



Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Free Introductory Scenario



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

Mary's Child written by Matthew McFarland.

Cover Art by Alex Maleev

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Your Requiem Begins Here

Like most people, you've probably had the sense — at least once — that things were not right with the world and that not everything was as it seemed. You've felt that sinister truths hid behind a façade of normality, veiled partially by the rational, orderly "natural laws" we call science. And when night falls, when the shadows grow long and the wind whistles through the trees, you shudder and remember the truths of your ancestors, who were right to fear the dark.

You've just entered the World of Darkness, a world very much like our own, save that the shadows hide very real monsters (though most people fool themselves into believing it isn't so).

In **Vampire: The Requiem**, the first Storytelling game set in the World of Darkness, you and your friends tell the story of some of these monsters, namely those mortal men and women who find themselves transformed into vampires (or Kindred, as they call themselves). Neither truly alive nor dead, the Kindred survive on the blood of mortals. They can shrug off terrible injuries, they never grow old, and they have a variety of inhuman abilities. Nevertheless, the Kindred fear many things, from the burning touch of sunlight or fire, to the widespread exposure of their kind before their mortal prey. Most of all, they fear the Beast, that savage aspect of their damned souls that hungers for blood and violence and can drive them into uncontrolled rage or acts of sheer depravity.

Their origin is lost to time, but many Kindred think that the curse comes from God Himself as punishment for terrible sins. Kindred society has existed in some form for the last two millennia. Tonight,

the most powerful vampire in a domain usually goes by the title of Prince and rules over a feudal hierarchy of smaller domains and hunting grounds. The Kindred divide themselves both by blood (into five large extended families known as clans, which are traced from sire to childe) and by association (into several powerful covenants, political groupings of like beliefs and outlooks). Personal rivalries, alliances and other distinctions complicate even these simple divisions. Ultimately, every Kindred must make her way alone through the endless night.

The Game

Vampire: The Requiem is a Storytelling (or roleplaying) game. In it, a group of players cooperates to tell a story. Each player takes on the role of a single Kindred, except for the Storyteller. This player essentially takes on every other role, describing the world to the other players, acting out the parts of other characters and determining what challenges the players' characters face. Players roll dice to determine if their characters can overcome the challenges before them. In a typical exchange, the Storyteller describes the scene in which the players' characters find themselves. ("You rise from a day's slumber in the small basement you use as a haven. A scratching at the door tells you someone is trying to get in. What do you do?") The players then describe their characters' actions, usually in the first person. ("I sneak up to the door and look through the peep hole.") The Storyteller then describes the results of the action, going back and forth until the scene is resolved. Dice are rolled when players have their characters try things that aren't guaranteed success.

Jumping out of a moving car without getting hurt would require a dice roll; leaving a stationary one wouldn't.

This booklet contains everything you and four of your friends will need to play your first game of **Vampire: The Requiem**, except for some pencils and paper (for notes) and several 10-sided dice (these specialty dice are available in most hobby shops and are sometimes called "d10"). Those of you who are going to be players should read over the character backgrounds in the center of this booklet and choose the one you want to play. The Storyteller should read the rest of the booklet in preparation before playing.

The Rules

Vampire: The Requiem uses a set of rules called the Storytelling System. Many of the rules are introduced in the scenario proper or on the character sheets (special powers and so on), but there are a few basics to go over first.

- **Rolling Dice:** When rolling dice in the Storytelling System, you do not add the numbers together. Instead any single die that comes up 8 or better is considered a success. You usually only need one success to accomplish a task, but more is always better (causing more damage in combat, for example). Any die that comes up a "0" (considered a 10) counts as a success and can be rolled again (and potentially get another success). If you roll no successes at all, your character has failed that action.

- **Dice Pools:** The number of dice you roll to attempt something is called your dice pool. It is usually made up of the total of two traits on your character sheet (one Attribute and one Skill) and modifiers imposed by any special equipment your character uses or adverse conditions.

- **Modifiers:** The Storyteller determines what modifiers apply to any dice pool. These either add to, or subtract from, the dice pool (the number of dice rolled). These modifiers usually come from tools used (a bonus is listed with the tool), Merits that the character has (described in the character description), or general circumstances. The Storyteller should grant or impose a bonus or penalty (usually ranging from +2 to -2) if the circumstances are especially favorable or deleterious. For example, an at-

tempt to climb a wall that is slick with rain and slime would suffer a -2 penalty, whereas doing so on one with plentiful handholds and ledges would gain a +2.

- **Chance Die:** If modifiers reduce your dice pool to zero dice (or even less), you should roll a single die (called a *chance die*). A 10 rolled on a chance die generates a single success, while any other result is a failure. Rolling a 1 on a chance die indicates a *dramatic failure*, and the Storyteller should describe especially troublesome results (a gun jamming, a blow-out during a car chase, etc.).

- **Actions:** Almost anything a character does is considered a *simple action*. You determine the dice pool, roll the dice, and see if you succeed or fail. In combat you can perform one simple action per turn. Sometimes, you'll be asked to take an *extended action*, which represents doing something over a period of time, like researching something in a library or searching a room. In this case, every time you roll the dice represents a fixed amount of time (usually 10 minutes, but it varies for some more involved actions). You accumulate successes from roll to roll until you get a certain number (described in the text), at which point something happens, or you run out of time. Some actions can also be *contested*, which means that two people are working against each other, such as in an arm-wrestling match, or when a character tries to sneak past a watchful guard. In a contested action, each player (or the player and the Storyteller) rolls the dice pool for their character and the person with the most successes wins. Finally, some actions are *reflexive*, which means that they happen automatically and don't take up any time — you can perform them and still perform a simple action in that turn.

- **Turns and Scenes:** A *turn* is a 3-second period and is used in combat. A *scene* is a longer period (usually as long as it takes for everyone to do what they want in a particular place). Some vampiric powers function for a single turn, while others last the whole scene.

The Character Sheet

The middle folds of this booklet contain character sheets for the four characters that players will use in **Mary's Child**. These sheets contain all the game

numbers that define a character's capabilities, divided into a variety of types of traits. Most traits are rated from one dot (•) to five dots (•••••), much like a star rating system for movies. Different traits represent different things:

- **Attributes** represent inherent capabilities, such as Strength, Intelligence or Presence.

- **Skills** represent learned abilities, like Firearms or Medicine. A word or phrase in parentheses next to a Skill indicates a Specialty, an area of the overall Skill in which the character is particularly talented. If you are asked to roll a dice pool in which your character doesn't have the right Skill, you suffer a penalty of either -1 (for a missing Physical or Social Skill) or -3 (for a missing Mental Skill). If, on the other hand, you have a relevant specialty in the Skill in your dice pool, you get a +1 modifier.

- **Health** determines how wounded your character is, and it has both dots and points. Your character's dots are filled in on your character sheet, and they represent the total number available to him when he is uninjured. His Health points are recorded in the corresponding boxes, denoting his current state of health. (See "Health and Damage" for how to mark off Health points and the effects of wound penalties.)

- **Willpower** represents your character's reserves. You can spend one point (and one point only) of Willpower on any roll, and you get three additional dice in your dice pool. Alternatively, you can spend a point to raise your Defense trait by two against a single attack. Willpower is valuable, and you regain it only for acting in accordance with your character's **Virtue** or **Vice** (see individual character descriptions). Willpower is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most of other traits.

- **Blood Potency** represents the inherent power of the character's vampiric nature.

- **Vitae:** This is the amount of blood currently in a vampire's system. You spend Vitae to activate different vampiric powers.

- **Disciplines** are special vampiric powers, which are explained in the character's description.

- **Merits** are special edges a character has, such as Contacts or Resources or Stunning Looks. The effects of each are explained in the character's description.

- **Defense** and **Initiative Modifier** are traits used in combat and are explained in that section.

- **Speed** is the number of yards a character can move in one combat turn and still perform an action. A character can run up to twice his Speed rating yards in a turn if he sacrifices his action. Speed will most likely come into play in a chase.

- **Humanity** is a measure of your character's morality, of how far he has succumbed to the Beast. Your character can lose Humanity over the course of play. Humanity is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most of other traits.

Combat

Stealing blood from the living and subject to beastly frenzies, Kindred attract violence. When a fight breaks out, it can be important to keep track of who is doing what, and how badly they are hurting each other. When that happens, follow these steps:

First tell the players that their characters are entering combat. Until the combat ends, everyone acts turn-by-turn, with each character everyone getting one chance to act each turn.

Next, have everyone roll Initiative, which is the result of the roll of a single die + the character's Initiative modifier as listed on the character sheet. (This is a rare case where you add the number that comes up on a die to the value of your trait, instead of rolling a dice pool and looking for a success.)

Starting with the character with the highest Initiative result and continuing on to the lowest, each character gets to take a single action (usually an attack). The player can choose to yield her character's action until later in the Initiative queue, or until the next turn if she wishes. Resolve each character's action before asking the next player what his character does.

If a character attacks another character, the attacker rolls the appropriate dice pool:

- **Unarmed close combat:** Strength + Brawl, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

- **Armed close combat:** Strength + Weaponry, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

- **Ranged combat (guns and bows):** Dexterity + Firearms, minus target's armor (if any)

- **Ranged combat (thrown weapons):** Dexterity + Athletics, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

Add bonus dice based on what weapon is being used or what effect is being performed, then subtract penalties for circumstance conditions. The player rolls the remaining pool. Each success equates to a Health point of damage inflicted, the type of which is determined by the nature of the attack. The Storyteller describes the attack and wound in narrative terms.

Once everyone has acted, a new turn starts and the player with the highest Initiative gets to act again. Players *do not* make new Initiative rolls every turn.

Complications

- **Avoiding Damage in Close Combat:** Your character's Defense trait represents his instinctive ability to duck and weave and make close-combat attacks harder, and so serves as a penalty to incoming attacks. If your character hasn't yet acted this turn and is willing to forgo that action, he can dodge, which doubles his Defense for the rest of the turn. If your character is attacked multiple times in the same turn, however, it becomes harder for him to avoid being hurt. For every attack targeted at him past the first, reduce the character's Defense by 1 (to a minimum of zero). If your character is dodging, the doubled Defense reduces by 1 for each additional attack.

- **Avoiding Damage in Ranged Combat:** Unless a ranged attacker is close enough that he could just as easily attack in close combat (a few feet), or is throwing a weapon, Defense doesn't apply. To avoid damage in a firefight you can either find cover (hide behind something solid) or fall prone (drop flat to the ground). Falling prone constitutes a character's action for the turn but levies a -2 penalty on ranged attacks. Anyone within close-combat striking distance (a few feet) gets a +2 bonus to hit a prone character, though.

- **Concealment and Cover:** If your character is partially concealed behind an object, she is harder to hit with ranged attacks. The penalty goes from -1 (crouching behind an office chair) to -3 (poking up out of a foxhole). If you are *completely* concealed, the attacker suffers no dice pool penalty but has to score enough successes to shoot through the inter-

vening object (called the cover). Piercing an object reduces the number of success rolled by a number based on the durability of the cover: from 1 (for wood or thick glass) to 3 (for steel). If this penalty reduces the number of successes to 0, the attack fails to penetrate the cover and you take no damage.

- **Range:** Every ranged weapon has three ranges listed in yards in the format short/medium/long. An attacker suffers no penalty when her target is within the short range. If the target is at medium range, she suffers a -2 penalty. At long range, this penalty goes to -4.

Health and Damage

- **Damage Types:** There are three types of damage, each more serious than the last: bashing, lethal and aggravated. *Bashing damage* generally results from blunt or stunning attacks. *Lethal damage* generally results from cuts, gunshots and other more serious attacks. (Note that, because they have no functioning internal organs to damage, Kindred take bashing damage instead of lethal from gunshots.) *Aggravated damage* generally results from especially vile supernatural attacks.

- **Marking Damage:** When a character suffers damage, the player marks off that number of Health points, starting with the box under the leftmost dot of his Health trait and proceeding left to right. The symbol used depends on the type of damage.

Bashing damage is marked with a slash (/) in the first available empty box. So imagining that Louis (one of the characters in this scenario, who has seven Health dots) had just taken one point of bashing damage, his Health boxes would look like this:



Lethal damage is marked with an X, and it pushes any existing bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of bashing damage). If Louis next took a point of lethal damage, his track would be:



Aggravated damage is marked with a large asterisk (*) by adding a vertical bar to an X. It also pushes any existing lethal and bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of lethal or

bashing damage). If Louis next suffered a point of aggravated damage, his track would be:



- **Wound Penalties:** If a character is reduced to two or less Health points (by whatever type of damage), the player suffers penalties to all die rolls. With the third-to-last box is marked with a wound, the penalty is -1; when the second to last is marked it is -2; when the last box is marked it is -3. (These modifiers appear on the character sheet for easy reference). These penalties apply to all rolls except those related to losing Humanity (see below).

- **No More Health:** Marking off a character's last Health box usually means that the character has become incapacitated. If that rightmost wound is bashing (and the character is mortal) she falls unconscious. If that rightmost wound is lethal or aggravated, a mortal character quickly bleeds to death. Note that this would mean the character has no bashing damage at all, since it will always be the rightmost. Kindred react differently to these conditions.

- **Additional Damage:** An unconscious mortal or a severely battered Kindred can still be damaged by further attacks. Without further Health boxes to mark off, you represent this damage by upgrading existing wounds. Any new bashing or lethal wound upgrades an existing bashing wound to lethal (make the leftmost / into an X). Additional aggravated damage converts a point of lethal or bashing damage to aggravated (make the leftmost X or / into an asterisk).

- **Healing:** Mortals recover from damage thanks to rest and medical attention. Kindred need to spend Vitae to heal.

Effects of Vampirism

Part of the scenario in this booklet deals explicitly with the characters discovering that they are Kindred, but it can be useful to have some of the basic game effects of that transformation all in one place.

- **Blood Consumption:** Kindred have a trait called Vitae, which represents the amount of blood in their system. They automatically spend one point of Vitae to rise every night, so eventually they must

feed from the living. They also spend Vitae for other effects. Most young vampires can only spend one Vitae per turn and hold at most 10 Vitae. A vampire without any Vitae left suffers a lethal wound when she rises (when she would normally spend a point of Vitae). Any other effects that require Vitae expenditure fail if the character has none to spend.

- **Reduced Damage:** The Kindred anatomy is animated by a supernatural curse, not the functioning of delicate organs, so it takes a lot to inflict serious damage upon them. Firearms inflict bashing damage to Kindred instead of lethal damage. Blades and arrows still inflict lethal damage, however. In addition, a vampire does not fall unconscious if all her Health boxes are marked off due to bashing damage. She remains able to act but still suffers a -3 wound penalty. Additional damage upgrades existing wounds as normal. If all a Kindred's Health boxes are marked off due to lethal damage, she enters a coma-like state called torpor. A vampire loses all of her Health points to aggravated damage is destroyed.

- **Healing:** Kindred do not heal like mortals. Instead they must spend Vitae to do so. One point of Vitae heals two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. The vampire can take other action in the same turn as healing bashing or lethal damage. Aggravated damage is much harder to heal. It takes five points of Vitae and two full nights per point of aggravated damage to heal.

- **Physical Augmentation:** Vampires can boost their Physical Attributes (Dexterity, Strength, Stamina) for a moment by spending Vitae. Each point will add two dice to dice pools using one of these Attributes for the current turn (the vampire can take a regular action that same turn at no penalty). Certain Disciplines allow for more efficient use of this ability.

- **Fire and Sunlight:** Vampires suffer terrible damage from exposure to fire or sunlight. Both anathema cause a number of automatic points of aggravated damage per turn, depending on their intensity and the amount of exposure. A cigarette lighter held to one's skin or a hand held in sunlight that is filtered through heavy drapes would inflict only one point per turn. Being tossed in a wood fire or looking out a window on an overcast day would inflict three points per turn. Being caught in a chemical

fire or fully exposed under direct sunlight would inflict five (or more) points per turn. (Note that Kindred of Clan Mekhet — like Jack and Mary in the **Mary's Child** story — suffer one extra point of aggravated damage per turn from fire and sunlight.)

- **Daytime Slumber:** Vampires are overcome by a crushing fatigue upon the rising of the sun and remain immobile (and to all appearances truly dead) until sunset. If they are attacked during the day, they can rise, but it is extremely difficult: the player rolls a dice pool made up of his character's Wits Attribute alone, a success meaning the character notices the disturbance. The player then spends one point of Vitae and rolls the character's Humanity as a dice pool. The character rises for a single turn per success on the Humanity roll.

- **The Masquerade:** One of the Kindred's firmest traditions is the Masquerade, an edict that they hide their existence from mortals (and thus act as mortals would when in their company). This law is more than a social edict, however. It reflects an inherent part of the vampiric nature. A Kindred's reflection (and any photographs or video) appears slightly blurred or grainy. This is not enough to stand out at first glance (viewers often assume there's a flaw in, or dirt on a lens or mirror) but it is enough to make identifying individuals and their features very difficult. Kindred can suppress this effect for a scene if the player spends a point of Willpower.

- **Frenzy:** The Beast within all Kindred is violent and savage, and it can overwhelm the conscious mind with overwhelming anger, fear or hunger. Regardless of the type of frenzy, the process is the essentially same: The player rolls Resolve + Composure. Success means that the character resists the frenzy for a single turn per success and can roll again at the end of those turns (hoping to accumulate more successes). If the player manages to accumulate a total of three successes, the frenzy subsides. If, however the player fails one of these rolls, the character immediately enters frenzy. (Note that rolls to resist frenzy count as reflexive actions.)

Hunger frenzies are triggered only when the character has four or fewer Vitae in his system. Anger frenzies are triggered by especially infuriating circumstances (public humiliation, the triumph of a rival, being assaulted) or the Predator's Taint. Fear fren-

zies are triggered by being near fire or sunlight or by the Predator's Taint. The Storyteller can increase or decrease the number of successes needed for a frenzy to subside depending on the intensity of the trigger.

A vampire in frenzy attacks, runs or feeds (as appropriate) at the exclusion of all else. These vampires can't do anything complex, but the Beast's savagery does give them some advantages. They ignore all wound penalties, they gain a +1 bonus to dice pools for physical actions, and any attempts to affect their minds (with Disciplines such as Majesty or Dominate) suffer a -2 penalty. The frenzy usually subsides once the thing that triggered it is either destroyed or out of sight.

- **Predator's Taint:** Vampires know each other on sight because their Beasts rise to the challenge of another predator's presence. Normally this reaction feels like nothing more than a simple undercurrent of tension. When Kindred meet for the very first time, though, this tension is so acute that it can cause frenzy. The nature of the frenzy (anger or fear) is determined by the relative Blood Potency of the vampires. Vampires with lower Blood Potency than those they face must resist fear frenzy; vampires with equal or greater Blood Potency must resist anger frenzy. This risk of frenzy can be decreased or eliminated by circumstances that make meeting other Kindred less traumatic, such as when the newcomer makes an immediate offer to help or the meeting occurs in a place where the characters both feel safe. In general, a single success is needed to resist frenzy caused by the Predator's Taint. (Note that two of the players' characters in this story — Becky Lynn and Jack — have Disciplines that affect the Predator's Taint.)

- **Losing Humanity:** A Kindred's worst fear is giving in completely to the Beast. The more heinous sins they commit, the stronger the Beast grows and their Humanity trait falls. At Humanity 7 (where all characters start), theft or any worse misdeed can cause moral degeneration (a loss of Humanity). When the character commits such an act, the player rolls a number of dice based on the severity of the sin. The worse the sin is, the *fewer* dice are rolled. (Petty theft is four dice, manslaughter or massive property damage is three dice, murder is two dice.) If the roll fails, the character loses a point of Humanity. (Willpower can't be spent on this roll.)

Characters with reduced Humanity justify their sin to themselves instead of repenting, and they become that much more callous. It will now take a worse sin to cause another roll to degenerate. At Humanity 6, only grand theft or worse can spark such a roll. At Humanity 5, it takes intentional mass property damage or worse. At Humanity 4, it takes an impassioned crime such as manslaughter.

Characters who do lose Humanity also risk becoming unhinged mentally. If a player fails a degeneration roll, he should immediately roll his character's reduced Humanity as a dice pool. If he fails that roll, the character gains a derangement. This can be any form of minor but pervasive mental disorder, such as depression or a phobia. The player should roleplay this new character quirk, but it has no mechanical effect.

- **Dealing with Mortals:** Kindred are no longer truly human, and as they degenerate, they tend to lose the instinctive understanding of social cues among the living. When dealing socially with the living, a Kindred's Humanity trait serves as her maximum dice pool for any actions involving Social Attributes or Skills. Therefore, a vampire with Humanity 5, Wits 3 and Empathy 4, would roll seven dice (Wits + Empathy) to read a fellow Kindred's body language, but only five dice (Humanity) to read a mortal's.

Mary's Child

This is the first scenario in a nine-part chronicle called **Danse de la Mort** ("Dance of Death") which will be released online at www.worldofdarkness.com. The chronicle takes the characters deep into the World of Darkness, revealing some of the secrets of the city of New Orleans and, ultimately, the fate of the characters. But before any such grandiose concerns, the characters have to come to grips with their existences as vampires and make a place for themselves within the community of the Kindred of the city. They must begin the Requiem and keep their sanity intact. The first lesson is always the hardest.

This scenario is meant for the Storyteller's eyes only. If you are planning to take on the role of

one of the characters in **Mary's Child**, please stop reading now. Storytelling games are much more enjoyable if you experience the plot twists and surprises along with your characters, so don't spoil the fun for yourself.

Preparing for Play

First, read through the rules at the beginning of this document, just to get an idea of how the mechanics of the game work. Then, have a look at the character sheets in the middle of this booklet, and note the characters' different capabilities and advantages. We don't expect you or the players to memorize everything right out of the gate, but if you give the characters a quick once-over in conjunction with the rules, the numbers will make more sense in game play.

Let the players read over their characters' backgrounds, roleplaying hints and traits, and answer any questions they might have. Help them understand how the rules work with regard to the dots and numbers on the character sheets.

Also, read through **Mary's Child** once before attempting to act as Storyteller. We've tried to make it as easy as possible on you, but you should have an idea of what's coming up. Plus, players will always make decisions that you — and we — didn't see coming. That's great! That's part of roleplaying. It does, however, require you to think on your feet. If you know how the plot progresses, you can take what the players do and allow those decisions to steer the game toward the conclusion, rather than having to say, "No, you can't do that because it would take us too far off track."

Throughout this scenario, you will find sections of text for you to read aloud to the players. You will also find occasional sidebars labeled "Complications." Players are clever, and even players who don't have much experience roleplaying will think of actions for their characters to take that we can't anticipate. The Complications sidebars give you, the Storyteller, some warning about how the players might derail the story in certain places and how you can steer it back on track without seeming too heavy-handed.

The Setting

Mary's Child is set in the city of New Orleans, and it begins just after midnight on Ash Wednesday. When the sun rises this morning, Mardi Gras will end and thousands of people will leave the Big Easy for their hometowns, a little wiser, a little hung over, perhaps with a few more guilty secrets. The residents of the city will return to business, cleaning up after one of the world's biggest parties. Many of them will go to Mass and receive ash on their foreheads, ostensibly to show their need for repentance during Lent. Of course, not all of the visitors to New Orleans leave after the festivities die down. A decent number die here, their blood spilled to slake the thirsts of the undead.

Vampires have their own systems of government, their own laws and their own leaders. One of their cardinal rules is the Masquerade: In public, they behave as mortals do, and keep their natures secret. Reasons for this vary from pragmatism to commandment from on high, but frankly, a vampire simply finds hunting easier when his prey is unsuspecting. Therefore, a clever vampire can seduce, feed from and even kill a mortal with no one the wiser, especially during this season of debauchery.

This is precisely what happened to the four characters in **Mary's Child**, except the vampires that attacked them chose to raise them from death, making them into Kindred, rather than simply killing them. Normally, their sires (the vampires who Embraced them, transforming them into Kindred) would then school them in the ways of the Kindred, but the characters have been abandoned, alone and hungry, with no one to inform them of the laws they are assuredly about to break.

Act One: Awakening

In this act, the characters awaken in Louis Armstrong Park in the middle of the night, without any idea of what has happened to them. In very quick succession, they have an opportunity to feed on the blood of partygoers, are whisked off to a church by another vampire and are then discovered and dragged

before Augusto Vidal, the Kindred Prince of New Orleans.

Scene One: New Blood

The characters awaken in the Tremé District of New Orleans. Traditionally populated by black Creoles, this small district bears the distinction of being New Orleans' first true suburb. Situated lakeside of the French Quarter's old walls, now North Rampart Street, this mostly poor neighborhood is but a shadow of the quaint area it once was. The run-down (and often derelict) condition of many of the district's once beautiful buildings has recently spurred residents to rally in an attempt to revive the area. Progress is slow, however, for many consider the Tremé nothing but a lost cause.

Still, a number of important sites are located here, amid and beneath all the crime and grime. One of the most wondrous churches in the region, St. Augustine's Church, is located here. Built by the same architect who rebuilt the St. Louis Cathedral, St. Augustine's opened in 1842, making it the second-oldest African-American Catholic church in the nation. Down the road sits Louis Armstrong Park, the place commemorating the legendary jazz cornetist and singer. In the mid-19th century, the area was just outside the city walls and was the location for a slave-and-freed-blacks market called Congo Square. In the early 20th century, the infamous red-light district of Storyville occupied the adjacent area.

Read the following aloud to the players:

You open your eyes and look around. Your vision takes a moment to clear, but you can hear people and music — the sounds of Mardi Gras. It sounds distant, though; you don't seem to be in the French Quarter.

The night is cool, and you feel a breeze flow over you from the north. It should chill you, but you do not shiver or feel goose bumps rise. The light from the street lamps seems distant and hollow, and your clothes feel cold and rough against your skin. Something is different, something is terribly wrong, but you can't muster the feeling of fear or outrage. You do feel something, though. You feel hunger.

You glance around and see three other people picking themselves up from the ground. You feel a momentary flash of anger and fear, as though recognizing a threat in

each of these people, but the feeling passes after an instant, replaced by the gnawing hunger.

Stop reading aloud

Give each player a chance to describe what his character looks like to other players. The players can read off the descriptions listed on their character sheets, make something up or both. Then, continue with the next section:

Read the following aloud:

Something inside you screams for sustenance on a deeper level than you have ever known, and yet no food you can imagine sounds at all appetizing.

As you struggle with this feeling, you hear four people approaching. You can tell by their slurred mumbles and by the way their footsteps fall that they are drunk. As you listen, the group stops just out of sight, and the four of you feel your hunger intensify. You can't quite understand why, but somewhere in that group of people is what you need.

Stop reading aloud.

Let the players have a moment to deliberate among themselves or ask questions. The characters have about one minute before the four partygoers round the corner and come face to face with the ravenous Kindred. (One of them dropped his keys, and they are helping him find them.) If the players decide that their characters leave the area, skip ahead to the scene entitled "Meeting Father John." If the characters approach the partygoers stand there and wait for the partygoers to round the corner, proceed from here.

Read the following aloud:

*The four people, two men and two women, are obviously college students. None of them looks older than 21, and all are clearly drunk, leaning on each other for support and stumbling through the dark. One of the men clutches a whiskey bottle with a few swallows left in it. One woman's shirt is partially unbuttoned, and you can see several rings of beads around her neck. The partygoers look at you and begin giggling as only inebriated folks having fun can. Strangely, they don't seem to acknowledge you (**indicate Jack**) at all. As you stare at them, you find your gaze inexorably drawn to their throats... and you feel your canines elongating, growing into needle-sharp fangs.*

Stop reading aloud.

The players have probably figured out what's happening here, in a general sense: Their characters have become vampires and need to feed on human blood to survive. What the players decide to do in this situation, however, isn't as simple as saying, "Okay, I bite someone."

- If the characters attack, skip to "Feeding." The partygoers are too drunk to put up much of a fight, and they abandon their friends if not all of the characters attack.

- If the characters turn and flee the area, skip to "Meeting Father John."

- If the characters stand there and do nothing for more than 30 seconds or so, proceed from this point.

The Beast

Every vampire has a Beast, a vicious and animalistic part of its soul that drives the Kindred to feed, to hunt and to kill. Because they are so hungry for blood, the characters are feeling the urges of their Beasts very keenly. If they do not feed, their Beasts try to make them.

Read the following aloud:

As you stare at the partygoers, your vision starts to blur. Sounds and scents take on sharp focus — you see their jugular veins throbbing, their chests heaving as they breathe. You feel the warmth of their bodies, and it only reminds you how cold the night feels. Thought begins to melt away, replaced by an animal hunger that brooks no description. You tense to leap at your prey...

Stop reading aloud.

All the characters are subject to a hunger frenzy — their Beasts are driving them to feed on the partygoers no matter what. Have each player roll her character's Resolve + Composure to suppress the frenzy (see rules on p. 6). One or two successes allow the character to hold back the frenzy for that many turns before the player rolls again. Three or more successes stave off the hunger frenzy entirely. The character may act as she pleases.

If the roll fails, proceed from this point:

Read the following aloud:

*You lunge forward, your body no longer your own. You cannot think, speak or feel — you exist now only to feed. You grab a (**choose a man or woman**) by the*

shirt, pull your victim's head back and sink your fangs into his/her throat.

Continue reading from the text under "Feeding."

Feeding

Each of the characters can hold a total of 10 Vitae. An adult human being holds a number of Vitae equal to his Health dots. (Therefore, the average person holds seven Vitae.) The characters' starting Vitae pools are listed on their character sheets. If any of the Kindred attack and feed on the partygoers, either deliberately or as the result of a failed Resolve + Composure roll, continue from this point:

Read the following aloud:

You feel your victim's skin break under your teeth. She/He struggles for a few seconds, but as your fangs pierce the skin, she/he stops thrashing and falls against you. You can hear the woman/man's heart beating fast and her/his breath coming quickly, and you dimly register her/his hands clutching at your back like a lover's. Your mind isn't equipped to process these details at present, however — all you know is the rapture of the blood.

It trickles down your throat but doesn't settle in your stomach like any food or drink you've ever tasted before. It spreads throughout your body, and you feel your limbs grow stronger, your senses sharpen. You feel deep and prolonged pleasure, more than sex ever was or ever could be. You feel the act of consuming another human being, and part of you recoils from that act, gasping in horror. A roar of approval and increasing hunger from some new voice within you drowns that gasp out, however.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, the characters have taken three Vitae from their victims. If they take any more, they are in danger of killing the partygoers. How they experience this depends on if they chose to attack or were forced to by a failed roll.

Read the following aloud to any players who chose to attack their victims:

You feel your victim's heart slow, and the clutching hands at your back begin to tremble. Her/His knees buckle, and she/he gasps quietly. Somewhere in your mind, you feel a small and forgotten part of yourself say, "She/he is going to die."

Read the following aloud to any players who failed their Resolve + Composure rolls and attacked their victims:

The thing under your hands grows colder, and its movements slow. Some part of your mind tries to whisper something to you, something important, but you are lost in the rush of blood, the rapture of feeding. The voice grows more insistent, and you pause long enough to realize that the voice is your own, and that the thing in your grasp is a human being.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, ask each player of a feeding character if she wants her character to continue feeding or attempt to stop and release her victim. Doing so isn't as simple as just letting go, though. The characters are vampires now, and they are fighting their base instincts when they attempt to leave people alive. Any player who wishes her character to stop at this point must make another Resolve + Composure roll. Players who chose to have their characters attack the partygoers receive no modifiers to this roll, while those who failed the earlier roll receive a -2 modifier to this roll, as their characters are already in the grip of the Beast.

Read the following to any player who succeeds on the roll to stop feeding:

The quiet voice in your mind grows louder, and you tear your mouth away from your victim's neck. She/He falls to the ground, unconscious and pale, but breathing. You stand up straight and take in the night. Something has changed, and you realize with a heavy feeling that it is you.

Read the following to any player who fails to stop feeding:

The voice of protest fades, shouted down by a much louder, much stronger voice. You dig your fangs deeper into her/his neck, straining for the last drops of blood. You are empty and cold, and the blood inside this person — this thing — can make you warm, can make you live, can sustain you for another night. The voice of reason weeps, but a much older and more powerful voice laughs and exults, satiated.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, the players must check to see if their characters lose Humanity. Whenever vampires act inhumanly, they run this risk, but more inhuman acts

incur the chance more often. Basic rules appear on page 6. In this instance, if the character fed on a person willingly, the player rolls three dice. If the character willingly killed the person, the player rolls two dice. If the character fed unwillingly (that is, the player failed the Resolve + Composure roll) and then avoided killing his victim, the player rolls four dice. If the character fed unwillingly and killed his victim, the player rolls three dice. Those who fail lose a point of Humanity and run the risk of gaining a derangement (see “Losing Humanity,” p. 6).

Note that if Louis’ player fails the first roll (to avoid losing Humanity), he applies a -2 modifier to the second (to avoid gaining a derangement) because of his clan weakness.

Read the following aloud to players of characters who did not lose Humanity:

Stolen blood spreads throughout your body, and you already feel the warmth it gave you leaving. Your victim lies still, and you look down at his/her face, pale and washed out, a tiny trickle of blood leaking from the wounds in his/her neck. You have become a monster, a voice inside you says. But another side of you protests, saying that you are still in control. You are still who you were this morning, simply... changed.

Read the following aloud to players of characters who did lose Humanity:

Sweet blood spreads throughout your body, warming you, strengthening you, feeding you. You know what you have done and what you have become, even if you don’t know how or why. You are more than you were this morning, and if that means that you must feed on the blood of others... you think you can do that.

Stop reading aloud.

A character who stopped feeding before killing his prey receives three Vitae, and the player should add those to the character sheet now. A character who killed his victim fills his pool entirely, so the player should mark on the sheet that the character now has 10 Vitae. If Tina’s player chose to stop feeding or not to feed at all, Tina loses two Willpower points because of her Daeva clan flaw.



COMPLICATIONS — FEEDING

This scene is included to give the players a taste of what their

characters will have to do every night in order to survive, and to show them early on that their instincts might easily get the better of them. The players might react to this scene in any number of ways. They might have gone into the game knowing that they were going to be playing vampires, and have no trouble adjusting to the notion of their characters attacking and feeding on mortals. The danger here is that the act of feeding shouldn’t feel like finding a power-up in a video game. As Storyteller, strive to remind the players that feeding is a violation no matter how it’s done, and that what the characters have just done — attacking random people who were out for a good time — is little different from a random act of violence.

If the players are having difficulty adjusting to the idea of their characters (whom they might see as the “good guys”) drinking the blood of innocents, you might choose to skip the roll to see if they can break away from their prey and just assume they do so automatically... this time.

If some of the characters attack their prey, either through their own decision or the urgings of the Beast, and the other characters move to stop them, you can take the opportunity to test the combat rules described on p. XX. Don’t let this brawl go on too long — after everyone has taken a turn or two, have Father John show up and break up the fight (see “Meeting Father John”). Remember that if a vampire bites a mortal, that mortal is immediately lost in merciful bliss and cannot resist, but if a vampire bites a vampire, that isn’t the case at all.



Scene Two: Meeting Father John

Father John Marrow is out hunting when the characters run across the partygoers. If any characters flee, he stops them. If they feed, he waits to see what kind of Kindred they are, and when they have finished feeding, he approaches them. He quickly realizes that they are young and unschooled, which makes them potential resources for his agendas. (See below for more background on Marrow and for his game traits.)

Read the following aloud to any player whose character flees rather than feeding:

You turn and run off in the other direction, away from the partygoers, resisting the sudden urge to leap on them and bite at their throats. You aren't aware of anything but the sounds and smells of people behind you — which makes the sudden appearance of a man in front of you seem that much more abrupt.

He is dressed in black and wears a priest's collar. His blue eyes linger on your face, and then he glances over your shoulder at the partygoers behind you. "Don't be afraid," he says. "I'm not here to hurt you." Despite these words, you feel an urge to run as he takes a step toward you. A primitive and frightened voice somewhere inside identifies this man as a predator among predators. The feeling passes, however, and the priest places a hand on your (if possible, pick a character whose player has been quiet or shy during the game thus far) shoulder. "My name is Father John Marrow," he whispers, "and I, like you, am Kindred."

Read the following to any player whose character fed:

As you look down on your victim, you hear footsteps behind you. A man is walking toward you, slowly and deliberately, his hands slightly raised as though to show you he means no harm. He is dressed in black and wears a priest's collar. His blue eyes linger on your face, and then he glances over your shoulder at the body (or bodies) next to you. "Don't be afraid," he says. "I'm not here to hurt you." Despite these words, you feel an urge to run as he takes a step toward you. A primitive and frightened voice somewhere inside identifies this man as a predator among predators. The feeling passes, how-

ever, and the priest places a hand on your (pick a character whose player has been quiet or shy during the game thus far) shoulder. "My name is Father John Marrow," he whispers, "and I, like you, am Kindred."

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, have everyone roll Intelligence + Streetwise. Characters without Streetwise are acting unskilled and their players roll a dice pool equal to Intelligence - 1. Jack, however, benefits from his Eidetic Memory Merit and his player rolls Intelligence + Streetwise + 2 (eight dice total). Inform anyone who succeeds that his character has heard of this priest. Father John Marrow is the pastor at Corpus Christi Church in the Tremé District. If a player achieves five or more successes, called an *exceptional success*, the character also remembers that Father John performs midnight Masses. (A different priest performs the day services.)

Father John is willing to answer questions for the characters, but not out in public. He suggests that the group of them retreat to his church to get their bearings. If the characters killed one of the partygoers, Father John bends down next to the body, shaking his head. He then makes the sign of the cross over the corpse and pulls a handgun from his jacket. He asks the characters to walk in the other direction and not look back, but if they watch, he doesn't press the issue. He shoots the corpse(s) in the forehead, and then quickly leads the characters out of the park. He refuses to answer any questions until the group reaches Corpus Christi.



FATHER JOHN MARROW

Father John acts as spiritual advisor to Antoine Savoy (the so-called Lord of the French Quarter), and he keeps himself informed of all nocturnal goings-on in the city. He does not, however, wish to cross Prince Vidal, so when the Prince's forces come to collect the characters, he stands aside. In truth, however, Father John would like nothing better than to use these Kindred as a lever

against Prince Vidal, on behalf of Savoy.

In all dealings with the characters, he tries to present himself as a priest — he is wise, learned, trustworthy, able to hear confession and absolve guilt, and knowledgeable about the vampiric condition from both a practical and religious standpoint. If any of the characters makes a great show of devotion (especially if the character in question is Catholic), Father John remembers that character and is less willing to let that character come to harm if he can help it.

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Lancea Sanctum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (Catholicism) 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Vodoun) 3, Politics (Kindred) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 2 (Sermons), Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3 (Tremé District), Subterfuge 3

Merits: Language (French 2, Creole 1, Spanish 1)

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5 (Faith; Greed)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 6

Defense: 6

Speed: 10

Blood Potency: 3

Vitae:

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Majesty 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 1

Father John has the same basic Kindred powers as the four players' characters. He can spend

one Vitae per turn to heal or to augment Physical Attributes. His Celerity, Resilience and Vigor Disciplines function just as they do for the characters. (See Tina for Celerity and Vigor; Becky Lynn or Louis for Resilience.) His Majesty Discipline grants him the Awe powers (shared with Tina) and the following other powers:

Revelation (Majesty ••): This power subtly undermines a subject's will, making that person trust John and confess to him. To use the power, spend one Vitae and roll eight dice (John's Manipulation + Persuasion + Majesty). The targeted character's player should roll his or her Composure + Blood Potency. If you get more successes, the targeted character will answer a question to the best of his or her ability, even revealing deep, dark secrets.

Entrancement (Majesty •••): This power warps the free will of the target, making her into John's slave. Someone subjected to this power believes that she is voluntarily serving John, but when the power's duration ends, she comes to her senses and might well feel violated and angry. Roll nine dice for this power (John's Manipulation + Empathy + Majesty). The target's player should roll dice equal to that character's Composure + Blood Potency. If you get more success, the power takes effect.

John only has one Merit detailed here: Languages. He speaks French fluently and Creole and Spanish conversationally.



Scene Three: Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi Church is a small Catholic church built about 20 years ago. Unlike the buildings surrounding it, it is clean of graffiti and litter, but needs

a lot of repair and upkeep. The door hangs strangely on the hinges, making the front of the church look lopsided, and the lawn is in desperate need of a mow. The sign out front says: THE SHEEP WHO KNOWS GOD NEED NOT FEAR THE WOLF — MATT. 10:16. Father John leads the characters around to the back of the church and unlocks the door there. He ushers them inside and leans out to look carefully around the parking lot before closing the door.

Have each player roll Wits + Composure with a –3 modifier (because the sound is so faint). If this roll succeeds, tell the players that their characters hear a car door slam nearby.

Read the following aloud:

Father John turns around looking worried. He motions for all of you to sit down in the plastic chairs in this room.

You seem to be in a room used for Bible school. Posters with inspirational photographs or cute drawings and Bible verses adorn the walls, but judging from how faded and frayed they are, they haven't been changed in years. The linoleum tiles in the floor are cracked, and although most of the room is clean, the corners are filthy. A tarnished silver crucifix hangs over the door through which you just entered, and it wobbles precariously as John shuts the door.

"I don't know how much time we have," he says. "I can answer some of your questions — I'm sure you have many." He sits down and pulls a rosary from his pocket. He plays the beads between his fingers as he waits for your queries.

Stop reading aloud.

Father John will answer any question the characters ask of him. He won't answer every question honestly, however. Because he is unsure who sired these vampires and why, he is unwilling to give away too much information. Plus, he knows that they have only a limited time, so he tries to give them information that will aid them in surviving their meeting with Prince Vidal.

The following are some of the obvious questions the players might have their characters ask Father John, as well as his answers to those questions.

• **What happened to us?** As stated, John doesn't know any particulars and doesn't wish to reveal the

truth behind how the Embrace is granted. He answers the question this way:

You have all become vampires, cursed by God to never know daylight and to drink only the blood of mortals. How this came to pass is one of God's great mysteries, but be certain that some other vampire — we call each other "Kindred" — took notice of you and passed his curse along.

• **Is it true that [insert question about vampire lore here]?** John doesn't want to overplay his hand, especially with regards to faith, so he doesn't tell the whole truth when asked about popular vampire mythology. He tells the characters the following:

A stake through the heart destroys a vampire, as does sunlight and fire. (Partially true. Sunlight and fire can destroy vampires, but a stake through the heart merely immobilizes them.)

Garlic has no effect on the Kindred. (True.)

We must sleep by day, and no force can rouse us. (Partially true. Vampires do sleep by day, but they can wake if the need is great enough.)

We can subsist on the blood of animals as well as mortals. (True for the characters' purposes, though the blood of animals fails to nourish vampires as they grow older.)

Crosses and other objects of the Christian faith repel us, unless we keep our souls pure of sin. (False. Father John further explains that since this church is his special domain, these rules do not apply here, but he urges the characters to give confession as soon as possible.)

Kindred can exist for hundreds of years, but they are not truly immortal. (True insofar as Kindred continue existing until destroyed.)

• **What are we capable of doing?** The characters have surely noticed their increased strength or perception (and the players have, of course, read their character sheets and know exactly what the characters are capable of doing). Even so, the players might wish to hear explanations of their powers from an "in-character" source, and that's fine. Father John, however, doesn't know what clans the characters represent (which is often a good way to figure out what Disciplines a vampire knows), so he doesn't wish to guess at their powers. He answers this way:

All of us can bolster our strength and speed with the blood we steal from the living. Some of us can see or hear with perfect clarity, to the point of reading minds. Others can disappear from view entirely. I have even heard tales of Kindred becoming as mist or swaying their direst enemies to their sides with a glance, but I have never dared to attempt such feats. Understand that any power you wield is either stolen from the living or granted by Satan, so using such power carries risks to your soul.

• **Why did I lose control and bite/kill a person?**

John considers this an important lesson, so he tells the full truth here.

Every Kindred has a Beast within, a part of his soul awakened at the moment of death. This Beast wants nothing but blood and pain, and will urge you to kill and kill again. You must resist the urgings of the Beast, for they are always sinful, and will ultimately spell your damnation if you are not careful. The Kindred hunt down and destroy those among their number who are fully ruled by their Beasts, poor souls who don't have even a shred of the humanity they once took for granted.

• **How many of us are there?** Questions about numbers of vampires or whether any society of vampires exists prompt this response:

Every city has a Prince, the eldest and most powerful Kindred in that city. Our Prince is a Spaniard called Vidal, and I expect you'll be meeting him soon. If you are Catholic, keep to your faith. If you are not, I recommend you consider conversion.

Don't allow the players to ask every question that comes to mind. After John has had a chance to answer a few questions and you feel that the players have a bit more information to go on, the Prince's agents arrive to take the characters away.

Read the following aloud:

You hear a clock strike one somewhere, and Father John pauses in mid-sentence. He cocks his head as though listening to something outside, and then stands. "Don't resist," he says quietly. "You might be able to fight your way free, but they will simply call you to them. Blood calls to blood." Before you can ask him what he means, a loud knock sounds at the door.

John opens the door and moves out of the way to allow another man into the room. The man is wearing leather pants and a white shirt, as well as a gold cross and saint's medal around his neck. His head is completely

shaved, but he has a very young face. He looks perhaps 20 years old, but as he bares his fangs, you realize that he, too, is one of the Kindred. He could conceivably be much older. The flare of fear you felt when you first met John returns, but this time it is much, much stronger.

Stop reading aloud.

The newcomer's arrival triggers the Predator's Taint in all the characters (see p. 6). This new Kindred, whose name is Alexander (see pages 16 and 25 for more on him), is considerably more powerful than the characters, and this fact, combined with the stresses that the characters are already under, makes it possible that they will run rather than stand up to him. The exception here is Becky Lynn, whose Protean Discipline might compel her to react aggressively instead of running.

Have each player roll Resolve + Composure. If this roll succeeds, the character keeps her fear of Alexander under control and may act normally. If the roll fails, the character bolts under the influence of a fear frenzy.

Have any player whose character flees roll initiative for her character (the number rolled on one die added to the character's Initiative Modifier). You do the same for Alexander. If Alexander acts first, he can attempt to stop the character before she reaches the door. (If several characters run, Alexander prioritizes in this order: Tina, Becky Lynn, Louis, Jack.) Roll Alexander's Strength + Brawl and have the player roll her character's Dexterity + Athletics + 1 die (because the character is in frenzy). If the player rolls more successes than you do for Alexander, the character escapes the church. Skip to "The Chase." If you roll more successes, Alexander catches and immobilizes the character.

If Becky Lynn's player fails the roll, she leaps at Alexander, teeth bared in an anger frenzy. He catches her and immobilizes her with no problem, but this does give any other character who fled an extra turn to get away.

If the character acts first, the character ducks out of the church and goes running. Since the character's Beast is in control, the character acts instinctively, running away from light and activity, back toward the park.

Scene Four: The Chase

This is a brief scene wherein Alexander and the other characters chase down any characters who bolted from the Church.

Read the following aloud to players whose characters haven't fled:

You watch as your companion flees toward the park in a blind panic. Alexander grits his teeth and looks at you, and then glances up to Father Marrow. The priest simply shakes his head. "Fine," hisses Alexander. "You (number of characters that didn't flee) come with me. We need to find him/her/them before the sun rises or someone else gets killed."

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters argue with Alexander, he barks that there isn't any time to waste and goes running off toward the park. If the characters go with him without arguing, he remembers this and speaks on their behalf later.

The players can suggest any method of finding their errant cohorts they can think of. Some suggestions:

- A character with the Streetwise Skill might try to find a shortcut around the park and head the fleeing Kindred off. Roll Wits + Streetwise. Jack receives a +2 modifier.

- The characters might simply chase down the runner(s). Assuming everyone is running flat out, you can handle this with everyone making extended Stamina + Athletics rolls. The fleeing character's player gets a +1 bonus to this roll each turn because she is in frenzy and will get away if she can accumulate (over however many turns it takes) her pursuer's Speed rating in successes. (So someone being chased by Louis would need nine successes, for example.) Any pursuer rolls but without the frenzy bonus and catches up on any turn in which his total accumulated successes match or exceed the fleeing character's accumulated successes. (So if Louis got two successes last turn and two this turn, and his pursuer Becky got one success last turn, she would need three or more successes to catch him this turn.) Remember that any character can spend one Vitae

to add 2 dice to this Stamina-based dice pool for one turn. Tina can also spend Vitae to activate her Celerity Discipline (which she won't do if in frenzy). This doubles her Speed for the turn, not only making it harder for someone she's chasing to get away, but giving her a +4 bonus to her rolls that turn for her inhuman speed.

- Alexander has a car but doesn't know the streets well enough to zoom around the park and hope to spot the fleeing vampire. (He usually walks.) Another character could drive (Jack is obviously the best choice). Roll Wits + Drive: One success gets the fleeing character(s) in sight; two catches up.

Once the group finds the fleeing character, he must be subdued or calmed. Give the players an opportunity to initiate some sort of attempt to do so. If they allow Alexander to do this for them, he breaks the character's legs (causing four points of lethal damage) and holds him down until the frenzy passes. Tina is also a skilled combatant, so she could immobilize the vampire. (Roll Strength + Brawl.) The frenzy passes once a character has been immobilized for a turn.

Other, less violent, approaches are viable. Louis could use the Dominate Discipline to force the character to calm down. He receives a -2 modifier to use this power on a frenzied vampire, however. The same modifier applies if Tina attempts to use Majesty to catch the character's attention.

The frenzied character can either continue running or find a hiding place in the park. The frenzy passes a few minutes after she gets away from Alexander.

When the chase is over (or if no characters fly into frenzy and flee the church), proceed to Scene Five.



ALEXANDER

Alexander doesn't like some of the things he has to do in service to Vidal, but he is loyal. He remembers a time when morality and faith meant much more to him, but those nights are long past. Alexander was Embraced against his will, and he sees much of himself in these young Kindred, but he also honestly believes that they are better off serving Vidal

Louis Maddox

Quote: *I lurk on forty-eight different newsgroups, and not one of them ever mentioned vampires.*

Up until last night, Louis Maddox was just another New Orleans resident, employed in the technical support department of a local ISP. His real talent, however, lay in ferreting out information from the Internet. In his experience, it was all in there somewhere, and it was just a matter of finding out who put the information there and whether or not it was reliable. Even during the chaos of Mardi Gras, evenings usually found Louis holed up at an Internet café just outside the French Quarter.

But something happened last night. He's still fuzzy on the details, but he remembers conversation... real conversation, not online, which is odd. And he distinctly recalls leaving the café with someone....

Description: Louis is a man in his late 20s. He is slightly overweight and keeps his hair buzzed, the better to cover the fact that he's balding. He wears glasses... or at least, he did, but he doesn't seem to need them now. He wears nondescript sweatshirts and blue jeans, and his lucky LSU ball cap.

Equipment: Laptop computer with wireless Internet access, pocketknife (+1 damage, inflicts lethal wounds), comfortable clothes, apartment keys.

Virtue/Vice: Louis' Virtue is *Temperance*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, whether good or bad, despite the obvious rewards it might offer. His Vice is *Sloth*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene during which he successfully avoids a difficult task but achieves its goal nonetheless.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Vitae: Louis can spend one Vitae per turn. He begins with four Vitae.

Healing: Louis can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Louis can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Command (Dominate •): This power allows him to give a one-word command to a target, such as "Freeze!" or "Quiet!" This command cannot cause the target to harm herself. For Louis to use this power, roll 6 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Intimidation + Dominate).

Mesmerize (Dominate ••): This power allows Louis to implant hypnotic suggestions and issue complex commands to his victim. He cannot rear-

range or alter memories, but he can force a victim to leave a door unlocked, to fetch him an item, to guard a door during the day or even something subtle such as waiting for a particular person and then spilling a drink on that person. For Louis to use this power, roll 9 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Expression + Dominate).

Louis must make eye contact to use either Command or Mesmerize. What's more, when Louis uses either of these Dominate powers, the Storyteller rolls the victim's Resolve + Blood Potency. Louis must get more successes than his target for the power to function.

Resilience (•): This Discipline makes Louis supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae point to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds Louis' Resilience (1) to his Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds one to his Health. Doing so, he gains an eighth box on his Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties one box to the right. Also, the first time Louis suffers aggravated damage in a scene in which his Resilience is active, one point of the damage is considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for him to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Louis loses his extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Louis' seven base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Ventrue): As a member of the Ventrue clan, Louis is cursed to grow paranoid and delusional with time. When you roll to avoid gaining a derangement, subtract two dice from the die pool (the Storyteller will tell you when this happens).

Merits

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Louis is a smart guy who has a good memory for trivia, so he often knows minute facts about topics that he's never actually been schooled in. Whenever Louis is confronted by a situation outside his normal realm of knowledge, you may roll six dice (Louis' Intelligence + Wits). If this roll succeeds, Louis knows a helpful fact about the given topic.

Haven: Louis had a small apartment where he can shelter during the day. It's small — only two rooms — but it's only a few blocks from the French Quarter. What's more, Louis has set up various security measures around the door and window (he's not exactly paranoid, but break-ins aren't unknown in the area). If Louis is in his Haven when someone attempts to break in, he receives a +1 to any rolls to notice this attempt.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Louis Maddox

Apparent Age: late 20s

Player:

Concept: Computer Whiz

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Sloth

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence ●●●●○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●●○○
Finesse	Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resistance	Resolve ●●●○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics (Research)	●●●○○
Computer (Internet)	●●●○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●●○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	○○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●●○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive	●●○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression (Online)	●●●○○
Intimidation	○○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	●○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Encyclopedic Knowledge	●●●○○
Haven	●●●○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Flaws

_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	4
Speed	9
Experience	_____

Disciplines

Dominare	●●●○○
Resilience	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	●
6	●
5	●
4	●
3	●
2	●
1	●

Tina Baker

Quote: *Only two years in. This sucks.*

Background: Before last night, Tina was a sorority girl from “up north” (Tennessee, actually) who came down this year to experience Mardi Gras for the first time. She was majoring in sports medicine but was still taking core classes. Having once come uncomfortably close to being victimized while in high school, she also took time to train in self-defense. Having just completed her first semester of her sophomore year, she drove down with some of her sorority sisters, but they separated shortly after arriving. Tina spent a few days hanging out with some folks she met here...

...and then something bad happened. She's got extremely fuzzy memories of the incident, but she remembers fighting, and being hurt, perhaps even stabbed. Although she doesn't have a scratch on her, she knows that she was in a fight last night, and she has a terrible suspicion that she lost. At present, however, she has other concerns, like the blazing thirst that she can't seem to identify.

Description: Tina is 20, and is a striking, athletic young woman. Her Embrace stripped her of her healthy complexion, but added a certain feline charisma to her. She stands about 5'6" and keeps her brown hair cut chin-length.

Roleplaying Hints: You are not a victim. Your friends call you paranoid sometimes, but what you are is strong. You refuse to be easy prey, and this trip to New Orleans was supposed to prove that... except that you became a victim anyway. You aren't normally wired for seeking revenge, just making sure that you never become a victim again, but this time, you feel you *owe* someone. As much as you would like to strike out for home, you know that you have to figure out what happened, and these other people seem to be in the same boat.

Equipment: Cell phone, purse with a little spare cash, backpack with change of clothes.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. She regains one spent Willpower point at the end of any scene in which she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn. She begins with two Vitae.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity •: This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so cost Tina an action, but the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn

(the Storyteller will tell you when it wears off). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed doubles). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (1) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor •: This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (1) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

Contact: Tina has a friend—Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university—she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker
Apparent Age: 20s
Player:

Concept: College Student
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Gluttony

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
Clan: Daeva
Covenant:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence ●●○○○	Strength ●●●○○	Presence ●●●○○
Finesse	Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resistance	Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)
Academics ●○○○○
Computer ●○○○○
Crafts ○○○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Medicine (Sprains) ●○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ●○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)
Athletics ●●○○○
Brawl ●●●○○
Drive ●○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Larceny ○○○○○
Stealth (Crowds) ●○○○○
Survival ○○○○○
Weaponry ○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)
Animal Ken ○○○○○
Empathy (Body Lang) ●●○○○
Expression ●●○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○
Persuasion ●●○○○
Socialize ●●○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○

Merits

Barfly ●○○○○
Brawling Dodge ●○○○○
Contacts ●○○○○
Danger Sense ●○○○○
Striking Looks (+1) ●●○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Flaws

_____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Size _____ 5
Defense _____ 2
Initiative Mod _____ 6
Speed _____ 11
Experience _____

Disciplines

Celerity ●○○○○
Majesty ●○○○○
Vigor ●○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Other Traits

Health

●●●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10 _____ ○
 9 _____ ○
 8 _____ ○
 7 _____ ●
 6 _____ ●
 5 _____ ●
 4 _____ ●
 3 _____ ●
 2 _____ ●
 1 _____ ●

Becky Lynn Adler

Quote: *If my family finds out what happened, heads will roll.*

Background: Until last night, Becky Lynn was a true Southern belle, the pride and joy of the influential Adler family. She was schooled at home and received everything she ever wanted. She attended parties for others in her social circles, and probably would have found some nice young gent to marry, had fate not had other plans.

Becky Lynn had never been allowed to go to Mardi Gras, but this year — now that she was finally of age — she persuaded her father to allow her to go to the French Quarter (chaperoned, of course). She knows she had a wild night, which she blushes to recall. She doesn't know what happened to her chaperones, but she does remember spending quite a long time talking to a man whose face she can't even remember now. She just remembers that his name was John, and that his voice made her quake with pleasure...

Roleplaying Hints: You are quite used to having to make a good first impression, and although you are so far out of your element it could drive you mad, you are not going to let these folks think that you're some harlot who comes out to bare her bosom on Mardi Gras. You are terrified to call your family; you just know something awful happened to your chaperones last night... and you think something awful happened to you, too. It fills you with such thoughts whenever you try to remember... thoughts that you're ashamed to be thinking.

Description: Becky Lynn is beautiful and delicate. She is recently 18, with soft blond hair and deep brown eyes. She would normally be dressed formally and at the height of fashion, but she is currently wearing the more casual (but still stylish) clothes that she wore last night.

Equipment: Purse, ready cash, jewelry, perfume, makeup.

Virtue/Vice: Becky Lynn's Virtue is *Hope*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming her own goals or well-being. Her Vice is *Envy*. She regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which she gained something from a rival or had a hand in harming that rival's well-being.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Becky Lynn can spend one Vitae per turn. She begins with five Vitae.

Healing: Becky Lynn can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Becky Lynn can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical

Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Aspect of the Predator (Protean •): This power mitigates the effect that meeting other vampires has on her. Whereas normally, vampires react fearfully when they meet Kindred of higher Blood Potency, Becky Lynn *always* reacts as though her Blood Potency were equal to whomever she meets.

Resilience (••): This Discipline makes Becky Lynn supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds her Resilience (2) to her Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds two to her Health. Thus She gains a ninth and 10th box on her Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties two boxes to the right. Also, the first two points of aggravated damage Becky Lynn suffers in a scene where her Resilience is active are considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for her to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Becky Lynn loses her extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Becky Lynn's eight base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Gangrel): Becky Lynn's blood is cursed with a potent bestial instinct that sometimes makes it hard for her to think clearly. When rolling dice pools based on Intelligence or Wits Attributes, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving perception or reaction to surprise, or to the Resolve Attribute.

Merits

Fame: Becky Lynn is a member of New Orleans' social elite, so the media and people in the higher echelons of society pay attention to her. Add one die to her Socialize or Persuasion when she can use her fame to her advantage, but the Storyteller also may make occasional rolls to see if anyone on the street recognizes Becky Lynn.

Resources: Although Becky would need to touch base with her family to gain access to their vast fortune, she has her own bank account and credit cards. She can spend up to \$5000 without any problem.

Striking Looks (+2): Becky Lynn is beautiful. Add two dice to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Becky Lynn is attractive (as well as famous) people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Becky Lynn Adler

Apparent Age: late teens

Player:

Concept: Southern Belle

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence ●●○○○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●○○○
Finesse	Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resistance	Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●○○○
 Computer ○○○○○
 Crafts ●○○○○
 Investigation ○○○○○
 Medicine ○○○○○
 Occult (Cajun) ●○○○○
 Politics (High Society) ●●○○○
 Science ●○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●●○○○
 Brawl ○○○○○
 Drive ○○○○○
 Firearms ●○○○○
 Larceny ○○○○○
 Stealth ●●○○○
 Survival ○○○○○
 Weaponry ○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ●○○○○
 Empathy ●○○○○
 Expression ●●○○○
 Intimidation ○○○○○
 Persuasion ●●○○○
 Socialize ●●○○○
 Streetwise ○○○○○
 Subterfug (Innuendo) ●●○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Fame ○○○○○
 Resources ●●○○○
 Striking Looks (+2) ●●○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Flaws

_____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Size _____ 5
 Defense _____ 2
 Initiative Mod _____ 4
 Speed _____ 9
 Experience _____

Disciplines

Protean ●○○○○
 Resilience ●●○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●●●●○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10 _____ ○
 9 _____ ○
 8 _____ ○
 7 _____ ●
 6 _____ ●
 5 _____ ●
 4 _____ ●
 3 _____ ●
 2 _____ ●
 1 _____ ●

Jack McCandless

Quote: *In a jiffy.*

Background: It wasn't glamorous work, but until last night Jack McCandless made a good living running envelopes and packages all over New Orleans, and was damned good at his job. He knew the city inside and out, all the little back ways, all the best ways around the French Quarter (which of course is a nightmare to drive through), and the neighborhoods best left alone.

He thinks he was in one of those neighborhoods last night, but he doesn't remember, which is doubly frightening for Jack because he possesses a razor-keen memory. All he remembers is a last-minute delivery, and that he was thinking about going home and having a beer when he saw a really hot hooker on the sidewalk...

And that's about all. He still has his van, though, and that's a big comfort. The package, however, is gone, and that worries him for some reason.

Roleplaying Hints: You're not sure what the hell's going on, but two of these people don't know much about the *real*, dirty N'awlins, and the other isn't from around here. They're going to need your help before the night's out. Heck, if time's a factor, a body could do a lot worse than to have *you* as a chauffeur. But they don't seem to notice you unless you speak up.

What the hell *happened*? All you know is that you and these other people have been grievously wronged, and someone is going to pay for it.

Description: Jack was never exactly handsome, but his Embrace made matters much worse. Where he was once thin, he is now almost skeletal, and his pallor appears disturbingly lifeless under direct fluorescent light. Jack wears simple brown slacks and a button-down shirt, but he dons expensive running shoes when he's working.

Equipment: Van, .38 special handgun (roll Dexterity + Firearms +2 to attack: Every success causes one point of lethal damage to mortals or bashing damage to vampires, range is 20/40/80 yards), pocket full of bullets, clipboard, car keys.

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Justice*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback. The "right thing," to Jack, is a kind of street-level decency: Never steal from someone who doesn't deserve it, never give someone bad directions, and never take someone's last dollar. His Vice is *Pride*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Jack can spend one Vitae per turn. He begins with three Vitae.

Healing: Jack can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Jack can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Touch of Shadow (Obfuscate •): This power allows Jack to hide small items in his grasp or on his person. Even if someone is looking for the item on his person, the power keeps it hidden. You roll eight dice (Jack's Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate); once active, the object is hidden for the scene or until Jack decides to end the Discipline.

Mask of Tranquility (Obfuscate ••): Most vampires feel a flare of fear or anger — the Predator's Taint — when they meet another Kindred for the first time. Jack, however, doesn't engender that effect, though he does still suffer from it and can thus recognize other vampires. Jack may "turn off" this power if he wishes.

Cloak of Night (Obfuscate •••): This power allows Jack to disappear completely, even from plain sight. He remains invisible until he wishes to reappear or until he takes obvious action (such as attacking someone or breaking a window). Disappearing requires a success on a roll of Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (seven dice for Jack). If you roll five or more successes, anyone who sees Jack disappear forgets that he was even there in the first place.

