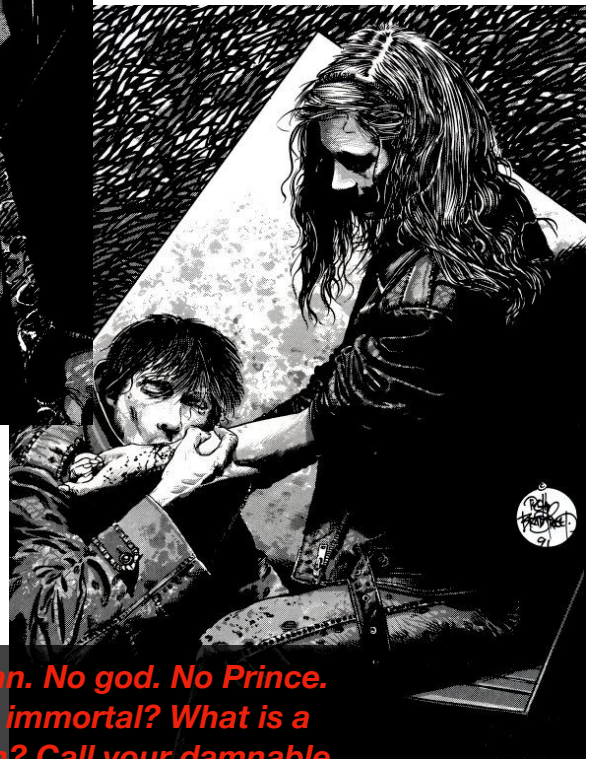


Detroit by Night



*No one holds command over me. No man. No god. No Prince.
What is a claim of age for ones who are immortal? What is a
claim of power for ones who deny death? Call your damnable
hunt. We shall see who I drag screaming to hell with me.*

— Günter Dörn, Das Ungeheuer Darin

Vampires

The blood-drinkers who stalk the World of Darkness mostly call themselves Kindred, licks, or Cainites. The term “vampire” seems *déclassé* to the habitués of Elysium and the theorists of Anarch utopia, reminiscent of cheesy Hammer sequels and tourist-friendly reactionary folklore. However, those Embraced in recent decades increasingly use the term among themselves, (“taking the v-word back”) establishing their claim to this status, despite the thinness of their Blood. When challenged, they respond: “Who has a better right to the name? Those of us actually out in the night, or the mythical monsters from movies?”

Vampires cannot afford too many illusions; as predators, their existence depends on fooling their prey, not themselves. Whether they call themselves Kindred, licks, or vampires, they face certain immutable truths. To be a vampire is to be driven by an insensate Hunger for human blood and by the immortal legacy of your vampire Blood. Hunger drives you to murderous frenzy, impels you to slake your thirst in mortal veins. The human blood you drink alchemizes and resonates, granting not just ecstasy but also immortality; not just strange powers, but also slavery. More than most of us, vampires are what they eat. More than most of us, vampires must retain their Humanity if they want to be more than that.

Truth and Lies

The differences between pop-culture vampires, or even legendary Balkan vampires, and the Kindred trip up would-be slayers and even some new-fledged Cainites. However, the similarities argue that myth-makers both modern and medieval occasionally tasted the truth. Even the seemingly timeless truths of the vampires admit some exceptions, or shift as the Blood changes its tides. For centuries, the Kindred believed there was no generation after the 13th, and some modern vampires retain a psychosomatic fear of the cross or garlic.

Vampires are immortal: true. Vampires can die from decapitation or burning by fire or sunlight, but they do not age or die of natural causes. They require no food save blood, and they never need to breathe. Enough trauma can reduce a vampire to a deep, trancelike sleep called torpor — but they can revive again with sufficient time and blood.

Vampires are the living dead: true. A vampire’s body has no heartbeat or pulse, holds no heat, and generates no sweat or hormones. A vampire’s body does not age or rot. It regrows lost flesh and even whole limbs, given time enough. And yet it thinks, walks, plans, and speaks — and hunts, and kills.

