

CHILDREN OF THE BLOOD

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Second-Best Smile

By Eddy Webb

Baptiste leaned over the wooden table covered in stickers and coffee stains, looking into the young man's eyes. "Come now," Baptiste said, dragging a dark-skinned finger across the pale skin of the man's cheek. "Surely we can head inside and find something better to do with our time." The young man chuckled shyly as Baptiste pretended to sip his overpriced coffee. The vampire's long dreadlocks danced across the back of the hard metal chair as he planned the next step in his seduction.

It was late, probably too late at night to be sitting outside a coffee house. But here in Atlanta, the artistic area of Little Five Points was always best when it was just getting late. It positively hummed with energy. Homeless people begged for change from outraged liberals sporting flannel and carefully-cultivated beards. In the distance, Baptiste heard a DJ spinning records from a collapsible stand clashing with scratchy, bike-mounted Bluetooth speakers blaring the latest K-pop. From where he sat, he could easily see two tattoo parlors and three bars,

all with lights on and people passing through the doors, shouting and laughing. It was a riotous storm of humanity, ready to fight or fuck in equal measure.

He idly picked at an EAT MORE FIBER sticker peeling from the table. *One more round of toying with him, I think, and then I'll feed well.* Baptiste adjusted his clothes, a careful blend of counterculture and casual designed to fit in without attracting too much of the wrong kind of attention. He put on his third-best smile as the young man blushed and fumbled with his smartphone, muttering something about cancelling some plans with friends.

Which is when Roberto showed up to ruin everything.

The Diva instantly recognized the Warlock — or as Baptiste preferred to think of him, *that* Warlock — from recent court gatherings. Roberto was some kind of computer programmer obsessed with chaos theory and crank conspiracies in equal measure. Always wore a trimmed

beard and T-shirts that looked like he was buried in them. Baptiste avoided the Tremere in general, and this one in particular, after being cornered during a particularly boring gathering of Kindred and told at length about how the entire infrastructure of the Internet was teetering on the edge of total collapse. As if Baptiste didn't have to deal with 1999 once already.

Roberto dropped a tastefully distressed leather laptop bag on the table and stared at the nameless young man. "Take a hike," he said in clipped tones. "I need to talk to Baptiste." The young man looked confused, glancing between the two Kindred. After a moment, Roberto slapped the phone out of the man's hands. "I said fuck off," he screamed. Baptiste's lost dinner hastily claimed his phone from the ground, flipped Roberto off from behind, and walked into the late-night crowd.

"Good evening, Roberto," Baptiste said with scathing sarcasm. "I see your charm and wit have not diminished since the last time we met."

The Tremere ignored the jibe, pulling his laptop from his bag. Typing on a few keys for a moment, he turned the screen for Baptiste to see, but carefully kept it from the view of other people carousing the area. Baptiste only needed to see a glimpse of the orgy to recognize his own face and body.

"Hello Baptiste," he said finally. "We should talk about your membership in the Nephilim."

...

LAST WEEK

"We all ... rejoice ... in the blood of the Nephilim!"

Baptiste thrust one more time before stepping away from the writhing mass of naked flesh. He affectionately stroked the back of one of his paramours as he watched for a moment. The act of physical sex was less interesting than the lead up, but it was often inspiring. The chase, the flirting, the dance, it was all a wonderful way to feed, and an enjoyable pursuit in its own right. But he was blocked on his latest artistic creation, and he hoped the collection of beautiful young flesh spread out before him would give the right creative spark to finish his latest work.

He walked over to the chaise lounge, where several equally beautiful mortals lay, exhausted by the combination of sex and blood loss. He sat down beside them, examining his options. He was debating between tasting a curvaceous woman and a heavily-tattooed non-binary morsel when his eye was attracted to another woman walking around the edge of the orgy.

She wore extraordinarily little, although more than anyone else here, if Baptiste was being honest. She was whispering and laughing with a number of influential Nephilim, the

hosts of this little bacchanal. It wasn't her grace that drew his attention, or her body. It wasn't the green, feathered mask she wore around her eyes, although that was quite fetching. Instead, his eye was drawn to the elaborate, ornate tattoo that covered her back. A gorgeous tattoo of a giant cobra.

...

NOW

"Gorgeous tattoos in the photo," Baptiste said, glibly. "Nice composition overall. Where'd you get it?"

Roberto closed the lid of the laptop. "I'm a digital investigator," he said. "I find information other people want to keep hidden."

"That must be hard when vampires can't even use a cell phone," Baptiste said, dramatically yawning into his hand.

Roberto stiffened as the shot hit home, and his terra-cotta skin briefly flushed in anger. The Tremere shook his head and stared into Baptiste's eyes, trying to resume the thread of his tirade. "Look, we're both members of you-know-what."

"You mean the Camarilla?" Baptiste said, derailing Roberto again as he smiled his third-best smile.

"Shut up," the Tremere said through gritted teeth. "You don't know who's listening."

Baptiste got up. "You're the one who confronted me in an outdoor café. But if you don't want to talk...."

"We're both members of you-know-what," Roberto continued. "And our local community leader frowns on membership in cults."

Baptiste shrugged, but sat back down.

...

Baptiste stood back up and walked over to the new arrival. "Excuse me," Baptiste said, carefully placing his hand on the woman's back. On the beautiful cobra. "You seem lost."

She turned and smiled. "On the contrary, I've definitely been found," she purred, looking his dark, nude form up and down. "And I see you've dressed for the occasion."

