

# Isles of Darkness

## Post-Reset Vampire: the Requiem Chronicle

### Setting Guide

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Isles of Darkness post-reset Requiem setting guide. The purpose of this guide is to give you a glance at the form that the Requiem setting takes in the UK. It is not a comprehensive guide to Requiem – that's in the Requiem books – nor is it a proscriptive guide to how to create the history or setting of your domain. What it is, hopefully, is a collection of tools and ideas that will help you create fun, thematic characters and conflicts, either as a Storyteller or as a player.

There's a lot of history and politics in this guide, but you will notice that there aren't a lot of exact dates. In general, we've tried to keep things tied loosely to particular periods, both because most social changes occurs as long-term trends and to ensure maximum flexibility in creating character backgrounds. There are also a lot of events and locations that aren't specific to a particular place – you'll notice, for instance, that the history section describes a Sanctified holy site but doesn't tell you where it is. If, as an ST, you'd like it to be in *your* domain, please just contact the GST! We'd like to have the major events of history happen within PC domains as much as possible.

If you don't want to read every part of this guide as a player (it is pretty long!), there's an executive summary at the end. Once you've read that bit, you can read up on the bits that interest you and talk to your LST about what your character knows about the setting.

## Setting Overview

The setting of the post-reset chronicle is a world in turmoil. A recent civil war between vampire factions has eliminated most of their leaders, while the collapse of the country-wide Monarchy has upended many of the old certainties.

It's hard to identify many country-wide setting elements, but that is itself part of the game's setting. Each domain has its own distinct culture, with its own laws, customs, titles and offices. Some of these are so old no one remembers where they came from, while others are modern creations engineered by Kindred desperately trying to make their societies work. Each domain therefore has a unique character. In one domain, court could be a highly formal affair, with titles and precedence firmly established, while in another it could be an informal backroom meeting of the city's vampire conspiracy. All vampires understand local variation and are accustomed to putting up with it, even if they don't like it personally or complain about it afterwards.

Each domain around the country is different, but there are certain similarities. No domain in play has been ruled by its current government for more than a few years (although it is possible to make an exception for domains ruled by NPCs, no ruling PC should be grandfathered in). All domains in play have recently signed a peace agreement that prohibits open war between them. Lastly, all domains in the game share a few basic cultural norms. These are mostly addressed in the history and theme and mood sections, but here are a few quick summaries in bullet-point form:

- Social tolerance is important *in public*.
- Being an elder gets you *some* extra respect. Not a lot, but some.
- Settling scores from the war is not acceptable *in public*.
- Escalating a non-violent conflict to violence is the mark of an unstable person.
- Everyone did things they're not proud of during the war.
- Taking a political betrayal personally *in public* is a sign of weakness.

Broadly, these norms are supposed to create an atmosphere of conviviality at court, even among characters who loathe each other and are actively working at cross purposes.

Note that these are social norms, not iron laws. In some domains, some of these will be more relaxed and others will be stricter. Some characters will violate these, of course, but players should be aware that this is what their characters are doing.

The disruption that affected all domains has also hit the five Covenants. Old certainties that governed even the traditionalist Covenants for centuries have been jarred loose; new factions are emerging, old factions are returning and no one knows who will be the next great Covenant leaders.

Although there is no longer a shared government, history has given most domains a shared cultural legacy. Even domains that were not founded during the Monarchy have some traces of its culture, just as some Camarilla cultural norms are found in Scottish domains that were never part of the Roman Empire. Most of these are so simple that the Damned don't really think about them: the recognition of the five Covenants, the importance of the role of Harpy, the shared acceptances of Boons and so on are consistent across domains.

Also shared across domains is the Tabula Legis ("table of the law,") allegedly an ancient Camarilla document outlining the appropriate punishments for various crimes. Several different versions of the Tabula exist, but they share some broad similarities. All domains deviate from it in some ways, and many domains deviate from it altogether, but its existence is widely known and it's often used as a starting point on matters of crime and punishment.

The actual text of the Tabula is too long to include here, and each Domain's is different, but it'll be available separately from this document. The key point is that some crimes appear on more than tablet and that the Tabula supports a range of different interpretations. However, these interpretations aren't completely flexible: no domain thinks that petty theft merits death and no domain thinks that diablerie merits nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

Here are some things that *aren't* consistent from domain to domain:

The title of Prince is common, but it's far from universal. Some Princes are no more than executive officers of a council, while some domains have no single leader at all – although vampires from other domains will often refer to some particular local strongman as "Prince" anyway. Interestingly, even though many domains have no Prince, almost all domains *do* have a Harpy or Harpies.

Other titles are even less consistent. One domain's Sheriff is another domain's Marshal or Enforcer or Head of Security, while another domain relies on putting out bounties on malefactors and letting the citizens collect them.

Celebrations and similar public affairs are important in every domain. The exact nature of these celebrations varies from domain to domain, but in every domain they fulfil the same vital social function: forcing displays of public social cohesion – or public social conflict – within an established framework.

Much of the rest of the world is a mystery to vampires. Even parts of their own domains are shadowy; perhaps they once had infiltrated their human institutions, but the war disrupted their networks of contacts. However, this is both a problem and an opportunity – ambitious vampires know that they have a chance to take control of valuable resources, both increasing their use to the domain and giving them more ability to strike at their rivals. STs are encouraged to put a good deal of work into making their domain's influence game rich and detailed; we envision this being a significant area for both CvC and CvE competition.

However, the influence game isn't the only challenge facing vampires. See the Antagonists section for more detail on other threats.

## Theme and Mood, Look and Feel

Vampiric society is a secretive conspiracy that exists behind the scenes of our world. In reality, most conspiracies aren't all that exciting – emails between people who shouldn't be talking, meetings that aren't about what they say they're about, conversations over drinks in the same bars everyone else goes to. But in our game, that's not what vampiric society is like at all. The world of vampires is dangerous, sordid and perversely appealing.

Partly, that's just the World of Darkness in effect. But it's also just how vampires are; they couldn't help it even if they wanted to. Even the most modern, pragmatic court is sinister and unsettling, even the most brutal and degraded court has a certain cruel glamour about it.

This overall look and feel is summarised by a number of themes. Some of the themes pertain to the chronicle as a whole, while others are specific to the first “season” of the game.

### From the ashes

A main theme for the first season is **from the ashes**. This theme focuses on the struggle of the domains and characters to rebuild vampiric society and accumulate much-needed influence in the aftermath of a disastrous civil war. However, playing a society in ruins will only be interesting for so long. After a period of play, assuming PCs don't successfully disrupt the recovery, this theme could be retired and replaced with another, more appropriate one.

Other major themes at the beginning of the chronicle will include:

### Vampires are scary ...

The one thing every Requiem character has in common is vampirism. No matter how kind and civilised, no matter how reserved and bookish, they all have at least a little bit of the predator in them. When you play a vampire character, you're playing someone who is a threat, who views the world with hungry eyes. Your character, no matter who your character is, is *dangerous*.

We want to bring back the vampire-ness of the game, that swagger that it had before we all got too familiar with the idea and started to focus more on our characters as investigators or adventurers or occultists or what have you. It should be possible to look at any character in the chronicle and see why it was the right choice to make that character a *vampire* – and what “vampire” means to the creator.

### **... but it's scary to be a vampire.**

On the other hand, so's every other bloodsucker in the room. Surviving as a vampire means taking risks; it means prying into secrets, looking for advantages, building alliances and thinking quickly. There are things out there you don't understand, and the things you *do* understand – humans and other vampires – scare the shit out of you. And when you think about it, sometimes you think you might be the most frightening of all.

This doesn't mean that the game should be overwhelming, but it should mean that a lot of what vampires do is just survive – avoiding detection and ensuring a plentiful food supply. These aren't necessarily plots in themselves – the game isn't called *Herd Manager* – but they can certainly be ways in which characters become aware of or become involved in plots.

### **Party like it's 1699**

New vampires are often surprised by how much time vampires spend partying. You'd think that “court” would be a time for government business, but most of the time it's also this elaborate social display. Don't these monsters take anything seriously?

The answer is that vampires take celebrating very seriously indeed; hosting courts is an opportunity for them to outdo one another in wealth, in taste, in who they know, and so on. Government business *does* get done at these events, but often informally.

Partly the vampiric love of celebration is a form of social competition, and partly it fulfils a psychological need. Vampires, even elders, know that they have to hide themselves, to blend in. To do this, they have to constantly act – in public, at least – like the humans that most of them consider to be beneath them. When court comes around, therefore, they like to cut loose. The influence of Elders means that vampiric fashion and style is highly anachronistic – but it's a creative, jumbled anachronism rather than simply wearing the clothes of another era. Even the most rigid Invictus blend fashions from different centuries without thinking about it.

This doesn't mean that all vampires are stylish peacock-types in ruffled shirts or corsets. It does mean that vampires tend to turn up to court wearing their “colours” – whether that's literal gang colours or a set of coded symbols showing House allegiance. A vampire who turns up to court in a t-shirt and jeans is dressing like an ordinary human – like *prey* – which is a very bold statement.

