

The Memphis by Night Primer

Game Setting:

Memphis is a city in the southwest corner of the U.S. state of Tennessee, and the county seat of Shelby County. The city is located on the 4th Chickasaw Bluff, south of the confluence of the Wolf and Mississippi rivers. Memphis has an estimated population of 670,100. The greater Memphis metropolitan area, including adjacent counties in Mississippi and Arkansas, has a population of 1,280,533. This makes Memphis the second largest metropolitan area in Tennessee, surpassed only by metropolitan Nashville. The area was settled by the Chickasaw Indian tribe, and for 10,000 years they occupied the bluffs along the river. European exploration came later, beginning in the 16th Century with Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and French explorers led by René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle.

Memphis was founded in 1819 by John Overton, James Winchester and Andrew Jackson. The city was named after the ancient capital of Egypt on the Nile River. As the cotton economy of the antebellum South depended on the forced labor of large numbers of African-American slaves, Memphis became a major slave market. In 1857, the Memphis and Charleston Railroad was completed, the only East-West railroad across the southern states prior to the Civil War. Tennessee seceded from the Union in June 1861 and Memphis briefly became a Confederate stronghold. Union forces captured the city in the naval Battle of Memphis on June 6, 1862, and the city remained under Union control for the duration of the war. Memphis became a Union supply base and continued to prosper throughout the war. Meanwhile, Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest harassed Union forces in the area.

During the 1960s, the city was at the center of civil rights issues, notably the location of a sanitation workers' strike. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel, the day after giving his prophetic *I've Been to the Mountaintop* speech at the Mason Temple. Memphis is well known for its cultural contributions to the identity of the American south. Many renowned musicians grew up in and around the Memphis and Mississippi Delta. These included such musical greats as Elvis Presley, Muddy Waters, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Robert Johnson, W. C. Handy, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Isaac Hayes, Booker T. Jones, and Al Green.

Today, Memphis is a bizarre blend of cosmopolitan civility, refined culture, crippling poverty, rampant crime, and mystery. Intrigue is no stranger to any of the social classes in Memphis. Corruption in local government, class and race always being powder keg issues, and a murder rate that exceeds that of Los Angeles, CA (per capita) Memphis is a city where danger could be lurking around any and every corner. And there are darker and more terrifying dangers to Memphis that lie below the radar or the average mortal's gaze. The world of darkness in Memphis is a hotbed of activity and the eternal Jihad is played out nightly on the streets of the Mid-south with blood flowing in the streets at night and regularly hose off into the mighty Mississippi by dawn.

Game background:

Kindred have been a presence in Memphis since long before it was settled by Europeans. The Indian folklore refers to powerful gods that slept within the earth and ran with the wolves at night in search of prey. These powerful spirits were both revered and reviled by the natives as guardians from the wilderness, chastisers of the wicked, and cullers of the weak. It was once the Slave trade became central to the economy of the region that Camarilla Kindred began to settle here. The city's Kindred population fluctuated over time while contending with other supernatural forces, chiefly lupines, but eventually a Camarilla Princedom was established under the cunning rule of Prince Vanessa. Vanessa ruled Memphis with relative stability until 1984 when the city's ivory tower fell to a Sabbat Crusade led by the Puritan Priscus himself, Righteous Endeavor.

An Archbishopric was founded and the city found itself ground under the heel of the reckless and wasteful Sabbat as the city remained contested by both sides. The Camarilla tried in vain for fifteen years to re-establish itself. The tide was turning in the Camarilla's favor as the dreaded Majoria De La Montier cut a swath through the Sabbat with ruthless and brutal determination, but a mysterious Figure known only as Mr. M put things into motion that derailed the efforts of the Camarilla and in 1987, Majoria left Memphis to lay siege to an ever greater prize and the largest jewel in his crown, New York. One of Majoria's lineage however, knew that Memphis would be Camarilla again and he set his eyes upon the bluff city and the glory that would be harvested from freeing such an important city from the wretched claws of the Sabbat. In 1999, Prince Vanessa fell to the fangs of the Sabbat Archbishop and it seemed as if the city's ultimate fall was all but complete. Then, a familiar face returned to Memphis to give the City new hope. Xavier St. Croix had returned.

In 1985 his great-great-grand sire Majoria De La Montier, sent Xavier to Memphis to serve Prince Vanessa. Xavier served for 2 years as the Ventrue whip when he and his peers and a massive contingent of Camarilla elders left on a crusade to take back the Sabbat held New York City. After the liberation of New York, Xavier, and those loyal to him, were banished to Sabbat held, Trenton, NJ, as a clever plot by the inner circle to take Trenton and fortify a staging ground for their next major target, Philadelphia.

After serving as prince of Trenton till 1999, Xavier left New Jersey to return to his beloved south. At the same time, a seventh generation Sabbat Brujah Antitribu killed Vanessa and was laying siege to the Camarilla forces of the city with a small but well organized war pact and quartet of paladins. Xavier, recognized an opportunity and contacted the Giovanni of Tunica and North Mississippi and persuaded them that a strong Camarilla princedom would be better for "family business" and that if their support could be enlisted in eliminating the Sabbat (Whom had already incurred the wrath of the Giovanni) and so long as the Giovanni kept a low profile, they would be pretty much left to their own devices. Just as the Sabbat had managed to turn the tide of the conflict, by eliminating most of the city's former Primogen, Xavier and Julius Giovanni, assisted by the Pontifex of the South, Venrhazha, laid a trap for the Sabbat and in the ensuing ambush managed to wipe out ALL of the war pact, the paladins, and Xavier himself took the heart's blood of the Archbishop as his prize. Victorious, Xavier declared his princedom and began fortifying the Bluff City and rebuilding its splendor.

