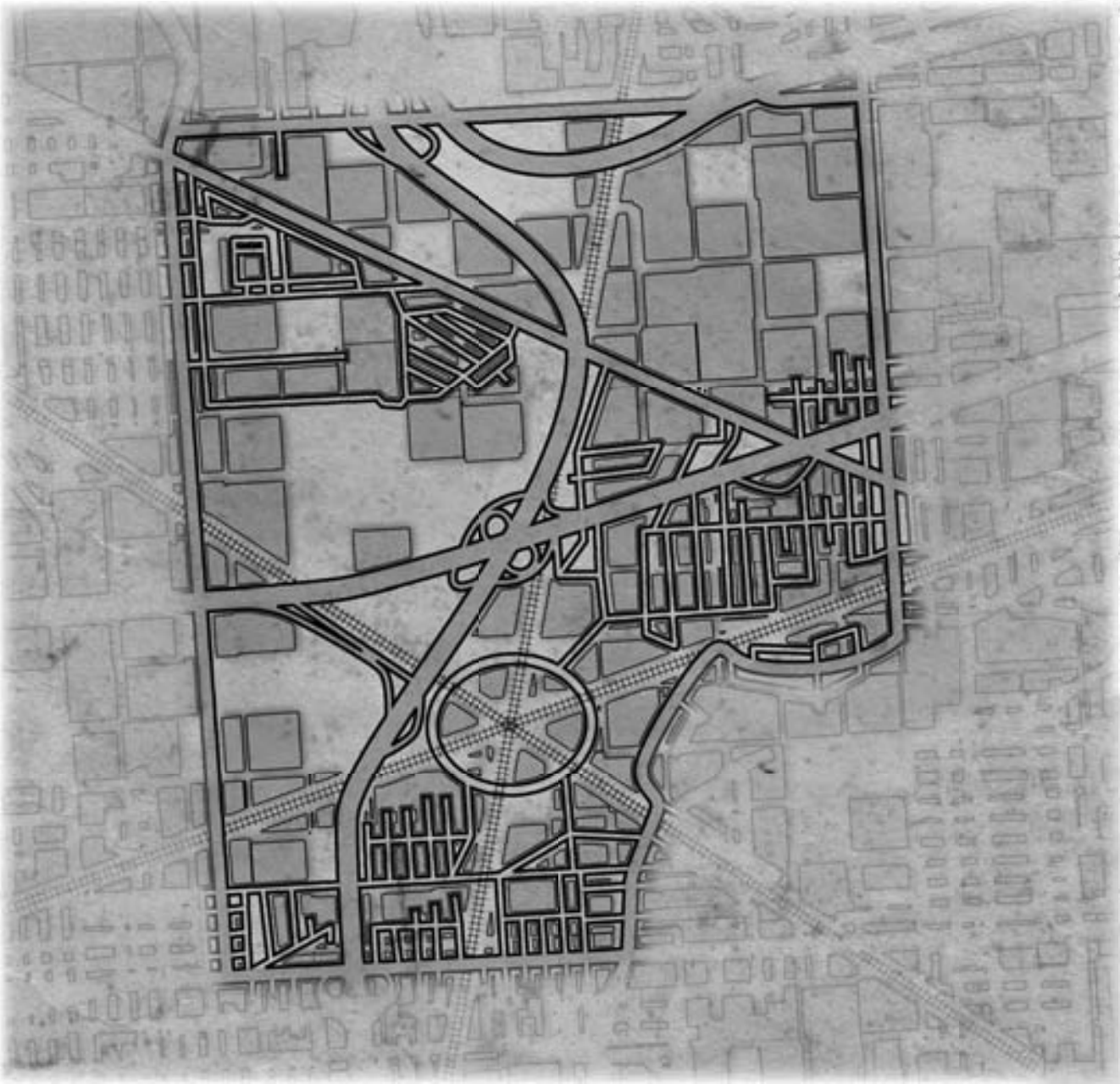
If the green spaces are brown, out of control, and choking out the unloved old flats in the neighborhood, this becomes an area that people drive through but *do not stop*. Pedestrians avoid the boulevards for fear of whoever or whatever is waiting in the tall grass to jump them. Homeless campers take their chances living between the lanes, but a few of them go missing in the night to creatures that move quickly and quietly through the weeds.

Optional System: A main artery like these boulevards makes travel faster but more predictable. Moving through this neighborhood may save time at the risk of visibility to local rivals or lords. If the place has gone to hell, Stealth becomes easy (+1 to +3) and perception rolls become hard (–1 to –3).

Industrial

This could be a train depot, a warehouse district, a factory yard, or the loading grounds for an airport or harbor. Wide stretches of open gravel and asphalt would provide good visibility if there was sufficient light… but of course there isn't. At night, people mill about in the patches of light near loading docks, but most of the place is quiet and empty. Cars and bodies get dumped here next to the huge concrete pylons holding up the expressway. Chain link fences keep out the honest but no one else. Trucks get cut open in the night. Truckers get cut open in the night. Coyotes, picking at garbage and raccoons, skulk through. Little office buildings sit dark and empty at the edge of the neighborhood, and factory housing huddles with its back to the gravel plains. Inside people look into their televisions and stay away from the windows.

Optional System: This is the urban veldt. At night, this place is a hunting ground for scavengers, predators, and thieves. The pickings are often slim, but the consequences are practically nonexistent away from the loading docks. On foot, a little Stealth and Athletics can make travel in here easy enough (–1 to –3 penalties to rolls), but driving through here is next to impossible with all the locked gates, chain link, ditches, and broken roads (–4 to –5).

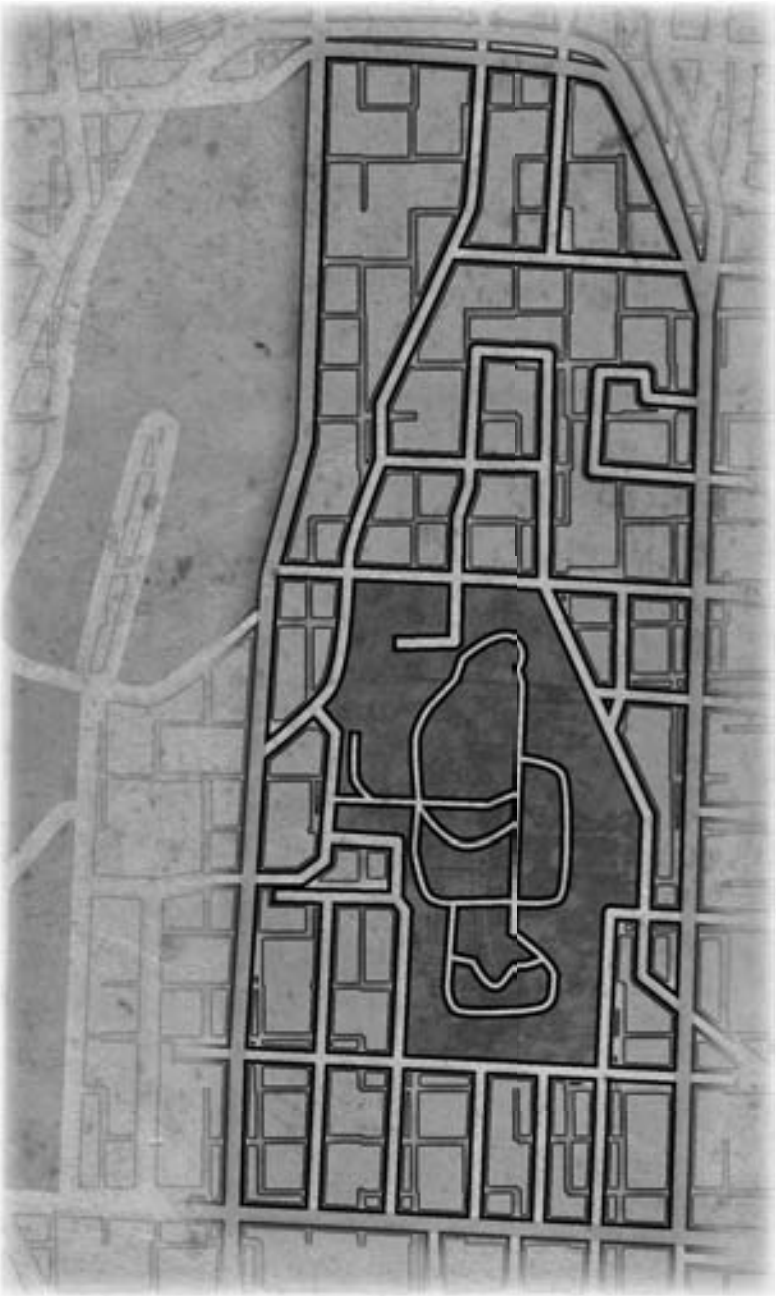


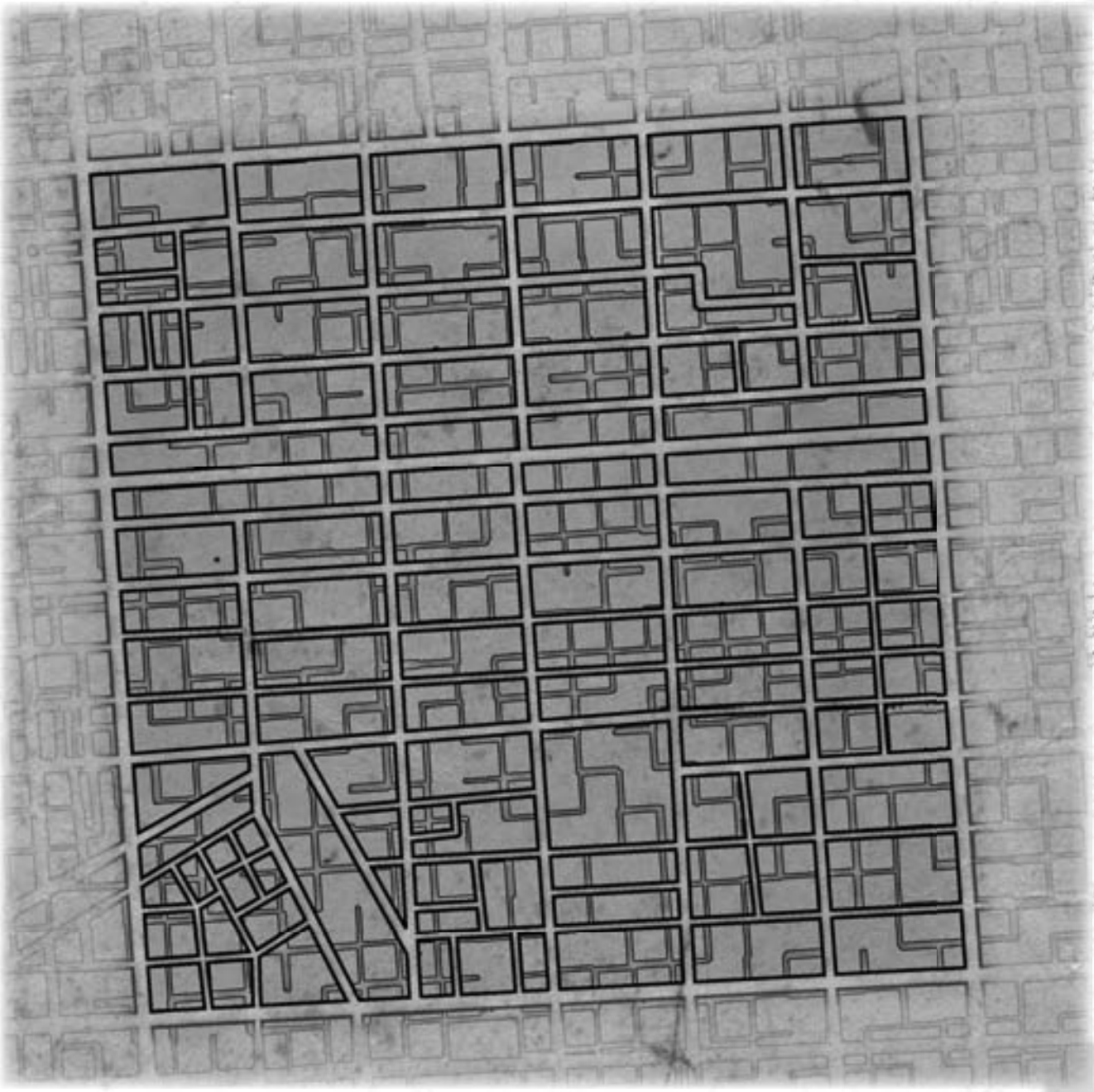
Park

In a nice neighborhood, the park is a garden in the center of the neighborhood, where people walk their dogs and wave hello even after dark. Houses with clear, bright windows look out on the pond and the trees. The people inside imagine they live in the country sometimes. It's quaint here; if a body turns up in the park, it is not soon forgotten.

If this place has fallen apart, the park is a rotting hole in the middle of the neighborhood. Junkies and dealers gather on the trails. Wild dogs wandering into back yards in the night, roam in packs through the woods,. Lunatic vagrants stab anyone who gets near their camps, just in case. Bodies go unnoticed or unreported for days at a time. Many of them never get investigated. At night, the police won't go in here.

Optional System: Parks allow a rare opportunity to use the Survival Skill in town. Hunting rolls in a park are easy here for good or bad neighborhoods (+2 to +3) if the vampire's looking for animals; in the bad neighborhood, even humans are easy prey. But if a vampire can't control himself here, he ruins it for everyone when some neighborhood kids find the body. Visibility in this area is actually good because so many houses are situated to look out on the park (+2 perception rolls on behalf of the townspeople).

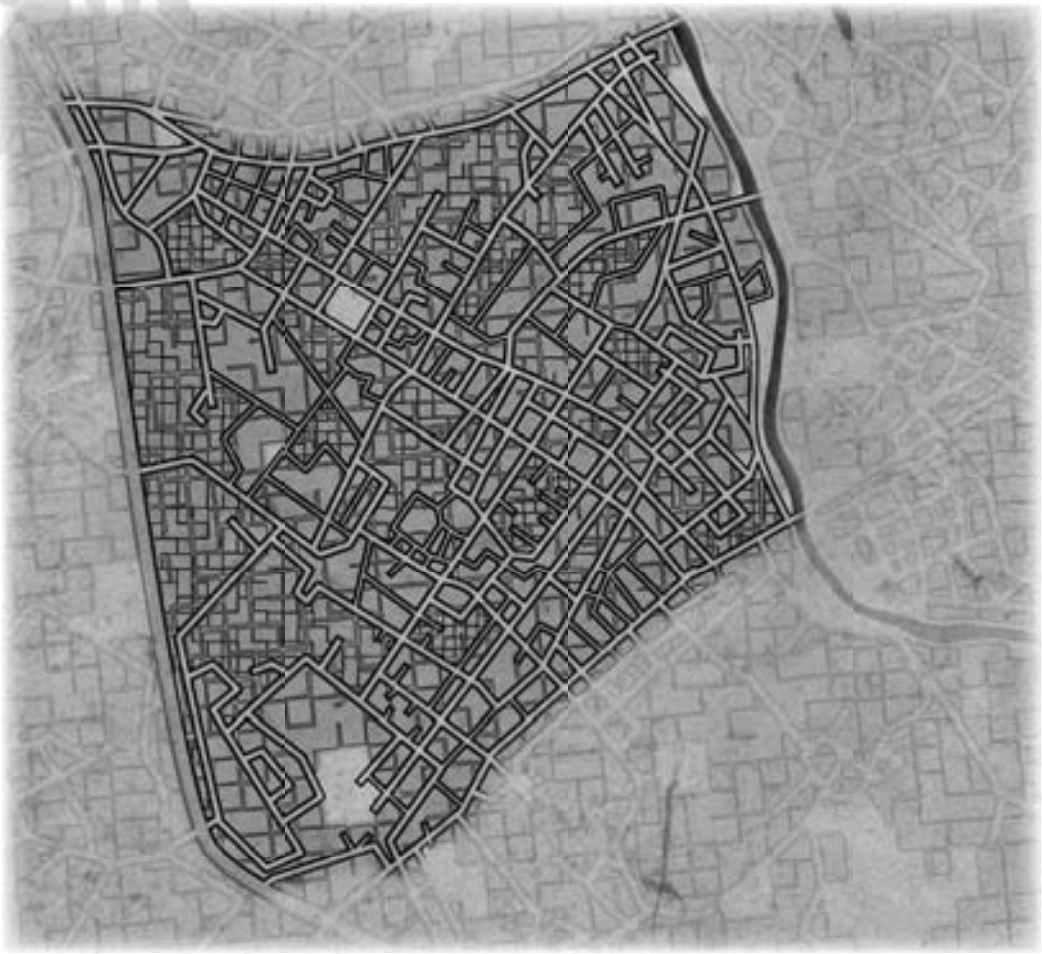




Grid, Punctuated/Residential/Uneven

The grid is the default plan for most communities. Lots of cities have multiple grids stemming from urban sprawl pushing neighboring communities together over time, and the grids don't always agree. In these three example grids — the average Residential, the more elegant Punctuated, and the less orderly Uneven Grid — streets have an overriding plan with a few significant exceptions. Parks, institutions, new developments like public transit or on-ramps, shopping centers, and housing projects can all account for the larger footprints in these areas.

Depending on the city and the neighborhood, the average building in these areas could be coldly repetitive single family brick bungalows, cute little Craftsman bungalows rotting into weedy huts, multi-family townhouses, sturdy gray Brownstones, peeling fake brick rowhouses, tall posh townhomes hidden behind hedgerows, or anything else.



Slums

The neighborhood the money forgot about grows in response to its environment. Like a medieval city, people build onto their houses as far as they can go without losing a fight. Streets sometimes just end because some contractor put up a building or a parking lot barricade has been dragged into the lane. Streets clogged with parked cars leave alleys easier to travel. Some streets are so narrow that sidewalks are practically in living rooms. Clotheslines hang across streets and alleyways like banners. Half a dozen TVs talk over each other. Somewhere a gun goes off five or six times and nobody flinches.

This plan fits inner-city neighborhoods where year after year of failed plans have choked streets nearly to death. It also works for crowded factory-style neighborhoods from the early 20th century when smoke-belching industrial buildings crowded together with company housing gathered around their feet like children. The weird shapes and large footprints on this plan could be sprawling warehouses and factory complexes with private company roads or public roads running underneath them.

Old European (or European style cities like Montreal) cities with surviving antique street plans end up with streets like this in perfectly desirable — even prestigiously expensive — neighborhoods. Cars are just as hard to navigate in here, but pedestrians can feel safe enough getting lost on the streets.

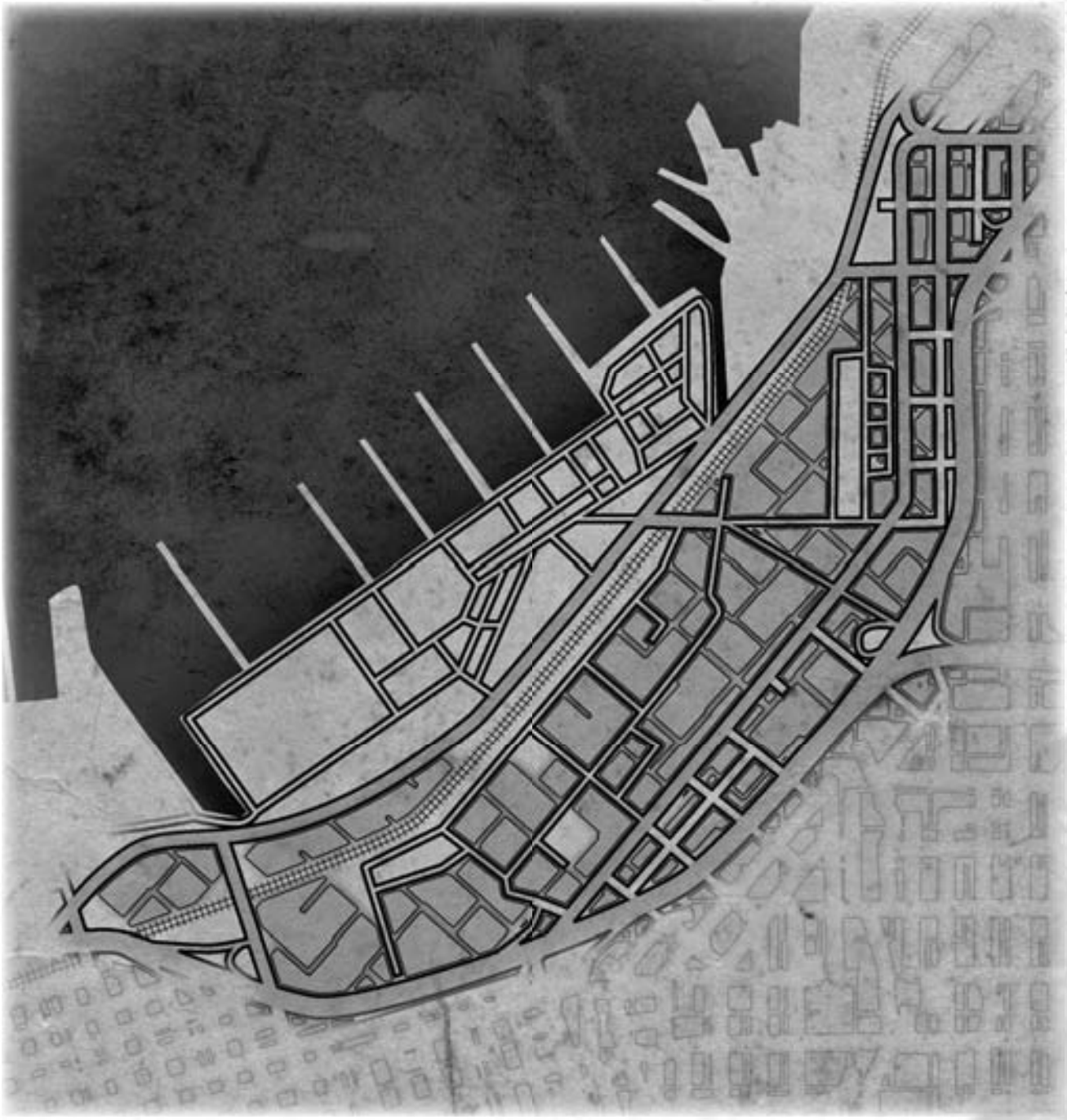
Slums go through cycles. Maybe this neighborhood collapsed during the urban flight of the 1950s and 1960s but has gone through aggressive revitalization in the past ten years. Half the neighborhood could be expensive lofts, cozy coffee shops, glassy bars, and organic grocery stories. The other half could be a mix of honest blue-collar workers who are suffocating under new property taxes and displaced gangbangers and squatters about to make a stand.

Optional System: Getting around in here is obviously difficult. A dice pool of Intelligence + Streetwise helps find the way. Presence + Streetwise vs. Wits + Streetwise might be necessary to get around without looking like a victim or a troublemaker — random harassment and violence are as likely as the story's need for a dose of action dictate. Driving through this neighborhood is hard enough just when navigating the space (Wits or Dexterity + Drive – 2 to 4), but knowing which way to go isn't much easier (Intelligence + Drive – 4).

Waterfront

The Waterfront can be a revitalized tourist destination with a Ferris Wheel and seafood restaurants. More likely, though, it's a no-nonsense stretch of working spaces. Cargo yards, warehouses, factories, processing plants, office buildings, parking lots, and construction yards intermix for the length of this place and hug the dark water of the sea (or river or lake). Lots of urban waterfronts are active all night long, well-lit and well-patrolled — thievery is rampant in these places with the chaos of activity and the sheer volume of merchandise, but harbor police and private security are fierce. Drunken fights and muggings are both common.

The shape of the waterfront was specifically chosen to work for ocean-side harbors, lakeside piers, or riverside docks. A peninsula city might have Waterfront neighborhoods on three sides or be a mix of Waterfronts and anything else. Industrial segments are a logical match for the Waterfront, but the rail line running through the Winding Streets could lead into and out of the Waterfront too.



Winding Streets

The Winding Streets plan is good for everything the Grid plans are, it just restricts travel a bit more. Winding streets were popular at the end of the 1800s for creating cozy, private environments. The streets cut down on visibility and dispel some of the feeling of living in houses filed like crates. In theory, they also cut down on undesirable visitors by dissuading drive-through traffic with a confusing street plan. When a neighborhood like this goes in the shitter, though, it cuts down on response times, too, and that lack of visibility drives up the home invasion statistics.

The tract of land running down the middle may be a green park built up around old train tracks. It could be a modest stretch of woods and weeds unclaimed and unkempt around the old tracks. It could be a green corridor of city property where freight trains rattle through in the night. It could be a gravelly open wound in the neighborhood that is full of dead cars and stained mattresses and where freight trains come through in the dark and set off chanting shouts and drunken hollers that are punctuated by the sound of bottles breaking.

Putting it Together

The map segments are, obviously, not snugly interlocking puzzle pieces. They're not designed to plug seamlessly into one another because strictly mapping every street in the city isn't the goal of this system. Rather, the map segments are meant to stand in for *types* of neighborhoods, wherever those neighborhoods land within the city. The negative space between map segments can be defined to your taste. You might assume that all the space between the mapped Districts are forest preserves and park land, a baseline residential District that you've created for your city, a river, the ocean or anything else that fits your vision.

The scale of map segments is intentionally left vague. You might shrink the Slums or expand the Industrial yard to suit your neighborhoods. You could shrink the basic Residential Grid and line up a half dozen of them to create a long residential corridor on one of town. There are no rules for this process — play until you have a result you like.

Though Districts and map segments are designed to interact directly with each map segment paired with one District, that's just for simplicity. The Industrial map segment could span two Districts, one industrial and one residential, for example. Two map segments, such as one Slum and two Waterfronts, could be put together to create a single depressed island District of crumbling warehouses and claustrophobic shacks trapped in the middle of town.

Cut and Paste

Photocopy the map segments in this book, cut them out and arrange them as you like. Or visit White Wolf Online at **www.white-wolf.com** and download larger versions of the **Damnation City** map segments to print out and use to build your city. Mix in your plans and Districts and the options are endless.

Barony Gameplay

Barony is a style of gameplay for **Vampire: The Requiem** that presumes that the players' characters are involved in the neo-feudal politics and intrigues of the Danse Macabre. Characters in a Barony chronicle are not out for blood and mystical power alone. They also want territory and authority over their fellow monsters, to rise in the ranks of the Damned, and shape Kindred society.

The game systems that support this kind of play are simple expansions on familiar rules. New Merits and guidelines for enacting Kindred customs with game mechanics are all it takes to play a Barony chronicle. As such, it's easy to "upgrade" an existing chronicle to Barony now that you have this book.

Many of the following systems from the storytelling possibilities of feudal politics to the gameplay possibilities of schema are usable by themselves without incorporating new Merits or tracking Kindred domains for the whole city. If all the chronicle needs is a backdrop of political intrigue to propel the thrillers, mysteries, and action stories that make up your typical chapter of play, this chapter does that too.

It's important to remember, though, that despite the hierarchy of Kindred society, a Barony chronicle is not something that can be "won." This is not a fair play experience or a point-based domain construction kit. The primary motive behind all design choices you make should be drama. The coterie needs to face challenges and conflicts to spark new stories. If Kindred had the means to create a stable society free of petty jealousies and backstabbing, they'd have no fear and you'd have no stories to tell.

The goal of a Barony chronicle must be the same as a core **Vampire** chronicle: to follow the thread of the players' characters' choices and consequences through whatever story emerges until it comes out on the other side of the chronicle. The difference is that, in a Barony chronicle, the stakes are higher.

The Basic Hierarchy

- **The Prince** grants land to Regents or any lower status of Kindred.
- **The Regent** grants land to vassals or any lower status of Kindred and owes fealty to the Prince.
- **The Vassal** grants tenancy to any lower status of Kindred and owes fealty to a higher vassal (e.g., a Regent) and the Prince.
- **The Tenant** can allow any vampire who she's willing to be associated with to spend a few nights in her haven or immediate feeding ground. The tenant has to answer for any trouble caused by her guests should her lord demand it. The tenant has no authority to grant territory and owes fealty to a liege vassal and the Prince.
- **The Serf** toils in the turf of higher-ups. Though he has a haven on land belonging to a lord, he has no authority over anything outside the walls of his haven.

Playing the Serf

A chronicle in which the players' characters are serfs, as the Kindred use the term, has no special rules or traits. Characters at this level of the political hierarchy are likely to be unaligned with the covenants and may be outlaws. Unlike the role of the serf in mortal society, Kindred serfs are not essential to the societal system of the Damned. Tenants handle enough of the production of Vitae and service necessary for the lords, and many vampires are self-sufficient anyway .

Serfs among the Damned are hardly considered Kindred yet. They hold a place more suitable for ghouls and blood dolls — though even ghouls may be brought inside the house.

Playing the Tenant

This is, more or less, the default situation of play in **Vampire: The Requiem**. The players portray Kindred who are subordinate to elders, covenant leaders, and landlords. Though the characters may have their own havens, they have to scratch out a place for themselves in the city and their covenants if they want to get ahead in the Danse Macabre or find satisfaction in their Requiems.

Characters at this level can have virtually any level of Covenant Status or Clan Status but seldom have more than a dot or two in City Status, at least at first. Certainly they do not possess the Domain Merit. Characters are likely to be agents of more powerful Kindred or the covenants in general. A superior wants something done, and she asks the characters to do it. That's the basic hook for stories about tenants.

For examples of the kinds of things tenants may be dispatched to do, see the relevant covenant guidebook or **Coteries**.

Playing the Vassal

A city's political scheme may have multiple layers of vassals between the low tenants and the Regents who are so near to the Prince. A vassal, generally, is any Kindred beneath a Regent with the ability to grant out (sub-infeudate) her territory to other Kindred. Thus, all Kindred above tenants and below the Regents are vassals.

Characters at this level of the hierarchy may be influential members of vampire society and in command of prestigious domains and valuable Sites that put her at the center of Kindred plans for the future. Or a character at this level may be a backwater nobody sitting atop a useless span of houses and garages with little political value and waiting to find her big break. Vassals may be prominent members of local covenants, promoted simply to encourage them to share their valuable turf, or are rank-and-file groundlings who are expected to graciously host the occasional covenant-mate out near dawn now and again.

Vassals, owing fealty to their liege lords above them, may participate in the same kind of errands and missions as tenants (and any other street-level vampires). Vassals are also close enough to the action, though, to plan their own local coups and take power where they can. Vassals are the most mobile creatures in the Kindred hierarchy and are often the source of the strife that shakes of the schema of local politics. This is a terrific place for players' characters in the Danse Macabre.

Playing the Regent

Regents are those Kindred lords who receive their territory directly from the Prince. Even when a Regent has granted no land out to vassals below her, she is known as an overlord. Regents are prominent even when they are not particularly important. Their proximity to the Prince — always politically and often personally — makes them visible to the Kindred court, but their authority gives them the privilege of retreating from the Danse Macabre to a degree.

Regents are often high-ranking or leading members of covenants and are given territory by the Prince as a means of forcing responsibility for covenant-member actions on an affiliated Regent. Regents are highly visible figures in the Danse Macabre, at least insofar as their names and territories are usually well known. Some neighborhoods take on nicknames among the Damned based on the Regent who controls it — Sykestown, Cameron's Hills, or Richville, for example.

Involving a Regent in one's political schemes is dangerous. To unseat a Regent, one must strike close to the Prince, possibly even attacking one of his confidants. A Regent who doesn't stick her neck out may be able to hold territory for decades. Regents who stay active in the Danse Macabre probably have vassals whose necks they stick out instead. What a Regent without vassals can't do, however, is defer blame for things that happen in her domain, so wreaking havoc in her turf forces her to act and reveal what kind of lord she really is. (Of course, if the Regent reveals herself as a competent or excellent lord, the troublemakers in her territory are in bloody trouble.)

Regency is the dream of many vassals. The Prince has great power, but the Regents have access to him and the luxury of staying out things now and again. The Primogen, who may well be Regents themselves, are likewise in a fine position. The Prince is an obvious target, and many Kindred are simply not cut out for the position. A vampire who knows it might strive for Regency, then fight to hold that seat for eternity.

Stories about Regents are about calculated responses to political attacks. Though players' characters can certainly become Regents (or even the Primogen or Prince), Regents are more likely to be antagonists in a Barony chronicle — at least at the beginning. At this level of play, the coterie may have to circle round one of its members, who takes on the mantle of Regent while the rest of them make do with vassalage or even less.

Paying Fealty

Barony gameplay hinges on the customs of Kindred politics and uses them to fulfill a vital goal: Give **Vampire** characters things to do.

All positions in the neo-feudal hierarchy, save for the Prince and the scots, owe fealty to another vampire from whom they take their power. In the fictional game world, this is a method for keeping vampire society in order, keeping tabs on Kindred of lower-station, and formalizing culpability among treacherous and secretive monsters. In the game itself, fealty is a simple, reusable way to get stories started. The lord demands her rent, and off the coterie goes.

Fealty among the Damned typically requires lower-station vampires to perform a service for their superiors. Just what's fair for the lord to ask of her vassal depends on their agreement at the time the vassal swore homage to the lord. Traditionally, Kindred vassals pay their rent in one of two pays: blood or service.

Taxed in Blood

The Blood is the only crop on which the Damned truly depend. It is all that grows in the fields and all that the

lowest vassals and tenants are expected to tend. Though elder vampires are typically also excellent hunters, lots of them aren't willing to risk their centuries of experience on a simple errand into a perilous city. If their vassals fail to deliver, the elder can hunt. Should something go wrong, it is the vassal who suffers and not the lord.

Among the eldest Kindred, who can drink only the Vitae of their own kind, finding a vassal trustworthy enough to risk a Vinculum may be essential. The elder sends this vassal (often his own childe) out to hunt mortal men and women and bring back their blood in his veins. Then the elder drinks from the vassal, and the fealty is done.

This is how so many Regents finally lose their seats: to vassals bonded to them by the Blood who abuse their love and betray their lords. Other elders voluntarily surrender their seats to loyal blood-bonded vassals before this inevitable betrayal, and then they, only to reclaim their seat decades later, retreat into torpor.

Despite the obvious flaws, centuries of Kindred have fallen victim to this same cycle. The Curse makes it inevitable for some. The Blood is inescapable, and so is all this that comes with it.

In an effort to escape this situation, variations on rents of the Blood have become customary in some cities:

The Annual Flesh

Rather than feed time and again from a vassal, some lords demand a payment of whole bodies — Kindred or mortal —, still fresh and vital, to be paid at set dates. This is called the Annual Flesh, though lords with few vassals often demand payment several times a year. It's the responsibility of the vassal to acquire suitable payment for his lord and to deal with any consequences of getting it. The vassal must hide his crimes, or the vassal must take the fall if he screws up.

Some lords demand particular terms of their vassals — a woman between the ages of fifty and sixty or a Kindred no more than seven nights old — so that the vassal can be discarded when he fails and replaced with a new favorite.

His Choice of the Crop

A popular American variation on the Tax of Blood is the right of the lord to choose a vessel from the vassal's fields. This is, in effect, quite similar to the Annual Flesh but is different in practice. Typically a lord exercising this custom goes out into the city with the vassal and selects a target in person. "That one," says the lord. "Bring it here."

For some lords, this is a means of measuring the vassal's capabilities and character. For other lords, this is a tiresome chore mandated by a Prince who thinks lords *should* see their vassals firsthand. Some lords abuse this privilege by asking their vassals to hunt and deliver a mortal precious to them like an old lover or a neighborhood child. A vassal who refuses is technically in violation of his oath and may be dismissed (or brought before the Prince and charged as a renegade). Again, lords interested in replacing their vassals make them jump through this hoop.

Taxed in Service

Not so different from the tax of blood is the tax of service, which is traditionally called corvée. It is a period of service to the lord by the vassal, for which the vassal receives no pay except for an extension of his rights beneath the lord. The exact terms of service depend on the oath agreed to by the vassal when he swore fealty, but a few customary standards are common.

First, a lord seldom agrees to a rent of particular actions in advance. A vassal typically owes his lord a number of nights of service per year, which the lord may divide up into individual nights as he sees fit. Just what the vassal will be called upon to do depends upon the lord. A smart lord does not declare any action off limits or any action particularly required when the oath is sworn, so that he can make up his mind up later.

Some lords call for clandestine or political business like messaging, surveillance, shadowing, collections or delivery, and duties at court like speaking, singing, or ushering. Other lords call upon their vassals to soldier for them, extorting from mortal Assets, hunting fugitive ghouls, or dissuading the vassals of rival lords from expanding their territory.

Corvée

Corvée is essentially any service short of soldiering. In practice, though, serving as escort, bouncer, or bodyguard is considered corvée if violence doesn't break out. The Kindred have terms for particularly common kinds of corvée:

- *travail pour le sang* (labor for the Blood) — Any service that calls for the vassal to collect vessels for the lord, especially animals or to clean up after a lord's feeding by scrubbing blood or getting rid of bodies.
- *travail pour la puissance* (labor for the power) — Any service that calls on the vassal to behave according to his lower position beneath the lord, such as acting as a messenger, porter or valet, or being loaned out to another lord in any capacity.
- *corvée sanglant* (bloody service, bloody drudgery) — Any service that is humiliating, gross, or nasty, whether or not it involves blood. Cleaning up after debauched drug-addicted blood dolls have shit the sheets, for example.

• *loyer* (rent) — Also called "black rent" (*loyer noir*) or "blood rent" (*loyer sang*), a corvée of regular payment may require the vassal to pay his lord a monthly sum and be it of money, drugs, blood, or information suitable for espionage or blackmail against another lord.

Optional New Flaw: Fealty

The feudal contract is based on an exchange of servitude for dominion. The homage owed to a liege lord is difficult to quantify in game terms, however. Describing the advantages of a domain is one thing, but reducing the relationship of the lord and her vassal to a few dots sacrifices dramatic nuance. The best way for the Storyteller to balance the social costs of vassalage with the mechanical benefits is through the narrative. Let it be an issue as often as is dramatically necessary for your chronicle.

That being said, the rent of servitude or substance owed to one's lord is a ripe subject for a new Flaw (see p. 217 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). By registering the feudal contract as a Flaw, the relationship is given a nod by the game mechanics without losing its narrative weight. In game terms, the Fealty Flaw earns a player an experience point whenever a decision is made for her character by a liege lord or when rent is paid upon demand. The loyal vassal gains experience points at the expense of freedom.

Since most character's lords will be Storyteller characters, this simple solution should work fine for most chronicles. In the event that one players' character somehow becomes the lord of another, let their relationship be regulated solely by the choices each player makes and the consequences that follow — as all feudal contracts are meant to work.

Several of the Merits in this chapter call for the Fealty Flaw to be taken as a prerequisite. Since this Flaw is optional, so is its requirement for those Merits, at the Storyteller's discretion.

New Merits

Barony isn't so much about a new layer of game systems (see Primacy for that), but it is a way of organizing the chronicle. Most of the mechanical manifestations of the Barony system come in the form of new Merits.

Many of these Merits are a bit more free form than those found in the **Vampire: The Requiem** rulebook. Not all vampire domains are created equal, and not all of the quirks of a character's domain can be neatly wrapped up in a few dots of the Domain Merit. The Storyteller must be prepared to make judgment calls and the player must be prepared to abide by them. Both must be willing to give a little for the sake of everyone's good time.

Cant Fluency (•)

Prerequisite: Politics • or Occult • or Streetwise •

Effect: Your character is fluent in one kind of Kindred marks. She may have learned this academically as part of a dryly rational attempt to prepare herself for contact with street vampires, or she may have picked this up through experience. However she learned it, she is now fluent both in reading and creating a style of underground graffiti. She can read marks left behind in the style and leave marks for those fluent in it.

You must select a category of marks when purchasing this Merit. Categories include Clan Marks (covering the marks of all Kindred clans in a single Merit), Covenant Marks (each covenant covered by a separate Merit), or any other category unique to your chronicle's city (such as a bloodline's marks). This Merit can be taken multiple times to reflect fluency in multiple marks.

Cant Savvy (••)

Prerequisite: Intelligence •• and Investigation • or Occult • or Streetwise •

Effect: Your character is adept at puzzling out the meanings of occulted graffiti with which she has no fluency . With time, she can decrypt the symbols and numerology of gang tags, Kindred marks, and other secret society glyphs. This enables her to read warning signs, coded directions, and declarations of territory intended for someone else.

Your character gains a +2 bonus on the extended action to make sense of foreign and coded glyphs. Once she has decrypted at least three of a group's marks, she gains a +1 bonus on Social rolls with members of the group.

Connections (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Presence •• and Politics •• or Streetwise •••

Effect: Your character knows who is connected to whom in the feudal hierarchy. He's met others face to face throughout the social network. He knows names and faces. He knows the relationships between Kindred.

Each dot in this Merit represents knowledge of and rapport with two connections between your character and others in the feudal hierarchy. For example, with just one dot in this Merit (a poor value by itself), your character might have a rapport with his personal feudal lord (up one step from your character) and another of the lord's vassals (down one step from the lord). With more dots, the character can develop a reasonably accurate picture of the city's politics.

At the Storyteller's discretion, two connections can be used to forge a connection between the character and another Kindred of the same feudal rank or to recognize a private (invisible) connection between a Kindred of the same feudal rank and any other. Connections with Kindred above the level of Regency (such as the Prince and, in some cities, the Primogen) may be worth two connections as well, at the Storyteller's discretion.

This Merit interacts with the schema described later in this chapter. Each branch of the feudal hierarchy is a connection. With this Merit, a character has a good starting sketch of the city's feudal schema.

Domain (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Fealty Flaw

Effect: Your character is lord over a domain granted to him by an overlord.

Like the Haven Merit, the Domain Merit actually encompasses several other related Merits. Most of these "under-Merits" closely resemble their counterparts from the Haven Merit (see **Vampire: The Requiem**, p. 100-102).

In many cases, your character's ratings in this Merit won't be variable, but rather given to you by the Storyteller to reflect a domain already in existence in the game world. You may be able to gradually increase certain values of these Merits with experience points, but changing the character of a neighborhood doesn't simply happen and certainly does not happen because your character solved a mystery last week. The Storyteller must oversee alterations to this Merit. See "Designing Domains," p. 203, for guidelines on creating and altering domains.

The following Domain Merits are each purchased or defined separately.

Domain Location (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit generally measures how easy it is for a vampire to hunt within the Domain. Each dot of Domain Location grants a +1 bonus to hunting rolls for any character in the domain, whether resident or trespasser. This Merit also defines the maximum number of dots in Haven Location a resident Kindred can have here. Your character, as the lord of the Domain, may impose a lower maximum on a tenant, vassal, or simple resident by demanding she nest in some secluded part of the territory.

This Merit is not identical to the Feeding Ground Merit. Feeding Ground represents a body of mortals suitable for hunting regardless (or even in spite of) the general atmosphere and landscape of the area. Dots in Domain Location cannot be "cashed in" for dots in Herd.

This Merit is its own drawback. Better feeding grounds attract trespassers who often bring trouble with them. The lord of a domain with a good Location has to protect it.

Domain Quality: Interactive (• to • • • • •)

Effect: The Domain Quality Merit describes the Domain's influence over actions in the area and the nature of its populace. In practical terms, it defines the maximum modifiers, positive or negative, the Domain can have in its Interactive Attributes (see p. 251). An Interactive Attribute can have a positive or negative modifier up to the number of dots in this Merit.

Thus, with two dots in this Merit, the Domain can have a +1, –1, +2 or –2 ratings in Access, Information, and Prestige. An Attribute does not have to be rated to the maximum possible modifier, but no Attribute's modifier can exceed the dots in this Merit. So, with Domain Quality: Interactive • • the Domain could have Access –2, Information +1 and Prestige +2.

Domain Quality: Reactive (• to • • • • •)

Effect: The Domain Quality Merit describes the Domain's influence over actions in the area and the nature of its populace. In practical terms, it defines the maximum modifiers, positive or negative, the Domain can have in its Reactive Attributes (see p. 251). A Reactive Attribute can have a positive or negative modifier up to the number of dots in this Merit.

Thus, with two dots in this Merit, the Domain can have a +1, –1, +2 or –2 ratings in Safety, Awareness and Stability. An Attribute does not have to be rated to the maximum possible modifier, but no Attribute's modifier can exceed the dots in this Merit. So, with Domain Quality: Reactive • • • the Domain could have Safety +2, Information –3 and Prestige –1.

Domain Size (• to • • • • •)

Effect: Domain Size measures the amount of physical ground your Domain covers. More is not always better. A larger Domain means more land to patrol and defend, more space for Kindred trespassers to slip in or even lair unnoticed, and more room for troubles to emerge. More land, however, generally also means greater Status and prestige among other Kindred in the feudal hierarchy.

Domain Size isn't a precise measure of blocks or miles. It's a relative measure of the domain compared to the city and its Districts. In general, each dot of Domain Size should correspond roughly to the lord's station in the feudal hierarchy — the lowliest domains are Domain Size • while all but the most modest or token-appointed Regents are Domain Size • • • • •. (The Prince doesn't count his dominion by Domain Size as his Domain trumps everyone else's — it's the whole damn city.) In some cities a single dot of Domain Size might represent three or four blocks of turf while in others it could be nine or ten streets wide. It depends on the size of the city and the Prince's standards for the number of domains her city should have.

The guiding rule of Domain Size is its relationship to the Tenant and Vassal Merits. Your character can purchase a Tenant or Vassal Merit once for each dot of Domain Size. Resident Kindred who keep havens in the domain, but have no formal claim to land under the lord, count for about half a dot of Domain Size as an abstract measurement, but the Storyteller should adjust that measurement relative to the size of the domain. A nest with five dots in Haven Size may be worth a whole dot of Domain Size in a small city or crowded District where a mansion sized lair would be almost impossible to maintain under the Masquerade. The Masquerade is always a looming factor in determining what kinds of havens are suitable for the Domain Size. (But don't discount the ability of a domain to contain hidden networks of rooms in defunct office buildings or even abandoned subway stations serving as palatial havens.)

This Merit, therefore, doesn't necessarily limit the number of dots that local havens can have in Haven Size. The Storyteller has the right to set a limit in order to reflect the nature of the domain's neighborhood, but it's not essential. Regardless of limits imposed by the domain, the lord of the land always has the right to limit the size of local havens. It's his right to decide how much of his land another Kindred receives. Some lords cite the Masquerade when forcing their tenants into smaller havens, but the fact is that lordly fiat is all the justification they need.

Domain Security (• to • • • • •)

Domain Security reflects the general safety of the area, either as the result of police oversight or the proximity of Hounds or a surplus of gated condos and iron grilled storefronts. Domain Security interacts with the local District's Attributes (and thus the Domain Quality Merits) but doesn't override them. Neither does it dictate a limit on Haven Security dots in the domain.

Domain Security modifies the likelihood of thieves and muggers in the domain. Each dot of Domain Security imposes a –1 die penalty on rolls to locate or hire characters specializing in Skills like Larceny, Stealth, Streetwise, and Subterfuge. This penalty does not apply to the actual physical acts of breaking and entering, though; that's covered by the Security dots of individual buildings like havens. Rather, Domain Security reduces the need for dots in Haven Security.

The Storyteller could assume that an average neighborhood in the city is prowled by muggers and thieves with an average dice pool of 7 plus or minus Stability modifiers. The Storyteller rolls that particular dice pool to

determine if a random act of crime or violence emerges from the background to spice up the chapter. A success indicates a couple of muggers or a car thief. An exceptional success could indicate an armed robbery, drive-by shooting, or open shootout in the street. Dots in Domain Security, modified by Safety, are rolled to contest the random crime roll.

The domain's rating in Haven Security (modified by District Attributes) can be rolled, with each success reducing the response time by one minute from a base starting time of ten minutes, to determine the response time of local police.

Strictly speaking, a lord may impose a ruling on the security measures of local havens — declaring blaring alarms off limits or demanding Kindred have barred windows — but it is not his feudal right to do so. The space within a Kindred's haven is his own. That is where every vampire is a lord.

Feeding Ground (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Fealty Flaw (for •••• or ••••• only)

Effect: Your character has been granted one of a limited number of exclusive hunting grounds in the city. This hunting ground is like a private patch of land to farm, which is making your character at least a crofter in the feudal hierarchy. Even with a large or rich hunting ground (•••• or •••••, say), your character does not have any feudal rank without the City Status Merit or any real authority without the Domain Merit.

Exclusive hunting grounds grant a dice pool bonus to hunting attempts made therein. That bonus should range from +1 to +3. Each increasing bonus in hunting dice pools should be proportionally rare and at a rarity determined by the Storyteller to represent the scarcity or bounty of easy Vitae in the domain. For example, there may be four hunting grounds of +3 value in the domain, 12 of +2 value, and 36 of +1 value. These values are not cumulative; time spent hunting in one feeding ground precludes time spent hunting in another.

As an option, the player may choose to "cash in" a hunting ground in order to cultivate a number of Herd Merit points equal to the original bonus. This effectively reduces the bonus of that hunting ground to +0 permanently. (Kindred may continue to hunt there, but they simply don't gain the benefit of the bonus anymore.)

Multiple Kindred may share the benefit of a plentiful hunting ground, but overtaxing the local vessels is a quick way to scare people off and thus reduce the bonus. Each time in one month that more than a single character takes advantage of the bonus in a specific hunting ground on a single night, make a note of it. If such occurs more than the value of the bonus in that single month, the bonus is negated completely until the Storyteller deems otherwise.

Site (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has a degree of access to a useful building in the city or a degree of influence over a mortal who can provide access to such a place. A Site grants bonus dice equal to the Merit's rating to the dice pools of one Skill when used on the premises. You must define the Site and the relevant Skill when this Merit is purchased. Purchase this Merit multiple times to represent multiple Sites or Sites that grant bonuses to multiple Skills.

The bonus granted by this Merit represents a selection of equipment kept at the site (something more substantial than just a few tools — a complete garage, not a toolbox) or a supporting character found at the Site who can provide service and expertise. Thus a Site worth Medicine •••• might represent access to a private medical practice's surgical suite or access to an underground surgeon.

A Site might not comply with this Merit as neatly as, say, a haven. Specific Sites can be designed by the Storyteller or the player with additional bonuses or penalties, provided the final Site and its rating in dots are approved by the Storyteller.

Dozens of sample Sites can be found in Chapter Five.

Tenant (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Domain Size • per Merit, Fealty Flaw

Effect: Your character has one or more Kindred tenants in his Domain. This vampire makes her haven in your domain in exchange for providing your character with a corvée. Each dot in this Merit entitles your character to call in the corvée roughly every month. Like the Resources Merit, the Storyteller needs to regulate the frequency with which you can use this Merit in order to prevent it from outclassing other Merits.

You define the specific terms of service your character demands from his tenants, but the Storyteller can veto your terms if no local Kindred will agree to them. In general, each dot in this Merit entitles your character to five Vitae per month, which is one expenditure equal to about Resources • (multiple dots do not equate to a higher Resources value, but rather more frequent use of Resources •), temporary access to a piece of equipment worth +1 to +3 in bonuses, or one night's use of a Retainer worth the same value as this Merit. The specific benefit of the Tenant Merit must be decided when the Merit is purchased. If the Storyteller agrees, however, the Merit can be renegotiated with the tenant later.

You can purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect different tenants in residence, but you cannot purchase this Merit more times than you have dots in Domain Size.

Drawback: Tenants can cause trouble. Because tenants do not have the same kind of authority or responsibility over the land, they cannot be expected to defend the domain or solve problems on site unless the lord calls in the corvée. This Merit essentially comes with a linked Flaw. Every time your character collects his corvée, the Storyteller may roll a dice pool equal to 7 – the dots for that Tenant Merit. If the Storyteller gets a success, the tenant in involved in some kind of trouble, such as attracting unwanted mortal attention or causing damage to the Domain or a Site that temporarily reduces its value by one point. This trouble may not be the tenant's fault, but it is the tenant's presence that makes it responsibility of the lord (your character) to deal with it.

Vassal (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Domain Size • per Merit, Fealty Flaw

Effect: This Merit functions essentially the same as the Tenant Merit but with a separate drawback. Your character cannot have more Vassals and Tenants in any combination than he has dots in the Domain Size Merit.

Drawback: A vassal's authority over his territory can come into conflict with the lord's authority over his. When the Storyteller deems your character's vassal is exerting his authority over the territory more loudly than your character or plotting to gain more power from (or over) him, your dots in this Merit serve as a penalty to your character's Social dice pools to influence other Kindred within the domain.

(If this Merit is being used in a Primacy chronicle, it can also interfere with one's use of Assets who reside within your character's domain.)

Designing Domains

Whether you're playing a chronicle in which the characters are conspiring lords or petty street thugs, the domains claimed and controlled by those vampires older and wiser than you cast their shadows over the city where they hunt.

Domains, like characters, Districts, and Sites are unique creations the Storyteller designs to evoke mood, create atmosphere, and amplify the themes of the chronicle. Though they can be described with dots of Merits, it doesn't always make sense for players to be able to simply buy them during character creation or grow them with experience points alone. The handling of domains in the game has to react to the chronicle.

But before domains can be handled, they have to exist. What are the limits of a domain in the world of the Damned?

Domains by Area

The archetypal vampire domain is defined by the physical ground it covers. Larger domains and more desirable areas are reserved for more influential and respected (or feared) Kindred. Small corners of the city may be parceled out to up-and-comers, recognized supporters, or Kindred with a brief flash of greatness. In between are the majority of domains — a few blocks of average urban landscape from which to scratch out blood and add another night to eternity.

Domains can be granted based on a rough radius from a central location like a haven. "The Herald'll spread the word: Five blocks out from the water tower belongs to Dante," declares the Regent. "Six streets around the movie theater are yours," grants the Prince. Recognizing the precise borders of such domains is difficult, which leaves room for modest poaching and trespassers, but the local lord can try and sketch out a border using the vampire cant to mark the limits of his authority.

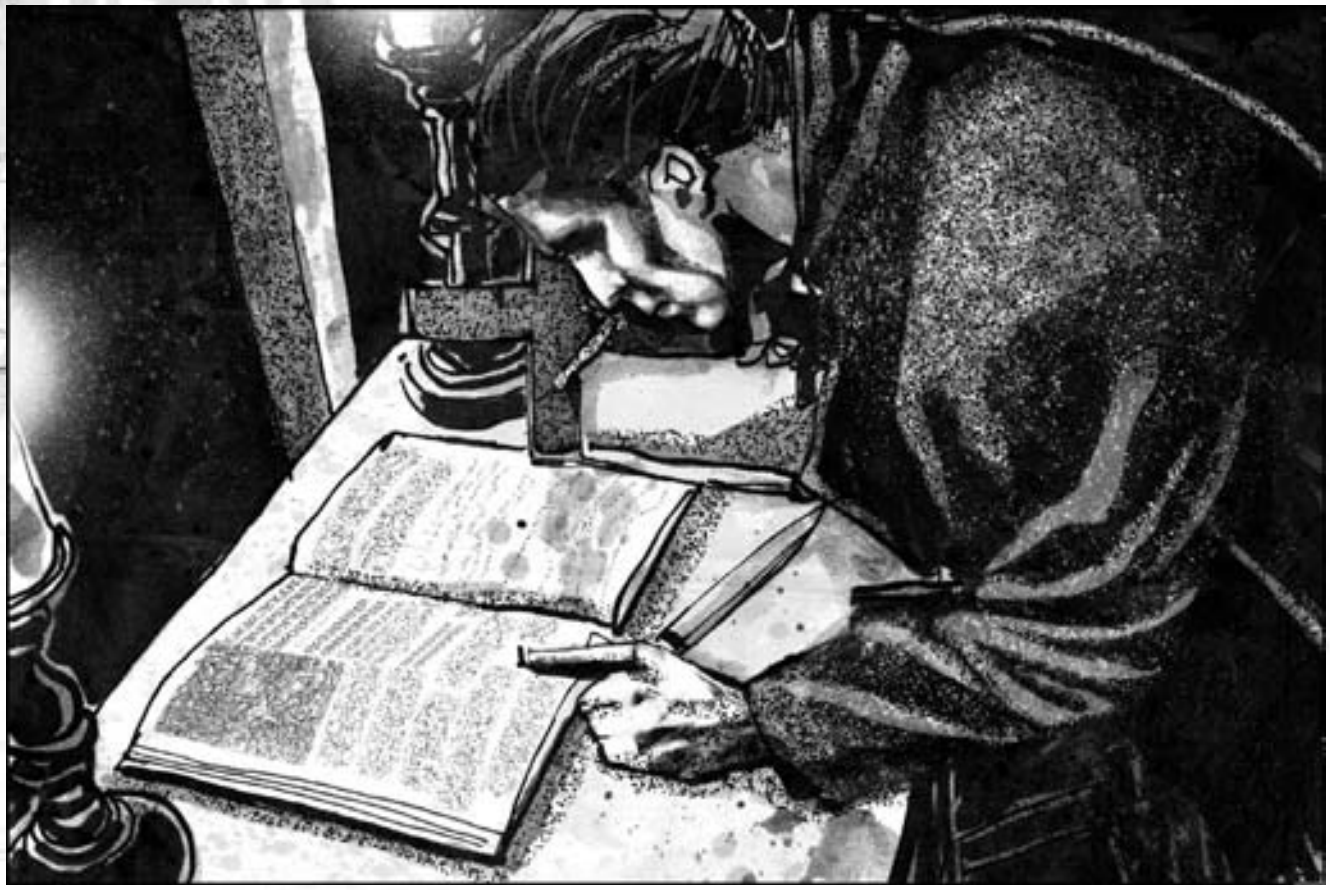
Domains can be granted based on boundaries, though: from the highway to the hospital, everything between Riverside and Hawthorne Parks, or east from 11th Avenue to the harbor, for example. This decentralizes the lord's control, and while removing the vague power that comes from a seat of power, it better protects the secrecy of the lord's haven.

Among Kindred of higher station like Regents and their immediate vassals, domains are more likely to be defined directly by neighborhoods or districts. These are the landed territories that inspire titles. The Duke of Echo Heights, Edgar, Baron of Ashton, and Cross. The Lord of Laidlaw Park. She of the Island. These are the lords, whose rule defines the character of the city for those in the Danse Macabre, of whole Districts.

Dominion of Authority

A domain can be as small as a building, particularly a large or sprawling complex like a hospital or shopping mall and their surrounding parking lots and support buildings. These are the specialists, the Kindred tied to a patch of ground so small that there's hardly anything to do but the work for which they are known, of the feudal world. These are domains of single Sites.

But that dominion by expertise can also stretch across a city by encompassing a handful of buildings and pos-



sibly the connecting streets. These are domains of precise definition and lands that the local Kindred must know well to avoid trespassing or poaching. The Kindred marks can alert traveling Damned that they're crossing a street that belongs to Doctor Walsh of the Ordo Dracul or in the claimed space between the Shaw and Wilshire Buildings of Brother Stark, but word of mouth and direct declarations at court are surer ways to teach borders to the monsters. The role of the Herald reveals its value in this kind of city.

A domain of authority can also be granted over intellectual concepts like the Lord of Medicine who could claim dominion over hospitals, clinics, and private practice buildings but might come into conflict with the Haunt of Dogs over the veterinary clinic. The Haunt of Dogs can claim a degree of authority wherever the city's coyotes and street dogs go, at the animal shelters, around the dog-fight ring, and possibly even the territory that borders on werewolf turf, but he always finds himself having to sort out his lordship with whatever vampire is lord over this block or that.

A vampire's dominion is not protected by pedantic texts and legal precedent as much as it is protected by guile, force, and bargaining. Two lords argue over who takes responsibility for a drained mortal corpse before the Prince finds out. A lord may turn to his overlord to sort out the right of the Shadow Harpy of the Stage to make her haven beneath an old movie palace in his territory. There are no hard and fast rules.

Dominion by Association

All those conflicting territories can be further complicated by Kindred who are given dominion over broad ground like "the highways" or "parking garages" or "the rooftops." The Queen of the Surface Streets has profound influence and access throughout the city, though she may find that dominion over mortals in cars is not great power. These Kindred more often have power over the movement of their fellow vampires but have to negotiate feeding rights and possibly tenancy with other landed lords.

Buying Domains Outright

If the chronicle's city still has room to be fleshed out when the players are making their characters, a pool of experience points might be given out to the troupe to create the domain where the coterie will have power.

With those points, the players are creating part of the game world, defining its size and personality as they fill in dots on the domain sheet. This helps assure that the players get a domain they're excited about but can alter the landscape of the city in ways for which the Storyteller wasn't ready .

Buying dots in Domain Merits with experience points isn't the same thing as the *characters* claiming or defining the domain, though. They may have inherited it in its current form or carved it out months before through skullduggery, blackmail, and turf wars. The domain doesn't transform the land around it — some part of it has always been there as part of the city. The characters just lurk in it.

Alteration Through Action

Alternately, the Storyteller can create a domain for the coterie and grant it to them during play. The domain can then be designed to fit snugly into the city and precisely into the atmosphere of the chronicle without being limited too much by point values.

Existing domains that are claimed or granted in this way can have their traits rise and fall organically through play. A fire tears through the neighborhood? Domain Location and Security may fall. Mortal developers start turning warehouses into lofts (possibly after being pressured by a Kindred behind the scenes)? Traits go up.

This kind of play lets characters' actions really define their domain and creates immediately tangible goals and consequences for Barony stories. Rather than waiting to rack up experience points and then choosing between character development and setting development, the players can focus on their actions in the game world during play and the expenditure of experience points after the session.

Don't mix the two methods — buying and alteration — or you can throw the value of experience points out of sync in your chronicle. If the players spend experience points to increase Domain Size after one chapter and in the next chapter lose that dot when they fail to stop another Kindred's plot to steal ground, they'll be understandably pissed.

Improving the Domain

Improving a domain is the stuff of stories. Investing experience points in a domain is a privilege earned by winning battles against other vampires and reaching delicate agreements with neighboring lords. The coterie must get money to the local police department or put the fear into local criminals to earn the right to buy another dot of Domain Security. They must gain the favor of their overlord or even *his* overlord if they want to be granted additional territory and thus the right to put another dot in Domain Size.

Of course, the Storyteller can simply build upgrades to Domain Merits into her stories as the rewards and consequences of actions taken or avoided. If the characters can prove that Dante covered up the murder of a cop in Edgeville, the Prince cuts his lands in half and awards that turf to the players' coterie. If the characters can recover Sycorax's ghoul before he's killed by the kidnappers, the Prince will grant them feeding rights in part of his domain, adding two dots to Domain Location.

As above, a domain should either gain its dots through experience validated by in-game actions or solely through Storyteller modifications built into the chronicle's stories. Mixing and matching techniques can cause characters to *lose* experience points when the traits of the domain change through play, and since characters don't typically lose experience points dedicated to Skills or Disciplines through play, that makes Merits a generally poor place to put one's experience points.

Sites, Subjects and Conflicts

The lord of a domain has a right, at least recognized among the Damned, to pull the strings of mortals in his territory. Thus, over time, the lord can claim places within his lands as Sites. Leveraging these Sites into influence and power over other Kindred is an essential part of turning a domain into an extension of one's personal power.

How does a character gain influence over a Site? If the Storyteller agrees, it can be as simple as telling the Storyteller how the vampire found the site and acquired access, and then buying a Site with experience points. Does the vampire simply steal the keys and slip in when the kine are away? Does she use her mastery of Dominate or Majesty to bend the will of a building manager? Or does she take advantage of a conflict in a person's life to gain a degree of control over him?

This is the stuff of intrigue and melodrama. When the Storyteller wants to make the acquisition of a Site part of a story, Subject's conflicts are an easy place to start. A conflict is a problem in a Storyteller character's life that needs solving... or can simply be exploited by the vampire.

A doctor needs to pay off gambling debts, and the lord steps in to help him, "If," he says, "you will help me."

A local politician has spent thousands of dollars on exotic prostitutes in recent months, one of them just OD'd on the job, and a local vampire saw it all happen while hidden with Obfuscate. "I'll get rid of the body and keep your little secret," she says, "if you do something for me in return."

Conflicts are short story seeds with built-in suggests for determinate actions to resolve them. The doctor needs the equivalent of a Resources • • • • expenditure, and if the character can swing that (or find a partner who can), he can buy the doctor. The politician needs discretion and a cover up, which his conflict description might rate as Stealth • • • • •. If the character can pull it off, the politician goes into his pocket.

Conflicts can be reduced to a simple scene (perhaps a montage or flashback?) that describes how the Site came into the vampire's possession, in case you don't want to take the time to tell a whole story about it.

The dots of Merit based conflicts are simple enough to understand. A character simply needs that many dots in the appropriate Merit to solve the Subject's problem. If the character can't do it himself, he needs to find help that can (or buy up his Merits).

Conflicts based on Skills are broader. They can be used by the Storyteller to define a simple central action in several ways. That Stealth • • • • • problem might require the character to hide the body and cover up the scene with a Stealth action under the pressure of a –5 penalty, for example. Here are three simple ways to translate a Skill value into a challenge:

• Make the dots the penalty to an instant action using the given Skill. Failure means the character doesn't solve the Subject's problem and potentially ruins any chance at getting control over him. Success means the problem is solved or at least pushed far enough into the background to win the relieved, guilty, hateful, terrified, lusty, or reluctant service of the Subject.

• Make the Skill rating + 5 the target number for an extended action involving the given Skill. Unless the action is accomplished in a number of rolls equal to the conflict's dots, the Subject's problems come to a head before the vampire can win his servitude.

• Double the conflict's dots to create a dice pool that contests the action of the character to solve the Subject's problem. Use this action when some active force is putting pressure or pain on the Subject and the vampire must avoid, defeat, or drive away that agent to get the Subject into the clear.

Trespass: Crossing the Domains of the Damned

A lot has been made about the sovereignty of Kindred territory and the act of trespassing. While, in most cities, trespassing is a minor offense milked by local lords to pressure caught Kindred into owing favors, some deeply territorial vampires may run outsiders out of their turf with tooth and claw. The specter of the Predator's Taint looms over everything — Kindred caught with weapons in the domain of a strange vampire may drive the Beast into a bloodthirsty frenzy that costs everyone flesh and blood.

The consequences of trespass are for individual lords to decide, for overlords to adjudicate, or for the Prince to declare. Whether or not trespassers get caught, however, is a matter for game mechanics.

System: The player controlling the lord of a domain must define at least two dice pools that describe ways vampires could cross her territory. For example, Dexterity + Stealth can describe vampires on foot simply staying out of sight and dashing through back alleys. Presence + Subterfuge could be used to blend into the local populace, which is making it hard for the lord's agents to tell just who is getting their hackles up. Wits + Drive could be necessary to find a way through the domain on side streets.

Characters attempting to traverse a domain without having to stop and explain themselves to a vampire drawn to them by the supernatural rattle of another Beast's scent must take an action in accordance with one of the dice pools for the domain. The dice pool is modified by the Access trait of the domain's District. If the action is a success, the characters pass right through the territory into the next. If the action fails, they are observed, and possibly stopped, by a local vampire who might demand a toll, a bit of respect, or even that the characters turn around and go back the way they came.

Disciplines powers like many of Obfuscate's and the first power of Protean can be added to these dice pools, once the relevant power is activated.

Schema: Social Architecture

The parts of the Kindred neo-feudal society can be arranged in a lot of ways. The links between lords and vassals reveal a lot about the schemes and loyalties of the city's vampires. The social architecture of the city is the political complex in which all Kindred reside, save the outcasts. Traversing the social landscape can be similar to treading marble halls in a palace of regal governance, or it can be like skulking through the fog of stinking alleys behind the city's posh hotels and clubs.

Selecting or designing the social and political hierarchy for your city is more of a creative process than a logical one. But the appearance of a logical system — or a once logical system — can go a long way toward making your imaginary society of monsters seem real. Your city's social networks and political dynamics define your chronicle's gameplay, which is almost like creating a unique new board on which to play chess. This is the arena in which the characters will be conspiring, betraying, investigating, politicking, and debating for the survival and success of their coterie in the Danse Macabre.

The playing field for these social games of the Damned is best laid out, by you the Storyteller, as a diagram of the city's vampire social networks. In **Vampire**, this diagram of vampire society — this map of the Damned's dungeons of intrigue — is called the **schema**. A schema can show political relationships, personal bonds, secret influences, or any other Kindred social dynamic suitable for your city. It's your schematic for intrigue.

Before designing an original schema for your city, take a look at those on the following pages. These eight diagrams show you different ways of thinking about Kindred society. Better than that, they give you a clear sense of what's required to create a Byzantine network of loyalties, goals, and lies suitable for the Danse Macabre.

Dramaturgy vs. Simulation

Make no mistake: the primary function of your city's schemas is to manifest the dramatic game world in your imagination. If your schema can appear to somehow authentically represent the logic of an aged and antiquated society of hidden monsters, that's a great advantage, but the pursuit of realism when defining vampire society is a snipe hunt. **Vampire** is a dramatic medium, an entertainment device, above all else, and vampire society is a mechanism in that device. The illusion of realism is worthless if it is not also fun to play.

Part of the beauty of the neo-feudal dynamic is that it can result in social hierarchies no more logical or strategically sound than some personal relationships. Sometimes too many vassals accumulate because a lord awarded dominion in exchange for help too often over 200 years. Sometimes fools hold choice domains because they once had something the Prince needed or because they fuck well and can keep their mouths shut.

In **Vampire**, the schema is a dramaturgical tool first, and a speculative simulation of socio-political dynamics and the sanguine economy only if there's room left over afterwards.

Reading the Schema

No two feudal hierarchies are exactly alike. Each is a reflection of the favors, servitude, blood familiarity, and covenant loyalty of the city's unique Kindred. See pp. 214–225 for other examples of neo-feudal hierarchies.

- **P:** Primogen.
- **R:** Regent.
- **V:** Vassal.
- **Tenants:** These appear as drops of blood attached to landlords through feudal bonds.
- **Others:** Specific titles denote unique arrangements. Almost any arrangement is possible as long as the Kindred involves understand the terms of their relationship. See individual schema for examples.

Mapping the Lands of Monsters

You know those bulletin boards with the maps and the photos and the twine all rigged up in the squad room that television detectives use to chase a serial killer or sort out a criminal organization? That's how players can use schemas.

As their characters discover more of the Kindred dwelling in the city, they add more boxes to the schema or more pictures to their bulletin board. As they discover connections between those vampires, they draw lines or in string between them. Eventually, step-by-step , they grow a map of the relationships within the city. As they compare that map to the official party line of the Prince's loyal Kindred (and the status quo that you've revealed to them as the Storyteller), inconsistencies, and secret connections become clear. Then come questions, doubts, suspicions, and fear. Thus comes the stuff of intrigue and suspense.

If your troupe has the means, try maintaining a schema of the sort the characters could maintain themselves. This is a terrific prop. Besides giving the players a tangible artifact from the imaginary world of the game, it also tracks information, keeps things clear, and reduces confusion. (Confusion is a game-killer.)

The Default Social Dynamic

First thing's first. Here you see the core thematic conflicts of **Vampire: The Requiem** rendered out, cold, and dead like a corpse. These aren't the only way the covenants can interrelate — not by far — but this is their assumed relationship in the platonic, "default" **Vampire** chronicle.

Default Covenant Relationships

The diagram shows the twin core ideological axes of the covenants. The religious covenants (on the left) are assumed to oppose one another and the political covenants (on the right) are assumed to oppose their own counterparts. The Lancea Sanctum and the Invictus are assumed to share a loose allegiance (or at least an arrangement not to compete with each other), but the Carthians and the Acolytes do not enjoy such an assumed relationship. The Ordo Dracul while potentially engaged with any covenant is the wildcard.

The Prince is in the middle of all major factions but elevated above them. He grants territory and authority to the covenants while the covenants attempt to influence his decisions.

Keep in mind that opposition is not the same thing as hostility. Even in this default mode, a Sanctified vampire may cooperate with Acolytes. Only their ideologies are in conflict — they each cannot abide the other's orthodoxy within their own. These axes of opposition create lots of viable conflicts, and conflicts are stories.

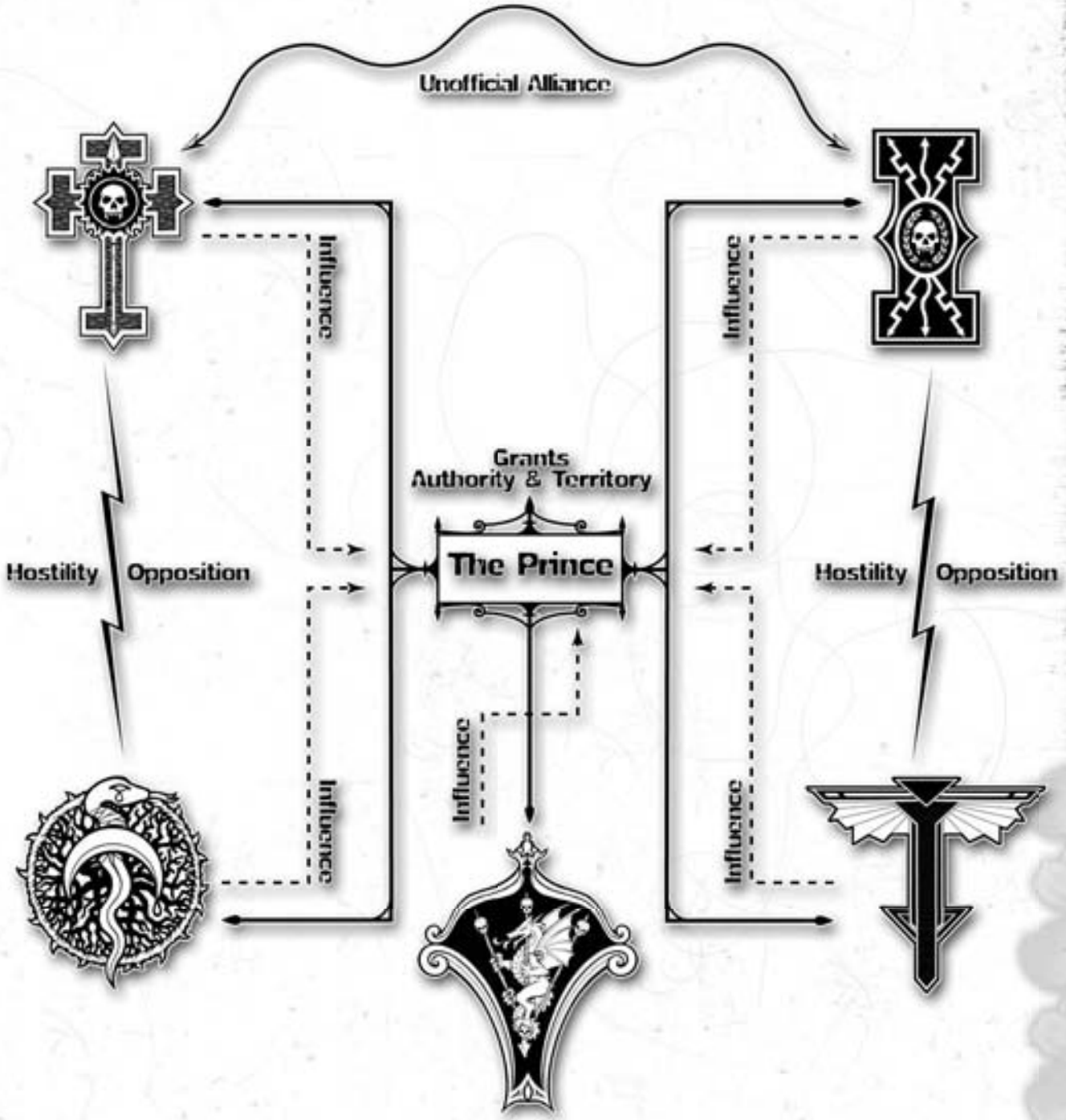
Behind the Scenes: Why Just the Five Covenants?

We get asked a lot why a thousand little covenants, creating an endless series of conflicts and character options for **Vampire,** can be milling around the World of Darkness. The prelude to the answer is this: the factions in each of the covenant books and the broods described in books such as **Shadows of Mexico** *are* those miniature covenants, more or less. They provide the endless options and variations for which you're looking . (Belial's Brood is an example of what happens when a brood grows and becomes so difficult to ignore that it can be mistaken for a covenant.)

The actual answer is this: The five covenants are the landmarks for the major thematic conflicts in **Vampire: The Requiem** — religious and political, old versus new, passion versus reason, wonder versus fear. The covenants are meant to be the big ideological avatars that cast their shadows over all of Kindred society not because it is necessarily logical that a monstrous society would organize itself this way (how many societies organize themselves wholly logically anyway?) but because the central dramatic conflicts of vampires (and of **Vampire**) fall broadly into these five areas. They are the back drop that provides thematic context to everything else.

But the space between any two bodies in these schemas is a potential source for conflict and, thus, action. Reconsidering the relationship between any two covenants is as simple as drawing a new line between them. What if the Inner Circle of the Invictus grants some of their territory to the Lancea Sanctum — will a new line of opposition appear between the Carthians and the Sanctified? What if the Carthians form an unofficial partnership with the Ordo Dracul — will the witches of the Circle of the Crone join their alliance to reap the benefits of their unified front?

These are starting positions. Once the game begins, the ramifications of Kindred plots, conspiracies, and intrigues shift the relationships between the covenants. Even after centuries, these relationships never truly settle. The Danse Macabre never ends.



The Religious Axis and the Political

The second diagram renders two of **Vampire**'s inherent thematic conflicts as the two axes of a grid. Rather than showing the relationships between the covenants as a whole, you can use a similar diagram to chart the relative ideology of the city's vampires (and, thus, each covenant's membership).

The Lancea Sanctum and the Circle of the Crone represent opposite ends of the religious spectrum in the Danse Macabre. The Invictus and the Carthian Movement represent opposite ends of the political spectrum.

The Ordo Dracul as a quasi-mystical fraternity with a strict code of customs and behavior is somewhat religious and somewhat political. The Ordo Dracul is the wildcard. The Ordo Dracul in your city might represent an area at the center of the grid or might simply reflect the position of whatever vampire wields the most power within its ranks.

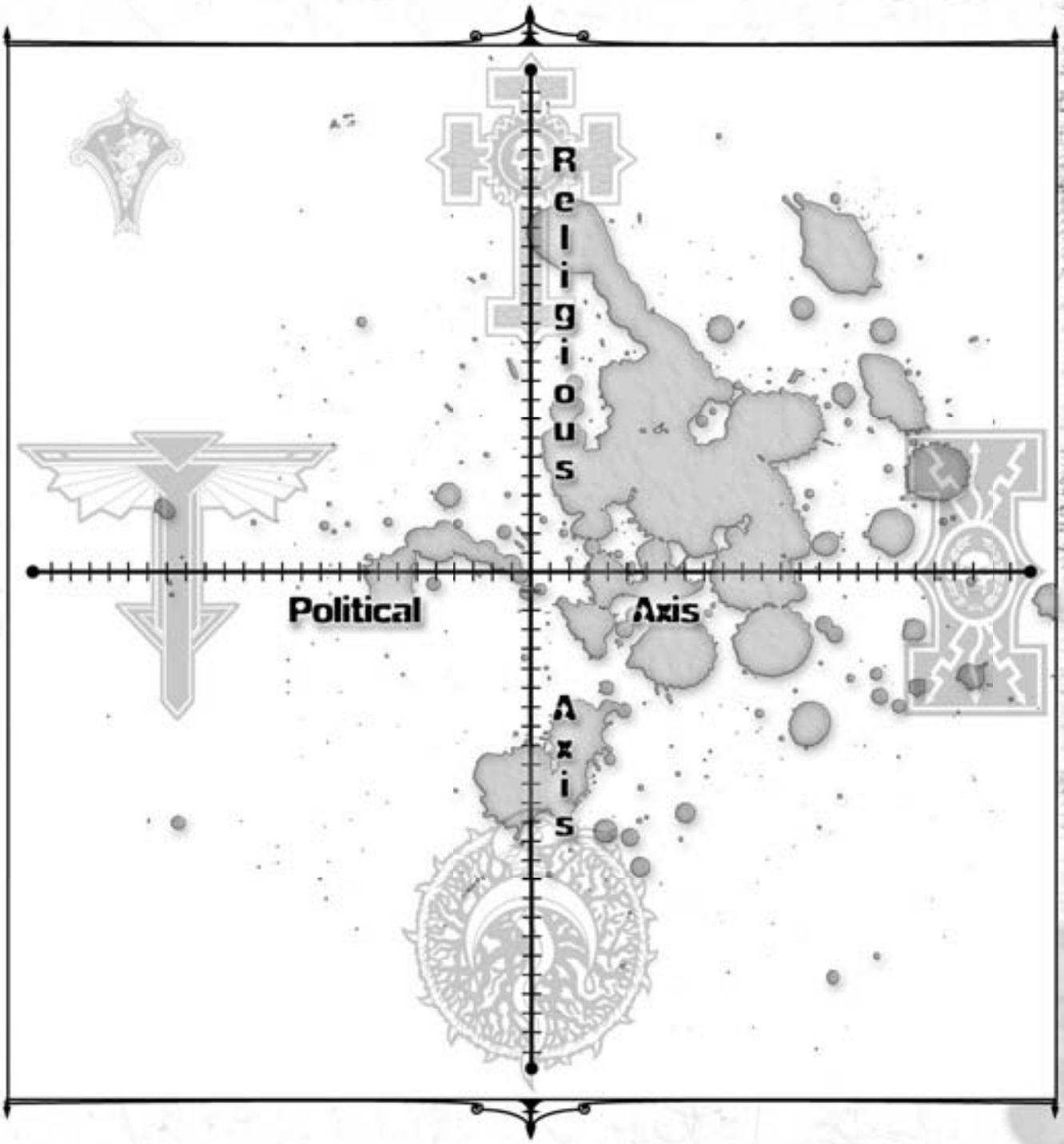
Individual vampires might land anywhere on the grid based on their personal motives and beliefs. A dedicated member of the Invictus, with a lot of political power and no faith whatsoever, would land right on the political axis far to the Invictus side of the spectrum. A pious Bishop with no interest in secular distractions would land right at the top of the religious axis.

In some cities, most vampires might stick close to one axis or another. In some cities, most vampires might chart somewhere near the center but away from either axis. The placement of the Kindred population on this graph helps you visualize the state of Kindred philosophy and politics in your city. Most Sanctified vampires might fall near the center of the religious axis while the local Bishop is all the way at the top — zealous, single-minded, and maybe crazed — describing a city of casual worshippers doing just enough to placate a fanatical religious leader.

