

A SOURCEBOOK FOR VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

BLOOD SIGILS



VAMPIRE

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THE MASQUERADE



THE CRAFT OF BLOOD

Blood trickles in channels alongside the walls of Ur, and pools in chalices in Transylvanian castles, carrying within it the power of sorcery – to ward, and guide, and perform dark miracles impossible even to vampires.

And the Blood can change. Thin-bloods transmute it in kettles, meld it in their own veins, boil it in the bodies of unfortunate mortals. This thin-blood alchemy flares up and burns new paths through vampire society as new-fledged vampires seek any leverage on the Kindred who would destroy them, and on the Blood itself.

Orphaned Judges, desperate Warlocks, and Mercurians with nothing to lose rewrite the rules of blood craft in these 21st century nights, spelling out new names and laws in their Blood Sigils.

This book presents Blood Sorcery and Thin-Blood Alchemy for Vampire: the Masquerade.

Blood Sigils includes:

- The redworking scene in 21st-century chronicles: who's buying, who's selling, who's hunting, what's waiting
- Dozens more Thin-Blood Alchemy formulae and Blood Sorcery rituals, plus systems to build formulae and rituals for your chronicle
- Tools, monstrosities, tomes, and the veins of the earth to be tapped by vampire sorcerers
- How to add a blood craft scene to your existing chronicle, including a sample chronicle structure focused on Thin-Blood Alchemy



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WORLD OF
DARKNESS
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Mature Advisory: contains graphic and written content of a mature nature, including violence, sexual themes, and drug use. Reader discretion is advised.



BLOOD SIGILS

BLOOD SORCERY AND
THIN-BLOOD ALCHEMY

A Sourcebook for
Vampire: The Masquerade



VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

BLOOD SIGILS

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BASEMENT SESSION

Will pulled his sliced-open wrist away from Karen. His Blood and her saliva left a trail on his arm, dripping past the red crescent branded into it. He wiped the trail away, then shut off the living room lights and turned on the TV. Loud white noise broke the silence.

"I want you to do the visualization," he said to her. "OK?"

"Are you gonna cut me again?" Karen was born five years before him, but she looked and sounded so small on his couch. The days when she was the older, wiser friend were fading away.

Will felt his breath catch. His hand went into his pocket, brushing against the box cutter. He stepped toward the couch.

"I don't..." He started, "The teeth. I don't have 'em. So I gotta. You know."

Karen didn't answer. She locked her gaze on the TV.

"Christ," Will whispered. Then he said to Karen, "Breathe deep. Close your eyes. Listen only to my voice. I want you to imagine two things at once. Imagine someone you love, and someone you hate. They can be the same person if you want."

Before he could continue, three knocks came from his door. He rushed over and threw it open. A woman who looked about twenty but who was far older stood at the doorway, dressed in a suit.

"Sheila!" Will kept his voice low. "I'm in the middle of something."

Sheila looked to the couch, then to Will. "Twenty minutes, not a second longer. I'll be in my car."

She grabbed the door before he could and closed it silently. Will unsheathed the box cutter and crept toward Karen.

"Keep those thoughts in your mind," he said, "Hold them there, and hold still."

Sheila finally spoke when they entered city limits. "Someone at the Ashton Heights pulled a brick they shouldn't have and tore open their basement. It's 'closed for renovations,' because the man upstairs doesn't want anyone knowing there's a corpse with a stake in its chest beneath the building."

Will leaned back in his seat. "So why go there?"

"I'm raiding its tomb." She smiles. "For the Chantry, of course."

"Why bring me?"

"The tomb in question belongs to Francis Lambert, a first-circle Regent who believed in two things: testing the limits of sorcery, and advancing internal trust among Clan Tremere. So naturally, he was accused of consorting with devils, staked, and locked with all his treasures in an undisclosed location."

Sheila drove towards a hotel looming in the distance. "I owe Fishlip a great Boon for making sure we will be alone there. Most Kindred believe we only sealed away his projects. So, we just need to ensure you aren't seen for a while."

It took a few moments for Will to realize the implication. "Haven't you already done enough to me?" "I'm making things right," Sheila said. "I bring you the power and immortality I promised you, and I get Lambert's tomes."

"Oh good, you get the tomes," Will said, "I get to run from the Sheriff forever."

Sheila scoffed. "A few years in hiding and guaranteed entry to the Chantry, versus an eternity cutting your friends open with box cutters. I think it's a fair trade."

"You wouldn't—" Will began, but cut himself short, pointing to three vans bearing an XTD logo, parked outside the brownstone. "I thought you said we'd be the only ones here?"

Sheila stopped the car. She stared at the vans, her hands gripping the wheel.

"Who are they?" Will asked.

Her response came out as a hiss. "*Chopra.*"

Will thought they might have been cell phone tower technicians given shotguns and told to clear out Lambert's tomb. When Sheila's mouth wasn't full, she referred to them as "Mrs. Chopra's goons." She got one to confirm as much before tearing out his throat and draining him dry.

As Sheila adjusted her blood-soaked suit, Will whispered, "We could have made a deal."

She ignored him. "His tomb is ahead, through the hole in the basement floor."

Beneath the basement, a generator whirred, keeping three hastily set-up flood lights flickering. Francis Lambert's shriveled corpse lay staked on the slab, surrounded by amulets, tinctures, and tomes.

Sheila grabbed a gold-leaf covered volume. "Lambert's personal journal." She flipped through it. "All of his notes, his rituals! Years of lost thaumaturgic power, all in my hands. The *look* on the esteemed Regent's face when I—"

A bruised and beaten young man in XTD coveralls, someone Will reckoned was about Karen's age, came up from his crouch on the floor beside Lambert's body. He gripped the stake.

"Let me out of here alive," he said. He tugged the stake. "Or I'll do it."

"Hey." Will took a careful step towards him. "Don't do anything you'll regret."

He wasn't sure if it was his step or Sheila's shout that made the young man yank out the stake. All he knew was that one moment everything was still and the next, Lambert's fangs tore through the young man's neck, meeting with a sickening click to snap the spine. As the severed head hit the floor, Lambert, now only half-desiccated, regarded the two with glassy eyes.

"He's still hungry," Sheila said. "I've got this."

Will looked at the generator. "No. Sheila, grab what you can and get out of here. I'll catch up."

"It's too late to eat him now!"

"Go!" Will ran for the generator as Lambert lunged for his throat.

He stabbed his box cutter into the generator's cord. The electricity ran through him and mixed with his blood and Karen's fury. He gripped Lambert's head as thousands of volts ran through his fingers and into the elder vampire's body.

Will felt jagged fangs tear into his throat, and pulled Lambert's head closer. For a moment he teetered on the edge of a long slide into darkness and then, finally, saw wisps of smoke curl up from Lambert's mouth. Lambert's clothes caught fire, then his dry flesh. Out of the corner of his eye, past the flames, Will saw Sheila take one last look at him before climbing up the hole back to the basement, several lifetimes worth of sorcerous loot in hand.

FIRE BURN, AND CAULDRON BUBBLE.

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, MACBETH

Cards on the Table: Introduction

Consider this a book first and foremost about a subculture, a covert community; in other words, a *scene*. Not a section of a drama, or even a part of a game session, but the *blood craft scene*. It's about redworkers: vampires who seek out rituals and formulae, who try to gain power or understanding through Blood Sorcery and Thin-Blood Alchemy, and the sketchy neighborhoods, old libraries, and dangerous, illegal gatherings they frequent. It's akin to the designer drug scene, or the drag racing scene, or those creeps who hunt endangered animals to eat them, or the psycho book scouts in *The Ninth Gate*, or coin collectors if coin collectors drank blood and murdered folks left and right because coins could do magic.

That scene exists in every city in the World of Darkness, because pretty much every city has thin-bloods who do alchemy, and Tremere and Banu Haqim desperately looking for rituals after their home base vanished. That means the blood craft scene exists in every chronicle, even if your chronicle isn't mostly about that, in the same way the druggie scene and the underground music scene and the radical politics scene all exist in every chronicle, ever-present, if just off stage.

But if your chronicle *is* all about the blood craft scene, then you've come to just the right place. And ideally, once you've read this book, you'll really *really* want to play in a chronicle that is *all* about the blood craft scene.

By the way, we do use the word *scene* a lot in this book, because no better word exists for the people and places and vibe around a subculture. However, when we shift gears and use the word *scene* to mean *unit of game time*, it should be fairly clear.

How to Use This Book

In general, this book mirrors all proper magic texts, in that it has an exoteric use—lore and possibilities for the world within the game, and for chronicles set in that world or similar—and an esoteric one—systems

and guidelines to help players and Storytellers to mechanically represent, model, or game that lore. As with all game books, twist, manipulate, and transmute either part to suit your table and your troupe. The blood craft scene is so new and so different these nights that what we write here might not hold true in Cape Town or Venice or Edmonton or, by an odd coincidence, your chronicle's city.

This book comprises two large divisions: **The Scene** and **The Secrets**. Think of **The Scene** as the exoteric, outward-facing player side of the book.

The Players lays out the types of characters and places that comprise a typical blood craft scene, presented as potential antagonists because let's get real, it's a **Vampire** story. Your characters might take any or all of these roles as they get a better and better handle on the scene and their own roles within it. The mechanics in some character types' Special section abstracts the kind of sneaky dice-stacking players delight in; it's meant to approximate that stuff for the busy Storyteller, not to model new mechanics for those sneaky dice-stacking players. Player characters should use their own rules systems and ingenuity to accomplish what these Storyteller shorthand mechanics do. As always, the Storyteller remains the final arbiter of what is and isn't allowed in their chronicle.

This is also where we present an abstract system for buying and selling, well, magic. Use it in as much or as little detail as you want. Finally, we offer some locations you might find in your scene and further guidelines for building a blood craft scene into your own chronicle.

Although **The Magics** chapter presents dozens of alchemical formulae and sorcerous rituals, the real juice within may be the systems and advice for building and balancing your own unique and exclusive formulae and rituals for your chronicle. After all, if you give a vampire a magic ritual, they gain power for one night. If you teach a coterie to invent magical rituals, they ... well, they probably get themselves horribly in over their own heads and burn down half the city. That's why we give that power to the Storyteller instead. The Storyteller may require characters to complete Projects, hunt through distant libraries, or make a literal deal with the devil (or rather, with an aapilu) to gain access to new rituals or formulae.

MATURE CONTENT WARNING

Vampire: The Masquerade deals with mature themes and story elements, centering games on personal and political horror. In this game, you portray a blood-sucking monster in a world resembling our own. Characters typically experience (and participate in) activities you see in other vampire fiction: violence, seduction, lying, murder, and exploitation. *These are story elements and themes for collaborative play.*

This book specifically draws parallels between the drug trade and the blood craft scene, in keeping with the larger potential parallels between vampirism and addiction present throughout the game. Both scenes can incorporate and cause extreme horrors such as abuse, human trafficking, rape and exploitation, birth defects and child endangerment, and even suicide.

Neither drug dealers nor Blood sorcerers reliably consider others' health or safety. But you definitely should! Be sure to check out the *Advice for Considerate Play* in *Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 421–425.

The Secrets holds the esoteric, hidden, Storyteller side of the book. The Storyteller can stir the ingredients of this division into the chronicle in any proportion they wish, using whatever recipe appeals most.

Movers and Shakers lays out exactly that: the big players on the scene, and the medium fish trying to bite off pieces where the big players hopefully won't notice. Mrs. Chopra gives us a mortal threat, but feel free to substitute the Order of St. Leopold or the Arcanum or some other batch of interfering mortals if you like. Or add them all in, if you're not too worried about losing the vampiric focus.

The next chapter gives some of the strange and dangerous things redworkers have **Met on the Path**, or that your coterie might deliberately take that path to meet: outright antagonists, creatures, strange artifacts, tomes and grimoires, and mysteries to explore. Whether that path runs off to the side of your chronicle or right down the middle of it, the **Chronicles** chapter helps to lay it out, cut it to fit, and pave it with your players' nightmares and their characters' dreams. Plus, cool lines on maps!

Theme and Mood

The theme of this book is *consequences*. Magic comes at a cost, in resources, time, and enmity. Nothing happens without payback and blowback, because the ecology and the economy keep getting stirred up. Big disasters happened just off stage and now the pieces keep falling on the actors. Everything a thin-blood alchemist does can go horribly wrong, not just in the lab but in some ancilla's suspicious mind. Rituals carry even more risk, and things worse than failure await Blood sorcerers who succeed without thinking about the next steps.

You're a seller one night, but you're a buyer the next, swings and roundabouts. The wheel turns, and it'll roll right over you if you stop moving. The blood craft scene isn't just *Fast and Furious* with athanors, it's *Uncut Gems*, but with weird magical ingredients instead of a big-ass opal. Which would make a wonderful magical ingredient, by the way.

The mood of this book is *wonder*. Not twee wonder, but weird, surrealistic, dangerous but somehow significant on a deep level wonder, like the Wonderland that turned Alice's mind inside out. Wonder as in the Seven Wonders of the World, spectacles nobody could believe mere mortals built, that the Greeks had to invent a word in order to describe them. That word, by the way, *themata*, was an ancient Greek pun on *thaumata*, meaning "magic."

The redworking scene isn't fixed and set and established. It's weird and dangerous and surreal, even for creatures who turn into bats or bounce knives off their skin. It's full of big dangers that even thousand-year-old vampires haven't really mapped, or admitted. It's strange and vibrant and lit up and funky and happening, not tied down like Elysium codes of conduct or demarcated like Anarch turf districts. It's got vampires who stay up too late, and who deliberately look into the mirror for demons.

And that's what's up with the Tarot card chapter names. They're cool, that's what. This is the secret key to magic: cool works better than dull. It lights up the mind and the heart, and it's every player's job to help set more stuff alight. As the ritual magician A.E. Waite said (about the Tarot, as it happens), "There are few things more dull than a criticism which maintains that a thesis is untrue, and cannot understand that it is decorative."

Magic Words

Cool words are part of why people read magic books, and perhaps play in a sorcery-themed chronicle. Here's some that show up on the scene.

Aapilu: From the Akkadian “one who answers,” a seemingly sentient Blood reflection; plural **aapilum**, variant **abaaalum**.

Almost Assembly: Loose network of scientific-minded thin-bloods pursuing vampiric-human evolution through alchemy.

Ashipu: A Banu Haqim sorcerer, especially one who pursues metaphysical enlightenment.

Athantor: An alchemical furnace, used to cook formulae in the Fixatio method; when the alchemist cooks the formula inside their own body, this is the **Athantor Corporis** method.

Boiling: Sidelong reference to alchemy, used in domains where thin-bloods face persecution. “It’s boiling in there,” or “It’s supposed to get boiling tonight.”

Brew: The result of an alchemical formula, also called an **elixir**. Loosely, the formula itself: “Just learned a new brew.”

Bru: Part of the blood craft scene, used interchangeably as a verb: “Does he bru?” or address: “No worries, bru” or an adjective: “She’s bru, man.” Probably derived from either the alchemical *brew* or *bruja* (Spanish for “magician”). Maybe both.

II Calderone: “The Cauldron,” a Ministry cult that uses drugs to break down its converts.

Cellar rat: Someone who taps torpid vampires for vitae.

Chopra-wafadar: One of the many agents of Mrs. Chopra, from the Urdu (and Mumbai Hindi) word for “loyal.”

Cocktail: Alchemical formula.

Cook: Alchemist. Also **cooker**.

DOVECOTE: Thin-blood alchemical formula-sharing internet community. Their hardcore replication-focused branch in Lagos goes by **CRONUS**.

Dropper: Vampire who sells vitae from other Kindred.

EI: Still the most popular recreational blood formula, although lots of EI sold now uses different recipes than the original mix. Short for Elevate (p. 74).

Fair Trader: Blood trafficker who promises (and often supplies) “ethically sourced,” or at least less horrifically obtained, blood.

Fancier: Collector of magic with no desire or ability to use it.

Fritae: From “fraudulent vitae,” alchemically counterfeit vampire Blood. Also **brugazi**.

Furcus: Tremere term, from “fork” in Latin, where two veins of the Earth branch from a larger vein. Plural **furcae**. Often a magical **nexus**.

Goratricine: Follower of House Goratrix in the new Tremere factional system. **Goratrero** in Latin America, or derogatorily, **Goratrajo**.

Kalif: Hashish fertilized with vitae, now nearly impossible to find after the fall of Alamut.

Kettle: An athanor; an alchemical contest is a **kettle battle** even if you’re not using Fixatio.

Koldun: Tzimisce sorcerer; plural **kolduny**.

Lui Domien: Tzimisce koldunic sorcerers attempting to awaken the poisoned Earth.

Mundie: Apocalyptic mystical alchemical society, from *athanor mundi*, the “furnace of the world,” where all Kindred shall be reduced and united in one Red Elixir. Also the source of those Athanor Monday shirts you sometimes see.

Pedunculus: The *stem*, the larger vein of the Earth that another vein (or more) branches from.

Redworker: Any user of Blood Sorcery or Thin-Blood Alchemy, a blood magician.

Sangria: Any kind of chemically—or alchemically-altered blood consumed for recreation. It might be a gelcap of liquid EI, or a tube of junkie plasma mixed with Four Loko, or it might be something really weird.

Solitarchy: A Tremere chantry that prefers going it alone to joining up with a so-called successor faction.

Sunburner: A Sabbat thin-blood on the Path of the Sun. Also **Heliophile**.

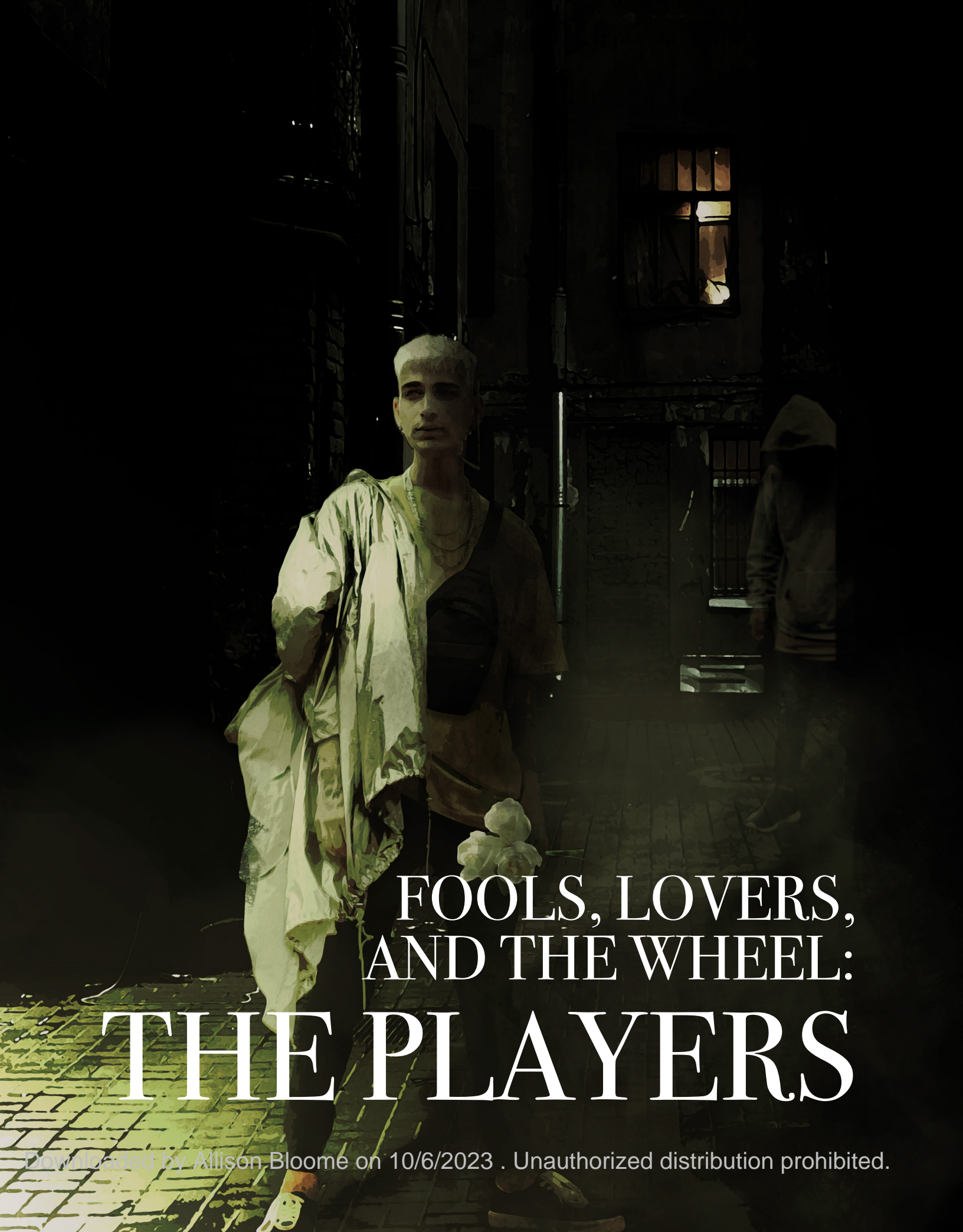
Venae terrae: Latin for “veins of the Earth,” patterns of magical energy flowing around your city, and around the globe. One vein is a **vena**, often punningly referred to as a **vine**, or called a **ley line** by New Age vampires who hate Latin.



THE SCENE

BUY WHEN BLOOD IS RUNNING IN THE STREETS,
EVEN IF THE BLOOD IS YOUR OWN.

— ATTRIBUTED TO JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER



FOOLS, LOVERS,
AND THE WHEEL:

THE PLAYERS



MONEY COMES INTO THE WORLD WITH A
CONGENITAL BLOOD-STAIN ON ITS CHEEKS.

— MARIE AUGIER



The players' coterie doesn't have the blood craft scene all to themselves. A centuries-old Tremere chantry or Banu Haqim circle has new competitors and problems to worry about now. Even highfalutin Blood sorcerers suddenly have to lower themselves to deal with gutter magi and thin-bloods because they don't have access to their great old networks, or their vitae-infused hashish, any more. Rich guys who suddenly need drugs, it's a tale as old as Capone.

It's more likely, however, that your coterie *are* those new competitors and problems, or some of them at least. Thus the players' coterie and the scene's big players overlap. This chapter depicts your possible roles, your possible competitors, the problems you all share, and where you go to get a jump on them or dig up a new angle, perhaps literally.

You don't need to add one of each of the following characters or locations to your chronicle to have a

scene. Treat this as a list of potential ingredients, not a strict formula. Feel free to change these numbers around, especially increasing them for more major foes: these are raw ingredients, not necessarily finished elixirs. Also note that special abilities for these Storyteller characters don't translate precisely or mechanically to readily available options for players' characters.

That said, players' characters may take on any or all of these roles during the chronicle, even shifting from scene to scene during a story. Buyers become sellers, alchemists are wannabes to Tremere thaumaturges and vice versa. You may have to be a cut-out in one deal in exchange for being allowed to study as a mystic with a powerful ashipu.

This chapter also offers some formulas for doing magical business in blood, and some options for using these examples to build out your chronicle's messy magic marketplace.

Buyers

Every marketplace starts with a buyer or, ideally, with lots of buyers. Herewith, some customers for your characters. Even if your characters aren't selling right now, some customers get really insistent about buying.

GENERAL DIFFICULTIES

The General Difficulty values given for each sample scenester lets the Storyteller treat them as Simple Antagonists (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 370).

The number before the slash represents the Difficulty to defeat their strongest ability, the number after the slash is the Difficulty to overcome them in other tests.

Alchemist

Thin-blood alchemists haven't been around for long, but they've carved out their own niche with blood, sweat, and tears—mixed together in a nice, warm vial, of course. Alchemists of all different experience levels and interests boil through the scene, and it's not hard to start picking out faces if you look long enough.

Newbie

Newbies look for the most basic equipment and supplies. They've got a list (long), and a budget (tight) and they try to make one fit the other as best they can... though most get strong-armed into going over budget right quick. The scared ones nervously try to chat up mid-tier alchemists on where they buy their stuff, scuttling back into the shadows at the slightest hint of annoyance. The brash ones try to get chummy with the biggest fish in the pond right away, and don't pick up on everyone's subtle hints that maybe they ought to start a little smaller.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Persuasion 6, Occult 6, Stealth 6, Distillations 4–5

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 1–2

Equipment: Handwritten list, okay first brew, burner phone

Professional

The professional has done this a hundred times. They know what to look for, where to go, and what to do with it. They've got a setup they're happy with, and don't buy equipment unless it's really special. Standing agreements with local suppliers provide them with the basics, so when they head out for something themselves, it's for a particular ingredient for a brew. The professional usually has ties to one of the Mercurian alchemy groups, be it the Almost Assembly (p. 109), DOVECOTE (p. 112), or a local flock. They know the scene and take interest in new faces. Some take newbie alchemists under their wing fairly regularly in Mercurian solidarity, but most just want to brew their recipes in peace.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 6, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Insight 7, Persuasion 7, Occult (Alchemy) 7, Streetwise 7, Distillations 6–7

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 3–4

Equipment: Recipe notebook, kettle battle kit, stained shirts, faint burnt smell

Specialist

The specialist only cares about the extremely rare and preferably exclusive. They like their visits to be secret and get *very peeved indeed* if word somehow gets out. Specialists make everyone nervous: the sellers, their fellow buyers, and particularly anyone unlucky enough to cross them on an excursion. Rivals and fellow alchemists take an extreme interest in finding out what specialists buy, but even they try to keep their distance. CRONUS (p. 113) sends specialists from their Lagos base to collect uncommon ingredients or equipment.

General Difficulty: 5/3



Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Firearms 6, Intimidation 7, Investigation (Blood Craft Scene) 8, Larceny 8, Stealth 8, Occult (Alchemy) 7, Distillations 9

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 5

Equipment: Fake IDs, suspiciously average clothes, incredible travel chest of alchemical gear.

Special: A specialist always has a vial of Copycat (p. 78) on them, in case they need to get lost in a crowd. However, they brew their Copycat from their travel kit, which means they've only got one or two different blood samples for it. Wits + Awareness (Difficulty 4) can help someone notice the same clothes or injuries with a different face, or remember a Copycat face when presented with it again.

Blood Sorcerer

Oh, how the mighty have fallen. Once, the Tremere had the Pyramid and its network of well-stocked chantries, and the Banu Haqim had shipments from regional strongholds. Now, they get their components from the lick with the bad haircut and the too-big trench coat, just like everyone else. Most are humble enough. It's the ancillae—the ones old enough to remember the glory days but not old enough to get dragged into the Gehenna War—who are the real pain in the ass.

Banu Haqim Blood Sorcerer

Banu Haqim Blood sorcerers are new to a lot of scenes, and they bring an intense vibe. They're very serious about their Discipline, and frivolous sorcerers who "waste the sacred art on trivia"-like pursuing player coterie's secular goals instead of mystical improvement—get a long lecture. Those who abuse their power (however the Lawman in question describes that) find themselves in for something far worse.

Thin-bloods and others outside the clan often sort the Banu Haqim they encounter into one of three types:

Judges are pillars of morality, or at least pretend to be. They look for anything that fits their rigid moral code, and rain hell on anything that doesn't.

Scholars immerse themselves in scenes. They're looking to learn from occult teachers and historians.

Bouncers prefer the applied arts. Anything that hurts or kills is something worth their attention.

General Difficulty: 5 / 3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Mental 8, Social 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Insight 7, Melee 7, Occult (Blood Craft) 9, Stealth 7, Disciplines 7

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 4, Celerity 2, Obfuscate 3

Blood Potency: 4

Equipment: Combat knife, chemistry kit, motorcycle leathers

Special: A Banu Haqim Blood sorcerer knows five Blood Sorcery Rituals: one Level One Ritual, two Level

Two Rituals, two Level Three Rituals, and one Level Four Ritual. Banu Haqim prefer Rituals that analyze properties of blood or provide advantages in combat.

Tremere Blood Sorcerer

Tremere Blood sorcerers know more than everyone else in the scene. At least, that's the image they want to project, and they're very good at it. It doesn't hurt that for a few centuries, they *did* know more than everyone else in the scene. That still might be the case.

Traditionalists strive to return the clan to their former glory. They buy anything that'll help make that happen. Most of them cluster in House Goratrix (p. 101).

Witches embrace the new status quo. They're interested in Rituals and materials that call upon old and forgotten ways. Their standard bearers populate House Carna (p. 102).

Radicals want to go further beyond, pushing sorcery to its limits. They're looking for original ideas and strange instruments of power. They might be solitarchs (p. 103) or something even weirder.

General Difficulty: 5 / 3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 8, Social 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Leadership 7, Occult (Blood Craft) 9, Subterfuge 8, Disciplines 7

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Blood Sorcery 4, Dominate 2

Blood Potency: 4

Equipment: Vial of sire's blood, ceremonial short sword, fancy ritual robe

Special: A Tremere Blood sorcerer knows five Blood Sorcery Rituals: two Level One Rituals, and one Ritual each for Levels Two, Three, and Four. Tremere prefer Rituals that analyze enemies or prey or provide protection.

Collector

To own a thing allows one to partake in its beauty, or history, or its virtue as a symbol. To own a unique thing cements one's importance or discernment. But to own a unique and *dangerous* thing may be the



best way to make sure no one uses it on you.

Collecting is part of human nature, a fetishistic joy taken in having a wide variety of guns, or Beanie Babies, or woodblock incunabula. The Embrace certainly doesn't *reduce* anyone's tendency toward envious acquisitiveness, so both mortals and Kindred who can't necessarily *use* a given formula, artifact, or piece of equipment still want it. Like the gun collector who can't shoot straight or the comic enthusiast who gets a floppy slabbed unread, these collectors want this stuff because they think it's cool and it makes them feel good.

A *fancier* is the derogatory phrase for someone who has no use for these items and keeps them solely as status symbols. Often entitled and prominent in other areas, vampires in this category might be a fascinated Toreador, an obsessed Malkavian, or a Ventrue who just wants to show off. These are the ones you burglarize, if you can get away with it.

A *seeker* gets more respect, because many successful cooks and sorcerers were once just like them. These people (mortal and Kindred) want the power and don't have it *yet*. They collect as a first step towards creating. Mortal seekers tend to have short sell-by dates, as they either get Embraced or, more commonly, die. These are the ones you teach some tricks in exchange for rare stuff they're not yet educated enough to value.

Finally, the *market rats* can't use the stuff they collect, but recognize that this is, just maybe, an under-served sector where commerce can transpire in all its glory. They collect to accrue value, and happily trade like for like as long as they think they're getting a good deal. They're equally happy to sell from their collection for cash, Camarilla favors, or a nice blood doll. These are the ones you haggle with and maintain good relations. Perhaps there's even some affection leavening the contempt you might naturally feel toward someone who looks upon the grandeur of magic and thinks, "I can make a buck off that!"

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6



Exceptional Dice Pools: Etiquette 6, Finance (Art/Antiquities) 7, Larceny 6, Occult (Blood Craft) 6, Persuasion 7, Streetwise 7, Subterfuge 7

Equipment: High-end digital camera and laptop, cash, a little bit of good coke, three very different objects of blood enchantment significance.

Cut-Out

The entire gig economy is based on “I want it done, don’t want to do it, so I’ll hire one of those poor,” and it’s not really new. There have always been gofers, PAs and do-boys, back to when they were called vassals and thralls.

This protective layer of ignorant errand-runners is especially desired when, say, it’s someone of prominence, high clan, and impeccable reputation who needs some kind of shameful blood drug or procedure.

Enter the cut-out. Or, more commonly, cut-outs plural.

A close cut-out is a trusted retainer or ally, typically someone leveraged beyond “we’ve known each other for decades and are tight pals.” The actual consumer leans on this associate to get it because the associate is more fit for the buy. What makes them more fit? Could be ability to take a punch, a keener bullshit detector, or more familiarity with crime and criminals. This brooding ancilla or neonate might make the drive down to the alchemist’s lair or the underpass market in person, or they might, in turn, delegate the buy to a jobber.

Jobber

Jobbers make a career out of this sort of thing, and they’re masters (or at least students) of dead-drops, anonymity, and maintaining a healthy distance from their employers. Nosferatu are well-represented at this tier, if their clients don’t mind having their goods dropped off by a mangy dog or night-flying carrion bird. But whatever their clan—and even some mortals work this level—jobbers don’t want to know who hired them and take steps to ensure their employer knows they don’t know. They

may interface with the redworking black market personally, or their role may be entirely “I’ll get the car in Carbon Cliff and drive it to Galesburg by noon without looking in the trunk.”

General Difficulty: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 6, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness (Tails) 7, Firearms 5, Intimidation 7, Larceny 7, Occult 6, Streetwise 7

Equipment: Motorcycle or panel truck, sawed-off shotgun, fake IDs, police union membership card

Special: A Kindred jobber begins with General Difficulties of 4/3 and increases either Physical or Mental to 5, and Willpower to 7. Add 1 to all Exceptional dice pools. Add a 3/2/2 spread of Disciplines appropriate to their clan: Auspex and Obfuscate come in very handy here. Start their Blood Potency at 2 and increase it based on how important they seem to your chronicle.

Patsy

Of course, for just doing what they’re told on the level of “get this from there, leave it here, don’t be late,” the user, or the arranger, *or* the jobber might subcontract again to a patsy. This is where you get drug addicts bicycling a smelly satchel from one public bathroom to another across town in exchange for fifty bucks or a fix. Or someone slack-jawed from Presence or blank-eyed from Dominate doing what they’re told.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness (Surveillance) 5, Persuasion (Begging) 6, Streetwise 5

Equipment: Trash vehicle, lighter, multitool

Embarrassed Client

They know they don’t belong here. They feel the eyes of scenersters on them when they arrive. If they could, they’d break into a full frop sweat. They don’t



know anything about blood craft, and they know that once they open their mouth, the entire scene knows it. Unfortunately, they must be here. They're a cut above regular cut-outs, Kindred running errands for bigger players.

Proxies are cut-outs for important figures in Kindred society. Barons, Primogen, and the other upper crust of the city benefit from blood craft as much as everyone else, but they can't just stroll into the scene. It could be a security risk. It might be that the folks in charge don't want to tear themselves away from their work. It's also possible that the scene is officially forbidden on a Prince's word, but said Prince still needs an alchemist. So, they grab some ladder-climbing Lick and send them to pick up a few things.

The *assets* are also cut-outs, but from figures *outside* Kindred society. No one is sure who or *what* they work for, but they know this client represents another strange faction of the night. These sorts make scenesters nervous. At best, they're infiltrators for the Black Hand. At worst, they're Second Inquisition narcs or spies for Lupines or other dangers to Kindred in and out of the scene.

Pretenders aren't working for clients, they're here to buy things for themselves. They hint that they're there on behalf of someone more powerful, but that's just a fiction to protect their good name outside of the scene. A Kindred goes to such lengths for a few reasons. It could be an attempt to cover their tracks in a city where the blood craft scene is unfashionable or deadly. It could also be that what they seek is genuinely embarrassing, like when a Caitiff tries to buy something to help them pass as the clan they're pretending to be.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Persuasion 5, Politics 6, Stealth 6, Disciplines 6

Disciplines: Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Presence 2

Equipment: Hastily scrawled request, cheap rental car or expensive lease car, compact pistol

Special: Embarrassed clients want out of there as soon as possible, and a shrewd vendor can turn that

to their advantage. When a character haggles (p. 46) with an embarrassed client, they begin the first turn with a one-die bonus to their pool. This bonus increases with each round the character wins, to a maximum of a three dice bonus.

If a character is more interested in who the client's backer is, a Charisma + Persuasion or Manipulation + Intimidation Test at Difficulty 4 gets them to reveal their backer's identity. (On a critical win, the client doesn't realize they've done so.) Doing this might negate any dice bonuses the character would receive when haggling, at the Storyteller's discretion.

This embarrassed client is built as a Ventrue, but any vampire can be one. Use a 3/2/2 spread for in-clan Disciplines. Start their Blood Potency at 2 and increase it based on how important they seem to your chronicle.

Mystic

Blood magic concerns the mastery of self, first and foremost. Blood sorcerers unleash the true potential of vitae. Thin-blood alchemists draw strength from their strange condition. The mystic pursues these ends like the rest of the scene, but they also aim a little higher. They don't only seek power, but enlightenment. This power brings a message, and the mystic wants to decipher it. Banu Haqim ashipu historically seek enlightenment, though with supplies of kalif cut off they often turn to more practical matters. Both the Ministry and the Sabbat claim illumination of a sort as the centerpiece of their traditions. Other mystics are either part of a blood cult, are interested in joining a blood cult, or have started a blood cult of their own.

Evangelists aim to spread their newfound faith, and they do it while shopping. They're often working on behalf of their blood cult and hope they can pick up a recruit as well as service or a trinket. This rarely works. The scene's willing to put up with them if they know how to fulfill their boons, but evangelists seldom tolerate anything that disrespects or disregards their faith and might even buy such things to destroy them.

Dabblers seek truth and meaning anywhere and everywhere, and right now that's in the blood craft scene. They buy things they don't even know how to use, hoping that it brings them one step closer to the answers they seek. Their worldview is currently a potpourri of ideas both mortal and Kindred. They might join multiple blood cults, which



could get messy if the word ever got out. They're fascinated by the rituals of the Banu Haqim, tempted by the thin-bloods and their alchemy, and would love to get a glimpse of what goes on in a Tremere's chantry.

Mentors have hit a point in their search where they feel like they've learned everything possible. Unlike the evangelist, they've moved beyond preaching to anyone who might hear. They're looking for knowledge, skills, and tools to help educate those already in their flock. Sometimes that's learning a ritual to serve as a metaphor for their faith, other times it's buying the time of someone who has seen something their faith considers forbidden.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Mental 7, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Performance 6, Persuasion 6, Occult 8, Disciplines 6

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Blood Sorcery 3, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 2

Blood Potency: 2+

Equipment: Half-written spiritual manifesto, religious texts, assortment of crystals

Special: In addition to other forms of payment (p. 46), mystics can serve as conduits for Chained Rituals (p. 71). Once per scene, when a character performs a Chained Ritual with a mystic, they receive a +1 bonus to the casting roll, even if the mystic doesn't know the Ritual. If the mystic does know the Ritual, the bonus increases to +3. This effect does not stack if other mystics are present during the Chained Ritual's casting.

This mystic is built as a Malkavian, but any vampire can be one. Use a 4/3/2 spread for in-clan Disciplines. A mystic must also have a Blood Sorcery rating of 2 or higher to give a bonus to Chained Rituals.

Wannabe

Who *wouldn't* want to do magic? People respect you, maybe even fear you. You can make yourself powerful, beautiful, irresistible...and yes, you've heard about the cost, but the results would be *worth* it.



That's the way the wannabes think, at least. They're the young Kindred who heard of Blood Sorcery second- or third-hand and managed to push their way into the right hangout; Duskborn who think sorcery seems way more effective than alchemy brews; mortals in the Kindred orbit drawn to sorcery's promises of power, wealth, or just getting laid. They're not just clueless nobodies: they *do* know something about sorcery—maybe more than they let on—through careful research and prying conversations, but they don't know how to do it themselves, no matter how much they may want to. Instead they swirl around the scene looking for their way in.

The wannabe is all about the paraphernalia: the jangling silver jewelry, the flapping coat with occult symbols embroidered into the lining, the leather sandals made from the hide of a white ox rubbed with thyme oil. If they can just look the part enough to get the right person's eye, perhaps they can learn the hidden knowledge. Some unpleasant Licks use wannabes as patsies or jobbers (p. 18), promising them occult knowledge in exchange for their services, which they then dole out in drips and drops. Most simply accept them as an inevitability of the scene and try not to promise too much.

Some reckless wannabes set themselves up as hedge magicians, claiming they know rituals and wards that they most definitely do not. It does make them briefly more visible, but they don't tend to last long. The first time they disappoint someone with even an ounce of actual power, they either disappear into the night or arrive on a friend's doorstep desperately seeking help.

Wannabes keep feelers out for books or knowledge, hoping they might snag some before more experienced practitioners catch wind. They often haunt the center of the rumor mill, making themselves useful by listening for tidbits and whispering them into high-profile ears. They overlap in this regard with touts (p. 29), and may be both. Note that many different sorts of breakers (pp. 121–127), from cops (p. 123) to Chopra-wafadars (p. 122), adopt wannabes as their cover, until they learn enough to pretend to be something more clued-in.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Mental 4, Social 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 5, Etiquette 5, Occult 5, Persuasion 5, Subterfuge 5

Equipment: Ornate clothes, extensive book collection, psychedelics, cool-looking but ineffective occult objects (crystal ball, godseye, iron knife, and so on).

Sellers

The presence of buyers in the scene draws sellers to it. Your coterie probably does both at one time or another, and the alchemist (p. 14) and Blood sorcerer (p. 16) in the Buyers section probably also sell when they can, or when they have to.

Blood Forger

Vampires need mortal blood. Need creates a market. Markets create counterfeits. The people selling fugazis to vampires break cleanly into two categories: The clever ones with an angle, and the stone-cold dummies. Let's talk about the fools first.

Stupid Blood Forger

Dumb blood scammers are almost always Kindred. Even stupid mortals are rarely stupid enough to try feeding tofu to a tiger. If they are, it's not something they survive to try twice. So most commonly what happens is some neonate, straining under how hard it is to stay fed, finds a way to make fake blood—stray dog blood in a donor bag with some vinegar to prevent clotting—and sells it to other desperate neonates foolish enough to buy on trust. But that's short term, as people remember and can only be gaslit so long. So the faker finds a way to doctor it up a little. Sometimes a drop of their own vitae is enough to make it smell or taste adequate for a sip. Or they find some other mystic trick that lasts long enough, and they either get established enough to become clever blood forgers, or they get caught and someone rumbles them.

FRITAE

You think forging human blood is dodgy? Try forging vampire Blood. If you survive to do it a second time, you've beaten the odds.

Short for *fraudulent vitae*, fritae is the product of any of several different formulae that turn mortal blood into something that smells, and maybe even tastes and feels—for just a minute—like vampiric Blood. Some alchemists brew fritae as an ideological (or unadorned) fuck you to “real vampires,” some do it only to “make rent this one time, I swear,” and a few do it because it has obvious applications in further alchemical research.

Obviously, getting caught selling it has obvious applications in necromantic research, because the would-be sucker comes after you hard.

Detecting fritae is a contest of the brewer's Alchemy + Subterfuge vs. the buyer's Wits + Awareness. (The buyer can add *Auspex* or Alchemy to their pool, as supernatural vision and long practice with brews both help you recognize the real thing.) If the buyer is allowed to taste the fritae, they add +1 to their result.

Add Subterfuge 7 or 8 to the Exceptional Dice Pools of the alchemist (p. 14) for a hardened dealer in such *brugazis*.

General Difficulty: 3/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Persuasion 6, Streetwise 7, Subterfuge (Faking Blood) 7

Disciplines: Celerity 1, Dominate 3, Presence 2

Blood Potency: 1

Equipment: Impressive clothes that look right but don't smell right, getaway car that has it where it counts, sad little lab.

Crafty Blood Forger

Smart blood forgers have enough tricks that they can rotate through them. Examples include but aren't limited to: Using Dominate to implant false memories (“no, that wasn't dud blood, you just ruined it by going aggro and spilling most of it”); Blood Sorcery rites that turn water into blood, but only for an hour; taking adequate blood and stretching it out with fillers, like stepping on cocaine; selling blood that's “full of great MDMA” and then using Presence to make the buyer feel bliss.

That's without getting into fraudulent Resonances. Resonance is subtle enough that you can't tell if blood has it or not off a single sniff or sip, and by the time you've finished that purportedly melancholy blood but still feel chipper, the forger is

usually gone with your cash. Again, if they don't use the Presence trick.

But the most important thing clever blood forgers do is provide *exactly what they promise* when they're able. Screwing every customer 100% of the time is unsustainable. But if you only screw any individual customer 25% of the time, you can do a lot of transactions before they pick up the pattern. Especially if it's subtle.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Etiquette 6, Persuasion 8, Streetwise 8, Subterfuge (Blood Forgery) 8, Disciplines 6

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 4, Dominate 3, Presence 3

Blood Potency: 2

Equipment: Flashy car, boho clothes, a wonderful lab that is clearly where their heart and soul resides.

Blood Supplier

The difference between a *blood runner* and a *specialist vintage supplier* isn't just in euphemistic job titles. It's as stark as cynic versus optimist. Or perhaps, enslaver versus seducer.



Blood Runner

The most familiar blood runners are the proud villains of the Circulatory System (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 386). These blunt instruments conflate compassion with weakness, measure success solely with dollar signs, and prove brutally efficient at finding, capturing, and exploiting mortals whose blood has particular influences. If you need blood from a lactating descendant of Genghis Khan, and don't think about it too hard when they ask if you can wait ten months for it, blood runners can get it done.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness (Blood Vintage Tasting) 7, Brawl 8, Drive 7, Firearms 7, Insight 6, Stealth 7, Streetwise 7, Distillations 6

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 3

Humanity: 3

Equipment: Armored SUV, Uzi SMG, ball gag, rohypnol, handcuffs, elixirs to duplicate other Disciplines at 2 as needed

Special: Blood runners, especially those with the Circulatory System, taste a lot of different blood vintages in their career. They can taste Resonances, and often other qualities, in mortal blood that less-gifted palates might not detect. This blood runner is built as a thin-blood, as joining the Circulatory System proves a reliable way to develop a client network among other vampires; something the thin-bloods need more than most.

Fair Trader Specialist

A lot of alchemists aren't happy with the Circulatory System, especially if they've seen the sausage getting made. In one unfortunate case, literally; North Carolina Kindred can be loathsome. Being *thin-bloods* specifically, a lot of the Kindred on the cutting edge of vitae alchemy are far closer to humankind and, consequently, less comfortable with human trafficking, rape, abduction, forced drugging, extrajudicial imprisonment and other sundries listed in the Circulator System's overhead

column. Kindred trying to be something better than a soulless predation machine prefer to employ a specialist supplier.

Specialist suppliers—*Fair Traders* to the System—find specialized blood in its native circumstances instead of trying to force people to have a cokehead's blood or the blood with melancholy or suicide's blood. Most of them sit somewhere on a spectrum between surprising innocence and moral gray, but they think about sustainability and harm reduction in ways few blood runners can even grasp. Which is to say, they generally accept that hurting people is bad and should be avoided.

Go to a specialist if you need it good and can pay a premium, because their product is, indisputably, better. Go to the blood runners if you need it on the cheap or *right the fuck now*. If you need sanguine-aspected blood, you may actually be better off going to the specialists, no matter what. Sanguine bleeds resist industrialization.

General Difficulty: 5/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Etiquette 6, Insight 8, Investigation 8, Persuasion 8, Streetwise (Homeless) 8, Disciplines 5

Disciplines: Auspex 3, Dominate 1, Presence 2

Humanity: 5

Blood Potency: 3

Equipment: Surveillance gear, pleasant-yet-frumpy clothes, medical equipment, a truly staggering number of refrigerators.

Special: This Fair Trader is built as a Toreador with an out-of-clan Discipline, primarily to illustrate the core Disciplines a specialist in *somewhat* ethically sourcing mortal blood probably depends on.

Cellar Rat

Going into torpor exposes the Kindred to all kinds of threats, like diablerie and destruction. The *cellar rat* is one of those threats. They've got a hot item for sale: the blood of a torpid vampire on tap. Some gently



drain the vampire, others keep them staked just in case they wake up, and others try rituals or alchemical infusions to deepen their cash cow's torpor.

The *treasure hunter* just found the poor bastard lying around somewhere. The chaos of the past few years has left a few vampires dead to the world, their would-be protectors scattered to the hills. The treasure hunter came across an abandoned haven and decided it was worth the risk to return with a lancet and a flask.

The *bad seed* is often a childe who's had enough. They never say it, but they're the ones who put their sire or their master into torpor in the first place. Now that domineering, controlling prick's going to help *them* for a change. They do everything in their power to make sure their charge stays asleep.

The *loyalist* plays the long game. They'd like to see their charge awaken, and soon. But for now, there's work to do. The benefits of selling powerful vampire Blood are nice, but a few customers consume too much, thinking there's no harm in a possible Blood Bond to a sleeping vampire. That's when the rat plans to awaken their sleeper, and help command their new servants.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 3, Social 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Stealth (Avoiding Tails) 7, Disciplines 5

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Fortitude 3, Protean 1

Blood Potency: 1–3

Equipment: Chains, haven with basement, large syringe

Special: The cellar rat has access to at least one torpid vampire with a Blood Potency between 3 and 6. The vampire in their care may be of any clan. When the cellar rat and their charge first appear in the story, the torpid vampire uses a special meter like Hunger: it starts at 0 and increases to 5. When the meter hits 5, the torpid vampire awakens, ravenous.

Tapping a torpid vampire with the cellar rat present or by following their direction is a Dexterity + Medicine test at Difficulty 3. Not following their directions or tapping without the rat increases the

Difficulty to 5. On a win, the character receives one dose (enough for one Rouse Check, or one Ritual or formula) of the torpid vampire's blood per success and the Storyteller makes a standard Rouse Check for the torpid vampire. A critical win on the tapping test provides blood without a Rouse Check. A failure automatically increases the meter by 1 and produces only one dose of vitae, and a bestial failure instantly awakens the vampire from torpor.

This cellar rat's Discipline spread is for a Gangrel, but any vampire can be one. Apply a 3/3/1 Discipline rating spread for in-clan Disciplines.

Orphan

Some alchemists use the Calciniatio method (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 284), making mortals their athanors, emotionally manipulating them and exposing them to all kinds of substances to create their potions and tinctures. Some of these mortals separate or escape from their thin-blooded masters and into a conundrum. Do they return to their lives after everything they've experienced, or do they remain in this shadow world and make something of themselves? The ones who stay become *orphans*, or mortal athanors who work for hire, know the rush that Resonances bring, and know they can't walk away. They need the emotional highs and lows, and making a profit out of it sweetens the deal. In exchange for their services, orphans usually ask for food, shelter, financial assistance, or even genuine vitae.

The *runaway* couldn't take it anymore. Maybe it was when their alchemist tried to force-feed them boric acid, or maybe it was when they decided that a cattle prod wasn't their favorite Resonance manipulation tool. They stay in the scene; the mystical scarring and carefully placed tattoos mean they're always athanor-ready. They're selling their blood to take back control over their life.

The *mourner* lost someone important to them. The relationship between this orphan and their alchemist was probably good, or at least not as bad as the runaway's. They might have been the only survivor

of an attack on the alchemist's haven by a Scourge (p. 125) or hunter (see *Second Inquisition*, chapter 1 or *Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 370–372). The alchemist might have died only metaphorically: fled, or transformed, or perhaps even supposedly found their way back to humanity. The mourner keeps the work going in honor of their lost friend.

The *bicycle* is a different kind of orphan, in that they never had a stable relationship with an alchemist to begin with. Bicycles cluster in cities with notable alchemist populations but little sovereign territory. They started out with one alchemist, sure, and maybe it was someone they knew well. Once word got out, however, every wannabe alchemist who couldn't find space for a furnace (or wanted someone else to drink the boric acid) kept hitting them up for a session. The bicycle went along with it, either because the alchemists pay well, or they just like the scene, or because even alchemical abuse—perhaps especially alchemical abuse—creates co-dependence.

General Difficulty: 3 / 1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Mental 2, Social 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Drive (Escape) 5, Insight (Murderous Intent) 5, Streetwise (Alchemy Scene) 6

Equipment: Car with tinted windows, phlebotomy kit, pistol

Special: An orphan's emotional state helps jumpstart the alchemical formula, shifting their own blood's Resonance. Once per session, an orphan's client can emotionally manipulate them by selecting a preferred Resonance and rolling a test of either Charisma + Performance, Manipulation + Persuasion, or Manipulation + Intimidation, Difficulty 3. A win changes their Resonance to the client's preferred Resonance at an Intense level. A critical win changes their Resonance, and adds dice equal to the margin to the distillation roll die pool.

Street Sorcerer

It's uncommon enough to find a real street sorcerer

these nights that word gets around when one pops up. Street sorcerers tend to be low-level mortal magicians in the orbit of a vampire, or young Kindred (Duskborn or one generation above). They're more than a parlor occultist with fancy tools: they do actually have some genuine skills, and they seldom advertise more than they can deliver. They're also *incredibly* paranoid, guarding their few secrets with everything but their life. After all, it's all they've got and they don't know if more will ever come their way. Street sorcerers tend to burn bright and burn out fast, caught up in a world where they have few defenses when they inevitably get in way over their heads.

Mortal sorcerers don't use actual Blood Sorcery, but tap into another source of power: an ancient stone or revered icon, the spirit of a dead mentor or ancestor, the Veins of the Earth (p. 179), or animal or human sacrifice. Their incantations or talismans replicate the effects of specific Blood Sorcery rituals, generally with idiosyncratic side effects or weak points such as *ending at the sound of church bells* or *doesn't work on anyone carrying platinum*. They cannot use Blood Sorcery powers. Use their Blood Sorcery values below as a guideline to the level of rituals they can approximate, not as an indication of actual Discipline possession.

There's another kind of magician who seemingly breaks all the above rules (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 377). Fortunately, they tend to move in vastly different circles than the Kindred, even redworking Kindred.

Makers and Mumlbers

The *maker* read the right books, talked to the right teacher, or was just plain lucky enough to stumble into crafting or finding a magical tool. They focus their power source through that object, although they may have to cut off someone's pinky finger to recharge it.

The *mumbler* knows about four or five real wards and rituals. Their work often has a folksy twist to it, thanks to their teacher's word-by-word instruction and years of backyard improvements or failures. They hire themselves out to anybody who needs some wards



drawn or rituals chanted but can't afford the notice or price of a higher-level sorcerer, Kindred or otherwise.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Craft 8, Etiquette 6, Insight 7, Investigation 8, Larceny 7, Occult 6, Persuasion 8, Stealth 7, Subterfuge 8, Rituals 6

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 3

Equipment: Well-made arcane object, ring of keys, small silver bowl

Special: Some street sorcerers pick up other arcane effects—producing light, healing injuries, talking to animals—from their heritage and training, or from their magpie habits of trying anything shiny once. For such arcane effects, the sorcerer spends a point of Willpower and makes an Occult roll. If the effect has a dot value, such as points of Health recovered or Aggravated damage done, spend that much Willpower on a one-to-one basis. If they succeed, the effect occurs. Subtract 1 die from the pool if the sorcerer hasn't spent the previous eight hours in appropriate ritual preparation or activity; subtract two dice from the pool if they attempt the effect while in combat or otherwise stressed and distracted. A sorcerer can only use one effect at a time. Sorcerers who draw their powers from the divine often have True Faith; if so, they can add their True Faith to their Occult pool.

Walker

The *walker* knows a guy. They know a lot of guys, in fact. A walker is basically a *tout* (p. 29) with some skills, and therefore somewhat more cred in the scene. They move through the city's underground subcultures with relative ease, and use that experience to build up a formidable rolodex of who's who and what's what. If they're thin-bloods, they know some sanguine mortals on tap. You want to know the latest book-hound rumors? They've heard them. You need to know whose ghost keeps shrieking in the walls of your haven? They've got a clue. You want information

on a rival? They know the juicy tidbits. You need a quick ward done? They're there for you! All for a very reasonable price, of course...

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Etiquette 6, Insight (Wants) 7, Investigation 7, Occult 6, Persuasion (Glad-Handing) 8, Politics 6, Stealth 7, Streetwise (Blood Craft Scene) 8, Subterfuge 7, Rituals 5

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 2

Equipment: Contact list, warding bag (chalk, herbs, candles), sharp knife, two phones

Special: Part of knowing everybody in the scene is knowing who wants to mess with who. If the walker gets pushed to the wall, threatened with grievous bodily harm, or otherwise dangerously hampered, they can make a Streetwise roll to credibly threaten retribution from their threatener's rival: they've got a favor they can call in, or a standing date at the midnight movies they'll be missed at, or the like. Walkers also might pick up additional arcane effects, as above.

Tattooist

The vampire body, with a few major exceptions, is unchanging. The *tattooist* provides one of those exceptions: a way to modify the body after death in a way that sticks. It's a popular profession in the scene. Some vampires who'd never get caught dead with one in life go straight to a tattooist soon after Embrace, perhaps as a symbolic beginning of their vampiric unlife. Others relish the usefulness of the tattoos Blood Sorcery and Thin-Blood Alchemy create, either for the information they hold or the further customization they provide.

Blood Sorcerer Tattooist

The simplest Blood Sorcery tattoos create brands, necessary for when the Ivory Tower's Princes decide



to brand the thin-blooded in their city. *Blood Sigils*, complex Blood Sorcery tattoos, hold information: a vital consideration in the era of constant digital surveillance.

