

The Embrace

There is no fear as your life is fading away. You feel an unexpected comfort in the arms of the being that is taking your life. You experience a surprising calm as it all disappears. Drop by drop, it takes your fears, your worries, your dreams, your joy.

Then, your conscience vanishes, and all that's left is blackness.

You open your eyes. There is a lingering feeling that something is missing, but something else immediately overrides it. It is an electric purr that stirs your senses awake. Coming back from Death is slow. You feel sluggish as you become aware of the room you are in, the company you share. Above and around you are slow swinging hunks of meat, like the bodies of that deathly migration. Beside you are others, also escaping Death's shore.

*urge: more pressing, more acute. As you begin to sit up, you feel it for the first time: **Hunger**. And you know, somehow, as you experience the terrible pangs of this *Hunger*, that you are no longer human.*

Introductions

At this point, the characters **open their eyes** and see. Allow the players to describe their characters, to explain the way they are dressed, and to describe outstanding physical traits that may come from their strengths and weaknesses. First, we'll focus on their immediate feeling of **Hunger**, and then their surroundings. They are actually trapped in a **walk-in freezer**, but they will discover this soon enough.

RULES EXPLANATIONS AND ADVICE

Next you'll find the first of many rules explanations, which will be formatted like this. Depending on your preference, you can read these to yourself, and explain as needed, or you may even read them out loud. If you do so, don't read indications to yourself, in italics.

We'll start off by discussing **Hunger** and the **Blood**.

The Hunger, Part 1

Even as you all sit still in the cold, quiet room, and you start making out the shapes around you, you feel your first Hunger. It is different from any hunger you have ever felt. Like a person starving to death who suddenly smells food, you sense the blood and you know that it will ease this terrible, hollow pain inside you. How will you deal with your first Hunger?

You smell blood and recognize it as exactly that: the aroma reaches out to you, sweet and tempting. Your eyes fall upon the meat hooks that decorate the room, searching for the choice meal you are craving. There are whole animal carcasses hanging from the hooks. Pork, cattle... And yet your gaze locks onto a piece hung in the middle of the room. A brunette mop of hair dangles upside down, together with the stark realization of what your body craves: the corpse of a man wearing blue jeans and a t-shirt. You understand that there's more to this room, but right now you can only focus on him.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BLOOD

Hunger is an ever present and persistent feature of **Kindred**. Every night, upon waking from their day sleep, vampires must **Rouse** their Blood. We'll represent this with **Hunger dice**.

Give each one of your players two Hunger dice now.

Hunger Dice are a tangible representation of their characters' Hunger, and they'll have to roll them throughout the scenario. Once the players get to look at the Kindred Profile sheet, they will be able to track their Hunger there, too.

Ask your players to roll a black die.

If you roll a blank face, take an additional **Hunger Die**. If the check comes out as a ♀ or ♂, maintain the current number of **Hunger Dice**.

Rouse checks must also be made any time that there is a risk of gaining additional **Hunger**. This includes **Blush of Life, Blood Surge** or using **Disciplines** (these concepts will be discussed later). Whenever these checks are made, the result determines whether **Hunger** increases, but the intended effect (e.g. powering a Discipline) will occur **regardless** of the result. In other words, you still accomplish your goal, but only at the risk of growing hungrier.

All characters will always have at least **one** Hunger die. The only way to eliminate that last Hunger die comes with moral complications, as we'll learn later in this story.

For more information, please take a look at the **Reference Guide**, p. 12.

WHAT IS THE HUNGER?

Whenever discussing the Hunger throughout this scenario, you can give out any of the following. Refer to this sidebar whenever discussing the topic.

