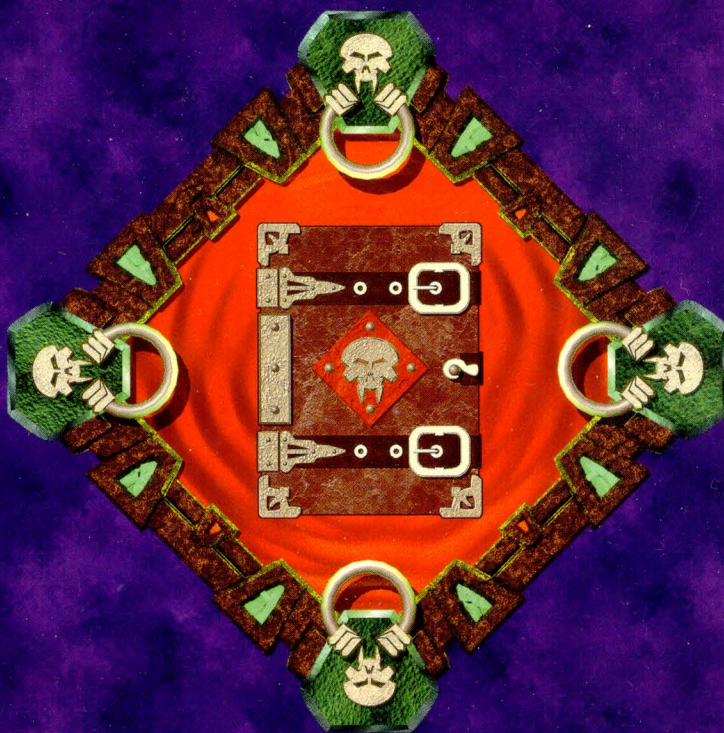




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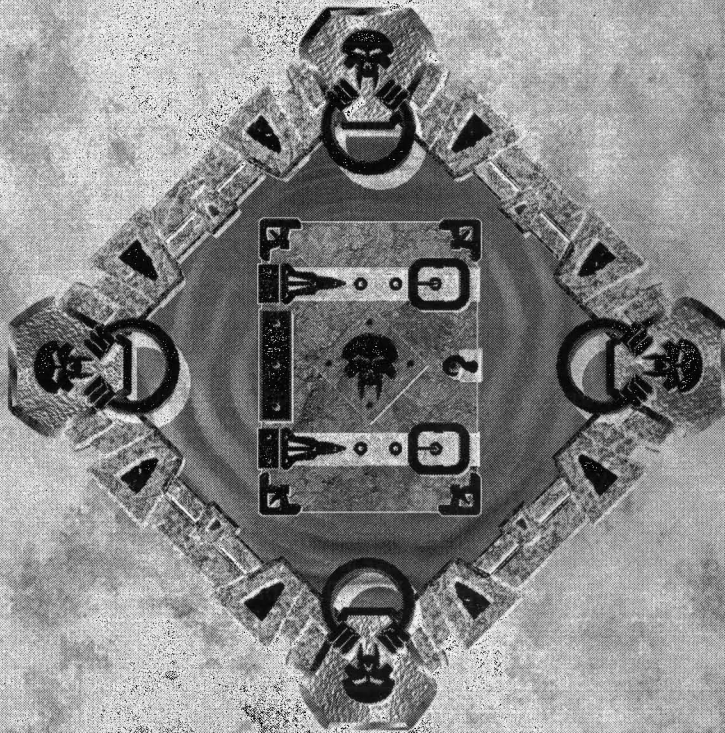


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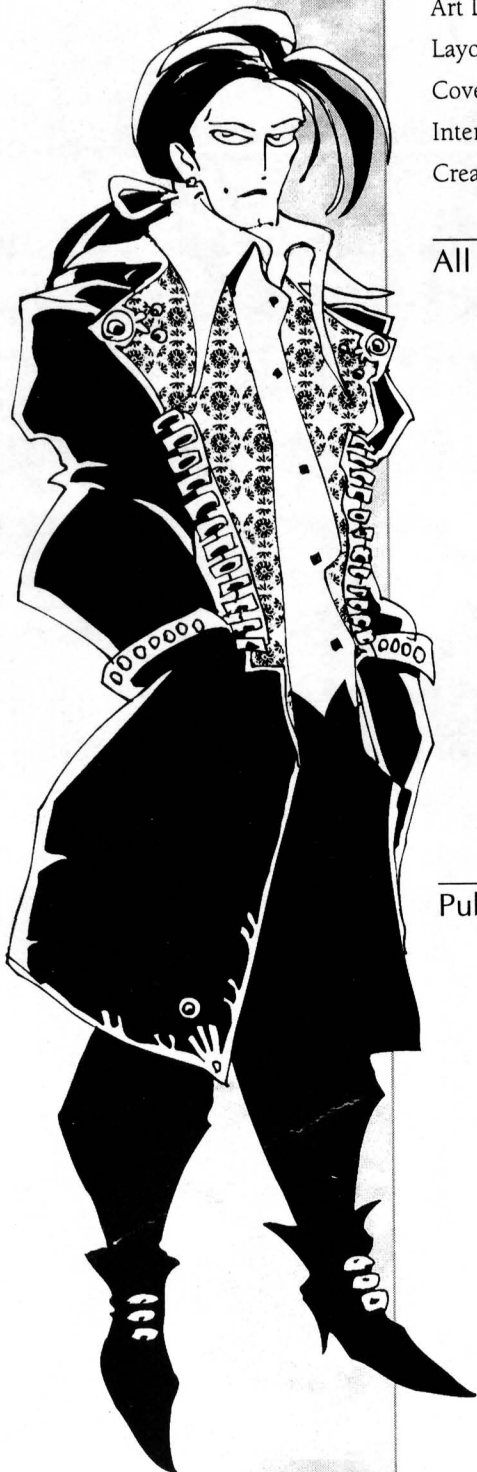


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INTRODUCTION

Someone once asked me why I was obsessed with death. Before I go further maybe I should explain a few things. In my room, I have a life size paper skeleton and several pictures from medical museums of various bones, both deformed and normal. I am a big horror fan (no, I don't dress in black, natch). Characters in my writing always tend to die at the end, sometimes sooner. Even so, everytime someone asks me that questions, it takes me aback a little. Surely I am not obsessed with death, right? Well, no. I like skeletons and medical photos because they show the eternal side of man. I believe that when we die, the only thing we know for sure (almost) which will stay for a long time are the bones. And both my love for horror and the fact that most of the characters in my writing die has got to do with drama, which brings me to this book.

As one of the character says in this book, life is just life until drama occurs, then it becomes art. The same is true of vampires. They are perhaps the greatest tragic heroes one can find. They are doomed from day one by something that will keep them away from the rest of humanity and about which they can do little. Some may see their condition as cool, as powerful, but they forget something very basic: first, before becoming powerful, you have to survive long enough, which might just be difficult and secondly, being immortal can be very lonely. What do you do when you see your loved ones dying all around you? What about when you are directly responsible for their deaths?

You will find enough material in this book to help you infuse some of that horror in your campaign. At very least, we hope that this will make for a decent read.

*The first part, *Alone in the Darkness*, gives us the point of view and the (mis)information available to those vampires who chose to walk the path of the Ronin, the loners, individuals who chose to shrug off the idea of the coven and try to survive in the society of 2020 alone. Never an easy time, with paranoia as their closest pal, the Ronin roams back and forth across the States, never stopping long enough in a city to make friends or enemies.*

*The second part, *Diary*, follows a young man's transformation from normal human into a vampire. Through his trials, we can glimpse the vampires' society and through it the coven's place in normal society.*

*The last section, the *Appendix*, gives more details and rules along with an overview of the world situation for vampires, with a few new vampire archetypes. There are also some guidelines for both Ronin and coven campaign along with adventure seeds and NPCs.*

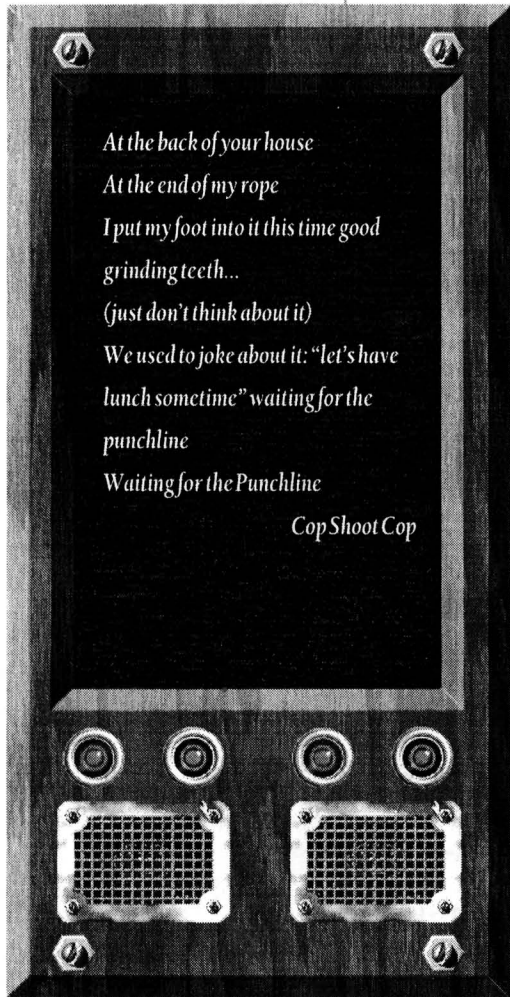
Keep in mind that the first two sections are written from the point of view of characters. Of course, what they believe to be the truth is sometimes just clever manipulations from corporations, or worse...

Remember that it is always darkest just before dawn.

Stéphane Brochu

PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

INTRODUCTION



At the back of your house

At the end of my rope

*I put my foot into it this time good
grinding teeth...*

(just don't think about it)

*We used to joke about it: "let's have
lunch sometime" waiting for the
punchline*

Waiting for the Punchline

Cop Shoot Cop

No. Not really.

The night was filled with the familiar sounds of human life and wailing, the electronic catcalls of cops' sirens and emergency vehicles. The sounds of life and death. The breath and heartbeat of the multitude living their life in the night, planning their slow deaths to the elements that they only sometimes controlled.

The collective sounds surrounded him in the club. He felt as one of them and yet he knew he was apart. Apart because he didn't make the sounds. The sounds of life weren't his to truly make, but with practice, he had been able to imitate them — fake them. The fake signs of life. And once he had mastered them, he had been able to deal death all the more easily.

The steady beat of chromatic rock filled his ears as the smoke and the bodies, jerking to the waves, filled his eyes. He took them all in: the Goths in the corner, pretending to be unlife, the Rockheads over there, thinking they knew what death was all about. And the others, the ones on the dance floor, were wasting their precious lives on hedonistic pleasures, tainting their blood with drugs and their meat with metal and plastic. The blood was their lives, and his life.

The hunger was strong tonight. And, if the night was good to him, maybe the hunger would go away. He took the crowd in again, looking for an easy prey, someone who wasn't tainted by the excesses of this generation.

He saw her alone in the corner, surrounded by the Goths, yet seemingly as alone as he was in the multitude.

He looked at her for a time, bracing himself for the coming ritual that was almost as old as the world. He would offer her the world while, of course, letting her know that he could just as easily have someone else. She, hopefully, would be taken enough by this while pretending disinterest. Except that the stakes were slightly different. How many times did he perform this ritual and how many more times would he have to perform it, simply in order to survive?

Wouldn't it be simpler to hunt the night, he thought, stalking the alleyways and the prey that was already wounded? Eat of the tainted blood, a mercy kill for both the prey and society? No. He would not stoop that low, feeding on junkies and homeless. He still had a shred of dignity after all. He might be a parasite, a leech, but somehow he was still human.

Unable to hold back the force of his hunger any longer, he got up and made his way through the throng of bodies towards her. The more he looked at her, the more he could almost regret his coming actions. But he wouldn't — he shouldn't. After all, it was his life or hers. Or at least what passed for life. She, and the others in this club, did not understand what it meant to be alive, to be able to know death, to know real longing. They were jaded by it all. You could only know when you had lost it all as he had, when your life was but a parody.

The worst of them were the Goths. Not only did they not respect life, but they claimed to know unlife and — a true sign of ignorance — to want unlife.

As he got closer to her, he finally caught a glimpse of her eyes and then he knew. He knew that his first impression of her was right. Even though she was amongst "friends", she was utterly alone. But there was something else in her eyes. She was afraid. Her eyes filled with the fear that lives in the eyes of someone drowning.

This was strange. He was used to seeing fear in his victims' eyes, but not before the kiss was given, when they finally realized what was happening. But there was no doubt about it. She was scared. And he hadn't even made contact with her yet.

He stopped, a few paces away from the pack of Goths. She looked at him, slowly, her pale complexion purple in the black lights, her black-lined eyes and lips standing out like pockmarks, like a washed-up corpse on the edge of the night — a recently drowned victim in the sea of humanity.

As she looked at him, a slight smile appeared on her lips. She got up quickly, closing in on him, and while he was still dazed by her sudden change of attitude, she grabbed his hand and led him outside the nightclub. She turned and looked at him, her lips forming words he couldn't quite understand as she led him away.

Leaving the cocoon of sounds and sights behind, they stepped into the night with its sounds of death and despair. Garish hookers tried, despite the fact that he already had company or maybe appealing to other needs, to sell themselves to him. But he didn't see them. All he saw now was the back of her head, her purple hair glistening in the light drizzle. Water made rivulets on her simulated leather jacket, cutting swaths across the white zombie face painted on the back. She led him in an alleyway between the refuse bins and the cardboard sleeping boxes of the winos and junkies, leaving the glaring neons, the cars and the seedy night lifers behind.

A prostitute screamed at them from a dark corner, her john abandoned and pulling up his pants to run away. She stared at the hooker as she advanced, the whore backing off and making back for the relative safety of the street. He was still in a daze, unsure of what had happened in the last few minutes since they left the club; he had been caught in some sort of maelstrom, a tempest of renewed will and hope.

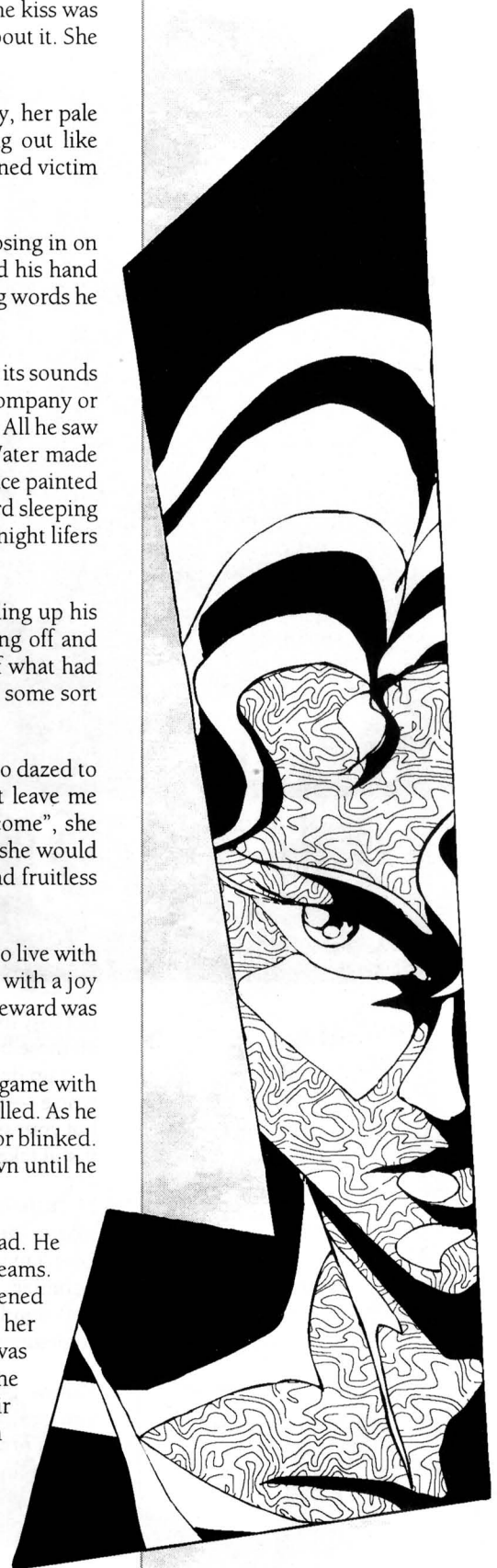
She stopped and pushed him against a wall. He fell back, too aroused to resist, too dazed to do anything. She fell to her knees, as if to pray to him. "I knew they wouldn't leave me behind", she said, her fragile voice filled with hope. "I knew that you would come", she added. He looked at her face, all traces of fear now gone. She almost looked like she would laugh in relief, in boundless joy, like the junky who finally scores after a long and fruitless search.

"Well, master," she said, "did I pass? Are you gonna take me to the underground, to live with my brethren? When will I be able to embrace my new life?" Her eyes were filled with a joy common only to the junky and the young child, as when they knew the expected reward was coming.

At first he was taken aback by her, not knowing if she was perhaps playing some game with him, or if she was psychotic. But there was an urgency in her voice, a need unfulfilled. As he stared into her face, looking for some clue, he noticed that she neither breathed nor blinked. And he knew. He knew that she was a sister, a kindred of the night. He knelt down until he was face to face with her and spoke.

He told her of the lies, of the nature of his life — her life now that she was undead. He spoke of the realities facing those who prey in the night upon the weak and their dreams. He told her the stories of his affliction and the affliction of his "forefathers". He opened her eyes to the cold night that was the rest of her life. Did he wish to disenchant her or did he truly want to make her see what life would really be like? All he knew was that he had enough of the lies spread by the Goths and their masters, by the Glamvamps and others like them, and by the ancients who, in order to please their megalomaniacal egos, did not stop at enslaving countries, but needed to feed upon the dreams of its people.

He told her everything he knew about his life and the true condition of his Dark existence. This is what he told her.



PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

FIRST

*First night out
she craves a direction
her heroes offer her
everyone is looking for something
and they assume that someone else
knows what it is
-No direction*

Bad Religion

Wipe that smile off your face, girl. You really don't know what you got yourself into, do you? You have no clue, do you? I'll bet that you know jack about anything. I'll bet you don't even know the first thing about what it is to be undead.

Yeah, sure. You've read the books, and you probably seen all the movies a dozen times. Well, let me tell you, it ain't like that at all.

Of course the other told you these things. Sure thing. What do you want him to tell you? That once this is done, you ain't worth the meat you're walking in? Of course he told you that it was gonna be great, gonna be a blast. Would you have stood there, getting your blood drained out in order to feed a psycho if you would've known the truth?

And that's why he left you behind. That's why he just upped and left. Because if you had found out about the pain and everything else, you would've tried to do him in right there and then. But now, it's a bit late. And he's long gone. You see, this ain't even like getting some piece of ware. There ain't no guarantee, you can't get your money back.

Let me guess. You woke up and he was gone. Didn't even have the courtesy of waiting around for you to come to and explain what this new "condition" entailed. Let me ask you: do you even know the first thing about feeding? Before we get into how often and how much blood you have to drink in order to stay "healthy", let me ask you about feeding habits, like where and how to choose a "willing donor" and all that stuff, you know, like before the actual feeding.

Yeah sure, just pick a wino in a back alley or something. Sounds good to me. And I assume that you used to pick on some sick dog or better yet, rats in the sewers for meat before. Sounds real good to me. Come on! Do you realize that if you did that you would, at best you were lucky, probably dump tons of chemicals, bad alcohol and maybe a few diseases in your blood? Might as well use toxic waste as a mouthwash.

Look, sorry kid. I didn't mean to snap at you. It's just that, well, things are not rosy for us. It ain't all that easy. It sounds stupid, but you gotta watch your diet, what with all those bloody synthetic drugs out there and all the biotoxins, if you don't watch it, you'll end up dead, again. And on top of that, those street people might just be the Knights — or worse — trying to get the drop on you. Sure, we're immune to a lot of diseases and drugs, but your system still has to "clean out" the crap. That's right, Technicolor yawn. Vamp or not, it still takes its toll. And trust me, it ain't the time to get attacked.

More than ever you gotta be careful. Yeah, we be tough mothers and all that, but some of the plagues around, the natural ones and the others, they'll wreck havoc on your system. And I don't mean getting a cavity or two. Some of them will turn you in almost nothing more than a zombie. Or cripple you so bad that maybe spending the rest of eternity in that state might not sound so pleasant. Sure, they can't kill you, but maybe that's not such a bad alternative sometimes. Remind me sometime to tell you about some of the vamps I know. Not pretty.

I know, I know. The winos are easy prey and, well, when you're hungry, you're hungry. But you gotta be careful. A slightly safer way of doing things might be to pick up people in bars. That's probably what happened to you. But even that's not too safe. Havta watch out for cybers, and, if you ain't careful, some psycho will come back to hunt you down. And even though you're faster and maybe stronger now, well, cybers can makes up for those quite well, thank you very much. On the other hand, the only other vamps that hunt in the clubs are

the younger generation. Something about overwhelming of the senses keeps the old fogies out. Good thing too. I guess we've gotten used to those excesses before we became vamps.

Another thing: if you're gonna drain some poor sap of all his blood, make sure that not only is he really dead, but that he doesn't have one of those annoying Trauma Team cards. The last thing you want when you just had a meal is combat.

I knew a guy down in New Orleans, back before the plague, use to keep a real stable of "blood cows". Yeah, he had about twelve Goths whom he would feed on regularly, in turn so as not to drain them too much and all. It's probably the safest way of doing things, but on the other hand, you still have to be careful. He got a little too cocky and one of his "donors" opened his mouth to the wrong guy. Result: one less vamp in the bayou.

I know that all that sounds pretty bad, but yeah, I must admit: there's almost nothing in the world like feeding. Not even sex rivals it. Pure bliss, although sex IS better now. Not that you still have much of a drive in that department, but there is something to be said for heightened senses. EVERY sense is boosted. Like the guy used to sing: "Some kind of wonderful..." Guess it makes up for all the other crap.

The whole thing about feeding is kinda difficult to explain. Let me put it this way: ever seen a junkie just before he gets his fix? That sense of anticipation, the look in their eyes, like they can almost taste it already? Well, for a vamp — and I don't care how old he is — it's just like that. And the taste, that first moment, when you get the first drop on your tongue and you can feel your body just... just — and then.... and then like, you can feel your mind catch fire and... and...

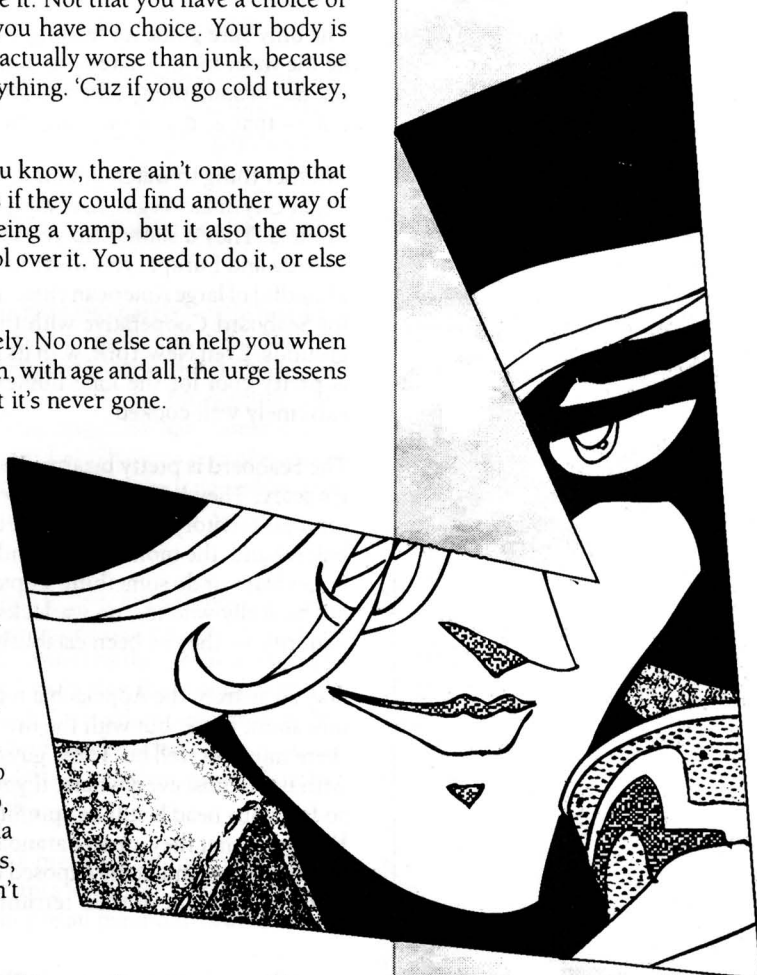
Hell girl, you just gotta try it; there just ain't anything like it. Not that you have a choice or anything actually. You gotta feed. Just like the junkie, you have no choice. Your body is driving here, not like you have any control anymore. It's actually worse than junk, because there ain't no way that you're gonna go cold turkey or anything. 'Cuz if you go cold turkey, well, it's curtains, doll.

Which brings us to the need to feed and all that junk. You know, there ain't one vamp that I know that would not give up feeding on a regular basis if they could find another way of doing things. Sure, it's probably the best thing about being a vamp, but it also the most dangerous. And as I said, it's not like you have any control over it. You need to do it, or else you're just so much unmoving meat.

Feeding time. That's probably when you feel the most lonely. No one else can help you when that time comes. And you'll see, it comes plenty often. Yeah, with age and all, the urge lessens and lessens (some would say like that other drive...), but it's never gone.

At first, since you're young and all, you'll probably havta feed every couple of days. After a while, that'll drop to basically once a week. That's how much I have to feed right now. Not that it's any different from what you'll feel. It's always the same.

What do you think? Does it sound romantic so far? Does it look like the life you were promised? Didn't think so. You don't even know half of it yet. That's what makes me so mad about vamps like the one who made you. They don't give two bits about what happens to their "offspring". They get a kick out of making it, like some sort of sick ego boost or power trip, but when the time comes to 'fess up, boom, they're gone. Yeah, and then suckers like me havta pick up the pieces. Or watch the young ones kill themselves, either because that's what they want to do or they don't know better.



PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

Enough of that melodramatic crap for now. Let's just get back to what I was saying. It's nice to know the how, but what about the where to feed? Or should I say, the where not to feed. Skip the classics. Forget the dark castles. You'd probably starve to death before some sucker showed up. No dark alleys. Anyway, all you'd get would be the loser type: the winos and the junkies. Basic dietary no-no's. The clubs are probably the best place to hunt; that and the universities it would seem. Looks like the government doesn't mind some smart-alec types disappearing from time to time. Not that the government doesn't know about us, don't kid yourself.

Yeah, the clubs. Just be careful who you pick to be that night's donor. Another basic rule: corps are a bad choice, unless some other corp hired you to do so — and even then. Trust me, stay away from corporations. They're just bad news in general. I could tell you so many tales of vamps who sold out to corps (especially Arasaka), thinking that they could just walk away when they were fed up of the politics and all the crap. Let me just say that I haven't seen many of them again. Yes, the corporations know about us, that's for sure. Stay away from them.

I guess another type to stay away from would be the obvious cybered-up. And anyone who seems to have too many friends. Actually, about the only safe ones are the loner type and the Goths. Why the Goths? Simply because you can mess with their minds so easily that they'll feel honored to let themselves be fed upon. Except that sometimes, some of them are already part of a "feeding group", like the one that friend of mine had in Louisiana. Actually, some guy told me that in Europe and in some parts of Canada, since the covens are so organized there, they swap "blood cows" and stuff, sort of like a Blood of the Month Club or something. Now, I don't know if I believe him or not, but covens are weird enough that I'd be tempted to believe almost anything.

The only sure guide for feeding is experience. I could blab for hours and still, you wouldn't be the wiser for it. There's just something about the perfect donor, like it's screaming "Feed on me" or something. Like you for example. You'll see. In a while you'll be able to pick them out — that is, if you live long enough.

Another thing to watch out for is territories. Some covens, especially in the larger cities like Night City or Las Vegas, have long-established covens inhabiting them. — and they're jealous hunters. They'd sooner rip you apart than let you hunt on their turf. But unless you go to Canada and Europe, you won't have to worry too much about covens. As I said, there's only a handful of large American cities that still have covens in them. Most of the East coast, except for Seaboard Cooperative with their bloody backwards hick vamps, is pretty much open grounds. Even New York, with its roaming packs of Radvamps and the occasional werewolf, is pretty cool for the lone hunter — that is, if you don't mind radiation and your food extremely well cooked.

The Seaboard is pretty bizarre. The vamps there are so bloody protective and closed-off that it's scary. They have this secret police that will hunt you until they rip you if you ever feed on their territory. They're worse than the bloody Knights. Even if you try to talk to them beforehand, the moment they find out that you're a vamp, they'll start harassing you 'til you either leave or do something stupid, at which point they'll rip you. The heads of their covens are basically witches, no warlocks there since only women can lead the coven, and for the majority — they've been established for ages — some say as far back as Salem and stuff.

Stay away from the Appalachia region. Too much politics. There might be no real covens to talk about there, but with the involvement of some of the most powerful American vamps, there might as well be. These guys have some of the most complex webs of power going on, with ties almost everywhere. If you happen to be stuck there and need to feed, they'll know so fast your head'll still be spinning when they rip you. It's not that they protect their turf, but rather that they are so paranoid of other vamps taking their place, of the bloody Knights ripping them, and being exposed by the media, that they'll do anything to keep any signs of vamp activity out of their territories. There's even rumors that they feed outside of those

states. But it does have its good side: there hasn't been a single Glamvamp in Appalachia in a long while. And the damn Goths have been harassed so much that they've gone underground, forming little communities and stuff.

Dixie, the Northeast and the Midwest are probably like heaven on Earth for most lone vamps. I know they are for me. Feed where you want, when you want, show a little force and most meatboys leave you alone. Of course, like any paradise, there are little enclaves of powerful covens. In Detroit for example, there are at least two covens (since I was there last) who are fighting for control of the city. This doesn't mean that you can't survive there, it simply means that you should be real careful. The city is so big that even if they tried, they couldn't keep track of every bloodletting that happened in town. Besides, there's so many crazies going around in that city who think they're vamps...

The fun thing about Connecticut is the arcologies. In the New Haven one, for example, run some of the raddest, baddest vamp gang in the States. I ran with them for a little while a couple of years ago and it was the closest thing to a real family that I'd ever had. Strange gang though. They sleep in rope nests attached to the top of the dome, just like bats. I guess that's where they got their name from: the Batsons.

Another fun place to eat is Georgia, with its famous King Gardener. If you play your cards right, most people will believe that you're part of the King's secret police and will keep their mouth shut so that you don't take sudden interest in them. Of course, if you go a little too overboard the secret police might take interest in you.

Louisiana, girl, is still a cool place to party, and Louisiana vamps know how to party. They're friendly, at least as friendly as vamps get, and as long as you don't act like some sort of jerk, they won't really mind you feeding on their turf. And let me tell you, there ain't no place like New Orleans during Mardi Gras, even if you can't enjoy booze and dope anymore.

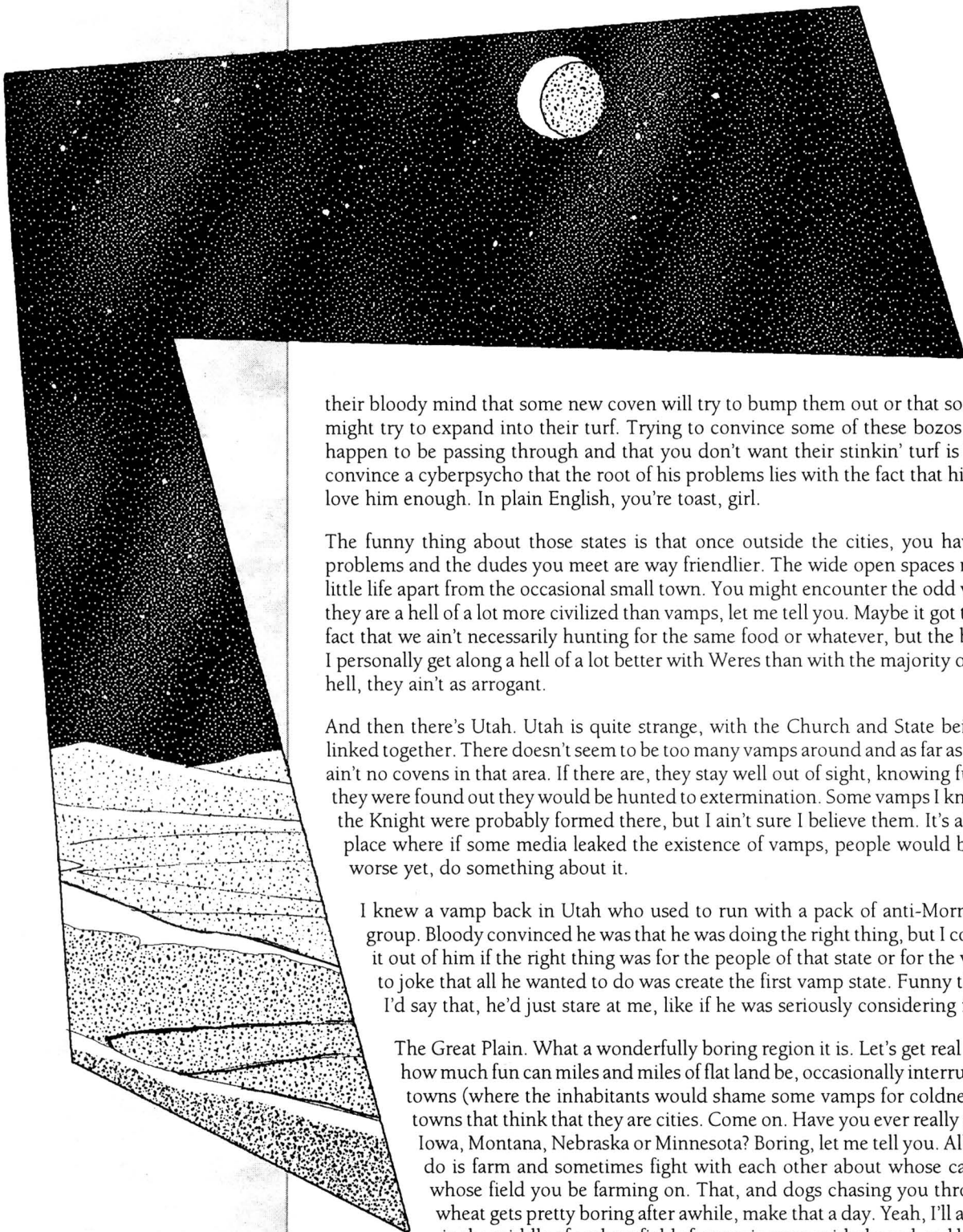
Alaska? Don't know, never been there. See, in order to go to Alaska you either have to fly there or go through Canada. Last time I tried to take a plane they got kinda nervous when they noticed that I didn't breathe (actually, they thought that I was some sort of cyberpsycho) and wouldn't let me on the plane. And you can just forget about going through customs. Even if you have a SIN, they still run batteries of tests to see if you don't have some weird plague or something. Yeah, you'd fail miserably. So, unless you got money coming out of your ears, forget about leaving the country. Even Hawaii is out of the question.

A good rule of thumb about covens in the States is that if the state was barely touched or has recovered nicely from the riots, the Wasting Plague and other fun problems of the last ten years, then there's probably some sort of coven or vamps organization in the state's larger cities. So, yeah, I guess that this would mean most of the Free States. Texas, for example, still has some nasty, powerful covens. But because Texas is Texas, they also have some of the scariest lone wolves around, that even the area's covens are afraid of. There's a sort of balance that's been established in Dallas and in most other Texan cities, between the lone wolves and the covens. But if you're not from Texas (and they'll be able to tell real quick), forget about feeding.

Let me tell you something else about Texas. If you were gonna believe everything that's said about that state, you'd be pretty confused: tales about some vamps that have been around since the civil war (whenever that was), and vamps that were created by the government back then as some sort of elite soldier corp, or supersoldier. Now, I know that the government has always been a little whacked out, but to go that far? Who would be crazy enough or fanatical enough to do something like that? Anyway, as you'll soon find out for yourself, part of the important thing about a Ronin is to be able to scare the hell out of the other vamp before he jumps you. Bluffing is the essence of survival, and so is bull.

As for Nevada, Northern and Southern California, things are pretty much the same. Inside the big cities, watch your steps and where you feed 'cuz there are a few covens that have either been there for a long time, or have just relocated — and they're all paranoid. Scared out of

PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS



their bloody mind that some new coven will try to bump them out or that some old coven might try to expand into their turf. Trying to convince some of these bozos that you just happen to be passing through and that you don't want their stinkin' turf is like trying to convince a cyberpsycho that the root of his problems lies with the fact that his mom didn't love him enough. In plain English, you're toast, girl.

The funny thing about those states is that once outside the cities, you have way fewer problems and the dudes you meet are way friendlier. The wide open spaces make for very little life apart from the occasional small town. You might encounter the odd werewolf, but they are a hell of a lot more civilized than vamps, let me tell you. Maybe it got to do with the fact that we ain't necessarily hunting for the same food or whatever, but the bottom line is I personally get along a hell of a lot better with Weres than with the majority of vamps. And hell, they ain't as arrogant.

And then there's Utah. Utah is quite strange, with the Church and State being so closely linked together. There doesn't seem to be too many vamps around and as far as I know, there ain't no covens in that area. If there are, they stay well out of sight, knowing full well that if they were found out they would be hunted to extermination. Some vamps I know think that the Knight were probably formed there, but I ain't sure I believe them. It's about the only place where if some media leaked the existence of vamps, people would believe it, and worse yet, do something about it.

I knew a vamp back in Utah who used to run with a pack of anti-Mormon "activist" group. Bloody convinced he was that he was doing the right thing, but I could never get it out of him if the right thing was for the people of that state or for the vamps. I used to joke that all he wanted to do was create the first vamp state. Funny thing is, when I'd say that, he'd just stare at me, like if he was seriously considering it.

The Great Plain. What a wonderfully boring region it is. Let's get real here. I mean, how much fun can miles and miles of flat land be, occasionally interrupted by small towns (where the inhabitants would shame some vamps for coldness) and small towns that think that they are cities. Come on. Have you ever really gone through Iowa, Montana, Nebraska or Minnesota? Boring, let me tell you. All they seem to do is farm and sometimes fight with each other about whose cattle this is or whose field you be farming on. That, and dogs chasing you through fields of wheat gets pretty boring after awhile, make that a day. Yeah, I'll admit, feeding in the middle of a wheat field after sex is great, with the red, red blood staining the blond wheat, with the black sky above pierced slightly by stars, but face it: you can only do it so many times before it gets boring.

Yeah, Minneapolis used to be pretty cool, with one of the best music scenes anywhere, but lately it's pretty boring like the rest of the state. Of course, the fact that the Corps are so powerful in that region doesn't help. Too much corruption makes it difficult for a Ronin to

have fun, with the vamps that have been there for a while and the Corp sponsored vamps being very weary of strangers on their turf. Something's gotta be said about finding work there though — it's damn easy. As long as you watch your back, you could make an easy few thou' euros there with very little work. Of course it's all Corp work and most of it involves "termination", but hey, there's just something about being paid to eat out that always appealed to me.

