



Vampire: The Masquerade
Moose's Quickstart Guide

STORYTELLING

In a lot of ways, storytelling resembles games such as *How to Host a Murder*. Players take the role of a character — in this case, a vampire — and engage in a form of improvisational theatre, saying what the vampire would say and describing what the vampire would do. In a storytelling game, players take their characters through adventures, called (appropriately enough) stories. Stories are told through a combination of the wishes of the players and the directives of the Storyteller (see below).

PLAYERS AND STORYTELLERS

Most people who play **Vampire** are players. They create vampire characters — imaginary protagonists similar to those found in novels, films and comics. In each group, however, one person must take the role of the Storyteller. The Storyteller acts as a combination director, moderator, narrator and referee. The Storyteller creates the drama through which the players direct their characters. The Storyteller also creates and takes the roles of supporting cast — both allies with whom the characters interact, and antagonists against whom the characters fight. The Storyteller invents the salient details of the story setting — the bars, nightclubs, businesses and other institutions the characters frequent. The players decide how their characters react to the situations in the game, but it is the Storyteller (with the help of the rules) who decides if the characters actually succeed in their endeavors and, if so, how well. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the final authority on the events that take place in the game.

Example:

Rob, Brian, Cynthia and Alison have gathered to play **Vampire**. Rob, Brian and Cynthia are players: Rob is playing Baron d’Havilland, a Ventrue aristocrat; Brian is playing Palpa, a Nosferatu sewer-dweller; and Cynthia is playing Maxine, a Brujah street punk. Alison is the Storyteller, and has decreed that the characters have been brought before the vampire prince of the city to face judgment. The players may now decide what to do: Rob, speaking as Baron d’Havilland, may try to smooth-talk his way out of the prince’s ire; Cynthia, as Maxine, may angrily denounce the prince as a “fascist”; and Brian, as Palpa, may simply decide to use magical invisibility to flee the situation. Ultimately, though, it is Alison, the Storyteller, who determines the prince’s reaction to the characters’ words or acts; it is Alison, speaking as the prince, who roleplays the prince’s reaction; and it is Alison who determines whether the characters’ actions, if any, succeed or fail.

WHAT IS A VAMPIRE?

Storytelling and roleplaying games may feature many kinds of protagonists. In TSR’s *Dungeons & Dragons*, players assume the roles of heroes in a fantasy world. In Hero Games’ *Champions*, players take on the roles of superheroes. In **Vampire**, appropriately enough, players assume the personas of vampires — the immortal bloodsuckers of the horror genre — and guide these characters through a world virtually identical to our own. The vampires who walk the Earth in modern nights are both similar to and different from what we might expect. It is perhaps best to begin our discussion of the undead as if they were a separate species of being — sentient, with superficial similarities to the humans they once were, but displaying a myriad of physiological and psychological differences. In many ways, vampires resemble the familiar monsters of myth and cinema. (There is enough truth in the old tales that perhaps they were created by deluded or confused mortals.) However — as many an intrepid vampire hunter has learned to his sorrow — not all of the old wives’ tales about vampires are true.

• **Vampires are living dead, and must sustain themselves with the blood of the living.**

True. A vampire is clinically dead — its heart does not beat, it does not breathe, its skin is cold, it does not age — and yet it thinks, and walks, and plans, and speaks...and hunts and kills. For, to sustain its artificial immortality, the vampire must periodically consume blood, preferably human blood. Some penitent vampires eke out an existence from animal blood, and some ancient vampires must hunt and kill others of their kind to nourish themselves, but most vampires indeed sustain themselves from the blood of their former species.

- **Anyone who dies from a vampire's bite rises to become a vampire.**

False. If this were true, the world would be overrun by vampires. Vampires feed on human blood, true, and sometimes kill their prey — but most humans who die from a vampire's attack simply perish. To return as undead, the victim must be drained of blood and subsequently be fed a bit of the attacking vampire's blood. This process, called the Embrace, causes the mystical transformation from human to undead.