- **Hunger** is a psychological experience as much as a physical one. A hungry vampire doesn't feel their stomach knotting, rather, they become irritable, more prone to violence, and more intent on sating their hunger. Vampires at Hunger 4 or 5 risk losing control and cannot focus on anything other than the hunt.
- The first time they taste human blood, the still-human part of them will recoil in disgust, but the Beast wants nothing more than to drink every victim dry.
- Feeding is an ecstatic experience for both predator and prey (called the Kiss by Kindred).
- Humans can survive some blood loss, but not much. A vampire who loses control and feeds too deeply might kill their prey. This is the core horror of Vampire: characters must risk someone else's life to sustain their own. Establish the value of each life so risked.
- Vampires can instantly heal bite marks they make by licking the wound.
- Characters may end up developing a rapport with their prey and adopting them as contacts or mortal allies.

As the rolls are resolved and everyone has either **two** or **three** Hunger dice, read the entry below.

Read one or both paragraphs, depending on how many Hunger dice a player has in front of them.

The Hunger, Part 2

(Two Hunger Dice)

First you were drowsy from waking, but now the blood smell has snapped you into focus. You feel your first Hunger significantly. Maybe just a small sip from the dead body would ease this newfound desire. Maybe the animals could

give you enough sustenance to carry on. You can resist it if you choose. Maybe it is shame of defiling the dead, how the others in the room would see you, or the dread of drinking blood that holds you back. Maybe you just surrender to your Hunger. Beggars can't be choosers.

(Three Hunger Dice)

Your Hunger is coloring all of your thoughts, tainting everything you see, hear and smell. You're beckoned by the fresh body offered to you. Its blood smells stale, but there's also a sweetness in it. You want to drink. What will these others think of you? That doesn't matter. What are you becoming? You may have to think about that later. Right now, feeding is what you want to do the most..

The players have a choice to feed from the animal carcasses or the hanging corpse. There is no type of identification on this person. He appears to be only recently dead and still has blood in his veins, as if left there to test them. Even characters with three Hunger dice can resist this degrading act, but they may not want to.

Feeding from him or from the animal carcasses will not reduce their Hunger. Blood from dead bodies doesn't provide sustenance to most Vampires. The aftermath of this fruitless action should probably disgust the players whose characters partook in it.

Exploring the Room

Now that the players tried to sate their Hunger or resisted the urge, they start becoming more aware of their surroundings. This is a great opportunity for the players to practice their skills. Doing so will help the players better understand how to proceed

ROLLING DICE

Many situations in the game call for rolling dice. To do so, gather a number of **dice** equal to the number of **dots** a character has in the relevant traits. If a character has any **Hunger dice**, replace that number of **regular dice** (black) with **Hunger Dice** (red). For example, if **Blake** wants to **Investigate**, this action will use their **Intelligence + Investigation**, which in this case totals **6**. The player rolls **6** dice. **Blake** has **2** Hunger dice, though, so they would replace **2** of their regular dice (black) with **2 Hunger Dice** (red). Blake rolls **4** black dice and **2** red hunger dice, and checks the symbols rolled.

Any die that shows , , or  counts as a **success**. Blank sides and  results should be ignored. The total number of successes must equal or exceed the **difficulty** of a test. Any successes in excess of the difficulty are called **margin**, and may improve the outcome.

Whenever the difficulty of a test in this story is not mentioned, default to 2.

ACTIONS

When calling out for a test, the easiest way is to call for the preset, default **Actions**. In this story, we're using these as shorthand for the types of tests that may come up most frequently, to save you and your players time in calculating dice pools until you get comfortable with that.

All characters have a number of actions which will consist of a total to roll and the **Attribute** and **Skill** combination that composes it. In the previous example, just call for **Blake** to roll **Investigate**, and don't worry about adding these values, as it's already done for you.

You will have to adjudicate when calling for tests not covered under the **Action** logic. Essentially, any **Attribute + Skill** combination is possible. If a character has no dots in a skill, they can always roll with just their **Attribute**.

Use your best judgment and don't be afraid to make mistakes. This is how we learn, after all.