Vampires, even in undeath, are not completely static creatures. Plotting a character on this graph can also reveal his sympathies and vulnerabilities. The Carthians strive to coax Kindred from the center to their side of the spectrum. Sanctified preachers and strong-arming paladins convert Kindred to their end of the axis through rhetoric or violence.

How to Use These Schema

These two schemas (p. 209 and p. 211) are Storyteller tools. Use them to get a clear concept of your chronicle's city to experiment with ideas for the Kindred population in your city and to track the changes to the status quo as they happen during play. This kind of record makes it much easier for you to keep the compelling espionage of your chronicle in motion by giving you an essential vantage point on the city's vampires and covenants.


Religious
Political
Axis
Axis

Layers of Power

In any city, a covenant's overall influence over the Kindred population can be seen to depend on three major factors: the covenant's philosophical or ideological influence, the covenant's political power or authority, and the amount of territory the covenant controls. In other words, a covenant's power is the sum of the height of its power, the breadth of its turf, and the depth of Kindred dedication to its cause.

This schema depicts a sample breakdown of one city's landscape of power. Each covenant is represented by a rectangle revealing the overall scope of its influence. The larger the rectangle is, the more influential the covenant. Where the rectangle reaches reveals the nature of its power as measured by three basic factors:

- **Physical Territory:** A stylized skyline represents the city's physical territory; that is, its geographical area. This isn't a scale measurement — one inch equals nothing in particular. This is just a backdrop against which the relative areas of covenant turf can be compared. The wider the covenant's area, the more ground it controls in the city, whether as a result of grants from the Prince or widespread squatting and turf claims.
- **Heights of Power:** Above that is a rough estimation of political clout, authority, influence, and recognition. The higher a covenant reaches into the lofty heights of political power, the better known that covenant is to the city's vampires and the more power that covenant wields over local Kindred society.
- **Depths of Devotion:** Below the skyline is a measure of the covenant's pull over the beliefs of the local Kindred. A covenant with a shallow reach may be misunderstood, secretive, or simply regarded as something cold and monolithic. A covenant that reaches deep on this scale has a dedicated following of vampires (and possibly non-vampires) who are passionate about keeping the covenant alive and prosperous.

For Example

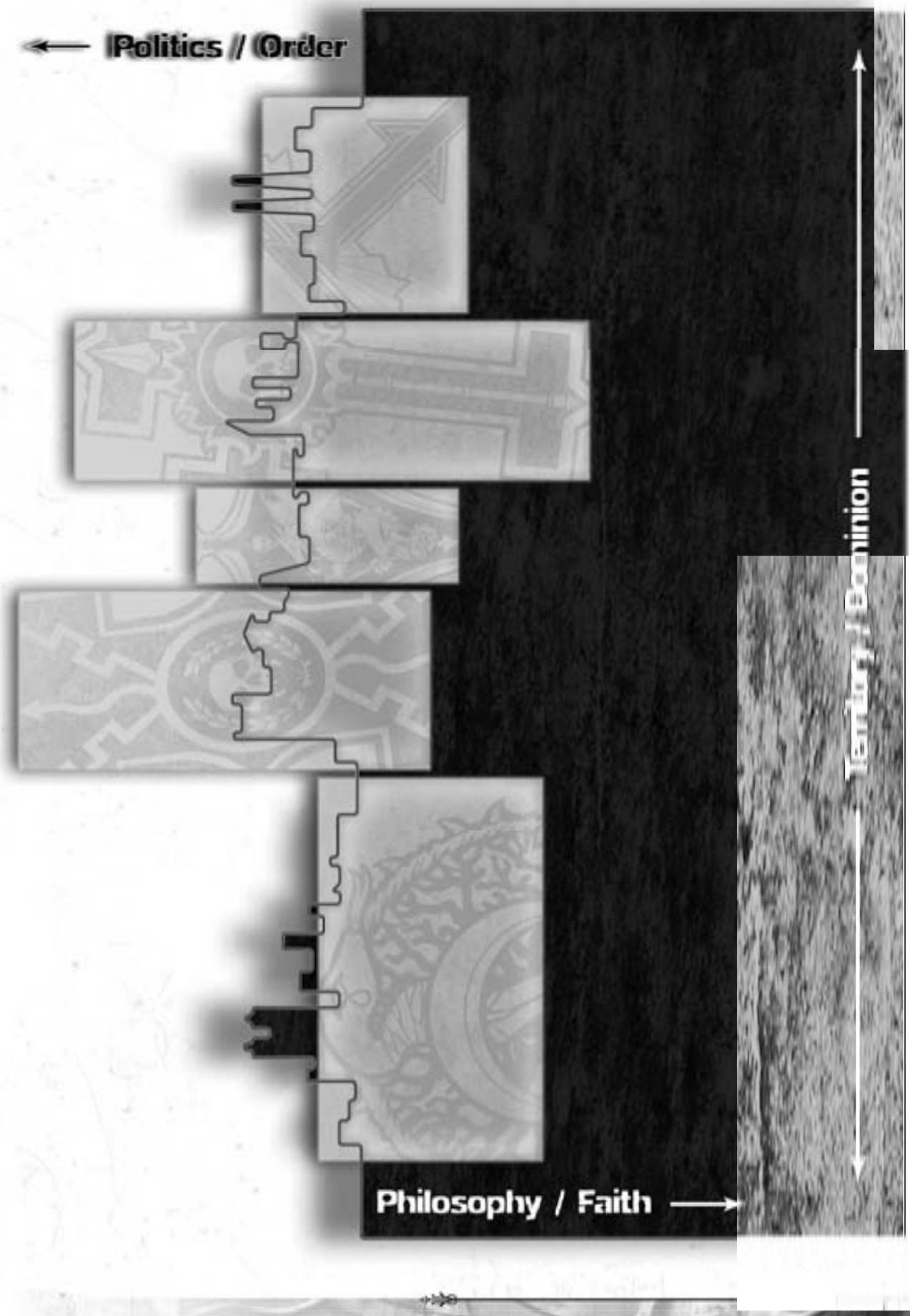
In the example to the right, the **Invictus** is shown to have the most political power (its area reaches the highest), a moderate amount of territory (the width of it's area across the skyline), but only a small amount of the city's trust. In comparison, the **Carthians** have some dedicated followers located throughout the city, but those followers haven't been able to muster much authority in the city. The **Lancea Sanctum** has a great deal of political power (especially for a religious covenant) and a good deal of devotion from the city's vampires, but the covenant's territory is slight. The **Circle of the Crone**, in contrast, has very little political presence, but the covenant's members are devoted and lay claim to a lot of the city's ground. The Kindred of the **Ordo Dracul** control a tiny amount of the city, but the covenant's members are committed to the covenant's goals and have insinuated themselves into the city's politics.

Variations

It's easy. Just sketch out rectangles that describe the *relative* influence and power of each covenant in your city, and consider what it is that makes those shapes true in your chronicle. In a city of just two dozen vampires, any five fanatics might cause the Ordo Dracul's area of influence to plunge into the depths of faith. A single Bishop with prominent ties to the Prince (or damning evidence against him) might draw the Lancea Sanctum's influence into the heights of political power. Disillusion those fanatical Dragons or destroy that Bishop, and the areas of influence may radically change.

This schema is a good one to show the players in your chronicle how to immediately and effectively get across a sense of the society their characters are involved in — the kind of sense any Kindred who's been to court might glean just through conversations and observation, but that players can struggle to understand from just the glimpses they get of your city through play. The players' characters reside in the World of Darkness full-time, but the players only know what you show them. To immerse them into the setting, increase their general awareness of the world in which their characters dwell.

System: To add real value to court congregations and appearances at Elysium gatherings, let the players look at the city's current layers-of-power schema only when they do some investigating or mingling with vampires from other covenants. The more the players learn, the better their sense of the landscape of power becomes. You might make this an extended action at court with each Wits + Politics or Manipulation + Politics roll equaling an hour of eavesdropping and mingling at court. Every success reveals one span of one covenant's area of influence — territorial, political, or philosophical. Bonuses and penalties might be applied to reflect the character's Status, enemies, trustworthiness, or even Humanity.


Politics / Order
Philosophy / Faith
Territory / Dominion

Sample Neo-Feudal Hierarchy

This schema, focusing on territorial grants and obligation, describes a city's official relationships of subinfeudation and fealty. Every line in this diagram stands for a bestowment of territory and/or authority — that is, vassalage — emanating originally from the Prince of the city.

Territory, authority, and responsibility are bequeathed down the hierarchy while homage, fealty, and service are paid upward. All territory and authority ultimately originates with the Prince, though clearly *most* territory is actually granted by Kindred with less power. The majority of the domains and crofts in the city are bestowed by Kindred other than the Prince on to vampires of substantially less City Status than the Damned elite. In many cases, these are small domains amounting to little more than personal feeding grounds or havens.

For Example

In this diagram, grants are passed down from high-Status vampires to lower-Status vampires as the Regents and liege Kindred see fit. Some vassals may be granted domains and authority in exchange for corvée or service; others may receive territory without any associated authority as a reward for prior service. In general, the higher a Regent or vassal is on this schema, the greater his authority (and thus his City Status).

The **Prince** grants territory and power to two members of the Primogen, to the **Seneschal,** and to five **Regents**. These are all his vassals. All but one of his vassals has, in turn, granted portions of their territory to other Kindred (their own vassals). Most of the Prince's vassals have some other title beyond just Regent (e.g., Herald, Master of Elysium, Seneschal). Those titles may reveal what corvée they owe to their liege, the Prince, or those titles may be rewards or promotions granted later in appreciation for their fealty; it depends on their histories together. Is the Sheriff the Regent best suited to the job, or is he the *Kindred* best suited for the job, who was thus made Regent? We'd have to dig deeper to find that out — such investigations are part of what players do in a game of intrigue and espionage such as **Vampire**.

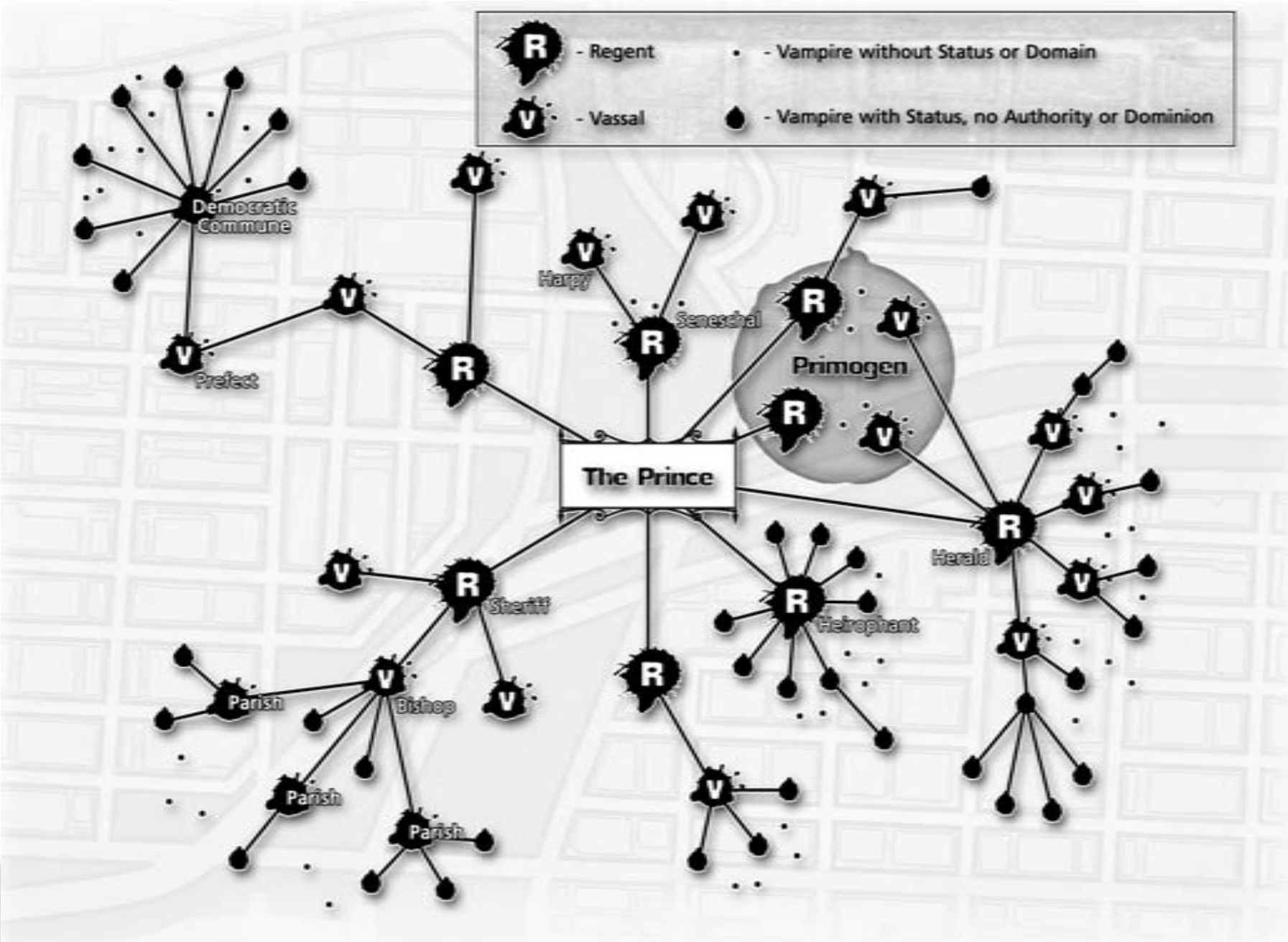
The **Seneschal** is a Regent, insofar as she is a high-ranking Kindred with dominion granted directly by the Prince, but her authority goes beyond that of the other five Regents. She has granted portions of her land to two vassals of her own, and one of which also happens to be a Harpy.

The three **parishes**, each anchored by a Sanctified chapel or mission, in this example are territories created by the Bishop (a vassal of the Sheriff's). Each parish also represents a Sanctified Priest, who is responsible for the parish and its corvée to the Bishop, in the covenant hierarchy. The Bishop officially grants territory to the parishes, rather than to the attendant Priests, to preserve their holdings in the event that a Priest must be replaced.

The **Prefect**, local head of the Carthians, may have great Status in his covenant, but he is just another vassal in the city hierarchy. He has created a domain within his own that his followers call the **Democratic Commune**, which in this example is essentially a communal haven and common feeding ground shared by every Carthian vampire in the city. Every 90 nights, they elect one of their own to officially hold the feudal seat for the Commune (and be responsible for paying their rent of service to the Prefect, who in turn owes his own liege lord).

The **Hierophant**, a Regent who received her domain from the Prince himself, has bequeathed none of her territory to true vassals beneath her. Instead, she has granted a few of her followers the right to make their havens on her land, but these tenants have no authority outside their own walls and no right to grant parcels of their territory to other Kindred. The two linked tenants share a haven, and one of them was there first.

The **Herald**, who is a Regent and an influential Society Kindred, was granted a vast domain by the Prince many years ago. Since then, he has granted portions of his territory to many other vampires including two who are now counted among the Primogen. All of these vampires owe black rent to their liege lord, the Herald. He awards land only to get something for himself in return.


R - Regent
V - Vassal
- Vampire without Status or Domain
- Vampire with Status, no Authority or Dominion
Democratic Commune
Prefect
Harpy
Seneschal
Primogen
The Prince
Herald
Sheriff
Heirophant
Parish
Bishop
Parish
Parish

Sample Rigid Hierarchy

This diagram describes a modern interpretation of the traditional land grant model that is informed by contemporary representative governments. This is a good model for Carthian controlled cities that have not utterly abandoned the customary quasi-manorial hierarchy. (That is, most of them.)

In this setup, Regents' authority does not encompass the power of their vassals. Instead, the Regents' provide oversight and bear responsibility for those below them to those above them. The number of possible vassals at each level of power is fixed — all the Regent does is fill any empty positions if he is able. Regents do not create new domains — the State defined all borders when this hierarchy was established. This is less a scale of infeudation and more of a chain of command or order of representation. The vassals represent the Kindred beneath them to their Regents, who represent them to their covenants, and who represent them before the Primogen.

Outside the rest of the power structure is the council of Prisci, bringing insight and advice to the Prince from any Kindred who choose to involve themselves in their clan's familial meetings. Kindred are meant to be represented by their Prisci in secret, so that they may privately oppose their own covenant's agenda without making enemies of their neighbors. In theory, the Prisci and the Primogen are kept apart, so that each may speak freely in the presence of the Prince, but in practice members of either council are free to break their privileged silence if they like — no real consequence hangs over them besides their honor.

The Prince, in this schema, is more of a prime minister, taking in advice from Primogen and Prisci, managing government agendas, and meeting with representative vampires from all ranks of their secret society. Above all, the Prince is the mouthpiece of the executive councils, both familial and political, to all the State's Kindred.

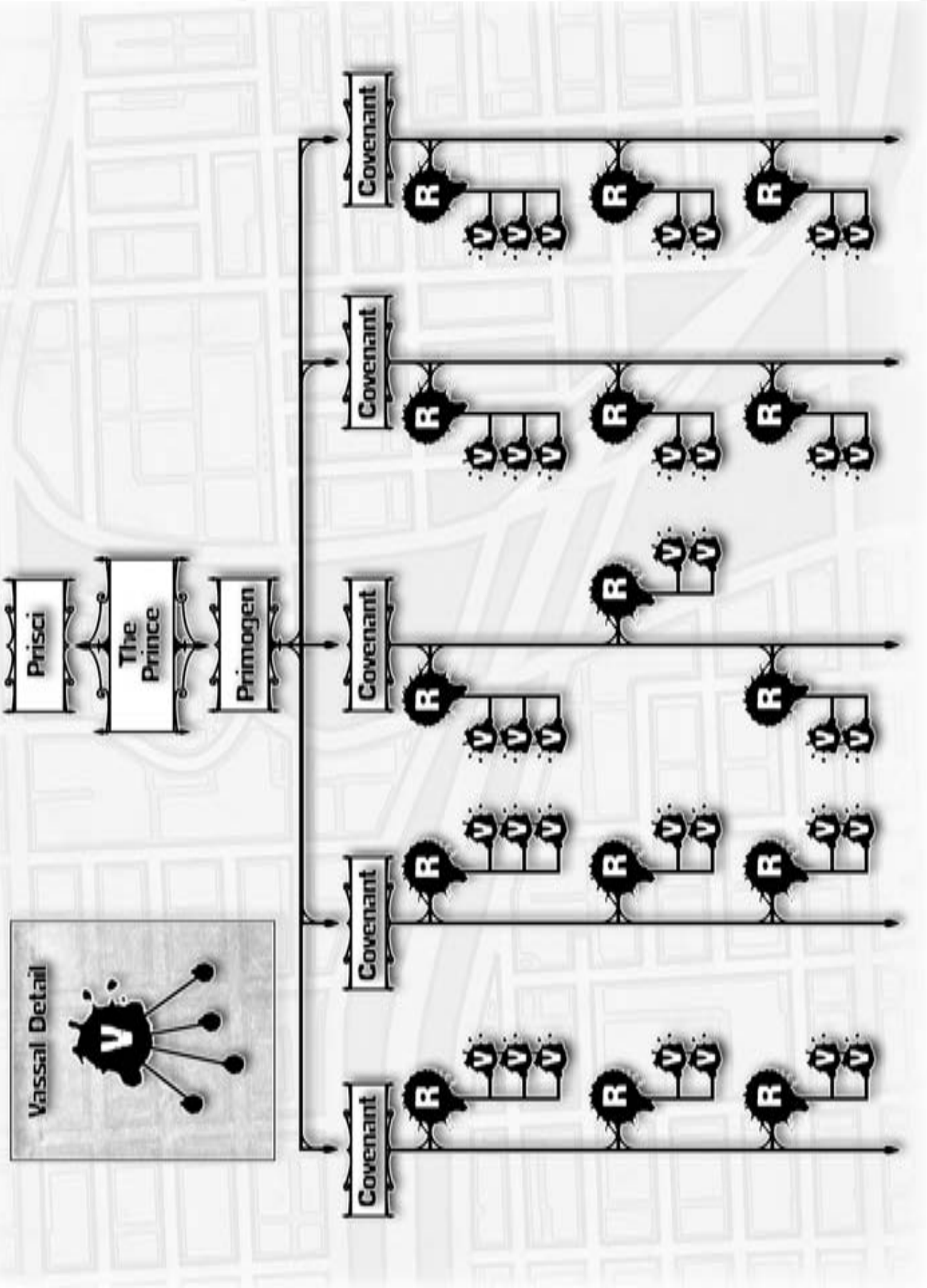
How to Use This Schema

This rigid form removes the mysterious, flexible structure from the city's hierarchy and replaces it with a fixed framework that is easily visible from any point in the chain of representation. Rather than striving to convince a Regent to carve out a bit of the city for them, the players are politicking to get one of their own appointed to a position that already exists. This may require the coterie to get the existing officer expelled.

A static structure doesn't make all Regents equal, however. As you can see, each covenant has one senior Regent who oversees three subordinates while all other Regents have only two vassals to do their bidding. Even while every covenant is supposedly identical in its representation, the covenants might not be evenly granted lands. If the covenant boundaries were drawn up when the Lancea Sanctum was unpopular or the Invictus was broken in defeat, some covenants may control many more domains or include many more vampires than their neighbors. Although the Circle of the Crone may be allowed seven total vassals and three total Regents in its ranks, the local membership may simply not include enough Kindred to fill those seats. In this system, vampires may be able to leverage Status from some covenants just by offering to join their ranks. A vampire may be doing a Regent a favor by falling in line, whereas in the more traditional feudal model the Regent does the vassal the favor of granting him a line in which to stand .

On the other hand, the fixed structure limits the options players have when politicking, which can be useful for troupes without much knack for scheming and conniving. Identifying the best way to win vassalage and then succeeding at actually getting it is easier in this city because it's all systematized. First, find an empty vassalage or displace a vassal you know you is inferior to you. Then, repeat this process all the way up the ladder, even if it takes centuries.

Without the ability to shift domains or duties at an elder's whim, you, the Storyteller, must give up the dynamically reactive city that changes in reaction to the characters' successes and failures, but you have gained a more stable system that frees you from tracking quite so much political minutia.


Prisci
The Prince
Primogen
Vassal Detail
V
Covenant
Covenant
Covenant
Covenant
Covenant
R
V

Visible and Invisible Influence

Not all power comes with a title. Not all authority comes with territory. Not all relationships come out into the open.

The two previous sample hierarchies show you just the official links between Kindred in power, but it's not as if vampires speak only to their landlords and tenants. Covenant-mates convene for formal meetings, acquaintances posture and mingle at courtly functions, clan cousins gather to honor their elders, and illicit lovers rendezvous in secret havens. Lovers coerce, enemies threaten, rivals blackmail, sires guilt childer, and allies debate. Things said in any of these meetings can spark bloody feuds, dissolve treaties, inspire renegotiations of manorial contracts, and force the reformation of domain policy.

The Prince's decrees may seem mad when seen only in the visible light of public politics, but in the invisible spectrum of behind-the-throne pressures and pleading, his rulings may make sense. The Danse Macabre is a game of cold manipulation and fiery passion (and **Vampire** is a game of supernatural intrigue and courtly espionage in addition to personal horror). The hidden relationships and simmering feuds are what turn politics into intrigue and agendas into dramas.

In this schema, the channels of official (visible) and private (invisible) influence are revealed. **Visible**, in most cases, means officially knowable by the public, even if most of the populace is ignorant of the facts. **Invisible**, in most cases, means a personal or secretive relationship is involved, even if it eventually becomes common knowledge as long as it is unofficial, politely unspoken, or outright illegal.

Influence that flows in two directions represents the give and take of a personal relationship. Influence that flows in one direction represents manipulation of one party by another — a Kindred being manipulated may *believe* influence flows in both directions, though, when in fact he is being used.

For Example

In the sample schema on the right, official channels of fealty (in black) and unofficial channels of influence (in gray) are revealed. In this city, clans and bloodlines are involved in courtly politics alongside four covenants. An already complex network of feudal relationships is complicated by personal rivalries and affairs.

The **Prince** is at the top of the feudal hierarchy, but at the center of an internecine web of intrigue. He has granted lands and titles to many inferior Kindred including most of the Primogen, but he also maintains unofficial contact (and counsel?) with the Avus of a local bloodline and a Regent [R2] in the ranks of one covenant, who the Prince feels will amount to great things. This Regent, though he is a vassal of his covenant, was given Regency by the Prince, who ordered the covenant to promote the young neonate. Unknown to most of the city, the Prince has also granted territory to a secret Regent [Rx], without informing even the Primogen. Is this hidden vampire an assassin or something else?

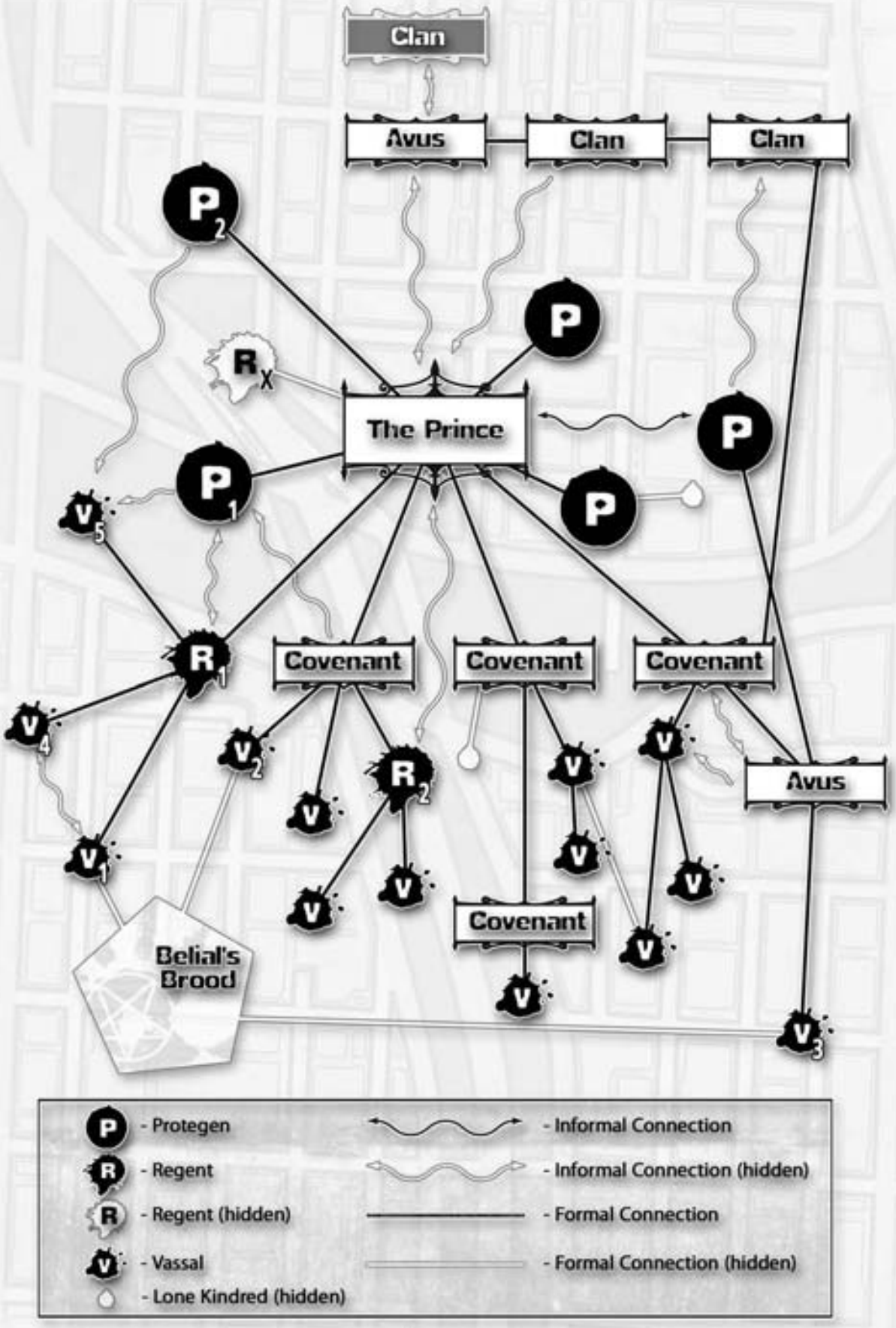
The Prince's clanmates are actively using their blood ties to manipulate his decisions (successfully or not). The clan has also given some of its lands over to the bloodline, which is in collusion with the Prince (and of which the Prince is rumored to be a member). The Avus of that bloodline, however, is conspiring with the Priscus of another clan against its own cousins. Does the Prince know this?

Three vulnerable **paravail vassals** [V1, V2, V3] have secretly allowed vampires of **Belial's Brood** to roost in their lands. Each vassal thinks he's the only one to have done so. Each thinks of Belial's Brood as his secret weapon. How long until their treachery means ruin for other lords?

One **Regent** [R1] has three weak vassals participating in schemes against him. The first [V1] has granted asylum to the Brood but is also plotting with his neighbor [V4] to usurp their Regent's position. The third [V5] is being used as a pawn by two of the Primogen [P1 and P2], who are engaged in their own petty dispute over feeding rights. One of these Primogen [P1] is also conspiring with the Regent [R1]. Is the Regent in league with the Primogen, or is his vassal being used against him?

It's Yours Now

More relationships wait to be detailed, if you choose to use this schema as a model for your city. Whether you draw your schema with secret alliances and future plots already in mind or you sketch out a feudal network and idly fill in a few wavy lines to see where they lead your imagination, the schema's working for you now.


Clan
Avus
Clan
Clan
P2
P
Rx
The Prince
P
P1
P
P
V5
R1
Covenant
Covenant
Covenant
V4
V2
R2
V
V
Avus
V1
V
V
V
V
Covenant
V
Belial's Brood
V
V3
P - Protegen
R - Regent
R - Regent (hidden)
V - Vassal
- Lone Kindred (hidden)
- Informal Connection
- Informal Connection (hidden)
- Formal Connection
- Formal Connection (hidden)

Conflict and Power Web

This is a simplified relationship diagram showing only the major players in the city, including official and personal relationships that are both public and private. In this city, power is not limited to just the ideological groups of the covenants but is spread out (or snatched up) by Kindred representing (or manipulating) their clans and bloodlines. If each line linking the various agents of power is a conduit of influence and potential access, it becomes clear that even at the top of the hierarchy the Prince is surrounded by competitors and rivals. In this schema, conflicts and conspiracies make up most of the data. This diagram, then, describes a series of stories about to happen. This is a diagram of the plots vampires are putting into motion, which can in turn become your plot for a future story.

So it's all about potential energy here. The spark that sets off the fire should, ideally, be the troupe's characters. For example, the players' coterie discovers that one of the city vassals (V3) is manipulating another (V4), and this news causes a series of investigations and confrontations that eventually reveals a conspiracy by two outsider vampires (the Rival and the Rogue) to dethrone the Prince. Or the players' coterie accepts land and lordship from a Regent (R3) who wants them to help him defend his domain against VII — but the coteries' mission eventually leads them to learn that VII is, in fact, being manipulated by the Prince himself.

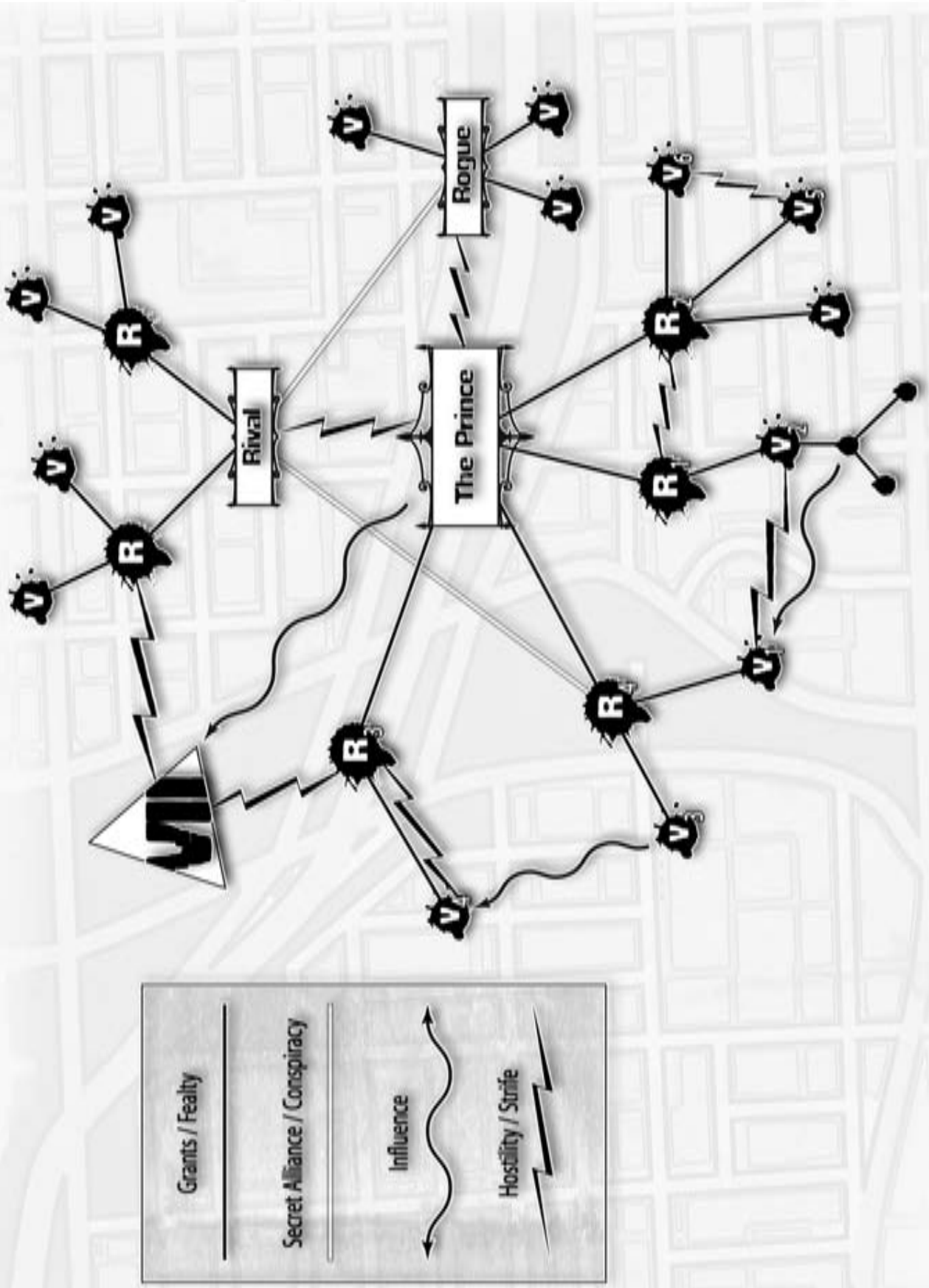
All these allegiances and hostilities are in a precarious starting position until the protagonists of the chronicle arrive on stage. After that, every Storyteller character is activated and changing the playing field with every move they make. The schema becomes a maze of loyalties and lies the coterie (and the players) must navigate to achieve the only real success in the Danse Macabre: survival.

The Setup

In this schema, the **Prince** is the center of power and authority in the city. There may be Primogen or countless other vassals not represented here (we're only concerned about those somehow connected to these conflicts). The Prince has **four Regents** (R1–R4), who in turn have their own vassals. The Prince is also busy defending himself and his organization from two outside crews: a **Rival** for the throne and a **Rogue** unaligned vampire with his small following. Also outside the Prince's organization is a crew of VII, and although they are a threat to some of his organization, the Prince has found it more profitable to steer those bloodthirsty fanatics than to smite them.

Two of the Prince's **Regents** (R1 and R2) are constantly squabbling over territory and philosophy (maybe one is Sanctified and the other is an Acolyte); each is trying to manipulate and stymie the other. Their strife creates a distraction that gives their own vassals room to behave and create more conflicts (between V1 and V2, between V5 and V6), and all of whom are trying to defend their own lords' honor in the hopes of getting ahead. One of the vassals (V2) has a tenant coterie on his land that is also subtly influencing an enemy (V1) into more fierce attacks against their landlord in hopes of freeing up his feudal seat. Elsewhere in the city, another vassal (V3) has convinced his neighbor (V4) that his landlord (R3) is vulnerable from attacks by VII — if V3 and V4 work together, then maybe they can slay VII after R3 is slain. Then they'll split his domain between them.

Above all of this, however, is a more sinister scheme. One of the Prince's Regents (R4) is betraying him to the Rival. Together, these two vampires are using the Rogue to draw out and weaken the Prince's resources. Only with the aid of his Regents can the Prince defend against both the Rival and the Rogue, and R4 intends to use the Prince's desperation for leverage — once R4 has achieved greater status and domain from the Prince, he will turn against the Rival and work to restore the Prince's sovereignty. But R4 doesn't know that the Prince has been giving up Kindred in the city to placate VII — they will take out the Rival's vampires, saving the Prince the trouble unless the players' characters intervene. Once the Rival and the Rogue are dealt with, though, something will have to be done about VII.


Rival
The Prince
Rogue
Grants / Fealty
Secret Alliance / Conspiracy
Influence
Hostility / Strife

Political Dynamics and Geography

In the neo-feudal system, power, loyalty, and geography are intertwined. Where a vampire hunts is often a reflection of his success in the Danse Macabre (or his willingness to violate the Prince's laws). Where a Kindred sleeps is a reflection of his favor with the powers that be (or his usefulness to them). Understanding the hierarchies of power isn't enough — you have to see how that hierarchy spreads across the asphalt of the city like a bloodstain.

This is a model of political influence and responsibility described geographically. It reveals overlaps between trust and power as well as disparities between power and territory. Here the physical landscape reveals cultural dynamics — and thus accompanying political dynamics — that shape the borders of Kindred territory (or form as a result of those borders). Here, too, we see how the city's landscape inspires (or forces) a Prince to appoint Regents and vassals when he might otherwise not want to.

Grants

Lines from larger spots to smaller spots indicate a grant of territory in exchange for fealty. These are formal relationships that are publicly known at court.

Purview

The gray circles around each charted vampire show that character's general range of typical activity. Vampires may cross the city to scheme or politick, but most of their nights are spent near their havens hunting for food. (Note that few stories are about "typical activity.") Higher-Status vampires have a larger radius of freedom (whether they choose to use it or not). Notice that not every Kindred in this schema is the center of a sphere. The Carthian lord, for example, adopts all responsibility and authority over his people.

Where purviews overlap, vampires are likely to interact, squabbling over feeding rights, bitching about one's neighbors, and plotting ways to widen or strengthen their control. Traveling vampires would do well to avoid areas of overlapping purview. Kindred in such areas tend to be more wary of trespassers, and the scent of the Beast alerts many Kindred that another vampire is in the area, thanks to the Predator's Taint.

Borders

Look at how the covenant territories interact. Rather than position himself in the center of the city, where he'd be surrounded on all sides by enemies, the Prince makes his lair at one end of the city and surrounded by his Invictus, Sanctified, and Ventrue allies. But notice, too, how the Prince has placed most other vampires' turf away from his own — he doesn't trust his fellow Kindred too close to where he sleeps.

Potential assassins can still drive around the city and come at the Prince physically from any direction, but they must still pass through the territory of numerous other Kindred, who have probably sworn an oath to protect the Prince. But the Prince's position really protects him from the fallout of mistakes and troubles made by unruly groups like the Carthians and the Nosferatu. The Carthians may still bring their troubles to court, but at least they're nightly antics won't fuck up the Prince's yard.

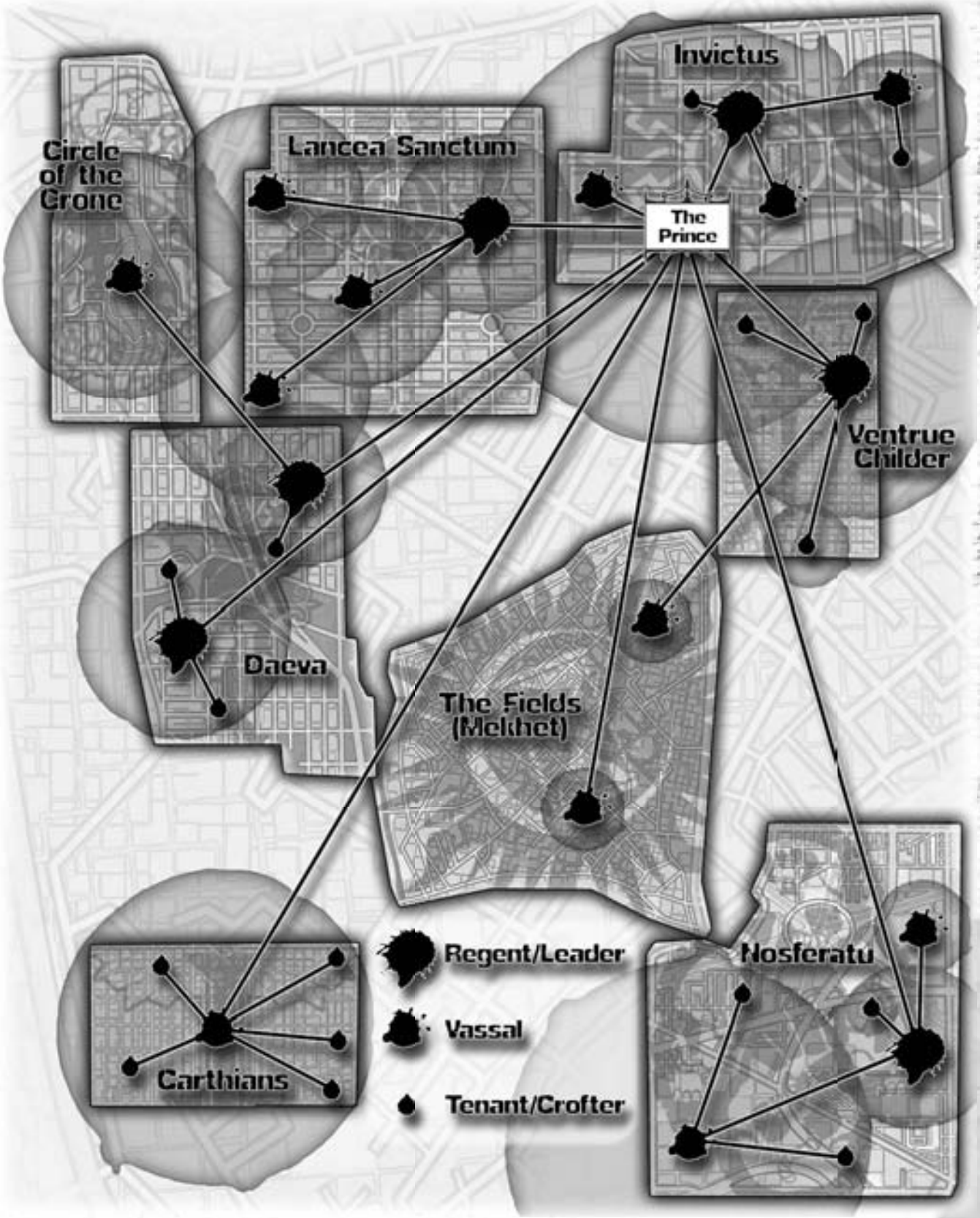
Few of the territories doled out to the Prince's vassals are in direct physical contact. The Prince wants a few blocks of neutral ground to keep friction to a minimum. Territories in close proximity to one another are carefully positioned, however. Daeva Regents have been given land near the Acolytes and the Sanctified and charged with keeping those groups away from each other's throats... but the very reason the Prince granted the Crone cult land near the Sanctified was to keep both covenants distracted and off balance.

The Prince has also granted territory within his own purview to a Ventrue vassal whose task it is to prepare Ventrue childer for entry into Kindred society. That vassal is responsible for the neonates in the territory until they are deemed mature enough to take on authority of their own.

Loyalty

In theory, the domain borders drawn by the Prince reveal something about the memberships of the city's covenants. Surely those Kindred who dwell in Carthian territory are Carthians themselves, but is that a viable way to measure the local population? Kindred linked by direct fealty are presumably personally closer to those with whom they share no direct ties. Right?

Compare this schema to that on the next page.


Invictus
Circle of the Crone
Lancea Sanctum
The Prince
Ventrue Childer
Daeva
The Fields (Mekhet)
Nosferatu
Carthians
Regent/Leader
Vassal
Tenant/Crofter

Private Dynamics and Geography

Vampires are social creatures, but they are also bloodthirsty monsters. Some dwell under the banners of their leaders. Others nest near the zebras. Even in a city in which territory is broken up by covenant or clan, not all Kindred can be expected (or trusted) to spend their Requiems within those categories. Not all Carthians keep their havens on the Prefect's lands, and not all pious vampires sleep in the shadow of the church.

Here's a different take on the previous schema that is showing the personal (and sometimes secret) social networks between the same Kindred on the same map of territories. Notice how these personal connections vary from the political connections on the previous map.

The feudal system results in many personal connections becoming political connections and vice versa, but that's never the whole story.

Borders and Loyalties

Borders are platonic; they help people think about limits. They are not physical barriers; they alone cannot keep out a vampire. Territorial borders and covenant memberships do not determine which vampires consort with each other or why.

In truth, it seems most Kindred maintain contact with vampires from more than one covenant. But most of that contact is social, even personal, and may be kept carefully apart from one's political relationships in a desperate (and inevitably doomed) effort to protect their hearts from the machinations of the Danse Macabre.

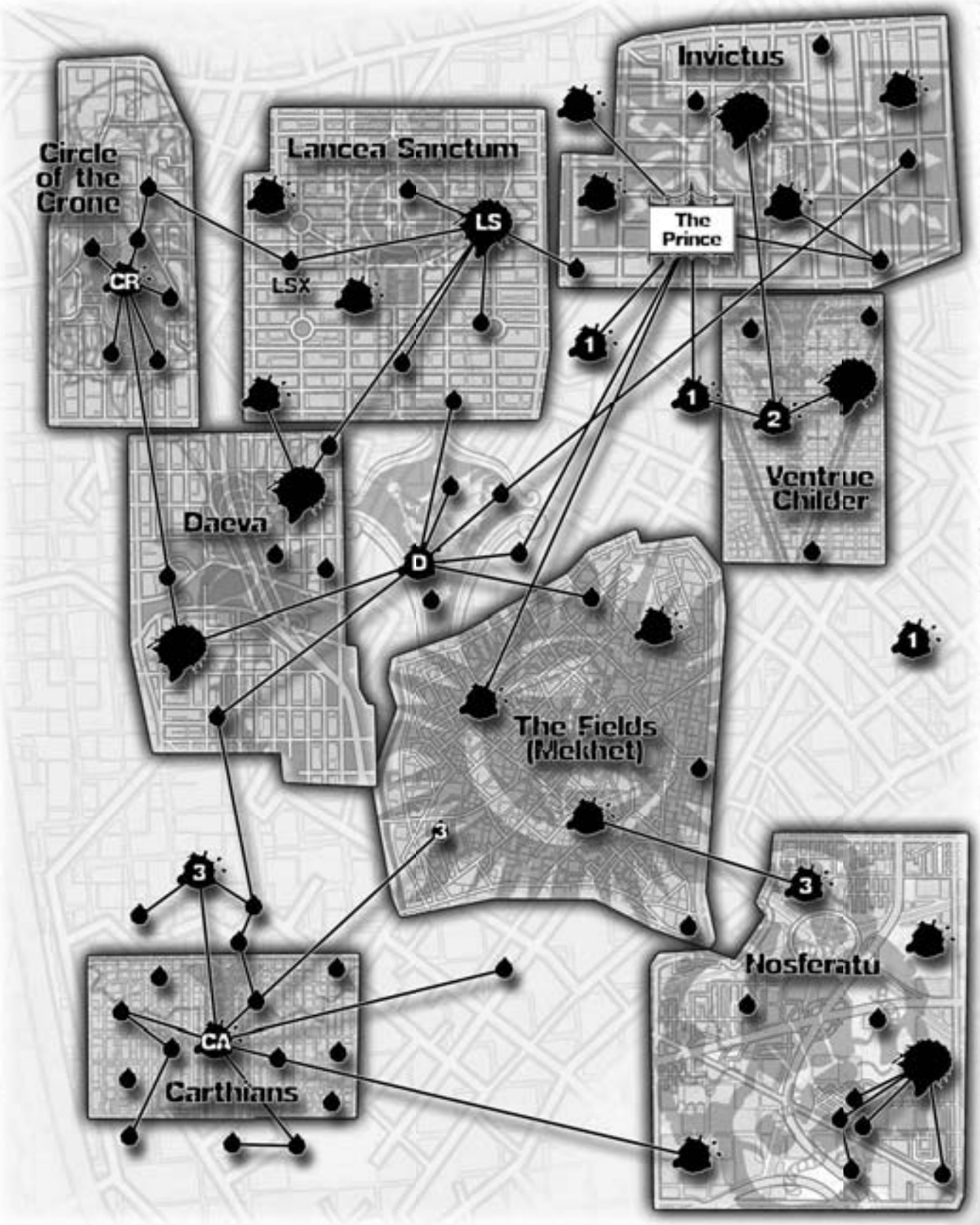
In the example city at right, however, even the private relationships between local vampires are largely defined by politics and geography. Kindred are keeping secret most of their relationships with vampires in other domains. But few of these private relationships stretch out over any great distance. Kindred are more likely to know their neighbors than their clan-mates. Thus, some clans choose to gather together if they can.

Look at number of Kindred marked on this map who are not visible on the public map. Most Kindred know where the leader of the Circle of the Crone (CR) gets her power, but the personal dynamics within her coterie aren't public knowledge. The very presence of the Ordo Dracul is not commonly known — it's members derive unofficial territory from a self-declared Regent (D) who makes his lair outside the Prince's boundaries, but not every Dragon nests outside covenant borders. They have members dwelling in Invictus, Sanctified, Daeva, and Mekhet territories, and their connections go much further than that.

The Prince has a pair of secret Regents (1) dwelling outside the public eye. These must be Kindred of considerable worth but with little accountability. One of the Prince's Invictus vassals has granted land to his childer (2) but not yet formally disclosed it. The Prince probably knows, though, because that vassal (2) is in contact with one of the Prince's secret Regents.

Meanwhile, Kindred farther out from the Prince's turf have initiated their own clandestine colonizing efforts outside their formal territory (3). The Carthian Prefect (CA), in particular, has granted land or tenancy to several Kindred outside of his official territory. Perhaps he's just given these Kindred the go-ahead to strike out on their own, but he's still pulling strings.

The Lancea Sanctum Bishop (LS) would probably not be happy to know that one of his own (LSX) has some kind of private relationship with an Acolyte.


Invictus
Circle of the Crone
Lancea Sanctum
LS
LSX
CR
The Prince
1
1
2
Ventrue Childer
Daeva
D
1
The Fields (Mekhet)
3
3
3
Nosferatu
CA
Carthians

IV: Rasha

It was a simple equation. Jimmy plus casino equaled trouble. But just this once, purely as an exercise in what was possible, Rasha would do her best to keep the irresistible force from colliding with the explodable object.

The casino was Rainfold's. They were to meet him in the back room for marching orders. They were to be there, her and Jimmy and Airbox, at 1:15, and it was already 1:10. And here was Jimmy, headed straight in the opposite direction, for the slot machines.

Rasha grabbed his jacket collar and hauled on it, like you'd do with a dog.

"Hey!" Jimmy protested.

She tapped her watch.

He went into a sulk. "We got time for a couple of pulls."

The casino binged and buzzed with flashing lights and ringing bells. It was a quiet night. A solitary blackjack table attracted the hardcore Kindred and assorted hangers-on. The roulette wheel spun in lonely circles for a handful of sallow punters. Poker went on behind a lacquered screen, its panels covered in red flocked Victorian wallpaper.

Jimmy snapped out of his over-dramatized funk, his attention held by the tightly-packaged behind of a passing casino server. Her uniform consisted of a red satin one-piece, cut high on the hips and low at the back. A platinum blond wig bobbled underneath a gold lame pillbox hat. A red silk choker encircled her long, elegant neck.

"Hey, I have an order for you!" Jimmy grabbed her by the elbow. She turned around. Her pink, collagen-enhanced lips had been sewn shut with a thin gauge of fishing line. Rainfold liked his staff discreet.

Dull-eyed and stoned, she slowly unhooked her choker, revealing a dartboard of pinprick scars. These were the remnants of countless careless feedings.

Rasha pulled Jimmy away. "He might have to drive tonight," she said to the server, semi-apologetically.

The server shrugged, as if, beneath her layers of intoxication and traumatic dissociation, she was still capable of relief.

"But you know what the gold hat means!" Jimmy protested, as she dragged him across the sticky casino floor. "The gold hat means crack."

"You are not getting cracked out right before the meet," she told him.

"Jeez Louise, Rasha, you know how long it's been since I had a taste of crack-blood?"

Airbox moved resolutely, silently ahead, leaving the Jimmy-wrangling to her. She couldn't blame him for withdrawing. If the guy had been her friend, she'd have killed him months ago.

Maybe that's what this was gonna be about. Rainfold would declare Jimmy a liability, and they'd have to steel themselves and take him out on the spot. As a declaration of loyalty. Rasha prepared herself for the possibility. Visualized the garrote held tight between her hands.

Little pink nubs protruded from the sleeve of Jimmy's jacket.

"What the hell are those?" she asked.

He pushed out the stump for all to see. "Trying to re-grow my hand. It's fucking hard — a lot of blood."

"Maybe if you fed more diligently —"

"I was trying..." He pointed to the server with the gold hat. A degenerate Ventrue at the blackjack table was opening up her throat.

"Like you were going to use that for your hand." Rasha grabbed his forearm to further examine his weakly healed hand. "Put that away when we're talking to Rainfold," she said.

Jimmy was still on the mope when they got to the office door. Functionaries subjected them to the ritual weapons search and waved them in.

Rainfold wore a gray velour jersey and blue vinyl track pants. A set of thin, horizontal shades sat atop his bald head. He sat at his desk, crushing foam packing peanuts. Each time he was finished disintegrating a small pile of them, he swept the green Styrofoam dust off his desk and onto his carpet. A dwarf in a tux, his lips also sewn shut with a length of fishing line, stood at attention with a DustBuster in hand. When the pile of rent foam got high enough, he would scuttle up to vacuum it up.

Jimmy pointed at the dwarf and laughed. "Cool, Rainfold! Cool! Where'd you get him?"

Rainfold looked through him, to Rasha and Airbox. He gestured to a leather couch. They took their seats; Jimmy bopped over to join them.

"Carney's dead," Rainfold said. "Somebody aced him in his meat barn. Tell me where that's located."

"On our slice," Rasha said.

"Smart girl," said Rainfold. "You got a smart girl working with you there, Airbox."

"That's right," said Airbox.

"You should be able to guess what comes next, but I'm saying it anyway," said Rainfold. "Because I have always been a fan of clarity. Somebody aces one of my people on my turf. On your turf. You find out who it is, and deal with them. Or you lose your slice."

"When we deal with them, how unequivocally do we do it?" Airbox asked.

"Anyone less than a lord, I delegate to you." He punctuated the instruction by firmly sweeping a rain of foam peanut bits onto his carpet.

They stood to go.

Rainfold pointed a crooked finger at Jimmy. "Wait. You. Your assignment is different. I got a used server out back. Poor girl's heart gave out on her."

Jimmy wasn't getting it. "Yeah?"

Rainfold stood. "You're taking her to the meat house for disposal. That's your new job now. Work the meat house."

"The abattoir?"

"Carney's gone. I need a new Carney."

"I don't know nothin' 'bout butchery —"

"It's not for consumption, Jimmy. I don't need you to be the Mozart of meat. Also, you'll find Carney still there. Clean him up, too. Show respect. Only feed him to the nice seagulls."

Rasha shifted forward on the couch. "How did he go?"

Rainfold drummed his fingers in a dust of packing materials. "Just so there are no surprises, Jimmy . . . As of now, only his mind is gone. Your culprit laid a shatter on him."

"So we're looking for a heavy-duty nightmare artist," said Rasha.

Rainfold tapped the tip of his nose.

"You mean I got to finish Carney, then dismember him and this chick, too?" Jimmy complained.

"Be grateful."

"For what?"

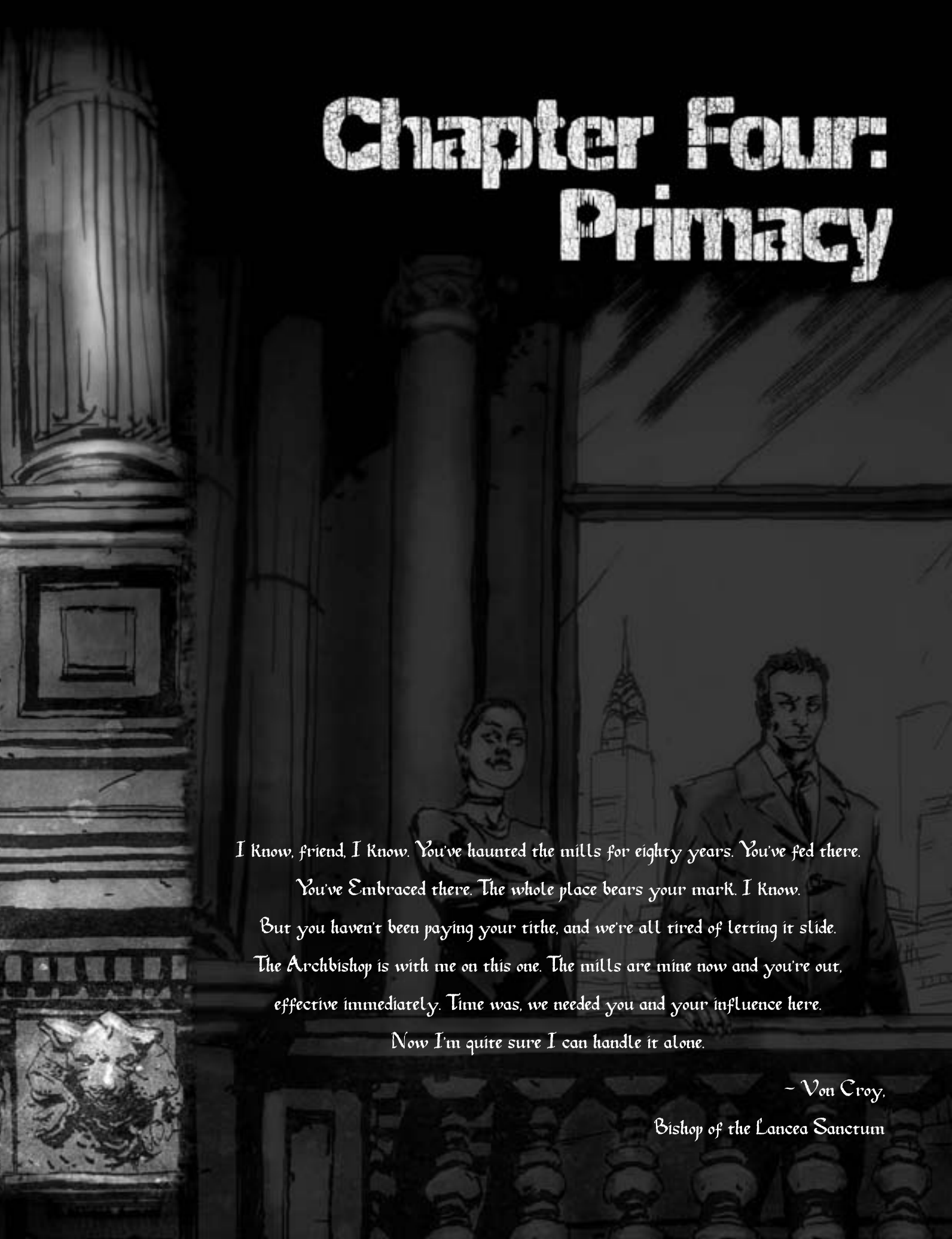
Rainfold turned around again. His smile was unhappy. "For a job you can't hardly fuck up."

Rasha hauled on his elbow and cleared him out of there.

"Let him have a taste of whatever girl he wants," Rainfold called after her.

Rasha patted Jimmy between his slumping shoulders. She was surprised how light it made her feel, to discover she wasn't gonna have to murder him, after all.

Chapter Four: Primacy



I Know, friend, I Know. You've haunted the mills for eighty years. You've fed there. You've Embraced there. The whole place bears your mark. I Know. But you haven't been paying your tithe, and we're all tired of letting it slide. The Archbishop is with me on this one. The mills are mine now and you're out, effective immediately. Time was, we needed you and your influence here. Now I'm quite sure I can handle it alone.

~ Von Croy,

Bishop of the Lancea Sanctum

"Unless the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh in vain."
— One Motto of the City of Edinburgh

In the typical **Vampire: The Requiem** chronicle, the action happens at the street level with a handful of Kindred protagonists struggling against a harsh city riddled with treacherous bloodsucking monsters for a chance to survive the Danse Macabre for another night.

That's not how it is with Primacy.

In this style of play, everything's different. Primacy "zooms out" to focus on the highest levels of Kindred power, where individual mortals are the instruments used to shape the night, rather than breathing, caring characters. At this level of play, a vampire's contacts and minions are reduced to dots on a page. The Damned in power remove themselves from the people they use, lose, and discard because the cold reason of authority is so often an act — putting faces on the masses clouds a vampire's resolve with guilt, hate, love, or grief. Beyond that, for many of the eldest Damned, their connection to Humanity has weakened so much that meeting with the living face to face results in terror more than seduction and disgust more than respect.

Primacy puts players in control of the most influential vampires in the city — Kindred with fingers around dozens of throats, drawing capital, power, and Vitae off businesses, institutions, and individuals in their shadow. Neonates or elders, covenant leaders, or demagogues raised up by nepotists, the characters' players' control at this level of play use gunmen like street-level characters use guns. They don't repair cars or study science. They have people who do that for them.

Even these vampires are not immune to the feudal customs of the Kindred or the sinister machinations of the Danse Macabre. Vampires on the street can hide from the Byzantine plots and schemes of Kindred politics. The vampires perched near the top of the tree of feudal authority find themselves and their power swaying back and forth on thin branches as the winds change.

Primacy Gameplay

Primacy is not so different from the core **Vampire** experience. The stakes change, but the core drama remains the same. Characters in a Primacy chronicle are still the protagonists and anti-heroes in a tale of personal horror, but instead of being the street-level monster with bloody knuckles, the characters become dons and godfathers whose calculated actions so often result in tragedy for someone. The question becomes, "Who suffers?" and what does that do to the soul and Humanity of the character?

Despite a lot of new terminology, Primacy is not a different game. Everything here builds on the material in Chapter Three.

The rivalries and competitions that go on between characters at this level of play shouldn't be confused for competition between *players*. Despite the rising and falling values of the new Advantage and Influence, this is not a game you can lose.

The goal, as always, is to tell a compelling, dramatic, and hopefully frightening story. Influence and event driven play are simply tools for creating conflict and

PvE and PvP

You probably know these terms already. They're jargon acronyms from video gaming. They stand for Player versus Environment (PvE) and Player versus Player (PvP), respectively.

In the typical **Vampire** chronicle, action is assumed to be PvE: the characters interact with the game world as described by the Storyteller (who isn't a player, for the purposes of this topic) and face challenges that extend from it, rather than the other players' characters.

In Primacy play, an element of PvP play is introduced. Players can attempt to attack or subvert the Assets of other players by going through the Storyteller. This has the potential to cause problems for some troupes. Be careful. If it sounds like it could be trouble, it probably will be. Simply declare other players' characters off limits for Primacy-level actions.

If you do give the PvP aspect a shot here, remember that among the bloodsuckers who keep the Danse Macabre, a certain degree of skullduggery is expected. The troupe's characters may consider it fair game to buy off each other's Assets. They may be able to appreciate the play, for example, as long as the Asset isn't removed from the coterie's portfolio. From the cold, nearly inhuman remove at the top of the Kindred hierarchy, where mortal men and women are used and traded, a cunning subversion can be admired as a savvy move in the Danse Macabre, rather than a theft and betrayal.

But turnabout is fair play.

sparking stories. Reaching maximum Influence is not the goal and it's not a victory. Influence is a means to an end, and that end may never come because the Damned never die. Power is what vampires use to get what they really want — objects, affection, revenge, answers, security, sex, blood. Those who pursue power find that even when it's been caught, the running never ends.

That's the damnable thing about power, isn't it? You're either fighting to get it or fighting to keep it.

The Premise

In a Primacy chronicle, the characters are assumed to be powerful vampires in the Danse Macabre. This doesn't mean they are especially old or supernaturally powerful (though they may be — the Storyteller determines starting experience points). They may be heirs to a previous generation of powerful vampires or they may simply be celebrities by circumstance. These characters wouldn't be the first politicos to win influence through luck.

At the top of the ladder of Influence is the Prince. No matter what happens, the Prince remains a Storyteller character. This is one of the main conceits of Primacy.

It is better to manipulate the Prince than to be the Prince. In a Primacy chronicle, the players strive to use their Influence to shape the city where they rule, steer Kindred society, and convince the Prince to do what they think is best.

New Advantage: Influence

Influence is a new Advantage unique to Kindred like Blood Potency. Unlike Blood Potency, however, Influence rises and falls rapidly through play and does not inevitably drive the character who has it towards a grim end. Unlike Status Merits, Influence is not completely beneficial. Having five dots in Covenant Status is great — it makes you the Bishop and makes your role in vampire society clear. Reaching the peak of Influence makes you a target for those below you because your power is a threat to theirs.

Influence is a multifaceted trait that impacts play in many different ways. For the most part, its mechanisms build on the rules you already know. As a unique property of Primacy, however, Influence interacts with actions that are only taken at this scale of play.

Influence is not a mini-game. Given nothing but dice and non-dramatized actions, Influence is extremely easy to gain. Primacy play assumes that the Danse Macabre provides an endless cast of antagonists to oppose and challenge the characters on their way to the top and to provoke the conflicts and setbacks that drama requires. If all the characters do is roll dice to gain Influence points and win Assets, they can make it to the heights of power in a few weeks. But that's not dramatic. It's not horrific. It's not a story.

The Influence Advantage is a tool for managing great power and intrigue. Rather than presume that the players of cunning undead masterminds must be political geniuses themselves, Influence assumes a level of capability on the part of the characters and spares the players too much detail.

Influence is a common language that makes it easy for casual players to interact in a complex game world. It reveals the stakes of actions, the wages of success, and the costs of failure. It just makes things easier.

Influence Dots

Influence is rated from one to ten dots. All characters in a Primacy chronicle automatically have the Influ-

Effects of Influence

Influence	Input	Assets Max	Resources	Protection/Loyalty	Agent XP
1	1	10	5	1	—
2	1	15	5	1	—
3	2	20	5	2	10
4	2	25	5	2	15
5	3	30	5	3	20
6	3	35	5+1	3	25
7	4	40	5+2	4	30
8	4	45	5+3	4	35
9	5	50	5+4	5	40
10	5	55	5+5	4	50

ence Advantage. Unless the Storyteller's plans for the chronicle to call for something different, every character begins with two dots in Influence.

Players may voluntarily reduce their Influence to increase that of another character by one. Thus the players can extend the reach of their characters into the heights of power if they can work together in the face of great temptations.

Every level of Influence brings with it more and more power to control and manipulate the mortal world and the assets of the city as described below. But Influence is a delicate resource. It can be gained and lost.

Depending on the number of vampires at work in your city, you have two options when it comes to determining and tracking Influence:

The Default Mode

The Default Mode allows for multiple characters at every level of Influence and sees the trait imposing changes on a character's domains based at the same time that it changes to reflect the character's actions.

- If a character's total dots in Assets rise past the maximum for his level of Influence, he gains a dot of Influence. If the character's total dots in Assets drop below the maximum for the next-lowest level of Influence, he loses a dot of Influence.
- If a character's Influence points are exhausted, he may reduce his Influence dots by one to restore a number of Influence points equal to half his *old* Influence dots. Thus, if Dante willingly gives up one of his six dots in Influence, he regains three Influence points (half of six, the level he just sacrificed) but must cut loose up to five dots worth of Assets.
- In-game actions, such as defeating a rival vampire with greater Influence, can earn an Influence boost at the Storyteller's discretion.
- One dot of Influence can be purchased with 10 experience points.

Alternate Mode

This mode is better suited to smaller cities where not so many vampires are vying for the Prince's ear. In this mode, no two vampires can have the same number of dots in Influence. If the Carthian Prefect has six dots of Influence, no other character can have six dots of Influence. Other characters may have five or seven dots, but there are no equals in this mode of play. Thus Influence becomes a clear ladder of power.

In this mode, the only way to gain or lose Influence is to earn more dots in Assets than the next vampire up the ladder or to lower his dots in Assets.

Influence Points

Like Willpower, Influence is made up of both dots and points. Influence points — also called Juice, in the lingo of politics — are spent and restored during play.

Spend Juice to:

- Gain a single automatic success on a single contested or extended political action (see p. 237). You may spend multiple Influence points at once in this way. (This may represent pulling in favors or pressuring Assets to act.)
- Grant a success to another character's political action as above. But what will you ask for in return?
- Make use of more than one Asset at once.
- Activate an Agent for one chapter. (See "Agents.")

Resources

Vampires pulling the strings of bankers and business from behind the scenes are in a position to make a great deal of money. The scope of a horror game and of **Vampire** in particular is such that more money does not equal more fun. After a certain point — specifically, after five

Character Creation for Primacy

Players creating characters for Primacy-level play probably need additional experience points to describe their shadowy, manipulative monsters behind the thrones of mortal society. Not all Kindred at this level of politics are ancient or personally formidable, though. In fact, the time spent pushing mortal pawns around the city often distracts from the personal growth of the Damned. They spend more time cultivating Assets than improving themselves.

Avoid the temptation to make all Primacy characters (including Storyteller characters) "movers and shakers" right from the start. The players' characters need someplace to go, and the chronicle needs room for stories to unfold. Whatever you do, though, *do not let experience points dictate your descriptions of Storyteller characters*. Part of the dangerous mystique of the undead is that their age and appearance often reveal nothing of their power. That cute puckish Regent who seems to be bored by the political talk could be a 200-year-old Dragon with minions all over the city. That crusty bearded seer who rules over the city cemetery may not be the ancient philosopher he appears to be — he might just be lucky. Don't broadcast a character's power unless you want to ruin their mystique.

75 experience points are probably enough for most starting characters with 100 experience points as a good upper limit. Make up your own mind based on the kind of chronicle you're setting up and the chart on p. 92 of **Vampire: The Requiem**.

dots in Resources — the amount of money a character can throw at a problem becomes irrelevant. There isn't much that five dots of Resources can't buy that won't overload the chronicle anyway.

Beyond that, great sums of money attract attention from the living in a way that dares a breach of the Masquerade. Kindred have many reasons for wanting precious antiquities or artifacts (see **World of Darkness: Reliquary**), but raw capital is often more trouble to keep secret than it is really worth. Is it worth having a billion dollars if every other vampire will destroy you to keep their secret safe?

Yet, vampires with great Influence command great wealth. With six or more dots in Influence, a vampire may be so wealthy that not only is she herself rich, but she can make other characters rich. Every level of Resources above the fifth dot represents another person that the vampire can make a millionaire. (In game terms, the recipient automatically gains four dots of Resources.)

An Asset who is granted this wealth cannot be turned by another character unless that character is willing to devote more "bonus Resources" to the target. Such an Asset may still be killed.

Note that Influence lifts the ceiling on *maximum* Resources but does not grant free dots in Resources. Each "bonus dot" of Resources costs experience points according to the normal formula for Merits.

Assets

Assets are the main commodities of Primacy. They are the primary way that characters are likely to interact with the world, whether it means putting a stop to a threat against the Kindred court or making a power play against a rival vampire.

Assets represent mortal men and women under the character's influence. Assets may be motivated by money, blackmail, intimidation, the Blood or Disciplines — it doesn't really matter at this stage. What matters is that these people do the characters' bidding eagerly, miserably, warily, and shamefully.

.Assets are a finite resource. There are only so many medical doctors, experts in the occult, gunmen, and speechwriters that can be brought into service by the undead without risking the Masquerade. The number of viable Assets that are worth the risk is even lower. In game terms, this means that only so many characters — whether the players' or the Storytellers' — can have dots in each Skill as Assets. The Storyteller declares how many Assets are in play for any given Skill. (See "Primacy Storytelling" for more on this.)

This makes each Asset a distinct and precious resource, and the Kindred who controls that Asset becomes a target for allegiance or attack. If you want a good surgeon to save the life of your ghoul, you go to the vampire with a surgeon in his pocket.

Acquiring Assets

At the beginning of play, every player has a number of points, which are determined by their Influence dots that are to be distributed among their Assets. At this point, the Assets put into play in the game world by the Storyteller do not limit the players. This is where the players first get to impact the game world — by putting Assets into play with their initial dots.

Once the chronicle has begun, Assets are gained and lost only through in-game actions. The number of dots listed for Assets at each level of Influence is not guaranteed. One character with three dots in Influence might only have 21 dots of Assets while another has 25. It all depends on what Assets are available to be won.

Rather than buying new dots in Assets with experience points, players must lure or coerce Assets away from other characters, undertake actions to draw new Assets out of the city, or wait for the Storyteller to introduce a new Asset into the chronicle.

Recording Assets

A character may have more than one Asset per Skill. Each Asset must be recorded as a separate trait. To distinguish Assets from another, they may be given names or some other descriptor, depending on their prominence in the chronicle. (See "Characterizing Assets" below.)

For example:

Medicine: Dr. Bell, Surgeon	• • • •
Medicine: Psychiatrist	• •
Medicine: Paramedic	•

Protection and Loyalty

Beyond just dots, Assets may be affected by two additional traits: Loyalty and Protection. Protection guards an Asset against physical harm, specifically attacks from other vampires and their minions. Loyalty inspirits an Asset, helping it to resist coercion, seduction, and bribery.

These are simple binary conditions: An Asset is protected or it isn't. An Asset is inspirited or it isn't. A character can protect or inspirit a number of Assets at a time as determined by his Influence dots. Check the Protection or Loyalty box for an Asset that is protected or inspirited. An asset can be simultaneously protected and inspirited.

Protection

Assets can be attacked. Some vampires are content to snuff out an opponent's advantage if it can't be stolen away. Men in dark suits drag an enemy Asset from his bed and back to their master, where the vampire lord devours him. Desperate junkies stab the enemy Asset in his driveway in exchange for a hit from their master. An unidentified gunman shoots the Asset in his car, and then disappears into the city.

If a vampire believes an Asset is at risk, she can assign it Protection. Protection steels an Asset against attack and making it more likely to survive attempts on its life. If the vampire has Assets in Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry, the player may reflexively contest any attacks on the Asset by rolling Presence + the appropriate Skill, reflecting the power with which the vampire has motivated her muscle. (This is a free attack action; see "Actions" below.)

If the vampire has none of the appropriate Assets, she simply assures the Asset that everything will be all right or devises a plan to keep the Asset safe until help can arrive. Increase the target number to kill the Asset by the vampire's dots in Intelligence or Presence (player's choice).

Loyalty

Assets can be turned away from their masters. Some vampires aren't content to go through another Kindred to get what they want. They resolve to make the Asset theirs. Men with suitcases full of cash show up on the Asset's doorstep. An envelope of incriminating pictures turns up in the mail. The vampire herself looks the Asset in the eye and commands him to come with her.

If a vampire believes an Asset to be at risk of coercion, she can inspirit it and steel its Loyalty. If the vampire has Assets in Intimidation, Persuasion, or Subterfuge, the player may reflexively contest any coercion of the Asset by rolling Manipulation + the appropriate Skill, reflecting the strings the vampire is pulling with her Assets.

If the vampire has none of the appropriate Assets, she does her best to keep the Asset happy enough to stay (or too frightened to leave). Increase the target number to coerce the Asset by the vampire's dots in Strength or Manipulation.

Characterizing Assets

Assets need a bit of character to bring them to life in the game world. This can happen early on in the chronicle through the creativity of the troupe, or it can unfold over the course of the chronicle as the mortal pawns behind the Asset dots appear "on stage" during play. (Players can use the City of Millions to characterize their Assets with the Storyteller's approval.)

Assets essentially represent Sites and Subjects that are reduced to the barest shorthand. Thus, the sample Sites and Subjects in Chapter Five can be used to characterize Assets too.

Agents

Agents are simply additional characters that the players control. The Agent is the Primacy character's right-hand operative or favored minion. Each player can have only one Agent in existence at a time.

Agents are created just like any other character, according to the rules in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. An Agent gains an amount of starting experience based on his master's Influence dots. Agents are assumed to be ghouls, though they may be mortal characters at the player's discretion. Ghoul Agents begin with one Vitae and one dot in a Physical Discipline of the master's clan. (Mortal Agents gain no special benefit for surrendering ghoul abilities.)

An Agent can be Embraced if the master pays the cost of the Willpower *dot* as usual.

Players may dispatch their Agents on missions by spending one Influence point per scene. Once any player's Agent has been dispatched on a mission, every other player may send her Agent along without paying the Influence cost. A different player may pay the Influence cost per scene as long as one Influence point is paid by the troupe per scene in which one or more Agents are active.

Taking Action

In Primacy, the core gameplay is largely unchanged. A Primacy character can do anything an ordinary **Vampire** character can do if she's willing to expose herself to physical harm by going out into the World of Darkness and doing things herself. Stories in which the characters do things themselves are, therefore, played as typical **Vampire** stories between Primacy turns.

When "pulled back" to the level of lofty politics and manipulations, Primacy play has a few distinct changes from regular **Vampire** play. For one, a Primacy character's Attributes are used a bit liberally. The assumption is that masters lead their Assets by example. Thus, a vampire with great Composure has Assets that gain confidence from her grace under pressure and draw on her Composure when taking action on her behalf. A vampire with great Stamina has Assets that learn to suffer and endure by pushing themselves harder with the knowledge (and fear) of what they may be forced to suffer if they do not.

Here's what makes actions in Primacy play distinct:

- In Primacy play, when the characters aren't venturing forth into the world to conspire or battle, a whole night's worth of activities are resolved in one turn. This is called, simply enough, a Primacy turn. In a Primacy turn, "Instant" actions take one turn and thus one whole night. See the following sample actions for detailed examples. No Primacy actions are taken on nights when the characters are participating directly in stories.
- Actions during Primacy turns are communicated to the Storyteller in secret. Write the action on a piece of paper and slip it to the Storyteller. Thus, one player may target another player's character with his action and maintain the secrecy of his schemes.
- A player may take a single action during each Primacy turn. These actions encompass a whole night's business, though, so a player's descriptions of her character's actions don't involve a dash behind cover or a bit to the neck but a whole scene. (Movement isn't a part of Primacy turns; travel to and from destinations is included in the action.) To maintain secrecy, however, a player may leave such descriptions up to the Storyteller.

Acting remotely through mortal pawns is imprecise. Primacy actions pair one of the vampire's Attributes with an Asset's rating (also called an Asset Skill). At this level of abstraction, equipment is not a factor — it's included as part of the Asset's dots.

Only a few basic actions are possible on a Primacy turn unless the particular needs of a story open up new avenues of action. The core actions of a Primacy turn focus on gaining or denying avenues of influence and, of course, the pursuit of Vitae. The following section describes the core Primacy actions.

Attack an Asset

Dice Pool: Intelligence/Presence + Brawl/Firearms/Weaponry Asset (Select a single Attribute and a single Asset Skill. A character without an appropriate Asset cannot attack.)

Action: Extended, possibly contested (if target has Protection). Each roll represents one night's attack. The target number of successes equals the target Asset's dots + the master's Stamina or Composure plus any modifiers from Protection. When the target number is reached, the target Asset is killed (and removed from play).

The build up to death represents close calls, failed executions, and minor injuries — a hit man makes it into the Asset's house but fails to close the deal, for example. Eventually, every target is caught and killed unless the masters pulling the strings intervene.

When Assets attack other combative Assets (i.e., Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry Assets), the action is contested rather than extended. Whichever Asset gets the most successes reduces the dots of the opposing Asset by one. Protected Assets may reflexively force a contested roll as described on p. 236.

Defend an Asset

Dice Pool: Intelligence/Presence + Asset's Rating.

Action: Instant. Each success reduces the current successes accumulated to kill the target Asset by one to a minimum of zero. This represents the vampire healing or bolstering the Asset after an attack. "Calm down, James," the master soothes over the phone. "If you keep your head, we can find this bastard and put him down."

Coerce an Asset

Dice Pool: Strength/Manipulation + Intimidation/Persuasion/Subterfuge Asset (Select a single Attribute and a single Asset Skill. A character without an appropriate Asset attempts the action with the Attribute dice alone.)

Action: Extended, possible contest (if target has Loyalty). Each roll represents one night's coercion. The target number of successes equals the target Asset's dots + the master's Resolve or Composure plus any modifiers from Loyalty. When the target number is reached, the targeted Asset moves into the coercing vampire's service and becomes one of her Assets.

When an Asset is contested by a target with Loyalty, it may itself be coerced by the target's master. An Asset sent to coerce can be lured away by another master this way.

Rally an Asset

Dice Pool: Strength/Manipulation + Asset's Rating.

Action: Instant. Each success reduces the current coercion successes accumulated against the Asset to a minimum of zero. This represents the vampire beating the Asset down or convincing it to stay loyal.

"If you take his money, if you read his letters, if you look in eyes, if you humor him just a little," the master says with his hands around James' throat, "I will find you and eat the marrow from your bones. Do you hear me, James?"

Investigate an Action

Dice Pool: Wits/Manipulation + Asset (Select a single Attribute and a single Asset Skill.)

This action is like a perception dice pool in street-level play except that it represents the vampire's ability to glean information through any of her minions out in the world. As such, Assets tied to any Skill are potentially eligible for this dice pool. Investigation, Politics, Stealth, Empathy, Socialize, and Streetwise are viable choices for virtually any situation while Assets associated with the particular investigation are also good fits — Firearms Assets ask around about other gunmen, and Academics Assets ask questions at a University function.

Action: Extended. Each roll represents one night of investigations. Success reveals the Kindred master behind the attack or courtship of the character's Asset. The target number of successes required is equal to the attacking Asset's dots plus the Influence dots of the Kindred master.

The difference in Influence dots between the investigator and the attacker penalizes the investigator's dice pool. Kindred who operate closer to the same level are more aware of each other's existence.