Vampires drink the blood of the living: true. Vampires crave human blood, and they can only slake their thirst and power their inhuman abilities with the life’s blood of their victims. 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 consume the blood of their former species.

Vampires leave the marks of their fangs in their victim’s body: mostly false. When first Embraced as a vampire, the undead grow extendable fangs for feeding. However, vampire saliva can close the wounds made by their fangs, thus concealing the evidence of the feeding.

Those who die from a vampire’s bite rise to become a vampire: false. When vampires do kill their prey, the victim simply perishes. Otherwise, vampires would overrun the world. To Embrace a human, allowing them to return as undead, the vampire must feed the drained victim their own undying Blood, called *vitae* by older vampires.

Sunlight burns vampires: true. Although some thin-blooded vampires can bear the sun briefly and some vampiric powers allow a few minutes’ survival, sunlight fatally burns a Kindred’s undead flesh if exposed long enough. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it extremely difficult to remain awake during the day, even within sheltered areas.

Garlic or running water repels vampires: mostly false. Mortals desperate to find any protection from the undead invented these comforting fables. A few vampires still labor under these shackles, but they are rare.

Vampires flee from crosses: generally false. This myth is another comforting pious fabrication from the medieval era. However, some wielders of holy symbols (not just crucifixes) drive vampires back or damage them with the power of their True Faith.

A stake through the heart kills vampires: false. However, a wooden stake — or arrow, crossbow bolt, etc. — through the heart paralyzes the monster into a state of torpor until removed.

Vampires have the strength of 10 men; they command wolves and bats; they can hypnotize the living; etc.: true and false. Vampire Blood grants Kindred supernatural powers called Disciplines, which encompass all these abilities and more. Vampires increase their power as they age, from newly created vampires little more powerful than humans to mighty elders who can rival fiction's Lestat or Dracula. The methuselahs and Antediluvians, who have stalked the night for millennia, often possess literally godlike power.

Vampires are monsters — demonic spirits embodied in corpses: false — and true. If anything, the tragedy of vampires outweighs that of demons. Instead of one fall and a clear eternity of evil, vampires feel an inexorable pull toward damnation, often for centuries. Vampires seldom begin as sadistic monsters, unless they began that way as humans. However, overpowering hunger for human blood and an existence dependent on regular feeding drive vampires toward sociopathy and predation. The vampire's psychology changes as their solitary, predatory existence corrodes attitudes learned as a communal omnivore.

Circumstance or need eventually forces even the most reluctant vampire to kill — and the joy and ease of murder turns such force to inclination, and finally to desire. Realizing their betrayal, vampires cease to trust. Realizing their differences, vampires isolate themselves from the mortal world. Realizing their existence depends on secrecy and control, vampires become secretive and manipulative.

As the years turn to decades and then to centuries, and the vampire kills over and over — or refrains from killing and watches their loved ones die anyway — such feelings ossify. Human life, always brief, becomes cheap, and then valueless compared to immortality. The mortal herd means nothing, only the vampire's house of cruelty, shadows, and lies holds significance. Jaded, unfeeling, paranoid — in a word, monstrous — vampire elders may not in fact be demons, but at that point, who can tell the difference?

Clans

Kindred are divided into clans. Each one holds a different aspect of the Beast that was imposed upon the original Kindred. Clans are transmitted by blood from the sire (the progenitor) to the childe (her progeny).

The **Brujah**, usually known as Rabble, are philosophers and rebels by nature. Their physical prowess only competes with their passion for humanity and all that it has to offer. They are one of the core Clans of the Anarchs. Their Beast represents itself as uncontrollable bursts of blind rage, rendering pointless their best arguments for peace and justice.

The **Gangrel** live in communion with nature. Although they are generally regarded as loners, with no interest in Kindred politics and society, they often gather in packs, like wolves, creating their own communities. They are the other central Clan of the Anarchs. The nature of their Beast mocks them, punishing them with animal traits — both physical and psychological — whenever they lose control.