The Scourge or Sheriff calls in the *cauterist* when a thin-blood gets to survive, often with a request for the branding to be *extra* painful.

Other tattooists specialize by subject matter. For example, a *historian* keeps the city's history out of the hands of outsiders, painting tributes and legends on flesh. A *ritualist* makes vampires into unliving grimoires, etching magical instructions into their client's skin. Some incredible rituals spread this way.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Craft (Tattooing) 7, Etiquette 6, Politics (their sect) 5, Disciplines 5

Disciplines: Auspex *or* Celerity 2, Blood Sorcery 3, Dominate *or* Obfuscate 1

Blood Potency: Usually 2–4

Equipment: Tattoo machine, blood-infused paints, lavish haven

Special: A tattooist has one or both Rituals: Seal the Brand (**Players Guide**, p. 99) or Blood Sigil (p. 66). Blood sorcerer tattooists are often Tremere or Banu Haqim but could be from any clan. A tattooist must have a Blood Sorcery rating of at least 3 in addition to any of their in-clan Disciplines.

Thin-Blood Alchemist Tattooist

Thin-blooded tattooists might not be as useful to the vampire elite, but their tattoos are popular just the same. Tattoos that can shift and change at the will of their owner aren't just a fun novelty, but a useful tool for preventing identification by law enforcement or hunters.

Predictably, thin-blood tattooists embody all types and topics, for example:

A *caricaturist* creates tattoos making fun of the local power structure and other stuck-up Licks.

An *opsec fanatic* takes Body Paint's (p. 73) security properties seriously, encouraging their clients to adopt



wild patterns making facial recognition impossible.

An *artist* sees Body Paint as a collaborative effort, using their tattoo design as the opening to an artistic conversation with their client.

General Difficulty: 3/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 4, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 6, Craft (Tattooing) 7, Streetwise 6, Distillations 5

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 3

Equipment: Tattoo machine, homeopathy machine filled with blood and paint, securely locked haven.

Special: A thin-blooded tattooist has Body Paint among their Formulae. This alchemist uses Fixatio, but any distillation method is possible. Thin-blooded tattooists might have a single other Discipline at a rating of 1.

Tout

The tout knows that information doesn't really want to be free, it wants to be sold to the highest bidder. Touts are obsessed with getting new clients. They really love it if their clients all hate each other, since it makes selling information on their enemies much easier. Touts sell their info in a few ways: through channels on the dark web, through dead drop distributions of files written in code, or a good old fashioned silent auction in a rented community center.

Touts tend to be overbearing and pompous about what they know, but their information and tips usually pan out. Partisanship reduces your clientele and spreading lies in a scene full of people who sling spells or create poisons is a great way to bring about final death. Still, no one said that a tout's sources can't be partisan or liars, so to anyone who gives up their prized ghouls for a chance to find an Antediluvian's grave, *caveat emptor*.

The *rumormonger* is interested in the social aspect of the scene, selling stories about its celebrities and its *persona non grata*. They're not just an unliving gossip rag; the information they get includes things like what rituals or formulae scenesters are working

on, which Lick is in trouble with the Sheriff for poaching the Rack, or who's most likely to start hanging with the Black Hand.

The *journalist*, on the other hand, is more interested in information from outside the scene. They're the masters of open-source intelligence, grasping what they can about scenes in other cities and bringing the benefits back to their home scene for a nominal fee. Journalists spend a lot of time on the road, and when they're back with their wares, they make a big show about it.

The *real estate agent* is interested in location, specifically the locations of furcae (p. 35), torpid elders, artifacts (pp. 136–142), and other things that the average scenester would pay for in blood, coin, or boons. Well-established real estate agents might own some of these locations and flip them to rich coteries.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Occult 6, Persuasion (Gossip) 7, Stealth 6, Subterfuge 6, Disciplines 6

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Obfuscate 2, Potence 2

Blood Potency: 1–4

Equipment: Cellphone filled with contacts, well-marked city map, personal notebook

Special: Getting information out of a tout without paying for it is an arduous task. Manipulating or tricking a tout into giving away their tips for free requires a contest (Manipulation + Subterfuge) against the tout's Subterfuge pool, and if the tout wins, you accidentally let something slip instead. Touts are also excellent hagglers (p. 46). On the first turn of a haggle, touts begin with a two dice bonus, which reduces by one for each subsequent turn (i.e. two on the second turn and one on the third turn).

This tout's Discipline spread is for a Nosferatu, but any vampire can be one. Apply a 3/2/2 Discipline rating spread for in-clan Disciplines.

Vitae Trafficker

Everyone agrees vitae traffickers are insane. There's no other way to put it. Some of them are the kind of

insane that compels people to walk into volcanoes or go base jumping off skyscrapers, and others are just... well, there's not really a word for it. The only thing that unites them beyond a disregard for their own safety is their equally unbelievable capitalist instinct. There's a lot of money to be had in the vitae business, and they squeeze out every last drop.



Vitae-Dealing Ghoul

Some ghouls manage to stow away a little of the precious vitae their creators supply to them, gritting their teeth through the withdrawal to get the reward: a precious savings against... what, exactly? Breaking away from their master? Becoming one of the Kindred? Whatever their motivation, it's enough to risk the wrath of their master and the end of their vitae altogether. Ghouls sell to specific buyers, usually taking a quick detour during specific errands.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Intimidation 5, Occult 6, Stealth 5, Streetwise 5

Disciplines: Obfuscate 1

Vitae-Dealing Vampire

Revenge isn't a bad way to make a quick buck. Some members of rival coteries kidnap each other after a clash and take the death-by-a-thousand-cuts method to the very edge of actual final death. They bleed their prisoners bit by bit and sell their Blood through second parties to the highest bidder. It's an unsavory form of revenge, and it's explicitly forbidden in many domains, not that that stops those likely to try it. It's a dangerous game, though; as soon as the rival coterie gets wind of what's going on, they stop at nothing to settle the score as quickly and painfully as they can. Selling other Kindred's vitae comes close enough to diablerie for many Princes, unless they get a big cut of the proceeds.

General Difficulty: 5/3

Attributes: Physical 6, Social 4, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Skills: Athletics 7, Finance 8, Firearms 7, Intimidation 7, Investigation 7, Stealth 8, Streetwise 6, Disciplines 6

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Celerity 3, Potence 4, Presence 3

Humanity: 5

Blood Potency: 3

This vitae-dealing vampire is built as a Brujah on



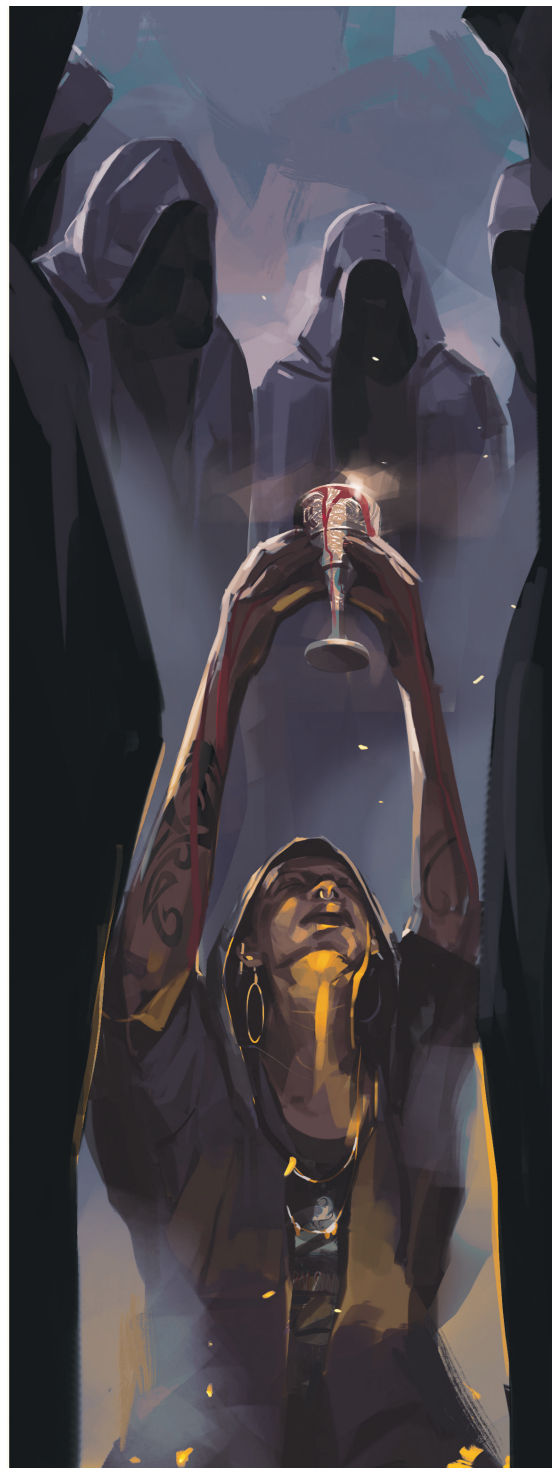
RITUAL CIRCLES

Blood sorcerers and mortal magicians gather for spellcasting and other forms of socializing in magical circles. These groups often have no name at all—everyone who knows about the circle knows not to talk about it—or just use the name of their coterie or chantry founder. Tremere chantries might have a secret name, or just use the name of the city: Tuscaloosa Chantry. Mortal circles and Kindred blood cults using mortals as cover prefer fancy or antique names: The Lodge of Hadoth or Morrigan's Childer or the like.

Ritual circles like to present themselves as the scene's elite, even if they don't take part in it. According to them, this is where the real magic happens. They're often right; circles tend to have better supply chains than any single person in the scene. Members of a circle might refer to each other with a magical-sounding name, usually some mangling of Latin, Greek, or Arabic. Its members are very close but prone to drama. Secrecy is important and its members take great pains to keep theirs.

A Tremere circle meets in their chantry. Banu Haqim ashipu prefer a walled garden open to the stars, not always overtly connected to their haven. If the scene doesn't have enough of any one clan to organize a meeting place, the most active Blood sorcerers might rent or buy an anonymous storefront or basement somewhere inconspicuous, ideally on or near a furcus (p. 35).

Walking into a ritual circle is hard, and joining the circle is harder. Circles have both mundane and supernatural protections. Ghouls and retainers provide the former, and joint castings of **Ward Against Cainites (Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 280)** the latter. A Status rating of 2 or greater in something the circle finds admirable generally suffices for an invitation to a semi-public gathering at the circle. Membership additionally requires a rating of at least 3, or a really convincing and compelling story, and a public reputation the circle finds appropriate.



the edges of an Anarch moot, but switch their Disciplines around to customize a dropper for your own scene.

Vitae-Dealing Hunter

Slaying vampires spills a lot of blood. One member of a local crew might need an extra mortgage payment, as a one-time deal that becomes an every-few-months deal. A bent SAD or Leopoldite operative, or better yet, a special agent in command of the local Coalition presence, can make it a regular deal: extracting vitae from area blankbodies as protection price for a territory they've uncovered, promising to keep their people at bay in exchange for those Blood bags. They've set up a complex system of dead man switches that send locations and names to their bosses if they unexpectedly die—or so they claim, and they're intense enough to try *this* racket, so why not believe them? Some might even have a more direct source: an unfortunate vampire they staked and keep in torpor in a secret location, draining them like a cellar rat.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 6, Awareness (Surveillance) 8, Finance 6, Firearms 7, Investigation (Missing Persons) 8, Occult (Vampires) 6, Streetwise (Blood Craft Scene) 5

This vitae-dealing hunter is based on the Inquisitor Investigator stat block (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 372).

Other Faces in the Scene

Even marketplaces have more going on than buying and selling. The redworking scene, while making the market, also creates lots of other social niches that the Blood runs into and fills.

Banu Haqim Cleaner

They know how to use Quietus, sure, but they're more interested in the speed and stealth in their Blood. Still, they're in deep with the scene because they clean up messes. Sometimes it's literal messes, like the remains of a kine who asked too many questions. Other times, it's running interference against mortal law enforcement or shaking out Black Hand infiltrators. Then there's the real, not-fucking-around kinds of messes. A ritual goes wrong and a creature that slobbers shadows stalks Blood sorcerers. Someone gets a little too chummy with a malevolent spirit. When the scene needs them, they show up with a machete and a sawed-off shotgun for good measure.

Chemist

In life, they took a minor in chemistry while studying prelaw. The Embrace made that major useless, but their chemical prowess has taken on a new fervor in unlife. They collect ancient potion recipes from Setite weirdos and Haqimite exiles and apply their knowledge to modernize their measurement and find easier sources for trickier components.

They've transformed their tiny apartment kitchen into a makeshift testing lab, putting the old techniques through rigorous tests and forging new ways to bring their gifts to vampires sorely in need of them. The praise and status in the scene they get for their work makes them feel useful, sometimes more useful when they were alive.

Kettle Battle Referee

It was the Prince's idea to send an actual Tremere to make sure the Run-Offs' weird-ass cook-off didn't end in murder or a Masquerade breach, and to keep an expert eye on their so-called magic. They drew the short straw. Now they're here, trying to judge who's best at telekinetically hurling file cabinets at each other. The worst part is, they're starting to *enjoy* the job. The Duskborn are an



entertaining bunch, at least. They're just not sure if the thin-bloods actually like them, or if they're just waiting to catch them alone and drain them for a ticket to the big leagues.

Lady of the Scene

The Chantry downtown claims it's the true authority on Blood Sorcery, but everyone knows that the real authority dwells half an hour from the city limits. They say she has hundreds, no, *thousands* of years of occult knowledge in her library. She'd never claim that the decrees she makes from her living room are rules the scene must abide by. She's no *Prince!* Still, anyone who disregards her advice might get an unwelcome visit from her followers.

Refugee

They don't use their real name—any of them—or, what hurts worse, don't claim their sire. Ten years ago, their name held power, prestige, and a reputation. Tonight, they let their peers think whatever they like, as long as they provide shelter and feeding grounds, and they're not picky. They're not sure how long it will take before those who hated the power and prestige of their old name find them again. If they just stopped practicing Blood Sorcery, they wouldn't make nearly so many ripples. They might even be able to stop running. And yet, the scene in this town is just so *fascinating...*

Locations

Blood magic aficionados find themselves in a lot of strange locations. Some of those locations got strange only once redworkers started hanging out there, and some were always unnerving, outré, dangerous, or all three. Not every scene has one of each location in this section, but if you're looking for an unconventional setting, consider these.

Botánica

Dispensing everything from Our Lady of Guadalupe floor wash to fresh herbs to back room unlicensed medical care, the spiritual-goods stores in Latin America and Hispanic neighborhoods in North America seem like the last place to find vampires. But ritual candles, exotic oils, and hand-labeled incense cross traditions from Santería to folk Catholicism to thaumaturgy with ease. If you need any kind of plant ingredient—resin, leaves, seeds, perfume, oil, dried, fresh, roots, whole plants in pots—for your ritual or your brew, well, that's literally what *botánica* means: “plant store.”

The informal nature of the botánica's medical services and its tight relationship with the immigrant community above the Rio Grande, expose the store to political pressure from organized crime and from well-connected vampires. Some botánica owners make deals with their local devils so they can continue to serve the neighborhood's better nature; others simply feel the temptation of the money and power offered by Kindred hustlers. Some may even fall for the Sabbat's conversion techniques.



When a young alchemist walks into the store full of novena candles, Spanish prayer books, and hanging wolfsbane sachets, they should never know quite what to expect.

The smart play with a botánica involves befriending the owner or their family: a little protection from worse Kindred, or good prices in cash with respect. Shorthand this with Charisma + Persuasion, or roleplay gaining a new Contact. Without such a connection, the impatient redworker might turn to Larceny: generally Difficulty 3 (4 in a high-crime area) to break in. Finding just what you want requires knowledge of Spanish and Intelligence + Occult (Difficulty 3) to sort through the sacked shelves and racked candles for just the right ingredient. Now, if the botánica owner has previously befriended a mortal hedge magician, or another redworker, or worse yet the Order of St. Leopold's local conventicle, then breaking in can get you more trouble than you bargained for.

Cemetery

Cemeteries are not, on balance, hard to access illicitly, as the residents rarely call the cops. Breaking in is a meager 2 in Difficulty. But which cemetery are you visiting?

There's the really nice one where the historical lords of industry slumber in great mausoleums. It's got a reputation for Satanism that probably derives from the two Caitiff who stayed there in the 70s, but some Tremere swear by its vibes. Sorry, its *thelemic resonance*. If they're right, add a bonus die to Blood Sorcery rolls here. In any event, you can do worse if you need to lay low for a day than crashing out in one of the marble crypts, and the view is evocative.

But maybe you'd prefer the old, no-frills one where the names have weathered off the stones. It's the only place you can get graveyard dirt from someone who died in the 1800s, and no one *ever* checks it. Seriously, in 2011, some old Blood witch drove in one of those mini backhoes to excavate the grave of someone *totally* forgotten. She says a cop car

drove up, looked at her cones and caution tape, and drove away without even rolling down the window.

The *weird* one is the neo-hippie place out in the suburbs that claims to practice 100 percent ecologically sound organic corpse disposal. There are markers, but no bodies. No remnants, no traces, not even any confused ghosts. Whoever runs that place is doing something with those cadavers, and it's probably not organic.

Chemical Supplier

Penny-pinching chemistry teachers and home science kit aficionados across the world can tell you that the easiest way to buy chemicals these days is over the Internet: it only takes two or three weeks. Massive chemical supply houses offer their wares to schools, labs, and manufacturers alike, delivering everything from simple hydrogen peroxide to volatile explosives. Intelligence + Science at Difficulty 2 helps find the right names among the glut of identical plastic bottle pictures.

Perhaps time is of the essence and no one can wait three weeks for a box mostly stuffed with packing peanuts to finally show up at their door. In that case, many of the same chemicals lurk on the shelves of drug stores, groceries, and hardware stores: acetone is in the paint aisle, slaked lime in the water-treatment supplies, borax is in with the cleaning solutions, and saltpeter is in any bag of fertilizer at the garden center. Science experiment books and lab manuals include lists of suggestions on where to get these common chemicals. Firework shops usually sell some big fireworks in the back; they're a good place to find small amounts of the flammable elements that make those bright colors against the night sky. Intelligence + Science at Difficulty 3 makes looking at ingredient lists straightforward.

Trickier chemicals like silver nitrate or mercury won't be so easy to find. On a *really* tight schedule, sometimes it's easier to just break into a chemical warehouse and see what's on the shelves. Larceny + Dexterity at Difficulty 4 gets a door open, but it's Difficulty 4 with Resolve + Science to sort through

all the innumerable cardboard boxes and plastic tubs and figure out what the hell is in them. Or maybe B&E isn't worth it. Bribing a corrupt security guard to open the door is a time-honored tactic, too, with Manipulation + Streetwise at Difficulty 3. Just make sure to seem like a small-time drug manufacturer and promise to share some of the profit.

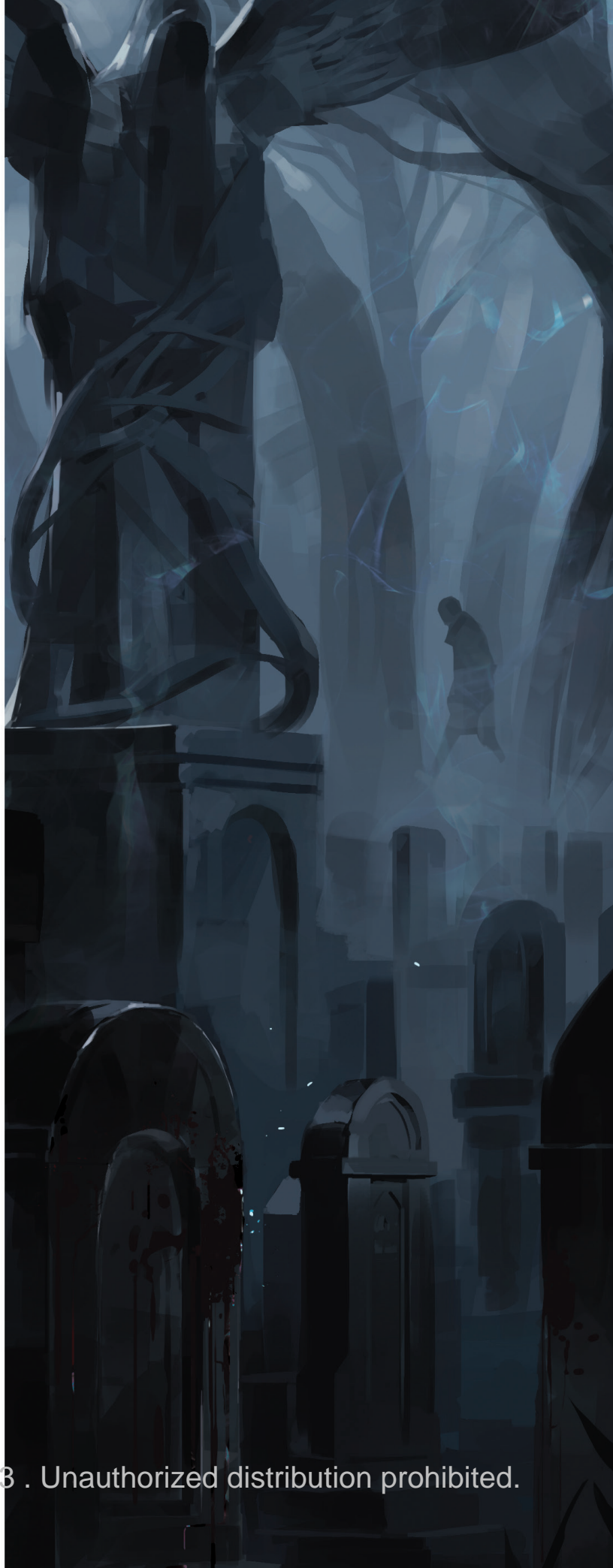
Criminal Front

Late-night visitors are no stranger to the López Chess Academy. The school offers classes in the afternoon and evening—mostly attended by retirees and kids from nearby neighborhoods—and night classes that end at 3 a.m. The late lessons attract a more motley group of people: line cooks, night nurses, writers, and all the oddballs up past midnight. The students and teachers take their classes seriously, though, and the atmosphere inside is one of intense concentration as newbies and old hands alike watch lessons on an old overhead projector and recreate historic matches with each other. On warm nights after the dinner rush, they sometimes set up their boards on the back patio of the pizza parlor that shares a wall.

It's a front, of course. The Chess Academy is a useful side project of a local criminal outfit that uses the club to clean their money: a couple fake students' tuition here and there, and rent they don't actually pay for the building they secretly own. Some of the senior teachers and older students are in on the deal, but legitimately enjoy the games enough to keep coming. They've got connections to people who can find strange and illegal substances, or even just ordinary old illegal substances. Wits + Streetwise or Persuasion (and a good endgame) at Difficulty 2 can get interested parties far in discovering names to listen for and people to find.

Furcus

Mystical energy is real, and it flows through the world. Where these energy channels cross or well up, a nexus forms. When Kindred sorcerers map



the lines connecting these nexi, they recognize the diagram as the Blood Serpent (p. 150), and a nexus becomes a *furcus*, a “fork” where two (or more!) veins of the Earth, *venae terrae*, branch off from a *pedunculus*, a “stem.” Younger vampires who don’t like Latin sometimes just use *nexi* and call *venae terrae* *ley lines*, even though they’re seldom straight.

Furcae manifest all over the city if a Blood sorcerer knows where to look. How they form isn’t well understood: a city fountain becomes a nexus because it’s world renowned, while an abandoned department store becomes one because its empty shelves and winding hallways evoke a sense of liminal space. Some appear to press up from below regardless of what lies above, as deep *venae terrae* flow from (or toward) the resting places of powerful methuselahs. Protecting a *furcus* is as important as claiming one, since it’s not just vampires who hunt for these powerful places.

Finding a *furcus* through intuition or gut feeling is possible but difficult. It requires careful investigation of an area, and a Wits + Occult or Resolve + Awareness test at Difficulty 5. A win reveals whether a vein of the Earth run through the area, and a critical win either reveals the location as a *furcus* or deduces the flow of a *vena terra* nearby if it isn’t. A good map of the *venae terrae* might point a sorcerer to a location to investigate, or even lower the Difficulty of the test by 1.

Auspex provides a surefire way of finding *furcae*. Sense the Unseen lets the user passively detect a *furcus* at Difficulty 3, or a *vena* (along with its direction of flow) at Difficulty 4. Premonition may reveal a *furcus* at the Storyteller’s discretion. Winning a Clairvoyance test always reveals whether a location is a *furcus* before the player asks any questions.

Furcae can increase the chance of a ritual’s success. Most *furcae* provide extra dice for the Ritual pool: a minor *furcus* adds one die, a major *furcus* adds two dice, and the most powerful *furcus* in a city might conceivably add three dice. Legendary *nexi* such as Stonehenge could add even more dice, or provide other magical effects: the Storyteller should

absolutely customize such *furcae* for their chronicle. To unlock this bonus, a Blood sorcerer must perform an awakening and attunement ritual, such as Tiamat Glistens (p. 64).

Grocer

Your local corporate grocery store carries ordinary cuts of beef, pork, lamb and chicken, and perhaps a bison burger or two. To get the really *useful* parts of the animal, turn to your local kosher or halal market, like Valley of Jordan. Organs like hearts and livers won’t get you a second glance at the counter. The butcher they buy from is a friend of the family, so if befriended (or hired), they can get you the offal that’s usually thrown away: bones, horns, spleens, guts. They may even source the occasional bezoar or capon stone.

For fish, head to the 24-hour Park-and-Shop market in Chinatown. They sell good, fresh fish at low prices, and have some species that are hard to find at big stores: eel, live crab, turtle, and more. The person behind the counter more than likely knows the guy who gets their stock, and can perhaps be persuaded to source some fresh kelp or even shark on the down-low.

On the vegetarian side, an organic or health food shop like Sunrise Market has more herbs and supplements than you can shake a stick at, and some of them do far more than simply help with digestion. They’ve got infused vinegars and wines for sale, too, and a selection of seeds in their gardening section that you can peruse. Grow-lights keep plants and herbs fresh even when you can’t put them in the sun yourself.

Roll whichever Social skill pool best fits the interaction, probably Persuasion or Subterfuge. Establishing a business relationship is just a Difficulty 2 test, but the more successes, the easier to find someone who can source unusual ingredients.

Holy Ground

People are beings of faith. They express that faith on *holy ground*, places like churches, temples, mosques, or pilgrimage sites. Even the simplest holy ground is an emotionally significant place. Sacred ground,



from every religious tradition, births much of humankind's rituals and artifacts.

Holy ground is also important for Blood sorcerers and alchemists. Blood magic is intertwined with mortal magical practices, which in turn entangle with human faith. If a ritual or a formula relies on the symbols of a mortal faith, performing them on that faith's sacred ground might help speed things along. Some holy grounds have blessed resources like pious relics or holy water. If a Lick isn't the sort to burst into hives (or flames) when exposed to religious symbols, these resources serve as components for powerful workings.

How much security a holy ground has depends on what it's holding. A simple church keeps its doors locked and might have a security guard, but a cathedral could have a full security detail as well as video surveillance on its perimeter. There's also a higher-than-normal chance of a face-off against a mortal with True Faith (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 222).

Scavenging holy ground requires quick thinking

and quicker hands, and is a Dexterity + Occult test. Its Difficulty begins at 3, and increases depending on the location's importance and security.

Holy ground can quicken, even halve, the speed of a Ritual's casting. Other Rituals, such as Calling the Beast, might be impossible on sacred ground. Whatever effect it has, it's different from regular magic, and that might be worth investigating on its own.

Holy Ground Ratings

True holy ground has a rating from one to five dots: one dot being a neighborhood religious structure or consecrated graveyard, three dots being a major religious establishment or venerated site such as Notre Dame du Paris or the Six Grandfathers in the Black Hills, and five dots being a Holy of Holies such as the Wailing Wall or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or the Kaaba in Mecca.

Holy ground has no mechanical effect on vampires or other supernatural creatures, except those with the appropriate Folkloric Block Flaw (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 182), though it may make them

uneasy or irritated. Until, that is, someone with True Faith stands on it; at such times, the Faithful adds the dots of the holy ground to their own True Faith. The total still cannot exceed five dots.

If the Faithful comes from a different tradition from the ground (a Catholic priest in a Hindu temple, for example), or behave contrary to the ground's purpose (no gunfights in a Buddhist stupa!) they generally cannot add Holy Ground to their Faith.

For more Holy Ground mechanics, see **Second Inquisition**, p. 39.

Hospital

Blood crafters don't just get blood from hospitals. Hospitals have so much more; they're the original big box stores of redworking. The cabinets and fridges hold exotic pharmaceuticals, chelating metals, and chemicals useful for alchemy, and narcotics for keeping the subject of a ritual still. Things removed from patients—tumors, organs, bones, bezoars, bullets—hold great redworking potential. The radiology department keeps stocks of isotopes that alchemists dream of feeding to their athanors. Sheets and pillows mortals died on have great magical significance for necromancers. One Stericycle box from one overworked surgical ward has enough bone fragments, hair, human fat, and bloody latex for almost any flesh ritual you could imagine. The Plague Oracles (p. 114) want contaminated sharps, or better yet, disease cultures.

Finally, most hospitals have a big incinerator to dispose of all those contaminated items safely. Every ambitious Kindred finds themselves in need of a big incinerator from time to time.

Thus, breaking into hospitals becomes *almost* routine to the supply-conscious redworker. Security in healthcare ranges from so-so to paranoid, depending on the expense accounts of the clientele. Intersecting with the security is the degree of mystic influence: often by vampires, but some other supernaturals also like to get their sticky fingers on sick people.

Laboratory

The university's new Prynne Center for the Biological Sciences is stuffed to the gills with top-of-the-line, intuitive, pristine equipment: shiny centrifuges and chemical cabinets, and so many, many beautiful, empty vials! The building has thick walls, key-pad locking doors and at least a few security guards to keep wanderers away from those shiny chemical cabinets, which makes getting in tricky but not impossible (Larceny tests for entering take Difficulty 4). Enough students, visiting professors, and even tour groups troop regularly through the building that an unfamiliar guest glimpsed in the labs gets noted but not necessarily thrown out. The shelves are well-stocked, so if the urge to experiment with some new formulae strikes, there's a likely chance (Wits + Science) that at least one desired chemical per success hides somewhere in the labeled bins.

Next door is the old, dilapidated biology building that the university planning committee constantly promises to tear down sometime in the next two years. Under flickering yellow lights, grad students of less-favored professors scurry along the empty, strangely warm hallways and hope for an office transfer. The equipment in this building is old, finicky, and mostly unattended. The doors lock firmly, but there's nary a security guard to be seen. Larceny tests start at Difficulty 3. The students who work here tend to be mostly nocturnal and mostly recognize each other, so they remember a stranger passing them in the halls.

Museum

The museums of the city are stuffed to the gills with relics of sacred sites looted, built over, or lost to the ravages of time. What could be more enticing to anyone looking to harness the energy of a furcus, restore a sacred site to its ancient potency, or just establish cred in a hurry with the scene's power players? You need careful research to figure out what exactly *is* powerful, though—an Intelligence + Occult test at Difficulty 3



Hospital Security

Wealth	Low	Light	Heavy
Rich	<p>There are cameras and prominent security and those smiling attendants are quite sharp-eyed, but they interpret anything they see as "probably a kidnapper or a pervert." You have the place to yourself. Composure + Subterfuge (Difficulty 3) or Medicine (Difficulty 2) to pass as an orderly on another shift.</p>	<p>Here you have an occult presence that visits. The guards are uneasy, the orderlies are spreading rumors and the good-looking receptionist has resumes out. Probably you have a Ventrue making ghouls of city council chairs, or Hecata necromancers doing... whatever fuckery they do. You can probably avoid the other entity or make a deal. Wits + Awareness (Difficulty 4) to stay out of the way of orderlies and... others.</p>	<p>At this stage, the weird is on-site 24/7. It's an undead doctor scrubbing in to surgery under Obfuscate, to lap gore from incisions. It's a night-scheduled bureaucrat who never leaves, just fudges the books to cover up "misplaced" blood bags, "spilled" narcotics, and "heart attacks" among the at-risk. Whatever is dwelling here, it's paranoid and it's ready for incursions. Resolve + Stealth (Difficulty 5) to stay on task, get your goodies, and not get involved in whatever that thing is.</p>
Poor	<p>Your basic candy store for vampires. Do whatever you want, no one cares about these people except each other and they have no clout. What, like some vigilante dickbag is going to take advantage of all the flammable oxygen tanks? Unlikely. Manipulation + Intimidation (Difficulty 2) sends the signal to everyone not to mess with you, and you'll be out of their hair in no time.</p>	<p>Someone else has found society's brutal inequalities very useful, and they may not want to share. (If they had their act together enough to negotiate shares, they'd be at a rich hospital.) If you're sneaky, you may be able to get around them, especially since the mortal security is lax. Dexterity + Stealth (Difficulty 3) gets you into the stairwell or gurney elevator (or your famulus or homunculus into the air ducts) without being tagged.</p>	<p>Maybe the worst. The thing occupying this place of pain and death isn't pursuing a goal, it is tied to the site. This is where you get Kingdom Hospital shit: dozens of powerful ghosts; vampires with their flesh warped through the electrical conduits; sorcerers whose ghastly experiments left them inhuman and unalive. This is not a place you go to get things—or to get better, really. It's a nightmare you defeat, or more likely just survive. Or, most likely of all, fall into forever. It's going to take a lot more than one test, or one die pool, to get something magically valuable out of this supernatural free-fire zone.</p>

at least. Many of the artifacts preserved in museums have lost their power over the centuries, though they remain beautiful and meaningful objects. But some still have the potential inside them, like a tuned instrument waiting to be played. They just need the right note to resonate with....

Museum security has tightened up in the last decades. The big art museum downtown has bag checks for guests and staff, security guards who pass through every fifteen minutes, and cameras everywhere—not to mention the heat sensors and alarm systems on all the art in the galleries. Behind the scenes is more relaxed, but still tight. Thick doors with keycard lock systems record the identities of the people who pass through them, and cameras stare down the hallways. The loading docks beneath the scowling griffins on its exterior are the only places that statues and artifacts pass through between armored car and a curator's waiting arms. The small local art and history museum might have some remarkable artifacts as well, guarded by fanatical curator-slash-preservationists who know every nook and cranny of their domain. Despite

their weaker security, the smaller building and well-acquainted staff mean that both small and large museums are at equal Difficulty 5 to break and enter using Dexterity + Larceny. Museums close at night, except for gala fundraisers: the cover of a crowd and the opportunities of shadow amount to the same Difficulty after dark.

Nature Preserve

Nature preserves are parks, forests, or anywhere where urban development takes a pause and nature resumes its dominance of the world. Some lie within city limits, and others are only a short drive out. As any Farmer (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 177) knows, nature preserves are secluded and perfect for getting things done in secret. This is perfect for Blood sorcerers whose rituals tend to be distasteful, noisy, or flashy. It's also great for gathering and cultivating resources for alchemists. Why bother running an errand for a Lick to get some deadly nightshade when there's a patch growing only half a mile out?





As useful as they are, nature preserves are dangerous. Even a park within city limits is still cut off from the rest of civilization. That makes it prime territory for Lupines who don't take any intruder lightly, let alone an undead one. A preserve's privacy works both ways. No one easily sees a Blood sorcerer or an alchemist at work, but no one gets a glimpse of anyone attacking them either.

Gathering natural resources such as plants, animal body parts, or Animal Resonance from a nature preserve is a Stamina + Survival Test, its Difficulty determined by the preserve's size and how close it is to civilization. Smaller, closer, safer preserves have higher Difficulties: a more impoverished ecology might require Difficulty 5 to harvest the exact ingredients you need, while a huge national forest or a pasture half a night's ride out could be Difficulty 3, assuming you want to spend the whole night searching through it.

Occult Bookstore

Page Turner is a used bookstore inside an old theater. It spans three floors (although one is the converted balcony) and a basement. They carry everything from comics to music theory, classic literature to old paperback romance novels. The basement level is devoted to art books, pulp science fiction, new age, and occult books. A few of these are even legit, classic texts on magic or alchemy by writers like George Ripley, Michael Scot, and al-Kindi. In general, the rule of thumb is that if a book can be found online, it can be found at Page Turner. Buyers of unusual, self-published or hand copied books need to convince the affable but busy rare-book dealers on staff to find them copies at obscure estate sales or book fairs. Use any Social pool that seems appropriate at Difficulty 3.

The Third Eye bookstore occupies a squat old stone building tucked between a dilapidated gym and a thrift store. Their inventory is entirely occult and new age books. The store has just four rooms, but the shelves are stuffed so high and close together it feels more like the shop is just one thin, winding hallway moving in and among the book stacks. Two staff members amble along the aisles: the owner,

an elderly blind man who navigates the store by memory and a system of paper slips inserted between books, and the cranky young man who runs the shop on Mondays and Tuesdays. They keep odd and unpredictable hours. Looking for rare books here is a time-consuming but usually worthwhile task, but sometimes requires convincing the bibliophile man at the till to actually part with a volume. Use any Social skill that seems appropriate at Difficulty 2.

Buyers at any store must use Intelligence + Blood Sorcery, Thin-Blood Alchemy, or Occult at Difficulty 2 to know which books are actually worthwhile.

Public Market

So where, specifically, is the scene? It exists everywhere redworkers meet, from after hours micro breweries, to the basement stacks of the university library, to that vegan yogurt shop nobody ever seems to go to, but it happens where buyer meets seller and cash meets barrelhead. Generally, this means a public market. Or rather, in the corner of the public market: past the racks of weirdly cheap Blu-Rays and electronics, through the maze of food stalls, behind the big wall of tires for some reason, you'll find the sunglasses dude selling perfume or body oil in little vials off a purple tablecloth, or the girl watching a telenovela over a shelf of weird looking pendants with a big fridge in back.

Those are the sellers; if they smell vitae on your breath or you know the secret handshake or say "bru" with just the right inflection. The vendors' code, as eloquently enshrined at Chicago's now defunct Maxwell Street Market, is "We Cheat You Fair." *Caveat emptor*, even—especially—when you're buying blood in styrofoam cups, or elixirs in vape pens, or getting a magical ritual tattooed on your leg. Keep your wits (or rather Wits + Streetwise or Subterfuge) about you.

Common in colder cities, *indoor market halls* fill enormous cavern-like buildings that often look like someone threw them up temporarily 60 years ago. Immigrant families building businesses, folks who don't want to pay retail for just-as-good-as-Chanel, hipster artisans, guys who saw something fall off a truck: they man tables, booths, and even tiny huts

jammed into this labyrinth. Pickpockets, con artists, and drug dealers do great here, though a code of ethics generally keeps their depredations focused on the customers, not the vendors.

Street markets have all of the above except the roof, and operate most vibrantly in the less-salubrious parts of town until the authorities and do-gooders *urban renew* or *heritage district* them out of existence. They move to a worse street, and things get bad for a while, and this might be when the pale guy who sells something in Igloo coolers gets a table instead of having to hang around the back of the live butcher shop. The best thing about a street market, from the seller's perspective, is that someone comes around unexpectedly—the filth, the Scourge, whoever—you can pile the good stuff in your van and drive out the back way much faster. In many locales, *night markets* take over street markets after dark: more street food and less raw meat or vegetables, a different sort of souvenirs, and of course, a better class of Kindred clientele.

Specialty Shop

Imagine a pet store that caters to high-end collectors of saltwater exotics. Is there *anyone* you'd see in there and think they don't belong? An executive, a sweating woman in last decade's fashion, a youth in hip-hop club gear... any one of them tracks as really, *really* into fish. The same goes for stereo gear, sports memorabilia, or offbeat antiques.

That's why specialty shops are the perfect cover for even *weirder* stuff. A hot shop for blown glass is already so far outside ordinary experience that having people show up there at 3:00 a.m. is par for the course. If it's actually an auction where vampires angrily bid on Rh-null blood and alchemical paraphernalia, no cop who'd get suspicious knows enough about glass blowing to call bullshit when they knock on the door and get told, *Oh, we have to heat these Venetian strands slowly or you get fissures that flaw the color, it's going to be hours before we can bend these, nothing weird here officer! Also, those aren't bong, they're decorative ewers!*





Add in the trend that many small, hyperspecialized stores are one rent payment from being a bitter memory. If some stranger offers a week's profit for the owner to look away one night, who's going to say no? Quirky folks scrambling to make a dollar off their combined TV repair/ model train/ international courier business might actually be into it if you told them you're bending reality with the occult power of mortal blood.

A Bloody Business

Every city's blood craft scene is a chaotic hellhole in its own way, but one thing is certain: redworkers need *more*. Maybe it's power, components, knowledge, or time, but anyone dabbling in the arts always seeks more. Whether they buy it from the scene's market, strongarm someone into giving up their secrets, or snatch it from the bony fingers of some long-torpid elder, it's never a cake walk.

Setting Your Terms

Level ratings and rarities are important, but the best way to determine how complicated finding and obtaining a desired working or ingredient should be is by its narrative significance. Think about the form of narrative time that best fits the object of the coterie's desire: offscreen, a single test, a narrative scene, a session, or a story. The following mechanics focus on tests and scenes, but can expand into sessions and stories.

For many chronicles, the narrative significance of cocktails, rituals, or components has a distribution like a bell curve: offscreen and story on the edges, with tests, scenes, and sessions on the bell.

Offscreen

Best for common components with no narrative significance. Use sparingly for unique components, and almost never for formulae or rituals.

Test

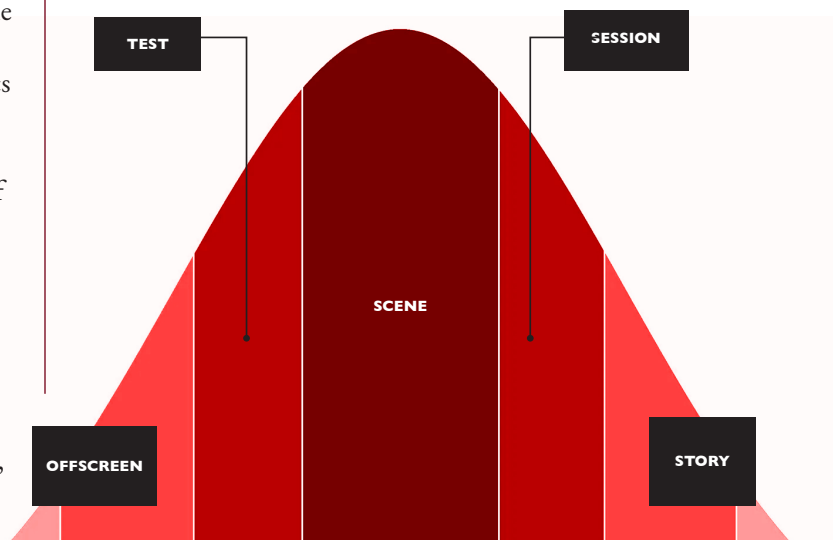
If obtaining components might have narrative consequences, but doesn't immediately demand a scene of its own, use a single test. For rituals commonly taught in the domain, or a formula temptingly left unattended on a lab counter, a test might obtain them. Just remember, sometimes the dice make a test into a scene when you least expect it.

Scene

Most rituals, formulae, and significant components deserve a scene of their own to obtain. Characters go out of their way to get them and face immediate, dramatic complications if they fail. Formulae and rituals already purchased with experience often still get discovered or trained in a scene, which then establishes supporting characters or hazards that can pay off later in the chronicle.

Session

Components, formulae, and rituals that take an entire session to get are either well hidden from the coterie—usually for good reason—or the act of getting them spurs other figures, such as rivals, hunters, and other powerful Kindred, into action.



These blood craft aspects have real potential to shift the balance of power in your chronicle.

Story

These are the one-in-a-million prizes, with guaranteed chronicle-changing consequences. Every session in this story either brings the coterie closer to its prize, introduces obstacles to the prize, or foreshadows the mind-boggling implications of what might happen if the coterie gets it—or if they fail. The item may be the key to one of the Mysteries (pp. 148–155), or vital to a Prince or Baron’s plans.

Scavenging

When it’s literal, it’s something like dumpster diving. When it’s a euphemism, it’s referring to theft. The parade of consequences that befell the Kindred have left plenty of abandoned chantries, lost caches, and missing texts. It’s a gold rush for thaumaturgic lore if a Lick’s willing to put their unlife on the line. When redworkers scavenge, it boils down to diplomacy, gleaning, or robbery.

Handle this like you would most uses of the game systems. Unless the Storyteller determines otherwise, scavenging is a test or contest with a base Difficulty. If the component, formula, or ritual is significant to

a scene, session, or story, this test occurs at the end, or when most dramatically appropriate. Each obstacle (see the examples below) increases the Difficulty by 1 to a maximum of +3. The Storyteller may also increase the Difficulty for a separate, active danger to the scavenger, such as another enemy present in that scene, session, or story, or an immediate threat such as a fire. Otherwise, they may require the scavenger or their coterie to block or overcome that danger with a separate test or scene.

Success brings the scavenger a reward, and points of margin either increase its quality, provide an extra copy, or bring a temporary advantage such as a Social reputation bonus with other redworkers. A good rule of thumb: the temporary advantage lasts one iteration shorter than the item’s significance. A ritual that takes a session to uncover provides a Social boost for one scene, for example. Messy criticals also provide rewards, but might not bring additional benefits due to whatever awful event follows.

As with most standard feats, if a scavenging test has at least one success and is not a bestial failure, it always wins at a cost (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 121). The scavenger faces a consequence for their reward, which intensifies with each missing success. Consequences prove either temporary setbacks in the narrative or longer-lasting flaws.





Starting Scavenging Difficulties

Narrative Significance	Starting Difficulty
Single Test	2
Focus of Scene	3
Focus of Session	4
Focus of Story	5

Diplomacy

Kindred with a little leverage can get surprisingly far by just asking. Sure, it's even odds that they get deceived or enslaved, but it keeps the conscience clean.

Suggested Dice Pools: Charisma + Etiquette, Wits + Insight, Manipulation + Persuasion

Suggested Obstacles: Opponent has higher Status than scavenger; opponent suspects scavenger has nothing to offer in return; opponent is a known liar or politically opposed to the scavenger.

Possible Rewards: Blood Sorcery instructor, open supply line to a magical component, Contacts, Mawla.

Possible Consequences: Scavenger reveals a social weakness, opponent demands an immediate favor, opponent coerces scavenger into the start of a Blood Bond.

Gleaning

Not every secret's location is documented, and cities hold decades of hidden bounty. The *finders, keepers* philosophy of the scene makes claiming things easy. A Lick's just gotta get there first.

Suggested Dice Pools: Dexterity + Streetwise, Wits + Investigation, Composure + Occult

Suggested Obstacles: Location is hidden by codes or puzzles; location is protected by law enforcement; location has leftover traps or wards; prize has horrific revelations for scavenger.

Possible Rewards: Lead to another ritual or formula, unique alchemical tools, mysterious talismans.

Possible Consequences: Attention from law enforcement, scavenger trapped inside abandoned

location, someone else claims the turf and objects to scavenging on it, scavenger learns a secret of blood craft no Kindred was ever meant to know.

Robbery (Grave or Otherwise)

One of the comforting truths of the redworking scene is that everyone steals each other's stuff if it's not nailed down. It's a dangerous job, but what's worse: final death, or knowing that piece of shit Warlock's Scythian torc is just sitting there in a drawer at the chantry?

Suggested Dice Pools: Dexterity + Larceny, Manipulation + Subterfuge, Strength + Intimidation

Suggested Obstacles: Haven has tight security; haven's owner is aware of scavenger's presence; rival thieves.

Possible Rewards: Something else hidden with it: a fully translated ancient grimoire, proprietary formulae, long-lost Kindred artifact.

Possible Consequences: Capture by haven security, violent clash with rival thieves, sudden awakening of the haven's owner from torpor.

Making Deals and Slinging Wares

In most markets, the concept of a clean deal is a fantasy. Redworking scenes don't usually have formal structure: their markets get managed either by self-appointed judges—a Banu Haqim often takes this role for themselves—or by hope and tit-for-tat game theory: you can't cheat too often and expect anyone else to deal with you. Sales aren't on the record, and there are no refunds.

Still, markets are a great place to get what a redworker needs. A bad deal still beats scavenging's perils, and some markets are semi-anonymous, giving sectarian Kindred a chance to see what mojo the other sides are packing. Instant monetary, magical, or political gain doesn't hurt either.

Value and Currency

Who can put a price on blood craft? Everyone, with these two guidelines. The Storyteller has the final say on the price of anything, but here are a few general rules for buying or selling blood workings.

Dot for Dot, Level for Level. When in doubt, use the dots or level on a character's sheet to determine how much to charge or sell something in game terms. Learning the first dot of Blood Sorcery might cost a Resources dot for a few sessions; learning a new Level 3 formula might mean giving up the use of your 3 dot Mawla for the rest of the story, or trading for a grimoire holding a Level 3 ritual. Just performing a ritual or brewing up an elixir without teaching it costs half the dots of teaching it, rounded up or down to fit the customer's urgency. (The player still has to pay the cost in Experience; the above is just the cost for the character.)

These prices don't have to be equivalent, especially if the character haggles (see below). When using dot values, make sure they have a narrative equivalent appropriate to the exchange. A dot of Resources could be a roll of cash, but it could also be enough black tar heroin for a thin-blood alchemist's pet project.

Boons. The common currency of many cities, use boons when nothing on a character sheet feels appropriate for the exchange. Teaching a Level 5 ritual or formula almost always requires a session's worth of action (at least) to pay off.

Haggling

When neither party can agree to a price, it's time to haggle. Mechanically, haggling works the same whether the player's character is looking for a lower price or a stronger profit.

Haggling is a social conflict that begins when neither party agrees to the price of a component, formula, or ritual. Each opponent first states their preferred price and builds their social conflict pool, usually involving Manipulation, Resolve, Finance, or Persuasion. A social combat ensues, as the winner of the first turn inflicts Superficial Willpower damage on the loser.

At the start of the next turn, the previous turn's loser can choose to either accept the deal or walk away, ending

the conflict. If not, the loser begins with a counteroffer and the conflict continues. At the end of three turns, the character with the most Willpower damage must either accept the current price or walk away.

Using mental Disciplines during a haggle isn't forbidden, but some scenes consider it a major dick move. Winning this way carries consequences: everything from prices getting jacked up on you, to losing dice in other social contest pools, to the local Ministry mindfucker deciding to make you a special project. Such consequences can last for the rest of the story, if not longer.

Kettle Battle

Get enough people into a craft in one place and someone's going to ask: Who's better? When thin-blood alchemists need to know who's best, they throw a *kettle battle*.

Kettle battles are a mix between a cooking competition and a hip-hop cypher. They emerged with Thin-Blood Alchemy and happen in cities with large thin-blooded populations. Since battles get messy, they also happen outside the eyes of authority. This might mean at the underground rave club in the old factory district, the abandoned airstrip outside town, or in a mostly built, but entirely bankrupt, empty suburban subdivision.

Depending on the scene, there might be an ad hoc kettle battle every weekend, or every full moon, or during the city's big festive times, such as Carnival, Christmas, big football game nights, to blend in among the normie crowds and parties. Most scenes have battles on the summer solstice and on Alchemy's Birthday: the closest weekend to March 12th.

Each city's battle style is different, but most kettle battles break down into two phases: boasting and brewing.

First, battlers show off their achievements, such as the health and state of their athanors, or rare and powerful formulae they've created. It's a full-on exhibition, both to intimidate other battlers and bring new thin-bloods into the craft.

Next, the kettle battle's organizer—usually a



Suggested Boon Values

Boon Type	Value
Trivial	Common magical components, performing a common Level 1 or 2 ritual or formula for another, a hit of El or another sangria
Minor	Uncommon magical components, performing Level 2–3 rituals or formulae for another; teaching Level 1–2 rituals or formulae, copies of Level 1–2 rituals or formulae, enough sangria for the whole coterie for a session
Major	Rare or unique components, performing Level 4–5 rituals or formulae for another; teaching Level 3–4 rituals or formulae, copies of Level 3–4 rituals or formulae

big-name alchemist or someone important to the thin-blood community—gets the battlers together and introduces the theme, which ranges from direct requests like, “Burn as much of this stop sign as you can, points for speed and color” to vague requests like, “Show me what you can do with this guy’s blood.” The organizer gives the battlers time to gather materials and brew, from half a night to three. Bigger name organizers usually hold longer battles, for bigger rewards social and otherwise.

Once time’s up, the battlers reconvene, they imbibe or apply, and show off their skills. The alchemist who impresses the crowd most wins. Everyone gets ripped to the tits on El or other sangria and parties until dawn: or at least until the vampires in charge break things up.

Mechanically, a kettle battle breaks down like this: **Boasting:** Boasting is a free-for-all Social Conflict. Opponents are looking to psych each other out. Charisma + Performance and Manipulation + Intimidation are the usual dice pools, but battlers can also use Charisma + Alchemy as a social attack, for instance. After three rounds, the character with the least Willpower damage receives a three dice bonus for the distillation roll in the next phase, with those in second and third place receiving a +2 and +1 bonus respectively. Bonuses gained here can’t be used outside of this kettle battle.

Brewing: Most of this phase is narrative. Battlers gather what they need, manipulate mortal vessels if they have any, and prepare their brew. Characters can use either a formula they already know or create a new one (pp. 84–87). To qualify as a winner,

a character must gain at least 4 successes on a distillation roll. Of these characters, the highest margin wins the kettle battle.

Rewards: Prizes depend on the scale of the battle. Small or insignificant battles net the winner’s margin as a bonus toward a relevant dice pool (probably a Social pool, but the Storyteller should get creative) for the rest of the story. Large or important battles net the winner’s margin as a pool of Resources to draw on for the rest of the story, separate from any Resources they already have. Huge or hyped-up battles net the winner’s margin in Status (The Scene), which applies in full among alchemists, and is one dot less among Blood sorcerers. Kettle battle winners gain a maximum of a five dice bonus or 5 Background dots.



Making the Scene

Every city has a blood craft scene, and though common elements abound, no two are quite alike. Whether the redworking scene plays a big role in your chronicle, or just serves as a springboard for other stories, it's a good idea to map it out beforehand using the Scene Map: a wide-angle blood-crafty version of the Relationship Map (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, pp. 142–144). Then start the story brew boiling with background Trends, and map the changes with Heat. Using the Scene Map, Trends, and Heat, you can create a redworking scene as unique as a fingerprint.

Scene Mapping

A Scene Map is a lot like a Relationship Map. It's got a wider scope, pulling back to a top-level view of the city's blood craft scene. You might be tempted to start one right after your Relationship Map, but consider playing a few sessions first. This lets the troupe work out story elements they'd like to see in their scene. Ideally, the entire troupe should participate in a Scene Map's creation, but the setup works just as well if a Storyteller must do it by their lonesome. Creating a Scene Map involves seven steps:

Step One: The Stars of the Show

The scene can't exist without the characters. A character is a player's eyes, ears, and fangs in *Vampire*, so the redworking scene in your game should tie into the coterie's nightly existence.

Just like a Relationship Map, put your characters on it first. Beneath their names, write a short phrase describing their place in the scene. This might be something like *member of the local chantry* or *new thin-blood alchemist*. Characters not directly tied to blood craft connect into the scene in unique ways



and might want to look at *No Magic Please, We're Ventrue* for ideas (pp. 158–160).

It's possible that a player doesn't want their character to be in the scene or can't think of any good ideas now. That could extend to the rest of the troupe. That's fine! When the coterie does enter the redworking scene, the map is ready for them.

If any established relationships in the coterie involve blood craft, put those on the map as well

Step Two: Find Some Overlaps

Now look to your Relationship Map and your character sheets. Are there any Storyteller characters directly tied to the coterie who should be on the map? If so, put them on it along with a short phrase that describes what they do there, and any relevant connections from the Relationship Map.