Every roll made by the attacking Kindred in his efforts to kill or coerce the character's Asset adds one die to the investigator's dice pool. More nights of attempted murder leave more evidence. More secret meetings and incriminating photos leave more signs behind.

Once the target number of successes is achieved, the Asset used to attack and the vampire pulling its strings are revealed.

Example: *Dante's B&E expert has had his throat slit. He was Dante's man for smash-and-grab jobs, so any number of other lords might want him dead, but Dante wants to know who in particular. What's scary is that this happened without any warning, so Dante knows it's someone with clout. He has Angela, the Weaponry Asset he'd send to cut someone's throat, ask around. Dante's dice pool is therefore Manipulation 3 + Weaponry 3 + the number of rolls made to execute Dante's Larceny Asset (1) = 7 dice.*

The Storyteller knows it was one of her own characters, Sycorax, who had Dante's thief killed. Sycorax sent one of her five-dot Weaponry Assets, and Sycorax has eights of Influence, so the target number for Dante's investigation is 13. The difference between Dante's Influence (3) and Sycorax's Influence (8) is five, so Dante's dice pool, down to two dice, is penalized by five dice. The Storyteller decides to make the first roll of Dante's investigation in secret. It nets 1 success.

When Dante's player makes the next roll and finds out his dice pool is being penalized by five dice, he hesitates. Dante sees that his Asset's investigation isn't turning up much, and Dante puts this together with the short work made of his thief and realizes that he's up against a major player in the Danse Macabre. Even if he called in some favors (that is, spent two Influence points for two automatic successes), he'd be out of his league. If he wants to find out what's going on and protect himself, he'll have to find another important Kindred to ally himself with.

Investigate an Asset

Dice Pool: Wits/Manipulation + Asset (Select a single Attribute and a single Asset Skill.)

This action is like a perception dice pool in street-level play except that it represents the vampire's ability to glean information through any of her minions out in the world. As such, Assets tied to any Skill are potentially eligible for this dice pool (as mentioned earlier).

Action: Extended. Each roll represents one night of investigations. Success reveals the rating and description of one Asset in the control of the target Kindred.

The target number of successes required is equal to the Asset's dots plus the Influence dots of the Kindred master. The rating of the target Kindred's best Stealth or Subterfuge Asset penalizes the investigator's dice pool.

A specific Asset Skill must be targeted for investigation. Once the target number of successes is reached, the Asset is revealed to the investigator (though the revealed Asset's master does not know it). Additional Assets of the same Skill can be revealed by continuing the action and accumulating additional successes equal to the next highest Asset's rating and so on.

A failed roll at any point during this process does not end the investigation, but it does alert the targeted Kindred that "someone's been asking questions." If the target Kindred wants to know who, he must "Investigate an Action" as described previously.

Example: *Dante has tasked his Investigation Asset, a ghoul PI worth four dots, with looking into the Duke's pawns in Uptown. Dante wants to know if the Duke has anyone knowledgeable in the occul, and instructs the PI to "listen but don't go sticking your nose out." So Dante's dice pool is Wits 4 + Investigation 4 = 8 dice.*

The Storyteller determines the target number by adding the Duke's Influence dots (7) to the rating of his lowest Occult Asset (1) for a total of 8 successes. The Duke has a spy in his domain, though – a three-dot Stealth Asset – whose coaching of other Assets helps throw off investigators. Dante's dice pool is reduced to 5 dice by this spy.

After three rolls, Dante's PI uncovers the Duke's amateur occultist, but Dante tells him to keep digging. He suspects the Duke's got someone better than a one-dot occultist on the payroll, and he's right. Once the PI accumulates four more successes he'll find the Duke's mystic antiquarian (Occult • • • •), working in a private library near the East Street subway.

Gain Influence

Dice Pool: Any Attribute + Any Asset.

Like feeding (p. 164 of **Vampire: The Requiem**), there's no single method — or proper dice pool — for regaining Influence points. They're a reflection of the promises, favors, posturing, and social maneuvering that goes on in the background. The player's character is presumed to be better at networking and politicking than the player himself, so all the player must do is dramatize the action by putting together a dice pool that describes a scene.

Manipulation + Academics might describe the character promising another Kindred a chance to visit the private university library in the character's domain. Strength + Brawl might describe the character sending his own thugs to knock troublemaking mortals in line in someone else's domain. Wits + Larceny might describe the character identifying thieves in another's domain, so they can be watched, used, or turned-in.

The actual ramifications of these actions aren't important — the library visit, the street brawl, and the fate of the thieves don't have to be significant events in the city or the chronicle — though they do provide potential fodder for the Storyteller when devising future stories.

Whatever dice pool the player assembles is modified by the other Kindred in the city with dots in Influence. Each vampire in the city, including those of other players, may stymie the character's attempts to regain favors. Each vampire that chooses to do so imposes a –1 penalty to the dice pool. This penalty is cumulative but cannot exceed a total –5 penalty. Kindred cannot stymie this action in secret, however — the player and his character get to know which vampires interfered or spoke out against him.

Once the player has declared a Gain Influence action, he cannot cancel it after learning what penalty will be imposed. Whatever penalty is imposed must be risked by the player and his character. The dice pool may be modified by a Willpower point but not by Influence points.

Action: Instant. If the roll is a success, the player regains one Influence point. If the roll is an exceptional success, the player regains three Influence points. If the roll is a failure, no Influence points are gained. In the event of a dramatic failure, the player's character loses no Influence but every character that opposed the roll gains one Influence point.

Activate an Agent

This is a special action that zooms the gameplay back in on street level by pitting the character's Agents against some threat or obstacle. This can include the Agents of Storyteller characters or even Assets. This action is the narrative edge that the players have over Storyteller characters — if they cannot get ahead of the Storyteller characters with simple actions, they can challenge them in the rain and filth of the streets with old-fashioned storytelling.

Agents remain active for one scene per Influence point spent. This should be enough for agents to capture or kill a target, retrieve an artifact, interrogate a captive, or some other specific dramatic action. This isn't enough to get a wounded Agent from the scene of a crime to a hospital in the event of a serious gunshot wound or something like it. A character who is bleeding out at the end of an Agent scene does not survive unless more Influence points are spent and he is saved in a subsequent scene.

There's no formula for this action. The Storyteller must play out the scene according to the typical rules of the World of Darkness and her own narrative sensibility. If anything, however, scenes involving Agents should be even nastier and deadlier than those involving the player's "main" characters. Agents are the poor sods the Damned use to hurt and be hurt. The players need to feel like they are legitimately risking their Agents when they use them, or they have no value.

But since an Agent can be replaced, players may be tempted to throw them away, which is awfully cold-hearted. A character who casually sends his people to their deaths may act like it doesn't bother him in front of other Kindred, but he has to wake up with himself the next night and reconcile his actions with his Humanity.

What Game Statistics Do Assets Have?

If a character's Asset appears "on stage" in a street-level scene with an Agent, they'll need traits of some kind to help determine how long they live or how slowly they die. Assets are not full-fledged characters in a mechanical sense (though they can and should develop personalities over time if possible), so the method for creating them is simple:

- An Asset's rating equals the dots in the relevant Skill. A four-dot Larceny Asset has four dots in Larceny, for example.
- The trait category — Mental/Physical/Social — of the Asset's Skill is the primary category for the Asset's Attributes and Skills minus whatever dots must go into the Asset Skill. Therefore the Larceny Asset has 5 dots in Physical Attributes and 11 dots in Physical Skills with four of those dots going to Larceny.
- An Asset cannot have more dots in any Skill than it has in its Asset Skill.
- Assets do not have Merits.
- Assets do not get templates or lesser templates and so cannot be Kindred or ghouls.
- All other design choices for the character are the same as for any starting World of Darkness character.

Influencing the Prince

In Primacy, the Prince, surrounded by would-be counselors and advisors — the players' characters among them, sits at the top of the city. When a course of action comes before the court — such as a criminal charge against one of the city's Kindred, a proposition from a local mage, or the choice to attack or entreat a burgeoning Carthian revolution — the Kindred advisors, whispering in the Prince's ear or conferring with him in chambers, make their case in secret. One advisor gets his way.

Influencing the Prince is a special action, in which the course of the story (and possibly the city!) is changed with a few cunning words. The Storyteller first presents two or more courses of action available to the Prince (see below for examples). The players can submit additional options via their characters by defining a course of action ("We must kill them all, sire," or "Send my man, Voss, to slip in there and steal the object for us.") and assigning it a Skill that describes the general approach (Weaponry and Stealth, from the previous example).

The players then form dice pools that describe their arguments to the Prince. These dice pools consist of one Attribute (Intelligence, Presence, or Manipulation) + one Skill (*not an Asset!*) + the character's Input dice (as determined by her Influence dots). The single character with the most successes sways the Prince to her plan, and that is the course of action ordered by the Prince. The character gains one Influence point per success.

Characters may not use teamwork when swaying the Prince, though they can all advise him to pursue the same course of action. The character that scores the most successes gets the credit (and the Influence points) from the Prince, however.

These kinds of actions are an integral part of Primacy Events, described on p. 242.

Primacy Storytelling

A Primacy chronicle deals with the same themes and motifs as any other **Vampire** chronicle, but it is dealt with from afar. Most scenes are likely to resolve around the players' characters and a few other Kindred conspiring, intimidating, lying, scheming, and debating. Atmosphere is essential. The places (or Sites) where these meetings take place and the information characters reveal to each other can fuel many nights of Primacy actions.

The choice of setting is essential not only to the theme of your story but also to the actions that place there. Characters with Sites suitable for hosting meetings of the elite Damned may use them not only to gain visibility and favor but also to impose modifiers to actions involving her plans for the night.

These are scenes with profound potential for intrigue. The choices made in these scenes create or expose motives for other actions. The character who insults the Daeva Prisci at court may find his bartender (a Socialize Asset) wooed away to the Daeva's club. The character who reveals to a Shadow Harpy he has a new pawn under his thumb researching the catacombs beneath the city may discover that pawn murdered just a few nights later.

Violence when it occurs at all probably centers on Agents. Violence between Primacy-level characters must be climactic, hot-blooded explosions of passion that can no longer be contained by the cold machinations of the Danse Macabre. Imagine what must be at stake to drive one of these monsters to risk his Requiem at the hands of another bloodsucker.

Above all, remember that context is essential. Primacy actions are intentionally cold in their game mechanics to reflect the detached nature of Kindred at the dark heights of influence, but your chronicle's stories should stay hot like spurting blood. Primacy actions are simple measures of what succeeds and what fails, but the meat of every story is *why* these actions are taken and *what* the characters intend to do about it. The consequences of those actions are almost always going to be more dramatic than the actions themselves if only because the consequences gain dramatic power from the suspense that comes between the action and the revelation of its consequences. It's one thing to slay another vampire's drug dealer or steal away his lawyer, but what's really juicy is finding out what the wronged will do about it.

Political Storytelling

Jeff Tidball explored techniques for political storytelling in his terrific essay for the **Requiem Chronicler's Guide**. One vital piece of advice from that article is this: Focus on the choices rather the execution of the choices. The characters decide to bomb an enemy target, and the next night they hear it is done — and what it's cost them. What the characters think and say changes the city around them at this level of power. There's a lot of drama to be mined from the realization that ideas can kill. If you want a lot more advice on the subject, go read that essay.

Assets Are the Prizes

Assets need to be introduced and eliminated to keep the intrigue and double-crosses going. The characters

must always be pursuing more Assets or defending the ones they have. Look at the Assets column on the Influence chart. It shows you exactly how many Assets need to be in play for any vampire to achieve certain levels of Influence. If one vampire manages to control the majority of Assets, he becomes a fearsome force against his enemies — capable of dispatching formidable Agents against rivals and their minions. The only way for underdogs (like the troupe's characters) to get ahead is for them to discover untapped Assets in the game world, take control of them, and hold on to them.

Going out and getting new Assets is a built-in, reusable hook for getting stories started. Sites and Subjects can be used just as they are in Barony. (Assets are, essentially, Sites and characters reduced to a single value.) Though the cultivation of Assets is intended to be a complex and dramatic experience rich enough for a whole story, it could also be reduced down to a few Primacy actions if that suits your style of play. Add five to the rating of a Subject's conflict and you have the target number for the extended action to gain control of that Asset.

Conflicts out of scale with an Asset's rating might deter characters from taking it, or they might reward the patient lord with a perfectly useful Asset without any competition.

Players Tell Stories

The outcome of single actions can determine a whole night of events. Players get to describe what those results look like once success or failure has been determined. Help them to conjure up vivid scenes of brutal gunmen assassinating enemy Assets or of disguised ghouls kidnapping a rival's minions. The dice simply reveal success or failure. It's you and the players that give it life.

Yet the secrecy that surrounds Primacy characters can round counter to that. If necessary, the troupe should adopt a "suspension of disbelief" policy in which the players' characters all agree to cooperate enough to facilitate the open declaration of their actions. Is it unlikely that three or four vampires would trust each other that much? Sure. But trust is essential between creative collaborators, and that's what the players in the troupe are. Sacrificing the trust and fun of the players for a pale simulation of it among backstabbing monsters is a bad idea.

Primacy Events

In addition to all the backstabbing and skullduggery surrounding Assets and street-level problems, the most influential Kindred in the city struggle with grandiose crises. Whether their goal is to protect the city's Kindred, look good in front of the Prince, win ground for the covenant, or profit off of peril, the city's most powerful vampires are drawn to conflict like crows to a corpse. If nothing else, some of them simply can't trust their fates to the choices of other monsters.

Primacy Events are abstract conflicts that the Storyteller puts into play. They give Kindred something to do with all those Assets and provide the basis for potential stories involving Agents or the Primacy characters themselves. More than anything, they stimulate action among the stagnant vampires at the top.

Using Primacy Events

Each event is an extended action requiring multiple Assets to complete. Each roll represents one or more nights of activity. Some events have a specific array of necessary Assets, and others have two or more possible approaches to success. Which approach the Kindred court undertakes is determined by the Prince, and the Prince's decision is determined by his advisors (see "Influencing the Prince").

For example, an event that requires 20 successes to be achieved and the Skills Medicine, Occult, and Weaponry to be used needs at least one success contributed by an Asset of each of the three Skills. Another event might call for just 10 successes with at least three successes contributed by each of three different kinds of Assets. The actions represented by these successes are bigger than any single vampire can manage — these are tests of one's Assets and Influence and not of one's personal expertise.

Each course of action in an event also includes Attributes eligible for use in dice pools for that action. Any of the Attributes given may be paired with any of the Assets unless otherwise stated in the event's description.

All characters can attempt to contribute their relevant Assets, but only the character who achieves the most successes is counted as a contributor. Contributors gain one Influence point per successful roll (*not per success*). Essentially, potential contributors engage in a multi-sided contested action for the right to claim that roll's Influence point.

Participating in the rolls to complete a Primacy Event uses up a character's action for the Primacy turn. Some events must be completed within a set number of rolls. Kindred interested in milking the crisis for all it's worth, however, may hope to draw things out in pursuit of gaining more juice for himself. Other Kindred may use the chaos of a Primacy Event to investigate their neighbors or poach Assets from rival vampires.

As nights pass in the city while the rolls of the extended action are going on, the Storyteller might also play out street-level stories based on the Primacy Event. These

stories might dramatize the actions of Agents or other characters on the ground to combat the event, or they might just play out against the dramatic backdrop of a Primacy Event. The outcome of these stories might even contribute successes or bonus dice to Primacy actions to resolve the event at the Storyteller's discretion.

Prince of the City

The following Primacy Events were inspired by event cards from the **Prince of the City** board game. **Prince of the City** uses a system very similar to Primacy's to play out these events — in fact, that system inspired this one. If you want more Primacy Events or just want another way to experience the complex power plays of the Danse Macabre see **Prince of the City**.

Command of the Harpies

The effete socialites among the court Harpies have been spreading rumors about the affairs of the local Kindred. They've dropped hints about precious secrets to the wrong Damned and may have even shared information with werewolves and mages in the city — all of this just so they can feel important. Now the Harpies must be shut down and their rumors contained before enough information gets out to do damage.

Target Number: 15

Effects: Each roll represents one night. If the event is not resolved within six nights, each participant must reveal the identity and rating of one Asset of his choice as rumors turn into common knowledge.

The Prince must choose between two courses of action:

Punish Them: The Harpies must be put down to not only teach them but also to demonstrate to all their contacts that their behavior is unacceptable to his majesty, the Prince. This sends a clear signal that the information leaked is potentially harmful, but also that the court will not hesitate to protect itself. The Harpies must be found and brought before the Prince for punishment; then word of their fates must be put out to their contact. **Assets:** at least one success each from Investigation, Brawl *or* Weaponry, Socialize *or* Streetwise. **Attributes:** Strength, Presence

Soothe Them: The Harpies have gone out of hand because they feel insignificant. If left idle, this is simply what socialites do to feel meaningful. They must be brought back under the Prince's thumb and given seemingly important tasks. They must also be painted as effete gossipers whose stories, with no truth in them at all, were just blather to get attention. This diminishes the apparent value of the leaked information but may make the Prince look like he's vulnerable to Harpy pouting. The Harpies must be calmed and kept busy while the court spreads word that their tales are tripe. **Assets:** at least one success each from Persuasion, Politics, and Subterfuge **Attributes:** Wits, Manipulation

Exclusive Salon

A Daeva lord of the First Estate is hosting a series of private salons in three different historical homes in the city over three nights. It's been twenty years since she's organized this kind of event. It's a prime social event with a prestigious guest list of Kindred glitterati. If your Assets make a good show of it here the most influential Kindred will know about your excellent taste and influence.

Target Number: 3

Effects: Each roll represents one night of the salon. If, on any night, no successes are accumulated, re-roll for all contributors that night. There is no consequence for failure here, rather just several chances to gain Influence points. If a character wins the contested action two nights in a row, she gains an additional Influence point. If a character wins all three nights, she gains two additional Influence points.

The Prince chooses the topics for each of the three salons. Characters may advise him to select any three of the following Assets: Academics, Crafts, Occult, Politics, or Expression. Each night's roll involves a different Asset.

Attributes: Presence, Manipulation

Strained Vitae Supply

The best hunting grounds in the city have become overcrowded. The fields are thick with wolves. If prominent Kindred don't do something, the kine will avoid the area and the feeding ground will be ruined. The common Kindred must be driven out until the fields can replenish themselves.

Target Number: 10

Effects: Each roll represents one night. If the situation is not resolved in three nights, all Kindred nesting within one District of the overwhelmed feeding ground suffer a –1 penalty to the Haven Location and Feeding Ground Merits per night. Once the event is resolved, these penalties relax by one die per week.

The Prince must choose between three courses of action:

Force Them Out: The rabble wouldn't overtax a feeding ground if they were reasonable, so they must be dealt with bluntly. Send out Hounds and minions to throw them out of the area. **Assets:** At least one success each from Brawl, Intimidation, and Streetwise **Attributes:** Strength, Stamina, Presence

Explain the Situation: Kindred on the ground simply aren't in a position to see the big picture. Explain to them what's happening and they have to cooperate because none of them can feed if the feeding ground is shot. **Assets:** At least three success each from Politics, Expression, and Persuasion. **Attributes:** Intelligence, Presence, Manipulation

Lure Them Out: They go where the blood is. Promise them easy hunting somewhere else, grant them temporary privileges in other territories, or just fucking pay them to feed somewhere else, and they'll follow the scent. **Assets:** At least three successes each from Persuasion and Streetwise **Attribute:** Manipulation

Uprising

Kindred are being attacked. Ghouls are turning up dead. Who is the source of these attacks? Belial's Brood? VII? Rogue ghouls? A revolutionary coterie? This new enemy must be rooted out and destroyed before the damage becomes untenable.

Target Number: 20

Effect: Each roll represents one week of probing, hunting, and fighting. Each week every Kindred in the city with the Influence Advantage suffers an attack against his lowest rated Asset. The attackers use axes, crowbars, torches, and meat hooks (Weaponry dice pool 7). The attackers are not Assets but a mob, so investigating their master is a waste of time.

The Prince must choose between two courses of action:

Assault: Storm the streets at night, kick down doors, and kill them where they live. Fight to the brink of the Masquerade. **Assets:** Exactly the following successes are needed. Any successes beyond those listed for the particular Asset are wasted: Investigation 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Weaponry 5, Intimidation 5. **Attributes:** Strength, Presence

Guile: Lure them out. Identify their methods and ambush them. They are brutish, so we must be clever. **Assets:** Exactly the following successes are needed. Any successes beyond those given for the particular Asset are wasted: Investigation 6, Politics 2, Brawl 5, Weaponry 5, Subterfuge 2 **Attributes:** Intelligence, Wits, Strength

Agent Missions

Simply put, Agent missions are like any **Vampire** scene suitable for play outside of Primacy with a few important differences.

Agents do not normally gain experience points. Thus, all that is at stake for the player is the success or failure of the Agent's goals (and those of his master, the player's regular character). Because an Agent is not a "real" player character, the ramifications for sacrificing that character are minor. By the next chapter, the master has a new Agent to send out into the night.

This freedom from the fear of character death can be a great boon to the story. The kind of melodrama that arises from *knowing* your character is never going to make it out of the sewers/haunted house/burning boat/hotel alive can inspire bold, no-holds-barred role-playing.

Some characters, even if they are originally designed to be little more than temporary minions on short-term assignments, take on a life of their own. If an Agent becomes so compelling that the troupe wants to watch her develop as a character over time, no good reason exists why the Storyteller can't simply promote her from game mechanic to full-fledged character who is capable of earning experience points and participating in multiple stories.

If the players' characters aren't also some kind of coterie, it might seem to stretch credibility to have their Agents keep turning up at the same places all the time, scene after scene. The most obvious excuse for this quirk of the medium is to claim that the characters are all watching each other closely enough that none of them wants the others' Agents causing trouble without the someone representing their own interests on the scene.

But the best solution is even simpler: Don't worry about it. What credibility are you worried about anyway? No overseeing audience is grading you. The only audience is you, and you want all these characters in the same place so that everyone gets to play. That's reason enough.

V: Mrs. Jones

Anita Jones rose from her box in the basement of her home on Willow Creek Lane. She ran a hand along the flannel sheets that lined her crate. They were starting to get pilly. Plus that death smell had seeped into them. Maybe she could convince Michael to head out to the 24-Hour Wal-Mart Super Center after they put the kids to bed. That new computer-animated movie with the perky talking animals was out on DVD, and they could pick that up, too. Jenny had been nattering on about it for weeks, ever since the commercials started up. Those movie companies sure knew how to tap the parental wallet.

Anita put on sweats and a tank top and wrapped herself in a fleecy pink housecoat. Her slippers sat at the foot of the casket. They had bunny ears and faces — a Mom's Day gift. She preferred her moccasins, but wore them religiously, so as not to hurt the kids' feelings.

She checked the clock radio. She'd overslept again — hadn't turned on the alarm. Anita wondered if maybe Michael had reverted to old habits and slipped it off, on purpose. He worried about her too much. Last night he'd said she looked rundown. Sleep had nothing to do with it, of course, but Anita tried to shield him from the realities of her feeding regimen.

She quickly unbolted the locks on her bedroom door. If he'd put the kids to bed without her, she'd have the riot act to read him. He had a point, about keeping their circadian rhythms in line. Even with the homeschooling, there was a limit to how late she could expect to keep them up. But dammit, they were her kids, and she wasn't gonna go a night without seeing them, even if only for an hour or so.

Her husband Michael lay on the camel-colored broadloom of the ground floor hallway. His neck was contorted backwards, his face bloodied and bruised.

Anita threw herself onto him, tears blurring her vision. She searched for a pulse, but already knew. He was gone.

She ran for the upstairs bedrooms. "Jenny! Marcus!" she screamed.

The home invaders were waiting for her, sitting at the top of the stairs. A beautiful olive-skinned woman with elaborately curled hair and shiningly perfect red nails had her arms around Jenny. Holding Marcus was a crow-thin, spiky-haired creep wearing the outdated rock star uniform so common among downtown city trash bloodsuckers.

Trails of dried tears ran down the cheeks of both of the kids. They were terrified.

The invaders stroked their hair with mocking casualness.

"Jenny, Marcus, now don't be afraid," Anita said. "Everything's going to be okay."

"We keep telling them that," said the man. "See, kids, everything's going to be okay. Because Mommy isn't going to try to Nightmare either of us. She isn't going to so much as think about it. Because if she does... we give Mommy nightmares."

Uselessly, stupidly, Anita reached into the pockets of her housecoat. As if there'd be a weapon there.

"Sorry about your husband," the woman said. "Lack of cooperation."

"He wanted you to know, Anita, that he loved you very much," said the man. "And not to let anything happen to the ankle-biters." His eyes wan-

dered to the row of family pictures lining the stairwell walls. The early pictures came first, before the Embrace: the vacation to the Grand Canyon, the visit to Disneyland. The more recent pics were all indoor shots, taken with a camera timer. In each of these photos, Anita's image was blurry at the edges. She had the same funny expression every time, showing the concentration it took to get her image to be recorded.

Jenny tried to squirm herself free. "Mommy, Mommy, tell them to let us go!" The woman held her tighter, kissing her on the forehead. The gesture left a glossy print of upside-down crimson lips on Jenny's ashen skin.

"What do you want from me?" Anita asked.

"We know you killed Carney."

"I don't know any Carney."

"Cut the shit, Mom. Without revealing sources and methods, we know. Your husband homeschools the kids. You don't work. Nice lifestyle you got here. We know how you pay for it."

"I don't give up my clients, if that's what you want."

The man licked Marcus's neck. A dark wet spot appeared in the crotch of the boy's pajamas. "Here's the deal. We let you cut the kids' memories of everything that's happened till now. Homework suggests you've done that before. Yes?"

Anita nodded.

"We lock them in their rooms, we settle up and after we leave, we call nine-one-one. With luck, the kids see very little."

"And in exchange?"

"Your client's name."

She nodded again.

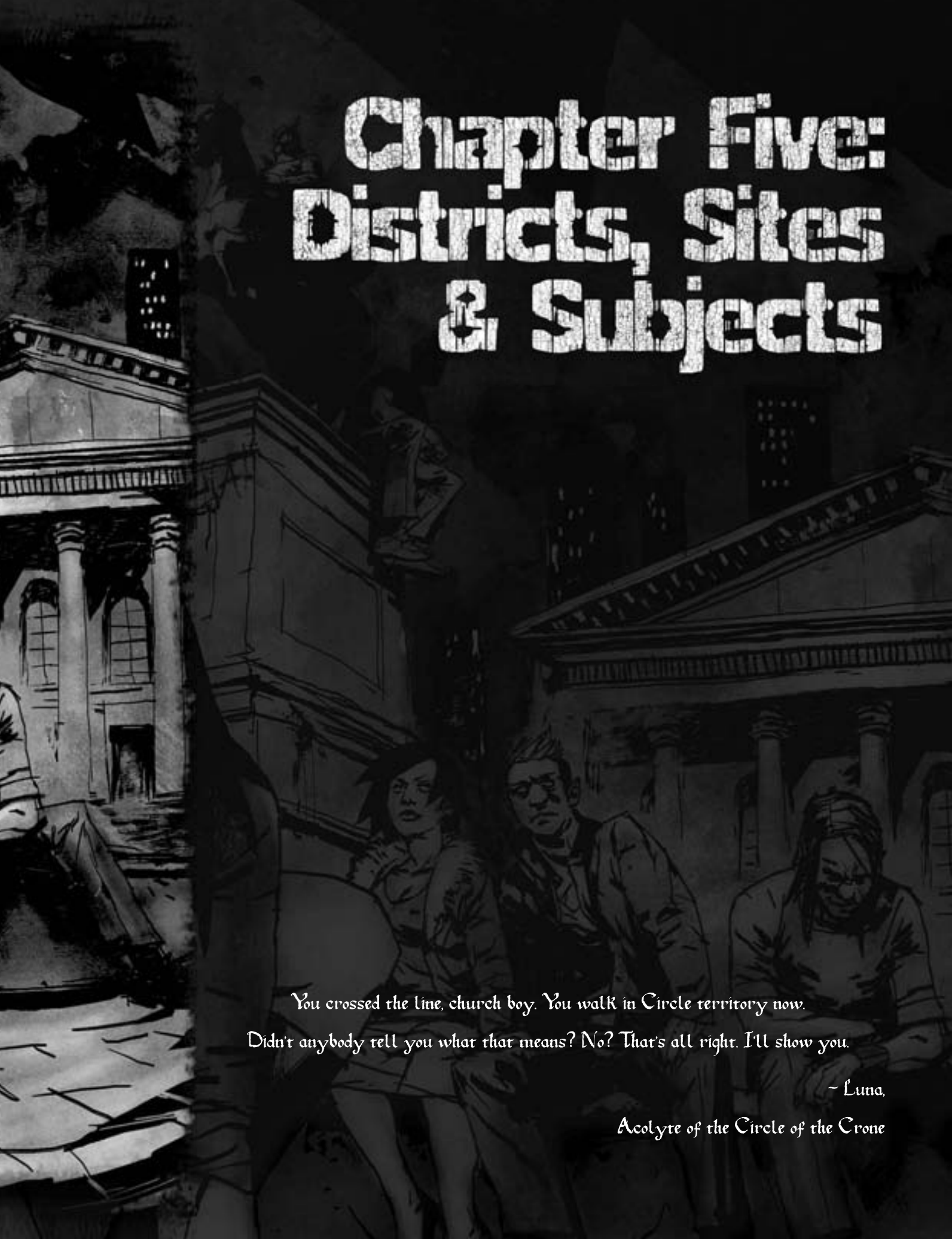
The intruders let her hug the kids as she whispered new versions of the night's events into their ears. She went deep, ensuring they wouldn't form detailed recollections of what was about to happen, either. Anita tucked them both into Marcus's bed. Then they led her away.

After she supplied the name, the woman leapt on her.

She punched viciously, again and again, a fury of blows, some more effective than others. She smacked Anita's head against their china cabinet, and then into the corner of their 52" projection screen TV. Anita was vaguely aware of the man trying to call her off. Mostly she could hear the woman screaming in her ear and the hole in the side of her head. About this fellow Carney, and how he may not have been much, but he deserved better than to be hung on his own hook. They had to do her; it was their duty. But they weren't going to make a point of posing her body afterwards, for her comrades to find. They'd show some respect.

The man pulled the woman away, allowing Anita to fall backwards onto the carpet. Anita wanted to ask if they'd seen what Carney had been disposing of, but she was too weak to form the words. Why she wanted to justify herself to this trash, she couldn't know. She heard them discussing her return engagement at the abattoir.

As she lapsed into torpor, the last thing she saw was the row of ceramic ducks mounted on the living room wall. The kids had picked them out....



Chapter Five: Districts, Sites & Subjects

You crossed the line, church boy. You walk in Circle territory now.

Didn't anybody tell you what that means? No? That's all right. I'll show you.

~ Luna,

Acolyte of the Circle of the Crone

Modern man lives isolated in his artificial environment, not because the artificial is evil as such, but because of his lack of comprehension of the forces which make it work- of the principles which relate his gadgets to the forces of nature, to the universal order. It is not central heating which makes his existence 'unnatural,' but his refusal to take an interest in the principles behind it. By being entirely dependent on science, yet closing his mind to it, he leads the life of an urban barbarian.

—Arthur Koestler

This giant chapter is loaded with examples of Districts, Sites and Subjects. The purposes of these new game elements are described in the Barony and Primacy chapters.

What you have here are not finite lists of possible Districts, Sites or Subjects. Far from it. What you have here are examples and samples. There are as many possible hospital Sites as there are hospitals in the World of Darkness. This chapter merely strives to give you as many options to play with as possible.

Because **Damnation City** is meant to be the definitive work on this subject for **Vampire**, we expect we won't get the chance to print many more examples of these ideas in action in future books. New characters get printed in every book, but new Districts and Sites may not, so here are as many as we could pack into these pages.

Apropos of Nothing

During the many design phases of **Vampire: The Requiem**, the issue of territory and technology came up a few times and was most vociferously challenged by Chris McDonough. Chris wondered why his (hypothetical) character couldn't just call up someone he knew from his living days and ask for whatever assistance it was the character needed.

The hypothetical example came up frequently, and somehow over the course of design meetings, the long-distance contact became a contraband marketeer. As well, since the Game Studio is in Atlanta, the example character was arbitrarily decided to have been located somewhere down I-95. We addressed the problem and decided to make it difficult for vampires to travel, building isolation into the setting both naturally and artificially.

As design progressed, Chris was resoundingly mocked for his constant reliance on his "black-market katana dealer down crank alley near Florida," a subject about which he remains sensitive to this day. If you see him at a convention or communicate with him via e-mail, be sure to tease him about it. Fred gets all bent out of shape about it, too.

Districts

Reading Districts

Description: Here you'll find a colorful narrative rundown of the place — not just the way it looks or smells, but the way it feels.

In Play: This section gives you an idea how the District works in play. Look here for story ideas or possibilities for corvée related to the territory. These are by no means definitive. Just as any two people in the same line of work may be different, any two Districts may involve different behavior. One Nightclub Circuit is a sterile playground for suburbanites where the Kindred need to keep each other in line to keep the easy prey coming; another Nightclub Circuit is a grimy stretch of broken sidewalks smeared with puke and littered with broken glass, where the Damned can be caught with their fangs out and pass as freaky gothic punks.

District Traits

Similar to characters, Districts have traits. These describe how safe, how popular, how bright, how unruly the neighborhood is, sketching out the place's character. But unlike a character's traits, a District's traits aren't measured in dots. Since Districts don't take actions of their own, their traits are rated as dice pool *modifiers*, from –5 to +5, just like equipment or other settings.

These are broad-stroke descriptions. A District may have an Access rating of +3 dice, but that doesn't necessarily mean the residents leave the doors unlocked in that neighborhood. These traits are guides — default places to start conceptualizing the place.

You'll find no strict system for determining the traits of a District, though. They are not built like characters, with experience points and fixed starting dots to spend. Districts are part of the game world — the World of Darkness — and the world isn't fair. Each District is a tool for atmosphere and gameplay. Each should be carefully selected or constructed by the Storyteller to serve the needs of the chronicle and its stories. Realism and game balance are unnecessary in a game that runs on conflicts to create drama and action. If you can achieve realism or balance, and find that they enrich your gameplay, that's great, but don't go off the reservation chasing after them.

Avoid the habit of pigeon-holing any particular combination of traits into a single meaning. Consider all the factors at play in the District and then assign the trait a modifier that describes the overall situation there. For a guideline, look at p. 124 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Your city needs a grim, lawless wasteland of burn-out row houses and abandoned cars rotting in the street where insane vagrants and bestial vampires prowl the streets looking for victims to rob of cash and blood — a shitty, hellish pit in which all the city's filth pools. Such a hole is best described with negative ratings in every trait. Balancing this neighborhood's traits doesn't accomplish the gameplay goal of creating a scary, harrowing urban wilderness of raw primal peril. Neither does it accomplish the dramaturgical goal of describing the place's grim nastiness in game terms. Artificially skewing the neighborhood's traits for fairness (or the illusion of it) doesn't make your game any better.

Some places really are way off the scale of awfulness. Some neighborhoods really are better off than the next one in almost every way. The heart that pumps the blood of every story is conflict. The city isn't fair.

Use	Physical	Mental	Social
Interactive	Access	Information	Prestige
Reactive	Safety	Awareness	Stability

The traits used to describe Districts aren't as specific as characters' Attributes, but are similarly arranged. Unlike character Attributes, which fall into Power, Finesse and Resistance categories, District traits fall into two, less rigid categories: Interactive and Reactive.

Interactive

These traits are, very roughly, the traits that characters reach out and touch. Visitors to a District actively travel there, evoking Access modifiers. Investigators asking questions or doing research in the area are actively poking around, turning over the proverbial rocks, thereby invoking Information modifiers. Characters who try to fit into the neighborhood, or name-drop it somewhere else to get a bit of street cred, are actively interacting with the place's reputation, and are therefore subject to its Prestige, good or bad.

Reactive

These traits are, very roughly, the traits with which the District resists or responds to characters. Characters who

want to break down doors or throw their weight around a District must contend with its Safety modifiers. Characters trying to lay low or sneak through must consider the place's Awareness. Characters who get out of line or push the locals too far will find retribution modified by the neighborhood's Stability.

Physical

The intersection of these two traits gives a sense of a neighborhood's physical character. A District with good Access but poor Safety might be fine during the day but trouble at night, or might be a collection of storefronts and apartments at the end of a subway line you wouldn't want to ride alone. A District with poor Access but a good Safety rating could be a backwater neighborhood or cul-du-sac quarter; the District might also be a commercial or industrial zone where getting in is easy *if* you're a semi-trailer coming in off the highway, but not any other way.

Access: This trait describes how easy it is to get into or out of the District, or to move around within it. Positive modifiers describe a neighborhood with ample cabs, a working subway or elevated train, bus lines, easy-to-navigate roads, reasonable traffic and street signs. Negative modifiers describe a neighborhood with no sidewalks, no passing cabs, no local subway station (or a lousy one), inconsistent buses, bad or broken roads, constant construction, missing signage and the like.

Safety: This trait describes the likelihood of getting hurt within the District — whether you're a stranger or a local. A District with positive Safety modifiers has locks on the doors, maybe bars on the windows, a reasonable expectation that the police will come if called, streetlights and so forth. A District with Safety penalties may be ramshackle, low-rent, behind the times or otherwise vulnerable; or it could simply be rife with thugs, drug-seekers, maniacs, wild dogs, bloodthirsty monsters and other dangerous creatures who believe they can hurt people and get away with it in this part of town. Consider how the Safety and Stability traits can interact, too: a highly stable neighborhood might not lock its doors, because it doesn't fear its neighbors, while a block caught in the middle of a gang war might be heavily patrolled by police (for a positive Safety rating) but still ready to explode (due to its negative Stability).

Mental

The combination of Information and Awareness describe the amount of communication going on in the neighborhood, as well as giving a general idea of how well informed and self-aware the community is in general. For a living character, these traits might ordinarily be filed in the Social category, but these modifiers interact primarily with the Mental traits of characters taking action within the District, whether those characters are visitors or locals. A neighborhood with a positive Information modifier and a negative Awareness modifier might be full of flyers, kiosks, signage, newspaper machines, ATMs and WiFi hotspots, but have almost no living eyes around at night to keep an eye on it all (similar to a lot of downtown high-rise districts). A District that skews the other way might lack street signs or a local newspaper and be populated with people unwilling to talk about their neighbors, but could at the same time be well lit and teeming with residents who look out their windows and call the cops when they hear a noise.

Information: The Information trait describes the volume or quality of information that can be gotten about the District from within the District. A neighborhood with a good Information rating has a local newspaper, kiosks with pinned-up flyers, posters for local events, community representatives, talkative passersby, a website, ATMs and/or public Internet access. If the locals are in touch with each other and have a strong sense of what's happening in the community, the place has a positive Information trait — though they may still be unwilling to talk with outsiders if they have a poor Stability or Safety trait. A neighborhood with a lousy Information modifier is barren and dead to the eyes and ears: street signs may be missing, stores have signs that say only GAS or CHECKS CASHED, people avoid asking each other questions and they certainly don't give out information to strangers who come nosing around.

Awareness: Awareness is tied to Information, but is not dependant on it. Although a District theoretically needs good Awareness to be well-informed, that's not necessarily the case. Information is the trait that benefits from Town Hall meetings, while Awareness is the trait that benefits from streetlights and a good view. Dark, crowded Districts littered with junk, where stained windows, long shadows and the drone of constant highway traffic overhead make it hard to see or hear, have big Awareness penalties. In those places, the locals might *want* to call the cops on the blood-seeking freak creeping around in the alley behind their garages, but they can't if they don't know he's there. Districts with quality streetlights, motion-sensitive bulbs, good sight-lines and a quiet ambience have positive Awareness ratings. The people is these places are likely to notice someone climbing up the fire escape across the street, though they may not be involved enough to call the cops.

Social

These Social traits describe a District's self-respect, integrity and internal allegiance, as well as, to a limited extent, the way the District looks to the city at large. As with each pair of District traits, the intersection of these two traits is much more informative than either one is by itself. A neighborhood known for good nightclubs and great late-night greasy spoons might have a good Prestige modifier even though its Stability penalty means the place is prone to fights, drunken vagrants and harassment. A quiet stretch of peaceful houses and apartment buildings, where everybody knows the name of the local grocer and would notice if Mrs. Wallace went unseen for a day, might have a high Stability bonus, even though people two streets over think of it as a dead stretch of grownups.

Prestige: This trait may be tricky to understand, if only because it is not actually concerned with Prestige, *per se*. Rather, this trait describes how well regarded a neighborhood is, even if it is not actually prestigious. A District that is well-known, but reviled, has a high negative modifier in this trait. A neighborhood that "you know, seems okay, but I don't know what it's called," has a very low but positive modifier in this trait. The higher the number, the greater the impact on people who are told about the place or taken there — the greater the draw and the further away its known. Positive numbers attract people, negative numbers keep them away.

Consider how this trait is separate from Information, Safety and Stability: A place may be unsafe, unruly and poorly documented and still attract people to it. Maybe they come for the cheap drugs or the pussy, maybe they come for the novelty or the nightclubs, maybe they come for some last great restaurant holding out in the ruins of a once-great neighborhood. The point is, they come.

Stability: Stability describes the feeling of community in the District, how likely locals are to come to each other's aid or turn their backs on the suffering going on outside their windows. A District with a positive Stability modifier gives a shit about its neighbors, calls the police when it hears gunshots or comes running when there's a fire. A District with a negative Stability modifier is eerily still and quiet and stays that way even while some kid is bleeding to death in the street from the bullet in his gut.

Consider the ways this trait interacts with Safety. A neighborhood may be unsafe but defiantly maintaining its identity and camaraderie in the face of a drug war. A neighborhood may be well patrolled and generally law-abiding, but populated with coldly removed residents who figure it's none of their business why the people next door are squeezing off automatic weapons. In a neighborhood that's unsafe but stable, homeowners might shoot you themselves if you fuck with the block. In a neighborhood that's unsafe and unstable, the neighbor who rushes to your side after you're shot might just be there to loot your shit.

Haven Qualities

What kind of havens can a vampire find in the area? This is vital for determining the quality of a domain by the standards that really matter to Kindred. The absentee landlord who won't even lair in his own domain does not earn much trust from his vassals. The lord whose domain is better suited for the havens of the Damned attracts more desirable Kindred to his territory.

The haven qualities trait of a District describes the traits limits for the Haven Merit within that District. This is, of course, a rough guideline. Storytellers can craft more or less desirable variations on the Districts here simply by tweaking the neighborhood's haven qualities. Before you make adjustments, you should understand how the qualities are rated.

The possible value of each Haven Merit — Location, Security and Size — are rated with a base value and/or a plain-language description.

A particular Merit might be have an upper limit within the District (for example, "up to 4" or "2 maximum"), in which case no haven in the District can have a rating above the limit in that Merit. The neighborhood might be too crowded for a Haven Size higher than 3, or it might be so high-profile that no site suitable for a Haven Size 4 or 5 could be inhabited without risking the Masquerade.

A particular Merit may also have a minimum value to be appropriate for the District (for example, "at least 2," or "3 or more"), in which case a character cannot have a haven in that District unless *all three* of its Haven Merit ratings line up with the minimum values. Some neighborhoods are too dangerous for any haven without at least Haven Security 2 to really be considered a haven at all. Some neighborhoods are so well situated that a haven in the area can't be properly described as part of the area unless it has Haven Location 3 or higher.

Haven quality requirements can also be dictated by the lord of the domain, as described in the Barony chapter.

The Districts

Districts are as distinct as characters. As such, none of these are the final word on what sort of traits are essential for a Chinatown or Gallery Circuit. This is

merely a large selection of examples to get your started (or fill your needs). You have plenty to choose from, including multiple examples of particularly common Districts. To make it easier to find the one you're looking for, they're all listed alphabetically for you on this page.

Complete information on how to use Districts in city building and gameplay can be found in Chapter 3: Barony.

Districts by Name

Airport
Asylum
Bus Station
Cathedral
Chemical Plant
Chinatown
City Courts
City Hall
Corporate Sector
Elysium
Fashion Circuit
Financial Sector
Gallery Circuit
Harbor
Industrial Works
Latin Quarter
Library
Little Italy
Media Sector
Medical Center
Mercantile Sector
Metro Underground
Morgue
Mosque
Museum
Nightclub Circuit
Nobility Hill
Police Department
Power Plant
Projects
Rail Station
Sewers
Slums
Synagogue
Theater Circuit
University
Waste Plant

Airport

Description: Airplanes roar overhead almost constantly in this hub of national and international transit. A forest of blinking lights stretches to the horizon along a massive, artificial plateau under the shadow of the control towers. Outside, the whole place stinks of jet exhaust. Within, the airport is reasonably modern, though parts of it, here and there, look as though they haven't been cosmetically modernized in 10 or even 20 years. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people, from all of over the world, are constantly coming and going, speaking a dozen different tongues, too busy to take it all in.

In Play: The airport may well be the single most potent resource in the city, in addition to being the most closely scrutinized. The characters' duty is to simply keep the airport as "neutral ground," in which no Kindred might meddle (thus threatening the city's well-being, as well as chancing observation by kine government.)

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +4. The airport can be reached in any of a half-dozen ways and has a security force, local police and federal agents on hand. These days, though, access is only easy for people with picture IDs and a lot of patience.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +4. Wireless Internet is available in every waiting area, and bored people waiting for a flight are more than willing to chat. A paranoid atmosphere keeps the security on a constant state of alert, both in person and through CCTV systems.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +2. The housing around the airport is somewhat lower class, but it's a tight family neighborhood. A disturbance in the area gets people banding together to help.

Haven Qualities: Location up to 2, Security up to 5, Size 1 max. Havening in or around the airport makes feeding difficult, given the constant scrutiny, but it makes for highly secure housing, provided one can deal with the cramped conditions.

Asylum

Description: This dismal structure is an awkward patchwork of decrepit Victorian mansion and grim, soot-stained factory. Crouched forebodingly on a small hill and surrounded at a distance by high, slate gray walls, the edifice projects the air of a fortified prison keep, far more than a place that one might go for the treatment of mental illness. The few trees that cling to life on the grounds are sickly and bare, while the grass is streaked with dead pale brown patches.

In Play: The character is required simply to ignore the occasional mysterious disappearance of an inmate — always someone without family or friends, and often completely divorced from reality — once every few months.

Later, seemingly perfectly legitimate records show these unfortunate souls as having died peacefully of natural causes. No one asks any questions, and life continues as normal for both the employees and the inmates.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety –1. The asylum is locked up pretty tightly, for the most part, though a few dangerous inmates occasionally manage to escape their cells to wander the halls.

Mental: Information –3, Awareness +3. Reminders of the outside world — in the form of newspapers, books and television — are rare here, but some of the inmates possess an almost preternatural insight. Things are kept routine here, so deviations from the norm are noticed quickly.

Social: Prestige –4, Stability +1. The asylum has a reputation as an ugly, awful, practically medieval sort of place. Still, the inmates try to look out for their own, as do the staff.

Haven Qualities: Location up to 4, Security minimum 3, Size up to 5. The asylum is a fortified private feeding ground for the undiscerning... or the sadistic.

Bus Station

Description: The smell of stale diesel fumes is omnipresent, along with that of festering garbage from overflowing trashcans. There is a distinct undercurrent of the pungent odor of human sweat and urine. The ground is littered with broken glass, cigarette butts, syringes and other detritus. Expansive concrete shelters, almost completely covered in graffiti, provide deep shadows in which the homeless sleep, while the occasional addict shoots up, or a prostitute services a john. Buses, however, are nowhere in sight at this late hour.

In Play: The character is commanded to clean up the neighborhood, but not too much. Enough to encourage the transportation authority to run the buses into the early morning hours (so as to stimulate the nightlife in the fields), but not so clean as to drive away the destitute and downtrodden upon whom the local Kindred can readily feed.

Traits

Physical: Access +4, Safety –3. The station is a plaza, at the hub of all of the city's bus routes, an area populated at night largely by the criminally desperate.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness –3. The whole neighborhood is covered in flyers, but the majority of them are weeks or months out of date, while most of the locals are willfully oblivious to nearly everything, keeping their eyes down to avoid inviting contact with strangers.

Social: Prestige –3, Stability –3. Folks assume that everyone from this area is a pimp, crack whore or homeless lunatic who'd step over a dying man before offering to help him. For the most part, they're right.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 1, Size 1. There's plenty of feeding to be had, but precious little secure space.

Cathedral

Description: A fine example of French gothic architecture, the cathedral fairly towers over all other buildings in the area. Within, stained glass windows depict images of saints and angels. Dozens of tiny flames in the racks of votive candles flicker as air moves through the building. A young janitor is dusting around the altar, and takes care to genuflect briefly, crossing himself, as he moves from one side of the slightly raised dais to the other.

In Play: On the third floor of the rectory, behind the cathedral, there is a room with a locked door. Once every month, the door is unlocked by an unknown party. The character is commanded to enter the room on that night and to take whatever it is that is sitting on the table in the center of the room, if anything, and turn it over to the Scourge immediately, no matter what it might be.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety –1. While easily reached, the cathedral's neighborhood isn't exactly the best place to wander, anymore.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –1. The cathedral's records are extensive, but there's no security system here, and the building's layout isn't the best for unimpeded visibility.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –1. The area has been going downhill for years, now.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 2, Size up to 3. Feeding can be had in the immediate area, and a Kindred with the right connections could manage to secure a haven in one of the many buildings in the area owned by the Catholic Church.

Chemical Plant

Description: Row on row of rusted steel drums are lined up outside of this looming, dilapidated collection of structures. The chemical plant — hidden like a dirty secret at the far end of a long, isolated road — looks as though it is decades out of code. Acrid smells are everywhere, blending into an olfactory tapestry that leaves the nose and throat itching and stinging. Rats of exceptional size scamper between the drums. At the far end of the lot, two forklifts are unloading palettes of barrels.

In Play: The character is to keep the owner of the chemical plant happy and out of trouble with the law (the latter of which, given the deplorable state of the plant, probably requires a great deal of legwork on a fairly regular basis.) Due to the terms of an old Kindred treaty, the plant is neutral territory and has occasionally been used for the disposal of evidence.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety –2. The plant is secreted away from public view, and both the rats and the highly toxic chemicals make for an unpleasant experience for any visitor.

Mental: Information –3, Awareness –3. There's little to be learned here, but the authorities deliberately cast their collective gaze away from this place.

Social: Prestige –5, Stability +1. Only the dangerously insane would reside in what amounts to a toxic waste dump, but the status quo protects the plant.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security at least 2, Size up to 3. Immune to the harmful effects of long-term exposure to the plant, a vampire could make a decently spacious haven in the area (or even in the forgotten corners of the plant itself), at the expense of security and access to sustenance.

Chinatown

Description: Brilliant reds, yellows and golds abound on the main streets here, coloring the Asian-inspired architecture. On the back streets, however, closely clustered buildings turn inward, creating a distinctly unwelcoming feeling for outsiders. Some men sitting at a card table set up in an alley play mah-jongg, while an old woman stands on her fire escape, taking her laundry down off the line.

In Play: Both the Circle of the Crone and the Invictus have interests here. The character, however, is charged with eroding the influence of both factions, in favor of extending privileges to the Carthian Movement and the Ordo Dracul. However, this must be done without alerting either the Acolytes or the Unconquered to any conscious effort behind the slow erosion of their control here.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety –2. Outside of the main thoroughfare, Chinatown is confusing and often perilous for outsiders.

Mental: Information –2, Awareness –3. Those who don't belong here find that knowledge is withheld, and doors and shutters close, as everyone turns a blind eye. The crowds and tangled alleyways are easy to hide in, though.

Social: Prestige –2, Stability +2. While not an esteemed neighborhood or one frequented by the police, Chinatown is protected by its own private defenders.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 3, Size 2. Small havens can be secured here, with decent protections and good access to the wheat.

City Courts

Description: This beige marble structure vaguely evokes a sense of Classical architecture, married to early 20th-century aesthetics. One of the two lamps standing watch over the stairway leading into the court is burnt out, and only half of the other streetlights are in working order. Within, the beige gives way to ivory white marble, accented by Art Deco sensibilities. A clerk of the court wanders by, rather unsubtly straightening her skirt as she quietly speaks into a digital recorder.

In Play: Occasionally, those useful to the city's Kindred regime pass through the court, usually in the role of defendant. The character is required at these times to keep an eye out for judges who prove themselves unfavorable to that regime, bailiffs who treat them roughly, lawyers who defend them poorly and the like. The character merely has to pass these names along to the Seneschal and pay no mind to whatever might happen to the worst offenders at the Prince's convenience.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +3. Public transportation makes frequent stops around the plaza on which the court, the center of the city's law, is located.

Mental: Information +4, Awareness +4. There is very little that can't been researched, seen or otherwise known here. Newspapers are plentiful. Conversations and crowded hallways make eavesdropping surprisingly easy. But people are always on the lookout here, whether security guards watching for trouble, overwhelmed visitors trying to find traffic court or career-minded young lawyers looking for their big break.

Social: Prestige +2, Stability +4. The area around the city courts is affluent and benefits from a placid, law-abiding (at least on the premises) populace. Housing consists mostly of private high-rise condos with doormen and buzzers.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 3, Size 2. Hunting is difficult here at night (everything closes down around 6 P.M.), housing is generally of modest size, considering its exorbitant price, and the area is remarkably secure.

City Hall

Description: A broad, two-story dark gray brick structure built on a low rise, this City Hall building appears to have been built sometime within the past 20 years or so. A wide, cobbled lane, bounded by flowerbeds, ascends a path through the grass in front of the hall, leading directly to the front stairway. What can be glimpsed through the locked double doors of the décor is modern and tasteful.

In Play: The character is assigned to watch over a seemingly unimportant bureaucrat employed at City Hall when her duties bring her back there at odd hours of the night. She need only look in on the area every so often and inform the Sheriff if more than a week goes by without one of her nocturnal visits to the area. He is specially instructed that if he should ever encounter her in trouble, he is to take action to help her out without revealing the truth of his nature.

Traits

Physical: Access +4, Safety +1. City Hall sits at the intersections of some of the busiest streets in town. Bus stops, subways stations and cab stands are all over the area. The sidewalks here are actually meant to be walked on.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +3. City Hall has a great many informational resources at its disposal, as well as vigilant security.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +1. The neighborhood in which City Hall is located is decent, though there is little real sense of community here. Jobs at City Hall are sometimes prestigious, though (Prestige +2), and having an office here can be a big deal (Prestige +3 or more).

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 3, Size 2. Good-sized and secure havens are available to those vampires who don't mind ranging a bit for their sustenance. Buildings in the area include lots of turn-of-the-century rehabs with forgotten rooms, abandoned floors and isolated sub-basements. Modern office technology and budget cuts have left many office buildings half-empty in the area.

Corporate Sector

Description: Sleek, modern skyscrapers crowd the skyline here. The streets are kept clean, despite the almost continual bustle of people in the area. Everyone seems to move with purpose and without patience. Even those who are obviously not here on business move in time with this area's hectic pace. A mounted policeman rounds a corner, his horse's hooves striking the pavement with a rhythmic, echoing report.

In Play: This wasn't always the corporate sector. In the old, sealed-up train station underground, a Sanctified Daeva makes his haven. For a long time, he played the part of the harmless eccentric, but now he is attempting to seize control of the area's resources and he's taken decades to put his pieces into place. The character is tasked with foiling this elder's plans. If need be, she may call upon the resources of other ranking local Kindred for this task, but she must be subtle to avoid bringing undue attention to her benefactors' plans.

Traits

Physical: Access +3, Safety +2. This area sees regular travel and is patrolled day and night. Access by train, cab, limo and bus is easy, though access to local buildings is often less so (Access –2 or more). The guards patrolling this area include both public police and private security.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +2. Big business requires ready access to information and up-to-date security measures. Newsstands are set up on almost every corner here, stock data glide by on tickers outside of several buildings and flat-screen televisions play cable news in corporate lobbies 24 hours a day.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +2. Only the affluent can afford to live in this peaceful, upper-class area. At night, this place is socially dead, except for a few security guards and a few late workers worth keeping their eyes on.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 4, Size 2. While most housing in the area is a bit small, it is well protected and offers access to feeding.

Elysium

Description: This elegant early 20th-century hotel only shows its age in the most superficial of ways. Great care has clearly gone into preserving its beauty. Within, everything is marble, brass, mahogany and crystal. Massive chandeliers provide most of the illumination in the foyer, and in the ballrooms and function rooms. The staff is courteous and attentive, garbed in black formalwear or else dark red uniforms. Artfully placed and manicured plants liven the atmosphere.

In Play: To be granted control of an Elysium is a prestigious duty, indeed. Important functionaries of the hotel have been placed in thrall to ranking members of the local court, so the character's duty is simply to maintain the place and to be certain that all Kindred visiting come and go in peace and safety. (And, secretly, to make sure thralls stay loyal to their masters.)

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +4. Elysium is accessible by a variety of inconspicuous means and the Kindred ensure that its grounds and immediate vicinity are considered sacrosanct by the Damned and protected from ignorant kine.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –2. There are respectable informational resources on hand at the Elysium hotel, from newspapers and television news channels to helpful staff. That same staff, however, has long been conditioned to pay no heed to that which does not concern them.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +4. Elysium is located in surroundings deliberately cultivated by the Kindred to be wealthy and prestigious, as well as safe and lawful.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 2, Size up to 2. Rooms can be had in the hotel itself and there are more than a few permanent residents. Although feeding is easy to come by, there is little in the way of private security (a resident vampire must trust the building's staff to protect him) and only modestly sized suites are available in any sun-proof capacity.

Fashion Circuit

Description: The buildings in this area are many decades old, but have been aggressively modernized to serve as home to franchises of the most prestigious and exclusive clothiers. Many of those walking the streets here are the products of the deliberate cultivation of one contemporary high fashion or another. Fast-walking pedestrians taking calls on their cell phones only narrowly avoid collisions. The beautiful people scrupulously ignore those less aesthetically blessed than themselves.

In Play: The character is tasked with ensuring that the steady flow of recreational narcotics through this area persists. Many of the most physically flawless specimens are favored feeding stock, and aggressive drug habits help to keep them pliant and, often, forgetful of the details of strange liaisons with those who hunger for more than merely sex.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –2. The fashion circuit is easy enough to reach and safe to visit during daylight hours, when cabs are frequently looking out for travelers. By night, however, the neighborhood is gradually overtaken by shadows and locked gates, as well as drug-seekers and drug dealers. The subway runs at night, but the station's not safe enough for casual visitors.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness –1. The people here really do tend to be shallow and vapid. They won't give the time of day to a stranger and can hardly see past their own BlackBerries.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +1. The area is highly regarded and affluent, and the locals prize conformity.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security at least 2, Size 2. While havens in the area tend to be small, they benefit from the area's exemplary security measures and provide ample access to the wheat.

Financial Sector

Description: Skyscrapers are abundant in this section of the city. Even at this late hour, several people in business-formal attire are on the streets, talking into their earpieces, hailing cabs and wandering to and from meetings. The architecture here ranges from about half a century in age to structures

obviously completed just last year, if not more recently. Banks, holding companies and other, similar businesses are especially prevalent.

In Play: The Invictus rules the financial sector, but is more than happy to allow other capable vampires to see to the drudgery of its upkeep. The local lord stands to gain a great deal of prestige, and even favor with the First Estate, in exchange for exemplary service in making certain that the District remains safe and stable for kine and Kindred alike.

Traits

Physical: Access +3, Safety +3. There are numerous ways to get to this clean, well-maintained section of town. Police kiosks are common. Phone boxes capped with blue lights provide direct lines to 911 operators.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +4. Keeping track of worldwide financial developments requires ready access to a variety of informational resources, while the amount of money being moved in this location demands a certain degree of persistent attention. CCTV cameras are everywhere, hidden by black plastic hemispheres.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +3. This is a high-class neighborhood, in which it pays to obey the law.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security up to 5, Size 2. Modest, but extremely secure, condos are available in the area, though feeding can prove to be difficult due to the lack of after-hours traffic. Kindred without the means to pay for a condo (with sun-proofing renovations) — or pull of the appearance of a legal citizen — won't find many places to roost here aside from underground utility closets and the like.

Gallery Circuit

Description: This neighborhood winds its way through twisting streets. On the outskirts, staid and aristocratic galleries showcase fine (and expensive) works of art, while the center of the area coexists with a thriving youth culture and consists primarily of less formal galleries, as well as bistros, boutique shops and a couple of nightclubs. The distinct populations seem sharply divided, with only the artists readily transitioning between the two.

In Play: A local Nosferatu Acolyte has been granted domain over the city's artists. The lord granted control of this District's physical territory is "encouraged" (with the understanding that she might lose control of the area if she does not take the course of action she is *most assuredly* not being urged to take) to subtly destroy the professional careers of said Haunt's favorite talents, thereby leaving the Haunt a lord of nothing.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +1. While somewhat difficult to navigate, the gallery circuit is a reasonably secure neighborhood.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +2. The populace here keeps up on current events and has an eye for detail. Kiosks with flyers are common. Fences get papered with posters for local shows and events. Locals sit out on their stoops, smoking cigarettes and sketching passersby.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +2. This is a well-regarded area with a solid reputation. The place is small enough, and apartments are thus hard enough to get, that landing a place here is worth bragging about.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 3, Size 1. Living space is hard to come by but generally well protected, and hunting is abundant.

Harbor I

Description: Mercantile freighters are docked here, each one a small galaxy of fixed and blinking lights. Something is always being loaded or offloaded, it seems. The smell of the sea comes across the concrete like a dirty sailor, and carries with it the smells of fish and gulls, foodstuffs from around the world and other, stranger commodities. Dockworkers and crewmen yammer at one another, cussing and cursing, sometimes in English, sometimes not. Just outside of a small dive bar, a fistfight breaks out. No one pays it any mind.

In Play: Whatever shipping into or out of the city doesn't happen by land or air happens here. The character is commanded to make certain that the smuggling of... human... commodities into the city is maintained without incident. The "product" consists of a handful of the desperately poor from non-English-speaking countries, shipped in about once quarterly to satisfy the palates of the most monstrously jaded local Kindred.

Traits

Physical: Access +3, Safety –2. Easily accessible, the harbor is, but at the same time, a rough-and-tumble place. It lies at the end of many old streets, stands like a bouncer at one end of the city and at night turns into a

vast black nothing where screams go into the dark like a body slipped into the sea.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness –1. Word from all over the world finds its way here, but people mind their own business, for the most part. Still, workers keep their eyes open for thieves and cutthroats, just in case.

Social: Prestige –2, Stability –2. No one's particularly proud to call the harbor home, as it's poor, run down and often violent. This is a place for work, not for homes. A fight here might go unnoticed or get cheered on.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 2, Size 2. The harbor is a fantastic hunting ground for Kindred who don't mind exchanging space and security for ease of feeding — or, of course, those who can't afford to live anywhere better. People who get attacked here may not be the type to call the police. People who disappear here might not be missed for many days. Security is tough, because people are always coming and going, and so many old buildings, metal cargo containers and little shacks have been abandoned that people think they can go anywhere that isn't padlocked. Smaller spaces may be the only places to secure here.

Harbor II

Description: The only sounds are the constant gentle lapping of the waves and the faint rustle of the wind. Some distance away, a huge derelict building on the verse of collapse — once a posh hotel — overlooks the sea. The air smells almost clean here, and the stony beach shows little evidence of human trespass. Far-off, on the other side of the broad harbor, are mostly abandoned waterfront warehouses and factory buildings.

In Play: The character is to keep kine interests out of the area, preventing them from revitalizing the harbor for commerce, so that such efforts are aimed toward the center of the city, which is more closely influenced by Kindred. Anything that drives people out and doesn't directly threaten the Masquerade is fair game: from faked hauntings to "industrial accidents."

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +1. No public transportation comes out here, and the roads leading this way are poorly maintained, but those who get here have the run of the place.

Mental: Information –4, Awareness –3. The harbor is effectively a ghost town. There's no one to talk to and no one to care what transpires here.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –2. If someone were to set up shop here, he would be seen as a bit of an eccentric, and there's no community to speak of.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 1, Size 5. There's ample space, but none of it is defensible or remotely nearby even passable feeding grounds.

Industrial Works

Description: Dozens of factory buildings, ranging in age from more than a century to less than a decade, are to be found here. Some have been renovated into housing or the occasional nightclub, but most are still put to their original purpose. The commotion of heavy machinery resounds faintly in the area, as third-shift workers come and go. Some are about their tasks, while others are taking smoke breaks and chatting in small groups.

In Play: The industrial works were once the territory of the local Carthians. As part of the terms of their withdrawal from the area, the covenant's local members draw a tithe from all monies collected here for Kindred operations. The character's duty is to be certain that the Carthians get their cut, so as to maintain the truce that keeps them out of the area.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +1. The industrial works aren't hard to get to, and they're a decently safe place.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +1. There's plenty of scuttlebutt to be had here, for those who care to listen, and people are a little more attentive than usual in these parts.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +1. This is a youthful neighborhood. In five or 10 years, it's going to be a trendy neighborhood, as well. The community is already starting to gel nicely.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 3, Size 4. Kindred can easily acquire spacious and well-protected havens here, with the local nightclubs providing ample feeding.

Latin Quarter

Description: Three-story apartment houses, often with first-floor stores, markets or restaurants, crowd against one another here. The advertisements on billboards and at bus stops — mostly for alcohol, cigarettes and "urban" fashions — are all in Spanish. On a second-floor porch, two young women, one of whom

holds an infant, are having a quiet but heated argument, also in Spanish.

In Play: For nearly as long as anyone can remember, a coterie of Mekhet, Carthians and Sanctified has ruled here, without any particular allegiance to the Prince. The character is expected to bring these rogue Kindred under the banner of the current regime and will receive some backing from the Seneschal and the Sheriff in his efforts to do so.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –1. Easily reached and navigated via its broad streets, the Latin Quarter is a bit of a rough neighborhood.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +1. Informational resources here are decent, and the layout of the area promotes an awareness of one's surroundings.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +1. A lot of people are inclined to see this as just another ethnic ghetto, but there is a sense of community spirit among the people.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 2, Size 3. The herd is plentiful here, as are good-sized and moderately secure havens.

Library

Description: This building towers at four imposing, stone-faced stories. A worn granite staircase leads to the age-darkened wooden double doors. In addition to the main body of the library, three wings branch off the structure. By day, the tall trees on the grass that surrounds the library offer shade to those who might enjoy a book outdoors, under their boughs. At this hour, however, they serve to inhibit the already somewhat sparse lighting in the area.

In Play: The library is contested territory in the city, vied for by both the Lancea Sanctum and the Ordo Dracul. The character is granted the domain, but is required to keep the peace between the two factions and to ensure that both have equal access to the library's resources (equal enough, at any rate, that neither side can legitimately complain).

Traits

Physical: Access +2 Safety +1. The library sits on a popular college campus and is frequently patrolled by its own police force.

Mental: Information +4, Awareness –1. While there is a great deal of knowledge to be gleaned at the library, its layout and poor lighting scheme somewhat impede visibility in the area.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +1. The library's neighborhood is a good one, and there are usually few problems here.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 3, Size 2. While large havens are few and far between here, the college campus makes for a resilient herd, and safe accommodations are rather easy to come by.

Little Italy

Description: Everywhere on the outskirts of this neighborhood, where innumerable markets and restaurants jockey for position alongside one another, is the smell of food, a tantalizing scent that fairly saturates the air here. As one moves inward, modest duplexes and three-story apartment houses are cramped close together, though such serve to make the neighborhood feel connected, rather than crowded. The locals seem to have no hesitation about being on the streets at night.

In Play: A Daeva with ties in Little Italy is trying to shut down the small undercurrent of organized crime in the area. The character is to foil those efforts, as the criminal element is in part responsible for the steady flow of cash that moves through this area.

Traits

Physical: Access –1, Safety +1. While difficult to keep track of, the convoluted streets here are, nevertheless, fairly safe to walk at even the latest hours.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +1. People talk and keep an ear to the ground here.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +3. Little Italy is the oldest and most highly regarded of the ethnic neighborhoods in town, and the local police, the criminal element and the citizenry all value peace and stability.

Haven Qualities: Location *, Security *, Size *

Media Sector

Description: Most of the structures here are broad and squat — two or three stories, at most — and faced with brick or beige stone. Broadcast antennas are common here, as are thick tangles of heavy black cables, woven amongst the

many buildings. The small patches of lawn here are neatly trimmed, and more than a few have lovely flowerbeds or elegantly sculpted hedges. Even in the middle of the night, these buildings seem to be well staffed.

In Play: If the Masquerade fails, this is where its failure will be transformed from an unfortunate indiscretion to a genuine catastrophe. The character is to monitor the many channels of communication here and intercept anything that the local Kindred populace needs to keep under wraps.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +2. Only one bus route goes out this way, but the train stops nearby and everything is clustered reasonably close together. Police patrols are common.

Mental: Information +5, Awareness +2. Information is the business of this sector, and constant scrutiny keeps it safe.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +2. The neighborhood is well respected and law-abiding.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 4, Size 3. While feeding isn't abundant here, safe and sizable havens are.

Medical Center

Description: This structure appears to be quite modern: a tall, narrow building faced with reflective black marble. The center's name is spelled out in large gold block lettering over the automated sliding double doors. In the waiting area, leather-upholstered chairs and couches are arranged around bookcases and glass-topped coffee tables, and a secretary sits behind a long black counter, tapping away at a keyboard, even as she offers a friendly greeting.

In Play: The character is responsible for keeping an eye on any medical records that might lead an enterprising employee at the center to begin looking into the causes of patients treated for the occasional indiscrete (or botched) feeding. With access to these records, the character is expected to compromise or "lose" particularly dangerous files when needed (whether hard copies or information stored on the center's network).

Traits

Physical: Access +3, Safety +3. This is a readily accessible building in a good part of town.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +3. The center offers prodigious informational resources and is closely monitored by an attentive staff.

Social: Prestige +2, Stability +2. The center is located in an upscale neighborhood, and the people there intend to keep it that way.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 5, Size 2. The medical center has a few hidden spaces, all of which are extremely secure, and offers ready access to feeding for those with a sense of subtlety.

Mercantile Sector I

Description: The old meat-packing plants have been refurbished as lofts, but over half of the brick-faced businesses to be found here are markets, a handful of which are open well into the late hours. The smell of open-air produce stands lingers along the main boulevard. In a small park, across the street, two elderly men play a game of chess, while a younger crowd bustles along.

In Play: A powerful local Gangrel has kept his hands in the affairs of this neighborhood for quite some time. He holds considerable influence over three of the families that own profitable markets here. The character is to wrest that control from him, without endangering the Masquerade and, preferably, without alerting him to the situation until it's too late for him to do anything about it.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +1. The mercantile sector is easily reached by car, train or bus, and little violent crime happens here.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +1. There is a high school and a library in the neighborhood, which is well lit, even on the darkest night, and laid out for a fair degree of visibility.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +3. This part of town is pleasant and respectable, and the community is a close one.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 3, Size 2. Sizable housing is scarce, but feeding is plentiful and havens here are often quite safe.

Mercantile Sector II

Description: Aging brownstone buildings, some quite sizable, sit side-by-side with slightly more modern architecture here. Boutique stores line the streets, though nearly a quarter of the shops are bookstores, newsstands, stationers and other businesses devoted to the publishing

industry. This neighborhood is a trendy one, with 20- and 30-somethings walking to clubs and restaurants, eager to fritter away some hard-earned cash.

In Play: A reclusive Dragon makes her haven here, though she has never sought to claim domain over the neighborhood. The character is tasked with convincing her to part with certain tomes from her extensive personal library. The books in question are rare to the point of uniqueness, and most of them are quite old. Doubtless, she will prove difficult to persuade.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety –1. Easily accessed, this neighborhood nevertheless has slightly more than its fair share of assaults and muggings.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness –1. There is a great deal on information to be had here, through various media, but the people are a bit oblivious.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +1. While not upscale, the neighborhood is popular with the youth, and there is a feel of community here.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 2, Size 3. Feeding is plentiful in the mercantile sector, as are decently sized and reasonably safe havens.

Mercantile Sector III

Description: A wide variety of shops are located here, with something of an emphasis on jewelers, watchmakers and other, similar businesses. At this time of night, most of the stores are closed, their façades concealed by rolling steel grating. One or two shops appear to be open, even now, however. Dressed to the nines, people are still walking the streets, most of them on their way to restaurants or clubs.

In Play: A small coterie of Mekhet, rumored to be members of some strange bloodline, have dwelt here for as long as anyone can readily recall. The character is to act as a liaison to these Shadows, conveying the will of the Prince to them and carrying back any response, when appropriate. In addition, the character is expected to do the occasional small favor for these Kindred, to keep them happy.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +2. This neighborhood is both safe and convenient to reach.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +1. There are a few bookstores and Internet cafes here, and the particular nature of the commodities commonly traded here mean that watchful eyes and well-maintained security systems abound.

Social: Prestige +2, Stability +2. The mercantile sector is a good place to call home.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 4, Size 3. For a pretty penny, a Kindred can acquire housing in a roomy, well-protected place with above average access to the herd.

Metro Underground

Description: Several layers of different train lines are stacked atop one another here. Narrow passages and steep escalators open onto wide platforms. Advertisements are plastered everywhere: on the walls and even on the trains themselves. There is a faintly musty odor here, along with the slightly sour scent common to very crowded spaces. Despite the hour, there are still many people here, waiting for various trains all over the city.

In Play: A long-forgotten tunnel of the old underground serves as the neutral territory on which the city's court can meet with a Gangrel of unknown age, power and allegiance. The character is expected to make certain than nothing compromises either the secrecy or the Kindred access to that particular tunnel.

Traits

Physical: Access +5, Safety +1. Because of the constant traffic through this nexus of the city's transit system, safety is rarely a concern.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness –1. The only information to be had here comes in the form of newspapers and flyers, and the miles of winding passages make it difficult to keep an eye on everything.

Social: Prestige –4, Stability +1. Degenerate homeless are believed to dwell in some of the unused service tunnels, but the transit police keep things orderly, for the most part.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 3, Size 1. Tiny but relatively safe spaces with decent access to hunting can be found among the tunnels of the metro underground.

Morgue

Description: The structure before you is a sprawling, single-story building, faced in dark stone. The tall, narrow windows are covered by steel mesh, painted black. Only one window is lit; other than the vestibule and waiting area, the rest of the place appears to

be dark. Within, there is a smell reminiscent of faint rot and chemicals, as well as a sickly sweet aroma of flowery perfume. Dark doorways yawn in shadowed corridors, and the dim lighting seems to die at the threshold. At the end of the hall, a stairway descends into the sublevels.

In Play: The character is tasked with making things run smoothly for one of the nightshift coroners, who happens to be a necrophiliac. Ill socialized and with a disturbing demeanor, he is being groomed for Embrace by a local Sanctified Haunt. Until that night comes, however, the coroner's proclivities must be kept secret and protected from any mortal scrutiny.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +2. The morgue isn't in an out-of-the-way locale, and the neighborhood is safe.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness –2. The libraries and computers here are all very good, but the premises are nowhere near as carefully monitored as they should be — almost as though someone deliberately deflects any scrutiny cast upon the place.

Social: Prestige +2, Stability +1. The neighborhood's a good one, but apathy and inertia, rather than any real sense of unity, hold the locals together.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 3, Size 3. Any local haven, whether in or around the morgue itself, is apt to be spacious and secure, with ready access to feeding.

Mosque

Description: This elegant structure has seen better days. What were once shining, gilded minarets are now dimmed by a film of the city's pollution, while a smashed-in window, high up on one outer wall, is covered with a piece of clear plastic tarp. Another part of the outer wall, adjoining an alley, presents an illusion of comparative newness, having been scrubbed clean of hateful graffiti several years back.

In Play: The character is commanded to keep the area free of hate crimes against the Muslims who come to worship here. (There hasn't been any particular threat of such a thing for almost five years, but the elder who desires this — a formerly Sunni Invictus — is slow to react to the changing of the times and reflexively inclined to believe that the "decadent Westerners" despise "his people.") While this seems like a cakewalk, any act of violence against a local Muslim, even so much as a perfectly mundane mugging, is apt to rouse the elder's ire.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +1. The area of the mosque is reasonably accessible, and the neighborhood is safe.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +2. Considerable information is available in and around the mosque, while the people remain wary, mindful of anything out of the ordinary.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +3. The lingering results of the backlash against Islam several years ago persist, though only slightly, but the people here have a strong sense of community spirit.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 2, Size 2. Feeding here is not particularly easy, but reasonable secure space can be had with little hassle.

Museum

Description: This place has clearly seen better days. Once, long ago, this area was peopled by the idle rich, and the museum was a prestigious place to meet with friends. Now, its Edwardian façade is badly in need of repair, and half-completed restoration projects (which will likely never actually be finished) dot the outside of the structure. Within, a whole wing has been closed down due to water damage. Many of the remaining exhibits are years out of date and showing their age. Most of the sparse staff seems half-asleep.

In Play: The remotest recesses of the closed-off wing of the museum are actually being used as a storage area for two torpid Kindred — criminals sentenced to several decades of the sleep. The character is charged with acting as jailer for these two, to be certain that no kine stumble across them and also to preserve them from any harm; their sentence was slumber, and not Final Death, after all.

Traits

Physical: Access –1, Safety –1. Only one infrequent bus comes here, and parking is scarce in this neighborhood in decline.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness –2. The museum still does contain a few interesting shreds of information, though no one here cares enough to do much of anything with it.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –1. The once-lauded area is slowly falling into poverty and criminality.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 3, Size 4. An enterprising Kindred could easily and securely take up residence in the vast, hidden corners of the museum, or

else in one of the nearby spacious homes once owned by the wealthy elite, while feeding is easy to come by in this part of town.

Nightclub Circuit I

Description: This entire short street is lined with a variety of nightclubs and, at the far end, a strip club. The whole place has a vaguely seedy feel to it, hastily concealed under a celebratory atmosphere. Goths and ravers walk side-by-side with Eurotrash and an undifferentiated mass of humanity just looking to get laid. Everyone steers wide of a splash of vomit on the sidewalk, as a young woman sits, half passed-out, with her back against a wall, and her friends try to keep her conscious with ambling conversation.

In Play: The character must ensure that no Masquerade-related incidents occur here, potentially spoiling this veritable feast of the Damned. Unfortunately, due to mismanagement by the prior steward of this domain, young and incautious Kindred are inclined to treat the herd of the nightclub circuit a little too cavalierly.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety –2. The nightclub circuit is readily reached by several routes, but the occasional drunken brawl, mugging, assault, rape or even murder takes place in the area, and drug-related crime is common.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness – 2. Word on the street is abundant here, but drugs and drunkenness, and a deliberate obliviousness ensure that many strange things transpire unnoticed.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –2. The nightclub circuit is a run-down area, plagued by extralegal activity.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 1, Size 2. Apartments are easily had in along the nightclub circuit, but they're small and break-ins are common.

Nightclub Circuit II

Description: Located in the tangle of back alleys just outside of the downtown area, the nightclub circuit caters to all sorts of tastes, from the tame to the exotic. The clubs on the outskirts of this neighborhood offer the usual fare: a night of music, drinking and socializing. In the interior, darker proclivities and more marginalized demographics find purchase. And, everywhere, the narrow alleys and tall buildings obscure all that transpires from the eyes of the city.

In Play: A great deal of criminal activity occurs here, under the cover of "legitimate business." The character is commanded to keep the factions happy and to maintain the delicate balance of power, so that no one group gains enough of an upper hand to begin seizing control of the entire area.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +2. While exceedingly difficult to navigate, the nightclub circuit is kept safe by the various criminal interests whose profits depend largely upon a steady flow of visitors to the area.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –1. There is ample opportunity to hear about subjects of interest here, but the maze of alleys makes for poor visibility.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +2. While not a respectable neighborhood, the area around the club circuit is held together by an unspoken law.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 3, Size 1. Studio apartments above and around the clubs are easy to find and are quite secure, with abundant opportunities for feeding nearby.

Nobility Hill I

Description: This prestigious neighborhood looks down upon the rest of the city from a series of high hills. Most of the homes here are expansive Tudor-style manor houses, though there are a few examples of more modern styles, as well. The area is quiet, and save for a few lights on in windows, here and there, the locals seem to be asleep.

In Play: A number of powerful and useful kine dwell in this area. The character's duty is to occasionally look in on them and, when needed, act as an intermediary (either personally or via Retainers) through which their bribes and other favors can be moved, facilitating the Kindred influence over the city.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +3. Winding roads, high hills and a lack of local points of interest serve to keep out the hoi polloi, but the police are quick to respond to the rare incident here.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +1. While affluent, the people here are only marginally well informed and tend to assume that they are safe and secure.

Social: Prestige +4, Stability +3. Those who live in this wealthy, law-abiding community are envied by many.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 4, Size 4. While hunting is a bit of a chore here, havens tend to be large and defensible.

Nobility Hill II

Description: Well-lit lanes crisscross this gated community, and the smell of lilacs and pine waft pleasantly from the immaculately manicured foliage. A pair of security officers rolls past in a sedan, the driver speaking into his radio as he slowly takes a corner. Every home is a sprawling estate, with elegant architecture, a perfect lawn and a state-of-the-art security system. An older gentleman sits on his front porch, smoking a pipe. He smiles a bit, and offers a polite nod.

In Play: Three Ventrue — a sire and her two childer — dwell here, and the character is tasked with meeting the needs of their exacting palates once every month or so. They demand beautiful young men and women, all of whom must be able to pass for the regal and affluent, but without any of the inconvenient entanglements that usually come part and parcel with such people.

Traits

Physical: Access –3, Safety +3. This exclusive community is tighter than a drum — well lit, with high walls, automated gates, frequent patrols and the best and most modern security systems.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +3. The residents keep up with the news, and have their own library and school. Furthermore, people pay attention to their surroundings here, attentive to the quality of their community.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +1. Residence here conveys a measure of status upon a person. However, the residents are, for the most part, only superficially close and are usually more acquaintances than they are friends.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 5, Size 4. Havens here are spacious and safe, but feeding is at a premium.

Nobility Hill III

Description: Wide lanes and lush parks abound in this classy corner of town, characterized by tall brownstone buildings. Opulent bed-and-breakfasts sit alongside the sorts of businesses that open by appointment only, concealing all traces of commerce so as not to offend the sensibilities of the locals. Most of the people around here seem to be professionals in their late 30s and up, though a handful of younger people are also to be seen in the area.