He turned on his third-best smile. "I am always eager to please. But it seems you're interested in something more than the buffet on display." He waved vaguely at the moaning, screaming mass of exquisite flesh.

"Indeed," she said, and offered her hand. "My name is Mel, and I'm curious to learn more about this little ... group."

Baptiste raised an eyebrow. "And...?"

Her lips parted in a dazzling smile. "Why, the blood of the archangel, of course."

The Toreador upgraded his smile to his second-best. "Of course — I'd be happy to tell you all about it," he lied.

...

"If you don't want me to tell our leader about it..."

Roberto was still babbling, so Baptiste cut into his flow again. "I get it. You're blackmailing me. Badly, I might add, but I'm interested to see where this goes. What do you want in exchange for your silence?"

Roberto's face struggled between relief and annoyance before settling on frustration. He opened the laptop again and pointed to one face in the picture. "I need to know about one of the

attendees of this particular..." He curled his lip in disgust. "Meeting."

Baptiste noticed the tasteful green mask at once. "Who is she?" he asked, innocently.

"Her name is Mel, and I have reason to believe you know her."

The Diva grabbed one of his dreadlocks and toyed with it, looking bored. "Well, I don't. Your elaborate scheme has collapsed, I'm afraid."

Roberto leaned forward, speaking in a fierce whisper. "If you don't tell me what you know, I'll..."

Baptiste flung the dreadlock aside. "You'll reveal my cult membership to the prince, yes? Exposing me for violating the rule about heresy. Well, that'll go badly for you."

"Why?"

Baptiste turned on his second-best smile again. "Because I'll tell her you're a secret member of the Church of Set."

...

"I used to be part of the Church of Set," Mel said. Baptiste had grabbed a robe from the storeroom as they moved away from the groaning, heaving masses. The ghoul — Baptiste quickly deduced her mortality — tried to trick and manipulate him into telling her about the secrets of the Nephilim. But he was a vampire with preternatural charm, and before long she was telling him everything.

He handed Mel a tissue from the pocket of his robe. She waved it off, wiped her eyes with the back of her hand, and continued. "He had me bound to them for a long time. Months, maybe a year. I've lost track of time."

"He?" Baptiste asked.

"He said he was a magician of some kind," she admitted.

"A Tremere?"

"Yeah, I think," she said. "I only knew him as 'Mr. Vega.'"

"Ah," Baptiste said. "That Tremere. I'd like to meet him."

Mel suddenly looked scared. "Oh, you can't do that," she said. "He's very paranoid. He won't meet with anyone unless he has to."

"Do you have a cell phone?" he said suddenly.

She laughed and gestured to herself. "No room for one in this outfit, I'm afraid. But I have one in my car."

"Go get it, and let's lure Mr. Vega into the open."

...

"Once I found these pictures on her phone, I needed to know what happened to her," he said. All pretense at blackmailing Baptiste was gone. Now the angry, volatile sorcerer was replaced with a desperate, scared vampire. "She's been gone for about a week."

"What's so special about her?" Baptiste asked, feigning interest.

"She's my ghoul. My favorite ghoul. She had such ... spiritual potential." Roberto put his head in his hands. "Then one day she refused to drink my blood and just ... left. I don't know where. I don't know why."

He looked up at Baptiste. "I just want to find her. And the pictures on her phone were ... evocative."

...

Mel swiped her screen again. "These pictures are ... evocative," she said. They were back at his apartment,

looking over the pictures from the orgy. She had convinced one of the exhausted mortals to take them before shuffling back to the chaise. Baptiste suggested they finished their plotting in secret, and she agreed to go to his place. "Do you think they'll be enough?" she asked.

"Do you doubt me?" Baptiste asked. He gave her his second-best smile.

"No, no," she said, smiling nervously. "I just don't understand what these will accomplish. If I send them to him, he'll suspect a trap."

"Mr. Vega is some kind of computer expert, is he not? No doubt he'll recover them from your phone once you go missing."

She looked blankly at Baptiste for a moment, as if she didn't hear him correctly. "What do you mean, missing?"

He looked her up and down. "You are lovely, I cannot deny that." He took a step closer. "But you work against true beauty." Another step. "The beauty of the archangel."

He put a hand over her mouth before she could scream. "I will preserve the most beautiful part of you. Shhh. Don't worry."

...

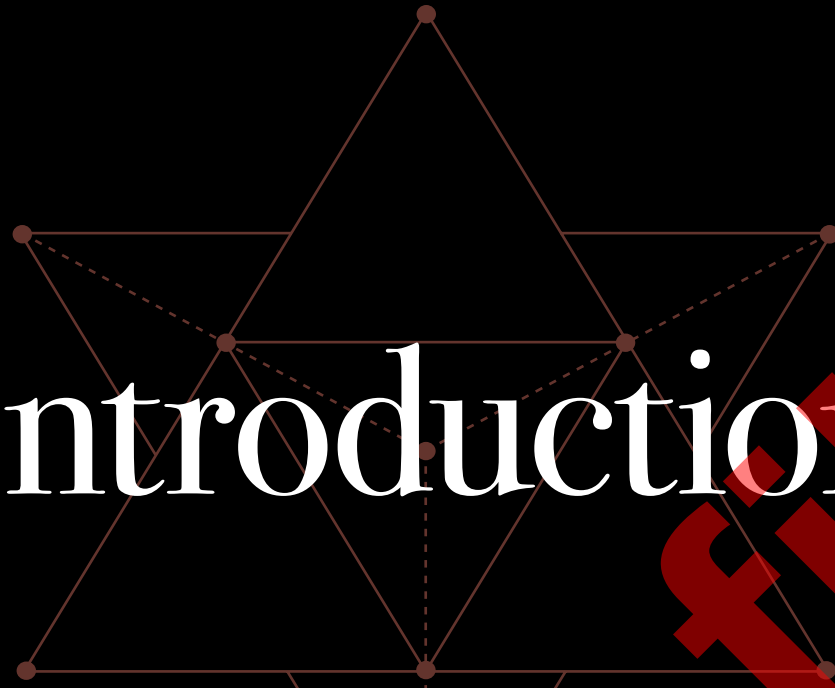
Baptiste put a hand on Roberto's shoulder. "Shhh. Don't worry. I will do what I can to bring you to the next meeting. You can ask around for Mel."