Vampires tend to be very tolerant of the celebrations of other factions. The Lancea Sanctum might not join in a Crone rite, but even the most hard-nosed will politely participate in the festivities that surround it. Not to do so would be considered a very grave insult. Similarly, a court invitation that deliberately excluded one faction would be understood as the prelude to a head-on confrontation.

We wanted this theme to reflect the nature of vampire society – a piecemeal thing, created from the customs and beliefs of many different eras. But it's also simply one of mood: we wanted to create games which gave a good environment for social competition and display.

## Conscience costs

Most vampires don't start out as monsters, even with the prompting of the Beast. They don't kill and deceive and ruin lives because they like it. It's just easier. Quicker. Safer. And after a while they no longer notice – or, worse, they start to realise they like it.

There is heroism in the World of Darkness – it just isn't always easy to see. Vampires are capable, in their way, of doing good. Some struggle to protect their mortal families, while others try to preserve great works of art and culture or teach their own knowledge to others. But it's hard. A vampire who wants to do the right thing has to struggle not only against the Beast itself but also against the thousand other factors that make ruthlessness a sound choice – not least among them the whole structure of vampiric society. Other vampires might be willing to help you take down a threat that affects them as well without charge – but indulging what they see as your own sentimentality? That's going to cost you, either in boons or in some other way. And the things you might have to do to pay your bills could be unpleasant themselves.

## It's a conspiracy!

A story about a secret society of vampires that exist alongside ours is necessarily a conspiracy story. This means an atmosphere of general suspicion, which is a good thing. But it can also make the game unwelcoming to new players, who fail to get involved due to the perfectly-justified IC suspicion of existing characters.

The tone we're hoping for is one of suspicion rather than paranoia. What we mean by this is that it's perfectly reasonable for vampires to expect that other vampires may try to screw them over, take their resources, win their allies away from them, outshine them and so on. *Everyone* understands that this is the norm, and it's not considered odd for negotiations to proceed from this starting point. Genuinely trusting partnerships between vampires are rare, and they often end in tragedy.

What vampires *don't* think is that other vampires are trying to screw *everyone* over. That is – another vampire might very well be trying to take power, but there's no reason to suppose that she's trying to destroy the domain – or, stranger still, the whole world. The more personal a goal is, the more a vampire needs to rely only on those he trusts implicitly. But when defending an entire domain, most characters should be able to feel that self-interest will motivate locals to help. We want characters to feel wary, but not at the cost of making it hard for new characters to enter play.

## He sang of the wheel returning

Some historians of the Damned believe that vampire history forms an endless series of cycles of expansion and contraction. Vampire culture flourishes and collapses, flourishes and collapses. Some vampires don't believe in this cycle. Others don't care: the cycle appears to be on the upswing at the moment, and they're going to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. Still others prepare for what they perceive as the inevitable collapse. Many of these vampires are in the Invictus and Lancea Sanctum, Covenants that pride themselves on preserving knowledge and stability in times of crisis. But there are also Acolytes who believe that the crises are tests of strength, and Carthian preppers who stockpile resources against the coming

apocalypse. But there a few more who think that the most recent collapse shows that the time has come to break the cycle, once and for all ...

## Variations

Obviously, each Domain will have its own themes and moods. These are just some of the overarching ones that will be expressed in National plot. VSTs can **and should** emphasise some of these more and others less in their own games, as well as introducing their own themes.

## History

### Introduction

Like everything else in the chronicle, history is a tool for players and storytellers to create stories with. The purpose of this guide is not to summarise the whole chronicle history (although there is a document for that), but to help you understand how to make the history work for you.

As we discussed in the introduction, there aren't a lot of specific dates in the history section. For simplicity's sake, though, here are some dates for the general periods listed here:

- Arrival of the Camarilla: ca. 100 AD (although later in some areas)
- Fall of the Camarilla: ca. 430-450 AD (although it clings on in some areas)
- The Early Middle Ages: ca. 500-1100 AD
- The High Middle Ages: ca. 1100-1300 AD. Ish. Establishment of the Invictus in Britain.
- The Late Middle Ages: ca. 1300-1500 AD. Maybe a little later.
- Foundation of the Monarchy: ca. 1700, although it's a long process. If you're older than this, you are an Elder.
- Foundation of the Carthian Movement: ca. 1800, although there had been previous Carthian groups.
- Public appearance of the Ordo Dracul: ca. 1880. (CHECK THIS)
- Assassination of Edvard Haug: 2005.
- Open war begins: 2006.
- Ramsgate Massacre: 2010.
- Beginning of peace talks: 2014
- War concludes: 2015

A complete list of the Monarchs, with the dates of their reigns, is found in the Appendix.

## **Before the Camarilla**

The only records we have of vampiric life before the Camarilla come from the Camarilla itself, and Rome's Kindred were not much interested in the culture of the “barbarians” they encountered. There does not seem to have been any kind of national culture or organisation, and the few surviving records speak of the practices of local vampires with a mixture of horror and contempt. Some locals quickly joined the Camarilla, adopting its manner and cultures. Indeed, one of the ruling officials of the British Camarilla is said to have been embraced before the arrival of the Romans.

### **Using this period as a Storyteller:**

Go nuts. Keep the history local – in this era, travel between domains for vampires will have been fairly rare, and even domains quite near each other may have had very different cultures. Remember that the vampires of this era had few of the advantages the Camarilla had – there was no writing, and no populations dense enough to sustain large numbers of Damned. Most domains will have been inhabited by single coterie or families of vampires.

Thematically, this period should be brutal and mysterious. The vampires of this era had almost nothing in common with their modern heirs, and any plot dating this far back should emphasise the themes of alienness and mystery. Prehistoric cultures weren't “primitive” – but prehistoric vampires *were*. Vampires from thousands of years ago should never be relatable.

### **Using this period as a player:**

The odds of your getting a character approved who dates from this period are infinitesimal. However, if you do, be sure to coordinate with your LST, who will be able to tell you what your domain was like during this period. Life as a vampire during this time was primitive, without any of the protections of modern society. Food was scarce. Most will remember it as a time of struggle and constant hardship. The fog of ages has probably muddled your character's memory to the point where

### **What my character knows about unlife before the Camarilla:**

Next to nothing. In fact, probably *less* than nothing, since most of what she knows is probably folklore and half-truth.

## **Conspiracy theory: Ratlines.**

A small number of finds suggest organised vampiric activity in Britain prior to the earliest accepted date for the arrival of the Camarilla. Primarily found in Southern England and in Wales, these artefacts include a small number of inscriptions and one (unoccupied) Torpor tomb. Three of the inscriptions, including one in the tomb itself, repeat the same name: Chaluchasu. The language is not Brittonic; it is Etruscan.

Some say that the artefacts have been misdated, others that the start date for the Camarilla presence in Britain ought to be moved forward. Still others point out that Romans knew of Britain through trade links with Gaul for many years before its conquest. Could another vampiric society have intentionally relocated to Britain in order to escape Camarilla rulership? No surviving Camarilla texts or inscriptions mention such a group, but the records are notoriously gap-filled. If there was such a group, it seems to have stayed well-hidden. Given the Camarilla's lax moral code, it's sobering to think what a group of Kindred would have to have done to be considered outside the pale.

Nonetheless, some Damned scholars are eager to find out more about this society. What secrets of vampiric lore might they have known that were suppressed by the Camarilla?

## **Life under the Camarilla**

The Camarilla left few records behind them; we know little of their society other than that it preserved many mortal Roman cultural traditions and that it was ruled directly from Rome, with the provinces playing a relatively minor role. In Britain, its rule was often tenuous; local elites would have contact with it, but some groups of vampires continued to survive entirely outside it. Many more were nominally under its rule, but had little direct contact with the government.

In terms of sophistication and material culture, vampiric society under the Camarilla reached heights not seen in Britain until the modern day. Several cities boasted elaborate Necropolis complexes, where learned debates and grotesque blood orgies were equally common. Most of these have since been plundered, but smaller sites, including the elaborate tombs built by some elders, are still undiscovered. As a rule, shrines and Necropolis sites have almost always been plundered for their artefacts and documents because their locations were public knowledge. However, a small number were maintained by the Lancea Sanctum. Because early Sanctified were martyred in these courts, the faith regards them as holy.

What little modern Kindred know about life under the Camarilla suggests that it was a period of peace, of strict control over some aspects of unlife and almost total laxity in others. Many regard it as a golden age, when works of philosophy and even poetry were written. Others, however, note that almost every serious policy decision was made from Rome and doubt that modern Kindred would wish to return to that state of affairs.

Britain's Camarilla presence never equalled that of more settled parts of southern Europe and the Near East. Even though population density increased during the Roman period, the cities and towns of Britain were no match in size for cities elsewhere. The vampiric population therefore remained dispersed. Governance was often in the hands of younger childer of Senatorial houses, who would do a tour of a few decades in the provinces while being groomed for more important roles later.