In Play: A Kindred of unknown allegiance is believed to reside somewhere in this area, and the character is commanded to seek out this individual. Unfortunately, the vampire in question is an agent of the mysterious covenant known as VII, and quite adept at remaining hidden until the opportunity to strike presents itself.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +2. This peaceful and accessible neighborhood is located not far out of the downtown area.

Mental: Information +3, Awareness +2. Several of the tenured local university professors reside in the neighborhood, which hosts the city's Athenaeum, and the wide-open parks encourage a clear view.

Social: Prestige +3, Stability +3. Things are good in this area, and the residents work to keep them that way.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 4, Size 3. The safe and relatively spacious haven space available here offers many choices for Kindred on the hunt.

Police Department

Description: This building has seen better days. The brick façade is old and in need of repair in a few places, while one broken window on the second floor is covered over with clear plastic sheeting and duct tape. Inside, sepia-tone marble and pale wood paneling serve to give the whole place an appearance of faded dignity. Most of the amenities look as though they haven't been updated or adequately maintained for 30 or so years. Police shuffle along, halfway oblivious, performing their nightly routines.

In Play: In the basement, there is a closet, to which the character is given a key and commanded never to use it. In fact, *no one* is ever supposed to open that door, and the character is placed in charge of making certain that it stays shut, by any means that won't draw undue attention from the potentially dozens of police working upstairs at any given time.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +3. The station is on a side street, in a slightly out-of-the-way location, but a bus passes right by it and it's not particularly hard to find.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +1. The computer systems aren't cutting-edge anymore, but there is a tremendous volume of information stored here, on various media, and, while the police are collectively apathetic, *someone* is likely to notice if anything is out of sorts here.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +2. The neighborhood's quiet and decent, while the police are tight-knit and reflexively close ranks against potential threats.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 4, Size 4. There's little feeding to be had here, but the station is huge, with a lot of unused, yet secure, space, both on the second floor and underground.

Power Plant

Description: One of a scattered cluster of huge buildings along the marsh, the power plant itself is difficult to distinguish at first glance. A high chain-link fence is capped with razor wire, but there are at least a few gaps in the weedy metal screen, here and there. The most distant of the buildings appears to be the newest, but all of them are lit, despite the fact that one or two — perhaps older power plants — look to be on the verge of collapse.

In Play: The ghoul of a favored member of the Primogen sits on the board of directors for the power plant. Not everyone esteems this particular Primogen, however, so the character is ordered to keep the Primogen safe from any "accidents" that might befall her while she's on the grounds, as her Final Death (or a lengthy incapacitation) could easily compromise a significant resource of the dominant regime.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +2. The plant's a bit off the beaten track and wrapped in secure-looking metal, but it's not nearly as secure as it appears. To make up for the lack of security, the police have to regularly drive by the site. Despite its worn appearance, some of the more conscientious local police patrol the area.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –1. The computer network here is decently up-to-date, but the security system could use some work, and the employees are more focused on the machinery than they are on people who don't belong. All of this happens under the hum of cooling units and the constant buzz of high voltage.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +1. The neighborhood's not much to look at, but a dedicated police presence keeps the locals' spirits up. The locals don't want this place turning into a slum, so they protect it as they can.

Haven Qualities: Location 1 max, Security 2 or more, Size up to 4. An enterprising and discreet Kindred could easily haven in one of the abandoned buildings here, provided that he didn't much care about the condition of the place or its access to feeding. There are few people here.

Projects I

Description: Three-story brick apartment buildings are clustered closely together here, each one all but identical to the last. Small, fenced-in yards, some badly in need of moving or watering, separate the complexes from one another. Through the narrow alleys between the buildings, the distant lights of the city can be seen, descending the hill on which the projects are perched. The wind kicks up for a moment, and a merry-go-round in a small playground squeaks in protest, rotating ever slowly in the breeze.

In Play: The character is to keep these projects exactly as they are: a sketchy lower-class neighborhood in which unwholesome business can occasionally be conducted. Feedings gone awry are sometimes covered up here as assaults or even murders, while the rare missing person in the area is soon enough written off as dead, and investigations quickly cease.

Traits

Physical: Access –1, Safety –2. The projects are a rough neighborhood, located on a high hill, and a bit difficult to get to via public transportation, or even by car, given the convoluted tangle of streets that leads to them.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness –2. People have their ears to the ground here, but don't, as a rule, notice anything that doesn't directly affect them.

Social: Prestige –2, Stability –2. The projects are dirty, unpleasant and violent.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 2, Size 2. Ample feeding is available here, though safe housing is somewhat harder to come by.

Projects II

Description: Save for their colors and more recent renovations, the houses here look all but identical, the product of hasty post-World War II construction. Low, chain-link fences separate yards from one another along neat blocks with four to 12 houses sitting back-to-back and side-by-side. A small drove of teenagers wanders past, talking far too loudly for this late hour, and making rude commentary at passersby.

In Play: This area has traditionally been something of a no-man's-land for Kindred. The character is tasked with finding a way to turn the projects into a valuable

(or at least passable) resource for the city, using whatever means are at her disposal.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +1. These projects are easily navigable and decently safe.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness +1. There aren't many local informational resources, but the layout of the projects promotes good visibility of the area.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability +1. This is a decent neighborhood, overall.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 2, Size 2. Small homes and sparse feeding are all that a Kindred here has to look forward to in a haven.

Rail Station

Description: After the descent down a long, poorly lit and broken escalator, the forlorn platforms of the rail station come into view. Advertisements hang on almost every available inch of wall space, though many of them are marred and damaged by tangled graffiti tags and splotchy vandalism. It smells musty here. A few late-night stragglers wait for their respective trains, and no one much acknowledges anyone else's presence. In the distance, an approaching train shrieks on the tracks.

In Play: The character is to keep the encroachment of other Kindred out of this area. The rail station is a desirable prize, after all, connecting as it does the various regions of the city. Holding onto this prime piece of real estate is a full-time job, in many respects, and the character will surely have to enlist aid, both from Kindred co-conspirators and from unwitting kine.

Traits

Physical: Access +4, Safety –1. The very point of this place is accessibility, but it can get a bit unpleasant, even dangerous, here at night, since just about anyone can get in here.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness +2. Other than what's in the newspapers available here, there's not much to be learned at the station. At least a few of the people who frequent the place, however, tend to keep their eyes open, and some low-rent roving security agents are about.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –1. The rail station isn't located in a great part of town, and almost nobody has a real sense of pride about the place anymore. If trouble happens here, people run.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 2, Size 2. Kindred can haven in some of the hidden nooks and crannies of the station itself, as well as in the shoddy, low-cost housing that surrounds it.

Sewers I

Description: The smell is everywhere — a malodorous reek that crawls up into the nostrils and dies there. The stench is thick enough to taste on the air. Rats and cockroaches scuttle along in every shadow. Dingy water drips from the massive concrete tubing and strange, pale gray moss clings to some of the seams at which one section connects to the next. Odd, distorted noises occasionally echo faintly through the network of tunnels.

In Play: Something, neither human nor Kindred, dwells in the remotest passages of the sewers, and the character's job is to keep peace with the unknown entity. It is never seen, communicating through a raspy, breathless voice that always sounds as though it is coming from the next tunnel over. The entity's rare demands, so long as they don't threaten the local Kindred population, are to be met in a timely manner.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety –2. The sewers are often cramped and twisted, and difficult to safely access. The rats and roaches are everywhere, and can be quite aggressive, while sinkholes and other perils lurk below the filmy surface of the fouled water that flows through the tunnels.

Mental: Information –4, Awareness –3. Nothing human dwells down here, and there is no access to information beyond the occasional water-stained flyer or newspaper. No one really cares what goes on in the sewers.

Social: Prestige –4, Stability –3. It's a sewer; it's safe to assume that anyone down here is dangerous and quite possibly unfit for life on the surface.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 3, Size 5. The network of tunnels is massive, offering access to some decent feeding grounds, while the unsafe nature of the sewers paradoxically makes them relatively secure.

Sewers II

Description: The sewers on this small island just offshore, dedicated to waste treatment, seem to go on

forever. It feels as though one could wander for weeks in here and not tread the same ground twice. The tunnels are wide and very modern and well maintained, with lightweight aluminum mesh walkways and railings along the sides. Rats and other animals are down here, of course, but only in the more remote passages, where the workers only rarely wander.

In Play: These sewers are the result of a years-long development project inspired by several local Invictus. Officially, the character needs only to act as regent over this territory. In reality, however, the ire of the Unconquered is bound to be considerable, and actually holding onto it is apt to prove difficult.

Traits

Physical: Access –3, Safety +1. While difficult to access, the sewers here are, nonetheless, actually quite safe.

Mental: Information –4, Awareness –2. There are no informational resources to speak of here, and the tunnels aren't closely monitored.

Social: Prestige –4, Stability +1. While clean for sewers, these are still sewers, albeit well-maintained ones.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 3, Size 5. A vast and secure haven could be obtained by a Kindred unconcerned with finding feeding in the immediate area.

Slums I

Description: A train rumbles by, overhead, dislodging dust and paint and rust. Everything here seems to exist in the shadow of bridges, overpasses and other elevated structures. One in every eight or 10 of the squat apartment houses looks to be derelict, or else overtaken by squatters. Even many of the legitimately inhabited structures have broken or boarded-up windows. The entire neighborhood appears to be the product of a deliberate, years-long campaign of vandalism and economic oppression.

In Play: The character is placed in charge of the local drug trade, to ensure that the appropriate Kindred receive their respective shares of the profits. Interacting with some of the dealers, however, is quite a chore; given their long dominion over the area, they're very much accustomed to being the ones who make demands, rather than complying with such.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –3. Trains and buses stop in the area, but the wise avoid getting out at said stops.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –3. This is a good place to hear the word on the street, but a fear-numbed populace has been conditioned to pay no heed to anything that doesn't directly concern them.

Social: Prestige –3, Stability –3. There is no sense of community loyalty in this violent slum.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 1, Size 3. If a Kindred is willing to exist without any reliable safety measures, she can enjoy prodigious opportunity for feeding and quite a bit of living space.

Slums II

Description: Tall, old apartment buildings close in on all sides in this claustrophobic neighborhood. Even the narrow streets feel like alleys. Networks of fire escapes obscure the night sky, and there is a persistent smell of waste and old trash coming from between and behind the buildings, and from the backed-up sewer system. People tend to hustle past, keeping their eyes averted from strangers, and no one's voice climbs above a whisper in the streets.

In Play: Illegal dogfights in the basements of some of the tenement buildings are a popular form of entertainment for several of the local Carthians and Invictus, and the events are considered a sort of time of truce, during which the two normally opposed factions might conduct diplomacy. The character is tasked with making certain that these dogfights continue without interference from the law or from any meddlesome Kindred.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety –3. It's hard to navigate the slums, which are perilous for even the most stalwart.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness –3. The populace here is kept ignorant and unaware through fear of violence.

Social: Prestige –3, Stability –3. People here are assumed to be either the perennially downtrodden or else deplorable sorts of criminals, and that assessment is largely a reasonable one.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 1, Size 3. It's easy enough to take over an abandoned tenement here and to feed freely on the locals, but there's little in the way of security to be had.

Slums III

Description: Hills rise and fall in this neighborhood, which is laid out on jagged, labyrinthine angles. Most buildings are three-story apartment houses, though some have first-floor stores. Other businesses are located in squat, ugly buildings of brick or cinderblocks. Only a

few stores are open now, their façades illuminated by garish neon lighting. Several pops sound faintly in the distance, followed by the screech of tires on asphalt. A dog starts barking.

In Play: The character must take control of the abundant criminal element in the area. Clashing gangs make the neighborhood an unreliable resource and could soon result in a police crackdown, further devaluing these slums for Kindred purposes. Rival gang leaders must either be brought under a single banner, or else disposed of.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –1. The neighborhood is poorly designed, but accessible. Still, the criminal element runs rampant here, and while most violence targets other gangs, bystanders are by no means safe.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness –1. Word of mouth travels quickly in these parts, but many of the savviest locals turn blind, deaf and dumb whenever ignorance seems prudent.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –1. Recent escalations in gang violence have destabilized this unsavory — but once reasonably tight-knit — neighborhood.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 2, Size 3. An enterprising Kindred could cheaply rent (or purchase) one of the slightly better and more secure apartment buildings for use as a home and base of operations.

Slums IV

Description: Dirty water laps along a dingy shore, littered with detritus ranging from car tires and broken household items to drug paraphernalia, spent condoms and a few scattered bullet casings. Ramshackle homes slouch along the side of the street opposite the beach wall. A small pack of semi-feral dogs skulks through the shadows of the waterfront, tipping over a trash can and rooting around for food.

In Play: The character is ordered to make certain that this area remains exactly as it is, or, better still, descends even further into poverty and hopelessness, so as to drive the property values through the floor. Unfortunately, the character is not alone in this endeavor. A small, well-hidden covey of Kindred claiming allegiance to Belial's Brood has the exact same idea, though for very different reasons.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –3. A bus route runs along the beach, but no one who has any other choice willingly gets out here.

Mental: Information –3, Awareness –3. An abiding apathy, born of equal parts fear and desperation, keeps the people from thinking too much, and they tend to avoid considering their dismal surroundings.

Social: Prestige –3, Stability –4. This slum is practically a forgotten little anarchy shoved against the edge of the water and banished from the city's thoughts.

Haven Qualities: Location 3, Security 1, Size 3. While sustenance and good-sized havens are easy to come by, no one — not even a vampire — truly feels safe here.

Slums V

Description: While this slum is run down and generally impoverished, there is a pervasive feeling of renewal here. People are walking around, even at this time of night, and seem devoid of the sense of paranoia and fear that one commonly attributes to such a downtrodden neighborhood. The sidewalks and small parks look clean, if not carefully maintained, and the closely packed homes appear well taken care of.

In Play: A charismatic local has begun to organize the populace into community groups, admonishing them to take back their neighborhood and to take pride in it. The character is commanded to quash this inconvenience. Even murder is acceptable, so long as the Masquerade is maintained and the character does not inadvertently create a martyr.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety +1. Easily reached by both public transportation and car, this slum is gradually turning itself around.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness +3. Locals are taking pains to improve both the local school and library, and people are paying attention to what transpires here.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability +3. While this is a lower-class neighborhood, the people have genuine solidarity.

Haven Qualities: Location 2, Security 3, Size 3. Feeding is becoming increasingly difficult here, due to the neighborhood watch, but havens tend to be spacious and secure.

Slums VI

Description: Most of these duplex homes are badly in need of a new paintjob. Eaves sag under the weight of years and weather damage. The people, too, seem to sag under a heavy burden. Hardly anyone takes notice of a man inflicting a savage beating on a woman attired as a low-rent prostitute, and no one moves to

stop him. A small-time drug dealer openly hawks his wares on a corner.

In Play: The local leadership of the Ordo Dracul has a keen interest in this area, for undisclosed reasons. The character is to allow them access to the slums, but also to ensure that they pay the required tithe. In no case is he to interfere in their work, whether to aid or to hinder them.

Traits

Physical: Access –1, Safety –3. This slum is a bit remote and very much unsafe.

Mental: Information +1, Awareness –1. While one can hear the talk on the street here, much goes on that is obscured from sight.

Social: Prestige –2, Stability –2. This slum is just a bad place to live.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 2, Size 4. Whole buildings can be acquired cheaply and moderately well secured, providing access to good hunting.

Synagogue

Description: This sprawling, single-story building appears very modern in its design. Artfully designed street lamps bathe the area in soft white illumination and the grounds are expertly maintained. Brick-faced apartment buildings and large, Victorian-style homes are gathered closely around the synagogue, which appears to share its vast parking lot with three different apartment complexes.

In Play: The character is charged with arranging, through legitimate means, for a particular elm tree on the synagogue's grounds to be chopped down and torn up by the roots, and replaced with an oak sapling. The character is not told why this must be, though it may have something to do with the Circle of the Crone's recent movements in the area.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +3. The area of the synagogue is easily reached by car or public transportation and benefits from a safe environment.

Mental: Information +2, Awareness +2. The populace here is well-informed and tends to be perceptive.

Social: Prestige +2, Stability +3. This is an affluent neighborhood with solidarity and respect for the law.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 4, Size 3. Feeding is scarce, but secure homes can be readily secured for use as havens.

Theater Circuit

Description: A row of aging theaters, some still quite grand and imposing in their growing decrepitude, spans this broad boulevard, all of them dating from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Rather than the top hats and evening gowns that the surroundings seem to demand, however, most passersby are attired in slightly threadbare modern fashions. In front of one derelict theater, a shabby-looking vagrant panhandles, singing old show tunes in an incongruously lovely voice.

In Play: The character is commanded to facilitate the restoration of this area. Prominent members of the local Kindred court wish to see one or more of the theaters refurbished, and the area's overall quality returned to something similar to its prior glory, so that a new Elysium can be established here. To that end, the character is required to assist by "encouraging the undesirable element" to leave.

Traits

Physical: Access +1, Safety –1. The ancient trolley still runs parallel to the theater circuit, but the neighborhood has certainly seen better days.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness –1. No longer a playground for the elite, the theater circuit is behind the times and largely overlooked.

Social: Prestige –1, Stability –1. This area is now poor and increasingly run down.

Haven Qualities: Location 4, Security 3, Size 4. Hunting is plentiful in this area, which benefits from the presence of the readily secured old homes of the long-vanished upper class that used to dwell here, which are huge, though often in need of a bit of repair and touching up.

University

Description: Taking up a large city block all to itself, the campus of this university is crowded with a profound diversity of young people, even well into the night. The architectural style of the campus is a cacophony of old and new, as aging buildings are replaced with more recent construction. Asphalt lanes weave through the grass and between the trees that span the lengths of the grounds.

In Play: The character's task is to cover up the rare student disappearance. For the most part, the young men and

women who are taken to feed the ranking elite of the Kindred court turn up days later with patchwork memories of their "adventure," but someone occasionally overfeeds, and investigations must be deflected from the Masquerade.

Traits

Physical: Access +2, Safety +1. The university is easily reached by train, bus or car, and is only rarely the site of violent crime (beyond the occasional drunken fistfight, that is).

Mental: Information +4, Awareness +1. In addition to the customary informational resources, students are also more than happy to talk about what's going on, and the layout of campus is very open and secure.

Social: Prestige +1, Stability –1. This is a nice neighborhood, but some of the students can occasionally be a little rowdy and rebellious.

Haven Qualities: Location 5, Security 3, Size 2. Feeding is plentiful here, and while havens tend to be small, they are often quite well protected.

Waste Plant

Description: The reek of burning and processed garbage clings to everything here, like a poisonous film that settles onto every available surface. The air is stained a pale brown, obscuring the moon in an amber haze. Blue methane flames rise into the air from tall stacks protruding from a colossal, dark red building. The narrow peninsula connecting the plant to the mainland is raised high above the waters of the marsh, but the smell of rotting vegetation and dank water is everywhere.

In Play: Inconvenient evidence of Kindred wrongdoing occasionally makes its way to the waste plant for incineration and disposal. The character's appointed task is to serve as a liaison to Kindred upon such errands, and to confirm with the local authorities that a given item is, in fact, meant to be destroyed by the Sheriff's thrall, who oversees the night shift.

Traits

Physical: Access –2, Safety +2. The plant is right off the highway, but is remote enough from anything else of interest to be rather safe.

Mental: Information –1, Awareness –1. There's no appreciable access to information here, and everyone keeps focused on his work, rather than what's going on around him.

Social: Prestige –3, Stability +2. Anyone living nearby would be in a shack on the marsh, but the workforce benefits from a decently strong union. Start something here, and the workers will come to each other's rescue.

Haven Qualities: Location 1, Security 3 or more, Size 2. A small haven could be secured on-site by a cunning and subtle Kindred, though feeding would prove difficult. This area is empty enough, though, that anything bigger than a small apartment would be suspicious.

Sites

Reading Sites

A District is a whole neighborhood (or multiple, similar neighborhoods rolled into one). Sites are discrete locations within a District. Most Sites are single buildings, like a convenience store or a church, but that's not an essential criterion for a Site. Think of Sites as individual places with a distinct personality and use. A hot dog cart can be a Site if it projects its own style. A particular back alley can be a Site if it is somehow distinctive and functional — maybe it's a great place to roll tourists or sell boosted electronics.

Let your gut be your guide. Identifying a place isn't scientific. You know a place has character when you see it. You know it has a meaningful use if you put it to use time and again.

Sites are not platonic measures of all buildings of their type. They're like characters. Just as you could generate general game statistics for "a police officer" or for "Sgt. Danielle Lowe" in particular, you can do the same for Sites. The sample convenience store later in this chapter is a particular, individual store in the city. Every entry that follows depicts a particular Site for you to play with.

Also like characters, Sites are described with certain categories of information. Most of them are self-explanatory, but here's what you'll be looking at:

Type: A general descriptor for the kind of place the Site is, meant to help you match up Sites with Districts. This is a rough guideline only; it has no impact on game mechanics.

Description: What does the place look like? Smell like? *Feel* like? What purpose does it serve dramatically? Mood comes across naturally from description, but this section also offers up some thematic considerations for the Site.

History: The history of the Site or the people who make it distinctive. Understanding what a place was like yesterday helps make sense of it today.

Activity: What are background characters doing here? What goes on at this place?

Significant Storyteller Characters: Look in this section for a broad sketch of the Storyteller characters (and potential Subjects or Assets) that can be found at this Site.

Extras: Background characters that might come and go but aren't really an integral part of the place. Use these to add dimension to a Site's description over time. On one visit, the place may be empty. On the next, a family of tourists might be crowding into the place.

Hostile Encounters: How might the place go bad? Where is the potential for conflict and violence?

Locations: What spaces can be found within the Site? This isn't a definitive list, but a collection of quick options for Storytellers staging chases, fights, investigations or any other scene here. The locations within a Site, like a shower or walk-in freezer, also serve as inspirations for equipment modifiers to actions at the Site.

Stories: Look in this entry for story ideas that can arise organically out of the Site, or conflicts that could impose themselves here — all good fodder for drama.

Site Traits

Like characters, Sites are described in game terms with simple traits. Most of these are related to other traits with which you're already familiar, but for the sake of clarity they are described again here.

Location, Security, Size: These ratings are more or less equivalent to those used for the Haven Merits with the same names. This lets you translate a Site (or a ruined counterpart) into a haven with ease. See **Vampire: The Requiem**, pp. 100-102 for details on each trait.

Advantages: Sites are essentially equipment. A Site provides bonuses to actions involving certain Skills that jibe with the Site's function. A popular nightclub grants a bonus to Socialize actions, a veterinary clinic grants a bonus to Medicine and Animal Ken rolls, a dark alley is a good place to hide (using Stealth). The potential benefits of a Site are pretty broad (see Chapter Three: Barony), but they all have one thing in common: The characters must be at the Site to gain the benefit.

Status: Some places have a reputation of their own. When they do, mentioning them in the right circumstances can provoke awe, envy or ire. A Site's Status represents how well known it is — *and* how well regarded, overall. A character that owns a Site gains its Status bonus to dice pools the Storyteller deems suitable. Two kinds of Status cannot be applied to a single roll, however. Nobody is impressed that the Prince (City Status 5) has a bar located near the ballpark (Site Status 2); they're impressed that he's the Prince.

Sites by Name

24-Hour Laundromat
Abandoned Factory
After-Hours Boozecan
Alley
All-You-Can-Eat Buffet
Aquatics Center
Army Surplus Store
Badlands Motel
Bookstore
Brothel
Church
City General Hospital
Coal Tunnels
Community College
Confessional, The
Consulate
Crematorium
Crumbling Animal Shelter
Dojo
Drug Lab
Drug Market
Elephant Graveyard
Fashionable Bistro
Five-Star Hotel
Forger's Workshop
Front Company
General Practitioner's Office
Gray-Market Electronics Shop
Gun Shop
Hardware Store
Hidden Temple
High-Traffic Subway Station
Highway Overpass Shanty
Hot Dog Cart
Illegal Sweatshop
Indy Coffee Shop
Junk Shop
Library
Limo Service
Mechanic's Shop
Neighborhood Gas Station
Nightclub
Occult Bookseller
Penthouse Condo Haven
Photo Studio
Police Satellite Office
Police Station
Private Club
Private Detective Agency
Private Gym
Private Surgery Practice
Psychic's Parlor
Public Swimming Pool
Repertoire Cinema
Roller Rink
Safe House
Seedy Pawnshop
Shooting Range
Slaughterhouse
Small Park
Taxi Dispatch
Tech-Sector Office
Tenement Squat
Triple-Play Racetrack
Two-Bit Attorney's Office
Underground Boxing Club
Underground Nightclub
Underground Parking Lot
University Hematology Lab
Upscale Gallery
Used Car Dealership
Zoo

Mental Sites

Academics: Bookstore, Community College, Library
Computers: Gray-Market Electronics Shop, Tech-Sector Office
Craft: Elephant Graveyard, Junk Shop, Mechanic's Shop
Investigation: Police Satellite Office, Police Station, Private Detective Agency
Medicine: City General Hospital, Crumbling Animal Shelter, Private Surgery Practice
Occult: Confessional, Hidden Temple, Occult Bookseller
Politics: Consulate, Police Satellite Office, Private Club
Science: Drug Lab, University Hematology Lab

Physical Sites

Athletics: Aquatics Center, Private Gym, Roller Rink
Brawl: Dojo, Underground Boxing Club
Drive: Limo Service, Used Car Dealership, Taxi Dispatch
Firearms: Gun Shop, Shooting Range
Larceny: Forger's Workshop, Safe House
Stealth: Coal Tunnels, Underground Parking Garage
Survival: Army Surplus Store, Small Park
Weaponry: Hardware Store, Slaughterhouse

Social Sites

Animal Ken: Crumbling Animal Shelter, Zoo
Empathy: Brothel, Church, Psychic's Parlor
Expression: Indy Coffee Shop, Repertoire Cinema, Upscale Gallery, Photo Studio
Intimidation: Abandoned Warehouse, Alley, Crematorium
Persuasion: Brothel, Penthouse Condo Haven, Two-Bit Attorney's Office
Socialize: Indy Coffee Shop, Nightclub, Private Club
Streetwise: Drug Market, Illegal Sweatshop, Seedy Pawnshop
Subterfuge: Front Company, Underground Nightclub

Remember, though, that not everyone responds to Status in the same way. Normally, a character shouldn't be penalized for having a good rating in a trait like Status, but consider the audience. The owner of a rival nightclub might not be impressed by the owner of a more popular nightclub. Certainly, the more popular club can't be ignored, and the rival is sure to feel the pressure of Status, but his reaction drifts closer to jealousy than envy.

Durability and Structure: These are very rough guides to the construction and sturdiness of the Site. (Durability and Structure are explained in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 135-138.) Durability describes the kind of materials the place is made of. The higher the Durability, the more solid the building (e.g., concrete walls or steel frame). Structure is a rough measure of the building's ability to retain its functionality. Reducing a Site to zero Structure doesn't necessarily leave it razed or up in smoke. Rather, a Site with no Structure no longer qualifies as a Site; it's damaged to the point of being inoperable.

These traits are included in case a werewolf drives a truck into the Site or some vampire-hunter starts blowing his five dots of Resources on the biggest toys in **World of Darkness: Armory** and comes looking for revenge.

The Sites

Here they are. Using these Sites as models, you should be able to create any setting you want for your chronicle. Using these Sites as written, you have hours and hours of gameplay ahead of you.

24-Hour Laundromat

Type: Commercial

Description: The 24-Hour Laundromat is situated near a busy intersection in a commercial/retail zone. It's a small building, fronted by a synthetic white spray-rock façade. The sign identifying it is plastic and backlit, with a number of wire spikes running along the top as a deterrent to roosting pigeons.

Inside, under flickering fluorescent lights, two banks of chipped, outdated, oversized laundry machines rumble and grind around the clock, saturating this site with perpetual white noise. Even when nobody's using the facility, the hum and click of the lights seem to bounce off every wall and machine, boring through the flesh and bone of visitors. The floor is covered in cracked, patterned vinyl meant to suggest tiling, and the walls are painted a cheap, relatively inoffensive green. A single clock on the wall marks time and advertises a popular soap brand. A machine at the back dispenses detergent and fabric softener, and two hard wooden benches provide seating space for waiting customers.

There is a small box of lost and discarded items next to one of the machine banks, filled with random cloth items: mismatched socks, a pair of shorts, a child's T-shirt. Signs warning customers not to abuse or misuse the machines are posted along the walls.

The 24-Hour Laundromat is cheap and completely self-serve. Most of the customers don't bother to stick around for the entirety of the wash cycle; they simply deposit their laundry, get the machines running and wander out for about an hour.

There is a small maintenance room in the back of the shop, piled with machine parts and equipped with a small tool rack. It's usually locked with a simple deadbolt.

The theme of the 24-Hour Laundromat is *tedious necessity.* Mortals don't feel any real love for this place. Few enjoy their time there, and no real effort has been undertaken to make it the least bit appealing. Sensitive Kindred who visit the Laundromat are often struck with a sense of pathos, sympathizing with the pallid, bored mortals who conduct their business there. Vampires disconnected from their Humanity are more likely to sneer at it, seeing it as an indication of the wretched life of the average mortal. Thus, the 24-Hour Laundromat is a bit of a litmus test for Kindred visitors.

The Laundromat makes a good setting for meetings between Kindred characters and downtrodden or less glamorous mortals. It's not exactly carefully monitored, and anyone with an armful of laundry will look as if he's got a legitimate reason to be sitting around inside.

History: The 24-Hour Laundromat has been in business for almost 40 years, and very little has changed over all that time. The machines are serviced and replaced whenever they break down, and the advent of more convenient technology has brought about a couple of wholesale replacements (the addition of coin-operated machines eliminated the necessity for a cashier in the early '70s, and digital timers improved efficiency overall in the '80s).

There have been a couple of violent crimes in and behind the Laundromat over the years. Most are family altercations that get out of hand; in one case, an argument led to a fatal stabbing in front of the detergent dispenser. There is something about the noise in this place that seems to drive nervous customers over the edge; more than one dispute has come to blows that both participants later claim was extremely uncharacteristic for them.

For some reason, the machine shop at the back has been the target of frequent break-ins, even though the

thieves usually don't get away with anything more than a couple of screwdrivers or a lug-wrench set.

Activity: The Laundromat is completely self-serve. There is almost always one or two people watching a load of clothes tumble around and around in one of the machines. At peak hours (on weekends), every machine is occupied. Otherwise, it's never very busy.

The owner of the Laundromat performs semi-regular maintenance, walking through to make sure that the machines are all in working order, collecting coins from the cash trays and retiring to the back of the shop whenever something needs repair. He avoids contact with the customers if possible, and only visits so that he can keep the place generating funds.

A number of petty criminals make the Laundromat an occasional base of operations. On cold nights, a local drug dealer runs his business from the benches, pretending to do his wash. Small-time thieves and perverts sometimes sneak in, looking to steal some clothes for sales to vintage shops or to keep in personal collections.

Significant Storyteller Character: Disgruntled Owner (Dice Pools: Crafts 6, Academics 4, Larceny 4)

Extras: Overtired local drudge, raucous punk roommates doing the monthly wash, small-time dealer running operations, seedy drunk searching for a warm spot to sit, furtive thief looking to grab unguarded clothes

Hostile Encounters: The drug dealer threatens the characters, assuming they are narcs or competitors. The manager accuses the characters of mishandling a machine and breaking it. A customer accuses the characters of stealing her clothes.

Locations: Storefront, machine banks (–1 Mental abilities due to noise), maintenance room (+1 Crafts)

Stories: Expose and destroy the rival small-time criminal influence using the site as a base of operations. Watch out for an unwelcome vampire who feeds on late-night customers of the Laundromat. Conduct a campaign of sabotage in an attempt to convince the owner to close up shop and sell the location to the characters' interests.

Traits: Size 1, Security 0, Location 2, Advantages: n/a, Status 0, Durability 35, Structure 2

Abandoned Factory

Type: Industrial

Description: A lightless, rusting hulk of a building, crisscrossed with half-rotten catwalks and splintered supports. The huge, defunct manufacturing floor is covered in an inch-deep layer of dust, broken glass and rat droppings. The rusting remains of cannibalized assembly lines remain in place, slowly disintegrating. Frayed conveyor belts sag on skeletal tracks. Cavernous ovens and mixers stand inert, their electricals long torn away and sold for scrap. A row of empty offices overlook the floor from above, accessed via a dangerously ruined, rust-shot staircase. Pieces of the roof have collapsed, leaving wide patches of the floor exposed to the sky. The pavement outside and in the loading docks is cracked and stained with decades-old oil drippings.

By day, long shadows dominate the manufacturing floor, concealing sharp protuberances and slick, filthy puddles.

By night, a cloak of near-impenetrable darkness falls over the whole of the interior, making quick navigation impossible for all but the bravest or most foolhardy interlopers. The scrabbling and squeaking of rats is magnified by the exposed metal surfaces throughout, making it seem as if anyone who wanders into the factory is surrounded by innumerable threats. Characters with low Composure ratings will be unable to remain steady for long in the late-night environs of the Abandoned Factory — and those with low Resolve are likely to leave quickly, whether they choose to or not. Any use of the Nightmare Discipline should receive a substantial bonus (+3) in this site.

The Abandoned Factory is inhospitable to both the living and the undead. Be sure to describe the dangerous, ramshackle appearance of the place — everything seems to be on the verge of collapse, and it all might come down as soon as someone touches it. The factory would make a good location for a physical confrontation, or it might serve as a particularly inhuman (or unfortunate) vampire's haven. The theme for this site is *hazardous neglect.*

History: Fifty years ago, the Abandoned Factory was a landmark of local industry. Thousands of locals found employment in and around the huge facility, and many praised its establishment there. However, the incidence of disease rose dramatically in the surrounding area, and it was soon discovered that the plant's byproducts were poisoning the neighborhood. A bitter, pitched battle followed, with the locals squaring off against the factory's management. Eventually, the business was driven away — but they were not legally obligated to clean up their mess. They just stripped the buildings down, sold off everything they could and left. The site remained, and the city never managed to raise the funds to raze the building or eliminate the toxins that permeate the structure itself. Nobody could be convinced to buy the land, and the structure remains to this day — slowly falling apart, while the locals can do little but avert their eyes when they happen to pass near.

Activity: There isn't a lot of life in the Abandoned Factory. There's a thriving community of rats breeding in the damp, dark corners of the building. On occasion, a small band of thrill-seeking urban explorers will make their way onto the floor, photographing the remains and climbing on the extremely dangerous wreckage.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Rats, ragged stray dog, unwholesome vagrant, curious teenage wanderers

Hostile Encounters: Because the factory is so insecure, hostile encounters can easily arise when characters encounter other interlopers — whether on purpose or not. Territorial vagrants and Kindred defend their chosen shelter from perceived invaders. A hungry dog, desperate for food, attacks the characters. Police searching for a fugitive stumble across the characters, mistake them for trespassing criminals and attempt an arrest.

Locations: Ruined shop floor (+1 Stealth), decaying offices, crumbling walkway (–1 Athletics, –2 Stealth), defunct loading bay, half-collapsed roof, water-damaged cafeteria (+1 Stealth)

Stories: Try to make peace with an angry vampire after accidentally stumbling on his assembly line haven. Intercept a weapons shipment at the loading dock before a gang of violent Kindred can receive it. Save an overdosing street kid found squatting in the offices.

Traits: Size 4, Security 0, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

After-Hours Boozecan

Type: Commercial/Underworld

Description: This small commercial site has been converted to an illegal after-hours club, complete with a small, poorly lit bar, seating space for about two dozen people, and a quick-access fire (and police) escape. The whole place is painted black: walls, floors, ceilings and windows, for that dim, dark nightclub vibe. The limited illumination, combined with black lights and cramped quarters, make it pretty difficult to spot details.

The bar is stocked with cardboard boxes full of beer and a few liquor bottles. It's not a full selection by any means. Close examination of the sticky, beer-stained counter will reveal the residue of powdered drugs.

There's really nothing in the way of security at this site. When it's in operation, a bouncer keeps close watch on the door, but without him, there's really nothing but a simple lock to stop an unwanted visitor from making their way in.

The After-Hours Boozecan is a down-in-the-gutter location useful for scenes involving contact with some of the rougher elements of a city. Characters will need to make a Streetwise roll just to figure out where the place is (or have access to an informant), and they're going to have to make another one to get in without raising hackles. The theme of the site is *lawlessness.*

History: This site is located in a large, commercially zoned building on the edge of the club district. Technically, it's still a retail business (it's listed on the books as an independent film studio), but the legitimate base it grew from fell through about eight years ago when the owners went bankrupt. They quietly sold their lease to a couple of friends, who repainted, remodeled and reorganized.

Four years ago, a well-known drug dealer was knifed in the corner, where he died unnoticed. His body was subsequently ditched in a nearby alley, and while the police investigation has never really gone anywhere, most of the punks in the neighborhood know where the murder went down.

Over the course of its nearly decade-long operation, the Boozecan's seen a few close calls. A couple of medical emergencies, brought on by overdoses or alcohol poisoning, have threatened to reveal the existence of the site to authorities. Quick-thinking bartenders staved off the threat by taking sick customers to a nearby hospital in each case, cementing their reputation as members of the scene.

Activity: The After-Hours Boozecan opens for business at about two or three in the morning, just as most bars are closing up shop. On weekday nights, it tends to be busy, but not overcrowded, from then until sunrise. On weekends, though, the Boozecan is packed to the limit — beyond the limit, really — until the operators push everyone out, blinking, into the morning sunlight. Most of the customers are unsavory types, but they usually know better than to get violent. Anything that leads to a bust could shut the whole place down forever, and nobody wants to earn the reputation for causing that.

Significant Storyteller Character: Huge Bouncer (Dice Pools: Brawl 7, Intimidation 6, Streetwise 5)

Extras: After-hours drinkers, punks on a bender, junkie looking to score, curious "scene tourists," predatory dealer

Hostile Encounters: A local punk draws attention to the characters by accusing them of working with the police. The bartender bans the characters after they're involved in a brief scuffle with a friend of his. A fight breaks out after the last bottle of beer is sold.

Locations: Dark, beer-stained main room (+2 Stealth, –1 Investigation), tiny bathroom

Stories: Track a murderous drug dealer to the Boozecan. Use the site as the staging ground for an assault on a rival vampire who's out of touch with the scene. Seek out a degenerate vampire who's been feeding on customers in order to sate his vice.

Traits: Size 1, Security 1, Location 5, Advantages: +2 Streetwise, Status 1, Durability 30, Structure 2

Alley

Type: Any

Description: City Hall's been gettin' rid of the alleys as they rebuild, you know that? Sure glad they missed this one, it being such a beaut and all. So somebody shit behind the Dumpster... circle of life. And, yeah, there're no windows lower than the fourth floor on either side. Just means privacy. Like the steam from that grate, there — ambience. Great place for a nice, civilized conversation. Right?

The city has all kinds of alleys, and they're all well-decorated. Some of them have strobe lights, others retro fallout shelter signs not connected to any particular door. In the immediately postwar neighborhoods, most of the alleys are open, bounded only by yards gone to seed. In the slums and shantytowns, alleys are as narrow as they can get without completely blocking traffic. In commercial areas, they tend to be wide enough for several people to walk abreast.

The thing they have in common is that they're not places people stay. Alleys are there to get you from one end to another... unless they're blind alleys, in which case they're there for somebody to get cornered. Alleys are most likely adjacent to territories the characters already claim, or are convenient spots to lurk in someone else's territory.

History: When two thoroughfares love each other very much, sometimes they give birth to a connecting pedestrian walkway. Other alleys are old coal delivery routes, the bastard children of Victorian heating, and cousins to the coal tunnels under downtown. Many are accidents, created when buildings were demolished and their replacements didn't *quite* fit together.

Activity: For most alleys in your chronicle, very occasional. A few are havens for the homeless, and some are frequently used shortcuts.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A student hurrying home. A gruff-looking man starting a barrel fire.

Hostile Encounters: The characters are mugged. An old enemy appears in their way.

Locations: Up against the wall, face down in the concrete, inside a Dumpster

Stories: Lie in wait for a rival. Trace the city's old pedestrian roads trying to find an ancient haven.

Traits: Size 1, Security 0, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 0, Durability n/a, Structure 2

All-You-Can-Eat Buffet

Type: Commercial

Description: This brightly colored establishment is a mainstay of suburban dining, its garish sign lit up day and night, advertising the all-you-can-eat lunch and dinner buffet, highlighting "over 400 dishes!!!" in bright red letters. The restaurant itself is a large, low building,

featuring seating for 300 patrons, arranged around four long steam trays, which are divided by category: soup and salad, two hot rows and desserts. The whole of the interior is carpeted with industrial, easy-clean flooring, designed to look festive without attracting too much attention.

The décor is set by the season. Whenever a holiday is near, a set of decorations is hauled out of the back room and strung up all over the interior: red and green tinsel for Christmas, pink and red for St. Valentine's Day and so on. Family dining is the bread and butter of this establishment, so every effort (within the bounds of a limited budget) is made to create a happy, friendly atmosphere. Tables are set with paper mats depicting colorful cocktail choices, and staff members are outfitted with ice-cream colored uniforms.

This site has terrible security. The doors are fitted with deadbolt locks, but employees often prop them open to make carrying garbage or equipment in and out easier. There are two security cameras in the parking lot, but they're broken and haven't been repaired for months.

The All-You-Can-Eat Buffet is a setting suffused with *mundane happiness*. It's nothing fancy, and it often suffers ridicule, but the simple truth is that a lot of people enjoy eating there. Kindred visitors to the buffet restaurant may be struck with a sense of ordinary life — the spark of the ignorant, satisfied masses teeming in their city, completely oblivious to the horrors and pleasures awaiting more inquisitive mortals.

History: The All-You-Can-Eat Buffet first opened in 1976, and has enjoyed relatively steady business since. Shifting trends in diet have occasionally caused a dip in sales, but never too intensely, and never for too long. Nothing of real significance has ever happened here.

Activity: Open from 11 A.M. to 9 P.M. every day, the buffet is constantly busy, but rarely full. After close, the staff stays on for about an hour and a half to clean up and prepare for the next day. Late at night, the place is locked up and completely dead.

Significant Storyteller Character: Restaurant Manager (Dice Pool: Persuasion 4, Socialize 5, Academics 4)

Extras: Family diners, service staff, cashiers, cooks, cleaning crew

Hostile Encounters: An aggressive diner bumps into one of the characters on his way to the steam trays and chews them out for getting in his way. A child throws food at one of the characters. A customer grows impatient in the parking lot and gets into a fender-bender with the characters.

Locations: Extensive family seating area, buffet steam trays, washrooms, manager's office, kitchen, staff room

Stories: Host a large gathering of mortals at the restaurant as part of an influence maneuver. Investigate rumors that a local vampire has been poisoning the food supply at the restaurant for reasons unknown. Monitor the mortal family of one of the local vampires as they dine.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 2, Advantages: +1 Socialize, Status 0, Durability 45, Structure 2

Aquatics Center

Type: Residential

Description: The Aquatics Center sits back from the road, reclining amidst an occasionally well-tended lawn and a set of superfluous tennis courts. The Center's core is two large domes, tied together by large-windowed corridors and office annexes. Gilded with circular awnings and a second-story main entrance, the mid-century design looks more like an alien spaceship than a public building. The pools close to the public shortly after sundown, with the locker and weight rooms open an hour or two longer. Barring the occasional private party, the building stays quiet until morning, the only occupants a pair of overpaid and overweight security guards.

The theme of the Aquatics Center is unnerving emptiness. After dark, the floor-to-ceiling windows that make the corridors and areas around the pool feel airy and open by day create a sense of exposure at night, while the cramped, mildewed locker rooms are downright claustrophobic. The cavernous pool areas are lit only by safety lights and exit signs. The water casts silky, sickly green reflections on the dome ceilings, and always seems a shade darker than it should. Gazing into the regulation diving well, it's not hard to imagine *something* lurks within, either invisibly swimming the depths or perhaps lurking just beneath the concrete walls. The irregular, choking gulps of the filtration system do little to help. And while the chlorine stench may seem clean to mortals, it is acrid and sometimes even painful to the refined senses of the Kindred. To vampires, the night belongs to the dead, and a visit to the Aquatics Center is uncomfortably like being in the belly of a living thing.

Nonetheless, the Aquatics Center has its share of undead visitors. The security guards have been known to let their friends use the weight room, and some of those friends are friends of the Damned, as well. The locker rentals are also attractive; while they've become a bit of an open secret in the Kindred community, they're a good place to keep drugs and other merchandise from the eyes of mortal law.

History: The Aquatics Center was built as a YMCA facility in the early '60s. At the time, it was state of the art, with two indoor pools (one Olympic-sized) and an out-

door pool surrounded by picnic tables. Of course, back then the Aquatics Center was in a sterile middle-class suburb. During the '70s, the Center became a meeting place for gay men who were beginning to assert a public cultural identity, and even became a rallying point for gay political organization toward the close of the decade. The adoption of the Aquatics Center as an unofficial gay community center met with surprisingly little flack from the nearby residents, who preferred to keep out of their neighbors' business, or the Young Men's Christian Association, which was glad for the traffic.

In 1982, however, the city annexed the suburb containing the Aquatics Center. The neighborhoods had been depleted by white flight, but hadn't been replenished by a corresponding rush of minorities. The houses themselves weren't worth much, either; whatever they'd cost the original owners, they'd been put together on the cheap by developers in the '50s. The city rezoned most of the area as cheap commercial space, and turned the blocks immediately around the Aquatics Center into dense, subsidized housing.

The "Y" kept its heavy traffic, but that traffic got younger and younger, dominated by children who needed a place to hang out rather than homosexual couples who liked to volunteer and make donations. In 1993, the YMCA sold the facility to the city, which filled in the outdoor pool and cut back the open hours. There's another story, one that hangs around the place like a chlorine smell. Any of the local children will tell, in cautious tones, about the cousin of a friend (or was that friend of a cousin?) who broke in after hours with her friends and wound up drowning. It's the kind of story kids always tell — but the older kids have more details, and some of the old gay crowd tell the story, too....

Activity: During the summer, the pools are packed with children and teenagers; the weight room is also popular with the latter. The rest of the year, it's busiest in the early afternoon. Year round, the youthful energy of the customers sparks confrontations with the aging staff, as does the youthful apathy of the lifeguards. The Aquatics Center is nearly deserted at night.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Security Guards (Dice Pool: Weaponry 5)

Extras: Swimmers doing laps. Hobbyist weightlifters working out. Teenage boys leering at girls.

Hostile Encounters: If trespassing and making a lot of noise, the characters will run afoul of the security guards. Otherwise, the Aquatics Center is safe by virtue of its emptiness.

Locations: The Olympic pool, the main pool, the weight room, the locker rooms, the sauna, the administrative offices

Stories: Break into a locker looking for drugs. Use the Center as a neutral meeting ground. Investigate a drowning.

Traits: Size 4, Security 1, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Athletics, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Army Surplus Store

Type: Commercial

Description: The sign at the top of the building still reads MANN GROCERY COMPANY, but the store inside the old supermarket has been National Surplus for as long as anyone remembers. The decaying MANN sign reflects the National Surplus way of doing business: lots of products, no frills. If it's military or outdoors-related, and not directly related to killing people, you can be sure you'll find it at National Surplus. You can even buy inert grenades, not to mention the quarter of the store devoted to men's shirts, fine china or whatever the owners found cheap this month.

In the mid-'90s, the owners experimented with opening a paintball range upstairs. (Actually, they *wanted* a firing range, but zoning laws murder dreams.) The range is no longer open regularly, but can be rented for private parties if you know the owners.

National Surplus is all about *preparation and fear*. While National gets its share of recreational campers and hipsters looking for large boots, the clientele that make the most lasting impression are those who are convinced they *need* the equipment, that if they don't have it, they're going to meet a horrible end. Even campers feel the need to be careful; seems like everybody knows somebody who disappeared out in the woods. Who's to say it didn't have something to do with packing the wrong tent peg?

As much as most of the Kindred avoid the wilderness, National Surplus is a good fit for the Kindred mindset. Durable clothing, fire extinguishers, machetes... everything a body could want for a haven, or to go negotiate with Lupines.

History: National Surplus was originally founded after World War II to purchase and resell military uniforms and equipment. Operating from a warehouse in the city's northern suburbs, National was primarily a wholesale operation, supplying local industry and fire departments. (At the outset of the Korean War, National achieved brief notoriety for selling stock back to the Army at nearly twice the original cost.) It opened its first retail superstore in the mid-'70s, and moved into the two-story Mann building a few years later. National did a booming business in late 1999 as "Your Y2K Headquarters." The banner stayed up a full week into January of 2000, as if stubbornly waiting for the

promised apocalypse. Another spike occurred after the September 11th terrorist attacks, and small ones can be expected every time America's National Terror Alert changes color. Elysium gossip suggests that the real owner of National Surplus is a Lancea Sanctum preacher known for his fire-and-daylight apocalyptic sermons, but it's probably a joke; nobody was telling it before 2000.

Activity: National Surplus is busiest during the day and rush hour, located as it is along a commuter route out of the city. Because of the huge space and overflowing shelves, National seems mostly deserted even when busy.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A rotating cast of college-age clerks. Boy Scouts excitedly discussing an upcoming hike.

Hostile Encounters: A survivalist draws a weapon over a derisive comment from one of the characters. The Predator's Taint tips off the characters to a vampire hiding in the back room.

Locations: Cash register counter, aisles upon aisles of gear and knick-knacks, upstairs paintball range

Stories: Stock up on exciting gear such as chemical glow sticks. Train on the paintball range. Sell off a load of illicit but valueless merchandise.

Traits: Size 3, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Survival, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Badlands Motel

Type: Residential/Commercial

Description: Crude, gray, and uninviting, this is a nasty place for anyone to find himself in, day or night. The chipped and peeling paint on the walls is caked with thick, decades-old dust. The light fixtures both inside and outside the rooms are unreliable, often flickering or just burnt out. A large neon sign out by the road advertises vacancies, as well as the color TV in each room. The sign once indicated a pool as well, but that part of the sign's been knocked out, since the pool's been dry for at least eight years. This isn't a place to stay — it's just shelter. Characters with Resources • can afford to stay here for a few nights. Those with Resources • • can make their stay indefinite, if so inclined.

The office is harshly lit with fluorescent lights. A portable television is mounted on the counter for the manager to watch — it seems permanently stuck between channels, but nobody ever bothers to adjust it. A pegboard mounted on the back wall holds the keys to each room. A dull, half-broken bell sits on the counter, for summoning the manager from his alcove in the back late at night.

Each room is carpeted with a dusty, deep beige pile, loaded with stains and ground-in dirt. The beds are creaky and lumpy, the television sets barely work and the showers only run hot in the evenings, and only for an hour or two. The door to each room features a simple deadbolt lock and a flimsy chain.

The Badlands Motel makes a good setting for just about any story in the World of Darkness. The theme of the site is *the last chance* — it's just one short step above sleeping out on the street, and it plays host exclusively to the desperate and the lost. Evil circumstances chase a lot of people into a place like this, and some of them never make it out again. Kindred who stalk the Badlands Motel are usually the ones forced to feed on the outskirts of a city, excluded from all of the more convenient or classy sources of Vitae.

History: The Badlands Motel opened for business in 1960. At the time, it was just a clean, relatively well-appointed rest stop. Positioned poorly, it was missed by most of the traffic coming into and going out of the city, and the motel rapidly began to lose money. Unable to afford the upkeep and incapable of finding an interested buyer, the original owners (a husband and wife) watched helplessly as it fell into disrepair. By 1964, the bank financing the business took possession of the motel and sold it off at a cut-rate price.

The second owner, a rather unscrupulous man with rumored connections to organized crime, began to use the motel as a launching pad for his less-than-legal side projects. Several gambling and prostitution busts were made at the site, and he eventually went to prison — but not before legally passing the motel off to his brother, who held it for him.

In the last 30-odd years, the motel has served as the backdrop for four murders, 17 armed robberies, 15 reported cases of assault (and dozens of unreported ones) and no fewer than six massive smuggling busts. Local police have a nickname for the place, earned, they say, many times over: "Fugitive Hotel."

Activity: There are never more than a couple of rooms rented out at a time in the Badlands Motel. Technically, the office is open all night, but the manager often sleeps off a drunk in his alcove, emerging only if somebody bothers to ring the bell more than a couple of times.

Significant Storyteller Character: Drunken Motel Manager (Dice Pools: Larceny 3, Weaponry 4, Streetwise 4)

Extras: Three-time loser on the run, undercover narc, organized crime lowlife, gang members, bad-luck prostitute, nomad vampire

Hostile Encounters: A jumpy fugitive attacks the characters, hoping to score some cash. A narc busts the characters for engaging in criminal activity. A nomad vampire frenzies in reaction to Kindred characters' Taint.

Locations: Squalid rooms, poorly lit parking lot (+1 Stealth), grimy office, manager's quarters, empty swimming pool

Stories: Track a murderer to the Badlands Motel and administer the Prince's justice before the police get to him. Seek out a fringe-dwelling vampire known to feed on the denizens of the motel. Ferret out a rebellious cell of vampires using the motel as a staging ground and base of influence.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 0, Visibility 0, Durability 35, Structure 2

Bookstore

Type: Commercial, Downtown

Description: If you can't beat 'em, act like 'em. It's a strategy that works well for vampires and nearly as well for Clark Booksellers. Step inside, and you'll find all the accoutrements of the modern chain bookstore: large selection, nice chairs and a coffee bar with a girl whose smile shines as brightly as her piercings. With a prime location and a cult following among hipsters who find the store's history hilarious, "Clark's" can pull in a steady revenue stream for a Kindred handler. It's also not a bad feeding ground: the shop has become a meeting place for young professionals looking to share their love of greats such as Jack Kerouac and Norah Roberts. A careful vampire can pull Licks here as easily, and with less competition, than at more traditional sites on the Rack.

History: Clark Booksellers used to be a chain itself. In 1976, real estate baron Truman Clark kickstarted the business with outlets in a half dozen of his retail properties. Clark stores were small, spartan affairs, where minimal staff worked for minimum wage. They were the kind of place nobody liked and everybody shopped. Truman was betting on long-term returns, so he sold hardcovers at a substantial loss, undercutting then-numerous independent bookstores and driving them out of business. Eventually, there were Clark bookstores in virtually every mall and strip mall in the tri-county area.

Unfortunately for Truman Clark, he *always* bet on the long term. When he died, his sons Andrew and Truman Junior found themselves squabbling over a land and retail empire that couldn't pay for itself. With the addition of a disinherited daughter, Carla, and several ex-wives (Truman Senior just didn't like letting women hold the purse strings), the legal saga of the Clark family played out for years in the papers and drive-time radio.

In the meantime, premium chain bookstores were growing in popularity — and making money by keeping customers in stores with lattes rather than long lines. Escaping his family troubles with the Clark Booksellers trademark and none of the related debts, Andrew set up a single location in a converted townhouse. Much to the surprise of his brother and sister, who are still trying to divide piles of slums and strip malls, Andrew's business is thriving.

Activity: Clark's is always busy, from opening at noon to closing at midnight, but the crowds are heaviest between eight and 11.

Significant Storyteller Character: Andrew Clark, the owner

Extras: A steady stream of customers from noon until midnight. Two guys flirting in the DVD section. A cashier palming money from her register. A customer donating his time to put the graphic novels back in order.

Locations: The cafe, the registers, the books and music section

Stories: Use Clark's distributor connections to hunt down rare books. Pick up dinner. Intimidate Carla out of suing over old assets.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 3, Advantages: +1 Academics, Status 0, Durability 30, Structure *

Brothel

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: The little white house is pristinely painted, which makes the roadside sign for Madame Sandra, Psychic Reader incongruous in its disrepair. But Madame Sandra doesn't have much use for a sign. The people who need her know where to find her. Her parlor is hung with heavy drapes and portraits of great spiritualists such as Helena Blavatsky and Aleister Crowley. Madame Sandra, a handsome woman just shy of 40, greets customers in a crimson kimono and green scarf. Madame Sandra's psychic readings were originally a front for her prostitution, but now both are active vocations. Whether you're looking for a palm reading or a hand job, expect satisfaction and be ready to pay.

The Madame has two "girls," one of whom assists her in services, and the other who fetches her groceries and prescriptions. She never leaves the house herself.

The theme of Madame Sandra's is breaking down. The Madame herself is a mix of buried anxiety and disassociation, but she's keenly observant and easy to trust. She really listens, and she can tell what people want to hear, whether it's about their sexual prowess or their romantic future. The Madame tells every kind of lie, just as long as it has a happy ending; her clients are people and monsters who need those lies. But, as Kindred learn too well, lies can only hold the truth at bay so long.

Significant Storyteller Character: Madame Sandra/ Lindsay Coburn (Dice Pool: Empathy 4, Subterfuge 4)

Extras: A nervous man in the parlor, a society matron walking back to her car, Madame Sandra's assistants

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: The parlor, the kitchen, the reading room, a basement gym, the work bedroom, Lindsay's bedroom

Stories: Scare off cops or gangsters trying to get Madame Sandra to pay protection. Find out if a vampire who's been patronizing her has been telling too much. Bug the reading room or bedrooms, without Madame suspecting.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 2, Advantages: +1 Empathy, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Kindred who find their way into Madame Sandra's good graces or onto her client roster may find her a useful anchor for their Humanity... as long as they don't think too much about what's going on behind her eyes. They might also gain access to her client files, full of the secrets and insecurities of patrons past and present.

History: Lindsay Coburn was a high-end prostitute from her late teens through her mid-20s. Thanks to good looks and a protective madam, her career as a call girl was charmed. Her clients weren't so lucky — almost uniformly wealthy, stressed and damaged. Lindsay had been talked into the business on the grounds that a pretty woman could make a lot of money for very little work. That was a lie; Lindsay didn't find sex taxing, but dealing with johns was exhausting. They'd bemoan their marriages, their jobs and their friendships, and Lindsay would take it all away with a smile and flattery. Lindsay came to the bitter conclusion that not only couldn't money buy love or happiness, but nothing could. Disillusionment became depression, depression became agoraphobia and agoraphobia became home business. Lindsay Coburn became Madame Sandra.

Activity: Clients are taken by appointment only, so the Madame or one of her assistants is on the phone.

Church

Type: Residential, Downtown

Description: You were meant to come here in the daylight. The minarets and the false towers, those are meant to shine in the sun, to show mere mortals God's reflected glory. But they're above the streetlights and they're angled just wrong, so instead they're black spikes stabbing at Heaven. Even the bas-relief cherubs take on a sinister cast, their brows knitting and their lips twisting in the shadows from passing headlights. God's glory? No, not even God's judgment. The Morningstar Fellowship Hall radiates God's twisted sense of humor. That's not to say it's not uplifting to the soul, or at least numbing to the hole yours left when it got ripped out. There's a certain comfort in saying, "God, you sly bastard... right back at you," and then smirking at each other like men's men and cracking up. Old Testament style.

Mortals don't tend to see it that way, which is probably why the pastor rarely schedules services during the day. Shea Alexander's message, delivered from his "rescued" marble pulpit, is simple: if you're ready to believe in Christ, Christ is ready to believe in you. Pastor Shea is full of hellfire for the sinners, but takes care to remind

the saved that salvation isn't so hard. Just take the Spirit into your heart and sign on the dotted line. Anybody who wouldn't take a deal like that, well, he deserves what he gets.

The Church is a whole bundle of assets for the right vampire. Although Shea's still paying off the mortgage, he's pulling in donations at a rate usually reserved for guys who perform miracles as a half-time show. Parishioners looking for guidance are one step away from being marks or blood dolls. Pastor Shea might be the greatest asset of all, with his Catholic taste for restrained theatrics and his folksy Protestant appeal.

History: The Morningstar Fellowship has only inhabited the hall for the last year and a half, and they owe it all to a generous bank and the sins of others. After the press exposed molestation by three Catholic priests, and a coverup masterminded by the city's long-serving Cardinal, the Archdiocese deconsecrated several churches and put them up for sale. God provides, but Caesar awards judgments.

Shea Alexander was preaching in a storefront at the time, an old toy store. As much irony as he was able to milk from that, the opportunity to reign in a proper church was tempting, as was the opportunity to take it back from obviously failed and fallen papists. He secured a substantial loan and purchased the property. The central location and improved production values have been good to his ministry; any given service attracts upwards of 100 people.

Activity: Morning and noon services. After sunset, the Church is open to all those who feel the need to pray or just reflect quietly.

Significant Storyteller Character: Shea Alexander, Pastor (Dice Pools: Empathy 6, Persuasion 6, Intimidation 6)

Extras: A practicing choir. The janitor, working on a particularly difficult carpet stain. A homeless man standing by a radiator, admiring a window depicting the Eighth Station.

Hostile Encounters: The characters interrupt an argument between the pastor and a young woman. A sensitive who has been attracted to the Church rants angrily about things that should be dead... and asks the characters for help.

Locations: The main hall: the altar, the sacristy, the transepts. The rectory: the parish office, the pastor's quarters

Stories: Install a Sanctified preacher to handle evening services. Find out what connections Pastor Shea has in the financial community.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Empathy, Status 2, Durability 60, Structure 2

City General Hospital

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: The hospital speaks. The fluorescents whine, the floors yawn as they sag, the patients cry out and fall silent. Stop, listen and you hear one long story of suffering and neglect. No beginning, no ending, plenty of sound and fury. Wander the moaning halls, and you'll find the light stretched as thin as the staff, City General itself forever dying along with the worst of its patients.

Hospitals are classic prizes for Kindred, being full of people who are already feeling ill, drugs to fence for cash and a fair share of stored blood if you know which fridges to avoid. That also puts hospitals among the worst and most likely places for a Kindred turf war. The current Prince has yet to award City General as a territory. Instead, he's arranged the ghouling of a few staff members and put them at the disposal of a rotating series of Kindred caretakers. Those caretakers are free to weasel access to just about any hospital resource. The psych ward is particularly tempting: with individual rooms, no windows, and one guarded door in and out, the psych ward makes a great rental property.

History: City General opened in 1954, an ivory tower of healing and science. Affiliated with a university medical school, the Hospital promised state-of-the-art health care and first pick of the best and brightest young doctors. Some employees say that was actually true; others say the hospital was a disaster from the outset. In 1973, a city paper published "Do No Harm," a series of articles criticizing overtaxing of interns, reduction in emergency care and generous bonuses given to the top administrators. Shortly afterwards, the university sold its interest in the hospital to a national conglomerate. Since then, the building has grayed and its staff dwindled. City General is known in the medical community as a career dead-end.

Activity: City General is busy 24 hours a day. Characters trying to get the attention of a physician are likely to be put off and passed around, but not because anyone's loafing. Quite the opposite; the medical staff, administrators and facilities crew are in constant motion. They might even look efficient, if their eyes were less hollow, if the waiting rooms were less crowded, if the sounds in the halls sounded less like the wailing of the damned.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Doctors and nurses, but not enough of them. Hypochondriacs persistent enough to get ignored. Patients living and dying with every kind of disease.

Hostile Encounters: A man made of stitched-together corpses recovers on an emergency room table, starting a brawl when he lashes out at his doctors.

Locations: X-ray bay, maternity ward, psych ward, emergency room, various labs, doctor's lounge, cafeteria

Stories: A nurse with too-even features begins euthanizing patients on the seventh floor. An anesthesiologist stealing from the medicine stores draws attention to thefts perpetrated by the characters. An x-ray machine shows images of mutilated bodies — bodies that have never been admitted to the hospital.

Traits: Size 4, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +3 Medicine, Status 0, Durability 70, Structure 2

Coal Tunnels

Type: Downtown, Transit

Description: One tunnel's very like another, down here. All narrow walls and smooth, arched ceilings. Occasionally, one is distinguished by a sagging, dead light fixture or an abandoned coal cart. And clean, so clean. No people, because there's no heat. No other vermin, because there are no people. Barely any water, either, which is a tribute to how sturdy all this concrete must be. Even the parallel lines of the rails, their ties long since rotted away, run evenly into forever.

Yet, this underworld touches the world of the living — intimately. Most of the older buildings in the downtown core are linked to the tunnel system, and some of the newer ones plunge into the ground only a few feet from the tunnels. A little construction could make the Coal Tunnels a perfect transit system for the characters.

History: The Coal Tunnels might be the sturdiest piece of history lurking under the city. Built around the turn of the century, they were one of those great ideas that turned out to be completely unworkable. That idea: use the electric power of tomorrow to deliver coal needed to heat today's big buildings. Predating the city's commuter electric rail by half a century, the Tunnels were closed down around the same time it opened.

Activity: N/A

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: N/A

Hostile Encounters: Nothing living.

Locations: Junctions

Stories: Build a haven connected to the Coal Tunnels. Connect them to an otherwise secure building. Meet something monstrous far from the eyes of the living.

Traits: Size 5, Security 0, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Stealth, Status 0, Durability 100, Structure 2

Community College

Type: Residential

Description: Leaves crunch beneath your feet. Students shuffle between low, brown buildings. The smell of damp grass fills the air. The usual activity of a college campus... but a little too late at night, and just a little too slow. The students look wrong, too. Some of their backs have been bowed by burdens heavier than books, and they're not excited to be here, so much as determined. They walk the lighted paths between the buildings, focused on where they're going more than where they are.

The theme of the Community College is *determination.* Few students are here because they're just doing what comes next. They want to get into a bachelor's program. They want to get better jobs. They want to pick up where they dropped out. Few circumstances can be exploited as easily by a vampire.

Universities are a bad place to pick up food. Though many students are feeling the first blush of freedom, they're also closely watched and tightly scheduled. The Community College is a little better. Kindred with older appearances can blend in more easily, and students don't live on campus. These same qualities make the college useful to vampires who can admit they need help keeping up with the times. The Community College is also an excellent source of cheap help with basic academic skills. Complex research projects can be divvied up among several students while their Kindred master puts together the pieces.

The college buildings are open most of the night, and they're not used to capacity. The school's not a bad place for a meeting, and Elysium was even held in the theater for a few months while the usual venue was being renovated.

History: The college was established in the mid-'70s as part of the mayor's education initiative. Most of the buildings were built back then, and are showing their age.

Activity: Bursts of students move across campus at 10 before each hour. A man and woman argue outside one of the buildings. A few smokers watch with vague interest from the library doorway. The sounds of a piano drift from somewhere nearby. One car hits another in the parking lot.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A homeless man sleeping in the quad.

Hostile Encounters: A mugger accosts the characters.

Locations: Science building, theater, library, classroom buildings

Stories: Protect a favorite Lick from retaliation by an ex-lover. Secure a building for a secret meeting between the Prince and a visitor. Learn how to use the Internet.

Traits: Size 5, Security 0, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Academics, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

The Confessional

Type: Downtown

Description: The Confessional smells like piss, but, you know, a lot of places in this city smell like piss. The smell's practically a tourist attraction. At least the Confessional comes by it *honestly*, right? It's a restroom, after all. One of those pay-per-flush jobs the city installed a few years back. You put in some change, you take a crap and while you're at it, you read the writing on the wall. Maybe leave some of your own. Something about your ex-girlfriend or Jesus or how the two of them are fucking.

Next door, Town Hall Liquor smells a little less like piss and a lot more like rotgut. The clerk, Larry, has been known to let folks open their purchases in the store. It's a bad habit, but he's a softie. Unless you're shoplifting. Larry watches all six glittering aisles with Coke-bottle glasses and beefy fists.

The value of the Confessional is all location. Run down as the block is, Town Hall's right near City Hall. The store gets a lot of foot traffic from all kinds of people, so both it and the coin-op rest stop generate some income. The toilet's a little better. Something about that spot makes people tell the truth. Nobody lies in the Confessional, and a lot of them leave the truth in Sharpie. Maybe some little kid drowned in there, or it's on an unusually small Indian burial ground. Who cares? All that catharsis over the last few years has made the place a mystical hotspot. One an enterprising vampire could exploit. Or rent.

History: In the late '90s, the city tried out a network of pay toilets in the downtown core. The program couldn't cover its costs and shut down within a year. The water and electricity were cut off, and the johns were locked up for good. Not all of toilets were physically removed, though, and that's where the Confessional's story starts. Town Hall's owner hasn't been paying for water or energy for over a decade, and Larry didn't have much trouble extending those pirate utilities a little. They jimmied the coin box, clean it occasionally, and it pulls in regular cash. Larry's noticed the weird chill in the john, and noticed the unusually direct nature of some of the graffiti, but he doesn't think much about it.

Activity: In the Confessional... exactly what you'd expect. Starting shortly before sunset, Town Hall pulls a steady stream of commuters and partiers, some of whom take advantage of the facilities, and a few of whom are highly placed.

Significant Storyteller Character: Larry, the clerk (Dice Pools: Empathy 4, Brawl 4)

Extras: Shoppers

Hostile Encounters: Larry's strict about checking IDs, and unmerciful to those with fakes. After all, they're not really customers. Anyone trying to bullshit him is likely to get tossed out into the street.

Locations: The john, the register, the aisles, the storeroom, the employee bathroom

Stories: Rent access to the spot to the Ordo Dracul. Trap a guy on the toilet 'til he spills.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 3, Advantages: +3 Occult, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Consulate

Type: Downtown

Description: A wooded drive leads to a miniature Baroque palace. Inside, cherry and oak furnish a bold, rich decor. Gently flickering gas flames light the solemn halls, and classical music plays from somewhere almost out of earshot. The Consulate's a beautiful building, particularly given that it represents a country you've never heard of.

The Consulate's broad mission includes "cultural exchange" and "economic development." The diplomats search out markets for goods produced by state-owned factories. These markets do not have to be, shall we say, strictly legal — and they don't have to be remotely ethical. The diplomats wine, dine and bribe city officials and local businesspeople, looking to move products from army boots (now used by the Police Department) to submachine guns (now used on the Police Department).

Diplomats cultivate an Old World atmosphere that will appeal to older Kindred, and they're very useful friends. Calls from its staff are always returned. Three of the senior diplomats have diplomatic immunity, and the Consulate grounds themselves are territory of the nation it represents. You could bury bodies in the garden. Provided you don't dig up any of those already there.

History: When the Soviet Union collapsed, its consulate in the city closed down, and the diplomatic personnel were called home or laid off. For the federal employees who monitored the Soviet diplomats, it was like losing old friends, or a favorite TV show going off the air. For the small, newborn republic that bought up the land, it was more like Christmas. Like *American* Christmas. While their countrymen struggle to maintain basic utilities, the diplomatic staff live it up on tax money and donations from homeland business magnates. It's for the greater good, really. And if you're so concerned about those starving workers, why not order a few? They work hard, and they're very lovely....

Activity: Business meetings can occur at any time, and hush-hush ones may happen after business hours. Receptions and parties of varying formality are held several times a week, particularly early in the fiscal year.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Quiet, well-dressed security guards, a junior diplomat sending a fax home, an irritated local lawyer

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: Long driveway, ballroom, dining hall, conference rooms, bedrooms, diplomatic offices, security checkpoints, gardens

Stories: Sneak an old friend, or some undocumented dinners, into the country. Move contraband using diplomatic vehicles. Find out if a vampire is nesting inside.

Traits: Size 3, Security 3, Location 3, Advantages: +4 Politics, Status 4, Durability 55, Structure 2

Crematorium

Type: Residential, Park

Description: Credit where it's due; the architect at least *tried* to make it fit. Sure, the flying buttresses are a little much, and the charming little gargoyles are have lost most of their plaster features. The Crematorium is a squat, square building that's been dolled up to match the funeral home and the rest of the cemetery. Inside, the only gesture to comfort is a cramped antechamber with cherry paneling and a decaying loveseat. Once you're into the Crematorium proper, it's all business. The lancet windows used to spruce up the outside are smoked, and a full 18 feet above the work floor.

The crematory is a story-and-a-half high hulk that dominates the interior. The coffin (a plain pine box, not the fancy kind weirdoes sleep in) is loaded onto an inclined conveyor, about the height of a man. Once the oven has reached the necessary heat, the coffin-door can be opened by a crank, which also operates the conveyor. The coffin slides into the bottom of the furnace, which directs a continuous stream of flames over the corpse's torso and body. In a few minutes, the timer dings, and a second crank wheels out the cremains tray.

Nobody would hang out in the Crematorium for fun, but it's a real godsend for interrogating Kindred. Choke down your own fear, tie a guy down in a coffin and start asking questions. Might want to practice a little, so you can time your real good questions to the temperature gauge; it beeps every 100 degrees. Then, when it's hot enough to incinerate corpses, it beeps three times. Sort of like a microwave.

History: The city's first municipal crematory was installed in 1918, following a massive flu epidemic. The crowding of local cemeteries had been a problem since the late 19th century, and the flood of unidentified flu victims was too much for the conventional disposal infrastructure to handle. More and more citizens have had their bodies cremated throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. This Crematorium was built in 1972, when the cemetery was still run by the city. Through various quirks of the municipal contracting process, it's still operated by city employees, even though the funeral home is leased and the rest of the cemetery is run by a private contractor.

Activity: During the day, between a half-dozen and dozen cremations are performed. Family sometimes watch, but usually the only witnesses are the crematory operators.

Significant Storyteller Character: Crematory Operator

Extras: N/A

Hostile Encounters: Only the ones you arrive with.

Locations: The antechamber, the crematory

Stories: Catch the crematory operator on his way home to find out what he knows about a local vampire's disappearance. Sabotage the furnace to disrupt an execution.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 0, Durability 30, Structure 2

Crumbling Animal Shelter

Type: Medical

Description: A gray, unassuming, flat-topped building at the edge of the city center. Paint peels on the sign above the door, hinting at the sad state of the interior: underfunded, under-staffed and woefully under-equipped, it's in a perpetual state of near-collapse. The constant cries of caged, unclaimed strays and abandoned pets echo throughout the structure. The walls are thinly painted cinderblock, the lights cheap, unflattering fluorescent. The only soundproofed rooms in the building are two veterinary offices — small, sterile and just barely organized enough to keep from being cluttered.

Characters searching the medical offices will be able to find some drugs and equipment, but nothing that's designed for human consumption. They'll need to make a Medical roll to make sense of the drugs and figure out whether or not they're useful.

The Animal Shelter has no real security to speak of: the front and rear doors are just locked with a simple deadbolt, and the cages are not locked at all — they just have a hook-and-latch system designed to provide the caretakers with easy access while preventing animal escape.

When describing this site, be sure to keep the distressing noise and the smell of the caged animals in the

forefront. The theme here is *contained desperation*. If a vampire enters the scene, the animals will all go wild with panic in their cages, trapped as they are in the presence of a high-order predator. Characters who are especially softhearted might not be able to take the surroundings at all; the helpless, hopeless animals in this place are a living reminder of the apathy and ignorant cruelty of the World of Darkness. A Resolve + Composure roll may be required to reflect whether or not characters are able to function without breaking down or losing their cool while in the cage facility — especially for those with a Morality or Humanity rating higher than 6.

History: The Animal Shelter's been in operation for at least 30 years. When it opened, it was a bright, clean facility representing the hopes of its original backers. Slowly, though, over time, it has been swept aside in favor of hot-button issues, enduring funding cuts and neglect. Most of the people working there have been around since the start, and have watched the inexorable disintegration of their dreams.

Activity: Everyone working at the Animal Shelter is engaged in a constant struggle to save the animals that come into his or her care — responding to medical needs, searching for welcoming home, and raising funds. They are all stretched to the limit by their circumstances — at any given time, each volunteer is likely to be found feeding an animal, placing an important phone call and directing an animal service worker with a newfound stray to an empty cage. To make things worse, at least one bottom-feeding vampire is likely to consider the Shelter an ideal source of captive Vitae — meaning that a number of the pets are sick or dying no matter what the workers do.

Significant Storyteller Character: Strung-Out Veterinarian (Dice Pools: Animal Ken 7, Medicine 6, Persuasion 4)

Extras: Idealistic volunteer care worker, cynical animal services catcher, stray dogs and cats

Locations: Reception, veterinary offices (+1 Medicine), cage facility (–1 to all Mental and Social Abilities due to noise, –2 if a vampire is present because of panicking animals), medical freezer

Hostile Encounters: If the characters are vampires, every animal in the place is hostile. A dog or cat might escape from its cage and attack. A poor neonate looking for a quick snack reacts badly when the characters surprise her. A veterinarian believes the characters are antagonizing the animals and tries to forcibly eject them.

Stories: Track and capture a vagrant vampire who is feeding on the trapped animals and threatening the Masquerade. Isolate the stray dog that is carrying and spreading a strange blood disease. Investigate a blood cult that is stealing cats from the shelter for sacrifice.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 2, Advantages: +1 Animal Ken, Status 1, Durability 45, Structure 2

Dojo

Type: Commercial

Description: Ads for the Bradley Dane Tae Kwon Do Academy are a staple of late-night local advertising. "Learn to defend *your*self while building self-esteem *and* sportsmanship," shouts a tough-sounding announcer, while children and adults break cinderblocks and execute impressive flying kicks. The Dojo itself commands less attention, being tucked away on the second floor of a tired strip mall.

Most classes at the Dojo are for children, but around two dozen adult hobbyists and competitors also train there. Some of them have learned self-esteem and sportsmanship, but most are in it for the exercise or the beat downs. The adult classes are exclusively in the evening, as are the mock tournaments. If vampires don't mind faking a sweat, they will fit right in. Kindred students can benefit substantially from Bradley's defensive focus, and can make friends who'll watch their back in a fight.

History: As Bradley Dane's ads boast, he's a three-time finalist in regional tournaments. They don't mention that the middle-aged coach hasn't competed in over a decade. Bradley broke his knee in a decidedly unofficial match, and the chronic pain has kept him from serious exertion since. While Bradley enjoys teaching, he misses competition. He'd sure like to teach the guy who broke his knee a thing or two.

Activity: Two or three classes are going on at any time in one of the two large training rooms. Dane prefers to teach the adult classes himself, but his trick knee means he sometimes leaves demonstrations to one of the senior students.

Significant Storyteller Character: Bradley Dane, instructor (Dice Pool: Brawl 4, reduced by his injury)

Extras: Children of various ages, wannabe kickboxer, devoted Olympic hopeful

Hostile Encounters: Bradley gets angry when asked about his knee. One of the other students resents a character's quick learning.

Locations: Two classrooms (converted ballet studio), business office

Stories: Recruit Dane as a ghoul. Enroll a mortal friend for her own protection. Place money on an upcoming tournament.

Traits: Size 4, Security 1, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Brawl, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Drug Lab

Type: Residential

Description: From the outside, the high rise looks ready to crash. It should; it's been condemned going on six years now. Windows are out up and down the sides, and graffiti is creeping like ivy up the brickwork. The elevator still rattles up and down, but only when the current occupants are expecting visitors. The occupation is masterminded by a successful methamphetamine cook named Bert Turner. Bert, a skinny kid probably not even old enough to buy beer, is being protected by muscle on loan from a customer, and they're enjoying their leeway.

Bert's operation is headquartered on one of the old apartment building's top floors (though not the very top; the roof is caved in). He does his work surrounded by peeling yellow wallpaper and unusually brave rats. He uses a camping stove, pots and pans, and an array of tubing and thermometers; the kitchen looks more like a boiler room. The ramshackle lab isn't very sanitary, but Bert's an expert cook and works in large batches.

History: The high rise and the block around it have been officially vacant for several years. Until recently, the building was home to squatters; these days, Bert's cooking crew don't let them beyond the lower floors. Bert rarely leaves the building; while he and "the guys" are on good terms, it's well understood that he can't be seen by police. He's too good at what he does, and the cops have too many questions about the fire that burned down his parents' house.

Activity: Bert's guards on patrol. The train storming past on the half hour.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Bert Turner, methamphetamine cook; Bert's Guards (Dice Pool: Firearms 5, each)

Extras: Squatters on the lower floors

Hostile Encounters: During a confrontation between the cooking crew and the characters, some of the product ignites. Police raid the building, looking for Bert Turner or the characters.

Locations: Empty apartments, lab kitchen, Bert's bedroom, guards' rooms

Stories: Expand the lab to synthesize a larger range of drugs. Take over protection of Bert, and keep him on a tight leash.

Traits: Size 4, Security 2, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Science, Status 0, Durability 60, Structure 2

Drug Market

Type: Residential, Plaza, Underworld

Description: The obelisk is meant to commemorate the brave soldiers who fought in the Spanish American War. Instead, it marks the city's busiest bazaar, a Drug Market operating openly and apparently above the law. There are lookouts, yeah, but nobody expects trouble because the cops don't have the manpower to storm in this part of town. The dealers, the customers and the various hangers-on crowd the square, pumping money in and out of the thriving local economy. They represent all races, religions and any economic class that can't send

somebody to buy their coke for them. The Drug Market brings people together.

Security is provided by a loose coalition of local gangs, with a common interest in supporting local commerce. Not all of them are directly involved in drug sales — in fact, a few of the block's own crews have grown up only to service the Drug Market. Others have brought a variety of secondary businesses to the Market, from the oldest profession to the newest Hollywood bootlegs. Coke to Kalashnikovs, blowjobs to *The Italian Job*, you can buy anything at the Drug Market.

The criminals who benefit from the Market forbid violence, and crack down hard on anybody breaking the truce. As Kindred well know, that doesn't actually stop the killing: it just means that violent outbursts are unscheduled and twice as dangerous.

Moving in on the Drug Market can be as difficult as it is desirable for vampires. The dealers, unlike their customers, are primarily local, and they figure they've got enough competition amongst themselves. Dealers in new commodities are often welcomed, though.

History: The city's busiest drug markets are what law enforcement types call "closed networks" — you have to know a guy who knows a guy. Even the downtown street dealers are pretty careful about whom they deal with. In the late '90s, some housing department genius decided that he could make all that go away. If friends deal to friends, he thought, let's split them up and surround them with strangers. As part of a large investment in the city's subsidized housing infrastructure, he arranged to move thousands of families off the blocks where they'd lived for decades, and into a series of ethnically and socially mismatched new neighborhoods.

At first, it worked: the new neighbors distrusted each other, and the criminal elements quarreled and murdered each other as expected. Within a few years, though, some of the networks realized how much they had to offer each other. They formed new alliances and drew new territory lines. The Spanish-American War Memorial happens to be right at the intersection of several of those territories. As a recognizable landmark, it became an obvious spot for diplomacy and business. Parlays and power lunches merged with everyday dealing, and the Drug Market was born.