The only interesting place in the Great Plains region (ever wonder why they called it that? Maybe it was because it was just that, plain boring) is Wyoming, and not because of the landscape. Nah, the thing about Wyoming is based on rumors. I know I looked for it myself for a little while, but couldn't find it. What I'm talking about is the famous vamp feeding camp, Thunder Basin. Yeah, I know, you were told that it was some sort of gulag. Well, if you knew your real history better, you'd know that the Russian gulag were really feeding camps for the powerful vamp community in Russia. And you thought all along that when people referred to the vamps in Russia they were just being "poetic"...

The Pacific Northwest is another dangerous region for the lone vamp, once again because of politics. Since this is one of the most powerful, non-corp owned region, people in general are a little more weary about outsiders, but most of the time they're still friendly. But here, other vamps won't rip you if they find out about you. Rather, they'll set try to set you up as the fall guy, girl. And most of the time you won't even notice before its too late.

A vamp friend of mine lives in Idaho. Last I talked to him, he was still having a good time there, with his radio show and all. He has this show on like real late at night and stuff and he shoots the breeze with whatever idiot wants to argue with him. He got in trouble a couple of time in the past with 'em Aryan idiots just cuz he believes in equal rights and all. Yeah, the thing they don't know is that he thinks that all meatboys are equal because to him they're all lunch anyway. They tried killing him a few times, but they never figured out how the hell he survived. Pretty funny stuff actually.

He took me hunting in the woods of central Idaho a few times, looking for Neo-Nazi scum, and boy did we have a good time. It's not everyday you get to see the face of some racist retard when some 200 pound, 6 foot tall black vamp comes down on them for the kill. The only thing is, it stinks to hell when they pee their pants, which is to say all the time.

I get worried about him cuz last I talked to him, he was sprouting more and more about Sanctuary and all that religious crap. That stuff's more dangerous than the Knights, let me tell you.

I guess that leaves us with the West region. Damn hot if you ask me. And there seems to be way more Weres around than vamps, which by me is just fine. The thing is, if you're not in one of the cities (which seem overrun by 'em stupid SINners), there ain't much to see, except for the desert. And the reason they call it the desert is because there ain't no one around.

It's quite strange to walk around the desert, with the heat (even at night) and the sand. As I said before, about the only people you see around are the Weres, and if they're not Weres, well, you'd better run, cuz they're either soldiers on illegal arm tests, smugglers or heat-crazed locals.

The cities are pretty much closed up and if you're not Corp, or you ain't got dough, they'll kick your sorry butt out. I try to stay away from that part of the country for those reasons and also cuz overall, they're boring.

Well, boring that is except for two places. One of them is Alpha, over in Arizona. There's so many rumors flying around about that place that it takes willpower not to want and infiltrate the damn place. I mean, I'm sure you heard the rumor about there being a computer running the place and that it is almost built on a communist model, where everyone is equal but some are more equal than others? And then there's the rumors about the space vamps having made it, as a foothold on Earth and stuff. Let me just tell you this: I've been there and tried to get

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in. It's almost impossible. And I think that those rumors are just that, rumors. It's probably just some weird end-of-the-world cult like the Church of the Dead or something. Better leave it alone, girl.

The other place that's sometimes fun to hang around in is Colorado Springs, and that's mostly because of the element of anarchy that seems to pervade the place. It sort of reminds me of New York, but without the damn radiation. It's just like being in one of them post-apocalyptic films, like *Mad Max* or something. It's just great. All you gotta do is hook up with one of the smaller gangs, prove to them that you might be useful as extra muscle, and bang, instant party. They'll try to take advantage of you by sending you out on search and destroy missions against weaker gangs, but hell, it's like they're sending you out for food, and most of the time with backup too! The other vamps in the region basically have the same sort of deal going on with various other gangs and have a non-aggression pact going on amongst themselves. Basically what that means is that they'll attack rival gangs, but won't attack other vamps; the dumb gangs let them get away with that! I find the whole thing a riot.

Enough talk for one night, girl, I'm starving and you must be too. Let's go back to the bar. I'm dying for a bite to eat.

PEOPLE OF THE NIGHT

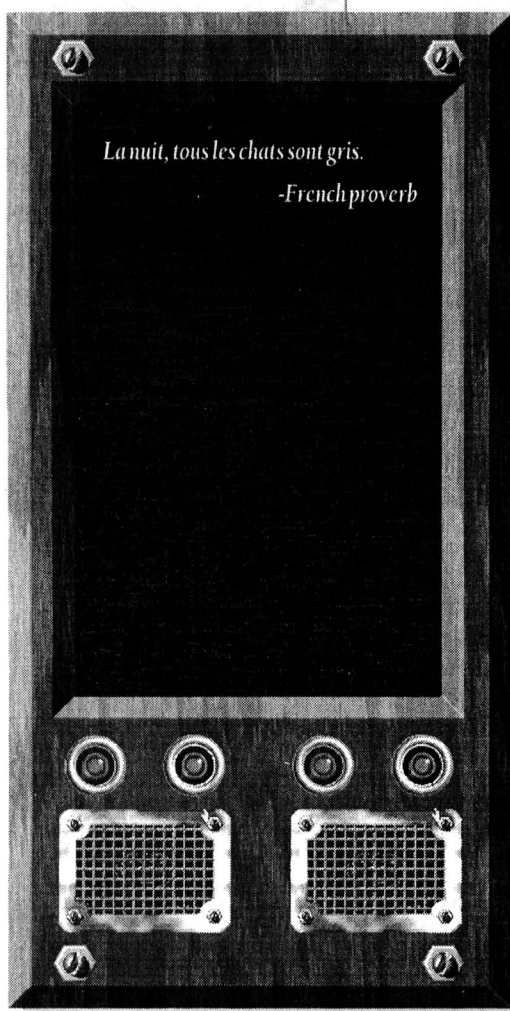
Hope you had a good day's sleep, cuz here comes another chunk of the sermon. Yeah, yeah, I know. You'd rather be out there in the night, learning by falling flat on yer face and almost getting ripped. But as a pal of mine once said "Now you know and knowing is half the battle".

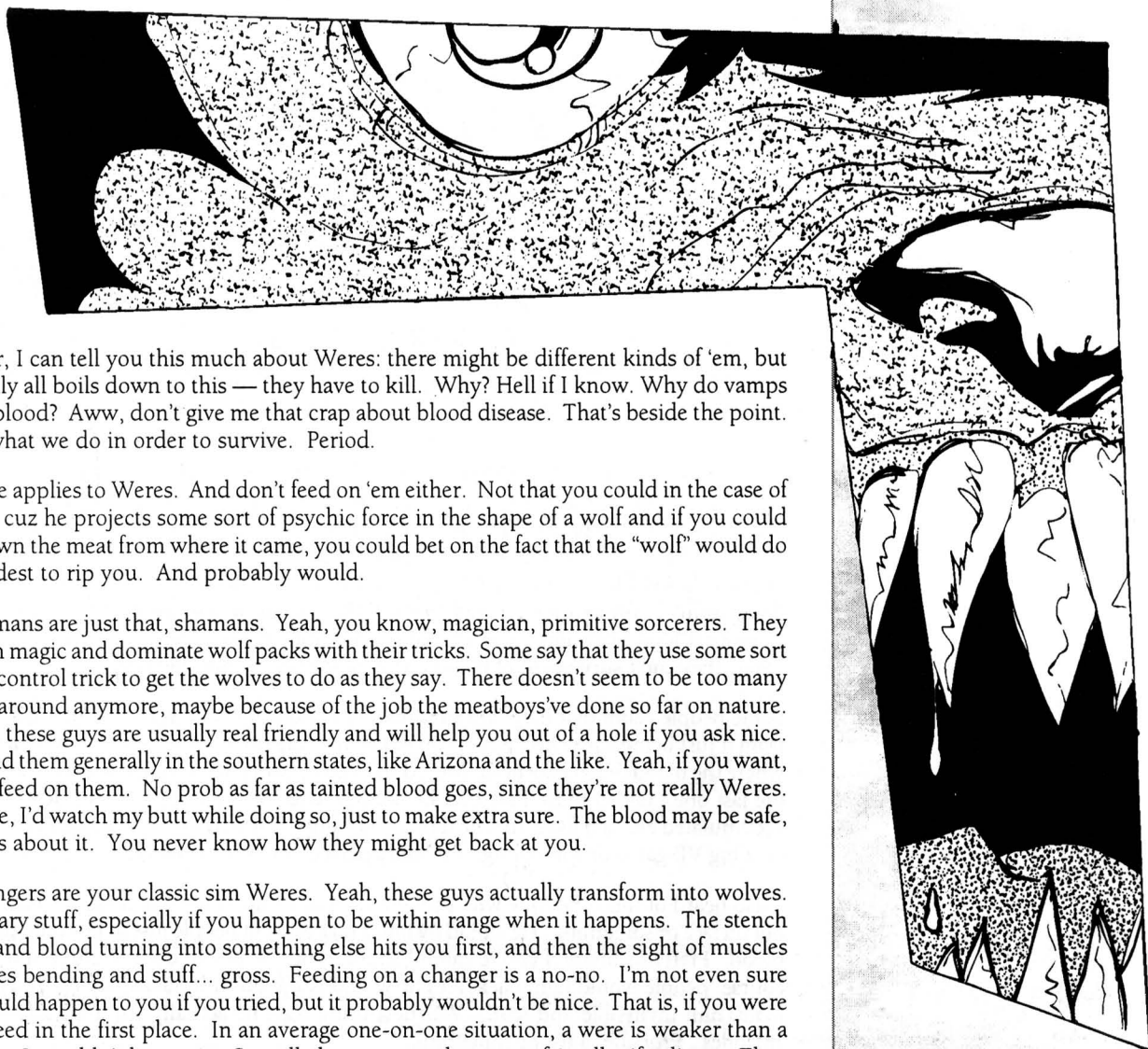
I guess one way of putting it is that the world, especially at night, is divided into two: the meatboys and the others. And if you think that the others are just like us, well, you're partly right.

Yeah, there's the vamps in the night, but there's also the Weres. 'member when I talked about some of the states and I said that some of them had werewolves in 'em? Well, one thing you gotta remember is that although they're much friendlier than your average vamp, they'll still kick your ass if you cross 'em. And, don't confuse them with Lycs. Why? Because Lycs are just your basic psycho, except they gotta kill and when they do, they do it like wolves, with blood everywhere (waste of good eats if you ask me) and ending up eating most, if not all, the flesh. Truly disgusting.

It's not like the Weres, who change shape and stuff and are true creatures of the night. No, the Lycs are just plain whacked out. They look like meatboys, act like meatboys most of the time, but every time the moon is full... You don't have to worry too much about 'em though, cuz they die like meatboys — that is, fast. And I wouldn't feed on them. Like I said before, be real careful of tainted blood. They tend to hang around with Weres if they're not in a city, or if their "leader" isn't dead. Like vamps, there's all kinds of Weres and Lycs around and I can only tell you about those I know.

First thing about Weres: they smell different. Just like they can pick us out in a crowd, so can we. Knowing that the guy is a were is useful, but it doesn't tell you a hell of a lot. I mean, he could be a spirit walker, a changer, a shaman or a polt. And also, depending where you encounter him or her, their traditions might be totally different. You gotta remember this, girl. Even if the Net and the media told you otherwise, the real world is real different depending where you are. I mean, people on the West Coast are a different breed than people on the East Coast, and I don't even want to think about Euros or the rest of 'em. The same applies to us, children of the night.





However, I can tell you this much about Weres: there might be different kinds of 'em, but it basically all boils down to this — they have to kill. Why? Hell if I know. Why do vamps feed on blood? Aww, don't give me that crap about blood disease. That's beside the point. We do what we do in order to survive. Period.

The same applies to Weres. And don't feed on 'em either. Not that you could in the case of the polt, cuz he projects some sort of psychic force in the shape of a wolf and if you could track down the meat from where it came, you could bet on the fact that the "wolf" would do it's darndest to rip you. And probably would.

The shamans are just that, shamans. Yeah, you know, magician, primitive sorcerers. They play with magic and dominate wolf packs with their tricks. Some say that they use some sort of mind control trick to get the wolves to do as they say. There doesn't seem to be too many of those around anymore, maybe because of the job the meatboys've done so far on nature. Anyway, these guys are usually real friendly and will help you out of a hole if you ask nice. You'll find them generally in the southern states, like Arizona and the like. Yeah, if you want, you can feed on them. No prob as far as tainted blood goes, since they're not really Weres. Of course, I'd watch my butt while doing so, just to make extra sure. The blood may be safe, but that's about it. You never know how they might get back at you.

The changers are your classic sim Weres. Yeah, these guys actually transform into wolves. Pretty scary stuff, especially if you happen to be within range when it happens. The stench of meat and blood turning into something else hits you first, and then the sight of muscles and bones bending and stuff... gross. Feeding on a changer is a no-no. I'm not even sure what would happen to you if you tried, but it probably wouldn't be nice. That is, if you were able to feed in the first place. In an average one-on-one situation, a were is weaker than a vamp, but I wouldn't bet on it. Overall changers are also pretty friendly, if solitary. They like being alone and, generally, prefer to live in the wild rather than in the city.

Which brings us to the spirit walkers. Generally speaking, they're a lot like shamans, except that instead of mind controlling a wolf pack, they seem to "ride" the body of a wolf, usually the leader of the pack. Pretty strange stuff if you ask me. They'll be sitting on the floor, with the skin of a wolf wrapped around them, and then their eyes just sorta go blank, like there's nobody home anymore. They sorta remind me of 'runners, except that instead of the Net, they run the woods and the plains. Weird. Oh yeah, you can feed on 'em too, if you really want.

Some people talk about were packs and stuff, but don't believe 'em. Most of the time, Weres are loners. The only time they'll be with company is when they're running, but then it's either with real wolves or with Lycs. Sometimes you'll see a family of Weres, with young Wolvens in the plains and stuff. I wouldn't do anything to 'em though, cuz the mother is usually pretty vicious when push comes to shove.

Overall, you'll probably won't see too much of Weres around anyway. I've been kicking around for a while now, and I've only met a few. Most of the time, they'll leave you alone. Vamps and Weres've always had an easy relation with each other. We stick to towns, they stick to the countryside, with the occasional excursion into the 'burbs. There's always exceptions, though. But don't worry about 'em, girl, cuz they sure don't worry about us.

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Which brings us back to the vamps and the meatboys. You know meatboy culture, or at least you know what they let you know. Now, keeping that in mind, do you really think that all vamps are the same? Didn't think so.

Yeah, of course, personality-wise, we're all pretty different. You got, just like in the meatboy world, your classic megalomaniac, bent on world domination, all the way down to your suicidal loser type, without forgetting your typical ego maniacs, who only want to pleasure themselves without thinking about others and the other assorted psychos who haven't really adjusted to their new "lifestyle." And that's just your basic psychological profile.

We can divide the vamp world into two: on one hand you got your real vamps, and on the other you got your meatboys who wanna be vamps. Now, don't confuse those meatboys with the Goths or posergangs. These guys are really sick, not like the Goths who simply wish they were vamps.

Nah. The whackos, or the Medvamps, are truly screwed up. They really believe they need blood in order to survive. It's real strange. I've once observed one of 'em make a careful cut on the wrist of a sleeping victim and drink the blood, only to puke it out a few minute later. She probably drank too much or something. But you should've seen the glow on her face afterwards, just like a real vamp who's just fed. And that's the screwed up part. Some of them, if you didn't know better, you might believe that they're actual vamps. They act like vamps, somewhat look like vamps and all that rot. But they're not. They don't have vamp blood, hence they can't survive off of blood cuz they simply cannot digest it.

Some people claim that there are a number of reasons for such screwed up folks, anything from it just being a psychological problem all the way up to meatboys who were kissed, but where the blood didn't take hold. Me, I don't know. And I'm not sure I care so much. I mean, the last one I talked to told me that he needed "lives" in order to survive and that once he accumulated enough lives, that he'd be a real vamp. Screwed up. It's like he makes it out to be a big VR game or something. Probably played "Buckets of Blood" too many times.

I also heard of this other one who thought he was a vamp only when he was real whacked out on lace or something. He would fly into a rage and cut people just so he could drink their blood. Pretty ordinary if you're careful about it, but he would do it in clubs and stuff. Of course, people would fight back, and he would laugh off the attacks, saying that the blood made him invincible and stuff. Weirdest thing was, he actually survived a few of them episodes. Probably a psi or something.

The main thing all these guys have in common is that they're unbalanced, whacked. They all want to be vamps real bad, but they're the last meatboys that I'd kiss. Prime candidate for Kerushihood, that's what they are. I mean, turn one of 'em into a vamp, and the next thing you know he's trying to rip you so he can drink your blood and get stronger. No thanks. Or the classic case of finally having what you thought you wanted, only to be disappointed. Then what? You go back to get a refund? Nah. So it's curtains for 'em. And usually, they do it with the biggest bang they can muster.

But, like the Lycs, you would never be able to tell by just looking at them, at least, for the majority of 'em. They're not like the Goths with their black clothing and their obsession with skulls and crap. Nah, these guys, just like us, look just like your regular Joe Meatboy. And they are. Except for their little quirks.

And then there's us, the vamps, the predators, the destroyers of the light, as the Knights call us. But, yeah, as I said earlier, we're not all the same. Sure, we all share similar beliefs and we all have to feed, but, hell, even those basic facts differ from vamp to vamp.

Take the ones we, on the street, call Glamvamps. I'm sure you know about them. They mainly stay in Europe, living in large expensive castles, and screaming at the world that, indeed, they're vamps. Arrogant sons-of-bitches, that's what they really are. They seem to enjoy the publicity they get for their appearance as much as they enjoy blood.

You see, for some reason, they attract a following much like rotting meat attract flies. All the rags publish stories on them every other week, exposing them again and again for what they really are, and they just laugh it off, arranging accidents when a media gets too nosy for her own good. They rub elbow with the rich and powerful of the world, thumb their noses at the Knights and, rightfully, get on the nerves of the rest of the vamp community.

Yeah, they tick me off. How do you want me to react to an idiot who, because of some obscure reason, is able to, without even really trying, pick and choose who he'll feed on that week? They're the ones who started the "Blood cow of the month" club, and they're also the ones responsible for all the bloody Goths around, bunch of stupid kids just looking for an idol to worship. They parade around, looking exactly like sim vamps, with the cape, suit, pale complexion and jet black hair. You'd think that they just stepped out of a sim, and all that's missing is the organ music when they walk into a room. Some of them are even public figures, for frag's sake. Pretty boys, the lot of them.

I mean, they don't even hunt. They just sorta walk into the latest sex club, and bang, there's about twenty daddy's girls falling at their feet. Like they were some kind of Rockerboy or something. And some of them actually are Rockerboys. They're the ones responsible for the majority of orphans like you, flying into a town, dropping by some Goths hang-out and, for the pure thrill of it, kiss some poor sod. Of course, they never stick around to take care of the sod, instead, they just hightail out of there as soon as they can.

Glamvamps are probably some of the most powerful young vamps around, both financially and connection wise. About the only ones who are more powerful than them are the old European coven masters, who, by the way, hate them because of the risks they create for the rest of us. The funny thing is, the Knights leave them alone most of the time. I don't really know if it's because they think that they're just rich Medvamps, because they're afraid of the publicity a screwed up rip would cause, or simply because they're way too dangerous to rip, but the bottom line is the same: Glamvamps are left alone.

There are some rumors going around that some Glamvamps are usually coven masters in several cities, but I personally doubt it very much. Why? Simple. No one in their right mind would put up with 'em pretty boys for very long. At least without violently trying to teach them a thing or two about manners. And beside, they're way too flaky.

On the other hand, the rumors about feeding clubs and harems are probably true. With the kind of fannish following some of them 'suckers get, that wouldn't be surprising at all. Human devotion can be quite strange sometimes.

The sickest part of it all is that the Glamvamps are not a small, isolated group. There's quite a few of 'em in Europe, with all the decadence of ancient Rome fitting them quite well, thank you very much. They really tick me off. I think the only vamps that make me madder are the coven types. Big sissy wimps, that's what they are. But, more on them later, much later.

It's like them pathetic clowns, the Corpvamps. Imagine that, if you will: some pathetic vamp who, for the right price, has become the private plaything of some big corp, doing as they please. They seem to blend the old traditions with the new, the idea of a coven that covers your back with the new modern idea of corporations.

In Japan, they're called the Yorozaibatsu, or the "corporate family of the night". Another bunch of pretentious sissies, if you ask me. They've completely integrated themselves into the corporate hierarchy. More often than not, they'll play hitman to the big boss, with no real intention of going up that ol' corporate ladder.

About the only way you become a Corpvamp is if you get noticed by the big guy and he thinks that you believe enough in the corp to be trusted with that kind of power. Imagine: for them, a vamp is the perfect employee, cuz not only are you faster and sometimes more intelligent, but your upkeep is cheaper and where would you defect to once you've undergone that kind of change? I've met a few disgruntled ex-Corpvamps who went Ronin. Not a pretty sight,

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let me tell you. More often than not, they're totally paranoid (not that they weren't before), sure that the corp for which they used to work is still after them. Never mind the fact that they can easily outlive them, if they only took the big sleep. Stupid sheep, that's what they are. Huh? Never mind what a sheep is.

Don't get me wrong. The Corpvamp is not one of 'em Japanese fads. We got Corpvamps of our own, here in the good ol' US of A. They thing is, they're a little more of the backstabbing variety, that's all. They're out for their own good, seeing their "condition" as being a faster way to the top, and once there, a good way of staying there. The North American Corpvamp is much more an individualist than his Japanese counterpart, who would do anything for the good of the company. I guess it just goes to show the differences in ideologies.

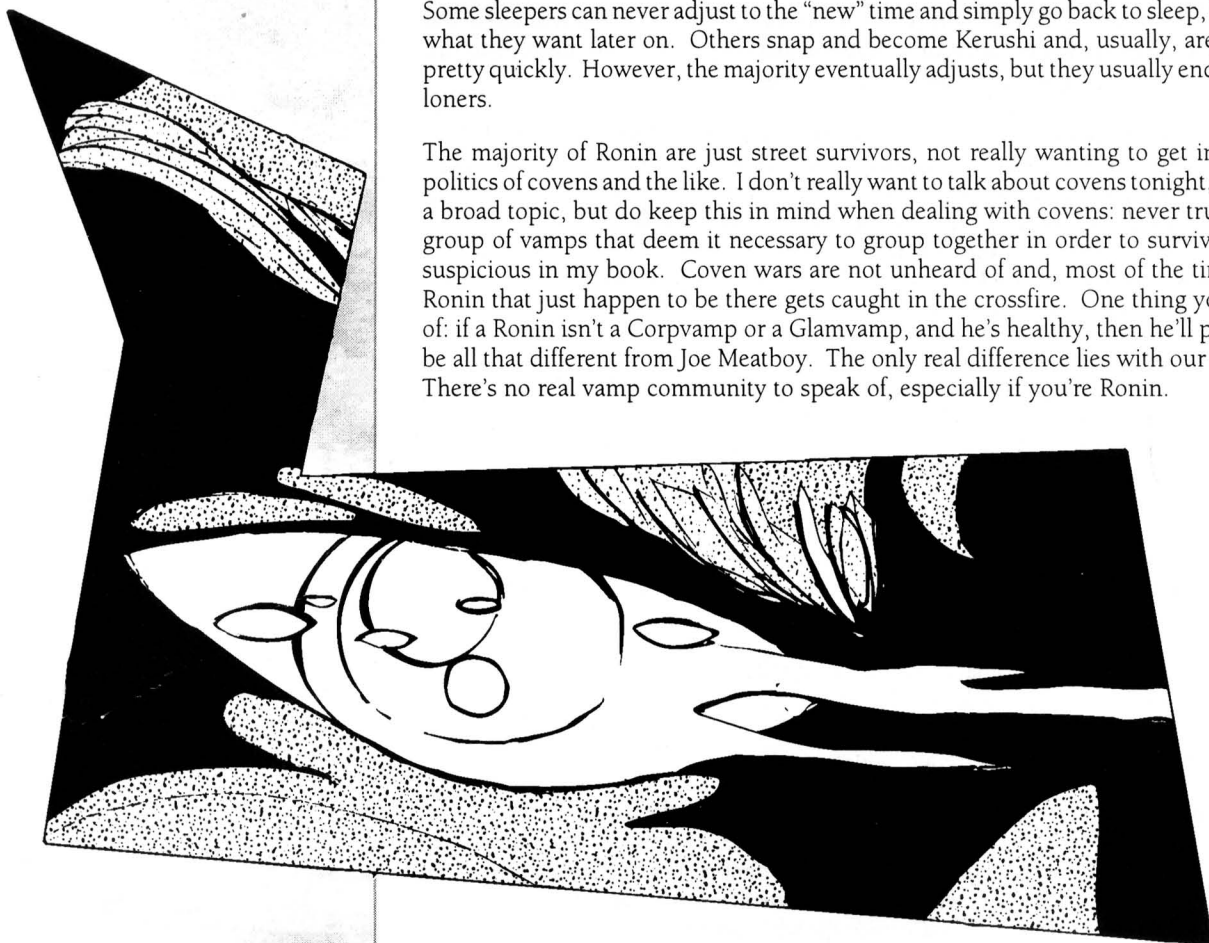
Another type of vamp you'll probably encounter is the sleeper. Sleepers are basically vamps who just came out of hibernation. They're easy to spot simply cuz they're real confused about what's going on around them. I mean, if you'd just woken from a 50 years plus sleep, you wouldn't exactly be on the ball as to what's going on.

The general rule about sleepers is that you're suppose to help them as much as possible, bring them back up to speed. Why? Cuz you might take the big sleep one day, and believe me, when you awake, you'll want the help too.

The thing with sleepers is that, unlike a Kerushi or Radvamp, the condition is obviously temporary. But, nonetheless, even when a sleeper is brought back to speed, she's never gonna fit completely, simply because their way of thinking is so different. It's sorta the same thing as with ancients and old vamps, but worse since they haven't seen things change firsthand.

Some sleepers can never adjust to the "new" time and simply go back to sleep, hoping to find what they want later on. Others snap and become Kerushi and, usually, are taken care of pretty quickly. However, the majority eventually adjusts, but they usually end up becoming loners.

The majority of Ronin are just street survivors, not really wanting to get involved in the politics of covens and the like. I don't really want to talk about covens tonight, since it's such a broad topic, but do keep this in mind when dealing with covens: never trust them. Any group of vamps that deem it necessary to group together in order to survive is extremely suspicious in my book. Coven wars are not unheard of and, most of the time some poor Ronin that just happen to be there gets caught in the crossfire. One thing you can be sure of: if a Ronin isn't a Corpvamp or a Glamvamp, and he's healthy, then he'll probably won't be all that different from Joe Meatboy. The only real difference lies with our diet, that's all. There's no real vamp community to speak of, especially if you're Ronin.



The only time you might hear from the other vamps in any given city is when a Kerushi or a zombie pops up. Yeah, I know I've mentioned Kerushi a few time already. You might have sorta guessed what they are by now, but let me tell you anyway.

Basically a Kerushi is a vamp who, for any number of reasons, has snapped, lost it or whatever you wanna call it. It's not just that he's crazy that causes a problem, but rather that he's more often than not suicidal. And most often than not will kill himself in the most flamboyant way possible.

Problem is that they will often cause the meatboys at large and a horde of hunters to come down on the vamps of the region simply cuz they'll attract a hell of a lot of attention. Think of it this way: it's like a cyberpsycho, except that he's a vamp. And, a vamp feeding openly or a vamp who doesn't bother covering up after having fed is a dangerous thing. Or worse: the Kerushi will believe that his condition must be stopped, and, to top it off, so does vampirism. Which means that he'll start hunting vamps himself or will help a group of hunters with information that they would've never gotten usually.

Why does it happen? Damned if I know. Some vamps claimed that the Kerushi cannot handle the simple facts of unlife. That's one of the reasons you gotta be careful when you kiss someone. Just cuz you really like the dude, or he used to be your input before means frag all. Only certain type of people can take the pressure of our nightly life.

There was this kid a while ago in Night City who was turned into a vamp. Some jerk obviously thought that it would be funny or somethin, but, obviously, the kid freaked out. Killed a couple of peds and crap, which, in itself, wasn't all that bad, but he brought down the wrath of the cops, cuz he killed some high exec from some corp or somethin, the local Goths, cuz the vamps are still real nervous around here after the little war we had with Arasaka and they're too much of a bunch of wusses to take care of these things themselves, a bunch of Knights, cuz they're Knights after all, and basically way too many people on his poor little butt. Guess what? The kid died at the end. Sure, you might sneer and say that the kid should have been more careful, but look at you. You're much older, but you ain't a hell of a lot wiser. I'll bet anything that the jackass who made him just took off or somethin, without telling him the first thing about feeding.

I'll also bet you that the poor kid didn't ask for that kind of crap in the first place. Probably had a good Da and ma, but hell, some stupid vamps can't leave well enough alone. They got to take action to stir the crap. Girl, if I ever got my hand on some of 'em Glamvamps...

Not all Kerushi are innocent victims. Some are just basic idiots who thought they could deal with any crap we threw their way. And then, like they discovered religion or somethin, they turn around and start offin' the vamps who made them. Religion is a strange thing girl. You should watch out for anybody who appears to be too religious for his own good. They might turn out to be either hunters or worse yet, vamp prophets. But before I start yapping about prophets and hunters, let me tell you about the other sick vamps that you might want to watch out for.

As I said before, you won't hear much about the vamp community except when some Kerushi or zombies show up. Now, don't get me wrong and please don't jump to conclusions. When I say zombie, I don't mean the sim zombie and I definitely don't mean some 'dorphed up piece of meat. Nah, zombies are... special. There ain't many things like a zombie in our world.

One thing you'll notice about being a vamp is that your body doesn't age, doesn't change. Your hair will stay the same length as when you got made, and if you break your arms or somethin, it'll heal in a matter of days. But the thing is, if your arm was broken before you got kissed, it won't heal. Ever.

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I don't know if you see what I'm getting at, but, basically, a zombie is a vamp that was screwed up in one way or another before being kissed. At least, that's my theory. See, if you were on smash or somethin, I think that the trip would almost be forever with you. The thing is, survival instincts are very strong in vamps, so it goes to follow that you'd get some stoned out vamp, wandering the streets, smelling bad and stuff, looking like your typical sim zombie. Of course, the fact that he was zoned out wouldn't diminish his hunger for blood. On the contrary, he'd probably have the permanent munchies. Another theory is that if you get a corpse that was fresh, and I mean real fresh, and you kiss it, you'd reanimate the body in a way. But since the brain would be dead, it wouldn't be too smart and it'd probably listen to some basic commands. I'm not so sure about that, but hell, anything is possible, right?

Understand now why the vamp community freaks out when they see zombies? Yeah, bang on girl. If zombies are around, it means that there's some idiot that's making them. And that can only mean trouble. And yeah, it also means, once again, Knights coming out of everywhere. Makes hunting a little hard.

Almost nothing can hurt a vamp, right? I mean, if we get our arm chopped off (or ripped off), it'll grow back. It might take a couple of days, and in the meantime your arm looks like an overgrown chicken wing, but, it'll grow back. I know it make cybernetics impossible for us to have, right? The trouble is, once you notice them things, some vamps believe that they're invincible and all. And then they go into the radzones, like New York and the Middle East. Why? Cuz you can. And there's no one else around. For miles.

Okay, so it's all nice and nifty to hang around the 'zones, but the bad news is, we're not invincible. Yeah, there's fire. And sunlight. Although a large amount of firepower would also do. And then there radiation. Bad juju. Real bad juju.

Radvamps. That's what they are. Forever haunting the radzones. Why? Cuz not only does it mess up your looks, it also affects your brain in the long run. Yeah, you're right. You'd have to be quite screwed up already to go and endure the zones. As I said yesterday, you gotta like your food well cooked. But it's not only the ones who ventured into the zones that are Radvamps. There's also the ones who were there, front row center and witnessed the sun coming down on earth. Yup. They saw the blast firsthand. And that ain't happy about it.

I mean, these guys are friggin' freaks, basically. Twisted limbs, skin that is almost liquid. Hell girl, it ain't pretty, not at all. It's like the other freaks, those who got affected by the plagues and the other junk from the bio corps. You can bet that none of 'em are Glamvamps, that's fer sure.

And because of that, they're not exactly the friendliest vamps around. Some of 'em are real whackos. This vamp that I met in the bayous once told me of this Radvamp from the Middle East who had come to the States to extract vengeance. The vamp was able to teleport and stuff, and used to stalk this old theater that was frequented by a bunch of streetkids. According to him, that vamp thought that he could heal himself by bathin' in the blood of "virgins", whatever that means nowadays. Never found out exactly how that story ended though. Remind me one day to go back to the Bayous. Let's just say that I had to leave in sort of a hurry.

Some Radvamps even made the bomb into a religion. The Reaganites like worship the bomb for making 'em pure and remaking 'em in its image. Some vamps say that they're secretly planning to nuke a couple of other cities to purify 'em too. Why this doesn't surprise me, coming from New Yorkers...

If it weren't for raiders, Radvamps or not, they would die, that's for sure. There's always some idiot who comes to the zones, expecting to find some treasure, be it either cold, hard cash, gold or maybe some lost 'tech or some old junk that some geezer somewhere might want. But, hell, that's what the Radvamps feed on, I guess 'em and the Weres that're around there too.

There's only three things vamps should really be afraid of: other vamps, hunters and religion. Things get real ugly when religion and vamps are mixed together.

See, the thing is that vamps prophets don't preach the same crap that the SINners or the other meatboy religions do. Nah. Apart from the Reaganites, there's only one other religion: Sanctuary.

I told you about a buddy of mine from Idaho yesterday, right? Yeah, the radio dude, that's the one. Well, it turns out that the last time I talked to Phil, he was running at the mouth about Sanctuary. Scared the hell out of me. You know why? Because Sanctuary is really some sort of death wish, an unconscious desire to commit suicide. Sorta like being a Kerushi, except that's it more organized, more documented.

The whole religion is based around this story about a vamp, Catherine in some version, Mary in others. She'd been a vamp for a few years, being known around for being strange, prone to hearing voices and stuff. She'd actually share her kills with other vamps, who'd take advantage of her to no end. Pretty pathetic. Some version of the story says that she was a real mean bitch before she started to hear voices, but not every prophet agrees on that.

I'm sure you're starting to see why I think religion is dangerous. I just started to tell the story and already I've told you about some minor differences between them, but anyway, back to the story. Turns out that one day, she starts puttin' on weight. Now, if you've been listening, you know that that's impossible for a vamp, but the thing was, she was. She was getting fatter. Not just her stomach, but her whole body. Her arms and legs got fatter and fatter, her stomach got fatter, hell, even her head was getting fatter.

Now, in that position, huntin' gets harder and harder. And if you can't feed, you're outta here! But the thing was, she didn't look like she was gonna croak. The getting fatter and fatter lasted for a good 9-12 months and she went without feeding for at least the last 6 months. The other vamps left her alone, convinced that she had caught some weird disease or somethin, or worse, that she'd been cursed. Nowadays, vamps would've thought that the toxins or something got to her, but in those days, folks were a little more superstitious.

Anyway, the bottom line is, everyone expected her to either die or go into hibernation. And then, after something like a year, she finally went into hibernation. Her skin got bluish, her lips were huge and well, she was huge, period. She just lay there, in the corner of a crypt, stuffed inside a coffin. She must've stayed there for a couple of months before anybody found her again. Turns out that this tramp who was looking for somewhere to sleep choose the crypt where she was.

When he walked in, he couldn't believe it. She'd gotten so fat that her skin was stretched out so much over her body that you could almost see through it, and, even worse, the coffin had burst, spilling her flesh out like dough. And the smell, worse than a were turning. For some reason, he didn't take off. He actually felt drawn to her body, probably expecting to find jewels or something. But anyway, as he got closer, he could see a faint glow coming from her. Finally, when he got in front of her, he saw that something in her stomach was giving off light. He freaked out! And then he heard the voice. A small voice, like that of a child. It told her to go and get 'em, lead 'em to the crypt so that they could be reborn.

Quite simply, he peed in his pants. Not that he'd never done that before, but this time, it wasn't cuz of the booze. So he took off, running blind in the night, trying to get away as fast as he could from the crypt.

He ran blindly into an alley without really looking where he was going. It just happened to be feeding night for three vamps from the Burk coven. They jumped him quickly and were about to start feeding on him when the tramp started babbling about the crypt. Somehow he managed to convinced 'em to spare him and to follow him back to the crypt. I guess vamps in those days weren't afraid of hunters or feeding on junk. Either that or they were dumb. Real dumb.

PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

So he brought 'em back to the crypt and they all saw her. At first, they didn't recognize her, but upon closer examination, of at least a few feet away of course, they knew who she was. And that's when she gave birth. If what happened can be called birth.

Greenish blood and maggot flew everywhere, splattering the bum as well as the three vamps. Yup, she just upped and blew up. Boom. The bum fell to the floor and curled up in a bad way, freaking out, fer sure. The vamps were about to beat the crap out of him — they were so mad — when the voice that the bum heard before came back and told 'em not to, that he wasn't worth their while.

That's when they looked up and saw it. Sanctuary. Of course, they didn't know its name then or anything, but it told 'em. Told 'em everything. Huh? What'd it looked like? Oh yeah, it looked like a ball of light, totally blinding, like a small sun, but of pure white. And in the middle of it, you could see a fetus, with the cord going to Cath's ripped up body.

Now, I guess this doesn't sound so bad, right? Might be a little gross for a birth and all, but, when you're vamp, you take what you can, right? That's not the problem. The problem is what it told 'em. It promised to cure 'em. To make 'em new. I guess you could say to transform 'em into something better. I ain't exactly current on its teaching, but I'm sure if you really want to know, you can find out.

They couldn't believe it at first of course. So, in all its glory, it fried one of the vamps on the spot. Like he got hit by... by something, like a fly that gets zapped by one of 'em bug lights. He just turned all white and burst and there was nothing left of him. Nothing, except for a little pile of white dust.

It then told the two vamps that were left to gather the other vamps that they knew cuz it had messages for 'em. Told the vamps not to be scared about what happened to the other vamp, cuz now he was better. The vamps got real scared and ran out, with the firm intention of not coming back. I mean, would you?

The thing is, when they got to their coven house, dawn was around the corner. Not that they had any choice in the matter, but they went to sleep for the day. And that's when they were "touched", at least according to the story.

They had the same dream, of being in a jungle of some sort, with something running after them. And there was like a light ahead, a light that they were sure would save them. Of course, the light turned out to be the fetus, Sanctuary.

So they went back the next night, bringing a few vamps along. And the night after. And so on. Every night, more vamps would show up, until the religion spread around. And the fetus would teach 'em night after night. Teach 'em about salvation and all that crap. The thing is that what it was really telling 'em is that death was the ultimate savior. And that only it, Sanctuary, could give 'em the way out.

After about three years, Sanctuary told its disciples that it had an important message and that they should all gather at the crypt on a certain night. So many vamps showed up that Sanctuary told 'em to bring the body of its mom outside, so that all the vamps gathered could hear its message. Some accounts say that there was over a hundred vamps present, others say that there was a thousand. I'm not sure I believe either of 'em. Not that I believe the story in the first place.

