

TRAILS OF ASH AND BONE

DESIGN

WRITTEN BY – Matthew Dawkins, Joshua Alan Doetsch, Cat Evans, Ross Fisher-Davis, Klara Horskjær Herbol

DEVELOPED BY – Matthew Dawkins

WORLD OF DARKNESS LINE DEVELOPER – Matthew Dawkins

EDITOR – Matt Click

ART

ART DIRECTOR – Michael Chaney

COVER ART – Mark Kelly | INTERIOR ART – Mark Kelly, Sam Denmark,
Drew Tucker, Mirko Failoni, Ken Meyer Jr.

CLAN SYMBOLS, CLAN FONTS, AND VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE LOGOS – Chris Elliott and Tomas Arfert

CREATIVE DIRECTION – Richard Thomas

SPECIAL THANKS TO: The backers of Cults of the Blood Gods and the Red Moon Roleplaying crew of Craig, Hjalmar, and Mattiaz! A super special thank you to Sharkey, for your invaluable feedback.

©2021 Paradox Interactive AB

All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written consent of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf, Vampire: The Masquerade, and the World of Darkness are registered trademarks of Paradox Interactive AB. All rights reserved.

Visit Paradox Interactive AB online at www.worldofdarkness.com



REVELATIONS IN THE WATER THAT IS NOT WATER 6

INTRODUCTION 9

Flesh Becomes Ash 9

THE WELLSPRING 11

Introduction and Storyteller Advice 11

Prologue 12

Why Are You Here? 12

What's My Motivation? 12

The Wellspring Cultists 13

Søren Brogaard 13

Maria Mónica Jørgensen 13

Isabel Jørgensen 13

Simón Jørgensen 14

Villy Fabricius 14

Natasha Vejstrup 14

Katrine Bricato 15

Other Cultists 15

The Wellspring Beliefs 15

Follow the Leader 17

Jakob 17

Chapter One: Behind the Trees 19

I Saw It All 19

Obstacles in the Way of Departure 20

Screw This 21

Where Home Lies 22

Talk to Isabel 22

Investigate the Cult Site 22

A Blood Trail 22

Ritual Circle 23

Ghoul Wolfhounds 24

Approaching the Cabins 24

The Main Hut (Middle) 24

Villy and Søren's cabin 25

Jakob's Hut 26

Chapter Two: Welcome 26

Meeting the Cultists 26

Søren 27

Maria 28

Isabel 29

Simón 29

Villy 30

Natasha 30

Kasper Sinter 31

Katrine 31

Daysleep 32

Dining Al Fresco 33

Refusing to Drink 33

Drinking from Søren 33

Not Nightwalkers 33

Peace 34

Chapter Three: Circles and Signs 34

I Can't Find My Mom! 34

Helping Simón 34

Refusing to Help 34

The Box 35

Convincing the Cult 35

Forcing the Cult 35

Sneaking In 36

Villy's Revelation 36

Villy's Exit 36

Coming of Age 36

Talk to Katrine 36

Find Maria 36

Find Simón and Isabel 37

Participating in the Ritual 37

Stopping the Ritual 37

Jewelry Theft 37

Chapter Four: The True Leader 38

The Coming of Maja 38

Maja 38

Ditte Henningsen 38

Talking to Maja 39

Attack Maja 40

Confront Maja 40

Leave the Cult 40

What of the Prince? 40

Chapter Five: The Well Is Empty 41

Sacrificial Lamb 41

The Prince 41

My Childe 41

Lost and Afraid 42

The Kommisærs 43

Maja 43

Come with Us 43

Our Little Secret 43

Be Mine 43

There is No Other Way 44

Epilogue 44

Anarch Infiltrations 44

Difficult Tutelage 45

Whispers from the Past 45

Homeless 45

I Recognize That Mark 45

What Have You Done? 45

THE FAMILY 47

Introduction 47

Story Breakdown 47

Character Advice 49

<i>Hecata</i>	50	<i>Aggressive Corpse</i>	74
<i>Camarilla</i>	50	<i>Strand's Last Stand</i>	74
<i>Anarchs</i>	50	<i>Ms. Strand</i>	75
Atlantic City	51	Lubango's Warm Welcome	75
AC by Day	51	<i>Entering Pleasantville Conspicuously</i>	75
AC by Night	52	<i>Lubango</i>	76
Atlantic City Kindred	53	<i>Lubango's Crew</i>	76
<i>The Ruler</i>	53	<i>Entering Pleasantville Discreetly</i>	76
<i>The Anarchs</i>	54	<i>Engaging Lubango</i>	76
<i>The Hecata</i>	55	Night-Time Raid	78
<i>The Bahari</i>	56	<i>The Burglars</i>	78
<i>The Camarilla</i>	56	The Camarilla Avenue	78
<i>The Outsiders</i>	56	<i>Books and Bindings</i>	78
Domain Activity: Lining	57	<i>Felix Lodz</i>	79
Domain Activity: Wagers	57	On the Offense	79
Prologue	58	<i>Abigail Kirby</i>	80
Chapter One: Three Bears Casino	59	On the Defense	80
Meeting with Zingaretti	59	Hunting, Gambling, and Other, Less Civilized Entertainments	81
<i>Thomas Zingaretti</i>	60	<i>Justin "Poodle Pumper" Simmons</i>	83
Safe Haven	60	<i>Waxman</i>	83
Exploring their Surroundings	61	Chapter Three: Fact from Fiction	84
<i>Zingaretti's Quarters</i>	61	Zingaretti Burns	84
<i>The Casino Floor</i>	62	<i>But what of Zingaretti?</i>	85
<i>Savio "Popcorn" Cámara</i>	62	<i>The Fire Crew</i>	85
Casino Encounters	63	Blumenau Cauterizes	85
<i>The Boardwalk</i>	65	<i>Killing with Kindness</i>	85
<i>Painite</i>	66	<i>Ferdinanda "Ferdie" Dixon</i>	87
<i>Kima Znaimer</i>	66	<i>Just Plain Killing</i>	88
The Borgata Hotel	67	<i>Dirty Blok Gang Members</i>	89
<i>Henry Mona</i>	67	Luxemburg House	89
Chapter Two: Meet the Family	67	<i>Entering the Sanctuary</i>	90
Coffee with Blumenau	68	<i>Luxemburg House Staff</i>	91
<i>Introductions to Blumenau</i>	68	<i>Vulnerable Women</i>	91
Ornella	68	<i>Or Maybe Not</i>	92
The Leak	68	<i>Luxemburg House Tenants</i>	92
<i>Hecata Whereabouts</i>	68	<i>Bahari Supervision</i>	92
<i>Favors</i>	68	<i>"The Sleeper" George Price</i>	92
<i>Repercussions</i>	69	Ornella's Isolation Chamber	93
<i>Edith Blumenau</i>	70	<i>Revelation Betrayed</i>	93
The Police Intervention	70	<i>Ornella Giovanni</i>	93
<i>Atlantic City Cops</i>	70	Epilogue: Family Values	94
<i>Interrogation</i>	71	Ornella Reborn	94
<i>Face to Sideface</i>	71	Local Justice	94
<i>Jay "Sideface"</i>	71	Defecting to Atlantic City	95
Meeting with Milliner	71	Lying to the Sponsor	95
<i>Lia Milliner</i>	72	Serving the Family	95
Strand's Cold Comfort	72	OPEN YOUR EYES	97
<i>Gaining Entry</i>	72	Introduction	97
<i>The Undead and the Unliving</i>	73	Character Advice	97
<i>Poltergeist</i>	74		
<i>Screamer</i>	74		

