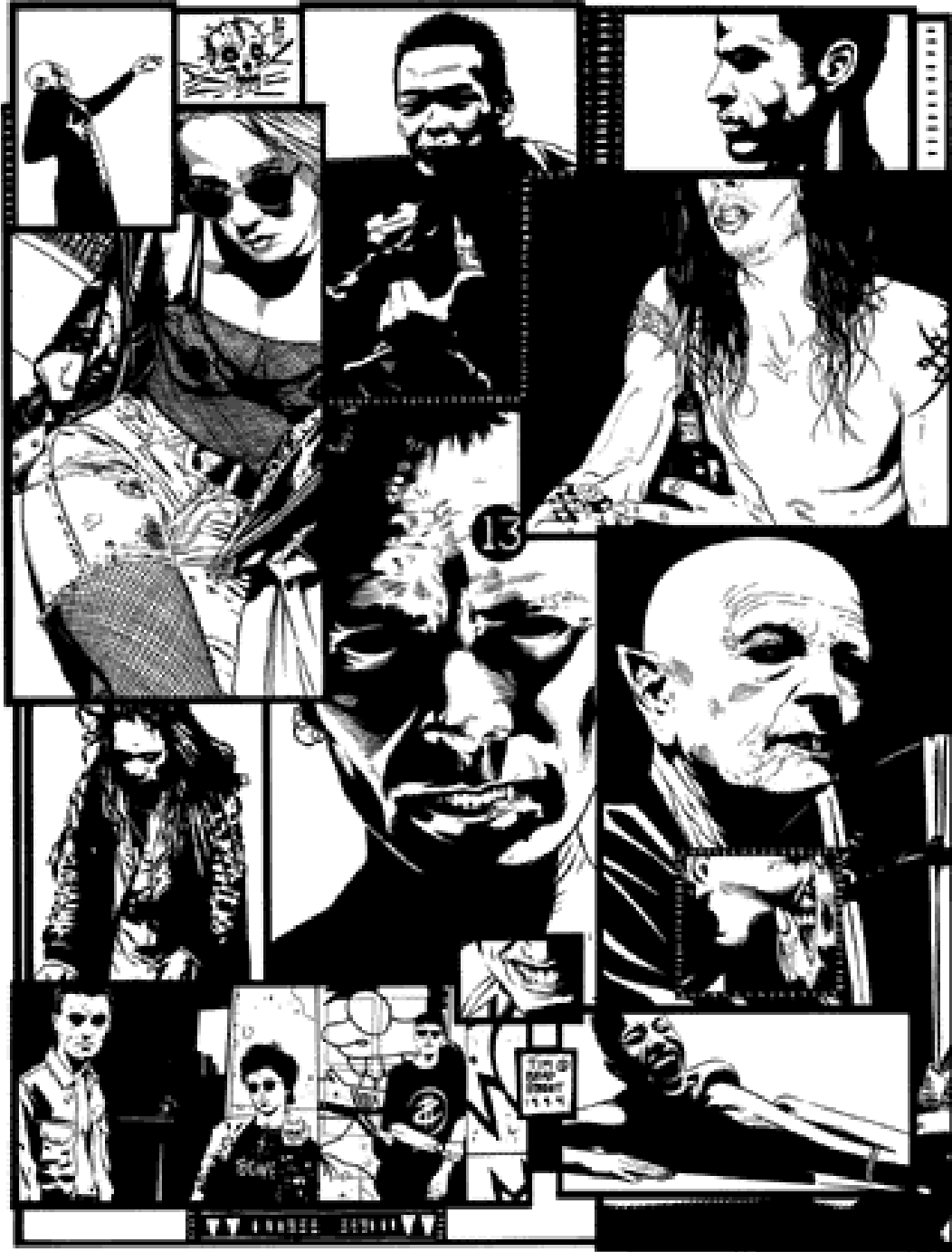


**A Beginners Guide to the World of Darkness  
Or  
How to succeed at being supernatural without really trying.**



For use in **Pittsburgh by Night v2.0** and other MET games

## Section one: Vampires Everywhere

Cainites. Kindred. Leeches. Bloodsuckers. Undead. The 13 Clans. All of these are terms for the mythical creatures we know as vampires. In the World of Darkness vampires are real, and go by many names. Lets explore some of those terms, so you know what the hell people are talking about, shall we? We'll look at the sects and the Clans/Bloodlines that belong to them. Detailed info on the Kindred can be found in *Laws of the Night revised*, *Vampire Revised Clanbooks*, *LotN: Guide to the Sabbat* and *LotN: Guide to the Camarilla*.

**A Clan:** A “family” of vampires who all share decent form an Antediluvian (3<sup>rd</sup> Generation of vampires). The clans all pass on certain powers and flaws that are unique to their blood.

**A Bloodline:** A smaller group of vampires who share decent for a progenitor that is not an Antediluvian. Usually created by some random deviation in the blood of one of the clans. Also called bloodlines are the remnants of clans that no longer have an Antediluvian (such as the mysterious and hated Salubri).

**The Camarilla:** The largest sect (political party) of vampires, with influence in every part of the world except Asia. They seek to coexist with humans and keep the existence of vampires a secret (a policy they call the “Masquerade”). They aren't the “good guys” by any means; they just don't want to be hunted out of existence. They have a very European feudal system with each city being ruled by a Prince. Think Republicans, with fangs.