Clan Weakness (Mekhet): Jack's Kindred body is cursed to be even more sensitive to fire and sunlight than most. If he is exposed to these anathema of vampiric existence, he suffers one more point of aggravated damage per turn than other vampires

Merits

Contacts: Jack has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department, a young cop who works the night shift in the French Quarter. This cop, named Michael Rample, knows Jack socially and usually gives him information about traffic conditions. Michael would be willing to share more sensitive information with Jack, but he might require a bribe for truly important tidbits.

Direction Sense: Jack always knows which way is north, and he can always retrace his route in unfamiliar territory.

Eidetic Memory: Jack doesn't forget anything he sees or hears (meaning you should take notes as his player). He normally doesn't need to make a roll to remember anything he knows, but if he is under stress, he adds two dice to any such roll.

Stunt Driver: Unlike less skilled drivers, Jack can take other actions while driving, including firing his gun. The Storyteller might still require a Drive roll if Jack needs to do anything fancy, however.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Jack McCandless

Apparent Age: late 20s

Player:

Concept: Courier

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant:

Attributes

Power	Intelligence ●●●○○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●○○○○
Finesse	Wits ●○○○○	Dexterity ●●●○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resistance	Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●○○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●○○○○
 Computer ●○○○○
 Crafts ○○○○○
 Investigation (Street Crime) ●○○○○
 Medicine ○○○○○
 Occult ○○○○○
 Politics ○○○○○
 Science ●○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●○○○○
 Brawl ○○○○○
 Drive (Quick Arrival) ●●●○○
 Firearms ●●○○○
 Larceny ●○○○○
 Stealth ●○○○○
 Survival ●○○○○
 Weaponry ●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ○○○○○
 Empathy ●○○○○
 Expression ○○○○○
 Intimidation ●○○○○
 Persuasion ●○○○○
 Socialize ○○○○○
 Streetwise (Slums) ●●●○○
 Subterfuge ●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Contacts ●○○○○
 Direction Sense ●○○○○
 Eidetic memory ●●○○○
 Stunt Driver ●●●○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
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 _____ ○○○○○

Flaws

_____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 Size _____ 5
 Defense _____ 3
 Initiative Mod _____ 6
 Speed _____ 10
 Experience _____

Disciplines

Obfuscate ●●●○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
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Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

-1-2-3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

D _____ ○
 9 _____ ○
 8 _____ ○
 7 _____ ●
 6 _____ ●
 5 _____ ●
 4 _____ ●
 3 _____ ●
 2 _____ ●
 1 _____ ●

than dealing with Savoy or his faction. That in mind, he won't overlook disloyalty to the Prince or to Maldonato. If the characters attack and destroy Alexander for some reason, Father John will help them hide the deed.

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Lancea Sanctum

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Investigation 2 (Vampires), Occult 1

Physical Skills: Brawl 3 (Breaking Bones), Drive 1, Firearms 3, Larceny 2 (Picking Locks), Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 4 (Fortitude; Wrath)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 8 (includes Fast Reflexes)

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Blood Potency: 4

Vitae:

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Protean 3, Resilience 3, Vigor 2

Alexander has the same basic Kindred powers as the four players' characters, but his more potent blood means that they function a little better. He can spend two Vitae per turn, for instance, and use it to heal himself and to augment his Physical Attributes. His Celerity, Resilience and Vigor Disciplines function just as they do for the characters (see Tina for Celerity and Vigor; Becky Lynn or Louis for Resilience). His Protean Discipline grants him the Aspect of the Predator power

(shared with Becky Lynn) and the following other powers:

Haven of Soil (Protean ••): This power allows him to merge with the earth, making him largely immune to physical damage and protecting him from the sun's rays. Doing so costs Alexander one Vitae.

Claws of the Wild (Protean •••): Wicked, curved talons grow from Alexander's fingers (which requires the expenditure of one Vitae). To attack with these claws, roll Strength + Brawl + 1 – the target's Defense. Every success inflicts one point of aggravated damage.



Scene Five: Ashes

In this scene, the characters are taken to meet Prince Vidal but wind up being forced into penitence instead.

Once the chase has been resolved (if necessary), Alexander motions the characters into his car. If they resist, he assures them that they are in far greater danger if they refuse than if they accompany him. A successful Intelligence + Empathy roll from any player indicates that he appears to be telling the truth.

On the way, Alexander doesn't say much. If the characters ask where they are going, he replies that they are going to meet Prince Vidal, who doubtless has some questions for them. If they express concern, he nods gravely and informs them that the truth will save their lives and souls. If the characters ask how Alexander found them, he tells them that he received word of the characters' location and predicament from another vampire, but he doesn't explain further.

Alexander drives the characters to the Garden District, an upscale residential area near the campuses of Tulane and Loyola Universities, and pulls into the driveway of a mansion. He explains that it used to be a private residence but is now open for touring during the day. At night, it serves as a sometime haven for Prince Vidal. He steps out of the car

and curses. A silver Mercedes sits in the driveway in front of his car. If the characters ask what this means, he mutters the word “Maldonato,” then turns to face the characters with a look of pity and resignation. He then leads them up the driveway.

Read the following aloud:

Alexander opens a cellar door in the back of the house and leads you downstairs. He opens a door at the bottom of the stairs, gestures you through it, then shuts it behind you.

The room in which you find yourselves is pitch dark, but you can hear people moving in the blackness and you can all smell wood smoke and incense. You feel fear rise up inside you as the animalistic part of you — what Father John called “the Beast” — pushes you to flee, to escape from the deadly predators only inches away in the dark. You fight back this fear, knowing that fleeing would only make things worse.

You hear the sound of metal on metal and the creak of a hinge, and someone takes a step closer to you. After a moment, a deep, resonant voice says, “Kneel, and prepare to receive the mark of penitence.”

If all characters kneel, skip the next paragraph. If any character does not kneel, read the following:

You hear a rush of movement and feel wind as something passes by you, and then a sharp blow to the back of your head. You tumble forward, and whatever it was that struck you walks deliberately around the group of you again.

Read the following aloud:

The voice says, “The kine wear the mark of ash on their foreheads to remind them of Christ’s sacrifice and to be penitent during the time of Lent. We wear the ashes for the same reasons, but also to remind us to be mindful of God’s laws.” You smell ashes again and feel fingers smearing something on your forehead, one at a time. “You will wear these ashes for the remainder of the night and for the entirety of the day to come. Remove this mark at your peril, for to disobey the word of a Sanctified priest is to feel the pain of fire.”

You hear footsteps, and then the door to this room opens. Several people ascend the stairs, but you cannot see them. The door closes, and as you gather your

thoughts, you hear someone shift from across the room. Although you cannot see or hear anyone else, you know you are not alone.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters are indeed not alone. Maldonato, the Kindred who just spoke and who serves as the right hand of the Prince of the city, has placed an agent in the room and instructed him to watch the characters throughout the rest of the night and the next day. This agent is stealthy enough to avoid notice. Even if a character lights a match, all that the characters will see is a flicker of motion just out of their range of vision.

Let the players discuss their characters’ predicament as long as they like, but the door is barred too soundly for any of these characters to budge. They are trapped until the following sundown. If any character wipes his forehead clean of the ashes, that character immediately suffers one point of aggravated damage and loses one Vitae as the very blood in his veins burns. (This power is a form of blood sorcery practiced by Maldonato’s hidden agent, based on his unforgiving faith.)

When the players have finished any discussion or actions they wish to take, progress to Act Two.

Act Two: Pilgrimage

In this act, the characters make confession of their sins before the Prince of New Orleans, Augusto Vidal. He then turns them loose, but assigns them the penance of returning to the site of their Embrace and praying. He also offers advice on their next move.

Scene One: Confession

In this scene, the characters meet Prince Vidal and talk with him about faith and the future.

Before beginning this scene, have each player spend one Vitae. All vampires expend one Vitae at sunset to animate their bodies. If any character’s Vitae drops to 4 or less, she is hungry and her player receives a -1 modifier on all rolls

to resist frenzy. If she has only one Vitae left, she receives a -2 on these rolls.

Read the following aloud:

You don't remember falling asleep, but you do remember fragments of the dreams you have during the day. As you awaken, still on the cold floor of the mansion's basement, your minds whirl with images of last night. You remember the partygoers in the park, the conversation with Father John, the smear of ash on your foreheads and, dimly, the feeling of fangs in your throat and the taste of blood on your lips.

You barely have time to collect your thoughts, however, when the door opens. A shaft of light spills into the room, and you recognize Alexander's voice. "Prince Vidal will see you now."

Alexander leads you up the stairs and into a beautifully furnished living room. An ornately carved wooden box on a table in the center of the room catches your attention. There's a faint smell of incense in the room.

Stop reading aloud.

Have Louis' player roll Intelligence + Wits (for his Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit). If this roll succeeds, Louis notes that the furnishings and decorations are not re-creations, but painstakingly preserved antiques, probably worth a small fortune.

Continue reading aloud:

A man sits in a high-backed chair looking out a window. You can't see his face, but his hand is draped over the arm of the chair, holding a silver rosary. Alexander motions for you to be quiet, and in the silence, you can hear the man in the chair praying softly in Spanish.

After a moment, he stops and stands, pocketing the rosary. He turns to face you, and you notice that he, too, has ashes on his forehead. He takes a step toward you, and you feel your Beast cry out in sheer terror at this deadly opponent.

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player roll his character's Resolve + Composure. If this roll fails, the character backs up into a corner and cowers there for a few seconds before regaining control of herself. If Becky's player fails, she steps forward and bares her fangs rather than cowering.

Continue reading aloud:

The man is a tall Spaniard, with Mediterranean features and broad shoulders. His slick, black hair appears wet, and he wears a neatly trimmed Vandyke moustache and beard. He is dressed in a crisp black suit and meticulously polished leather shoes. He looks each of you in the eye, then gestures to the chairs and the sofa in the room. He nods to Alexander, who leaves the room and shuts the door behind him.

"Now is the time for confession," he says in a thick Spanish accent. "From the moment of your awakening as Kindred to the moment you walked through the door, you will confess all to me. If you would be more comfortable doing so in private, that is acceptable, but I assure you that anything said in my presence is sacrosanct."

Stop reading aloud.

Confessing to the Prince

The man asking for confession is Augusto Vidal, the Prince of New Orleans. He does not introduce himself, and this is deliberate. He knows that Alexander has already told the young vampires whom they are going to see, and he doesn't wish to put focus on himself, preferring to let the characters talk about themselves and each other.

The characters are unlikely to agree immediately, and Vidal's reaction to a refusal depends very much on how they go about refusing. If a character explains that she is not Catholic, Vidal chuckles and states that now is a good time to convert. Further, it doesn't matter if the characters aren't Catholic. The sacrament of confession is open to all Kindred.

If the characters press the issue or refuse outright to give confession, Vidal's eyes narrow and he leans forward menacingly. He explains that he cannot force confession, but he will take the truth from the characters' minds if they force him to do so. If he has to do this, though, there can be no absolution or repentance, and this puts the characters' souls in grave danger. He asks them again to cooperate willingly.

If the characters become violent with Vidal, he uses his Majesty Discipline to awe them (see Tina's character description for this power; roll seven dice for Vidal to awe a group, nine against a single char-

acter). If this doesn't work, Alexander and other vampiric aides (with similar traits) quickly arrive to subdue the characters. The Prince can take a great deal of damage without suffering much injury, and you can assume that he comes out of any attack largely unscathed. Once the characters are subdued, he offers them the chance to confess again.

If Vidal convinces them to give confession (even if they intend to lie to him), skip ahead to "Penance." If any character completely refuses, proceed to "Forced Communion."

Forced Communion

Vidal will not force another vampire to actually give confession, but he will search a vampire's mind for information that he requires. In this case, he wants to know who Embraced these Kindred and what happened to them last night, specifically what they talked to Father John Marrow about.

Read the following aloud:

Vidal shakes his head sadly. "The sacrament of confession is a blessing, neonates, and much more pleasant than any alternative. I will not force you to confess your sins, but I must know them." With that, he turns to you (indicate the player of the character who most openly defied the Prince). His eyes burn into yours, and you feel your mind unwillingly giving up the events of last night, down to details that you didn't realize you took in. You feel his sight reaching back the beginning of the night, back to the moment that—

You stagger backward, and you note that the Prince looks stunned as well. "Clearly," he says, "someone wishes to cover their tracks." He drums his fingers on the arms of his chair thoughtfully. "It is possible," he murmurs, "to extract the information anyway, but I think that doing so might well shatter your minds, especially as you haven't been among the Kindred for very long."

Stop reading aloud. Continue with "Penance."



COVENANT—THE LANCEA SANCTUM

The Prince, Maldonato, Father John, Antoine Savoy and in fact most of the Kindred of New Orleans belong to a sect (or

covenant, in vampire parlance) called the Lancea Sanctum (the "Holy Lance"). Vampires of this covenant believe that the vampiric curse comes directly from God and exists for a purpose. Kindred are meant to be predatory scourges, creatures who prey on the sinners in the world and serve as warnings to the faithful. In the temporal here and now, the Lancea Sanctum teaches that Kindred thus stand above mortals (like a wolf would above sheep) and that one's mortal past is unimportant compared to fulfilling the nature imposed on the Kindred by God. The covenant takes its name from the spear of Longinus, the Roman centurion who pierced Christ's body on the cross, and was (according to the covenant's legendry) punished by being transformed into a vampire. The Sanctified (as members of the covenant call themselves) often employ imagery and practices borrowed from Roman Catholicism, and revere Longinus as their Dark Messiah, the first vampire to understand his curse and reveal that truth to others. As in mortal religion, practices and zeal varies from vampire to vampire within the covenant. Prince Vidal and Maldonato are conservative and have little tolerance for those with other beliefs, while Antoine Savoy and Father John are more tolerant of other outlooks.



Penance

Once Vidal has extracted information from any characters who don't give confession willingly, the Prince turns to those who do. He listens carefully and blesses each of them in turn, stating that God forgives them even in their Damned state. If one of the characters lies to Vidal, have that player roll Manipulation + Subterfuge, while you roll 8 dice



(Vidal's Intelligence + Subterfuge). If the player gets as many or more successes than Vidal, the Prince buys the lie (unless it is horribly unlikely or contradicted by another player). If Vidal gets more successes, he recognizes the lie and makes a mental note of it, but doesn't let on.

Once done, he returns to his chair, but stares out the window as if distracted. After a moment, he speaks but does not turn to face the characters. "Do you believe in God?" he asks. Vidal's aim here is to get a sense of the characters' religious beliefs. He is a devout Catholic himself, and he has specific beliefs pertaining to his vampiric state, but he doesn't wish to overload the characters with information about his faith.

Allow the players to answer his question as their characters. No information has been provided on the characters' faiths, which is deliberate, to allow the players to customize their characters in this important area. Vidal engages in religious discussion, and while he makes no secret of his own beliefs, he does not directly contradict or belittle anyone else's. He does point out to any character who identifies herself as an atheist, however, that existence as a vampire isn't really possible unless one allows for God.

Let this discussion go on as long as the players are enjoying it. If you feel your players are likely to get touchy by so direct a discussion of religion, you can either avoid Vidal's question altogether or keep the conversation short. When you feel ready, proceed.

Read the following aloud:

Vidal turns to face you again. "Among the Kindred, faith is a weapon, much as with mortals. By this I mean that by claiming an act is in the name of God, one can justify truly heinous actions. The transition into our condition requires young Kindred like yourselves to look deeply at your own beliefs, your own souls, and see what truly lies there. Also, you must ask yourselves, 'Why has God chosen me to endure this?'

"Given that this is your first full night of the Requiem, I would like to suggest that you undertake a pilgrimage of sorts. I suggest that, as penance for your sins and to ease your passing into the night, you return to the site of your Embrace and pray there. While there, memories of your Embraces, or the events directly before, might return. If this does occur, I should very much like to hear of those memories. While I in no way mean to denigrate the hor-

ror that you are suffering, I have responsibilities to the city, and I can't allow a conspiracy of rogue Kindred to Embrace people left and right. I must know what happened." With that, he stands, indicating that the interview is over.

Stop reading aloud.

*Scene Two:
Return to the Park*

In this scene, the characters return to Louis Armstrong Park but find little in the way of information. Alexander inadvertently shows them another good lead, however.

Alexander waits outside to drive the characters back to the Tremé District.

Read the following aloud:

As you ride through the Tremé District, Alexander turns off several blocks too soon. "Don't worry," he says. "I'll take you to the park. I just need to cruise by a cemetery first." To your questioning looks, he replies "It's a Civil War graveyard, and it means something to the Prince. People he knows are buried there, I guess. I don't know. Anyway, people have been doing voodoo stuff there."

Stop reading aloud.

Have the players roll Intelligence + Occult. Jack and Becky Lynn both have Occult ratings, so their players use the normal dice pool; Becky Lynn's Specialty also applies. Tina's player rolls only a chance die, because Tina has no Occult rating and therefore receives a -3 modifier, which takes her dice pool below zero. Louis has no Occult rating, but he can use his Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit, so his player rolls Intelligence + Wits. If the roll succeeds, inform the appropriate player that *vodoun* is a religion that grew out of African traditions and Roman Catholicism. Much of what the media has popularized about "voodoo" is false or out of context.

If the players ask Alexander to elaborate, read the following aloud:

"I don't know exactly what's been happening. The Prince is afraid of someone defiling the place, and he can't exactly ask Father Marrow to keep an eye out — they're kind of on opposite sides of the fence, you know? So I cruise by there every now and then." Alexander smiles.

“Actually, if you wanted to score some points with Prince Vidal, going in there to take a closer look would be a good step. It’s only a few blocks from the park. I could drop you at the park and meet you back at the graveyard.”

Stop reading aloud.

If the players don’t ask him to elaborate, don’t worry. This scene includes other hooks to get the characters to the graveyard.

At the park, the characters can return to the site of their Embrace and look around, pray, or meditate as they see fit. Have Jack and Becky Lynn’s players roll Wits + Occult (Becky Lynn’s Specialty does not apply here.) Apply a –2 modifier to Becky Lynn’s roll. (The characters don’t know this, but Jack and Becky Lynn have the potential to pick up a sense of their sire’s activities here — Becky suffers a penalty because her sire’s activities are less recent than those of Jack’s sire.) If the roll succeeds, both characters feel something strange. Jack feels a sense of remorse and desperation, while Becky Lynn feels loss and nostalgia. Both vampires, however, feel these sensations coming from where Alexander just drove them.

The Embrace site yields no other information. Whoever it was that engineered their Embrace was careful to clean up afterward, it seems. If the characters killed any partygoers last night, the area shows evidence of being picked clean by crime scene units, and it probably has police in the area, but nothing of direct interest to the characters.

If the characters follow Becky Lynn and/or Jack’s sensations, they lead back to the graveyard. If the characters don’t heed this feeling, or if both players fail the roll, Tina’s cell phone rings. Alexander says he has to run an errand, and gives directions to the graveyard—only a few blocks away—where he will meet them.

Scene Three:

The Unnamed Graveyard

In this scene the characters visit the graveyard, have a brief run-in with some young gang members and find evidence of *vodoun* activity.

If the characters arrived here by following the strange sensations that Becky Lynn or Jack received at the park, those sensations grow stronger as the characters walk into the cemetery, then gradually fade. The reason that Becky Lynn and Jack feel these sensations is that both of their sires were here recently (though for different reasons). Vampires can sometimes feel what their sires or childer feel through a connection called Blood Sympathy.

Read the following aloud:

The graveyard doesn’t have a gate or a sign. It sits sandwiched between a parking lot and an abandoned building, surrounded by a wire fence. Like many graveyards in New Orleans, the dead are entombed above ground in stone caskets, rather than being interred in the often-soggy earth. Not one bouquet of flowers shows any recent visits to the graveyard, and as you walk among the tombs, you see why. All of the graves date from the 19th century. Many of the dead entombed here, you realize, were Confederate soldiers.

Stop reading aloud.

Let the characters take whatever action their players wish. If any of the characters sit down and pray or quietly meditate, have the appropriate players roll Wits + Occult (Jack gains a +1 modifier, again because his sire is nearby). Success indicates a strange feeling of unease, as though something was trying to catch the characters’ attention, but to what purpose, the characters can’t tell. If any player manages more than five successes, inform that player that her character feels a sense of fear and urgency directed at Jack. If the characters try to home in on that feeling of unease, it leads them to the back corner of the cemetery. (If none of the characters succeeded or attempted to pray, they can find this area by simple exploration.)

Read the following aloud:

The ground in this corner dips slightly, creating a small valley flanked by caskets. The grass here seems wet, and as you look closer, you can see that it is actually splashed with blood.

Stop reading aloud.

Allow the players to have their characters investigate the area in whatever way they would like, but they have only about three minutes be-

fore the gang shows up (see “The Gang”). Some possibilities include:

- **Investigation of the blood.** A character might attempt to look at the spatter pattern and try to determine if the blood was spilled from a container or a living being. This could be accomplished with an Intelligence + Investigation or Intelligence + Streetwise roll (-2 dice in either case because of the difficulty of spatter-recognition). Success means that the character figures out that the blood was probably poured from a container held about five feet off of the ground.

- **Investigation of the monuments.** An Intelligence + Investigation roll (-3 dice because of the difficulty of spotting such clues) reveals tiny droplets of blood on one of the monuments flanking the dip in the ground. If the characters try to open the monument, skip to “The Gang” (as that takes too long). If, after they have resolved this, they decide to go back to the casket, go to “The Casket.”

- **Taste.** The characters, now being vampires, might decide to taste the blood to gain information, especially if they consider the feeling that drinking blood the night before gave them. This blood tastes good to them, but flat and uninteresting. It confers no Vitae and certainly not the quasi-erotic pleasure that the partygoers’ did. (Blood “spoils” very quickly for vampiric purposes.)

- **Witnesses.** If the characters decide to leave the cemetery to find someone who might have seen what happened here, they run into the gangbangers (skip to “The Gang”). If they somehow avoid the gangbangers or find a witness thereafter, they can find out from a local vagrant that a woman comes here at night to “do voodoo crap,” which involves pouring blood onto the ground. The witness can’t describe this woman, however. He has never gotten a good enough look at her, and he actually seems to be afraid of her. He did see her stashing something in one of the monuments, however. If the characters ask one of the gangbangers about the blood (perhaps by using Dominate to force him to talk), they find the same information after the next scene.

The Gang

Vampires aren’t the only predators abroad at night. As the characters wander around the graveyard, they

hear several people talking in loud voices, and then someone whistles loudly.

Read the following aloud:

*Four boys walk into the cemetery, all of them looking purposefully at you. They focus on you two (indicate **Becky Lynn and Tina**), but keep an eye on you (indicate **Louis**) as well. They don’t seem to notice you (indicate **Jack**) at all.*

Stop reading aloud.

Jack automatically recognizes these kids’ gang colors as belonging to a Tremé District street gang notorious for assaulting tourists who wander out of the French Quarter. They are especially infamous for their treatment of women. If Louis’ player succeeds in an Intelligence + Wits roll, Louis knows the same information (having read about them in an online news feed).

Continue reading aloud:

The boys approach you quickly. One of them has a hand tucked behind his back. Another cracks his knuckles menacingly.

“Why don’t you give us some money?” one of them asks.

*“Or something else,” another says, looking at you (indicate **Becky Lynn**).*

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can approach this predicament in any number of ways. The most obvious, of course, is to fight. If a character attacks or makes a threatening move, the toughs respond violently. If the characters do anything obviously vampiric, though, such as baring fangs or using visible Disciplines like Celerity, roll each gangbanger’s Resolve + Composure. If this roll fails, the gangbanger bolts, leaving his companions behind. Statistics for the gangsters are provided in the nearby sidebar.



GANGBANGERS

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Weaponry 2

Willpower: 4

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 11

Weapons: One of the thugs has a light pistol (+2 damage [so roll 6 dice to attack]; range 20/40/80; it carries eight rounds). The pistol would inflict lethal damage upon a mortal, but only bashing damage upon a vampire.

The others have knives (+1 damage [so roll 6 dice minus the target's Defense to attack]). They inflict lethal damage upon mortals and vampires.

Health:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Should the characters wish to feed on the gangsters, they each hold seven Vitae. Killing any of them, even in self-defense, requires rolls to avoid losing Humanity (roll three dice if acting in self-defense; roll two dice if the thug is helpless). Simply fighting back (even to the point of minor injuries) does not require a roll.

The characters might also talk their way out of this in any number of different ways. For example, Jack could convince the gang that the characters have enough street cred that messing with them is unwise (roll Manipulation + Streetwise; Jack's Streetwise Specialty applies). Tina could charm the gangsters (roll Presence + Persuasion; Striking Looks applies). Becky Lynn could explain that her family could apply pressure to the gangs in the area and make life very difficult for them (roll Manipulation + Intimidation; Fame applies, though the gang doesn't really fear such repercussions, so a -2 penalty also applies). Louis could try to engage them in a discussion and gain a rapport (roll Presence + Expression, but the hostile circumstances impose a -2 modifier). Of course, Disciplines such as Majesty and Dominate can win the battle quite easily for the Kindred, though any use of Majesty against a group this size suffers a -2 penalty.

If the characters return to the casket after dealing with the gangbangers, they find that the lid is extremely heavy. Moving it aside requires 10 successes on an extended Strength + Athletics roll, but all four of the characters may try this at once. Have all players whose characters attempt to move the lid make this roll and total the successes. Remember that any player can add two dice to such a roll by spending one Vitae. Once they have moved the lid, continue from this point:

Read the following aloud:

The great stone lid shifts with a loud grating sound. Inside this stone casket, you find a wooden coffin, as might be expected. Also, though, you find several plastic garbage bags, apparently containing clothes.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters open the bags, they find that they do indeed contain clothes. The clothes are woman's fashions, and Tina and Becky Lynn realize that these clothes range from bargain basement to extremely expensive. Some of the cheaper clothes have blood and white powder on them. The characters might jump to the conclusion that this is cocaine or some other drug, but a quick taste reveals it is flour. Any player who succeeds in an Intelligence + Occult roll (Becky Lynn's Specialty applies; Louis' player can use his Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit) realizes that flour is often used to draw symbols called *vévés* in *vodoun* rituals, and chicken's blood is also sometimes used in these ceremonies.

Continue reading aloud:

As you look through these belongings (or "peer into the casket," if the players decided not to open the bags) you hear a cell phone ringing. A moment's searching finds it in the casket. The phone's caller ID reads "Unknown Caller."

When one of the characters answers, continue reading aloud.

A woman's voice on the other end of the phone says, "May I speak with Jack McCandless?" Take Jack's player aside and continue reading. "Jack," she says. "I'm sorry. I truly am. But I had no choice. Listen now. God's judgment is coming for one of us, and I hope and

pray it's me. But you can't let them take your soul the way they took mine. You can't let this rot infect you, too. You've got to remain pure and pray for forgiveness. You've got to do your penance and—" The phone goes dead.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters do not answer it, it keeps ringing until Alexander comes to pick them up (about 45 minutes). Whether or not they answer, the characters can take whatever actions they wish until Alexander returns for them.

When Alexander shows up, the characters can report on what happened. If so, proceed to the next scene. If the characters do not tell Alexander what happened, he gives them a phone number to contact him and leaves them to their own devices. He suggests they find a haven and keep their noses clean, reminding them of the need to remain hidden from mortals. He tells them he will check in on them in about a week.

If the characters do not wait for Alexander to return, he will hunt them down again and demand to know what happened.

Scene Four: Divine Wrath

After Alexander listens to the characters' story, he contacts Maldonato, who asks to speak with the characters in person. Alexander drives the characters out of the Tremé District back to the Garden District, but passes the house that the characters spent the night in before. He takes them down St. Charles Avenue, stops in front of a church on the Loyola University Campus, and tells them Maldonato is waiting for them inside.

If the characters protest or ask why Maldonato is meeting them instead of Vidal, Alexander says that as the Prince's Seneschal, Maldonato assumes many responsibilities, including hearing the characters' report. Alexander also informs the characters that Maldonato is no less devout in his faith than Vidal, and that it's best not to anger him.

Read the following aloud:

The doors to the church open quietly, and an elderly Catholic priest stands before you. His eyes are glazed over and his mouth hangs limply open as he beckons you to follow him. He leads you into the church, past the

confessionals. A man stands in the aisle next to the font. As you approach, he genuflects, then dips his fingers into the holy water and crosses himself. He then turns to face you. His skin is dusky and smooth, with only the merest hint of the wrinkles of age around his deep-set eyes, which sparkle faintly. He wears a tailored gray business suit. A gold ring on his left hand glitters in the candlelight. Although you have never seen his face, you know by his mere presence that he was the vampire you heard in the dark last night — Maldonato.

He glances at the priest, who takes a seat in the back pew, then looks to you. "Follow me." The tone indicates that this is not a request.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters do not stop and genuflect and cross themselves at the font, Maldonato glares at them and demands that they show the proper respect for the house of God. He does not listen to arguments about varying faiths, but he is unwilling to fight in a church so he won't force the issue. If anyone asks what is wrong with the priest, Maldonato states that the man is not being harmed and will not remember his actions in the morning — he, like Maldonato himself, is a servant of Vidal.

Maldonato leads them to the front of the church and bids them sit in the first pew. He then asks them to tell him what they found at the graveyard. Once they have finished, proceed.

Read the following aloud:

Maldonato stares at the altar, eyes fixed firmly ahead, apparently trying to compose himself. He snarls something in Spanish, then immediately crosses himself. Finally, he turns to you. "I know I speak for Prince Vidal when I condemn this woman as the worst sort of blasphemer, and probably a follower of Savoy as well." To your questioning looks, he replies, "Savoy is a Kindred who titles himself the 'Lord of the French Quarter.' He is truly nothing more than a pretender, a usurper with a few followers who will be crushed in due time. But at least he keeps his faith, or so I have heard." Maldonato clasps his hands together tightly. "This woman, however, is defiling a place sacred to the Prince. The Prince suspected as much. We have had problems with Kindred vodoun practitioners in the past, but most of them have been destroyed and I thought the remaining blasphemers had left the city. Evidently not." He turns to stare at you

(indicate Jack). “That she is performing her blood-rites so close to the site of your Embrace, and that she claims some sort of connection with you, is surely no coincidence. Likely she knows something of why you were all Embraced — murdered, to be frank. And that means you have a better chance of finding her than anyone. Will you do so?”

Stop reading aloud.

Allow the characters to deliberate on this. They might wish to find the mysterious Kindred, but for their own reasons, and that’s fine, too. Maldonato doesn’t really *need* for her to be found in all haste, especially now that her graveyard hideaway has been exposed, but he does want to keep the characters busy and on the trail of their sires. Maldonato understands the Blood Sympathy and how it can work in the characters’ favor, but doesn’t he wish to explain it just yet.

If the characters refuse, Maldonato simply shakes his head and dismisses them. Skip to Act III. If the characters accept, proceed.

Read the following aloud:

Maldonato nods. “Thank you. The Prince will not forget this, and neither will I. As for this Kindred, you may capture her or destroy her as you like, but if you manage to catch her intact, bring her to the mansion where we first met. You may contact me at this number should it become necessary.” He hands you a small ivory-colored card with a phone number printed on it.

He glances at a gold pocket watch. “You have several hours before daybreak, but I suggest you use some of that time to find a haven and begin your investigations. You’ll find your van outside, Mr. McCandless.”

Stop reading aloud.

The characters exit the church to find that Jack’s van is indeed waiting for them, fully fueled and with the keys in the ignition. The characters have about four hours of night left to do as they please. Some possibilities:

- **Find a haven.** Louis has his apartment, of course, which is big enough to hold the entire group, if barely. Becky Lynn could rent a hotel room, but this would require covering the windows and keeping the maids out. Jack’s player can roll Intelligence + Streetwise

to remember an abandoned building where the group could hole up for the day.

- **Begin the investigation.** If the group wants to start searching for the mystery woman right away, go to Act III.

- **Flee!** The players might decide that their characters don’t wish to become involved in the horror of New Orleans’ nights, and decide to flee the city. If they do so, you are pretty much on your own, though you might have the woman call Jack again and ask him to stay.

- **Feed.** The characters might or might not have fed on the gangsters. If they are feeling hungry, they might take the time to go searching for victims. The characters can feed in any number of ways, each requiring different types of rolls. They might try to grab someone off the street without being noticed (Strength + Stealth), seduce a victim (Presence + Persuasion; Striking Looks Merit applies), bite someone in a crowded club (Dexterity + Subterfuge) or find a lone streetwalker or derelict who won’t be missed (Wits + Streetwise). Whatever method the characters use, remember that they run the risk of losing Humanity if they kill. Use the same system listed in Scene One. If the characters feed and don’t take more than three Vitae, however, you need to make them roll to avoid Humanity loss only if their feeding methods are especially brutal.

In the unlikely event that the characters fight Maldonato during this scene, he simply vanishes (his mastery of Celerity is such that he can move faster than even vampiric eyes can follow). He spares the characters only because he will not stoop to violence in a church, but the characters have made a powerful enemy.

Act Three: Shrouded Mary

In this act, the characters track down a frightened vampire who knows a few secrets about why the characters were Embraced and what the future might hold for them. They also have the chance to

decide where they stand in the power struggle between Savoy and Prince Vidal.

If the characters refused to search for the woman when Maldonato asked, they are more or less on their own. Hopefully, they choose to look for the woman of their own accord (since she clearly knows something about why Jack was Embraced, at least), but if they don't, they might be put on her trail by going to see Marrow and then being introduced to Savoy. Try to gently steer the players toward tracking the woman down, but if they have other concerns they wish to attend to first, let them do so.

Scene One: Investigation

This scene begins whenever the characters begin searching for the woman from the graveyard. We have included a number of different methods of approach that the players might think of, but the players will probably come up with something we didn't. As such, it is important to know what information is out in the world for the characters to find, so that you can allow the players to find it by their own ingenuity. The players will appreciate what they accomplish much more if they came up with the methods of approach themselves, rather than having you tell them to roll some dice and then getting information if the roll succeeds. With that in mind, you should review the full story of Mary, the woman in the graveyard, before proceeding (see p. 39).

What follow are some avenues of approach that the characters might use to find Mary, as well as what systems are involved and what information they might lead to. In the interest of saving space, we haven't provided descriptive text for these avenues, so you as Storyteller must describe the scenes and the events as the characters search.

- **Police:** Jack has a Contact in the New Orleans Police, a detective named Mike Rample. Mike is willing to answer some questions about the area, but he won't give away sensitive information without a bribe (or a use of Dominate). Convincing him to give up information requires a Manipulation + Persuasion roll. Mike knows that the area of the Tremé District around the graveyard has a reputation for gang violence, and that very few prostitutes work

the area. In fact, the only one he knows of is a woman named "Marie." He remembers her as an attractive black woman wearing a blond wig, but he hasn't seen her recently.

- **Newsgroups:** Louis can search for information on the area with his computer. Doing so requires an Intelligence + Computer roll from his player (his Internet Specialty applies). This action is extended, and each roll takes one hour of online research. For each success, Louis learns one of the following facts:

1. The graveyard has been featured on several "haunted places" documentaries and websites, but it isn't included on any walking or driving tours of New Orleans because of the neighborhood. Stories speak of the ghost of a widow of a Confederate soldier who goes to the graveyard to pray. (This is Mary, of course.)

2. A fire in the Tremé District last year claimed the lives of 10 people. The fire department ruled the blaze arson, but no arrests were ever made. Witnesses saw a silver Mercedes speeding away. (Meadows and Maldonato disposing of their handiwork after destroying the *vodoun*-practicing Kindred.)

3. Researching similar fires turns up a psychic reader's store that burned about six months ago. (Mary's haven.)

4. Searching a newsgroup for men who frequent prostitutes turns up a story from a man who bought a woman in New Orleans during Mardi Gras last year, and woke up feeling "like I had the worst hangover of my life, except I wasn't drinking at all." He says the prostitute's name was Marie, and that she wore a small gold crucifix around her neck and a brand of cheap perfume called Evening Mist. (Mary, of course. The perfume is available at any department store, and recognizing it afterward requires a Wits + Composure roll.)

- **Asking around:** People in the Tremé District can describe "Marie" down to the crucifix and the perfume, and they can provide more information: She works the streets around the graveyard and around Corpus Christi Church and is often seen in the area of the "old palm reader's place." Getting this information can require one of several different rolls, depending on the characters' methods. Beat-

ing this information out of a bum or gang member requires a roll of Strength + Intimidation. Sweet-talking someone requires Presence + Persuasion. Talking to a street-savvy person requires Wits + Streetwise (a decent bribe adds a +1 modifier). Of course, the Dominate Discipline can be used to force information out of any mortal.

- **History:** Tina can turn to her contact Dr. Montrose for history of the area. In addition to providing some perspective on the Tremé District, Dr. Montrose mentions that a colleague of his studying hate crimes in New Orleans mentioned a psychic reader whose store was burned recently, and who apparently died in the fire. He doesn't know the location of the store, but with this much data, any character could find this information on the Internet or at the library.

- **Other vampires.** The characters might talk to Father Marrow or attempt to find Alexander, Prince Vidal or even Maldonato for more information. Alexander has seen a prostitute he knows as a vampire in the Tremé District but has never questioned her. If the characters visit Father Marrow, go to Scene Two. Vidal is unavailable. The characters can contact Maldonato using the number he gave them. If they mention the fire, he admits that he and Meadows destroyed a cabal of blasphemers and that Mary must have escaped. He advises them that she can probably disguise her features using her Disciplines, and that she might not even rile the Beasts inside them like other vampires do.

Scene Two: Meeting Savoy

If the characters venture to Corpus Christi Church to meet with Father Marrow, they wind up meeting Antoine Savoy, the self-styled Lord of the French Quarter, as well. The characters might venture to Corpus Christi searching for Mary, or to speak with Father Marrow about her.

Read the following aloud:

This church seems small and dingy after your visit to the Holy Name of Jesus, but also safer somehow. As

*you walk in the front doors, you see the font in the center of the aisle and remember Maldonato's insistence that you genuflect. As you look about the church, you hear Father Marrow's voice. "Welcome back. There's someone I'd like you to meet. Prepare yourselves. You'll likely react with fear." Another vampire enters from a door at the back of the church, and, as Marrow predicted, you (**indicate Louis and Tina**) feel your Beasts telling you to flee.*

The man is a short and thin, with strong European features. His hair is dark, as is the facial hair that hovers just between a five-o'clock shadow and a true beard. He wears a casual suit and a gentle smile. "Good evening," he says. "My name is Antoine Savoy."

Stop reading aloud.

Allow the players to converse with Savoy and Father Marrow. If they ask about the friction between Savoy and Vidal, Savoy explains that Vidal is a bigot — he dislikes blacks and Creoles as well as the *vodoun* culture. Savoy states that while he might not practice *vodoun* himself, it is an offshoot of his own faith and he respects it. He believes that Vidal is on his way out and will soon sink into a death-like sleep. (According to Savoy, this happens to most elder vampires.) He intends to take the reins of the city when Vidal sleeps, and he feels that allowing Maldonato to do so would be a disaster of Biblical proportions.

If asked about "Marie," he asks why the characters wish to know. If they come up with a plausible lie or reason that doesn't involve Vidal (such as Jack stating that he believes that Mary Embraced him and he wants to know why), skip to Scene Three. If they say that they are looking for her on behalf of Vidal or Maldonato, read the following section.

Read the following aloud:

Savoy shakes his head. "I understand that you've been overwhelmed by the last few nights. Absorbing all of this in a century is trying enough. But you must understand — the Prince is using you. If you wish to find this woman, I can help you do so, but if you turn her over to the Prince and his lackeys, she will be burned even as she screams for mercy. If you want her to survive, you cannot tell the Prince her name or anything about her. If, of

course, you feel that her crime is great enough to merit execution, then take her to Vidal.” He pauses for a moment, fondles a silver chain with a saint’s medal on it. “But, if the Prince executes her, he’s doing so because she follows a faith other than his. Surely you aren’t so far from your breathing days that you can’t understand how reprehensible that is?”

Stop reading aloud.

Savoy knows where Mary can be found, and doesn’t really care about her specifically. He does, however, wish to plant seeds of distrust against Vidal. If the characters persist in asking him how to find her, he’ll tell them, regardless of their stated goals.

*Scene Three:
Mary’s Prayer*

In this scene, the characters find and confront Mary. What they do with her is up to them.

The characters can find Mary’s haven in several different ways. The most obvious way to find her is through Savoy. He knows the location of her primary haven. The characters’ investigations through the computer or on the street might also lead them to the storefront.

Read the following aloud:

The storefront stands alone across the street from a boarded-up gas station. Burned bits of books and other debris still litter the parking lot. The front door is gone but is replaced by thick boards that sport a NO TRESPASSING sign. The windows are similarly secured. The back door of the building is still there, but it hangs loosely on its hinges.

Stop reading aloud.

Mary doesn’t use either door to enter the building. She has rigged a small section of the wall to slide in, allowing a tiny gap that she can squeeze through. Spotting this section requires a roll of Wits + Composure (-2 dice because of its hidden nature). Moving the wall requires a Dexterity + Larceny roll. Slipping through the gap is automatic for Becky Lynn and requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll for everyone else.

Kicking in the front door requires five successes on an extended Strength + Brawl roll. Entering the back door is a bad idea. Mary has the doorframe rigged with a bucket of jagged glass. The player of the first character to enter through the back door must roll Wits + Athletics with a -2 modifier for the trap. If the roll succeeds, the character steps back quickly and the bucket misses. If the roll fails, roll four dice. For every success, the character suffers one point of lethal damage.

Once the characters have entered the store, proceed.

Read the following aloud:

The store is one large room, strewn with garbage bags stuffed full of unidentifiable junk. A stack of books sits on a makeshift table fashioned from two construction barrels and a broken door, and one fire extinguisher hangs on each wall. The floor is covered with soot and bloodstains, and the walls are decorated with strange symbols drawn in flour. At the front of the room, next to the front door, is a semicircle of candles and pictures of the Virgin Mary. Kneeling in front of those pictures is the woman you have come to find.

She is a black woman, possibly in her late 20s, but the disfiguration of her face makes her true age indeterminable. She wears a short skirt and a halter-top, and she has short black hair. A blond wig sits on her left with a small stack of money. She stares straight ahead at a large painting of the Virgin Mary, never even acknowledging you, her lips moving in prayer. Tears stream down her face, and looking closer, you can see that the tears are of blood.

Stop reading aloud.

Mary will stop praying long enough speak to the characters if they speak sharply to her or touch her. Upon seeing Jack, she only cries harder and apologizes profusely, saying she had no choice but to do what she did.

What happens next depends on the characters’ intentions and actions. If they tell Mary that they intend to take her to the Prince, she flies into a frenzy of terror and attempts to flee. She will fight anyone in her way in an attempt to escape.

If the characters tell Mary what they have seen and what their true mission is, she states that she didn't know that the graveyard was special to the Prince (which is true) and swears to remove her possessions and never return. While she doesn't mention it, she also has no intention of returning to this haven, since it's obviously been compromised.

If the characters ask questions of Mary, she answers them to the best of her ability. She Embraced Jack because she felt he was clever and strong enough to survive the experience, and she had always admired his courage and street savvy. She was afraid not to capitulate to the blackmailer's demands, because she knew that if Maldonato and the Prince found her, they would destroy her. She is willing to face whatever justice Jack decides upon for her, even if that involves her destruction, but she is terrified of being turned over to the Prince and his people.

This scene can end in any number of ways, depending on the characters' actions.

- The characters might fight and destroy Mary, never learning her true motives for Embracing Jack (or even that she did). In this case, Maldonato and the Prince are disappointed about not learning more about her, but they thank the characters and agree to let them reside in New Orleans as long as they abide by the Prince's laws.

- They might capture her and take her to the Prince. If so, they are asked to wait while Maldonato extracts information from her. Listening to her screams is truly heart wrenching, and any player whose character has a Humanity of 5 or more must make a roll to avoid losing Humanity (roll four dice).

- If the characters release Mary and claim that they never found her, Prince Vidal asks that they keep an eye out but thanks them for their efforts. He allows them to stay in the city, provided they check in with Alexander every week.

- If the characters take Mary to Savoy, Savoy vows to look after and protect her, and he thanks the characters for their bravery and charity. He recommends that they not offend the Prince, however, as Vidal is a dangerous enemy. (And although Savoy won't admit to it, he would be grateful to have a set of eyes in the Prince's circles.)

Aftermath

When all is said and done, the characters are known to both Savoy and Vidal and their respective factions, and have taken the first step in uncovering the mystery of their entry into undeath. Mary Embraced Jack, but who put her up to it? What kind of Kindred could wield enough influence to arrange the Embraces of four people into four separate clans, and then entice them to abandon their new vampiric progeny? And more importantly, *why*? These and other questions will be answered in the forthcoming sections of the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle.

The rest of the chronicle can be found online at www.worldofdarkness.com, where you can download new scenarios, play them online and find out more about **Vampire: The Requiem** and the World of Darkness. Then, on August 21st, you can pick up the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Vampire: The Requiem**, which reveal everything you need to tell your own stories of the undead.



MARY

Mary is a vampire who has hunted in the Tremé District for the last four years. She began her Requiem in Baton Rouge and fled to New Orleans after her religious beliefs conflicted with those of the vampires in power there. Knowing that Vidal and his people were devout Catholics and members of the Lancea Sanctum, she felt that his policies would be a better fit for her.

After two years in New Orleans, however, she fell in with a group of vampires practicing *vodoun*. The religion incorporates many beliefs and practices from Catholicism, so Mary didn't feel that she was betraying her beliefs by participating. As her understanding of this new faith developed, she felt that she had more in common with other *vodoun* practitioners than with Sanctified vampires.

Several months ago, servants of Vidal (including Maldonato and one named Meadows, whom the characters don't have occasion to meet in **Mary's Child**) found and destroyed this coterie of Kindred at the Prince's behest. Mary escaped, and has been in hiding and conflicted about her faith ever since. She was recently blackmailed into Embracing Jack McCandless, but she doesn't remember by whom. She knows that her choice was either to Embrace someone of her choice and leave him in Louis Armstrong Park or to have the Prince informed of her religious

practices. Like the characters, however, many of the details have been wiped from her mind.

Mary uses the stone casket in the graveyard to hold her spare clothes. She placed the cell phone there moments before the group arrived (she is strong enough to lift the casket lid alone). She still haunts the Tremé District, using her command of *Obfuscate* to feed on the tricks she turns. She stole her cell phone from an unfortunate John, in fact. The blood she uses in her *vodoun* rituals is normally her own, though she does sometimes use rat's blood.

Mary has several havens, but her primary one is a burned-out storefront in the Tremé District. The store was once a "spiritual advisor's" place of business. The woman who worked there read tarot cards and performed palm readings and other such mystical feats. She had no actual supernatural ability, but she was an open practitioner of *vodoun*, and a street gang burned her store a few months ago. She perished in the blaze, and Mary has used the store as a haven ever since.

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Unaligned

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Medicine 1, Occult 1 (*Vodoun*)

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 4

(Escaping Handcuffs), Stealth 4 (Being Overlooked), Survival 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3 (Picking up Johns), Socialize 2, Streetwise 4

Merits: Haven 2 (the burned-out store)

Willpower: 3

Humanity: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Lust

Health:

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Blood Potency: 1

Vitae:

Disciplines: Obfuscate 3, Vigor 3
Mary has the same basic Kindred powers as the four players' characters. She can spend one Vitae per turn to heal or to augment Physical Attributes. Her Obfuscate and Vigor Disciplines function just as they do for the characters (see Jack for Obfuscate; Tina for Vigor).





Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Prelude: Last Night



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

Last Night written by Matthew McFarland.

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Last Night

Welcome to **Last Night**, the first of the online components to the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle. We assume your players have experienced the events of **Mary's Child** and learned a bit about their characters as vampires, about the nights of New Orleans, and have seen hints of the draconian politics of the Kindred. In this story, though, we're going to take a step back and examine what happened to the four characters on their last night as mortals. During this story, the players will take on the roles of the same characters, but without the special traits of **Vampire** characters, including Disciplines, Vitae, and so on. The characters are free from the murderous urges of the Beast... for the moment.

Theme and Mood

The theme of **Last Night** is lost time. **Last Night** moves at a different pace from **Mary's Child**—the game can move much more slowly, as the characters aren't racing against time. In fact, you should subtly encourage them to linger. This is, after all, the last night they will spend breathing, although the characters don't know it (the players do, of course, which should only add to the horror). Although the story can only last about seven hours in game time (from sunset at roughly 5:30 PM to midnight when the characters are abandoned in Louis Armstrong Park), the characters should feel as though they have as much time as necessary to do what they want. No matter what they do, they will, in coming years, look back on their last night and lament that they didn't have enough time, or that they didn't make the most of it. This is part of the tragedy of the Requiem.

The mood of the game should be almost surreal. Most mortal inhabitants of the World of Darkness never notice anything beyond the normal and physical, but another world of monsters and enigmas exists right under their noses. The characters of **Danse de la Mort** enter that world upon their Embrace into the ranks of the Kindred; this is, therefore, their last night before taking their first steps into the World of Darkness. Since you have already played through **Mary's Child**, this game should take on the feeling of nostalgia—or, better yet, of a half-remembered nightmare. As you describe settings and scenarios, emphasize this growing feeling of mystery. Make incidental Storyteller characters exchange knowing glances. Describe shadows moving at the periphery of the characters' vision. The aim here is for the characters to be able to look back on their last night as mortals and know that *something* was happening, that they were not chosen by accident—even if they don't know the extent of the conspiracy that stole their lives.

Preludes

Last Night is a special kind of story called a *prelude*. This story exists to give background to the characters and the existing chronicle, to show how the characters got to where they are. In film terms, it's a prequel... but roleplaying games aren't films. With five people determining where the story goes, rather than just one director, a prelude story can spin wildly out of control and leave the characters somewhere very different than where **Mary's Child** assumes they began. As a Storyteller running **Last Night**, you have two general options when dealing with this issue, depending mostly on the temperaments of your players.

Some players look for continuity to match up, and will happily assist you in making sure that all four characters wind up in Louis Armstrong Park just after midnight on Ash Wednesday, just as **Mary's Child** presented. With this sort of group, you should have no problem gently steering the action to lead to that conclusion, and if you have to be somewhat heavy handed at times, no one will mind.

Other players, though, like to have total control of their characters and if they feel their characters would or would not do something, regardless of what has gone before, then that's how it's going to be. It's also possible that you haven't played through **Mary's Child** yet and want to run the Prelude before that story, which opens up the possibility of significant changes to the storyline.

Before we get into the events and challenges of the characters' last night as breathing mortals, let's examine some of the biggest potential changes and hiccups that might occur and how to deal with them. You might want to glance over **Mary's Child** again to familiarize yourself with the names and events of that story before trying to digest this information. We'll wait.

Storytelling Techniques

Normally, a prelude involves only one player and the Storyteller running through any number of formative events in a character's life. A prelude for Becky Lynn, for instance, might include a scene or two with her father, establishing her family's emphasis on propriety and decorum, and perhaps establish that she has rebelled in the past and then stepped back in line under her father's influence.

This prelude, however, establishes the Embraces of the characters together. A group prelude isn't necessarily any more difficult to run than a single prelude, but it does require attention to different sorts of details. Below are a few Storytelling techniques that may help you to present **Last Night** in a satirizing and entertaining manner.

Cross-Cutting

Last Night differs from **Mary's Child** in that the characters don't begin together. This means that you, as Storyteller, must bring them together so that they can interact. Hopefully, the players will help you out, picking up on cues and interacting with each other so that you don't have to spend an entire session nudging them into the right place, but even if they do, each character is going to spend a short amount of time separated from the group. A Storytelling technique called cross-cutting therefore becomes essential.

This technique refers to "cutting" the action between two or more scenes. It happens often in television shows, and can function well in Storytelling games if you remember a few rules of thumb:

- **Keep it short:** Don't spend more than 15 to 20 minutes on any one scene.
- **Watch the other players:** If the folks not involved in the current action start to look longingly at the TV or the bookshelf, it's probably time to cut to a different scene.
- **Don't waste time:** Use time in cross-cut scenes to steer the characters together, not to allow an attention hog to monopolize the game. Reward players who help you bring the group together by awarding the greatest amount of time and attention to the largest group of players.
- **Leave them hanging:** Don't feel the need to completely resolve a current scene or action before cutting to a different player. Leaving things on something of a cliffhanger can help keep players engaged.

The characters might spend a great deal of this story alone or in pairs, and that's fine, as long as you jump between scenes often enough for them not to get bored, but stay with each player long enough that they don't get flustered or confused.

Accommodation

Players like it when things go their way. That doesn't necessarily mean they want nothing but good things to happen for their characters, or for every challenge to be resolved without a struggle; indeed, most players enjoy conflict (that's the essence of any story, after all). But players do *not* like to attempt interesting and innovative solutions to a conflict only to be shot down by Storyteller fiat. When we say "accommodate the players' desires," we simply mean that if a player thinks of something to do or an approach to a problem, it should at least have a *chance* of working. This is true even if—especially if—the approach isn't covered in the text of this story. What makes table-top roleplaying games different from (and, if you'll excuse us, superior to) computer "roleplaying games" is that the players are free to have their characters take any action within their capabilities and the players' imaginations. Don't stifle that—encourage it.

That said, innovation brings a chance of failure. If the player attempts something dangerous or chancy, feel free to call for a roll and even apply a negative modifier. The tone of **Vampire: The Requiem** isn't cinematic high-action, it's moody personal horror. Getting into a fight, for instance, *always* carries serious risks, and you shouldn't feel the need to downplay that. At the same time, if the player comes up with a particularly brutal method of incapacitating an opponent, you might let it succeed—but then impose a Morality roll. Success can come at price, but it should be attainable.

Railroading

Most of the time, "railroading" is a negative term with regard to Storytelling games. It refers to the Storyteller forcing the players, directly or indirectly, to follow the pre-arranged plotlines of the story. Indeed, pre-written scenarios (such as the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle) are often accused of relying too much on railroading.

The truth, though, is that the Storyteller sometimes *needs* to impose structure on the game. If everyone is having fun interacting with each other in character, let it go on as long as necessary. But be aware that eventually the players are going to want to find out what happens next, and you can't always wait for them to talk to the right person or turn down the right street. You're perfectly within your rights as Storyteller to move the action along when necessary (and even to ask the players outright if they are ready for that to happen, especially if you're playing with a new troupe and haven't learned to read the group dynamics yet).

One of the more obvious methods of railroading is having a more powerful character show up and tell the players' characters what they should be doing. Some troupes don't mind this sort of thing, but others feel like puppets when given this kind of direction. You might consider more subtle methods of nudging the action along, such as dropping enticing hints. Many players can't resist having their characters investigate doors left ajar, conversations drifting out of half-open windows, strange noises from the basement, and other such obvious snares. More accurately, many players *don't* resist these things, because they know that by investigating them they get to see the story unfold.

New Systems: The Vampire Template

The characters in this story are built using a set of rules designed to create mortal characters. A set of additional points and rules called a template is then added on to make the characters vampires (as you first saw the characters in **Mary's Child**). Here, we explain how this template works from both a system and story point of view.

When a mortal is Embraced, she becomes a vampire of her sire's *clan*. Four clans were introduced in **Mary's Child**: Daeva, Gangrel, Mekhet and Ventruë (a fifth clan, Nosferatu, makes a first appearance in **Last Night**). A clan determines much about a vampire's capabilities: each clan bequeaths three Disciplines that the charac-

ter can learn more easily than others. Also, each clan imposes a weakness on its members. Beyond these factors, however, clan doesn't impose much upon a vampire. Much like genetics might influence a person's skills or temperament but does not choose a career for her, a vampire's clan indicates the character's blood-born abilities but doesn't decide on how that character spends her Requiem.

When a mortal becomes a vampire, she must become a predator. The power of the sire's Vitae improves a certain facet of that mortal. What facet improves is based on clan; each clan has two "favored Attributes" that can improve upon the Embrace. What follows is a brief explanation of what Attribute improved for each character and why:

Becky Lynn Adler: Stamina (the other choice was Composure). Becky is skilled in social situations and can think well on her feet, but the Requiem is dangerous. The blood of her sire strengthened her body to allow her to better withstand the rigors of vampirism.

Tina Baker: Manipulation (the other choice was Dexterity). Already a capable combatant, Tina was Embraced into a clan of social predators and seducers. The Embrace added an allure to her that wasn't present before.

Louis Maddox: Resolve (the other choice was Presence): Louis, as a mortal, didn't have the determination necessary to be successful. The Embrace awakened in him a hunger that allows him to hunt down and feed on other people.

Jack McCandless: Intelligence (the other choice was Wits): Jack relies on stealth to hunt, rather than brute force or seduction. He therefore needs to solve problems and think laterally, and Intelligence aids in that.

In addition to the favored Attribute, vampires gain the Blood Potency trait, which measures the mystical power of their undead blood. Starting characters also gain three dots in Disciplines. Each clan has three Disciplines that the members learn most easily. Tina, for instance, excels in Celerity, Majesty and Vigor. Not all of the Disciplines have been revealed up to now, but others will come to light in future installments of *Danse de la Mort* (and characters will have the opportunity to learn them). A starting character must have two of the three Discipline dots assigned to in-clan Discipline, but the third can be placed into any Discipline.

Knowledge of the Future

Most of the time, players faced with portraying their characters' pasts will jump to the task of helping the troupe to figure out how the group came to be in their current situations. In this case, the players know that their characters began *Mary's Child* in Louis Armstrong Park with very little memory of the previous night. The players will probably be happy to assist you (and each other) in getting their characters to that point, rather than taking the knowledge of what is about to happen (they are pulled before Prince Vidal and interrogated) and using it to decide whether or not they want to, say, leave town.

You might, however, have players who attempt to use the story they have already experienced as a way to "win" the Prelude. If you have such a player in your group, we're sorry. There's really very little you can do, except to explain that in a Storytelling game, no one "wins" in a conventional sense. As long as there's a unique

and compelling story being told, or, at least, everyone has a good time, then everyone wins. If a player is being disruptive simply to annoy you or the other players, excuse him from the Prelude and say that he can come back and play the next story, which takes place after *Mary's Child*. At least then, he can't make life difficult for you by using information that his character doesn't have yet.

Fifth Character

Introducing a fifth player becomes possible in this story. As mentioned above, there are actually five clans, and on the night of the characters' Embrace, a member of this fifth clan Embraced someone as well. For reasons discussed in the story, she did not leave her new childe in the park with the others, but he was indeed present during the events of *Last Night*. If you have a fifth player who would like to take on the role of Edward Zuric, we have provided enough information to allow this (and having Edward as a player-controlled character is actually the best way to go). If not, or if you would prefer to keep the troupe to four players, you can play Edward yourself as a Storyteller character.

Our Story Begins...

Last Call unravels over a single act, divided into four scenes. These four distinct moments bring the players' characters together and carry them through the very last evening of their mortal lives.

Scene One: Sunset

This scene consists of some vignettes designed to establish where the characters are and what they are doing as sun sets on Mardi Gras, and to steer them toward a club called Didi's, where several of their future sires lurk.

As *Last Night* begins, the characters are in various places in and around the French Quarter. Inform the players of where their characters begin:

- **Becky Lynn** is in the French Quarter, flanked by two chaperones in her father's employ, watching the crowds and trying to decide where to go first.
- **Tina** is also in the French Quarter, leaving the hotel room where she crashed for the night after a party. She has plans to go to a jazz club called Didi's to catch up with some people she met at the party last night.
- **Louis** is in an Internet café in the French Quarter, at his favorite table, facing the street.
- **Jack** is picking up a package from a bookstore in the French Quarter.
- **Edward** is playing guitar in an impromptu jam session on Bourbon Street. Several other folks are involved, playing portable instruments (harmonica, bongo drum, etc.). Passers-by throw money into Edward's guitar case.

Read the following aloud to all players:

It might be something you've seen year after year, or it might be a vacation or a new experience, but no matter what, it's Mardi Gras in the Big Easy. This is the last night of Mardi Gras celebration: tonight at midnight, Fat Tuesday becomes Ash Wednesday, and tomorrow thousands of penitents will receive ash

on their foreheads as a sign of contrition for the sins of the past year. Thousands more will head home, perhaps poorer, certainly exhausted, some with stories to share and some with secrets to keep forever.

Read the following to Becky Lynn's player:

The throngs of people go on forever. You've seen Mardi Gras on television before, but your family never allowed you to experience the festivities for yourself. But now, just a few weeks after your 18th birthday, your father gave you permission to venture into the French Quarter and see the spectacle. You have chaperones, of course, and you're smart enough to know that they're here both to protect you and to keep you out of trouble. But the lights, the colors and the people, the masses of people, make it worth the trouble of going out under guard. You know that many people come to New Orleans during Mardi Gras to have affairs and one-night-stands, and you wonder just what that must be like, to find someone to inspire that sort of passion, even if for a short while.

Read the following to Tina's player:

The streets of New Orleans are dangerous. Even with the masses of people, you know how easy it would be to be pulled into an alley or slipped a drugged drink. You'd resolved to be careful, but then your friends from the university split on you the first night you were here. You hope you can find them again before leaving. Somehow, though, even those concerns seem far away. The people here aren't malicious—drunk, perhaps, but not malicious. People throw you beads and you hear the familiar cry that follows it. Sexist and degrading... maybe. But maybe it's all in fun? In any event, you have plans. Some folks you met at a hotel party are meeting up at a jazz club called Didi's, and invited you along.

Read the following to Louis' player:

The noise outside is stifling. You're seriously considering leaving the café and retreating to your apartment... but then, you say that to yourself every year. This is Mardi Gras, and you know, looking out the café window into the French Quarter, that you could stay here all night and watch people wander in to buy coffee and beer and never be able to predict what sorts of folks you might see. This is the problem with Internet friendships—that is, all of yours—you don't get to see people. This year, as every year, you decide to stay a little longer.

Read the following to Jack's player:

How the hell do you always get stuck working on Mardi Gras? It isn't that you mind—hell, you've seen this festival slide downhill every year—but the number of people in the city make delivering anything difficult. Of course, the dispatch said that this package was going to the Tremé District, which isn't exactly a nice neighborhood, so the increased police presence typical of the season is actually welcome. Fighting your way through the crowds to get into this bookstore, you wonder what book is so important that it needs to get delivered by courier today.

Read the following to Edward's player:

This is why you came to New Orleans in the first place. Well, truthfully, the van of lovely college gals who stopped to pick you up on Interstate 55 were headed here for Mardi Gras, but you'll take fate's blessings when you can get them. Now, hanging around

outside a fairly posh restaurant, playing your guitar while another fellow wails on a harmonica and another bangs out a beat... yeah, this is good stuff. The stack of bills and change in your guitar case is growing, and that's nice, but you've eaten today, anyway. That's not the important thing.

Read the following to all the players:

You take a pause from current activities to glance to the west. The sun's final rays stretch out from the horizon, covering the city in a haze of gold and red, illuminating the party-goers, marking the final day of the Mardi Gras celebrations. And then the light is gone, and only wan twilight remains. All of you feel a momentary chill, as though something other than the time of day has changed—you all feel a brief but intense longing for company, for human contact, but you are alone among the throngs. Looking about, the other people here seem alien and distant, their cheers and shouts a language you have no recollection of, their faces twisted by the twilight into grotesquerie.

And then the feeling passes, the language returns, the faces normalize, and here you are in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. What better way to spend an evening?

Stop reading aloud.

Ask each player what they wish their characters to do. If they have strong ideas, allow the players to pursue those ideas. If they wish to simply continue doing what they are doing, run the vignettes provided for the characters. At present, only two of the characters have goals imposed on them by the story (Tina and Jack), but the other three are nearby (Louis' café is across the street from Didi's, Edward is playing less than a block away, and Becky Lynn and her companions are nearing the area).