Domain Coterie	98	The City Investors	113
Pre-Generated Characters	98	The Prince	113
Camarilla	98	The Wannabe	113
Anarchs	98	The Interlopers	113
Others	98	Meeting Kallias	114
Prologue	98	Motivation	114
Chapter One: Marvels	100	Golconda	114
The First Marvel: Estelle	100	Run Out of Turin	115
The Second Marvel: Vix	101	Disciples	115
Finding Vix	101	Marvels	115
Interview	102	Proof	115
Investigate	102	I Spy	115
Intimidate	102	A Messenger	116
The Third Marvel: Farid	103	Chapter Three: Power Plays	116
Farid	103	Moves and Countermoves	116
Humaira	103	Epilogues	117
The Fourth Marvel: Marley	104	Jeremiah Casaubon	117
Marley	104	Audrey Barrowman	119
Martinet's Deputy	104	Kallias	121
Escape	104	Francesca de Launcey	123
Opposition	105	Farid Larif	123
The Fifth Marvel: Dawn	106	Owl	124
Debbie Parrott	106	Humaira Larif	124
The Video	106	Estelle Hargreaves	124
The Prince's Ghoul	107	Haze	125
Investigating Audrey	107	The Fates	125
Audrey's Masks	107	Andrew Ducheviski	126
Anarchs	107	Other Antagonists	127
Poison Whispers	107	Hunters	127
The Lay of the Land	107	Casaubon's / Kallias' Bodyguards	127
The Prometheans	107	Audrey's Henchmen	127
The Temple	108	Security Guard (Saira)	127
The Wire-Walkers	108	Elysium Security	127
The Young Offenders	108	OLD WOUNDS	129
The Fates	108	Introduction	129
The City Investors	109	Story Breakdown	130
You Are Seen	109	Theme and Mood	130
The Prince's Ghoul	109	Character Advice	130
Chapter Two: The Miracle at Elysium	110	Personal Motivations	130
The Pre-Meet	110	Hecata	131
Divided Loyalties	111	Camarilla	131
The Anarchs	111	Others	131
Audrey's Own Schemes	111	Mixed Coterie	131
Truth and Consequences	111	Local or Visiting Coterie?	131
Averting Elysium	111	The City of Florence	131
Elysium	111	A Kindred History	132
Security	112	The Hierarchy of Florence	134
The Prometheans	112	The Florentine Council	134
The Wire-Walkers	112	Citizens and Visitors	135
The Temple	113	Of Anarchs and Others	135
The Fates	113		

Prologue	135	<i>A Walk in the Underworld</i>	161
An Invitation	136	Canto V: Murder Theatre	162
This Is a Whodunit	137	Epilogue	162
This Is Not a Whodunit	137	Antagonist Traits	163
How It Might Have Happened	137	Hecata Kindred	163
<i>The Murder Victims</i>	137	<i>Carmen Giovanni</i>	163
<i>Handout #1: Letter from Carmen Giovanni</i>	137	<i>Jinno Hatsumi</i>	163
<i>The Murderer</i>	138	<i>Ghede L'Oraille</i>	163
The Hungry Gestalt	139	<i>Ravinder Narula</i>	164
Creeping Dread	140	<i>Tommaso Sforza</i>	164
Canto I: The Masque	140	<i>Hel-Blár</i>	164
The Palazzo Pitti	141	<i>Marianna Giovanni</i>	165
Masks of the Hecata	142	<i>The Little Deaths</i>	165
<i>Party Business</i>	142	<i>Roger de Camden</i>	165
Carmen's Announcement	144	Camarilla Kindred	165
<i>Autonomy of the Grave</i>	145	<i>Rinaldo Albizzi</i>	165
After the Announcement	145	<i>Francesca da Rimini</i>	166
<i>Through the Forbidden Door</i>	145	Other Kindred	167
Canto II: The Scene of the Crime	148	<i>Kindred Ruffians</i>	167
Utilizing		Wraiths and Shambling Horrors	167
Backgrounds	148	<i>The Hungry Gestalt</i>	167
An Escort to the Murder Site	149	<i>The Catacomb Saints</i>	167
<i>The Vasari Corridor</i>	150	LORESHEETS, POWERS, &	
<i>The Palazzo Vecchio</i>	150	PLAYABLE CHARACTERS	169
<i>The Hall of</i>		The Ruby Throat	170
<i>the Five Hundred</i>	150	Descendant of Roger de Camden	
<i>After the Investigation</i>	152	(Hecata Characters Only)	171
Canto III: The Unusual Suspects	153	Relics of the Veil	172
The Florentine Elite	153	Oblivion Ceremonies	173
<i>The Gastronome</i>	153	Level 3	173
<i>The Gardener</i>	154	<i>Fortezza Sindonica</i>	173
<i>The Mambo</i>	155	<i>Knit the Veil</i>	174
<i>The Little Deaths</i>	155	Level 4	174
<i>The Weaver</i>	156	<i>Death Rattle</i>	174
<i>The Perfumer</i>	156	Ready-Made Characters	175
<i>The Foreign Prince</i>	157	<i>Christopher Deacon</i>	175
<i>The Priest</i>	157	<i>Holliday "Burgundy" Hall</i>	176
Other Encounters in Florence	157	<i>Matisyahu "Motti Fenn" Fennheim</i>	178
<i>Intimidation</i>	157	<i>Ratkyd</i>	180
<i>The Hungry Gestalt is Out There</i>	158	<i>Bettina Beluzzi</i>	182
<i>Political Danse Macabre</i>	158	<i>Anoush Vardanian</i>	184
Canto IV: The Underworld	158	<i>Alek König</i>	186
A Deal with Hel	158	<i>Allette Durand</i>	188
The Catacomb Saints	159	<i>Matt Angelo</i>	190
<i>Down Below</i>	159	<i>Bastian Ducasse</i>	192
A Favor for a Priest	160		
<i>The Exorcism</i>	160		
Into the Shadowlands	161		

Revelations in the Water That Is Not Water

By Joshua Alan Doetsch

On the nighted eve of the grand masked ball, a storm rages through the streets of Florence that no one breathing can see. Under the glow of such a mercy, sanity grows in sickly patches. Outside, something ululates from a honeycombed multitude of gnashing maws — when Carmen asks my honest opinion on the table settings for the upcoming festivity. I groan. No one else in the room reacts. Why should they?