Activity: The Market is busiest between sunset and midnight, but does a good business at all hours.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Customers of every variety. Suspicious lookouts watching new arrivals. Groups of dealers jealously guarding their spots. Undercover cops sizing the place up for a raid.

Hostile Encounters: A wholesale customer opens fire on a stingy dealer. A lookout decides the characters are narcs.

Locations: The obelisk, the park benches, the video disc tables

Stories: Snap incriminating photos of someone important shopping at the Market. Carve out a spot for a Kindred-affiliated cartel. Make the local gangs an offer they can't refuse.

Traits: Size 4, Security 0, Location 4, Advantages: +4 Streetwise, Status 2, Durability n/a, Structure 2

Elephant Graveyard

Type: Industrial

Description: Similar to a fairy-tale wolf, the city swallows its prey whole. Go poking around its belly, and you'll be surprised what it coughs up. Come off the highway, drive into the shadow of the overpass and suddenly you're surrounded by metal hulks of impossible size. Despite the city's halo, the darkness is perfect at night, and you'd be better off finding your way by the tattoo of rain on old steel than the distant streetlights. Welcome to the Elephant Graveyard, where old airplanes and construction equipment are gutted and dumped.

Shine a light or perk up your eyes, and you'll find the cyclopean carcasses of military and civilian aircraft, cranes, even oil derricks. The graveyard is poorly guarded and unused. Every so often, a few homeless try and camp here, but the long alleys between corpses create bone-chilling winds. These conditions don't pose a problem for Kindred, though, and a dedicated vampire could hide a haven in one of the planes or scrap piles. Gain access to the chop shop, and the characters could build or destroy on a large scale.

History: The Fitzgerald Aerospace Maintenance Yard was opened several decades ago, back when the government intended to actually do maintenance here. Turns out, though, that it's cheaper to dispose of aircraft than to fix them; they're a little like people, that way.

Activity: The only activity, besides the occasional dumping of new bodies, is at the chop shop. Located in the northeast corner of the yard, this hangar is equipped to disassemble large equipment such as airplanes and cranes. New arrivals that can't be dumped in one piece are dismembered here and then hauled into the yard.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A homeless woman. A lone security guard. An elderly veteran considering suicide.

Hostile Encounters: The security guard catches sight of the characters. Police chase a suspect through the graveyard, with both sides blundering through.

Locations: Scrap piles, aircraft great and small, the chop shop, the security booth

Stories: The characters find an elaborate chapel in an old bomber; the crucifix has thorns through Christ's eyes instead of in his crown. A mysterious explosion in the chop shop results in regular patrols by authorities.

Traits: Size 5, Security 0, Location 0, Advantages: +3 Crafts, Status 0, Durability (variable), Structure 2

Fashionable Bistro

Type: Commercial/High Society

Description: This classy, overwhelmingly beautiful restaurant is situated in a converted red-brick townhouse, facing onto a bustling downtown street, right across from a luxury hotel. The restaurant is decorated throughout in subdued, warm colors based around a burgundy palette, and the atmosphere is both sophisticated and relaxed. This is a place for the in crowd to dine, to host and to be seen. Candlelit booths are nestled in warm corners, each set comfortably apart from the rest. Vaulted ceilings carry and reflect the light, conveying flattering illumination to every place in the site.

Out front, full valet parking is provided, and guests are walked under a well-lit canopy to the wooden double doors. A maître d' directs them to the well-appointed bar, if they so desire, or walks them directly to the reserved table. All diners ought to reserve their tables in advance (although some high-profile guests, admittedly, are always welcome and will always find a table ready). A dinner and drinks will be quite costly; characters with Resources • • • can afford to visit the Bistro once in a while (assuming they choose carefully from the menu), but frequent guests will need at least Resources • • • •. It's not unheard of for a table bill to grow into the thousands when champagne or other drinks are factored into the equation.

The cuisine has a French Mediterranean focus, and the tantalizing scent of spice and baking bread is always in the air. Mortals often experience a brief, uncontrollable flush when they first enter the Bistro, thanks to this carefully conceived aroma. A vampire who smells it may react just as strongly (perhaps more so) or not at all, depending on his age and how badly he misses eating food.

This site is relatively secure. While the locks are simple key-and-bolt affairs, the restaurant itself is generally so busy that someone is always around, and will almost always notice an unexpected visitor. During peak hours, there are valets, waiters, bartenders and cooks everywhere.

The Fashionable Bistro is a perfect setting for stories involving the upper crust of humanity and the vampires privileged enough (or vain enough) to claim it as their milieu. Everything in the site is aimed at making its patrons comfortable and happy, so the operating theme here is *exclusive luxury*. Of course, the flipside of that comfort is the security involved in keeping out the less fortunate, and eagle-eyed characters will notice that the windows and doors are reinforced.

History: The building that now houses the Fashionable Bistro was once a residence, built in 1897, and owned by a wealthy family for three generations. Even before the building's modern incarnation, it played host to some of the city's richest and most powerful citizens at the famously elaborate dinners arranged by its original owners.

In 1960, the house was rezoned as a place of business and refurbished as a restaurant. It was run at a loss for more than 10 years by an affluent owner concerned more with his own establishment in the entertainment scene and less with profits. In 1972, though, a gossip column in the local newspaper reported a visiting A-list celebrity's preference for the place, and suddenly business took off. It soon became *the* hotspot for both traveling and local celebrities, and even attracted the attention of the Kindred world, becoming a "watering hole" of the Invictus. Now it's nearly impossible to get a reservation there unless one is either world famous or incredibly well connected.

Activity: The Fashionable Bistro is open for business from 6 P.M. to 3 A.M., but the staff is hard at work every day at sunrise. Kitchen assistants bring in the day's fresh produce early in the morning, and the chefs get to work preparing the necessaries for the evening's menu. By the time the doors open to guests, most of the kitchen staff have been at work for almost 12 hours.

In the evening, the Bistro is always packed full. The bar is surrounded by seated patrons enjoying a drink, the tables are all occupied and bartenders, waiters and hostesses are busily moving back and forth making sure every customer is content. Parties often last all the way until last call (and sometimes much longer — depending on how much money is produced).

There is almost always at least one table occupied by an influential vampire and his entourage. Kindred characters making a sudden appearance can expect a very chilly reception indeed — and may well be presented with the opportunity to make the worst decision of their Requiems.

Significant Storyteller Character: Invictus Mainstay (Dice Pool: Entrancement 9, Socialize 7, Intimidation 5, Politics 5)

Extras: Steely-eyed maître d', sycophantic waiter, magnificent hostess, agonizingly overworked kitchen assistants, faux-humble celebrity chef, smooth valets

Hostile Encounters: An unwelcome character is faced with the simmering wrath of a vampire patron. Characters without a reservation are dismissed by the maître d'. Characters approaching the Bistro's back door are accosted by a belligerent valet.

Locations: Swanky tables (+1 Socialize), bustling kitchen (+1 Stealth, +1 Crafts), freezer room, washrooms, manager's office, valet parking lot

Stories: Gain entry to the exclusive Bistro in order to seek an audience with one of the patrons. Protect a celebrity visitor who insists on attending an event despite recent threats. Conspire to humiliate a prominent Invictus vampire who is out stargazing during a high-profile party.

Traits: Size 2, Security 4, Location 5, Advantages: +1 Socialize, +1 Persuasion, Status 4, Durability 45, Structure 3

Five-Star Hotel

Type: Residential/Commercial

Description: The Five-Star Hotel is *the* elite luxury resort for visitors to the city (and local businessmen looking to impress clients). Standing at an impressive 32 stories high, the Five-Star Hotel's glass edifice towers over the downtown core, offering an unobstructed view in all directions for guests. Hundreds of millions of dollars went into constructing and furnishing this building, and every detail, from the marbled neo-Roman fountain in the lobby to the heavy velvet drapes on the penthouse suite's four-poster bed, has been selected with an eye toward invoking a sense of lavish beauty.

There are more than 1500 individual suites within the hotel, from relatively simple single and double accommodations to the multi-tiered penthouse rooms. Each suite is carpeted and fully stocked with amenities, and features a picture window view. Vaulted ceilings and tasteful decoration mark each and every guest room as an outstanding living space. The décor follows a subdued, off-white color scheme, creating a sense of soft, neutral, unobtrusive surroundings. On closer examination, though, every piece of furniture and fixture is perfectly detailed, bringing together a presentation of absolute finery and opulence.

Two swimming pools (one outdoor, one indoor), an extensive arboretum, a full shopping concourse, five luxury restaurants, six fully equipped board rooms, eight ballrooms and four world-class bars round out the building's facilities. All are decorated with the same attention to style and detail as the guest suites, and all contribute to the Five-Star Hotel's famous reputation for unparalleled accommodation.

But the physical accoutrements of the building itself are only half of the equation. Every guest at the hotel is appointed a concierge staff, which is available 24 hours a day, ready and able to respond to every request. A staff of thousands services the hotel around the clock, ensuring that no customer is ever faced with an unpleasant or unsatisfying experience throughout his or her stay. Privacy and relaxation are paramount at the Five-Star Hotel, and the entirety of the staff is instructed to make their best effort in guaranteeing both without pause or exception. Every guest pays dearly for her accommodations (some of the penthouse suites run into the tens of thousands for a single night's stay), and none should ever be presented with a denial of comfort or pleasure.

Of course, if an abundance of money is offered up, even the rule of law doesn't limit the entertainments the hotel staff will arrange for their honored guests. High-class prostitutes, drugs and even more bizarre illegal services are delivered straight to the rooms of those willing to pay — and police bribes are often included in the price.

Characters who wish to stay in the hotel can come up with the money for a small room with Resources • • •, and a mid-sized or double with Resources • • • •. Only characters with Resources • • • • • can possibly afford the price of an exclusive suite for more than a couple of nights. If a character is staying for only one night, the Resources requirement drops by one — but that single night will tap their budget out.

The Five-Star Hotel's security system is state of the art. Security cameras, monitoring stations and a professional guard are in force 24 hours a day. It's almost impossible to go anywhere in the building without being seen. Keycards provide access to rooms and activate the elevators. Express verbal invitation must be given, in person or over the room-service telephone, for a guest to approve a visitor. Complicated electronic combination locks provide access to the security rooms, including the hotel safe and shopping concourse vault. Each room also has its own safe, featuring a combination lock that is reset for each guest. The windows in most rooms are sealed, tempered glass.

The Five-Star Hotel is an ideal location for stories that bring the characters into a world of decadent entertainments — the playground of the rich. The theme for this site is *ostentatious excess,* and it applies well in any chronicle that involves high-stakes play among the rich and famous Kindred of a domain.

History: The Five-Star Hotel was constructed in the early 1990s, raised over the remains of a rezoned office block. Several citizens' groups attempted to halt the project, claiming that the hotel's size and height would block out the view enjoyed by people on the street, as well

as cast a shadow over a nearby park. The protests were never taken seriously, and accusations of corruption were leveled at the City Hall officials involved — and subsequently dropped. The hotel opened for business in 1998, immediately securing a place as one of the most popular and most profitable resort locations in the city.

Activity: Activity in most of the Five-Star Hotel dies off in the evening, with the closing of the shopping concourse and the pools at 10 P.M., but the late-night bars, full-service 24-hour staff and frequent high-society parties up in the suites ensure that there is always someone around, no matter how late (or how early) one arrives. The Hotel averages one-quarter to one-third empty on slow weeks, but it tends to be full to capacity during peak events (including holidays, local entertainment festivals and certain conventions).

Significant Storyteller Character: Hotel Manager (Dice Pools: Socialize 6, Persuasion 5, Academics 3)

Extras: Obsequious concierge staff, efficient maid, eager busboys and porters, world-weary bartender, wild partying rich kids, repressed conventioneers, unscrupulous businessman on assignment, celebrity on a press junket, reclusive billionaire

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: Single room, penthouse suite (+1 Socialize, +1 Intimidation), executive board room (+1 Intimidation), swimming pools and gym (+1 Athletics), elevators, shopping concourse, indoor arboretum, ballrooms (+1 Socialize), bars (+1 Socialize)

Stories: N/A

Traits: Size 5, Security 4, Location 5, Advantages: +2 Socialize, Status 3, Durability 75, Structure 2

Forger's Workshop

Type: Residential

Description: The Forger's Workshop is sandwiched between a real liquor store and a check cashing joint, hunching comfortably over a neighborhood grocery. The brick buildings, painted over in a shiny but flaking rust-red, would be charmingly antique if somebody gutted them and stuck in Starbucks and Benetton. Historic charm, waiting to happen soon as the history gets cleared out. The windows, covered in neon and washboard and metal grating, promise cold beer, a notary public and half a dozen lottery games. Inside, the aisles are full of dry goods and canned soups, with an ample freezer section and a grudging produce section at the front. The real work is through the back and up the sagging stairs.

The upstairs workshop is also nearly the home of its teenaged master. Dozens of disarrayed but well-loved computers and printers are lit by chili pepper lights and the ghost glow from old CRTs. When new customers come calling, the boy might turn on the halogen in the corner, but if he knows you, he expects you to cope. A ceiling fan moves around stale air with a tang of marijuana smoke. The room is watched faithfully by a poster that could be Miss September, if Miss September had eyes that blue and happened to be a contortionist. An oversized closet holds an old-fashioned darkroom, for those times when digital just won't do.

The theme of the Forger's Workshop is everyday business. This shop isn't frequented by international jewel thieves or regularly turned over by the cops. The owner just sells you what you need, whether it's a doctored passport or a bruised head of lettuce. The store is a neighborhood fixture, whether or not you know what goes on upstairs.

The characters are likely to know the Forger's Workshop well: Kindred need access to talented forgers. Few vampires retain any legitimate legal identity. Ghouls and other proxies can handle large transactions, such as the deeds to houses, but it doesn't hurt to be carrying a driver's license if one gets stopped for speeding. They got Al Capone on tax evasion, after all. Worse, a surprising number of Kindred were Embraced in the prime of youth — and tonight, that's likely to mean getting carded. Plus, a lot of elders are pretty short....

History: Business can be a strange thing. The owner used to run a little grocery store; still does, if you check his taxes. One day he got a notary's license, and not long after, he bought a sign. NOTARY PUBLIC, said the sign, with a pleasant pink halo. Men came and asked him to stamp papers. And noticing the grocer's *excellent* penmanship, they'd ask him to make little changes. Occasionally, he'd help out a poor wretch from foreign parts, just imparting a little knowledge about the law, and a few false promises. Just to make him feel better. Not long after, the grocer hired the boy with the computer. With the boy's help, the grocer wasn't limited to changing numbers or imagining dates. Together, they can rearrange and remake the whole world of paper and plastic.

Activity: Not much. The grocery business could keep itself afloat, but most of the traffic is daytime, and practical forgery clients use it as cover. Night clients are likely to be teenagers needing fake IDs, criminals who have been procrastinating or even Kindred.

Significant Storyteller Characters: The Owner, the Boy

Extras: An unfriendly-looking man leaving with a brown-paper parcel, a group of teenage girls waiting for a friend to pick up her order, the occasional legitimate shopper contemplating a box of stale Oreos

Hostile Encounters: The owner keeps a gun under the cash register, but he's more likely to attempt Intimidation than to actually fire.

Locations: The grocery aisles, the cash register, the upstairs workshop, the miniature darkroom

Stories: Pick up an order for a senior Kindred. Get a suspicious document checked out by a talented faker. "Borrow" flammable chemicals from the darkroom.

Traits: Size 2, Security 3, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Larceny, Status 0, Durability 40, Structure 2

Front Company

Type: Commercial/Industrial, Plaza

Description: "YouTil," says the directory plaque in the lobby. Doesn't say what a YouTil is, though. Self-service electrical supply? Plumbing contractor? Some kind of Internet company?

The Front Company is all about hiding in plain sight. Enter the offices, and a pleasant but indistinct receptionist will keep you waiting. She's constantly on the phone, talking about order numbers and deliveries, but never being specific about locations or products. Behind her is a portrait of the president, and another of a friendly but square-jawed man with salt-and-pepper hair. The reception area makes up a suspiciously small amount of the rented office space. Whatever YouTil does, it takes up a lot of room.

YouTil might be importing illegal immigrants for sweatshops and sex slavery. Blood farming, even, if there are Kindred involved. Okay, that's a little harsh: YouTil *might* be a front for something relatively innocent, such as conning retirees out of their pensions or selling swampland to veterans. It'll vary by chronicle; after all, "At YouTil, the power is Yours."

History: Established in 1994, YouTil is a leader in their market space. YouTil strives to bring value and satisfaction to customers and investors. YouTil cares about the community.

Activity: YouTil is active whenever you need it to be.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Receptionist (Dice Pool: Persuasion 6); You

Extras: Security guard, man in suit headed home for the day.

Hostile Encounters: If the characters are unwelcome, and attempt to pass through the door, they'll encounter a security guard who's in much better shape than he first appears.

Locations: The reception area, other facilities You require

Stories: Get the Front Company into the local merchants' association. Set up a new human trafficking operation. Find out what's behind that door.

Traits: Size 3, Security 3, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Subterfuge, Status 0, Durability 60, Structure 2

General Practitioner's Office

Type: Medical

Description: A two-story, red brick house that has been converted as an office space for two doctors, including an x-ray and blood-work lab in the basement. The offices each have their own entrance and

waiting room, marked with name plaques. The walls are uniformly white and mounted with framed, oil-painted landscapes.

The basement lab is split into three rooms: the x-ray facility, which is relatively small and completely dominated by the imaging machinery, a waiting area and a room for drawing and storing blood.

Characters attempting to break into the office will find it relatively unguarded. The doors are dead-bolted, and each of the equipment cabinets has a key lock of its own. There are a few painkillers and other drugs in the cabinets, but not enough to make a robbery for anything but personal use worthwhile. The labs are likewise key locked. Even though most of the equipment in the lab is expensive (especially the x-ray imaging camera), it's not the sort of machinery that sells easily on the black market.

The General Practitioner's Office is a versatile location, serving both an ordinary function (as characters may have many good reasons to visit the doctor's office) and an extraordinary one (if they choose or need to hijack its equipment after hours). Most characters will be a little edgy in the office, since nobody really likes being in a place of illness and injury. The theme of this site is *trepidation*.

History: Despite the best intentions of the staff, the General Practitioner's Office, which has been in operation for just over 20 years, has played host to a number of unfortunate incidents. Some very sick individuals have found their way into the office's waiting rooms, forcing a shutdown of the facility on more than one occasion (once with a serious SARS scare). There have been a number of close calls as well, but nobody's died here — mostly thanks to the quick thinking of the personnel and the experience of the doctor himself.

Over time, the buildup of nervous energy seems to have settled into the building itself. People just feel uncomfortable when they show up here. Even patients waiting for a routine checkup start to get edgy, and the effect has been growing in recent years. More than one local vampire has checked the place out just because of its apparent influence, but nothing conclusive has ever been uncovered. Some statements about poor geomantic choices might be on record in an esoteric Academy of the Ordo Dracul, but that's about it. Kindred aware of the effect have begun making use of it to terrorize or interrogate rivals, and it is beginning to earn a bit of a reputation in Elysium.

Activity: The office is open from noon to 6 P.M., Monday to Friday. It locks up after hours, clearing out pretty quickly, and remains empty all night. The blood samples in the basement lab are stored for a maximum of a couple of hours, and are sent out by courier to a local hospital for extensive tests. They are never kept overnight.

During daylight hours, the office is always busy. Patients line up in the waiting rooms, reading or talking in subdued tones while they await the attentions of the GP. There are rarely fewer than three people waiting at any given time.

Significant Storyteller Character: Concerned Doctor (Dice Pool: Medicine 7, Academics 6, Socialize 4)

Extras: Friendly nurse, genial receptionist, busy lab technician

Hostile Encounters: An angry patient confronts a character who seems to have pushed ahead of him in line. A small child falls down and hurts herself in front of the characters, and her mother rushes to blame them. The doctor refuses to prescribe a sedative to an addicted character.

Locations: Exam rooms (+1 Medicine), offices, waiting rooms (–1 Socialize), x-ray lab (+1 Medicine, –2 Socialize), blood-work lab (+2 Medicine, –1 Socialize)

Stories: Intercept blood samples taken from a ghoul before the local hospital gets a chance to examine the biological anomalies created by the presence of Vitae. Investigate the apparent psychic effect of the office to determine whether or not it has an identifiable source. Break into the office and use it to treat a badly wounded ally without running him through the hospital system.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 2, Advantages: +1 Medicine, –1 Composure, Status 1, Durability 30, Structure 2

Gray-Market Electronics Shop

Type: Commercial/Underworld

Description: Out on the edge of the city's commercial district, nestled between a strip-mall restaurant and a dollar store, the Gray-Market Electronics Shop advertises too-good-to-be-true prices on a constantly shifting range of merchandise, including computers, television sets, stereo equipment, small kitchen appliances, GPS locators, cell phone accessories, recordable media and more.

Inside, the merchandise is arranged on shelves according to some kind of complicated system — but it's one that doesn't make much sense to casual observers, who note the feeling of barely controlled chaos upon entry. Without one of the shop's newsprint flyers in hand, it's hard to concentrate on making a specific purchase, especially with all of the competing sounds and images coming off the shelves.

There's a limited security system in place at this site: dead-bolts on the doors and a couple of cameras monitoring the shop floor, as well as a fast-alert signal button that immedi-

ately dials 911 and plays an automated message in the event of a robbery. There's an alarm wired to the barred door, but it's relatively easy for an experienced thief to spot.

The Gray-Market Electronics Shop is a catchall equipment resource for characters looking to scrounge, but their bargain hunting might bite them back. The theme of the site is *ethical ambiguity* — most of the people shopping there know that they aren't getting totally legitimate goods, but they'll engage in willful blindness just to get the good price. Many of them end up paying in different ways altogether, of course.

In general, characters making purchases at this site can get their hands on goods for one dot less than the usual Resources cost — but there's a catch. In most cases, the warranty on the goods will be invalid, either because the company guaranteeing the condition is out of business or because of some other technically legal circumstance. Some of the equipment will prove to be inferior or outright faulty when put to use. It takes an Intelligence + Academics roll to spot the problems in any warranty, and an Intelligence + Crafts roll to tell the difference between a lucky find and a bad choice.

History: The Gray-Market Electronics Shop has been in uninterrupted business for about 11 years, since the construction of the strip mall space the store occupies. It's been hit with fines for selling stolen goods more than once, but never heavily enough to threaten operation. Three years ago, a small group of customers got together to file a civil suit against the shop, claiming that its warranty practices were fraudulent. The case dragged on for almost 18 months, resulting in a judgment in favor of the defendants.

Activity: Open from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. most days, the shop is rarely busy, but also rarely empty. On any given day, the proprietors may be found stocking the shelves, negotiating a shipment with delivery personnel (both legal and otherwise), working to make a sale or watching television. After hours, the shop is locked up tight and left empty.

Every so often, a trucker with questionable merchandise will make a delivery late at night, unloading stolen or counterfeit goods. The proprietor and his friends will be around for any of these deals, although they're careful not to make any revealing statements about the nature of the shipment. They will be on guard in these circumstances, worried that police are planning a bust.

Significant Storyteller Character: Shady Proprietor (Dice Pools: Empathy 5, Streetwise 5, Persuasion 6)

Extras: Bargain-hunting shoppers, fuming former customers, bored staff, time-pressed trucker making a delivery, nervous thief attempting to sell off his haul

Hostile Encounters: The proprietor chases away characters who inadvertently interrupt an under-the-table deal with a trucker. An irate customer pushes the characters aside in an impatient attempt to get a refund. A salesman attempts to cheat the characters with shoddy merchandise.

Locations: Main floor (–1 Investigation due to noise), sales counter (–1 Investigation), delivery bay, staff washroom, basement storage

Stories: Expose a fencing operation running through the shop's basement. Seek retribution for bilked customers who have been denied legal recourse. Find a particular stereo that's stuffed with contraband and being sold, unwittingly, by the shop.

Traits: Size 1, Security 2, Location 4, Advantages: n/a, Status 1, Durability 35, Structure 2

Gun Shop

Type: Commercial

Description: Sandwiched between the beauty salon and the used book store, the gun shop does its best to stand out. During business hours, the door stays open and a life-size cutout of a hunter advertises a popular brand of duck blind. Inside, racks and display cases run the length of the store, chock full of new and very intimidating-looking weapons. The owner watches you casually as he updates his ledger.

The gun shop provides not only firearms but connections to a community of trained gun owners. A bulletin board in the back tracks upcoming hunting events and shooting tournaments. The owner is also willing to backdate receipts for friends who don't want to bother with the seven-day wait.

History: The Gun Shop is a longstanding feature of the area, but it changes ownership every few years. The last owner went bankrupt; the one before him was busted for possession with intent to distribute. The current owner is in the process of trying to sell the store to a nationwide chain.

Activity: A few customers at any given time. A police officer and customer sticking his head in to say hello.

Significant Storyteller Character: Owner (Dice Pools: Firearms 5, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 2)

Extras: A group of regulars who seem to stay the same no matter who runs the shop.

Hostile Encounters: A customer gets into a violent disagreement with the owner. A police officer checking in recognizes one of the characters.

Locations: Handgun case, armor display (special order only), sporting rifles, ammunition storage, hunting accessories display, employee bathroom

Stories: Find a sharpshooter to eliminate a kine enemy. Trace the purchase of a murder weapon. Arrange a meeting with a local pro-gun politician.

Traits: Size 1, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +2 Firearms, Status 0, Durability 40, Structure 2

Hardware Store

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: The clerk gives you a sleepy glance as you saunter in. Past the paint, the PVC pipes, the insulation. Erector-set shelves close in as you look for the really good stuff. Drill bits and hobby knives and everything shining and sharp. You find what you need: a hammer to break bones, a blade to cut skin like soap, whether it's living or dead. The clerk bags them for you and waves you on your way. You smile, but not long enough he can count your teeth. On an impulse, you get some rust-colored paint, too. Might as well decorate to match the stains.

A vampire lives by violence, and she can't always keep the bloodshed one-sided. Preparation always pays off when prey fight back or rivals come calling. Fortunately, mortals mass-produce an array of killing tools. While they get suspicious when someone stockpiles shotguns and butterfly knives, they pay a lot less attention to home repair tools.

History: The Hardware Store is part of a well-known regional chain. This particular franchise is a mom-and-pop operation, and it's something of a neighborhood institution. The owners donate every year to the local parades and restaurant festivals, and in turn they have a loyal clientele of do-it-yourself decorators and professional craftsmen.

Activity: The Hardware Store is busiest weekend afternoons, and stays open only a few hours after sundown.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A tired clerk reading a magazine. A puzzled customer trying to match a paint color.

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: The paint aisle, the power tool displays, plumbing supplies, gardening tools, the back room

Stories: Find a discreet weapon. Booby-trap a haven. Find interrogation supplies.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Weaponry, Status 0, Durability 50, Structure 2

Hidden Temple

Type: Residential

Description: Beneath a classic brownstone, a faithful man waits for his savior. His lair is filthy, less from abuse than from neglect; he reserves his attention for spiritual matters. Radios, CD players and a television produce a cacophony only he understands. He scribbles notes frantically, constantly, using stimulants to stay awake for weeks, then falling into deep and almost comatose depressions. Brian Carpenter is awaiting his messiah, and the savior cannot come soon enough.

A few followers tend him. His sister, Amy, is also his one true apostle, the only one of them to have yet been granted any of his powers. A half-dozen others listen to him with varying amounts of faith. Brian makes converts

easily: he can tell all your fears and dreams, and those who cross him are wracked with seizures and see horrors. His scripture, however, is bizarre at best of times and incoherent at most of them. Still, he promises that, when the savior comes, there will be bliss for all others, and final rest for himself.

Kindred are likely to be bemused by Brian's ranting and less impressed by his powers than the herd. Nonetheless, he's an effective mind-reader. His abilities don't work on vampires, but that's more likely to be an advantage than anything else. He'll find their company restful and their lies credible.

History: Brian and Amy Carpenter inherited the brownstone from their father, who died when Brian was only six. Amy, born from an earlier relationship, was already 18 and assumed guardianship of her younger brother. Brian's powers began to appear shortly after their father's funeral; he often claimed he was talking with Dad's spirit. As he aged, his mind opened wider, and he became less and less able to distinguish his own thoughts from those of others, and the wider mass of humanity from the divine. Amy cared for him as best she could, until he was old enough to drop out of school and get a job for himself.

When Amy tried to kick Brian out, though, he opened her head and made her *see*. Since then, the siblings exist in a strange symbiosis. Amy's still the practical one, working at the photo store and bringing home food. Brian wanders the streets and finds people willing to believe in him, or people who might lead him to his "Prince of Peace." At night, they share their visions and their nonsense sense of purpose.

Activity: Brian comes and goes at random, although Amy usually knows where he is. Followers similarly drift in and out, usually in Brian's company.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Brian Carpenter (Dice Pool: Telepathy 6); Amy Carpenter (Dice Pool: Telepathy 3, Persuasion 5)

Extras: Anxious followers, stray animals Brian takes in

Hostile Encounters: Any challenge to Brian and Amy's beliefs will bring a swift retaliation from both siblings.

Locations: Brian's basement room, Amy's room, the filthy kitchen, the living room

Stories: Convince Brian he's found the savior. Use him to interrogate a reluctant mortal. Rehabilitate Amy and teach her to use her skills as a ghoul.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Occult, Status 1, Durability 40, Structure 2

High-Traffic Subway Station

Type: Transport

Description: A nexus of subway and bus lines meet in this three-floor station, crossing one over the other. Two buried tracks run under the ground, and a bus depot stands on street level up top, including a station, parking lot and maintenance facility. The underground tracks run through wide, tile-floored platforms designed to allow the passage of huge crowds. On the east-west platform (the lower one), the tracks run on the outer walls of the station, while on the north-south (the middle floor), they run in the center of the station. Two large concession stands are placed on the north-south platform, one on either side. Each of the subway tunnels provides quick access to the city's underground. Fluorescent lights provide bright illumination on the platforms, but stop altogether at the edge of each tunnel.

The whole of the Station is monitored by an extensive security camera system, and there is a fast emergency response alert button in each of the ticket agent booths (as well as two out on each platform). There is a dedicated security force on watch during operating hours, and the every entrance is gated, chained and padlocked shut after close.

The Station is a very time-dependent location. If the characters visit it during peak hours, they will have to fight their way through massive crowds, which can provide a tense and exciting setting for a chase, or any story element that might involve combat (potentially endangering hundreds or even thousands of innocent travelers). If the characters make their way into the station outside operating hours, the large, empty spaces in the station can make for an atmospheric locale. If the station has a theme, it is that of *servicing life*; the station exists for no reason but to facilitate the daily transport of ordinary, hardworking people. To Kindred, this place is not only a potential shelter or passage to underground spaces, but also a reminder of their mundane, living days.

The Station is also a metaphorical, as well as a literal, gateway location. Characters who enter the maintenance tunnels are moving from the ordinary, surface world of mortal activity to the unseen, dark passages below. It's a great place to stage a scene involving a transition between opposing worlds: have/have not, light/dark, truth/lies, trust/paranoia or any other dualism that suits your chronicle.

History: The High-Traffic Subway Station was built just over 70 years ago, originally connecting a number of streetcar lines near one of the central intersections of the city. The construction of the city's subway system followed 20 years later, and the Station was selected as a logical and convenient nexus for two lines, undergoing major reconstruction and refit. It's gone through a bit of a makeover twice since, the first involving a renovation on the platforms (to widen them and repaint the walls), and the second involving the installation of larger, brighter and more ubiquitous advertising.

The Station has only undergone three prolonged closures in the history of its operation: twice during major transit union strikes (twice in the 1970s and then again in the late 1990s). It has served as the backdrop for hundreds of suicide attempts, dozens of murders and thousands of robberies (violent and otherwise) since opening for business.

Activity: One of the busiest transit locations in town, the High-Traffic Subway Station plays host to hundreds of thousands of travelers each day, from the hours of 6 A.M. to 2 A.M. Nearly everyone in the city who rides the subway to and from any downtown location passes through this station at least twice a day.

The Station is also one of the most popular choices for subway-jumper suicides in the city, playing host to dozens of deaths a year. Many of these deaths go unreported in the city's media.

After the hours of operation, maintenance staff generally does two complete passes through the Station: cleaning platforms, repairing damage and clearing garbage from the tracks, adjusting and repairing lights and replacing advertising on the first pass, after closing and then preparing the station for operation just before opening.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Maintenance crews, energetic buskers, sorry-state panhandlers, busy commuters, late-night theater crowd, weekend club kids, track rats, hopeless case contemplating suicide

Hostile Encounters: A pickpocket tries to steal one of the characters' wallets. A manic-depressive traveler attempts suicide near the characters, giving them the opportunity to rescue him. A stressed-out passenger bumps into one of the characters and unleashes a vehement string of obscenities.

Locations: Ticket booth, bus depot (+1 Stealth) station platforms (–1 Stealth), tunnel entrances (+1 Stealth, +1 Intimidation), filthy washrooms (+1 Streetwise), concession stands (+1 Survival, +1 Streetwise)

Stories: Find and catch a serial platform pusher. Investigate suspected unaligned Kindred activity in the tunnels running in and out of the station. Eliminate a rival vampire's ghoul at the height of the evening rush.

Traits: Size 3, Security 4, Location 5, Advantages: Stealth 1, Status 3, Durability 100, Structure 3

Highway Overpass Shanty

Type: Industrial/Residential

Description: A dark, trash-strewn corner of the city, ignored by the thousands who pass it every day. The great concrete pillars of the overpass rise on all sides, propping up the bridge and looming over a great, shadowy recess. Behind the pillars, scorched and rusted trash cans stand near a makeshift plywood shack. Late at night, the cans are filled with scavenged firewood set alight, providing heat and light to the homeless wanderers who dwell in and around the shanty. Rats scurry at the edges of the overpass, writhing in the shredded paper and plastic that blows and sticks under the bridge on windy days.

There is no working light under the pillars. There are two bulbs placed by the city's roads and traffic department, but they are regularly broken by local malcontents, and cannot be relied upon. Water drips down the columns constantly, leaving calcified deposits at the base of each one. In winter months, huge icicles dangle from the bridge above, threatening to fall on passersby.

The shack is a poorly constructed clapboard assembly. The windows are simple holes cut in the walls, covered by loose garbage bags. The door is open and unlockable. Inside, a filthy, mildewed mattress lies on the cold ground, among a scattering of broken boxes and empty bottles. Considering the possibility that somebody might actually live here invokes a sense of extreme pathos and revulsion in all but the most streetwise observer.

The Highway Overpass Shanty is a nasty place. Characters who wander into it should be afraid — even those who are used to preying on the city's inhabitants — because it feels as though it, and everything around it, has been lost completely to the shadows. Death and decay permeate the site, suffusing it with a stinking, chill sense of horror. The theme of the location is *pathetic squalor*. It can be useful in a story that requires characters to visit the absolute edges of human or Kindred society, and demonstrates that there are creatures that survive in the most awful circumstances, never asking for or receiving the aid of the teeming millions who surround them.

History: The overpass was constructed as part of an urban renewal project in the late 1970s. While great effort was expended on beautifying and repairing the highway itself, there was little attention paid to the dark space created beneath the road, and it was soon inhabited by homeless mortals seeking shelter from the rain and chill of cold months.

Activity: The space under the overpass, and the Shanty itself, is inhabited by a number of homeless people. At any given time, they may be found there sleeping, sharing a bottle of cheap liquor or bundling themselves away from the cold. Well-to-do individuals who wander through the stained, ominous pillars aren't likely to stick around long — and the inhabitants constantly watch those who do with suspicion and ire. Muggings are frequent, as are drunken brawls. The pervasive sense of death affects

everyone in the site, and longtime dwellers often seem to be verging on homicidal or suicidal behavior.

Significant Storyteller Character: Hard-as-Nails Homeless Man (Dice Pools: Survival 6, Crafts 3, Brawl 5)

Extras: Sad-case homeless man, boisterous drunk, mentally ill wanderer, filthy junkie

Hostile Encounters: The inhabitant of the clapboard shack tries to fight off characters who encroach on his turf. A passing motorist takes a potshot at characters under the pillars just for kicks. An aid worker insists on trying to feed the characters and take them to a local shelter.

Locations: Shadowy corner (+3 Stealth), gang-tagged pillars (+1 Streetwise), plywood shanty (+1 Survival, +1 Intimidation).

Stories: Find the owner of the clapboard shack and prove that he is related to one of the prominent Kindred of the city. Interpret the gang tags under the bridge and stave off a looming territorial conflict. Use the dank surroundings to add atmosphere to the interrogation and intimidation of a rival influence.

Traits: Size 2, Security 0, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 0, Durability 100, Structure 3

Hot Dog Cart

Type: Commercial

Description: A small trailer cart, equipped with a hitch for transport, a large, two-tiered propane-powered grill, insulated storage and a weatherproof canopy. Condiment bottles and trays are arranged on the outer edge of the cart for easy access to customers.

These ubiquitous carts can serve a number of purposes in any downtown scene: providing obstacles in a chase, a quick snack (to mortals and vampires) to passersby or a ready source of petty cash, improvised weaponry or even explosive propane tanks. Smart vampires know how to keep tabs on — and make use of — everything that passes through their territory. Nothing deserves to be overlooked... not even this humble sidewalk businesses.

History: The operator purchased this cart a few years ago, hoping to make a little extra cash on the side. He lucked into a great corner location, right near some of the hot downtown clubs in the city, and ended up making enough money to leave his day job behind. He's become a fixture on that corner now, watching the local nightlife grow and change, and serving the club-hopping youth of the city. He's been robbed a few times over the years, but chosen to remain where he is.

Activity: The Cart opens for business in the early evening, and tends to see steady business until about three or four in the morning. There are quiet spots here and there, and the operator will usually sit on a stool, reading, watching a small portable television or just waiting for customers. Each night brings at least three rushes: the late office crowd on their way home, the early club crowd on their way into the bars and the after-hours crowd looking to fill up after a night of heavy clubbing.

Significant Storyteller Character: Hard-Bitten Cart Operator (Dice Pools: Streetwise 5, Persuasion 4, Brawl 4)

Extras: Drunk clubbers, hungry panhandler, good Samaritan bringing coffee

Hostile Encounters: A belligerent drunk harasses the characters, looking for a fight. The cart operator mistakes a character's approach for violent intent and starts yelling, threatening to call the cops. A hard-partying college kid vomits on the characters' shoes as they pass by.

Locations: Just the Cart.

Stories: Use the Hot Dog Cart as a cover to deliver a message to a vampire ally. Investigate claims that a vampire has been using the Cart as a means to meet susceptible mortal stock well outside of his assigned feeding grounds. Conceal an explosive in the Hot Dog Cart and attempt to smuggle it into or near to an enemy's haven.

Traits: Size 0, Security 0, Location 3, Advantages: +1 Streetwise, +1 Socialize, Status 0, Durability 15, Structure 1

Illegal Sweatshop

Type: Industrial/Underworld

Description: A small, anonymous, poorly ventilated industrial building, longer than it is wide. Crammed in between two high, unpainted walls, dozens of sewing tables are laid in rows, each with seats placed on both sides. Cone lights hang over each table, providing the only illumination in the shop. The small, greasy windows are fogged with decades of dirt and smoke residue, rendering them effectively opaque. A small room in the back is packed full of small pallets covered with lumpy mattresses. A tiny, filthy washroom is set off to the side of this back room.

Characters with high Morality or Humanity (higher than 6) will find themselves moved to do something about the terrible conditions the workers are subjected to. Even those with slightly lower scores (5 or 6) who don't feel the need will still be put off by the circumstances, and likely to feel distaste for the people running the show.

The Illegal Sweatshop is a busy location, day and night. Its thematic purpose is the *hidden horror*: in the middle of a totally ordinary neighborhood, dozens of people are subjected to ugly, torturous conditions — completely ignored or unrecognized by those who pass it by. It can be used to throw a surprising curve at characters who enter an industrial building, expecting to find an empty warehouse or machine shop. The Sweatshop produces garments or textiles of some kind — be sure to describe the pristine product on every table, tying it in to something mundane that they characters probably encounter every night. Once they encounter the reality of the Illegal Sweatshop, they'll never be able to look at those ordinary items the same way again.

History: The Illegal Sweatshop has been in operation at this location for about five years, brought in after its previous location was exposed and raided by police. Once the people running it found its current spot, they settled in and got down to shielding themselves: bribing corrupt police, laying down a cover story to ensure that their neighbors remain ignorant and making sure their workers are trucked in only during the dark, early hours of the morning. There have, in the past, been two incidences of violence in the Sweatshop's history. Both involved small uprisings on the floor, and both ended in the death of "instigators" at the hands of armed floor managers.

Activity: Extremely busy at all hours. There are two shifts of workers — essentially slaves — operating on a 12-hour rotation between 10 A.M. and 10 P.M. Those who aren't on the floor working are eating and resting in the back, on mattresses. The foreman of the Sweatshop doesn't allow any of the workers to leave under most circumstances. Almost every one of the workers is an illegal immigrant locked into a "contract" of obligation, working to repay a debt incurred in shipping her to the country — but suffering a series of penalties and costs that officially account for her room and board, as well as "damaged materials," ensuring that the debt can never be fully repaid. Most have given up hope, disillusioned by the sad realization that the circumstances they are subject to here are no better than they were in their land of origin.

Significant Storyteller Character: Floor Manager (Dice Pool: Brawl 5, Intimidation 5, Streetwise 6)

Hostile Encounters: The Floor Manager is always armed, and won't tolerate interlopers — especially those who express distaste for what's happening in this place. He knows that the police are paid up, and is confident that any "mishaps" resulting from his armed response will be covered up with little effort. Desperate workers, unable to fully understand their situation, react poorly to characters' attempts to rescue them.

Locations: Busy shop floor (+1 Crafts), foreman's office, tiny washroom, ramshackle back-room barracks

Stories: Halt operation of the Sweatshop as part of a campaign to disrupt the influences of enemy Kindred. Rescue one of the workers from a beating at the hands of the violent foreman. Block the sole exit and take advantage of the close quarters to go on a feeding binge.

Traits: Size 1, Security 3, Location 3, Advantages: n/a, Status 1, Durability 35, Structure 2

Indy Coffee Shop

Type: Commercial

Description: This small but intensely popular Coffee Shop faces onto the corner of a busy intersection, displaying an in-store roasting operation through large picture windows. A service counter provides snacks and specialty

coffee — both in take-out packages and for consumption in the store. Six tables are arranged near the counter, some with comfortable couches for seating, others with simple chairs. A row of stools is also placed near a small ledge at one of the windows, affording customers a view of the street.

During warm weather months, a small, canopied patio runs along one side of the Coffee Shop, providing seating for about 15 patrons around five tables.

The Coffee Shop is clean and pleasant, always suffused with the smell of roasting coffee (which is vented to allow it to waft out into the street as well).

Coffee, snacks and coffee preparation equipment are all on sale at the café, as well as a selection of magazines and newspapers.

The store is secured only with simple locks on the doors. There are no security cameras or alarms in place.

The Indy Coffee Shop is likely to be a popular spot for politically active characters who see themselves as part of the counterculture — particularly Kindred of the Carthian Movement, who may have associations with a study group or underground movement there. The theme of this location is *enthused defiance.* The connection to fresh, enthusiastic mortal ideals and the relaxed atmosphere of the place lends itself well to meetings of anti-establishment mortals and vampires. When describing the Coffee Shop, be sure to take the time to highlight the feeling of protest and independence here — flyers on a public board, rebellious 20-something customers at the window and the comfortable, laissez-faire attitude of the proprietors.

History: Opened nearly 40 years ago, the Indy Coffee Shop has managed to weather the corporate coffee boom of the last couple of decades, maintaining a healthy, dedicated customer base despite the pressures of big-money competition. Owned and operated by a single family who has managed their finances carefully, it continues to turn a small profit each year. In the mid-1990s, the shop briefly served as the meeting place for an anti-globalist protest group, but the owners refused to lend support to the movement, and the activists eventually moved on. Since then, the original proprietors of the shop have retired, passing the business down to their children.

Activity: The Coffee Shop does steady business throughout the day and into the evening, providing unique blends to the locals and hosting students, artists and other locals who just want to sit and watch the world go by. The roaster runs throughout the day, providing a small but steady output of premium fresh blends to customers.

After hours, there's little activity in the Coffee Shop at all. The proprietors and their staff run through a relatively quick cleanup and prep procedure in the evening, then leave to go to their respective homes. In the morning, it only takes a few minutes to open the Shop and get the business running.

Significant Storyteller Character: Proprietor (Dice Pools: Socialize 6, Academics 4, Crafts 6)

Extras: Coffee-guzzling students, energetic counterculture intellectuals, hardworking staff

Hostile Encounters: A patron of the store accuses the characters of attempting to steal her purse. A riled-up intellectual gets into a spirited debate with the characters over a harmless, throwaway comment. A character unable to conceal his contempt for the idealistic patrons is noticed and harassed for his reaction.

Locations: Patio tables (+1 Socialize, –1 Stealth), couches (+1 Socialize, +1 Politics), coffee bar, basement washrooms (+1 Streetwise)

Stories: Find a potential ghoul among the ranks of the fashion-conscious and tech-savvy student crowd. Locate and disrupt the cell of revolutionary Kindred using the café as an after-hours meeting place. Punish a café regular who inadvertently insulted an elder vampire on the street.

Traits: Size 1, Security 1, Location 3, Advantages: Streetwise 1, Status 1, Durability 35, Structure 1

Junk Shop

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: This place is a cavern of curved brick arches, sagging cement walls and meandering black iron pipes. Weak light implies a glow through caked warehouse-style windows with rusted latches. Wooden doors hang loose in plaster walls that go nowhere. Once upon a time, this place was a mill or factory of some kind. Now it's an enormous disorganized antique and junk shop, packed in like keepsakes and Christmas ornaments into an old garage.

The place is broken down into sections: In the back of the place is a furniture graveyard where dozens of tables crowd together to create a sticky wooden plain populated by herds of ugly lamps. A tennis-court-sized room is crowded with racks of dusty gowns and 1970s-style outerwear. Milk crates of old vinyl records in water-damaged sleeves are jammed under every desk, table and sewing station where they'll fit. The front of the store is a wilderness of dishes, silverware, figurines, appliances and assorted architectural remains, stored in a wide, high span of glass cases laid out like hedgerows.

Much of the light in here comes from junk lamps and bare bulbs. The hum of the AC units swallows every other

sound more than a few feet away. Somewhere, though, an AM radio playing Big Band tunes cuts through it all.

The theme of this place is *forgotten meaning*. Everything in this place was once prized, once cherished by someone, somewhere, and has since been left in the Junk Shop like a grandmother at a retirement home. People forget why their keepsakes were once important, why their grandparents saved this dress or that hat, who gave them that rusted lighter or when they got that dinette set. These things remember, though. Bringing one of these into a home imports the old meanings and old memories with them. Furniture never forgets.

History: It wasn't supposed to be like this. The Junk Shop was going to be cleverly organized and carefully cataloged. Furniture and materials were going to be swapped out, so only the most interesting stuff would remain. It was all part of a long-term plan to keep the place topical, hot and happening — to build up a reputation and bankroll the original owners could retire on.

But then she died, and he grew old. Keeping things current didn't seem as important once he realized that he had nowhere else to go. The store is home now to so many old things that the idea of digging through them all seems insurmountable. Things accrue. Things got lost in the piles, behind the stacks.

Activity: The owner, Saul, gets phone calls from people eager to get rid of stuff, and Saul is easier on their conscience than just throwing it out. Saul's cat, Cliché, leaps out from behind a stack of magazines. The sounds of a conversation drift over from another aisle in the labyrinthine shop — the words "Kindred" and "haven" can be heard clearly — but finding the speakers is a challenge amidst all the junk.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Saul Syg, the owner, is the old guy in the cardigan and half-glasses smoking cigarettes up on the raised floor behind the glass case and the cash register (Academics 3, Crafts 3). Tyler is the teenager who comes by to help Saul move furniture, load and unload trucks, and sort old vinyl records — Tyler's also rumored to be some kind of wizard (Crafts 3, Occult 1, Strong Back).

Extras: Long-haired music snobs rifling through the old record collections; a pair of hipster interior decorators who wish they were on TV, describing what they see to each other and passing judgment on everything; the suburban guy who comes in every month and spends an hour chatting with Saul (and setting up a good alibi before he meets his mistress at a nearby motel); the old fella in the suspenders and Army jacket who wanders the aisles.

Hostile Encounters: Saul's been robbed a few times, usually at night by ski-masked guys with crowbars and baseball bats looking to take a cashbox or useful household appliance, such as a TV or microwave. Tyler swears the place is haunted, that at night something without a body throws things and shuts off the lights, but Saul's never seen it.

Locations: Loading dock, clothing section, rows of milk crates full of old photographs and postcards (+1 Investigation), furniture graveyard (+1 Stealth), storm cellar full of old books and magazines (+1 research), tin-ceiling room of glass cases and old trinkets laid out in front of Saul's perch (–2 Larceny)

Stories: Tyler's caught on to some Kindred secret — maybe his rudimentary study of the occult led him to some hearsay about Theban Sorcery — and the local lord's decided Tyler must be brought inside the masquerading city or stopped before he learns more. Years ago, Saul bought an armoire in which a dead body has been hidden for years, and its ghost is losing patience: on the anniversary of its murder, it seeks out creatures to carry out its revenge. The Primogen have been secretly hiding Kindred artifacts and records in Saul's private storerooms for years, then protecting them through Obfuscate and Dominate — so when Saul's shop catches fire, someone capable of braving Rötschreck must get in there and retrieve the Primogen's things.

Traits: Size 4, Security 3, Location 2, Advantages: +2 Crafts, Status 1, Durability *, Structure *, Influence Cost: 2

Library

Type: Downtown

Description: Ah, the library. The modest brick façade, the smell of old books and newsprint, the wet smacks of high schoolers making out in the quiet room. That's about as much sensory data as you're going to get: the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library is almost painfully sterile, with its even fluorescent glow and slow evening shifts.

For vampires, the relatively quiet atmosphere of the King Library can be reason enough to haunt the place. The special collections are also extensive, and what they may lack in subjects Man Was Not Meant to Study, they more than make up for in local history, blueprints, aging manifests from freighters elders might just happen to have shipped in on. Even better, a vampire with access to the city archives stored here has the ability to expunge information.

History: There are a lot of King Memorial Libraries in the country, but the city has the distinction of having

dedicated one of the first, in June of 1968. As a local historical site, the King Library has been regularly renovated and was recently made the city's official archive.

Activity: Patrons lined up for the lone computer. A volunteer sorting old books for the downstairs book sale. A librarian removing the guy surfing porn from the computer.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Senior Librarian (Dice Pool: Academics 4); Security Guard (Dice Pools: Brawl 4, Weaponry 5)

Extras: A six-year-old kicking a fiche machine; the man who knows what's *really* wrong with the world; an architecture student puzzling over old blueprints.

Hostile Encounters: You'd think it'd be hard to find trouble in a library, but that's only if you're not looking at the kids like they're food. Since the city archive is here, there's also a small security staff, armed with batons.

Locations: The circulation desk, the stacks, the children's section (free construction paper!), the fiche machines, the downstairs book sale, the city archive office, meeting rooms (for rent, but horribly insecure)

Stories: Search old blueprints to pinpoint rivals' havens. Swipe rare editions for petty cash. Dig for family ties elders are hiding. Scare off ghost hunters or mages trying to do any of the aforementioned.

Traits: Size 3, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +3 Academics, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure *

Limo Service

Type: Commercial/Industrial, Transit

Description: Distinguished Limousines operates out of a small garage on the border between the suburban sprawl and an industrial zone. The automobiles, including traditional limos, elegant vintage cars and a mammoth stretch utility vehicle, preen and strut through the city. Distinguished delivers celebrities and politicians to posh after-hours parties, and adds a dash of class to post-prom fornication.

The Limo Service is good for making an impression, and having pull with the owners might give the characters a wealth of benefits. From access to the vehicle fleet for a discounted price to access to influential passengers, savvy Kindred can use it to increase their apparent wealth and make valuable connections.

History: Distinguished Limousines was established in 1990 by Rod Prescott. Having been fired from a taxi service when his relationship with a dispatcher turned sour, Rod got loans from his wife and brother-in-law to buy a classic limo. Doing the cleaning, maintenance and driving himself, he was able to undercut several of the more established limousine services. In 1996, he purchased the Celebrity Limousine Company, retaining most of its staff and regular clientele. Rod's never met a penny he wouldn't pinch, and he doesn't hesitate to get dirty in the garage or immaculate to pick up a customer. His abrasive attitude causes friction with his employees, though, and they're well aware of both his affairs and his constant rows with his two investors.

Activity: Limos are heading out and returning home at any given time. Weekends tend to be busier than weeknights.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Rod Prescott, owner (Dice Pool: Drive 6); Mike Dahl, his brother-in-law (Dice Pool: Persuasion 4)

Extras: Drivers; two full-time mechanics; a receptionist handling sales.

Hostile Encounters: The characters get in the middle of a fight between Rod and Mike, prompting both men to turn on them. A local kid tries to steal one of the pretty cars.

Locations: Garage, office, mechanic's corner

Stories: Secure a car for regular use. Investigate the murder of Rod Prescott.

Traits: Size 3, Security 3, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Drive, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Mechanic's Shop

Type: Industrial

Description: "Foreign cars a specialty" is a total lie. Oh, sure, if you drop your fancy Japanese car, with all its computers and doodads here, ol' Jesse'll fix it up. Sure. But that don't mean he likes it. 'Course, even American cars are full of gadgets these days. Most of them aren't even made in America.

The Mechanic's Shop has a two-car vehicle bay and a corrugated steel shack for an office. About 100 feet back, across the gravel parking lot and grass that's either dead or dying, is Jesse Carson's house, a tiny rambler that's either white and long since yellowed, or yellowed and long since bleached. If you want to sit while you're waiting, there're some folding chairs outside the garage.

The inside of the vehicle bay is something else altogether. Jesse organizes his workspace meticulously, and he's positively anal about his tools. More than that, he's kept up; he has several PCs with the appropriate software to gather and modify data from the onboard computers of modern luxury cars.

The Mechanic's Shop is useful for repairing the inevitable damage to characters' automobiles. Jesse doesn't deal with stolen cars, but he could be persuaded to

change around a Vehicle Identification Number, if a friend asked. The vehicle bay is also fairly secure, so it's not a bad place to spend the day.

History: Jesse, a big man with small, wet eyes, doesn't talk much about his past. He doesn't talk about much, period, except cars and basketball. His personal history is plain and unpleasant. When he was drafted into the Army for the Vietnam War, his brother, Steven, went ahead and enlisted. Jesse ended up sitting the war out in Germany, while Steven took a bullet to the head on a numbered hill. Steven survived, but his motor skills are clumsy due to brain damage. His hands fumble, and he has trouble speaking. Jesse takes care of Steven, who spends his days in the house, reading quietly. If you listen, you might hear a shuffling as he clumsily turns pages.

Activity: Customers come and go throughout the day and early evening. Every few weeks, a physical therapist comes out to see Steven.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Jesse, owner and mechanic (Dice Pool: Craft 3, Intimidation 2, Empathy 4); Steven, his brother

Extras: A customer waiting for his car, sipping a beer; one of Jesse's Army buddies, stopping by to say hello.

Hostile Encounters: Neighborhood kids throwing rocks at Steven's window. A bonfire in a nearby field catches on the grass.

Locations: The vehicle bay, the office, Jesse's house

Stories: Use the shop as a safehouse in exchange for helping Steven. Uphold that bargain. Scrub the computer on a stolen car for resale.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 1, Advantages: +2 Crafts, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Neighborhood Gas Station

Description: Fluorescent lights cut away a swath of concrete and oil stains from the nighttime gloom beyond. The artificial glow creates an artificial sense of safety, like an oasis in a desert of darkness, until the fluorescents start to flicker and the darkness sneaks in. During the day, this place is a communal gossiping ground for local homeowners and renters. People line up to buy lottery tickets and scratch-offs. People sit on the hoods of their cars, joking and bitching like friends. The baseball game gets played out of tinny speakers.

At night, the gas station is like a lingering afterimage burned into the air — pale, vague, washed-out and ghostly. The graveyard-shift attendant hides in a sealed cage of bullet-proof glass and brick, interacting only through a lousy speaker and a metal drawer. He sits on a milk crate and reads porno magazines off the racks. Every once in a while, some local comes by in pajamas, shoes and a coat to buy cough medicine or milk, glad to be in and out, feeling somehow separate from the nighttime city in the coldly even light of the outdoor roof over the pumps. Everything smells like gasoline and dirty tires.

The theme of the Neighborhood Gas Station is twofold: As a potential crime scene or battleground, it's a good thematic fit for *nervous tension* — visitors don't trust each other, but some nights pass without trouble, and everybody hopes this is one of those nights. That theme plays into its more complicated counterpart: *polite pretense*. On one level or another, everyone's lying here: the

guy buying medicine and milk is pretending to be casually comfortable, the lunatic's playing up his loud-mouthed craziness to keep predatory people away from him, the drug dealers are pretending to be area kids hanging out, the muggers are pretending to be nice people, the hucksters are pretending to be out-of-luck motorists, the dude behind the counter's pretending to be comfortable, the vampires are pretending to be living people. It's all a cold approximation of light and warmth and normalcy, but it's all stained from the traffic of drugs, cars, blood and fear that passed through here an hour before — even though the place looks slow now.

History: Somebody built it in the 1970s and then renovated it in the late '80s. It's changed hands a dozen times, though a few of the day-shift workers have been working here for a decade. It used to be a brand-name place selling brand-name gas, but now it's all dirty metal, eroded paint and cracked concrete. The floor inside is sticky, the bathroom's a fly farm. This place makes enough money to stay afloat — maybe a lot more — but since it doesn't seem to hurt business to let the place rot, it rots.

Activity: At night, lonely nervous passers-through look over their shoulders as they pump gas. Lone lunatics shout at nobody as they root through the big black garbage cans between the pumps. Pairs and trios of young men in puffy black jackets and knit hats smoke cigarettes at the open mouth of the out-of-service carwash door — they watch who comes and goes. They're selling drugs or stealing cars or robbing houses.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Rico, the night-shift attendant (Socialize 3), who won't talk to you unless you strike up the conversation, and then won't shut up; Nancy, the short, too-perky fake redhead who lingers around after her shift ends, so she can flirt with cops (Persuasion 4); Guster, the harmless old homeless guy who comes buy four or five times a night to buy coffee and single cigarettes (Stealth 5).

Extras: Truckers in dirty clothes; car-loads of curfew-breaking teenagers; bored young gangbangers; stray dogs that don't back down; middle-aged motorists comparing printed-out Internet directions with the big plastic-shielded map inside the store; a filthy bastard taking all the used-car magazines; a yuppie DUI-waiting-to-happen trying to act casual.

Hostile Encounters: Stray dogs won't leave the lot, even when cars pull up, and seem to wait for motorists to get out of their cars so they can steal or demand food. Two guys arguing outside the station suddenly pull knives to mug or carjack lone customers. A belligerent drunk or three causes more trouble than one cop can handle, and the situation escalates out of control in the 10 minutes it takes backup to arrive. A road-rage car chase ends at the gas station when a gun-shot driver crashes into one of the pumps.

Locations: Bathroom (+1 Intimidation, –2 Medicine, +1 Stealth), pumps (–3 Stealth), convenience store, employee cage, freezer access/back room (+2 Stealth), derelict carwash (+3 Stealth)

Stories: The characters arrive to find Rico dead in his box, and just then the police arrive and assume the worst. The remains of a vampire turn up in the abandoned carwash part of the station — who was it?

Traits: Size 2; Security 3; Location 2; Advantages: +1 Crafts, +2 Drive, Status 1, Durability *, Structure *

Nightclub

Type: Downtown

Description: Successful nightlife? All about crossing lines far enough to be exciting and not far enough to freak patrons out. Also, pretty lights. The trick to successfully eating nightlife? Crossing lines far enough to be more exciting than everybody else but not far enough they realize you're going to rip their throats out. Also, pretty eyes.

Built in the shell of an old bank, Blitz is three stories and two dance floors of crossing lines. Far as the promoter knows, it's the first Nazi-invasion themed club anywhere. Bartenders in midriff-baring SS uniforms. Brown-shirted bouncers. Portraits of the Führer and a huge British flag pockmarked with bullet holes and burn marks. The patrons are just as garish. Some go in-theme, with shaved heads and yellow stars. Others stick with the classics like tight pants and not much else. Kindred with any sense of style at all don't so much blend in as fade out, making it a perfect spot for takeout.

All that said, any vampire running the show is going to have a few special concerns. First being that Anti-defamation Leagues'll be shouting to high heaven just as soon as they find words angry enough. Second that the club is such a huge fucking hit that there's already overfeeding. Something's going to have to be done about the Kindred regulars, most of whom are blatantly stepping over domain lines and a few of whom are finishing their food. And last, a few vampires who remember the war were Embraced while they still cared. A few Rosie the Riveter posters and a disclaimer over the door won't do much to appease them. For a vampire, Blitz is a goldmine full of landmines.

History: Blitz was born out of a really bad joke. Former New York promoter Jim Benson heard a fashion industry friend bitching about "death camp chic" and

decided it might be worth taking literally. Once Jim sobered up, he figured nobody wants to play Holocaust dress-up, but that maybe he could sell something that sexed-up war and smart uniforms. A relocation and a few very silent partners, and Jim had a hit on his hands. Jim Benson's not stupid, though, and he's instructed his Brown Shirts to keep the number of actual neo-Nazis to a minimum, and most certainly not to let them hand out any literature. He's let some race rock slip into the play lists, but makes sure none of it's in English.

Activity: Clothes vibrating from a sound system that mistakes bass for volume. Red and yellow lights and machine gun sound effects peppered into every mix. Electropunk, just plain punk, and even some industrial find their way in. Couples making out against the walls. A designated mosh pit sunk into the lower floor, full of people who just like pain. Couples making out in the mosh pit.

Significant Storyteller Characters: The Brown Shirts, a well-staffed bouncer crew (Dice Pool: Brawl 5, each); Jim Benson, owner; Katie Chopin, the unsettled lead bartender

Extras: College students out for a night on the town; the underage girl dressed as *Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS*; the guy trying to grope her who doesn't see the bouncer looming behind him; one dude finally drunk enough to realize this whole thing is in poor taste; history buffs arguing the authenticity of some of the memorabilia nailed to the walls; their friend, who actually recognized the portrait of Sir Oswald Mosely; too many Kindred poachers.

Hostile Encounters: The mosh pit spills over and surrounds the characters with exuberant conclusions. A patron sneaks a knife in and pulls it on one of the characters a few drinks later.

Locations: The restrooms (decorated with Allied propaganda posters, reeking of piss and booze); Benson's deserted office; the Dumpsters out back (good for slamming adversaries into)

Stories: Cut down on Kindred poachers. Stop by for dinner. Burn the club down for moral decency and/or the insurance.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 4, Advantages: +4 Socialize, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Occult Bookseller

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: You smell that? No, seriously, stop and smell a moment. That's jessamine. Not many places you can go at night that smell this *good*, and fewer still that smell as good to the living. Now step inside (watch it, the stairs are sagging) and look around. Plants everywhere. Day and night blooming. Books stacked thick on baroque-style cherry shelves. Even the New-Agey crystal displays are pretty.

Located in a handsome Edwardian townhouse, the Occult Bookseller puts a cheery spin on a subject many Kindred regard with fear or disgust: mortal supernatural arts. The owner, Ferdinand, is a bit of a crystal-gazer, but he's helpful and not too nosey. The stock is made up of the usual fluff, along with legitimate but (from a Kindred perspective) ill-informed scholarly books and journals. The shop's real attraction is Ferdinand's professional connections; he knows dozens of wealthy dealers and collectors in the kine occult community.

History: Ferdinand Weiner opened his shop four years ago after retiring from the Coast Guard. The son of eclectic pagan parents, he developed a more academic in the supernatural, going so far as to complete a bachelor's degree in comparative theology. The store was meant to be a relaxing occupation, and he would have been happy if it supported itself. Much to his surprise, it's been wildly successful.

Activity: The store is open from 4 P.M. to 9 P.M., and closed Mondays. At any given time, there are three or four customers.

Significant Storyteller Character: Ferdinand Weiner, owner (Dice Pool: Occult 4)

Extras: Stern earth-mother type, dumped guy looking for a love charm, tourists enjoying the local color

Hostile Encounters: A psychic abruptly realizes the characters aren't alive... and knocks over some candles when she panics. A broke junkie stages a holdup.

Locations: The shop floor, a reading room, Ferdinand's apartment upstairs

Stories: Find a buyer for the possessions of a murdered rival. Investigate the beliefs of a mortal cult. Buy an insulting gift for a Circle of the Crone holiday.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 3, Advantages: +1 Occult, Status 0, Durability 40, Structure 2

Penthouse Condo Haven

Type: Residential, High Society

Description: This 24th-floor Condo is very, very expensive, and it shows. Detailed in a neo-Art Deco style, the walls, windows and furniture are all balanced and fitted together just so, creating an overall impression of wealth and taste. Done up in rich, warm brown and soft, creamy off-white tones, the condo manages to seem both old-fashioned and ultramodern at the same time. Super-sleek appliances are hidden away in clever sliding

partitions and turntables so that they remain out of sight when idle. Huge picture windows make up the south and west walls of the apartment, providing a spectacular view of the cityscape below, as well as each evening's sunsets. Precious artworks adorn the walls, and a crystalline sculpture of inestimable fragility and worth rises organically from the most prominent corner.

Located right in the heart of downtown, just a few steps away from the hottest club district and less than 10 minutes' ride from the city's financial core, this Condo caps off one of the most exclusive, expensive living spaces around. Fully serviced by full-time maintenance and cleaning staffs, the condo is always in pristine condition. The inhabitants of the Penthouse Condo also benefit from 24-hour access to the building's rooftop garden, Olympic-sized swimming pool and world-class gymnasium.

Of course, the Condo is some vampire's haven. It might not seem the smartest place to dwell — especially considering the amount of sunlight that must stream through those enormous windows in the daytime — but there's a perfectly light-tight walk-in closet in the bedroom, and another, smaller one in the bath.

Security in the Penthouse Condo is the last word in modern protection. Surreptitiously placed, automated cameras monitor and record the goings on in the lobby, parking lot, elevators and hallways. Complicated computer systems auto-focus on faces, maintaining a database of visitors that can be accessed in the event of a crime. The elevators require keycard access to take guests and visitors to each floor individually (so, for example, a key for the 14th floor will provide access only to the 14th floor). There is a professional security staff on call, watching the monitors, manning the reception in the lobby and ready to respond to problems in each individual apartment in response to an emergency. Each apartment is fitted with its own bolt locks and wired with intrusion alarms. Tenants are also free to consult with security providers and furnish their own additions: the Penthouse Condo also has a motion-detection system in place, as well as an array of infrared sensors protecting the more valuable artworks.

A character must have Resources • • • • • to purchase the Penthouse Condo. It's well outside the price range of anyone with less.

The Penthouse Condo makes a good location for stories involving power-hungry or influential Kindred. The theme of the site is *ostentatious display*, and it should be used when a character wishes to lord his material wealth over the characters (or to tempt the characters themselves into following money). With the Condo's unobstructed view of the city, it's overwhelmingly attractive to arrogant, self-aggrandizing types.

History: Built only four years ago, the condo was quickly brought to the attention of its current owner by a lickspittle ghoul seeking the approval of his master. The moment he laid eyes upon it, the vampire who currently makes his home there demanded its purchase — which was negotiated smoothly and quickly, thanks to the force of his will. Now he spends his nights overlooking the downtown core, listening to news of goings-on at Elysium and plotting his own advancement. In the meantime, although he's been careful not to make a habit of feeding too close to home, some of the nearby tenants have been subject to his pressing hunger on more than one occasion. A veil of listlessness and fatigue is slowly drawing itself over the vampire's neighbors, and it's only a matter of time before somebody intelligent notices what's going on.

Activity: During the day, the vampire tenant sleeps in the walk-in closet, leaving his security and care to his long-suffering ghoul. Nobody is admitted without undergoing his close, careful scrutiny, and nobody gets out of his sight while inside unless the tenant gives his express approval. At night, the vampire tenant rises to lord over the apartment, accepting guests and composing letters. When the hunger takes him (or when politics necessitate it), he leaves for a time, activating the sophisticated, custom-built security system to watch over the place in his absence.

Significant Storyteller Character: Vampire Tenant (Dice Pools: Mesmerize 8, Investigation 7, Intimidation 7, Subterfuge 6)

Extras: Soft-stepping ghoul, careful cleaning staff, obstinate doorman

Hostile Encounters: Characters paying an unexpected visit meet the wrath of the dedicated ghoul. Security door staff refuse to allow the characters access to the building. The vampire tenant interprets the characters' actions as threatening, unleashing his Beast in a bid to drive them out.

Locations: Foyer, small kitchen, living room with expansive view (–1 Stealth, +1 Persuasion), bedroom, walk-in closet, lavish bathroom, bathroom storage, tiny atrium office

Stories: Inform the vampire tenant that the Prince is revoking his right to feed and dwell in this area of the domain and take possession of the apartment for his rival. Attempt to cover for the tenant's dangerous flirtation with the Masquerade by arranging to explain his neighbors' "illness." Draw the vampire tenant into political debate in an attempt to trip him up and trick him into betraying his disloyalty to the Prince.

Traits: Size 2, Security 5, Location 5, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 4, Durability 35, Structure 2

Photo Studio

Type: Commercial

Description: The Photo Studio is a converted warehouse space, separated into three individual shooting studios, each with its own darkroom. Professional lighting equipment and advertising props (i.e., acrylic "liquid pour" sculptures, chairs and tables, backdrops, etc.) are stored and made available to client photographers.

An interview room is situated in the lobby, mounted with thousands of thumbnail images of local models and their agency phone numbers. Photographers are free to use the room to try and find the perfect face for their work, or to interview prospective models and conduct contract negotiations.

The building itself is about three stories high, with very few windows. Those that remain have been shuttered to prevent light from spoiling the shooting space and darkrooms. Parking is available in a small alley to the side, and signs are hung to indicate which doors may or may not be opened, depending on whether or not certain studios are in use. All doors feature a simple deadbolt lock for security.

Characters who want to rent a studio space for a day or two need at least Resources • • to be able to afford it; those who want it for longer should add one dot to the required rating. Those who are clearly not using the space to take photographs are likely to be kicked out after a day.

The value of the Photo Studio to Kindred characters should be obvious as soon as they enter: every major room in the building has been compartmentalized, with the equipment to make it light-tight if necessary. Darkrooms and studios can both be completely sealed off, and can easily be converted into makeshift havens — so long as a vampire can arrange to guarantee privacy. The studios themselves provide great working spaces for artists, and the props available allow resourceful characters access to everything necessary for manufacturing some pretty convincing optical illusions, if one is so inclined. The theme of this location is *professional trickery*.

History: Originally built in the 1940s, the warehouse that would eventually be refurbished as the Photo Studio was nothing more than an unremarkable storage facility for almost 40 years. In 1983, right on the cusp of a local industrial and real estate market collapse, the warehouse was cleared out and sold off at a cut-rate price. A partnership of professional photographers took it over and had it remodeled, setting the state for a small artists' renaissance in the neighborhood. Business grew steadily, and the studio gained a measure of local fame.

In recent years, two of the three original owners have retired and sold their shares to the third. He's turned the whole building into an artists' rental space, with fees set by the day, week or month.

Activity: On any given day, at least one of the three studios is usually in operation, and shoots may well carry on late into the night. It's not out of the ordinary to schedule a 14-hour shoot for some commissions, and photographers' assistants tend to arrive before sunup (to get an early start on the setup) and stay late into the night (to finish up knockdown and cleanup). While a shoot is in session, costume and makeup consultants, production assistants and advertising liaisons usually hang about, watching the proceedings or eating and chatting. On the studio floor, models and photographers work steadily, surrounded by assistants and, depending on the nature of the shoot, observers.

Significant Storyteller Character: Old-Pro Photographer (Dice Pool: Crafts 7, Socialize 5, Expression 5)

Extras: Flamboyant hair and makeup crew, grumbling production assistants, eager photo apprentice, models, modeling agent, micro-managing advertising executive, concerned client, rental office receptionist

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: Individual studios (+2 Crafts), darkrooms (+1 Crafts), interview offices (+1 Intimidation), store room, lobby

Stories: N/A

Traits: Size 4, Security 1, Location 0, Advantages: n/a, Status 1, Durability 70, Structure 2

Police Satellite Office

Type: Residential/Commercial

Description: You can dress it up with whatever kids' mural and big blue sign you want, but it's a trailer. Just like the ones they use for "temporary" classrooms at the high school down the street. (The ones at the high school have murals, too, and the anatomy's better.) The half-dozen officers who share the office aren't too fond of it.

Offices like this one are spread out through many of the residential Districts. While there's no specific policy of assigning officers of a particular ethnic background to a particular ethnic neighborhood, there *is* a policy that they should "speak the local language," and staffing decisions suggest that languages in demand include "Black" and "Asian." Shortsighted and racist decisions have played a significant role in burnout of officers at this particular station. The fucked-up whispers that come on the radio around midnight haven't helped.

The theme of the Police Satellite Office is waiting for the big one. The officers working here are even

more plugged in than usual to the surrounding community. They know everybody's business, the score with the local gangs and drug pushers (not always the same guys, as television would have you believe). They know exactly which personal faults are likely to erupt into neighborhood quakes. Sometimes, that allows the officers to solve problems before they blow up; more often, it creates a sense of inevitability and looming tragedy. They know which sides they're going to take when shit really heats up, and they haven't all picked the same ones.

Characters with influence in the Police Satellite Office have a heavy political lever at the street level. By encouraging particular police behavior, they can influence neighborhood sentiments, both in the legitimate political arena and among the neighborhood's cast of criminals.

History: The Police Satellite Office is one answer to the question, "Where's a cop when you need one?" (Other popular answers include "on the wrong side of the gun" and, of course, "with your mama.") Part of a philosophy called Community Oriented Policing, the Satellite Office is intended to put police officers in the residential areas not just to confront offenders but to become part of the community, to use people skills to solve people problems.

The project has half-succeeded. In the four years the Satellite Office has been in place, the officers assigned there have gotten very involved, and they genuinely care. That involvement has had a price, though: officers often use their discretion to favor neighborhood interests, or sacrifice opportunities to intervene in order to maintain relationships with long-term personal or political value. Not everyone's a people person, either — some officers are well suited to enforcement or mediation roles, but not to long-term involvement in the community. Despite City Hall's best intentions, that's rarely been taken into account when assigning staff to COP programs.

Activity: At any hour, there are supposed to be two uniformed officers on duty, but they often get called away to assist in the field. Since a stint at the Satellite Office starts off or fills out a patrol shift, one officer will often be resting while the other answers phones and visitors. Most residents visiting after sunset are on personal or emergency business.

Significant Storyteller Character: Duty Officer (Dice Pools: Empathy 4, Firearms 5, Politics [Local] 4)

Extras: A married man stopping by to flirt with an officer. A drunk sobering up in the corner. An officer snoozing after a long shift.

Hostile Encounters: As noted above, officers are well acquainted with local residents, and good at spotting outsiders. The officers could easily turn hostile if they suspect the characters are trouble. A woman who suspects an officer of an affair with her husband storms in, loaded for bear.

Locations: It's a trailer.

Stories: Get an officer on a rival's payroll a better assignment. Plug into local gossip to gain an edge dealing with mortals.

Traits: Size 1, Security 0, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Politics, Status 0, Durability 10, Structure 2

Police Station

Type: Residential, Downtown

Description: Brand-new and state of the art, the Police Station is supposed to embody both what the voting public expects from a police station and what police need to protect the voting public. The modern glass-and-slate exterior nods regularly at neoclassicism, Acropolis steps side-by-side with pedestrian- and wheelchair-friendly ramps. At night, the walls are flooded by calming blue lights, and the single, reassuring word POLICE blazes magnesium-white in the night.

Right into the windows of the apartments across the street. The Police Station is brand-new and state of the art, but every detail is *slightly* off. The round reception desk was designed to be welcoming and afford a full view of the rotunda... but that meant the metal detectors had to be placed right at the foot of the stairs. Each division had their own offices, but the generous staffing budget meant the cubicles, and even individual desks, had to go. Parking is integrated into the lower floors and practically bomb-proof, but the less dense building materials leak automotive noises and even conversations into the conference rooms. And the less said about the unisex locker rooms, the better.

Officers from two and half other precincts have been dumped here, reorganized and expected to keep doing their jobs as if nothing has happened. A staggered transition cycle was planned, but construction delays and the scheduled demolition of the old 7th Precinct House ultimately required almost everyone to move at once. Instability, plenty of resources and nobody sure who belongs where: it's the perfect time for a vampire and her coterie to worm their way in.

History: Between the recent overhaul of the city's police precincts and the newness of the building itself, the Police Station has no history. That's a problem: in the chaos accompanying the station's move, not everybody's been able to adjust to the new chain of command. Officers frequently rely on colleagues who have been moved to new divisions, new shifts or even the other precincts.

Activity: Lots of it, 24 hours a day. Meetings being held in hallways, officers shouting into phones, civilian staff conflicting with security. Neither the characters nor the officers can get a thought in edgewise.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: A detective leaving in a huff. An electrician trying to finish an installation that was supposed to be done yesterday. A courier delivering large and unidentifiable equipment.

Hostile Encounters: A group of gang members takes control of the holding cells. The front desk detains one of the characters when a metal detector breaks down.

Locations: Rotunda/reception areas, evidence storage, crime labs, mail room, interview rooms, conference rooms, locker rooms, holding cells, main office space, division offices, senior staff offices

Stories: Place informants in the new precinct. Break out of a cell before morning peeks through the nice, humane window.

Traits: Size 3, Security 4, Location 4, Advantages: +3 Investigation, Status 3, Durability 80, Structure 2

Private Club

Type: Downtown

Description: From the street, the ground floor looks like a church or an English manor house, rain-streaked and gray. But on top of all that are 12 stories or more of stone and leaded glass windows, capped with what looks like the top of a church, complete with bell tower and rose windows. Set into the stone above the door is a carved wooden sign that reads GRAY'S. Doormen in fancy blue coats pop out of the front door seconds before limos and Town Cars drop off gentlemen in fine suits. Once they're all inside again, the place looks empty and abandoned from the ground floor. Only higher up do lights become visible.

Inside, Gray's is a fine English-style gentleman's club done up with dark hardwoods, glass cabinets, ornate staircases and deep leather chairs. Cigar smoke clings to the carpet and tapestries. Four floors of parlors, sitting rooms, libraries, dens, billiards tables, poker rooms, television suites and private meetings rooms are arranged around glittering classical foyers with old-fashioned iron elevator equipment running like guts up their insides. The top floor contains bars and dining rooms, sequestered meeting rooms, an art gallery and a wide roof-top patio for social functions or a quiet thought before the city's nighttime lights. In-between the bottom and the top are numerous ballrooms for entertaining, offices and quaint quarters for the staff, suites for illicit rendezvous and several derelict floors of old storage, forgotten furniture and private members-only safes and storage lockers.

While still comfortable and handsome, the building is now wrinkled and cracked inside like an old man. What was once a desire to remain traditional has become staleness and faded glory. The rugs are worn flat, the chairs are discolored and compressed, the televisions are out of date.

Yet the building remains a popular after-hours home away from home for many of the city's elite, wealthy and

well-born. The theme of this place is *stale decadence* — a fitting place for scheming vampires and sinister power plays in the Danse Macabre. On the lower floors, the rich and old drink and lie and conspire and play while, outside, the homeless root through the Dumpsters and die of exposure beneath the fire escape. Upstairs, club members posture and pine, reminisce and revitalize themselves with finery. In between is a crass space of smoke-stained fuck-dens and high-priced drugs, riddled with empty rooms, ashen ruins and boarded-up dead spaces where secret things get locked away. The building itself is a vampire.

History: Gray's Gentleman's Club was a fine institution in London at the end of the 19th century. Two or three "grandson clubs" were opened in the States in the 1920s to accommodate the nation's new aristocracy of obscenely wealthy debutantes and debauchees. This is the last of them. This Gray's club has gradually been transformed by generations of wealthy inheritors and dabbling businessmen into a haven from the city's real social dynamics — an ivory tower stained black by cigar ash. Here, everything is easy to get, discreetly handled and obtainable with money and without social games. Sex is young prostitutes hypnotized by cash and glamour, drugs are delicate wooden boxes of cocaine on the end-table, victory is a middle-class salary won in a card game or bet on the stock market. Similar to a rich and senile recluse, Gray's Club has gradually grown so distant from society that all it can see is its own repetitive desires filled through bland, faded routines, over and over into infinity. The Kindred infiltrated the club decades ago.

Activity: Valets in pin-stripe suits shuttle boxes of cigars and bottles of brandy. Four fat cats up to their necks in plush leather chairs stop talking and stare suspiciously as a character goes by. Wall Street types in suspenders and shirt-sleeves ooh and aah over a great break at the pool table. Some bald inheritor yells so loudly at a waiter that his face goes red and veins bulge out in his neck.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Vaughn, the head valet, who appears to be an uptight prude but is actually a clever and convincing conspirator (Empathy dice pool 7, Subterfuge dice pool 5); Marcel, the club's oily European "Spa and Suite Manager," which is a fancy way of saying "pimp" (Streetwise dice pool 6, Subterfuge dice pool 5); Charise, the upstairs bartender, drug dealer and confidant (Empathy dice pool 6, Socialize dice pool 6)

Extras: Posh and poised valets, drunken club members, nervous and overwhelmed guests in borrowed blazers, white-gloved waiters leaning over with folded hands to take requests, blue-coated doormen sneaking a smoke outside the front door, white-jacketed kitchen staff joking in a foreign language

Hostile Encounters: A mogul challenges a character to a game of poker or billiards for a sickening amount of money. A desperate vampire attacks the homeless outside the Club's kitchen entrance and the homeless fight back. A club member tries to blackmail one of the characters.

