

# In The Deepest Night

A Nightbane® Netbook by Steven "Conan" Trustrum

## Copyrights and Trademarks

Accept for the following registered and unregistered trademarks, intellectual properties, and modified excerpts of Palladium Books®, this work is copy written by Steven Trustrum 2002©, and may not be distributed, reproduced, or altered in any way without his permission.

1983, 1987, 1988, 1990 Kevin Siembieda; © 1995 Palladium Books, All rights reserved world wide. No part of this work may be reproduced in part or whole, in any form or by any means, without permission from the publisher. All incidents, situations, institutions, governments and people are fictional and any similarity to characters or persons living or dead is strictly coincidental."

### Registered Trademarks

Palladium Books®, Mechanoids®, The Mechanoid Invasion®, Rifts®, Megaverse®, RECON®, and After the Bomb®

### Unregistered Trademarks

Nightbane™, Nightlands™, Heroes Unlimited™, Villains Unlimited™, Beyond the Supernatural™, Boxed Nightmares™, Ninjas & Superspies™, Mystic China™, Palladium Fantasy RPG™, Triax™, Mindwerks™, Vampire Kingdoms™, The Juicer Uprising™, Phase World™, Spatial Mage™, Blood Shaman™, Wormwood™, Psyscape™, Mega-Damage™, S.D.C.™, I.S.P.™, P.P.E.™, SAMAS™, Splugorth™, Cyber-Knight™, Glitter Boy™, Juicer™, Mind Melter™, Psi-Stalker™, Coalition States™, Northern Gun™, Erin Tarn™, Naruni™, ... and other names and titles.

**CAMERA**  
Trustrum.com

<b>A Foreword is Forewarned</b> .....	4	Packlord Adepts - Master of Beasts .....	36
<b>The Story of Earth's Vampires</b> .....	5	Psynek Adepts - the Initiates and Mindlords .....	37
The Superstitions and the Facts .....	6	Shaper Adepts - Monsters among Monsters .....	38
The Need for Secrecy .....	7	<b>The Nations of Blood</b> .....	41
The Offer of Power .....	7	The Ascended .....	41
The Vampire Personality .....	7	The Ritual of Sacrificial Transference (level 10) .....	42
The Right of Might .....	8	The Grumian .....	43
Vampires and the Nightlands .....	9	The Madlova .....	46
<b>Those Who Hunt the Hunters</b> .....	10	The Mardekesh .....	48
Ba'al Vampire Hunters on Earth .....	12	Further Developments .....	51
Ba'al Vampire Hunter Training .....	12	<b>The Freeholds</b> .....	52
A Storm is Coming .....	13	The Bloodsages .....	52
A Vampire by Any Other Name – .....	13	The Ferine Hordes .....	54
The undead hero .....	13	The Kodarn .....	57
<b>Vampire Hierarchy</b> .....	15	The Silent Ghosts .....	61
The Vampire Intelligence - True Rulers of the Night .....	15	Equipment of the Silent Ghosts .....	64
Something Wicked This Way Comes .....	16	<b>Vampire Magic -</b> .....	65
The Demon Familiar .....	18	<b>the spells and artifacts of the Undead</b> .....	65
The Master Vampire - generals of an unholy army .....	19	New Spells .....	65
The Secondary Vampire - An Optional Player .....	19	Shatter Wood (level 3) .....	65
Character R.C.C. .....	20	False Reflection (level 4) .....	65
The Wild Vampire - An optional Player Character .....	20	Repel Wood (level 4) .....	65
R.C.C. .....	21	Walk Between Raindrops (level 4) .....	65
A Typical Wild Vampire Lair .....	22	Blood Bank (level 5) .....	66
The Disembodied Essence .....	23	Mask Undead (level 5) .....	66
Wampyrs – Outsiders Looking In .....	24	Stake of Mists (level 6) .....	66
Living Thralls – (Sometimes) Unwilling Traitors of .....	24	Charm Vampire (level 7) .....	66
Mankind .....	25	Free Vampire (ritual, level 15) .....	67
<b>Vampire Power &amp; Combat Additions &amp; Clarifications</b> .....	27	New Magic Items .....	67
Sunlight Expanded .....	27	The Heart Knife .....	67
Expanded Damage Table – Effective Tools .....	27	Vampire Lore .....	67
The Myths of Consecrated Ground and Invitation .....	27	Biography of the Vampire Monk .....	67
Attacking a Vampire's Heart .....	28	The Tale of the Redeemed One .....	68
Long Range Attacks .....	28	The Words of the First .....	68
Close Range Attacks .....	28	<b>Pendragon</b> .....	70
Attacks on an Incapacitated Foe .....	28	The Tale of Pendragon .....	70
A Natural 20 and the Heart .....	28	A Place to Start .....	70
Removing a Vampire's Heart .....	28	A Name to Call Their Own .....	71
Vampires versus Nightbane .....	28	The Schism and Secularization of Pendragon .....	72
Vampires versus Other Supernatural Creatures .....	29	The Secret Society Today .....	72
Vampires versus Lasers .....	29	The New Crusade .....	73
Vampires and Technology .....	29	Recruitment .....	73
Feeding upon Tainted Blood .....	30	'The Chateau', global headquarters of Pendragon .....	74
Vampires & Knock-Down .....	30	Propaganda and Intelligence .....	74
Grappling .....	31	Methods of Operation .....	75
<b>Vampire Adepts -</b> .....	32	Excaliber .....	75
<b>a specialist subset of the Vampire R.C.C.</b> .....	32	Operations on Earth .....	76
Infiltrator Adepts - the Immortal Spies .....	32	Operations in Other Dimensions .....	77
Necromage Adepts - Undead Sorcerers .....	33	The Longbow Contingency .....	78
Nektek Adepts - technology addicts .....	34	Operation Man Friday .....	78
Nightbringer Adepts - .....	35	My Brother's Keeper .....	78
Kodarn Freehold only .....	35	The Hierarchy and Structure of Pendragon .....	79
		The Brotherhood of Magi .....	81
		The Brotherhood of Paladins .....	82

The Harbingers - foot soldiers against evil .....	82	Seal Mirrorwall: Greater (ritual, level 14) .....	124
Harbinger O.C.C. ....	83	<b>New Morphus Tables</b> .....	125
Forsaken Harbingers - .....	85	Alien Shape Table II .....	125
victims of their own obsession.....	85	Stigmata Table III .....	125
The Potion of the Undead .....	85	Stigmata Table IV .....	126
Pendragon in your campaign .....	87	Biomechanical Table III.....	127
Members of Note .....	87	Era-Specific Morphus Tables.....	128
Dominic Trickman.....	87	Industrial Age Biomechanical Table.....	128
Manuel Imagon.....	87	Ancient Biomechanical Table.....	129
Reginald “Bone” Marshall.....	88	<b>New Nightbane® Talents</b> .....	131
Relations with other groups and factions.....	89	Bone Blades .....	131
The Weapons and Equipment of Pendragon.....	90	Dawnfist.....	131
Conventional Weapons of Choice .....	91	Leech.....	131
Special/Exotic Weapons and Equipment .....	91	Light of Purity.....	131
<b>The Nocturnes</b> .....	96	Flesh Missiles .....	131
The Illusion.....	96	World Speech.....	132
Organizational Structure.....	98	Elite Nightbane Talents.....	132
The Watch .....	98	Mechanical Senses.....	132
Team 3 .....	99	Fighting Flora .....	133
Resources.....	99	Experience Tables.....	134
The Numbers .....	99	Vampire R.C.C. & .....	134
Campaign Use & Adventure Ideas .....	100	Vampire Adepts .....	134
Operation Foxhunt.....	100	Harbinger O.C.C. ....	134
Operation Fireball.....	100	Theologian O.C.C. ....	134
The Snake Oil Plan .....	100	True Scholar O.C.C.....	134
Against the Hordes .....	101		
Nocturnes of Note.....	101		
The Scarlet Brother.....	101		
Latus Crom .....	102		
Atif “Blue Blood” Balladamesh .....	103		
Macabre .....	104		
Relations with the Other Factions.....	105		
...And The Truth .....	105		
The current Iosef Pendragon.....	107		
<b>New O.C.C.s</b> .....	110		
Theologian O.C.C.....	110		
True Scholar O.C.C. ....	113		
<b>Ancient Nightbane</b> .....	116		
Ancient Nightbane Skill Packages.....	116		
Serf/Commoner/Laborer.....	116		
Ancient Warrior.....	117		
Scholar/Noble .....	117		
<b>New Skills</b> .....	119		
<b>New General Spells</b> .....	122		
Shape Wooden Stake (level 1).....	122		
Anchor Stake (level 3).....	122		
Blinding Faith (level 4).....	122		
Crimson Rain (level 4).....	122		
Feeder Finder (level 4).....	122		
Seal Mirrorwall: Lesser (level 4) .....	123		
Feast of Horror (level 5) .....	123		
Arcane Rainbow (level 8).....	123		
Osiris’ Sanctuary (level 8) .....	124		
Sunstone (ritual, level 13).....	124		

## A Foreword is Forewarned

Journal Entry, April 1, 1999

*"April Fool's Day and where do I find myself? On the side of some nameless mountain nestled deep in the wilds of Romania, that's where. I still can't believe that I let Doctor Neddows talk me in to taking over his graduate necrology field study class on site in this desolate little corner of the world, all so that he could do some silly, traditional prank with his old fraternity.*

*"Ah, who am I kidding, I never could pass up the chance to watch a wild pack in its natural environment."*

*"I need to get out more."*

*"Anyway, back to the matter at hand. The subjects of this study, according to Doctor Neddows' field notes, began to move down from their mountain territory a few months ago and have been moving closer to the lowlands as the season progressed. Neddows has hypothesized, based upon studies that he has conducted in previous years, that this may lead to evidence of some kind of migratory pattern."*

*"Hey, it's his study, I'm just here to fill in for a couple of days."*

*"We've set up our camp in a grove encircled by a growth of thick bushes that, luckily enough, have wolfbay growing amongst them. Not being one to leave anything to chance, I've had the students put some extra bundles of the plant among the bushes as well, just to ensure that there are no gaps. This ring of plants has formed a duck blind that will also (hopefully) serve to protect us should the subjects detect our presence. Why the subjects chose a lair, even a temporary one, that is so close to something that is anathema to them, is beyond me - I wouldn't want to live next to something like toxic waste, but who am I to say why creatures such as these do what they do?"*

*"..."*

*"Here come some now - they've just exited the cave entrance and it's only fifteen minutes after sundown. This short period of time between the sun's descent and their egress would suggest that their lair is not very deep within the mountain. Hmmm ... they seem to be sniffing the air. They are probably checking to see if any animals or humans - food, essentially - has passed by the cave recently."*

*"Oh damn, they seem to be sniffing in our direction. One of the students must have been stupid enough to think that they could go into the cave when I wasn't watching and look at the subjects as they slept. Why is it that there is always at least one idiot kid in every class who thinks that he is not bound by the rules like everyone else?"*

*"Yes, they definitely have our scent. The subjects are now moving towards the outskirts of the wolfbay bushes encircling our camp. I'd estimate that we have only a minute or two before their limited minds figure some way through or over the barrier, so I'd better get back and break out my special equipment and prepare the students."*

*"This is why I hate taking over-eager graduate students into the field to study vampires."*

- Transcribed from the tape-recorded field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

Why is it that man has always been afraid of the night, huddling close to hearth and home when the sun drops into the embrace of the horizon? Is it because of the menacing traces and lines that everything assumes beneath the moon's gaze, the sounds that echo plaintively from the unseen, or is it simply because humans were born of the day and of the light? Perhaps it is because mankind is instinctively aware of what lives in the darkness that conceals all from their sight once the protective sun has set.

Mankind has long forgotten that before light was brought to the universe that there was darkness, a black so pervasive and total that it was the sum of all that was. When light was finally joined to that which had never known its like before, the darkness shied from this unknown quality and feared the revelation that it brought. Though man may not remember this time, there remain those creatures that do or who have found themselves akin to the lost darkness itself, unable to bask in the light lest its brilliance consume them entirely.

Time has proven this to be true, just as it has proven that there are also creatures that choose to live within a world of both light and darkness, aspiring to the former while desperately clinging to the latter. These creatures are feared by humanity most of all, even if it does not consciously know it. Able to appear as though they were of the light as is man, their true nature is more like the deep, unassailable blackness - concealing and dangerous. At most times it is difficult to see this distinction, especially for those blinded to the fact that such a fiend is even possible. Within such ignorance and arrogance lie the minds of most men, seeing all contrary thoughts as wild superstition and tales to frighten small children.

Man has learned to ignore those instincts that are older than civilization, instincts that tell him that the dark holds both mystery and unspoken fear. The night is alive, and it hungers.

# The Story of Earth's Vampires

Who can say for certain when the vampire intelligences first began to send their essence fragments through the dimensional ether to Earth? Perhaps they probed the planet while its surface was still cooling following its fiery birth, or maybe the essences first fled back to their masters after finding only giant lizards or savage humanoids whose primitive minds could not even comprehend the offer of power being presented to them? Then again, perhaps they have always been here. Human history spans so many thousands of years that even the near-omnipotent vampire intelligences do not remember which among their kind was the first to successfully gain a foothold on Earth, nor do they recall how long they have had their many eyes turned towards this world's people – time has little meaning to immortal monsters with the power to make entire dimensions fear them.

Irrefutable, however, is the fact that for as long as man has toiled under the yoke of civilization (and almost certainly before then), the undead have existed beside them, living in the shadows and feeding off of humanity (and sometimes openly ruling them as well). Analysis of history (both generally known and unknown), myths and legends, and occult texts have allowed researchers to piece together a somewhat general historical outline of the relationship between mankind and the vampire.

As far back as Jericho some ten millennia ago, several thousand years following the exile of the Ba'al, evidence may be found that proves the presence of the undead within the cities of man. Before humanity's cities began to spread across the Middle East, stretching first between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and later down the Nile, there already existed stories of creatures that would assume the guise of man only to prey on them and drain them of their life force. When civilization and urbanization began to spread into Europe and the Mediterranean around 1800 B.C., so too did the vampire plague. Evidence also shows that these creatures did not restrict themselves to urban areas alone.

Primitive cave paintings and pottery, as well as some rare scripts that must remain unknown to the world at large for obvious reasons, offer up proof that the vampire menace existed on Earth before the rise of the Ba'al and their ascendancy to demi-godhood. Stories and texts of other ancient races also make note of the vampires and give accounts of a series of wars that erupted between the undead and other creatures of the

night, possibly the Nightbane or some equally mysterious force.

Surviving evidence would also seem to show that when the Great War against the Nightlords blew across the globe like a deluge of suffering, the undead masses feasted upon the battlefields, gorging themselves with the blood of the fallen. The Great War was like a gift to the **Nations of Blood**, as the vampires were collectively known, and offered them an opportunity to strengthen their hold on the weakened and crumbling first civilizations of mankind. Even as the Ba'al's final, tormented screams echoed between the dimensions, the marauding vampire sects swept down upon the cities of man and dealt the survivors the killing blow – or so the ancient tales proclaim. Defeated, mankind returned to a savagery that would take them thousands of years to crawl back out of.

Unable to be kept down for long, as the lengthy telling of man's history would reckon events, humanity would rise up again and start civilization anew, forcing the rampaging vampires to once more seek seclusion lest organized bands of mortals seek them out and finish them off. This second coming of civilization proved to be lean times for the Nations of Blood compared to those of the past because, as the cities of man spread outwards from the Middle East (without coincidence, the believed point of origin of the Ba'al), so too did the concept of organized, cross-tribal religion. Unlike the belief systems of the past that consisted mainly of elemental powers, obscure taboos and rituals, and immobile icons of immense size, these new religions used specific and portable symbols around which to base their faith. With such physical representations of their beliefs to protect them, mankind was unknowingly turning their cities and homes into places that were rapidly becoming hazardous for the undead.

In some small corners of the world the vampires continued to operate as if nothing were amiss, openly feeding on the locals. In a few instances, bold vampires would overcome the development of organized religion by using their unholy powers to convince the humans to worship them as gods, creating creeds that would always lead to human sacrifice. The remnants of these atrocious cults and faiths may still be found among select ruins around the world, monuments to the folly of man and the role it played in its own enslavement. When certain religions began to spread out and influence larger regions, conquering through the strength of their ideals and/or the might of arms, these Nations of Blood were usurped from their power and fell from their divinity back into isolation like the rest of their kind.

It is known that most Nations quickly adapted a paranoid approach to continuing their survival and no

longer sought to attain the massive numbers necessary to bring their creator to Earth. Instead, the vampires struck out when they could, feeding in isolated alleyways and snatching unattended children from shadowed doorways and irrigation ditches. With the world rapidly being tamed and transformed into a global civilization where few cultures could continue to remain apart from outsiders, the undead knew that to have their existence discovered would be to alert all of the human race and bring doom down on all their heads. The Nations of Blood now knew fear.

Some resolute (or foolhardy) vampires took the opposite approach and decided that the best way to hide from humanity was to do so in plain sight. By integrating themselves into the masses and by exploiting the very instruments of society that had robbed their kind of godhood, these vampire Nations would seek to tame man through subtlety and guile. Agreeing with the more reclusive and fearful Nations, those undead who had decided to walk amongst mankind knew that to be discovered would mean death and so they too decided to keep their numbers to a minimum.

Periods of human history that have been racked with tragedy have also provided the undead legions with the opportunity to come out of the shadows for that brief moment and walk with impunity. A world or region-altering crisis like the black plague, the battlefields of the First and Second World Wars, the Nazi death camps, or the bloody taming of the American West, for example, allows the vampire population to strike from its hidden lairs and feed without being discovered. With carnage surrounding them on every turn during such times, mankind did not have the will, the desire, or the ability to differentiate and recognize the terrible acts of the undead for what they are. On the contrary, it is frightening how quickly man has taken the blame for the actions of these creatures because the vampire's activities so greatly resemble man's own monstrous deeds.

One of the more earth-shattering events in human history, the coming of Dark Day and what was to follow, was at first believed by the vampires to be a miraculous gift. With governments and organized religions in chaos the world over, the Nations of Blood thought that they would once again be able to act without fear of reprisal from the human masses, but such was not to be. Many undead, not knowing what to make of the sunless day, had joyously gone forth and glutted themselves upon the fear-tainted blood of mankind, the horror of their feasting lost amongst the countless evils of that day. But the Nations were quick to learn that this "gift" would leave a foul aftertaste.

The Ba'al had anticipated the vampires' gorging and just like they had commanded armies of

their minions to use the confusion of Dark Day to slaughter humans that might pose a threat to their invasion, so too did they have servants assigned to track down and kill the vampires that they knew would try to take advantage of the situation. In the days following Dark Day, humanity would mourn the souls lost during that terrible time, but nobody shed any tears for the unknown monsters who had also been duped and massacred by the Ba'al. But the immortal undead have a long memory and their hatred of the Nightlords was increased exponentially since then and it is this anger and hate that may one-day drive the vampires into springing from the all-concealing shadows to strike down the new masters of the night.

The mysteries of history must continue to unfold, only then proving whether or not this possibility shall come to pass.

## **The Superstitions and the Facts**

The supposed common knowledge surrounding vampires can be linked to the mostly incorrect notions that are portrayed within the entertainment industry. When self-proclaimed vampire hunters first faces these inhuman monsters, they often make the mistake of referencing the pop culture representation of the vampire. Such information often does contain some manner of truth to it, such as the use of the crucifix and garlic, the anathema of sunlight, the defensive barrier posed by running water and the use of the wooden stake, however, this is not the whole truth. Far more is overlooked or misinterpreted to allow the supposed facts contained within works of fiction to be of much use on their own.

For instance, it is widely unknown that a child's simple squirt gun can be a deadly tool against a vampire or that silver, as can be found on a common necklace, is also harmful (though not fatal) to the undead. Similarly, the portrayal of fire or a wooden stake as methods of final destruction are also incorrect, much to the chagrin of many a misinformed would-be vampire hunter. Thinking the bones of a staked vampire to be the remains of a monster that has long since been destroyed, many curious individuals have pulled the wooden anchor of bondage from the skeleton's ribs only to find themselves confronted by a quickly reforming vampire. Instead, the best and truest sources are those people that have never denied the existence of the undead and have always fought to keep this evil at bay. Individuals such as these are best sought among the small, isolated villages and townships of Europe or among the roguish gypsies that continue to ply their skills across the European and Mediterranean regions. However, care should be taken because it is difficult to

say which of these people has not found it better to cast their lot in with the undead instead of slowly watching their numbers fade in the nightly onslaughts and raids.

Another source of information can be found in the ancient tomes and scrolls that are contained within the world's many museums and libraries, both public and private. Some ancient relics also contain clues as to the nature of vampires, or may even be proof against them, but have been designated by the ignorant to be artifacts equated with any old ancient clay pot or dinosaur bone. Of course, even learning that these items exist and where they may be found is difficult enough, but to actually gain access to them is usually almost impossible! Unless someone who already has access to the object is also aware of the item's true purpose and is sympathetic to the vampire hunter's quest, the pursuit of such artifacts is a wasted effort (unless one is willing to break the law).

As can be seen, the combating of vampires is one of those instances where it can be said that television truly is harmful to those who watch it.

### **The Need for Secrecy**

Vampires may possess various impressive and useful powers but their very existence depends upon the ability to remain a secret from mortals. To act openly in the distant past was possible because there was no such thing as global communications - most of the world's populace was uneducated and extremely superstitious, and humanity lacked the tools and weapons necessary to stand against the dark tides of the undead. Now, finding their prey to be protected by the secular, pragmatic thought and skepticism of the present, and armed with technology that can make short work of even the mightiest of vampires if wielded competently, the undead find themselves in an era where they have become the hunted. Though most of the world is still ignorant of their kind, vampires can no longer risk exposing themselves to humanity lest they provide the mortals with the proof that it needs to override its doubts concerning the paranormal. Were this to happen, humanity would quickly devote their resources to the extermination of the legions of night and it is this constant possibility that has forced the vampires further into the darkness, restricting them to operating in secret so as to keep their lairs and very existence unknown.

Some individual vampires or entire Nations are unwilling to sit back and hide in the shadows, feeding when they can, satisfied to cower within the secluded spots of a world that they feel the other vampires have acquiesced to hand over to the beings who walk in the daylight. Indeed, these vampires are working to conquer the world that they see as rightfully theirs and to

exterminate or enslave all of mankind. But only a small group of even these determined and staunch defenders of vampire superiority dare to refute the wisdom of keeping their actions secret for the moment. They recognize the wisdom in waiting until a time when it will not matter at all if their kind is discovered by the human cattle. A time when mankind is weak and on its last legs. A time that the Nightlords are unwittingly helping to bring about.

Things have, of course, become far more complicated with the return of the Ba'al to Earth, but the undead have been living beneath the protective veil of secrecy for so long that they have become accustomed to it and little change was needed to accommodate the return of their ancient enemies. The Nightlords are aware that the vampire masses still reside upon the planet of their birth and that many escaped the purgings of Dark Day, but at the moment they have far more important things to occupy their attention than hunting down creatures who are content to stay out of their path. For the moment, at least.

### **The Offer of Power**

A vampire intelligence gains its initial footing onto an earthly realm by dispersing disembodied fragments of its own life essence throughout the megaverse. This fragment arrives by means of a dimensional portal created by the intelligence or may be summoned by a foolhardy mage who believes that he/she can master the essence's power without succumbing to its will. The essence only has 24 hours to find someone whose corruption, greed and quest for power (no matter its source) will give in to the essence's telepathic promises and empathic urging.

As the unwitting mortal seals the deal with his words of agreement, his life essence is violently ripped from its place within the human shell and creates the vampire intelligence's anchor to that dimension in the form of a new master vampire. This new life form is the result of merging the life essence of the vampire with what little remains of the host's mortal soul. The two combine into a twisted parody of life that retains some of the abilities, memories and skills of the now destroyed human that once possessed the host body. For all intents and purposes, however, the mortal host has been slain to make way for the rise of a new master.

### **The Vampire Personality**

Whether or not vampires are a part of nature or something else altogether is a subject for wide debate, but the obvious fact that these powerful creatures exist

near the top of nature's food chain is unmistakable. However, vampire society is not a cohesive whole but is instead a fragmented collection of warring groups of undead that would gladly see each other fall beneath the scythe of extinction.

It is not just that the various vampire Nations must contend with each other over the same food or over their mutual thirst for conquest, but there is also a rage that is born into the instincts of all vampires, an overwhelming desire to slay the creations of another intelligence. Vampires of different masters can instantly recognize each other and in that moment there is inflamed a bestial urge to attack that is very difficult for them to override. This persistent drive to wage war upon other Nations is one of the undead's greatest weaknesses because it increases the risk of exposing their kind to the mortals. But if the vampires are not raging around, fighting each other for all the world to see, how then may they be recognized by mortals?

Master and secondary vampires can pass for human if they are judged by appearance alone, but the wild vampire is clearly something that has degenerated from its once-human visage and is therefore more difficult to explain away. Except for their nocturnal lifestyle, their bloodless-pale skin tone, gaunt facial features, large canines, willowy bodies and fingers (which are almost always unusually long) and long, claw-like fingernails, secondary or master vampires can pass amongst the living while only drawing minimal glances of curiosity. However, a vampire may be betrayed by its eyes which glow a bright, penetrating red, yellow or orange whenever it uses its powers or exercises its will over another creature, or its inhuman, animalistic, and megalomaniac personality. A vampire's behavior is one of superiority over the creatures around it (including vampires of lesser status) and a complete sense of confidence in its seeming god-like abilities. Not only do their powers inflate a vampire's ego and vision of lordship over mankind, but the idea of walking with impunity amongst their unsuspecting food has only served to fuel this overconfidence to unbelievable new heights. This egomania is yet another exploitable weakness of the undead because they will often underestimate mortals and not see those who would oppose their vampiric might as a serious threat until it is too late.

The higher up the hierarchical ladder of vampire society that one looks, the more calculating, controlled and egotistical they become. Wild vampires tend to be slaves to their base animal instincts, a result of the mixing of diluted alien and human essences into one being. Surprisingly, wild vampires also find it the easiest to accept the undead of other lords. The capsulized hierarchy of the wild vampire clans is so

entrenched with dominance and submission that just about any vampire will be accepted by them so long as they can prove their strength and the wild vampire is not directly commanded otherwise by a vampire of the same creator and of higher station. The polar opposite of this, master vampires have a frighteningly cold and inhumane control over their ever-present hunger for blood and yet retain the passion of their power-seeking goals. The personality of the secondary vampire falls somewhere between these two poles, making them suitable to either fit reasonably well into human society or to act in the role of soldier and capable assassin. Unlike the plotting and commanding masters or combat-oriented wild vampires, both of whom are essentially restricted to specific roles in undead society, the secondary vampire is an undead jack-of-all-trades because of his middle ground behavior. And maybe this makes the secondary vampire the most dangerous of all.

### **The Right of Might**

Within the brotherhood of the undead, the unspoken law that "might makes right" is one of the primary definers of vampire behavior and hierarchy. Vampires have organized themselves based upon the biological and mystical differences that separate the various sub-types within their race, but have further defined these strata by elevating the strongest above others of their own type that are weaker. Despite sharing the communal will of their vampire intelligence creator, each undead monster is still a slave to its bestial and monster instincts - instincts that are pure predator.

There is no promotion, no demotion and no reprieve; weakness is seen as an end to the vampire's usefulness and the creature is replaced as soon as it is convenient to do so. At the very bottom of the vampire's vision of hierarchy are the human cattle that provide the undead with their food supply and slaves. Considered to be weak, stupid and fragile (mortal), the human livestock are only shown as much concern as is necessary to keep them ignorant of the presence of vampires, until such a time comes as the undead can openly proclaim their mastery.

Within the Freeholds this constant power struggle is usually even more prevalent because the predator instincts of the vampire race become mixed with the power mongering that only free will can bring. Within these organizations, the structure is often defined by a mix of the traditional right of the most powerful with the political machinations that only creatures who can truly think for themselves can possibly possess. Many vampire Freeholds are rife with intrigue, back stabbing (often literally), and secret allegiances that are designed to usurp the power of those above them. Only

a few of these freethinking monsters possess the proper combination of self-control, forethought and physical or mystical strength that is necessary to put such quests for power aside in light of the greater good (or, more appropriately, evil).

So ingrained into the vampire psyche and behavior are these instincts and beliefs that even player character vampires will have to work hard to control them. It is only natural that the animalistic side and sense of superiority that comes so easily to the undead will cause player character vampires to see themselves as the natural leaders of any group that they are in, especially if it is comprised of mortals. As if the undead state of such player characters did not itself provide enough opportunities for imaginative and fun role-playing, the situations that arise from this aspect of the vampire's own sense of self-importance should prove interesting indeed.

## **Vampires and the Nightlands**

Because there is no true sunlight in the Nightlands, vampires are able to walk the land without having to worry about returning to a lair before the rising of the dreaded sun. This would make the Nightlands an ideal target for conquest by a vampire intelligence were it not for the fact that the shadowy dimension is already filled with powerful supernatural beasts and beings who do not exactly welcome the presence of the undead.

Primary among these denizens are the Ba'al, the undisputed rulers of this twilight world and a definite enemy of the vampire cause. Not only are the undead recognized as the servants of rival powers who seek the same control and dominions as do the Nightlords themselves, but they are also in direct contention with the Ba'al for food as both are energy leeches who feed off of the life force of mortals. Without the Nightlords' human slave stock, a resource that the Ba'al are not exactly willing to share, the small pockets of the undead that may be found in the Nightlands would quickly starve and go mad.

Hunts are often held to scour the city-states and their surrounding territories (anywhere within easy range of a vampire's hunger) to clear out possible infestations. Commonly bored by the tedium of running their small kingdoms or regencies, even the Ba'al or their Ba'al-Zebul lieutenants will sometimes participate in what they see as a distracting sport, no matter how many of their own servants are slain in the process. A Ba'al vampire hunt is the ultimate example of the cycle of life with two forces towering at the top of the food chain fighting each other for dominance.

## Those Who Hunt the Hunters

"Even by the standards of a soup jockey" he thought to himself as he unconsciously drew his hand through his buzz-cut hair, "today has been one long stretch of boredom".

Lifting the silver ladle from the large pot before him, he absently emptied the contents back in with the rest, the simple action being the only available way to break the day's slow pace. Watching as one of the old men rose from the table directly opposite his soup station, Peter Faust prepared to ladle out a second helping. Though obviously of advanced years, the elderly man seemed wearier than Peter would ever have thought possible. Dressed in a motley arrangement of rags, miss-matched clothing and a stain-covered fur jacket that had seen better days, the old man was just one of many homeless people seeking shelter at Peter's soup kitchen that day.

"Poor bastard" Peter thought sadly as he ladled out some more of the thick broth. "He doesn't even know what's going on and he still has to fight for his life everyday". Shaking the melancholy away, Peter took solace in the knowledge that he was doing his part to make life better for these people.

Just then, across the wide room near the doors leading outside, several outbursts and the sound of chairs scraping across the floor drew Peter's attention. Craning his neck to try and see past the few late stragglers that were blocking his view, Peter placed the ladle back into the soup so that he could lean across the table for a better look.

Abruptly, a figure cloaked in rags - rags that seemed strangely clean for someone who was supposed to be living on the streets during one of the coldest winters that the city had ever known - forced his way through the gathering crowd, dragging another man with one hand. The neck in the stranger's grip was bent at an odd angle while the blood pooling onto the floor from the unfortunate man's torn jugular set the rest of the room into a panic. Using his ragged sleeve to wipe the blood from his mouth, the stranger pulled back the hood of his torn sweatshirt to reveal the grinning, clean-shaven face beneath.

"Now that I've had my first drink, my little sweetmeats" the newcomer hissed cruelly through his sharp teeth, "I think it is time to belly up to the bar". Easily tossing the corpse of the derelict to one side, the stranger moved further into the room, heading right towards the old man in the fur jacket whose freshly

ladled soup was now spilling onto his arms and legs as his hands trembled with fear.

"Sorry sir, but we don't serve your type of food at this establishment, I'll have to ask you to leave". Stepping out from behind his table, Peter held a ladle full of soup in front of him as if show what types of food were acceptable. Shocked by the brazen attitude of the unassuming volunteer before him, the stranger almost laughed as he tried to figure out if Peter was too brave or too stupid to cower in fear like everyone else.

"No soup then?" Peter said with a shrug as he turned as if to pour the thick broth back into the pot. Instead, he quickly spun back and threw the contents at the killer. The steaming soup splashed across the man's face but Peter was too smart to even hope that the stranger had been blinded. Extending his arm to its full length and pivoting on his right foot, Peter snapped the ladle around sharply against the side of the man's head, using the momentum to increase the force behind the blow. Caught completely unaware, the silver ladle caused a trickle of blood to run from the stranger's brow and down his nose. Eyes wide with the shock of being assaulted so, the man slowly raised two fingers to the wound, his disbelief easily read in his face as he looked at the blood upon his fingertips.

Using the stranger's shock, Peter reached inside his sweater-vest and drew forth his pistol. Seeing the automatic weapon as the soup jockey leveled it towards him at shoulder height, the stranger's expression went from one of disbelief to that of pure amusement. Seeing a similar smile also cross Peter's face as the human aimed down the length of the weapon, the killer's own grin disappeared into a straight line of confusion. And then he had no expression at all.

Having quickly emptied the gun's entire clip of silver ammunition into the startled stranger's face, Peter replaced his sidearm as he calmly walked over to the fire axe hanging from a nearby wall. Ignoring the many panicked homeless people around him, some of whom were turning to run out the door while others simply stayed where they were and cried, Peter walked back to the fallen stranger. Using the axe, Peter sharply sliced a leg off one of the room's many wooden chairs and then gave the broken end a few swift chops, quickly shaping it into a rough point.

After pouring the rest of the soup onto the floor, Peter used the heavy, metal pot to drive the table leg into the body's chest before nodding his approval. Finally, Peter dropped the axe and drew a silver plated knife from where he had hidden it up his pant leg, using the blade to saw off the man's head.

With one hand around the decapitated corpse's ankle and carrying the head in the other, Peter dragged

*the body into the kitchen and through the shelter's back exit towards his car in the alley beyond. Leaving the body behind the vehicle, Peter threw the head onto the floor of the backseat and then returned to lift the headless corpse into the black sedan's trunk.*

*Distant sirens could be heard getting closer, causing Peter to rush to the driver's seat and quickly pull out of the alleyway into the attached street, hopefully heading in the opposite direction of the approaching police. Looking in his rear view mirror, he could see the flashing lights of the squad cars stopping in front of the shelter. Peter grinned as the sound of sirens became increasingly more faint.*

*Smiling inwardly to himself at a job well done, Peter felt a sense of satisfaction from catching the vampire that had been preying on the district's homeless people. And it had only taken him a little under two weeks of volunteer work to do so. Now all that he had to do was drive a few more blocks, ignite the thermal charge in the backseat and get clear of the area while the fiery explosion and burning car finished the job for him.*

*"Yep" he decreed jokingly as he adjusted the knob of the car's radio, searching for a good station, "the life of a soup jockey may be boring, but the day of a Team Epsilon agent is anything but".*

With such a long and shared history between them, it was inevitable that the truth of the vampires' existence would be discovered by some humans, who, for obvious reasons, took exception to being treated like food. The first vampire hunters were men and women who already shouldered the responsibility of defending their tribe, clan, family or nation. Even in the most bleak of times in human history - such as wars and famine - when the vampires would rise in greater numbers to feed, these warriors would carry on their sacred trust of slaying the undead. Knowledge and skills would be passed on to new generations to carry on the fight, doings so with a secrecy that rivaled that of their prey lest they be judged as madmen. Some vampire hunters would (and still do) gather in large numbers while some preferred to work solo, in pairs, or in similarly small groups. The latter have usually joined this secret war for very personal reasons, such as revenge for the death of a loved one, or because they are nearly as much a beast as the monsters that they hunt.

No matter a vampire hunter's background or reasons for striving against the tide of the undead masses, he or she is usually wholly devoted to the cause and will fight to the death if need be. In this war against evil there is no R&R, there are no medals, no honor and no recognition. There is only devotion, unyielding determination and unbridled heroism. The question

then, is why would the player characters take up vampire hunting, especially with so many more pressing evils to be fought? Reasons can range from simple demographics (there are more vampires in their area than there are Ba'al), a matter of honor (dad was a vampire hunter), or revenge.

A player character need not join an organization like Pendragon to be an effective hunter, either. A small, independent group of vampire hunters can, for instance, do pretty much what they want and need not depend upon the authority and will of others to act. Nor do independents have to worry about their own goals colliding with some unknown "big picture" held by the upper echelons of their organization. The characters can act and react as they see fit without the need to constantly defer their decisions to some hierarchal power structure that slows down the war. On the other hand, large groups can provide player characters with sanctuary and respite, expensive and rare equipment and weapons, the support of other like-minded men and women, and offer access to information, lore and intelligence that would otherwise be almost (if not entirely) impossible for them to come by. Unfortunately, the goals of these larger groups may (and likely will) be called upon to supersede any goals held by the player characters. Should the players see an opportunity to strike a blow against the Ba'al, they may be ordered to pass it by because of some design or personal agenda held by someone above them in the chain of command. Such is the way of bureaucratic red tape. Lone hunters or subsidized soldiers, both paths hold distinct advantages and disadvantages that must be considered when playing a vampire hunter.

Perhaps the greatest problem facing a vampire hunter in the world of Nightbane is that of the specialized equipment needed to fight the undead. Out of necessity, modern vampire hunters have learned to meld the traditions and wisdom of yesterday with the know-how and tools of today. With the proper mix of modern equipment and ancient lore even a simpleton stands a chance against an overly confident vampire. Unfortunately, this train of thought often leads to a common mistake among rookie vampire hunters. Stocking up on squirt guns and wooden stakes may well prepare a warrior for fighting cold-as-death bloodsuckers but would not even be considered an annoyance by a Hound or Ashmedai. Along the same vein, carrying nothing but armor piercing bullets and stinger missiles for fighting the Nightlords will likely see the warrior becoming an entree should he cross paths with the undead. Most vampire hunters (those who survive their initial folly, that is) quickly learn to arm themselves with an intelligent balance of weaponry

- no mean feat considering what awaits them out there in the darkness.

There are also those creatures who seem naturally born to fight the undead and who possess powers that provide them with an incredible advantage over the common man. Among these gifted individuals and races are the mysterious Nightbane, secretive magi, feared psychics and confounding Guardians.

Nightbane are shaped from chaos, or so it seems, and their very punch can harm (though not kill) a vampire, as may any number of this race's supernatural Talents. Even the weakest of these beings - and the term is used loosely as few Nightbane are truly "weak" - can hold its own against several undead at a time thanks to their strange Morpheus form. A perk to being a Nightbane that should never be underestimated is that their powers work equally well against vampires and Hounds, thereby reducing the need for their arsenal to be tailored for use against one or the other. Rumors also abound that there is even a sect of Nightbane, both ancient and newly born, whose abilities seem perfectly suited to the hunting of vampires, a task that they have undertaken as their live's mission.

The Guardians, whatever they may truly be (and there are many guesses), are one of the more feared enemies of the Nations of Blood. Lacking any need for sleep, able to draw sustenance from daylight, and possessing light powers that can kill the undead, Guardians seem to be the polar opposite of vampires. In fact, if the Guardians were more organized (the Lightbringers are not yet seen as a serious threat) and were found in greater numbers, the Nations of Blood would likely give up Earth for lost and abandon it in favor of less dangerous dimensions. But this is not so, not at the present, least ways, and so the vampires remain, avoiding the Guardians when at all possible.

Not nearly as dangerous to the undead as are the Nightbane or Guardians, mortal magi and psychics are some of the few humans that have earned the grudging respect (and sometimes fear) of the Nations of Blood. Able to focus their training and raw talent in any number of directions, a psychic or sorcerer can never be depended upon to be identical to the next, thus enshrouding these mortals in a veil of unpredictability that is tempered by the power that they may hold. Add to this the technological arsenal of anti-vampire weaponry that is available to the common man and a human spell caster or psychic can prove to be a formidable challenge for even the more powerful creations of the god-like vampire intelligences.

No matter what form or intention a vampire hunter may assume, their long stance between the light and darkness is probably the only reason why mankind was not enslaved by the Nations of Blood long ago.

## **Ba'al Vampire Hunters on Earth**

The Ba'al war has many fronts, most of which are directed towards the Nightbane and humans, but forces have also been sent after the creatures that held the title, "Lords of Night", prior to the invasion of Dark Day. A typical team of Ba'al vampire hunters will consist of either an NSB strike force - for when witnesses may be involved - or a small pack (six or so) of Hounds with one or two Hunter scouts and a Hound Master to assume command. All Ba'al vampire hunters have received additional training in fighting their prey and are likely to be veterans of the Ba'al's sporting hunts in the Nightlands. Similar to the Nightland hunts, a Night Prince has been known to join an earthbound hunt from time to time in the pursuit of distraction.

Nightlord minions assigned to a vampire hunt possess an advantage over their human counterparts in that their armor, supernatural strength and weapons are ideal for stalking their undead quarry. A Hound's Darkblade - a magical weapon for the intent of what manner of creatures it may harm - also proves very useful in whittling a vampire down. However, the vampire must still be slain in the usual fashion, requiring that minions assigned to a hunting party be equipped with tinder (or lighters) and skins of pitch for setting their catch aflame once it has been subdued.

Thus far the Nightlords have mostly kept their hunts in the areas where they are concentrating their invasion forces, using their specialized minions to rouse any local vampires from their lairs and put them to the torch before they can cause trouble. At first the Nations of Blood were unprepared for these hunts, believing instead that the Ba'al's primary concern would be the human populace, and so they were caught by surprise and slaughtered in large numbers in the months immediately following Dark Day. Afterwards, the vampires wizened up and realized that they were in a fight for their very survival and are now taking steps to defend themselves and even hopefully mount a counteroffensive in the future.

The proverb that evil will eat its own to the benefit of the benign is indeed true in some instances, with the Nightlords' vampire hunts being a prime example. So far both the vampires and the Ba'al have been careful to keep their conflict from arousing human suspicion, but it is almost inevitable that one of the two will become desperate or overconfident, resulting in the unfortunate exposure of their war to other factions that would like to see both of these demon forces obliterated.

### *Ba'al Vampire Hunter Training*

A Nightlord minion that has been trained as a vampire hunter will have several benefits. The minion

gains the Lore: Vampires skill at +10%, (+15% for Doppelgangers and Doppelganger Warlords), is +1 to initiative and +1 to strike vs vampires, and they will be armed with weapons designed for combating the undead.

The Ba'al have even created a special **Darkblade Spear** that has the usual spear point or arcing blade at one end of the shaft (3D6 plus base P.S. damage) and a wooden spike for impaling at the other (1D4 plus base P.S. damage; 2D4 vs vampires).

### **A Storm is Coming...**

Not even the Nations of Blood foresaw what would transpire on March 6, 2000 - a day without the grace of light. On that ill-fated day, humanity saw what a beast it could become as riots and suicide spread across the planet like a virus. Under the cover of this unnatural night and the paranoid rampages that it caused, the Nations of Blood strode out from their hidden lairs and struck at the mortals who had held them in check for so long. Entire villages and towns were massacred - some for food and some simply for sport - while humanity continued to writhe in fear. The vampires' gory festivities did not last long because the Nations of Blood were not the only ones who sought to use Dark Day to mask their activities.

The Ba'al had anticipated the actions of their ancient enemies and had placed some of their best vampire hunters in the vanguard of their invasion forces. While destructive armies of Hounds and Hunters swept through the cities of man, decimating the military and constabulary, crack teams of vampire hunters scoured the sewers and dark crannies of those same cities, finding and destroying every undead that they could find. It was a massacre. The fact that many vampires had gone above ground to gorge themselves, thereby making it entirely too easy for the Nightlords' minions to find and slay them, only added to the body count. When the blackness of Dark Day finally receded, over half of Earth's vampire population was no more.

Since Dark Day, the many factions of Earth, both of man and not, have been seeking a way to repel the Nightlords and force them to return to the nightmarish dimension from which they came. The Nations of Blood are no different. Like man, the vampire kingdoms have had much of their power and influence usurped by servants of the Nightlords, a turn of events that has relieved the Nations of some of their best agents and resources. This transgression, more so than the loss of their own kind, has driven many Nations into action.

While some Nations of Blood gather their strength and carefully move forward to regain what

stolen power that they can, biding their time, others have already begun to move. Groups like the Grumian and the Nocturnes have decided that neither the undead nor humanity have the time to wait for a more opportune moment and so are already waging a guerrilla war upon the invaders. Necessity has forced these vampires to side with beings who would normally be considered enemies (and often food), Nightbane and humans included. In spite of shared hatreds and the desire to settle old scores, most parties have agreed to lay aside their differences (for the time being if not necessarily forever) so that maybe they can achieve together what none of them would be able to do alone.

Some of these resistance groups have met with limited success though far more are defeated by their powerful opponents. Unlike their human allies, however, their own losses usually mean very little to the Nations of Blood because they can be replaced with relative ease. For it is not the loss of their kind that angers the undead so immensely, it is the thought that the brazen Nightlords would dare invade Earth in the first place! Such an affront cannot be forgiven. But as the successes of the Nations increase, whether they are acting on their own or with mortal allies, those undead that have not yet joined the fight begin to turn increasingly more of their attention to the front lines of a war that most people do not even know exists.

Who knows, if the alliances between man and the undead continue to prove fruitful, maybe those vampire Nations who have remained in hiding will come forth and add their own skills and might to the battle? In a war against a darkness of pure black, has humanity found its best friend in a similar darkness? We shall see.

### **A Vampire by Any Other Name – The undead hero**

Pursuing the horizon,  
That fleeing light  
Which struggles against the  
Harsh blackness that  
Peers over my shoulder.

I dare not turn around  
For fear of being swallowed  
Within the ravenous talons  
Of impenetrable night.

Instead I shall stare  
Ever onwards towards the morn,  
Existing with peril in twilight,  
Forever chasing dawn.

-Excerpt from the Biography  
of the Vampire Monk

It is possible for a Game Master to allow players to use a secondary or wild vampire (but not masters) as a character, but a player should also be prepared to accept the Game Master's decision if he feels that vampire characters are not acceptable for the current campaign. If the vampire rogue is allowed, then there are definitely some issues that shall have to be resolved.

First, the very nature of the vampire is that of an evil, blood thirsty monster who is often ruled by impulse and instinct as often as not, leading to dangerous situations where the character may lose control of its restraint. It is also possible, like any other character type, for the player's vampire to be either evil or good. Of the two, a vampire of evil alignment would pose the greatest problem within a player party because other characters in the group, some of whom may be good, will have difficulty accepting such a monster among them. If the vampire is of a good alignment, he must resist the basic urges that are constantly assaulting his reawakened sense of ethics. Restricted by his alignment from the cruelty that is synonymous with others of his kind, the character cannot torture, lose himself to his blood lust, nor drink the blood of an unwilling person. Even if the character confines itself to drinking blood from villainous mortals and the enemies of humanity, this may still be considered too extreme and cruel, depending upon the vampire's alignment.

Other player characters can volunteer to be snacks, if they trust the vampire character enough, but most truly heroic vampires may see even this as too brutal and savage an act. There always remains the risk that the vampire will lose control of his thirst, no matter how noble his intentions or beloved the donor, and drain his ally dry. Some good aligned vampires may also drink the blood of the recently killed or even feed on the condemned because, unfortunately, animal blood and that of other vampires provides the undead with no nourishment.

Another problem that will arise with a player character vampire is the simple fact that they too will suffer from the same vulnerabilities as their evil kin, therefore restricting them to being active only at night. This will force the rest of the vampire's group to alter their activities so that they too are mostly restricted to action after the sun goes down if the players are to continue role-playing together. Not only does this greatly restrict the direction and control that the Game Master will be able to exert over his campaign, but it will also require the group to miss many opportunities to act, simply because of the vampire's inability to go

out during the day. The vampire player character may also sit out on the sidelines during daytime adventuring, but most players will resent being left out of the game, even if only for a little while, and the rest of the players will not like having to hinder themselves by operating only at night. Also, especially after considering the incredibly high amount of experience needed for the undead to increase in level, such missed opportunities will cause vampire characters to lag in earned experience even further compared to the rest of the group. It is up to the players to decide what is best for the group as a whole and then they shall be forced to play with that decision. As if all of this were not enough, the vampire's reputation will never allow the character to fully step out from the shadow of his evil kin, nor will others likely ever give him their full measure of trust.

Next comes the issue of what type of vampire to play. Despite secondary vampires being the most common "rogues" and therefore the best option for a vampire player character, it is also possible for a wild vampire to be chosen. The latter must be played even more carefully than would a secondary vampire because the former's wild brethren are of low intelligence, aggressive, outspoken, easily provoked, prone to anger, are easily bored and is in many ways a slave to its instincts rather than a rational creature. In short, they are as much a beast as they are a man. Adepts may also be chosen (if the G.M. allows it), though some (e.g., Nightbringers) are wholly inappropriate for players or for the specific campaign currently underway.

So then, you may ask, with all of the complications, why would I ever want to play a vampire? The answer is easy. Sometimes it is more enjoyable to play the loner and the outsider, the person in the group who must exist on the fringe and walk the razor thin line between the hunger of darkness and the salvation of light. The same elements that make role-playing a vampire character difficult should be looked at as challenging hurdles to be overcome and not as unsurmountable obstacles that blocks one's path. It is in the finding of ways to exist in the group that the player of a vampire finds satisfaction. It is in every well role-played conflict between bestial instinct and suppressed humanity that a player feels like he has achieved something. And it is with every one of his undead kin that he stakes and leaves to burn up in the rising sun that the character regains some measure of his lost soul.

To play a more common and "safer" type of character is all well and good for a while, but eventually the experienced and open-minded gamer will seek a challenge, a character type to test the mettle of his role-playing skills and intelligence. Such a character may be found in the rogue vampire.

# Vampire Hierarchy

There exists among the Nations of Blood (but not necessarily in the Freeholds), a short though definite hierarchy of ability and command. Created through the passing of power from one undead unto another during their creation, this hierarchy is as rigid and inflexible as the vampire's need for blood. Within this hierarchy is created a ranking system of vampire lords, aides/lieutenants, warriors and servants that much resembles that of a feudal system. The status of each vampire is recognized by the others and each social stratum dominates those who are beneath it.

## The Vampire Intelligence - True Rulers of the Night

*"From the maelstrom of the Chaos of Creation did I emerge, my power given form corporeal and my intentions and drive made whole in the body physical. At first there was confusion as I did not realize what had become of me, indeed, I did not yet realize that I was now 'I', for foremost in my mind even then was the thirst. Oh, how I remember the thirst."*

*"The thirst was everything. The thirst was in my mind and tormented me as I struggled to come to terms with my existence. The thirst drove me to seek out others like myself, others with the ability of self-recognition who had been spit forth from the chaos of Not into the order of Is, much as I had been. I found these beings, I thirsted for their energy - for their very life. I fed upon them, I feasted and reveled within their gore, enjoying the satisfaction that their lifeblood brought to my overwhelming desire."*

*"Understand this, my first son, that the death that I delivered unto your kind was naught but a single drop in the depthless expanse of my unquenchable need. Someday the Chaos will recreate life in my image, each such life born with a thirst like my own, each life born upon the path of conquest. These new beings, a shade of myself, shall seek out the essences of others, much as I have done with your race. They will seek to propagate and control, much as I have done with you. They will seek to feed the thirst that gnaws at their every conscious and unconscious thought, much as I will one day do with this entire universe."*

-Excerpted from Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D's partial translation of an ancient copy of the "Words of the First"

The master vampire may serve as the commanding voice on Earth, but it is the alien intelligence trapped in its distant dimension that truly rules a Nations of Blood. Each of the vampire intelligences will have minor variations in its appearance that sets it apart from the others of its kind but otherwise all essentially look the same. Ranging from 100 to 200 feet (30.5 to 61 m) in diameter, these hulking mounds will have six to twelve tentacles protruding from its body, each ending in a fanged mouth. The flesh of the intelligence oozes with a disgusting slime that ranges unchecked across its entire body, including the hundred or-so red or yellow eyes that form a circle around the single, main eye that is centered within the creature's bulk. A dire creature whose sole purpose is the acquiring of power through the propagation of his minions and the enslavement of humanity, a vampire intelligence is a being with enough power to rival that of even a Nightlord.

Only after the vampire intelligence has managed to infest a world with a minimum of 2500 minions - no easy feat without being discovered - can the creature physically enter a dimension other than its own. Once the monster has taken up residence in its new home, the amount of minions can drop below the required 2500. There is no minimum amount of vampire servants required by an intelligence for it to remain within a dimension that it has inhabited but it will still require servants to guard it and carry out its wishes.

In addition to the army of undead needed to bring it into another dimension, the intelligence also requires a nexus point or likewise reliable source of massive amounts of magical energy (P.P.E.) to transport itself and subsist upon once it has arrived. The process by which the intelligence feeds upon energy allows it to control all dimensional traffic through the nexus, thus limiting such travel to those whom the intelligence allows. Furthermore, anyone attempting to draw P.P.E. from the nexus is limited to one third of the usual amount of energy. Also needed by the vampire intelligence is a constant supply of human(oid) blood upon which to feed, just as do its minions. The comparatively low level of magical energy of Earth makes it very dangerous for a vampire intelligence to manifest within that dimension because the number of locations that provide for its special needs are few.

Psychic sensitives can detect the presence of these immensely powerful supernatural monsters from over a hundred miles (160 km) away, filling such psionically gifted individuals with a sense of dread and evil. But the power within Earth's nexus points will disguise the presence of a vampire intelligence by covering the psychic signature of the latter with the might of its own mystical energies.

A vampire intelligence shares a telepathic link with each of its undead servants and so can share in the hedonistic and evil pleasure that these monsters take in their existence of killing and destruction. This link also allows the intelligence to instantly know when one of its creations has been placed in stasis or has been destroyed, but the link is not so strong that the intelligence can hear or know what these same minions are experiencing as events unfold. This means that the intelligence is neither capable of naming the exact location of their minions nor can it identify whomever it was that had attacked its creations.

Any master vampire within 500 miles (800 km) of the intelligence can communicate directly with its lord via telepathic means. Nevertheless, even this link is not strong enough to allow the intelligence to see through his servant's eyes, requiring that a lengthy and direct mind probe be used to extract all that the master vampire knows. The master is, however, capable of concentrating and transmitting its memories in the form of images and words, allowing it to send information that will enable the intelligence to easily identify the faces or place of anything seen by the master vampire.

Ancient tomes that have contributed to much of what the world's vampire hunters currently know have given evidence that at one point in Earth's history, when its ley lines glowed with their own self-generating energies, the lords of the vampires dwelled upon our planet. Worshipped as gods by primitive man, these monstrosities used their abilities to intimidate humanity into offering up sacrifices to their evil while their undead minions served as testimony to the "gifts" of power that these creatures would grant unto their loyal servants. Many of these same ancient sources have described a time of great turmoil and war that ravaged the Earth and drained it of its vital energies, reducing them to their current levels. Within such an environment, the vampire lords became weakened and so all were forced to return to their own dimensions or face the ruthlessness of those parties involved in the conflict. Many scholars believe that this period was the time of the Great War against the Ba'al and, if this hypothesis is true, it would go far to explain why the Nightlords and vampire intelligences have an unbridled hatred for each other.

Most other creatures, including those humans that have devoted a lifetime to studying the ways of the undead, continue to be ignorant of the existence of the vampire intelligences and do not know what these tomes mean by "vampire lords". To all except for the best learned of the students of vampire lore, the vampire chain of command only rises as high as the masters; only a few beings beyond the vampires themselves are

aware of the malicious monsters that actually rule over the undead masses.

### *Something Wicked This Way Comes*

Its 2500 undead servants may act as the necessary dimensional anchor for the transfer of the vampire intelligence's essence from its dimension into ours, but some intelligences also seek to use a natural or artificial focal point to aid in the process. This focal point may provide energy necessary to fuel the intelligence's Dimensional Portal spell or it may be used as a beacon of sorts to channel the intelligence's essence to the desired location, thereby decreasing the chances of its life force being randomly cast across the megaverse.

As such, this "bridge", will be bastioned by a focal point at both ends of the dimensional portal. Remember, the portal used by the vampire intelligences is the same as the spell except that it has the additional requirement of the 2500 vampires within the dimension to which the intelligence intends to travel. This means that the vampire intelligence still requires the 1000 P.P.E. needed to cast the spell, but the P.P.E. possessed by these creatures ranges from 200 to 1200, leaving far too many vampire intelligences without the ability to fuel the spell on their own. Thus, they must often look towards an outside source of P.P.E. energy to aid them. Enter the portal's focal point.

The focal point can be anything from an altar, pyramid or sacrificial rock that is resting upon a nexus point, an isolated magical anomaly, a powerful and ancient artifact, or an immense sacrifice of mortal life at the prescribed moment. Events and places such as these will be adequate devices for the vampire intelligence's needs. It is possible for the powerful intelligence to make the trip to another dimension without such a mystical bridge having been provided and secured by his minions in both dimensions (assuming that the creature has sufficient P.P.E. of its own), but the additional security and precautions are always preferred.

A vampire intelligence that opts to travel between dimensions solely under its own power also runs the risk of being too drained to deal with any opposition that may await them at the other end of their transit. Certainly, the 2500 (minimum) vampires that allowed the intelligence access to the dimension in the first place will provide security at the receiving end, but it is dangerous to gather so many undead in one place, for to do so runs the risk of drawing unwanted attention, thus the intelligence prefers not to waste its strength if it can at all help it.

## Vampire Intelligence

**Alignment:** Any evil though Diabolic is the most common.

**Horror Factor:** 18

**Size:** 100 to 200 feet (30.5 to 61m), **Weight:** 60 to 120 tons.

**Typical Attributes:** I.Q. 20+1D6, M.E. 20+2D6, M.A. 16+2D6, P.S. equal to 40 (Supernatural), P.P. 15+1D6, P.E. not applicable, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6 crawling. Can also travel through dimensions using magic.

**Hit Points:** 2D4x100+100

**Armor Rating:** Not applicable.

**S.D.C. by Location:**

Small Eyes (100) - 5 each

Giant Eye (1) - 225

Tentacles (6-12) - 75 each

\* Main Body - 1D6x500

\* **Reducing the S.D.C. of the main body to zero** will temporarily hurt and impair the intelligence, but not destroy it. **Penalties:** Reduce attacks per melee to half, initiative by half, and is now vulnerable to surprise attacks. Natural regeneration ability should quickly restore the lost hit points, unless the monster continues to suffer incredible amounts of damage. At this point damage will start to be taken from hit points unless the intelligence's regeneration abilities can compensate for the sustained damage.

**P.P.E.:** 2D6x100

**I.S.P.:** 1D4x100

**Psionic Powers:** Equal to a tenth level psionic. Has all sensitive and healing powers, plus group mind block, super-hypnotic suggestion, psi-shield and psi-sword (can be held in the tentacles; more than one psi-sword can be created at a time).

**Magic Powers:** The vampire intelligence is a creature of magic. Despite its mystical and supernatural nature, it does *not* know all magic. However, all vampire intelligences know the following high level magic.

**Spells:** All summoning and circle magic, close rift, dimensional portal, mystic portal, teleport: superior, time hole, restoration, calm storm, dispel magic barrier, negate magic, anti-magic cloud, and create magic scroll. In addition, the intelligence will know 1D6 spells from levels 1, 3, 5 and 7. **Level of magic experience:** Roll 1D6+3.

**Natural Powers:** In addition to those discussed previously, the vampire intelligence can create one *additional master vampire* for every 1000 secondary and/or wild vampires that comprise its minions. The first master vampire is considered to be the intelligence's general and right-hand vampire. A slow kill at the mouth of one of its tentacles will create a *secondary vampire*. And of course, the intelligence can

create a *demon familiar* (see the description that follows).

Superior vision like that of a hawk, nightvision 4000 feet (1200m), see the invisible, see the infrared and ultraviolet spectrum, smell blood two miles (3.2km) away, recognize the scent of human blood 90%, speaks all languages, can read Dragonese (the language of dragons and other, timeless races) and Nosfetrú, and *regeneration* of 1D6x10 hit points once every melee. Regenerates an entire tentacle or eye within ten minutes.

Otherwise, it possesses all the basic physical powers of the *undead vampire* legions, except that it cannot metamorph and sunlight does not destroy it. This means most forms of attack, including fire, poison, drugs, etc. inflict no damage. Only *magic* can inflict damage to the S.D.C. of the body or otherwise affect the intelligence. Fortunately, this also means the vampire intelligence is vulnerable to the same weaknesses as the undead vampires. Wood, silver, running water and holy water inflict damage directly to hit points! Sunlight (not the magic spell, globe of daylight; it is too weak) does *not* kill the intelligence, but dramatically reduces its power. All spells, psionics, regeneration saving throws, bonuses, physical attacks attributes, S.D.C. (but not hit points), etc. are reduced by 75% when the intelligence is bathed in sunlight! Reduce by 50% if a gloomy, overcast day.

**Combat:** Eight (8) hand to hand attacks per melee. Or can use magic or psionics or combine the types of attack; three by psionics or three by magic (plus two hand to hand) per melee. Each magic or psionic attack is roughly equal to two hand to hand attacks.

**Damage:**

Tentacle Killing Bite - 4D6

Restrained Tentacle Strike - 6D6 plus P.S. bonus

Tentacle Strike - 1D6x10 plus P.S. bonus

Tentacle Power Punch - 2D4x10 plus P.S. bonus; counts as two attacks.

Tentacles can also be used to entangle an opponent, wrapping around a person like a python. To pull free of the tentacle a combine P.S. of 45 is necessary. An entangled foe can be crushed by the constricting tentacle at a rate of 5D6 points of damage per melee and counts as an extra melee attack. There's a 1-41% chance that both arms are pinned by the encircling tentacles. The ensnared victim is also easy prey to attacks by the other tentacles, which strike automatically if the person's arms are both pinned (cannot parry).

**Combat Bonuses:** In addition to attribute bonuses, +10 to save versus Horror Factor, +6 on initiative, sneak attacks are impossible, cannot be blinded, and gets to attempt a parry on all attacks. Impervious to all forms of

mind control and psionic and magic sleeps and paralysis.