If you're having trouble, here's some ways established supporting cast members might be involved in the scene:

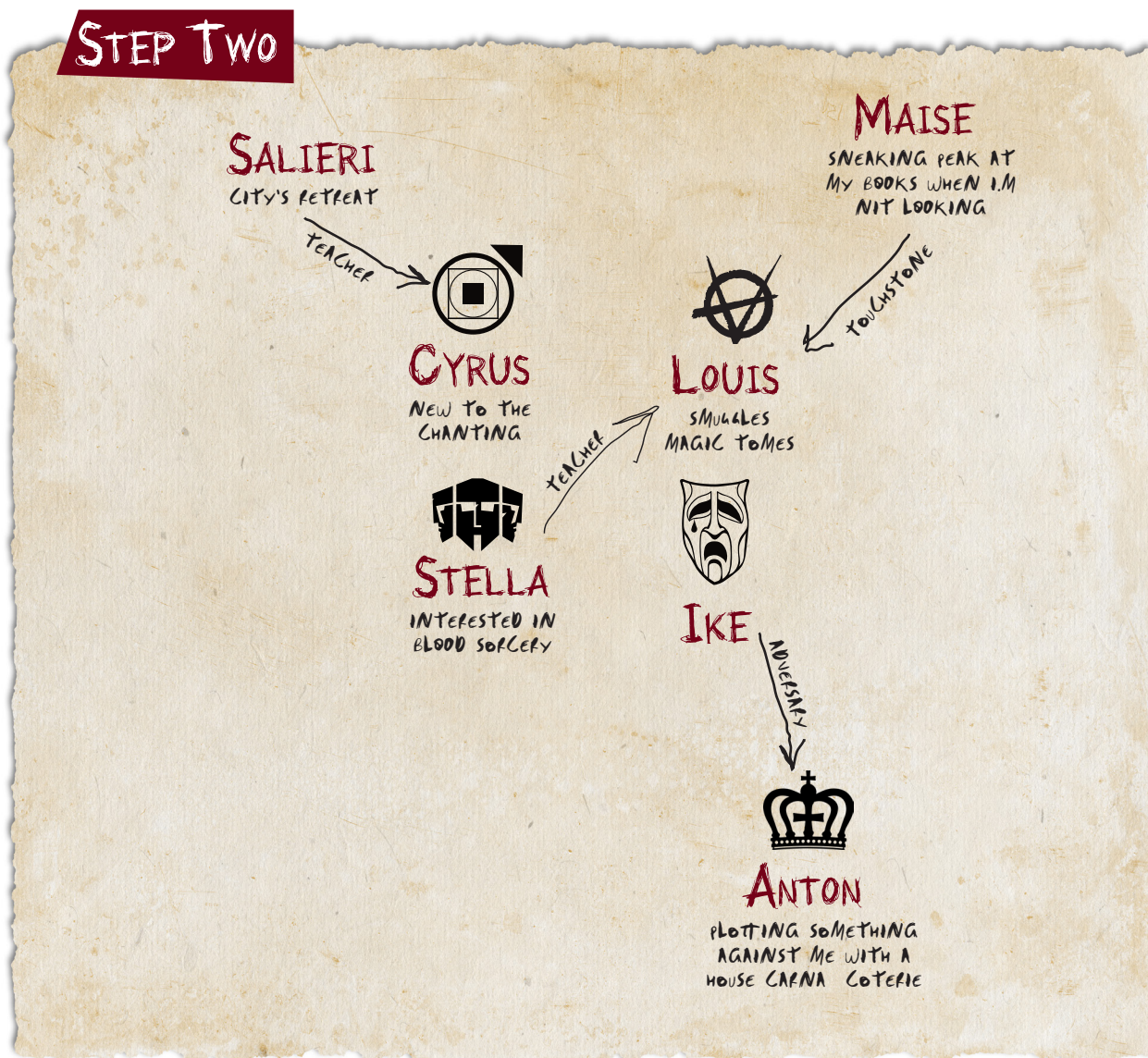


- **Allies, Contacts, and Retainers** might be in the scene if a player's character is. They might not know why their associate needs seventy-five pounds of glassware moved pronto, or why they need a full analysis of the Central City Graveyard, but they do it.
- **Mawali** might be well connected to the rest of the scene, or even a major figure. If your Mawla is in a clan whose members are likely to study (pp. 93–95), consider putting them here.
- If a **sire** isn't a Mawla and is present in the

character's unlife, the scene might be where they spend their time when not dealing with their childe's antics.

- **Touchstones** probably aren't in the scene, but in blood craft focused chronicles, the threat that the scene could come to *them* should be present for at least one.
- At least one **Enemy** or **Adversary** should be in the scene, if the coterie has them. If a player can't think of a good reason why their character would care about the scene, putting an Enemy or Adversary here is a great hook.

STEP TWO



Step Three: Recruit Sellers

It's time to add some new faces to the scene. Look through the Sellers section (pp. 21–32). Give every player a chance to add a seller archetype to the map. Give the seller a name, a clan (if they're Kindred), and a short phrase describing what they're selling. Not everyone needs to pick a seller if they don't want to, but the map should have at least

three sellers. If any already established supporting character would sell something in the scene and isn't already on the map, you can choose them instead. Unless a relationship immediately stands out, don't worry about making a connection until the coterie meets the sellers in play. This goes for buyers and breakers as well.





Step Four: Entice Buyers

Look through the Buyers section (p. 14–21), and just like before, let each player have a chance to add a buyer archetype to the map. Give them a name,

a clan if appropriate, and a short phrase describing what they want. There should be at least three, and players should feel free to pick someone already on the map as also a seller.



Step Five: Scout Locations

Go around one more time with the Locations section (pp. 33–43) and let each player put a location on the map. Name it and write a short description of the location and where it is in the city. If you're playing in a real-world city, note the actual neighborhood or street it's on. Once at least three locations are on the map, attach them to at least one character already on the map. This can include players' characters.

If the players attach multiple Storyteller characters to one location, they become another coterie in the blood craft scene, and the location is part of their Domain.

If a player's character gets attached to one of these locations along with the other coterie, the character might have struck a deal to use that location, work with that coterie regularly, or might even be part of their coterie *in addition* to the player coterie.

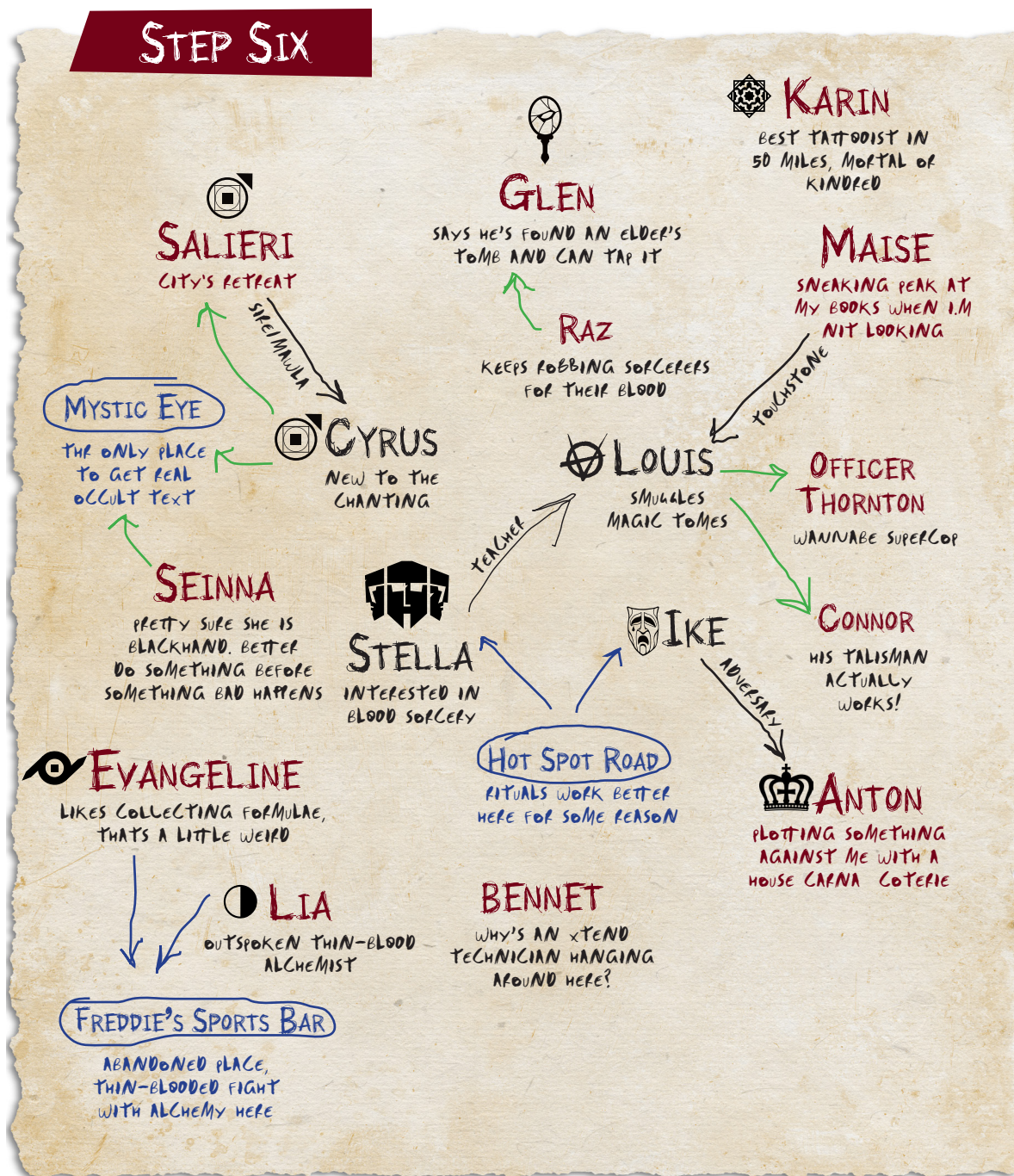




Step Six: Bring in the Breakers

If the Storyteller approves of the troupe making their own enemies, follow the same process as Step Three and Four with the Breakers section (pp. 121–127). Otherwise, the Storyteller selects at least

three breakers on their own, perhaps on a private version of the scene map. Name and describe them. Attach each breaker to a character or a location. These people or places become their initial targets.



Step Seven: Name Your Scene

If you'd like to, name your scene. Scenesters don't usually get to name their scene, outsiders do, so either consider what the rest of the city would call what you've made, or let any player whose character

isn't in the scene name it. This might be from the neighborhood (Compton Bru), from its major celebrity or most important redworker (The Montez Crowd), or just a cool phrase or old band name (Simply Red).





Trends

Now that the scene has a cast of characters and a few important locations, it's time to figure out what drives your scene.

Every scene has their internal narrative: who's hot, who's not, what's in, what's out. *Trends* abstract these internal narratives. Think of them as the headlines you'd see if your scene had a zine. They exist to let the Storyteller build a vibrant scene with lots of things going on, and to keep track of them throughout the chronicle.

Trends can drive story, either when players decide to interfere or profit from them, or when the Storyteller wants to move a background element into the main plotline. They act as reservoirs of possible complications, as options for a sudden night or two to fill before something else comes to fruition, or even as elements to drop into dialogue: "Sorry I'm late, man, but the Ace just dropped a new sangria and it hits hard."

Look over the Relationship Map and the Scene Map, and decide on three Trends as a troupe. Trends break down into a few broad categories:

- **Beefs** are rivalries between two figures in the scene, either Kindred or whole coterie. Whatever they're fighting about, it isn't going to solve itself.
- **Celebrities** are figures who've captured the scene's interest. They don't have to be in the scene. Sometimes somebody just settles on a furcus.
- **Fads** are crazes taking the scene by storm, usually involving approaches to Blood Sorcery, wild new ingredients to play with, or certain kinds of formulae.
- **Projects** are sorcerous or alchemical workings with a lot of hype. They're not ready yet, but a lot of Kindred are waiting to use them or steal them.
- **Threats** are things that could get the entire scene in trouble. FIRSTLIGHT raids, a Prince crackdown, Anarch civil war, or some massive, non-vampiric supernatural threat.

Once you have three Trends down, write them at the top of the map. Draw five empty boxes next to the coolest or most dangerous of them; draw four empty boxes next to the others. Leave plenty of space for more Trends; they tend to arise in play. If something cool or dangerous organically comes up, perhaps from a player improvising at the table, write it in as a Trend: that's how they happen, after all!

The Storyteller can add new Trends to a Scene Map at any time they wish, based on events that take place in the chronicle. There is no limit to how many Trends can be in play in a blood craft scene at any given time. Turn Trends into core story elements, or keep them in the background; it's up to you.

Heat and Change

Your scene is many things, but it can't be *stable*.

Thirty years ago, Thin-Blood Alchemy as we know it didn't exist. A thousand years before that, the Tremere were a dark dream in the minds of magi. The changes in your scene might be smaller in scale, but no less dramatic. The world is alive, even if the Kindred aren't. The players' characters are agents of change, but they aren't the only ones.

Track changes to the scene using *Heat*. Heat represents how fresh and exciting a Trend is, and how soon it cools off. It functions somewhat like a tracker. Trends take damage as time passes and characters act. In other words, Trends start off white hot, and then cool into embers.

Trends start with up to five Heat, drawn in as tracker boxes. The biggest, most talked-about Trend or Trends get five boxes; others get four, or even three if you mean them to burn bright and fade fast. At the end of every story, every Trend takes one Superficial damage to Heat. Further damage comes from play. The more the coterie interacts with Trends, the faster they cool. They can even choose to damage and eliminate Trends entirely, or replace them with their own.

Sources of Heat Damage

Event	Heat Damage
Regular passage of time	1 Superficial damage to Heat per story.
Trend is a major plot element during session.	1 Superficial damage to Heat per session.
Players' coterie actively undermines Trend and succeeds at their goal that session	1 Aggravated Heat damage to Heat per session.
Trend focus is destroyed, fully disgraced, or meets final death	Instant incapacitation (probably)

DEEP TROUBLE
SALIERI'S LEGACY ☒ □ □ □ □
THE MAGNUS OPUS □ □ □ □ □
WHAT DO WE DO WITH SIENNA? □ □ □ □ □

COOLING DOWN

As Trends accumulate Heat damage, the effects show themselves in the chronicle. When a Trend has at least 3 points of Aggravated Heat damage, narrative signs of a change pile up on the horizon. Some portents of a Trend about to cool off include:

- The arrival or departure of a figure in the scene: a big wheel blows in from out of town, or one of the key scenesters gets an invite to a massive working in Miami.
- An irreconcilable difference comes to a head: accusations have reached the Prince, or one side gains a significant advantage.
- A craze hits total saturation in the scene: even new-fledged Duskborn know about furchus-hopping, or the kettle battle organizer bans nightshade hops from all brews.
- A working nears completion or makes a big public showing upon completion: rumors fly that it's the next new moon for sure, or that long-missing athanor shows up in a vacant lot, glowing and floating an inch above the ground.
- An enemy prepares to make a move: low-level types get grabbed, or head out of town.

When a Trend fills its tracker with Aggravated Heat damage, it's incapacitated and crossed out. The Trend is now over. Celebrities have left or been exposed, fads die out or silently drift into the corner of the fridge, projects come off or fail spectacularly, beefs settle after a showdown or a climbdown. Threats settle into a reliable pattern or an added cost of doing business, or if the player coterie took successful action, actually disappear.

Trends don't always vanish when they cool off. The subject might still be a part of the scene, or what it's created is still around, but it's no longer fresh

DEEP TROUBLE
SALIERI'S LEGACY ☒ ☒ ☒ □ □
THE MAGNUS OPUS □ □ □ □ □
WHAT DO WE DO WITH SIENNA? □ □ □ □ □

or exciting. It's either just another part of the scene or its time has passed. The Storyteller and players should decide what feels organically like "no longer a big thing" if the player coterie involved themselves.

When a Trend is incapacitated, decide whether a new one replaces it. Maybe things chill out all around, or everyone has to lay low, or the Storyteller wants to keep everyone's eyes on the main narrative for a while. But probably, more Trends have suggested themselves in play, and your scene remains vibrant and bubbling.

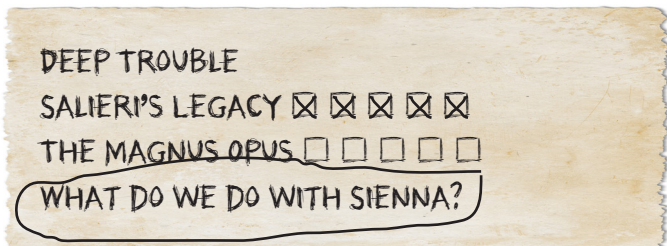
Using your Relationship Map, your Scene Map, and—most importantly—the events of the



chronicle so far, the Storyteller creates a new Trend and gives it five empty boxes. If a story is in progress, the Storyteller may use this time to hit and hype up this new Trend. When the next story begins, the Trend shows up in full force. If players worked to undermine and incapacitate a Trend, they may choose the next Trend instead, at the Storyteller's discretion. It's their fifteen minutes now.

HEATING UP

Trends do not heal without direct action from the coterie or other power players. Once per session, when the coterie interacts with a Trend in a way that further promotes it in the scene or allows it to catch on outside of the scene, the Storyteller may choose to *remove* 1 point of Superficial Heat damage. This happens even if the Trend's promotion came as an unexpected consequence of the coterie's actions.

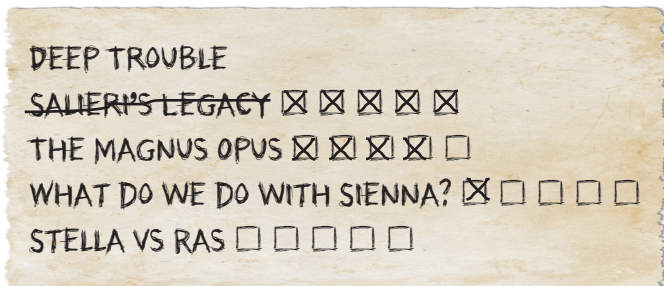
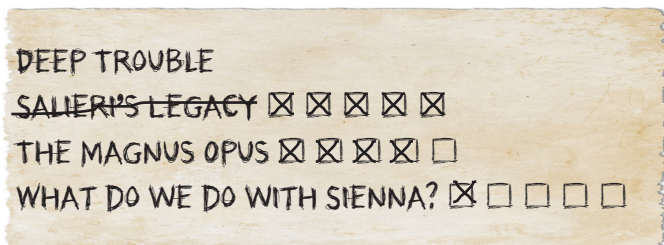


- The coterie helps the celebrity find (or fuck) someone, or whips up a controversy about them, or gives them credit for the coterie's actions.
- The coterie uses the fad ingredient in an amazing way to win a kettle battle, or corners the market in it and drives up the price, and thus the exclusivity.
- The coterie takes sides in a beef, or escalates it for their own profit, *Yojimbo*-style.
- The coterie pursues their own version of the project, or sabotages the likely winner to revitalize the contest.

Once per session, if the coterie's actions dramatically changed the scene, the city's greater society, or the chronicle itself in service of a Trend, the Storyteller may choose to remove a point of Aggravated Heat damage instead.

If any attempt to heal a Trend takes its Heat down to one Aggravated Heat damage or below, the Trend revitalizes in an intense way. Perhaps it's found a new way to capture the scene's interest, or maybe a feud takes an exciting new turn.

Circle a Trend that's healed all its Heat damage and erase its boxes. It's no longer a Trend, but a fully established aspect of the scene. A celebrity is here to stay, a beef settles into a long-term rivalry



worked out at kettle battles and not in burning havens, a project becomes a defining part of the scene's culture. Players' coterie aren't likely to heal threatening Trends, but the Storyteller could offer them the option to focus a threat on some other specific aspect of the scene: a snooty Hecata grave circle, for example. This kind of screw-the-other-side healing generally requires the players to make the threat the focus of at least one or two sessions. ■



NOTHIN' TO
SEE HERE...

HANGED MAN AND
TEMPERANCE:
THE MAGICS



BLOOD IS THE FIRST INCARNATION OF THE UNIVERSAL FLUID;
IT IS THE MATERIALIZED VITAL LIGHT. ITS BIRTH IS THE MOST
MARVELOUS OF NATURE'S MARVELS; IT LIVES ONLY BY PERPETUALLY
TRANSFORMING ITSELF, FOR IT IS THE UNIVERSAL PROTEUS ... THE
UNIVERSAL SUBSTANCE, WITH ITS DOUBLE MOTION, IS THE GREAT
ARCANUM OF BEING; BLOOD IS THE GREAT ARCANUM OF LIFE.

— ELIPHAS LEVI



Redworkers measure prestige, exercise power, and sometimes simply make rent, by their knowledge of rituals or formulae. The new workings here range from street drugs and tattoos to vertiginous command over the veins of the earth. If that's not enough, this chapter provides systems and advice for customizing, crafting, and creating rituals and formulae for your own chronicle: secrets you can trade with other Storytellers, perhaps, in your own **Vampire** blood craft scene.

New Blood Sorcery Rituals

Per **Vampire: The Masquerade** (p. 272), learning a ritual takes the square of its level in weeks. A good teacher or excellent grimoire (p. 142–147) can shorten that period by as much as two-thirds. Researching and creating a new ritual from scratch, by contrast, is a hard extended task: make an Intelligence + Blood Sorcery roll once per month with a difficulty equal to the Ritual Level +2. (Lower the Difficulty by 1 if you have an excellent magical library to consult.) When

your accumulated margin reaches ten times the Ritual Level, you have something you can try out! You can add your Occult skill to the margin total on the second winning roll. More than one Blood sorcerer can use teamwork (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 122) to create a ritual together from scratch, adding the highest Occult skill in the group, not necessarily that of the leader.

Example: Cristobal wants to research and create a new Level 4 ritual. He has Occult 3, which he adds to his second roll margin. When he accumulates a total margin of 40 (including those 3 points from his Occult) on his rolls, he's done!

Level 1 Rituals

Astromancy

The stars write the natures of those on earth below them, or perhaps they reflect them. Combining astrology and hematomanancy, the sorcerer draws out true information about allies, enemies, and mortals that catch their interest.

INGREDIENTS: The night sky; a silver mirror or platter; the blood, hair, spit, or flesh of the target

PROCESS: In the middle of the night, the caster goes to an area with a clear view of the stars in the sky and



places their target's biological material on the silver surface and spreads a Rouse Check's worth of blood over the surface. The caster spends up to a half hour watching their blood shape itself into patterns and images regarding the answers they seek about the subject.

SYSTEM: A win on the Ritual roll reveals the target's greatest aptitudes (i.e., any Attribute or Skill 4 or higher) and their current Ambition. A critical win also reveals their current Desire and at least one of their Convictions. If the sorcerer knows the correct birth date or Embrace date of the target, they can add one die to the Ritual pool. Knowing both still only adds one die.

Bind the Accusing Tongue

The Tremere developed this ritual early in their ascent to power, which may help explain that ascent. Bind the Accusing Tongue prevents the target from speaking ill of the caster, ensuring the sorcerer's unspeakable acts remain that way.

INGREDIENTS: A picture, effigy, or image of the target, a lock of the target's hair, a black silken cord.

PROCESS: The caster winds the cord around the hair and image while intoning the ritual charm.

SYSTEM: A win on the Ritual roll prevents the target from saying, writing, or otherwise directly communicating anything negative or harmful—even, or rather especially, if it's



KOLDUNIC SORCERY

To become a koldun, a Blood sorcerer of the Tzimisce, a postulant vampire of that clan must take this Level 1 power with their first dot in Blood Sorcery. This requires a lengthy period of time (a week or more) spent in a wild place – usually guided by a senior koldun, often the new sorcerer’s sire. The wild place must either be connected by a vein of the earth to the Kupala demon-field of the Carpathians or to a territory already established by one of the Old Clan. Kolduny consider the new moon the ideal time for this initiation, both for ritual reasons and because the chances of lupine attack are somewhat diminished.

The postulant koldun opens a vein and plunges their arm into the earth (or water, fire, or air), establishing—or so the koldun claim—a Blood Bond with the earth. Kolduny choose their elemental thrall at this time: Water, Fire, Air, or Earth. A koldun character can command multiple elements only by taking the Koldunic Sorcery power multiple times.

Cost: One Rouse Check, and some Aggravated Health damage.

System: After making the Rouse Check, the koldun opens the old cut of their initiation. They may inflict 1 point of Aggravated Health damage to themselves per dot of Blood Sorcery they possess. For each point lost, the koldun extends their senses farther out:

Extended Senses

Points lost	Perception radius
1	15 meters
2	90 meters
3	500 meters
4	1.5 kilometers
5	8 kilometers

Their perceptions focus through their chosen element. For example, a fire-bonded koldun sees, smells, hears, and feels through flames, stoves, furnaces, heater coils, lit cigarettes, etc., within their radius of effect. Koldunic Sorcery can perceive mystically-hidden beings such as Obfuscated vampires with a successful contest of Resolve + Blood Sorcery against Wits or Resolve + Obfuscate (or other relevant supernatural Trait).

Duration: One scene, although the koldun can renew this power at its previous level at any time that night by making another Rouse Check and losing 1 point of Aggravated Health damage. The power expires completely at sunrise.

true—about the caster without a Composure + Resolve test (Difficulty equals the caster's Blood Sorcery rating +2). On a critical win, the Difficulty of the test equals the caster's Blood Sorcery rating +3. The ritual lasts until the target succeeds on their test, or until the cord unwinds, at which point the hair and image crumble into dust.

Level 2 Rituals

Craftmaster

Some Blood sorcerers seek to gain skill through their sorcerous art, rather than pursuing mastery with the slow, difficult path of practice. The sorcerer drinks a skill specialty possessed by a gifted subject.

INGREDIENTS: Blood of a gifted subject, representative craft object such as a needle, page of a book, playing card, chisel, etc., vulture bones.

PROCESS: The caster chars the vulture bones in a fire and places the representative object in a bowl over the flames. They pour the blood of the subject into the bowl, completely covering the object. As the last of the bones crack and burn, the vampire drinks the blood from the bowl, letting the object touch their lips as they drink.

SYSTEM: On a win, the caster gains the subject's dots and specialty in Academics, Craft, Performance, or Science until sunrise. The dots replace, not add to, any already possessed by the caster. If the caster already has that specialty, they gain one extra die on top of the specialty die. On a critical win, the Ritual lasts for a week. On a total failure, the caster accidentally swallows the craft object and takes 2 Aggravated Health damage from it traveling through their body, the object spiritually furious at its skill being stolen.

Depths of Nightmare

This ritual gives targets the worst nightmares they've ever experienced. Developed by the cult of Set to punish recalcitrant followers with nightmares of Duat, the ritual has caught on outside since it's very good at wearing down a target's will.

INGREDIENTS: Target's hair; melted wax; natron (soda ash)

PROCESS: The caster mixes a Rouse Check's worth of blood into the melted wax, then rolls their target's hair in the mixture. The vampire shapes the bloody wax into a humanoid shape, as close to their target's body shape as possible. After writing glyphs or curses in their native language, the sorcerer soaks the figurine in a bowl of water mixed with natron.

SYSTEM: On a win, the target receives a number of nightmare-filled days (or nights, for mortal targets) equal to the number of successes rolled. When they first awaken after each sleep, the target receives 1 Superficial Willpower damage. On a critical win, the damage is Aggravated instead. This damage cannot be healed normally until the spell has run its course: only magic or the like can remove the shock and horror of these dreams. On a total failure, the target not only has pleasant dreams, but dreams of an ibis-headed man who points the target in the caster's direction. This occurs even if the caster used no Kemetic imagery on the figurine.

Elemental Grasp

This koldunic ritual commands the sorcerer's chosen element to slow or otherwise interfere with a target: sticky mud or sudden rockslide, flash flood or stinging hail, icy wind or choking fog, a wave of enervating heat or a brush fire across the path. So far, it remains exclusive to the kolduny, although rituals have a way of twisting themselves into another tradition's grasp eventually.

PREREQUISITE: Koldunic Sorcery

INGREDIENTS: A handful of the koldun's element or a ritual representation of it, such as a wooden staff for earth, a knife or bunch of feathers for air, etc.

PROCESS: The koldun scratches open their initiation scar and makes a Rouse Check while commanding the element to hinder a target the koldun perceives. Magical perception counts for this purpose.

SYSTEM: On a win, the element rises against the target. If the element is already awake during the



casting (commanding air during a thunderstorm, for instance), the koldun adds one die to their Ritual pool. The target takes one point of Superficial Health damage per success, and must make an appropriate skill roll (e.g., Toughness + Athletics, or Composure + Drive) to continue against the element against a Difficulty equal to 1 + the total successes on the Ritual roll. On a critical win, the element rises against every suitable target within sight of the main target. The effect continues until the koldun does anything else besides command the elements: fight, move, make any other skill roll, etc.

Le Sang de l'Amour

This ritual allows the caster to create a connection between themselves and a lover that's more than just their mutual attraction.

INGREDIENTS: Blood of the caster and their lover, two glass vials on chains (or leather thongs).

PROCESS: The caster collects their own blood and their lover's at the same time, careful to keep the two separate. They don't need much blood—only a teaspoonful. The only requirement: both must desire the other *at the time of the casting*. The caster seals the two blood samples inside the vials, hanging each from a chain. As the lovers exchange vials and hang them around their necks, the caster sings a song in praise of their lover to Aphrodite, Ishtar or another love or lust deity.

SYSTEM: With a win on the Ritual test, le Sang de l'Amour allows both participants to concentrate (Resolve + Awareness) and know approximately where the other is on a success. They don't get an exact location, but have a rough sense of

distance—in the same city, the same state, across the ocean from each other. With more successes, they get more information, small details of the sensation of being in the other's location: they feel a deck pitching up and down, the strain of climbing harsh terrain, or the vibration of loud noise. With a critical win, the ritual provides one automatic success on the lover's perception roll. Any other successes let them actually see brief glimpses of their lover and their surroundings, and even hear snatches of conversation. On a total failure, the blood accidentally mixes in the vials and both participants get disoriented and confused if they try to concentrate on the other. Their Composure suffers, reducing by 1 until the end of the next scene even if they break both vials and end the ritual. The ritual only remains effective as long as both wear their partner's vial and as long as the vials remain unbroken. If one of the participants does not actually desire the other during the ritual (if a player, they should state as much privately to the Storyteller), their vial dries and clots the first time they use it, becoming useless muck. This has no adverse effect on the two participants beyond the personal fallout.

Silentia Mortis

Replicating Discipline powers didn't begin with Thin-Blood Alchemy. The Banu Haqim initially developed this ritual for those of their assassins who didn't possess the Silence of Death (Obfuscate 1) power. It has since spread into general use.

The ritual enchants a talisman (usually the paw of a cat, weasel, or other silent desert animal) to generate a sort of white noise or counter-resonance by roiling the holder's Blood. The effect: a magical silence emanating from the holder, muting all sounds within its radius of effect. Sounds originating outside that radius can be heard inside, dimly.

INGREDIENTS: Paw of a cat or other silent desert predator, blood from caster (and from holder, if different), corpse-wax candle (p. 139), a white rose.

PROCESS: The caster whispers the words of this

ritual, cuts their palm, and clenches the paw in their fist, soaking it in a Rouse Check worth of their blood. If intended for a holder besides the caster, the holder also cuts their palm and holds the paw, making their own Rouse Check and mingling their blood. The holder remains completely silent during this ritual. After burning the rose in the candle, the caster quenches the candle flame with the bloody paw.

SYSTEM: A win on the Ritual roll creates a 6-meter radius of magical silence around the holder once they activate the talisman by making a second Rouse Check. The talisman must touch the holder's flesh, but they need not keep it in their hand. The silence ends when the holder loses the talisman or after one hour, and the talisman shrivels into nothingness. A critical win increases the radius to 12 meters.

Tiamat Glistens

Blood sorcerers know that places of power, like mortals, just need to be tapped. This ritual prepares the place of power, increases its true potential, and perhaps most importantly attunes it personally to the vampire. This Ritual is a common element in many Chained Rituals (p. 71). Sorcerers seek means of permanently attuning a site to themselves, possibly through a Blood Bond similar to the koldunic initiation ritual, or through the sacrifice of a rival sorcerer on the site, but so far nobody has found one. Nobody who's talking, anyway.

INGREDIENTS: A place of power such as a furcus, dust of a precious metal (which one depends on the magical valence of the site).

PROCESS: The caster mixes a Rouse Check's worth of blood with the precious metal dust. At the site of a place of power, they shout praises to Tiamat, scattering the bloody metal dust mixture into the air and on the ground for at least fifteen minutes.

SYSTEM: On a win, the sorcerer primes the place of power for any ritual taking place there for a number of nights equal to the number of successes on the Ritual test. During this time, any ritual performed by the caster on this place of power

gains the bonuses or other advantages associated with it—usually a dice bonus to Ritual pools (see *Furcus*, p. 35). On a critical win, the sorcerer also automatically succeeds on one die of their Ritual roll. Only one caster receives the benefits of Tiamat Glistens per place of power. If another caster successfully performs the Ritual during the time of another caster's successful casting, the first caster immediately loses the dice bonus.

Viscera Garden

Blood sorcerers can grow Blood-addicted plants in special fields, using the crops as magical components or for enjoyment. It's also a great way to get rid of a body, if the Blood sorcerer has the space.

INGREDIENTS: A plot of land, a day-old human or animal corpse, the caster's Blood (for upkeep).

PROCESS: The caster clears out a plot of land and digs a hole. They tear open their wrist and pour a Rouse Check's worth of Blood into the human or animal corpse. The corpse being a day old is essential in the human corpse's case; accidental Embraces have occurred when a human corpse is too fresh. The corpse is eviscerated, and its mass thrown into the hole. The caster plants or transfers their preferred plants to the plot, then covers them in the corpse's viscera.

SYSTEM: A win instantly disintegrates the buried body and viscera into blood-scented smoke. In addition, plants grown in the plot are unusually hardy and vampires can ingest them (consuming these plants as food slakes no Hunger, but it stays down). Vampiric influence Discipline tests against a mortal who ingested a viscerated plant take -1 to Difficulty (or the target loses two dice from their resistance pool, for contests). The plants must receive a Rouse Check's worth of Blood every month, or else they wither and die within a week. A critical win extends the length of time between waterings to two months. An animal corpse can fertilize a Viscera Garden of about 1 x 1 meters, or about 3 x 3 feet. A human corpse doubles these dimensions.



Level 3 Rituals

Blood Sigil

This ritual stores important records and documents in one of the most resilient mediums available: the unliving flesh of another Kindred.

INGREDIENTS: Tattoo ink or other substances that can stain skin, a written message on paper, a photograph, or a painting, a sharp object with a tip heated by candle flame.

PROCESS: The vampire to be tattooed opens a vein in their wrist with the sharp object—usually a scalpel, a knife, or the needle in a tattoo gun—and bleeds into containers with their chosen painting material. Then, the caster tears the paper or picture, mixing the remains into the paints while chanting for fifteen minutes. The caster applies the Blood Sigil on another vampire by heating the sharp object's tip, dipping the sharp object into the paints, and carefully carving an image into the vampire's skin. This image need not be relevant to its hidden information.

SYSTEM: Make no Ritual roll until after applying the Blood Sigil. A win permanently seals the tattooed image into the vampire's skin and perfectly preserves the message within. A failure creates a tattoo and preserved message that fades away upon the vampire's next rising. Read the message within a Blood Sigil by viewing or touching the sigil for fifteen minutes and either winning a Resolve + Occult Test at Difficulty 5 (Difficulty 4 if touching the tattoo) or using Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1). The sorcerer who applied the Blood Sigil can erase the tattoo (and the message) by spending one Willpower and touching the tattoo for fifteen minutes.

Elemental Shelter

This ritual allows the koldun to melt into and shelter within their chosen element, as with Earth Meld (Protean 3). A fire-bonded koldun does not check for Röttschreck against any fire they ignite for the

purpose of this ritual, but must resist terror frenzy before casting this Ritual to meld with the flames in a suddenly-burning Haven, for example.

PREREQUISITE: Koldunic Sorcery

INGREDIENTS: At least enough of the element in question to envelop the koldun's body.

PROCESS: The koldun scratches open their initiatory scar, bleeds into the element, commands it to receive them, and falls or dives into it.

SYSTEM: On a win, the koldun melds into the element. No physical attack can injure them, nor can sunlight or fire. While in the element, the koldun remains aware of their surroundings, except during day-sleep. At those times, disturbances such as digging or loud noises awaken them or not, as with all vampires (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 219). The koldun's form remains waveringly visible to Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) or to normal sight (Wits + Awareness) with a Difficulty equal to the margin of the Ritual roll. On a critical win, the koldun completely merges with the element, becoming entirely invisible. The koldun can emerge from the element at will by night at the spot they entered it. If a fire-bonded koldun's fire goes out (or less likely, if someone drains a water-bonded koldun's aqueous shelter), the koldun enters torpor within or beneath the ashes and coals. They can make a Resolve + Awareness test (Difficulty 2) to awaken in the presence of potential prey just as if they had fallen into torpor from hunger.

Nepenthe

Nepenthe offers “quiet of all pain and strife, forgetfulness of every ill”—but just a taste. The ritual's draught temporarily clouds the mind and makes the drinker's terrible deeds seem pale and distant, like a story they heard long ago. But the mixture has its dangers: use it too often, and one's ability to feel remorse withers and fades.

INGREDIENTS: Poppy seeds, starflower, honey, the subject's tears, the caster's Blood.

PROCESS: The caster pulverizes the solid ingredients together in a bowl and mixes in the Blood and



honey. The last ingredient added should be the tears of the ritual's subject. The potion gives off a strong, sickly sweet smell. The subject must drink the entire draught in one go.

SYSTEM: With a win on the Ritual roll, Nepenthe removes 1 Stain from the drinker's tracker before a Remorse roll. On a critical win, Nepenthe removes 2 Stains before a Remorse roll at the end of the session. However, on a Total Failure, 1 Stain carries over to the next session, regardless of whether the Remorse roll succeeded or not. If a vampire uses Nepenthe more than two sessions in a row, their mind becomes dependent on it and one of their Stains becomes permanent. This is a cumulative effect—four sessions in a row results in two permanent Stains, etc.

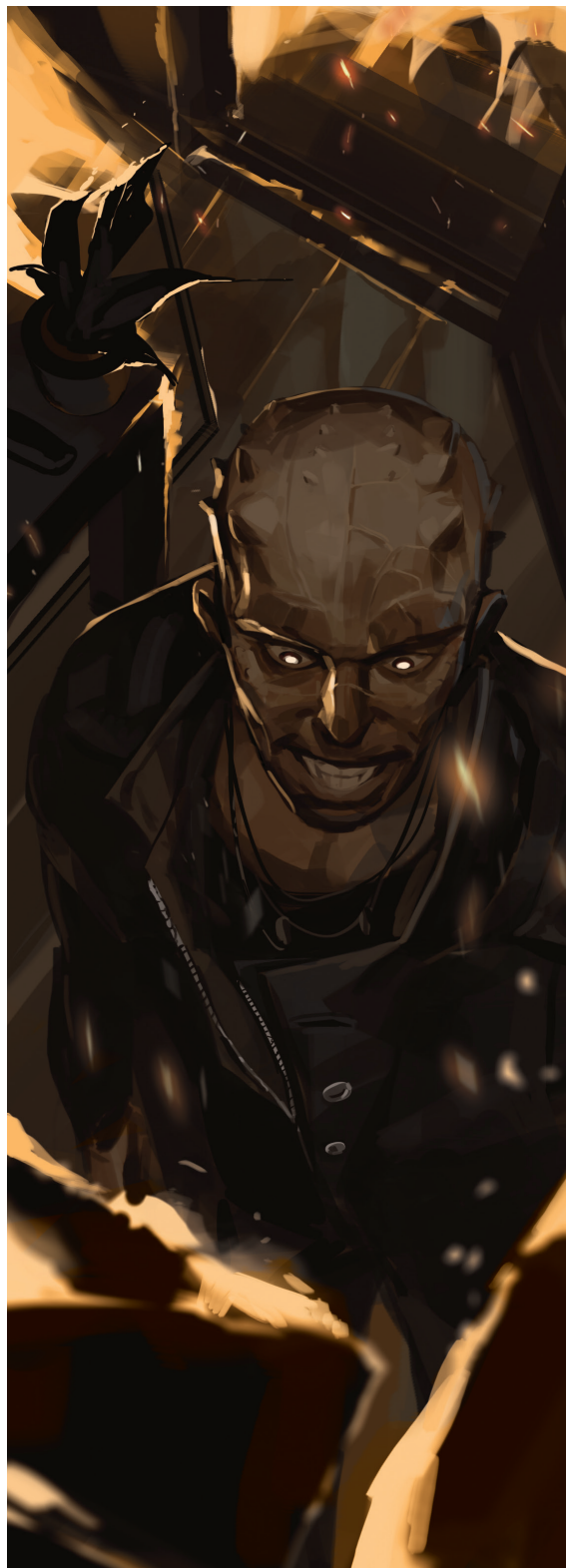
Seeing with the Sky's Eyes

The watcher's eye sees best when the target cannot see the watcher. The Banu Haqim know this and use a special ritual to observe targets from the one place they cannot possibly detect: Heaven itself. The Tremere scoff at the idea that the caster travels to a higher realm and observes targets from above, but they can't deny the results, and have brought this ritual into their practice.

INGREDIENTS: Euphoric mortal blood (usually from someone high on cannabis), incense, brazier, an effigy or photo of a target.

PROCESS: The caster drinks the euphoric blood, lights a mixture of their own Blood (one Rouse Check worth) and incense in a brazier, inhales it and falls into an ecstatic trance while studying the target image.

SYSTEM: After a half-hour of the trance, make the Ritual roll. On a win, the caster may ask the Storyteller one question about the target's location and surroundings for every success rolled. On a critical win, the caster receives an additional three questions, and may ask about the target's Ambition, Desire, Convictions, and Humanity in addition to any questions about the target's location and whereabouts.



Seeking Tiamat

This ritual helps Blood sorcerers seek out the veins of the Earth, bringing the flow of their Blood into harmony with the blood of Tiamat.

INGREDIENTS: A foot-long, sharpened piece of witch hazel or magnetized iron.

PROCESS: The caster jams the wood or iron into their forearm along the ulnar vein, causing themselves 1 point of Aggravated damage, and makes a Rouse Check. Then they must walk around the city or region for at least fifteen minutes.

SYSTEM: On a win, their arm begins twitching and pointing toward the closest furcus in the area; by changing their direction, intelligent casters can triangulate a location within a few minutes. On a critical win, the tool discovers the closest vein of the Earth, and points toward two furcae on that vein.

Soul of the Hemonculus

This enchantment forms a shriveled, impaired, quarter-weight duplicate of its caster's mortal self (pp. 133–134). This squat, restricted, and often bitter creature must obey any command by its maker, sometimes willingly, sometimes not. They are not harmed by sunlight. You can make one as a lab assistant, flunky, or substitute child if you like.

INGREDIENTS: Glass bottle blown on the night before the new moon, semen, chalk, graveyard dirt, the caster's Blood, a dead man's thumb, and a dead pig.

PROCESS: The caster puts the Blood and other ingredients in the glass bottle, corks it with the thumb, shakes well, and lets it sit in total darkness until the full moon. The bottle is then bathed in moonlight while the caster recites a short chant, before sewing it into the pig's stomach. The caster buries the pig in consecrated ground, at least three feet deep, and makes the Ritual roll. If it succeeds, on the next new moon when the caster digs it up, the pig looks like a miniature version of them. The caster commands it to arise, and it must obey.

SYSTEM: Make the Ritual roll against the higher of 3 or the user's Stamina: their very flesh resists this

blasphemy. If the roll succeeds, the hemonculus quickens and births in a month. A hemonculus has its maker's Attributes and the Skills from their mortal life, but each at one dot lower, to a minimum of 1, half the maker's Health and one dot of Willpower. Hemonculi can't become ghouls, be Embraced, or be Blood Bound, and any vampire who feeds on one gains no nourishment and finds the process repellent.

Stone of the True Form

With a special stone and an excellent throwing arm, a Blood sorcerer can dispel hallucinations and deceptions of the night. It's even rumored to work on lupines.

INGREDIENTS: A hunk of metamorphic rock, such as slate or marble.

PROCESS: The caster must smooth, carve, or tumble the rock into a sphere somewhere between the size of a marble and a baseball. If they have a relevant Craft specialty, or access to a geology lab, they can make a test to do it in an hour; otherwise it takes six hours. The caster then coats the sphere in a Rouse Check worth of their boiling Blood and commands it to *reveal* in the oldest language they know.

SYSTEM: When the vampire throws the stone (Dexterity + Athletics) and hits something that is either an illusion, a being created by a Discipline or ritual (such as a Tzimisce's *vozhd* or a hemonculus), or a shapeshifted being (either by Protean or by inherent means), the sorcerer rolls the Ritual roll versus the target's Resolve + Occult. On a win, the illusion dispels in a spray of blood, the created being tears apart into its individual components, or the shapeshifter painfully shifts into its original form. This unveiling effect lasts for one round. Any margin equals the dice penalty to the illusion resuming, creation repair, or next shapeshifting attempt. On a failure, the caster may try again until sunrise, assuming they can recover the stone without being slaughtered. Once the ritual succeeds, the stone breaks in half and cannot be reused.



Trespass

This old Ministry ritual resembles various Obfuscate powers, with a few important limitations. It only applies to the structure used as an ingredient, and its user can still be perceived by supernatural beings or entities. To non-supernatural entities, they seem to be a statue, pillar, decorative piece of molding, tapestry, or other part of the structure. The vampire can also flow themselves through any crevice or other passage in the structure that blood could flow through: not through a sealed vault door, but through most door frames and air ducts. Unlike Incorporeal Passage (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 280), they can be attacked and damaged. Trespass does not hide one from a location's genius loci (p. 133).

INGREDIENTS: Fragment of the desired location's cornerstone or doorstep, the blood of a thief, thread.

PROCESS: The caster ties one end of the thread around the fragment of cornerstone and soaks both in the blood. They then chant an efficacious prayer to Hermes or Set—the traditional patrons of the Trespass ritual—or any other spirit or deity associated with trespass. The caster wraps the thread about the trespasser's body, starting at the heel and ending around the forehead.

SYSTEM: The ritual lasts for as long as the thread remains wet with blood (one scene, or about 30 minutes). When the vampire attempts to actually enter the building, make the Ritual roll. On a win, the caster enters without problem. With a Willpower spend, they can flow through air vents, cracks under doors, or anywhere else liquid blood could flow. On a critical win, they don't need to spend Willpower to flow through such cracks, and gain an intuitive knowledge of the structure's layout. On a total failure, the building itself rejects the caster. Everyone passing by gains two dice to their pools to notice and suspect the trespasser, who takes Superficial Health damage equal to the number of failed dice in that pool every turn they remain in the building.

Viral Haruspex

Unique to the plague oracles (p. 114), this ritual focuses on the common cold—specifically the rhinovirus subvariant, the most common version. As with all plague oracle Rituals, the caster must be hosting the virus. To host a virus, the vampire must drink from a mortal carrier of the disease within 24 hours before casting the ritual: after that, the germs die in the Kindred Blood.

Viral Haruspex aggregates sensory data or factual recollection from every mortal in a twenty-kilometer radius carrying the rhinovirus. If you're looking for someone, you can know if any mortal with a cold has seen them. If you want to know a particular fact and don't trust Wikipedia, you can consult the memories of everyone in the range who's all snotted up.

INGREDIENTS: Live rhinoviruses in caster's Blood, a rat, a bowl or dish. Plague oracles love to use stainless steel surgical bowls for their rituals, but that's not a hard requirement.

PROCESS: The caster mingles a Rouse Check worth of their Blood in the bowl with the brains of the rat and stirs it up widdershins. The vampire then drinks the blood while staring into the dish.

SYSTEM: A win on the Ritual roll produces a vague impression of the sought data, overlapping or echoey if more than one sick mortal is looking at or listening to the target. For factual knowledge, the information flows into the caster's head: "That store was on 19th Street but it closed in 2009 when the owner got divorced." More successes over the Difficulty provide more complete vision, knowledge, or other results.

Level 4 Rituals

Compel the Inanimate

This ritual allows a vampire to take control of an object for a single moment, with just enough time to step away and deny plausibility.

INGREDIENTS: Any inanimate object.

PROCESS: The caster smears a glyph on an inanimate object with one Rouse Check's worth of their Blood



and gives the object a quick order. After the caster's Blood dries on its surface (about five minutes), the object carries out the order to its best ability.

SYSTEM: A win on the Ritual roll allows the object to understand their order as the caster intended it. A critical win allows for one additional order, which does not have to be carried out at the exact same time as the first order but must be carried out before the night's end.

Orders must be simple commands, not complex sentences: *fall over*, *crash*, or *erase your databanks*. Objects do not have concepts of time and cannot easily recognize individual people, so orders concerning a specific time or person cannot be carried out perfectly. The caster must be in the same relative environment as the object when the order is carried out, such as a caster ordering a lamppost in a park to shut off must still be in the park, a caster who commands a museum suit of armor to tumble must be in that museum, etc.

Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can detect the caster with a contest of Wits + Auspex vs. the caster's Composure + Blood Sorcery.

Egregore Consultation

This proprietary plague oracle (page 108) ritual focuses on the influenza virus, so its caster must be hosting influenza to use it.

Mystics use the term *egregore* for a sort of unified oversoul of a region, people, or spiritual category. In this case, it means the combined knowledge and instincts of everyone within twenty kilometers who has the flu. In addition to drawing on their own training, the plague oracle can access—at least in part—the wide and relevant experiences of every sick person in range.

INGREDIENTS: Live influenza viruses in caster's Blood, worms, flukes, or other parasites, a knife, a magnet.

PROCESS: The caster chops up the worms with the knife and smears them on the magnet. Holding the magnet in their left hand and facing north, they intone the ritual chant.

SYSTEM: The sorcerer picks a Skill they wish to enhance before making the Ritual roll. On a win, the next three times the plague oracle uses that Skill in a pool, they get a dice bonus equal to one plus their margin on the Ritual test. If the Storyteller decides the Skill is only somewhat uncommon, add a die to that bonus; if the skill is very common, add two dice. On a critical win, add a free Specialty or another bonus die if the caster already has the desired Specialty. For example, a Tremere in Cairo hunted by an Islamic anti-vampire society could use this to speed her research in this ancient center of learning. She rolls six successes: a margin of 1 plus 1 die, plus 1 more die for the numerous fluey scholars in the area. She gets three dice to add to her next three Academics rolls. She could similarly play the stock market with Finance in New York or Shanghai, or get off a crack shot or three in Dallas.

Land's Sustenance

This ritual allows a Blood sorcerer to "feed" from a place of power. They transform it into a place of suffering, from which they stave off their own Hunger for a small while. The kolduny call their version of this ritual *Mouth of the Land*.



INGREDIENTS: A place of power such as a furcus, anything that demarcates a territory such as police tape, a sign post, an enclosed space, etc., a dagger.

PROCESS: Over four nights, the caster uses a dagger to carve occult symbols into the corner of a plot of land or the corners of a wall within a place of power, one corner for each night. On the fifth night, the caster must stain all these symbols with half of a Rouse Check's worth of blood, circumventing the entire location and staining them before the night ends. With the other half, the vampire stains something that demarcates the territory they've carved out and places it either around the area (if it's something like police tape) or in a corner of the area (if it's something like a sign).

SYSTEM: On a win, the land the vampire marked off *hungers*. A simple cut turns into a laceration. An otherwise harmless fall breaks necks. In general, injuries and accidents become bloodier. As the land saps on the blood of innocents, the benefits mystically pass on to the caster. Once per session, the caster may choose to automatically pass a number of Rouse Checks equal to their margin on the Ritual test. This ritual lasts until the end of the story. After that, the caster must recoat the symbols with a Rouse Check and a Ritual roll.

Riding the Earth's Veins

If a Blood sorcerer has access to a furcus, this ancient Banu Haqim ritual serves as a last resort when escaping enemies. There's a catch: the caster has no control where they end up. Riding the planet's secret rails means casting your fate to the wind, literally.

INGREDIENTS: A furcus, a physical sign of entrance such as a ticket, key, or doorknob.

PROCESS: At the furcus, the caster bathes the sign of entrance in a Rouse Check's worth of Blood while singing praises to a deity or famous figure representing escape, travel, or the wind. Traditionally, this ritual calls upon the Mesopotamian god Enlil. After ten minutes, pour the Blood on the ground.

SYSTEM: Make no Ritual roll until the vampire touches the soil (or floor) of their chosen furcus

with their physical sign of entrance. On a win, the caster dissolves into a bloody mist, drawn into the Earth's veins and reincorporated twenty minutes later at a furcus of the Storyteller's choosing. On a critical win, they arrive at the nearest furcus to their Haven or to a place of power attuned to the caster by Tiamat Glistens (p. 64). This ritual is one-way, and only activates at the specific furcus where the sorcerer first cast it.

CHAINED RITUALS

All rituals are useful on their own, but some are capable of greater things. Blood sorcerers can achieve workings of power beyond that of ordinary Level 5 Rituals by gathering and casting compatible rituals, letting their power spill into each other and coalesce into a greater force. These workings, *chained rituals*, were once well-kept secrets among jealous Blood sorcerers, particularly the Tremere and Banu Haqim.

A chained ritual comprises a set of at least three Rituals of any level, with one Level 5 Ritual serving as its *linchpin*. Each component of a chained ritual, including the linchpin Level 5 Ritual, have their own individual effects. When sorcerers cast all the rituals in a chained ritual within 10 meters of each other, the chained effect of the linchpin Level 5 Ritual activates instead of the individual effects of the rituals in the chain. All rituals must succeed for the chained ritual to take effect: a single failure breaks the chain.

Level 5 Rituals

Elemental Attack

This koldunic ritual commands their element to attack a target: avalanche or sudden subsidence or falling tree, flash flood or waterspout, lightning bolt or stifling suffocation, gas main explosion or sudden electrical fire.

PREREQUISITE: Koldunic Sorcery

INGREDIENTS: A weapon representing or made from the element, such as a wooden club, an icicle, a meteoric iron knife, a torch, etc.



PROCESS: Wielding the weapon, the koldun opens their initiation scar and makes a Rouse Check while commanding the element to attack a target the koldun perceives. Magical perception counts for this purpose.

SYSTEM: On a win, the element attacks the target. If the element is already awake during the casting (commanding air during a thunderstorm, for instance), the koldun adds one die to their Ritual pool. The target takes one point of Aggravated Health damage per success, and the same damage again every round afterward until they win an appropriate escape contest (e.g., Dexterity + Athletics) vs. the koldun's Resolve + Blood Sorcery. Excepting fire, the elements only do Superficial damage to vampires, but they may still bury them, carry them away in a flood or tornado, etc. On a critical win, the element attacks every suitable target at the caster's discretion within sight of the main target. The effect continues until the koldun does anything else besides command the elements: fight, move, make any other skill roll, etc.

CHAIN: When chained with Elemental Grasp (p. 62) and Tiamat Glistens (p. 64), this ritual unleashes a high-apocalyptic elemental effect: earthquake, tsunami, tornado, magma flow, etc. Damage doubles to the targets, but collateral damage gets wildly out of hand, and continues until the koldun stop casting.

Fisher King

This Ritual makes a Blood sorcerer one with their chosen land, reading its secrets like a book. The chosen land size varies with the sorcerer's power, but generally roughly equals the size of their coterie's domain. The koldun version is called *Lozov Kral*.

INGREDIENTS: A landmark representing a region, dirt from the region, a horse-hair paintbrush

PROCESS: The vampire blends a Rouse Check's worth of blood with dirt from the region they wish to observe. With the blend, the sorcerer paints magical symbols on a landmark important to the land's inhabitants.

SYSTEM: On a win, the caster develops a mental connection to the land. Once per session, the



sorcerer may make a Wits + Streetwise (if urban or suburban) or Wits + Survival (if rural) test. For each success, the Storyteller truthfully answers one question the player has about the land: its greatest threat, does an enemy reside there, the Resonance of its inhabitants' blood, etc. This ritual lasts until the end of the story, during which the caster may ask one more question per session. After that, the caster must replenish their symbols, making another Rouse Check and Ritual roll to renew it.

CHAIN: When chained with Land's Sustenance (p. 64) and Compel the Inanimate (p. 69), the coterie has almost total control over the place of power and its surrounding area. They have near-omniscience over the land, with three free questions about it per session, per caster. The land's structures or trees watch and warn the casters of hostile approach, unless magically disguised or shielded. While on the land, the casters can mend up to 5 points of Aggravated damage per night, total (split between the casters on a first-come, first-serve basis).

New Thin-Blood Alchemy Formulae

As a rule, Thin-Blood Alchemy formulae either resemble short-term powers inherent in the blood of, or one-shot elixirs bled out by, the alchemist (Athanor Corporis) or their mortal athanor (Calcinatio). Alchemists using the Fixatio method produce elixirs, regardless.