Using this period as a Storyteller:

The Camarilla is long gone but it remains a controversial topic among modern Kindred. Think of the way medieval Europeans saw the Roman Empire – some perceived it as a cruel pagan tyranny, while others saw it as a golden age of art, culture and philosophy. The Camarilla should appear this way in your games (when it appears at all). Very few (almost no) vampires, PC or NPC, are old enough to remember the Camarilla, but Camarilla art, artefacts and sites still exist; they are highly prized by some vampires.

The hunt for knowledge about the Camarilla matters a great deal to these Damned partly because of academic curiosity and partly because they believe the Camarilla may have known more about the origins of vampires than their modern descendants. Camarilla artefacts and documents command very high prices among collectors, which could motivate some PCs to turn amateur archaeologist (tomb robber is such a dirty word). There are even legends of Torpored Elders being sold on the black market, either ransomed to their own descendants or sacrificed to sate the hunger of closeted Diablerists.

Using this period as a player:

It is a little more likely that your character will have heard a good deal about the Camarilla, although how much of this is accurate is a matter for debate. For many vampires, the Camarilla is more a time of legend than one of history – less Julius Caesar and more King Arthur. Many of the monarchy's practices were justified on the grounds of their Camarilla ancestry. Your character is more likely to know the history of his or her Covenant or bloodline from this era.

### **Sidebar: the martyrdom of Saints Fraxinus and Ulma**

Many Covenants and coteries maintain the tradition of adopting aliases, whether the revolutionary names of the Carthians or the code names of the Ordo Dracul. This often results from a period in the group's history in which membership was forbidden; members used the aliases not only to conceal their involvement but to protect their bloodlines from reprisals. The oldest such tradition is that of the Lancea Sanctum. In the early days of the Faith, Camarilla officials savagely persecuted the new religion. Two of the most famous martyrs in the British Isles were the siblings Fraxinus and Ulma, condemned to death for protesting blood sacrifices in their home domain in the middle of the second century AD. When the military governor offered to spare Ulma for the sake of her beauty, she disfigured herself with burning coals so that she could die along with Fraxinus.

Today, the former Camarilla Necropolis where Fraxinus and Ulma were martyred is one of the holiest sites to the Sanctified of Britain. It has been in continuous use as a Lance basilica since at least the beginning of the fifth century, making it possibly the oldest continuously occupied vampiric site in Britain. Over the years, it has been repaired and modified many times so that almost none of the original complex remains. Yet behind the devotional artwork, shrines to saints and tombs of the faithful, undiscovered Camarilla secrets may remain. Naturally, the Sanctified hierarchy has furiously condemned any attempt to investigate

the ruins. The conflict between scholars and the faith has been made worse by the fact that many members of the Circle of the Crone allege that the story of Fraxinus and Ulma is no more than a legend.

## **A new dark age and the coming of feudalism**

Vampiric society is highly dependent on dense human populations. As a result, when the fall of the Roman Empire and a wave of migration (or invasion) from what is today Germany and Denmark destroyed the urban civilisation of eastern Britain, the Camarilla was wiped out along with its mortal analogue.

In the crisis that followed, a curious fact became apparent: in times of peace, elders dominated vampire society. But when it fell into crisis, neonates – able to feed on more readily-available food and much more easily able to blend in with mortals – tended to survive their more vulnerable masters. History is patchy; individuals and domains sometimes disappear without a trace. Did something happen to them or is it just that no records have survived?

The distinction between the Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest periods is not important to most vampires, but there were a few differences. Even at the height of Anglo-Saxon England's wealth, very few cities were densely populated. The mortal government was not quite the feudal model that we tend to associate with the Middle Ages, and Kindred society remained based more on coterie and families than any other form of loyalty. Similar models applied in Britain's other nations, where urbanisation was even less common.

The post-Conquest period saw not only England but also the rest of Britain more socially influenced by France, complete with a more Continental feudal model. The Invictus rose to prominence in this period, and it's easy to see how the experience of the middle ages influenced their thinking. The feudal system decentralised control, essential in an age without high-speed communications, and placed personal loyalty at the centre of social and political relations. Even today, elder Invictus tend to see their covenant, together with the Lancea Sanctum, as preserving civility and peace against a rising tide of barbarism, an attitude they developed during an era when the peaceful, literate Camarilla seemed far away.

Most domains in this period operated on a feudal model; individual vampires or coterie held particular areas, answering to an overlord, usually styled "Prince." These fiefs could be separated geographically, but for practical reasons they were usually close together. This system still exists in some domains. The Lancea Sanctum became the dominant religious power of the era, but the Circle of the Crone were never as absent as most Sanctified would have liked. Most Princes found that it was better to have the cooperation, however grudging, of the witches than to have to face their strange powers.

## **Plague and chaos**

The Black Death hit Kindred as hard as it humans. Not only did populations in some areas collapse, but travel restrictions and widespread societal paranoia hit vampires badly. Some even believe that vampiric feeding habits helped to spread the infection. The result was chaos. Some sought the safety of Torpor; others fled into the wilderness to prey on animals. Some Princes purged their own domains, putting anyone

who might attract suspicion to the sun. Some domains emerged battered but unscathed. But there were those who never forgot how their own people abandoned them at the first sign of danger.

### **Using this period as a Storyteller:**

This is the era in which most domains really come into existence as we know them today. Because of the relative lack of communication between domains, there isn't a lot of coordination between local and national history necessary. Rulers and movements rose and fell and were forgotten other than by locals. It's not impossible that some elders will be around from this period, but they will be very rare and seldom reliable. Some domains practice customs and rites dating back to this era – in some cases the original meaning of these practices has been completely lost!

### **Using this period as a player:**

Your character might actually remember this period, although those who do so clearly are extremely rare. It's more likely that she has heard of the events of the middle ages from elder relatives. Quite apart from the many social and technological changes, most Elders struggle to get over the pace of vampiric society – and its size. Without concentrated urban populations, vampires were few and far between in the medieval period. Getting along with one's fellow Damned was a skill practiced only at annual festivals like the saints' days.

### **Sidebar: Plague Pits**

The plague was the worst thing to happen to vampires since the fall of the Camarilla, and the worst thing to happen to mortals since ... well, possibly ever. In some areas, as many as 80 per cent of the population died; overall, the death toll was probably around 30 to 45 per cent. Unable to understand the phenomenon, mortals believed that the pestilence was caused by bad air, the presence of dead bodies, intentional poisoning or the wrath of god.

There were some vampires who shared this view. Believing that some higher – or lower – power was washing the old order away, and that the reign of the Damned or the end of the world was about to begin, one domain in the west of England closed up its gates, crammed hundreds of mortal survivors into the Prince's haven and waited, finally daring to unleash the impulses that the Canons of Longinus and plain common sense had repressed until now on the helpless humans. Legend has it that the plague got in among the survivors within nights. As the human populace dwindled, the vampires, maddened, turned on each other. When an expedition from a nearby Sanctified monastery arrived months later, there was not one survivor.

The domain was resettled around the time of the Industrial Revolution. But although the catacombs the medieval domain used as its headquarters still exist, the locals don't like to visit them. They say that there are sometimes odd noises, like the jingling of bells, and that the smell of rose petals and spices seems to come from nowhere.

## The post-medieval period

Conservative elements in vampiric society welcomed the revival of interest in classical civilisation that ended the medieval period (oddly, vampiric society weathered the Wars of the Roses comparatively well, perhaps having learned some lessons from its previous crisis). Post-medieval Britain saw a growth in everything vampires needed to survive and flourish: Urbanisation, trade, literacy, travel. Reform-minded members of the Invictus began to correspond with one another and with like-minded Unconquered as far away as Hungary, forming the liberal cenacles that would one day become the Carthian Movement. And scholars of the occult – always a significant proportion of vampire society – began to become aware of interesting new developments in Eastern Europe.

The vampiric courts of this era were glorious, at least for those who lived in the favour of their monarchs. The Damned vied with one another to sponsor the greatest human artists, scholars and musicians. Tournaments continued as a safe outlet for the aggressive vampiric nature long after they had faded out of human society.

This period is notable for the way in which even very conservative vampires embraced change. After all, for Renaissance intellectuals, the golden age was located in the past – a past that vampires could flatter themselves they had been part of, even though some remembered the cruelty of the Camarilla and harboured secret doubts. Many factors contributed to the creation of ties between members of different domains, a phenomenon that Princes tried unsuccessfully to discourage. Whereas once the members of another domain had been effectively a rival tribe, now it was not at all uncommon for vampires to find that they had correspondents, family members, allies or lovers among their neighbours.

And then the Civil War.

In one way, the catastrophe of the war wasn't as bad for vampires as the Black Death had been. Whole areas of the country were relatively unaffected by the fighting, although the economic effects were widespread. And it certainly wasn't as bad as the conflicts in Germany, which had reduced the Damned to little more than hunted fugitives.

