

# ADDITIONAL REQUIEM RULES

This document is used to incorporate additional Requiem materials created by the Camarilla into the chronicle. It is a library of custom Rituals, Devotions and Bloodlines that introduce new mechanics.

Players whose character sheets use mechanics from this appendix have a duty to carry with them either the books in question, or verbatim copies of the relevant mechanics. Failure to do so may result in those mechanics simply failing when employed, at Storyteller discretion.

## RITUALS & DEVOTIONS

### THE OATH OF MONOMACY

**Prerequisite:** Invictus Covenant Status ●●●

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

This is an Invictus Oath.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae each provided by the two Kindred taking the Oath

**Test Pool:** No roll is necessary to activate this power.

**Action:** Instant

This Oath requires five Kindred to complete: the presiding Judex, the two Kindred fighting the Monomacy, and the two witnesses. Only the Judex needs to know the Oath. All participants must have at least Invictus Covenant Status 1. Once the Oath has been enacted it is not complete until one of the two Kindred fighting the Monomacy has met final death. When the Oath of Monomacy is enacted any other Oaths the two fighting Kindred are under are temporarily voided. During the battle both fighting Kindred get to add their Invictus Covenant Status to all test pools related to the conflict.

Monomacy is fought using the flavor material provided in the Invictus book. An Invictus member does not have to accept a Monomacy challenge from those of lower station. A proper challenge can only be issued to those with Invictus Covenant Status no more than one dot higher than their own. If the challenger's Lord approves it, a challenge may be issued to one with Invictus Covenant Status two dots higher than the challenger. Many Invictus do not consider a Judex a true Judex unless they know this Oath.

This power costs 3 experience points to learn.

### ALPHA'S METTLE

(Protean ●●●●, Resilience ●●●,  
Gangrel Clan Status ●●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

The Gangrel are stalwart fighters, none more so than their leaders. Few can manage to rise in the ranks of the clan without literally having to fight for respect. Once gained, keeping that respect is just as hard. Since Gangrel leaders often prefer to lead by example, they tend to be on the front lines of every conflict. Alpha's Mettle helps them survive in this leadership role.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no test to activate.

**Action:** Instant

For this power to work, it must be activated the turn after invoking Resilience. The Gangrel's dots in Protean are added to the number of aggravated damage that her Resilience downgrades to lethal damage during the scene.

This power costs 15 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Jeremiah Spaulding.

### DESECRATE

(Nightmare ●●, Obfuscate ●, pure Nosferatu clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Through Touch of Shadow, the Nosferatu learns to exert her power over inanimate objects. Through Dread, she learns to bring out a measure of the Beast's dark aura. Having mastered both, the Haunt can now spread that terror to a prized possession or protected artifact so that

others will give it as wide a berth as they would the Nosferatu herself.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae per scene

**Test Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Nightmare versus Composure + Blood Potency (The Nosferatu clan weakness does not apply to the user's draw.)

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

This power causes a sense of wrongness, unholiness, or danger to emanate from an affected object for the remainder of the scene. Anyone who attempts to interact with it must make a reflexive Composure + Blood Potency draw against the original activation's successes, or find themselves without the nerve to confront the evil before them. Failure means the character suffers a -2 penalty to all actions while in its presence. (Penalties are not cumulative with Dread or with other applications of Desecrate.) The resistance test can be attempted only once per scene.

As with Dread, a single draw can be made to represent a crowd of prospective mundane victims based on the highest resistance pool among them. Players' characters and important non-player characters should always test to resist this power individually. Desecrate cannot be used to target certain characters selectively, it affects everyone who sees the object or attempts to interact with it. Desecrate only works on unattended objects; it cannot, for example, affect a cloak that the Nosferatu wears to a Primogen meeting. The power ends if the Nosferatu picks up or takes control of the object.

This power costs 9 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Desecrate is based on the contributions of Sean Argyle.

## DREAD GATHERING

(Nightmare ●●, Obfuscate ●●●●●, pure Nosferatu clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

This Devotion gives the Nosferatu and her allies an appearance of ravenous, inhuman predators, able to drive others before them in terror.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no draw to activate

**Action:** Reflexive

Dread Gathering is activated when the Nosferatu activates Dread. It allows her to designate certain willing subjects as co-sources for Dread; not just exempted from the effects, but also considered to be additional points from which the Nosferatu's aura of fear emanates. If the vampire wishes to include more subjects than her dots in

Obfuscate, a -1 penalty is applied to her draw for Dread for each additional person.

The range and potency of the emanation are based on the Nosferatu's traits and draw results; the other members of the Dread Gathering are just relay points for that effect. Only one resistance draw is made for each victim, despite how many members of the Dread Gathering they encounter. Dread Gathering requires the concentration of everyone involved. It ceases when any member does something drastic such as attack someone, perform a dodge maneuver, or activate another Discipline.

This power costs 21 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Dread Gathering has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned through the workings of said plotline. It is based on the contributions of Eric Parks.

## EASY PICKINGS

(Celerity ●, Obfuscate ●, pure Mekhet clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

This Devotion allows the vampire to combine Celerity and Obfuscate to improve her chances of picking pockets or performing other sleights of hand without detection.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** Wits + Larceny + Obfuscate

**Action:** Reflexive

Successes drawn for this power are subtracted from observers' contested draws to notice a sleight of hand (Mind's Eye Theatre, page 80). A successful Clash of Wills test negates this penalty for the Auspex user, but does not guarantee success in the contested draw to observe the sleight of hand.

This power costs 6 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Easy Pickings is based on the contributions of Alex McConachie.

## FLICKER

(Celerity ●●●, Obfuscate ●●●, pure Mekhet clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval (special, see below)

All Kindred know that the Mekhet are fast, and can vanish in the blink of an eye. Shadows who have mastered this Devotion take that birthright a step farther, combining those two native abilities into something far more useful. Alternately vanishing, moving at extreme speed, and re-appearing somewhere else, the user appears to rapidly blink

in and out of existence, confusing foes and making the Mekhet an elusive target to hit.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None, this power requires no test to activate

**Action:** Reflexive

When using an action to dodge, the Mekhet can spend one Vitae to augment that dodge, applying her Obfuscate dots as a further penalty to opponents' attack draws for the turn, even with firearms attacks. The vampire must have Celerity activated in the same turn in order to use Flicker.

This power costs 18 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned by a vampire that is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Flicker has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned through the workings of said plotline or learned in-game from a player character. It is based on the contributions of Peter Smalley.

## GUARD THE SACRED SOIL

(Animalism ●●●, Protean ●●, pure Gangrel clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval (special, see below)

This power allows the Gangrel to find a greater measure of security for her day sleep. While interred in the earth, she can call upon nearby animals to protect the area.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae to mark territory

**Test Pool:** Manipulation + Survival + Animalism

**Action:** Instant

The borders of the area where the Gangrel intends to sleep (no larger than a small forest clearing) must be marked with her blood. A test is performed for this power, followed immediately by the use of Call of the Wild to summon creatures to guard the area. For each success achieved with Guard the Sacred Soil, the animals provide the vampire with one temporary level of the Haven Security Merit, to a maximum of five levels. This is in addition to their normal abilities to defend the area on their master's behalf.

The animals will not behave unnaturally in a way that would draw attention to the area, unless they perceive a threat. The protected area is no more obvious for their presence than without it. Guard the Sacred Soil's effects end when the Gangrel wakes for the night.

This power costs 12 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Guard the Sacred Soil has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned

through the workings of said plotline or learned in-game from a player character. It is based on the contributions of Rik Sowden.

## IRONCLAD COMMAND

(Animalism ●●●●●, Dominate ●●,  
Ventrue Clan Status ●●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Clan Ventrue has long been the clan of authority. When a Ventrue speaks, others listen. Unfortunately some subjects go against the Lord's orders because of morality conflicts or a strong sense of self-preservation. By tapping the animalistic portions of the subject's brain when implanting a command, the vampire can set a lingering time bomb designed to remind the subject that disobedience has consequences.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no test to activate.

**Action:** Reflexive

The Ventrue may enact this power by expending a point of Vitae along with the activation of Mesmerism. If the Mesmerism is successfully implanted but the compulsion is later thrown off with a Resolve test, the subject must immediately check to resist Röttschreck. The fear frenzy requires a number of successes to withstand equal to the number of successes obtained for implanting the Mesmerism. Whether or not the subject resists the frenzy, she suffers from terrible head pain for the rest of the scene, inflicting a -1 penalty on all tests she performs therein.

This power costs 21 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Jeremiah Spaulding.

## THE IRON GLARE

(Majesty ●, Vigor ●, Daeva Clan Status ●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Not all Daeva are social virtuosos. Some rely more on brute force than on beauty. Even these physically-oriented Daeva expect to get their way in social situations, and some rely upon this power to do so.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** Strength + Intimidation + Majesty

**Action:** Instant

The Daeva makes a public display of strength such as crushing a brick in her hand, bending a piece of rebar, or breaking a solid oak table with her fist. For the rest of the

evening, the audience remains daunted by the Daeva's might.

This Devotion has all the effects and limitations of Awe, but calls upon brawn and intimidation to enact rather than charm. Use the systems in *Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem* (page 176-177) for enacting this power, but employing the test pool described above.

This power costs 6 experience points to learn. The Iron Glare is based on the contributions of Rowan J. Draper.

## JUGGERNAUT'S GAIT

(Majesty ●●●●●, Vigor ●●●, pure Daeva clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval (special, see below)

The Daeva's force of arms and force of personality are each a thing of legend, but the sight of a Succubus who has mastered both is a terrifying thing to behold. The potent strength of the Succubus is only made more frightening by the powerful influence that Majesty can invoke.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae in addition to the costs of activating Sovereignty and Vigor

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no draw to activate.

**Action:** Reflexive

When both Sovereignty and Vigor have been activated, the Daeva can invoke this power to ensure that others stay out of her way for the rest of the time both Disciplines remain active. Anyone wishing to approach the Daeva to within a number of paces equal to her dots of Vigor, or wishing to stand in the way of the Daeva to block her path must first draw to resist her Sovereignty. Failure to resist Sovereignty means that the affected character cannot approach the Daeva so closely, or must move out of her path.

Juggernaut's Gait cannot be overcome with the expenditure of a Willpower point and success on a Composure + Blood Potency draw. As a function of Sovereignty, the power is overwhelming and must be countered by a determined foe as described here. Those attacked by the Daeva are no longer affected by Juggernaut's Gait, but such acts of aggression do not mitigate the effects of this Devotion for the attacked person's allies as they do for Sovereignty. The aggressed target's allies can assist the target despite being affected by Sovereignty, provided that they aid the target in a way that does not harm or treat with disrespect the Sovereignty user.

This power costs 24 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Juggernaut's Gait has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into

the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned through the workings of said plotline or learned in-game from a player character. It is based on the contributions of William Matthew Klutz.

## LION AMONG WOLVES

(Majesty ●●●●●, Vigor ●, Daeva Clan Status ●●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Just as there can be only one Prince of a city, so too the elders of the Daeva have found that in a given situation, there can be only one true sovereign. The user of this Devotion commands respect and submission even from other Kindred who are using Sovereignty. The user may speak to those using Sovereignty as she would any other lesser Kindred. He need only refrain from physical attacks and uses of Disciplines that could harm or affect the other Sovereign vampire negatively; all other jibes, slurs, condescension or outright insults may be applied freely, and those subjected to them must role-play the appropriate submission due a superior despite their own Sovereignty.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** Presence + Intimidation + Majesty

**Action:** Contested and reflexive; resistance is reflexive

If the vampire with this Devotion has Sovereignty active when coming into the presence of another vampire with active Sovereignty, she may spend one Vitae to enact Lion among Wolves. Both Kindred draw Presence + Intimidation + Majesty. If the user of this power gains more successes or an equal number of successes to her opponent, the two characters interact socially as if the Lion among Wolves user had Sovereignty active and the other vampire did not. This lasts until the remainder of the scene or until the two vampires are no longer in one another's presence.

Lion among Wolves has no affect on combat or hostile interactions that would require an aggressor to test to resist Sovereignty. It cannot be overcome with the expenditure of a Willpower point and success on a Composure + Blood Potency draw. As a function of Sovereignty, the power is overwhelming and must be countered by a determined foe, as described here. Lion among Wolves has no affect on other Kindred who possess this same Devotion.

This power costs 18 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Peter Smalley.

## MASK OF FEAR

(Nightmare ●●●, Obfuscate ●●,

Nosferatu Clan Status ●●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Kindred are, at their core, competing predators. Sometimes being the top predator means being the biggest and the baddest, but more often it just means appearing that way; the perception of power is more important than the power itself. Members of Clan Nosferatu have taken this adage to heart, employing this power to cow other vampires around them.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Nightmare

**Action:** Instant

When activated, this power lasts for the remainder of the scene, and supersedes Mask of Tranquility. Instead of hiding the Beast, it brings the Beast to the surface and infuses it with Nightmare to make it seem even more intimidating.

Other vampires are not subject to the usual relationship of Blood Potency when meeting a Nosferatu under the effect of this Devotion. When a Predator's Taint test is appropriate, other Kindred react as if the devotion user had a Blood Potency equal to the sum of her Blood Potency and the number of success achieved in activating this power. For example, a Nosferatu with Blood Potency 4 and three successes from activating this Devotion would be perceived by other vampires' Beasts as having Blood Potency 7.

This does not alter the user's own reaction to the Predator's Taint; her Blood Potency is still considered to be its normal level when determining whether the Nosferatu should check for frenzy or Röttschreck. It could be possible for both Kindred to enter Röttschreck.

Observes with Auspex active automatically attempt a Clash of Wills test when affected by Mask of the Beast. Success indicates that the Devotion has no effect on them.

This power costs 15 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Justin Gaskins.

## MASTER OF BEASTS

(Animalism ●●, Dominate ●●, pure Ventrue clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval (special, see below)

The Lords of Clan Ventrue have long shown their mastery over both man and beast. They have cunning thralls under their command and vicious beasts to guard their homes. A Ventrue's domain is a fearsome place for an outsider to be. Ventrue who use this power rely more on animals than humans to guard their homes by combining their animal minions' ferocity with near-human intelligence.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower per draw

**Test Pool:** Wits + Animal Ken + Animalism versus animal's Resolve

**Action:** Contested and Extended (6-15+ successes; each draw represents one week of mental manipulation); resistance is reflexive.

This power lends some of the vampire's own intellect to a beast. Master of Beasts does not have any mechanical effects until five successes in excess of the animal's Willpower dots are accumulated. (For example, if the animal has Willpower 4, Master of Beasts begins to take effect once 9 successes are achieved). Once this benchmark has been reached, all future attempts by the character to use any Animalism power (including further uses of this power) on the animal receive a +1 bonus, and all attempts by others to use Animalism on the subject suffer a -1 penalty. For every additional five successes that are accumulated, the bonus and penalty each increase by one, to a maximum of +5 and -5. If the animal is also her ghoul, the vampire may double successes achieved when drawing for this power.

Once the bonus reaches +3, the animal takes on a measure of human intelligence. It can reason, giving it the ability to carry out more complex orders, provide more detailed reports, describe more applicable context to its observations, etc. The animal's Intelligence Attribute is not actually increased by this change, as the ability to reason is borrowed from the vampire.

An animal so affected will lose this benefit if isolated from its master for an extended period. After a number of weeks equal to twice the Master of Beasts-granted bonus have passed without contact, the bonus drops by one point. For example an animal affected by Master of Beasts has accumulated a +2 bonus for its master's use of Animalism upon it. If it is kept away from its master for four weeks, the bonus drops to +1. Two more weeks would end the effect of this power completely.

This power costs 12 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Master of Beasts has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned through the workings of said plotline or learned in-game from a player character. It is based on the contributions of Justin Gaskins.

