

# Quarantine Zone: The Undercity of London

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## **Elevator Pitch**

Banished from the Surface, an Undercity of Nosferatu scrape to survive in a hostile necropolis, lead by an ancient nosferatu prince, where higher social standing takes you further away from the noise of the surface world. A blood soaked 'Neverwhere' where the occult is rarely hidden socially, but often lurking in ambush around the corner. Guild politics and a shifting economy lead by story and player interaction.

# Themes

**Body Horror** - The changes that occur to a Nosferatu are unsettling and alien. As the tainted nature of the Haunt's requiem changes them, so too does the world they inhabit. Ghoul rats crawling with maggots hunting barrow-wights in swarms, sickness ridden ghoul servitors bowing and scraping to their undead masters. Loss of limbs and loss of self, but more than anything the strong knowledge that no matter how miserable or disgusting the Nosferatu are, there is something WORSE out there in the barrows.

**Economic Horror** - You live in sewers, and ancient hollows and collapsed basements. You can't go out onto the surface for fear of Morbus Quarantine teams staking you out for the sun or young invictus hunting parties out to make a name for themselves gunning you down in the streets for the boons your death brings them. Nothing is free and nothing is easy - Every day is scraping and bowing and begging for blood, or desperately finding a way to improve make-shift farms to feed herds and ghouls. That's not to say that a niche can't be carved, but carving is hard work and any amount of comfort comes at SOME cost.

**Alien Culture** - Under London is a totally different world, even for a vampire. There is no mortal throng to roam amongst in order to feed, there is no need to hide who you are. In many ways, the nosferatu are more free than many other vampires. The social heirarchy of normal vampire existence doesn't exist - there are no Priscii, no seneschals, no harpies... No Masquerade. 'Luckily' for the player characters, they are Neonates, not just new to the society but new to their own existence. How will they survive in a world where blood is harder to come by, and how will they navigate a brand new world...

## What to Expect from the Game:

You're a Nosferatu or a Ghoul - No wiggle room, no exceptions. Bloodlines are easier to come by and some unique bloodlines, or theme changes to bloodlines, will be present.

No Casual Feeding - Every drop of blood comes with a surface raid or taxing feeding on small herds of mortals.

Alternate Factions - Most of the Nosferatu in the Undercity are Neonates, and unable to leave the Undercity for fear of the Blood Hunt, do not learn about the greater covenants. Instead, the city's teeming pyramid is built on the backs of the Under-Guilds.

Born in the Dark, Die in the Dark - Except for the rare few neonates who steal up into the surface on blood-raids, all resources, contacts and allies will be connected to the Undercity.

Resources 5 still makes you equivalent to a millionaire in the eyes of the Undercity, but represents a wealth of goods and favours owed rather than simply raw coinage...

No Visitors - The Prince Above has decreed all Nosferatu blood hunted in the city of London, and those Kindred who would associate with them are unwelcome in his city. This may change, in the future, after the game has established - Visiting Nosferatu may be welcomed.

Politics and Brutal Economy - The Undercity doesn't have the luxury of an unknowing populace living amongst it, being able to be used, hidden within and consumed. There are only so many resources to go around and pressure must be applied to achieve anything.

## The Under-Guilds:

**The Barrow Wights** - *Wearing the Trappings of their Order, Chains laden with padlocks. Warriors and Rangers of the Outer Tunnels, guardians of the City.*

**The Upstanding Guild of Dredgers** - *Dredgers are the merchant caste of the city, either skilled in searching through the waste that falls into the undercity from above, bartering and trading or organising Surface Raids - If you need something physical, the Dredgers will likely have something to suit you.*

**The Brotherhood of the Boiling Rat** - *Once simply farmers of sewer rats and breeders of ghoulled servents, the Brotherhood now maintain farms and food stores for the mortal servants of the Nosferatu, as well as breeding their own and number a few skilled doctors of the mortal arts. The brotherhood operate small 'Bag Men' cells of kindred who steal away into the overcity to kidnap mortals, and steal animals to keep the genetic stock below strong...*

**The Seventh Circle Association** - *The Brotherhood may be the marrow of the city, but it is the Association which is the muscle that pumps the blood around the city. Keepers of Secrets, of Knowledge, of Boons and of Blood, the Association works like a brutal business firm. Its business? Ursury.*