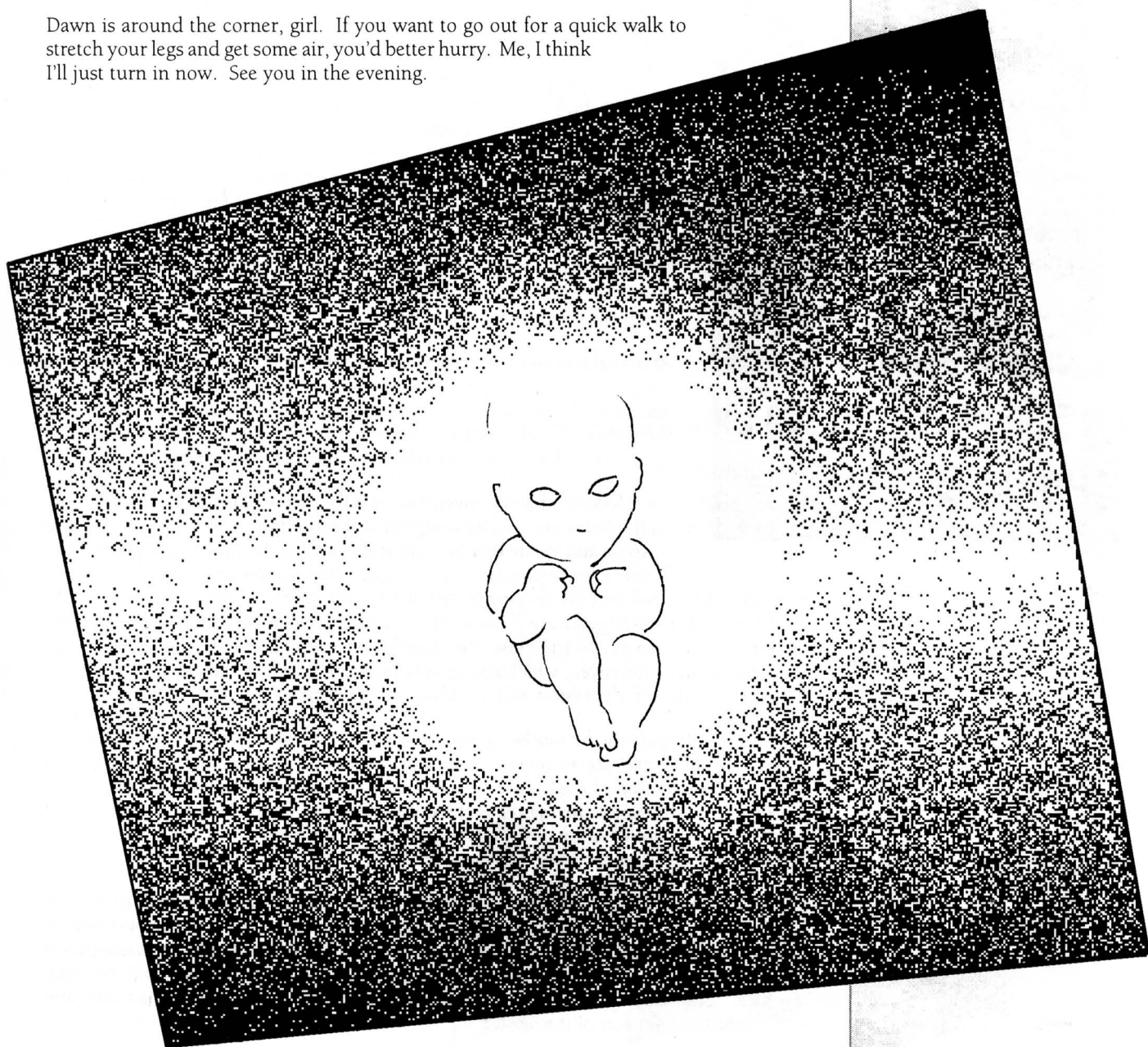
Anyway, back to the story. It told 'em that it was leaving, leaving 'em to spread the word, leaving to go back to its world, but that it'd be back one day. There might have been a little more than that to its final speech, but the vamps present freaked out at first. It told 'em to calm down, that it wouldn't forget about 'em, that when things would look the bleakest it'd be back to take 'em all back to its world. Those who believe would be made into kings; those who didn't, well, they'd be along for the ride, but things wouldn't be pleasant.

So Sanctuary then rose into the sky, the cord detaching itself from its mom's body. When it had reached a few hundred feet, it sorta blew up, like a star going supernova or somethin'. A few of the vamps present also burst into balls of light at the same time as Sanctuary.

Since then, there's been many prophets preaching the return of Sanctuary. None of 'em can agree on specific details, cuz nothing was written down; everything was passed by word of mouth. Of course, they all look for the signs of its return and fight with each other as to who is right and who is wrong. The stupid thing is that they can't see that they all basically say the same thing: that one day that thing will be back and it'll kill all the vamps. And they want us to believe that it'll be out of mercy? Yeah, right. And I kiss people to save their soul. That and a fiver'll get you a cup of synthcoffee.

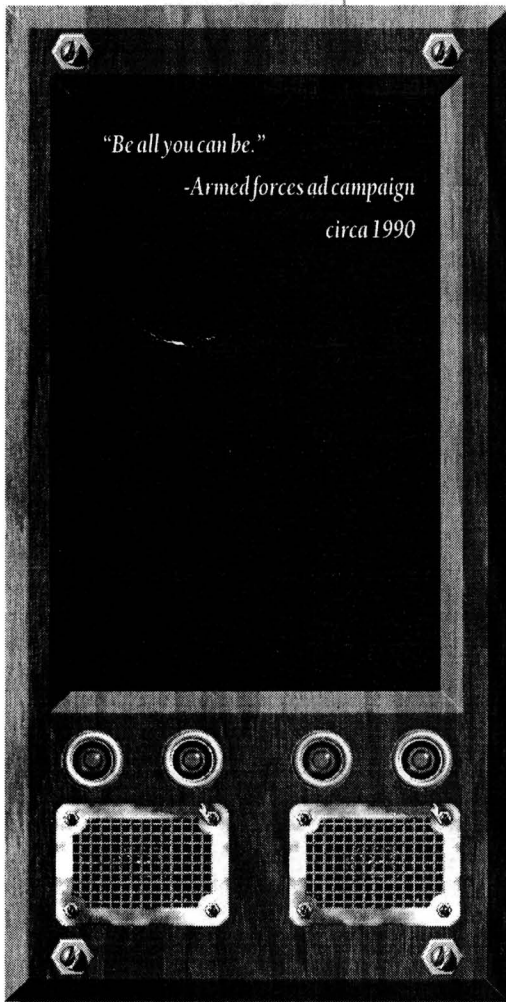
Things are getting worse and worse, and more and more prophets are saying that the time is right and that it's coming back. It scares the hell out of me.

Dawn is around the corner, girl. If you want to go out for a quick walk to stretch your legs and get some air, you'd better hurry. Me, I think I'll just turn in now. See you in the evening.



PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

THEM



"Wake up girl. This is the last night and then you'll be free to chose what you want to do, whether what I told you matters or not.

I told you yesterday that there are three things that you should really watch for: religion, hunters and other vamps. You know why religion is dangerous now. Hunters, well, if you can't figure it out... And as far as vamps are concerned, well, the thing you should worry the most about are covens.

Why covens? Because of politics, quite simply. Covens are probably the one thing most responsible for the death of so many vamps, with their politics, their bitching and whining, and all that rot. You know, if there were only two vamps in a town, even if it was a small town, they would leave each other well alone. But the moment a coven comes in, boom! there's territorial wars, fighting and all that junk. They're worse than the bloody corps.

The problem with covens comes from their reason of existence, the why they are. I mean, basically, it all boils down to security in numbers, right? The more vamps who have a vested interest in your survival, the more likely you're to feed tonight, right? Well, yes and no. What if, in the coven proper, you don't get along with one of 'em? Tough noogie, right? Nah. The thing is that this vamp is in your camp. And there ain't nothing worse than having friends for worse enemies.

Before I go running at the mouth about the "evils" of coven life, let me tell you a bit more about their structures and stuff, you know, the basics. Maybe you'll see as we go along why there are so many problems with covens.

At the heart of any given coven, there's a master. Doesn't matter whether it's the guy who originally made the coven or if it's some other jerk who came and bumped the old guy out. The thing is, no matter what you might hear, there ain't no such thing as a democratic coven. Dictatorship is the way it goes. Socialism is just not in the vocabulary of your average coven vamp.

So, it follows, that the coven master is the one who makes all the rules and stuff. Rules are usually designed to keep him out of trouble as long as possible and insure that he stays at the head of the coven. Generally, rules follow a few true and tried formulae, such as no one else in the coven is allowed to kiss, feeding only on people that the master deems okay to feed on, and the punishment that will be given out if any vamp is stupid enough to break the rules. Since the master is the only one allowed to kiss, that usually means that he will be the oldest, by far, of all the vamps in the coven, which also usually means that he'll be the toughest mother of the bunch. Take out the master and the whole thing crumbles.

A problem with only the master being able to kiss develops with how the members of the coven'll feel about any new members. Some may show hostility towards the new vamp cuz she stole the attention of the master or some such. Or sometimes, you'll get your basic personality clash. Since the master is the only one who's permitted to do this without consulting anyone else, it's tough luck if there are personality problems. Deal with it or leave is the usual message sent to any troublemaker.

The other thing that happens when the master is the only one allowed to kiss and if the coven doesn't accept outsiders is that everyone will end up sharing some basic characteristics. Usually makes it much easier to spot who's with who that way. And yeah, most coven will never, never accept outsiders. Makes life as an orphan a bitch. And that's why Ronin stick together. Because it's usually some coven bastard who made the orphan in the first place and won't admit to it for fear of the master.

Apart from that, covens vary pretty much. The internal organization as well as their overall structure varies as much as from a small streetgang to a corp, or half-organized cults. Anything goes, as long as it pleases the master, it would seem.

Younger covens tend to be more along the lines of streetgangs, with all the rituals and junk. They can be quite handy to know in a crunch, and they're usually friendlier than your average coven, simply cuz they're younger. Also, fear is a great tool when dealing with 'em.

I ran with a streetgang a few years back, when I was camped out in the New Haven arcology. Now, the Batsons are quite different from the majority of covens in that they're way more based on the idea of a family rather than a regular coven. They hang around with each other and readily accept outsiders who can prove themselves useful. They also seem to be the only coven who accepts orphans every once in a while, at least until the vamp can fend for himself.

That gang is very tribal in its rituals. The rites of initiation involve complex tattoos being applied to the skin of the future vamp, just before she is kissed. No one is kissed without approval of the entire gang and without being given the pros and cons of being a vamp. Real strange and real refreshing, if you ask me. They have meatboys running with them all the time, which is real useful to them, but has proven dangerous on at least two occasions in the past.

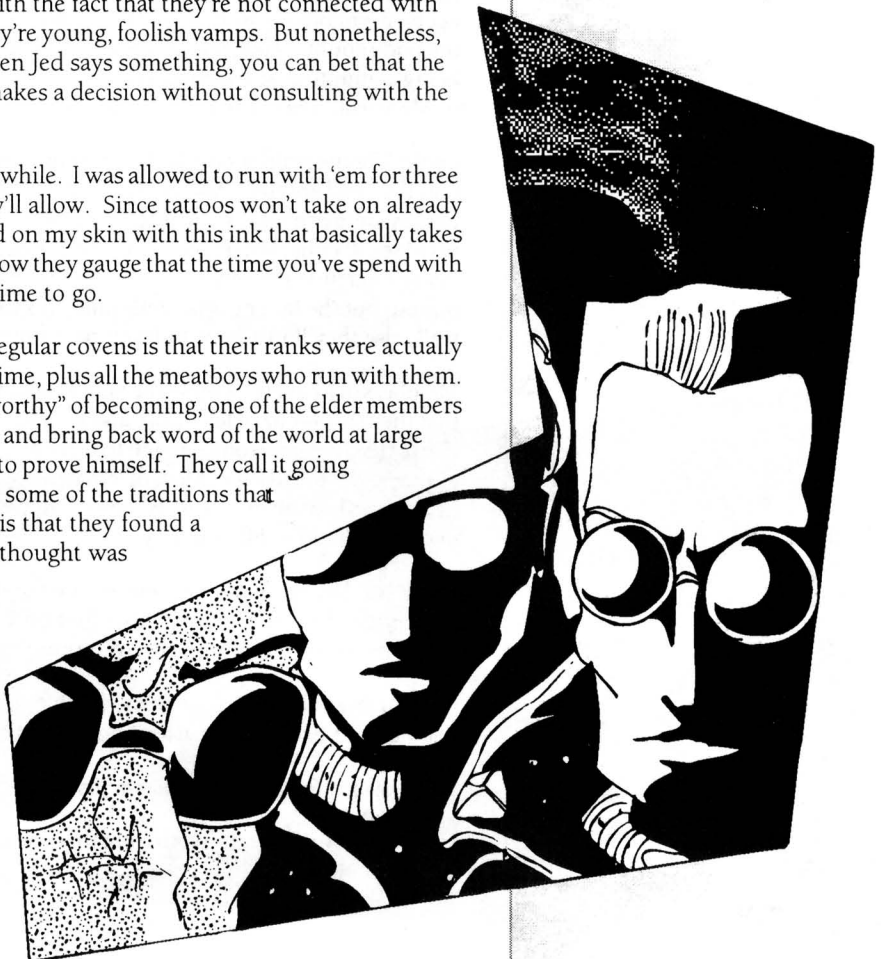
There are certain advantages of having meatboys running with you, I guess, but you better make sure that they know what's going on, or else you can almost bet that they'll turn on you the moment they find out. Funny thing is, the Batsons almost never feed on their Meatboys, I'm not really sure why. Maybe it's just cuz they know where they've been.

I guess most of their differences have to do with the fact that they're not connected with the old European coven traditions and that they're young, foolish vamps. But nonetheless, there's still a leader, and his word is law. When Jed says something, you can bet that the rest of the gang listens, although he seldom makes a decision without consulting with the rest of the "tribe".

As I said, they let outsiders run with them for awhile. I was allowed to run with 'em for three months, which is supposedly the longest they'll allow. Since tattoos won't take on already kissed vamps, they had these symbols painted on my skin with this ink that basically takes a few months to rub off. It's funny, but that's how they gauge that the time you've spend with 'em is passed. Once the paint wears off, it's time to go.

Another thing that distinguished them from regular covens is that their ranks were actually quite large, sometimes up to 6 or 7 vamps at a time, plus all the meatboys who run with them. But, nonetheless, if someone else is deemed "worthy" of becoming, one of the elder members is usually asked to go on a quest for some time and bring back word of the world at large in order to leave some room for the new vamp to prove himself. They call it going on a walkabout. Don't ask me where they got some of the traditions that they're using, I don't really know. My guess is that they found a bunch of old magazines and used what they thought was cool, but that's Jed for you.

Now, the majority of vamp streetgangs are not quite so nice or so organized. Most of 'em are just a ragtag gang of vamps who hang out together and fight amongst themselves to see who's gonna be the leader this week. The majority of 'em were started by an orphan who was already a member of a gang and decided that if he had to put up with that crap then he wasn't gonna be the only one. Shows you the kind of mentality most covens have.



PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

Another type of coven that you might run into, especially if you're up in New England, is the magic coven. They're way closer to cults than anything else, since they always involve a very charismatic leader, almost akin to a Glamvamp, except that this guy is totally schizo. The entire vamp creation is wrought in black magic type rituals, with prayers and dark candles, just like in the old time sims. They believe that they have been put on the earth by some dark forces and that they are evil incarnate. These guys are really nasty most of the time and they're probably more responsible for the bad rep that we get than the Glamvamps. See, the Glamvamp doesn't really believe in all the bull, while these guys...

Their feeding rituals are also something else, being part of a ritual complete with a sexual orgy. Now, I've never really cared for that junk and never really wanted to be part of it, and I recommend that you stay away from 'em too. Rumor has it that they're responsible for the trouble that's brewing up in Montreal, with the city being on the verge of a cult war between the vamps and the voodoo community. That's why I intend to stay clear from that city for awhile. That and the fact that my French is almost non-existent.

Back in Chicago, before the wasting plague hit that city like a sack of puke, there was a large vamp "civil" war that basically got started cuz of a stupid cult coven. It looks like the cult had been kidnapping and slashing the throats of way too many people in the city and some of the other covens didn't like the attention they were getting from the Knights. Not that vamps feared the Knights back then, but vamps were still wary about meatboys becoming hunters, sort of like the sheep hunting the wolf. Anyway, it appeared that the cult was preparing for some large ritual to bring back or bring across a god or something. Of course, when the vamp community found out, some of that city's prophets called it blasphemy and the whole thing went quite mad. 'S'like some sort of jihad, with vamps fighting to bring that "evil" deity across, the Sanctuarians fighting for the purity of their "souls", Ronin fighting to keep all 'em bloody Kerushi in their places, Knights popping out of nowhere and adding to the body count... Hell, girl, it was a real bloody mess. Never seen so much mindless violence being committed, so much blood flowing. Sick. And that's what it looks like is gonna happen in Montreal. Except that the corps are probably gonna get involved this time.

Looks like the majority of vamps who end up creating a coven used to be loners who decided that they had enough. Maybe they had been part of a coven when they first became a vamp, or they were orphans, but it doesn't matter. There's only two reasons for making a coven the way I see it: either you're lonely or you're just a megalomaniac who likes the power. And one doesn't exclude the other. More often than not, the master might've started with the first reason, but the latter comes with time. It's their coven and vamps better listen to 'em else... well, else they'll just have to listen next time, right?

Members of a coven? Simply the people who were kissed by the master. And the only reason that they stay is cuz of fear, pure and simple. Eventually, they leave the coven though. They figure that they're strong enough to leave all the bull behind and that they don't need the rest of the coven to survive. Most of 'em survive. For a while. The streets have a funny way of dealing with arrogant bastards. And if they survive long enough, they create covens of their own, usually in a different city.

There used to be loads of covens before the collapse. I guess they relied too much on their accumulated wealth though, cuz about only a quarter of 'em survived the collapse. Funny how the majority of Ronin survived though. Guess it goes to show...

Of course some of the covens use the local Goths quite to their advantage. The little jerks just need an excuse to be used and abused by the first vamp who passes by.

The Goths... Frag, those guys are just so...

Let me tell you about the Goths, not that you don't know enough about 'em already, but every little bit helps, right?

I don't really know who started the whole movement, but it probably had something to do with always dressing all in black and spiking your hair and stuff. Nonetheless, they've been around for a while now, and what started as just another youth movement was quickly overtaken by eager beaver vamps who saw the youths' obsession with death as just something else to be exploited.

Anyway, quickly enough the movement was infiltrated by vamps who started to spread rumors and legends as to the origins of vampirism, forming subgroups within the movement and generally causing chaos. It's like when I told you about Sanctuary, you didn't believe me. Admit it. You were told different stories by the Goths you hanged around with, right?

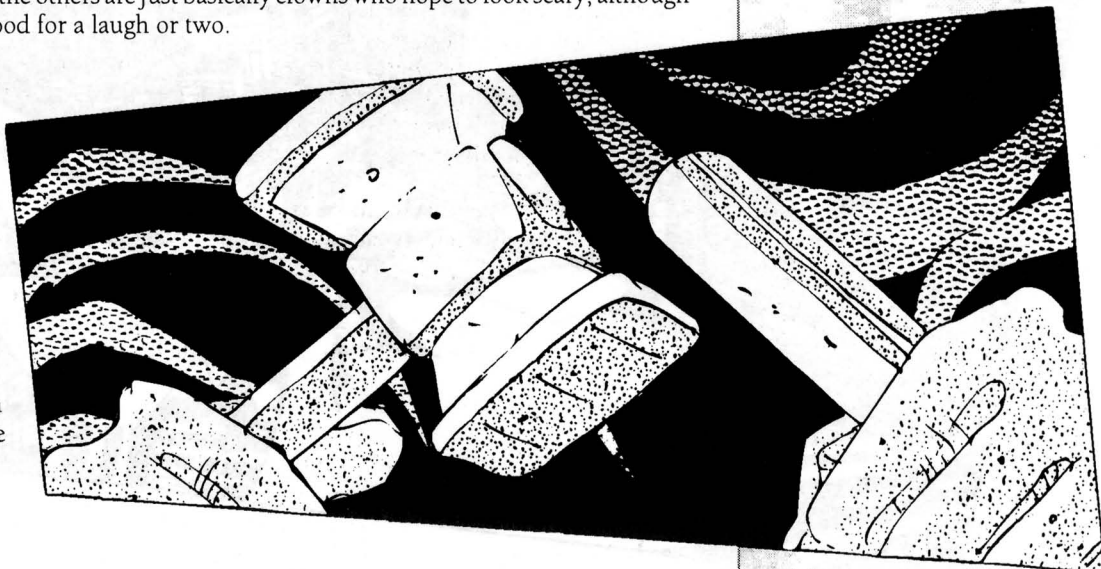
I know all about your complex hand signals and other signs that you use to recognize other members of your clan. You think that we have clans, right? That's what you expected to find when you saw me, right? Well, remember this, girl: most of it we made up to deceive you and you got to keep that in mind. On the other hand, you know so much about the Goths that you'll be able to use it to your advantage.

Take the Fistpuppets, here in Night City for example. They believe that they're part of the Rituals clan, right? That they, when they're made vamps, will be part of the clan that will bring vampirism to its rightful place, taking away the power from the mere meatboys and stuff. They believe that they are at war with the rest of the vampire community, so they hide their symbol, the dagger, within other designs on their black leather jacket. I guess the main reason why their skins are so white is simply cuz they don't get enough sun. Either that or they're letting their "master" feed on 'em way too often. And the stories that they're told...

Forget about the biblical origins of vampirism. The truth is, we don't even know where we come from ourselves. As far as we know, we've always been around, and we'll always be around. That is, as long as there's meatboys to feed on. And the clan bull? No. There isn't any. Forget any thoughts of an organized vampire underground. We, like meatboys, are diverse. There's no such thing as a vamp neighborhood, just like there will never be anything like a vamp country. Why? Because we are parasites and we need the meatboys to survive. We need the darkness to hide in. We cannot reveal ourselves to the meatboys, cuz, if you think that they would submit freely to us, you're sadly mistaken. We might be stronger, we might live longer, but the simple truth is, there's too many of 'em. And beside, it would take all the fun out of hunting, right?

Speaking of hunters, all that I can say about 'em is be careful. There ain't no such thing as an easy lunch, and if it looks just like that, well, then you can probably bet that there are some hunters just around the corner. The only ones you really have to worry about are the Knights — the Sun Knights. All the others are just basically clowns who hope to look scary, although Heart Burn is always good for a laugh or two.

You might've wondered how come I know so much. Simple. I keep my ears open and my nose to the floor. That and travel'll really expand your mind. Hate to do this to you girl, but get out. Now. And don't come back or I'll finish you off. You're on your own now. Hope you have a nice life.



PART I: ALONE IN THE DARKNESS

END

Well I'm sorry you're disappointed
But time they change and so did I
Standing still
and getting nowhere quicker
Well it seem that I didn't have to try
But now I found a reason to move on
And you won't miss me much
that I'm gone
You don't seem disappointed

-Disappointed
Bob Mould

And once he finished telling her, she left. She turned away slowly, hurt at first when he told her, told her everything, told her to get out and get lost.

Maybe he really hoped never to hear from her again. Maybe it was all just a try, a try to forget about her eyes, her gullible eyes that had believed all the lies. He knew, he saw it, that she was confused, unsure of her present state, but he still kicked her out, to fend for herself in the neon jungle amongst the predators and the prey.

She was a predator now, not an easy prey anymore. Most probably, she would be prey again, fast. She would probably not last too long, with the Knights and the others out there. Funny how things changed but still remained the same.

Was it really his fault, all the lies she had believed until now? Was it his fault that she had let herself be kissed so easily? Was he the one responsible for the lies or was he just a victim like her?

He waited. He waited for what seemed like hours, finally getting up slowly, readying himself to take her down and snuff what little flame was left in her. Because she was predator. Because she was prey.

As he left the room five minutes after her, he noticed that it had started to rain again. Maybe the rain would feel good this time. Maybe it would wash the blood away.



PART II: DIARY

• MAY 12TH, '06

Mom got a letter from the government today. They wanted to inform her, with their deepest regrets, that Dad had died in Central America while defending what our country stood for. What a bunch of crock. Dad's dead and Mom's stuck with me and Andy.

Mom didn't say as much, but when she told us, she looked at me kinda strange. I know what it means. Since I'm the oldest and she can't support both of us (she can barely support Andy as it is), it's good-bye Paul, it's been nice having you around, please stay in touch.

I'm leaving for Night City tomorrow.

• MAY 19TH, '06

It's been a week since I left Mom and Andy. I miss them a lot. Haven't called home since I don't really have the money to call, and I'm not even sure Mom still has a phone.

I wrote them a letter though. I was gonna send it to them, but then I remembered that I don't have a return address.

I told them in the letter of my bus trip to Night City. Six glorious days in a Greyhound bus, seeing America, the country Dad gave his stupid life for, in all its splendor. There's so many homeless people around that it scares me. Will I really be able to get some sort of job in Night City?

I saw kids my age selling drugs or their bodies, while others were begging for change or cigarettes, their minds in a constant haze. Made me want to give up smoking. Almost.

I think the worst part was when I was in Toledo where we had stopped for the night. Had to sleep in those stupid plastic chairs. I can still feel the stiff plastic trying to reshape my bones. I still hurt when I sit. Or when I stand for that matter. I couldn't really get to sleep with the fluorescent lights buzzing above me and blinding me with their dead light, so I got up to stretch a bit and decided to go outside to get some air. I locked my shit in one of 'em steel locker, got my cigarettes and walked out.

When I got outside, I leaned against the wall to smoke and take the night sky in. It was a beautiful night and all the weirdoes were out. I saw this old beat up Chevy pull up as part of this Nomad caravan. It screeched to a halt a few hundred feet away from the bus terminal and I could hear people screaming inside. Then the driver's door flew open and this guy came running out and around the car. He opened the other door and pulled this woman out. They kept on screaming at each other and he hit her. In the stomach. Hard. He then opened the back door and dragged this kid out. I swear that kid couldn't have been much older than Andy. He threw him into the street, just like that. He then reached inside and threw a couple of suitcases out. He slammed the doors closed and got back into his (?) car. And he just drove away. Boom, just like that. Wish I had a gun to show that guy what fear looks like. Wish I had the guts to have done something.

Shit: that's what this country looks like to me.

• JUNE 1ST, '06

Been in Night City for almost two weeks now and still have no job. I'm scared. I don't wanna do the things I see the other kids my age doing.

I really don't know what I'm gonna do.

Mom, I wish I could hate you for what you made me do. Same to you Dad. But I don't. I can't.

Uncle Sam, you I do hate for making me, us, what we are.

• JUNE 15TH, '06

Got a job today. Finally.

It ain't the best job in the world, but at least I'm working. I can pay back the hotel for the money I owed them and get you back, my diary. Feels good to be able to sleep in a bed and shit, to be able to take a shower again without having to worry about the perverts.

I wash dishes for a living. At least for now. As soon as I have a chance, I'm going back to school. I'm gonna put some money aside for that.

PART II: DIARY

• JUNE 20TH, '06

Haven't written anything for a few days, but nothing much has been happening. I really don't like my job and my boss' a jerk, but frag it. I got to survive.

I'm not really sure I like the city so much. It sure ain't what they make it out to be on the tube. There are so many people on the streets, living off of what's in the garbage cans. I just hope that I'll never have to sink that low. I think I'd rather kill myself before I got back to living on the streets, not that I'd survive very long anyway.

• JULY 4TH, '06

Happy fragging 4th o' July. Daddy, this is what you died for.

Met a girl today. Her name is Angela. Kinda nice.

I went to a bar to celebrate the 4th by getting thoroughly sloshed. It's amazing how mature you look to people when you have dosh in your pockets and you're willing to part with it. Blew all of my school fund. Anyway. I was just sitting there, at the bar getting surly and drunk and this girl just sat beside me. I didn't notice her at first, not that I really wanted company, but she just sat there and drank. One drink after another. Like she was trying to catch up with me or something.

After a little while, I finally looked up at her. She was striking. Pale skin. Deep black hair, not too long, but not really short either. Chrome cyber right hand. She wore a black leather jacket, with a painted white knife-like cross design on the shoulder. Body to die for. Body to kill for.

I looked at her, and maybe because it was the booze talking anyway, asked her what was wrong. She just looked at me and laughed.

She told me I wouldn't understand. I hate that. I'm not a goddamn kid anymore. I've gone through shit like anyone else. So I told her to screw off.

I made to get up, to get away before I did something stupid, but she reached out and grabbed my sleeve and made me sit down again. For some reason, I sat down. Maybe it was because of her eyes, maybe because I would've had problems walking away anyway.

She told me her name and asked me who I was. I told her. I spilled my beans to her, maybe more than she wanted, but I was in no conditions to distinguish between what I wanted and what she wanted. Funny thing is, she just looked at me through the whole thing and never told me to shut up or looked like she didn't care. I felt like I could tell her anything at that time.

She wouldn't tell me anything about herself, just told me to met her the next day at the Hook'n'Slash. She said she had some friends that I might like to meet. I guess the worst that can happen is that I get ripped off.

Maybe she is sincere. Maybe I might make some new friends. I guess that could be nice.



• JULY 5TH, '06

Good news: I didn't get ripped off and I wasn't killed (obviously).

Angela's friends are weird. They remind me of that kid back in Richmond who thought he was a vampire. They all look pretty much the same: jet black hair, leather jacket and really pale skin. I felt like telling them to go out more often during the day, to get some sun, but that might be hard in Night City, with the pollution and all. I'm not even sure that I've seen the sun since I've been here. It's so dark out here that sometimes you think that the night will last forever.

The Hook'n'Slash is an unusual place. The walls are painted black and the lights are red. Give the place an eerie feel, but the thing that got to me was the music. I guess I can sum it up in one word: depressing. To each his own, I guess.

Most of the people in the place seem to dress in black also. They seemed to hang around in groups of two or three, with one of 'em sometimes changing place and going to join another group.

The Rituals (that's what Angela's friends call themselves) seemed to be waiting for something or someone the whole night. I talked to Angela mostly, while the others seemed wary of me, almost as if they were scared.

Angela told me that it was mostly because they didn't know me. I asked her why she dressed in black and she told me that she and her friends, she called them Goths, believed that there was more than death in life and celebrated that fact by laughing at conventions. She said they believed in the Art of living to the fullest, in exploring the possibilities of life. I told her that it looked like they were obsessed with death. She said they weren't obsessed with death, but that they loved unlife. I'm not sure I understand.

She started telling me about suffering and how only it can make life into Art when this guy walked in. He looked to be no older than most in the bar, but somehow he looked wiser, older. The way he looked at all the Goths in the place, you could tell that he had them in the palm of his hand, that they respected him. Angela looked at me and told me I had to leave. I did, but just before I stepped out the door, I took one look back and I saw all the Goths crowded around the man. I guess that was the guy they were waiting for.

Hopefully I'll see Angela soon. I think she likes me.

• JULY 8TH, '06

Angela came by my work tonight. Funny thing is that I don't remember telling her what I did for a living, even less where I worked. Doesn't matter I guess.

I don't think I'll forget the way she smiled when she saw me. Maybe this city isn't so bad after all.

She told me to meet her later at the Hook'n'Slash. So I did. The rest of the Rituals were there, as usual. I talked to Angela the whole night about this and that. At one point I asked her who the man was but she wouldn't tell me. She said I didn't need to know that just now. I frowned when she said that, but she just smiled at me and somehow, that made it all right. I think I'm in love.

The rest of the night was pretty uneventful. I got to talk to some more of the Rituals and I think that they're warming up to me. It's probably because of Angela.

I'm supposed to see her tomorrow night. Maybe I'll ask her out, just her and me, without all the Gothboys.

• JULY 9TH, '06

She said yes.

• JULY 10TH, '06

Her lips are the sweetest poison.

It's funny. I used to miss Mom and Andy, especially at night when I got back from work. Angela seemed to have somehow taken their place.

We went to this really sleazy Chinese restaurant and ate and drank so much. Afterwards, we just walked around for a while. We just talked the whole time about this and that. I didn't want to ask her about the Rituals because I didn't want to remind her that they existed. I know, I know, that's silly because they're her friends and all, but I just wanted this evening to be mine and hers alone.

I walked her home. That's when I kissed her.

I'll see her tomorrow again. Won't be the same since we'll be with the Rituals and all, but at least I'll be with her. I hope it wasn't just the booze talking.

PART II: DIARY

• JULY 11TH, '06

Saw Angela today. She was at the bar with the Rituals. They looked at me differently. I'm not really sure why, but it was almost as if they accepted me because of what happened yesterday.

Angela took me aside in an urgent manner, like she wanted to tell me something extremely important. It sorta scared me at first. But when we got to a booth, she sat me down and kissed me hard. Then she looked me in the eyes and smiled. She got up and went back to the Rituals. I just sat there, dumbfounded, happy, drunk with the taste of her lips.

Her lips are sweeter than water.

• JULY 18TH, '06

I've been seeing Angela for a week now. She occupies my every thought. I know it sounds corny and stuff, but she makes my life here and the people around me more tolerable. Hell, she makes my boss tolerable.

I met her at the bar after work, as usual. She was happy to see me and told me she had a gift for me. That she did.

I was surprised when she gave me the leather jacket. It is brand new. She told me to put it on and it fitted perfectly. Slash, one of the Rituals, told me that he'd paint the dagger design and whatever else I wanted on it. Somehow, I'm proud of myself. I know that Angela is proud of me. I guess I'm one of them now. I am Ritual.

Angela mentioned something about initiation rites.

She came home with me. She's sleeping as I write this. Never knew what sex was like before tonight.

To say it was amazing is stupid. We fitted together like a hand in a glove. She seemed to know exactly what to do without being sleazy for it. Funny thing is that I also knew what to do, even though she is the first. I always thought that I'd be clumsy when the time would come, but I guess I was wrong.

Her skin tastes sweeter than her lips, if that's possible. The way she looks when she reaches that intense moment is forever burnt into my memory. It was like communion, union of mind and body.

She stirs in her sleep right now, her hand reaching for me. I'm going back to her.

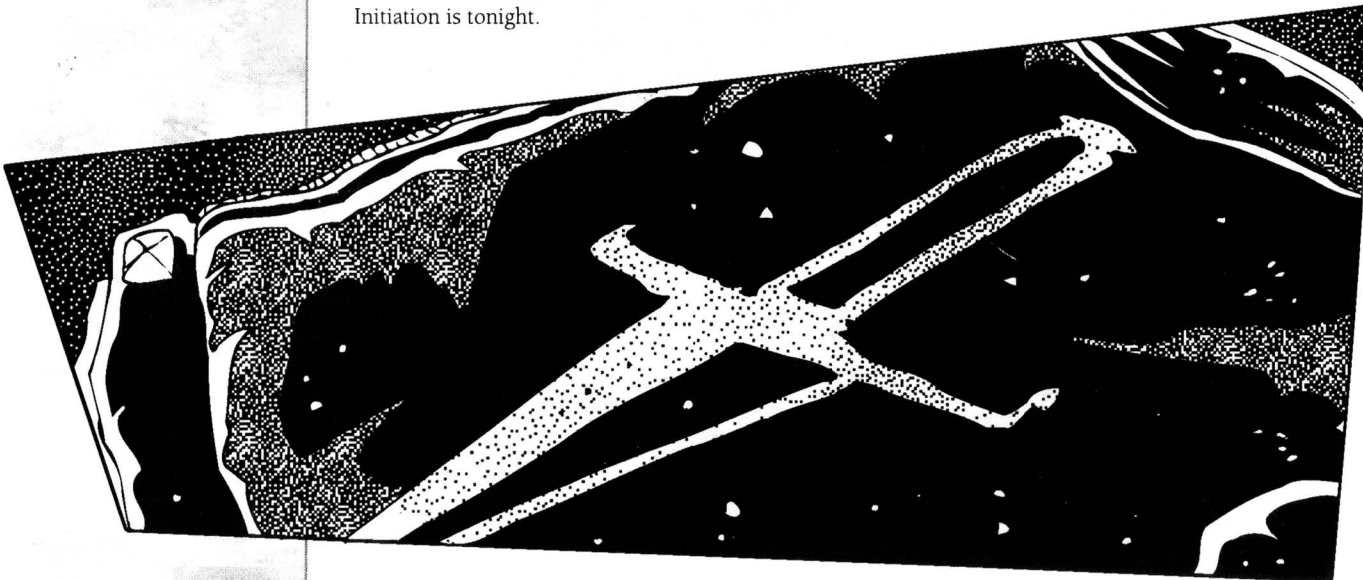
• JULY 19TH, '06 (MORNING)

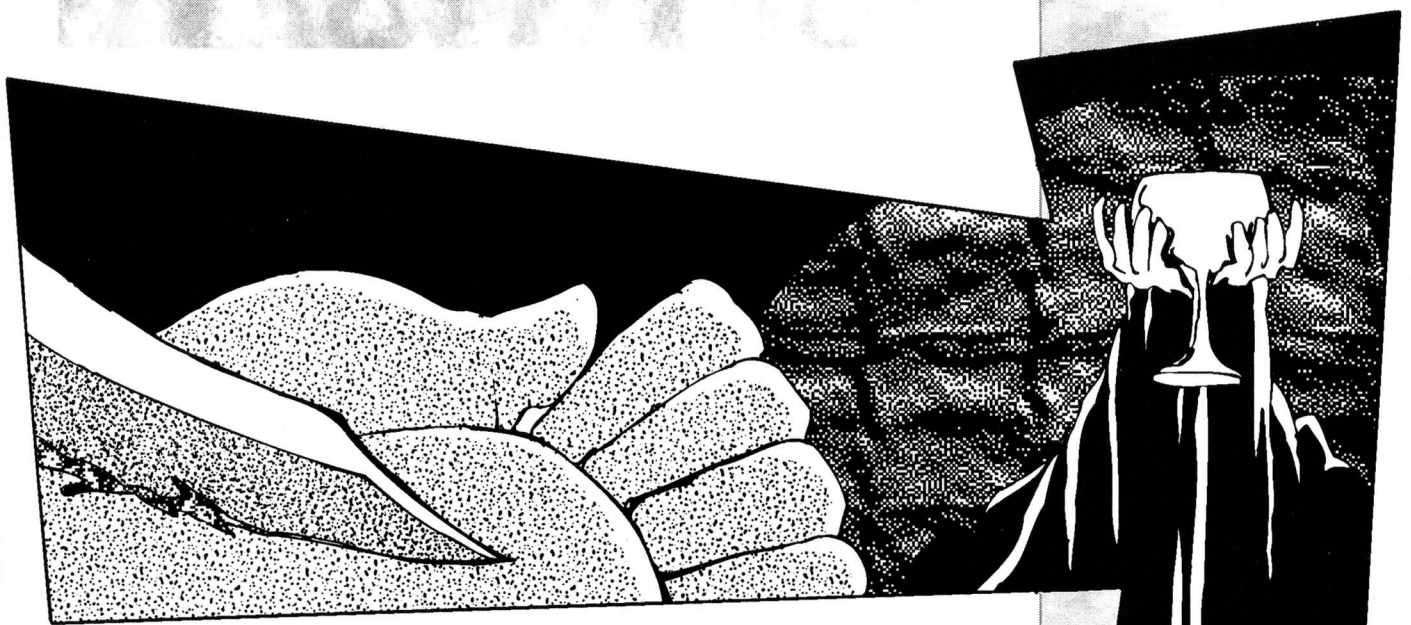
Angela told me that I could move in the house after the initiation rites. She says that all the Rituals live together in the house. She says that once I move in I could quit my job, that they would take care of me, as long as I took care of them.