Carmen selects colors, patterns, and other trifles. Then they look up from the samples and offer a smile only meant for me. Not everyone can name their own purgatory. My purgatory is named Carmen Giovanni.

Carmen conducts business in their silken bathrobe. Or is it a smoking jacket? Everything Carmen does, they perform with languid grace and practiced casualness. We stand in the study, at least I think so. The details are all humming mists. I see every past version of this ancient room, as well as a few of the future, all undulating on top of one another. Someone was chained to the far wall there and tortured with the Pear of Anguish. Or will be.

Servants and assistants buzz about the room. I barely see them. They are all vibrating blurs of quickly forgotten details. The living

haunt me but faintly. They bring in masks and costumes, many rejected, some accepted. Carmen asks opinions on live musical entertainment and then says something tastefully bawdy and the room quivers with laughter. Everyone adores Carmen. Unlike their ancestors and most of their descendants, Carmen will look a servant in the eye, use familiar tones and given names. They are charm incarnate.

With mock seriousness, Carmen examines the guest list for the masked ball. Slyly, they hold the list so that I too can see. They are familiar names, like the major arcana of a demoniacal tarot. The Gardner, the Mambo, the Gastronome, the Weaver, the Perfumer, the Priest, the Foreign Prince, and all the rest will be in attendance.

“I’ve made some last-minute additions to the guest list,” Carmen says to a faceless assistant, “over there on my desk.” These new names, however, are unfamiliar to me. Something new.

Time passes. Someone trims Carmen’s lustrous hair. It always grows back to full length during the day. It is at this moment that a shrieking horror lurches into the room, a thing that was recently, or not so recently, a man. Translucent skin chokes its bones. Vapor and

ectoplasm seep and fume from two holes in its neck. Its mouth gapes in a lamprey circle of teeth and suction. It charges toward Carmen.

I swing my sword. That is to say, I swing the memory of an echo of my sword. It is enough. The wretch falls bisected and still. Neither Carmen nor the barber react.

Carmen looks over the food menu, a subject far past their experience, but they have professional tasters to sample and describe in exquisite detail. Carmen listens in fascination to the recipe for cooking an ortolan bird.

The preparations follow thus: Capture the tiny bird and blind it with a set of pincers. Place the animal in a cage tight enough to allow no movement. Feed the creature a diet of figs, grapes, and millet. In the ever-dark of blindness, the bird will eat until it swells four times its normal size. Drown the engorged creature in a snifter of Armagnac. Pluck the marinated corpse and roast it for six to eight minutes. Serve immediately. The eater places the whole bird inside their mouth, feet first, all except the head, before biting down. Traditionally the eater does this while covering their face with a napkin to hide their gluttony from God. The teeth puncture the tiny lungs and stomach, releasing packets

of hot brandy into the mouth. The bird's head falls into the napkin.

Carmen claps and laughs, saying, "That! That is deliciously wicked. I know just whom I will entertain with that."

I know whom they mean. Whether that particular guest subsists on the meat or on the cruelty, I cannot say.

Carmen stands and stretches like a cat. "I'm going downstairs for a bath," they say to the servants. "Let us continue in ... two hours?" Carmen adjusts their robe. "Were you all peeking just now?" they say with a raised eyebrow. Everyone laughs. Everyone adores Carmen.

The scion of the Giovanni walks out of the room, and I follow. I always follow. We descend down several stairways. The light becomes less bright, the spatial arrangements less confusing. Everything is stone down here. Little has changed. What I see is closer to what is.

"Tell me," Carmen says to me, "do you think everyone will come together and celebrate and truly bond as one happy family?"

One such as I stands outside of time. From that vantage, one such as I sees far away things, past and future. Some might call this soothsaying, but it is a false gift. I can see only distantly. I am nearly blind to the immediate. When the End of Days comes, there will be no Before and no After. I will only see the Now — that is to say, nothing.

I speak, and my voice pierces the Shroud, and I say the words that echo to me from far away: "There is wrong done with the knife, and though the gods smile, there are those of the dead who will not let old wounds heal."

Carmen considers and chuckles. "Oh you, you are always so dramatic."

"Do you think Hel-Blár will attend the revels?" I ask.

At this, for only a mayfly moment, Carmen shivers. There exist few things in this world or in the next that cause Carmen Giovanni to shiver, and they grow fewer every year. I will feast on this tiny crumb of enjoyment over the next several sand grain months.

Down in the underground, the shrill chiming of an electronic bumble profanes the ancient air with its modernity. Carmen sighs and places the glowing rectangle to their ear.

"Yes? Oh? On the contrary, that is precisely what I want. I want the Ivory Tower there. They can't resist their curiosity, and their mere attendance implies participation and complacency in the way things are. And I want them to see us. All of us. So many of us! Hmm? No. No. They will not be allowed in those chambers, and that conveys the proper message to them in ways words cannot. Yes. Until then. Ciao-ciao."

We pass many doors. Carmen indulges a recreational moment to open one particular door and look inside. The room contains a rare treasure: the last existing Brazen Bull. It is a large, hollow statue of the horned beast all in bronze. Millennia ago, many a person was locked inside, before a fire was lit beneath the bronze belly. As the victim roasted within, the ingenious acoustics of the beast's throat and mouth converted the screams into the bellows of an angry bull. All the while, the flaring nostrils released spicy plumes of incense smoke.

The bronze is now cool, but I can hear the trumpeting call of all the past victims. Carmen closes their eyes and inhales, breathing in the memory of the incense, absorbing the powerful resonance and saving it for what is to come.

The final door is of a dull metal with no ornamentation. Though heavy, it swings open without a sound. The bare room has a domed ceiling of marble and a deep bath. Carmen disrobes, revealing exquisite, pale flesh. They place on their head a helmeted mask, the lacquered skull of a great, horned beast. They chant, first in Latin, then in Enochian, and then in tongues developed in the Underworld by no living speaker. Soon thereafter, several servants shamble in holding trays. The faces of these servants I can see clearly. Each tray contains a severed head, each well preserved.

