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# VAMPIRE TRANSLATION GUIDE™

Sample file

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# VAMPIRE TRANSLATION GUIDE

**Vampire: The Masquerade** was first released in 1991, and became one of the most recognizable and popular roleplaying games of all time. In 2004, the game line officially ended, and was replaced by **Vampire: The Requiem**, which has gone on to a successful run in its own right.

Both of these games take place in a World of Darkness, though the respective Worlds of Darkness for **Masquerade** and **Requiem** are quite different. Over the six years (as of this writing) that **Requiem** has been supported, fans of both games have expressed the desire to use elements from one game in another. Some people feel that the game systems of **Requiem** are far more streamlined and functional than those of **Masquerade**, but that the setting material of the earlier game is still compelling. Some feel that the newer World of Darkness is, on the whole, perfectly functional, but they would like to bring back some of their favorite clans or bloodlines from **Masquerade**. And some players would prefer to just mix the games and see what sort of chronicle falls out.

These translation documents are meant to assist in the process of playing **Requiem** with **Masquerade** rules, or vice versa. The major clans and bloodlines of both games are reexamined here with the opposite game's rules in mind, as are Disciplines, covenants/sects, Humanity, character creation, and the basic setting assumptions of the games.

Through all of this, however, it's important to remember the Golden Rule, the one rule that has remained unchanged through all iterations of **Vampire** and the **World of Darkness**: The rules are less important than the story. It's on p. 195 of **Vampire: The Masquerade Revised** and on p. 120 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, stated in different ways, but the intent is very clear. How you're rolling the dice isn't as critical as how the story is unfolding. It's more important that everyone's having fun than that everyone's following the rules.

We bring this up here because the translation from **Masquerade** to **Requiem** isn't seamless. They are different games, written by different people with different intents during different times. When situations come up in play that this document doesn't address, the Storyteller should look at the rules of both games, figure out the intent, and translate it over as best he can. If it becomes less fun somehow, try again. That's really the only way to get it wrong.

## MASQUERADE VS. REQUIEM

Before we get into the numbers, it behooves us to take a look at the different Worlds of Darkness that the Kindred of both games inhabit, and to shine a light on the differences between the games. Below are the main points on which the games differ.

## A LARGER WORLD OF DARKNESS

Both **Masquerade** and **Requiem** take place in a game setting much like the modern world, but in which monsters lurk in the shadows. Vampires are not the only monsters in either setting: Werewolves, mages, ghosts, faeries and other, stranger creatures share the shadows with the undead. But in the original World of Darkness, the different game lines were ostensibly worlds unto themselves. That is, although crossover systems and products existed, it was always stated up front that the "Lupines" of **Vampire: The Masquerade** weren't necessarily the Garou of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**.

In **Requiem**, this isn't true. The core rules of the setting are found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, and the World of Darkness is assumed to hold as few or as many monsters as the Storyteller wishes. The rules are the same across the game lines, meaning that a Storyteller who wishes to introduce werewolves into her **Requiem** game doesn't have to do nearly the same amount of rules revision



(or at least consideration) as one who wants to include werewolves in a **Masquerade** game. While products, revisions and supplements were released over the years to make this easier on original World of Darkness players, the fact remains that the assumption was that each game line had its own ruleset.

The effect that this had on the games themselves was that **Masquerade** and its sister games in the original World of Darkness were distinct and compartmentalized, and crossover attempts weren't easy (though obviously they weren't impossible, either). In **Requiem**, vampires are simply one part of a larger world.

### UNIFIED MYTH

**Vampire: The Masquerade** assumes one main creation story for the Kindred: That the son of Adam and Eve, Caine, killed his brother Abel and was cursed by God to roam the Earth forever as an unliving monster. Caine's childer created 13 vampires between them, and these vampires gave rise to the clans of **Masquerade** (though in the ensuing centuries, some clans were destroyed and their positions usurped, and numerous offshoot bloodlines arose). Many of the sectarian disputes of **Masquerade** were built around differing interpretations of this creation story, and artifacts occasionally arose in supplements that seemed to indicate that this story was factually true. The creation of vampires is firmly grounded in the setting of the game, and while various factions quarrel over the existence of Caine and the Antediluvians, the setting very much assumes this story to be the correct one.

In **Vampire: The Requiem**, however, the very nature of vampiric aging and memory (see p. 72) make proving or disproving any given creation story impossible. The Circle of the Crone and the Lancea Sanctum tell very different stories about the origins of vampires, but they are hardly the only ones. The supplement **Mythologies** (published in 2006) presents a number of different potential geneses for the Kindred, and the system treats none of them as more or less valid than any other. This is in keeping with the more mysterious feel of the current World of Darkness — just as many stories exist, but less evidence points to one being *true*.