- **Brujah:** Angry bikers, punks, or gangbangers who seek to rebel against everything. Or they can be very civilized intellectuals, who still seek to rebel against everything. Brujah all have trouble controlling their tempers.
- **Ventrue:** Vampiric businessmen and politicians. Very refined and commanding, most Princes are from Clan Ventrue. The Ventrue are very selective about whom they feed from and will only feed from a certain type of human (only from Shriners, English Professors, or Eskimos for example)
- **Tremere:** Vampire Wizards. They spend all their time seeking new discoveries in the occult and magic. Very ordered and hierarchal, they put clan Tremere above all other concerns. All Tremere are very carefully controlled by their elders.
- **Toreador:** Art fags. Hedonists. Degenerates. They spend eternity trying to create new trends of artistic expression and pinning for their lost humanity. The Toreador are easily distracted and entranced by beautiful things.
- **Nosferatu:** Ugly as hell. The Nosferatu look like the vampires of eastern European lore, bald, rat-toothed, gangly and otherwise inhuman. They dwell in the sewers and spy on everyone. If it happened, the Nosferatu know about it.
- **Malkavian:** Insanity is the only constant for this clan. All of its members are incurably insane. Some show it, some don't, but none of them seem entirely right in the mind. Don't think “Cute” crazy, think “Texas Chainsaw Massacre” crazy.

**The Sabbat:** The second largest sect. They seek to subjugate humanity as farmers would cattle. As much a religious cult as a political entity, they venerate Caine, the alleged first

vampire. Their Hierarchy is modeled after the Catholic Church and the rank and file Sabbat are grouped into small, tightly-knit packs. An Archbishop and a group of Bishops, who each rule a portion of the city, rule each city usually.

- **Lasombra:** The shadowy reflection of the Ventrue. They revel in their role as the predators of humanity. They are masters of the manipulation of humans, vampires and darkness itself. The Lasombra do not cast reflections in mirrors or other reflective surfaces.
- **Tzimisce:** Old School bloodsuckers. They hail from the wilds of the Carpathian Mountains (Transylvania). Very old fashioned and cruel, they delight in the misery and pain of others. Their connection to their ancestral lands means they must sleep in its soil each day.
- **The *antitribu*:** Members of most of the other clans can be found within the Sabbat (except for the Tremere and Giovanni). These *antitribu* or “Anti-Clan” tend to have an opposite view or a more extreme version of the doctrine of their other brothers in the Camarilla or Independent clans. There are also several obscure bloodlines (City Gangrel, Serpents of the Light, Salubri *antitribu*, etc) that are only found within the Sabbat.

**The Anarchs:** Vampires who don’t organize themselves by sect or clan. Very chaotic, they maintain the Masquerade, but only for personal safety. Found mostly in California, which is almost free of any other sects influence, and as such it is called the “Anarch Free State”. Almost every Clan and bloodline can be found to varying degrees within the ranks of the Anarchs.

- **The Caitiff:** Vampires without a clan. Too far removed from their clans’ founder to receive the characteristics of their blood, they are the bastard children of the clans. Most of them are found among the Anarchs but a fair number also belong to the Camarilla and the Sabbat (where they are called “Panders”). Because of their weak blood they tend to be the scapegoats and cannon fodder of the other clans.

**The Independents:** Five clans and a few bloodlines that ally either with no one sect or as suits the whims of their individual members. They serve their own, very different goals rather than the will of either the camarilla or the Sabbat.

- **Followers of Set (Setites):** A clan of serpentine mystery that hails from the sands of Egypt. Degradation and corruption of the body, mind, and spirit are their tools. They are tolerated by the sects, if not trusted. They believe their clan founder was the Egyptian god of darkness, Set, and thus take more damage from sunlight.
- **Giovanni:** The vampire mafia. They are based in Venice, Italy. They only embrace from their mortal (Giovanni) family, and are *very* closely knit. They are also Necromancers, and have the more dealings with the spirit worlds than any other clan (if only with the lands of the dead). Their bite causes intense pain and terror in the victim. {April’s description: Incestuous, Mafioso, Necrophiliacs.}
- **Assamites:** Middle Eastern assassins and sorcerers. They are contract killers for Kindred and humans alike. Feared and respected among the undead, they tend to receive a wide berth wherever they go, this also may be due to the fact that they prefer to drink the blood of other vampires and not stop.

- **Ravnos:** Gypsy charlatans and thieves, the Ravnos are trusted even less than the Setites. There are very few Ravnos in the modern nights, as something happened in 1999 that caused a cannibal rage to overtake the clan and devour each other. All of the Ravnos are criminals of some sort.
- **Gangrel:** Formerly members of the Camarilla, the Gangrel left the sect because of some struggle between higher-ups in the sect. They were always very independent anyway, given their tendency to wander the forests (despite the high concentrations of werewolves found there). Very close to their natures as beasts, very down to (and close to) the earth. They look more like animals as time passes.
- **Samedi (Bloodline):** These Cainites more closely resemble the zombies of voodoo mythology than actual vampires (they constantly rot). Samedi tend to live in Haitian immigrant ghettos or cemeteries, anywhere they won't draw too much attention. They seem to have a hatred for the Giovanni that goes back as far as they do. Anyone fascinated with death is a potential embrace for the Samedi.
- **Daughters of Cacophony (Bloodline):** A mysterious bloodline of unknown origin, the Daughters move through Kindred society as enigmatic sirens. They possess a power, which allows them to do anything from destroying objects to entrancing the minds of listeners with their voices. They are always distracted by music, which no one else hears.