## RAIMENT OF ANUBIS

(Auspex ●●●●●, Majesty ●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

The Anubi do not have a unique discipline to help them through the hard nights of the Danse Macabre, but they do have a few devotions that make their dealings with ghosts easier. These devotions are never taught outside the

bloodline, due to the paranoia the Anubi have about their continued existence.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** Presence + Expression + Majesty

**Action:** Instant

This power allows the Anubi to push the power of Awe across the Gauntlet to affect ghosts. While using this power, the Anubi may not use Awe in its normal manner. At Storyteller discretion, this power may also affect death-aspected spirits (see Werewolf: The Forsaken).

This power costs 15 experience points to learn.

## RECOVER THE FRAGMENT

(Auspex ●●●●, Dominate ●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** Intelligence + Persuasion + Auspex - subject's Resolve

**Action:** Instant to initiate, but requires one or more hours to complete

Recover the Fragment allows the user to search a subject's mind for a memory that has been lost to torpor. However, this power has several limitations. First, the subject must be willing to undergo this process. Second, a single defined item can be attempted with each invocation of this devotion. ("Do I remember who betrayed me in Milan in 1436?" is an acceptable example of this, "What happened to me in 1942?" is not. The answer must be something that can be given in a simple sentence.) Third, the more recent the lost memory is, the easier it is to recover, as can be seen below.

Number of successes (Period that can be reached / Time required)

- 1 (Within 100 years / 1 hour)
- 2 (Within 250 years / 2 hours)
- 3 (Within 500 years / 4 hours)
- 4 (Within 1000 years / 6 hours)
- 5 (Within 2000 years / 8 hours)

Lastly, this power is unable to recall any pre-Longinian data, if an ancient from that period should be found. (Camarilla Note: It requires the same approval level to recover data from a time period as it would to play a character from that age.)

Suggested Modifiers: -1 for each period of torpor (beyond the first) that the subject has undergone.

This power costs 24 experience points to learn.

## REGAL BEARING

(Dominate ●, Resilience ●, Ventrue Clan Status ●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

The clan of kings exemplifies self-control. Mastery of beasts, kine, and Kindred only comes after mastery of the self. Regal Bearing allows the Lord to maintain a measure of control in the face of social adversity and rise above the tide.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no test to activate.

**Action:** Reflexive

When the vampire is exposed to a provocation that might invoke an anger frenzy, she may activate Regal Bearing to help maintain her composure. The number of successes needed to resist the frenzy is lessened by an amount equal to her Dominate rating, to a minimum requirement of two successes. Regal Bearing has no effect on fear or hunger frenzies.

This power costs 6 experience points to learn. Regal Bearing is based on the contributions of William (B.J.) Altman.

## ROLL OVER

(Animalism ●●, Resilience ●●, Gangrel Clan Status ●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Some Kindred utilize their animalistic nature to a greater degree than others. With this power, the vampire learns to exploit her connection with the Beast to manipulate the Beast within other Kindred.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Animalism versus Composure + Blood Potency

**Action:** Contested; resistance is reflexive

To use Roll Over, the vampire must be within a few paces of the victim and stare them down. This necessitates eye contact, similar to the requirement for Dominate powers. For each success gained, the victim receives a -1 penalty on any offensive physical actions that she takes against the vampire for the duration of the scene.

This power works only on other Kindred. It cannot be used on the same target by the same vampire more than once per scene.

This power costs 12 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Glen Davis.

## SCARPER

(Celerity ●●●, Obfuscate ●●●,

Mekhet Clan Status ●●●●●

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Kindred are typically familiar with the power of Obfuscate, such that a disappearing Mekhet is assumed to still be present despite being invisible. Scarper uses speed and finesse to create the illusion that the user has quickly left the area, whether she has or not.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no test to activate.

**Action:** Instant

This power is activated in conjunction with Cloak of Night or Cloak the Gathering. Mortal witnesses automatically reconstruct the scene in their memory to justify the vampire's disappearance, even if the successes for activating Cloak of Night or Cloak the Gathering do not exceed their Willpower dots. This power also causes supernatural creatures to rationalize a disappearance under Cloak of Night or Cloak the Gathering if successes in activating those powers exceed their Willpower dots. A successful test of Clash of Wills negates this effect.

Scarper costs 18 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Jon Argles.

## SCRAMBLE

(Auspex ●●●, Obfuscate ●●, Mekhet Clan Status ●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

The Mekhet's mastery of both Auspex and Obfuscate has allowed the clan to develop several useful combinations of the two. Just as the Ventrue can alter a person's memory, so too can this power be used to alter the latent psychic impressions left on a person's body in order to confuse or deceive those who use Spirits Touch upon that person.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** Intelligence + Subterfuge + Obfuscate

**Action:** Extended (10-100+ successes, based on the detail and complexity of the change; each draw requires one minute within the affected area)

The Mekhet can use her knowledge of Spirits Touch to subtly alter, enhance, cover, or erase certain elements of the psychic resonance attached to a person. She must first employ Spirits Touch to analyze the psychic impressions. Thereafter she may use Scramble to change or remove the impressions she was able to perceive. The Storyteller assigns a degree of difficulty and number of successes needed to successfully alter a psychic imprint. More comprehensive alterations, up to and including complete reconstruction of every psychic on the target person, are possible albeit substantially more difficult.

Truly effective use of Scramble requires substantial finesse and patience as well as the ability to carefully and thoroughly think things through ahead of time. It's fairly simple to strip out a recent, powerful event, but doing so leaves an obvious gap for those who later look with Spirits Touch. A wise Mekhet will prefer to subtly alter the latent impressions or replace them with plausible impressions for later Auspex users to find.

Scramble only works on people; the psychic impressions left on other objects cannot be affected.

This power costs 15 experience points to learn. It is based on the contributions of Dennis Moore.

## SEKER'S CLAWS

(Auspex ●● or ●●●●●, Protean ●●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** This power requires no test to activate

**Action:** Instant

**Duration:** one scene

This pair of devotions, both known by the same name, allows the Anubi to strike at ghosts. The Auspex 2 version only allows the Anubi to strike ghosts, but does not prevent that damage from affecting any physical object the ghost may inhabit. At Auspex 5, the power (which must be learned separately) allows the Anubi to strike ghosts without affecting items (or people) they inhabit. While using this version of the power, the Anubi is unable to perform any task while requires fine manual dexterity. Neither version is used without careful consideration, as the Anubi prefer to placate, negotiate with, or otherwise manipulate ghosts, rather than attacking them. Either power may be terminated before the duration expires. If this is done, it requires new vitae expenditure to activate it again that scene.

This power costs 14 experience points for the Auspex 2 version, and 24 experience points for the Auspex 5 version.

## SNAKE EYES

(Animalism ●, Protean ●, pure Gangrel clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Kindred with this Devotion gain the ability to "see" in the infrared spectrum, allowing them to more efficiently hunt warm-blooded prey in the darkness. This is not actual "vision" but a system of heat-sensitive pits in the face used to detect heat and identify the distance to its source.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no test to activate.

**Action:** Instant

Snake Eyes allows the vampire to register the basic shape and temperature of items or individuals, but it does not allow fine details or colors to be perceived. Non-heat sources such as walls and other vampires cannot be discerned. The effect of this Devotion last for one scene, but can be turned off prematurely if desired.

This power costs 6 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Snake Eyes is based on the contributions of Glen Davis.

## SUCCUBUS' GRACE

(Celerity ●, Vigor ●, pure Daeva clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

Any Kindred can use the powers of the blood to perform exceptional physical feats, but the Daeva are uniquely adept at more subtle acts. With sufficient exercise, a Succubus can call upon her great strength or speed without stretching the boundaries of the fantastic.

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Test Pool:** None. This power requires no draw to activate.

**Action:** Instant

For the remainder of the scene, the user may elect to gain a bonus equal to her Celerity (for Dexterity-based tests) or her Vigor (for Strength-based test) on any non-supernatural and non-offensive use of Athletics, Larceny, or physical-based Expression (i.e. dancing). These increased capacities appear exceptional, but do not blatantly seem supernatural or inhuman.

This power costs 6 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Succubus' Grace is based on the contributions of William Matthew Klutz.

## TERRIFYING STRIKE

(Vigor ●●, Nightmare ●●●●, Nosferatu Clan Status ●●)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval (special, see below)

The vampire's blows strike terror in the hearts of her enemies.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** Special (see below)

**Action:** Contested and reflexive; resistance is reflexive

The Nosferatu may activate this Devotion when she attacks an opponent with a physical strike (an unarmed or melee attack, or a thrown object of at least as much weight as a manhole cover). If the strike inflicts damage, the victim makes a Stamina + Composure draw, penalized by one for each level of damage inflicted. If she fails the test, the victim is left shaken and bewildered. For the rest of the scene, she suffers a draw penalty on all of her actions equal to the damage inflicted by the Terrifying Strike. (This does not affect resistance draws.)

The effects of multiple Terrifying Strikes are not cumulative against the same opponent; only the highest penalty applies.

This power costs 18 experience points to learn. It has been reserved by the Master Storyteller for integration into the chronicle via a plotline, and can only be learned through the workings of said plotline or learned in-game from a player character. Terrifying Strike is based on the contributions of Dave Madden.

## TRIUMPH OF WILL

(Dominate ●●, Resilience ●●●, pure Ventrue clan)

**Approval Requirement:** Low Approval

This power passes to servants a portion of their master's personal fortitude.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Test Pool:** Stamina + Athletics + Resilience

**Action:** Instant

Triumph of Will works only on willing mortal characters, including ghouls. While under the effects of this power, the subject receives a bonus to all Stamina-based tests equal to the number of successes drawn for the power. She only needs to sleep a few hours a night, and is practically immune to mundane sources of fatigue. If the subject is a player character, she can perform one extra downtime action on top of her normal allowance. If the subject is a non-player character that represents one of the Merits to which downtime actions can be passed off (Mind's Eye Theater, page 140-141), said Merit can handle one extra downtime action per downtime period.

Triumph of Will persists for as long as the vampire wishes to maintain it. The Willpower point used to fortify the subject cannot be recovered by the vampire until one week after she ends the power.

This power costs 15 experience points to learn. It cannot be learned if the vampire is part of a bloodline, and is lost if the vampire ever joins a bloodline. Triumph of Will is based on the contributions of Jon Argles.

# BLOODLINES

## ACTEIUS

BY ASHLEY PERRYMAN

“THEY SAY THAT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, HOW MISGUIDED THEY ARE. KNOWLEDGE IS PROTECTION,  
IT IS WHAT WILL PROTECT ME FROM THE NIGHTMARE OF MADNESS, AND GUIDE ME IN MY DUTY.  
KNOWLEDGE IS SACRED, IT MUST NEVER BE LOST”

This ancient line is rarely seen by modern Kindred, but there remain persistent rumors that perhaps they are not as rare as some may think. Traditionally members of the bloodline have served to protect knowledge, libraries and seats of learning. It is not only their Disciplines that serve to make them excellent guards and to perceive danger, but also their deeply obsessive nature. The objects of their protection, termed their "Charge", tend to be books, manuscripts, and libraries. To a member of this bloodline nothing is more important than this duty, which can take on almost sacred intensity. Because of their obsession with protecting knowledge other Kindred call them "Librarians."

All members of the bloodline know the tale of their progenitor. It is a tale of great shame, a mark of failure, and one, which as a result drives the Acteius to never again witness or allow the destruction of knowledge. It has become their driving goal, their obsession, and in many ways also their nemesis. All Acteius seek a repository of knowledge to protect, most as a result accepting service to another Kindred as an inevitable consequence, which in turn can create a unique bond. Their obsession to protect their Charge is so strong that it can drive the Acteius to insanity and destruction, something they often strive to prevent happening through the bond of service. Both master and servant tend to know this, the master aware of just how useful and vigilant the Acteius will be, and how fragile she is if her Charge is in danger.

Most often the Acteius will end up in service to a Covenant, as a member of it, guarding an important repository of knowledge. Sometimes they remain outside of the Covenants and instead serve powerful Princes. All who accept the service of the Acteius know one thing, that service will be absolute and unwavering to the point of final death. Contrary to what some may think the Acteius can be very creative in finding ways to protect their Charge.

They are masters at seeking out potential threats and ensuring such threats are dealt with. They have an ethos; Knowledge is Protection. As a result the Acteius will strive to fully understand what it is she is protecting. The Acteius will strive to watch far more than simply her Charge, may monitor the movements of others, the Danse Macabre, the politics of mortal society. No Kindred should ever forget the ability of the Nosferatu to gather knowledge, the ethos and obsessed nature of the Acteius simply takes this a step further.

To an Acteius the duty to protect their Charge is as binding as a Bond of Blood. It has that power. Those who threaten, or plan to, rarely get to speak of the consequences. To do so is to invite swift death, and like members of their parent clan the Acteius are very good indeed at finding out whom or what might be a threat. There is a saying amongst those who know of the Bloodline, "Never threaten an Acteius or what it is looking after." Some Princes have even gone as far as considering any Kindred who does such a thing upon the Sacred grounds of Elysium as reason for their destruction, such is the risk of resulting violence if no action is taken immediately.

Fear of violence is fixed deep within the psyche of the Acteius, war, conflict, explosives and fire. These are great fears. Being faced with such fears tends to bring out the beast, and to progressively leave more and more mental scars. History has taught this to the Acteius many times. It is something that most will do all they can to prevent, not out of a sense of self preservation, but that it is a threat to all they stand for. Some say there is madness in the bloodline that the very thing they strive to protect is what has brought about their downfall. Maybe this is something for philosophers to debate, for the Acteius it is too close to reality, painful to properly contemplate but essential to

understand if the madness is to be avoided. To the Acteius the risk of ever growing madness is called the Curse.

**Parent Clan:** Nosferatu

**Nickname:** Librarians

**Covenant:** The Acteius have no particular leaning towards any Covenant. All Covenants keep records and knowledge so find members of this line very useful providing they can be kept reasonably sane. The precise nature of the role may vary from Covenant to Covenant. The Lancea Sanctum might expect one to guard and protect Holy texts; the Invictus may be more concerned with maintaining proper records. The Circle of the Crone may see them as guardians of sacred knowledge, and the Ordo Dracul as librarians perhaps and an object of study, how can a Kindred be both so powerful and so fragile? Even the Carthian Movement has counted the occasional Acteius within its ranks. To most the Acteius are simply too useful not to have around and too fragile to be left outside of the support and protection of Covenants.

Most Acteius tend to gravitate within the Covenants to important seats or places of knowledge, or into the direct service of high-ranking members. In return they are often granted a great deal of protection and few Covenants are likely to admit to others they have those of this line within their number. The Covenants tend to understand the inherent weakness of this line and to do all they can to ensure the potential for madness is not brought to the fore.

Due to the risk of madness and the ever presence closeness of the beast some have sought membership of the Ordo Dracul, but to date the best that has achieved is to delay the inevitable. Perhaps there is more, perhaps it is only part of the answer to the Curse. Unaligned Acteius tend to be highly coveted for their unique abilities and devotion to duty. It is not just Covenants who would welcome one of this line, some end up in the employ and protection of powerful Princes.

**Appearance:** The Acteius are no different physically than any other Nosferatu. They have the same horrible disfigurements and the same disturbing demeanor. They may be drawn from all walks of life and all cultures.

**Haven:** In most instances their haven is likely to be assigned. These tend not to be havens of their own, but those of others who seek to protect knowledge. Often these would be within important Covenant seats of learning. Those very few who are unaligned, and not in service to another, are likely to have havens near or within important places of learning, universities, major libraries etc. Proximity to what they are protecting is by far and away the most important consideration. Within the haven their only real concern is security, they may be very obsessive about security, not in a personal sense but in a desire to protect what they are looking after. Most find themselves in a good

deal of comfort as well but this is simply because others have deposited their books, knowledge, tomes or whatever in such places.