As a result, such discussions in **Masquerade** are more limited and insular. A religious debate doesn't tend to dispute whether the Antediluvians ever existed, but rather how active they are tonight. A similar discus-

sion in **Requiem** might debate whether any vampire is really older than 200 years or so, the nature of the vampire curse, or something even more esoteric.

### GLOBAL VS. LOCAL

**Vampire: The Masquerade** is a game of cities, but vampires across the world are connected. The Camarilla, one of the two powerful sects of vampires, has an organizational structure that spans the Western world. Infractions of the Traditions may draw down punitive action from outside a given city, and although travel is still problematic for logistical reasons, moving between cities isn't usually a deadly gamble. After all, the city is likely to be Camarilla- or Sabbat-dominated, a fact which the traveler can certainly find that out ahead of time.

**Vampire: The Requiem**, and the current World of Darkness in general, embraces a more local feel. Characters know what the political power structure is in their home city, and maybe other cities if they know someone in those locales. But a member of the Order of Dracul can't point to a city in which his covenant holds power and definitively say how things will be or how best to navigate the nights there. At best, he might be able to make some educated guesses, and knows enough of the terminology to avoid making fatal errors, but in **Requiem**, each city or region is a domain unto itself.

As such, **Masquerade** enables a more global feel. Characters from other cities might visit, but be able to trade on position within their sects, which enables a greater cast of characters (and enables players to more easily bring in new characters from outside the existing city's power structure). In **Requiem**, however, a vampire from a neighboring state might seem exotic if her city's customs are different enough, so establishing a sense of mystery is easier. Also, because characters don't usually have to report back to a larger governing body, the players' characters can more easily seize and hold their own domains.

### DIFFERING TONE

The tone of **Vampire: The Masquerade**, perhaps because the focus is wider, is more overt and action-oriented than that of **Vampire: The Requiem**. **Masquerade** vampires can reshape a target's flesh with a touch, punch through walls easily, take multiple actions in a turn and summon up shadowy tentacles to throttle their enemies.





**Requiem** vampires display superhuman levels of strength, speed and endurance, but their supernatural abilities don't drift as far from the vampires presented in popular mythology (as described by Stoker, Rice, Moore, etc.).

Understanding this difference requires looking at the systems of both games and recognizing how they work and where they differ. In **Masquerade**, Potence (the supernatural power that grants vampires their enhanced strength) adds *successes* to Strength rolls. In **Requiem**, Vigor, the equivalent power, adds *dice*. Even taking into consideration the ways that the different games register multiple successes, this puts a very different face on what the undead can do.

### METAPLOT

**Vampire: The Masquerade**, and in fact the original World of Darkness in general, operated on the principle that the events put forward in a given supplement or edition of the game were “canon,” and future books took those events into consideration. For instance, in **Nights of Prophecy** (published in 2000), a powerful Nosferatu known as Baba Yaga was killed in Russia. As far as the continuing **Masquerade** game line was concerned, she was dead. Over the long life of the game line, many such changes occurred, some of which were fairly small and insignificant, and some of which altered the game line as a whole. Notably, an entire clan was nearly wiped out in **Time of Thin Blood**.

The current World of Darkness (and therefore **Vampire: The Requiem**) operates on a “year zero” principle. That is, events in any given book are assumed to have just happened, and events from previous books aren't recognized as having happened at all. Any event, character or situation in a **Requiem** supplement is an option for the Storyteller to use, and once the book is published, future books don't mention, change or “invalidate” them.

Opinions vary, of course, on the benefits of metaplot. It does enable the writers of the game line to create an ongoing story within the game world, and some fans enjoy being able to follow that story from one book to the next. On the other hand, some players enjoy having the wider range of options that the more “toolbox” nature of the current World of Darkness provides. Since the writers don't have to worry about a book's contents becoming “canon” or synching up with previous supplements, they are free to break the game's established rules and present strange or esoteric possibilities (the **Mythologies** sourcebook is built on this principle).



# CLANS

In both **Masquerade** and **Requiem**, vampires belong to one of a number of clans. In both games, while an individual vampire does not choose her clan, the clan that she belongs to make certain assumptions and statements about her. The Toreador of **Masquerade** are aesthetes and sometimes dilettantes. The Mekhet of **Requiem** are secretive and perceptive. The stereotypes about clans extend to what sort of person a given vampire might Embrace, and are reinforced by the clans' weaknesses and selection of innate Disciplines.

For all the similarities, though, "clan" means something different in the two games. In **Masquerade**, the 13 main clans descend from the 13 Antediluvians (or from vampires who diablerized one of those ancients). In **Requiem**, the history of the clans is fragmentary at best. Each has several myths about their own origins, and these myths usually suggest that each clan is a different, if similar, kind of monster. The common origin of the Kindred is that they all come from humanity, rather than a single supernatural force. In both games, it is possible to gain status within one's clan, though this status is of necessity more widely recognized in **Masquerade**, where the members of individual clans communicate more among themselves. Indeed, in **Masquerade**, several clans are sects in their own right.