The object here is to draw the characters closer together, using Didi's jazz club as a focal point. If any of these characters attempt to get into the club on their own (that is, they go directly there without going through the vignette), have the players roll Presence + Socialize (Striking Looks and Fame both apply as positive modifiers for this roll, and bribing the bouncer with at least \$30 is good for a +2 modifier as well). Success means the character is admitted past the line, while exceptional success means the cover charge is waived. Failure means the character is stuck in line with everyone else.

Me and My Shadows (Becky Lynn)

You should assign names and personalities to Becky Lynn's chaperones. If Becky Lynn's player is amenable, ask her to help you establish their relationship with each other and with Becky Lynn. Are these men friends? Are they members of the Adler family, or just employees? Have they chaperoned Becky Lynn before? Does she resent them or is she grateful to have them around? Answering these questions will give their deaths later in the story a much greater impact.

For now, spend some time roleplaying, taking the role of the chaperones and discussing with Becky Lynn what the plans for the evening are. You might even have one of the other players take on the role of one of the chaperones, just so you don't have to hold up two ends of a three-way conversation (which can become confus-

ing very quickly). After a few moments, one of the chaperones excuses himself and ducks into a restaurant, saying that he's just seen someone that he knows. He's gone for a few minutes, and then returns, saying that he was mistaken. If Becky Lynn has been undecided about what to do tonight, or if her player has not expressed any interest in going to Didi's, the chaperone mentions the club and says that the manager is a friend of the family. He gently encourages Becky Lynn to go to the club, at least for a while. If the player was already inclined toward going to the club, the chaperone doesn't make the suggestion, but does try to make sure Becky Lynn isn't distracted away from going to Didi's. Have Becky Lynn's player roll Wits + Empathy. If the roll succeeds, Becky Lynn notices that her chaperone seems a little dazed. If she asks, he says that just didn't get much sleep last night.

What's really happening here is a bit more sinister. Becky Lynn's future sire has used the Dominate Discipline to force the chaperone to bring Becky Lynn to the club, where he intends to seduce and then Embrace her.

Hot Licks (Edward)

Have Edward's player roll Presence + Expression to put on a good show for the crowds. If the roll succeeds, they applaud and throw money in his guitar case. If the roll fails, Edward misses a few notes, people walk away, and the other musicians shoot him some disapproving glances. If the player rolls five or more successes, Edward puts on a dazzling display of musical acumen, and the crowd applauds and cheers. In this case, a man passing by with a trumpet case leans in and asks if Edward would like to perform with him onstage at a jazz club just down the street, offering a respectable sum of money for an evening's work.

Opportunity Knocks (Louis)

Read the following to Louis' player:

The line outside the jazz club across the street continues to grow by the minute. Every time the door to the café opens, strains of music drift in, and you wonder how difficult it would be to get in. Some people don't seem to need to wait in line... of course, those people are important and good-looking. You turn your attention back to your computer.

Someone taps on your table. You look up to see the man at the next table looking at you with a slightly panicked expression. He looks about your age, but is thin and well dressed. An extremely expensive-looking laptop computer sits open in front of him. "Maybe you can help me," he says. "This damned thing froze up, and frankly I'm not all that good with computers." In response to your questioning look, he says, "I own an Internet company, but I mostly do marketing and managerial stuff. Anyway, can you help me out here?"

Stop reading aloud.

Louis can fix this glitch without his player making a roll. The man, who introduces himself as Nathaniel Dubois, is grateful. He attempts to draw Louis into a discussion of what Louis does for a living, trying to find out his ambitions, politics and social life.

Again, Nathaniel does not exactly have the most wholesome of intentions. He intends to Embrace Louis, in hopes of using his expertise later on. He does not wish to use Disciplines to sway Louis in any way, but will if necessary. After a

bit of conversation, Nathaniel says that he is meeting with some business partners at the club across the street (Didi's, of course), and asks Louis to join him.

If Louis agrees, read the following aloud.

Nathaniel packs his computer away in its case and the two of you walk across the street to the club. You start to wander instinctively toward the back of the line, but Nathaniel glances at the man at the door and slips him a fifty; the bouncer waves you both inside. Nathaniel smirks at you. "I hate waiting in line."

Stop reading aloud.

Special Delivery (Jack)

Read the following to Jack's player:

The bookstore has a white sign with red lettering that reads "Rare Books," but the sign is angled so badly that you can't see it from the sidewalk unless you know exactly where to look. The front door is locked, but a minute of persistent knocking gets a shout of "come around back!" from someone inside the store.

The back door is shut, but as you walk around the store a woman opens it from the inside and beckons to you. She looks perhaps thirty years old, with black hair streaked with red. She wears gold jewelry and a black business suit, and looks over a pair of wire-rimmed glasses at you. "You're here for the package, right?" Without waiting for an answer, she hands you a padded envelope. "Please be careful with this," she says. "You know where it's going?"

Stop reading aloud.

As mentioned earlier, Jack knows that the package is going to the Tremé District, and has the address in his van.

Continue reading aloud.

"I have another errand for you, if you'd like," she says. "I don't want it to be an official job, but I'm willing to pay." She hands you a slip of paper indicating a dollar amount equaling, you figure, about two month's salary. Warning bells go off immediately; nobody offers this kind of money for legal activity.

Stop reading aloud.

The woman (who's name is Sarah, if Jack asks) wants Jack to drive four people to Louis Armstrong Park around midnight. She can only provide pictures and names of two of them (Becky Lynn and Louis) at this point, but will provide information on the others as soon as she can. She provides Jack with a cell phone that can receive pictures and text for that purpose. Sarah also says that the people don't yet know that they're going to the park tonight, but they will by the time they'll need to leave.

At this point, have Jack's player roll Wits + Investigation. If the roll succeeds, Jack recognizes Becky Lynn's picture and knows that she is the daughter of a prominent New Orleans family. He does not recognize Louis.

Jack's player may well decline this offer; not only is it probably on the wrong side of the law, it's just *weird*. If he does decline, Sarah's first response is to offer more money. She will even let Jack name his price, but insists on only paying 25% in advance (she has no intention of ever paying him the rest, anyway). If he still refuses, Sarah uses her vampiric powers of persuasion to convince Jack.

If this does become necessary, avoid simply telling Jack's player that he is in Sarah's power. Instead, inform the player that Sarah's proposition seems quite reasonable, that while this errand might be off the books, it isn't really *illegal*. She hasn't, after all, asked him to take people anywhere against their will. And besides, he could certainly use the money. Don't say anything to suggest that the urge to serve Sarah originates from her. Jack creates his own justification for doing so. If the player balks at this you can explain to him that *something* is affecting Jack, but that Jack himself doesn't realize it.

Once Jack has agreed to the errand, Sarah gives him the address of an Internet café in the French Quarter where he can find Louis. By the time he gets there, however, Louis has already left with Nathaniel. Jack can ask the café employees, or if his player doesn't think to do so, you can have Jack notice Nathaniel and Louis entering the club (this means that Jack must find his own way in).



WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

Sarah is a vampire, the one who arranged the Embraces of all of the characters. She possesses some skill with the Discipline of Majesty. Full game traits for Sarah should not be necessary for this story, and therefore aren't provided. Sarah's full game traits will be explained in future installments of **Danse de la Mort**, and her reasons for arranging the Embraces are explained in "Dramatis Personae," below. For now, just bear in mind that Sarah wishes to keep the number of people involved in the Embraces to a bare minimum, because she is hiding from Prince Vidal and his minions. This is why she wants to enlist Jack's help in getting the other characters to the park, rather than involve another person.

If she needs to use the Majesty Discipline to get Jack to agree to her "errand," she will. She'd rather pay him off, however, as she'd prefer that the characters remain untouched by supernatural powers, because mortals under the influence of such Disciplines can sometimes be detected by perceptive Kindred.



Party Time (Tina)

Read the following to Tina's player:

Pressing through the crowd, occasionally checking the directions you wrote for yourself on hotel stationery, you approach the jazz club. Even from here, you can see the line, and smile to yourself. You have a knack for getting into clubs, no matter how stiff the competition. You start to cross the street, but a careless partier bumps into you, spinning you around. For one split second, in a nearby alleyway, you see a man with a young face and sandy blond hair staring at you, drawing his finger across his throat. A few more people cross in front you... and he's gone, as though he was never even there.

Stop reading aloud.

If Tina investigates the alley, she finds no trace of the man there.

If Edward is still playing his guitar, Tina will pass by the area where he and his impromptu band are performing. Have Edward's player give a description of Edward to the rest of the troupe. You might also consider having the other musicians take a break at this point, freeing Edward up to talk with Tina.

Scene Two: Didi's

This scene serves to bring the characters together into a group, and introduce them to Becky Lynn's sire.

Getting all of the characters into the club is necessary for the next scene in the story, but don't feel the need to rush it (remember, allow the characters to linger over their last night as mortals). All of the characters have at least some impetus for entering the club. All of them have seen the growing line and know, therefore, that this is a hotspot. Tina actively has plans to go there, and Louis has just received an invitation.

Tina and anyone with her can get in without waiting in line (thanks to Tina's Barfly Merit). Anyone else must get in on his own as outlined above.

Read the following aloud the first time any characters enter the club:

The sound of the crowd outside fades away as you walk into Didi's, replaced by a jazz trumpet. The club is large, but it's absolutely packed. The main room is round, and the stage sits at the far side of the room. Most of the tables are already full.

Stop reading aloud.

Each of the characters will have different experiences upon entering the club, depending on who they are with and why.

Edward: If Edward got the invitation to perform onstage, he is actually let in through the back entrance, given a chance to wash up a bit, and then he and the trumpet player take their places and begin playing.

Becky Lynn: She and her entourage have no trouble securing a table. The club's manager recognizes her and has one cleared immediately. He is not actually a friend of the family, despite what Becky Lynn's chaperone said, and does not come over to talk with them. Becky Lynn's future sire, John Harley Matheson, is at a table behind hers, waiting for the right moment to approach.

Tina: If she enters the club on her own, she doesn't see the people she was supposed to meet right away, and must stand in the dark at the back of the club waiting for a table. As she does so, she hears a whisper in her ear: "If this was your last night, what would you do differently?" When she turns, no one is there. Almost immediately, she hears someone call her name. Her friends from the party last night have a place saved for her.

Louis: Nathaniel does indeed have a table waiting near the stage. He and Louis sit down, order their drinks and chat for a moment. Have Louis' player roll Wits + Composure. If the roll succeeds, Louis notices Nathaniel glance toward the back of the room, and then start. Nathaniel's eyes widen momentarily, and then he picks up his laptop and bolts for the exit, looking terrified. Although Louis has no way to know it, Nathaniel has just seen John Harley Matheson, and was unable to control the fear that the Predator's Taint engendered.

Jack: Of all of the characters, Jack is probably going to have the hardest time getting admitted to the club (unless he heavily bribes the bouncer or the player comes up with another way in). Try to time it, though, so that Jack enters the club just as

Nathaniel is leaving. Jack sees Louis sitting alone, and recognizes him from the picture. Of course, he also recognizes Becky Lynn, but she is at a table with two other people, which might deter Jack from approaching her.

The next phase of the story takes place in the club. Again, we've presented a series of vignettes designed to further the game along and facilitate interaction between the characters. If the players gravitate toward one another naturally, forego the vignettes if they would get in the way of this interaction. When the characters have come together into a group, move on to Scene Three.

These vignettes can include any or all of the characters, but are written to include two of them specifically. You might need to nudge things along to position the appropriate characters so that the vignettes work. Most of the time, this is as simple as stating that a character goes to the restroom and finds herself in the appropriate place while returning to the table.

Blood Calls to Blood (Tina, Edward)

Lucas Gates, Tina's future sire, has been stalking and scaring her all night. He already knows that John Harley Matheson is a vampire, but the two of them have met before and so do not have to fight the urge to frenzy tonight. Andrea Ouellette, Edward's future sire, is a different matter—not only have she and Lucas never met before, but they hate each other on sight, and neither of them is particularly good at controlling their emotions.

At some point when Tina and Edward are close together (when Tina is near the stage if Edward is performing, or any time if they came here together), read the following aloud:

The music dies down for a moment as a feral scream emits from a dark corner of the room. A woman comes stumbling backward out of that corner, obviously shoved by someone. She is an athletic black woman, hair braided into tight rows, wearing tattered blue jeans and a black shirt. When she regains her footing she stands over six feet tall. The most notable thing about her, however, is her skin. Her arms are covered in black tattoos, but her very flesh seems to move, writhing in the faint light. Around her, you can see other patrons staring in horror and revulsion at her. She stares into the corner, as if waiting for someone, but her expression betrays a hint of fear.

The person who emerges from the shadows doesn't look very impressive. He has sandy blond hair and looks perhaps 19 years old, with a young face and a fair, almost pale complexion. He wears cargo pants and a brown leather jacket over a white t-shirt, but the most noticeable thing on him is the knife in his right hand. He lunges for the woman with an angry shout.

Stop reading aloud.

Neither of these vampires are in frenzy yet, but they are both nearing that state. If Tina intervenes to help Andrea, she can regain any spent Willpower points for acting within her Virtue (Fortitude). Likewise, Edward can gain a single Willpower point if he intervenes with the intention of acting like a hero in order to bed Andrea later (his Vice is Lust).

Run this combat like any other. Tina and Edward can both take an action before Andrea or Lucas get a chance. Inflicting even one point of damage to Lucas (i.e., hitting him successfully) snaps him out of his burgeoning frenzy, and he ducks back into the shadows and disappears using Obfuscate. Andrea calms herself if anyone speaks to her.

If Edward involves himself in any way, Andrea approaches him and asks what he intended to do. No matter the answer he gives, Andrea decides to Embrace him, but flees the club before the police arrive. She also points to Tina and instructs Edward to stay with her and make sure the man with the knife doesn't return for her. If Edward stays out of it, Andrea grabs him seemingly randomly and gives him the same instruction (she does not know that Lucas intends to Embrace Tina or even that Lucas is part of the same conspiracy that she is, and wants to protect Tina from Lucas' predations).

Southern Gentleman (Becky Lynn, Louis)

Run this vignette when Becky Lynn and Louis are both seated at their tables.

John Harley Matheson has had his eye on Becky Lynn for some time, but hadn't planned on Embracing her quite yet. Sarah's offer (see *Dramatis Personae*) changed his plans somewhat. While the other sires aren't aware of each other or the intended childer, Matheson has made it his business to know who the others are and who they plan to Embrace. He's only been able to nail down two of the targets (Louis and Jack), because the other two sires (Lucas and Andrea, who will Embrace Tina and Edward, respectively) stay well out of Kindred political circles in New Orleans.

John used his powers of Dominate on one of Becky Lynn's chaperones earlier in the evening, planting suggestions to help him get close to the young lady without raising any alarms from her bodyguards. Now, sitting a few tables behind her in the club, he notices that Louis is sitting alone (John didn't notice Nathaniel run out), and decides to make himself known to both future vampires.

He has a waiter extend an invitation to both Becky Lynn and Louis to join "the gentleman at that center table," for a drink. Becky Lynn's compromised chaperone offers to escort her while the other remains at their table. Louis, of course, can accept or refuse as his player sees fit, and Matheson doesn't push the issue. If Becky Lynn or Louis are interacting with any of the other characters, or if you run this vignette after "Blood Calls to Blood" (above), Matheson extends his invitation to the other characters as well.

Read the following to the players of any characters that receive Matheson's invitation:

*The man sitting at the table has a young face, but his bearing and his expression are pure Southern charm. He wears a gray suit, perfectly tailored to his slim frame, and beams at you as you approach his table. He stands to shake your hands (**indicate any male characters**) and kisses yours gently (**indicate any female characters**), and then sits down again, indicating the empty chairs.*

A waiter walks over and motions toward his glass, empty but for ice cubes. "No, thank you," he says. "I'm driving tonight." The waiter takes your drink orders and then disappears.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, have each player whose character is present roll Wits + Investigation – 2 dice. If the roll succeeds, the character notices a puddle of whiskey beneath the table. As there is no liquid actually on the table, it seems that the gentleman has poured his drink out. If this is brought to his attention, he laughs it off, saying that the whiskey here isn't very good anyway.

Continue reading aloud:

"My name is John Harley Matheson," the man says. "And I do hope you'll forgive the intrusion. I'm here alone tonight, and I wanted some company. I don't get out much, you see," he says with a sly smile. He turns his attention to you (indicate Louis or any other male character present) and looks at you as though waiting for an introduction.

Stop reading aloud.

John is a pleasant enough conversationalist. He skillfully manipulates the discussion so that he himself is never the topic, and if asked direct questions acts uncomfortable and changes the subject. He doesn't answer questions about what he does for a living or similar inquiries, in part because he still thinks in terms of 19th century etiquette (where asking such questions of a gentleman would be impolite), and in part because he isn't conversant enough yet in 21st century matters to give convincing answers. He listens raptly to any character talking about such topics as computers or other relatively new technologies (when John was last active, computers existed but weren't nearly as prevalent). If the topic turns to Mardi Gras and the debauchery outside, his demeanor slips a bit and he states that he does not approve of young women "exposing themselves like Storyville harlots." Any character who lives in New Orleans (Louis, Becky Lynn, or Jack) knows that Storyville was razed in 1917, and that John is much too young to remember the place with any clarity. If someone calls him on this or any other anachronism he might make, he laughs it off and claims to have been raised in a very traditional family, and is well schooled in history.

John continues buying drinks for everyone present. Have all the players involved (assuming their characters continue to drink) roll Stamina + Socialize. If the roll succeeds, the character manages to hold her liquor well. If not, the character is drunk, and therefore suggestible. John mentions that some friends of his will be meeting at a party later, and if the characters wish, they could come along. John even has a car waiting (this provides an alternative to the characters riding to the park with Jack, or if you like, John could simply be referring to Jack).

Tina is Chosen (Jack, Tina)

Run this vignette any time Jack is with other characters. The ideal time to run it would be when Jack is sitting at the same table or nearby to Tina.

The vignette is simple enough. Jack's phone rings and a text message shows YR 4TH PSSNGER. Then the picture flashes to a photo of Tina... at whatever table she's currently seated.

Play this vignette for horror. Looking around the bar reveals nothing, as Lucas (who took the picture and then sent it to Jack) is hiding via the Obfuscate Discipline.

Scene Three: The Park

In this scene, the characters travel to Louis Armstrong Park, probably under false pretenses, and receive the Embrace.

Getting There

The most challenging thing about this scene might well be getting the characters to the park. This is why it's important to forge relationships between and among the characters in Scene Two. Louis Armstrong Park, while perhaps pleasant enough during the day, is part of the Tremé District and is therefore not a good spot for tourists and partiers to visit after dark. Sarah has decided that the park is going to be the site of the Embrace (she has her reasons, they just won't become clear to the characters for some time yet), and so the sires must maneuver their prey there. Below are some suggestions about how the characters, singly or in a group, can arrive at the park:

- Jack, especially, knows the dangers of the district, but he also has his instructions. You can remind Jack's player of the money awaiting him if he delivers his passengers to the park. What excuse he uses to get the passengers into his car is up to him, though John Harley can certainly provide reasons to get in the car.
- John Harley Matheson doesn't necessarily tell people where they are going when they get into his car. He tells them about a party at his mansion, making it sound as inviting as possible, and keeps them talking throughout the trip to the park.
- Becky Lynn's untainted chaperone has strong feelings about the trip. If that chaperone is left alone with John Harley Matheson for even a moment, however, Matheson uses the Dominate Discipline on him. Both chaperones then state that they will protect her and that she might as well enjoy her night on the town.
- Louis can receive a cell phone call from Nathaniel, apologizing for running out (he claims a medical emergency) and asking Louis to meet him at the entrance to Louis Armstrong Park.
- If Tina goes along to the park, hopefully Edward will follow at Andrea's request. If Tina doesn't go along, Lucas follows and attacks her (see Tina's Embrace, below), regardless of where she is.

At the Park

When the characters arrive at the park, read the following aloud:

The entrance to Louis Armstrong Park looks foreboding, but inside the park you can hear music playing. Although the neighborhood isn't the best, apparently Mardi Gras doesn't pass it by. You can see other cars out, but the only other people in evidence are a prostitute standing on the other side of the street and a woman standing near the entrance. The streetwalker whistles at you, but doesn't approach. The other woman, however, waves at you and approaches your car.

She looks perhaps thirty years old, with black hair streaked with red. She wears gold jewelry and a black business suit. “Good evening,” she says. “My name is Sarah, and I’d like to thank all of you for coming out here tonight.” **Skip the rest of this paragraph if John Harley is not with the characters.** She glances at John Harley, and they both nod almost imperceptibly to one another.

Sarah turns her attention to you (**indicate Becky Lynn**) and your chaperones. “I know you,” she says. “Becky Lynn Adler, right? We’ve met—I was at a party your parents held a few years back.” She smiles at you, and the smile should be warm, but all you can think of is snakes.

A breeze picks up, and the night seems to grow colder. You all wonder, for a moment, what you are doing here—and then Sarah looks up as though addressing the entire area and says, “Go ahead.”

The streetwalker appears behind you (**indicate Jack**), placing a hand on your shoulder almost tenderly. The shadows lengthen, and then part to reveal the man with the knife. He grins at you (**indicate Tina**) and gestures with the knife. The tall, black woman from the club steps onto the sidewalk from the park, and points to you (**indicate Edward**), beckoning.

Another man steps out from behind the park entrance—you (**indicate Louis**) recognize Nathaniel. He gestures to you frantically, mouthing the words “come here!”

Sarah steps back as though waiting for something, but you each have other concerns now.

Stop reading aloud.

Ask the players what they would like their characters to do. Have the players roll for initiative (one ten-sided die added to their Initiative Modifier) and act accordingly. Below are the initiative ratings of the various characters involved and what they plan to do.

The Sires' Actions (Turn 1)

Initiative	Action
18	John Harley's fingertips elongate into sharp claws, and he tears open both chaperones' throats. They fall to the ground, dead.
16	Lucas waits for Tina to act. If she runs, he chases her (see Tina's Embrace). If she fights, he engages gleefully.
15	Mary grabs Jack's hands and pulls him into the park (see Jack's Embrace).
14	Andrea uses Celerity to run to Edward, grabbing his wrists and holding him fast.
13	Sarah takes no action during all of this, but if attacked employs the Dominate Discipline to freeze her assailant in place.
12	Nathaniel waits for Louis to join him (see Louis' Embrace). If Louis runs, Nathaniel chases him.

What happens during this first turn of conflict is important. The characters might join to protect each other or panic and run off in separate directions. In either case, Sarah notes the characters' behavior carefully, for future reference.

The characters will, of course, wind up being caught and Embraced by their sires. The rest of this scene details the Embrace of each character. These Embrace vignettes are tightly scripted—whatever happens, the characters are going to become vampires—and in many cases players will gladly go along with this. They will expect, however, to have some impact on their characters' fate, and you should allow that. If Becky Lynn's player wants her to fight back, say, let it happen—you can even have her roll some dice to land a few blows—but her sire will ultimately overwhelm her and proceed with the Embrace. Remember what the characters do in these situations and look for opportunities later on in the chronicle to refer back to them. That way, the players are rewarded for their choices.

Becky Lynn's Embrace

John Harley probably has to chase down his intended child, but in any event, when he corners her he does not approach violently. He wipes the blood off his hands daintily, and then opens his hands to show her that he means no harm.

Read the following aloud to Becky Lynn's player:

John Harley approaches you with his hands at his sides, his fingers splayed out, apparently attempting to show you his benign intentions. The feral light in his eyes when he tore out your chaperones' throats, however, hasn't subsided.

“Becky Lynn,” he says, “I could have chosen anyone in this entire city, but I chose you. You know why?” He stops a few feet in front of you. “Because you remind me of a time when being a gentleman meant something, before the country became a contest of vulgarity.” He smiles, and as much as you hate to admit it, the smile is charming. Even the glint in his eyes is... strangely arousing. “You are a lady, a true lady, and I can help you to become so much more. Regretfully, I can't be there right away, but we have nothing but time.” He stretches out his hand to you.

If Becky Lynn's player states that she takes John's hand, read the following aloud and then skip the next paragraph of this section: His hand is cold and soft, and he pulls you close to him, kissing you, first gently, then insistently. “Becky,” he whispers in between kisses, “you can't imagine how long I've waited for you.”

If the player wishes Becky Lynn to refuse, run or take any other hostile action, read the following aloud: John surges forward and catches your hands in his. A single red tear runs down his cheek. “It's not the first time a lady has refused me,” he says. “But I understand your fear. Please know I'll always help you, if you need me.”

His head darts forward and he bites into your throat. You should be feeling terror or pain, but instead you feel the strangest sort of pleasure, something between sexual and narcotic. Your body feels cold, but at the same time you feel safe, here in his arms.

He releases your neck, and you feel yourself about to fall. Everything around you fades away. Your vision blurs, and sounds become distant echoes. You hear his voice saying, "Kiss me," and then his lips against yours again. Something begins to trickle down your throat, and you don't try to identify it, you simply swallow it down, accept it, because it comes from him.

What follows is pain. Your entire body shudders, then flails as you try to beat your own limbs against the ground hard enough to break them, just to deaden the pain somehow. You are dimly aware of John holding your hand, whispering encouragement, but the sudden knowledge that you are dying overshadows this gesture.

Stop reading aloud.

Tina's Embrace

Lucas has no intention of easing his child's transition into undeath. On the contrary, he wants to make it as painful as possible. As mentioned earlier, if Tina runs, Lucas chases her. He lets her gain a little distance, but doesn't allow her to leave the park. Lucas is much faster than Tina (thanks to his Celerity Discipline) and can catch up to her whenever he likes.

When he does catch her or if she stands her ground, read the following aloud:

The man lashes out with his knife, cutting your forehead. Blood begins to drip into your eyes, but you don't feel any pain yet. You know you will soon, though, as soon as your body has a chance to register what's happening. You raise your hands to cover your face, but the man moves faster than your eyes can follow and plunges the knife into your back.

"You know," he says, pacing around you as you struggle to remove the knife, "you're the sixth girl I've killed this year. Third at Mardi Gras alone. It's shaping up to be a good year, isn't it?" He darts forward and jerks the knife out of your back. You hear a rib crack and feel the blade scrape bone, but you refuse to fall. "Tough bitch, aren't you? Well, good. Then I chose well. Hate to think I was going to give all this to some little princess like that one Matheson picked." He grimaces, and kicks your legs out from under you.

"Well, I could do this all night, but Sarah wants you dead before midnight." He grabs you by the hair and sinks his teeth into the back of your neck. You feel excruciating pain for a split second, and then a calming, drugged feeling spreads over your body. You fight, fight it as much as you can, trying desperately to break free, but he is stronger than you. You feel bitter tears stream down your face as the last of the blood leaves your body, and you swear that you'll get him for this....

He drops you onto your back and straddles your chest. He slices his hand open with his knife and you feel rain on your lips. Not rain. Blood. "Drink up, bitch," he whispers. You can see he's excited, but he doesn't pant or even breathe noticeably.

The light from the streetlamps fades, but you feel blood running down your throat. You repeat your vow once more before everything goes black.

Stop reading aloud.

Louis' Embrace

Nathaniel, as stated, tries to beckon Louis to join him behind one of the entrance signs. He is attempting to spare Louis the more painful parts of this experience. Specifically, he doesn't want Louis to see what happens to the others. If Louis runs, Nathaniel chases him down, but when he catches up he looks pale and feral (he has expended a great deal of Vitae to catch Louis).

Read the following aloud (if Louis runs, skip the first sentence):

Nathaniel motions you behind the sign and crouches there. "Okay," he says, "I know this is terrifying for you, but you have to listen now. I don't have a choice. I had to agree to this, and you seemed like a good candidate. I would have liked more time to explain this to you, but this is all we have." Nathaniel looks you up and down, and then focuses on something over your shoulder. "Oh, God." You try to turn your head, but he reaches out and grabs your face, keeping your attention on him. "Listen. If you remember nothing else, remember this: Miss Opal will help you." He then grabs your wrist and, with a look of utter distaste, sinks his teeth into it.

You feel the pain of the bite, and raise your hand to strike him, but your hand doesn't seem to have the strength. A pleasant, numbing cool spreads from your hand throughout your body, and lying here on the ground, waiting for the next step in this surreal nightmare, just seems preferable to fighting back. Your body grows cold, but you can't muster the energy to shiver. Just as you are about to black out, you find Nathaniel's wrist at your mouth, cut open and bloodied, and apparently he wishes you to drink from him....

...And though you cannot understand why, you do. As you drink, you feel your limbs reviving, your strength returning, and a hunger awakening within you. You've had ambition before, of course, but this is different. It's more primal, even purer, in a way. As you drink, ignoring the pain as your body dies, you have a horrible suspicion that this hunger is almost, but not entirely, related to blood.

Stop reading aloud.

Jack's Embrace

Mary, of course, is the streetwalker the characters saw before (and who was at the center of the first scenario, **Mary's Child**). She grabs Jack as soon as she can and tries to pull him somewhere safe (his van is a good choice). She is much stronger than he is, but doesn't wish to hurt him. If he resists, she begs him to come with her, stating that his compliance is all that can save him from pain. If he still resists, she forces him, tears of blood streaming down her face.

Read the following aloud:

The prostitute pins you up against (the seat, a tree, the ground, depending on where they are) and her eyes brim with bloody tears. "I'm sorry, Jack," she says. "Sarah made me. They would kill me if they knew. Oh, God, forgive me." With that, she sinks her slender fangs into your throat.

The bite is instantly and indescribably pleasant, as absurd as it seems. She holds your hands down, but you don't resist; as

horrifying as the circumstances are, you take comfort in her embrace.

She releases your neck quickly, and the night air comes crashing down like a cold wave. You begin to shiver, and can only watch as she drags a fingernail across the skin just above her right breast. Blood wells up, and she raises your head to her flesh, murmuring, "Drink, now. Drink, and rise up."

The blood burns your lips, but you can't stop drinking it. You feel the world fade around you, and you realize just how easy it is to get lost in the world, just how deep the shadows go. As if reading your thoughts, she whispers, "Don't be scared of the shadows, honey. Just learn them, learn to take them and wrap yourself up in them, and then no one can see you but God." She pulls you back from her skin, and strokes your face. A burst of pain doubles you over, and you feel your heart spasm in your chest. "He's always watching," is the last thing you hear her say.

Edward's Embrace

Andrea, Edward's sire, first rushes to him and grabs him. If Edward runs, she can easily catch him, but doesn't try to hurt him. If he strikes her or struggles too much, though, she snaps his arm in frustration.

Read the following aloud to Edward's player:

The woman stares at you, the flesh on her face still moving somehow. The pain of her grip and the terror you feel paralyze you, and the woman looks around almost contemplatively. "Look, Edward," she says. "You aren't going to understand this. This is all so wrong. But I'll admit, it is going to change things around here." She shakes her head. "I never would have gotten involved if I'd know that psychopath was in on it, and I can imagine what you must think of me. I'll explain everything later—I promise—but right now, you just close your eyes and trust me."

She steps forward and holds you close, and even as you try to run, you find she is too strong. You can feel that constant, horrible writhing on her flesh up next to you, and then you feel two pinpricks of pain in your neck. The pain lasts only a second, and then you feel bliss. You slump to the ground, lost in memory and music, the life leaving your body.

The bliss ends as she holds a bloody hand to your lips. You take her blood, and the nightmare begins. She is feeding you fear, the raw horror of the night made into liquid. She is a monster, and by drinking of her... you will become one as well.

As she stands up, you feel your body changing, your skin trying to crawl away. "It's okay, Edward," you hear her say, but you don't think she believes it.

Stop reading aloud.

Scene Four: Midnight

In this scene, the characters arrive at the location where the last story began, and they learn (and soon forget) Edward's fate.

Read the following aloud:

All of you are dimly aware of being moved, your heels scraping the ground, and then being laid out in the middle of the park. You still can't seem to bring your bodies to move, however.

From somewhere above you, you hear John Harley Matheson's soothing voice. "Are we just going to leave them here? What if they don't wake up before dawn?"

Another male voice, reedy and vicious. "So what? They burn."

"Shut up, Lucas. I didn't arrange all of this just to watch them burn up." Sarah's voice, probably. "They'll be up and around in a few minutes. All of you can leave. Thank you for your participation."

"And what about our agreement?" This voice, so quiet you can barely hear it, is Nathaniel's.

"You'll each get what's coming to you," says Sarah. "Now, please, go on. I still have work to do."

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player roll Stamina + Resolve. Becky Lynn and Louis both effectively receive a +1 modifier because the Embrace has raised one of those Attributes. If this roll succeeds, the character is able to move again, but cannot yet stand. All the characters can see, though, and note that five of the vampires are standing around them in a rough circle, but Mary is missing. Andrea is glowering at Lucas.

Continue reading aloud:

"Sarah, you didn't tell me that this bastard was part of this." Andrea stares at Lucas; Lucas takes a nervous step back.

"I didn't tell you anything you didn't need to know," Sarah retorts.

Stop reading aloud.

Any player who failed the previous roll may roll again for the same results. Any player who succeeded may roll Strength + Resolve (Louis has a +1 modifier for his raised Resolve). Failure results in no change, success means the character can now stand, but cannot walk without falling.

Continue reading aloud:

"They're waking up," says Nathaniel. "We need to go."

"I'm not leaving," snarls Andrea. "I'm not leaving him here. I don't like this at all."

John Harley clears his throat. "Well, ladies, I'm afraid that I am in danger of overstaying my welcome in this fine city, so I'll be off. Nathaniel, may I offer you a ride?" Nathaniel nods cautiously, and the two men walk off.

Andrea walks over to you (indicate Edward) and helps you up. "I'm taking him along. You didn't tell me enough about this, Sarah."

Sarah turns on her and bares her fangs. "Andrea, you knew what I was trying to find out. You're tainting the experiment even now. Put him down, let me erase his memory, and get out of here!"

Stop reading aloud.

Have any players who succeeded on the first two rolls make a Resolve + Composure roll (Louis again has a +1 modifier for his increased Resolve). If this roll fails, the characters can still only stand unsteadily. If the roll succeeds, they can now

walk slowly. If any character starts walking away, Sarah catches up with him and pulls the character back toward the others.

Continue reading aloud:

“They’re gaining their strength back, Andrea.” Sarah now sounds desperate. “Put him down and go!”

“Don’t push me, Sarah,” she snarls back. You can see madness in her eyes, and her fangs extend past her lips. “You don’t want to make me angry.” She throws you (indicate Edward) over her shoulder. “I don’t give a damn about your experiment. I’m going to teach him the Coils myself.” She begins to run away. Sarah takes a few steps toward her, but turns her attention back to the four of you.

“All right, then,” she says. One by one, she stares into your eyes, and you feel your memories melting away, the last night that you spent as mortals slipping away from you. Somewhere in the distance, you hear a clock strike midnight....

You open your eyes and look around. Your vision takes a moment to clear, but you can hear people and music—the sounds of Mardi Gras. It sounds distant, though; you don’t seem to be in the French Quarter.

The night is cool, and you feel a breeze flow over you from the north. It should chill you, but you do not shiver or feel goose bumps rise. The light from the street lamps seems distant and hollow, and your clothes feel cold and rough against your skin. Something is different, something is terribly wrong, but you can’t muster the feeling of fear or outrage. You do feel something, though. You feel hunger.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, the story has come full circle (perceptive players might even recognize the last two paragraphs as the first two paragraphs of *Mary’s Child*). Have each player roll Wits + Resolve (Louis gains the +1 modifier again). For each success, the character retains one piece of information from this story. This memory returns as the character sleeps and only becomes fully available *after* the events of *Mary’s Child*. It is up to you, as Storyteller, to decide what is an acceptable piece of information, but we recommend, for example, that the name “John Harley Matheson” count as one success. That he is Becky Lynn’s sire might count as a second, and that he murdered her bodyguards could count as a third. Someone should probably remember that Edward existed at all (which will enable the characters to look for him in the next story). Likewise, hopefully someone allocates a success to remembering Sarah. You might want to have the players write down which facts their characters’ successes allow them to retain, so that the players cannot simply coordinate to ensure that all characters remember everything.

Dramatis Personae

The most important Storyteller characters in *Last Night*, of course, are the characters’ sires and Sarah Cobbler, the vampire who orchestrated their Embrace. The information provided here only gives their names, histories and motives for becoming involved with Sarah Cobbler’s conspiracy; their game traits aren’t important during this story (but will be revealed in future installments in which they become important).

At the end of this section, we present character background on Edward Zuric along with a character sheet for him, and new ones

for the other four players’ characters. These sheets represent the characters before their Embrace—the four main characters appear as vampires in *Mary’s Child*, and Edward will as well in a later scenario. The characters’ Merits are explained in *Mary’s Child*.

Sarah Cobbler

In life, Sarah was a scientist. Her field was the human mind, and she specialized in anger and impulse, trying to find the root of human rage. She learned what rage truly was one night when she found herself caught between two Kindred locked in frenzy. One finally fought the other off, but by that time Sarah’s throat had been torn open and she lay dying. The winner of the fight Embraced her, perhaps out of guilt, perhaps out of gratitude.

Sarah belongs to a covenant of vampires that seeks to transcend the undead condition. She is a fairly young Kindred of Clan Mekhet (the same clan as Jack McCandless and Mary). Sarah was Embraced in 1962 and since then has labored to understand the effect called the Predator’s Taint. This is the effect that causes vampires to flee or attack (or at least resist the urge to do so) when they meet other Kindred. Sarah theorizes that vampires “imprint” on the first vampires they meet, much like young animals do, and since the first Kindred one meets is typically one’s sire, this is why vampires of like clans have similar interests and personalities. She therefore decided to arrange the Embraces of five different people into five different clans and wipe away their memories, ensuring they would “imprint” on each other. She hopes this will give her insight into the vampiric condition enough to grow in personal power and status within her covenant.

Image: Sarah changes her appearance as much as she can, dyeing her hair and changing clothes and styles almost nightly, but she almost always wears gold jewelry. She was in her late 20s at the time of her Embrace, and is an attractive if severe-looking woman.

Nathaniel Dubois

In life, Nathaniel Dubois was a capitalist of the first order. He turned his incisive mind and clever tongue to making himself and his employers (whomever they happened to be; he never kept a job for too long) as great a profit as possible. He was known as something between a con man and a negotiator, and fell into the habit of getting his business partners very drunk (and therefore suggestible) before making important decisions. The 1980s made Nathaniel very rich indeed... but everyone makes mistakes.

As computers and the Internet started to boom, Nathaniel, struggling to keep up, made a few questionable decisions and wound up driving his employers (who trusted his advice implicitly) into bankruptcy. That night, he received a visitor—a Ventrue Kindred who had been using Nathaniel’s employers as an easy source of funds. He explained to Nathaniel that he wasn’t happy with what had happened, and opined that all he needed was a little historical perspective. The Embrace was Nathaniel’s sire’s way of giving him that.

Nathaniel spent his first decade as a vampire finding his feet and coming to grips with his new existence. He discovered that it wasn’t easy to work his way up the ladder in any society of Kin-

dred, because the people above him seemingly never left. Finally, he discovered that some vampires were interested in equal rights for all Kindred, regardless of age, and he fell in with these idealists.

He was still broke, however, and so when Sarah Cobbler found him and asked what he would require to join her experiment, he wanted only money.

Image: Nathaniel is tall and thin, with a friendly smile and thinning brown hair. He was in good physical condition at the time of his Embrace, but his years as a vampire have made him gaunt (he fills out a bit when well fed). He favors tailored suits, but doesn't have the ready cash to dress as he used to, and so his clothes are somewhat out of date.

Lucas Gates

In 1978, a young man in southern Florida who had fantasized his entire life about what it would be like to kill a woman finally worked up the courage to try. Unfortunately, the woman he chose was a vampire. Nearly lost to the Beast, she saw in Lucas the opportunity to inflict horror and bloodshed upon the world, and rather than simply killing him, she Embraced him. Lucas murdered his sire in a frenzy of bloodlust soon after, and set off across the country, finally possessing the power he'd always thought should be his.

As he traveled, though, he realized that he was a weakling compared to most other vampires. He managed to keep those feelings under control until he passed through a city in Georgia and discovered the Prince to be a woman possessed of a strange form of blood sorcery. Lucas, of course, had no idea what he was witnessing, but knew that he was hopelessly outclassed and, burning with humiliation, fled further west. He tried unsuccessfully to learn what the prince had been doing, how she wielded such power, but had no luck until Sarah Cobbler found him.

Lucas wasn't Sarah's first choice for a sire of Clan Daeva, but the Kindred she had originally chosen backed out before Mardi Gras. Pressed for time, Sarah offered to give Lucas the name of a Daeva Kindred she knew who could teach Lucas the arts of blood magic. Lucas accepted, and probably would have anyway, provided he was allowed to torture his childe first.

Image: Lucas was only 18 at the time of his Embrace. He has sandy blond hair, with a young face and a fair complexion. He usually carries a rucksack and keeps at least one hunting knife on him at all times. He refuses to use guns, and if asked makes oblique references to not needing such "dull weapons," but the truth is he knows very little about firearms and is a terrible shot.

John Harley Matheson

Born in 1829, John Harley Matheson was the youngest child of Stephen Matheson, one of the wealthiest land- (and slave-) owners in Louisiana. As he grew up, he learned to be a perfect gentleman. His family encouraged this attention to politesse. After all, it would be in John's best interest to marry money, given that his older brother would inherit the family land and businesses. John didn't bear any grudges toward his family because of this. He understood that politics, familial or

otherwise, was a dance, a game played by specific rules. He had no desire to break them, merely to play the game well. That, perhaps, was what drew his sire's attention.

Embraced in 1848, a few months before his 20th birthday, John realized that the rules had changed. He murdered his brother and other siblings, and then, after a suitable period, his parents. Throughout all of this, his sire taught him that the world of the Kindred worked on rules, just as polite society did. As in life, John Harley chose to abide by those rules rather than break them.

The Civil War came and went, and John's family land was sold to opportunists from the North. He made sure the mansion was never destroyed and land remained mostly undeveloped, but beyond that, he avoided interfering too much in mortal politics. The Kindred, after all, had their own concerns. Somewhere along the way, John Harley Matheson stopped through New Orleans and made an enemy of Prince Vidal. He had not been back to the city since then, until Sarah Cobbler came to visit him on his plantation, only a few nights after he'd awakened from a 20-year slumber, and offered to make sure he was tutored in the politics and niceties of the current age in return for his aid in her experiment. John didn't care one whit about her dabbling in the vampiric condition, but he feels sorely out of place in the modern world. He accepted her offer, but made sure to choose someone who could do his line credit.

Image: John was Embraced as a young man, but his age and experience are evident in his bearing and manners. He has a young face, soft brown hair and eyes, and long, thin fingers. His etiquette is impeccable, but he knows that a hint of indiscretion at times is the best way toward subtle seduction—and he prides himself on always seducing, never overpowering, his prey. He favors soft gray suits and refuses to carry weapons of any kind.

Andrea Ouellette

Andrea Ouellette was attending a movie with some friends when she was abducted, assaulted and Embraced by a vicious Kindred. To this night, she doesn't know why he didn't simply kill her, and she cannot ask him; his Requiem ended in a fire a scant week after he made her a vampire. She drifted on the periphery of undead New Orleans for a time, looking for answers to her unlife, and adopted some nihilistic views. Andrea believed that vampires represented the ultimate in social and moral decay: They were the end of everything, dead people who fed on life, wandering and killing until their luck ran out.

She saw something in rural Louisiana one year that made her rethink those values. She saw a vampire stop a lynching, turn the victim free, and slaughter the would-be murderers. When she asked the Kindred why, he simply said that he might be a monster, but that he had no loyalty to monstrosity. Those words became a sort of mantra for Andrea—that was the sort of monster she could become. Since then, she worked to control her own monstrous urges, eventually joining the same covenant of vampires as Sarah Cobbler.

She isn't sure exactly why she joined with Sarah's conspiracy, and absolutely has had second thoughts. She was afraid, however, of whom her replacement might be if she backed out, and so saw it through.

Edward Zunic

Quote: *I always knew I'd die in New Orleans.*

Background: Edward is a musician, a guitarist who works his way around the country as a street performer. Sometimes, he stays in a city long enough to join a band, but it never seems to work out for long. Edward makes great first impression, but he's impulsive and sometimes volatile—hard to be around for too long. Besides, the road always calls to him.

This isn't the first time Edward's been to New Orleans. In fact, he hasn't missed Mardi Gras for the past three years (it's much easier to attend when you don't have to worry about paying for a hotel, and Edward can always find someplace to sleep). Normally, he makes his best money during Mardi Gras. This year, of course, he wound up with a slightly different set of circumstances than sharing a coed's bed and making some quick cash....

Description: Edward is a fit young man in his early 20s. He has nimble fingers and expressive eyes, red-blond hair that falls below his eyebrows, and a seductive smile. He carries what he owns in a backpack, but his guitar is his pride and joy.

Equipment: Guitar, condoms, switchblade (+1 damage, inflicts lethal wounds), change of clothes, roll of gold dollars.

Virtue/Vice: Edward's Virtue is *Charity*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower points when he helps another at the risk of loss or harm to himself. It isn't enough to share what he has in abundance. He must make a real sacrifice in terms of time, possessions or energy, or he must risk

life and limb to help another. His Vice is *Lust*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he satisfies his lust in a way that victimizes others (though of course, he never sees it that way).

Merits

As a mortal, Edward has no access to Vitae, Disciplines or other vampiric advantages. He does have three Merits, however:

Fast Reflexes (+1): This Merit adds 1 to Edward's base Initiative Modifier. This is already calculated on his character sheet.

Inspiring: Edward is able to rally others in times of great distress, renewing their courage and determination in the face of adversity. Once per game session, he can exhort those around him to redouble their efforts in the face of great stress or danger. The player rolls Presence + Persuasion. If the roll succeeds, any individuals who actively assist Edward and who are within earshot regain one spent Willpower point (not to exceed their Willpower dots). The character may not use this Merit on himself, and may not use it on the same subjects more than once a day.

Striking Looks (+1): Edward is rugged and handsome, so he gains one extra die on any Presence or Manipulation roll to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get his way by using his looks. Remember, though, that because Edward is attractive people tend to remember him.

the World of Darkness

Name: Edward Zurich
 Age: mid-20's
 Player:

Concept: Muscian
 Virtue: Charity
 Vice: Lust

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
 Faction:
 Group Name:

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
FINESSE	Wits ●●●●●	Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
RESISTANCE	Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

SKILLS

Mertal

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●●●●
 Computer 00000
 Crafts 00000
 Investigation ●●●●●
 Medicine 00000
 Occult (urban legends) ●●●●●
 Politics 00000
 Science 00000

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●●●●●
 Brawl 00000
 Drive 00000
 Firearms 00000
 Larceny ●●●●●
 Stealth ●●●●●
 Survival ●●●●●
 Weaponry (knife) ●●●●●

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken 00000
 Empathy ●●●●●
 Expression (guitar) ●●●●●
 Intimidation ●●●●●
 Persuasion ●●●●●
 Socialize ●●●●●
 Streetwise ●●●●●
 Subterfuge ●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

Merits

Fast Reflexes (+1) ●●●●●
 Inspiring ●●●●●
 Striking Looks (+1) ●●●●●
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Flaws

Size 5
 Speed 10
 Initiative Mod 6
 Defense 2
 Armor _____

Health

●●●●●●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Morality

10 _____ 0
 9 _____ 0
 8 _____ 0
 7 _____ ●
 6 _____ ●
 5 _____ ●
 4 _____ ●
 3 _____ ●
 2 _____ ●
 1 _____ ●

Experience _____

Weapons

Switchblade _____ Dice Mod. +1

Equipment

_____ Dice Mod. _____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size
 Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity +
 Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Morality = 7

the World of Darkness

Name: Louis Maddox
Age: late 20's
Player:

Concept: Computer Whiz
Virtue: Temperance
Vice: Sloth

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
Faction:
Group Name:

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence ●●●●○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●●○○
FINESSE	Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
RESISTANCE	Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

SKILLS

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics (research) ●●●○○
Computer (internet) ●●●○○
Crafts ○○○○○
Investigation ●●○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Science ●●○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Drive ●●○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Larceny ○○○○○
Stealth ●○○○○
Survival ○○○○○
Weaponry ●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ○○○○○
Empathy ●○○○○
Expression (online) ●●●○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Persuasion ●○○○○
Socialize ●○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○

OTHER TRAITS

Merits

Encyclopedic Knowledge ●●●●○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

Flaws

Size 5
Speed 9
Initiative Mod 4
Defense 2
Armor

Health

●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Morality

10 _____ 0
9 _____ 0
8 _____ 0
7 _____ ●
6 _____ ●
5 _____ ●
4 _____ ●
3 _____ ●
2 _____ ●
1 _____ ●

Experience _____

Weapons

Pocket Knife

Dice Mod.

+1

Equipment

Dice Mod.

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size
Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity +
Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Morality = 7

the World of Darkness

Name: Becky Lynn Adler
Age: 18
Player:

Concept: Southern Belle
Virtue: Hope
Vice: Envy

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
Faction:
Group Name:

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence ●●●○○○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●●○○○
FINESSE	Wits ●●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●●○○○
RESISTANCE	Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

SKILLS

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●○○○
Computer ○○○○○
Crafts ●○○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Occult (Cajun) ●○○○○
Politics (high society) ●●○○○
Science ●○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Firearms ●○○○○
Larceny ○○○○○
Stealth ●●○○○
Survival ○○○○○
Weaponry ○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ●○○○○
Empathy ●○○○○
Expression ●●○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Persuasion ●●○○○
Socialize ●●●○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge (innuendo) ●●○○○

OTHER TRAITS

Merits

Fame ●○○○○
Resources ●●○○○
Striking Looks (+2) ●●●●○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○
____ ○○○○○

Flaws

Size 5
Speed 9
Initiative Mod 4
Defense 2
Armor _____

Health

●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Morality

10 _____ 0
9 _____ 0
8 _____ 0
7 _____ ●
6 _____ ●
5 _____ ●
4 _____ ●
3 _____ ●
2 _____ ●
1 _____ ●

Experience _____

Weapons

Dice Mod. _____

Equipment

Dice Mod. _____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size
Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity +
Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Morality = 7

the World of Darkness

Name: Tina Baker
Age: early 20's
Player:

Concept: College Student
Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Gluttony

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
Faction:
Group Name:

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
FINESSE	Wits ●●●●●	Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
RESISTANCE	Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

SKILLS

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●●●●
Computer ●●●●●
Crafts ●●●●●
Investigation ●●●●●
Medicine (sprains) ●●●●●
Occult ●●●●●
Politics ●●●●●
Science ●●●●●

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●●●●●
Brawl ●●●●●
Drive ●●●●●
Firearms ●●●●●
Larceny ●●●●●
Stealth (crowds) ●●●●●
Survival ●●●●●
Weaponry ●●●●●

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ●●●●●
Empathy (body language) ●●●●●
Expression ●●●●●
Intimidation ●●●●●
Persuasion ●●●●●
Socialize ●●●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

Merits

Barfly ●●●●●
Brawling Dodge ●●●●●
Contacts ●●●●●
Danger Sense ●●●●●
Striking Looks ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Flaws

Size 5
Speed 11
Initiative Mod 6
Defense 2
Armor

Health

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

Morality

10 _____ 0
9 _____ 0
8 _____ 0
7 _____ ●
6 _____ ●
5 _____ ●
4 _____ ●
3 _____ ●
2 _____ ●
1 _____ ●

Experience _____

Weapons

_____ Dice Mod. _____

Equipment

_____ Dice Mod. _____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size
Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity +
Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Morality = 7

the World of Darkness

Name: Jack McCandless
Age: late 20's
Player:

Concept: Courier
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Pride

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort
Faction:
Group Name:

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	Intelligence ●●●●●	Strength ●●●●●	Presence ●●●●●
FINESSE	Wits ●●●●●	Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●
RESISTANCE	Resolve ●●●●●	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●●

SKILLS

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●●●●
Computer ●●●●●
Crafts ●●●●●
Investigation (street crime) ●●●●●
Medicine ●●●●●
Occult ●●●●●
Politics ●●●●●
Science ●●●●●

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●●●●●
Brawl ●●●●●
Drive (quick arrival) ●●●●●
Firearms ●●●●●
Larceny ●●●●●
Stealth ●●●●●
Survival ●●●●●
Weaponry ●●●●●

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ●●●●●
Empathy ●●●●●
Expression ●●●●●
Intimidation ●●●●●
Persuasion ●●●●●
Socialize ●●●●●
Streetwise (slums) ●●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●

OTHER TRAITS

Merits

Contacts ●●●●●
Direction Sense ●●●●●
Eidetic Memory ●●●●●
Stunt Driver ●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●
●●●●●

Flaws

Size 5
Speed 10
Initiative Mod 6
Defense 3
Armor

Health

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

Morality

10 _____ 0
9 _____ 0
8 _____ 0
7 _____ ●
6 _____ ●
5 _____ ●
4 _____ ●
3 _____ ●
2 _____ ●
1 _____ ●

Experience _____

Weapons

.38 Special (range: 20/40/80)

Dice Mod.

+2

Equipment

Dice Mod.

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • (Buying the fifth dot in any area costs two points) • Health = Stamina + Size
Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity +
Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Morality = 7



Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Part Two: Fury



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

Fury written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

Welcome to the second online installment of the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle for **Vampire: The Requiem**. In this story, the characters are suddenly pulled into a volatile situation involving Andrea Ouellette, Edward's sire. During the confrontation that follows, they stand to learn many things — some unpleasant details about Edward's clan, Andrea's motivations for joining Sarah's conspiracy, and how deadly a vampire can truly be.

Theme and Mood

The theme of **Fury** is risk. The characters must enter hostile territory in order to prevent Andrea from being destroyed, and in so doing they risk their unives. If they don't take this risk, however, Andrea will be ash on the morning wind, and Edward in particular loses a great deal of valuable information. The main lesson to be learned here is that the characters *can* lead unives of inaction, simply hunting and keeping their heads down, but if they choose passivity, they waste their potential (not to mention that the story becomes rather boring).

The mood of this story is, as the title suggests, fury. Andrea Ouellette is a passionate person... but passion is a tainted thing for the Kindred. At any moment, a vampire can explode into a vicious frenzy. In this story, Andrea attempts to gain better control over her Beast using arcane techniques, but the attempt backfires horribly, turning her into a creature of focused rage. Throughout this story, let the players see the madness and anger lurking in the unbeating hearts of all Kindred — be it the seething, righteous wrath of Vidal, the focused, murderous rage of Andrea or Alexander's frustrated lashing out as he vacillates between duty and compassion.

Remember When

Edward, the fifth vampire Embraced with the four original characters, can join the characters at any point in this scenario — most likely when they arrive at Corpus Christi Church in Scene One. Whenever he sees them or they see him for the first time, have the players roll Intelligence + Resolve. If the roll succeeds, they remember Edward as being present at their Embrace.

The other memories the characters carry from **Last Night** (the prelude scenario) should emerge slowly over the course

of **Fury**, ideally as the characters explore the church and face the enraged vampire within. If possible, use events that happen during **Fury** to trigger flashes of memory from the night of the characters' Embrace. Seeing Andrea for the first time, a splash of blood, flashing police sirens, the draw of a knife, even a gentlemanly Southern drawl can all trigger memories. The characters get to act on these memories in the next story.

Off the Beaten Path

With prewritten scenarios, we always run the risk of the players disregarding the storyline and going off on tangents, pursuing events meant to be side plots or curiosities, and generally doing the opposite of what we, the writers, and you, the Storyteller expect. You have two options when the players do this: Steer them back on track, or allow them to run with it.

If you steer them back on track, don't do it in a heavy-handed sort of way. Adjust the clues they find or the events that befall them to lead back to the search for the characters' sires. If the characters go searching for a vampire mentioned in passing and who has no further bearing on the story, that vampire might see Becky Lynn and refuse to speak with the child of "that bastard Matheson." Immediately the characters know that Matheson offended people in the past, and (hopefully) will want to discover why. The main thing is never to make the players believe that they don't have a choice in where the story goes (because they *should* have a choice).

If you decide to run with whatever the players decide to do, you'll be making up a great deal of material yourself, as we can't hope to cover all possibilities in the space we have. If that's acceptable to you, and your players are having fun, then the game is doing what it is meant to do. Make sure, though, that you have some goal in mind for the players (or that they have a goal in mind and you know what it is). Otherwise, the game can simply stretch on as the characters chase clue after clue, not really sure what the goal is. Giving the game some direction isn't tyrannical. It's what the Storyteller *does*.

Storytelling Technique — Running Combat

While the players have seen a bit of fighting already, they face their first serious challenge in this story. Andrea is more powerful than any of them and poses a serious threat to the entire coterie: if the characters wind up fighting her and

Alexander they face a serious chance of losing at least one of their number. As the fight is probably the most significant scene of this story, some advice on running combat scenes is appropriate.

Running combat is a challenge for Storytellers because of the great dichotomy between the time of combat in the story versus the amount of time running the combat scene takes. A turn of combat, after all, takes three seconds in the game, but in real life a single turn can take up to 10 minutes to resolve. A combat scene involving five players and a few Storyteller characters, therefore, can easily take more than an hour of real time, even if the scene only takes up a minute or so in the game.

Also, not every player enjoys combat. Some players simply don't like violence, and others don't mind it but feel that their characters don't have any place in a fight. But just as it's your responsibility to make sure that no character (and player) is left out of the game at any other time, you must do your best to ensure that everyone gets some "face time" during a fight.

Below are some tips on running combat, in **Vampire** and in Storytelling games in general.

- **Know your genre:** The World of Darkness is a horror setting. This means that the characters shouldn't be able to jump into combat, guns blazing, and expect to win because they're the heroes. Even in **Vampire**, where the characters have the might of the undead behind them, they are far from immortal. Combat should always be a risk (see "Theme and Mood," above), because the characters never know the exact capabilities of the being(s) they are fighting. This uncertainty is very much in-genre with the World of Darkness's themes of secrets and horror. Don't lose that focus even when the bullets are flying.

- **Know your audience:** As mentioned above, different players have different opinions about combat scenes. Some players look at them as strategic challenges, some enjoy taking out their own aggression through their characters' actions, and some relish the chance to roleplay their characters in the fluid and frightening environment that combat provides. Odds are that all of your players won't have exactly the same ideas about what a fight scene should entail, so do your best to find what the *troupe* would most enjoy and run the combat as close to that mean as possible. If the troupe wants combat to be brief, a quick interlude of violence before returning to what they see as the meat of the game, don't drag the combat out, even if ending it quickly means fudging a few dice rolls. Likewise, some players feel that combat is the meat of the game and love to pit their characters against opponents in brutal violence. If that's the case, let the fight go on as long as necessary, provided everyone's still having fun with it.

- **Watch pacing:** Critical in roleplaying games in general, pacing is even more important in combat. While the Storyteller system's combat mechanics are meant for smooth, fast-paced play, there are still enough permutations (especially with the players' inevitable complications) that things can become bogged down. You don't have to, and shouldn't, rush a player

who is deliberating on an action, but at the same time, feel free to remind players that their characters don't have any more than a second to debate their actions. Keep the action flowing — you shouldn't spend any more than a few seconds deciding on an action for the Storyteller characters (and we've provided notes on their fighting strategies and probable actions in the appropriate places in the story). If players' eyes start to glaze over, it's time to end the combat.

- **Keep it dramatic:** It's easy, especially after a few turns of combat, to allow the sequence of events to degenerate into: "Okay, roll to hit." "I hit with three successes." "Okay, that one's dead." This kind of attitude, however, does the story a disservice. Remember, when people get into fights, especially when weapons are involved, serious injury or death is usually the result. Vampires can heal themselves of most of the damage they sustain in normal combat, but that doesn't negate the pain they feel in the meantime (some older vampires have learned to block out pain more effectively, since they know that it is fleeting, but this should only serve to heighten the horror for the neonate characters involved in this story). When running combat, describe wounds, tears in clothing, destruction to the environment, screams from passersby, and other such details. If a character takes a bullet to the chest point-blank, the dice might still indicate that he suffers only two levels of damage. If the gun is so close that his shirt smolders, however, the player (and the character) will remember that bullet wound even after he has spent the Vitae to heal the wound.

Along this line, allow players to describe their characters' actions. The genre conventions of **Vampire** don't allow for kung-fu madness or dodging bullets (not without exceptional traits, at least), but the characters should still have their chances to, for lack of a better term, look cool. You can either allow the player to describe what he wants his character to do before dice are rolled and then assign penalties or modifiers to the roll accordingly, or you can wait until the dice are rolled and allow the player to interpret the result. In any case, use visual and visceral details — whether you or the players are doing the describing — to make the scene memorable. Without these details, the fight scene simply becomes a numbers exercise.

- **Be patient:** Combat is the most rules-intensive part of any game, because it has the most variables. Some players are more rules-savvy than others: some catch on quickly to how the game engine works, while others are still going to have trouble understanding what you mean when you say, "Roll Strength + Brawl." And yet, you need to make combat fun and exciting for *all* of the players, and that means not letting the fight become an exercise in arithmetic. This, in turn, means you might have explain, patiently and not condescendingly, how certain aspects of the rules function (possibly more than once). You still need to watch pacing, of course, but don't penalize players for not immediately grasping the game systems. You might consider making a "cheat sheet" of how combat works and what the various maneuvers and Disciplines can accomplish, and handing them out to the players ahead of time. If nothing else, taking the time to type that information out will cement it more firmly in *your* mind.

Combat Revisited

Mary's Child gave the basics of how combat works in **Vampire: The Requiem**. In **Fury**, we take those combat rules a step farther, adding such options as special maneuvers, a variety of weapons and more.

The Last Health Point

In **Mary's Child** we provided you with a simple rule for what happens when a character's last Health point is marked off with a wound: that character is out of action, either because he has fallen unconscious or is bleeding to death. In most cases, that simple rule of thumb works well. However, there are times when it's critical to know just how long a character has left: Can he stay conscious long enough to trip an alarm? Will the ambulance get there in time before she bleeds out?

Just what happens to a character who has marked all her Health points depends on what type of character she is (mortal or Kindred) and what type of damage is in that last box (bashing, lethal or aggravated). Remember that in all cases, less serious wounds are "pushed right" on the Health track by graver injuries. This means that if a character has even one bashing wound, that wound will be the rightmost (and so fill the last box). With that in mind, the various possible results are:

- **If the last wound is bashing (/):** If the character is mortal, she must fight to remain conscious. Every turn, the player makes a reflexive Stamina test (which doesn't suffer from the -3 wound penalty). If she fails, the character falls unconscious. If she succeeds, the player may act normally (note that she does suffer the -3 wound penalty to all actions, however). If the character is a vampire, she automatically remains conscious, but does suffer the -3 wound penalty to all actions.
- **If the last wound is lethal (X):** If the character is mortal, he is immediately incapacitated by the trauma of his injuries. He may also bleed to death: Every minute (not turn, *minute*) he does not receive medical attention, one of his lethal wounds is upgraded to an aggravated wound. If the character is a vampire, he is driven into the deathlike slumber called torpor (see below).
- **If the last wound is aggravated (*):** Whether mortal or undead, the character dies once and for all.

Torpor

Vampires can enter torpor voluntarily, or through physical damage or starvation. During this long slumber, the vampire appears to be a mundane corpse (though he does not decompose) and experiences haunting dreams and visions. The vampire's body remains subject to damage from fire and sunlight. Long periods of torpor can result in a Kindred's Blood Potency rating dropping and in severe culture shock as the vampire rises to find a world very different than the one she left behind (in future stories, when the characters speak with John Harley Matheson, they will discover the effects of this culture shock).