**The Others:** There are several bloodlines referenced above with no information given, but there is a reason. These lines are very rare or secretive or both and as such most vampires will never hear of, much less meet one of these oddities. There are a few more than those above, which are accordingly even more rare.

**The Pecking Order:** In vampire society there is a simple rule, older is better. The older you are and the more potent your blood the more respect you are afforded. Most young vampires must be very smart to advance or gain any status as those who hold positions of power may very well have held them for centuries (the perks of being immortal). The potency of one's blood is called your "Generation" and it determines just how powerful you can become. What follows is an example of the generation spread and the relative age of those vampires.

- **Caine:** The first vampire (according to common myth). He is counted as the first generation (and the first murderer, since he killed his brother, Abel).
- **The Second Generation:** Caine's children. They are all thought to have been destroyed in some great war between the undead before biblical times.
- **The Third Generation:** The Antediluvians, the founders of the 13 Clans. Most of them are thought to predate Noah's flood.
- **4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Generations:** Known as "Methuselahs", these Kindred are becoming more active in modern times and are accorded equal parts fear and respect for their age, power, and the rumor that they must drink the blood of other vampires to survive.
- **6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Generations:** Elders, these vampires are most of the heads of the sects and fill a substantial portion of their positions of authority. Very old and potent.

- **9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Generations:** The Ancillia, vampires who have existed for hundreds of years but are not yet old or powerful enough to be considered elders.
- **11<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> Generations:** Neonates, mostly. That is to say vampires created within the last 50-75 years or so. Most starting player characters should be neonates of these generations.
- **14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Generations:** Considered rumor and legend until recently, these vampires blood is extremely thin and they are far less potent than any other vampire. Almost always Caitiff and only rarely are vampires known to be of the 14<sup>th</sup> generation allowed to join a sect, the 15<sup>th</sup> generation are still considered a myth due to stories of them walking in the daylight and having children as mortals do.

**Resources and References:** Some films/books/TV Shows/Etc have influenced or been influenced by **Vampire: The Masquerade** (and in one case, have been based directly on it). A lot of these make good references for different groups and examples of such.

**Blade (Movie/Comic Book):** The movie was influenced a great deal by the game (Deacon Frost and Co. being typical Sabbat, and the Council being the Camarilla). Throw in a Dhampir hunter and you got a kick ass action flick.

**Near Dark (Movie):** The basis for the Sabbat. A Pack of nomadic Gangrel *Antitribu* tearing up the American Southwest. Very cool movie, well worth the price of purchase. Shows the tensions that can mount when solitary predators are forced to work together for mutual survival.

**Interview with the Vampire (Movie/Novel):** The pomp and circumstance, as well as the eternal whining of Camarilla Toreador. The movie is *much* better than the book. Lestat makes a damn good Sabbat Toreador and is the coolest character in the book or movie.

**The Lost Boys (Movie):** Anarchs at their best vs. some adolescent hunters. A fun movie and a good reference for anyone playing a Gangrel, Brujah or Ravnos. Especially if they are Anarchs.

**Habit (Movie):** A cunning Ravnos selects potential children in modern day New York. A damn fine movie if a bit hard to find. Also shows why vampires avoid wooded or wild areas like parks (werewolves hang out there).

**Kindred: The Embraced (TV Series):** Loosely based on Vampire, it makes a decent example of the inner workings of a Camarilla city. Not very good as it deviates a great deal from the source material in the dumbest ways.

**Forever Knight (TV Series):** A good look at an Elder vampire trying to blend into modern society *and* trying to regain his humanity. Well acted, and scripted it makes a better example of the world of Vampire than *Kindred: The Embraced* ever did (and it lasted longer too).

**Bram Stokers Dracula (Movie/Novel):** Tzimisce: The Movie. Its obvious the production team was playing tabletop vampire between takes. Also shows how much the novel influenced everyone's favorite Carpathian vampires.

**Pale Blood (Movie):** A lonely elder seeking out other vampires in the modern world. Very good film, despite the era it was made in and the budget the production had. Not a Dracula knock-off like so many low budget vampire films are.

## Section two: A kind of Magic

Wizards and other wielders of magic have been a part of human society for as long as we have wondered about the mysteries beyond our perceptions. In ancient times magic flourished, people believed in it and things of myth and magic were everywhere. Things are not as they used to be. Magic is dying. Bit by bit, year-by-year, a little more magic leaves our lives. Replaced by science, conformity and other “safe” ideas. Modern men have no time for wizards and dragons and other things of fantasy. Except for the Mages that is.

There are several factions who once fought a war to control reality itself, but the Mages lost. Lets take a look at the factions in the “Ascension War”. Further details on the Awakened can be found in *Laws of Ascension* and the *Revised Mage Traditionbooks*.

**The Traditions:** Also called the Council of Nine, these mages are of radically different styles and believes but everyone works toward a common goal, to usher humanity into a new age of enlightenment and wonder. All that changed with the fall of their greatest chantry and the declaration of the Technocracy as the winners in 1999. After that the council disbanded, leaving the Traditions on their own. The Each Tradition had a seat, and each seat represents a sphere of magic (different aspects of reality).