**The Firm** - *A city grows, and the Undercity is no different. Acting like a combination of Municipal Caretakers and a union of builders and decorators, The Firm are responsible for ensuring the Necropolis has all the amenities it needs for its continued survival, wether that be foul smelling waterways, repairing collapsed tunnels or embargos on expansion for guilds who don't pay their dues. The 'Trades' of The Firm are as much artists as they are craftsmen, the beautification of the lower layers of the city is VERY lucrative work...*

## Merits

**Necropolis Merits:** Apply to the Footfalls in general, but guilds may Embargo use of Necropoli Merits as a social technique. Some Necropolis merits are Personal, rather than public, where noted.

**Bleak Annals:** For each dot in the Annals, choose one Mental Skill Specialty. At any time, any Nosferatu with dots contributing toward the Necropolis can use the Bleak Annals and make a Research roll (pp. 55-56, World of Darkness Rulebook). Success on this roll allows the character to utilize the bonus from the Skill Specialty as if it were his own for the rest of the night.

Note that, when purchasing dots in the Annals, the same Skill specialty can be purchased up to three times.

**Caldaria:** At one dot, the Caldarium provides a place of social power for the Nosferatu: all Haunts within the Caldarium gain +1 to rolls involving Expression, Persuasion, Socialize or Subterfuge. At three dots, this bonus increases to +2, and in addition all present gain the Meditative Mind Merit. At five dots, the bonus increases to +3, and a dark serenity stays with the Haunt even after he leaves the bathhouse. For the rest of the night, he gains a +2 bonus against any kind of frenzy.

**Catacombs:** Navigating the tunnels necessitates an extended Wits + Investigation roll, with ten successes required. Each roll is equivalent to one hour's worth of wandering. Those who do not have dots in the Necropolis Merit suffer a penalty to this roll equal to the owners' total dots in Catacombs. Those who do possess any dots in the Merit, however, may still have to succeed on the roll. Even the Haunts may find themselves periodically lost in the dark and distorted heart of their own Necropolis.

The Catacombs are almost unremittingly dark. Standard Perception rolls are hampered by a standard -3 penalty, and the "Fighting Blind" rules (p. 166, World of Darkness Rulebook) may apply at Storyteller discretion.

**Dark Temple:** COMPLETE OVERHAUL TO CONNECT TO THE LYGOS/YAGNATIA EXPIE

## Being Nosferatu

The Nosferatu loses Humanity like any other vampire, by committing sins that distance him from human norms and mores. But yet again the question is, how does this feel? For the Gangrel, the loss of Humanity is something that pushes the vampire closer to her Beast—and while this could be said of all vampires, for the Savage it represents a slide toward wildness, toward an untamed brutality. For the Daeva it offers a seduction to sin and perversion: her Beast manifests as the inescapable allure of one's Vice.

A Haunt, however, finds that his Humanity fades with a whole different feel. Yes, it still represents a closing proximity to one's Beast, but what does that mean? One Nosferatu describes it in terms of being drawn into a spider's embrace, a thickening cocoon of silk binding the flesh and mind. See, losing Humanity is literally that for the Nosferatu. One's humanness fades, replaced by the alien strangeness exhibited by all of their kind.

With each degeneration, you as player are encouraged to come up with a new way in which your character separates from the human herd. Some new foible? Or some lost habit? Perhaps your Haunt, upon losing a dot of Humanity, now fails to include any kind of human politeness in his speech: gone is any semblance of please or thank you or any human vocal cues at all. It's all cold language, direct and affronting. Alternately, perhaps it goes the other way. Now your character is all politeness, manners performed at a truly uncomfortable level—even as she's slowly draining some club kid of his blood she's all "Please may I drink you dry?" and "Thank you for this bountiful offering."

These don't need to be mechanical in nature and don't necessarily need to reflect a gained derangement. It's simply some strange new manifestation of her strangeness. Maybe now she smiles all the time. Perhaps she destroys her body in unnerving little ways: biting off fingernails, pulling flesh from her dry lips, scratching at her scalp until a faint trickle of muddy blood drizzles down the bridge of her nose. It could even be that her posture is now perfect (stock straight all the time) or ruined (bent at a cock-eyed angle even when running). Loss of Humanity is literally a widening gulf between the Nosferatu character and her once-humanness. How it manifests is in your hands.