There is a **Master List** of all player characters' actions in the **Reference Guide**, p.14 under Appendix I, in case you need to refer to it. This way, you can see which character is best at what type of action and you can call them out with suggestions.

with the challenge of escaping the room. For this, ask your players to look at the second page, or **Character Profile**, of their character's sheet. This will reveal a host of information, but they should focus on their **Actions** first.

Ask them to look at them and, in the meantime, read on **Rolling dice** and then prepare yourself to go about **Exploring the Walk-in Freezer**. You can explain to them how rolls work in your own words, read this text out loud, or just wait for the moment to call a roll and explain the procedure as you go.

Now that we know the theory of rolling dice, let's apply it investigating the scene.

Exploring the Walk-in Freezer

Your eyes begin to adjust to the darkness and poor lighting. Shapes of animal carcasses decorate your surroundings. The stench in the room is difficult to take for most of you.

If Blake is Present

This is positively unbearable to you. Your whole body reacts negatively to the stench. You want to throw up, but your stomach is empty. You need to get out of this place as soon as possible.

However, you quickly realize that you can hold your breath with no consequence. For a moment, you take in that breathing — something you took for granted and was so natural for all of your life — is now something you can choose to do, or in this case, choose not to do, and in doing so avoiding the worst of the stench.

The chains clank under the weight of the hanging meat, and you can see the still air clinging to the flesh. The visible fog partially manages to obscure your vision under the cold, hospital-like lighting, causing you to navigate the room carefully to avoid bumping into the

adorned meathooks. As you walk, you realize there are streaks of dried blood on the floor, and small piles of rotten meat, which you can't identify as animal or human. There are also several hospital-like blood bags. They smell of blood, but they are definitely empty.

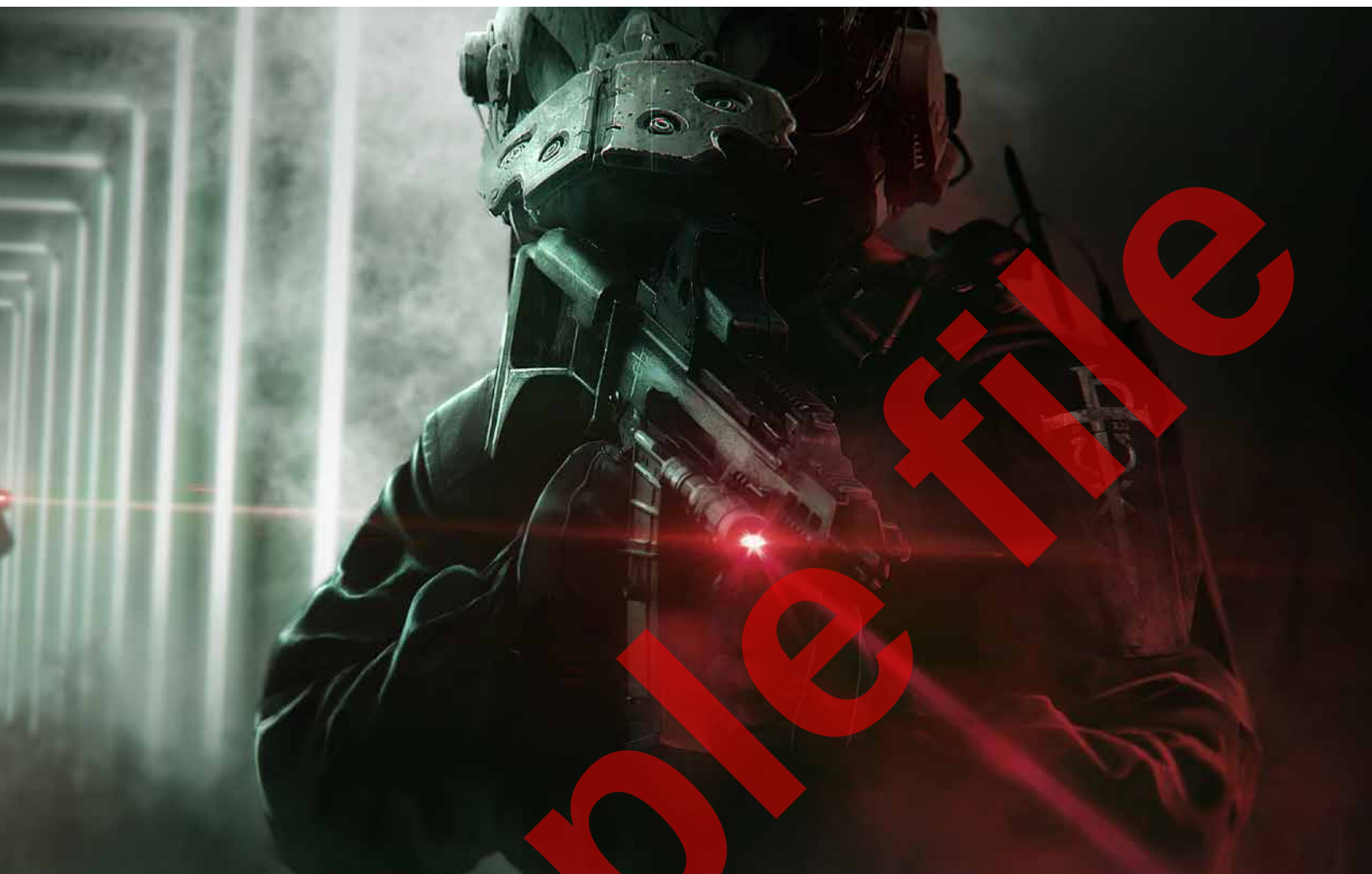
As you reach the walls, you realize they are made of steel, partially covered in patches of frost. However, your skin doesn't stick to the walls if you try to touch them. Your body is no longer warm.