Many have lost their minds trying to understand the psyche of the **Malkavian**. Gifted with unique insight on the cryptic codes that rule the world around them. If the Oracles are often cryptic, that's only because it is impossible to coherently express the magnitude of their vision. They are generally underestimated but, behind their extravagant ways, there is always the spark of genius.

The **Nosferatu** wear their Beasts in their lapels, on their faces, and written all over their bodies. Their curse may seem like one of the cruelest: upon receiving the Embrace — the act of transforming a mortal into Kindred — they suffer the most horrific metamorphosis, turning them into monsters of nightmare. Even though they display their monstrosity on the outside, the clan often gives fruit to the most humane and psychologically complex Kindred.

Lovers of humanity, beauty, and splendor, the **Toreador** are regarded as the most sensual of Kindred. Their pursuit of aesthetic perfection has drawn them for centuries towards the arts. They gather in art galleries and theaters to play their social games, and become involved in the lives of mortals like no other Clan. Their aesthetic sensibility is so acute that they have grown vulnerable to environments that don't agree with their taste, suffering from anxiety and melancholy whenever they are not surrounded by beauty.

A thousand years ago, a powerful magician captured a vampire and performed a terrible ritual on her. The magician was obsessed with eternal life, and got the curse of Caine in exchange. Since then, the descendants of **Tremere** have been accumulating knowledge and bowing to a rigid

hierarchy. However, since the Second Inquisition laid waste to their Chantry in Vienna, their whole lineage has grown weak and disunited. Nowadays, the Tremere sell their services as mercenaries, and try to understand how to live with their newfound freedom.

Traditional leaders of the Camarilla, the **Ventrue** — or the Blue Bloods, as they are often called — exude majesty, power and privilege. They are educated on the idea that they are born to rule, and everybody else needs to obey them. The Ventrue have rarefied tastes when it comes to blood, and can only feed on specific types of people. The nature of this exquisite palate varies from one Ventrue to the next — some can only feed on middle-aged men, while others won't taste any blood that doesn't come from convicted felons.

The Camarilla

During the Dark Ages, when the Inquisition appeared, Kindred were not ready, and many of them paid the price. The survivors gathered and established a series of commandments that would ensure their survival. The Elders decided that they would be in power, and their word would be the law. This was the origin of the Camarilla, the largest vampire community ever known.

The Anarchs

The Anarchs splintered from the Camarilla. With whole cities under their control, the Anarchs now stand as a force to be reckoned with. Government is loose, and it changes wildly from place to place, but the principle remains: age is not the measure of leadership. Some are eager to build a fair society, while others are hungry for power. All of them are the Anarchs, more an identity than a real group.

The Second Inquisition

With the explosion of the Age of Information, hiding has become harder than ever. At first, Kindred tried to use all the new technologies to their own advantage. They created secret networks in the dark web, and established channels to communicate with one another. But mortals are paranoid by nature, and look for enemies everywhere. It was only a matter of time before Kindred were discovered by governments and intelligence agencies.

In 2001, in the wake of the events that led to the War on Terror, intelligence agencies across the globe started reinforcing surveillance, both online

and offline. By mere accident, they discovered a hidden network of secret societies populated by monsters of legend. Joining forces with the Society of Leopold — a mystical group of witch hunters based in the Vatican — agencies like the CIA and MI6 took the job the Inquisition left unfinished in the Middle Ages. This was how mortals started hunting Kindred again.

During the Second Inquisition's first decade, they achieved impressive results. The online presence of Kindred was completely removed and the undead population of entire cities was exterminated. The creatures of the night were forced to take desperate measures. They retreated from the virtual world. Fear and paranoia became the rule among them.

What's Happening

New Tyrant Generation

Centuries ago, wise elder vampires established the Camarilla, which has kept Kindred across Europe, the Americas, and the world safe while guarding the sacred Traditions of their kind — or so goes the Camarilla propaganda story. Still, despite its recent setbacks, the Camarilla defines vampire life for a lot of Kindred around the world.