I asked her about the initiation rites. She wouldn't tell me anything, saying only that they were necessary to initiate me to the gang. It's probably like those rites I saw on the tube once when they were showing college frats. Whatever.

As I write this, I just noticed that I've been wearing black since I kissed her for the first time.

Initiation is tonight.





• JULY 19TH, '06 (NIGHT)

I met the rest of the Rituals at the bar. Angela was already with me.

I sat down at the table with them. We drank a round or two, with Slash, Angela and Nails toasting me in turns. At one point Nails nodded to Angela. We all got up and filed out of the bar.

We went to this warehouse. It was very dark inside but I know by the echoes that it was fairly large. It seemed to be empty apart from a couple of crates in a corner. Nails grabbed an empty oil drum and dragged it in the middle of the floor. We all stood around it while Nails lit a fire in it.

Angela left and returned with a cup and a knife. She presented them to Nails, who had joined us in the circle. He held the cup above his head and screamed. That really startled me, because until then no one had said a word since we left the bar. He lowered the cup again and Angela took out a capsule of some sort which she emptied in the cup.

Once she did so, Nails gave her the knife back. Now, this is the part that really scared me, but I tried not to show it. I'll do anything for Angela. If she wanted me to do this, well, so be it. She took the knife and slowly pulled it across her wrist. She then held her wrist above the cup and let a little of her blood flow into it. She took the cup from Nails and handed the knife back to him. Nails did the same, spilling his blood in the cup also.

One by one all the Rituals did this. I was the last to go, with Slash presenting me the knife. I tried to calm my nerves but I almost dropped the knife my hands were shaking so. All the Rituals' eyes were on me, their lips smiling, their eyes warm. I steadied my nerves and cut my wrist slowly, like I had seen all the others do, spilling my blood with all the others.

Slash passed the cup back to Nails, who again raised the cup above his head. He let out a slow building scream, with each of the Rituals joining in one by one. At the height of the scream they suddenly all stopped. Nails lowered the cup again. He sloshed the blood in the cup slowly, looked at me and said "To you, for the night, forever. May the night be long and fruitful with any desire you may have." And then he drank. He drank some of our mingled blood. He passed the cup around again, each man and woman present drinking from their blood, our blood, my blood.

The cup finally made its way back to me. I drank. I drank all that was left at the bottom of that cup. And after, as Nails directed me, I smashed the cup on the cold concrete floor.

I am no longer Paul Smith. I am Dredd Bloodkin the Ritual, reborn from the blood of my brethren. I am Ritual.

• JULY 20TH, '06

Quit my job today. I cannot express how good it felt to be liberated from those bonds. As I write this, I am waiting for Angela. My bags are packed and I am ready to leave.

Perhaps the greatest thing that came out of meeting Angela might not be the love we share. Not that it is not great, but rather, that I have regained a family of sort in the Rituals. They will protect me and take care of me, as long as I do the same. I miss my mother and Andy, but now, I have a new family.

Angela is supposed to start teaching me the ways of the Rituals. Tonight is my first lesson.

PART II: DIARY

• JULY 21ST, '06

I learned a few things today. Maybe I should write them down here, in you my diary, so that I remember them better. I know that I'll go against Angela's wish by doing so, but she'll never find out.

- The initiation rites are tied to ancient legends, which state that there is power in blood, for it is the essence of human life. They also state that whoever consumes the blood of others without killing them is forever tied to them. Of course, the ritual screaming "seals" the transaction, as it were.
- The dagger design signifies the eternal war. Angela didn't go into details as far as that was concerned, but it has something to do with sworn enemies and the fight for control.
- The legends and symbolism were passed to the gang by the Master. Now, I assume that the Master is the man I saw at the bar the other night. Where he gets that information, I don't know.
- The legends and symbolism are ancient.
- The Rituals are really some sort of first step towards some greater goal. Angela alluded to some other state of being, but wasn't specific. This scares me a little. I just hope that this is not really some sort of religious cult.

From the information I got tonight from Angela, it sounds as if the whole mythology, with its warring factions, are almost like the Gypsies. It reminds me of some of the flicks I saw on the tube when I was a kid. I'm not so sure I believe everything that she tells me, but she seems to believe it herself.

The more I heard her talked, the more it started to sound like she believed in vampires. The obsession with blood, the "unlife" she keeps mentioning, the Master who is ancient and all that rot.

It is also my first night in the house. The house is impressive. I don't know how they can afford to support it, since none of them seem to have a job or any other means of support. I hope it doesn't mean that they do illegal shit. I'm not sure I want to sell drugs and shit like that. We'll see.

I'm supposed to met the Master in a week.

• JULY 24TH, '06

My "training" with Angela is continuing. She has taught me the secret hand signals and has expanded my education as far as who the Rituals are and the reason for their being. Again, I'll list some of the stuff, although Angela has made me swear to never tell anyone what I know.

- By now I'm fairly sure that the Master is a vampire. Or at least he believes that he is and has all the Rituals believe that he is. I'll believe it when I see it.
- There is a second rite that I have to go through. All the Rituals go through it once a month or so. She calls it a communion, a strengthening of the bonds of sort. Sounds like cultish behavior to me...
- There are other Goth gangs in town, although, from the sounds of it, we don't associate with them. When Angela mentioned this to me, she had a look of disgust on her face. I asked her about it and she told me that they were weaklings, dogs when they could be masters. She seems to despise them.

I visited more of the house lately. It is really impressive. I've been in the library for my training and it seems really extensive, at least on vampirism and the occult. There are a few paintings on the walls, all of which look real old. I'm not really sure who the people are supposed to be, but they all look severe.

Something had been bugging me about the house since I moved in and I finally put my finger on it: there are no windows in the whole house. Not even the bathroom and not the bedrooms (at least not mine and Angela... yes, I'm sleeping with her. Yes, I'm in the purest of heaven). If anything, I'm spending all of my time with Angela and for that I'm really grateful.

The other thing about the house is that it seems very old (except of course for the computer room and the tube and sound system in the living room). All the furniture is either fake or real old. The paintings and carpet all combine to almost make me feel like I was in one of them vampire flicks.

To say that the Goths are obsessed with vampires would be stating the obvious.

I dyed my hair black today and decided to let it grow. I meet the Master in a few days and I'm getting increasingly edgy about the whole thing.

• JULY 27TH, '06

Tomorrow is the big day. We're supposed to meet the Master at the Hook'n'Slash. To say that I'm nervous would be an understatement. Angela is also very edgy about the whole thing. I tried to find out why, but she won't tell me. I suspect that it's because the Master might have the final say as to my "belonging" with the Rituals.

If I had to leave Angela, I don't know what I'd do. It was already hard enough leaving Mom and Andy. I sometimes think she is the only thing keeping me alive and sane.

• JULY 28TH, '06

I guess I passed the test. At least the first part with the Master. I was right. He is the man I saw before and yes, he did have the final "approval" of my belonging.

I'm not sure about anything anymore. I did not believe in vampires before I met the Master. Now, I'm not so sure. I've never met someone quite like him. Somehow, it's as if he can see right through you. He asked me a few questions and I answered as best I could. I could tell that if I lied, he would know right away. I'm not even sure I could have lied to him. Actually, I did, but I'm sure he knew. He asked me if I told anyone about the Rituals and I said no. But the look he gave me after I answered him, the little smile on his lips told me that he knew. He knew I lied and that somehow amused him.

When the Master walked in, most of the people in the bar left. A few stayed, nursing their drink, oblivious to what was happening. A few of the guys went up to them and "politely" asked them to leave.

Once the bar was empty, we all stood in a half-circle around the Master. Angela, as in my initiation, produced the cup and the knife and handed them over to the Master. He took out of the briefcase he was carrying a small cloth which he draped over the cup. He then raised the cup over his head, but instead of screaming, he mumbled a few words. I didn't understand what he said, but I'm sure it wasn't English. The rest of the Rituals then answered "Bless be thee." This went on for a little while, with the Rituals answering the Master each time he spoke. He lowered the cup afterward, removed the cloth and dropped a tablet of something in the cup. He walked up to Nails first, gave him the knife and Nails, as in my initiation, dragged the knife across his wrists, making a small incision. He then let some of his blood flow into the cup.

The next part is what convinced me of the existence of vampires. The Master licked Nails' wound and I saw it heal before my eyes. The wound closed by itself and the same happened to all the Rituals who were present, including myself. Even if I look at where the wound should be right now, I cannot find a trace of it. Yet I know that I cut myself. I know I bled into that cup.

The only other part that was different from the initiation is that the only one who drank the blood was the Master. He drank all of it and you could see visible changes in him as he did so. I don't know, but he looked better, more... majestic as he did so. Now I know why the Rituals call him the Master. I know that he must be really powerful. I fear him and I love him, somehow.

It is as if the whole gang is in thrall to him, me included. I know now that there isn't much I wouldn't do for him. Why is that? I just met him after all.

Tomorrow we fight the Crimsons, another Goth gang. That's what the Master wants. He told us that it was because they stood for the Hiding, keeping vampires hidden from the living, when we the Rituals know that the vampires should be the ones who rightfully guide us. I'm not sure we fully understood him or that it really matters whether we do or not. I for one would probably do anything just because he tells us, just because that's what he wants us to do.

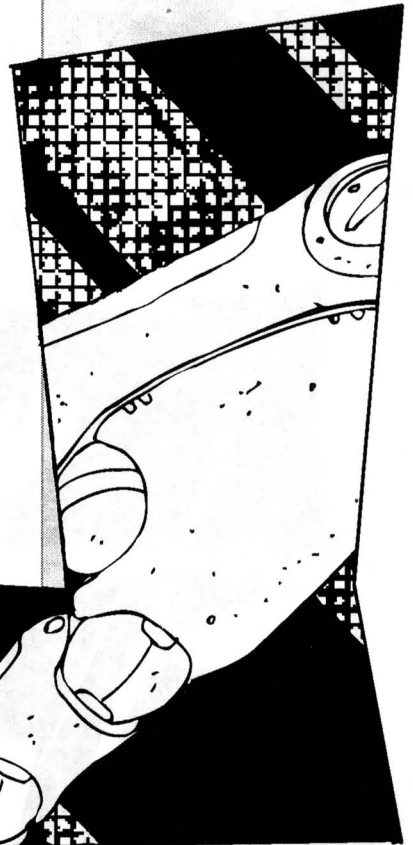
Tomorrow we fight. We fight for our rightful Master, for the once and future rulers, the natural order.

• JULY 29TH, '06 (EVENING)

Angela told me before the fight about her cyber hand. I never really asked her in the past, but I always figured that it probably had something to do with the Rituals. Turns out that she lost it in a previous battle against the Crimsons. She told me that she had artificial lungs as well. She wouldn't tell me more after that, saying it was too hard for her to talk about it.

I'm trying to keep myself calm, to concentrate on the coming battle. If Mom saw me now she'd probably be trying to convince me not to go. It's funny what you will do when you believe in something, in someone. I've never really fought anyone before today.

If I am to be Dredd Bloodkin the Ritual, then I must do this, for the Rituals, for the Master.



PART II: DIARY

• JULY 29TH, '06 (NIGHT)

I killed someone tonight. I felt the hot spray of his blood hitting me like a hot shower. I saw someone die in front of me and it was real.

I feel ill.

I don't understand what really happened. All I really recall is the rush just before the battle and the power that I felt when I saw him (it?) hit the ground. I have no idea who he was or why I killed him, I don't know nor do I care, really. He had no identity except for being foe, being in my way.

We entered the bar at 10:00 p.m. They didn't know who we were or what we wanted, until one of them spotted the daggers on our jackets. Then the bar just erupted. One of them must have been a vampire, because he moved so fast. We weren't packing heat because we didn't want to attract the cops, but some of us have cyberlimbs and the like, the rest of us just packed knives. I had a knife and it felt good to plunge it in their flesh.

The first to fall were the Goths on their side. Mostly young ones, a little younger than me. I guess they weren't ready for us and they paid dearly. Now I understand why the Rituals were so nervous the first time I met them. When at war, trust in strangers is the first thing to go. Everyone is a potential enemy.

When the vampire died, the Goths just ran away. By that time, I had killed my first man. It's funny, because I felt so alive when I did it, when I took someone else's life, as if I was feeding off their life as it trickled out. I felt like a god, with the power of death over someone else.

Angela killed two Crimsons. She smiled at me when she saw my handiwork. She is proud of me like my mother never was.

Some of the dead were women, some younger than I. We didn't care. As far as we are concerned, they knew what could happen the moment they said they didn't believe in the same things we did. And they paid the price.

I feel ill because I feel okay, no, because I feel good about what I did. I feel no remorse because I did it for the Master.

And I don't even know his name.

• AUGUST 5TH, '06

It's been a day since we fought the Crimsons. Nails called a meeting in the dining room today. We all sat around the table, as we usually do during lunch, except that there were no candles on the table and we weren't eating.

Nails sat at the head, as he usually does, and told us that he had just spoken to the Master. He told us that he was pleased with us, that we had done him proud. He was especially pleased that we had killed the Crimson vampire, calling him a weak jerk.

Nails told us that we were allowed, as a reward, to do whatever we wanted. He then handed out envelopes to all of us, calling out names one by one.

In my envelope, there was money. A lot of it, around 5000 Euros, and a note.

I didn't read the note right away. Instead I waited to get back to my room. Angela was already back, talking to me excitedly about what we were gonna do that evening. She said that she wanted to get some upgrade for her cyber hand with the money she got, that she'd been saving for a better one. I sort of tuned her out for a little while.

I asked her how much money she got. She told me that she got the same as usual, 2500 Euros. She sort of wondered why I asked her that. I told her that I was just curious whether everyone got the same. She told me that yes, everyone except for Nails probably.

The note was burning a hole in my pocket. I excused myself and went to the bathroom where I read it.

It was from the Master. He congratulated me on a job well done and asked me to come and see him for a private audience. He doesn't want anyone else present or anyone else to know.

He wants me to meet him the day after tomorrow.

• AUGUST 6TH, '06

I think I drank too much yesterday.

When we got back to the house, after having been to more bars and boozecans than I knew existed, me and Angela just sort of plopped down on the bed and started talking.

She told me about her childhood and stuff, of why she became a Goth and joined the Rituals, how she's always been fascinated by the occult, the forbidden side of things. Like any such conversations, it started quite innocently and got more and more serious as time went on. I told her how she was the first one whom I had "real" sex with and all and she told me about her first time. She told me how she had the biggest crush for the longest time on this European Glamvamp, Giorgio, and how when she met the Master she got a crush on him instead. She told me how the Master hates the Glamvamps, calling them weak and toyvamps since they let themselves become media beasts, domesticated and spineless, instead of the primal, conquering predator the vampire is meant to be. We talked about how she always wanted to be a vamp and how she'd never realize that dream. I asked her why she felt that way and explained to me that since she got cyberwear to replace her busted hand, the Master refused to even consider her for vampiredom, saying that she is corrupted, impure.

She looked me in the eyes when she said that and cried softly. She told me that she hoped I would not be denied that pleasure and that if I ever became a vamp, that I would not forget about her.

I asked her how many Rituals became vampires. She didn't know exactly, but she said that since she became Ritual, at least 6 went on to become vamps. None of them were ever seen in Night City again, but that was because the Master usually sent them to another city for the first 2-3 years. She said that it was all part of his plan to put vampires at their rightful place in the world.

I wanted so badly to tell her about the note, wanted her to be proud of me and that maybe I was already chosen to be a vampire by the Master, but I didn't. I was too afraid that maybe it wasn't that. Or that the Master would find out and deny me the chance because I had told someone. If I had blown my chance that way, it would have killed her. And it would have killed me because of it.

I told her about Andy and Mom and Dad, but my stories didn't compare to hers. She knew so much more than I, had done so much more and had known more pain and pleasure. Not that she was older than I. She simply had lived her life more fully than I.

Angela, if I become, I shall make you one also. Then we can live in the night, as long as there is a world to feed off of, for blood, emotions and experience.

PART II: DIARY

• AUGUST 7TH, '06

Slight disappointment. The Master doesn't want to make me vampire yet, but from what he said, he likes me and if I keep up the good work, there are chances that...

The Master's house is nothing like I imagined it. It is situated at the very top of an apartment complex, with all the security of a corporate building. The apartment itself is just a penthouse, with modern furniture and comforts, white walls and wall-sized tube. The paintings on the walls are just that, paintings. Nothing spectacular unless you're into dripping watches and sunflowers (at least I guess they were sunflowers; whoever did those paintings had some serious problems...).

The Master welcomed me in dressed in his bathrobes. I was sort of surprised that there were no servants to answer the door or anything. He took me to the living room, where soft classical music was playing. There was someone else present, a young woman, also dressed in a bathrobe. I told the Master that if this was a bad time I could come back, but he just laughed.

At one point a young male came in, of about Andy's age. He sat down at the Master's feet, his head on the Master's lap.

He told me that there was a very specific mission that he wished me and the Rituals to take care of as soon as possible. It seems that there is a hunter in town that wants the Master dead. Since he knows exactly what the Master looks like, he'd rather have us deal with him. He told me of all the confrontations he has had with the hunter and the hunter's dad for the last century and how weary he is of having a puny mortal being such a pest. He gave me an envelope for Nails and said that he expected me to be the one who killed the hunter.

After that, he simply told me to leave. He said he had more important things to do and laughed. Both the boy and the woman laughed with him.

I guess I was gone for a couple of hours. Angela asked me where I'd been when I got back and I lied to her. I said that I had been at the arcade. I felt terrible about that, but I couldn't tell her the truth for some reason.

I gave Nails the envelope and when he had looked at the contents, he gave me a strange look. He told me that he should be next, that this was unfair. Maybe he's right, but that doesn't matter. The only fair thing is what the Master wants. If Nails is unhappy with that, tough.

• AUGUST 8TH, '06

Nails called a meeting today. Throughout the whole meeting he kept on giving me cold stares.

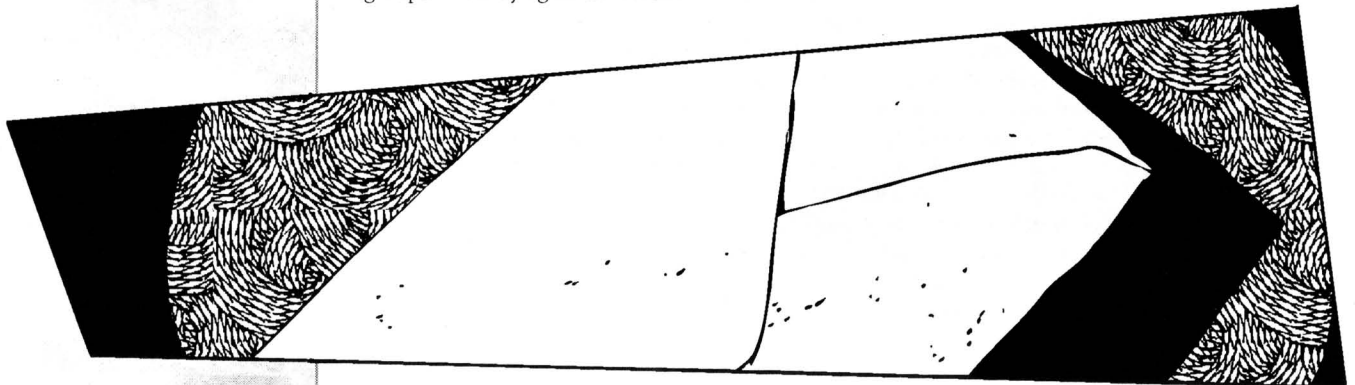
He told us the same thing that the Master told me yesterday. He gave each of us a photo of the hunter, a certain Doctor Van Musley. Nails told us that the first thing we had to do was obviously to find the good doctor.

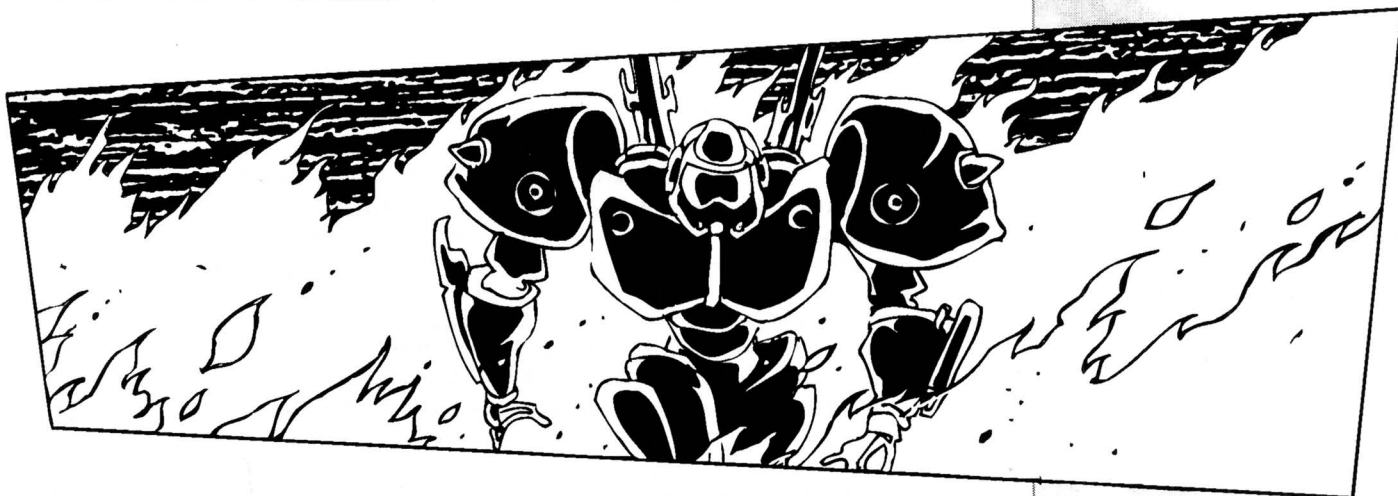
He divided the gang into 4 groups and assigned each a specific section of town. Once one group found him, we were to get in touch right away with the rest of the gang. Only when everyone was there that we would move in for the kill.

He told us to expect Sun Knights. At that, most of the Rituals uneasily shifted in their seats. When I asked Angela afterward who the Sun Knights were, she basically told me that they were the baddest hunters I'd ever meet and that it was the greatest honor to kill one of them.

I was assigned Angela and Slash. We were told to cover the university grounds as well as the business core.

We spent about four hours tonight looking for the doctor. We didn't find him, same with all the other groups. We'll try again tomorrow.





• AUGUST 9TH, '06

Everything is different now. Nothing is the same.

Angela is in the hospital, in a coma. I write this by her side.

Maybe I should explain what happened. We were patrolling, looking for the good doctor in the sectors allocated to us by Nails when I heard something. I could've sworn that a voice in my head told me to go to the Master's place, that Van Musley would be there. So I told Slash and Angela.

We went straight to the Master's place, making sure that no one was following us or anything. The last thing we wanted to do was walk into a trap. When we got there we looked around and Slash noticed a van parked near the entrance to the building. There was someone sitting in the front seat, reading a newspaper.

I told Slash that I'd check it out, see if I could see anything inside the van. I knocked at the window, asking the driver for some directions and a light. While he was fumbling with his coat pocket looking for his lighter, I took a quick peek inside the van. For a delivery van, it sure had some strange equipment.

I walked away, back to Angela and Slash and told them what I had seen. Angela told Slash to go and call the others, while she and I would keep an eye on the van. When Slash was gone, she looked at me and told me that this would definitively put her into good favor with the Master. At this, she opened her coat and showed me the piece that was tucked into her pants.

Before I could even try to stop her, she was walking towards the van. I just stood there, unsure of what to do next, of what she was going to do next. She walked pass the van and I guess when she thought that she was in the van's blind spot, she turned around and gently rolled what looked like a grenade under the van. Where she got all the firepower is something I'll have to ask her when she comes out of her coma.

She ran a small distance, but the grenade must have gone off before she expected it. The blast knocked her down and out. I looked at the explosion, helpless.

I know now why the Rituals were afraid of the Sun Knights. What came out of that van next is something I never thought I'd see. Dad has described them to me many times in his letters from the front: a powered armor. That thing just walked out of the van, ignoring the flames licking at its body, as it ripped the remains of the van from its way. It stepped out and went straight for Angela's inert body.

I panicked. I really didn't know what to do next, when Slash came back. He told me that he had reached the others and they were on their way, packing the big guns. I was about to start running at the powered armor when I saw it pick up Angela with one of its big hand. She looked like a rag doll in its arm. It picked her up by her ankle and swung her hard at a wall. Then it turned around and looked straight at me and Slash.

Thank god the rest of the Rituals showed up. I guess they really packed the big guns, because all it took was about five shots. Five shots of what looked like hand-held rocket launchers. But the behemoth fell down face first after that.

While they were firing at the armor, I went with Slash to pick up Angela. She was still breathing, but I could tell that she was hurt bad.

I took her to the hospital as soon as I could. The doctor told me flat out that even if she comes out of the coma, she'll probably be a vegetable.

Maybe the Master can help her.

Angela, please don't leave me. I don't know what I'd do without you.

PART II: DIARY

• AUGUST 11TH, '06

Angela has now been in a coma for 2 days.

The Master met with us at the house today. He was pissed off. The man is a monster.

He killed Slash when Slash tried to defend himself. He accused us of being a bunch of incompetent fools, having caused so much shit that the cops would be investigating the area for the next two weeks. That we might as well have bought out an ad in the paper inviting the entire vampire hunter population to his place for a party.

That's when he killed Slash. Slash started to say something and the Master just freaked. He picked Slash up by the throat and crushed his head. Not with his hands, but some other way. You could see poor Slash's head cave in by itself, but you could tell that it was the Master doing it.

When he calmed down, I asked him about Angela. He just laughed and said that she got what she deserved, the bitch.

When the Master finally left, Nails told us to get rid of Slash's body. I can't believe him. No funeral, nothing. Just dump his body in the river, get rid of it as fast as possible. What happened to all the fragging rituals, the promises and all that junk? Do they mean nothing if the Master says so?

I hate him. Angela might die and he will do nothing to help her. It's all his fault.

• AUGUST 12TH, '06

I sat at Angela's bedside for most of the day. Nothing much has changed in her condition.

The doctor came by at one point and asked me if Angela had any kind of medical coverage. I told him that as far as I knew, she didn't. That's when he showed me the bill so far. I told him I'd get the money, that I'd be back the next day. He just sort of nodded at me.

I don't know what to do. The hospital wants over 10,000 Euros from me. If they don't have their money soon, they'll unplug Angela.

I'm going to see the Master tonight. It's the least he can do, if he won't heal her himself.

• AUGUST 13TH, '06

The bastard said no. I'll kill him if it's the last thing I do.

I can't believe it. He just looked at me and sneered. He said that he had told me once that she wasn't worth his time, that she was impure, tainted by the mark of modern man. I couldn't believe my ears. I told him that she would have done anything for him, in fact, had done anything he asked, that she had done what she had done to prove herself worthy in his eyes.

He just stood there and laughed. If that was all that she could do, then she did prove her worth to him, he said. She was worth nothing since she had failed.

I left the apartment before doing something foolish. And that's when they got in touch with me, when I stepped out of the building.

I'm not too sure who they really are, but they say that they are vampires, just like the Master. They don't look anywhere as powerful as the Master, of that I am sure.

They're waiting for me at the Hook'n'Slash as I write this. They say that they have a deal for me, something I might be interested in.



• AUGUST 15TH, '06

My name is Paul Smith. I am vampire. I am no longer Ritual.

Of course I was interested in their deal. They wanted the Master dead. Said that he was no good for the community, that he attracted too much attention. Too many hunters appeared in Night City in the past two years and that made their Coven nervous.

In exchange for me getting rid of the Master for them, I was made vampire. And would be taken in the Ramirez coven. Of course I said yes. They offered me everything the Master had used against me, against the Rituals and much more. They trusted me. Hell, they viewed me as their equal.

They told me that Angela had indeed killed Doctor Van Musley and two other Sun Knight operatives and that the Rituals, with their timely arrival, had taken out the last of them. The problem was not that crew we had killed, but rather the other two crews that would now be dispatched to clean up and get rid of the problem that they now knew for sure existed. That's why the Master was pissed: because there would be more Knights after him now.

But the problem did not stop there for the Ramirez coven. No. More Knights activities in Night City just meant that they might also get nailed because of some jerk. So things were simple: them or him.

I have never known such pain as when they made me vampire. I swear, they must have emptied my body of blood and replaced it with something else. Nothing is like it used to be to me. I tried eating some food when I got up tonight just to puke it out seconds later. My body feels different. My mind is different. But now I know what to do. The Master dies tonight. And he won't be able to play some mind tricks with me.

• AUGUST 16TH, '06

I killed the bastard tonight. It was quite simple really. I'm sure the cops will wonder what happened for a few days. The funniest part is that I used his own weapon against him.

I went back to the house today to get a few things that I would need when I move into the coven house. Nails was there when I walked in. He didn't even notice the change. I guess Jose was right. The only difference between a human and a vampire is their diet. And we live longer. He's promised to teach me the truth about vampires.

Anyway, Nails was there when I walked in. He said he was waiting for me. He was quite pissed off because I hadn't been at the house these last few days. I told him some bullshit about wanting to be alone to deal with Angela and shit and how I had been at the hospital for most of the time also. He told me that the hospital had called yesterday and said that since no one had paid the bill Angela had been transferred to a public hospital. I must not forget about her. I will go and get her tomorrow night and bring her to the coven house.

Once I got Nails off my back I packed a bag with some of the stuff I really wanted to keep. Then I went into the armory to get some of the toys I had seen them use on the powered armor. Yup. A nice big incendiary rocket launcher. Just like Daddy used in Central America.

And that's how I did it. I simply went to the building across the street and aimed that baby. The penthouse went up in flame and I doubted that the Master ever knew what hit him.

Angela, I did this for you. For tomorrow you'll be with me forever.

• AUGUST 17TH, '06

Moved in the Coven house today.

I went to the hospital to try and track Angela down. It took a while but I finally found her. When I got to that hole in the wall that they called an hospital, they wouldn't let me see her, because visiting hours were over. After much arguing, they finally let me in to see her. She looks as beautiful as the first day I saw her. She looks so peaceful.

I don't know if I had the right to do what I did next, but I had no choice. It was either that or lose Angela. I know that if she could tell, that when she finds out, she'll be the happiest person in the world. For now though, she'll just keep staring at the ceiling until I can find something to heal her.

I kissed her. That's the first thing I did. Her lips were still sweet, but there was no real life behind them. That's what convince me to do it. I kissed her, as Jose says. I gave her the gift of vampiredom. She is one of us now. She has what she always wished for. She is vampire.

Getting her out of the hospital wasn't easy, but the other from the Coven came in to help me. They weren't happy when I told them about what I did, but they came to give me a hand anyway.

I am so tired. I just want to lay down and sleep. Now that Angela is beside me again, I can finally rest, for a little while at least.

PART II: DIARY

• AUGUST 23RD, '06

I was out for a couple of days. I am still weary but at least I am not as tired as I was.

Jose introduced me to the others today. Jose is the head of the Coven, although the others seem to have as much of a say as he does. None of them look like vampires. They all look like very pale humans, that's all. With the way things are today, everyone looks pale anyway.

There's Pete. He used to be a Solo. Now, with Arasaka trying to find him and kill him for a botched mission, he doesn't do much. In the Coven, he is responsible for security and to take care of people that might be dangerous to our survival.

The next one that was introduced was Rico, who looks much younger than I. Rico was a friend of Jose from way back when. It turns out that Rico was the first vampire of the Coven. I guess that makes him the founder or something. Rico's brother and Jose were in a street gang together, about 30 years ago. He was turned into a vampire by a woman who wanted to have a pet vampire for a little while. When she grew tired of Rico, she told him to get lost. He went straight to Jose and explained what happened. Of course, Jose didn't believe him at first. Rico made Jose into a vampire so they could hunt the woman down together. They found her about five years ago. I guess she's dead now, but I didn't ask, and they didn't offer the information. That's when they came across Pete. I don't know if they're the ones who made Pete into a vamp either, but I guess it doesn't matter.



Jose told me there used to be two other vamps with them, Preacher and Pauline, but that they were gone. He said that they went bonkers and joined some Sanctuary cult sub-group or something. He told me that he would explain who Sanctuary was later, but for now not to worry.

I asked them about the war. They told me that they didn't know much about the Central American conflict. I laughed. They asked me why. I told them that was not the war I was talking about, but rather the war between the vampires who believed in the Hiding and those who didn't. And then they laughed. They told me the truth. The whole truth, unlike the web of lies told to me, to the Rituals by that bastard Enrich, the Master. Here's the whole truth:

- First, there is no such thing as a war over the Hiding. There is no such thing as the Hiding, simply because it's a simple fact of unlife. To flaunt your condition is to die. Also, for there to be such a thing as the Hiding, there would have to be an organized vampire society. While this might have been true up to 50 years ago, the Collapse and the bouts of plague put an end to that. The closest to a community there is is a loose association of Covens in a given city. In some cities there aren't even any Covens.
- There are a lot of screwheads who claim to be Ronin, loners who end up causing more trouble than not because they believe that they know better. Most of the time they are egotistical bastards (like Enrich) who do not care for the safety of the other vampires.
- Vampirism is not a supernatural condition, nor does it mean that you are better than others. It is a blood disease that forces you to change your life habits. When you are a vampire, you are no more dead than the average meatboy. You simply have a different diet and a longer lifespan. You will die too, most of the time due to carelessness and misunderstanding. Because a vampire's life time is so much longer, some of us gain psychic abilities, something that is latent in everyone, but because a normal human's life is so short, it never has a chance to develop by itself.
- A vampire's body does not age the same way a "normal" human's will.
- A Coven, like the one I was now part of, is simply a way of staying alive longer. While this wasn't true in the past, there is rarely a leader, or master. Everyone is equal. I guess what this means is, like other people, vampires find safety, comfort in numbers. Of course, there are still some vamps around who believe themselves all powerful. Either they have been alive for centuries and the days of old still haunt their dreams, or they're just stupid, like Enrich, and believe all that crap they read and see.
- Talking about crap, since vampires are not supernatural like some believe, there is no sure way of killing them. The only reason a particular vampire might be affected by something like garlic or silver is that he believes that it might hurt him. Most of that garbage is just that garbage spread by vampires to protect themselves. Some think that this belief is given potency through the vamps' latent psychic abilities. Kind of a self-destructive thing. Actually, there is one sure way of killing us: lots of lead or burn us alive. Then again, anyone would die under these conditions.
- While there is no true behind the superstition, vampires are tougher than the average Joe Meatboy. But a bullet is a bullet, whether you drink blood or not.
- We might be just like humans, but there are people out there who will kill us, partly because of the abuse of others before and partly because of the misconception and fear bred by fallacies and lies. The Sun Knights do exist. This was about the only true thing Enrich told the Rituals. They do exist and they are as dangerous as he made them out to be. The worst part is that there are some vampires who, for reasons that are as diverse as they are from each other, will help those hunters kill us. Trying to reason with the hunters will only bring death to whomever tries, for they have the same zeal and devotion as the nastiest religious culty.

The more I listened to them, the more I could see that the Master had played us, filled our heads with lies so that we would do as he pleased. Jose said that the Crimson, for example, were actually another group that Enrich had made, for pure entertainment purpose. He thought that it would be fun to pit a couple of street thugs against each other and see who would win. He also used us to feed, covering the fact with ritual mumbo-jumbo.

The last thing Jose said is probably the hardest thing I learned that night. It is not a fact about my new life, but rather something that we'll have to do to protect ourselves.

I argued with Jose for the better part of an hour but to no avail. His mind, along with the rest of the Coven, was made up. That's when I learned another lesson of my new life: do as the consensus dictates or find a new place to sleep.

In two days, we kill the Rituals and the survivors of the Crimson. I hope that Angela never finds out. She would never forgive me.

I will never forgive me.

PART II: DIARY

• AUGUST 24TH, '06

I had to feed today. Had to feed Angela too.

I don't know if feeding myself was tougher than feeding her. It was hard enough for me to find a "donor" for my feeding. Thank god Jose was with me. But then to drag back the poor fucker to the Coven house, drain some of his blood into a cup and hold up Angela's head so I could pour some blood into her mouth, watching it dribble out when I went too fast. I just don't know.

But if this is what I have to do, then so be it. I will do it. I made her vampire, I will take care of her.

Jose tried to tell me that even if I lived to be a hundred, I'd never be able to heal Angela. Told me I wasn't no Jesus Christ, that this wasn't Lazarus. I didn't understand what he was talking about and he just told me to forget it. I won't. I won't forget Angela. Somehow, one day she'll be better. Whether science heals her or I do, she'll be with me again, life in her limbs, life in her face. Jose told me I was mad sleeping with her in this condition. Doesn't he understand that she needs me sleeping beside her, needs my presence? That she knows that I'm still there for her? That if I leave her, I might as well kill her?

After feeding, I talked to Jose for a little while, just shooting the bull and stuff. He told me that you never get used to feeding. I guess that's why some vamps go bonkers and others think that they are gods or some other crap.

I wonder if the lion ever has a twinge of conscience when he feeds on the antelope. I guess not. I guess that's our curse as vampires, as human. We realize our actions and have to deal not only with the consequence, but with ourselves afterwards.

Tomorrow we hunt down the rest of the Crimsons. And then, we kill the Rituals.

• AUGUST 25TH, '06

One down, one to go.

Killing the Crimsons was pretty easy. First off, there was only two of them left, so there wasn't much fight in them. And then, they were scared shitless, knowing that the Master was dead and that they almost got wiped out a couple of weeks ago.

So we sent in Rico to lure them out of the bar they were holed in. He told them that the Master wanted to see them. They didn't want to believe him at first, but Rico just started walking away, telling them that it was their choice.

They walked right into it. They followed Rico through one alley too many: the one with Pete, Jose and me in it. They recognized me. I told them everything. I told them that I had killed the Master, that he had lied to them and everything.

Then I told them that since they now knew too much, I had to kill them, nothing personal. We did. And I fed on them. Brought one of them home with me so I could feed Angela too. Same thing as yesterday: tip the head and pour in the contents of the cup. I'm not sure it really works, but I try. I have to.

Pete and Jose gave me shit after. Told me that I didn't have to enjoy it so much, to play with them. They said that I had been in the same situation as them and that I was no better. That it wasn't because I was a vampire now that I had anything over the Crimsons or the Rituals for that matter.

I told them to fuck off. Shouldn't have, but I did. I don't know why.

I'm so confused. I don't understand what's coming over me. I'm always hungry and I relish feeding. Maybe what I need is a good whooping. Or maybe not.

Angela, I still love you, no matter what's happening to you. I will save you from this state. Jose is wrong. I will save you.