**Background:** The Acteius rarely embrace. To do so would create a Childe and the responsibilities of teaching would interfere with other far more important duties. When they do embrace it is likely to be at the direct request of those they are working for, or because the madness is growing within them and creating a Childe is the only way to ensure the continued protection of their Charge. Traditionally any that are embraced are likely to have served as a ghoul for many years and most Acteius have such ghouls. To them ghouls are the perfect servants to help protect their Charge and some may even come to see losing a ghoul as a direct threat.

Most, if not all, Acteius end up in the service of another Kindred, anything else is simply too dangerous. They accept that serving another Kindred is far better than risking the Masquerade by seeking to protect a mortal library. It is simply a matter of expediency to do so. In reality most when embraced are already in service to another Kindred, it is rare and dangerous for one to be created and then released to seek a Charge. Acteius have a thirst for knowledge. They take one simple view, the more they know the better they will be at protecting their Charge. Similarly the more they know about what they are protecting the better. This can be almost self-delusional, she might even try to convince herself that if she memorizes the entire content it increases its safety.

In a way it does, but this does not alleviate any potential threat. However, just like binding themselves by blood to their master, liege, mentor or whatever term they want to use, it does potentially serve to protect them from the growing threat of madness and being consumed by the beast. For many this becomes an important drive, part of protecting their Charge, for they in time come to know that if they go mad, as they surely will without a lot of help, then they will have failed.

**Character Creation:** Chosen and groomed for mental acumen, a thirst for knowledge and a willingness to serve, characters are likely to have been a ghoul for many years before the Embrace. Most will come from some sort of academic or scholastic background and have an almost obsessive thirst for knowledge. Ghouls will likely be chosen for the right abilities, good memory, self-control and devotion. They are likely to have high Mental and Physical traits, to be perceptive, aware and vigilant. Ghouls will in all probability have been deeply conditioned before the Embrace. Characters tend to be somewhat reclusive and/or to watch from the sidelines. Many also enjoy teaching others but of course are unlikely to have high social traits. Most have at least one loyal ghoul; retainers and herd are also useful if they can be obtained. They tend to be reclusive, often when seen in public their line is not

revealed, it is easy enough to claim to be of the parent Clan. Favored abilities include eidetic memory, and skills like meditation and psychology are highly valued for obvious reasons. Their fear of fire would make it unlikely that an Acteius would use firearms, or learn skills that facilitate the use of explosives, incendiary devices and the like.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Nightmare, Obfuscate, Vigor, Auspex

**Weakness:** In addition to the normal Nosferatu clan weakness, the Acteius are difficult to be around. They have exactly the same weakness as their parent clan. The 10 again rule does not apply to any roll involving Presence or Manipulation in social situations. Any 1's that come up are subtracted from the number of successes. This vulnerability does not apply to dice rolls using the intimidation skill or to the composure attribute.

In addition all Acteius are obsessed with learning and protecting knowledge and have a heightened fear of fire. Should they believe their Charge is in danger they suffer a - 2 penalty to resist frenzy as the drive to protect comes raging forth. Acteius are always at an additional -1 penalty when confronted by fire or the serious threat of fire. Additionally, all Acteius are at -1 to all tests when away from their library, due to their distracted nature.

**Organization:** Like their parent Clan there is little in the way of organization. Most members of this bloodline are far more concerned with duty than matters of family. Given their small numbers and inclination to remain where they are and dedicated to a task it is not uncommon for a member of the bloodline never to have even met another. Some in these modern days are in communication by other means, electronic mostly, discussions being mostly about how to avoid the terrifying fall into insanity. There may have been an organized bloodline structure in the past, but not now, it has mostly been lost. All that remains is that any who are embraced (a rare occurrence to start with) are taught the heritage as spoken by Sarah.

**Concepts:** Covenant Archivist, Teacher, Librarian, Security Expert, Advisor. Mentor, Theologian, Scholar, Scientist, Writer, Philosopher.

## HISTORY

The proudest of the Acteius say that the progenitor of the bloodline was a seer in Egypt, one who had access to the Royal Court of Cleopatra. Of course there is no proof whatsoever and most modern Vampires dismiss this entirely. However the legend goes that the progenitor told Cleopatra that she and Antonius would defeat Rome in a great sea battle and that she would be Queen of the known world. It is said he was in charge of the Library of

Alexandria, responsible in part for its upkeep and safety. On his advice Cleopatra went to war against Rome, and at the Battle of Actium the naval forces of Egypt were destroyed. Within a year Cleopatra was dead, so too Antonius. Within that year Augustus took his full and bloody revenge on Egypt and the Roman Empire was born.

It is said that the progenitor witnessed the Roman invasion of Egypt, and most importantly witnessed the destruction of the Library of Alexandria. That through the flames he came to see the torment of the destruction of knowledge, that he saw and felt the pain of fire. It is said that he told Cleopatra that she would win through his own pride and a desire to expand the library, and that instead he brought about its destruction. It is said that the visions drove him mad, that the very gods of Egypt gave him the sight to witness in full what he had brought about.

It is believed he fled into the desert and was not seen again for over 500 years and then he appeared in Jerusalem. The tale goes that he embraced a Childe in Jerusalem and taught his Childe all he knew, told her of his pride and shame. Told her of his guilt, the story of how he brought about not just the destruction of Egypt, but also the loss of the greatest library in the known world. He told her that she and others she must create should never allow knowledge to be destroyed or lost, that it is a sacred duty, one he failed and must pay the price for. He told her he was cursed by the gods of Egypt; cursed with the ability to see what he had done. It is said that he never gave his name, that out of shame he chose to remain nameless. Sarah spoke that when he had completed his task, taught her all he knew, that he gave her his blessing and she in turn promised that the line would forever do all in its power to protect knowledge. Sarah said that the next dawn, he walked into the sun.

This is what Sarah told her Childer, it is what they in turn told theirs. It is what is told to all of the bloodline. It is their truth. The very reason for what they do. It is their story of creation, whether it is true or not, they all believe it with a passion, it is the reason for existence. It is the story of the creation of the Acteius, a name for the bloodline chosen by Sarah as a reminder of the dangers of war.

**Growth:** Sarah went east into the desert. She was part of the growth of Arab culture and learning before the days of Mohammed. As empires in Europe fell apart, rose, and fell again, she remained in the east. Others of the bloodline traveled in Africa and Asia. The first maps of the known Arab world were created with her knowledge and vision, the sky mapped, the mathematics of navigation created, the growth of science nurtured and protected. As Europe sank into the dark ages, the knowledge within the Arab world grew. Slowly over time, under the banners of Mohammed parts of Europe were reclaimed, the learning and knowledge ever spreading, creating the need for more of the Bloodline in Kindred courts further and further a field.

In time Europe re-emerged from darkness, the Renaissance, a vast explosion of knowledge, of learning, of new ways to think. By then Sarah was gone, but the line was growing in response to need. The great Kindred courts of the known world saw the value of the line, and of course the dangers as well. They were cherished for their ability and devotion to service, protected for their vulnerability, awed for their power.

For the Acteius their way has always been a path littered with the fallen. War is forever the greatest fear. The numbers lost to war, or even to the fear of war, growing just as fast as the expansion of known civilization. So many fell as the Great Khan spread across the known world, this was the first major disaster for the bloodline. Before that during the Crusades, the sacking of Tyre, Jerusalem and Byzantium did some damage but it was small in comparison. Later, the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain, the sack of Toledo did not help, but most accept that this did in time serve to bring about far greater glories. The times when Europe plunged itself into war took a far heavier toll than small civil wars, but even those drove some to their destruction. If the fear of fire, of the loss of a single book which can be triggered by one individual and can drive an Acteius to frenzy, insanity, and even death, what then the fear of armies? But in those nights there were more decades of peace than years of war, the losses in those years were often localized and not great. The line continued to grow slowly, to seek the patronage of powerful Kindred and Covenants. The Renaissance truly was the high point, a time when the bloodline reached its peak. A time of the great Kindred courts of Europe, a time of learning, culture, peace and prosperity, a time when the Acteius thrived.

**Decline:** What then with the rise of Napoleon? The rise of technology and science. Explosives, firearms, cannon. This is the ultimate horror for any Acteius. Europe plunged itself into war and chaos. Armies crossed the continent. Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Poland, Russia, the land erupted into flame. No longer was there simply a fear of swords, of an accidental fire started by a candle, now there were cannon, explosives, guns, and the means to destroy cities in a matter of hours. No longer were havens safe, nothing was safe, a war that might a few centuries earlier have killed a few humans, left all else unharmed, now threatened all the Acteius stood for. The bloodline faced its greatest fear, magnified many times. Only in places distant from war did they survive, such was the shock of the realization of what humanity can become capable of. Some thought it could never get worse, how wrong could they be.

Twice in less than 50 years the globe descended into war. The first war was not so bad, that of course is merely relative in comparison to what was to come. It was far worse than anything that had ever come before, it left a

mere handful of the Acteius unharmed in Europe and similar losses elsewhere. The machines of war, dreadnoughts, zeppelins, stood as visible reminders of the power of humanity to bring about destruction. To the fragile psyche of the Acteius it was too much to bear.

Briefly there was a recovery before once again the world plunged into war and this time the weapons were even more terrifying. Not one of the bloodline survived in Europe. Even those with Charges that were not directly hit were driven mad with fear. Simply hearing the tales of Dresden, Coventry, London, Warsaw, Leningrad, Moscow was enough to drive most Acteius over the edge, they did not need to be there, the knowledge of events drove them mad, to frenzy, to death. The air raid sirens, the sound of a bomber far overhead, they too were enough. For the Acteius fear is the mind-killer, and in those years fear is all they had. Then came Hiroshima. The news of Hiroshima was thought for some time to have eradicated the line completely, the realization that humanity was now capable of destroying not just cities, but the whole world, that humanity had mastered the power of the sun. It was too much to contemplate. Most went utterly mad, those that did not die needed to be disposed of, the damage to their minds too great.

In a few places, protected by powerful masters, and bound by blood, some survived. The precise numbers are not known, less than a dozen, maybe even half that number. With no internal structure none can be sure, and those who have been secreted away are unlikely to be spoken of. Where they were they stayed, hidden and protected. Almost certainly none returned to Europe, Europe did not get better, if anything it got worse. The world might have started to rebuild and recover but the fear remained, and for the Acteius fear is the killer. No Acteius could remain in or near a city, in a country even, which was the target of nuclear missiles. The Cold War was not a good time.

**Recovery?:** Only in the last three decades has there been any sign of recovery. How much of a recovery, it is difficult to say. The human weapons exist, there remain global flash points, and the great fear will not fade. Even now their position as a bloodline is in all probability precarious. It is not known how many remain, and many Kindred will never have met one of this bloodline. Those few that do remain are protected from threat and assisted to resist the ever-growing danger of madness.

Well this is what some say. Others say the bloodline is a dangerous liability and a permanent threat to the Masquerade. Then there are the tales; maybe they are true, maybe not. It is said that in Harare, a Prince forced one of the bloodline into service, and when his mind broke made to embrace a ghoul before being cast into a pit of fire. The embraced ghoul was then blood-bound to that Prince, a cycle that has since been repeated. It is said that in Detroit

one of the bloodline that had gone mad was sold in chains as a gift for diablerie. It is said that in Berlin and in Nanjing members of the bloodline were executed simply for what they were, and that in Cairo, for some unknown reason one was left chained in a courtyard for the sun.

There are rumors that in the past, one by the name of Arif wrote a great treatise on how to avoid the slide into insanity. He is gone now, was last heard of almost 400 years ago in Damascus. The treatise is lost. Simply facing the truth that knowledge has been lost is very painful for the Acteiis, but some strive in what time they have to find it, each hoping to be successful before the curse of the bloodline catches up with them.

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The fulcrum on which the Acteiis stand is their role, devotion to duty and the one they serve. They are likely to be protected by their master for very good reason, and in return they serve their task with devotion. This is not devotion to the master, but to the Charge. Those in service to a Covenant or Prince are likely to be well respected, if nothing else this serves to keep them safe from attack. The reality is also that they are immensely knowledgeable, and that is always a useful resource for others. Within covenants they may become teachers, mentors, advisors in addition to their primary role. Generally the Acteiis take on the society and culture of the master, ward or whatever term they want to use. As a bloodline there is no specific culture since there are so few of them and rarely meet another.

The only internal bond they are likely to have is with a Ghoul or a Childe. This is bound into the tale of the progenitor and the story of Sarah. A ghoul is more often than not a trusted and fully indoctrinated servant. Any Childe will have been embraced for a specific reason and having been a ghoul for a long time likely to already know what is expected.

Those who are embraced are always told the story of Sarah and the progenitor. This is told from her

perspective, and although the progenitor is accepted, Sarah is always considered to be the Mother of the bloodline, and her will is that which is followed. The progenitor is not reviled; he is simply seen as a tragic figure, a lesson to all of the consequences of pride and ambition. They tend to also be told the tale about Arif, and be given a cautionary warning about rumored events in Harare, Berlin, Cairo, Detroit and Nanjing.

Most understand the dangers they face in sliding into insanity, it is seen by the bloodline as a curse, a curse placed on the bloodline, on the progenitor by the Gods of Egypt. Most are, in one-way or another, seeking to understand and undo the Curse, or at the very least to control the beast within. To be free of the curse of madness is seen as the only real way to safety so many spend a great deal of time on this, looking for the Treatise of Arif, trying to understand the nature of the curse, or simply in trying to control the beast within.

Acteiis are strong advocates of the Vinculum. They see it as a powerful tool and essential to their role. Naturally Ghouls will be subject to the Bond of Blood, so too would any Childe. It is not uncommon for Acteiis to accept the Bond of Blood themselves from those whose property is their Charge. To an Acteiis that bond may be protective and serve to help resist the emergence of the Beast and resulting madness, as such it serves to help protect the Charge. A wise Acteiis balances this carefully, there are always risks in the Vinculum, and the tales of abuses committed on members of the bloodline simply serve to remind all of the risks.

**Feeding:** Acteiis are unlikely to hunt; to do so would mean leaving their Charge. Instead they are more likely to have a Ghoul bring them food. Others Librarians may be provided for by their master, this is not uncommon. They have no particular feeding preferences, beyond a desire to feed safely and quietly. Those vessels brought into an Acteiis haven rarely leave; if they did leave they might leave with knowledge that would endanger the Acteiis.

# Anavashra

By Spider Wingate, Michael Gearman, and Tim Harris

In the last few decades, with the increasing Indian and Bangladeshi population in Western lands, a strange cult of Gangrel has appeared as well. Their reception from European and American Princes has varied because of the insular nature of these Kindred. This cult or bloodline, and the lines aren't clear, is called the Anavashra, and rumors tell of them holding many domains in Northern India and Bangladesh. Most Kindred do not care to travel to verify these tales. Those with some understanding of the Hindu caste system refer to them as Brahman, but the Anavashra themselves regularly insist they are not worthy of such a title.

The Anavashra rarely hold position in the Western cities they reside in, preferring instead to dwell outside the standard society of vampires, seeking knowledge from all sources.

**Parent Clan:** Gangrel

**Nickname:** Ascetics

**Covenants:** As mentioned in the Bloodlines: The Hidden entry for the Rakshasa, the Covenants in India have no relation to the European or American counterparts. Anavashra who come to the West are described as Brahman, or members of a priest caste. Of the Western vampire societies, the Lancea Sanctum offers nothing to the Anavashra; their religious beliefs are just too different to have any correspondences. However, none of the other Covenants seems able to attract many of the Ascetics to their ranks. Most remain unaligned, preferring to remain above the conflicts of the Covenants. The Ordo Dracul has interested a few, because certain of their powers remove, in part, the karmic burden of being a vampire.

**Appearance:** Anavashra tend towards traditional Indian garb, with simple robes or sari (for women) being the most common. Even in Western cities, there tend to be large enough Hindu populations that this mode of dress does not stand out.