Athanor Corporis alchemists who brew one-shot elixirs inside their body can tap themselves for another dose once per night without making another Distillation roll, as long as they keep the mix of the source blood the same: no feeding on different Resonances, and don't let yourself get to Hunger 5. Tapping *Calcinatio* athanors for elixirs does 1 Aggravated Health damage per Formula level per dose, but also doesn't require another Distillation roll unless the athanor's mental balance or food intake changes significantly.

Elixirs with negative effects on the user can create feedback in Athanor Corporis alchemists: once they've bled out a dose of Blue State or Martian Purity, for example, it's very much in their interest to drink a shot of sanguine to slosh the formula in their own veins instead of suffering the effects accidentally on their next Rouse Check.

As a rule of thumb, learning a new Thin-Blood Alchemy formula from a recipe or teacher takes the formula's level in weeks. Researching a new formula from scratch takes the Formula's level squared in weeks.

Level 1 Formulae

Body Paint

This formula allows the alchemist to create tattoos with personal touches beyond human tattoo artists. Sometimes, an alchemist's client can customize their ink further. The alchemist creates a shiny, dark brown fluid that stays in liquid form until painted or tattooed onto mortal or vampire skin. The alchemist tattoos the target or reaches out and massages the flesh as the liquid dries, shaping it into unique patterns.



INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric mortal blood, tattoo inks, henna, marker fluid, or any substance that stains skin.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

DICE POOLS: Dexterity + Craft; Stamina + Resolve

SYSTEM: On Distillation rolls with 1–3 successes, the body paint dries faster, and the alchemist must Win a Dexterity + Craft test at Difficulty 3 to finish their work before drying. On Distillations with 6 or more successes, the target may reshape the tattoo any time after a week with a Stamina + Resolve Test at Difficulty 5. The alchemist may change the fluid's colors at will while working, as can the target if they're able to reshape their tattoo.

DURATION: Permanent, unless erased by flesh colored Body Paint.

Checkout Time

Thin-bloods traveling great distances face challenges. Being shipped as a literal corpse can, for the clever, mitigate them.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, phlegmatic mortal blood, embalming fluid, myrrh, a toad's skull.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The alchemist writes a span of times and dates on the subject's left arm in Roman numerals. The subject can be the alchemist themselves. At the starting time, the subject enters a deep torpor and cannot be awakened until either the ending time transpires, or someone rewrites the ending time. Coming out of this slumber does not require a Rouse Check. While in this state, the recipient is indistinguishable from a corpse. They have no aura, they don't need to make nightly Rouse Checks, and they don't take damage from any accidental exposure to sunlight or similar banes.

DURATION: The written time span determines the duration, but cannot exceed nine nights.

Elevate

When you're at the party and feeling like a thrill, go find the guy by the bathrooms. No, not the guy

selling speed and molly to sweaty dancers. The *other* guy, the one that stands way too still. He's got the regular stuff, but he's also got tabs of El if you know to ask. El makes the whole world feel *elevated* to thin-bloods: colors, sounds, tastes, and energy all shift and intensify. It's a pure shot of dopamine that makes everything faster, fresher, and way more fun.

It's not just in your mind, either: your reflexes really *are* faster, your eyes *do* see farther, your feet move quick and sure to the beat. Thin-bloods who've taken El can be identified by the slightly glassy tinge to their eyes and the bubbly energy that lets them dance until dawn. Regular Kindred can get the effect by drinking from someone who's taken El, just like any other drug.

While Humanity 8 or higher vampires with Blush of Life can get high without recourse to alchemy, the fact that thin-bloods have developed a workaround for this aspect of the vampire curse angers older Kindred. In this, as in daywalking and so much else, the thin blood of the Mercurians carries potential advantages.

If players go looking for sangrias or party brews, someone almost always has El for sale.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, sanguine mortal blood, fermented chocolate, rice vinegar, black coffee, often some kind of fun street drug.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

DICE POOLS: Stamina + Alchemy

SYSTEM: Whoever consumes the formula instantly feels a rush of warmth and pleasure flowing through them, relaxing their muscles and quickening their nerves. They get a +1 on any Dexterity dice that they roll during the scene. El also can act as a carrier for regular street drugs, although the effects shift unpredictably if usually toward ecstatic stimulation. Badly made El makes the user feel great, but actively degrades Dexterity with a –1 penalty.

DURATION: One scene

Food Stain

Resembling ketchup, this elixir places a mark on a



person who consumes it or is anointed with it. The alchemist can easily tell whether anyone later drinks the blood of the marked individual.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, melancholic mortal blood, some highly colored flavoring such as BBQ sauce, mustard, cheez-puff flavor dust, etc.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: If someone—mortal or Kindred—is marked by consuming or contacting this goo, the next individual who feeds from them becomes obvious to the alchemist who made it. *Obvious* means that if they see that person, hear them or smell them, they know. In the rare case that the alchemist has at least *Auspex 2*, they become aware the instant the feeding occurs. Moreover, for about an hour after, they know the direction toward the drinker, though not distance.

DURATION: Once created, the mystic potential of the substance persists until consumed or applied, but it starts to smell pretty bad after a week, even if refrigerated.

Speak From the Heart

Known as *message in a butthole* in California, this creates an elixir that is, to all appearances, some flavor of soda. Some patsy, usually mortal, drinks the soda. The next vampire who drinks the patsy's blood receives the message.

INGREDIENTS: A soft drink, the alchemist's Blood, melancholic human blood, mercury, ink or paint.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The alchemist imprints the message while brewing the soda. Grape soda can carry seventy-one words or less. Orange reveals a sketched image in the drinker's mind for about a minute. Lemon-lime conveys a brief but vivid emotional sensation. It's possible that a mortal who drank the carrier's blood would also get the effects, but no one's run that experiment.

DURATION: The messages take about sixty seconds. They persist in the carrier until death, or until someone drinks their blood.

Level 2 Formulae

Advanced Torpor

This Formula induces torpor. For thin-blooded, it's a last resort mending coma.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric and phlegmatic mortal blood, neem extract, diazepam, diphenhydramine, chamomile flower.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The alchemist creates (or for other Distillations, they or their vessel bleeds) a bright pink, watery fluid. Mixing this substance with mortal blood creates an elixir that causes its imbiber to immediately fall into torpor. This torpor lasts as long as if they have entered it through ordinary means.

Unlike regular torpor, a vampire in Advanced Torpor always has a Rouse Check re-roll while under its effects, whether it's for the day passing or for mending any damage. Should the vampire end their Advanced Torpor not at Hunger 5, they may keep their current level of Hunger when they awaken. All vampires in Advanced Torpor mend as a vampire, even if a Thin-Blood Flaw otherwise makes that impossible.

If the vampire's Hunger rises above Hunger 5 while in Advanced Torpor, the vampire enters regular torpor for the remaining portion of their torpor, and standard rules apply.

ATHANOR CORPORIS: The alchemist can tap their vein once per night until their next feeding or reach Hunger 5. There is no further Distillation cost.

CALCINATIO: If the vessel survives the tap, the alchemist can tap them again in one week. The vessel takes 5 Aggravated Health damage per tap.

DURATION: Until the target awakens from torpor.

Blacklight Surprise

The sun is the bane of the undead, but this formula can lend Phoebus' hideous strength to a common UV flashlight or blacklight bulb, for the Kindred unlucky enough to be downrange of it.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, sanguine and choleric mortal blood, sunflower seeds, hand sanitizer, Luminol.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: A UV source smeared with Blacklight Surprise does 1 point of Aggravated damage every turn its light hits a vampire. It provokes fear frenzy like sunlight does. Kindred who already take damage from UV take an extra point.

DURATION: At least one hour, plus an additional hour for every success the alchemist scores with the dice. If the light source breaks, the formula burns off.

Blue State

A mind-altering elixir with a sludgy cobalt color, when fed to a target or applied to their skin, it forces them to grudgingly and obsessively contemplate the next wrong thing one of their friends or allies does.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, melancholy and phlegmatic mortal blood, cobalt.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: Someone under the effects of Blue State cannot forgive. The next time a friend or ally violates the target's Convictions, the target takes 1 Stain. A mortal target merely holds a seemingly unreasonable, intractable grudge.

DURATION: The Stain remains until the characters have, at least, a very uncomfortable conversation.

Level 3 Formulae

Diamond Skin

For all their potential, the thin-blooded are fragile, at least compared to other vampires. This elixir is designed to balance the scales, letting alchemists take hits straight on, survive long falls, and maybe even talk shit to the local Sheriff and walk away clean. It also gives an alchemist's skin a gorgeous shine underneath neon lights, which is its own kind of perk.

This formula is less reliable than Tank (**Vampire: The Masquerade Players Guide**, p. 105), but can last and protect longer depending on the alchemist's skill.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, melancholic human blood, ground up granite, diamonds, or ceramics, lotion or oil.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: A number of Aggravated damage points equal to the alchemist's successes on the Distillation roll become Superficial damage to the user. This only affects physical damage from slashes, punctures, or impact; it has no effect against fire, sunlight, sorcery, or acid.

DURATION: Until the margin is used up; on a critical win on the Distillation roll, the effect lasts for one scene.

Fireskin

Originally created to safely superheat Athanor Corporis, the Fireskin formula allows Kindred—and mortals brave enough to gulp it down—to literally plunge into fire without fear. The key ingredient of salamander (p. 134) bone tastes like horrible, bitter ash, but when the drinker chokes it down, it briefly lends its original fiery sympathies.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, powdered elemental salamander bone, tobacco, sulfur.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: Whoever drinks the Fireskin formula feels like their skin and the air around them is strangely cold—at odds with the little flames that start to lick up and down their skin. The fire doesn't spread from them, but their body is superheated and painful to the touch. They do +1 fire damage when they strike with their body (only the additional damage counts as fire), and can increase that to +2 if they manage to grapple someone. Fire does no damage to the user during this period, but cold damage is doubled.

DURATION: One scene

Hospital Chains

Hospital Chains keeps Kindred and mortals from recovering from injuries. Because sometimes, when you teach someone a lesson, you want to give them a study aid to make sure it sticks. The elixir takes the form of stringy red spittle to be expectorated or



splashed on the victim.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, phlegmatic mortal blood, a sample from a fatal carcinoma, hydrofluoric acid.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

DICE POOLS: Distillation Roll vs. Stamina

SYSTEM: Once Hospital Chains touches an injured person, they cannot clear physical injury by any means. Blood is Roused in vain; hospital visits yield no improvement, only bills.

DURATION: The restriction on improvement lasts for 2 days per point of margin; on a critical win, it lasts 2 days for each success on the Distillation roll.

Martian Purity

The name refers not to *Martian* in the extraterrestrial sense, but to the Roman god Mars and his association with iron, the choleric principle and similar mystical correspondence.

With that cleared up, this spell cures blood-borne illnesses by expelling them via one's pores as ignited, flaming gas. Some Princes who've learned about this stuff insist on inflicting it on suspected plague-rats in their domains, citing Masquerade concerns and offering weak apologies for the unpleasantness as a Hound or other court functionary stands by with a fire extinguisher.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric mortal blood, iron filings, gunpowder ash.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: This only works on a mortal or Kindred carrying a blood-transmissible infection. When consumed, the elixir forces the impurity out through their skin, outgassing through the pores of the back. It ignites on contact with air, doing 2 points of Aggravated damage to the carrier. It is up to the Storyteller whether this works on individual supernatural infections.

DURATION: Two rounds

Mask Off

Militant thin-bloods use this formula to hit true vampires where it hurts: their precious Masquerade.

The formula shows to best advantage in gatherings where Kindred and kine mix.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric and melancholic mortal blood, ground mustard seed, lemon juice, amphetamines, ground match heads.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

DICE POOLS: Distillation roll vs target's Stamina + Resolve

SYSTEM: The alchemist creates (or for other Distillations, they or their vessel bleed) a yellow-reddish paste. When loaded into an explosive and detonated, it creates an acrid gas that covers an area 3 by 6 meters, roughly the size of a large meeting room. The explosion and the gas inflict no damage, but any true vampires with the Blush of Life caught in the blast must make a contest of their Stamina + Resolve versus the alchemist's Distillation roll. Any true vampires that lose the contest have their Blush of Life instantly, painfully come to an end for all to see. They also cannot use Blush of Life for the rest of the night.

On Distillation rolls between 1–3 successes, true vampires that lose the contest have a few moments to hide before the gas takes effect. On a critical win on the Distillation roll, true vampires that lose the contest must also make a Fury Frenzy check at Difficulty 2.

DURATION: One scene

TLC

The acronym stands for *This Lick Cares* or possibly *Tastes Like Chicken*. This formula creates a powder that imbues blood of living animals with the mystical qualities of mortal blood that the Beast craves. For vampires looking to avoid feeding on mortals as their blood strengthens, this formula is a must. This powder commonly appears in any big redworking scene's black market.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, animal blood, choleric mortal blood, nettles, iron pieces, meat glue.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The alchemist creates (or for other Distillations, they or their vessel bleed and must sift

out) a bluish-brown powder. Feeding the powder to an animal allows a vampire to feed on the animal as if it were a human. For every success on the Distillation roll, the alchemist can enrich enough animal blood to slake one point of Hunger, although only the largest dogs can slake more than 1 point of Hunger without dying. Horses, cattle, and other large mammals contain enough blood to slake 8–10 points of Hunger, if it's dosed with TLC. Killing an animal under the effects of TLC cannot slake a vampire's Hunger to 0.

Troll the Pious

The pus-colored paste produced by this formula resembles the nontoxic glue given to pre-school children and has a similar waxy smell. Wiped on an object, a person or a location, it induces feelings of disquiet and unease in the religious. Those rare folks with True Faith experience even worse outcomes.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, melancholic mortal blood, used hot tub water, cornstarch, a body hair from a living green-eyed natural redhead.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The procedure produces enough goo to wax about three square meters of floor—you can rub it into carpet, but it's messy—or anoint one person all over, or smear a dozen books or about half the tools in a small workshop. Anyone who believes in a benign higher power, or whose profession involves religion, feels uneasy when in a waxed location, or when their attention is drawn to an anointed object. This is sufficient to give a one-die penalty to Social and Mental pools, and to Physical pools requiring close concentration. People with True Faith take a two-dice penalty and also have horrible hallucinations that feel like profound insights into the nature of evil but are actually expressions of their own fears and prejudices. To be fair, it is possible the fears of the truly faithful really could provide insights into evil. This penalty does not affect any pool (such as resisting vampires) to which they would add their True Faith, however.

DURATION: On a location, one dose lasts a couple of months. On an object, two months if no one touches it, one month if it's handled infrequently, a week if it's

handled often. On a person, a dose lasts three days, and on the first day their skin looks waxy and oily.

Level 4 Formulae

Copycat

Mercurians might not be able to turn into mist or mesmerize onlookers into overlooking them, but Copycat's the next best thing. Chugging the brew makes the user's face blur to look like the face of the "donor" whose blood they added to it—even their hair changes color. Unfortunately it's not an *exact* copy. The planes and shape of the face don't mask easily, and the donor's friends and family would be able to tell it wasn't them in a well-lit room—the face has a sort of uncanny valley look to anyone who knows it very well, and the hair isn't *quite* right. But it's a surefire way to slip away in a crowd or a party, or even as a quick disguise somewhere where someone doesn't know the face at all.

Adding to the difficulty, there has to be some resonance between the alchemist's Blood and the donor blood when the two are drawn for the formula to work: some alchemists take psychedelics with their donor, others eat the same meals that night. Sex, or particularly exciting interactions such as a swordfight or performing together, can also align the two bloods.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric and phlegmatic mortal blood, mirror glass, donor blood, *Boquila trifoliolata* leaves, chameleon skin.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: Upon drinking, the user feels the unpleasant sensation of something wet and sticky oozing to cover their face. That feeling remains for the next twenty minutes, slightly itchy and tight as the Copycat brew slowly loses potency. When it's finally through, a slightly itchy white residue like dry glue is left over the skin.

For those who know the donor by sight, telling the drinker from the donor requires an Intelligence + Awareness test against a Difficulty equal to the Distillation roll's successes.

DURATION: Twenty minutes (usually one scene if you're smart).



Half-Living Conductor

This formula grants the alchemist protection from one of the most primal forces of nature: lightning itself. Compared to the ever-present threat of fire or sunlight, lightning and electrical currents are usually the least of a vampire's worries. In the hands of an alchemist, it can become a deadly weapon.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, choleric and sanguine mortal blood, molten conductive metal (gold, silver, copper, and aluminum are popular choices), ground rubber, rainwater from a thunderstorm.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

DICE POOLS: Stamina + Alchemy

SYSTEM: The alchemist is immune to all physical damage taken from any electrical source, be it lightning, tasers, live wires, or a supernatural ability. Upon exposure to an electrical current, the alchemist may choose to redirect the current. They amplify the incoming electricity in their body and shoot it out in an arc from their fingertips, mouth, or eyes.

Using electrical redirection in a conflict is a ranged attack using Dexterity + Alchemy. It inflicts margin + 2 in Superficial Health damage for vampires and in Aggravated Health damage for mortals.

On Distillation rolls with 1–3 successes, the alchemist is protected from electrical forces, but their redirected electrical attacks do no additional Health damage. On Distillation rolls with 6 or more successes, the alchemist's body bursts with electrical power. Their attacks inflict Aggravated Health damage to mortals and supernaturals alike.

DURATION: One scene or until voluntarily ended.

Red State

A hypnotic ointment or potion that erases the specific memories of an ally or associate's misdeeds.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, sanguine and phlegmatic mortal blood, iron oxide.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: When applied or consumed, this places the subject in a peculiar state of moral forgetfulness. The next time someone close and trusted violates the drugged person's Convictions or commits an act against them, those memories simply do not take. It slips free of the mind like amnesia, and cannot be restored. Being told, "Saphir killed your sister, man! Why are you still friends with him?!?" sounds fake and makes no sense. The very notion that the crime might have occurred fades within moments.

DURATION: Permanent until the target imbibes a choleric Dyscrasia.

Vitae MSG

A formula that makes consumption of blood even more pleasurable already has a built-in market.

Kindred are treacherous and vindictive by nature though, so this ointment is also used to get particular vampires to feed from particular

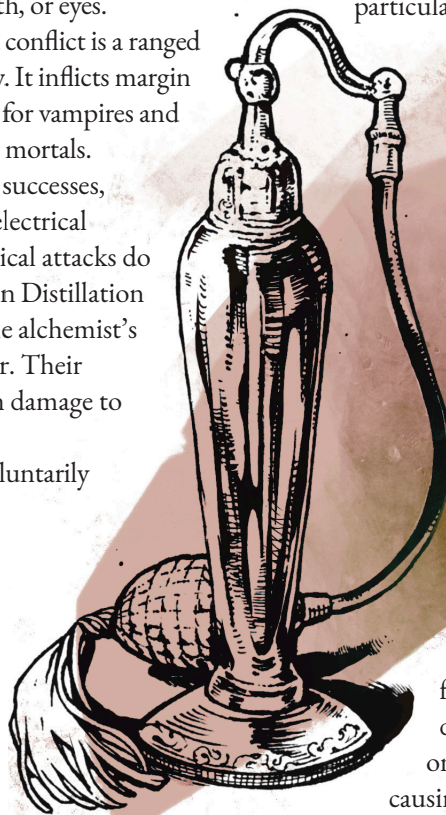
vessels—to establish Blood Bonds, make someone into a plague carrier, or set up the consumption of some other formula.

Needless to say, a lot of Ventrue love this stuff.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, sanguine mortal blood, MSG, powdered sugar, knockoff (*not* genuine) Chanel No. 5.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The production process yields a clear, watery liquid that smells faintly of vanilla and jasmine. It does nothing until it is rubbed onto the skin of a person or animal, causing that being to inflame vampiric thirst. Any vampire who sees or smells anyone



who has Vitae MSG on them feels an intense desire to feed on them. They can resist this urge with a point of Willpower, or by accepting an additional point of Hunger. If the vampire spends more than thirty minutes in the presence of the anointed one after that, they must feast—or else spend another Willpower, or accept more Hunger. The compulsion partially offsets the Ventrue Bane—blue bloods can feed from the person enhanced by Vitae MSG by spending 1 Willpower less if they aren't in their preferred category.

DURATION: Once someone is anointed, the desire lasts until the next dawn, if they survive.

Level 5 Formulae

Saturn's Flux

This is a drug that breaks Blood Bonds, which is a pretty big deal. Some authoritarian domains that rely on the Bond and the threat of it execute without trial just for possession, even if you're "just holding for a friend." Others confiscate it for their own use while forbidding it to Kindred without clout. Still other domains insist on a Prince's prerogative to control all access to it, so that the court can strip Bonds inconvenient to those in power.

It's already politically complicated. It does not help that you have to freebase it.

INGREDIENTS: The alchemist's Blood, phlegmatic mortal blood, lead, laxative, horse hair.

ACTIVATION COST: One Rouse Check

SYSTEM: The process yields a thumbnail sized pellet, crackly and gray. To gain the effect, smoke it in a steel pipe on a bed of ash, taking precautions as Kindred must for dealing with a small open flame. Within twenty-four hours of ingestion, the smoker literally shits out the Blood Bond—painful and bloody but not injurious for mortals. Kindred, with withered digestive tracts, take a point of Aggravated damage as the unwholesome influence resists expulsion.

DURATION: As mentioned above, the effect kicks in within a day's span of ingestion—sometimes

waking Kindred from daysleep with agonizing cramps. Until used, the pellet seems to stay fresh indefinitely. Given that this stuff has only been around two years, it may just be that its shelf life has not yet been reached.

I Brew, You Drink

It's the question every alchemist dreads, and the longer they hang around with their true vampire peers, the more often it comes up: "Hey, can I get a hit of that?"

Ask any Lick in Elysium if they'd ever try what the run-offs drink, and they'd answer with unanimous disagreement. On the street, it's a different story. Who doesn't want to lift things with their mind, experience a Discipline they've never had, or have a get-out-of-torpor-free card? Sometimes, an alchemist obliges, either to shut up their fellow Kindred or see what happens.

Distillation Considerations

When a true vampire uses a formula, the formula's creator makes a Rouse Check and rolls a Distillation roll as normal. It's their Blood, not the user's, that makes or breaks the brew's effects. Calcinati alchemists must offer up their athanor to the vampire using their formulae; a dangerous move. Athanor Corporis alchemists are in their own kind of trouble, as customer vampires must feed off them for their formulae. If the alchemist has Catenating Blood (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 183), the vampire's also taking a step towards a Blood Bond. Fixiato alchemists have no real issues: just hand over the bottle and let them chug.

Formulae function and duration remain as normal. Formulae that depend on a Thin-Blood Alchemy rating use five minus the true vampire's Blood Potency, but never more than the Alchemy rating of the cook.



The Wheel of Misfortune

Die Result	Effect	Description
1–2	Regurgitation	The vampire vomits the formula out in a bloody mess. The vampire gains 1 Hunger.
3–4	Blood Swoon	Until the end of the next session, disobeying the alchemist's requests requires a Resolve + Intelligence test with their Alchemy rating as Difficulty.
5–6	Frenzy	Convinced they have been poisoned, the vampire tests for terror frenzy at Difficulty 2. On a failure, the vampire tears at their own flesh, trying to spill their poisoned Blood. The frenzy ends when they do Aggravated damage to themselves equal to their margin of failure on the Willpower test.
7–8	Discipline Dysfunction	Until the end of the next session, Discipline dice pools suffer a one-die penalty (on a 7) or a two-dice penalty (on a 8).
9	Withering	Until the end of the next session, the vampire's Blood Potency reduces by half of the alchemist's Alchemy rating (round down); minimum 1.
0	Taste of Half-Life	Until the end of the next session, the vampire loses access to all Disciplines, and suffers injuries like a thin-blood. They cannot create Blood Bonds during this time.

Side Effects

Thin-Blood Alchemy is a Discipline in its infancy, one that twists the Blood in ways that even the strangest Blood Sorcery can't. It's a delicate balance that only thin-bloods can safely handle. When thicker Blood meets Thin-Blood Alchemy, things get weird.

Formulae wreak havoc on unprepared vampiric physiology, especially in true vampires. Side effects aren't consistent either: two vampires drinking the same formula might have two very different reactions. It's a phenomena thin-blooded alchemists call *the wheel of misfortune*.

After the distillation roll, the Storyteller rolls a die and consults the Wheel of Misfortune Table to find out what side effects the imbibing vampire suffers. Side effects begin immediately after the formula's effect ends.

Boil Your Own

Whether you're trailblazing a new evocation based on ancient Banu Haqim documents or mixing your blood with antifreeze to see what it does, here's how the magic happens.

Making New Rituals

Creating a ritual on the fly is a four-step process: Determine the goal, determine ingredients and process, determine the system, then determine the dot value.

Step 1: Determine the Goal

Think about how you'd like to see the ritual exist in your chronicle. Is it a simple convenience? A display of power? How often will the ritual appear? Will it



be used by players or only by Storyteller characters?

Once you know the ritual's overall narrative place, it's time to figure out what it does. Begin by making sure it fits within the thematic limits of Blood Sorcery:

- **Blood Sorcery is control over the Blood.** While it can command or view strange or even unknown forces, the source of a ritual's power always comes from within the practitioner's veins.
- **Blood Sorcery is horrifying.** Even the subtlest ritual should frighten a mortal. They're shortcuts that should not exist, created by acts that are sometimes outright monstrous.
- **Blood Sorcery is specific.** Rituals should have a singular focus. Thin-Blood Alchemy can be weird and versatile and fluid; a Blood Sorcery ritual does one thing.

A new Blood Sorcery ritual shouldn't just exist to mimic an existing power from another Discipline. Even a sorcerous attack should use the Blood of the vampire or their foes, not just be "Potence, but it takes longer." Some properly sorcerous actions include:

- **Magical Effects:** Wards, scrying, divination, communication with aapilum or with the veins of the Earth: lean into the "sorcery" half of the equation alongside the "Blood" half.
- **Macroscopic Action:** Rituals can connect the Blood of the sorcerer with the larger blood-soaked universe. Whether it's the "parasite-to-parasite" equations of the plague oracles or the potential for altering an urban landscape through the veins of Tiamat, Blood Sorcery can go bigger than other Disciplines, given enough knowledge.
- **Blood Command:** Boiling an enemy's blood, sending your Blood out like a scouting serpent, leaving a smear of Blood behind as a spying eye; Blood Sorcery should make every drop of vitae obey in new and twisted ways.

Step 2: Determine Ingredients and Process

A solid goal needs ingredients and a process to make it happen. This step is how you make one dice roll



feel different from another.

When thinking about ingredients for a ritual, consider:

- **Blood:** Blood is an inherent ingredient for a ritual. For some, only Blood is necessary.
- **Goal Symbolism:** Any additional ingredients are symbolically relevant to the ritual's goal. A protection ritual could use elements of what the Blood sorcerer wants protection from. Rituals for tracking down others could involve locks of their subject's hair or spatters of their blood.
- **Moral Considerations:** The most relevant symbolism could be something that makes mortals or other Kindred uncomfortable. This isn't limited to any ritual level.
- **Amount:** Rituals should have at most three extra ingredients besides Blood.
- When thinking about the process, consider:
- **Time:** Some rituals take longer than the default assumption of five minutes per level. Longer rituals over the course of hours or even nights could be appropriate for protection or knowledge-providing rituals, or those with outsized effects on their target.
- **Ritualistic Form:** Some rituals use the tools and trappings of magical traditions. Tremere Thaumaturgy develops rituals with a process steeped in medieval Hermeticism, many Banu Haqim rituals descend from Sumerian exorcisms or invocations, while Akhu rituals used by some Ministers may have similar effects but evoke Kemetic imagery of ancient Egypt.
- **Stains:** Some rituals may need a process that could incur Stains. These rituals are either intended to kill or require the emotional or physical harm of mortals.

Step 3: Determine System

With the in-narrative aspects of the ritual covered, you have a solid base for adding mechanics. In general, the system of a ritual involves a Rouse Check and a test or contest. A win activates the

ritual, and a critical win enhances the effect.

Some considerations when making a system are:

- **Ritual Roll:** If a ritual needs a dice pool other than the standard pools, remember that it's always an Attribute + Blood Sorcery. Ritual rolls happen only when the magical effect should happen.
- **Additional Rolls:** If the ritual needs an action before the Ritual roll activates the spell, make a dice pool for that action with a set Difficulty. If the ritual is contested, determine if it's a contest or a conflict, and make a competing pool.
- **Effect Length:** Most ritual effects last for a scene. Ritual effects lasting longer than a scene are either very powerful or need a physical anchor.
- **Other Disciplines:** If a ritual could interact with another Discipline's power, it may lessen the effect of a Power, but it never negates or shuts off the power.

Step 4: Determine Dot Value

Now you know what the ritual does, the ingredients it needs, and how the ritual is performed, it's time to give it a dot rating. Giving your ritual a dot rating helps determine how much experience it should take to learn, or what sort of currency (pp. 45–46) it's worth in the redworking markets.

Consult the following chart to find the suggested dot value ratings for custom rituals. Choose the most relevant criteria for the ritual's goal when determining a dot rating. Narrative Rarity here essentially tracks the ritual's narrative significance (pp. 43–44). A 3 dot Ritual in one criterion may not necessarily follow the same level for the other criteria.

Note that these are general criteria, not universal ones: a Level 5 Ritual doesn't need to involve glowing green Blood tornadoes, but could (and arguably should) be extremely subtle. However, a putative glowing-green-Blood-tornado ritual probably does need to be level five if it exists at all.

Ritual Dot Value Guidelines

Dot Rating	Scale of Power	Process Difficulty	Damage Dealt/Protection Granted	Supernatural Blatancy	Narrative Rarity
•	Affects single target, Slight enhancement to caster	Only requires time	Bonuses or penalties to attacks or defense rolls.	Little to no chance of Masquerade breach	Common, shows up a lot in the chronicle
••	Affects two or three targets or sensory environment of caster; Noticeable enhancement to caster	Slightly complex undertaking	Set amounts of Superficial damage per win	Possible chance of Masquerade breach	Fairly common, any connected character could probably find it with a test
•••	Affects up to five targets or half a city block, Major enhancement to caster	Difficult undertaking	1 Superficial damage per point of margin	Likely Masquerade breach	Fairly uncommon, finding it takes some effort (a scene)
••••	Affects up to 10 targets or a whole city block, Dramatic enhancement to caster	Very difficult undertaking or time sensitive	1 Aggravated damage per point of margin, multiple points of Superficial damage per point of margin	Certain Masquerade breach	Rare, finding it takes real effort (a whole session)
•••••	Affects an entire large domain, Immense enhancement to caster	Immense undertaking or extremely time sensitive	Multiple points of Aggravated damage per point of margin	Undeniable Masquerade breach.	Very rare, finding it requires lengthy dedication (a whole story)

Making New Alchemy Formulae

Creating a new formula at the table follows the same process as creating a new ritual, with some differences.

Step 1: Goal Differences

Thin-Blood Alchemy isn't a millennia-old art form

bound by dead languages and undead pedants, it's a survival hack for vampires on the fringes of power in all senses. In a sense, nothing is out of bounds for an alchemical formula, because some weirdo has probably tried it out of desperation, vainglory, or perverse curiosity.

That said, consider Thin-Blood Alchemy's themes when coming up with new formulae:

- **Thin-Blood Alchemy is control over states of being.** Alchemy is an art of transition, and thus



thin-blooded alchemists draw power from their own transitory state.

- **Thin-Blood Alchemy is unpredictable.** Thin-Blood Alchemy is still a new process. No one is quite sure how or why only thin blood makes it work. Characters making formulae should always feel like they're doing something dangerous, that could blow up at any moment.
- **Thin-Blood Alchemy bends reality.** Think of Blood Sorcery as Newtonian: predictable equations that reveal the universe. Thin-Blood Alchemy is relativistic, quantum chemistry that almost makes sense and sometimes bends the universe rather than reveal it.

The early alchemists tried counterfeiting other Discipline powers, and wanted to give themselves an edge in fights with stronger vampires, which are fine actions for the *greatest hits* formulary on the shelf, but it's more fun and interesting for new formulae to try other actions:

- **Human Potential:** Formulae shift and warp bodies and minds, playing with the self of the user. These alterations can go beyond the direct enhancements of the physical Disciplines, opening doors of perception or potential.
- **Give an Edge:** Alchemy works best on the margins, shifting a close loss to a near win. Rather than the broadsword of a Discipline, the alchemist uses a formula as a scalpel: narrowly focused to accomplish something exactly.
- **Vibes:** Something that seems like it would be neat to be able to do might be just the ticket for a level one or two formula. If it's the sort of thing that might impress a bunch of Duskborn rolling in a parking lot somewhere, it fits. If it has an unexpected benefit as a street survival hack, it definitely fits.

Step 2: Ingredient Differences

Where has hundreds of different ritual actions and processes, alchemy combines everything in one distillation. Alchemists focus more on ingredients:

- **Resonance Symbolism:** In addition to

ingredients symbolically relevant to the formula's goal, an alchemist also needs blood with symbolically relevant Resonance. The four Resonances cover a wide variety of possible actions. A formula that enhances physical force might use choleric blood, while a formula for mental clarity might use phlegmatic blood.

- **Amount:** There's no limit to the amount of suggested ingredients for a formula, but an alchemist usually needs five main ingredients at most for their takes on the brew. You can assume lots of weird little drops or sprinkles of something along the way. Formulae rarely need more than two Resonances.

Step 3: System Differences

As noted on p. 73, some formulae convey temporary powers that can be used repeatedly or throughout a scene or until the alchemist's Blood mix changes. Other formulae create elixirs or other one-use draughts. Technically, Fixatio alchemists create elixirs in either case; some of their elixirs grant powers. Note which type your new formula should be when inventing it.

Thin-Blooded Alchemy systems differ from Blood Sorcery:

- **Distillation Rolls:** Distillation rolls always happen right before the effect kicks off.
- **Additional Rolls:** For any test or contest that involve the formula after it's active, determine a pool that uses an Attribute + Alchemy. If the formula is contested, determine if it's a contest or a conflict and determine a competing pool.
- **Effect Length:** Formulae generally last for a scene but have more varied lengths than rituals. Some consumable formulae last until they leave the system, or until the user's next feeding. Some formulae, especially those intended for mortals, can last for hours or days.
- **One-Shot Elixirs:** Athanor Corporis alchemists who brew one-shot elixirs inside their body can tap themselves for another dose once per night

without making another Distillation roll, until they feed on a different Resonance from that required by the formula, or until they reach Hunger 5. Tapping Calcination athanors for elixirs does 1 Aggravated Health damage per Formula level per dose, but also doesn't require another Distillation roll unless the athanor's mental balance or food intake changes significantly.

Step 4: Dot Value Differences

The Ritual Dot Value chart's criteria (p. 84) apply to formulae, with a few alterations:

- **Scale of Power:** Formulae often affect others with enhancements as well, and so *enhancement to caster* becomes *enhancement to brewer or brewer's subject*.
- **Process Difficulty:** Process doesn't apply to formulae. Players and Storytellers may instead replace it with *Ingredient Scarcity*, with each dot representing the increasing difficulty required in getting some of the formula's suggested ingredients.

The Fine Art of Counterfeit

Some of the most popular formulae counterfeit the Disciplines of thicker-blooded vampires. Survival might depend on speeding out of a bad scene with Celerity, or seeing it ahead of time with Auspex, and it gives many Duskborn a kick to "steal" a Discipline from their self-proclaimed betters. This is how thin-blooded alchemists reverse-engineer Discipline powers into formulae.

Step 1: Observation/Experience

Reverse engineering begins with direct contact. An alchemist watches the Discipline in action, or more likely, experiences its effects firsthand. While experiencing or observing a Discipline power that their Alchemy level can copy, the alchemist may make a Wits + Alchemy Test, Difficulty 3. A win saves the power in their mind, and a critical win reveals the Discipline's connected Resonance.

An alchemist may only hold one power in their mind at a time. Once it's lodged in, it's stuck. In extreme cases—especially if the alchemist took damage or otherwise suffered from the power—it becomes like a Compulsion, even penalizing any Distillation roll that doesn't create their new project. The hold happens reflexively, even with Mental Disciplines like Dominate: the alchemist may not suspect their memories were altered, but they're suddenly struck with inspiration all the same.

Step 2: Scavenger Hunt

Inspired to replicate a power, the alchemist furiously works, sketching alchemical diagrams and breaking down ingredients that could model the power. The player and Storyteller should agree on the final ingredients and amounts necessary, but here are some suggestions:

- **Mental Disciplines:** Amphetamines, pheromones, animal brains, incense, herbs.
- **Physical Disciplines:** Steroids, ground metals, animal muscle, spices, poisons.
- **Sorcery (Powers Only):** Ground crystals, flowers, animal livers, psychedelics, ground-up textbooks.

The alchemist also needs to taste blood with the power's Resonance. If they know what it is, it's just a matter of finding or manipulating the right people. Sometimes another alchemist sells them a formula that counterfeits the same power, and they can deduce and reduce the correct Resonance from that sample. If not, it's either lots of guesswork or finding a vampire with the Discipline and drinking their Blood, with the potential Blood Bond consequences hopefully priced in.

Step 3: Experimentation

With the materials gathered, the alchemist puts their formula to the test and makes a Distillation roll. A win creates a new counterfeit formula, formalized by the creation process (p. 73). A critical win doubles the duration of the counterfeited power for its inaugural use. Any failure gives the alchemist the



choice to either forget their fixation or keep it and gather a new set of ingredients for another attempt. The alchemist's body rejects the failed brew on a total failure, taking points of Aggravated Health damage equal to the power level they tried to forge.

Lab Disasters

To change matter one needs reaction. The best way to get reaction is with reactive chemicals. *Highly unstable* chemicals, to the layperson.

Forget, for a moment, the far too numerous examples of meth labs exploding and consider *grain silos*. These sound boring, right? They just store agricultural products, and they blow up too. It's the dust, flammable dust. You store tons of grain, you get loads of dust and one spark may be all it takes to ignite it.

Pure oxygen, the granddaddy of reactive lab chemicals, is so much more combustible that you can't get fire without it. On balance though, oxygen isn't as dangerous as lithium or sodium.

That's without getting into the equipment. Vessels required to purify reagents can explode if not properly vented, like anything kept under pressure. What gets pressurized? Anything that's a gas at room temperature and therefore would require too much space to store.

Fire, which nobody calls *the vampire's friend*, is used to agitate apart many compounds, but the icy temperatures of, say, liquid nitrogen are just as dangerous, if not more so because first aid classes skip over exotic injuries like tissue collapse due to intense cold.

So your alchemy lab is probably a death trap.

What's that mean? Rules-wise...

Any time you use a lab to refine chemicals at scale (or every ten Distillation rolls), make a lab safety roll at Difficulty 2. This uses Intelligence + Academics, Medicine, or Science—whatever's best. If it is a win, everything's fine. If it fails, you get a two-dice penalty to your next safety roll. If it's total failure, you're due for a lab explosion.

If you get the lab explosion result, roll a single die. Evens, it blows up right away. Odds, it's definitely *going to explode* and you don't know; or you've unwittingly attracted a salamander (p. 134). The gasses are building up, or the contaminated cleaning rag is in the trash but hasn't ignited yet. It's up to your Storyteller to decide the most delicious time. When it does, everyone inside the lab takes 10 levels of Aggravated Health damage. It does 5 Aggravated Health to everyone in a room adjacent to the lab, and 3 Aggravated Health to everyone else within what the Storyteller decides is a reasonable *splash zone*. However, reduce this damage by one for every dot you have in Science, representing how much attention you paid to safety measures.

What can you do about it? There are a few options.

- **Be rich:** Got three or more dots in Resources? You get a two-dice bonus on all lab safety rolls... as long as you're willing to either jump through some interesting plot hoops to explain how you stayed off a watch list after purchasing fume hoods, lab-safe refrigerators, and specialty cleaning gear, or lose a dot off your coterie's Portillon because the DEA finds you *fascinating*.
- **Be prissy:** You can get a one-die bonus to your lab safety roll if you roleplay being super uptight and unchill about safety procedures, and add an extra *hour* to every lab procedure.
- **Manage expectations:** If you're willing to make smaller batches of dirty product, you can get a two-dice bonus on lab safety rolls in exchange for a two-dice penalty to *all* rolls to actually produce anything with the lab. It's safe, but small and unreliable. ■



THE SECRETS

I SEND IT THROUGH THE RIVERS OF YOUR BLOOD
EVEN TO THE COURT, THE HEART, THE SEAT OF THE BRAIN
AND THROUGH THE TWISTS AND OFFICES OF MAN.

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, CORIOLANUS

A man with a beard and tattoos is the central figure, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark, draped garment. The background is a dimly lit library with bookshelves filled with books. In the foreground, there are several lit candles, one of which is casting a strong red glow. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and dramatic.

DEATH AND
THE MAGICIAN:
THE SOURCES



HENCE, HERMES SAYS, WHAT IS BORN OF THE CROW IS THE BEGINNING OF THIS ART. CONSIDER THAT IT IS BY SEPARATION OF THE BLACK, FOUL, AND STINKING FUME OF THE BLACKEST BLACK THAT OUR ASTRAL, WHITE, AND RESPLENDENT STONE IS FORMED, WHICH CONTAINS IN ITS VEINS THE BLOOD ...

— THE SIX KEYS (1604), ATTRIBUTED TO EUDOXUS



The world of blood craft encompasses the unthinkable ancient rites of Blood Sorcery dating back millennia to pre-Bronze Age Sumer, and the postmodern mix-mashup cocktail culture of Thin-Blood Alchemy dating back decades to pre-Silicon Age LA.

Blood already performs so many miracles: it grants deathlessness, powers inhuman strength, speed, and concealment, it connects every vampire into a chain of Kindred, supposedly reaching back to Caine himself. But what if it could do *more*? That is the question the first Blood sorcerers asked, delving deep into the nature of the Blood and its strangely independent power. Could the Kindred harness that power? They thought they could.

If Blood Sorcery seeks the Blood's true nature, Thin-Blood Alchemy insists that its true nature—perhaps everything's true nature—can be redefined on the fly, in heat, chemistry, and experimentation. To them, the Blood is fluid: it flows and shifts, it changes over centuries and overnight. Alchemists don't so much channel, or even map those flows, but respond to them, tease them out, dance with them.

Blood Sorcery

To the uninitiated, Blood Sorcery seems like an outlier. Kindred are predators. Each Discipline makes that loud and clear; they lure, they manipulate, they seal the deal. Blood Sorcery isn't as interested in the moment-to-moment actions of the hunt. Its instant tricks can be too flashy for regular use, and its Rituals take time and resources beyond what the kine provide. Outsiders can't deny its utility, but view it as something separate from their way of unlife.

Practitioners know better. Predators need more than instant tools. Feeding on a source as powerful as humankind requires dedicated protection and planning, which this sorcerous Discipline provides. Blood Sorcery might be sealed away in books and the minds of occult hoarders, but it defines a Kindred's being just as much as brute strength and seduction. An initiate of the sanguine arts doesn't cheat or call on something beyond their Blood. They take command of their curse, pushing its capabilities to its limits and beyond.

UR

Even in the best of times, a desert where the sun bakes the days dry is unlikely to appeal to Kindred, and southern Iraq is not having the best of times. But the history of Ur isn't going to come to you, and what a history it is! A city commanded into being by a mighty ancestral vampire! Laid out on the very principles of blood witchcraft!

Even if Ur's bricks weren't laid by the hand of Caine himself, there is still plenty there to interest sorcerers and alchemists. Dust from Ur is an ingredient in at least one alchemical working that lets those fallen in battle rise up to torment their attackers, and more than one Kindred mystic has seen a satellite map of Ur and recognized shapes they've been drawing in vitae for centuries.

That's without getting into the artifacts. Did a temple seal of the moon deity Sīn/Nannar, looted from Ur and stolen from ISIS, turn the tide in the thirty-year battle between the Okefenokee Lupines and the Kindred of north Florida? Do Ur's ancient tablets of sorcery really teach mortals how to read them? Do statues from the city really come to life when there's a new moon on an equinox, with blood that presents bizarre properties?

IN CHRONICLES

Traveling is dangerous and southern Iraq is dangerous, so the reward of going to Ur should be powerfully tempting. Perhaps mapping it more precisely unlocks higher grades of Kindred magic. Even without traveling there, Ur can cast a long shadow.

Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust

A local alchemist thought it'd be handy to cut precious Ur-dust with cremated remains. She didn't get supercharged Ur-dust, though: she got the powerful, furious remnant of a very, very old vampire. It wants a proper body. It wants its due veneration. It does not care about the tatters of the Masquerade. Every Kindred in the city wants it gone, quickly. Well, except the ones who think they can use it. The coterie is present for the creation of the remnant, unfortunately for them—or one of them discovers, to their dismay, their sire's sire's sire is as close to a relative as this *thing* has, and they're next in line with a body to spare.

A Tithe to Ur

When a frenemy of the coterie showed up at a party wearing weird clothes and an old necklace he claimed was an ancient artifact, calling himself *High Priest of Ur*, everyone took it as a joke. But weeks later, he's got a tiny but dedicated following of baby redworkers deferring to his every word and doing supposed rituals of ancient Ur every other week. Normally everyone would just roll their eyes and tell him to piss off, but something *is* happening around those rituals. The group does things they shouldn't be able to do. Everyone else in the city noticed their own redworking is getting weaker. Is that ancient artifact actually something from Ur? Did he find a ritual to siphon off other peoples' redworking? Is he actually working with the powers of Ur—or is Ur working through him, somehow?

Through This Ancient City

Local sorcerers notice strange phenomena when they perform rituals on certain streets; blood pooling in sidewalk cracks, passersby fainting, heartbeat echoes. After much research—and one very expensive consultation—they discover those streets' shapes echo the ancient roads of Ur. But why are they in the city to begin with, or why does the Ur phenomena seem to be spreading? The daylight world is starting to notice. Unfamiliar crumbling, shadowy buildings appear in the corners of the coterie's vision, and paths lead them towards something at the center of the city.



Until recently, the ripest fruits of this Discipline lay locked away in strongholds like the Vienna Chantry and Alamut. Now both lie in ruins, trodden by hunters and heretics. The arcane secrets they held are scattered to the winds. The political alliance of the Warlocks and the Judges has brought their arts closer together, to their mutual displeasure.

For vampires of the other clans, this is an opportunity. Never have the secrets of Blood Sorcery been so free. Kindred willing to pay the right price can find a teacher with little fear. The strange occult experiments of House Ipsissimus find their way to the other members of the movement through zines and private messenger channels. Desperate sorcerers hid what tomes and grimoires they could save in caches around the world. These texts lie in wait, ripe for the taking.

More than ever, Blood Sorcery runs through the veins of those beyond the Tremere and Banu Haqim. While the shock of stories like a skilled Brujah Blood sorcerer or a Ventrue haven protected by self-made wards haven't gone away, the novelty has. In cities all over the world, more Kindred learn what practitioners have known for years: Blood Sorcery makes a perfect tool for a predator.

The Old Blood

The art of Blood Sorcery has multiple origin points. Some claim Caine created it, others say Lilith, and some venerate Set as its founder. Materialist Kindred maintain that the so-called art merely covers a suite of powers of the Blood discoverable only through practice, but unconnected to Oblivion's extradimensional realm. One common legend recurs in the Discipline's murky past: a nameless city raised in the last nights of the Stone Age, a supposed second attempt at a directly Kindred-ruled civilization. Here, claim most Kindred historians of Blood Sorcery, the first vampire sorcerers developed the rituals unlocking this Discipline.

Outside of these potentially mythical origins, Blood Sorcery developed alongside mortal religious and occult beliefs. The most common form of the Discipline in antiquity, the Banu Haqim's Dur-An-Ki, emerged in the Neolithic period from early shamanistic

practitioners. Its ritual invocation of powerful spirits required the caster to enter a transcendental state, whether through intense sensory overload or feeding upon kine under the influence of psychoactive drugs.

In the early 11th century, the warlocks who became Clan Tremere brought their Hermetic approach to the art, organizing the abilities it developed into sets of categories within a greater practice referred to as Thaumaturgy. The Tremere's presence in the Camarilla and consequent worldwide spread brought Thaumaturgy into greater use until the beginning of the 21st century.

The rise of House Carna, the Anarch Rebellion, the Gehenna War, and the Banu Haqim's entrance into the Camarilla shook up hundreds of years of mystical practice in less than 20. Much of the two clans' occult knowledge disappeared in the fires of the Second Inquisition, under the fangs of an unhinged Sabbat, and behind the will of the risen Haqimite methuselah Ur-Shulgi. As Blood sorcerers reformed or recovered their practices, Blood Sorcery consolidated into the form seen tonight: a set of basic abilities to master the Blood, supplemented by Rituals sometimes tied to various Blood craft traditions.

The New Blood

While the mysteries of Blood Sorcery lie open to a wider audience, not all Kindred rush to learn that kind of magic. Mastering the Blood itself is an arduous task, even for those naturally attuned to it. Meanwhile, teachers are relatively easy to find but always expensive, and learning from a teacher provides most would-be Blood Sorcerers their instruction in exchange for a steep price: money, favors, political alliance, or a Blood Bond. Unlike other Disciplines, Blood Sorcery needs time and practice to flourish. Drinking from the right people can boost its power, but rarely does it provide instruction, and self-teaching can prove far more dangerous than other Disciplines.

Choosing to take the arduous path of Blood mastery is a choice any Kindred can make. Vampires of some clans prove more likely to take on Blood Sorcery than others.

Brujah

To make a difference, one must have power and the will to use it. The Brujah eagerly seek out any means to shatter the perceived status quo, and that includes Blood Sorcery. Blood magic, like all the mystic arts, enacts pure change; an attractive prospect for the Rebels. Some Brujah also see the Discipline as the ultimate mastery of the Blood, intriguing those who cling to the notion of a High Clan of Philosopher-Kings brought low by treachery and the march of time. They say that in Carthage, Blood Sorcery was in common practice, its knowledge freely shared among all. Such Kindred often demonstrate much more interest in sharing their knowledge with their coterie and clanmates.

When a Brujah studies Blood Sorcery, they often focus on powers and Rituals that enhance their undead body or defend their havens. In general, the faster a Ritual can be cast, the better. As a clan of action, they can't afford the delays more elaborate Rituals create.

Hecata

The Hecata pride themselves on their mastery of Oblivion. However, even the most powerful Necromancer can't deny there's some blind spots in its scope.

Blood Sorcery not only fills in these gaps, it also gives the Lazarenes safer options for a show of power. Stealing blood from a distance is obvious, but so are the immensely painful Kisses the Clan of Death gives. A Blood Sorcery Ritual gone wrong has less downside (or a less personal downside) than a ghost hellbent on ruining a Kindred's unlife. The only real obstacle: most Blood sorcerers these nights join one political faction or another, often as the tuition for their sorcerous instruction. This threatens the Family's traditions of political immunity.

When a Hecata studies Blood Sorcery, they often focus on powers and Rituals that provide opportunities that command of the dead cannot. Hecata also privilege the study of Wards, especially against ghosts.

Malkavian

Knowledge curses Clan Malkavian. They see patterns before everyone else, know things they shouldn't, and find themselves on the edges of society because of it. Blood Sorcery provides a way through. Here, the comforting tried-and-true Rituals center them, while the art itself opens up a space in which to bring their visions into being. The art combines security and practice. If one must be exposed to unending streams of awful, awful knowledge, why not take up the Discipline that rewards it?

When a Malkavian studies Blood Sorcery, they often focus on powers and Rituals that help interpret the world around them, or at least the Blood of their peers. Abilities that focus on turning blood into draughts or tinctures of some sort also interest them: even older Malkavians have been known to associate with thin-blooded alchemists. In this sense, they take blood as self-medication quite literally.

Ministry

As the fabric joining a tapestry of cults, the Ministry adopts all kinds of occult practices. Therefore, Blood Sorcery has gained popularity within the clan's ranks. For those who cling to a certain old-time religion, it's a little more personal. The Serpents have many unique approaches to Blood Sorcery, with the most popular being Akhu, a class of Rituals using the symbols of ancient Egyptian religion, supposedly attributed to Set himself. The Cult of Set prefers to keep these arts secreted deep within its councils, but some adherents willingly evangelize them to the rest of the clan.

When a Minister studies Blood Sorcery, they often focus on powers and Rituals that reveal. Whether revealing the presence of another or of something otherworldly, or revealing something uncomfortable about their fellow Kindred doesn't matter: the act of revelation holds sacred importance.

Toreador

The joke is obvious: the Toreador heard someone call Blood Sorcery "the art," and they wanted in. That's



only a little true. Blood magic has an undeniable aesthetic force. Moonlit nights, candles, the careful setup of the sacrificial altar, the changing texture and hue of vitae as it transforms into something more, all of these naturally appeal to the Artists.

More importantly, Blood Sorcery provides something novel. Out of all the Disciplines, it's shifted the most, and someone always adds more to it. The Divas would love to take a front row seat to those kinds of discoveries. There's even an appeal to collectors. Who can find the rarest Rituals, and who is powerful enough to perform them? A Toreador Blood sorcerer might keep a library of grimoires so well-curated that it'd make a Tremere feel inadequate.

When a Toreador studies Blood Sorcery, they often focus on elaborate powers and Rituals with stunning effects. Subtlety is for hunting. When a Hedonist achieves perfect mastery of their abilities, they want everyone to know, and they want everyone to know exactly why they did it.

Tzimisce

The Old Clan knows they are the first and best Blood sorcerers. Who lorded over the Earth so well that even its elements obey their beck and call? They did. Whose magic inspired the Black Hand to take on the rituals that hold those ravenous beasts together? Theirs. When ailing will-workers ravaged a clan to supplement their fading sorcery, whose vitae did they rob? The Voivodes. They left a legacy on the Discipline, and woe to anyone who denies it.

A Tzimisce Blood sorcerer begins with Koldunic Sorcery (p. 61) and its associated Rituals, branching out to powers and Rituals that exercise direct control over people or property.

Thin-Blood Alchemy

How did the new alchemy begin? It's the stuff of myth and legend, of course. Ask any two alchemists how the craft began, get three answers. At least a third of those answers begin with El (p. 74). One story gets

repeated a little more than its brethren: a thin-blood biology tech in Sacramento (*no*, Boston; *no*, Las Vegas) is trying to figure out how to make a little sanguineous pick-me-up for daylight hours. He mixes some blood with chocolate powder, vinegar for the acid and cold brew coffee for a caffeinated kick and gets...a nasty uncoagulated mess. So he tries sneaking it into work and whirling it around in the big industrial blender and gets...a nasty uncoagulated mess. So *then* he throws it out and goes to bed in a huff.

And in the wee hours of the morning, with the smell of the stuff still in his nostrils, he has a dream that the ingredients are dancing around a bonfire. One by one the coffee and chocolate and vinegar link hands and jump into the fire to die. When they hit the fire, they turn to ash, and when the blood jumps in after them, *it* starts to turn to ash, too, and he's thinking to himself *oh, it's going to turn into a nasty uncoagulated mess*, when out of his own arm a dancing thread appears, snaking around the ash and the blood and tying it together in a big red bow—his own Blood, dancing with the other ingredients. But it's half Blood and half not-Blood; it can dance with them but it can't die with them, and so it's bringing them all together, pulling them into a pattern that's halfway between everything: between hot and cold, between the edges of molecules, between life and death.

He wakes up in a cold sweat and jumps out of bed to squeeze a fingerful of his Blood into his mix and *bam*, El.

The story might just be a legend. But it might be true. There's always someone who swears their friend's friend knew the guy, that's how you know it's legit. So why waste the excuse for a party? More than a few Mercurians host *Craft Birthday Parties* on March 12th (3/12: 3 for the three stages of matter, and 12 for the 12 gates of alchemy) and brew up a handle of El in its honor. And for all its might-have-beens, the story isn't a bad way to explain how the hell Thin-Blood Alchemy works—why it's *Thin-Blood Alchemy* and not *Camarilla Alchemy*. The changeable nature of Mercurian Blood sets it apart from other Kindred's stable, all-too-solid vitae. Mercurian Blood shifts its sympathies and

repulsions ever-so-slightly to align with the forces around it, melding the ingredients of a brew into something beyond its separate parts. It's the thrill of knowing that despite its apparent weakness their Blood can do something really special, something other licks can't do, that makes alchemy into an irresistible prospect for more than a few thin-bloods.