- **The Order of Hermes (Forces):** The classic wizards of lore, these modern day Merlins rely on tired and true methods of magical application. Spells and magical artifacts are their stock and trade. Very ordered and hierarchal, their practices are quite rigid.
- **Euthanatos (Entropy):** Garbed in the trappings of priests of death, assassins, doctors or the like, the Euthanatos seek to offer the “Good Death” to those in need. Souls that are bogged down by pain, misery, evil or simple stasis are often sent to their reincarnation or final reward by the Euthanatos.
- **Sons of Ether (Matter):** Weird Science! The ‘Sons take the cast off theories of pseudo-science and make them work. These techno-wizards are often like characters from Pulp Adventure magazines (Doc Savage, The Shadow, etc), and H.G. Wells or Jules Verne novels.
- **Verbena (Life):** Your classic “White Witch”. They hold many of the tenets of Wicca close to their hearts as they work their magic. Most are very environmentally friendly and usually get along with certain werewolf groups.
- **The Akashic Brotherhood (Mind):** Fighting-monks from the orient, the Akashics seek to hone their minds and bodies to perfection. Most are extremely peaceful and travel a great deal as they search for enlightenment.
- **Celestial Chorus (Prime):** Be they Catholic priests or fighters for the Islamic Jihad, the Celestial Chorus are certain that mages are servants of god. Given a portion of divine power to protect humanity and shepherd them into the light. Of course they seldom agree exactly how to do that or who, if anyone, is right about what/who god is.
- **Virtual Adepts (Correspondence):** Cyberpunk incarnate. The youngest of the Traditions by far. These Technocratic defectors are supporters of modern technology as a means of enlightenment. Most of the worlds best hackers (the ones who never get caught) are found in the ‘Adepts ranks.

- **Dreamspeakers (Spirit):** Tribal shamans and medicine men who seek peace and enlightenment through dealings with spirits. Very traditional in their outlooks, which are shaped by the tribal practices of whatever culture they hail from.
- **Cult of Ecstasy (Time):** Hedonistic mages who seek power through excess of pleasure. Be it sex, drugs or rock and roll the members of the CoX dive into their excessive lifestyles responsibly. Most are hippies, drug addicts or members of some other counter culture.

**The Technocracy:** The opposite of the Traditions, the Technocratic union seeks to save humanity by imposing one static reality on the world. This new paradigm would have no place for deviants such as vampires, werewolves and of course, mages. After all, it's hard to tell someone unicorns are a myth when the man next door has one out back.

*Technocrats should NOT be Player Characters in the average mage game.*

- **The New World Order:** Also called the N.W.O. or MiB (as their agents are the Men in Black lamented by many UFO researchers and occultists), or the thought-police. They decide what you hear on the news, what you see on TV and what's safe. Between spying, covering up (and cleaning up) activity of the supernatural and working toward a "1984" type society, they have a busy schedule.
- **The Syndicate:** The financiers of the Union, they have their meat hooks deeply imbedded into global finance and economy. A perfect world needs a stable financial base after all.
- **The Progenitors:** Humanity is evolving, but not quickly enough for the Progenitors. High-tech medication and genetic manipulation are the tools of their trade. Some of the most freakish sights can be seen in their labs, the results of advanced recombinant DNA experiments.
- **The Void Engineers:** Deep space explorations, undersea bases, travel to parallel dimensions and other things like this are all in a days work for the explorers of unknown places. Boldly going to places no man has ever dreamed existed.
- **Iteration X:** Mankind's bodies and minds are far too chaotic and fragile, to truly ascend to new heights we must abandon the flesh and embrace to perfection of the machine. At least, according to this convention. They're most visible contributions to the war are their dreaded cyborg shock troops and HIT marks (Think "The Terminator" only worse).

**Other Willworkers:** A few other groups also operate in the World of Darkness and relate to the war the mages call the "Ascension War". Here is a brief look at them.

- **The Crafts:** Functionally the same as the Traditions, just not as big. The most prominent of these groups are **The Hollow Ones** (gothic/industrial mages). Some others are the Templars (fanatically Christian mages), Taftani (wizards *a la Arabian Nights*), and the Ahl-I-Batin (Middle-Eastern mages of correspondence).
- **The Marauders:** Insane mages who seem to be immune to paradox (the reality backlash that effects all mages). Mostly they hide in the spirit worlds because they are universally hunted by Tradition mages and Technocrats alike who see them as dangerous threats to both humanity and reality.
- **The Nephandi:** Mages who serve dark masters, be they demons of the inferno or creatures straight out of H.P. Lovecraft's worst nightmares. They are reviled and

despised by everyone (except other worshippers of such things), including the Marauders. Very nasty.

- **“Hedge Wizards” or Sorcerers:** Humans who have mastered a lesser form of magic that relies on rigid and difficult paths to perform any effects. Not nearly as potent as their awakened cousins, they still involve themselves on the fringes of things as they pursue whatever goals they may have. Information on Sorcerers is found in *Laws of the Hunt* and the *Laws of the Hunt: Players Guide*.