**Skills:** The vampire intelligence knows few skills outside of magic, but it does know some. Literacy in Dragonese and Nosfetrú 98% (can read magic too), plus literate in two others, speaks and understands all languages 90% (Nosfetrú 98%), demon and monster lore 98%, Select three additional skills from each of the following skill categories: Technical (+30% bonus), Wilderness (+30%), and ancient weapon proficiencies (W.P. sword is usually one of them), plus two modern W.P. (uses them in the demon familiar form). Note: the demon familiar knows everything the intelligence knows.

**Notes:** Other than creating vampires by the slow kill bite, the intelligence and its minions have no other means of reproduction. Vampires have been known to seduce their victims, especially those targeted for a slow kill transformation, but both male and female vampires are infertile.

Remember that the intelligence can create one master vampire for every 1000 lesser vampires. The master vampire must always be a willing victim and will always be evil. The first master vampire will have superior rank over the masters that follow later.

A vampire intelligence can only enter our world when there are 2500 or more vampires counted among its minions but a legion of vampires alone is not sufficient. There must also be a huge supply of magic energy (P.P.E.) and a regular (though comparatively minuscule) supply of humanoid blood. Earth's relatively small amount of mystic energy and the dominance of human beings made it impossible for an intelligence to enter our world, although vampire intelligences' essences were periodically sent to Earth and are responsible for the many vampire legends of old. Throughout Earth's history there have been outbreaks of invading vampires (the most famous near Transylvania and throughout Eastern Europe during the middle ages), but none has ever been able to establish a nation large enough to rival even a single human city.

## The Demon Familiar

Much like the avatars that may be constructed by the Nightlords, the demon familiar of the vampire intelligence is an extension of its master's very life essence, albeit larger and more powerful than those fragments used in any of the humanoid vampire types. The demon familiar is created within whichever dimension is currently occupied by the intelligence's bulk and is sent forth into the megaverse to work its will.

All sensory information experienced by the familiar is simultaneously experienced and passed on to its creator, meaning that everything the familiar sees or knows is also known and seen by the intelligence, regardless of which dimension/location the other may be in. Much like a probe or scout, the familiar is sent into the megaverse to act as its creator's eyes and ears and as an enforcer who ensures that its master's great designs are carried out properly.

The demon familiar appears as a 15 to 20 foot (4.6 to 6 m) tall monster with the head of a bat, immense bat-like wings, and powerful legs and arms that can rend an opponent in two. Because only one such creature may be created by the vampire intelligence at a time, the demon familiar is often kept out of harms way despite the incredible power and strength that it possesses.

### An extension of the Intelligence

**Alignment:** The same as their vampire intelligence.

**Horror Factor:** 18

**Size:** 15 to 20 feet (4.6 to 6 m), **Weight:** 3 to 6 tons.

**Typical Attributes:** I.Q., M.E., and M.A., are the same as for the originating intelligence, P.S. equal to 30 (Supernatural), P.P. 15+1D6, P.B. 1D6, P.E. not applicable, Spd. 4D6 walking/crawling or 3D6x10 flying.

**Armor Rating:** Not applicable.

**Hit Points:** 1D6x50

**S.D.C.:** Not applicable.

**P.P.E.:** 3D4x10

**I.S.P.:** 4D4x10

**Psionic Powers:** Equal to a tenth level psionic. Has all sensitive and healing powers, plus group mind block, super-hypnotic suggestion, psi-shield and psi-sword.

**Magic Powers:** Same as the vampire intelligence

**Natural Powers:** Same as the vampire intelligence; roughly equal to the undead vampire except that the familiar cannot metamorph and sunlight does not kill it (but does not dramatically weaken it). The demon's bite can turn others into secondary vampires (via slow kill). The intelligence simultaneously sees, hears, and experiences everything its demonic extension experiences without requiring any form of telepathic communication (after all, they are one and the same).

**Combat:** Five (5) hand to hand attacks per melee or can use magic or combine the types of attack; two by psionics or two by magic (plus one hand to hand) per melee. Each magic or psionic attack is roughly equal to two hand to hand attacks.

**Damage:**

Killing Bite - 3D6

Restrained Strike - 4D6 plus P.S. bonus.

Full Strength Punch or Claw - 6D6 plus P.S. bonus.

Power Punch - 1D6x10+10 plus P.S. bonus; counts as two attacks.

**Combat Bonuses:** In addition to the attribute bonuses, +10 to save versus Horror Factor, +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to dodge when in flight and can maneuver in total darkness using echo location like a real bat. Impervious to all forms of mind control and psionic and magic sleeps and paralysis.

**Skills:** Same as the vampire intelligence.

**Death:** The demon is killed when its hit points are reduced to 50 below zero. Its death also inflicts 1D4x100 hit points worth of damage to the intelligence itself and causes it terrible pain. Of course, the damage can be regenerated, but until every last hit point is restored, the intelligence is weakened and sluggish; only 6 attacks per melee.

**Notes:** The demon familiar is a true extension of the vampire intelligence that can be created in the dimension that the intelligence physically inhabits. The demon is another, more powerful fragment of the intelligence's life force that serves as a mobile body by which it can survey its surroundings. If you recall, the intelligence itself cannot venture far from its source of P.P.E.; the demon familiar enables the monster to venture into the world unimpeded by its vast size and energy requirements. There is no limit to the distance the demon can travel and it may be dispatched hundreds of miles away to extract revenge or to deliver mayhem. But when serving as a protector, the familiar is seldom more than minutes away, especially when trouble is brewing.

As an extension of the intelligence's life essence, the demon possess all the memories, knowledge, and personality of the intelligence, as well as the same psionic and magic powers. Everything the demon experiences is simultaneously experienced by the intelligence and vice versa, for they are different parts of the same body/essence and thus still linked as one. Only some of the physical characteristics such as hit points, P.P.E and I.S.P. are different; the result of the fragmentation and different types of body. The demon always appears as a giant bat-thing with massive leather wings, powerful arms, claws, terrible maw, and vaguely humanoid shape. In many respects, the horrible creature looks like a giant bat with arms.

**Rifts Note:** Information and game statistics for both the vampire intelligence and demon familiar while in the magic rich setting of Rifts can be found on pages 10 to 13 of the **Rifts Vampire Kingdoms™** book. Remember, in the setting of Rifts the Nations of Blood exist as powerful kingdoms that cover much of Central America.

## **The Master Vampire - generals of an unholy army**

*"The best light to put the master breed of vampires into (besides sunlight, of course - sorry, I could not resist), is that of a feudal king who is paid homage by the subservient masses. Studies of vampire hierarchy have lead me to believe that, along with reigning over the subordinate breeds of undead, the master shares some kind of bond with a greater power, but what that is I cannot say. My own limited translations of the antediluvian text entitled the 'Words of the First' have lead me to believe that there is no other conclusion to be drawn but this."*

*"However, what we do know for sure and what can be proven by the longitudinal studies of myself and my colleagues, is the control and influence that the so-called master vampires have over their progeny. Although I am certain that some sort of psychic dominance must at times play some role in this relationship, I am also certain that the superior power, strength and intelligence of the master breed also causes all lower status vampires to naturally elevate the former to the position of Alpha."*

-Excerpted from the field notes of  
Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

If the vampire intelligence is the commander-in-chief of the undead armies then the **Master Vampires** are the generals. These vampires are the next in the chain of command with the initial master usually lording over the others with cruel authority. Of all the vampire types, only the masters that had a choice in their fate, having accepted the vampire intelligence's offer of power and immortality for the small price of one's soul and individuality. An evil alignment must now be selected, all attributes re-rolled and all but a few of the monster's previous skills are lost. Once the change has taken place, an instantaneous transformation from mortal to undead, it cannot be undone by any means. Becoming a master vampire completely removes from the bodily shell any sense of humanity, except for a few, precious articles of individuality. A partially remembered past with dream-like memories will linger, but remain within the twilight of the creature's consciousness, never fully being realized or accepted as a part of the monster's sense of self.

It is to the master vampire that the responsibility of creating a nation and power base for its lord must fall, charged as they are with creating secondary vampires that will increase the intelligence's hold on Earth. Full of the might granted to it by the

vampire intelligence, a master vampire is a deadly foe by any definition, but only one may exist for every 1000 lesser (secondary and/or wild) vampires in the same dimension. A master seeks to strengthen the hold of his lord upon the world by continually increasing the number of undead that the intelligence will control. Once the vampire intelligence's army of evil is at least 2500 strong, it can open a dimensional rift to the world that is occupied by its minions and enter that dimension physically, no longer restricted to acting through agents alone. This desire, has of course, been curbed with the coming of the Ba'al to Earth lest the vampire population grow too large and in so doing, prematurely reveal itself to the invaders.

Master vampires are the ultimate Alpha and the legions of secondary and wild vampires their ever-hungry pack. Predators to the very core, the master vampire will stake out (no pun intended) a territory to claim as his own and from that town, village, city or region, the master will lord over his creations and pass along the will of the intelligence. Within these dominions, all other masters - including those also belonging to the same intelligence - are seen as rivals to the power of the ruling master and all vampire servants of such intruders are likewise unwelcome. Even the mighty vampire intelligence is not able to control the bestial side of their servants that forces them to stubbornly protect their claimed territories, a behavior that most often ends with the death of the intruding undead. Although such protective actions are usually only necessary against the vampires of rival intelligences, even masters created by the same lord know well enough to keep their undead children out of the domain of their brethren masters.

The master vampire is an extremely dangerous opponent, not only because of the power that he personally wields (which is vast), but also because of the control and influence that he has over the legions of undead and human slaves that serve him. As the moniker "master" implies, this tier of the vampire race see themselves as the ruler of all creatures (with the exception of their intelligence) and so will go to great lengths to prove this superiority. This need often manifests in intricate webs of plotting and deception that seek to manipulate other beings into performing the vampire's goals for him, providing him the satisfaction of proof of his own dominance and the anonymity that the undead need in order to survive. To thwart the plans of a master vampire, whether knowingly or otherwise, is to incur the enmity of an immortal being who is anything but a good loser. Incapable of forgiveness or forgetting, these ungracious creatures never let loose a grudge against those who may have bested them and will do all that they can to even up the score. It may take

months, years or decades, but the master vampire will take its vengeance against its enemies.

Game statistics are to be found on page 179 of **Nightbane®**.

## **The Secondary Vampire - An Optional Player Character R.C.C.**

*"The most numerous type of vampire by far, it is from the rank that I have heard labeled as the 'secondary', 'common' or 'intermediate' breed that most rogue undead come from. And by the term 'rogue' I am not only addressing the issue that the creature tends to operate on its own, as do the so-named rogue elephants of the African herds, but also the fact that the vampire seems to have somehow disassociated itself from the conventional hierarchy and social practices of its kind."*

*"A secondary vampire may be recognized by its slightly bestial appearance, a look that sits somewhere between the human norm and the feral countenance of the wild undead. As befits their 'middle of the road' character, the duties of the secondary vampires seems to be that of the common soldier - a midpoint between the master vampire generals and the wild vampire fodder. However, it has also been my experience through the course of my studies that the behavior of this breed will also vary depending upon its geographical location. Whether this is due to some element of the culture, is the undead equivalent of nationality (something that I one day hope to prove exists), or is something that has not been guessed at as yet, I cannot say."*

-Excerpted from the field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

A **Secondary Vampire** is one that has been created by the master or another secondary vampire and therefore suffers from the dilution of power that comes from not being created by the essence of the intelligence directly. Secondary vampires are the typical variety and are the most common of the undead. The oldest and wisest of the secondary vampires serve as minor lords and barons, commanding or leading other secondary vampires whereas the younger ones perform more menial tasks such as hunting and combating the master's enemies.

A master vampire creates a secondary by using its *slow bite* ability on another individual who may or may not (most likely) be willing. Almost completely subservient to the will of a master vampire and the intelligence itself, a secondary vampire is slightly less powerful - though more savage - than is its creator. This

makes a secondary vampire a very dangerous opponent, perhaps even more so than a master, because the deadly mix of intelligence and bestial instinct serves to create an enemy that can easily be consumed by its passions and therefore become extremely unpredictable. Secondary vampires may sometimes break from the will of their masters (the intelligence and their master vampire creator), but almost always with punitive repercussions. Whether because of the smaller portion of the vampire intelligence's essence or the confusion of serving two masters, the secondary vampire remembers more about his former self than do any of the other vampires, masters included. As a result of this unexplainable amount of freewill that secondary vampires possess, it is from this caste that most renegades (player characters) will come after having won the battle of wills against their lords.

Secondary vampires can themselves create other vampires through the use of the slow kill attack, often choosing family members, friends, and loved ones due to their greater retention of the memories of their mortal life. This is not done out of any need on the part of the vampire to have his loved ones share his immortality, but is instead a matter of the creature's fractured memories compelling him to convert these people into undeath.

Unlike the master vampire whose slow kill technique always causes the conversion of a new secondary vampire, the slow kill ability of secondary vampire will have far less predictable results. There is a chance that either a wild vampire or a foul wampyr will be created instead of the intended secondary vampire, leaving the process dangerously in the hands of fate. See the section on the vampire's slow kill, elsewhere, for further information.

Game statistics are to be found on page 181 of **Nightbane®** with the following addendum: Secondary vampires have 3D6x10 I.S.P.

### **The Wild Vampire - An optional Player Character R.C.C.**

*"Now let me tell you about the so-called 'wild' vampires - they're about as tough as stone and twice as dumb. I've seen these creatures, enraged by their lust for blood, charge out into the sunlight and burst into flame while pursuing prey, and I've also seen them skirt the most cleverly laid traps without even pausing or breaking their stride."*

*"The wild vampire rests upon the bottom rung of the undead's evolutionary ladder and it is a position that suits them. Human - though somewhat primitive and brutish - in appearance, the wild type of vampire*

*depends and survives upon their animalistic instincts and bestial impulses rather than by guile or intelligent forethought and planning. I am not yet sure if the wild vampire is an example of one of the superior vampire types that has somehow mentally degraded or an exclusive breed all its own (though I tend to lean towards the latter), but I do know one thing for sure - these things are some of the most deadly, unpredictable creatures that I have ever encountered."*

-Excerpted from the field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

The **Wild Vampires** are castaways and insane, thus they are at the bottom of vampire society. Can there be anything more frightening than a mad or mentally deficient vampire that has become more of an animal than anything else? These vampires, though considered flawed and the least important of their kind, retain a vital function in most Nations - that of cannon fodder or slaves. They are often used to either stir up trouble and generally cause anarchy, or serve as shocktroopers in a battle. The wild vampire has lost most of the intelligence and ability to think clearly that it's betters have, reducing them to pure killing machines acting on instinct. The appearance of a wild vampire will instantly reveal them as something other than human and as a vampire to those who are familiar with the supernatural.

Slaves to their instincts, wild vampires often act with bestial reflexes in most situations and commonly fly into a blind rage if angered or assaulted. Complex thought, such as strategy, puzzles and the deciphering of clues are beyond the capabilities of all but the most intelligent of this vampire breed. At the forefront of a wild vampire's thoughts are feeding, satisfying their urges (killing), hunting and the commands of their superiors. Like the vampires of the other hierarchical tiers, the wild vampires are generally ruled by their superiors and ALL non-rogues are subservient to the commands of their vampire intelligence.

It is common for these rogues to travel and hunt on their own, greatly resembling any other beast of nature's creation except that there is nothing at all natural about these monsters. Wild vampires who seek others of their kind for some small measure of companionship or mutual protection, but who avoid the large groups of the Ferine Hordes, will tend to stick to small groups of two to six. These larger groups do not have to be as aggressive or predatory as the solo hunters who stalk the outskirts of rural townships or the back alleys of man's cities because these former are better able to swarm a weak or solitary target, allowing them to avoid desperate action more often.

Most vampire intelligences also let the wild vampires under their control roam free to a limited degree as doing so is far easier than trying to contain them. When left to do pretty much as they please in the wild, these semi-feral vampires continue to operate under the overall goals of their creator, one of which is almost surely always to remain hidden from mortal eyes, but within these rules they can act freely. Wild vampires that still belong to a vampire intelligence remain subject to their animal instincts, unfortunately for their masters, and commonly lose control in the lust of the hunt. For this reason, packs of wild vampires are usually given a secondary vampire to fill the role of “Alpha”, thus ensuring that they cause as little damage to their creator’s goals as possible.

Game statistics are to be found on page 182 of **Nightbane®**.

### **A Typical Wild Vampire Lair**

Wild vampires that live away from the control areas of their creator and Nation must find a place to rest when the light of dawn invades the night. Typically this lair is in a secluded area, sometimes an abandoned urban ruin but usually in the wilderness, often in the hills or mountains if such an area is to be found on the creature’s native soil. Whether the vampires have to dig out their home themselves or if they find a natural formation that suits their purpose also depends upon the area where they seek to live.

**1. Entrance:** As an example of the surprising craftiness of these creatures, the wild vampire’s will hide the entrance to their lair by having it blend in with the natural surroundings. Camouflage will include placing the entrance beneath a rock outcropping so that it cannot be seen from the air, covering it with a weave of vines, branches and leaves, and/or building a thatch door that is then covered with mud so as to appear a part of the surroundings.

**2. The Kennels:** Two or three hollows are left close to the entrance where the vampire pack’s beast companions (wolves or wild dogs) can sleep and tend to their young. Not only will the animals alert the vampires if any intruders come through the entrance, but their smell also covers up the stench of decay, misery and death that is exuded from the vampire lair.

**3. Traps:** Not entirely stupid or without imagination or intelligence, the vampires will setup traps within the main tunnel of their lair so as to alert them to the presence of intruders and slow down the same so that the undead can have time to prepare for a fight.

**(A)** The first trap is commonly a noise maker, such as a trip wire that will rattle a string of empty cans

or bells hidden off to the side. Another common ploy is to tie a poisonous snake here so that it will strike out and kill or harm an intruder while also causing enough pain or surprise to make them scream, thus alerting the lair.

**(B)** The second trap is more dangerous as demanded to deal with any intruders that penetrate this deeply. Pit traps, with or without spikes (falls on 1D6 spikes, each causing 1D6+1 damage), spring-loaded blades or frames of sharpened sticks that swing downwards at chest level (-3 to dodge, 6D6 damage) are common.

**(C)** The deadliest trap of all, the third is designed to finish off any stragglers that the lair’s defenses had not yet been able to dissuade. The trap is rarely magical in nature (though this has been known to be done), and is more commonly something like a giant block that disengages from the tunnel’s ceiling to drop down on the intruder (-5 to dodge or take 1D6x10 damage), or a series of grenades/explosives connected to trip wires. This trap, no matter what it is, is designed to seal off the tunnel from intruders but it leaves tiny cracks that allow the vampires passage in mist form.

**4. Larder:** It is here that the undead will keep any prisoners that they have taken for feeding. With no care taken for their captive’s well-being, the chamber is usually roughly hollowed out with rocks littering the floor. This is also where the vampire’s throw their refuse and the remains of their other victims. The bars/obstacles erected to keep the prisoners in here do not have to be opened or removed for the vampires to feed as they can pass through by turning to mist. All captives are hypnotized or their spirits broken before being placed here so that they cannot scream and alert passers by. It is not unheard of for their tongues to be torn out as well.

**5. Lair of the Insignificant:** This chamber is where the pack’s weakest and lowest status vampires rest. By placing these unworthy undead closer to the lair’s entrance, it is assured that they will suffer the brunt of an assault by any intruders, thus weakening their foes even if they themselves should die before the pack’s more powerful members join the fray.

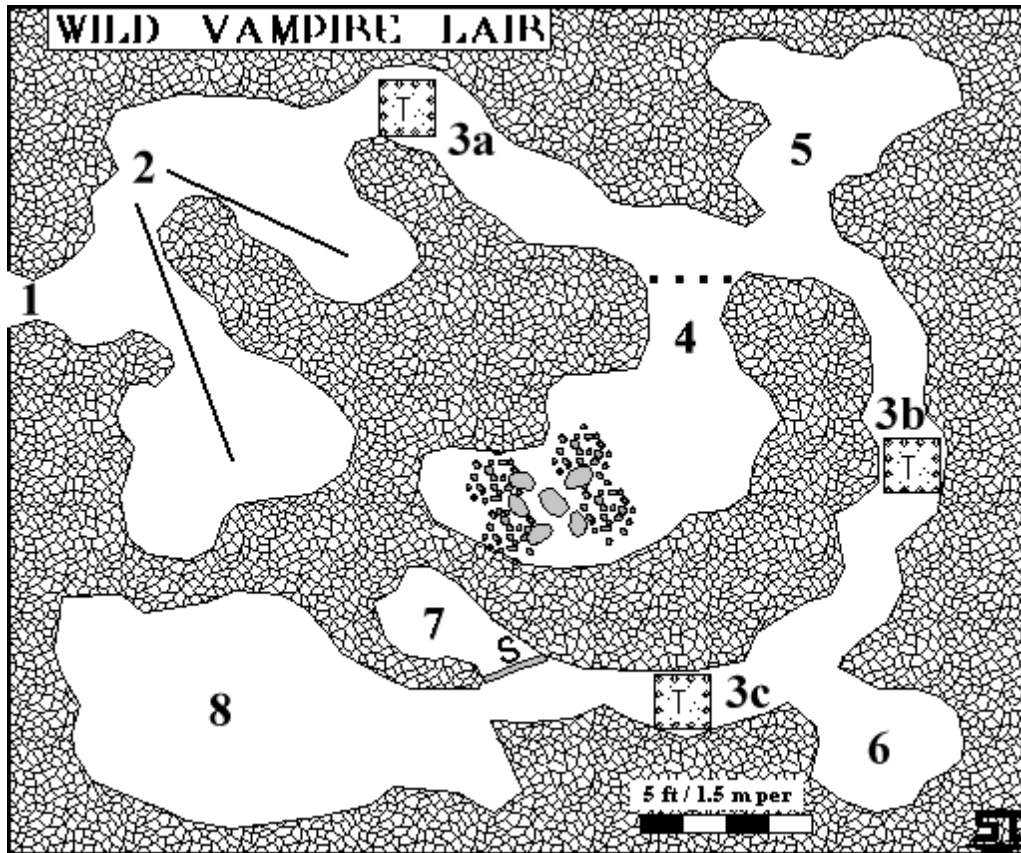
**6. Treasure Horde:** Here is where the vampires keep everything that they have stolen from man’s communities or that they have taken from their victims. “Treasure” is not always a very good description of what is to be found here, though. Certainly there are things such as wallets and jewelry strewn throughout the random piles about the floor, but so too are their shoes, spoons, broken bottles, broken wristwatches, car keys, and so on.

**7. Guardroom:** When an alarm alerts the undead that an intruder has penetrated their lair, one or

more of the pack's senior members will hide itself behind the false door to this chamber. If the intruders should make it as far as the Lair of the Superior, this guard will then spring out from concealment and fall upon the enemy from behind.

**8. Lair of the Superior:** It is here, in the deepest part of the lair, where the pack's leaders and more powerful warriors sleep the day away. The most desirable of targets for a group of vampire hunters, it is also the most difficult to reach.

*Though some of these tales may be exaggerated or more myth than truth, several are from reliable and time proven sources. My final point of note on this matter is that on one or two occasions there were people of proven psychic ability in the area at the time of the individual's spontaneous transformation into an undead monster. In all such cases, the psychic in question noted feeling the presence of the supernatural prior to the individual's transformation, despite the fact that no vampire was within sight at the time. This would*



*lead me to believe that the transformation was not in fact a spontaneous and uncontrolled event at all, but perhaps may be best described as something analogous to a possession of sorts."*

-Excerpted from the field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

It is the **Disembodied Essence** that is sent out into the megaverse by the vampire intelligence to search for individuals that

are willing to do anything, no matter the cost, to achieve their goals. Eventually the essence will find such a person and cease its wanderings, creating a master vampire in the process. If a willing host has not been found within 24 hours, the essence must return to the intelligence. Until such a time, the essence is confined to a form of pure energy and has very little power to affect the world around it; basically, it is limited to communication and minor acts. This lack of ability to do much of anything, despite what the essence will eventually become, places it fairly low in the hierarchy of vampire society. An essence is invisible to the eye except for those that can see the invisible and it may also be sensed by those who can feel the presence of supernatural evil.

### The Disembodied Essence

*"The process of creating a vampire can be detailed with at least a minimal amount of accuracy by even the youngest of horror fiction fans. However, there have been documented instances of men and women being converted into undeath 'spontaneously'. By this I mean that there could be found no trace of an intruder (undead or otherwise), nor could any of the conventional means of determining and tracking the presence of a 'parent' vampire prove that such a monster had ever been present to create the new vampire. Also of note in these instances is that all such spontaneously created vampires are of the master variety.*

As the essence has yet to bind itself into a willing host, it retains its closeness to the vampire intelligence that spawned it. Because of this, the essence's intellect and other mental capacities remain undiluted by the process of possession and so remain similar to that of the vampire intelligence itself. Once a suitable host is found, the essence will begin to charm and manipulate the intended victim by all means at its disposal until the target agrees to allow the essence access to his or her very being, therefore transforming the victim into a master vampire.

### **Disembodied Vampire Essence**

**Alignment:** As per their vampire intelligence.

**Horror Factor:** 12 to those who can see it and recognize it for what it is.

**Size:** About 4 feet (1.2 m) as an energy being. Weight is not applicable.

**Typical Attributes:** I.Q., M.E., and M.A., are the same as the originating intelligence, P.S., P.P. 15, P.E., and P.B. are not applicable and it can travel (fly/float) at a speed of 50 (35 mph/56 km) while in this energy form.

**Armor Rating:** Not applicable.

**Hit Points:** 1D4x10+20

**S.D.C.:** Not applicable.

**P.P.E.:** 4D6; it is a creature of pure malevolent energy.

**I.S.P.:** 4D4x10

**Psionic Powers:** Equal to a tenth level psionic, as per the vampire intelligence, but can only use the empathic transmission, hypnotic suggestion, and telepathy powers until it takes possession of a host.

**Magic Powers:** The essence has no ability to cast spells.

**Natural Powers:** The disembodied essence of a vampire intelligence is but a small fragment of the greater creature and is therefore very limited in what it can do. Restricted to energy form, the vampire essence is invisible to the normal eye (only see the invisible or the ability to see astral objects or detect supernatural evil will reveal them) and is impervious to physical and energy attacks, including poisons, though magic and psionics will cause it harm. Intangible while in energy form, the essence can pass through objects such as doors and walls as though they did not exist. The essence does not sense things as do physical beings and is aware of everything that goes on around it and so it cannot be snuck up on, nor is it hindered by darkness.

**Vulnerabilities:** Most of the magical and psionic weaknesses of a normal vampire will also affect a disembodied essence. Because the essence has not yet taken a body as its host it cannot be harmed by silver, wood or sunlight, though the essence tends to operate at night anyway. Protection circles (simple and superior) will keep the essence at bay and a successful exorcism

or banishment will send it packing to the vampire intelligence for a period of 1D4 months (2 weeks per level of the caster's experience for banishment). They are affected by the spell control/enslave entity and under such circumstances may even work with their captor willingly if their vampire intelligence sees some benefit, such as eventually corrupting the captor into a master vampire.

**Combat:** Two (2) psionic attacks per melee

**Bonuses:** In addition to the attribute bonuses, +5 to save versus Horror Factor, +1 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge when in flight and can maneuver in total darkness. Impervious to all forms of mind control, and psionic and magical sleep and paralysis.

**Skills:** All those possessed by the vampire intelligence though only purely mental knowledge, such as the understanding of languages, will prove useful in this form.

**Death:** The essence is killed when its hit points are reduced to 40 below zero. Its death also inflicts 1D4x50 hit points worth of damage to the intelligence itself and causes it terrible pain. Of course, the damage can be regenerated, but until every last hit point is restored, the intelligence is weakened and sluggish; only 6 attacks per melee.

**Notes:** As an extension (small though it may be) of the intelligence, the disembodied essence possess all of the memories, knowledge, and personality of its creator. Everything the essence experiences is simultaneously experienced by the intelligence and vice versa, for they are different parts of the same body and thus still linked as one.

### **Wampyrs – Outsiders Looking In**

*“As is to be expected when pursuing the study of anything regarding the supernatural and paranormal, there are bound to be things that will stump and mystify one’s investigation and speculations. One such thing is the classification of the various breeds of vampire.”*

*“Not only am I certain that there is some kind of ultimate ruling class of undead that has thus far escaped detection, but there have been reports and sightings – some of which have been made by yours truly – of an anomaly of the standard vampire behavior. These anomalies sport such contradictions as being able to walk beneath the light of day for periods extending long past the point that a vampire should have been burned to a briquette, avoidance (possibly an inability) to assume other forms during situations where such an action is the common response, and an unparalleled show of independence.”*

*“Whether this is just a further indication of distinction amongst previously classified types of vampires or if it is proof of some as yet unknown breed remains to be seen. I have sent word to my colleagues to keep an eye out for specimens that reveal traits such as I have mentioned and they will alert me should they encounter such an unusual undead.”*

-Excerpted from the field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

Pronounced *vom-peers*, wampyrs are the odd result of a failed slow kill attack upon a mortal. Instead of being transformed into a true vampire, as is normal for such a bite, the individual has been turned into a creature that exists outside of the state of living and yet is just shy of the state of undeath. As if this were not enough, wampyrs are shunned by their undead relations and a strong enmity is to be found between the two races, making the wampyr an outsider among outsiders. Nobody can say with any surety why it is that the slow kill has not properly affected these rare beings and instead has caused them to enter their current state, but there are numerous speculations on the subject. Some believe that it is the true and pure innocence of the victim, but then again, maybe not. Perhaps it is a matter of the amount of a given chemical or natural hormone within the person's body, maybe it has to do with his or her strength of will, it is also possible that they are latent Nightbane whose powers had not yet manifested and yet made them partially immune to the vampirism to which they had been subjected. The brain boys over at Martier University have several theories on the subject which they are now pursuing but none have yet to bear any fruit and nobody else has yet given any definitive proof as to why or how this peculiar breed of vampire exists, be the hypothesizer a Seeker, Nightbane, vampire intelligence, or the wampyrs themselves.

Existing within the doorway between life and undeath, the wampyr shares many traits and characteristics with both realms. It is because a wampyr retains some of the elements of its mortal life that many first strive to hold on to their previous existence and lifestyle. Unfortunately, the simple facts that a wampyr still suffers damage from sunlight (albeit not as much as true vampires) and that they must also feed upon the blood of the living makes such an attempt nearly impossible. Try as they might, the tragic secret of a wampyr can only be hidden from one's loved ones, coworkers and friends for so long. In more cases than not, the shocking discovery that the person that they love has become something more than human, more than mortal, tends to terrify those around them more so than would their mysterious disappearance had the

wampyr originally decided to cope with his new life and leave the old one behind.

In the face of such shunning or due to an inability to cope with what they have become, some wampyrs resort to using their new abilities to their own selfish advantage by becoming criminals or predators that are as dangerous, if not more so, than the vampires to which they are so closely related. Other wampyrs, those which are able to control their urges and hold onto their intrinsic goodness, seek to use their powers to do good and will often quest for some manner of vengeance by actively hunting down and slaying the creatures responsible for their new state of being. To this end, many heroic wampyrs have formed alliances with other hunters of the supernatural, including Nightbane and the Nocturnes.

Unlike traditional vampires, a wampyr is susceptible to normal physical attacks and can be killed by such assaults. However, these creatures also possess an incredible rate of regeneration that allows them to quickly heal any damage taken, but if they are reduced to zero hit points, they are placed in as great a risk of dying as are normal humans. Though lacking the useful vampire abilities of metamorphosis and summoning, wampyrs are likewise harmed by exposure to sun/daylight, but at a greatly reduced rate.

Running or holy water, certain herbs, the need to sleep on native soil, and holy symbols are all vampire weaknesses that are not suffered by their wampyr relatives. And while driving a wooden stake into their chest will not render a wampyr incapacitated as it would with a vampire, it will cause damage and more than likely upset and anger the supernaturally strong creature.

Game statistics are to be found on page 188 of **Nightbane®**.

## **Living Thralls – (Sometimes) Unwilling Traitors of Mankind**

*"I have not had many opportunities to study a poor unfortunate that has been enslaved by an undead master, but even from these few rare encounters I can tell you that my paradoxical pity and anger with these individuals was matchless."*

-Excerpted from the field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

**Human slaves**, commonly referred to as “thralls”, are the absolute lowest of the rungs of power within the Nations of Blood. Some such slaves are created through a series of non-lethal bites that work similarly to the slow kill and these unfortunates become

the mortal slaves of the vampire. The third and final bite of this process stops short of the fatal and transforming bite of the slow kill, but is sufficient to allow the undead monster to exert its will over its mortal victim. Thralls brought under the influence of an undead in this way are carefully chosen because a vampire may only have so many such servants (two for masters, and one for secondary and wild vampires).

However, because of the limited number of thralls that a vampire may enslave by means of this process, other means of acquiring human vassals are also employed. Such methods include bribery, blackmail, extortion and kidnapping, brainwashing and the hiring-on of evil mortals whose own interests are very much in line with the vampire's own. Lastly and most unfortunately, there are also humans who willingly serve a vampire lord out of the hope of one day being made undead as well. These latter individuals, deluded and misguided though they may be, are also extremely dangerous as they usually prove to be as fanatically devoted and subservient to their master as are the vampire's mind controlled thralls.

Once mentally enslaved or otherwise brought under the vampire's control, their undead master uses these unfortunate human slaves for a wide range of tasks. Depending upon the thrall's socioeconomic status and the strategic importance of his occupation, the human slave may be called upon to do little more than act as a spy or representative of the vampire's interests among the world of the living. This could mean that the human would act on the behalf of his master in all business matters or perhaps may even be involved in politics, all the while flavoring his stance on certain issues in the direction most appealing to the goals of the vampire.

Not all tasks assigned to a human thrall are equally deceptive or intricately woven into the tapestry of mortal society. A slave that is of low intelligence or social status may be found working as a laborer or simple servant within his master's lair or perhaps he is kept and treated as cattle are by humans – as a convenient source of food. In the latter case, the vampire is likely to only feed upon the mortal a bit at a time, not draining him completely or transforming him into a vampire unless unusual circumstances demand it. The time invested in creating and concealing an enslaved human without drawing suspicion is great and not often or easily squandered upon the momentary passions and whimsy of the master.

Some vampire masters may be wise enough to show their human thralls some manner of favor or reward for the proper performance of their assigned tasks, but most will rely solely upon the strength of their own will to retain control over their slaves. Difficult

though it may be for a mentally controlled human to resist the desires of its undead lord, it is not impossible for him to resist the commands given to him, though raising up his hands in rebellious violence is beyond the ability of this defiance. Resistance to their master is rare, though, because no matter what the reasons for a thrall's servitude may be, they are every bit a piece of property as is the clothing upon their lord's back.

# Vampire Power & Combat Additions & Clarifications

The undead possess many powers and abilities, some of which have often lead mortals to see them as gods or demons. These supernatural abilities, when exercised, grant the vampire the strength and facilities that its limitless capacity and need for violence and death demands. Some of the undead's powers are subtle and low key, such as their talent for mind control, while still others are direct, brutal and vastly more disturbing.

## Sunlight Expanded

Vampires are so terrified of sun/daylight that they must save versus a Horror Factor of 14 to even approach it or versus a Horror Factor of 18 to run into or through the light of the sun.

## Expanded Damage Table – Effective Tools

Not only does wood, silver and water inflict damage directly to hit points, but the damage to a vampire is far greater than to a normal humanoid. All damage is done directly to hit points.

- **Snowball:** Although not exactly comprised of running water, the surface of a freshly made snowball will have enough fluid water upon it to cause 1 point of damage. Should the snow not be removed before the vampire enters a place where the remaining snow on its flesh will have a chance to melt, a further 2D6 points of damage will be suffered by the monster as the melting water trickles across its flesh. Remember that a vampire's flesh is dead and so does not give off any heat, making it incapable of melting the snow on its own.
- **Supernatural Strength:** The very fact that the physical attacks of a creature with supernatural strength are, by necessity, of a supernatural nature means that such attacks will indeed harm a vampire and do damage directly to its hit points (or to the S.D.C. first if an intelligence). These attacks will not, however, permanently kill a vampire.
- **Light Rain Shower:** A light drizzle or slight rainstorm will cause 1D6x10 hit points of damage for every HALF melee round (7.5 seconds) to any vampire exposed to such weather.
- **Heavy Downpour:** A heavy rainstorm will cause 4D6x10 hit points of damage for every

HALF melee round (7.5 seconds) to any vampire exposed to such adverse weather conditions.

## The Myths of Consecrated Ground and Invitation

As has been previously stated, early vampire myths and how the undead are portrayed on television and in the movies have lead to several misconceptions concerning the monsters. Among these, it is widely believed that a vampire cannot enter your home unless it is invited. This is false. It is also thought that vampires cannot walk upon ground that has been consecrated by a priest, such as a cemetery or church. This is also false.

The misconception concerning the need to invite a vampire into one's home probably originated somewhere in the ties between organized religion and the obligatory hospitality that many of these creeds teach as a way to righteousness. Many ancient cultures believed that to turn away a stranger in need from one's door was a sin against one's god(s) because it showed a lack of compassion and kindness. The myths concerning this practice more than likely found its way into vampire lore because of the proven effects of a holy symbol upon the undead. If a crucifix could harm and repulse a vampire, then certainly one's own home, the place where the faithful's righteous hospitality acts as a like symbol of the owner's credence to his faith, would prove to do the same. Or so the stories go. The fact that it was often common practice to adorn one's home with holy symbols, typically in sight of the front door, more than likely also played a role in the development of this legend.

Consecrated ground is just a more obvious version of this same misconception. Because a church, temple or similar sacred plot of land acts as a place of worship, and thus as a holy symbol of sorts, many have come to believe that the undead cannot enter it. Bolstering this ill-conceived jump in logic is the fact that vampires have rarely ever been recorded entering a church or temple. The reason behind this is truly a no-brainer, however, because as one would expect, these structures of holy worship are filled with and covered by symbols of faith. These symbols are what holds the creatures at bay, not the building or the land itself.

Cemeteries also once had a similar effect on the undead because gravestones and burial monuments were commonly adorned with carved or etched holy symbols and not because the ground was consecrated. Such holy representations would usually drive out the vampires once they had risen from the grave (if they had been buried following their death) and keep them from

returning, despite the stories about vampires digging themselves back into their graves each dawn. However, as secular thought swept across the world, cemeteries were increasingly filled with gravestones or markers that bore nothing more than the deceased's name, life span and possibly an epitaph, allowing the undead to seek the solitude and protection of a secluded mausoleum if they so chose. It is at this point that the legends concerning vampires go from stating that vampires may only rise from a grave that has not been consecrated and changes to asserting that vampires return to their graves every morning. The land itself plays no part in this one way or the other, it is the displaying of holy symbols (or lack of) in the cemetery itself that has propagated this myth.

## **Attacking a Vampire's Heart**

### *Long Range Attacks*

It is difficult to strike the heart when shooting with any type of long range weapon, whether it is a crossbow or a gun. **Long range** is considered to be 20 feet (6 m) or more. Attackers must make an aimed, *called shot* to strike and must roll a 19, 20 or higher to strike successfully. **Bonuses to strike** are applicable! Vampires cannot parry an attack from a gun or bow. Thrown weapons like a spear or knife can be parried or dodged.

### *Close Range Attacks*

A close range attack is the usual hand to hand combat or sword play. It encompasses a range up to 20 feet (6 m) away; a distance that can be closed within a single melee attack (a few seconds) and is close enough to have a good view of the target. From this range the character's normal attacks and bonuses apply. The only condition is that the combatant must state that he is "trying to pierce the heart" before he strikes. The player must announce a *called shot* for gunplay or bow weapons. The vampire opponent gets his usual option to parry or dodge the close range attack.

### *Attacks on an Incapacitated Foe*

The old method of "stake 'em while they sleep" is a sure fire way of hitting one's mark. The attacker can easily aim and hit the heart of a sleeping or otherwise immobilized vampire. Such an attack would be an automatic hit except for the vampire's Horror Factor aura and the nervousness the attacker is likely to feel. Thus, there is a slim chance that the *point blank* attack may miss. Roll to strike as normal; a roll of 1-4 misses

the heart (a last minute twitch, deflected by a rib, etc.). The wooden stake (or whatever) has pierced the vampire's chest, but just missed the heart by a fraction, but still does damage. The vampire is now awake, in agony, and angry. A roll of 5-20 is a definite strike, rendering the fiend immobile.

### *A Natural 20 and the Heart*

The roll of a natural 20 (unmodified by bonuses) always strikes the heart if such is the intended target, unless the vampire's parry or dodge roll is a natural twenty as well.

### *Removing a Vampire's Heart*

Although such an occurrence is extremely rare, it is possible for a supernatural creature with powerful limbs, sharp claws and the ability to harm a vampire by means of their natural attack - a clawed Nightbane, for instance - to actually dig into a vampire's chest cavity and tear out its heart. This sort of attack is *very* difficult (requires a successful Death Blow attempt and a proclamation of intent), but is nearly unmatched in its effectiveness against the undead. If the assailant meets the necessary requirements for delivering such a blow, is able to get close enough to the monster without being slain, and is lucky enough to land a successful Death Blow strike, then the attacker will have torn the vampire's unbeating heart from its chest.

Such a maneuver will cause the vampire to immediately fall into stasis as if a wooden stake had been thrust into its heart. The heart can now be destroyed by fire or water, either of which will permanently slay the monster, but if the heart is returned and placed once again in the unmoving vampire's chest then the creature will awaken and recover as normal. Much as like happens to the head if left nearby, only a few moments are needed for a separated heart to transform into mist and rejoin itself to its immobile body. There is no way for a vampire to resist this attack if the roll for the Death Blow strike is successful.

## **Vampires versus Nightbane**

For some unknown reason, the Talents and physical attacks of a Nightbane will cause full damage directly to a vampire's hit points. Nightbane Talents, but not their physical attacks, will even bypass the S.D.C. of a vampire intelligence. Nobody has yet been able to derive a suitable answer as to why Nightbane can inflict full damage with their Talents while spell magic, some of which is otherwise more potent, causes only half damage. Some have speculated that it is because these two races are somehow linked while others believe that

it is purely a cosmic coincidence. The most likely reason is that the very nature of the Nightbane allows them to inflict full damage because they are so much more than creatures who merely harness and use magic - in a sense, Nightbane *are* magic.

Many Nightbane are so powerful that they can render a vampire helpless with a few well-struck blows or uses of a Talent. However, the vampire cannot be slain by such attacks and requires the standard, ritualistic methods to ultimately destroy these undead monsters.

Lastly, although the slow kill attack of the vampire will not work upon a Nightbane, the blood of the latter will indeed serve as sustenance for the former. Several vampires have at times noted that the blood of a Nightbane has a very appealing, almost intoxicating taste, something that those few biologists lucky enough to have studied the blood of a Nightbane have never been able to account for. If a Nightbane is slow killed before it has gone through its initial 'becoming', then the individual is killed outright and will not become a vampire.

## **Vampires versus Other Supernatural Creatures**

Those creatures who possess supernatural strength or are of such a nature that they may cause harm by means of their physical attacks to creatures invulnerable to damage other than by magic, may cause damage to the vampire with physical strikes. Such creatures will cause damage to the vampire equal to their normal hand to hand damage, with bonuses from a high P.S. attribute included. However, even if such beings were to tear a vampire apart and cause sufficient damage to kill non-undead, vampires cannot be killed in this manner. No matter the amount of damage caused in physical combat, even by other supernatural creatures, the vampire must still be permanently destroyed by the usual means: staking, decapitation and burning.

Lightbringers are especially dangerous to the undead because they are in effect mobile suns whose light can bring a vampire harm or even kill it as would natural daylight. Like Nightbane, a guardian cannot be transformed into one of the undead by means of a slow kill bite, though the process will kill the luminescent being.

## **Vampires versus Nuclear Weapons**

One of the most debated aspects of the vampire's nature is whether or not they should be harmed by nuclear weapons. Some might argue that nukes, much like the sun, rely upon a thermonuclear

reaction in order to produce results, hence nukes should also damage a vampire, as does the sun.

What is being overlooked is that the sun is more than just the burning of gases and constant explosions and implosions, much like how a crucifix is far more than two pieces of wood of differing lengths that have been attached to each other. Beyond the physical and chemical factors that result in the sun's thermonuclear reaction and subsequent radiation of sunlight, there are also the mystical and symbolic characteristics of the giant, burning orb to be considered. These same mystical and symbolic characteristics allow the sun to harm and possibly even kill vampires, whereas nuclear weapons, which do not have these same unexplainable characteristics, will do nothing more than knock the undead beast off its feet and throw it through the air a few dozen yards.

## **Vampires versus Lasers**

In the decade that has passed since the printing of vampire source material for **Rifts®**, there have been put forth a seemingly endless amount of questions regarding what can and cannot harm the undead. One of the most common questions is that of the laser. As a beam of concentrated, damage causing light, some people have put forth the hypothesis that a laser should be able to harm a vampire, right? Wrong.

Concentrated though it may be, comprised of light though it may be, it is daylight that harms a vampire, not simple fluorescent, ultraviolet, incandescent, or concentrated light on its own. Many students of vampire ecology have devoted great amounts of time towards experimentation and hypothesizing regarding this question and yet not a one has come up with a concrete, empirically proven explanation for why this is.

## **Vampires and Technology**

Almost all vampires abhor technology and prefer instead to use their own supernatural powers and talents. Technology is the way of man, a creature less than the vampire, and thus a concept best left in the ashes of the undead's mortal life. It is the joy of stalking and killing lesser beings that gives them this arrogance (and rightly so) that their own powers are sufficient to deal with most foes without the need for such a crutch.

The average vampire sees itself as an indestructible force that has not only surpassed mankind but also all other creatures, elevating themselves to godhood in their own eyes. This feeling leads to overconfidence and a superiority complex that few other

creatures would be able to rival. Their natural invulnerability, supernatural strength and talents, combined with the instinctive knowledge of how to use each, makes a vampire a deadly adversary and so it is only natural that such egotistical views would form. Even vampires that somehow manage to keep their will free of their vampire intelligence will most likely begin to develop such opinions as they learn the true power that comes from their inhuman abilities.

The only real technology that vampires find at all useful are weapons, recognizing the massive capacity for destruction that modern technology can produce. While retaining their love for their own abilities, vampires acknowledge that sometimes they are simply not sufficient to deal with a foe that attacks in superior numbers and are equipped with means that are proof against the powers of the undead. Ancient and magical weapons remain a vampire's favorite type, however, and even so most still prefer to stalk their prey unarmed, with only their own claws and fangs with which to rend their enemies.

It is good that the massive ego of the undead keeps them from fully adapting technology to their needs, not only because of the truly frightening sight that a nation of vampires armed with rocket launchers and assault rifles would be, but also because this would mean the use of body armor. Because there are so few things that can harm a vampire, especially of the type that are readily available at hand, the vampire's feeling of immortality and invulnerability is, for the most part, fairly justified. Should vampires someday come to the realization that, their egos aside, body armor would virtually eliminate the problem of their hearts being impaled in combat, the world would suddenly become a much more frightening place.

### **Feeding upon Tainted Blood**

For blood to be useful to a vampire as food, it must be relatively pure. This means that the blood of a drug or alcohol abuser would be too tainted in its intoxicated state to be of use to the undead, as would the blood of those individuals on certain forms of medication. This does not mean that the alcohol, drugs, toxins, etc. will have an effect on the vampire, but is merely to say that the individual's blood has been temporarily altered past the point where it can act as a sustaining food supply. Certain diseases of the blood have a similar result. To counter some of these influences, it is possible for the vampire to take his still-living prey to a hidden, secure location and wait for the effects of the substance to wear off before feeding. If the option is available to them, the undead monster can use the negate poisons/toxins spell to purify the blood.

Of further concern is that of which creatures' blood is useable by the vampire masses for food? Humans are clearly the most abundant and obvious choice for food, but other creatures with which an undead may be presented opportunity to feed upon may not be suitable. For instance, Hounds and Hunters have no blood to begin with, and creatures like the Ashmedai and even Doppelgangers are so far removed from the origins of humanity that their bodily fluids offer no sustenance to a vampire and are foul to even so much as taste. The blood of Nightbane and other such creatures of magic that bear a close relation to humanity or whose blood alone is similar to that of mankind are the perfect cattle to service the hunger of the Nations of Blood.

### **Vampires & Knock-Down**

The punch, body block or similar physical attack from a creature with supernatural strength not only causes damage to a vampire, but will also have enough force to perhaps knock the vampire off his feet. Being knocked down or off one's feet means losing one melee attack/action that round. Large explosions or impacts from vehicles may also knock down the vampire though no physical damage will be caused.

#### **Knock-down Impact Table**

The following is the likelihood of knocking a vampire off his feet (losing one melee attack) by the amount of damage inflicted.

- Supernatural blow of **1-24 points** / explosion of less than **200 points**. No chance, withstands the blow.
- Supernatural blow of **25-36 points** / explosion of **200-350 points**. 01-30% chance of being knocked off feet.
- Supernatural blow of **37-48 points** / explosion of **351-500 points**. 01-50% chance of being knocked off feet.
- Supernatural blow of **49-60 points** / explosion of **501-650 points**. 01-70% chance of being knocked off feet.
- Supernatural blow of **61-80 points** / explosion of **651-800 points**. 01-90% chance of being knocked off feet.
- Supernatural blow of **81-120 points** / explosion of **801-1000 points**. 100%! Knocked off feet.
- Supernatural blow of **121 or more points** / explosion of **1001 or more points**. 100%! Knocked off feet and stunned! Loses all attacks/actions that melee round (15 seconds).

## **Grappling**

The constant physical attacks of creatures with supernatural, or even sufficient normal physical strength (24+), can keep the vampire too busy and off balance to attack them or anybody else (though only the attacks of those with supernatural strength will cause damage as well). Superstrong characters with a lot of protection or capacity to take damage can also grapple, pin, entangle, or crush/squeeze (bear hug) a vampire. As long as the character hangs on or keeps the fiend unbalanced, the vampire is incapacitated and cannot attack others. Remember, with the possible exception of giant-sized opponents, the vampire can inflict a powerful bite even when entangled/pinned. Likewise, a vampire can perform a metamorphosis into mist to escape the strongest hold. But this too is god, because the vampire will lose time and attacks changing from one form to another, especially mist.

## Vampire Adepts - a specialist subset of the Vampire R.C.C.

An adept is brought into the vampire fold through the use of a slow kill, as is any other vampire, and yet they have not been reborn as a typical undead. Possessing skills or powers that differ from those of the standard vampire, an adept - for one reason or another - has been granted abilities in one aspect of their nature that is greater than that of their kin. Using these enhanced powers, an adept is capable of performing acts that would otherwise be beyond the capacity of a vampire to achieve. This enhanced ability also has a heavy price attached to it. When a new vampire is made, be it of the master, secondary or wild variety, the monster is imparted with a predetermined and inflexible amount of the vampire intelligence's own life force and essence. Because it is from this essence that the vampire draws his immortality and inhuman powers, the enhancement of one aspect of the adept's abilities invariably requires a reduction in the strength of others. During the process that creates both vampire and adept, a necessary internal balance between benefit and weakness must be struck.

The vampire Nations consider adepts to be a valuable resource because their creation is so infrequent and unpredictable. Even adepts capable of performing a slow kill will not automatically create another of their kind (the chances are the same as for regular vampires), making these specialists all the more rare and precious to their masters. Because of this, an adept is often granted extra protection by other vampires and/or animal or human servants so that their talents and powers will not be lost through their death.

Interestingly, the adepts are also far more likely to become a free-willed rogue than are the standard vampire species. Much like everything else about the vampire adepts, why the adepts are more inclined to break from the control of the vampire intelligence is a puzzle that has not yet been solved. This greater preference for being their own master, mixed with the intelligences' desire to protect these important agents, means that most intelligences watch their adepts very closely. **Note:** Wampyrs cannot be adepts.

### **Infiltrator Adepts - the Immortal Spies**

The Infiltrator has a greater than normal resistance to many of their species' weaknesses and has

a better mastery of its base instincts and urges. These abilities make it far easier for Infiltrators to penetrate human civilization, blend in, and gather information or conduct covert operations by using the very structure of that society against itself. In this capacity, Infiltrator adepts have become the ultimate agents of the vampire invasion, providing their masters with valuable information and acting as an agent of economic incursions that wrench the control of precious resources out of human hands. With the wealth and power gained from such actions, the Nations of Blood also garner better opportunities to "recruit" individual humans who yet wield even greater power. Through this ever widening cycle of acquisition, the power bases and influence of the Nations of Blood increases.

By looking at the advantages that this adept has over its brethren when it comes to weathering the normal methods of vampire slaying, it becomes easy to understand the shock and danger that a vampire hunter must be faced with while combating these creatures. However, it is fortunate for mankind that the vampire intelligences consider these extremely rare individuals to be too valuable a tool to squander in combat for they are usually ordered to fight only in self-defense or moments of extreme need and desperation. The primary purpose and goals of an Infiltrator adept shall always be that of attaining power and influence, all the while being mistaken for one of the mortal cattle.

**Requirements:** Infiltrators come from all walks of life, had a wide range of attributes, occupations and skills as mortals and so nobody, vampires included, has yet been able to uncover any pattern or requirement for the creation of this breed of adept. Each newly created secondary vampire has a 1% chance of becoming an Infiltrator.

**Limitations:** Only secondary vampires may be Infiltrators.

Infiltrator adepts lose all ability to metamorphosis into any other form and cannot summon fog, vermin or canines. They likewise lose any spell abilities that may have been possessed while human. Finally, the Infiltrator is incapable of creating vampires by means of the slow kill, nor can they use their bite to create human slaves.

**Attribute/Combat Modification:** +1 to M.E. and -1D4+1 to P.S.

**Psychic Cloaking:** The Infiltrator cannot be detected or examined by psychic powers such as Presence Sense, Detect Evil, Detect Psionics, Sixth Sense, See Aura, and so on.

**Vulnerability Resistance:** Sunlight only does a trifling 2D6 hit points of damage per melee of exposure and the adept need not save vs Horror Factor to approach it (if this optional rule is used). Holy and running water, the touch or shadow of a crucifix, silver, and wood all do half the usual amount of damage. All magic - except Globe of Daylight, which will no longer keep these highly resistant undead at bay - and psionics will have the regular effects on the adept.

Sunlight still robs the Infiltrator of the use of his powers (except for super-regeneration), but it is otherwise unimpeded, as opposed to regular vampires that are virtually rendered helpless in the light of day. And an Infiltrator can operate for half a day without being overcome with the usual sluggishness and loss of half the vampire's normal skill ability. However, the adept will have to remain at rest for half of that night to compensate. Beyond this half-day of normal operation, the vampire will act the same as any other vampire who is forced to remain awake during daylight hours.

**Life Imitation:** Infiltrators have a regular skin tone, a rising and falling chest as though the undead creature were breathing and a false pulse within the neck and wrists. But there is still no beating heart within the monster's chest, leaving the deception not entirely foolproof. In addition, an amount of heat that is almost equal to that of a mortal human is radiated, but this can also prove to be a limitation because this warmth is sufficient to melt any snow that may fall upon the monster's skin, thus causing the creature damage from the rivulets of water. This ability is sufficient to fool a passerby or even a hastened paramedic in most situations.

The illusion of a pulse and breathing requires some concentration on the part of the vampire, conferring -1 penalties to the creature's number of attacks, -10% to all skills, and -1 to strike, dodge, and parry. Any blow that successfully wounds the vampire or an impact/explosion of sufficient force (300+ S.D.C.) will be enough of an annoyance to break the monster's concentration and cause the false breathing and pulse to stop.

**Why play an Infiltrator Adept?** Of all the adepts (and the three primary species), Infiltrators hold the most promise for dealing with the common problems that will assail a player character vampire. Not only can the adept operate (partially) during the day without some of the more troublesome worries of its non-Infiltrator kin, but it has the ability to pass itself off as human, a fact that makes the character's integration into a player group far more easy. Infiltrators are the perfect bridge between the difficulties and joys of taking on a vampire character

for those players who want all of the fun but could do without most of the hassle.

## **Necromage Adepts - Undead Sorcerers**

Some mortal spell casters of exceptional aptitude or power have been known to be reborn as undead sorcerers named "Necromagi". These adepts have somehow retained much of their old talent with spells, along with a great deal of their old knowledge and personality, making them some of the more dangerous vampires to walk the earth. Moreover, unlike their brethren who retain their mortal spell casting abilities but are forever restricted to a certain level of ability, a Necromage can learn new spells, although at a terrible cost.

A Necromage is considered a truly valuable asset to a Nation of Blood because these beings are quick thinkers, good problem solvers, wield an impressive arsenal of spell magic and are capable of more independent thought than most other vampires. Many master vampires who are not themselves Necromagi have taken all of these factors into account and usually charge these undead wizards with the task of using their talents to help safeguard the Nation's nests and strongholds.

**Requirements:** Any spell caster of at least the fourth (4th) level of experience and with a total P.P.E. that is equal to or higher than 90% of the maximum amount that he can possibly have, has a 3% chance of becoming a Necromage if transformed into a vampire. For example, a fourth level human sorcerer with a P.E. of 15 would at most be capable of having 111 P.P.E., requiring that the character have at least 100 P.P.E. to have a chance at being reborn a Necromage.

**Limitations:** Only master or secondary vampires may become Necromagi.

They lose the ability to summon and control vermin and canines and possess no psionic powers except for the vampire's telepathic link to its minions. Necromagi also become far more vulnerable to sunlight, suffering 2D4x10 points of damage directly to hit points per melee of exposure (1D4x10 from a Guardian). Lastly, reduce the vampire's I.S.P. total by half.

**Attribute/Combat Modifications:** Master vampires are +4 to I.Q. and +2 to M.E. while a secondary vampire Necromage is +2 to I.Q. and +1 to M.E. All Necromagi gain +4 to save versus mind control, including vampiric. They also retain a greater amount of their mortal personality, memories and skills, granting them greater

independence and four additional skills if a secondary vampire.

**Additional P.P.E.:** The Necromage adept has an additional 2D4x10 P.P.E. beyond that which is normal for his vampire type. At each new level of experience the adept learns to focus and channel its mystical energies more efficiently, effectively giving it an increase in 1D6+1 P.P.E.

**Learning New Spells:** Necromagi may learn new spells by permanently expending an amount of P.P.E. equal to 10% of the P.P.E. cost to cast the spell (rounded off and with a minimum cost of 1 P.P.E.). If a spell has more than one P.P.E. cost or a cost that depends upon the character's level of experience, the new spell must be purchased based on the highest possible P.P.E. casting cost. Upon becoming a vampire, these adepts only lose one third (33%) of their original spells instead of the usual half.

**Spell Potency:** Normally, a spell caster who joins the undead has his spells' strength frozen at the level that it had been at the time of the metamorphosis. The spells of a Necromagi, however, only stay at that level until the character's level of experience as a vampire surpasses that which he had been as a mortal, after which point all of the vampire's spells continue to grow in strength. For instance, a 3rd level sorcerer becomes a vampire. Normally his spells would forever be stuck at third level but once the character becomes a 4th level vampire, the spells continue to become more powerful.

**Why play a Necromage Adept?** Simply put, Necromagi are power. Enhanced weaknesses to sunlight aside, the Necromage adept possesses most of the strengths and invulnerabilities of a standard vampire but also gains spell casting resources that no other undead can match. What's more, the adept provides a player with the additional incentive of greater space for improvement - not the least of which is an increasing P.P.E. amount and the capability to learn new spells - a reward that is sorely lacking in many other vampire character types. Remember though, that the vampire intelligences consider these sorcerers to be a great resource that is not easily replaced so they will not simply allow a rogue Necromage to leave the fold unpunished.

### **Nektek Adepts - technology addicts**

Nektek adepts are an extraordinarily odd case to find among the ranks of the undead because they have completely embraced the use of technology, something that is despised by the Nations of Blood.

Other vampires see the Nekteks as awful aberrations, mistakes that are usually corrected by the immediate destruction of the adept. Only a few Nations of Blood and Freeholds will accept Nekteks and of these rare exceptions, only the Silent Ghosts do so without prejudice.

A Nektek adept is not only slaved to the vampire's thirst for blood, but also to a need to acquire, tinker with and understand all things technological. The lair of a Nektek is an odd mixture of mechanical and electronics workshops, a computer network, tool shed, and gadget storage area. Filled with an insatiable curiosity about machines, electronic components and computers, a Nektek will constantly be striving to create new devices or program better software for their excursions into cyberspace. Such a hunger is not cheap and so Nekteks will often resort to stealing what components they need or performing all manner of crimes in order to accumulate the money to buy them.

A further aspect of the Nektek personality is an almost total lack of ruthlessness. This is not to say that they are not evil or cold-blooded killers because most are. No, Nekteks, like their programs, are efficient and calculating and rarely waste their energy or time on the pursuit of revenge, political power, the thrill of hunting or the need to kill. For a Nektek, killing is just a part of their feeding process and nothing more. Far more amusing to these immortal hackers is the satisfaction of slicing through encrypted computer defenses or designing a more fuel efficient engine for their car. However, when a Nektek does decide to let its chained bestial side show, their actions are typically as calculated and determined as are their program codes.

Nekteks are easily one of the rarest of adepts, a seeming reflection of the general vampire attitude that technology is inferior to the natural powers of the undead. However, the number of these bloodsucker specialists that have been created has been increasing slowly but steadily since the beginning of the industrial age. This would seem to lead further credence to the theory that society, not just random chance, is a determining factor in the creation of the various sorts of adepts.

**Requirements:** Many Nekteks were extremely talented mechanics, computer programmers, engineers, or of a similar profession while alive. A mortal possessing a computer, mechanical or electronics related skill with an ability of 90% or higher is likely to be reborn as a Nektek adept instead of a standard vampire (10% chance). Mortals without such a high aptitude for technology have only a 1% chance of entering undeath as a Nektek.