**Haven:** These Gangrel prefer what they describe as "harmonious living spaces", but this should not be mistaken as New Age nonsense. Rather, any items they possess are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Hindu iconography, especially representations of Shiva,

is especially common. However, when they realize the time has come to "walk through the fire" (see below), then they give away all of their possessions, or the entire haven, to other Anavashra.

**Background:** The Anavashra all come from the Indian subcontinent, primarily northern India and Bangladesh. Players should consider what specific circumstance prompted a character to make the difficult passage to a distant land. The extremely few line members Embraced in the West come from mortal stock of similar descent, though this tendency results in part from mere propinquity; Ascetics tend to dwell among their mortal countrymen.

However, Ascetics rarely Embrace, as they consider it the greatest of crimes that can happen to a person. It is much more common that a Gangrel of Indian heritage is instead fostered into the bloodline once they have proven themselves capable of sufficient moral discretion and shown that they can bear the burden of the bloodline.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Auspex, Majesty, Protean, Resilience

**Weakness:** Like all Gangrel, with regard to dice pools based on Intelligence and Wits Attributes, the 10 Again rule does not apply. Additionally, any 1's that come up on a roll are subtracted from successes. (The latter part of this weakness does not affect dramatic-failure rules.) This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving perception or reaction to surprise (see p. 151 of the World of Darkness Rulebook), or to the Resolve Attribute. Additionally, the Ascetics attempt at all times to keep themselves from being debased through their dependence on blood. In keeping with this, they gain no sustenance from stored vitae (including Vitae Reliquary or other such mystical storage devices); only fresh blood adds to their Vitae pool. Moreover, that blood must be free of disease or taint. However, this is not the only stricture laid upon this bloodline. Their belief that the curse of vampirism is the greatest crime that can be inflicted upon a human comes out in the Embrace itself. For a member of the Anavashra bloodline, the cost of Embracing is raised to 2 Willpower dots.

**Organization:** Western cities rarely see more than a single member of this bloodline, and only then if the city has a significant Indian or Bangladeshi population. When questioned on this, immigrants say that there are not more of

them there, because others of their bloodline have found different places to be.

In India, however, the Anavashra hold many domains, but not because they have sought the power that Praxis gives, but because the Indian vampires apparently hold them in such high esteem that they have them take Praxis.

When a city does hold multiple Ascetics, they stay in contact with each other, going about their own business; though they do respect the rulers of the city they reside in.

**Character Creation:** The Anavashra depend greatly on Mental Attributes, seeking to overcome with time and effort that which the Embrace weakens. After that, Physical and Social Attributes are equally valued. Ascetics tend to have a wide variety of skills; the better to tend to the tasks they have set themselves. And most Anavashra eventually become skilled combatants, even if they never show this ability to the world. Ascetics place high value on the Herd Merit, as it allows them to address one of their weaknesses without great difficulty.

It is highly unlikely that a non-Indian Gangrel would be accepted into the bloodline.

**Concepts:** Priest, seeker of knowledge, holy man, pacifistic warrior.

## History

In Hindu legend, the Asura (demon) Andhaka attacked a gathering of the Deva (gods) with the intent of stealing the goddess Paarvatee away for his foul purposes. Before he could do so, Shiva captured him and placed him on the tip of his trident and began to dance. When Andhaka was fixed on the tip of the trident, all his sins were burned away, and he obtained perfect knowledge and praised Shiva. In this story, Andhaka was killed and resurrected as a higher being.

Hindu mythology describes the Deva, or "bright ones" which are the Gods and their servants and the Asuras or "powerful ones" which are the opposing force. This is not a definition of good or evil, but opposition.

The Anavashra believe this to be true, and consider Andhaka to be the spiritual, if not actual, founder of their bloodline. Through his sacrifice and resurrection, a door was opened for those who chose the path of sacrifice to do the same.

Vampires are considered, under Hindu mythology, to be both Asura and Dahit, or the lowest of the low castes, below even the Untouchable. It is because of this that many of the Hindu religion commit suicide when Embraced, and as such, those who are not strongly religious are often the target of the Embrace by most

clans. Indian vampires in general have twisted the caste system to support them taking position in it's standard roles. Thus, the Anavashra are placed, more often by other vampires than by their own choosing, in the Brahman, or priest, caste.

All of this combines to put the Ascetics in control of a significant number of domains, where they have the standard of forbidding the Embrace altogether. Strangely, this makes them more popular rulers.

**Origins:** In truth, the bloodline did not have a name, or a purpose, or a true existence until the late 3rd century A.D., when the vampire who would become regarded as their greatest sage, known only as Goptar, gave them both. In his text, the Lêsüdâvavashram (roughly translated as Book of the Place of Nine Unworkings) Goptar detailed visitations by avatars of Shiva and Paarvatee. These avatars explained that Andhaka's sacrifice had created a new dharma for those willing to follow it. If followed correctly, those undead that followed it could be assured of a new life

Under this new dharma, it was the duty of each member of the bloodline to find nine great evils and thwart their plans, hopefully not perishing until the ninth had been defeated. Doing so, he explained, was a violation of the dharma of demons, but was in accordance with their new dharma. This balance of dharma and adharma would set up the circumstances by which they could sacrifice themselves in a manner consistent with Andhaka. Succeeding in this goal, Goptar stated, would allow them to die untainted, and be reborn into the cycle, no longer an Asura. Andhaka, he said, had opened the way for them, with his evil and sacrifice obviating the need for evil on their part. Even should an Anavashra, or Seeker of the Place of Nine Unworkings, fail to die against their great evils, should they then "pass through the fire", that is, die facing fire or the sun thereafter, their place in the proper cycle would be assured.

According to the fragmentary records remaining from that time, Goptar himself is said to have faced a 'great beast' that threatened a temple to Shiva, and both were consumed in a blaze of perfect light.

**Rise of the Anavashra:** After the Brahmin caste reasserted its control in the 4th Century, the Anavashra was one of the Brahmin bloodlines to rise to power. Perhaps because they represented a middle ground between the extremist Brahmin lines and the Kshatriya lines, such as the Rakshasa, they were able to take and hold several domains in northern India and what is now Bangladesh.

Because they were of the Brahmin caste, and could thus authorize cross line adoptions, the Ascetics grew quickly though the next several centuries.

The Anavashra largely ignored the invasions by Muslim, European and British; even when the other undead Brahmin lines called for unification to repel the British conquerors, the

Anavashra used the ensuing chaos to uncover long hidden evils to sacrifice themselves against. Many Ascetics met Final Death during the Indian Revolt, but not at the hands of mortals or other vampires. They perished in completion of their purpose. However, the example this set for younger Gangrel caused some refilling of their ranks.

**Modern Nights:** The diaspora started by the Rakshasa has caused the Ascetics to ponder certain questions. Is it part of their dharma to travel to other lands to find their Anavashram there? A small, but significant number have decided that it is, and have begun to travel to European and American cities. As of yet, they have made few inroads into the Orient, South America, or Africa (South Africa is a notable exception).

## Society and Culture

Please read the sidebar Caste and Dharma from *Bloodlines: The Hidden*.

**The Balance of Dharma and Adharma:** Ascetics believe that vampires, in their accursed state, have the dharma of Asura, or enemies of the gods, but that as Anavashra, that dharma has changed. They do not consider themselves to be champions of the gods; merely tools the gods can use to destroy greater evil. While their acts may be adharmic (opposed to their dharma) as Asura, they fulfil the dharma given to them by Andhaka.

The standing an individual has in the bloodline is determined by how far along they are on their personal quest of sacrifice. Obviously, this is very subjective, but Ascetics tend to take the word of their brothers in that regard.

Ascetics acknowledge that not all vampires will accept or understand their quest, and moreover, that many of them will act according to the dharma of demons. Only those who accept the teachings of the Anavashram can find a different dharma. Ascetics in the west do not abandon their dharma; rather they see it as a greater challenge, thus leading to a greater sacrifice.

**Priest-Warriors:** It cannot be denied that the Gangrel are among the most feared combatants among the Kindred, for their mastery of Protean, if nothing else. The Ascetics, do not shun this role, honing their skills to a degree any warrior would envy. That isn't to say that they use these skills against opponents on a regular basis, however. They do not have nightly conflict or regular battles. They seek out the evils they believe they are to confront, but between those battles, they prefer to have a peaceable existence.

When arriving in a new city, they present themselves to the Prince at the earliest opportunity and ask permission to reside. If it is not given, they move on that night, having planned for that contingency. Obviously, it is not part of their quest to be in that particular city.

# Anubi

By Patrick Gearman and Michael Gearman

Anubis the Dweller in the Mummy Chamber, Governor of the Divine House ... saith:- Homage to thee, thou happy one, lord! Thou seest the Utchat. Ptah-Seker hath bound thee up. Anubis hath exalted thee. Shu hath raised thee up, O Beautiful Face, thou governor of eternity. Thou hast thine eye, O scribe Nebseni, lord of fealty, and it is beautiful. Thy right eye is like the Sektet Boat, thy left eye is like the Atet Boat. Thine eyebrows are fair to see in the presence of the Company of the Gods. Thy brow is under the protection of Anubis, and thy head and face, O beautiful one, are before the holy Hawk. Thy fingers have been established by thy scribe's craft in the presence of the Lord of Khemenu, Thoth, who hath bestowed upon thee the knowledge of the speech of the holy books. Thy beard is beautiful in the sight of Ptah-Seker, and thou, O scribe Nebseni, thou lord of fealty, art beautiful before the Great Company of the Gods. The Great God looketh upon thee, and he leadeth thee along the path of happiness. Sepulchral meals are bestowed upon thee, and he overthroweth for thee thine enemies, setting them under thy feet in the presence of the Great Company of the Gods who dwell in the House of the Great Aged One which is in Anu.

- The Speech of Anubis from the Papyrus of Nu and the Papyrus of Nebseni

Many Kindred are unaware of the Anubi, or unknowingly dismiss them as a faction of the Circle of the Crone or the Ordo Dracul. While the Anubi are not the smallest bloodline, they are also not the largest, and seem to be very inclusive as to who is adopted into the bloodline.

As with many other bloodlines, their origins are shrouded in mystery. Kindred scholars inside and outside the bloodline argue over the origins of the Anubi, but three points in history are typically held as likely starting points for consideration. The first contention places the mortal ancestors of the Anubi in the reign of the early Pharaohs of Egypt, even as far back as the First Dynasty, over 5000 years ago. Most Kindred who hear this claim, of course, dismiss it immediately as nothing more than outright falsehood as an attempt to claim some sort of status by means of the bloodline's longevity. Other Kindred scholars contend that the mortal ancestry of the Anubi lay at a far later time, around 30 B.C., when Egypt became a province controlled by Rome, which would allow Roman Kindred easier access to the area. It was around

this time that certain mystery cults that venerated Egyptian gods appeared in Rome, lending some credence to this theory. The third major theory as to the origin of the Anubi place it in relatively recent history, in the Napoleonic era, when many antiquities of Egypt made their way to France, sparking a new interest in the region and culture. Anubi are likely to give all three origins as the truth, or even make up a new one, depending on the listener, if they admit to being Anubi at all.

The 'truth', though much of it has been lost to time, is that Anubi are believed to have come into being before Rome's ascendancy over Egypt, and served as dark priests of the dead and shepherds of the living throughout much of the Middle Kingdom. With Rome's arrival, and the eventual decay of the Egyptian priesthood, the Anubi numbers slowly dwindled.

The shrinking bloodline was struck a nearly fatal blow when the Lincea Sanctum drove them from the valley of Thebes. The few Anubi that remain from that time claim that the bloodline once held a blood magic similar to Theban Sorcery, but since their expulsion, have lost that gift.

Since that time, the Anubi have spread around the world, hiding themselves among other Gangrel, in search of either a way to retake their ancient stronghold, or a "New Thebes" from which to build again.

Whatever their true origin, it cannot be argued that the Anubi bloodline is centered on Egyptian mythology. The name of the bloodline comes from Anubis, the guardian of the dead in the Egyptian pantheon. A new member of the bloodline is traditionally and formally inducted into the bloodline with a ceremony that borrows heavily from the ritual of mummification. Although true mummification is not performed (normally, no organs are removed, unless the Avus is in the Circle of the Crone, and the process is done over the course of a few nights, rather than the traditional seventy), the new Anubi is wrapped in linen and rituals are invoked in the name of Anubis to ensure that the Anubi returns from the underworld.

With this touch of death comes the duty of Anubis. The Shepherds of the Dead work with ghosts, to lay them to rest, or send them beyond. Unlike other bloodlines that destroy ghosts wherever they find them, or steal the power

of the restless dead, the Anubi look upon their dealings with ghosts as a duty and burden.

Although a significant number of Anubi remain in Egypt, though not in the valley of Thebes, they can still be found in any city that had a large number of Egyptian artifacts, whether in a museum or university. Several wealthy Anubi maintain large collections of such artifacts, for study, veneration, and personal power within the bloodline.

**Parent Clan:** Gangrel

**Nickname:** Guardians of the Dead (Internal), Jackals (External, derogatory)

**Covenant:** The Anubi may be found in any of the Covenants, with the exception of the Lancea Sanctum. The Sanctified who remain aware of their existence want them eliminated because of the 'proof' they may offer as to the origins of Theban Sorcery.

In the other covenants, the Anubi may take open positions of power and authority, but rarely admit to their bloodline, because of the Sanctified position.

The Anubi who join the Circle of the Crone do so in order to add the power of Crúac to the rituals they perform, but most usually find the practices too disparate to mesh well. A few Anubi do manage a middle ground, and as the Circle of the Crone and as the Anubi have a common dislike and enemy of the Lancea Sanctum, they have been known to work together. Typically, those Anubi who venerate Nephys or Seshat fare the best in the Circle of the Crone. Acolyte Anubi are typically the most obsessive about conflict with the Lancea Sanctum. This ultimately does little to endear them to either Covenant. A number of Anubi have been known to join the Ordo Dracul as they provide a means for the Anubi, as they put it, to "avoid the wrath of Ra". Additionally, Anubi in the Ordo Dracul are fascinated by the Dragon's concept of Wyrms Nests, and believe that the Theban Valley may be one such, but have been unable to return to verify this. A noticeable number of Anubi have joined the Invictus, as they provide a structure and hierarchy they are already familiar with, as well as a means of gathering mundane power. While the Carthian Movement does not offer a similar structure, a number of younger Anubi have joined that Covenant because it is easier for them to hide what they are among the rest of the Carthians.

**Appearance:** While Anubi still residing in Egypt typically look and dress like natives of that country, outside of Egypt, a wide range of appearances is likely. Given that the bloodline contains a fair number of Egyptologists (both professional and amateur), any Anubi residing in the United States or Europe can and is from practically any ethnic group and social standing. When in public, the Anubi do not wear Egyptian items, preferring that their origin remain secret. Only during formal occasions do the

Anubi dress in the attire of Ancient Egypt, at all other times preferring to blend in to avoid questions.

**Haven:** With most Anubi residing near Egyptian collections for ease of access, havens run the gamut from apartments near museums or campuses, to inside the museum or campus itself. Many wealthier Anubi tend to have several rooms in their haven decorated in antiquities and artifacts from Egypt, including mummified animals and carved figures. Certain elder members of the Anubi are reputed to have a communal haven to which they return when the ages press on them too greatly. If true, the quality of the artifacts there would likely be beyond that found in most museums.

The wealthiest of the Anubi maintain mansions that contain one or more rooms devoted to Egyptian artifacts and antiquities, as well as a meeting place for formal gatherings. Such meeting rooms are typically underground and reminiscent of buildings, catacombs, and royal chambers in Egypt, depending on the personal styling of the owner.

Those Anubi without such means either take what Havens they can acquire, typically underground if possible, and as close as possible to any collection of Egyptian artifacts. Basement apartments are preferred, as most Anubi will not stoop so far as to move into sewers or abandoned subway tunnels.