- **Vampires are monsters —demonic spirits embodied in corpses.**

False...and true. Vampires are not demons *per se*, but a combination of tragic factors draws them inexorably toward wicked deeds. In the beginning, the newly created vampire thinks and acts much as she did while living. She does not immediately turn into an evil, sadistic monster. However, the vampire soon discovers her overpowering hunger for blood, and realizes that her existence depends on feeding on her species. In many ways, the vampire's mindset changes — she adopts a set of attitudes less suited to a communal omnivore and more befitting a solitary predator. At first reluctant to feed, the vampire is finally forced to do so by circumstance or need — and feeding becomes easier and easier as the years pass. Realizing that she herself is untrustworthy, she ceases to trust others. Realizing that she is different, she walls herself away from the mortal world. Realizing that her existence depends on secrecy and control, she becomes a manipulative user of the first order. And things only degenerate as the years turn to decades and then centuries, and the vampire kills over and over, and sees the people she loved age and die. Human life, so short and cheap in comparison to hers, becomes of less and less value, until the mortal "herd" around her means no more to her than a swarm of annoying insects. Vampire elders are among the most jaded, unfeeling, paranoid — in short, monstrous — beings the world has ever known. Maybe they are not demons exactly — but at that point, who can tell the difference?

- **Vampires are burned by sunlight.**

True. Vampires must avoid the sun or die, though a few can bear sunlight's touch for a very short period of time. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it extremely difficult to remain awake during the day, even within sheltered areas.

- **Vampires are repulsed by garlic and running water.**

False. These are myths and nothing more.

- **Vampires are repulsed by crosses and other holy symbols.**

This is generally false. However, if the wielder of the symbol has great faith in the power it represents, a vampire may suffer ill effects from the brandishing of the symbol.

- **Vampires die from a stake through the heart.**

False. However, a wooden stake — or arrow, crossbow bolt, etc. — through the heart will paralyze the monster until it is removed.

- **Vampires have the strength of 10 humans; they can command wolves and bats; they can hypnotize the living and heal even the most grievous wounds.**

True and false. The power of a vampire increases with age. Young, newly created vampires are often little more powerful than humans. But as a vampire grows in age and understanding, she learns to use her blood to evoke secret magical powers, which vampires call Disciplines. Powerful elders are often the rivals of a fictional Lestat or Dracula — and the true ancients, the Methuselahs and Antediluvians who have stalked the nights for thousands of years, often possess literally godlike powers.

THE HUNT

When all is said and done, the most fundamental difference between humans and vampires lies in their methods of sustenance. Vampires may not subsist on mortal food; instead, they must sustain their eternal lives through the consumption of blood — fresh human blood. Vampires acquire their sustenance in many fashions. Some cultivate "herds" of willing mortals, who cherish the ecstasy of the vampire's kiss. Some creep into houses by night, feeding from sleeping humans. Some stalk the mortals' playgrounds — the nightclubs, bars and theatres — enticing mortals into illicit liaisons and disguising their predation as acts of passion. And yet others take their nourishment in the most ancient fashion — stalking, attacking and incapacitating (or even killing) mortals who wander too far down lonely nocturnal alleys and empty lots.

THE NOCTURNAL WORLD OF THE VAMPIRE

Vampires also value power, for its own sake and the security it brings — and vampires find it ridiculously easy to acquire mundane goods, riches and influence. A mesmerizing glance and a few words provide a cunning vampire with access to all the wealth, power and servants he could desire. Some powerful vampires are capable of implanting posthypnotic suggestions or commands in mortals' minds, then causing the mortals to forget the vampire's presence. In this way, vampires can easily acquire legions of unwitting slaves. More than a few "public servants" and corporate barons secretly answer to vampire masters. Though there are exceptions, vampires tend to remain close to the cities. The city provides countless opportunities for predation, liaisons and politicking — and the wilderness often proves dangerous for vampires. The wilds are the home of the Lupines, the werewolves, who are vampires' ancestral enemies and desire nothing more than to destroy vampires outright.