**Limitations:** Only master and secondary vampires may become Nekteks.

A Nektek loses the ability to metamorphosis into any of the vampire's alternative three forms (mist, wolf or bat), and the use of their super hypnotic suggestion power requires double the normal amount of I.S.P.

**Attribute/Combat Modifications:** All Nektek adepts receive a bonus of +1D4 to their I.Q. attribute.

**Psychic Cloaking:** The Nektek cannot be detected or examined by psychic powers such as Presence Sense, Detect Evil, Detect Psionics, Sixth Sense, See Aura, and so on.

**Additional Skills:** The adept may select 5 additional skills from the Communications, Electronics and/or Mechanical skill categories, and/or from any computer related skill (i.e., operation, programming and hacking). Each of these skills receives a bonus of +25%.

**Instinctive Mechanical Aptitude:** Whenever using a mechanical, electrical, or computer related skill, the vampire can retry a failed skill roll. For example, let us say that a Nektek is attempting to hack into a computer database but fails the skill roll. Normally this would mean that the hack failed and has most likely tripped a security program. In this case, the Nektek may attempt to re-roll the failure. If the second roll succeeds then things proceed as normal and the hack is completed successfully, but if the second roll should fail then the hack has been done improperly, with all the appropriate consequences. Only one such re-roll may be performed per skill roll attempt.

**Tamer Sub-Type:** A rare 5% of Nekteks known as "Tamers" also receive the master psionic power of Telemechanics (see **Between the Shadows™**, page 115). Tamers are considered to be the most gifted of their kind and are given positions of higher status than are typically allotted to other Nekteks. Pendragon considers the Tamers to be one of the greatest risks to their security and so have taken great steps to keep the location of Excaliber a secret from these foul monsters.

**Why play a Nektek Adept?** For players who enjoy playing the outsider, what can be more so than a vampire character who is even shunned by other undead? A Nektek is not a standard character type and will offer players the opportunity to step out well beyond the norm into realms of role-playing that few other characters can reach. Imagine the challenge of playing an undead grease monkey who drag races local

teenagers for pink slips to chop his winnings for parts or examine the possibilities of a Nektek who frequents a popular cyberspace chat room in order to discuss coding techniques with his fellow hackers or as a way to lure unsuspecting innocents to their doom. A fun way to play a Nektek is to imagine him as a mix between Chief Engineer Scotty and a cheesy, leather-wearing Count Dracula. An extreme, I know, but fun nonetheless.

## **Nightbringer Adepts -**

### **Kodarn Freehold only**

Belonging only to the Kodarn Freehold, the Nightbringer adept is a dangerous adversary with few equals, living or undead. Though many of their natural vampiric powers are forever lost to them, a Nightbringer gains several frightening new abilities to compensate.

Hired the world over (and sometimes by those who dwell beyond), the Nightbringers have a well-earned reputation for being able to penetrate any stronghold, of being able to kill any man or being of power, and for having a cruel efficiency that is rumored to make even the Nightlords nervous. While there has never been a known instance of any Kodarn killing a Nightlord (although a few Night Princes have fallen to them), only a fool would mistake this exemption as cowardice or a lack of ability. It is far more likely that nobody has yet been able to meet the price that such a job would demand.

Nightbringer adepts also have a distinct love for firearms, possibly because of their lack of many of the traditional vampire offensive capabilities, thus making them an odd exception to the general rule concerning undead and technology. The Nightbringer is analogous to the gunfighters of old who would hire themselves out to whomever could afford their incredible penchant for destruction.

For more information, see the detailed section on the Kodarn Freehold elsewhere.

**A Nightbringer will typically be armed with** a pump or automatic shotgun, assault rifle or sub-machine gun filled with silver or armor piercing rounds (depending upon the target), a silver-plated combat knife, one or two pistols or revolvers with silver or armor piercing rounds, several wooden stakes, 2 to 5 grenades, perhaps a satchel charge or two, and a specially modified - though lightweight - bullet proof vest to act as proof against staking (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 90, Weighs 8 lbs/3.6 kg).

**Requirements:** The process of creating a Nightbringer is unknown to everyone except for the Kodarn Necromagi. While it is believed that the defining

element of their birthing is a powerful ritual performed over the newly converted vampire at the moment of transformation, this has never been confirmed. Similarly, if there is some special need for a specific type of mortal, perhaps requiring a certain kind of personality or other like factor, it is something that no outsider has yet been able to learn.

**Limitations:** All Nightbringers are secondary vampires; it is unknown if it is possible to have wild or master vampire adepts of this sort because all of the Kodarn's wild vampires were destroyed with the death of their vampire intelligence and the only surviving master is a Necromage. Regardless, it can be said with certainty that no such instance has happened (that has ever been noticed by outsiders) since the Kodarn Freehold was first established.

The Nightbringer loses the ability to summon vermin or canines (but retains its power to summon fog) and it can no longer access *any* of its psionic powers, including the telepathic link to other vampires. Nor can it metamorphosis into any other forms, exert its will over other vampires, or make human slaves by use of its bite. Lastly, all mortal magical abilities are always forgotten, though any lore or non-spell casting, magic-oriented skills, like the sorcerer's skill "understand the principles of magic", may remain.

**Attribute/Combat Modification:** +2D4

P.P. and +3D6 to Speed. They also regenerate twice as fast, gain an additional +3 bonus to initiative, and +3 attacks/actions per melee. The Nightbringers' great love of firearms has also conferred upon them a +2 bonus to strike with all modern small arms, be the shot aimed, a burst or wild. Nightbringers are true masters at meting out death.

**Additional Skills:** Intelligence 55%, Prowl 75%, Assassination 65%, and two additional modern weapon proficiencies.

**Immunity to Mind Control:** All Nightbringers are immune to all kinds of mind control, including that of other vampires and intelligences, except for the sole remaining Kodarn master.

**Shadow Sliding:** Much like the Nightbane Talent of the same name, the Nightbringer adept is able to transform itself into an insubstantial, two-dimensional shadow. While in this state the vampire seems as little more than a flickering shadow that catches the eye briefly and then fades into the darkness, unnoticed except by the subconscious. While shadow sliding, the vampire is almost invisible and can slither flatly along walls or

across the ground, able to go through any opening except those that are airtight. Along with the vampire's clothes and small personal items, the adept may carry up to 10 additional pounds (4.5 kg) of weight, plus one pound (0.45 kg) per additional 4 P.P.E. expended. It is possible for two or more Nightbringers to share a load between them, combining their weight limitations, so long as the item to be carried is in contact with all the adepts involved when they simultaneously assume shadow form. It takes one full melee attack/action to both turn into and out of shadow form.

The ability to see the invisible will not reveal the Nightbringer because the power is turning the vampire into a shadow, not actually causing him to become invisible in the traditional sense

**P.P.E. Cost:** Use of this ability requires no spending of P.P.E., meaning that if the vampire chose he could remain in shadow form indefinitely. However, the carrying of extra weight *does* cost P.P.E. (as previously outlined) and the Nightbringer is also unable to attack or pick up/move objects that were not enveloped by his shadow sliding ability while this power is active.

**Mirror Walking:** See the information regarding the member variation within the Kodarn Freehold for details.

**Why play a Nightbringer Adept?** Simply stated, you shouldn't. Nightbringers are meant to be used as NPC villains and not as player characters. It is not their powers that pose a problem, it is their background and goals that make it virtually impossible for one of these vampires to be successfully integrated into a player character group without widely detracting from the Kodarn's mystique. While it is *possible* that a Nightbringer rogue may be allowed, the limited number of Kodarn that may exist at any given time would require that the entire Freehold devote itself to tracking down and slaying the renegade in order to return its life force.

## **Packlord Adepts - Master of Beasts**

Some people just get along well with animals and share a rapport with beasts that goes beyond the common pet/master relationship. When such a person is transformed into a vampire, there is a chance that he or she will rise as a Packlord adept. A Packlord retains their closeness to animals and will constantly be surrounded by them. These beasts will be as close to a friend as any undead may ever know and will act as guardians, defenders and assassins. Many superior vampires will take advantage of the abilities of the

Packlord and use them as scouts, spies and as vanguards who both protect the lair and sniff out enemies who may have penetrated its other defenses. Unfortunately, this adept possesses a mind that resembles that of a beast more so than other vampires of its race, leaving it with fewer memories and skills.

As one would expect of such an animalistic creature, most Packlords choose to dress simply, almost rustically or barbarically, in a manner that makes them truly seem to be the lords of their beasts. Though a few Packlord adepts treat their animals as they do any other creature, with intense cruelty and hatred, a surprising majority will actually care for and groom their beasts with an intensity that could almost be labeled as love. Many such adepts live with their animals at all times, mingling the scent of the beasts with their own, thus showing their “pack” that they are truly one with the adept in the position of alpha.

**Requirements:** As a mortal, the individual must have had a bewildering rapport with and affinity for animals, allowing for a 8% chance of becoming a Packlord once transformed into one of the undead.

**Limitations:** All three types of vampire may be a Packlord, though the most common are wild vampires with masters being the rarest.

The Packlord loses the ability to summon fog and to metamorphosis into mist. Remember, unless the vampire somehow has any wooden or silver bullets that penetrate his body removed, something that obviously cannot be done by transforming into mist, the vampire cannot regenerate the damage caused by such items.

Furthermore, because of their more animalistic minds, the adept suffers penalties to resist the mind control of vampires as though he was one step lower in the vampire hierarchy; master vampires save as if a secondary vampire, the secondary vampire as a wild vampire and the wild Packlord suffers an additional -2 penalty to those applicable to normal wild vampires. They also only possess half the number of skills that a regular vampire of its type (master, secondary or wild) would have.

Packlords are able to create new vampires by using their slow kill, but they cannot use this ability to enslave humans.

**Attribute/Combat Modifications:** +1D4 to P.P., +1 to P.S. and +2 to P.E.

**Additional Summoning Ability:** The Packlord can summon triple the normal amount of animals for double the regular duration, per level of experience. A mental and emotional bond is also shared with the animals,

creating an empathic link of sorts that allows the vampire and its beasts to form an intense relationship of trust and companionship.

**Enhanced Animal Metamorphosis:** All animal attack methods do an extra 1D of damage and the animal form also gains one extra attack/action per melee.

**Why play a Packlord Adept?** Packlords are great for players who enjoy using characters that speak monosyllabically and spend as much time causing problems for the player group as they do for the enemy. A character of this type can add a very interesting ingredient to a group’s composition, causing problems such as having the vampire’s animals around all the time and having to deal with a teammate that is sometimes more animal than an intelligent creature. Packlord player characters are the most fun when played to the extremes of their bestial personality, allowing the player to act in ways that he wouldn’t with most other character types if he ever hoped to be thought of as sane.

## **Psynek Adepts - the Initiates and Mindlords**

When a powerful mortal psychic is transformed into an undead, there is a chance that he or she will be reborn as a Psynek adept. A Psynek can use the combination of his vampire and psionic talents to sneak into the most heavily guarded buildings, to steal something or silently kill someone, and then be gone before anyone is the wiser. The Nations of Blood have also taken to using these adepts to steal or plant items within the homes of human opponents in order to discredit or blackmail them. This tactic has proven to be very effective and has caused more than one economic or political rival of a Nations’ cause to back down. Their talents often make the Psynek the commando or assassin of choice for the Nations of Blood.

Perhaps the greatest problem with the Psynek is that mortal psychics can detect them with ease. This makes it hazardous to keep these vampires within a communal lair because any vampire hunters with a psychic among their numbers can find and track them with little difficulty. Not only does the presence of a Psynek place the entire lair at risk, but a psychic sentry can also detect one of these adepts that is trying to sneak past his post.

**Requirements:** Upon being turned into a vampire, master psionics have a 10% chance of being reborn as a Psynek while major psionics have only a 4% chance.

Only master and major psychics can become this adept type.

**Limitations:** Only secondary or master vampires may be Psyneks.

Any psychic character within 200 feet/61 m (double if possessing the Sense Evil psionic power) of a Psynek adept has a chance (45% for master, 35% for major and 15% for minor psionic characters) of automatically detecting the presence of the vampire. The revelation of the vampire's proximity manifests as a dull throbbing within the psychic's mind and the feeling that there is a nearby evil, both of which get slightly stronger the nearer the Psynek gets. The throbbing will not cause any pain, but will become more and more annoying as it increases in strength.

Psyneks also lose the ability to metamorphosis into both their wolf and bat shapes, retaining only their ability to change into fog. Furthermore, these adepts are -4 to save vs magic and suffer full damage (instead of the usual half), from attack-type spells (see the section on *Vampires versus Magic* for further details). This means that magic users are often the first to be attacked by a Psynek.

Finally, Psynek adepts regenerate at a reduced rate of 1D6 points per melee.

**Attribute/Combat Modifications:** -2 to P.S., -2 to Speed, -1 to P.P., +2D4 M.E. and +1 I.Q. Gains an additional 5D6 plus their M.E. attribute in I.S.P. if they used to be master psionics or 2D6 plus their M.E. for major psionics. All are +2 to save vs psionics and are +3 vs the mind control of other vampires, including that of their own vampire intelligence!

**Enhanced Psionic Ability:** Instead of possessing their mortal psionic powers, the mingling of the psionic energy and vampire essence causes a mutation that requires that entirely new abilities be chosen. These are in addition to the standard psychic abilities of the undead. Whether the adept is a master or secondary vampire, all Psyneks save as master psychics.

**Major Psychics (Initiate):** The vampire gets the normal psionic abilities of the vampire race and selects 1 power each from the Sensitive, Healing, Physical and Master categories. One new power from either the Sensitive, Healing, or Physical category is selected at every even numbered level of experience while new Master psionic powers are selected at levels 6 and 12. These lesser Psyneks are referred to by the title, **Initiate**, and their powers are equal to a *fifth level psychic*, no matter the vampire's actual level of experience.

**Master Psychics (Mindlords):** For those Psyneks who were master psychics while alive, select 2 powers each from the Sensitive, Healing, Physical and Master categories. One new power from either the Sensitive, Healing, or Physical category is selected at every additional level of experience while new Master psionic powers are selected at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. There are few human psychics that can match the psionic power of these menacing adepts who refer to themselves as **Mindlords**. The psionic powers of a mindlord are equal to those of a *seventh level psychic*, no matter the vampire's actual level of experience.

**Why play a Psynek Adept?** Like the Necromage adepts, to be a Psynek is to possess power. Very few mortal psychics can oppose the strength of a Psynek, a creature whose inborn vampire abilities and psychic might make it a dangerous character indeed. Psyneks are also fun to play because their abilities increase rather well as experience is gained, granting a sense of accomplishment that is rare among vampire character types.

### **Shaper Adepts - Monsters among Monsters**

Possessing a strength that is far beyond that of even the super-strong, regular vampire, Shapers also have a fearsome aspect to their metamorphosis abilities. When transformed into either their canine or bat forms, they are larger, stronger and far more demonic than are those of other undead. The animal's features are more angular and feral, and the eyes constantly glow with a harsh red light that no natural beast could possibly possess. The adept can also assume a new shape that is unique to them alone. Monstrous and terrifying, this "horror" form is perversely half man and half animal - an immense and destructive hybrid body that allows the vampire to slaughter people wholesale and fight tooth and claw with even the hardest hitting of Nightbane.

Shapers are used to guard those areas that require the utmost security, act as shocktroops in battle, assassinate those creatures who are not so easily killed, and as bodyguards for important pawns or other vampires. If the sight of the vampire in horror form is not enough to dissuade an opponent, the vampire's might should be satisfactorily capable of doing so. Wild vampire Shapers must be reigned in tightly by the mental commands of their superiors so that they do not use their incredible strength to go on a rampage and in so doing expose their Nation to scrutiny. For this and other related reasons, wild Shapers are often sent to guard remote locations where they can be kept in reserve until needed in battle. However, there are times

when unleashing a maddened, animal-like wild Shaper into a population can work towards the Nations' ends.

**Requirements:** Most Shaper were brutal, hostile monsters even while mortal. Now, having joined the ranks of a vampire intelligence, the individual's bestial and angry nature has been harnessed into one of the most violent and uncontrollable of the adept types. For such mortals, there seems to be a 4% chance of being reborn as a Shaper adept when they are made anew into vampires. For those not of this personality type, the chance is less than 1%.

**Limitations:** Only secondary and wild vampires may be a Shaper.

Shapers lose the ability to summon fog, turn into mist, use super-hypnotic suggestion and the following psionic powers: Alter Aura (self), Presence Sense, Sense Evil, Super Hypnotic Suggestion, and Induce Sleep. It also takes double damage per melee of exposure to daylight or the shadow/touch of a cross. The adept loses the use of 1D4+1 skills.

**Attribute/Combat Modifications:** -1D4 to I.Q. (minimum of 4), +3D4 to P.S. and +1D6 to P.E. The Shapers is a hulking brute whose body gains 1D6+1 inches (5 to 17.8 cm) and 2D4x10 lbs (9 to 36 kg) of muscle upon becoming a vampire.

**Demonic Animal Form Metamorphosis:** When transformed into animal form, Shapers have the following statistics instead of those belonging to regular vampires and is about 50% larger.

### **Wolf**

Horror Factor: 12

Run: Speed of 44 (30 mph/48 km).

Other Natural Abilities: Track by scent 55%, and leap 30 feet (9.1 m) across 10 feet (3 m) high.

Combat: +3 to strike, +1 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 on initiative, +10% to prowl.

Attacks per melee: Add one to the normal humanoid number of attacks. Bite: 5D6+6 damage (no P.S. bonus), claw: 5D4 plus P.S. bonus.

### **Bat**

Horror Factor: 12

Fly: Speed of 50 (35 mph/56 km).

Other Natural Abilities: as per the normal vampire's bat form.

Combat: +3 to strike, +1 to dodge, +5 to dodge in flight, +5% on prowl ability.

Attacks per melee: Half the normal number of attacks. Bite inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. damage, claws do 2D6 plus

P.S. damage bonus. Can inflict vampire slow kill bite and drink blood while in bat form.

**Horror Form Metamorphosis:** Along with the normal canine and bat animal bodies that may be metamorphosed into, the adept has a new form that is reserved expressly for use in battle. When first transformed into a vampire the Shaper must roll percentile in order to determine whether it will have the bat-like or canine-like horror form.

**Canine Horror Form (01-50%):** The canine horror form resembles a wolf, only it stands upright on its canine legs and it has finger-like claws and opposable thumbs on its upper arms/legs that allow it to manipulate tools and weapons. There is very little hair on the body, appearing here and there in patches of tough, bristly fur. The torso is wide and slightly bent forward, allowing the canine-thing to easily switch from two to all four legs so that it may move faster, like a true wolf. The creature's skin is a pale, sickly yellow, but its eyes glow with a malicious shade of red.

Attributes Modifiers: +2D6+2 P.S., +2 P.P., +1D6 P.E., +2D6 to Spd. on two legs, +4D6 to Spd. on all four legs, +6D6 Hit Points. Otherwise, the attributes are unchanged.

Horror Factor: 16

Combat Modifiers: +1 to initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge and roll with impact, +5% to prowl. These are in addition to the vampire's normal bonuses. Can leap 30 feet (9.1 m) high or long. These are in addition to the usual bonuses.

Damage: Bite inflicts 6D6 damage (no P.S. bonus); based on the supernatural strength damage chart, a claw strike inflicts normal punch damage +2D6, a power claw inflicts damage as a power punch +4D6 (counts as two attacks).

**Bat Horror Form (51-00%):** A bat horror form looks identical to a smaller version of the vampire intelligence's demon familiar. Appearing as a giant bat-thing with large leather wings sprouting from its back, tightly muscled arms, claws, sharp fangs, and an upright humanoid shape, the horror form looks like a giant bat with arms and glowing red eyes.

Attributes Modifiers: +1D6+2 P.S., +1D4+1 P.P., +1D6 P.E., +3D6 to Spd. on two legs, +3D6 Hit Points. Can fly at a speed of 66 (45 mph/72 km). Otherwise, the attributes are unchanged.

Horror Factor: 16

Combat Modifiers: +2 to initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +5 to dodge while flying, +2 roll with impact. These are in addition to the vampire's

normal bonuses. These are in addition to the usual bonuses.

Damage: Bite inflicts 1D4x10 damage (no P.S. bonus); based on the supernatural strength damage chart, a claw strike inflicts normal punch damage +1D6 plus P.S. bonus, a power claw inflicts damage as a power punch +2D6 (counts as two attacks).

**Why play a Shaper Adept?** Let's face it, sometimes all we want to do is kick ass and take a few names, and the Shaper can certainly do that. A Shaper player character should be role-played as always being on the verge of losing its temper and becoming violent, a trait that definitely makes for interesting role-playing, especially if the group has some characters in it that would rather solve problems with their heads than by force of arms. Unfortunately, Shapers are good for very little outside of intimidation and battle and the loss of many skills makes them very difficult to use outside of this capacity.

## The Nations of Blood

When a vampire intelligence first gains a foothold on Earth by corrupting some greedy individual, the first thing its newly created servant does is establish what has become known as a **Nation of Blood**, a name given to this menace by the other races of the megaverse. Each Nation comprises the collected minions of that intelligence, often going so far as to also encompass any humans that have come under the vampires' sway. Unlike segmented yet interrelated societies such as humanity, the Nations of Blood are not a collective association or organization and do not share a set of rules, common interests or allegiances to each other.

Like any predator, the Nations have carved the world into defined territories that prescribe their hunting grounds (areas of human population), and power base. A single Nation of Blood unto itself is a dangerous adversary and so it is lucky for mankind that the vampire intelligences that rule over these nocturnal kingdoms see each other as natural enemies and rivals. If the Nations of Blood were to ever overcome their loathing for each other and unite in alliances then all mankind would surely be made to suffer.

The individual Nations are further defined as different from each other by the minor variations that are the natural results of being born from different masters. While the respective vampire intelligences resemble one another in appearance, methods of feeding and procreation, and the basic powers that they possess, there is evidence that they may not all be of the same race.

Following are detailed descriptions of some of these Nations, specifically those possessing individual traits that set them apart from what are considered to be typical vampires. Whether the Nation's differences from the others arises from its methods, the direction of its goals or a behavioral or physical difference from a standard undead, each of the Nations outlined below is in some way unique and thus worthy of elaboration.

### The Ascended

Legends concerning creatures who demand blood to survive are a global phenomenon that has been proliferate in many ancient cultures. The eldest of European and South and Central American civilizations have left proof that they once offered up human sacrifices to appease the hunger and desires of their gods, a fact that is not disputed by the scientific community. However, what if the beings demanding these sacrifices had not really been deities?

Minions of Qixon Kay Kion, one of the megaverse's eldest vampire intelligences, have been coming to Earth for thousands of years, using their powers to impress the planet's primitives into worshiping them as gods. The deific vampires would demand that the locals feed them by sacrificing some of their population on crude altars, an arrangement that allowed them to glut themselves without having to lift a finger to hunt. Though the vampire intelligences are certainly not lacking in reasons to despise each other, the methods of Qixon Kay Kion did nothing to endear it to its fellows. Seen to be the devious stratagem of a weakened and lazy being, Qixon Kay Kion's approach to feeding has often encouraged other intelligences to try and usurp his high standing in the vampire hierarchy. However, these upstarts would all discover that the sacrifices offered up to Qixon Kay Kion had strengthened it beyond imagining, thus all such attempts would fail pitifully.

Unfortunately for this Nation, colonialism and the intellectual evolution of man would see an end to its era of power. As its human priests fell beneath the musket balls and swords of the European invaders, Qixon Kay Kion began to grow weaker, as did its minions. Having lived so long upon the blood of sacrifices, the Ascended had lost almost all of their ability to hunt and what few predatory instincts remained were not sufficient to slake the Nation's thirst. The Ascended quickly began to starve and go mad while their intelligence lord grew weak from attrition.

Today, the Ascended are scattered to the winds. With only a few remote pockets of primitive man remaining to still grant them the sacrifices that they need, this Nation of Blood is currently the weakest and most secluded of the lot. Starving and reminiscing of their glory days of power, only a handful of Ascended have managed to attain followers and food through continued sacrifices. Even among the latter Ascended, insanity is the norm due to the link that these creatures share with each other and Qixon Kay Kion.

Part of the Ascendeds' insanity entails their wholly buying into their own story of godhood. These monsters now believe that they are deific power realized and that humanity exists at their discretion alone. This, along with their ineptitude for self-preservation, has contributed to their current low numbers. Most of the time these creatures cower in the darkness of man's fallen cities, too intimidated by their own inadequacies to hunt for food. Sometimes though, they will strike out, maddened by thirst and filled with believed omnipotence. At such times they will have no care for the secrecy necessary for the continued survival of their kind and will openly wade among mortals, wreaking wanton havoc and death while feeding. Almost always

such delusional blood rages are accompanied by wild, ranting speeches espousing their godhood and all-powerful abilities. It is at this time that the vampire hunters usually step in and slay the exposed creature who is too filled with his own supposed supremacy to effectively act in its own defense.

Other than these uncommon rampages, the Ascended are largely unseen and isolated from humanity and undead alike. Even Qixon Kay Kion has hidden itself among the dimensions so that the enemies that once coveted its power would not find it and exact revenge. Paintings and carvings found at ziggurats in South and Central America would lead the well informed to believe that this hiding place is Earth, but this has never been confirmed.

Vampires of the Ascended dwell among the tattered remnants of the civilizations that they once ruled, looking out onto empty courts and vine-covered altars. The ruins that these undead now call home are as much an ironic symbol of their fall from power as anyone could ever devise. Most commonly encountered by archaeologists who lucklessly open an ill-chosen sarcophagus, tomb robbers who would steal Aztec gold, or brave adventurers who are looking into tales of massacring monsters, the Ascended are now as much a part of history as the religions that they coerced humanity into erecting in their favor.

Recently there have even been rumors circulating among those in the know that an Ascended has appeared in New Mexico and have erected a death cult in her own name. If this is true, it is likely that the vampire will draw the attention of the Nightlords, an event that could force the zealous undead into taking an action that could reveal both forces to the world of man. It is also likely that if the Nightlords do not initiate some action, as the death cult grows its “deity” may see the Nightlords as a rival pantheon and may herself seek to settle things.

**Symbol:** None beyond those used by their various human worshipers.

**Nation Demographics:** These vampires have all been created from the people of the few remaining “primitive” cultures of Earth, typically those of South America, Africa and Polynesia. Each is also as mad as a hatter, resulting in a higher ratio of wild vampires than in any other Nation (with the obvious exception of the Ferine Hordes).

**Racial Distribution:** Approximately 200 members.

- 1 Master vampire
- 78 Secondary vampires
- 121 Wild vampires

**Adept Distribution:**

- 90% Non-adept Vampires
- 5% Packlord Adepts
- 4% Shaper Adepts
- Less than 1% Psynek Adepts
- Less than 1% Necromage Adepts

**Territory:** The once expansive lands of this Nation have dwindled to nothing. The Ascended now live in dusty ruins, several of which are tourist spots and also fabled sites of mysterious disappearances or monster sightings.

**Ruling Intelligence:** Once powerful and feared by all, even its own kind, Qixon Kay Kion hid itself many centuries ago when it first began to feel its powers fading. I.Q. 25, M.E. 28, M.A. 24, P.P. 17, P.B. 2, Spd. 8, 700 hit points, 2400 S.D.C. main body, 900 P.P.E., 300 I.S.P. All physical attributes, hit points, S.D.C., etc. are at a lowered level as if Qixon Kay Kion was being exposed to sunlight, a result of the intelligence’s extended denial of the energies that it needs.

**Nation Structure:** There is no structure to this Nation; all of its members are scattered and hidden from the world beyond their tiny and forgotten lairs.

**Member Variation:** Each possesses the God Syndrome psychosis and 1D4+1 other randomly determined insanities. Neglect has also made these monsters fairly inept in combat, reducing all bonuses to initiative, strike, parry, dodge and roll by half and requiring them to make a save vs insanity (with no bonuses) in order to shift into their mist or animal forms.

All Ascended are innately aware of the ritual that once served to feed their Nation through sacrifices.

### *The Ritual of Sacrificial Transference (level 10)*

**Range:** 5 feet (1.5 m)

**Duration:** Instant

**Saving Throw:** None

**P.P.E.:** 75, but more than one spell caster can contribute.

Following the proper incantations, the speaking of which takes 1D4x10+10 minutes, a human (vampires cannot perform the ritual, only benefit from it) must take the life of another human who rests upon an altar of stone. The altar serves as a focal point for the ritual by first absorbing the P.P.E. released by the death of the sacrifice, then amplifying it and finally transmitting it to Qixon Kay Kion across the dimensional barriers at a rate of 5 P.P.E. gained for every 1 P.P.E. released by the sacrifice.

After the sacrifice, the humans would leave the body upon the altar where the vampire minions would later come and feed off of it. When the priests returned the next day to find the corpse gone, they would believe that their gods had reached down from the heavens to take away their offering.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** The Ascended can be introduced to a campaign in several imaginative ways. Could those rumors about a cult of homeless people in the sewers who are kidnaping and sacrificing the wealthy be founded upon the work of an Ascended vampire(s)? And just what will be unearthed in that recently discovered gold casket from the mountains of Peru that was brought back to the city for study and display in the museum? What would happen if this Nation was to find a noteworthy means for sacrifice again, what would be the ramifications of fully-empowered vampires who are off their rocker?

Any of these scenarios should not only draw the attention of the player characters but would also be of great interest to the Nightlords who are never pleased by the attention that these vampires tend to draw. Will the player characters end up battling the forces of the Ba'al as well or will they unknowingly be working together, never realizing that they are aiding each other towards the same ends?

There have also been rumors that several Ascended have viewed the invasion of the Nightlords as an infringement upon their deific rights by other "gods". Supposedly, these insane vampires have decided to take direct action against the worshipers of these "false gods" and are preparing to make a move against several Ba'al strongholds on Earth and in the Nightlands. If the rumors prove to be true, what this may mean remains to be seen but, considering the Ascended's total lack of subtlety, cannot bode well for any party who wishes to keep secret the war that is raging for the Earth.

This Nation of Blood can be used as a recurring enemy but its strength lies in being used as a momentary distraction or short-term annoyance. Although, if used intelligently, the Ascended can allow for an incredibly potent long-standing enemy that has rationalized that the characters pose a "heretical threat" to its divinity and will bring all of its powers to bear for the downfall of the player group.

**Relations with Others:** Vampires of the Ascended continue to consider themselves above all other creatures, despite the obvious weaknesses that they suffer. At some point in the past this Nation has managed to alienate all the other Nations and Freeholds, beyond the bounds of the hatred that vampires normally hold for each other. Those Nations that seek to hide

amongst humanity now consider the ravenous Ascended to be a danger to the existence of their entire race whereas the other Nations simply see the vulnerability of these once-gods as an opportunity to settle old scores. Both the Nightlords and Pendragon keeps a watchful eye out for these mad creatures, with their respective agents in areas renowned for their ancient culture being constantly on guard for Ascended activity.

Oddly, the Ascended view the Nightbane as a direct threat to their godhood, more so than any other creature. A Nightbane encountering one of these monsters will be assailed with curses such as "pretender", "blasphemer", "false one" and "fallen". What this may mean has never been learned but scholars that have taken the time to study this reaction have hypothesized that at some time in the distant past a group of Nightbane may have taken a cue from the Ascended and set themselves up as gods, possibly stealing power and worshipers from this Nation. If this is true, is it possible that such a group of Nightbane continues to do so or may attempt such a foul deception in the future?

## The Grumian

This Nation once loomed over the other vampires, its power and numbers matchless even if all the other Nations were to combine as one to oppose them. When humans, Nightbane, or Ba'al had problems or were engaged in open conflict with the undead, it was usually the Grumian that were the source of their agitation. Even during the twilight of the Great War against the Ba'al, it was the Grumian that continuously rallied their undead legions to assail their weakened prey like a sharpened scythe reaping sickly wheat.

All this would change at the whim of fate.

As the story tells it, Grumian dul Aster, the Nation's ruling intelligence, had actually sallied forth from its hidden lair to gorge upon the dead and dying after the exile of the Ba'al to their Nightlands prison. Overcome with confidence and sureness in its own superiority following the vicious war that had culled nearly every society on Earth, the hulking monster had its great bulk transported to the final battlesight so that it might personally glut itself upon the mystically altered blood of the deceased Ba'al. Unfortunately for Grumian dul Aster, it was not the only creature of immense power that thought that there was something desirable to be had from this tragic place.

When the intelligence arrived, it sent its minions to chase away all those who were seeking to loot the field or carry away their dead for proper burial. Shortly thereafter, some of its minions returned and told of a mighty figure that also strode across the field,

gathering mystical items while denying them to the vampires. Still enwrapped within its own sense of superiority, Grumian dul Aster and most of its vampires went forth to deal with the being who would dare defy its might.

Things become very uncertain beyond this point. Some say that the other being was a wandering god of knowledge and magic who had come to ensure that the legacy of the Ba'al did not fall into the wrong hands (there are even some scholars that believe this god helped defeat and banish the Nightlords), while yet others hypothesize that this powerful being was another alien intelligence or a renegade Nightlord that somehow escaped imprisonment and may still wander the Earth. Despite who(what)ever this being may have been, it is known that a great battle ensued. Unleashing magic never before seen on planet Earth, Grumian dul Aster's mysterious opponent whisked the vampire intelligence and its minions away to the wastes of the Nightlands where it held them all in a state of suspended animation; they could see and think but could not move. Then, through a process that is said to have taken centuries and is sometimes described as having been a great circle of magic drawn upon the scorched earth of the Nightlands or a spell that rained down from the heavens, the enigmatic being wrought a terrible justice upon the intelligence.

Though it was outwardly the same, Grumian dul Aster's sense of ethics and morality were drastically changed. Still held by the mighty being's spell of suspended animation, the vampires of Nation Grumian were forced to look on as their altered lord actually wept through its many eyes for the pain it had inflicted upon humanity. In that moment, the collective will of Nation Grumian snapped as the now decidedly benign soul of its intelligence clashed with the still entirely evil nature of its creations. The enigmatic being then left the altered intelligence and its bewildered minions to their own devices, alone within the barren depths of the Nightlands. Unable to cope with the new sense of morality that their creator possessed, the confused vampires of this Nation scattered into the wastelands. Itself in disarray, Grumian dul Aster fled in the opposite direction as quickly as its ponderous form would allow and it has never been seen nor heard from since. From that day onward, the power of Nation Grumian, as it was known, was shattered and has never been rebuilt. The enemies of these once feared vampires quickly filled in the void left by their rival's unexplained absence and the name of the Grumian quickly fell beneath the sword of history.

The vampires that scattered across the Nightland's twilight-covered landscape at first wandered aimlessly for years, searching for food before

finally encountering the first of the city-states. By that time most were half mad from starvation and so were slaughtered in the process of blindly attacking the cities' rather small, enslaved human populations. Of those vampires that survived and managed to feed well enough to recover, they found themselves forced into hiding within the catacombs beneath the city-states in order to escape the Ba'al's patrols, able to strike out for food only when starvation demanded it. Eventually groups of Grumian encountered each other and banded together to better fight off the patrols, thus allowing them to make raids for food with greater impunity.

Over the long years since then, these groups have become a source of great ire for the Nightlords and countless teams of Hounds have been sent into the sewers to wipe out this undead plague. Forced by their free will to adapt without the driving consciousness of their intelligence lord, these pockets of Grumian vampires first learned to evade these extermination teams and later to fight back and toss them out of the sewers with their Darkspears between their legs. Whether it was born of necessity or as some residual, long term effect of Grumian dul Aster's transformation, these vampires are now one of the leading sources of resistance against the Nightlords that is to be found in the Nightlands.

A few members of Nation Grumian were not with their lord when it and the majority of its vampires were whisked off to the Nightlands, but their numbers have long since dwindled to the point of being insignificant. Today there exists only rumors of impotent, pitiful vampires who still go by the nearly forgotten name of Grumian. It is said that these lamentable creatures are forced to live in the darkened sewers and back alleys of man's cities, feeding off the homeless and other scraps of society, all the while fearing their own shadows.

Whether the Grumian is located on Earth or the Nightlands, the pursuit of survival remains the most important driving force in their unives. Although most older Grumian have retained their evil ways, with each new generation there is an increase in morality, compassion for other species and a desire to overthrow the Ba'al. Despite this slide towards good still being considered a weakness by the majority, a few Grumian are now going so far as to openly work with other factions, including humans, under the banner of mutual respect (and sometimes friendship). Most Grumian believe that this extreme personality change in their kind is the result of these newer generations being filled with the "corrupted" essences of their reformed vampire intelligence.

**Symbol:** A serpent twisted into a horizontal “S” with a sphere resting in the curved fold to the right and an inverted triangle within the fold to the left.

**Nation Demographics:** The Grumian had always been more concerned with force of numbers than the strength that comes with quality, so all manner of people of either gender could be counted in this Nation. Now the Grumian propagate their numbers in the same way but because of the indiscriminate needs of survival rather than the freedom that comes with being at the top of the food chain. Very few of the elder vampires have survived, either on Earth or the Nightlands, and it is believed that there are now less than ten who are over 500 years old.

**Racial Distribution:** There are approximately 4100 Grumian vampires.

- 2 Master vampires (1 on Earth)
- 3460 Secondary vampires (230 on Earth)
- 610 Wild Vampires (40 on Earth)

**Adept Distribution:**

- 96% Non-adept Vampires
- 4% mixture of the various types of adepts

**Territory:** The wastelands of the Nightlands, especially those around Marrow and Devil’s City. The Grumian of Earth have claimed the alleys and sewers of the mortal’s cities as their homes.

**Ruling Intelligence:** Grumian dul Aster must still exist because its vampire “children” have not all been destroyed, as is the way of things with the death of an intelligence. The fact that the Grumian can propagate by slow kill would also lend support to this. It is likely that this creature, having been changed so greatly, has been in hiding these many centuries. If Grumian dul Aster has managed to retain its benevolent morals through all of that time, it is probable that the guilt of its past and its inability to alter the ways of its creations may have driven it mad. At the very least, Grumian dul Aster is now extremely weak after going so long without a steady source of P.P.E. What else may have become of this being, none can say.

Regardless of their intelligence’s state of being and possible current activities, the Grumian have enjoyed a sense of free will that is equal to that of a Freehold, possibly because, if it still lives, Grumian dul Aster no longer wishes to hold dominion over others or because of its complete apathy and lack of interest in the outside world.

**Nation Structure:** Beyond the small groups that have gathered together for the strength that comes in numbers, there is no real structure to be found among

the Grumian. Leaders are typically selected based on the authority of might or, rarely, on a telling example of cunning and tactical guile.

**Member Variation:** None, the Grumian’s power over the other Nations came from their great numbers and not any genetic or supernatural differences from the norm.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** It is possible for the player characters to encounter a group of Grumian while prowling through a Nightlord’s city-state. Whether combat, an alliance or absolutely nothing happens in this event depends upon how the G.M. wishes to portray these undead. If an alliance is struck, the vampires can become a source of information and may even act as guides through the tunnels beneath the city, allowing the player characters to gain the element of surprise on their Nightlord foes.

Another idea would be to have a Grumian leap out of the shadows of an alleyway on Earth to save a player character at the last moment, thus revealing what can truly be found beneath the rags worn by some of the city’s homeless. If so, can this new friend offer the group a pipeline to the word on the street or even to other Grumian vampires who may join their cause to free humanity from the Ba’al’s influence? Or maybe the Grumian leaps out to assault the player character instead of saving him? Enemies, allies, or neutrals playing both ends against each other will all work when involving this Nation in a campaign.

Rumors have also been circulating that the Grumian of Devil’s City have been able to take advantage of the open invitation that this city-state has offered to the denizens of Hades. If these stories are to be believed, a deal has been struck in secret between a Demon Lord of Hades and the leader of the local Grumian resistance. Could the demon lords be offering the vampires a way back to Earth, or maybe there is some truth to the rumors that a small, walled town of demon and vampire creation exists deep in the Nightlands’ version of North America. No matter the full truth, if even a small portion of any of these rumors prove to be correct, things could soon become very interesting.

#### **Relations with Others:**

**Humanity:** Most of these vampires still see mankind as an inferior and weaker species, but a growing number recognize the help that they can gain by making an alliance. The Grumian remember that their own power once stemmed from their superior numbers and so now they are able to recognize the strength that the hordes of humanity may be able to

draw from. Of course, they would need someone to control and direct them, but what else are allies for?

The Ba'al: The remnants of Nation Grumian hold the Nightlords and the war that they started on Earth as being ultimately responsible for their downfall. If not for the Ba'al's unholy crusade and pride, the Great War would never have taken place and Grumian dul Aster would never have allowed the Nation's fall. Things are only made worse by the fact that the Grumian are the constant target of the Ba'al's specialized vampire hunts, turning cells of these undead into targets for sport. Combined with their desperate need for survival and the direction in which they lay their blame, these vampires will fight their oppressors whenever possible.

Nightbane: Many Grumian hold these shapeshifting enigmas partially responsible for the Great War that resulted in the Nation's fall from power. Though this blame is irrational, it is easier for the vampires to lay the onus of fault on the Nightbane for their participation in the war rather than on their own greed and power mongering. This blame remains less than is reserved for the Nightlords though, so the Grumian are far more willing to accept the Nightbane as (necessary) allies, but will rarely trust them or rely upon them too greatly.

Other Nations of Blood: Old vendettas die hard and none of the other vampire intelligences have forgotten their treatment at the hands of the Grumian while the latter sat at the top, despite the thousands of years that have since passed. Even rogue vampires of other Nations cannot help but feel spite and anger at the site of a Grumian, their ire becoming caught in their throat as they pause to laugh at how far this once great Nation has tumbled. Thus far no peace or alliance has been negotiated between any sect of Grumian and another Nation of Blood, even among those who are as openly or vehemently opposed to the Ba'al as are these vampires.

The Freeholds: The Grumian resent the fact that many other vampires consider them to be one step away from being counted as one of the traitorous Freeholds. As the Grumian see it, they have not betrayed their lord and creator but were instead cheated by an unknown power and forced to exist without the benefit of their master's will. To this Nation, the various Freeholds are vile creatures who hold no loyalty to those beings that gave them their power and renewed life and so they are held in contempt and reviled. Only a few Grumian have managed to put aside this viewpoint long enough to accept the much needed help of some of their independent kin in their struggle to overcome the Ba'al.

## **The Madlova**

Most vampire intelligences have enough confidence in the abilities and acumen of their creations to allow them some *small* measure of freedom. Not so Madlova dul Morg, the ultimate ruler of this Nation of Blood. To Madlova dul Morg, the idea that its creations - beings who are given existence by accepting a part of its life energies - should be allowed to do as they please, independent of its control, is as ridiculous and repugnant as if one of its tentacles was granted the ability to do so. For this is all that Madlova dul Morg considers his minions to be, extensions of its own body with no right to any independence whatsoever.

Vampires of this Nation are essentially automatons that lack even the most rudimentary signs of free will or even instinct (unless in combat, and even then their will is extremely limited). No emotions, no independence, no ability to act without their creator's commands, and a lacking of any sense of self-preservation are the hallmarks of these vampires. To fight a vampire is itself a harrowing experience, but to face one that has no concern (no conception, in fact) for its own well-being and unlife is just plain terrifying.

The chaos of Dark Day allowed the Madlova to increase their numbers exponentially within the cities of man and spread outwards into new areas of control. They are now one of the largest Nations of Blood, even if their nature requires that they continue to move slowly lest they tip their hand to the Nightlords or a human faction (especially Pendragon). Currently Madlova dul Morg has set its sights on taking control of the back alleys and high-crime urban areas but it is also contemplating conquering entire isolated, rural communities. The purpose of this proposed plan is to reign over areas that are currently considered beneath the Nightlord-controlled government's notice so that the Nation of Blood can secretly learn as much as it can about human behavior and independence.

Already several "tests" have been conducted as entire villages in the American mid-west are now under the sway of this intelligence. Although a great deal of these hamlets' populations have been converted into undead, the majority are allowed to retain their mortality but are enslaved so as to be able to deal with any inquisitive strangers or wanderers. All of the villages chosen for this test were selected because they are all far off of the beaten track and have populations of less than 500. If these vampire villages prove to be profitable to the Maldova cause over a long term, this experiment may shift into the first step of conquest and erasing all signs of individuality from the Earth.

Fortunately for all mortals, Madlova dul Morg's inability to trust even its own vampires has severely handicapped it, with all likelihood severely

enough to stop the vampire intelligence from ever seeing its goals carried through. Madlova dul Morg has never learned that the best thing a general can do for its troops is develop the overall strategy while leaving the small scale tactics and the fighting itself up to its soldiers. The intelligence's need to control all aspects of its creations is humanity's best weapon against this Nation of Blood.

**Symbol:** None officially but the other Nations have come to represent them by using the Nosfetru symbol for "mindless" within three concentric circles.

**Nation Demographics:** Male or female, it does not seem to matter with this Nation so long as Madlova dul Morg's purposes are being met. It would seem that the fettered control that this Nation's intelligence has over its vampires has kept the number of Madlova wild vampires to a minimum and even these normally bestial creatures are as mindless and tame as the rest. There are very few Madlova adepts, also probably because of the Nation's lack of free will.

**Racial Distribution:** Approximately 3000 members, currently.

- 2 Master vampires
- 2760 Secondary vampires
- 240 Wild vampires

**Adept Distribution:**

- 97% Non-adept Vampires
- 1% Psynek Adepts
- 1% Necromage Adepts
- 1% Infiltrator Adepts

**Territory:** Nation Madlova stays mainly within urban centers where their personalities (or more precisely, a total lack thereof) will be able to be lost among the masses when appearances in public are necessary. Mostly though, the Madlova stay away from mortals and restrict their activities to high crime and/or low income regions of a city where unexplained killings and disappearances are the norm.

**Ruling Intelligence:** Madlova dul Morg is perhaps the biggest control freak in the known universe. It does not currently wish to enter Earth's dimension because of the conflict being waged there, a situation that poses an unacceptable amount of danger to its self. Right now it must be content to be fed by its minions and to spread its influence where it can without drawing attention. Should the Nightlords ever be banished back to the Nightlands or destroyed outright, then its designs would suddenly shift into new directions of conquest with its current rural experiments being the first step. I.Q. 26, M.E. 32, M.A. 18, P.P. 17, P.B. 3, Spd. 6, 600

hit points, 1300 S.D.C. main body, 700 P.P.E., 400 I.S.P.

**Nation Structure:** There are only two steps to the Madlova ladder of power: the slaves and the master, with Madlova dul Morg assuming the latter role. All groups of Nation Madlova vampires act as one and are allowed no leader beyond the intelligence itself.

**Member Variation:** Madlova dul Morg's constant and near total control over the actions of its Nation has an inhibiting affect on all Madlova vampires but also makes them entirely immune to the mind control of other vampires and vampire intelligences.

In combat, Madlova dul Morg allows the vampire just enough free will to allow its predatory instincts to surface, effectively turning the creature into a killing machine with no thought given for self-preservation. However, the level of control that its creator maintains even in moments such as this slows the vampires reaction time and removes any chance of it being able to entertain tactics born of the moment. In single combat all Madlova are -2 to initiative, -1 to strike, parry and dodge, and -1 attack per melee. Their mindless appearance adds +2 to their Horror Factor. When two or more Madlova vampires are attacking the same foe, instead of being penalized each will receive an additional +3 bonus to initiative, a +1 bonus to strike and the ability to simultaneously strike that opponent together, thereby making it more difficult, if not impossible, for the target to defend against all incoming attacks. Also, all Madlova coordinating in this fashion roll initiative individually but each gets to act as if they all rolled as per the highest initiative result among their number. Alone the Madlova are of little threat to a capable vampire hunter, but in packs they are like a single, deadly beast with countless limbs.

Furthermore, they do not suffer from the usual, crazed lust should they be denied the blood that they need to survive. A starving vampire of this Nation still suffers the usually penalties of its weakened state (-2 on initiative and -10% on all skills), but a failed saving throw vs feeding frenzy will result in the vampire's mind shutting down completely instead of just driving it mad. In this state the monster is unable to act, move or even relay information to its master. Unless the immobile vampire is found within the six month period that it takes a vampire of another Nation to go mad permanently, a Madlova will be stuck in this vegetative state forever (or so it is believed).

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** For those G.M.s who want to throw a curve at their players by presenting them with vampires that in no way act as expected, the Madlova are the perfect choice. The

swarming techniques and the ability to act as one mind should drastically alter any aspiring vampire hunter's opinion of the undead and their supposed behaviors, possibly even leading them to believe that what they face are not vampires at all but possibly some new kind of wampyr! Game Masters are encouraged to feed these speculations and guesses, possibly building up a paranoia that will lead the players into believing that these "new" monsters have distinctly non-vampire strengths and weaknesses.

Madlova dul Morg's strategy of assimilating small towns and hamlets into its Nation can act as another springboard to adventure. Have people started to take notice that travelers are entering some mid-west townships and never being seen again? Is a relative of a player character in such a town suddenly acting very suspiciously? Do the player characters' adventures cause them to travel through such a town, only for them to learn that there is more going on than at first seems? Do the Madlova accidentally target a town that has already secretly been chosen by the Nightlords for some foul purpose or do the Ba'al catch wind of the experiment and send in a team of minions to deal with it at the same time as the player characters decide to the same, creating a three way conflict? There is unlimited potential here that a G.M. should not be afraid to exploit.

#### **Relations with Others:**

Humanity: Madlova dul Morg not only holds to the traditional vampire view of humans as being nothing more than food stock and a means for propagation, but it also despises mankind for its free will. Ultimately, this vampire intelligence wants to discover a way to not only conquer man bodily, but also mentally. It is to this end that it is conducting its experiments into human behavior - to find a way to wipe away humanity's freedom of thought like so much unwanted luggage.

The Ba'al: The Madlova see the Ba'al as wasting an unprecedented opportunity to subjugate mankind and do away with its free will. Were its undead host in the same position, Madlova dul Morg believes that it would have already been able to break humanity and grind it beneath its will, turning all men into mindless zombies or dispensable chattel. Regardless, the Ba'al themselves are seen as weak for allowing underlings into positions of command instead of ruling totally with their own iron fists. And like all weaklings, the Madlova will tear down the Nightlords, a brick at a time if need be, until their wall of power is irreparably breached and their throats exposed to vampire domination.

Nightbane: Unknowing and uncaring whether the sense of personal freedom and independence that seems to be ingrained into every Nightbane is a result of their human upbringing or a reflection of their unique, alternate visages, Madlova dul Morg views these beings as perhaps the greatest threat to its plans. The fact that even the mighty Ba'al are wary of the Nightbane has shown Madlova dul Morg how truly dangerous they can be, independent of their penchant for destroying the undead. Still, Madlova dul Morg is curious as to whether or not Nightbane can be broken and bent to serve its will despite not being able to be turned into the walking dead. Perhaps its experiments can provide some answers.

Other Nations of Blood: Seen to be fools and incompetents who are too weak to maintain control over their creations, the rulers of the other Nations are considered complete incompetents who must be destroyed.

The Freeholds: It is a statement on Madlova dul Morg's need to control everything in sight that it cannot abide the existence of even the most reclusive and peaceful of rogue vampires. To the shared mind of the Madlova, these "free" undead are the embodiment of everything in the world that this Nation wishes to see destroyed. Under no circumstances will the Madlova ever ally itself to any of these creatures, not even for the briefest of moments or out of the direst of necessities. The burning hatred of the Madlova can be a dangerous and ever mindful danger for a G.M. to hang over the head of a player character vampire, a bogeyman that hasn't a care for the expense of its own offspring so long as the perceived threat to its hegemony is destroyed.

### **The Mardekesh**

The servants of the evil intelligence, Mardekesh dul Abin, first appeared in the ancient lands that would later become the kingdoms of the Mediterranean, Middle East and eastern Europe about one thousand years following the exile of the Ba'al. Having played a pivotal role in the founding of several of the first nations of mankind, the Mardekesh were careful to ensure their own lofty positions in these growing civilizations, always sure to maintain tight control over their power and the human sheep who served and fed them. These first Mardekesh openly ruled as kings and did nothing to conceal their paranormal nature from their vassals and slaves. The undead rulers thought that they knew the workings of man's primitive mind and so they believed that humanity lacked the will to so much as question the rules of a society that had always been under the yoke

of vampiric oppression, let alone act on those questions. How wrong they were.

Used though they were to believing that suffering under the tyranny of vampire rulership was the norm, a movement to achieve their freedom began to grow among the oppressed citizens after only a few centuries of suffering under this cruel rulership. Quietly and cautiously, these rebels learned all that they could about the strengths and weaknesses of Mardekesh dul Abin's creations, readying themselves for the proper time to act. A few more centuries later and the sheep were finally ready to strike back against the shepherds.

In a single night that the Mardekesh will always remember with a shudder of suppressed rage, the human slave stock of every kingdom in their dominion rose up with a united voice and fought back against the undead lords who had fed off of them (figuratively and literally) for so long. Unprepared for the rebellion, something that they had never anticipated in their wildest imaginings, the Mardekesh and their loyal guardians and mortal servants were easily overpowered and forced to flee the cities that they had created. The Mardekesh would have their revenge, however, because few of the kingdoms that they had erected knew how to survive without them at the helm, and so every last one of them dissolved into barbarism and was lost to the darkness of history.

Thousands of years would pass before humanity once more began to gather and form together into civilizations. With the rise of organized human societies came the return of the Mardekesh, but they were now wiser and far more cautious concerning how they would exist alongside the mortals who had once been their chattel. No longer would the Mardekesh seek to openly rule but instead they would manipulate the world of man through tightly controlled intermediaries and slaves. The most trusted and willing of these mortal servants would much later become some of the more powerful and feared clans of Romani, the gypsies.

Concealing themselves from the probing eyes of their short-lived neighbors, these vampires contentedly evolved alongside the rapidly changing ways of man, learning all that they could while using their endless life spans to acquire great wealth and influence. In this way, the Mardekesh were better able to hide themselves while using human servants to maintain some semblance of an ability to manipulate the world that was expanding around them. The Mardekesh had found a new way to rule mankind - they had learned to control the flow of money.

Today, this Nation of Blood is easily the most powerful of the lot. Using fortunes that are centuries (if not thousands of years) old, the Mardekesh have long and wisely invested in the ideas of man and although

not all of these investments have born fruit, most have allowed these vampires to acquire and maintain frightening levels of power. Of course, when the Ba'al invaded, the Mardekesh lost almost all of their corporate and industrial investments, but most of their less conventional sources of revenue and power remained. For you see, the Mardekesh were always very open-minded and observant towards the ways of man and so they did not restrict themselves to the legal realms of capitalism alone. Watching and seeing the power that could be bought through corruption, and with their Romani servants to guide them, the Mardekesh have been building up their criminal empires for centuries. Through the mobsters and gang-bangers that serve them, unwittingly or of their own free (or subjugated) will, these vampires are now once more spreading their influence outwards through the cities of Europe and North America. They know that they are not yet strong enough to openly strike against the Ba'al and take back what was stolen from them, but they are making every effort to sink their fangs into an exposed neck whenever the opportunity arises.

**Symbol:** A sign made from the joining of the Nosfetrus runes for subterfuge and power.

**Nation Demographics:** Being one of the oldest Nations of Blood still in existence, the Mardekesh have some of the more ancient vampires still around, with some of its members being over five millennia old. Despite these ancient (and extremely powerful) undead within their ranks, the majority of the Nation's vampires are relatively young thanks to the dangers of living so closely with humanity.

Roughly 35% of the vampires belonging to this Nation of Blood are female.

**Racial Distribution:** The Mardekesh's population typically ranges from 1,200 to 4,000 members, but it is currently 1,600 or so.

- 2 Master vampires
- 1,000 Secondary vampires
- 600 Wild vampires

**Adept Distribution:**

- Greater than 84% Non-adept Vampires
- 1% Nektek Adepts
- 6% Psynek Adepts (5% Initiates, 1% Mindlords)

- 8% Infiltrator Adepts
- 1% Necromage Adepts

**Territory:** As should be expected of such creatures, the Nation of the Mardekesh makes its home in several of the world's more industrialized and economically significant urban centers, claiming the

sprawling metropolises of Detroit, Chicago, New York, London, Hong Kong, and all of Germany and Romania as theirs. Ruling through guile, blackmail and favor rather than brute force, assassination and threats (though they will use such methods if they must), the Mardekesh are very careful when it comes to keeping their presence a mystery.

The Mardekesh employ their Psynek adepts very carefully throughout their territories, using them as interrogators and bloodhounds to root out any minions from another vampire intelligence who might be entertaining aspirations of invasion.

**Ruling Intelligence:** Content for the moment to remain within its home dimension, Mardekesh dul Abin, watches Earth like a grandmaster chess player, contemplating its next move even before its opposition has had pause to ponder current events. Its forethought and subtle methods are groundbreaking when compared to those employed by other intelligences. I.Q. 24, M.E. 28, M.A. 20, P.S. 40, P.P. 16, P.E. not applicable, P.B. 2, Spd. 7, 600 hit points, 2100 S.D.C. main body, 800 P.P.E., 200 I.S.P.

**Nation Structure:** The ruling master vampire is the direct voice of Mardekesh dul Abin and it is to him (they are never female), that the rest of the Nation must turn for guidance. The master maintains strict control over all business dealings and allows his subordinates very little freedom to act on their own, even though in name these lieutenants may be the CEO of a major corporation or head of a major crime family. By keeping the chain of command as tightly controlled as possible, the ruling intelligence believes that it may keep the animalistic instincts of its progeny more subdued. The master's lieutenants are chosen from secondary vampires that were gifted in the world of business and global economics as mortals.

The wild vampires of Nation Mardekesh are usually kept in rural areas where many will flee to join the Ferine Hordes. No big loss. Those that remain loyal to their creator are kept out of the way until such time as their kin have need of their bestial, raging brawn. These creatures are used in those rare instances when a Nightbane, vampire from another faction, rival gang lord, or even a Nightlord minion is proving to be too troublesome and must be dealt with in a permanent fashion.

**Member Variation:** None.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** Nation Mardekesh is about as close to a "typical" group of vampires as is likely to be found. Neither excelling nor succumbing to any extremes in their character, goals or

power (so far as vampires go, that is), the Mardekesh seek nothing more than the return of what was taken from them by the Ba'al and (eventually), total control over Earth and its residents. Like was said, they are pretty typical for vampires.

Whereas other Nations of Blood and Freeholds are mainly intended to be used occasionally and as special, plot reinforcing events in a campaign, the Mardekesh are the most suited for random encounters and battles. These creatures are everything that one would expect from the undead in our modern world - lacking of all compassion, power mad, crafty and as dangerous as one's nightmares would have one believe. Don't take this to mean that the Mardekesh are to be used merely as backdrop and disposable villains. No, they can be used as the arch nemesis of an adventure or entire campaign as readily as any other foul faction in the **Nightbane®** setting, it is just that they lack the individuality and uniqueness that adds spice to the flavor of the other Nations of Blood.

#### **Relations with Others:**

**Humanity:** Mardekesh dul Abin has condemned mankind for its past transgressions. It is watching humanity from the shadows, manipulating a person here, a group there, all the while learning from the Ba'al's mistakes (sometimes going so far as to secretly aid the Nightlord's enemies), preparing for the day when it will initiate an invasion of its own.

**The Ba'al:** Earth belongs to the Mardekesh even if the planet does not yet realize it. To have their property invaded by these upstarts is an unacceptable situation that they have only recently recovered from sufficiently to oppose.

**Nightbane:** Powerful as they are, there is no way that the Nightbane will be useable as a slave race in the Mardekesh's new world order because they are simply too unpredictable. And so they must all die.

**Other Nations of Blood:** There is no way that the creations of Mardekesh dul Abin will form an alliance, no matter how temporary, with any of the other Nations and the only thing that has stopped an all-out war so far is the need to first deal with the Ba'al and mankind.

**The Freeholds:** Even worse than the other Nations, the Vampire Freeholds have thrown away the discipline and order provided by their creators and so these abominations must all die. To even think of entreating with a Freehold (except perhaps the Kodarn) is enough to turn a vampire's stomach.

## **Further Developments**

Besides the those previously detailed, the existence of other Nations of Blood around the world have also been confirmed. These Nations have not been explained in detail because each has very few adepts, ranging from 1% to 3% total per Nation, and very little else to set them aside from the standard vampire. Should an enterprising Game Master wish this to be otherwise, they should feel free to flesh out these groups of undead as they see fit, keeping in mind how they would have had to develop considering the other Nations previously explained.

It is also quite possible (even likely) that other Nations and Freeholds exist on Earth and have somehow managed to stay out of the way of the known vampire factions, allowing them to remain undiscovered as yet. Game Masters can use this to add groups of undead that they see fit to create, but be careful not to add too many organizations so that the world practically teems with vampires.

## The Freeholds

The Nations of Blood are comprised of vampires under the sway of a vampire intelligence ruler, but there also exist several groups of undead that hold loyalty to no such god-like overlord. These few groups are collectively referred to as the Freeholds and they exist outside of all forms of the normal, recognized vampire hierarchy because they are just that, free. Unhindered by the pervasive purpose of feeding a vampire intelligence and seeking a means to bring about its rule on Earth, these undead regain a semblance of their mortal personality, although it is almost always sorely twisted beyond what it had previously been.

It is no surprise that many of the Freeholds have large numbers of adepts among their ranks because, for some unknown reason, these vampire subtypes are more likely to go rogue and break from the will of their ruling intelligence. Like the other rogues of the Freeholds, the purposes and goals of these free-willed adepts are their own.

### The Bloodsages

As war descended upon the Earth and the Ba'al fought for control of the planet, it seemed that all creation itself would be torn asunder in the conflagration. The magical energies that pulsed around and within the planet were at an all time high for the span of humanity's existence, causing several unexpected results. Storms raged, seas swelled and surged, deserts receded or expanded, and the supernatural succumbed to almost entirely random changes. One such change was found in vampire society.