**Background:** The Anubi do not regularly adopt Gangrel from outside the lineage, save in very special cases. Any such adoptions are the result of not only the Gangrel in question showing special interest in Egyptology, but also the ranking Anubi in the area giving permission, usually after ritualistically seeking insight into the matter. Practically all modern Anubi are Embraced because of their interest and devotion to Egyptian lore, mythology, and deities. In fact, many older Anubi have been known to form small mortal cults in order to have a pool of potential recruits into the Bloodline, though that practice has grown less common in the last few decades.

**Character Creation:** It would be an exceptionally rare Anubi who does not have at least some small skill in Occult, and as such, they tend to be more intellectual than other Gangrel so as to better utilize that scholarly focus. While they do not neglect the physical abilities they inherit from their Gangrel progenitors, they are much more likely to favor an even mix of Mental and Physical skills, erring toward the Mental side. As with the Gangrel, they are very honest about their strengths and weaknesses, and as such, there are both warriors and scholars in the bloodline. Social Attributes and Abilities tend to be a lesser concern.

**Clan Disciplines:** Animalism, Protean, Resilience, Auspex

**Weakness:** The Jackals are subject to the weakness of their parent clan. The more they feel the call of the Beast, the more bestial they become, and the more their minds become those of less principled animals. With regard to dice pools based on Intelligence and Wits Attributes, the 10-Again rule does not apply.

In addition to the standard Gangrel weakness, the Anubi are strangely vulnerable to magic. It is believed that this weakness dates to the expulsion of the bloodline from the Valley of Thebes, and prior to this event, the bloodline possessed a different weakness. In game mechanics, Anubi do may not use 10-Again on any rolls to resist magic, vampiric or otherwise.

Additionally, members of the Anubi find themselves 'cursed' with a form of wanderlust beyond that considered 'typical' for Gangrel. They rarely remain in one location for more than a few years; however, the network of connections with other Anubi allows them to 'trade off' a location with another member of the bloodline. Realistically, this may be less a curse, and more a desire to avoid the unwavering glare of the Sanctified. No Anubi may ever learn Theban Sorcery. If a character has learned Theban Sorcery and joins the Anubi bloodline, they immediately lose all their dots and rituals, and the experience points spent on it are not refunded.

**Concepts:** Antiquities scholar, archaeologist, college professor, college student, cult member, Egyptologist, Egyptian native, mystic, seer.

## History

While many Anubi are concerned about the origins of their bloodline, too much time has passed, and too many artifacts have been lost for them to do more than wonder. That history is lost; it only remains for the Anubi to see how they will proceed from here. When the Lancea Sanctum drove the pagan Anubi from Thebes, the remaining elders of the line decreed that the Anubi should "scatter to all the lands under Ra" so that they would not be completely destroyed, and that they should not return to Thebes until they had gained the power necessary to drive the Sanctified from the valley.

The Anubi scattered to the winds, many following the artifacts stolen from Egypt by overeager archeologists. In fact, some Kindred point to this bloodline as the source of the various "Pharaoh's Curses" that followed some of the tomb robbers; though no Anubi claims today to be the deliverer of Tutankhamun's curse.

While the Anubi could not recover the artifacts stolen from their homeland, they could continue to study them, in the hopes that some hint to their lost power may be found. In modern nights, the Anubi prefer to stay near such artifacts, in vain hopes of finding such a remnant of

power. Many of the younger Anubi have begun comparing Egyptian funerary rituals to those of other cultures, especially South American, in hopes finding some hint or path to power there.

**Organization:** When a person is Embraced into the bloodline, or more rarely, pulled from the Gangrel clan, there is a period, usually lasting one to three years, where the prospective member, called the Bak [student] (or Bakat if female), is taught about the history of the bloodline, their duties to the gods and to the restless dead by the Seba [teacher] or Sebat. During this period, the Bak is expected to learn the rites and rituals of the Egypt priests, as well as learning both standard hieroglyphs and the coded meanings the Anubi apply.

After this period it is not uncommon for Anubi to keep in contact with each other, especially in a sire to childe relationship, the common grouping of Anubi is as a priesthood leading a mortal or (rarely) Kindred cult.

When multiple Anubi are in a domain, one holds the position of the Priest of Anubis, with the other Shepherds speaking for other Egyptian deities. In such cases, any duties a given Anubi may have are determined by the god or goddess he chooses to worship (in addition to Anubis).

**What about Set?:** The Anubi do not worship the god Set. This is not because of Set's reputation as a god of evil, which comes from the Hyksos dynasty's selection of Set as chief god, but because they remember the Khaibit, and leave the worship of Set to that bloodline. Common examples of gods worshiped are:

**Thoth / Seshat** - Followers of either of these gods tend to be scholarly, as much as that may seem contradictory for a Gangrel bloodline. While they are aware that they will produce few breakthroughs, the Chosen of Thoth or Seshat are some of the most methodical (detractors would say plodding) scholars in Kindred existence. Priests of Seshat are not uncommon in the Circle of the Crone, where they tend towards the use of anthropomancy (divination through the use of human entrails).

**Amun-Re** - The Anubi who choose to worship Amun-Re are considered unusual in the extreme, as sun gods and vampires rarely seem to get along. Also known as the Guardians of the Boat, the followers of Amun-Re see themselves as both defenders of their bloodline's traditions and as those fated to find an end to vampiric existence. This second viewpoint makes them more likely to join the Ordo Dracul, concentrating on the Coil of Banes, than many other Anubi.

**Anhur-Horus** - The 'warrior faction' of the Anubi, the Select of Anhur-Horus see themselves as the defenders of the bloodline. While they do not openly attack the bloodline's enemies, as such could easily draw the attention of the Lancea Sanctum, they are regularly masters

of tactics, guerrilla warfare and misdirection. The Select are also the most likely to 'assist' ghosts by killing those who caused them to form (which occasionally leads to other ghosts, but that isn't their concern).

**Aaep** - The Touched of Aaep are a heretical branch of the Anubi, who worship the devourer spirit as a means of destroying the Sanctified. Because they regularly make pacts with 'demons', Belial's Brood, or, according to rumor, VII, both their bloodline brothers and other vampires regularly hunt them. It is primarily encounters with this faction of the Anubi that has caused the Lancea Sanctum's overwhelming response to this bloodline. As Shepherds of the Dead, the Anubi seek to quiet the restless dead. While they may gain power from either the dead or grateful living (or undead) for this, the Shepherds perform this task because it is their ancient duty, not for power. They are still vampires, however, so will take most gifts or payments offered.

**Aaep? Amun-Re? Who are these gods?:** There are a couple things to consider when giving the names of Egyptian gods. The first is that their names were written in hieroglyphs; so translating the symbols 'squiggle-fish-eye-falcon' to a name can be difficult. The Greeks and Romans were helpful in this regard, however, but differences still exist. For instance, Set can be Seth, Setesh or Sutekh. Anubis, the Greek version, is more accurately spelled Anpu, but could also be Anup, Anupu, Wip, Ienpw, Inepu, Yinepu, or Inpw.

To make this more complicated, as dynasties changed in Egypt, gods were merged, split apart, imported, raised to leadership and lowered in power. Likewise, which gods were the progenitors of the others likewise changes. Anubis was originally considered the son of Ra (or Re), but eventually became the son of Osiris (or Usiris, Aser, Ausare). As such, with a little research, nearly any god or combination of gods is available for the Anubi to worship.

# Beni Murrahim

By Dustin Gridley  
"Yes sire."

Out of the sands and Mirages of the Middle East comes a Ventrue. He is a silent type whose only goal in unlife was the same as his only goal in mortal life, to serve: A Vizier whose name is unknown, serving his lord or Sultan over the course of uncounted lifetimes. Cast out from his home as an evil Djinn he wandered away into the west in search of someone to serve... At least that's what is speculated. The exact origins of the Beni Murrahim are unknown, but the bloodline's undying passion to serve is well documented. A bloodline of the Ventrue, this clan within a clan has grown swiftly in recent years, and always experiences tremendous growth during wartime when Princes vie for control of turbulent resources. Created some time within the distant past it is said that a young Ventrue followed his heart into the Middle East to serve the Roman Empire as best he could, perhaps following his commanding officers last living order, perhaps to escape the politics and intrigues of his (then) Covenant, perhaps... perhaps, it is really unknown. After having settled in Baghdad, the Jewel of the World, this Ventrue set about securing a place for himself in his new environment. Embracing others from the top of the social food chain he quickly established his undead family as the very best of servitors.

Always the Viziers sought out others to serve and when in that service performed to the best of their abilities. It became custom for a Prince to order the embrace of a new Vizier and gift his fellow Prince with that new, completely loyal and trustworthy, servant. Eventually, as always, there was conflict. The mainstream Ventrue clan decided that they wanted the Viziers for themselves. Loyal as always the bloodline was swayed, cajoled, and then forced to abandon any non-Ventrue masters they might have. In the end there was bloodshed, though not much as the Beni Murrahim, like any other sensible Kindred, abhor needless bloodshed.

With the rise of the Middle Eastern monotheistic religions the Beni Murrahim found yet one more being to serve, a great many becoming loyal followers of the Muslim faith and to a (much) lesser extent Christianity and Judaism. Thus it was that with the decline of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D. the presence of the bloodline also declined in Europe. For three hundred years almost no European Vampire saw, or even heard of a Vizier. With The Moorish invasion of Spain in the eighth

century A.D. however the bloodline made a forceful reappearance in Europe.

Following on the heels of North African Moors came several Ventrue warlords, all of whom used the Beni Murrahim to devastating effect. From their newfound strongholds of Cordoba and Granada these Ventrue spread their influence and that of their most loyal retainers thru-out Spain and (slowly) into Western Europe.

With the renaissance of the 1400's however came the true revival of the Viziers. As princes from all over Europe sent emissaries and Kindred to Northern Italy they received a welcome surprise, for not one Ventrue Prince sent a delegation to Italy but that delegation returned with one of the "most famous of Ventrue bloodlines" at their beck and call. These were no mere servant boys however, only the best were chosen to be inducted into the bloodline, and they only served the best. Philosopher Generals, Primogen, Seneschal, these were the type of people chosen to be Viziers, and they served none less than the Prince himself.

**Parent Clan:** Ventrue

**Nickname:** Viziers

**Covenant:** Of course there are no Carthians, no Beni Murrahim worth his salt would, nor even could, support anarchy in it's purest form, nor this 'democracy' that the Carthians revere. Most Viziers find solace in the Invictus, as it is the very foundation of order and leadership within Kindred society. A substantial number of Viziers also look to the Lancea Sanctum (particularly the Iblic Creed), as there is no greater being to serve than God himself.

Despite the obvious power to be found in the Circle of the Crone and the Ordo Dracul the number of Viziers that can be found in either covenant can be counted on one hand. The Covenants simply do not call to those who serve.

**Appearance:** The oldest of the Beni Murrahim are from the Middle East and their physical visage says as much. Many Ancillae are from Spain and Italy and tend to keep the fashions of their embrace. Younger Kindred can be from anywhere as the Beni Murrahim bloodline has spread as far as their parent clan. Regardless of age the Viziers always keep a professional appearance, clean cut and sober, the better to serve their lords.

**Haven:** Many Beni Murrahim simply live with their masters, pooling haven points, or so close to them that they can be found in their masters chambers within minutes of being notified. They tend to have rather drab havens, not worrying too much about art or fashion, as neither will have much impact on their services. When pooling haven backgrounds the Beni Murrahim tend to spend a great deal of points on security and/or location as both are essential to the comfort and safety of their master.

**Background:** Viziers do not choose who will enter their bloodline, rather, it is their master who picks, and orders the embrace of, the new Beni Murrahim. Indeed some Ventrue princes go so far as to breed acceptable stock for the embrace, taking generations to accrue just the right qualities and training in a prospect.

This bloodline, though they are servants to others, are not simply butlers and mafioso yes men, though these exist in extreme rarity, are intended to be the greatest of servant-leaders. Military generals, political advisors, senior VP's of a Fortune 500 company, these are the types chosen for the Embrace, and only after they have proven themselves worthy in their mortal positions are they even considered. Needless to say, in modern nights, greater care must be taken in these selections, to protect the Masquerade. After the Embrace the newly created Vampire is often tutored only for a few months before being sent off to serve their new masters.

As for being inducted into the bloodline it is a rare happening indeed. Many who seek acceptance into the bloodline do so for safety purposes, figuring it is better to serve in heaven than rule in hell. Those rare few who are accepted into the bloodline do so only after years, or even decades, of proven loyalty and service. Local Sheriffs, Primogen, and Seneschals are often the only ones even considered for this dubious honor.

Rare is the Ventrue who would stoop to servitude but when there is no other choice to protect oneself from political adversaries or when there is no other viable road to power one may request induction.

**Character Creation:** Though all Viziers realize the importance of social powers and skills, especially empathy, an ignorant servant is no servant at all. Thus mental attributes are often highest, with an intelligence of at least three. Since it aids in all facets of service, many Viziers develop their Investigation skills to a prodigious degree. There are as many personal bodyguards as there are politicians in the Beni Murrahim and thus physically

primary characters are a commonality with emphasis on defensive martial arts. As Auspex, even at lower levels, allows a character to know what is going on about her it is often a pillar on her character sheet. Also since a true bodyguard is willing to take any hit for her master Resilience also stands as a pillar of strength on the sheet.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Auspex, Dominate, Resilience, Vigor

**Weakness:** Suffering also from the parent clans curse, with derangements such as Dependant-Personality Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder being the most common, the Viziers also carry a curious and unique weakness inherited from the unknown founder of their bloodline. His desire to serve, and the fact that he Embraced only the best of servants, led to the bloodline developing a requirement to serve a lord. Every Vizier must declare whom they will serve; if there is no Ventrue to serve they will move on and find another. When without the clear leadership of a master the Beni Murrahim suffer a -3 penalty to all rolls. This penalty is immediate, should a Viziers master die and she know it, she immediately suffers this penalty until she is accepted as a servant to another master. (Note: No you cannot say your character serves "God" or any other amorphous being, s/he must serve an actual active, not torpid, PC or NPC.)

**Organization:** Since the members of the Beni Murrahim are servants, they have no real organization within their own ranks. Each strives to best serve his or her master to the best of their capabilities, and any social organization within the ranks would only serve to distract from that. This is not to say the Viziers eschew political positions, far from it. There is no better way to serve your Prince than to be his Seneschal, Sheriff or, lowliest of all, Primogen. In fact it is somewhat common practice to appoint a Vizier to the position of Primogen, just to keep them close and in the thick of things where their talents can best be utilized. On occasion local Beni Murrahim meet in a sort of gentleman's club to "take a night off." They smoke cigars, chat quietly and indulge in secret pleasures, earning bragging rights as to who is the best servant.

**Concepts:** Primogen, Loyal Toady, Apprentice, PR Agent, Bodyguard, Religious Sycophant, Military Advisor.

**Symbol:** A square Muslim art frame, in the center of which is the Roman numeral II.

# Cassian

By Chris Burns

*"I had as lief not be as live to be In awe of such a thing as I myself."*

*- Cassius, Julius Caesar, I, ii by William Shakespeare*

Bloodlines are proud collections of Kindred bound together by powerful blood and ideals. Drawn together by a philosophy or their desires or simply by blood, members of bloodlines usually treat one another well. This is not the case with the Cassian offshoot of the Ventrue.