The Tremere wiped blood tears away from his eyes with the back of his hand. "Really?"

"Of course, my friend," Baptiste said. "I'll even show you this lovely tattoo I've preserved."

And he gave Roberto his absolute best smile.





Introduction

"You were expecting guttering candles and hooded robes. Childe, we're not that kind of cult. We're something far more interesting."

— Baptiste, helping an initiate into their new faith

Many Kindred convince themselves cults are something only for deluded mortals. Vampires are steeped in more intrigue and mystery than the typical human experiences in a lifetime. When a mortal devotes their mayfly life to a secret society, that human believes they've reached the apex of conspiracy, tapping into some hidden faith or arcane god that truly rules the world. But some Kindred manipulate those mortal cults, and they know there's nothing out there except undead cunning and a relentless thirst. It's hard for them to imagine a strong, powerful vampire falling for a similar scam.

But the truth is, vampires crave faith just as much as mortals. Sure, they might be the one behind the curtain in a mortal cult, but that doesn't mean there isn't *really* something out there. Hell, methuselahs are creatures so powerful a human would struggle distinguishing them from a demigod, and even those powerful creatures live in awe and dread of their progenitors. Who isn't to say there might not be something to such devotion? Maybe it's best to whisper a prayer or light a candle, just in case.

Kindred are addicted to secrets. They hide themselves from the world, from humans, from other vampires, and from their own conscience. Everything that passes through their lips is a lie, even if it's the truth. If a

vampire decides to seek something greater than themselves, they use the systems and structures they're familiar with. The same secret societies, conspiracies, and cults they mock mortals for flocking to.

Maybe the mortals aren't the deluded sheep the Kindred believe them to be.

But there's no specific kind of Kindred that falls into a cult or creates one. One can point to clans like the Tremere with their rigorous structures and elaborate rituals, and arguably call them "cults." The truth is, however, even the anarchic Brujah and the individualistic Gangrel crave salvation. Anyone from the Caitiff to the Hecata, from the Toreador to the Lasombra, from the Camarilla to the Anarchs, might want a creed to follow or a god to bow down to.

In fact, there's no such thing as "an average cultist." There are no faceless, chanting hordes standing in hooded robes while staring at a pentagram marked out in black candles. Instead, just scratch the surface of a Kindred heresy, and you'll find the same thing you'd discover in just about any faith: a diverse group of individuals who all have their own thoughts, opinions, and agendas.

Here are some of them.



No Candles, No Robes

Perhaps you are a player excited by the possibilities teased in *Cults of the Blood Gods*, and you're looking for more. Or maybe you're a Storyteller running a *Vampire: The Masquerade* chronicle featuring cults, and you need more grist for the mill. Either way, you will find a variety of useful material in this book to quench your thirst.

The following chapters of *Children of the Blood* provide a wide variety of SPC cultists to act as supporting characters and antagonists for any *Vampire: The Masquerade* chronicle. You will also find supporting material, such as sample coteries, Loreshoots, and new Merits and Flaws, which can expand and enrich your experience.

We're building off the material presented in *Cults of the Blood Gods*, but while that book pairs well with this one, you don't need it to use the characters, Loreshoots, or other material presented within. We give

you not only interesting Kindred to use as antagonists or allies for your chronicle, but also story seeds and nascent schemes to act as a springboard for your own stories, whether they focus on the hidden religions of the Kindred or not. Feel free to take what you like, adjust what you wish, and discard the rest — like the cultists themselves, the only thing that matters is what you find to be the most truthful and compelling parts.

Within these pages, you will find:

- **Second-Best Smile** — This opening fiction introduces

you to some of the unpleasant personalities and their practices, detailed further in this book.

- **Introduction** — What you're reading now. In a few short moments, you'll turn the page and discover the wide diversity of cultists lurking within.
- **Believers and Charlatans** — A broad collection of SPCs from a variety of cults and clans. These vampires range from the newest fledgling to Kindred who might call themselves elders, all working to the ends of their re-

NOT JUST CULTISTS

*While this is ultimately a book of vampire cultists, remember these SPCs are defined by more than their cult membership. In much the same way a person of faith has goals and problems beyond their denomination, these characters have more interests, desires, and plots besides the faith they hold. We've gone to great lengths to avoid presenting boring, disposable worshipers who exist only to perform obscure rituals and then die at dramatically convenient moments. Treat these characters with the same attention and depth that you would any other **Vampire: The Masquerade** character, and your chronicle will be all the richer for it.*

spective cults ... and themselves. They can be your enemies or your allies, as you choose.