Even under the wise rule of the majestic prince and wise primogen, threats to the city's stability (mundane, mystical, and mythical) abound. The harpies' tongues slash and burn away status like a wildfire in these tumultuous nights and alliances ebb and flow like the muddy waters of the great Mississippi. Only three things are certain about the kindred climate of Memphis these days, tensions are high, peril skulks in every shadow, and someone or something is in the shadows pulling the strings and cackling while the puppets dance!

Some things to consider when crafting your character:

- Players are not permitted to create Setite Characters or Gargoyles.
- Standard character creation rules but with an additional 60 freebie points (75 total)
- All character regardless of age know they are kindred and how to use their blood abilities and the disciplines that THEY THEMSELVES possess. To know more, Kindred lore must be purchased at character creation. Characters may spend blood to make their skin warm and flush, make their heart beat for a scene; however, it is assumed that the characters that do not purchase **masquerade** as a secondary ability at character creation forget to do these things as a default. A character's age and humanity may also make even these masquerade reinforcing actions difficult to effectively pull off.
- All characters begin the game with \$1000.00 in their pocket in addition to or in spite of any resources they purchase at character creation. Additionally each character may start with 1 firearm, 1 bladed weapon, one vehicle, and one "container" holding 5 points of vitae. All other items are at the storyteller's discretion and must be ON THE CHARACTER SHEET! No assumptions will be made especially in regards to "gear carried."
- All of the characters are relatively new to Memphis and know only the location and number for the main Elysium,
- Purchasing "city secrets" as a knowledge will assist you in specific rumors and information about the area and each dot taken in city secrets OR Camarilla Lore will allow your character to know an additional kindred or supernatural inhabitant of the city.

Game mechanics house rules:

- **Round = 5 seconds; scene = 10 minutes or 60 rounds** (no it doesn't exactly add up, but that's the way it is gonna be, bitch!)
- **Increasing stats:** Expending one blood point will increase one physical attribute by one dot for one scene or 10 minutes of "in game" time. Stats may be increased beyond generational limits by up to two points for one scene at the cost of one blood point per point increased.
- **Feeding:** characters may roll their unmodified stamina dif. 6 to determine how much blood they can ingest per round
- **Healing:** Characters may spend one blood point to heal one level of bashing/lethal damage.. Characters must spend 5 blood points and rest for 24 hours to heal each aggravated wound level. Optionally, characters may spend 5 blood points and 1 willpower point per aggravated wound level to heal an aggravated wound in combat (or during non restful activity).
- **Initiative:** The character with the highest celerity score *acts* first in the round. Initiative is rolled for ties and all others without celerity. (wits + dex diff 6). The character with the lowest initiative score announces their action first and other characters announce their actions in order progressing to the character with the highest celerity. Once a character announces their actions, they may not be changed. This is to allow those with the highest initiatives/celerity the chance to chose their actions based on the actions of slower characters.
- **Resisting:** Resisting the use of dominate and presence (unless noted otherwise in the rules) is done by the expenditure of one point of willpower and successfully rolling willpower at the same difficulty of the acting character's difficulty and scoring at least one success more than the acting character.
- **Combat:** It is assumed unless stated by the character that one will attempt to dodge or otherwise protect oneself when being attacked. For this reason attackers will always roll to hit a target by using their dex + appropriate skill vs. a difficulty of the target's dex + dodge(when the target is aware of the attack). Characters may attempt to dodge as a main action in which case the dodging character will roll their dex + dodge (diff 7) as a contested roll against the attacker's roll (diff target's dex+ dodge). This dodge can only be used to dodge a single attack made against the target.
- **Difficulties greater than 10 and excessive successes.** For a difficulty of 10 that a character must score at least 3 successes on then two 10's must be rolled. This roll also is a success for any roll of difficulty 11. Thusly for each two degree of difficulty in excess of 10, then an additional 10 must be rolled in the die pool. E.g. To hit a character with a dex + dodge of 16, then an attacker must roll four 10's on their attack. For successful rolls over 6 successes the degree of accomplishment MAY be increased. When rolling to hit a target with a melee or ranged attack, every 3 successes over 6 adds an additional die to the attacker's damage roll. One's do not count against a character's damage roll i.e. you can't "botch" damage.
- **Rituals, and other misc.** Rituals take ten minutes per level of the ritual to complete unless otherwise noted in the description. Pavis of the foul presence, the blasé merit, is only effective on levels of presence up to level five. These and other such means of resistance have diminishing returns and benefits as the power that they are meant to foil increases.

THESE RULES ARE OFTEN ABRIDGED OR SHORTCUTTED IN GAME PLAY TO COINCIDE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THEIR INTENT AND PROVIDE A SMOOTH FLOW OF DRAMATIC STORYTELLING.