THE EMBRACE

Vampires are created through a process called the Embrace. The Embrace is similar to normal vampiric feeding — the vampire drains her chosen prey of blood. However, upon complete exsanguination, the vampire returns a bit of her own immortal blood to the drained mortal. Only a tiny bit — a drop or two — is necessary to turn the mortal into an undead. This process can even be performed on a dead human, provided the body is still warm. Once the blood is returned, the mortal "awakens" and begins drinking of his own accord. But, though animate, the mortal is still dead; his heart does not beat, nor does he breathe. Over the next week or two, the mortal's body undergoes a series of subtle transformations; he learns to use the Blood in his body, and he is taught the special powers of his clan. He is now a vampire. Some vampire clans Embrace more casually than others, but the Embrace is almost never given lightly. After all, any new vampire is a potential competitor for food and power. A potential child is often stalked for weeks or even years by a watchful sire, who greedily evaluates whether the mortal would indeed make a good addition to the clan and the line.

THE CAMARILLA

The Camarilla is a great sect of vampires that formed in the late medieval period. A vampire "United Nations" of sorts, it was formed to protect vampires from the purges of the Inquisition, to uphold the Traditions of Caine, and to enforce the great Masquerade. Many Camarilla vampires, remembering the nights of fire when vampires were uprooted and destroyed, uphold the Masquerade fanatically. Camarilla vampires reject the idea of vampires as monstrous predators, instead preferring to live clandestinely among mortals and feed cautiously. The Camarilla is the most populous sect, and (in theory) the most powerful. It comprises seven clans of vampires, each with its own culture and agenda, and this renders it prone to discord. Ruled as it is by a fractious sort of parliamentarianism, the Camarilla is slow to act and often indecisive in the face of threats; when it brings its combined might to bear, however, the Camarilla is virtually unstoppable. Beginning characters are assumed to be Camarilla vampires, and to belong to one of the seven clans.

THE SIX TRADITIONS

Camarilla vampires swear to uphold the legendary Six Traditions of Caine, the laws which Caine supposedly passed to his progeny. Like any other laws, the Traditions are commonly ignored, bent or violated outright.

THE FIRST TRADITION: THE MASQUERADE

*Thou shall not reveal thy nature to those not of the Blood.
Doing so shall renounce thy claims of Blood.*

THE SECOND TRADITION: THE DOMAIN

Thy domain is thine own concern. All others owe thee respect while in it. None may challenge thy word while in thy domain.

THE THIRD TRADITION: THE PROGENY

Thou shall sire another only with the permission of thine elder. If thou createst another without thine elder's leave, both thee and thy progeny shall be slain.

THE FOURTH TRADITION: THE ACCOUNTING

Those thou create are thine own childer. Until thy progeny shall be released, thou shall command them in all things. Their sins are thine to endure.

THE FIFTH TRADITION: HOSPITALITY

Honor one another's domain. When thou comest to a foreign city, thou shall present thyself to the one who ruleth there. Without the word of acceptance, thou art nothing.

THE SIXTH TRADITION: DESTRUCTION

Thou art forbidden to destroy another of thy kind. The right of destruction belongeth only to thine elder. Only the eldest among thee shall call the blood hunt.

THE JYHAD

Since the nights of antiquity, the Children of Caine have struggled for supremacy. Leaders, cultures, nations and armies have all been pawns in the secret war, and vampiric conspiracies have influenced much (though by no means all) of human history. Few things are as they seem in the vampires' nocturnal world; a political coup, economic crash or social trend may be merely the surface manifestation veiling a centuries old struggle. Vampire elders command from the shadows, manipulating mortals and other vampires alike — and the elders are often manipulated in turn. Indeed, most combatants may not even realize for whom they fight, or why.

STATUS

Vampires are very hierarchical creatures. The vampires of the Camarilla, in particular, have created an elaborate structure to ensure order among the undead. Vampiric territory (generally consisting of cities and outlying suburbs) is divided into fiefdoms. Each fiefdom is ruled by a prince, a mighty vampire elder. This figure may grant lesser vampires hunting territories within his (or her; "prince" is used unisexually) fiefdom; these territories are referred to as domains.