As Carmen chants, the servants drop the severed heads into the bath. The liquid is clear, but it flows with a slow, loathsome plasticity and opalescence. Carmen's words reach a fevered crescendo. The now drowned heads respond, opening and closing their mouths in words no one above the surface can hear.

Carmen removes the horned mask, and a servant takes it. They turn to me with a grin.

"Perhaps you speak truth. Perhaps wrong is done with the knife. Then we must turn the landscape until all is inversed, and the wrong thing becomes right. I will commune on this now."

With that, Carmen steps into the thick liquid, sinking down to the bottom of the deep bath. The mouths of the heads continue to open and close in mute cadence. Carmen's mouth moves too, speaking back to the gory chorus. Silently shouting, arching in ecstasy, Carmen pulls the heads to them, until vanishing beneath the pickled orbs. Though there is much churning below, the surface of the shimmering fluid barely moves.

The stone domed ceiling vanishes, becoming a swirling, starless sky. I gaze upward. I abide. I always abide.





Introduction

“Sincerely, I recommend staying the fuck away from Kindred who form these weird, close-knit cults. Keep everyone at arm’s length.”

— Lia Milliner, *Money Launderer*

Cults lead to grandeur.

Cults lead to destruction.

This book contains four stories centered on vampires and their cults, the price of betrayal and the benefits of faith. *Trails of Ash and Bone* presents you with distinct stories introducing brutal hierarchies and the comfort of belonging within a religion.

Every story is different, but they’re all about the pains and pulls of faith for the undead.

Flesh Becomes Ash

The content in the following chapters of *Trails of Ash and Bone* can be used straight from the book or adapted for any other story of *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

- **Revelations in the Water That Is Not Water** — In this short fiction, we’re introduced to the revolting appetites of one Carmen Giovanni.
- **Introduction** — Our brief exposure to the boons and banes of cults in *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

- **The Wellspring** — Our protagonists are sent to fetch the Prince of Copenhagen’s childe in the forests of Denmark, only for things to go horribly wrong.
- **The Family** — A member of the Hecata clan in Atlantic City has betrayed the family, and our protagonists are responsible for discovering the leak of clan secrets.
- **Open Your Eyes** — The Prince of Birmingham has fallen under the sway of a Golconda prophet and the domain’s Kindred are revolting.
- **Old Wounds** — In the historic domain of Florence, a gathering of Hecata Kindred is disrupted when a grisly murder takes place.
- **Loresheets and Ceremonies** — This chapter contains new Loresheets and Ceremonies for player characters to choose, allowing them to connect their characters to the Vampire’s lore and explore some of Oblivion’s depths.
- **Ready-Made Characters** — Ten intriguing, involved characters with backgrounds, ambitions, and traits appear in this chapter, perfect for any *Vampire: The Masquerade* story.





The Wellspring

*“For the outside world has nothing to offer, merely agony and pain.
Here is where true salvation lies. Here is where you will never be alone again. Here is home.”*

— Jakob, leader of the Wellspring

The Wellspring is a five-chapter story with heavy focus on humanity, desperation, and hope. The player characters must determine the fate of seven mortals in a dire situation. In this story, the player characters dive deep into human mentality at its worst, where physical and mental torture is encouraged, and expressions of individualism banned. They encounter individuals of various ages and stages in life, all affected by isolation to different degrees, and learn deep secrets with horrible consequences if released. But sometimes, from the depths of human despair hope can unfold, as the members of the Wellspring may show the coterie.

The player characters play a vital role in the Wellspring, as they dig deeper and further into not only the mechanics of cult existence but also the cultists' stories. In this story, the player characters must make difficult choices as they dig deeply into the cult's background. This story challenges not only the vampires' view on humanity as a concept but also the characters' own Humanity. Will they free the Wellspring, or exploit its power?

Introduction and Storyteller Advice

The Wellspring centers on the concept of player freedom and initiative. The Storyteller should encourage players to investigate and discover the Wellspring's secrets according to what interests them. Provide the story elements to the players, and lightly guide them to mix and match the pieces. This story is deliberately non-linear, with a toolbox approach to encounters. The best way to prepare for this story is to read it beforehand, select scenes that appeal, and keep others in mind for introducing based on player actions.

The Wellspring takes place over a week, maximum, and heavily focuses on player characters, SPCs, and the dynamic of the cult, therefore the Storyteller should understand the cultists and their group to run the Wellspring successfully. Take time to read about the cultists and create an idea of who they are before running the game. Adding Storyteller-created cult members is an excellent idea, if the Storyteller wishes to expand the game's focus.

The following text provides story hooks, player handouts, dynamic characters, and an open plotline. Discuss with the players beforehand the themes they want to explore in the Wellspring, and more importantly, discuss any touchy or “forbidden” subjects, as the Wellspring can dive into difficult human emotions and experiences. The Storyteller should avoid material that might harm the players in any way. The **Vampire: The Masquerade** core book contains safety guidelines, and we recommend you check them out.

Assist the players in forming their group dynamic and determining their characters’ relations with each another. Characters can be from any sect or clan, as each might respond to the situations the Wellspring presents in an interesting, distinct way.

Players required: 2–4

Duration: 6–10 hours

Prologue

He is dead. What was once a threat to your life — a bestial creature, a rotten soul — now lies before you as nothing more than a pile of ash drifting away on the wind, his remnants escaping between the oak trees. Was this truly all the feared vampire was? Was this it? Somehow, you feel as if this is only just the beginning and more awaits behind the trees...

Why Are You Here?

Politikommisær Gorm of Copenhagen, a close ally to the Prince and a respected member of the Kindred community, asks the coterie to investigate the whereabouts of a powerful vampire known as Jakob, hiding within Rold forest. Gorm wants the coterie to bring Jakob back safely, as he’s the Prince’s childe. The Prince will not easily accept the final death of her childe.

Unfortunately, Jakob is now a degenerated wight. Doubly unfortunately, the wight was powerful, and the coterie wielded all their might to best him, and their conflict brought him to final death. The Wellspring begins right after this battle occurs as the PCs stare down at the ashes.

What’s My Motivation?

Depending on the player characters’ clan and sect affiliation, their reason for embarking on this mission could come down to loyalty; promises of payment in the form

BUT MY CHRONICLE’S NOT SET IN DENMARK...