Founded in America in the late 18th century, the Cassians have changed from a cohesive group of political operatives to a family of distrust and deceit. The very nature of the members is what has split them apart. Alliances are shaky in the Danse Macabre. For a bloodline to be so actively joined together striving for common goals is rare, and the Cassians are a stark example of why this is so.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the bloodline has been engaged in a shadowy war against itself. Sires turn against their Childer, coterie collapse, and the future of the bloodline itself is uncertain. Each member uses their skills and gifts to further their own goals, always at the expense of other members. In recent years the infighting has grown so bad, most Cassians do not acknowledge their bloodline at all. Those Kindred that have heard of it believe the Cassians to be just another lineage lost to the ages. Some Ventrue do realize it is a separate bloodline, but are ignorant to most of its history. Even among the Cassians themselves, much has been lost and their true history is. A select few Elders know the true history of their bloodline, and they are loath to share it with upstart Ancillae and Neonates.

Hatred and distrust fracture the bloodline, even tonight. This is fortunate for Kindred society. If the Cassians could return to their roots and work together towards a common goal, the results would be both swift and frightening.

**Parent Clan:** Ventrue

**Nickname:** Partisans

**Covenants:** Politics and scheming is central to who the Cassians are, so it is unsurprising that the majority of the bloodline belongs to the Invictus. The First Estate welcomes members into their ranks. A Partisan's abilities alone make her a formidable component for the plans of the Unconquered. The combination of potent political talents and the gifts of their bloodline allow many Cassians

to rise through the ranks of the Invictus with little difficulty.

Newer members have not been joining the First Estate, however. Young Cassians find the ideals and politics of the Carthian Movement more to their liking than the old views and feudal system favored by the Invictus. Some join for personal freedom, some for their progressive ideals, and yet still others join the Carthians seeing a vast field of untouched potential they can shape and mold as they see fit.

The most political of the covenants are not the only ones the Carthians join. While the politics of the Lancea Sanctum are more straightforward, members who faith is strong find solace in the Second Estate. The Ordo Dracul plays host to a handful of Partisans as well. Their political goals and personal advancement usually fit hand in hand, and so members are well suited to accept the philosophies of the Dragons. There are few, if any, Cassians in the Circle of the Cronos.

**Appearance:** Cassians dress well; their bearing is classic Ventrue. Power suits, long flowing dresses and conservative looks are popular amongst members, though some newer Partisans dress more in accordance with modern business casual standards. Some members dress in the manner of college dissidents, their extreme liberal views being more important than their appearance.

It is the rare Cassian elder that shuns modern garb for the attire of courts long past. While late 18th century clothing is out of style even for the eldest of the Partisans, a scant few favor late 19th and early 20th century looks, eras dominated by classic American statesmen.

**Haven:** Like their parent clan, Cassian havens are symbols of their power and influence. Penthouses, mansions and sprawling estates are very common homes for members. They take great care to secure their havens against their enemies, even at the expense of a convenient location. Typically, Cassians have their havens outside of major cities, in tiny neighborhoods.

While they respect the tradition of offering a safe haven to other Ventrue, the tradition does not include their fellow Partisans. In the past, other members welcomed

each other warmly into their homes. When the bloodline fractured politically, for their safety, they began to refuse each other the traditional hospitality out of fear for their unives. While members are proud of their lineage, they do not flaunt their association with the bloodline. This makes any request by a Ventrue for a safe haven a tricky situation for Cassians tonight.

**Background:** Politicians, corrupt and otherwise, are the preferred stock from which Partisans choose their childer. Chosen for their abilities to manipulate and exploit, new Partisans quickly immerse themselves in Kindred politics, setting up their own plans and establishing long-term goals. A very few are chosen to be used as pawns in the schemes of their Sires. These pawns quickly learn the ways of court, or they suffer decades, if not centuries, of being nothing more than a lackey. Many Sires are pleased when their childer are able to escape their plans, but this pleasure quickly passes as the Elder Partisan now as a new, young rival, one who may know more than the Elder wishes.

**Character Creation:** As masters of political arenas and exploiters of other Kindred, Partisans tend toward high Social and Mental traits. Presence, Manipulation, Wits and Composure are usually above average, allowing the Cassians to control the flow of a conversation. It is the rare Partisan that has high Strength, as they often manipulate others into doing their dirty work. Since they make enemies as often as they make allies, members tend to have decent Dexterity and Stamina, to help survive more physical interactions. Social skills are the bread and butter of the Partisans. Empathy, Persuasion and Intimidation form the basis of their court tactics. A solid understanding of Politics greatly helps them size up the local scene, allowing them to choose their targets carefully. While members do not place large stock in Physical Skills, many Cassians are proficient in Stealth, which they use for inconspicuous exits from dangerous situations.

Partisans tend to have multiple levels of Allies, Contacts, Resources and Status. Without these their nightly attempts to manipulate and control the courts of the Kindred would be far more difficult. Secure Havens are prized; safeguards against the foes they tend to accumulate.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Animalism, Dominate, Majesty, Resilience

**Weakness:** In addition to the normal Ventrue clan weakness the Cassians are very manipulative and prone to losing their humanity in their drive to control the night. They retain the Ventrue clan weakness, suffering -2 penalty to Humanity rolls to avoid acquiring derangements after failing a degeneration roll.

With their social skills and powers of exploitation, the Partisans have become loath to lower themselves to do 'menial' labor. They rely on others to get their hands dirty, while they reap the rewards. With regards to dice pools

based on Strength or Dexterity in physical situations, the 10-again rule does not apply. Additionally, any 1s that come up on a roll are subtracted from successes. (This latter part of the weakness does not affect dramatic-failure rules.) This weakness does not apply to dice pools involving the Stealth skill or Initiative, or the Stamina Attribute.

**Organization:** In the early days of the bloodline, the Cassians were quite organized. Pooling their resources and working towards common goals, they held great sway and steered the politics of their contemporaries. This did not last long however. Individual members began to push their own goals and desires, often conflicting with their fellow Partisans. In a few short decades, most members actively opposed their cousins, and the Cassian bloodline became a hotbed of internal politics. Such activities slowed, or completely stopped, their dominance of the courts.

In modern nights the Cassians, while proud of their abilities and their heritage, tend to target fellow members seeing them as threats to their plans. Two or more Cassians in one city typically devote most of their resources to undermining each other. Once one has achieved dominance over his fellow Partisans, they return their attention back to their goals, always keeping an eye on their defeated, but still dangerous, cousins.

**Concepts:** Corporate lobbyist, local glad-hander, cynical political operative, corrupt union official, idealistic trust fund brat, bootlicking sycophant, revolutionary firebrand, elder statesman, liberal agitator, political apologist, conservative zealot, media propagandist

## *History*

Creighton Woodsworth-Booker was already a Ventrue and member of the Invictus when he left England in 1703 for the American colonies. After nearly a century serving his Invictus lords in London, Creighton felt the need for change, and the lands of America were ripe for the taking. He landed in Boston in late 1703 and soon integrated into the local Kindred society.

Within a matter of months, he controlled a number of money lending and banking establishments through well conditioned retainers. Creighton, his base of power now established and his haven secure, fully entered the politics of his fellow Kindred. Always a passionate debater and political philosopher, the mindset of colonial America proved a fertile ground for his discussions and ideas. Out from under the thumb of his Invictus lords, especially his sire, Creighton left the First Estate and joined the area's growing Carthian Movement. Creighton rose higher in the Boston courts with the last of his ties to the Old World cut. His own agenda took precedence now and the anger of the Invictus grew; not only had one of their own left the

First Estate, they left for the Carthian Movement, and Creighton undermined their plans for the region.

Creighton threw his support behind the colonists when they cried for independence. He was very sympathetic to their cause after throwing off his own masters. He did not become personally involved in the conflict; the Ventrue used his influence and resources instead. He smuggled supplies and information to the mortal populace. One night, personally overseeing a smuggled shipment of meat and tea, Creighton found his Requiem changing.

The entire shipment had been set up to draw Creighton out and assassinate him. His Sire had not been pleased to hear of her childe's treachery; she had taken it quite personally. She arranged for the supply ship to arrive and she arranged for the assassin onboard it. Caught unaware, Creighton very nearly met his Final Death. Only the quick intervention of his loyal retainers spared his life. Distracted by the mortals, the assassin reacted too slowly to the recovered Creighton's sword and paid the ultimate price. The strain of nearly dying, killing his would-be assassin, and the dawning realization that his sire was behind it all slowly took its toll on Creighton. He found himself falling to the curse of his Ventrue blood; his mind shattered. Creighton withdrew from the politics he loved so dearly, retreating into the arms of his second passion, his library. He found solace in his books and plays, but in the end the words on the pages merely helped shape his dementia, not stave it off.

Creighton had a deep love for the works of Shakespeare, and during this troubled time he read the bard's plays incessantly. By the time he was finished, he saw himself as Cassius, the famed Roman who helped orchestrate the assassination of Julius Caesar. He was tired of the tyranny of the Invictus. He had left to join the Carthians. He was trying to give power back to the people. Like Cassius wanted to. Reading the story of Cassius, his mind rationalized the events of the previous months. Wounds knitted together and gaps filled. A fortnight later, wholly supplanted by his dementia, the Kindred that emerged from seclusion was no longer Creighton Woodsworth-Booker. Only Cassius remained.

Choosing revolutionaries who were politically minded, but wished to stay behind the scenes, Cassius soon had half a dozen childer. They worked with him to strengthen the Carthian Movement in the area, as well as the ward off the attacks of the Invictus and further the cause of the American Revolution. Cassius's dementia drove him, his followers unaware of the vast changes that had occurred to his psyche; his fervor and passion mesmerized them. Combining their talents they held great sway in the politics of Kindred and Kine. Under Cassius's leadership, they thrived.

Then the war ended. The colonies won their independence. Cassius was pleased, but the years, and changes that had occurred, weighed heavily on him. He gathered his childer and announced to them he would soon take the Sleep of Ages. He left it to them to continue his work. It was his biggest mistake.

Without their Sire to lead them, the childer turned away from their cohesive goals and furthered their own initiatives and schemes. The newly freed colonies held more potential than ever and the temptation to mold the growing nation to fit their own view proved too much for the young Kindred. Within decades they had turned from a strong coterie upholding the ideals of the Carthian Movement, to a fractious brood that had jumped sides to whatever covenant was most convenient for the individual. By the end of the 18th century the Cassians spread out, leaving Boston for other domains. The weakest of their number fled first; the strongest stayed trying to claim Boston as their own. Wherever Cassians found fellow members conflict erupted. Smear campaigns, backstabbing politics, and even guerilla attacks were common occurrences between Partisans. Easily distracted by their rivals, few were able to further their own designs. Tonight, Cassians actively seek domains devoid of Partisans. Without the threat of their most dangerous rivals, the members are free to immerse themselves in local, even regional, politics, gaining notoriety and power.

## *Society and Culture*

Politics and intrigue will a Partisan's nights. Whether they are seeing to their own plans or ruining the plans of their rivals, every night holds opportunity for those that wish to seize it. They attend every court they can reasonably make, often traveling far outside of their domain to see to the farthest-reaching branches of their designs.

When not actively scheming, Partisans enjoy the nightlife of the mortal world. Many own nightclubs and restaurants and frequent such places, enjoying the trappings of a life that is not truly theirs. Members attend plays, art exhibits and other such high society functions as well. While some do enjoy the culture they expose themselves to, each and every one looks at social occasions as a way of increasing their status and power. A new ally or contact gained at such an event is one more they have and one less their rivals do. Cassians not only use such events to pass the time and create new alliances, but also as a place to hunt. Occasionally the Partisan will host the gala herself, creating a Herd for her needs. It is the rare Partisan that ventures out into the city streets to hunt. Few enjoy just 'slumming', but it does happen from time to time, whether the member does so out of necessity or for a change of pace.

Each member also heavily involves themselves in the politics of the city. Rigging elections, leaking scandalous

information to the press, and general muckraking allow Partisans to create a cityscape more to their liking. Often, this gives members quite some latitude when dealing with potential Masquerade breaches. Applying funds, calling in favors, and sometimes just a simple phone call can help alleviate a potentially messy situation. The Kindred courts look favorably on such gracious acts, while the Partisan gains more influence and normally a large debt on the part of the offender.

Few Cassians hold Praxis. The posts of Seneschal, Master of Elysium, and Harpy are often enough to make members content. Preferring to be kingmakers than king, Partisans are able to shift politics in directions they wish while not making themselves the largest target for potential rivals. As

long as the political scene remains stable enough to offer safety and pliable enough to work with, members rarely feel the need to take matters into their own hands.

In courts they rely on their Social skills most often, resorting only to the Disciplines of Dominate and Majesty when absolutely needed. Partisans do not like showing their hand, and overt use of their powers marks them as something other than a typical Ventrue. Not only does cause others to be more wary in their presence, but alerting a fellow member of their existence is always a concern.

# Matasuntha

By Christopher Grice and Matthew Sanderson

"Honor is like an island, rugged and without a beach; once we have left it, we can never return"

- Nicholas Boileau

History is written by the winners. One victim of this fact is the Huns. Forever tarred with the brush of being a race of peoples that raped and pillaged their way forever westward across Asia, eventually reaching Eastern Europe, they are remembered as little more than a group of savages.

Wrong. The Huns were one of the most efficiently organized military bodies of the old world, able to move with lightning fast readiness and proficient in many forms of weaponry. They were not one whole nation of peoples, but a blanket term that covered many tribes. One such tribe was the Matasuntha. They came into existence fairly late into the golden age of Hun activity in Eastern Europe, but have since definitively made their mark on Kindred politics in that area.

Embraced from the ranks of the Huns, and subsequently from military bodies across the years and countries of Eastern Europe they are still as highly organized as they were on the night of their creation and are growing from strength to strength. They offer a simple service in these vicious nights: bodyguard protection for Gangrel princes. Driven by honor, they are some of the most noble and just Kindred that walk the modern nights, and equally as deadly.

From a castle retreat, Castle Adler, deep in the mountains, they often train perpetually, ready for the night when they are called upon to defend the honor and safety of a prince they are sworn to protect. God help anyone that gets in their way...

**Parent Clan:** Gangrel

**Nickname:** Birds of Prey

**Covenant:** The fundamental driving force for the Matasuntha is clan. They protect Gangrel princes. Politics is of no issue to them. They don't care if a Prince is Crone, Invictus, Sanctum, or any other covenant - blood is the beginning, it is the end, it is everything. For this simple reason, since the bloodline is one massively organized fighting force, they remain completely neutral of politics

and are all unaligned, with absolutely no exceptions. Anyone that even considers delving into politics has no place in the bloodline and would never have been offered membership in the first place.

There is, however, a story that is passed throughout the ranks of the Matasuntha of a Hawk who turned to join the Invictus. He joined the covenant and it was at least a decade, quite possibly longer, when another member found out about this. Since the Matasuntha act as lone bodyguards for a Prince and he had been serving in what would become Eastern Germany for sometime, he had had no contact with his superiors for sometime. When the truth of his allegiances had been found out, the Order of the Vulture (see below) was dispatched and dealt with him.

His ashes were scattered on the wind from the highest tower of Castle Adler and his name was forever struck from records to serve as a warning to others who might decide to challenge their impartiality. This does raise questions amongst the younger members though. Was the story real? Are there others who are currently hiding political allegiances in the bloodline, hiding from the eyes of the Falcon himself?

**Appearance:** The Matasuntha often favors simplistic clothes. Nothing extravagant, nothing brightly colored. They value practicality above all else. Like most Kindred in the modern nights, they have a fondness for black, which serves two purposes. One, they blend in the natural vampiric surroundings, and two, it makes them harder to spot in the darkness of the mountain nights. This is far from a uniform, since that would give away the element of surprise they have when stepping forward to defend their client. The large part of the Kindred population (i.e. outside the Gangrel clan) doesn't even know they exist, which is one of their key strengths.