- **Cult Coteries** — Several new coterie types, comprised of the characters presented within. In addition, you will discover new coterie types to add alongside the ones in both *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Cults of the Blood Gods*, as well as a coterie of ready-made player character cultists, so players can dive right into the world of hidden faiths and heresies.
- **New Advantages** — New Merits, Flaws, Loresheets, and Bloodlines, including ones specifically designed for cults, to apply to cultist characters, or any appropriate *Vampire: The Masquerade* characters.

Faces, New and Old

To the established fans of *Vampire: The Masquerade*, some of

the characters in this book may ring a bell. Some of them have indeed appeared in previous edition sourcebooks, and this is the first time they've been updated for this edition of *Vampire*. Others have appeared in minor ways in other sourcebooks for this edition of *Vampire*, and they're now being fleshed out with full biographies for the first time.

We strongly encourage Storytellers to use this book alongside others they might own, such as *Chicago by Night* (you can add any of these characters to that domain, if the city needs more Kindred of a cultist variety), *Let the Streets Run Red* (characters in this book based in Milwaukee and Indianapolis expand the brief bios they receive in the story *Innocence in Blood*), and *Trails of Ash and Bone* (where you'll recognize a name or two from here, as well). Never be afraid also of switching a character's cult. If you want Belinde Buch to be a Nephilim or even a member of the Bahari, instead of a Cleopatra, it's an easy switch to make. It also says something about her domain, in your chronicle. If you want Derek Robertson as an enforcer for the Hecata, by all means

switch his surname to Dunsirn or rename him fully as Dario Puttaneca. They're easy changes to make, and Storytellers should never feel constrained by what's on the page.

The coterie chapter in this book exists not just for the characters outlined in it, but to encourage players to think of how they'd fit into such a structure, or how the SPCs in this book might function together, even when they appear dysfunctional. If you want to move a character out and replace them with another, go ahead. A clash of faiths makes for potent drama, especially when characters find the only thing binding them to be the Blood.

Ultimately, we want *Vampire* fans to make use of these characters in inventive, inspiring ways. Whether you position them as supporting characters, short-term antagonists, or long-running villains in your chronicles, they should be there to enter your player characters' orbits, offer, demand, threaten, or lure, and be played as memorably as possible. Fine tune the tragedy, play up the horror, and make every SPC in your tale as evocative as possible.





Believers and Charlatans

*"I can see it all...working toward an end game, a greater goal.
The time is coming when — drenched in gore and gnashing our teeth — we will rise and be made whole.
That, or else we will perish."*

— Raíz, in blood on her apartment wall

There is no one reason for Kindred to find faith. Some had it in life and clung to it in undeath; some were sucked into eerie cults and twisted rites, looking for power or allies. Others feel it burning within, a new sensation they seek to understand. A few fake it to get by from night to night. Whatever the reason, these Kindred are enmeshed in the overlapping nets of clan, coterie, and cult. They may be allies or adversaries, trusted mentors, or the power behind the throne, but all seek something.

Though many of the SPCs in this chapter have been placed in specific locations and most have backstories that place them in various historical events, Storytellers are encouraged to tweak any of them to fit in at the table. Clans, generation, Blood Potency, and any other relevant attributes may also be adjusted as needed. Perhaps Tobias'

Starfall Ranch is in Montana or Ukraine. Maybe Lyle Cochrane fought in the Revolutionary War instead of the Civil War, or else he fought for the North. How does her character change if Misery is a Toreador sired by Erzulie, in Chicago, instead of being sired and abandoned by Marcus Vitel in Vancouver? It's even possible all the vampires in this chapter inhabit the same domain. If so, what do their coterie and webs of influence look like, and how do their cults help or hinder the others?

If the reader is familiar with other sourcebooks such as *Let the Streets Run Red* and *Trails of Ash and Bone*, they will find several characters fleshed out from brief descriptions in those supplements. As with the other SPCs presented here, they can be extracted from the domains specified and placed wherever suitable for your needs.

FLORIAN RIBEIRO

Epitaph: Mathematics Savant

Quote: "There is an order in all things, whether you like it or not."

Clan: Toreador

Embraced: 2021 (Born 1996)

MORTAL DAYS: PRODIGY

Florian was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil. Both of his parents were engineers, and he grew up around plans for bridges and architectural measurements. If asked, he says he always had a knack for recognizing patterns and sequences. He easily fell into games like chess and found tasks involving numeracy to be second nature.

While other child prodigies were often distant and aloof, Florian was always warm and gregarious. At times, he made off-color remarks about the beautiful symmetry of someone's face, but those remarks were always in the positive. He graduated from the University of São Paulo with master's degrees in both mathematics and quantum mechanics. He was obsessed with discovering how the universe fit together and the underlying patterns that made it all predictable. He wanted to find God, not as a sentient, personified force, but as an underlying equation. A thing that existed beneath the veneer of reality as humans perceive it.

His thesis on the "God Equation" was considered innovative by the scientific community and his treatises on the subject were widely read, even by peers who disagreed with his conclusions. To Florian, the adulation of his colleagues was secondary to the discovery of the truth. A truth that only science and examination could reveal. However, the praise he received caught the attention of one of the Kindred of São Paulo, the Toreador Bernardo da Silva who wished to bask in his reflected glow. Florian was seduced by the older man, who possessed a vibrant charisma he found irresistible. The two became lovers and, when asked if he wanted to spend eternity with this man, to continue his magnificent work forever, he accepted.