The effect on vampires, however, was devastating. Mobilisation or displacement of the human population played hell with feeding patterns, especially since feeding needs had quickly expanded to depend on an expanding population. Larger domains were unable to cope with the crisis in the same way their smaller medieval forebears had, creating a refugee situation that further imperilled those domains that hadn't been directly hit by the war. Those domains that hadn't been too badly hit by the war either closed their gates or exploited the refugees. Conflicts over resources became more common; large, hungry domains eyed the feeding grounds of their peaceful neighbours. Even when the immediate threat was over, the long-term effects lasted. It was nearly 1700 by the time something like peace was restored.

This short summary of the post-medieval period isn't meant to suggest that not a lot happened here. Remember, this history only covers events that affected *every* part of the country. Your domain's history can be much more eventful.

### **Using this period as a player:**

Almost any character old enough to have survived this era will have had some kind of traumatic experience. This applies even to characters who are from elsewhere in Europe – there's a reason some historians call the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century the era of “the general crisis.” Even those spared direct suffering will have experienced the political and social crises brought on by the war and its effects.

Of course, how your character remembers this experience – and how he or she *reacted* to it – is up to you. Until recently, though, experience of this type of trauma was something really confined only to Kindred who had survived this era, the distinguishing mark that separated Elders from Ancillae. Now, of course, things are different.

If your character lived through this period, here is something you can count on: if you are still in the same domain you were in during this period, you wronged someone and someone wronged you. Talk to your fellow players and your LST to decide who it was. If there's one thing vampires are very good at it, it's holding grudges.

### **Using this period as a Storyteller:**

For many domains, this is the era of original sin. The refugee crisis in particular saw rulers forced to make difficult choices. Many, being vampires, made the choice that would lead to the greatest power for themselves. When creating your domain's elder NPCs, think about how they handled this period.

## **The rise of the Monarchist movement**

The crisis of the 17<sup>th</sup> century convinced many in Kindred society that some kind of central authority was needed in order to prevent further civil conflict. Drawing inspiration from mortal thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, they proposed a united government, to be established along scientific principles. Although the idea of a central government gained currency, it would eventually take a form its originators would not recognise.

Several obstacles stood in the way of a unified society. First, most princes were unwilling to give up their power. Second, even those willing to enter into a union with other domains would never be able to agree on a leader. Third, the latest principles of governance excited hardly anyone. Into this impasse stepped a group of elders with a proposed solution.

The existence of the Flavian bloodline had always been known. Descended from the last of the Camarilla proconsuls, these vampires were regarded more as a historical curiosity than anything else. Since the fall of the Camarilla, few had held positions of power, but they were generally well-regarded, considered as a responsible family with a strong tradition of internal discipline. The elders – the group who would be known as the Kingmakers – proposed choosing a member of this bloodline as the ruler.

The idea was received cautiously – but there were several factors in favour of it. The combined influence of the Kingmakers suddenly made supporting the monarchy an attractive proposition. Princes who felt

menaced by their neighbours benefited from the aid of this powerful cabal. Once a few Princes had thrown their support behind the idea, they were able to combine their power to overcome opponents who were, after all, fighting for autonomy and therefore not always able to cooperate effectively.

It also helped that the candidate proposed by the Kingmakers, Edward of Chillingham, eventually known as Good King Edward (although he carried the regnal name Flavius I), was a charming, generous, mild-mannered vampire who was able to earn the respect of several key Princes and influence brokers. By halfway through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Monarchy covered most of Britain, with only a few domains still holding out. The Monarchist movement was very cautious in approaching those who resisted; it openly claimed to be more interested in showing the good sides of its system – although covertly the Monarch's agents supplied aid to Praxis claimants in holdout domains.

This era also saw the rise of proto-Carthian groups within the Invictus and other Covenants.

### **Sidebar: Who were the Proconsular line?**

It seems unlikely that British vampires would believe that the descendants of the last military governor installed by an occupying power would make good rulers, but the Proconsul – he is usually known only by that title – had reached the status of a folk hero long before the Kingmakers decided to use his legend for their purposes. According to the folklore, the last of the Camarilla's governors remained behind in Britain after his order to withdraw, leading the fight to preserve the vampiric civilisation against encroaching barbarism.

Medieval worldview or not, it's unlikely that anyone ever thought the Proconsul's legacy actually made his descendants qualified to rule, but there was enough of that medieval worldview left to make it a convenient fiction.

During the Monarchy, the Monarchs funded research into the history of their line, but little of the resulting information was ever publicised. Some have publicly wondered why – and whether the files still exist.

## **Life under the Monarchy**

Monarchs came and went, most of them inoffensive, some of them charismatic, one or two of them difficult to deal with. For the most part, the running of the Monarchy – which didn't amount to much – was handled by a circle of advisors and functionaries that gathered around the court. The Monarch's position was largely ceremonial, but the ability to have neutral ceremonies of this type proved to be highly useful. A period of peace was very welcome after the chaos of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Scotland had always stood slightly outside the trends that governed the domains of England, although naturally social and economic trends didn't end at the border. Once Scottish domains joined the Monarchy, however, more travel and cultural exchange became the norm.

The success of the Monarchy led to more growth – not necessarily in its role in the daily life of most domains, but in its cultural and social significance. Because the Monarch's social recognition was in

demand, her ever-growing collection of toadies and flatterers began to amass significant Boon reserves by selling their ruler's favours. Young vampires who felt excluded from their domain's political structures flocked to the central court where opportunity seemed greater.

As the Monarch's court became larger and larger, it became more and more flamboyant and cruel in its entertainments. The most fashionable vampires flocked to its balls and soirees to see and be seen, and any vice that could be imagined – and a few that stretched the imagination – could be indulged behind closed, or at least half-closed, doors.

But the Monarchy wasn't all empty hedonism. The Monarch's court was increasingly wealthy and influential, and its opinions influenced the conduct of domains across the country. Although the court would never have dared to move directly against a Prince, any domain ruler who openly defied the Monarchy was likely to run into a suspiciously well-funded challenger for his or her Praxis. A few rulers were overthrown in this way, but most – canny political operators themselves – learned exactly how far they could push and get away with it. The Monarchy's informal intelligence network, known colloquially as the Bureau, kept the quiet conspiracy of Monarchist policy-makers well-informed.

More than anything else, the Monarchy was the longest continuous period of peace in British Kindred history. Between the fall of the Camarilla and the end of the 17th-century crisis, conflict between domains over scarce resources had been as common as conflict within domains. Under the Monarchy, this changed. Some vampires believe this was simply the consequence of an ever-growing, ever-urbanising population which supported a larger number of vampires safely. It's certainly true that the vampiric population increased during this period.

Although the Monarchy restricted open conflict between domains, it had little effect on private feuds between Damned, which were considered a normal part of social interaction. Violent conflict, however, was ruthlessly suppressed. This didn't make grudges and vendettas disappear, however. They simmered beneath the surface, waiting for their chance to break out.

### **Using this period as a player:**

Remembering the Monarchy is what separates a neonate from an ancilla. Most characters have mixed feelings about the Monarchy, but some didn't care much about it at all until the war broke out. In a way, that was part of the Monarchy's strength – it blended into the background, making it seem as if it had always been there. Under the Monarchy, your character will have had a chance to relax a little and really follow his or her personal goals. This is a good part of your background in which to explore those goals.

### **Using this period as a Storyteller:**

A long period of peace is a good time to build complex systems in your domain's history, as well as to embellish the relationships between NPCs. The culture of your domain during this period will be the PCs' main point of reference for normality before the war.

## **Sidebar: The Bureau**

Officially, the Bureau had no name. Officially, the Bureau never really existed. It was merely an informal collection of the Monarch's advisors, their sources and their friends. In practice, the Bureau was a hated secret police service, devoted to identifying threats to the Monarch's rule and taking action against them. There was a saying among the vampires of the Monarchy era: "everybody doesn't like somebody – but nobody likes the Bureau." When the war came, unsurprisingly, the Bureau were more hated and hunted than anyone else.

The Bureau weren't completely defenseless, however – apart from a few leaders, most of their agents were anonymous. And those who were discovered often had valuable intelligence they could use to bargain for protection. There are still plenty of them out there, some now loyal to the Restorationist cause, most now working only for themselves.

## **The war**

When the system failed, everyone realised they should have seen it coming earlier. When a group of radical Carthians was suspected of assassinating a Monarchy official, the Monarch ordered the suspects arrested over the objections of their Prince. When the Monarch's agents entered the domain, the Prince ordered them to leave. They refused. A fight broke out.

To a human observer, the war barely seemed to happen. A prominent politician died in a single-car accident. A journalist committed suicide. A tragic fire devastated a city street. A yacht was lost at sea. A company suddenly went out of business. A promising playwright packed up and moved to Hollywood. An industrial storage facility was demolished. For most vampires, war meant nothing more than hunkering down in their havens and sniping at one another's resources; when there was bloodshed, it was quick and almost invisible, as teams of assassins struck at enemy leaders and vanished again.