Somehow brought on by a localized ley line storm nearby, a master vampire (the original Nation of which has been lost to antiquity) suddenly found himself free of the burden of slavery. Unknowing whether it being a Necromage or if its status as a master vampire was the catalyst for its freedom, the creature fled and took to the wild so that the loyal minions of its creator would not find it. At first the vampire reveled in its newly found freedom but it quickly grew bored with the savageness of its outcast existence. It did not take long (only a few hundred years) before the vampire found others of its race who were likewise in control of their own faculties. Like it, the other undead were all Necromagi, a fact that leads credence to the theory that the raw energies of the Great War had somehow been attracted to the vampires' enhanced mystical nature, and through that, released them from the dominion of their respective vampire intelligences. Recognizing the

benefits of an alliance, these creatures who would have once called each other enemies chose to join together, forming what is now today the smallest of the known Vampire Freeholds.

Though they have never chosen a name for themselves, they have come to accept the term by which others (including the Nations of Blood) have taken to calling them - the Bloodsages. Few can claim to have seen, let alone ever met, a Bloodsage, but their influence throughout history is like a trail of footsteps in the sand if one knows what to look for. Other factions and Nations of Blood have uncovered such clues and evidence that reveals that the bloodlines of humanity the world over have been influenced by this Freehold for at least seven millennia. For what purpose or by what means, none can say nor can a pattern be found within the subjects, but the proof that manipulations have occurred is unmistakable. Speculation has varied between the unlikely to the fantastic, with theories such as a plot to create a breed of super slaves or powerful bodies to one day be transformed into the undead being two of the more popular stories. Which, if any, of these many rumors are true, none can say except for the Bloodsages and these reclusive enigmas are not forthcoming with any information.

It has also been learned that the Bloodsages covet magic, spells and artifacts like a miser does gold. Again, for what purpose remains a mystery. Like any of the other factions that treasure such knowledge, the Bloodsages have resorted to using tactics that have been both ingenious and ruthless to acquire what they crave. However, the endless life span of these vampires allows them the luxury of convoluted plots that can last for decades - sometimes centuries - before achieving their ends. So that these plans may be overseen and fostered with the greatest of care, the Bloodsages sequester themselves in secret lairs within the homes of mortal servants where they can gather and conspire to achieve their goals. Also, their lack of dependence on an intelligence and their extensive abilities have lead the members of this small group to wield a disproportionate amount of power in vampire society. Mixing the potency of magic with their undying intellect, the Bloodsages could pose a dire threat to mankind if their intent is revealed to be anything less than benevolent.

**Symbol:** A large eye with twenty-seven smaller eyes encircling it.

**Nation Demographics:** All Bloodsages are selected based on two criteria - they are rogues (independent) and they are Necromage adepts. However, if this were the only means by which this Freehold filled their ranks (meager though they are),

they would likely have died out from attrition thousands of years ago. The Bloodsages are one of the few who possess the Free Vampire spell, a potent incantation that they have been known to use on promising vampires who they afterwards attempt to convince to join their cause. Those who refuse are quickly destroyed.

Three is a sacred number to the Bloodsages, thus they will only ever have 27 (3x3x3) members at a time.

Racial Distribution:

7 Master vampires

20 Secondary vampires

Adept Distribution:

100% Necromage Adepts

**Territory:** None to speak of beyond their secret lairs and gathering places.

**Mindset:** A Bloodsage works tirelessly towards two things - the acquisition of mystic knowledge and power, and the subtle completion of its mysterious designs. Only the secrecy of the Freehold and the conversion of new members is seen as being more important.

**Freehold Structure:** The Bloodsages defer to the more ancient and powerful of their number. The older the vampire, the better practiced they typically are at their craft and the more items of eldritch power they possess. Each vampire is responsible for the acquisition, upkeep and defense of their own sanctuary but is also responsible for providing hospitality towards any other Bloodsage that may be passing through the area or seeking aid.

**Member Variation:** Besides the obvious abnormality of its members all being Necromagi, their countless years of mystic study has allowed these undead to more efficiently transfer their P.P.E. in the process of learning new spells. Instead of the 10% that is the normal permanent P.P.E. cost for a Necromage to acquire a new spell, the Bloodsages only expend 5%. This has allowed them to learn a far greater number of spells, making them the most powerful spell casters among the vampire Nations.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** Some of the greatest non-Nightlord threats currently (and previously) facing humanity are the many factions that clamor to possess the greatest amount of magical artifacts and spells. The Seekers have thus far proven to be benign (or at least neutral), though groups such as the Order of the Cobra and the Templars make no qualms about the ruthless techniques of their pursuit of the same

end. The Bloodsages add a new element to this equation because they have the patience of immortality and the time to match for the pursuit of their plans. Nothing is more dangerous than someone who knows what they want and is willing to carefully take the time to get it, no matter how long that may be.

The ambiguous and seemingly unrelated pursuits of this Freehold can be used to tie up loose ends that a Game Master now wishes to see settled in his campaign. Could the Bloodsages' manipulation of human bloodlines be the cause of the Nightbane? Could the Nightbane be a branch of humanity that these vampires have bred to fight against the inevitable return of the Nightlords? Does man have the Bloodsages to thank for their more recent turns in their evolution, and if so, what else do these manipulative undead have in store for man's future (or even their present)?

**Relations with Others:**

Humanity: The Bloodsages look upon humanity with an odd mix of contemptuous superiority and reluctant reverence. It is almost as though these undead sorcerers see something in mankind that it is waiting for humanity itself to open its eyes to. Evidence of genetic manipulation through control of human bloodlines also indicates an involved and hidden interest in mankind. Whether this Freehold sees humanity as a flower of unknown potential waiting to bloom, a weed to be plucked, or a bush to be pruned as the gardeners see fit remains to be seen. Either way, does humanity really want its fate to be manipulated by the soulless undead?

The Ba'al: For reasons unknown, the Ba'al have made the finding and slaying of the Bloodsages one of their top priorities and have even brought some of their most able and deadly vampire hunters across the Mirrorwall to do so. But this Freehold is no simple hunt. Their uncanny intelligence, centuries of solitary secrecy and practice at hiding have made them a difficult quarry and one that does not die easily when discovered. Do the Nightlords fear these learned vampires and the secrets that they may hold (or the ones that the Ba'al *think* that they hold)?

Nightbane: Several other Factions that have encountered this Freehold recently - an odd occurrence in and of itself considering how adept the Bloodsages are at remaining concealed from prying eyes - have voiced the opinion that the Bloodsages have an interest in the Nightbane that extends beyond mere curiosity. Some Factions, the Seekers most notably, have suggested the radical (and unfounded) theory that the Nightbane might actually be the product of the Bloodsages' centuries of manipulation of man's bloodlines. This is unlikely, of course, as there are

Nightbane who are thousands of years old. On the other hand, the current, dramatic increase in the number of Nightbane could speak against this counter argument - it is almost as if some kind of breeding program had seen fruition at the appointed time, namely the coming of Dark Day. And then there is the fact that nobody knows just how long the Bloodsages have been around for either. Still, this theory is surely just wild speculation and the haphazardous application of coincidence to support a crazy hypothesis.

The Nations of Blood: Not only do the Nations of Blood reserve the same hatred for the Bloodsages as they do for all other Freeholds, but there is also an additional animosity that stems from the fact that the vampire lords do not like losing their most powerful sorcerers to this group of upstart wizards. To the vampire intelligences, this loss is like rubbing holy water in a gaping wound. As a result, no Nation of Blood will have anything to do with the Bloodsages, no matter the circumstances, and all Nations of Blood now operating on Earth have been putting great effort into the finding and killing of the Bloodsages for centuries. The Nightlord invasion has curbed these efforts for the duration but the determination to bring true death to these wizards remains.

For their part, the Bloodsages rarely ever take direct action against their former masters except when their own agendas and goals are being tampered with. In such instances, however, the guile of the Bloodsages typically allows them to maneuver others into doing their dirty work for them.

Other Freeholds: Most other Freeholds are content to leave the Bloodsages alone because they have a) recognized the danger of meddling with the undead wizards and b) there is no real reason for them to get involved. Only the Kodarn show no fear of the Bloodsages and it may be that the Freehold of assassins may soon be taking offers from the Nightlords for aid in the latter's efforts to find and slay the sorcerers.

## **The Ferine Hordes**

*"I have had many occasions to view the wild vampire, both in its native environment and under controlled circumstances, and I must admit that the buggers never fail to surprise me. Just when I'm sure that they cannot do anything that is more unpredictable than what I've already seen, these beasts will do something that is the furthest from what I expect."*

*"There is no rhyme or reason to what they do, or at least none that I've been able to discern, and they have proven that their instincts, not their minds, are what's in the driver's seat."*

*"The only thing that I've ever witnessed that is more unpredictable and dangerous than a wild vampire is an entire pack of the things. Now that is anarchy incarnate."*

-From field notes of Dr. John W. Konstantakis, Ph.D.

A wild vampire may serve its superiors, either as a guard, foot soldier or bully boy, but even their masters must admit to the lack of control that even they may exert over the creatures that occupy the lowest rungs of the undead's hierarchy. Such are the ways of the vampire throngs and such are the ways of the Nations of Blood. There are, however, a great many wild vampires who have broken free of their creator's dominion and now wander the world as rogues, living a life that is as free as these creatures shall ever know. Such are the ways of the Ferine Hordes.

The Ferine Hordes are not a single entity but are instead a generalized categorization of all rogue wild vampire packs that exist beyond the control of vampires still under the sway of an intelligence. A "wild pack" of vampires typically has between 6 to 15 or so vampires in them, roughly 95% to 100% of which are wild vampires with the remainder being secondary vampires who have come to enjoy the freedom (and power) of the wild or have been driven mad. Such undead usually take over the pack, using their superior wits to assert their control. Larger packs of 30 to 50 or so undead have also been reported (and some even substantiated), but such immense gatherings are rare, both because of the amount of territory that they would need to claim and defend in order to survive and due to the unlikelihood that they would be able to hide from vampire hunters for very long.

Large packs are more bold than the smaller because the same bestial instincts that cause them to form their packs also tell them that the more there are of them, the stronger they are and the thus the more capable of taking on a dangerous opponent they become. Small packs may be content to slay cattle, pick off small groups of hikers or even disable and kill the occupants of a vehicle on a lonely stretch of highway, but the larger packs have been known to conduct raids on small rural villages and townships or slaughter an entire apartment building if located in an urban lair. Such attacks have become more common and bold in the past century as growing secularism and the weakening of superstitions has allowed the Ferine (and other vampires) to act with greater impunity and less fear of reprisals. Solitary or paired hunters are also known to exist in the wild and in urban centers, but they tend to keep to themselves more so than do the larger packs because they lack the strength of numbers needed to defend themselves in today's dangerous world.

Like wolves, the Ferine Hordes use animal-like tactics and cunning to hunt their prey. They will stalk the weak and slay solitary targets, running their quarry ragged until it becomes exhausted enough to make a foolish mistake. They also employ stealth and surprisingly intelligent tactics such as using the terrain to set up ingenious ambushes or arranging feints and distractions to draw their prey's attention away from the true danger. To make matters worse, the incredible powers that are at the command of these monsters makes them all that much more unpredictable when they are on the prowl. A person being hunted by a pack of wild vampires can never be sure if that rolling mist up ahead is really fog or an undead lying in wait, or if that rustling in the darkened brush is a raccoon out for a jaunt or a metamorphosized vampire or one of their animal servants. Luckily, wild vampires are likely to succumb to the lure of becoming reliant on their almost complete invulnerability and thus their slow wits will have a hard time reacting in time to properly deal with prey that they thought to be helpless but turn out to be well prepared for a fight.

A wild vampire's close ties to animals - most commonly wolves and wild dogs - further exemplify their distance from the rational, thinking mind of the men and women that they once were. Not only do the Ferine Hordes share their lairs with their animal friends but they will also hunt together. It is because of this tie, undoubtedly, that there are more wild vampire Packlord adepts than there are among any other vampire species. The relationship between undead and beast is more than just pet to master, it is a relationship of mutual trust and affection (if these monsters can be said to have such feelings). Truly, witnessing a wild vampire with his animal companions is almost enough to make one forget that the wild vampire is a cruel, malicious killer with no care for the cruelty that it enjoys inflicting on humanity.

**Symbol:** None.

**Nation Demographics:** Most of the Ferine Hordes are made up of wild vampires though a small fraction of insane or exiled secondary undead have also joined their number. Though there is no sexual bias among their kind, circumstances have left the gender split at roughly 35% female versus 65% male.

**Racial Distribution:** There are an estimated 6,000 unaffiliated wild vampires worldwide.

93% Wild vampires

7% Secondary vampires

**Adept Distribution:**

82% Non-adept Vampires

5% Shaper Adepts

10% Packlord Adepts

3% Other Adept types (secondary vampires only)

**Territory:** The expansive tracts of Texas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Mexico are all the hunting grounds of the Ferine Hordes. Non-North American Ferine may be found in the wilds of Romania and China, the mountains of Switzerland and Austria, the Russian steppe, the outback of Australia, and the savannah of Africa. Lacking the intelligence of the secondary and master species of vampire, the wild vampires of the Ferine Hordes rarely possess the insight to carry earth from their native land with them and so they tend to stick to the region of their rebirth into undeath.

Each pack will have set, well-defined hunting grounds that other vampires, wild or not, will invade at their own peril. A wild pack will use self-inflicted wounds to define the boundaries of their territory, mingling the scent of their blood with that of their animal pack in order to leave scent markings on rocks and trees.

**Ruling Intelligence:** None.

**Mindset:** The Ferine Hordes abhor the ways of mankind and so they tend to be entirely nomadic. They will never settle down in one place for too long, opting instead to move between established lairs throughout their territories, rarely staying in one for longer than a few months at a time.

Repulsed and wary of the ways and tools of humanity, wild packs avoid using technology even more so than their 'sane' brethren. Instead, the Ferine Hordes have "gone back to their roots" and will rely entirely upon their natural abilities and impressive powers, using them on an instinctive and reflexive level that can never be reached by their kin who have been tainted by the world of man.

**Freehold Structure:** The most aggressive and powerful vampires, be they wild or secondary, come to lead the wild packs of the Ferine Hordes. These leaders, or "alphas", only command for as long as they are able to hold their position against all comers (of which there is rarely a shortage). Contests of rulership do not always end in death, however, despite such an end being most common. Sometimes a failed upstart contender is locked up to starve for a few days or crucified in a forested area where the sunlight can filter through the trees in thin rays, slowly burning the renegade until death is near before being removed. Such punishment is often enough to remind these rebels of their place in the pack before returning them to their previous position. If, on the other

hand, the alpha's position is usurped by his rival, quarter is very rarely given.

Like the wolf packs that they so closely resemble, the wild packs of the Ferine Hordes are arrayed in a hierarchy of power that branches out beneath the alpha and places the strongest at the top and the weakest or newest members at the bottom. A more definitive example of the vampire truism that "strength is power" will never be found than is given by the Ferine Hordes. To rise in standing in the pack, the vampire must challenge and defeat the vampire holding the position of power above it, with death or surrender being the only possible outcomes for either contender. Even the wild packs are not without their sense of order though, and so a vampire that continuously disrupts the pack through its constant aggression and callous attempts to climb higher in standing will either be killed or banished before it poses too great a risk to the pack's well-being.

Within each pack where the vampires are of mixed stock there will also arise a clan structure that exists alongside the pack's hierarchy of strength. Each clan will be formed by wild vampires who were born of the same intelligence. Still sharing a common bond even though they are most likely no longer under the sway of their vampire intelligence, a clan will itself form a hierarchy of strength with the leader of the strongest clan almost always also lording over the entire pack.

**Member Variation:** Almost all of these beasts are of the standard wild type, although a few originate from Nations which have provided them with minor variations from the norm.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** Wild vampires are perfect for when a G.M. needs an excuse to through a fight his players' way with little reason behind the encounter. These creatures are slaved to their instincts and rarely allow rational thought to impede their desires, creating a foe to oppose the player characters for no other reason than the characters have warm blood pumping through their veins or that they have trespassed into the vampire's territory. Obviously, the Ferine Hordes will not be involved in the convoluted, twisting and turning plots that many of the other Nations of Blood involve themselves in, but nor do the Hordes have to be restricted to the role of fodder alone.

A wild pack of vampires could be terrorizing a rural township, making daring raids for food under the cover of night only to disappear just as quickly. The local police cannot solve the crimes ("Vampires? Come on, just because the victims have all been drained of their blood doesn't mean we have to jump to silly

conclusions!!") and so it is up to the player characters to do so though it will not be easy. The hills and fields around the town are the domain of the undead and they know how to use their own territory to their best advantage. One of the other Nations could also setup a pack to take the fall for their own actions, having orchestrated their own evil activities so that they would appear to be the work of wild vampires who in truth no nothing. Can the players unravel the truth or will they confront and defeat the wild vampires, leaving themselves to believe that they have done what is right while the real perpetrators go free?

#### **Relations with Others:**

Humanity: Man is little more than walking meat. Wild vampires are capable of controlling humanity and turning them into slaves but few have the patience or insight to do so, often allowing their raging hunger and lack of imagination to cause them to slay any captives out of hand instead.

The Ba'al: Wild vampires may not have the imagination and intelligence of the other vampire species but they do possess the instinctual hatred of the Nightlords that burns so brightly in all undead. Other vampires may hate the Ba'al for reasons such as the loss of power and status that was theirs before Dark Day but such things mean very little to the animal-like mind of the Ferine. No, for the wild vampires of the Hordes, hatred for and the desire to kill the Ba'al resides in their instincts, like most of their driving thoughts, leading credence to the theory that there may be a much deeper relationship between the Dark, all Nightbane, the Ba'al and the vampire intelligences.

Nightbane: Both races are dangerous, predatory creatures of the night and so the wild vampires see all Nightbane as competition. Sure, the Nightbane do not feed upon humanity as do the undead, but some still see mankind as prey and treat them as such, often causing (knowingly or not) these mystical shape changers to trespass into a vampire's territory. Such an affront cannot be allowed to pass as the wild vampire's uncontrolled emotions demand that they defend their home against the intruder. Some Nightbane and rogue vampires have also speculated that there is something within a wild vampire's mind, something that goes beyond reason and is buried deep below the monsters instincts, that drives the Ferine to attack Nightbane on sight. What this may be and whether or not it is a part of the suspected connection between the Nightbane and the vampire race is not known. Yet another mystery.

The Nations of Blood and Freeholds: Other Nations may sometimes opt to twist the Ferine Hordes to suit their own needs by they also view the wild

vampires' lack of subtlety and secrecy as a danger to the existence of all vampires everywhere. Wild vampires only conceal themselves so that they may better hunt their food and hide from other predators and not so because they understand what humanity would do to every undead, no matter their allegiance, were man to learn that monsters walked the night.

## The Kodarn

Even among creatures as evil and abhorrent as vampires there may be found examples that set a new standard in malevolence and darkness. This Kodarn are a glaring example of this truism. The Freehold traces its origin to the time of the Nightlords' exile from Earth, many thousands of years ago. The vampire intelligence known as Kodarn the Invulnerable had just established sufficient undead minions to bring itself into Earth's dimension and was in the process of doing so when the Great War between humanity and the Ba'al reached its culmination in the form of the massive spell that sealed the demon sorcerers within the bleak realm of the Nightlands. Unpredictably, the same mystical force that sealed the dimensional crossing between worlds also caused a backlash of energy that killed Kodarn while the intelligence was still in transit.

Normally the death of a vampire intelligence would have also instantly slain all of its undead minions, but such was not to be the case this time. For some unknown reason, the amount of dimensional energy involved in the incident, combined with the life force energies that were unleashed by the creature's death, sent a magical shockwave throughout its creations. This shockwave tore through the Kodarn vampires, killing over 90% of them and leaving the rest with an unexpected side effect. Surprised (to say the least) that their master had been destroyed just as its moment of triumph had arrived, the few remaining vampires were further startled to find that their unprecedented survival beyond the slaying of their lord had left them totally free willed! Left to pick up the pieces of their once great Nation, the survivors soon discovered that only one master vampire remained to them and that all of the Kodarn's wild vampires had also been destroyed. With only 184 remaining vampires, the Kodarn, as they chose to call themselves after their fallen parent, discovered a terrible consequence of their lord's death - with no vampire intelligence to impart its essence into new bodies, the Kodarn would never be able to increase their numbers. All was not entirely lost, however.

It soon became apparent that the mystical altar that was to serve as the focal point for Kodarn the Invulnerable's entrance to Earth had been imprinted

with a great deal of the creature's energy at the moment of its death. The altar now acts as a storehouse for the essence that is released when one of the surviving vampires is destroyed, allowing the energy to be placed into a new body. Still, this only ever allows the Kodarn a maximum of 184 vampires and, should the sole remaining master vampire be lost, the new host would have to go through a special ceremony in order to be transformed. What this ritual may be is a secret known only to the Kodarn, but the process of creating all other new members of this Freehold is the same as usual so long as there is an available life essence stored within the altar. The Kodarn have been able to keep their numbers steady, more or less, at their maximum of 184, but they have never found a way to surpass this limit. After so many thousands of years of trying, the surviving Kodarn spell casters have yet to find anything that might give them some hope that they may one day expand their population, and yet they continue their research towards this end.

Recognizing that their limited numbers had placed them at an extreme disadvantage, the Kodarn vampires went into hiding soon after their creator's destruction. Very careful to conceal their feeding patterns and anything at all related to them, the Kodarn remained hidden from the eyes of man and undead alike for over six thousand years. Nobody except for the Kodarn know exactly what it was that this Freehold did during that time, but when they finally did return from their self-imposed exile, a millennia or two after the civilizations of man had finally begun to recover from the Great War with the Nightlords, these vampires made their presence known. The newly returned Kodarn immediately destroyed one of Kodarn the Invulnerable's ages-old enemies, another vampire intelligence. Somehow, and this is something that no scholar has ever been able to learn, the Kodarn slaughtered all two thousand or so undead minions belonging to this intelligence and eventually killed it as well. The entire genocidal hunt took them less than three months from start to finish.

Soon after this unprecedented and devastating act of vengeance, the Kodarn made it known that they were now offering their services to anyone who could afford them. Somehow during their long period of hiding, the vampires of this Freehold had managed to alter the majority of their members, creating a new adept type found only amongst themselves. These adepts, known simply as **Nightbringers** (see elsewhere for more details), are thought by others to be created through some dark and forbidding blood rite that must be performed when each new Nightbringer adept is transformed from mortal to vampire. No matter their origins, these powerful and *very* deadly vampires have

become perhaps the most effective and prominent mercenary assassins the world over. The Kodarn are renowned for their ability to get the job done, no matter the risk and loss of life (or undead) involved. The Kodarn Freehold will hire its members out to anyone with the means to reach them and fulfill their demanding contract requirements. Being undead, money means almost nothing to the Freehold except for allowing it to maintain its holdings, safe houses and to keep the Nightbringers armed with the weapons that they require. Beyond these simple needs, the Kodarn find monetary possessions useless. Instead of money, the Freehold more often requires that their clients pay them in valuable information, magic items, a deed in return, massive amounts of human slaves, or a favor to be named later. It is this last method of payment that is the most dangerous because the favor, when it is eventually called upon (and it always is), is inevitably very hazardous or costly to the client, more so even than the deed that was performed for them by the Nightbringers. However, a few early examples of the wisdom of not trying to cheat the Kodarn Freehold soon made it clear that such favors must be fulfilled, regardless.

The Kodarn Freehold will sell its services to anyone willing to pay their incredible prices, including the Nightlords, other Nations of Blood, unscrupulous cults and even to humans. Completely without scruples or morals beyond their own oblique sense of honor, the Kodarn's assassins will do whatever it takes to see that the mission is completed, using methods that make even other vampires seem tame by comparison. The types of assignments that these vampires will accept range from simple assassination or intelligence gathering, to terrorism or sabotage. Petty crimes such as kidnaping, robbery and arson are considered beneath the capabilities of these talented killers and so are rejected as missions unto themselves. However, the Kodarn will use these crimes as elements in a greater scheme, perhaps using them as a diversion or means to lure their intended victim into a position of their choosing.

The Kodarn can be distinguished from other vampires and the human cattle by their rather unique appearance. All Freehold members keep their skulls shaven, a procedure that requires simple magic to override the vampire's awesome regenerative powers. Besides their bald heads, all Kodarn have their faces magically tattooed. This tattoo, which runs across the brow, flowing around and down past the eyes and across the cheeks to finally end beside the corners of the mouth, is pure black and is done in a style of sharp lines and jagged points that seem sculpted to the vampire's features. This, and the black clothes and trench coats worn by almost all Nightbringers, serve to distinguish

the Kodarn from everyone else and to project an image that enhances the already considerable fear that proceeds them by reputation.

Unlike almost all other vampires, the Nightbringers fully enjoy the modern magic known as technology. Recognizing early on in their history that they would need all the edge that they could get in order to compensate for their small numbers, the Kodarn see technology as a suitable equalizer. Among their favored technological toys are shotguns and automatic weapons, explosives and short blades. The Kodarn have also become infatuated with the Internet and have recently begun using it to find customers and arrange meetings with prospective clients.

**Symbol:** A triangle with an eye at each corner and a starburst in the middle.

**Nation Demographics:** The Kodarn vampires are extremely odd in the respect that they are all adepts and that random chance or their mortal personality had nothing to do with them becoming so. Adepts by design, each Nightbringer is created at the moment of transformation by some unknown blood ritual. Because the ritual is so secret and the few Necromagi left to the Kodarn are the only ones who know the process, these spell casting vampires rarely leave the safety of the Freehold's hidden fortresses.

The average age among the Kodarn vampires is six hundred years, with approximately fifteen who are well over two thousand years old! The extreme difficulty in finding and killing these vampires has helped them to develop a life expectancy that is higher than that of any other nation.

Because Nightbringers do not have the ability to create or control them, and the Necromagi do not venture out into the world, human slaves are not used by the Freehold of Kodarn. The only capacity with which this group uses humans are as mercenary go-betweens with parties who are interested in acquiring the Freehold's services (and as food, obviously).

Roughly 10% of the current Kodarn vampires are female.

**Racial Distribution:** The Freehold is currently at its maximum of 184 members.

1 Master vampire (there can never be more than one)

183 Secondary vampires

**Adept Distribution:**

171 (93%) Nightbringer Adepts

13 (7%) Necromage Adepts

**Territory:** Nobody except the Kodarn know exactly where they hide themselves and if they claim

any territory as their own they have not made it known to anyone except themselves. It is suspected by many that the Kodarn have established several hidden strongholds around the world, each probably protected by strong magical and worldly traps and guardians. These places are thought to protect the Freehold's most valuable assets: its Necromagi, the only beings who possess the knowledge of how to create Nightbringer adepts. However, the accuracy of this belief has never been discovered because all non-Kodarn are dealt with in a place of the vampires' choosing. This place is always somewhere that is private enough to quietly do business and yet public enough to dissuade double-crossings (in case the Kodarn's terrible reputation is not enough of a deterrent).

**Ruling Intelligence:** None, Kodarn the Invulnerable was slain thousands of years ago while caught between worlds during the Nightlord's exile to the Nightlands. Instead of the vampire intelligence, the free-willed master vampire rules this Freehold with an iron will and hand to match. The current leader is Master Gormal (13th level master vampire Necromage), a one-time mage who inherited the Kodarn lordship almost two thousand years ago when the previous master vampire was caught and slain by heroic Nightbane.

**Mindset:** The Kodarn seem to adhere to the basic principle that power and the acquisition of influence are all that is needed in order to survive. This is what outsiders see and so this is what they believe. What remains unknown to outsiders is that the Kodarn see all beings even remotely involved with the death of Kodarn the Invulnerable as eternal enemies of the most despised sort. This blanket hatred includes humans, Nightbane and the Ba'al, the three primary species involved in the Great War that peripherally caused Kodarn's demise. Also despised are the vampires of other intelligences, rivals who have always held a special place of resentment in the heart (if such beings can be said to have this organ, literally or figuratively) of Kodarn the Invulnerable. The Kodarn have been secretly plotting the downfall of these enemies ever since the Freehold first went into hiding. Serving all and yet holding loyalty to none but themselves, the Kodarn play the many factions of the Nightbane world against each other, creating an environment that not only breeds distrust among all parties but also ensures that the Kodarn will never run out of work.

Using the items, information and power that they attain as payment for their services rendered, the Freehold plans to one day strike a telling blow against those for whom its hatred burns. To others it may seem

that no amount of information or trivial magical trinkets would ever grant the Kodarn the capability required to carry out such a plan, but few realize that nobody except for the Kodarn themselves have kept track of their varied business dealings. Many thousands of years of mercenary work, earning a seemingly minor bit of information here, a weak and thought to be useless artifact there, eventually adds up to a very substantial cache of wealth, data, and mystical might. All at once or one at a time, the forces that have in one way or another brought harm upon the Kodarn will one day be made to pay for their transgressions.

These vampires also have an odd sense of honor. A Kodarn assassin, while having no problem with killing a helpless or innocent person, will be wary of killing those enemies that have proven themselves to be worthy fighters (unless such beings are the target of their operation, of course). While these enemies will almost certainly pose a problem to the Freehold at some later time, it is considered a dishonor to rob such an opponent of the opportunity for another chance at a noble death at the hands of the superior Kodarn vampires. Oddyly, the Kodarn as a whole do not seem to take pleasure in killing and do so only to suit their needs and appetites (both for blood and for revenge).

**Freehold Structure:** Sitting at the very top of the ladder of power is the sole remaining master vampire whose job it is to direct the global operations of the Kodarn, to personally approve (and sometimes even direct) any major operations, and to continually evolve and develop the Freehold's plan of vengeance.

Holding lordship directly beneath the master are the Kodarn's few Necromagi, averaging 1200 years of age and possessing experience levels that range from 7th to 12th. These spell casting undead have the accumulated power and wisdom of uncountable generations and are feared by the Nightbringers who must follow their will. It is to these Necromagi, who are spread across the globe, that the responsibility of regional control of the Freehold's operations fall. All missions proposed to the Kodarn must be approved by a Necromage, or if the job is considered too vital and important, by the master itself.

At the bottom of this short chain of power are the Nightbringers who carry out the various campaigns that have been accepted by the Necromagi. Amongst themselves in the field, the Nightbringer adepts grant control over a mission to those with seniority or who have proven themselves the most capable.

**Member Variation:** The vampires of the Kodarn are not only different from others of their kind because they lack a ruling intelligence and thus have a

total sense of freewill, but also because of their embracing of technology. With a loss of many of their offensive capabilities, the Nightbringers have always had to adapt the machines and tools of man to their own needs. The members of the Kodarn Freehold favor and use an odd mixture of conventional weapons to be used against most opponents and modified weapons that humans have developed to kill the Kodarn's fellow vampires.

Bear in mind that only the Nightbringer adepts have the irregular abilities that are associated with the Kodarn. The Freehold's Necromagi, other than their total freedom of will, are the same as any other such vampire adept for the most part. The only ability that is common to both the Nightbringers and Kodarn Necromagi is the ability to **Mirror Walk**. It is believed that this ability was granted to these vampires because the Kodarn was caught and destroyed while in transit between dimensions when the mirrorwall was closed during the Great War. At that moment, the surviving creations of Kodarn the Invulnerable somehow became attuned to the mystical frequencies of the mirrorwall and now have the ability to move through it as can Nightbane. With this ability there are few places that a target, be they Nightlord or Nightbane, may run to.

A mirror walk costs 10 P.P.E. and takes one melee round (15 seconds) to perform. The vampire can carry up to 75 lbs (33.75 kg) of cargo and equipment (not including any clothing worn at the time). For every single additional P.P.E. that is spent another pound (0.45 kg) of equipment may be carried through the mirrorwall. For example, carrying an additional 40 lbs (18 kg) of equipment through the mirrorwall would cost the vampire a total of 50 P.P.E. (the normal 2 P.P.E. for himself and initial 75 lbs plus 40 more for the additional 40 lbs of items).

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** This Freehold is meant to be used to strike fear into player characters and NPCs alike. Kodarn assassins should be played in such a manner that any character encountering them is left with the impression that they can never be truly safe from the Kodarn, no matter where the character may hide. It is not necessary to reveal the existence of the Freehold as the power behind any individual members that the characters may come across, it is enough that the players encounter them and realize how dangerous this unknown element is.

The opportunities for introducing this faction into a campaign are varied and should be used to help create or enhance the dark and foreboding atmosphere of the game. The most obvious method of having the players cross paths with the Kodarn is to have an old enemy hire this Freehold to deal with the player group.

Such a mission could range from just a desire to kill the player characters to the gathering of blackmail information or some other form of leverage to either get the group off the customer's back or perform an undesirable service for them.

Another idea is to have the player characters assigned to protect an individual who is himself a target of the Nightbringers. Though not directly considered a part of the contract with the customer, and thus not a target themselves, the players would be considered an obstacle that would have to be dealt with in order to complete their mission. Should the intended target be terminated, the Nightbringers would escape, their contract fulfilled, leaving the players to ponder just how lucky they are to still be alive.

Game Masters should always keep in mind that a Nightbringer is a master of camouflage and stealth, and thus chance encounters and random combat with them is rare at best. To use the Kodarn as just another random encounter or body to hack apart to hinder the achievement of the game's goal is to not fully exploit the potential of this group and reduces them to something less than that which they are intended to be. Knowing that creatures such as the Kodarn exist, constantly stalking the darkness, should be used as a plot element to keep the players from growing complacent in their own might and overconfidence.

#### **Relations with Others:**

Humanity: Very few humans know about the Kodarn's existence and even fewer would dare seek them out. Most of mankind's dealings with this Freehold of assassins is done at the business end of a gun.

Nightbane: Many Nightbane have found themselves the target of the Kodarn, for one reason or another, since Dark Day. Whether these assassins were hired by the Ba'al, a rival Nightbane Faction or a personal enemy, a disproportionate number of the Kodarn's victims of late have been Nightbane, leading many people with the proper knowledge to believe that someone out there has a very personal stake in wiping out the entire race.

The Nations of Blood and Other Freeholds: Few other Nations or Freeholds will let it be known that they would dare work with these "freaks". Instead, if a vampire intelligence or Freehold absolutely has to resort to the use of the Kodarn because nothing else can assure the completion of their desire, then they will act through intermediaries that cannot be traced back to them. In this way, the Nations and Freeholds hope that their weakness in requiring the aid of outsiders may be hidden from their own enemies.

Resistance: This militant group is a constant target of the Kodarn. The two are *very* aware of each other as their respective interests are quite often in direct opposition. While many Resistance fighters have fallen to the claws of the Kodarn, so far as anyone has been able to keep track, only two Nightbringers have ever been destroyed in return. As the Resistance sees it, this puts the Kodarn Freehold farther ahead in the game than is comfortable so they have made a point of trying to even the score. When the Kodarn Freehold's plot for vengeance is finally realized, the Resistance, as a symbol of Nightbane strength, will be one of the first groups to be swept aside and thrown on the world's funeral pyre.

Warlords: Though supernaturally powered, the Warlords remain street thugs just the same. The Kodarn have no need for the employment of these brutish gangs and their strong-arm tactics, and so no relations exist between the two. The Warlords are completely unaware that the Kodarn Freehold even exists. Often involved in events that are considered petty and trivial by those factions with both the need and the means to hire the Kodarn, the Warlords have only rarely been the targets of these most deadly assassins.

Nightlords: These beings are seen as ultimately responsible for the loss of Kodarn the Invulnerable and so will one day pay an equivalent price. Until that day, the Nightbringers sell their services to the Ba'al just as they do to everyone else. These god-like beings are completely unaware of how the events that lead to the death of the Kodarn's ruling vampire intelligence is largely their fault and so continue to use the services of this mysterious group against their enemies, including each other. Should the Nightlords someday, somehow, ever learn the true nature of the Kodarn and how they have no vampire intelligence as their lord, it is more than likely that they would still continue to use them. The egotistical Ba'al are not naive enough to ignore that such dealings would be like sticking their heads into the open mouth of the proverbial lion, but they are also egotistical enough to think themselves capable of controlling the situation. Only time will prove whether or not they are correct.

Nocturnes: With more than a few vampires among its numbers, the Kodarn see the Nocturnes as just another Nation of Blood that will someday have to be destroyed. Only the most ruthless members among this faction have ever employed the Kodarn and none are aware of their origins, true goals or just how many, and which, other factions these assassins are employed by.

Lightbringers: Like any vampire, the Kodarn view the Guardians and anyone that would ally themselves with these beings of light as eternal enemies.

As such, all Lightbringers are to be killed on sight so long as doing so does not jeopardize the completion of a current mission. Should the mission itself involve the slaying of a Lightbringer, no simple feat even for a Kodarn, so much the better.

Seekers: Down through the years the Seekers have gathered as much information as possible on the various supernatural and magical forces that count Earth as their home. In so doing, it was an inevitable that they would come across tomes and individuals that know of the Kodarn. Like any group of humans who possess extensive knowledge of magic, the Seekers do pose a threat if they are encountered and so will have to be dealt with in time.

Spook Squad: Without even knowing it, the Spook Squad has run across the Kodarn during their old days with the alphabet organizations. The Kodarn were responsible for several assassinations that confounded law enforcement and intelligence agencies the world over - only now, after their initiation into the world of the paranormal, have some of these agents begun to guess the true nature of the killers that they sought.

The Iron Band: These two mercenary factions are often competing for contracts, whether they know it or not, and will kill each other on sight.

## **The Silent Ghosts**

The Freehold known as the Silent Ghosts is the latest such collection of rogue vampires to have formed themselves into a group out of a common interest. The short history of the this Freehold began in the early 1990's when several free willed Nektek adepts crossed paths on the Internet while separately trying to hack into the systems of the same corporation. After several months of correspondence, these rogues began to quietly search across cyberspace for others of their kind who were also operating solo.

Within a year, a series of brazen and presumably impossible hacks and raids on advanced technology research and development facilities were conducted with such skill that the police were baffled as to how the perpetrators had conducted the crimes. In each instance the criminals had left the words "Silent Ghosts" at the scene, either spray painted on a wall or left as a graphic file within the computer system in such a way that it would certainly be discovered. No matter how skilled the investigators, no further clues were ever discovered at the crime scenes and no way of entry into either the computer systems or buildings were to be found. A special team of police computer specialists and detectives were formed to try and track down these mysterious criminals who resembled silent ghosts in reality as well as in name. And yet, after years of

searching, the team has managed to acquire very little new information, none of which has even come close to leading them to the truth about this group.

There are two distinct factors that make this faction stand apart from most other vampires, even the other Freeholds. First, all of the Silent Ghosts seem to have an unnatural fascination with advanced technology, especially computers and cyberspace, and second, without exception all of this small group's members are Nektek adepts. Several students of the supernatural who have managed to learn some small thing of the Silent Ghosts speculate that this unnatural compulsion to possess, tinker with, and build high-tech items is a psychological side effect from the massive amount of time these vampires spend in cyberspace. According to this theory, the undead state alters the manner in which the brain functions to such a degree that overexposure to an environment that is not truly real and is essentially being projected into the brain by false stimuli has somehow altered the vampires' behavior and thus created this obsession. Whether or not this is true remains to be seen.

Today, the Silent Ghosts continue to baffle the world's crime fighters and Nightlords alike, conducting data raids whenever it suits them with little fear of being found out, traced or stopped.

**Symbol:** This Freehold is represented by the Nofsetru rune for silence, centered within the shape of a silver colored diamond.

**Nation Demographics:** Nothing out of the ordinary (as well as such a term can be applied to vampires, that is), may be found among the Silent Ghosts. They allow males or females to join so long as the vampire is worthy. New members are chosen through careful searches through cyberspace and by word of mouth. As is to be expected by the goals and nature of the Silent Ghosts, all members are Nektek adepts.

**Racial Distribution:** There is no limit to the number of members but the Freehold's relative newness and the rarity of Nekteks usually keeps it floating around 50 or so.

100% Secondary vampires (currently)

**Adept Distribution:**

94% Nektek adepts

6% Nektek Tamers adepts

**Territory:** The nomadic (for a race of immortal beings, anyway) Silent Ghosts go wherever the technology is, gathering in small groups so as to escape detection. Some of the main concentrations of this Freehold's members may now be found at Silicon

Valley, Hong Kong, Vancouver, Tokyo, Singapore, and Berlin.

**Ruling Intelligence:** None.

**Mindset:** Like mortal hackers, the Silent Ghosts conduct their computer crimes mainly for the entertainment of it all - something to break the monotony of their immortal unlife. The Freehold's activities usually involve penetrating classified private sector and military databases (particularly if it is discovered that they are owned by other supernatural forces), uncovering personal, private files and broadcasting them on entire systems, posting compromising pictures of upstanding citizens on community bulletin boards, and other similar acts of computer vandalism and pranking. When theft of cash or valuable information is involved it is almost always to better an ongoing project, either by providing missing data that is needed for the project's completion or by allowing access to the funds necessary for portions of their research.

Of all the Nations of Blood or Freeholds, the Silent Ghosts are the most civil and sociable of the lot. Most have transcended their undead state and have even gone so far as to form Internet friendships with mortals (keeping their true nature a secret, of course)! To a Silent Ghost, the energy that other vampires spend on hunting, killing and conquering could be much better spent, such as by developing a new search engine program that finds all of the credit card numbers for everyone in the world with the first name "Bill", or by creating a robot that vacuums the floor while simultaneously doing a shadow puppet performance of "Titanic". These are the weird things that occupy a Silent Ghost's time.

Needless to say, based on their unconventional behavior and pastimes, the feeding habits of this Freehold differ from the norm as well. Few Silent Ghosts care to take the time away from their hacking, research and tinkering to hunt down a human and dispose of the body, so they commonly enslave a human at a nearby hospital, clinic or blood bank who then provides them with their food. The relationships that the Silent Ghosts have, almost to a one, developed with humans online has altered their view towards man so that they now see humanity as more than just livestock.

**Freehold Structure:** Silent Ghosts will gather together to work on projects or for mutual protection against vampire hunters and other undead but beyond that there is no structure within this loose affiliation of hackers. There are certainly those Silent Ghosts that have garnered more respect than others and thus their

opinion carries more weight, but beyond this there is no set hierarchy or system of status.

If one absolutely has to place a name at the top of this Freehold's pecking order, however, it is possible to say that the most respected of their number is the completely enigmatic that is known to his fellow Silent Ghosts as "Roger Dodger". Nobody has ever seen him nor has he given out too much information on himself, and despite his demonstration that he is intimate with all things undead, nobody can even prove that he is in fact a vampire! Roger Dodger is a legend among the Silent Ghosts because he has organized and led no less than eight highly successful electronic raids into some of the world's most protected systems, including those of the NSB and Preserver Party headquarters. This consummate hacker has also broken into some of the other Silent Ghosts' systems, specifically those of vampires who boasted that their data was untouchable, but in all cases no damage was done other than the quick and masterful slicing of the system's defenses. It seems he only did it to prove that he could. This hacker par excellence has earned the respect and adoration of each and every Silent Ghost.

**Member Variation:** Silent Ghosts are all Nektek adepts with no additional changes beyond their enlightened views towards humans and morality in general (a full 40% of the Silent Ghosts are now of the anarchist alignment, 20% are aberrant, 15% are unprincipled and one is even scrupulous), and the fact that most tend have I.Q.s near the top of their race's range.

**Campaign and Role-Playing Notes:** It is very possible that a player character may run into a Silent Ghost while surfing the Internet with an outcome that depends greatly upon how the player character conducts himself. Or maybe the player characters are the luckless victims of an unwitting Silent Ghost who just happens to be breaking into the data system of a Nightlord controlled instillation at the same time as the characters are breaking in physically, resulting in the characters being assaulted by the defense mechanisms and alarms being tripped by the vampire hacker.

Because the Silent Ghosts are so accepting of humans, they are also a good place from which to recruit an ally or an undead player character. This Freehold is always looking for challenges to test their abilities and may join a cause just for the fun or thrill of the risk involved, or perhaps they help the characters with an ulterior motive in mind or out of a sense of true friendship.

It is also possible that the player characters run across Roger Dodger. Does the masterful hacker pose a

danger to the character's plans and efforts? Does Roger Dodger have goals of his own that make him offer aid to the endangered player characters? Is Roger Dodger even a vampire or is he a mole of some sort (possibly for Pendragon or the Nightlords) who is just trying to set up the entire Freehold in a single strike and taking out the player characters at the same time is just an unexpected bonus? Only the Game Master knows for certain.

#### **Relations with Others:**

**Humanity:** Many Silent Ghosts see mankind as playthings, as do almost all other vampires, except in a different way. These technology addicts prefer to toy with the humans by cracking the encryptions that man places around its most valuable information, by using the anonymity of the Internet to lure the gullible into playful (and sometimes dangerous) games, or something similar. Not particularly violent, as far as such a thing can be said of vampires, the Silent Ghosts have a higher opinion of humans than do most other undead, but this does not mean that they will hesitate to feed on the race that has provided them with the technology that they love so dearly.

**The Ba'al:** The Nightlords and their hordes are a non-stop source of trouble for the Silent Ghosts. The Ba'al are always sending their vampire hunters to track down members of this Freehold who delight in cracking NSB files and then spreading the data across Internet sites where the enemies of the Nightlord-controlled government can find it.

**The Nations of Blood:** The other Nations see the Silent Ghosts as aberrations on two different levels: first because they are independent members of a rebellious Freehold and second because they embrace rather than detest technology. The Silent Ghosts are not seen as a great threat simply because most Nations of Blood themselves refuse to use technology and therefore have few computer systems to be targeted by the vandals. However, the animosity that the undead reserve for each other, especially towards the Freeholds, is only enhanced by the Silent Ghost's faith in the sciences of man, thereby making them a favorite target for hunts of sport by bored master vampires and their followers.

**Other Freeholds:** Possessing their own varied quirks, most Freeholds are content to leave the Silent Ghosts alone with their games of computer intrusion and tinkering so long as the hackers stay out of the way. Only the Kodarn have shown more than a passing interest in the Silent Ghosts and then only because the latter have stepped on so many toes that they find themselves almost constantly targeted for vengeful extermination by one Faction or another.

### *Equipment of the Silent Ghosts*

Besides modifying humanity's own tools, weapons and articles of high-tech inventiveness (including many of the technological items used by groups such as Pendragon), the Silent Ghosts have put the collective talents and mechanical geniuses of its members to work on more outrageous projects. These efforts have not only resulted in the creation of the Freehold's complex, virtual reality computer system, the Deadnet, but also in the production of other useful items that have served the Nekteks well. It has also been learned that the Silent Ghosts have made several pacts with unscrupulous cybermagi who have, for some unknown cost, provided this Freehold with many hideous devices that the vampires have then altered to fit their purposes. Game Masters should feel justified in giving these vampires any examples of high technology that he has introduced into his campaign (or possibly even toned down versions of that which may be found in other game settings, such as **Rifts®**).

# Vampire Magic ~ the spells and artifacts of the Undead

Despite being a series of spells that are most useful to the undead, the collective incantations referred to as "vampire magic" may be learned and cast by anyone capable of using such knowledge. Vampire magic, however, is used primarily by the undead and their mortal servants, and few outside of their bloodsucking number have access to this forbidden and ancient knowledge, thus it is almost the sole domain of the Nations of Blood.

## New Spells

### *Shatter Wood (Level 3)*

**Range:** 50 feet (15.2 m)

**Duration:** Until a hard impact jars the targeted item, causing it to explode, or one melee round elapses, after which the item returns to normal.

**Saving Throw:** None

**P.P.E.:** 1 for tiny, 3 for small, 6 for medium, 12 for large.

A small to large-sized piece of wood, be it a ladle, spoon, branch, twig, stake, etc., is charged by the mystical energy of the spell, practically causing the wooden object to swell with contained force. Large pieces of wood such as a floor plank, hockey stick or axe handle may not be so charged until the caster reaches the fifth level of experience. After it has been charged by the spell, the wooden item must then be thrown or slammed hard against something (preferably some distance away from the spell caster), causing the contained energy to explode outwards, sending deadly splinters of wood in all directions. Additionally, a vampire caught in the blast radius of the splinters suffers a chance that a sliver of wood will pierce his heart with the effect of a wooden stake.

Tiny items (e.g., a twig or toothpick): 1 to 2 points of damage to a 1 foot (30 cm) blast radius; 5% chance of impaling a vampire's heart.

Small Items (e.g., a wooden tablespoon, small branch or chopstick): 1D4 damage to a 3 foot (90 cm) blast radius; 10% chance of impaling a vampire's heart.

Medium items (e.g., a branch or wood): 2D4 damage to a 5 foot (1.5 m) blast radius; 20% chance of impaling a vampire's heart.

Large items (e.g., a floor plank or baseball bat): 2D6 damage to a 8 foot (2.44 m) blast radius; 40% chance of

impaling a vampire's heart. Anything larger than this can only be affected in part.

### *False Reflection (Level 4)*

**Range:** Self or by touch.

**Duration:** 1D4 minutes plus 1 minute per level of the caster.

**Saving Throw:** Standard

**P.P.E.:** 8

By tapping the vampire's memories the magic of this spell allows the undead to cast a false reflection. Because the spell is working from the vampire's memories, it may not be perfect though, especially if the creature is of a vampire sub-species that retains very little of their individuality and memories from their mortal life. **Chance of Success:** Equal to the vampire's M.E. attribute x4%, -20% for master and -30% for wild vampires (with a minimum of 1%. The further from success the attempt is the greater the discrepancies. For instance, failing the roll by a mere 5% may mean that the vampire got the color of its eyes wrong or forgot a small scar whereas a roll that missed the mark by 40% would mean that the false reflection's hair style, length and color are all wrong, it has a tan and possibly fails to match the vampire's true facial expressions.

This spell is useful to Necromagi who wish to blend in with mortal society but is fairly useless to non-vampires unless they purposefully want to alter their reflection by consciously changing their mental self-image while casting the spell.

### *Repel Wood (Level 4)*

**Range:** Self or by touch.

**Duration:** 1D4 melee rounds.

**Saving Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** 7

A purely defensive spell, casting this on a creature will render it temporarily invulnerable to wood. This means that any attacks with a wooden weapon, whether it is a quarterstaff, club, wood-tipped bullets or arrows, or a stake to the heart, may bounce harmlessly off the target's skin instead of penetrating its flesh. The spell provides a "natural Armor Rating" of 14, +1 at levels 4, 8 and 12, against such weapons. Magical weapons made of wood are able to harm the target as normal.

### *Walk Between Raindrops (Level 4)*

**Range:** Self or by touch.

**Duration:** 2D4 melee rounds.

**Saving Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** 7 +1 per melee round of duration.

A rather simple spell though one that is infinitely useful to the undead, Walk Between Raindrops allows the target to repel certain quantities of water. A typical rain or a blast from a squirt gun (pistol or rifle) will do no harm to the vampire and will run off of it without getting the creature at all wet. Larger quantities of water, such as a deluge rain, the blast of a water cannon/hose or a direct hit from a water balloon is still concentrated enough to do damage, though at half the usual amount.

### *Blood Bank (level 5)*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 1D4 days per level of the caster.

**Saving Throw:** Standard

**P.P.E.:** 10

This monstrous spell causes the target's body to produce and store four times its normal amount of blood. During this time, which lasts up to 4 days per level of the spell caster, the victim's body becomes incredibly swollen and bloated from the extra fluids and his veins and arteries puff up and become visible as if they had been drawn upon the skin. A human who has come under the influence of this spell can thus provide a vampire with more blood to feed upon than is normal, causing some undead to keep fattened victim's of this spell like cattle.

While under the influence of this spell the victim can suffer quadruple the amount of blood loss that is normal before suffering from the effects described on the Blood Loss Table. For instance, four pints must be lost instead of one before feeling any effects from the loss. Furthermore, the target's Speed and P.P. attributes (with all the bonuses to strike, parry and dodge reduced appropriately to the new value), number of attacks, and bonuses to initiative are reduced to one-third normal. A beneficial result of the bloating is that it provides a bonus of +6 to roll with punch/fall/impact due to the extra "padding" provided by the swollen flesh.

In order to maintain the body's increased rate of blood production the victim must be fed triple the normal amount of food daily or he will not be able to keep up with his own body's demands and will starve.

### *Mask Undead (level 5)*

**Range:** Touch only

**Duration:** 1 hour per caster's level of experience

**Saving Throw:** None

**P.P.E.:** 20

This spell creates an illusion of life - or at the very least, a vague semblance of it - upon an undead target. To which degree this spell will take affect

depends upon the targeted undead's current state (and the G.M.'s discretion). An undead can only be made to look slightly more lifelike than its normal appearance. For instance, an animated skeleton could be made to appear as a creature of muscle but lacking skin whereas a vampire would lose its pale complexion and its chest would be seen to move as though breathing and it would appear to have a heartbeat. Despite the spell, nothing can mask the scent of the supernatural that is radiated by the undead and thus dogs and the like would still sense them.

Only undead can be affected by this spell, not the unanimated dead.

### *Stake of Mists (level 6)*

**Range:** By touch. Effects one stake only.

**Duration:** 1 melee round per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** 20

A wooden (not silver) stake that has been enchanted with this spell can harm vampires that have assumed their mist form. A successful strike against the monster's mist form will cause damage to the creature as normal and a critical strike has a 25% chance of causing the vampire to immediately revert to its humanoid form with the stake lodged in its heart. This spell also allows the wooden stake to harm a vampire protected by the Repel Wood spell. There are unconfirmed rumors that someone has designed a version of this spell that works on silver and wood-tipped bullets.

### *Charm Vampire (level 7)*

**Range:** 10 feet (3 m) radius per level of experience.

**Duration:** 3D4 minutes, plus 2 minutes per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** Standard.

**P.P.E.:** 22

Vampires may normally attempt to mind control others of their ilk with the success of such an effort depending on a number of factors, not the least of which is the vampire's sub-species. A vampire upon whom this spell has been cast will be able to try and exert its will over other vampires as though it were one sub-species type higher than it actually is; wild vampires roll as secondary vampires, secondary vampires as masters and masters remain as masters but all targets of their mind control roll to save with an additional -3 penalty. If this spell is cast upon a mortal he or she will be able to attempt mind controlling vampires as though he were a secondary vampire of the same essence as the target. A maximum of 1D4 vampires will be affected per casting.

### *Free Vampire Ritual, level 15)*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Permanent

**Saving Throw:** Special

**P.P.E.:** 35 per point of M.E. of the controlling Vampire Intelligence

This rare ritual allows the caster to attempt to wrest control of a vampire from its creator and set its will free. In order to determine if the attempt is successful, the targeted vampire must save vs psychic control using the save bonus of its vampire intelligence instead of its own. This roll is penalized by the spell caster's save versus magic. If the saving throw fails, the vampire has been freed from its master!

A freed vampire instantly loses its link to its master, leaving the intelligence to know that its mental connection and control is gone but without knowing of what is the cause. The now independent bloodsucker retains its statistics, alignment and memories given to him by the alien intelligence but also regains the memories, as fog-filled, dream-like images and perceptions, and personality traits - though twisted by his evil alignment they may be - from his mortal life. It should also be noted that just because the caster freed the vampire, the undead is under no obligation to follow the caster's commands. The vampire is now truly free to do as it pleases, though promises of power can very often create an ally of it.

Should the saving throw succeed, the creature remains in control of the alien intelligence and it becomes instantly aware that someone attempted wresting away its domination over one of its minions and will even know who is responsible!

## **New Magic Items**

### *The Heart Knife*

A rare tool of the Nations of Blood that is as wicked as it looks, a heart knife is created by means of a difficult ritual that is taught by the vampire intelligences to their favored master vampire Necromagi. The ritual requires a knife, the blade of which must be made of hollowed glass and have dimensions that are a minimum of 1 foot (30.48cm) long, 3 inches ( 7.62cm) wide, and one inch (2.54cm) thick. At the culmination of the 2D4+3 hour ritual of the blade's enchantment, the knife is plunged into the heart of a living human. At this climatic moment the still-beating, contorted heart of the mortal is drawn into the blade and continues to pulsate from within the glass. This kills the human and

permanently siphons 2D6 Hit Points and 4D6 P.P.E. from the Necromage.

The knife can produce up to 20 pints of blood per 24 hour period, which can be drained from the blade and fed upon at its master's will. This weapon also causes 4D6 S.D. plus any applicable P.S. bonus, and will harm supernatural creatures that are immune to normal weapons. A heart knife does double damage against all supernatural creatures (including Nightbane) and does triple damage to the undead.

By spending 2 attacks/actions, the blade can also siphon and store 1 pint of blood for every 10 points of damage caused with a single strike to a living creature. The victim then suffers any possible ill effects as described on the Blood Loss Table. This function can only be used if some of the blade's daily total of blood that it produces has already been drained as it can only ever contain its maximum of 20 pints. Siphoned blood can be used to feed the vampire so long as the blood was taken from a creature that can normally be fed upon

Only vampires may use the special abilities (including the damage multipliers) of these magical weapons. A heart knife may suffer 3D6x10 S.D.C. once it has been enchanted, but no damage caused to it may be repaired.

## **Vampire Lore**

Just like that of any other culture or society, the history of the Nations of Blood and vampire Freeholds is long and rich with a melding of factual events and unproven myth. It is up to the individual Game Master to determine which stories and texts are known to characters in possession of the Lore: Vampires skill and which are the dominion of the undead alone.

### *Biography of the Vampire Monk*

Supposedly written by a 12th century monk-turned vampire, this unnamed tome is an enigma of occult lore. Claiming to have been transformed into one of the undead by a visitor to his abbey, the purported monk author states that he awoke on the ill-fated third night with his own will intact and slew his creator soon after rising as one of the damned. Interested scholars have been studying the now legendary text - which is written in Latin and contains 532 pages in its original format - for centuries and yet no consensus has been reached concerning the authenticity of the nameless book referred to rather pointedly as "The Biography of the Vampire Monk".

Along with recounting the circumstances of his conversion into one of the undead and his sadness at no longer being able to serve his faith due to his

involuntary revulsion from the symbols of his belief, the book's journal-like entries span the next two hundred and thirty-two years. The text ends with the despairing monk-vampire claiming that after centuries of fighting his overwhelming urges to feast upon the blood of others, he can fight no more lest he become mad from the effort. Within the book's final entry is the monk's description of how he planned to end his existence – by chaining himself to a tree so that the welcome rays of the morning sun would bask over him and redeem him. The last words of the final entry are an apology to those upon whom he had been forced to feed and a plea for forgiveness.

Heart wrenching and an interesting read to be sure, some of the entries conflict with known history that occurred during the centuries that the book was supposedly written and is penned in such a melodramatic manner that speculation over the work's authenticity will probably never die. Adding further to these doubts is the loss of the original text, which was allegedly brought to America in the early 17th century by missionaries who then scribed several copies. It is from these copies, the remaining few of which are themselves now several hundreds of years old, that the modern reproductions that circulate in occult bookstores around the world are reported to have been made from.

**Adventure Hook:** An archaic-sounding, strange visitor has been asking around at the older, local churches - some of which date back three centuries or more - about a strange, heretical book about a fallen monk that he claims to have once owned. This stranger and his questions have stirred up a hornet's nest, alerting the Ba'al, Nations of Blood, Seekers and any number of other factions. No matter how hard these groups try to find the stranger, however, he always seems to elude them. With so many factions looking for this stranger it is only a matter of time before someone steps on someone else's toes and starts a fight. And what do these factions want with this stranger, anyway? Can the player characters find the stranger first and keep him safe from those who are looking for him? What will they do with him when they find him and what exactly is his connection to this book that he seeks so desperately? Is the stranger a Seeker, a Doppelganger servant of the Ba'al, a rogue vampire, or something else entirely? So many unknown factors, so many possibilities.

### *The Tale of the Redeemed One*

It has always been held, and never proven to be otherwise, that once a person has been transformed into one of the undead there is no regaining one's lost mortality. There is, however, a story that has survived

for countless centuries among the vampires and mortals alike that casts doubt upon this. Involving a renegade vampire that redeemed himself by performing good deeds and truly setting aside all evil, the tale comments on both the evils and good of the unnamed individual's life and undeath.

Finally having purified himself of all sin and malicious thought, the story tells how the vampire awoke one evening to find that his heart beat within his breast once more. He had regained his mortality. The tale ends there and it would be easy to attribute this word-of-mouth legend as a pitiable result of undying hope and faith if it were not for one thing. This tale is told among many cultures of Earth, both modern and ancient, and each time it is told with uncanny similarity to the versions told on other continents by other people, a commonality that is substantial enough to make even the most skeptical of scholars wary.

**Adventure Hook:** What happened to the redeemed vampire after he regained his mortality (if he truly did exist, that is)? Did he become a human again or did he become something more? If the latter, it is possible that this being still walks the earth, fighting vampires in his continuing quest to do good. If this is so, what would happen if the player characters were to encounter him?

**Adventure Hook:** An obvious consequence of this story upon any vampire player characters would be the desire to undertake a quest for the return of their own mortality. But just how far will such characters have to push themselves in order to return to life and forever banish the demonic presence within themselves? Will the effort drive the vampire mad? Is it all just a story in the first place or will the undead character's efforts actually return his mortality to him?

### *The Words of the First*

There must always be a first, a primary, an originator in anything, be it a living being, a thought, or an action. Vampires are no exception to this universal rule and there have been many legends, rumors and speculations about where, when and why the first vampire came into existence. Each world and/or dimension has its own beliefs surrounding this puzzle and yet there is one clue to this mystery that predates all others throughout the megaverse.

Written upon the cured skin of an unknown creature and written in blood that has been identified as having come from a vampire, the incomparably ancient script illustriously known as "The Words of the First" are said to be the recitations of the first vampire intelligence, as scribed by its creation, the very first master vampire. Copies of this work, often likewise

written upon the skins of the local food supply and penned in the blood of the vampire scribe, have managed to spread across the megaverse, through innumerable dimensions to countless worlds.

The book contains narrations of the dictating intelligence's first days of consciousness, including its first experiences with the thirst for blood, the telling of the creation of its first vampire, stories about the worlds that it has ravaged, and ravings about its intentions to feed upon the entire megaverse. Few mortals can read this work without becoming violently ill and some have even been driven mad. The Words of the First is not for casual reading but detailed study of the text over time will grant a character the Lore: Vampire skill at +10% (or just add the bonus if the character already has the skill).