THE PRINCE

The ruling vampire of a Camarilla-held territory is called the prince. This powerful vampire is usually of Clan Ventrue or Toreador; however, Brujah, Nosferatu or even Malkavian princes are not unknown. The prince has absolute power to establish, grant or strip domains, and to declare certain areas off limits for hunting. The prince may declare certain areas as Elysium (neutral ground where violence is prohibited), and may call blood hunts on rebels and malcontents who violate the Six Traditions. Princes tend to control city-sized regions; thus, there is a Prince of Paris, a Prince of Chicago, a Prince of Atlanta, etc. Because a city's prince has often lived in the area for centuries, she has had ample time to build a power structure, and usually knows far more about the workings of "her" city than rebellious anarchs give her credit for.

THE PRIMOGEN

The prince is often served by a council of advisors chosen from powerful elders of the various clans. These elders are collectively called primogen. Though, in theory, a prince's rule is absolute, a prince who fails to heed her primogen often finds herself deposed or killed in short order. The primogen are formidable forces in their own right, and ceaselessly intrigue against each other and the prince.

THE ELDERS

Elders are vampires who have existed for 300 or more years. They have mastered many magical powers during this time; most elders are deadly and formidable creatures. Elders tend to be scheming, ruthless and paranoid beings; they will do anything to hold onto their power structures, oppress or manipulate the younger "upstart" vampires, and destroy their rivals.

THE ANCILLAE

Below the elders are the ancillae. Ancillae are most often vampires who have lived from 100 to 300 years of unlife, though certain ambitious younglings may achieve the rank prematurely. As their name suggests, ancillae often serve as aides and agents for elders or the court; they usually play their own power-games as well, though these are of lesser consequence than the manipulations of the elders.

THE NEONATES

Lowest in rank are the neonates, those vampires created less than a century ago. Though occasionally cherished, neonates are often deployed as pawns by scheming elders. This callous treatment, combined with the value recent generations place on individuality, often causes neonates to resent their elders. After all, when one came of age during the Summer of Love, it is hard to empathize with a reactionary old tyrant who grew up amid feudal oaths and Divine Rights.

Most beginning characters are presumed to be neonates.

THE METHUSELAHS

Ask a mortal to name the most dangerous predator on Earth, and he might mention a Bengal tiger, a Nile crocodile or a great white shark. Ask the same question of a vampire, and often one will hear the word “Methuselah” leaving those cold lips. Simply put, Methuselaha are ancient vampires — beings that have survived for over a millennium. Having been undead for so long, Methuselaha often undergo profound physiological and psychological changes. From a vampire’s point of view, the most horrible of these is a predilection for vampire blood — just as vampires stalk mortals, so they are occasionally stalked in turn. Most vampires prefer to ignore the existence of the Methuselaha, considering them near extinct aberrations akin to dinosaurs. It is ironic, then, how many of the plots of the Jihad can ultimately be traced to these ancient, shadowy progenitors.

THE CLANS

According to the ancient myths, Caine’s grandchilder, the Antediluvians, numbered 13. Each of these Antediluvians, the stories continue, founded a great clan of vampiric descendants, all of whom bore the gifts — and the stigmata — of their progenitors. Eons and lies have shrouded the truth of this story, but there can be no denying that 13 clans of Kindred walk the Earth. These clans bestow distinguishing benefices and taints upon vampires Embraced into them; thus the Nosferatu are infamous for their hideousness, for example, while the Brujah are notorious for their violent tempers. Clans act as combination families, social cliques and schools. For example, the violent Brujah disciplines its childer to become inhumanly strong, fast and fearsome, while the sorcerous Tremere instructs its disciples in the ways of ESP, mind control and magic. Some clans are insular and tightly knit, with definite social structures and worldwide agendas; others are loose and anarchic, united by little save their common blood.