Long seen as an immutable, invincible Ivory Tower, the Camarilla finds itself in a state of flux, with many of its oldest members and most established Princes disappearing or becoming hard to reach. A mysterious force known as the Beckoning calls them away, leaving their regnae wide open for Anarch aggression.

The Camarilla has lost some of its most famous domains, such as Berlin and London, to this instability. In many cities, the Camarilla no longer rules with absolute authority, but shares its regnum as an aristocracy of sorts, mingling uneasily with the Anarchs.

It's not all gloom and doom in the Camarilla, however. For a young and ambitious vampire, the disappearance of so many elders has left space for upward mobility unheard of in the history of the sect. For the first time ever, a neonate can take over a domain if they play the game well enough. What's more, many of the elders have left their estates, fortunes, and resources essentially abandoned, tended by a few confused blood servants. A sharp neonate can hijack a fortune accumulated over the millennia and use it for their own purposes.

Right now, the Camarilla crouches on the defensive, but it never remains that way for long. The energy provided by the young and the ambitious gives the sect new life. For much of Camarilla history, when a gifted or greedy neonate proposed a plan, elders responded predictably: "The time isn't right, take a century or two to think it over and learn how the world works, then perhaps the Prince will grant you a hearing." Innovation equaled grounds for suspicion, not promotion.

Furthermore, the elders atop the Ivory Tower came of age in a time when windmills and telescopes were high technology, kings ruled unquestioningly, and money took the form of favors owed or gifts exchanged. Modern changes confused and irritated them, and they tried simply waiting them out. It didn't work.

But now, with younger Kindred increasingly making decisions, the Camarilla is slowly abandoning its traditional strategy of inaction and moving to exert real power in the modern world. It's a time for a young vampire to make their mark. Why not be like the neonates who spearheaded the capture of Mexico City from the Sabbat? The elders and Justicars of the Camarilla long thought such a bold act impossible. What else might be possible, if you can seize the night first?

Total Revolution

This is a good time to be an Anarch. The Anarch Revolt, held long-dormant by Camarilla oppression and its own infighting, now surges all across the world. Even established Camarilla cities hold Anarch enclaves; the elite retreat into Elysia as the formerly dispossessed claim their own domains.

The fall of Los Angeles and the birth of the Anarch Free States on the American West Coast formed a mere prelude to the fall of Berlin and other cities. Still reeling from the loss of their elders, the rudderless vampires of the Camarilla now find themselves unable to defend their privileges without the power of ancient Blood to enforce their decrees.

There is no single Anarch Movement united by ideology or leadership. The global Anarch Revolution is a spontaneous force, born out of centuries of Camarilla repression, embodying the various ideologies and agendas of whoever happens to be there on the ground, ready to carry the torch.

This is a time of unparalleled opportunity for an Anarch vampire to make their mark, ideally on a

Camarilla throat. No matter how humble your origins, you can take the fight to the so-called Princes and try to topple the Ivory Tower. Their enemies weakened by mortal hunters and the insidious Beckoning, the correlation of forces is finally on the side of the Anarchs.

The revolution is just the start, however. The real challenge for a politically minded neonate comes afterward. Does the revolution collapse into violence and brutality, or is it possible for a charismatic and ambitious lick to build their own utopia of blood?

Individual Monsters

The immense turbulence of a wounded Camarilla on the verge of resurgence, an Anarch Movement fighting for its future, and a fracturing Sabbat leaves a lot of space for unbound vampires to do their own thing. There's more thin-blooded than ever before: vampires of such a high generation that they exhibit traits normally associated with humans. For these vampires, the conflicts of the Camarilla and the Anarchs, and the vast power struggles between the sects, make nothing but noise. Best to ignore them unless a zealous Archon or Councilor decides to make it their business to harass those who fail to conform.