**Adventure Hook:** Inside the book is mentioned a place known only as 'the Grove'. It is here, laments the author of The Words of the First, that the very first vampire intelligence was imprisoned. The author states that it and the other minions of the First were never able to find and free their creator but have never stopped searching for it. The only clues available are penned in the text; supposedly the undead author of this book was sent cryptic visions by its lord in the hopes that one day a vampire would find and free it. The clues left by these visions were written into the book as follows: "And in the Grove, upon a twilight world where the sun never rises nor sets, beneath the city of both hope and death, there shall be found the First. Entombed within the words of forever and watched over by the guardians of time, the First will slumber on until the Lords of Night rise to crush the land of the Sun-Become-Darkness beneath their heel. Only then shall one of the not-dead be free to release their ultimate lord who shall then return all to chaos."

Scholars all seem to agree that the "twilight world" is the Nightlands but they cannot seem to decide whether the "Lords of Night" are in fact the Nightlords or the self-proclaimed lords of the night, the Nations of Blood. The rest of the clue remains as much of a mystery now, following Dark Day, as it ever was, a situation that brings little comfort because without unraveling this puzzle there is no way to stop servants of the First from trying to resurrect their slumbering master.

## **Pendragon**

Glancing towards the end of the narrow, cobbled street, bathed in shadows by the overhanging balconies to either side, the man could see the faint, red shine of the eyes staring straight at him through the darkness. Taking a moment to catch his breath and pump a fresh round into his shotgun's chamber, he moved back into the doorway, all the while under the constant watch of the distant eyes. Adjusting his trench coat as he crouched within the doorway's protective enclosure, the man ran his fingers across the unfamiliar steel of the weapon, hoping it would appear as a sign of confidence.

"Anthony, are you there?" he whispered hoarsely into his headpiece, careful to keep his voice low. Apparently it was not low enough for it seemed that the owner of the eyes had heard the fear crack in his voice and decided that this man cowering in the doorway posed no real threat. Striding out from the darkness into the moonlit street, her eyes shining with frightening malevolence, the young woman adjusted the long skirt that flowed down her shapely legs as she moved forward. A corner of the woman's exquisite mouth twisted up in an evil grin that revealed long canines to her terrified quarry.

"I'm here Father Christopher" squawked the headset in his ear; Anthony's words bore the cold confidence of experience which he, Christopher, lacked. Reaching into the folds of his cloak, Father Christopher drew out his small crucifix and gave it a gentle kiss as he said a prayer for their success and for the lost soul of the woman who continued her approach. Replacing the symbol beneath his cloak so that it hung limply on its chain, Christopher raised the shotgun to his shoulder while trying to ignore the sweat that was quickly forming on his young face.

"Pitiful man, you know that your weapon cannot harm me." Hissing the words at the priest before her, the deceptively beautiful woman was now only a mere thirty paces or so from Father Christopher. Unexpectedly, she stopped, crouching low like a cat ready to pounce upon a cornered mouse.

"Shoot her, Father!" Anthony's voice seemed to be screaming in his ear, but to Christopher it sounded distant and dreamlike. Watching the woman grin evilly, the priest found that he could not stop looking into the cold depths of her scarlet eyes.

Suddenly tired, the helpless priest felt his finger go loose around the trigger just as the woman sprang forward with a strength that would easily carry her the meager distance between the two of them. Father Christopher was vaguely aware of the form

soaring towards him as Anthony cursed loudly into the earpiece. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion while the flying woman reached out her slender hands to grasp at the vulnerable priest's throat. Father Christopher remained still, unable to move despite the long, sharp nails at the end of the outstretched fingers that were rapidly bearing down on him.

A mere inch or two from wrapping her talons around the stunned priest's throat, something seemed to slam into the woman's chest while still in mid-air, throwing her sideways into the wall beside the doorway. His contact with the woman's eyes broken, Father Christopher found himself able to move again. Shaking the last of the cobwebs from his mind, the frightened priest raised the shotgun with trembling hands and turned to see what had happened to his assailant.

Pinned to the wall by a two-foot long, silver-lined wooden stake that had savagely pierced the fine silk of her blouse and ran through her chest, the damned woman was obviously dead. Still trembling, Father Christopher reached into his cloak for the implements he would need to observe the ceremony demanded by the release of the creature's tormented soul.

"Damn vampires, overconfidence will be the death of 'em every time" spoke a gruff voice behind him. Stepping forward to sever the head and cover the body in gasoline, Anthony took a final puff on his cigarette before flicking it at the headless corpse that still hung from the wall. The body went up in flames instantly, almost as though the fire hungered for the flesh that had cheated death for who knew how long. Turning to face the still shaking priest, Anthony pulled out another cigarette and lit it before reloading his stake launcher. "Ok Father, I think you've learned the downside of making eye contact with 'em and you seem to have the whole 'come eat me, I'm tasty' routine down pat, now all we have to do is teach you how to pull the trigger on that toy in your hands"

The sarcasm and annoyance in Anthony's voice was impossible for Father Christopher to miss, but he could not find it within himself to become upset. Despite his shame and fear, the young rogue priest knew that Anthony was correct - he did have a lot to learn if he was going to survive long enough to be of service to Pendragon, and through them, mankind.

## **The Tale of Pendragon**

### *A Place to Start*

The story of the secret society now known as Pendragon has its humble and unassuming origins

entwined within the history of another organization - one that served the cause of something more ethereal than mortal man - during the early years of the second millennium, AD. Those who would count themselves among this holy order had been commanded from on high to sweep the land in a search for sacrilegious thought, heretical citizens and pagan practices that would dare oppose the hallowed dogma. Granted all the necessary rights and authority that such a task demanded, these Inquisitors tore apart civilization in their hunt for those who would consort with demons, sell their souls to the forces of darkness or simply have a differing sense of morality and heavenly worship. Spain, Portugal, Germany, France and most of Europe were ravaged by the Inquisitor Courts, with England being largely spared their zealotry and wrath save for the trial of the Templar Knights.

During this time, a group of Inquisitors - led by a warrior-turned-priest by the name of Dominic Trickman - stumbled across a plot to bring down the Holy See's power. Summoning warrior friends from his past and fellow brother's of the present, Trickman tracked down the heretical force behind the plot and did battle with it, realizing only after his faith had granted him victory at the cost of most of his men that he fought something not of this world. The plotters had been of the undead.

In spite the proof brought before them, the Holy See believed none of Trickman's supposed delusions and suggested that he and his companions take a short hiatus to gather and compose themselves. Too caught up in their continuing rise to political influence and economic affluence, the Holy See could not find it within itself to believe in such a distraction though their faith told them that such evils did indeed exist. Wisely surmising that more of the foul creatures awaited in the darkness, looking only for the proper opportunity to strike out at man, Trickman chose instead to leave for good, taking his followers with him. He would finish the battle that he had begun, even at the cost of his very soul. Dominic and his followers moved their fledgling cause to England and from there began a crusade against the supernatural evils that assailed humanity like a plague.

Intelligent enough to know when to listen to the experience and wisdom of others, Trickman sought out magi and scholars with knowledge of the arcane who could help to train his followers in the lore of their foes and the methods that would be required to destroy the supernatural. At first, many of Dominic's followers, extremely devote as they were, had a great deal of suspicion and mistrust for these men and women who dabbled in unearthly (hence, unholy) knowledge. Their secret society now existed in a realm of gray where it

became necessary for them to entreat with the devil, so to speak, in order to catch and kill it. Even to this day, many who have joined Dominic's cause continue to distrust their spell wielding companions and tolerate them only so long as they remain loyal to their shared goals.

Next, Trickman decided to institute measures to ensure that future generations would be protected against the supernatural. To this end he chose from among the children of his followers the most promising to be sequestered in a secret location where they could learn the skills that they would need to be the mighty sword of humanity. Trained from an incredibly young age in all manner of supernatural lore and martial techniques, these youths would be raised with the singular purpose of waging the war that their parents had begun. Granted the grandiose title of **Harbingers**, for it was the doom of all things evil that their coming signaled, these children would devote the rest of their lives to the day when humanity could close its eyes in the dark and not be concerned with what lay hidden amongst the blackness.

### *A Name to Call Their Own*

Several centuries passed since its inception and this growing secret society continued to act without an official name. Finally, after the 1485 publication of Sir Thomas Malory's collection of Arthurian romances, entitled *Le Morte D'Arthur*, the current leader of the organization thought that the book suited their purposes perfectly. Taking the name **Pendragon**, that of the king who would return to Britain once more during its time of greatest need, the secret society that had begun as a group of discontented inquisitors had now become a group with an identity all its own - knights of the realm of mankind doing battle against monsters who sought to undo humanity. With this new identity came an upsurge in morale and sense of duty that helped Pendragon's agents to better realize that they were all of one mind and purpose. The name Pendragon, with all of the valorous stories and notions that were summoned by it, caused a dramatic increase in membership that would see the organization's numbers swell to nearly ten times their previous amount in a little under a year.

Riding upon this newfound success and need for the organization to grow along with its membership, there came about an inspired ratification that created the organizational structure that still exists today. The newly established nine branches within Pendragon allowed agents to act more easily alongside like minded and skilled individuals whose abilities and agendas much more closely resembled their own. Also accompanying this hierarchical construction was the

development and formalization of long-term plans and a desire to spread beyond Northeastern Europe, the area to which they had thus far confined their activities.

As Pendragon began to stretch across the world, setting up bases of operation in most major cities as fast as the planet's growing populace could raise them, the men and women of this most secret society never lost sight of the reason for their foundation. Even as the Europeans were plundering and conquering the New World, Pendragon was there to study those new supernatural forces that were encountered and to fight for mankind's protection from such evils. This period in particular - meaning the subjugation and taming of the Americas - was an especially trying time for the organization.

Made to adapt more quickly than they were prepared to, these defenders of humanity would often find themselves overpowered or run ragged by the demands of their undertakings. If nothing else, the first few decades of Pendragon's campaign in the Americas taught its agents that their faith alone was not a sufficient weapon to fight the evils of this world and beyond. For the first time in its history, the organization's leadership began to look towards the pseudo-heretical ways of scientific experimentation and theory for an answer to their plight.

### *The Schism and Secularization of Pendragon*

Many among Pendragon's ranks still were not comfortable with some of their fellows practicing magic or using the paranormal powers of the mind, but to a pious man of the times, many of the ways of science were considered to be alchemy and thus closer to the Devil's breast than the previous two pursuits. Because of this decision to begin to use science as a way to fight for their cause, there was a schism amongst Pendragon's ranks that saw a full third of its members leave in protest. Although these embittered men and women would never betray Pendragon, they could no longer abide the skirting of the boundaries of heresy that the organization's leaders found more and more necessary in order to ensure victory, and so they left.

Several decades after this schism, Pendragon was forced to recognize the friction that was building within its ranks due to the inclusion of science - which was rapidly gaining ever more recognition but still existed on the fringe of holy acceptance - and the already mistrusted magi and psychics. To solve this problem and accommodate their loyal spell casters, the then-leader of Pendragon created the sub-organizations known as the **Brotherhood of Magi** while likewise creating the **Brotherhood of Paladins** for the group's psychics. Necessary though it may have been, this

unfair segregation has led to hurt feelings and a sense of separate purpose between what is considered the orthodox branches of Pendragon and the two brotherhoods to which the "unconventional" agents had practically been outcast into.

It is unfortunate that the circumstances of that time demanded such a reshuffling of Pendragon's members because, as the years were soon to prove, the religious mind set of the typical agent was in decline. With the immense dogmatic shifts and philosophical upheavals that were sweeping the globe in the past and coming few centuries, it would be naive of anyone to expect that Pendragon would exist as an island of devotion, unshifting in the spiritual storm that raged around them. Slowly and definitely reluctantly, the religious leanings of this secret society began to be unintentionally filtered out and more individuals who would once be considered heretics (atheists and followers of other creeds) began to be accepted without protest, so long as they were willing to be devoted to the group's cause. It would seem that even the secretive monster hunters of Pendragon could not forestall the arrival of the Renaissance.

Having surpassed and outlived its parent, so to speak, Pendragon learned to adapt to the changing times and in so doing inherited the knowledge and skills of each coming era to turn them towards their own benign ends. With the Renaissance having passed, Pendragon had finally come to wholly accept and incorporate the technologies of the times and modify them to suit their purposes, often mingling them with tools of their remaining faith. Such weapons of science now allowed Pendragon's agents to effectively and (relatively) efficiently deal with their hated foes.

### *The Secret Society Today*

The Pendragon of today has come far since those first tentative steps taken in its infancy. Before the coming of Dark Day, members were spread around the world so that they could deal with the supernatural evils that were already present in Earth's dimension. Now, having fully accepted the ways of science and more (but nowhere close to entirely) open to the teachings and practices of magicians and psychics, the secret society that began as a few rebellious Inquisitors has grown into an incredibly powerful force for humanity. Following Dark Day, Pendragon has now lost many of its members and resources to the mysterious purpose and activities of the Nightlord invaders.

Today is a strange time to be an agent of Pendragon, for unlike their operations in the past when a select few members of the world's governments knew and supported their cause, today's agents must also be

wary of a government that has been infiltrated at all levels by the very enemy that the organization strives to slay. Aware that the governing bodies of many of Earth's nations are now influenced by the paranormal or have been completely replaced or controlled by alien forces, Pendragon's need for secrecy has never been more clear nor more essential.

No longer able to depend upon its old political bastions to help them cover up any leaks or accidental revelations regarding their existence, Pendragon has become increasingly paranoid with regards to its secrets and anonymous identity. Because common sense dictates that the wealthy would be infiltrated in much the same manner as were the politically influential, Pendragon has withdrawn all contact with its backers until such time as irrefutable proof of their continued loyalty and true identity can be verified and maintained by observation. Of those few financial backers that have thus far been verified as still being human and free from outside influences, all have been granted a heavy guard comprised of some of the best agents that Pendragon's branch of Principalities has to offer.

Having long since broken from its origins in religion, the modern, secular Pendragon now finds itself readily accepting help from all kinds of sources. Now, with things becoming as dire as they are, Pendragon has become even more lax in their membership requirements, though not in their methods of recruitment, and have begun to accept some of the more unorthodox practitioners of magic and even some Nightbane. More than a few voices were raised in protest to this new, though desperate, policy. Many agents - Harbingers more so than any other - are unable to simply push aside centuries of indoctrination and prejudice against the supernatural to now accept as members some of the very creatures that they once hunted.

The coming of the Nightlords has changed many of the immediate goals and methods of operation that Pendragon has clung to for centuries. Nonetheless, this secret society of monster hunters has not survived for as long as it has without being able to adapt to the new times and ways of the world. Society may have changed after Dark Day (and not for the better), but Pendragon has changed with it accordingly with hopes of assuring that it will continue to survive into the future. Whether this will prove true or not remains to be seen.

### *The New Crusade*

With the arrival of the Nightlords upon Earth, Pendragon has finally found an enemy for whom their hatred shall rival that which was previously reserved for

the vampires and werebeasts alone. As their own agents within the world's governments and businesses began to be replaced by Ashmedai, Namtar and Doppelgangers, Pendragon rapidly became aware of the purpose of the Ba'al's invasion and the subtle methods that they were employing. Knowing that the Nightlords seek to first subvert and then to control human society, Pendragon has been forced by necessity to split their operations between stopping or slowing the efforts of these evil beings and combating their ageless, undead foes.

Well aware that they do not have sufficient members or resources, especially now that the Nightlords have sunk their claws into so many of Pendragon's financial sources, this organization of vampire and monster hunters have upped their recruiting efforts. Dire though the need for new members may be, Pendragon is as yet unwilling to sacrifice caution or secrecy to swell their ranks. Their time-proven methods of enlistment have kept Pendragon a secret up until now and so the organization is not willing to toss them aside now that they are inconvenient.

Further realizing that the Ba'al's own desire not to rush their plans grants them the extra time that they need to recruit new warriors in the proper fashion, the monster hunters are cautiously doing things properly so that when the moment comes to fully unleash themselves upon the enemy, the agents of Pendragon shall be ready. In the meantime, Pendragon continues to prepare itself by researching new weapons, studying its enemies and trying to reinforce and protect what resources remain available to them.

A new Crusade has been joined, but this time the contested Holy Land is the entire planet.

## **Recruitment**

Pendragon's agents are proud to uphold the ideals and morals of the great mythological hero from which they have taken their name. Skill, bravery and sometimes even a touch of lunacy are required to face the evils that these men and women must fight and hope to survive, making them some of the toughest warriors that mankind can produce. But the many secrets of Pendragon, including the fact that it exists, are far too important to entrust to just anyone, especially the general public. To ensure their anonymity, Pendragon is very careful when selecting who is to be approached in the hopes of attaining their support in the war against evil. Industrialists, sports heroes, "old money" families and rulers of nations may all be said to be counted among the ranks of Pendragon's supporters or members, either through direct participation or through "shadow financing".

The selection process often requires that the subject be watched for periods of up to a decade if need be, in order to insure that the person is of the type that Pendragon needs and is looking for. During this time, the prospective member's background is thoroughly checked, as is his or her current associations and business partners. This is done to ensure that the individual is of the moral integrity, however loosely defined such a term may be, that Pendragon requires of its members and so that all fears that the person may be involved with the forces of darkness may be assuaged. This is not always easy because lying and self-interest are common traits among the power elite, thus requiring such caution and care.

This same standard is applied to the group's field agents, although the decade long period of observation is hardly ever required. Field agents are men and women of action, even before being approached by Pendragon, and so the ideals and morals that they adhere to are evident in nearly everything that they do, making their observation and judgement period much shorter.

In addition to recruiting from outside of its ranks, Pendragon has access to the Harbingers, a group of warriors raised since childhood to be the champions of mankind against the armies of supernatural evil, as well as those other children who would follow in their parents' footsteps and become members. Theologians of all types also flock to Pendragon's banner by associating the group with the purposes of a higher power or by perceiving the society to be an instrument of a Jihad against the supernatural. No matter how these theologians twist the facts to suit their own belief systems and personal agendas, the power of their faith and their devotion to the same are a useful asset in the fight against the malevolent forces at work beyond the realm of man.

Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, Pendragon is facing an attrition of financial aid and manpower due to the Nightlords' control of many of the Earth's tycoons, politicians, and likewise influential and powerful people. Although it may be tempting for the organization to cut some corners when it comes to checking up on prospective members and supporters in order to fill the gaps that have been afflicting them since Dark Day, Pendragon knows that the threat to their security posed by such a practice is far too great to risk. Damaging though it may be to their cause, their supplies, personnel and assets, Pendragon is grudgingly forced to admit that their previous methods regarding the acceptance of new members must be adhered to lest more damage to their secret society result.

## **'The Chateau', global headquarters of Pendragon**

The numerous cell groups of Pendragon that have spread themselves across the globe most commonly rely upon their own resources to provide them with semi-permanent bases of operations. However, staying in one place for too long carries many dangers and so the operatives of Pendragon tend to move around every few months to make it far more difficult for their enemies to hunt them to ground.

Nevertheless, there remains a need for a central hub around which all other operations must revolve and be directed by. This hub, named 'The Chateau', has been the center of the organization's worldwide operations for a little over two centuries. Located several miles outside of the Swiss city of Geneva within the hilly countryside, far from anyone else and surrounded by wide, sprawling estates, The Chateau is an ancient and palatial manor that mixes the conveniences of modern society with the style and architecture of a medieval fortress. It consists of the manor itself and a sprawling, subterranean complex where most of the organization's more valuable equipment is kept.

## **Propaganda and Intelligence**

The intelligence agents and brain boys of Pendragon continually strive to find ways to effectively counter the propaganda and lies of their evil foes. Before the rise of Dark Day, Pendragon had the luxury of knowing that the vampires and Children of the Moon were unwilling to expose themselves to humanity and careful in concealing their nocturnal habits of horror. Since the Nightlords arrived on the scene, all of this has changed. The Ba'al are making concentrated efforts the world over to seal their strangle hold upon the economic and political powers of mankind, an extreme contrast to the general subtlety and patience of the immortal undead.

The leaders of Pendragon are not stupid and are more than aware that the Nightlords are not dumb either. People first clung to the policies of President Douglas Carson, the Preserver Party, and the creation of the NSB because they represented a source of calm to the overly panicked post-Dark Day global populace. Even unmasking the Nightlords or their agents on a widely circulating public medium such as television is unlikely to be effective because it is easy for the largely Nightlord occupied networks to cover up the incident as an advertising spoof or as the actions of dissident radicals. If nothing else, Pendragon's long centuries of experience with combating the werebeast and vampire menaces have lead them to one irrefutable truth: people

are content to relax within their own ignorance and will ignore what their senses tell them so long as doing so allows them a sense of ignorant, blind security.

Still, for Pendragon to sit idly by without trying to enlighten those few people out there who have the capacity and want to believe in such conspiracies and monsters would be a tragic error. And so Pendragon's propaganda experts have taken small but relatively effective steps towards reaching this marginal number of people in the hopes that the seed that is planted in their minds may one day bloom into a global awareness. These messages of the truth include pirate radio transmissions and anonymous postings on Internet message boards (though the Shadowboard is generally avoided), and other such means where the propaganda agent can remain mobile. Throughout the world there has been a growing following of the various pirate radio stations that operate under the auspice of Pendragon. Most notable of these illegal broadcasters is the agent known only by the pseudonym "Angel". Angel broadcasts from the east coast of the United States, constantly traveling and never staying in one city or state for too long lest the government (Ba'al) track him down (or her, as he/she uses a voice mask that keeps his/her identity and gender a mystery).

The words of Angel have roused some of America's marginalized citizens to form resistance cells and fight back for humanity. Of the members of the apocalyptic militia groups that survived the initial purge of the Nightlord's invasion, most have taken Angel's words to heart and are now striking back to free their beloved homeland. Unfortunately, many of the latter are so enthusiastic in their efforts that they do not take into account the supernatural might of their targets and so they are quickly wiped out.

## **Methods of Operation**

During its early years, Pendragon had to rely upon stealth, guile and reliable intelligence and research to see them through. Lacking silver bullets spewed by the hundreds from automatic weapons and the anonymity granted by today's sweeping disbelief in the supernatural, the agents of old were often forced to fight in close quarters in an atmosphere of religious zeal that hindered them more than it ever helped. The weapons and ideals of their trade may have changed since then, but old habits die hard.

Even today, with agents that can snipe a werebeast in the head with a silver bullet from half a mile away, Pendragon's standard operating procedure (SOP) continues to be one of caution. Barring those spontaneous operations where an agent is called upon to react rather than be proactive in their fight against the

supernatural, Pendragon continues to gather all the intelligence that it can on a specific situation before sending in valuable men who may lose their lives because of a lack of all the available information.

When hunting vampires, Children, or any other monster, the agents involved will first observe their target for as long as they feel is necessary without undue risk to the public. Movement trends and timetables, lair layouts, feeding patterns, local allies and support, and any other useful intelligence is patiently sought before action is taken. These are the techniques that have kept many of Pendragon's best operatives alive for so long and so these are the techniques that they will continue to teach to the next generation of warriors.

Not all of Pendragon's agents subscribe to this philosophy of thinking before you act, however. Whereas some agents such as the Magi and Paladins are renowned for their forethought and sound strategies, others like your average Harbinger are equally well known for their "nuke first, don't even bother to ask questions" approach to the same situations. Some agents just cannot control themselves long enough to fully think through what they are about to do in order to realize how truly rash it may be. Fortunately for Pendragon and humanity as a whole, their superiors usually recognize these qualities in the agent and turn it to their advantage by unleashing the operative at the exact moment when the adrenaline is at its highest.

## *Excaliber*

Beneath The Chateau rests the massive computer of Pendragon, known affectionately as **Excaliber**. Comprised of an intricate network of powerful processors and programmed with cutting-edge artificial intelligence (A.I.) technology, the central computer of Pendragon is assuredly one of the great wonders of the world, filling an immense subterranean chamber with its data banks, terminals and cables. Programmed by the most competent and loyal of cybermagi, similar spell casters and hackers that have joined Pendragon's cause, Excaliber is one of the greatest and most daunting programming projects ever attempted by man.

Bearing a full personality and ability to think on its own, Excaliber is a modern marvel of both technology and magic that has surpassed all expectations. Because Excaliber is continually evolving as both a computer network and as an A.I., its operators must assume the multiple roles of programmers, teachers, and psychiatrists. Distinctly female in its mannerisms and personality, the characteristics of Excaliber's assumed identity are in constant flux and

range from those of a petulant and extremely independent child to that of a protective mother.

Because "her" operators are still trying to stabilize Excaliber's personality, they find themselves constantly having to play up to the moods of their computer and from time to time have even found it necessary to stroke her ego. For her part, Excaliber sees all of the agents of Pendragon as her surrogate children (the best way to describe her feelings), The Chateau as her home, and the agents who are responsible for her operation and maintenance as her immediate family and best friends.

Besides using Excaliber to archive all of Pendragon's accumulated knowledge, it is also utilized to attack Nightlord, werebeast, and vampire controlled computer systems and as a relay/redirection/encryption hub for all of Pendragon's telephone and Internet communications. Capable of hacking into any communication center that has an attached Internet link (and almost all of them do) with relative ease, Excaliber and the agents who direct her manipulate records and similar information to cover the tracks of all such communiques. This precaution makes electronically tracking a message by an outsider to either its source or destination nearly impossible.

If an outside source is even coming close to deciphering the encryptions or untangling these false trails laid out by Excaliber, the A.I. will immediately bombard the intruder's system with virus programs and scramble or erase the entire network so that the data in question becomes 100% irrecoverable. Pendragon only uses such action as a last resort because it is extremely messy and only serves to verify the Nightlord's suspicions that someone was indeed using their own computers and lines of communication against them. Excaliber also utilizes its talents to encrypt all access to its resources from agents in the field so as to ensure that such an external connection to its system is not traced and so that no unauthorized users may "piggyback" a permitted access.

Additional responsibilities of Pendragon's supercomputer include helping agents to analyze, reference, correlate, and organize information and intelligence, hacking external systems for the purpose of stealing or sabotaging data, and the sabotaging of externally slaved peripherals such as automated surveillance cameras and defense turrets.

Excaliber has also proven to be useful during field operations, at which times she has hacked the security of a location that was the target of Pendragon's agents, thus minimizing the risk to human life. Useful though she may have been in these instances, Excaliber also proved herself to be somewhat unreliable because of the confusion between her child-like and matriarchal

qualities. This confusion has sometimes caused Excaliber to go overboard in her efforts, like activating all of a building's sprinklers in one case, or to be over protective in others, such as when she sealed a building's electronic locks because she was too worried for the safety of the agents to grant them access.

The impressive and nearly unparalleled processing, storage and multitasking abilities of Excaliber allows it to easily juggle all of its many duties simultaneously, with or without the direction of human control.

### *Operations on Earth*

Fearing that others who might otherwise be allies may actually be enemies in disguise, Pendragon has begun a campaign to gather all possible intelligence on the various factions of the **Nightbane®** setting and not just the Ba'al alone. Some may call this paranoid, but Pendragon wishes to be sure that if the need arises for it to reveal itself to a like-minded Faction, that it is doing so with as little of its neck exposed as possible. Until such a hypothetical time comes, the secret society is content to offer other benign organizations aid in the form of convenient and anonymous intelligence and covert, unnamed aid from the shadows.

Easily recognized as the most economically and militarily powerful nation in the world for decades, the United States was one of the prime targets for the Nightlords' invasion. As such, agents assigned to this continent have been ordered to penetrate the layers of secrecy that have been built up within the various bodies of government and to find out the truth of who among the power elite of America is no longer human. Extremely dangerous, this intelligence gathering mission has already cost Pendragon dearly as over half of the men and women they have sent on this errand have been discovered and killed, some even publicly while branded as enemies of the state. Still, knowing the importance and dire necessity of discovering just how far up the corruption goes and who is involved, Pendragon continues to send willing agents onto American soil.

As for Europe, the constant bickering and infighting in the region, much of which predates Dark Day, has proven to be a fertile garden just waiting for the Nightlords to sow the seeds of invasion. Using this already unstable political environment as a means to more easily gain a foothold in the European governments, the Ba'al assigned to this part of the planet by King Moloch were able to quickly entrench their agents into positions of power. With their puppets in place, the Ba'al soon began to manipulate the

political climate to increase everyone's paranoia concerning the actions and intentions of everyone else.

Despite their efforts to conceal their hand in these events, Pendragon has taken note of what has been happening elsewhere and so were easily able to recognize the Nightlords' manipulations in Europe. Pendragon is only all too aware that this environment of distrust, hatred and paranoia could very easily lead to a war where some trigger-happy Ba'al puppet or independent human ruler unleashes the power of atomic weaponry upon its rivals. Whether this is the ultimate desire of the Nightlords, Pendragon is unable to say, but they are not willing to take any risks. They have thus made the uncovering of Ba'al agents within the governing bodies of Europe one of its highest priorities. Once such a minion is discovered, Pendragon will immediately do what is necessary to deal with the situation. This often entails a hastily planned assassination, usually employing lots of explosives in order to ensure that the job is done properly. While not at all quite or delicate, this approach would seem to be getting the job done.

On the down side, for each minion of the Nightlords that is discovered and destroyed, there are dozens more prepared to take its place. Furthermore, every show of force by Pendragon gives these evil creatures more fuel for their fires of paranoia, allowing them to feed the people of Europe cover-up stories regarding nationalist terrorist groups, renegade armies and assassinations sanctioned by enemy nations. Obviously Pendragon would wish that their activities did not give their enemies such opportunities to further their evil cause, but the monster hunters also realize that they have little choice but to proceed unless they are willing to turn over all of Europe without a fight. They are not.

Pendragon must also be careful that none of their European activities spark premature enlightenment in the world's population. The revelation of the truth about the Nightlords would also likely mean that entire cities, possibly even countries, would be exterminated in the invader's unfettered efforts to deal with any and all resistance. Pendragon is unwilling to burn the Earth in order to save it and so is currently not making an effort to reveal the truth about the Nightlords.

Besides their two main theaters in North America and Europe, there are smaller missions of sabotage, infiltration, intelligence gathering and even assassination being carried out by agents around the world. Of imperative consideration in all operations is the sparing of human life, though the loss of those that have turned traitor to their race is a regretful but necessary result of the war. However, when it comes to the lives of those supernatural beings that have invaded

the Earth there is no mercy to be asked or to be given - they are an abomination that must be destroyed.

### *Operations in Other Dimensions*

Not content to merely wait for the Nightlords to bring the fight to Earth, Pendragon has been sending armed expeditions into the Nightlands on a regular basis for just over a year now. Before this time, their activities in the Nightlands were limited to the occasional exploratory force or team that was sent to retrieve something or someone stolen from Earth by the Nightlords' agents. Dark Day has changed this policy.

The Brotherhood of Magi has provided the secret society with the powerful magic it needed to transport the twelve teams of operatives (mostly Harbingers) that have penetrated the Nightlands since Dark Day. The first three teams were used to reconnoiter the area surrounding the city of Marrow, the Nightland's counterpart to Constantinople. Finding within this terrible city experimentation and horrors the likes of which few men are demented enough to have ever imagined, Pendragon has decided that action must be taken to stop these atrocities. Being far too dangerous to set up their base of operations within the city itself, the teams that followed the scouts brought their equipment to an island in the Sea of Ashes (the Nightlands version of the Mediterranean Sea). This island has proven to be near enough to be used as a staging point against Marrow and yet remote enough to make tracking the operatives back across the barren sea nearly impossible.

With the arrival of the twelfth team, the hidden compound known romantically as '**The Summerhouse**' has only recently become fully operational and manned. The Summerhouse has been built near some ruins that continue to puzzle Pendragon's scholars but are believed to have been erected by the enigmatic "Lost Race". Nestled within a natural cave system among the hills of the island, allowing for several hidden and guarded exits from which the Harbingers can strike across the Sea of Ashes at the Nightlords, the occupants of the Summerhouse are careful to ensure that their home is not found by the Nightlord's hounds.

Equipped with generators, a small computer network, a large cache of arms and a mirror link to Earth, this base has a staff of thirty-five men and women devoted to the cause of bringing down Marrow. Already, small strike teams have traveled to The City of Night, as it is also known, and struck at its grotesque activities, only to melt into the Doppelganger population before returning across the sea.

After learning that people from Earth were being kept in the city for the purposes of interrogation

and experimentation, the agents of the Summerhouse have redoubled their efforts into gaining intelligence on the forces and commanders of Marrow as well as into seeking out possible allies who are less than satisfied with the cruel rulers of the city. Should such allies be found, most likely among the Doppelganger slave population, the people at the Summerhouse will be one step closer to their goals.

Pendragon is also now undertaking steps to counter Nightlord efforts in the Astral Plane and Dreamscape, two alternative realms of existence which allow the enemies of man unprecedented opportunities to spy on their would-be victims. Slowly but surely, Pendragon is gathering and training agents who have access to these dimensions so that they may train others to do so as well.

The Magi and Paladins currently have agents that act individually or in small groups within these dimensions, but they are operating in more of an intelligence and counter-intelligence capacity as opposed to the strike force that Pendragon is working towards in the (far) future. Through these men and women, Pendragon hopes to prevent the Nightlords from using the dreams of their own agents against them or to spy around for the organization's headquarters and bases by astral means.

### *The Longbow Contingency*

It is whispered among some of the orders that the Seraphim have given the order of Principalities (see elsewhere) a secret command to be enacted in the worst possible situation. Supposedly called the 'Longbow Contingency', the set of commands are (if they truly exist) most likely in the hands of Requel, the order's leader, and are to be used only if ultimate victory by the Ba'al's or Nations of Blood seem imminent. The stories say that the Principalities have been entrusted with a series of nuclear devices that have been modified with magic, turning them into a doomsday device that, when set off, will tear apart the very fabric of reality. Such an event would not only destroy the Earth but would also obliterate the mirror world of the Nightlands, leaving in their place a black hole that would span both dimensions.

When asked whether or not the stories about the Longbow Contingency are true, the Principalities all quickly laugh and say that such a notion is absurd. But perhaps they are too quick to laugh and cast sidelong glances at each other whenever Longbow is mentioned. Perhaps.

### *Operation Man Friday*

This is a special mission, the aim of which is to infiltrate the Ba'al controlled upper echelons of the governments and industrial/economic elite of the world, one step at a time. By placing agents in the lowest rungs of the world's ladder of power, Pendragon hopes to open doors that will allow yet more positions to be infiltrated by its operatives. In this way, by starting at the foundation and working their way up, Pendragon's agents expect that within a few years they will have placed several of their agents in key positions. When this happens, these "loyal servants" of the Ba'al will be able to feed information back down the chain of infiltration to Pendragon, and will have people in place who are willing to give their lives if the situation demands it if they know that they will be taking key Nightlord personnel to the grave with them. Though a long term plan, Operation Man Friday is one of Pendragon's greatest hopes for survival, and yes, victory, in the war against the invaders from the Nightlands.

### **My Brother's Keeper ...**

Although Pendragon has been largely secular in the past century or two, Dark Day sparked a spiritual revival in the secret society, the same as it had done around the world. With this reawakening came the raising of all those voices that had been silenced concerning the secular leadership's allowing of "monsters" and "witches" into Pendragon. Now, with the rekindled fire of their faith and growing numbers that increase daily, the faithful joined into a secret sect known as the **Knights of the Blinding Faith**.

The Knights, zealots to a one, are secretly working within Pendragon to infiltrate or overthrow the Seraphim and other key positions within the organization, a situation that would grant them the ability to banish or do away with all Pendragon's heretical members. The Brotherhoods of Magi and Paladins, the Forsaken, the Nightbane of the Powers - all would fall beneath the cleansing scythe of righteousness should the Knights of the Blinding Faith gain control. Currently, the Dominions have been able to uncover very little in the way of intelligence on the Knights; even watching the most obviously faithful of Pendragon's fellowship has proven fruitless.

And yet the rumors about the Knights and their purpose continues to circulate as more and more lips rapidly seal up when questioned about this forbidden sect. Who will be approached next to join and just how far up the ladder of command has the sect already

gained followers? All good questions. It would be a pity if Pendragon was unable to survive the answers.

## The Hierarchy and Structure of Pendragon

Like many covert partisan and resistance groups throughout history, Pendragon divides itself into a 'cell group' structure. Each field cell consists of ten or so (no larger than twenty-five) operatives that have been assigned to a particular region to act on their own with relative freedom. Though a cell usually has an open hand in how they approach their duty, each understands that they are fighting a war of secrecy and to do anything that would draw unwanted attention to themselves or to Pendragon, either from the Nightlords or the public, is to be avoided at all costs.

The leader of a cell group is responsible for reporting to and taking orders from a superior officer who is himself often in charge of a cell group that operates in a more strategically vital area. By keeping its command structure fragmented, the many arms and hands of Pendragon are less likely to do each other harm should one cell be revealed to the enemy.

The organization uses a simple ranking system resembling that of the army to distinguish its agents' seniority and ability, as well as the amount of control and influence that each operative has within Pendragon. Most cell leaders are captains or majors, while the Seraphim would be considered the commanding generals.

On a much grander scale than the cell groups, Pendragon as a whole is divided into several branches, or orders, each of which is commanded by a brigadier general and is charged with a particular type of duty. Every order contains a selection of agents whose abilities have been deemed to best suit the purposes of that particular branch. These orders are:

The *Seraphim* (leaders) are the six members of Pendragon that are responsible for its overall goals and operations and each is chosen by a vote among the other five members. A Seraphim can only be deposed by a similar vote or by his own volition. Each is assigned to supervise a specific region of the world, over which they have complete control barring a majority vote by the rest of the council. Only the other Seraphim and a select few loyal and trustworthy agents know who these people really are.

Russia and the Mediterranean are controlled by the Seraphim known as "Dominic" while "Sarah" controls Japan, China, Australia and most of Southeast Asia. "Joseph" commands Pendragon's interests in Europe and the UK and the extremely cautious (some

would say paranoid) "Mary" rules over Africa. "Samuel" oversees Pendragon's interests in North America, one of the most contested battle zones of the New Crusade, and lastly, South and Central America are commanded over by the vengeful Seraphim, "Zachary".

The symbol of the seraphim is a winged man with its head back as though singing and hands lifted upwards.

Seraphim: 6 members. Their areas of specialty and O.C.C.s are classified.

The *Cherubim* (archivists/researchers), who are lead by "Ophaniel", are headquartered within the secret archives beneath The Chateau but the majority operate out of their own libraries and laboratories. They work tirelessly to gather and record as much information as possible to be passed on to the main archives where it is analyzed, assessed, stored and, if able, used to Pendragon's benefit. Most Cherubim that are out on assignment have a small to large library of their own - depending upon the extent of their means - that they use to help the cell groups in their area.

Cherubim also serve as Pendragon's scientists and it is this order that initiated the Excaliber project and has diligently worked through the centuries to ensure that the Harbingers would have every possible technological edge over their enemies. Not easily pigeon holed, some Cherubim appear as antiquated bookworms or professors while others look like they have just been dragged from a punk rock concert.

The recently updated symbol of the Cherubim is an open book with interlacing circuits running across its pages.

Cherubim: Approximately 230 members worldwide.

9% Cybermancer O.C.C.

19% Hacker O.C.C.

48% True Scholar O.C.C.

2% Net Demons R.C.C.

22% Other O.C.C.s

*Thrones* (hunters/intelligence) are responsible for acting as Pendragon's unrelenting eyes and ears in the world. Under the command of "Zabkiel" (who is currently a woman), Thrones track down any enemies of Pendragon that may have gone to ground and also infiltrate Nightlord or vampire controlled governments, corporations and similar bodies to attain what information they may. Only the most capable and devoted of agents are made Thrones because they are privy to information that is forbidden to most other orders and are continually required to perform their duties without backup.

All Thrones are chosen from the ranks of the Archangels where they will have previously proven their capabilities. As such, each Throne already bears the Archangel's tattoo to which the Thrones add a fiery blue wreath.

Thrones: Approximately 600 members worldwide.

12% Parapsychologist O.C.C.

46% Ex-Government Agent O.C.C. (see

**Between the Shadows™**)

32% The equivalent of the ADA Field Agent O.C.C. (see **Between the Shadows™**)

10% Other O.C.C.s

*Dominions* (internal affairs/observers) scout

for and observe potential recruits and are also constantly keeping an eye on the other orders to ensure that they remain loyal to Pendragon. In this latter capacity, Dominions investigate their fellow agents who are suspected of a crime, be it civil or against Pendragon's own regulations, or of consorting with the enemy. This duty has earned the Dominions the eternal spite of the other orders and a reputation as snitches.

Most (70%) Dominions have risen up from the Archangels and were selected for their complete devotion to the secret society and to their fellow man. Others are directly enlisted into this order from the general populace because their previous occupation, a detective, for instance, or mentality is so well suited to the task. The greatest (and often the most fanatical) among the Dominions is their leader, codename "Hashmal".

Upon joining the Dominions all marks of previous orders, including tattoos, are removed so that the agent will bear no connections to past affiliations. He is then given a badge - much the same as those carried by police - that bears the order's symbol: an ornate scepter with a gilded orb beneath.

Dominions: Approximately 160 members worldwide.

18% Theologian O.C.C.

23% Harbinger O.C.C.

31% Ex-Government Agent O.C.C. (see

**Between the Shadows™**)

12% The equivalent of the ADA Field Agent O.C.C. (see **Between the Shadows™**)

16% Other O.C.C.s

The order of *Virtues* (sorcerers & psychics) is comprised entirely of the Brotherhoods of the Magi and Paladin. Used for combat and intelligence gathering, the paranormal abilities of these agents grant them an advantage over other orders that has proven to be very effective. But because of these same powers, the Virtues are not fully trusted by most other agents and are always

closely monitored by the Dominions. The leader of the Virtues is known simply as "Valor".

An all-seeing eye resting upon an olive branch, which is then mystically tattooed onto the agent, represents the order of Virtues. These mystical tattoos are enchanted so that they cannot be replicated and will glow with a faint red light when any spell casting member of the order recites a simple (level 1, uses 2 P.P.E.) spell of recognition known only to them.

Virtues: Approximately 425 members worldwide.

67% The Brotherhood of Magi

33% The Brotherhood of Paladins

The *Powers* (special forces) are comprised of

supernatural agents, such as loyal Nightbane, as well as the most dangerous and skilled humans within the organization - the Forsaken. Following their Nightbane leader, "Sammael", the Powers are perhaps the most deadly of the orders. Used for those missions within areas such as the Nightlands, Astral Plane, Dreamscape or NSB headquarters, or for those that require an act of supreme bravado and risk, the Powers are the ultimate representation of Pendragon's raw strength and zeal to see the Earth freed.

Much like the Virtues, Powers are not fully trusted by Pendragon and are constantly watched by the Dominions. Powers, for the most part, are aware of this observation and do not take kindly to such attention and distrust.

In keeping with their purpose, the order of Powers has chosen as its symbol a pair of lightning bolts crossing each other upon a circular field of red. This symbol is usually tattooed onto the agent (for those capable of bearing such marks), or is worn as a patch on an article of clothing.

It should be noted that creatures such as vampires, werebeasts, and wampyrs are NEVER allowed to join this order, or Pendragon for that matter, as their (supposed) innate link to evil forever marks them as an enemy in the eyes of these monster hunters. All Forsaken Harbingers are Powers because no other order of Pendragon can fully accept what these men and women have become.

Powers: Approximately 800 members worldwide.

8% Forsaken Harbingers

40% Nightbane R.C.C. (various areas of training)

13% Nightbane Sorcerers R.C.C.

Less than 1% Astral Lords

24% Mystic O.C.C.

15% Other O.C.C.s

*Principalities* (guardians) are responsible for the protection of Pendragon's headquarters and other important facilities. This would include many of the more important safe houses and bases of operations, the corporations that act as a cover for their research and financial dealings, and the hidden locations where young men and women are molded into becoming deadly Harbingers. A small number of these staunch protectors are also assigned as bodyguards to each Seraphim and similarly important members.

Principalities are not required to take commands from the other orders except for the Seraphim, their post commander, and Dominions ranked brigadier general or higher, so long as the new command does not supersede or counter the order of a higher-ranking Principality. In fact, the authority of a Principality is so near absolute that they can countermand the order of anyone besides the previously mentioned exceptions if the agent feels that the actions or commands of a fellow agent may put his post at undue risk. Leading the Principalities is the capable Harbinger, "Requel", who has commanded for the past twelve years, before which he served in the field as an Archangel for well over a decade.

A simple representation of their immense mission, the Principalities use a clenched fist within a circle of red as their symbol and each is issued a badge, much like a police officer's, that bears this same mark. Many also have their order's symbol tattooed somewhere on their body.

Principalities: Approximately 1,200 members worldwide.

6% Theologian O.C.C.

42% Harbinger O.C.C.

18% Ex-Government Agent O.C.C. (see

**Between the Shadows™**).

34% Other O.C.C.s

*Archangels* (common agents), or simply "Angels", are the standard, basic field agents of Pendragon. There is no standard for application into the Archangels beyond the approval of the local cell leader, the willingness to help, and love for one's fellow man.

As their symbol, the Archangels have taken a sword that stands upright on its blade, from which, just below the pommel, sprouts a pair of tiny wings. Each and every Archangel is required to get this symbol tattooed somewhere on their person as a means by which they may recognize one another. Should an Archangel ever be reassigned to another order they will often retain their tattoo (if it is permitted) as a symbol of pride.

Archangels: Approximately 7,000 members worldwide.

60% Harbinger O.C.C.

8% Ex-Government Agent O.C.C. (see

**Between the Shadows™**)

3% The equivalent of the ADA Field Agent O.C.C. (see **Between the Shadows™**)

4% Theologian O.C.C.

2% Arcane Detective O.C.C. (see **Between the Shadows™**)

23% Other O.C.C.s

## **The Brotherhood of Magi**

Recruited and placed within the Brotherhood of Magi, the spell casters of Pendragon have been almost entirely isolated from the rest of the organization so as to keep friction and prejudices to a minimum. Most of the Brotherhood has learned to accept this segregation but few can say that they like it. Along with filling the role as trackers of the supernatural, fireball throwing combatants and the like, these spell wielders are used as secret operatives, advisors and bodyguards by those who are willing to put their prejudices aside. With nobody to turn to but each other, most Magi have unfortunately come to the opinion that their loyalty must be to each other first and to Pendragon second, a view that has created a true sense of brotherhood that surpasses being just a name. Further underscoring their sense of fraternity, each Magi is instructed in a series of passphrases, mystical symbols and similar means by which they can recognize each other.

Recognizing no single leader, the Magi have formed a hierarchical system that uses a series of metaphorical circles to which a member may belong, with the First Circle being the highest and the Eighth being the lowest in rank. There are only eight members allowed within the First Circle, which serves as a council of manipulators and commanders that answer only (technically) to the Seraphim. This is not always true in practice as the members of the First Circle may feign cooperation in order to better serve their own agendas. Advising the First Circle are the members of the Second, to which only sixteen Magi at a time may be members. From the Third through to the Eight Circles there may be an unlimited amount of members, though for obvious reasons the lower circles contain more members than the higher, with each increasing rank of circle bearing a proportionate increase in responsibility and power within the brotherhood as a whole.

Headquartered at an unknown location in the Italian Alps, the Brotherhood of Magi has protected itself with a series of mystical enchantments and guardians, as well as by technological surveillance methods. The compound uses powerful magic to

prevent mystical or psychic remote observing as well as viewing from passing planes and satellites. Of the buildings from the original compound made nearly four hundred years earlier, only the central building known as 'The Tower' remains. Shaped by magic from a single piece of rock, The Tower is an immense, circular structure with a diameter of just over sixty feet that stands nearly one hundred feet tall, giving it a squat, blunt appearance. There are absolutely no windows in The Tower and only one entrance - a pair of wooden doors facing eastwards. Protected by invisible wards, enchantments and entities, The Tower is perhaps one of the most heavily guarded locations on Earth. Though few outside of the First and Second Circle are allowed to enter The Tower, other Magi are permitted to stay at the surrounding compound for protection or to pursue their studies.

The entire compound is encircled by a high, metal fence topped with cyclone wire and is comprised of several barracks for visiting Magi, a garage for the camp's vehicles, and a vast library containing books of both mundane and arcane significance, several of which were penned by Magi of the past. Also to be found is a greenhouse for growing food and herbs, a hanger with a helicopter, and a few storage shacks. The base is snugly located between several mountains that require the use of oxygen masks and cold-weather gear to be crossed safely, making it well protected by nature, magic and man.

Membership Breakdown: There are currently 275 members worldwide in the Brotherhood of Magi.

45% Sorcerer O.C.C.

20% Mystic O.C.C.

6% Astral Lord and Mage O.C.C.s (see

**Between the Shadows™**)

29% Other

Note that Fleshsculptors are *never* allowed to join.

## **The Brotherhood of Paladins**

Much the same as the Magi, the Brotherhood of Paladins' members were at one time all viewed as heretics, witches and servants of evil. Psychic to a one, the Paladins are represented by a heraldic shield containing a dove in profile with its wings outstretched as if to take flight. Unlike their mystical counterpart, the Paladins did not gain acceptance until much later when a far more open-minded council of Seraphim came to power, thereby allowing these psychics an equal chance to serve their fellow man. Opening their organization to the membership of these true psychics in 1919, Pendragon still has not entirely taken the Paladins into their trust. Commanded by a powerful mind master that

assumes the title of "Charlemagne", this Brotherhood is a tightly knit group that fully trusts nobody except for each other and perhaps the Magi whose standing is similar to their own.

Despite the fact that many Paladins have joined the cause, only a fraction are assigned to active combat duty because the potential uses of psychic abilities makes a Paladin too valuable to squander in battle. Of those that are used as warriors, most are psi-mechanics, naturals & geniuses, or kinetics because they are best suited for such duties. Of the remaining Paladins, most are assigned to a particular region as freely acting agents who are to perform specific missions, infiltrate enemy groups or to join like-minded organizations (secretly, of course) as advisors and spies. A few powerful Paladins are always kept out of sight so that their extraordinary abilities may be held in reserve for emergencies and so that they may train new members.

Unlike the Brotherhood of Magi, Paladins have no headquarters of their own and so when not away on assignment they must count on any Pendragon safe house or their own residence for shelter. When the Brotherhood must all gather in one place - for whatever purpose - they use both psychic and normal means to send out the summons and then meet at a random site of their choosing, often at an unexpected location such as a remote hotel in a small town or city.

Membership Breakdown: There are currently 150 members worldwide in the Brotherhood of Paladins.

56% Psychic P.C.C.

3% Dream Maker/Dancer P.C.C.s (see

**Between the Shadows™**)

8% Mind Master P.C.C. (see **Between the**

**Shadows™**)

7% Kinetic P.C.C. (see **Between the**

**Shadows™**)

11% Natural & Genius P.C.C. (see **Between the Shadows™**)

6% Psi-Mechanic P.C.C. (see **Between the**

**Shadows™**)

9% Other

## **The Harbingers - foot soldiers against evil**

So named because they are meant to be the forerunners of the doom of all supernatural evil on Earth, to be a Harbingers requires skill, bravery and just a hint of madness. Practically raised with a silver sword in one hand, a pistol in the other and an oath of allegiance upon their lips, these soldiers are totally immersed (some might say brainwashed) in the ways and goals of Pendragon. As adolescents, these men and women are taken to remote locations to be raised by

their instructors in a cold, demanding environment, hidden from everyone except for their Principality guards, senior Harbinger officers (colonel and up), and the Seraphim.

Not merely restricted to the lore surrounding supernatural creatures, all young inductees are also educated in the known anatomy, physiology and behavior of their foes. Later comes instruction in the proper use, understanding and maintenance of a wide variety of weapons and fighting techniques, in addition to advanced tactical and military theory. Once their training has been completed, usually around the age of 19 or 20, the newly inducted Harbinger is given his or her assignment and is sent out into the world to do battle.

### *Harbinger O.C.C.*

**1. Recognize the Supernatural:** When a supernatural being is seen by the Harbinger, be it someone who is possessed, a vampire, werebeast, an Ashmedai, a Nightbane in its Facade, or any like manner of creature, there is a good chance that the warrior will realize the true nature of what he is seeing. **Base Chance of Success:** 45% plus 5% per additional level of experience to recognize the monster as being supernatural (+10% to recognize vampires except if an Infiltrator adept). A second successful roll, with a -10% penalty for Nightbane in their Facade or for possessed people, will allow the Harbinger to identify the type of creature.

**2. Special Combat Training:** Harbingers are trained to be more deadly than any special forces soldier or intelligence agency assassin. Their skill with weapons and their own unique form of hand to hand combat is all the result of centuries of devoted, single-minded evolution in monster hunting techniques.

**Supernatural Armor Penetration:** By carefully aiming an attack, be it with a hand strike, gun or melee weapon, the character can avoid or penetrate an opponent's Armor Rating (A.R.), needing only a normal roll to strike to inflict damage. This action counts as two melee attack/actions and first requires a successful Lore: Demon and Monster skill roll, with a failure requiring that the Harbinger's attack defeat the creature's protective armor as normal. If the supernatural being is also wearing regular body armor, the attack roll must be greater than its A.R., as normal.

**Weapon Specialization:** Select a modern firearm *or* ancient melee weapon proficiency with which to

specialize and gain the following benefits. These bonuses are in addition to any gained from a weapon proficiency.

(A) **Modern Firearm:** +1 to initiative and to strike with an aimed shot at levels 3, 7, and 13. +1 to strike with a burst and wild shot at levels 4, 8 and 14. Increase the weapon's effective range by +10% at levels 2, 6, 10 and 14. Reloading takes half as long as normal, allowing some weapons, such as automatic pistols, to be reloaded and fired within the same melee action/attack if the spare clip/magazine was handy at the time. These bonuses only apply to the weapon proficiency of specialization.

(B) **Ancient Melee Weapon:** +1 to initiative, parry and entangle at levels 3, 5, 8, 11 and 14, and is +1 to strike (and throw, if applicable) at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13. The character receives an extra attack/action per melee when using his specialized weapon at levels 1, 4, 9 and 12. These bonuses only apply to the weapon proficiency of specialization.

### **Harbinger Special Hand to Hand Level**

- 1** Three attacks per melee, +2 to strike. Karate-style kick does 2D6 damage. Knock out/stun on an unmodified roll of 17-20. Disarm. Backward sweep kick: Used only against opponents coming up behind the character. Does no damage; it is purely a knock-down attack (same penalties as body flip) but cannot be parried (an opponent can try to dodge but is -2 to do so).
- 2** +2 to initiative, parry and dodge, +4 to damage vs supernatural creatures. +1 to P.S. Entangle.
- 3** One additional attack per melee. Jump Kick (critical strike).
- 4** Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18 to 20. +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to disarm.
- 5** Automatic dodge. Death Blow (if desired; must announce his intention).
- 6** One additional attack per melee. +2 to pull punch, parry, and dodge.
- 7** +1 to initiative, +2 to automatic dodge, disarm and entangle.
- 8** +1 to P.P., +2 to strike. Leap Attack (critical strike).
- 9** +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, a punch now does 1D6 damage, Knock out/stun on 16-20.
- 10** One additional attack per melee. +2 to parry and automatic dodge.
- 11** Critical strike on an unmodified roll of 17-20. +1 to disarm, +2D4 to Speed.
- 12** +2 to initiative, +1 to disarm. +2 to damage vs supernatural creatures.
- 13** +1 to strike, dodge and automatic dodge. +1 to either P.S., P.P. or P.E.

**14** One additional attack per melee. +1 to strike, +1 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

**15** +2 to entangle, +1 to damage vs supernatural creatures.

### Description of Combat Maneuvers

**Automatic Dodge:** This maneuver does *not* use up a melee attack/action. Only bonuses from a high P.P. attribute and those specifically stated to be for automatic dodges apply to an automatic dodge attempt.

**Disarm:** The disarm move is a strike, hold or grappling maneuver that causes an opponent to drop his weapon or whatever he is holding. The move counts as one melee attack/action but does not give the weapon to the character performing the maneuver, nor does it cause damage. The item is either knocked away or falls to the ground. A disarm can be used as a defensive move in place of a dodge or parry, or can be done as an attack/strike.

In order to disarm successfully, either as a strike or as a defensive maneuver, the disarming character must roll to disarm versus his opponent's own strike (used defensively) or parry (used as a strike). The higher roll wins.

**3. Socially and Emotionally Inept:** Having been taught that their emotions can be used against them and can render them weak, Harbingers are unprepared to deal with many of the feelings and passions that come with being human. Over time these men and women will begin to come out of their shells but will never fully be able to gain anything remotely resembling normal behavioral development. They are prone to miss the point of jokes, sarcastic comments, rhetorical questions, romantic advances and some of the more subtle indications of friendship. Harbingers are -15% to trust (but not intimidate) and -20% to charm (but not impress) rolls. Game Masters should award experience to players who role-play the social and emotional ineptitude of a Harbinger character well.

**4. Bonuses & S.D.C.:** +3 to save vs magic, psionics and mind control/possession, +5 vs Horror Factor and +1 vs insanity. Harbingers begin with 1D4x10 S.D.C. and may distribute 4 attribute points total as they see fit amongst their M.E., P.S., P.P. and P.E. attributes while also gaining a +10% bonus to any intimidation roll, as per the M.A. attribute.

**Attribute Requirements:** Must have a minimum M.E. of 15, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, and P.E. 14.

### O.C.C. Skills for all Harbingers:

Speak/Read/Write Native Language (+30%)  
Basic Mathematics (+5%)

Speak/Read/Write Latin (+10%)

Strategy/Tactics (+30%)

Lore: Vampire (+30%)

Lore: Demon and Monster (+20%)

Boxing

Athletics

Select four Modern Weapon Proficiencies and two Physical skills.

### O.C.C. Related Skills:

Select 4 other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels two, five, nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Radio: basic and cryptography only.

Domestic: None

Electrical: Basic electronics only.

Espionage: Any (+15%)

Mechanical: Any (+10%; +15% on weapons engineer)

Medical: Paramedic only

Military: Any (+20%)

Physical: Any (+10% where applicable)

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Concealment (+5%), palming, and streetwise only.

Science: Any (-5%)

Technical: Any (+10% on all lore skills)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select five secondary skills from those listed. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All secondary skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Sunglasses (hypnotic resistant), a revolver, automatic pistol and/or sub-machine gun (each with 2 normal and 1 silver magazines), a SWAT-style jumpsuit, modified combat harness and/or bandoleer, 2 HE and 2 silver fragmentation hand grenades, 6 wooden stakes and a mallet, crucifix, 3 vials of holy water, a powerful flashlight, 50 feet of nylon rope with 10 climbing spikes, casual and work clothes, a silver-plated dagger or sword, a backpack, and a utility belt with pouches. A harbinger is also likely to possess an inexpensive jeep, car, pickup truck or motorcycle.

**Equipment Available upon Clearance:** Harbingers currently engaged in extremely dangerous assignments may request additional equipment and weapons such as stake launchers, sniper rifles, explosives, etc. Pendragon also allows its agents to purchase their own special equipment at any time, thus bypassing the requisitioning process.

**Money:** 2D6x100 +300 in cash to begin with, and 2D6x1000 in property.

**Why be a Harbinger?** A Harbinger is a warrior's warrior, a man or woman who fights for a cause despite knowing that the odds are heavily stacked against them. These characters possess a mental and emotional fortitude that grants them great advantages when facing evil and their skill in combat rises to a level that few humans can match, possibly even putting them on par with some supernatural creatures. For players wanting strength and ability without having to play a being hated and feared by mankind, the Harbinger is the perfect choice.

### *Forsaken Harbingers - victims of their own obsession*

Slightly over 200 years ago there arose a sect of Harbingers that came to believe that in order to defeat their greatest foe, the vampires, they would have to become like them. By using a forbidden alchemical process and the blood of slain vampires, this small group distilled a concoction that would grant them superhuman abilities and powers somewhat like those of the undead. Records concerning whom it was that first set the Harbingers on this path are not known to exist, but it did not take long afterwards for the rest of the Harbingers to become aware that something was amiss. After learning of the deplorable actions of this sect, the Seraphim and Harbinger commanders set their minds to the difficult task of deciding what was to be done with the offenders. The easy answer would be to punish the guilty Harbingers - possibly even banishing or killing them - and destroying all traces of the potion, but the accused's successes in the field had increased so greatly that not even the most devote of Pendragon's leaders could dismiss the potion out of hand.

A compromise was eventually decided upon and the offenders were thereafter appropriately referred to as "the Forsaken". Though unable to extend their leniency so far as to encourage others to start taking the potion, Pendragon instead opted to leave the choice within the hands of the individual Harbinger. Furthermore, once a warrior has joined the Forsaken, he is immediately transferred to the order of Powers where his strange new abilities are more at home. As for the making of the potion itself, Pendragon has decided that ignorance is bliss and so has declined to even ask about the alchemical process, a secret that is passed down from member to member among the sect of outcasts.

To become one of the Forsaken, a Harbinger must approach a current member and, having gained the latter's approval (no easy feat considering a Forsaken's

paranoia), subject himself to the trying process of preparation. Because of the vile origin and contents of the potion, and the nature of the change that overcomes its taker, almost all other agents of Pendragon avoid the Forsaken and view them as freaks that are themselves borderline monsters. This unyielding stigma has never gone away and, in addition to the horrible changes brought on by the potion's use, is a major reason why the number of Forsaken Harbingers is so comparatively low.

The number of Forsaken has never been more than 8% of the total Harbinger corps with 3% or 4% being the norm. Currently this number is roughly 5% and continues to rise as the battle against the Nightlords grows more difficult.

### *The Potion of the Undead*

Most of the potion's ingredients may be attained by legitimate, if unorthodox, means, but the most vital component, the blood of a vampire, is another matter. The Forsaken have entire teams (10% of their total numbers) that specialize solely in the hunting and capturing of vampires to be taken and held in special prisons where they are slowly drained.

A Forsaken-to-be must drink the potion daily for a period of two months, during which time he begins to change and adapt to the abilities been forced upon him. The Harbinger will be uncomfortable in sunlight and his sleeping habits will become increasingly nocturnal, leaving him very sluggish and tired during daylight hours. These side effects are all signs of the final change that will come after the passing of the two months. If even a single day's dosage of the foul draught is missed, the entire process must begin anew.