There is one door at the other end of the room, and if one of you presses your ear to the door, you think you can hear movement on the other side.

At this point, players may use **Actions**, to learn more about the walk-in freezer and its purpose. Ask your players to roll their **Investigate** action, with a **difficulty of 3**. Depending on how well they roll, they can find various clues. Collectively, they should be able to figure all of this out:

- There are barely **hidden cameras** on the ceiling. These are clearly functioning.
- Considering the **body found earlier**, this might indicate that the purpose of all of this is to **watch them and test them**.
- The **inside handle** of the freezer door has been deliberately removed.





The Escape

After the players have investigated the room, they will probably want to try and find a way out. This is their time to shine, work together, and exercise their creativity to escape. Reward the players for their ingenuity in this situation. Trust your players' creativity and keep an open mind.

SAMPLE OPTIONS TO ESCAPE:

- They may use a **meat hook** on the dismantled door mechanism to pry it open with a **Lockpick** Action (Difficulty 2).
- They can use the cold pieces of meat as battering rams to force the door open. Use the **Attack** Action (Difficulty 4) for this. Using supernatural force (**Blood Surge**, see below) can make this easier. **Terry** and **Marsh** could be particularly good at this.
- They can use the same principles to dismantle the hinges of the door.

Ideally, the players should decide on what to try. If they get stuck and frustrated, suggest investigating a bit more, or simply suggest one of the options provided, so the game can move forward.

Given that some of these tests may be difficult, they can be assisted by **Blood Surges** and **Willpower** expenditure (see below). For some characters, certain Actions have **Discipline** powers factored in. When performing these Actions, or if they rely on **Blood Surges**, you can suggest that player characters feel they are performing supernaturally well on them. **Disciplines** will be revealed soon.

WILLPOWER

All characters have a Trait called **Willpower**. This determines their force of will and mental resources. A player has the option to check one of the Willpower checkboxes to re-roll up to three (3) **Regular Dice** (black) to improve a test.

This can be done once per roll. Once all checkboxes are crossed, the character is out of Willpower. You can learn more about this Trait in the **Reference Guide**, p. 8.