KINDRED NIGHTS: QUEST FOR PERFECTION

The Embrace alone was not what troubled Florian most, it was the fact that this supernatural world existed at all. He saw no rational reason for vampires' existence. To him, they were as implausible as a literal God. Even as da Silva did his best to teach the ways of the Kindred, he found his childe growing more disillusioned with his life's work. If the lessons about their powers of persuasion were to be taken at face value, Florian wondered if he had ever loved Bernardo at all or was under his insidious influence the whole time.



Bernardo cared for Florian, however, and he dedicated himself to trying to find the answers to the mind-rending questions the fledgling was posing of this new reality. Unfortunately for him, Florian found his instruction was insufficient and began probing for access to Kindred scholars who could assist him. Various names were put to him, the likes of Beckett and Netchurch. However, it was the name of Roger de Camden that struck him most. A man who had not only studied the intricacies of the transition between life and death in some detail, but who was connected to an ancient vampire of immeasurable knowledge and power. A Kindred who, some said, was the very personification of order and stability in the world.

It was settled, Florian travelled to the UK to supplicate himself before this Cult of Mithras and present himself as a student ready for instruction. Bernardo, unwilling to disappoint his wayward childe, provided him with transport to the city of Edinburgh and a stipend to support him while he found his way through his issues. How long the young man would hold the focus of his erstwhile lover was unknown to him, but Florian didn't care. What was love next to the ultimate truth of the universe? What was a fleeting caress when compared to the total understanding of the mysteries of existence? Florian believed that Mithras holds the key to those answers, and he dedicates himself to uncovering them.

PLOTS AND SCHEMES:

- **Debunk the Magic:** Florian believes there is a perfectly reasonable explanation for all of this Kindred

business. He's dedicated to uncovering it, using the knowledge of ancient vampires. He knows, however, that to attain those secrets, he must first throw himself upon the mercy of those who see their God as a personage, not a single, glorious pattern.

- **Harmony in all Things:** Florian's search for perfection is more than a desire for beauty or aesthetic purity. He believes all things, even those that seem senseless and pointless to the mortal understanding of morality, are part of a huge and ever-evolving mathematical pattern. This draws him to inquiring minds and he seeks to surround himself with those who are on a similar quest for knowledge.
- **Nephilim Target:** Though he's not aware of them yet, the Nephilim tabernacle in the UK have become aware of Florian's arrival in Edinburgh. If the Mithraists fail to offer him what he seeks, they believe they can sway him to their side. Florian may be attracted to their mantra of questing for personal perfection if he's to hear of it.

DOMAIN AND HAVEN:

- **New Town Apartment (Haven 2)** Florian's generous stipend from Bernardo enabled him to buy a well-appointed apartment in Edinburgh's New Town, close to the center of Prince Roger's power.

THRALLS AND TOOLS:

- **Dr. Alexei Fedorov (Allies 2)** Alexei is a mathematician doing research at Heriot-Watt University. He keeps Florian in touch with developments in the scientific community and challenges him to weekly chess games. Alexei has a bit of a crush on and hero worships the young prodigy, who he's heard all about.

KINDRED RELATIONSHIPS:

- **Bernardo da Silva (Distant Support, Mawla 1, Resources 3)** His sire maintains long-distance affection for his childe and, so long as this remains the case, Florian may peruse the city and socialize with its Kindred at his leisure. However, his sire is unlikely to retain his interest in the young man indefinitely and such a change of heart would necessitate a new benefactor.
- **Prince Roger de Camden (Curious, Mawla 1)** Since his appearance in the city, the Prince has been happy to sway the young man to the Mithraic way of thinking. He finds the persistence of Florian's demands — which seem to come whenever the fancy takes the young Toreador — as an irritation to his contempla-

tions. However, he has extended him the hospitality of the city and begins instructing him in the ways of the cult.

- **Annatoliya (Watching Brief)** Tipped off by spies loyal to her sire, Anna has an eye on Florian and is considering recruiting his friend in the café to her side as a thrall, in order to push him toward the Nephilim's waiting arms.

WHISPERS:

- **Question of Liability:** While Florian's thirst for answers is pleasing to his peers in the Mithraic cult, his persistence in questioning those outside of the cult's sway makes some consider him a liability to their cause who is vulnerable to outside influence.
- **Doting Sire:** Talk around court is that Florian's sire is a very wealthy Kindred who lavishes his wealth upon his childe. Such generosity could be exploited by the right people.
- **Rival of Scholars:** Kindred with established influence in the universities of Edinburgh find Florian's presence and fame within the science and mathematics faculties of the establishments unsettling. They fear that he may wrest their influence from their grasp with ease.

MASK AND MIEN:

- Florian's a skinny young man, with a narrow but smiling face and curious brown eyes. He's fastidiously tidy and neat, even when dressing casually. His hair is permanently set in a short-cropped cut, with severe lines as though it were plotted out by a landscape gardener. He sees no need to identify himself as anything other than Florian Ribeiro, occasionally as Dr. Ribeiro, when being addressed by his peers.
- Florian is extremely polite in conversation, to a fault. Many find his incredibly considerate way of speaking disingenuous. However, he has no such compunctions about people's time and will contact them at his leisure or, occasionally, abruptly end a dialogue when he feels it has concluded. He expresses surprise and genuine regret when people are shocked by this behavior.
- If physically threatened, Florian immediately flees. He's under no illusions about being a fighter and sees bravery as a vice rather than a virtue. He only defends himself if absolutely cornered.