**Haven:** Just like their appearance, practicality is the key word for the bloodline. If anything, their havens couldn't really be described as a living space of any form, but more like a form of gymnasium. Many members of the bloodline

don't even have havens, they simply meld into the fields and stone at night and practice their killing arts in the woods by the light of the moon. Those that do have either the money to invest in a haven, or a suitable building before the cold touch of the embrace favor places in the less populated areas of towns. Basements that would make ideal venues for a fight club are the most typical. No wallpaper, no creature comforts. Merely a place to train and hide from the sun until darkness falls across the land once more each night. As such they need not be particularly grand on the Size front, or Location, but Security is one thing they take very seriously. No-one catches a Matasuntha unaware, especially not in their own haven, so they have the place sealed up tighter than Fort Knox, with multiple layers of warning systems to alert them of a potential intruder, as well as traps to ensnare and kill such unwelcome guests.

**Background:** As previously mentioned, the Matasuntha only embrace those from a highly trained military background. Ex-special forces for the Eastern European countries, former members of secret police bodies (including the infamous Stasi during the Cold War) all came under their field of interest and were cultivated as potential recruits. Only the best of them made it through – those that didn't make the grade were either turned away or died in the process of evaluation. There can be no weakness in the team and those who fall short don't get to be a part of it. Upon occasion they have also turned to the world of organized crime for their new members, targeting hit men and professional heavies, but (somewhat unsurprisingly) when they have identified these people through investigation of past military activity and found this as the profession the ex-serviceperson went into.

While originally 'confined' to Eastern Europe, with the fall of the Soviet bloc, younger members of the bloodline have slowly expanded into other regions; however they remain rare in most locations.

**Character Creation:** It goes without saying, but the physical attributes and skills are favored amongst the bloodline, particular dexterity, followed by strength and stamina on an equal footing. This is to reflect the lightning fast reaction time and mobility of the Huns from which they are derived. Kill the opposition before they can land a blow on the target, etc. Mental attributes come second, followed by Social. No need to make any speeches when pulling a knife across someone's throat.

Members of the bloodline also are highly recommended to take at least the first level of Animalism and purchase a retainer, since they make excellent companions and scouts when keeping an eye on targets, etc. Hawks and wolves are amongst the most popular choices of animal and they are often ghouled to enhance their effectiveness and capabilities. Likewise, they are normally named in a very spiritual fashion and become a totem of sorts to a group of

the Matasuntha in any one city at one time. Animal Ken is also highly recommended to supplement and aid in their relationship with the retainer. It is also mandatory that members take at the very least one Weapon Proficiency. Hand-to-hand and long-range weapons are both acceptable since the bloodline also trains highly proficient marksmen in keeping with the Hun Bow that was developed long ago in their mortal past.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Animalism, Celerity, Protean, Resilience.

**Weakness:** In addition to the flaw of their parent clan, the Matasuntha also suffer from two particular disadvantages. Firstly, given their clan's affinity with nature and tendency to use animals as companions/resources, they highly dislike feeding from animals. Matasuntha have to make succeed in a Resolve + Composure test to feed from animals. Should they fail this test, they lose a Willpower point to represent the struggle. Additionally, succeed or fail, they are filled with such revulsion that they are down -1 in all challenges for the rest of the scene.

Even if they see someone feeding from an animal, they must make this Resolve + Composure test. If they succeed, they are revolted but remain calm. If they fail, they must undergo a frenzy check (Difficulty of 2 successes), to which the second of their disadvantages applies; Birds of Prey suffer a two-point penalty on all frenzy checks. Additionally, the call of the wild and hunt that pounds in the heart of every Gangrel is stronger in the Matasuntha. Being master predators, they find it difficult to restrain themselves from taking part only in hunts on people that threaten the Princes they are sworn to protect. This held in rage and bloodlust has to blow off sometime, and it does so in those moments when the Matasuntha are close to frenzy. This is the price they pay for their code of honor.

**Organization:** The rank and structure of the bloodline is of a very much a militaristic basis. However, they have cast aside such terms as Private and Colonel in favor of more naturalistic titles. The lowest rank, similar to a Private in the regular army, is that of Owl. These are new recruits who are still progressing in training and yet to score their first kill in the line of duty. They move in packs of three, and indeed this is the only time outside of a training environment that members of the bloodline act in groups, period. Most of their time is spent training in Castle Eagle to refine the arts of killing and combat perfection. The next step up is the Hawks (akin to a Sergeant). These are warriors who have proven themselves in the heat of combat with a foe and have earned the right to stand beside a Prince as their bodyguards. There is only ever one bodyguard assigned to a single Prince at one time. Since this is the most populous area of the Matasuntha, there is going to be a disparity between their numbers and the numbers of Princes they currently protect. This is becoming an ever-increasing issue as the bloodline

continues to expand. Those who are not engaged in active duty often spend their time in perpetual practice or helping to train the Owls. A few select others act as messengers communicating news very infrequently to members scattered across Eastern Europe.

Above the Hawks are perched the Vultures, the right hand of the Eagles. The Vultures are the internal police as such of the Matasuntha. They remove unwanted problems and see to it that Eagle policy and orders are maintained. These are feared throughout the bloodline (even by the Eagles themselves to a certain degree) for their borderline humanity. Treated like old dynamite they are handled with care and only ever brought out to deal with a problem when absolutely necessary. However, when they are brought out, they deal with the situation like no others could do. They might well be some of the most dangerous, vicious and bloodthirsty Kindred the walk the shadows in these nights.

At the head of the bloodline, in Castle Adler, sit the Council of Eagles. These individuals are well known throughout the clan in Eastern Europe and are the direct point of call for those Princes that wish to employ the services of a Hawk. One member always has a deciding vote in the case of ties and they handle issues in a semi-democratic way amongst themselves. They negotiate payment, the length of contracted service for a Hawk, locations where they will be based, etc. and generally command the operations of the bloodline across Eastern Europe. They are the greatest tactical minds in the Matasuntha, which leaves them envied by some as despised by others as being nothing more than old warriors who have lost the taste for the kill in the modern nights. An opinion such as the latter couldn't be further from the truth.

**Concepts:** Ex-military, mercenaries, professional fighters, hit men, street fighters.

## History

The roots of the Matasuntha lay in the Golden Age of the Hun reign. Golmet wasn't a particularly revered warrior amongst his tribe, but he had a deep-seated sense of honor and was a master falconer. When he gave his word, he would rather die than break it. One such oath he swore to the leader of his tribe is that he would escort their emissary to meet with the head of another nearby tribe to discuss various matters of trade and co-coordinated efforts in the conquest of the immediate Western lands.

Escorting the emissary proved to necessitate a nighttime journey to ensure an arrival at the allotted time. Passing through a narrow mountain pass, they were ambushed by four men on horseback and one archer above them, out of sight. Standing at the front of the party after the scouts fell without much resistance, Golmet held off the four

members of the opposition whilst he let loose his trusted falcon to deal with the archer. A few moments later, the arrows stopped falling and were replaced by the one eyed corpse of their caster, the falcon still pecking at the fresh open socket.

Being only one man, and outnumbered four to one, the best that the noble warrior could do was to fend off the four for as long as he possibly could. Exhaustion took its toll and in a moment of weakness, a split second before his blade could parry, he was mortally wounded. In a last, desperate, furious rage, knowing all was lost; he flew himself at the four and killed two. Kneeling on the ground, his vision failing him, the third man brought up his blade to sever the Hun's head from his body, only to be stopped by the fourth. In the moments before Golmet finally blacked out, he remembered them carrying him down the pass to the sound of one final swift thrust behind him.

Several nights later, only barely holding onto life in the attacker's camp, he learned they had executed the emissary from the fourth man. He tried to lunge himself onto a sword in response, claiming his honor and sacred trust had been broken. The fourth man took the blade away from him like taking candy from a baby, the noble warrior's strength had deteriorated so vastly. It was in this time they finally began to talk with words and not actions.

The fourth man, and leader, of the group introduced himself as Mankor. He explained that he had been looking for a man such as him for a long while now and that Golmet was a very rare breed indeed. Each of the other members of the small tribe had been nothing in comparison to the strength and courage he had displayed that night on the mountain pass. He couldn't let such talent, such devotion and courage go to waste. The Gangrel embraced him.

Mankor explained that Golmet had been misled. He was following a false leader, a mortal leader. There were others out there that fed on the mortals, just as Mankor had planned to do on the group making their way through the pass, with the help of his retainers. These held the true power in the world and with Golmet's help, the two of them could bring honor and meaning to this world. Indoctrinated fairly painlessly into the ways of vampiric society, the two of them moved back into the Hun lands where they prospected for members to join them, and thus the bloodline was formed.

In the mountains of Eastern Europe some fifty years later, as the pair swelled to double figures, the party came across a deserted castle - its former occupants having been 'removed' by the Huns on their advance further westward. They claimed the castle as their own and christened it after the giant stone statue of an Eagle that sat over the main portcullis - Castle Adler, German for Eagle.

From here, in the seclusion of the mountains, with no human inhabitants for tens of miles, they became at one with nature, using it as a friend, ally and weapon. They trained themselves to become the best warriors Europe had ever seen in the vampiric world and then set about searching the countryside for Princes of their blood that needed their help. The rest is history. News of their existence spread like wildfire amongst the clan in Eastern Europe and their services were as equally sought after then as they are now. Ready to move with supernatural swiftness, they can deploy themselves to come to the aid of a Prince in no time at all. There is little sign they are about to change their ways, and since it is such a winning formula, no one can blame them either.

## Society and Culture

Life begins in the bloodline from the moment they are chosen to become members. Background investigation takes place in a city where a Hawk has been positioned to serve in, wherein they check the potential for the qualities they seek (in particular, their sense for maintaining a neutrality, etc.). They approach the candidate head on and give them little choice other than to accept the embrace or the cold touch of death. Many accept the former and become Owls.

Training takes many years (decades is not an exceptionally large figure to use in the grand scale of things) in Castle Alder. In this time, they have to pass through several rites of passage, from the likes of coming to find the weapon they are most adept at using, finding their animal companion for life in the wilderness in the mountain range and finally being able to claim first blood

on an enemy – targets identified by Hawks as potential threats to a Prince that can be used as prey for the Owls.

After this, service to a Prince and constant training become their way of life – a life that rapidly becomes solitary outside of their relationship with their animal companions. Advancement to the ranks of the Vultures and the Eagles themselves is a very rare occurrence, since it only happens with the death of one of their members. The last reported ascension of a Hawk to a Vulture (the last recent ascension of any kind for a Hawk) was over 250 years ago.

For the Matasuntha, the duty of protecting a Prince is its own reward. However, the Eagles deem that the Prince keeps a standard payment. This generally takes the form a large personal hunting ground that no other Kindred may enter and a haven located within said area. From here, the Hawk looks for potential new recruits in the city they are based within and the cycle of induction begins once more, meaning the bloodline is one of the largest and steadily growing in the modern nights. Just how many of them there are though, no one knows, and the Matasuntha certainly are not saying a word on the matter. Other than the initial rites that an Owl takes part in, society and culture become almost obsolete terms to describe their existence. Honor and devotion to the cause they have surrendered themselves wholeheartedly into performing takes over and eventually consumes them. It is a small price to pay, in their eyes, for a sacred duty that they believe none other are better equipped to perform, and will go on performing it, they believe until the end of the very world itself.

# MNEMOSYNE

BY CHRISTOPHER GRICE AND MATTHEW SANDERSON

"THE MORE CONNECTIONS THAT CAN BE MADE IN THE BRAIN, THE MORE INTEGRATED THE EXPERIENCE IS WITHIN MEMORY." – DON CAMPBELL

"Personality is built on the sum of one's memories, for without them we are like a ship lost at sea without a compass, having no idea where we are going or from where we once came." So wrote the founder of the bloodline named after the Greek Goddess of memory and mother of the Muses. Despite their name, the Mnemosyne emerged into the vampiric scene relatively recently, born out of a combination of drug experiments, science and the occult. Its small numbers are dedicated to the preservation of memory and feelings amongst themselves, through which they seek to unlock the doors of their minds to establish a most powerful resource: the hive mind.

They have drawn upon the symbolism of the zodiac, these young Kindred have each taken the name of a sign and have come to, in one way or another, personify that chosen symbol. Their reasoning behind this is that the zodiac represents a complete cycle that encompasses the human subconscious. The stars dictate a person's fate and their personality. By walking the path following these lines of fate and predetermination they hope to make the opening of the gateways into the vaults of the mind all that more easier. Only they though know how far they have walked down this path.

Working together as a mental gestalt, they have already made their mark on politics of the undead in a large way. Their powers of invading peoples minds with the subject being almost totally unaware had led them to become some of the most potent and reputable interrogators, spies and general Devil's Advocates throughout the world. With only thirteen in existence, their services are highly sought, and they don't come cheaply either, for their payment doesn't just come in commodities like wealth or riches... but in memories themselves.

**Parent Clan:** Mekhet

**Nickname:** Zodiacs

**Covenant:** Zodiacs are very much wild cards when it comes to political leanings. Whilst their individual personalities do a lot of the choosing, their outlook as a whole would seem to suggest that they gravitate more towards the likes of the Ordo Dracul and the Invictus rather than any others. The studies and experimentation they perform are very much in line with the former, and

their support to and maintaining of the status quo, the second. Their structure, however (see below) also implies they would be quite at home amongst the Carthian Movement. Despite all this, it does not stop any member from making their own decision based on their own personal beliefs.

**Appearance:** Varying wildly from member to member, there is little that could compare one to another. One might be found wearing their hippie remnants of the sixties, and others still found dressed in sharp business suits, others in lab coats, etc. There is no such thing as a stereotype when you are trying to form a metaphorical representation of the entire human psyche.

**Haven:** Having come from a scholarly background, the members of the bloodline have very well stocked, but not necessarily well-organized havens. Equipment and textbooks can be littered everywhere to being meticulously catalogued depending upon the member. They are, as a rule of thumb, generally close to a library or other place of learning, so they can utilize this as a potential resource in the course of their studies, etc.

**Background:** To date, none of the original thirteen members of the bloodline have met the end of their requiem. However, if any ever where to, they would immediately have to fill their ranks to ensure their experiment continues. They would look for people with backgrounds similar to their own. Someone highly educated and intelligent with an active interest in the occult, but coming from a scientific perspective; someone willing to push the boundaries of experimentation in order to get results; someone willing to pay a great personal cost to get what they want. Unsurprisingly enough then that they base themselves fairly close to places of learning so they are always keeping an eye on potential new recruits should one of their members ever fall in the course of their joint Requiem.

**Character Creation:** Mental attributes are highly prized, as are skills in occult and various sciences (most notably parapsychology). Social skills come next down the line of preference. Physical prowess generally comes in last place of concern. These are occult scholars and scientists more adept to fighting with their minds and words than with weapons and fists. Regarding disciplines, Auspex and

Dominate are their top priorities, since they are the vehicles that make the process of memory transference possible. It is important to know that the merit 'Eidetic Memory' is mandatory for members of the Mnemosyne.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Auspex, Celerity, Dominate, Obfuscate

**Weakness:** Having the ability to effectively experience the lifetime's worth of memories from another Kindred, they have grown a taste for this that could well be called an addiction. They have become very passionate about this subject as they are continually wishing to experience new feelings and seeing history from numerous different stances. This has led to many calling them Daeva trapped in Mekhet bodies.

If presented with the opportunity to experience new sensations or gather new information, they must take that opportunity immediately, or lose two Willpower points per incident. In the case of dangerous sensations, such as skydiving or stock car racing, they may take the proper precautions before engaging in the activity. This weakness does not apply to blatantly lethal situations.

Additionally, if given the opportunity to telepathically examine a subject, they must spend a Willpower point to stop.

**Organization:** Democracy and free will play a large part in the Organization of the bloodline (if organization is the correct word to use). They each took/were given a name according to a symbol of the zodiac upon their embrace and this dictates the path that they are to take in their Requiem. Since then, they walk their own paths, have scattered across the globe (although they meet regularly, see below) and have little by way of a command structure. They keep in regular contact via telepathic links so each one knows what each other one is doing over the course of the nights, but other than that, they are self supporting, individual Kindred making their way through each night as it comes.