• AUGUST 26TH, '06

Screw up. Nails is still alive, Rico ain't.

The way I saw it, there were only 4 Rituals left: Nails, Meathead, Dim and Wrongway. What we didn't count on was the fact that they still had that weapons cache given to them by the Master. Why the Crimsons didn't have access to heavy firepower like that, I don't know.

We tried to sneak in the house a little after midnight. Rico went in first, creating a diversion at the front door. While Rico pretended to be a kid looking to score, we went in the back door, hoping to catch the rest of them off-guard.

Once we got in, we split up. Pete was to go upstairs alone, and see if there was anyone there. He got to Dim first. Sliced poor Dim's throat from ear to ear. The big guy never knew what happened.

Jose went looking in the other rooms with me. Jose and I got Meathead. I gutted him like a pig while Jose kept his mouth shut.

Pete came back downstairs just as we were finishing Meathead and told us about Dim. That left two Rituals alive: Nails and Wrongway. Neither seemed to be anywhere else in the apartment. We decided to go further in the apartment and try and ambush whomever it was that answered the front door.

That's where we screwed up. We assumed that one of them was out for the night since we hadn't seen anyone else in the house. Wrong.

Wrongway came out of the bathroom right at that moment. We overpowered him fast enough, but not before he gave the alarm. And the only one who could respond to the alarm was Nails, who had answered the door.

From what we saw on the front porch, he must have had a flame thrower built into a cyber arm. I never knew that he had a cyberarm. But poor Rico found out soon enough. We found his still writhing body on the front steps.

And Nails was gone.

Shit. I feel like it is my fault that Rico is dead.

Jose was kinda quiet on the way back to the coven house. Pete wasn't Mister Conversation either.

All I could think about was Angela. On one hand, I couldn't wait to be back, to make sure that nothing had happened to her while we were gone. On the other, the thought of feeding her again made me queasy.

Angela, I once said that I would go to hell if that's what you wanted me to do. I guess I arrived there safely after all. Am I really in hell or is this the price I must pay?

• AUGUST 28TH, '06

She's gone.

And the bastard's got her. I don't know how he did it. Must have came during the day or something, but no one noticed a thing.

Except for me. I woke up and the sight of her familiar face was no more. Nails got her, the fragger.

I'll get her back even if I have to go to hell and back.

Jose tried to convince me that it wasn't worth it, that she was a vegetable after all. That's when I hit him. Hard.

I ran out of the Coven house after that. I don't know if they followed me but I just ran out. I had to get out.

I have to find him. I have to find her.

Goddamn, she's the only thing keeping me sane.

• SEPTEMBER 1ST, '06

Still no sign of her or of Nails.

Must not give in. I must find her.

I don't know if Nails is feeding her. Probably not. By now she's probably starving.

I have to eat. If only to stay alive long enough to find her and be with her again, but the thought of hunting makes me sick. All I can see is her face, on each of my potential victims.

Must find her before I lose it entirely. Must find her before I go crazy.

PART II: DIARY

• SEPTEMBER 3RD, '06

Found Nails today.

Found him in an abandoned warehouse. Where my initiation rites first took place.

He's been dead for a few days. He stank to high hell.

Angela wasn't with him

I know who did it. They will pay for it.

Jose is going to pay dearly for this.

Must feed first. But tomorrow, tomorrow Jose dies

Feeling tired. Feeling weary.

• SEPTEMBER 4TH, '06

Jose is dead.

Pete is dead.

Angela is dead.

I killed them. All. Jose and Pete with my own hands. Angela because I loved her too much to let her go.

Jose tried to tell me why they did it. He said I was going crazy. He just didn't understand.

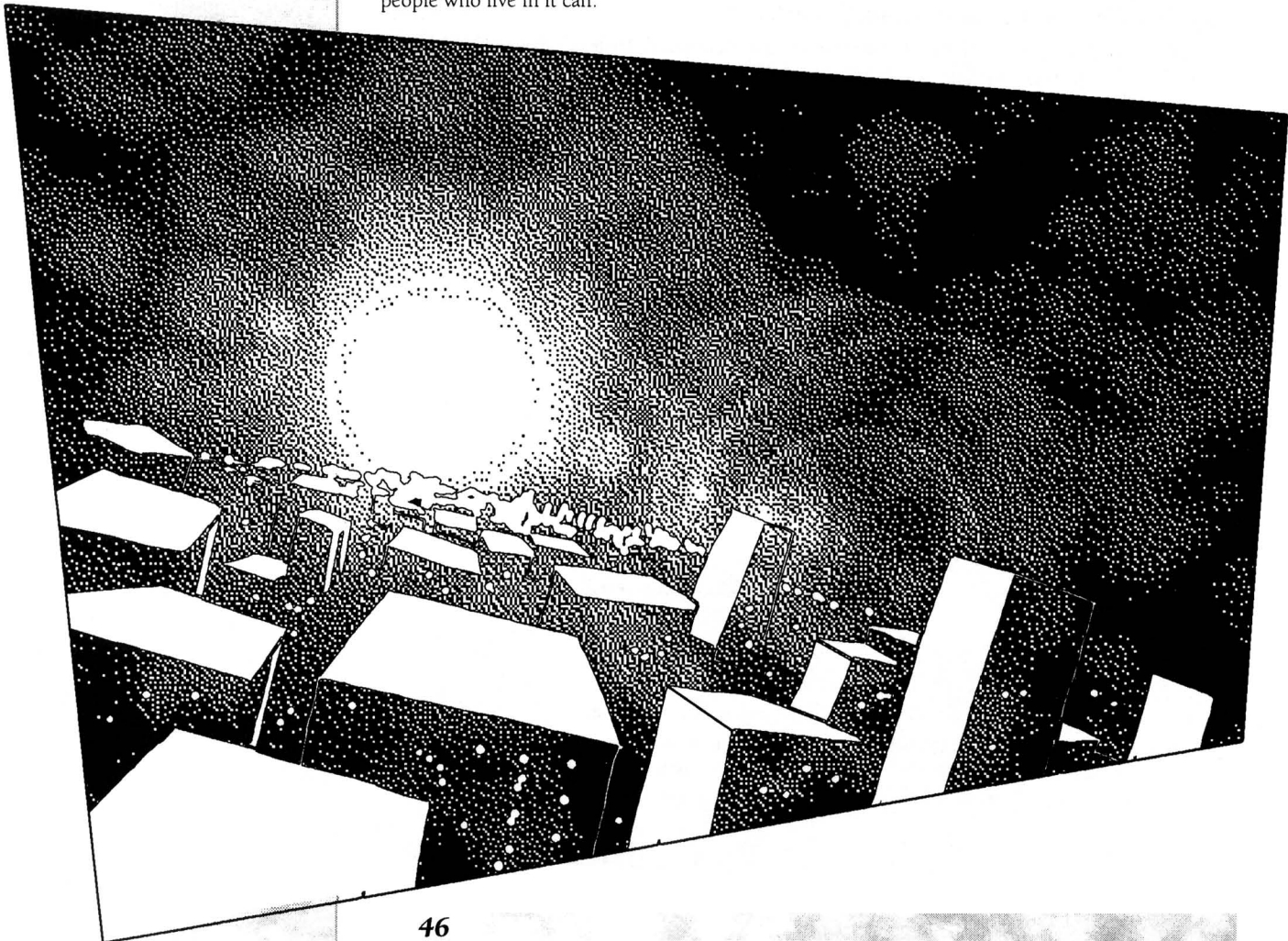
It's 5:00 in the morning as I write this. I am lying on top of the largest building I could find. The sun will come up in a little while.

Mom, I love you.'

Andy, don't make the same mistakes I did. I love you too, brother.

Angela, soon I'll be with you forever, like we wanted it to be.

Uncle Sam, I don't hate you anymore. Now I know that a country can never do any wrong. Only the people who live in it can.



APPENDIX

A VAMPIRE'S LIFE

Here are a few new rules added to the Night's Edge sourcebook that will add flavor to your campaign using vampires. As always, if you do not agree with a particular rule you are free to disregard it.

CREATION TRAUMA

Apply a penalty to the COOL check required during particularly horrific transformations. For example, a character who is accosted on the street and held down while transforming would have a -1 penalty to the check, while one who was tortured with the creation over an entire night, or nights, would have a -2 to -4 penalty. On the other hand, a character who was warned about what was going to happen and accepted it might get up to a +3 bonus to the check. Also keep in mind the mortal's beliefs. A Sun Knight would obviously have an automatic -2 penalty, regardless of the circumstances, while a Dracula's Children poser would have a +2 bonus.

The pain of the transformation is also important. The character must also make a BODY check or die. If death results, the character does not become a vampire. This BODY has no modifiers, but explains why only the larger vampires are generally found. The BODY check represents an intense fever and pain that lasts for 1d6+3 hours. During this time, the character is at -4 to any and all checks, except the COOL check listed above. If the check is failed, then sometime during that period the character will die. Otherwise, the character emerges healthy and "alive", a newborn vampire.

FEEDING

Feeding causes a Euphoria effect, much like a narcotic, as described in Dark Metropolis. The vampire's Stress Level is reduced by the number of BODY drunk. If the vampire feeds past 0 BODY, the character acts as if having taken a Psychedelic, and hallucinates for 1d6 hours. These hallucinations tend to be violent and cruel, with the vampire participating in enacting the cruelty. Feeding on animals does not produce the euphoric state, resulting instead in a Clouded Thinking effect. The number of BODY drained from an animal acts as a penalty on all INT and TECH checks for the next 1d6 hours.

KILLS

When a kill is made, the GM should note the victim's particulars: the locale in which the murder was committed, where the body was left, the apparent method of murder, and any evidence left behind by the character. Any pattern could lead the police to discovering the character's identity, or at least outline the character's profile. Popular kill sites may be monitored by police and plainclothes officers may pose as the character's favored victim type. Once the police are sure of the character's identity, they will move in to arrest or kill the character. Martial law gives them the legal right to do this in the United States; the laws may vary elsewhere.

APPENDIX

IDENTIFICATION CHECK

After each kill a character makes, the GM should make a secret Identification check. This has a varying difficulty, depending on how much evidence was left behind or whether patterns were evident. Take the check total and find the highest difficulty type of information that the check was greater or equal to. This is the information that is gained by the police about the character. The check is normally made using 1d10 + any modifiers. Note that this system can be used for determining whether murders committed by non-vampire characters are discovered.

IDENTIFICATION CHECK MODIFIERS

LOCALE*	MODIFIER
Committed in Japan or Off Planet	+4
Committed in the United States	+2
Last discovered kill in same specific area	+3
Committed or body found in an urban region	+1
Committed in First World Nation	+1
Committed or body found in a rural region	-1
Committed in Third World Nation	-3

KILL METHOD*	MODIFIER
Multiple victims (3+) killed in same specific manner	+4
Last discovered victim killed in same specific manner	+2
Multiple victims (3+) killed in same general manner	+2
Kill method particularly gruesome or unique	+2
Last discovered victim killed in same general manner	+1
Kill method very common (gunshot, etc.)	-2

VICTIM TYPE*	MODIFIER
Multiple victims (3+) killed of same specific type	+4
Corporate victim (executive rank or higher)	+4
Upper class victim	+2
Last discovered victim killed of same specific type	+2
Multiple victims (3+) killed of same general type	+2
Victim type particularly unique or discriminating	+2
Last discovered victim killed of same general type	+1
Victim type very general (only men, only blue-eyed people, etc.)	-2
Lower class victim (homeless, etc.)	-4

EVIDENCE*	MODIFIER
No hard physical evidence left	-2
Fingerprints left	+2
Character's bodily fluids left	+3
Character's personal effect left	+3
"Tag" left (a calling card unique to the character)	+5

*Only counts toward victims in same general area, within the last 2 years.

IDENTIFICATION DIFFICULTY TABLE

TYPE OF IDENTIFICATION	DIFF
No Information	10 or less
Pattern Recognition	15
Profile Description	20
Positive Identification	25 or more

- **No Information:** This results in the law enforcement agencies gaining no relevant information on the character's kills.
- **Pattern Recognition:** This results in the identification of some pattern in the character's kills. The pattern identified will relate to the common elements in the character's known kills. This may be in regard to victim type, murder method, murder site or body disposal method.
- **Profile Description:** This results in a correct profile of the character, including: approximate age, gender, social class, psychological disorders and personality traits.
- **Positive Identification:** This results in a positive identification of the character. If the character's identity is not in computers (doesn't have a SIN card), then a Profile Description is generated that is highly accurate, and indicates the subject is a Blank.

SIGNAL LANGUAGES

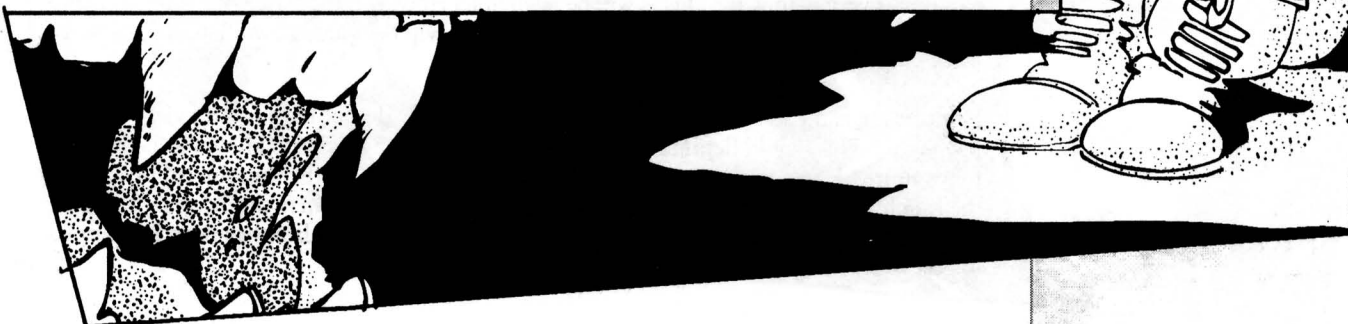
A set of signals would be considered an Expert skill, with the extent of knowledge of the signals determined by the GM. Normally, in 2020, it will be restricted to a coven, at most a city, and only cities in which there are organized covens who interact a great deal. Usually, only the elder vampires will know any signs, possibly from lands they once inhabited. But, of course, the usefulness of these signals would be limited to interactions with other elder vampires who happened to know the signs.

CREATING FLEDGLINGS

Young vampires are not as skilled at reducing the trauma of Creation, therefore there are penalties added to the COOL and BODY checks that are required at Creation. See the Creation Penalties table below, using the age of the vampire creating the Fledgling.

CREATION PENALTIES TABLE

AGE	COOL	BODY
Fledgling	-3	-2
Young	-2	-1
Adolescent	-1	0
Mature or older	0	0



APPENDIX

SERVANTS & HUMANS

In the past, vampires have been known to use human servants for their own nefarious purposes. Today, though it is less common, some vampires maintain mortal slaves. The function of the servants range from a purely service-oriented duty to feeding "cows". While often very useful, the reason that most Dark Children refrain from using humans is that their loyalty is rarely assured, therefore dangers are always associated with their use.

• SERVANT

First, there is the mortal servant. The duties associated with this position include housekeeping, chauffeuring and maintenance of the vampire's dwelling. In many cases, the servant is unaware of his or her master's true state. This is often for the best, as this class of mortal aide usually has the lowest degree of loyalty. Usually, only the richer vampires have such servants.

• GUARD

Increasingly common among the vampire community are mortal guards. Because of the danger associated with the Sun Knights and such organizations, and since vampires cannot function during daylight hours, mortals are used to guard their property and corpses. Guards' loyalty varies widely, usually dependent upon the relative pay. However, they are usually unaware of their employer's true nature, and therefore could be dangerous if such information was discovered.

• PROCURER

For the truly extravagant vampire, there are procurers. These are mortals who go out and find victims for the vampire, bring them back and prepare them. This is rarely found in this day and age, except in the elder vampire's courts. This method of feeding is archaic in origin, and not particularly useful considering the fact that most Procurers at some time turn on their masters and kill them. This is a dangerous position for a mortal to fill, and without great incentive will only fulfill their duties until given a chance to escape or wreak vengeance upon the vampire. In this case, the mortal is almost always aware of the master's true nature.

• BLOOD COW

Last, but not least, are the blood cows. These are the mortals used for feeding, but over a long period of time. As noted in Night's Edge, vampires need not kill their food, as long as they get the proper amount of blood over the desired period of time. For Mature vampires, this means that 6 BODY worth of blood is required over the course of 30 days. This could be 1 BODY every few days, or one feeding of 6 BODY at one time. When blood cows are used, generally they are drained slowly, such that they may not even notice the blood loss. For example, an Ancient could use a blood cow so sporadically that only an occasional weakness would be noted.

The dangers associated with blood cows are not as grave as one might imagine. Unless the vampire is very young, the effects will be negligible. However, the status of the relationship is the prime determinant of how reliable the human will be. Blood cow relationships range from lovers to slaves.

Vampires in campaigns may use blood cows so that they do not have to find victims every few nights. This would definitely be the case if the Sun Knights were known to be looking for vampires. Having a slave blood cow at home would mean that the vampire could wait out the Knights. On the other side of the coin, perhaps a normal human in the campaign is being used as a blood cow of some type. Perhaps one of the team members has been kidnapped for use as a Slave blood cow? Or a character's lover?

- Lover blood cows are the best kind. This relationship is typified in Necrology 3: Immortality, in Elizabeth Cook's relationship with her lover. He allows her to feed on him, so that she does not have to hunt. In this case, the loyalty is high, but the lover does know the vampire's secret, and could betray that loyalty should the relationship end, or the lover becomes tired of living with a parasite.
- Slave blood cows are among the most dangerous kind. In this case, the mortal is often imprisoned in some manner, so that the vampire can feed at his or her leisure. These mortals will most likely kill the vampire if given the chance. Who can blame them? They will also be most likely to go to the Sun Knights, if they know about them, or become hunters if they escape. Of course, the ultimate horror is to turn a slave blood cow into a vampire after years of captivity, but only the most depraved Children would do this.
- Unwitting blood cows are rarely used because of the difficulty in maintaining the mortal's ignorance. In this case, the human is unaware that the vampire is feeding off of him or her. This is often accomplished using Mnemonics powers or feeding while the victim is asleep. Once the victim realizes what is going on, difficulties will arise though. They may seek out Hunters to help them, or arrange for an ambush. This is why it is rarely done these days.
- Singular blood cows are a completely new category, in that they are usually only used once or twice, and then abandoned. These types are victims of feedings that are not killed in the feeding. This is actually quite common in countries where the law level prohibits killing one's prey. However, unlike the Unwitting blood cow, the Singular victim usually realizes that they have been fed on, though whether they attribute this to some psychopath's fantasy or a real vampire attack will vary. The advantage in Singular blood cows are that they are only used once, therefore the victim will most likely know little about the vampire's identity and may just write off the attack as a "weird" mugging.
- Stalked blood cows are like Singular victims, in that they are aware of what is going and that they are often randomly selected, but unlike Singular ones, they are stalked over time. The Stalked blood cow will be followed by the vampire over time, so that he knows the victim's patterns and lifestyle. And then, once assured of the victim's lack of defenses, proceeds to feed, bit by bit, over time. These blood cows know that they are being fed upon, and will most likely react with ambushes or contacting Hunters. This is why usually only Young vampires use this tactic— you usually only try it once.



APPENDIX

COVEN CAMPAIGNS

If the Game Master wishes to set up a vampire coven campaign, here are some ideas and rules that will help develop the flavor of the campaign.

COVEN DESIGN

The first step is to actually set up the coven. There are two choices when doing this, either design an existing coven that the characters become a part of, or have them go out and establish their own coven. In the latter case, most of this section can be used as guidelines for the GM. Otherwise, these steps can be used to set up a pre-existing coven, or other covens that the characters may encounter.

As an example, we will design the Leech Coven of Montreal.

• LOCATION

The second step is to choose where the coven is situated. Only the general location is needed at this point (the city.) Generally, this will already be decided by the GM, due to a pre-existing sourcebook on the city in question, however it could be anywhere in the world. Consult the World View in Chapter 4 for more on the status of vampires in various parts of the world. For example, be advised that there are not too many covens in the United States, though they are found from time to time (and PCs could change that.)

Example: We decide that the coven will be located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. In the World Overview, it says that covens are common in Canada, so there is no problem locating it there, and the probability of other covens being present is high.

• MASTER

The third aspect to determine about a coven is the Master. This will be the founding member in most cases, is therefore highly important. If the coven is an old one, there might have been more than one Master. In this case, it is best to write a few lines about past Masters (name, age level, temperament, time period as Master, etc.). The current Master is the most important one though. This Master should usually be completely fleshed out with a character sheet. If he is meant to remain primarily in the background, then a description will suffice.

The following information should be determined: name, age level, apparent age, real age, personality, appearance, powers, main skills, and history. These can be determined randomly (see **Night's Edge**) or chosen by the GM. It is recommended that Masters be usually Adolescent or Mature, only occasionally younger or older. Ancient Masters should not be used.

However, note that some covens are anarchists; no one vampire rules, and whoever is most qualified for a particular task runs it. This will most likely be the case in covens that player characters establish.

EXAMPLE:

Coline Leech is an Age Level III Rocker vampire (Mature), who was born in 1901 and Created in 1924. Thus, she is actually 119, but she looks 23. She desires wealth, is an Extrovert and Diplomatic, but a Skeptic. She is also Cynical and Greedy. She is Micronesian/Australian, very tall and thin, but wears only Generic Chic fashion. Her powers include Psychokinesis +3, Psychic Focus +2 and Illusion +3. Her main skills are Charismatic Leadership +6, Perform +6 and Seduction +8. She was Created by the Master of the Marseault coven in Paris while visiting the city in the 1920's. After staying on with that coven in Paris for a decade, Coline left to return home at the start of WWII. She spent a few years getting back into the swing of the city, but when threatened by the Gilbert family, she decided that she needed allies. So, she began Creating fledglings to form her own coven.

• HISTORY

The fourth consideration is the coven's history. A quick overview of who founded it, what their past was and the major events in its past will suffice. This information should be recorded, and could be used in the future as seeds for adventures.

EXAMPLE:

The Leech coven was founded by the vampire Coline Leech. She formed the coven to resist the Gilbert family's pressures on her. She created Fledglings quickly over a short period, so they were weak for a long time, forcing them to hide in the outskirts of the city. But soon they grew in power, and around the turn of the Millennium, they managed to wipe out the Gilbert family, and became the dominant coven in the city.

• CHILDREN

The next consideration is the Children of the coven. This number can range from two to twenty or more. Most covens in the **Alternate Reality Universe** have between three and twelve members though, so the size should not be too great. Consider too that a large number of vampires require a large feeding range, lest they be discovered.

For each Child, the name, age level, appearance, personality and basic history should be given. This will give the players an idea of who else is in their coven, and the GM some NPCs to work with. This information can be chosen or randomly determined by the GM. The NPC members should, in general, be older than the player characters. It is recommended that player character vampires be AL 0 or I, so that they can learn about their vampiric abilities as players would about their characters. Remember to space their transformations by at least a year.

EXAMPLE:

The Leech coven is quite large for the city, being the strongest, and has seven Children. The player characters count as four of them, therefore we only have to create three (listed below).

- **Jacques Dupuis:** Age Level II vampire, male, appears to be 30 years old, antagonistic, ambitious. One of the original members, Jacques wants to be the new Master and is thinking about overthrowing Coline.
- **Benoît Rogers:** Age Level II vampire, male, appears to be 27 years old, manic, compassionate. The second oldest after Jacques, Benoît is a party-animal, but also a nice guy who is Coline's current, and long-term lover.
- **Marie Sauv :** Age Level II vampire, female, appears to be 29 years old, arrogant, treacherous. The third youngest, Marie is currently Jacques' lover, and supporting him in his bid to take control, though she wants to then kill him and take control for herself.



APPENDIX

• RULES/TERRITORY

The next step is to determine the coven's territory within the city, and any rules that might govern the coven members. The rules are entirely up to the GM, though here are some sample ones. Most covens have between none and seven rules, though some of the more totalitarian ones have up to twelve.

- No Childe will create a fledgling (without the Master's express permission.)
- Children must obey whatever the Master commands.
- No Childe will reveal their true nature or other information about the coven.
- No Childe will feed past the food's death.
- No Childe will leave their food where others could find it.
- Feeding is only permitted on a particular group of people.
- No Childe will leave the city of the Master.
- No Childe will associate with members of other covens.
- No Childe will kill.
- No Childe will steal.
- No Childe will mate with a mortal.

Once the rules are determined (if any), the coven's territory must be decided. This will generally include one neighborhood or district per two members, round up. This means that a coven with seven or eight members would require four districts. This may be more or less, depending on the region's politics. Also, in more strict areas, more territory will be needed, to spread out the hunting ground, while in more lenient places, less territory will be required. The GM should make the final decision on this. At this stage, it would be best to determine all of the coven territories in the city, relative to one another. Note that this is regarding feeding, if there are restrictions on movement in other coven's territories, make a note of this.

EXAMPLE:

The Leech coven has eight members, and therefore requires four neighborhoods. The GM selects six from a map, reflecting the power of the coven in the region. Since Coline is not too strict a Master, the GM decides that only three rules are in effect:

1. No Childe will create fledglings (without the Master's permission.)
2. No Childe will associate with members of other covens.
3. No Childe will reveal their true nature or other information about the coven.



• RESOURCES

The resources available to the coven should now be determined. This is a somewhat arbitrary decision on the part of the GM, depending on how much funding is to be an issue. It is recommended that the Master's Wealth Accumulation be doubled, to reflect income generated from Children and put toward the coven's well-being. However, in this case, the money is put toward the coven house, a few dwellings that can be used as safe houses, a few vehicles for members and furnishings. Otherwise, members have their own accumulated wealth to do with as they wish.

EXAMPLE:

Coline is found to have 140,000eb, so doubling that we get 280,000eb. She is able to buy a nice house, and rent a few safe houses over the city. She also purchases a few cars for the members.

• RELATIONS

The last major concern regarding covens are the relations between the various covens in the city. There are five basic types of relations between covens: Malevolent, Hostile, Hidden, Friendly and Benevolent.

- The Malevolent coven is the worst of the five; they are openly hostile and will attack other covens openly. They are also one of the most commonly found types. They are highly territorial, often attacking loners who happen into their territory as well.
- Hostile covens are not much better, though they rarely attack openly. They will prefer more subtle attacks, such as convoluted or long-term ploys, and will seldom resort to outright retaliation. They are, in a sense, the cowardly version of Malevolent covens. These covens are not uncommon.
- Hidden covens mostly avoid other covens and generally keep to themselves. They do not involve themselves in politicking, nor do they relish mingling with vampires from outside of their coven. While they may have established lordship over a particular territory, they will only defend it covertly, perhaps sicking the police on intruders through anonymous phone calls.
- Friendly covens will maintain cordial relations, possibly even give information, but that is the extent of the relationship. Consider them associates, not friends. They will generally not attack a coven that they are friendly with, but they will not help them either, unless it suits their goals.
- Last and the least common, are the Benevolent covens. These are the ones that will ally with other like-minded covens to form allegiances and organize the vampire community. These types are exceptionally rare, though when found, they are generally in a cluster of covens all working together. This is similar to what has happened with most of the covens in Canada, and to some degree, the ones in Europe.

Coven interrelations are a complicated affair, though generally fairly stable. If coven A hates coven B, then there is little that will change that except a change of Master, large turn-over of coven members, death of one of the covens or the introduction of a new element. A new element is when coven C enters the picture. There may be a shift in coven relations then, but in general, the affairs of the vampire community remain constant.

The GM must determine the names, and general descriptions of the other covens in the city. A good idea is to generate all of the covens found in the city using these steps, and then, with all the necessary information, determine logically what the relations would be. Or, the GM can simply roll for random results on the Coven Relations table below.

APPENDIX

COVEN RELATIONS TABLE

01-20	Malevolent
21-60	Hostile
61-85	Hidden
86-95	Friendly
96-00	Benevolent

EXAMPLE:

There are two other covens in the city right now, but the GM does not have time to generate them, so simply names them the Macoute coven and the Ravager coven. Relations between the Macoute and Leech coven is determined to be (roll of 07) Malevolent. They are currently at war with one another. The Macoutes might be allies of the Gilbert coven?

Things are only slightly better with the Ravagers (38), Hostile. In this case, the two covens dislike one another, and even fight occasionally, but nothing overt. Just to complete the relations, the GM rolls for the relations between the Macoutes and the Ravagers (50), so they dislike one another too, but less than they hate the Leeches. This will make a dangerous playing ground for the players, therefore the GM could decide to make the focus of the campaign the war between the different covens. The player characters could either be the mediators or combatants, or even bystanders, watching the war rage around them. In any case, the GM now has a good grasp on what is going on in his campaign universe, at least within that city.

• COVEN RECORD SHEET

Once all of this information has been determined about the coven, record it on a Coven Record Sheet for quick reference. It is best to have one of these sheets for each coven in your campaign city. Players should not be allowed to look at other coven's record sheets.

COVEN RECORD SHEET

COVEN NAME: _____ YEAR FOUNDED: _____ LOCATION: _____

	NAME	SEX	AL	APPEARANCE	PERSONALITY	HISTORY
COVEN MASTER:						

	NAME	SEX	AL	APPEARANCE	PERSONALITY	NOTES
CHILDREN:						
CHILDREN:						
CHILDREN:						
CHILDREN:						
CHILDREN:						

RULES: _____

RESOURCES: _____

RELATIONS: _____

CAMPAIGN TYPES

Once the covens have been generated, the Game Master and players should decide what kind of campaign they will embark upon. Here are five basic types of coven-oriented campaigns presented here, though they are just suggestions:

• BLOODBIRTH

In this campaign, the goal of the player characters is to establish their coven. This could include the founding of one completely from scratch, breaking from an existing coven or reorganizing an existing one. In any case, the difficulties faced will include other covens, other vampires in the region and any hunters around. The characters could also face difficulties from organized crime or corporations in the area that don't want to lose any control of the neighborhood, even to vampires. Of course, the main difficulty will be in actually setting up the coven, which may require creating new children, determining who will be the Master and setting up the Coven House. These concerns will take a good number of sessions on their own.

This type of campaign is best suited for players who enjoy building stable bases of operations, and the large-scale concerns of the campaign environment. Good leadership and cooperation will be required to succeed at this type of campaign. One of the advantages of this campaign type is that it can be used to launch into other types, such as a Bloodbath.

• BLOODLUST

A standard vampire campaign in which the search for prey is the primary goal. In this case, the characters should all come from an existing coven, as action will center on their outside activities. This campaign type is best-suited for action-oriented players, or those who enjoy the thrill of the hunt.

The antagonists in this type of campaign will most likely be the police who will be tracking them (see Identification rules) and Hunters. Otherwise, the main NPCs will be the victims. Depending on the vampire's hunting style, a great deal of role-playing or stalking will occur. This can be adjusted to suit the style of the player characters.

This small-scale type of campaign is good for short scenarios, or drawn out for a long hunt. The players will be forced to stretch their cunning and deviousness to their limits.

• BLOODBATH

The Bloodbath campaign involves a large-scale war between one or more covens in a city, usually with the player character's coven being one of the combatants. In this case, the characters are forced into the roles of soldiers, spies or tacticians, helping their coven to emerge victorious.

While this type of campaign highlights the stronger strategic types, there will be a number of highly violent encounters, as vampire wars tend to end with only one of the opposing covens surviving.

The characters will be working against distinct enemies (the other covens), with Hunters and the police in the background, always keeping them on their toes. After all, when the bodies accumulate after killing another coven's members, the police are bound to be interested. Indeed, other beings in the city could become interested in a war. What does the local Lycanthrope pack think of it all? Are they allied to one of the covens? Is there a practitioner around who is aware of the enormous use of psychic energies? Might she become interested in what is going on?

APPENDIX

• BLOODRUN

This type of campaign ignores the politics of the region, as an entire coven is on the move. Travel is the highlight of this type of campaign, wherein the coven, as a whole, is nomadic. This is not that rare considering the advantage of having the whole country or countries as hunting grounds. There are some very old gypsy bands that are in fact vampire covens, just as the occasional traveling carnival has a coven in its midst.

The characters must have some guise in their travels (nomads, circus, missionaries, etc.), but otherwise act as normal. They can participate in normal adventures from the cyberpunk universe, keeping their vampiric nature a secret, and feeding here and there, spreading their kills over a continent.

This campaign may involve a team of Hunters who are pursuing the characters, but at the same time, the mobile nature of this campaign means fewer chances they will actually be found. The characters get to see new places and new people everywhere, only occasionally running into problems with local covens.

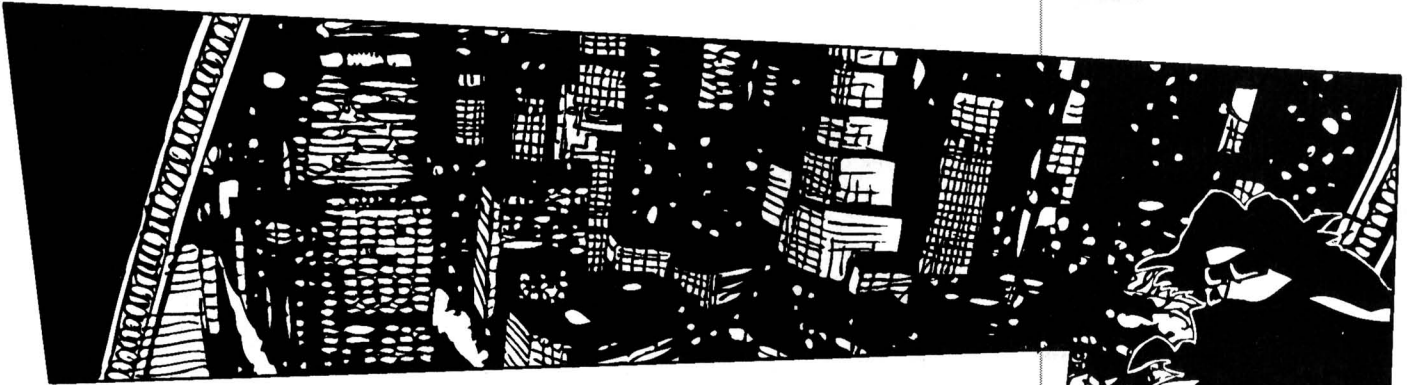
• BLOODPUNK

This last type of campaign involves nothing special but an established coven, little or no politics among the existing covens and an overall quiet "Dark" underworld. The characters instead are very young vampires, and as such can maintain their previous identities and continue on adventures as normal. In this type of campaign, the vampire community becomes part of the background, still present, but not as important. This is one of the more popular types of campaigns, as it allows normal Cyberpunk adventures to be used, and the campaign can take a more traditional perspective. Instead of a corporation as the character's patron, it is a Master.

ADVENTURES

Once you have developed the covens and decided the campaign type, create the specific scenarios that the characters will be involved in. No specifics can be given here, as every group will have their own campaign type, and within that, dozens of variations. Instead, here are a few general tips for running standard adventures using a coven of vampire player characters.

- Always keep in mind the vampire community. What are the other covens up to while the characters are engaged in the adventure? Similarly, are the police or any hunters tracking the characters?
- Never forget that the characters have to feed. This could interfere with an adventure, but it is a requirement that is nevertheless ever-present.
- Adjust adventures to take into account the vampire's abilities the player characters possess.
- If a patron is required, perhaps the Master has an interest in the adventure, and orders the characters to investigate/infiltrate/intrude/etc.



RONIN CAMPAIGNS

A Ronin campaign can, and often will, take very different paths. Due to the fact that more often than not it will be a solo campaign (or one where there is very few players), the amount of flexibility this allows can be as much a pleasure as it is a pain. Keeping this in mind, here are a few pointers and (hopefully!) helpful hints.

There aren't that many vampires left in the world. The collapse affected the vampire population as much as it did the human population, so it follows that not everyone the Ronin will meet will be a vampire. The same goes with coven. They are a rare thing in the States, with the majority of large cities having maybe two to three covens. Very large city (Montreal is a good example of this) will have up to five covens, maximum. Europe is a little different, but the same basic rule of thumb applies. As far as werewolves go, unless you look for them, you won't see them, since there are even less left in the world. You also have to know where to look for them.

A Ronin campaign can be very similar to an ordinary cyberpunk campaign, with the corporate intrigue and all the usual fun. Remember that if the Ronin is older (real age, that is, not looks) than 30, he probably won't have cybernetics, since they are a rather recent development. Of course, if he is over thirty, the chances that he'll need cybernetics are much lower...

A mixed group (vampires and normal) can be interesting to run, as long as you make sure of a few things at the beginning. Do the normals know about the vampires? If they don't make sure the players act accordingly. A vampire is just a normal human, with all the quirks and charms that this entails and a little extra. There's nothing more boring than a two dimensional character, and vampires are not immune to this. Play them with zest, with character. Even as an enemy, they will be more interesting if you spend a little bit of time fleshing them out.

Since some Ronin have been around for awhile, this means that their life paths are usually longer and more interesting. Always use as much as possible from the character's background in the game. It also adds a little something when the vampire who has kissed the character suddenly appears back into the picture. How does the character feel about his old master? Did he even know who created him? If he didn't, how will he react? This could be an interesting subplot in an ongoing campaign.

Another thing that is interesting when playing a vampire character is that, by going to sleep, you can retire the character for a few sessions, if you felt that things were in a rut. Since the character is on ice (literally), none of those usual pesky loose ends will come back to haunt you. Unless you want them to.

With a little bit of time and forethought, your cyberpunk campaign can be greatly enhanced with the addition of a Ronin character. They have none of the strings attached with a coven and have to be more self-reliant, since there is no other group of vampires covering their butts in case of trouble.



APPENDIX



THE WASTING PLAGUE AND OTHER MAN-MADE FUN

Although vampires are immune to the majority of human diseases and drugs, biochemical weapons like the wasting plague and other designer plagues might affect the vampire, and just like radiation, depends on the exposure and the dosage that the vampire might have been exposed to.

Keeping in mind that this is a roleplaying game and not some discussion about the virulence of toxins upon non-living tissues. No hard rules can be given about the possible effects of toxins and biochemical weapons. With this in mind, a whole new world of possibility opens up to the enthusiastic Referee.

However, a few things should be kept in mind when playing with biochemical toys: any toxin that kills outright, without any nasty side effects will probably not have any effects, apart from nausea and incapacitation, on younger vampires (less than age level II), or no effect whatsoever on older vampires (over age level III). Note that it would take a dosage that would normally kill approximately 5 to 10 regular humans. Once again, any other toxin, especially those who maim more than kill or who maim THEN kill, might have an effect on the vampire, depending on the age level. As a rule of thumb, use the following formula to make a quick test as to whether or not the effects are permanent: $(AGE\ LEVEL\ X\ 2) + BODY + 1D10\ VIRULENCE > 20$, where VIRULENCE is the toxicity of the toxin, on a scale of 1 to 20 (1 being the weakest, 20 the strongest). If the test fails, well, use your imagination...

Effects of toxins will not necessarily show up right away. Also, effect build-up are possible. A little toxin everyday can go a long way.

Not all the effects of a toxin have to be physical. As with radiation, they may also affect the mind, thereby creating one of the versions of zombie, along with permanent drug induced state (when a vampire is created while being under the influence) version. Zombies typically have an INT Stat of about 1, with the MA Stat never being above 4.