When creating a vampire, the player must choose one of these seven clans. (There are six other clans — four neutral and two Sabbat clans — but this kit does not concern itself with them.) Each clan provides an Aptitude (a certain mundane feat at which clan members excel), an Advantage (an area of supernatural specialty or societal influence), and a Weakness (a mystic curse laid upon the clan in ancient, or not so ancient, times). Each clan also provides certain Disciplines — mystic powers which the clan teaches to its members.

The clans are:

- **Brujah:** A clan of violent, antiauthoritarian vampires espousing freedom from societal restrictions.
- **Gangrel:** A clan of nomadic shape shifters who prefer the wilderness to the confines of the cities.
- **Malkavian:** A bizarre clan of lunatics whose members are infamous for their insanity — and insight.
- **Nosferatu:** A loathsome clan of deformed monsters who skulk in subterranean tunnels and sewers.
- **Toreador:** A clan of elegant, passionate vampires who patronize artists, musicians, actors and the like.
- **Tremere:** A secretive, treacherous clan of vampire warlocks who practice blood magic.
- **Ventrue:** A clan of aristocrats and nobles who consider it their duty to lead the Camarilla.

BRUJAH

The Brujah are inheritors of a majestic and ancient legacy, which is unfortunate. Tonight's Brujah seem less like a clan and more like a mob. Punks, terrorists, revolutionaries, criminals, gangbangers and the like make up the Brujah; the clan seems to be united in nothing save its contempt for the institutions of vampire and mortal society. Well, this is not entirely true; Clan Brujah are among the most savage vampires, and the most trivial slight or annoyance may trigger a howling Brujah frenzy. The Brujah's disunity keeps the clan tenuously in the Camarilla, but Brujah thugs routinely defect to the anarchs, the better to strike against their hated elders. Even the "tamer" Brujah annoy the elders and princes routinely through acts of defiance and rebellion. Despite their recalcitrance, however, Brujah are valued as warriors; they are perhaps the most dangerous vampires in a straightforward battle. To anger a Brujah is nigh suicidal — and Brujah are notorious for their tempers.

GANGREL

Of all vampires, the Gangrel are perhaps closest to their inner nature. These nomadic loners spurn the constraints of society, preferring the comfort of the wilderness. How they avoid the wrath of the werewolves is unknown; perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the Gangrel are themselves shapeshifters. When a mortal speaks of a vampire changing into a wolf or a bat, she is probably speaking of a Gangrel. Like the Brujah, Gangrel are fierce warriors; unlike the Brujah, Gangrel ferocity does not stem from anarchic rage, but from animalistic instinct. Gangrel have a keen understanding of the Beast in their souls, and prefer to spend their nights in communion with the animals whom they so emulate.

MALKAVIAN

At first glance, the members of Clan Malkavian do not appear to be a clan at all; they are chosen from all races, creeds and social strata. But Malkavians, regardless of mortal standing, bear one disturbing commonality: They are all quite mad. Whether from the clan's choice of victims, the circumstances of the Embrace, or some property in Malkavian blood itself, all Malkavians go insane shortly after the transformation (if they were not insane to begin with). Accordingly, many Malkavians find themselves pariahs, ostracized by a vampiric society fearful of their random urges and capricious whims. Wiser Kindred, however, prefer to keep the madmen close at hand: Behind the Malkavians' lunatic cackling and feverish rantings lie smatterings of insight, even wisdom.

NOSFERATU

Caine's children are called "The Damned," and no vampires embody this more than do the wretches of Clan Nosferatu. While other vampires still look human and may travel in mortal society, Nosferatu are twisted and deformed by the curse of vampirism. To put it bluntly, the Embrace transforms them into hideous monsters. Unable to walk among humans, Nosferatu must dwell in subterranean sewers and catacombs. Other vampires revile Nosferatu, considering them disgusting and interacting with them only when they must. Because of this stigma, however, Nosferatu are survivors *par excellence*. Few creatures, mortal or vampire, know the city's back alleys and dark corners like the Nosferatu do. Additionally, Nosferatu have refined the crafts of sneaking and eavesdropping to fine arts; if anyone or anything has the latest dirt on mortal or vampiric society, it is the Nosferatu. Finally, millennia of shared deformity and abuse have fostered strong bonds among the monsters. Nosferatu forego the squabbling and feuds ubiquitous to the other clans, preferring to work in unison. You mess with one, you mess with 'em all — and that can get messy indeed....