Sire: Bernardo da Silva

Ambition: Prove God is a lie

Convictions: Protect the knowledgeable; Educate the unknowing whenever one can

Touchstones: Dr. Alexei Fedorov, Physics Researcher — Florian's frequent companion and confidante; Lucy McFarlane, Café Owner — Florian's pet project

Humanity: 7

Generation: 11th

Blood Potency: 1

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3; Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Skills: Drive 2, Stealth 2; Etiquette 1, Insight 2, Leadership 1, Persuasion 2; Academics (Mathematics) 3, Awareness 2, Investigation (Research) 3, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Science (Physics) 3, Technology (Computers) 2

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 1

General Difficulties: 4/3

LANDON DANKWORTH "FATHER CHRISTIAN PATRIOT"

Epitaph: Proudly Deluded

Quote: "Those Anarchs had better kick up what they owe, or there's gonna be a reckoning."

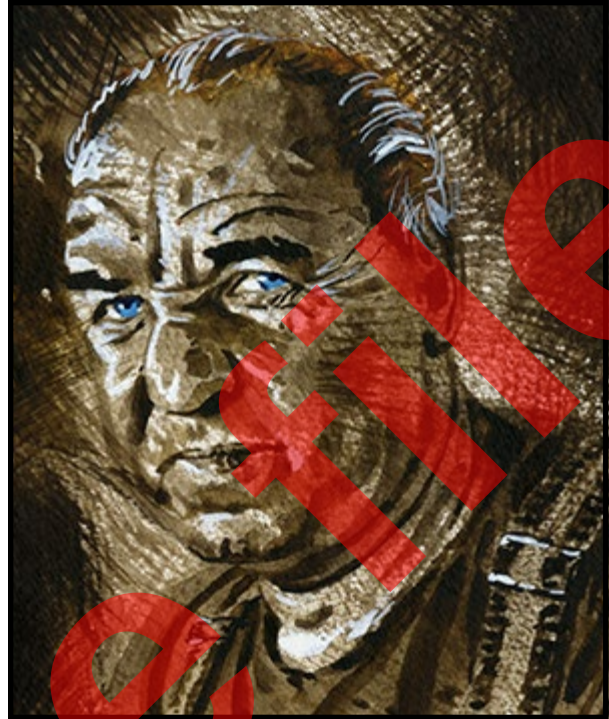
Clan: Thin-Blood

Embraced: 2020 (Born 1971)

MORTAL DAYS: OVERWHELMING RESENTMENT AND PRIDE

Landon Dankworth was born into a life of moderate hardship, as the fourth son of a single mother in a community outside Little Rock, Arkansas. His mother wasn't neglectful or harsh, but she couldn't provide everything Landon could see in the hands of other kids his age. He attended school when he could, worked a part-time job from an early age to help his mother with the bills, and always kept his head down. He recognized from the people in his community an ideal of "work hard enough and you'll earn your just reward." He did work hard, but the rewards were paltry. As his peers left the state, formed relationships, attended university, or bought nice cars, he was left with about as much as he had as a child: nothing of material worth.

The Dankworths were, therefore, a poor family. They never had the means to pay their way into the "better"



strata of society. But at no point in Landon's young life did he ever learn to empathize with those sharing his position. Instead, his brothers always blamed the individuals lower down the ladder than they, whether the targets were street criminals, people of color, immigrants, or families with slightly worse fortune than the Dankworths. If *they* worked harder and were honest Americans, the Dankworths wouldn't be suffering in the lower echelons of society.

These lessons instilled two things in Landon: a resentment of those beneath him, who he often blamed for the ills of the world and their own meager position; and an overwhelming pride in his honest approach to hard work. In Landon's mind, and that of his affirming brothers, the world would be a much better place if everyone worked like they did, and looking up at the millionaires, corporate kings, and politicians they admired, the Dankworths recognized in them the same philosophy. They were never at fault. It was always the Mexicans, Black folks, Muslims, and socialists who kept the Dankworths down.

This twisted ideal compounded in Dankworth a bizarre kind of working-class pride. *He* never received a trust fund from his parents. *He* never asked for government aid. *He* worked every day of his life without being some snooty academic. At a bar one night in his hometown of Paron, Landon was extolling the virtues of his work ethic and the sins of his lessers. He declared (with his twelfth King Slim beer in hand), that "someday, and I swear to God, the people who work hard and ask for nothing in return are gonna get what's theirs."

This speech caught the ear of a vampire who was intending on just passing through. Instead, the Kindred stopped and listened.

KINDRED NIGHTS: THE RISE OF AN ICON

This vampire wasn't what one might call "wise." Court Brookes was an Anarch, in theory, but had never fought against anyone or for anything, instead possessing a semi-objectivist idea that a vampire could make themselves important and powerful through sheer force of will and work. To Court, participating in a society would only dilute the effort. He listened to Dankworth's words and recognized (to his ear) a kindred spirit, and without introducing himself he assaulted, subdued, and Embraced the middle-aged redneck in the bar's restroom. He left Landon with the briefest of introductions to his new state, before patting his shoulder and advising "you make something of yourself, my friend." Court then left Arkansas, as even without wisdom he felt he'd be better off elsewhere, and he was probably right.