Endless stories illuminate the margins of the World of Darkness, and in the long run, some of them may prove more significant than any in the major sects realize. Nobody in the World of Darkness knows everything that's going on, and the infinite variety of the world always provides a new mystery, a new puzzle piece that fails to fit any established patterns. Individual vampires build their own domains and rule with iron fists in the style of the monsters of the Middle Ages. Anarch dissidents flee to small rural communities, war zones, and border areas to carve out their own territories far away from human or undead authorities. Nomadic licks prove that it's possible to live on the road after all, if you know how. An infinite variety of vampire unlifestyles exist for those who seek to escape the stifling ideologies of the sects.

The vast size of a modern metropolis and the existence of the Masquerade even make it possible for a clever lick to hide right under the nose of a Camarilla Prince. Only a fool thinks they can be sure of everything that happens in a city of millions.

The Second Inquisition

Despite unceasing strife between the undead, the worst threat to Kindred might just come from humanity. The Camarilla has long argued that if mortals were to become aware of the existence of vampires, all Kindred would die on a pyre. They believe that the world would see witch-hunts like never before, and that no amount of immortal power would be able to defend the lords of the night from the teeming billions inhabiting the planet.

The Camarilla is being proven right. Intelligence agencies across the world have uncovered the existence of the undead. While these mortal groups struggle to articulate the real nature of the threat, they exchange information with each other and with the hardline holdouts in the Vatican's Society of St. Leopold. The old Inquisitors find their prejudices finally validated and taken seriously — and funded, and provided whole arsenals of weaponry — by some of the most powerful and ruthless organizations in the world.

Right now, the Second Inquisition remains codeword classified and sub rosa, neither understood nor controlled by their collective agencies at large or by their governments. Not every CIA agent and FSB apparatchik knows about vampires, but a sufficient amount of key personnel in very anonymous offices know enough to generate a major threat. The Second Inquisition has killed Princes in London and Las Vegas, and it has crippled a clan in Vienna. Dozens of incautious Anarchs and arrogant Sabbat have lost their lives, unused to mortals who know how to hunt for vampires. And of course, many vampires try to play the Second Inquisition against their rivals by leaking the address of a haven or the details of a murder.

The Second Inquisition fights vampires, but the inquisitors are far from heroes. They come from some of the most morally corrupt organizations on the planet. Assassination, regime change, subversion, global surveillance, destabilization, and disinformation are their day jobs. In this sense, they make a good match for the descendants of Caine.

From the perspective of the player characters, the Second Inquisition forces them to take the Masquerade seriously. Traveling across international borders, or even across an airport, puts you on a list, even when it doesn't put you in a sunny room. Going online? Why not just send the NSA an email inviting them to hunt for blood and see the Primogen? The Five Eyes have quietly added vampiric keywords to their electronic red flag lists.

Text someone to find out where Elysium is tonight, and the Inquisition might invite themselves along.

Despite all the danger, the Inquisition also represents opportunity. It has killed enough vampires to create openings and power vacuums throughout undead society. You might get lucky, or you might get it to kill your enemies. A particularly foolhardy group of Kindred might even try to infiltrate or control the Inquisition or some of its agents, risking a fiery death for the chance to wield a fiery sword.

Detroit by Night

The Caine-worshipping cult known as the Sabbat held Detroit for most of the 20th century. In the first years of the 21st century, a group of young Kindred loosely affiliated with the Camarilla claimed dominion over the emerging Great Lakes Megalopolis, pushed the Sabbat back, and have kept them contained within the City of Detroit and a few surrounding suburbs.

Between a vampire population much too large for the declining human population and the Sabbat's disregard for the Masquerade, even the high murder rate couldn't mask Sabbat activity in Detroit, making the city was especially vulnerable to the Second Inquisition. A major FIRSTLIGHT operation targeted the city in the early 2010s and largely eliminated the vampire population.

Since then, Detroit has become home to Anarchs and other independent licks driven out of the surrounding Camarilla-controlled areas. Recently, a few Camarilla Kindred have begun moving in and claiming domains in the downtown area and other gentrifying neighborhoods, sometimes inciting open conflict with Anarch gangs.

Chronicle Tenets

- Never kill the innocent
- Be your own, never submit
- Without a cause, you are nothing