How long a vampire remains in torpor depends on a vampire's Blood Potency and Humanity. Since the characters have not been able to raise their Blood Potency ratings yet, if

they are driven into torpor during this story (a distinct possibility) they simply remain in a death-like state for a short time, based on their Humanity ratings. Those who have maintained a Humanity of 7 would slumber for one week; those with Humanity 6 will slumber for two weeks; those with Humanity 5 will slumber for a full month.

It is unlikely that any character's Humanity rating has fallen to lower than 5 over the course of these stories, but even if it has, the character doesn't remain in torpor longer than a month.

Maneuvers

In hand-to-hand combat, most basic attacks are handled with the simple Strength + Brawl (- target's Defense) roll. This represents any type of simple strike, including a punch, kick, or elbow to the gut. More versatile and even exotic maneuvers — throws, nerve pinches — are learned by studying the martial arts — Andrea Ouellette is schooled in kung fu, for example. There are a couple of special maneuvers untrained characters may perform, however.

Grapple

Characters with high Strength Attributes can gain significant advantage by grappling. Once they get a hold on a target, they may apply a clinch with various effects, from immobilizing the victim to crushing him. The victim does get to fight back, however, so grappling a character with a higher Strength can be dangerous.

The player rolls Strength + Brawl to achieve a hold. The target's Defense is subtracted from the player's attack pool, as normal. If the player gets at least one success, her character has a hold on the target.

If the victim has yet to act in the turn, he may try and break loose at his stage of Initiative. Alternatively, the target may try to turn the tables on his attacker and perform an overpowering grappling maneuver of his own. In either case, roll Strength + Brawl, but the opponent's Strength is subtracted from the dice pool (instead of Defense). Even one success breaks the hold or allows a maneuver to be performed, as explained below. If the attacker's hold is broken, the grapple is over (though the attacker can attempt to grapple again). If the victim's roll fails, he does not free himself or does not accomplish a maneuver. The attacker still has a grip on him. The victim of a grapple can try to free himself or perform a maneuver in subsequent turns, unless he is immobilized (see below).

If in the next turn the attacker still has a hold, he can try to overpower his opponent by making a Strength + Brawl roll. The target's Strength rather than Defense is subtracted from the attacker's dice pool. If the roll is unsuccessful, the attacker still has a hold, but accomplishes nothing more in the turn (he does not overpower his victim). If even one success is gained, one of the following overpowering maneuvers can be accomplished in the turn.

- **Render Opponent Prone:** Both combatants fall to the ground. Either party must break the hold in order to stand again in a subsequent turn.
- **Damage Opponent:** Successes achieved on this turn's Strength + Brawl roll are applied as points of bashing dam-

age inflicted on the character's opponent. The character crushes, squeezes, bends or bites his victim (see above for special bite effects).

- **Immobilize Opponent:** Even one success renders the target immobile. The victim's physical actions are restricted to breaking free (he cannot attempt any overpowering maneuvers of his own), though he could bring mental or some supernatural capabilities to bear (Storyteller's discretion). Furthermore, the victim's Defense does not apply against attacks from opponents outside the grapple. So, if a character immobilizes a victim, attacks on him from the other characters are not penalized by the victim's Defense.

Once an opponent is immobilized, he remains so from turn to turn until he breaks the hold. The player does not need to make further overpower rolls from turn to turn to keep the victim immobilized, but the attacking character can do nothing except maintain the hold. If he dedicates an action to any other effort, the target is no longer immobile. The character still has a grip, but a successful overpower effort is required in a subsequent turn to immobilize the opponent all over again.

Trying to break free from immobilization is handled like a contested action between grapplers. A Strength + Brawl roll is made for the victim, and it's penalized by the holder's Strength. Successes rolled are compared to those that were gained by the holder when he applied the immobilization maneuver. If more are gained, the hold is broken and the victim is free again.

- **Bite:** Characters in a grapple can try to bite one another if they wish. For mortals this is just another form of the "damage opponent" option (above) and inflicts one point of bashing damage per success on the overpower roll. Kindred can do this as well, but their fangs inflict lethal damage instead of bashing. They can also choose to feed instead of causing maximum damage, draining one point of Vitae per turn. Kindred victims lose this blood from their Vitae pool, while mortal victims suffer one lethal wound per point drained. Note that unlike in a non-combat situation, mortals are not overcome by the pleasure of the vampiric kiss and can continue to resist.

Specified Targets

Sometimes a character wants to direct an attack at a particular part of an opponent, or at an object carried by an opponent in order to achieve a specific effect. A character might want to shoot a gun-wielding robber in the hand, for example, or swing a tire iron to specifically hit an opponent in the head. As Storyteller, you impose penalties to the attack roll based on the size of the intended target. A torso might be at -1, a leg or arm -2, a head -3, a hand -4 and an eye (or the "off" button of a machine) -5. If no successes are gained, the attack misses altogether.

The Storyteller determines the result of a successful attack. A successful Strength + Athletics roll might be required for a victim to hold onto a held object, with a penalty to the effort equal to the damage inflicted in the attack. A blow to the head with a blunt object that normally inflicts bashing damage might inflict lethal damage, or cause the victim to be stunned and incapable of action for a turn.

Stake Through the Heart

A stake through the heart, as the characters learn in this story, does not destroy a vampire. It merely renders the vampire immobile. To stake an opponent, an attacker must target the heart. Wielded in hand, a stake calls for a Strength + Weaponry roll. The damage that your character inflicts is lethal and must be sufficiently high to pierce muscle, bone and organ. All totaled, efforts to stake a resisting target are at -4 and a minimum of three points of damage must be inflicted in a single attack. If less than three points of damage are inflicted, the stake sinks in but doesn't reach the heart. There is damage, but not enough to have any special effect on a vampiric target.

Weapons

The characters have access to a few weapons already, but as their existence becomes more and more dangerous, they may seek to acquire others. Damage always adds to the dice pool to attack with that weapon.

Close Combat Weapons

Baseball Bat: damage 2; inflicts bashing damage

Knife: damage 1; inflicts lethal damage

Brass Knuckles: damage 1; inflicts bashing damage; used with Brawl, not Weaponry

Wooden Stake: damage 1; inflict lethal damage; see "Stake Through the Heart," above.

Firearms (lethal vs. mortals; bashing vs. Kindred)

Light Revolver: damage 2; range 20/40/80 yards; ammo: 6

Semi-Automatic Pistol: damage 2; range 20/40/80 yards; ammo: 17 (+1 in chamber)

Rifle: damage 5; range 200/200/800 yards; ammo: 5 (+1 in chamber); not concealable

Shotgun: damage 4, range 20/40/80 yards; ammo: 5 (pump-action) or 2 (hunting model); re-roll 9s and 10s on attack rolls

Our Tale Continues...

As with **Last Night**, **Fury** is meant to be fast-paced, beginning and ending in a single night (from the characters' perspectives). In fact, the main action of this story requires only a few hours, as the characters confront and subdue Andrea, trying to coax her out of her blood madness.

Fury takes place a few nights after the events of **Mary's Child**. The characters have had time to find a haven and make other immediate adjustments to their new existences, but haven't had time to begin any real investigation into what happened to them. Edward has been with Andrea receiving instruction in the Requiem, but she hasn't managed to teach him much more than the basic use of his Disciplines, how to feed, the names of the clans and so on (the things the other characters already know, in other words). She hasn't had more time to spend with him because she has been preparing for what she calls "a major breakthrough." That breakthrough happens tonight.

Up until this night, Andrea and Edward have been squatting at a tenement near Corpus Christi Church. Edward knows of John Marrow, but has not met him yet. When this story begins, Andrea has left Edward at the tenement, telling him that she will be back soon. As he watches, she goes to the church.

Clan Nosferatu

Andrea is a member of Clan Nosferatu. These Kindred are nightmares made flesh, the monstrous horrors of old Greek and European vampire legends. All Nosferatu — or “Haunts” as they are sometimes called — are monstrous in some way. Sometimes this deformity is physical, as with Edward, but sometimes it is merely a feeling that the vampire exudes. In Andrea’s case, her flesh seems to be constantly crawling and writhing, as though her skin were trying to get free of her bones. Some Nosferatu are true monsters, whereas others attempt to move within Kindred society despite the deformity that sets them apart.

Scene One: The Call

This story begins early one evening, about an hour after sunset. The characters can be together or separate (we recommend beginning **Fury** when they’re all together, as it’s easier on you, but if you’d rather bring the characters together gradually, feel free). The coterie receives word that the police have surrounded a church in the Tremé District after sounds of fighting from inside were reported. The characters might hear about this occurrence in any number of ways. Conventional media is an obvious possibility, but Jack McCandless might be sharing a drink with his contact (a cop, remember) when the call for officers comes through. Edward, of course, sees the cops arrive at the church from his vantage point nearby. If any of the characters carries a cell phone, and if Father John Marrow has the number, he might manage to make a call before the Blood Rage overtakes him (see below).

In any case, the characters discover that Corpus Christi, the church that doubles as the haven of their erstwhile ally Father John Marrow, is the apparent site of a hostage situation. The characters might have any number of different responses to this news.

- **Alert a more powerful Kindred:** The characters might decide to contact Prince Vidal, Miss Opal (whom they have yet to meet but whose name they may remember from **Last Night**), Antoine Savoy or any other character they see as an authority figure. If they try, they discover that Vidal and Savoy are already on site, and that their presence would be greatly appreciated, as they have a good rapport with Father John.

- **Go to the church:** Perfect! Simply continue with this scene.

- **Try to gather more information:** If the characters wish to conduct a quick investigation, perhaps calling contacts, they have about 20 minutes to do it. After that, they all begin feeling a strange, irresistible pull toward the church (Vidal’s doing). Edward is not subject to this, but he can see the other characters arrive (see Recognition sidebar). There isn’t much information to be had, anyway. If the characters talk to cops, they can learn that a passerby reported screams and breaking

glass from the church, and that the police are assessing the situation before entering.

What’s Really Happening

Andrea Ouellette occasionally uses Corpus Christi as a haven, and gives confession to Father John Marrow. Andrea, however, also practices strange and arcane rituals designed to allow her to transcend the vampiric condition. She believes that with perfect mastery of these rituals, she can ignore sunlight, the need for blood, and even tame the Beast that drives her to frenzy. She was practicing exactly this sort of ritual tonight at Father John’s church... but something went horribly wrong.

Instead of quieting the Beast, Andrea roused it into a murderous frenzy and, in the process, gave it free reign of her mind and soul. Her rage has now tainted the rest of her personality, including her Disciplines. Her Nightmare Discipline, which under normal circumstances can drive others into fear frenzies, is now raging out of control and sparking frenzied rage in any vampire who approaches her. The player of any vampire who comes within 10 feet of Andrea must roll Resolve + Composure once per turn until she either fails (at which point the vampire enters frenzy) or accumulates 3 successes. The effects of this frenzy are listed below under “Blood Rage.”

Because the Blood Rage is an effect of the Nightmare Discipline gone awry, characters with any proficiency in it are immune to the effects. In **Fury**, this applies to Edward (note that he can still enter a normal frenzy if provoked).

Father John succumbed to this frenzy and attacked Andrea, but she beat him into torpor without sustaining much injury herself. She is now struggling as her conscious mind tries to regain control and her Beast cries out for blood, driving anyone around her to madness.

The City’s Elite

By the time the characters arrive, a half-dozen patrol cars surround the church, and sirens indicate that more are coming. If the characters listen to conversations among the police, they can learn that a SWAT team is en route, but that the captain of the local precinct has forbidden anyone to enter the church until further notice.

Any character whose player succeeds on a Wits + Streetwise or Academics roll realizes that this is strange. There have been no reports of shots fired and no suggestion that this is a hostage situation, meaning that some attempt at entering the church is probably justified.

After the characters have looked around a bit, read the following:

Four vampires stand across the street, watching the police scurry about. You recognize three of them: Prince Vidal, Antoine Savoy, and Alexander, one of the Prince’s soldiers. The fourth is a woman you have not met. She stands between Vidal and Savoy, her body tense. She is dressed in an ash-gray suit, and you notice that her hand doesn’t leave her purse. Judging from her posture, she clutches a weapon there.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters don't approach quickly, Alexander notices them and whispers to Vidal, who waves them over. If the characters felt a supernatural compulsion pulling them here before, they realize it comes from him.

Read the following aloud:

As you approach, you feel the tension — no, the rage — in the air. You knew, on some level, that Vidal hated Savoy, but not until now did you truly grasp the depth of that feeling. Savoy, for his part, seems uneasy, but doesn't return Vidal's feeling with anything near the same intensity. Alexander glares at the woman between the two elder Kindred. She glances at you and you see her eyes narrow as she fights the now-familiar desire to attack when faced with a competing predator... you.

"Good evening," growls Vidal. "You already know Alexander and Savoy. This," he says, indicating the woman, "is Natasha Preston." All four of the vampires eye you menacingly, uncertainly, as if none of them is sure exactly what role you play here.

Stop reading aloud.

Allow the characters to join in the conversation. Vidal and Savoy are in the midst of arguing over a course of action. They know that John Marrow is inside the church, but they haven't been able to reach him, and attempts to summon him using Majesty have failed (this is the supernatural call the characters felt). Savoy believes that this is his problem, since Marrow is his ally and this is Marrow's domain. Vidal declares that since he is the Prince of the entire city, Savoy must accept any judgment he makes. Natasha Preston is an ally of Savoy's, but is not a member of the Lancea Sanctum and as such makes for a decent negotiator. Alexander doesn't say a word through the debate; he is here simply as protector and driver for the Prince.

The characters can join the argument on either side or state their own positions. If the characters offer to enter the church but make a show of loyalty to Vidal, Savoy assents, but reminds the characters that Father Marrow has to date provided them with good advice and a listening ear. If their loyalties seem to lean more toward Savoy, Vidal storms off in a rage, instructing Alexander to enter the church and "sort this out."

Natasha says little during the exchange, and seems to be walking on eggshells around the two would-be rulers of the Crescent City. If the characters address her directly, she responds tersely. If the characters don't suggest investigating the church, Natasha eventually does. Vidal instructs them to enter, find out what is happening, and remove any trace of vampiric activity. He tells them that he will see to it that they enter unmolested by the police, as his influence over the precinct is why the authorities haven't entered yet.

If Edward brings up that his sire is inside, Vidal immediately orders the characters to find her and bring her out, since she is a member of Sarah's mysterious conspiracy and needs to be questioned. Edward can speak on her behalf, indicating that she isn't to be tortured. Vidal controls himself enough to remind Edward of the state of things (i.e., Vidal is the Prince and Edward is a Kindred Embraced without permission), but agrees that Andrea won't be harmed if she cooperates.

Entering Sarpus Christi

Regardless of what the characters decide or how the discussion turns out, Vidal sends Alexander along. The Gangrel slinks around back and joins the characters as they prepare to enter.

As promised, the police aren't a problem. The officers stationed near the door pull back as the characters approach. Nonetheless, have each player roll Dexterity + Stealth as they approach the back door. Jack can use Cloak of Night (Obfuscate ●●●), in which case his player need not roll. If any of the players fail this roll, their characters are caught on camera by gawkers hoping to sell the footage later (see Aftermath for the result of this).

The back door of the church isn't locked, and the characters can slip in quietly. Once they do so, proceed to the next scene.

Gearing Up

The players might well decide that they don't wish to enter the church, especially with so little information, without some form of protection. Vidal, a soldier in life, appreciates this and can supply a few weapons from the trunk of his car. These include wooden stakes, knives, and a baseball bat. Vidal explains the effects of staking if the characters ask.

Vidal also has firearms with him — three semi-automatic pistols and a pump-action shotgun — but is reluctant to give them to the characters. The last thing he wants is gunplay inside the church (which would make holding the police back almost impossible). If the characters make a reasoned argument for the extra firepower, let Vidal be convinced (he decides that this will be a good test of these neonates). He cautions the characters to avoid fire at all costs, however, and to avoid using guns if possible. If they do have to fire, they will need to escape without being seen.

Scene Two: The Church

When the characters enter the church, read the following aloud:

As soon as the door closes, you know something is wrong. The plastic chairs are scattered around the room, and many of the posters on the walls are torn. Two doors lead from this room. One of them, you know (indicate Edward) leads to the basement and the room where you spent the week following your Embrace. The other leads to a short hallway and then the church itself.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can take any action they wish. Andrea is in the church, while Father John is lying at the bottom of the stairs. Neither Kindred is making a sound, so attempts to sit still and listen quietly to gain a bearing on their locations won't work.

At this point, have the players of Louis, Tina and Becky Lynn roll Intelligence + Composure. Tell players with successful rolls (privately, unless of course everyone succeeds) that activating the Resilience or Vigor Disciplines now would be a good idea, since they remain active for the scene.

The Basement

The characters discover Father John at the bottom of the stairs. He has no obvious wounds on him (he spent his last point of Vitae healing the damage that Andrea inflicted) but isn't moving and is unresponsive to conventional methods of waking him. The characters might get the brilliant idea to force-feed him some of their blood. This doesn't revive him (as the characters all have a Blood Potency lower than Father John's) but if they try this or mention trying it, Alexander feeds Father John some of his blood.

This proves to be a mistake, however. Father John revives, but in a vicious hunger frenzy. Roll initiative for Father John and Alexander (their traits appear in **Mary's Child**) and have the players do so for their characters. John lashes out at the nearest character, attempting to bite her and drink her blood. Two Health points of damage, however, are sufficient to put John back into torpor. Alexander does this if none of the characters defend themselves.

If the characters are confused, Alexander explains that it is possible to destroy a vampire through prolonged conventional damage. Sooner or later, even Kindred can be cut to pieces. It is much more likely, however, that a vampire will fall into torpor after being heavily damaged, and this is what has happened to John. He'll be all right, but only after he has fed.

The Church

Andrea is lurking in the main part of the church, her rational side trying desperately to subsume the Beast again. She does not hear the characters walk down the short hallway leading from the back room to the church itself, but when they open the door, she sees them.

Read the following aloud:

As you open the door into the church, you immediately note that several pews are overturned or damaged. A trickle of water runs down the aisle, and you realize that the font has been overturned. Police lights filtering through the stained-glass windows cast odd flickers of color throughout the room, distorting shape and movement. Peering through this confusion, you see a tall black woman sitting in a pew in the middle of the church. As you enter the room, however, she rises and walks down the aisle toward you. You notice the black tattoos on her skin and that they seem to writhe there — and you remember.

This woman was there at your Embrace. She was one of your sires. They called her Andrea.

Stop reading aloud.

Andrea's frenzy is of a different sort than usual. Ordinarily, when a vampire enters frenzy for whatever reason (fear, anger or hunger) the Beast guides her. The Beast is only capable of very simple actions, however, so a fear frenzy usually means that the Beast forces the Kindred to run, stopping only if physically unable to flee, while an anger frenzy sends the vampire into a blind rage in which she attacks anything at hand.

The Blood Rage than Andrea is currently suffering, however, came about because Andrea was trying to master her Beast. In the process, she merged her conscious mind with

that Beast, resulting in her being driven by rage and hunger, but still capable of limited higher functions (such as speech, but more importantly, combat tactics normally beyond the mental reach of the Beast).

As Andrea approaches the characters, have the players roll Wits + Empathy - 2 dice (because they are unfamiliar with her; Edward's player rolls the normal dice pool). If the roll succeeds, the character notices that Andrea's walk changes as she moves toward them. She hunches slightly, her posture tenses, and she looks ready to break into a run.

At this point, have each player calculate initiative for her character (the total of one die roll + Initiative Modifier). You should also calculate initiative for Alexander. Ask the players if they would like to spend Vitae this turn to augment their Physical Attributes or activate Disciplines. The character sheets provide descriptions of how to do so. Characters with Celerity, Vigor or Resilience need to activate those Disciplines by spending one Vitae (hopefully, some characters have already activated the latter two Disciplines). Alexander has already activated Resilience and Vigor, and activates Celerity on the first turn. He will also spend a Vitae to add two dice to any Strength-based action he takes this turn (Alexander can spend two points of Vitae in a turn because of his higher Blood Potency).

Don't roll initiative for Andrea. She automatically acts on 17 (her normal initiative modifier (5) plus her Celerity (3) plus 9 = 17). The reason for the arbitrary — and high — number is that she should have an advantage going into the fight, but not an insurmountable one. Her first action is to close the distance between herself and the characters in order to affect (or, more properly, infect) them with Blood Rage.

The characters act in descending order of initiative, but the Blood Rage comes into effect the instant Andrea steps within 10 feet of a character. When that happens, the player must roll Resolve + Composure. If the roll succeeds, the character fights off frenzy for a turn (but won't fight it off completely until the player accrues 3 successes). If the roll fails, the character enters frenzy and attacks the nearest target at hand (see sidebar). Once the character has fully resisted the Blood Rage, she need not check again during this combat.



BLOOD RAGE

The Blood Rage engenders a frenzy similar to the one that Andrea is undergoing. The victim's Beast cries out for blood, but just as Andrea's Beast is tempered with her conscious mind, a victim's Beast is also partially affected by Andrea's Nightmare Discipline. Thus, victims of the Blood Rage don't attack Andrea unless no other target is present, and don't attack Edward in any case (he also knows the Nightmare Discipline, and therefore the Beasts of characters afflicted with Blood Rage fear him). They are incapable of using complicated plans, but can still use weapons, even firearms, during the frenzy. They cannot retreat from combat, however.

If a character falls into the Blood Rage (and it's likely that at least one of them will), allow the player to control the character, but explain that all she sees is red, moving shapes. Those shapes

represent whatever the character most hates or fears — in Tina’s case, for example, she might see the face of her deranged sire on everyone nearby. Ask the player of the frenzied character who that character sees. If the player has a clear idea of why she is suddenly attacking her fellows, it will seem less like a loss of control from the player’s perspective and more like a horrifying situation for the characters (which is the idea).

In game terms:

- A frenzied vampire ignores wound penalties to dice pools, until wounds become severe enough to render the character unconscious or torpid.
- All attempts to influence the frenzied character’s mind, by Dominate, Majesty or other means, take place at a -2 dice penalty, while rolls for the character to resist or throw off mental influence receive a +2 dice bonus.
- The character receives one extra die for any Physical roll. The Beast goes all-out, all the time, and its blinding rage shuts out all distractions and doubts.

These benefits apply to Andrea as well.



Since Andrea probably acts first, it’s very likely that one or more of the characters will enter Blood Rage before they get a chance to take their first actions of the combat. This is fine — Andrea’s Beast *wants* this battle to become a free-for-all so that it can gorge on the characters’ blood.

Andrea’s Tactics: Andrea attacks the character she sees as the weakest. Since she knows that a vampire’s physical body doesn’t define his fighting prowess, she doesn’t automatically go after Becky Lynn, but whoever takes a failed or hesitant action in combat. She switches targets if her opponent falls or moves away from her, and avoids becoming surrounded.

Alexander’s Tactics: Alexander is here to eliminate the threat to the city, and the quickest way to do that is to destroy Andrea, so that’s just what he attempts to do. The problem is the Blood Rage. Alexander is just as susceptible to it as the characters, and even if he doesn’t succumb (see below), he still has to deal with any characters who do. Barring intervention by frenzied characters, he uses his Protean Discipline to grow fearsome claws and attacks Andrea.

Complications

This fight has the potential to become chaotic and possibly fatal to the characters in very short order, and that means you, as Storyteller, need to decide on a few things.

First, will you allow characters to die here? Vampires are hard to destroy, but it can certainly happen (especially if Alexander enters frenzy). In general, losing a character due to a roll of the dice is unsatisfying... but on the other hand, a player might be growing bored with a character and wish to “retire” her. Have a plan in place for how to introduce new characters if you do allow fatalities. Any character currently not being controlled by a player makes a good target.

A second question is whether to allow Alexander to enter Blood Rage. He is a more effective combatant than Andrea due to his Protean Discipline and martial training, and is prob-

ably capable of destroying the coterie by himself. Then again, with him on their side, the characters can probably take Andrea down in a single turn. You can either decide that Alexander will or won’t succumb to the Blood Rage, or you can roll his Resolve + Composure and let the dice decide. Some factors to influence that decision:

- Have the other characters entered frenzy? If the players are having a “bad dice night” and Edward is the only character left unaffected by the Blood Rage, you probably shouldn’t have Alexander succumb. If, however, only one of the characters enters frenzy, go ahead and have Alexander fall into Blood Rage as well.

- Are the characters prepared? If they scoped out the place, made a convincing and clever battle plan, asked Vidal about weapons, or took other actions to favor themselves as much as possible, have Alexander enter frenzy. This isn’t a punishment for forward thinking, and *don’t* portray it that way. Instead, roll some dice out of sight of the players and then pretend that Alexander failed his roll. All this represents is that even the best-laid plans are subject to factors that the characters can’t predict, and besides, seeing the Prince’s stalwart servant lose his mind and attack underscores the themes of the story nicely (and in a game context, you don’t want to make things too easy for the players, right?).

If the characters went charging into the church with no preparation, they probably don’t need any additional challenges. Don’t let Alexander do the work for them, though. If you’d rather keep the fight between Andrea and the characters, you can rule that he doesn’t resist the frenzy, but changes its focus, entering a fear frenzy instead. He runs to a corner and hides for the duration of the fight.

If Alexander does enter Blood Rage, don’t give him a surprise attack on the characters (which the players would rightly feel is dirty pool on your part), but perhaps declare his first action that turn to be Full Dodge, increasing his Defense as he sizes up his opponents and chooses his target.

Finally, don’t forget the police outside. Between Vidal and Savoy, there is enough influence over key city figures to prevent the cops from moving in. The problem is that neither of them can stop the city’s press from taking an interest, and what began as a noise complaint will quickly escalate to a “possible hostage situation.” Rumors of terrorists, religious fanatics, urban gangsters, voodoo cultists and simple violent criminals circulate, and the police waiting outside grow nervous, edgy and dangerous.

While Savoy and Vidal would like all of the vampires in the church to come out safely (if only for questioning), they are concerned foremost with remaining hidden from the mortals. From your perspective, you can dangle the threat of the police entering the building in front of the players if they are about to do something stupid, but if the cops actually *do* enter, you’re faced with the prospect of having one or more frenzied vampires facing down a horde of heavily armed and very jumpy policemen.

If the cops do enter before Andrea is brought under control, here are some possibilities:

- Andrea attacks, and the cops open fire. Andrea is riddled with bullets and immediately driven into torpor. The characters then must obtain her body before sunrise (which first in-

volves getting out of the church without being arrested, and don't forget that Becky Lynn has a dot of Fame).

- Andrea runs right into the midst of the cops, using Celerity to move faster than they can follow. She grabs one and runs away to feast. The characters are faced with the same challenge as above, but are now tracking a mobile, frenzied vampire instead of a corpse.

- Andrea hides, her Beast relishing the idea of picking off the cops as they search the building. This leaves the characters high and dry, however.

If the cops enter while the characters are still present, the Kindred probably wind up under arrest. Jack can escape easily by using Obfuscate, and you might allow characters with Majesty or Dominate to use those Disciplines to avoid being taken into custody. Vidal pays bail on any other characters and pulls strings to have them released before sunrise (no small feat, and he makes it quite clear that he expects that favor to be repaid).

Talking Andrea Down

The characters have a couple of options on ending this combat. The first is simply to beat Andrea into submission and take her body out of the church without the police noticing. This is not exactly an easy feat at any stage, especially considering that she incites fury in any vampire in her vicinity. The second is to free her from the Blood Rage, which also ends the frenzy of anyone else she's infected. Doing so requires connecting with the human (or at least rational) part of Andrea. Anyone can conceivably do this, but Edward has the best chance.

The first step in accomplishing this is probably the hardest. The characters have to awaken the rational, human side of Andrea's personality and separate it from the Beast. Some possible methods of doing so:

- A character could possibly use Dominate to force Andrea to pay attention, but as Andrea's Blood Potency is much higher than the characters' and she receives a +2 modifier on the resistance roll for being in frenzy, this isn't likely.

- Likewise, Majesty might be effective, but the same problems apply. Since Majesty doesn't require eye contact, however, it has a better chance of working.

- A character can simply try to talk his way past Andrea's Beast. This requires a roll of Presence + Expression (Manipulation isn't appropriate because any clever wordplay is lost on the Beast anyway). The player must accumulate 5 successes in order to get through to Andrea, though even a single success implies that Andrea hears what's being said. Striking Looks bonuses do not apply to this roll, but Edward receives a +3 modifier. Certain turns of phrases add or subtract dice as well. The following words or phrases give the speaker a +1 modifier: blood, Father John Marrow (or any other recognizable permutation of his name), Edward, Beast, control, change and calm. The following words or phrases incur a -1 modifier: Sarah, Lucas, Vidal, Christ, God, police.

- If Edward uses his Inspiring Merit, he gains two automatic successes on the above roll, and Andrea pauses for a few seconds, losing her action in the current turn.

Once the characters have broken through to Andrea's rational side, they must keep her calm for a few turns while she brings herself out of the Blood Rage. Have each player roll Intelligence + Empathy. If the roll succeeds, the player realizes that they can help her by keeping her calm. If the roll is an exceptional success (five successes or more), the character realizes that too many people will just overwhelm her, and that one person should try to soothe her while the others leave the area. Edward is probably the best choice, but any character can attempt to keep talking her down. The other characters should probably take the opportunity to leave the area (see "Leaving the Church").

Andrea frees herself of the frenzy in three turns; this can be reduced if the player of the character trying to soothe her succeeds on a Presence + Persuasion roll. Each success reduces the time needed by one turn.

Once Andrea is "herself" again, she acts confused and remorseful, repeating that she has "failed" and that "Sarah was right." She composes herself quickly when told of the police outside, however, and escapes with the characters.

Leaving the Church

The cops are now watching all of the doors carefully, so escape for the characters (except for Jack, of course) is difficult. Alexander can call Vidal from one of the phones in the church, or a cell phone if one of the characters has one, but the Prince doesn't have much help to offer. Let the players brainstorm. If they come up with a plan that requires aid that Vidal (or Savoy) could conceivably give, the elder acquiesces. A few basic possibilities follow:

- **Cause a Diversion:** Maybe Jack could sneak out and start a firefight with the cops from another building, or swipe a teargas gun from a SWAT van and fire it into the police's midst. A good diversion can add anywhere from 1 to 5 modifier dice on attempts to sneak away or run.

- **Flee!** The characters make a break for it. Increasing Strength or Dexterity with Vitae makes the characters harder to catch. If the characters run for it, have the players roll Strength + Athletics with a -3 modifier (they are surrounded and the police have lights trained on the doors). A character with Celerity active does not suffer this modifier and in fact the player adds the character's Celerity as a positive modifier. If the roll succeeds, the character clears the line of police cars and can try to lose herself in the Tremé District. This requires a roll of Wits + Streetwise (Jack's Slums Specialty applies). If a group of characters are together, only one needs to make this last roll.

- **Sneak Away:** Trying to creep away from the church and disappear into the night is easy enough for Jack, but other characters aren't so lucky. Players must roll Wits + Stealth with a -5 modifier. This means that they have only a chance die to roll. If this roll results in a dramatic failure, the character is not only caught but has some incriminating evidence (most likely blood) on her. If the roll simply fails, the character is caught and placed under arrest. If the roll succeeds, the character slips by the cops safely.

Aftermath

This story can end in any number of ways. If Andrea is destroyed, the characters have lost a link to Sarah's conspiracy, and Edward loses his dot of the Mentor Merit, but Vidal is pleased enough. In any case, Alexander reports honestly on all that happened, which can reflect well or poorly on the characters. John Marrow, of course, is extremely grateful to the characters for saving his unlife, as is Andrea, if she survives.

If Andrea survived, she is taken for questioning. The characters aren't privy to this no-doubt-unpleasant session of inquisition, but later learn that Andrea shares an ideology with Sarah and initially supported her "experiment," but then changed her mind when she learned that Sarah meant to Embrace — to murder — five people in the same night and worse, that she involved Lucas Gates. Andrea is allowed to speak (over the phone) to Edward. During this conversation, she is guarded, but answers any non-sensitive questions she can (the particulars of her beliefs and practices are *extremely* sensitive, and so she doesn't discuss them). She tells Edward that in order to move beyond the violation of the Embrace, he and the others need to find and come to terms with their sires. Of course, Jack has already done so, and now Edward has the chance to talk with Andrea, which leaves Tina, Louis and Becky Lynn. She does not know where to find Lucas (Tina's sire) but opines that John Harley Matheson (Becky Lynn's sire) is probably staying at his mansion and knows that Nathaniel Dubois (Louis' sire) is still in the city.

The other Kindred of the city might have changed their opinions about the characters in the wake of this story, of course. If the characters acquitted themselves well, handling the problem without the threat of exposure to the mortal world and without getting Alexander killed, Prince Vidal recognizes them personally and grants them special dispensation to move throughout the city, as long as they are searching for their sires or otherwise investigating their Embraces. Antoine Savoy and Father John Marrow are likewise grateful, and recognize and help enforce this decree. In this case, each character gains a new Merit: a single dot of City Status. A player adds her character's City Status rating to Social rolls involving vampires who reside within New Orleans, regardless of clan or sect. This bonus does *not* apply to supernatural rolls (so though the rolls for the Majesty Discipline involve Social Attributes, City Status doesn't apply), nor does it help when dealing with Kindred who don't claim residence in the Crescent City.

Of course, if the situation at the church ended in gunfire and bloodshed, no one is likely to be impressed by the characters. They are persona non grata until they can bring themselves back into the Prince's good graces (don't worry, they'll have their chance in a future installment of *Danse de la Mort*). Prince Vidal still gives them permission to search for their sires, but the tone of the decree is more a warning than a privilege: "Find your sires or I will hold *you* responsible for this fracas."

Press Coverage

The events of this story, of course, receive coverage in the mortal realm, but Vidal and Savoy use their sway to cover some of it up. In the end, only fringe news sources make too much of a fuss. Unless the fight truly got out of hand, the mainstream press writes it off as gang violence. If any of the players were caught on camera entering the church, though, tabloid papers carry a story about "ghosts in New Orleans," with pictures of blurred, humanoid shapes entering Corpus Christi.

Dramatis Personae

The only new character introduced in this story is Natasha Preston, and she doesn't appear for long enough to require further information. Andrea's game traits are provided below (see *Last Night* for her background), and Alexander's and Father John Marrow's can be found in *Mary's Child*. Finally, we present an updated character sheet for Edward after his Embrace.

Andrea Ouellette

Clan: Nosferatu

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Occult 3 (Research), Politics 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2 (Sucker Punch), Drive 2, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3 (Avoiding Trouble)

Merits: Disarm, Fighting Style: Kung Fu 2, Languages (French 2, Spanish 1), Meditative Mind

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 5 (Hope, Wrath)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 5

Defense: 3 (+1 Armor vs. bashing attacks)

Speed: 11

Blood Potency: 4

Vitae:

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Celerity 3, Nightmare 3, Resilience 1, Vigor 1

Andrea has the same basic Kindred powers as the players' characters, but her more potent blood means that they function a little better. She can spend two Vitae per turn, for instance, and use it to heal herself and to augment her Physical Attributes. Her Celerity, Resilience and Vigor Disciplines function just as they do for the characters (see Tina for Celerity and Vigor; Becky Lynn or Louis for Resilience). Her Nightmare Discipline grants her the Monstrous Countenance power (shared with Edward) as well as the two additional powers

described below (along with her level of Auspex). She also shares Edward's clan weakness.

Heightened Senses (Auspex •): Andrea can magnify her senses (or just one) to superhuman levels. Doing so requires an action but no roll of the dice. This can even allow her to see in pitch darkness.

Dread (Nightmare ••): Andrea can create a feeling of inexplicable panic in a small area. Spend a point of Vitae for her and roll Manipulation + Empathy + Nightmare; anyone she affects rolls Composure + Blood Potency to resist. If she wins, anyone she affects suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls and cannot spend Willpower to gain a +3 to rolls. This effect has a range of 15 yards and lasts as long as she concentrates. Andrea using another Discipline or entering combat will end the effect.

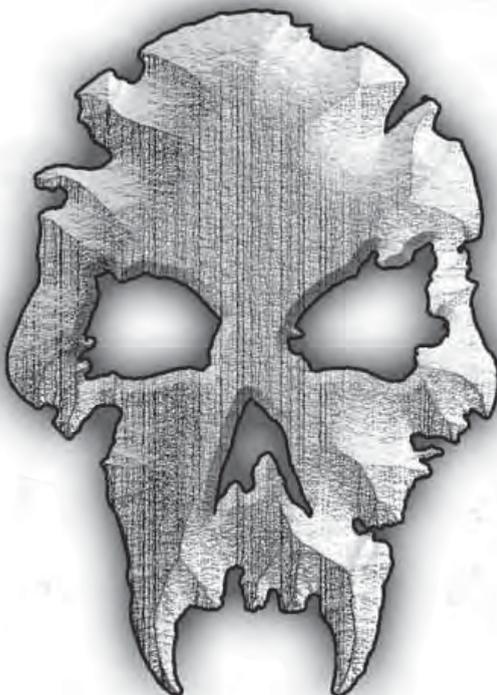
Eye of the Beast (Nightmare •••): Andrea makes eye contact with another being and either paralyzes her victim in terror (if mortal) or drives the victim into a fear frenzy (if Kindred). Spend a point of Vitae and roll Andrea's Presence + Empathy + Nightmare (her clan weakness does not apply), resisted by the victim's Composure + Blood Potency.

In addition to speaking French and Spanish, Andrea has the following Merits:

Disarm: Andrea is skilled enough with melee weapons to disarm opponents. In a successful armed close-combat strike, if her player gets a number of successes equal to or greater than the opponent's Dexterity, she can choose to disarm her opponent instead of doing damage. A weapon lands a number of yards away from the opponent equal to your successes rolled.

Kung-Fu (••): Andrea is a trained martial artist. This gives access to two special maneuvers. The first is **Focused Attack**, which reduces her penalties to hit specific targets by one with Brawl attacks. Even when a specific part of an opponent is not targeted, armor penalties to her Brawl attacks are reduced by one. Her second maneuver is **Iron Skin**, which gives her an effective armor trait of 1 against bashing attacks only.

Meditative Mind: This Merit allows Andrea to enter a meditative state whenever she chooses. The Merit has little effect during this game, except that it allows her to regain control of herself (with some help from the characters).



Edward Zuric

Quote: *I always knew I'd die in New Orleans.*

Background: Edward is a musician, a guitarist who works his way around the country as a street performer. Sometimes he stays in a city long enough to join a band, but it never seems to work out for long. Edward makes a great first impression, but he's impulsive and sometimes volatile — hard to be around for too long. Besides, the road always calls to him.

This isn't the first time Edward has been to New Orleans. In fact, he hasn't missed Mardi Gras for the past three years (it's much easier to attend when you don't have to worry about paying for a hotel, and Edward can always find somewhere to sleep). Normally, he makes his best money during Mardi Gras. This year, of course, he wound up with a slightly different set of circumstances than sharing a coed's bed and making some quick cash....

Description: Since his Embrace, Edward's once-striking good looks have abandoned him. His hair has darkened to a red so deep it is nearly black, and his fair skin has become yellowed and sallow.

Equipment: Guitar, condoms, switchblade (+1 damage, inflicts lethal wounds), change of clothes, roll of gold dollars.

Virtue/Vice: Edward's Virtue is *Charity*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower points when he helps another at the risk of loss or harm to himself. It isn't enough to share what he has in abundance. He must make a real sacrifice in terms of time, possessions or energy, or he must risk life and limb to help another. His Vice is *Lust*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he satisfies his lust in a way that victimizes others (though of course, he never sees it that way).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Edward can spend one Vitae per turn. He begins *Fury* with seven Vitae.

Healing: Edward can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Edward can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (•): This Discipline allows Edward to boost his speed to preternatural levels. To activate Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Edward suffers a penalty equal to his Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of his

Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, Edward's Speed rating doubles as long as the Discipline is active. Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's Edward's turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Edward's Celerity (1) to his Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Edward and activate it before they roll.

Monstrous Countenance (Nightmare •): By baring his fangs and emitting a terrible, animalistic hiss, Edward can spark sheer terror in a victim. Roll six dice (Edward's Presence + Intimidation + Nightmare) to activate this power (the Nosferatu clan weakness does not penalize this roll). The player of anyone seeing Edward in person when this power is active must roll Composure + Blood Potency. If the player fails to match your number for success, his character immediately flees and will avoid your presence for the remainder of the scene. Edward may keep this power active for the entire scene.

Vigor (•): This Discipline makes Edward superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Edward adds his Vigor (1) to his Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Nosferatu): Edward's blood is cursed to cause discomfort in those around him, manifesting in his case in the form of his jaundiced complexion. When rolling dice pools based on the Presence or Manipulation Attributes in social situations, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools that involve the Intimidation Skill, or to the Composure Attribute.

Merits

Fast Reflexes (+2): This Merit adds 2 to Edward's base Initiative Modifier. This is already calculated on his character sheet.

Inspiring: Edward is able to rally others in times of great distress, renewing their courage and determination in the face of adversity. Once per game session, he can exhort those around him to redouble their efforts in the face of great stress or danger. The player rolls Presence + Persuasion. If the roll succeeds, any individuals who actively assist Edward and who are within earshot regain one spent Willpower point (not to exceed their Willpower dots). The character may not use this Merit on himself, and may not use it on the same subjects more than once a day.

Mentor: Andrea did not abandon Edward at his Embrace and is determined to teach him what the Requiem has in store for him.

Vampire THE REQUIEM

Name: Edward Zurich

Concept: Musician

Clan: Nosferatu

Player:

Virtue: Charity

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse De La Mort

Vice: Lust

Power:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (urban legends)	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●○○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry (knife)	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression (guitar)	●●●●○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	●●●●○
Streetwise	●●●●○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Fast Reflexes (+2)	●●●●●
Inspiring	●●●●○
Mentor	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Celerity	●○○○○
Nightmare	●○○○○
Vigor	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	●
6	_____	●
5	_____	●
4	_____	●
3	_____	●
2	_____	●
1	_____	●

Equipment

Switchblade	+1
-------------	----

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	8
Speed	10
Experience	_____
Armor	_____



Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Part Three: Blood Money



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

Blood Money written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

Welcome to the next online installment of the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle for **Vampire: The Requiem**. In the past few stories, the characters have seen a glimpse of the World of Darkness — first as vampires, then as mortals in the prelude story **Last Night**, and again as vampires in **Fury**. In this story, they continue where they left off there, as vampires drawn into the world of nightly predation by a conspiracy among the Kindred... but now their memories are slowly returning. Their motivations for finding their sires might vary from revenge to loyalty to simple curiosity, but at least now they have the tools to begin that search. And in the midst of it all is the mysterious “Sarah,” who engineered the entire event — why?

The remainder of the **Danse de la Mort** series assumes that the characters continue their search for their sires. Prince Vidal, in **Mary’s Child**, gave them permission to undertake that search and in the wake of Andrea Ouellette’s outburst in **Fury**, he has given them leave to move through the city of New Orleans to do so, granting them a kind of “diplomatic immunity” in his factional dispute with Antoine Savoy (Vidal has other motivations, too, but more on this later). Other events intrude upon this search, of course, revealing more about the world of **Vampire**. The characters will have opportunities to learn new Disciplines and facets of their vampiric existences, but the reasons behind their Embrace continue to elude them until the last chapter.

Theme and Mood

The theme of **Blood Money** is price. Everything and everyone has a price, be it in money, information or even blood. Louis Maddox, during the course of this story, finds out what his life was worth to the vampires who stole it. The other characters see how the Kindred barter information and favors in lieu of money (since quite a lot of vampires seem to have money in abundance). Hopefully, this will get the players thinking about their own Embraces and what Sarah might have offered their sires (Jack, of course, already knows that his sire Embraced him in response to blackmail, and Edward knows that Andrea joined Sarah’s conspiracy out of ideological curiosity).

The mood of this story is impersonal. “Just business” is the catchphrase here. Nathaniel Dubois didn’t see Louis as a person, but as a resource, and a major facet of this story should

be forcing Nathaniel to see what he did. You can reinforce this mood in a number of ways. Consider, for one thing, that the most important investigation is carried out by phone and Internet, not face-to-face. When the players’ characters speak to other Kindred (especially Vidal and Miss Opal), don’t use the characters’ names. Vidal addresses the group as a whole and Miss Opal calls everyone “honey” or “sugar.” This has the effect of depersonalizing the conversation: Opal could be talking to anyone.

Storytelling Technique — Central Character

A film or a novel normally has one main protagonist. We see the story through his eyes and within his frame of reference (which is why the protagonist is usually being introduced to a new set of circumstances; the reader or viewer experiences these along with the character). Roleplaying games involve multiple protagonists, however, and since the protagonists are each under the control of a different “author” (i.e. that character’s player), one character cannot and should not be the focus of the chronicle.

Individual stories, however, are another matter.

Mary’s Child was, in a way, Jack’s story — the action centered on areas of the city with which he is familiar and told the story of his Embrace from his sire’s perspective. **Last Night** was much more of an “ensemble” piece, concerning each of the characters equally (which is the case with most roleplaying games). **Fury**, of course, was Edward’s story, allowing him to rejoin the group and see the horrific nature of his sire. **Blood Money** is Louis’ story — the main thrust of the story is research and investigation, and the main theme is identity and subjective value. Louis, an Internet expert, understands these concepts well.

What does having a central character mean for you, the Storyteller? You certainly don’t have to announce that Louis is the central character for this story (although you can if you feel the players will take this concept in the spirit in which it’s intended). Just keep in mind that Louis is the character who should be driving the action here. That means that his suggestions might bear more fruit than the others. One way you can do this is not to require rolls for certain actions that Louis’ player states that he will undertake.

Instead, if there is a reasonable chance of success (actions concerning computers or research, for instance), you can just assume that the roll succeeds. You're not really cheating anyone, as this is Louis' specialty and he probably would have succeeded anyway. All you're doing is removing the fickle element of chance from the equation and letting Louis shine.

All of this doesn't mean that the other characters should be left by the wayside, of course. Using a central character in a roleplaying game is a balancing act, just like crosscutting (see **Last Night** for a discussion of this technique). If you want a purely mechanical way to make Louis the central character, tell his player at the start of the game that he has five dice that can be added to any roll during the course of the story, but he can only use those dice once. That is, if his player adds three dice to a roll early on, he only has two left for the remainder of the story.

Character Advancement

Over the past few scenarios, you have seen the evolution of the five characters from mortals to vampires. Although Kindred are static creatures (they do not age as mortals do) they can continue to learn and grow.

Starting with this scenario, we present new character sheets for the five characters as they grow in experience and capabilities. In most cases this evolution manifests as the development of new vampiric Disciplines, but the characters may also improve Skills and Merits, or develop whole new ones. Not every character will necessarily get a new sheet each scenario (some traits take more time to develop than others), but fret not — everyone will have a chance to shine.

The **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Vampire: The Requiem** provide a fuller advancement system in which players earn and spend experience points for their characters.

New and Improved Traits

Improvements in Attributes or Skills represent lessons the character learns as she goes through her Requiem. In the previous stories, all the characters have had the chance to engage in searches, to learn occult secrets, to fight for their survival, and much more. These lessons manifest as improved traits.

Improved Disciplines function much the same: as a character uses her dread powers, new capabilities become possible. Louis Maddox, for example, may discover he can now affect the memories of those he Dominates, as well as issue commands and implant suggestions. Some characters will even develop all new Disciplines, such as Jack McCandless's new proficiency in Auspex. This reflects the Blood responding to Jack's needs (and his own clan tendencies). After so much investigation and nasty surprises, preternaturally sharp senses are very welcome.

It is up to you and the players to determine just how and when the characters discover their new capabilities. The easiest solution is to say that a week or so of time passes since the last story, during which time the characters discover their new capabilities. You can even run very quick vignettes for each player in which her character uses the new power (this allows the player to try it out). A more challenging (but more rewarding) approach is to have the new powers manifest in play during scenarios. When an appropriate situation comes up, ask the player to describe how the power manifests for the character — does Jack, trawling the streets at night, suddenly see everything come into sharper focus?



Traits Not on the Sheets

A few traits aren't filled in for you on the various new character sheets. The most important is Humanity, which may have lowered from its starting value of 7 due to character actions. You should transfer over the character's current Humanity from the previous character sheet.

As well, there will be opportunities in this and other scenarios for characters to align with one of the covenants of the undead. In game terms, this grants the character one dot in the Covenant Status Merit, but such a decision should be the player's, not ours. So if, through events in this or another story, a character is initiated into a covenant, the player should simply write in "Covenant Status" under Merits (with the appropriate covenant name in brackets). This trait starts at one dot, but could increase through events.

Note that all the characters have gained one dot in a similar Merit, City Status (which does appear on their new sheets), which represents their overall standing among the Kindred of New Orleans. That they have standing at all reflects the interest Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have taken in them.

Disciplines Above 3

The characters have already interacted with some very powerful Kindred and their travails are hardly over. You will note, however, that we provide only the rules for using appropriate Discipline powers up to level 3. In the cases of Celerity, Resilience and Vigor, higher levels only grant greater effectiveness with the same basic power, but the other Disciplines have new and different powers at that level. For the purposes of **Danse de la Mort**, however, higher ratings will (with a few exceptions) only grant higher dice pools for using the lesser powers of a Discipline. Kindred are generally reluctant to pull out the "big guns" anyway and the basic powers will be more than enough to keep the players busy for now. Full details of the Disciplines appear in **Vampire: The Requiem**.

Our Tale Continues...

Unlike the previous two stories, which took place over a set amount of time, **Blood Money** can take as long as the players wish to spend on it. It begins when they begin investigating some of the memories that resurface during the week after **Fury** and ends when they confront Nathaniel Dubois and Louis learns what his life was worth. In the interim, they have the chance to meet several influential Kindred in the city of New Orleans, to gain some perspective on their level of individual power and the immense power they can wield by acting in tandem, and receive some foreshadowing about what comes next.

Scene One: Opening Bid

This scene consists of information the characters might uncover by following memories from **Last Night**, how they might follow those leads, and who has the information they need.

As the characters' memories return, the players are probably left with a smattering of names, faces and events from their last night as mortals.

Memories

Included here are the most significant names and events that the characters might remember from **Last Night**, what information exists on them, and who knows this information. The characters can ask any of the Kindred they have met about these vampires, but remember that even two characters who know the same facts won't present them in the same way. Father John Marrow is helpful, but manipulative. He wants the characters to trust him above other Kindred, and is careful to paint others in a less-than-flattering light. Alexander knows very little, but is as helpful as he can be. Andrea can speak with Edward over the phone (if she survived **Fury** and is in the Prince's custody), but the conversation is monitored, so she is careful of what she says. Prince Vidal answers questions quickly and curtly (the only reason the characters can gain audience with him at all is that he is concerned about an arranged mass Embrace in his city). Also, if the characters meet with Vidal, he offers them special permission to travel throughout the city and talk with Kindred inhabitants as they wish, but only in pursuit of their sires. He states that any vampire who abuses the characters will answer to him and his followers. The characters won't know it (though they might guess), but in issuing this decree, the Prince is using them as stalking horses, hoping that any enemies of his will strike the characters first.

- **Andrea:** If Andrea survives, she tells the characters her last name ("Ouellette") and that she joined the conspiracy out of "ideological curiosity". She refuses to say more because of the Prince's monitoring.

If she was destroyed during the last story, the characters must find information on her in other ways. If given a description of Andrea along with her name, Antoine Savoy identifies her as "Andrea Ouellette," a vampire native to New Orleans (though he isn't sure when she was Embraced) who generally kept to herself. He recalls her having at least one female companion at one time, but doesn't know any other details. (The companion is Sarah, , though Savoy doesn't know that). No other Kindred the characters have met knows much of anything about her.

- **Lucas:** No Kindred in the city knows anything about Lucas (except for Andrea, and all she knows is his full name). See "Mundane Investigations," below.

- **Nathaniel Dubois:** Nathaniel Dubois is a young Ventruue who recently lost a great deal of money after his Embrace. He approached Prince Vidal, offering his services in exchange for monetary compensation, but Vidal refused to work with him (Dubois isn't Catholic). Vidal, Maldonato, Savoy and Alexander all know that much. Nathaniel subscribes to the same philosophies as Miss Opal (see below), and Vidal, Maldonato and Savoy can all identify him as a Carthian (see sidebar). Father John knows a bit more, but won't tell anyone except Edward (see below).

- **John Harley Matheson:** John Harley is a Gangrel vampire of indeterminate age, who might even be older than Prince Vidal. He does not reside in New Orleans and is in fact not allowed

within city limits on pain of death by fire. This is all Maldonato, Alexander, or Vidal will tell the characters, although they do demand to know if Matheson is still in the city. Savoy and Miss Opal know that John Harley predates the Civil War, but not by how much, and that he only recently arose from a torpor of at least 20 years. Neither knows the reason for his banishment from New Orleans, but Savoy suspects it might be for religious purposes. Vidal will not say why he has been banished.

- **Mary:** The characters have already learned as much about Mary as they are likely to discover. If she still survives, she can tell them a little about Sarah (see below), and knows Andrea and Lucas' last names (see "Mundane Investigations").

- **Sarah:** The only Kindred who know anything about Sarah are her five conspirators (the characters' sires) and Mezzo (see below). Mary, if she is still extant, can tell the characters that her full name (or at least the one she gave Mary) is Sarah Cobbler, and that she is of Clan Mekhet. This name doesn't mean anything to any of the other Kindred that the characters have met. Nathaniel knows a bit more, but this is covered in Scene Three.

- **Miss Opal:** At the climax of *Last Night*, Nathaniel told Louis "Miss Opal will help you." Any Kindred the characters ask can identify Miss Opal as a Carthian (see sidebar) Nosferatu and a Primogen (a "Primogen" is an advisor to the Prince) who, like John Harley Matheson, only emerged from torpor comparatively recently. Savoy or Vidal (through a lieutenant) can arrange a meeting with her. If the characters choose to meet with her, go to Scene Two. Whoever arranges the meeting mentions that Miss Opal isn't at all easy to look at, but is powerful both physically and politically, and isn't above smacking less-powerful Kindred around if they behave rudely.

- **Mezzo:** The characters discover the identity of a vampire known as "Mezzo" during the course of their investigations (see "Mundane Investigations," below). If they bring this name to Savoy or Father John, they look noticeably concerned but share no information with the characters. No other Kindred the characters have met know anything about Mezzo (except for Dubois; again, see Scene Three).



COVENANT — THE CARTHIAN

The Carthian Movement is a covenant of Kindred who believe in progressive, egalitarian means of government. Most of them dispute the notion of a single, powerful Prince ruling over the Kindred of a city, but some of them are willing to accept a democratically elected leader (advised by the body public, of course). Despite their seemingly benign philosophy, the Carthians aren't humanists. They believe in equality among *vampires*, but don't necessarily care if their mortal prey is getting a fair shake.

The characters hear differing reports about the Carthians, depending upon whom they ask. Vidal feels that they are tolerable, so long as they make the proper religious observances. Savoy, ever the politician, says much the same thing, but in a more diplomatic manner.



Of course, the characters can look into these names in other ways besides parroting them to more powerful Kindred. They receive less reliable information in some cases, but in others, they stand to learn facts that the more established Kindred of the city don't know.

- **High Society (Becky Lynn):** During *Last Night*, Sarah mentioned that she had attended a party at the Adler residence some years back. The family keeps guest books for all such soirees, although getting hold of these guest books would require Becky Lynn either to sneak into her parents' house or actually to confront them and to come up with some explanation for her absence and newfound phobia of sunlight. In any event, searching through the guest books requires Wits + Investigation rolls from all participating (all characters searching may pool successes). Each roll represents one hour of work. When the pool reaches 30 successes, the characters find the guest book — the party was held ten years ago, when Becky Lynn was only eight. Speaking to some of the relatives and guests who were present (as Storyteller, feel free to make up some names and personalities) reveals that "Sarah Cobbler" looked much the same then as she did when the characters saw her a week ago, except that her hair was light brown. She paid special attention to Becky Lynn, they remember, and told her old legends about a haunted mansion near a bayou (the characters might guess, correctly, that the mansion in question is John Harley Matheson's).

Becky Lynn's family has no information on Lucas, Andrea or Mary. John Harley Matheson rings a bell with some of her older relatives, but they aren't able to recall why. One of the older ladies in the family (one of Becky Lynn's great-aunts) seems to recall that he was a gentleman who courted her in her youth, but the rest of the family says that she's senile.

- **History (Tina):** Tina can contact Dr. Montrose for information. Have Tina's player roll Manipulation + Persuasion. If she succeeds, Dr. Montrose finds what information he can within the space of one evening. If the roll fails, it takes two nights for him to get back to Tina.

Dr. Montrose has no information on Lucas, Andrea, Sarah or Mary. He finds the name "John Harley Matheson," however — he was a wealthy landowner who vanished just after Lincoln was assassinated (1865). The Matheson family was an extremely wealthy Southern plantation family that lost most of its money during the Civil War. John Harley Matheson was the last direct descendant of the line. His mansion was restored with money from an anonymous donor in 1975, was opened to the public in 1981, and then was closed to visitors in 1997.

- **Police (Jack):** Jack's friend in the New Orleans Police Department, Mike Rample, has some interesting information for Jack (provided that Jack pays him off). Tina might remember that Lucas bragged that he had already killed two other girls during Mardi Gras and three others this year (a gruesome tally, given that Mardi Gras is in early February). With that information, Rample discovers the identities of the first two victims, both tourists here for the party, both female college students (you can make up names if your players ask for them). Both girls were sexually assaulted and then murdered by multiple stab wounds. Medical

examiners discovered something odd: while no other bodily fluids were discovered, both women had traces of blood, not their own, on and in their bodies. This blood came from several sources and shows evidence of decay, as though it had been somehow breaking down naturally but kept from drying.

• **Father John Marrow (Edward):** Father Marrow won't reveal anything about the characters' sires to most of the characters, partially because he fears retribution and partially because he wishes to keep them mostly ignorant. Over the week since the characters rescued him from Andrea, however, he has developed some respect and affection for the characters, Edward in particular, and is willing to be more open with him. Any character watching the two of them interact notices this if her player succeeds on an Intelligence + Empathy roll (Tina's Body Language Specialty applies). As Storyteller, you should endeavor to make it obvious enough that the players might pick up on it without needing to roll dice. If Edward talks to Father John alone, and his player succeeds on a Presence + Persuasion roll, Father John lets it slip that Andrea had second thoughts about her involvement in the "experiment," but at least she didn't do it for the same reasons as "that whore Dubois." If pressed, Marrow says that Louis needs to sort this out with Nathaniel, as it's between the two of them. He suggests that Miss Opal might know where Nathaniel is staying, but he knows that Nathaniel is still in the city.

Online Research

Louis' forte is research (and this is "his" story, after all), so he can find out a great deal of information on the 'net, given time. Louis' player should make an extended Intelligence + Academics roll for each topic he researches (his Research Specialty applies, of course). Louis also gets a +2 bonus for the quality of computer equipment he is using (and his overall online savvy). Each roll represents 30 minutes of research and each topic must be researched separately. The number of successes that need to be accumulated for the effort to research a topic to succeed is given with each topic below.

• **Lucas [4 or 8 successes]:** If the characters talk to Mary and learn Lucas' last name (Gates), Louis can find information on him rather easily (4 successes needed). If not, Louis can find information by browsing crime and serial killer sites, and eventually comes up with a description and a photo (8 successes needed). The photo is of extremely poor quality — the figure is clearly male, but the features are blurred and indistinct. The description is Lucas, though, right down to the creepy smile. Lucas Gates is wanted in Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana and is on the FBI's Most Wanted List. He is suspected in sixteen known murders, all of women between the ages of 18 and 29. If the characters bring this information to any vampire in power (Savoy, Vidal, Opal, Maldonato), they express outrage that this monster was allowed into the city. The characters might notice, though, that they don't seem concerned so much with the women that Lucas kills as with the police scrutiny he might bring with him.

• **John Harley Matheson [5 successes]:** Running his name through the Internet turns up much the same information as described under "History," above. It also turns up an outdated website including times when the Matheson mansion is open

for tours, a map of the grounds, and directions to the house from New Orleans (roughly a three-hour drive).

• **Andrea [5 or 9 successes]:** Again, if Louis knows Andrea's last name (Ouellette), he can find a bit of information on her (5 successes needed). Andrea Ouellette was reported missing in New Iberia, Louisiana in October of 2000. She was last seen in the parking lot of a movie theater there. The picture that Louis finds looks almost identical to what the characters remember of Andrea, save that her skin is a bit paler (the picture doesn't show her arms, however, so the characters can't tell if the tattoos are present. They aren't mentioned on the site, though). A reward is still being offered for information leading to her return. According to the site, she was 23 at the time of her disappearance. Without her last name, Louis must search much longer to find the same information (9 successes needed).

• **Nathaniel Dubois [3 successes]:** Nathaniel never told Louis the name of his company, but Louis can find it with little trouble (Dubois Designs). Nathaniel Dubois still has a legal identity, but has filed for bankruptcy. His company's website has been taken down, but he still owns the domain name. He has an address listed online (see Scene Two if the characters decide to visit it).

• **Miss Opal [n/a]:** No usable information on her is available online.

• **Sarah Cobbler [4 successes]:** Searching this name turns up an online journal with the following information, dated six months ago:

I swear, I wish I had never met Sarah Cobbler, but then, it wasn't my decision. Still obsessed with change, when all she can really change is her hair. It's kind of sad. She's still creepy, though. She's the kind of person who would have looked forward to dissecting fetal pigs in high school.

The journal belongs to someone only called "Mezzo." Mezzo doesn't have any personal information listed except for a dead link to a personal website, but her IP indicates that she is from (or logs on from) New Orleans. By reading the rest of the journal (and with a successful Intelligence + Expression roll; Louis' Online Specialty applies) any of the characters can tell that Mezzo is female, probably in her 20s, well-educated, versed in literature and classical music and living with an oppressive family who doesn't know she is keeping the journal. A separate Intelligence + Occult roll indicates (if the characters haven't guessed already) that she is a vampire — she makes oblique references to "never seeing the sun" and "this awful diet."



MEZZO

While Mezzo doesn't figure into **Blood Money** directly, she will play a roll in future installments of **Danse de la Mort**. If the characters attempt to contact her by leaving comments on her journal, she responds to them politely but does not reveal any personal information about her whereabouts

or “living” conditions. She does, however, note their concern (if they express any) and if she has the slightest reason to suspect they might be vampires, she begins her own investigations. She knows about Sarah’s conspiracy, and so discovers who the characters are in very short order. You can drop hints occasionally that the characters have a sense of being watched, but they never find who or what is spying on them.



Scene Two: Consultation

In this scene, the characters visit Miss Opal, learn a bit more about the Carthian Movement, and discover Nathaniel’s hiding place.

The characters can gain an audience with Miss Opal through Vidal or Savoy (or even through their functionaries like Maldonato and Father Marrow). Once someone calls her on their behalf, they have only a few hours to wait. They receive word back that Miss Opal will see them the following night, and are given instructions on where to wait for her car.

Read the following aloud:

You wait on the outskirts of the French Quarter for nearly an hour, and then a compact car pulls up. A young man with a baseball hat pulled down low over his face leans out the window and speaks in a thick drawl. “Y’all here to see Miss Opal?”

Stop reading aloud.

The driver isn’t in the mood to answer any questions. The inside of his car is a mess, and it won’t hold all of the characters — he expected them to follow in their own car.

When travel arrangements are sorted out, continue reading:

You follow the man’s car away from the French Quarter, into the Mid-City. Like the Tremé District, this downtown area is unsafe after dark. You look out the windows of your vehicles at the various people walking the streets and realize that they might be unsafe, but you are now the threat.

The man makes a hard left and stops in front of an apartment building. He gets out and leans on his car, motioning for you to park behind him. The man points to a flight of stairs going down to a basement apartment. “Go on down there, and wait for her to answer your knock before you go in. It might be a minute.” He then turns his attention away from you and lights up a cigarette.