This applies to all the stories in this book, and books such as **Chicago by Night** and **Let the Streets Run Red**, but if your chronicle is set in another domain, just shift this tale to another location. Change Prince Belinde to another vampire, make Jakob a player character’s lost sire, and shift titles like “politikommisær” to “sheriff” or “inspector.” We use Copenhagen as a local backdrop as it’s an intensely urban environment not far removed from wide tracks of countryside, including the forest in which this story is set. You can easily move this tale to Washington State, Stuttgart, or Rio de Janeiro, given their proximity to great expanses of woodland.

of cash, territory, boons, or siring rights; or boons to be collected down the line. If the characters are more mercenary in nature, Politikommisær Gorm may have hired them to find evidence of the Prince’s feral childe so they can mutually blackmail Prince Belinde of Copenhagen.

For a more humane coterie, more deeply entwined with this plot, Jakob may have murdered one of their loved ones since his descent into becoming a wight, or perhaps one of their Touchstones was recruited into the Wellspring, and they now seek to rescue them. Any number of reasons might lure them into the forest.

The following are reasons for a coterie to become involved in this story:

WE OWE THE PRINCE A FAVOR / WE WISH TO WIN THE PRINCE’S FAVOR

If the player characters are indebted to the Prince, they’re sent to find Jakob to repay the favor. This, and wanting to prove themselves to the Prince, are good ways for misaligned coterie comprising gangsters, supermodels, artists, and stockbrokers to come together. The Prince cares less about the coterie composition, believing most will probably fall to Jakob in their attempt to retrieve him.

POLITIKOMMISÆR GORM WANTS TO BLACKMAIL THE PRINCE

If the player characters are mercenary, the politikommisær (or another vampire) tells them about the infamous vampire in the forest, and the rumor that they’re the Prince’s misbegotten childe. Recovering the vampire with a stake through their heart would prove to be a formidable blackmail chip.

JAKOB RECRUITED / MURDERED A PLAYER CHARACTER'S LOVED ONES

Jakob was an old vampire, and despite the edicts he placed on his cultists, he left the forest semi-regularly to hunt and enrich himself on fresh blood. The cult's size is so meager by the story's start, that Jakob couldn't sustain himself on them as a herd, anyhow. In one of Jakob's forays into the city, he may have harmed a character close to the protagonists, or even recruited them to his cult. The trail leads back to the forest, and the politikommisær may become involved with an offer to add a reward if the protagonists find the feral Nosferatu.

"I LOST MY LOVED ONE..."

If the player characters have roots in local mortal society, and are known for investigating or handling strange affairs, a mortal might approach with a faded photo of one of the cultists, asking the protagonists to help look.

The Wellspring Cultists

Sharing the dim spotlight with the player characters in this story come the cultists of the Wellspring: all mortals (to one degree or other), all in a desperate situation, and all acting to tug on the player characters' desires, fears, and Humanity. The Storyteller should get familiar with these characters ahead of the story and feel free to add new ones. The Wellspring is a character-driven plot, so adjust the characters to suit your story. Keep in mind that any of these characters are interchangeable with connections from the player characters' pasts, or such SPCs could be added to the congregation.

SØREN BROGAARD

Ever since Søren graduated from one of Copenhagen's most esteemed business schools, the pressure to perform and excel from first his parents and later his wife intensified. He formed a small yet successful business with his childhood friend but in order to satisfy his wife's monetary demands and grandiose shopping habits, he knew he had to take drastic measures. Unknown to his partner and family, he started laundering money through his business for a variety of criminal organizations. Just as his plans came together and he could satisfy both his family, parents, and his economic quandaries, the police raided his business and found everything. Knowing he couldn't return to his family — let alone society — without facing judgement and a prison sentence, he disappeared.

Through Søren's new contacts in Denmark's criminal environment he met Villy, who gave him temporary sanctuary and a card that read "Need an escape? Call this number." Søren called and soon after, he joined the Wellspring.

The only people aware of Søren's continued existence are members of the Wellspring, of which he's been a member for two years. As soon as Søren entered the cult, he was elevated to the leading position under Jakob's guidance, much to Villy's disdain. Søren is now Jakob's only ghoul.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 2, Mental 2

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 5; Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4; Occult 4

Disciplines: Animalism 1

General Difficulties: 4/2

MARIA MÓNICA JØRGENSEN

When Maria was 19 years old, she travelled to Denmark on a student visa and had no intention of returning to her home country. Her father died when she was young. Her mom fell into a deep pit of alcoholism. During her studies she met her eventual husband, and within a year of knowing each other, they married and had twins. Maria's husband was always possessive over her, a possessiveness which slowly turned to anger and violence if she did not do as he asked.

One night, after a vicious fight, Maria packed her belongings and left with her children, never to return. She gained custody of both, but a loneliness followed her. She had no friends in Denmark and the culture was still foreign to her. One morning, while standing in line at the welfare center, an elderly man behind Maria struck up conversation. He told her he could see she struggled and there was a way out. Next week, Maria and her two children had their first meeting with Jakob.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 2, Social 3, Mental 2

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Stealth 3, Survival 3; Awareness 3, Medicine 3

General Difficulties: 3/2

ISABEL JØRGENSEN

Entering the cult as when she was four years old has left Isabel's memory of the outside world scattered and

fractured. She remembers cars and the little apartment she used to stay in with her mother, and she misses the cherry lollipops she got at the dentist, but little more is left of her memory. To many of the cultists' annoyance, Isabel's presence means there's rarely a quiet moment. Her only playmate is her brother, and despite being his twin, they could not be more different from each other.

Isabel often runs around the woods near the camp to pick bugs from trees or set traps for mice and birds. She has a keen interest in crafting and building contraptions. She often asks questions about her existence in the woods and why they don't have a house with water like they once had. Isabel is the cultist who shows the most fear toward Jakob and he's often the only one she listens to.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 1, Social 2, Mental 1

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 3

Exceptional Dice Pools: Survival 2; Technology 2

General Difficulties: 2/1

SIMÓN JØRGENSEN

Opposite his rambunctious sister, Simón prefers to stay quiet, and can often be seen playing on his own with a toy or reading a book. Simón lives most of his life in his own mind, imagining things that could be beyond the woods. Despite never talking about it, Simón has vivid memories about his past and knows that there is a life outside of the cult, but he never dares raise the subject with his mother or sister.

Simón spends most of his time in his side of the cabin, finding new ways of hiding his books from Jakob, who doesn't permit Simón's book-reading. Simón has taught himself how to read and has kept a diary covering the last year of events in the camp.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 1, Social 1, Mental 2

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 3

Exceptional Dice Pools: Craft 2, Stealth 2; Subterfuge 5

General Difficulties: 2/1

VILLY FABRICIUS

Villy is the oldest member of the Wellspring in both age and time spent in the cult. He was introduced to the cult by a business partner, a gentleman by the name "Jakob," who was looking to create his own company.