**Magic the Gathering:** True Magic in the world of **Mage: The Ascension** can only be performed by those mortals who have “Awakened”. These awakened are tied to what is called an “Avatar”, think of it as a second soul, and the presence of this within them allows them to influence reality itself. A mages ability to perform magic is limited by a few factors.

1. **Belief:** A mage can only perform effects within their “Paradigm” or system of belief. If they don’t think they can do something, they can’t; it’s that simple. Example: An Order of Hermes mage might have enough power within the sphere of Life to turn a man into a piece of lawn furniture, but it is doubtful he would think he could, so he can’t.
2. **Arête:** Arête is a measure of a mages enlightenment, and with enlightenment comes power. Spheres are rated 1-5 and if a mages Arête is not on par with a sphere level, he cannot use that sphere level (but he can still perform effects using the lower levels).
3. **Paradox:** When a mage does something that just *should not happen*, he runs a risk of getting paradox. This is why most modern mages prefer to conceal their power in the form of coincidence and luck. This is safer and should it be witnessed by any normal humans (called Sleepers) it can be explained away.
4. **Foci:** Foci are items, incantations, devices, rituals, etc that mages use to focus their magic. The higher a mages arête, the less need for foci she has. These are always things that conform to her paradigm and without them, performing even the simplest of rotes (spells) become difficult if not impossible.

Magic is extremely flexible; a creative mage with the right spheres can do just about anything (again, as long as he thinks he can). The mutable nature of magic makes it potentially the most powerful force (and thusly mages the most powerful group) in the World of Darkness. However, with all power comes a price and a mages price is paradox. There are 2 styles of magic for purposes of determining paradox probability.

1. **Vulgar Magic:** Throwing a fireball, teleporting in plain sight, moving at inhuman speed, raising the dead or other flashy effects. Mucho paradox.
2. **Coincidental Magic:** “Finding” a \$100 bill when you need some extra cash, a mugger’s gun jamming when he tries to shot you, always having the right tool for the right job (within reason). Little to no paradox.

**Resources and References:** Many, many works from various mediums make good fodder for a mage player to draw inspiration from. Here is a short list of recommended pieces to get you started on the road to Ascension...

**The Matrix (Movie/Comic Book):** Virtual Adepts vs. The N.W.O. on a grand scale with *lots* of vulgar effects (Time/Forces anyone?). Highly recommended... whoa.

**Lord of Illusions (Movie/Novel):** Not Clive Barkers best work but still a worthy mage reference. Nix makes a good Nephandi cult leader while Swan serves nicely as a Hermetic mage who has lost his way.

**Practical Magic (Movie):** What do mages do all day? And how does the presence of magic affect their lives? A great piece for answering those very questions. Good Verbena film. Also featuring two of the hottest witch's in history (opinion).

**The works of H.P. Lovecraft (Short Stories/Novellas):** What exactly does knowledge of the occult and forbidden things do to the fragile minds of mortals? All of Lovecraft's works make for good reading in general, and their influence on the World of Darkness and Mage in particular are unmistakable.

**The Terminator (Movie):** Iteration X's pride and joy, the HITmark in all its soulless glory. Very nicely done, very good movie.

**1984 (Novel/Movie):** A chilling look at a very possible future. This what most mages think of when they consider who won the war, and why they must keep fighting. The goals of the N.W.O, laid bare on paper or on film.

**Warlock (Movie):** Ignore parts 2 and 3 and watch the original. Lots of obscure folklore was used in this movie, making it very entertaining. The warlock shows why the Nephandi and their goals are so damned scary. Giles Redfern, the witch-hunter, makes good use of hedge magic and shows why it's not as useless as some say.

**Bram Stokers Dracula (Novel/Movie):** Abraham van Helsing is a wonderful model for a driven Celestial Chorus vampire hunter (more so in the movie version).

**20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (Novel/Movie):** Capt. Nemo, Son of Ether war protestor (called "Utopians" by other Etherites). Actually all of Jules Verne's books make great inspiration for Sons of Ether.

**The Invisible Man (Novel/Movie):** Read the book or watch the B&W movie, but not the pathetic rip-off "Hollow Man". A Son of Ether driven mad by a crippling paradox flaw (not being able to turn visible again) and the terrible things he does. Most of H.G. Wells's books make good Etherite references (also check out "The Time Machine").

**The Magician (TV Series):** Starring the late, great Bill Bixby. An adventure series about a stage magician who helps those in need. Is it real? Is it a trick? Who knows? He's a "Copperfield" like Swan in "Lord of Illusions", a mage who disguises vulgar magic as trickery to avoid paradox.

**Kung Fu (TV Series):** A great one for Akashic Brothers who like to travel. The original is the best; ignore "The Legend Continues".

**Enter the Dragon (Movie):** Another one for Akashic Brothers, and one of the greatest films made by the legendary Bruce Lee. Akashics are about more than just martial arts action, but sometimes Nephandic mages with one hand become international terrorists and their asses need a kickin'.

## Section three: The big, bad wolf

It's the end of the world as we know it, and the werewolves don't feel fine about it at all. Creatures of spirit as well as earth, the Garou (what the werewolves call themselves) are the earth's last line of defense against the Wyrms, the embodiment of corruption and decay. The Garou are a dying race.

The Garou tribes are fighting a losing battle against a cosmic foe and insane odds (not stacked in their favor). Sound fun? Then perhaps you have what it takes to stand your ground when the Apocalypse comes.