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player make a Wits + Composure roll. If the roll succeeds, the character notices that the man’s face sports several warty growths, but that he breathes and is clearly mortal.

Continue reading aloud:

The staircase is worn and the walls are covered in gang graffiti. The door at the bottom of the stairs is in good repair, though.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters do as they were told and knock, they hear a woman’s voice say, “Come on in, sugar.” Continue with “Meeting Miss Opal,” below. If they open the door before this,

Miss Opal takes offense at their presumption (see “A Woman’s Wrath”). She activates Dread (Nightmare ••) as they walk in, just to underline the point.

Meeting Miss Opal

The door opens into a large main room, almost completely empty. A splash of blood in the corner, however, indicates that something violent once happened here. They see a hallway off to the right and light coming from a room in that direction. If they linger too long, they hear a sweet female voice in a thick drawl saying, “Come on in, honey. Ain’t got all night.”

Read the following aloud:

You make your way down the hall, passing three padlocked doors. The last door on the left is open, and thin yellow light pours from the room.

The room inside is the cleanest you’ve seen — a soft oversized rug covers the stone floor and a king-sized bed takes up the far side. What immediately draws your attention, though, is Miss Opal herself. She stands, unsteadily, as you enter the room, clad in a loose-fitting, peach-colored dress. A black shawl covers her face, but what you must consciously avoid staring at is her great bulk. She probably weighs close to 400 pounds, and flesh sags off her arms as though it might splash to the floor at any moment. She lumbers over to you as you enter, shaking your hands with a grip that indicates she is far stronger than she seems.

Miss Opal indicates a set of folding chairs leaning against the wall, and bids you take a seat. As she moves back to the edge of the bed, you notice that she is not alone: a young mortal man, perhaps 17 years old, lies on the bed unconscious, as if drugged. Miss Opal glances back at him, apparently to make sure he is still sleeping, and strokes his leg affectionately. “I can’t drink of him right now,” she says. “Still too out of it! I’d be giggling all the rest of the night.”

“I don’t believe I have met any of you, but I am always delighted to meet new Kindred, especially those descended from people I know,” she says with a look at you (indicate Louis). “What shall we talk about?”

Stop reading aloud.

Miss Opal is a pleasant conversationalist, and is interested in seeing how well the characters would fit into the Carthian Movement. She sounds them out on topics such as equality and religious freedom, and takes special note of how they react to her physical deformity (and, for that matter, how well they seem to tolerate Edward). She doesn’t ask them anything as direct as “What do you think of the Prince’s persecution of folks who don’t practice his religion,” but does ask whether the characters were “church people” in life and whether they plan to attend Mass now that they are vampires. She is also interested in where their loyalties fall with regards to the Savoy/Vidal power struggle, and she has some interesting information on this topic. The facts below are conversational tidbits that you can drop while portraying Miss Opal, either in response to the characters’ questions or as conversation starters if the discussion lags:

- “I’ve been in this city since Reconstruction, Honey. I’ve seen a great many of us come and go, and us Haunts never been nothin’ but thugs and brutes until now.”

• “Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy isn’t any new feud, Sugar. More than a hundred years they’ve been fighting. I think neither of them would know what to do without the other.”

• “Oh, we all go to sleep now and again. I just woke myself up goin’ on 20 years ago.”

• “Our governments are always behind the times, but things move so *fast* now — maybe we should, too.”

• “Oh, we ain’t all rich, Honey. It’s just we don’t buy food, and we know how to save up. Most of us, anyhow. But we have spendthrifts among us, just like breathing folks do.”

Eventually, the characters will probably ask about their sires, or at least about Nathaniel. Miss Opal doesn’t know anything about Andrea, Lucas or Sarah. She knows Mary and clucks her tongue in disappointment if she is mentioned, saying “Oh, that poor child. She just never learned how to be Kindred.” She isn’t surprised that Mary was blackmailed into Embracing Jack, however. Mary was always weak.

If asked about John Harley Matheson, Miss Opal states that he was always a perfect gentleman, “but there’s an animal inside of him, Honey.” She also reveals that his family owned slaves, but isn’t sure when he was Embraced or by whom.

If asked about Nathaniel, she tells the characters that he is a young Ventrue, not even 10 years from his Embrace. He knows all about computers (Miss Opal is more knowledgeable on the subject than most Kindred of her age, a fact she takes pride in) and is “pretty bright, but got no sense about money.” She also says that, in life, he was a heavy drinker and still prefers to feed on intoxicated mortals. According to Miss Opal, he lost his business and most of his fortune during the recent recession, but spoke with her a couple of weeks ago about a business opportunity. “Now, I don’t mean to upset you, Honey,” she says to Louis, “but I think he did what he did for cash, and that’s all.”

She knows where his old apartment is, but informs the characters that he doesn’t stay there anymore. She agrees to tell them where he is staying now on two conditions: First, that they don’t harm him in any permanent fashion, and second, that they each agree to give her a minor favor in the future.

A Woman's Wrath

Miss Opal has a quick temper and doesn’t brook any rudeness from her visitors. If any of the characters violates any of the conditions below, Miss Opal lashes out against that character. Calculate initiative for Miss Opal and for the offending character. If the character wins, he has a chance to duck before Miss Opal backhands him. If not, Miss Opal’s meaty hand knocks the character into a wall, and the immense Nosferatu admonishes: “Mind your manners, Sugar.”

- Any comment about Miss Opal’s weight.
- Any derogatory comment about blacks, women or Nosferatu.
- Any blasphemous remark, including taking the Lord’s name in vain.
- Expressing intention to kill Nathaniel or any other Kindred.
- Profanity, although she lets the first vampire to swear off with a “Watch your mouth, now. There’s ladies present.” If it happens again, she lets loose.

If Miss Opal smacks someone, roll her Strength + Brawl + Vigor – the victim’s Defense. The victim suffers one point of bashing damage for each success (remember that a vampire heals two points of bashing damage for every Vitae his player spends). If the character entertains thoughts of counterattacking, Miss Opal narrows her eyes and says, “Don’t go getting rude, Honey. You don’t want me to have to scare you.” Hopefully, the character takes the hint. Miss Opal is a fearsome combatant, especially given her command of the Nightmare Discipline.

Scene Three: Closing the Deal

In this scene, the characters track down Nathaniel Dubois and confront him with his greed and cruelty. Whether that involves destroying him or not is up to the troupe.

The Former Dubois Residence

Through the course of their investigations, the characters have probably discovered Nathaniel’s old address. If they visit this apartment, they discover he has long since departed, but that doesn’t mean the trip is wasted.

Read the following:

The apartment building has seen better days. A FOR RENT sign hangs in the window, but it looks as though it’s been there a while, and the telephone number has faded to the point of illegibility. The front door is unlocked, and from the sounds emanating from upstairs apartments, the place isn’t completely uninhabited. You can see from the peeling paint and decaying décor of the place that it wasn’t always as shabby as it is now — when Nathaniel Dubois dwelt here, it was likely a much more appealing place.

Nathaniel’s apartment is downstairs, and as you descend, you note that the lights are either burned out or smashed. His door is in the middle of the hallway, the insignia of Dubois Designs still affixed to it.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters might be apprehensive about entering the apartment, especially if they fell victim to Mary’s trap in the first scenario, but apart from the fact that the door is locked, the characters have nothing to stop them from gaining entry. A successful Dexterity + Larceny roll is sufficient to open the lock quietly. Three successes on an extended Strength + Brawl roll works as well (not quietly, of course).

Note, by the way, that no light from outside reaches this apartment and it has no power, so hopefully the characters thought to bring flashlights. If not, you’ll need to adjust the description below to compensate for them groping around in the dark.

Continue reading aloud once the characters have gained entry:

Clearly, this apartment hasn’t been inhabited for some months. Dust and grime coat the room. The light switch doesn’t work, as there is no power. A couch sits against the far left wall and a large metal shelving unit against the right. A least a dozen surge protectors sit on the shelves. This was apparently Nathaniel’s hub, but his computer equipment, of course, is long gone.

Stop reading aloud.

Searching the rest of the apartment (it consists of the main room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a bedroom) yields a bit of useful information. His cabinets are well stocked with liquor, but nothing else. Have the player of any character searching the place roll Wits + Investigation. If the roll succeeds, that character finds a receipt from a nearby liquor store.

A trip to the liquor store and some quick persuasion (which can involve Dominate, Majesty, threats, bribes, or any other method the characters choose to employ) reveals that Nathaniel still buys his booze from the same place. The clerk knows where Nathaniel “lives,” too, as he’s occasionally had to make deliveries. He says that Nathaniel pays him very well (not true — Nathaniel Dominates the clerk into thinking so).

When the characters are about to leave the apartment, have Louis’ player roll Wits + Investigation and Jack and Edward’s players roll Wits + Larceny. If any of these rolls succeed, the appropriate character notices a series of locks on the inside of the apartment. Obviously Nathaniel took his home security seriously. The only surprising thing is that he didn’t have an escape route. (Make a note of who succeeds on this roll, as it might become important later.)

Confronting Nathaniel

Nathaniel didn’t move too far away from his apartment. While the players might see this as foolish (which, to an extent, it is), he had his reasons. For one thing, he has no status or clout within the city and doesn’t subscribe to the beliefs of those in power, so developing a piece of territory and sticking to it is a good idea. Also, vampires in general are territorial and static creatures — they don’t like to change their routines if they can help it.

Read the following to the players:

Just finding a place to park near the building is a pain. Nathaniel’s building has its own lot, of course, but a high gate with a keypad lock surrounds it. Even getting onto the property requires a code or, presumably, access from someone inside.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can try a number of different approaches to get into the lot. Climbing the fence simply requires a Strength + Athletics roll, but there is a 50% chance that someone inside the building notices and calls the police (roll one die; on a 1 to 5 someone notices). Jack’s Obfuscate power can get around this problem, of course. If the police arrive, they enter the building and start asking around. They won’t find the characters unless they make a lot of noise, but their presence makes leaving in a hurry tricky.

Alternatively, the characters can attempt to disable the lock. This requires a total of ten successes on an extended Dexterity + Larceny roll. Each roll represents one turn (3 seconds) of work. The rolls all suffer a -3 penalty unless the characters can find a good toolkit somewhere.

Finally, someone can try to kick in the gate. This requires an extended Strength + Stamina roll with a -3 penalty to represent the durability of the lock. Each roll represents one turn (and one kick). When a character has accumulated three successes, he manages to break the lock. He trips the alarm, however, on the first kick to achieve even one success. The cops arrive a few minutes later.

A character with the Dominate Discipline might get the idea to call someone’s room randomly and try to force him to let the characters in. This doesn’t work, however: Dominate requires eye contact (but it would be an interesting learning experience for the characters).

Once the characters do gain entry to the grounds, they need to get into the building itself. This requires entering the front door, which, while locked, is a much simpler affair. Picking or popping the lock requires a total of 6 successes on an extended Dexterity + Larceny roll (-2 penalty if the character in question doesn’t have tools; three seconds per roll).

According to the information the characters received, Nathaniel’s apartment is on the second floor (if they check the mailbox for that apartment, it isn’t labeled). They can take the elevator or the stairs to reach his floor, and no nasty surprises await them regardless of which route they take.

If the characters discovered Nathaniel’s address from Miss Opal, she calls him to warn him that the characters are en route. He has therefore prepared his escape route (see below). If they found his address through any other means, he isn’t expecting them and hasn’t had time to do so.

What the characters do when they reach his door is very much up to them. If they simply knock, they hear footsteps inside and then either hurried activity (if Nathaniel wasn’t expecting them) or a series of clicks as he opens the locks on the door. If the characters wish to open the door themselves, they have a difficult task ahead of them. Picking the locks requires accumulating *fifteen* successes on an extended Dexterity + Larceny roll. If the character making the roll succeeded on the Wits + Larceny roll at Nathaniel’s old apartment, however, the player receives a +3 modifier to the roll since Nathaniel is using the same kinds of locks. Kicking in the door, requires accumulating 10 successes on an extended Strength + Stamina roll with a -2 penalty for the strength of the lock and hinges.

However the characters gain entry, when they do, read the following aloud:

The door opens into a short hallway, which leads to a large, almost oval-shaped room. You can see an open kitchen to the left and a door on the right, presumably leading to a bedroom. The place is well furnished: a couch and two matching chairs make up the centerpiece of the room, and modern artwork adorns the walls. You don’t see any computer equipment, however. Stepping into the room a little farther, you notice that the windows are covered with large sheets of metal, apparently bolted to the wall.

Stop reading aloud.

If Nathaniel let them in, he leads them into the main room and offers them a seat. If they broke in, Nathaniel is in the bedroom attempting to escape. All of the windows in his apartment are covered with the metal sheets, but the one in his bedroom is rigged with a mechanism that allows it to slide off easily. From there, Nathaniel can drop the two stories to the ground. He might damage himself in the process, but his vampiric body can easily heal such damage. The characters have four turns from when they make their presence known to Nathaniel to when he drops to the ground. If he makes it out of the building, he heads to his car and attempts to flee to Miss Opal.

If the characters catch Nathaniel in the apartment, or he knew they were coming, they can then confront him in whatever manner they see fit.

Nathaniel explains his actions this way: He had lost his business and most of his money, and was getting by on loans and the bit of cash he had saved away. He had (and has) contacts among other Carthians, but was afraid of incurring debt to them. Debt to Kindred is always worse than debt to mortals, he explains. He met Sarah Cobbler a few months ago (what he knows about her is summarized below) and she offered him money in exchange for a simple service — choose a mortal, Embrace him at a given location and time, and then abandon him.

Below are some questions the characters might have for Nathaniel and his responses:

- **What do you know about Sarah Cobbler?** Nathaniel knows that Sarah is a Mekhet. He knows that she is more powerful than he is, and knows that she isn't a Carthian, but not where her political allegiances lie. Nathaniel suspects her to be at least a century old, possibly more, but probably not as old as Vidal or Miss Opal. As to where she is now or her ultimate goal in arranging these Embraces, he does not know — and neither, he suspects, do the others.

- **What do you know about the other conspirators?** He knows that John Harley Matheson still stays at his mansion, but nothing of interest about any of the others.

- **What do you know about Mezzo?** Nathaniel expresses surprise that the characters even know about Mezzo at all. He explains that he found her in the same way that they did, through the Internet. Since most older Kindred have difficulty with new technology, he assumes that she is a neonate. He has conversed with her online and suspects her to be a Carthian, but admits that this is only a guess. If asked her clan, he says he doesn't know, but have the players roll Intelligence + Subterfuge while you roll Composure + Subterfuge for Nathaniel. Any player who rolls more successes than you do for Nathaniel notices that he looks at Edward uncomfortably when the subject of Mezzo's clan is raised. If one of the players calls him on this, he says that he doesn't want to offend Edward, but Mezzo mentioned something about being "under quarantine"

once, and some members of Clan Nosferatu are rumored to carry diseases. Nathaniel knows that she has met with Sarah Cobbler, and wonders if Mezzo was in on the conspiracy in some capacity.

- **Aren't you ashamed of yourself?** Nathaniel is not initially ashamed of what he did, but he can be made to see his act for what it was. He will listen to the characters' accusations and arguments, and finally relents. Embracing Louis was a crime, he understands, but he pledges that he will help Louis — and the others, if they wish — to come to terms with their new existences.

- **How much?** Nathaniel agreed to make Louis Maddox into a vampire, condemning him to insanity and ending his life and the lives of anyone that Louis might kill in his predations, for \$50,000. When Louis hears this, his player must roll Resolve + Composure to see if he can avoid frenzy. If Louis successfully retains control, not only avoiding outright frenzy but also not launching into an angry tirade at all, he can regain all spent Willpower points (his Virtue is Temperance).

What to Do About Nathaniel

The characters might decide on any number of avenues of approach with regards to Nathaniel.

- **Kill Him:** This is in direct violation of the promise they made to Miss Opal, and besides, do two wrongs make a right? If the characters do decide to destroy Nathaniel, he fights as best he can, but he's outnumbered. Any character with Humanity 5 or above who takes part in this act might degenerate. If so, the player must roll two dice. If this roll achieves no successes, the player loses a dot of Humanity and must then roll her new Humanity rating. If *this* roll fails, the character gains a derangement, some form of insanity, based on her actions (Louis receives a -2 to this roll, remember). An obsession with security, compulsively washing hands, nightmares, and violent mood swings are all possibilities.

- **Bring Him to Vidal:** Vidal turns Nathaniel over to Maldonato, who tortures him to gain all information on Sarah and the conspirators out of him. In the end, he has no more information than he freely gave the characters. The players must roll as above, save that they roll four dice instead of two to check for Humanity loss. Nathaniel survives only because Miss Opal intercedes on his behalf, but is banished from New Orleans.

In either of the above cases, the characters have made an enemy of Miss Opal.

- **Let Him Go:** Nathaniel is as good as his word. He helps the characters cope with the realities of unlife and puts in a good word with Miss Opal and the other Carthians, who, in turn, speak well of them with both Vidal and Savoy. If this occurs, you might grant the characters a second dot in the City Status Merit. (In a full game of **Vampire**, this would require the player to spend experience points for her character, but you can simply award this extra dot for the purposes of this introductory chronicle.)

Dramatis Personae

The only new character introduced in **Blood Money** is Miss Opal. She is detailed here, as is Nathaniel (just in case his traits become important). We also provide the new character sheets for the players' characters.

Miss Opal

Clan: Nosferatu

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 2, Crafts 2, Investigation (Body Language) 3, Occult 2, Politics 4

Physical Skills: Brawl 4, Drive 1, Stealth 3, Survival (Urban) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation (Physical Threats) 4, Persuasion (Rhetoric) 3, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Labor Organizations) 3, Allies (Local Government) 3, City Status 2, Clan Status (Nosferatu) 3, Contacts 3, Covenant Status (Carthians) 4, Giant (Note: Miss Opal is actually only 5'6" or so; it is her vast bulk that grants her the benefits of this Merit), Haven 2, Herd 3, Resources 2

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 7 (Prudence; Wrath)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Blood Potency: 3

Disciplines: Nightmare 3, Obfuscate 4, Resilience 3, Vigor 3

Vitae:



Miss Opal has the same basic Kindred powers as the players' characters. She can spend one Vitae per turn. Most of her Disciplines function just as they do for other characters (see Edward and Andrea for Nightmare; Jack for Obfuscate; Becky Lynn or Louis for Resilience; Tina for Vigor). She shares the Nosferatu clan weakness with Edward.

Miss Opal has several Merits indicating her status in the city of New Orleans. Her City Status and Covenant Status indicate her standing among all of the city's Kindred and among her own covenant, respectively (so she clearly wields more power among the Carthians than among the general Kindred population). Her Contacts Merit is a measure of the information that comes to her via her other Kindred and her street contacts. Her Haven and Resources are just the same as those described for Louis and Becky Lynn, even if the particulars differ (her haven is described in this scenario). Finally, the Giant Merit indicates that her Size rating is 6, rather than 5, and so she gains an extra Health point.

Nathaniel Dubois

(See **Last Night** for Nathaniel's background.)

Clan: Ventrue

Covenant: Carthian Movement

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2 (Finance), Computer 3, Politics 1, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Fast Talk) 4, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Contacts (Business) 3, Covenant Status (Carthians) 1, Fresh Start

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 5 (Prudence; Greed)

Health:

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Blood Potency: 2

Vitae:

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Dominate 2, Majesty 2, Resilience 1

Nathaniel has the same basic powers as the characters, and his Disciplines function in the same way as theirs (see Louis for Dominate and Resilience, Tina for Celerity and John Marrow for Majesty). He can spend one Vitae per turn. He has one new Merit: Fresh Start. Nathaniel can dedicate an action to altering his standing in the Initiative order in the following turn and for all subsequent turns, choosing to insert himself at a new point in the roster, even if it means going first when he went last before. For example, if his Initiative roll resulted in a 9, but a rival whom he wanted to waylay got a 12, Nathaniel can forfeit an action in turn one to get a fresh start and then act before that rival at 13 in turn two and afterward.

Louis Maddox

Louis' traits improve for **Blood Money** as he learns The Forgetful Mind (Dominate ●●●) and gains City Status. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Louis' Virtue is *Temperance*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, whether good or bad, despite the obvious rewards it might offer. His Vice is *Sloth*. Once per scene, he regains one spent Willpower point if he successfully avoids a difficult task but achieves its goal nonetheless.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Vitae: Louis can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Louis can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Louis can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Command (Dominate ●): This power allows him to give a one-word command to a target, such as "Freeze!" or "Quiet!" This command cannot cause the target to harm herself. For Louis to use this power, roll 7 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Intimidation + Dominate).

Mesmerize (Dominate ●●): This power allows Louis to implant hypnotic suggestions and issue complex commands to his victim. He cannot rearrange or alter memories, but he can force a victim to leave a door unlocked, to fetch him an item, to guard a door during the day or even something subtle such as waiting for a particular person and then spilling a drink on that person. For Louis to use this power, roll 10 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Expression + Dominate).

Louis must make eye contact to use either Command or Mesmerize. What's more, when Louis uses either of these Dominate powers, the Storyteller rolls the victim's Resolve + Blood Potency. Louis must get more successes than his target for the power to function.

The Forgetful Mind (Dominate ●●●): This power allows Louis to reshape the memories of a victim. He must first make eye contact and then spend time asking questions (to determine what a person does remember) and describing in detail any new memories he wishes to implant. Louis' player rolls 6 dice (Louis' Wits + Persuasion + Dominate) minus the target's Resolve. The more complex (or unlikely) the memories, the more successes Louis must accumulate: forgetting the color of

someone's hair might require only one or two successes; forgetting a traumatic event (like seeing a vampire feeding) might require 15 or 20; completely changing a week of events would require 50 or more. Louis' player can keep rolling to accumulate successes so long as he isn't interrupted—each roll represents five minutes of mental manipulation.

Resilience (●): This Discipline makes Louis supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae point to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds Louis' Resilience (1) to his Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds one to his Health. Doing so, he gains an eighth box on his Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties one box to the right. Also, the first time Louis suffers aggravated damage in a scene in which his Resilience is active, one point of the damage is considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for him to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Louis loses his extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Louis' seven base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Ventrue): As a member of the Ventrue clan, Louis is cursed to grow paranoid and delusional with time. When you roll to avoid gaining a derangement, subtract two dice from the die pool (the Storyteller will tell you when this happens).

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Louis and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Louis's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Louis is a smart guy who has a good memory for trivia, so he often knows minute facts about topics that he's never actually been schooled in. Whenever Louis is confronted by a situation outside his normal realm of knowledge, you may roll six dice (Louis' Intelligence + Wits). If this roll succeeds, Louis knows a helpful fact about the given topic.

Haven: Louis had a small apartment where he can shelter during the day. It's small — only two rooms — but it's only a few blocks from the French Quarter. What's more, Louis has set up various security measures around the door and window (he's not exactly paranoid, but break-ins aren't unknown in the area). If Louis is in his Haven when someone attempts to break in, he receives a +1 to any rolls to notice this attempt.

Tina Baker

Tina's traits improve for **Blood Money** as she gains City Status. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. Once per scene, she regains one spent Willpower point if she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity •: This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so cost Tina an action, but the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (the Storyteller will tell you when it wears off). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed doubles). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (1) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you

make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor •: This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (1) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Tina and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Tina's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contact: Tina has a friend — Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university — she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker

Concept: College Student

Plan: Daeva

Player:

Virtue: Fortitude

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Gluttony

Doterie:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine (Sprains)	●●●●●
Occult	○○○○○
Politics	●●●●●
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth (Crowds)	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy (Body Lang)	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Barfly	●●●●●
Brawling Dodge	●●●●●
City Status	●●●●●
Contacts	●●●●●
Danger Sense	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+1)	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
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	○○○○○
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	○○○○○

Disciplines

Celerity	●●●●●
Majesty	●●●●●
Vigor	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Size	5	_____
Defense	2	_____
Initiative Mod	6	_____
Speed	11	_____
Experience		_____
Armor		_____

Becky Lynn Adler

Becky Lynn's traits improve for **Blood Money** as she gains a rating in the Brawl Skill and in City Status. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Becky Lynn's Virtue is *Hope*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming her own goals or well-being. Her Vice is *Envy*. Once per scene, she regains one Willpower point if she gains something from a rival or has a hand in harming that rival's well-being.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Becky Lynn can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Becky Lynn can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Becky Lynn can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Aspect of the Predator (Protean •): This power mitigates the effect that meeting other vampires has on her. Whereas normally, vampires react fearfully when they meet Kindred of higher Blood Potency, Becky Lynn *always* reacts as though her Blood Potency were equal to whomever she meets.

Resilience (••): This Discipline makes Becky Lynn supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds her Resilience (2) to her Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds two to her Health. Thus She gains a ninth and 10th box on her Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties two boxes to the right. Also, the first two points of aggravated damage Becky Lynn suffers in a scene where her Resilience is active are considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for her to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Becky Lynn

loses her extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Becky Lynn's eight base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Gangrel): Becky Lynn's blood is cursed with a potent bestial instinct that sometimes makes it hard for her to think clearly. When rolling dice pools based on Intelligence or Wits Attributes, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving perception or reaction to surprise, or to the Resolve Attribute.

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Becky Lynn and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Becky's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fame: Becky Lynn is a member of New Orleans' social elite, so the media and people in the higher echelons of society pay attention to her. Add one die to her Socialize or Persuasion when she can use her fame to her advantage, but the Storyteller also may make occasional rolls to see if anyone on the street recognizes Becky Lynn.

Resources: Although Becky would need to touch base with her family to gain access to their vast fortune, she has her own bank account and credit cards. She can spend up to \$5000 without any problem.

Striking Looks (+2): Becky Lynn is beautiful. Add two dice to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Becky Lynn is attractive (as well as famous) people tend to remember her.

Jack McEandless

Jack's traits improve for **Blood Money** as he learns the first two levels of the **Auspex** Discipline and gains **City Status**. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Justice*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback. The "right thing," to Jack, is a kind of street-level decency: Never steal from someone who doesn't deserve it, never give someone bad directions, and never take someone's last dollar. His Vice is *Pride*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Jack can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Jack can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Jack can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Heightened Senses (Auspex ●): Jack can magnify all his senses (or just one) to superhuman levels. Doing so requires an action but no roll of the dice. This can even allow Jack to see if pitch darkness. Jack's player can also add his Auspex (2) to any Wits + Composure roll to notice an imminent threat. Finally, with this power active Jack can pierce the veil of another Kindred's use of Obfuscate. When Jack might see through Obfuscate, his player should roll 7 dice (Jack's Wits + Investigation + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the Kindred's Resolve + Stealth + Obfuscate. If the player gets more successes, Jack sees through the illusion (seeing someone hiding using Cloak of Shadow, for example).

Aura Perception (Auspex ●●): By concentrating, Jack can perceive the shifting colors of another's aura, allowing him to read their moods. To do so, Jack must observe the subject for at least two turns. The player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) – the subject's Composure. Jack then perceives a number of emotions (colors) equal to successes on the roll, starting with the most dominant. If this power is active while the target is lying, the player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the target's Composure. If the player gets more successes, Jack knows the target is lying. Finally, if Jack uses this power while interacting or being in close proximity to someone for at least a turn immediately before a fight, he gains a bonus to his Initiative equal to successes when activating this power (as you can predict the target's actions).

Touch of Shadow (Obfuscate ●): This power allows Jack to hide small items in his grasp or on his person. Even if someone is looking for the item on his person, the power keeps it hidden. You roll eight dice (Jack's Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate); once active, the object is hidden for the scene or until Jack decides to end the Discipline.

Mask of Tranquility (Obfuscate ●●): Most vampires feel a flare of fear or anger — the Predator's Taint — when they meet another Kindred for the first time. Jack, however, doesn't engender that effect, though he does still suffer from it and can thus recognize other vampires. Jack may "turn off" this power if he wishes.

Cloak of Night (Obfuscate ●●●): This power allows Jack to disappear completely, even from plain sight. He remains invisible until he wishes to reappear or until he takes obvious action (such as attacking someone or breaking a window). Disappearing requires a success on a roll of Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (seven dice for Jack). If you roll five or more successes, anyone who sees Jack disappear forgets that he was even there in the first place.

Clan Weakness (Mekhet): Jack's Kindred body is cursed to be even more sensitive to fire and sunlight than most. If he is exposed to these anathema of vampiric existence, he suffers one more point of aggravated damage per turn than other vampires

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Jack and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Jack's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contacts: Jack has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department, a young cop who works the night shift in the French Quarter. This cop, named Michael Rample, knows Jack socially and usually gives him information about traffic conditions. Michael would be willing to share more sensitive information with Jack, but he might require a bribe for truly important tidbits.

Direction Sense: Jack always knows which way is north, and he can always retrace his route in unfamiliar territory.

Eidetic Memory: Jack doesn't forget anything he sees or hears (meaning you should take notes as his player). He normally doesn't need to make a roll to remember anything he knows, but if he is under stress, he adds two dice to any such roll.

Stunt Driver: Unlike less skilled drivers, Jack can take other actions while driving, including firing his gun. The Storyteller might still require a Drive roll if Jack needs to do anything fancy, however.

Edward Zeric

Edward's traits improve for **Blood Money** as he learns Dread (Nightmare ••) and gains City Status. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Edward's Virtue is *Charity*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower points when he helps another at the risk of loss or harm to himself. It isn't enough to share what he has in abundance. He must make a real sacrifice in terms of time, possessions or energy, or he must risk life and limb to help another. His Vice is *Lust*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he satisfies his lust in a way that victimizes others (though of course, he never sees it that way).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Edward can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Edward can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Edward can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (•): This Discipline allows Edward to boost his speed to preternatural levels. To activate Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Edward suffers a penalty equal to his Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of his Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, Edward's Speed rating doubles as long as the Discipline is active. Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's Edward's turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Edward's Celerity (1) to his Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Edward and activate it before they roll.

Monstrous Countenance (Nightmare •): By bearing his fangs and emitting a terrible, animalistic hiss, Edward can spark sheer terror in a victim. Roll seven dice (Edward's Presence + Intimidation + Nightmare) to activate this power (the Nosferatu clan weakness does not penalize this roll). The player of anyone seeing Edward in person when this power is active, must roll Composure + Blood Potency. If they fail to match your number for success, their character immediately flees and will avoid your presence for the remainder of the scene. Edward may keep this power active for the entire scene.

Dread (Nightmare ••): Edward can create a feeling of inexplicable panic in a small area. Edward spends a point of Vitae and the player rolls five dice (Edward's Manipulation + Empathy + Nightmare); the Storyteller rolls Composure + Blood Potency for targets to resist. If Edward's player wins, anyone he affects suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls and cannot spend Willpower to gain a +3 to rolls. Edward can affect anyone within a range of 15 yards. The effect lasts as long as he concentrates; using another Discipline, undertaking any complex action or entering combat will end the effect.

Vigor (•): This Discipline makes Edward superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Edward adds his Vigor (1) to his Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Nosferatu): Edward's blood is cursed to cause discomfort in those around him, manifesting in his case in the form of his jaundiced complexion. When rolling dice pools based on the Presence or Manipulation Attributes in social situations, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools that involve the Intimidation Skill, to the Composure Attribute, or to dice pools for using the Nightmare Discipline.

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Edward and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Edward's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fast Reflexes (+2): This Merit adds 2 to Edward's base Initiative Modifier. This is already calculated on his character sheet.

Inspiring: Edward is able to rally others in times of great distress, renewing their courage and determination in the face of adversity. Once per game session, he can exhort those around him to redouble their efforts in the face of great stress or danger. The player rolls Presence + Persuasion. If the roll succeeds, any individuals who actively assist Edward and who are within earshot regain one spent Willpower point (not to exceed their Willpower dots). The character may not use this Merit on himself, and may not use it on the same subjects more than once a day.

Mentor: Andrea did not abandon Edward at his Embrace and is determined to teach him what the Requiem has in store for him.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Edward Zurich

Concept: Musician

Clan: Nosferatu

Player:

Virtue: Charity

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse De La Mort

Vice: Lust

Doterie:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (urban legends)	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●○○○○
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry (knife)	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression (guitar)	●●●●○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	●●○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Fast Reflexes (+2)	●○○○○
Inspiring	●●●●○
Mentor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Flaws

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Disciplines

Celerity	●○○○○
Nightmare	●●○○○
Vigor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Switchblade	+1
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	8
Speed	10
Experience	_____
Armor	_____



Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Part Four: The Gentleman



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

The Gentleman written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

In this installment of the *Danse de la Mort* chronicle, the characters leave New Orleans in search of John Harley Matheson, Becky Lynn's charming sire. In the process, they learn exactly why vampires normally stay to cities — the countryside is a dangerous place for the Kindred. Only those powerful enough to reside in the rural areas do so, and this is the second lesson of **The Gentleman**: Vampires can become horrifyingly potent, given enough years. John Harley Matheson has been a vampire since before the Civil War, meaning that while he is powerful, even he pales in comparison to such imposing figures as Prince Vidal and Philip Maldonato. And yet, herein the characters stand to learn that with the great power of age comes weakness as well....

Theme and Mood

The theme of this story is loss. Time marches onward, and vampires remain mired in the eras in which they lived. John Harley is still very much a product of the mid-19th century, and has difficulty dealing with the advances of the past hundred years. He has lost his family, much of his fortune, and parts of his sanity over time, and though he has gained great power through his Disciplines, they are simply parlor tricks compared to the temporal might that some younger Kindred wield. During **The Gentleman**, all the characters — and most especially Becky Lynn Adler — must reflect on what they have lost in their transition from life to undeath, and come to terms with what they can reclaim, what they can replace, and what is lost forever.

The mood of the story is haunting. The sounds of the wind through the trees around John Harley's plantation, the music he plays on his violin, his mortal servants, even the strange cries from the surrounding bayou should all both chill the characters and drive home a feeling of mourning and loss. Every time John Harley mentions a memory from his childhood, he is talking about someone long dead. The characters should understand that some night they, too, will have only memories of their mortal lives, for no other proof will remain.

Storytelling Technique — Focus and Atmosphere

One of the major problems with any roleplaying troupe is keeping the players focused enough on the game to make some headway on the story. Often, players have difficulty refraining from jumping into tangential discussions of other games, movies, or life in general, and establishing and maintaining the mood of the game is nigh impossible in the face of that kind of behavior. Below, we offer some suggestions on obtaining and maintaining the players' attention during the game.

Focus

A roleplaying game is, first and last, a group of friends getting together. When that happens, people are going to want to chat. That's fine. It's easier to roleplay if everyone is relaxed and not trying to simply sit down and jump into the game headfirst, so don't feel compelled to stop people from talking about their jobs or lives before the game starts. The operative phrase, of course, is "*before* the game starts." Encourage people to get their chatter out of their systems before you begin. Here are some suggestions on how to do that:

- **Set times.** If you can play all night, great. If not, establish when the game has to end. Normally, this isn't too hard. Odds are someone in the group has to wake up in the morning and doesn't want to play past a certain time, so set the end time for the game for a half-hour before that person wants to leave. That will give everyone time to discuss the game, write down notes and pack up their books without rushing. Likewise, set a time for the game to begin but, if possible, allow people to arrive a half-hour to an hour earlier. Then, people can chat (you included) without anyone feeling like they're detracting from the game. A further hint: If you're going to order food, do it in this "socializing time" before the game, preferably as soon as everyone arrives. That way you don't have to worry about the game being well underway when the pizza guy shows up.

- **Change the space when the game begins.** We include suggestions for atmosphere below. If you use any of those techniques, don't implement them until everyone is settled and ready to play, or use them to indicate that everyone should get settled and ready to play. Don't dim the lights until the players have their character sheets, dice, pencils and so on and are done talking about their days at work. This emphasizes that "game time" is different than "social time" without beating anyone over the head with it.



- **Recap.** Ask the players to recap what happened during the last session. Correct them if they misremember an important fact that their characters wouldn't have confused (thinking that Savoy is the Prince, for instance). This practice not only helps freshen everyone's memory (including yours) but it helps the players to feel as though they are continuing where they left off, which eases the transition from chatting to gaming.

- **Relax.** Remember, this should be fun. People are going to wander off on tangents, and there's no advantage in snapping at them about it. If the conversation starts to drift during the game, just say, "Stay on track, guys," in a gentle tone of voice. If you don't sound accusatory or angry, the players won't feel threatened. Don't feel like you're stifling their social time, either. Anything that's really worth saying will keep until the game's over for the evening.

Atmosphere

Making the players feel immersed in the game environment can go a long way toward maintaining focus. This really doesn't take much effort or anything too extreme. Two simple tricks can enhance the mood of the game enormously.

- **Music:** If the characters are at a club, playing the appropriate kind of music is intuitive enough. But what about when they are hunting the streets of New Orleans for blood, or quietly investigating the scene of a murder? Music can work wonders toward helping the players to feel "in the moment." The trick is to find music that is appropriate, but not distracting. You know the tastes of your troupe better than we ever could, so suggesting specific bands or even genres is futile. We recommend instrumental pieces, especially for scenes involving conversation, since it's much easier to talk if you don't have to compete with lyrics (and it's then impossible for the players to absentmindedly sing along). Keep the volume low enough that the music enhances rather than distracts from the game. Having to talk over the music is difficult and annoying.

- **Lighting:** Special lighting is difficult to arrange if you're playing in the back of your local game store, but harsh, overhead lighting is reminiscent of the sun and is therefore not very appropriate to **Vampire: The Requiem**. Candles are better in terms of mood, but they do raise the temperature of the room slightly, and some people can't keep their hands off of them (which can re-



sult in messy wax spills or fire hazards). If you use candles, consider using large, base candles rather than taper candles, as they burn longer, provide better light and don't tip over as easily. Lights situated on the floor can also provide the effect you want without the inherent problems that candles pose. Lighting probably provides the best atmospheric change in terms of drawing a clear distinction between "game time" and "social time," too — when the game ends, you can just flip on the light. Just be aware that some players fall asleep if the lights are too low.

Our Story Continues...

The characters have by this point discovered and confronted three of their sires. Only the Kindred responsible for Embracing Becky Lynn and Tina remain at large (as well as the vampire who set the whole experiment up). The only one of these Kindred they have a solid lead on is John Harley Matheson. Lucas Gates (Tina's deranged sire) could be anywhere. **The Gentleman** begins when the characters decide to track down John Harley Matheson.

If you choose to use Central Character Storytelling technique put forth in **Blood Money**, Becky Lynn should gain any Central Character bonuses for this story.

Scene One: Preparations

During the last two stories, the characters might have found various bits of information on Matheson, depending on whom they asked. What the characters might have learned, and from whom, is summarized here:

- John Harley is a member of the same clan as Becky Lynn (obviously, because he is her sire).
- He is not welcome in New Orleans by order of Prince Vidal (any Kindred the characters have met can tell them this, but not why. Only the Prince and Maldonato know the particulars, and they don't share them).
- He was Embraced before the Civil War (Miss Opal, Savoy).
- He rose only recently from a torpor of at least 20 years (Miss Opal, Savoy).
- He has trouble adjusting to modern society and is willing to pay for lessons in 21st century culture, but doesn't learn well (Nathaniel).
- He appears genteel and polite, but is a cold-blooded killer when necessary (the characters have observed this, but might not remember it. Nathaniel can remind them, however).
- His mansion was available for tours from 1981 (when it was refurbished with an anonymous grant) through 1997, but the website that advertised this is badly outdated (Internet). It does contain a map, however.
- In life, he was a wealthy landowner, but his family lost its fortune in the Civil War and he vanished just after Lincoln's assassination in 1865 (Professor Montrose).

The characters can ask around again, trying to fish more information out of the Kindred in the city that they know. Depending on the events of the previous stories, some of those Kindred might not be willing to talk to the characters at all. In any event, though

Vidal has given the coterie special dispensation to search for their sires, he doesn't have time in his busy schedule to take frequent meetings with young Kindred, so getting to see him is difficult. Likewise, Savoy and Miss Opal are both important figures and while the characters are interesting curiosities, they have other concerns.

Obtaining an appointment with any of these three figures involves a roll of Manipulation + Persuasion + City Status. If the characters have made a show of loyalty to a given character (they gave confession to Vidal during the first story, they've visited Miss Opal or Nathaniel to talk about the Carthian Movement, etc.) apply a +1 modifier. Likewise, if they have acted in ways counter to the given character's agenda, apply a -2 modifier to the roll. A simple success indicates that the character will take a meeting with the coterie within the week. An exceptional success (five successes or more on the roll) means the meeting can take place that very evening.

A meeting doesn't guarantee the elder vampire in question will spill all he knows, however. Vampires guard their secrets carefully. Besides, John Harley Matheson is a powerful Kindred, and not someone that even Vidal wants to anger by saying too much about him. Roleplay through any meetings the players can secure for their characters. During the course of the meetings, when a character asks about Matheson, have the player make a roll based on her style of questioning. If, for instance, Becky Lynn invites Antoine Savoy to a "late supper" and questions him as the two feed idly on a young couple she has seduced, you might have her player roll Manipulation + Socialize. If Louis converses with Nathaniel over the Internet, you should have his player roll Manipulation + Expression (and his Online Specialty would apply). A simple conversation would probably involve Manipulation + Persuasion, though a player who asks direct questions and tries to avoid verbal sparring might roll Presence instead of Manipulation. In any event, City Status applies to any of these rolls, but using the Majesty Discipline causes the interview to end early — the undead consider it rude to stoop to such tricks for simple conversation.

What the characters can actually learn about Matheson is below, in the same format as before:

- He is a member of the animalistic Gangrel clan. This means that he has an affinity for shapechanging, but that his Beast drowns out his higher-level thought at times (any of the Kindred can tell the characters this).
- While many Gangrel are savage, John Harley never lost his charm or his sophistication. This requires great willpower and mental fortitude (any of the Kindred knows this, and even Vidal has to admit that he respects Matheson for it).
- Matheson is a member of a covenant called the Invictus, and has been almost since his Embrace (Miss Opal, Antoine and Vidal all know this, but Vidal won't tell the characters what it means, simply telling them that they are "worldly Kindred who do not have the proper fear of the Lord"; the others relate the information in the sidebar entitled "Covenant — Invictus"). Other members of the Invictus reside in New Orleans. In fact, the characters have already met one: Natasha Preston. If the characters decide to meet with her, go to "Meeting Natasha," below.

• Miss Opal and Antoine Savoy both know that John Harley Matheson is driven and ruthless (or was; who knows how the intervening years have treated him?). They suspect that the official reason for his banishment from the Crescent City was religious in nature, but unofficially, Prince Vidal saw him as a threat but hesitated to kill him outright. By placing a standing banishment on his head, Vidal can keep Matheson out of the city (or at least prevent him from spending any time there).

• Nathaniel knows that Matheson and Sarah Cobbler have known each other for some time, but isn't sure about the extent or nature of their relationship. He suspects that Matheson is the elder of the two.



COVENANT — INVICTUS

The Invictus is also called the "First Estate" in Kindred circles, and has been in existence since the fall of ancient Rome. Unlike the Carthian Movement, which is predicated on equality, the Invictus espouses a feudal system of government, where those who are worthy take power and hold it. "Worthy," of course, is a somewhat relative term, but it tends to boil down to "whoever has the means to take and hold power." Invictus vampires cultivate influence over mortals, using money, supernatural might and violence to gain a voice in government, finance, organized crime and any other circles of power that they can. Joining the Invictus requires only a declaration of loyalty to the elders of the covenant... and the recognition that those elders are likely to be in power for a very long time. That is, of course, unless someone "worthier" unseats them.



Meeting Natasha

Savoy or Father John Marrow can arrange a meeting with Natasha Preston. She agrees to meet them in the lobby of a hotel in the French Quarter.

Natasha is waiting when the characters show up. She greets them with a firm handshake and asks curtly why they wanted to talk with her.

Natasha is not interested in talking about her unlife or how she came to New Orleans. As she speaks, allow Becky Lynn's player to roll Intelligence + Socialize. If this roll succeeds, Becky Lynn realizes that Natasha sounds as though she is from New England. This is true, in fact, but Natasha isn't interested in pleasantries. Antoine told her that the characters would probably be interested in talking about John Harley Matheson, and she is prepared to do that.

First, she makes it very clear that her loyalty is to Antoine Savoy, even though she is a member of the Invictus and he is not. She further explains that her research indicates that Prince Vidal had no basis, religious or otherwise, to banish Matheson from New Orleans (though she admits she is a relative newcomer). She has visited Matheson's mansion and spoken with him, and if the characters are interested in doing the same, she advises them to watch their manners. John Harley is an old-fashioned gentleman, and doesn't abide rude behavior in his home. She also advises them that if they begin their meeting with Matheson by reciting their lineage, they will earn his at-

tention and respect. Of course, the characters can all only trace their lineage back one step (to their sires), and their situation is somewhat unique, but Natasha doesn't know that. Natasha further advises that the characters don't arrive to the mansion hungry, but if asked why, only says that it's a long drive and very few mortals live in the area. An Intelligence + Subterfuge roll, however, indicates that she seems concerned when she offers that advice. She refuses to elaborate, however.

If the characters express interest in visiting Matheson, Natasha advises them to get a fast car and good driver, and not to stop along with way. "We're not as impressive outside of the cities," she says.

If asked about anything other than Matheson, she initially refuses to answer. A successful Intelligence + Subterfuge roll, however, reveals that she is simply waiting for an offer. The characters can motivate her by offering information about Vidal's activities (which they aren't presently privy to), or by promising future favors to her. She is willing to trade information on both Mezzo and Sarah Cobbler for future services, and won't specify those services any further, save to say that they won't be dangerous. If the characters agree, she can tell them the following:

• **Sarah Cobbler:** Natasha knows that Sarah is *not* a member of the Invictus, but suspects her to be a member of the Lancea Sanctum (see **Mary's Child**). She knows that Sarah is a Mekhet and is at least 40 years into her Requiem, but isn't sure what her ultimate goals are. Sarah has been a presence in the city for decades, but doesn't reside there full-time, which is strange — Natasha explains, if the characters ask, that most vampires don't like to travel, as it presents too many risks. When she is in town, Sarah does not meet with either Savoy or Vidal. As far as Natasha knows, though, Sarah isn't under any kind of prohibition (as Matheson is), though since she brought not only Matheson but also Lucas Gates into the city without Vidal or Savoy's permission, that might have changed. Although Sarah isn't a member of the Invictus, Natasha says, she keeps a thumb on the pulse of mortal high society, attending parties and political functions sometimes. Natasha also mentions that she must dye her hair nightly, because it never looks the same twice.

• **Mezzo:** Natasha admits to knowing of Mezzo and that Mezzo knows more about Sarah than she does, but cannot give the characters any information on how to find the reclusive Kindred. She offers (after securing promises of favors) to attempt to contact Mezzo if the characters wish to talk with her. She assures the characters that Mezzo has no real power in the city and is simply "a young but observant Kindred."

Leaving the City

The characters can all pile into Jack's van or they can somehow procure a car large enough to hold all of them (unless for some reason they wish to travel separately). The mansion is about three hours outside of the city.

As the characters drive out of the city, read the following:

For the first time in your — what do the other vampires call it? Requiem? — you are leaving the city. As the black highway stretches before you and the lights of the Crescent City disappear behind, you feel a terrible gnawing fear. What waits for you in the dark? Other, territorial vampires, or stranger things still? Will John Harley Matheson be glad to see you, or will he, like Andrea, be locked in the throes of frenzy? The only shred of hope that you (**indicate Becky Lynn**) can cling to is a hazily remembered promise from your sire that he would always help you if you asked.

Stop reading aloud.

Scene Two: Stops Along the Way

This scene exists only to drive home to the players that their characters are safer in the cities than between them, and to show them that stranger things than vampires stalk the night. You can skip this scene completely if your troupe is pressed for time, and if they choose to heed Natasha's advice and don't stop, don't force it on them.

Read the following aloud:

You've been on the road for nearly two hours, and conversation ceased some time ago. You are each lost in your own thoughts, watching the road, the cars, the scenery fly by. Normally, a car ride like this would make your muscles cramp up, but you don't feel the slightest bit discomforted. You only feel the hunger, the craving that replaces every other desire for you — you might have fed tonight, but you could feed again.

*You (**indicate the driver**) pull off of Interstate 55 onto route 22, a smaller highway that leads, eventually, to the Matheson House. Twenty minutes go by, the trees grow thicker, and none of you have seen any man-made structures since turning off the main freeway. Then, up ahead on the left, you see what looks like a gas station and diner. Four cars are parked out front and one more at the gas island, but you don't see any people. The lights inside the building are flickering and as you approach, they die entirely. The lights over the island, however, remain lit.*

Stop reading aloud.

Ask the driver's player if he plans to stop the car or if any of the other characters urge him to do so. If not, you might mention to Jack and Edward's players that either of them could potentially fulfill their Virtues (Justice and Charity, respectively) by investigating. If they still refuse, skip ahead to Scene Three. Don't penalize the characters for not stopping. After all, they're taking Natasha's (very sound) advice by leaving well enough alone.

If the characters do stop the car, continue reading aloud from this point:

You can see movement inside the diner. Someone — an adult man, judging by the height — is pacing back and forth in front of the counter. As you watch, he turns toward you and steps forward so that you can see his face. The man is just over six feet tall, and is husky, muscular... and naked. He has thick brown facial hair, and as he presses his face to the glass you can see it is smeared with blood. He reaches his hands up and presses his palms to the glass, peering at you like a caged animal, and you can see that his palms are covered in hair. His hands leave bloody streaks down the glass, and he pants, steaming up the window. Behind him,

you can see a lone shoe on the floor... but looking closer, you see that the foot is still in it.

The man starts, and shoves his fists forward through the glass. He springs outward, landing in your midst, and runs toward the road.

Stop reading aloud.

Allow the players to take whatever action they like here. If one of them shoots the stranger, apply a -2 penalty for shooting a moving target in the dark. Even if the bullet hits, however, the man simply stumbles and lets out a pained snarl. If they follow him, they hear him run into the brush, and then his footsteps disappear. They find his prints, but those, too, vanish, replaced by the footprints of a wolf.

Astute players will probably guess that the man is a werewolf, but you don't have to confirm or deny that supposition. Inside the diner, the characters find the remains of 10 people, torn to pieces, their throats chewed open and their hearts torn out. Enough blood remains in the bodies for all five characters to fill their pools, if the characters wish to indulge in such a grisly feast (normally, dead blood is useless to vampires, but these people haven't been dead long enough for the blood to cool). The victims appear to be travelers and local residents.

When the characters have taken whatever actions they wish to take here, continue on to Scene Three.

Scene Three: The Mansion

Matheson House isn't gated or patrolled, and in fact the characters might well miss the sign unless they pay close attention (Wits + Composure roll, -1 modifier unless using Auspex). After a long, winding driveway, the characters pull up in front of the house. It is in fairly good shape, but doesn't look as though it's being given regular upkeep anymore — vines are beginning to creep up the front of the house and the paint is peeling.

Meeting James

When the characters exit the car, read the following:

Standing in the driveway, looking up at the mansion, you are momentarily overcome with the strange sense of walking back into history. After all, somewhere on this property is a man who lived here when the house was new, when the outlying building you can see in the distance actually housed slaves. It's easy to imagine, with the moonlight illuminating the house and the night-sounds echoing, how the place must have sounded then...

In fact, do you see movement from the slave quarters?

As you peer into the gloom, trying to pinpoint the movement you're sure you saw, the front door to the mansion opens. An African-American boy of perhaps 16 years walks down the front steps. He is tall and dressed in a suit that hangs just a bit too loosely on his thin frame. The immediate flare of anger you feel indicates that he is Kindred.

"Good evening," he says in a thick Louisiana drawl. "Is Mister Matheson expecting you?"

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can converse with this young vampire for as long as they wish. He introduces himself as James. He is polite and soft-spoken, and happy to answer their questions to the best of his knowledge.

Some of the probable questions the characters might ask James, and their answers, follow:

- **Are you John Harley Matheson's childe?** James shakes his head and looks at the ground, as though embarrassed or even offended by the question. He does not elaborate, however.

- **Do you know [insert detail about New Orleans here]?** James has never been to New Orleans and does not know any of the vampires there.

- **How many other Kindred dwell on the mansion?** James and John Harley are the only two vampires here permanently, though Matheson does entertain visitors. If asked, James names Natasha Preston, Nathaniel Dubois and Sarah Cobbler as having visited within the last month.

- **Personal details.** James is a member of Clan Mekhet. If asked about his own lineage, he declines to answer, saying "we don't discuss that in polite company." Allow the players to roll Intelligence + Subterfuge (Becky Lynn's Innuendo Specialty applies). If the roll succeeds, the characters note that James seems discomfited by the question. On an exceptional success (five or more successes), the character notices a flash of anxiety in James when asked this question.

James isn't from New Orleans, but from Morgan City. He is willing to discuss his (fairly mundane) mortal life, and admits that he has only been a vampire for a few months. He came into Matheson's service shortly after his Embrace, but isn't willing to discuss the details of that arrangement.

- **Are there people in the slave quarters?** James explains that John Harley keeps mortal staff, and that they live in the former slave quarters. They are not usually visible, and Matheson prefers it that way.

- **Upon whom does Matheson feed?** Astute characters might have noted that the mansion is a good distance removed from any population center, and might wonder how Matheson copes with this. James, however, doesn't provide any insight, simply answering, "That's Mister Matheson's business, and you'll have to ask him."

Whenever the characters are ready, James leads them inside to meet John Harley Matheson.

The Master of the House

Read the following aloud:

James leads you through the front door and the foyer into an opulent great room. Artwork adorns the walls, and the candlesticks holding the only light sources are polished silver. And yet, the room lacks the grace and beauty of the room in which you first met Augusto Vidal. This room seems like a disjointed attempt to recapture past glory.

Seated in front of the windows is John Harley Matheson, dressed in a soft charcoal suit. A wineglass sits in front of him, the inside stained red, presumably from his last meal. He stands and crosses

the room, taking your (indicate Becky Lynn) hand and kissing it. "Becky Lynn," he says softly. He looks up at the rest of you and smiles. "And company. To what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can question Matheson as much as they wish, but they must remain polite. Matheson doesn't brook any raised voices, loss of temper, and certainly not threats of violence. Any obvious use of Disciplines, too, invokes his ire. Unlike Miss Opal in **Blood Money**, however, Matheson doesn't use physical force to back up his threats. Anyone who offends him is simply ordered to leave the room. If the character refuses, Matheson reminds him that the characters are guests in his house, and need to obey the rules of that house. If the vampire persists in being stubborn, Matheson uses Dominate to force the character from the room.

During the conversation, Matheson fixates almost exclusively on Becky Lynn. He speaks to the other characters if they ask him a question, but keeps his answers short and to the point... unless Becky Lynn expresses interest, in which case he answers at length and in detail. After the characters have conversed a bit, have the players roll Intelligence + Subterfuge (Becky Lynn's Innuendo Specialty applies). If the roll succeeds, the character has the feeling that Matheson would prefer to speak with Becky Lynn alone. If any character brings this up tactfully, Matheson mentions that he does, in fact, have some information to impart to his childe alone, but that the other characters are free to wander the grounds, provided that they stay away from the slave quarters. If a character is rude or lewd about the suggestion, a look of fury crosses Matheson's face and he snarls, "How dare you impugn my intentions toward this young lady!" before storming out of the room.

Some of the obvious questions and answers follow. Some information Matheson doesn't give to anyone but Becky Lynn. These tidbits are *italicized*.

- **Why did you take part in Sarah's conspiracy?** Matheson feels out of touch with the modern world, and Sarah promised to provide education and aid in understanding it. *Specifically, she gave him James as a servant, and put him in touch with Nathaniel Dubois.*

- **Why are you banned from New Orleans?** He refuses to answer this question, stating only that Vidal is a self-important zealot and feels threatened by any talk of secular authority. *John Harley once had a strong hold over several Louisiana old-money families, but the Prince ruled his practices threatened to expose the Kindred. John Harley protested and was exiled. Most of his mortal retainers were killed during the resulting purge. He refuses to discuss the details with anyone, even Becky Lynn.*

- **Who do you feed upon?** John considers this question rude, but not unforgivable, especially if it's phrased in a tactful way, such as "It's wonderful how secluded this place is, but it seems you'd have trouble finding food." He states that he has standing arrangements, and that James is instrumental in fulfilling them. If any of the characters expresses hunger, he offers to provide sustenance, and has James bring the characters someone from the slave quarters (see "The Slave Quarters" for a description of these unfortunates).

Matheson is uncomfortable talking about this to Becky Lynn. He asks her not to ask about his feeding habits, not yet. If she persists, he admits the truth: He cannot feed on mortals, and can only take sustenance from other Kindred. James feeds on the servants, and he feeds on James.

• **What's James' story?** Matheson says only that James came into his service recently and has proven to be a capable servant. See above. James is little more than a slave, and from John Harley's attitude toward him, Becky Lynn should be able to see that clearly.

• **What else do you know about [insert vampire here]?** Matheson considers it extremely rude to talk about others behind their backs, and refuses to gossip. He actually knows very little new information about most of the Kindred that the characters have met. He hadn't met Nathaniel, Mary or Andrea before the night of the characters' Embraces. He says that he had Lucas "run some errands" for him, but that "he is beast, not fit for polite society." He explains that Sarah Cobbler has notions of escaping her vampirism, but that he never listened to her dogma because he considers it foolish. He does not know Mezzo by name, but he does know that Sarah was a scientist in life and has a specific interest in human medicine and virology. She also has "allies among the city's elite, even among the Invictus of New Orleans."

The Slave Quarters

The slave quarters are several hundred yards from the mansion itself, and as the characters approach, anyone with Auspex can smell rot and human waste from the building. The characters don't hear anything even with Auspex unless they stop and listen closely, requiring an Intelligence + Composure roll with a -2 modifier, no modifier with Auspex. If this roll succeeds, the character hears sounds of motion inside the building. The door to the slave quarters is unlocked.

If the characters open the door, read the following:

The scent of human filth is the first thing that you notice as you open the door to the slave quarters. The moonlight spills into the building, illuminating it enough for you to see that it is composed of only one room. A hole in the floor near the door is the apparent source of the stench. Four mattresses lie strewn over the rest of the floor, and six people ranging in age from young teens to late forties lie sleeping on them — or, at least, they pretend to sleep. Some of them have their eyes shut tightly, as though willing themselves to ignore the fact that you've opened the door. As your eyes adjust to the darkness a bit more, you notice two very disturbing things. First, everyone in the room is visibly undernourished, not to the point of extreme illness, but certainly to the point of weakness. Second, each of these mortals is African-American.

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can take whatever action they feel is warranted here. The slaves aren't physically bound, but have been Dominated not to speak. If the characters ask them questions, all they can manage to do is open their mouths before John Harley's mental commands kick in. Their conditioning is so thorough that they don't bear Matheson any ill will, but then, they don't have much emotion of any kind left. Most of their will and desire have been excised, leaving only hollow shells.

The slaves follow the characters if ordered to, and if a character tries to carry one, the slave doesn't resist.

The Upstairs

If a character ventures upstairs, he finds that the rooms are all orderly and clean, if a little dusty. All of the bedrooms are fully furnished, and don't show signs of being used recently. Nothing of value or interest is left in drawers, cabinets or closets. John Harley keeps everything of value to him in the basement.

If the characters try any of the light switches here or anywhere in the house, they discover that the house does have electricity.

The Kitchen

If a character enters the kitchen, read the following:

James sits in the kitchen, overseeing the efforts of three servants. Two of them sit at the kitchen table peeling potatoes. The third stands in front of the stove, stirring something in a huge iron pot. You notice that the two people peeling potatoes cut their fingers every third or fourth stroke, and the pile of peeled potatoes next to them are stained pink from their blood. They don't seem to notice their wounds, or you, and methodically continue their work.

Stop reading aloud.

If asked, James explains that these people are preparing meals for the other servants. No other food except the potatoes and the contents of the pot (a thick, pasty oatmeal) is in evidence. The refrigerator works, but contains no meat or vegetables. The cupboards contain huge jars of vitamins. Have any player whose character sees all of this roll Intelligence + Medicine. If successful, the character realizes that a person with this kind of diet could survive, and even stave off scurvy by taking the vitamins, but would be sickly and weak... much like the zombie-like servants in the kitchen.

The Basement

The basement is accessible through a door in the kitchen and a cellar door on the side of the house. The one off the kitchen is unlocked, but if the characters try to enter the basement while James is in the kitchen, he admonishes them not to go down there without Matheson's permission. If they state that Matheson gave them leave to wander the house (which he might have; see above), James acquiesces. The door off the side of the house is padlocked from the outside and bolted from the inside. Picking the padlock isn't difficult (three successes on an extended Dexterity + Larceny roll, with a -2 penalty unless the character has a good tool) but the bolt is impossible to open from the outside. Smashing through is possible. This requires 6 cumulative successes on an extended Strength + Stamina roll, with a -3 penalty for the strength of the bolt. The noise brings James and Matheson running to investigate.

Once in the basement, the characters find that it shows signs of frequent flooding, though it has no standing water currently. The walls are simple stone and the floor bare earth.

The Barn

Matheson's barn appears, from the outside, to be on the verge of collapse. A successful Intelligence + Investigation roll, however, reveals that though the structure looks dilapidated, it has had regular maintenance and is actually in fairly good shape.

If the characters look inside, read the following:

The barn no longer houses animals, except perhaps for rats and bats. A blue van is parked in the middle of the barn, and a large tank of gasoline sits next to it. A variety of tools, some modern and some dating to the 19th century, hang on a rack against one of the walls.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters investigate the van, they discover that it hasn't been used recently. The keys hang on the tool rack. Have the player of any character looking around in the van roll Intelligence + Investigation. If this roll succeeds, the characters note the following:

- The back of the van has no seats, but contains lengths of rope that are smeared with blood and a roll of duct tape.
- A small piece of paper under the driver's seat has the following words written on it: "Lucas Gates. White, blond hair. Meet Rampart and Conti."

Scene Four: The Slave Trade

This scene begins when the characters decide to take action in response to Matheson's loathsome practices. "Taking action" here could mean confronting him about it, trying to free the slaves, or simply leaving the property. If the characters choose to ignore this practice entirely, the characters run the risk of losing Humanity. Have each player whose character's Humanity score is *greater than four* roll three dice. If the roll succeeds, the character is wracked by guilt for her inaction (and probably feels an impetus to correct the situation). If the roll fails, the character loses a dot of Humanity. The player must then roll the character's new Humanity rating to avoid gaining a derangement. Louis, remember, has a -2 modifier to this second roll.

If the characters leave the plantation with the plan to take action on the situation when they reach New Orleans again, they can stave off the loss of Humanity — for a while. See "Aftermath" for more on this course of action.

If the characters do take direct action while at the plantation, however, Matheson agrees to discuss the matter with the characters. He sends James out to the slave quarters and instructs him to keep an eye on the servants, and then turns his attention to the characters.

He explains to them that he cannot feed on mortals, only Kindred, and that this is true of many powerful vampires — including, he says pointedly, Prince Vidal. James, however, as a neonate, can still feed on mortals, and so the slaves serve their purpose well. James feeds upon them, and Matheson upon James.

If the characters bring up the obvious bone of contention (that Matheson is *keeping slaves*), he nods and says that he understands their concerns. He explains that this really isn't any different than keeping livestock, it's just that his livestock are also capable of performing useful services around the house instead of just standing around waiting to be eaten. Besides, he says, he only takes people who have dead-end lives — drug addicts, wage slaves, the homeless — rather than people with families or who make any real contribution to the world.