Once the change has been completed, the Harbinger's moods and physical appearance will have altered greatly. The Forsaken's skin will take on a pale hue and his incisors will become slightly elongated. As if this were not enough, the individual's eyes will take on a slight red tinge as well, giving the person an appearance that will make other, non-Forsaken humans feel remarkably uncomfortable in his presence. The person's entire personality takes a dramatic shift to the darker side of the spectrum, making the Forsaken Harbinger prone to fits of rage, depression, melancholy and frightening fatalism. Similarly, the warrior is possessed by a grim sense of self-confidence and determination to see the job done no matter the cost, a characteristic that often seems to be a borderline invulnerability or god complex.

### **Forsaken Harbinger Abilities**

**1. Enhanced Healing:** Instead of healing once per day, the character now heals the usual amount once every 3 hours. Wounds will not leave any scars and broken bones mend seamlessly.

**2. Superior Attributes:** +2D4 to P.S. and this attribute becomes Supernatural, +1D4 to P.P., +1D4 to P.E., +2D6 to Speed. Leaping distances are doubled.

**3. Weakness – Addiction:** A Forsaken requires a daily dosage of the potion (several swallows worth), or he may revert to normal. Each day that the Harbinger is denied his necessary dosage requires a save vs magic with all normal bonuses applied. A failed roll means that he retains his powers for another day while success means that his body has fought off the effects of the potion and has caused him to change back into a normal human. Add a cumulative bonus of +1 to this saving throw for every day after the first that has passed without the Forsaken having received another dose of the potion.

As if this potion did not have enough of a down side to it already, a Forsaken that is denied the potion (whether he regresses to normal or not) will quickly realize that his body has become addicted to the vile drink. A Forsaken suffers from the same effects of withdrawal as is typical for a drug addict (see **Nightbane®**).

**4. Weakness – Unstable Psyche:** Roll on the following table to determine exactly what damage has been done to the Harbinger's sanity since joining the Forsaken and undergoing the change.

**01-25:** Is obsessed with killing the undead, so much so that they will drop everything else to do so. Not only this, but the Harbinger is paranoid about the infiltration of human society by the vampire swarm. Any human that is pale, has light sensitive eyes or even complains about having to get up in the morning is a possible vampire and may suddenly find himself under assault.

**26-50:** Overcome whenever he must go out into a wide open space, the character is subject to the usual effects of a phobia when placed in such a situation. The Forsaken feels most comfortable when underground, in dark places.

**51-75:** Prone to violence, the character easily loses control of himself if provoked or if under battle conditions, making him fly into a blind rage that is as dangerous to his friends as it is to his allies. Save vs insanity in order to resist losing control. While in such a rage the character is +4 to damage, +1 attack per melee, +1 to initiative and +6 to save vs pain, psionics and magic. However, his lack of care for his own defense

leaves him unable to dodge at all, -3 to parry, pull punch and roll with punch/fall/impact. Lastly, any friend that even gets near to the character in this state is just as likely to be attacked as is an enemy. Another saving throw vs insanity is necessary for the Harbinger to regain control of himself or to resist attacking a friend.

**76-00:** So great is the Forsaken's addiction to the potion that he must drink double the usual amount. Furthermore, because his body has become accustomed to a greater dosage than is normal, the saving throw that is made if the potion is denied him is at +2, making it easier for his body to fight off its effect and he also suffers double the normal effects/penalties from withdrawal.

Over time there is a growing chance that further damage will be suffered by the Forsaken Harbinger's sanity, requiring that he attempt a save vs insanity every eight months. A failure requires a random roll for insanity, as is normal. Forsaken that have been taking the potion for a long time, sometimes for years, are shattered wrecks of humanity and the other agents of Pendragon often fear them as much as do the Nations of Blood and Nightlords.

**5. Weakness - Vulnerable in Sun/Daylight:** The character becomes a nocturnal creature. To try and change this sleeping pattern is extremely difficult and will serve to enhance the warrior's moodiness and harsh personality. If forced to operate out in the day/sunlight, a Forsaken is extremely uncomfortable and sluggish; P.S., P.P. and Speed are reduced by half, -2 attacks/actions per melee, -3 to initiative, and his eyes will be extremely sensitive to the point where only the darkest sunglasses will help (-2 to strike, parry, dodge and roll, otherwise). These penalties are half the above if the Forsaken is active during the shadowy hours of dawn or dusk.

**6. Weakness - Susceptible to Vampire Domination:** Not only can vampires sense something distinctly unhuman about these warriors, but if one tries to mentally dominate the Forsaken as it would attempt to do with another vampire, the altered Harbinger must roll to save vs psionic mind control with a failure bearing the same results as those suffered by a vampire.

**Modifiers to resist a vampire's commands:**

- 0 vs Vampire intelligence (any).
- +2 vs Master Vampire of a different essence/nation.
- +4 vs Secondary Vampire (any).
- +5 vs Wild Vampires (any).

## **Pendragon in your campaign**

The most obvious way to use Pendragon is to have the player characters be agents of the secret society. Whether they are acting for the betterment of mankind, out of a need for revenge, or for other reasons that are theirs' alone to know, the characters have signed on for the duration. This sort of campaign is likely to be centered on combat, intelligence gathering and counterstrikes into the Nightlands, werebeast, or vampire held territories. Encounters with the vampires, Children and/or the Nightlords can easily be accommodated and justified within such a campaign and will allow a group of players that are new to the **Nightbane®** setting a good opportunity to get a feel for the game's atmosphere.

The player characters may be Dominions (or just filling in due to a shortage) ordered to keep an eye on a prospective recruit or a current member, only to learn that their subject is a traitor or has been replaced by a vampire or Nightlord minion. Or perhaps the subject of their attention is being framed and the characters act before realizing this, too late made aware that they were tricked into making it appear as though they were themselves traitors. It is also possible that the characters are a part of an elite assassination squad whose job it is to wander the country, possibly even the world and between dimensions, striking against key werebeast, Nightlord, or vampire targets. This may seem like a campaign of straightforward combat, but it would also involve the infiltration of the enemy's forces to gather intelligence before attacking and careful planning so as to make it back alive while leaving the world in ignorance of Pendragon's covert war.

Alternatively, player characters need not join Pendragon for it to be an element in their campaign. They could be investigating a rash of covert-style assassinations and other attacks against the Nightlords with the hopes of finding an ally, or maybe the characters are accidentally in the wrong place at the wrong time, allowing them to witness agents of Pendragon in action, arousing their curiosity as to whom the mysterious men could be. To put a spin on things, Pendragon does not even have to be introduced as an ally! If the players have chosen a supernatural O.C.C./R.C.C. for their characters then friction with Pendragon will obviously exist. Nightbane, werebeasts, rogue vampires, wampyrs, etc. are all suspect or outright hunted by Pendragon without any consideration being taken first. Aggressive behavior such as this will surely give the characters a bad opinion of Pendragon and may even lead them to interfere with the organization's activities without knowing that the organization considers itself to be acting in the best interests of humanity. This latter situation is a

wonderful opportunity to sow confusion among the characters.

## **Members of Note**

### *Dominic Trickman*

Down through the centuries scores of agents have steadfastly claimed to have seen the founder of Pendragon. Having recognized their society's founder from paintings of him that hang in many of the group's bases and safe houses, there have been almost one hundred agents that have filed reports of sighting Trickman. In each instance, the person has stated that Trickman was watching their activities from afar, his shocking appearance serving to draw the agents' attention to a danger that would have quite probably otherwise taken their lives.

No definite answer has been arrived at as to the veracity of these claims, but rumors circulate that Trickman may have been turned into a wampyr and then faked his death so that he could forever work for the good of humanity. Another unfounded rumor ventures that Trickman was the first of the Forsaken and the architect of the foul brew that gives that sect their powers. The potion, so the rumor says, has given Trickman an extended life span, something that cannot be proven by looking at any other Forsaken because none have ever been known to survive into an advanced age. The location of Dominic Trickman's grave is unknown so there is no way to prove or disprove the unlikely possibility that Pendragon's founder is still among the living (or undead). Could it be that Dominic Trickman, Pendragon's founder, still sits in the position of 'Dominic' on the council of Seraphim? With the secrecy surrounding that circle of powerful individuals, anything is possible.

### *Manuel Imagon*

Thought by those who know him to be one of the planet's most learned men, Imagon is a wizened scholar in his early sixties and a long time member of the Cherubim. An expert in paranormal relics and dead civilizations and cultures, it is to Imagon that all recovered artifacts are first given for inspection. He is extremely well respected among the secret society - and academia as a whole - and is a veritable fount of knowledge and wisdom. It is rumored that Imagon is a member of the Seraphim, most likely under the title of 'Dominic', but proof of this has never been uncovered.

**Alignment:** Scrupulous

**Attributes:** I.Q. 20, M.E. 17, M.A. 10, P.S. 12, P.P. 15, P.E. 9, P.B. 11, Spd. 16

**Disposition:** Imagon is a consummate student of existence - anything and everything fascinates him and he tirelessly pursues the answer to the immortal question, "why?" He is a bookworm without peer and finds the smooth, faint roughness of a text's page far more comforting than the warmth of another person's company.

**Age:** 62

**Height:** 5 feet, 6 in (1.68 m)

**Weight:** 147 lbs (66 kg)

**Hit Points:** 42

**S.D.C.:** 10

**P.P.E.:** 2

**Experience Level:** 9th level True Scholar

**Abilities:** **Body of Knowledge:** Primary: Technical, Secondary: Science, Medical, Tertiary: Espionage, Military, Communications, Electrical. **Advanced**

**Research & Learning.**

**Psionic Powers:** None

**I.S.P.:** N/A

**Combat Abilities:** Hand to Hand Basic

**Number of Attacks:** 6

**Bonuses:** Parry +2, strike +1, damage +2, dodge +2, roll with punch/fall/impact +2, +1 vs possession, +2 vs psionics, +1 vs insanity, perception +7, +3 vs Horror Factor, Critical Strike on 19 or 20.

**Skills:** Speak English 98%, Read/Write English 98%, Speak Latin 98%, Read/Write Latin 98%, Speak Greek 98%, Read/Write Greek 98%, Speak Nosfetrú 98%, Read/Write Nosfetrú 98%, Speak Hebrew 98%, Read/Write Hebrew 98%, Basic Math 98%, Advanced Math 98%, Astronomy 97%, Lore: Religion 98%, Computer Operation 98%, Research 98%, Writing 86%, Lore: Nightlands 98%, Lore: Magic (General Knowledge 98%, Recognize Wards, Runes and Circles 91%, Recognize Enchantment 86%), Lore: Vampires 98%, Lore: Psychic 98%, Cryptography 79%, Paramedic 98%, History 96%, Read/Write Hieratic 98%, Speak Hieratic 98%, Intelligence 70%, Computer Programming 96%, Computer Hacking 65%, Basic Electronics 39%, Literacy: Wizard Glyphs 86%, Computer Repair 74%, Investigation 91%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt (cane).

**Appearance:** Somewhat hunched over by the years he has spent at a desk reading, Manuel Imagon is a stereotypical bookworm, right down to the suspenders, thinning, white hair and small, round spectacles that are about to slip off of the tip of his nose.

**Equipment:** He always carries his glasses, a dozen or so books, a few notebooks and pads with pencils and pens of all sizes and colors, and his favorite cane. His

cane doubles as a weapon (1D6 damage) and can harm vampires by virtue of the silver horsehead at its tip.

**Money:** \$55,000 saved.

### *Reginald Bone Marshall*

Currently the leader of the pariah sect, the Forsaken, Marshall is a hulking, ruthless and bloodthirsty (obvious reasons aside) warrior with a penchant for cutting his defeated opponents into many pieces with his silver-plated longsword, "Cleaver". Marshall is as feared by his own troops as he is by his enemies. Pendragon keeps a careful eye on Marshall and has more Dominions watching him than any other single person on Earth. Hel is said to have earned his nickname after his penchant for taking the finger bones of vampires that he has slain and then wearing them like jewelry.

**Alignment:** Anarchist

**Horror Factor:** 11 to anyone witnessing this savage in battle.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 13, M.E. 19, M.A. 17, P.S. 23 (Supernatural), P.P. 16, P.E. 19, P.B. 10, Spd. 20

**Disposition:** Reginald is a brutal man who views the loss of innocents in combat as a necessary evil if the war against the undead and Ba'al is to be won. He has little sympathy for those too weak to defend themselves and holds no loyalties except to mankind as a whole (not as individuals), his fellow Forsaken, and Pendragon, in that order. And woe to anyone who calls him "Reggie".

**Insanity:** Bone is obsessed with killing the undead and will wage his war at any cost, so long as the foe is defeated. He will rush blindly into incoming fire, rage through a pack of Hounds, or leap into the waiting claws of a vampire to kill his hated foe.

**Age:** 36

**Height:** 6 feet, 3 in (1.92 m)

**Weight:** 212 lbs (95.4 kg)

**Hit Points:** 43

**S.D.C.:** 66

**P.P.E.:** 2

**Experience Level:** 7th level Forsaken Harbinger

**Abilities:** Recognize the Supernatural (75%), Supernatural Armor Penetration, Automatic Pistol Specialization (initiative +2, aimed strike +2, burst and wild strike +1, range +20%, reloading takes half as long), Enhanced Healing.

**Weaknesses & Vulnerabilities:** Socially Inept, Addicted to the Forsaken potion, Vulnerable to Daylight, Susceptible to Vampire Domination.

**Psionic Powers:** None

**I.S.P.:** N/A

**Combat Abilities:** Special - Harbinger training

**Number of Attacks:** 8

**Bonuses:** Initiative +3, parry +7, pull punch +2, strike +2, damage +8 (+12 vs supernatural), dodge +7, automatic dodge +2, entangle +2, roll with punch/fall/impact +7, disarm +2, +3 vs possession, +3 vs mind control, +5 vs psionics, +3 vs insanity, trust 30%, intimidate 55%, perception +1, +2 vs poison, +5 vs magic, +8% vs coma/death, +5 vs Horror Factor, Knockout/stun on 17 to 20, Disarm, Backward Sweep Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike on 18 to 20, Automatic Dodge, Death Blow, Pin/Incapacitate on 18 to 20, double all leaping distances.

**Damage:** Punch 3D6+8, Restrained Punch 2D4+8, Power Punch 6D6+8, Karate Kick 6D6+8, Jump Kick, Body Block/Tackle 3D6, Crush 3D6.

**Skills:** Speak English 98%, Read/Write English 90%, Basic Mathematics 80%, Speak Latin 90%, Read/Write Latin 70%, Strategy/Tactics 90%, Lore: Vampire 90%, Lore: Demon and Monster 85%, Boxing, Athletics, Acrobatics (Sense of Balance 90%, Walk Tightrope 78%, Climb Rope 92%, Back Flip 90%, Climb 40%, Prowl 30%), Wrestling, General Repair/Maintenance 65%, Assassination 60%, Demolitions 98%, Streetwise 44%, Detect Ambush 70%, Basic Radio 70%, Pilot Automobile 64%, Sniper, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Automatic & Semi-automatic Rifles, W.P. Sub-machinegun, W.P. Heavy.

**Appearance:** A large, muscular man whose very presence frightens the timid and faint of heart, Reginald shaves his scalp and never seems to take off his sunglasses. He wears dark, night camouflage fatigues, and a necklace of vampire fingers, all of which combine to increase Bone's intimidating figure.

**Equipment:** Hypnotic resistant sunglasses, Browning GP 35 pistol (2 armor piercing clips, 2 silver clips), modified combat harness holding 2 HE and 2 silver fragmentation hand grenades and 6 wooden stakes, silver crucifix, "Cleaver" (a silver-plated longsword; 1D8+2), Galil Sniping Rifle (2 armor piercing magazines, 1 silver magazine), and a canteen filled with the Forsaken's potion.

**Money:** Roughly \$2,000.

## **Relations with other groups and factions**

Though it would be convenient to say that the world is entirely ignorant of the existence and history of Pendragon, such a statement would be false. Several of the following organizations have had direct dealings with Pendragon while others only peripherally and

without knowing whom it was they were working with or against.

**The Resistance:** Pendragon is unwilling to trust a group of supernatural creatures such as the Resistance, no matter how profitable such a relationship may be to both parties. Agents are currently under orders to leave this group of freedom fighters alone to their own devices unless they witness proof that their actions will harm humanity, in which case all bets are off. The Resistance is aware of some of Pendragon's activities, but has always attributed them to some other group, such as the Spook Squad.

**The Underground Railroad:** Pendragon sometimes lends the UR aid from the shadows, protecting its refugees with the hopes that some of the beings saved will move on and join a group that is fighting the Ba'al. This is not always the case, of course, but deterring the Nightlords' goals in any way is in itself reason enough to lend their anonymous support to the Railroad.

**The Nocturnes:** For full details on Pendragon's relationship with this group of renegade undead, see the section on the Nocturnes, elsewhere.

**The Warlords:** Much like the Nightlords themselves, the Warlords are seen by Pendragon to be a plague upon humanity, a group that uses its supernatural might to bring harm to mankind. Though they have not been able to spare the resources or men to take any concentrated action against this segmented group of outlaws, Pendragon does strike at them or muddle their activities whenever possible.

**The Seekers:** No matter how hard Pendragon has worked to keep its covert war from the attention of outsiders, it is impossible to do so against a group that covets information as much as do the Seekers. Older than Pendragon, the Seekers have drawn upon the archives and libraries of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of historians and magi from the past millennia or two and so have access to a great wealth of information which they have used to learn a thing or two about Pendragon.

Should the Seekers reveal themselves to be anything more than a group of spell casters and mystics seeking knowledge (a goal that in itself may prove dangerous to mankind), then Pendragon will see this group as just another enemy to be dealt with. Until such a time though, the Seraphim have ordered that the Seekers should be ignored and left alone whenever possible.

**The Lightbringers:** This group represents perhaps the greatest amount of controversy and division of opinion to Pendragon. Nobody knows what these creatures are and what (or whose) cause they serve.

Some agents believe they are a force for good while others argue that they are serving their own agenda. Because this argument exists as high as the Seraphim, Pendragon has told its agents to stay clear of this group until further information can be gathered.

**The Spook Squad:** Comprised mostly of non-magic wielding humans (though they do have a psychic branch), the Spook Squad is about as close to the ideal ally as may be found. Some of the agents that now make up the Spook Squad previously knew about the covert actions of the secret society of monster hunters - after all, learning secrets was what they did for a living. Because these agents recognized the evils that Pendragon was battling, at that time they chose to leave the organization to fight its war, a war the existence of which they could not convince their government of. Now that the policies of an unbelieving government are no longer an issue, these warriors have chosen to support Pendragon whenever they are able.

**The Shadowleague:** This group and the Shadowboard BBS that it runs is of great concern to Pendragon. Not only has the Shadowboard been the only link in the loss of several independent and member agents, but it has also evaded all attempts by the Cherubim to find out who runs it. The simple fact that even Excaliber has yet to be able to penetrate the overwhelming security that protects the Shadowboard and its user account database is something that has Pendragon perplexed and more than a little worried.

**The Order of the Cobra:** Seeing the Order of the Cobra as an abomination and the true revelation of the evils that “witches” could work on their fellow man, Pendragon has tried for a long time to shut this group down. Through the centuries of fighting, Pendragon has managed to retain its secrecy though the Order has long since realized that there is a mysterious, organized force that is directly working to oppose them. Pendragon is trying to acquire the identities of as many "Parents" as it can so that it may eventually kill them, and thus also their Children, in one telling stroke.

**The Nightlords:** Much attention that was once reserved for the Nations of Blood alone has now been turned to the fighting of the Nighlords and their servants, both willing and not, human or otherwise. The Ba'al know that there are humans who are aware of their secret invasion but they have not yet heard of Pendragon. Operations conducted by the monster hunters are often attributed to the actions of other groups that are well known to them, the Nocturnes, Spook Squad and Resistance in particular.

**The Vampire Menace:** Despite vowing to stomp out supernatural evil in all of its forms, Pendragon and its varied members have never forgotten the demonic forces that lead to the organization's birth.

Vampires have always represented one of the greatest and most dangerous continuing threats to humanity (whether mankind chooses to believe in them or not), and so Pendragon has consequently devoted most of its time and effort to dealing with the undead particularly. This is not to say that Pendragon pursues vampires alone, but is instead meant to illustrate the enmity that the secret society has for the undead, a hatred that is now returned in kind.

It took only a few centuries after Pendragon's formation for the Nations of Blood to take note of the changes occurring amongst the human cattle about them. Though they had often encountered resistance in the past from those few humans that had uncovered the secret of their existence, the vampire kingdoms were shocked and mystified by the evidently organized opposition that now seemed to be set against them. Riding upon the apparent success of their efforts to drive away one of their most hated foes, many of Pendragon's operatives become increasingly careless as more and more of their vampire hunts ended up being false alarms. This sloppiness, combined with the decades during which most of the Nations of Blood had gone into hiding, would lead to an encounter that caused several of Pendragon's Harbingers to be captured and turned into mind controlled thralls.

Unable to resist the will of their new masters, these unfortunate souls revealed the existence of Pendragon and its purpose to stamp out all supernatural evil, including that represented by the vampires and their foul fiefdoms. Luckily, this revelation so enraged several of the vampires present that the human captives were killed out of spite before they could reveal too much about the organization's structure, locations, operations or immediate goals. Still, Pendragon's secret was out and so now they too would become hunted, in much the same way as they had been hunting the Nations of Blood for so long. The war for the fate of humanity was now truly joined.

**The Tribes of the Moon:** Considered just what step shy of the evil of the Nations of Blood, the various Tribes of the Moon are old foes of Pendragon. These monster fighters have only a limited knowledge of these secretive beasts, however, and are unaware of most tribes' existence. When a werebeast is found, though, it is treated as an abomination and killed immediately unless it is thought that observation may gain useful intelligence, such as the location of the things lair and comrades.

## **The Weapons and Equipment of Pendragon**

In order to perform their duties as the secret defenders of mankind, Pendragon must arm itself with a

variety of weapons, both conventional and not. Pendragon's history has pitted it against supernatural opponents such as vampires, Nightbane (good and evil alike) and other mythically related creatures, requiring them to build tools that are up to taking on such a task. With the coming of Dark Day and the Nightlords' invasion of Earth, Pendragon has been forced to adapt many of their current technologies and weapons as well as develop new ones to better combat this foe.

### *Conventional Weapons of Choice*

The most popular weapons are those that are easily concealed, can deliver a formidable amount of damage and allow the user to maintain a respectable distance from their prey. Sub-machineguns, grenades, and high-caliber pistols all allow for this and can be adapted to suit the specific needs of battling the various enemies of Pendragon. Though subtlety and covert ability are traits that are both admired and preferred by Pendragon, it is fully prepared to use more obvious means in order to take the battle to the enemy if needed. To this end, Pendragon also uses some weapons of a more destructive and overt nature that, while avoided if possible, are far more effective against an opponent. These latter, heavier weapons range from rifle launched grenades (modified and not), rocket launchers, satchel charges, assault rifles, machine guns and several weapons of Pendragon's own design.

### *Special/Erotic Weapons and Equipment*

There is certainly equipment used by this organization that is as dangerous as it appears, but there are also simple, unassuming items that have been modified or made from scratch that are just as effective and yet do not draw as much attention to their wielder. Some of these weapons and articles of equipment are the results of years of research and field testing while others are the result of simple common sense, a little ingenuity and more than likely just a touch of inspired desperation.

#### **Silver Tipped Arrows & Crossbow Bolts:**

These do double damage directly to the vampire's Hit Points. If the arrow strikes their heart, the shaft will perform as does a wooden stake. Reduce the normal range of the bow by half when using these oddly weighted arrows. **Cost:** \$20 per arrow.

**Silver Bullets:** A silver bullet causes normal damage when used against vampires (some larger calibers may do double damage, at the G.M.'s

discretion). On the down side, the bullet's silver composition causes it to tumble improperly, reducing its range to half the normal amount. Furthermore, silver is a relatively soft metal and so the penetration value (P.V.) is reduced by 2. The cost mentioned below is for a box of 100 rounds.

.22 Caliber: \$72  
.32 Caliber: \$84  
.38 Caliber: \$108  
.45 A.C.P.: \$168  
.44 Magnum: \$192  
12 & 20 Gauge Shotgun  
    Buckshot: \$168  
    Solid Slug: \$192  
9mm & 7.65mm: \$180  
5.56mm: \$240  
.41 Magnum: \$180  
7.62mm: \$288  
.357 Magnum: \$168  
.50 Caliber: \$540  
Hollow Point: add \$48.  
Full Metal Jacket: add \$100.

\* **Teflon** decreases the Armor Rating of any target by 2, add +2 to the P.V., and gives a damage bonus of +1D6. Add \$400 to the normal cost.

\* **Exploding Shell** can only be used in pistols but with each firing there is a 35% chance that the round will not explode. The Damage bonus for this shell is +6 for low caliber, +10 for medium and +15 for high caliber weapons. Add \$800 to the normal cost.

\* **Dum-Dum** have less penetration than normal bullets (the target's Armor Rating effectively increases by 2 against dum-dums) and there is also a 25% chance that the round will jam when fired. There is a damage bonus of +1D6 with this round but the weapon's range is reduced by 15%. Add \$40 to \$120 to the normal cost.

\* None of these bullet modifications are available at neighborhood gun shops.

**Silver-plated Blades:** Such weapons encompass everything from the smallest of knives to the largest of swords and should not be interpreted to mean that the weapon's blade was forged from silver. If this were so it would be too soft and bend in combat quite easily, thus the original metal blade is coated in silver plating. These weapons cause double damage directly to Hit Points against creatures vulnerable to silver. **Cost:** +100% to 500%.

**Silver-plated Gloves:** These interesting items are otherwise simple leather or heavy cloth gloves that have had silver plates attached to the back and

underside of the hand and fingers. The plates allow any hand assaults (except palm strikes) made upon a vampire to not only hurt it, but to also inflict double the attack's normal damage directly to Hit Points! **Note:** Do not add the user's P.S. bonus before doubling the damage. **Cost:** \$150 to \$250 per pair; add \$50 if silver studs are also added to the knuckles which increase damage from punches by +2 (+4 against vampires).

**Silver-plated Boots:** Much like the silver-plated gloves, these boots have had silver plates added to their sides, heels and toes. Motorcycle, workman, or cowboy boots are often chosen for this modification because it is common for such footwear to have decorative strips of chrome or steel attached to them. The plates allow most kick attacks (except those that hit with the flat of the foot where no silver plate may be placed) to cause double damage to vampires directly to Hit Points. **Cost:** Add \$250 to \$400 (at least) to the price of the pair of boots.

**Wolfbay Spray:** Much like a can of pepper spray, the contents of these canisters may be sprayed directly at vampires, confusing and stunning them (lose initiative and one attack, -6 to strike, parry and dodge). The spray has the same effect on other creatures that breathe and will cause them to sneeze and their eyes to water (-6 to strike, parry and dodge). The spray is a liquid so it must be washed or wiped off, otherwise it continues to disorient for 2D4 melee rounds. **Range:** 6 feet (1.83 m). **Cost:** \$60 for a spray can worth 15 sprays.

**Wolfbay Nerve Gas Grenades:** These gas grenades essentially cause the same effect as does the spray, yet it is contained within a modified grenade shell of the 40mm, hand or rifle launched variety. The area of effect varies but averages between 15 to 45 feet (4.6-13.7m) and, depending upon the weather, the cloud lasts for 1D8+2 melees. **Cost:** \$80 or so per grenade

**Wolfbay Cloud Generator:** Simply a modified Feistel DM22 Smoke Generator (**The Compendium of Contemporary Weapons™**, page 147), this small device can be fired from a grenade launcher up to 1,312 feet (400m), can be thrown by hand, or can be held while operating. The effects are the same as that created by the wolfbay nerve grenades. **Delay:** 4 seconds, **Diameter:** nearly 2 inches (50mm), **Length:** 3.74 inches (95mm), **Weight:** 6.5 oz. (185 grams), **Duration of Cloud:** 1D4+3 melees.

**Impaling Spears:** Taking a hint from the ancient design of the boar spear, this weapon has a

short, metal crossbeam placed upon the weapon's metal shaft about 2 feet (60.96 m) below the 6 inch long (15.24 cm), silver blade. This crossbeam, which sticks out 4 inches from either side of the shaft, stops any creature impaled on the spear from rushing up the length of the shaft to attack the weapon's user.

The blade can be removed by pressing a large stud placed near the wielder's hands, allowing the user to impale one vampire, disconnect that particular blade (leaving it where it is in the monster's chest), and then replace it with another. Releasing the current spearhead does not take up an entire melee attack, instead counting as part of the strike itself should the wielder choose to release the blade directly after the blow lands. Replacing the blade takes one action if it is conveniently located. **Weight:** 6.5 lbs (2.9 kg), **S.D.C.:** 100, **Damage:** 3D6 S.D. (double against creatures vulnerable to silver), **Cost:** \$1,300 for the spear and \$250 for each additional spearhead.

**Blessed Ammunition/Bullet:** Temporarily bestowed with power by a Theologian, a blessed bullet becomes a deadly tool against evil. **Duration & Effects:** See the "Blessing an Item" ability of the Theologian O.C.C., found elsewhere, for the full details and possibilities involved in using this ammunition. **Cost:** No greater than the cost of the bullet and the time and implements needed to perform the blessing.

**Blessed Blades:** Much like a blessed bullet, this is a bladed weapon, often a sword or knife, that has received the benefits of a Theologian's blessing. **Duration & Effects:** See the "Blessing an Item" ability of the Theologian O.C.C., found elsewhere, for the full details and possibilities involved in using these weapons. **Cost:** No greater than the cost of the weapon and the time and implements needed to bless it.

**Cross-covered Flashlights:** This is a regular flashlight of any size that has had the shape of a cross painted or taped across its glass. Not only will the shadow of the crucifix harm all vampires that it falls across, but it will also inspire fear and revulsion in them (save versus Horror Factor 18). **Cost and Damage by type of Light:** Flashlight: 2D6 H.P., \$10; Large vehicle size spotlight: 4D6 H.P., \$50; Huge aircraft size spotlight: 1D4x10 H.P., \$1,700.

**Crucifix Engraved Bullets:** The shape of a protruding crucifix is carved into the ammunition's tip. This etching allows the bullet to penetrate the monster's flesh and will damage it, but they still cannot kill a vampire. **Damage:** As normal, **Range:** Half normal, **P.V. Modification:** Reduce by half. **Chance of**

**Misfiring and Jamming:** 5% per single shot, 15% if fired in a burst.

**20mm & 40mm Silver Sabot Grenades:** The first component of this modified grenade is the four-section plastic sabot that surrounds the second component – a .50 caliber silver flechette. When fired, the 20mm/40mm sabot peels away and leaves the flechette to travel the remainder of the distance (the usual range of the launcher) on its own. **Damage:** 1D6x10 (double to vampires) with no blast radius, **P.V.:** 6, **Cost:** \$60 to make.

**Holy Water Darts:** Darts with silver tips that are fired from a regular tranquilizer gun used to inject the target with holy water. Because the holy water is inserted into the vampire beneath the skin (but not into the blood stream, which does not circulate), it will cause an increased amount of damage and will make the skin above and around the impact point to bubble and blister, causing the monster excruciating pain (-1 to all actions and -10% to all skills for 1D4 melee rounds). **Damage:** 4D6 H.P. The statistics for the tranquilizer rifle and its darts are given on page 218 of the **Nightbane® RPG**.

**Hypnotic Gaze Reducing Sunglasses:** Pendragon has developed a specially treated lens that, when fitted into sunglasses, serves to help the wearer resist a vampire's hypnosis. On the down side, the special coating slightly distorts the wearer's vision. They also act as a very good pair of normal ultraviolet-proof sunglasses, are very durable and scratch resistant and are made in a variety of styles, including clip-on. **Bonuses:** +4 to save vs hypnosis that is reliant upon eye contact, **Penalties:** -10% to any skill requiring fine, delicate work and -2 to strike, parry and dodge (double these penalties if worn in the dark), **S.D.C.:** 2 or 3. **Cost:** \$450 to make.

**Paintball Gun:** Firing .68 caliber plastic balls that are filled with holy water instead of paint, these toys have been turned into deadly weapons for use against the undead. The weapon is gravity fed from a "hopper" on its top. The impact of a paintball causes 1 point of damage to mortals.

- **Pistol:** The weapon operates on a 12 gram CO2 cylinder that fits into its handgrip. It takes a half melee round to unscrew the spent cartridge and replace it with a fresh one. **Effective Range:** 50 feet (15.2m), **Muzzle Velocity:** 250 m/s is the norm but it can be increased marginally, **Weight:** 1.25 lbs (562.5g), **Damage to Vampires:** 2D6 H.P., **Rate:** single or semi-automatic, depending

upon the gun, **Payload:** 30 paintballs in the small hopper with enough CO2 for 60 shots, **S.D.C.:** 20, **Cost:** Single shot pump: \$80, Semi-automatic: \$145.

- **Carbine:** 22.75 inches (57.8 cm) inches long without the large CO2 adapter that doubles as the weapon's stock, carbines are the norm for paintball guns. **Effective Range:** 150 feet (45.7m), **Muzzle Velocity:** 250 m/s is the norm but it can be increased marginally, **Weight:** 2.5 lbs (1.13kg), **Damage to Vampires:** 2D6 H.P., **Rate:** single or semi-automatic, depending upon the gun, **Payload:** 200 paintballs in the hopper with enough CO2 for about 1000 shots, **S.D.C.:** 45, **Cost:** Single shot pump: \$115, Semi-automatic: \$220.

**Spring Sheath Stake Launcher:** The device is strapped to one's forearm and is activated by a flexing of the muscle and a quick motion of the wrist. This launches its single wooden stake forward where it can either be caught by the hand above it (roll to strike vs a 14 to catch properly or the weapon is mishandled), or used as a missile weapon that strikes at a penalty of -2. No Weapon Proficiency may be applied to this weapon. **Weight:** 1 lb (0.45 kg), **S.D.C.:** 6, **Effective Range:** 15 feet (4.5 m), **Damage:** 1D6 S.D. (double to vampires), **Cost:** \$35.

**Pneumatic Stake Launcher:** The stake launcher uses pressure provided by a CO2 cartridge or compressed air tank to fire a single 1.25 foot (38 cm) long wooden stake. Though only useful at short ranges, the stake launcher can be made out of common objects, most often the parts from pellet and/or paintball guns, plastic industrial tubing and compressed CO2 cartridges, making them cheap to produce. The weapon is used as is a rifle and several Harbingers have even crafted double-barreled versions.

In a pinch the stake launcher can also be used to fire other objects, such as tubular or smallish hand grenades (half range due to their weight), though with an additional penalty of -2 to strike due to the non-aerodynamic nature of such objects and because of the odd fit inside the launcher's barrel. This weapon uses W.P. Bolt-Action (single shot) Rifle.

**Weight:** 8 lbs (3.6 kg), **S.D.C.:** 35, **Effective Range:** Approximately 200 feet (60.96 m), but for every 50 feet (15.25 m) beyond the first there is a cumulative penalty of -2 to strike (e.g.: -2 at 80 feet/24.4 m), **Damage:** 2D6+4 S.D. (double to vampires). **Rate of Fire:** Each shot takes a single attack, **Payload:** A single stake per tube; 20 shots per CO2 cartridge is the norm. It takes half a melee to remove and replace a spent cartridge

with a new one. It takes a single action to reload the stake if one is handy, **Cost:** \$550. A new cartridge costs about \$50 to \$75 or \$5 to refill.

**Under-Barrel Pneumatic Stake Launcher:** Mounted like a grenade launcher beneath the barrel of a rifle, this weapon fires stakes that are only about 6 inches (15.2 cm) long. The under-barrel stake launcher is fired by means of a trigger attached to the lower rear of its housing - the entire apparatus is attached to the rifle by means of wire, pipe clamps or a specially crafted mount. This weapon uses W.P. Heavy. **Weight:** 4.45 lbs (2 kg), **S.D.C.:** 25, **Effective Range:** approximately 50 feet (15.25 m), but beyond 25 feet (7.62 m) there is a penalty of -2 to strike, **Damage:** 2D4 S.D. (double to vampires), **Rate of Fire:** Each shot takes a single attack, **Payload:** A single stake; 10 shots per CO2 cartridge is the norm. **Cost:** \$275. A new cartridge costs about \$25 to \$40 and \$2 to refill.

**Vehicle Mounted Pneumatic Stake Launcher:** Obviously not a weapon of subtlety, the vehicle mounted stake launcher is either attached in a fixed position or to a swivel mount on a jeep or pickup truck. Many of these weapons commonly have more than one barrel, with two or three being the norm. The amount of CO2 required to propel the stakes from the launcher is so great that they are often provided with several large canisters or with a portable, gasoline powered air compressor. The stakes fired by this launcher are 2.5 feet (76 cm) long. This weapon uses W.P. Heavy. **Weight:** 35 lbs (15.75 kg), **S.D.C.:** 50, **Effective Range:** approximately 500 feet (152.4 m), but for every 100 feet (30.48 m) beyond the first 200 feet (60.96 m) there is a cumulative penalty of -2 to strike, **Damage:** 5D6 S.D. (double to vampires), **Rate of Fire:** Each shot takes a single attack, **Payload:** A single stake per tube; 30 shots per cannister is the norm. It takes a full melee to remove and replace a spent canister and a single action to reload the stake if one is handy, **Cost:** \$900. A new canister costs about \$110 to \$150 and \$20 to refill.

**Water Balloons:** Any balloon can be used as a helpful weapon against the undead by filling it with water. One must be careful when depending upon water balloons, however, because they break easily, even when carried within a container. **Effective Throwing Range:** 10 feet (3 m) without too much of a risk of breaking while throwing, any distance beyond 10 feet and the thrower is -6 to strike and with a 60% chance of the balloon popping in his hand! Maximum throwing range is 50 feet (15 m). **Weight:** 6 ounces (170 g), **Damage to Vampires:** 6D6 Hit Points (9D6 if holy

water) to a 3 foot (0.9 m) radius, **Cost:** \$3 for a package of 100 balloons.

**Water Grenade:** Originally intended to be filled with bright paints and to be used in recreational war games, these items are comprised of a balloon filled under high pressure with water that is surrounded by a hard, hole-filled shell. Upon impact, a sharp pin is rammed through the balloon, forcing the water to spray the holes in the outer casing. **Effective Throwing Range:** As for a normal grenade, **Weight:** 8 ounces (227 grams), **Damage to Vampires:** 4D6 directly to hit points with a blast radius of 5 feet (1.5 m), 6D6 if the water was blessed, **Cost:**

**Water Guns:** A common water gun can pose a real and dangerous threat to a vampire because it shoots a jet of *running* water that will melt vampire flesh like acid would that of a mortal; even more deadly are those water weapons filled with holy water! The damage listed for the following weapons is for normal water, increase the given amount by 50% if holy water is used instead. Some of the more expensive, gimmicky water guns will have extra features, like being able to shoot two streams at once, sometimes even in more than one direction simultaneously, an area-covering spray instead of a single stream, and so on.

- **Plastic Water Pistol:** Range: 30 feet (9 m), Weight: 3 ounces (85 grams), Damage to Vampires: 2D6 hit points, Payload: 12 blasts, S.D.C.: 3, Cost: \$2 to \$5.
- **Metal or Ceramic Water Pistol:** Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), Weight: 2 lbs (0.9 kg), Damage to Vampires: 2D6 hit points, Payload: 12 blasts, S.D.C.: 20, Cost: \$15 to \$30.
- **Plastic Water Pump-style sawed-off Shotgun:** Range: 50 feet (15 m), Weight: 6 ounces (170 grams), Damage to Vampires: 4D6 hit points; wider, concentrated blast (more water), Payload: 10 blasts, S.D.C.: 10, Cost: \$10.
- **Metal or Ceramic Water Pump-style sawed-off Shotgun:** Range: 75 feet (22.9 m), Weight: 5 lbs (2.3 kg), Damage to Vampires: 4D6 hit points; wider, concentrated blast (more water), Payload: 10 blasts, S.D.C.: 40, Cost: \$40 to \$60.
- **Full size Metal or Ceramic Water Shotgun:** Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), motorized. Weight: 7 lbs (3.2 kg), Damage to Vampires: 5D6 hit points, Payload: 10 blasts, S.D.C.: 55, Cost: \$75.
- **Full Size Metal or Ceramic Water Rifle:** Range: 150 feet (45.7 m), Weight: 6 lbs (2.7

- kg), Damage to Vampires: 3D6 hit points, Payload: 12 blasts, S.D.C.: 45, Cost: \$85.
- **Water Rifle and Water Grenade Launcher:** Range: rifle is 150 feet (45.7 m), grenade launcher is 75 feet (22.9 m), motorized. Weight: 10 lbs (4.5 kg), metal or ceramic. Damage to Vampires: Rifle blast 3D6 hit points; the grenade is effectively a water balloon that erupts on impact, covering its target in water (approximately 8 ounces of water to a 3 ft/0.9 m area), inflicting 6D6 hit points of damage. Payload: 12 rifle shots and one grenade, must reload. S.D.C.: 50, Limited Rate of Fire: Can fire grenade only two times per melee and it takes one melee action to reload. Cost: \$105 for the weapon and \$2 for a pack of 10 of the special balloons/grenades.
  - **Portable Water Cannon:** This water weapon looks like a two-handed flame thrower with a hose and small, one gallon hip tank (7lbs/3.2 kg full) or five gallon backpack tank (35 lbs/15.8 kg Full). Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), Weight: 11 lbs (5 kg) plus the water tank, Damage to Vampires: 6D6 hit points; fires a high-pressure stream of water. Payload: 10 blasts for the one gallon tank or 52 blasts for the five gallon tank, S.D.C.: 40 for the weapon, 10 for the one gallon tank and 25 for the five gallon tank, Cost: \$140 for the cannon, \$10 and \$45 for the tanks, respectively.
  - **Vehicle Mounted Water Cannon:** This big, machinegun-style water cannon comes with a large, fifty gallon drum of water. The weapon must be mounted on a vehicle, within a weapon emplacement, or carried by a character with a P.S. of 24 or higher. Range: 400 feet (122 m), Weight: Cannon 40 lbs (18 kg) metal and ceramic, 50 gallon drum is 350 lbs (157.5 kg) , Damage to Vampires: 1D6x10 hit points; fires a high-pressure stream of water, Payload: 40 blasts, S.D.C.: 70 for the cannon and 45 for the water drum, Cost: \$500 for the cannon, \$200 for the tank.
  - **Additional Water Tanks:** These are simple hip tanks or backpacks that can be connected to most water weapons to increase the number of shots. Half gallon hip tank (3.5 lbs/1.58 kg) adds 40 shots to most weapons or 20 shots to heavy water weapons. Gallon hip tanks (7 lbs/3.2 kg) add 80 or 40 shots, or five gallon backpack tanks (35 lbs/15.8 kg) adds 400 or 200 shots. Costs are \$5, \$10, or \$45.

## The Nocturnes

**Warning:** Much of what is presented here is for the Game Master's eyes only and should not be read by players.

*"Scatter, we're made!" Before the words had left his mouth, Joshua was bursting forth from the crowd of sheepish Dopplegangers, shedding his dirty rags as he made for the gaping door of a nearby building. He didn't even have time to see if the rest of his group managed to get to cover before the Hunters swooped down onto the street.*

*Rushing up the dingy, darkened stairwell, Joshua willed the transformation to overcome him as he searched for a window overlooking the crowd below. Peering through the window sill as he felt the final changes rush through his body, Joshua bit back a curse as he saw the armored, winged forms of the Hunters tearing into the near mindless Dopplegangers as they looked for his compatriots. And then one found her.*

*Joshua had argued that Deborah was unprepared for a mission of this magnitude, having only recently undergone her horrifying metamorphosis into one of those luckless creatures damned to exist between the poles of life and death; glimpsing both realms but welcomed in neither. And yet she had been sent anyway. A wampyr who still didn't fully realize what she had become or what she was capable of, Deborah simply wasn't prepared for the horrors to be found in a Nightland's city-state. And now she was in trouble.*

*Unfurling the bio-mechanical wings that sprouted from his now-furry shoulders, Joshua leaned his massive form through the window and leapt out into the air above the street, stretching forth his razor-sharp, metal claws as he dove towards the Hunter that was trying to impale the panicked wampyr with its Darkspear. With a howl of rage, the Nightbane slammed into the Hunter's back, his momentum carrying both himself and the armored minion over the cowering form of Deborah. Rolling so as to land on top of his adversary, Joshua reached out with his mind to summon his shadowy tendrils as he slashed down into the protected ribs of the evil creature beneath him.*

*A quick bite from the sharp beak of the monster bled his shoulder, but Joshua ignored the pain and concentrated. Suddenly there were tentacles of pure black wriggling forth from the Nightbane, slashing downwards at the Hunter with fury. With its Darkspear pinned to its body by its opponent's bulk, the Ba'al minion was unable to defend itself from both the quickly striking tendrils and the slashing claws. Finally, with a sickening crack, Joshua's shadow tendrils found*

*purchase among the Hunter's exoskeletal ribs and tore upwards, rending the creature's chest open. Without so much as a whimper, the monster died.*

*Seeing that his fellows had rallied and defeated the rest of the flying minions, Joshua tried to ignore the many Doppleganger bodies littering the bloody street, reserving his attention for Deborah alone. Curled up in the middle of the paved road, rocking back and forth as tears streamed down her face, the Nightbane could see that the suddenness of the attack had brought home the seriousness of this war and that the wampyr's already fragile hold on sanity had nearly been broken by that realization. Pulling Deborah close to him while ignoring the pleas of the other Nocturnes to leave the area before more minions arrived, Joshua sought only to provide Deborah with a moment of security and peace within his arms. It wasn't easy loving a wampyr.*

Few really know what to make of the Nocturnes. To the other factions they are an enigmatic group of beings that embrace magic, the supernatural and creatures that are typically synonymous with the word evil. No matter what anyone believes they may know about the group, the truth is far different than what they imagine.

### The Illusion...

Organized nearly four centuries ago by the wampyr Iosef Pendragon, the Nocturnes were birthed as a means to give humanity a protector (wanted or not) against the unknown swarms of the vampire intelligences. Iosef claims to have first freed himself from bondage and to have later slain his once master, a vampire intelligence, several centuries before starting the group. He has since devoted himself and his followers to stamping out this undead blight that would sweep over the Earth and feed upon its occupants. To this noble end, Iosef has enlisted the aid of Nightbane warriors, human mystics, renegade vampires, fugitive Dopplegangers, and enraged wampyrs, among others, to wage his war.

Unfortunately, claims Iosef, the magic ritual that allowed him to break free of his master's control nearly killed him in the process and is far too dangerous to share with others, no matter the circumstances. This saddens many of the vampires that have thrown their lot in with this group because they truly believe that, were they to perform the same ritual, they would regain the full measure of their lost memories and personality. Regardless, Iosef has led them well and so they trust his judgment in this matter.

All vampires and wampyrs that join the faction must be willing to follow one of the cardinal rules laid down by Iosef: no Nocturne is to take a human life

unless (A) that human has proven himself to be an enemy and (B) has also left no other option. Drinking blood as a matter of survival is unavoidable for these Nocturnes but it should be done only to the extent that is necessary for sustenance. This need for the blood of others remains one of the instinctual desires of the undead, be they reformed or not, and so it is not always easy for even these good intentioned renegades to control themselves.

Counting among their ranks creatures that are as feared as the beings that they fight, the Nocturnes have always held to a strict code of secrecy for the sake of their own protection. Because most members are themselves considered monsters, it is not surprising that the level of trust and acceptance that the Nocturnes have received from other well-intentioned Factions has been less than satisfactory and friendly. That is okay. Fear and revulsion are things that the Nocturnes have grown used to seeing in the eyes of others and so they do the best that they can regardless of what others may think of them. Still, one cannot live as the focus of such prejudices without being affected in some way and so the Nocturnes have grown to return this distrust for fear that anyone who calls himself an ally may actually be setting them up for a fall. The leadership of and the example set by Iosef Pendragon are truly the only things that hold this organization together though he is the epitome of this paranoid distrust.

Few other Nocturnes can claim to have met Iosef Pendragon directly while fewer yet have ever related the same impression of the group's leader. When seen, Iosef always sticks to the darkness and keeps his face hidden for fear that an enemy agent may infiltrate their organization and pass along his description to others. Iosef's caution may border on paranoia, but the Nocturnes mostly come from a background of being hunted and so they are very accepting of such eccentricities. Only the upper-most echelons of the faction ever meet with their leader on a semi-regular basis and even in these instances, Iosef is very careful to remain hidden within a darkness that even mystical nightvision cannot penetrate.

If there is anything that makes his followers forgive Iosef's strangeness, it is the fact that he is a brilliant strategist and has an uncanny knack for being better informed than anyone else. Seemingly always aware of what is going on around the world, Iosef Pendragon obviously has access to some intelligence network that his direct subordinates are unaware of. Whether this source of information is magical or more worldly in its nature is likewise a mystery. No matter how Iosef manages to get his intelligence, the incredible accuracy of his information, combined with his usual sound planning, is enough to make the other Nocturnes

listen to his ideas and strategies. So far Iosef has lead the Nocturnes with confidence, good intentions and with a care for his fellows that has made most of the other members of this faction place their trust in him entirely – indeed, for some members Iosef is the only being that they trust at all. To the Nocturnes, their wampyr commander is a true hero, a savior and righteous being who shall see them through to victory. Or so the Nocturnes say openly.

Among outsiders and even themselves there are rumors that Iosef Pendragon - and the entire Nocturnes Faction through him - is really the pawn of some hidden force. Whether this shadowy and unseen manipulator is acting with Iosef's knowledge and help depends upon the specific rumor that one chooses to listen to. The most common story in circulation is that Iosef is not an independent vampire at all. This particular rumor has it (sometimes "on good authority") that the leader of the Nocturnes is still a minion of the vampire intelligence that he has claimed to have slain and that he is using the Nocturnes to wipe out his master's competition so that it may more easily subjugate mankind afterwards. Iosef's secretive and withdrawn disposition may lend support to this rumor, if one is willing to allow their perceptions to believe as much, but no solid proof has been offered in this regard. Those closest to Iosef (if there can be said to be such a person) claim that their leader's intentions regarding the well-being of humanity are honorable, but then again, no irrefutable proof may be offered for that argument either.

When Dark Day fell across the face of the Earth, the Nocturnes were one of the few groups that immediately recognized the threat for what it really was – an invasion by the supernatural. Realizing what was happening, the faction mobilized quickly and was able to escape the initial chaos thanks to their already considerable paranoia and distrust of others, two factors that made it virtually impossible for the Nightlord scout forces and infiltrators to act against them. The Nocturnes' Nightbane, a large number of which were isolated from their comrades and slaughtered during Nocturne reprisals against the invaders, suffered the Faction's heaviest losses during this time.

The Nocturnes found themselves facing an enemy that had been plotting its revenge for over ten millennia and that seemed to float between the subtle use of mole and imposter agents and the thunderously obvious activities of any other invader through history (cloaking the world in darkness and slaughtering people en masse during the confusion is not exactly subtle). Rallying to their cause - the defense of humanity - the Nocturnes quickly adapted their tactics to this new foe. In an example of daring and ingenious strategy, they

also managed to prevent the Nightlords from replacing or taking control of several important representatives and spokesmen for powerful political and economic powers within a few key cities in the United States and Canada. Quick thinking such as this showed the full measure of Iosef Pendragon's brilliance because, while the Nocturnes were not foolish enough to believe that they could hold the Ba'al at bay for any extended period, the operations were done in such a way that further attempts to infiltrate the important positions of these cities any time soon would draw more attention than the Nightlords would be comfortable with.

Before the arrival of the Nightlords on Earth, the Nocturnes had been given many centuries with which to seek supernatural lore, among which was a vast quantity of information on the lords of the Nightlands. The Nocturnes still recognize the vampire intelligences and their undead nations as a danger to humanity but the invasion from the Nightlands now poses the more immediate threat and so the direction of their war has shifted following Dark Day. The Nocturnes are now involved in several ongoing campaigns of intelligence gathering and resistance activities within the Nightlands themselves. It is hoped that the information gathered from that alien landscape will supplement their existing knowledge and provide the Nocturnes with the clues that they need to unlock the mysteries of some of their research on Earth. It is hoped that these efforts may ultimately find a way to defeat the invaders. Active resistance in the Nightlands is usually of the sort that is meant to disrupt the flow of troops (shapeshifting infiltrators and Doppelgangers in particular) through the Mirrorwall, but also involves the raiding of prison camps, theft of useful artifacts and generally trying to get in the way as much as possible.

Nocturne activities on Earth must be done in such a way as to ensure their secrecy, a consideration that is not at all difficult for the overly cautious Faction. Earth operations are currently restricted to small-scale activity like the uncovering and assassination of minimally important impersonators, the freeing of captive "dissidents", and the gathering of intelligence. All information that is gathered on the Nightlords on Earth, be it on who they have managed to replace or where they have their minions garrisoned, is stored for later use if it cannot be used immediately. Poorly organized, outnumbered and outgunned though they may be, the Nocturnes are giving it a fighting try and may buy humanity the time that it needs to awaken to the truth.

## **Organizational Structure**

The Nocturnes have very little formal structure or hierarchy about them. They commonly operate in small groups of 2 to 6 members, choosing for themselves who will lead them and report upwards through the chain of command. Only in the most important operations or locations will Iosef appoint a leader who supercedes the selection made by the local members. By using such an informal hierarchy of leadership that recognizes ability and bravery over connections and seniority, the Nocturnes have maintained a relatively high morale level by providing their warriors with a sense of worth.

Largely united in purpose though they may be, the high level of distrust that the Nocturnes share for outsiders (and as often as not, each other) has crippled their ability to act with any sense of global or even regional cohesion. Spread around the world, though mostly throughout the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, the Nocturnes operate in small groups that normally contain ten to twenty members. Each group reports to and is directed through a very loosely organized chain of command that eventually leads all the way up to Iosef Pendragon and his overall plans. For the most part these groups are left to their own devices and can do pretty much as they please so long as they act within the organization's rules and maintain their anonymity.

## **The Watch**

"The Watch", a simple name for a group of beings charged with a nearly impossible task. And what might that task be, you ask? Why, nothing short of monitoring that enigmatic, confounding barrier between dimensions known as the Mirrorwall. Using a variety of scrying methods, both psychic and magical, this band of powerful sorcerers and psychics keeps an eye out for Ba'al crossings through the Mirrorwall with the hope of uncovering patterns so that the Nocturnes can better anticipate their enemies' movements and goals. So far the Watch has met with only limited success, but as time passes they get better at their duties and their ability to track and predict Nightlord passage increases. The Watch is one of the Nocturnes best means of gathering intelligence on its foe and thus one of the organization's most valuable resources.

So that the entire Watch will not be wiped out if their location is ever discovered, the group of 25 or so beings has been separated into three divisions, one of which is located in Europe, one in North America and one in Africa. By continually shifting their location around their assigned continents, the Watch has so far

been able to avoid all Nightlord attempts to find them. Their constant movement may make the Watch's responsibility more difficult as their equipment must constantly be packed and unpacked as they move about, but it is a necessity; recent events have led them to believe that a traitor in their midst has been leaking information about their movements and responsibilities to the enemy. If this is true, the entire Nocturnes organization could be in jeopardy.

In addition to bearing the responsibility of monitoring the Mirrorwall, the Watch has been charged with finding a way to seal the dimensional barrier once again. Though they have met with very little success thus far, the Watch realizes just how important their efforts in this direction are. If the Mirrorwall could be sealed again, the Nightlords' forces on Earth would become isolated, without hope of reinforcements, and would be relatively vulnerable to the many native groups who have been fighting the secret invasion. Of course, if this secondary purpose has been leaked to the enemy by the supposed traitor, the Watch will rapidly become one of the Ba'al's primary targets.

### *Team 3*

Commanded by the deadly and fanatical wampyr, the Scarlet Brother, this team of three Nightbane, six humans and four other wampyrs is one of the most dangerous companies within the Nocturnes organization. Walking death and resignedly stoic to a one, the members of Team 3 have been sent to the evil city-state of Devil's City to interfere with the supposedly secret alliance between Lilith and the Lords of Hades. Such a team would prove very detrimental to the well-being of Earth and so the Nocturnes have made causing problems for the negotiations between the two evil parties a top priority.

But it is possible that this mission is proving to be too much even for the unsurpassed Team 3, and so the player characters have been sent through the mirrorwall to lend a hand. Are the player characters ordered to create diversions for the activities of Team 3, thus better allowing the infiltrators to gather intelligence and disrupt the proposed alliance while the player characters draw all of the fire? Very likely, the player characters will be treated as second stringers by the pompous members of Team 3, something that might cause a rivalry between the infiltrators and the player group. Will this rivalry lead the player characters to take foolish and unnecessary risks or will it force them to strive to succeed where Team 3 has failed thus far? Whatever may happen, the negotiations between the

Lords of Hades and Lady Lilith must be shattered, no matter the cost.

## **Resources**

The Nocturnes are poorly funded and usually rely upon the personal wealth of its members to keep its operations going. For the most part this is okay because many Nocturnes have retained property and funds that they owned before their 'becoming' a Nightbane, transformation into an undead, or initiation into the world of the arcane. With few immediate needs beyond the simple amenities of food, shelter, and a way to communicate with each other, the Nocturnes have little in the way of worldly wants or desires.

Unlike most other resistance-type Factions in the Nightbane setting, the Nocturnes do not have to worry about repairing equipment or buying ammunition. Their weapons are their own natural talents and powers, abilities that are replenished by time and thus they do not require the use of money. This fact alone grants the average Nocturne great freedom of action and independence because he or she does not constantly have to worry about being resupplied by his superiors.

## **The Numbers**

Besides having the greatest number of vampires of any of the Nightbane Factions, aside from the Nations of Blood and Vampire Freeholds, the Nocturnes sport a full and diverse range of members. Few Guardians are able to overcome their prejudices against wampyrs and vampires and so the Nocturnes will not accept the creatures into the Faction, no matter how well intentioned and open-minded they may seem. There is roughly a 63%/37% split between male and female members, respectively.

There are approximately 2,750 people worldwide who are currently members

- 4% Nightbane (several of which are Ancient)
- 10% Nightbane mystics
- 9% Renegade Dopplegangers
- 9% Renegade Vampires
- 3% Renegade Vampire Adepts
- 4% Wampyrs
- 12% Human spell casters
- 8% Human psychics
- 29% Regular humans
- 8% Others

## Campaign Use & Adventure Ideas

The Nocturnes organization is a paragon of contradiction. Few other factions will allow such an ensemble of different character types, ranging from everything from the undead to Nightbane to humans, all of which coexist and fight side by side with (relative) trust and acceptance. This organization is one of the best means for players to select characters of just about any type while still allowing for a plausible reason for them all to be allied together.

The following are all good springboards for grand adventures for Nocturne player characters. The Game Master is strongly encouraged to incorporate the hints and insinuations throughout this entire sourcebook to enhance the following adventure seeds as he or she sees fit.

### *Operation Foxhunt*

With the coming of the Nightlords, the Nations of Blood have noticed that the attention that the Nocturnes previously reserved for them alone has become substantially divided between multiple fronts. As such, many Nations have undertaken bold plans to try and regain lost footholds into territories that they had been forced from by Nocturne vampire hunters in centuries past. To counteract these encroachments, many new Nocturne recruits are being trained how to find the well-concealed lairs of the undead and how to vanquish the foul demons once found. These teams are often led by an experienced vampire hunter whose job it is to lead these rookies out into the field to give the Nations of Blood a slap on the wrist for their audacity while hopefully also keeping the recruits alive long enough to learn from their experience.

Are the freshly made player characters recruited to fight as one of the teams and if so, what will their experienced team leader think of being charged with babysitting a bunch of wet-nosed rookies? Will the player characters' first few battles be against small groups of undead, thus providing them with the chance to learn with little risk, or will their very first vampire hunt result with them biting off more than they can chew? And what would happen if the team leader was slain in this initial encounter, would the player characters remember enough of their training and vampire lore to survive long enough to become tried and tested vampire hunters? Should the player characters survive, where will their war against the undead lead them from here? Will they be given marching orders to attack a known nest of powerful vampires or will they be allowed to wander as they may

to destroy the corruption of the undead wherever it is to be found?

### *Operation Fireball*

As a last resort, the Nocturnes are using some of their rogue vampire agents to smuggle nuclear weapons (both tactical and strategic) into the city-states of the Nightlands. If Earth should ever fall to the evil Ba'al, these undead, who will themselves survive the nuclear blast, are to detonate these bombs in a last act of retaliation. Could a player character vampire be one of the undead chosen to infiltrate an enemy stronghold with such a weapon or perhaps the characters have been ordered to escort an NPC vampire on this mission to ensure that he and his package arrive safely?

### *The Snake Oil Plan*

Like most creatures, the Ba'al need food to survive - it just so happens that the Nightlords eat the life force of other creatures. Like so much cattle, the denizens of the Nightlands who serve their masters as soldiers may also be called upon to feed their masters' hunger, but the risk of becoming a meal is greatest for the bountiful Doppelgangers. And don't think that the Nocturnes haven't taken notice of this.

The Snake Oil Plan involves poisoning the Nightland's Doppelganger population through their food supply, thus depriving the Ba'al of their main source of life force energy. By this, the Nocturnes hope to weaken the Nightlords to the point where they will either have to reveal themselves on Earth in such a way as to rally all of mankind against them or make them vulnerable to assassination. A bold idea, the Snake Oil Plan has one flaw: nobody knows exactly where or what the Doppelganger's food supply is! None of the city-states have any agriculture - the barren Nightlands are incapable of growing crops and there are no herd animals to speak of. Some have even speculated that the Doppelgangers are forced to eat their own dead. Until this food supply is discovered, the Snake Oil Plan, an operation that is already incredibly risky, is just an idea.

The Nocturnes are sending small teams of operatives into the Nightlands in search of the Doppelgangers' food source. These teams must use stealth and guile to mingle with the drone-like Doppelgangers in order to learn where it is their food comes from and, if possible, infuse the supply with a deadly toxin. Is the player character group such a team? Will they successfully infiltrate the Doppelganger populace or will they be discovered and forced to flee into the Nightlands or hide within the twists and turns of

the nightmarish city, force to survive by their wits, without the support of the Nocturnes? And if they do somehow manage to unravel the secret of how the Ba'al keep their masses fed, will the information be of any use to the Nocturnes?