Landon's world changed abruptly with the Embrace. He had to renegotiate his entire simple, prejudicial mindset to accommodate his inability to work at the scrapyards during the day, his need to hunt others at night, and his possible occupancy of a state lower than that of the lowest mortal. Rather than succumb to any form of self-reflection, or gain a greater awareness of the world around him, he instead concluded that he was better off as a vampire and this tiny community would form his herd. Finally, people would look up to him, because they'd receive "just" punishment if they failed to do so. Somehow, Landon convinced himself that he'd earned the Embrace and this new, more robust form of being.

Through his minor power and neatly corralled community, Dankworth has arranged a convenient cult of personality. He uses Paron's Baptist church to speak (always following the pastor, for whom he still has the utmost respect) on the virtues of hard, honest toil, the depredations of city life (which he's never experienced), how it corrupts those who give in to it, and how one gains glory by reminding those beneath you to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, even if that meant taking their boots away first to really hammer home how they're not appreciative enough of the rights they possess. This message somehow resonates with many among the congregation, who gladly see the until-recently quiet Landon as a local political dynamo.

Landon's followers have set the thin-blood up online on venues such as Twitter, Facebook, and similar sites, advertising him as a father (technically true, as he does have a child), a Christian (tenuous, as while he attends church it's more to address everyone in one place than to worship), and a patriot (untrue, except as it pertains to his small community, as he feels the urban sections of the

United States have fallen to dependency on state aid, the sickness of communism, and liberal fragility), without actually naming him (as they don't trust the "deep state" with his personal details). Their reason for spreading his word to the internet is a simple one: they sincerely believe Landon speaks for the working classes of America, and they're holding their leader up as some kind of icon. His followers routinely post snippets of his unremarkable political and philosophical screeds, which wouldn't be out of place in a bar or a barn, but somehow find an audience online. Unfortunately, a couple of disenfranchised members of the community have posted a counter-narrative, including reports of his night-time activities.

Dankworth is unaware of any of this, and doesn't own a PC or mobile phone. However, at least a few vampires have heard of this Kindred known as "Father Christian Patriot" with his own petty fiefdom of fanatics, somewhere out in rural America, and some of his neighbors have taken to referring to him as "Father Christian," even those he's not an ordained minister. While some vampires judge this "Father Christian Patriot" for his utter disregard for the Masquerade (which he would believe is a liberal form of censorship), others see him as among the first of the neo-feudal lords of the 21st century, seizing a domain for himself where the Anarchs and Camarilla don't care to venture.

PLOTS AND SCHEMES:

- **Slow Growth:** Dankworth fell into this cult game, but is doing surprisingly well at it, possibly due to his words resonating with the unquestioning crowds in his community. He's not actively trying to expand into other communities, but takes a lot of pride in hearing from his neighbors how they'd been speaking warmly to folks as far south as Owensville and as far north as Thornburg about his righteous words.
- **Attend Church:** Despite lacking any real sense of faith, Dankworth recognizes the utility of a church for bringing people together, and it's a calmer place for doing so than the local roadside bar. He's enlisted the pastor, who agrees wholeheartedly with Dankworth's muddled and hateful views, to invite congregations from elsewhere. Landon primarily hunts those people of Paron who *don't* attend church despite his invitation.
- **A Gun for Everyone:** As part of his diatribes, Landon encourages his followers to carry guns with them wherever they go. He cites the Second Amendment and claims that with firepower, Paron will keep out the communists and the migrant minorities, but actually wants an armed militia due to a fear of Lupines he's developed in recent months.

DOMAIN AND HAVEN:

- **Paron (Contacts 2, Haven 2, Herd 2, Influence 2, Resources 1)** Technically, Landon has the run of Paron. It's only a small community, but everyone knows each other and few people (outside those he's pointedly prejudicial against) give him a place to stay and report back to him should he need it.
- **The Trailer (Haven 1)** With his small savings, Dankworth bought his own trailer some years back, where he and his mortal wife and daughter still live. They're sadly supportive of the vampire living beside them.

THRALLS AND TOOLS:

- **Dankworth Family (Allies 2)** Landon uses his older brothers as lieutenants, though they resent their younger brother bossing them around. His wife and daughter keep him safe during the day.
- **Pastor John Relish (Retainer 1)** Landon's words resonate with the man of the cloth, who has begun to see "Father Christian Patriot" (the pastor helped set up his website) as a protégé and political savant. He's keen to help Dankworth direct his words against the Baptist church's enemies. Dankworth doesn't know why Relish keeps calling him "Father Christian," but values the pastor too highly to correct him.

KINDRED RELATIONSHIPS:

- **Court Brookes (Forgotten Sire)** If Court could see Landon now, he'd probably approve. As it is, he has no relationship with his misbegotten child, but prolifically goes around embracing loudmouths like him every few months before moving to another domain.
- **Gabriella (Troll)** The Nosferatu gamer based in Chicago (see *Let the Streets Run Red*, p. 193) is aware of "Father Christian Patriot" because her online followers entered a feud with his online followers, culminating when Gabriella received a death threat through her haven mailbox. As she doesn't advertise her address, she's concerned about what Dankworth's followers might do next.