BLOOD SURGE

Kindred's Blood (often referred to as **vitae** by them) has innate powers. One of the abilities it gives is known as **Blood Surge**. This ability allows players to add one die to any test, increasing their chances of success.

First, the player makes a **Rouse Check** to see if they gain **Hunger**. Regardless of the result, they get **one additional die** for any test (including all Action tests). They can do this once per roll.

Both **Blood Surge** and **Willpower** may be used for the same roll.

You can learn more about this ability in the **Reference Guide**, p. 13.

The Kitchen

As you all pile out of the frozen holding cell, you find yourself in a kitchen that is bright, reasonably clean, and it features the type of equipment you'd expect in a high-end restaurant, and you think that's where you are. The contrast with the meat locker you just exited may give you pause. As your eyes look for an exit, you find two: there's a set of doors that no doubt leads to the main room of the restaurant, and a side door with a green emergency exit sign.

THE RESTAURANT

Player characters may want to explore the restaurant. At this point, they probably will not be able to, but you need to have information in advance in case it's asked.

- *If the player of a character such as Blake's claims they may know this restaurant, you may rule that they recognize it as The Enchanted, an upscale restaurant, which has remained closed for the past two or three months with no clear explanation.*
- *The kitchen is well stocked though some of the food has expired.*
- *Even fresh If they try to eat the food, the player characters will immediately regurgitate it. In most cases, Kindred cannot eat food. Garlic has no special effect.*

As they explore the kitchen, they run into a reluctant guard. Use your discretion as a Storyteller to decide how the guard confronts them. Depending on how it plays out, the guard may even help them escape at this stage. If the guard aids them, use their generic dice pool for any roll. Mortals never have Hunger dice.

One or more of the characters know the guard. Choose one or two players that were the least active so far and read the corresponding text below Parker's description. These indicate that these player characters were somehow related to Parker in their Mortal life.

When describing the guard, you can decide their gender and adjust pronouns accordingly. If the guard shared a prison cell with another player character, you probably may want to adjust their gender to match.

PARKER, RELUCTANT GUARD

An ex-con, Parker had a hard time getting a legitimate job, and this is their first night watching this restaurant. Those who hired them sounded strange, but the money was good, and there was even a small bonus up-front.

Dice Pool: 4

Parker's Worst Night

A guard seems to be patrolling the grounds, possibly alerted by the noise you made exiting the walk-in freezer. Armed with a flashlight and nightstick, the guard is wearing an ordinary uniform which seems to fit them badly. The look on their face suggests that they probably would like to be anywhere but here. Then, they see you and shine their flashlight in your face!

Read depending on the characters in play:

I've Seen This Guard Before...

Terry or Rain: You recognize the guard! You remember them from your time in prison. Their name is **Parker**. They were also an inmate, and you always had a friendly relationship. You are both surprised to see each other in this situation. They don't act hostile. Instead, they raise their hands, obviously willing to talk this through.

Blake or Alex: The guard is vaguely familiar. You met them a few years back. You used to go to the same parties, but they never seemed to belong there. They were selling drugs to rich partiers. What happened to them? You glimpse a look of recognition in their eyes. Maybe they'd rather sort this out by talking rather than fighting?

Sam or Jay: The guard looks familiar to you: they're distant relative! You remember their name: **Parker**. You haven't seen them in ages. The look in their eyes show that they recognize you too. They say your name, almost smiling. Attacking you or your friends would never cross their mind.

Marsh: You know this guard. You grew up in the same area. You trained martial arts together. Their name is... **Parker**. You were always better than them, until they quit, and started selling drugs. Parker clearly does not recognize you, but if you bring up stories from your past, Parker finally does so, and mentions how much you've changed.

At this point, the characters may interact with **Parker**. Depending on how the interaction goes, they may even try to use powers on the guard that they're beginning to discover they have.