Villy was reluctant. He had an established homelife with a wife and children. While a part of him grew tired

of the same everyday routine, he was comfortable with his lot. It was his kernel of frustration that Jakob cultivated, seeding every one of their conversations with talk of how Villy should find somewhere new and start over, with freedom from the rat race, the familial grind, and the constant disappointment of parenthood. Jakob needled and needled, offering Villy money, status within this new company, and most importantly, a restart for his life. Villy eventually buckled, agreeing to create the Wellspring with Jakob, believing it to be a form of organic farming commune distant from the urban sprawl he was used to. He gave up everything and placed all his trust in Jakob.

There came a time quite swiftly, of course, when Villy realized everything he was doing with the Wellspring was against common sense and ethical intelligence. He knew the "employees" at this startup were little more than desperate homeless and outcasts, and he was occupying a joint leadership role for a bizarre personality cult. Most importantly to Villy and his business-minded sensibilities, there was no money to be made here. He expressed this all to Jakob in a frustrated outburst, only to be met with threats against his family back in Copenhagen in response. He was to stay with the cult and shepherd them whenever Jakob wasn't around. If he failed, if he left the woods, if he even attempted to contact his family, they'd die painfully.

Villy bowed before Jakob and took on stewardship over the Wellspring, but it took him over a decade to truly buy into the "hope" it was selling to its members. After 20 years in the cult, Villy now takes up a background role, and has been pushed aside by newer and stronger members. His disdain for being cast aside after many years of service is apparent, and now Jakob's gone, he doesn't know what his future holds.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 2, Social 4, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Subterfuge 5; Survival 3

General Difficulties: 3/2

NATASHA VEJLSTRUP

When Natasha's parents threw her out of their house for hiding drugs in her mother's jewelry box, she had little money to take care of herself and refused to seek help from authorities. Determined to take care of herself despite her 16 years of age, she resorted to sex work and drug dealing to make it through the day. Her pimp would often provide her with what she needed for survival, but during slow weeks or if she was sick and couldn't work, she had to survive with what she had. When she was 20 kroner short of buying a liter of milk and a loaf of bread, a woman with two children

offered to pay for what she needed. She offered Natasha a place to sleep, although it would be under modest circumstances and a fair distance from the city. Natasha joined the Wellspring, and to date, hasn't left the forest.

Natasha is loyal to the structure of the Wellspring, but less so to Jakob, within whom she identifies many of the behaviors she associates with some of the terrible people she met in Copenhagen. She appreciates the sanctuary of the wilderness and the community of the family atmosphere, but she finds herself asking Villy lots of questions whenever he returns from the city. She is likely to latch on to newcomers with all kinds of enquiries about life beyond the tree line.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 2, Social 3, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 3, Survival 3; Medicine 4

General Difficulties: 3/2

KATRINE BRICATO

Growing up to a life of wealth and decadence, Katrine faced few difficulties in her childhood. Her parents were rarely home and thus Katrine was left to her own devices and decisions. She isn't sure when she met Jakob for the first time, but she remembers him coming to her parent's house frequently throughout her tenth summer, and him showing a keen interest in her. She was never allowed to listen in on what Jakob and her father talked about, and she and her mother were told to leave the room on many occasions.

Katrine was sure she was going to end up at a boarding school by the time she turned 11, so it was to her surprise that she discovered her mother packing her belongings. Katrine asked her mother what was going on, and her mother, tears in her eyes, instructed Katrine that it was time for her to go.

Despite Katrine's protests and struggles, she was placed in the back of a van and driven away. Seven years after, Katrine still thinks back to that day, but she has accepted her role as Jakob's partner, and forced herself to care for him despite his violent tendencies. With Jakob's final death, she falls into a despondent state. Jakob was all she had, and as awful as he was, she doesn't connect to her fellow cultists on the same level.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 1, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Leadership 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 5

General Difficulties: 3/2

CULTIST AGENCY

The Wellspring cultists work best if they're more than just set dressing and plot devices. These characters all escaped (or were taken) from society for a reason, and through exchanges with the player characters they should express their desires, fears, and reasons for wanting to remain isolated in the woods over returning to friends and families back home. For this story to function at any meaningful level, these characters should perform useful tasks and act as counsel for the protagonists, so emotional bonds might form. Don't be afraid to tell a player about how, after three nights of intense exchanges, one of the Wellspring cultists has developed into their character's Touchstone, for instance.

OTHER CULTISTS

The Storyteller is encouraged to add one or two additional cultists to the Wellspring. One should have a personal connection to one of the protagonists, such as a relative who went missing years before, a kidnapped Touchstone, or a ghoul who vanished one day. The other should be a more distant connection of one of the other player characters, such as someone with whom they briefly worked in their breathing days, or someone they remember seeing reported as missing on the news.

Building in these connections allows the player characters to form a deeper attachment to the Wellspring's members.

The Wellspring Beliefs

The Wellspring's been through around 30 members by the time the story starts, with only a handful of those remaining. Some have passed in and out well before the story starts, with several dying at a disappointed Jakob's hands or fangs, and others fleeing never to be seen again. The surviving cultists assume those people who run away are absorbed back into the corrupt urban machine, but the reality is Jakob hunts them down or, if they start running their mouths about "the Nightwalker in the woods," Belinde or one of her kommissær's swiftly silences the blabbing mortal.

Those who remain with the Wellspring do so due to fear, a belief in Jakob and his "divine gifts," or the realization that a wilderness commune with its share of hardships and torments is still preferable to pointless toil and anonymity in a city like Copenhagen. They've built a self-sustaining life for themselves in the forest, hunt-

ing rabbits and deer, growing crops, fishing, and eating berries — when not engaging in cult rituals of celebration and competition. Everything they do is in exaltation of Jakob, who existed (before becoming a wight) for the adulation he received.

Jakob's cult tenets are as follows:

GIVE THANKS TO THE LEADER FOR ALL GOOD THINGS.

The cultists are led to believe their existence in the wild wouldn't last without Jakob's protection and infrequent blessings, in the form of vitae he bestows to them. These are so infrequent, in fact, that only one cultist can be considered a ghoul through repeated drinks.

SUSTAIN THE WELLSPRING WITH THE GIFTS OF THE WILD AND OF JAKOB, REJECTING THE CORRUPTION OF THE CITY.

Jakob tried on many occasions to form cults in cities, but cities have distractions in the form of jobs, families, friends, and an incessant bombardment of news. His belief was that for the Wellspring to flourish, it needed to divorce itself from civilization.

THE CITY AND ALL ITS INHABITANTS ARE CORRUPT UNTIL THEY GIVE THEMSELVES TO THE WELLSPRING.