REGENERATION

While it is true that a vampire will regenerate any lost limb or damage, the whole story is a little more complex. What happens in the meantime, if your favorite vamp lost an arm? Does he sleep for the whole time while it grows back? And how does it grow back? Does it just appear? Or is it more like a plant, growing a new branch? While the following is the official word, do feel free to make any changes to please yourself and your players. After all, it's your campaign.

A vampire who sustains damage will tend to go into a shorter version of hibernation in order to regenerate whatever damage was incurred. That period of time will simply be (Damage/Healing rate) days long. However, if so desired, a vampire can awake anytime, with the normal penalties (**Night's Edge**, page 31) for large amounts of damage. Of course, healing is then stopped at whatever amount has been regained and will only continue once the vampire goes back into hibernation.

However, if a limb was lost due to damage or attempted cyber surgery, things are a little different. The amount of damage is obviously of a different order and it also brings with it the problem of limb growth. In this case, the vampire will automatically go into hibernation, in order to recover. A Stun save is taken, in the same way a normal human would, and if successful, the vampire may elect to stay awake. Of course, if the vampire stays awake, healing will not start until hibernation has begun.

The amount of time needed to regrow a limb is the same as with normal damage, plus 1 day for fingers and toes, 5 days for an arm or a leg. Obviously, heads cannot be regrown. Multiply the healing time by the amount of limbs missing. For example, if you lost 2 fingers, the amount of time needed would be: $2 \times ((\text{Damage/Healing rate}) + 1)$ days. Any other body part modifier can be derived depending on size...

Note that a limb that has not been fully regrown will be quite useless as it will not have the strength needed for any actions whatsoever. If you lost a leg, good luck running away. The limb, in its in-between stage, will look like a withered version of itself while it's regrowing. A vampire may elect to wake up during the hibernation, at the cost of having to spend an extra day per limb not fully grown back in hibernation, since the healing process was halted.



APPENDIX

GOTHS

Goths in the **Alternate Reality Universe** are similar to the familiar faces we see in the big cities. Clad in black, obsessed with images of death, pallor and a general outlook based on the writing of a few philosophers and musician, they stick out like the proverbial sore thumb, even in the day and age of cyberpunk. They are existentialists in an age which doesn't believe in life anymore.

The vampire community, especially the Glamvamp, have made a deep impression in the Goth culture. Most often than not, the Goths will idolize a Glamvamp for being the epitome of what they want to be. Of course, local covens and Ronin are quick to exploit the situation.

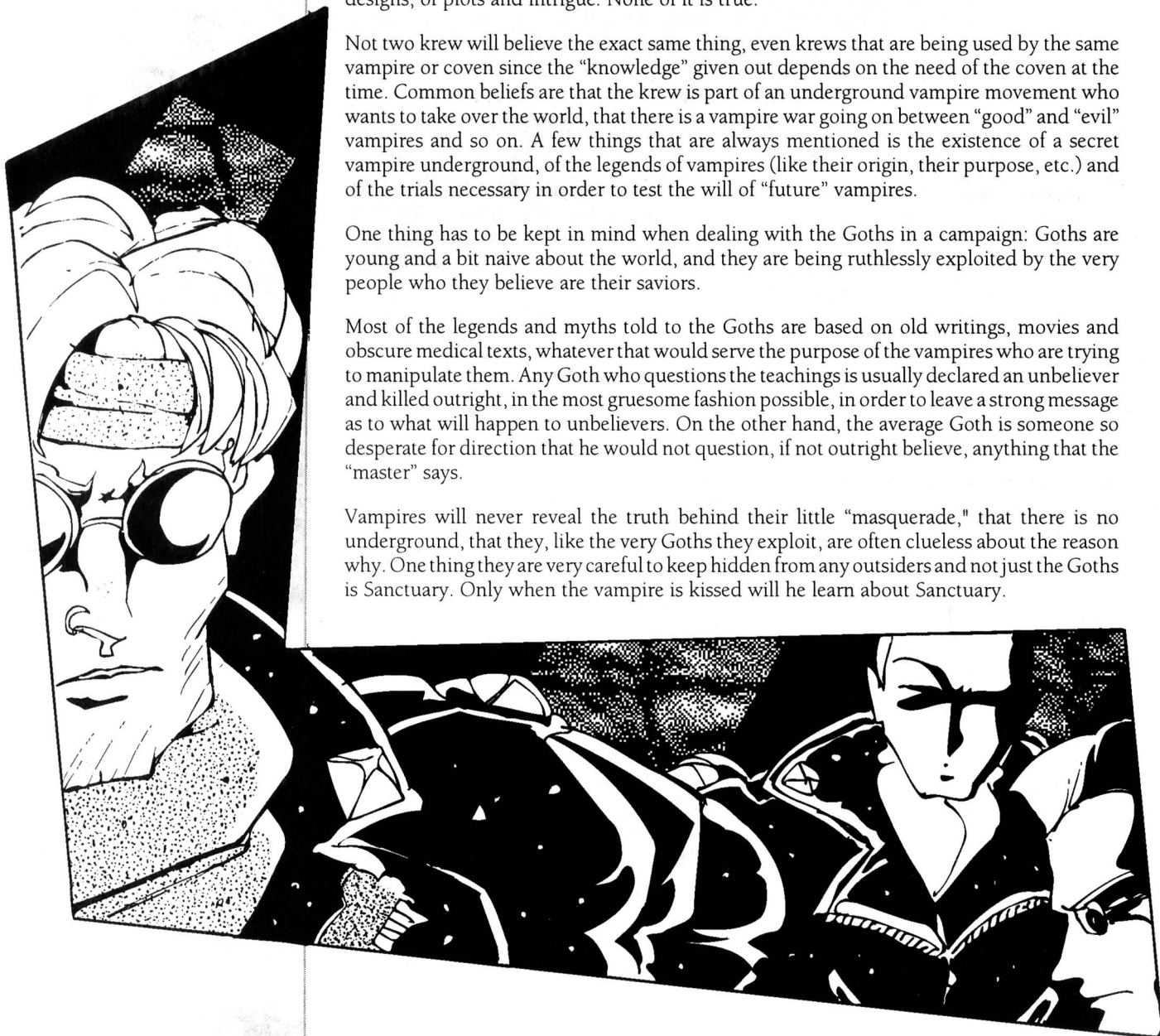
Vampires will often take upon it themselves to hook up with the local Goth crowd (called *krew*), offering them "true" knowledge of the vampire community. More often than not, this will consist of a tangled web of lies, with mentions of an underground, of secret signs and designs, of plots and intrigue. None of it is true.

Not two krew will believe the exact same thing, even krews that are being used by the same vampire or coven since the "knowledge" given out depends on the need of the coven at the time. Common beliefs are that the krew is part of an underground vampire movement who wants to take over the world, that there is a vampire war going on between "good" and "evil" vampires and so on. A few things that are always mentioned is the existence of a secret vampire underground, of the legends of vampires (like their origin, their purpose, etc.) and of the trials necessary in order to test the will of "future" vampires.

One thing has to be kept in mind when dealing with the Goths in a campaign: Goths are young and a bit naive about the world, and they are being ruthlessly exploited by the very people who they believe are their saviors.

Most of the legends and myths told to the Goths are based on old writings, movies and obscure medical texts, whatever that would serve the purpose of the vampires who are trying to manipulate them. Any Goth who questions the teachings is usually declared an unbeliever and killed outright, in the most gruesome fashion possible, in order to leave a strong message as to what will happen to unbelievers. On the other hand, the average Goth is someone so desperate for direction that he would not question, if not outright believe, anything that the "master" says.

Vampires will never reveal the truth behind their little "masquerade," that there is no underground, that they, like the very Goths they exploit, are often clueless about the reason why. One thing they are very careful to keep hidden from any outsiders and not just the Goths is Sanctuary. Only when the vampire is kissed will he learn about Sanctuary.



SANCTUARY AND OTHER VAMPIRE RELIGIONS

Just like in the human society, there are religions in the vampire world. However, they are not as organized or as formalized as the ones in human society.

There are a few religions in the vampire community. The major one, Sanctuary, is little more than the ramblings of a few prophets who journey from town to town, spreading the word. There are no "official" rituals, no holy tomes that spell out the common belief. Instead, the whole of the religion is based on an oral tradition, with stories and rituals being passed on by prophets and dreams. No two prophets will tell the same story, the same beliefs or use the same rituals, but there is one core belief that comes across and defines the movement as a religion: the belief that vampires are a damned race and that only Sanctuary, when it returns, will be able to free them from their curse. How this will be accomplished or when it is going to happen changes from prophet to prophet.

Dreams play an important part in Sanctuarism. Based on the many versions of the Sanctuary legend, the belief that dreams are a door that Sanctuary uses to communicate with prophets is a strong one since it was the way that he convinced the first two prophets that he was indeed who he claimed to be. This belief has caused more small scale religious wars than anything else, since if one is to believe that she was spoken to in her dreams by Sanctuary and it told her something different from what other prophets are saying, then the other prophets are false prophets, blasphemers...

The legend outlined in the *People of the Night* chapter is one version of the main Sanctuary legend. There are as many variations of the legends as there are prophets. However, do note that none of the prophets call for a jihad against the meatboys.

Another smaller but more organized religion is that of Reaganism, or, the worship of the nuclear bomb. Although there are a few local differences between different sects (the Middle Eastern version of this religion is called the Sons of the Burning Sun), the basics are pretty much the same: a group of Radvamps (or normals, since this religion will also take them into its folds) who were present when the bombs went off developed a strong belief that the bombs were actually an omen, a sign of God, that purified them and brought them closer to perfection, to the Godhead. Some group will believe that the rest of humanity must also be purified by the holy fire, while others just believe that they alone are the chosen ones. No matter what they believe, this is probably one of the most dangerous cults, its members being pure fanatics.

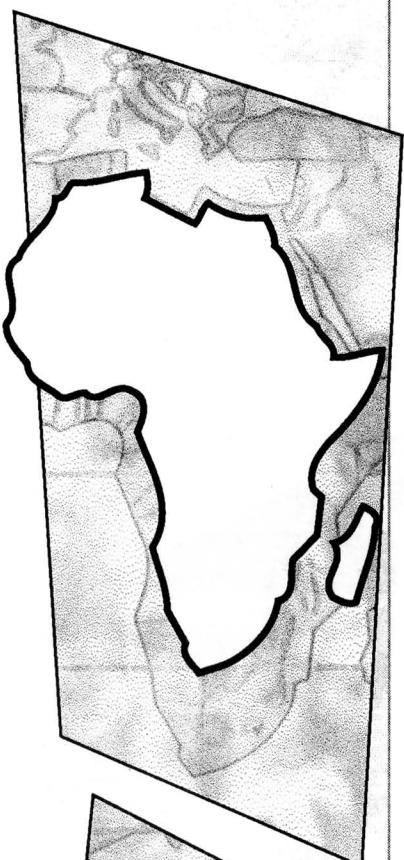
Their form of worship includes rituals involving radioactive materials, baptisms in pools of heavy water for members that were not present when the bombs went off and variations on the theme. They have established ritual sites, more often than not wear white or black robes during worship along with masks to cover up their faces. Rituals are usually complex deformation of the Christian Eucharist, with the host being replaced by small chunks of radioactive material. Most members die within their first years, with anyone surviving being perceived as being a "chosen" one.

The only other religions to speak of in the vampire community are those which are loosely based on existing ones in the human society like, for example, the magic covens which are based on black magic or satanic rites or the African tribal religions practiced by vampire tribes and shaman. Those religions, or cults depending on your point of view, are much more traditional than the main vampire religions, but are also less practiced, simply because their ideologies are seen as wrong or obviously contrary to the reality of vampiredom. Nonetheless, there are still a few practicing covens, mainly made up of people who were already believers before they were kissed.

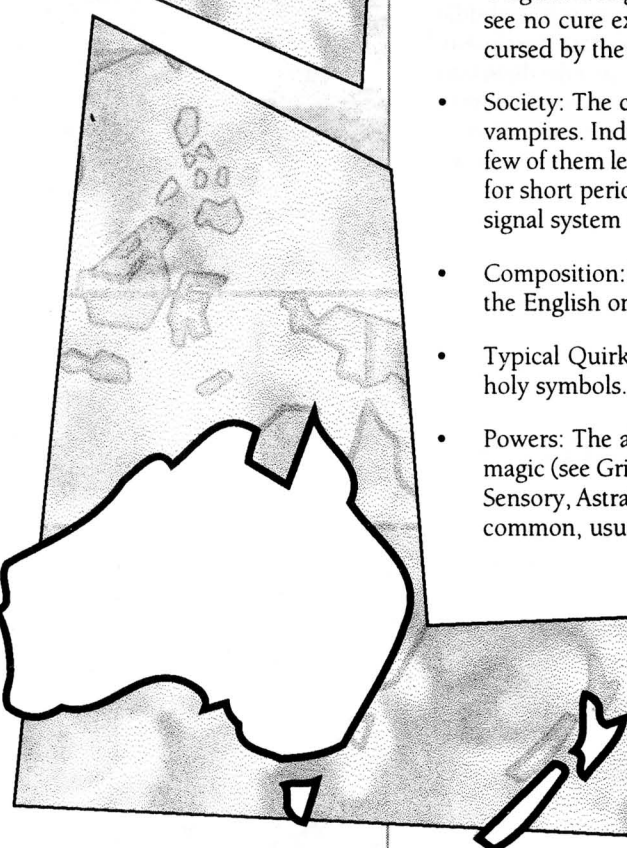
APPENDIX

WORLD SITUATION

AFRICA

- 
- **Origin:** African vampires all tend to believe that vampirism is due to a curse from the gods, or imposed by a magician of some sort. Holy magic is said to be able to cure it.
 - **Society:** Individuals are most common, covens are rare. Usually a fledgling vampire is apprenticed for a while under a Master, and then sent out to find its own home. There are no common traditions among African vampires. Strongly territorial, African vampires may kill intruders without warning.
 - **Composition:** Mature and older vampires are usually found in the larger cities, killing all challengers. Younger ones are found apprenticed to older vampires, or grouped in smaller communities, trying to build up their power.
 - **Typical Quirks:** Stat: +1 BODY, Destruction: immersion in water, Fear: holy symbols, Stench of the Grave.
 - **Powers:** African vampires use a number of psychic powers, as well as Witchcraft and Shamanistic magic (see Grimm's Cybertales). Common powers are Animals, Charm, Hypnological, Mania, Sensory, Astral, Psychokinesis and Teleportation.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

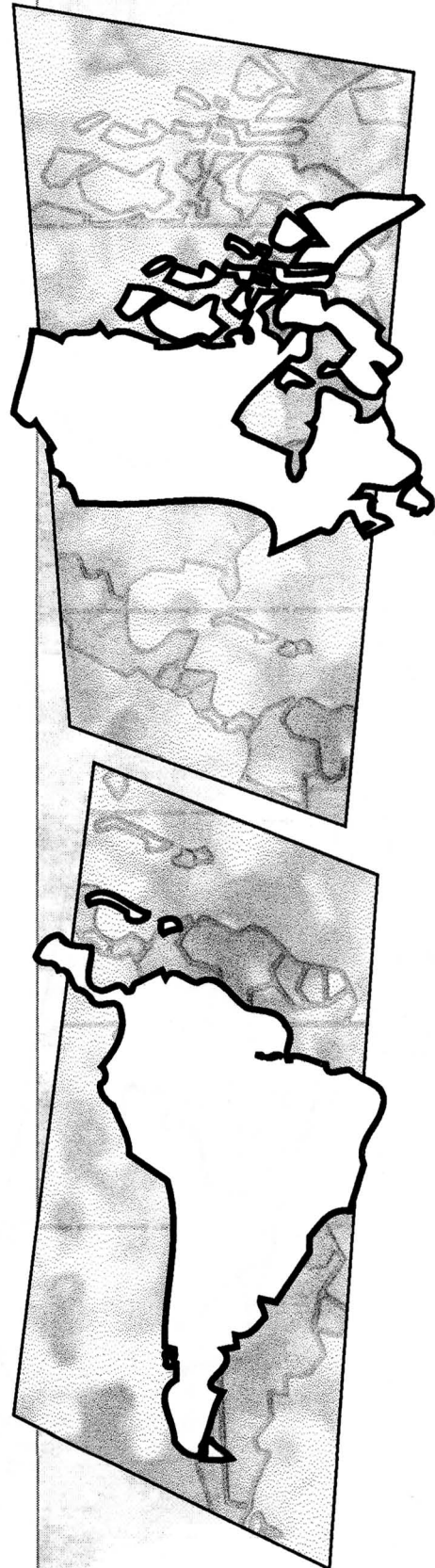
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- **Origin:** Aboriginal vampires believe that they are individuals cursed from birth. They see no cure except death. English vampires are mixed between seeing themselves as cursed by the devil or just afflicted with some disease.
 - **Society:** The coven is extremely strong in Australia and New Zealand among English vampires. Individuals are more common among aboriginal vampires, though there are few of them left alive. Like in Europe, tolerance of loners is low. Intruders are tolerated for short periods of time, though challengers are quickly disposed of. There is a hand signal system and tradition of interaction between vampires in this region.
 - **Composition:** The eldest vampires are the aboriginal ones, being Old to Ancient, while the English ones are primarily Mature or younger.
 - **Typical Quirks:** Among the aboriginal: Destruction: immersion in water, Fear: tribal holy symbols. Among the English, there are no common quirks.
 - **Powers:** The aboriginal vampire's psychic powers are complemented by Shamanistic magic (see Grimm's Cybertales). Common powers are Animals, Charm, Hypnological, Sensory, Astral and Astral Body. Among the English vampires, only psychic powers are common, usually: Charm, Mania, Mental, Telepathy and Kinesis.

CANADA

- **Origin:** Canadian vampires tend to believe that their lot is due to a blood disease of some sort and many have even launched research projects into the disease's exact characteristics. By and large, rational explanations are preferred. The aboriginal vampires believe it to be a curse for some evil deed, with the only cure being a life dedicated to good.
- **Society:** Most Canadian vampires are friendly, though they are hard to find. Covens coexist quietly with loners. Visitors are accepted, even for extended periods, as long as they remain discreet. Any vampire who draws too much attention is given multiple warnings, and then killed discretely by some unspoken agreement between the resident vampires. The society at large is rational and calm. And, while most covens are small, they make use of communications equipment to keep in touch across country, helping one another a great deal.
- **Composition:** The majority of vampires in Canada are Adolescents and Mature. There are a number of Old and a few Very Old ones, as well as one Ancient. There are few younger vampires, usually only a half dozen in large cities.
- **Typical Quirks:** Among the aboriginal: Fear: tribal holy symbols. Otherwise, there are no typical quirks, it varies widely.
- **Powers:** The psychic powers of aboriginal vampire's are complemented by Shamanistic magic (see Grimm's Cybertales). Common powers are Animals, Charm, Hypnological, Sensory, Astral and Astral Body. Among the other vampires, only psychic powers are generally found, though in some vampires, no psychic powers are known at all, or they possess just Negation (see Grimm's Cybertales). This is due to the strongly rational outlook of these types of vampires.

CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA

- **Origin:** Central and South American vampires tend to be of the belief that they are cursed creatures, with no hope of salvation. There is a strong religious conviction found among them.
- **Society:** The society in this part of the world is virtually nonexistent. Small, young covens are found in some places, with stronger, older loners ruling in others. Territorialism is high, with intruders often being killed without warning. Wars between covens and loners are common, as they both try to gain more territory.
- **Composition:** The majority of vampires in Central America are either very young or very old. There are a couple Ancients, but the rest are mainly aboriginal Old or Very Old vampires who hold large territories. Up to twenty Fledgling and Young vampires can be found in some covens, often ruled by mere Adolescent, who battle the elders for land.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Immersion in Holy Water, Fear: Holy Places, Holy Symbols.
- **Powers:** Most vampires use psychic powers, while the aboriginal ones use Shamanistic magic (see Grimm's Cybertales) as well. Common powers are Mental Assault, Psychic Assault, Kinesis, Psychokinesis, Body Control, Psychic Focus and Mental Shield (see Grimm's Cybertales).



APPENDIX

CHINA

- **Origin:** Chinese vampires believe that they are demons, inhabiting dead bodies. This occurs when the proper burial rites are not performed on a corpse.
- **Society:** Because of the wide diversity of cultures in China, conventions vary widely. In the rural regions, loners are most common, traveling around the country and feeding here and there. In the cities, covens are the norm, usually controlling certain parts of the city.
- **Composition:** In the rural regions the age levels vary widely, while in the cities, there are mostly younger vampires, with a small number of older ones. There are a few Ancients in China, though they do not play an active role in the society.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Immersion in Water, Fear: Holy Symbols, Miscellaneous: Stench of the grave, Must sleep on bodies.
- **Powers:** Chinese vampires tend to use psychic powers, usually: Illusion, Mania, Astral Body, Body Control, Transform.

EASTERN EUROPE

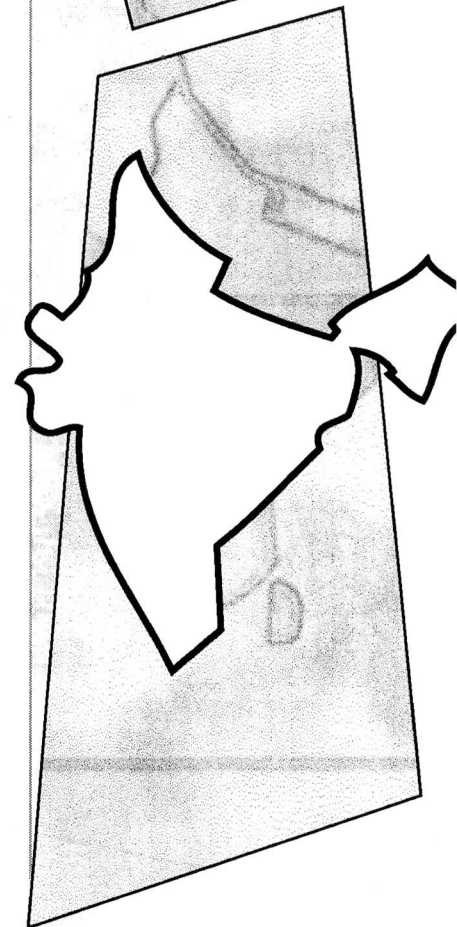
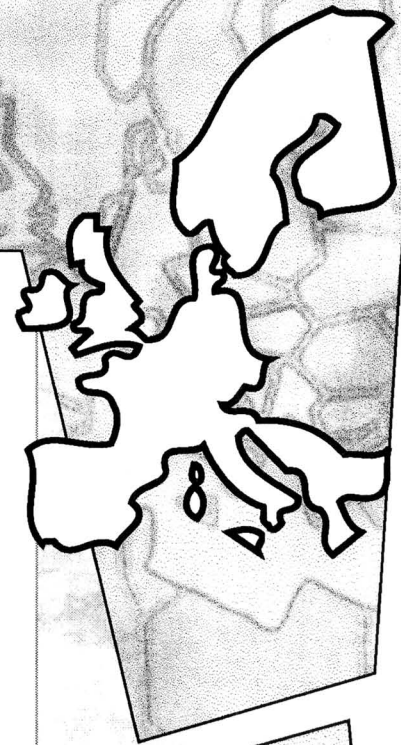
- **Origin:** Home of Dracula, and some of the most famous vampires in the world, the belief is that there was some cursed ancestor to all vampires who infected others by biting them.
- **Society:** Eastern European vampires share a similar culture to that of their Western counterparts. Many of the traditions and signals are the same or similar. Covens are most common, with strong hierarchies of power, the eldest almost exclusively the Masters. Loners are typically hunted by the covens as heretics. Obedience to a vampire who is your elder is a common tradition, regardless of membership in that vampire's coven.
- **Composition:** There is a good mix of ages in Eastern Europe, with every age group well-represented, except for Ancients, of which there are none. Most covens are older, with only a few younger fledglings, thus keeping the balance of age groups. Loners tend to be older, or very young.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Stake through Heart, Decapitation, Bury at Crossroads, Fear: Holy Places, Holy Symbols, Garlic, Wild Roses, Mirrors, Miscellaneous: Must sleep in coffin with soil from homeland (-4).
- **Powers:** In Eastern Europe, the majority of vampires have psychic powers,. Common powers are Animals, Charm, Hypnological, Mental, Sensory, Telepathy, Psychokinesis and Transform.

EUROPE

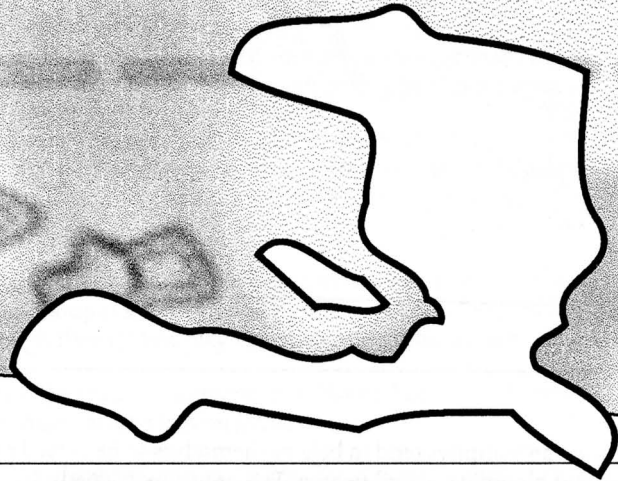
- **Origin:** European vampires tend to believe themselves to be cursed people, descended from some evil bloodline or evil people. The only cure is death.
- **Society:** The European vampire community is still one of the strongest around. There is an age-old tradition of signals and traditions, almost universally known by European vampires. This is largely due to the continuous travel throughout Europe by the vampire community, enhanced by modern telecommunications. Covens are the norm, with loners being frowned upon or even hunted. Territorialism is present, but travelers are allowed safe passage without much problem.
- **Composition:** The European vampire community has a younger mix. The eldest tend to be Old, with most covens ruled by one somewhere down the line. The majority of European vampires are Adolescent or Mature. Young and Fledglings are not that common, as deaths in Europe are investigated closely by Interpol now, making things difficult.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Stake through Heart, Decapitation, Bury at Crossroads, Fear: Holy Places, Holy Symbols, Garlic, Miscellaneous: Must sleep in coffin.
- **Powers:** In Europe, the majority of vampires have psychic powers. Common powers are Animals, Charm, Hypnological, Mental, Sensory, Telepathy and Psychokinesis.

INDIA

- **Origin:** In India, vampires are special creatures from the dawn of time. They are demons of sorts, sent to prey upon humanity.
- **Society:** The vast majority of Indian vampires are loners, with only a few covens found in the entire country. All vampires tend to avoid one another and only found together in the Master-Fledgling relationship. Outsiders are typically ignored, but attacked if they seem to be settling down. Territorialism is high, though only apparent when threatened.
- **Composition:** There are a good number of elder vampires, a few Ancients, a dozen Very Old and dozens of Old ones. There are a good number of younger ones as well, though all keep a very low-key profile.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Contact with water from Ganges, Fear: Lotus Blossom, Salt, Miscellaneous: Must sleep in temple.
- **Powers:** Indian vampires use psychic powers, such as: Charm, Illusion, Teleport and Transform.



APPENDIX



HAITI

Origin: In Haiti, vampires are evil spirits inhabiting people's bodies. There are purification rites, known by only a few special Bokor (see Grimm's Cybertales), that can cure people of this affliction. However, it is also believed that the Bokor are the ones who cause it to happen in the first place, so they may not be so willing to help.

- **Society:** There are no covens in Haiti, only loners. The only time a couple of vampires will be found together is in the case of the Master-Fledgling relationship. There are no traditions or signals among vampires from Haiti either. They tend to avoid one another, killing each other if forced into an encounter.
- **Composition:** Most of the vampires in Haiti are young, none older than Old. Also, Haiti has one of the lowest populations of vampires in the world.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Bokor Spell, Fear: Salt, Holy Symbol, Miscellaneous: Must sleep in grave.
- **Powers:** Haitian vampires use psychic powers, such as: Animals, Hypnological, Illusion, Mania, Mnemonic, Teleportation and Transform. The older ones, typically Bokor on the side, also practice voodoo magic.

JAPAN

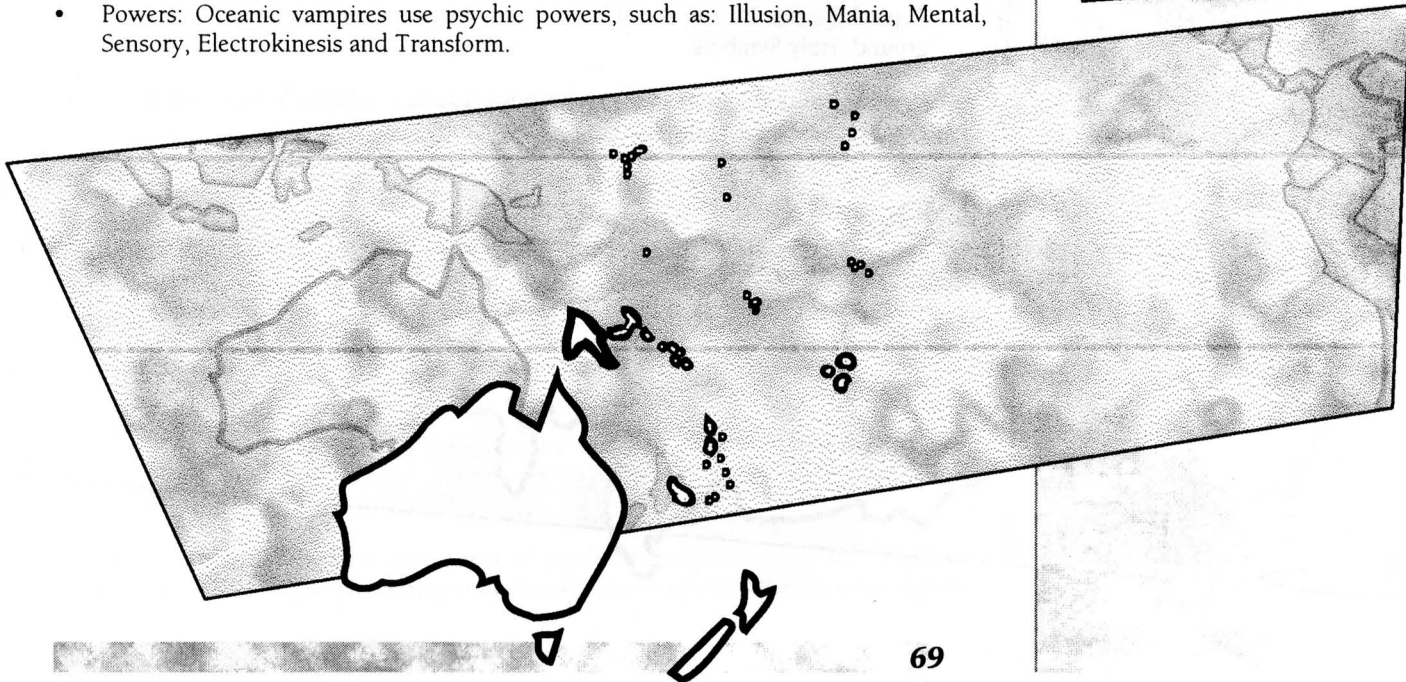
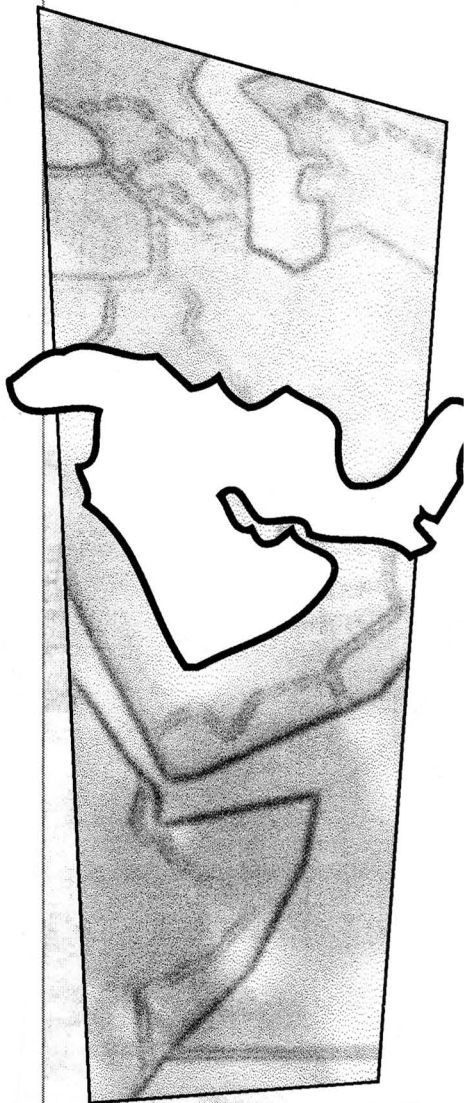
- **Origin:** In Japan, vampires are believed to be demons inhabiting people's bodies, or demons who have taken physical form. Their only cure is killing the body by burning it and scattering the ashes.
- **Society:** Japanese vampires don't have covens per se. They are loners, but work together. There are traditions they follow, they have their own territories, and usually do not enter into conflict much at all. They also almost never kill. They allow the victim to live, but erase any memory of the encounter.
- **Composition:** There are a range of ages in Japanese vampires, from the Very Old to the Fledgling. There is one Ancient, Yosiko, who now poses as an executive in Arasaka.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Wooden Stake through heart, Decapitation, Fill mouth with uncooked rice, Fear: Uncooked rice, Salt.
- **Powers:** Japanese vampires use psychic powers, such as: Charm, Illusion, Mnemonic, Sensory, Astral Body, Body Control, Psychic Focus and Teleportation.

MIDDLE-EAST

- **Origin:** In the Middle-East, vampires are believed to be evil creatures who prey upon sinners and other unholy people. The only cure for vampires is to be good of heart, and they will not disturb you.
- **Society:** While there was once an intricate culture of vampires in the Middle-East, there is now nothing. After 80% of the vampires perished in the meltdown, the rest were scattered, some into make-shift covens, others wandering as loner Radvamps. There are some signals and traditions unique to the middle-east vampires, but only the elders know them.
- **Composition:** The majority of vampires who survived were Old or older, with some Ancients surviving untouched. The only young ones are Fledglings just recently made.
- **Typical Quirks:** Fear: Holy Symbols, Running Water, Holy Ground, Miscellaneous: Awaken earlier than usual, cannot cross running water.
- **Powers:** Vampires from the Middle East sometimes practice esoteric magic, but by and large use psychic powers, such as: Illusion, Mnemonic, Sensory, Psychic Focus, Radikinesis and Transform.

OCEANA

- **Origin:** The belief is that vampires are creatures infected from some evil bloodline. The only cure is to dump them in the ocean.
- **Society:** Oceanic vampires have no real society. They are largely loners, only operating in covens in the cities, where the pickings are good. Travelers are often ignored, or toyed with.
- **Composition:** The majority of Oceanic vampires are no older than Mature, with the vast majority being Adolescents. They are mostly from Europe, though ones from all over the world can be found.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Decapitation, Fear: Salt.
- **Powers:** Oceanic vampires use psychic powers, such as: Illusion, Mania, Mental, Sensory, Electrokinetics and Transform.



APPENDIX

OFF-PLANET

- Origin: Varies
- Society: Orbital vampires usually do not have covens, as there is not a large enough population, but they often know one another and work together when necessary. Territorialism is present, but typical penalties for trespassing are some sort of restitution, not death. The traditions only include the two basic laws, don't kill humans and don't fight amongst yourselves.
- Composition: There is a good range of ages in Orbital vampires, from the Ancient to the Adolescent. Very Young and Fledgling vampires are quite rare, as they dislike new vampires in already crowded environments. There are three Ancients in orbit, including Von Konos.
- Typical Quirks: Varies
- Powers: Orbital vampires have a wide range of powers, and some are found to use magic, particularly Technomancy. However, the more common powers are: Mnemonic, Telepathy, Electrokinesis, Teleportation and Astral Body.

RUSSIA

- Origin: The Russian vampire is believed to be the result of an evil person who made a pact with the devil to live forever. The only cure is to decapitate the vampire and bury the head in consecrated ground.
- Society: Russian vampires are almost exclusively found in large covens (10-20 members). They are involved in power struggles among each other, therefore there is no real traditions or cooperation among them. However, lineage is still a concern of theirs, one of the few remnants of their ancestors. Travelers are usually ignored or an attempt is made to use them for their own goals.
- Composition: There are a large number of young vampires, from Fledglings to Adolescents, with only a few Mature and Old ones, and a few dozen Very Old and Ancient vampires.
- Typical Quirks: Destruction: Decapitation, Bury on Consecrated Ground, Fear: Holy ground, Holy Symbols.
- Powers: Russian vampires use psychic powers such as: Charm, Mania, Mental, Sensory, Psychokinesis and Transform.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

- **Origin:** The common belief in this part of the world is that vampires are demons inhabiting bodies of evil people.
- **Society:** There are no real societies in these countries; the vampires tend to be loners or Masters of slave Children. Other vampires are regarded as tools or adversaries, and dealt with accordingly.
- **Composition:** In the jungle, the majority of vampires are Very Old or Ancient, but there are only a dozen of these to be found. In the cities or military camps, the Masters are typically Old, Mature or Adolescent, with the slave Children ranging from a large number of Fledglings to a couple elite of Adolescents.
- **Typical Quirks:** Destruction: Immersion in Water, Fear: Holy Symbols.
- **Powers:** Southeast Asian vampires tend to use psychic powers, usually: Charm, Mental Assault, Sensory and Body Control.

USA

- **Origin:** There is no common belief as to the origin of vampires. A strong rumor among the younger vampires, particularly those abandoned by their Masters, is that they are all part of a huge government or corporate experiment.
- **Society:** There are pockets of covens in some regions, such as Night City, but otherwise, the majority of vampires are loners, or in small groups for mutual protection, but not covens.
- **Composition:** The majority of vampires in the USA are Adolescents or younger. The elders have either died or left. There are no Ancients in the States other than those just passing through.
- **Typical Quirks:** There are no common quirks. Variation is the rule. The only more or less common quirk among netrunning vampires is that dying in the Net really does destroy them. This is a -4 Destruction quirk.
- **Powers:** American vampires use a mix of psychic powers and some technomancy, though for the most part the younger ones barely know how to use their psychic powers.

APPENDIX

VAMPIRE ARCHETYPES

KERUSHI

• DRIVEN BY INSANITY

They hadn't followed him. They couldn't have. Of that he was sure. He was too fast for them. Hadn't that been one of the gifts from his master, speed?

Running down the dirty alleyway, he could hear the moaning of the sirens in the night, an electronic cat in heat. But he knew it did not scream for him, could not scream for him. If it did, he would break the mortal that dare try to stop him. Like he did to the others, spilling the life giving blood to the floor, their necks broken, their bodies mere puppets. At least he hadn't given them the disease, the plague.

The plague. He had spread it for too long. He had had it for too long. He could not stand it anymore. The nightly rituals, scavenging the streets for food and fools, hiding in the shadows while the others claimed their superiority to the mortals that roamed the street. If they were so powerful, why did they need to hide in the day? Why couldn't they face such a simple thing as the sun?