Even so, after four years of conflict most Damned were ready for a respite. Most of the suspects in the original killing were already dead, and the fighting was being driven largely by vendetta. Months of careful negotiating went into the establishment of a peace conference; under guarantees of safe conduct, leaders of most of the domains involved in the fighting met in Ramsgate to discuss a resolution to the war.

No one knows exactly what happened. Some say that there was a genuine assassination attempt on one of the factions, others that a misunderstanding led to a brawl that resulted in a mass frenzy. What is certain that when the smoke cleared, the king and several prominent princes on both sides were dead, with many more in Torpor. Some were missing, presumed dead or fled.

Fighting broke out again with renewed intensity. This time, several incidents made it to the mass media, and only frantic cover-up work maintained the Masquerade. Killings became more common, up to and including pitched battles – although a pitched battle by Damned standards usually involves no more than a coterie on either side.

The war pulsed on, flaring up and then cooling down, until early 2008, when a message reached both sides from Lydia Hale, a former royalist hanger-on with ties to the Bureau, presenting evidence that the mysterious organisation known as VII had been responsible for Haug's assassination. Many believed the explanation, which was consistent with VII's pattern (or rather lack of pattern). Many more were sceptical of the claim but accepted it because it provided a convenient excuse to draw an end to hostilities. Sick of fear and fighting, they didn't ask too many questions about the story's provenance.

### **Using this period as a player:**

All but the youngest characters lived through the war; this is a great time to establish rivalries and grudges. Your character doesn't have to have had strong feelings toward one side or the other – most combatants didn't. They were dragged into the conflict by personal loyalty, by boons owed, or by family, domain or Covenant obligations.

If your character lived through this period – that is, unless you are a brand-new Neonate or have recently emerged from Torpor – you wronged someone during the conflict. Maybe you betrayed a friend or relative to the other side, maybe you failed to save an ally. Maybe you destroyed something that was precious to a vampire on the other side. Maybe you hurt someone without even knowing it. No matter what, you will have wronged at least one person, and at least one person will have wronged you. You should talk to your fellow players and your LST about who these people might have been.

But don't worry; the peace treaty is in force. No one will kill you for what you did; too many people are invested in people not getting killed for what they did in the war.

No one will *kill* you.

### **Using this period as a storyteller:**

The general backdrop of the war is a good way to seed specific stories in your game. People went missing or on the run, secrets were buried, rivalries were formed. Try to have unanswered questions and unsettled scores resulting from your domain's wartime history. What NPCs died? Work together with the PCs to find out what side they were on and facilitate relationships or rivalries between them.

## **The Covenants**

Along with clans and domains, the five Covenants are the basic building blocks of vampire society. The overall beliefs and goals of these Covenants are summed up in the Requiem corebook and in the Covenant books. Of course, each Covenant has its own unique history in Britain that influenced its development in a particular way.

Each Covenant has its own philosophies, its own goals and its own inherent challenges and advantages. NPCs from PCs' Covenants – and other PCs from them – should provide information, challenges and reasons to argue and believe. Even very hierarchical Covenants contain a large degree of variation between the views of their members, however; even the many factions and sub-philosophies listed in the Covenant books are representative examples, rather than a definitive list.

## **The Carthian Movement**

The Carthian movement emerged during the Enlightenment as a loose association of reform-minded Invictus, populist Sanctified and disaffected Unbound who declared their sympathy with the manifesto of radical European Carthians. Early attempts by Invictus Princes to suppress the anti-authoritarian movement were met with heavy resistance; eventually the two sides came to a modus vivendi. The Monarchy did not support the Carthians, but preferred to wait and see how the movement would develop, always happy with anything that weakened the individual power of the Princes.

Outwardly, it might seem that the Carthians would be opposed to the Monarchy, and there were many Carthians who were. New Carthians in particular tended to be embraced from among mortals whose revolutionary views disinclined them to take orders from a decadent autocrat. Carthians from Continental Europe tended to be even more radical than their British counterparts; in the UK, a breed of reformist Carthian quickly emerged from among the Whigs. These moderate Carthians, schooled in the pragmatic politics of Enlightenment Britain, saw the Monarchy as a useful means to an end. Astute, experienced and able to connect to the Kine in a way their Invictus rivals could not match, these Carthians began to make their way into the ranks of the Monarchy's ever-growing administration. These highly-trained political operatives allowed the Monarchs to expand their authority without becoming indebted to the traditional Invictus power structure. It was a prudent move for the Monarchs – in the short term.

Shielded by their fellow-travellers within the Monarchy (collectively called the Centre), local groups of Carthians sprang up around the country throughout the 19th century. They ranged from intellectual debating circles to revolutionary guerilla groups, drawing on contemporary politics and even reviving much older traditions of dissent. Some flourished, while others were brutally put down. Local Carthians both appreciated and resented their allies in the capital, remembering long nights on the run from the Invictus when expected help from the Centre never arrived.

By the end of the 19th century, the Carthians were an accepted part of the Kindred political landscape. In a few cases, Carthians even took control of domains, either by displacing existing Princes or by founding new collectives in out-of-the-way locations. The Monarchy accepted them, although many Kindred viewed them with suspicion. Domains which rejected the Monarchy were, as always, subtly undermined until a new leader appeared whose attitude toward the central government was more accommodating.

By the late 20th century, many believed that the Carthian fire had gone out. Many Kindred saw no difference between being ruled by an Invictus Prince in a frilled shirt and being ruled by a Carthian Chairman in a suit and tie. Revolutionary Carthians promised a utopian future after the destruction of the Monarchy, but even they couldn't see how it could possibly be achieved. The internal struggles of the Carthians were as heated as they were incomprehensible to outsiders.

At the turn of the 21st century, however, the hour of the Carthians arrived. Though often accused of creating the civil war within the Imperial Praxis through the assassination of hated Monarchy operative Edvard Haug, the Carthians were able to capitalise on the slaughter and instability that war caused. Many of them had experience in civil wars and revolutions worldwide, and their strategic philosophy had always focused on survival and guerilla fighting. Revolutionary Carthians adapted to the chaos very well; their reformist colleagues in the Centre faction didn't. Princes weakened by internal strife were toppled by Carthian revolutions, most of them short-lived. Despite these setbacks, the Movement gathered power and resources.

In 2014, the warring domains came together to discuss peace. Indeed, the Carthians were one of the loudest voices for peace, something which surprised many. Whether responsible for the war or not, they came out strong from it. Though their numbers were depleted, they enjoyed the prospect of recruiting the young and open minded Kindred sired in the 21st century and quickly building their power once more. Furthermore, the destruction of traditional power structures left Kindred society looking for alternatives – and who better to supply them than a Covenant with a long history of political innovation? Nonetheless, the collapsed structures of most domains mean that the first priority of the Carthians in the post-war world will, like everyone else, simply be survival.

### **Factions within the Carthian Movement**

*Carthians* describes many groups within the Carthian movement. Some or most of these are active in the United Kingdom; some of the best-known included the PPIB and the Oppositionists, but other more secretive groups such as the Night Doctors also exist. The old tension between Collectivists and Individualists is always present. In addition, there are some groups specific to the UK. Note that these can overlap; there's nothing odd about having a Vanguardist Sabotage Artist or a Centrist Night Doctor.

#### ***The Centre:***

The dominant faction during the Monarchist period, the Centre used the power and influence of the initially apolitical Monarchy to implement reforms while avoiding interference from local domains. By the late Monarchist period, they were so powerful that non-Monarchist Carthians were regarded as a ridiculous fringe group. When the war came, however, the tables turned. Centrist Carthians who supported the rebels found their mastery of the Monarchy's political procedures ineffective in stopping an increasingly single-minded monarch. In modern nights, the Centre work to restore civilisation, putting their skills and influence to new uses. Some are said to be Restorationists, although most deny it.

#### ***The Vanguard:***

These revolutionary Carthians did the bulk of the fighting in the early days of the war, largely because their unified political outlook transcended each individual's personal or domain loyalties. As a result of their successes and sacrifices, they are now a much more potent group within the Covenant than they were. Many of the terms of the peace treaty were a response to Vanguardist concerns. However, now that they have achieved many of their official goals it remains to be seen whether they will fall apart or find a new direction.

### **Preppers:**

Heavily influenced by the thinking of revolutionary Carthian Doug Davies, preppers believe that the war was a sign of a coming vampiric apocalypse. They spend their time developing strategies for self-sufficiency and disaster survival. Other Carthians tolerate some of their kooky beliefs because it's handy to have people with a supply of guns, hiding places and canned blood when things really do get bad. One notable prepper group are *Carthian Democracy (Posadist)*, a PPIB-influenced faction who emerged from a split within Davies's *Revolutionary Carthian Committee (Posadist)*. Their rival group, the *Carthian Socialist Union*, lost the fight for Davies's torpid body and went underground some years ago. Some prepper groups are influenced by the teachings of extremists such as the Final Civilisation.