**Concepts:** University students, occult scholars, hippies, drug users, New-Age believers, book worms, academics, teachers, lecturers, etc.

## HISTORY

In the summer of 1965 at the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit at Goldsmiths College (part of the University of London), Catherine DeLacey stood up in the lecture theatre and recited her essay entitled 'Memory, the Mind and Psychic Phenomena', from which the quote mentioned above is taken. Her sire to be, sat in the audience knew then that he had found a companion in the Requiem. Her argument was that psychic phenomena were simply a way of utilising the human subconscious. By following patterns in behaviour, they could bend the fabric

of reality around them and open their minds to this subconscious in order to shape it as they wished. The key to recognising these patterns was a highly detailed and precise memory. The essay was well written, but not very well critically acclaimed.

Catherine was not alone in her studies into psychic paranormal activity. Her class contained thirteen people, and they were a very close-knit community that partook in many experiments to achieve scientific recognition. Influenced in part by the hippie movement, and others by cult fiction such as the works of H.P. Lovecraft, they began to move their experiments into the realm of drug use - in particular, hallucinogens. During this time, they reported slight evidence of telekinetic tendencies and shared thoughts. However, after an initial few successes, they were quite rapidly heading nowhere.

Enter Robert Stone, Mekhet and occult scholar. DeLacey doesn't speak of him much these nights, and he doesn't feature much, if at all, in the night to night running of the bloodline, and since all the information we have on him comes from her, we can't be sure if what follows is indeed correct or not. The reason for her silence is unknown but has left a lot of speculation amongst the Mnemosyne. Stone claimed to be an associate, if not a direct member of a group known as the Agoniste, a group dedicated to uncovering the hidden origins of vampiric society. He offered her the embrace when he told her that they shared a similar interest: the preservation of memory. She accepted after experiencing his powers at first hand.

After this, she dropped off the academic radar, much to the surprise of her friends, but then re-emerged at the beginning of 1966 when she began the process of embracing the rest of her college classmates. Fate had it that there was a pair of twin sisters in the group that made the naming of the groups members, at the suggestion of Stone as symbols of the zodiac (one for each symbol and two, obviously, for Gemini). To further increase the bonds with their allocated symbols, Catherine embraced them all on the nights in the center of their celestial time-scales. Stone furthermore suggested another name for the circle of friends, but this is where he vanishes from all accounts, and that page in Catherine's memory has been dyed blacker than the darkness night to prevent its reading. Anyone delving to such a depth finds a different interpretation each time. Putting the pieces together of each recorded and potentially false memories, the general assumption has been reached that Stone informed DeLacey that the circle she had created was now a part of the Agoniste and they would work exclusively for them from now on. She refused this and after a battle of wills, Stone walked away for good, disowning the whole group as an abomination. Catherine then christened the group as the Mnemosyne and they set about their experiments.

They found through a devotion comprising of Dominate and Auspex they could freely walk around in the minds of each other, and share any and all information they wanted. Further to this, they discovered their blood relation enhanced this capability. It was easier to perform among themselves rather than with anyone outside of the circle. They read the minds of all the lecturers at the university and then made them forget the whole experience, gaining lifetimes of research and knowledge about the world of darkness that surrounded them.

Eventually their experiments brought them back to drugs and they found the ultimate way to open their minds to one and other. They perform this ritual they have created once each year on New Years Eve when they meet in a city of their choice. Each member brings a mortal of the same star sign they have been associated with to the gathering, conditioned as to become pliable. They then fill the individual as full as they can with LSD, taking them as close to an overdose as possible without actually doing so, and then feed on the individual. They take all they can before the body would die. Once this is done, they are ready to link minds. Riding the wave of power of the hallucinogen, they flow between minds, passing on all their memories and experiences in a split second. They have been trying to discover what it is that guides this wave, whether it is part of their own minds or the beast within them that allows this to work. All they know for the moment – or at least all they are willing to inform people of – is that it works. This Ritual of Replication means that each member of the bloodline is informed of everything the others have been doing over the past year, and also the memories they have fed upon from other Kindred and mortals alike.

Having unlocked this great vault of the mind to which they thought would be the secret to accessing the universal subconscious in its entirety and bathing in the accumulated knowledge of every mortal and vampire in the world tonight, they found only another one lurking in the darkness beyond it. This being that the ritual would only work for the thirteen of them.

They tried with various numbers of the circle and various numbers of other groups from the outside, both mortal and Kindred (the former obviously having their memories wiped afterwards) but they could never achieve the same results. Thus, since the early 1990's, when they reached a conclusion that they must spread their net wider to search for other ways to enhance their goals at finding the key to the hive mind.

So, they have spread out across the globe where they have hired their adept skills in Auspex and Dominate to Princes who wish to extract the truth from members of their court they believe are lying to them. This has brought them much honor and prestige, particularly in the United States and the Old World were the vast majority of their numbers

are to be found. They are called upon as impartial observers and reconcilers in disputes. The charge for their service is simple: the chance to wander through the minds of those they get to serve. Of course, they make a deal that they will tell no one else any secrets that they might inadvertently find and as such strike the experience from their own memories – or so they did to begin with and now merely convince the parties in question by use of Dominate and implanted memories. To such a degree has their lust for knowledge and experience tainted their initial purpose.

In the modern night, they continue their researches, but prefer to randomly drink from the vast fountain of memories that dwells within the minds of the Kindred they meet. A spring they find more addictive than any vampiric vitae could ever be as far as they are concerned.

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Life within the bloodline is not standard from one member to the next. Currently, only about 70% of them partake in services described above relating to impartial advisors and Devil's Advocates. Those 30% remaining on their own in solitary study into the ways of the occult and ritualistic practices, are highly sought after though in the cities where they are known to take up residence to do the same as the bloodline relations.

The Mnemosyne, unsurprisingly given their description above, often find a home within the Daeva community in any city and regularly partake in many night-to-night activities with them. This has been known to distance themselves somewhat from the rest of the clan in general in several cities, but this really isn't an issue for the Mnemosyne – they couldn't care less what the rest of the Mekhet think of them for the most part. In that way, they are very self-centered individuals, caring more about the furthering of their own goals than their standing in relation to the rest of vampiric society as a whole.

Aside from the formal meeting once a year on New Years Eve, they do meet occasionally in London, in their old haunt at the University, with which they keep close links. It is here that they always have their eye on half a dozen new potential replacements to step into a gap if one should ever arise. It was rumored that one time when a member of the bloodline fell into a temporary torpor, many others in the circle also did as a direct result, even before their time. This suggests another subconscious link between the thirteen of them that they are yet to explain – and could prove a damaging flaw if ever found out and exploited in the correct way.

As yet though, with even the Mnemosyne in the dark as to everyone else as to what this could be, they are counting their blessings and hoping that it remains something that others will not be able to capitalize upon. Until then, they continue as they always have done, sailing upon the ocean of memories under the light of the moon looking for that goal which is always just over the horizon.

# NORVEGI

BY CHRIS BUSER

**"DON'T LOOK SO SURPRISED, M'DEAR...I PROMISED YOU THE TRUTH.  
I NEVER PROMISED YOU THE WHOLE TRUTH."**

Most Kindred think of the Norvegi as a recent institution, a group of debauched Shadows skulking under rocks and behind curtains, seeking trinkets, gossip, and other petty amusements to pass the eternity of their undeath. Most Kindred would be wrong.

The genesis of the Betrayers can be found in the De la Vegi, a minor line of Eastern European aristocracy. Left to their own devices, they would have eventually interbred themselves out of existence, with their dabbling in the collection of obscure artifacts and near-worthless tidbits of arcane lore dying with them. That all changed, with the Embrace of Yisek into the Mekhet in the beginnings of the 19th century. Seemingly gifted with all the courage and backbone that had been bred out of his ancestors, he carved a daring path through Europe, his beloved ghoul Emily always at his side. Though many shuddered upon remembering the way something always seemed a little... wrong about him, they could not argue with his effectiveness at gaining anything he desired, whether the heart of his latest conquest, or a particular trinket that had caught his eye. Widely suspected (but never proved) to be an accomplished diablerist, he quickly grew in personal power, acquiring the talent of commanding the Beast within animals and his peers to his own advantage, until he was regarded with some fear and awe by the rest of his clan, as a perfect monster of a Shadow.

After a few decades of such escapades, a bitter pall had begun to fall upon his features. Was this all there was to look forward to? And then, it came to him... there was a ready-made crop of potential brethren, waiting to be given a purpose. Yisek descended upon the ancestral estates... and began. Less than two decades later, Mekhet started appearing all over the western hemisphere, with the surname of "Norvegi", the determination to acquire knowledge, items, and power for the interest of their relations, especially Yisek, who they worshipped almost unto a demigod... and the determination to do literally anything to succeed. By the dawn of the 20th century, the Betrayers were generally acknowledged as a successful bloodline, and anyone who actually trusted one of them was acknowledged as a fool.

To this day, the Norvegi continue to prosper, Embracing only those of their own ancestry, taking in the limited

convert. They are known as expert spies, thieves, if possessing of an unusual devotion towards Yisek, and the concept that all knowledge is worth having. Rarely residing in the same city, they tend to keep quiet contacts with each other, echoing their mortal kin in preferring the company of their peers when the time comes to boast of their achievements. Rumors of secretive "family reunions" are thought to be nothing more but urban legend... when asked, about this or their unusual nickname, the response is typically a shy, secretive smile, and an invitation to "trust me, and find out for yourself...". As for the founder... his own fate was hardly as promising. Upon learning that he intended to acquire a herd of ghouls, to complement her services, the first Betrayer was in turn betrayed, as Emily staked him through the back in a fit of jealous rage. His final fate is unknown, but it is widely suspected that he still exists, in a dank, forgotten tomb, where (if she still walks the earth) she occasionally visits him, for reasons only she would know.

**Parent Clan:** Mekhet

**Nickname:** Betrayers

**Covenant:** Many of the Betrayers are far too jaded to put faith in anything intangible; thus, membership in the Lancea Sanctum or the Circle of the Crones is rare. Far more to their liking are the Invictus, and the Carthians, depending on the individual Norvegi's preference towards visibly (or invisibly) pulling strings to get what she desires. Surprisingly, the Dragons have very little use for them, as they simply travel in different circles... the Ordo Dracul preferring secrets of a spiritual nature, while the average Betrayer finds power in hidden knowledge of a more temporal bent.

However, an Unbound Norvegi is nearly unheard of, as one who stands alone typically lacks the access required to gain the knowledge or items desired. That said, Harpies trade stories while meeting in Elysium of at least one Betrayer has climbed his way to the throne of a Domain simply by being the "neutral ear that everyone could turn to", until the residents of the city awoke one morning to discover that he literally knew the worst secrets concerning every other member of power, and fear of what could be unleashed upon their new Prince's final death has kept him there ever since.

**Appearance:** Many of the Norvegi prefer to dress in much the same fashions that the rest of the Mekhet of the city choose, and for the same reasons. If a "signature look" exists for the Betrayers, it is the spurning of silver jewelry in favor of platinum.

**Haven:** Norvegi can be found anywhere from basements to penthouse suites, but Internet access is the one thing that can be called a "must-have". Without fast, convenient access to the information archives of cyberspace, it's not a haven; it's just where the Norvegi happened to be when dawn snuck up on them.

**Background:** As described above, you need to have once been a mortal De la Vegi in order to be Embraced into the Norvegi bloodline. There is an exception to the rule, however... the Betrayers will happily allow any Mekhet to join the bloodline, under the condition that the would-be Norvegi first fully blood bond himself to his Avus. This is not as uncommon as would be first supposed... on the face of it, tying oneself to an active, thriving group with a vested interest in accumulating information (and keeping an eye out for each other) seems far better than a Requiem spent alone. On the other hand, you'd have to trust a Betrayer to keep her end of the deal...

**Character Creation:** Never the most physical of creatures, Norvegi are evenly split between those who value intellectual challenges, and those who prefer personal interaction. Concepts involving acts of thievery often concentrate on Mental skills and Physical abilities, such as Intelligence and Larceny, while the latter focus on Social skills and abilities, such as Manipulation or Subterfuge. Both camps agree that the best way to avoid injury in combat is simply to be anywhere else except where the blow lands, and use their Disciplines to fullest effect in this regard. Obviously, no blood relation Norvegi predates the 1800's, and to date, no Mekhet that pre-existed the Bloodline has joined it.

**Bloodline Disciplines:** Animalism, Auspex, Celerity, Obfuscate

**Weakness:** In addition to the normal Mekhet clan weakness the Betrayers have been accurately described as "inbred and degenerate", and for good reason. In addition to sharing their parent clan's increased vulnerability to fire and sunlight, all Norvegi have Yisek's inhumanity permanently lodged in their unbeating hearts. All Norvegi subtract two from their Humanity score when calculating the base time spent in Torpor, which tends to reinforce their traditional rules of avoiding violence.

Socially, while the bloodline doesn't draw the same shame upon it that, say, the Morbus does, they do get a second glance when they become active in local politics, as one can never be sure if they're making a personal power play, or one on behalf of their "family". This is represented by the fact that Betrayers pay half again as much for Status

in Kindred society. (Clan and Covenant Status costs are 3/6/9/12/15 for members of this bloodline. The cost of Status at character creation, from Merit Points, is unchanged.)

**Organization:** Most Norvegi are known to keep loose tabs on their neighbours, the better to avoid working at cross-purposes. Status, as such, is a useful tool that can unlock many doors, but it isn't the be-all and end-all of their existence. While the Mekhet as a whole are not entirely trusting of their erstwhile kin, the general consensus is "At least they're not Carriers", and will give begrudging credit where credit is due, content in the knowledge that to the Betrayers, their greatest rivals are each other, as each attempts to out-do the other in accomplishment and esteem.

What the Mekhet don't realize is that the Norvegi are extremely interconnected, one with another. Growing up in a household of incestuous gossips tends to cause many of them to learn the wisdom of keeping one's friends close, and one's enemies closer. You never can tell if the cousin who owes you everything might hold the one piece of vital information that you need to pull off your next scam, or if the sister who left you at the altar will come crawling back to you, needing something only you know. The world of the Shadows is a cold, cruel one, and while you may not like your fellow Norvegi all too much, they're still family, in a way that no one outside of the bloodline could ever fully understand. Even those not born of the lineage quickly learn the subtle give and take, as the Betrayer they are bound to educate them on why it is that the family needs to work together in order to keep the lineage, as a whole, as strong as possible. The few Elders who remember Yisek personally remember his wrath, and how he treated those who failed him too many times, and have no doubt whatsoever that if he is out there still, and does return, he will be pleased with those who acted as he would have, while those he is displeased will make a lovely snack. Thus, Norvegi who live up to Yisek's example are praised, those who do not... tend not to live long. Thus, it behooves everyone in the bloodline to stay at least neutral towards each other, help each other out if needed, (and expect suitable overcompensation for doing such, as well as the accompanying bragging rights) and to make any direct confrontations with each other either very subtle, working through intermediaries, or very direct and brutal, with the survivor claiming the spoils. Those who pull off the best schemes, learn the juiciest info, and help out the most of their brethren receive praise from their peers, and quickly become known as the favoured of this or that particular Elder of the line.

Yet, these Elders have an additional, darker motive for keeping the Bloodline in contact (and, theoretically, in working harmony) with one another. Should the rumors prove true, whoever discovers and releases Yisek from his

prison would rise to most favored status, and be his left hand, the position of highest honor amongst them. Thus, information is encouraged to flow from one Norvegi to another, while the spymasters watch over all, bloated spiders in webs created of data and strewn wide across Western civilization, waiting for the news that could

confirm what befell their founder... and how that news could best work for them.

**Concepts:** Bartender, blackmailer, councilor, government conspiracy nut, Harpy, master art thief, neighborhood fence, ninja wannabe, professional heartbreaker, or safecracker.