Locations: Parlor (+1 Socialize, +3 Persuasion), billiards rooms (+3 Socialize), suite (+3 Persuasion for seduction only), kitchen, grand staircase and foyer, abandoned floor (+2 Intimidation), dining rooms, television rooms, rear alleyway, roof-top patio (+1 Intimidate, +2 Socialize for carousing), wine cellar (+3 Stealth)

Stories: A prostitute hungry for love, or something like it, attaches herself to the characters and tries to insinuate herself as one of their Retainers or herd. One of the Vitae-addicted valets reveals his knowledge of the Masquerade and the Damned to the coterie and tries to use it as leverage for money and Vitae. Someone (a member, a hooker, a housekeeper) is accidentally killed in a bit of reckless debauchery, and it's up to the characters (who may also be the killers!) to clean it up.

Traits: Size 5, Security 3, Location 3, Advantages: +4 Socialize, Status 3, Durability *, Structure *

Private Detective Agency

Type: Commercial

Description: You haven't heard of Monday Investigative Services, but if you read the paper (and you *should*, it's not just for breathers) you've seen their work. The public works contracting scam? Exposed by a civil suit, where Monday was working for the plaintiff. The software engineer who kept that kid in his basement? Monday tracked him from here to Chicago for his ex-wife.

From their offices in a converted condominium downtown, the Private Detective Agency investigates people's financial doings, not to mention their comings and goings. Usually, they investigate civil cases, such as divorces or torts. On occasion, they're contracted by the city police, for staff supplementation or cases related to their previous work.

The investigation industry holds opportunities for vampires as clients or investigators. The financial and legal mazes vampires hide behind can be navigated by an experienced investigator, and a vampire's supernatural powers can open doors that social engineering and patient analysis can't.

History: Connie Monday wishes she got hit over the head more often. If she did, she wouldn't have to wake up every morning to impatient clients and mounting personal debts. Hell, even a proper divorce case, the kind with dirty pictures, would be nice. Instead, Connie

leaves most of the skulking and peeping to her younger employees. She sticks to what she learned back in the DA's office: crunching numbers. For someone who rarely bothers to balance her own checkbook, she's remarkably good at it. Still, she wouldn't mind getting out of the office a little more often.

Activity: Monday and her crew keep odd hours; if the characters listen in, they are likely to hear cases discussed in last names, accounting acronyms and very large integers.

Significant Storyteller Character: Connie Monday, founder (Dice Pools: Investigation 6, Subterfuge 4)

Extras: Busy investigators, a bored client waiting for help, a secretary brewing coffee

Hostile Encounters: The characters are mistaken for investigators by an angry client. One of Monday's assistants comes sniffing around a haven.

Locations: Reception area, coffee nook, interview/conference room, Monday's office, staff offices

Stories: Become a partner in the agency. Put a detective on the trail of somebody you don't like. Burglarize the office for information about a rival.

Traits: Size 2, Security 3, Location 1, Advantages: +2 Investigation, Status 0, Durability 40, Structure 2

Private Gym

Type: Commercial

Description: From the 30th floor of the Constitution building, you can see the whole city. The members of the Constitution Gym, however, are more interested in how much their peers are pressing. From the newly hired to the just-retired, they're all wealthy businessmen with an unusual interest in physical fitness.

The Gym is well equipped, private and unapologetically elitist: the only way to get in is to be invited by one of the roughly two dozen members. This implication of status, as well as the access to wealthy and influential men is likely to attract Kindred. Once they're in though, vampires may discover that faking exercise is a good way to fake life. Sure, a body needs to pump blood to pump iron, but he needs to pump blood to get laid or get high, too. The discipline involved first in focusing the Blood and second in physical exertion provides a brief high that is enhanced by the camaraderie of the other club members. It's like a few minutes of being alive.

History: The Constitution Gym started as a small sixth floor weight room in 1967, when two local banks shared the building. Several young, successful bankers from each institution were frustrated with their sedentary jobs and rented some empty office space. The weightlifting club took off, and in 1974 incorporated and moved to the top floor of the building. The men who founded the club continued to rise in wealth and station, and as some of them moved on to other firms, men from outside the banks were invited to join. Two of the founders are still members today.

To date, the only woman invited to join was Katherine Chapel, a property attorney. Chapel was found murdered in her apartment in the winter of 1993; no connection to the gym was ever discovered.

Activity: A few members stop by at lunch, but most of the patronage is at night, when the men are avoiding their wives and lovers. There's an ongoing competition to see who can bench press the most weight; recent high marks are posted on the "kill board" outside the sauna.

Significant Storyteller Character: Gym President (Dice Pools: Athletics 5, Politics 5, Persuasion 5)

Extras: Assorted gym members, a surly personal trainer, a kid cleaning the pool.

Locations: The weight room, the pool, the sauna, the exercise bikes, the balcony

Stories: Discover why Kate Chapel's ID was wedged in a set of lockers recently discarded by the gym. Recruit a ghoul from among the members. Secure an invitation for a friend.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +3 Athletics, Status 2, Durability 40, Structure 2

Private Surgery Practice

Type: Residential

Description: After the narrow stairs and the Orphean descent, you wouldn't expect a room like this one. Sure, it's a nice neighborhood, but the rugs alone must have cost a fortune. Stacks of vintage girlie mags sit between overstuffed leather chairs, and if the place smells heavily of cigars, so what? They're *good* cigars. So have a seat. The doctor will be with you in a moment.

Once he is, you'll enter an immaculate surgery, with the lights low (good for Kindred eyes) and an array of knives and tools displayed like a chef's knives along a brushed-steel counter and an operating table. On paper, the doctor practices dentistry — hence the fancy chair, though the cuffs were added later. The doctor, however, has moved on to more profitable efforts. He provides medical services to people who don't want to show their faces at a hospital, and, increasingly, to the Kindred community.

Vampires often figure they'll never need a doctor again. Supposed to be one of the perks, right? Death's tough, though. Vampires in fights tend to heal wounds

as quickly as they can, sealing bullets, splinters and other debris within their dead flesh. Without medical skill, they dig them out later, often doing as much damage as the original wound. Infection's a danger, too: Kindred don't have to worry about bacteria for their own sake, but disease is a threat to the Masquerade. The doctor's patients are vampires who can't avoid fights but can afford his sizeable fee.

Of course, that leaves the problem of anesthetizing and disinfecting vampires. Through his human practice and discreet classified ads, the doctor has recruited stable of prescription drug addicts willing to work for their fix. He and his wife restrain and dose them in the dentist's chair, then use a custom transfusion rig to steadily pump their blood into the vampire patient.

The Private Surgery should evoke visceral horror. Even with anesthesia, vampires remain partially awake during surgery, trapped in bodies that are being taken apart and sewn back together. They might catch sight of the donor in the chair, all glazed eyes and dripping blood. Drug proxies are ultimately disposable; while the doctor, just as many Kindred, takes care not to kill donors, he has no particular interest in their well-being. The doctor's cold, methodical interaction with the donors should show characters what they're *really* doing when they feed, stripped of phony seduction or pretensions of nobility.

History: In the '70s, a vampire named Smiles rode into town with a pack of mortal dealers and a fancy new drug called crack. He set up his own entourage and his own court. The doctor was his ghoul, catering to the vampire's fear of disease and keeping his fangs pearly-white. Smiles thought his fresh-as-blood business and his extensive mortal entourage would impress Kindred. They didn't. Smiles was an arrogant upstart by anybody's standards, and the Prince's men eventually hung him out for the sun.

The doctor managed to escape the purging of Smiles' network. Going cold turkey off Vitae was the hardest thing the doctor ever did, but he didn't get a choice. He's still got scars where he gnawed his own wrist, desperate for just one diluted taste. When Smiles' dust settled, the doctor started feeling out his underworld and Kindred contacts, building a new practice. The profits are generous, especially now that older vampires are starting to buy into the "better to be safe..." spiel.

Activity: When patients arrive, the doctor always seems to be "just about done" with someone else.

Significant Storyteller Characters: The Doctor (Dice Pools: Medicine 6, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4); His Wife (Dice Pool: Medicine 1)

Extras: A pallid donor limping out the back door. A bored driver waiting for a patient.

Hostile Encounters: The brother of a drug proxy bursts in, looking for answers. A contaminated proxy accidentally doses a patient with something nasty, causing him to wake in frenzy.

Locations: The surgery, the waiting room, the doctor's house

Stories: Encourage the doctor to fall off the wagon. Sell Kindred medical data to the Ordo Dracul. Capture another vampire while he's under the knife.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Medicine, Status 2, Durability 35, Structure 2

Psychic's Parlor

Type: Commercial/Residential

Description: The hand-stenciled sign stuck the house's front yard read "Psychic Caroline: Medium/Palms/Tarot/Tea." The house is a multi-family brick building with a sliver of yard and a sunken basement apartment. That's where Caroline sees the future. A neon hand with an eye on its palm glows purple and pink in the basement window. A hand-written sign taped to the window tells visitors to go around back. There, down some sloping steps from the parking garage, is the door with the eye painted on it.

Inside, the place isn't much different than the low-ceilinged apartment is was a year ago. The living room has become a waiting room, with a stack of New Age magazines and a pair of torn-up quasi-Victorian thrift-store couches. A portable TV plays a talk show repeat. The kitchen, right off the waiting room, is stocked with jars of magic powders, arcane ingredients, lotions, vitamins and homemade soap.

The dining room, blocked off by a colorful sheet with a Nepalese pattern, is Caroline's parlor. Potted ferns hang from the ceiling. Shoji screens block the windows. A round breakfast table with three chairs is set in the middle of the room, topped with a folded felt cloth. The place smells like incense and hand cream. Symbols from Tarot cards are painted on the ceiling.

History: Caroline's always been sharp... but is she psychic? She doesn't know. Celeste seems convinced, though — convinced that Caroline is either psychic or psychic enough to make a living at it.

Opening the parlor was Celeste's idea. The apartment used to be hers, but she gave surrendered all of it save for the bedroom to give her dream a chance. With Caroline's help. Celeste runs "the shop," where she sells the oils and mistletoe. Things have gone well so far — no angry customers, enough money to get by — but Caroline's

gradually feeling cornered by Celeste. Caroline can't keep up the hours Celeste wants her to, and some of the customers' devotion to her predictions scares her now. Caroline convinces herself she does good work by giving good advice, but what if she ruins somebody's life with her advice? And... what if she's psychic?

Activity: The place is weirdly quiet and still, like the waiting room at a shrink's office. An old Hispanic lady from the neighborhood steps in, the bell on the door jangling behind her, and the psychic's manager says, "Hello, darling, I was hoping we'd see you today."

Significant Storyteller Characters: Caroline, the early-30s psychic whose name is on the sign, is a good-looking middle-American woman who uses her normalcy and modest sex appeal to turn customers into repeat customers (Dice pools: Empathy 8, Persuasion 5). Celeste, the large and crafty African American woman in the colorful dresses, manages the business and the books, greets and schedules visitors and works hard to make the place feel mystical (Dice pools: Academics (Business) 4, Occult 3, Socialize 5).

Extras: A waiting room of shrunken Hispanic grandmothers

Locations: The waiting room, a small washroom, the main parlor (+4 Empathy, +2 Subterfuge, +3 Expression), the back-room office, the back stairwell leading up to the alley (+2 Stealth)

Stories: Caroline appears on some local news channel, having predicted the death of some vessel or enemy the characters killed — how did she know and what else does she know? While performing a reading of a superstitious blood doll or ghoul, Caroline senses the truth about their vampire connections — how do the characters deal with her suspicions?

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +4 Empathy, Status 1, Durability 40, Structure 2

Public Swimming Pool

Type: Public Service

Description: A large, well-lit, clean building featuring an Olympic-sized swimming pool and smaller activity areas. The pool building is connected to a community center, and is both well funded and popular. A colorful, abstract mural is painted all along the interior walls, lending to the appearance of a safe, cheerful place for locals. Safety equipment is mounted on the walls as well: a couple of life jackets, two long-reach poles and some Styrofoam float boards.

There's a first aid office right next to the pool, mostly equipped for treating cuts and scrapes. There are two emergency kits in the office, and the walls are covered with instructional posters.

The changing rooms and showers are sizable and well lit, with an access hall provided for entry to the pool without having to step back out into the lobby. Bulletin boards are posted in the change rooms, advertising classes and activities.

The maintenance closet contains mechanical pumps, barrels full of chlorine and a number of nets, poles and pipes. The closet is locked with a simple deadbolt, while the exterior doors are chained and padlocked late after hours.

The Public Pool can lend a lot of drama to stories that focus on relations with mortals — the décor and function of the place is bound to remind vampires of their living relatives... especially those with children. Some characters may even recall bringing their own family to the pool for evening classes or other activities. Of course, since the building remains empty most of the night, there are any number of uses a vampire might put it to: a haven, a meeting place or a place to drag and store one's victims....

History: The Public Swimming Pool was built in the late 1970s as part of a government-sponsored community initiative. The programs there enjoyed great success, and were well appreciated by the locals, operating on tax subsidies for a number of years. In the early '90s, after a couple of accidents led to a brief closure and the commissioning of a safety study, it was determined that the Pool was too costly to repair, and would have to be shut down. A grass-roots community protest followed, and the city council struggled to find a solution. An offer from a private corporation was considered, and very nearly accepted. Before the contracts could be inked, though, an unnamed investor brokered a deal with the city: a fund for the renovation and continued operation of the Pool would be established, so long as it remained a public resource. No official has revealed the identity of the mysterious benefactor — but to date, the Pool is well maintained, well staffed and in no apparent danger of shutting down.

Activity: In the daytime, the Public Swimming Pool is bustling with activity: junior swim classes, senior citizens' exercise programs, aqua jogging courses and free swim days. Some evening activities are offered, but after nine o'clock, the pool shuts down for the night and everyone clears out. The pool is cleaned and chlorinated late at night, and then the building is locked up and left empty until the morning.

Significant Storyteller Character: Hawkeye Lifeguard (Dice Pools: Medicine 5, Athletics 6, Intimidation 3)

Extras: After-hours cleanup staff, cheerful swim instructor, exuberant swim class kids, stressed office worker winding down

Hostile Encounters: A territorial Gangrel attacks the characters for straying into her turf. A fearful instructor tries the chase the characters away from a swim class. The ghost of a drowned child attempts to pull one of the characters into the pool and hold her there.

Locations: Swimming pool, change rooms, offices, storage rooms, first aid office (+1 Medicine), janitor's closet

Stories: Investigate a high incidence of suspicious accidents in and around the pool. Ensure that the building remains clear of vampires in an attempt to protect local children. Arrange a meeting between rival factions at the pool, safe from prying eyes outside.

Traits: Size 2, Security 1, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Athletics, Status 1, Durability 65, Structure 3

Repertoire Cinema

Type: Commercial

Description: A large, if somewhat run-down movie theater boasting two tiers of audience seating, with room for nearly 300 viewers. The seats are upholstered in fading, worn velvet, and many are in a poor state of repair, stuck in either open or fully folded configuration. Elaborately carved pillars flank the silver screen, but reveal a long-term buildup of dust and cob webbing on close inspection. The ceiling, similarly elaborate, is also cracked and features several shoddy patch jobs.

Half-spiral stairs in the lobby lead up to the extensive balcony above the floor seats, as well as a pair of sizable restrooms. A small concession stand and ticket booth are positioned near the entrance.

There is a small collection of older and hard-to-find film reels in the projection booth — an accumulation of purchases on behalf of the cinema, put in place by the long-time projectionist.

It would be relatively easy to break into the cinema. Simple deadbolt locks secure the front and rear doors, as well as the concession stand and projection booth.

The Repertoire Cinema is a once-grand structure that has been repurposed for modern use. The theme of the site is *encroaching decomposition*, underscored by the decaying state of the detailed carvings and decorations throughout, as well as the disproportionate size of the building overall. Characters paying attention to their surroundings will note the preponderance of dust, cheap repair materials and other evidence of the slow encroachment of rot throughout. Kindred Embraced in the '20s may feel a strange draw to this site: it's a melancholy reminder of their living nights, and a reflection of their own cobwebbed and artificially extended state. If the Cinema could be returned to its former glory, the Cinema would make a beautiful Elysium space, but as it stands it's just another crumbling relic.

History: Originally established as a theater in 1920, the Repertoire Cinema was converted into a first-run cinema 30 years later, then again into a second-run indie cinema in the mid-1980s. The building has seen a steady decline in business over the last 50 years or so, and has suffered attendant cutbacks in maintenance and repair. Now on the verge of closure, the Repertoire Cinema is kept open by cut-rate business and hosting services for cult film festivals.

Activity: The Repertoire Cinema shows two movies six nights a week — the early show usually begins at or around seven o'clock, and the late show follows the end of its predecessor by about half an hour. There is a featured "cult-movie" show every Saturday at midnight. Attendance at the shows varies, from just a handful of cinephiles to a totally packed house, depending on what's playing and what else is happening in the city on a given night. After hours, the place closes down completely — staff stays behind for up to half an hour for cleanup, but their exit leaves the building empty until the next evening. On rare occasions, the manager will bring friends in for a private daytime viewing.

The midnight shows tend to get quite raucous — the audience often responds to on-screen events with shouted comments and tossed projectiles (mostly foodstuffs). The showings have become quite popular with a local pot-smoking crowd of teenagers.

Significant Storyteller Character: Film-Buff Projectionist (Dice Pools: Crafts 6, Academics 5, Streetwise 3)

Extras: Concession and ticket sales staff, grubby homeless man looking for a warm place to rest, old-fashioned movie-lovers, rowdy teenage potheads, cult movie fanatics, arty film students

Hostile Encounters: A nostalgic, low-Humanity vampire explodes into a rage frenzy when an unruly group of teens mocks his favorite film. An usher attempts to eject one of the characters, mistaking him for a troublemaker who was previously banned from the premises. A crazed gunman enters the theater, shooting indiscriminately.

Locations: Ticket booth, lobby, concession stand (+1 Stealth), floor seats, balcony seats, washrooms, projection booth

Stories: Find an important artifact hidden somewhere in the building by a neonate on the run in the 1930s. Investigate rumors that the Repertoire Cinema screen

is serving as some kind of emotional sink and nexus point for ghosts trying to pass through into the world of the living.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 2, Advantages: n/a, Status 1, Durability 32, Structure 1

Roller Rink

Type: Park

Description: The skating arena sits to the side of a city park, a long gray box of dented metal and rotting wood. The Roller Rink sign has been in place so long — has diverted the rainfall for so many years — that it has created white stripes down the wall facing the park. At night, the perimeter of the building is lit by floodlights set back from the walk. The rink is a classic arrangement: a tiny video arcade, a cheap concession stand and a banked track with bleachers on two sides.

Depending on the vampire, Friday nights at the Roller Rink can be great fun or an agonizing tease. Fridays are match nights for the city's punked-up, over-the-top Rollergirls. On a good night, the smell of blood and rug-burnt skin drowns out the popcorn grease and the Kindred can indulge the Beast with a little vicarious violence.

History: Built during the commercial roller-skating boom in the late '70s, the Roller Rink is one of the few in the area equipped for spectators. By default, that's made it the home of the city's Rollergirls, an all-female roller derby league. Roller derby involves two competing teams skating laps while one representative of each races. Each "pack" tries to prevent the other's "jammer" from passing through them and completing her lap. Derby is a contact sport, and the city's league works fights hard to keep their rep as the roughest in the region, with fractures and concussions resulting from nearly every match.

Activity: When there's no match, the rink is crowded with children from elementary school age to their late teens. During matches, the rink is all colored light, roaring crowds, and the echoes of wheels and collision.

Significant Storyteller Character: Mona Lethal, Rollergirl League President (Dice Pool: Athletics 6)

Extras: Kids skating. Rollergirls. A teacher and his class on a field trip. During derby matches, a heavy crowd of hipsters and extreme sports followers.

Hostile Encounters: An elementary school teacher catches one of the Kindred ogling his charges. A fight breaks out in the audience at a derby match.

Locations: The track, the arcade, concession stand, management office, bleachers

Stories: Hire a derby competitor or two for muscle. Meet an informant under the cover of a raucous match. Investigate claims that a new athlete is a Lupine.

Traits: Size 3, Security 0, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Athletics, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Safe House

Type: Any

Description: The outside doesn't matter. If you've got some idea what you want your hideout to look like, the guy who's after you probably has the same idea. Like

the heart of a pretty girl, what matters is on the inside. Monsters make enemies. When shit hits the fan, a smart vampire has someplace to hide. Leaving town is rarely an option, so the Safe House is in the city but hidden from prying eyes. The physical structure should be sturdy, and as fireproof as possible. Cellars and old fallout shelters are good candidates, as are any kind of stone or metal vault. There's room for elaborate disguise, as well: a Kindred hiding in the house of a wealthy family might use an asbestos-lined crawlspace behind a false wall in an already hidden safe.

History: The well-prepared vampire has a Safe House equipped or at least selected well in advance.

Activity: The Tradition of the Masquerade teaches that the best place to hide is with the herd, and that stays true no matter whom a given Kindred is hiding from. Witnesses can complicate the use of Disciplines or sorcery, and can double as prey if the vampire needs to hunt for himself.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Staying with relatives or friends is out of the question, unless they're influential enough to keep enemies at bay. If the vampire had influential friends, he probably wouldn't be running. Having someone to answer the door and bring back prey is useful, though. A backup ghoul is ideal, preferably one who keeps away from the Rack and the vampire's other haunts.

Extras: Again, the key is to hide behind others. Mortals going about their business will add a layer of plausibility to whatever disguise the haven uses.

Hostile Encounters: The prepared vampire keeps a weapon on his person, but keeps the rest of the Safe House free of anything that could be turned against him.

Locations: Access control and security are vital, but overdoing them can be fatal. Ways out are also ways in, and high-tech security or heavily armed guards can be a tip-off.

Stories: A conspiracy to dispose of a rival is exposed, and the Prince takes the rival's side. The characters must storm another vampire's private fortress.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +2 Larceny, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Seedy Pawnshop

Type: Commercial/Underworld

Description: A dusty, tiny hole of a store, squeezed between two other businesses, marked by a weathered sign that just reads PAWN. One barred window faces the street, revealing a crowded, chaotic display of chipped musical instruments, obsolete cameras, typewriters, watches and television sets. Inside, shelves crammed with less valuable materials line the walls. Anyone searching these racks is likely to find just about any half-useful junk they can think of. In a pinch, most of it could serve, although none of it would be very reliable.

A grimy booth stands at the back of the store, protected by a heavy iron grille. Behind the booth, a pegboard wall-mount displays a number of pistols and three velvet pads full of plain gold, diamond and otherwise valuable rings. For the right price, the weapons can be bought without proper identification.

There is an alarm system on the window and door, as well as a hot-button system in the proprietor's booth that both locks the front door and alerts police. The Durability on the dead-bolted door is 10, and the Structure is 3. After hours, the doors (front and back) are double-locked, and the proprietor's booth is dead-bolted.

The Seedy Pawnshop is a depressing place, top to bottom. It's a potentially useful location for characters — it's open late and it's a good source of quick no-questions-asked cash. Every item in the store, though, represents somebody's desperate circumstances. Sensitive characters will understand that the full shelves mean that pawned items are rarely reclaimed here. The operating theme here is *lost hope*.

Anything bought at the Pawnshop will be unreliable, and may not function properly at all. An Intelligence + Crafts roll is necessary to determine whether or not merchandise is in working order, and a Dexterity + Crafts roll is required to repair anything that's broken.

History: The Pawnshop was first opened in the late 1930s, responding to and taking advantage of the growing poverty in the city's downtown core. The shop has survived a round of neighborhood collapse, gentrification and collapse again, remaining the same throughout.

In 1951, the first owner of the Pawnshop was murdered by a desperate thief. The building was inherited by a distant cousin, who immediately sold it to the highest bidder — an immigrant family who owned and operated it for about 10 years, suffering a string of violent robberies and dismissive prejudice before deciding to sell it off. Since then, the Seedy Pawnshop passed hands from one proprietor to another, often switching ownership after a particularly brutal or otherwise upsetting crime.

The local police have a file at least two inches thick detailing incidents at and around the Seedy Pawnshop. They joke about the place, often referring to it as a "cursed" spot, even though they're really just kidding around.

Activity: The Pawnshop is open for business all day and late into the night. Business is never brisk, though.

Furtive junkie customers wander in and out, hoping to sell their scrap-worthy equipment off in search of fast cash, and the occasional shopper stops by to see if he can get a good deal on merchandise. The Pawnshop is considered an easy target for local petty criminals, even though successful thieves rarely walk away with more than $100 or a used (and unreliable) gun.

Significant Storyteller Character: Shop Proprietor (Dice Pools: Larceny 5, Weaponry 3, Intimidation 4)

Extras: Desperate junkie with a broken camera, deal-hunting shopper out of his element, sad case hoping to buy back a wedding ring, twitchy small-time thief

Hostile Encounters: A junkie tries to hit up a character for cash, working up the nerve to try and rob the characters. An angry visitor finds his property in the store and accuses the characters of stealing and selling it. The shopkeeper mistakes the characters for thieves, threatening to lock them in and call the police.

Locations: Storefront, shelves, proprietor's booth (+1 Streetwise)

Stories: Locate and retrieve a long-lost heirloom in a character's desperate bid to stay connected to her former life. Foil an attempted robbery before it occurs. Track down a junkie who ripped off an ally and sold off his possessions so that you can exact revenge.

Traits: Size 0, Security 2, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Streetwise, Status 1, Durability 30, Structure 2

Shooting Range

Type: Downtown

Description: There's no sign outside for the Shooting Range. It's not a secret, exactly, but if you don't know to walk down the stairs and knock on the door of the old StrikeZone Bowling Alley, you're probably not the kind of customer they're looking for. The Shooting Range caters to the urban warrior, an ordinary man who, at any moment, might be called upon to defend himself and all he stands for.

So says Pete Barkley, anyway. The Shooting Range's owner is a boyish 40-something spouting an endless stream of romantic "warrior" rhetoric. The majority of the regulars are police officers, former soldiers and a few civilians who just want to keep up on their shooting. The half-secret of the Shooting Range's location is a good lure for handgun marksmen who don't want to be bothered by newbies. By contrast, the range master is a fat, surly man nobody's ever seen fire a gun... but who will shut customers down *fast* if they're not observing proper safety.

Barkley's range features six shooting booths, each with an independent, motorized target line. Shooters load paper targets onto the line and use a keypad to move the target to a precise distance. Unlike most indoor handgun ranges, the Shooting Range does not rent weapons. The Shooting Range is an asset for Kindred who need to improve their shooting, and who can acquire their own weapons. If they can stand Barkley's speeches, the other customers will allow the Kindred to practice in privacy, if not silence.

History: The Shooting Range has been in place for many years; if asked, Barkley dodges the question. Certainly, it was established after 1979, since that's the year the old bowling alley opened. (Check the sign. It's still out front.) The range master might know more, but he doesn't talk much on duty.

Activity: The range is busiest during the commuter rush, with as many as a dozen customers.

Significant Storyteller Character: Pete Barkley, owner

Extras: Various marksmen, the range master

Hostile Encounters: The ghoul of a rival Kindred stops in to squeeze a few off. The range master threatens to eject one of the characters for his sloppy safety and "street" shooting habits.

Locations: Lounge, restrooms, ear protection rental, cash register, shooting lanes

Stories: Meet a rival and try to outshoot each other. Make friends with an off-duty police officer. Find the source of a strange whine in the restroom.

Traits: Size 1, Security 3, Location 3, Advantages: +4 Firearms, Status 0, Durability 60, Structure 2

Slaughterhouse

Type: Industrial

Description: The building standing in this part of the old stockyards, the Slaughterhouse is the lone survivor of over a square mile of collapsed buildings and empty, gravel-strewn lots. The approach is unnervingly open, unless you use the old cattle tunnel, which lets out across the road. And that journey, through hundreds of yards of low and noisome concrete, is enough to make even the Kindred feel like prey. The Slaughterhouse is full of that feeling, and that's one reason to go there when you don't want to be disturbed. The other is the soundproofing.

As a monument to the dominance of predator over prey and Man over Beast, the Slaughterhouse has a certain resonance for the Kindred. Sturdy construction and compartmentalized design make the Slaughterhouse a suitable haven, while its isolation and bloody history make it a good place to train with weapons.

History: The Slaughterhouse would be one of the city's historical landmarks, if the thought of it didn't make the

kine nauseous. When the Slaughterhouse was originally built, cattle were slaughtered without first being stunned. Their piteous cries carried across the river. The solution was a thick lining wall that kept sound within the abattoir; this construction is one of the reasons the building still stands.

Activity: The quiet of the grave.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: N/A

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: Holding pens, processing line, killing floor, entry tunnel, waste gutters

Stories: Gather the coterie for sparring. Bring a human here to terrify them. Investigate a flow of fresh blood from one of the gutters.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 0, Advantages: +1 Intimidation, Status 1, Durability 70, Structure 2

Small Park

Type: Residential

Description: This small, flat green space is located near a busy city street, providing a convenient, if temporary, escape from the confusion and noise of urban life. Surrounded by a line of tall trees that provide a surprising sense of isolation, the Small Park is noticeably quieter and calmer than the neighborhood beyond.

A children's playground dominates one side of the park, equipped with swings, see-saws, a reinforced plastic "adventure set" and a small sandbox. The children's area has its own short wooden fence, set in place to delineate a play boundary but not designed to keep anyone in or out.

The other half of the park provides a green zone for amblers and dog walkers, part of which doubles as a softball field on weekends.

In summer months, the whole of the Small Park is alive with clipped grass and community gardens. Scented flowers are grown for their appeal, and the trees provide comforting shade to the edges of the space. In winter, a blanket of snow tends to settle over the Park, bringing an gentle silence with it.

The Small Park is a good setting for breaking up the rhythm of a tense story. The theme here is *momentary respite*, and the Small Park can provide characters with a chance to rest, even if just for a moment, and get their thoughts organized. There's something mild and peaceful about the place, even in the midst of the city's madness — but that sensation seems to be contingent on its fleeting nature. It's not designed to last... and in the World of Darkness, it never really can.

History: When the residential growth of the city spilled outwards in the 1920s, necessitating the construction of the neighborhood, the municipal government set the Small Park aside as a public space, outlawing construction on it. Since then, it's been a mainstay of local families and seniors, a place they go to play, to wander among the flowers and to put aside their troubles.

Of course, neighborhood children whisper stories about the park. A number of urban legends find their notional setting there — a bogeyman murderer who drags children into the bushes, a ghost dog

who attacks young lovers and terrible infectious bacteria that lurk on the play sets. There's no evidence to support any of these stories... but that doesn't mean they can't be real. One child really did disappear in the park late in the 1970s, but police believe that her father kidnapped her after he lost a messy custody battle during divorce proceedings. Relatively little violence has occurred in the Small Park over the years — perhaps a surprisingly limited amount — but that's the only really unusual feature of its history.

Activity: On warmer, more pleasant days, the Small Park is very busy during sunny hours. Children frolic on the play sets, and teenagers hang out after school. Dog owners take their pets out for walks and activity.

At night, some of the local teens make use of the park for surreptitious drinking and drug-taking, but they tend to hang around in tight groups, and don't exactly make good targets for vampires on the hunt.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Raucous children in the playground, cautious parents, teens out on a clandestine drunk, softball players gearing up for a game, dog owners drinking coffee and watching their pets

Hostile Encounters: A dog out for a walk reacts badly to the presence of Kindred characters. A watchful parent takes note of the characters' proximity to the play area, confronting them in hopes that they'll leave. A softball player accidentally hits one of the characters with a wild toss.

Locations: Shaded trees, children's play area, softball field, green zone

Stories: Spot and capture a predatory wanderer before he can hurt one of the children in the park. Track a nomad Gangrel who's been using the park as a base of operations despite a ban from the Prince. Investigate the truth behind one of the Small Park's urban legends.

Traits: Size 3, Security 0, Location 1, Advantage: n/a, Status 1, Durability n/a, Structure n/a

Taxi Dispatch

Type: Commercial

Description: This grubby, exhaust-stained building serves as the garage, dispatch and secure parking lot for a fleet of city cabs. The main structure is a large, open warehouse with two hydraulic maintenance lifts in one corner, tables and lockers for the drivers in another and a counter for dispatchers and the office manager. The climate control in the building is extremely poor — in the winter, everybody's shivering inside, and in the summer it's unbearably hot. The people running the place just can't be bothered to install an expensive system.

The dispatch counter is crammed with legacy radio equipment, which has been dismantled and reassembled over the years in a constant effort to keep it running without replacement. Those who are mechanically inclined often comment on the inventive skill involved in its construction — by all rights, it should have given up the ghost long ago, but creativity and willpower have kept it alive.

The exterior of the building is unremarkable and relatively poorly maintained. It's a low, unpainted brick structure with a small sign over the garage-sized roll-up doors and a sizable parking lot off to the side. A rusty chain-link fence surrounds the building, topped by razor wire in an attempt to keep thieves and wanderers out. Grimy, torn plastic bags flutter in the wire, blown there by the wind and left to hang by lazy or irresponsible employees.

Since the Taxi Dispatch is constantly inhabited, there is very little in the way of physical security. Simple locks hold the doors, and the chain-link fence is chained and padlocked.

The Taxi Dispatch is a great location for influence-heavy chronicles. It may be a filthy, sweaty, unpleasant place, but it provides access to easy, anonymous transport, detailed information about the comings and goings of the city and a perfect cover for questionable or illegal mechanical work. The theme of the taxi dispatch is *downtrodden ingenuity.*

History: The Taxi Dispatch was founded as an independent company in 1953, and has passed from owner to owner at least seven times in the past 50 years. Bankruptcy, forced buy-outs, shady dealings and legitimate sales have led to a history so convoluted that it would require a few nights of dedicated study with a skilled accountant to fully understand. The current owners have maintained operation for the last 10 years and remained largely unmolested — likely due to underworld connections in some degree — and their tight-fisted style of business management is a frequent and frustrating subject of conversation among the local drivers.

The Taxi Dispatch was closed down for two years in the mid-'90s after a violent confrontation between police and a number of the drivers led to a detailed federal investigation. The former owners are now in prison, serving terms on fraud, racketeering and smuggling charges, and the current owners have worked very hard to disassociate themselves and their company from their predecessors.

Activity: Always busy. The Taxi Dispatch runs 24 hours a day, so drivers, mechanics and dispatchers are always around, frantically going about their business. A constant din rings throughout at all hours — power tools, music on the machine floor, radio chatter, bitching and

moaning among the employees and, of course, the running of engines. Forget about stealth in this place. The mechanics are always keeping an eye on their tools, sick of getting ripped off, and the drivers (who are responsible for their cars) don't want anybody screwing with their property and livelihood.

Significant Storyteller Character: Sweaty Mechanic (Dice Pools: Crafts 7, Weaponry 5, Intimidation 5)

Extras: Hardworking drivers, long-suffering dispatchers, perpetually angry manager, visiting owner

Hostile Encounters: The manager, paranoid of criminal activity, tries to chase the characters out of the building. A pushed-to-the-limit driver freaks out, pulling a gun and threatening to blow away a mouthy dispatcher and anyone who gets in his way. One of the mechanics erupts after a character picks up one of his tools without asking.

Locations: Open floor (–2 Stealth), tool-crammed workshop (+2 Crafts, +1 Streetwise), drivers' rest area (+1 Streetwise), busy parking lot, tiny washrooms, lockers, corner tables, dispatch counter (+1 Streetwise)

Stories: Disentangle the management from a subtle, complicated influence scam run by Kindred in the domain. Take over the dispatch and use the cabs to snarl up traffic during a critical influence push. Steal a cab and use it to kidnap a rival vampire.

Traits: Size 2, Security 3, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Crafts, –1 Stealth, Status 1, Durability 45, Structure 2

Tech-Sector Office

Type: Commercial

Description: Second floor in the old Union Station, take the freight elevator upstairs and go straight ahead. The receptionist's desk is usually empty, leaving a ringing phone to join the chorus of power supply fans. The cathedral windows shine streetlight over rows of desks and computers, and employees are everywhere. They don't just sit at the desks, they sit on them, they cluster around them, they disassemble PCs next to them. If you've been here before, just go where you need to go. If you haven't, get your butt in a chair and Rosa will be here to help you. Eventually. Once that server's back up.

As computers become more numerous, more capable and easier to use, they also become more opaque. Even for small businesses, it's often cheaper to hire a company like DConcepts to manage their technical resources. The Tech-Sector Office has network engineers, software developers, security system experts and more. If it's got a computer in it, chances are somebody here knows how to take it apart.

The theme of the Tech-Sector Office is information ubiquity. Pieces of DConcepts equipment and code are scattered throughout the city, and many of them are actively maintained. Private intranets, inventory management systems, even camera and alarm systems. If Rosa's firm didn't do an installation, she probably knows who did. They might even owe her a favor. Characters with access to DConcepts can worm their way into most corporate and government networks by exploiting the company's contracts or expertise. Kindred doing so should be reminded of the traces they themselves leave behind.

History: Since its founding in the late '80s by programmer Rosa Dogan and accountant Colin Sharp, DConcepts has become one of the largest local IT contractors. Colin cashed out during the dot com bubble to start a free ISP; after its collapse, he went back to corporate accounting. He remains a friend of several senior employees and an occasional boyfriend of Rosa, so his friendships are one way into the company.

Activity: Because many of the businesses the Tech-Sector Office supports keep late hours, and servers have to stay up 24/7, employees usually work late into the night. Characters seeking entry after business hours will need to have a keycard or somebody to let them in.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Rosa Dogan, programmer-turned-entrepreneur; Mel Corman, office manager

Extras: Dozens of programmers, network engineers and phone support technicians

Hostile Encounters: N/A

Locations: Server room (windowless, single-entrance, sophisticated fire suppression), receptionist's desk, open-plan office space, Rosa's office (overlooking the floor)

Stories: Bring in a missing Kindred's PC for dissection. Set a tap on a government email server.

Traits: Size 3, Security 3, Location 2, Advantages: +1 Computers, Status 0, Durability 70, Structure 3

Tenement Squat

Type: Residential

Description: A dilapidated, crooked house on the verge of collapse. Weathered, warped boards are nailed up over all the windows and doors, although the seals created are less than perfect. An opening has been torn through the boards on one of the house's back windows, providing easy (if somewhat dangerous) access to anyone who might want to enter. Every aspect of the house is in poor repair: the walls are titled, the chimney is half-collapsed and the roof is patchy. Not a single pane of unbroken glass remains anywhere on the house's face, and extensive water damage has reduced some of the bricks along one side of the building to chalky, reddish dust.

The place is much, much worse on the inside. Stained, waterlogged mattresses lie on the floor of two of the rooms, their undersides completely covered in mildew. The stink of wet rot permeates the whole building, top to bottom. Half-hearted graffiti is scrawled on the walls, mostly referring to visitors marking time between heroin hits. Waste — both human and otherwise — litters the floors. A suspicious, dark stain is spattered across the wall next to the staircase, the signature of some nameless, long-past violence. The stairs themselves are rotted through, and provide no safe access to the second floor.

This site is a good stopover for characters in search of a temporary haven, so long as they don't mind sharing with junkie mortal squatters. It's otherwise a thoroughly unpleasant place, and while it might serve as a satisfying backdrop for less savory goings-on, nobody would consider it pleasant by any stretch of the imagination. The theme of the Tenement Squat is *unmitigated squalor*.

The squat may be used as a metaphoric setting as well as a literal one in the story. Characters coming through a crucible of sorts may find themselves in this site when they hit rock bottom, at the moment of some kind of critical reversal. This is a perfect location to indicate that they have been beaten down as far as they can go: the only way out is up.

History: Somebody must have lived here once. Someone must have actually liked this place and made it their home. If so, it hasn't been for at least 20 years — there are markings on the walls that prove that gutter punks made it their own as early as 1983.

Truth is, the house was built in the 1950s, and was host to a couple of perfectly happy families before it fell into its current state. Local rumors (unsupported by historical evidence) suggest that a grisly triple murder resulted in its current state of neglect, but the truth is that someone who just didn't care enough inherited the house in the late '70s, defaulted on her tax payments and let it fall into a state of disrepair during a long and bitter battle with government authorities. The house currently stands in a legal limbo — the unfortunate owner has since died, but her son has taken up the battle with City Hall, hoping to reclaim rights to the site so that he can tear it down and build a new house there. Until the case is settled, though, he's not going to go to any trouble taking care of the place — and neither is anybody else. So it remains a retreat for the homeless and the depraved, and so it will remain until it can be released.

Activity: At any time, day or night, characters wandering into the Tenement Squat are likely to find three or four homeless stragglers bedding down, sharing a needle (or a drink) or fighting for the right to use the shelter. On occasion, it stands completely empty — creaking and groaning in the wind, as if threatening to fall in on itself.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Exhausted street punks looking to crash, nasty old beggar setting up for the night, filthy drunks, mentally ill wanderer

Hostile Encounters: A paranoid, territorial squatter threatens to attack the characters as they try to enter the building. Two homeless criminals, caught in the process of planning a robbery, mistake the characters for rival operators. Police perform a routine sweep to clear the place out, including the characters.

Locations: Waterlogged basement (+1 Stealth, +1 Intimidation), drafty rooms (+1 Survival), open attic (+1 Intimidation)

Stories: Free the house from its legal entanglements so that it can be destroyed and rebuilt. Lend a sympathetic ear to a mentally ill squatter and help her reclaim the life she's wandered away from. Bring a rival vampire to the squat for interrogation and potential disposal.

Traits: Size 2, Security 0, Location 4, Advantages: +1 Survival, Status 0, Durability 28, Structure 2

Triple-Play Racetrack

Type: Commercial

Description: A large, well-maintained horse-racing facility, the Triple-Play Racetrack plays host to a wide variety of gambling events. It boasts three tracks, built in concentric oval rings on the grounds, all of which are overlooked by large canopied bleachers, and a sizable indoor gambling facility.

The outermost track (named the "R. L. Garvey track" in honor of a famous breeder and racer) is a thoroughbred turf course, one and a half miles in length. It is least frequently used for racing events, but is immaculately maintained, since it stands closest to the bleacher seats.

The middle track (called the "Utility track") is a second, more frequently used, thoroughbred oval track, one mile in circumference. It's a dirt course, regularly raked and sifted to ensure that rocks and other debris don't compromise the running surface.

The innermost track (simply referred to as the "Inner track") is seven-eighths of a mile in length, made of crushed limestone. It serves as a course for standard-bred racing, and is also frequently used.

Inside the tracks, a gigantic leader board faces the stands and lists the names, numbers, positions, current betting odds and running times of competitors for each event.

Inside, the betting kiosks stand at the end of a large hall dotted with television monitors and small tables. At the far end of the hall, a large bar and restaurant play host to hungry gamblers. On the second floor, above the common floor and over the bleachers, private boxes featuring full service bars, large television monitors and dedicated betting telephones provide a full view of the racing field.

The security system on the track is quite extensive. Electronic keycard locks protect all of the doors leading to the cash kiosks and executive boxes. The cash storage and all registers are monitored by security cameras and subject to frequent spot counts. The storage system itself is a guarded vault.

The theme for this site is *artificial gloss*. The track is suffused with an elaborate façade of respectability, thinly laid over the reality of criminal activity, desperate addiction and simple greed. There are hidden dangers in the track as well: vampire characters without Animalism will have to stay away from the stables and the tracks if they don't want to cause a panic among the horses and completely disrupt the races. Plans to enter ghoul horses into races may seem like a good idea to Kindred who've never tried it, but the result is less than pretty: a bloodthirsty, predatory horse set loose among more passive animals, and a potential violation of the Masquerade if the horse does anything particularly unnatural or surprising.

History: First opened with a single track in early 1905, the Triple-Play Racetrack has seen steady business and the occasional controversy throughout a century of operation. Long considered both an entertainment center and a gathering place for lowlifes, the Triple-Play Racetrack has endured several grass-roots campaigns to close it down — the latest taking place in the 1960s, after which it seems to have settled into acceptance. A number of high-profile races have been hosted at the track over the last 50 years, prompting the construction of the outer two courses, approximately 12 years apart, and cementing the track's role as a major tourist attraction. With the growth of the track, though, attraction of the criminal element has also increased, and pickpockets, con men and violent extortionists plague the facility. Several attempts have been made to "clean up" the track, but earnest police initiatives rarely outlast the enduring criminal attention. Pressures to maintain budget and turn their attentions to harder crime often force the officers of the law to withdraw, leaving the track largely at the mercy of the underworld.

Activity: During the hours of operation, the track is attended by crowds of varying size — from a few dozen eager gamblers on bad weather days to thousands of spectators coming out to see a major event. Early in the morning, before the track opens to the public, breeders and jockeys can be found tending to their animals in the stables. Late at night, after the betting offices close, maintenance crews tend to the grounds and clear out the discarded stubs and various garbage on the facility floor.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Corrupt Track Manager (Dice Pools: Politics 7, Intimidation 5, Socialize 5)

Extras: Kiosk operators, energized racing fans, desperate gamblers, bottom-feeding pickpockets, high-powered executives, jockeys, breeders, thoroughbred horses, janitors, armed security guards, sports journalists, photographers

Hostile Encounters: A thief tries to mug the characters in the parking lot. A security guard grows suspicious of the characters, threatening to throw them out. A horse in the stables shies away from vampire characters, threatening to kick loose and trample them.

Locations: Cashier's kiosks (–1 Stealth), concession stands, washrooms, bleacher seats, box seats (+1 Socialize), tracks (–2 Stealth), stables (+1 Animal Ken), parking lot

Stories: Fix the results of a race to make sure that the Kindred owner of a competing horse is happy. Assassinate a significant enemy influence while he watches the races from his luxury box seat. Gather evidence and expose the corrupt money-laundering scam operating on the betting floor.

Traits: Size 5, Security 4, Location 4, Advantages: Socialize 1, Status 3, Durability 65, Structure 3

Two-Bit Attorney's Office

Type: Commercial

Description: The door is labeled, simply, ATTORNEY. It's on the second floor of a motel-looking building, above a dojo with no windows and next to a Korean nail salon. Inside, the place turns out to be about the size of a motel room. It feels like the early 1980s, with the linoleum and the metal desk. A shelf full of legal books looks good, but the other dozen or so stacked around the room on cardboard boxes are more suspect. An Elmore Leonard novel lays open, face down on the desk.

History: David Krenz's friends told him he should be a lawyer because he liked to argue. He shouted at the TV screen during *Law & Order* and *LA Law* the way his friends yelled during football games. But David didn't have much money and was a pretty lousy student. After graduating from a third-rate law program and passing the bar (third time's a charm) he took out a loan and opened his own little office. "This way," he jokes, "my name goes straight into the firm's name and I don't have to be a partner with anybody."

David's car is nice. ("It's important to make a good impression.") His apartment is better than his office. Those are the places where he spends his income. The rest of his life is bought with credit and he doesn't expect to ever be out of debt. But at least he's his own boss.

Activity: An oscillating fan whirs back and forth in the lobby, flapping the pages of year-old entertainment magazines. Somewhere outside, a car alarm goes off.

Significant Storyteller Characters: David Krenz, the attorney with the bad rep, is well-spoken but not well-read — with time to do a lot of cramming, he can put on a good show, but he's lousy with paperwork (Dice pools: Academics (Law) 4, Politics 4, Persuasion 5, Socialize 6).

Extras: Small-time accountants also make their offices in the building. A very short man in blue coveralls cleans the offices three nights a week.

Locations: The waiting room and entryway (–2 Intimidation), Krenz's office (+1 Subterfuge)

Stories: Krenz takes on a case that, if pursued, will veer too close to the operations of the coterie — find a way to get Krenz off the case, or otherwise off the trail, without attracting more attention. Krenz has vanished, his files have been ransacked, and there's blood on his carpet — find him.

Traits: Size 1, Security 2, Location 2, Advantages: +3 Persuasion, Status 2 (passed the Bar, but not respected), Durability 40, Structure 2

Underground Boxing Club

Type: Residential

Description: Look at that waiver closely. Because it was written by a real lawyer, who's had a real case before the very real State Supreme Court. And it says, in legalese, that nobody here is responsible for how kicked your ass is about to get. Now welcome to Friday Night Fights.

The Underground Boxing Club is built around a few well-known facts of human nature. First, people like to fight. Second, people like to drink. Third, when drinking, people think that videotaping themselves fighting is an absolutely terrific idea. The Club isn't about training, and it's rarely about settling scores. It's about a bunch of yuppies who get their catharsis playing Rocky and get laughs watching it later. Fight nights rotate between members' homes; as time has gone on, that's meant more and more suburban basements. As card-carrying members of the disaffected middle class, Club members are good targets for Kindred looking to feed. The Club members are also fiercely loyal to each other; a vampire who earns their trust can cultivate minions who won't pull punches.

History: The Underground Boxing Club has been meeting for between three and four years. Originally, the tapes were private, but a couple of the more hardcore members have started blurring the faces and uploading them on the Internet.

Activity: Punching, kicking, no biting.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Various bankers, lawyers and other folks who wish they could hit their bosses

Hostile Encounters: That's what you come here for.

Locations: An empty parking garage, somebody's basement, a living room with all the furniture pushed back against the walls

Stories: Recruit club members as food or fodder. Reforge the club as an effective fighting school.

Traits: Size 1, Security 0, Location 1, Advantages: +1 Brawl, Status 0, Durability 55, Structure 2

Underground Nightclub

Type: Residential

Description: In a middle-class neighborhood, where middle class people live middling lives, there is a house. There's a big car parked in the driveway, but nothing ostentatious. The windows have pretty curtains, but they're always drawn. Two university professors live there, and it seems they have guests. They keep quiet, though. They're nice kids, and they keep to themselves.

Those who show up on the right night, carrying the right gift (a bottle of wine or a loaf of French bread, and always a crisp $100 bill) get admitted to the wildest night of their lives (assuming they weren't here last week). Welcome to the House of Secrets, the hottest club nobody you know knows exists.

The theme of the Underground Nightclub is hidden decadence. Once guests are past the bouncer, they're ushered down a hidden elevator and through an airlock into a cross between Hitler's bunker and Kublai Khan's pleasure dome. The lights are pulsing, the dance floor's hopping and the clothing is optional as long as you can stay glamorous without it. DJ Glorious ("Glo" to her friends, and if you're in, you *better* be one of her friends) holds court among those beautiful, wealthy and above all connected enough to get in her door. The place is all plastics and steel, with a sprinkler-and-drainage system that can render the premises spotless in minutes.

Among Kindred, it's well-known that the club is funded by a vampire, and the bass isn't quite heavy enough to overwhelm the skin-crawling sensation of the Predator's Taint. Forty feet below the ground, completely soundproof, and apparently under the watch of a potent elder,

the House of Secrets is a place few of the Damned care to go. Glo, however, rents the club space for private parties, and it's not a bad place to do a murder.

History: Glo founded the House of Secrets a few years ago when her warehouse party, 2-11, collapsed under ever-heavier operating costs. Liquor licenses, security, paying off cops, paying off dealers... all those little taxes added up. As much as her initial success made her a local start, the pressure of catering to enough bodies to fill the space put limits on what she could play. 2-11 cost too much, and it just wasn't fun anymore. So Glo came up with the notion of a "premium" club space — one that charged a specific, dedicated clientele through the nose, while letting them put whatever they wanted *in* their nose. By going underground, she bypassed a lot of her ongoing costs.

What she needed, though, was the cash to carve out the space. In this city, though, dealing with conventional organized crime is close enough to dealing with the city government as to make no difference. So Glo got a partner who was pretty far off the grid already, a Daeva who suggested that if Glo was going to build one well-soundproofed and highly secure underground vault, she might consider building two. She got even luckier when he went into torpor only a year into the club's operation. He rests in a vault beneath the club — one designed to be opened only from the inside. Even Glo can't get in; the allowance of Vitae she uses to maintain her 24/7 party-girl lifestyle is doled out by an elaborate mechanism built into the tomb.

Activity: Dancing and the various sex acts it resembles. Glo's business is built around a very narrow clientele, and they're uniformly rich, beautiful and full of themselves. Glo spinning trip-hop and drum-and-bass to match her Vitae-amped heartbeat. Fights lasting fractions of moments before the bouncer puts a stop to them.

Significant Storyteller Characters: The "Professors," the two actors paid to live in the house; the Bouncer (Dice Pools: Brawl 7, Intimidate 8), a strong and shouty type who must have *something* unnatural in his blood; DJ Glorious, the lord and mistress of the operation

Extras: Patrons in many states of intoxication and undress. Bartenders filling glasses as fast as the patrons can drain them. A few select dealers there at Glo's invitation. Rarely, the childer of the Kindred who sleeps beneath.

Hostile Encounters: The Bouncer efficiently removes anyone who might slow down the party. Anyone capable of resisting him is likely to find himself in a fight.

Locations: The DJ booth, the elder's vault, the bathroom (unisex, but amply sized)

Stories: Manipulate the elder's accounts to force Glo to look for new partners. Intimidate a drug dealer who's been frequenting the club. Throw a bash to wake the dead.

Traits: Size 2, Security 4, Location 1, Advantages: +3 Subterfuge, Status 2, Durability 70, Structure 2

Underground Parking Lot

Type: Industrial

Description: Huge, multi-tiered and apparently built to deliberately confuse its customers, the Underground Parking Lot provides spaces for more than 200 cars right in the busy heart of the downtown core. Poorly conceived signs point out the direction of traffic (and the way to the exits), often positioned so as to seem contradictory or false. Whether by accident or design, the Lot causes a great deal of frustration in the weary drivers who make their way slowly from one tier to the next, either perpetually in search of an empty spot or nervously seeking egress.

Each of the four levels making up the Lot has its own animal icon meant to differentiate it from the others and improve a driver's chance of remembering where he parked. These icons are painted on the walls in bright colors, but many are stained and peeling, somehow highlighting a poisonous sensation that seems to permeate the whole of the structure.

There is a camera system in the Lot, but it's only barely monitored by a lazy, underpaid guard. In the event of an emergency, the guard is more likely to call police and stay in his booth than attempt to interfere.

The Underground Parking Lot is a ubiquitous feature of city life, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's mundane. The Lot makes a good setting for a variety of scenes: chases, shadowy meetings, hunting — anything, really, that is served by a measure of tense anonymity in the middle of the city's busiest district. The theme of the Underground Parking Lot is *furtive anxiety.*

History: There's little to be said about the Underground Parking Lot's history. It's been in operation for over 30 years, and while it's seen countless petty criminal incidents, nothing of real significance has made a permanent mark on the place. Rumors abound of grisly murders, violent kidnappings and horrifying rapes, but few bear up under serious investigative scrutiny. The rumors persist, though, because the site just... feels bad... and nobody can really say if there were ever a time it weren't so.

Activity: The Parking Lot operates 24 hours a day. Most of the entrance and exit routes are automated, run by pressure-plate sensors, electronic ticket dispensers and

mechanized payment kiosks. There is a maintenance staff, but it's minimal and usually hard to find. The Lot is fullest during shopping hours and late in the night — there is usually a relative lull between 5 P.M. and 7 P.M. No matter how busy the place is, though, it's rare to see other people who aren't in their cars. There's an isolating effect to the whole of the site — no matter how much is going on, people making their way through the Lot and its stairwells always seem to feel as if they're alone.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Aggravated drivers looking for a spot, speed-walking office workers headed for home, half-inebriated clubbers heading out to party

Hostile Encounters: A careless driver dings the back of a character's car and steps out, blaming her for the accident. A small gang of muggers accosts the characters in a stairwell. A vampire on the hunt misreads the characters' intentions, believing that they are poaching Vitae in his territory.

Locations: Dark corners (+1 Stealth), concrete stairwells (+1 Stealth), large lots (+1 Stealth), pay booths

Stories: Find the vehicle abandoned by a mortal who was murdered shortly after leaving the Lot and scour the car for clues. Enforce a ban on feeding imposed by the Prince on this Lot. Steal a rival's car from the Lot and use it as part of an elaborate frame.

Traits: Size 3, Security 1, Location 5, Advantages: +1 Stealth, Status 3, Durability *, Structure *

University Hematology Lab

Type: Downtown, Plaza

Description: Beyond lobby ferns and an oversized parking lot, white-coated men and women busy themselves with vials of precious fluid. Cataloging it, analyzing it, learning its mysteries. In their very clean laboratories, in their very methodical way, they are deciphering the secrets of blood.

The University Hematology Lab performs both research and clinical hematology. The clinical technicians analyze blood samples provided by doctors in order to provide information for diagnosis. The researchers focus on understanding and treating blood diseases such as leukemia and sickle cell anemia. A university alumnus has also recently endowed research into identifying foreign genetic material in blood samples, such as parasites or bacteria.

Most Kindred wonder about the Blood at some point in their Requiems, and Ordo Dracul Kindred see scientific research as a means to purge themselves of vampiric weakness. More authoritarian vampires might pursue genetic typing to separate the blood of different victims within Vitae, allowing them to monitor Kindred feeding on a previously unthinkable scale.

History: Dr. Ari Batiste is the new head of the Hematology Lab. A young professor chasing tenure and burnout, Ari has taken charge of moving the Laboratory from its limited facilities in the university medical building into a 21st-century laboratory a few blocks from the downtown campus. The senior faculty are pressing Ari to commercialize the research programs so that they're less of a revenue drain on the clinical lab. Ari sympathizes more with his graduate students (particularly the pretty ones) than he does with his fellow faculty, and he's ready to make a show of academic independence. What he'd really like to do, though, is find some fat checks for the Lab to pursue his own pet projects.

Activity: During the day, researchers and clinical technicians processing samples. At night, a few graduate students finishing up reports.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Dr. Ari Batiste, director

Extras: Security guard, sleeping graduate student, overworked researcher

Hostile Encounters: A student confronts the characters as they use the lab equipment.

Locations: Offices, lunchroom, sample cataloging room, sample refrigerators, laboratory pods for each project

Stories: Obtain a diseased blood sample with which to dose a rival. Intercept medical waste leaving the lab, and sell it to Kindred trying to hold onto their Humanity. Work with the Ordo Dracul to analyze the peculiarities of the Blood.

Traits: Size 3, Security 3, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Science, Status 1, Durability 50, Structure 2

Upscale Gallery

Type: Commercial

Description: On the edge of the most fashionable shopping district in town, between a café and a couture shoe shop, this small storefront affords a fragmented view of an austere, dramatically lit gallery through custom-frosted plate, tempered glass. The unusual treatment on the glass renders it opaque when viewed at any angle except straight on, in which case it appears completely transparent.

Inside, the Gallery is a single, long room painted a subtle off-white color and spotted with powerful incandescent lights. Works of art are mounted on the walls or under glass, with small, elegant cards naming them, crediting the artist and listing a purchase price. The display

almost always features a hot local talent, and each piece is invariably (some would say outrageously) expensive. During gallery events, space is cleared on the floor for a long banquet table.

The security system on the Gallery is top of the line. Alarm systems are wired through the glass front and door, hooked into an automated security company response line and police alert signal. Infrared sensors crisscross the room after hours, and the thermostat logs sudden changes in temperature or humidity and activates the alert system in the event of an unusual variation. Hidden cameras monitor the front door, show floor and back of the building all the time, and recordings are stored for future review. The picture —window storefront is powerfully enforced by the tempering process, and it is bullet-proof, smash-proof and burn-proof (Durability 15, Structure 3).

The theme of the Upscale Gallery is *privileged fame*. Only the fortunate few are spotlighted in its showings, and any artist who does manage to make a splash at this site is guaranteed a series of interviews, profiles and recommendations in local media. Just having one's name associated with the gallery paves the way for a financial windfall and a measure of high society cachet. Kindred looking to maintain the image of modern success often act as patrons of the Gallery, touring its displays late in the night to select their havens' newest accoutrements.

History: The Upscale Gallery was opened in the late 1970s, back when the neighborhood was well into a decades-long decline. The space was cheap, the displays were avant-garde and the attention attracted helped lead to the gentrification and re-imagination of the entire District. Soon surrounded by a new generation of hip cafés and shops, the Upscale Gallery earned a reputation as a revitalizing "trigger."

Over the decades that have passed, the owners, who have become quite wealthy, have slowly let the flavor of its showings slip from the beautiful and unusual works of local creators to the pricey and fashionable pieces of the art-world elite. Some of the citizens of the city are well aware of this change, but the patronage of the rich and the constant attraction to tourists keeps the Gallery operating smoothly.

In the late 1990s, during an anti-globalization demonstration that turned ugly, a number of protestors smashed the windows of the Gallery and trashed the works on display. As a result, the extensive security systems described above were installed, and the glass was replaced with the high-tech material that now forms the gallery front.

The attentions of Kindred patrons has further guaranteed that none of the vampire community turns a malicious hand toward the Gallery... at least, none of the intelligent ones.

Activity: The Gallery is open to the public between 3 p.m. and 11 p.m. every day, and individuals with a good reputation (Fame • • or higher and Resources • • • • or higher) can call in advance to arrange for private viewings outside of normal operating hours. On most days, the Gallery is busy but not crowded. The owners (a pair of sisters) are almost always in attendance, ready to negotiate a sale or arrange a future showing.

During a show party, the Gallery is jammed full of high-society types, and many of the soirees held at the site spill out onto the sidewalk out front. It's difficult to get around during one of these wine-and-cheese events, because the Gallery is so popular.

On occasion, a vampire visitor will arrange one of the private showings previously mentioned, looking to buy a new piece for display in dealings with fellow Kindred. Without realizing or understanding the implications of the interest expressed by these patrons, the owners are only too happy to host their wealthy, undead customers.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Owner (Dice Pools: Persuasion 7, Socialize 6, Recognize Talent 8)

Extras: Curious tourists, extremely wealthy dabblers, too-cool artist, grumbling critic, fawning art appreciator, Daeva investor

Hostile Encounters: The owner decides that the characters are unsavory and should be ejected from the Gallery. An artist accuses the characters of failing to show him (or his work) the proper respect. A local critic dresses down the characters for their lack of taste.

Locations: Stairs and storefront, gallery showroom (+1 Socialize), backroom storage, back door with two parking spaces

Stories: Conspire to get a character's artwork profiled and shown at the gallery. Use the Gallery's new show as a means to attract and entrap a vampire patron. Seduce one of the owners in an attempt to gain control over the operations of the Gallery.

Traits: Size 1, Security 5, Location 3, Advantages: +1 Socialize, Status 3, Durability 30, Structure 2

Used Car Dealership

Type: Commercial

Description: This mid-sized lot is full of older model cars, lined up in rows with soap-written prices on the windshields. All makes and sizes are available here, in varying states of repair. Most of the cars are certified, but some are sold "as is" for cut-rate prices. At the far end of the lot, a small building stands under garish signs and

colored flags, housing the sales office. The whole of the property is surrounded by a chain-link fence with barbed wire looped around the top.

Inside the building, a desk and three comfortable chairs are housed in a small, soundproofed room, while the rest of the structure is devoted to an auto shop and repair floor. Customers are ushered past the screech and whine of the shop to the relative comfort of the office for the negotiation and finalizing of sales. Signs proclaiming temporary financing deals and current interest rates are posted all over the office and painted on the windows facing the street.

There's a measure of security in this site: the barbed-wire fence is chained and padlocked after hours, and the lot is monitored by a couple of cheap, fuzzy security cameras. The store itself is sealed with standard key locks, and all of the registration forms for cars are kept in a safe under the manager's desk.

Characters looking for quick access to a relatively cheap vehicle can make use of the Used Car Dealership. Anything from a compact car to a sport utility vehicle can be found for one Resource dot less than the brand-new purchase price, although the Durability rating of the vehicle is likely to be lessened, and it may be unreliable. An Intelligence + Crafts roll is required to accurately determine the condition of a vehicle, and the character involved is likely to have to resist a Manipulation + Persuasion attempt on the part of the dealer while examining the vehicle. If the character wants one of the "as-is" vehicles, he can purchase it for *two* Resource dots lower than the new price, but it should be assumed that the vehicle is not in working condition, and will require extended Crafts rolls to bring it back to operating capacity. The theme of the lot is the *quick and dirty* deal — people who don't care much for small talk or the bounds of legitimate business can get what they want here... or get bilked, if they're not careful.

History: The Used Car Dealership has been in business for just over a decade. The owners have taken advantage of a legal loophole to trade the papers on the place back and forth a couple of times over the years to escape obligation in civil suits that have been brought against them. A good number of questionable sales have gone on here, and the shop is much maligned by the locals, who'd really rather see it go under.

Activity: The shop is open every day from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. After close, the lot fence is closed and locked, and the keys to all of the cars are sealed in a safe. There is no activity whatsoever on the lot late at night.

The shop mechanic is hard at work in the garage most days — both repairing salvage-worthy vehicles to get them ready for sales, and performing less-than-legal duties such as filing off serial numbers, falsifying manufacturers' marks and sabotaging brake lines. Anyone who approaches him will find him extremely reluctant to engage in conversation, because he's done time for violent crime before, and isn't eager to get associated with any criminal activity now.

Characters who make their way into the lot are likely to be intercepted quickly by a salesman, who will do what he can to make a sale. If they're hanging around without intent

to do business, he will try to shuffle them off the lot as soon as possible, keeping his eyes open for real buyers.

Significant Storyteller Characters: Fraudulent Used Car Dealer (Dice Pools: Subterfuge 6, Persuasion 5, Academics [Law] 3)

Extras: Shifty-eyed mechanic, gullible rubes, nervous car thief

Hostile Encounters: The dealer attempts to clear characters off the lot, realizing that they're smart enough to spoil potential deals. The mechanic attempts to sabotage the characters car after they come sniffing around one too many times. A mark operating under the dealer's persuasive spell assumes the characters are competing bidders and gets quarrelsome.

Locations: Car lot (+1 Stealth), dreary sales office, grimy garage (+1 Crafts)

Stories: Retrieve a stolen car that's found its way to the dealership. Negotiate an under-the-table purchase for a vehicle with fake papers so that it can be used to commit a crime. Catch the dealer in the act of defrauding customers so that he can be put out of business.

Traits: Size 2, Security 2, Location 0, Advantages: n/a, Status 1, Durability 35, Structure 2

Zoo

Type: Park

Description: When Kindred think of the caging of the Beast, they only *wish* they could cage it like the City Zoo. Step through the rusted, flaking iron arches, walk through the entry valley and you'll pass dozens of sad and hungry beasts. Staring through dented bars, they're scrawny and listless, from the greatest lion to the smallest gibbon. Hungry as they are, they'll barely even growl or yelp as a vampire passes through. Here in the Zoo, perhaps, is a lesson: the beast dwindles along with its cage.

The Zoo has recently begun closing some of the exhibits; the manlike great apes and their aloof neighbors, the reptiles, have been shipped to other parks. The Zoo is dying.

History: The Zoo opened in 1881 as one of the first public zoological parks in the country. A pride of lions were the first animals to move in, migrating from the collection of a wealthy bachelor who later left his estate to the park. Over the next several decades, the Zoo introduced a number of exotic species. In 1981, celebrating a century of operation, it welcomed its first panda.

The panda had to be sold within the decade. The Zoo is in a constant state of financial crisis, and for years chose to acquire new animals rather than improve existing exhibits or infrastructure. Much of the sewer system is Victorian, and only three of the public buildings were built after 1950.

Activity: A trickle of visitors during the day; mostly tourists feeling ripped off. At night, zookeepers feeding the creatures and cleaning their cages. The animals themselves aren't particularly active.

Significant Storyteller Characters: N/A

Extras: Zookeepers, a journalist, representatives from other zoos appraising the animals

Hostile Encounters: A lion finds its lost fight when it locks eyes with a vampire. A security guard interrupts one of the characters feeding.

Locations: Two veterinary clinics, a dozen animal houses, the vast and stinking Dumpster lot, old administrative offices

Stories: Liberate a fancy "pet" for an elder. Run off a Lupine communing with the animals. Steal supplies from the veterinary clinics.

Traits: Size 5, Security 1, Location 1, Advantages: +4 Animal Ken, Status 1, Durability 70, Structure 2

Subjects

Reading Subjects

Subjects are read like any other sample character in a World of Darkness book. Most of the entries you'll find below are both self-explanatory and familiar. Here's a quick rundown of the things that are new or different:

Virtue and Vice: Virtues and Vices go a long way toward describing the ways a character can be manipulated. Push someone far enough, and they're likely to fulfill their Vice in the hopes of gaining back some confidence or calm (in the form of a Willpower point). Because the whole purpose of a Subject is to be manipulated, these are important traits to know.

Conflict (Trait Rating): A Subject's conflict what makes him vulnerable to coercion and manipulation by the Kindred. Part story hook and part sample action, conflicts describe what a character must do to gain a subject as an Asset, and thereby win control over whatever Site the Subject is associated with. Conflicts are described in detail in the Barony chapter.

Dice Pool: Like other non-combatant characters, the abilities of these Subjects are described in plain language and sample dice pools. Since Subjects are built with such a specific function in mind — the dramatization of a vampire's insidious influence — their dice pools are more specific as well.

Sample Subjects

These poor bastards are just fodder for your imagination. Use these to get you started. Any character written up in any World of Darkness book is a potential Subject if you give him a conflict to exploit.

Aging Drug Dealer

Quote: "Look here, son. Look here and shut up."

Description: A man in his mid-50s, who can't relax even when he wants to. He strokes a short beard, one he's only let grow since his hair went white.

Background: The Army really did pay for college, but college only taught him how to launder the money from his extracurriculars. Dealing was easy money, back then, before he fell back on it as a full-time career. In the Dealer's business, the only way to strike rich is to dig deep, and it took him a long time to realize what a hole he was in.

Somewhere in there he had time to get married and have two strapping sons — neither of whom wants anything to do with him. His ex-wife doesn't, either, but she can't close the door when he shows up bleeding on the step.

Storytelling Hints: The Dealer is wound very tightly, but he never quite loses it. Make him capable of a little charm, too, but don't overdo it.

Virtue and Vice: Fortitude and Greed. For someone willing to wade through rivers of bullshit and bullets, the Dealer makes some rash decisions. He's always working out his next big score, even while the current one's blowing up in his face.

Conflict (Firearms • • • •): What does a man want when he's made it to 50 in a dangerous game, when teenage boys want his racket and shoot better than he ever could? He wants to not get shot. He wants to cash out. He wants to retire to Mexico. Barring that, he would like to spend a long evening with a very expensive lady.

He can't, yet. A deal just went very, very badly, and the aforementioned adolescent morons want his product and want their money. He's still got the former, but his partner split with the latter and is either long gone or recently dead. The Dealer's holed up in his ex-wife's basement, trying desperately to figure out who to call who hasn't already sold him out. The gang kids, meanwhile, are practically going door to door; they had big plans for that powder at retail, and if they can't deliver, they're going to lose ground to the competition.

More of the Dealer's contacts have stayed more loyal than he realizes, and he'd be able to open some well-guarded doors for characters who help him out. The kids who are after him have persistence and ammunition, but they operate as independently as he does. Characters with law enforcement contacts might try and get them shut down, but informing isn't going to make the Dealer's friends feel trusting. Violence or intimidation would raise fewer eyebrows, but the young guns are likely to come back when they see a chance for revenge.

Abilities

The Way of the Gun (Dexterity + Firearms, three dice): The Dealer might have a cataract, but he's also got a revolver and a half-dozen reasons to kill.

Bus Driver

Quote: "Hey, this is your stop! What? 'Course I remember."

Description: A tall, round woman behind an immense steering wheel. Her hair is gathered in cornrows and a stern librarian's bun. She gives off a strong impression of someone who needs a smoke.

Background: The middle child among three girls, the Bus Driver didn't face the heavy expectation laid on the oldest, or the clinging that still dogs the youngest. Nonetheless, she was the first married, the first to have a kid and the only one who's managed to hold a steady job. It's not much of a job, mind — she wishes she didn't have to go to work just when her husband gets home. Her night shift sparks more than a few fights, but his job doesn't provide health insurance, and it doesn't let him leave early if their son needs to be picked up. Marriage is full of compromises.

Storytelling Hints: The Bus Driver is the kind of Storyteller character who might be in the background for a long time before the troupe's characters notice her. Work with that; try making her and characters similar to her an ongoing part of your chronicle's rhythm, so that when she does present them with a problem or an opportunity, they'll wonder why they never thought about her before.

Virtue and Vice: Faith and Envy. The Driver wears a cross around her neck, and it doesn't look like a fashion statement. "God provides," she'll say if you ask, but she'll occasionally mutter that God could provide a little more.

Conflict (Streetwise/Occult • • •): The bus routes are the pulse of the city, and a steadier pulse than some would have you believe. Particularly on these cold, dry nights, when anybody who's out is looking for somewhere to be in, the buses run smoothly and predictably. The Driver long ago stopped being distracted by homicidal drivers and suicidal pedestrians. She could dodge them in her sleep, but that wouldn't look too professional. So, ensconced in the warm and yellowed light of her bus, she watches her passengers in the mirror, and she does her best to be friendly when they get on and off. She even gives them names in her head, such as "Angry Mom" and "Ebenezer Scrooge."

Looking back, it all started with Ebenezer. She had to stop the bus and ask him to step off. He was arguing with Austrian Beefcake, who always seems to pick the seat she can't see because of the warp in her mirror. That's a shame, because he's fun to look at. She asked Ebenezer to get off a few stops early, and he screamed at her loud enough that she figured it was worth phoning into the transit cops. He wasn't there when she drove back the other way, and she never saw him again. That didn't strike her as too odd, until she realized that Sherry the Stripper hadn't stepped on in a while. They were both weeknight regulars, and she always saw Sherry at least on Wednesdays.

Seems like every Wednesday, now, she's got one less regular. The Driver feels crazy for thinking it, but it's almost as if something were following her bus. She hasn't reported the disappearances, because what could she report? She doesn't know their names, or where they actually live. At least Austrian Beefcake's still around.

Abilities

Same Old Grind (+ Drive, five dice): The Bus Driver handles her big vehicle well, and when she's on her usual route, she almost never makes mistakes.

Corrupt Judge

Quote: "Contempt? You don't know the meaning of the word."

Description: A stout man, with a sincere grin and a short temper. He saunters into the court as if he owns the place, but the truth is, he's just warming the bench for his employers.

Background: Don't believe what you see on TV: law isn't really about brilliance, it's about hard work. The Judge is happy to say so, having done his time in both the District Attorney's office and the halls of academia. Hard work and connections. The Judge has friends who are also friends with the governor, and that's how he got his very comfortable seat. He works *very* hard for them.

The Judge can be found at the city courthouse late into the evenings, making sure all the loose ends are taken care of; because of his particular concerns, he can't trust everything to his clerks. On weekends, he enjoys golf and coaches his son's intramural football team. He and his wife can often be found at upscale restaurants or having drinks at one of the country clubs they belong to.

Storytelling Hints: The Corrupt Judge is an unlovely character; make sure the players get to see that. When characters come to him, he'll generally be as an ally. Show them that scheming, false gentility, and rotten hearts aren't unique to Kindred.

Virtue and Vice: Prudence and Gluttony. Despite his outbursts and rages, he really is a patient man. He settles his scores, yes, but he likes to indulge in long, slow revenge. You know how long a man will stay alive under torture? He'll live even longer in state prison.

Conflict (Politics • • •): The Judge looks out for his friends, and his friends' friends. He makes sure the kids

get nice, low bail so they can go home to their mamas. He doesn't let evidence that's in questionable taste into his courtroom. In return, his friends are very generous. His old colleagues in the District Attorney's office aren't quite as pleased. When he went the bench, he was supposed to be one of *them*. He was supposed to keep fighting their war, not go native. They're simply out to get him. The Judge's brilliance, however, serves him well. He never seems to be wrong on points of law, and he never seems to say anything untoward in earshot of their nasty little wiretaps. He knows the tricks because he used to turn them.

The media, however, is digging in a lot deeper. They've run stories about him being an alcoholic — a cruel exaggeration — and published salacious rumors about his intimate relations. They've even published studies showing that out of 12 judges, he was responsible for 63% of releases on bail. Something really ought to be done.

The Judge's legal influence and criminal connections would be powerful weapons for a vampire. His access to city facilities and several excellent country clubs would grant the characters access to the power behind the bench.

Abilities

Friends and Influences (Manipulation + Intimidation, five dice): With his judicial authority and very dangerous friends, the Judge is unlikely to be tried anywhere, except the court of public opinion.

Detective

Quote: "She was wearing a skirt that should have been as illegal as the pictures she starred in."

Description: He's a very average-looking man: not too tall, bit of a belly, generally wearing an old leather jacket. He's in his mid-30s, but he probably won't look much different by 40. He'll still be blending into the crowd.

Background: The Detective was raised in a middle-class suburb not too far from the city, the kind of place where dirty deeds are hushed up rather than trumpeted across the front page. His mother was a saint, even if she was one of the more rough-and-tumble ones. She wanted him to be a priest; he wanted to be a cop. Ten years on the beat and in Homicide convinced him she was right, and that hearing the confessions of philanderers was a much happier way to make a living.

He dropped off the force and got a job as a peeper. Guys who say divorce work is sleazy haven't had to humor a man into telling what he did with the rest of his son's body. Playing good cop did a number on the Detective's soul, and he's glad he got out.

Storytelling Hints: The literary detective exists in a predatory world of corrupt authority and rotting morality,

not unlike the World of Darkness. He's not a hero, but he's a man for his time. This Detective isn't that detective — he just wants to be. He plays cool, but he doesn't end up having the cards. When he has a chance for poetic justice, he falls back on the brutal kind.

Virtue and Vice: Justice and Wrath. The Detective is a very particular kind of individual, with a sharp sense of right and wrong and an alarming tendency to get blood all over it.

Conflict (Weaponry • • •): You can get in trouble even when you're just snapping photos and fishing receipts from Dumpsters. The Detective was following around a shipping magnate and a notorious madam. Little richer than most of his cases, and he was enjoying eating at swanky restaurants on the agency's tab while the happy couple dined a few tables over. Everything was just peachy until he realized the case wasn't about sex. Turns out the madam and the magnate were all business. The shipping business, even; his wife had nothing to worry about. The *kind* of shipping, though... that's where things started to go wrong for the Detective.

Turns out they're bringing in immigrants from the old Eastern Bloc. Women, mostly, but girls, too. He doesn't know how they're getting them, but they're coming in on the magnate's ships, drugged into comas and stacked in shipping crates. He's been trying to follow the shipping patterns, but the women just seem to disappear after they get hauled off the boats. He figures they're headed for sex slavery, but after a decade on the force, he can imagine plenty of other fates just as grizzly.

Last night, some large men showed up at his lover's apartment, and they made quite a mess. They're probably on the Detective's trail already....

The Detective's trust would earn the characters access to the agency that employs him, but they might also have reason to shut him up. After all, people who aren't legally in the country don't go missing. If the characters choose to help the traffickers, let the players apply any points or successes spent on the Detective on them, instead.

Abilities

Digging in the Dirt (Resolve + Investigation, four dice): The Detective has a knack for knowing where secrets are buried, and the dogged persistence to dig them up.

Driven Attorney

Quote: "I'll see you in court. That's why I'm smiling."

Description: Young and energetic, almost adolescent, with deep blue eyes and a cloud of curly brown hair.

Background: The Driven Attorney is a young man barely out of law school. Charming and hardworking, he's had no trouble fitting in at the District Attorney's office. His few close friends are beginning to see him fray at the edges.

When he was younger, the Attorney was abused by his father. The old man never got hauled before a jury; he was too wealthy, and, besides, the Attorney's never told anyone.

Between his personal trauma and the grotesque crimes he prosecutes, the Attorney increasingly fails to connect to people outside his office. He can't help but size new acquaintances up as victims, obsessively imagining their autopsy reports laid out on his desk. His skin crawls every time, and he's learned to avoid children.

He keeps a large apartment down the street from that strip joint where they had the shooting. The decor is spartan and Swedish, and he often finds it more comfortable to work there. Just as most of his colleagues, the Attorney goes to trivia Wednesdays at a bar across the street from his office, but he usually brings his laptop.

Storytelling Hints: The Driven Attorney should use legal jargon only a little more often than Kindred name Disciplines. Emphasize his personal relationship with crime and justice by sprinkling dialogue with emotional references to characters and action instead of technical references to decisions and statutes.

Virtue and Vice: Prudence and Wrath. Presented with trouble, his eyes glaze briefly. When they focus again, they're very cold. In a clipped, confident tone, he sketches a plan.

Conflict (Allies • • •): The Driven Attorney easily wins colleagues' respect with his dedication, but he's headed for an early burnout. Not everyone is as thorough as he is, and he's becoming frustrated at seeing monsters walk because some idiot managed to confuse which videos were found in the back seat and which in the trunk. He's also painfully aware how few crimes make it to court in the first place. He's decided to make that work for him.

Leslie Grady is a real piece of work. The Attorney can handle that the slime got off on cocaine charges — repeatedly — because he was informing for the feds. What the Attorney can't let go is Grady's stash of child pornography, most of it homemade. The DA's office couldn't identify the kids, and a judge threw the search out as "patently illegal." The Driven Attorney wants to get the guy out of circulation, but hasn't figured out a way to do it that's legal. Or at least cop-proof.

Killing Leslie Grady isn't easy. Sure, he's in his 50s and made of pudge, but he's mobbed up on both sides of the law. Characters looking to take him out will have to make sure the killing can't be traced to them or the

Attorney, who won't be nearly as useful if he's dogged by suspicion.

Abilities

Legal Weasel (Intelligence + Academics, four dice): An assistant DA doesn't wield much real power, but the Attorney's legal skills are top-notch. He's best at criminal cases, but also has law school experience with property law.

Bureaucracy (Manipulation + Persuasion, two dice): The Driven Attorney works with officials in law enforcement and the judiciary almost constantly, and he knows how they work.

Insomniac

Quote: "Can't sleep. What's *your* excuse?"

Description: He's only out at night and only very late, after television's switched to infomercials and mocking sky blues. He's drinking coffee, because why the hell not, and he can't sit still, always tapping his leg or playing with his phone. He's only stopped here for a moment, to gulp down some liquid courage before he heads out into the waiting dark.

Background: His doctor told him not to lie in bed when he can't sleep; that's why he takes these walks.

In the daylight, he's probably someone else. His clothes are clean and fairly new, so he might even be somebody. He must live alone, because who would put up with his hours? Why can't he sleep, anyway?

The Insomniac walks his blocks, up and down layers of the city's past and present. He sees men sleeping in doorways; he greets the hookers as they're going off-shift. He knows how much of what happens behind closed doors leaks out open windows. He sees who comes and goes in the night and the streetlights.

Storytelling Hints: The Insomniac sees a lot, but doesn't put it together. He'll ramble a long while about strange doings after dark, but rarely knows or cares about their secret significance.