TOREADOR

The Toreador are called many things — "degenerates," "artistes," "poseurs," and "hedonists" being but a few. But any such mass categorization does the clan a disservice. Depending on the individual and her mood, Toreador are alternately elegant and flamboyant, brilliant and ludicrous, visionary and dissipated. Perhaps the only truism that can be applied to the clan is its members' aesthetic zeal. Whatever a Toreador does, she does with passion. Whatever a Toreador is, she is with passion. To the Toreador, eternal life is to be savored. Many Toreador were artists, musicians or poets in life; many more have spent frustrating centuries producing laughable attempts at art, music or poetry. Toreador share the Ventrue's love of high society, though not for them the tedium of actually running things — that's what functionaries are for, darling. Toreador know that their place is to captivate and inspire — through their witty speech, graceful deeds, and simple, scintillating existence.

TREMERE

Even among vampires, the insular Clan Tremere bears a reputation for treachery. This reputation is well earned; the Tremere were formerly a cabal of human wizards who, hungering for immortal life, wrested the secrets of vampirism from unwilling Kindred. Such vile deeds earned the clan a sinister reputation; even today, certain vampire clans would love nothing better than to destroy the entire Tremere line. Nonetheless, Clan Tremere holds a place in the Camarilla, for its members were instrumental in suppressing the Inquisition and supporting the Masquerade. Then, too, the Tremere have proved themselves dangerous enemies — and powerful allies. Tremere still practice a version of the arcane arts they studied in life, and so these “warlocks” use their sorcerous powers in service to the Camarilla...almost as much as they use the Camarilla in service to themselves.

VENTRUE

Elegant, aristocratic and regal, the Ventruie are the lords of the Camarilla. It was Clan Ventruie that provided the cornerstone of the Camarilla, and it is Clan Ventruie that directs and coaxes the Camarilla in its darkest hours. Even in the modern age, the majority of princes descend from Clan Ventruie. The Ventruie would, of course, have things no other way. In the tradition of *noblesse oblige*, the Ventruie must lead the other clans for their own good. In ancient nights, Ventruie were chosen from nobles, merchant princes or other wielders of power. In modern times the clan recruits from wealthy “old-money” families, ruthless corporate climbers, and politicians. Although Ventruie move in the same social circles as the Toreador, they do not fritter away their existences in frivolity and idle chatter. The Ventruie proudly wear the privileges of leadership, and stoically bear its burdens. Thus has it always been; thus shall it always be.

Creating a Character:

1. **Choose a "CONCEPT"** - What "IS" your character; a stripper, a college professor, a stay at home mother of 3? Take a look at the sample concepts image for some ideas and choose one

SAMPLE CONCEPTS

- **Criminal** — jailbird, Mafioso, drug dealer, pimp, carjacker, thug, thief, fence
- **Drifter** — bum, smuggler, prostitute, junkie, pilgrim, biker, gambler
- **Entertainer** — musician, film star, artist, club kid, model
- **Intellectual** — writer, student, scientist, philosopher, social critic
- **Investigator** — detective, beat cop, government agent, private eye, witch-hunter
- **Kid** — child, runaway, outcast, urchin, gangbanger
- **Nightlifer** — clubgoer, skinhead, punk, barfly, raver, substance abuser
- **Outsider** — urban primitive, refugee, minority, conspiracy theorist
- **Politician** — judge, public official, councilor, aide, speechwriter
- **Professional** — engineer, doctor, computer programmer, lawyer, industrialist
- **Reporter** — journalist, news reporter, paparazzo, talk-show host, 'zine editor
- **Socialite** — dilettante, host, playboy, sycophant, prominent spouse
- **Soldier** — bodyguard, enforcer, mercenary, soldier of fortune, Green Beret
- **Worker** — trucker, farmer, wage earner, manservant, construction laborer

2. **Choose a NATURE and Demeanor** - your nature is an overarching personality trait that is really what you are at heart, while your demeanor is one that you show to the rest of the world. They can be very similar, the same, or vastly different. Take a look at the Archetypes image and select one to be your NATURE and one to be your Demeanor.