The interaction here might well grow intense. Jack and Edward both subscribe to Virtues that drive them to aid the slaves, but any of the characters might feel that this behavior is disgusting. How they go about voicing this is important, however. If John Harley ever feels physically threatened, he simply narrows his eyes menacingly and warns the characters not to threaten him in his own house. The characters immediately feel a surge of fear, not unlike what they usually feel when approaching more powerful Kindred, except that even Jack experiences this sensation. They have the feeling that Matheson is much more powerful than any other Kindred they have met, and that he could probably destroy them all if he so chose (while it is true that Matheson could do so, he isn't as old or as dangerous as either Vidal or Maldonato, he is simply expressing his power more overtly than either of those two Kindred have).

If the characters express their desire to free these slaves, Matheson laughs, but offers a proposal. He will give them one slave for each drink of blood they will give him from their own veins. If the characters balk, he ups the ante and offers a slave plus a piece of information of interest to the characters. If they still refuse, he quietly reminds that he could probably take their blood anyway.



FIGHTING JOHN HARLEY

If the characters do begin combat with Matheson, don't feel that you need to hold back to ensure that the characters survive. They have been given every indication that Matheson is a more-powerful Kindred, and they have been given non-violent options for resolving this scenario. That said, don't feel compelled to make sure they lose, either. John Harley *is* powerful, but he is also low on Vitae, so the characters might be able to outlast him. If he drops below four Vitae, however, he tries to flee and sink into the earth using Haven of Soil (Protean ••). The characters can then free James and the slaves, and even destroy Matheson's home, if they wish. Of course, Matheson vows revenge on them — but as long as the characters return to New Orleans and stay on the Prince's good side, they should be safe.



During this discussion, have each of the players roll Wits + Composure in the following order: Becky Lynn, Jack, Tina, Louis, Edward. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, mention that time is a factor: The drive here took three hours, plus any time the characters spent talking or exploring before these negotiations begin, and the characters still have a three-hour return trip (unless they stop somewhere along the way, but that has shown to be dangerous). John Harley tries to keep the characters talking and focused on the matter at hand, hoping to make them lose track of time. If they are still here when the sun comes up, his slaves (who, while weak, can function during the day) can immobilize them until sunset, allowing Matheson to feed at leisure.

The following are pieces of information that John Harley will trade to the characters. He will not answer questions.



• “Lucas Gates is still in New Orleans, probably in the seediest part of the city. If New Orleans still has a Storyville, that’s where you’ll find him. He can’t keep his hands to himself for too long.” (True, though Matheson knows this because he paid Gates off to find him a slave while they were recently in New Orleans. Gates recently contacted Matheson to ask if he needed any more. If the characters already know that Gates has been in contact with Matheson from investigating his van, Matheson tells them that snooping is extremely impolite.)

• “Sarah Cobbler and Andrea Ouellette are members of a secret society. I don’t recall the name, having only passing connection with the society’s members before, but I do know that they aren’t seeking to escape the Requiem so much as transcend it. To write their own Requiem, as it were. I’ve seen Sarah do some things that make me think there’s something to their rhetoric, too — she’s weathered the years far better than most of us.” (All true.)

• “Augusto Vidal is running out of time. I’ve slept for years, and he must, sometime soon. If Antoine Savoy is still walking when that happens, he’ll be able to take the city. You might consider where your loyalties are.” (True.)

• “John Marrow isn’t just a friendly face. He is Savoy’s advisor, confessor and occasional executioner. He’s not a loner, either. You just haven’t met his coterie.” (True, as far as Matheson knows. His information source was flawed, not that he will admit that.)

• “Sarah Cobbler is from a dangerous line of Kindred. If she wished, she could probably wipe out the city, and it’s not just her you’ve got to worry about. I’m sure she’s got childer — or maybe a sire — in New Orleans.” (True. John Harley won’t elaborate. The “childer” he refers to is Mezzo, who isn’t actually Sarah’s childe or sire, but is of the same line.)

• “Gates wasn’t the original choice for your **(indicate Tina)** sire, you know. The original would have been much better, but she backed out.” (True. The original was a member of the city’s Primogen. The characters can meet her during the next story.)

At some point, have Becky Lynn’s player roll Intelligence + Politics. If the roll succeeds, it strikes her that James is a slave, and so he might be eligible for trade for blood as well. If any other character brings this up to Matheson, he refuses outright. If Becky Lynn does, he considers, and then accepts, provided she gives up her blood to Matheson. If she agrees, Matheson drains her completely dry, but allows James to leave. Matheson also releases James from the mental blocks he had imposed (after which James is only too glad to leave).

If John Harley accepts a trade of Becky Lynn’s blood for James’ freedom, he drains her completely dry. This does not drive her into torpor, but leaves her famished. She must feed *immediately* and has to resist the temptation to enter frenzy when she has the opportunity. Forcing her to act so monstrously after an act of human charity is a cruel pleasure for John Harley. Assuming she manages to control herself (or is restrained) and secures James’s freedom, Becky Lynn regains all spent Willpower (her Virtue is Hope).

When Matheson drinks from the characters, he only takes one Vitae at a time (except for draining Becky Lynn if she

trades hers Vitae for James). He lingers over the character’s arm (male) or neck (female) and savors the taste of the Vitae, but otherwise doesn’t seem to notice the “donor” at all.

Leaving the plantation with the servants is difficult, however. If the characters brought Jack’s van, everyone fits, if uncomfortably. If they brought a smaller car, though, they have a problem. James has a van (which he uses to round up slaves), but unless they talk to James and discover this fact or have visited the barn, they won’t know about it. Matheson is willing to part with the van, but requires more blood (three Vitae).

As the characters leave, Matheson stands on his porch and begins to play a violin, slowly and sadly.

Aftermath

If the characters rescued the slaves, they must decide what to do with them. Matheson refuses to undo the mental damage he has wrought, stating that not only would their feeble minds shatter in the process (which isn’t really true), doing so would constitute a breach of the Masquerade (which is true). The slaves, therefore, are almost catatonic and follow whatever instructions are given to them. If the characters bring them to New Orleans, Vidal (or Savoy, if they go to him first) can arrange for the slaves to be taken to a psychiatric ward, where they can be identified and treated. Edward regains all Willpower if this occurs (his Virtue is Charity).

Trying to rouse other Kindred to take action against John Harley, whether the characters wish to return to free the slaves or simply to enact justice on the elder Gangrel, is a losing proposition. Matheson isn’t causing any problems for the Kindred of New Orleans, and while his actions might be deplorable, most of the Kindred of the city don’t feel they have any right to tell him how to lead his Requiem. This should be an eye-opening experience for the characters as they are told again and again that a few mentally dead mortals just aren’t worth the risk. If the characters eventually give up trying to free the slaves, though, the same chance for Humanity loss applies.

If the characters discovered the whereabouts of Lucas Gates, they will probably want to search for him. That search is the subject of the next story.

Portraying John Harley

John Harley seems to have an answer for everything. That’s because he’s had a long, long time to think of his answers. The fact that he can justify his actions to himself doesn’t change how reprehensible they are, and even within his own rather delusional framework (people as livestock, people taken from dead-end lives) is one rather troubling fact — all of his slaves are African-American. Like most vampires, Matheson has trouble letting go of the mores and norms of the world of his living days, and the years haven’t made him any more racially tolerant. In fact, as the Beast gains greater hold of his soul, his contempt for people in general and black people in particular only grows.

The characters in this story are probably going to be quick to point Matheson’s obvious bigotry out... it just isn’t going to do them a lot of good. They aren’t going to change

Matheson's mind. Even Becky Lynn, for whom he has the highest regard, is little more than a promising experiment to John Harley. If she spurns him, he considers the experiment a failure and informs Sarah Cobbler of the result.

But while they can't change Matheson's mind, the characters have two other important accomplishments here: One is to rescue the slaves and James, but the other (perhaps more important in the long run) is to reaffirm their feelings regarding mortals and humanity (and Humanity). John Harley abandoned much of his many years ago. The characters still have that choice to make.

Dramatis Personae

The only new character described here is James. John Harley's game traits are included as well. We also include new character sheets for some of the players' characters, reflecting their development at the beginning of this story.

John Harley Matheson

(See *Last Night* for John Harley's background.)

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Invictus

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Occult 3, Politics 3 (Kindred)

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (claws) 4, Firearms 1, Stealth (stalking) 3, Survival (swamp) 3, Weaponry (saber) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Expression (polite chatter) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (seduction) 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies 3, Covenant Status (Invictus) 1, Haven 4, Resources 3

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 3 (Fortitude; Pride)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Blood Potency: 7

Vitae:

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Celerity 2, Dominate 4, Majesty 3, Protean 5, Resilience 3

John Harley has the same basic powers as the characters. His high Blood Potency means that he can spend *five* Vitae per turn. Most of his Disciplines have been described in previous installments.

Note that although John Harley can hold 20 Vitae in his system (hence the twenty boxes, above) when the characters arrive at the plantation, he has only 12 in him.

James Kelvin

Clan: Mekhet

Covenant: Unaligned

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Occult 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (immobilizing) 2, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2

Merits: None that apply to this story.

Willpower: 4

Humanity: 4 (Hope; Envy)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 9

Blood Potency: 1

Vitae:

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Obfuscate 1, Resilience 1

Tina Baker

Tina's traits improve for **The Gentleman** as she improves her Celerity Discipline. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. Once per scene, she regains one spent Willpower point if she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (••): This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost Tina an action, and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (the Storyteller will tell you when it wears off). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (2); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed triples). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (2) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you

make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor (•): This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (1) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Tina and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Tina's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contact: Tina has a friend — Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university — she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker

Concept: College Student

Plan: Daeva

Player:

Virtue: Fortitude

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Gluttony

Potery:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine (Sprains)	●●●●●
Occult	○○○○○
Politics	●●●●●
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth (Crowds)	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy (Body Lang)	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Barfly	●●●●●
Brawling Dodge	●●●●●
City Status	●●●●●
Contacts	●●●●●
Danger Sense	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+1)	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Celerity	●●●●●
Majesty	●●●●●
Vigor	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	11
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Becky Lynn Adler

Becky Lynn's traits improve for **The Gentleman** as she learns Feral Whispers (Animalism •) and Haven of Soil (Protean ••). For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Becky Lynn's Virtue is *Hope*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming her own goals or well-being. Her Vice is *Envy*. Once per scene, she regains one Willpower point if she gains something from a rival or has a hand in harming that rival's well-being.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Becky Lynn can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Becky Lynn can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Becky Lynn can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Feral Whispers (Animalism •): This power allow Becky Lynn to understand and speak to animals, which may allow her to find out secrets or otherwise make use of them. The player rolls 5 dice (Becky's Manipulation + Animal Ken + Animalism) and gains a +1 bonus if the animal is a predator. Becky must make eye contact to speak to an animal and cannot yet demand obedience.

Aspect of the Predator (Protean •): This power mitigates the effect that meeting other vampires has on her. Whereas normally, vampires react fearfully when they meet Kindred of higher Blood Potency, Becky Lynn *always* reacts as though her Blood Potency were equal to whomever she meets.

Haven of Soil (Protean ••): This power allows Becky to merge with any bare soil (be it a field or garden or park grounds), slipping into it without disturbing it and falling into a near slumber. This costs Becky one Vitae and takes one turn, but protects her from virtually all damage and the sun's rays. Becky can rise from the soil whenever she wishes (usually at dusk).

Resilience (••): This Discipline makes Becky Lynn supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds her Resilience (2) to her Stamina for the re-

mainder of the scene, which also adds two to her Health. Thus She gains a ninth and 10th box on her Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties two boxes to the right. Also, the first two points of aggravated damage Becky Lynn suffers in a scene where her Resilience is active are considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for her to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Becky Lynn loses her extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Becky Lynn's eight base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Gangrel): Becky Lynn's blood is cursed with a potent bestial instinct that sometimes makes it hard for her to think clearly. When rolling dice pools based on Intelligence or Wits Attributes, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving perception or reaction to surprise, or to the Resolve Attribute.

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Becky Lynn and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Becky's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fame: Becky Lynn is a member of New Orleans' social elite, so the media and people in the higher echelons of society pay attention to her. Add one die to her Socialize or Persuasion when she can use her fame to her advantage, but the Storyteller also may make occasional rolls to see if anyone on the street recognizes Becky Lynn.

Resources: Although Becky would need to touch base with her family to gain access to their vast fortune, she has her own bank account and credit cards. She can spend up to \$5000 without any problem.

Striking Looks (+2): Becky Lynn is beautiful. Add two dice to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Becky Lynn is attractive (as well as famous) people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Becky Lynn Adler

Concept: Southern Belle

Plan: Gangrel

Player:

Virtue: Hope

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Envy

Potential:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	●●●●●
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (Cajun)	●●●●●
Politics (High Society)	●●●●●
Science	●●●●●

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	●●●●●
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	○○○○○
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge (Innuendo)	●●●●●

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●●●●●
Fame	●●●●●
Resources	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+2)	●●●●●
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Protean	●●●●●
Resilience	●●●●●
Animalism	●●●●●
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	4
Speed	9
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Health

●●●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Edward Zunic

Edward's traits improve for **The Gentleman** as he improves his Drive and Empathy Skills. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Edward's Virtue is *Charity*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower points when he helps another at the risk of loss or harm to himself. It isn't enough to share what he has in abundance. He must make a real sacrifice in terms of time, possessions or energy, or he must risk life and limb to help another. His Vice is *Lust*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he satisfies his lust in a way that victimizes others (though of course, he never sees it that way).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Edward can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Edward can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Edward can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (•): This Discipline allows Edward to boost his speed to preternatural levels. To activate Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Edward suffers a penalty equal to his Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of his Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, Edward's Speed rating doubles as long as the Discipline is active. Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's Edward's turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Edward's Celerity (1) to his Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Edward and activate it before they roll.

Monstrous Countenance (Nightmare •): By bearing his fangs and emitting a terrible, animalistic hiss, Edward can spark sheer terror in a victim. Roll seven dice (Edward's Presence + Intimidation + Nightmare) to activate this power (the Nosferatu clan weakness does not penalize this roll). The player of anyone seeing Edward in person when this power is active, must roll Composure + Blood Potency. If they fail to match your number for success, their character immediately flees and will avoid your presence for the remainder of the scene. Edward may keep this power active for the entire scene.

Dread (Nightmare ••): Edward can create a feeling of inexplicable panic in a small area. Edward spends a point of Vitae and the player rolls 6 dice (Edward's Manipulation + Empathy + Nightmare); the Storyteller rolls Composure + Blood Potency for targets to resist. If Edward's player wins, anyone he affects suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls and cannot spend Willpower to gain a +3 to rolls. Edward can affect anyone within a range of 15 yards. The effect lasts as long as he concentrates; using another Discipline, undertaking any complex action or entering combat will end the effect.

Vigor (•): This Discipline makes Edward superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Edward adds his Vigor (1) to his Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Nosferatu): Edward's blood is cursed to cause discomfort in those around him, manifesting in his case in the form of his jaundiced complexion. When rolling dice pools based on the Presence or Manipulation Attributes in social situations, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools that involve the Intimidation Skill, to the Composure Attribute, or to dice pools for using the Nightmare Discipline.

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Edward and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Edward's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fast Reflexes (+2): This Merit adds 2 to Edward's base Initiative Modifier. This is already calculated on his character sheet.

Inspiring: Edward is able to rally others in times of great distress, renewing their courage and determination in the face of adversity. Once per game session, he can exhort those around him to redouble their efforts in the face of great stress or danger. The player rolls Presence + Persuasion. If the roll succeeds, any individuals who actively assist Edward and who are within earshot regain one spent Willpower point (not to exceed their Willpower dots). The character may not use this Merit on himself, and may not use it on the same subjects more than once a day.

Mentor: Andrea did not abandon Edward at his Embrace and is determined to teach him what the Requiem has in store for him.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Edward Zurich

Concept: Musician

Clan: Nosferatu

Player:

Virtue: Charity

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse De La Mort

Vice: Lust

Potential:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (urban legends)	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●○○○○
Drive	●○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry (knife)	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○
Expression (guitar)	●●●○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	●●○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Fast Reflexes (+2)	●●○○○
Inspiring	●●●○○
Mentor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Celerity	●○○○○
Nightmare	●●○○○
Vigor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	8
Speed	10
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Health

●●●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Switchblade	+1
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Vampire™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Part Five: Blood Ties



1554 LITTON DR
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

Blood Ties written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

In this installment of the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle, the characters hunt down Lucas Gates, the vampire who brutalized and Embraced Tina Baker and has murdered an unknown number of other women during his time among the Kindred. The characters have a chance to discover not only a bit more about the conspiracy that ended their lives, but also to learn how vampires can become more powerful, and what the ultimate punishment is among the undead. Finally, they learn a bit more about the mysterious Mezzo.

Theme and Mood

The theme of **Blood Ties** is depravity. Lucas Gates represents the bottom end of the scale. He has lost so much of his Humanity over time that he is as much a monster as John Harley Matheson, but a great deal more aggressive in his monstrosity. He lurks in dens of iniquity in any city he enters, leaving the slums and stalking his prey — young women — wherever he can find them. But he is not the only degraded and depraved face in this chapter. To find Gates, the characters must journey through New Orleans' red light district, and witness what the Big Easy can do to its inhabitants.

The mood of this story is desperation. Lucas is desperate to leave the city before the characters catch up with him, but his Beast and his own lusts keep drawing him back. Antoine Savoy is desperate to sway the characters to his side, feeling that they might be the next “generation” of important Kindred in the city. Prince Vidal, while he would never admit to desperation, saw in **Fury** that without Savoy and the characters, the situation might not have been resolved without bloodshed and the risk of exposure. And, perhaps, Tina is desperate to take back what Lucas stole from her — her life and soul.

Storytelling Technique — Maturity and Sensitivity

Certain subjects that come up in play can make players uncomfortable — Prince Vidal's questions about religion in **Mary's Child**, for example. This story deals with other issues — including sex, drugs, poverty, prostitution and murder — that can devolve into red-faced giggling if the players aren't equipped to deal with them. We aren't going to tell you how to run your games or what level of graphic depiction of these topics is right

for you and your players. You'll have to figure that out yourself. That said, it's *very* important that you and the players do figure it out, hopefully before running this story. It's possible to take a completely cavalier attitude to the events of this and other stories, seeing the supporting cast as unreal “extras,” able to be discarded as their usefulness to the characters disappears. This, however, is a disservice to the story. Storytelling games, as has been said before, are meant to be fun and entertaining, but then again, films like *Seven* are entertaining and yet are profound and disturbing at the same time. **Blood Ties** allows for this sort of face-to-face confrontation with evil, but seeing evil in a game context rather than a story context robs it of its gravity. Seeing the evil in this story for what it is — the state in which the characters themselves can wind up, if they aren't careful — is much more satisfying.

The events of **Blood Ties** culminate in the characters (Tina, specifically) having the chance to destroy and consume the soul of a true monster... her sire. This raises moral questions such as: Is the act justified? Destroying him probably is, but consuming his essence and blood, utterly and completely annihilating him? Is that any better than what he has done to his victims? Also, it raises the very real question of whether or not, in consuming Gates' soul, Tina will take on any of his taint. You can choose to run this story “by the numbers,” but then **Vampire** becomes little different from *Grand Theft Auto*. Have a look at the deeper repercussions of the characters' actions, make those repercussions clear to the players, and see what revelations and insights come out of it.

New Systems — Vitae Revisited

The rules summary included with **Mary's Child** provided most of the effects of vampirism and uses of Vitae, but there are others, some of which come into question during **Blood Ties**. Here, then is a quick summary of some of these other uses of Kindred Vitae.

- **Blood Sympathy:** Kindred have an instinctive and occult tie to their vampiric progenitors and decedents. In practical terms, Kindred share this bond — called blood sympathy — with any vampire up to two generational “steps” from them (hence, their sire, “grand-sire,” any childe or “grand-childe”). The sympathy usually manifests as the occasional flash of insight when a vampire with which a Kindred is bonded is both nearby and experiencing a powerful emotion. Especially potent emotions (like mortal terror) can cover great distances. These effects are left to your discretion as Storyteller, but you can call for a Wits + Occult roll to sense the effect, adding 2 dice if the subject has acti-



vated Heightened Senses (Auspex •). Kindred can, however, intentionally invoke the sympathy in order to get a sense of a relative's location and emotional state. Doing so costs one Willpower point and requires the same roll as above.

- **Blood Tasting:** When tasting blood Kindred can often tell how closely related the “vintage” is to their own Vitae. The player makes an Intelligence + Occult roll. When drinking mortal blood, a successful roll will tell the character if the blood is that of a mortal relation of his. When drinking Kindred Vitae (which has many risks), successes convey more information. One success is enough to tell whether the blood comes from the character's own clan. Two successes enable the character to recognize the clan or recognize the blood as coming from his immediate Kindred “family.”

- **The Blush of Life:** Although vampires are dead, they can imitate some of the things that living people do. By spending one Vitae, a Kindred can counterfeit some of the effects of life: their skin flushes, their heart beats and chest heaves with (unnecessary) breath. They can even engage in sexual intercourse — either to feed upon a suitably distracted mortal vessel, or for simple pleasure.

- **Diablerie:** The act of diablerie, sometimes known by the poetical name of Amaranth after a flower that never fades, is the process of drinking not only a Kindred's Vitae, but her very soul as well. Diablerie is one of the cardinal sins of Kindred existence, banned by tradition and said to be a quick path to surrendering to the Beast.

To be a victim of diablerie, a vampire must be in torpor (whether due to raw damage or a stake through the heart). The diablerist then drinks any remaining Vitae in the victim's system and then keeps drinking, sucking at the blasphemous essence that animates the Damned. Doing so requires an extended Resolve + Stamina roll. The diablerist's player must accumulate as many successes as the victim has Willpower dots. What's more, each roll represents one turn of effort and the diablerist can only continue for as many turns as he himself has Willpower dots. Thus a willful victim takes longer to drain and a weak-willed diablerist has less time in which to do it.

If the diablerie succeeds and the victim had a higher Blood Potency than the diablerist, the diablerist's Blood Potency immediately goes up by one. The diablerist also gains some of the victim's knowledge, in the form of memories and other flashes of insight. Finally, the diablerist's aura (visible with Auspex ••) is marked with distinctive black veins, making the crime very hard to conceal.

- **The Vinculum:** Vampiric blood is an addictive substance that can warp the mind of the drinker, making them servile. This bond, called the Vinculum, usually takes three drinks on three separate nights to take hold. At that point the drinker (or “thrall”) feels great loyalty toward the vampire (the “regnant”) and the regnant gains a +2 bonus on any attempts to influence the thrall. Taking fewer drinks causes lesser versions of this loyalty. Rumor has it that vampires with high Blood Potency can resist the effects of the Vinculum.



Our Story Continues...

This story begins when the characters begin their search for Lucas Gates. In the last story, **The Gentleman**, they may have learned that Gates was lurking in New Orleans' red light district, either directly from John Harley Matheson, from his servant James (if James left with them), or from the information they found in John Harley's barn. Or, they might not even know that he is still in New Orleans, in which case you may need to present a more obvious "hook" to put them on his trail.

Blood Ties, like **The Gentleman**, depends on character action for its beginning point. As such, any amount of downtime might occur between these two stories. You might choose to run other stories in New Orleans as the characters pursue other avenues of interest, but feel free to use one of the hooks provided below to draw them into **Blood Ties** if you don't feel comfortable enough with the game to run your own stories yet.

If you are using the central character option presented in **Blood Money**, Tina Baker should receive those benefits during this story.

Scene One: Vice

In this scene, the characters begin their investigations into Gates and New Orleans' red light district. This "scene" is fairly open-ended, as the characters might take any number of approaches toward their inquiries.

Hooks

Although the characters had several opportunities during the last story to learn of Gates' whereabouts, it's entirely possible that they did not (and the players shouldn't be penalized for not asking exactly the right questions). If the players do not have the correct information, use one of the methods presented here to introduce the notion of hunting Gates in New Orleans to them.

- Tina Baker, while hunting, feels a sudden burst of sadistic pleasure. After it passes, she feels dirty, as though she has hurt or violated someone. The next night, she reads about a woman murdered not far from where she was when she felt that sensation. What happened, of course, was that she felt her sire's pleasure during the murder.

- Another Kindred with whom the characters are on good terms (Father John Marrow or Miss Opal would be good choices) contacts them with the news that Gates is in the city. Different vampires could learn this in different ways, of course: Marrow has information sources that the characters don't know about, while Miss Opal has contacts through her Carthian allies.

- If the characters have taken a keen interest in Mezzo, she emails one of them (probably Louis, but not necessarily) a picture of Gates. The photo is blurry, but a pencil sketch accompanies it, and the surrounding area is clearly visible and includes a street sign. Mezzo does not answer questions about who took the picture or how she knew to send it to the characters.

Investigations

Even if the characters learn all they possibly can from Matheson, his servant, the van or any of the above hooks, they don't discover much more than "Gates is hunting in the red light district." By this point, however, the characters (and the players) should be quite comfortable tapping their resources to look for Kindred. Below are some of the obvious methods they might use, but if they come up with something unexpected, simply decide what information their tactics might provide.

- **Other Kindred:** Although the characters have received good information from other vampires in the past, Lucas Gates keeps an extremely low profile, so the characters learn little by asking around. Vidal or one of his associates such as Alexander can tell the characters that Gates, a murderer and a monster, should be destroyed on sight. Andrea Ouellette, if she still survives, is currently under "house arrest" by the Prince, but holds the same opinion of Gates — he must die for his crimes. Even Father Marrow says that Gates is beyond redemption.

These Kindred don't have much in the way of useful information, however. This is because Gates is extremely perceptive and avoids other Kindred. In life, he was a burgeoning serial killer and like most such predators, he is a loner — socially functional when necessary, but more comfortable on his own.

A specific question the characters might ask of Nathaniel, Andrea, Matheson or even Mary (if by some miracle she is still extant) is: What did Sarah offer Gates in return for his participation? Mary and Andrea don't know, but assume he joined with no thought to remuneration. The brutality of the act was enough. Matheson doesn't speculate, stating that he can't understand brutes such as Gates. Nathaniel isn't certain, but does assert that Gates didn't belong to a covenant (such as the Carthians or the Lancea Sanctum) as do most Kindred. His "fee," therefore, might have involved networking with other vampires or being instructed in a Discipline he might not have otherwise been able to learn.

Two Kindred know enough about Gates to be useful: Mezzo and Antoine Savoy. If the characters contact Mezzo about Gates, she sends them the photo and drawing above, but no further information. If the characters approach Savoy directly or ask Father Marrow to meet with Savoy, go to Scene Two.

- **Police Investigation:** Jack McCandless has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department. For a small bribe, Officer Rample is willing to part with the following information: Lucas Gates is wanted in Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana and is on the FBI's Most Wanted List, which the characters might already have known.

If the characters look into recent murders in the red light district, they find that violent deaths in the area, especially of prostitutes, aren't at all uncommon. The authorities, however, haven't linked any murders to the same perpetrator, and the FBI doesn't become involved until evidence of serial crime appears. Since Ash Wednesday, the night the characters were

Embraced, Gates has murdered three women, but more than a dozen homicides have occurred in New Orleans. Officer Rample is unwilling to provide the characters with extensive information (and as he's a patrolman, not a detective, he isn't privy to much anyway) but if someone Dominates him, the characters can learn that no homicides currently on the New Orleans Police Department's agenda resemble vampire attacks (no inordinate loss of blood, no wounds inflicted by fangs, etc.).

- **Internet:** Louis can search the web for information on Gates, but isn't likely to find more than was available in **Blood Money**. Make the same extended Intelligence + Academics roll as described there. If the player accumulate 7 successes, Louis can learn (in addition to the information described in **Blood Money**) that the FBI has nicknamed Gates "The Ghost" because he leaves virtually no forensic evidence and no paper trail.

- **The Mean Streets:** If the characters decide to simply venture into the red light district to search for information, go to Scene Three.

Scene Two: Temptation

In this scene, the characters meet with both Antoine Savoy and Prince Vidal, both of whom subtly (and not so subtly) try to ensure the characters' loyalty. This scene has two main components: the meetings with these two powerful Kindred. You don't need to spend much time on this scene. It simply serves to illustrate that both Vidal and Savoy would like to have the characters on their side, for different reasons, and that Savoy is willing to use his connection with Mezzo to lure the characters.

Antoine Savoy

Run this scene if the characters deliberately approach Savoy about Gates, or if they visit Father Marrow. In the latter case, Marrow informs the characters that Savoy would like to see them.

When portraying Savoy during this scene, consider the interactions the characters have had with him in the past. Savoy is a consummate politician first and a member of the Lancea Sanctum second, so he does not stress the religious aspects of his covenant if he feels the characters would be put off by that approach. If the characters (or at least a majority of them) seem to respond favorably to this kind of behavior, he arranges to meet them at Corpus Christi, has Father Marrow offer them confession, and plays the role of a spiritual leader. If not, he meets them in the bustling French Quarter, keeping the surroundings and the tone of the meeting secular.

In any case, he has some suggestions for hunting Gates. He reminds Tina that, since she is Gates' childe, they can each feel the other's emotions even at great distances. (This may be news to the characters, but should explain certain insights and feelings that have sprung up as they confronted their sires.) It is possible, though difficult, to deliberately activate this sympathy. Savoy explains that in order to do this, Tina must concentrate on what she remembers about Gates, picturing him as vividly as possible, and try to "let the blood guide her." He innocuously offers to let her taste his blood. He, too, belongs to Clan Daeva and this taste may aid her in her attempt (while this is true, he has another motive, namely imposing the Vin-

culum). If Tina attempts this, have her player spend a Willpower point and roll Wits + Occult as detailed under the Blood Sympathy rules at the beginning of this story. If Tina tastes Savoy's blood first, her player adds 1 to this roll. If the roll fails, nothing happens, and Savoy suggests she try again when she is closer to her goal. If the roll succeeds, Tina receives a brief flash of Gates' feelings at present as well as a general sense of how close she is to her sire. What those feelings are is up to you, but might include hunger, fear, lust or rage depending on Gates' current activities.

Prince Vidal

While Savoy is willing to downplay (or ignore) his faith to pander to the characters, Vidal does no such thing. If the characters attempt to meet with Vidal or Maldonato, or if they move to enter the red light district, they receive word that Vidal wishes them to attend a Mass. This contact can come from any number of sources: a Dominated thrall, a cell phone call, a hand-delivered invitation — choose something that reflects the relationship that Vidal and the characters have developed. The mass is to be held at the Most Holy Name of Jesus Church at Loyola University, where they first met Maldonato in **Mary's Child**.

Vidal performs the Mass much like a standard Catholic service, though one dating from at least several decades back, as he recites it in Latin (any player can roll Intelligence + Academics to note this). During the ceremony, he drags a knife across his palm and then sets it down and holds the chalice under his bleeding hand. When the chalice is full, his hand heals without so much as a scar. He does not offer an explanation for why his blood replaces communion wine, but does say a hushed blessing over the chalice, invoking the name of Longinus as well as Jesus Christ. He then drinks, and beckons the characters to receive the sacrament. The characters have three choices here: They can drink, refuse to drink, or pretend to drink and try to fool Vidal. The characters note, too, that they are the only ones here asked to take this communion.

- A character who does drink feels the blood spread across her tongue like nothing she has ever tasted. Vidal's blood trickles down her throat and she feels stronger and sharper. The room's sounds grow more distinct for an instant, the whisper of traffic outside blending with the sound of music from elsewhere in the church. The character looks up at Vidal, and feels a strange surge of respect — this man does not control her, but she feels loyalty nonetheless. In addition to this sensation, have the player roll Intelligence + Occult to see what information she gleans from tasting Vidal's blood.

- If the characters refuse to drink, Vidal doesn't force them, but does note who displays loyalty and who does not.

- Any character attempting to fool Vidal must be skillful and clever. Have the player roll Manipulation + Subterfuge (if the character tries to misdirect Vidal's attention long enough to spit the blood back into the chalice) or Wits + Larceny (if the character tries to dispose of the blood after sipping it). You may grant the player modifier dice (positive

or negative) if the player's idea is particularly clever or silly. If the roll fails, Vidal notices, but doesn't say anything in any case. Again, he simply notes who was willing to drink and who wasn't.

When the Mass is over, Vidal meets with the characters and thanks them for attending the service. He asks them their current activities and what luck they've had finding their sires. If they tell him they are on the trail of Lucas Gates, he tells them that, as Prince of New Orleans, he gives them special permission to destroy Gates and "take his blood and soul." If the characters ask him for other information, he has little to give them, other than to say that he has not given the red light district to any one Kindred — any vampire may hunt there freely. Therefore, the characters do not need to worry about invading another Kindred's hunting grounds in their search.

Scene Three: Little Deaths

The characters search the red light district for Gates, seeing the worst of New Orleans. Along the way, Tina must face her heritage as one of the Daeva, and learns that she, like her sire, ignores her vices at her peril.

The characters probably venture into the red light district with one of two plans: to find Gates through the blood sympathy, or to simply ask around and try to gain information on him.

Blood Calls to Blood

The blood sympathy is inexact, unless a player rolls an exceptional success, and even then it only provides a momentary insight into where the Kindred being sought is located. Tina can make as many blood sympathy checks as she wishes, but each one costs a Willpower point, and depleting her mental reserves in this fashion is dangerous. Also, Lucas can attempt to find her in the same way, which you might point out if the characters are relying too much on this tactic.

Lucas is hiding out in an apartment building called Rosebush Place, but doesn't sit still for very long. You can guide the characters toward him gradually, taking them through as many of the vignettes below as you wish on their hunt. Again, Lucas might be feeling anything you need him to feel during this time, but Tina can recognize the emotions as his.

Streets of the Big Easy

The characters can't ask around for Lucas Gates, of course. Very few people who see him survive, and no one knows his name here. Any character can approach homeless folks, streetwalkers, gang members, or simple pedestrians and ask whatever they wish. Asking about murders in the area is likely to get the character pegged as a cop, however.

The characters may, of course, employ Disciplines in their search. Dominate works fairly well, but this power only serves to force a victim to do (or not do) something, not as a mind-reading device. As such, one character can pose a question and Louis can command the mortal to "answer truthfully." This method of question is slow and clumsy, however, and the mental tampering might actually harm the subject's

chances of remembering something important. If the characters try this, roll four dice for the victim. If the roll fails, the victim can't make any connection between what the characters ask and what she knows, and truthfully answers the question with, "I don't know." Even if the roll succeeds, however, the answers are likely to be vague.

Using more conventional means of questioning produces better results, as does the Majesty Discipline. Talking to people without having them hurry off (or go immediately into their own cons or sales pitches, as with prostitutes), requires a Presence + Empathy roll. The player's dice pool for this roll is limited by her character's current Humanity, since she is dealing with mortals. The first level of Majesty bypasses this roll entirely, however. During the questioning, what rolls are appropriate depend on the type of questioning used (dice pools marked with an asterisk are similarly limited by Humanity).

- **Simple conversation between people from this neighborhood:** Manipulation + Streetwise (Jack's Slums Specialty applies); -4 dice if other members of the coterie are visible

- **Scaring it out of them:** Presence + Intimidation for verbal or subtle threats, Strength + Intimidation for directly physical ones. The Nightmare Discipline can help here.

- **Appealing to human nature:** Manipulation + Empathy*; Striking Looks apply.

- **Seduction:** Presence + Persuasion*; requires finding someone of the appropriate preference; Striking Looks apply.

- **Buying a round in a bar for the locals:** Presence + Socialize*.

- **Bribery:** +2 dice to appropriate roll.

- **Roleplaying:** Add or subtract 1 die from the appropriate roll, depending on how well the players convey what their characters mean.

Vignettes by Red Light

Below are several "mini-scenes" the characters may find themselves in during their travels through the red light district. You don't need to run all of them, but choose the ones that your players would be most interested in. During these vignettes, the characters have opportunities to indulge their Vices or play to their Virtues, and situations may arise where they can lose Humanity. Keep the game systems for these occurrences in mind while running the vignettes.

- **The Woman in the Alley:** As the characters are walking near an alley between a bar and a vacant storefront, they hear cries of pain. Inside the alley, a man has a woman pinned up against a wall and is beating her face with the flat of his hand. The characters can intervene if they like, but the woman doesn't thank them, in any case. If the Kindred harm or kill the man, she kneels over his prone body trying to wake him up and curses the characters. If they simply talk to him or threaten him, she screams for help and tells them to mind their own business. Use of Disciplines, especially Dominate, might change their attitudes forcibly... but if they're forced, what have the characters really accomplished? If the characters interrogate either of these people as to Lucas Gates' location, neither of them know the name, but the man remem-

bers someone fitting Gates' description outside a liquor store a few blocks away. That liquor store is less than a block from the Rosebush.

- **The Dying Man:** The characters find a man lying on a park bench, and notice that he is bleeding from the mouth. A successful Intelligence + Medicine roll reveals that he is dying. His arms are covered in track marks and his ribs are plainly visible if the characters lift his shirt. As he dies, he raves about an "angel" that sang to him as she kissed him. He is wearing a hospital ID bracelet from Charity Hospital. Jack can tell the others that this hospital is only a few blocks from Louis Armstrong Park.

- **The Hooker:** A prostitute approaches one of the male characters (probably Louis) and propositions him. She is short, painfully thin, and has dark circles under her eyes. A moment's peering at her reveals that she is no older than 16. The character can take any action here, from ignoring her to giving her money (which she promptly spends on heroin), to feeding from her (taking any more than 3 Vitae points kills her). The characters can also question her about Gates. She knows nothing about him specifically, but knows that rumors have been circulating among other prostitutes that a psycho is killing streetwalkers. Most of them don't believe it, but a friend of hers was stabbed to death and left in the street recently. The body is gone, of course, but attempts to use blood sympathy on that spot receive a +2 modifier.

- **Crackheads:** Run this scene when the group is separated, even for a moment. A pair of crackheads assault a character. Becky Lynn or Tina is the most preferable, but they will attack any lone character. If they attack a woman, they attempt to rape her. If they attack a man, they simply wish to beat and rob him. This is likely to go badly for the muggers, of course. One of them is armed with a knife, and the other has a revolver with three bullets. Both of them receive +1 to close combat attack rolls, however, from the drugs in their systems. Feeding on these men induces a similar high, and any character doing so gains an extra die to Strength and Stamina rolls, but loses one die from all Social rolls (due to being edgy and paranoid) and suffers a -1 modifier to resist frenzy. These effects last until the character has spent the Vitae she ingests from the crackheads. The muggers know nothing about Gates, but they do know that someone new is selling crack out of the Rosebush (they won't offer that information if the characters ask about Gates or murders, but will if they ask about "anything weird going on").

- **Slumming Vampire:** The characters feel a sudden flash of rage — the Predator's Taint. Glancing down an alley, they see a young man propping a prostitute against a wall and retracting his fangs from her neck. When he sees them, he snarls in rage as the Taint hits him, and then sets her body down and steps forward. His name is Peter Lebeaux, and he is a Mekhet and a member of Antoine Savoy's faction. He is also a homicide detective. He is willing to assist the characters as much as he can, but has other business tonight and so can't accompany them (he's still working). If asked about prostitute murders, he says that there have been several in the last month, and that it isn't uncommon. If they men-

tion Lucas Gates, he says that he knows the name but didn't realize Gates was in the city. He is willing to use an Auspex power called The Spirit's Touch to read the psychic impressions left in an area. All the characters have to do is supply something for him to touch (the place where the prostitute said her friend was found would work, and Lebeaux takes them to that same place if they ask to go to wherever a body was found). He concentrates for a moment, and then describes Gates attacking from the alley, stabbing the woman several times in a blur of motion, and then walking off toward the Rosebush. If asked about the Rosebush, Lebeaux says it's a dangerous place — it used to be simply an apartment building but is slowly becoming a huge crack house. Lebeaux expects to be able to call on the characters for a favor later for his trouble.

Scene Four: Submission

In this scene, the characters find and confront Lucas Gates. Unlike their meetings with the other sires, in this instance, neither side has a clear advantage.

Gates has made a temporary haven at the Rosebush apartment building, and over his weeks of lurking in New Orleans, has subtly shifted the drug trade to the building. Most of the people living in the building have been encouraged to leave, either with money or violence, and a local drug dealer and his gang have set up shop in the building, selling crack and allowing users to crash out in the empty apartments. Gates has taken to feeding on these people, but still goes out to indulge his other appetites, usually on prostitutes.

The Front Door

The building has four floors and a basement. The front door of the building is the only one the "real" tenants of the Rosebush are permitted to use. The lock on this door has long been broken.

If the characters enter through the front door, read the following:

The smell of stale urine hits you as soon as you open the door. You are standing in a small hallway. To your left is a staircase going up, and a little farther down the hall you see several doors. Straight ahead you can see three men, all in their mid-teens, standing outside the open back door. Loud rap music plays on their radio, and they don't seem to notice you immediately. To your right is a row of mailboxes, but they are all open and empty, most of the doors torn off. Graffiti decorates the walls and crack vials litter the floors.

Stop reading aloud.

If the characters interact with the gangsters, they first ask if the characters are buying. If not, the toughs tell them in no uncertain terms to leave. If the characters agree to buy crack, the toughs demand money from each of them and point them downstairs. If a conflict erupts, use the statistics for gangbangers provided in **Mary's Child**.

The Back Door

The back door of the Rosebush is meant for people coming to buy crack. **If the characters approach this door, read the following:**

Walking around the building, you hear loud rap music coming from the back door. Three young men stand around smoking cigarettes and talking. When they see you, one of them waves you over and asks, "You buying?"

Stop reading aloud.

Again, if the characters decline, the gangsters tell them to leave. If they accept, the toughs point them to the basement (after collecting their money).

The Basement

The basement door is just inside the back door, on the same side of the hall as the staircase up. The three gangsters are guarding this door. Sneaking past them is impossible, though the characters could conceivably lure them away long enough to creep downstairs. It's probably easier to either pay them off or incapacitate them, however.

When the characters descend the staircase, read the following:

The smell of human waste and rot increases as you descend the staircase. A single, pale light bulb illuminates the basement. You can see moldy mattresses and a few folding chairs around, and roughly a half-dozen people lying down or smoking crack pipes. The scene is reminiscent, in some ways, of what you saw in John Harley Matheson's slave quarters.

A man sits at a card table at the back of the room, flanked by two huge men with heavy pistols tucked into their belts. As you enter the room, an emaciated woman stumbles up to you (**indicate any male character, even Edward**) and whispers, "Buy me a rock and I'll do you right here."

Stop reading aloud.

The characters can do anything they like, here. If they approach the man at the table, his bodyguards finger their weapons nervously (the characters are a strange-looking group, after all). The dealer is happy to sell to them, but won't willingly divulge any information about Gates (whom he doesn't know by name, but recognizes by description). Forcing him to talk requires besting his bodyguards and the gangsters from upstairs, who come running at the first sound of trouble. Use the gangbanger statistics from **Mary's Child** for the bodyguards as well, with the following modifications: the bodyguards each have Strength 4, and their pistols inflict 3 dice of damage (roll Dexterity + Firearms +3, or seven dice, to attack). The crackheads in the basement don't join in any fighting. They run if violence breaks out and hide if someone starts shooting.

If the characters successfully press the dealer for information, he tells them that Gates resides on the top floor of the building, in apartment 4D.

Upstairs

Each of the floors, excluding the ground floor, holds eight apartments, labeled A through H (the ground floor has only four apartments, all of which the gang has overtaken). Most of these apartments are empty, but a few tenants still live here.

- **Second Floor:** Apartments 2A through 2F are empty. 2G is inhabited by a woman with severe social phobias — she manages to leave her apartment to buy food and to go to work, but never answers her door and doesn't leave otherwise. 2H

houses a teenaged couple hiding out from the girl's parents. She is nearly eight months pregnant. The boy begs for money during the day and mugs people at night, using the money to buy food.

- **Third Floor:** Apartment 3A houses a family of four (a mother and three children, ages three, four and six). The children are malnourished and they ask the characters for money as they come up the stairs. Apartments 2B, 2C and 2D are empty. 2E appears empty, but a crackhead is crashed out on the floor, too weak from withdrawal to move. 2F and 2G are empty. The door to apartment 2H is sealed with duct tape, which doesn't mask the smell of rot from inside. If the characters peel off the tape and look in, they discover three mutilated bodies — Gates' handiwork. The bodies are not locals, but tourists, girls murdered during Mardi Gras.

- **Fourth Floor:** Gates is in apartment 4D (see below). The other apartments serve as storage and crash space for the dealers. Currently, eight people lurk on this floor, not counting Lucas. Four are playing cards in 4E, two are watching television in 4G, and two more are standing guard in 4A. These last two might hear the characters coming up (the stairs creak horribly) and alert the others if the Kindred don't find a way to silence them. Getting up the stairs without alerting the guards requires an opposed roll. The player of any character sneaking up the stairs rolls Dexterity + Stealth with a -2 modifier (for the squeaky stairs), while you roll four dice (the guards' Wits + Composure). Unless you get more successes than a player, the guards do not hear the characters coming. If Jack uses Obfuscate to mask himself, he can ascend the stairs without making the roll. Likewise, if Tina or Edward activates Celerity, they can race up the stairs and attack before the guards have a chance to take any action.

Confronting Gates

If the characters have managed to reach the fourth floor without sounding alarms (that is, no shooting, no excessively loud fighting, etcetera), then Gates is unaware that they are present. If they have made a great deal of noise, he has had time to prepare.

In the former case, they can proceed to his apartment with no problem. If they don't know which one he's in, now would be a superb time for Tina to use the blood sympathy. If she does so, her player gains a +2 modifier for proximity. If they simply check each apartment alphabetically, of course, they'll find him before they find the other gangsters (provided they take out the two in 4A without causing a ruckus).

Gates' door is unlocked.

When the characters enter apartment 4D, read the following:

You open the door to apartment 4D, perhaps expecting to find an abattoir. The reality is much more mundane. The apartment is mostly empty. A couch sits in one corner and a pile of clothing lies in the middle of the floor. The room is lit only by a single light bulb dangling from the ceiling. The windows have been covered with blankets and duct tape.

As you enter the room, you smell gasoline. Glancing left, you see seven canisters along the far wall, all apparently full.

Stop reading aloud.

Gates is present, but is hiding using the Obfuscate Discipline. Jack can see through this concealment if he activates *Auspex*, however, as described under *Heightened Senses (Auspex •)* on his player summary sheet. If Jack spots Lucas, he holds up a canister of gasoline and splashes some on the floor, and warns the characters not to approach. "This place is a matchbox," he warns, pulling a lighter from his pocket. At this point, he becomes visible to all.

If the characters have inadvertently announced their presence, they smell gasoline as they reach the top of the stairs. Lucas steps out of the shadows with his lighter, and informs the characters that he has already doused the stairs in gasoline.

Lucas isn't entirely sane, of course, but he isn't suicidal. He knows that if the building becomes an inferno, he probably won't survive, and while he might talk a great game about being willing to die and take everyone else down with him, he doesn't truly have that kind of courage. He is willing to talk with the characters, but as he does, the other gangsters on the floor take notice and join him. The characters have enough time to ask two or three questions before the gangsters appear, after which Lucas refuses to say anything else. Some possible questions and their answers follow:

- **Why did you join Sarah's conspiracy?** Lucas scowls if asked this, and states that Sarah lied to him — she promised to teach him "magic." He doesn't elaborate further. (True.)

- **[Any insulting or disparaging remark]:** If the characters insult Lucas, call him crazy or pathetic, he lights the lighter. Have each player first roll *Resolve + Composure*. One success is enough to stave off fear frenzy, but if the roll fails, the character runs. Any player who succeeds on this roll may then roll *Wits + Empathy* (Tina's *Body Language Specialty* applies). If this roll succeeds, the character realizes that Lucas is just as frightened of the fire as the characters, and is in fact barely controlling himself enough to light the lighter.

- **What do you know about [other Kindred]?** Lucas knows little about any of the other conspirators. He despises Sarah and Andrea just as he hates all women. He respects Matheson's power (though he doesn't admit it openly) and reveals that Matheson paid him to find "a couple of niggers" while he was in town. He states that Nathaniel is a "pussy." He knows nothing of Mezzo.

When the gangsters arrive, read the following:

Several gang members approach. Lucas waves slightly, and you see the gangsters' feature soften as they look at him, as though they were looking at a trusted friend or leader. "What's with the gas?" one asks.

Lucas simply shakes his head, but the other gangsters murmur slightly, nervous. Lucas furrows his brows and all of you feel the power of his personality flare up. The gangsters turn their gazes from him to you... and their expressions change to hatred.

Stop reading aloud.

Lucas has been feeding small quantities of his *Vitae* to the gangsters to ensure their loyalty. He has not invested enough time, blood or dedication to grant them any supernatural ben-

efits, but he has secured their loyalty through the *Vinculum*. Taking orders from a madman brandishing a lighter in a pool of gasoline is enough to challenge anyone's loyalty, however.

Lucas directs the gangsters to attack the characters, but a successful *Wits + Empathy* roll (Tina's specialty applies; dice pool limited by *Humanity*) will reveal that these men are more worried about the prospect of fire than anything else. Use of the *Majesty Discipline* could snap them from Gates' thrall long enough for their survival instinct to kick in, and even a convincing argument might hold them back from attacking. Gates, however, doesn't sit back and will prod them to attack, even using his own Disciplines. If such a standoff occurs, call for an extended and contested roll to influence the gangsters. Roll Lucas' *Presence + Intimidation* with a +2 bonus since the gangsters are his thralls. The opposing player should roll whatever dice pool seems appropriate (*Manipulation + Expression* to make a convincing argument, say, or *Presence + Expression + Majesty* to use *Awe*). Note that because they are trying to influence mortals, the characters' *Humanity* serves as a limit on any non-Discipline dice pools including the *Empathy, Persuasion* or *Socialize Skills* (so if the character has a *Manipulation + Expression* total of 8 but a *Humanity* of 5, the player rolls 5 dice only). Attempts at intimidation (like Gates') are unaffected by this limitation. Feel free to grant bonuses for good roleplaying. Whoever reaches seven successes first (the highest *Willpower* in the group of gangsters) wins.

If Lucas wins, the gangsters attack the characters. Use the traits provided earlier. The gangsters don't use guns in close quarters, but five of the eight of them have knives.

If Tina wins, the gangsters back off, trying to get past the characters to go downstairs. Have the characters roll initiative. Lucas lights the floor on fire and makes a dash for the windows, figuring he can survive the fall. If any character beats his initiative, she can stop him by grabbing his wrist (*Dexterity + Brawl - Lucas' Defense*). If this succeeds, Lucas flies into anger frenzy, attempting to kill Tina specifically. He bites to inflict lethal damage, but otherwise uses little in the way of battle tactics.

If the floor does catch fire, every player must check for fear frenzy. Resisting this frenzy requires five successes on a *Resolve + Composure* roll, and each roll receives a -1 penalty. Also, the fire spreads quickly. If the characters are standing on a gasoline soaked surface when Lucas sets it on fire, those characters receive a -3 modifier to avoiding fear frenzy, and suffer three points of aggravated damage per turn. Characters with the *Resilience Discipline* have some limited protection against this; see the description of *Resilience* in the character write-ups.

The building, as promised, burns like kindling. Escaping quickly is the only chance for survival. As Storyteller, you can choose to make this extremely difficult, having the players roll *Dexterity + Athletics* to climb through burning wreckage and keeping careful track of how much damage the characters have incurred, or you can assume that if the characters run or leap out a window, they will escape unharmed. If the characters suffer several points of (aggravated) damage while trying to escape the inferno, this only serves to underline an important point — vampires are *not* immortal, and the things they fear, they fear with good reason.

Diablerie

Whether the characters beat him into torpor after grabbing his lighter away, or chase him down after he leaps out a window, Lucas should not survive this encounter. If Tina wishes to simply slay him rather than consuming his soul, she is fulfilling her Virtue of Fortitude and regains all of her Willpower. If she consumes his soul, of course, she is fulfilling her Vice of Gluttony and regains one Willpower point in addition to the other benefits of diablerie.

If Tina successfully diablerizes Gates, read the following:

As the last of his blood trickles away down your throat, you feel the taste of ash in your mouth. You know from talking to Vidal that it is possible to consume a vampire's soul, but did a monster like Gates even have one?

And then you feel it.

You don't know if you'd call it a soul, exactly, but everything that Gates was, everything that defined him, the strength of will that drove him and the desperate, depraved desire for bloodshed that led him to murder you and God knows how many other women, slides into you like the blade of his knife. You consume it, you swallow it, and you draw power from it. You feel your Embrace again, the pain of the murder and the violation of his fangs in your neck... but this time, you feel what he felt. You feel the near-orgasmic pleasure at ending a life, at watching a woman twist in pain beneath you. The part of you that is still you, still Tina, recoils from that, trying to latch onto the years you've spent fighting against this sort of horror, fighting to empower yourself.

Stop reading aloud.

At this point, have Tina's player roll Humanity (minus the one automatically lost for committing diablerie). If this roll fails, Tina gains a derangement. Sadism, obsessions with blood or knives, or nightmares are all appropriate choices. If she succeeds, Tina retains her sanity, but might occasionally have murderous urges for a few weeks after this.

Tina's Blood Potency also rises to 2 and she can now hold 11 Vitae in her system.

Aftermath

With Lucas' destruction, the characters have confronted each of their sires and learn why they entered the con-

spiracy, but they still do not know what Sarah Cobbler's motives were, and they have few leads to follow for her. Vidal suggests (when they next speak to him) patience — Kindred are adept at going to ground, but Sarah wouldn't go to this much trouble without checking into the characters at some point.

Dramatis Personae

The only new Kindred character introduced in this story is Peter Lebeaux, and he doesn't make enough of an appearance to merit game traits. Lucas Gates' traits are provided below. We also include new character sheets for some of the players' characters, reflecting their development at the beginning of this story.

Lucas Gates

(See **Last Night** for Lucas' background.)

Clan: Daeva

Covenant: Unaligned

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Medicine (arteries) 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (running) 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth (stalking) 3, Weaponry (knives) 3

Social Skills: Intimidation (psycho) 3, Streetwise 2

Merits: None that apply to this story.

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 2 (Fortitude; Lust)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Blood Potency: 3

Vitae:

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Majesty 3, Nightmare 2, Obfuscate 3, Vigor 1

Lucas can spend one Vitae per turn.

Louis Maddox

Louis' traits improve for **Blood Ties** as he improves his ratings in the Intimidation and Persuasion Skills (both useful for Dominate). For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Louis' Virtue is *Temperance*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, whether good or bad, despite the obvious rewards it might offer. His Vice is *Sloth*. Once per scene, he regains one spent Willpower point if he successfully avoids a difficult task but achieves its goal nonetheless.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Vitae: Louis can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Louis can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Louis can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Command (Dominate •): This power allows him to give a one-word command to a target, such as "Freeze!" or "Quiet!" This command cannot cause the target to harm herself. For Louis to use this power, roll 8 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Intimidation + Dominate).

Mesmerize (Dominate ••): This power allows Louis to implant hypnotic suggestions and issue complex commands to his victim. He cannot rearrange or alter memories, but he can force a victim to leave a door unlocked, to fetch him an item, to guard a door during the day or even something subtle such as waiting for a particular person and then spilling a drink on that person. For Louis to use this power, roll 10 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Expression + Dominate).

Louis must make eye contact to use either Command or Mesmerize. What's more, when Louis uses either of these Dominate powers, the Storyteller rolls the victim's Resolve + Blood Potency. Louis must get more successes than his target for the power to function.

The Forgetful Mind (Dominate •••): This power allows Louis to reshape the memories of a victim. He must first make eye contact and then spend time asking questions (to determine what a person does remember) and describing in detail any new memories he wishes to implant. Louis' player rolls 7 dice (Louis' Wits + Persuasion + Dominate) minus the target's Resolve. The more complex (or unlikely) the memories, the more successes Louis must accumulate: forgetting the color of

someone's hair might require only one or two successes; forgetting a traumatic event (like seeing a vampire feeding) might require 15 or 20; completely changing a week of events would require 50 or more. Louis' player can keep rolling to accumulate successes so long as he isn't interrupted—each roll represents five minutes of mental manipulation.

Resilience (•): This Discipline makes Louis supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae point to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds Louis' Resilience (1) to his Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds one to his Health. Doing so, he gains an eighth box on his Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties one box to the right. Also, the first time Louis suffers aggravated damage in a scene in which his Resilience is active, one point of the damage is considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for him to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Louis loses his extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Louis' seven base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Ventrue): As a member of the Ventrue clan, Louis is cursed to grow paranoid and delusional with time. When you roll to avoid gaining a derangement, subtract two dice from the die pool (the Storyteller will tell you when this happens).

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Louis and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Louis' player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Louis is a smart guy who has a good memory for trivia, so he often knows minute facts about topics that he's never actually been schooled in. Whenever Louis is confronted by a situation outside his normal realm of knowledge, you may roll six dice (Louis' Intelligence + Wits). If this roll succeeds, Louis knows a helpful fact about the given topic.

Haven: Louis had a small apartment where he can shelter during the day. It's small — only two rooms — but it's only a few blocks from the French Quarter. What's more, Louis has set up various security measures around the door and window (he's not exactly paranoid, but break-ins aren't unknown in the area). If Louis is in his Haven when someone attempts to break in, he receives a +1 to any rolls to notice this attempt.

Tina Baker

Tina's traits improve for **Blood Ties** as she improves her Vigor Discipline and gains a rating in the Occult Skill. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. Once per scene, she regains one spent Willpower point if she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (••): This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (2); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed triples). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (2) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you

make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor (••): This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (2) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Tina and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Tina's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contact: Tina has a friend — Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university — she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker

Concept: College Student

Plan: Daeva

Player:

Virtue: Fortitude

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Gluttony

Potency:

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
<i>Finesse</i>	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine (Sprains)	●●●●●
Occult	●●●●●
Politics	●●●●●
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth (Crowds)	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy (Body Lang)	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Barfly	●●●●●
Brawling Dodge	●●●●●
City Status	●●●●●
Contacts	●●●●●
Danger Sense	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+1)	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
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	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Disciplines

Celerity	●●●●●
Majesty	●●●●●
Vigor	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Health

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●●●●●●
□□□□□□□□□□

Virtue

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	11
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Jack McBandless

Jack's traits improve for **Blood Ties** as he raises his level in the Investigation Skill. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Justice*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback. The "right thing," to Jack, is a kind of street-level decency: Never steal from someone who doesn't deserve it, never give someone bad directions, and never take someone's last dollar. His Vice is *Pride*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Jack can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Jack can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Jack can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Heightened Senses (Auspex •): Jack can magnify all his senses (or just one) to superhuman levels. Doing so requires an action but no roll of the dice. This can even allow Jack to see in pitch darkness. Jack's player can also add his Auspex (2) to any Wits + Composure roll to notice an imminent threat. Finally, with this power active Jack can pierce the veil of another Kindred's use of Obfuscate. When Jack might see through Obfuscate, his player should roll 8 dice (Jack's Wits + Investigation + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the Kindred's Resolve + Stealth + Obfuscate. If the player gets more successes, Jack sees through the illusion (seeing someone hiding using Cloak of Shadow, for example).

Aura Perception (Auspex ••): By concentrating, Jack can perceive the shifting colors of another's aura, allowing him to read their moods. To do so, Jack must observe the subject for at least two turns. The player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) – the subject's Composure. Jack then perceives a number of emotions (colors) equal to successes on the roll, starting with the most dominant. If this power is active while the target is lying, the player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the target's Composure. If the player gets more successes, Jack knows the target is lying. Finally, if Jack uses this power while interacting or being in close proximity to someone for at least a turn immediately before a fight, he gains a bonus to his Initiative equal to successes when activating this power (as you can predict the target's actions).

Touch of Shadow (Obfuscate •): This power allows Jack to hide small items in his grasp or on his person. Even if someone is looking for the item on his person, the power keeps it hidden. You roll eight dice (Jack's Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate); once active, the object is hidden for the scene or until Jack decides to end the Discipline.

Mask of Tranquility (Obfuscate ••): Most vampires feel a flare of fear or anger — the Predator's Taint — when they meet another Kindred for the first time. Jack, however, doesn't engender that effect, though he does still suffer from it and can thus recognize other vampires. Jack may "turn off" this power if he wishes.

Cloak of Night (Obfuscate •••): This power allows Jack to disappear completely, even from plain sight. He remains invisible until he wishes to reappear or until he takes obvious action (such as attacking someone or breaking a window). Disappearing requires a success on a roll of Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (seven dice for Jack). If you roll five or more successes, anyone who sees Jack disappear forgets that he was even there in the first place.

Clan Weakness (Mekhet): Jack's Kindred body is cursed to be even more sensitive to fire and sunlight than most. If he is exposed to these anathema of vampiric existence, he suffers one more point of aggravated damage per turn than other vampires

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Jack and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Jack's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contacts: Jack has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department, a young cop who works the night shift in the French Quarter. This cop, named Michael Rample, knows Jack socially and usually gives him information about traffic conditions. Michael would be willing to share more sensitive information with Jack, but he might require a bribe for truly important tidbits.

Direction Sense: Jack always knows which way is north, and he can always retrace his route in unfamiliar territory.

Eidetic Memory: Jack doesn't forget anything he sees or hears (meaning you should take notes as his player). He normally doesn't need to make a roll to remember anything he knows, but if he is under stress, he adds two dice to any such roll.

Stunt Driver: Unlike less skilled drivers, Jack can take other actions while driving, including firing his gun. The Storyteller might still require a Drive roll if Jack needs to do anything fancy, however.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Jack McCandless

Concept: Courier

Clan: Mekhet

Player:

Virtue: Justice

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Pride

Potency:

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●○	<i>Strength</i> ●●○○○	<i>Presence</i> ●○○○○
<i>Finesse</i>	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●○	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●○○	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●○○○
<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●○○	<i>Stamina</i> ●●○○○	<i>Composure</i> ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●○○○○
Computer	●○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation (Street Crime)	●●○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	○○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive (Quick Arrival)	●●●○○
Firearms	●●○○○
Larceny	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise (Slums)	●●●○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Contacts	●○○○○
Direction Sense	●○○○○
Eidetic memory	●●○○○
Stunt Driver	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Auspex	●○○○○
Obfuscate	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	3
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	10
Experience	
Armor	

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Virtue

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	○
5	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○

Equipment

Revolver +2



VAMPIRE™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Part Six: Plagues



1554 LITTON DR.
STONE MOUNTAIN,
GA 30083
USA

Plagues written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

Welcome to the next installment of the **Danse de la Mort** chronicle. By this point in the chronicle, the characters have each confronted their sires, learned about the dark sides of their clans, advanced in the use of their Disciplines and discovered some of the covenants into which Kindred group themselves. And yet, greater mysteries await them. Some of these mysteries are very general: What was the creature they saw on the way to John Harley Matheson's mansion in **The Gentleman**? What other covenants of Kindred exist? Other mysteries are personal to the characters, and the main one of these is bound up in one woman: Sarah Cobbler.

In this story, the characters have a chance to meet Cobbler, but she slips away before they can do more than thwart one of her plans. They do come face to face, however, with the mysterious Mezzo, who provides some of the last pieces in the puzzle of Sarah Cobbler and sets the stage for our final story.

Throughout **Plagues**, the characters get to enter further into the dark shadows of Kindred existence. Having proven their worth to the elders of the city, they can join the dominant covenant in New Orleans. They also see in stark terms the sickly effect certain vampires can have on a city. Ultimately they must ask themselves, are they plague bearers of a kind as well?

Theme and Mood

The twin themes of **Plagues** are freedom and consequences. The characters are experiencing their first taste of real freedom in this story: no longer under the yoke of their mission to find their sires and about to be officially accepted into the Kindred community, they should feel as though they are truly beginning their Requiems. They have lost their mortal lives, true, but all that they have seen has shown them that they are not powerless and can eke out an existence by night, just as so many other Kindred do. But with freedom comes choices, and with choices come inescapable consequences. The characters must decide whether they will join the Lancea Sanctum and what doing so (or refusing to) will mean for their survival. What's more, when they thwart Sarah Cobbler in Act One, they must deal with the consequences in Act Two. There are no easy choices for the undead.

