

Paradigm of the Camarilla Mortals Venue

Each venue within the Camarilla Chronicle has a specific paradigm that gives guidance to Storytellers and players. Paradigm is the frame of the chronicle, and everything proceeds from it.

“Mortals” here refers to normal humans. It does not cover ghouls, wolf-blooded, Awakened mages, Awakened-venue-variants, or any partially-numinous mortal. Such characters are not permitted in the Mortals Venue as PCs.

The Paradigm:

The Mortals Venue is about those people who have become aware of the supernatural and joined together in communities to do something about it. Mortals are committed to the simple principals of secrecy and community, and operate in an environment of extreme paranoia of outsiders, and the shared understanding that the general population is not ready for the truth.

The Paradigm Explained:

There are two main components to the the idea of secrecy, the supernatural and the human.

All characters in the Mortals Venue are committed to preserving the secrecy of the supernatural. There are two general approaches to this. These are NOT mutually exclusive, so it is possible to have characters or games with a mix of both.

1. PCs believe (for their own reasons) that the existence of the supernatural must not be revealed to the general public.
2. PCs accept that attempts to reveal their knowledge to the general public will be met with widespread disbelief and possible consequences such as confinement in a mental institution.

Regardless of which general category your PC (or VSS) is subsumed under, attempts to reveal the existence of the supernatural to the general public will be considered in violation of paradigm. Note that this does not preclude a character from selectively revealing certain facts to other individuals, nor does it cover such things as tabloid media or similar “hiding the truth in plain sight” measures. But public preaching, mass recruitment, media revelations designed to reveal instead of deceive, or other such activities targeted at “the public” are not appropriate to the venue.

There is a human element to secrecy as well. Mortals naturally form communities. Whether the community in-game is a secret society, a corporation, a family, the fact is, mortals in the World of Darkness who do not have some sort of community generally lead lives which are nasty, brutish, and short. So humans seek each other out to find mutual protection and support. Your community is a voluntary association. Your

community is where you go to feel safe. Your community is (most likely, but not always) safe because it is secret.

Mortals do not needlessly jeopardize their safety, or when applicable, the secrecy, of their own community. The protection of your community can be selfish, or altruistic, or both, but it is uniformly recognized by mortals that they are all better off if they can preserve the integrity of their communities.

Mortals respect the secrecy of other societies. Public betrayal is rare. Outright infiltration is almost unheard of. Mortals don't have to play nice with each other all the time. They do have to recognize that the cost of infiltration far outweighs the benefits. Infiltration means being a member of two secret societies at once while pretending you are a member of only one. People don't do this because if they did, then suddenly, you can't trust anyone. Not even those closest to you. Without trust, there can be no community.

Without community, your chances of achieving your goals fall drastically. The cultural taboo against infiltration is therefore in the best interest of every PC in the Mortals Venue, which is why characters uphold it, and why infiltration is punished if it occurs. Secret societies are frequently in competition with each other, but they've learned to share the playing field. This doesn't preclude playing dirty, but like most things, what matters is not what you do, but what happens if you're caught.

Mortals who quit a secret association are considered to be the black sheep of the Venue because they have, in essence, turned their back on their community. They are a liability to the community they left, and a liability to any future community they join, because they are seen as untrustworthy and lacking a sense of what community means.

This commitment to secrecy is how secret societies have managed to avoid being infiltrated by mortals or supernaturals. In those rare cases of infiltration, the infiltrator is killed. The commitment to community is how secret societies have stayed free from indirect control by unsavory mortals or supernaturals. Anyone found to be under the influence is rescued; sometimes that 'rescue' means death. The supernatural exerting the influence is also traced down, if possible destroyed, and the group will take additional measures to safeguard themselves according to the situation.

All of this is driven by the third element of the venue. Everyone realizes that secrecy is a full time effort, that communities are vulnerable, and so they are paranoid of being infiltrated by the supernatural. They take constant measures to protect secrecy and community, and they are very, very certain that anyone admitted to their community is a trustworthy individual who holds their same values. They are suspicious of anything that looks like divided loyalties, which is why so few mortals hold membership in more than one community. This is also why secret societies rarely recruit from pre-existing communities, including organized crime, paramilitary organizations, or other groups to which a person already has outside loyalties as strong as those held by members of the occult societies.