ARCHETYPES (NATURE AND Demeanor)

- **Architect** — You build a better future.
- **Autocrat** — You need control.
- **Bon Vivant** — Unlife is for pleasure.
- **Bravo** — Strength is all that matters.
- **Caregiver** — Everyone needs nurturing.
- **Celebrant** — You exist for your passion.
- **Child** — Won't somebody be there for you?
- **Competitor** — You must be the best.
- **Conformist** — You follow and assist.
- **Conniver** — Others exist for your benefit.
- **Curmudgeon** — Nothing is worthwhile.
- **Deviant** — You exist for no one's pleasure but your own.
- **Director** — You oversee what must be done.
- **Fanatic** — The cause is all that matters.
- **Gallant** — You're not the showstopper, you're the show!
- **Judge** — The truth is out there.
- **Loner** — You make your own way.
- **Martyr** — You suffer for the greater good.
- **Masochist** — You test your limits every night.
- **Monster** — You're Damned, so act like it!
- **Pedagogue** — You save others through knowledge.
- **Penitent** — Unlife is a curse to atone for.
- **Perfectionist** — Nothing is good enough.
- **Rebel** — You follow no one's rules.
- **Rogue** — Those who can, win. Those who can't, lose. You can.
- **Survivor** — Nothing can keep you down.
- **Thrill-Seeker** — The rush is all that matters.
- **Traditionalist** — As it has always been, so it shall be.
- **Trickster** — Laughter dims the pain.
- **Visionary** — There is something beyond all this.

3. **Decide which of these is more important to your character** and rank them as Primary (most important) Secondary (of moderate importance) and Tertiary (of the least importance)

- Physical Attributes (strength, dexterity, stamina)
- Social Attributes (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance)
- Mental Attributes (Perception, Intelligence, Wits)

Your concept will help you decide. For example, if you are playing a nosey investigative reporter as a concept, then you would probably want to place the emphasis in mental attributes rather than physical. It would likely make more sense for you to be perceptive, quick witted, and smart than be able to bench press 200 pounds.

4. **Prioritize Abilities (Talents, Skills and Knowledges)** the same as attributes and assign 13, 9, and 5 to those.

5. **Spend 7 points in Virtues** (Conscience, Self-Control, Courage) Your starting humanity is your conscience + self control. Your starting willpower is your starting courage.

6. **Spend 5 points in Backgrounds** (Allies, contacts, Fame, Retainers, Herd, Status, Resources, Generation)

7. **Spend 3 points in disciplines**

8. **Spend Freebie points.** Typically start with 15. Each attribute costs 5, each ability costs 3, each discipline costs 7, Each Virtue costs 4, each background, humanity, and willpower cost one. Merits may be bought with no cost in flaws with freebies (up to 7) flaws may add additional freebies (up to 7) **Any Attribute or Abilities that you have 4 or more dots in, you may pick a "specialization" that will allow you certain advantages in some situations.**

9. **Buy merits and Flaws.**

10. **Add gear, possessions,** vehicles, and expanded backgrounds and descriptive data.

And finally... answer as many of the questions posed in the questions image as you can. Don't be scared to let your imagination run wild. This is your character; create it in the image that you would like to portray.

• **HOW OLD ARE YOU?**

When were you born? How old were you when you were Embraced? How long have you existed as a vampire? How old do you look? Are you more mature than you seem? Less?

• **WHAT WAS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD?**

How did you spend your early years? How were your basic motivations and attitudes forged? Where did you go to school? Who were your immediate family? What is your clearest childhood memory? Did you go to high school? Did you have a hometown, or was your family constantly on the move? Did you go to college? Did you run away from home? Did you play sports? Did any of your childhood friendships last to adulthood?