"Giving themselves to the Wellspring" is a subjective rule that Jakob and his followers have twisted depending on the cult's membership at any given time. When Jakob was lucid, he would baptize new cultists with his own vitae. At other points, to give oneself was to receive a

brand, have sex with a cultist in high standing, or take a risky trip into the city to empty an account and go on a shopping spree for the cult (this latter one occurred on several occasions when winters were hard or when crops failed).

EVERY MEMBER OF THE WELLSPRING IS EQUAL BENEATH THE LEADER AND THEIR APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE.

The cultists adhere to this rule, which obliges them to share their dwellings, personal belongings, and thoughts, especially at Jakob's demands. As many cultists emerged from broken backgrounds, a forced equality has given them a greater sense of fairness in life.

BREATHE, LOVE, LIVE, AND DIE FOR THE WELLSPRING.

Putting the cult above all — and by the cult, this means Jakob — is of utmost importance, and in some respects, the biggest ask. The first three elements are theoretically simple, extolling the virtues of living life and loving one another freely. To die for the Wellspring, however, is a rule rarely tested. If abided, cultists should be prepared to sacrifice their lives for one another, and especially for the leader.

THE LEADER IS FOREVER, UNTIL A NEW LEADER COMES. WAIT FOR THE NEXT LEADER, NO MATTER WHAT.

This contradictory tenet was one Jakob put in place in a moment of panic. He felt himself falling to the Beast some years ago, but wanted to ensure none of his cultists



would abandon him if this occurred, or if he fell to torpor. Before this story started, he made communication with a child of his, Maja, as again he felt the descent calling.

THE LEADER MUST ALWAYS BE A NIGHTWALKER.

Jakob was wary of one of his more headstrong cultists usurping the Wellspring while he slept, or an outsider arriving and luring them away. By specifying the leader must be a “Nightwalker,” he narrowed the chances of any such event taking place.

THE LEADER SELECTED YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE SPECIAL.

Jakob felt empowering the cultists in this simple way was an effective method of making them feel better about leaving society behind.

NEVER DENY THE LEADER’S ROLE AS YOUR SAVIOR.

To engender loyalty in his cultists, Jakob wanted it perfectly clear that it was because of *him* that the cultists were chosen, saved, and liberated. He kept vague exactly what he was, actually encouraging conjecture among the cultists in that regard, occasionally asking “What do you think I am?” of his followers. He always sad he was “a Nightwalker,” but when asked if that was the same as being a vampire, he’d mock and humiliate the question’s asker, making them feel small and stupid amid their fellow cultists.

Follow the Leader

Though the story begins with Jakob’s destruction, we provide his background in case the player characters are interested in finding out more about the fallen cult leader who also happens to be the Prince of Copenhagen’s child. His cultists know snatches of this information, which Jakob was always proud to confess. Likewise, Maja and the Prince (later in this story) may impart some of this if the player characters seek context for Jakob’s actions.

JAKOB

Epitaph: Cult Leader

Quote: “Life is much better in a community. Come, let me show you.”

Clan: Nosferatu

MORTAL DAYS: SOMETHING MORE

Born into poverty in post-Reformation Odense, it took Jakob’s parents every krone of their meager sav-

ings to send him to the local Latin school, with hopes of pushing him up from the ranks of serfdom in which they languished. To Jakob, this was a godsend: he craved a chance to become more than an obscure peasant. He required recognition and admiration.

Jakob was, sadly, never an exceptional academic. Stymied in part due to his childhood of manual labor at a shoemaker’s, where literacy and numbers were far less important than a boy’s ability to stitch and cobble, but also because of the school’s classist principles, he suffered daily at the school. He couldn’t afford private tutelage or the variety of books the other students accessed. His teachers were cruel, especially to one as lowborn as Jakob. Many an afternoon was spent scrubbing desks or being locked in the teacher’s cupboard for minor infractions, while his classmates learned their lessons over his weeping for help. They refused to establish a friendship with him. To be seen with Jakob was to be scum.

Jakob hated his circumstances, his teachers, and his fellow pupils, but hated even more the knowledge that he had no way out. He adamantly refused to return to the shoemaker’s or tell his parents of his dire situation. He felt forced to find another technique, if he was going to succeed.

The young man broke into the schoolhouse one night and pored over teacher diaries, altered students’ work with subtle errors, and destroyed parchments entirely. If he was going to struggle, everyone would struggle. He gathered enough personal information to blackmail the staff and humiliate the pupils. He daubed anonymous graffiti implicating teachers in scandals stolen from private journals, wrote to the cathedral about the poor Latin instruction being delivered at the school, and started pushing himself as the one honest peasant in a field of highborn miscreants. His techniques were dirty, but to Jakob’s mind, completely necessary. He wanted people to look up to him.

One of the schoolhouse teachers was an elderly man named Holger. He was as unpleasant to Jakob as the rest, but he possessed a vital element his fellow teachers did not: a homicidal urge to protect his secrets. Holger’s clandestine love (actually a blood bond) for a woman named Belinde was found one morning, scrawled in muck on the classroom boards. Pages from his diaries had been copied verbatim and nailed to doors. Holger knew the perpetrator as soon as he spotted the smug Jakob, and took him to the cellar, where students were regularly beaten. Holger began his beating of the boy, his ferocity growing, and looping a rope around Jakob’s neck, attempted to throttle the life from him. It was sheer luck that allowed Jakob to fall backward, pushing Holger to the ground, where his head cracked open on the stones.

Jakob hid in the cellar for the remainder of the day. Nobody came looking for Holger, nobody came looking for Jakob. In the evening, when Jakob resolved to move the body, something shifted behind one of the cellar walls.

Belinde, of Clan Nosferatu, awoke.

She immediately recognized her dead ghoul and was close to eviscerating the young boy when he stood up straight and confessed “This man tried to kill me, and I stopped him.” Admiring something in the simplicity of Jakob’s statement, she went on to listen to the student and recognized his inability to fit into society. She was visibly monstrous, and ever on the outside, looking in. Belinde saw potential in the young student. He struggled against adversity, much as she did. A spark of what once felt like care and compassion flared in her dusty heart.

Belinde approached Jakob, promising him success outside society’s constraints and away from the cold judgment of others. Soon after, Jakob stopped caring about his school and focused on serving Belinde. She didn’t give him any meaningful tasks, but just enough to keep him occupied, clothed, and fed. For Jakob, Belinde’s attention finally gave him the sense of validation he sought so desperately. Her horrific appearance never bothered him.

As Jakob convinced Belinde of his worth, she elected to end his mortal life, and restart it with the Embrace. His trust in her made her job that much easier. He didn’t resist when she plunged her fangs into his neck, but the screaming started as he felt his life ebb away.

A few nights after his 25th birthday, Jakob joined the ranks of the undead.