### **The Circle of the Crone**

Some scholars believe that the Circle of the Crone has its origins in one of the five *alae* of the Camarilla; however, the Circle's emphasis on an ever-growing tradition means that nothing about its beginnings is ever really certain.

By the end of the early Middle Ages, almost all humans in the British Isles believed, to one extent or another, in the Christian faith. Knowing the Circle's pagan origins, it would be easy to assume that this hampered the Covenant, and it did – but not as much as might be expected. Even devout Christians had their worldviews shattered by the experience of the Embrace; many were willing to reject the Christian God as just another thing they'd always believed in that turned out to be untrue.

Membership of the Circle was not respectable during the Middle Ages, and the Covenant met privately – not necessarily “in secret,” but out of the public eye. Few domains could afford the internal conflict of a purge, but those who made their pagan faith public were frozen out of vampiric high society. Most members of the Invictus paid at least public respect to the teachings of the Lancea et Sanctum, and those who didn't didn't make much noise about it.

This lack of public discussion of Circle beliefs meant that, unlike the more doctrinally unified Sanctified, the Acolytes developed very differently in different parts of the country. Individual covens formed their own teachings and ritual practices, even developing new Cruac rituals.

The post-medieval period saw a revival of interest in paganism; public discussion of magic and the occult became much more socially acceptable. As with all trends, vampiric society was slow to catch up with this trend, but not immune to it. Circle covens began to communicate more openly with each other, to share ideas and discuss their magical experiences. It was a time of intellectual revolution; younger members of the Circle, steeped in human philosophy, sought a single transcendent truth behind the many masks of the Goddess, and attempted to systematise Circle teaching and ritual practices. Some older Acolytes rejected the views of the new arrivals, branding them dabblers and mere humanists, but many embraced them.

The crisis of the 17th century saw a boom in witch-hunting in England (a similar witch panic began even earlier in Scotland) particularly in East Anglia. Very few of the humans affected by the witch panic had

anything to do with the Circle; for the most part, they were simply luckless victims of a paranoid craze. But the increased atmosphere of suspicion made life harder for many Acolytes; coupled with the overall social and economic crises, the situation hit the Covenant hard.

Perhaps it was this that made some members of the Circle of the Crone disposed to support the Monarchy despite its obvious pro-Sanctified leanings. Some of the Elders who backed the first Monarchs were Acolytes, although they were far outnumbered by members of other Covenants.

The lack of unified leadership within the Circle meant that, even though covens were now communicating openly with each other, they continued to develop in different ways. This remains true today. It's not uncommon for an Acolyte arriving in a new city to discover that the local members of the Covenant have different titles, different rites and very different teachings. Sharing these is considered a mark of friendship; even if not every Acolyte accepts that all paths to the Goddess contain some truth, those with doubts keep them to themselves in public. Similarly, the influx of neopagans in the decades following World War II had an impact on the Covenant (although having been pagan as a mortal doesn't necessarily mean joining the Acolytes as a vampire – every Covenant contains Damned of varied religious backgrounds).

Although some vampires condemned it as a weakness, the distributed structure of the Covenant meant that it survived the war much better than many others – while the loss of senior members of the Ordo Dracul was a crippling blow, for example, the Circle was more resilient. In rare cases, individual covens were completely wiped out, but most Circle covens today have at least some pre-war members – and often a chain of membership stretching back into distant history.

However, the lack of any strong bond between Acolytes outside local covens also means that the Circle saw perhaps more intra-Covenant violence than any other Covenant. Given the Covenant's long history of prizing strife and conflict, it's easy to suspect that these wounds have not healed as much as the Circle claims they have.

Although the Circle has no formal hierarchy, there are those whose experience or insight mean their teachings are respected within the faith.

### **Factions within the Circle**

*Circle of the Crone* describes many different subgroups and schools of thought within the Circle. Most of these groups exist in Britain in one form or another. There are also some uniquely British groups.

#### ***The School of War:***

Also called the School of Hard Knocks, this militant Acolyte group believed that the war actually served the Covenant well, forcing prominent Acolytes to deal with the realities of vampiric existence and make hard choices rather than losing themselves in the senseless hedonism of the Monarchist culture. Although some have described this as a violent movement, much of its violence is directed at its own members, who test themselves relentlessly. Although every Acolyte believes in the value of tribulation, the School of War believe in taking steps to prevent society from becoming soft again.

### ***The Old Religion:***

Also known by other names, this revivalist Acolyte group believes that the civic religions of the Camarilla diluted the original cultural practices of the Circle of the Crone – and that society will thrive once more only once the secrets of those primeval Acolytes are recovered. Seeking a past with no records, they have turned to mystical methods in their quest.

### **The Invictus**

The Covenant that would become the Invictus originated in the feudal society of early medieval Europe. Britain was a late adopter of the system compared to France, Germany or Italy, but when the mortal feudal model arrived in the 11<sup>th</sup> century it found willing adopters among the existing vampiric rulers. Many of these native Princes had quasi-feudal systems already in place; incoming Invictus vampires, less provincial than their mortal counterparts and unified by a shared belief in the teachings of Longinus, fit in well.

By the high middle ages, the Invictus was unquestionably the dominant force in vampiric society, although perhaps it would be a mistake to think of it as a single entity. Indeed, the Invictus as a Covenant in the modern sense did not really exist until the foundation of the Carthian Movement at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For most of vampiric history, the Invictus was not an organisation but a way of life, a structure that united rulers and ruled in a network of mutual obligation. You were Unconquered – or Sanctified – or you were nobody.

This is not to say that there was no conflict in vampiric society during the pre-modern period – far from it. The Invictus model established rules for conflict between feudal lords, but understood that these conflicts would occur. Different fealty chains – known by the Latin term *familiae* – competed for influence and prestige in conflicts that could turn bloody if not carefully managed.

After a series of crises in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many Invictus came to see this model as outmoded. Although it worked well on a local level, it struggled to deal with the challenges of an increasingly connected world. The head of a fealty chain was responsible only to her vassals, but society as a whole could fall into ruin while each liege focused on protecting her own patch. These radical philosophers were derided by traditionalist Invictus, but with the backing of the powerful Elder group known as the Kingmakers they were able to found what would become the Monarchy.

The Monarchy broke with several fundamental traditions of the Invictus, but it did an effective job of stopping the out-of-control competition between domains and *familiae*. Prudent liege lords infiltrated their own vassals into the governing structure to minimise the damage it could do them. Others stood athwart the Monarchy's path and were crushed. By the time of Bad King Edward, the Monarch's fealty chain was by far the largest in the country, with dozens or even hundreds of members.

And then it all went to hell. In the aftermath of the conflict, traditionalist Invictus claim that their older feudal model is more relevant than ever, while younger Unconquered try to balance the demands of tradition with the increased pace and connectedness of modern society. The Covenant also struggles with the fact that its ideals of loyalty and duty mean that it is by far the most represented Covenant within the Restorationist movement.

## **Factions within the Invictus**

The Orders and Guilds of the Invictus are an important part of its culture; for Unconquered during the war, they provided yet another axis of divided loyalty. Many groups which serve “The Invictus” as a whole, such as the Order of Sir Martin or the Order of the Thorned Wreath, suffered terribly during the war, unsure where their services were most needed. Some Knights begged to be sent on foreign missions to avoid having to fight their own kin or friends, while others voluntarily entered Torpor. Other groups were hit equally hard; there are even shocking reports of the neutrality of Guild of Marathon couriers being ignored. Some groups – notably The Octopus – were strongly associated with the Monarchy, and would be in disgrace if it weren't for the fact that their unique political expertise is needed more now than ever.

### ***Neo-Feudalists:***

Many Invictus see the Monarchy as a misstep from the Invictus philosophy. When a single ruler claims power, they argue, the accountability inherent in the feudal structure is lost. A cynic might point out that most of this faction are younger Invictus who saw their power actually *increase* during the chaos of the war. Nevertheless, they take their feudal obligations very seriously, and this faction is growing faster than any other.

### ***Imperialists:***

A smaller group of Invictus members believe that the problem with the Monarchy was merely the irresponsible conduct of the Monarch rather than the system of government. A new unified government might be the only way to resist external threats and foreign encroachment, but it has to be created properly. The only problem with Imperialist groups is that no two of them have exactly the same idea of who the new Monarch should be.

### ***Corporatists:***

If the Imperialists want to go back to how things used to be, and the Neo-Feudalists want to go back to how they imagine things were, the Corporatist Invictus want to explore new models of administration – new *hierarchical* models with the Invictus on top, mind you. They're not Carthians, no matter what the other groups say.