• **WHAT KIND OF PERSON WERE YOU?**

Were you a decent person, or were you an asshole? Were you popular? Did you have a family? How did you earn a living? Did you have any real friends? What kept you going from day to day? Will anyone miss you?

• **WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST BRUSH WITH THE SUPERNATURAL?**

When did you realize you were being stalked? Did you believe in the occult before your Embrace? When did you first meet a vampire? Were you afraid? Disbelieving? Angry? What frightened you most?

• **HOW DID THE EMBRACE CHANGE YOU?**

How did your sire catch you? Was the Embrace painful? Did you get a kinky pleasure out of it? Did the Hunger tear at you? Did it frighten you? Did it feel right? Are you grateful to your sire? Do you want to kill him for what he did to you?

• **WHO WAS YOUR SIRE, AND HOW DID HE TREAT YOU?**

What do you know of your sire? Was he abusive, arrogant, cryptic or open? Why do you think he chose you? Did you even know your sire at all? How long did you stay with your sire? Did he teach you anything at all? How long was your "apprenticeship"? Where did you stay? Where did you go? Did you meet any other vampires during that time? Do you judge other vampires in general by your opinion of your sire? When did he teach you the Traditions?

• **WERE YOU PRESENTED TO THE PRINCE?**

Did the prince welcome you? Was she reluctant to accept you? Did she need to be bribed or threatened? Did your sire have permission to create you? Are you on the run from the prince? What do you think her opinion of you is?

• **HOW DID YOU MEET THE OTHERS IN YOUR COTERIE?**

Were you brought together by chance or design? Are you all of one sect? Are you united in purpose and attitude? How long have you been together in the city? Did you know any of the others before the Embrace? Are your sires in cooperation, or are they rivals? What holds your coterie together when things get their worst?

• **WHERE IS YOUR HAVEN?**

Where do you hide during the day? Do you have a permanent home at all? Do you stay in the place you inhabited in your mortal life? Do you hide in an abandoned building? The sewers? Do you have anyone to protect you during the day?

• **DO YOU RETAIN ANY CONNECTIONS TO YOUR MORTAL LIFE?**

Are you presumed dead? Do you still watch over relatives from afar? Do you pretend to be still alive? Did you abandon your mortal existence entirely?

• **WHAT ARE YOUR HABITUAL FEEDING GROUNDS?**

Whom do you feed upon, and where? Do you have a territory that you consider exclusively yours? Is your favorite hunting ground used by others? Do you compete with others? What is your preferred prey? Do you ever kill when you feed? Do you have a specific herd? Do you seduce your prey? Kidnap them? Assault them on the street? Do they come to you?

• **WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?**

Do you seek revenge on any enemies? Do you long to return to your mortal life? Do you have ambitions in Kindred society? If you could achieve anything in the world, what would it be?

A FINAL NOTE

A character without motivation might as well not have survived the Embrace. Knowing what drives your character is central to understanding who she is. A vampire's values are often very different from those of a normal human; the death and rebirth of the Embrace can work a great change on an individual's personality. Think about where your character has been and where you'd like to see her go (or where she would like to go). Consider her Nature and Demeanor — do they suggest an ultimate goal? Once you have an idea of what it is your character wants to achieve, you're one step closer to making her a full-fledged personality of her own.

Game mechanics house rules: (this is not an exhaustive list. The storyteller will adjudicate, modify, and create new rules as needed.)

- **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 to its generational maximum 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 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. Healing wounds out of combat is automatic; however, healing wounds during combat or other highly active situations will require a successful stamina roll difficulty 6. Characters must spend 5 blood points and rest for 24 hours to heal each aggravated wound level. Characters must spend 5 blood points and a willpower in order to attempt to heal an aggravated wound in combat (or during non restful activity) and then must roll their stamina difficulty 5 and score at least 3 successes to be successful.
- **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.