Virtue and Vice: Temperance and Envy. Not sleeping doesn't mean he's free of fatigue, that's obvious from his slow, mild manner and the tired way he rubs his nose. Sometimes, he watches sleepers through their windows, as if by observation he could snatch their rest or dreams away.

Conflict (Occultism • • • •): Whatever keeps a man wandering every night has got to be pretty bad. Especially when he seems to have a day job. Whatever it is, though, he's seen something a lot worse, and he's only just beginning to realize how bad.

He barely saw it, the first time. Five-thirty A.M., nearly daylight and time for him to go home and shower. He just happened to look in a window where a woman was sleeping peacefully. At least, she usually was. That night, there was a shape crouching over her, hidden in its own shadow and peeling back her blanket. He only saw the shape, but he could tell it saw him, too. He ran, dinner and bile rising up in his throat.

The Insomniac has never looked through that window again. He walks the other side of the street now, and he tries not to remember the thing. Every time he does, the memory comes a little more alive. He can see its crooked hands hooked in the blanket, its nail scratching her very soft skin. He can see its tarry, cracked flesh, its gently smiling lips and its simple baby doll face.

He can see that there's nothing left of it below its waist. Even though he never saw it move, he knows how it drags along on those long, twisted fingers, because now he can remember it dropping the blanket, creeping to the window, reaching for him...

In the light of day, even he thinks he's crazy. His chronic fatigue is producing hallucinations and obsession. The whole thing was a waking nightmare. Obviously. The characters, however, don't live in the light of day. Even if they don't believe him, it might be a good idea to humor the guy. He keeps remarkably good track of what happens in his neighborhood, and he's picked up quite a collection of keys here and there. Even saves some interesting garbage.

Abilities

Weird Vibe (Presence + Intimidation, three dice): Skulking around at all hours of the morning, listening to arguments and peeping in windows, the Insomniac creeps people out. That gives him a degree of protection from the mundane horrors of the night.

I Know What You Did Last Night (Wits + Streetwise, three dice): The Insomniac's memory is very sharp, and he knows the regular occurrences of his neighborhood very well. He also knows where to find members of the nocturnal economy, even if they avoid him.

Locksmith

Quote: "Give me a second. We're as good as inside."

Description: A lean, 40-ish man with a widow's peak and an old army jacket. When conversation slows, he turns back to his work.

Background: The Locksmith is one of those guys who loves his work. His dad was a locksmith, too, and they used to spend hours picking apart and reassembling different locks on the dinner table. He went to technical school, but he learned most of what he knows from doing jobs for his father.

His wife won his heart by spending long evenings talking while he worked in his dad's old storefront shop, and they married shortly after high school. Tonight, they own a small locksmithing firm and work regularly with other independent contractors. Most of their clients are commercial or government agencies, although the Locksmith has been known to help frustrated motorists.

Storytelling Hints: Portray the Locksmith as genial, but a little reserved. He's friendly, but he's always taking something apart in his head, particularly if his Conflict is still in play.

Virtue and Vice: Prudence and Lust. Although the Locksmith is usually a cautious man, he'll hit on anybody with a pair of breasts, even if his wife's around. No sense of danger at all when pretty women are nearby.

Conflict (Craft • • • •): In the Locksmith's workshop, he keeps a gray, metal box about four and a half feet long. The city environmental authority brought it to him a few weeks ago. Workers drilling to take water table measurements near the city limits breached an unexpected chamber, apparently part of a collapsed mine. They got a different permit, dug a bigger hole and invited an archaeologist to look around with them. The box was half-buried in mud.

The archaeologist dated the box to sometime immediately postwar, but they couldn't open it underground. Even after they hauled it to the surface, nondestructive techniques weren't much use. The environmental authority took the box to the Locksmith, who's been trying to crack it ever since.

His job hours are building up, but he's not much closer to figuring it out than he was right after they dropped it off. The lock mechanism seems to have been designed by some kind of hobbyist. At first, the box looks as if it opens with three keys, but the insides are weirder, incorporating elements of a combination lock and connecting to machinery behind the mechanism. The Locksmith can hear those machines tick and tock while he works. He's even started to hear them when he goes to sleep. The puzzle is beginning to get to him, and he's been passing up jobs with better rates to take longer cracks at it.

The mysterious box makes an excellent opportunity for an extended action, with the characters solving the puzzle a bit at a time while winning the loyalty of the Locksmith. It's also an ideal place to put a clue important to your chronicle — it might contain the remains of a dissident vampire, or a cache of secret documents. Worst case, it's full of unexploded Army munitions, and the involved lock is just something a soldier in a metal shop had some

fun putting together. Although his shop is just him and his wife, the Locksmith gets a lot of jobs for mechanical lock installation and repair for city buildings and assets. He recently led a team of independent contractors who installed the mechanicals for a new police station.

Abilities

Locksmithing (Wits + Craft, four dice): The Locksmith is adept in repairing or disabling most conventional locks.

Miracle Breaker

Quote: "You're not ashamed of yourself. Fine. I'm ashamed enough for the both of us."

Description: A large man in a suit as well tailored as it is well-worn. He runs his fingers through thick, white hair as he meticulously examines his notes. When he speaks, he booms, like a well-trained preacher. The Miracle Breaker is no preacher, though: he's an atheist.

Background: The Miracle Breaker is a successful public radio journalist and presenter, although these days he spends more time researching books. His first book was *The Foot of the Garden*, a folksy history of Victorian occultism. Shortly after *Garden* became a bestseller, he was invited to meet a young man who claimed to see while blindfolded. When he caught the boy peeking out the bottom of his blindfold, the Miracle Breaker ripped it from his face and berated him. Tears streaming down his face, the boy recanted. The Miracle Breaker's companions were unsettled but impressed. The journalist himself felt the heady flush of a job done right. Since then, he hounds the charlatans and the deluded, shredding the supernatural frauds that infest the World of Darkness.

Storytelling Hints: The Miracle Breaker's knowledge of the occult is thorough and precise, but may or may not have much to do with the realities of the World of Darkness. He believes in truth and the virtue of searching for it more than science or a rational universe. Despite his skepticism, characters need to maintain the Masquerade: the Miracle Breaker is a skeptic, but he's bright enough to acknowledge the supernatural if he actually encounters it.

Virtue and Vice: Faith and Wrath. His eyes stop on every detail for too long, as if he were trying to memorize or see through it. When he discovers a lie, he turns on the liar in an apoplectic rage.

Conflict (Resolve • • •): The Miracle Breaker is being haunted by the living. As a skeptic and journalist, he interviews people with paranormal claims. He tries to be patient and open-minded; many of his targets mistake this for the first, faint glimmer of belief. The delusional are disappointed or even shattered when he inevitably rejects them.

Marina Kerske was an admittedly extreme example. An awkward, bookish kid who grew up listening to public radio, she was enamored with the journalist long before she ever met him. Marina's parents were busy and distant. By 13, she was cooking her own meals, signing her mother's checks and telling anyone who would listen about the spirits she saw. Her act was essentially automatic writing, with a few toothy grins and shy pauses thrown in for good measure.

She called up the spirits for friends and then audiences, and gained a little local fame — whatever her mother had time to drop her off for. Marina first approached the Miracle Breaker at a book signing, where he brushed her off. Disappointed, she contacted the local skeptic committee he sits on. She arranged for her abilities to be "tested." When the day arrived, she wasn't disappointed. He was there, and he spoke to her, listened to her, paid attention to Marina while the girl's mother tapped her foot impatiently. And then he turned on her. Called her a fraud, as he had everyone before. Shouted down her every objection. Finally, when her mother was in his face, and he'd caught his breath, he laughed. Long and loud and perfect for radio.

Marina never got over it. Less than a year later, she hanged herself, and Janine Kerske blames her treatment at the hands of Miracle Breaker. Janine follows him, now. Every day from his office to his suburban home. She watches him, as unable to express her anger as her love for her daughter. She watches the journalist. Through his windows. While he sleeps. One day, she'll be able to express herself. Which is why she bought the gun. He'll have to listen.

Freeing the Miracle Breaker from his stalker wins a Kindred an influential voice in local media, but it's a messy job. Janine Kerske is obsessed and broken. Her obsession with the Miracle Breaker is known to her friends, and many suspect that he did more to Marina than Janine's saying. Similarly, the journalist is reluctant to turn to authorities, because the publicity could be very bad, indeed: he's built his career on tearing people apart, and he thinks it would be easy for his employers to decide that's a liability. To intimidate Janine, characters will need to defeat her Resolve 3. She can't be bought off. Characters can also kill her in the usual way, but murder presents all the usual problems, and presents even worse consequences for the journalist if discovered. Of course, consequences are also leverage.

Abilities

I See What You're Doing (Wits + Investigation, four dice): The Miracle Breaker has seen all of the old spiritualists' tricks, and he's quick to catch onto new

ones. His historical knowledge of the occult is also excellent, and may inadvertently include information useful to Kindred.

Let Me Make a Call (Manipulation + Socializing, three dice): The Miracle Breaker has friends and contacts at many levels of the local media, from mailroom clerks at his station to a tennis partner who produces TV news.

Party Boy

Quote: "Yeah, but you should've been here *last* week."

Description: The fauxhawk and the wallet chain clearly mark him as a bridge-and-tunnel kid, a Thursday night commuter planning to party hard tonight then stumble into work tomorrow. He's obviously a regular, though, nodding to the predators and the prey as they dance to decide which is which.

Background: The Party Boy thinks of himself as an MBA and a shiny white smile, but there's more to him than that. There are loving parents who can't quite stand each other. There's a woman, back at school, who sends him love letters even though he knows she's screwing someone else. And there's an irresistible thirst for the blood of the Damned.

Storytelling Hints: The Party Boy's a ghoul, but he doesn't think of himself that way—who would? He barely even thinks about rearranging his schedule around his regnant, about the little favors he does at work to keep the Vitae flowing.

Virtue and Vice: Hope and Gluttony. Listen to him, at 4 A.M. in some all-nite diner, and you'll hear all about what he wants. How he's going to marry that girl from school, how he saw Finish Him! live and they brought the house down. But he's watching you the whole time, too, watching your very still veins and wondering if you're going to guide him back to the rest room and give him what he needs.

Conflict (Resources • •): Party Boy did just what he was told, doctoring numbers and hiding his regnant's transactions. He's done it too well, though, and now he's being promoted. Out of the cube farm and into an office. Flex time and a reserved parking space. He's going to be taking home a lot more every week, now that he's not handling any accounts directly.

Part of him loves it. The money's great, mom and dad are proud, the girl came down just to see his office. Handling money, though, is what gets him his fix. He's going to be in trouble now that he's management, not down in the trenches. He's already starting to feel it, feel his veins parch and his gut burn. He needs Vitae, and he needs it soon, but that's going to require getting his hands back in the accounts, or finding another supplier. He doesn't know anything about the Kindred, but he does know all about his regnant's finances.

Abilities

Money Laundering (Wits + Larceny, four dice): As an account manager, the Party Boy learned all the tricks. As a supervisor, his influence is more limited, but his knowledge remains.

Man About Town (Presence + Socialize, three dice): All of the Party Boy's late nights *are* good for something. He's on the list at a number of trendy nightspots, and he knows his fair share of the beautiful people.

Patron of the Arts

Quote: "No such thing as too generous, dear. Now, tell me who to make it out to."

Description: Silver-haired and gold-adorned, she'd look rich even without the custom suit. Don't mind that she's talking down to you, she does that to everyone.

Background: The Patron of the Arts had her identity worn away gradually. First her parents died, then her husband and before she knew it, she was retired. Oh, she still owns the company, but her protégé runs it now, and he's more efficient than she was by half. She's building a new self, endowing painters and writers, buying the university a new arts center, spending as much money as she can on the things that make us human.

She's equally at home in the boardroom or at a formal dinner. The wags at the *Post* call her "the Baroness," and they devote entirely too many stories to her wardrobe. They even claim she's seeing a young movie star, if you can imagine. Her most recent act of generosity is restoring a theater downtown; she's naming it for her father, but the green room will be dedicated to Barrymore, who played a short engagement there long ago.

Storytelling Hints: The Patron is soft-spoken and dignified. Rather than a nefarious schemer, portray her as a methodical businesswoman.

Virtue and Vice: Charity and Pride. The Patron of the Arts knows that her station comes with responsibility. She does her best to make the world a better place, and one in her own image.

Conflict (Investigation • • • •): The Patron's money doesn't grow on trees — it's pried from the hands of the city's poor. She's made her living buying cheap and renting dear. Her company has been gradually lowering standards on their buildings since she started, and she's kept the standards so low for so long that her tenants don't even think they're that bad. The renters are pretty satisfied, until they get asked if they have heat. Or rather,

until they get told heat is required by law. Some of them don't even have water.

Getting the rent out of folks is rarely a problem. The city pays some or all of the rent for thousands of low-income tenants through a voucher program. City Hall always pays on time, and tenants in the voucher program can't withhold rent, even if they realize they're being wronged. The threat of eviction takes care of the rest. Terrible things happen on the streets.

The Patron's got a good thing going, but trouble always comes up. A few little things — overcrowding, non-code materials, bad wiring — added up to cause a fire in one of her developments. The city's sifting through the rubble, and they might not find anything, even if they ask the right questions. Unfortunately, there are boxes of records, including affidavits and photographs, at a non-profit law clinic. None of them are in the public record: the cases were settled out of court. If the city finds those records, the subsidies the Patron relies on could be delayed, at the very least.

A grateful Patron might give the characters access to her properties. Many of them are quite nice, as long as you're not human.

Abilities

Substantial Wealth (Resources, five dice): The Patron of the Arts has been squeezing blood from brownstones for many years.

Priest

Quote: "Have faith, my son. At times like this, it's all we can do."

Description: A mane of red hair spills over the young man's broad shoulders and barrel-chest. His Roman collar winks out from beneath a goatee and John Lennon glasses. His look is altogether a little too groovy for a priest.

Background: The Priest found his calling in the statehouse. Graduating from college and armed with a degree in political science, he took a job with a state senator. His illusions quickly fell by the wayside; he'd never imagined that he'd change the world right away, but he expected to make progress, to help the senator fight for the people they represented. Instead, he found himself working day and night for a tired old man who just wanted to hold the seat for his party.

Looking for meaning and a way to make a difference, he went back to the Church, then found his way into the seminary. After several years of study locally and in Rome, the Priest has been assigned to a local parish. He hasn't regained his sense of grand purpose, but he's found that he can bring comfort to people in his community, and that's enough for now.

Still, he often ponders his departure from politics. When he's not saying mass, the Priest spends his evenings in his office in the rectory, or at the university library. He's currently at work on a paper about democracy and Catholic theology.

Storytelling Hints: The Priest is strongly steeped in and attracted to the intellectual tradition of the Church. Rather than fire and brimstone, use him to examine the insidious moral dilemmas the characters face.

Virtue and Vice: Justice and Sloth. The Priest preaches fervently about the divine and infernal natures of right and wrong, but always speaks of them as standards to be measured against when the soul comes before God. He seems reluctant to speak on changing this world.

Conflict (Streetwise • • •): Someone shot a man on the steps of the church. The Priest knew him pretty well: he was a union organizer, and his daughter had just started kindergarten. After the detectives were done, crime scene cleaners were supposed to hose the place down. The Priest couldn't wait for that, couldn't look out the rectory window without crying. He mopped the steps himself.

In the process, he had a spiritual experience. Nothing groundbreaking, nothing the Kindred would call supernatural, just a moment when he felt God calling. The Priest realized he'd been hiding inside too long, that something horrible is going on in his parish and that he needs to find out what. The police won't say why the man was shot, but the Priest thinks they know.

Broadly, he suspects a struggle between a notoriously independent local labor union and the neighborhood's major gang. The crime can only bring retaliation. The Priest doesn't want a war in his parish; he wants to find a way to make peace. Or at least to put the fear of God into the bastards.

The Priest offers Kindred access to the church and a trusted voice in the community. Manipulated judiciously, he can become a voice of unity and intimidation to keep the locals in line, or nudged back into a more political role, using the Church's weight to affect local government.

Abilities

The Word of the Lord (Presence + Persuasion, four dice): Having written more than a few political speeches, the Priest is skilled at applying scripture to the problems of his audience without eroding its majesty or plain meaning.

Rebel Rouser

Quote: "We stick together, we'll get through. We sell each other out, we'll both hang."

Description: The kind of guy who can get a stadium to pay attention just by shouting. He's young, mid-30s,

maybe, but he's been talking to crowds his whole life. He'll give you the shirt off his back, but he'll need you to join the Cause.

Background: The Rebel Rouser was raised in foster homes and on street corners. He flirted with the seminary, but it turns out he likes girls a little too much. Instead, he's found his place in the city's shantytowns, helping the homeless make the best of their homes. For a while that was settling down, but, at his heart, he's a Rebel. He wants hands off, not handouts.

Storytelling Hints: The Rebel Rouser isn't a saint, but he should be fairly sympathetic — particularly to neonates still fond of humans. His friends and neighbors are dirty and smelly, and a fair few of them are criminals by some definition or another, but he sticks by them and sticks up for them.

Virtue and Vice: Fortitude and Pride. Forging a political platform out of people who didn't even used to vote is long, hard work. The Rebel Rouser is tireless, and the only people he lets say "no" are those he knows will come around later.

Conflict (Allies • •): The big city has never loved the little cities that spring up inside it. Officials despise the shantytowns because they're wretched, ugly, not fit for people to live in. That feeling builds in their guts, and when a proposal crosses their desk, a chance to build a sparkling, upscale plaza in exchange for moving around a few "homeless" people, they leap at the chance.

The Rebel Rouser lives to fight this kind of problem, and he can get the community stirred up. Unfortunately, City Hall will just call up the bulldozers and bring down the riot cops. Once that happens, the best the Rebel can hope for is that his friends will get displaced with only a little abuse. At worst, the shantytowns' biggest employers, the dealers, will stand up for themselves. A battle with the cops will spill a lot of blood, and there's no way the Rebel's side will win.

CiviCorp, a nationwide firm known for "revitalizing" poor areas in major urban centers, is backing the city's plan to clear out the shantytowns. They've made some big promises: new shopping districts, an overhauled waterfront, plush new condominiums. The mayor's office is giving them the go-ahead, and the city planners are being dragged along in their wake. They see a public-private partnership for a better tomorrow.

The Rebel sees graft and a disregard for the common man. He'd love to remind the city that when you grind the common man down, you put him on fist-level with your balls, but, so far, he doesn't have a lot of options. The characters, by contrast, have many options, and the Rebel's crisis is an excellent opportunity. Get in good with him, and they could have their run of the communities he's involved in.

Abilities

Word on the Street (Wits + Streetwise, four dice): The Rebel Rouser is more than just well-informed, he's observant. In the shantytowns and their environs, he hears what's up and can sense what's going down.

Security Guard

Quote: "Booking. Bookies. Bassist. All my problems start with B. Think they're hiring on Sesame Street?"

Description: Stripper-pole thin, with hair that falls in strings and a smile as big as his flashlight. Dude looks like exactly what he is: a broke guitarist who lives on ramen.

Background: The Security Guard was raised by a bitter old man with a room full of guitars and an excellent record collection. Real records, like vinyl. College didn't agree with him, but he scraped by and stumbled through, earning a communications degree. The diploma's in his closet, under a pile of ex-girlfriend clothing. He's been in a couple of bands since then, but not so much since he started working nights. When he's off, he mostly lurks around his decaying apartment and the pub downstairs. When he can get enough friends together, he'll hit the downtown club circuit.

Storytelling Hints: Try the Security Guard the next time the characters are staging a break-in, and they don't snap the guard's neck or do something equally Humanity-draining right off the bat.

Virtue and Vice: Hope and Lust. The Security Guard is single, but he's always got his eye on someone, because what's the point of playing guitar if you don't occasionally melt underwear?

Conflict (Contacts •): He's off Thursday and Friday. He could play gigs, then, and he's been working on some new material. Except he still owes his ex's brother a few hundred dollars from a fantasy football season gone wrong, so he needs some extra days. Of course, he could probably pick up more money if he could just get a gig.

These are the circles the Security Guard's mind paces in, as he sits at the CCTV monitor or walks the perimeter. The man's stuck in a rut, and there's not much he's going to do about it. Compared to his problems, the property he's guarding barely matters at all. Sure, he wants to keep his job, but he's not going to take a bullet for it. Might take a roll of cash or an introduction to a producer for it, though.

Abilities

Like the Back of My Hand (Composure + Intimidation, four dice): The Security Guard's been on this job long enough to know all the place's little quirks; the plumbing's groans, the places people might hide, everything. Not only is he quick to spot anything out of the ordinary, he can easily sneak up on a character undetected.

Student Researcher

Quote: "Yeah, I'll dig that up. Just need a little time..."

Description: Simultaneously shorter and dourer than the other students, he'll spend his entire time in the theater department playing old men. He carries a load of books in his arms.

Background: The Student Researcher is majoring in both history and drama, and tends to define himself in those terms. His parents would have preferred he apply his boundless energy to law or medicine, but they're happy as long as he applies himself. He engages and entertains other students, but his seemingly endless string of ex-girlfriends all say the same thing. He's distant. Bored, more than depressed, like whatever he's doing is just something he has to get out of the way before what comes next.

At night, the Student Researcher can usually be found rehearsing in the theater building or doing research in one of the departmental libraries. He has a room on campus, but usually only his roommate is home.

Storytelling Hints: The Student always has his nose to the grindstone, whether he's researching for the characters or one of the professors he works for.

Virtue and Vice: Fortitude and Gluttony. Generous with his time and also with his attention span, he devours knowledge whole. He can't check out just one book from the library.

Conflict (Medicine • • •): He does evening rehearsals, he researches all night, he gets up first thing in the morning and goes to the gym. He's been feeling ragged lately, but he's always said he'll rest when he graduates. He collapsed during rehearsal a few weeks ago, and got dragged to the hospital for some tests. The doctors found serious kidney damage caused by hypertension, as well as apparent abnormalities in his adrenal gland. The basic problem is hereditary, but it's been severely aggravated by lifestyle. Translation: the Student actually *is* working himself into an early grave.

The adrenal malfunction is treatable, but the kidney damage may not be. Finding out, not to mention actual treatment, is going to be very expensive. His parents don't have that kind of money. The Student Researcher is ripe for seduction by some mysterious benefactor.

The Student's worked for several different professors, and has accumulated more than his share of university keys. Char-

acters with their hooks in him can access most buildings on campus, especially if they can pose as students or staff.

Abilities

Let Me Look That Up (Intelligence + Academics, three dice): The Student isn't ready to make innovative contributions to historical research, but he knows the library like the back of his hand. He also reads a few foreign languages.

Suicide Junkie

Quote: "You here to fight, or here to fly?"

Description: Wiry and wired, she's 150 pounds of trouble poured into size-six jeans. She breathes like it's exercise and keeps her pulse going because she likes how it feels.

Background: Fear is a self-defense mechanism. Whether Kindred admit to them or not, their fears keep them safe.

When the Suicide Junkie was Embraced, she was hyped and she was horny and she was having the night of her life. She remembers that feeling, can almost taste club air full of sweat and smoke and hair gel, almost feel her sire's ass in her hands, almost smell her blood on his lips. The memory keeps her going, racing, hunting for another high like the one that killed her. She chases it through the city's dreadful nights, through drugs and fucks and the wail of the sirens. She'll take any blow, hurt you or her any way she can think of if it makes her feel just a little more human.

Her sire's long back in the ground and that's made the Suicide Junkie everybody else's problem. Everybody knows she's bugfuck, but you can always hit her up for cash or crash space.

Storytelling Hints: The Suicide Junkie takes the hunger for life that gnaws inside all vampires and shows what can happen if it's indulged obsessively. Depending on the tone of your chronicle, she may show how oppressive the Masquerade is, or she may demonstrate just how crazy you have to be to go against the grain. Either way, encounters with the Suicide Junkie should highlight physical danger (mad dashes across rooftops, long talks lying down between train tracks) while discussions about her should highlight social danger.

Virtue and Vice: Charity and Lust. She rolls the cash between her fingers, if you can move your eyes down that far without getting stuck on something else. She fakes life well enough that she's faintly appetizing sometimes but nauseating most of the rest.

Conflict (Streetwise • • •): The Suicide Junkie is a threat to the Masquerade. She kills without cleaning up after herself, talks shit to impress the living and indulges herself in the powers of the Blood without paying much attention to who's watching. She's tolerated because a lot of Kindred owe her one, but she may have just crossed her last line.

She wasn't always this much of a problem. Back when her sire was around, he kept her in line with liberal use of Mental Disciplines. He never locked her down all the way, though: that would have missed the point. He didn't really Embrace her for her drug contacts or to watch his body when he went into torpor. The Suicide Junkie was selected carefully, made into a monster with a direct focus on keeping her desperate to live. Even her notorious lack of self-preservation may be down to whatever her sire Dominated into her skull before her death. He created a companion who reminded him of life, through whom vicariously savored a world he found harder and harder to understand.

Unfortunately for the Masquerade, the Suicide Junkie has discovered videotape. She's been carrying a little camera around, taping games of tag with commuter trains and whatever other kinky shit gets her off this week. She likes watching herself act badass. One of these tapes was stolen by a lick, and someone needs to destroy it before he can show it to other mortals or vampires.

The characters can win the Suicide Junkie's trust if they can cool off things for her. In exchange, they'll get a place to crash and admission to any number of backrooms and VIP lounges. Larceny's the easiest way to get the tape back, but reminding Kindred what she's done for them (effectively buying her Status) could straighten things out, too. On the other hand, they might just want to take her down and toss what's left in a Dumpster. They'll be out a potential subject, but prove they're dangerous to mess with. In that case, the three dots for this Conflict should be applied to another one where Streetwise is relevant.

Abilities

I Know a Guy Who Knows a Guy (Contacts, five dice): The Suicide Junkie's got friends in low places. From the overpass shanties to the more hardware-oriented nightclubs, she can usually find the right criminal at the right price.

Tired Clerk

Quote: "That gonna be all?"

Description: She's looking at you again, and she's not quite right. Her cheeks are sunken, and her eyes buggy, distorting your reflection like the security mirror. Her hair falls in her face as she rings up your purchase.

Background: The Tired Clerk is a high school dropout, the kind of person who can never find the will to

do something unless not doing it is causing her pain. So she fell out of school, then she stepped in this job. She even found somebody whose bed she was too lazy to get out of. He's a good guy. They're stable. They're the status fucking quo. That's what she likes.

Storytelling Hints: The Clerk's a quiet sort; act out or describe her body language and her gestures as much as her dialogue. She doesn't wear her Conflict on her sleeve, either; it might be best for the characters to overhear her talking about it with someone else.

Virtue and Vice: Temperance and Sloth. Occasionally, she cracks a smile, but she doesn't ever raise her voice.

Conflict (Resources • •): The condom broke. That's what she'll tell her parents, if she ever sees them again. Not going to say that they weren't using protection, that she was drunk and caught up in him. Now the time's starting to tick away. Eight months to midnight. She's going to have the baby; she's always wanted a kid, even if she wouldn't have gotten around to having one on purpose. But her boyfriend, the band boy singer who never gets around to playing a show, he's another matter. He's not sure he's ready. He doesn't have the money. He won't say if he's staying.

The Clerk needs cash, and she doesn't know how to get it. She could start stealing from her drawer, if she wasn't already figuring that into her income. Robbing a bank's right out. She'd do anything, if someone would just tell her what to do.

Abilities

I See It All (Manipulation + Empathy, four dice): The Clerk's fishbowl eyes take in everything, and she doesn't say much. She's very good at watching and listening and not being noticed.

Urban Survivalist

Quote: "Sure, it looks like a bit much now. But when They come? It'll pay off big time."

Description: His boots positively gleam, and he's still got the rigid posture his sergeant drilled into him. Besides his clothes, his only nod to civilian life is a short beard.

Background: The Urban Survivalist took the same lessons from the National Guard that he did from the Scouts — be prepared and respect fire. He's always really wanted to get out and live in the great outdoors, away from smog and cops and sewers that have the nerve to vent into his window. He's no farmer, though, and none of his other plans have worked out.

Instead, he's learned to treat the city like a jungle. He knows where to snatch or scavenge food, which beasts must be feared (cops) and which can be tamed (his landlord). He's learned how to flee. The city's been rebuilt over and over, and if you stick to the right territory, it's easy to take off into a dense underbrush of fire escapes, parking garages and crumbling alleys. Even easier if you winged the other guy, first.

Storytelling Hints: Don't have this guy jumping at shadows. That shtick tends to get old, and in the World of Darkness, it isn't all that dumb. Instead, consider that the Survivalist's problem is his understanding of the big picture: he's made the world as a whole a little too personally concerned with him, and blurred the lines between reality and fantasy.

Virtue and Vice: Justice and Pride. The Urban Survivalist's fantasies are fueled his overdeveloped sense of fair play and the ego that makes him so sure he's right.

Conflict (Streetwise • • •): Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean there isn't a warrant for your arrest. In fact, the two have surprising synergy. The Urban Survivalist is wanted for the indiscretions of youth — dealing hash, passing bad checks and possession of illegal firearms. He's been holing up "off the grid" in a slum apartment under a dead guy's name, but he's had a few brushes with the law. The police just don't get it; they think *he's* the problem, rather than the forces that are manipulating them.

The Survivalist likes to explore, and he can show the characters around some of the city's more unusual locations. Introducing him into your chronicle is a great way to try out the Careening rules in this book, as well as add a new subject.

He's not particularly well liked in the gun collecting or conventional hiking communities, but he does have friends and contacts there. He spends as much time at a local gun shop as he can, but he's worried the owner will narc on him.

Abilities

Straight Shooter (Dexterity + Firearms, five dice): The Survivalist isn't going to win any tournaments, but he knows how to handle a gun.

Urban Jungle (Wits + Survival, five dice): Years of staying out of trouble have taught the Survivalist how to use the city's secret paths and hidden places.

Wealthy Patient

Quote: "You'll be rewarded. Trust me."

Description: The beeping machines almost play a tune. You think she's dozed off again, but, no, she's watching you with wet blue eyes. The overhead lights are off; the machines light themselves, and a sunlamp shines over her head like the grace of God, but it's not doing anything to stop her from dying.

Background: The Wealthy Patient comes from old money, and she hasn't done badly for herself, either. She has the requisite two children, and she didn't used to mind sharing them with the requisite bastard ex. Everything's changed recently, though. There's a lump in her head, and it's cancerous. Pushing on her brain, making her twitch, making her black out sometimes. Her money buys her comfort, with a hall in the hospital all to herself and morphine dripping steadily into her arm. But she's only got a few weeks or a few months before she drifts off forever. She has things to settle, first.

Storytelling Hints: The Wealthy Patient isn't evil, or at least not abnormally so, but she's used to knowing what she wants and making sure she gets it. She may become more and more ruthless as she gets closer and closer to death.

Virtue and Vice: Prudence and Pride. She tastes her words carefully before speaking. Her voice never falters, even when discussing her own death.

Conflict (Status • •): The Wealthy Patient is putting her affairs in order, but she hasn't settled the matter of the children. Her ex-husband is a lout, good for nothing at all as far as she's concerned. When she passes away, he'll gain full custody of their children. She would much rather find another guardian, her parents, perhaps.

Even with her life trickling away, the Patient is biding her time. Her ex-husband must be removed from the picture somehow, and her lawyers are still circling for the kill. He has lawyers of his own, though. In the meantime, she's promised the hospital a generous share of her will.

A vampire of influence wouldn't be wasting kindness on the Wealthy Patient. Putting a word in a judge's ear, or discovering something scandalous about her ex-husband's business connections could earn a substantial reward. Or even just give her a little more time, if there were some way to hold back death.

Abilities

A Comfortable Living (Resources, four dice): Between her parents' fortune and her own, the Wealthy Patient is capable of paying for anything, or anyone, she requires.

VI: Rainfold

From above, the towers of the city were a collection of monuments. Illuminated from within, exuding power, literally and otherwise. Rainfold forced himself to look up from the contents of his document folder, to savor the moment. He leaned back into the helicopter seat to better feel the machine's vibrations shuddering through him. The sensation reminded him of what it was like to have more than a couple of functioning internal organs. Not wanting to seem like a hick in front of Issyanov's pilot, Rainfold reined in his palpable delight.

Confidence and control, those were the watchwords.

All the numbers were good. Revenues were up, expenses down. In the last three months he'd taken 12 blocks of turf, including the Smashclub, from the Rakers. His mole inside Osiel's operation was consistently delivering prime intel. Issyanov had no better man than him.

He had to be ready if asked what he wanted. A shaving of the Dowager's turf, maybe. Rainfold could illustrate how the old biddy was sitting on resources he was signally qualified to maximize. He'd ask for the restaurant, and, if Issyanov seemed receptive, the honey run from Rutledge to Pinckney.

The copter swung over Issyanov's building, shuddering down through heady winds to its helipad. The Prince's penthouse was only accessible from the air. No doubt about it, the man was swank.

A pair of burly no-necks in Hugo Boss were there to open the chopper door and escort him to the rooftop entrance. They took him down spiral stairs, their silvery metal ornamented with swirling leaves and vines. Lush indigo carpeting covered a wide hallway, lined on each side with black marble columns, each bearing a sculpted bust of a Roman emperor. They looked old, like they might have been genuine antiquities.

At the end of the corridor waited a set of metal swinging doors. Rainfold pushed through them, to find himself in a bare, uncarpeted room. A clear plastic drop cloth covered the mottled concrete floor.

He was already rearing back to elbow one of the no-necks in the throat, but of course, they were ready before he was. They folded him like a card table.

Rainfold woke up shackled to a chair. His arms were pulled tight behind his back, presumably cuffed. He'd been stripped down to his pair of tailored dress pants, which he'd purchased specifically for tonight's meeting.

Issyanov's gluey, accented voice dripped from a set of audio speakers mounted in the ceiling. "Rainfold," it said, "I am very disappointed in you."

Rainfold retained his composure. "I don't know who's been telling you what. Because my loyalty to you is absolute. Sir. Is it the Dowager? She been pouring poison in your ear about me?"

The voice crackled. "Ask yourself. Would Issyanov be acting drastically, except with facts that are incontrovertible?"

Rainfold's back stiffened. "I'm supposed to guess what I've done? Is that it? My Prince, this is beneath you. What are you, a chick? A girlfriend?"

He thought he heard a suppressed snicker behind him.

"The crime, it is clear cut," said Issyanov. "Never mind the details. It is first rule, before all others. No Embraces without permission of Issyanov. You thought it was okay, because babies are disposed of afterwards, and never grow up to be real Kindred? Was this your thinking?"

Dust seemed to fill Rainfold's throat. "Okay, okay. I'll stipulate. That happened. But. But listen. This is a very lucrative operation you're tossing to the wind here. Not just in cash, but in favors and information. Without that, there's no Smashclub. No tip-off to the Raker hit on your Ninth Street vault. Yes, absolutely I gave you plausible deniability. I saw that as pivotal. For your benefit."

"When you start out in this game, you think the shit, it flows downhill. When you get to my position, Rainfold, you see it is opposite. Everyone I own, when they dump on themselves, they dump on me, too. What you do in my name, I have done, then, too. And you know what troubles me about this B versus D, my friend?"

"N-no."

"Why you do it. Money, sure. Information, yes. Indebtedness of others to you, all right. But honestly, we know why you dream this up and implement it. It is for its own gratuitous sake, Rainfold. You do it because it is so fucking sick."

One of Issyanov's men entered, carrying a small plastic cooler. He withdrew from it a turkey baster filled with thick blood, almost black. Holding it up like a cop might wield a flashlight, he emptied it onto Rainfold's chest.

Rainfold kicked, bucking the chair back and forth. It steadfastly resisted his efforts to crumple it. "You call me gratuitously sick?"

"I get no sex thrill from this. It is merely a solution to a logistical problem."

The goon reached into the cooler for a pair of blood bags, stuffed one into each bra cup.

"We found your training pit, Rainfold. Your contenders, they are hungry."

No-neck number two slipped into the room, bearing two of the dog carriers. An Embraced infant snarled and scratched inside each of them.

The stouter of the two goons took a second turkey baster from the cooler. Holding it at arm's length to avoid spattering himself, he sprayed a gout of blood on the floor in front of the carriers. He trailed it up onto Rainfold's pant leg and onto his chest.

Rainfold knew the little buggers better than Issyanov. If they were starved enough, they'd leap on him and tear him apart, regardless of the cue.

"Look, okay, I get it, all right. You don't have to do this!"

The only answer was a staticky click through the speakers. Issyanov had shut off his mic.

Stationing themselves behind the dog carriers, the two goons popped open their latches and jaunted at a hasty pace out the doors.

The vampire infants hissed and gasped in their cages for a while before realizing they were free. When the first one burst forth, the other swiftly followed, propelled by the Beast's taste for blood. They scrabbled onto Rainfold's legs. He screamed. They jabbed clawed fingernails into his flesh, climbing him like a set of monkey bars. Within seconds they'd chewed their way deep into his abdomen.

Chapter Six: The City of Newcastle

Let me tell you the great secret of the city. It wants you here.
It wants you to know it, to touch it. It thinks, it yearns, it feels.
It wants you to claim it, and name it, and change it.

Wait, did I say 'you'? Not you. Me.
You're going to burn before you get the chance.

~ Doris,
Wild Adept of the Curse,
Sworn of the Axe,
vampire of the Ordo Dracul

This City is what it is because our citizens are what they are.
— Plato

The port city of Newcastle stands as an icon in the World of Darkness, a city seemingly custom-tailored to host the horrors of a world in which the border between the natural and the supernatural blurs. Here, monsters prowl the night hours, corrupt public officials knowingly jeopardize the well-being of their constituents, ruthless businessmen care only about the bottom line and the poor sink ever deeper into their cycle of shame, degradation and despair.

It seems custom-tailored because it is. The city of Newcastle is a sample city. It's entirely fictional and shows many of this book's principles in action. Therefore, you can use Newcastle as a ready-to-play chronicle setting, or you can use it as an object lesson upon which to model your chronicle's home city. Note that, as written, Newcastle is a coastal city. That harbor could just as well be a lakefront or riverfront, though, depending on where you put Newcastle in your World of Darkness. For Storytellers who want a landlocked city, a little adjustment will be necessary.

Storytellers are encouraged to use Newcastle as a toolbox. They may build something with every tool in the kit, use a single tool for a quick "repair" to an unexpected turn in their own cities or start with these basic elements and further characterize them as their own. Storytellers may even wish to lift entire neighborhoods, whole cloth, into their personal chronicles. Knock yourselves out, Storytellers; they're your tools now.

The Character of the City

Newcastle's fictional history isn't why it's been included in this book. The city as it exists when the characters step out of their havens and into the night is all that matters here. What they know of it is what they can see from the street, what they overhear on the subway, and what they can glean from the smears and stains of a century or more of human habitation.

You won't understand Newcastle by sitting it down, buying it a drink and coaxing out its life story. You've got to get to know it. You'll get a sense of the city the way most travelers come to understand a new city: by exploring it. Read "A Tour of Newcastle" on p. 358 to do that.

Source

The real origin of Newcastle — the one that reveals something of the design process — is the inspiration for its look and feel, not a fictional tale of colonial founders or wealthy rail barons. Those are fine sources of inspiration, and starting with characters or back-stories is always a viable option for conjuring up drama, but that's not where we started this time.

City design for the World of Darkness is about atmosphere, setting and gameplay above all. Lingering on historical personalities or trivial minutia distracts from the immediate visceral thrill that comes from a sensual, believable game setting. That minutia can help to support believability, but it's not where we started this time.

The initial inspiration for Newcastle came from the map. Specifically, it came from the map on the game board of **Vampire: Prince of the City**, our first **Vampire** board game. In part, the inspiration came from the art by Sam Araya (much of which appears in this chapter as well), and in part it came from a little self-imposed design challenge: Start with the board and make a believable, interesting and atmospheric play space out of it for the storytelling game.

Adaptation

In many ways, the process of translating a game board into a play space for the storytelling game is the opposite of the city-building approach described in Chapter Three. Rather than starting with a real city and blurring out details to make it fun to play in, we started with a stripped-down baseline with a broad and balanced play space and added details to make it feel more organic and "real."

The idea is to show just how much life can be given to a city through inspiration and imagination alone. Most of Newcastle's neighborhoods emerged from little more than a name and a picture. They took on their own textures and shadows, styles and personalities, as we moved through them in our imaginations. Turning the corner from Red Beach into Nor Lock, the city unfolded in our mind's eye as an instinctive amalgam of cities we knew from life, movies and books, mixed together and seen through the lens of the World of Darkness.

The map of Newcastle is a mutation of the game board from **Prince of the City**. Some Districts have been added,

Try It Yourself

As a brainstorming exercise, you can try doing what we did. Before you read "A Tour of Newcastle," look at the map on pp. 356 and 357. All you have to go on are the images, the names and where they fall on the map, just like we did when he looked at the **Prince of the City** game board.

Now imagine you're getting into a cab at Pat Gleason airport. You've just arrived in the city for the first time. You hear gulls and smell gasoline and jet exhaust. What's the first place you visit? What do you see from the back seat of the cab on your way there? What can you hear through the glass? Why did you choose the destination you did? Why are you going there? Do you know someone in the neighborhood? Who is it?

After you get where you're going, go for a walk. Hoof it from one neighborhood to another. As if you were remembering the trip, call up just the most interesting and memorable details. What caught your eye in the local storefronts? What's traffic like? How do people talk? What do you smell in this neighborhood, and how is that different from what the next one smells like?

Intuitively following your imagination this way, rather than directing it with the cold focus of a city planner, helps you avoid the pitfalls of excess realism or statistics. Your imagination spares you from boring details, just as you should spare the players when describing your city to them. Because you've wandered the city yourself, you'll be prepared to tell them what it's like as if you've been there, rather than resorting to made-up data from an imaginary almanac.

And just like that, you're creating a city.

or, more often, split into multiple different examples of the same kind of District, so we end up with more slums and fancy neighborhoods, rather than just one of each. All of them have been transformed from the hexagonal spaces of the board game to a more organic arrangement that puts certain Districts into contact with other Districts in ways that can create interesting conflicts between vampire landlords. (How does, say, the Regent of the financial sector feel about the petty lords of the nearby slums and industrial areas?)

Seeing the harbor, bus station, subway and airport all on one end of the game board raised the kind of question that can get the creativity stirring. Why would all of these transportation centers be clustered together in one part of town? How do we explain that?

First, this told us that there needed to be water out there, for the harbor. (Once we'd put water out there, we liked the idea of including an island or two, so we did.) To explain the location of the other transportation Districts we decided that they were all built around the original rail station, which was built there in the oldest part of downtown, back when the city was much smaller and clustered around the lake and the harbor. That at least kept us going through the process; to see how we ended up characterizing those Districts in the end, see pp. 358-389.

Notice, though, that having all those transportation hubs in one area didn't stop us from inventing another one, Spoke Hill (p. 385), to show that the modern city does not orbit utterly around the old downtown neighborhoods. The ideas behind each District aren't so precise or so strict that you can't add details to distinguish them.

This method — pose a question, then make up a few answers to it — paired with the imaginary tour method first mentioned together give you all the structure you need to brainstorm your own distinctive neighborhoods and environments based on places you've been or want to see explored. From then on, conjuring the city in your imagination should be like playing.

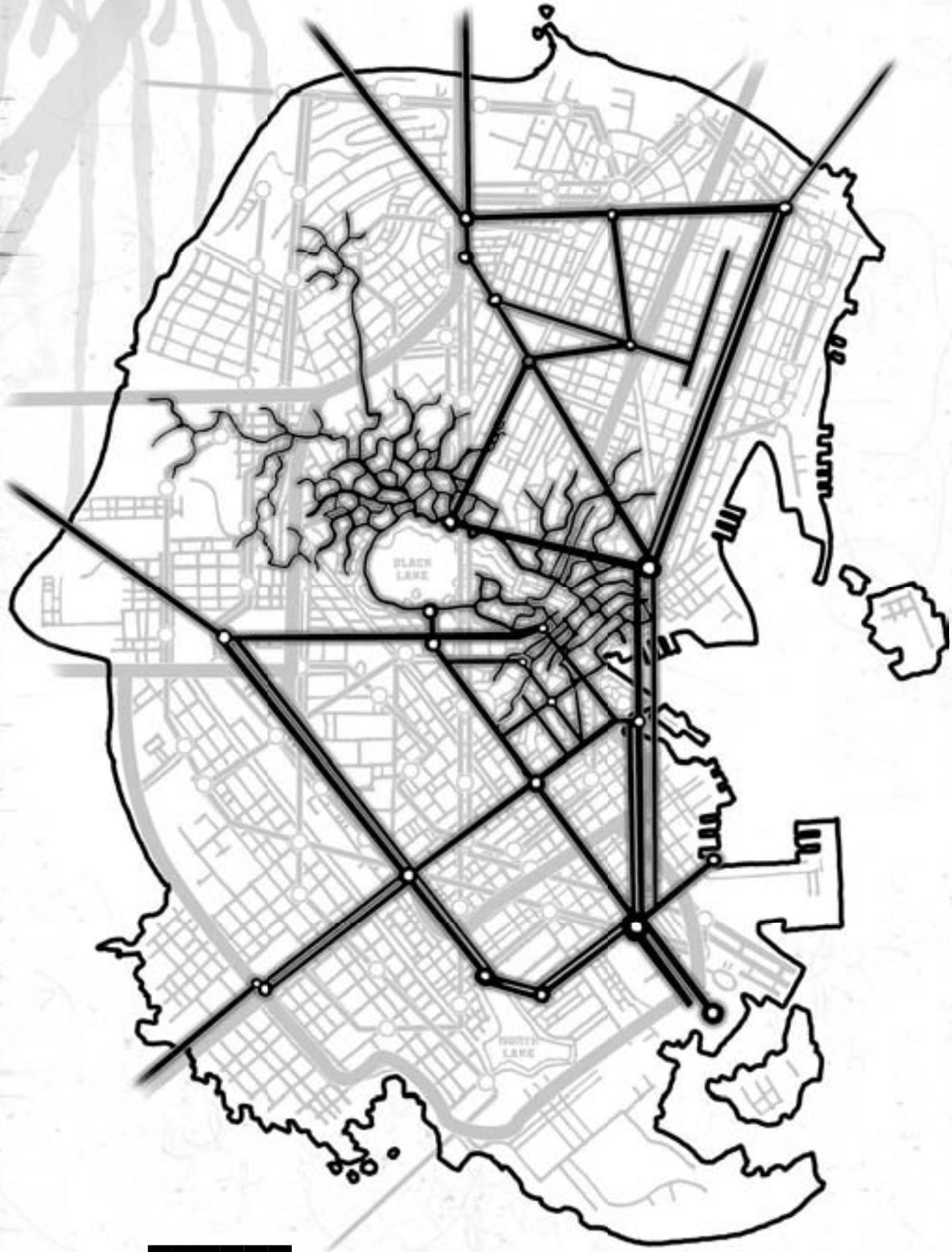
If that doesn't sound like fun to you, there's a whole city in the following pages, waiting for you to show up.

Cityscape & Culture

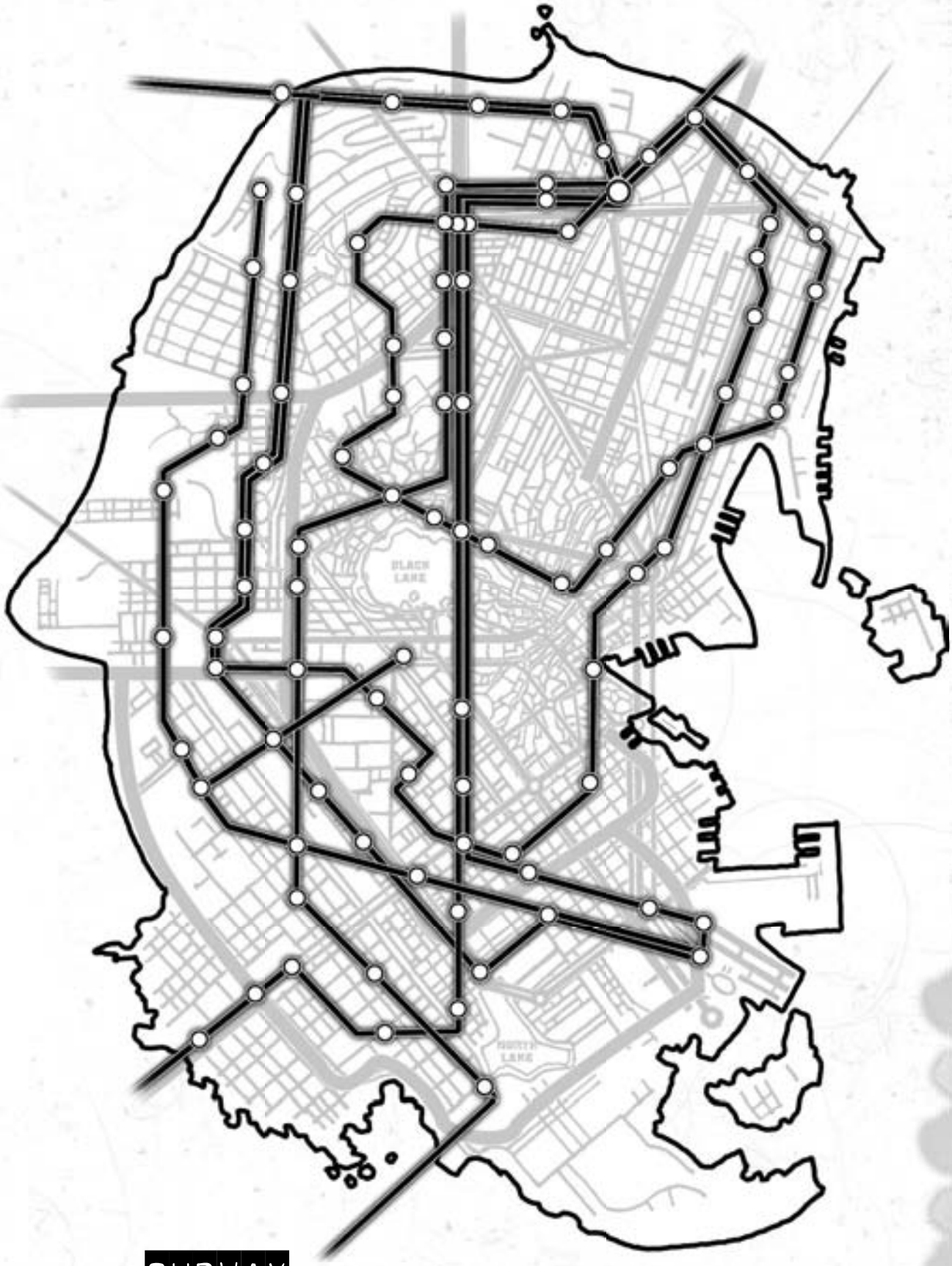
Newcastle is, foremost, a starter kit. Rather than give you a list of street names, we've done the hard part and shown you where the streets are. The kinds of streets in each part of town give you an idea what that kind of town is like — crowded, meandering, planned, sprawled out, etc. Name only the streets that matter to your stories, and name them things that either resonate with the theme and mood of the chronicle or that evoke the part of the world where you've chosen to plant this city. Name them after Prime Ministers or your old schoolteachers, if you want.

(Newcastle doesn't make use of the archetypal District maps in Chapter Three for two reasons. One, the design of Newcastle's neighborhoods and streets was done before the archetypal maps were. Two, you could build a city out of the archetypal maps yourself, so Newcastle gives you a whole other set of maps to work with.)

Newcastle's public transit system is assumed to be a subway with some stretches of elevated track, but the map works fine whether you raise the whole thing up on steel girders or bury the whole thing underground. Newcastle's sewers have an unplanned, vein-like quality to them, to reflect the older foundations of the city center and create a creepier set of tunnels to explore, but if that sewer system isn't enough for you, assume that it is only the collection of tunnels that do not follow the courses of streets above; thus any street can also show the path of a sewer tunnel.



SEWERS

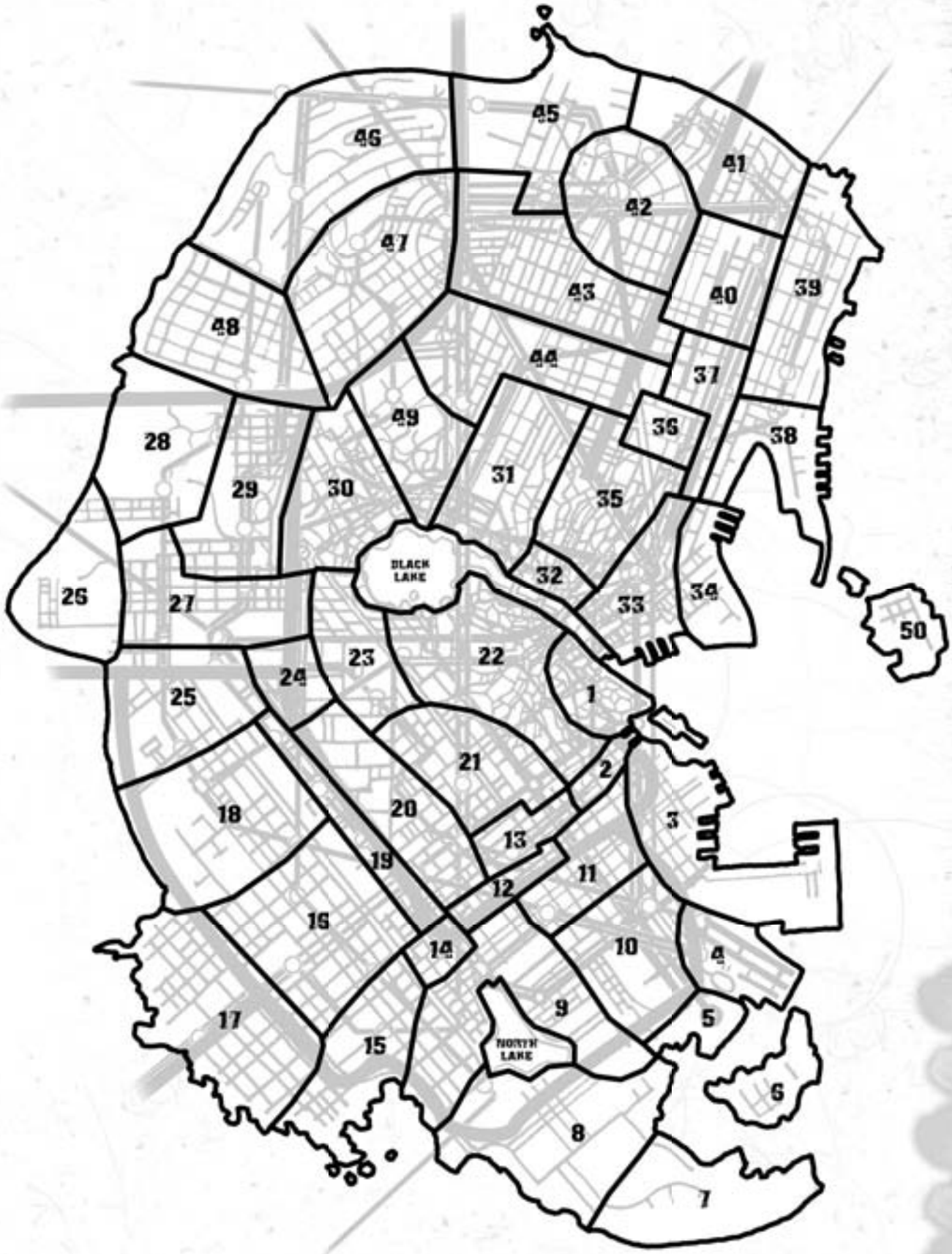


SUBWAY

STREETS

FREEWAYS

BLACK LAKE
NORTH LAKE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NORTH LAKE
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Newcastle is a coastal city, hugging the sea on one side and stretching out beyond the city limits into a vast suburban sprawl on the other side. Unless you say otherwise. The city could be an island like Manhattan, in which case the cleaner lines of the city limit become the artificial shore of a land reclamation project. The city could be situated on a major river rather an ocean. It could be built out onto a peninsula, with water on all side except for where the train tracks come into town. Which side of the city is North is up to you.

The culture of Newcastle depends on where you put the city. Set it in a state or country that you know well and the local culture becomes clear. Set it somewhere exotic, and all you have to do is read up on the real-world culture of that place for suitable inspiration.

The nature of the Danse Macabre in Newcastle hinges on the customs and laws of the local Prince. Chapter One gives you ten Princes from which to choose. Any one of them could be the Prince of Newcastle. Any number of them could be vying for the title.

Swap out any of the following Districts with one from Chapter Five. Divvy them among the Damned using Chapter Three as a guide. Define one or two Assets for each District to set the city up for Primacy play.

Grab the city's skyscrapers with both hands, rip them up from the dirt and replant them where you like. Reach down into the sea and pull a new island to the surface. Declare the inhabitants of Roosevelt Park to be paupers and they are paupers.

A Tour of Newcastle

This examination of Newcastle is done by neighborhoods. The presentation should look a bit familiar. It's adapted from the noncombatant character template used everywhere in World of Darkness titles. We figured this was the best way to showcase the city's neighborhoods, giving the Storyteller material to offer her players, a history to establish the neighborhood's context and plot hooks to catch the characters' interest. Description and Background entries are pretty straightforward. The Storytelling Hints entry speaks directly to the Storyteller, letting him in on exactly why we designed the neighborhood as we did. You'll also see two new entries in the format, Character and System. Character is a summary of the Virtue and Vice that most represents the feel of the neighborhood. These aren't necessarily the prevailing Virtues and Vices of the individuals in the neighborhood; they're just snapshots of the neighborhood's demeanor. The System section describes any unique rules effects or dice pool modifiers that might come into play when characters visit that neighborhood.

These neighborhoods are drawn at least partially from the Districts in Chapter Five. Here you'll see those same Districts put to use as specific neighborhoods in a specific city, showing you how the kind of mileage you can get out of each District. (This also increases the number of ready-to-use neighborhoods you have available when building a city of your own.)

1. Grand Junction (Bus Terminal)

Description: Nobody takes the buses anymore. Nobody good, that is. Only the dregs come or leave by bus, and the Grand Junction neighborhood looks it. Even the one-way streets and highway on-ramps are pitted with decay, just like the people forced to live here and the people who ride the dilapidated cattle cars into and out of Newcastle. The whole place smells like diesel and bum piss, and the oil in the lingering smoke makes sure both of those smells travel with a person into other parts of town, in his nose and on his clothes.

Background: Grand Junction was the waypoint for all visitors coming to or leaving Newcastle 50 years ago. The buses used to stream into Grand Junction from all points of the compass, full of bright-eyed tourists and hopeful businessmen with the Next Big Idea. Now, not so much, since rail and air travel is more dependable and less desperate. A handful of the brownstones in the neighborhood still have some of their Jazz Age grandeur about them, but most of the neighborhood has slid into apathetic neglect.

Storytelling Hints: A bus station is always a great place to display a sense of expectation with coming or leaving. In Newcastle, though, that sense of expectation is one of low hopes. Bus travel is the most inexpensive mode of long-distance travel, so it attracts the most frugal travelers, few of whom have come by even those few dollars honestly in the World of Darkness. The few regal houses that still remain from another time are a device that shows things weren't always this bad. They display a gothic sense of loss that isn't overtly tied to gargoyles, churches and other "stock" edifices of gothic significance.

Character: Hope and Greed. Grand Junction still has an ephemeral air of new beginnings that could pan out. Of course, it harbors just as many opportunities for new beginnings that prey upon others (and have probably left checkered pasts at another bus station).

System: The miasma of failure and decline of Grand Junction wears down even the most ardent individuals. No character may regain more than a single point of Willpower over the course of a single scene in Grand Junction.

2. Center Street Station (Rail Station)

Description: A melting pot of business and pleasure travelers, blue- and white-collar workers and cultures, Center Street Station hosts a little bit of everything at any given time. Lawyers ride the elevated train to the rail station next to freight handlers; vacationing families board the coach cars while finance consultants travel first class. Center Street Station is the second most vital commuter center in town, the place from which interstate trains depart and the most traveled local transit route deploys.

Central Street Station is cluttered and busy, but with the honest debris accumulated over the course of a business day. Scores of newsstands, fast-food joints, corner shops and street vendors all vie for attention here, seemingly without pause.

Background: Center Street Station focuses all the character of Newcastle into a single, kinetic burst of pedestrian experience. Everything in the city is here because everybody passes through it sooner or later. The neighborhood occasionally ghettoizes in response with whichever ethnicity or nationality has made particularly heavy emigration to Newcastle, but that turns over every five to seven years, changing to accommodate a new cultural demographic. Right now it's cycling out of a strong North African phase and into a Czech tenancy.

Storytelling Hints: This neighborhood serves many of the city's business and finance districts, so it's designed to evoke a New York sense of cosmopolitan bustle. Ads and newsstands are everywhere, to ensure that Center Street Station's heavy foot traffic has as much exposure as possible to the products and services paying top dollar for that "mind-space." The vampires of Newcastle consider Center Street Station an Elysium: it's so heavily trafficked by people and a focal point of so many Kindred travels and endeavors that grudges among the undead that played out here would draw too much attention and risk everyone's well-being. A few "sensitive" individuals from the supernatural community have reported phantom trains berthing at nonexistent platforms at the train station at nonsensical times such as "12 degrees after midnight," but when pressed for other details on the reveries, they shake their heads and are nervously unable to answer.

Character: Fortitude and Sloth. CSS will always be there, and it'll always serve the big money of the business districts a few streets over. That's also its curse, because it's so easy to "avoid eye contact" and thus lose touch with the human element that's omnipresent in the neighborhood.

System: During peak hours — from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. — Center Street Station is so thronged with people that all attempts to shadow an individual and evade shadowing suffer a –1 to dice pools. (For more information on shadowing, see p. 76 of the World of Darkness Rulebook.) Likewise, the heavy pedestrian traffic impedes all extraordinary vehicular activity, such as high-speed maneuvers and vehicular tailing. All Drive dice pools for any activity other than straightforward driving during those peak hours suffer a –2 dice penalty. A driver may ignore that penalty if he wishes, but if he chooses to do so and his roll results in a failure or dramatic failure, it's going to be messy.

3. Newcastle Harbor (Harbor)

Description: Much of Newcastle's industry occurs along its harbor, from small-time import-export to huge freight ventures. For many transplants to Newcastle, especially among non-native English speakers, the harbor is where they first find work in the city. The city's automotive manufacturing plant sends many of its cars out by ship, as well, and its dockside warehouses are the largest in Newcastle. The whole of the harbor has a reputation as a place where people don't see anything they're not supposed to and crossing the strike line can cost a man his life.

(For information on Waterbank and Waterbank Island, see entry 34.)

Background: Unsurprisingly, Newcastle Harbor has long been a bastion for organized crime in town, due to the connections to the shipping trade and union labor for the freight companies. Storytellers may introduce any particular flavor of organized crime they wish for the harbor's illegal element — whatever best suits the story.

Storytelling Hints: The "rough and tumble docks" are a staple of American literature and pulp, and the introduction of a supernatural element here is almost required for the genre. This is a place where the Storyteller can exercise his own creativity, as this could be anything from a gang of Mobbed-up vampires to a big-city take on a cult that reveres... whatever horrendous sea creature dwells beneath the depths of the harbor.

The Storyteller also has a bit of flexibility here with regard to other business in the harbor. If Newcastle is on an island or otherwise borders an ocean, there's almost certainly a fisherman's trade occurring. If Newcastle touches something similar to the Great Lakes, the fishing trade is probably small to nonexistent, and rampant pollution of the lake might represent a local horror of its own. The lake might also offer a leisure business of boat rentals and fishing cruises if the Storyteller wants less flavor of New York and more of Florida or California.

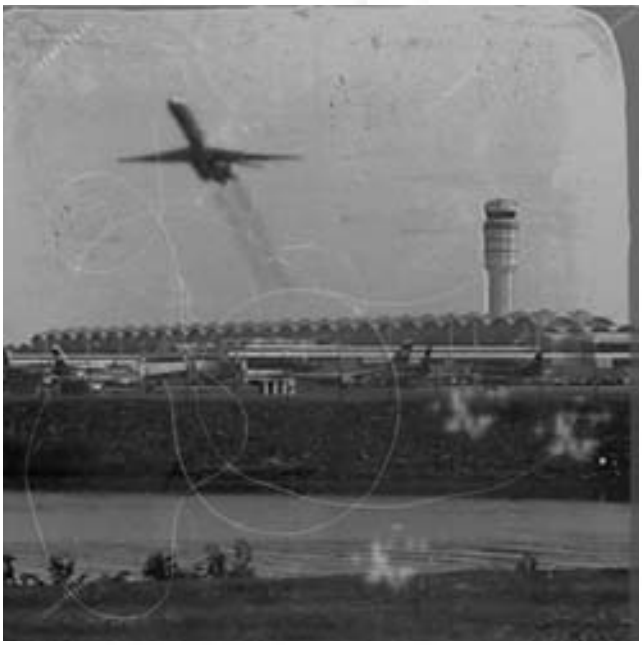
Character: Fortitude and Envy. People who work on the docks and at the harbor are, for the most part, honest, hardworking people. Occasionally, though, they feel that they're working too hard for too little and cast a jealous eye on the lifestyle of other city residents.

System: Newcastle Harbor is notoriously tight-lipped about its people and its doings. Attempts at Investigation in the neighborhood suffer –1 penalties to dice pools due to the quiet paucity of available information. As well, bribes paid out in Newcastle Harbor are very expensive for the benefit they confer.

4. Pat Gleason Memorial Airport (Airport)

Description: Most of Newcastle's tourist traffic arrives by train or boat, and the addition of PGM in the late 1950s felt very much like an afterthought. The airport serves international carriers, but only a few flights from foreign countries stop here. The whole neighborhood has a feel of unrecognized potential — the airport could probably be bigger and busier, if more effort and money were spent convincing airlines to serve the area, and the low-income housing around the airport could be less violent and disheveled, if the residents felt any pride in ownership. For the most part, though, the airport and its neighborhood are "good enough" for what they're supposed to be. The runways of the airport are notoriously soft, probably as a result of having been built on inadequate structural support.

Background: Pat Gleason was a detective who made commissioner and eventually became mayor of Newcastle in the early 1950s. He laid the groundwork for the introduction of the airport in hopes that it would be a tremendous boon to the local economy, but that never quite happened. Sure, the place is accessible to the airlines, but it's generally cheaper and less difficult to come in by land or sea. As well, the building of the airport itself marks an ugly chapter in Newcastle's history of corruption, as its construction was a deal brokered between the city commissioner and his cousin to the financial benefit of both men. The airport was built



cheaply, and it shows, from its ramshackle shops to its interminable security lines all funneling through a single station.

Storytelling Hints: The airport has been designed to be sub-par to encourage a little creativity on the players' part, to keep them on their toes in thinking about how goods and people get into and out of Newcastle. The old assumptions about "We'll just stake out the airport and wait for our enemies to sneak in" doesn't work in Newcastle, as the airport is lackluster, and most travel occurs by train or boat. As well, the airport is third-rate to impose a sense of isolation. Newcastle is only marginally accessible by the most popular travel method of the 20th and 21st centuries, giving the city a sense of gothic withdrawal from the world, at least in a popular sense.

Character: Temperance and Sloth. People who settle into the airport neighborhood do just that. They settle. Nobody intends to move here, but many people end up here. Occasionally, that lack of ambition works to the neighborhood's favor, as crimes of passion, drunken debauches and nihilistic excess don't happen much around the airport neighborhood. It's an adequate place to retire to and live a quiet, unexamined life. In fact, it's practically the perfect place to maintain a quiet, subtle herd for a vampire who can keep his affairs in order.

System: The airport area has long been neglected as a vampiric domain and as a criminal resource, so it's ripe for exploitation. Streetwise dice pools for specifically illegal activities gain a +1 bonus because the attitude is so lax here. "Nothing ever happens out by the airport," and even the police know it.

5. Red Beach (Power Plant)

Description: The Red Beach Electrical Power Plant and its surrounding residential and low-density commercial district are so named for the high clay content of the sand making up the beach. Cynics suggest that it's named for the "red tide" that blooms off the coast and occasionally poisons shellfish found in the water, which can be poisonous to those who eat them. The power plant is often a scapegoat for various ecological problems Newcastle weathers, but it's much less of a contributor to environmental contamination than the heavy industry that's the city's stock in trade. Nevertheless, this misapplied pseudoscience is the cause of much of Red Beach's coarse reputation.

Background: Red Beach Electrical Power Plant is sorely out of date and taxed almost daily beyond its capacities to generate energy for Newcastle. This has been the case for almost 20 years, when the population began growing at a rate faster than the local infrastructure could keep up. The Red Beach Power Company has opened numerous satellite plants, but the hastily erected electrical grid is likewise insufficient to handle the city's power needs. Red Beach Power Company has been paying state and federal fines for their inability to meet demand since 1976. The company will probably continue to pay fines until 2076, assuming it can keep its head above water until then.

Storytelling Hints: An unreliable power provider is custom-made to suit the needs of horror stories. Indeed, anytime the Storyteller decides the chronicle would benefit from a blackout, the precedent exists to visit it

upon the city, which might last a few moments to an entire night. Also, the electrical grid is best maintained near the plant and in the surrounding neighborhood, naturally, so the comparatively humble tract homes and apartment complexes of Red Beach often enjoy more reliable service than some of the more distant, if more affluent, neighborhoods, which establishes a bit of class consciousness that's good for story conflict.

Character: Charity and Greed. As this Virtue and Vice are opposed, so is the social dynamic at work in Red Beach. Many of the neighborhood's residents are also employees of the Red Beach Power Company, and try their hardest to ensure everyone in the city has power to maintain a reasonable standard of living. The reality of the matter for the executives at the company, though, is that it's easier on the bottom line to pay the fines that accrue each year than to undertake a monumental power grid upgrade. So what if the plebes lose power for a couple hours every month? It's not like it affects any of the top execs. Everyone's got to pay his bill every month, and it's not like they're going to just stop using electricity....

System: None (though red-tide shellfish and random blackouts may certainly spawn rolls of their own)

6. Graves Island (Waste Plant)

Description: Graves Island is a far more insidious influence on the environment than the comparatively clean electrical plant at Red Beach. Unlike many of the distinct regions in Newcastle, Graves Island is almost entirely devoid of residential land use, which makes it possible for the plant to get away with the more egregious sanitation violations it commits on a daily basis. Sure, workers get sick every now and then, but it's not like any of the locals are suffering. (Of course, that's because there are no resident locals, to speak of, but the PR and admin departments don't have to bring such things to the public's attention.) The whole island is a marshy mess, with service roads collapsing after heavy rains. It reeks of untreated waste, and occasional "bog fog" renders the plant invisible from the Newcastle mainland and difficult to see on the island itself. The whole locality feels two or three degrees hotter than the rest of the city on any given day.

Background: Similar to Red Beach Electrical Power Plant, the Graves Island Waste Plant is operating beyond its capacity. Unfortunately, it's just beyond its window of "good enough." Sixteen years ago, the city's Utilities Director plundered a renovation budget allocated to Graves Island and made for Buenos Aires. The mayor covered up the scandal then, and none of the subsequent

mayors ever knew corruption was to blame. All they know is that Graves Island is trying to keep up with the city's needs. They don't look any more deeply into the books than they need to. Nobody wants to be the mayor under whom the "Great Newcastle Shitstorm" takes place.

Storytelling Hints: The situation on Graves Island works for both conspiracy tales and horror tales, as the Storyteller sees fit. The layers of corruption and civic scandal are prime for inquisitive players' characters to uncover. The noxious conditions on the island are also perfect to spawn some horrendous, slimy sewer-monster that might make its way to the city proper and become a real threat — or even represent a number of its kind. When city employees begin to go missing (whether due to cover-ups or sludge-fiends) and people in the city fall ill as a result of contaminated water, someone's going to be held accountable.

Character: Temperance and Pride. Each Utilities Director has had a rude awakening when she takes office and sees the precarious state of the waste plant and wants to bring it up to code as soon as possible. The fact that it's such an unpleasant situation means no one wants it on her record, for better or for worse, though, so it remains the city's unacknowledged albatross.

System: On nights when the waste gases rise through the porous ground, visibility drops and individuals' sight becomes blurry. Physical actions that require precision or hand-eye coordination suffer a –1 die penalty. Visibility is reduced to half normal. In addition, Stamina rolls and dice pools related to resisting disease are reduced by one, due to the contaminants that are omnipresent on the island.

7. The Yards (Chemical Plant)

Description: With its proximity to other troubled, service-sector neighborhoods in Newcastle, the casual visitor might expect the Yards neighborhood to have significant troubles of its own. The truth of the matter, though, is that the Yards is almost a model neighborhood, from the responsible functionality of its chemical conglomerate anchor to the quiet respectability of its middle-middle-class residents. It's a conservative neighborhood, with most of its horror represented by the existential angst its comparatively privileged teenagers sometimes feel, or the shock encountered when it turns out that the guy who lives down the street is actually gay.

Background: The Yards has been an almost idyllic neighborhood for the past 60 years, with almost a television-quality perfection and complacency to its prim housewives and well-kept lawns. Therefore, the occasional aberrations it does experience seem quaint, such as "street gangs" that are just collections of shiftless high-school students instead of the armed, drug-dealing hardcore of the inner city, or the sexual predator who is simply a groper rather than an actual rapist.

Storytelling Hints: The Yards' quirky character comes as a result of the chemical plants' byproduct bleed-off. One of the plants manufactures crowd control gases used by armed forces and police departments, and another of the plants manufactures a drug intended to subdue ADHD. Some of the elements of these products have seeped into the local water supply, which becomes especially potent when mixed with the already contaminated water coming out of the Graves Island plant. The whole place should exhibit a somewhat surreal quality, like a Norman Rockwell painting in which the subjects have been doped into their roles of Americana. It's almost like a suburb out here.

Character: Prudence and Gluttony. The surface demeanor of the Yards is one of a sentimental "things will come out all right in the end" outlook suitable to a greeting card or an after-school special. Gluttony comes into play in a more high-concept sense, as the neighborhood represents the over-medication of American culture, which seeks a quick fix or a pill to make its problems go away.

System: Characters with the Wrath Vice do not regain Willpower by indulging that Vice in the Yards. If you're working with District traits (see p. 251), the Yards have a Safety rating of 2.

8. Nor Lock (Industrial Works)

Description: "Hellish desolation" adequately sums up the composition of the Nor Lock neighborhood, and it's a striated Hell not unlike that of Paradise Lost, with the first circle abutting the Purgatory of the Yards and the ninth circle dragging North Lake into its environs. With a minimum of residential space, most of Nor Lock is industrial from the auto plant that dumps its waste into North Lake to the foundry that dumps its waste into North Lake to the plastics plant that dumps its waste into North Lake. It's all a stinking metal-and-concrete sprawl, with nothing higher than three stories except a few sterile office parks. In the factories' lunchtime proximity and in the squalid residential areas, local dives abound, and cheap beer is a more common meal than the perfunctory blue plates.

Background: The era of the untarnished working man is over. Once, men could be proud to say they worked assembly-line jobs at the factories, but crooked union delegates and bottom-line management left the factories in the lurch in the late 1970s. Now, a 12-hour day, five days a week is an acceptable schedule on the factory floor, and many of the workers have to resort to cheap meth to keep themselves alert and focused for the last 20 of those hours. Where the meth went, the prostitutes followed, and by the early 1980s, Nor Lock had a reputation as a trough of petty vice. It retains that reputation now, a timeless testament to the fate of the laborer-tradesman.

Storytelling Hints: The Nor Lock neighborhood is designed to combine the feel of New York's Depression-era Bowery with the cinematic blue-collar industrial dependency of such places as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Detroit. Depending on where you place Newcastle

in a national context, its floor workers might be good ol' boys just tryin' to earn a paycheck or shaggy-headed, mustachioed union men whose dream is to own a restored IROC Camaro. It's a popular place for Kindred to carve out money-earning domains, as it's easy to skim off the tops of so many of these plodding businesses, and their jaundiced productivity keeps anyone from looking too closely at them.

Character: Prudence and Pride. Those who live and work in Nor Lock take a proletarian pride in gettin' by, but they have the spendthrift ambition that keeps them buying lottery tickets and American cars.

System: Satisfying a drug or alcohol addiction is easy in Nor Lock, and doing so here earns back two Willpower points instead of one for the indulgence. On the other hand, the hardworking ethic of the neighborhood also makes satisfying Virtue rewarding, offering an additional "phantom" Willpower point above and beyond the character's maximum when she replenishes her pool due to fulfilling a Virtue. This extra Willpower point must be used within 24 hours, or it simply fades away.

9. Lockham (Slums)

Description: The counterpart to Nor Lock's squalor, Lockham is where many of Nor Lock's employees live. It's a poorly planned neighborhood with obsolete two-and-a-half-family homes jumbled next to dingy apartment complexes and crumbling starter homes. At any given point, half of the lights at the rail stations are burnt out or vandalized. The district's demographic is predominantly Latin, with the next largest populations split equally among Poles, African Americans, North African Muslim immigrants and various Middle Eastern nationalities. A dwindling population of original owners who bought homes in the neighborhood back before Nor Lock had decayed so irreversibly still live here, too. The streets of Lockham are forever under pothole repair, and the neighborhood needs many new streetlights to replace the stop signs for traffic relief, but the money's just not there. Here are yards with cars up on blocks and chain-link fences that corral dogs hungry with neglect, and persistent rumors of "the boogeyman" cling a little more tenaciously to the local culture than children's stories usually do.

Background: In the early 1940s, Lockham was an up-and-coming neighborhood, a pastoral neighborhood of small homes that working men could afford. As the complexion of the factory floor changed, "white flight" occurred, and the neighborhood slowly shifted under the influences of inflation and transitory workers to one of low income and high crime. Lockham was never the high-rise tenement that television fosters as the idea of in-town poverty, but the neighborhood remains a dead-end neighborhood where the working poor watch their meager savings slowly spiral into negative equity.

Storytelling Hints: Lockham represents a poor urban neighborhood that doesn't depend on soaring architecture and tiny apartments to communicate its desperation. This is a neighborhood where the poor can't afford to do anything after work besides watch TV, eat a frozen dinner and get high or drunk before the next shift. It's also a neighborhood with many small churches, as some of the desperate poor turn to faith in a higher power that might help them out of their ruts. A prominent Nosferatu considers the entire neighborhood her domain, and the Prince doesn't really care to refute her.

Character: Faith and Lust. Sometimes, God's the only one to turn to who can help things get better. The exploding population of Lockham and the high rate of single-parent households and illegitimate children suggest that something other than booze and TV is a local pastime, as well.

System: Although it's not a function rated entirely by systems, Allies and Retainers from Lockham are notably loyal, because they often believe that their patrons or mentors represent a way out of the poverty blight that their neighborhood offers. If you're using the District traits, Lockham has a Prestige of –2 and a Stability of –1.

10. Morgan County Reservoir (Sewers)

Description: The area around Morgan County Reservoir is nice enough, but its proximity to the slums of Lockham keep the reservoir neighborhood ever teetering on the brink of overt unpleasantness. Despite that nice enough façade, something's wrong in the reservoir neighborhood, as an uncomfortable number of cases of syphilis have been traced back to the families living in the neighborhood. It hasn't yet been declared an epidemic, but the "Morgan Mono" is a stigma currently attached to people from the neighborhood even if they don't have the disease. Nobody knows what's causing it or who first carried it in, but the rest of the city considers the reservoir neighborhood a bit of a joke — a haven for hicks, a den of swingers, a district of exceptionally horny and unclean teenagers — and all the derision does is shame the afflicted from treating their condition.

Background: Morgan County Reservoir marks the place where Morganville used to stand more than 100 years ago, before Newcastle grew southward past Black Lake and absorbed it. Thus, the neighborhood still feels a little bit different from Newcastle proper — its central post office is still called Morganville Post Office, for example. More than anything, the Morgan County Reservoir neighborhood feels stagnant, from the layer of verdigris over much of the titular reservoir to the houses that aren't quite shabby but are somehow unappealing.

Storytelling Hints: The key problem with the neighborhood is its proximity to Lockham and the financial sector. People want to escape Lockham into Old Morganville, but the financial sector doesn't want its assets swamped by a ghetto raging out of control. Few Kindred have domains in the neighborhood, but conflicts between the wealthy Kindred of the finance sector and the have-nots who make their havens in Lockham often spill into the mazy streets of Morgan County Reservoir. As well, something is preying on those Kindred, but whether it's a territorial vampire or something wholly other, no one yet knows.

Character: Fortitude and Lust. There's no denying the sense of urban antiquity that defines the antiquated storefronts and commerce centers of Old Morganville. On the other hand, those traditional values seem to be eroding beneath a tide of sexually transmitted disease.

System: Something's definitely wrong in Old Morganville, and syphilis is only a symptom, not the core problem. Wounds take twice as long to heal naturally in this neighborhood, and creatures that have supernatural methods of healing pay double the cost to do so. The Storyteller should decide exactly what this is, and the answer may touch off a significant story arc.

11. Hoyt & Cross (Financial Sector)

Description: Newcastle's analogue to Wall Street, Hoyt & Cross, named for the intersection where almost all of the city's banks have their headquarters, is a mecca for those who have money and want to turn it into more. Banks, investment firms, venture capital companies and finance analysts all have their offices here, in the penthouse offices far above the homeless lunatics and junkies on the street. It's a curious collision of the financially blessed and the utterly down and out, where bums panhandle for spare change out front of $20-a-plate-lunch restaurants, where the air smells like avocado oil, roasted garlic and inescapable body odor.

Background: The city passed an ordinance 12 years ago that prevents panhandling, a particular problem in the neighborhood, but rare is the police officer who

bothers to enforce it. Aside from that, Hoyt & Cross is about as orderly a district as one would hope to see, especially after several banks threatened to close their Newcastle headquarters if the riffraff on the street weren't cleaned up. That was 15 years ago, and Hoyt & Cross is a prestigious neighborhood to work in. Five years ago, residential developers attempted to convert a lot of the old downtown space into hip lofts and condominiums, but the results were decidedly bourgeois, all expense with little actual value. Rare is the individual who actually lives and works in Hoyt & Cross.

Storytelling Hints: Reports of vagrancy given to police officers are somewhat of a mystery to the NPD, because about half of them are impossible to substantiate. That is, a seemingly respectable individual might call in a report of panhandling or make a complaint to a beat cop, but only half turn out to have an actual suspect. In the other half of the cases, the bum in question just "vanishes," but few police want to question the sanity of otherwise upright citizens who are obviously able to handle their important jobs.