KINDRED NIGHTS: TRUE MESSIAH

Even as a mortal, Jakob disliked other people. So much so, he refused to spend time with individuals of

“lesser intellect.” Swiftly, Belinde realized her childe was — with the dubious benefit of undeath — becoming an ungracious prig. Her affection for his pluck and determination ebbed.

From the time of Embrace, his Beast had significant control over him. Jakob had an explosive temperament that only worsened as years went by, resulting in his attempting to humiliate fledglings in court, so he might receive greater recognition than them, or delivering sadistic treatment to mortals when denied his wishes. When his plans went awry, he’d resort to physical attacks on fellow Kindred, sometimes ambushing and even murdering his peers. Eventually, the Prince ordered him to stay away from Elysia, since he would create chaos every chance he found. Jakob lacked the charisma to be a manipulating herald and the diplomacy to represent his clan: he was just a menace. It was only his sire who prevented his destruction.

When Jakob put the flame to another vampire’s haven, Belinde told him he could no longer be a part of Camarilla society. His crimes had gone too far, and her protection would extend over him no longer. Yet, his innate need for validation devoured his self-worth. He knew he had to find a following — even if he had to force people into his orbit.

Jakob was never religious in life but observed how diligently kine went to worship to thank a god or gods they could never know truly exist. He watched as war and money tore families apart and people died in the name of religion and community, and that’s when he knew he could create something beyond the expectations of Kindred and kine society. For years, he studied mortal flock mentality, what made them believe in the unbelievable, what made them give up their entire life for one cause, until he knew he had enough information to create his own religious movement. He didn’t want

to love people based on their merits but rather on their devotion to him.

Jakob’s formed his first cult at the end of the 16th century, and it was a successful order until the Malleus Maleficarum found popularity in Scandinavia. He knew he had to remain hidden lest he burn at the stake. His disciples patiently awaited his return, but town officials heard rumors of the cult’s existence. Jakob watched as inquisitors drowned people he saw as family in the Odense stream, one by one, under the moonlight. He did nothing to prevent it and once more, the Beast chewed at his heart. After this event, Jakob entered a despair-induced torpor. He woke up in 1799, a year before he met Maja, his eventual childe, and in a succession of attempts over the coming centuries, formed cult after cult to sooth his frayed spirit. Each fell apart as he raged and frightened them into fleeing, turned them against one another, or consumed them.

It was in 1975 he formed his latest, and most successful cult, which he called the “Wellspring.” He chose this name as he felt they represented a fresh start, a source of inspiration for him, and hopefully, new life for all his cultists. He realized he could no longer recruit members of his own, as his lack of Humanity prevented him from understanding how to successfully interact with mortals. He obtained Villy through a combination of bribes and threats, and crudely introduced him to the ways of the cult. From then on, the Wellspring steadily grew. For years, Jakob remained in the shadows of the cult, observing it from a distance and controlling it first through Villy but later through Søren, and with the cult’s successful growth, his Humanity showed signs of returning. He’d selected a cadre of outsiders, just like him, and it was Jakob’s genuine belief that the “Wellspring” could give them purpose and strength, while sustaining his need for validation.

SO HUNGRY...

In this story, it's advised the characters begin at Hunger 1 and add two Hunger levels per member of the coterie between each character. Whether the players want one character to have Hunger 2 and another 4, or one vampire to have none and another to have 5 is up to them. Hunger plays a crucial part in this story, so it starts higher than it normally might.

And then his sire reached out to him for the first time in decades, and the Beast took over. Always precariously on the edge of descent, Jakob's fury took over, and he could resist the transformation into a wight no more. The player characters encounter him after he's well and truly fallen into the lowest state of vampiric being, his last act of rationality being to remove himself from his mortal followers so that when the Beast took him, he didn't immediately rip them to pieces.

Chapter One: Behind the Trees

The player characters receive a phone call only minutes after they destroy Jakob. Gorm calls the group to make sure everything has gone to plan. This is where the Storyteller should state the following (and adjust as necessary for the group):

You were tasked with returning Prince Belinde's errant childe — a vampire named Jakob — to the court of Copenhagen. You hadn't been given much information as to why, beyond his acting in an unstable manner outside the domain, but the instruction itself was clear: paralyze and bring him in.

Unfortunately, staking the vampire was an impossibility. Jakob was too feral, too ferocious, for you to pin down, mentally subjugate, and least of all stake. You fought for your unives, and the end result was Jakob as a smear of grease and ash on the forest floor, and each of you starving but standing.

Now the politikommisær, Gorm of the Banu Haqim, calls you on your one-use burner phone to ask for an update. You're covered in Jakob's vitae and ash, standing in the woods, in the early hours of the morning, too far from the roadside to get back to civilization in time for the dawn. Gorm asks again: "What happened?"

The coterie must decide: Do they lie about killing Jakob and risk getting caught when they return empty-handed; or do they tell Gorm the truth and find the city's hounds at their backs?

THE PHONE BLACKOUT LAW

The Camarilla has a blackout rule on the use of phones in Denmark after a number of prominent Kindred found their calls traced and their havens destroyed in short order. Eight Kindred have now been assassinated, with the belief being the phones led attackers to them. The running theory is a segment of the Second Inquisition analyze every call for words such as "clan," "blood," "vitae," "prince," and the like, but nobody knows for sure.

Prince Belinde and her kommisær expect all business to be conducted in person, via dead drops and encrypted letters, through graffiti tags, and, when extremely necessary, using ghouls as messengers. Belinde expects vampires to control their business, and she maintains the ethos of "We're eternal beings, so if your news can't wait until Elysium, learn to practice a little patience."

The fact the coterie were given two phones for this assignment is unusual and emphasizes the importance of the vampire they were sent to capture. They have been instructed to make no outgoing calls with the phones (they have no credit on them), and to only expect calls from Gorm. The coterie are told that after a call, the coterie should destroy the SIM card.

To convince Gorm of the lie, they must make a successful Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (Difficulty 4). Feel free to come up with your own responses in your role as the politikommisær, or use the examples below for inspiration:

LYING TO GORM

"Good. The Prince wants the childe back before sunrise, so I expect you here well before that — with an unharmed Jakob, of course."

TELLING THE TRUTH

"... You did what?! Oh, this is bad. This is bad. You are aware this is the Prince's childe, right? There will be hell to pay if you return now. You must stay out of sight until I've figured this shit out. Stay in the woods until I call you. I'll call you on your second phone. Destroy the first one. You know the phone blackout law."

I Saw It All

The coterie is deep within Rold forest, one of the largest forests in Denmark spanning 30 square miles of hundred-year-old trees, moss clad rocks, and springs of