Werewolves have a very tribal society, which is organized by many complicated factors we'll be touching on, so pay attention if this sort of thing is your bag, baby. For further reading refer to *Laws of the Wild revised* and *MET: Book of the Wyrms*.

**The Garou Tribes:** Their duty to defend has cost them much over the centuries, but they survive. Each tribe has its own concerns and duties in addition to the fight against the Wyrms. Divided as much as they are united, the members of the Garou nation are more different than the color of their fur or the phase of the moon they are born under (which is called their "Auspice"). See the *Revised Werewolf Tribebooks* for more specific details.

- **Get of Fenris:** Nordic werewolves, who are extremely violent, even by werewolf standards. They respect physical prowess more than anything else. A lot of them are also racists, which bothers many other tribes.
- **Silent Striders:** In their war-form they more resemble Anubis, the Egyptian god of the dead, than a werewolf. They are the messengers of Garou society and have a particular hatred for the vampires called the "Followers of Set".
- **Shadowlords:** Eastern European nobles and businessmen, the Shadowlords are the ultimate in elitist pricks. Very manipulative and aggressive, they seek to rule Garou society, if for no other reason than that they are Shadowlords.
- **Children of Gaia:** The peacemakers of Garou society, they seek a harmonious existence with everything (except creatures of the Wyrms, of course). Often described as tree-hugging hippies by their peers.
- **Red Talons:** Genocidal in the extreme, Red talons want humans wiped out (or at least culled more often) as they do the most damage to Gaia. None of them are born as humans; they are always born as wolves.
- **Glass Walkers:** The most adaptable of the Garou, the Glass Walkers have taken to living exclusively in the cities of men (bringing them into frequent conflict with vampires). They also have incorporated technology into their spirit rites.
- **Black Furies:** If the Get of Fenris are white supremacists then the Black Furies are Female supremacists. Not all fit the motorcycle riding dyke stereotype, just most of them. They see men (werewolf or human) as inferior and incapable of leadership.
- **Fianna:** The bards and rowdy Scotch-Irish drunks of Garou society, the Fianna love a good time. They also have connections to the fae that date back many millennia.

- **Uktena:** Very shamanistic in their outlooks, they are also the most occult oriented of the Garou. They can be found among the remaining tribal societies of the world.
- **Wendigo:** The Native American version of the Get of Fenris, they have yet to forgive the Europeans (human and Garou) for what was done during the colonization of the Americas.
- **Stargazers:** No longer are these oriental mystics found within the Garou nation, they have left to join the mysterious “Beast Courts” of Asia. Enigmatic even before their defection, the Stargazers have everyone wondering why they left so suddenly.
- **Bone Gnawers:** Found among the destitute and homeless (whom they protect) the Bone Gnawers are almost as adapted to city life as the Glass Walkers. The Bone Gnawers are a lot smarter and capable than others give them credit for.
- **Silver Fangs:** Russian Garou nobility, the Silver Fangs are the traditional leaders of the Garou. However, like human nobility they suffer from more than a little inbreeding and as such modern Silver Fangs are usually a little crazy.

**Other Tribes:** There were more tribes than this in times past, but some have fallen completely to the Wyrms minions. The Croaten were a tribe that sacrificed themselves entirely to stop a mighty Wurm beast. The Bunyip were the only Garou of Australia, until they were totally wiped out by their greedy European brothers.

- **Ronin:** Outcasts from their tribes by choice, ignorance or dumb luck. These Garou walk a very lonely road as their Garou brethren offer them little in the way of hospitality or companionship.

**Servants of the Wurm:** Every warrior must have an enemy, and the Garou’s collective enemies are the forces of the Wurm. Twisted and freakish, the Wyrms minions stand for one thing: corruption and destruction of *everything*.

- **Pentex:** An entire multi-national corporation that has been influenced totally by the Wurm. A great deal of Pentex’s employees are fully aware of what and whom they work for. The Wurm in some way influences all the products Pentex and its many subsidiaries produce.
- **Black Spiral Dancers:** There is a fallen tribe of Garou that are never talk about except as horror stories for the cubs, the White Howlers. The White Howlers succumbed to the Wurm and became its chosen warriors, the twisted abominations called the Black Spiral Dancers.
- **Fomori:** Humans who have been possessed by Wurm-Spirits called “Banes”. Blessed with freakish superhuman powers but cursed with horrible diseases, Fomori are truly sad creatures. Often created by Pentex, either directly or by their Wurm tainted products.
- **Vampires:** Garou see the leeches as servants of the Wurm (regardless of if they know it or not) and attempt to destroy them whenever its convenient (like when they venture from the relative safety of the cities). Wurm taint or not, vampires and werewolves have been mortal (and immortal) enemies since either race remembers.

**Gaia's other children:** The Garou are not the only shapeshifters, even though they once tried to wipe out all the rest (a dark period in their history called the "War of rage"). Each has their own function under Gaia. The only info given is what the average werewolf knows about the rest. There are also a few more than are listed.

- **Nuwisha:** Native American werecoyotes, tricksters.
- **Corax:** Wereravens, curious like cats.
- **Gurhal:** Werebears, very tough but slow to anger.
- **Bastet:** Werocats with their own tribes.
- **Rokea:** Weresharks, probably just a myth.
- **Ananasi:** Werespiders, *very* dangerous.
- **Mokole:** Werelizards, very rare, maybe extinct.
- **Ratkin:** Wererats, they live in the sewers.