WHISPERS:

- **Vampire Bot:** Father Christian Patriot doesn't actually exist — he's a bot made up from algorithms of popular populist posts, with a monstrous edge incorporated inadvertently due to the upcoming release of an anticipated vampire video game.
- **On the List:** Dankworth's conspicuous activities have resulted in people visiting friends and relatives in Paron and those who stumble over his social media

PLAYING WITH PREJUDICE

A character such as Father Christian Patriot can be played up or down to the extent the players of your Vampire: The Masquerade game enjoy. Bear in mind that when invoking characters such as he, humor is one natural outcropping, as many people find comfort in mocking such bigotry, while hatred or upset is another. His views, and the views of many of his followers, are abhorrent. Therefore, it is vital for the Storyteller to check with the players before utilizing a character like this to that extent. If the players and Storyteller don't want an antagonist like Dankworth spewing his prejudicial bile, then he can focus entirely on his misguided pride, be adjusted to suit the story, or be replaced by a different antagonist.

presence (which he doesn't maintain personally) discussing it, with rumors reaching the ears of Archon Dawn Nakada, who feels this imbecile needs nipping in the bud.

- **Hate Crimes:** Dankworth's always harbored hateful views, often cloaked under the guise of patriotism and earnest belief. His Beast manifests through his hatred of people different to himself, resulting in a series of hate crimes taking place in and around Paron.

MASK AND MIEN:

- Landon Dankworth is a tall, barrel-chested white man, with thickly calloused hands, a strong jaw, and a receding hairline of red hair. His skin is remarkably ruddy for a vampire. Dankworth commonly wears the overalls or dungarees and plaid he wore as a working man.
- Dankworth is a quiet man when he's working or in unfamiliar surroundings, but when he's surrounded by others who share even a fraction of his views, he becomes a bombastic orator of middling skill, deploring the activities of those he views as draining the good will and generosity of his community and the American state, and holding back all the honest workers out there. His words can easily turn to that of outright hate speech if he feels comfortable expressing them (and he usually does, considering anyone who takes offense "weak" or "liberal"). As always, the Storyteller should make sure that everyone is comfortable with this kind of content.
- Dankworth doesn't run the Father Christian Patriot profile himself, and lacks any form of cover identity

he can present to Kindred or kine. While the Father Christian Patriot identity doesn't name him, it does name his community. (Mask 1)

Sire: Court Brookes

Ambition: Give everyone the liberty to follow my every word

Convictions: My freedom of speech is the most vital thing

Touchstones: Pastor John Relish — friend, confidante, and mentor.

Humanity: 5

Generation: 15th

Blood Potency: 0

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1; Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 4

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Craft (Furniture) 3, Drive 2, Firearms 1; Animal Ken 2, Intimidation (Prejudice) 2, Leadership 2, Persuasion 2; Awareness 1, Politics 2, Technology (Motors) 3

Disciplines: Presence 1

Thin-Blood Merits:

- Discipline Affinity: Presence
- Lifelike

Thin-Blood Flaws:

- Bestial Temper
- Mortal Frailty

General Difficulties: 4/2

GLORIA FLORES "GUMS"

Epitaph: Monstrous Makeup Artist

Quote: **guttural grunts and growls**

Clan: Nosferatu

Embraced: 2018 (Born 1982)

MORTAL DAYS: PURVEYOR OF BEAUTY

Fabulous Flores — that was how she was known. Gloria had an innate understanding of human desire, an eye for beauty. The faces of her clients were a canvas on which she produced masterpieces gracing stage and screen. While the adoring public raved about how fantastic a performer looked in the latest big production, Gloria

reaped the rewards in private. From her upbringing doing nails and hair in her mother's salon, she had become the name in Hollywood makeup artistry.

Not only was she in demand with every major studio the world over, her private consultations, online video tutorials and chain of Flores brand salons made her incredibly wealthy and one of the most eligible ladies in Los Angeles.

Her life was to take a turn when she received an offer too good to turn down from a private client with a Hollywood Hills mansion. The man's associates were an odd bunch, but the money they offered was four times her asking price. When she was finally shown her client's face, she almost regurgitated the protein shake she had for lunch. He was more akin to a goblin than a man, with gnarled, white skin, like birch tree bark. His mouth stretched wide in a welcoming smile, with two prominent incisors right at the front like the maw of a mutated rat. In his throat were slits wheezing and hissing like a busted accordion when he spoke in a sibilant string of syllables which she had to strain to hear. He assured her she could not walk out of this meeting. She had a choice, either she could complete his hair, makeup, and style consultation without showing a single trace of disgust, or he would make her like him. Fearing a beating, and permanent disfigurement at the hands of his goons, she complied. But as she tried to apply a foundation to his discolored face, part of his skin flaked off and stuck to her brush, causing her to wretch.

"Too bad..." hissed her sire, "such a pretty one."

KINDRED NIGHTS: IMAGE OF MONSTROSITY

The Embrace was an unimaginable torment. Gloria heard her bones splinter and crack as her lungs burned and her body convulsed with whatever poison he had forced down her throat. Gloria was vaguely aware of being taken somewhere, all the while screaming and cursing, her voice becoming raspy and her mouth rancid with the foul taste of the ichor the man drained into her mouth. She passed in and out of consciousness, eventually awakening in an underground chamber that smelled like a sewer. As her eyes swam into focus, she saw she was held by chains hanging from the ceiling and manacled to the wall. She saw her attacker step out of the shadows and opened her mouth to bark accusations at him, but all that emerged were rasps, grunts, and growls. Her tongue felt thin and unfamiliar. Her mouth, horrifically distended, felt like it opened her head clean in half. Looking down, her flesh had become pale, sunken, and hung limply from her bones like a wet garment.

Her hair did not brush her shoulders as she turned, her limbs were enormously long and her once voluptuous body was stretched and flattened like pulled taffy. She was no longer Gloria Flores, she was "Gums."