## **The Lancea Sanctum**

The Lancea Sanctum arrived in Britain no later than the end of the third century, but may have been there earlier; Sanctified holy sites, having been in continuous use since the Camarilla period, are notoriously hard to date. The Covenant's early years saw a series of vicious conflicts against the pagan cults that were to become the Circle of the Crone as the Sanctified settled scores with their old oppressors. Eventually the

conflict cooled into a standoff; neither had the resources to prosecute a conflict during the economic downturn of the Dark Ages.

In the middle ages, the Covenant made the decision to ally itself with the fledgling Invictus -- the allied Covenants quickly developed a partnership that was to dominate society into the Renaissance. The Sanctified built strong ties with the First Estate -- many Longinians had family members among the Unconquered, and it was hard for a member of the First Estate to advance without at least publicly showing allegiance to the teachings of the Lancea.

This relationship has always caused tension within the Sanctified; the faith's teachings don't always line up with what the alliance finds to be politically expedient, and Sanctified leaders have to choose between the two, always dissatisfying someone. By the end of the Middle Ages, dissident Sanctified were withdrawing from the mainstream of the Covenant to live in their own small communities according to their (often unique) interpretations of the Testament of Longinus. Their age-old rivalry with the Acolytes renewed itself during this period, as an increased interest among mortals in the religions of antiquity saw the pagan Covenant's ranks swell. The situation became even more serious during the period of the Monarchy -- although the Sanctified were nominally an important part of the Monarchy, many younger members of the Covenant resented seeing gold-robed bishops attending a Monarch who hadn't hunted a human for himself in decades.

Historically, Longinian beliefs have followed the evolution of Christianity, with a variety of different creeds united within a single organisation. Although Sanctified disagree about their creeds, they accept those who differ as fellow Sanctified, and very few outside the Covenant grasp the full difference between them.

When the war broke out, many Sanctified tried to stay out of it, but the network of personal friendships, Boons and family relationships made it impossible for them. Even cenacles that tried to stay completely detached wound up as targets, raided for their resources by other groups. Eventually, the separatist communities came to an agreement with their counterparts in the mainstream domains; both parties agreed to use their influence to attempt to put an end to the fighting. Bartolomeo of Lichfield, a Sanctified bishop whose domain had been devastated by the fighting, pleaded with the separatists to return, saying that the worst of the suffering could have been averted if they had stayed and helped rather than withdrawn to live by themselves.

Many separatists, shamed by this famous sermon, have started to return to Kindred society to restore it. Without much experience in politics, these former monastics have only the strength of their conviction and their belief that vampires, in the wake of their terrible experience, will be willing to listen to their teachings.

### **Factions within the Lancea Sanctum**

*Lancea Sanctum* outlines a number of different groups and Creeds within the Covenant. All of these exist within the UK, although of course the American-based Tollison Creed is very rare. The Westminster Creed is stronger in the UK than anywhere else in the world. Members of all Creeds were on either side during the war, and returning separatists may be of any Creed.

There are also a vast number of different monastic orders – sometimes consisting of no more than a handful of Sanctified – within the Faith. Although these share some basic similarities, they often devote their time to a specific purpose. One such is *The Order of Saint Amphibalius*: These monks devote themselves to protecting vampires in Torpor and counselling those who have recently awakened. Some say that they manipulate their charges, exploiting their suggestible state and stealing from them, but most regard this as a rumour. Monks of the order have been working frantically to deal with the crises caused by the war.

## **The Ordo Dracul**

The existence of the Ordo Dracul, which had previously been thought to be extinct, was revealed following the publication of *Dracula* in 1897. Ordo members over 100 years old remember the Covenant's struggle to escape not only from outraged members of other Covenants but also from the Bureau, the Monarchy's feared internal security force. The purges of the late 1890s ended in a compromise brokered by the Monarchy in 1906; rumour has it that the Monarch's closest advisors included undercover agents of the Ordo. Some Princes, especially traditionalist Invictus who felt that the Ordo had broken their oaths by not being truthful with their lords, were frustrated at the Monarch's ban on hunting down members of the Covenant; they satisfied themselves with driving those with divided loyalties out of their Covenants and purging them from government positions. The Lancea Sanctum also angrily denounced the upstart Covenant for daring to question.

A century later, the position of the Ordo Dracul in society is greatly improved. Ordo members have proved their abilities over and over; many domains rely on Ordo citizens and there have even been Ordo Princes.

However, the recent history of the Ordo is as much of a mess as that of any other Covenant. The Covenant tried desperately to keep out of the war, but the same network of domain loyalty, personal obligation and clan identity that pulled in everyone else dragged many members of the Ordo into the conflict.

The Ordo's structure survived the war more or less intact, but the stresses of the conflict prompted a debate within the Covenant. Prior to the war, the British Ordo had been united within a single Academy – with all the domains more or less politically unified, this seemed like the simplest method. However, now that the unified structure of the Monarchy was no more, some of the Ordo, most notable among them Yevgeny Glushin, the most senior member of the Sworn of the Dying Light, have begun to advocate for dividing the power structure into several different Academies. Resistance to this idea was led by Gregory Piers and Elizabeth Doherty, the Ordo's other two senior leaders.

However, shortly before the peace treaty was due to be signed, something went terribly wrong at the Ordo retreat known as Whitby Abbey (it's not in Whitby and it's not an abbey; that's the Ordo for you). No one is exactly sure what happened, but the Ordo are calling it an accident during an experiment. Piers has been publicly confirmed dead, while Doherty hasn't been seen. As a result, the Ordo's national leadership is in flux.

## **Factions Within the Ordo Dracul**

*Ordo Dracul* outlines several groups within the Ordo Dracul, both those officially recognised by the Covenant and those that exist without official approval. In the British Ordo, the main political divisions are between those who support a unified Academy and those who support more local devolution. This might seem like a minor technical distinction to outsiders, but it also tends to map to a dispute between Dragons who want to pursue their research without what they perceive as bureaucratic meddling and those who worry about what might be going on in local chapter houses, far from supervision.

Within the Ordo, there are also those – known by the old-fashioned term *Draconists* – who feel that the war has invalidated the old idea that the Ordo should stay out of politics. Left to their own devices, the Draconists argue, the other Covenants ran Kindred society into the ground. What could be clearer than that the Ordo needs to finally come out of its self-imposed political exile and assert itself?

## **Who's Who**

The war purged Kindred society of some of its most famous names, including the last universally-recognised Monarch, Bad King Edward. But there are still some well-known vampires whose names are known outside their own domains. Many Covenants have their own well-known leaders, but these people are rarely famous outside their own factions.

As plots develop, this list may grow. The ultimate goal of the ST team is to make sure that the list of well-known vampires is mainly populated by player characters.

## **Antagonists**

### **Vampire Hunters**

Every vampire knows that humans are the most dangerous creature out there; what they lack in supernatural powers, they make up in numbers, ingenuity and the ability to kill you at one in the afternoon. During the Monarchy, this was a generally-repeated truism, but modern vampires know it as a cold, hard fact.

Most hunter groups are local in their scope – a single person or team finds out about vampires and, perhaps with a few carefully-chosen allies, decides to do something about them. Sometimes hunters don't even know about the existence of vampiric society as a whole, but are simply devoted to hunting and killing a single vampire (like the protagonists at the end of *Dracula*, for example). But there are a few groups that have expanded their activities to more than one domain – when these hunters roll into town, local vampires need to be a little more creative in dealing with them.

## **The Order of Saint Guthlac**

### ***The Public Face***

Named for Saint Guthlac of Crowland, who fought demons in the fens of East Anglia, this order is no longer explicitly religious. It consists of devoted hunters who receive training and armament from the order's shadowy inner circle. Knights of Saint Guthlac use conventional vampire-hunting methods, including stakes, holy items, swords and other ancient weapons. Their support teams of Squires deploy a combination of old-fashioned paper research and modern surveillance techniques, possibly including some unknown occult means. Vampires fear the Order not only for its physical threat but for the ever-expanding library of vampire knowledge it must be accumulating.

### ***The Order for STs***

The Order of Saint Guthlac sounds like it's been around for ages, but it's actually a modern creation. When tech-industry tycoon Spiridon Katsaros lost his family to a vampire attack, he devoted himself to wiping the creatures out using his most powerful weapons: his vast wealth and organisational abilities. It's not as romantic as sword and stake, but it's surprisingly effective. The order's medieval religious trappings are a facade, used to motivate the crusaders against evil who form the front line and to distract vampires who go looking for a medieval religious organisation.

## **The Dumuzi Club**

“You have power and money, but you are mortal. You know you cannot escape death. But immortality can be obtained ... If others have succeeded in conquering death, why must we accept it? I know where the immortals live and how to obtain their secret.”