Kerushi, they had called him. But they were the ones who were crazy. They didn't see the darkness from the night. Didn't they feel the suffering that he felt? Didn't they cry when one more of their loved one died? Didn't they feel the isolation, the loneliness?

Rosie had understood. She had truly loved him. She had almost welcome the kiss when it had come. Until he had told her of the realities, what it had really meant.

When she had entered the bonfire, it was as if she hadn't been the only one burning. He had burned too with her, the last shreds of excuses withering in the fire. He had finally plainly seen what his life was: an excuse, a farce. The mask had fallen.

The word in the coven was that he was about to go Ronin. They had read his isolation wrongly. While they believe that he was about to leave and roam the globe alone, he had plotted their death. If they couldn't see that their life was a farce, a mockery, then they needed to be shown, if not to save them, then to save the ones that would come later, created by them.

He had had only time to kill McArthur, managing to wake before the others and setting his coffin on fire. The vampire had been old and had caught fire like so much straw. The fire had been cleansing to him too, the flames bringing back Rosie for a mere moment.

The others had awoken almost immediately. First Chuck, quickly followed by David and Gabriel. He had seen right away that the others would bring him down. He had badly planned that part. At least McArthur would be dead. He had ran into the night, hoping that the confusion would keep the others back and give him some headway.

Catching his breath, he paused for a moment, listening for any noise in the din of the night. As he drew a deep breath, a palm crashed into the back of his skull, showering the inside of his head with fireworks.

"You know the rules, Smiley, Kerushi must be killed. Death brings death and yours will be long in the coming."

• GAME NOTES

Kerushi are probably the most challenging foe any group of players in the cyberpunk universe can confront. Not only do they possess the powers of the vampires but they are also psychologically unbalanced.

The genesis of a Kerushi is a simple affair: it is simply the state of mind of a vampire that has snapped. He is no longer in full possession of his mental faculty because his mind is no longer able to cope with the realities of vampiredom. This is reflected in the rules with a Age Level test. If the vampire fails then it is assume that he will commit suicide. The Referee takes away the character in very much the same way he would in the case of a cyberpsycho. This is all well and dandy, but what if the character was interesting? One option is to make the character into a Kerushi.

Insanity comes in many ways. It might be fun as a quick session to unleash a Kerushi into the downtown area in much the same way as one who let a cyberpsycho loose. The players would have to deal with the menace before the authorities came around simply because that kind of activity would bring unwanted attention from the local Sun Knight chapter.

As a Referee device, they can be an interesting threat to a group of vampires (simply because they know so much more than mere hunters) or be a central part of an on-going campaign if it involves a conspiracy of some kind. An interesting plot could be about a vampire who just wants to die, but doesn't want to do it alone and devises a larger plan to take along a large segment of the normal population or starts a war with some corporation.

On the other hand, a fun approach might be for an afflicted character to take on small quirks in the "mad scientist" type vein — the perfect plot to relieve themselves and other vampires from their eternal thirst, even if they don't want to be relieved of it. Or, what about an archaeological dig or some other type of expedition that unleashes forces unknown, like if the vampire happens to be locked up and forced into hibernation just after he goes insane?

If a PC goes Kerushi, you might want to leave the option to the player to keep on playing him. With a really devious player, many interesting session could develop as the former allies play a deadly game of cat and mouse.

The name of the game is flavor. The players might know everything there is to know about vampires, but the mind of an insane person is always a frightening (and fascinating) thing to explore. Go ahead, give it a try. But remember, don't indulge to much, a mind being such a terrible thing to waste...



SMILEY

Streetname: Smiley
 Role: Vampire/Rockerboy
 INT 8 REF 11
 ATTR 7 LUCK 7
 EMP 1 PSY 9

Real Name: Frank Petersen
 Specialty: Kerushi
 TECH 5 COOL 2
 MA 10 BODY 8 (9)

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
 Ethnic Origin: American
 Real Age: 19
 Hair Style: Long, Messy
 Weight: 160 lbs
 Dress & Style: Street Fashion

Apparent Age: 17
 Age Lvl: I
 Hair Color: Purple
 Height: 5' 7"
 Eye Color: Swirls
 Distinguishing Features: Dirty, smells bad.
 Something odd about the way he looks at you.

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Destroy all the leeches
 InMode: Insane, Scheming

ExMode: Giggles

• QUIRKS:

Fast (+1 MA), Quick (+1 REF); Destruction: Stake through the heart, bury at crossroads

• SKILLS

Name	Level
Charismatic Leadership	+4
Perform	+2
Composition	+2
Play Instrument	+2
Persuasion	+4
Handgun	+4
Hide/Evade	+6

Name	Level
Awareness/Notice	+5
Wardrobe & Style	+5
Brawling	+6
Streetwise	+6
Seduction	+4
Motorcycle	+5
Photo & Film	+3

• OUTFIT

Cyberwear: Wolver, the clothes on his back. He does possess a Shive (Kundalini Roadworks), but will not think of using it.

• BACKGROUND

Smiley was a member of the Ortega coven in Seattle. Not always the most stable person to have around, others in the coven accepted him for the simple reason that they could better keep an eye on him. That was their first mistake.

The night Smiley went mad (it had been a slow process, finally ending with the suicide of his once input Rosie), he torched McArthur, the coven's master. After a mad chase across the city, they finally caught up to him.

One of the rules of the Ortega coven is that anyone who crosses them must pay. That was their second mistake. They tried to make him pay, but Smiley seemed to ignore the pain that they were dealing out, instead spewing out insults and threats the whole time.

After beating him to a pulp in the back alley, they brought him back to the coven house to execute him. Somehow, he managed to escape (some blame Chuck for not paying attention to the drooling Kerushi). Their third mistake came quickly after, when they decided to wait until next night to chase him again (it was around 4:30 in the morning).

The result? Smiley managed somehow to stay alive, only to come back and torch the coven house. What exactly happened to Smiley, no one is really sure. Some say that he still hangs around shadows, looking for vampires to eliminate. Others say that he died, staying up too long and being caught in the morning sun's deadly rays.



GLAMVAMPS

• A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

Decadence, my father used to say, is just a matter of point of view. Take for example, the Romans. Did they think that what they were doing was decadent and wrong? Probably not. So, I believe that it's not whether or not you think you are decadent that matters, it's what the neighbors think. If you're gonna do something, do it with style and make sure everyone knows it.

I'm a vampire. I live for the pleasure of blood and the thrill of the seduction. Don't get me wrong. I don't slink around dark alleys, looking for the odd streetkid alone at night. No. That is the life of an animal. I am vampire. I live the high life.

The prey I choose are willing participants. Be they from Paris, Berlin or Neo Tokyo, they know what I am. And they love me for it. We have, you might say, a mutually exploitative relationship. I drain them of their blood and money until I no longer need them, and they get my favors in return. It might seem like little in return, but they love every moment of it...

Take for example one of my latest... encounter. Her name was Cassandra Marx. The daughter of a rich German corp, she thought she had it all. Anything she wanted, daddy would get for her, usually within the hour. The father was one of the most powerful figures in Europe and his daughter knew this fully well. She used her name like other people use a key. Yes, she thought she had it all, but she was missing one thing: me.

I met her in an exclusive club in London. Despite all the troubles of that poor country, there is still no one that can outdo the British for pure perversion. Here she was, tied to a rack and, by the sound of it, enjoying herself quite a bit. I tapped her master on the shoulder and quickly 'convinced' him that maybe he should go for a bit of fresh air.

She recognized me right away. As I said earlier on, I have a certain reputation in these milieu. The kind of pleasures I gave her that evening are the stuff legends are made of. Oh the sheer pain and pleasure I showed her. I must admit I was in great form that week.

These little meetings continued for a few nights. And then, the moment that I had been waiting for, knowing fully well that it was going to happen, happened. She asked me the big question: she wanted to be one of my brides.

Don't get me wrong. Any other vampire would kill (and do...) for this kind of proposal; by now I am used to it. As a matter of fact, I get sometimes worried if this doesn't happen a few times every month. I start to think that I have lost my edge. You see, to say that I need that kind of attention to live would be an understatement. I need their blood as much as I need their money. And, lucky me, she had both in large quantity.

To get back to my little story, let's just say that her dad doesn't really know what her daughter is up to these days and I, on the other hand, can get a nice warm meal whenever I wake.

But life as a vampire isn't all glamorous you know. There are people out there who don't see eye to eye with my lifestyle. Those pesky little devils from the Church for example, or those annoying Knights. Stuck in the middle ages both of them, and I should know. These are times of liberation, of acceptance. Live and let live, that's my motto. Except if they get in my way...

I must say that their little interventions make for good copy for the scandal rags going around. And I am never one to shy away for publicity, good or bad. You'd be surprise at how much easier it is for me when they know who I am.

What, you say, you don't know my name? Shame. Anyway, if I have to tell you, then you're probably not worth my while....

APPENDIX

• GAME NOTES

Glamvamps are an interesting variety of vampires. They seem to feed as much off of publicity as of blood, using people's knowledge of their true identity to draw victims towards them.

The typical Glamvamp is a decadent creature. He is part of the jet set usually living the high life in Europe. Some of them are performers, using their vampirism as a seduction tool to ensnare legions of fans. They play the book version of vampirism to the hilt, dressing all in black and making sure that their skin is a suitable shade of white before stepping out of their mansions (usually located atop the largest hill they can find). They do sleep in coffins and will often pretend to be afraid of crosses and garlic when, more often than not, they could not care less about them.

The majority of vampire hunters leave them alone for a few reasons: they do not want to become publicly known for their activity and the Glamvamps usually have too many connections for them to be accessible. Another reason is that to most vampire hunters, the Glamvamps come off as being vampire posers. They cannot believe that a vampire would be so bold as to publicly announce what he was.

Because of these factors, the Glamvamp can become an interesting recurring character in a campaign. It is always fun to hear about the decadent European, that is, until you have to face him.

Do note however that as flaky as he might seem, he is still very dangerous opponent, having considerable resources at his disposal and also having many covens in different cities.

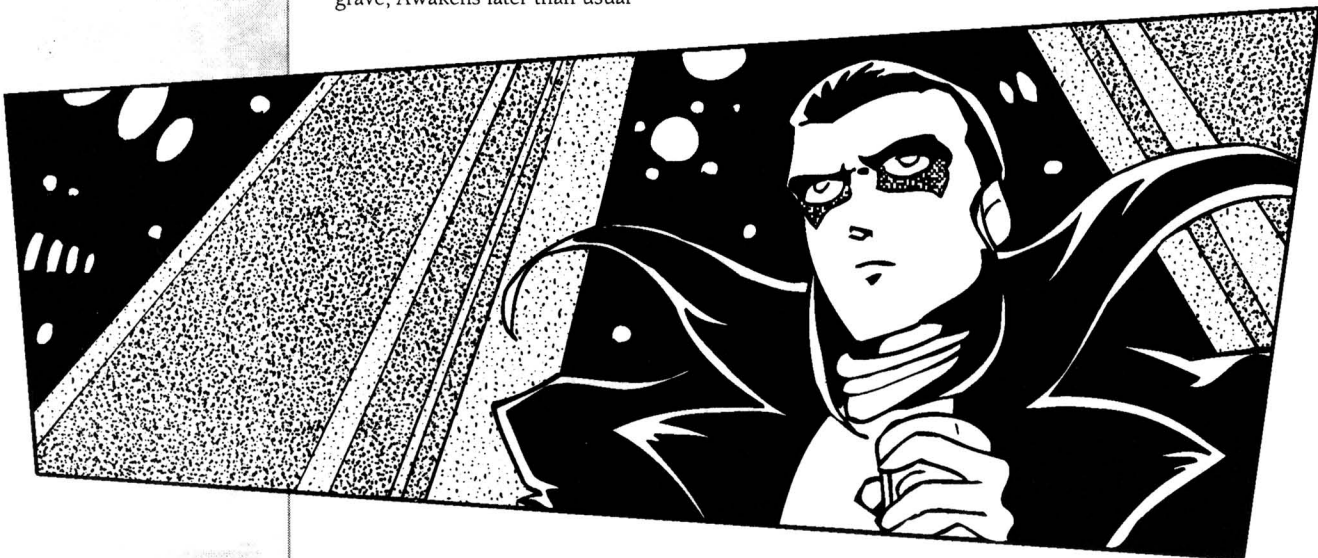
• GLAMVAMP RECOMMENDED SKILLS & POWERS (ROCKERBOY SUBCLASS)

PSYCHIC POWERS:

	LEVEL	SKILLS	LEVEL
Charismatic	var.	Leadership	var.
Charm	var.	Awareness/Notice	var.
Sensory	var.	Personal Grooming	var.
Illusion	var.	Wardrobe & Style	var.
Persuasion	var.	Seduction	var.
Social	var.	Brawling	var.
Vampire Lore	var.	Dance	var.

TYPICAL QUIRKS:

Beautiful (+2 ATTR), Cool (+2 COOL); Destruction: Decapitation with shovel, put poppy seed on grave; Awakens later than usual



BLOOD

Streetname: Blood Real Name: ?
 Role: Glamvamp Specialty: Gigolo
 INT 9 REF 10 TECH 5 COOL 8
 ATTR 12 LUCK 5 MA 8 BODY 8 (9)
 EMP 8 PSY 5

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male Apparent Age: 23
 Ethnic Origin: European Age Lvl: I
 Real Age: 26 Hair Color: Black
 Hair Style: Long, tied back Height: 6' 2"
 Weight: 175 lbs Eye Color(s): Brown
 Dress & Style: High Fashion (as long as it is black)
 Distinguishing Features: Either he's a vampire or he's a die hard Cure fan

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Self pleasure ExMode: Friendly, Charming
 InMode: Cold, Self-centered Disorders: None

• QUIRKS

Beautiful (ATTR +2), Cool (COOL +1); Destruction: Put poppy seed on grave; Cannot enter churches, must sleep in coffin

• SKILLS

Name	Level	Name	Level
Charismatic Leadership	+9	Awareness	+7
Personal Grooming	+8	Wardrobe	+7
Persuasion	+8	Seduction	+9
Brawling	+7	Vampire Lore	+4
Dance	+5	Social	+6
Education	+5	Handgun	+6
Body Language	+5	Human Perception	+6
POWER: Charm	+3		

• OUTFIT

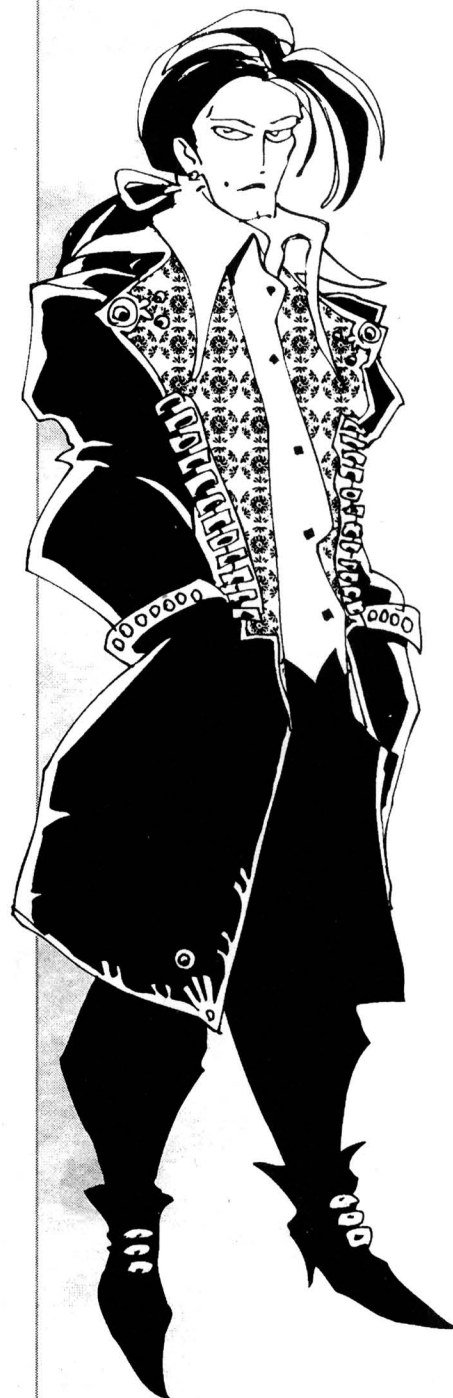
Benson Cascade; Kundalini Roadworks Shiva; Penthouses in London, Paris and Berlin; Travel coffin; miscellaneous personal effects

• BACKGROUND

Blood is THE role model for any up and coming Glamvamp. He represents all that the Glamvamp is: a leech not only to humankind but also to society. He drains his victims (male or female, he doesn't care) of not only their life blood, but also of their money. The more sarcastic out there would say that those rich jerks get back what they have been dealing out all these years, but the truth is that money is not the object. It never is with Blood.

Little is known about him, except that he came onto the scene a few years ago and started his little seduction game. He seemed pretty comfortable with it, which would lead one to believe that he had already been doing that before he was turned into a vampire. He never hid the fact that he must feed on blood in order to survive and in fact he makes it his calling card, leaving bite marks well in evidence on the neck of his latest victim, many of whom use it as a mark of status.

Blood will not reveal anything about his past to anyone, even under torture or death threats. Some say that it is his only weakness. If one could figure out his past, Blood might listen... or try to kill.



MARY MAGDELAINE

Streetname: Magdelaine
 Role: Glamvamp
 INT 8 REF 11
 ATTR 12 LUCK 7
 EMP 7 PSY 8

Real Name: Mary Coverdale
 Specialty: Model
 TECH 3 COOL 6
 MA 7 BODY 7 (8)

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Female
 Ethnic Origin: European
 Real Age: 23
 Hair Style: Long
 Weight: 125 lbs
 Dress & Style: Long flowing black dress

Apparent Age: 20
 Age Lvl: 1
 Hair Color: White
 Height: 5' 7"
 Eye Color(s): Black
 Distinguishing Features: Haunting smile

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Revenge
 InMode: Plotting, Patient

ExMode: Shy, Quiet
 Disorders: None

• QUIRKS

Charismatic (+2 EMP), Beautiful (+2 ATTR); Destruction: Decapitation with shovel, put poppy seed on grave; Awakens later than usual

• SKILLS

Name Level
 Charismatic Leadership +5
 Personal Grooming +5
 Persuasion +4
 Brawling +3
 Dance +6
 Pose +6
 Photo & Film +3

Name Level
 Awareness +4
 Wardrobe +6
 Seduction +4
 Vampire Lore +3
 Social +4
 Perform +4
 POWER: Charm +2

• OUTFIT

Cyberarm (Whip); Cyberhand (Mace sprayer digit); Gang jazzler

• BACKGROUND

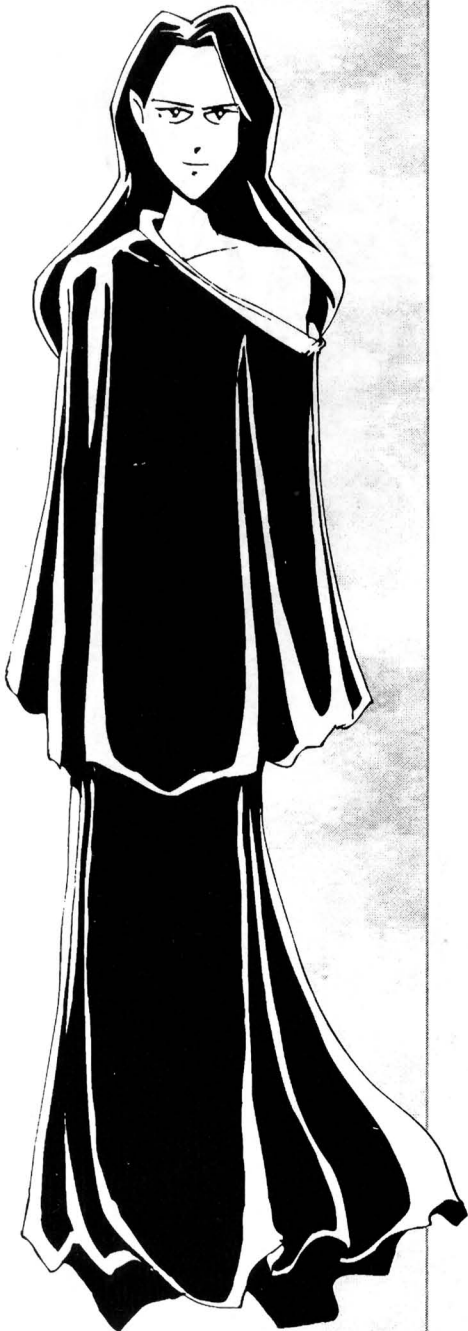
One of Europe's top models, Magdelaine's name is on everyone's lips. Whether it is because of whom she was last seen with, what she was wearing, or her latest demands of the top fashion designers, her name is well known across Europe.

Of course, the fact that this reclusive, shy person is also a vampire (or so she claims) doesn't help the growing mystique around her. Her (publicized) life story is known by all: a young student in England, she was discovered by one of the top agents on one of his annual trips to England. She had been working in a bar of dubious nature (but then again, the screamsheets ask, what bar is not of dubious nature in England?) and was at first reluctant to climb on the stage. It took some cajoling and doing on the part of the agent (no one seems to remember his name...), but she finally agreed to come with him to France.

It was in France that she became a vampire, at the hands of some mysterious figure. This only helped her already booming career, as Neo Gothic fashion was becoming the craze again.

Most of the public story is true. What the public doesn't know is that she became a vampire by design. She is in fact trying to track down the assassin of her older sister, Janet. She knows that he/she is a high ranking official with some company with a penchant for kinky sex (the body of her sister was dumped in the back alley of some S&M club), but knows very little else.

She will do anything to find her sister's murderer.



RADVAMPS

• THE BURNING PAIN FROM A THOUSAND SUNS

How long must I stay here, in the dark, hiding not only from their cursed sun but also from their stares? How long must I hide, fearing once again the kiss of the night's sun, the burning pain from a thousands burning suns?

Through their blood will I be reborn, like I was reborn through their cursed wars. They caused me to be deformed, burned, and my beauty lost; they will cause me to become again what I once was.

Damned, damned may the sons of Adam be. Sweet, sweet my revenge will be.

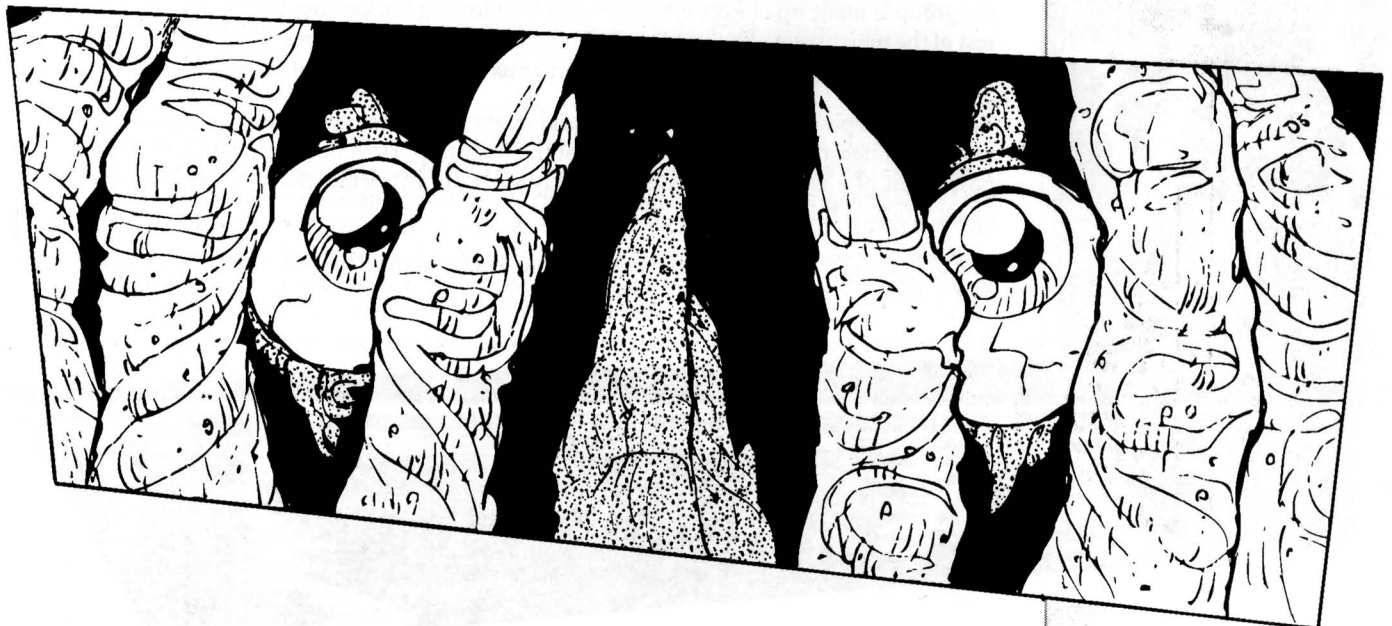
I did nothing to deserve what they have laid upon me. What kind of revenge is this? Have I scarred their children for life, forcing them to hide their once beautiful faces behind masks? No. I may have drank their blood in drunken abandon, I may have given them the kiss of eternal life which is a blessing, but I have done nothing to deserve such a curse.

That night will be burned into my memory, like it is burned on my skin, for the rest of my damned life. I remember, being on the hunt for some food — oh yes, I remember. I remember looking up towards the sky when I heard the sound. It was too late then, the midnight sun was burning the night away, showing me a spectacle that I hadn't seen in a long, long time.

The fool I was feeding on died right away, before being able to tell me what was going on. At first, I thought that all this had done to me was burn me badly, but I thought that with time I would heal. I was wrong. So wrong that every night I curse the sons of Adam for their foolishness.

I didn't heal, I grew uglier instead. My limbs started to deform, becoming twisted, like an old tree. My once beautiful face developed sores so hideous that no amount of make up could hide them. I now hide behind this mask, a leper.

I hope that perhaps their untainted blood will cure me. So now I feed on them, not out of hunger, but out of revenge. They will pay, pay with their blood for what they have done to me.



APPENDIX

• GAME NOTES

Vampires of the Middle East and of any other contaminated zone for that matter have to contend with other things than just Hunters, they have to contend with something even deadlier: radiation.

While vampires can take more radiation than a normal human (**Night's Edge**, p. 28), they still have to deal with the permanent damage inflicted by something that most of the time they are not even aware of. The lucky ones will only develop sores over their bodies and a few spots that appear to be burn marks. Others will develop horrible deformities. Such is life in the scorched lands.

As a rule of thumb, the vampire will have taken between 150-175 rads worth of radiation. This, you will notice, is fatal to human beings (**Deep Space**, p. 21). It also makes for an ugly, deformed vampire who is probably not that sane anymore.

Of course, how the vampire gets exposed to that amount of rads is left entirely to the Referee or the player. Is it from a nuclear blast in which the vampire was caught in the periphery of? Or maybe the vampire was enjoying a long lie down (A.K.A. hibernation) and he awakens to find himself ugly, deformed.

Do note however that even though vampires can take a large amount of rads without dying, that it is not possible to survive a nuclear blast if the vampire is standing too close (i.e. a few km's) from the blast. Evaporated is evaporated. Third degree burns can, however, be recovered from. Apart from that, treat as if it was exposure to the sun, with all the consequences thereof (see **Night's Edge**, p. 36).

One of the things that has to be kept in mind with Radvamps is the hatred that they will probably feel for the human race. A Radvamp will blame humans for inflicting this on them and will probably try to extract revenge. On the other hand, the more morose and fatalistic might see it as a punishment for what they are, maybe even turning the whole thing into some sort of quasi-religion. Insanity follows obviously at the heels of the deformity as the vampire attempts to deal with his new body. Don't forget that normally, a vampire gains a certain amount of beauty from their condition. Spending the rest of your life in a deformed, twisted body is not too good for morale.

Scenarios involving a Phantom of the Opera type vampire might be interesting, especially if the group is made up of Rockerboys or people following Rockerboys (solos, agents and the rest of the merry gang of hangers-on). Or maybe the players get trapped by a Radvamp who is trying to drain them of their blood in order to "cleanse" himself.

The standard plot of revenge upon the world might be interesting, but more interesting still would be nuclear blackmail on the part of the Radvamp. How does he manage to get into possession of a nuclear weapon and exactly what are his demands is entirely left to the imagination of the sadistic Referee.

The only thing to keep in mind when using Radvamp is that "they're mad as hell and they won't take it anymore." And they do not glow in the dark...



MOHAMMED

Streetname: Yogi al Rahman
 Role: Vampire/Rockerboy
 INT 9 REF 10
 ATTR 1 LUCK 8
 EMP 2 PSY 11

Real Name: Mohammed al Rahman
 Specialty: Radvamp
 TECH 6 COOL 2
 MA 8 BODY 7 (9)
 Rads 8 8 0

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male Apparent Age: 30
 Ethnic Origin: Arabic Age Lvl: II
 Real Age: 120 Hair Color: n/a
 Hair Style: Bald Height: 5' 1"
 Weight: 75 lbs Eye Color(s): Black
 Dress & Style: Loose fitting tunic
 Distinguishing Features: Looks like a gnarly old man. Burn marks cover his body. Wears a white mask most of the time, as his real face is horribly scarred.

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Be forgiven by God ExMode: Cold, Distant
 InMode: Insane Disorders: None
 (believes that he talks to God,
 worships the nuclear warhead)

• QUIRKS

Beautiful (+2 ATTR), Cool (+1 COOL); Destruction: Immersion in heavy water; Cannot cross line of salt (Note that the Stat Quirks have been canceled due to radiation. The destruction quirk comes from his new beliefs.)

• SKILLS

Name Level	Name Level
Charismatic Leadership +8	Awareness/Notice +6
Streetwise +2	Persuasion +8
Oratory +8	Seduction +3
Human Perception +6	Dance +2
Expert: Burning Sun religion. +8	Vampire Lore +4
Expert: Muslim religion +5	Teaching +6
POWER: Mania +5	

• OUTFIT

Whatever he needs, his followers will get for him.

• BACKGROUND

Mohammed Al Rahman was asleep when the desert was turned to glass. He had been hibernating since the late 1930's, as a means to escape the coming World War. He awakened not long ago to find his body a twisted parody of what it used to be. He doesn't know, or understand what has happened to him.

Seeing it as vengeance from God for the acts that he has committed, he has "reformed" his evil ways and founded a sect, the Burning Sun of God. He hopes to redeem himself through this act and be delivered from the pain and torment his condition has afflicted on him.

The Burning Sun of God (BSG) is a pseudo-religious sect. Freely borrowing tenets from Muslim beliefs and mixed in with the revelation Mohammed is having, they believe that they must cleanse themselves by drinking the blood of innocents and destroying any infidels that stand in their way. Do note that the majority of his followers are not vampires, but victims of the nuclear blast themselves. They see nuclear weapons as the will of God made "flesh" and worship them and their use. Arguing with a son of the Burning Sun is probably not a good idea as they can be quite fanatical and see anyone who questions their beliefs as infidels.

Mohammed himself doesn't really involve himself in the day to day operation of the cult, leaving this task to his second in command. He is rather morose and keeps to himself, except when he believes that God has told him something that he must communicate to his followers. Yes, he can be considered Kerushi.



APPENDIX

SLEEPERS

• A LONG WAY FROM HOME!?

??/??/??

Woke up yesterday. Was really hungry — felt like I hadn't eaten in ages. When we (Clyde, Alister and myself) stepped out of the mine shaft, it was night. We looked about for a bit and found out that we must have been asleep for longer than we reckon. Nothing is familiar around us and we can't remember why we were asleep in that mine.

Saw the strangest things. When we looked for food, we came across folks that had metal bits attached to their bodies. We figured them for cripples so we went to feed on them. One of them almost killed Clyde. By God, he ripped across Clyde's chest! And he didn't have a knife or nuthin'. Good thing that Alister was fast on his feet and took the guy down quickly.

When the guy went down, his friends started screaming things at us. It was English all right, but we couldn't figure out half of what was being said. We brought Clyde back to the mine shaft and he is now back asleep, healing himself.

??+1/??/??

Starting to remember a bit what has happen. According to Alister, we had been stationed here to keep an eye on the mine. We slept in the mine itself in case someone found us in the house. Seems that someone found us awright. They found us and blew up part of the mine to trap us here.

We had panicked for awhile, trying to get out and failing miserably. Alister was the first one to fall asleep, followed by Clyde then myself. Before we fell asleep, we had been discussing the possibilities of being rescued. We all reckoned that they was pretty slim.

Seems that chance is what got us out. Some local folks wanted to see if there was still some gold left in the mine and dug a hole. They left without noticing us, thank god.

My uniform reminds me of why we fought the war. Equality. More like everyone is cattle to us now.

??+2/??/??

Still haven't gone back outside. Don't really want to know what the year is, rather stay here and go out just for feeding.

Clyde woke up today, almost fully healed. It never ceases to amaze me that the supersoldier program actually works. I guess we have Mr. Lincoln to thank for that.

Or maybe not.

Alister claims that we must have been asleep for a few hundred years. If we hadn't gone outside, I would have laughed at him. A few hundred years! Sounds insane, doesn't it? But then again our condition seems insane also.

??+3/??/??

I'm hungry. And so are the others. I don't want to go outside. I don't understand what is going on. They told us that we would be almost invulnerable. They said nothing of this, this constant hunger and these unholy powers.

??+4/??/??

We finally gave in to our hunger yesterday. We had to go into town since there was no one to feed on in the wilderness. This is an insane age.

We saw whores. Everywhere. And people dressed strangely and looked at us as if we were crazy. A young man(?) with blue hair and a glowing(?) tattoo on his cheek pointed at us and laughed. He said that it was the best costume that he ever saw. Clyde got angry and grabbed him by the throat, almost ripping him right there and then. After much coaxing from Alister, he finally dropped the hooligan.

We went in the back alley and fed on some rats. I hate this age. It is loud, it smells and there seems to be no morals.

??+5/??/??

Clyde and myself have been talking about suicide. How does one kill himself when one is already dead?

Alister is brooding more and more. He talks of teaching the youth of this age a lesson in morals. We have tried to dissuade him but without much fervor or success.

GAME NOTES

Old vampires are not necessarily all powerful. Those who fall into hibernation because they have been trapped and do not awaken until someone frees them (be it willingly or not) often believe that they still are at the same power level as when they went to sleep (this is especially true of fledglings who look for their masters as soon as they awaken again. Of course, their masters are about as powerful as they are that point).

The other thing to keep in mind with sleepers is that they do not know the age that they awoken in at all. More often than not, they will still go around with the same mentality of the age that they came from, trying to change the people around them instead of adapting to the age at hand.

This can be interesting in a campaign as the players will have to deal not only with survival but also the discovery and coping in a brave new age. The vampire will also not be aware of all the people who know about them and the new hunters, such as the Sun Knights. Corporations will also be after them if he shows signs of being a powerful ally.

If a vampire went into involuntary hibernation, the chances are that their personal fortune will be non-existent. Any money that the vampire might have on himself will be considered fake (how can anyone possess money that old?) and any claim to assets will be laughed at. Unless the vampire had prepared for such an eventuality, he will be penniless. Of course, interesting NPCs can be created using this little ploy. How many times has movies was the 'ancient evil' plot been used? Well, by using an old hibernating vampire trapped in some sort of tomb, this cliché can be yours to use in a game! What fun awaits the players when they find themselves dealing with an Ancient! Who said grandpa was boring?

As an interesting aside, most sleepers must pass a sanity test upon waking, else, they will go back to sleep, being too confused and scared of the new age they have woken in. Or, if the Referee wishes, the sleeper might go Kerushi...





Real Name: Alister McGill
 Specialty: Civil War Vet

TECH	4	COOL	4
MA	10	BODY	9 (12)

TECH	4	COOL	4
MA	10	BODY	9 (12)

Apparent Age: 17
Age Lvl: III
Hair Color: Brown
Height: 5' 6"
Eye Color(s): Brown
Distinguishing Feature: You really have to ask?

Distinguishing Feature: You really have to ask?

ExMode: Cold, Crazy
Disorders: None

Disorders: None

Name	Level
Handgun	+5
Ride Horse	+7
Athletics	+8
Drive Wagon	+7
Intimidate	+5
Expert: Religion	+4

Expert: Religion +4

[illegible]

ions of the American Civil War period)

tion; Knife; Confederate army clothes; Backpack;

CLYDE

Streetname: ? Real Name: Clyde Jones
 Role: Vampire/Solo/Sleeper Specialty: Civil War Vet
 INT 8 REF 11 TECH 4 COOL 6
 ATTR 9 LUCK 6 MA 10 BODY 8 (12)
 EMP 3 PSY 9

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male Apparent Age: 16
 Ethnic Origin: American Age Lvl: III
 Real Age: 163 Hair Color: Blond
 Hair Style: Crew Cut Height: 5' 8"
 Weight: 165 lbs Eye Color: Blue
 Dress & Style: Trench coat, t-shirt, jeans and riding boots
 Distinguishing Features: Talks with a funny accent, Uses archaic language

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Discovery ExMode: Warm, Open minded
 InMode: Edge seeker Disorders: None

• QUIRKS

Strong (+1 BODY), Fast (+1 REF); Destruction: put coins in mouth

• SKILLS

Name Level	Name Level
Combat Sense +7	Handgun +6
Melee Weapon +8	Ride Horse +5
Rifle +6	Athletics +7
Stealth +3	Drive Wagon +2
Intimidate +6	Pick Lock +8
Education +4	

• OUTFIT

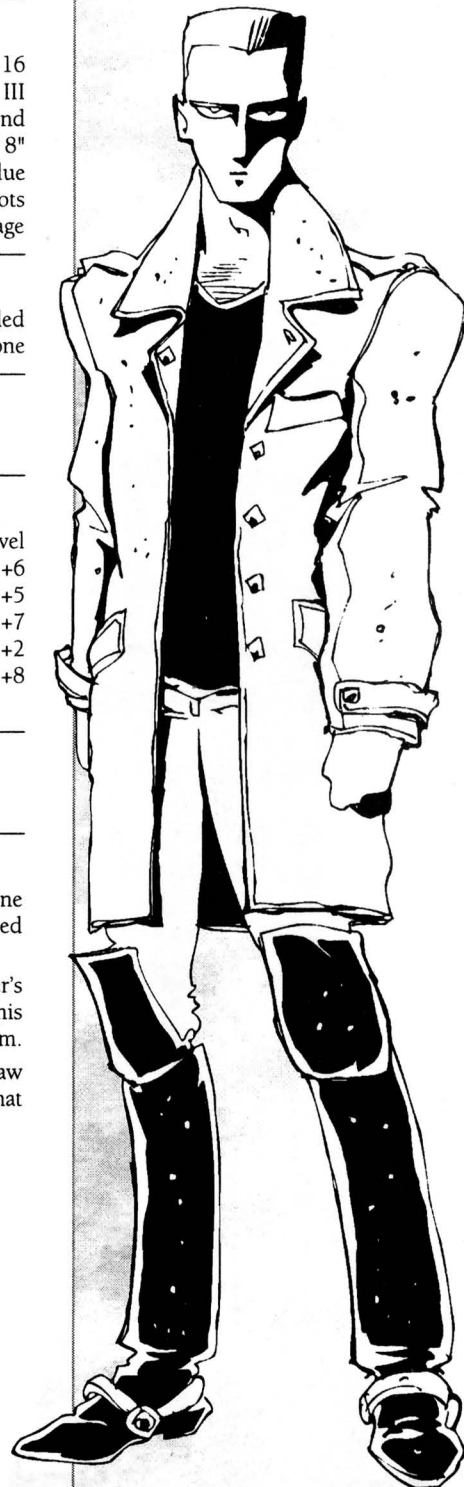
Goncz Taurus Auto pistol; Digital watch; Cellular phone; various personal effects

• BACKGROUND

The three, Alister McGill, Thomas Smith and himself, Clyde Jones, that had awakened from the mine shaft found themselves wandering in this new world, not knowing what to do. Then Thomas figured out how to kill himself.