The Golden Age

The latter half of the 80s was new formula after new formula exploding (sometimes literally) out of homebrew labs all over the world. That's when *Mercurian* really came into vogue, too—you can sometimes pick out an older thin-blood when they talk about *Mercurian sympathies*. Alchemy was a badge of honor: even thin-bloods with absolutely no interest in sweating for hours over a smelly pot got into the mood, wearing Mercury symbols and throwing words like *athanor* and *kettle* around. In Santa Fe, thin-bloods drove out into the desert for brew parties and set off fireworks that turned the midnight sky blue. In Naples, alchemists held meetups on old fishing boats, sailing the warm waters of the Mediterranean as half the crew debated the merits of various ingredients while the other half got high on coolers of alchemical brews. In Lima, the Gogyo group started underground clubs where you could walk right up to the bar and order any brew you wanted.

It was forbidden almost instantly, of course. The second a Mercurian showed up anywhere with something a *real* Lick can't do, the local Camarilla got a call. They already harbored suspicions of the newly emerging thin-bloods, demanding allegiance and desperately figuring out ways to bind them into the Masquerade. *A danger to the Masquerade* was always a good way to get rid of Kindred deemed dangerous (especially when they actually *were* dangerous to the Masquerade), and Camarilla Princes pounced at the chance. Their usual policy was scorched-earth: labs destroyed, whole coterie rounded up and interrogated, domains scoured. Even a whisper of some Mercurian's name and *Alchemy* in the same sentence was as good as declaring the *lex talionis*. The craft went

underground, deeply secret and deeply coded—but never gone. Even older Kindred proved too fascinated with the power thrumming in Thin-Blood Alchemy to stamp it out entirely.

With Friends Like These...

Camarilla vampires weren't the only ones driving alchemists to ground: fellow homebrewers did their part, too. When you're trying to be the big alchemist in town, it's much easier when nothing remains of your competitors but ash and gore. The backstabbing and infighting only crescendoed during the 90s, as Alchemy became ever-more secret and ever-more precious. Alchemists burnt each other up from the inside, poisoned their rivals with tainted brews, gave each other sabotaged tools and ingredients. Hired goons trashed labs and generally made the scene a dangerous place to eke out an existence. The number of new brews plateaued as it quickly became clear that introducing a new formula was like painting a target on your back.

The paranoia did its part, too. A lab that's completely undetectable from the outside is also a lab that can't ventilate poisonous gas billowing out of an *athanor*, or open quick enough to escape an angry salamander that's crawled into the furnace. An alchemist who can't trust anyone tests their brews on themselves, even the ones that turn out to be really, really nasty.

Brave New World

With Camarilla domains left grasping at the tatters of their power and the Anarchs ranging freely, Alchemy still keeps underground, under wraps, and yet... its confines flow a little looser now. The Internet makes research and finding ingredients far easier, and the threat of discovery all the more dangerous. The coalitions are bigger, but looser. The network of interested patrons—and enemies—grows, too, from fellow thin-bloods to older Kindred interested in Alchemy's potential in the power vacuum, to even some mortal players. Slowly but surely, the formulae plateau of the 90s slants up again as the art emerges from the fire.



PHILAETHES DOE

Name hidden, gender unknown, located *maybe* in Spain, Doe was a radical who demanded thin-bloods overthrow the chains of elder generations and form the *athanor mundi*, using Alchemy to fire all Cainites into a true Philosopher's Stone, gifting the world with eternal life and freedom from disease and age. Doe's first furious call to arms appeared on alt.metaphysics.alchemy in 1991, to the horror of many older Kindred and the skepticism of many thin-bloods. But some were drawn to the message and formed *Mundies*, where they'd try to fulfill Doe's prophecies. Tracts supposedly authored by Doe show up from time to time, mostly repeating the same points as Doe's early works, but most alchemists believe they killed Doe in the early 2000s. The movement has mostly fallen out of vogue now—although more than a couple of the Almost Assembly's (p. 109) ingroups build on the foundation of Mundies.

TRENČÍN, SLOVAKIA

About two hours out from Vienna lies Trenčín, Slovakia, and close to it is Hrad Čachtice, the ruined castle where Elizabeth Báthory died after being accused of torturing and murdering scores, or hundreds, of peasants. It's a tourist attraction even to goth-minded mortals, but for one week of the year—the week culminating on the winter solstice—it hosts adventurous blood alchemists and becomes the Burning Man of the murderous undead. They call it the *Conventicle Alchemie*, though during the planning stages before its first year, they persistently misspelled it *Conventical*.

Trenčín (population 55,000) is nominally a Camarilla domain, with a few Tremere of the Carna faction especially influential, but that's a small group and it spends much of its time preparing for the next year's Čachtice party or covering up the previous one. Close to a hundred cooks have shown up over the last few years and it's only getting bigger. They need to be fed and covered, duties the single coterie of Trenčín gladly undertakes to be on the cutting edge of alchemical research.

The Conventicle is part small-group study sessions, part marketplace of new works and old devices, part lecture opportunity for the eager to hear the egotistical, and part party. If you have a new recipe, this is a place you can make a half-year's profit selling it in five days, as long as no one kidnaps you to torture the secret out of your unliving flesh.

IN CHRONICLES

You *could* actually go to Trenčín—it's a redworking hotspot, after all. Thanks to this, the Conventicle can show up in almost any chronicle as prize tickets, an offhand remark to show alchemical know-how, or even just the set-up for a good party story. But like all party stories, what happens before and after is often more interesting.

I Know What You Did Last Solstice

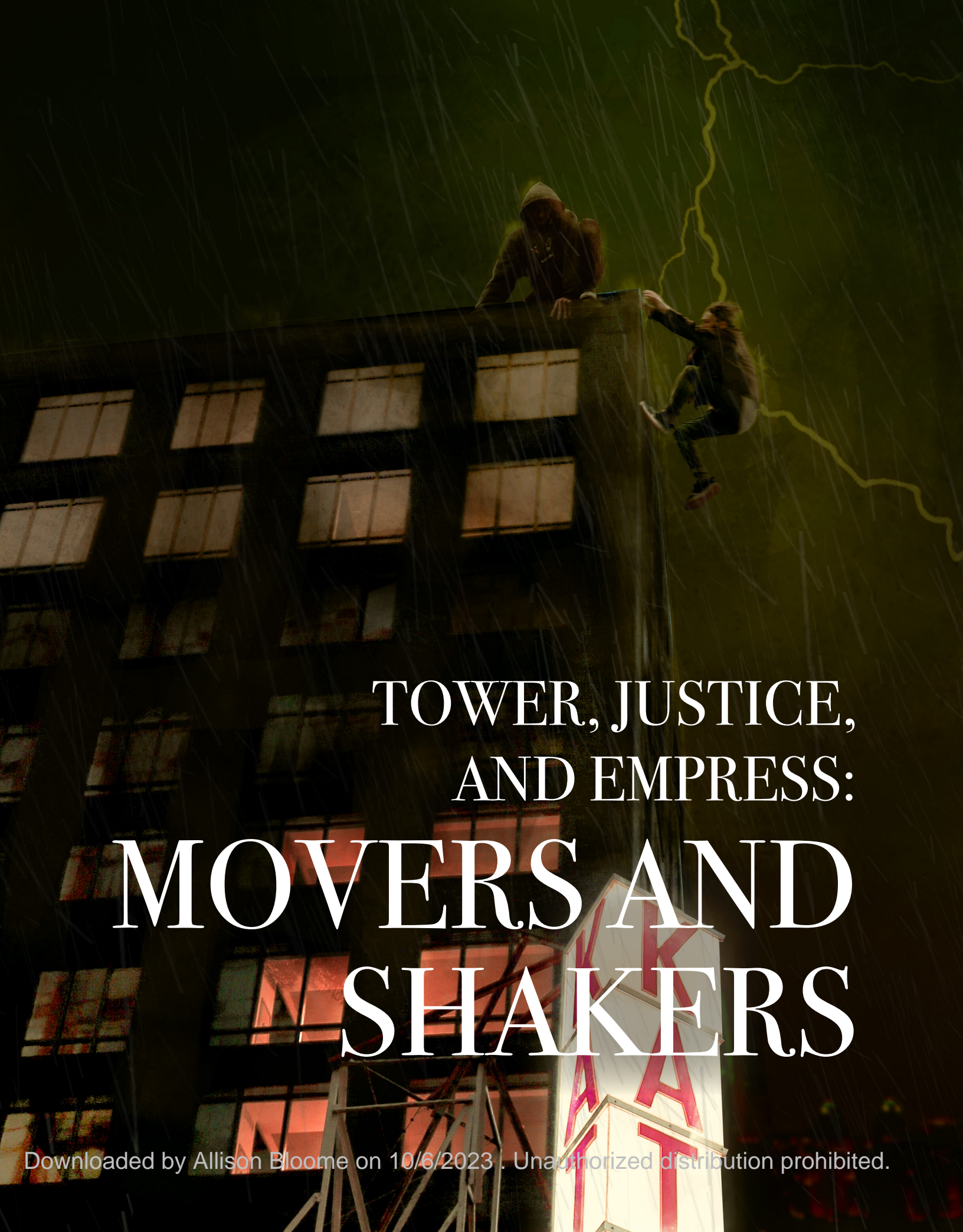
Everyone in the coterie's back from the Coventicle, exhausted, broke, and burned out—so no one notices Alex is missing until people come looking. The last picture he sent is a photo with the coterie none of them remember. People they've never met seem to know them from Trenčín—people who go missing themselves shortly after. Someone's trying to get rid of everyone in town who went to Trenčín, and it seems connected to the gaps in the coterie's memory. Can the coterie piece together what happened? What could be so dangerous or valuable it's worth disappearing fellow Kindred for?

The Alchemist Who Knew Too Much

Annie is a good friend and a better alchemist—good enough that she shared the new formulas she found at Coventicle with the coterie. Unfortunately, another attendee would very much like to be the only one with her particular ingredient list. With hired goons on the coterie's tail following orders to bash them up *at least* and Annie gone to ground, they'll have to call on their connections to hide out or show they're powerful enough not to mess with.

Red Solo Cup Coterie Stories

Finally, players who like the long game of playing sides against one another could take on the roles of that Trenčín coterie, juggling the egos of the planned guests beforehand, protecting the event from itself and from outsiders, and cleaning up indiscretions when it concludes.



TOWER, JUSTICE,
AND EMPRESS:
MOVERS AND
SHAKERS



YET TO MY GRIEFE I KNOW, UNLESSE I FIND
 FORTHWITH ASSISTANCE OUT OF MY OWNE KIND
 I CANNOT GENERATE; MY BLOOD GROWES COLD:
 I AM AMAZ'D TO THINK I AM SO OLD.

— GEORGE RIPLEY, CANTILENA (C. 1470)



Every blood craft scene faces a few constants: not just dark deals and weird smells, but influential figures in Kindred society who find themselves involved regardless of their individual preferences. Two mighty clans defined Blood Sorcery for centuries, and cannot remain aloof from the new freshets it sprays into the modern nights. As the Kindred have reason to remember anew, a sufficiently powerful mortal can still shape their world, or at least endanger their current unives. Other factions rise to the scent of sorcerous power, and the thin-bloods scramble into factions of their own to survive.

Tremere

Once, the Tremere stood over the rest of the Camarilla like a proud tower. At least, that was how it looked to them. They were elite, organized and international. They had a monopoly on

Thaumaturgy and a robust structure where the suckers at the bottom of the ladder had hope to ascend while the bastards at the top had a real nice view. They could even blusteringly claim that they *chose* unlife instead of being cursed like some maundering Ventrue or ditzzy Toreador.

From within the fortress, Thaumaturgy looked like the only discipline worth the name. It was a near-science to bend vitae's power to the operator's desire, rather than a handed-down set of tricks to help one bite, scuttle, and hide. The other clans lay in stasis while the Tremere constantly ascended.

But towers fall.

The fires of the Second Inquisition turned the Prime Chantry into a smoldering corpse yard and the Blood Bonds the warlocks used to maintain order whip-cracked all the way up and down the structure. Some have since tumbled to their doom. Others are trying to prop the ladder back up and rebuild. And some have decided to walk away altogether in favor of something new and different.

CEORIS

Ceoris is to Blood Sorcery as St. Peter's Cathedral is to Catholicism: a historical center for a powerful hierarchy, a place of great symbolic and emotional power, and the address to which riches of learning and treasure were hauled throughout the Middle Ages. During or shortly after the Vienna raid, an inquisitorial IAO strike team firebombed it to ashes as part of a particularly vigorous live-fire NATO exercise in Romania. The site now lists as the property of the MCS Trust. Persistent investigation or Dominating the right officers from the Serviciul Român de Informații reveals the MCS Trust's joint funding by the Romanian secret police and the Romanian Orthodox Church. Purportedly, Ceoris is now a graveyard and, indeed, there are thousands of crosses planted in the bulldozed-flat turf where the Tremere towers once stood. The markers have no names, there are no records of actual burials happening and, if you inquire about getting a gravesite there, you're told it's full up while earning a serious background check.

The IAO team hauled truckloads of material from the site to a Bucharest warehouse convenient to Dealul Mitropoliei and paid for by the SRI. A lot of it was just slabs of gold that had melted in the intense flames and solidified in the basement, but there were also items that, apparently, thermite couldn't harm.

The MCS site in the hills has also become a hardship posting for both priests and spies. Those transferred out still have nightmares about voices from the soil, red mists in the moonlight, and always, the feeling of watching eyes.

IN CHRONICLES

You have essentially no reason to go to Ceoris in person: first off, it's destroyed. Second, it's guarded by enemies who'd shoot a stake in your heart as soon as look at you. But Ceoris has its own ways of reaching out...

Crusade

Enemies and friends of the coterie are starting to disappear: there's a hunter in town—a good one. The signs point to a visiting priest at St. Catherine's who preaches about dreams of lamb's blood welling up beneath his feet and red halos. He never sleeps at night. He seems to know *exactly where to look* for Kindred. Digging into his past reveals he started his one-man hunting spree only after he returned from a disciplinary stint near Ceoris.

Don't Look Now

It sure seemed innocuous, but when one of the coterie touched the old necklace in the box of old artifacts, they suddenly saw a field of a thousand nameless crosses, red mist rising over green hills, and a woman walking through a checkpoint. The next night, the same woman stared out at them from the crowd before disappearing. She's a powerful bilocator who's in Slovakia to find artifacts from the ruined fringes of Ceoris—and she wants that necklace and its siblings. The coterie must figure out a way to bargain with her, or stay out of her sight.

The Enemy of My Enemy

Inside an old warehouse near the coterie's domain, the MCS Trust builds a new outpost. They want to frustrate—maybe outright fight—Tremere in the city. There's no love lost between the Tremere and the other Kindred. The MCS Trust may be IAO, but should the coterie hang back until they've dealt with the Tremere? And what about the neighborhood Tower attracted their specific interest, anyway?



Goratricines

Let's start with the conservatives who would insist on shoving their way to the front anyway. *Goratricine* is the current phrase for *followers of Goratrix*, although *Goratrero* is more common in South America. Unless you're not a follower of Goratrix, in which case you might use the contemptuous *Goratajo*. Some claim the Goratricines are actually led by Goratrix himself, though most in this camp really don't care whose boot it is, as long as somebody is licking. Karl Schrekt may be the new man on the mountaintop, but given Kindred paranoia and communication vulnerabilities, it can sometimes be hard to be sure where a particular command originated. It's complicated, but whoever or *whatever* is in charge these nights, he's got Blood Sorcery tricks that make Cauldron of Blood look like a rabbit in a hat, so he can call himself anything he wants, thanks.

The goal of the Goratricines is to restore the old structure. They want to once more be an international, top-down, highly leveraged community. If they can't run it on Blood Bonds any more, well, Dominate is the carob to that chocolate, especially with some Presence to sweeten

it up. Backing up occult obedience training is good, old-fashioned dependence. The Goratricine overlords of Taichung City and Buenos Aires control how their underlings feed, selling it to newcomers as a safe, consistent way to get vitae without scrambling. Other chantries oversee their followers' cash, again presenting it as a convenience so you can concentrate on your studies. Anything essential to Kindred existence, you can bet there's a Goratricine chantry somewhere trying to monopolize it for *the common good*.

The problem is, a lot of Tremere don't actually want to meet the new boss. It's not just the lone-wolf operators slipping through the cracks, selling their skills to the highest bidder, and ghosting away before the local chantry gets wise. Many chantries look at this Tremere nostalgia project and politely say, "I prefer not to."

Which is a conundrum. No great leader rebuilds the Tower by going to war against every Tremere enclave that doesn't immediately bend knee and lick boot. But on the other hand, letting people just say no is not the way to look like an implacable strongman. So the central organization takes a few brutal, memorable, and deliberately cruel steps against *rebels* when it can or when it must. More



often, local Goratricines steadily influence the local scene, buying favor with a ritual or access to a fuscus, pull old strings with the local Prince and Primogen, and recruit promising newcomers on seemingly very attractive terms.

Carna's Followers

Members of House Carna eager to distance themselves from the old top-down Tremere (and play footsie with the Anarchs) cultivate a reputation as open-faced progressives, but there's only so far night-stalking murderous vampires can carry off love, peace, and simultaneous release. Their kink-forward version of the Blood Bond makes Carna herself the solid core of a personality cult, and what she seems to want to do with that is broaden research to make a superior Blood Sorcery alternative by fusing in

Thin-Blood Alchemy. Carna supports the Trenčín Conventicle (p. 97), and influential Carnines often sponsor impressive local kettle battles, or provide prizes for radical reinterpretations of old rituals. If the result further alienates old-school Tremere, so much the better.

It's not solely Duskborn cooks getting in on this vibe—the organization throws a wide net. Her followers love mortal Wiccans, not only as kine, but as long-shot bets on new avenues of occult investigation. (The only thing better than a Blood Doll who thinks he can see auras is one who truly can.) Eager to turn the page on the past, many Carnines reach out beyond blood magic towards some unified theory of magic. Which, as often as not, means they're in more danger from other supernaturals than they are from the hated Goratricines. But the vanishingly rare times that they find some kind of synergy makes up for





dozens of failed attempts. Kindred who want to research outside vampirism for answers about their undead condition find House Carna extremely welcome. So do practical, tough, and capable Kindred who protect those wide-eyed intellectuals as they negotiate, investigate, and travel the globe pursuing mysteries.

Solitarchies

Imagine if, this very night, the entire Walton family was liquidated by an unlikely collusion between Opus Dei and WHINSEC graduate wet teams. Walmart stock would be in freefall, but it's not like every individual shop would close overnight. Their store rooms would still be full, their bank accounts and cash registers untouched, their employees would retain their scanners and vests. Local and regional management would remain, even without corporate. Other stores would just take down the yellow sign, strip out the trade dress, and keep selling the same products from the same suppliers to the same customers.

That's a rough parallel to the fall of Prime Chantry. In many domains, individual chantry-masters have stepped up and taken charge. It's been hard where the Blood Bond was assumed to be an unbreakable, unstoppable trump card, but the smarter warlocks didn't rely on just one play. It was great to have an international coven of scary warlocks to point at during negotiations with the Prince, but that was a privilege dearly bought. They are on their own, but by the same token, they no longer have to cream off the best of everything for some demanding elders in Austria.

The most successful post-Vienna Tremere enclaves are what could be deemed *solitarchies*—individual domains existing independent of the pyramid-ladder, partly by choice and partly from necessity. By becoming stubbornly local, solitarchy chantries become more agile, more open to negotiation, more pliable, and far more able to say *not my problem* to anything that isn't stinking up their back yard.

Some of them have gone so far as to formally reject Goratricine supremacy. Others sheltered in place after Vienna fell, waiting to see if their chantry was next, and developed wildly paranoid routines only just now beginning to crack. Some have cultishly fallen in behind a charismatic leader, or politically radicalized towards fascism, or blood Communism, or full, weird, mind-controlled mutual hive slavery.

Many solitarchies default to selfish comfort. Taking a break from decades or centuries of dealing with the demands of their superiors, these groups don't try to re-invent Blood Sorcery or even perfect what they've got. Some try to maintain a monopoly on high rituals, or camp on the most puissant furcus. Others coalesce around a school of thought, or a magical goal, or trying to crack an ancient Mycenaean puzzle, or anything. They're not reinventing themselves or maneuvering in the international Camarilla snake pit. They're giving quid pro quo with their immediate neighbors, in an open fashion that was unthinkable in the 20th century.

On the other hand, for every solitarchy that says, "I'm just going to run my store and make nice with politics," another says, "The guards have left the prison and the doors are all unlocked!" The international Tremere hierarchy *held these chantries back*—and now that they have escaped observation, they dive into experiments that would make H. H. Holmes clap with childish glee. Being an inventive thaumaturgy genius does not necessarily make one a responsible or even reasonable individual. So some solitarchies explore forbidden techniques and rites with gusto and exuberance.

The Anarch will-to-power mystics that identify as House Ipsissimus exemplify this sort. They combine their self-aggrandizement and calculated sadism with a dash of off-kilter innovation and street-focused politics. Those latter elements help them blend into local scenes as *ritual incubators*, *co-op labs*, or just markets for new magics that the Prince doesn't need to know about.

Banu Haqim

The Banu Haqim find themselves in a strange time. The perils the clan faces bring them closer to Kindred society. The days of independence are long gone. The Lawmen now buy deep into the worldwide political game, whether it's in the Camarilla or elsewhere.

This is also true of the blood craft scene. The Children of Haqim are out and present, making deals, swapping secrets, and gaining whatever advantage they can in the name of necessity.



The Banu Haqim in the Scene

As the needs of coterie, domain, and sect start to outweigh the needs of clan, younger Banu Haqim see little harm in sharing their Blood Sorcery secrets. Rare magic is not just useful on its own, but as currency. If someone's willing to provide a steady supply of blood or act as a reliable informant in exchange for showing how to turn vitae into a powerful narcotic, why not take the deal?

That doesn't mean vampires from the Clan of the Hunt always sell off their arts to the highest bidder. Their often strong moral codes come into play. Judges share their arts with those who match their personal ethical worldview. Some stalk their pupils or buyers, making sure their heart is ready for the mysteries they seek, and may feed upon their would-be student if not.

Many Children of Haqim in the scene tend to act as chroniclers, researchers, and revivalists. In any given city, Blood sorcerers come and go, ritualistic styles drift in and out of fashion, and knowledge evaporates like water. Someone must preserve its history, because the Warlocks certainly aren't going to do it with any reverence.

The scholars of Haqim's childer take great pains to observe and document the unlife and times of a city's blood craft scene. A chronicler's record isn't just a grimoire, or a list of what Rituals are popular in a city. It also breaks down the social aspects of the scene: who's who, who's left, and who got themselves dusted. Between the lines, it might hint about crimes unpunished or righteous works done in secret. Due to the Camarilla's rightful distrust of technology, these *keys to the city* tend to be memorized oral histories or kept in volumes of handwritten notes with coded names.

All that knowledge can bring a lot of power. In some cities, these Banu Haqim use their in-depth knowledge to establish themselves as ambassadors, or even leaders of the scene. A city with a heavy Judge presence might have a rigid, formal scene, defined by rules only passed by word of mouth but kept by Kindred with long memories.



In cities with only one or two of these scholars, they might serve as a go-between for the scene and the rest of the city's Kindred society. In domains where the Banu Haqim have a sturdy place in the Camarilla, this role might even be official.

While some Banu Haqim record what was past, the more active members of the clan are eager to know what's happening *right now*. The blood craft scene, when left to its own devices, can go to some nasty places. Robbery, mutilation, murder, these are some of the *nicer* things that can happen with blood sorcery. Black Hand infiltrators, damage to the Veil, or unchained aapilum can turn the scene into something much worse.

So, these Judges do what they do best. They embed themselves in the scene, and they start policing it. If there's already formal or unspoken rules in the scene, that makes their unives easier. They listen to those rules, judge them based on their own ideas of what the scene should be, and then enforce them the rules as they interpret it. If the scene's a little more freewheeling, a Banu Haqim uses their best judgement to enforce their moral standpoints on the blood craft scene. In a city filled with Banu Haqim, this gets dangerous. No one ever said that Judges had to *agree* with each other about what's right.

A few Banu Haqim seek to revive older forms of Blood Sorcery. Recovered tomes from Alamut hold ancient Dur-An-Ki rituals for invocation of spirits. These spirits, they assure skeptics, mean no ill-will. They only ask for favors, and only wish to establish partnerships. Its practitioners believe that more widespread use can give Judges an edge against other sorcerers—and other foes.

Other clan members, especially those very dedicated to formalized faiths, aren't so sure. While it's possible that these invoked spirits might be benevolent forces of nature or even angels, it feels a little too close to idolatry. Older exiles have seen what happens when someone tries to reintroduce *the old ways* to the clan, and how well it's gone for them. While further schism seems highly unlikely, the topic remains the subject of fierce debate behind closed doors.

Mrs. Chopra

Every year, Saviti Chopra makes a stump speech to her *Chopra-wafadar*, the semi-facetious nickname for the most trusted employees in a very special section of Xtend Ltd. After mourning the fallen, she reminds her team of the importance of their work. When they rob vampires of their magical artifacts, copy their spells, and capture them, the goal is to bring their occult knowledge into mortal hands, where it's best used.

The project is all for the love of humankind. She asks a lot of her team: infiltration, robbery, brutal execution of creatures that were once human. But she reminds them, it is for a greater purpose. The team's numerous sacrifices are for a brighter, more enlightened future.

What she omits is that alongside this goal, she'd like those sacrifices to benefit one person.



All For Love

Saviti met Satyavan Chopra at Stanford. Saviti loved his gentleness, and Satyavan loved her unyielding determination. He's the official genius founder of Xtend Ltd, and it's his picture the world saw as the company's database, infocom, and mobile services spread across South Asia, the Middle East, East Africa, and Oceania, but as far as he was concerned, he was only one half of an incredible team. It was a sentiment he'd often share with the board of directors, made more awkward since Saviti was *also* a director.

Then Satyavan got sick. It was a slow, degenerative process, his blood rebelling against him in ways medical science couldn't explain. He experienced extreme photosensitivity, sudden organ failure, and intense lethargy attacks. He tried to take it in stride, but Saviti could see that every day brought him new agony. Then, one morning, she woke up and found him comatose. He remains in a coma to this day.

Seeing a power struggle on the horizon, Saviti took control of the company. A portion of the research department shifted from communications and digital storage into medical tech. Off the record, she researched Satyavan's condition, and found conflicting information about a *Chédiak-Higashi-like syndrome* that was similar but not quite what her husband suffered. Then a revelation occurred.

Complaints about a high-level executive at the Mumbai headquarters led to the discovery of the employee's true identity: Diya Yadav, a woman who died seven years ago. She kept a cult of personality around her as she rose in the ranks. Corporate rivals vanished, later discovered partially devoured by "wild animals." The Kindred would know she was a Nagaraja of the Hecata, but an in-depth investigation by Xtend's HR and security team only knew, as impossible as it seemed, she was a vampire.

Saviti became involved when reports leaked their way to the top. She scoffed at the idea until she read the report and noted the eerie similarities between Diya's activities and symptoms of her husband's illness. She personally signed the order to circumvent

reporting her to the authorities, and instead capture her and keep her in a holding cell in Dubai.

The extraction and interrogation only succeeded by the skin of their teeth. Much of the security and medtech squad died, but Mrs. Chopra's eyes opened to the world of the undead. Diya didn't reveal everything, and not all she said was truthful, but it was enough to establish basic safety protocols for Mrs. Chopra's teams. Diya also revealed the existence and location of a Tremere chantry in Goa, which saved her from her planned destruction. After another barely successful raid, Saviti saw the potential in blood craft and more importantly, how it could save her husband.

In the years since, Mrs. Chopra has developed a team of medical and occult researchers backed by private security hired on long-term contracts. She further supplements her *wafadar* by personnel from the other divisions of Xtend, brought into the project for short periods of time. She scours the redworking scene for anything that could save her husband and humanity along with him. She's building an enviable collection of occult and magical grimoires and artifacts, but this isn't enough for Saviti. She spares nothing in her quest, not expenses, not employees, and especially not vampires.

Mrs. Chopra picks up on tips from a variety of sources: the speculation and predictions of her occult researchers, keywords identified on any communication sent on Xtend cloud services or the XTD mobile network, and Diya Yadav herself. Mrs. Chopra isn't very keen on keeping any vampire who runs afoul of her unscorched, but the Nagaraja keeps the *un* in undead by embedding herself into blood craft scenes on Xtend's behalf.

She takes anything her team grasps, but is especially interested in:

- **Blood Artifacts:** Potions, blood-operated magical objects, and other oddities mortals can use.
- **Hedge Magic:** Mortals can't perform a Kindred's blood craft, but since their Rituals are based in human ritual and faith, any Ritual that is easy to tweak or directly make into hedge magic is a must.



- **Healing Powers and Abilities:** Any blood craft that seems like it can heal Satyavan is high priority. The fewer strings attached, the better. The Embrace is *not* an option, and a Kindred who tricks the organization into providing him childer is in for a rough time.

Mrs. Chopra in the Scene

Mrs. Chopra is just another anonymous Indian tech billionaire, not a public crusader or glossy-magazine guru. She has to pick her battles or she risks losing control of her company to a board more interested in dividends than in vampire-hunting.

Mrs. Chopra's influence varies depending on location: Xtend is the eighth-largest telecom and data firm in India, the fifth-largest in Indonesia and Dubai, and the third-largest in Kenya and South Africa. Xtend isn't Google or Apple, in other words. Xtend has a direct presence in four cities: their main headquarters in Mumbai and three regional headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Dubai, and Milpitas, California. Scenes with a connection to Mumbai, Goa, or one of those regional centers might have heard rumors of a *Mrs. Chopra* or even her Chopra-wafadar, but they probably haven't connected the "rich woman looking for bloodcraft" to Xtend. Let the players make that connection in play: it's more fun.

Xtend has just barely begun to test the market outside the Indian Ocean rim, its European and American customers mostly in expat and immigrant communities from south Asia and east Africa. Mobile storefronts and cloud server centers in a few strip malls and exurban tracts, and maybe a middleware headquarters in a down-market skyscraper, make up its footprint in most Western cities. Xtend vans and cell towers slowly appear in the streets, ads for the XTD phone service manifest on train station billboards and Bollywood cable programming.

Mrs. Chopra realized early that full-on raids were not sustainable. Barging into the havens of magic-

slinging vampires is a terrible idea. Even if the raid succeeds, it grabs the attention of government forces, some of which care far too much about stomping out the vampire menace to take a bribe. Chopra-wafadar work subtly; when they need to commit violence, it's swift and terrible.

In Chronicles

Chopra-wafadar present in three basic fashions, mostly determined by what branch of Xtend they used to work for before Mrs. Chopra pulled them into her obsessive special project. If they came from R&D, they tend to focus on the nitty-gritty of the blood craft process. They ask a lot of questions, more than regular mortals. There's a curious glint in their eyes, and perhaps a hint of jealousy. There's no logical reason that any of what they see or buy should work, and yet it does. They want the power, but they don't want the curse. They reject the Embrace, but they would take hundreds of pages of detailed documentation about the process.

Those who came from HR, middle management, or marketing, on the other hand, show more interest in the figures of the scene. They buy time from orphans (p. 25) and spend hours asking hundreds of questions. They chat up vendors, seeing who's more willing to bend the Masquerade than others. Blood magic can be a lonely business, lonelier than regular Kindred society, so there's always someone willing to talk. These vampires fall into a trap. Scouts seek powerful figures, folks they can open a ticket on for their higher-ups. A vendor who thinks they've found a regular client or even a friend might end up stuffed in a bag and thrown into a cargo plane before long.

Not every Chopra-wafadar is an iron-eyed researcher or operative-in-waiting. Some were salespeople at the local XTD mall store whose new position is far more dangerous than they realized. They're still trying to process the fact that vampires exist, let alone that they can do magic. Their naivety is dangerous, but it can also charm arrogant Kindred or those with close ties to humanity.

IN YOUR CHRONICLE

You can leave Xtend and the Chopra-wafadar in the background, just one more minor piranha in the pool. Or, if Mrs. Chopra has heard how rich and vulnerable your redworking scene is, she might escalate to a major antagonist.

When Mrs. Chopra sets her sights on a city's blood craft scene, it looks something like this:

Phase 1: Repositioning and

Recruitment—Her team identifies any Xtend-related workers in the area and recruits the desperate or the promising into the special project. One or two mid-tier Chopra-wafadar relocate to the area to supervise. Xtend opens a cell phone store or rents an office suite near the airport for the team to use as a safe house and control headquarters. The coterie probably doesn't notice this step at all: at most, they see a few more teal XTD vans around.

Phase 2: Infiltration—Chopra-wafadar embed into the scene, either as clients, experts, or—if necessary—sources of food and comfort. They seek out knowledgeable but relatively weak members of the scene to exploit or buy from. The coterie suddenly makes more sales to new customers, but prices for finished rituals or artifacts rise across the scene. The most vulnerable member of the coterie makes a great new friend who also knows how to fix their computer and has a great deal on a cell phone plan. This phase might last for months or even years until they find a suitable target for Phase 3.

Phase 3: Identification and

Extraction—Chopra-wafadar pick a target: a specific artifact, tome, or vampire, something they can't just buy, something that's worth the risk of direct action. They plan a heist and carry it out, bringing in extra security muscle from India or hiring local talent as need be. Their standing orders: kill any vampire they can't incapacitate for extraction. If the coterie has identified their target, this provides an opportunity to heist the heisters, or warn an ally, or set up a foe—whatever seems best. If the coterie is the target, they may find themselves on a cargo plane to extremely sunny Dubai.

THE CHANTRY MERCHANT

Under an assumed identity, an otherwise upstanding member of the local chantry teaches its secrets to anyone in the Camarilla who can support her last remaining mortal descendant. It's a great opportunity for anyone looking for an edge in the scene, but the word's gotten too far out. Mrs. Chopra wants to hear her secrets, and then chuck her in a furnace for good measure.

THE MALADY PEN

Using the Malady Pen is simple. Load it up with blood, write a big, long letter about a disease that ails you, then mail it off to someone. Its user is cured, but sending the letter sends the disease to its unfortunate recipient, getting ordinary people sick and turning Kindred into unwilling carriers. A powerful Anarch in the scene knows it's in the city and wants to keep it from the Black Hand. Mrs. Chopra knows, too, and will stop at nothing to have it.

Other Actors

In the rubble of the Pyramid and the Mountain, new practices emerge. An ambitious ancilla with a devoted coterie or three of followers can leverage a new—or very old—ritual, or control of a major nexus, or an Audi trunk full of kalif, into a whole lot of power in a given domain. Other clans whose members never ceded control of blood craft to Tremere or Haqim find new opportunities as their childer slowly rally: new masks for the Ministry, new lands for the Old Clan.

As always, the thin-bloods have to figure out what all these weird old vampires even mean, and whether any of it prefigures more Scourges coming to kick over their brew again, or Sabbat psychos coming to preach them to literal death. Some of it certainly means flocking tighter and flying harder for what you want. That's challenge enough to draw a response.

Any of these groups might show up in, or have beef with, or even run your blood craft scene. Alternatively, feel free to use them as sample recipes

for your own chronicle’s strange brew of politics and sorcery and survival for another night.

The Almost Assembly

Hidden away on seemingly dead forums, obscure microblogs, and password protected messenger servers, the Almost Assembly is a community of thin-bloods focused on transcendence. What they seek is not Golconda, it’s not a return to humanity, and it’s not feasting upon the true Kindred for their power. It’s a search for true immortality.

The Assembly formed sometime in the mid-2000s from a collective of thin-blooded doctors, nurses, scientists, and occultists who gathered on an abandoned USENET newsgroup to discuss their condition. The discussions initially focused on support and reports on self-medication, but when a pseudonymous user posted a scientific paper concerning *Thin-Blooded Syndrome*, the newsgroup pivoted into the medical and mystical implications of thin-bloodedness and the rising art of Thin-Blooded Alchemy. Much of that paper’s findings don’t hold up tonight, but the Almost Assembly considers it a seminal text and its author, “Dr. Douglas Netchurch,” as an honorary founder of the community.

The Assembly styles itself as a virtual academic association, and it publishes a digital annual journal called the *Curriculum Vitae*, which presents case studies of Duskborn around the world, as well as formulae with clear scientific measurements. It also provides a forum for its members to discuss its current main philosophy: that the thin-blooded are an evolutionary step between mankind and its *alt-states*, and a Neo-Human, an immortal being with Kindred abilities but no frailties.

The exact details of this philosophy still draw debate, and its subject to change as years pass, but its basic assumption is that the idea of *blood-thinning* is an inherently flawed concept. They don’t reject the Generation framework—except for a few radical *Blood Cycle* theorists—but question its relevance. It’s too tied to mythology and Kindred social bias to

THE SECRETS

THE SECRETS

tell the full story. Assembly theory argues that the alchemical prowess of the Duskborn and their better integration with prey prove them the evolutionary equal of older Kindred wielding hoary Disciplines and stifling custom.

The Assembly further proposes that vampirism isn't a separation from humanity, but rather an *alt-state*, a setting the human body enters when exposed to *occult trauma*. Alt-states tap on the body's natural occult energy systems, which persist even post-death. The issue, then, is that alt-states are hard on humans biologically and psychologically. An alt-state is difficult to deactivate. After a certain amount of time or with enough occult trauma exposure, it's impossible.

The thin-blooded provide a unique opportunity: somewhere between baseline and alt-state, they could learn to toggle the two settings, or achieve something more. The Almost Assembly wants the latter. They see the road to Neo-Humanism in the perfection of Thin-Blood Alchemy. Their formulae focus on decreasing typical Kindred weaknesses and enhancing their strengths.

Breakthroughs are scarce, and the threat of FIRSTLIGHT infiltrating the Assembly is real, but the community soldiers on. Every member is their own *magnum opus*, a great work sculpted with care and formulae. Every year, the dream of the Neo-Human, who knows both the warmth of the sun and the chill of the night, comes closer to reality. A new age beckons, and it is almost, *almost* here.

In Chronicles

Academic, focused, fervent. Or, technocratic, passionate, secretive. Assembly members are usually detached from the larger alchemy world, preferring the ivory-tower route to the under-the-overpass kettle-battle path. They're scientific to a fault, trying to find the logical route of thin-blood biology, even when Kindred nature laughs in their face. But their focus does reap rewards: the Assembly's one of the most internally stable groups, and their discoveries are legitimately interesting.

Encountered in Assembly microblogs when you search *just* the right terms, or in intense debate in the weird corners of the alchemy scene. Inquiring into thin-blood biology or medicine is sure to turn them up.

HELP WANTED

The coterie obtains an issue of *Curriculum Vitae*, and discovers an advertisement for a local Assemblée asking for local contacts. If they get in touch, they find she's looking for volunteers to recruit sellers for her as she continues her Great Academic Work. Unfortunately, what she doesn't tell them is she's persona non grata at the shops she's looking to buy from, thanks to unscrupulous experimenting on another thin-blooded.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The coterie gets word that some of *their* formulae are published on Assembly sites, with *someone else's* name on them! But this *someone else* claims they've never heard of the coterie, and produces suspiciously familiar notes as proof. The only thing to do is either discredit within the Assembly circles, or somehow put their name back on their formulae. And how did those notes get out there, anyway?

BODY SNATCHERS

The Assembly's theories might be out there, but there's something compelling about them—enough that someone's kidnapped – or possibly staked—an Assembly member to examine her very personal *magnum opus*. The Assembly needs someone to find her and bring her back, not only returning their colleague but her precious unpublished research as well.

The Calderone

Emerging from the Valle d'Aosta region of Italy in the early 1900s, the Calderone began as a Ministry sub-sect focused on Thaumaturgy. Given the Tremere attitude toward *sharing*, the Calderone—a name simply meaning *the cauldron*—has been embattled since inception, making them very small, but very tough.

The Tremere claim the Calderone got their knowledge of Blood Sorcery through diablerie and



the Calderone's denials are so blasé and smug, they might as well be confirmation. They haven't sat still on it though, and welcome thin-blood experiments as openly as any of Carna's covens.

Like a cancer, Calderone influence on a domain tends to move in stages.

Stage One: Party People—When they just arrive and have no established power base, they're fun! They can make commonplace substances or experiences as compelling as heroin! They can help you manage mortals by addicting people who haven't even touched the drug! They're friendly, laidback, tolerant, and don't ask much in return; just some breathing space and a little respect.

Stage Two: Hard Hustle—When they've been here a while, they start setting conditions. Any mortal who snaps under the influence of their drugs gets handed over to them—that's just good sense, right? Do *you* want to deal with crashed out despairing nihilists in withdrawal? Leave it to the Calderone, they're experienced. During this phase, they're still friendly and easygoing with cliques and gangs that are too strong to cross, but they start winnowing the lesser groups. Those who are weak enough to fall to a surprise attack get just that, if the Calderone can either avoid taking responsibility or, after the fact, present it as a good thing that they destroyed all those neonates. "They were violating the Masquerade!" is a much easier sell to the Prince when the accused are all ashes. Other small coterie get co-opted, especially if they have a grievance against the established hierarchy. They're quietly invited to get ready for a putsch against the hated oppressors. Armed, indoctrinated and supplied, they're ready to be the tip of the spear when the Calderone make their move. Or, alternately, they're deniable cats-paws when the Calderone have a problem they don't want sticking to them.

Stage Three: Final Fallout—Now the mask comes off. Everyone they've befriended is warned to watch out for everyone *else* they've defended. If they can sow enough paranoia and grievance, they don't have to be the strongest in the city, they just have to

stand back while the strongest savages the second strongest, then step in with the coup d'état. It's all in the timing. Once their control is established, it's all punishment, all despair, all pain. Because, remember, their ultimate goal is not authority, but a spiritual rug-pull ending with despair, isolation, and the bleakest possible exposure to the hissing abyss at the center of an absurd universe that should never have existed.

The question is... which stage is your city in?

In Chronicles

Charismatic, a master of subtle pressure, chatty. Or, cold, thrill-seeking, opportunistic. Their affable exteriors might mask a deep nihilism, but Calderone are far from apathetic. They'll pick the action or path they believe leads to the most interesting outcome, or at least the one with the soaring high and the plunging crash. Some Calderone sample their own wares, riding the waves with their chosen targets—and getting closer in the process—while others prefer to keep a clear head and hungrily watch the chaos unfold around them.

Encountered at wild parties with lots of substances flying around, counterculture hangouts, and sitting on the very edge of the cliff, looking down.

IN WITH A BAD CROWD

At the party there's a woman handing out some of the best *stuff* the coterie's ever had, half Alchemy and half Blood Sorcery, and it ends with a perfect, mellow calm. The woman's friendly—she lets them know there's a lot more interesting stuff where that came from. Some of her friends show up, too, and they're nice, but there's something off about the way they watch the partiers throwing up and sobbing in the bathroom the same way everyone else is watching the dancers on the floor. Why are they so insistent on getting the coterie's number?

SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

Allison Hall's smart, beautiful, personable, and very much on the rise in the Blood Sorcery world. And she's noticed the coterie, and likes them—and wants them to help her out with new combinations of



Blood Sorcery and Alchemy. And she wants you to help her find people interested in testing out the new mixtures...and isn't it fun to see their eyes go blank... and have they ever thought about how mortals are just like chickens, running around before dinner?

DOVECOTE

About two hours after the first Camarilla domains announced that they were going to start branding thin-bloods, a group of alchemists and hacker-adjacents decided the best defense was a good offense. No more secret alchemy formulae or proprietary ingredients: share them around, make 'em powerful, make *even more*, so when the bastards came knocking, there'd be hell to pay. They set up secret servers, wrote out ground rules, and spent five hours coming up with a cool-sounding name. The next night, the first DOVECOTE meeting was in session, with a grand total of 14 members. Since then, their number has ballooned to at least a few hundred—possibly more, as some groups of alchemists write under one collective name—spread out across North America with a sprinkle of members in Latin America and Asia.

DOVECOTE encourages constant experimentation, with a heavy focus on formulae that can help its members fight or flee. Members try out countless recipes, both out of their own

heads or suggested by other members, and write up intricate reports of their formulae and outcomes to share with their comrades. Most announce the exact time they plan to submit, so interested parties can save their data before the chat server gets its daily wipe-down. There's an unpleasant subset of Licks who *innocently* suggest dangerous or unpleasant formulae, just to see if other people will try them out, but other members specialize in catching these *burners* and taking them down. DOVECOTE members don't use the actual words *vitae*, *Blood*, or even *humors*, in their reports, of course—they're not stupid. Codewords like *whatsit* or *Dr. Pepper* stand in for *Blood*, *horny/angry/mopey* for *sanguineous/choleric/melancholy*, and a whole raft of other secret phrases help disguise the servers from any prying eyes or keyword alerts.

Getting into the DOVECOTE servers is difficult. The best way is for an extant member to invite a new brewer, which means proving oneself both to be a good alchemist and a trustworthy one to a *secret* DOVECOTE member. Despite being quite open with each other, the DOVECOTE community fiercely defends its records—this is meant to protect its members, after all. It can take years before enough trust builds between thin-bloods for an invitation to emerge.

DOVECOTE members in the same domain often frequent the same shops and suppliers, tipped off



by one of their compatriots. Most are interested in buying materials, not books or occult equipment, and they tend to have at least a small presence in the designer drug scene in a given city.

CRONUS

Any group on the Internet is guaranteed to spawn offshoots: the people who don't take it seriously, and the people who take it very, *very* seriously. CRONUS is the latter. Frustrated with DOVECOTE's perceived laissez-faire attitude, a small number of former members splintered off and formed their own nexus; an actual, in-person group of alchemists. They settled on Lagos as their center of operations, moving shop entirely to be within walking distance of each other in the Idumota market. CRONUS's network focuses on intense research into *why* formulae work the way they do. They don't bother with DOVECOTE's hit-and-miss experimentation; instead, they dissect old recipes over and over again, cross-examining them with chemistry papers and historical texts until every molecule is accounted for. Members travel out periodically to gather ingredients and collect texts around the globe.

If Camarilla vampires—or anyone else—try to mess with them, they don't just want to fight or flee. They want to *win*.

In Chronicles

Observant, casual, a go-with-the-flow veneer masking a low simmer. Or, intense, controlled, angry. Usually DOVECOTE members try to stay out of conflicts within the alchemy scene, although some members try to *push* junior alchemists to *see what they're made of*. Some DOVECOTE-ers are really in it for the cool formulae and the secret club, but most of them take their mission seriously and believe they're setting up the scaffolding to defend Thin-Blood Alchemy and thin-bloods themselves.

Encountered in local alchemical scenes everywhere—albeit secretly—or through the network after an invite. In CRONUS's case found in locales with rare books and materials.

FOOT IN THE DOOR

The coterie showed the local alchemy scene what they were made of in the last kettle battle, and someone took notice. Another alchemist presses an encrypted thumb drive into their hands: tonight's key to the DOVECOTE servers, and a big formula's about to drop. Everyone's excited and the coterie discover their Domain's members are gathering to test it out...

MONKEY WRENCH

Someone on the server is publishing dangerous formulae without any warnings. Members claim they're seeing their formulae published elsewhere. Is someone trying to sow chaos? Seed suspicion? Or are there just real assholes to throw out?

BUYER BEWARE

A CRONUS member heard about a very rare item in the coterie's domain and showed up to buy it. Unfortunately the coterie was also trying to buy it, either for themselves or someone else. Crossing CRONUS is never a good idea, but it *might* be worth it...

Lui Domien

Whether the Tzimisce sorcerer Domien, who settled into the Great Dismal Swamp between Virginia and North Carolina in the 1740s, was Sabbat or not became almost irrelevant. He kept to himself and out of politics for nearly two centuries, slowly siring childer while feasting on escaped slaves and refugee Natives. He may still dwell beneath a rotting plantation house in the heart of the swamp but his get traveled to the Great Lakes in the 1930s to recruit thralls from the Romanian immigrant communities in Cleveland, Gary, Erie, and Chicago.

What these nature-commanding Dragons saw there was the worst industrial pollution in the hemisphere: lakes poisoned, soil tainted, rivers on fire, skies dripping acid. A coven of koldunic sorcerers (p. 61) got the idea that this toxic pall could be the afterbirth of the American Kupala, an earth spirit as noxious as the Tzimisce themselves. The Lui Domien—roughly translated, *those of Domien*—sought, and still seek, to command this

envenomed earth. Mortals eagerly created this new element of Poison, so the Lui Domien shall master it as their old-country sorcerers mastered the old elements of nature.

The Tzimisce in the old countries of Eastern Europe prove surprisingly open to the Lui Domien message. There they face colossal slag piles and festering chemical pits left behind by the previous century's Communist regimes. One Voivode claimed that Chernobyl's radioactive red earth offers a whole new approach, or a whole new kind of power, to the movement, but she has disappeared in Ukraine for now. Barring another nuclear meltdown, the Lui Domien turn their gaze to thin-blood alchemists: perhaps the arts of transmuting metals and purifying matter can contribute to their new practice.

In Chronicles

Imperious, grandiloquent, and with a sense of unholy purpose behind the clinging chemical reek; or a bully trying to be charming, selling a timeshare in the newest type of the oldest magic. Lui Domien kolduny either jealously guard their toxic turf, or eagerly invite neonate Tzimisce to investigate the possible uses of pollution, depending on how strong they feel in a given domain and how much post-industrial grunge they have to work with. Redworkers in need of extremely dangerous ingredients may find the Lui Domien sitting on top of the sludge pit, setting the value of their gunk ridiculously high.

Thin-bloods generally find Lui Domien invitations to collaborate less than thrilling, but if you're really hard up you can always go to the worst Superfund site in your city and see whether a Tzimisce sorcerer has burrowed in beneath the stained concrete of a broken factory floor.

IN A BAD HUMOR

A rash of thallium poisonings spreads from a chemical refinery with a newly leaky runoff pipe. Some of the victims sport a strange new Resonance, tentatively dubbed *deleteric* by scene theorists.

Their forgetfulness, radical mood swings, brooding obsession, and spiteful outbursts all replicate thallium poisoning symptoms, but their blood now allows improved Blood Sorcery and Protean Disciplines. (It also does 2 points of Superficial damage per scene to those who imbibe it, as noted in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 310.) What a deleteric dyscrasia might do, nobody knows. Lots of alchemists want to experiment with the new blood, more perhaps than they want to shut down the toxic source. Magda Dodon, the Lui Domien koldun who claims the refinery as her domain, seeks an alchemist partner who really wants to investigate deleteric blood and the possibilities of even worse industrial poisons: does anyone in the coterie qualify? Does their worst enemy?

LUPINE INSURANCE

A Lui Domien coven has developed an alchemical powder, deployable from a normal fire extinguisher, that when sprayed on a wooden or stone object has the same effect as a Ward Against Lupines (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 279). The coterie has urgent business they need to transact in the nearby forest preserve: what do the Lui Domien want in exchange for a flask of the stuff? Buy now, because the price goes up when the moon is full.

The Plague Oracles

Did you know? Diseases are like radio frequencies. At least they are if you're a plague oracle.

A Malkavian saw it all (of course). Saw how the shattering of the Tremere was a crisis to the antique revanchists, but an opportunity to forge *synergies* between the old sorcerers who thought they knew it all and the one clan of vampires that always listened for something new—that was, indeed, unable to *ignore it*.

A Spanish Tremere chantry needed direction and found it with that first plague oracle, and turned their Blood Sorcery to the task of hearing the micro-parasites inside the blood and making them listen to the man-sized parasites outside the human body.

Mystics use the word *egregore* to describe a



collective consciousness: the spirit of a place or a people when individuals serve it like cells in a brain. Tech-types espouse *big data* analysis to use people as pixels in a picture of what a community desires.

Plague oracles *combine* these approaches.

The premise of the Plague Oracle school of Blood Sorcery is that everyone who hosts a particular illness—herpes, hepatitis, HPV—mystically corresponds with every other sufferer. The rites of the plague oracles bring insight and information from these collectives. Want to know how to navigate Barcelona with 10 percent of the skill of every driver there who has a cold? It's possible. Want to know what everyone in Rio with the yellow fever virus thinks about the president, or the weather, or a new brand of cola? Plague oracles can tell you, though at the price of hosting the disease themselves while examining it.

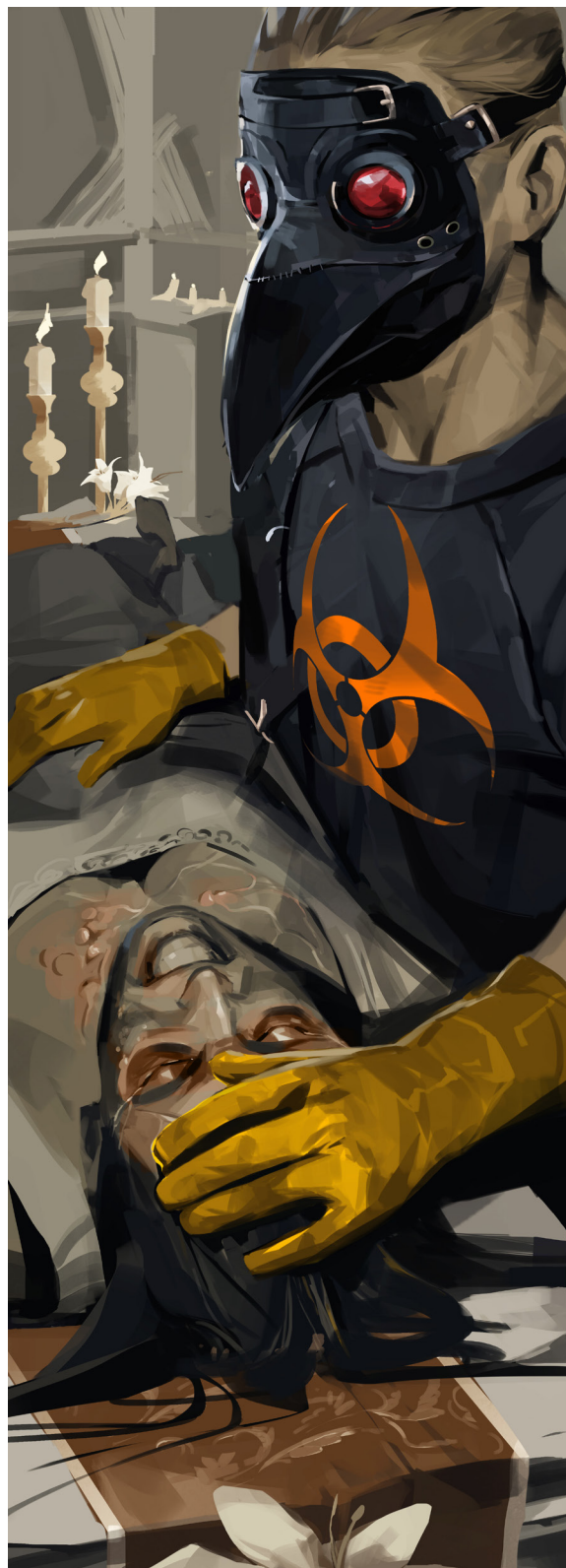
That's without reading the *illness itself*, seeing where it's going, feeling what it's done, aggregating the sensations of the mortals who hold it. Plague oracles work on widespread population influence and control by means of contagion, and they stay largely unopposed in their designs because too many Kindred don't understand what they're doing or else dismiss it as "more nonsense from Malkav's distasteful get."

Oh and if you're wondering? Yes, they wear bird-faced plague doctor masks for ceremonies.

In Chronicles

Off-putting, glittery-eyed, and rather unsettling—when's the last time you heard a vampire sneeze? Or talkative, eager to touch and communicate, just occasionally a little distant or distracted. Plague oracles tend to busy themselves in the background of the scene, just one more weird little solitarichy with an oddball theory of sorcery—until they burst into the foreground when one of their experiments gets a little contagious.

Encountered around the hospital or wherever case counts get a bit too high. They might be digging up an old plague pit—secretively at night, or openly with a suborned permit—or sniffing the walls at the derelict sanitarium.



A DISH SERVED WITH A COLD

A Herd belonging to one of the coterie has all come down with a nasty bug of some kind. But it's not the same germ that's going around, it's something a little exotic and unknown in these parts: MERS, maybe, or the flu variant from four years ago. A plague oracle has infected this Herd deliberately and specifically, in order to surveil their Kindred drinker: do they work for someone else, or has the coterie somehow triggered this infectious attention? Find out who else has this special disease, and find out who they feed, for a start.

INFECTIOUS LAUGHTER

Plague oracles draw a line between infectious diseases, caused by micro-organisms, and non-infectious diseases such as cancer or scurvy. Prion diseases straddle that boundary: they seem to have environmental causes, but you can also contract them by consuming prions, *mis-folded* proteins. And wherever there's a boundary, some sorcerer wants to shove on it. This sorcerer, Kim Tenzel, experiments with prions that induce the *laughing sickness* kuru, and some of her subjects have wandered off. She's trying to use prions as topological pentacles to communicate with a long-gone elder, or perhaps a methuselah, or maybe she's just eaten too many prions. Her old sodality wants her off the street without betraying old bonds and promises.

