

Contents of the Book of Nod

Vampires - or Kindred, as they call themselves - exist for centuries and often seem unchanging to mortal eyes. Even Kindred society, however, has undergone evolution, upheaval and strife. Let us look at history as the Kindred view it, that we might better understand their actions tonight. What follows is a summary of the informations taken by the legendary *Book of Nod*, but nobody is sure it does exist...

Caine and the First Nights

According to Kindred myth, the first of their kind was Caine, the first murderer. For his crime, Caine was cursed by God and thereby transformed into a vampire. Exiled from his people, Caine was forced to stalk the fringes of civilization, fearful of the sun and ravenous for blood. In his loneliness, Caine came upon a mighty witch named Lilith, who had been Adam's first wife. Lilith taught Caine how to use his blood for mighty magic (indeed, a few heretics claim that Lilith, not Caine, was the First Vampire). Lilith taught Caine many things, including how to use his blood to evoke mystic powers - and how to create others of his kind.

The Second Generation and the First City

At first Caine refused to beget, believing it wrong to curse the world with others of his kind. But eventually he grew lonely and brought three others into the vampiric fold. These three in turn begat 13 more, and these voracious monsters went among the early peoples of the world, carelessly feeding and using mortals as puppets in their sibling feuds. Caine, outraged by this behavior, forbade the creation of any more progeny. Gathering his childer and grandchilder to him, Caine built a great city - the First City in the world - and here vampires and mortals coexisted in peace.

The Antediluvians and the Clans

It could not last. Caine's childer squabbled for their sire's affections, and once again the mortals were used as pawns in the feud. Finally the city was thrown down - some say a natural disaster was the cause; others, that a spurned childe's vengeful sorcery precipitated the cataclysm. Caine vanished into the wastes, never to be heard from again. The three vampires of the Second Generation likewise disappeared into the mists of legend. But Caine's 13 grandchilder, free from restraint, began breeding new vampires with abandon. The 13 vampires became known as Antediluvians, and their childer, created in their images, inherited the Antediluvians' magical gifts and curses. Thus were the clans formed.

The Dark Ages

The clans spread across the world, sowing discord and misery. Though each successive generation of vampires proved weaker than the last, they made up for it with greater numbers. In the ziggurats of Babylon, in the palaces of Crete, in the tribunals of Rome, vampires ruled as shadowy tyrants, forever using mortals as food and unwitting soldiers. Vampire warred with vampire, clan with clan, and thus - from the ancient rivalries of the First City - was born the great Jyhad, which is still fought today. The Kindred reached their worst excesses during the early Middle Ages. During this period, many vampires ruled openly, smothering peasant and lord alike beneath their nocturnal grip. The vampiric population reached unhealthy numbers, and it seemed that the Earth would belong to the Kindred forever.

The Anarch Revolt

Again, it could not last. The Children of Caine, in their hubris, began to flaunt their power flagrantly. Terrified peasants whispered of the monsters in their midst - and the Church began to listen. The reports of a few horrified priests spawned a frenzied Inquisition, and vengeful mortals rose up in a tide of fire and blood. Though individually much more powerful than mortals, even the mightiest vampires could not stand against the humans' sheer numbers; vampire after vampire was dragged from its lair and hurled into fire or sunlight.

In the throes of the Inquisition, a current of revolt gripped the Children of Caine. Younger vampires, who were being deployed as sacrificial lambs by terrified elders, began to rise up against their sires and masters. In Eastern Europe, a group of vampires learned how to sever the mystic bonds through which sires controlled their childer. Soon all of Europe seethed beneath a nocturnal revolt, as rebellious childer threw off the yoke of their masters. Between the Inquisition and the revolt of the vampire "anarchs," it seemed as though the Kindred would not survive.

The Camarilla

And so, in the 15th century, a council was called. Seven of the 13 clans united in an organization called the Camarilla. With its advantage of numbers, the Camarilla suppressed the anarchs and agreed to exist behind a great Masquerade.

Never more shall vampires rule openly, the lords of the Camarilla decreed. We shall hide among the mortals, and conceal our natures from our prey, and in a few decades the mortals will know vampires only as myths. Thus, the Masquerade was born, and the Inquisition gradually forgot its original target. Ruled as it is by a fractious sort of parliamentarianism, the Camarilla is slow to act and often indecisive in the face of threats; when it brings its combined might to bear, however, the Camarilla is virtually unstoppable. Those anarchs who would not join the Camarilla were driven into the wastes, from which they would later emerge as the dread **Sabbat** cult. With the discovery of the New World and the dawn of science, humanity gradually forgot about the Kindred, relegating them to the status of childhood legends.

But, though hidden, vampires were still quite real. The wars of the Jyhad raged on, though the nights of open battle were replaced by sudden ambushes and maneuvering of human pawns. Weaving their webs throughout the ever-expanding cities, the Kindred eschewed their previous games for more methodical but no less deadly ones.

Gehenna

Increasingly, vampires speak of Gehenna, the long-prophesied night of apocalypse when the most ancient vampires, the mythical Antediluvians, will rise from their hidden lairs to devour all the younger vampires. This Gehenna, so the Kindred say, will presage the end of the world, as vampires and mortals alike are consumed in an inexorable tide of blood. Some vampires strive to prevent Gehenna, some fatalistically await it, and still others consider it a myth. Those who believe in Gehenna, however, say that the end time comes very soon - perhaps in a matter of years.

The Modern Nights

And the wars continued down the centuries, and continue still. The Jyhad rages as it always has though skyscrapers take the place of castles, machine-guns and missiles replace swords and torches, and stock portfolios substitute for vaults of gold, the game remains the same. Kindred battles Kindred, clan battles clan, Camarilla battles Sabbat, as they have for eons. Vampiric feuds begun during the nights of Charlemagne play themselves out on the streets of New York City; an insult whispered in the court of the Sun King may find itself answered by a corporate takeover in Sao Paolo. The ever-swelling cities provide countless opportunities for feeding, powermongering and war.

A mesmerizing glance and a few words provide a cunning vampire with access to all the wealth, power and servants he could desire. Some powerful vampires are capable of implanting posthypnotic suggestions or commands in mortal's minds, then causing the mortals to forget the vampire's presence. In this way, vampires can easily acquire legions of unwitting slaves. More than a few "public servants" and corporate barons secretly answer to vampire masters.