The mood of **Plagues** is, appropriately, diseased. In Act One, this mood is subtle — the city seems strong, but the Byzantine agendas and conflicts of the Kindred act as social sickness. Everyone should be furtive, hiding their true motives and looking for

others (like the characters) to make mistakes. By Act Two, sickness becomes literal as a disease grips the city. Everyone the characters meet looks ill, either physically (gaunt, drawn, pale, coughing) or mentally (darting eyes, near-catatonic). The fever that sweeps through New Orleans is at least partially supernatural in nature, and the Kindred should be able to feel its presence everywhere. Even though vampires are largely immune to illness, you might occasionally tell a player that her character feels a tickle in the back of her throat or a stiffness in her joints, and let the character wonder if this is merely a psychological effect of being near so many sick people, or if the character has actually contracted something.

Storytelling Technique — Using the Dice

Up until now, we've told you in the text of these stories where to use the dice and which dice pools to use. The full scoop on what all of the Skills and Disciplines can accomplish is presented in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Vampire: The Requiem**, of course, but after this many stories, you should be becoming fairly conversant in what the various dice pools represent and when they apply. Let's take a moment and consider when it is appropriate to ask a player to roll — and, more importantly, when it *isn't* appropriate.

In **Blood Money**, we mentioned that when a character is meant to have a chance to shine, it might be appropriate to forego dice rolls and remove the chance of failure. This is true not only in the case of a “central character” but also whenever a failed roll would derail the storyline. In **Danse de la Mort**, we've tried not to create situations where if one particular roll fails, the characters are left high and dry with no way (save perhaps for *deus ex machina*) for them to find their way to the next plot point. As you move from our published chronicle to telling your own stories, consider whether you are prepared for the consequences if a player fails a roll. Even if a player has an impressive dice pool, it's quite possible for the dice to all turn up under “8.” If you find yourself asking for rolls that the players need to succeed on, skip the rolls in favor of moving the story along.

In some situations, however, the story can progress differently based on whether certain rolls succeed or fail. If the characters notice a certain subtle gesture that the Prince's lieutenant makes to his master, they might be suspicious and therefore prepared when the Prince later betrays them. If they miss this red flag, the betrayal comes as more of a shock, but this presents its own drama for the story.

One situation that generally requires dice rolls is combat. Combat is a highly fluid situation, decided in the space of seconds. Even if the character is extremely skilled, something can always go wrong. You can, of course, choose to fudge the results of your dice rolls for Storyteller characters (appropriate if you mean for the fight to be an easy scene, but the players roll poorly and you roll well), but for the most part, battle is one situation to let fate decide.

New Systems — Bloodlines

Every vampire belongs (at least ancestrally) to one of five great clans. But their cursed blood is not static — it grows in power with age and experience, and Kindred can force it to diverge substantially. They can create their own bloodlines, with their own Disciplines. They never completely leave their clan of origin, but they become something more.

True bloodlines stand out because their members favor at least one different Discipline than their parent clans, they suffer a different blood-borne weakness, or both. Most remarkably of all, some bloodlines practice Disciplines known to few other Kindred. Some bloodlines actually introduce new Disciplines that have never been seen before.

Vampire: The Requiem provides five bloodlines and two specialty Disciplines that you can add to your chronicles, along with advice on creating others. One of these lineages, the Morbus, appears in this story. Further supplements will reveal other bloodlines, but most will come from your (and your players') imagination.

The Basic Effects

Beyond the social ramifications, being part of a bloodline has one major advantage and one major drawback. On the plus side, it allows a character access to that lineage's Discipline (which thereafter counts as a fourth "clan Discipline"). This may mean access to an all-new Discipline generally unknown to other Kindred (like the Morbus's Cachexy) or simply access to a fourth "standard" Discipline. In some instances more than one Discipline may be added to the character's spread of "clan Disciplines," but in that case others will be lost.

On the downside, the character also gains the bloodline's weakness, which complements a character's existing clan weakness. The character is from that point saddled with two weaknesses (or a very much aggravated version of the existing one).

Joining or Realizing a Bloodline

A character's ability to join a bloodline or create one of her own depends on several factors, including her clan, specific lineage and the power of her blood. A newly Embraced Kindred does not immediately inherit her sire's bloodline (if any), but she may join it as the power of her blood grows. (That power is measured in a trait called Blood Potency, which grows with age and training.)

• **Joining the Sire's Bloodline:** At Blood Potency 2, a character may "activate" his sire's bloodline, becoming a part of it. Joining a sire's bloodline requires the expenditure of a Willpower dot.

• **Joining Another Bloodline:** At Blood Potency 4, a character may align himself with an existing bloodline to which his sire *doesn't* belong. The character must belong to the bloodline's parent clan, however. For instance, a Mekhet could become a Morbus (even if her sire wasn't of that bloodline), but a Nosferatu never could.

Normally, a character needs the permission and patronage of a vampire who is already a member of that bloodline to join it. This patron is known as the Avus (from the Latin for "grandfather"). When the Kindred seeks to join the bloodline, she must drink at least one Vitae from the Avus (though drinking at least a point of Vitae from any member of the bloodline will suffice, including acts of diablerie...), so that she knows what mystic form she must force her blood to take. Cruel, domineering or overly careful Avuses occasionally subject their proxy "childer" to Vinculums, just to be sure that no later treachery occurs.

At no time does the Avus directly become a blood relation to the Kindred in question (unless he already is). The Avus is not subject to blood ties or blood sympathy (again, unless he already is). Without the support of an Avus it is almost impossible for a Kindred to join a bloodline to which she is not directly connected or that she creates on her own. Joining the Avus's bloodline requires the expenditure of a Willpower dot on the character's part, and the expenditure of a Willpower point and at least one Vitae on the part of the Avus.

• **Creating a New Bloodline:** If a player does not "activate" a sire's bloodline or join another clan bloodline, she may create a bloodline for her character at Blood Potency 6. Many bloodlines have a unique Discipline, and all have a unique weakness. As with activating prior bloodlines, the Discipline becomes a fourth clan Discipline, and the weakness layers on top of the existing clan weakness. Creation of a new bloodline costs a Willpower dot.

The Morbus

Mezzo and Sarah Cobbler belong to a bloodline offshoot of the Mekhet called the Morbus. The Morbus have frustrated historians and vampiric genealogists for as long as the Kindred have been aware of the existence of the bloodline. Owing largely to the rarity of extensive records cataloguing Mekhet lineage over the centuries, no one can pin down exactly whom the founder of this bloodline might have been, or where the Morbus first began to thrive. The idea of constructing a truly inclusive history of the Kindred (especially as regards the Mekhet clan) is a pipe dream at best, but some aspire to it nonetheless. Those Morbus who choose to concern themselves with the subject consider this ongoing failure a relief and a legitimization of their entire existence. They see themselves as simply Mekhet who are afflicted or cursed with singularly rarefied tastes.

All Morbus must feed on the blood of the ailing and diseased in order to sustain their vital undead state. This affinity with disease also expresses itself in the form of a Discipline called Cachexy, which allows Morbus to spread the diseases in their blood and even wield them as weapons. This practice of the blood-

line — sometimes called “Carriers” by other Kindred — makes them unwelcome in many domains. The Lancea Sanctum is especially unforgiving of “plague dogs” who infect the mortal herd — making New Orleans dangerous territory for the Morbus.

Act One: Divine Intervention

The events of this act begin after a suitable amount of downtime has passed from **Blood Ties**. Depending on the state of the characters at the end of that story, this could be anything from a week to a few months as they heal their wounds and come to terms with what they have learned. The characters might wish to leave the city or take other actions that we aren’t prepared to account for in these scenarios. If you wish, you may certainly play out such occurrences as solo games. In any event, once the characters have had a bit of time to collect themselves and find a routine that doesn’t involve searching for their sires, this first act begins. In it, the characters have the chance to join the Lancea Sanctum and come devilishly close to the woman responsible for their Embrace.

Scene One: Invitations

In this scene, the characters receive word that Vidal plans to recognize their contributions to the city publicly, in a sort of Confirmation ceremony for the city’s Kindred.

Vidal sends a courier to each of the characters with an engraved card inviting them to the Most Holy Name of Jesus Church (which the characters have visited before, in **Mary’s Child** and **Blood Ties**) the following Sunday at midnight. The card explains that Prince Vidal and Philip Maldonato wish to recognize the characters as full members of the Kindred community, and to acknowledge their efforts and tribulations in hunting down their sires and investigating their own murders. The words RSVP — REGRETS ONLY are printed in tiny letters at the bottom of the card, followed by a phone number. It seems the Prince expects them to attend.

If the characters take the card to Father John Marrow, he explains that Vidal is probably sincere in his intentions, but does advise the characters to consider where their faith lies before the ceremony. If they are not ready to swear their loyalty to the Lancea Sanctum, they should be ready to say so clearly. Vidal is patient, says Marrow, so if the characters are simply not ready to convert to the covenant yet, the Prince will probably give them time. If they appear uncertain or derisive, however, Marrow isn’t sure what the Prince will do.

If the characters take the card to a Kindred not of the Lancea Sanctum (such as Nathaniel Dubois), they receive much the same information. The other vampires in the city know full well that those in power expect shows of faith from everyone in the Requiem, whether they belong to the covenant or not.

Scene Two: The Ceremony

In this scene, the characters undergo a recognition ceremony before Prince Vidal and his followers, and are asked to join the Lancea Sanctum. Each character must come to terms with her beliefs about vampirism and the Requiem, and where God fits into those beliefs, if at all.

When the characters arrive at the church, they are not immediately permitted to enter. Instead, a young, dark-skinned man dressed in black meets them and introduces himself as Alberto, Prince Vidal’s assistant. Alberto is still mortal, but seems quite knowledgeable about the Requiem, and in fact asks the characters if they have fed tonight. If not, he advises that they walk through the nearby Loyola University campus and do so, since the ceremony might induce hunger. If the characters ask why a recognition ceremony would do that, Alberto looks confused for a moment, and then responds that he is only telling the Kindred what he was asked to tell them.

Alberto leads the characters (once any who wish to have fed) around the back of the church into a small waiting room. He asks whether any of them understand Latin, and then states that Prince Vidal is willing to perform the service in English, if they so desire. He explains that the characters will proceed out from the back of the church and sit in the first pew, Vidal will say a few words to those present and then the ceremony will begin. If the characters have any questions, they can ask Alberto, but he doesn’t have more information than he has already given them.

Recognition

Shortly, a knock at the door signals the start of the ceremony. As the characters leave the back room and walk into the church, have the players roll Wits + Occult. If the roll succeeds, inform the player that the characters are walking into a room full of powerful vampires, and should be mentally prepared for the Predator’s Taint. Any player who succeeds on this gains a +1 modifier on the Resolve + Composure roll required below. If any player mentions that her character is steeling herself for this occurrence without benefit of the roll, this modifier increases to +2.

When the characters enter the church, read the following:

*Walking into the church, you have time to register the Kindred sitting in the pews, to note Prince Vidal and Maldonato standing in front of the altar, to notice several other mortals dressed as Alberto was standing discreetly about the room, and then the fear takes you. You can feel your Beast and the Beast of every vampire present snarling, testing each other, and you feel that, despite your trials and growing power, you are still among the weakest present. Your instincts scream at you to flee, with the loudest voice since the first night of your Requiem. You (**indicate Becky**) tense yourself to spring into the church, to attack the assemblage, to take blood and souls from these pretenders.*

Stop reading aloud.

Have each player roll Resolve + Composure, subject to the modifiers above. If any character fails, the others see Maldonato vanish in a red-and-white blur, and then their errant comrade seemingly flies backwards against the wall, where Maldonato holds him until he calms down. The other Kindred in the church react, some chuckling, some shaking their heads or rolling their eyes. The characters definitely have the feeling that they haven’t impressed anyone by losing control.

After the characters all have themselves composed, Vidal motions them to have a seat in the first pew and then addresses the Kindred here.

Vidal is an impressive orator. He combines his natural charisma with his Majesty Discipline to command the attention and respect of all those present. He indicates the characters and says, “Here are five Kindred brought into the Requiem under perhaps the worst of circumstances — at the whim of one unworthy to carry our holy curse. Each of them was plucked from their mortal blindness and forced into our world. Random? No. God acts through all of us, to what purpose only He may know. And now, having sought their sires and answered their questions, they sit before us tonight, ready to enter our society, our city, our covenant, as true Kindred.”



THEBAN SORCERY

The Sanctified of the Lancea Sanctum stand as the dark priests and inquisitors of the Danse Macabre. They cultivate a fearsome image through their harsh doctrine and acceptance of monstrosity as divinely ordained. Nevertheless, it is their mastery of the dread Discipline of Theban Sorcery that sends ripples of fear through undead society. To hear the Sanctified tell it, its members are capable of no less than miracles themselves. In truth, the Lancea Sanctum does possess a potent form of spiritual magic, though whether it performs literal miracles is up for debate.

At some point after the covenant formed — purportedly in the third century AD — some of its members followed a Roman army into Thebes (“Thebias” according to fragments of a journal supposedly recovered from the march). There, a legion of Christian soldiers was drawn from the local ranks. When members of the covenant accompanied the Theban legion on its march to Gaul, one of their number brought with her the secrets of this magic, which she claimed to have learned from an angel on the journey. To this night, the covenant studies and practices this sorcery, which it uses to demonstrate its power, “prove” its chosen nature, and to punish transgressors against its dictates.

The characters have already had occasion to witness the power of Theban Sorcery: It was a Theban ritual that caused them pain if they removed the ashes from their foreheads in **Mary’s Child**. In this story, they have the chance to see two other rituals in action: the Blood Scourge, a literal lash of solidified Vitae used to whip sinners and in Sanctified self-mortification; and the Liar’s Plague, which causes beetles to swarm from the mouth of someone trying to lie.



Vidal can continue on, naming the accomplishments of the characters, or stop short there, depending on how much you feel like roleplaying his speeches. If you decide to add more to this section, consider what the characters have done that is likely to impress Vidal. Anything that he reports, however, he presents in such a fashion as to make it appear to be motivated by religious faith or loyalty to Vidal himself. If he mentions the characters’ rescue of John Marrow (during **Fury**),

for instance, he makes the act seem like a holy obligation to save a Sanctified Kindred from destruction by a dangerous heathen (Andrea), even if the Kindred in question does follow a misguided leader.

The characters aren’t obliged or expected to say anything during all of this, and in fact if they do, Maldonato (who stands off to the side during Vidal’s oration) gives them a slight shake of the head as a warning.

When this recognition is complete, Vidal motions to the black-clad servants. One of them opens a door on the opposite side of the church from where the characters entered (but still along the back wall) and ushers in a man in a long white robe. His head is shaved clean and his eyes are missing, the wounds around the empty sockets indicating that they were removed recently. The man is a vampire — the characters can clearly see his fangs as he walks — but he does not engender the Predator’s Taint. He stands next to Vidal, clutching something in his hand.

Simultaneously, two other servants lift an unconscious woman from behind the altar and lay her down. Vidal casually draws a dagger (with a Wits + Composure roll, the characters notice it is the same dagger he used in the Mass ceremony in **Blood Ties**; a character with Eidetic Memory notices this automatically) and cuts the woman’s arm, draining her blood into a large chalice.

If the characters asked for Vidal to perform the ceremony in English, he does so. Otherwise, he proceeds in Latin. He holds the chalice and dips his fingers into the blood, saying, “Seeing that Christ was dead, the soldiers did not break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out. A drop of Christ’s blood fell upon the soldier’s lips, and he wiped it away with his hand. Yet the next day, he slept past the sunrise, and roused from his slumber only at nightfall. And after tasting Christ’s blood, he thirsted for more.’ These were the words of Longinus, who revealed Christ’s divinity and revealed our place as wolves among the mortal flock. You, now, must take your place among us, the Sanctified.” He beckons the first character to him, and motions for her to kneel. With his bloodied fingers hovering near her forehead, he asks, “Do you join the Lancea Sanctum, accepting our tenets as yours, our faith as yours, leaving behind the mortal world and walking in darkness forever, as our Lord God intends?”

As Vidal is speaking, the characters notice the man in the white robe standing to his left, murmuring something in Latin. In his hand, he holds several small, black objects no larger than buttons (they are, in fact, beetle carapaces). Have each player roll Resolve + Blood Potency, while you roll 8 dice (the bald man’s Intelligence + Academics + Theban Sorcery). If any player scores more successes than you, her character is unaffected by the Liar’s Plague ritual (see below).

Allow the player to take all the time she needs deciding how to answer the question. In the end, Vidal doesn’t hold it against the characters if they choose not to join the Lancea Sanctum. As stated earlier, Vidal is patient. He cannot abide



lying, however, and makes an example of anyone who claims to accept his blessing but doesn't truly have faith. When the player has decided upon an answer, ask the player if that answer is truly representative of what the character feels. That is, does the character truly have faith in God and truly wish to join with the Lancea Sanctum? Three possibilities exist here: The character says "yes" honestly; the character says "yes," but lies; or the character says "no" honestly.

If the character refuses to join, Vidal nods sadly, and says, "May faith come to you, and may the Requiem treat you well." His tone of voice, however, indicates that he does *not* expect the Requiem to go well for the character at all. The congregation murmurs briefly, as though shocked or even offended at the character's decision.

If the character agrees and means it, Vidal anoints the character's forehead and lips with blood, and says, "Welcome to the fold, my child." The character gains one dot of Covenant Status (Lancea Sanctum).

If the character agrees, but lies, she does not actually say anything. Instead, black beetles begin to swarm out of her mouth as she tries to speak. Vidal steps back, and the bald man rasps, "Liar!" Other characters note that the beetle shells in the man's hand have crumbled to fine ash. A look of anger crosses Vidal's face, and he addresses the assembled vampires. "We cannot force our faith on others, and we do not try. Those who do not share our faith are merely asked not to attend our observances. Yet, this neonate seeks to make us think that **(he or she)** shares our reverence." He then turns his attention back to the character. "You are young and naïve, but you must be taught. Stand, turn your back to the altar, and do not move." If the character disobeys, Vidal repeats the command, but uses the Dominate Discipline to enforce it. Roll 10 dice (Vidal's Intelligence + Expression + Dominate) while the player rolls Resolve + Blood Potency. If the player manages to roll at least as many successes as you, the command does not work, and Vidal instead has his servants hold the character in place. The result is still the same, but the assemblage is impressed with the character's strength of will.

Once the character is in place, the Prince's servants strip the shirt from his back. The other characters see the man in the white robe roll up his sleeve and slash his wrist with Vidal's ceremonial dagger. Blood trickles from the man's arm in a stream, but instead of splashing to the floor, it solidifies into a lash. The man then whips the character three times. Make three separate rolls of 4 dice each (the man's Strength + Weaponry +1). Defense does not subtract from this pool, since the character isn't moving. Each success on these rolls inflicts one point of lethal damage to the character.

This probably only happens once, but if a second character lies, the same thing occurs. The maximum damage is six points, however. Characters with Resilience can, if they wish, activate this Discipline to mitigate some of the damage.

Once the anointing ceremony is complete, any characters who joined the Lancea Sanctum turn to face the congregation as members of the covenant. Those who did not are sim-

ply seated in the pew again. Vidal then turns, and he, Maldonato and the man in white exit the room. Alberto approaches the characters as the assembled vampires begin to leave and tells them that a reception is being held in one hour at a house in the Garden District. He can provide transportation or directions.

Scene Three: The Reception

In this scene, the characters have the chance to mingle with some of the Kindred of New Orleans whom they haven't yet met. They also discover that Sarah Cobbler is present, watching them.

The house in the Garden District is large and opulent, and as the characters approach they see lights in the windows and occasional signs of movement. It doesn't look as though a party is taking place, though. The place seems hollow and deserted. When the characters enter, however, they find that many of the Kindred from the church are already present. Vidal and Maldonato have not arrived yet, but plenty of other Kindred want to meet the characters.

Refreshments are provided — that is to say, the kitchen and the dining room hold more than a dozen people in various states of intoxication. A young Kindred named Daniel (a Ventrue) is in charge of these hapless folks, and makes sure that when they get too weak, they are removed from the "menu." He doesn't prevent other vampires from killing them, however. If the characters ask, he says that he and Gus Elgin (see below) rounded these people up over the course of the last week, and that any who survive will be released with their memories erased. If the characters express shock, Daniel informs them that this is common practice in large cities.

We have provided a few names and descriptions of vampires that the characters might meet, but feel free to create your own as well. Among the Kindred present are three Primogen. As the characters can quickly discover, these are Kindred selected to advise the Prince of the city on matters of policy. They have already met one of the Primogen (Miss Opal), but this evening gives them the chance to meet two others: Pearl Chastain and Coco Duquette (see below).

A few possible Kindred for the characters to hobnob with:

- **Familiar faces:** A few Kindred that the characters know are present, depending how the characters have interacted with them in the past. Nathaniel Dubois, Alexander, Miss Opal, Natasha Preston or even Father John Marrow (if the characters requested that he be present) might be here.

- **Gus Elgin:** Gus is a diminutive Nosferatu. His head is small and shrunken and his skin leathery and wrinkled. All the Kindred in the room, however, nod respectfully as he passes. He is a respected servant of Prince Vidal. If the characters ask, they learn that he is the "Master of Elysium." His duties include making such places as this house and the church ready for Kindred events and making sure that rules of non-violence are properly enforced. When Gus meets the characters, he asks them questions about their experiences, about the Kindred they've met and their impressions of those Kindred, their plans for the future, and, subtly, their religious faith.

• **Pearl Chastain** is a Daeva, and a member of the Invictus covenant. She is dressed in a gown that some characters may recognize as woefully out of date (Intelligence + Socialize) and appears to be in her late 30s. She half-heartedly attempts to extol the virtues of her covenant to any of the characters who did not join the Lancea Sanctum, but seems depressed and lethargic.

• **Coco Duquette**, in contrast, seethes with energy. She appears to be in her early 20s and wears a tight-fitting black turtleneck and black slacks. Her hair is dyed a deep red, which provides a striking contrast to her blue eyes. She is happy to talk with the characters, but steers the conversation away from religion and politics. Anyone who talks with her has the distinct impression that she avoids these topics not because she doesn't want to talk about them, but because her views are unpopular. Coco is a Mekhet and a Carthian, and if Miss Opal has spoken well of the characters, she is willing to extend support to them as well.

• **Desirae Wells:** Desirae is a Gangrel, and has little memory of her mortal life. She doesn't believe she is from New Orleans, but feels a connection to the city. She is happy to talk with the characters, but unlike most of the other Kindred here, doesn't have an agenda. She merely wants to meet Becky Lynn Adler (or any other Gangrel character) and try to discern if they are from the same lineage. Desirae does not belong to any covenant, which might interest the characters, especially if they don't feel any connection with the three sects of vampires they have seen thus far.

Sarah Cobbler

Sarah is present, but does not approach the characters. She lurks nearby, listening in on their conversations and trying to learn how they have changed since their Embraces. If the characters split up, she stays with the largest group.

The characters have seen Sarah, but not since before their Embrace, and therefore recognizing her is difficult. During the course of the evening, have each player roll Wits + Composure, while you roll 5 dice (Sarah's Wits + Stealth). Space these rolls out so that the whole group isn't rolling at once. If the player rolls more successes than you, her character notices a woman staying close to the coterie, listening in. The woman does not engender the Predator's Taint. She looks roughly 30, has bright blond hair and green eyes, and wears a wine-colored suit and a gold ring.

Once a character has noticed Sarah, he (and the others, if the perceptive character points Sarah out) has a chance to recognize her. Have the player (or players) roll Intelligence + Composure with a -4 modifier; Jack only suffers a -2 penalty thanks to his Eidetic Memory Merit.

Dramatic failure: The character is absolutely convinced that she has never seen Sarah before.

Failure: The character doesn't think she has seen Sarah before, but isn't certain.

Success: Sarah looks familiar, but the character remembers her as having black hair. The memory of who she truly is comes to the character after approximately 30 minutes.

Exceptional Success: The character immediately recognizes Sarah.

The Phone Call

After at least two of the characters have had a chance to recognize Sarah, whether or not they've been successful, a servant finds one of them and says that they have a phone call. The servant seems confused as to how anyone knew that the characters would be here and knew the number, but asks the character into a study to take the call anyway. The character who receives the call should be the one who has been the most persistent or interested in trying to find Mezzo. If no one has tried to find her, Mezzo prefers to speak to a woman.

When the character picks up the phone, she hears a beautiful, melodious female voice say "Is she there? Have you seen her yet?" If the character asks who the caller means, she replies, "Sarah Cobbler. She's there. I'm sure of it."

If the characters have already seen and identified Sarah, and tell the caller as much, she says, "She's there to watch you, but there's something else, too. Don't let her near the kitchen."

If the characters say they haven't seen Sarah, the caller repeats, "She's there. She's there to watch you, to see if you're any closer. But she's there to poison the others. Keep her away from the kitchen."

The character on the phone has time to ask one question or make one more statement before the caller hangs up, and she isn't willing to disclose much else. Some good questions for the character to ask:

- **Who is this?** "You know me as Mezzo."
- **What is Sarah going to do in the kitchen?** "She's trying to poison everyone, to weaken them, to make them sick."
- **Where are you?** "I can't leave. I don't know what will happen. I have to stay isolated."
- **Why did Sarah do this to us?** "She thinks she can cure it."

After the character asks a question (or at least, a *useful* question), Mezzo hangs up. The phone here does not have caller ID.

Scene Four: Fickle Fortune

In this scene, the characters take action against Sarah Cobbler. While they can stop her from infecting the vessels in the kitchen, she does manage to escape.

This scene begins as soon as the characters call attention to Sarah, begin actively following her or tell anyone about her presence. The characters are in a house full of very powerful Kindred, so the course of action that makes the most sense is to tell someone that she is here. On the other hand, the characters have surely noticed that Kindred politics and plots are Byzantine and unpredictable, so perhaps they would prefer to take this on themselves. Either is acceptable.

In order for this scene to be dictated by the players' actions, and not the reverse, we have presented Sarah's plan and the actions she will undertake if not stopped. The characters can interfere in any way they wish. We have included several possible courses of action and what occurs if the characters pursue them.

Sarah's Plan

Sarah intends to infect the vessels in the kitchen with a virulent disease. She was planning on doing so later in the evening, after the servants in the kitchen have grown tired and their attention lapsed. Until then, she follows the characters, watching them and observing how they have taken to the Requiem. Sarah does not engender the Predator's Taint simply because she uses the Obfuscate power Mask of Tranquility. In order to infect these hapless folks, Sarah needs to be undisturbed in the kitchen for a few moments. If the characters call attention to her or confront her, she attempts to run.

Sarah is more interested in seeing how the characters function within Kindred society than in her objective of disease, so if the characters post guards at the kitchen or warn the other Kindred (see below), she opts to skip that part of her plan. She does, however, leave smears of blood on several of the door handles. Any Kindred who touches this blood may become a disease carrier. The Kindred's player rolls Stamina, and the character becomes a carrier if she fails the roll. (The roll is really only appropriate if one of the players' characters touches the bloodied doorknob, but if you wish to have other Kindred become infected, feel free.)

Above any other concerns, Sarah does *not* intend to be captured or harmed here. She remains on the ground floor at all times, staying near the large windows and the front door. If things become too dangerous for her, she runs (see Coincidence, below).

Character Actions

If the characters alert the other Kindred at the party to Sarah's presence, they immediately turn to Gus Elgin for his ruling (since he is Master of Elysium and Prince Vidal has not yet arrived). Elgin decrees that Sarah needs to be caught and questioned, but that the prohibition against violence in a place declared Elysium (like this mansion) remains in effect. He does close the kitchen, however, and posts Alexander and another of the Prince's more martial associates at the door to deter anyone entering. Elgin immediately contacts Vidal, as well, who agrees with the Nosferatu's course of action.

If the characters simply try to find and capture Sarah themselves, remember that Sarah is not the only Kindred at the party who is interested in what the characters are doing. If the characters suddenly begin behaving strangely, Coco Duquette and Miss Opal in particular become interested and keep a wary eye on the coterie. Sarah, in response, moves from room to room, staying near the exits, watching the characters.

If violence breaks out, Gus Elgin and several of the Prince's other servants move to maintain peace. If the characters lunge for Sarah, she lowers her Mask of Tranquility, allowing all of the vampires in the room to react to her as if for the first time. Some of them do nothing, some lunge for her, some back away. The players must roll Resolve + Composure as usual for the Predator's Taint (Sarah's Blood Potency is 5). She takes advantage of this distraction to run.

Escape

Sarah Cobbler needs to escape for purposes of the story. If she can sneak away while the characters are trying to find her, or leave while Gus Elgin and company are searching for her, that's fine. If, however, the characters chase her, a more overt action is necessary. She could use Cloak of Night (Obfuscate ●●●) to vanish. Cobbler also has impressive disease-related powers and she could spark an acute outbreak of the disease that shows up in Act Two as she runs from the characters. Calling for frenzy checks as mortals on the street suddenly start bleeding and falling over should give her enough cover to get away.

You, as Storyteller, must be careful in how you portray this. It's very easy for the players to feel betrayed or teased if what they want is in their grasp and then yanked away. Instead, it's important to present what happens in this story as a victory, even a marginal one. Indeed, the characters have reached a turning point — they have found their sires, but they must still uncover the root of the conspiracy. Vidal, once he arrives at the party (and restores order, if necessary), tells the characters that their privileges for moving throughout the city now extend toward finding Sarah Cobbler. If her plot to infect the mortals in the kitchen was uncovered, Vidal states that Sarah should suffer death by burning — plague dogs are not welcome in his city. (If Sarah was successful in infecting those people and her actions are uncovered, Vidal orders them all killed and burned.)

If Sarah tainted the doorknobs of the house with her blood, some of the Kindred present might have become infected. Vidal's priest, the man in the white robe, is capable of performing a ritual that will cleanse such Kindred... if they come forward. The disease will not harm vampires, but it can be spread to any mortal upon whom the vampire feeds. It is up to you as Storyteller whether you wish for this illness to begin infecting and killing the favored vessels of some of the city's powerful Kindred. Sarah Cobbler spreads the disease in the French Quarter and Tremé District in the next act.

The characters also now know of a direct connection between Mezzo and Sarah Cobbler, and they have heard Mezzo's voice. The next logical step would be to find her. This search, in fact, is the focus of the next act.

Act Two: Sickness

The events of this act can take place about a week after the reception in Act One, but you can extend that time if the characters wish to do other things. Sarah Cobbler, unable to start an outbreak in the Garden District in Act One, sets about infecting the French Quarter. The effects take a few nights to rise to the surface, but they soon paralyze the city and threaten all its Kindred — including the characters.

This act begins with the characters, either separately or together, receiving news of a disease outbreak in the French Quarter. They can learn this in any number of ways — online news feeds, conventional media, making contact with another vampire, and so on.

Scene One: Infection

In this scene, the characters learn about the outbreak in the French Quarter and what it means for the Kindred community. They probably make the connection between the outbreak and Sarah Cobbler very quickly, and recognize this as a lead on her whereabouts.

News of the outbreak hits the media when city, state and federal health officials — along with the mayor of New Orleans — hold a press conference to announce a health emergency centered in the French Quarter. They appeal to anyone who has spent time in the Quarter over the last two weeks and who experiences any ill health to seek immediate treatment and to contact a hotline set up in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC) in Atlanta.

The resulting media firestorm leads to as much confusion as information, but the players' characters can parse out the following facts and speculations:

- Health officials first became aware of the problem when patients starting appearing in area hospitals earlier in the week with nosebleeds, coughing up blood, labored breathing, fever and chills. Six patients were identified in the same night.
- The number of patients tripled over the next two days, including other hospital patients infected by the first wave of victims.
- The disease has been nicknamed New Orleans Syndrome (or NOS).
- NOS seems to be passed person-to-person through body fluids. It is reportedly as infectious as a common cold, however, meaning that the sweat left on a door handle or a casual handshake can transmit it. It is possible that mosquito bites can transmit it.
- People with anemia are apparently at higher risk.
- If untreated, the disease is fatal in roughly half of cases, but doesn't seem to have spread beyond New Orleans.
- Victims become symptomatic within three days of exposure, and are contagious at that point. The disease can kill in as little as five days if left untreated.
- Ten people have already died of NOS, including five residents of the same house just outside the Quarter.
- Area hospitals are able to treat the illness, but are likely to be overwhelmed by cases (or people who fear they might have been infected). State and Federal authorities are promising aid and emergency clinics are being set up.
- A citywide quarantine is not in effect, despite some calls for such a measure.

Rumors

The Kindred community, of course, is abuzz with rumors about this disease, especially if word of Sarah's plans got around after the events of the last story. These rumors are more pronounced if any vampires did become carriers for a disease.

- One prominent rumor is that Vidal is finally taking aim at Savoy and his faction, and is doing it through Savoy's mortal herd. The events at the reception were a testing stage

(which is why Vidal himself didn't arrive until later), and the characters are Vidal's stalking horses.

- The characters hear the name "Baron Cimitiere" mentioned often. He is apparently a vampire with connections to New Orleans' *vodoun* community, which the characters know Vidal hates (see *Mary's Child*). Gossip states that the disease is actually magical in origin, and that Sarah Cobbler is the Baron's pawn.

- Another persistent rumor is that Savoy has moved beyond the ability to drink human blood (just as John Harley Matheson has) and is visiting a curse upon New Orleans. Some Kindred who subscribe to this rumor think he has done so in accordance with Lancea Sanctum dogma, bestowing the wrath of God on the city. Others who don't hold so high an opinion of his faith think he is merely trying to destabilize the city in order to take it from Vidal.

In any event, the characters' names come up often when discussing the outbreak. They are, after all, the newest coterie of Kindred in the city, and the events surrounding their ceremony (during the last story) ensure that they are a topic of conversation. From their perspective, however, the outbreak should be a clear sign that Sarah Cobbler is still in town, and has an agenda.

If the characters begin investigating this outbreak, continue from this point. If they choose not to get involved, one of them receives a call or an email from Mezzo. It consists of only one word: "Help."

Investigations

The remainder of this scene consists of information the characters can learn from various sources without actually going to the French Quarter to search. The characters can make use of contacts in various circles, as well as contacting the Kindred that they know. Very few of the city's vampires, however, are willing to meet with them personally. Many Kindred are terrified of becoming disease carriers. Getting rid of a virulent disease can be extremely difficult, requiring the use of terrifying Theban Sorcery rituals — something few Kindred are anxious to undergo.

- From mundane sources such as police, the characters can learn that the authorities believe the disease to be a terrorist or political action. They found smears of blood in various places in the French Quarter and the Tremé District. This information has not been made public, and so should be difficult to obtain (bribe money, threats or exceptional success on an appropriate roll, for example).

- The following Kindred will not meet with the characters and will not take their calls, either because they are frightened or busy: Antoine Savoy, Prince Vidal, Maldonato, Pearl Chastain and Miss Opal.

- The following Kindred will speak to the characters over the phone: Coco Duquette (she knows the information already presented here, and firmly believes that Vidal had nothing to do with the outbreak); Alexander (he believes that Sarah Cobbler is trying to weaken the Kindred of New Orleans, and tells the characters that Vidal is worried that she may have implanted commands in their minds); Nathaniel Dubois (he knows nothing of importance, but does *not* believe Sarah implanted any com-

mands); Gus Elgin (he tells the characters that Savoy and Vidal have both independently issued decrees that no Kindred may feed in the French Quarter for the time being); and Natasha Preston (she tells the characters that the Invictus has its own feelers out for Sarah Cobbler and for Mezzo, whom they believe is involved, and that John Harley Matheson informed the covenant that James, his servant, is in fact Sarah's childe).

- One Kindred will meet with the characters in person: John Marrow. At his church, he tells the characters that NOS has stricken the Tremé District hard, and Father John believes it may have started there rather than in the French Quarter. The authorities are now aware of this situation, but the outbreak has decimated Father John's usual herd. When the characters meet him, he is hungry and on edge, and tells them that they shouldn't stay long. He also warns them not to feed in the Tremé District or the French Quarter. He answers their questions, however. Some of the possible lines of inquiry are addressed below:

What is the truth of [rumor]? Father John knows for a fact that Antoine Savoy does *not* feed exclusively on vampires, and while this information is sensitive, Marrow isn't thinking very clearly and lets it slip. He believes Vidal is capable of infecting the city's mortals in order to weaken his rivals, but also states that Baron Cimitiere might be behind it. He can tell the characters how to find the Baron.

Who and where is Mezzo? Marrow does not know where Mezzo is, but knows that she hunts around Charity Hospital. Any character whose player succeeds on an Intelligence + Streetwise roll knows that this hospital is not in a safe area of the city and treats gunshot wounds and drug addiction more than anything else. He tells the characters that Mezzo refuses to speak face-to-face with other vampires, ordinarily, but has sired at least one childe. He initially refuses to tell the characters the childe's name, but if they press, he admits that Mary, Jack's sire, is Mezzo's childe (making Mezzo Jack's grandsire).

How is Sarah spreading the disease? John does not know how it is possible for a vampire to spread a disease so quickly, but tells the characters that the Kindred are capable of untold horrors, some of which have no presence in mortal legendry.

This scene ends when the characters go to meet Baron Cimitiere (in which case you can skip the next scene and go directly to Scene Three), or begin investigating on a direct level by looking around the hospital for Mezzo's haven or trying to find one of the blood smears mentioned earlier.

Scene Two: Symptoms

In this scene, the characters venture back to the dirty streets of New Orleans in an attempt to find information on the disease or Mezzo. What they find is a brutal lesson in the Kindred's relationship with humanity.

The characters probably begin their search in one of two areas: the Tremé District or the French Quarter.

The French Quarter

The French Quarter is in a state of high alert. Government personnel in hazmat suits and police officers in protective gear prevent people from entering controlled areas. The charac-

ters might decide to skulk near some of these people to listen in (requiring a Wits + Stealth roll or use of Obfuscate), or to use Majesty or Dominate to force information from them (simply talking to them won't work, as these people have been ordered not to give information out to civilians). From them, the coterie can learn that NOS is not airborne and is transmitted by contact with an infected person's bodily fluids, including sweat. The initial infection began, however, with several smears of what appeared to be human blood on various doorways around the French Quarter. Several of these smears were reported in the same night but no one got a sample — they all apparently disappeared the following morning.

The characters don't see other vampires in the French Quarter. The Kindred of the city are too afraid of contracting NOS to chance venturing there, and besides, hunting is near impossible now anyway.

The Tremé District

The Tremé District has not been quarantined. Indeed, no news of an outbreak centered here has been released. But if the characters venture to Charity Hospital, nearby the Tremé District, they see the emergency room crowded with people. Many are simply responding to the public call, but there are several positive cases of NOS and the hospital staff is well aware of what they have on their hands. Federal officials are also present, but the hospital is clearly on the verge of being overwhelmed. The waiting rooms are crowded, nurses and doctors scurry about, people are short tempered and working on next to no sleep. Outright panic is only one incident away.

If the characters start searching the hospital or questioning the staff, go to Scene Four.

A better bet might be to find someone on the street and ask questions. The characters, as usual, can take any number of approaches, from simply striking up a conversation with someone (Presence + Streetwise); bribery (Manipulation + Persuasion + a modifier appropriate to how much money is offered); threats (Presence + Intimidation); to Disciplines. In any event, characters can learn the following information, depending on what questions they ask:

- The outbreak started about three weeks ago. People found blood smears on the door to Corpus Christi Church and other heavily trafficked areas. No one reports finding a blood smear during the day, if the characters think to ask. Symptoms began a few nights later.

- The rumor on the street is that a *hougan* (voodoo priest) is placing a curse on the city of New Orleans. A number of elaborate and improbable stories as to who this *hougan* is and why he is causing this fever to circulate throughout the district (and you may feel free to make these stories as long and circuitous as you like; a successful Intelligence + Empathy roll is enough to show a character that these stories are urban legends or paranoid delusions). The story that the fever is somehow connected with "voodoo" is very prevalent, however, though no one can back this claim up with anything concrete. The characters know from experience, of course, that some *voodoo* practitioners do use blood in their rituals.

• The outbreak in the Tremé District, according to word on the street, has already killed more people than in the French Quarter, but the government won't commit the resources to helping the poorer folks.

• Some people go mad from the sickness. There is a woman holed up in a boarded-up gas station who attacks anyone who enters. The characters can receive directions to this gas station if they ask. If they do so, go to "Desirae."

Desirae

The gas station was closed fairly recently — the boards over the windows are still intact, and the graffiti looks like it was done within the last month or so. Any character whose player succeeds on an Intelligence + Streetwise roll knows that the graffiti here includes symbols indicating danger. The back door to the gas station is unlocked, but as soon as the characters enter, they feel the Predator's Taint. The Kindred in residence here is one the characters have met, however, and so the players need not roll to fight the urge to frenzy. If they enter, they find Desirae Wells crouched in the corner. Her eyes dart madly around and she stares at the characters for a moment. She is so pale that even the faint light from the open door makes her skin nearly translucent, and she is covered in dirt and grime. Have the players roll Wits + Composure. If the roll succeeds, they know that Desirae is lost in hunger frenzy and is probably about to attack.

The characters can proceed in any fashion they wish, and you can assign any traits you like to Desirae. If they fight her, she probably loses, as she is badly outnumbered and starved. They might decide to immobilize Desirae and feed her some of their own Vitae or find a mortal to satiate her. In her state, she can't tell the difference, but if the characters bring her a sick mortal, she flies into a fear frenzy when she finds out and runs. If they give her even a few points of Vitae from a healthy source, however, she calms down and becomes lucid again. She tells them that she sometimes hunts in the Tremé District, and was doing so a few nights ago when she was already hungry. She ran afoul of a street gang and was forced to expend much of her Vitae to defend herself, but sensed something wrong with their blood and didn't feed on them. She found out about the outbreak, but didn't have time to reach safety before sunrise and has been hiding here.

Desirae can tell the characters how to find Baron Cimitiere, if they don't already know. She knows nothing about Mezzo and doesn't know how anything about the Morbus bloodline. If the characters help her, she remembers the favor, but the real point of this encounter is to illustrate the truth of the vampiric condition: Vampires are parasites. If their hosts — mortals — become sick or unusable as food, the Kindred weaken and die (or fall into torpor) as well.

Mary

It is possible that Mary, Jack's sire, is still extant. When talk of *vodoun* starts to circulate, it makes perfect sense for the characters to seek her out if possible. If Mary still survives, she can confess the truth: She is Mezzo's childe and Sarah Cobbler is Mezzo's "sister" (that is, they share the same sire),

and they both belong to a bloodline that requires its Kindred to feed on the diseased. Mary is not aware of how bloodlines form among vampires, and is terrified that she might one night become a Carrier (a nickname for one of the Morbus Mekhet) herself. She can tell the characters where Mezzo's haven is, but refuses to go with them. She also knows how to find Baron Cimitiere. She does not know where to find Sarah, however.

What she told Jack in the very first story was true — she was blackmailed into participating in Sarah's conspiracy. What she didn't say was that Sarah knew who she was and how she could be manipulated because of her connection to Mezzo.

Scene Three: Fever

In this scene, the characters meet with one of the most powerful Kindred in the city, Baron Cimitiere, and learn about a new covenant of vampires. They also have occasion to reflect on their motivations and goals for their Requiem.

Finding Baron Cimitiere isn't as simple as going to his haven. Like many powerful Kindred, he has many. Any other vampires mentioned previously as knowing how to find him, however (Father John, Mary or Desirae Wells), can make a call and find out where the Baron is tonight. He is in the Tremé District, performing some sort of ritual for his followers. He will meet with the characters, however.

When the characters arrive at the address given, they find a bar. It is open, but nearly empty, and only the bartender and one patron remain. The lone patron is Kindred, however, a hulking black man who stops the characters as they walk in and demands they relinquish any weapons they are carrying. "They wouldn't do you any good anyway," he states in a Haitian accent, "but out of respect."

Read the following aloud:

The man leads you down a flight of stairs into a basement with a stone floor covered in strange symbols drawn in flour. A wooden altar sits in the center of the room, a dead chicken oozing blood over its surface. A man stands with his back to you, smearing blood over more symbols on the wall. You expect your Beasts to recoil from the sight of him, if this is indeed Baron Cimitiere, but for all you can tell, he is mortal.

He turns, however, and you realize he is anything but. He appears to be a walking corpse, his flesh gray and sunken, his teeth and eyes yellowed, his hair falling to his shoulders in stringy clumps. He wears an old black suit, top hat and sunglasses. You can smell perfume on him, but beneath that scent, the unmistakable odor of rot.

"Good evening," he says. "I've heard that you wish to speak with me about the disease."

Stop reading aloud.

Have the players roll Intelligence + Occult. Apply a -2 modifier to this roll unless the character has a Specialty in *Vodoun* or a special reason to know about the religion. If the roll succeeds, the character knows that Baron Cimitiere's dress and appearance resembles that of Baron Samedi, a powerful *loa* (*vodoun* spirit) associated with death and funerals.

Baron Cimitiere invites them all to sit on the floor. He explains that he is only meeting with the characters because he had a vision from Baron Samedi, his patron *loa*, that they would be coming to visit him. Normally, he restricts contact with “the Prince’s puppets.” If the characters protest this or make a show of loyalty to Vidal, Baron Cimitiere says that he has formal recognition from the Prince for his power over his congregations. This might well surprise the characters, since they know how unforgiving Vidal usually is on matters of faith, and should give them some indication of how much influence the Baron actually wields in New Orleans.



COVENANT — THE CIRCLE OF THE CRONE

The Circle of the Crone venerates a variety of female figures as an amalgamated creator of vampires, the Mother of all Monsters. Regarded as pagans by some of the more conservative Kindred factions, the Circle relies more on holistics and redemption than the penitence and guilt of other ideological covenants. Its members are also sorcerers and blood witches. The Circle of the Crone decries what is the most widely accepted creation myth of the vampire. To its members, the Lancea Sanctum’s progenitor is no “dark messiah” to be revered, worshipped or even heeded. Instead, the Circle of the Crone claims a more naturalistic origin for vampires, that they have always been a part of the world, spawned by the dark places where mortals fear to tread and where guarded suspicion yields to open fear. Their origin stories invoke such names as the Russian witch Baba Yaga, the horned god Cernunnos, the Thracian goddess of moon and magic Bendis, the animal-god Pashupati, bull sacrifices in the name of Mithras and the bloodier incarnations of the Morrigan. Members of the Circle of the Crone occasionally even incorporate elements dating before the Lancea Sanctum dogma into their philosophy through Lilith, the first wife of Adam. The Acolytes, as the members of the Circle are often known, reject vampiric notions of penitence entirely. Instead, they take a more organic approach to unlife, one that allows for all creatures — even the living dead — to continue to learn, grow and find enlightenment over time. While much of Kindred tradition places emphasis on guilt and penitence inside the Judeo-Christian model, the Circle of the Crone sees itself as being outside that framework.

Baron Cimitiere’s practice of the Circle’s beliefs is rooted in the religion of vodoun, but as stated, the covenant is highly diverse. Members can learn a form of blood sorcery called *Crúac*.



The Baron talks with the characters about his beliefs, to a point, but doesn’t wish to delve deeply into the philosophies of his covenant with Kindred he doesn’t trust. He does tell them that he suffered Final Death in Haiti and Baron Samedi raised him from the dead, because he still had work to do here (Baron Cimitiere knows that the characters could learn this

story by asking other vampires, and it has more gravity if he says it himself). He had nothing to do with the disease, but he does tell the characters that each clan has a patron *loa* spirit. The spirit for his clan, the Nosferatu, is Baron Samedi, the *loa* of death and protector of cemeteries. If the characters ask about the *loa* for their clans, he gives the following responses:

- **Daeva:** Erzulie, the spirit of love and beauty
- **Gangrel:** Grans Bwa, the spirit of the forest
- **Mekhet:** Legba, the spirit of communication and cross-roads
- **Ventrue:** Ayizan, patroness of the marketplace

Baron Cimitiere also says that other, less powerful *loa* can take individual vampires away from their patron *loa*, granting them different powers. This is the origin of what Kindred call bloodlines. He suspects, but does not know for certain that Guede, the *loa* of death, is responsible for the creation of the Morbus bloodline. These vampires, Baron Cimitiere explains, can only feed on the diseased, and spread their illness to create vessels from which to feed. The Morbus is an offshoot of the Mekhet clan (meaning that Guede stole a certain number of Mekhet away from Legba, according to the Baron).

If the characters ask the Baron where they can find Mezzo or Sarah, he doesn’t answer right away. Instead, he asks the characters why they want to find these Kindred. The disease will fade, people will die, but the Kindred community will weather the storm. As for discovering what happened to them, what difference will it make? They can’t turn back. The *loa* have chosen them and now they have different destinies to fulfill. Finding and destroying Sarah Cobbler, even if they do learn why they were Embraced, won’t help them recover the lives they lost.

Let the characters discuss this with Baron Cimitiere and each other. The Baron doesn’t really have an agenda. He’s simply trying to help the characters see beyond their immediate concerns. If the characters respond that they need to understand why they were Embraced in order to face their destinies, Baron Cimitiere respects that. Likewise, if the characters received a call for help from Mezzo, the Baron understands their concern, but warns them that for the most part, Kindred *never* expect kindness on the parts of other Kindred.

In any case, however, he doesn’t know where Mezzo or Sarah are, but suspects that a Morbus Kindred would make a haven near a hospital so that she could feed on the diseased without having to actually infect anyone. Charity Hospital, in fact, has a reputation among the poor of the city as “the place where AIDS victims go to die.”

If the characters behave respectfully and present the Baron with some interesting ideas or philosophies, he invites them to come back and speak with him again. If they bore or threaten him, he tells them to stay away from “his people.”

Scene Four: Treatment

In this scene, the characters find Mezzo and must attempt to save her from the mystical disease ravaging her undead body. This scene begins when the characters venture to Charity

Hospital and attempt to find her. Mezzo's history and recent trauma can be found under Dramatis Personae.

Searching an entire hospital is a daunting feat, and doing it in one night is even more so. Some possible avenues the characters might think to try:

- **Security Tapes:** Vampires don't show up clearly on videotapes. Most of the time they just look like blurs. This could actually work in the characters' favor, though, since they know what to look for. Old tapes are kept in a storeroom near the security office, and viewing them in the monitor room only requires subduing one guard. Of course, picking through the tapes is time consuming, even at high speeds, since the characters don't know exactly what dates to focus on. Have the player of each character searching through the tapes (there are enough screens for five characters to work at once) roll Wits + Investigation, with a -1 modifier if the character does not also have a dot of Computer. This is an extended action; each roll takes up one hour. Once fifteen successes are accumulated, the characters find footage dated three days after their confirmation ceremony. The footage shows someone with blurred features ducking into a room on the second floor. Later, the figure leaves, and then another figure, also blurred, steps out. This second figure seems to be having trouble walking, however. It stumbles down the hallway, past the nurses (who don't seem to notice) and out of sight. The characters can easily mark which hallway this occurs in, however.

- **Blood Sympathy:** If the characters include Jack, he can attempt to find Mezzo, since she is his grandsire (James, although he is Sarah's childe, is not of Mezzo's line and thus cannot detect her in this fashion). When in the hospital, the standard rules for using blood sympathy apply (Jack's player must spend a Willpower point and roll Wits + Occult). A standard success leads him to the second floor, while an exceptional success (5 or more successes) leads him directly to Mezzo.

- **Patients:** Remembering that this hospital has a reputation for losing AIDS patients, the characters might find out where these unfortunates are typically kept and search from there. They can find out from hospital staff that such patients usually stay on the second floor, although they might need to explain why they need this information (or, of course, bribe or Dominate the staff member in question). From there, they can search as they like. A successful Intelligence + Investigation roll leads a character to check storage closets near unused rooms. Mezzo is indeed hiding in one of these.

Mezzo at Last

When the characters find the appropriate storeroom, read the following aloud:

The storeroom door is unlocked, but when you try to open it, you find several boxes blocking the door. Pushing past these, you find the place a shambles — boxes and their contents strewn all over the room. The smell of fetid blood greets you. Turning on the light, you see a woman curled up in the corner, her knees pulled up under her chin, staring into space. She is not moving, not even breathing, and if not for the Predator's Taint you would think her

a corpse. Her chin is plastered with dried blood, and tacky puddles of the stuff dot the floor. It would seem that Mezzo is unwell.

Stop reading aloud.

Mezzo doesn't respond to sound, but if someone touches her, she begins coughing a dry, rasping choke, and then spits out a mouthful of blood. She opens her mouth as if to speak, but (as any character can see if he looks into her mouth) most of the soft tissue there, including her tongue, has rotted away. She mouths something to the characters. A successful Wits + Expression roll allows a character to understand the word "purge."

In order to survive the disease in her blood, Mezzo needs to purge the tainted Vitae from her system. The disease, however, prevents her from spending Vitae in the usual manner. Instead, she exists in a perpetual state of half-death (she no longer uses Vitae to reanimate herself in the evening, but as she can barely move, this is small consolation). Even spitting out the blood doesn't help much. She can't manage more than a mouthful a night and one mouthful only equals about a quarter-point of Vitae. The characters, of course, can easily drain the blood from her system by drinking it — but this runs the risk of infection. They might try other methods, such as cutting her to let the blood drain out, but this doesn't work. Vampires don't bleed when cut unless they will themselves to do so, and Mezzo doesn't have the strength to do this.

The safest thing to do would be for each character to take a small amount of Vitae. The player of anyone who drinks from Mezzo must roll Stamina + Resolve; Jack's player receives a +3 modifier to this roll because he is of the same lineage as Mezzo. Also, apply a negative modifier to the roll equal to the number of points of Vitae consumed (Mezzo has 7 points in her body). If the roll succeeds, the character suffers no ill effects, but gains only half as many Vitae points as she actually drank, rounding down. If the roll fails, see the section labeled "Mezzo's Disease."

Once she has been completely drained of blood, Mezzo stands, shakily. She takes a marker from her pocket and writes unsteadily on the wall: "Thanks need blood now." By this point, the characters have probably learned that she can only feed on diseased mortals, which means that in order to feed her, they must bring her such a vessel. Fortunately, the characters are in a hospital.

If the characters wish to bring someone to Mezzo (or take her to a patient) who is already terminally ill, they must read and interpret the patients' charts while avoiding hospital staff. Doing the latter requires a Wits + Stealth roll (or use of Obfuscate) while the former requires an Intelligence + Medicine roll. Taking the patient then requires the character to immobilize the hapless mortal and drag him down to the closet without being seen (requires two rolls: Wits + Stealth and Strength + Athletics), or bring Mezzo to the patient (same rolls; Mezzo is not strong enough to walk on her own or use her Disciplines). Her vessel does not survive the feeding. Afterwards, she heals her mouth enough to speak, but is still barely coher-

ent. The characters have only a few moments before she slips into torpor.

During those few moments of consciousness, Mezzo is able to clarify or state a few points (in this order):

- She and Sarah Cobbler share the same sire, but were not Embraced together.
- Sarah arranged the characters' Embraces as a sort of experiment.
- The original Daeva member of the conspiracy was Pearl Chastain, the Primogen.
- Sarah inflicted the disease upon Mezzo using the rites and knowledge gained from her covenant.
- Her covenant teaches that vampirism is impermanent; it can be transcended. Those within the covenant learn to "cheat" the curse of vampirism to a degree.
- The risks of this are great, however — performed improperly, these rites can amplify the banes of vampiric existence (perceptive players might immediately remember Andrea and guess, correctly, that she lost control while attempting such a rite).
- The name of the covenant is the "Ordo Dracul."

After this last bit of information, Mezzo falls into torpor. She remains in torpor for one month... which is more time than the characters can wait to find Sarah Cobbler, as will be discussed in the next and final story of **Danse de la Mort**.

Mezzo's Disease

The disease from which Mezzo is suffering is communicable to other Kindred, but because Mezzo has specific powers taught by the Ordo Dracul which change her Kindred "metabolism" (these powers will be detailed in the next installment), the disease affects her to a greater extent than others. If a character becomes infected, he suffers the following effects:

- **Slowed Blood Expenditure:** The character can spend one fewer point of Vitae per turn. If the character can normally only spend one, this decreases to one point every other turn.
- **Weakness:** The character's Strength, Stamina Speed and Health are all reduced by one point until the disease is cured.
- **Cosmetic Effects:** The character's blood withdraws deeper into his body, giving his eyes and face a drawn, sunken look, like someone suffering from extreme malnutrition. Fortunately, the character does *not* suffer the rot that consumed Mezzo's throat and tongue.

This disease can be cured by spending one Willpower point and five points of Vitae once a night for a number of nights equal to (10 – the character's Stamina + Blood Potency).

Aftermath

The characters can do anything they like with Mezzo. They can turn her over to the Prince or to Savoy (either way, she remains in torpor for one month, at which point she is questioned), they can destroy or even diablerize her (see **Blood Ties** for details on this process), or they can leave her where they found her in the storeroom. In any case, her role in this chronicle is at an end.

Dramatis Personae

In **Plagues**, the characters come face to face with both Sarah Cobbler and Mezzo, both of whose traits are below. The traits given for Mezzo apply to her normal capacity, not her weakened state. We also include new character sheets for some of the players' characters, reflecting their development at the beginning of this story.

Sarah Cobbler

Sarah Cobbler was born to privilege, and received opportunity for education far beyond what most women of her day were allowed. She completed her doctoral work in psychology in 1962, and a few months later fell prey to a frenzied vampire (see **Last Night** for more on her Embrace). Her Morbus heritage surfaced only a scant year after her Embrace, and Sarah, fascinated by her undead body's ability to hold and manipulate disease, honed this Discipline to near mastery.

Over the years, Sarah lost touch with her sire, drifted in and out of New Orleans, and found and made friends with her "sister," Mezzo. She also joined the Ordo Dracul, excelling at the Coils of the Dragon and challenging the most learned of her sect by applying recent psychological theory to the Kindred condition. She posited that it was possible to move beyond vampirism mentally, shutting off the urges of the Beast, after which the physical curses would fade.

In her heart, though, she fears for her safety if she is correct. If she loses the so-called "curses" of undeath, the diseases in her blood might kill her, rotting away her flesh. That this has already happened to Mezzo only intensifies her fears. For as much as she appears to be in control, Sarah is afraid for the future, and searching for the next experiment to distract herself.

Clan: Mekhet

Bloodline: Morbus

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (history) 4, Computer 3, Medicine (diseases) 2, Occult 4, Politics 2, Science (psychology) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression (oration) 2, Persuasion (making deals) 4, Socialize (vampires) 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Contacts 5 (vampires in various cities), Covenant Status 3 (Ordo Dracul), Languages (French, Creole, Spanish)

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 4 (Fortitude, Pride)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Blood Potency: 5

Vitae:

Disciplines: Auspex 1, Cachexy 4, Celerity 1, Dominate 3, Majesty 1, Obfuscate 3

Sarah can spend two Vitae per turn. The first three levels of Cachexy are described in Mezzo's character description.

Mezzo

Mezzo has made her haven in the hospital for the last four years, and knows the place inside and out. She feeds from the patients, sometimes to the point of killing them if they are truly suffering (but never in cases where the death would arouse suspicion). She uses the computers as a link to the outside world and has grown phobic about leaving the hospital.

She and Sarah Cobbler were Embraced by the same sire, but did not know each other in life. Indeed, they came from very different backgrounds — Sarah was a scientist, while Mezzo was a musician and singer. Why their sire chose to Embrace the two women is a mystery to both of them. He taught them, but never explained himself. Mezzo suspects that Sarah's obsession with Kindred relationships and blood ties originated with their own sire.

Mezzo's Morbus heritage surfaced only three years ago, but Sarah's surfaced much earlier. Mezzo Embraced Mary in Baton Rouge after she heard the young prostitute singing to herself, and felt a strange surge of empathy with the woman. She came with Mary to New Orleans, where Mary fell in first with the Lancea Sanctum and then with the *vodoun* community, while Mezzo sequestered herself away in the hospital. Slowly, she cut off every contact with the Kindred except for Sarah Cobbler, and even then she saw her "sister" only infrequently. Mezzo did not know the particulars of Sarah's conspiracy until it was already done. Mary was too afraid to confide in her sire.

Since then, Mezzo has contemplated leaving the hospital, but has been too afraid. After the events of Act One, however, she resolved to try to help the characters find Sarah. Sarah, not wishing to see this happen, used a combination of the Cachexy Discipline and her own unique powers to cause the diseases in Mezzo's blood to run out of control, weakening her and making her unable to do much more than crawl. She has been hiding in a disused closet in the hospital since then.

Clan: Mekhet

Bloodline: Morbus

Covenant: Unaligned

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (history) 4, Computer (Internet) 4, Crafts 2, Medicine (diseases) 2, Occult 3, Politics 2, Science 1

Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Stealth (close quarters) 5, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (singing, composing) 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Ambidextrous, Danger Sense, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Haven (Hospital) 4, Languages (French, Creole)

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 5 (Prudence; Envy)

Health:

Initiative Modifier: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Blood Potency: 5

Vitae:

Disciplines: Cachexy 3, Celerity 2, Obfuscate 5

Mezzo can spend two Vitae per turn.

Her Cachexy Discipline functions as follows:

Diagnose (Cachexy •): This power allows Mezzo to tell if a mortal is sick or diseased, and thus whether she can feed on him. The roll is Intelligence + Medicine + Cachexy.

Contaminate (Cachexy ••): With this power, Mezzo can transmit any disease she is currently carrying by smearing her blood over a surface. This costs one Vitae point. Anyone who comes in contact with the blood becomes infected unless his player succeeds on a reflexive Stamina roll (Kindred become carriers only). It was with this power that Sarah spread NOS.

Inflame (Cachexy •••): After infecting someone with a disease or identifying a preexisting one, Mezzo can cause the symptoms to flare up. This gives the target a -2 modifier to all rolls for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. This power requires a Vitae point and a roll of Wits + Survival + Cachexy – the subject's Stamina.

Tina Baker

Tina's traits improve for **Plagues** as she gains the first level of the Kung-Fu Fighting Style Merit and a rating in the Weaponry Skill. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. Once per scene, she regains one spent Willpower point if she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (••): This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (2); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed triples). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (2) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -

2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor (••): This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (2) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Tina and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Tina's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contact: Tina has a friend — Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university — she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Kung-Fu (•): Tina was already a skilled hand-to-hand fighter before her Embrace and she has now perfected that skill (presumably through training during off times). Her martial arts prowess gives access to a special maneuver called **Focused Attack**, which reduces her penalties to hit specific targets by one with Brawl attacks. Even when a specific part of an opponent is not targeted, armor penalties to her Brawl attacks are reduced by one.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker *Concept:* College Student *Plan:* Daeva
Player: *Virtue:* Fortitude *Covenant:*
Chronicle: Danse de la Mort *Vice:* Gluttony *Potency:*

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
<i>Finesse</i>	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	●●●●●
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine (Sprains)	●●●●●
Occult	●●●●●
Politics	●●●●●
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	●●●●●
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth (Crowds)	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	●●●●●

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy (Body Lang)	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

Barfly	●●●●●
Brawling Dodge	●●●●●
City Status	●●●●●
Contacts	●●●●●
Danger Sense	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+1)	●●●●●
Fighting Style: Kung Fu	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Celerity	●●●●●
Majesty	●●●●●
Vigor	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	11
Experience	
Armor	

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	○
5	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○

Equipment

Jack McEandless

Jack's traits improve for **Plagues** as he raises his level in the Stealth and Occult Skills. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Justice*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback. The "right thing," to Jack, is a kind of street-level decency: Never steal from someone who doesn't deserve it, never give someone bad directions, and never take someone's last dollar. His Vice is *Pride*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Jack can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Jack can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Jack can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Heightened Senses (Auspex •): Jack can magnify all his senses (or just one) to superhuman levels. Doing so requires an action but no roll of the dice. This can even allow Jack to see if pitch darkness. Jack's player can also add his Auspex (2) to any Wits + Composure roll to notice an imminent threat. Finally, with this power active Jack can pierce the veil of another Kindred's use of Obfuscate. When Jack might see through Obfuscate, his player should roll 8 dice (Jack's Wits + Investigation + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the Kindred's Resolve + Stealth + Obfuscate. If the player gets more successes, Jack sees through the illusion (seeing someone hiding using Cloak of Shadow, for example).