Clyde followed Alister for a while, but then decided to go his own way, not wanting to follow Alister's mad path to destruction. He now finds himself wandering the land, exploring and marveling at this age. Unlike Alister, he didn't find himself so upset about all the "sinning" that goes on around them.

Every once in a while, he'll do a quick job for a local mob man, knowing full well that the law probably could not catch him. He sees this work as an extension of his life as a soldier, and before that as the son of a barkeep.



DREED

Streetname: Dreed Real Name: Paul Smith
 Role: Gang member Specialty: Goth
 INT 7 REF 7 TECH 6 COOL 7
 ATTR 8 LUCK 6 MA 6 BODY 7
 EMP 5 PSY 2

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male Apparent Age: 17
 Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American Hair Color: Black
 Hair Style: Shoulder Length Height: 5' 8"
 Weight: 110 lb. Eye Color(s): Gray
 Dress & Style: Jeans and Leather jacket Distinguishing Feature: Smiles a lot

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Love ExMode: Warm-natured
 InMode: Fear of being left alone Disorder: None

• SKILLS

Name	Level	Name	Level
Awareness	+6	Brawling	+4
Dodge & Escape	+1	Gang Rank	+3
Hand Signal (Goth)	+8	Human Perception	+5
Intimidation	+5	Melee	+3
Social	+5	Streewise	+4
Swimming	+4	Wardrobe & Style	+6

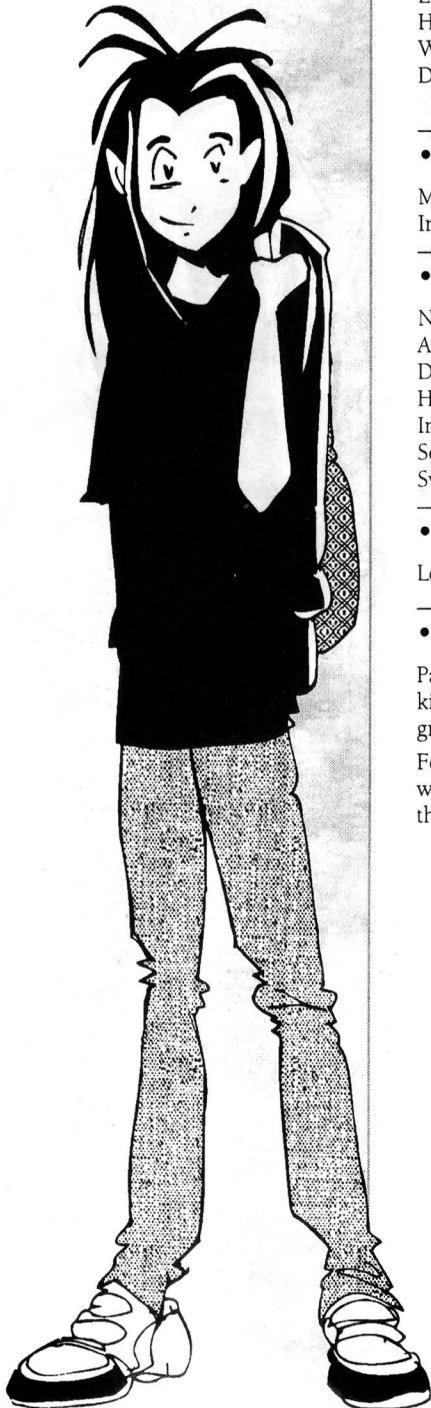
• OUTFIT

Leather Jacket; street clothes and bag; diary

• BACKGROUND

Paul left his family at the age of 16, when his father died in the Central American conflict. Like many kids in situation similar to his, he decided to head for the big city, where, obviously, opportunity would greet him. He quickly got disillusioned on his way to the city, and, upon arrival, joined a gang.

For the first time, he has found love in Angela and will do anything to stay with her. He is a scared kid, who has no idea about what is really going on around him. He is reacting, not of his own volition, to the events around him, much like a balled up piece of paper in a storm.



ANGEL

Streetname: Angel
Role: Gang member

INT 7 REF 6
ATTR 9 LUCK 3
EMP 9 PSY 1

Real Name: Angela Rourke
Specialty: Goth

TECH 4 COOL 8
MA 6 BODY 5

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Female
Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American
Hair Style: Short
Weight: 110 lb.
Dress & Style: Anything, but always black

Apparent Age: 21
Hair Color: Black
Height: 5' 11"
Eye Color(s): Blue
Distinguishing Feature: Always touches whom ever she is talking to

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Family, belonging
InMode: Fear of being left alone

ExMode: Happy
Disorder: None

• SKILLS

Name Level
Awareness +6
Dodge & Escape +1
Gang lore +3
Hand Signal (Goth) +9
Melee +3
Streewise +5
Wardrobe & Style +8

Name Level
Brawling +2
Expert:vampire myths +4
Gang Rank +4
Intimidation +2
Pick lock +4
Teaching +2

• OUTFIT

Black clothes; dirty teddy bear; Ank like necklace that she constantly wear; Leather jacket with gang logo and colors

• CYBERNETICS

Silver cyberarm (right); artificial lungs

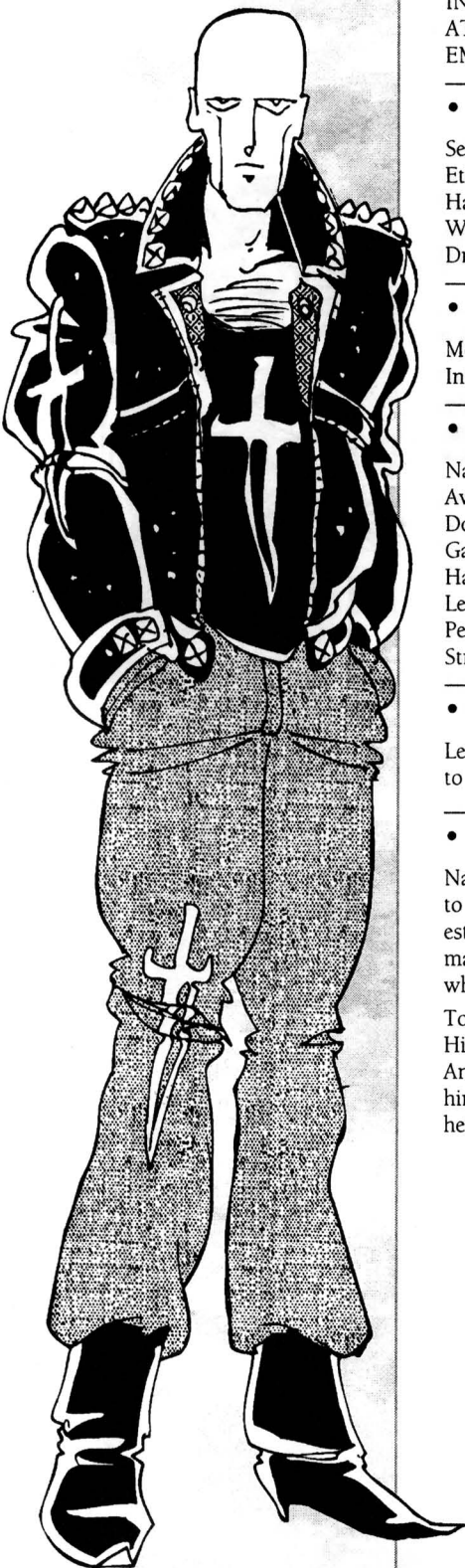
• BACKGROUND

Angela was born in Night City and, as with many kids, was running with krews by the time she was 13. She has always considered the krews to which she belong to be her true family and has always had some interested in the darker part of life.

She lost an arm when the gang that she was running with at the time, the Rituals a small Goth gang, fought and lost against the Crimson, a rival Goth gang. She sees herself and the Goths she hangs out with as social outcast, who know the truth about society and the true masters who control it all. She hopes to be turned into a vampire and take her place in what she sees as the real society. What she and the Rituals do not know is that they have been manipulated by a single vampire who used them as pawn in a little game, just as pure entertainment.



NAILS



Streetname: Nails
 Role: Gang member
 INT 8 REF 9
 ATTR 4 LUCK 4
 EMP 3 PSY 1

Real Name: Peter Price
 Specialty: Goth
 TECH 6 COOL 9
 MA 8 BODY 9

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
 Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American
 Hair Style: Bald
 Weight: 225 lb.
 Dress & Style: All in black

Apparent Age: 24
 Hair Color: -
 Height: 6' 2"
 Eye Color(s): Gray
 Distinguishing Feature: Shallow, haggard

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Lust for power
 InMode: Paranoid

ExMode: Sharp witted
 Disorder: Fear of fire

• SKILLS

Name Level
 Awareness +6
 Dodge & Escape +1
 Gang Rank +6
 Handgun +2
 Leadership +7
 Persuasion & Fast Talk +3
 Streetwork +5

Name Level
 Brawling +5
 Endurance +3
 Hand Signal (Goth) +7
 Intimidation +4
 Melee +5
 Stealth +4
 Wardrobe & Style +1

• OUTFIT

Leather Jacket with gang symbol and colors; Knife; BudgetArm C-13; CredChip account with access to all the Rituals' money (from the Master)

• BACKGROUND

Nails family died when he was still young. The fire that burned down the house took the firemen hours to put out and nearly took out two full block of Night City. The cause of the fire was never really established, although it was suspected that young Peter, Nail's real name, might have been playing with matches. He spent most of his childhood in and out of orphanages, until the American Collapse, at which time he was told he was old enough to take care of himself. He was fourteen at the time.

Too young to get a job and too old to be in a home, he did the only thing he could: he joined a gang. His wits and strength made him gang leader in no time and kept him in that position ever since. Like Angela, he found in the gang what he never had in his childhood: a real family. However, Nails thinks himself more as a father figure, something he never had for a long time in his childhood. Even though he'll deny it if confronted, he sees the Master as a father figure, and will do almost anything for him.

SLASH

Streetname: Slash
Role: Gang member

INT 6 REF 7
ATTR 8 LUCK 2
EMP 9 PSY 3

Real Name: John McLoed
Specialty: Goth

TECH 8 COOL 6
MA 6 BODY 6

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American
Hair Style: Long
Weight: 130 lb.
Dress & Style: Jeans and Leather jacket

Apparent Age: 21
Hair Color: Black
Height: 5' 7"
Eye Color(s): Brown
Distinguishing Feature: Skull tattoo covering half his face

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Love of Art
InMode: Rebel for Art's sake

ExMode: Distant
Disorder: None

• SKILLS

Name Level
Awareness +8
Dodge & Escape +3
Gang Rank +4
Intimidation +3
Motorcycle +4
Streewise +5

Name Level
Brawling +4
Education & Gen. Know. +4
Hand Signal (Goth) +6
Melee +4
Paint +5
Wardrobe & Style +3

• OUTFIT

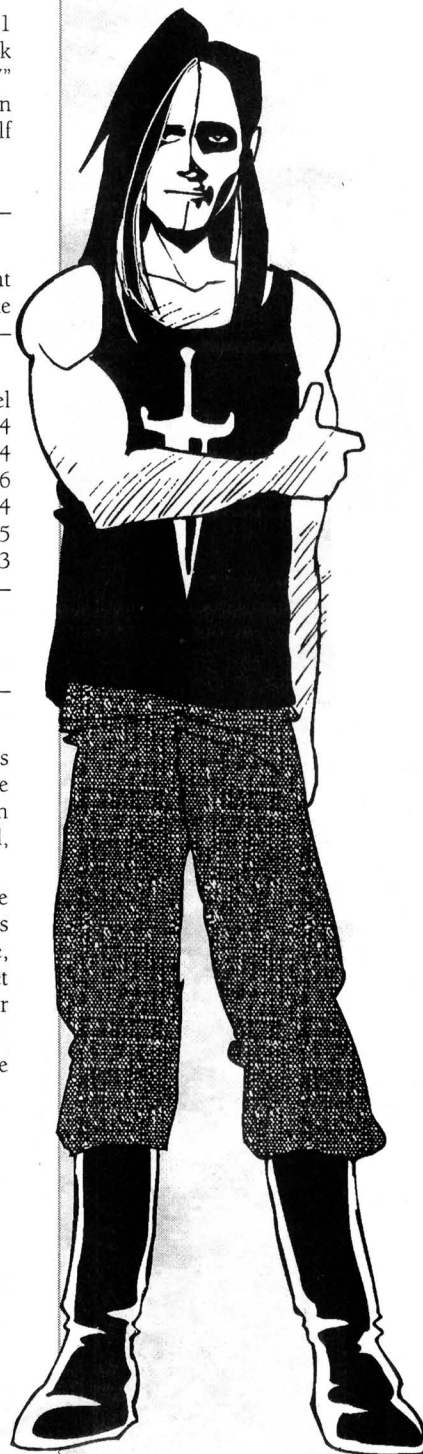
Leather jacket with gang logo and colors; Clothes; Knife; Paints and other painting materials

• BACKGROUND

Slash discovered paints when he was 4, when he started doing finger paintings. Like any proud parents would, his parents put them up on the fridge, which prompted him to start drawing directly on the fridge instead. Needless to say, they weren't amused by this turn of event and Slash was taught a lesson that has stayed with him to this day: authority figures never understands, nor will they ever understand, true art.

Unlike the others in the gang, he was actually brought up in the middle class, as the son of two corporate ladder climber. When he refused to go to corporate school if they wouldn't allow him to develop his artistic talent, he was given to choices: adapt or adapt. He choose to try to adapt, at least for a while, practicing his art on the side of innocent buildings all over downtown Night City. That's how he met the Rituals, and after a year, they finally accepted him as one of their own, as long as he passed their final test, which was to reject the bonds of the false society, in other words leave his parents.

Slash did as was expected of him, although he still sees them everyone once in a while, without anyone in the gang knowing about it.



THE MASTER

Streetname: The Master
 Role: Corporate
 INT 10 REF 10
 ATTR 10 LUCK 2
 EMP 1 PSY 8

Real Name: Enrich Von Bismark
 Specialty: Vampire
 TECH 4 COOL 8
 MA 11 BODY 8(11)

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
 Ethnic Origin: European
 Real Age: 176
 Hair Style: Short, slicked back
 Weight: 110 lb.
 Dress & Style: Businessman chic

Apparent Age: 34
 Age Level: 3
 Hair Color: Black
 Height: 5' 11"
 Eye Color(s): Gray
 Distinguishing Feature: .. Always carries a cane

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Power
 InMode: Self-centered megalomaniac

ExMode: Friendly in a shark-like way
 Disorder: None

• QUIRKS

Fast (+1 MA); Awakens earlier than usual; Destruction: Decapitation with shovel; Cannot enter churches

• SKILLS

Name Level
 Awareness +7
 Education +9
 Forgery +5
 Human Perception +7
 Language (English) +6
 Personal Grooming +8
 Play instrument (violin) +7
 Social +7
 Wardrobe & Style +8

Name Level
 Driving +6
 Fencing +6
 Handgun +6
 Judo +5
 Library Search +6
 Persuasion +10
 Resources +9
 Stock Market +10

• PSYCHIC POWERS

Name Level
 Charm +10
 Mania +5

Name Level
 Kinesis +7
 Regeneration +5

• OUTFIT

Penthouse; Mercedes Benz; Cellular phone; Laptop computer
 (Note: The Master is rich. He can get whatever he wants, usually within the hour)

• BACKGROUND

Not much is known of the Master, except for what he claims. He states that he has been a vampire for hundreds of years, that he has personally known the real Dracula and has lived through both World Wars. Of course, any questions regarding the validity of these claims will bring upon the questioner the wrath of the Master. He is very quick tempered and will not pardon someone easily.

He has been manipulating some of Night City's Goth crews to do his bidding and to entertain himself. He is a delusional madman, who cannot see or care about the needs of others. To him, everything is a game, put out simply for his pleasure.

PREACHER

Streetname: Preacher
 Role: Fixer/Vampire
 INT 9 REF 8
 ATTR 6 LUCK 3
 EMP 5 PSY 6

Real Name: Henry Murphy
 Specialty: Priest of Sanctuary
 TECH 4 COOL 7
 MA 7 BODY 7(8)

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
 Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American
 Real Age: 40
 Hair Style: Short cropped
 Weight: 100 lb.
 Dress & Style: Gray featureless clothing

Apparent Age: 23
 Age Level: 1
 Hair Color: Brown
 Height: 5' 5"
 Eye Color(s): Blue
 Distinguishing Feature: Deep gaze

• QUIRKS:

Charismatic (+1 EMP); Destruction: Bury at crossroads; Cannot enter churches

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Spread the word of Sanctuary
 InMode: Unsure of himself

ExMode: Friendly
 Disorders Hears voices

• SKILLS

Name Level
 Awareness +5
 Dodge & Escape +4
 Forgery +5
 Human Perception +5
 Melee +3
 Pick Lock +4
 Preach +7

Name Level
 Brawling +3
 Expert:Sanctuary lore +7
 Handgun +5
 Intimidate +6
 Persuasion +6
 Pick Pocket +3
 Streetdeal +3

• PSYCHIC POWERS

Name Level
 Charm +3
 Precognition +4

Name Level
 Heal +3

• OUTFIT

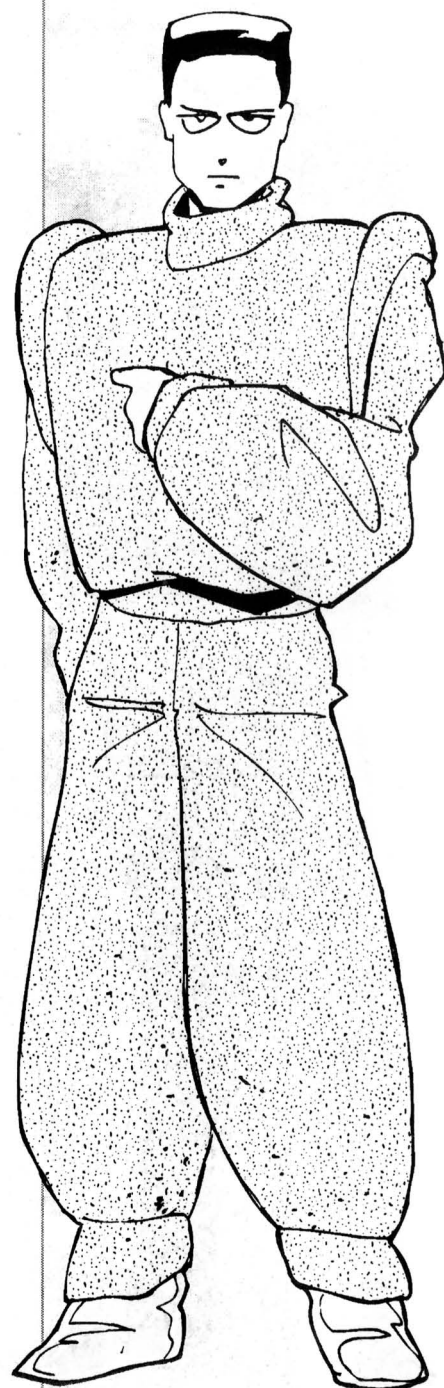
Clothing; Duffel bag; Diary containing notes and predictions that he has been "told" (he refers to the diary as the Book of Sayings); BudgetArm C-13; Old Bible that has been written in; Sleeping mat; Blankets

• BACKGROUND

Preacher earned his nickname early in his life. Having been brought up by devout Catholic parents, he had the Bible drilled into him from an early age. Even when he took to the streets and became a small time Fixer, he could still be seen carrying that Bible with him, quoting passages whenever the situation seemed appropriate. He had garnered quite a reputation as a Fixer by the time he was turned into a vampire.

Preacher was an Orphan. Not that his parents are dead, but rather the vampire that kissed him abandoned him afterwards. He met up with the Ramirez coven a few weeks afterwards and was lucky to be accepted right away. When asked about his "father", Preacher says that he remembers nothing of the night when it happened, only of the pain. He doesn't regret becoming a vampire, since he believes that since that day, he has been able to hear the voice of the lord more clearly.

He took right away to Sanctuary when he first heard of it, and is now convinced that he was kissed by Sanctuary or one of his agent on Earth. He has left the Ramirez coven with the intention of travelling throughout the States to spread the message of Sanctuary to unbelievers.



WANDERIN' PETE

Streetname: Wanderin' Pete
 Role: Solo/Vampire
 INT 8 REF 11
 ATTR 6 LUCK 3
 EMP 4 PSY 6

Real Name: Peter Paulson
 Specialty: Ronin
 TECH 4 COOL 7
 MA 10 BODY 9(11)

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Male
 Ethnic Origin: Caucasian American
 Real Age: 75
 Hair Style: Shoulder Length
 Weight: 300 lb.
 Dress & Style: Jeans and Leather jacket

Apparent Age: 25
 Age Level: 2
 Hair Color: Blond
 Height: 6' 5"
 Eye Color(s): Gray
 Distinguishing Feature: HUGE!

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Justice
 InMode: Cold, calculating

ExMode: Quiet
 Disorder: None

• QUIRKS

Strong (+1 Body); Quick (+1 REF); Destruction: Put coin into mouth

• SKILLS

Name Level
 Athletics +8
 Brawling +6
 Combat Sense +10
 Handgun +8
 Motorcycle +5
 Shadow +5
 Streetwise +8
 Weaponsmith +8

Name Level
 Awareness +10
 Capoeira +10
 Education +7
 Melee +6
 Rifle +5
 Stealth +10
 ubmachinegun +5

• PSYCHIC POWERS

Name Level
 Illusion +4
 Sensory +4

Name Level
 Mental +6

• OUTFIT

Leather Jacket; street clothes and bag; Darkwing motorcycle; Glock Thirty Machine Pistol; Goncz-Taurus Autopistol; Sleeping mat; Credchip account

• BACKGROUND

Wanderin' Pete is a Ronin, which simply means that he is masterless, covenless. A Vietnam vet, he has seen more than his share of atrocities in his life, none as great as the ones he sees everyday committed by the government which he once was willing to give his life to defend. He wanders throughout the States, never staying at the same place for more than a few days. He seeks out Orphans, vampires kissed and then abandoned, to open their eyes to the realities of their new life, and to see if they can bear it. And if they can't, Pete does the only honorable thing: he kills them. He sees himself as a righter of wrong, as a merciful angel who tries as hard as he can to make sure that the transition from human to vampire is a good one and that the new vampire has all the knowledge needed to survive.



BLOOD ROSE

Streetname: Blood Rose
Role: Model
INT 6 REF 6
ATTR 10 LUCK 6
EMP 5 PSY 2

Real Name: Audrey Branard
Specialty: Goth
TECH 6 COOL 9
MA 6 BODY 6

• DESCRIPTION

Sex: Female
Ethnic Origin: European
Real Age: 17
Hair Style: Long
Weight: 100 lb.
Dress & Style: Jeans and Leather jacket

Apparent Age: 17
Age Level: 0
Hair Color: Black
Height: 5' 8"
Eye Color(s): Gray
Distinguishing Feature: Pale skinned

• PSYCHOLOGICAL

Motivation: Discovery
InMode: Thrill seeker

ExMode: Happy-go-lucky
Disorder: None

• QUIRKS

Beautiful (+1 ATTR); Awakens earlier than usual; Destruction: Pour boiling oil on

• SKILLS

Name	Level
Education	+2
Perform	+3
Persuasion	+4
Pose	+6
Social	+3

Name	Level
Notice	+3
Personal Grooming	+6
Photo & Film	+2
Seduction	+5
Wardrobe & Style	+6

• OUTFIT

Large selection of clothes; Portfolio; Cellular phone; Address book with many "celebrity" names

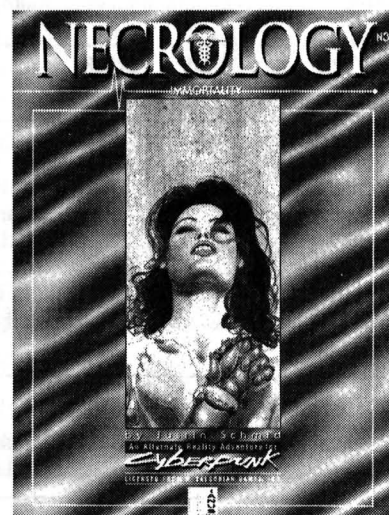
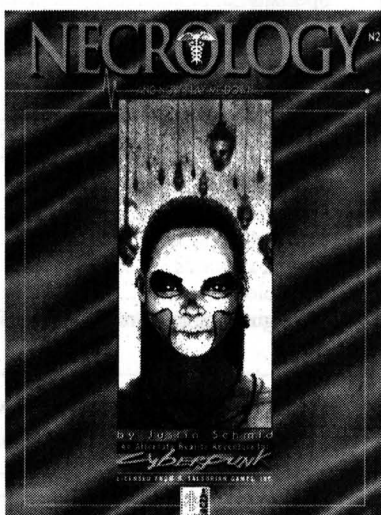
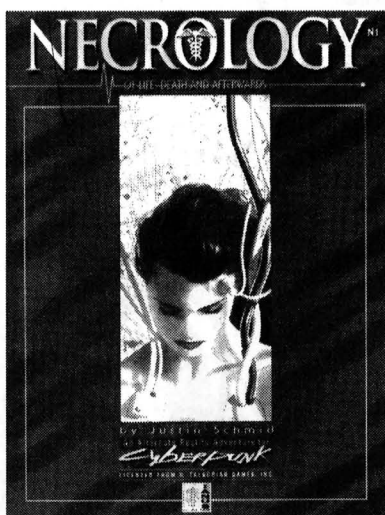
• BACKGROUND

Audrey was a model who has always seeked the "cool" edge of life, always the first in line to the newest clubs. She has always been facinated by the European Glamvamps and the whole vampire mystique. When the chance presented itself for her to met a Glamvamp for real, she jumped at it.

She was turned into a vampire that very night, when the Glamvamp seduced her with promises of seeing the world in a different way. She never imagined that he would just leave her behind, like a discarded hanky.



• NECROLOGY



A complete trilogy of Alternate Reality Adventures for CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0., licensed from R. Talsorian Games.

N1: NECROLOGY

There's a new fad in 2020: flatlining! Now anyone can experience life after death without any real risk to themselves. Sounds too good to be true? It is up to the players to find the catch. Written by Justin Schmid. 32 pgs, full color cover.

ICP102 (CyberPunk 2020 module) \$6.95US/Can

N2: NOW I LAY ME DOWN...

There's a killer on the loose! Mass murderers are quite common in 2020, but this one (if it is indeed only one person) does it in different ritualistic manners. Can the players figure out what is going on before they are next on the list? Written by Justin Schmid. 32 pgs, full color cover.

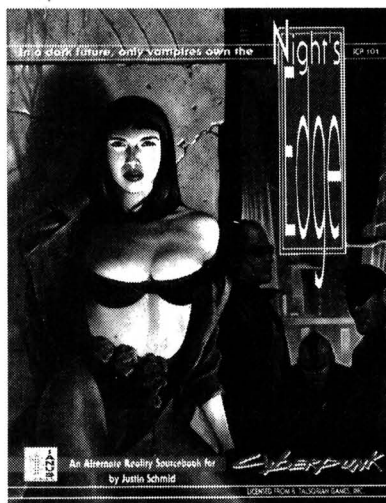
ICP104 (CyberPunk 2020 module) \$6.95US/Can

N3: IMMORTALITY

This time the players are warned of danger by a voodoo priest who, of course, wants to help them out. Knowing that they were up against such a priest in the last adventure, can they trust him? Will he help them defeat the larger menace? Written by Justin Schmid. 32 pgs, full color cover.

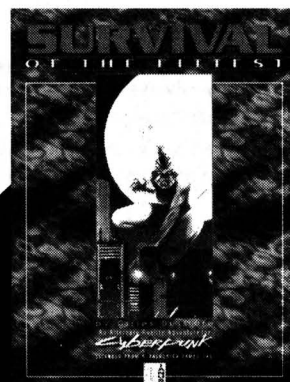
ICP105 (CyberPunk 2020 module) \$6.95US/Can

NIGHT'S EDGE



An Alternate Reality Sourcebook for CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0., licensed from R. Talsorian Games. Includes everything you need to know about vampires, vampire hunters, lycanthropes and were-wolves. The ultimate sourcebook for techno-horror in the Cyberpunk world! Written by Justin Schmid. 96 pgs, full color cover, squarebound.

ICP101 (CyberPunk 2020 Sourcebook)
..... \$14.95 US/Can.



SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

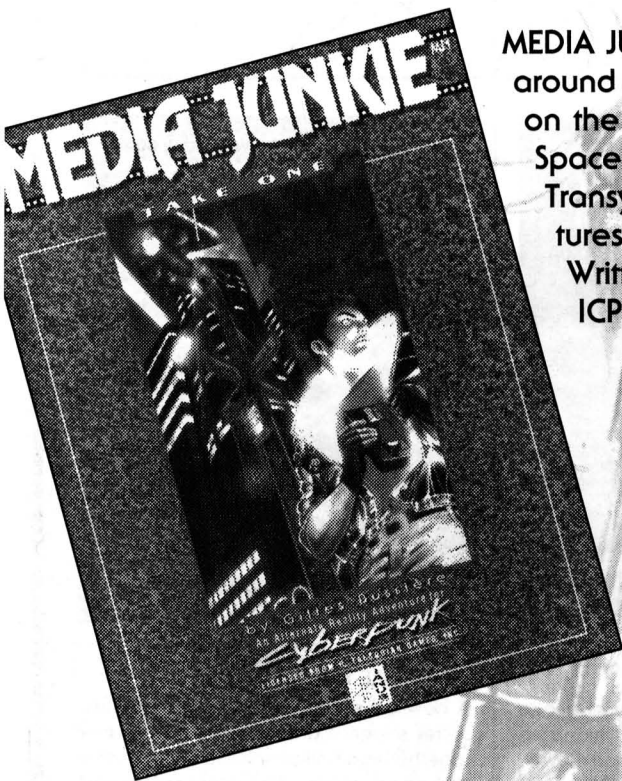
An Alternate Reality Adventure for CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0., licensed from R. Talsorian Games. Rumors abound of a mysterious stranger and of his ties to blood drained corpses found around Night City. When the players are hired to find a missing person, do they really know what they are getting into? To play with NIGHT'S EDGE. Written by Gilles Bussi re. 32 pgs, full color cover.

ICP103 (CyberPunk 2020 Module) \$6.95US/Can

MEDIA JUNKIE

ALTERNATE UNIVERSE MODULES FOR CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0.

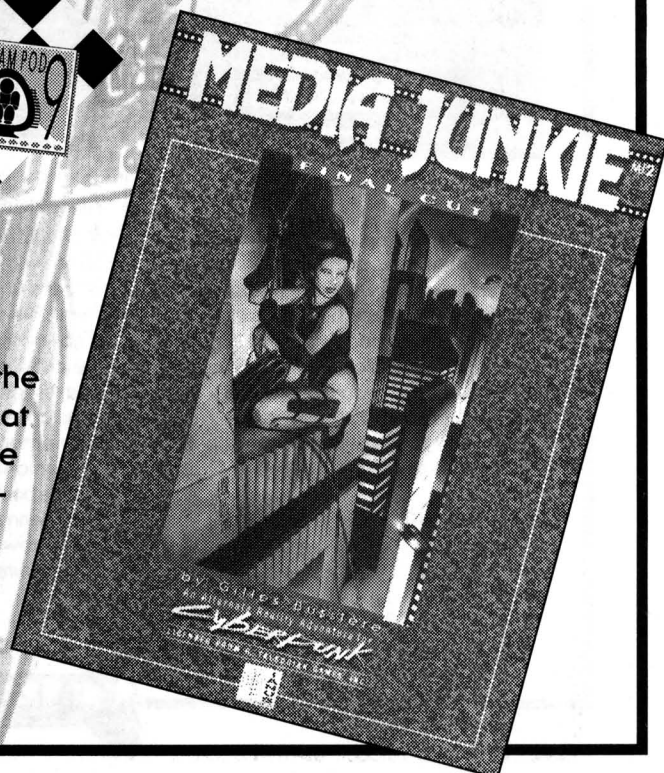
A SIMPLE ENOUGH JOB: FIND 10 MOVIES FOR THIS TOTAL MEDIA JUNKY. WELL PAID TOO. AS AN ADD ON, NO REAL DEADLINE. SOUNDED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. MAYBE IT WAS. EVER SINCE YOU TOOK THIS JOB, YOU'VE HAD THE STRANGEST THINGS HAPPENING TO YOU. LIKE THAT CREEP YOU MET IN HIS CASTLE WHEN YOU "RECOVERED" THE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL "DRACULA". AND YOU STILL HAVE THE FEELING THAT SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING YOU. THE NEXT MOVIE YOU HAVE TO GET IS "ALIEN". AND YOU DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN...



MEDIA JUNKIE is a collection of 10 small adventures centered around different movies. Part I contains four adventures based on the movies "M" (Alice in Gangland), "Plan 9 from Outer Space" (The Case of the Missing Flick), "Dracula" (Castle Transylvania 6), and "The Exorcist" (P.S.Y. Co.). The adventures can be played independently or as a mini campaign. Written by Gilles Bussière. 40 pgs, full color cover. Product # ICP-107. **\$6.95 US/Can**

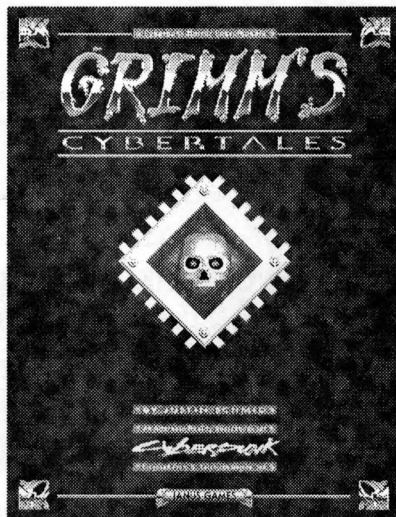


This is Part 2 and it offers 6 adventures based on the movies "Nosferatu" (The Old Man and Tessa), "Cat People" (The Little Red Running Hood), "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (Double Cross), and "Hell Raiser" (Showdown at O.K. Carnival), "Alien" (The Beast Within), and "Night of the Living Dead" (Dream Pod 9). The adventures can be played independently or as a mini campaign. Written by Gilles Bussière. 48 pgs, full color cover. Product # ICP-114. 48 pages. **\$6.95 US/Can**



CYBERPUNK HORROR ENCYCLOPEDIA

ALTERNATE REALITY UNIVERSE SOURCEBOOKS



GRIMM'S CYBERTALES

A sourcebook for use with Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., licensed from R. Talsorian Games. Grimm's Cybertales complements Night's Edge and focuses on humanity's dark side as a strong source of horror role-playing. It sheds light on the dark and enigmatic cults of the Alternate Reality Universe. In Grimm's, nowhere is safe; stalkers, mass murders and terrorists provide a mundane source of horror on the streets, while unknown beings stalk the Net and still others ensure that even one's sleep is not safe anymore. Also includes a unified magic system that is based upon a mixture of belief, chemistry, slight-of-hand and a touch of psychic powers. 128 pgs.

For Mature Gamers.

ICP-110 \$14.95

ALSO AVAILABLE

DARK METROPOLIS

128 pages

ICP #116 \$14.95

SUB-ATTICA

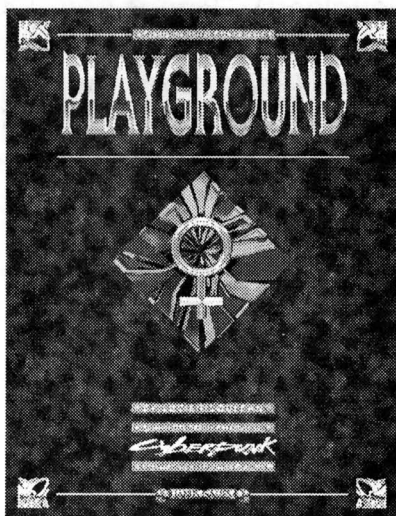
128 pages

ICP #120 \$14.95

HOME FRONT

56 pages

ICP #119 \$9.95

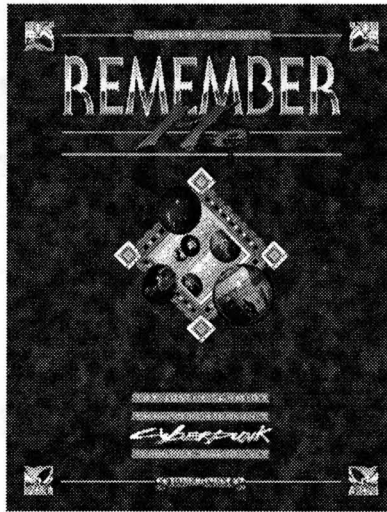


PLAYGROUND

Welcome to the virtual reality amusement parks where you can seek the ultimate hedonistic experience! Or at least, that's the official line. What the corporation won't say is that Playground's creator has been assaulted in the Net and now wants revenge. Add a team of vampire solos chasing her and the players are in the midst of a dangerous hunt. 64 pgs.

For Mature Gamers.

ICP-115 \$9.95

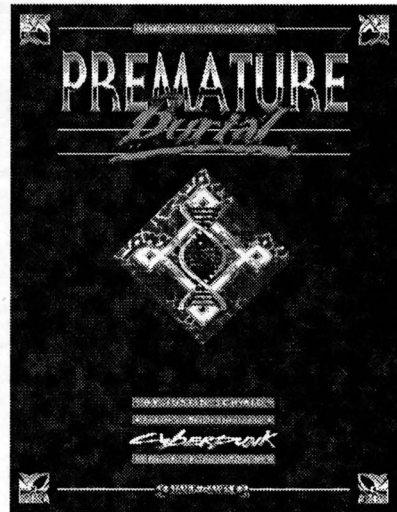


REMEMBER ME?

An Alternate Reality Universe adventure for use with Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. It highlights a series of memory-manipulation experiments being conducted by the CIA (which is not dead as everyone believed) under the guise of corporate psychological warfare research. In addition to the campaign-sized adventure, the book includes full rules for memory and its working, with character conversion templates. Also included is extensive background information on the CIA, its experiments and a complete CIA-controlled town (Johnsville). 88 Pages

For Mature Gamers.

ICP-118 \$9.95



PREMATURE BURIAL

A new adventure dealing with terrorists, secret societies and cloning, all brought together in a brilliant plot to overthrow a company's owner. The attempt fails and the plotters start winding up dead. The players must try to sort out the whole affair. But they had better hurry because they already know too much and both sides want them dead. 80 pgs.

For Mature Gamers.

ICP-117 \$9.95

IANUS GAMES

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RECOMMENDED FOR MATURE READERS

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Alternate Reality Sourcebook

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