### *Against the Hordes*

Recently, the Nocturnes have learned that a previously unknown vampire intelligence exists on Earth. This monstrosity has been extremely careful to keep its presence hidden as it slowly builds its strength; neither Pendragon, the Nations of Blood, nor the Ba'al are aware of it. But, the newly uncovered intelligence suggests that this intelligence has been able to create enough vampire minions to transfer itself to Earth and in such a manner as to exponentially increase its strength in the process. The player characters must find and stop it.

But what may be used against this new plague of evil? Does this particular Nation of Blood have anything that sets it apart from the rest? Any strengths, any weaknesses? Does the vampire intelligence have enough P.P.E. of its own for the journey into Earth's dimension or must its minions perform a ritual or seize a lost relic in order to fuel their master's coming? If so, can the player characters find the site of the ritual or the artifact in time to stop the monster's arrival? Worst of all, what if the player characters are too late?

### **Nocturnes of Note**

#### *The Scarlet Brother*

The Scarlet Brother earned himself quite a reputation during the Inquisition as he traveled across Europe, finding and burning heretics though he earned his terrible nickname from his penchant for having his victims painfully bled until they confessed their sins. This zeal would be the priest's undoing, however, when he eventually caught and tried gaining a confession from a "witch" who turned out to be a vampire! As punishment for the mortal priest's impudence, the undead decided to gain some small measure of vengeance by transforming this most holy man into something entirely unholy. But the Scarlet Brother's mind was too strong and instead of being reborn an enslaved vampire, the priest had become a free-willed wampyr.

Since that day, the Scarlet Brother has fought against the evils of the Nations of Blood, employing methods that would not always be seen as following the

ways of the Good. But if one's soul is already damned, what does it matter if one employs damning methods, right? For centuries, the Scarlet Brother has been traveling the world, purging the unclean and sweeping aside the impure from the steps of Heaven's Gate, clearing the way for the righteous. Today, the Scarlet Brother leads the daunting Team 3.

**Name:** Christoph Iadano

**Alignment:** Aberrant

**Horror Factor:** 11

**Attributes:** I.Q. 11, M.E. 18, M.A. 17, P.S. 27 (Supernatural), P.P. 17, P.E. 15, P.B. 17, Spd 15

**Disposition:** Christoph is a zealous servant of Good, despite his semi-undead existence. Instead of believing himself cursed, this fanatic believes that he has been transformed to be an avenging, immortal warrior of his faith. Though his allegiance with the Nocturnes forces him to work with demons and heretics, the Scarlet Brother holds in his disgust and anger and puts on a blank face until the inevitable day when the greater evils are vanquished, allowing him to purge his brethren.

**Age:** 844

**Hit Points:** 55

**S.D.C.:** 90

**I.S.P.:** 134

**P.P.E.:** 2

**O.C.C. and Experience Level:** 8th level wampyr

**Wampyr Natural Abilities:** Regenerate 2D6 hit points/S.D.C. per melee, supernatural strength and endurance, suffers half damage from metal weapons, immune to vampire mind control.

**Vulnerabilities:** Blood dependancy, suffers 2D6 damage for every minute of exposure to sunlight.

**Combat Abilities:** Hand to Hand Basic

**Number of Attacks:** 5

**Bonuses:** Initiative +1, parry +3, strike +2, damage +14, dodge +3, roll with punch/fall/impact +2, +5 vs possession, +5 vs mind control, +2 vs psionics, +2 vs insanity, trust/intimidate 45%, charm/impress 35%, perception +3, +5 vs Horror Factor, Judo-style body flip/throw, Critical Strike on 19 or 20.

**Damage:** Restrained Punch 2D6+8, Punch 4D6+8, Power Punch 1D4x10+8, Kick 5D6+8

**Psychic Abilities (Iosef):** All vampire psionics except Super Hypnotic Suggestion, plus See Aura (6).

**Skills:** Speak Italian 98%, Read/Write Italian 98%, Speak English 85%, Read/Write English 65%, Speak Latin 85%, Read/Write Latin 65%, Speak Nosfetru 85%, Read/Write Nosfetru 65%, Lore: Vampire 65%, Lore: Nightlands 60%, Lore: Religion 65%, First Aid 80%, Prowl 60%, Basic Math 80%, Horsemanship 68%, Writing (scripture) 60%, Lore: Nightbane 65%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt.

**Physical Description:** The Scarlet Brother wears plain clothing, usually black, and has a silver crucifix hanging from his beard-covered neck. His face would be nondescript were it not for the fire of zealotry that burns within this wampyr's eyes. When operating in the field, this fanatic wears a dark cloak with cowl that is blood red within its folds.

**Equipment & Money:** Cristoph typically arms himself with a pump shotgun with silver buckshot, an automatic pistol with staggered armor piercing and silver rounds, a bulletproof vest beneath his clothes, a silver dagger in each boot and a wooden crucifix within the folds of his shirt.

### *Latius Crom*

Once a great mystic who roamed the wilderness of Northern Africa during the declining years of the mighty Roman Empire, Latius was an advisor to kings and gave wisdom to the masses. And then he was brought into the darkness. For centuries after his transformation into a Necromage Adept, Latius was forced to serve his Mardekesh master who sought only to twist the sorcerer's magic to its own despicable desires. But then, in the early ninth century, Latius managed to break his master's control and make his will his own once more. His first act as a free undead was to slay the vampire who transformed him before fleeing into the mountains of the Mediterranean.

Shortly after the Nocturnes' founding, Latius showed up and made his services available. He remembered what it had been like to have his mind enslaved to the ambition of another creature and he despises having to see anyone else go through the experience. He now works to free as many vampires as he can from the iron grip of the god-like vampire intelligences. Latius also lends his aid to the humans who are being subjugated by the invading Ba'al, but the welfare of his fellow undead shall forever remain his top priority. Latius is currently assigned to the urban jungle of Manhattan.

**Name:** Latius Crom

**Alignment:** Aberrant

**Horror Factor:** 14

**Attributes:** I.Q. 16, M.E. 19, M.A. 20, P.S. 31 (Supernatural), P.P. 17, P.E. 21, P.B. 10, Spd. 24

**Disposition:** Latius is an honorable creature. He keeps his word and abhors unnecessary violence but he will throw himself into combat with vigor if the need arises. This powerful mage far prefers the solutions to be found in magic and will try to use these to solve any problem before resorting to the ways of the fist and the fang.

Oddly enough, he has regained his Muslim beliefs even if his nature prevents him from entering a temple or from wearing a symbol of his faith.

**Age:** 1,694

**Height:** 5 feet, 11 in (1.8 m)

**Weight:** 184 lbs (82.8 kg)

**Hit Points:** 116

**P.P.E.:** 172

**Spells:** Blinding Flash (1), Globe of Daylight (2), See Aura (2), See the Invisible (2), Sense Magic (2), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Energy Bolt (5), Fuel Flame (5), Anchor Stake (5), Impervious to Fire (5), Shatter Wood (6), Magic Armor (10), Repel Animals (7), Repel Wood (7), Circle of Flame (10), Eyes of Thoth (9), Sleep (10), Mask Undead (20), Stake of Mists (20), Tongues (12), Words of Truth (15), Agony (20), Paralysis: Superior (25), Familiar Link (55), Banishment (65).

**R.C.C.:** Secondary Vampire Necromage Adept

**Experience Level:** 10th

**Natural Abilities:** Create other undead via the "slow kill" bite, mind control over other vampires, metamorphosis into bat, wolf or mist form, summon fog. Regenerates 2D6 hit points per melee round, and can fight and function until reduced to -21 points.

**Invulnerability:** Vampires are invulnerable to most normal weapons, including explosives and energy weapons. Magic and psionics, magical weapons, silver, wooden weapons, and hand to hand attacks by supernatural creatures will inflict damage, but spell magic does only half damage and damage is not lethal or permanent. Sunlight inflicts 2D4x10 damage directly to hit points, and running water will inflict 2D6 to 6D6 damage. Silver and wooden weapons do full damage.

**Psionic Powers:** Telepathic link to minions only.

**I.S.P.:** 62

**Combat Abilities:** Supernatural

**Number of Attacks:** 5

**Bonuses:** Initiative +3, parry +2, pull punch +, strike +2, damage +16, dodge +1, +7 vs mind control (+9 vs vampires), +2 vs psionics, +2 vs insanity, trust/intimidate 60%, perception +3, +3 vs poison, +3 vs magic, +3 vs Horror Factor.

**Damage:** Restrained Punch 2D6+16, Punch 5D6+16, Power Punch 2D4x10+16

**Skills:** Speak Berber 98%, Read/Write Berber 98%, Speak English 60%, Read/Write English 40%, Speak Nosfetru 50%, Read/Write Nosfetru 40%, Speak Romani 60%, Read/Write Romani 40%, Research 60%, Lore: Vampires 40%, Lore: Magic (General knowledge 35%, Recognize wards, runes and circles 25%, Recognize enchantment 20%), Literacy: Wizard Glyphs 40%, Prowl 35%, Concealment 30%, Palming 30%,

Seduction 30%, Horsemanship 50%, Lore: Nightlands 35%, Lore: Nightbane 40%, W.P. Knife.

**Appearance:** Latus wears the loose robes of his homeland and time of birth. He has long, dark hair and a flowing beard that reaches down past his chest.

**Equipment:** Two silver-plated sabers (1D6) that are always concealed beneath his robes.

**Money:** Though he cares about money only so far as his sorcerous needs are concerned, the more than a millennia that Latus has existed has allowed him to amass a fortune worth several million. He regularly donates a fraction of his wealth to the Nocturnes' cause.

### *Atif Blue Blood Balladamesh*

Ironically called blue blood both because of his lineage and because of the blue liquid that constantly oozes from his grotesque stigmata, this Nightbane was a great noble of India once upon a time. He may not speak much about his past, but Blue Blood is now by far the most powerful Nightbane spell caster of the entire Nocturnes organization. To make the most of his wondrous abilities, Iosef has given Atif control of the Watch, those Nocturnes assigned to monitor the Mirrorwall and, hopefully, one day find a way to seal it.

**Alignment:** Unprincipled

**Horror Factor:** 15

**Attributes:** I.Q. 19, M.E. 26, M.A. 14, P.S. 13 (29; Supernatural), P.P. 12 (14), P.E. 16 (31), P.B. 14, Spd. 11 (36)

**Disposition:** Atif Balladamesh has never let go of his noble birth and continues to bear himself with a pride and dignity that comes across as haughty and snobbish to most others. He does not necessarily believe himself to be better than everyone (well, not entirely least ways), but he has never in his long life learned to overcome the lessons of his noble birth.

**Age:** 1664

**Height:** 5 feet, 4 in/1.64 m (7 feet, 2 in/2.2 m)

**Weight:** 188 lbs/84.6 kg (1,350 lbs/607.5 kg)

**Hit Points:** 58 (131)

**S.D.C.:** 30 (191)

**P.P.E.:** 262

**Spells:** Cloud of Smoke (2), Globe of Daylight (2), See the Invisible (2), Sense Evil (1), Sense Magic (2), Befuddle (3), Extinguish Fire (4), Levitation (4), Mystic Alarm (4), Anchor Wooden Stake (6), Energy Bolt (5), Fuel Flame (5), Ignite Fire (6), Negate Poisons/Toxins (5), Telekinesis (6), Astral Projection (7), Cure Minor Disorders (7), Energy Field (7), Repel Animals (7), Seal Mirrorwall: Lesser (8), Calling (8), Domination (10), Escape (8), Heal Wounds (10), Horrific Illusion (10),

Apparition (20), Fire Ball (10), Mask of Deceit (15), Memory Bank (12), Second Sight (20), Arcane Rainbow (varies), Oracle (30), Transferal (50), Banishment (65), Bonding (80), Curse: Paranoia (70), Create Magic Scroll (160), Amulet (290), Sunstone (310).

**R.C.C.:** Ancient Nightbane Sorcerer

**Experience Level:** 11th

**Natural Abilities:** All the basic powers, abilities and bonuses of the Nightbane R.C.C.; see **Nightbane™ RPG**, pages 85-114 for details.

**1. The Becoming:** Atif can transform from *Facade* (human form) to *Morphus* (monster form) in one full melee round or by making an M.E. roll at +12.

**2. Supernatural Senses:** Atif has nightvision in both *Facade* (200 ft/61 m) and *Morphus* form (500 ft/152 m), and can sense the presence of other Nightbane at a range of up to 630 feet (192 m), as well as recognizing other Nightbane when face to face.

**3. Supernatural Attributes:** Nightbane have supernatural strength and endurance, in addition they regenerate from damage at a rate of 15 hit points/S.D.C. per melee round.

**4. Mirror Walk:** Nightbane can cross over to the Nightlands by spending two P.P.E. in their *Morphus* form and using a mirror of any size. Can carry up to 100 lbs (45 kg) of inanimate matter or can carry people at a cost of one P.P.E. per two pounds.

**5. Immunities:** Nightbane are immune to all forms of mind control (magic or otherwise), immune to a vampire's slow kill bite, and cannot be physically transformed by any means (magical or otherwise).

**Morphus:** With the lower body of a horse, his flesh is etched with mystical symbols that bleed blue, the location of his eyes and mouth are reversed, and he has four arms. Atif's blood is also a rich blue when in his *Morphus*.

**Psionic Powers:** None

**I.S.P.:** N/A

**Talents:** Light of Purity, World Speech, Anti-Arcane, The Shroud, Swam Self, Lord of the Wild, Premonition.

**Combat Abilities:** Facade: No hand to hand form.

Morphus: Hand to hand: martial arts

**Number of Attacks:** Facade: 2. Morphus: 8

**Bonuses (Facade):** +6 vs psionics, +6 vs insanity, perception +4, + vs poison, +5 vs magic, +1 vs disease, +3 vs Horror Factor.

**Bonuses (Morphus):** Initiative +3, parry +5, strike +4, damage +18, dodge +5, roll with punch/fall/impact +6, +2 vs possession, +9 vs psionics, +6 vs insanity, perception +6, +8 vs poison, +15 vs magic, +3 vs disease, +30% vs coma/death, +5 vs Horror Factor, Entangle, Critical Strike on 18 to 20, Paired Weapons.

**Damage:** Facade: Punch 1D4, Kick 1D6, Morphus: Restrained Punch 2D6+18, Punch 4D6+18, Power Punch 1D4x10+18, Foreleg Kick 7D6+18, Rear Kick 1D6x10+18, Judo Flip 6D6+18.

**Skills:** Speak Arabic 98%, Read/Write Arabic 98%, Basic Math 98%, Advanced Math 98%, Research 98%, Lore: Nightlands 95%, Lore: Vampires 98%, Speak Latin 98%, Read/Write Latin 95%, Speak English 98%, Read/Write English 95%, Anthropology 85%, Archaeology 85%, Astronomy 90%, Chemistry 95%, Analytical Chemistry 90%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 98%, Lore: Geomancy 95%, Wizard Glyphs 85%, History 85%, Navigation 70%, Basic Mechanics 45%, Speak Nosfretu 95%, Read/Write Nosfretu 85%, Cryptography 80%, W.P. Knife.

**Appearance:** Atif is a squat, overweight man of obvious Arabic descent. He keeps both his long beard and hair tied braided in an archaic fashion and wears flowing robes that bespeak his scholarly nature and ancient status.

**Equipment:** Atif carries a Sunstone, a silver dagger that is curved like a twisting snake, and a great number of books and writing pads.

**Money:** He has managed to save up many millions of dollars in his long life, much of which has been turned over to the Nocturnes for their use.

### *Macabre*

Angus reached legendary status as the long-lived warrior, “The Phantom Talon”, as an assassin for the kings of Scotland. Nobody ever learned the Phantom Talon’s true identity nor how he managed to infiltrate the most well-guarded of castles and defeat the most attentive of guards to reach his targets. All that was known about the Phantom Talon was that he never failed. After over a century of killing the enemies of his lord, Angus disappeared without a trace.

Angus reappeared in the mid-60s when he showed up from nowhere to help a group of Nocturnes fight a lair of vampires that had been plaguing the nights of Aberdeen. Using the name Macabre, Angus agreed to join the cause of those whom he had aided and quickly rose up in the ranks to become the Nocturnes’ premiere assassin and enforcer. In the past decade, Macabre has also taken on the role of Iosef Pendragon’s bodyguard.

**Real Name:** Angus Dunneldene

**Alignment:** Anarchist

**Horror Factor:** None (14)

**Attributes:** I.Q. 12, M.E. 11, M.A. 13, P.S. 15 (38; Supernatural), P.P. 21 (29), P.E. 17 (27), P.B. 12 (8), Spd. 15 (25)

**Disposition:** Angus is stoically silent and speaks only when necessary. It is said that he has lengthy conversations with Iosef but this can not be confirmed. He has very few regrets about the things that he’s done over the years and this is why he has proven to be such a valuable soldier in the war for Earth.

**Age:** 257

**Height:** 5 feet, 8 in/1.72 m (6 feet, 1 in/1.85 m in Morphus)

**Weight:** 180 lbs/81 kg (135 lbs/60.75 kg in Morphus)

**Hit Points:** 52 (118)

**S.D.C.:** 43 (176)

**P.P.E.:** 162

**R.C.C.:** Nightbane

**Experience Level:** 8th

**Natural Abilities:** All the basic powers, abilities and bonuses of the Nightbane R.C.C.; see **Nightbane™ RPG**, pages 85-114 for details.

**1. The Becoming:** Angus can transform from *Facade* (human form) to *Morphus* (monster form) in one full melee round or by making an M.E. roll at +4.

**2. Supernatural Senses:** Angus has nightvision in both *Facade* (200 ft/61 m) and *Morphus* form (500 ft/152 m), and can sense the presence of other Nightbane at a range of up to 540 feet (162 m), as well as recognizing other Nightbane when face to face.

**3. Supernatural Attributes:** Nightbane have supernatural strength and endurance, in addition they regenerate from damage at a rate of 10 hit points/S.D.C. per melee round.

**4. Mirror Walk:** Nightbane can cross over to the Nightlands by spending two P.P.E. in their *Morphus* form and using a mirror of any size. Can carry up to 100 lbs (45 kg) of inanimate matter or can carry people at a cost of one P.P.E. per two pounds.

**5. Immunities:** Nightbane are immune to all forms of mind control (magic or otherwise), immune to a vampire’s slow kill bite, and cannot be physically transformed by any means (magical or otherwise).

**Morphus:** Gaunt, bony exoskeleton, skull face.

**Psionic Powers:** None

**I.S.P.:** N/A

**Talents:** Doorway, Nightbringer, Shadow Storm, Dervish Dance, Bone Blades, Mirror Sight, See Truth.

**Combat Abilities:** Facade: Hand to hand: martial arts.

Morphus: Hand to hand: martial arts.

**Number of Attacks:** Facade: 6. Morphus: 8

**Bonuses (Facade):** Parry +8, strike +5, dodge +8, roll with punch/fall/impact +4, perception +1, +1 vs poison, +3 vs magic, +1 vs disease, +5% vs coma/death, +1 vs Horror Factor, Entangle, Critical Strike on 18 to 20, Knockout on 20, Paired Weapons, Leap Attack.

**Bonuses (Morphus):** Initiative +1, parry +14, strike +11, damage +23, dodge +14, roll with

punch/fall/impact +7, +3 vs psionics, perception +1, +6 vs poison, +10 vs magic, +3 vs disease, +24% vs coma/death, +3 vs Horror Factor, Entangle, Critical Strike on 18 to 20, Knockout on 20, Paired Weapons, Leap Attack.

**Damage:** Facade: Punch 1D4, Karate Kick 1D8, Jump Kick. Morphus: Restrained Punch 3D6+23, Punch 7D6+23, Power Punch 2D4x10+1D6+23, Karate Kick 1D6x10+23, Jump Kick 2D6x10+23.

**Skills:** Speak English 98%, Read/Write English 80%, Basic Math 95%, Basic Radio 95%, Computer Operation 80%, Pilot Automobile 89%, First Aid 90%, Assassination 70%, General Repair/Maintenance 70%, Investigation 75%, Speak Nosfetu 75%, Read/Write Nosfetu 65%, Demolitions 96%, Demolitions Disposal 86%, Lore: Nightlands 60%, Boxing, Prowl 50%, Swimming 85%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife, W.P. Automatic Pistol.

**Appearance:** In his Facade, Angus is a mid-sized man with fiery red hair that drops down past his shoulder and a lengthy beard and moustache to match. His Morphus is taller, extremely gaunt and gangly with bony plates covering his body and a ridged, horrifying skull for a face.

**Equipment:** 12 Gauge RS 200 Beretta shotgun (4D6 damage, 100 ft/30 m, 6 shots) with 18 spare rounds.

**Money:** Angus has saved much of what he has earned over the centuries, leaving him with a total of \$250,000 to \$400,000 in cash, jewelry and other property.

## Relations with the Other Factions

The Nocturnes' relationships with many of the other Factions are presented in the main book and so are not reprinted here.

**The Shadowleague:** The Nocturnes do not have a great need for the Shadowboard but have still been known to use it from time to time. It is not uncommon for individual Nocturnes to monitor the discussion groups of this mysterious BBS, but no official or formal ties between the two are recognized or encouraged.

**The Brotherhood of True Illumination:** These foul sorcerers serve the Nightlords and for such an affront against humanity there can be no salvation. Like any other minion of the Ba'al, members of the Brotherhood are to be slain on sight - when they may be found and identified.

**The Order of the Cobra:** Self-serving criminals to a one, these spell casters are more of a nuisance than anything else. The Order's goals seem more oriented towards short term benefits rather than lofty aspirations like world conquest and so they can be

ignored for the most part in light of the number of more pressing matters that demand the Nocturnes' attention. But when members of the Order do get out of hand and must be dealt with, the Nocturnes have long since learned of the relationship between a "Parent" and its bonded "Children", a weakness that can easily be exploited to make the Order scuttle back into the shadows.

**The Iron Band:** Not inherently evil, the Nocturnes tend to leave these mercenaries alone except for when their contracts require them to go against the Nocturnes' own interests. In such instances, the Nocturnes don't hesitate to act in whatever way is necessary to ensure that the Iron Band's interference causes as little damage as possible. A band of Nocturnes acting out of Paris has recently undertaken a vicious crusade against the Iron Band for some unknown reason, going against Iosef Pendragon's explicit orders to leave the mercenaries alone. Whether or not this directed aggression will draw the enmity and concentrated retaliation of the Iron Band has yet to be seen.

**The Nightlords:** Invaders, usurpers and horrors to a one, the Nightlords and their minions can expect no mercy from the Nocturnes. Many of the races that are found within the faction - Nightbane, rogue Doppelgangers and vampires to name but a few - are already targeted by the Ba'al but joining the Nocturnes only makes it that much more important that the Nightlords deal with such dissident creatures.

## ...And The Truth

The rumors are true to the extent that the Nocturnes *are* controlled by an outside force that is manipulating their leader, but the stories are also false in their belief that this puppet master is Iosef's vampire intelligence creator. A surprise that would be even more startling to this Faction, were it ever to be learned, is that Iosef Pendragon was not a wampyr at all.

The secret society of Pendragon had been existing under its newly assumed title for half a century before its council of leaders, the Seraphim, were forced to admit that they still knew far too little about their enemies, the vampire Nations. To remedy this problem, the leaders of that time proposed a far reaching and ambitious plan that would not only allow Pendragon to gain valuable intelligence on its enemies but would also grant their organization yet another tool in the fight against the undead. They proposed the creation of a new Faction, the Nocturnes.

The Nocturnes, anticipated the Seraphim, would be comprised of renegade creatures of the night who would remain completely oblivious to the true

origins of their organization but would be devoted to essentially the same goals as was its unknown parent, Pendragon. In order to first create the Nocturnes and then maintain control, the Seraphim recruited an extremely powerful psychic from their own agents and made him aware of the role that he would play in the unfolding stratagem. This psychic would assume the role of the undead and use his impressive mental prowess to prevent anyone from discovering otherwise. Within the guise of the renegade wampyr "Iosef Pendragon", an ironic name that was purposefully chosen to remind the agent of his real masters, this psychic sought out other rebellious beings of the night who all bore a pronounced hatred for the vampire intelligences and their loyal minions. "Iosef" gathered these beings beneath his wings and began to organize them into a force that was opposed to the Nations of Blood. Pendragon's bold plan was under way.

"Iosef Pendragon" always remained in the shadows so as to risk revealing the truth as little as possible. Thankfully, the secretiveness of the Nocturnes as a whole allowed its leader to retain his privacy with few questions asked, permitting Pendragon's agent to operate and make contact with the Seraphim without raising too much suspicion. Aided by his own psychic strength and some mystical relics of unknown origin that were given to him by the Seraphim, the agent now known as Iosef Pendragon was able to fool his fellow Nocturnes into believing his story of paranormal patricide and wampyric existence while also avoiding all psychic and magical powers that could reveal the truth.

When it later came time for the original Iosef to retire, he was replaced by another agent of similar psychic might who then assumed the name and role of his predecessor. Thus has "Iosef Pendragon", wampyr leader of the Nocturnes, carried out his long, undead existence, always making sure to keep to himself hidden in darkness and mystery lest some deep-delving scrutiny reveal the truth. Each new Iosef is hand picked from among the Brotherhood of Paladins by the Seraphim and the Brotherhood's leader, Charlemagne, who are the only who are aware that the Nocturnes are really a tool of Pendragon.

By gathering like-minded creatures into the Nocturne fold, the Seraphim, through their agent Iosef, were able to learn more about the undead and their social structure within the first few years of the Nocturnes' existence than they had in all the time up until that point. Additionally, by pulling the Nocturnes' strings, Pendragon has been able to maneuver this group into unknowingly doing its will and carrying out missions upon which Pendragon was wary to risk the lives of its own agents. Pendragon uses its expansive

network of agents, supporters and moles to gather intelligence on malevolent paranormal forces and then passes the information along to Iosef in a way that is extremely careful to protect their double agent's identity from Pendragon and Nocturnes operatives alike.

Using Iosef to manipulate the Nocturnes into doing as they will has not only freed up Pendragon's own agents to act against more threats from the Nations of Blood but it has also provided the secret society with a convenient scapegoat to be blamed for its own activities. Iosef is careful to ensure that the existence of Pendragon is kept from the Nocturnes while the Seraphim are likewise vigilant in their efforts to prevent their own agents from uncovering the truth. Part of the reason why the lie has remained undiscovered for so long is because Pendragon's operatives consider the Nocturnes to be an enemy while the Nocturnes cast a definitely downward view upon any monster or vampire hunters. Without any cross-organization communication, the animosity that the Seraphim have carefully cultivated cannot be dispersed nor can the two groups untangle the web of deception to find the truth beneath.

This mutual want to see the other Faction defeated lends credibility to Iosef's story of his origins and his supposed reasons for starting the Nocturnes; if anyone were to claim that Iosef was an agent of vampire hunters, the "Wampyr" can simply provide proof of his own actions against such mortals in support of his allegiance to the Nocturnes. By having the Nocturnes and Pendragon battle each other despite both groups actually sharing the same masters, the Seraphim does not allow its true enemies, the vampire Nations and now the Nightlords, to form a cohesive attack against either group and thus forces their enemies to divide their attention. To this end, the Seraphim continue to order their agents to attack the Nocturnes whenever possible, thus ensuring that Iosef is continually provided with proof of his loyalty to his followers

Keeping all of this a secret has not always been easy and there have been a few occasions where the truth about "Iosef" has nearly been revealed. Quick thinking and even quicker action prevented the facts from coming to light each time, but the Seraphim become more paranoid with every instance and have ordered Iosef to withdraw further from direct involvement with the Nocturnes and to act more through intermediaries. If the truth were to be revealed, not only would the disenchanting and enraged Nocturnes likely kill Iosef and seek out his master(s) in retribution, but they would almost surely disband as well. Were this to happen, the Nations of Blood and Nightlords would be able to act more cohesively and with greater force

against Pendragon itself, something that the secret society is not currently prepared for.

Centuries of using the Nocturnes and the supernatural powers of that faction's members has caused the Seraphim to become dependant upon its puppet for certain activities. For instance, the Harbingers and their other agents are certainly willing to journey into the Nightlands for the sake of humanity, but Pendragon has grown used to using the Nocturnes to fulfill most of their interests there. It is not for this alone that the Seraphim would have the Nocturnes act, but also for operations on Earth that are sure to draw attention and reprisal, attention that Pendragon can certainly go without. Without the Nocturnes acting as their unwitting pawns, Pendragon would be forced to send its own (human) agents into far more dangerous situations, situations where they would be without the benefit of a vampire's super-regeneration, a Nightbane's various Talents, or a spell caster's arcane repertoire.

### *The current Iosef Pendragon*

Gerard Depote, a French psychic of considerable power, has been filling the role of Iosef Pendragon for the past eleven years. Gerard has been a glorious example of what Pendragon would wish for all of its agents - he is devoted, loyal, competent, intelligent, and a natural leader. Since his assignment as the covert leader of the Nocturne Faction, Gerard has never disobeyed the Seraphim, nor has he failed to complete what they desired of him. This has all changed in the last 18 months.

As if to define irony, a year and a half ago Gerard was assaulted and drained over a three day period by a vampire that had no idea who he was. Instead of arising as one of the undead legions, Gerard found himself existing in the state of limbo that is a wampyr. Possessing independence and its own will, there was nothing to shelter Gerard's mind from the shock of what had happened to him. Fleeing from his startled creator, Gerard ran out into the night and wandered aimlessly through the city streets for three days. When he finally returned from his absence, which went unnoticed by the Nocturnes who are used to their enigmatic leader's habit of not appearing for days on end, Gerard was a changed man.

The shock of his transformation has shattered Gerard's hold on reality, forcing him to develop a second personality to cope with his new existence. Unfortunately, the most viable personality that his fragmented psyche could develop was that of the person whom Pendragon had been asking Gerard to live as for the past decade. In plain terms, when the second

personality takes command, Gerard actually believes himself to truly be the fictional wampyr leader of the Nocturnes, Iosef Pendragon.

Without knowing, Gerard slips between the two personalities, all the while seeking to fulfill the tasks that have been set for each. When Gerard is in control, he remembers nothing of his transformation and seeks to continue on with the tasks that Pendragon has set for him. The Gerard personality has full access to his psychic abilities and assumes his newly realized aversion for sunlight and loss of appetite to be a result of the long, nocturnal hours that he has been keeping to better maintain his disguise. "Iosef" will assume control without warning whenever Gerard is presented with a situation that may force his mind to see his existence for what it has now become, or during times of stress.

It is his time spent believing that he is Iosef that is getting Gerard in trouble with the Seraphim. The Iosef personality has no idea what to make of the encrypted messages from Pendragon's six leaders and so destroys those that reach him when the Gerard personality is not in control. "Iosef" acts as Gerard has been instructed in the past to make Iosef appear, that is to say with the best interest of the Nocturnes in mind. Such actions almost always countermand the subversive orders of the Seraphim and thus have given cause for Pendragon to believe that Gerard is a traitor. When confronted, Gerard pleads that he is ignorant of any such orders having been given, and he is telling the truth because "Gerard" remembers nothing that happens when he is 'Iosef'. The Seraphim have gone so far as to have a Paladin secretly scan Gerard's mind to reveal the truth of this words, but because of the split personality, the Paladin found no indication of any lying.

What Gerard/Iosef's mental condition will hold for the futures of the Nocturnes and Pendragon remains to be seen, but it is very likely that the Seraphim will eventually get frustrated and take steps to remove Gerard from his role. If such becomes the case, it is quite possible that this will cause enough mental and emotional stress to finally shatter Gerard's mind and put the Iosef personality in control permanently.

**Name:** Iosef Pendragon

**True Name:** Gerard Depote

**Alignment:** Unprincipled, Aberrant as Iosef.

**Horror Factor:** 11 as Iosef.

**Attributes (Gerard):** I.Q. 15, M.E. 24, M.A. 19, P.S. 15, P.P. 12, P.E. 14, P.B. 12, Spd 15

**Attributes (Iosef):** I.Q. 15, M.E. 17, M.A. 18, P.S. 23 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 16, P.B. 12, Spd 19

Psychological restrictions imposed by Gerard's mind refuse to allow him to access his enhanced, wampyr strength, S.D.C., speed and reflexes. Using a

power such as See Aura on Gerard/Iosef will reveal the abilities of the current personality alone. Should Iosef ever take permanent control he would become a regular wampyr..

**Disposition (Gerard):** Generally cheerful despite the stress of his duties and the danger that he must constantly live with, Gerard has justified his betrayal of the Nocturnes, most of whom are genuinely benign people, by wholly embracing the beliefs of Pendragon. Gerard does not like to hurt people or send them into situations where they may get harmed but he has long since realized that doing so is a part of the role he must play.

**Disposition (Iosef):** Iosef prefers his privacy, not only for his own peace of mind but also to make it more difficult for his enemies to act against him. For this reason, the leader of the Nocturnes makes few appearances before large groups, usually acts and passes on his commands through intermediaries, and never removes the hood of his cloak in front of others. The Nocturnes accept this paranoid caution because Iosef has continually proven himself to be a capable leader who has the best interests of the group at heart.

Iosef does not like to kill, especially for food, and will only do so when necessary and he expects his followers to behave in the same manner. He does recognize that these are dangerous times and that ruthlessness is sometimes required, making Iosef someone who you neither want to get angry or oppose.

**Age:** 47

**Hit Points:** 37 in both forms.

**S.D.C.:** 36 (104 as Iosef)

**I.S.P.:** 146 (75 as Iosef)

**P.P.E.:** 3 in both forms.

**O.C.C. and Experience Level:** 8th level Mind Master as Gerard, 2nd level wampyr as Iosef.

**Mind Master Abilities (Gerard):** Supernatural senses 65%.

**Wampyr Natural Abilities (Iosef):** Regenerate 2D6 hit points/S.D.C. per melee, supernatural strength and endurance, suffers half damage from metal weapons, immune to vampire mind control.

**Vulnerabilities (either personality):** Blood dependency (switches to Iosef to feed), suffers 2D6 damage for every minute of exposure to sunlight.

**Combat Abilities:** Hand to Hand Expert

**Number of Attacks:** 5 (4 as Iosef)

**Bonuses (Gerard):** Parry +4, pull punch +2, strike +2, dodge +4, roll with punch/fall/impact +4, Critical Strike on 18 to 20, Karate Kick, Jump Kick, Judo Throw/Flip, Paired Weapons, +3 vs possession, +1 vs mind control, +5 vs psionics, +8 vs insanity, trust/intimidate 55%, perception +1, +3 vs dream manipulation/combat, +4 vs Horror Factor.

**Bonuses (Iosef):** Initiative +1, parry +6, pull punch +2, strike +2, damage +8, dodge +6, roll with punch/fall/impact +4, Karate Kick, Jump Kick, Judo Throw/Flip, Paired Weapons, +5 vs possession, +5 vs mind control, +1 vs psionics, +1 vs insanity, trust/intimidate 50%, perception +3, +5 vs Horror Factor.

**Damage:** As per a human when Gerard, Iosef does damage as per his supernatural strength.

**Psychic Abilities (Gerard):** The special nature of Gerard's transformation has somehow allowed him to retain use of his old psychic abilities, at their previous strength, but only when this personality is in control. Alter Aura (2), Detect Psionics (6), Empathy (4), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Telepathy (4), Total Recall (2), Mind Wipe (special), Block Breaker (varies), Sixth Sense (2), Psi-Sword (30), Psi-Shield (30), Astral Bolts (10), Astral Navigation (4), Mind Block Auto-Defense (special), Astral Projection (8).

**Psychic Abilities (Iosef):** All vampire psionics except Super Hypnotic Suggestion, plus See Aura (6).

**Skills (Gerard and Iosef share the same skills):** Speak English (with a British accent) 98%, Read/Write English 98%, Basic Math 98%, Lore: Psychic 85%, Computer Operation 90%, Cook 85%, Sing 85%, Lore: Vampires 80%, Lore: Nightbane 80%, Intelligence 60%, Pilot Automobile 79%, Pilot Airplane 83%, Streetwise 53%, Advanced Math 90%, Computer Programming 75%, Computer Hacking 60%, Speak Spanish 95%, Read/Write Spanish 75%, Lore: Nightlands 70%, Read Sensory Instruments 45%, Navigation 40%, Basic Radio 75%, Athletics, Wrestling, W.P. Sword, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Automatic Pistol.

**Physical Description:** Gerard is of average height and weight, possessing a body that is toned though not overly muscular. He dresses simply in dark clothing and is careful to always be cleanly shaven with his long hair tied back in a ponytail.

**Equipment & Money:** Gerard/Iosef has access to the full extent of the Nocturnes' resources, such as they are, because he is the only one who knows where all of the organization's funds are invested and kept.

### Amulet of Masking

Carbon dating has placed this artifact as predating the Great War against the Nightlords by at least ten millennia, leaving the secret of its creation a mystery that will probably never be unraveled. The wearer of this golden amulet is immune to mystical and psionic scrying, tracking and sensing powers or Talents (including Sense Evil, Sixth Sense, Presence Sense,

Clairvoyance and similar powers). The amulet is indestructible.

### **Cloak of Anonymity**

Believed to have been woven by an Ancient Nightbane, possibly even the Wanderer him(her?)self, this cloak of darkest velvet creates a shroud of darkness within its folds that is proof against technological, mystical and psychic nightvision, infravision, and other sensory abilities. Furthermore, powers or Talents of revelation like See Aura or See Truth are useless against the wearer. The cloak also grants a +6 bonus vs psionics and magic and is itself believed to be indestructible (or at least nothing has yet been discovered that will so much as singe one of its fibers).

## Rep O.C.C.s

### *Theologian O.C.C.*

**Thanks to Kevin Siembieda** for coming up with a name for an O.C.C. whose controversial nature was difficult to avoid but was begging to be written and introduced into the **Nightbane®** setting.

**An aside to the reader:** This O.C.C. was not designed to be representative of any one religion. Should a G.M. or player feel it appropriate to play a cleric of a specific religion then they may choose to tailor this O.C.C. to better suit their needs. The Theologian O.C.C. is a catchall occupation and it would be a mistake to believe that it was meant to portray a single system of worship.

Theologians possess an extreme faith and a total, enveloping devotion to a Higher Calling or Greater Power. Not all theologians are official representatives of a religion, nor are all church clergy of the theologian O.C.C., but all men and women belonging to this O.C.C. have been granted wondrous power by their beliefs. Whether it is their faith alone that gives them these abilities or if their beliefs are a reflection of the Singular Truth is unknown. No matter the real cause behind their powers, a theologian can perform near-miraculous deeds by channeling their faith.

Dark Day was a trying time of change for most people, but perhaps for none more so than those of a religious bent. Many lost their devotion as they looked out upon a sunless day while others suddenly found their belief awakened amidst that same horror. Churches and temples were filled by people seeking answers, salvation, forgiveness or even just a place to await the end of the world. Religious fervor seized more than one follower who thought to assure their own salvation by punishing those sinners whom they believed to have brought this dark apocalypse down upon the world. No time prior to or since Dark Day has ever caused as much spiritual turmoil or religious upheaval. And so were the dangers of the theologian O.C.C. revealed to themselves and all mankind during this time; the same faith that made the theologians strong could also easily lead to the evils of corruption, assumed righteousness and blind following.

The ideas adhered to by the theologians of Earth are a threat that the Nightlords will never stop pursuing and so all servants of Faith (whatever it may be), must be careful lest they also become martyrs to their following. Of the theologians that continue to serve their faith and fellow man, most do so from secret

locations and by word of mouth rather than from the pulpit.

**1. Exorcism Ritual:** This complex ritual uses the prayers and implements (holy water, symbol, etc.) of a theologian's beliefs, along with the strength of his own will and spirit, to drive out an entity or spirit that has possessed a victim, living or dead. Creatures that use possession and all forms of entities, demons and similar creatures (but not vampires) will be affected by the exorcism. So powerful is the theologian's ability that an exorcized entity is automatically banished to its home dimension.

The exorcism, which resembles an interrogation of sorts, requires 3D6 strenuous hours, during which time the possessing entity will likely try to use the abilities and powers of itself and its host to battle the theologian. A wise and experienced exorcist will have assistants to help restrain the possessed person while he carries out the rite. At the end of the exorcism, the theologian must roll against his ability (modified by his alignment) to see if the ritual was successful.

**Range:** The possessed victim must be within at least 8 feet (2.4 m) at all times.

**Chance of Success:** 30% +6% per additional level of experience. Extremely strong entities, such as a demon lord, may be harder to exorcize (reduce the theologian's exorcism ability to half normal). Bonuses from an exceptional I.Q. do not apply.

**2. Blessing:** By prayer and devotional ritual, a theologian has the ability to empower objects or people and create holy water. No item larger than man-sized (about 6 and a half feet/2 m tall and 225 lbs/101 kg), may be effectively blessed.

**(A) Blessing an item:** Only a single object at a time may be blessed, no matter its size. 2D4 minutes are required to bless a small object (e.g., knife or bullet) while a larger object (e.g., sword) would require 2D4x10 minutes.

**Range:** The item must either be held or be within 3 feet (0.9 m) and line of sight.

**Effect:** The item will harm supernatural beings immune to non-magical weapons and causes +25% damage when used against vampires and creatures similarly vulnerable to holy items. A blessed weapon is also +1 to strike, parry and be thrown, as may apply. When used against an opponent of evil nature or intent, a blessed weapon will cause triple instead of double damage if a natural 20 should be rolled to strike. If the item is submerged in holy water during the blessing then the extra damage to creatures harmed by holy items will become +50%, the bonus to strike, parry and throw will

be +2 and the damage on a natural 20 will be an astounding quadruple damage!

**Duration:** 1D4 hours plus 1 hour per level of experience. If the item is of the 'one-shot' variety, a bullet or arrow for instance, the blessing will instead end when the item is used if the duration has not yet expired. Should a blessed item be used for a purpose heretical to the theologian's faith, the blessing will be canceled immediately.

**Permanent Blessing (6th level):** The benefits of blessing an object can become permanent once the theologian has reached the 6th level of experience. To do so, the theologian must permanently sacrifice 1D4 P.P.E. for small items or 4D4 P.P.E. for large. At such a cost it should be obvious that a single theologian is not likely to permanently bless many items in the course of his life.

A permanent blessing may be canceled in one of two ways: the object is used for something that goes against the theologian's faith or if it has a luck curse cast upon it (as per the eighth level spell; the item is allowed a saving throw vs magic with a bonus of +3, +5 if blessed while submerged in holy water).

**Chance of Successful Blessing:** 30% +4% per additional level of experience, -15% for a permanent blessing (no P.P.E. loss for failure). Bonuses from an exceptional I.Q. do not apply.

**(B) Blessing a person:** A person that is blessed will be filled with the benevolent might of the theologian's faith. A theologian may bless one person at a single time per level of his experience. Though it is very common for a theologian to "bless" a large crowd at once, such a holy prayer is not of the type where the recipients gain any of the following benefits. Performing a blessing upon a person(s) takes 2D4 melees.

**Range:** The intended beneficiary(s) must be within 10 feet (3 m) plus 1 foot (30 cm) per level of experience, and be in the line of sight.

**Effect:** Temporarily +1 on all saving throws and immune to Horror Factors of 13 or less. If the recipient has holy water generously sprinkled or poured upon his head during the ritual, or if he is anointed, the bonus is increased to +3, he is immune to Horror Factors of 16 or less, and gains a +10% increase in Hit Points. Only one person can be blessed at a time to benefit from the latter enhanced blessing, no matter the theologian's level of experience.

**Duration:** 2D10 minutes (8 to 80 melees), plus 2 minutes (8 melees) per level of experience. People cannot be permanently blessed.

**Chance of Success:** 35% +4% per additional level of experience. Bonuses from an exceptional I.Q. do not apply.

**(C) Creating holy water:** Completely indistinguishable from normal water (even to a theologian), holy water can be made of any water that remains at least 75% pure and is in liquid form (no snow or ice). It takes 1 melee to bless the theologian's maximum amount of holy water and there is no limit to the total amount that a theologian can create.

**Range:** The water must be within 3 feet (0.9 m).

**Effect:** Each blessing can create 2.1 pints (1 liter) of holy water at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. A single vial containing 6 fluid ounces (180 ml) will do 3D6 damage directly to the Hit Points of vampires and creatures vulnerable to the stuff.

**Duration:** Permanent until used at which point it becomes normal water again.

**Chance of Success:** 30% +5% per additional level of experience. Bonuses from an exceptional I.Q. do not apply.

**3. Healing:** Once a theologian has reached the fifth level of experience he may attempt to heal the injured by a "laying on of hands." 1D4 melee rounds of deep concentration and prayer is required in order to perform this miracle. Only theologians of principled, scrupulous or unprincipled alignment, with no tendencies for anything worse, and who have a full measure of faith in the power of their Being(s) of Worship may perform this ability. This ability cannot, however, bring the dead back to life.

**Range:** Touch.

**Effect:** Can heal 1D4 Hit Points and 1D6+2 S.D.C. per level of experience. The beneficiary is also allowed another save vs poison or disease if either is ravaging their body, even if doing so would not normally be allowed. This additional saving throw receives a cumulative bonus (plus the beneficiary's usual bonuses), of +1 when the theologian reaches levels 5, 8, 11 and 15. Failure means the theologian cannot try to grant the target any further saving throws for that instance of affliction. A separate disease or poisoning at a later date can possibly benefit from this ability, however.

**Limitations:** Twice a day per level of experience.

**Chance of Success:** 30% +3% per additional level of experience. Bonuses from an exceptional I.Q. do not apply.

**4. Power of the Holy Symbol:** The character can call upon the traditional symbol of his faith to ward off ghouls, vampires, skeletons, zombies, Faerie Folk,

energy entities ("spirits"), and demons as a crucifix does vampires. No damage is caused if the symbol is touched to the creature unless specifically stated otherwise in the fiend's description.

Also, while wielding the holy symbol with the power of his devotion behind it, a theologian gains +1 to save vs magic and illusions and is +2 to save vs possession and demonic/vampiric mind control.

**5. Spiritual Purity:** The more benevolent the spirit of a theologian, the more likely he or she is to successfully perform one of their granted powers. The following bonuses or penalties are applied to the percentile rolls for determining the success of the character's previously mentioned powers of faith, based upon the theologian's alignment

Principled: +20%

Scrupulous: +10%

Unprincipled: +5%

Anarchist: -5%

Aberrant: -10%

Miscreant: -15%

Diabolic: -25%

**6. Bonuses:** +1D4 to M.A., +2 M.E., +3 vs possession and Horror Factor.

**7. P.P.E.:** 4D6 P.P.E. at level one and gains 2 P.P.E. per additional experience level.

**Alignment:** Though it is possible for a theologian to be of any alignment, most are good or unprincipled due to the very intent and purposes of most conventional theologies. Still, some less than benign individuals choose to hide behind the symbols of their creed.

**Attribute Requirements:** I.Q. 8, M.A. 12, and M.E. 10.

**O.C.C. Skills:**

Read/Write/Speak Native Language 98%

Read/Write/Speak the traditional Language of his faith (+20%)

Basic Mathematics

Lore: Religion (+20%)

Two Lore skills (+15%)

One domestic skill of choice (+5%)

Two additional Technical or Science skills of choice (+15%)

Hand to hand: Basic can be selected as one "other" skill, hand to hand: expert at the cost of three "other" skills, or martial arts (assassin may not be taken, even by evil characters) for the cost of four "other" skills.

**O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 8 other skills, but two must be from either the technical or science category.

Plus select two additional skills at levels 3 and 6 and one at levels 9, 12 and 15. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: radio: basic, T.V./video and cryptography only.

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Basic electronics only.

Espionage: Any except sniper, pick pockets, tracking and counter-tracking. A theologian with the interrogation techniques skill is +10% to any exorcism attempt.

Mechanical: Automotive and basic mechanics only.

Medical: Any except criminal sciences & forensics, forensic medicine and medical doctor. Paramedic counts as two skill selections, three if taken using secondary skills. (+10%)

Military: Strategy/tactics only. Some theologians study ancient battles and campaigns (e.g., the medieval crusades).

Physical: Any. Theologians often teach gymnastics, wrestling or boxing to the neighborhood youth.

Pilot: Any except for jet fighter, jet packs, tanks and APCs

Pilot Related: Navigation only.

Rogue: Streetwise only.

Science: Any (+5%; +10% on anthropology)

Technical: Any (+10%; +15% on research)

W.P.: Any except for energy pistol, energy rifle, or heavy. Each costs two skill selections, three if taken as a secondary skill.

Wilderness: Any

**Secondary Skills:** The character gets to select five secondary skills from those listed. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Formal ceremonial raiment and 'casual' uniforms if a member of an organization of faith, standard clothing for the everyday, several holy symbols, the text of his faith (if any), 1D6 vials of holy water, a small home or apartment, a car (3D4 years old) if the theologian has the appropriate piloting skill, and some odds and ends such as pens, notebooks and the like.

If the theologian begins as an active member of a militant or resistance organization such as Pendragon he or she will also have 2D4 wooden stakes, a pistol with 1D4 clips of silver and/or armor piercing bullets and perhaps (at the Game Master's discretion) a more exotic weapon such as a sword, assault rifle or stake launcher.

**Money:** Though the common misconception is that theologians do not require money, this is, of course, false as most maintain their own homes. Unless part of a monastic or similar order where the individual's shelter, food and similar necessities are taken care of, the theologian begins with 1D6x1000 in cash.

**Why be a Theologian?** Sometimes, when faced with a terror that defies everything logical and scientific, all that we have is our faith to see us through. A player that uses a theologian character has a lot to bring to a group, especially if the campaign is going to involve fighting against the dreaded Nations of Blood. The theologian offers many opportunities for imaginative role-playing. Does the character also see the Nightbane and practitioners of magic as a source of evil? Does he see the Guardians as the servants of the Divine Powers and therefore trusts them blindly? Will his faith hold up beneath the horrors of the war to save mankind or will it crumble like a structure built upon a poorly laid foundation? You decide.

### *True Scholar O.C.C.*

A true scholar is the ultimate seeker and vessel of knowledge, a man or woman that is willing to put aside most everything else in life to see their perpetual quest fulfilled. Social graces, relationships, fun and similar things that most other people take for granted have all fallen into neglect in the face of the insatiable thirst for knowledge. True scholars think that there is nothing in life, possibly even its meaning, that has not been written down somewhere. Containing in their heads a storehouse of information that is so extensive as to sometimes seem omniscient, true scholars may at times seem to be walking, talking encyclopedias rather than human.

Many true scholars are content to simply hoard and enjoy their paper treasures, acting as unmatched archivists, while others feel compelled to use what they have learned as scientists, researchers, and professors. No matter their calling, the true scholar will always feel more comfortable surrounded by the musty smell of old books than they ever shall in the company of other people. Not all true scholars are friendless, single or alone (though many are), but it must be accepted that to these men and women the only true and reliable friend that they are ever likely to know and be completely comfortable with is the knowledge, philosophy, and technical know-how of the written word.

**1. Body of Knowledge:** A true scholar is so widely read and so keenly open to knowledge and information that they have a rudimentary understanding

of a great many things despite not having been specifically taught or trained in that area. Almost anything may be found in a book and, having spent a great deal of time reading and studying everything that they can get their hands on, a true scholar may attempt to succeed at skills that he does not actually possess.

Of the skill categories, the true scholar must choose **one** that will be his **Primary Skill Category**. Any permissible skill within this primary skill category may be performed at the skill's base percentage. The true scholar then selects **two Secondary Skill Categories**, of which the permissible skills can be attempted at half (rounded off) their base percentage. Lastly, the character selects **four Tertiary Skill Categories**, which allows him to attempt any skill within at one third (rounded off) of their base percentage. No skill rolls made in this manner may benefit from any possible bonus due to O.C.C. or experience level. Bonuses for a high I.Q. still apply. Any skill category that is not selected to be among either the primary, secondary or tertiary skill categories cannot be attempted as a part of the Body of Knowledge ability.

All skills and skill categories fall within the domain of this ability with the following exceptions.

Espionage: All skills may be used except for sniper.

Physical: Swimming and S.C.U.B.A. are the only skills of this category that may be attempted as a part of the body of knowledge ability. Other skills in this category that possess a percentage are based more upon natural talent, reflexes, practice and physical ability rather than the capacity for one's mind to absorb information.

Rogue: All skills may be used except for prowl.

W.P.: This skill category may not be used. Someone can read about guns and swords all they like but there is no substitute for practice.

Should a true scholar fail a skill roll attempt using his Body of Knowledge ability, he must roll on the following skill failure table in order to determine what unfortunate results may come to be. Any roll on the following table for a failed Secondary Skill Category attempt is +10% or +20% if from a Tertiary Skill Category.

#### **Body of Knowledge Failure**

**01-20:** The skill failed without further effect.

**21-70:** Inconvenient failure. For example, the carburetor that the character was trying to replace has been messed in the attempt and now a good deal of time must be taken to clean it; while attempting to ask for directions in a foreign land, the character has miscommunicated his destination and is given the wrong instructions that will lead him a few blocks away from his desired goal.

**71-95:** Troublesome failure. For example, the carburetor that the character was trying to replace has itself been cracked and is rendered useless; in his attempt to get directions in a foreign land, the character miscommunicates his destination and so is given instructions that will take him to the furthest point in the city from where he wanted to be.

**96-00:** Disastrous failure! For example, not only has the character destroyed the carburetor that he was trying to replace, but the entire engine is damaged in the attempt and will require a great deal of work before it is operational again; in an attempt to get directions in a foreign land, the character has inadvertently made a rude comment about a goat and the mother of the muscular man from whom he was asking for instructions.

**Note to all Game Masters:** In order to prevent players from knowing the successful or failed results of any skill attempted with the Body of Knowledge ability, all such rolls should be done by the G.M. in secret. This allows the G.M. to convey the product of the character's skill roll, good or bad, without the player allowing his own knowledge of events to affect the actions of his character.

**2. Advanced Research & Learning:** The prowess of a true scholar to find hidden bits of information in texts, tomes and scrolls is unparalleled. Not only does the incredible amount of knowledge and exceptional study habits of a true scholar reduce the time need to research a topic to 25% of normal, but he can also lend a hand to any mage attempting to invent or research a new spell (as outlined on page 37 of **Nightbane® World Book Three: Through the Glass Darkly**). Whenever the true scholar offers a mage such assistance, the mage is allowed to increase his chance of success by a percentage equal to one tenth of the true scholar's research skill (ignoring fractions).

Furthermore, the true scholar's exceptional study habits and methods have allowed him to gain more from his training and learning than is typical. Any skill - be it an O.C.C., "Other", or even a Secondary skill - that is specifically selected by the character and also belongs in his Primary Skill Category (see the Body of Knowledge ability) gains an additional +10% bonus. Similarly, any selected skill that also falls within one of his Secondary Skill Categories is +6% while those that are within the Tertiary Skill Categories are +3%. This bonus is in addition to any O.C.C., high I.Q., or "Other" skill bonuses.

Lastly, if optional rules are being used that allow characters to learn skills outside of those gained by an increase in experience level, such as by taking a

university course, the true scholar will be able to acquire these skills in half the normal time.

**3. Eccentricities & Traits:** Thanks to years of being locked away in study, true scholars unavoidably develop personality quirks that make social interaction a little awkward. Roll upon the following table to determine what particular realm of social ineptitude the character falls into. G.M.s should be sure to reward players who stick to their character's eccentricities, no matter how inconvenient they may become.

01-15% Bookworm: It seems that every time that the character must make a decision he shoves his head into a book in order to find the answer. This has become so reflexive that he will sometimes go digging for information in some text or another at the most inopportune of moments, such as when driving or (in those ultra rare instances) while out on a date.

15-29% Shy Guy: An almost complete social recluse, the character has a hard time relating to anything or anyone that is not a book. If a girl (perish the thought!) were to come up and try speaking to him, he would count himself lucky to be able to stumble and stutter out his name, much less anything else.

30-43% Social Bumbler: This guy has absolutely no idea how to handle himself in social situations, but unlike the shy guy, the bumbler still tries to mingle and mix no matter how grievous the results may be. A social bumbler is the type of guy who, while at a fraternity party, requests that nobody ruin the good time for everyone else by drinking, or, while at his grandmother's funeral, will go up to his grandfather and try to console him with a comment like "look at the bright side, at least now you can upgrade to a newer model." This guy just has absolutely no clue about how to act in public.

44-57% Deluded Copycat: It has been very difficult for the character to find his own particular niche or identity, and so he has taken to emulating one of his favorite fictional characters. The mannerisms, style of dress, accent, famous quotes and all other characteristics that make that fictional character who he is will be imitated with exacting precision, so much so that the line between the imitator and the imitated becomes blurred, even for the scholar.

57-71% Outrageous Genius: This character finds it very hard to make friends because he has an almost perverse need to make everyone aware of just how vast his knowledge is. Boastfulness, arrogance and constantly quoting book titles and page numbers in order to prove others wrong are the premiere characteristics and lifeblood of this character.

72-85% Prankster: In order to make up for his social awkwardness and feelings of seclusion and difference

from those around him, the character has taken the psychological route of over compensation. So that he will not go unnoticed by others, the character will do the most outrageous, loud and eye-catching things possible to gain attention. Whether this means that he has to fill the school pool with Jell-O or stick potatoes in the tail pipes of every car in a mall parking lot does not matter. The character will go to almost any length - including those that are reckless and dangerous - to gain the attention that he craves.

86-00% **Wannabe:** So great is the character's desire to fit in that he will do almost anything that someone that he looks up to asks him to do. Hero worship and adoration of others is what gets this character through one day to the next, keeping his spirits up with the hopes that he may one day be accepted into the "in" group that he admires so much. Such characters find it difficult to take the initiative themselves and are constantly seeking the approval of others before acting.

**4. Bonuses/Penalties:** A total of 4 attribute points to be distributed between the I.Q. and/or M.E. attributes as the player sees fit, +1 to save versus possession, +3 to save versus Horror Factor, +1 to save versus psionics.

**Attribute Requirements:** To be a seeker of knowledge and information at the level upon which the true scholar O.C.C. exists requires a certain level of intellectual brilliance (I.Q. 15) and devotion to one's pursuits (M.E. 14).

**O.C.C. Skills:**

Speak/Read/Write Native Language 98%  
Select four Language and four Literacy skills (+15%)  
Select four Science or Technical skills (+20%)  
Computer Operation (+15%)  
Research (+30%)  
Writing (+5%)  
Hand to hand: basic can be selected as two "other" skill, hand to hand: expert at the cost of three "other" skills, or martial arts (or assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of four "other" skills.

**O.C.C. Related Skills:**

Select 8 other skills, two of which must be either technical and/or science skills. Plus select two additional skill at levels three and six, and one at levels nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%)  
Domestic: Any (+5%)  
Electrical: Any (+5%)  
Espionage: Any (+5%)  
Mechanical: Any (+2%)

Medical: Any (+10%)

Military: Any (+5%)

Physical: Any (-15% penalty where applicable; a life of study such as is lead by the true scholar does not leave much time for athletics).

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any (+5%)

Rogue: Any (+5% to computer hacking)

Science: Any (+20%).

Technical: Any (+20%).

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+5%)

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select five secondary skills from those listed. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All secondary skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Numerous notebooks, pens, sketch pads, sticky notes, pencils, and highlighters. Is also likely to have a recent model laptop computer and a membership to every library in the area. Will probably have a car that is in good condition and 1D4+2 years old. The Game Master should feel free to assign additional equipment that suits the characters occupation and interests.

**Money:** 3D4x\$100 in cash and 3D6x1000 in property.

**Why be a Scholar?** The true scholar is perfect for a player who prefers brain over brawn in his characters. No other O.C.C. allows for as many skills as this one (though they are not all fully developed), nor does any other character type provide the challenges to role-playing a personality that are so intrinsic to a true scholar.

## Ancient Nightbane

*"I was there to watch your civilization take its first, floundering paces and I pray daily that I shall not live to see its final steps as well. I had hoped that mankind would be able to defend itself against the encroaching darkness but as I see the talons of the invaders sink deeply into the controlling powers of nations and economies, as I watch people snatched from the streets or slain without notice, as I look on and despair for the evil that surrounds us all and yet is ignored, I feel hope sputter like the flame of a match before a hurricane."*

*"I am probably the oldest of my kind - I have never encountered anyone who has outlived my experience. I was there when Alexander left his mark in the book of history and I once heard Beethoven play, all the while wondering at the ironic sadness that his genius was lost to his own ear. I have fought in countless battles and I have sat on the sidelines of still more, a deathless warrior without fear of mortal courage or human steel. And yet even I feel helpless before this storm. And so now I watch. Helpless."*

*"Powerful though I may be, ancient though I may be, I am just one being, one mind, one voice. One life. As I sit and watch, praying for a world that is too afraid of its waking reality to stir itself from its slumber, I wonder just how many of my venerable brethren look on as do I. I wonder how many voices of wisdom have similarly been silenced by a lack of all hope."*

*"Wonder though I may, and ancient though I may be, I cannot help but feel that my time of action has passed. It is time that this world of man got on without me, perhaps without all of my kind. It is time for the world of man to live or die by its own hand, by its own spirit. Either way, I feel compelled to watch as events unfold."*

*"I pray that I am indeed immortal, otherwise I may very well be damned."*

- From The Wanderer's Journals. This portion first appeared on the Internet on March 16, 2007

Though most of Earth's Nightbane underwent the Becoming during or shortly after Dark Day, there are still those who predate this ominous day. Of these latter, many will only be a few decades old, their Morphus representing the time of their birth, a time that still understood the marvels of technology and the wonders of the global village that is our modern world. And yet there are also Nightbane who predate the industrial age, some even tracing the path of their life back farther than any organized religion now known. These long-lived creatures, known plainly as

"Ancients", should have about 2D4+2 levels of experience (if not higher), depending upon how old they are.

Like living pages from the book of history, the Ancients are like beings living outside of time. They have seen events, met people, and lived through moments of tragedy and glory that modern man knows only as words in a text. Ancients, like the Nightbane of recent days, will have aspects to their Morphus that represent the period in time from whence they came; Nightbane of long-lost Egypt may look like the engraved lid of a pharaoh's sarcophagus, those from the days of the Caesars may have flesh shaped like the armor of the Legions, or a Nightbane who survived the enlightenment of the Renaissance may have a body shaped from stained glass. And while these aged beings may have lived through the many centuries to pass after their Becoming, allowing them to experience man's evolution, that is not necessarily saying that the Ancient himself has evolved as well.