Sunburners

As the Gehenna War roils Kindred societies across the planet, the Black Hand brings in more thin-bloods than ever before. These Chameleons accept their place as neither mortal nor vampire, exalting themselves above either. Who else can say that they no longer bear the sins of Caine's traitorous grandchilder? The Sabbat reject the concept of clan itself, but its thin-blooded *embody* that rejection in a way that their superiors do not. When they walk in the daylight and the Sun scorches their flesh with horrific third-degree burns, they relish the pain. It is pure, it is holy, it is a sign that they are heralds of the Time of Thin-Blood.

They call themselves Heliophiles and they claim to walk the Path of the Sun. When they're not calling them *fucking lunatics*, *masochistic freaks*, or *the target*, the Kindred of the Camarilla and Anarchs sometimes call them *Sunburners*.

Sunburners make up a new religious movement within the Sabbat, and their faith and fervor are often stronger than more established packs. The brief unlifespans of most Cainite thin-bloods encourage this; the Heliophiles already have many honored martyrs. Like all their sects, they believe that mortals exist as prey. They got the golden ticket, the chance to experience an undying existence of fun and feasts. However, they look upon their true Kindred brethren with an emotion somewhere between pity and disgust. They're honored packmates and everyone belongs in the Sword of Caine, of course. Still, the curses Caine bestowed upon the wretched Third Generation run through them, and they flee from the morning light. If only the true vampires were as fortunate as they were.

The Heliophiles wear their burns as a badge of honor. The worse the burn, the clearer it is that the Sunburner faced that which shunned Caine himself and lived. Some reject daysleep, declaring that rest is only for weak mortals and those still subject to the Antediluvian's hold. Seemingly all practice Thin-Blood Alchemy, which serves as their highest form of worship. Alchemy is an act of transformation, the same one that turned them from a herd animal into a predator.

Formulae among the Sunburners are collective efforts, shared among their large packs. They focus on emphasizing their unlife between the living and the true vampires. Their favorite elixirs provide symbiosis with the Sun, weaponize its rays against their enemies, and invoke the sacred ecstasies of Frenzy in friend and foe alike.

Sunburners infiltrate almost every redworking scene in cities with an even somewhat active Sabbat movement, or in the next city down the road. Their new, unfamiliar faith passes as "just another creepy blood cult" in many cities and their formulae fascinate all but the most paranoid alchemist. It's



only when the Heliophiles' pack surrounds the alchemist in her haven, ready to share with her the truth about her true place in the eyes of Caine, that she might realize the danger she's in. Or maybe she vanishes that night and reappears months later, half-burnt, riding with them across the countryside to the next city on the road.

In Chronicles

True believers, ecstatic, unsettling. Or, feverish, desperate, searching for meaning and recognition. Pain is the real unifier of the Sunburners:

Their shared burnings are agonizing, rapturous experiences, molding even strong personalities into the cult's mentality. The cult comes above everything else for its members, especially their own safety. They're constantly seeking to spread their doctrine (although most of them pick likely targets rather than waste their time on obvious duds), and improve or discover new sources of power.

Encountered in the even-creepier part of the redworking world, especially Sabbat spaces, usually seeking out people to share their message with. Sometimes found in the desert parts of the world for their festivals.

PLAY WITH FIRE

Get close to Sunburners is never a good idea, but their formulae are just so *interesting*. And for a young thin-blood, it's so tempting to get their Sun-balms and charms, especially when existence sometimes takes one to the daylight world. But the Sunburners know very well how to pull back their ware and demand *more* from their clients when the moment's right, which is exactly what they do when the coterie approaches them in need of Sun protection.

HERE TODAY

The packs travel often, moving under the Sun as they were blessed to. But the coterie's the only group in their domain not pleased to see a pack leave town, because the pack took something with them, something belonging to the coterie. They might not be able to travel the same way the Sunburners do,

but they need to catch up with them and take back their property, before it slips away forever.

CRASH AND BURN

The Sabbat and its ilk have always preyed on mortals more openly than other Kindred like, but the Sunburners have taken it to a new, terrible level: last week a group of them walked in broad daylight into a park, burning, and drained three teenagers dry. The ruler of the domain wants them gone yesterday, tasking every Kindred in the city who's ever followed even a scrap of the Masquerade with chasing them out by any means necessary.

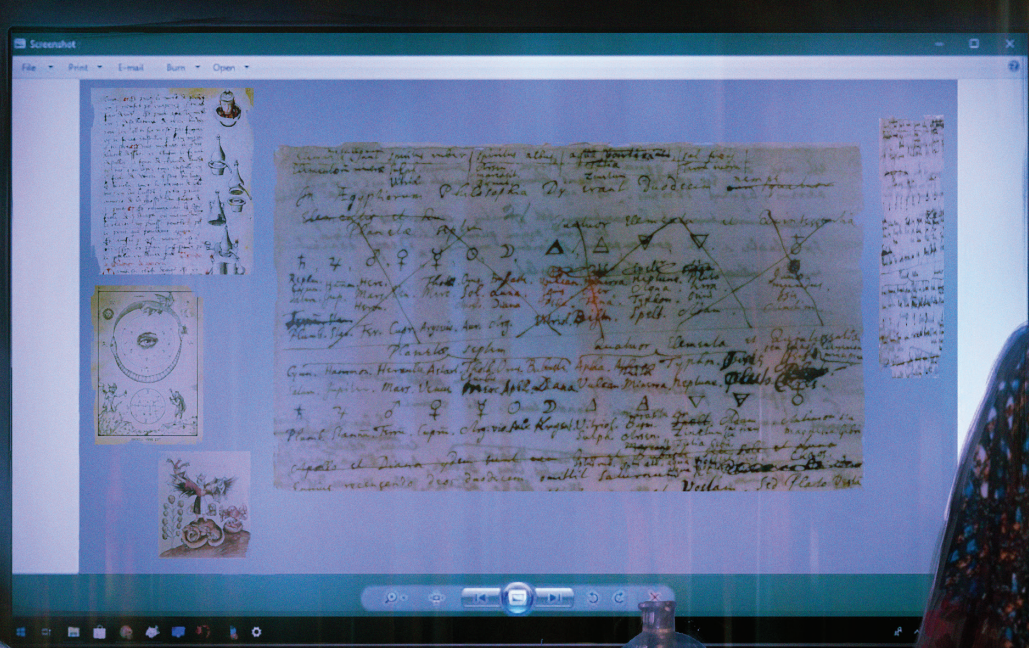
Local Alchemical Flocks

True Kindred have many institutions to choose from. Their clan is recognized, sects court them for support, coterie link into larger organizations, which link into the greater Kindred society. The blood craft scene is full of these organizations.

Thin-bloods have a smaller list of options. The Almost Assembly (p. 109) is for eggheads, the Ashfinders (**Cults of the Blood Gods**, pp. 35–46) are too busy snorting up dead vampires in Ibiza to help anyone, and you really don't want to join the Sunburners (p. 116).

So, the Duskborn turn to mutual aid. Every city with a thin-blooded population forms organizations to secure their havens, settle fledglings in their new unlife, and nourish the practice of Thin-Blood Alchemy. Sympathetic true Kindred refer to these local organizations as the *dispossessed*. The rest often call them *flocks*, if they even acknowledge them at all.

Many alchemists belong to a local flock. They're often the organizers. Anyone with enough control over their condition to manipulate their blood might have the drive and commitment to organize their kind. Alchemy-focused flocks have the largest entry rate; the art is so useful that many thin-blooded try their hand at it early in their unlife. Alchemical flocks have a pretty high departure rate. Not everyone eagerly transforms themselves into





a mystical furnace or manipulates people for the emotions in their blood. Many join, but only a few have the dedication to remain.

An alchemical flock loosely combines an academy, a social club, and a charity. Members share formulae, teach best practices to newcomers, and secure supply lines for major workings. They make special maps of cities with notes about which kinds of Resonances each district provides, with feeding locations away from the watchful eyes of Sheriffs and Scourges.

Alchemical flocks like to organize around utilities of alchemy. One focuses on making blood outside of the living more palatable, another on counterfeiting Disciplines. If there's more than one flock in a city, they might engage in regular kettle battles, either to determine whose focus is better, or just for sport.

Flocks don't expand far beyond their origin cities. The focus of one alchemical flock in one city may not fit another. Alchemical flocks might spin off a few branches in other cities, but these either dissolve or become separate flocks. This puts them at a major disadvantage when clans like the Tremere throw around their authority, or when outsiders like Mrs. Chopra set up shop.

Even in such cases, alchemical flocks have a few defenses. Unpredictable offensive formulae can shift confrontations, while duplicated powers can throw pursuers off the scent. Other thin-bloods, and sometimes even the flock's clientele, know an attack on their alchemists rolls into the rest of the scene, and often even rival flocks step in. Their enemies soon learn that safety really does come in numbers.

In Chronicles

Quite varied. For some, earnest, shy, friendly. For others, grandiose, unforthcoming, insular. Still others, jaded, knowledgeable, self-possessed. Depending on the flock's nature, they could be the type to double down on their decisions, even if unwise, or they could play peacemaker between other factions. They generally have a serious allergy to drawing too much attention to themselves,

even within the relative safety of their domain, and they'll set aside grudges to wrench fellow members out of the spotlight. However, in domains with open-minded rulers, an alchemical flock might step up to the plate to represent the thin-blooded in court or soviet. Not every alchemist wants such representation, of course.

Encountered in any city's alchemy scene, openly and usually recruiting. They're even reachable via a semi-public phone number or email.

GET READY TO RUMBLE

Two flocks are embroiled in a *mostly* friendly kettle battle competition. Each battle ups the stakes a little more, but even more established alchemists take note when they announce the prize for the upcoming battle is an actual salamander (p. 134). Does the coterie throw their hat in the ring, either for one of the flocks or themselves? Does that salamander enclosure *really* look secure?

BELLWETHER

The leader of the local flock stepped down unexpectedly without a clear successor. In the miniature power vacuum left behind, the flock is torn between several candidates, and may dissolve altogether. Does the coterie work to back one of the candidates, or step in themselves? Or do they let the little community wither?

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

It finally happened: someone got too interested or too annoyed by a local flock and they're about to bring down the hammer. The emergency signal goes out, and everyone who's ever strolled near the scene knows they need help. Alliances and old enmities fall into place, and it's time to batten down the hatches and start brewing like never before. ■



DEVIL AND STAR:
MET ON
THE PATH



BLOOD BEGETS PHANTOMS, AND ITS
EMANATIONS FURNISH CERTAIN SPIRITS
WITH THE MATERIALS REQUIRED TO FASHION
THEIR TEMPORARY APPEARANCES.

— H.P. BLAVATSKY, THE SECRET DOCTRINE



The world of the redworker encompasses more than just selling formulae or casting rituals. Vampires encounter strange and horrible things every night, and not just in the mirror. But redworkers encounter things that even other vampires shy away from thinking about. Redworkers, in fact, go looking for those things, seek out those encounters, and think long and deeply about them on the way to more such horrors.

Breakers

Buyers meet sellers, and we have a market. Which attracts breakers: figures who interfere in markets, either to rob them, milk them, or use them for their own non-commercial ends. Some breakers represent outside intruders who want to bust up the scene, some just want to buy and sell only on their own terms, and others just aren't good for business.

Your rivals may wish to escalate to breaking what they can't buy or sell. Thus your coterie may find itself regrettably cast as breakers to another redworker's business opportunity. What goes around comes around.

Black Hand

The Sabbat are like termites. They burrow in, hollow out the place, and emerge at the worst possible time. They *love* the blood craft scene. A community of eccentrics dedicated to ritual and occult fascination makes a prime hiding spot. Worse, it's also primed for recruitment. Take caution when making deals with the new Lick in town; that dead-eyed grin might hide something truly foul.

Noddist

Noddists seek to strengthen their Blood by any means. That includes diablerie, their favorite pastime. They seek power for its own sake, which might buy a Lick some time as the Cainite determines whose blood craft in the scene is strongest. Sometimes they offer the community access to the Sabbat's secrets and either recruit or devour those who master them.

They keep trophies of their conquests. It reminds them of the thrill of the hunt, and vampire parts make excellent magical components. Some redworking scenes rife with Noddists have a protocol when Kindred start going missing: pat down

everyone and search their havens top to bottom. When they find the shrine of skulls or the belt of eyeballs, they've found the Noddist.

General Difficulty: 5/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 7, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Melee 8, Intimidation 8, Occult (Noddism) 8, Disciplines 7



Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 4, Obfuscate 3, Protean 2

Blood Potency: 3–5

Equipment: Dogeared copied fragments of *The Book of Nod*, preserved Kindred heart, ritual knife

Special: If a Noddist leads a Sabbat pack, use its Blood Potency for every member of the pack. Noddists may use any Rituals from Levels 1–3.

Sunburner

Sabbat thin-bloods are weird, and not in the regular way Run-Offs are weird. They love to burn their flesh in the sun, they claim they're the only vampires free of *the ancients' curse*, and they turn on a dime from preaching at you to seeing how deep they can stab you. Sunburners in the scene prefer the Athanor Corporis method, using their time in the sun to scorch elaborate alchemical patterns into their skin.

Unlike the rest of the Black Hand, Sunburners hesitate to commit diablerie, because they consider their state sublime. Unfortunately, this means they just prefer to decapitate a vampire in their daysleep and move on. Keep your haven doors locked.

General Difficulty: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 5, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Brawl 5, Insight 6, Persuasion 7, Distillation 6

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 3

Equipment: Bloody sunscreen bottle, Oakleys, meat scissors, phlebotomy equipment

Special: Sunburners aren't afraid of final death. Any attempt to intimidate or threaten them with physical violence is Difficulty 3 at minimum. Sunburners have access to 3 formulae, one for each level. In addition, they may counterfeit any one Discipline Power from Levels 1 or 2 in any given night.

Chopra-wafadar

Flunkies and local stringers of Xtend (p. 105–108) and its various franchises and subsidiaries, they keep an eye out for anything their boss' boss' boss, Mrs. Chopra might pay a bonus for. Without careful observation, a Lick won't know a Chopra-



wafadar from a mortal in way over their head. When they do, it's too late, and the company sends in a specialist—or hires one on the *red market*—to grab the item, or the unfortunate redworker.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 4, Social 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 5, Drive 6, Subterfuge 5; add Occult (Blood Craft) 6 for mechanics, Investigate 6 for scouts.

Equipment: Wad of unmarked bills, health monitor watch, burner XTD7 phone

Special: A Chopra-wafadar might act alone, but most are never *truly* alone. They have supervisors, co-workers, and friends interested in the bonus payout for red results. Most can assemble a crew of three to five jumpsuits for a promising lead. While one checks out the merchandise, the rest lurk somewhere nearby, observing through well-hidden audiovisual equipment available with their XTD employee discount: pinhole cameras in their glasses, microphones in their belt buckles, chemical sniffers disguised as Fitbits. Their phones can uplink to Xtend servers, tracking their movements and often recording their conversations.

Patting down a Chopra-wafadar for such equipment is a Wits + Technology or Manipulation + Intimidation test at Difficulty 3. Finding the rest of their team takes a Wits + Investigation test at Difficulty 5. This Difficulty reduces by 1 per Chopra-wafadar discovered in the same scene, to a minimum of Difficulty 2.

Chopra-wafadar security specialists called in during later phases of a story can use the builds of hunters (see *Second Inquisition*, chapter 1) or Inquisitor Deltas (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 372).

Cop

The good news is that the cop only thinks redworkers are selling drugs. The bad news is *they think they're selling drugs*. It doesn't help that the drug scenes and blood craft scenes overlap, not least because so many alchemical recipes call for illegal

substances. Running afoul of local authorities is a simple fact of unlife in the scene.

The most common variety is the *beat cop*, just any law enforcement officer walking the streets. Beat cops are either in full uniform or plain clothes. They act in the heat of the moment and tend to escalate situations towards violence. Kindred usually encounter them when trespassing in restricted areas or when a neighbor calls the police during a blood working. Beat cops come in pairs, one approaching the scene while the other hangs back in the car.

Vice cops aren't as reckless. They're patient with suspects, visiting them in the guise of a dealer or a regular customer in sting operations that can stretch on for months. Then, when their target least expects it, in comes the rest of the vice squad—or worse, SWAT. Kindred usually encounter them when their blood craft brushes up against the drug trade. Some alchemists engaged in extralegal pharmaceuticals well before their Embrace, and their new practices lead their old enemies to the blood craft scene.

Either of these cops could be the *dirty cop*, and that's a blessing—at first. Kindred are excellent at bribes, both the monetary kind and the sort that involves hooking mortals on their Blood. Many cops under a vampire's influence were on the take elsewhere before finding their masters. Vampires can *make* someone a dirty cop with an open vein and a distraction. Kindred usually encounter them where the other two cops are.

The tricky part with a dirty cop is stringing them along, which is harder if the Kindred in question wants the Masquerade intact. Dirty cops love being in control and getting their way, and it takes a while before a dirty cop starts begging and pleading like other ghouls. Some dirty cops stay hard as nails, and while the rapturous strength of vitae is enough to keep them addicted, it's not enough to keep them loyal, at least not without a Blood Bond. Young vampires learn that a month between feeding their ghouls is plenty of time for a dirty cop to set up traps. Next thing they know, the dirty cop's got a new on-demand vitae tap.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 3, Social 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 5, Brawl 5, Drive 5, Firearms 5, Streetwise 6

Equipment: 9mm pistol, baton, unmarked police car (shotgun, zip ties, flashlight in trunk)

Special: Once per conflict, a cop can call for backup with an Awareness roll, Difficulty 2. A win calls



another officer to the scene, with each point of margin calling an additional officer. A cop's backup arrives within the next three turns. If the cop got only one success, their backup arrives at the end of the conflict.

This stat block describes a troublesome beat or vice cop; for a detective, see **Vampire: The Masquerade** (p. 371).

Worse Than Cops

If someone in the scene acts up a little too much, or if the cops realize the scene's something larger than a drug lab and city back alley, things escalate to worse than cops: feds. Feds—most likely from the Drug Enforcement Agency in the United States, the National Crime Agency in the UK, or the equivalent elsewhere—have a bigger budget and less accountability than cops. It's also harder for local Kindred to pull strings and call them off. It's not just the DEA or the like. Tax and immigration authorities, customs investigators—*did you import a valuable artifact from a war zone?*—fish and wildlife agents—one too many endangered eggs in that formula—even postal or agricultural inspectors. If a redworker gets their attention, they come calling.

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics (Law) 6, Awareness 6, Firearms 5, Investigation 7, Persuasion (Interrogation) 7

Equipment: 9mm pistol, sensible sedan (Kevlar vest (Armor 4) in trunk)

Special: Feds get close to the truth. Once per week, when a fed targets a vampire as a suspect, the fed learns something important about their Mask. The flimsier the Mask, the closer the fed gets to breaking the Masquerade. If unimpeded, the fed discovers the target's true nature after a number of stories equal to the vampire's Mask rating. A vampire with a Mask rating of 0 or with a Mask Flaw has their identity uncovered in the very next story.

Losing a Mask ticks a file somewhere in some



computer, which means eventually in the NSA's computers, which means the IAO, which means going on a tasking list for an Inquisitor Investigator (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 372). If things get really hot, and they have intel on dangerous blankbody activity, they can call in an Unnatural Threat Response squad of Inquisitor Deltas (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 372). For a whole lot of Inquisitor types, see **The Second Inquisition**.

Rival

Once you set foot in any scene, you inevitably meet rivals—the people who stepped in at the same moment as you, and are doing their damndest to make sure they wind up on the stair above yours. Rivals are fellow practitioners of the craft, whether that's Blood Sorcery or Thin-Blood Alchemy (see Alchemist on p. 14 or Blood Sorcerer on p. 16 for examples), and their skills can vary as wildly as any two people in a work-with-your-hands line of business. Professionals keep a wary eye on their peers, experts embark on enigmatic, decades-long fights with each other, and the newbies fight with each other for the scraps among the sawdust.

Three main sticking points contribute to making someone a rival rather than just a fellow buyer:

Turf provides an obvious point of contention. When two or more alchemists, sorcerers, or what-have-you work the same block, both lose customers, supplies, and underlings. It's a race to the bottom as they hurry to lower their prices to outbargain each other. Rivals in a turf war negotiate truces and boundary lines with each other—and strictly enforce the lines until one or the other makes the wrong move, and the whole thing comes tumbling down. The really sticky parts come when one rival raises enough power to forcibly expand their turf over those delicate boundary lines. Rivals concerned with turf want profits, secured by a solid customer base and supply chain.

Competition gets into your blood and gnaws at your brain. Social competition alone, often dressed up in ideology or mystic bafflegab, drives about a third of

rivalries in any scene. Some redworkers simply crave fame and fortune, and know that means they have to walk over a few bodies to get to it. They might feel sorry for any cold-blooded deals they make (or hitmen they hire), but in the end it's all just business. Others take a very academic interest in their craft, wanting to be *the first, the best, or the innovator of...* They might even encourage friendly(ish) competition and share (the worst) books in their libraries, though they just as happily snipe their competitors from a distance. Rivals driven by competition try to achieve lofty goals and raise their status and ability.

Never underestimate *hatred*. A distant dislike of someone *doing it wrong* can very quickly blossom into something far more pure, direct, and petty: *this ritual makes no sense* turns into *god, the way this asshole eats fucking crackers*. A Rival driven by hatred won't care about drawing straight lines through a plot of land or careful negotiation—they certainly won't care about "sportsmanship," "academic collaboration," or any nonsense like that. These guys just want their enemies to go down in the most humiliating way possible.

Scourge

Stomp one roach and you know there's more behind the fridge. But *one* roach, at least, is not going to pollute your lunch. For elders and ancillae of a certain turn of mind, the roaches are thin-bloods: vermin carrying the germs of the End Times. Alchemists combine the *gaucherie* of thin blood with the actual sin of *diablerie*, double-damned in such domains. Tremere and Banu Haqim, when they gain influence at court, often try to turn these sanitary strictures against their rival Blood Sorcerers: dangers to the Masquerade born in *diablerie*, or suspicious outsiders nobody sent who don't acknowledge Princely edict.

Princes, however, do not do their own roach-stomping. That falls to Scourges, Sheriffs, Hounds, and similar do-anything soldiers. Some of these breakers *love* stomping for stomping's sake and don't really care about the big picture. Some recognize they're a band-aid on a cancerous lesion, but they put

in their hours and hope to get a better duty next year. Some genuinely think they can make a difference to the domain and make everything better for everyone by cleaning up the perversions of the scene.

Mopes putting in the time also tend to go for low-hanging fruit, but they work cases a little more diligently, because in the long run it's less toil to bust one supplier than scamper after everyone being supplied.

Sadistic Prince-Thug

The sadist is usually happy with this duty because thin-bloods are normally poor bets in a boxing match. These folks just sniff out marketeers with bad opsec and beat them or destroy them before strutting back to the Prince for a high five. To avoid them, you don't have to be the sneakiest. You just have to *not* be the most obvious.

General Difficulty: 5/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 4, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 8, Firearms 7, Intimidation 9, Investigation 7, Melee 8, Occult 6, Streetwise 6, Disciplines 6

Equipment: AR-15 rifle with rail gadgets, Walther PPK, handcuffs, fireman's turn-out coat, pointlessly ornate trident

Disciplines: Celerity 4, Potence 2, Fortitude 2

Humanity: 5

Blood Potency: 3

True Believing Vampire Cop

The true believer is the worst of the lot. They study the networks, hoping to sweep up dozens of cooks and casters in a single night. They look for weak points, press supply chains, and dream of taking down some kind of *big boss*. Although many courts and soviets have functionally decriminalized Thin-Blood Alchemy by now, the ruling remains on the Prince's (or Baron's) books, and they exist to enforce the Baron's (or Prince's) word. While they may speak earnestly about their intentions for a better domain, they're a damn vampire. They can be just as sadistic or calculating as the others, and

it may even be worse when they tell themselves it's for a good cause.

General Difficulty: 6/4

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Brawl 7, Firearms 6, Insight 8, Intimidation 7, Investigation 8, Occult 8, Streetwise 8, Disciplines 6

Equipment: Scoped rifle, night-vision goggles, audio surveillance gear, bulletproof laptop, armored SUV

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Auspex 4, Dominate 3

Humanity: 6

Blood Potency: 2

Standover Man

A standover man is a criminal who takes your stuff with the *threat* of violence, as opposed to a stickup man, who takes your stuff with violence. One approach can turn into the other on a dime, so it's a matter of preference. Standover is patient and prefers to torture the helpless rather than just win an unequal fight. Stickup maybe gets off on the action and isn't afraid to take a few punches to get results fast.

Standover Vamp

General Difficulty: 5/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 5, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Brawl 8, Firearms 7, Intimidation 9, Larceny 7, Melee 9, Streetwise 7, Disciplines 7

Equipment: Blowtorch, huge revolver, meat cleaver, handcuffs and manacles, small tape recorder and notepad

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Potence 4, Fortitude 3

Humanity: 5

Blood Potency: 2

Racketeer

A more elaborate kind of standover man, the racketeer only takes a *portion* of your stuff, after rationally explaining the long-term consequences



if you withhold. The optimum blend of laziness and patience in the *getting your shit without earning it* category.

By and large, racketeers steal product from alchemists, services from Blood sorcerers, and money from both. If they steal recipe books, grimoires, or ritual devices, they're most likely working for a rival and you have even bigger problems. Mortals doing this gig are vanishingly rare, but worse because they universally operate by day, hiding their identities and threatening you with sunlight rather than the traditional fist/stake/gun.

General Difficulty: 5/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Brawl 8, Firearms 7, Insight 8, Intimidation 9, Larceny 8, Melee 7, Streetwise 8, Disciplines 7

Equipment: Elegant semiautomatic, several cell phones, understated Cadillac, photos of your mortal family

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Auspex 4, Dominate 3

Humanity: 6

Blood Potency: 3

Swindler

They're a talented newbie just looking for a mentor, someone to show them the ropes. Or they're a clueless seller who doesn't know just how good the thing they've got is. Or a buyer with more money than sense and a weirdly vague idea of how to spend it.

Nope. The swindler knows exactly what they want, who has it, and they've been hired—or are working as a stringer—to get it by any means necessary. The swindler is the scene's practitioner of corporate espionage or the long grift.



Spotting a swindler takes practice, but most older redworkers pick up the knack through sheer necessity. Younger practitioners don't have the knack yet. Swindlers drift through a city, keeping their jobs focused and relatively quick before they get out of town. Many eschew using their Kindred skills on fellow vampires, instead relying on good old-fashioned con artist tricks of the trade. It's simpler that way—or so they claim—to keep older Kindred from catching on, and younger Kindred feeling safe and secure.

The swindler usually targets one item or ingredient in particular, and they play the con as long as it takes to get it. If a vampire has a rare or unique Artifact (pp. 136–142) in

their possession and either displays it or talks about it in public, there's a good chance that a swindler appears in their circles—or that someone already in their circles was a swindler all along.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Larceny 6, Persuasion (Fast Talk) 7, Occult 5, Stealth 6, Streetwise 7, Subterfuge (Con Games) 8

Disciplines: Thin-Blood Alchemy 2 or Blood Sorcery 2

Equipment: Hidden camera, thumbdrive, cellphone, innocent expression

Special: The Swindler always has a blow-off plan for when they really need to get out of a situation. This might be a carefully never-revealed Obfuscate ability, a crucially planted misdirection, or something else the Storyteller improvises as needs demand. Whatever it is should be good for a three dice bonus to their last contest with the coterie—but only if they vanish afterward.

Creatures and Dangers

When you push the boundaries of Blood and vitae, mortality and vampirism, sorcery and science, sometimes you break through those boundaries to the other side. Things dwell there, and things go wrong there, sometimes the same things. The word *monster* comes from the Latin *monstrum*, meaning an omen or warning; consider these some warning signs that you've left the normal world behind.

Aapilu

The ashipu were the Mesopotamian first practitioners of Blood Sorcery, or so the Banu Haqim will tell you. They elevated themselves to commune with—or better, to become as—the gods or angels. Observing these entities, deciding to perceive them, draws them to you, or perhaps it draws them out of you. Every Kindred knows that they have a separate self in their Blood urging them to inhuman acts, a dark voice called their Beast. The ashipu also spoke inwardly, to those parts of themselves, and to other voices in their Blood.

Sometimes, those voices speak back. In Akkadian, *the one who answers* is the *aapilu*, a word that also connotes *door-keeper* and *soothsayer*. It's related to the word *abalu*, meaning *echo*, or *reflection*. Aapilum (the plural), or abaalum, come from out of the Blood—the sorcerer's Blood, or that of their lineage—in response to the sorcerer's evocation. They manifest in candle flame, drugged haze, echoing laughter, serpentine whisper, shadows, and very old bloodstains. Sometimes they even take physical form, but mostly they just answer the call.

They provide the sorcerer with a service or Gift, usually at some cost. At higher levels, aapilum negotiate the costs with an uncanny inside knowledge of the sorcerer's weaknesses and desires.

Aapilum range in power from manifested sins to horrific incarnations. In game terms, from one

to five dots of Aapilu Level. They add their Aapilu Level pool to their power, Ritual, or Discipline rolls.

Aapilum are immune to mind control powers. Like vampires, sunlight weakens aapilum: they lose one dot of Aapilu Level in reflected or dim sunlight, and two dots in direct or bright sunlight. Rituals exist to ward against aapilum, but mostly in Sumerian. If an aapilu takes physical form, it takes damage as a vampire, not as a mortal, and its talons or fangs do Aggravated damage to Kindred. Some aapilu can set fires by touch, turn meat to rotting dust, attract flies or locusts, or demonstrate other supernatural powers.

The aapilum listed below are only a representative sampling. Many others get summoned or encountered under less favorable conditions by redworkers and other vampires who call up what they can't always put down. Most often, sorcerers summon them to receive one of the Gifts listed, but the Storyteller should feel free to personalize these. The Storyteller should decide what, if any, experience point discount to give characters who gain an aapilu Gift worth points, such as a ritual.

• Arnu

Hideous clots of remembered or potential sin, arnum (also called *nefas*) bob up to enter mortal or animal bodies for some hideous errand. The caster spits the blackish-red glob out into a bone bowl, where it wriggles and whispers sinful suggestions until introduced into another being—ideally, one sleeping, restrained, or otherwise unaware—with a contest of the sorcerer's Resolve + Blood Sorcery vs. Willpower. While contaminated, the subject obsesses over, often commits, and sometimes wallows in, the sin. Contamination lasts until the next noon.

Arnu remind their summoners of something in their memory, but on – often unwise—further investigation, they turn out to be the worst act committed by the worst people the sorcerer or their sire has drunk from; the spiritual equivalent of heavy metal poisoning building up in the summoner's Blood.

General Difficulty: 3/2



Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Mental 4, Social 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Insight (Secret Sin or Shame) 7, Persuasion (Corruption) 6, Subterfuge 6

Gifts: The arnu can find the Ambition and the Desire of any being it contaminates, and the Desire of any being it succeeds at an Insight contest against. The sorcerer suddenly realizes the answer. Or, the nefas can shift a possessed mortal's blood Resonance toward the flavor most appropriate to its sin (such as sanguine from lust, melancholy from suicide, choleric from murder, phlegmatic from selfishness or apathy) with a Persuasion contest; on a critical win the host gains a suitable dyscrasia.

Dealing with the arnu causes the sin to flare brightly in the summoner's mind. It might nag at their memory, show up in nightmares, or otherwise recur or blow back into the chronicle. It costs the summoner one point of Aggravated Willpower damage to resist committing the sin—or forcing some mortal to commit it—each night: the Willpower loss stops when the vampire caves to temptation.

•• Zar

Also called *flickers*, from their common appearance as balls of colored witch light, these aapilum embody various kinds of sorcerous or vampiric powers. Zar sometimes remain invisible, manifesting only as a strange-smelling wind, oddly hot or cold for the environment. Modern sorcerers believe zar come from the potential and past of the sorcerer's Blood: powers they could have wielded or arts their lineage learned and lost.

General Difficulty: 5 / 3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: The pool most associated with its power or ritual, at 9: a zar with Feral Claws has Brawl 9, a zar with Mesmerize has Manipulation 9.

Disciplines: One Level 2 power or ritual, and the accompanying Discipline at 2. Higher-level powers come with zars of higher Demon Level.

Gifts: Zar can teach their summoner their power in exchange for an overt act against one of the

Chronicle Tenets (or potentially their Convictions), one that can incur a Stain. The power lasts for three nights, including the night of the summoning or pact. This power can be from a Discipline the character doesn't have, as long as it's in their clan's (or their sire's clan's, for Caitiff or thin-bloods) lineage somewhere. Alternatively, a zar can provide a dice bonus equal to its Aapilu Level to the summoner's Discipline pool if it's equal to the zar's; the price and duration of this gift are the same.

•••• Manis

The ancient Romans placated the *manes*—the good ones—with gifts of blood, and recognized their ancestors within them. They often appear as chalk-pale figures, not unlike statues. A manis brings ancient knowledge, lore, rituals, and secrets known only to previous sires in the sorcerer's lineage.

General Difficulty: 7 / 5

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 9, Mental 11, Social 9

Secondary Attributes: Health 9, Willpower 9

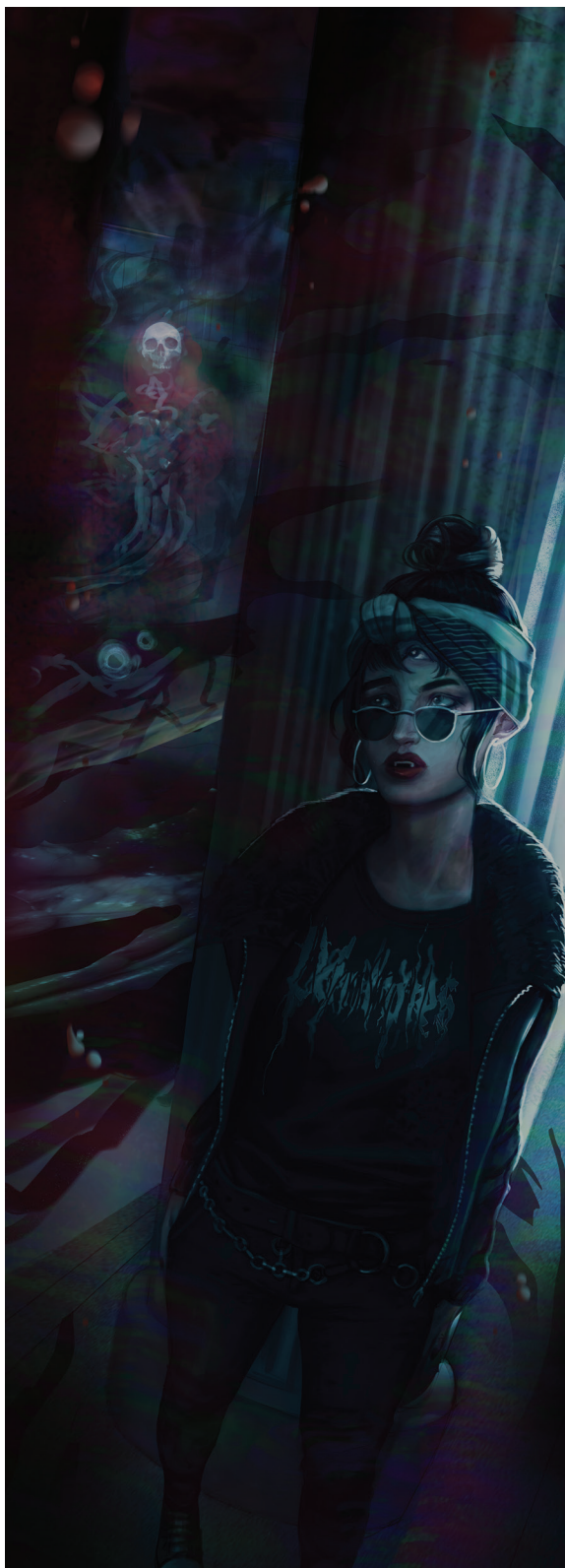
Exceptional Dice Pools: Occult 13

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 4, and two of the summoner's Clan Disciplines at 4 and 3.

Gifts: Manes teach magical lore: rituals, locations of furcae, and lost secrets, among other things. They always demand a number of specific services, usually aggrandizing their lineage or pointlessly reviving some ancient feud, along with the standard debased or dehumanizing action: blood sacrifice of a Touchstone's child, or the Embrace of a virtuous mortal. If the Storyteller can't come up with something dangerous and foul on the spur of the moment, manes often keep their favors for the future as a Life Boon owed them, and call on them in at the most inconvenient moments.

••••• Parshum

Go far enough back along every vampire's bloodline and you encounter superhuman monstrosities of almost godlike power, who ruled a city cursed by God. Rituals that summon *uparsim*—old ones—actually only awaken or embody a fraction



of their power: just the amount to refract through a single Blood sorcerer, say.

The uparsim take monstrous forms when summoned, and have very little patience for error or disrespect on the part of their so-called invokers. Any failure on any test or contest in the presence of a parshum triggers an immediate terror frenzy test (Difficulty 5).

General Difficulty: 7/6

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 13, Mental 11, Social 10

Secondary Attributes: Health 13, Willpower 13

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 14, Brawl 15, Intimidation 13, Occult 14

Disciplines: Blood Sorcery 5, and all the summoner's Clan Disciplines at 6.

Gifts: The mind reels at what uparsim can provide: the location of a methuselah's grave, the summoner's Blood thickened to that of an earlier generation, or sheer, overwhelming power directed at some inconvenient city block. Likewise, what an Old One might want from a summoner is impossible to guess, but it should be story-derailing in its apocalyptic potential.

A summoner dealing with a parshum is in constant danger of outright losing a point of Humanity: not necessarily as a price paid for a service, but as a simple consequence of exposure to their dark majesty.

Beast Shard

Sometimes, a Beast refuses to die, even with its body reduced to ash. When a ritual or a formula using the remains of a vampire who met Final Death goes wrong, there's a chance their Beast returns to wreak havoc. A Beast Shard resembles a blurred image of the vampire, as if caught in a bad mirror, casting a fuzzy shadow. It targets their accidental summoner's mortal loved ones, warping their Resonances and driving them into emotional frenzies. Shards delight in this emotional manipulation, driven by instinct and uninhibited desire to feed.

General Difficulty: 4/1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 2, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5



Exceptional Dice Pools: Stealth 8, Intimidation 6, Manipulation 7, Disciplines 7

Special: Beast Shards cannot communicate with spoken language beyond except snarls, mocking laughter, or grimaces, but can create emotional hotspots that bend mortal Resonances to their will. This hotspot extends in a roughly two-meter radius around the Shard. Mortals in a hotspot must succeed at a Composure + Resolve test at Difficulty 3, or the Shard dictates the character's Resonance and associated emotional state until the end of the scene.

Beast Shards of known characters in the chronicle, including former coterie members, use their former identities' Attributes, Skills, and Disciplines. Their Attributes and Skills are capped to 4, and their Disciplines are capped to level 3 powers.

Beast Shards are not ghosts, and aren't affected by any power, ritual, or ceremony that affects ghosts. They resemble holograms or reflections, but feel like cold bone when touched. Physical attacks, however, feel like nothing but cold light, and do no damage. Sufficiently bright light—brighter than a flashlight, more like an arc lamp—disrupts their image and does Aggravated damage to them.

Beast Shards deal +2 Aggravated Willpower damage in any social conflict with anyone who knew their original self. When they reduce a victim to 0 Willpower, the Beast Shard completely recovers either their lost Willpower or lost Health.

Brazen Head

An alchemical wonder, cast in the shape of a metal head with a hinged jaw. Despite its mechanical form, it speaks like a flesh-and-blood mortal and answers questions put to it. The gift of a brazen head is truth: it never tells a lie, and knows when the person talking to it is not being honest. But the truth in its answers often hides in riddles or mysterious phrasing; it's not clear if this is thanks to mysterious occult processes or just a nasty sense of humor from its creators.

Some taciturn heads only speak when spoken to. Others enjoy lengthy conversations...so long as the person it's talking to sticks carefully to the truth.

Building these creatures is a lost art, but the surviving accounts say they took seven years' constant attention, never breaking even to eat, drink, or sleep. Only a handful of them remain in existence, hidden away in ruined workshops and old storerooms.

General Difficulties: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 1, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Insight 7, Intimidation 5, Occult 8

Special: A brazen head can let out a deafening shout (Strength + Intimidation) that deals +3 Superficial Health damage to those within 10 feet of it and +1 Superficial Health damage to those within 50 feet. Some of the more disputatious brazen heads emit shouts that damage Willpower instead.

A brazen head cannot answer questions regarding the future, since any definitive answer has a chance of being false. Any event in the past—unless hidden through magical means—is fair game.

Putting a hand inside the head's mouth and telling a lie automatically results in the head attempting to crush the hand with its metal teeth (Strength + Brawl), at +3 Aggravated damage.

Chimera

In 2021, the Salk Institute and Kunming University created a human/monkey hybrid embryo, though they destroyed it after a few days. That's the *acknowledged* edge of legitimate science for artificial chimerae. Fetal blending in utero can give people multiple blood types or mosaic skin tones. These people are known as *genetic chimerae*, and they're rare.

Mix in Vicissitude, blood alchemy, black market DNA manipulation and whatever Tremere factions are doing, you get a dizzying array of blends. They're not supernatural beings, just meat creatures, works in progress. They tend to show up in Mundie compounds and Ipsissimus chantries, or wherever redworkers' visions take them further away from humanity.

Build chimeras around the trait their designer most favored, with pools of 8 or 9 in that ability, or 7 and 7 in two abilities.



For example, the Liu Domiel designed the nyukach, or *sniffer*, to inhale and ingest toxins and chemically process them, excreting them in pure state through their sweat, feces, and semen. They look not unlike the stereotypical gray alien, with mineral-colored skin, enlarged nostrils and mouths, and hairless, elongated heads and limbs. Thin-blood alchemists with Tzimisce hookups traffic them and use them as lab equipment.

General Difficulties: 4 / 1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 3, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness (Taste) 7

Special: A nyukach with some field experience—or better still, actual chemistry training—can identify toxins and other chemicals by smell or taste as though they have an Intelligence + Academics (Chemistry) pool of 9. Nyukachy add three dice to any pool to resist poisoning.

Some other experiments (and their Exceptional Dice Pools) include:

- **Corvidians:** A Japanese biologist turned thin-blood alchemist came up with a mystic DNA treatment using raven blood to protect her family. The process gives mortals birdlike features: feathers grown from hair follicles, unusually large and sensitive but immobile eyes equipped with a pecten oculi and nictitating membranes, fragile bones. But most importantly, they cannot be affected by Presence, Dominate, or Animalism. (Awareness (Long-Distance Sight) 6)
- **Counterfeit Wolfmen:** If you magically infuse Lupine blood into the right kind of choleric mortal, you can create a dollar-store manwolf, which promptly loses its reason. Set one loose in your neighborhood, and a lot of other Kindred stay away. (Brawl 7, Intimidation (Vampires) 7)
- **Donkey People:** The idea was to create kine that resemble donkeys but are sufficiently human that their vitae is nourishing and pleasant. South America hosts a few small herds of them that can pass for animals, if you don't get close enough to see their feet, or the misery in their human eyes. (Physical 4, Social 2, Mental 1, no exceptional dice pools)



Gargoyle Ghoul

The word *gargoyle* can mean anything from a waterspout statue on a cathedral to a hideous mask to a horrendous amalgam Tremere experiment from the Dark Ages.

These nights, it mostly refers to a ghoul, doubly enslaved by the Blood Bond and by a ritual binding them to a location: a Blood Bond with a specific knot in the veins of the Earth. Tzimisce gargoyle ghouls often sport fleshworked wings, and even wingless gargoyle ghouls can often climb or leap around their prison-post with preternatural parkour.

Redworkers may encounter gargoyles faithfully—or resentfully—guarding a Tremere chantry or magical archive, or running occult errands for some other Kindred.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Mental 3, Social 2

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics (Flying or Parkour) 7, Awareness 6, Brawl (Diving Strike) 8, Intimidation 6, Stealth (Silent Flight or Silent Climb) 7

Disciplines: Their master's highest rated Discipline at 2

Special: Gargoyles add at least two dice to all Awareness and Stealth tests inside their bound location, and lose two dice from any pool to resist mind control.

Genius Furci

The *genius loci* is the spirit of a place, often created by the collective energy of mortal belief or experience. If a place also rests on a furcus (p. 35), that energy becomes tainted—or energized—by Tiamat's blood. A *genius furci*, then, is a sort of vampiric genius loci, one that feeds on the mortals whose belief created it in the first place.

A genius furci might be an amusement park where kids fall off the roller coaster to their death every so often, or a gym where the steroid-protein mix in the cafe sometimes pops a lifter's blood vessel, or an old pump that leaches cadmium or cholera

into the water when it's hottest out. Like the genius loci, the genius furci protects its place from danger or destruction—but it also has to feed. It takes the shape of a regular: a custodian, a gofer, someone who always seems to be around. If that regular gets killed, the genius furci spawns a new copy the next night. Only razing the location kills a genius furci.

A genius furci in a spot where a vampire was destroyed—or even where a vampire spilled vitae—has a taste for Blood, too.

General Difficulties: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 8, Subterfuge 7, Awareness (Fire) 8

Add a Mental skill connected to the location type as well, if possible. For example, the genius furci of a museum might have Academics (Art or History) 8.

Disciplines: Presence 2 or 3 (for seeming interesting or scary)

Special: A genius furci affects its location, often by telekinetically moving something inanimate on or connected to the premises: swing a power line, ripple the floor tiles to trip someone, lock or unlock entrances. Such actions usually use the Brawl pool above. Disorientation attacks or attempts to lure prey to a danger spot use Subterfuge; the genius furci spots threats with Awareness.

Health points only apply to the *regular*, not to the building; they take damage as vampires. If the premises can be burned, the regular fears fire and goes to extremes to put it out.

Hemonculus

Don't confuse this with the necromancer's *homuncular servant*, this is related but different. Ever since the Middle Ages, men who envied the ability to give birth—though not the labor pains—have practiced alchemical rites to make what modern eyes call a *clone*. Naturally, the Tremere were familiar with them even before they became Kindred.

The ritual for vampires to make one is described earlier (p. 68). What you get is a runty, sullen,

forgetful version of your *mortal* self. Hemonculi are about 60–100 cm tall and have none of their creator's postmortem memories. They get the same Attributes and mortal Skills, but at one dot lower each, to a minimum of 1. Half the creator's Health. One dot of Willpower. Hemonculi can't become ghouls, be Embraced, or be Blood Bound, and any vampire who feeds on one gains no nourishment and finds the process repellent.

That said, they have their maker's fingerprints and their "blood" is, to all scientific tests, that of their maker – although, hemonculi provide no arcane connection to their maker. If a vampire needs some really convincing evidence that they're dead, make a hemonculus, kill it, maul the body and let the investigators find their DNA in the middle of that messy smear drying in the sun.

A hemonculus is mystically enjoined to do whatever their creator says. Some are revolted by what is, to them, a creepy, bossy, vampire version of themselves and obey the letter of the command but transgress the intent. Others, however, get into it. Kindred who secretly crave authority but find it hard to trust anyone who isn't *literally* themselves can get into very tight relationships with hemonculi, indulging them with the pleasures of life that they were, perhaps, too ashamed to pursue when actually living. Some of those hemonculi would literally die to protect their progenitors.

But even the ones who grumble and scheme *must* do what they're told, and they can go out in the sun. That's no small thing.

Other than doing chores in the day, or fulfilling warped psychological needs, they are traditionally used as apology gifts from old guard Tremere. If you want to apologize to someone and demonstrate sincerity, you create a hemonculus of yourself and deliver it. Naturally, the person is probably mad at you, but now you've given them a chew-toy that can scream in your voice as they scratch your face off it. It goes a surprisingly long way towards mending resentments.

Salamander

When a fire burns constantly for seven days in a space badly contaminated with volatilized Blood (thin-blood or otherwise), it becomes what alchemists call *gebennical fire*. They have a name for it, because it isn't as uncommon in alchemical laboratories as it should be. Unfortunately for anyone around the flames, this is catnip for salamanders. If they sense it, they come crawling into the warmth like a kitten into a sunbeam. Where, exactly, they reside before they enter a long-burning fire isn't certain, but it seems likely it's somewhere very, very hot.

Salamanders are made of pure elemental fire, their heart a beating core of plasma. While their shape resembles their amphibian namesakes, their glowing red skin and the feathery white flames licking along their sides mean it's impossible to mistake them for anything so mundane. They're territorial and ornery—it's all too easy to accidentally provoke these creatures to attack.

Despite the resemblance, salamanders' bodies don't fade and die like an ordinary fire. They can be injured by pure blunt force—a steam press would do it, but not a sledgehammer—but they can only be destroyed by complete immersion in water. An injured salamander doggedly tries to find a hot place to curl up in and heal. If their flames are completely extinguished, the salamander dies and leaves behind a charred, hard corpse.

General Difficulties: 3 / 1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 1, Mental 1

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 3

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Stealth 5

Special: A salamander has sharp, fiery teeth for biting. Add +4 fire damage to salamander attacks.

Simply touching a salamander is dangerous: salamanders do one level of fire damage to anyone who touches their skin. They cannot be harmed by piercing or cutting.



Sphinx

She doesn't have a lion's body, just moves with the grace of a predator. No wings, though her long, flowing coats and gowns make one *think* of wings. And she's big, but like a WNBA player, not like a monster of myth. She's Sphinx, and she does have a riddle.

Sphinx is not Kindred—Malkavians have heard her heart beat and Duskborn waking early have seen her return from the beach—but she's not human.

One of those Malkavians tried to feed off Sphinx and swears they got nothing but sand.

Despite her suntan, *she does thaumaturgy*. She reads the future in animal guts and crime scene blood spatters. She even trades lore for lore, sometimes. She might do alchemy, too: she loves to watch kettle battles, and often grants the winner a lead on some much-desired ingredient. But the big deal is the *question*.

She doesn't ask immediately. She shows up in a



city (*by day*), introduces herself to the authorities and ferrets out Elysiums with distressing ease. After a month or so, she asks one Kindred one question that, with surgical precision, upends the social order. Rarely in an obvious way, though when she asked an Anarch gang in Rabat why they didn't simply kill their bullshit Emir using the rocket launchers Ghazala had hidden in her garage, well...

Other riddles she's posed include:

"Why don't you play violin any more?" prompted a Toreador Prince to abandon praxis and leave Hamilton.

"What are the werewolves planning?" led a British court to a ruinous conflict that replaced them with Gangrel rivals—who instituted more liberal policies and a surprisingly fruitful truce with the lupines.

"What did Edith die for?" she asked the Court of Bruges, and within a fortnight they'd engaged in a vicious struggle with the Sabbat.

She's an alluring enigma, and the only thing the cities she visits have in common is a strong presence of Goratracine Tremere.

General Difficulty: 5 / 4

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Mental 8, Social 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 10, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Investigation (Riddles and Puzzles) 10, Intimidation 8, Occult (Alchemy) 9

Disciplines: None openly, but her conversation indicates awareness of Level 4 Rituals and Level 3 formulae.

Special: Kindred—or anyone—planning to attack, imprison, or otherwise hamper Sphinx must out-think her and her supernatural divination skills by opposing an Intelligence + Leadership pool against her Investigation (Riddles and Puzzles) pool. On a win, they can go ahead with their action; on a loss, she has figured out their plan and something goes wrong that allows her to escape.

Thinlings

Maybe a year, or nine months, after thin-bloods showed up, domains started talking about birth defects that seemed particularly relevant to the Kindred. Old, smart, weird vampires who'd never

seen these before drew the connection and now the name *thinlings* is attached and there's yet *another* reason for Princes to point hate at Duskborn.

Thinlings are mortal babies whose mothers suffered anemia during the pregnancy, sometimes to the point of severe, ongoing complications. Anemia then becomes an epidemic in the thinling's neighborhood.

Investigators who find a thinling and check out its mom find a statistically significant correlation between *giving birth to one* and *having been fed on by a thin-blood at some point*. The tie to dads is a whole other hassle, so that research is inconclusive, though at least one Malkavian insists they had a vision proving thin-bloods who bite dudes may also be responsible for thinling births later.

A thinling is, to all appearances, a scrawny mortal baby who cries a lot. They aren't vulnerable to sunlight. No fangs. But when it's asleep, something comes out of its mouth that looks like a baby made of plastic wrap. It floats and slithers and hides and, if it finds someone else asleep, it goes over their face and sucks blood out through their mouth and nose. Then, pinkish, it crawls back inside the baby.

The projections are tangible. A guy in Detroit has one in a mason jar full of formaldehyde. Nobody knows what the hell thinlings are doing or why. The statistics below refer to the projections.

General Difficulties: 2 / 1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 1, Mental 1

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 2

Exceptional Dice Pools: Stealth 5

Special: It sucks with a Dexterity + Stealth pool, against a Difficulty equal to the sleeper's Awareness. The same roll opposes any wakeful witnesses' Wits + Awareness. On a win, the sleeper loses the margin in Aggravated Health. If it loses, the sleeper wakes. Attacking the projection while inside its infant host kills the host.

Sorcerous Artifacts

Redworkers love *stuff*. It's one of the few commonalities linking them together. Whether



it's a piece of alchemical hardware or a rare sorcerous object, they hoard equipment like giant, bloodsucking magpies. This section provides a few of the strange and occult tools vampires might encounter in their studies.

The older an item's lineage is—the longer an object has worked blood craft—the more potential energy it carries and the more effective it is in a ritual. Tremere strongholds hoard these artifacts, carefully preserved in vaults and wunderkammern, kept from those deemed unworthy. Banu Haqim cache these tools in isolated stashes, hiding them away from prying eyes until the moment they're retrieved for a working. Many artifacts simply lie scattered around the globe, waiting to be rediscovered.

System: Distinguishing an actual sorcerous artifact in the wild usually requires Intelligence + Occult against a Difficulty of 2 or higher if the maker intended to conceal its nature. Some such items radiate in spectra perceptible by Auspex.

A sorcerous item in magical use for three centuries—not just any 17th-century antique—makes one die in a Ritual or other magical pool as a success: if you have a seven-die pool, flip one of them to a 9 before you roll the other six dice. At 600 years of magical use, the item pins two dice as successes; at 1,200 years of use, it pins three dice; at 2,400 years of use, it pins four dice, and so on. You can't just use the item in every ritual, though: it either has to be required in the ritual's ingredients list, or otherwise specifically, magically connected to that ritual. If there's any doubt in the Storyteller's mind, it's not suitable. Of course, items that old have lots of former owners who might haunt them, have cursed them, or even come looking for them.

Implements

Artifacts have almost infinite variety, but a few bubble to the surface again and again: the cup, the mirror, the ring.

Humor Cups (Unique)

The humor cups all look fairly innocuous:

simple stoneware cups—probably early Chinese pottery—each about an inch and a half in diameter. But the trained eye notices the shadow of unusual paint and burn marks underneath the cups' dark greenish glaze. Drinking blood from them reveals their remarkable power: each cup transforms the Resonant humor of blood poured into it to another. One changes all blood poured inside it to choleric, another transforms its contents to be entirely sanguine. The blood only remains transformed as long as it's in the cup, or if it's been drunk. There are believed to be five of these cups in existence scattered around the globe; all that remains of a full set of twelve.

Obsidian Mirror

The most famous obsidian mirror belonged to the Tudor philosopher and magician John Dee, who purchased it after it was taken—likely stolen—from an Aztec town in the 16th century. A single round piece of obsidian, polished to a mirror finish, they reflect not just what's in front of them, but far-off cities, strange animals, and distant faces. Those with training in Auspex find their senses can stretch farther and broader when they gaze into the mirror's depths, as if they're looking through a window at the object they scry.

System: Before using an obsidian mirror, roll Intelligence + Occult against Difficulty 3 to attune your senses to the mirror. On a win, add one die to Auspex pools when using the mirror. This is especially useful for Premonition (Auspex 2) and Clairvoyance (Auspex 5), but the clever seer can figure out other ways to incorporate the mirror into Auspex power use. Obsidian mirrors cannot transmit sound.

Adder Stone Ring

Adder stones are unusual glassy stones with a hole in their center. They wash up in Germany, Britain, and Egypt, where they're called many different names: *witch stones*, *hen gods*, and *aggri*. In folklore, they were made from petrified serpent saliva and supposedly allowed users to turn invisible or see



invisible beings. And indeed, Kindred proficient in Obfuscate seem even moreso when they wear an adder stone ring.