Aura Perception (Auspex ••): By concentrating, Jack can perceive the shifting colors of another's aura, allowing him to read their moods. To do so, Jack must observe the subject for at least two turns. The player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) – the subject's Composure. Jack then perceives a number of emotions (colors) equal to successes on the roll, starting with the most dominant. If this power is active while the target is lying, the player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the target's Composure. If the player gets more successes, Jack knows the target is lying. Finally, if Jack uses this power while interacting or being in close proximity to someone for at least a turn immediately before a fight, he gains a bonus to his Initiative equal to successes when activating this power (as you can predict the target's actions).

Touch of Shadow (Obfuscate •): This power allows Jack to hide small items in his grasp or on his person. Even if someone is looking for the item on his person, the power keeps it hidden. You roll eight dice (Jack's Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate); once active, the object is hidden for the scene or until Jack decides to end the Discipline.

Mask of Tranquility (Obfuscate ••): Most vampires feel a flare of fear or anger — the Predator's Taint — when they meet another Kindred for the first time. Jack, however, doesn't engender that effect, though he does still suffer from it and can thus recognize other vampires. Jack may "turn off" this power if he wishes.

Cloak of Night (Obfuscate •••): This power allows Jack to disappear completely, even from plain sight. He remains invisible until he wishes to reappear or until he takes obvious action (such as attacking someone or breaking a window). Disappearing requires a success on a roll of Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (8 dice for Jack). If you roll five or more successes, anyone who sees Jack disappear forgets that he was even there in the first place.

Clan Weakness (Mekhet): Jack's Kindred body is cursed to be even more sensitive to fire and sunlight than most. If he is exposed to these anathema of vampiric existence, he suffers one more point of aggravated damage per turn than other vampires.

Merits

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Jack and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Jack's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contacts: Jack has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department, a young cop who works the night shift in the French Quarter. This cop, named Michael Rample, knows Jack socially and usually gives him information about traffic conditions. Michael would be willing to share more sensitive information with Jack, but he might require a bribe for truly important tidbits.

Direction Sense: Jack always knows which way is north, and he can always retrace his route in unfamiliar territory.

Eidetic Memory: Jack doesn't forget anything he sees or hears (meaning you should take notes as his player). He normally doesn't need to make a roll to remember anything he knows, but if he is under stress, he adds two dice to any such roll.

Stunt Driver: Unlike less skilled drivers, Jack can take other actions while driving, including firing his gun. The Storyteller might still require a Drive roll if Jack needs to do anything fancy, however.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Jack McCandless Concept: Courier Clan: Mekhet
 Player: Virtue: Justice Covenant:
 Chronicle: Danse de la Mort Vice: Pride Potense:

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics ●●●●●
 Computer ●●●●●
 Crafts ○○○○○
 Investigation (Street Crime) ●●●●●
 Medicine ○○○○○
 Occult ●●●●●
 Politics ○○○○○
 Science ●●●●●

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics ●●●●●
 Brawl ○○○○○
 Drive (Quick Arrival) ●●●●●
 Firearms ●●●●●
 Larceny ●●●●●
 Stealth ●●●●●
 Survival ●●●●●
 Weaponry ●●●●●

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken ○○○○○
 Empathy ●●●●●
 Expression ○○○○○
 Intimidation ●●●●●
 Persuasion ●●●●●
 Socialize ○○○○○
 Streetwise (Slums) ●●●●●
 Subterfuge ●●●●●

Other Traits

Merits

City Status ●●●●●
 Contacts ●●●●●
 Direction Sense ●●●●●
 Eidetic memory ●●●●●
 Stunt Driver ●●●●●
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Auspex ●●●●●
 Obfuscate ●●●●●
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○

Size 5
 Defense 3
 Initiative Mod 6
 Speed 10
 Experience _____
 Armor _____

Health

●●●●●○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□
 -1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10 _____ ○
 9 _____ ○
 8 _____ ○
 7 _____ ○
 6 _____ ○
 5 _____ ○
 4 _____ ○
 3 _____ ○
 2 _____ ○
 1 _____ ○

Equipment

Revolver +2



VAMPIRE™

THE REQUIEM

Danse de la Mort
Finale: Dawn



1554 LITTON DR.
STONE MOUNTIAN,
GA 30083
USA

Dawn written by Matthew McFarland.

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Introduction

And at last, we have reached the final installment of *Danse de la Mort*. The chronicle that has taken the characters from their Embraces through horror, blood and revelation ends here, in a confrontation with the woman responsible for ending their lives and pitching them headlong into the Requiem: Sarah Cobbler.

This story ties up many of the remaining questions about the chronicle, but leaves much about the World of Darkness unrevealed. Now that the *Vampire: The Requiem* and *World of Darkness* rulebooks are available, however, you can begin your own chronicles with your own characters, set in any city you choose... although if you wish to continue the action in New Orleans, you'll find many familiar faces in *Vampire: The Requiem*.

For the present, however, the characters have other concerns.

Theme and Mood

The theme of *Dawn* is renewal. The characters are, once again, hunting for the Kindred who cursed them to undeath, but this time they have truly reached the last link in the chain. Once this has been done, the greatest mystery of their Requiem has been solved. And what then? Is it a new beginning for the characters? Do they feel freed from their past, now that they understand it? Or might they decide they can no longer exist as vampires and greet the sun after Sarah Cobbler has been unmasked? In a sense, the chronicle to this point can serve as a prelude to the rest of your stories, as this series of stories has brought the characters to the point that they can function well in Kindred society.

The mood of this story is finality. The dance ends after *Dawn*. Don't let players get away with reversing decisions during this game: if a character takes a rash action, let it have its consequences. Sarah cannot hide from what she has done, and the players' characters shouldn't be able to do so, either.

Storytelling Technique — Going Forward

When this story ends, the *Danse de la Mort* chronicle ends as well. More properly, the *published* chronicle ends. Your games don't have to (and shouldn't) cease without our weekly sup-

port, however. You'll just need to start thinking of your own stories. Below are some ideas to get you started, and more will of course be provided in *Vampire: The Requiem*.

- **Favors:** Over the course of the chronicle, the characters have given and received favors with various Kindred. They have seen how vampires trade favors and information in lieu of money. As the chronicle winds to a close and you prepare to take it in your own direction, you might consider what plot points remain unaddressed and what favors remain unpaid.

The characters might owe favors to such Kindred as Miss Opal, Father Marrow, Antoine Savoy, Pearl Chastain, Peter Lebeaux, Prince Vidal, Natasha Preston and nearly any other Kindred they have met. These favors can springboard stories in their own right. For instance, what if Peter Lebeaux discovers a series of murders possibly committed by a vampire? As a policeman, he has to investigate, but as a Kindred, he has to protect the Masquerade. He might call in a favor from the characters, since he knows they are experienced in tracking down rogue vampires. Or, what if the war between Vidal and Savoy heats up to the point that the Kindred of the city *must* choose a side? The coterie might side with Vidal, but maintain contact with Savoy through Marrow or Preston. Either of those Kindred might ask for favors on behalf of their master (whether the characters can untangle this web of manipulation is something else again).

- **Travel:** The characters have already left the city once. They know the danger the road presents. Suppose that Tina Baker wants to return home and set some things in order? The coterie might take a road trip to her hometown in Tennessee. This allows you, as Storyteller, to create your own vampiric population for the city. What dark history do the Kindred of that city share? What covenant holds power? How will they react to a daughter of the city returning as a vampire? Will they bar her entry — or refuse to let her leave?

- **Joining the Covenant:** The characters have had opportunities to join the Lancea Sanctum, the Carthian Movement, the Invictus, and even, possibly, the Circle of the Crone. In this story, they also have the chance to join the Ordo Dracul. Each of these covenants presents its members with certain advantages, and each might be tempting for the characters for different reasons. The initiations and ceremonies of these sects (which receive more attention in *Vampire: The Requiem*, of course) might make for superb stories. But what if the characters wish to hold membership in more than one

covenant? Can they maintain this “double unlife” for any length of time without being discovered? Might established members of the covenants actually *aid* them in this endeavor, either out of kindness (not likely) or desire to use them as spies later?

- **Mystery:** What *was* the creature in the swamp? What other bloodlines exist in New Orleans? The characters have only tasted the full horror and mystery of the Requiem. After this story, they have solved their most personal and immediate riddle... but there are many more to be unraveled.

Ask the players what direction they would like the chronicle to take once this story has ended. They will provide you with a host of ideas — or perhaps one of them would like to take on the role of Storyteller, enabling you to create your own unique character. The Dance of Death may have ended, but the story goes on as long as you wish.

New System — Coils of the Dragon

Central to the Ordo Dracul is the philosophy of transcendence, the desire to rise above the limitations of the cursed vampiric form. Learning the Coils of the Dragon allows a Kindred to “cheat” certain aspects of the Requiem. By defeating these incarnations of vampirism, the Order believes it is on the right path toward eliminating or escaping vampirism entirely — with the goal of attaining the next level, whatever form that takes. The Coils of the Dragon include three distinct philosophies, the Coil of Blood, the Coil of Banes, and the Coil of the Beast. Each of the coils has three tiers. Members of the covenant can study any or all of the coils, but they recognize that no vampire has ever truly achieved mastery — at least, not to the Order’s knowledge.

We present the basics of the Coil of Banes here. The Coil of Blood and the Coil of the Beast can be found in **Vampire: The Requiem**. Sarah Cobbler knows all three tiers of the Coil of Banes.

The Coil of Banes

The two major banes of the Requiem are fire and sunlight. Any attempt to conquer the curse of vampirism must overcome these two obstacles. While no vampire has yet managed to truly surmount them, the Coil of Banes provides a place to start.

First Tier: Conquer the Red Fear — The character gains a +2 bonus to resist fear frenzy triggered by fire or sunlight.

Second Tier: Surmounting the Daysleep — The player can spend a Willpower point for the character to remain awake for an entire day without penalty. Dice pools during the day are still limited by Humanity.

Third Tier: Sun’s Forgotten Kiss — Sunlight at twilight and dawn causes only bashing damage to the Dragon, rather than aggravated. After the sun has fully risen, however, its rays cause aggravated damage as usual.

This story begins as soon after the events of **Plagues** as the characters want to start looking for Sarah Cobbler, based on the new information that they have. If they speak to any more powerful Kindred in the city, they are told that once Sarah learns that they have found Mezzo, she will probably flee (unlike many Kindred, Sarah has shown herself to be willing to leave the city). Therefore, the characters probably don’t take a great deal of downtime between the end of the last story and the beginning of this one.

Scene One: Night Falls

This scene begins as soon as the characters begin looking for Sarah Cobbler. The information they may have collected on her thus far is summarized below, for your benefit.

- Sarah is a member of the Mekhet clan, and the Morbus bloodline.
- Reports on her age conflict. Some Kindred place her Embrace more than a century past, but no one knows the truth.
- She belongs to a covenant called the Ordo Dracul. More information on this covenant is given below.
- She has contacts in many different clans and covenants, and is apparently adept at making connections and alliances among Kindred.
- Sarah clearly has little regard for human life.
- She likes to change her appearance. For the most part, this simply involves dying her hair nightly.
- She and Mezzo share a sire, and James Kelvin is her child.
- She has influence, or at least a presence, in mortal circles as well as Kindred, and has for the past several decades at least.

Avenues of Approach

The characters have many different options for trying to find Sarah Cobbler, but make sure they understand that time is a factor. If they freed James from John Harley Matheson’s service, questioning him is a logical and useful step, but if he is still stuck on the plantation, it’s probably more time-consuming than anything else. What the characters’ usual sources of information (Vidal, Marrow, Miss Opal, and so on) know about Sarah has been covered in previous installments of **Danse de la Mort**, but the characters, after talking with Mezzo in the last story, have a few other leads.

- **Blood Sympathy:** For reasons explained later in the story, Sarah Cobbler cannot be detected using the blood sympathy.

- **James Kelvin:** If the characters question James about his Embrace or history with Sarah, he doesn’t remember much. Breaking through the mental blocks she imposed is difficult, and requires Louis to use the Forgetful Mind (Dominate ●●●). Louis’s player should make the standard extended roll for the power (Wits + Persuasion + Dominate - James’ Resolve of 2). He must accumulate 20 successes to undo Sarah’s tampering, with each roll representing five minutes of work.

After his memories are restored, James remembers being out with some friends in October of last year (remember that this chronicle began in February, on Ash Wednesday). He lost a coin toss to walk to a convenience store to buy some soft drinks, and Sarah found him outside the store. She beckoned him behind the store, and then pressed a rag soaked in chloroform to his face (she couldn't simply feed on him to incapacitate him, since as a Morbus Mekhet she can only feed on the diseased). James was Embraced in his sleep, and when he awoke, he was at John Harley Matheson's mansion. He remembers hearing the following conversation from the next room (you may wish to hand this script to two players to read out):

Sarah: *I don't see the problem. He's young, he's strong, and his family certainly won't be looking for him here.*

Matheson: *The problem, dear lady, is that he is a Negro. How can I trust him to do what I need done?*

Sarah: *Rearrange his memories, then. Condition him to do your bidding. Bind him with blood. (pause) Or is it just that you don't want to feed on a Negro?*

Matheson: *I admit that the prospect isn't pleasant.*

Sarah: *I'll put you in contact with someone else, then. One of the others involved in this is a young man who ran his own computer business. He'd be able to instruct you, and might even trade his blood. (pause, then sarcastically:) And he's white.*

Matheson: *Well, that will have to do. Would this be the mysterious Succubus of this little conspiracy? (If the characters ask a knowledgeable Kindred, they find that "Succubus" is a common nickname for Daeva vampires)*

Sarah: *No. She's... our Daeva is what you might call reticent. She's asked for anonymity. (pause)*

Matheson: *Had I known that was an option, my dear Sarah, I'd have asked that myself.*

Sarah: *I have another of your clan who would be happy to participate.*

Matheson: (chuckling) *No, no. In for a penny and all. And besides, the stakes are higher for young Lidia, I think, since she actually makes her home in New Orleans.*

Sarah: *True. Besides, I've already involved one other member of the Order. I don't know if it's wise to bring in a third. Again, John, I'm happy that you're participating in this. (pause) I think I heard him move. Let's go greet your new manservant, shall we?*

After that, Matheson used his Dominate Discipline to bind James completely to his will. From this, though, the characters can learn that someone called "Lidia" is associated with Sarah. If the characters bring this name to Marrow or another well-connected Kindred, they discover that the name refers to Lidia Kendall, a Gangrel associate of Baron Cimitiere.

• **Pearl Chastain:** The characters met the Daeva Primogen during the first act of **Plagues**, but later discovered that she was originally a member of Sarah's conspiracy. No one except Mezzo and Sarah knew this (since Pearl insisted that her participation remain secret, especially from other members of her covenant). If the characters are considering taking this information to Prince Vidal or any other high-status Kindred, have

the players roll Intelligence + Politics. If the roll succeeds, the characters realize that as long as the secret remains a secret, it gives them an edge over Pearl, but if they reveal it, she has no compulsion to talk to them.

Visiting Pearl Chastain isn't difficult. Any Kindred who knows even the slightest bit about the city's Kindred situation can inform them that the Lower Garden District is her domain, and that she is happy to take visitors. The characters can put the word out to other vampires that they wish to meet with Chastain and receive an invitation within a few hours, which is much faster than they'd probably expect (while the characters won't know it, this is because Chastain receives subtle pressure from Vidal and possibly Miss Opal to take the meeting).

Pearl meets the characters outdoors, in a gazebo surrounded by slightly chipped Greek statuary. The characters can see her bodyguards nearby, but these men don't attempt to intimidate the characters — they are there to protect Chastain from mortal threats, not vampiric ones. Pearl is dressed in fashions that haven't been in vogue for nearly 50 years, and looks badly out of place. Fortunately, few mortals are about.

If the characters confront Pearl with what they know, she does not admit to it right away, but first asks what they want from her. She doesn't bother denying it or making them present proof. She knows that if the characters present their case to the Prince he will subject her to the Liar's Plague ritual (as presented in **Plagues**). If all they want is information, she looks notably relieved, but the characters could blackmail her for money or political support as well. She can tell the characters the following:

Sarah Cobbler approached her just under a year ago with her plan. Sarah said she wished to study the vampirically developmental effects of Embracing several people into different clans without giving them the benefit of instruction. Specifically, she was interested in the Predator's Taint. At that point, she hadn't recruited any other Kindred to her cause. Pearl agreed to take part, but refused to give Sarah any other aid, and agreed on condition of anonymity.

Over the next few months, Sarah made frequent visits to Pearl's haven, as well as the hospital where Mezzo made her haven and Louis Armstrong Park. Pearl isn't certain why Sarah considered the Park so important, but knows that she chose that location as the Embrace site from the beginning. The other members of the conspiracy gradually joined, and although Pearl knew their names and clans, she did not know (or want to know) any other details. The exception was John Harley Matheson, whom Pearl had met before. She spoke with him during that time but never mentioned the conspiracy.

Pearl backed out of the conspiracy about a week before Mardi Gras, stating that she couldn't countenance the notion of siring a childe that she would never have a chance to teach. She assures the characters that if she had known who her replacement was (Lucas Gates), she would have gone through with it, but she has no way to rectify that mistake now.

Pearl knows very little about the Ordo Dracul. She has heard horrible rumors about their brutal and blasphemous practices, but admits she has little evidence. She suggests (with some

distaste) that Baron Cimitiere might know more, and in fact recalls that Sarah met with him, or at least someone associated with him, often during her preparatory visits to the city.

• **Baron Cimitiere:** The characters might have already asked Baron Cimitiere about Sarah, but may wish to question him again either for their own peace of mind or (more likely) after talking to Pearl Chastain. If he previously told the characters to leave him alone, obtaining an audience requires a successful Manipulation + Persuasion + City Status roll.

The Baron has little new to say about Sarah Cobbler, but if the characters ask about her covenant by name (the Ordo Dracul) or about someone of his acquaintance with whom Sarah was meeting in past months, he mentions Lidia Kendall. Lidia is a Gangrel and a practitioner of *vodoun*, although she is not a member of the Circle of the Crone. The Baron is willing to contact Lidia and have her meet the characters. Beyond this, he has no new or useful information for them.

When the characters move to meet Lidia Kendall, go to Scene Two.

Scene Two: Last Dark Hours

If the characters arrange a meeting with Lidia by way of Baron Cimitiere, they soon receive contact from her, telling them where to meet. The rendezvous is scheduled for only two hours before dawn, in the Mid-City. Any character whose player succeeds on an Intelligence + Streetwise roll knows that the area specified is known as a *vodoun* hotspot.

As the characters approach the neighborhood, allow the player of the driver to roll Wits + Composure, while you roll Sarah's Wits + Drive (4 dice). If you get more successes, nothing happens. If the player rolls more successes, tell him that he sees a car behind his car turn down the same street, but then park and turn off its headlights. If the characters watch, the door opens and a woman with long, braided hair steps out and walks toward a nearby house. The woman is Sarah Cobbler, but unless a character has active Auspex or approaches her closely, the characters can't tell this. If they do figure it out, skip to the end of this scene and go to "The Hunt."

When the characters arrive at the meeting place, read the following:

Your vehicle leaves the apartment and office buildings of the Mid-City, turning onto a street lined with houses. Behind the windows, you can see lights and people, hear music and conversation, smell cigarette smoke and the once-appetizing odor of a late dinner cooking. It occurs to you that you haven't seen many vampires lairing in neighborhoods like this, and you wonder why — surely it can't be any more difficult to feed here than in the concrete jungle of the city? Or is it that memory becomes too potent here, among the kine?

A group of men walk in front of your car, and you pull to a stop. A dark-skinned woman, not more than 16, you think, raps on your window. You turn to see her and the Taint rises. You recoil in fear, but she reaches back and smashes her hand through the glass of the window, and then regains control and steps back. "I'm sorry," she says. "That hasn't happened in a long time. I'm Lidia Kendall. Step out so we can talk."

Stop reading aloud.

Note that if the driver has Protean • or Obfuscate ••, you will need to adjust the preceding events to compensate for the character's different response to the Predator's Taint.

If the characters exit the car, they can see Lidia clearly. She wears blue jeans and a white T-shirt, and has her hair in tight cornrows. She leans on a lamppost and waves to the group of men in front of the characters' car, and then nods at the characters and asks what they wanted to see her about.

Lidia is a member of the Ordo Dracul, and her loyalty is to her covenant, not to Baron Cimitiere. She knows about Sarah's experiment and while she wasn't directly involved, she has no intention of giving Sarah up to these Kindred. Sarah is already present, as Lidia has already contacted her, but all Sarah wants to do is observe. Lidia, however, has brought backup in the form of a posse of *vodouisants*. She isn't sure about the characters' motives, and knows that they have been associated with the Prince and Savoy. Lidia has no love for the Lancea Sanctum, and suspects the characters might knowingly or unknowingly be part of Vidal's anti-*vodoun* practices.

Lidia doesn't give out information freely. If the characters ask about the Ordo Dracul, she gives them the information in the sidebar but doesn't mention the Coils of the Dragon. She claims not to know where Sarah is (which is true), but makes it clear she wouldn't give her compatriot up even if she did.

If the characters threaten her, she gestures and her friends move closer. The characters can see that they are all armed. If they insinuate that they have clout courtesy of the Prince, Lidia laughs derisively and says that the Prince can take this matter up with Baron Cimitiere. If the characters appeal to her good nature and try to convince her to help them out of decency, have the players roll Manipulation + Persuasion (feel free to add or subtract dice based on how moving the characters' entreaty is). The characters might also try bribing Lidia — money doesn't really interest her, but promises of favors in the future might, depending on what the characters can promise and whether they have a reputation for keeping such promises.

If the characters manage to coax further information out of Lidia, she tells them that she commissioned a magical working from Baron Cimitiere on Sarah's behalf. The working, which took the form of a small pouch worn around the neck, prevents a vampire's relations from using blood sympathy to pinpoint her. If the characters ask or wonder aloud why Sarah wants such a thing, Lidia says that she imagines that Sarah will want to be close to the characters to observe their behavior.

If this piece of information comes out, the characters might wish to search the area for Sarah. She is hiding nearby beside a house. Any player can roll Wits + Investigation (+ Auspex, if applicable). You roll Sarah's Resolve + Stealth (5 dice). If the roll succeeds, the characters see someone lurking beside a house behind where Lidia is standing. If the characters have been especially suspicious — checking the area, posting a form of watch — then Sarah is likely to use Cloak of Night (Ob-

fuscate ●●●) to remain hidden. Only Jack can pierce that veil with his Auspex Discipline.

Any violent action triggers a response from the mortal *vodouisants* (go to “The Attack”). In this case, Lidia simply activates Haven of the Soil (Protean ●●) and disappears to wait out the violence. If the characters try to jump at the movement, go to “The Hunt.” If they choose to ignore it, biding their time until they have an advantage, they run the risk of losing track of Sarah (and you may feel free to remind the players of that).

The Attack

If the character ever become violent with Lidia, or if they attack Sarah (who of course the *vodouisants* cannot see), Lidia’s posse attacks. All of them are armed with handguns or shotguns, and they know Lidia is a supernatural being (they don’t think she is a vampire — rather, they believe she is blessed by Grans Bwa, the *loa* spirit of the forest, and won’t be hurt by gunfire).

Use the gangster traits given in **Mary’s Child** for the *vodouisants*. Assume one *vodouisant* for each character, with handguns, plus two more with sawed-off shotguns. The handguns add 3 dice to attack rolls, while the shotguns add 4 and the shooter rerolls 9s and 10s for extra successes.

Sarah stands back and watches the attack, hidden from view by her Obfuscate Discipline, only taking a hand if the characters seem to be losing (at which point she appears behind one of the *vodouisants* with a shotgun and stabs him in the throat). At that point, the characters can see her and can therefore try to get a fix on her when she vanishes again. Roll her Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (8 dice), but with a negative modifier equal to the number of characters able to see her -1 (this number will vary depending on how many *vodouisants* remain alive at this point). If this modifier drops her dice pool below 1, she does not attempt to disappear, but merely flees. Go to “The Hunt.”

The Hunt

Sarah runs if the characters chase her. Once they’ve seen her she merely tries to stay out of reach. Sarah only needs to run until sunrise, anyway, and remains fascinated with the characters (whom she considers her creations). Her Obfuscate power allows her to vanish from sight if she can get away from witnesses (although Auspex can detect her), but she will intentionally reappear to the characters, hoping to get them cornered in a haven as dawn breaks (see next scene).

The vignettes below provide examples of what sorts of things can happen during the chase, depending on where the characters are when it begins.

- **Car Accident:** This vignette can occur if the characters spot Sarah before she gets too far away from her own car, or if she carjacks someone later on, using Dominate to force them from their vehicle. Sarah flees in the car, but isn’t a terribly good driver. She runs a red light and hits another vehicle broadside, pushing it into traffic from the other direction. The resulting mess can involve only three or four cars and stop

traffic on a smaller stretch of road, or could occur as morning rush hour begins and be a massive pileup. People slow their cars to watch, and the characters have to make sure Sarah doesn’t disappear into the crowd. Keeping an eye on her while keeping their own car mobile requires a Wits + Drive roll from the driver (modified depending on how bad the accident is) and Wits + Composure rolls from any passengers watching for Sarah. Sarah leaves her vehicle after the accident and flees on foot.

- **Home Invasion:** Use this vignette when Sarah is on foot. If the characters see her over Lidia’s shoulder and chase her, this vignette is appropriate. Sarah kicks in the door to a private home. As the owner emerges to investigate, Sarah uses her Dominate Discipline and says, “Stop them,” indicating the characters. This vignette can take on a variety of tones. If the person whose home she invades is a cop or a soldier with combat training and a gun already in his hand, this vignette becomes a fight. If the person is a housewife who simply tries to hold the characters back, they might have to try to avoid hurting the hapless woman (or cover evidence of a Masquerade breach). Perhaps the person whom Sarah Dominates has already told his spouse to call the police, which means the characters will soon face another problem. In any case, Sarah is just trying to slow the characters down. She doesn’t linger in the house, but runs out the back door after causing her diversion.

- **Crowd of People:** Run this vignette if Sarah runs into a large group of people. Depending on where she goes, this could be a nightclub, an early-morning business meeting, a bunch of people at a bus stop, or anything else you think appropriate. What Sarah does when she runs into a group of people depends on how far behind her the characters are, how much blood she has spent on Celerity during the chase, whether the characters have expressed interest in attacking her, and any other factors you think worth taking into consideration. Sarah might use her Cachexy Discipline to see if anyone in the crowd is sick, so she can feed. If she’s really hungry or desperate, she might use the power to infect someone to feed on. If she has a few turns head start on the characters, she might use her Cachexy Discipline to infect a crowd of people and cause their symptoms to flare up. The characters then have to deal with a crowd of sick people (which they might not feel is worth their time, but after the events of the last story, they might wish to prevent another outbreak). If you don’t wish to make Sarah out to be quite so malicious, she might use Dominate on a few members of the crowd to induce them to attack or detain the characters.

- **Separation:** If the characters manage to corner Sarah, she attempts to turn the tables on them by separating them. She uses Cloak of Night (Obfuscate ●●●) to vanish and reappear once a character is alone. She doesn’t engender the Predator’s Taint (although Jack can try to pierce her Obfuscate with his Auspex; this requires a contested roll of his Wits + Investigation + Auspex against her Resolve + Stealth + Obfuscate). If she manages to corner a lone character, she attempts to talk to him, trying to figure out the characters’

intentions. She keeps the conversation brief, knowing that the others will be back soon — after only a few moments of conversation, she attempts to use Dominate to force the character to mislead the others. This requires eye contact (and don't let the players get away with saying that their characters wear mirror shades or something to counter this effect; that doesn't work), and you should roll Sarah's Intelligence + Expression + Dominate (9 dice) while the player rolls Resolve + Blood Potency. If Sarah wins, the character must attempt to lead his fellows away from Sarah. If the player wins or ties, the command has no effect. Under no circumstance does Sarah attack the character. If attacked, she tries to get away or end the fight with conversation (and you can go to the next scene for details of the conversation).

• **Race to a Haven:** The meeting with Lidia took place only a scant two hours before dawn. Sarah attempts to keep the characters running until sunrise, knowing that she can function for much longer than they can. Try to arrange the chase so that the characters and Sarah are on foot when the sun starts to rise, and within dashing distance of something that could be used as a haven: a house, a hotel or the like. Sarah runs for the sanctum, using Celerity to increase her speed (if she has the Vitae left to do it). For early morning sunlight, the characters suffer 2 points of aggravated damage per turn of exposure. Sarah suffers this damage as well, but her Coil of Banes makes the damage *bashing*. Both Sarah and the characters can resist this damage with Resilience. Once the sun has fully risen (this takes about 10 minutes), Sarah suffers aggravated damage just as the characters do. Once inside, the characters suffer the effects of the daysleep: All dice pools are limited to their Humanity ratings, and the players must roll Humanity for their characters to remain awake. Sarah, however, remains awake automatically (thanks to another aspect of the Coils) and simply watches the characters to make sure they don't attempt to harm her. If they wish to talk, she talks with them (in which case go to Scene Three). Otherwise, she simply sits and stares for the entire day.

Scene Three: Twilight

In this scene, the characters talk with Sarah Cobbler at last, and can find out from her the precepts of the Ordo Dracul and her motives for arranging their Embraces.

KILL HER!

You might have to deal with players who simply want their characters to attack and destroy (or diablerize) Sarah Cobbler. This normally stems from one of two mindsets: Either the player hasn't quite come to grips with the nature of Storytelling games and sees Sarah as the "boss villain" that he must kill to win the game, or the player has decided that her character hates Sarah so much that frenzied homicide is the only response. The latter motivation, if a little simplistic, is fine: Vampires are predators and monsters, and behaving in this manner is perfectly acceptable for the game. The former mindset, however, leaves a little to be desired. If you have a player espousing the "kill first" agenda, try to figure out if it's the *character* or the *player* who's really being best served. If it's the character, let it ride.

The other characters can try to restrain their trigger-happy compatriot. If it's the player, you might need to take him aside for a quick reminder in the difference between **Vampire: The Requiem** and *The Legend of Zelda*.

This scene can occur any time the characters corner Sarah, but it serves the story best if it happens after they race for shelter from the coming day. Be sure to point out that Sarah suffers little or no damage from the sunlight and doesn't seem at all affected by the day's pull of sleep (she is, but the characters won't know it). They might despise or at least distrust this woman, but it's clear that she has power that other Kindred do not.

Sarah, for her part, is happy to talk with any of the five characters. Sarah is willing to answer nearly any question the characters ask about her, including about her own mortal life and history (some of this appears in her write-up in "Dramatis Personae," but you may feel free to supply any details the characters inquire on). Answers to some of the obvious questions follow:

• **Why did you do this?** This is probably the underlying question on the characters' minds. Why did Sarah set up their Embraces and then abandon them? Her response is that she believes that Kindred "imprint" on their sires just as young animals do on their parents, but if a group of neonates imprinted on each other instead, they would be capable of forming a support system or a hunting pack — quite simply, a force to be reckoned with in the unpredictable nights of New Orleans. She admits that the experiment didn't go as she'd planned, due largely to Pearl Chastain backing out and Lucas Gates replacing her. Sarah states that she wishes she had approached John Marrow "sooner" with her offer. The players might well pick up on this turn of phrase, and if they do, Sarah admits it: John Marrow knew that the Embrace was happening in Louis Armstrong Park. That was how he knew he had to be there to take the characters in. Sarah also admits to informing the Prince about the new Kindred in the city. She wanted them immersed in Kindred politics as soon as possible and didn't want to run the risk of them leaving town.

• **What did you offer the sires?** The characters have probably already had a chance to ask the sires themselves what they got out of the conspiracy, but in case they did not ask this question, or in case they forgot or didn't have a chance, Sarah tells them. She blackmailed Mary, her "sister's" childe, into taking part. Nathaniel Dubois wanted money. John Matheson wanted instruction in the modern world and a servant, and Sarah provided both in the person of James Kelvin. Lucas Gates wanted to learn the magic of the Circle of the Crone, but Sarah had no intention of allowing that to happen. She *did* give him the name and location of a Circle Kindred for him to contact, but told that Kindred to destroy Gates on sight. Andrea Ouellette, Edward's sire, volunteered to be part of the conspiracy — she, too, is a member of the Ordo Dracul.

• **Who chose us?** Sarah informs the characters that each of the sires chose their own childe. She knew ahead of time

that Jack, Becky Lynn and Louis were to be Embraced, but Andrea and Lucas waited until the last moment to pick their childer (this happened, you'll recall, during **Last Night**). If Becky Lynn asks, Sarah tells her that John Harley Matheson had intended to Embrace her that summer and take her back to his mansion, but Sarah convinced him to leave Becky Lynn in the city.

- **What is the Ordo Dracul?** See sidebar.
- **Can we join the Ordo Dracul?** Sarah is willing to take any or all of the characters on as students, but only if they help her remain in the city undetected.



COVENANT — ORDO DRACUL

The Ordo Dracul, or Order of the Dragon, is a group of vampires who believe that any hurdle can be overcome — including the curse of vampirism. They look to Vlad Tepes, the infamous Dracula, as their ideological father, and believe that he was cursed directly by God, becoming a vampire with no sire.

The Dragons, as members of this covenant call themselves, believe that everything changes in time and that change should be studied, understood and ultimately harnessed. Members of this covenant study under more-powerful mentors, who, in turn, learn from even older Kindred. While the Invictus asks loyalty of its prospective initiates, the Ordo Dracul demands intelligence.

Members can, over time, learn a series of rites and practices called the Coils of the Dragon. These powers allow the Dragons to cheat the curse of vampirism to a degree.



- **What did you do to Mezzo/Andrea?** Sarah states that she did nothing to Andrea, but that interestingly, what happened to her was similar to what happened to Mezzo. Sarah briefly explains the Coils of the Dragon and states that a Kindred who attempts to master one of these Coils takes the risk of amplifying the effects of a particular bane of the vampiric condition, rather than mitigating it. In Andrea's case, she was attempting to master the Coil of the Beast, but only allowed her Beast greater control of her mind. The Beast polluted Andrea's Disciplines, allowing her to induce the Blood Rage. In Mezzo's case, Sarah tricked her and gave her bad instructions while pretending to teach her the Coil of Blood. The results were much the same, though — Mezzo lost control of her Vitae and her Cachexy Discipline and wound up succumbing to her own diseases. If Mezzo survives, Sarah is relieved. She never truly wished to harm her "sister."

Sarah does not express remorse for what she did. She states that the characters are now more than what they were as mere mortals, and that they can reclaim everything that they had before their Embraces, given time, dedication and a good teacher. All they have to do is be patient and diligent, and they can learn to transcend their condition.

This scene ends when the conversation does, with whatever decision the characters make. They might choose to capture Sarah for delivery to the Prince (who almost certainly executes her), diablerize her (for which the Prince pardons them), release her,

join with her or any number of other choices. If they choose to attack her, she defends herself as best she can, but certainly isn't skilled enough to take on an entire coterie of vampires.

When the characters have reached a decision and acted on it, read the following:

The sun sets, and night falls on New Orleans again. You hear bells in the distance tolling the hour, just as they once tolled the first midnight of your Requiem, and you know the truth of your entry into that dance of death. Does the dance end here, in New Orleans? Will your enemies find you some dark night and take your soul, or will your Requiem play on through the centuries until some night you must hide from the world like John Harley Matheson or Pearl Chastain, your mortal years a blur of memory?

The sun sets, and the shadows lengthen. What further mysteries does this world of darkness hold?

Stop reading aloud.

Aftermath — Going Forward

At this point, the published chronicle of **Danse de la Mort** is over. The beginning of this installment gives notes and suggestions on turning this into a running chronicle, and the **World of Darkness Core Rules** and **Vampire: The Requiem**, in stores this month, fill in all of the missing details on the game setting. Despite the amount of information contained in this chronicle, many, many stories remain to be told, either using the characters from this chronicle or a group of original characters from your players' minds. We hope that this is not an ending at all, but a beginning.

Dramatis Personae

The only new character introduced in this story is Lidia Kendall, whose game traits are below. Sarah Cobbler's game traits appeared in **Plagues**. Note, however, that Sarah also has all three levels of the Coil of Banes as described at the beginning of **Dawn**. We also include new character sheets for some of the players' characters, reflecting their development at the beginning of this story.

Lidia Kendall

Born in 1853, Lidia was the product of the rape of a young white woman by one of her uncle's slaves. Her mother treated her as a burden and a mark of her shame, and Lidia grew up with a neurotic mixture of hatred and fascination for slaves and their culture. Hers would likely have been a short and inconsequential life, had the child not caught the eye of Roger Halliburton, a northern Gangrel who arrived in New Orleans after its surrender to the Union in May of 1862. A pedophile since before he was a vampire, Halliburton intended to keep Lidia as a ghoul and vessel, but when she was trampled by a maddened horse in 1869, her patron — in a paroxysm of what he thought was love — chose to Embrace her.

Despite being trapped physically at age 16, Lidia soon developed a cunning and intellect that allowed her to use her apparent age and ignorance to her advantage. She eventually surpassed her sire's political acumen and status in the region. Decades later, when



Halliburton was destroyed by a group of *vodouisants* in retaliation for the deaths of several local children, Lidia was easily able to continue on her own. Further, the destruction of her sire, with whom she had an intense love-hate relationship (leaning toward hate) re-inflamed her fascination with local black culture.

Her fascination swiftly became reverence during her studies, and Lidia became a practicing *vodouisante* and follower of the Ordo Dracul's transcendental philosophies during the Great Depression. Further, it was through her fellow Dragons that she first met Baron Cimitiere, whom she has since followed with a zealous — perhaps fanatical — devotion. Although Baron Cimitiere suspects that Lidia sees him as some sort of surrogate father/sire rather than a religious leader, her devout adherence to vodoun and her usefulness to his cause have encouraged him to overcome his reluctance and bestow upon her a fairly high-ranking position among his followers.

In truth, he's half right. Lidia does indeed look up to Cimitiere as a father figure and personal icon, but she's also devoted to her religion, her covenant members and her fellow practitioners — the first place she's ever really fit in. The fact that Baron Cimitiere does not share her covenant affiliation bothers her, as it is the only mark on what she considers his otherwise flawless judgment.

Clan: Gangrel

Covenant: Ordo Dracul

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Occult 4, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 3, Larceny 3, Survival 4

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression (acting) 4, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Kindred activity) 4, Subterfuge (misdirection) 4

Merits: Allies (*vodouisants*) 2, City Status 1, Contacts 2, Covenant Status (Ordo Dracul) 1, Danger Sense, Fleet of Foot 3

Willpower: 6

Humanity: 6 (Faith; Envy)

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 13

Blood Potency: 3

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Celerity 2, Protean 3, Resilience 3, Vigor 1

Coils of the Dragon: Blood Seeps Slowly, Conquer the Red Fear

Vitae:

Lidia can spend one Vitae per turn. Her Animalism Discipline allows her to summon and control various animals.

Louis Maddox

Louis' traits improve for **Dawn** as he improves Resilience Discipline. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Louis' Virtue is *Temperance*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he resists a temptation to indulge in an excess of any behavior, whether good or bad, despite the obvious rewards it might offer. His Vice is *Sloth*. Once per scene, he regains one spent Willpower point if he successfully avoids a difficult task but achieves its goal nonetheless.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Vitae: Louis can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Louis can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Louis can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Command (Dominate ●): This power allows him to give a one-word command to a target, such as "Freeze!" or "Quiet!" This command cannot cause the target to harm herself. For Louis to use this power, roll 8 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Intimidation + Dominate).

Mesmerize (Dominate ●●): This power allows Louis to implant hypnotic suggestions and issue complex commands to his victim. He cannot rearrange or alter memories, but he can force a victim to leave a door unlocked, to fetch him an item, to guard a door during the day or even something subtle such as waiting for a particular person and then spilling a drink on that person. For Louis to use this power, roll 10 dice (Louis' Intelligence + Expression + Dominate).

Louis must make eye contact to use either Command or Mesmerize. What's more, when Louis uses either of these Dominate powers, the Storyteller rolls the victim's Resolve + Blood Potency. Louis must get more successes than his target for the power to function.

The Forgetful Mind (Dominate ●●●): This power allows Louis to reshape the memories of a victim. He must first make eye contact and then spend time asking questions (to determine what a person does remember) and describing in detail any new memories he wishes to implant. Louis's player rolls 7 dice (Louis' Wits + Persuasion + Dominate) minus the target's Resolve. The more complex (or unlikely) the memories, the more successes Louis must accumulate: forgetting the color of

someone's hair might require only one or two successes; forgetting a traumatic event (like seeing a vampire feeding) might require 15 or 20; completely changing a week of events would require 50 or more. Louis' player can keep rolling to accumulate successes so long as he isn't interrupted—each roll represents five minutes of mental manipulation.

Resilience (●●): This Discipline makes Louis supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae point to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds Louis' Resilience (2) to his Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds two to his Health. Doing so, he gains an eighth and ninth box on his Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties two boxes to the right. Also, the first two points of aggravated damage Louis suffers in a scene in which his Resilience are considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for him to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Louis loses his extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Louis' seven base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Ventrue): As a member of the Ventrue clan, Louis is cursed to grow paranoid and delusional with time. When you roll to avoid gaining a derangement, subtract two dice from the die pool (the Storyteller will tell you when this happens).

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Louis and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Louis's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Louis is a smart guy who has a good memory for trivia, so he often knows minute facts about topics that he's never actually been schooled in. Whenever Louis is confronted by a situation outside his normal realm of knowledge, you may roll six dice (Louis' Intelligence + Wits). If this roll succeeds, Louis knows a helpful fact about the given topic.

Haven: Louis had a small apartment where he can shelter during the day. It's small — only two rooms — but it's only a few blocks from the French Quarter. What's more, Louis has set up various security measures around the door and window (he's not exactly paranoid, but break-ins aren't unknown in the area). If Louis is in his Haven when someone attempts to break in, he receives a +1 to any rolls to notice this attempt.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Louis Maddox

Concept: Computer Whiz

Clan: Ventrue

Player:

Virtue: Temperance

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Sloth

Potency:

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●○	<i>Strength</i> ●●○○○	<i>Presence</i> ●●●○○
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●○○○	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●○○○	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●○○○
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●○○	<i>Stamina</i> ●●○○○	<i>Composure</i> ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics (Research)	●●●○○
Computer (Internet)	●●●○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●●○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	○○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●●○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive	●●○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression (Online)	●●●○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●●○○○
Socialize	●○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Encyclopedic Knowledge	●●●○○
Haven	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Dominate	●●●○○
Resilience	●●●○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	4
Speed	9
Experience	
Armor	

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	○
5	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○

Equipment

Pocket Knife	+1

Tina Baker

Tina's traits improve for **Dawn** as she gains the second level of the Kung-Fu Fighting Style Merit and a rating in the Investigation Skill. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Tina's Virtue is *Fortitude*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she withstands overwhelming or tempting pressure to alter her goals. This does not include temporary distractions from her course of action, only pressure that might cause her to abandon or change her goals altogether. Her Vice is *Gluttony*. Once per scene, she regains one spent Willpower point if she indulges in her addiction or appetites at some risk to herself or a loved one (see Tina's clan weakness, below).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Tina can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Tina can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Tina can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (••): This Discipline allows Tina to boost her speed to preternatural levels. To activate Tina's Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Tina suffers a penalty equal to her Celerity rating (2); this penalty is on top of Tina's Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, her Speed rating increases by itself again for every dot of Celerity as long as the Discipline is active (so for Tina, her Speed triples). Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's your turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Tina's Celerity (2) to her Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Tina and activate it before they roll.

Awe (Majesty •): This power allows Tina a supernatural degree of charm; people affected by the power fawn over her and are fascinated by her. They won't take actions that will result in harm to them, but they will be polite and deferential. For Tina to use this power, roll 6 dice (Tina's Presence + Expression + Majesty). If you get more successes than the target has dots of Composure, that person is awed. When you make a social roll for Tina to affect that awed person anytime for the rest of the scene, you gain a bonus equal to the number of successes. Awe can be used against more than one person, but you suffer a -1 penalty for affecting two people, and -

2 for affecting 3 to 6. Anyone can shake off the effects of Awe for one turn by spending a Willpower point.

Vigor (••): This Discipline makes Tina superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Tina adds her Vigor (2) to her Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Daeva): Tina was always inclined to drink and eat a little too much, but as a Daeva vampire, she is a slave to those passions. Any time Tina can indulge her Gluttony but does not, she loses two points of Willpower.

Merits

Barfly: Tina is well versed in getting into clubs without waiting in line. As long as she is appropriately dressed for the club in question, she can get in without a wait or much difficulty.

Brawling Dodge: Tina works out every day and practices fighting at her university's student recreation center, and she is especially good at ducking and weaving to avoid getting hit in close combat. If she chooses to dodge in a turn (rather than strike) she adds her Brawl rating to her Defense (meaning her opponent subtracts five dice from his attack pool!).

City Status (•): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Tina and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Tina's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contact: Tina has a friend — Dr. Montrose, a history professor at her university — she can call for information. They met and became friends when she took his European History course. Tina can call Dr. Montrose to make use of his extensive knowledge on European and American history.

Danger Sense: Tina is used to staying alert in potentially dangerous situations. This gives her two extra dice on any roll to determine if she is surprised.

Kung-Fu (••): Tina was already a skilled hand-to-hand fighter before her Embrace and she has now perfected that skill (presumably through training during off times). Her martial arts prowess gives access to two special maneuvers: **Focused Attack** reduces her penalties to hit specific targets by one with Brawl attacks; even when a specific part of an opponent is not targeted, armor penalties to her Brawl attacks are reduced by one. **Iron Skin** gives her an effective armor trait of 1 against bashing attacks only.

Striking Looks (+1): Tina is athletic and sexy, so she gains one extra die to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Tina is attractive, people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Tina Baker *Concept:* College Student *Plan:* Daeva
Player: *Virtue:* Fortitude *Covenant:*
Chronicle: Danse de la Mort *Vice:* Gluttony *Potency:*
Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
<i>Finesse</i>	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

- Mental*
(-3 unskilled)
- Academics ●●●●●
 - Computer ●●●●●
 - Crafts ○○○○○
 - Investigation ●●●●●
 - Medicine (Sprains) ●●●●●
 - Occult ●●●●●
 - Politics ●●●●●
 - Science ○○○○○

- Physical*
(-1 unskilled)
- Athletics ●●●●●
 - Brawl ●●●●●
 - Drive ●●●●●
 - Firearms ○○○○○
 - Larceny ○○○○○
 - Stealth (Crowds) ●●●●●
 - Survival ○○○○○
 - Weaponry ●●●●●

- Social*
(-1 unskilled)
- Animal Ken ○○○○○
 - Empathy (Body Lang) ●●●●●
 - Expression ●●●●●
 - Intimidation ●●●●●
 - Persuasion ●●●●●
 - Socialize ●●●●●
 - Streetwise ●●●●●
 - Subterfuge ○○○○○

Other Traits

- Merits*
- Barfly ●●●●●
 - Brawling Dodge ●●●●●
 - City Status ●●●●●
 - Contacts ●●●●●
 - Danger Sense ●●●●●
 - Striking Looks (+1) ●●●●●
 - Fighting Style: Kung Fu ●●●●●
 -
 -

- Flaws*
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Disciplines*
- Celerity ●●●●●
 - Majesty ●●●●●
 - Vigor ●●●●●
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□
-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10 _____ ○
9 _____ ○
8 _____ ○
7 _____ ○
6 _____ ○
5 _____ ○
4 _____ ○
3 _____ ○
2 _____ ○
1 _____ ○

Equipment

- Size 5 _____
- Defense 2 _____
- Initiative Mod 6 _____
- Speed 11 _____
- Experience _____
- Armor _____

Jack McEandless

Jack's traits improve for **Dawn** as he raises his level in the Larceny Skill. For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Jack's Virtue is *Justice*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower when he does the right thing at risk of personal loss or setback. The "right thing," to Jack, is a kind of street-level decency: Never steal from someone who doesn't deserve it, never give someone bad directions, and never take someone's last dollar. His Vice is *Pride*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he exerts his own wants (not needs) over others at some potential risk to himself.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Jack can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Jack can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Jack can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Heightened Senses (Auspex ●): Jack can magnify all his senses (or just one) to superhuman levels. Doing so requires an action but no roll of the dice. This can even allow Jack to see if pitch darkness. Jack's player can also add his Auspex (2) to any Wits + Composure roll to notice an imminent threat. Finally, with this power active Jack can pierce the veil of another Kindred's use of Obfuscate. When Jack might see through Obfuscate, his player should roll 8 dice (Jack's Wits + Investigation + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the Kindred's Resolve + Stealth + Obfuscate. If the player gets more successes, Jack sees through the illusion (seeing someone hiding using Cloak of Shadow, for example).

Aura Perception (Auspex ●●): By concentrating, Jack can perceive the shifting colors of another's aura, allowing him to read their moods. To do so, Jack must observe the subject for at least two turns. The player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) – the subject's Composure. Jack then perceives a number of emotions (colors) equal to successes on the roll, starting with the most dominant. If this power is active while the target is lying, the player rolls 6 dice (Jack's Intelligence + Empathy + Auspex) while the Storyteller rolls the target's Composure. If the player gets more successes, Jack knows the target is lying. Finally, if Jack uses this power while interacting or being in close proximity to someone for at least a turn immediately before a fight, he gains a bonus to his Initiative equal to successes when activating this power (as you can predict the target's actions).

Touch of Shadow (Obfuscate ●): This power allows Jack to hide small items in his grasp or on his person. Even if some-

one is looking for the item on his person, the power keeps it hidden. You roll 9 dice (Jack's Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate); once active, the object is hidden for the scene or until Jack decides to end the Discipline.

Mask of Tranquility (Obfuscate ●●): Most vampires feel a flare of fear or anger — the Predator's Taint — when they meet another Kindred for the first time. Jack, however, doesn't engender that effect, though he does still suffer from it and can thus recognize other vampires. Jack may "turn off" this power if he wishes.

Cloak of Night (Obfuscate ●●●): This power allows Jack to disappear completely, even from plain sight. He remains invisible until he wishes to reappear or until he takes obvious action (such as attacking someone or breaking a window). Disappearing requires a success on a roll of Intelligence + Stealth + Obfuscate (8 dice for Jack). If you roll five or more successes, anyone who sees Jack disappear forgets that he was even there in the first place.

Clan Weakness (Mekhet): Jack's Kindred body is cursed to be even more sensitive to fire and sunlight than most. If he is exposed to these anathema of vampiric existence, he suffers one more point of aggravated damage per turn than other vampires

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Jack and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Jack's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Contacts: Jack has a friend in the New Orleans Police Department, a young cop who works the night shift in the French Quarter. This cop, named Michael Rample, knows Jack socially and usually gives him information about traffic conditions. Michael would be willing to share more sensitive information with Jack, but he might require a bribe for truly important tidbits.

Direction Sense: Jack always knows which way is north, and he can always retrace his route in unfamiliar territory.

Eidetic Memory: Jack doesn't forget anything he sees or hears (meaning you should take notes as his player). He normally doesn't need to make a roll to remember anything he knows, but if he is under stress, he adds two dice to any such roll.

Stunt Driver: Unlike less skilled drivers, Jack can take other actions while driving, including firing his gun. The Storyteller might still require a Drive roll if Jack needs to do anything fancy, however.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Jack McCandless *Concept:* Courier *Plan:* Mekhet
Player: *Virtue:* Justice *Covenant:*
Chronicle: Danse de la Mort *Vice:* Pride *Potency:*

Attributes

	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●○	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●○	<i>Presence</i> ●○○○○
<i>Finesse</i>	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●○	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●○	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●○
<i>Resistance</i>	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●○	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●○	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●○○○○
Computer	●○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation (Street Crime)	●●○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	●○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○
Drive (Quick Arrival)	●●●●○
Firearms	●●○○○
Larceny	●●○○○
Stealth	●●○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	○○○○○
Streetwise (Slums)	●●●●○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Contacts	●○○○○
Direction Sense	●○○○○
Eidetic memory	●●○○○
Stunt Driver	●●●●○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Auspex	●●○○○
Obfuscate	●●●●○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	3
Initiative Mod	6
Speed	10
Experience	
Armor	

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	○
9	○
8	○
7	○
6	○
5	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○

Equipment

Revolver +2

Becky Lynn Adler

Becky Lynn's traits improve for **Dawn** as she gains Claws of the Wild (Protean ●●●). For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all her abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Becky Lynn's Virtue is *Hope*. Once per session of play, she regains all spent Willpower when she refuses to let others give in to despair, even though doing so risks harming her own goals or well-being. Her Vice is *Envy*. Once per scene, she regains one Willpower point if she gains something from a rival or has a hand in harming that rival's well-being.

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Becky Lynn can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Becky Lynn can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. She can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Becky Lynn can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of her Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but she can do so and act in the same turn.

Feral Whispers (Animalism ●): This power allow Becky Lynn to understand and speak to animals, which may allow her to find out secrets or otherwise make use of them. The player rolls 5 dice (Becky's Manipulation + Animal Ken + Animalism) and gains a +1 bonus if the animal is a predator. Becky must make eye contact to speak to an animal and cannot yet demand obedience.

Aspect of the Predator (Protean ●): This power mitigates the effect that meeting other vampires has on her. Whereas normally, vampires react fearfully when they meet Kindred of higher Blood Potency, Becky Lynn *always* reacts as though her Blood Potency were equal to whomever she meets.

Haven of Soil (Protean ●●): This power allows Becky to merge with any bare soil (be it a field or garden or park grounds), slipping into it without disturbing it and falling into a near slumber. This costs Becky one Vitae and takes one turn, but protects her from virtually all damage and the sun's rays. Becky can rise from the soil whenever she wishes (usually at dusk).

Claws of the Wild (Protean ●●●): Wicked, curved talons grow from Becky Lynn's fingers when she wills them to (which requires the expenditure of one Vitae). To attack with these claws, her player rolls 4 dice (Becky's Strength + Brawl + 1) – the target's Defense. Every success inflicts one point of aggravated damage.

Resilience (●●): This Discipline makes Becky Lynn supernaturally tough. Spend one Vitae to activate this Discipline. Doing so adds her Resilience (2) to her Stamina for the remainder of the scene, which also adds two to her Health. Thus She gains a ninth and 10th box on her Health track, and you should move the listed wound penalties two boxes to the right. Also, the first two points of aggravated damage Becky Lynn suffers in a scene where her Resilience is active are considered lethal instead (and therefore easier for her to heal). At the end of the scene, when Resilience wears off, Becky Lynn loses her extra Stamina and Health. The wound penalties return to their original positions (so graver penalties may immediately come into play). Any extra damage (damage beyond Becky Lynn's eight base Health) must be healed right away at the end of the scene.

Clan Weakness (Gangrel): Becky Lynn's blood is cursed with a potent bestial instinct that sometimes makes it hard for her to think clearly. When rolling dice pools based on Intelligence or Wits Attributes, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving perception or reaction to surprise, or to the Resolve Attribute.

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Becky Lynn and her companions has translated into her being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Becky's player may add her City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fame: Becky Lynn is a member of New Orleans' social elite, so the media and people in the higher echelons of society pay attention to her. Add one die to her Socialize or Persuasion when she can use her fame to her advantage, but the Storyteller also may make occasional rolls to see if anyone on the street recognizes Becky Lynn.

Resources: Although Becky would need to touch base with her family to gain access to their vast fortune, she has her own bank account and credit cards. She can spend up to \$5000 without any problem.

Striking Looks (+2): Becky Lynn is beautiful. Add two dice to any Presence or Manipulation dice pool to entertain, seduce, distract or otherwise get her way by using her looks. Remember, though, that because Becky Lynn is attractive (as well as famous) people tend to remember her.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Becky Lynn Adler

Concept: Southern Belle

Plan: Gangrel

Player:

Virtue: Hope

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse de la Mort

Vice: Envy

Potery:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●●●●	<i>Strength</i> ●●●●●	<i>Presence</i> ●●●●●
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●●●●	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●●●●	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●●●●
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●●●●	<i>Stamina</i> ●●●●●	<i>Composure</i> ●●●●●

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●●●●
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	●●●●●
Investigation	○○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (Cajun)	●●●●●
Politics (High Society)	●●●●●
Science	●●●●●

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●
Drive	○○○○○
Firearms	●●●●●
Larceny	○○○○○
Stealth	●●●●●
Survival	○○○○○
Weaponry	○○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●
Intimidation	○○○○○
Persuasion	●●●●●
Socialize	●●●●●
Streetwise	○○○○○
Subterfuge (Innuendo)	●●●●●

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●●●●●
Fame	●●●●●
Resources	●●●●●
Striking Looks (+2)	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Protean	●●●●●
Resilience	●●●●●
Animalism	●●●●●
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	4
Speed	9
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Health

●●●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Edward Zunic

Edward's traits improve for **Dawn** as he learns Eye of the Beast (Nightmare ●●●). For ease of reference we present here a player summary of all his abilities and an updated character sheet.

Virtue/Vice: Edward's Virtue is *Charity*. Once per session of play, he regains all spent Willpower points when he helps another at the risk of loss or harm to himself. It isn't enough to share what he has in abundance. He must make a real sacrifice in terms of time, possessions or energy, or he must risk life and limb to help another. His Vice is *Lust*. He regains one Willpower point at the end of any scene in which he satisfies his lust in a way that victimizes others (though of course, he never sees it that way).

Disciplines and Kindred Powers

Blood Expenditure: Edward can spend one Vitae per turn.

Healing: Edward can spend Vitae to heal two points of bashing damage or one points of lethal damage. He can do so and act in the same turn.

Physical Augmentation: Edward can add two dice to any dice pool based on one of his Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina) by spending a point of Vitae. This benefit only lasts until the end of the turn, but he can do so and act in the same turn.

Celerity (●): This Discipline allows Edward to boost his speed to preternatural levels. To activate Celerity, you must spend one Vitae. Doing so does not cost an action and the Discipline is then active for the rest of the turn (you may spend a Vitae to keep it active in each subsequent turn). While Celerity is active, anyone attacking Edward suffers a penalty equal to his Celerity rating (1); this penalty is on top of his Defense or other modifiers and applies to all attack types. Also, Edward's Speed rating doubles as long as the Discipline is active. Note that you can choose to activate Celerity at any point in the turn, not just when it's Edward's turn to act. Doing so before rolling Initiative allows you to add Edward's Celerity (1) to his Initiative Modifier. You can also wait to see if anyone attacks Edward and activate it before they roll.

Monstrous Countenance (Nightmare ●): By bearing his fangs and emitting a terrible, animalistic hiss, Edward can spark sheer terror in a victim. Roll 8 dice (Edward's Presence + Intimidation + Nightmare) to activate this power (the Nosferatu clan weakness does not penalize this roll). The player of anyone seeing Edward in person when this power is active, must roll Composure + Blood Potency. If they fail to match your number for success, their character immediately flees and will avoid your presence for the remainder of the scene. Edward may keep this power active for the entire scene.

Dread (Nightmare ●●): Edward can create a feeling of inexplicable panic in a small area. Edward spends a point of Vitae and the player rolls 7 dice (Edward's Manipulation + Empathy + Nightmare); the Storyteller rolls Composure +

Blood Potency for targets to resist. If Edward's player wins, anyone he affects suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls and cannot spend Willpower to gain a +3 to rolls. Edward can affect anyone within a range of 15 yards. The effect lasts as long as he concentrates; using another Discipline, undertaking any complex action or entering combat will end the effect.

Eye of the Beast (Nightmare ●●●): By making eye contact with a target, Edward can either paralyze a mortal in terror or drive a Kindred into a fear frenzy. Edward spends a point of Vitae and the player rolls 9 dice (Edward's Presence + Empathy + Nightmare). The Storyteller rolls the target's Composure + Blood Potency to resist. If the player gets more successes, the paralysis or frenzy take effect immediately.

Vigor (●): This Discipline makes Edward superhumanly strong. Spend one Vitae. For the rest of the scene, Edward adds his Vigor (1) to his Strength (note that boosting Strength directly with Vitae lasts for only one turn).

Clan Weakness (Nosferatu): Edward's blood is cursed to cause discomfort in those around him, manifesting in his case in the form of his jaundiced complexion. When rolling dice pools based on the Presence or Manipulation Attributes in social situations, you should not re-roll 10s (you gain a single success from that die but no chance for a second). Additionally, any 1s that come up on the roll subtract from total successes. This weakness does not apply to dice pools that involve the Intimidation Skill, to the Composure Attribute, or to dice pools for using the Nightmare Discipline.

Merits

City Status (●): The attention Prince Vidal and Antoine Savoy have paid to Edward and his companions has translated into him being recognized as at least marginally important among the Damned of New Orleans. When dealing with other Kindred in situations where such recognition could be valuable, Edward's player may add his City Status to attempts to convince other Kindred.

Fast Reflexes (+2): This Merit adds 2 to Edward's base Initiative Modifier. This is already calculated on his character sheet.

Inspiring: Edward is able to rally others in times of great distress, renewing their courage and determination in the face of adversity. Once per game session, he can exhort those around him to redouble their efforts in the face of great stress or danger. The player rolls Presence + Persuasion. If the roll succeeds, any individuals who actively assist Edward and who are within earshot regain one spent Willpower point (not to exceed their Willpower dots). The character may not use this Merit on himself, and may not use it on the same subjects more than once a day.

Mentor: Andrea did not abandon Edward at his Embrace and is determined to teach him what the Requiem has in store for him.

Vampire

THE REQUIEM

Name: Edward Zurich

Concept: Musician

Clan: Nosferatu

Player:

Virtue: Charity

Covenant:

Chronicle: Danse De La Mort

Vice: Lust

Potential:

Attributes

Power	<i>Intelligence</i> ●●○○○	<i>Strength</i> ●●○○○	<i>Presence</i> ●●●○○
Finesse	<i>Wits</i> ●●○○○	<i>Dexterity</i> ●●○○○	<i>Manipulation</i> ●●○○○
Resistance	<i>Resolve</i> ●●○○○	<i>Stamina</i> ●●○○○	<i>Composure</i> ●●○○○

Skills

Mental

(-3 unskilled)

Academics	●●○○○
Computer	○○○○○
Crafts	○○○○○
Investigation	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult (urban legends)	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Physical

(-1 unskilled)

Athletics	●●○○○
Brawl	●○○○○
Drive	●○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Larceny	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Weaponry (knife)	●○○○○

Social

(-1 unskilled)

Animal Ken	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○
Expression (guitar)	●●●○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Persuasion	●○○○○
Socialize	●●○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Other Traits

Merits

City Status	●○○○○
Fast Reflexes (+2)	●●○○○
Inspiring	●●●○○
Mentor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Flaws

Disciplines

Celerity	●○○○○
Nightmare	●●●○○
Vigor	●○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

Size	5
Defense	2
Initiative Mod	8
Speed	10
Experience	_____
Armor	_____

Health

●●●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

-1 -2 -3

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Vitae

□□□□□□□□

Blood Potency

●○○○○○○○○○○

Humanity

10	_____	○
9	_____	○
8	_____	○
7	_____	○
6	_____	○
5	_____	○
4	_____	○
3	_____	○
2	_____	○
1	_____	○

Equipment

Switchblade	+1
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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