– The Alchemist, *The Holy Mountain*

Named for the dying and reborn god of Sumerian mythology, the Dumuzi Club is part secret society, part business. Most members have no idea of the club's vampire-hunting activities; they merely know that its leaders promise health, strength and longevity to its members. They would be shocked to know that what they are consuming is vampire blood. Those who reach a high enough level of initiation know enough of vampire physiology to know that they have to “recycle” the vampires they capture frequently to avoid the possibility of mental conditioning. This means that the club constantly seeks out new vampires to replenish its blood supply. They don't hate vampires and they don't feel any concern for protecting the public from them. From a vampire's perspective, this is good in one way but bad in another: The club is a secret organisation itself, which means it presents only a limited threat to the Masquerade. However, its opportunistic nature means that it hunts mainly neonates, Torpid elders and other vulnerable Damned. Nothing's guaranteed to send a vampire berserk quicker than losing a venerated sire or promising Childe to a cenance of rich jerks who will use him as a blood source for a few weeks before feeding him into an incinerator.

## **Belial's Brood**

The vampires of the Monarchy were aware of the existence of Belial's Brood and considered it a serious threat. However, a concerted effort by several domains culminated in the Steyning raid of 1876. Over a dozen Brood vampires were burned to ash and Brood leader Whistling Bill was captured. His interrogation led to another series of arrests and executions, together with the seizure of Brood safehouses, ghouls and assets. Since then, the Damned think of the Brood as finished. And they're right, sort of.

The truth is that Whistling Bill's reign was an anomaly for the Brood, a level of organisation they don't usually aspire to – for precisely this reason! A centralised Brood was too vulnerable to the Monarchy's highly-developed intelligence network. Isolated Brood coveys certainly do exist, but a massive Brood conspiracy is a thing of the past. In fact, most Brood outbreaks aren't even recognised as such. As you'll see as you read on, there are a lot of crazy vampires out there, and most authorities just ignore the ravings of the ones they capture. At a local level, however, a Brood cell can be a very serious problem, particularly given the already-weakened state of the Masquerade.

## **VII**

Most vampires believe VII exists, and most have heard of some of their assassinations. Most notably, they are blamed for the assassination of Edvard Haug, the catalyst for the war. However, VII are not considered a threat to Damned society as a whole. They tend to appear rarely, carry out some obscure mission and then leave again. Many people suspect that killings blamed on VII may actually be the work of others, with the infamous vampire bogeymen merely a useful scapegoat.

Other believe that VII's bizarre actions are intended to effect some kind of long-term change by eliminating Kindred and others who might change the development of vampiric history. But to what end, no one can say.

## **Restorationists**

Not everyone was a willing party to the peace settlement. Some fringe groups refused to make peace with the other domains. Most prominent among these are extreme Restorationists, a faction that still hopes for the return of the Monarchy in the person of Cynthia Carew, the senior surviving member of the Proconsular bloodline. This little exile court survives on the Isle of Man, no longer ruling much of anything but steadfastly maintaining that it is the sole legitimate authority in Britain.

Although Carew's advisors include a number of powerful elders – including some of the original Kingmakers – few people perceive her group as much of a threat by itself. But Restorationism is an ideology, not an organisation, and many Kindred with Restorationist sympathies signed the peace agreement because they thought it was the only way to end the violence, not because they wholeheartedly agreed with doing away with the Monarchy. Many PCs may have Restorationist sympathies, and there are Restorationist factions – even if they don't publicly call themselves that – in every Covenant.

Violence by Restorationists is very uncommon, but that doesn't mean that these accomplished political intriguers aren't a threat to some people. Of course, they could also be very helpful to the right vampire ...

## Second Sons

The perilous social and political situation in Britain after the fall of the Monarchy attracted opportunistic vampires from around the world. Unable to advance in the sclerotic hierarchies of their home domains, they saw the chaos among British Kindred as an ideal chance to snap up resources and enhance their personal power. Whether gladhanding businessmen or battle-hardened swords for hire, these vampires are referred to as “Second Sons,” a term some embrace but most find insulting.

Calling someone a “Second Son” isn't like calling them a diablerist – something you are or you aren't – it's like calling them a yuppie or a hipster. It's a descriptive term, not the name of an organisation, and many people who loudly condemn Second Sons may have a certain son-like quality about them.

“Antagonists” might be a misnomer for these vampires – they could easily be PCs, and they're not unreasonable. Like Restorationists, Second Sons can be bargained with, tricked, flattered, bullied, seduced or outright murdered. They're more *competitors* than direct threats. But a lot of vampires hate them with a passion, perceiving them as vultures come to feed off a weakened society rather than help rebuild it. A particular contempt is reserved for American Second Sons who claim they're not Second Sons because their bloodlines originally came from Britain.

## Pariahs

If the Restorationists were unwilling to participate in the peace agreement, the Pariahs were intentionally excluded from it. Like “Second Son,” “Pariah” is just a description, not a group title. In many cases, Pariahs are those whose crimes during the war were so great that some domain was unwilling to sign as long as they were included. Princes who wanted to end the killing had no choice but to eject these criminals from their domains, condemning them to a life of nomadic wandering. Still others are innocent scapegoats or hapless victims of the fact that Princes realised they could use the peace treaty to shame people they didn't like, claim their assets and break their political power (although no one with any real power could be excluded with impunity).

Today, Pariahs lurk on the fringes of vampiric society. Many left the country to establish themselves elsewhere, while others confine themselves to remote areas, avoiding the assassins and bounty hunters sent by their enemies. Still others remain in or near their old domains, their presence an open secret. Many Princes, Covenants or coteries have realised that because Pariahs are already outside of vampiric society they are valuable, deniable agents.

Pariahs are mostly concerned with surviving, but many of them burn with the desire for revenge against the society that moulded them into killers and then told them they had to leave because of who they'd killed. They range from vigilantes to refugees to feral monsters, but they're all desperate and that means they're all dangerous.

## Wild Children

The disruption of social structures during the war and a certain amount of tactical Embracing led to the existence of a number of Neonates with no sires to guide them. Some of these vampires quickly degenerate into starving, feral monsters, a danger to whoever they meet as well as to the Masquerade. But the occasional Wildchilde sets up an independent existence for him- or herself, feeding on humans and learning to blend in. When these creatures run into other vampires for the first time, the confrontations can be tense.

## The Sleepless

No one knows why Elders here and there are rising early from their tombs, but it's happened more than once. The Sleepless are often helpless, sometimes angry and always hopelessly confused. An individual Sleepless vampire can cause problems for a Domain, but there are those who begin to wonder if whatever is causing this phenomenon isn't the bigger problem.

## APPENDIX A

### The Monarchs

- 1) c. 1700: Edward of Chillingham, regnal name Flavius I. Known as "Good King Edward." Entered Torpor in 1846.
- 2) 1846: Georgina Framlingham, regnal name Claudia I. Childe of Edward Chillingham. Abdicated in favour of her childe in 1877.
- 3) 1877: Anne Bell, regnal name Claudia II. Childe of Georgina Framlingham. Died in a freak fire during travel in 1899.
- 4) 1899: Simon Chalmers, childe of Georgina Framlingham, regnal name Flavius II, and Walter Heming, childe of Edward of Chillingham, regnal name Flavius II. The contested succession ended in 1903, when Heming was forced to abdicate and retire. Chalmers ruled until the return of Flavius I in 1920.
- 5) 1920: Flavius I, returned from Torpor. Ruled until 1941, when both he and Simon Chalmers were killed when an incendiary bomb struck their secondary haven.
- 6) 1941: Edward Markham, regnal name Claudius I, childe of Walter Heming. Known as "Bad King Edward." Ruled until his death during the war.
- 7) Cynthia Carew, regnal name Araminta I, childe of Edward Markham.

## **The Post-Reset Requiem Setting in One Page**

### **History**

Vampire society seems to go through periodic cycles of boom and bust, partly based on the cycles of human history. From about 1700 to about 2000, there was a stable, peaceful national government, known as the Monarchy. Eventually, it collapsed in a bloody civil war that pitted members of Covenants, domains and even families against each other.

### **And Now**

The war is over. Everything is messed up. Domains are badly disrupted, struggling to protect their citizens and the Masquerade. With many of vampiric society's most powerful leaders out of the way, there are lots of opportunities around. And of course, there's all the usual things you might expect from vampires, with their power struggles, doomed romances, weird obsessions and elaborate conspiracies.

### **The Covenants**

Are torn by the events of the war. They're a lot like in the Covenant books, but there are some groups and philosophies that are unique to British vampires.

### **Antagonists**

Belial's Brood were largely crushed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are now rare. VII are mysterious and people are worried about them. Hunters are a serious problem. Various rogue factions of vampires are a threat, including those whose war crimes led to them being excluded from the peace settlement.

### **Themes**

Vampiric society is conspiratorial and decadent; even with the Monarchy gone, vampires still love to show off and act out. Life is hard, and survival is a struggle even for the most powerful. The past is full of barely-healed scars and weird mysteries.

### **Your character**

Neonates are too young to remember the Monarchy, but may still have fought – and committed crimes – during the war. Ancillae came up during the Monarchy period and are unused to life without a ruler. Elders are in the best position to see the cycles of history change.