**Cosmology:** Werewolves can access the spirit worlds known as the "Umbra". There are many layers to the Umbra, and most werewolves can only access those layers closest to earth (the near Umbra and the Penumbra).

In addition to the **Wyrm** there are cosmic forces at work, which make up the **Triat**. The **Weaver**, the embodiment of pattern and order and the **Wyld**, which represents wilderness, nature and chaos. These forces were more or less balanced until the Industrial revolution. At that time the Wyrm became trapped in the Weavers web and went insane, causing it seek to destroy everything as opposed to simply serving the function of entropy.

**Birthrights:** Werewolves are born what they are, not infected with some disease as it is typically shown in movies. Lycanthropy is a genetic condition. Sometimes this gene is recessive and the carrier is called a Kinfolk. These people (or wolves) are protected by their Garou cousins, as they are the best source of mates. Garou can be born in one of three ways...

1. **Homid:** Their mother was a human (or kinfolk) and they were raised as such until puberty, when they experience the first change.
2. **Lupus:** These Garou are born as wolves and live in the wilds until they first change. They have a hard time getting along normally in human society.
3. **Metis:** The forbidden child of two Garou is called a Metis. They are born in the Garou war-form and are considered outcasts. They are all sterile and deformed.

Werewolves have many forms they can take, depending on the needs of a given situation. Lets examine those, shall we?

1. **Homid:** Human, no different from anyone else.
2. **Glabro:** Think "caveman" larger, hairier and more bulky.
3. **Crinos:** The legendary war-form of the Garou. A 9 to 12 foot tall wolf-headed, hair covered, killing machine.
4. **Hispo:** Dire wolf form, a large, pre-historic wolf.
5. **Lupus:** Standard wolf form.

A werewolves place in their society is determined by personal accomplishment and their Auspice (the phase of the moon they are born under).

1. **Ahroun:** Gaia's warriors. These wolves are closest to their natures as predators.
2. **Ragabash:** Tricksters. These Garou think laughter is the best medicine.
3. **Theurge:** Shamans, mystics and such. They deal with spirits the most.
4. **Philodox:** Judges of the Garou. Keepers of the ways.
5. **Galliard:** Bards and storytellers, they are the singers of the ways. Historians.

**Reference Material:** Lots of books and films have been done concerning shapeshifters that make excellent research material for a **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** character, here's a handy guide to them!

**The Howling (Movie Series):** The first one was one of the chief inspirations for the game, and is the best of the series. Some of them get a little silly but what do you expect with 5 sequels. Most of them are pretty good. The first is highly recommended as it shows what happens when Black Spiral Dancers and Garou try to coexist. Bloodshed.

**Wolf (Movie):** Jack Nicholson stars in the update of the classic "The Wolfman". Very cool and a good look at what it would be like to experience the first change late in life.

**The Exorcist (Movie):** When faith confronts the Wyrms. A horror classic that makes a good example of what some Fomori are like, and how the church interprets them. A very scary movie even to this day, grab the Directors Cut if you can.

**Wolfen (Novel/Movie):** Wendigo and their Kinfolk sabotaging a construction project (no doubt financed by Pentex, those dirty bastards!). Not too bad a film, but it gets really preachy on environmental issues at some points (just like the Garou themselves).

**Werewolf (TV Series):** A nomadic Ronin on a quest to find or destroy his tribe. Very well done, it also served as fodder for the games creators.

**Full Eclipse (Movie):** A Pentex experiment to turn normal humans into werewolves creates a squad of freakish police officers who have no idea what's happening to them. It's worth the price of a rental.

**An American Werewolf in London (Movie):** What happens when a vacation goes very wrong. You become a werewolf and your friend gets gutted, only to hang around as a ghost offering you handy suicide advice. A very funny and very scary (for some) movie.

**Night of the Demons parts 1 and 2 (Movies):** More Fomori material. The first one is a bit creepy while the 2<sup>nd</sup> is reasonably campy, but still has some cool parts. Worth renting.

**Project: Metal Beast (Movie):** When the Technocracy (from Mage) takes an interest in werewolves, all sorts of craziness can happen. Like rampaging cybernetic Shadowlords. Pretty cool concept and a decent film, watch it if you can (more highly recommended if you plan to play a Glasswalker).

**Werewolf by Night (Comic Book):** Marvel Comics horror at its best. A great series about a solitary werewolf coming to grips with what he is and what it means. Well done back in the 70's, the more recent versions focused on more adult themes.

**An American Werewolf in Paris (Movie):** More recent than 'London, it's almost as good too. A young werewolf faces a fanatical pack of Get of Fenris neo-nazi's. Nicely done, the CGI looks good but the make up in the first one and the Howling were much better.

**Tales from the Crypt (TV Series/Comic Books):** Many stories about werewolves were done for EC Comics and subsequently translated to the small screen for the HBO series. Some are kind of cheesy while others are top notch, there are too many of both to list here. Catch the reruns and see for yourself.

## Section four: Dark Menagerie

There are many more strange and mysterious creatures in the World of Darkness. Those four presented in the preceding sections are the ones you are most likely to be able to play, at least if you are new to the game.