Of course, like everything, their gift comes with a cost: the wearer sometimes seems less visible, almost pale or faded out, when not using their Discipline. One Banu Haqim scholar connects the adder stone not with the saliva of serpents, but with the saliva of an unknown Antediluvian, which wipes the world's memory of the wearer much as Kindred saliva wipes the memory of the vampiric bite.

System: Wearing the ring transforms one failure into a success when rolling an Obfuscate pool. Difficulty increases by 1 each time the wearer is successfully attacked. For every transformed failure or increased Difficulty for an attacker, the wearer loses one die from their next Social pool.

Blades

The knife a caster uses to let the blood from their own body or another's has more significance than any other part of a ritual. Research-minded casters note that even small tweaks to a blade's structure changes their ritual's effect: whether a knife is long or short, the material of the handle, the color of the wrappings, double-edged or straight-edged...the list goes on and on.

At the end of the day, some knives are just a sharp stick. Others are much, much more. Each knife has its own history and potential, and finding the perfect one for a ritual is something to which a Blood sorcerer should devote more than a little of their time.

Blade of Pelops (Unique)

The Blade of Pelops first surfaced in the surviving record of a series of rituals carried out on an Aegean island in the Byzantine Empire in the 9th century. It was already very much an antique by then. The text notes the unusual colors in the polished stone of the blade: a swirl of rusty red amid the patinated white of old marble. In fact, the blade is not carved from rock at all, but a piece of an enormous fossilized shoulder bone, cut into the single-edged shape of a kopsis knife. Maybe it's ancient time literally being frozen inside its blade that gives the Blade of Pelops its remarkable effect.

System: A sorcerer who cuts themselves with the Blade at the beginning of a ritual (usually to draw the Blood needed for the working) increases their Blood Potency by two for the performance of the ritual. This either adds a die to the ritual pool, or lets them re-roll the ritual's Rouse Check, depending (*Vampire: The Masquerade*, p. 216).



Fiery Tools

Burning herbs, objects, and even Blood itself changes and melds the ingredients, both imbuing them with power and extracting it for the redworker. Burning ingredients does not simply mean destroying them, however—inhaling the smoke of smoldering herbs, or tasting the ash they leave behind ingests their potency into the Kindred's own body and Blood. The three-legged brazier, the silver censer, the ornate wooden incense burner, or even just the simple clay fire pot; all provide a ritual with a vessel to contain and control deadly fire. Their effectiveness only increases when rare materials and rituals are part of their creation.

Other artifacts host fire in other ways.

Corpse-Wax Candles

Made from rendered human fat or the adipocere that sometimes forms on buried corpses, corpse-wax candles are a grim tool to harness the energy of the grave. Making them is a long, smelly, and unpleasant process. Liquid vitae is added to the fat as the candles are poured into their molds. When they burn, the acrid smoke and wavering light surrounding the ritual are infused with pure vitae.

System: Making the candles takes at least four hours and uses Intelligence + Craft; the Difficulty equals the number of candles the vampire is making at once out of a single corpse. If they fail, they cannot simply melt the wax down and try again with the same materials; they have been spoiled by the process and cannot be reused. If successfully made and deployed in a ritual, they transform one failed die on the Ritual roll, or any associated roll into a success. Each candle only works in one ritual, after which it's nothing but a gross (and probably criminally evidentiary) piece of décor.

The good news is, a single human body contains a lot of fat: a sorcerer can get one candle per kilogram of body mass out of most fresh First World corpses, or one candle per 5 kg of pre-burial body weight out of corpses buried over a year ago, assuming they haven't completely skeletonized yet.

Hand of Glory

The murdering hand of a hanged man is hard to come by these days. *If* a sorcerer can find one—a real one—and they have a corpse-wax candle made from the body of the same man, they've got all the components of a Hand of Glory. Simply wrap the wrist in a cloth, fix the corpse-wax candle between its fingers, and light it. Those touched by the Hand of Glory's glow drop into deep sleep (or torpor for Kindred), awakening only after being struck, or once the candle's light goes out. If they were already asleep, they sleep as long as they normally would, and while the light burns, can only be awakened by being struck. The flame is weak—moving the Hand requires a Dexterity + Stealth roll to avoid it guttering out; it can be carried two meters per success before needing to stop or to re-roll. Someone holding the Hand cannot fight or move rapidly.

System: Lighting a Hand of Glory requires a Resolve + Blood Sorcery (or Occult) roll (Difficulty 4). While the Hand burns, everyone visible in its light must make a Composure + Resolve test (Difficulty 4) to resist its soporific effects, *except* the one who lit it. Vampires and other supernatural creatures can spend a point of Willpower to stave off the effects for a turn, if they fail the test.

Duration: The effect ends when the candle is extinguished, or when the candle burns out (after one hour).

Garments

The clothing and ornaments a practitioner wears have their own symbolism. Some rituals are done wearing furs to make the wearer resemble a wild animal; some laden with old, gem-encrusted raiments; and others performed entirely in the nude.

Lazarus Cloak

Just as fresh grave dirt can provide marvelous effects, the pristine shroud from the body of a corpse risen to life—but *not* one Embraced and risen as a vampire—protects against sunlight if

wrapped completely around a Kindred's body. Though it's usually neither thick nor sturdy (light shines through the thin cotton or linen quite readily), so long as it remains untraced, the wearer does not feel the painful touch of sunlight even when lying under the noon sun. The instant it's torn—even just a tiny hole—it becomes an ordinary sheet once more. Genuine miraculous resurrections are, however, extremely rare. The rumored appearance of or reference to a true Lazarus cloak drives Kindred to great, acquisitive lengths, despite the great inconvenience of wrapping oneself in a 15-foot winding sheet anywhere there's likely to be sunlight.

Mandrake

Mandrake roots tend to resemble people. In nature, the roots of *Bryonia alba* or *Mandragora turcomanica* often bifurcate in proportions that match human limbs and, now and again, the wrinkles of their surface look like faces glowering or screaming. That's the natural mandrake – which is also a narcotic and a hallucinogen.

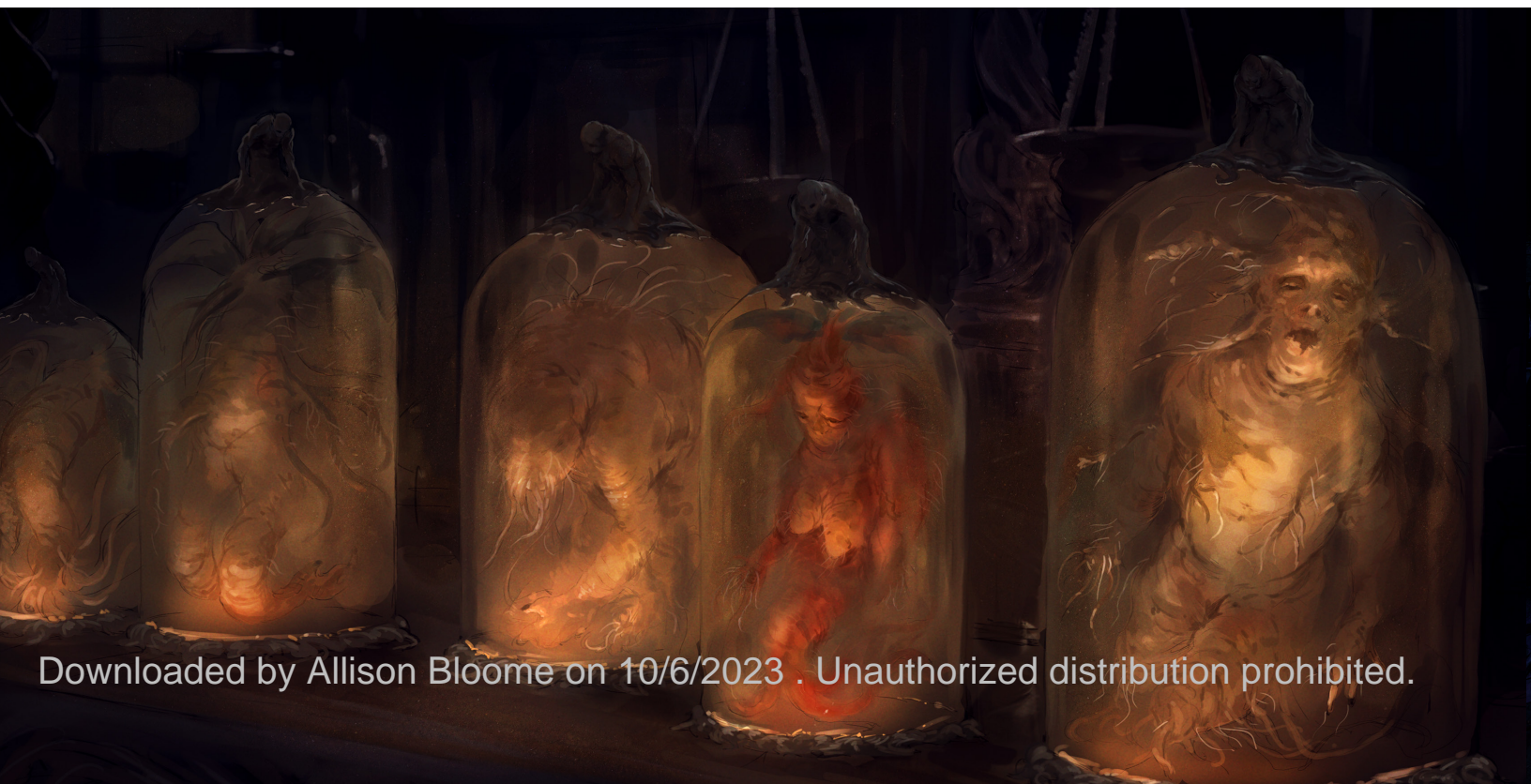
People have been doing freaky body magic on mandrake roots since the start of recorded

time. Lupines do it, wizards *definitely* do it, and vampires—with vitae's blood-is-life properties as a catalyst—do it too.

Without even knowing Blood Sorcery, a vampire can obtain a mandrake root, soak it in vitae by the light of the full moon, plant it, and any time after the next full moon, pull it up and suck the vitae out without any loss of flavor or mystic virtue. Also, the root develops the suggestion of a human face and form during the interim, so... yeah, there are collectors who like those.

With Blood Sorcery it gets *weird*. One ritual lets a sorcerer grow an entire soulless human shell that looks like a person and smells like a fresh apple. It's not smart, it can't talk, but it is obedient, and always really pretty in a rosy-cheeked, full-bodied way. Not great lab assistants, since *pick that up and hold it right there* is the absolute full extent of their capacities, but nicely-proportioned bodies that do exactly as they're told are often very popular with mortals. They can't be fed on, though; they hold only sap.

Alchemists have been experimenting with mandrake roots too, and getting closer to the original myth that when you pull them out, they scream so loud people die. It's not fatal yet, but they have made roots which, when knocked out of their jars, shriek for about a minute at a volume that sets





off car alarms and – interestingly—wakes the dead. Or at least, wakes Duskborn within a block for fifteen or twenty minutes of dazed stumbling about.

Alchemical Equipment

Ok, so you're putting together a lab. A brewer's lab *isn't* fancy. If you've gone fancy, you've gone in the wrong direction. It doesn't matter if your equipment's old or new: it just has to work for cooking. *Fancy* is just for impressing people who don't know anything about alchemy.

Alembic: Used for distilling liquid or gas; a flask curved under a long spout, fitted over the opening to a second flask, the **cucurbit**. Somehow getting access to a brewery's distillation equipment is the gold standard, but home brewers might use a distillation kit from a science surplus or kitchen goods store; or even just a big kettle, a plastic bucket, and some hose.

Athnor: Furnace for calcination and heating material. In alchemical mysticism it became a symbol of the art. Nowadays, small (around 20 kg metal capacity) propane foundries are fairly easy to come by, and they only cost a couple thousand bucks. Some alchemists swear by their jury-rigged pressure cooker, preferring to melt their metals in a separate crucible first. Other alchemists

dream bigger: a glassblowing kiln, an industrial furnace, a modified pizza oven, or a crematory.

Burner: A lab gas burner (think Bunsen) or jury-rigged propane or acetylene torches from a larger hardware store.

Crucible: Vessel for melting or blending metal. Small versions are called **cupels**.

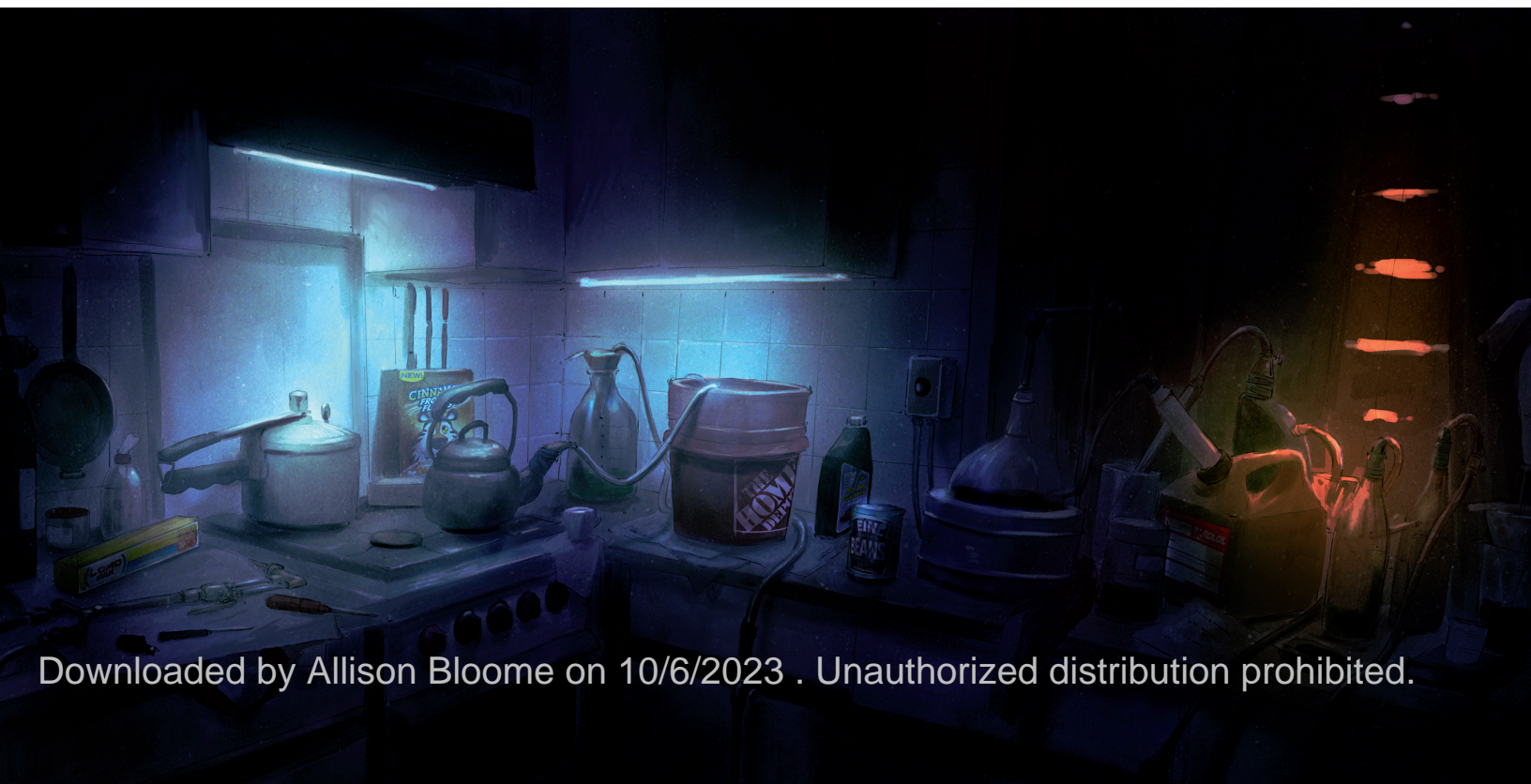
Darkroom: Some materials lose their potency when exposed to light. A designated darkroom is useful to have, even if it's just the broom closet or broken bathroom.

Descensory: Furnace that's heated on top so melted material flows down to a waiting vessel.

Filter: Laboratory filters, membranes, or just fine cloth can filter ingredients in a formula as well as prevent their accidental inhalation. Some brewers use coffee filters for their mixes, but wear those giant respirators that look like gas masks. Or vice versa.

Lab: More than just walls and a roof: a good floor should withstand high heat, chemical spills, and weight alone; ventilation, so you don't build up the wrong kind of fumes; and of course, thick walls, so heat and noise go unnoticed.

Mortar and Pestle: Handy to have around when you need something small pulverized. Or you can use a big industrial blender, for those hard-to-



emulsify items like microchips and tar.

Warmer: Electric water baths or heating mantles from a science laboratory are the best; but for the homebrewer on a serious budget, a cheap sous vide machine or hot plate can do much the same.

Vessels: Those bulbous, twisty-necked flasks and paraphernalia that lurk in the corner of medieval woodcuts and video-game wizards' workshops. They're usually made of glass or non-reactive metal. Science surplus stores and internet auction sites have these by the dozen, and plastic piping and funnels can specialize them even further. Those weird shapes boil down to one of four functions: boiling liquid, moving steam, collecting solids, and collecting liquid. The rest is history, or at least historical. Those of you studying historical tomes are familiar with some specialized terms:

- **Matrass:** Round-bottomed flask with a long, upright neck.
- **Bell Jar:** Open-bottomed vessel used to collect gas.
- **Boiling-Glass:** Large glass vessel with multiple funnels and tubes that can be attached to alembics for distillation or sealed with stoppers.
- **Pelican:** Vessel with two chambers and two joined arms that arc from top to middle; when heated, recirculates its contents through distillation and vaporization.
- **Retort:** Often a flask with a long, downward neck; sometimes a combination of alembic and cucurbit into one vessel.

Tomes and Grimoires

Generations of Tremere thaumaturges jammed their chantry shelves with crumbling books and stiff parchment scrolls, full of rituals and notes. Other, less wealthy groups make do with a handful of actually useful texts and research logs and their own common sense to guide them. Alchemists fill unpleasantly stained spiral notebooks with illegible handwriting, and pass flash drives around that supposedly have 14 GIGS OF BRUZ N SPELLZ loaded in there with the porn and ripped media files.

Redworking books are always rare and precious

commodities. They seldom have larger print runs than a couple dozen or (a big run!) two hundred. Even in the 20th century, the plurality of sorcerous works were hand-written or hand-copied. Finding them takes skill, perseverance, and more than a little luck.

Sorcerous Grimoires

To tell the truth, Tremere libraries have thinned out a little more than in the old days. With the dramatic upheavals, purges, and ideological infighting of the past 20 years, new texts and reconsidered books go conspicuously missing from their catalogues. Nowadays, bookhounds outside the Tremere circuit might have more treasures in their collections than expected. This section details a few of the texts dedicated bookstore haunters or enterprising redworkers might stumble across or seek out.

Das Tiefe Geheimnis

This book is probably the most common text on Blood Hermeticism. Written in the 15th century by Johanna Kloepper, a member of the Cologne chantry, *Das Tiefe Geheimnis* explains not only the basic tenets of blood sorcery and its history, but also the minutiae and methods of casting many of its most common rituals and workings. Unfortunately for students hoping to find a catch-all textbook, Kloepper's explanations are full of gaping omissions and strange errors, making her work only useful when read in correlation with other books. But even supplementing just one other book, it reveals a great deal. It's commonly believed that Kloepper's mistakes weren't careless, but purposefully scattered through the book to make it difficult for a layperson to follow – a common practice among mortal and Kindred philosophers of her day.

Kloepper originally wrote her book in German, but as the centuries passed the work was translated into most European languages, titled some variation on *The Deep Secret*. Almost any library with texts on Blood Sorcery has a copy of this book, translated into their native language. An experienced student of the art may have read the book several times



ITAMY

It's the latest, cutting-edge, must-have piece of culinary technology: it simmers, it slow cooks, it pressure cooks, it ferments, it informs you in a calm, robotic voice when you need to stir. It has 37 different settings, and customizable timers for each of them. You have to special order it from a Japanese company. And your friend's friend swears it's the one perfect catch-all for Thin-Blood Alchemy. They've got pictures of their setup with three of these miracle machines on pristine counters, cooking up the next dose of real power. You need the best to make the best, right?

Yeah, right. Anyone claiming to be an alchemist with an ItaMy in their setup is a poser, a wannabe, or a scammer trying to get your cash before they disappear. Making any kind of alchemical work in it results in either a burned mess or the fire department investigating a possible gas leak. In the worst kind of pinch, if you're an experienced alchemist, it can make a few grams of EI: subtract one die per level from the Distillation pool for any alchemical formula prepared with an ItaMy or similar programmable cook pot.



BOOK SMART

Storytellers have a few options when a character finds a tome. In addition to blood craft knowledge, many tomes might provide the equivalent of a free Specialty in Occult, or a bonus on a Memoriam pool investigating its revelations. Only the most powerful and versatile of texts should add even one die to Blood Sorcery or Thin-Blood Alchemy pools across the board, although adding one die to specific kinds of rituals, formulae, or wards makes a fair compromise.

To emphasize that learning redworking is *hard work*, define the specific rituals or formulae a given work provides. Some very clear or magically forceful books might speed the learning process from the standard square of the Ritual's Level in weeks: halving it, or reducing it by two-thirds. With this approach, characters have to seek out lots of different tomes to get more knowledge, and they have to work toward getting powerful enough to achieve some higher-level rituals or recipes they've read about. Younger vampires they encounter should only have a paltry number of rituals at their fingertips, even at slightly higher levels, while older vampires know many, many different ways to fuck them up.

over, and maybe even added to the extensive notes, corrections, and marginalia fellow scholars have added around the pages for five hundred years.

System: As long as the vampire has it available to consult, it grants the Blood Craft specialty to Occult. To discover a new ritual in an annotated copy of Kloepfer, spend a number of nights equal to the ritual's Level studying the book (no hunting) and make an Intelligence + Investigation (Cryptography) test at a Difficulty equal to the ritual's Level plus one. On a critical win, they learn that ritual in two-thirds of the normal time. A sorcerer cannot find more rituals in a given copy of Kloepfer than they have dots in Blood Sorcery.

Las Criaturas y El Cuerpo

Fresh off the new discoveries in microbiology of the 19th century, a Madrid chantry member named Ismael Molina published this book in 1889. Molina was obsessed with the idea that bodies were not single entities, but *vast and teeming Cities*, filled with millions upon millions of bacteria and individual cells. His line of logic led him to the idea that *all* bodies—Kindred and otherwise—were connected through the invisible sympathies and links that echoed through every cell and bacterium circulating through them.

Molina's book was a wash at publication. Some appreciated it for its detailed descriptions of wards and warding equipment, but most readers brushed off his larger theories as foolish, unwieldy, or simply insane. Only recently, with the emergence of plague oracles (p. 114), have sorcerers re-examined and even attempted Molina's rituals and rites.

System: Grants one die to Blood Sorcery pools for plague oracle rituals. Contains enough information to develop your own version of Viral Haruspex (for whichever disease you prefer) with an Intelligence + Blood Sorcery test at Difficulty 4. On a critical win, you can learn that ritual in five weeks instead of nine. Readers with the Medicine skill can refer to it while learning any Ward ritual; doing so subtracts their dots in Medicine from the number of weeks it takes to learn the ritual (minimum one week).

Experimental Journals of the Argentinian Circle

The Argentinian Circle was most active during Buenos Aires' 1920s boom, energized by the radical atmosphere whirling around the country. Their tiny group of vampires reasoned that might be an ancient and solemn art, but that didn't mean you couldn't improve on it. Their experiments cost them their unives when they met their Final Death just outside of the city in an enormous explosion that threw up writhing, radiant columns of white and green fumes.

Only a few copies of their notes survived. The most sought after copy was owned by Ángel Fuchs, a talented Tremere with a reputation as an obsessive thrill-seeker before his Final Death in a BOES dawn raid in 2010. It's not the notes inside the book that intrigue seekers, but the sigil reputedly drawn in a mysterious mixture on the cover that allowed it to somehow survive the conflagration.

System: A chained ritual cast while referring to the Journals pins one Hunger die as a 10 for one caster. The copy with the sigil is completely fireproof; referring to it during casting grants one die to the Blood Sorcery pool of any ritual involving fire, including salamanders (p. 134).

Commentary on The Flower of Hecate

When the *Flower* was written isn't certain; at first, it seemed to have appeared some time around the 5th century, but earlier references to it crop up now and again. Currently the estimate is sometime around 210 CE. What *is* certain is that the *Flower* was a thorough, painstaking exploration of the origins of and the secrets of the craft. Its writing was famously poetic, steeped in mysticism and symbolism. Scholars and magi sought out the *Flower* not just as a reference book, but as an ultimate ornament for their libraries.

Alas, the last copy was destroyed in 1479. All that remains now are the collected volumes of commentary that accumulated around this text, citing lines and pages lost for hundreds of years. Some lucky rites and rituals have been preserved



whole in these commentaries, but they're few and far between. A handful of scholars have devoted themselves to painstakingly reconstructing the original book from these references, trying to fill in the blanks between corrections with research, experience, and just plain guesswork.

System: Referring to a thorough or brilliant version of the Commentary grants one die to the Blood Sorcery pool of one type of ritual (attack, defense, warding, scrying, summoning, transport, elemental energies, those involving werewolves, etc.); essentially a specialty. Writing a thorough or brilliant version of the Commentary—a Project of Scope 1, monthly increments, Launch Roll Occult + Blood Sorcery, Difficulty 3; sorcerers with the Haven Merit Library can add one die to their Launch and Goal rolls—gains the author one dot of Status among Blood sorcerers.

Katharine Hughart's Book of Shadows

Katharine Hughart was a 17 year old Wiccan in Vermont who kept a *book of shadows* in the summer of 1996. Unbeknownst to her, Michael—her boyfriend of a year—had been Embraced just a few months prior, and was planning to Embrace her too. He told Katharine he had learned a magic spell that would grant both of them immortality, and convinced her to carry out a few preparatory rituals with him. Finally, the night of the “immortality spell” came. The rite went horribly wrong, and Katharine was killed—but not before she managed to drive a stake into her boyfriend's heart.

Her book survived, with copious, careful detail of every ritual Michael taught her, complete with sigils and ritual objects...and her growing suspicions about Michael. The final page reads, “If you're seeing this, I'm dead and Michael Leeks is a fucking vampire. Garlic doesn't work.”

Parties unknown stole her whole Wiccan library from the Brattleboro police evidence locker a week before the FBI's SAD team got there.

System: A ghoul who possesses a copy of Katharine's book and has access to a sorcerer's

library can learn one Level 1 Ritual for every dot they have in Occult. To cast those rituals, they still need a dot in Blood Sorcery.

Grimoires In Chronicles

People usually want books, including sorcerous ones, for three reasons: their rarity, their contents, or their sentimental value.

F IS FOR FAKE

The coterie obtains a very sought after, *very* expensive grimoire, either for themselves or for an important client. The buy goes without a hitch—but when they finally try out the rituals inside, they can't get any of them to work. The book's a forgery. Now the coterie's down a lot of cash—and possibly up one very upset client—unless they can find the seller again and get their money back.

THE FLOWER OF THEM ALL

The copy of the *Commentary on the Flower of Hecate* the coterie obtained is just as poetic and mysterious as promised. But what's more mysterious is the invitation they receive to an academic conference on the *Flower*—the same invitation everyone with a copy of the *Commentary* got, whether they publicized their library or not. It'll be a gathering of the most erudite, clout-chasing, or terrifying redworking scholars in the world. Some invitees regard it as a chance for legitimate scholarship. Some obsessives hunger after new marginalia. Others theorize wildly about suspicious organizers. Whatever everyone's motives, tempers are sure to flare when the organizers reveal they've found a fragment of the *Flower* itself...

BY ITS COVER

The book seemed innocuous at first when the coterie found it in one of their go-to bookshops, just a nice copy of an occult text. But when they look a little closer, they discover its end pages and jacket, beautifully painted with symbols and tiny text, are actually a ritual hiding the true nature of the book: it's someone's very personal, very annotated, almost diary-like grimoire. Why is it hidden so meticulously? Who left it or abandoned it in a bookstore? And what secrets are contained inside?



Alchemical Formularies

Although books on alchemy go back thousands of years, books of Thin-Blood Alchemy barely exist: the art basically grew up with the Internet, so its seminal early works languish in dead Geocities pages or cobwebbed Usenet files. A few early figures in the scene produced zines or small-press compilations of formulae, and most alchemists with a sense of history have a prized copy of the Japanese pirate edition of Kirin Taunk's *It's All in the Fire Now*.

Plenty of thin-bloods taught themselves alchemy from sixth-generation photocopies or learned it as an apprentice, or just watched really good kettle battles and didn't blow themselves up in their first few tries. A modern-night alchemical formulary more likely appears in a rubber-banded pile of Moleskines, a cardboard box full of scribbled-on cocktail napkins, or an encrypted PDF than in between paperback covers, much less calfskin bindings.

Hard Drive of Jordan De Bur

Jordan De Bur was a talented second year chemistry student when he was Embraced. He promptly started experiments with Thin-Blood Alchemy, egged on by new nocturnal friends. De Bur's formulae were elegant, extremely potent, and completely unreproducible thanks to the obscure plant and animal materials he somehow sourced for his brews. He kept his notes for his mixtures on the encrypted external hard drive he carried everywhere—which vanished with De Bur when the young scientist mysteriously disappeared in 2012. Fellow thin-bloods hotly debate whether he was destroyed or went into hiding to escape the Camarilla's brands.

The few recipes he shared are practically priceless on their own, fiercely guarded by the cooks he entrusted them to. What those recipes can do has reached mythological proportions, maybe blotting out their actual potency: they can slake Hunger for nights, they make you high as a kite for a week, they let you walk under the noonday sun. The myth grows with every telling. Rumors that the hard drive has surfaced in someone's collection rise and fall every year.



System: This rumored super-formulary might do anything if found. If a character can convince a thin-blood alchemist (or better yet, a wealthy mortal or true Kindred obsessed with alchemy) they have access to it with a successful Subterfuge test, they add one die to their Manipulation pools against the interested party until they catch on to the lie. The liar may have to fake a few formulae themselves to keep the scam running, though.

HISTORICAL ALCHEMY TOMES

Even, or perhaps especially, the most postmodern hipster Duskborn respect mortal alchemists like al-Razi and George Ripley for their insights into the alchemical process and the underlying fundamental theory. Tremere, Banu Haqim, and Tzimisce circles have long kept Renaissance print editions of their works as reference books for symbolic and hermetic magic. Academic press critical editions and specialist occult press issues of such works increasingly appear on thin-blood cookers' shelves next to the *CRC Handbook*, used Todd-Sanford lab textbooks, and Harold McGee. Sympathies and resonances between ingredients the medievals teased out while transmuting metals into gold prove very useful in Mercurian experiments.

Some core titles that might show up and at the very least grant a specialty in Alchemy to a redworker with the Occult skill, or increase the Distillation pool of one or two types of formula by a die, include:

- Pierre Borel, *Biblioteca Chemica*, Latin, 1654
- Nagarjuna, *Rasendramangala*, Sanskrit, c. 1000 (endless Tamil and Hindi editions, no two alike)
- Philalethes (George Starkey), *Secrets Revealed*, English, 1669
- Al-Razi, *Kitab al-Asrar (Book of Secrets)*, Arabic, c. 920 (the 1937 German translation is the most complete)
- George Ripley, *The Compound of Alchemy*, English, 1471
- Muhammad ibn Umail, *al-Mā' al-Waraqī wa'l-Arḍ an-Najmīya (The Silvery Water and the Starry Earth)*, Arabic, c. 950 (printed in English, Latin, and Arabic in Calcutta, 1933)
- Wei Boyang, *Zhouyi cantong qi (Seal of Unity of the Three)*, Chinese, c. 400? (most recent critical edition 2011)
- Lazarus Zetzner, ed. *Theatrum Chemicum (6 vols.)*, Latin, 1602–1661 (compiles alchemical texts dating back 2,000 years)

Abecedaria Alchemia

Every craft has its mystic, and Miriam Blau was the hierophant of Alchemy in the 2000s. As a mathematician, her interest in gematria—Hebrew numerology—and Jewish mysticism led her to regions of alchemy that few had even considered, let alone experimented in. She was convinced that the *magnum opus* was achievable by combining ingredients according to the numerology of the names of God.

In her sole published work—released on a number of pirate print-your-own-book sites in 2005—she offered no formulae, but a *meta-formulaic alphabet* deriving mathematical—and therefore alphanumerically codeable—values for 777 ingredients. In the introduction, she states that, as every form of matter has a mathematical equivalent, the particular ingredients could be discovered through careful study. Some alchemists claim to have achieved startling results with Blau's methods; others bang their heads fruitlessly against both the math and the mystical jargon. Blau disappeared from her study in Thessaloniki in 2008 and has not been seen since.

System: Alchemists with a Mathematics specialty in Academics can substitute one ingredient (except Blood and mortal blood) in any formula.

The Alchemist Cookbook

In 2009, a group of Anarch thin-bloods with a sense of humor typed up a few formulae, printed them out on an old risograph and stapled the pages together to give to their friends. Each *Cookbook* has just 20 pages, illustrated with smeared clip art and hand-drawn pictures of equipment. There are 25 copies in existence, scattered up and down the West Coast. It's easy to pass over a *Cookbook*, with its blue cardstock cover and cheesy fonts, but the formulae inside are clean and effective...as long as you know the key codewords scattered throughout the book. Copies of the *Cookbook* and its code have only ever been passed from friend to friend or teacher to student, but there's a large reward promised to anyone who can deliver a copy to certain interested high bidders.

System: To learn the formulae in the *Cookbook*, you have to know the codewords, which probably involves a session or even a story's worth of roleplaying. Once you do, however, you can pin one die in the Distillation roll any time you brew the next five formulae you learn.

DOVECOTE and CRONUS Servers

Camarilla princes might have banned talking on the Internet among their own Kindred, but they hold no sway over the swathes of Kindred they rejected. DOVECOTE's (p. 112) servers whirl away in a Los Angeles basement. They house a series of nested folders, loosely categorized as RULES (*don't say anything that means we have to dump this server; also DON'T mix bleach and ANY acid, dipshits*), BASICS (*the beginner's guide to cooking El*), SOURCING (*anyone know if Emilio's still selling real ivory?*) and CHAT. The logs in CHAT are wiped every morning at five o'clock.

CRONUS has secret servers too, hidden in Lagos. Their tech support is more paranoid than DOVECOTE's, and wipes their chat logs twice a day—at noon and again at midnight. CRONUS's servers tend to be more research-based, filled with blurry scans of 15th century alchemical tomes, modern chemistry books, a few sorcery grimoires, and cryptic associations between symbols and materials (*the sylph has the character of air and thus is coterminous with the sublimation...*).

System: Getting access to either set of servers is, again, a roleplaying exercise. With access to DOVECOTE, a character can add one die to a Social or Mental pool involving another thin-blood alchemist once per session: they've learned a rumor, picked up some cool jargon, have a minor favor to swap. With access to CRONUS, the alchemist can cut the research time to learn a new formula in half with a successful Intelligence + Alchemy test against a Difficulty equal to the formula's level.

Formularies In Chronicles

Most formularies are modified with notes and

commentary by their owners, so even ordinary books can become high-ticket items with the right marginalia.

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE...

A Kindred with significant clout asks the coterie to be her representatives at an exclusive, anonymous auction. The item she's after is a one-of-a-kind formulary. Unfortunately, the who's-who of redworkers have sent their minions to do the same—with orders to outbid or outwit the competition by any means necessary.

THE SERPENT'S TOOTH

Clare Grisham is mentor to several young redworkers, the coterie included. When she's destroyed, her books—both rare and mundane—are divided among her students. But not everyone's satisfied with their inheritance: there's burglaries and even threats of violence as someone tries to collect all of Grisham's estate. What's driving the mysterious collector? Is there something hidden in even innocuous-seeming texts? Is the collector personally obsessed with Grisham? And is there a connection to her death?

ELEVENTH HOUR

The coterie begged, borrowed, and bribed themselves into a full 24 hours with a copy of *The Alchemist Cookbook*. The copy belongs to a powerful and unforgiving alchemist, so when part of the book is destroyed in an accident, the coterie needs to get another copy, fast. Unfortunately, the only other person in the city with a copy is a personal enemy of the original owner. The coterie moves through the city's redworking scenes looking for an in with them. Hopefully the characters can convince or impress them enough to somehow let it go...before their 24 hours are up.

Mysteries

Even mortal occultists like to refer to the various magical arts as mysteries. Kindred redworkers have their own mysteries to investigate, questions and legends that haunt the scene. Sure, they're probably bullshit distractions made up by Tremere hardliners waiting to drain you... but what if they're real?



Red Mercury

The phrase *Red Mercury* turns up in illegal international arms deals now and then: purportedly, it's the USSR's special sauce for upping kiloton yields in nuclear weapons. Most legit scientists say it's a hoax—but *why wouldn't they?*—while credulous thin-bloods wonder longingly about what the Brujah got up to in secret Soviet labs before perestroika.

Regardless of how it started, *Red Mercury* has brand-name cachet now, and can refer to any of the following (and much more besides)—all of which, or none, might be true.

Cinnabar, or mercuric sulfide, used to produce vermilion pigment, which is not that exciting until you see the paintings on display at the Galerie du Retour.

A paint made from Nosferatu Blood, intended to render ballistic missiles invisible to radar through repurposed Obfuscate, purged during the fall of the USSR to avoid a schism between the Brujah who made it and the Nosferatu from whom it was made.

A ballotechnic chemical that, when subjected to shock waves, ignites with no explosion but intense heat. Like thermite, if you set it off with a hammer. This stuff is made from vitae, so it's shelf stable indefinitely and won't burn even if you play a blowtorch flame on it.

"Red Mercury is used to make A bombs" was

completely misinterpreted; it's not a component, but a performance-enhancing substance for thinkers. Give a genius the Embrace, render them down into R-M, let other mortals take the R-M and you just force-multiplied your original genius... until the supply runs out.

It's a reality lubricant. In its very presence, the laws of physics become pliant and suggestible. A weak sorcerer with an ampoule of this becomes a pretty good sorcerer, and a powerful one, whoo, stand back!

In Chronicles

Red Mercury is a classic MacGuffin. The coterie ends up holding this by happenstance and the vampires who need it for nefarious schemes pursue them. It could be an ingredient in some even *more* powerful, one-off formula. Or the coterie could learn that their despised rivals have gotten some, leading to an investigation into why they want it and inevitably a scheme to steal it.

THE FALLDOWN

It's never been strange in the redworking world to augment the mind or the body—that's what it's all about! Someone starts selling a substance they claim is *real red mercury*, making the coterie clever and ingenious in ways they only dreamed of (increase



Awareness, Investigation, Medicine, or Science rating by three) for a full night. But as soon as the drug wears off, it's clear things are going very wrong: the mind is cloudy (decrease affected Skill rating by three or to one), and they feel hungry and cold (Hunger 4). What was *in* that stuff? The coterie needs to find out if there's an antidote or cure for these horrible symptoms, fast.

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Asha Kaur is an artist and a pet of the local Prince thanks to her strange and beautiful portraits of high-paying Kindred. Her red mercury paintings capture much more than just her sitters' likeness. So when she walks into the sunlight one summer morning, it's all the stranger that her last two portraits evoke strong feelings of hatred and anguish: one is a self-portrait, the other a portrait of the Prince themselves. Asha's high-ranking friends can't look into her death, but they can ask the coterie to do so in their stead. Why did she destroy herself—and what about her paintings might have put a target on her back?

GUNPOWDER, TREASON, AND PLOT

Politics with the Anarchs are always *explosive*. Even more so when the local soviet has gotten a shipment of enough red mercury to blow a whole building to kingdom come. Anything this combustible can be both a threat and a deterrent, so they're keeping mum on where it is or what they'll do with it. And stuff like this tends to seep into the ears of mortal watchdogs, as well, which means the SAD—or worse, the GRU Eighth Direction—might not be far behind.

The Blood Serpent

Believers in ley lines, the Shaver mystery, Noddist cartography and similar practices see fractal recursions in the curves and branches of this path as it swirls across the planet. The fondlers of old Bibles call it *Tiamat* after the Babylonian chaos goddess, while those with a more feng shui background call it *the blood dragon line* and check the positions of their eight-sided mirrors.

Observed phenomena at furcae, places where the

line knots, coils, or crosses itself, include:

- Vitae carrying multiple Resonances.
- Random changes in intensity for Blood Bonds after Blood Sorcery rites (both stronger and weaker).
- Infestations of red mold in regional basements or red-colored fungus blooms in stagnant water.
- Inexplicable population drops in local animals, particularly bees.

There are many, *many* theories about the blood dragon line, but the most popular include:

- It's a map of the cracks where the barrier between the living world and the afterlife are weakened. The phenomena are probably multiple hauntings by organized ghosts. Possibly, everyone killed by Kindred over the centuries is collectively striking back.
- The earth itself is alive, and the Blood Serpent is literally the world bleeding, in a way that Blood Sorcerers can lick up! This injury was probably inflicted by one of the Elders, maybe even Caine himself, though a minority of Kindred simply insist it's climate change.
- Blood Sorcery has always been tainted, it was just the machinations of the ancients during Gehenna that awakened it. This is *literally* a living entity, coiling invisibly over the world, working its will on the living and undead alike. Most proponents of this theory try to figure out how to worship and bend knee to Tiamat.

In Chronicles

Narratives can be built around traveling on this map. Tracing the blood dragon line back to its source promises power, insight, or Golconda itself. What's actually waiting at the fountainhead might be something else entirely. For more ways to use the Blood Serpent, furcae, and the veins of the Earth in chronicles, see *Veins of the City*, p. 162.

MEASURING THE EARTH

Two great coils of the Blood Serpent intersect beneath the city, and the coterie's enlisted to map their path. But walking the coils isn't easy: monsters and dangers feel very at home along the Serpent's



KALIF

On the mountain of Alamut, the secret gardeners of the Banu Haqim grew special strains of cannabis, watered with vitae under the new moon and tended with endless night-long rituals. The tiniest error or impurity in the plant strain would destroy the crop. From these plants, they pressed a form of hashish called *kalif*. When bubbled through the blood of a mortal smoker in a sort of vampiric hookah, it opened the true eyes of Banu Haqim sorcerers. The ashipu beheld the Ladder of Heaven stretching and spiraling incarnadine into the skies, raising them to unheard of magical ecstasy and power.

Then Ur-Shulgi sacked the Mountain and drove the Lawmen into exile. The secret of cultivating kalif lost, and no more shipments coming from Alamut, the few surviving bricks of the drug command immense prices in the blood sorcerous underground. Recently, new suppliers have appeared, saying they might know where a kilo could be found, if you're really interested.

The Banu Haqim really don't like to talk about the First Daughter of Al-Aziz, the Sabbat convert who stole a supply of kalif, a stand of cannabis plants, and three ghoulish gardeners when she escaped Alamut during the British invasion of Afghanistan in 1880. Apparently, she survived, as did her plants. The new kalif seems to be coming from Mexico, under the protection of a cartel devoted to Santa Muerte, and the visions it shows may not conform to the more puritan notions of the Banu Haqim.

System: When bubbled or ingested via a smoker's blood, kalif reveals a transcendent vision linking the Blood to Heaven—or at least to what the ashipu thought Heaven looked like in 1200 BCE. Untainted, pure kalif can even allow the user to add an extra die to their next Remorse roll, if not used for a ritual. Tainted kalif shows visions of a more prurient kind, although it still links the smoker and gauzily clad angels in a chain. Even low-Humanity vampires feel their Blood flowing to their genitals under its influence, and can become addicted (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 180) to it.

When used in a ritual, it pins one die of the Ritual pool as a 10: if you have a Ritual pool of five dice, flip one to 10 and roll the other four. The ritual *must* have been designed to use kalif; you cannot just spice up a regular ritual with clouds of magical hash, not least because you'll babble the wrong words and screw it up.

As with other marijuana, ingesting kalif drops a die from the user's Wits pools and lowers Difficulties to resist frenzy by one.



back, and methods of tracking the lines tend to attract outside attention from other factions. Their job isn't made any easier by the Serpent's tendency to mess with Blood Sorcery.

BLOOD IN THE WATER

Red fungus blooms across the city, concerning mortal city workers as well as Kindred, and schools of fish float belly-up in the river. Some redworking scholars theorize a *clot* has formed within the Blood Serpent's path, forcing strange phenomena to pool within the city. Some Kindred congregate to try and tap into the sudden circulatory hotspot, encroaching on territory lines with impunity. Others gather to drain the clot and heal the land.

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

A sudden flush of Blood Sorcery activity isn't unusual when a crop of younger Kindred learn enough to start working on their own. What *is* strange is the sudden movement in a tiny section of the Blood Serpent. The coil shifted, ever so slightly, to lie along the territories shooting Blood Sorcery out of their ears in the coterie's town. If the Serpent can move, can it *be* moved? Every redworker in the area is suddenly filled with ambitions of *waking the Serpent* and the power within it.

The Doppelgänger

They're 165 cm tall with healthy natural curls and, usually, an outfit typical for wherever they're seen: suit in Manhattan, flowing tunic in Lexington, hijab in Cairo, jeans and a fitted white T just about anywhere. Looks like one of the Dinka people from South Sudan. Never speaks, at all. On the knuckles of their left hand, they have tattoos of four symbols that could either be primitive or modernized Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The Doppelgänger dies a lot, as annoying mysterious figures do when they annoy or mystify vampires. They've been gutshot in Rotterdam, defenestrated in Seattle, burned to ash in Nairobi and drained unto death in Jerusalem, London, Oran, and Singapore. It doesn't slow them down much. Or

perhaps it does not slow *them* down. Because they're spotted in multiple places at the same time, sometimes in the same city, sometimes half a globe away. When you behead them, like someone did in Brussels, or riddle them with bullets like in Shanghai, you may still see them the next night, riding the subway, minding their own business.

Members of Clan Tremere see the Doppelgänger more frequently than anyone else, but alchemy cooks start to hear the rumors too. The stranger shows up where activity around blood craft is frequent, powerful or innovative. Even when they don't observe actively, they seem to be *around*. Coincidentally renting an apartment across the alley from the cook shop. Working behind the counter at the bodega where the Circulatory System (pp. 22–24 and **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 386) arranges dead drops. Sweeping up at the hospital where a Carna-adoring ancilla has a secret lab.

The Doppelgänger is just around, watching and listening, sometimes dying and, circumstances permitting, showing up a week or so later.

In Chronicles

The Doppelgänger could be a creation of any of the factions in the *making weird entities* business, deployed globally to monitor rivals and steal their ideas. Their creator is the faction most likely to be the major antagonist in your chronicle. You can't interrogate an unspeaking figure, but skilled detective work could lead back to the maker and, presumably, all the intel they've gathered.

Alternately, what if it's all a hoax? Vampires are suspicious, but Dominate and Presence can turn anyone gullible. Who benefits from spreading the rumor that an immortal entity is spying on the Tremere and can replicate even when drunk to the death? A Tremere coterie could be tasked with finding out.

FIND AND DESTROY

The coterie's asked to get rid of a mysterious figure who seems to be circling a favored group of redworkers—trying to steal their secrets, or spy on



them for a rival clan? It's a shock, then, when the stranger reappears the next week alive and well—and not Kindred. How can the coterie scare them off? What exactly are they after? And how pissed off are people when the figure's still around two weeks later?

THE WUNDERKINDS

Word gets around the in-the-know corners of the redworking world: the Doppelgänger's in town. That means someone might be doing something new and exciting, or at least something powerful enough to take notice—so the coterie's sent to find out who, and what. Get information, get close if they're friendly. Be careful if they're not. And make sure to get there before the others who inevitably follow.

SILENT PARTNER

A strange, silent figure appears in the coterie's neighborhood, watching them from a table in their bar, mopping the floor of the university building they work in. When they finally confront the watcher, they receive a wrapped package as the stranger walks out the door. The package holds an old, old mirror with symbols inscribed on the back, and a short list of addresses within the city. When they visit the addresses, they find haunts of other redworkers with extremely similar interests. And a very similar stranger seems to be drifting about nearby...

The Blood Rider

Most vampires who survive multiple centuries carry some disease or another at some point. Tragic for their communities, inconvenient for them, but ultimately no big deal.

The blood rider *is* a big deal. It also appears to be a singular thing. A parasite of deathless things who are already parasites.

You might get it from one of your fellow Kindred. Maybe they're forcing a Blood Bond on you, or you're accepting it, or the two of you just swing like that, no judgment. If that happens, the good news is, your Blood Bond doesn't progress. Bad news: you got something else instead.

Or maybe you get it from a mortal—one who

seems unusually delicious and vulnerable. Add one to Hunger the moment you see them, but add one die to all dice pools to track and attack this attractive limping bird. When you finally sink in your fangs, they reduce your Hunger by the normal amount, but also, that additional point you got from seeing them disappears.

Then you have the blood rider in you.

While carrying it, you get a re-roll to your Rouse Check for Alchemy or Blood Sorcery and that is the last of the good news.

You get songs you never heard stuck in your head. That's the first sign, that little distraction. After a few nights of this, you rouse at sundown in a different position, as if you'd been moving in your sleep. Couple nights more and you're in a different *location*. Definitely, something is piloting your body during the day and doing things with it while you're sun-stuck. It definitely seems to avoid the sun, but shit happens, so you may wake up partially burned.

Oh, and apparently it makes Rouse Checks during the day, because you may wake up hungrier than feels fair.

After around a week of this, it moves on—presumably, by finding a new host during the day. When it leaves, it leaves you *ravenous*. You are at Hunger 5 if you let things get that far.

Of course, you can get rid of it before that by Blood Bonding, making a ghoul of, or Embracing somebody. Any one of those passes the rider on automatically. Burning it out by using all your Blood and reaching Hunger 5 *might* work, but are you willing to risk it?

This critter/phenomenon/self-perpetuating hassle flits around Goratrachine domains for the most part, and since they've never seen it before, the Tremere who've heard about it assume it's just more neonate urban myth.

In Chronicles

Most obviously, someone gets this and has to figure out what to do to get rid of it. Characters may get tasked with tracking someone who has the blood rider, which is an interesting challenge when it starts

moving about by day. If someone finds out its true nature, it might be open to alliance. Just carry it a couple days when you really need Blood Sorcery or Alchemy to be reliable and trust it to treat your body right by day.

FISH AND VISITORS

The coterie went out as usual, and came back each sated to their own satisfaction. And then the strange things started happening—things moving around, the cabinet doors being open. The blood rider stuff. The problem is, none of the coterie has found themselves out of place in the evening, so who exactly has it? When things start to get dangerous, when the window shades are pulled up or the doors are left unlocked or redworking equipment is used, figuring out who's carrying the rider becomes ever-more critical.

PARASITE REX

The out-of-it dancer at the club was too good to be true. Quite literally—one of the coterie noticed in time and pulled their friends away from the swaying mortal. A few other Kindred didn't figure it out and dined on carrier. But the blood rider noticed the coterie noticing it, and it didn't like them one bit. Kindred keep showing up around the coterie in a weird, off state and someone seems to be tampering with their stuff when they're not around. A parasite can't risk its prey evolving against it, and the coterie seems to be Patient Zero in its eyes.

MOST DANGEROUS GAME

A Kindred puts out a reward for whoever can bring them the blood rider: it's old, it's powerful, and it preys on Kindred, so of course someone wants to study, imprison, or use it. The only problem is, how does one find something without a body or a home? And what's the plan when the coterie finds it, or it find them?

Legacy Media Гримуар

Back in the 80s and 90s, computers were mostly dull, gray metal boxes, often with a little nonslip texture on the surface, a power switch, and a

bunch of holes and pin connections in the back. This thing looks like that, except there's no ON/OFF button, it has the word *ОГРАНИЧЕННЫЙ* ('restricted' in Russian) stenciled on the side in faded orange, and the single pin connector port on the back doesn't show up in any technical manual you can find. It's a complicated port too: 17 different openings in a pattern that isn't *quite* a Kabbalah Tree of Life or a veve from Vodou, but the shapes and arrangement somewhat suggest that direction.

Oh, also, this computer-thing never moves when anyone's looking, but it often shifts a couple inches this way or that when not monitored. It bleeds once a month—red, warm, apparently-human blood dripping out the seam where the case meets the back and front plates. If Kindred taste the blood, it's vitae, and they start dreaming of a half-bat woman sleeping in a crystal coffin. She's really emaciated and gray except for Her huge, rosy, swollen torso. Anyone who tries the *Гримуар* (Russian for, and pronounced, 'grimoire') blood finds Her really cool and interesting. It feels exactly like the first step of a Blood Bond, unless they've had more drinks, in which case it feels like the later stages.

The history of this goes back to the peak of the Brujah influence over the USSR, and though no one knows who's in that peekaboo dream-sarcophagus, anyone who studies it finds multiple sources agreeing that She was a powerful Kindred enchantress and possibly curse-hybridized with something else altogether. She was also a brilliant scientist in the early days of Russian computer technology and this gadget was Her grimoire. All Her notes, knowledge and genius are—maybe, probably—stored digitally on something that, even back then, could hold a lot of text.

The problem is, nobody knows what kind of specialized cable you poke into that freaky socket in back. People try to reverse-engineer something, but so far, if anyone's succeeded, they've kept their mouths shut and didn't share the cord when the Гримуар slipped from their grasp.



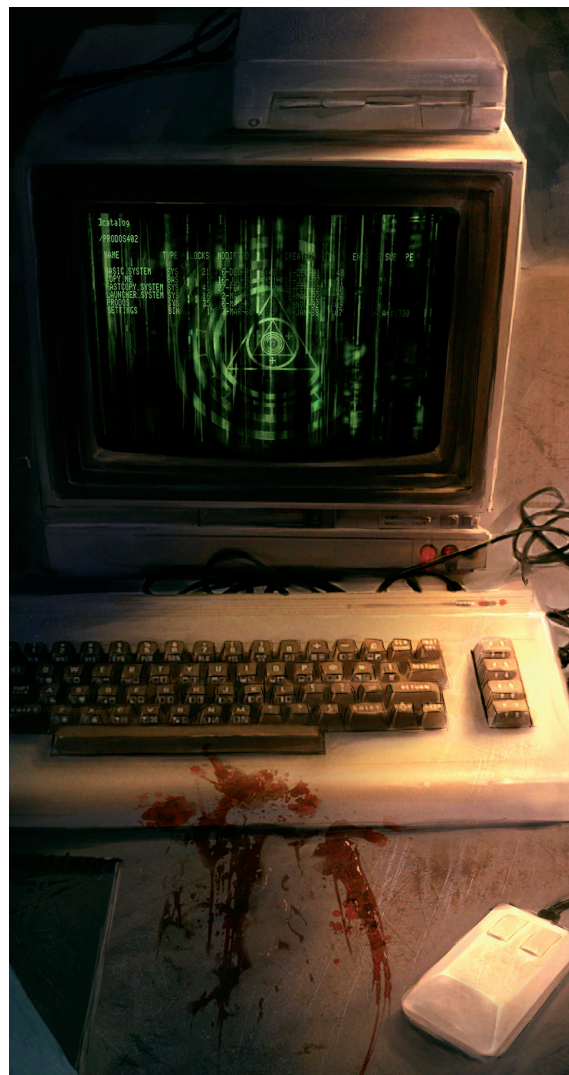
Opening it is a task requiring both technical and mystical education, and reveals arrays of circuit boards printed on what appear to be sections of human bones—scapulas, most likely. Pumping blood throughout and around the boards through yellowing plastic pipes is a small, feverishly thumping animal heart, likely that of a rabbit or a vole. It can be stopped with a miniature wooden stake or with daylight, but that likely crashes this system and loses its assumed bonanza of occult lore.

In Chronicles

Maybe the coterie wants to wake up the half-bat because they believe she can usher in some kind of Brujah worker's paradise. Acquiring the box seems like a good first step to finding her. Or maybe they get specialized information that indicates she *really* needs to die. Now tracking her back through the box becomes a different task altogether. In addition to occupying a MacGuffin position, what if someone just wants to use this as a convenient way to feed? They get fully Blood Bound, but... so what? They adore a sleeper they can't find. This could be someone's fascinating way of cheating undeath, until it gets stolen. Or until She shows up awake and expectant.