The truth of the matter is that half of the reports involve ghosts. One specific ghost, actually: Gary Nam. A Vietnam veteran, Gary Snyder returned from his tour of duty to find himself unemployable. He applied at numerous brokerages in the H&C neighborhood, but nobody wanted the potentially shellshocked vet. With no home to return to and a mind full of vengeance, Gary resorted to life on the streets, ranting at passersby and demanding change. Gary was probably the single greatest argument in favor of the panhandling ban during the ugly latter years of his life, and he hasn't let his indigent death prevent him from harassing busy pedestrians in the H&C.

Character: Hope and Envy. There's a fortune to be made in the H&C, just ready for someone with the guts or brains to make it. Unfortunately, there's always someone who's made a greater fortune, and the neighborhood's attitude isn't one that rewards a "second place is fine" outlook.

System: The make-it-happen attitude in Hoyt & Cross is infectious. Dice pools that involve financial activities gain the 9 again quality. This can be anything from managing a high-profile corporate merger in a Citicorp conference room to haggling over the price of an eight-ball of coke in the bathroom at Spence's Lounge.

12. Three Corners (Diamond Street, Butcher's Row, Printer's Corner; Mercantile Sector)

Description: Everything happens at Three Corners. That is, practically any service a city might conceivably provide happens along the strip of commercial zoning named after the three most prominent streets that intersect it. The city's merchandise mart is here, as are innumerable office buildings, street-side cafes, upscale bars, fancy hotels and even a restored movie theater that now serves as a small civic center annex. The neighborhood abounds with vintage architecture, both restored and au naturel, which gives the area a charming sense of anach-

ronism. The small cloisters of residential space in Three Corners speak to their owners' genteel sophistication.

Background: Three Corners is a font of history, its streets named a century-plus ago after businesses that no longer really thrive here anymore, though business in general does. In particular, Butcher's Row no longer even has a butcher shop on it, though you can get the city's best Italian sausage sandwich in the lunchroom at Vince's on Butcher. Years ago, Three Corners was a neutral-ground stronghold for some of the European criminal organizations that emigrated to Newcastle, but those gangs are either mythical or have retreated to their own, quieter, ethnic neighborhoods.

Storytelling Hints: Three Corners is the perennially hip neighborhood that never goes out of style even when tastes change. Right now the streets abound with ground-level boutique stores as the annuated business firms that occupy the upstairs offices in the tastefully preserved commercial district continue whatever it is they've been doing these many years. It's a versatile downtown that never fails to inspire and thrill. Thus, Three Corners is an informal Rack and Elysium. Even the rapacious Kindred don't want to screw up the urban oasis, and since its bars, bistros, boutiques and "underground" are open late into the night, it's a stylish, convenient place for a charismatic Kindred to seduce a Lick.

Character: Justice and Pride. People who make it in this highly competitive boutique and business neighborhood have earned everything they've worked to achieve. Unfortunately, a lot of them like to talk extensively about their skill and talent, and the attitude can be a bit much to bear.

System: Attempts to hunt in Three Corners earn a +2 dice bonus. The wise Kindred takes his vessel elsewhere to consummate the act, though, as the place is well trafficked but not debauched, earning pursuit and Investigation dice pools a similar +2 dice bonus, since everyone's alert to his surroundings and wants to keep the place as pleasant to visit as possible. If you're using the District traits, Three Corners enjoys a +2 Prestige and +2 Awareness rating, and a +1 Safety rating.

13. Teletex Circus (Media Sector)

Description: Newcastle became a "new media" city a few years after it became a "telecom city," just over a decade ago. Almost overnight, the boutique design houses and new media solutions consultants took over part of ailing downtown, taking advantage of (then) cheap rents and build-out loft space that could cheaply accommodate rooms full of computer networks. In the intervening time,

the neighborhood has become one of daytime productivity and single nightlife. Teletex Circus has everything one might find in a neighborhood devoted to media: coffee shops, an Apple store, art galleries, patio bistros and bars with brushed steel appointments where graphic designers and video editors with no kids and disposable income spend $70 a night on vodka tonics.

Background: Teletex Circus used to be a consumer-goods warehousing sector, and when orders for business product came into Hoyt & Cross back in the 1940s, the warehouses of then-Hoyt & Houghton filled the orders and shipped them out. Some of the refurbished buildings still have the names and logo of those now defunct companies emblazoned on their brick facades, from the Cut-Rate Box Co. to Hitchens' Cold Storage. It's a neighborhood in love with its own retro-modernity, and the price of leases have skyrocketed with the district's revitalization.

Storytelling Hints: It's good for the health of the city when a neighborhood becomes invigorated. For the Kindred who had been making their havens there, though, telecom crews digging trenches for T3 lines occasionally unearth things that had best remained buried. Hoyt & Houghton was once a place where Kindred could maintain a secure haven, but with the influx of people back into the neighborhood, it's no longer the overlooked oasis for secretive vampires neighborhood it once was. Indeed, some Kindred had to take flight overnight, meaning that there's probably more than a handful of abandoned havens still stocked with personal belongings... or potentially damning evidence.

Character: Hope and Greed. Teletex Circus's renaissance shows firsthand the creative new uses to which people can put seemingly desolate locales. With the

explosion in the value of real estate and media services in the city, though, a good idea can quickly become a way to make a quick buck on the gouge.

System: The neighborhood stands as a monument to the ability of mortals to keep the Kindred in their place, even unwittingly. It's a reminder that all the secret social status of the undead is precarious and fragile, once the kine decide to do what they will. Clan, Covenant and other Kindred-related Status traits are all considered one less than they actually are while an individual is in Teletex Circus.

14. Printer's Corner (Mercantile Sector)

Description: Unlike Butcher's Row, Printer's Corner still does brisk trade in its namesake business. Other businesses have moved into some of the closed or obsolete spaces, however, and the neighborhood has become one with restaurants, chain stores focused on home furnishings and clothes, trinkets and even a quirky independent book and music store. For two to three floors above the old print shops that make up much of the neighborhood, small and comparatively inexpensive (for downtown) office space is available. Beyond that, Printer's Corner is a mixed-use neighborhood, meaning that above the shops and offices are apartments and condos. Despite its proximity to Three Corners, Printer's Corner hasn't quite kept a modern appearance, and it looks a bit run down to casual visitors. It's also a little rough, and not every one of the handful of off-street businesses is making its money legally.

Background: Printer's Corner used to be home to bookmakers in both senses of the word. Some of those illegal gambling parlors still operate in the neighborhood, and some have made the transition to legal OTB fronts in the 30 years since Printer's Corner's business was predominantly printing. It's not crime that actively hurts anyone except the addicts, though, and the cops don't pay it much attention unless static between the organized crime gangs that occasionally lean on the places threatens to get bloody. The neighborhood has long been a predominantly Eastern European area, with many immigrants from that region coming here and learning a trade, or making connections with someone who does have work for their specialties through the print shops.

Storytelling Hints: Printer's Corner is specifically designed to contrast the affluence of Three Corners with its own fading value. It's not a night-and-day comparison — Printer's Corner is just a little more run down than its fashionable neighbor, but that's the sort of distinction that means a lot to in-town residents and Kindred who like to accentuate every bit of perceived value they can latch on to. For Storytellers, it's also a fine place to put a sagacious Kindred of another culture who doesn't necessarily buy into all the fad-of-the-moment American consumerism, such as a creepy Carpathian Ventrue or a Slavic Gangrel who considers the neighborhood "his." The record-bookshop is also a twist on the archetype of the musty occult bookstore: Here, the secret, mystical tomes are acquired with the same zeal and eye for rarity as the guy who's buying the 1966 acetate pressing of the Velvet Underground's first album. He's a collector first and a businessman to boot, not the aloof, withdrawn type of stock character who by default runs the creepy bookstore.

Character: Fortitude and Sloth. Printer's Corner will always adapt to whatever the city needs it to be, but it's never with the zeal that more fashionable neighborhoods embrace new trends. Therefore, the tarnish is always at least a little evident in Printer's Corner, whether on the buildings, or its employees and residents.

System: Attempts to gain information from face-to-face meetings with Contacts enjoy a +2 dice bonus if the meeting occurs in Printer's Corner, since it has a reputation for being a place where lax police enforcement makes getting away with covert meetings less difficult. If you're using District traits, Printer's Corner has an Information rating of +2 and a Prestige rating of –1.

15. Wicker Village (Mosque)

Description: An ethnically diverse neighborhood built predominantly as a residential neighborhood, Wicker Village has the greatest concentration of Muslims in Newcastle, with a significant population of Hindus as well. The character of the neighborhood varies wildly, peaceful and orderly on one street (where pride and ownership hold sway) while hectic and violent just three blocks over (where hastily assembled tenement apartments breed crime). The Masjid al-Shah Mosque once stood in the shadows of the Church on the Rock South, but as the neighborhood's immigrant population increased, so, too, did the congregation at al-Shah. Today, al-Shah stands as the most populous religious center in the neighborhood, and its facilities now sprawl over much of the land the mosque has spent the last 20 years purchasing. The mosque has a school, a community center and a cultural museum in addition to its religious functions.

Background: Wicker Village was once an affluent white neighborhood, but as Newcastle continued to grow, affluent whites continued to put ever greater distances between themselves and the inner city, which they perceived to be uncomfortably ethnic and inclined toward crime. Many sold their homes lock, stock and barrel, while others became landlords, renting out their homes to whomever would pay the rent. North African Muslims moved into the neighborhood first as renters but soon established their own local businesses, creating a distinct community anchor for themselves by the late 1980s. Not long after, several mosques followed, and Wicker Village grew outward, the only direction it could, to encompass more and more real estate on which greater numbers of Muslim homes and high-ratio Muslim apartment complexes were built.

Storytelling Hints: The Wicker Village neighborhood represents the growing presence of Islam in the world, and its rapid acceptance that makes it the second largest religion in the world today. Storytellers with religious themes in their chronicles will surely be able to use the mosque and its attendant Muslims to represent an Abrahamic but not Christian perspective in their stories. As well, many Kindred would be surprised to see just how many of their number hail from Muslim backgrounds, and an isolationist Prince might not even know how many Muslim Kindred observe their Requiems in his domain. Indeed, the neighborhood still belongs to a Lancea Sanctum Regency awarded 50 years ago, and even that Regent has no idea how widespread the Muslim Kindred of Newcastle and Wicker

Village are. He's content to ignore them in hopes that they'll go away, and the fact that he never sees them has him convinced that his policy of attrition is working. In truth, there are more Muslim Kindred in Newcastle than ever before, the Regent's ignorance notwithstanding. Many of these find a place among the Carthians, but several belong to a Mohammedan splinter sect of the Sanctified themselves.

Character: Faith and Wrath. The whole neighborhood is marked by the attitude fostered by the presence of the mosque, but the sense of isolation many Muslims feel in addition to the uneven conditions of Wicker Village and events on the world stage give many of them reason to act out in ways unsuited to any stable neighborhood.

System: Wicker Village has been growing more and more suspicious of itself lately, with tensions between various religions and cultures occasionally becoming openly problematic. Social dice pools related to diplomacy suffer a –2 dice penalty due to the rising tensions of the neighborhood, as nobody wants to back down and give "them" a chance, regardless of who "them" is. If you're using District traits, Wicker Village has a Stability rating of –1.

16. Mt. Zion (Synagogue)

Description: A middle-class neighborhood designed architecturally with an Old World feel, Mt. Zion is named for both the city's largest Jewish synagogue and the enormous clothier that has its headquarters in the neighborhood. The architectural style of the neighborhood is one that favors high buildings, built tall and nar-

row for mixed-use purposes. The neighborhood's streets are spaced widely, but the whole place is a crisscross of alleys that don't show up readily on city maps. It's as if the neighborhood were designed to confuse outsiders as much as possible. Indeed, several of the streets and alleys have the same name, split into two differently named thoroughfares, or terminate abruptly only to begin again eight blocks over. Mt. Zion is predominantly lower middle class, with many residents working at the clothing factory or light industrial employers of similar output.

Background: Firebrands and exclusionists have labeled Mt. Zion a "harbor for the Jewish element" since the late 1940s when Mt. Zion Synagogue was first built, but that's not exactly accurate. The Jewish population of Mt. Zion isn't any more numerous than it is anywhere else in the city. Indeed, more disturbing is that the architectural firm responsible for the designs of many of the building seems to have favored the most convoluted designs possible, and even exercised a significant amount of sway over the planning committee that established the neighborhood's infrastructure. It seems as if the architects wanted people to get lost among their designs.

Storytelling Hints: Storytellers who want to include memorable foot chases or vehicular chases as part of their chronicle should look no further than Mt. Zion. With streets that loop back over themselves and a seeming infinitude of alleys and cross-streets, it's a great place to elude a pursuer or to set an ambush that will only confuse the prey if he manages to escape. In addition, the architectural firm that originally designed many of the buildings in the neighborhood had one of the Kindred as one of its silent principals. The neighborhood was deliberately built to confuse outsiders, the better to allow Kindred to establish safe havens and pursue their prey with great efficacy. Tonight, the Kindred consider Mt. Zion to have the same lower-middle-class appeal among themselves that mortals do, which is simply a case of many Kindred preferring what's fashionable over what's functional. For almost any Kindred, a haven in Mt. Zion is an excellent find that will pay off.

Character: Prudence and Wrath. The only way to know where you're going in Mt. Zion is to pay attention to every last detail until you get a feel for the place, or to be born there. The undercurrent of frustration that marks the kinetic lives of those who aren't prudent occasionally turns the neighborhood into one where violence is common and those frustrations boil to the surface.

System: Kindred who establish havens in Mt. Zion gain an additional dot in the Haven Merit to allocate as they see fit among its sub-qualities. As well, whoever initiates a chase resolution — whether it's the guy who runs from a would-be assailant or the predator trying to corner his prey — gains a +2 dice bonus to rolls associated with the chase, since the party acting in response to the initiated chase isn't going to have time to fully survey his surroundings and get his bearings. This bonus is negated if the party responding to the chase knows the Mt. Zion neighborhood well (Storyteller's discretion).

17. Ormwood (Slums)

Description: Where the mazy alleys of Mt. Zion yield to the outskirt parkways of Ormwood, Newcastle grows nasty. It's a part of town that no one wants to be in, especially the people who live there. Resentful of their own poverty, Ormwood residents have little to turn to other than lives of crime. That's because, more than any other neighborhood in Newcastle, residents of the Ormwood neighborhood have the statistically highest rates of incomplete education. Nobody in Ormwood even wants an education — studies show that Ormwood residents would much rather take a chance at getting lucky with a pro sports career or music contract than they would earn an honest living at a realistic wage. As a result, Ormwood comes to resemble the ugly side of musical fantasies and hard-luck stories from the sports page. Most streets have a liquor store and streetwear shop, and even these turn over with regularity, due to crooked suppliers or too many robberies. The last stop on the rail line is ruined, the tracks twisted so that the train can't even approach the last quarter mile from the station.

Background: Ormwood began to show signs of its irreversible slide into thuggery during the late 1980s, when refugees from a tropical storm further down the coast took up residence in Newcastle. They brought a transient criminal

element with them, and for a time in the late '80s, it was impossible to find a motel in Ormwood that didn't have baggy-pants hustlers running a rigged craps game out of the lobby or selling stolen goods out of rented vans in the parking lot. People thought that when the storm relief came, the refugees would blow back to their own city, but it didn't happen. In short, what everyone thought would go away didn't, and the cancer instead took permanent root in what was never a particularly pleasant part of town to begin with.

Storytelling Hints: Ormwood is the part of town where players' characters can go when they have something blatantly illegal on their minds, or when they have evidence they need to get rid of after the fact. Don't allow Ormwood to become the city's corpse dumping ground, though. The police force is wise to the types of cretins who skulk through the neighborhood, and sometimes simply being in Ormwood is probable cause. Some of the "go away" mentality the city feels toward Ormwood still exists, and local politicians are loathe to send any developmental money its way, preferring to let the whole place atrophy and die, however long that might take. It should feel desperate and forsaken, as opposed to mindlessly violent.

Character: Charity and Envy. With a significant investment in a renewal project, city leaders might be able to turn Ormwood into something resembling the more civilized neighborhoods of Newcastle. Until that happens, though, Ormwood is going to remain rotten, neglected and furiously jealous of everyone who has managed to achieve something better in life.

System: Low-end crime thrives in Ormwood. Attempts to procure illegal goods or services gain +2 dice to the Streetwise dice pool. Note that these attempts should be appropriate to the environment. No one in Ormwood is selling a stolen tank or original Renoirs.

18. Hohenheim College (Library)

Description: The joke is that no one local goes to Hohenheim College, that its student body is made up of out-of-state students and weirdoes with pet theories to prove. The sprawling campus is among the largest in the nation, though, and the school employs a surprising number of locals. No one seems to know exactly how big the college is, though, or how many students graduate each year or even which fields of study it's particularly renowned for. All anyone can agree on is that it's a creepy old bunch of buildings that never seems to update, even though it adds new wings and buildings every year. The school's primary claim to fame is an extensive library that's rumored to include books thought lost hundreds of years ago or destroyed in purges. It's the sort of place that has the Malleus Maleficarum and the Summa Theologiae on its shelves, and a rumored Liber Mutus somewhere in its vaults.

Background: Hohenheim College began with a land grant in 1889 and received its accreditation in 1907. Since then, the school has been a popular beneficiary of many local and national philanthropies. In 1964, it began awarding the Hohenheim Award for Excellence in Human Sciences, an award of some small prestige given to the work authored in that year that represents a bold new direction in the broad field of science. Over the past few years, though, the awards have been growing more and more controversial as to the titles that have earned

the award. In the past three years, the award recipients have been a treatment of parapsychology, a treatise that attempts to validate modern eugenics and a methodology for extracting stem cells from amniotic fluid.

Storytelling Hints: Clever Storytellers can use Hohenheim College as an eccentric school and library of dubious validity that nonetheless experiences breakthroughs now and then that prove someone there "gets it." Whether that's an awareness of the supernatural or some legitimate scientific breakthrough is up to the needs of the story. The ultimate intent is to have players casually dismiss the school as one of quackery, a tax deduction for wealthy contributors, and then surprise them with something of genuine merit that arises from the awards ceremony.

Character: Justice and Lust. As with all learning institutions, a student who applies himself diligently will reap what he sows when it comes to learning. Exactly what that learning is often has a dark cast to it, though, and might be turned to nefarious purposes or simply acquired in an addiction to knowledge.

System: As might be expected, the library offers a significant (+3) bonus to Research dice pools. (See pp. 55–56 of the World of Darkness Rulebook for more information on research.) This bonus applies also to uncommon fields of research, such as alchemy, the arcane and the occult, that are largely difficult to find resources for in other, more traditional facilities.

19. Diamond Street (Mercantile Sector)

Description: Diamond Street's namesake trade still occurs in the showrooms and offices above the sidewalk shops here in the most prominent street of Three Corners. In fact, the thriving gem trade (which actually includes more than diamonds) in Newcastle makes it a sister city to a similarly important diamond-trading city in Europe: Antwerp, Belgium. Diamond Street is more about tradition and timeless beauty than the trendy Three Corners neighborhood. As well, it should be, as diamonds are forever. Diamond Street is a very safe street with good police attention, though the residential condos and penthouses are more of an afterthought than a neighborhood-defining feature of Diamond Street.

Background: The gem trade on Diamond Street has been part of the city's business since Newcastle's founding in the 19th century. While the gem business certainly isn't the lifeblood of the city, it does make many people very comfortable, from the diamond merchants themselves to the jewelers who create settings for the

diamonds to the showroom reps who make their money off commissions of gem and jewelry sales.

Storytelling Hints: The Kindred love Diamond Street, and the kickbacks they take from "protecting" this upper-class resource has put more than one luxury sedan in many vampires' garages. Of late, however, the "conflict diamonds" that have been making their way to Diamond Street through Sierra Leone and Liberia have been more than just tainted by human blood-prices. Some of these diamonds are actually cursed, Kindred occultists say, causing catastrophe to those unfortunate vampires who come into possession of the gems. Strangely, these curses have been found to affect only Kindred (though some mages have reported "curse stones," too, and theorize that they might have some detrimental effect on any individual with a supernatural aspect). Whether these stones are deliberately being sent to Newcastle or they're simply a symptom of a larger mystical secret is unknown.

Character: Justice and Wrath. Most of the scrupulous gem brokers on Diamond Street make it a point not to traffic in conflict stones. Those who ask fewer questions about their gems' origins are certainly no strangers to making their profit any way the can, including undercutting a rival's prices or sending fearsome "associates" to intimidate other dealers. It's not always about the money, it's about coming out on top, and doing what it takes to get there.

System: Diamond Street is renowned for the quality of its wares, and using the workshops of its artisans earns a character +1 to any Crafts roll to create jewelry or other valuable baubles. If you're using the District traits, Diamond Street has Safety and Awareness ratings of +2.

20. Six Hundred Guilford (Corporate Sector)

Description: Six Hundred Guilford Avenue — "Big Six," as employees in the neighborhood call it — is the largest and most ostentatious high-rise office building in the city, eclipsing the grandeur even of the most tenured of buildings at Hoyt & Cross. Of course, the stodgy environment of Hoyt & Cross considers Big Six to be crass and nouveau riche. The professional rivalries between high finance and corporate business notwithstanding, Six Hundred Guilford is an extremely clean, extremely stressful neighborhood. Most of Newcastle's nationwide corporate companies have offices here, and more than a few international companies maintain offices, too. It's not cheap, though — most local companies by comparison maintain offices in less expensive neighborhoods. If you've got it, flaunt it, though, and the wealthiest companies in America do so here, at about $80 per square foot of leased space annually.

Background: Big Six is nouveau riche, to be honest. Back in the 1950s, Guilford Avenue was a strip of car dealerships, single-office insurance brokerages and hardware stores. Today it's one of the fastest-growing commercial districts in America. To be fair, there are still two car dealerships on the strip, one of which is a BMW dealer and the other is an importer of high-end luxury car brands such as Aston-Martin, Bentley and Maserati. None of the insurance brokerages in Big Six have any fewer than dozen-office operations, but most have moved to Hoyt & Cross.

Storytelling Hints: Six Hundred Guilford is a perfect backdrop for stories focused on the high price of success and the crushing amounts of stress that holding onto success entails. In fact, the Prince and Primogen maintain a conference room in Big Six itself, for hosting formal meetings, and have almost immediate access to the Fossaway Ballroom at the Waldorf-Astoria just down the street. It's the neighborhood where you can reward yourself immediately with a new 7-series after getting the big promotion, and pick up a half-gram of coke to keep that celebration — and yourself — going.

Character: Charity and Greed. Almost every company devotes money to charities, and they even compete to see who can give more to philanthropy and advertise it (somewhat) tastefully. Of course, Greed is an underlying vice of corporate culture — could any other Vice be more appropriate?

System: Resources don't go quite as far in Six Hundred Guilford as they do in the rest of the city —whatever you buy here, you're helping to pay the lease, whether it's a dinner or a Rolls-Royce (or an eighth of an ounce). Costs for anything purchased in the Big Six neighborhood increase by one dot. If you're using the District traits, Big Six has a Safety rating of +1 and a Stability rating of –1 (because when businesses here flame out, they do it dramatically and with much public attention). A job in Big Six is +2 Prestige, while living in the neighborhood is +1 Prestige.

21. Felix Plaza (City Courts)

Description: An imposing cluster of official and court-related buildings designed by I.M. Pei, Felix Plaza is as interesting as it can be, given that the people who visit it often don't want to be there. The courtyards surrounding the plaza each have an impressive view of the courts, which makes some people feel that the full power of the law looms over them. They're not too far off the mark — despite the city bank accounts that never quite seem full, the courts are backlogged with cases and people, many of whom will be writing checks to the city to account for their fees and fines. Felix Plaza has a bit of an Orwellian feel, suggesting that if one has to be in attendance at the courthouse, the battle is already lost. There's little room for the individual inside the machine of civic justice.

Background: The Pei update of the courthouse plaza took place in 1986 and was finally paid off completely in 1997. Many local citizens complained that the celebrity architect was too expensive, that the redesign was unnecessary and that contracting and labor costs would far

exceed the original budget set aside for the renovation. When the city's three-term mayor was finally voted out of office in 1988, it occurred amid a storm of controversy, not the least of which was the $90 million that had been skimmed off the top of the courthouse budget and distributed among various flunkies, city officials and colleagues of the mayor. At that time, it was the most audacious hustle in city history, and it set the tone for the next 20 years, encouraging corrupt civil servants to more conscientiously cover their tracks.

Storytelling Hints: Felix Plaza represents the best and worst of government — its intended function to protect and serve its citizens, and the all-too-common descent into corruption that goes hand-in-hand with massive amounts of money and little accountability. In fact, the Judges' Benevolent Association and Solicitors' Fraternity, a combined society of judges, lawyers and "special interests" (including a number of Kindred) reads like a who's who of local legal corruption. It's an excellent place for Kindred who want to cultivate influence to undertake the process, but it's a veritable minefield of mortal, undead and other schemers who have the very same idea.

Character: Hope and Gluttony. While Justice might seem a more appropriate Virtue, it's not on too many people's minds, though they've convinced themselves that they can make a better world by working within that all but openly corrupt system. The ones who have no such aspirations are happy to exult in the power they've accumulated already and will continue to do so until their retirement.

System: Favor trafficking is a far more valuable commodity than cash in the city courts, so Persuasion dice pools gain a +2 dice bonus when involving legal matters in Felix Plaza. As counterpoint, blatant skullduggery is frowned upon (because everyone inside the system knows it should be practiced elsewhere...), earning legal-related Subterfuge dice pools a –2 dice penalty in the neighborhood. If you're using the District traits, Felix Plaza has Access, Safety, Awareness and Information ratings of +1 and a Stability rating of +2.

22. Drover's Park (Elysium)

Description: The oldest neighborhood in Newcastle, the most economically diverse, the most culturally integrated, Drover's Park is what most people think of when they think of Newcastle. The eldest of the homes still bear the signature style of the region, and only a mile away, affordable apartments offer the urban Newcastle experience without crippling leases. Drover's Park falls short of idyllic only because the neighbors don't trust each other. The wealthy resent the poor compromising their property values, and the less financially independent resent the upper classes trying to gentrify them out of the neighborhood. The blacks resent the Hispanics, who clash with the Asians, who can't relate to the Jews. Drover's Park is everything a city has to offer in a two-mile-diameter microcosm. It's residential comfort, commercial availability, a homeowner's bad dream and businessman's albatross. It's great when it's not terrible, but it's always both.

Background: Drover's Park is the original settled land where Newcastle was founded, the place where the town-then-city's first houses stood. Thus, Drover's Park doesn't have any singular identity; it's been a cultural and ethnic

melting pot ever since people moved here and put down roots. Every few years, it cycles a bit toward one particular demographic, but then the rest of the neighborhood's residents and businesspeople make their concerted efforts to swing the pendulum back toward the center. At numerous times over the past 100 years, Drover's Park has threatened to become an excusive neighborhood, a black ghetto, a working-class enclave and an in-town sprawl of strip malls and big-box stores. Nobody wants to lose his own individual claim to Drover's Park, though, so it works through council meetings to keep huge changes from taking place. Nowhere else in the city do neighborhood residents work so ceaselessly to maintain a status quo.

Storytelling Hints: The survival of that status quo is partially due to the undying efforts of the Kindred, the eldest among whom have a vested interest in the longevity of Drover's Park and the well-being of Newcastle itself. Many vampires have invested in property or businesses in the neighborhood, and the uncommon concentration of Kindred assets in the area has led to a mutual agreement among the Damned that Drover's Park is Elysium. Regardless of who rises to the office of Prince, even that individual's ultimate decree can't strip Drover's Park of that status. It's the will of the Kindred, the mutual understanding and respect for worth available to all. It might even seem a bit altruistic until one remembers that the Kindred interest is siphoning blood, lucre and other prosperity from the living hearts of the mortal population — a concordance of fiends and their cravings.

Character: Prudence and Pride. Drover's Park survives by its careful commitment to its own balance and moderation. In fact, this perennial sense of value contributes to the ever-present state of keeping up with the Joneses, and, if possible, exceeding them a little bit.

System: As the city's preeminent Elysium, Drover's Park accentuates the status of Kindred who have acquired it, whether in the Clan, Covenant or City subtypes. A Kindred who has acquired any Status at all in these categories finds it considered to have a +1 rating while in Drover's Park. This may affect multiple Status ratings. A Kindred with no Status does not receive this bonus — he's outside the system and thus beyond the graces of this particular Elysium. If you're using the District traits, Drover's Park has +2 ratings in both Stability and Prestige.

23. Castleback Circle (City Hall)

Description: The center of the city's political corruption, Castleback Circle nonetheless presents a stoic face to the citizens of Newcastle. In fact, most residents of the city

believe the local government exists to serve them. For the mayor, the public icon of local government, that's true. Among the hundreds of thousands of local government employees, though — the ones whose appearances aren't so readily known — unethical practice is almost the order of the day. Castleback Circle stands in contrast to that, though, an attractive complex of government buildings with an impressive marble façade. In the plazas out front, hot dog and gyro vendors ply their trade from carts, activists exercise their right to protest and homeless congregate as a reminder that not everyone in town can claim privilege.

Background: Once Newcastle became Newcastle, outgrowing the community of Drover's Park, the city established its City Hall in sight of the shores of Black Lake. The City Hall complex closed once due to a freakish, unseasonal flood that damaged some of the basement offices, storerooms and archives, but the city repaired the damage and quickly returned to business as usual.

Storytelling Hints: The diseased heart of the city, Castleback Circle not only collects the dishonest community servants, it's the home base for every high-level, black-hearted deal that originates with supernatural influence and manifests through local policy. That was no "unseasonal flood," that was the Prince and mayor striking a deal to wipe out the Prince and Primogen's back taxes, as well as records that clearly implicated them as being dead. The mayor's reward was for him to be "brought into the Requiem." While he was never Embraced, the mayor did have one of the Primogen turn him into a ghoul as he exited office. To this night, he serves as a mutilated clerk for the local Invictus, viciously resentful of his betrayal, but hopelessly addicted to the Vitae the Kindred provide.

Character: Justice and Wrath. As always, City Hall

can't help but represent the trust in the social contract that local residents invest in it. Behind the scenes, the power belongs to whomever's ruthless enough to take it — or to make others suffer and thereby rescind any claim they might have.

System: City bureaucracy inflicts a –1 die penalty on anyone who must unfortunately engage in any Social interactions (and therefore dice pools) with them, as well as any attempts to satisfy any procedural requirements (such as tax forms, renewing auto registrations, paying utility bills, etc.) that might require a roll to determine success. If you're using District traits, Castleback Circle has a +1 Safety and Stability rating.

24. Police Plaza (Police Department)

Description: The antiseptic-smelling hallways of Police Plaza look like an episode out of a 1970s-era cop show, with cheap wood paneling and inexpertly rendered suspect sketches tacked to the walls. The parking lot outside fares little better, with a dilapidated fleet of Chevrolet patrol cruisers limping on-duty cops to call sites. The whole plaza is straight out of the institutional building handbook, devoid of personality and a constant reminder that the only thing the individual is going to do here is suffer degradation.

Background: In the late 1970s, the Morgan County Prison, located to the rear of Police Plaza, experienced an inmate riot and mutiny. For 78 hours, the convicts had control of the place, roused to riot by inmate #27659226. The inmate in question briefly ran the prison like a nightmare out of the pages of The Lord of the Flies, and only intervention by the National Guard allowed police to regain control of the prison. After the dust had settled, neither inmate #27659226 nor his body was found. Closer investigation revealed that the prison had no record of any inmate #27659226 ever being incarcerated. Popular opinion maintains that this is a clerical error or an example of the deplorable condition of prisons, but those who know how closely the supernatural resides to the real world often have their own hypotheses.

Storytelling Hints: Strangely, and certainly thankfully, the police department stands as an honest buffer between the corruption of appointed civil offices and the common man on the street. Local Kindred haven't been able to figure it out, but the Newcastle police have proved remarkably difficult to influence, and they're downright intransigent when dealing with the Damned. In a metaphysical sense, this may be the ailing city's last line of defense as it seeks to protect itself from the depredations of the undead. In practice, local Kindred actually fear the police in Newcastle, and rightly so. None among the Damned wants to post bond two hours after the sun has risen.

Character: Justice and Wrath. In opposition to this Virtue and Vice extant at Castleback Circle, the local police force is truly committed to the enforcement of Justice, and can become dangerously frustrated if the right course of legal prosecution isn't carried out.

System: On-duty police officers encountered at Police Plaza gain an amazing +5 dice to any attempt to resist supernatural influence. In game terms, that's an enormous bonus, and an obvious indicator that something supernal has the city's protection in its interests.

25. St. Jude's (Cathedral)

Description: There's something fitting about St. Jude's being the cathedral in Newcastle, and the church with the largest congregation, since St. Jude is renowned as the patron saint of lost causes. The neighborhood itself is an outlying near-slum, a lower-class, blue-collar neighborhood with an anachronistic, turn-of-the-century preponderance of ethnic immigrants, such as Italians, Irish and a handful of Jews. The roads here are in poor repair, and the streets out in front of the houses smell like cooking food. Local commerce is predominantly ethnic grocery stores, mechanics' garages and bars. The church itself is the center of the neighborhood, a place where sometimes arguing neighbors can put aside their grief and unite in worship of God.

Background: St. Jude's is the neighborhood that never wanted to bring itself into the 20th century, much less the 21st. Although the houses are new — a massive restoration project begun in the mid-1970s was finally completed

in 1989 — the attitudes aren't, and many of the homes belong to the same families that owned them when the neighborhood was new.

Storytelling Hints: St. Jude's gives a big-city feel to the not necessarily big city of Newcastle, a bit of Ellis Island that makes for a distinct culture of its own that's different from Little Italy and the other ethnic neighborhoods. St. Jude's is a place that builds a kind of national diversity good for creating Storyteller characters, so that not every Italian is Mustache Pete, not every Irishman is Paddy O'Furniture and not every Jew is Sol Rosenberg. St. Jude's is modern in all but its long-standing pride in identity.

Character: Faith and Pride. That same ethnic pride occasionally manifests itself as stubbornness or arrogance, but the neighborhood's reliable attendance at church, and its earnestness in being there, allows the locals to transcend overweening senses of nationalistic dignity.

System: As with Police Plaza, residents of St. Jude's gain a bonus to attempts to resist supernatural influence or attack. The bonus is only +1, though it applies to all forms of supernatural impact, from using Disciplines on an individual, to attacking him in the throes of a blood frenzy. The "feel" is different, however. In this neighborhood, it's more of a sense of an Old World God protecting the devout than the city trying to look out for its own. Note that this bonus applies only to the devout — though it bolsters devout Jews, Muslims and other adherents of modern world religions just as readily as it does the local Catholics. Exactly how far to extend that to less common religions is up to the Storyteller, for the purposes of her chronicle's themes.

26. Fincher Park (Asylum)

Description: Pushed to the outskirts of town just as the mentally ill are often pushed to the margins of society, the Attacus Brooks Psychiatric Pavilion at Fincher Park attends to the needs of those for whom the realities of the modern world prove too taxing. The neighborhood of Fincher Park quietly accepts the presence of the hospital, but it's an attitude of resignation rather than welcome. The low- to middle-income neighborhood is one of the quieter ones in town, and a sometime destination for those who have lived in St. Jude's all their life.

Background: Attacus Brooks was once an affluent philanthropist in Newcastle and a frequent contributor to Hohenheim College and its extensive library. Something happened in the relationship between Mr. Brooks and then-president of Hohenheim Arnold Brewster, putting an obstacle in the path of their friendship and drawing a close to their professional relationship. Thereafter, Brooks, who had a reputation as an eccentric, opened his own research institute, which eventually became the hospital it is today once it started practicing methodology along with its theoretical curriculum.

Storytelling Hints: Attacus Brooks still runs the Psychiatric Pavilion at Fincher Park today, but it's with a hands-off style of management. The strangest part about Mr. Brooks' life, however, is the fact that he and Arnold Brewster are the same person. It's something impossible to explain in an understandable concept: Historically, they had both been seen in the same place together, they both married different women and they both obviously

held vastly different jobs and responsibilities. Now that Mr. Brewster has been dead for almost six years, Brooks is returning to some semblance of normalcy in his life (which explains the large periods of time he's taking to himself), but the time he spent as Brewster and simultaneously as himself, the same but distinct, weighed very much on the man, and he wonders if he should ultimately submit himself as his own patient.

Character: Charity and Lust. The hospital and its neighborhood exude an aura of positivity and of wanting to help one's fellow man. Unquenchable rumors about what happens behind the hospital's doors and the implication that last summer's Fincher Park rapist was an escapee of the hospital have tinged the hospital and its environs with a sense of the lurid.

System: Characters who spend the night in Fincher Park, even regular residents, occasionally rise the next morning or night with memories in their heads that are expressly not their own. The confusion this engenders applies a –1 dice pool penalty to all actions involving Mental Attributes until the next time they sleep and clear their heads.

27. Morgan County Medical Center (Medical Center)

Description: The rambling, bucolic medical center belies the constant quagmire of lawsuits, hospital politics and sloppily practiced medicine. If people's health weren't at stake, the hospital would be a laughingstock, but because people die there every day, it's a testament to the often depressing realities of state-funded hospitals. Many of the hospital's doctors live in the aging upper-class neighborhood surrounding the medical center, but only the ones who became wealthy before the modern advent of HMOs, PPOs and the broad-scale decay of American health care. For the new doctors just getting into the business, it's a never-ending maelstrom of 80-hour workweeks, back-to-back double shifts and wondering why the hell anyone would take out so many student loans to finish med school anyway.

Background: The hospital itself is new, but some of the malpractice suits involving it date back to the previous hospital building, which was demolished when the new hospital was finished in 2001. No one with decent insurance chooses to go to Morgan for their health-care needs; the well-insured visit Black Lake Presbyterian, 10 miles out of town to the north. Morgan County Med has an excellent trauma unit, however. One would assume it's because of all the practice they get.

Storytelling Hints: As part of the corrupt local government and an institute representative of the declining state of American wellness care, Morgan County Med is a hellhole, and it should feel like it, should anyone have to go there. Kindred often call it McMorgan's, alluding to how easy it is to slip in, feed from some random cadaver-to-be and get back on the road without too much difficulty or security. The fast-food reference also applies equally to the quality of the Vitae so obtained, because Morgan County Med is a destination only for the desperate and broke. As well, an influx of patients with toxicity problems from Graves Island water is on the rise.

Character: Hope and Sloth. Nobody wants to go to a hospital to die, and the location symbolizes the dwindling hope that something can be done for the ailing who wind up inside. It has all of the worst attributes of a state hospital, though, so assuming a doctor sees you before you die, there's no guarantee he's paid enough to care whether the regimen of medicine he prescribes for you will make you even sicker.

System: The doctors don't care, they're the ones who couldn't get jobs at better hospitals and the equipment is largely out of date. All Medicine dice pools for care obtained at Morgan County Med occur at a –1 die penalty.

28. Marlowe Cemetery (Morgue)

Description: Presumably, the Marlowe Cemetery began in a time before the need for funeral plots was so great as it is today; otherwise, the people establishing the cemetery would have done so in a location that wasn't practically a swamp. The ground is too soft here to adequately serve as a cemetery, but the infrastructure's

already in place, meaning that despite its unsuitability to the purpose, it remains the cemetery. On rainy days, a vicious fog rolls across the lowland of the cemetery proper, and only the mausoleums of the very wealthy rise above the miasma. This was also once intended to be a middle-class neighborhood, but the vagaries of the land soon revealed themselves, and the short-lived middle-class neighborhood quickly became a maudlin lower-class neighborhood.

Background: The Marlowe Cemetery neighborhood once included a beautiful park in its environs, but a lack of money after the mayoral scandal in the late 1980s meant that the city had to use land it already owned to erect the new morgue, which the overflowing hospital vaults at Morgan County Medical Center required. Now the park is gone, replaced by an ugly brick building that morbidly overlooks the decrepit Marlowe graveyard, itself no paragon of gothic grandeur.

Storytelling Hints: It's a graveyard. If you really need our help figuring out spooky ways to use a graveyard in your chronicles, you're probably Storytelling the wrong game.

Character: Temperance and Envy. From the richest of men to the most common, all end up beneath the earth eventually, and that morbid thought is never far from anyone's mind when he visits Marlowe Cemetery for whatever reason. Of those who live here or those still fettered to the living world from beyond the veil of death, no one actively chooses to remain here, and their jealousy for others can drive them to acts of desperation.

System: None, unless the Storyteller decides to use the cemetery for some specific purpose. If you're using the District traits, Marlowe Cemetery has an Access rating of +1 and Prestige and Stability ratings of –1.

29. Marshall Campus (Museum)

Description: The neighborhood known collectively as Marshall Campus includes the Newcastle Museum of Science and Astronomy, the Newcastle Aquarium, the Marshall-Mitchell Museum of Natural History, the Kirby House (a museum of local and state history) and the Atwater Homestead (one of the oldest surviving original settlements in the area). The neighborhood also includes a few corporate-sponsored attraction-museums, such as an automobile museum and an advertising museum. It's mostly a quiet neighborhood, with an occasional high-profile crime linked to something valuable taken from the museums' collections or an embezzling curator. The residential neighborhood, with apartment complexes and small enclaves of houses surrounding the museum campus, is moderately affordable.

Background: The neighborhood that became the Marshall Campus was originally the fairgrounds for the State Fair. (Newcastle also bid once to host the World's Fair in 1958, but lost out to Brussels.) After the State Fair fund ran bankrupt for seven consecutive years, the fairgrounds were purchased by a private investor, Virginia Marshall, who developed the land as an affordable venue for state-run and non-profit organizations. Today the land is managed by her grandson's trust, and he's shown every indication that he's willing to sell it as soon as his trust matures.

Storytelling Hints: The Marshall Campus is a region devoted to local history, and a great place for characters to go when some local mystery needs researched. It's also a tremendously valuable bit of real estate, and sure to draw much Kindred interest when Marc Marshall puts

it on the auction block. As it stands, the Damned have "arrangements" to use many of the local museums after hours for Kindred affairs or secret liaisons.

Character: Fortitude and Greed. The collected museums of the Marshall Campus are monuments to local spirit and the American Dream, displaying everything from scientific breakthroughs to the cradle in which Morgan County's firstborn child slept. Because of the land's historical significance, it's acquired a value that its private owner can't wait to exploit.

System: Academics rolls made when taking advantage of the Marshall Campus's various museums and collections gain a +1 die bonus. If you're using the District traits, Marshall Campus has an Information rating of +2.

30. Ferryman (Theater Circuit)

Description: The City of Newcastle Tourism Bureau spent three months and three-quarters of a million dollars branding the V-shaped intersection of Ferryman Avenue and Hamilton Street as "Better Than Broadway." It's hyperbole, sure, but it certainly helped to reinvigorate the ailing arts district known as Ferryman. Home to theaters small and large, the Newcastle Symphony Orchestra, galleries, pre-show bistros, late-night brasseries and a cadre of bums willing to show tourists "the quick way to the Fosse Theater," Ferryman is on the rise once again, with all the problems that occur in tandem with that: rising crime, rising cost of living and rising tax liability for those who own condos in the neighborhood. It's bohemian and fashionable and very, very liberal.

Background: The Ferryman neighborhood was once a vaudeville-style neighborhood where inexpensive variety shows played around the clock. The neighborhood went through a long dark period, during which Ferryman was mostly run-down movie theaters and equally run-down peepshow parlors and head shops. Twelve years ago, the mayor threw out the porn-peddlers with some savvy rezoning, and seven years ago, the Tourism Bureau worked its brand magic. Since then, Ferryman's name has been synonymous with patrons of the arts and urbane wit. It's also unofficially Newcastle's "out neighborhood," as declared by Pride! Magazine and fiercely advocated by the city's gay and lesbian demographic.

Storytelling Hints: Ferryman is a good place for mildly anachronistic character types, from Jazz Age musicians who saw Ferryman's gilded age to smut magnates and junkies who were turned out in more recent memory. It has a bit of the feel of pre-Giuliani Times Square and the Chelsea Hotel, where a genius writer might turn out

a masterpiece while on a six-month morphine jag. It's currently fashionable for Kindred to buy season tickets to various theaters and opera houses in Ferryman, though few really pay attention to which opera or show is playing. They're just there to be seen.

Character: Hope and Gluttony. Cynicism aside, Ferryman truly is a neighborhood of inspiration, where the bright lights and dazzling personalities one encounters there are truly memorable. Then again, so much fashionable fabulousness often goes hand-in-hand with excess of various flavors.

System: Regular visits to Ferryman can add a +1 die bonus to characters' attempts to create art (see p. 58 of the World of Darkness Rulebook). In a seedier sense, Streetwise dice pools also gain a +1 die bonus for characters who have at least a single point in the Skill — characters without even a single point of Streetwise are simply too clueless to take advantage of the neighborhood's easy attitudes.

31. Ashton Park (Gallery Circuit)

Description: Home to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Margaret Ashton Museum of Modern Art and the Park Gate Photography Annex of the MMA, Ashton Park is a terminally hip neighborhood that's always at the height of some artistic movement's renaissance or another's. Ashton Park is equally as renowned for its celebrity-owned condominiums as its art collections, and a local joke chides celebrities for buying in-town homes here but never actually spending a night in the city. On the more sordid side, a designer amphetamine has taken the neighborhood by storm, and many on the local A-list are rapidly developing addictions to this new, tarted-up version of speed.

Background: Ashton Park was once the homestead of the Ashton family, who bestowed it upon the city in the late 19th century. Since then, it's been a very tony part of town, nestled between the performing arts district and Little Paris. Except for the larger structures, which are always devoted to the big galleries, the buildings in the neighborhood are constantly shifting hands and being developed and redeveloped as loft space or gallery space, depending on who holds the deed for any given decade.

Storytelling Hints: Characters who want to make a space their own or sink money into investments could do far worse than making a piece of Ashton Park their own. It's expensive, but it's worth a bit of Status or Prestige in certain eyes. The best parties always happen in Ashton Park, so it's also considered the Rack among upwardly mobile Kindred — cast parties from neighboring Ferryman invariably happen here and some gallery or another is always hosting an event to commemorate its newest showing, and where vivacious mortals travel, so go the Damned.

Character: Charity and Gluttony. From its origins as a property granted to the city by private owners to the most up-to-the-minute concert or gallery showing benefiting the promoter's favorite cause, Ashton Park is a neighborhood built on the idea of "giving back." It suffers the same raucous embrace of indulgence as Ferryman, however, and is often less discreet about it.

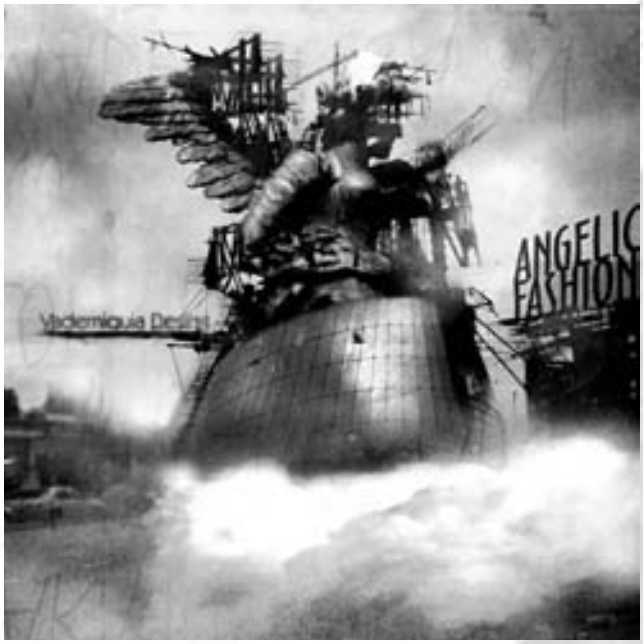
System: There's always a great party to crash or a crushing bit of gossip to be gleaned from a visit to Ashton Park. Socialize dice pools increase by +1 for interactions in the neighborhood, and carousing attempts specifically (see p. 85 of the World of Darkness Rulebook) gain a +2 dice bonus (not cumulative with the Socialize bonus). If you're using the District traits, Ashton Park has a Safety rating of –1 and a Prestige rating of +1.

32. Little Paris (Fashion Circuit)

Description: The newest styles and trends are always ready to wear, right off the rack or made to order in Little Paris's boutiques and ateliers. In fact, Newcastle has evolved a quirky new subculture that parallels that of Japan's plaza-fashion fads, in which the city's fashionistas congregate in very visible places for no reason other than to be seen in the moment's couture. Little Paris is actually a fairly antiquated name that nonetheless persists, since French fashions aren't the only ones in neighborhood stores or even a majority. It's a weird, hyperkinetic neighborhood where outrageous costumes that set the tone for more mass-market street clothes are on almost constant display.

Background: As its name suggests, Little Paris was once the city's locus for Parisian fashions. Over time, in the global marketplace, designers of all cultures and nationalities established clothing brands, some of which opened storefronts in Newcastle. The old-money, traditional element of local society points to the circus that Little Paris has become as an indicator of the world's slide into moral decay — but their parents surely said the same thing, and their own children are the ones paying the neighborhood's exorbitant asking prices.

Storytelling Hints: Little Paris can be as freaky or as tame, as vacuous or as sincere, as the Storyteller wants a sense of style to seem in her chronicle. By design, Little



Paris is a place where outlandish things happen, and any given appearance might be the next hot trend. As a result, "people who look like vampires" can get away with a lot here. It's also a convenient place to have the club-kid look spill over, so that not every shifty-eyed rendezvous needs to happen on a smoky dance floor.

Character: Hope and Pride. Fashion is the ultimate egalitarian environment, in which anyone who has an idea can see that idea blossom into the season's must-have, with no regard for the designer's politics, gender, sexual orientation or other unique characteristics. With so many people competing for the moment's adulation, though, it's a cutthroat environment that rewards ever more extreme or individualistic behavior.

System: With the right outfit (as determined by the Storyteller's themes), a character might enjoy a +1 die bonus to Presence dice pools while visiting Little Paris. That bonus is capricious, however, and might vanish as quickly as overnight if another look seizes the spotlight. If you're using the District traits, Little Paris has a Stability rating of –1 and an Access rating of +1.

33. Wear Street (Fells Heights; Nightclub Circuit)

Description: People might say that the era of the mega-club is over, but those people have never been to Wear Street. The neon-lit strip hosts a dozen A-list clubs, five of which occupy more than 15,000 square feet each. The largest, Gauge, has over 10,000 square feet of dance floor alone. Each of the clubs caters to a distinct musical and nightlife subculture, including Latin, hip-hop, house, country and Top 40. As well, one of the mega-clubs is branded distinctly as gay, making nightlife options more than just a simple choice of musical genre. Wear Street is a traffic nightmare but a clubgoer's wonderland from Thursday through Sunday, and well policed by the city, which charges nightclubs an additional fee for their liquor licenses.

Background: Hip neighborhoods change almost overnight, but with the money that's been poured into Wear Street's facades and interiors over the past nine years, the place has at least a good decade left in it.

Storytelling Hints: Storytellers can go wild here with the options the nightclub district offers. Clubs turn over ownership very frequently, so entrepreneurial players might want to take a shot at owning the hottest place in town. The high-dollar theme clubs spare no expense in making their spaces look lush and exotic, from marble fixtures in the bathroom to suspended-waterfall dance

floors to million-watt sound systems to VIP booths done up in luxury befitting a Roman emperor. Nightclubs are also a genre favorite for seductive hunts and off-the-record liaisons. Club culture occasionally turns violent, so a combat sequence isn't out of the question. There's also a tremendous amount of illicit business that occurs at nightclubs, including drug sales, money laundering and more drug sales.

Character: Lust and Gluttony. Excess has no Virtue. It's all about imbibement and taking someone home afterward, whether for sex or Vitae.

System: Carousing in this den of licentiousness is easy for all but the most strident wallflower, and doing so earns a +3 dice bonus. (See p. 85 of the World of Darkness Rulebook for more information on carousing.) If you're using District traits, Wear Street has a Stability rating of –2 and gossipy Information rating of +1.

34. Waterbank (Harbor)

Description: The strip of land along the coast and the small island at the mouth of the Black River is a quaint, faded urban coastline with neglected chain stores and lackluster attractions. Waterbank used to be a popular tourist destination and sightseeing locale, but now it's a declining shopping are with a handful of water- and beach-themed junk shops to give it a sense of local flavor. The beaches of Waterbank are mostly red clay, but sunbathers occasionally venture out to where the dark waves lap at the shore. A handful of moderately affordable apartments dot the coastline, but those who live in them pay primarily for location and few other amenities.

Background: From the 1920s to the 1940s, Waterbank was a popular vacation spot. A brief period of bad fishing harvests all but closed the area down for almost a decade, but then it reopened in the mid-1950s. Its resurgence lasted for two decades, but Waterbank lost most of its local flavor, instead being a beachfront market for Gap-like stores and casual dining chain restaurants. Waterbank never recovered from that second burst of capitalistic grandeur, and those stores still remain, slowly accumulating sea-grime and memories.

Storytelling Hints: Waterbank is an overlooked neighborhood of piers and break-even retail. Its few residences are perfect places to hide out without living like a refugee, and no one will notice if a few extra dangerous-looking individuals loiter for 20 minutes at the end of the docks. It's a neighborhood that the Storyteller can use to launch a "rebirth" for Newcastle, or he can use it as a region of inevitable, continual, slow decline, a symbol of the greater city itself. The odd effect that Waterbank has over Kindred (see below) is also a mystery that someone's long overdue to investigate.

Character: Temperance and Sloth. Waterbank lasted as long as it did because it never courted the fads that brought quick cash to other parts of town. Waterbank took the safe, comfortable route of family entertainment — souvenir shops, penny arcades and American food. In some ways, that temperance was actually a lack of ambition, and Waterbank never distinguished itself to acquire the prestige of a more desirable neighborhood. It's all the more homely when compared to nearby Wear Street.

System: Waterbank is mired in the gloom of its own stasis. That stasis has taken on a paranormal aspect, as well: Kindred spend only one Vitae every other night they rise from Waterbank havens, instead of one every night. It takes a month of residence in the neighborhood before the effect manifests, but the vitality many Kindred feel in light of Waterbank's general depression is undeniable.

35. Fells Heights (Nightclub Circuit)

Description: Wear Street may be where the exciting new clubs make their brief, scintillating appearance, but that's where they also meet their unfashionable demises, as well. The Fells Heights neighborhood apart from Wear Street is home to the many tenured bars and clubs, whether due to their long-standing traditions (The Lion Rampant), perennially popular low concept (The Quarter Pitcher Room), nigh-fetishistic specialty (Carousel — "Newcastle's Fattest Strippers") or underground appeal (Mistress Catherine's). The neighborhood also includes a variety of unremarkable apartments that were probably once dazzling and new but are now just way stations where residents can go fuck or puke before heading out on another bender.

Background: Fells Heights was "the strip" before Wear Street became included in the general neighborhood by consensus when its backers put the money into it. In its heyday, Fells Heights housed the notorious Pussy Cat Lounge brothel, punk-bar legend Overkill and the disco Snowflake. Over time, nightlife beat down the once-new club spaces, and leases grew cheaper and cheaper for new promoters to open their clubs. Every now and then, an old club makes a "resurgence" after several years or even decades of hiatus, which is always an easy way to get the front page in the newspaper's Style section.

Storytelling Hints: Old versus new, class versus flash, tradition versus whim, us versus them. Fells Heights watering holes are where the long-term habitués of venerable bars go to cruise, in comparison to Wear Street. Fell Heights is a favored Rack, particularly among ancillae who don't consider themselves above it all.

Character: Fortitude and Wrath. Fells Heights is like a cockroach, impossible to kill, and some of its bars have been pouring drinks for 60-plus years. It's also a place where many of the usual joys of nightlife have given way to boozy tempers and beer muscles.

System: Alcohol is the cause of and solution to many of the world's problems, and it flows freely in Fells Heights. The only Vices that reward indulgence with Willpower in the neighborhood are Wrath and addiction-related Gluttony. Likewise, Fortitude is the only Virtue that replenishes Willpower.

36 & 40. Laidlaw Towers and the Walter Chadwick Projects (Projects)

Description: Government-subsidized homes for those unable to find affordable housing, Newcastle's public housing has always been a matter of controversy among public officials. Plainly, most mayors want to wash their hands of the whole affair. Although both projects theoretically operate under the "one strike" law that allows the eviction of residents of public housing who are convicted of certain crimes, enforcement is the issue. Too many crimes fall through the cracks. Too many crimes diligently pursued and prosecuted by police disappear into the system after trial or plea. As a result, the projects get worse and worse, and have effectively evolved their own shadow economies revolving around drugs, contraband and food-assistance vouchers. At this point, they're almost like gated communities, albeit gated communities that have taken shape under a charter of crime, violence and abuse. In addition, about a third of the floors of Laidlaw Towers don't legitimately receive electricity, bunkering it instead from exterior power lines or oblivious neighbors. And as bad as it is in the projects themselves, the nameless satellite communities are even worse, as they don't receive the government-sponsored benefits that the developments do.

Background: Both Laidlaw Towers and the Walter Chadwick Projects were established in 1989 under an intended model of Health Realization Projects, and both public housing developments grew out of the worst of

Newcastle neighborhoods. Within three years, however, the desperate tenants of the new public housing demonstrated quite amply that they were happy to remain Newcastle's worst neighborhoods, screw fancy-school ideas like Health Realization, oh, and thanks for the new apartments. Within four years, both Laidlaw Towers and the Walter Chadwick Projects looked like Third World war zones after a nuclear strike.

Storytelling Hints: Bad things happen here, and too few people want them to improve to make much of a difference. Characters who seek to fights against the monsters they are might find and external cause to champion in either of Newcastle's public housing projects. More likely, however, is the potential for some drug deal, gang activity or simple, snatch-and-feed that a given Kindred thinks is going to be a walk in the park instead spinning wildly out of control. Indeed, both housing projects have multiple Kindred eking out vile Requiems within them, and a secret war between these Kindred and their unwitting followers rages between the two sites and through the streets of the Kellogg slums.

Character: Charity and Wrath. A few lights in the proverbial darkness of the projects shine with the intent of making the best of life under the tenant-voucher system that keeps both developments (minimally) functional. More of the projects residents prefer to live out their thug fantasies-turned-nightmares and follow codes of aberrant machismo that condone rape, violence, theft and victimization.

System: Residents of the projects are leery of outsiders, forever worried that they're about to be evicted, arrested, robbed or otherwise ripped off. Stealth and Intimidation actions there suffer –2 penalties, so second nature is it

for residents to look out for themselves. If you're using the District traits, feel free to allocate a variety of negative ratings as you see fit.

37, 38, 39 & 41. Kellogg, Edge Harbor, Briarville and Ripley (Slums)

Description: If the projects are bastions of violence, the slums are breeding grounds for despair. Each location has some overarching, unofficial but buzzworded reason for its decrepitude. Kellogg is "low density, low income" and can't earn enough to pay for itself. Briarville is "overdeveloped sprawl." Edge Harbor has "disproportionately few non-wetland development opportunities" — it's a swamp. Ripley is a "socio-economically interdependent" swath of trailer homes and tract houses built by a fly-by-night developer that didn't bother keeping construction up to code. Whatever the excuse, they're all dead ends. There's little too encourage anyone to try very hard here; they're all neighborhoods of working poor and the equally destitute who get by hustling their neighbors.

Background: With Newcastle in a state of unacknowledged urban renewal, wealthy developers invest in and gentrify in-town neighborhoods, pushing lower-income citizens ever outward as interior property values increase. The slums are in various stages of their 12-years-and-running histories of decline.

Storytelling Hints: The slums are where people go if they don't have anywhere else. It's where people disappear and aren't sought after, where an ounce of weed costs less than $100 and is probably as much thistle as marihuana, and where someone on the street has either a late-1970s Cadillac up on blocks out in the yard or three malnourished pit bulls snarling from behind the fence.

Character: It's bleak. It's impossible to say which Vice prevails over any other, or what acts might be understood as hallmarks of any given Virtue. People who are here just... are. And they resent it.

System: Suspicion of authority is common in the slums, and many individuals feel as if they've been abandoned by society and thus don't have to heed its hierarchies. Status ratings for individuals whose Status would be known by mortals (police officers, city officials, even corporate sponsorship) is considered one less than its actual rating while in the slums. The various Statuses that mortals would have no inkling of (Clans, Covenants, specialized vampiric City Status) are unaffected, and are probably Masquerade breaches should they come up at all. If you're using the District traits, the slums, just as the projects, suffer from whatever negative ratings the Storyteller deems thematically appropriate.

42. Spoke Hill (Metro Underground)

Description: The underground rail station hub and its plaza shops are a Newcastle hallmark, but not without their behind-the-scenes difficulties, like so many other Newcastle neighborhoods. For one, the subway hub was built long before Newcastle knew that its southern expansion would absorb Morganville, so it's not the most efficient dispatch center for reaching the city's many southern train stations. For another, police patrols are inexplicably iffy here, for some reason always on the other side of the underground mall when a robbery or attack occurs. The resultant atmosphere of danger is one that hurts the neighborhood's retail establishments, effectively limiting their business to the daytime, office-business hours. By night, the shopping mall is practically a graveyard, but the stores are required by lease contract to remain open for the mall's full hours.

Background: Spoke Hill was the city's darling for several years after its unveiling at the 1942 City Expo. Since then, it's still recognized as a signature element of Newcastle, but its reliance on private retailers for a disproportionate amount of shopping center upkeep and the geographical difficulties posed by the non-central

rail hub have left the neighborhood significantly worse for the wear.

Storytelling Hints: Storytellers can use Spoke Hill to build an odd sense of expectation. Especially at night, being in the shopping center is like being the only kid in the toy store on Christmas Day — it's open, but it's almost empty. The poor logistics of the local mass transit also serve as a symbol of the city's disinterest in the people who rely on it most: the privileged individuals at the higher echelons of local government don't care that Newcastle Area Rapid Transit's trains are a hassle to use and transfer on. They have their own cars and never have to worry about taking the train anywhere. Local Kindred covenants occasionally overreach themselves by claiming the rail hub as their own domain, so one of these wars of influence might be going on at any given time in the city's Requiem.

Character: Prudence and Envy. Citizens who take the train to work every day represent the success that tenacity and diligence can bring. It's hard to look down through the train's windows at the Mercedes and Jaguars in reserved parking places and not feel a twinge or more of entitlement, though.

System: Characters being pursued through Spoke Hill can turn the mall's cavernous hallways and the rail station's warren of outbound lines to their advantage by doubling back or taking random turns. At the prey's discretion, he may take either a +2 dice bonus on his chase rolls or impose a –2 dice penalty on his pursuers. He may use this benefit so long as he remains in the Spoke Hill neighborhood, and he may change between the penalty and bonus each turn. If you're using District traits, Spoke Hill has an Access rating of +3 but a Safety rating of –1.

43, 44 & 45. Chinatown, Calexico and Little Italy (Ethnic Neighborhoods)

Description: Newcastle's traditional ethnic neighborhoods vacillate back and forth from being true ethnic enclaves and tourism-friendly way stations near the Spoke Hill transit station. The 10- to 11-year cycles that punctuate the transition between ethnic neighborhoods and ironic hipster locales off the D Line are invisible to the casual observer, though. Hsu's genuinely has the best chicken with asparagus and black beans in town, and Chinatown's midtown market is entirely authentic. Dolce Vita is a perfect place to sip an espresso and munch biscotti or enjoy gelato, and Piave's mussels are excellent. Calexico is the least ethnically faithful of these neighborhoods, with Anglo-friendly taquerias and a weekend street-festival atmosphere that's more for souvenir shoppers than Latin purists, but it's more integrated than Chinatown.

Background: Today they're "ethnic neighborhoods." Fifty years ago they were "ghettoes." The only difference is the amount of money private investors have been able to milk from curious visitors and the local government has been able to generate from Section 8 housing allowances and vendors' licenses. Ethnic crime used to be a problem in these neighborhoods, but the locals' appreciation for outside money has tamed that a bit. It's easier for the cultural organized crime syndicates to collect protection money from neighborhood vendors than to rip each

other off for the same couple of thousand dollars that passes from gang to gang. Café owners and trinket-shop owners don't fight back, either.

Storytelling Hints: This is another venue for Storytellers to slide the scale of neighborhood function. At her discretion, the ethnic neighborhoods can be isolated communities of ethnic immigrants, wary of the outside world and residing here solely to take a shot at the gilded notion of a land of opportunity. Alternatively, ethnic neighborhoods might be little more than further local marketing efforts along the lines of Ferryman, trumped-up to give milquetoast tourists a sense of exoticism. Whatever the case, the ethnic neighborhoods are good places for Kindred to ply their trade, as the same insular attitudes that keep neighborhood crime invisible to the "straights" allows for a culture of secrecy that likewise observes Old World superstitions. Here, magic is real, and often baleful, and the Kindred are merely a portion of that greater belief.

Character: Faith and Pride. These are neighborhoods where, at the minimum, lip service is paid to the customs of non-native cultures. More often, those other customs thrive, preserved or intermingled with local culture. The ugly side of that cultural character is when resentments build or supremacy theories take root. It's easy for ethnic neighborhoods to turn suspicion of the outside to open xenophobia and vice versa, and of such things are cultural antipathies and full-bore race riots born.

System: Language barriers and cultural differences occasionally play a part in visits to ethnic neighborhoods. In times of tension, these differences grow more pronounced. Therefore, when things are rough between a given culture and mainstream Newcastle society, Social dice pools may suffer a penalty from –1 ("That's now how we do things in Calexico") to –3 ("Let's go crack some Italian skulls").

46, 47 & 48. Nobility Hill, Blackgate and Roosevelt Park (Nobility Hill)

Description: Every city has its esteemed neighborhoods, and in Newcastle, Nobility Hill is the upper crust of the upper crust. Usually, these high-end neighborhoods look down upon everyone else, but in Nobility Hill, the class struggle has turned in upon itself, as the old money refuses to be content with lording their greatness over the rest of the city. Of the Nobility Hill neighborhoods, the one plainly known as Nobility Hill insists that it alone holds claim to that title. Roosevelt Park is a fine neighborhood,

but it's not Nobility Hill, they maintain, instead being part of the greensward that makes up the titular park. Nobility Hill proper reserves much of its ire for the nouveau-riche, McMansion development of Blackgate, lower on the slope of the hill and indicative (to them) that money can't buy class or taste. And there's no defense against that statement. Blackgate is indeed a community of large but prefabricated houses, built on lots too small for the size of those houses, so the effect is one of expansive homes that practically sit atop one another. The developers love it, as it means they can charge practically anything they ask and people will buy them for the privileged zip code and appearance of affluence. Roosevelt Park has little interest in the whole affair, having long considered itself a neighborhood of its own, but still being able to call forth a healthy superiority over the new millionaires of Blackgate. In fact, as the wealthy turn exclusivity into a veritable war of status, it's the perception of the middle and lower classes, who lump all three neighborhoods into the greater "Nobility Hill" entity, that engenders the disagreement.

Background: The "true" Nobility Hill has been the premiere neighborhood in Newcastle for the 100-plus years the city has stood, and was briefly its own community during the pre-Newcastle days of Morganville. Roosevelt Park was the "next wave" of wealthy homesteads, though the conflict between those two neighborhoods never came to the point that the bad blood between Nobility Hill and Blackgate has. Indeed, Blackgate is less than six years old, built upon the now-gentrified land of the lower slope of the hill that once housed a middle-class development that Nobility Hill installed gates to exclude.

Storytelling Hints: Nobility Hill allows the Storyteller to create an additional layer of haves to align against the

have-nots, but then also establishes an undercurrent of tension amid the sub-strata of the haves. It's a place where elder Kindred also certainly resent the intrusion of young Kindred who have made a name for themselves and met with some success, in parallel to the prevailing mortal trends of the neighborhood.

Character: Justice and Pride. As far as the locals of the neighborhoods are concerned, their side will prevail, and it's only the snobs or the pretenders who are holding the proper social order at bay. That's a very thin margin to call a Virtue, and it all too often bleeds into the sinful boundaries of classism and elitism.

System: There's a reason the rest of the city sometimes refers to the Nobility Hill neighborhoods as the "WASPs' Nest." Characters who aren't part of the upper-class, Caucasian makeup generally associated with the neighborhood suffer –1 penalties to their Socialize and Persuasion dice pools. A patron, or other liaison to the privileged set, can negate that penalty, but only when she's personally there with the outsider. When she's away, well, Nobility Hill calls a spade a spade, as offensive as that is. If the optional District traits are in use, Nobility Hill has a +3 Prestige rating, and Roosevelt Park and Blackgate have +2 Prestige ratings.

49. University of Newcastle (University)

Description: A school renowned for its curriculum in agriculture and engineering, the University of Newcastle also has a reputation as a party school. Far from the dour over-academia of Hohenheim College, the University of Newcastle has a fresher, more vibrant face it shows to the world. It's a state school, though, and most of its contributions come from wealthy patrons who don't actually live in the city, but dwell instead in suburbs, nearby communities or even further afar. Adjacent to the dorms are no end of strip malls providing pizza delivery, chicken-wing-and-beer sports bars, brand-name clothing stores and even a few non-dorm residences. It's not all textbooks and keggers for the neighborhood, though. Although the school works hard to keep it covered up, one of the more sinister aspects of the school is that it's consistently in the nationwide top 10 of campuses with sexual predator problems.

Background: As with many of the older neighborhoods and features of Newcastle, the university actually existed before the city itself became an actual city. Accredited in 1865 as an agricultural school, the university has grown right alongside Newcastle, and became a city asset once Morganville incorporated and became Newcastle proper. It's a very modern school, up-to-date with modern teaching philosophy, educational equipment and student life facilities.

Storytelling Hints: While the school suffers the date-rape woes of schools across the Western world, the university also harbors an occult cabal of sexual predators trading in young flesh. Some of the cult's victims disappear, shipped off into lives of slavery or worse while others are coarsely conditioned to deny their abuse and returned to the school to continue their learning and lives. The cult's purpose is unclear, but it's not entirely a Kindred venture — those repugnant vampires who are a part of the operation have mentioned that people other than the Damned participate. They refuse to elaborate further, though, regarding the cult's actual practices as the parochial knowledge of the cabal itself. Storytellers, this is a good place to allow morally gray characters to wear white hats. Nobody likes a rapist, and bringing down the cult can only be a good thing.

Character: Prudence and Lust. Diligent study is its own reward, as the school's hundreds of thousands of successful alumni can attest. That said, there's no one in the world hornier than students.

System: The University of Newcastle's acclaimed engineering program offers a +1 die bonus to all actions involving Computer dice pools. If the optional District traits are in use, the University of Newcastle has +1 Access and Information ratings, but a –1 Awareness rating.

50. Hoetsch Island (Sewers)

Description: The infrastructure companion to the Graves Island waste-treatment facility, the Hoetsch Island "sewers" in truth contain the mechanisms that force water through Newcastle's pipes or at least redirect the

(semi-)clean water through the city's various pumping stations. There's only a single residence on the island, a corrugated tin shack that's rumored to be haunted by various old-timey figures of local historical significance who have become hermits. The truth is, it's not even a real residence. It's a supply station and field workshop. Come on, people.

Background: The facility at Hoechst Island doesn't suffer from the same wincing neglect that Graves Island does. The facility has received all of its necessary upkeep for the past 40 years, at least, and is only now falling slightly behind the curve with regard to its maintenance.

Storytelling Hints: In addition being the primary pump station for the city, Hoechst Island is also the repository for a hush-hush municipal slush fund. Part of the damage control regarding the silenced Graves Island scandal was the creation of an alternative sewage treatment fund, to be integrated into Hoechst Island. When the fund finally acquires enough money to bring the plan to fruition, the city could switch treatment methods from chlorination to ozonation, which would allow for the closedown of the Graves Island plant. Those mayors and utilities Directors have come and gone, though, and three years' worth of funding allocations now sit in an account earmarked for an unspecified Hoechst Island project. It's only a matter of time before some city accountant finds the idle fund — or the Kindred who have established a squatter's haven on the island hear about it through the management at the pumping facility.

Character: Justice and Pride. It's hard to argue that a public-works facility has anything but the welfare of its people in mind, since that's who it exists to serve. Once you add human nature into the mix, however, as with the cover-up that ultimately created the fund-plum that's ripe for the picking, it's unlikely those public works will see the true funding and development they need to survive.

System: Rumors of "monsters" in the sewers — everything from the white alligator chestnut to "blood-sucking devil-men" has sewer workers looking over their shoulders even if they profess not to believe in such hokum. Attempts at Stealth suffer a –2 dice penalty for anyone sneaking around on Hoechst Island, since nobody wants to be the one eaten by "the eight-foot, thousand-pound leech that's clogging up the city sewers."

VII: Jimmy

Jimmy paused before the window of a 10th Street electronics shop. He wished he could see his reflection, because he wanted to check and see if he still had blood on his teeth. Doing the best he could, he ran his forefinger along his top row of incisors and checked it for red in the saliva. Yep, there was definitely still juice on him. Airbox and Rasha had impressed on him the importance of making a good impression, and for once he wasn't going to let them down. He reached into his pocket for a travel-size bottle of mouthwash, took a mouthful, swished it around and spat it out onto the sidewalk. As he did, a spasm of looping movement seized his body, and he lurched into his own spray. It ran down his jacket and splattered his Grand Theft Auto T-shirt.

His arms fluttered. Shoving his hands in his pockets, Jimmy struggled to regain muscular control. Maybe he shouldn't have fed on an extended care patient so soon before the appointed hour. But it wasn't every night that the attentive security guard at the extended care facility left his slacker colleague in charge of the lobby. When Lady Fortune smiled on you, it was bad precedent to blow her off. And everything he'd heard about the wicked rush you got from the side effects of L-dopa had been verified, to the max. It was working on his undead physiology like the kickingest dose of Quaaludes ever metabolized.

Buzzing and fidgeting, Jimmy punched the doorbell beside the kitchen entrance. He rechecked the address, which he'd scrawled on a purple sticky note.

The door swung open. "You're late," said the person on the other side. Jimmy couldn't conclusively decipher the gender of his welcoming committee: he saw several big slabs of fat flesh enveloped in a filthy, food-stained white shirt, topped by a round, blobby head in a puffy cook hat. The chef carried a well-notched cleaver in his or her right hand, and used it to gesture to a chair by the grill.

Jimmy pulled his watch, with its busted wristband, out of his pocket. "I'm not that late."

"Sit," grunted the cook. "Around here, late is late."

Jimmy circled the chair, hoisting the waistband of his jeans over his bony hips. The kitchen was large and well stocked with equipment. However, only one of the grills was lit, and there was no other staff in sight. Fancy tray-type dishes, like you see in high-end places that put on a fancy presentation, sat piled high in the sink. Tiny roaches beetled across their food-encrusted surfaces. The whole place smelled vaguely gamey. On top of this hung a stron-

ger aroma, of cooking meat. When he was alive, this would have had Jimmy's mouth watering like crazy, but now all food registered to him as slightly repellent.

Faint music — bland restaurant jazz — and the low scrapes of flatware against dishes radiated from the other side of a battered door. Jimmy wandered up to it.

"Sit," said the cook.

"Just a sec," said Jimmy. He opened the door a crack and peeked out. The restaurant was a faded palace of oak panels and velvet curtains. Like an old-fashioned neighborhood steak house gone to seed. Only a couple of tables were occupied. At each one sat an individual who set off Jimmy's radar. One of them, a bald chick in dominatrix gear, he was pretty sure he'd seen before, at the park, on fight night. The mortal companions dug into large servings. The two probable vamps sat in front of large plates dotted with tiny morsels of food.

Jimmy turned to the cook. "I don't get it. They're eating."

"Sit. Your butt. Down."

He obliged, but immediately began to rock back and forth in his seat. Being in one place made it harder to mask the body-jolting effects of the L-Dopa. "So I guess it's like they miss it so much, they have tiny little bits of it, no matter how much blood they drink to, like, reactivate their digestive systems?"

Instead of answering, the cook turned on a burner, slapped a saucepan down on it and dropped a chunk of butter into it.

"Freeze," said a new voice.

Jimmy couldn't help but obey. His rebellious muscles locked into place.

The Dowager had entered the room. She was a wide-hipped, hefty woman, corseted into a Victorian mourning outfit, all lacy frills and black fabric. A monolithic bun of powdered gray hair held fast to a veiled bonnet. A double set of wobbling jowls hid her chin and neck.

The Dowager's corset jutted forward a bosom of prodigious proportions. Whenever Jimmy saw her, he imagined it as a shelf, suitable for the display of knickknacks.

The woman's gray-blue eyes bored into his head. Jimmy knew the sensation all too well. She was hoodooing him. His nonexistent impulse control made him a sitting duck for it.

"I'm sorry if I trespassed on your turf, ma'am. My running buddies told me I had an appointment here. I'll show you the sticky note with the address on it, if you let me reach for it."

The Dowager stood with hands clasped in front of her torso. "I ordered your presence here, Mr. DiCecco."

Jimmy tried to rev up his patented grin but couldn't even manage that. He had to find exactly the right thing to say to her. What did she want?

This couldn't be that bad. Because if it were, Airbox and Rasha would not have sent him. They had to know that this would all turn out okay. This was all about scaring some sense into him. An intervention. How the Dowager fit in, well, he'd draw her out. The crucial point was not to make it any worse by saying something stupid. "Uh, not to ask questions above my station, ma'am, but does Rainfold know about this? Because, you know, I'm a meek and loyal servant and all that, and I don't want him to think I'm dealing with other lords. You know, behind his back."

"Mr. Rainfold is no longer among us."

"Oh," said Jimmy.

The chef removed a roasting pan from the oven and placed it next to the stove top. He or she lifted the lid, taking a reluctant whiff from its steaming contents. The Dowager moved, employing her ample bulk to block Jimmy's view.

He put on his puppy dog look, pathetic and trapped.

She relented, a little. "You may make small gestures, but may not move from the chair."

"Um," said Jimmy. "Rainfold, is he . . ." He drew a finger across his throat. "Or is he coming back?"

"No. Not coming back." She either briefly smiled or simply twitched; Jimmy wasn't sure which.

"And so, uh. This means you're taking over his turf?"

She nodded.

"Which means, uh, we answer to you now?"

"What you lack, Mr. DiCecco, is not intelligence."

It took him a moment to parse her syntax on that one. "So like now you're lord of both territories?"

"The Prince was grateful that certain information was passed along to him."

"And Airbox and Rasha, they know already."

"Don't worry about them, Mr. DiCecco. They are raw, but show potential. All too effective, in at least one instance. Both will prosper. Under a firm hand."

A lengthy pause hung in the air. She was making him ask.

"So, uh," he finally said, "you wanted to see me, then?"

She glided over to him. He craned to see what the cook was up to, but she was still in the way. Vegetable chopping seemed to be in progress. Scallions, maybe.

The Dowager took his right wrist in her compact, claw-like hand, and examined the stump. He'd produced a set of fingernails and had a good start on the first knuckles of each digit.

She released his arm, apparently after coming to a decision. "I will permit you to keep that hand. If you ever succeed in regenerating it."

"Uh. Okay. Thanks?"

The Dowager pushed her face into his. Her breath smelled of mothballs. "Your old right hand, however, is a different matter. You do recall the offense that hand committed, don't you?"

Now he was physically capable of the charming grin, but had trouble summoning it just the same. "Uh, ma'am, well, arguably I've done a lot of idiot things in my time, and I guess my hand would be implicated in most of them."

The Dowager was not amused.

"You're not gonna make me say it, are you?"

The way her eyes shone said otherwise.

"Okay, but first . . . In my defense, I was coked to the gills. In a sober condition I would not in a million years have done what I did."

The cook stuck a BBQ fork into the roast pan and tossed its contents into the sauté of butter and onions. Jimmy hoped he hadn't seen what he thought he'd seen.

"Say what you and your right hand did," the Dowager demanded.

"It was at court, to celebrate the deal with the Sanctified. You were, ah, standing by the samovar, and I . . . touched you inappropriately."

"Is the dish ready, Leslie?" she asked.

The cook grunted in the affirmative.

The Dowager focused her mesmerizing eyes on Jimmy. "You will engorge your alimentary tract with blood. Render throat and gorge

and gut ready to receive the special of the day. Although vengeance is under normal circumstances best served cold, tonight you'll get it freshly braised." Now she smiled for sure, revealing tiny gray teeth. "So tender the meat just falls off the bone."

Jimmy whimpered. "Do I have to, uh —"

"Clean your plate."

The chef plated Jimmy's hand and poured bubbling sauce over it. She or he took a cloth and dabbed away the spatters, improving the presentation. A parsley sprig completed the arrangement.

"You, uh — you didn't do all of this, capping Carney and Rainfold and . . . this isn't just because of what I did. Is it?"

"Mr. DiCecco," the Dowager began, "do you think we rule the city?"

"Uh. I guess."

"Mr. DiCecco, we do not rule the city. The city rules us. Its highways and roads, its plazas and towers, they are a labyrinth. Directing us, guiding us to its will. Making us follow its rules. We come and go, but it is the laws of the city that are truly undying. And they dictate that the strong become stronger, or die. And that the weak and stupid and silly, when they step out of bounds, and attempt to humiliate the strong . . . When they unthinkingly challenge us. When they reach out and grope us. The rules say that they must be made to pay, and be widely known to have paid. Lest the strong become weak, and wither and die."

As she spoke, the chef moved a table from the corner and placed it in front of Jimmy. She or he blanketed it with a white tablecloth and laid out, with geometric precision, a single place setting.

The Dowager put Jimmy's fork in his trembling left hand. "It is not I who forces you to do this, Mr. DiCecco. It is the city. I merely obey its edicts, as you, sir, must from now on obey mine."

She nodded to the chef, who helped Jimmy by cutting the flesh of his hand into bite-sized chunks. The stringy meat glistened with miniscule globules of fat.

"Eat," said the Dowager.

Jimmy speared a piece with a fork, put it in his mouth and swallowed.

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ANGELIC
FASHION

Look, it's simple:

See that fat lick over there?

With the backpack?

When he steps onto the black asphalt of the parking lot, he's mine. Until then, he's in the fields, where any vampire can take him. I am the lord of this ground, and the penalty for poaching from me is you must drink from me. When you drink the kine that walk on my ground, you drink from me.

— Sycorax, Lady of the Blacktop

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