What follows here is a brief rundown of the other prominent supernatural groups in the World of Darkness. Information on these groups is scarce among the other groups so it is all given OOC (out of character), meaning you know it (now), but your character does not. As it stands, the various factions know *very* little about each other for the most part, some are totally ignorant of each-others very existence. Your character is not likely to *anything* about the rest. O.K.? Good, on with the show...

### **Changeling: The Dreaming:**

If there is one group that virtually no one knows anything about, it's the enigmatic fae races. Called the Kithian, the changelings are creatures of dream given flesh. Not entirely human, not entirely fairy, they die a little more each day as the banality of the world crushes them. Creatures of dream cannot last long in a world of reason, where the only dreams people know are the ones their televisions show them

Almost any creature described in a fairy tale can be found amongst them or associating with them. From high and mighty elves (Shide) to the diminutive and bawdy Satyrs, all manner of dream denizens are found in their ranks. In their freeholds one can find unicorns, dragons, and all manner of chimera.

Within Kithian society there is a feudal higherarchy similar to that of dark ages Europe (Kings and Counts and such) that divides the Nobles from the Commoners. There are also two main factions, or Legacies, called the Seelie (light) and Unseelie (dark). The Seelie seek to prevent the "Endless Winter", the death of the dreaming. While the Unseelie seek to bring about the winter so that must die can die.

See *The Shinning Host* and *The Shinning Host: Players Guide* for details.

### **Kindred of the East:**

The vampires of Asia are *not* Cainites, a misconception that has cost countless Cainites their unives. They have no clans, no bloodlines and bear only superficial similarities to their western counterparts.

Kuei-Jin, as they call themselves, do not embrace to create new vampires, rather they actually return from the grave on their own. A variety of reasons can give a ghost the ambition to return but only a handful manage to tear free of the 1000 hells and become one of the hungry dead.

They feed on chi, and not blood per say. Chi can be acquired from a variety of sources such as blood, breath, flesh, jade, and even more rarified substances. However not all Kuei-Jin can take chi from all possible sources, only the oldest know how.

The hungry dead believe they have reason for returning, to repay their karmic debt and seek enlightenment above their undead condition so that they may reenter the cycle of nature. They organize themselves by the paths they take to redemption, called Dharma's. The Kuei-Jin are not at all fond of Cainites, seeing them as not even vampires but pathetic and wretched creatures claiming decent from a homicidal farmer.

Details on the Kuei-Jin are found in *Laws of the East* and the *KotE Dharma books*.

### **Wraith: The Oblivion:**

Restless shades, ghosts, the dearly departed. All these are names for dead people. Mans greatest fear is fear of the unknown, and the greatest unknown is death. If we knew what they know, we would all want to be immortal.

Before recent events rendered the afterlife utter chaos it was called Stygia, and the empire was founded on one trade. Souls. Slavery was more common among the dead then it ever was among the quick. That's how it was, for thousands of years countless ghosts were imprisoned and later forged into objects needed for everyday "life" in the afterlife.

Now the chains are broken, and so is the empire. A storm (called a Great Maelstrom, the 6<sup>th</sup> one to be exact) is raging that has reduced the dark kingdom of steel to utter ruin. All things die, even in the land of the dead.

The only organization among the dead now comes from the once banned Guilds, groups of wraiths who all share the same agenda's and abilities, and the Legions, the remains of Stygia's armies.

See ***Oblivion*** for wraith rules in Live Action.

### **The Hunters Hunted:**

There are some humans who know the truth (at least in part) about the World of Darkness; some of these humans strive to retake the night. They are the hunters.

**The Inquisition (Society of Leopold):** The hunters of the Catholic church, either religious fanatics trying to rid the world of Satan's influence or mercenaries killing for god, glory and gold (not in that order). The church knows a great deal about the supernatural and seeks to make that information strictly academic.

**Project Twilight:** Some are government agents, seeking to protect the citizens and national security. Members of the FBI's "Special Affairs" division or NSA agents manning high-tech surveillance equipment looking for mysterious "black bodies". Sometimes the government does the work of keeping the public in the dark for the supernatural, though for their own reasons (preventing hysteria, panic, and war).

**Solitaries:** The average person, no special powers, only knowledge of the darkness and the will to fight it. Sometimes a supernatural will strive to destroy another type for some reason or another, and they could be counted as a solitary.

**The Reckoning:** Recently another type of hunter has emerged to combat the darkness. Very normal people, ignorant of the supernatural who are suddenly shown a piece of the truth and "Imbued" with the power to fight the monsters on their own terms. Little is known about these seemingly normal humans who can stand against the creatures of the night on their own terms and that they are given power by "The Messengers" to battle evil.

See ***Laws of the Hunt***, ***Laws of the Hunt: Players Guide*** and ***Hunter: The Reckoning*** for details on Hunters.

Minds Eye Theatre, Vampire: The Masquerade, Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Mage: The Ascension, Changeling: The Dreaming, Wraith: The Oblivion, Hunter: The Reckoning, Kindred of the East, and everything else described in here (except the movies and such in the reference sections) are trademarked and copyrighted by White Wolf Games. The information contained is not intended as a challenge to any copyrights, merely as a replacement for the really lame MET quickstart kit found on their website (which only had info for vampires).

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