If any of the characters tries to start a conversation based on their knowing **Parker** from their mortal life, **Parker** could just agree to let them walk away and let them be, or even agree to help them. On the other hand, depending on the approach taken by the player characters, **Parker** may try to run away if threatened.

The **Actions** suggested below are **Contests**, opposed by **Parker's** relatively weak dice pool of 4. They are probably easy wins for your players, but can still be exciting. In other situations you may choose to "take half" instead (see below), which, in this example, would make the difficulty 2.

CONTESTS AND TAKING HALF

Sometimes, two characters will be in situations in which they are directly or indirectly opposing one another. In this case, both sides roll (players roll for their characters, you roll for those under your control). Sometimes it will be the same dice pool and in other cases it will be differing pools.

Both pools are rolled at the same time, and any ties go to the acting character.

If you wish to reduce dice rolling, you may divide the dice pool of the opposing character by two, rounding down, and consider that number to be the successes rolled.

At this stage, some of the supernatural aspects of characters start coming to the fore, as their **Blood** is revealing itself to them.

Read Depending on the Characters in Play and How the Scene Is Playing Out:

Alex, Blake or Terry: Parker is caught off guard. They weren't expecting to see you breaking free, and even less to recognize someone among you. Your **Blood** whispers to you. Somehow, you know you could make them sympathize even more with you or be terrified by you. You can use your **Persuade** and make them feel in **Awe** of you. On the other hand, you may use your **Intimidate** action to **Daunt** them. As you do this, you feel supernaturally charming and manipulative.

Alex or Jay: The guard has just seen you. Your **Blood** tells you that you can make them forget the last ten minutes and just walk away. You instinctively know you can **Cloud Parker's Memory** by asking the guard to just forget.

Alex or Sam: Even though the situation is uneasy, your **Blood** tells you that you can manipulate the guard's mind with a single word. You can give Parker a one-word command to **Compel** them to do something. This command must not be harmful to them.

Marsh: You notice that if you stand very still, or move cautiously, the guard can no longer see you, which gives you a great tactical edge. You feel covered in a **Cloak of Shadows** and your **Unseen Passage** makes you invisible to the guard.

Rain: The **Beast** in your **Blood** whispers that you can make this lowly guard cower in fear from you. You can look at them with **Eyes of the Beast**, which are a terrifying red, and help you see in the dark. You also feel you're able to turn your hands into claws, **Feral Weapons**, to further startle the guard.

If they start talking, **Parker** explains that they just got this job, but it is not something they particularly like or are even trained for. Their background as a convicted small-time drug dealer didn't make it easy to land other jobs, though.

If the characters are determined to fight the guard, or even on feeding from them, the battle will probably be fast and brutal. Roll 4 dice for **Parker**.

In the extreme event that someone feeds off Parker, draining the guard completely lowers their **Hunger** to zero. In this case, make a mental note of which characters committed this crime and give them **Stains** when these come up later. **Stains** will be defined later in this scenario. For the time being, make a note that the guilty party got 1 **Stain**.

ONE-ROLL CONFLICT

Whenever a conflict seems very easy to solve, you can use the **One-Roll Conflict** system. The players just need to roll as many dice as their **Attacking** Action value and get or exceed a specific number of successes.

That difficulty is **2** for a **significantly weaker** opponent, **4** for an **even match**, and **6** for a **clearly superior** foe.

Encourage the players to think creatively. Any player that declares they use their **Disciplines**, did some preparation, or uses some creative edge to their attack, lowers the difficulty of their roll by **1**, or **2** if they did all of these things.

As long as one player's roll reaches or exceeds that difficulty, the player characters win the confrontation. However, even winning the battle may result in their taking some damage. To determine this, double the roll's **Difficulty** and **subtract all successes** (not only the **Margin**) from it. Any positive result is applied as damage to the attackers.

For more details on how One-Roll Conflicts work, see p.10 of the **Reference Guide**.