SLEEPS WITH ITS WICKED CLAWS

A Kindred procures the machine for their coterie at great expense, and perhaps a few high-stakes favors. They drink the blood seeping from its cracks, dream of the crystal coffin and the woman inside—and see her mouth an inaudible word. The next night it's clearer, her mouth less dried-out, somehow, and they just catch the word: the name of an older Russian Brujah who's lived remarkably quietly for 50 years. Who, when they try to contact, disappears into the wind. He leaves behind stacks of notebooks in his basement recording experiments in the USSR and countless drawings of the corpse in the casket, and a tantalizing box with foam clearly cut to hold the shape of a thick cord. What can the coterie do but seek him out, using their new mechanical guide? Besides, that blood was so warm and delicious...



SYSTEM COMPATIBLE

It's a dream team of the city's best redworkers, computer experts, and scholars, brought together to attempt a duplicate of the Legacy Media machine and build a working cord. *Without* breaking the original—that's made very clear. But strange things are happening, because the blueprint keeps changing in tiny, subtle ways and things break or malfunction. If someone on the team is sabotaging the project, it'll take a careful touch to figure out who and why. Or *what* and why. ■



MOON AND WORLD: CHRONICLES

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THE FIRST WAY IS SHORT BUT DANGEROUS,—AND ONE WHICH WILL LEAD YOU INTO ROCKY PLACES,—THROUGH WHICH IT WILL SCARCELY BE POSSIBLE TO PASS. THE SECOND IS LONGER, AND TAKES YOU CIRCUITOUSLY; IT IS PLAIN AND EASY, IF BY THE HELP OF THE MAGNET YOU TURN NEITHER TO LEFT NOR RIGHT. THE THIRD IS THAT TRULY ROYAL WAY WHICH THROUGH VARIOUS PLEASURES AND PAGEANTS OF OUR KING, AFFORDS YOU A JOYFUL JOURNEY; BUT THIS SO FAR HAS SCARCELY BEEN ALLOTTED TO ONE IN A THOUSAND. BY THE FOURTH NO MAN SHALL REACH THE PLACE, BECAUSE IT IS A CONSUMING WAY, PRACTICABLE ONLY FOR IMMORTAL BODIES.

— JOHANN VALENTIN ANDREAE,
THE CHYMICAL WEDDING OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ (1616)



Blood craft appears in all kinds of chronicles. In some, it's just another source of horror and wonder, part of the street-Gothic flavor alongside bats and riot cops. In others, it provides subplots or one character's obsession, while the main coterie pursues its politics or scrabbles for its survival. It can, of course, be the entire focus of a chronicle, especially if the coterie comprises a Tremere chantry, Banu Haqim divan, or alchemical thin-blood flock. Flavor, feature, or focus: blood craft can flow wherever you let it.

Building a Chronicle

The blood craft scene's greatest strength is that it introduces arcane angles to Kindred unlife without sacrificing the political and personal horror at the game's unbeating heart. You can use it to spice up your current chronicle, or you can dive right in and build a chronicle about a coterie fully tangled in their local scene. Here are a few ways to customize your game to introduce blood craft or bring it into full focus.

Magical Tenets

Blood Sorcery and Thin-Blood Alchemy are broad, powerful Disciplines. Even with their design philosophies in mind (pp. 82, 84–85), anything and everything seems possible. So, where's the line? What stops these magical fiends from tearing the world apart with bloody rituals and finely crafted formulae?

Aside from the Masquerade, this is where Humanity comes into play. Every Discipline is a little inhuman, but sorcery and alchemy are clear dividing lines between the Kindred and the rest. It's tough to integrate yourself into the kine when you can birth hemonculi or spit out fumes of choking gas. There's a need for an ethical floor sorcerous Kindred struggle with. Chronicle Tenets based around blood craft set that floor.

As a reminder, chronicle Tenets aren't hard lines. They're the moral equivalent of a barbed wire fence for characters to run into. When the troupe creates a chronicle Tenet, it's something they'd like to see their characters struggle with.

These sets of blood craft chronicle Tenets are ready for use in your chronicle, or as inspiration for your own. They refer to sorcery, but you can remix them for alchemy fairly easily. Or mix them into a regular set of Tenets, if magic isn't your moral focus.

Forbidden Sorcery Tenets

- Do not summon what you cannot banish.
- Do not heed the siren call of the forbidden.
- Dark mystical secrets must be destroyed.

High Society Sorcery Tenets

- Never humiliate a sorcerous fellow.
- Sorcery must never be in the hands of commoners.
- Only the sorcerous can punish their own kind.

Hubristic Sorcery Tenets

- Understand your limits, never exceed them.
- Seek power only when it's offered.
- Fools who exceed their grasp must be stopped.

Humanist Sorcery Tenets

- When drawing blood for a Ritual, cause no suffering.
- Never involve the innocent in your sorcery, no matter how potent their blood.
- Respect humanity's moral laws, even when you know you rise above them.

Rebellious Sorcery Tenets

- Never back down from a sorcerous challenge.
- Blood Sorcery must uplift the downtrodden.
- Do not shackle yourself to the Old Ways.

No Magic Please, We're Ventrue

Characters don't need a Blood Sorcery dot to get in on the fun. A scene involves more than just its direct participants. Every scene draws in folks from other walks of unlife, with tangible and intangible support. This is the role non-sorcerous Kindred can play.

Think about a music scene. The musicians are at the center of the scene, of course, but take a wider look. There's recording studios, live venues, and music stores. There are the people who run those, and then there's the people who own them. Getting even wider, a music scene is also its journalists and its fans, and the folks who sell merch and weed at shows.

This wider view also works for the blood craft scene. If you're the Ventrue in a party full of Tremere or Banu Haqim, there's a few roles you can play in an all-magical coterie.

Ambassador

You hear whispers as you approach the Prince. They call what your coterie did a Masquerade breach, that it'll bring about a Blood Hunt. You smirk. When you tell the court your side of the story, when you put on the charm, they'll beg the coterie to do it again.

Ambassadors speak for the coterie when no one else can. They lend their grace and their stature to what's otherwise a messy business. They're not afraid to negotiate and they're damn good at it. When the coterie's in a jam, they call the Ambassador first.

Ideal Clans: Ministry, Toreador, Ventrue

Bodyguard

No one gets past you. That's what you told your coterie, and you've proved it time and time again. Intruders? Assassins? Thieves? You've turned them all into bloody smears on the wall. If these goons think they can bag your clients and ship them to who knows where, you'll prove them dead wrong.

Bodyguards protect the coterie. Blood sorcerers aren't weak—some of them are famous for their violent prowess—but *someone* needs to be on the roof with the sniper rifle during the ritual, or capable of throwing down with an Inquisition agent while the others escape. When the coterie can't defend themselves, the Bodyguard will.

Ideal Clans: Brujah, Gangrel, Nosferatu



Experiment

You've been on this altar so many times that it might as well be your bed. This must be the—Fiftieth? Yeah, fiftieth—time they've tried this. Something about a Hunter's Moon, grand convergence of blood, blah blah blah. What piqued your interest is that they said if it works, you and your Beast will switch places. You're not sure if that's a good idea, but it'd be cool to see what that'd be like.

Experiments are the coterie's guinea pig. Maybe they think the powers are worth the dangers, maybe the coterie promised them a shortcut to Humanity, or maybe they're so hedonistic they crave experiences they can never forget. They take the brunt of the coterie's failures, but reap its benefits.

Ideal Clans: Caitiff, Malkavian, Tzimisce

Moral Center

You keep your humanity close to your heart. It makes you wonder if you annoy your coterie when you tell them about your concerns with their latest Ritual. But then you see the looks on their faces, the "God Damn It That's Right" look, and you feel relief.

Moral Centers aren't the bastion of moral purity, but have a strong sense of right and wrong. They're not afraid of speaking their minds, even if their peers could literally curse them for it. The only question is: how long until the rest of the coterie drags the Moral Center down to their level?

Ideal Clans: Brujah, Nosferatu, Salubri

Sage

You knew the world was full of mysteries. Now, you and your Blood sorcerer friends are uncovering world-shattering revelations every other weekend. You're never sure what the night will bring, but you take comfort that even after death, the world's as strange as ever.

Sages study the strange and unusual, but they don't use blood craft. What they lack in actual magic power, they make up in knowledge and enthusiasm. They're the ones who push the coterie deeper into

a mystery, translate the hefty grimoire, or put the pieces together.

Ideal Clans: Hecata, Malkavian, Ravnos

Vendor

It's a strictly professional relationship. They come with money and blood, and you give them what they need, like weird gems or incense. That's the only reason you're about to make this landlord's life a living hell. He's evicting them from their haven, and you're about to show him what happens when he screws around with your bread and butter.

Vendors are the coterie's supplier and fence. They don't know much about the scene, but the rest of the coterie are their favorite customers. Their working relationship is so good, they tag along on whatever misadventures they get into. Alternately, they're the scrounger, the fixer, the face of the coterie, tapping sources and veins all over the city to help out.

Ideal Clans: Ministry, Ravnos, Ventruce

Coterie Types

Some coterie types fit a blood craft chronicle better than others. The best types provide the coterie with resources for magic, a firm goal, or reasons for seeking out mysteries. When starting a blood craft chronicle, consider these coterie types.

Blood Cult

A cult's mortal adherents feed the coterie and provide extra pairs of hands. The coterie can tailor the beliefs they feed their followers to prime them for whatever they'd like to accomplish. This type works for troupes who enjoy flaunting the Masquerade.

Cerberus

The world is filled with places of power. Once vampires find some, they're keen on keeping them. Casting over a magical nexus (p. 35) makes rituals easier or more powerful. This type works for troupes who like having a strong base of operations.



Day Watch

Blood magic provides multiple ways for Kindred to function during the daytime. Having the entire 24 hour cycle available also opens new opportunities for hunting, Ritual casting, and Formula brewing. This type is for troupes with all thin-blooded characters, or troupes who like having mixed coteries of thin-blooded and true vampire characters.

Fang Gang

The blood craft scene often runs with the criminal underbelly of a city. Some need a steady supply of drugs for rituals, while others commit art heists as a cover for swiping powerful artifacts. This type is for troupes who like mixing crime drama into their occult horror.



Nomads

Why wait for the lost grimoires and artifacts to come to the coterie? Why settle for hanging around in just *one* blood craft scene? This type is for troupes who like globe trotting and adventure. See Ur and die! Or better, see Ur, and then see Ceoris!

Plumaires

Existing occult organizations are at least 80 percent social club, and the same is true for Kindred. They could be a study group of characters learning Blood Sorcery the hard way, or the representatives of a chantry. This type is for troupes who like social combat as much as the kind with fists.

Questari

Blood magic and alchemy are full of great objectives and enterprises. Most coterie in the scene are Questari or began that way. This type is for troupes who like tight, focused chronicle plots.

Just Add Blood Craft!

Depending on the troupe's play style, there's several ways an ongoing chronicle can introduce a heavier focus on blood craft and its scene. Here are a few examples.

- **Map It Out:** Sandbox or improv-heavy chronicles might want to go straight into setting up a Scene Map (p. 48) and see what hooks emerge from it. From there, the coterie can just wander in.
- **Here Comes the Circus:** Chronicles focused on threats to a coterie's domain can learn about a magical nexus (p. 35) on their hunting grounds. The coterie can either take advantage of it or try to keep would-be exploiters off their turf.
- **Deadly Lessons:** Chronicles with heavy interpersonal drama might have a character or two encounter a seller (pp. 21–32), offering to induct them into the mysteries of blood craft. If they're legit, what's their true motive?
- **Spies in Their Midst:** Politically focused

chronicles could present blood craft scenes as hotbeds of sect infiltration and skullduggery. Perhaps the coterie needs to dive in to gain intel on an enemy, or maybe they need to aid the scene against a sinister Black Hand plot.

Story Element: Veins of the City

Of all the upheavals in this time of Gehenna, the rising of Tiamat (p. 150) may be the one with the most practical impact in your chronicle. Furcae pulse, coils of power shift and pulse beneath the city, and everyone has yet another reason to fight over the decommissioned cathedral. Of course, in your personal chronicle, you can say places of power and furcae have always been a thing, and the Tremere mapped the coils of Tiamat back in the 1630s and just kept it to themselves like the greedy bastards they were. It might even be true.

Either way, the secret is out, and the city's blood is up. Literally.

In your city, the veins of the earth explain the spookier side of the phenomenon known as psychogeography. At its most mundane, psychogeography just overlays people's social reaction to a spot—*Look, it's that haunted house*—with its geographical relation to the rest of the city. The pattern-matching mind of human beings does the rest: you notice a lot of streets named after Freemasons, or wonder why that statue has a sword and the one across the park has a book and there's a big wrought-iron street lamp on the third point of the triangle. Also you're mapping triangles and pentagrams. Now things just got spooky.

Helpful psychogeography tips: Any three points on the map make a triangle. Any five points make a pentagram.

OPEN VEINS, RICH MAGIC

Under the default system in this book, furcae and other places of power provide bonus dice or other effects only with an attunement Ritual such as Tiamat Glistens (p. 64). For a richer magic, more wide-



REFINING YOUR CHARACTER

Whether a player's creating a Blood sorcerer or alchemist from scratch or introducing an established one into the blood craft scene, there's more to it than just putting dots of a Discipline on the sheet. Some Advantages and Flaws to consider taking are:

Advantages

Bond Resistance: Even with the fall of the Pyramid, the offering of Blood (and the implied threat of a Blood Bond) as a price for blood craft knowledge is still common in many scenes. Even a point of Bond Resistance can make the difference between a student and a slave.

Mawla: Blood Sorcery and Thin-Blood Alchemy must be taught. If a character is willing to fulfill some simple favors, having a Mawla makes education easy.

Status: In blood craft scenes, status is everything. A few dots here can open all kinds of doors.

Flaws

Addiction: Some alchemists took to their work because of what they were already addicted to in life. Blood sorcerers who depend on altered states might get a little too attached to what lies in their vessel's blood.

Dark Secret: Every Blood sorcerer or alchemist ends up doing something they regret. Some are worse than others, and it's only a matter of time before word gets out.

Known Blankbody: Blood magic is rarely subtle. Practice it long enough, and some analyst in Virginia's going to catch your face on a security cam. If you're lucky, he *only* discovers that you've been dead for a decade.

open chronicle, casters can gain the bonus without attunement. In that case, Tiamat Glistens provides one automatic success to Ritual rolls on a regular win, and two automatic successes on a critical win.

The personalization effect of attunement stays, however, to encourage the predatory competition for resources at the heart of vampiric existence.

Mapping the Veins

In the *earth mysteries* scene in the real world, various excitable cranks draw ley lines across the map of England, or London, or Boston, and that is indeed great fun. You should absolutely print out, or buy, a large-scale street map of your city and draw important spots in your chronicle on it. This should be a key part of your Scene Map (p. 48) even if you don't show your version to the players. Print out a second copy of the base map and encourage them to draw their own! But rather than draw straight lines connecting your points—although that pentagram does look tempting—you can draw swooping curves: blood dragon lines that fork and branch like a map of veins and arteries, because that's what they are.

More fundamentally, Tiamat's coils allow you to interrelate all the supernatural horror in your city in one framework. Use three methods to map them: deciphering, juxtaposition, and alignment.

Deciphering

Your city is a cipher, encoded by history, architects, and human cussedness—and in your chronicle, probably by vampires. You can explain every reported haunting, mysterious fire, or serial killer hideout as a symptom of Gehenna or of vampiric magic gone wrong—or gone right. Get conspiratorial-minded and study your city for Masonic temples, cemeteries, and those weird storefronts that just can't stay in business but somehow always have a new artisanal falafel or gluten-free yogurt place every six months. Ask yourself, "Did vampires do this?" Once you get into the habit of seeing your city this way, you'll find yourself drowning in meaning.

Let the players know what magical nexi and blood dragon furcae kind of look and feel like, and turn them loose with Google and the city map. They'll soon find even more places dripping with inviting danger.

Juxtaposition

There's no such thing as coincidence. Two murder sites, UFO sightings, or haunted houses on the same street make a furcus. Remember you can put vampire havens and domains anywhere you want, so feel free to load up already-weird spots. Or just look for all the abandoned or repurposed churches in your city and see what else goes wrong or weird nearby. These juxtapositions also let you give your furcae individual flavor: an extra die for fire magic where the old stables burned down in 1890; Malkavians learn rituals much faster in the derelict asylum; lower Difficulty for Oblivion ceremonies on the vein running between the two largest cemeteries in town.

Alignment

Once you're running veins between furcae, you have alignment. Branch your veins at places of power you've already mapped, or underneath bridges, gateways, memorial arches, or other places that exist to funnel traffic. Urban planners felt Tiamat's pulse without knowing it—or their Ventrue supervisors told them where the train station needed to go. Point the big pedunculus veins at your Towers (skyscrapers) and Pyramids. Yes, I said pyramids: some cities helpfully label their pyramids, like San Francisco; others you need to Google to find them hiding in obscurity. Hint: add *pyramidal roof cap* to that skyscraper search.

Now, set upcoming scenes on the lines you just mapped, embedding the veins ever deeper into your chronicle's ongoing stories.

Veins and Stories

The veins of the Earth, and the furcae they energize, establish the prizes in your chronicle city: places of power coveted by old-school Tremere, desperate Banu Haqim, wild Sabbat, and everybody else with a few dots of Blood Sorcery burning a hole in their coterie. The scene can wind up looking even more like the illicit drug market, complete with wars over literal turf. If you don't want a free-for-all chronicle,

map your city's most powerful Kindred onto the blood dragon flow: the Prince keeps the three-die furcus under her personal control, or only shares it with coterie she can trust or destroy. The Baron or Chairman of the Anarch local controls one or two two-die furcae, and now you have a stable conflict while the player coterie tries to keep its little one-die furcus away from the local Sunburner missionaries.

Work the veins and their branches into your chronicle in any number of ways.

- **Battlegrounds:** Inherent to the concept of a resource coveted by powerful monsters, and the easiest kind of conflict to work into a chronicle.
- **Hooks:** "Hey, the map shows a furcus right under the Third Street bridge! What do you suppose is down there?" And now you have a reason for the coterie to run into the Nosferatu who hoards magical coins from the Hapsburg Empire, and her army of feral cats.
- **Project:** Not unlike hooks, except the coterie decides to map the city's blood dragon lines as an ongoing project. This works best in a chronicle where the city's Kindred elites learned about Tiamat at the same time as everyone else, and it becomes a bit of a gold rush to the source of the Blood.
- **Rewards:** A senior Kindred sorcerer loans them access to a furcus for a ritual, with the instruction not to break anything.
- **Targets:** Just knowing there's a three-die furcus out there drives some coterie—or rather, some troupes—into frenzies of planning and politicking that will generate your whole chronicle, if you let it.

Story Element: Pursuits

The persistent theme in a blood craft chronicle is the pursuit of knowledge and power, often in some tangible form that the coterie can get (or lose) and some pack of evil shits can lose (or get). You've seen this movie—the *Lord of the Rings* films, *Raiders of*



the Lost Ark, Repo Man... Why does this keep happening? Because it works, sometimes well, sometimes with awkward weight.

You may want to run this as a chase plot. It's a particularly good fit for characters who are into all this sanguinary magic business because magic, in stories, often stands in for the naked pursuit of *power*. Fledgling vampires are good for the survival story, as they try to get by night to night, risking starvation, discovery, and punishment. Any vampire classification can be good for internal stories about emotion, degradation and morality, too. When you need to inflict harm tonight to wake up tomorrow, it can get tragic and complicated. As for political plots of entangled alliances, *well*, that's something where **Vampire** shines particularly darkly.

But the mysticism leans towards a different plot. It's not internal like the tragic drama, and it's not desperate like the survival chronicle. Where intrigue is all about understanding motivation, the pursuit plot is about comprehending what is *inhuman*. The nature of magic, the source of power, the means by which willpower and Blood can bend the world. That's the pursuit, however the *means* of empowerment changes.

So. You get an idea for a cool device, or spell, or kidnap victim who's not all he seems, and then the coterie chases it until victory or despair. It writes itself, right?

Well, it writes itself if you're willing to go for the laziest and most predictable version, but let's aim higher. If we dissect the pursuit plot, maybe we can run it smoother, change it up while keeping its virtues, and ratchet up its intensity.

The Pieces

Alfred Hitchcock called the object of the quest *the MacGuffin*, and it's the thing everyone chases. It's the money in *Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, the One Ring, the



Death Star plans, Ark of the Covenant, or Infinity Stones. Someone wants it, someone else has it, conflict, conflict, it gets used and there's destruction. Let's break those down.

- **Someone wants it:** Why? Because it's a threat, because it promises power, or a little of both. This is the phase where you establish what the MacGuffin is and does, why it's important, and and to whom.
- **Someone different has it:** Do they know what it is, like the Grail Knights in the third Indiana Jones film, or are they ignorant babysitters like Frodo in *Lord of the Rings*? This part lets you introduce the antagonism. Who are the bad guys and what's so bad about them? If the bad guys are pursuing and the protagonist coterie are the possessors, that's the most immediate way to motivate the players. Folks usually meet, "Someone's tryin' a steal your shit" with hostility and resistance. If the bad guys have the thing, it may be more difficult to motivate the coterie. "Getting the thing is the game I prepared for tonight," can work if you're an honest group, but ideally we want the coterie to be emotionally inspired to get this thing. Greed and fear are emotions. So is hope.
- **Conflict, conflict:** A component where tabletop RPGs often excel. This is where you get your fight scenes, schemes and heists, emotional betrayals, or just some funky plot twist.
- **It gets used, and there's destruction:** At some point, you need to see that firecracker go off. Anticipation is great, but you don't want A+ anticipation for a C- reveal. Make the players work to get to use the gadget, or make them terrified of the antagonists doing so, and when one or the other does, *surpass their expectations*. Edgar Allan Poe said that, as he was writing *The Raven*, he aimed to have the last stanza be the most powerful, and that if he had written a better stanza in the middle, he'd have *thrown it away*. That's discipline!
"I know this is awesome, but I'm neutering it because it's awesome in the *wrong place*," says the

Bard of Baltimore. Aim for that same discipline. No one who loves a barbecue restaurant cares if the salad is mediocre, as long as the ribs are rich and juicy.

Anatomy of a MacGuffin

The plot device around which everything orbits must be fascinating, frightening, and complicated for reasons beyond its power. The Ark of the Covenant is not just God's uranium, Nazis are chasing it and it's lost to time. Start with either the legends of what it can give the coterie *or* the rumors of how dangerous it is, and reveal the other side of the coin as they chase after it.

Change up expectations! What if it's powerful because it makes *mortals* stronger? What if it's something hypermodern instead of ancient? What if the danger it poses is entirely mundane, while its promise is mystical? A font of insight and influence that inevitably poisons the groundwater because it's radioactive is tricky, but it's definitely not cliché.

Make it personal, too. Look for themes among character backgrounds. They're all rich and privileged? Threaten the stock market! They're fighting the power? It's an heirloom to historical oppressors! Make it something they want to have *and* something they're terrified to see anyone else use.

Step One: Construct a MacGuffin that is uniquely poised to destroy something the coterie treasures or loathes. Its powers and effects should be specific to what your characters want or value.

10 Quick MacGuffin Looks

1. Huge, baroque, blasphemous altarpiece
2. Oracular brazen head (p. 131)
3. Severed hand that moves when given vitae
4. A semi-trailer that, when opened, inexplicably contains a 1970s era blood bank
5. Weird Victorian-era mechanism
6. Intangible concept that only one person can know at a time. As soon as it's written, it's forgotten by the writer and lies dormant until read. When spoken, the speaker forgets as soon



- as the listener grasps the awful truth.
7. Cuneiform tablet depicting the defenses of an Antediluvian's tomb
 8. Mask that reveals different things when different wearers look through its eye holes
 9. A ladle from an alchemical experiment that went critical
 10. Fossilized "dragon" skull

The Gang's All Here

Dealing with some confusing and hazardous occult device with no operating instructions seems complicated enough, but *that's not complicated enough*. Fold in an antagonist group that either has the thing and is *just* about to use it, or desperate to take the thing before the coterie can figure out its secrets.

It is almost always smart to have the opposition know more about the gadget, or have access to information the coterie wants, even if the bad guys cannot, themselves, decipher it. This motivates the coterie towards interaction, even if they already have the thing. If they don't have it and are seeking to take it, the knowledge differential escalates the urgency and also motivates interaction. Sure, they could bash their way to the thing and run out with it, but they could also engage in a game of intellectual cat-and-mouse trying to get their opposite number to let something slip.

While deplorable enemies can be straightforward, also consider giving them a good point. If they're well-intentioned but don't fully understand what they've got, it opens up the possibility of the coterie talking them around – or tricking them. Many players, especially **Vampire** players, prefer the smart win to the bloody one.

Step Two: Ensure the competition for the MacGuffin raises the risks—either if the opposition uses it or if the coterie does.

10 Quick Antagonist Cliques

1. Posse of obnoxious thin-bloods

11. Cauldron Setities (p. 110)
12. The Order of St. Leopold
13. Mrs. Chopra's elite wafadar (p. 122)
14. Goratricines (p. 101)
15. Plague Oracles (p. 114)
16. Some ignorant Toreador who collects this sort of thing
17. Oh shit, Lupines
18. "Is it 'Magi' or 'Mages'?"
19. Cult worshipping a powerful spectre

Gimme That Falcon!

Someone has the object of desire, others desire it, sharing is out of the question (...right?), and so conflict impends.

Physical conflict is a good way to start, either with the coterie trying a heist (like Indiana Jones taking the Ark off the trucks) or defending against a paranormal home invasion (like the Fellowship of the Ring getting the hell out of the Prancing Pony). It sets stakes right away.

People feel a unique resentment towards someone who has violated their personal residence and taken their stuff, so play to that if the coterie starts out having captured the metaphorical flag. Suggest the arrogance and contempt with which the invaders treated their haven, even as you leave clues leading back to them.

On the other hand, if the coterie is doing the B&E, either (1) have the opposition unexpectedly be present to defend or (2) have clues in the site to suggest that these people are disgusting and deserving of any bad thing that befalls.

After a physical clash, it's a good idea to move the rivalry to another venue, especially if the coterie got beat up and need a little time to recover and replenish themselves. Maybe the opposition makes an appealing but bad faith offer, or they start making threats, or they get their political contacts to try and talk the coterie around. But throughout, keep the pressure on.



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Step Three: Escalate, escalate, take a breath, escalate.

10 Quick Ideas For How to Defend the Precious

1. It's in a shipping container, constantly in motion, hard to track, hard to access.
2. Blood siphoning chamber that withdraws your vitae and sends it to the antagonists, who immediately know from the influx that someone's near the device.
3. It's encased in concrete and sitting at the bottom of a frozen lake.
4. It's hidden inside a statue in a very public place.
5. A tree has been cultivated around it, so some careful, albeit loud, chainsaw work is required to liberate it.
6. It's inside a laser grid, but these lasers somehow burn like sunlight.
7. It's inside a haunted mirror, and the specter guardian has to be tricked or persuaded to bring it forth.
8. It's atop an inaccessible mountain, usually fetched by a high-end drone with very specific coordinates.
9. A cult pledged to defend it with their lives keeps it constantly on the road. Their cover is a carnival full of fire-breathers, knife throwers and animal trainers.
10. Hidden in a cave, reached via advanced Protean powers.

A Convulsion of Power

The Nazis get the Ark of the Covenant, only to open it up and melt their own faces. Frodo gets the ring to Mount Doom, only to crack at the end. The Maltese Falcon turns out to be a fake, and the money from under the big W winds up scattered to a crowd of strangers. MacGuffins almost always detonate in a way that makes *nobody* happy, leaving survivors sadder but wiser. Or just sadder.

The good news is, it lets you play honestly. If the coterie is smarter, harder, and makes the sacrifices, they can get the item. If they choose to spare people and preserve their essential humanity, the antagonists can triumph. Either way, someone uses it in the end, *to tragic effect*.

If the antagonists got it, they do something awful with it before it leaves them damaged as well. If the coterie gets the thing, either they use it and it has disastrous, unintended consequences, or they just try to safekeep it and set up round two with the antagonists (or a fresh batch of *different* greedy pricks).

Don't leave this unleavened, of course. Give a reward with cost, to honor their choices. If they went down a dark path and used it for power, give them the power—with blowback and tragedy to make sure they realize the consequence. If they forebore, the reward is that they've retained their virtue. But be sure that's costly too.

If they get the thing and use it without consequence, it's a cheap victory. The more expensive the victory—of whatever type—the more memorable it is. Power with no downside, or virtue with no price, is a bedtime story. They've got their place, of course. But is that place your **Vampire** chronicle?

Step Four: It's a horror game, take your happy ending and shove it.

10 Possible Plot Twists

1. There was a traitor inside one group or the other all along.
2. Above and beyond its other properties, the item is haunted by a mind-influencing spirit.
3. Some apparently uninterested character from a different plotline was scheming after the MacGuffin all along.
4. Using the device has awakened an unsuspected Elder.
5. The proper heir to it, necessary for its full power, is a mortal with True Faith.
6. Mid-conflict, a third side shows up trying to steal it.
7. Mid-conflict, the antagonists schism and become even more extremist.
8. Someone offers a very personal and selfishly individual reward to a character who betrays the coterie.
9. An unconnected problem can be managed, if someone in the coterie just spills the beans to the Prince's Seneschal.
10. The device somehow creates mutual Blood Bonds when handled.

Sample Chronicle: Through the Twelve Gates

Around 1470, the English philosopher George Ripley wrote *The Compound of Alchemy*, laying out twelve alchemical *gates* to make the *magnum opus*, or great work: that little old thing called the philosopher's stone. This chronicle uses the Twelve Gates to follow the characters as they traverse the alchemy scene of their city, pursuing their own great work of becoming masters at the craft. The coterie hones their skill and chases fame, fortune, and plain old safety; their group becoming the athanor their Thin-Blood Alchemy skill simmers inside. And what's alchemy without violent chemical reactions?

Think of this chronicle like a spy thriller film: slow, gradual builds, and then a sudden spike of action moving the characters to the next level of danger. The first two Gates of the chronicle are the gradual build, not the fast burn. The Storyteller should focus on raising the tension, adding ingredients slowly to the mix. As the characters begin to realize the treasure they have in their hands, they also realize what a dangerous situation they've unwittingly stumbled into. When the Third Gate strikes hard, the characters suddenly have to adapt to their quickly transmuting situation.

As you run the coterie through the Twelve Gates, you will find more and more of your chronicle comes from previous player actions and reactions: that's just how it ought to work! Thus, the opening Gates have more detail, with the later Gates depending on broad structural guidelines rather than specific setups.

SHE'S SUCH A VIRGO

Ripley associated each of the Twelve Gates with one of the twelve Zodiac signs. The signs (and their associations) serve as built-in detail generators for

Storytellers for when the players' coterie encounters new people or groups in each of the Gates. Need a surname for someone the players encounter in the Second Gate? Try Bull, Del Toro, or Ushijima. Need some personality traits to pull out quickly for a shady bookseller or an embarrassed buyer? Pull up the "astrological personality traits" for whichever Gate they're introduced in and riff on that. Want a memorable name for an important place in the Ninth Gate? Call it *The Arrow* or *Bowman's Corner*. Storytellers don't need to use Zodiac symbology for the entire chronicle, but it's a useful way to quickly fill the story with entertaining and memorable nuggets—and a handy way to keep track of when people or places were introduced.

Salt, Sulfur, Mercury



The factions in this chronicle form the points of the alchemical triangle of Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury. The characters are Mercury, able to be flexible or structured at will, travelers between worlds. They're opposed and built up by Salt and Sulfur in their clashes with each other. So who are Salt and Sulfur?

Salt organizes, fights to stay stable and focused: they've got steady lines of supply, communication, and funding. Salt focuses on building a strong base and sending out well-equipped teams after careful prep. Salt isn't good at adapting in the field—sudden changes or obstacles confuse their tactics. Examples of Salt factions might be the local Tremere chantry, CRONUS (p. 113) or the forces of Mrs. Chopra (p. 105).

Sulfur fights hard and wild: they rely on speed and chaos as their strength, using confusion to shield their movements. Sulfur's lack of structure weakens them. A well-bastioned defense can bounce them back like a rubber ball off cement. Examples of Sulfur factions might be the Sunburners (p. 116), a Lupine pack, or a local Anarch coterie.



WHAT'S IN THE BOOK?

The mysterious package contains a rare and wonderful text—perhaps one of the alchemy books detailed on pp. 142–148. The promise of fully understanding it should be something too good to give up, something that plays into the coterie's personal objectives. A coterie of frightened, guilty thin-bloods could be tempted by a formula allowing them to completely embrace their human side and cast out the Beast once and for all. A coterie of power-hungry, political vampires won't want anyone else to get their hands on a formula to increase Blood potency by three, or give them Skill enough to take on a city's rulers.

The contents aren't necessarily completely opaque; the notes reveal some of the creator's history and (inevitable) tragic end. Perhaps it includes a few formulae besides the great work it's focused on for the coterie to learn as they improve their craft.

The First Gate: Calcination (Aries)



The alchemist begins the elixir, heating salts to destroy their outward form and reveal their inner structures. The First Gate is fire or potential fire, ruled by the heavenly Ram.

Just as the sun dips below the horizon, a fist bangs on the coterie's door. It's an old friend of theirs: a newbie alchemist (p. 14), street sorcerer (p. 16), or maybe a bit of a wannabe (p. 20). He's got a package—some weird alchemy book, that's all—it needs to stay hidden with the coterie for the night, just until he can get some people off his tail, that's it, promise. He unceremoniously shoves the package under the nearest large object and heads out into the night, promising he'll be back by morning.

Come morning, the coterie gets a phone call from the gossip grapevine: some unlucky schmuck found their friend floating facedown in the nearest canal around 5 a.m.

As the next evening dusks, the coterie discovers

people looking for the mysterious package—very, very dangerous people. Everyone's heard of the Salt Faction, and now everyone knows they're willing to kill for their prize.

What's the prize, exactly? Why, a book of alchemy formulae, of course. When the coterie studies the Book or tries mixing one of the recipes inside, they quickly discover it's not as simple as it looks. The Book's encoded; the cypher carefully encrypted into alchemical formulae so only a master alchemist (Level 5) can decode it. But the notes they *can* read promise an alchemical treasure beyond their wildest dreams. They just have to get better at alchemy to understand it. Some of the ingredients are written plainly, while others are encoded; they can begin to gather the ingredients even as they study.

SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM

What happens if the coterie decides they're better off handing the Book off to someone else to get the Salt and Sulfur factions off their back? If they decide that the formula within the Book, no matter how impossibly precious, isn't worth the danger?

Playing hot potato with the Book isn't the safe choice. Whoever got the Book takes on the coterie's Mercury role in the Twelve Gates, rapidly gaining power and gathering allies in the alchemy scene. And they'll be after the coterie to make *absolutely* certain they don't leak what's inside to anyone else. The Book's secrets were worth killing for at least once before, why not a second time? Now the coterie has to make sure they're not next on the list and get the Book back before their new enemy finishes the formula. They must choose their strategy: reclaim the Book by wreaking havoc on the newly-minted Mercury with Sulfur's chaotic bursts; or the slow, ordered planning of Salt, charting Mercury's next move.

The Second Gate: Solution (Taurus)



The alchemist dissolves their material in cooling liquid until the elixir becomes homogeneous. The Second Gate is ruled by the pulverizing Bull.

How do you get better at alchemy? Practice, practice, practice doesn't cut it—you have to get new recipes, find better ingredients, buy more equipment. In other words, you can't avoid venturing out into the city and getting your hands dirty.

The alchemy scene buzzes with gossip, even more than usual. Fellow newbie alchemists, buyers (p. 14) and sellers (p. 21) discuss the recent murder and rumors of a powerful alchemical *something* beyond anyone's pay grade. Come to think of it, how did the murdered alchemist get his hands on such a treasure, anyway? As the coterie ventures out, they can't help overhearing whispers about their friend getting in way too deep in someone else's pool. One buyer casually tosses out that their friend stole his package from the Sulfur Faction. Now Sulfur's racing against Salt to retrieve their lost treasure. They've got people out looking for hints to where the package disappeared.

So it's no surprise the coterie's meet-and-greet with other alchemists comes to a grinding halt when the Sulfur Faction makes their all-too-grand appearance, opening the next Gate.

The Third Gate: Separation (Gemini)



The alchemist eliminates contaminants from the elixir through evaporation and distillation, until the material is separated from everything but its true nature. The Third Gate is ruled by the Twins of the air, who unite their different forms in death.

Sulfur hears the coterie's name a little too loudly. They erupt on to them, attacking the coterie in their haven and searching desperately

for the Book. The coterie must spread out across the city to escape and find a new safe place to lie low and study—without losing the Book along the way! They're definitely on the alchemy scene's radar now. Do they rely on one of their new friends from the Second Gate to shelter them? New friends aren't always reliable, and if they get wind of what's in the Book there might be trouble. Do they buy the location of a safe spot off one of their new suppliers? Perhaps if they deliver well enough for a client, they can ask for a nice cozy hideout as payment.

The Fourth Gate: Conjunction (Cancer)



The alchemist combines the elixir's disparate parts into one through different reactions. The Fourth Gate is ruled by the watery Crab that drags the Sun and Moon into eclipse.

Still trying to lay low, the coterie puts a toe back out into the city, only to be immediately dragged into a kettle battle (p. 46) by the down-and-dirty half of the alchemical crowd. The crowd roils with competitive rivals (p. 125)—unpleasant backstabbers, and some true devotees of the craft—and desperate orphans (p. 25). The troupe throws their talents together in their brew, strengthening their coterie. Do they manage to score specialty ingredients for their kettle battle, possibly even an ingredient for the Book's core formula? Or are they forced to scabble for a good recipe with a box of scraps and expired ingredients?

The Fifth Gate: Putrefaction (Leo)



The alchemist allows the elixir to sit undisturbed while living material within it putrefies and decays, and is discarded. The Fifth Gate is ruled by the sun-maned Lion.

The hidden coterie receives a message from



both the Salt and Sulfur Factions, each offering a reward for the Book and promising destruction if it falls into its rival's hands. The factions declare a brief truce. The coterie has a period of peace and introspection as the deadline for their response approaches. They can follow leads on two more ingredients for the Book's formula.

Salt and Sulfur put out their call far and wide, unbeknownst to the coterie. The price proves just too good for an unscrupulous rival, a fellow alchemist, or even a supposedly friendly seller—they sell out the coterie without blinking an eye. Unfortunately, the coterie gets the word to run just as Salt descends.

The Sixth Gate: Congelation (Virgo)



The alchemist removes moisture from the elixir through repeated freezing. The materials align, balanced through crystallization. The Sixth Gate is ruled by the Maiden, who pulls the seasons into alignment.

Salt hunts, and the coterie is hunted. The chase ebbs and flows, but again and again, the coterie jumps around the city only to be intercepted by Salt. If they decide to go back to their new haven, there's a chance Salt finds it. It's not just their imagination that Salt seems to find them wherever they go: every time a member of the coterie kills someone or fails an initial Social test with a seller or breaker, Salt finds where they are. Once the coterie's encountered Salt once or twice, they start to recognize Salt's clothing and particular tells.

Either carefully planted information or bad luck for Salt sees Sulfur come roaring down like a hurricane, running full-force into their rival in their eagerness to get to the coterie. The coterie can escape in the confusion and either finally return to their haven or call on their connections to find refuge for a time.

The Seventh Gate: Cibation (Libra)



The alchemist feeds the elixir within its vessel, fortifying it with a reagent. The Seventh Gate is ruled by the great Scales.

Salt and Sulfur have retreated for the moment to lick their wounds and regroup after their battle. The coterie—in hiding again—discovers they're getting a reputation in the city as people to watch. They're approached by a high-profile client. To finish the requested formula, they venture into the professional side of alchemy. The high-end alchemy sphere turns on a very different axis than the seedy world of kettle battles and back-alley brews. Professional and specialist alchemists (p. 14) and obsessed collectors (p. 16) fill the roster—and refreshingly care little about the Salt and Sulfur Factions and more about these new upstarts jamming their foot in the clubhouse door. They're possibly interested in the Book, too, albeit more academically.

The coterie has the chance to study and learn up to three new formulae. Do they manage to charm their new acquaintances into giving them recipes or pointing them toward new books? Promise them a look at the Book in exchange for their expertise? Or do they manage to snag some books with the cash from their—hopefully successful—job. There's more at stake than just their education, though: the coterie's reputation in the scene rests on whether they can pull off the impressive brew for their buyer.

Time runs out on their refuge and the coterie must head out into the world once more.

The Eighth Gate: Sublimation (Scorpio)



The alchemist heats their elixir in the athanor to a blazing heat until the matter passes directly from solid to gas, then cools to a solid again. The Eighth Gate is ruled by the Scorpion that defies its arid nature to swim in the sea.

The coterie's new connections warn them of Sulfur's regrouping and give them some possible places Sulfur may be using as a base. The professionals from their successful business in the Seventh Gate want to preserve their talent for future business, or possibly future talent-poaching.

Armed with Sulfur's location, the coterie can go on the offensive against the Sulfur Faction, either negotiating with them or launching an attack. It seems like Sulfur can't read the Book themselves, so why do they want it so much? Can the coterie possibly find something they want more (and the coterie wants less)? Or can they defeat Sulfur in a straightforward fight, building a strong defense to keep the wild faction at bay until they exhaust themselves.

The Sulfur Faction finally burns out in a wild blaze, but a few survivors lurk around the edges.

The Ninth Gate: Fermentation (Sagittarius)



The alchemist mixes yeast into the elixir, infusing it with life-force. The elixir rests and darkens. The Ninth Gate is ruled by the fiery Archer, whose bow bridges the Heavens and Earth.

By now the coterie's seen the seedy and high-end sides of the city's alchemy scene. But they're reminded their world contains more than just Kindred and mortals obsessing over equations when they encounter a powerful monster (pp. 128–136) as they pursue a vital ingredient. They must use their wits and their alchemy to deliver them and the precious ingredient back to their lab, without getting mauled or worse.

The Tenth Gate: Exaltation (Capricorn)

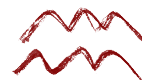


The alchemist purges impurities from the elixir, washing it with pure water, milk, and blood. It

moves from black to white then red. The Tenth Gate is ruled by the Sea Goat that presides over creation and craft.

The coterie gathers the last ingredient for the formula. They're forced to delve into the world of dangerous Blood trafficking, meeting members of the Circulatory System (p. 24), or vitae traffickers (p. 29). Now that the coterie's made a name for themselves, they have to be careful to operate under the radar from older, more powerful vampires looking for Blood trafficking. Politics remains a constant in the city's vampire underworld, but now it rears its ugly head a little more insistently. Are the older vampires of the city interested in the alchemy scene, for better or worse? Is the violent clash between Salt, Sulfur and Mercury getting official attention at this point or has it mostly been contained? What about when a coterie of new alchemists starts poking around in the Circulatory System's business?

The Eleventh Gate: Multiplication (Aquarius)



The alchemist multiplies the power of the elixir, infusing it with the alchemist's own force. The Eleventh Gate is ruled by the Waterbearer, who stands among the clouds.

When the coterie gets back to the lab, they realize they can finally read the Book's core formula. They've gathered the necessary ingredients over the eleven Gates; now they just need time. The formula takes days or even weeks to make, and they need that time uninterrupted. Why start now? Their encounters in the Tenth Gate might mean they need a powerful political bargaining chip now rather than later. Or perhaps they've found a wealthy buyer interested in getting a vial of the formula and need the cash now. Or maybe the coterie hears of Salt regrouping and needs a weapon.

Starting the formula isn't hard—although several of the hardest-to-get ingredients get fully used up. The coterie manages to get the formula to a place

where it's impossible to start over.

Which means, of course, that's the moment Salt reappears.

The Twelfth Gate:



Projection (Pisces)

The alchemist places the powdered elixir in the crucible and watches as it transmutes into perfection: the Magnum Opus. The Twelfth Gate is ruled by the Fish, which embodies beauty.

All the pieces are on the board. The coterie calls on their own web of alchemists to help them defeat Salt—do they have enough supplies and friends to make a dent in Salt's defenses? The final confrontation with the Salt Faction threatens to spill into the city as the formula sizzles on the athanor behind them. Nobody wants the city's older Kindred to get involved, but there's the threat they might appear and *clean up* the mess—including the coterie itself—if the fight becomes too visible. How do you keep an Alchemical fight under wraps? How far is Salt willing to go to get the Book, faced with such strong resistance?

The coterie either emerges victorious, become the philosopher's stone, fired in the athanor—or are defeated as the failed elixir, left to burn on the coals. ■





LORESHEETS

The following Loreshets allow your character to tap into the greater world of the blood craft scene, as well as important events in its history. Other relevant Loreshets include Carna (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 385), Descendant of Karl Shrekt (**Vampire**, p. 405), The Pyramid (**Camarilla**, p. 189), and Revenant Family: Ducheski (**Chicago by Night**, p. 283).

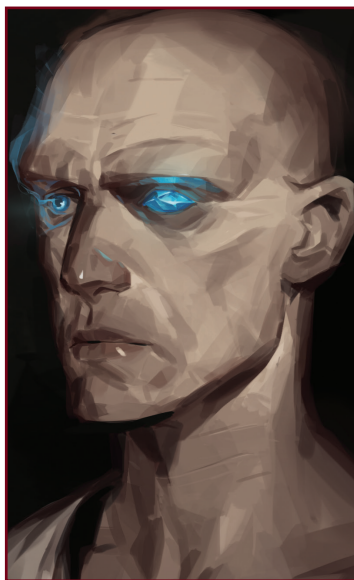
DESCENDANT OF AL-ASHRAD

(BANU HAQIM CHARACTERS ONLY)

When Haqim and ur-Shulgi walked the earth, al-Ashrad walked with them.

Legends say he knew magic when he was mortal, but after a violent disagreement with Haqim, ur-Shulgi Embraced al-Ashrad. As a vampire, al-Ashrad led them from the clan's home in Alamut as *Amr*, the most learned and respected of the clan's sorcerers.

When ur-Shulgi rose from torpor and demanded the clan follow the old ways, al-Ashrad helped lead a portion of the Lawmen into the Camarilla



before going into hiding. Since the Schism, he only emerged as his true identity once, to attend the Vermillion Wedding where he and Tegyrus saw their great plan to join the Camarilla come to fruition.

As a member of al-Ashrad's line, you are the heir to an incredible legacy. Few can rival your potential for Blood Sorcery. Those who fled Alamut look to you with respect, or at least jealousy. Some even regard you with hope. Maybe you'll be the one who outshines your ancestor, who puts an end to ur-Shulgi's schism once and for all.



LORE



• **Stories of Old:** You've learned from the stories you've heard from your sire, passed down from al-Ashrad, and you know how to apply those lessons in these nights. When you invoke the legacy of al-Ashrad and Haqim to motivate others, you receive a two-dice bonus to Leadership tests and contests.

•• **Sight Beyond Sight:** Before his Embrace, Haqim tore out al-Ashrad's left eye. As a vampire, he replaced it with a diamond rumored to give him visions of worlds beyond ours. A fraction of this power passed to you. Once per session, you (or your Storyteller on your behalf) may use the Auspex power Sense the Unseen (**Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 249) as if you had the Discipline, using your Blood Potency in place of Auspex when actively using the power. If you already possess this power, you receive a +2 dice bonus when actively using it.

••• **Vengeful Sorcery:** You've never forgiven your clanmates for the Schism, and you channel your rage into your sorcery. Once per session, in a violent conflict you may choose to take a two-dice bonus to use any Blood Sorcery power intended to harm another vampire.

•••• **Banish the Intangible:** Al-Ashrad's hatred for malevolent spirits is legendary. Though incorporeal beings are not necessarily malevolent, they still cower when they realize whose blood you share. Any Blood Sorcery power or Ritual that brings harm to corporeal things also affects incorporeal creatures with the same effect.

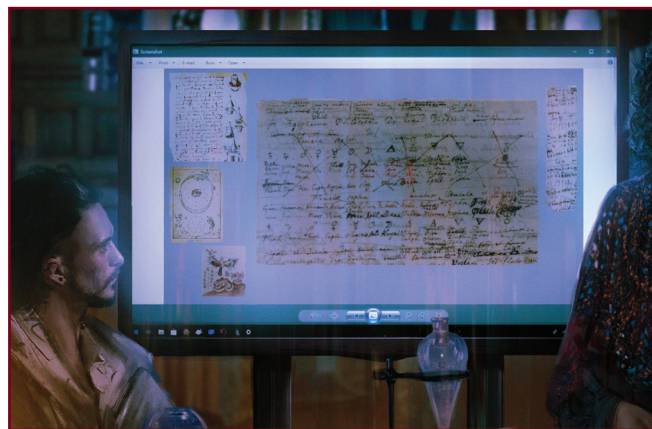
••••• **Amr-in-Waiting:** Al-Ashrad has chosen you to succeed him as Amr, should he face final death before the schism is resolved and the sorcerers regain their place in the clan. Gain Status ••••• (Banu Haqim), and one free Ritual at your Blood Sorcery level or below. Gain Adversary ••• in the form of a leader of ur-Shulgi's Blood sorcerers and your brother-in-blood.

STUDENT OF KIRIN TAUNK

(THIN-BLOOD ALCHEMISTS ONLY)

Get a group of old alchemists together, and the conversation inevitably turns towards Kirin Taunk (p. 140). These conversations are always the same: some speak of her with admiration, and others with barely hidden jealousy. One of the celebrated alchemists of the 1990s, Taunk pioneered formula techniques still used to this day. Untouched by alchemist purges in other Domains and the horrors of the North American theatre of the Sect War, Taunk's work served as a source of stability for the burgeoning thin-blooded community. Her guile made her a role model and a folk legend among those hiding from the local Scourge. Since her Final Death in 1998, her legacy continues through the many alchemical flocks (p. 111) founded by her apprentices.

Her legacy continues through you as well. Whether you've discovered her works by chance on the internet, study in one of the alchemic flocks



dedicated to continuing her approach to alchemy, or were one of the thin-blooded lucky enough to know her when she was still around, Kirin Taunk left a mark on your half-life. One day, it'll be your formulae that alchemists will pay hand-over-fist to get a glimpse of. You'll be the one to stand in a Prince's court or hang with the local rabble and feel at home in both worlds.

—> **LORE** <—

• **Stunning Efficiency:** Kirin Taunk's brewing speed was legendary. You've matched it, and surpassing it is within sight. All distillation times for formulae are halved.

•• **Professional Mindset:** Studying Taunk's life taught you that it's best to let your work speak for itself. Once per session and at the Storyteller's discretion, you may use your dot rating in Thin-Blood Alchemy in lieu of any Social skills at a lower rating.

••• **A Taunk Formula:** Through hard work or a great deal, you've obtained a sliver of Kirin Taunk's alchemical notes. Choose one formula of any level. You may purchase it with no experience cost, though you cannot use it until your Thin-Blood Alchemy reaches its level. Add two dice to your Distillation roll for that formula.

•••• **Diplomatic Power:** Kirin Taunk was a social force of nature, capable of fitting in amongst Camarilla and Anarch alike. Though recent events make the divisions between the two sects sharper, you carry yourself with enough grace and charm that these divisions mean little to you. You have Status •• (Camarilla) and Status •• (Anarch).

••••• **Taunk's Patron:** Kirin's mysterious benefactor took an interest in you, and still has it to this night. Gain Mawla ••••• (Taunk's Patron). Every story, pick three formulae you know. If your Mawla is active and approves of your actions, they send a shipment of rare or magically potent ingredients that give each formulae a two-dice bonus to the Distillation roll. Your Storyteller creates or chooses a powerful Kindred (maybe one that's already on the Relationship or Scene Map) as your patron's identity and may reveal it (and the consequences it brings) at their leisure.

VEINS OF THE EARTH

The Earth *lives*. It vibrates on frequencies far beyond human senses. As everyone carries on their day, as plants grow and animals thrive, the Earth's power ebbs and flows across the surface like water. It's in the air the kine breathes, and it's in the ground everyone walks on. The rise of Tiamat, the Blood Serpent (p. 150) only makes clear what many have known for years. The earth carves a web of energy patterns into its flesh. It waits for someone to take hold of it.



That someone is you. Maybe you were always fascinated by ley lines. Perhaps being undead opened your mind to new possibilities. You could have tapped into the planet's power accidentally, and you're trying to recapture that energy.

Your knowledge and passion make you a unique figure in the blood craft scene. You've established yourself as an expert, a pioneer in your field, or just a fanatic. When the scene needs someone who knows the city's places of power, you're the first on their list.



• **Seeking a Vein:** You've developed a knack for finding weird things, and it's only now that you've realized that it's because you just know where the planet's blood converges. Once per story at the Storyteller's discretion, you may declare that the location you are on is a furcus (p. 35).

•• **Drawing the Flies:** Some kine are drawn to the venae terrae just like you are. You've gotten to know quite a few people seeking out the planet's energies. They seek your knowledge, and you ask for a small price in return. Gain Herd ••• representing this group—but without new and interesting information about Tiamat's coils, they could fall away.

••• Revelations of the Earth:

You listen to the veins of the Earth, and hear who passes along them. Once per session, when you meditate for at least a half hour on a furcus, you may ask the Storyteller one question about one Kindred's location, direction of movement, and speed at that moment. The Storyteller answers truthfully. The venae cannot locate a Kindred who is in the air at that moment.

••• **Channeling the Earth:** While your ability to tap into the veins of the Earth may not be as powerful as Blood sorcerers or mystics, you know how to use the planet's power for your own benefit. Once per session, when you meditate for at least a half hour on a furcus, add one die to a Discipline pool in addition to any provided by Blood Potency.

•••• **Tiamat's Exchange:** Your knowledge of the veins of the Earth is so great that it feels like the Blood Serpent itself blesses you if you pay the price. Once per story, if you provide a large (human-sized or larger) offering of flesh or blood to a furcus at the beginning of the story, you may automatically gain three additional successes on a test or contest of your choosing.

VIENNA ZERO

(BLOOD SORCERY USERS ONLY)

Officially, it's the *United Nations Vienna Recovery Zone*. The Magyar Arrow Brotherhood attack on the city was localized to three city blocks, but the damage was so devastating and thorough that since 2008, all that's left is makeshift canvas buildings, light blue tarps, and disaster scene tape. Common theories on what occurred there include a missile strike, a dirty bomb, or a biological weapon.

You know what happened. Hungarian fascists played no role, and the missile strikes were made in the U.S.A. with love from the Vatican. The IAO attacked the



Tremere's headquarters, the Vienna Prime Chantry. In the years since, the Leopoldites and the rest of the Coalition's forces dig through the ruins as a major archeological project. Each new discovery teaches them more about the blankbody threat. They call it *Vienna Zero*.

Perhaps you have direct clearance to the site through a compromised operative, or maybe *you're* the compromised operative. Maybe you have a direct supply chain that brings you bits and pieces of what the investigation recovers. Either way, the artifacts and texts of the Tremere in their prime can be yours to access.



LORE



• **Inside Knowledge:** The knowledge you picked up from when you scavenged Vienna Zero is invaluable, both in a practical and political sense. When rolling Occult for anything related to blood craft, or when rolling Politics for anything related to the Tremere, you always have a +2 dice bonus.

•• **Off the Back of a Truck:** The Vatican officially destroys everything from Vienna Zero they deem too dangerous or useless to their investigation. Unofficially, some of it ends up in your hands. You gain a Contact ••• (The Slow Drip), a disgruntled contractor from Vienna Zero. If you've got something to offer, they can sometimes source the good stuff.

••• **Instrument of Power:** Through a friend of a friend, you've gotten your hands on something special and to your delight, you're very good at using it. Agree with the Storyteller on one Artifact (pp. 136–142), and add a one-die bonus to your pool for whatever tests it requires. However, every session you use it, you need to succeed on a Wits + Stealth (plus your Influence, if any, with the media) test against Difficulty 3 (or possibly more, for more powerful artifacts) to avoid attracting the attention of the Leopoldites, FIRSTLIGHT, or some other Coalition force.

•••• **The Very Last Copy:** By chance or through an incredible heist on Vienna Zero, you own the last remaining copy of a Tremere grimoire. Name the grimoire,

and name four rituals you do not yet know. These rituals may be at any level. You can learn these rituals without a teacher at half the learning time. Experience cost remains the same.

••••• **Deep Clearance:** You're not just read in on Vienna Zero, you're a valued member of the team. Gain Mask ••• (Zeroed) and describe your place on the excavation project. Once per story, you may take one artifact (p. 136–142) from the Vienna Zero site and use it as you wish, though the team will notice it's gone. You also have Enemy ••• (Effectiveness 3, Reliability 2), a FIRSTLIGHT or St. Leopold team member who suspects your true nature.

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