

BOOK OF THE
KINDRED

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Book of the Kindred

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FOREWORD

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MARK REIN·HAGEN

I'm the guy who made all this shit up.ⁱ All the stuff about blood, sex and the undead, and the dross like “the beast within” and “lest a beast I become.” It was, and is, all for a Storytelling game called **Vampire: The Masquerade**. Sometimes I just don't understand what happened to my little game; how it got so out of hand and became, in its own weird way, something of a cultural phenomenon, whatever that is.ⁱⁱ

It has gone from a Storytelling game to a line of novels to a computer game to a television show — **Kindred: The Embraced**. People as famous as Francis Ford Coppola have asked me to sign their books.ⁱⁱⁱ (Cool, huh?) The clan concept is about to be stolen by every wanna-be west of the Rockies. Whether it's the Ventrue, Brujah or Toreador, the tale is always the same (with hand to forehead): “Life is unlivable, unlife is worse, but at least I'm a cool cat.”

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that it is truly bizarre to listen to someone you don't know from Adam bandy about words and ideas that once belonged to you.^{iv} The ideas that make up the World of

ⁱ Me in the plural. (i.e., With the help of many brilliant friends more talented than I. Creativity is hiding your sources.)

ⁱⁱ I could probably come up with some sort of definition for C.P., but I just hate people who don't express some minor degree of humility, no matter how fake.

ⁱⁱⁱ It's true! It's just that he had no clue who I was... but someday he will!

^{iv} And equally bizarre to hear them claim those ideas as their own, as if no one would know. Some people just don't know how to hide their sources, I guess.



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Darkness and the culture of the Kindred were once idle dreams and fantasies — *my* idle dreams and fantasies — and now they have taken on a life of their own. People I don't even like talk to me about Kindred and Embraces, and some even call me up in the middle of the night and drone on about diablerie and the Sabbat.^v People, for some reason, have paid attention, and to tell the truth it freaks me out.^{vi}

I can't decide whether to be proud or horrified — part of me wishes these ideas still belonged solely to me, so I could fiddle with them more. I don't like to set anything in stone, and I don't like well-aged thoughts that no longer bend to my will. I hate that this world of the undead is now beyond my control and I can't do my will upon it. Others use it, live it and guide it, and there is little room for any of its creators anymore (we have the wrong instincts, you see).^{vii} It now exists more in the dreams and fantasies of *others* than in my own. It no longer belongs to me, or really, anyone.^{viii} If some little old lady in Topeka watches the show and gets more of a rise out of it than I do, who does it really belong to?

^v Though sometimes it's an agent from CAA or Paradigm who wants to talk about setting you up with some Hollywood "cool cats." Yes, Yes, Yes! Do me, Walt!

^{vi} That's not to say that telling the truth is my particular forte....

^{vii} As in me. I only like the starts of things, when everything is raw and new; endings are always so bloody dull. (Or lets put it this way: Some people just don't have a talent for detail or dedication, but do have the gift of gab).

^{viii} This heresy cannot go by without the reminder that, of course, all White Wolf copyrights and trademarks still stand.

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So, you might ask, why am I writing this insipid Foreword?^{ix} Well there are many reasons, but the only important one is that I enjoy preaching nearly as much as my father does,^x and the editor told me to have 1500 words by tomorrow morning or else. So, you'll either have to bear with me or skip onto the real meat — the rest of the book, that is. You may or may not be familiar with this material, but remember, this is the original stuff.

Damn, it seems like yesterday (or perhaps another lifetime altogether) that the folks behind this material all lived together in a rotted-out, flea-infested house with 300 boxes of unsold books sitting on the front porch. We didn't have any money, but we had each other.... Well, we had a book to write and a company to run at least.

Oh, it was tragic. I had no car, no bike, no quarters for arcades and no beer. For nine months, everything in my life centered around the twisted little world that spun around in my head. My parents, though they won't admit it now, thought I was heading down the freaky highway of doom, but my grandparents, bless their souls, lent us the money to pay for the first print run of books.^{xi} We were in business!

The first print run sold out in a few weeks, so we printed another one, and we kept doing it. Next thing we knew, we had built a real

^{ix} Truth is, I own part of the company that printed this book. (White Wolf, that is. Note our fine collection of Storytelling games and classic and contemporary fiction, no doubt shamelessly advertised in the back of this book.)

^x He's a Lutheran minister. Ironic, eh, me being a horror writer and all? Nudge, nudge; wink, wink.

^{xi} Of course, my partner's parents always forked up some cash, too, but he can talk about that in his own damn Foreword.... When he finally gets one. Ha!



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publishing company, probably the only one in the country owned by people under 50, much less run by a staff of people almost all under the age of 30. People liked our complex, convoluted world of clashing egos and passions, and its success led to even more books and the television show that you watch today.^{xii} Whether it's wraiths or changelings, Moorcock or Ellison, we have a book for you. In a few short years, we've gone from Dunkin' Donuts to smoked salmon, from watching 90210 to meeting Tori herself in all her greatness.

So, that's the sordid tale of how all this folklore and mythology got slung together and how it made a bunch of money.^{xiii} I'd go on; the story isn't done, but my word count is nearly up. So, whoever you are, please find something interesting in the following pages or none of it will have been worthwhile. Enjoy it if you can, despise it if you can't, but please, please, please — recvd 2.3^{xiv}

Psssst. Remember none of this shit is true. We made it all up. Pass it along.

^{xii} So (warm smile), why don't you check out the back of this book for descriptions of some of the other books that we have available.

^{xiii} Boy, I'd love to see some of that dough — I could eat enough Chubby Hubby to choke a cow!

^{xiv} A wasted mind is worse than a wasted life. Remember, your job is to process information and pass on what's good to the next person. If you like this book or anything in it — or any other book, for that matter — pass it along, Bozo! If you don't get the idea, read *The Lucifer Principle* (but ignore *The Turner Diaries*).