Many Ancients seem as though they exist outside of the stream of time, sitting upon the riverbank as the waters of history flow past. Most have maintained the superstitions, prejudices, mannerisms and speech of their birth as they desperately cling to the life that they had once known instead of adopting to the ways of the present. As a result, Ancients tend to be reclusive and isolated from the rest of the world. Many live the life of the hermit, sequestering themselves deep within the few lands that remain far from the prying eyes of modern man or the invading Nightlords.

## Ancient Nightbane Skill Packages

### Self/Commoner/Laborer

These are the men and women who worked the mines, toiled in the fields or sweated in the primitive factories of centuries gone by. Down through the numerous years, the character has adopted some of the ways of the evolving world around him, perhaps allowing him to maintain the appearance of being a typical blue collar citizen living a typical blue collar life.

#### R.C.C. Skills:

- Speak Native Language (+10%)
- Three Wilderness or Domestic skills of choice (+25%)
- Select either Horsemanship, General Repair/Maintenance, First Aid *or* Basic Mechanics (+20%)
- One Ancient W.P. of choice

Hand to hand: basic must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic costs one skill selection, expert counts as two, and martial arts or assassin counts as three skill selections. Remember, this ability only applies to the Facade.

**R.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 6 other skills, one of which must be either a wilderness or domestic skill. Plus select two additional skill at levels two and four, and one at levels nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Radio: Basic only (-15%)

Domestic: Any (+20%)

Electrical: Basic Electronics only (-15%)

Espionage: Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Pick Locks, Pick Pockets, Tracking and Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Locksmith and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: Holistic Medicine and Toxicology only (+5%)

Military: None

Physical: Any except gymnastics.

Pilot: Any (-15% on modern vehicles)

Pilot Related: Navigation only.

Rogue: Any except Computer Hacking (+5%)

Science: Basic Math and Astronomy only.

Technical: Any, but +15% to General Repair/Maintenance (-10% to all others except Language)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+10%)

### *Ancient Warrior*

Whether the Nightbane was once a Roman legionnaire, Celtic berserker, Norman knight or French dragoon doesn't matter because all are men who have been trained to make war their livelihood. Originally a soldier of a conquering army, defending garrison or a sword for hire, the Becoming of most Ancients warriors came upon them in the heat of battle, showing them an all new world, an all new war.

#### **R.C.C. Skills:**

Speak Native Language (+10%)

Select two skills from the Wilderness or Domestic categories

Strategy/Tactics (+15%)

One Lore skill

Military Etiquette or Intelligence (+10%)

Three Ancient W.P.s of choice

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to hand: basic can be changed to expert at the cost of one "other" skill, or to martial arts or

assassin at the cost of two "other" skills. This hand to hand applies only to the Nightbane's Facade.

**R.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 5 other skills, one of which must be either a weapon proficiency or physical skill. Plus select two additional skill at levels three and six, and one at levels nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Radio: Basic only (-15%)

Domestic: Any (+10%)

Electrical: Basic Electronics only (-20%)

Espionage: Any (+10%)

Mechanical: Basic Mechanics (-10%)

Medical: First Aid only (+10%)

Military: Any (-15% on modern Demolitions and Demolitions Disposal)

Physical: Any (+5%)

Pilot: Any (+10% on Horsemanship; -15% on modern vehicles)

Pilot Related: Navigation only.

Rogue: Any except Computer Hacking and Streetwise - Drugs

Science: Basic Math only.

Technical: Any (-10% to all except Language and General Repair/Maintenance)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

### *Scholar/Noble*

The Ancient was one of the learned men of his time or perhaps was born to a position of power, thus granting him an education that rose above the norm of the day. These men and women are accustomed to wielding power, gained either by right of birth or by the application of their knowledge, and it is possible that this still flavors their actions in the modern world.

#### **R.C.C. Skills:**

Speak, Read and Write Native Language (98%)

Speak two additional Languages (+15%)

Read/Write two additional Languages (+10%)

Research (+20%)

Select two skills from the Technical or Science categories (+15%)

Hand to hand: basic can be selected as one "other" skill, hand to hand: expert at the cost of three "other" skills, or martial arts (assassin may not be taken, even by evil characters) for the cost of four "other" skills. This hand to hand applies only to the Nightbane's Facade.

**R.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 8 other skills, one of which must be either a weapon proficiency or physical skill. Plus select two additional skill at levels three and

six, and one at levels nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Radio: Cryptography only  
Domestic: Any  
Electrical: Any (-10%)  
Espionage: Investigation, Forgery (both +15%), Disguise, and Wilderness Survival only  
Mechanical: Any (-10%)  
Medical: First Aid, Toxicology, Forensic Medicine, and Holistic Medicine only (+10%)  
Military: Strategy/Tactics only  
Physical: Athletics, Climbing, Body Building, Prowl, Running, and Swimming only  
Pilot: Any (+10% on Horsemanship; -15% on modern vehicles)  
Pilot Related: Any (-5% on all except Navigation)  
Rogue: Any (-10% on Hacking and Streetwise - Drugs)  
Science: Any (+10%)  
Technical: Any (+15%; +20% to Writing and Art)  
W.P.: Any  
Wilderness: Any

99% +1D4 hit points and +3D6 S.D.C.

00% Free Talent. Gains a free Talent, selecting from any that has a permanent P.P.E. cost equal to or less than 10% of the Nightbane's P.P.E. total. For example, a Nightbane with 84 P.P.E. could select from those talents with a permanent P.P.E. cost of 8 or less. Elite talents may not be selected.

## The Strength of the Ancients

Although it does not happen to all Nightbane who manage to outlive the centuries, many become more powerful as the strength of the ages builds within his blood. For every century of life that passes an "ancient" Nightbane is allowed a roll on the following table to determine if any new abilities or strength have resulted from his advanced years. Add a cumulative 1% to the roll for each century of life that has passed.

01-70% None.

71-73% Stronger. +1D4 to P.S. and +1 to P.E.

74-76% The next Talent purchased by the Nightbane may be bought at half the usual permanent P.P.E. cost.

77-81% P.P.E. Bonus. Permanently gains 4D6 P.P.E.

82-84% Wiser. +1D4 to I.Q. and +1 to M.E.

85-88% New Biomechanical Characteristic. Roll randomly on one of the biomechanical tables but a characteristic that was not yet known to that period of history may not be taken.

89-91% Endurance. +1D4 to P.E. and +1 to P.S.

92-94% New Stigmata. Roll randomly on one of the stigmata tables.

95% Enhanced Healing. Regenerates an additional 5 S.D.C./hit points at the end of each melee round.

96-98% A randomly determined new Morphus characteristic. G.M.s should reserve the right to veto any roll they deem inappropriate.

## New Skills

**Assassination (Espionage & Rogue):** A character that possesses this skill has been trained in the art of killing others through subtle and covert means. Such knowledge includes the proper use of specially designed equipment and weapons, the precise placement of special explosives in key positions within a building or vehicle (though not how to make or disarm them), the proper selection of a good "kill line" for sniping, and similar procedures for assassination.

The skill also trains the character in the proper ways to attack a person for maximum damage. This means that critical hits are caused on one less number than normal if the character spends at least four full melee rounds studying his opponent and then succeeds upon a skill roll (-10% for races with which the assassin is not familiar). Even then, the assassin must still catch the target by surprise or the critical hit bonus is nullified. **Bonuses to Other Skills:** +5% to Disguise and Forgery, +1 to strike with an aimed shot on all sniper weapons and bows/crossbows, and +10% to Demolitions (but not Demolitions Disposal). **Restrictions:** Characters of principled alignment cannot take this skill and those who are scrupulous may only take it with the Game Master's approval or if it is part of the character's predefined skills. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. This may not be taken as a secondary skill.

**Astrophysics (Science):** Includes a working knowledge of astronomy, which is the study of the stars and other celestial bodies, their movements, positions, cycles, alignments, and interrelations with the earth and each other. This knowledge can also be used to determine direction, approximate distances, identify seasons, and tell the time of day, but more importantly, it is used to study the universe and how it relates to nuclear physics, quantum mechanics, relativity, and other explanations of deep space phenomena like quasars and black holes. The skill combines astronomy and physics and also includes a working knowledge of the theories of time and space. **Requires:** Basic and Advanced Math. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**General Repair/Maintenance (Technical):** Not everyone can be a mechanic or electrician, but many are good with their hands and capable of doing satisfactory repairs on simple mechanisms, gears, pulleys, wheels, rope, and so on. This skill includes: sharpening blades, minor repairs on weapons, pack their own S.D.C. bullets/ammunition, sew torn clothing (it may not look pretty, but it does the job), replace a wagon wheel,

change a tire, shoe a horse, repair furniture, paint, varnish, nail and assist in basic woodworking, and even do minor patchwork on armor (restores 2D6 S.D.C.).

Roll once to see whether the character can figure out what's broken, what must be done to fix it, and whether it's beyond his meager abilities. Roll again to determine success or failure in making the actual repair. If failure, the player may try again, but only twice. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. Reduce skill proficiency by half if the item is extremely damaged, complex, high-tech or alien.

**History (Technical):** An extensive and continuing study and love for world history. This skill provides the character with a general knowledge of the growth of civilizations, cultures, religions and myths, past and present. The character will recognize major types of ancient architecture/ruins, areas of historical significance, weapons, characteristics, demons and deities. Once the general history skill has been taken it is possible for the skill to be taken again, this time with a specific people, time period, geographical location, religion, etc. in mind, granting the character advanced knowledge in the area of choice. As many specific versions of the history skill may be taken as the player wishes, but Game Masters should be careful in how they allow the players to define what the specific skill covers, ensuring that a general and broad is not attempted to be defined as "specific" in the hopes of gaining the increased chance of success. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience for the general history skill / 45% +5% per level of experience for a history skill for a specific selection from the past. A failed roll means a failure to recall specific details.

**Investigation (Espionage & Technical):** This skill is representative of techniques, skills and schools of thought required to carry out a proper investigation. The character is trained in the proper methods of examination of objects, correlation of events, and people in the search for clues as well as the correct procedures to carry them through. This skill includes knowing the proper channels to use to get background and current information on a person, rudimentary evidence gathering techniques like dusting for fingerprints, and the procedures and methods that are used so as not to disturb the evidence at a scene. So highly attuned are the powers of perception of a character with this skill that they can use it to detect a disguise (-20%) or a forgery (-15%). **Perception Bonus:** Someone with this skill gains a bonus of +2 to perception if this optional rule is used. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Language: Nosfetrú (Technical):** An ancient language that was spoken on a hundred worlds before the men of Earth had first spoken anything that may be labeled as language, Nosfetrú is the traditional tongue of the vampire kingdoms throughout the megaverse. Oddly graceful, almost musical in its pronunciation, Nosfetrú is filled with accents that sound like hissing or lisping, with few hard consonants to mar the flow of speech. Few outside of the Nations of Blood understand this language, much less know that it even exists. Much the same as their other powers, all vampires (except wampyrs) innately know how to speak this language. The skill percentage is identical as the regular language skill. **Base Skill:** 40% + 5% per level of experience.

**Literacy: Nosfetrú (Technical):** Much like the spoken version of the ancient language, the written form of Nosfetrú is very fluid and graceful. Written in vertical columns, from top to bottom, in a form and with characters that appears as some unknown oriental style, yet has an eccentric, ephemeral mystique to them. The skill percentage is identical as the regular literacy skill. Wild vampires and wampyrs are the only subspecies that does not innately know this skill. **Base Skill:** 30% + 5% per level of experience.

**Literacy: Wizard Glyphs (Technical):** Earth's spell casters have always maintained a written language all their own that was designed to keep the uninitiated from being privy to the ways and wants of arcanists. An ancient language that was used around the globe before the first Egyptian hieroglyph was even contemplated (even predating the Great War), wizards glyphs are a series of 999 symbols, runes and characters that can be combined to communicate any message. With representations for ideas, concepts and words that no other earthly language has any way of accurately describing or putting to words, wizards glyphs are the age-old choice for the writing of mystic texts, scrolls and spell books. **Base Skill:** 30% + 5% per level of experience.

**Lore: Magic (Technical):** This area of study does *not* give the character any magic powers, the ability to use mystical artifacts, or the ability to read magic symbols. What is provided is general information about magic, magic creatures, and myths about magic. For example, a character with this skill knows about the general abilities and powers of infamous magic creatures such as the various monsters of Earth mythology. He'd know what are the main types of magic (in his geographic area or all of Earth if he is well traveled), such as spell casting, summoning, fleshsculpting, mirror magic, necromancy, computational sorcery, and so on.

Likewise, the character is likely to know legends about powerful magic items, places, curses and notorious practitioners of magic. Although the character cannot read runes or mystic symbols (unless this ability is gained by some other means), he is likely to be able to recognize whether the symbol is a real magic ward, wizard glyph, rune or warning. The following abilities come with this layman's skill: **Base Skill (general knowledge):** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Recognize wards, runes and circles:** 15% +5% per level of experience. **Recognize Enchantment:** i.e. magic items, people under the influence of magic charms, possession, curses, mind control and similar: 10% +5% per level of experience.

**Seduction (Rogue):** This is the ability to make the opposite sex melt with desire. This skill is somewhat similar to the interrogation skill, in that the seducer knows how to ask the right questions to get information without being obvious. The seducer usually seems attentive, sympathetic, and alluring/sexy. Men and women, who are seduced, tend to have loose lips - meaning they tend to talk freely, say more than they should, and tell secrets. They also lose track of time, spend big money to impress and please their seducer, and lavish her or him with their affection, time and attention, while oblivious to everything else around them.

Most of all, somebody who is seduced is vulnerable. The person who is *successfully* seduced is distracted; skill performance is half and takes twice as long to perform, the character has no initiative, doesn't notice people or events around him/her, and is easily caught off-guard. No initiative and all bonuses are at half when attacked by a character other than the seducer. Worse, the victim(s) of seduction is completely vulnerable to the seducer! The seducer always gets the first strike/attack/action (any roll above a 4 hits or is successful). The victim has no chance of self-defense against that first attack, plus loses one attack/action from surprise or horror. In addition, the seducer is +5% to pick the pockets of, palm, or plant things on his/her victim of seduction, as well as +5% to the skills cardsharp, sing and dance. Research has shown that the more alcohol an intended victim drinks, the easier he/she is to seduce (+5%). **Base Skill:** 20% +3% per additional level of experience. **Skill Bonuses:** +1% for every *one* M.A. attribute point above 20, and every *two* P.B. above 17. So a character with a P.B. 23 (+3) and M.A. 24 (+4) would be +7% to successfully seduce. The seducer can influence more than one person at a time; one additional per every three levels of experience.

**W.P. Paired Weapons:** This skill is automatic at 7th level hand to hand Expert and Martial Arts, but it can also be taken as a separate skill. Th effects are identical (see *Combat Terms* in the **Nightbane®** book), but when taken as a skill, only two specific kinds of paired weapons are included. For example, the character may be skilled in paired short swords *or* paired axe and short sword, but not both (that would require two paired weapon skills). When the skill is acquired under hand to hand, it represents a high level of achievement and any single-handed weapon can be used in a pair. Unlike a separate selection of the skill, high level combatants do not have to specify their paired weapons, the can use any two single-handed weapons.

**W.P. Shield:** Combat skills with large and small shields used primarily for parrying and self defense. **Bonuses:** +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. A shield can be used in one hand and a weapon in the other. +1 to strike with a shield (1D4 damage) at levels 4, 8, and 12. No bonus to strike when thrown.

**Whittling & Sculpting (Technical):** The art of carving wood, bone and horn into three-dimensional objects, figurines, toys, and simple objects like stakes, arrow shafts, walking sticks, and so on. This skill is useful for those characters needing a hobby to pass the time while others can actually make a profit from their carvings. Note that this skill can be especially useful to a vampire hunter. The percentile number indicates the quality of technique and the quality of the work/appearance. Taking the skill twice indicates a professional quality and gets a bonus of +10% bonus of +10%. Selecting it once indicates a talented amateur. **Base Skill:** 30% + 5% per level of experience.

## New General Spells

### *Shape Wooden Stake (level 1)*

**Range:** By touch.  
**Duration:** Permanent.  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**P.P.E.:** 2

A useful device for combating vampires, this simple spell will transform a piece of wood within the spell caster's grip into a sturdy, wooden stake. The piece of wood must be at least the size of a pencil and can be no larger than an average table leg. The spell causes the wood to either grow or shrink, depending upon its original size, until it is a sharpened wood stake measuring about 1.5 inches (3.8 cm) in diameter and 10 inches (25.4 cm) in length. The change is permanent and allows the stake to do 1D6 damage plus any applicable P.S. bonus.

### *Anchor Stake (level 3)*

**Range:** By touch.  
**Duration:** Permanent  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**P.P.E.:** 6

The spell causes the sharpened end of a wooden stake to grow thick tendrils or roots that snake downwards throughout the creature's body, entwining with its skeleton. The tendrils then penetrate the ground/object beneath the vampire without being forceful, meaning that if the undead rests upon a stone slab or within a wooden coffin, the roots will enter the material without cracking or chipping it; no damage is done to the material beyond the holes made by the roots.

Snaking outwards and down for a 5 foot (1.5 m) radius, the stake's roots will firmly anchor the weapon within the creature's chest, making it difficult to be removed. A stake that has been anchored to a wooden object/floor will require a Supernatural P.S. of 40 (solo or combined) to pull it free, a 50 for packed earth, a 30 for loose earth (sand), a 60 for stone or concrete, and an 80 for a strong metal. +50% to all P.S. requirements if not Supernatural P.S. If possible, the roots may be hacked apart, usually requiring a total of 250 points of damage to be done in order to free the stake. A negation spell will not cause the roots to recede or disappear.

### *Blowing Faith (level 4)*

**Range:** Self  
**Duration:** 1 melee round per level of experience  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**P.P.E.:** 8

The caster is surrounded by a glowing nimbus of his faith. This aura has the same effect on vampires and similarly vulnerable creatures as would the sight of a holy symbol. Being touched by the aura will cause the vampire 1 to 2 points of damage though the spell caster's shadow causes no harm. Atheists and agnostics cannot cast this spell.

### *Crimson Rain (level 4)*

**Range:** 75 feet (22.8 m), plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of the caster. Maximum area of effect is a 30 foot (9.1 m) radius, plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of the caster beyond the first.

**Duration:** 1 melee per level of experience

**Saving Throw:** Special

**P.P.E.:** 2 per 5 feet of the spell's radius.

This spell takes any area of flowing water, be it from a burst pipe, rain, river, etc., and alters it in order to fool the undead. The altered water smells, looks and tastes like blood even though it is still only water. The spell works by affecting a chosen area and not the specific water itself; when water flows through the area it is altered, if it then leaves that area, it returns to normal. A person that is not aware that the "blood" is actually water and sees such a gory spectacle must save vs a Horror Factor of 14. Any vampire (or similar bloodthirsty creature) that is subjected to water within the area of affect will believe the water to be blood. They must then save vs insanity (-2 penalty for master vampires, -4 for secondary vampires, -8 for wild vampires, no penalty for vampire intelligences) and if the save fails, the vampire is caught up in its bloodthirsty lust and remains in the area to drink the "blood".

Obviously the water causes damage to the vampire as normal, yet because the monster has been carried away with thirst for blood, it takes no notice of the harm it is inflicting on itself and remains. However, if the save succeeds, the vampire realizes that it has been duped and is only drinking water, no matter what it seems to be. In this case, the lust leaves the vampire and he is free to act normally. Each melee that the vampire is affected by the lust to feed upon the altered water it is allowed another save to see if it can get free. Due to the power of the lust, each failed save adds a cumulative -1 penalty to all following saves until a successful save is rolled.

### *Feeder Finder (level 4)*

**Range:** By touch to cast on the recipient and can sense the vampire with an unlimited range (except when the target and tracker are in different dimensions than each other).

**Duration:** 1D4 days plus 8 hours per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** Not applicable.

**P.P.E.:** 7

So named by the eccentric mage that designed this spell, Feeder Finder was created with the purpose of finding a vampire before it is given the chance to fulfill a slow kill. By casting the spell on a person that has been victimized by a vampire's slow kill bite with the intention of turning that victim into a vampire, the spell will then allow the caster to track the offending undead back to its lair. The spell only works if the victim is bitten *after* the spell has been cast on the mortal selected for the slow kill, thus requiring that the spell be cast before the first or second such bite if the victim is also to be saved from undeath.

Once the spell is cast and the victim bitten afterwards, the caster will be able to mystically sense the vampire and follow it wherever it may go. This magical sense is like an intense intuition of what direction must be followed and cannot be disrupted by any means normally used to dissuade tracking. The vampire will not realize that he is being followed unless it uses some form of divination or like mystical means, or if the spell caster somehow gives himself away and allows himself to be spotted.

### *Seal Mirrorwall: Lesser (level 4)*

**Range:** One mirror by touch.

**Duration:** 1 hour plus 2D10 minutes per level of experience beyond the first.

**Saving Throw:** Special

**P.P.E.:** 8

Casting this spell on a mirror will temporarily proof it as a gate of travel through the Mirrorwall. Enchanted mirrors are allowed a saving throw to resist this spell; a 14 or higher is needed if the magic mirror doesn't already have a saving throw versus magic. If someone is already in transit through the Mirrorwall and is using the targeted mirror as the gateway, sealing the mirror will expel the traveler back through their point of origin. Casting the spell, Walking the Mirrorwall: Lesser has a 40% chance of disabling the seal whereas the Greater version will dispel it without fail.

### *Feast of Horror (level 5)*

**Range:** Self or by touch.

**Duration:** 1 hour plus 10 minutes per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** 10

The recipient of this spell is able to drink blood to gain nourishment instead of eating food, much like a

vampire. A half-liter of blood is about the equivalent of a good, healthy meal.

### *Arcane Rainbow (level 8)*

**Range:** 25 feet (7.6 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience.

**Duration:** This varies with the colors being summoned.

**Saving Throw:** Dodge. Depending upon the effects of the individual colors, a save vs magic may also be permitted.

**P.P.E.:** Varies

Casting this spell causes a ray of colored light to strike out from the mage's hands, the effects of which depends upon the caster's experience level and the color of the light. The caster may initially only summon one ray of colored light at a time, but an additional color may be summoned simultaneously at levels 2, 4, 8, 10, 12 and 14. All rays of light are +6 to strike.

**Red:** The target is engulfed by a burst of flame that does 1D6 damage per level of experience. A successful saving throw vs magic has no effect on this damage. Radius of the flame burst is 3 feet (0.9 m). P.P.E. cost is 5 plus 1 per level of experience.

**Orange:** This ray will remove any mystical disguise that it strikes; an Ashemdai's illusion will dispel, a Namtar's hollow body will crumble apart, and a magical cloak of disguise will fail. A saving throw vs magic to resist the ray is allowed, but at -4. P.P.E. cost is 16.

**Yellow:** Summons a ray of pure daylight that will cause 6D6 damage to vampires (half that to other undead). This light can cause the final destruction of a vampire as would the usual light of the sun. A successful saving throw will not reduce damage. P.P.E. cost is 10.

**Green:** The target must save vs magic or feel queasy and nauseous. Failure results in penalties of -4 to initiative, -3 to strike, parry, dodge and roll and -10% to skills for 1D4 melee rounds plus 1 melee per level of experience. P.P.E. cost is 5.

**Blue:** The ray's victim must save versus a Horror Factor of 15 or suffer the usual consequences. P.P.E. cost is 3.

**Indigo:** A living being struck by the ray cannot travel through the Mirrorwall by any means for one hour per level of the spell caster. A saving throw at -2 is permitted. P.P.E. cost is 16

**Violet:** If this ray strikes an evil supernatural being such as a demon, Hound, Ashmedai, Hunter, Ba'al or similar monster, the target will be overcome with great agony that will last for 1D4 melee rounds. The target loses half of its attacks per melee, its speed is reduced by half and it is -4 to strike, parry and dodge

and is -20% to any skill requiring its full concentration. A successful saving throw will negate the light's influence. P.P.E. cost is 15.

### *Osis' Sanctuary (level 8)*

**Range:** The room within which the caster stands. Can affect an area of 4,000 cubic feet (113.2 cubic m) per level of experience.

**Duration:** 10 minutes (1 hour if cast as a ritual) per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** Special

**P.P.E.:** 33

Casting this spell within a room or confined area will transform it into a sanctuary that is proof against the undead. To enter a room protected by this spell, the undead must make a successful save vs magic with a -8 penalty; failure causes the undead monster 3D6 damage directly to Hit Points. Casting this spell as a ritual confers a -12 penalty to the undead's saving throw attempt and causes 6D6 damage for a failure.

### *Sunstone Ritual, level 13)*

**Range:** by touch. The blast has a range of 20 feet (6.1m) plus 4 feet (1.22m) per level of experience of the creator.

**Duration:** Permanent

**Saving Throw:** Not applicable.

**P.P.E.:** 310

By enchanting a single translucent gemstone worth at least \$1000, this spell can provide the spell caster with a powerful tool for use against vampires. When the ritual is worked upon the gem, the spell caster must bestow upon it a word that, when spoken and combined with the direction of the user's mind, will unleash the gem's power. The gem is given the ability to store the sun's light and to later unleash it in a directed, concentrated blast that causes 2D4x10 damage directly to the hit points of vampires and similarly affected creatures. Furthermore, the blast is so bright that it will light up the area within 10 feet (3 m) radius of the blast's path. Up to one such blast can be stored per level of the sunstone's creator at the time that the item was made.

So long as at least one blast remains in the sunstone those blasts that had been used may be recharged at a rate of 1 blast for every 2 hours that the gem is left out in the clear (unclouded) light of the sun, up to its maximum. If all of the blasts contained within the sunstone have been used then the gem turns black and becomes worthless for magic and as a regular gemstone.

Once created, anyone can use a sunstone so long as they have been instructed on its operation and been given the word of activation. To unleash a blast

from the sunstone requires one melee action/attack during which time the user speaks the word of activation and concentrates on the target. This is a fairly rare spell because the Nations of Blood have worked long and hard to hunt down and slay anyone that may have had an opportunity to learn this deadly spell.

### *Seal Mirrorwall: Greater Ritual, level 14)*

**Range:** One mirror by touch.

**Duration:** Permanent

**Saving Throw:** Special

**P.P.E.:** 210

Like the lesser version of this spell, this arcane rite will seal a mirror so that it cannot be used for passage through the Mirrorwall. The only difference is that this ritual seals the mirror permanently. Enchanted mirrors must save versus an 18 to resist this spell.

# New Morphus Tables

## *Alien Shape Table ii*

**01-10% Broken glass:** The character's skin (or all of his flesh) is made of hundreds, maybe thousands, of large and small shards of glass. There is a -10% penalty to prowl because of the constant sound of breaking glass whenever the Nightbane moves. Add 3D6 to S.D.C., +1D4 damage to all physical attacks thanks to the sharp glass and +1D6 to Horror Factor.

**11-20% Energy:** The Nightbane's Morphus is made of solid energy that is in constant motion beneath the character's transparent, plastic-like skin. All spells or Nightbane Talents involving the creation/projection of a general energy type will have their effects increased by +50%. This means that an Energy Bolt spell will cause +50% its usual damage while an Energy Field would increase its S.D.C. by +50%. This does not affect spells or Talents of a more specific type of energy, like Shadow Blast, Fire Bolt or Life Drain.

Additionally, if the Morphus has the Gun Limbs characteristic, it will fire energy blasts instead of bullets. The permanent P.P.E. cost remains the same as it does for hard ammunition, but the range of an energy blast is 100 feet (30.5 m) per 1D6 of damage. Each blast also costs 2 P.P.E. (temporarily) per 1D6 of damage in order to be fired.

Because it is made of energy, the Morphus cannot have any Stigmata that will affect the appearance of flesh directly or that involves blood.

**21-30% Eye-Covered Body:** The Nightbane's body is covered by 3D4x10 eyes of varying sizes. They blink, wink and may or may not have eyebrows. It is impossible to sneak up on the Nightbane so long as anyone attempting to do so would normally be seen (i.e. the attacker isn't invisible, shadow melded, etc.). The eyes will have any extra sensory abilities, such as infrared or nightvision, that the Nightbane's usual eyes have. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**31-40% Hairy:** The Nightbane's entire body is covered in hair of an incredible length (2D6 feet/61 cm to 3.66 m). For some reason the hair does not impede the character's movements at all - he can see through it as if it isn't there nor will he trip over it accidentally. But all that hair makes it difficult to hit the Nightbane, causing all rolls to strike at him to be penalized by -2. The hair also helps to cushion impacts, giving the character a +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**41-50% Stained Glass:** Either the Nightbane's body is made entirely of sections of multi-colored stained glass or it has large and small fragments of stained glass throughout it. These sections of glass are

translucent, allowing sunlight to pass through in colored rays. +2 to Horror Factor.

**51-60% Gaunt:** Emaciated and thin, the character's flesh is tight and drawn across its bones as though the Nightbane had never eaten anything in all his living days. The muscles - what little there seems to be, no matter the Nightbane's P.S. - are stretched tight and the veins are pronouncedly visible as though they had been shrink wrapped against the skin. Add 1D6+1 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, -1D4+1 to P.B., +2 P.P.

**61-70% Darkness:** Like a living shadow, the Nightbane's body is made of solid darkness. All of the character's Talents and spells involving shadows or darkness will have their damage, range, duration, etc. increased by +25% while those of other characters used against the Nightbane will be only half as effective. On the down side, the character is vulnerable to laser blasts and bolts of light, such as those fired by a Guardian, causing the Nightbane to suffer an additional 25% damage from such attacks.+20% to the prowl skill (or prowl at 55% if the skill is not possessed), +1D4 to Horror Factor, -2D4 to S.D.C., and reduce the character's weight by 25%.

**71-80% Dwarf:** The Nightbane's Morphus is 6D6 inches (15.3 to 91.4 cm) shorter than his Facade. But the Morphus is also far stockier and more solid. Add 4D6 to S.D.C., +1D4+1 to P.S., +2D4 to P.E., reduce Speed by 25%.

**81-90% Obese:** Immensely fat, the Nightbane's flesh hangs from his limbs and in great waves and rolls. The character is so fat that he doesn't so much walk as waddle. Double the Nightbane's weight, +1 to Horror Factor, add 1D4x10 to S.D.C., +2 to roll with impact, -1 to P.E., reduce speed by half.

**91-00% Absent Joints:** There is no joint (or anything at all, for that matter) connecting the Nightbane's limbs to his body or to their own various segments. Instead, the forearm, upper arm, calves, thighs, fingers, hands, etc. all hang suspended in the air, never touching the others parts of the limb and yet all remaining in their proper place as if the joint existed. Add 2D6 to S.D.C., +1D4+1 to Horror Factor, and an additional -2 to make a called shot against any part of the Nightbane's body except for the main torso.

## *Stigmata Table iii*

**01-10% Disjointed Head:** Floating several inches above the shoulders, the character's head is not attached to his body. Not only does this make choking and decapitating attacks ineffective but it also allows the head to turn and look in any direction. The head cannot be taken from its place above the shoulders. +2 to

initiative, -25% to the prowl ability of anyone that is trying to sneak up on the character. Add 1D4+2 to Horror Factor.

**11-20% Covered/Stapled/Stitched Eyes:** Both eyes have been stitched closed with large staples, thick string or leather binding, or covered with a piece of leather or metal that has been attached to the face. Despite this, the character can see normally and the eyes will visibly shift beneath the sealed eyelids, something that is quite disturbing to watch. Add 2 to Horror Factor and reduce P.B. by 1D6.

**21-30% Covered/Stapled/Stitched Mouth:** Metal staples, thick bindings of string or leather seals the Nightbane's mouth, or perhaps it is covered by a piece of metal or cloth that is attached to the face, making it impossible for him to speak properly. The best that the Nightbane can manage is a mumble that must be shouted to even come close to being understood. A language skill is required at half the normal ability for the Nightbane to be understood by others and prowling and hiding is impossible if he must speak because he has to do so very loudly. Add 2 to Horror Factor and reduce P.B. by 1D4.

**31-40% Burned:** The skin is badly burned and is blistered, charred and hanging, revealing the muscle and bone beneath. Whenever the character is around there is a faint smell of burned flesh. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor, reduce P.B. by 2D6 and takes half damage from fire and heat (including magical).

**41-50% Etched:** The character's entire body is covered in designs, pictures and art that appear to have been carved into his flesh with a razor or knife. Though they are not bleeding, the etchings are scabbed over like they were only made a few days earlier. Add 3D6 to S.D.C. and 1 to Horror Factor.

**51-60% Universal Joints:** The Nightbane's joints, unlike those of a normal person, do not bend in just one direction. Instead, the joint is of the "universal" type which allows for movement in nearly all directions, even permitting the limbs to rotate up to 180 degrees upon the axis of any joint. The character can quickly redirect attacks and run in one direction while facing in another. +1 to strike, +2 to parry. This can be quite disconcerting to watch so add 1 to Horror Factor.

**61-70% Breaking Bones:** The joints and bones of the Nightbane seem to break or pop out of their place whenever he moves; -20% to prowl due to the constant sound of snapping bones and popping joints. +25% to Escape Artist rolls, +4D6 to S.D.C. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor

**71-80% Missing Flesh:** There is a large (or several small) chunk of flesh missing from the Nightbane's body. This can appear like a bite has been

taken out of the character or as a hole through the flesh. Add 2D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**81-90% Mobile Intestines:** The Nightbane's intestines are constantly, visibly shifting, moving, throbbing and pulsating beneath the skin, giving the appearance of one or more giant worms moving around within his stomach. +2 to save vs poisons/toxins, +2D6 S.D.C. and +3 to Horror Factor.

**91-00% Monstrous Piercing:** Throughout the entire body are piercings of grotesque appearance and varying size. These piercings will range in size from a small pin running through a flap of skin to spikes through a limb. Each piercing appears extremely painful and cumbersome though the Nightbane suffers no harm or hindrance. Add 5D6 to S.D.C. and 1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

### *Stigmata Table IV*

**01-10% Electrocuted:** The faint smell of ozone and burned flesh follows this Nightbane, his hair sticks nearly straight out and his flesh is slightly charred, with muscles that periodically twitch and convulse as though he had recently been electrocuted. The character suffers half damage from electricity, is +4D6 on S.D.C. and +2 to Horror Factor.

**11-20% Husk:** The Nightbane's skin seems to be lacking all of its fluids, making it brittle, peeling and cracked. Whenever the character moves there is a sound like tissue paper being crumpled. Also, flakes of skin are constantly falling from the character, more so when he or she is moving about. +1D4x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor and takes an extra 1D4+1 damage from any flame attack. Reduce P.B. by 25%.

**21-30% Face Apparatus:** Held in place by a series of clips, pins, ropes, straps, piercing and the like, the Nightbane's mouth and/or eyes are pulled open to unnatural lengths and wideness. These odd trappings are attached to or penetrate the skin of the face and prevent the mouth and/or eyes from closing or blinking, respectively. Though such a thing would normally be uncomfortable and impede talking in the character's regular voice, he or she can still function normally and with no discomfort at all. Reduce P.B. by 1D4+1 but is +2D6 to S.D.C. and +1D4 to Horror Factor.

**31-40% Bloated:** Puffy and swollen, the character's flesh is either very rosy, as though the bloating were caused by an excess of blood in his body, or pale and bluish, as though drowned. While not exactly fat, the character's flesh merely appears like it has been slightly inflated so that it sticks out in all places. Reduce P.B. by 10%, reduce damage from

blunt attacks by 25%, is +3D4 to S.D.C. and +2 to Horror Factor.

**41-50% Reversed Joints:** The Nightbane's joints bend in the opposite manner that is normal for a human. This means that elbows will bend downwards like the arms of a preying mantis, legs will bend forwards like a canine's, fingers bend towards the back of the hand, not the palm, and the neck can now bend only slightly forward while it can bend back so that the Nightbane's head may rest flat between the character's shoulder blades. While the legs actually make it easier for the Nightbane to run, adding 4D6 to Speed and double leaping distances, the arms and fingers make it more difficult to properly use tools and weapons (-15% to all skill requiring exceptional manual dexterity, demolitions and most piloting skills for instance, and -2 to strike or parry with a melee weapon). Add 1D6 to Horror Factor and 3D6 to S.D.C.

**51-60% Leper:** Pieces of the Nightbane's flesh and body parts are constantly rotting and falling off. As one would expect, the character's body is covered in black or bleach white, rotting wounds and boils that herald that piece's eventual separation from the rest of the body, but moments after the flesh falls off it is miraculously replaced by new flesh. This regeneration only applies to the flesh lost by this stigmata and not to any lost through combat or similar means. +2D6 to S.D.C., +1D4+1 to Horror Factor, reduce P.B. by 2D4 and the Nightbane heals/regenerates at double the normal rate.

**61-70% Maggots:** All areas and orifices of the character's body have maggots crawling through, in and out of them. If the Nightbane has any open or bleeding stigmata then the maggots will appear to be within the wound, eating the character's flesh. Though one would think this should be distracting and annoying to the Nightbane, he or she does not even feel the maggots as they crawl about. +3D6 to S.D.C., +1D4+2 to Horror Factor and +2 to save vs poison and disease.

**71-80% Boneless:** The body seems to be lacking bones or they are very soft and malleable. When moving, the Nightbane's limbs flop about and bend in weird places and the body seems to sag and gather in blobs, including the face, as though there were no bones beneath to give the body its support and structure. +2 to roll with punch, fall and impact, +4D6 S.D.C. and +1D4 to Horror Factor.

**81-90% Exterior Skeleton:** Built on the outside of the Nightbane, attached to his skin, is a second layer of bone that appears almost exactly as does the individual's normal, interior skeleton. This means that an outer layer of ribs crosses the character's chest, his eyes peer out through the holes of an outer skull, a line of bones stretch down the arms and legs, and so on.

Add 1D4x10 to S.D.C. and +2 to hand to hand damage. He can also use these bones for extra support, effectively increasing the character's P.S. attribute by 10 for the purpose of what he or she can lift and hold aloft, immobile.

**91-00% Bleeding Orifice:** A steady, constant stream of blood is forever flowing out of one or more of the Nightbane's eyes, mouth, nose, ears or other body opening. +1D6+1 to Horror Factor and +3D6 S.D.C.

### *Bio-mechanical Table iii*

**01-15% Cabled Muscles:** Instead of flesh and sinew for muscle structure, the Nightbane's strength is provided by taught, powerful looking metal cables. Add 5D6 to S.D.C., +1 or 2 to Horror Factor and +2D4 to P.S. Add 6D6 to Speed if the legs are also cabled.

**16-29% Jump Jets:** Exhaust-like metal ports along the Nightbane's legs and lower back allow him to leap amazing distances. The character can leap 3D6x10 feet (9.1 to 54.86 m; roll once when this characteristic is first taken) high or long with a loud boost. The Nightbane can also "leapfrog" along at twice his normal running speed. Add 3D6 to S.D.C. and 1 to Horror Factor.

**30-43% Oxygen Tanks:** Metallic tanks of oxygen are bolted to the Nightbane's body, most likely on the chest, back or upper shoulders. The tanks can hold a total of 3D6x10 minutes of air, either in a few large tanks or many smaller ones. The air is fed from the tanks into the body through segmented metal hoses that attach to the chest, mouth, neck or nose. Add 3D6 S.D.C., +1 P.E. and 1 to Horror Factor.

**44-57% Smoke Generator:** A field of dark, odorless smoke can be emitted from the ears, mouth, nose or/and an - ahem - other orifice. This cloud of smoke can obscure an area around the character up to 5 feet (1.5 m) in radius per level of experience, causing those who are obscured by the cloud to be -6 to strike. Even when the cloud is not consciously being created, the Nightbane's orifices still leak small plumes and trails of smoke. The Nightbane himself is immune to the blinding effects of smoke, both his own and from another, outside source. Add 1 to Horror Factor

**58-71% Removable Remote Hand:** One (or both) of the Nightbane's hands, which appear to be made of metal and covered in circuitry, can be removed and made to act on its own. The hand moves at a Speed equal to one third of its P.S., can crush and squeeze with the character's normal P.S., but can only lift objects at half his usual P.S. because of the lack of proper leverage. The hand is under the total control of the Nightbane but must remain within 15 feet (4.5 m) of the

character per level of experience or it will be rendered useless. If the Nightbane switches from his Morphus back into his Facade without first reattaching the hand, the Facade suffers 3D6 damage directly to Hit Points and the dismembered hand melts away into a bubbling pile of flesh. Add 3D6 to S.D.C. and 2 to Horror Factor (4 when the hand disengages and moves around on its own).

**72-85% Leaks Grease:** The Nightbane's body will bleed dark grease instead of crimson blood when wounded and, if any other biomechanical characteristics are rolled, they will constantly be leaking grease. The grease makes the character difficult to hold onto (+4 to roll with physical attacks and escape holds and locks) but may also ignite if exposed to flame (60% chance, causing 1D4 to 2D6 points of damage to the Nightbane, at the G.M.'s discretions; the fire will burn out in 1D6+1 melee attacks/actions). Add 4D6 S.D.C. and 1 to Horror Factor (3 if wounded and bleeding grease).

**86-00% Pneumatic Launcher:** A plastic or metal pipe that is surrounded by tubing (metal, plastic and/or rubber) which feed it air, yawns open from the character's flesh. The mouth of this pipe is typically 1 to 3 inches (2.54 to 7.62 cm) wide and can use the air pumped into it from the attached tubing to pneumatically fire an object that will fit into it. Heavy or non-aerodynamic objects (stones, for instance) will have a firing range of 25 feet (7.6 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience. Lightweight and/or aerodynamic objects (darts or wooden stakes) have a firing range of 60 feet ( m) plus 20 feet (6.09 m) per level of experience and are +1 to strike. Each pneumatic shot uses an attack/action and typically requires another to reload. Add 2 to Horror Factor.

## **Era-Specific Morphus Tables**

Nightbane from a certain period in human history will have aspects to their Morphus that are appropriate to that time, much like how a modern Nightbane character may have motorcycle wheels or television eyes. While it is possible that Nightbane history buffs may be allowed to roll on or choose from the era-specific Morphus tables, they should mostly be restricted to ancient NPCs or player characters that are being allowed to play such long lived being.

### *Industrial Age Biomechanical Table*

This table contains biomechanical elements that are specifically oriented towards those mechanisms that are related to the period known as the "industrial age". Everything has a distinctly 'old tech' look to it

and seems like something that might have been found in the background of an old machine-oriented silent film, like Metropolis.

**01-12% Steam Engine:** Located in the Nightbane's chest is the grated opening for a steam engine's furnace while a water tank is mounted on his lower back and exhaust chimney(s) sprout from his upper back or shoulders. By stoking the engine's fires, which can be seen burning within the Nightbane's torso, the character can temporarily boost his speed by +5D6 and his P.S. by +3D4 (roll for the amounts when this characteristic is first taken). To constantly maintain these bonuses, the Nightbane must feed the fire with a good amount of wood or coal once every ten minutes and the water in the tank must be added to once every half hour (though it mystically refills if the Nightbane switches back and stays in his Facade for at least an hour). Add 1D4x10 to S.D.C. and 1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

**13-23% Rivet Skin:** The character's skin is broken down into symmetrical, metal segments that fit over the character like a thick, second skin. These metal plates appear to be held in place by metal rivets, both large and small, depending upon where on the body they are located. The plates and rivets combine to give the Nightbane a bulky, clumsy appearance. Some Nightbane have even been known to have rivulets of rust running from between their plates or from under the rivets. Add 1D4x10 to S.D.C., +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**24-34% Typeface Fingers:** Like a typewriter, the tips of the Nightbane's fingers can metamorphosis into typeface that secrete their own ink. By tapping his fingers rapidly against a surface, the Nightbane can type out messages with an accuracy of 60% +3% per level of experience (a failed roll means that typos and other errors appear in the message). Add 2D6 S.D.C., +10% to all Literacy skills and 2 to Horror Factor.

**35-45% Gear Body:** All of the Nightbane's joints are lined with gears, both large and small. The gears grant greater strength (+1D4 P.S.) but lower the character's reflexes (-1 P.P.). The gears can also lock in place, unmoving, effectively increasing the character's P.S. by 50% in order to hold an object aloft. Add 3D6+2 S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**46-56% Light Bulb Eyes:** Primitive light bulbs protrude from the Nightbane's sockets instead of eyes. The bulbs' light can be increased to shine a path up to 15 feet (4.5 m) wide and up to 100 feet (30.5 m) long. The lights' intensity will also lower or increase depending upon the Nightbane's emotional state and level of excitement. Add 2D4 S.D.C. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**57-66% Clockwork Face:** Small gears poke through the flesh while a pair of perfectly centered minute, hour and second hands rotate in time, pointing out the twelve positions of the clock that are etched or embossed on the Nightbane's face. -5% to prowl due to the constant ticking of the facial clock, +2D4 S.D.C., add 1D4 to Horror Factor and the Nightbane has an absolutely perfect sense of time.

**67-77% Typeface Teeth:** The Nightbane's has two rows of teeth instead of one and both are visibly shaped like typeface that secrete their own ink. By inserting a piece of paper into his mouth and biting down rapidly, the Nightbane can type upon it as though he were using a typewriter. This is done with an accuracy of 50% +3% per level of experience (a failed roll means that typos and other errors appear in the message). Add 1D4 S.D.C., +10% to all Literacy and Language skills and 2 to Horror Factor when smiling or "typing".

**78-88% Chemistry Set:** Glass and rubber tubes crisscross the character's body and Bunsen burners and beakers are implanted in his torso (requiring a called shot at -2 to strike and at least 20 points of damage to crack them). The Nightbane automatically receives the Chemistry skill at and he can use his internal chemistry apparatus to experiment, distill and analyze chemicals as he would using a regular, external set. Add 1D4 to S.D.C., 1D4+1 to Horror Factor and +1 to I.Q.

**89-00% Hydraulic Limbs:** The Nightbane's limbs contain powerful hydraulics that enable the character to press or lift (but not carry) double the normal limit of his P.S. attribute which is increased by 2D4. Unfortunately, hydraulics are a tad slower than normal limbs and so there is a penalty of -1D4 to P.P. Add 5D6 to S.D.C. and 2 to Horror Factor.

### *Ancient Biomechanical Table*

The biomechanical elements of this table tend to be simple and lack the complex principles of many modern characteristics. Though some of the elements found on this table, such as the sword melee weapon, can be found under the standard biomechanical table, it is presented here to more specifically represent the time in history to which it is associated.

**01-10% Light Armor Suit:** Pieces of what appear to be light armor, such as scale, chain or partial plate mail, are attached to the Nightbane's flesh. This can include a helm, breastplate or shirt, gauntlets and/or shin guards but most of the Nightbane's flesh remains bare. Add 1D4x10+10 to S.D.C. and 2 to Horror Factor.

**11-19% Heavy Armor Suit:** Most or all of the Nightbane's body is covered in what appears to be armored plates with a large visored or slitted helm. This "armor" is in fact a part of the Nightbane and thus cannot be removed. Add 2D4x10 to S.D.C. and 3 to Horror Factor.

**20-28% Crossbow:** A crossbow is either attached to an arm or replaces the entire limb, allowing the Nightbane to fire bolts. **Note:** The character must permanently pay a cost of 1 P.P.E. for a crossbow that does 2D6 damage and has a range of 600 feet (183 m) or 2 P.P.E. for a crossbow that causes 3D6 damage with a range of 900 feet (274 m). The crossbow's bolts must be stored and fitted for firing as normal. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**29-37% Spyglass Eyes:** In place of eyes, the Nightbane has two spyglasses of polished brass that can telescope outwards to about 1 foot (30 cm). The spyglasses can provide 5X magnification with a range of 5 miles (8 km). Add 2 to Horror Factor.

**38-46% Arquebus Arm:** There is an arquebus (a long barreled, matchlock firearm) built into the character's body, most likely into or replacing an arm. **Note:** This Morpheus aspect requires a permanent loss of 2 P.P.E. The weapon causes 4D6 damage, has a range of 100 feet (30.5 m) and takes half a melee round to reload. The gunpowder, shot and ramrod must all be supplied separately.

**47- 55% Wagon/Chariot Wheels:** Instead of legs, the Nightbane has large, wooden wheels that appear to have been shod with metal. Whether the wheels are of the buckwagon or chariot (axle spikes and all) variety is entirely up to the player. Add 4D6 S.D.C., +2 to P.S., +3 to P.E., and 6D6 to Speed. Operating in confined areas may prove to be difficult. Add 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**56-64% Weapon Hand:** One of the Nightbane's hands can, at will, be metamorphosized into or is permanently shaped as a melee weapon such as a knife, flail, sword, axe, sickle, spear, etc. The weapon does normal damage for that specific weapon type, in addition to P.S. damage bonuses, and there is no risk of it breaking. In addition, the character is +1 to strike and parry (and entangle, if applicable) with his weapon limb and adds 2 to Horror Factor.

**65-73% Catapult/Trebuchet:** One or both of the character's arms can be winched back and locked into place in order to launch an object into the air like it had been flung by a catapult. +2 to P.S. and triple throwing range (but is -3 to strike) when the arm is used in this manner. Add 2 to Horror Factor.

**74-82% Windlass:** A rope can be pulled from the character's body and then retracted by the Nightbane by locking his arms in place and twirling them in a 360

degree circle upon the shoulder joint. The Nightbane on his own can use the rope to pull in as much weight as he can normally lift so long the rope can handle the weight (a maximum of 500 lbs/225 kg per level of experience). A weight greater than this would require someone to help to rotate the Nightbane's arms, like cranks, in order to reel the rope back in. Whether or not the rope is stored upon a visible spool or entirely within the body is up to the player. Add 2D6 S.D.C., +1 to P.S. and 1D4 to Horror Factor.

**83-91% Shield Arm:** One of the Nightbane's hands can, at will, be metamorphosized into or is permanently shaped as a metal shield of medium size. The shield can be round, rectangular or kite shaped, depending upon the Nightbane's background. Automatically receives the W.P. Shield skill with an additional +2 to parry with the shield limb but the parried attack still causes 10% of its normal damage because the "shield" is in fact a piece of the Nightbane. Add 5D6 to S.D.C. and 2 to Horror Factor.

**92-00% Cannon:** A large breech-loaded cannon has replaced one of the Nightbane's arms or is fitted into the middle of his torso. The cannon can cause up to 20D6 (2D6x10) damage with a maximum of 1D6 per 5 points of the Nightbane's P.S. It is possible to have a cannon that causes more damage than the character's P.S. would normally allow but firing it would knock him off of his feet, causing him to lose the initiative and one melee attack/action. The cannon has a range of 200 feet (61 m) and a blast radius of 1 foot (30 cm) per 1D6 of damage. **Note:** This advantage requires a permanent P.P.E. sacrifice of 1P.P.E. per die of damage. The character must carry around gunpowder and cannonballs to be fired and must ram them down with each shot, allowing a rate of fire of 1 per melee round.

## New Nightbane® Talents

### *Bone Blades*

Sprouting through his flesh from just about any location where his Morphus has bones, the Nightbane can grow razor sharp blades from his own skeleton. The blades can be made to extend outwards up to 3 feet (0.9 m) long. Blades sprouting from the forearm or back of the hand add 1D4 to the character's usual punch damage per 3 P.P.E. spent to create the blades, likewise for the normal kick damage for blades grown from the knees, heel, or toes. Characters without bones (e.g., those with the Energy alien shape or Boneless stigmata Morphus) may not take this Talent.

**Duration:** One melee round plus one melee per level of experience.

**Limitations:** Usable by the Morphus only. Can only spend 6 P.P.E. per level of experience. If more than one blade is grown at once, the Nightbane must distribute his P.P.E. expenditure between them as he sees fit without the total surpassing his maximum.

**Cost:** 5 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently; 3 P.P.E. per 1D4 of damage caused by the blades.

### *Dawnfist*

The Nightbane's fists can be surrounded by either a blinding white ball of energy or a sphere of darkness that eats light. This Talent may be used in either the Facade or Morphus.

If the light is summoned, add 2 points of damage to the character's usual punch damage for every 2 P.P.E. spent on it (double damage to vampires and similar creatures harmed by daylight), and the target must save vs magic with a -4 penalty or any active mystical or psionic disguise or deception will be unveiled. Such disguises include Alter Aura, a Nightbane's Morphus or an Infiltrator adept's life imitation abilities.

Calling upon the power of the sphere of darkness adds 1 point of damage to the character's usual punch damage for every 2 P.P.E. spent on it (double damage to Lightbringers and similar creatures of light), and the target must save vs magic with a -4 penalty or be blinded for half a melee round per level of the Nightbane. Blinded targets are -8 to initiative, strike, parry, dodge and roll and are -35% to any skill requiring sight.

**Duration:** One melee round plus one melee per level of experience.

**Limitations:** Only one of the Talent's effects, the ball of light or darkness, can be in use at one time. The

Nightbane can only spend 10 P.P.E. per level of experience.

**Cost:** 7 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently; two P.P.E. per 2 points of damage, with limitations.

### *Leech*

By touching someone, the Nightbane can choose to temporarily drain a victim of its P.P.E., Hit Points or skills. Whatever is stolen is transferred to the Nightbane through a wispy, incandescent flow of energy that passes between the thief and the victim. In the case of skills, roll randomly to determine which are temporarily stolen.

**Duration:** What has been stolen by the Nightbane will return at the normal rate in the case of P.P.E. and Hit Points or in 1 melee per level of experience for skills.

**Limitations:** Skills may not be leech until the Nightbane reaches third level. No more than 3 P.P.E. may be spent on this Talent per use, per level of experience.

**Cost:** 10 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently; 1 P.P.E. to leech 5 P.P.E. (for a gain of 4 P.P.E.), 2 P.P.E. to leech 1 Hit Point, or 9 P.P.E. to leech a skill.

### *Light of Purity*

Fires a bright energy bolt that does 1D4 S.D.C. for every two points of P.P.E. spent on it, so 10 P.P.E. would result in a 5D4 S.D. bolt, and so on. Against vampires and other creatures vulnerable to sunlight the blast does double damage and may even be used to cause an undead's final death, much like daylight. It can be used in either the Morphus or the Facade.

**Limitations:** The Nightbane can only spend 8 P.P.E. per level of experience. Range: 200 feet (61 m).

**Cost:** 5 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently; two P.P.E. per every 1D4 points of damage, with limitations.

### *Flesh Missiles*

By tearing off pieces of himself, or firing them if he has a Morphus aspect such as thorns or spikes, the character can make missiles from his own flesh. Small projectiles like shuriken or darts will cause 1D6 damage while the Nightbane himself suffers 2 points of damage. Creating a larger dagger that does 2D4 damage causes 1D4 points of damage to the Nightbane while making a spear or javelin of 2D6 damage will cause 1D4+2 damage to the character. All such missiles can be thrown double the character's usual throwing distance. These weapons will remain for one melee round per level of experience, after which time they crumble to dust.

Firing thorns or spikes will cause their usual damage, inflicting 1 point of damage to the Nightbane for anything causing 1D6 or less damage (100 foot/30.5 m firing range) or 2 points of damage to the character for spikes or thorns that cause between 1D6 and 2D6 points of damage (50 foot/15.2 m firing range). The spikes/thorns grow back after the damage caused by firing them is regenerated.

Both the spikes/thorns and weapons torn from the Nightbane will harm creatures normally hurt only by magical weapons. A spike, thorn or weapon that pierces a vampire's heart will act as does a wooden stake.

**Limitations:** None though Nightbane wishing to fire spikes or thorns must have a Morphus with such characteristics.

**Cost:** 4 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently. Costs 3 P.P.E. to create a missile weapon (no matter the damage) or 1 P.P.E. to fire a thorn or spike. Two spikes, thorns or weapons may be created/fired at a single time per level of experience.

### *World Speech*

This talent allows the Nightbane to speak and read any language, be it born of the Earth, another dimension or from magic. Doing so requires 1D4 minutes of exposure to the new language before the Nightbane is able to use that tongue with the same ability (skill percentage) as the person or writing providing him with the sample from which he is learning. For example, listening to a person speak Mandarin with a 70% ability and then reading a letter written with a skill of 50% allows the Nightbane to speak Mandarin at 70% and read it at 50%. Once learned, the ability to speak, read or write a language is retained so long as the character is exposed to the language for a minimum of one hour per day. It is rumored that some Ancient Nightbane with this Talent have achieved the ability to *permanently* retain the languages learned through this power!

**Limitations:** None.

**Cost:** 6 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently. Costs 10 P.P.E. per minute required to learn to read or speak a new language.

## **Elite Nightbane Talents**

### *Mechanical Senses*

The character's senses change to the equivalent sensor of a machine. Roll on the following table 1D4+1 times to see what senses are altered.

**01-10% Radar.** The character emits high-frequency radio waves that then bounce back to be interpreted. Interpret Shapes: 40% +5% per level of experience, Estimate Distance: 60% +4% per level, Estimate Direction: 55% +4% per level, Estimate Speed: 30% +5% per level, Estimate Exact Location: 40% +5% per level. +2 to initiative, +1 to parry and dodge. This sense can be fouled by rain, snow, dust and similar conditions, conferring penalties or rendering it completely ineffective.

**11-20% Telescopic Vision.** 2 mile (3.2 km) range, 4X magnification.

**21-30% Target Tracking.** All ranged weapons, be they apart of the Nightbane or separate, gain the benefit of his innate targeting system. +3 to strike with an aimed shot, +1 with a burst or wild shot.

**31-40% Radio Reception.** Can radio frequencies as he would hear normal sounds. The Nightbane also possesses the ability to filter out desired frequencies to ensure that he isn't simultaneously bombarded with every radio broadcast in the area. 0.5 mile (0.8 km) range. Rolling this option twice doubles the range and includes a signal descrambler (the equivalent of the radio: scramblers skill at 40% or a +10% bonus if the skill is possessed).

**41-50% Ultraviolet Vision.** Can opt to see in the ultraviolet spectrum. 2,000 foot (610 m) range.

**51-60% Radio Transmitting.** The Nightbane can speak in a desired radio frequency as easily as he can speak normally. Broadcast range is 1D4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km). Rolling this option twice doubles the range and includes a signal scrambler (the equivalent of the radio: scramblers skill at 40% or a +10% bonus if the skill is possessed).

**61-70% Infrared Vision.** Can opt to see in the infrared spectrum. 2,000 foot (610 m) range.

**71-80% Motion Detection.** The character is highly attuned to his surroundings and can react almost instantly to any movement in his proximity. +4 to initiative, +1 to parry, +3 to dodge.

**81-90% Thermal Vision.** Can opt to see in various shades of heat. 2,000 foot (610 m) range.

**91-00% Macro Vision.** 3 foot (90 cm) range, 12X magnification.

**Prerequisite:** At least one modern Biomechanical characteristic.

**Limitations:** Usable by the Morphus only. Is not available until second level.

**Cost:** 4 P.P.E. to permanently acquire *each* mechanical sense; activation is automatic and requires no P.P.E.

## *Fighting Flora*

The Nightbane can cause the local plant life to do his bidding. Plant and tree roots or long grass or reeds suddenly grow and erupt from the earth in sharp points or as attacking or entangling tendrils (+4 to entangle or +2 to strike for 1 or 2 to 1D4 points of damage per assault), branches and leaves can whip an opponent (+1 to strike, 1D6 to 2D6 damage), and pine cones, corn kernels, sunflower seeds, thorns, etc. may be shot forth as missiles (10 foot/3 m range, 1 to 3 points of damage, +1 to strike).

Most trees are rather rigid and so have only 2 attacks per melee whereas more flexible plants such as saplings and most bushes have 3 attacks while most flowers and grass have 4 attacks. S.D.C. and equivalent P.S. will vary by the type of plant but most large trees will have 30 to 50 S.D.C. per branch with a supernatural P.S. of 25 while a tulip would have a normal P.S. of only 3 or so and 1 or 2 S.D.C.

**Prerequisite:** At least one characteristic from the Plant Life Table.

**Limitations:** Usable by the Morphus only. Is not available until third level. Control is limited to plants within 15 feet (4.5 m) per level of experience and no more than 2 large trees can be affected at once per level. Each large tree is the equivalent of 2 small trees (saplings, for instance), 4 bushes, 10 flowers or a 100 square feet (9.29 square m) of grass or reeds.

**Cost:** 15 P.P.E. to acquire permanently; activation requires 5 P.P.E. per large tree (or its equivalent in smaller plants) that is controlled.

## Experience Tables

### *Vampire R.C.C. Q*

#### *Vampire Adepto*

- 1 0,000-5,000
- 2 5,001-10,000
- 3 10,001-20,000
- 4 20,001-40,000
- 5 40,001-80,000
- 6 80,001-120,000
- 7 120,001-160,000
- 8 160,001-200,000
- 9 200,001-250,000
- 10 250,001-300,000
- 11 300,001-400,000
- 12 400,001-500,000
- 13 500,001-600,000
- 14 600,001-1 Million
- 15 1,000,001-2 Million

### *Harbinger O.C.C.*

#### *Theologian O.C.C.*

- 1 0,000-2,120
- 2 2,121-4,240
- 3 4,241-8,480
- 4 8,481-16,960
- 5 16,961-24,960
- 6 24,961-34,960
- 7 34,961-49,960
- 8 49,961-69,960
- 9 69,961-94,960
- 10 94,961-129,960
- 11 129,961-179,960
- 12 179,961-229,960
- 13 229,961-279,960
- 14 279,961-329,960
- 15 329,961-389,960

### *True Scholar O.C.C.*

- 1 0,000-1,900
- 2 1,901-3,800
- 3 3,801-7,300
- 4 7,301-14,600
- 5 14,601-21,000
- 6 21,001-30,000
- 7 30,001-40,000
- 8 40,001-55,000
- 9 55,001-75,000
- 10 75,001-105,000
- 11 105,001-140,000
- 12 140,001-190,000
- 13 190,001-245,000
- 14 245,001-300,000
- 15 300,001-335,000