"Converting" an existing character from one game to the other is covered at the end of these documents. The sections below simply discuss changing the clans as a whole, systems included, from one game to the other.

## MASQUERADE TO REQUIEM

Below are brief descriptions of each of the 13 clans of **Vampire: The Masquerade**, as well as some notes on what needs to change in order to make them fit into **Vampire: The Requiem** and the current World of Darkness. The descriptions are abbreviated by the nature of these documents, and do not take into account the years of backstory added by supplements, clanbooks and the like.

Note that several **Masquerade** clans were included in **Requiem**, either as full clans or bloodlines. This section addresses taking every clan as it appears in **Masquerade**, regardless of their presentation in the latter game.

### ASSAMITE

The Assamites are a clan of assassins and diablerists. They believe that other vampires are inferior and that taking the blood and souls of these lesser Kindred is akin to a sacrament. In **Vampire: The Masquerade**, they labored for years under a magical curse that prevented them from indulging in diablerie, but as of the Revised edition of the game, that curse had been lifted and the clan was again targeting and slaughtering other Kindred to earnest.

**Requiem Assamites:** The Assamites are a sect unto themselves, and given their particular leanings that probably doesn't change from one game to the other. However, because the nature of "clan" is much less bound up in mortal nationality and ethnicity in **Requiem**, the Storyteller might consider making Assamites a covenant. Vampires of any lineage might be allowed to join, provided they demonstrate the necessary skills and temperament, and the Discipline of Quietude (see below) would be taught as a perk of membership. If the Storyteller has access to **Clanbook: Assamite Revised**, **Blood Magic: Secrets of Thaumaturgy**, **Libellus Sanguinus III** or any of the other **Vampire: The Masquerade** books that contain Assamite blood sorcery, she should be able to convert these systems into **Requiem** powers similar to Crúac or Theban Sorcery.

The Assamites might also work well as a Mekhet bloodline, since they already share two of the clan's Disciplines. Simply add Auspex and the Mekhet weakness, and assume that "the One" that they speak of is their bloodline founder. For the mythology to work, the Assamites would have to be an especially ancient bloodline, but that's workable.



If the Storyteller wishes to keep the Assamites as a clan, however, she has two possibilities. One is to make the clan initially small and local to the Middle East and northern Africa, but spreading as the clan gains influence and power outside of that area. The other is to keep the Middle Eastern influences on the clan's origins, but stipulate that while the clan's power base is there, the clan proper has long since moved out of the area.

In play, an Assamite's habit of committing diablerie as a religious rite raises the same problems in **Requiem** as in **Masquerade**. It's not impossible for a vampire to hide his proclivities from a coterie (though his aura betrays him in both games), and having a dark secret can be an interesting source of conflict and drama, provided the player in question doesn't mind potentially fatal repercussions for their character.

**Systems:** The Assamite clan Disciplines are Celerity, Obfuscate, and Quietus. The first two work as described in **Vampire: The Requiem**, and Quietus is converted below. The favored Attributes are Dexterity and Wits.

Before the blood curse was lifted, Assamite vampires were unable to safely drink Kindred blood, suffering one point of lethal damage per Vitae point they attempted to drink. This system was written in **Requiem**. After the curse was lifted, the weakness shifted, making Assamites more susceptible to blood addiction. In **Requiem** terms, Assamites do not receive the +1 bonus to resist drinking Vitae even if they do successfully deny it once (see p. 158 of **Vampire: The Requiem** for systems for Blood Addiction). In addition, Assamites start play with a mild blood addiction, and therefore suffer a -1 to the Resolve + Composure roll to avoid drinking Kindred blood when given the chance. While it is *possible* for an Assamite to score the exceptional success necessary to avoid blood addiction, it isn't likely, and falling into torpor becomes his only real recourse. That assumes, of course, that the Assamite *wants* to lose the addiction, rather than reveling in it.

### BRUJAH

The Brujah of **Masquerade** are an odd mix of brutes, thugs, rabble-rousers and philosophers. Over the years, this mindset was explained by delving deep into the clan's history, but for purposes of this translation document, it's enough to say that **Masquerade** Brujah look more like **Requiem** Carthians than

**Requiem** Bruja (p. 235 of **Vampire: The Requiem**). They value individuality and political discourse, but their clan weakness makes them volatile and dangerous to be around.

**Requiem Brujah:** The clan works more or less as written for **Requiem** games. Brujah might find a home in any of the major covenants. While the Carthian Movement is tailor-made for the clan's brand of political fervor, Brujah can be passionate about just about any cause, which means that a Brujah who sees the **Masquerade** as the greatest Kindred good might make a superb Invictus enforcer, while one who sees himself as God's perfect monster would be quite welcome in the Lancia Sanctum.

The Brujah might also function as a Daeva bloodline. The Daeva focus on Vice and depravity skews the Brujah clan concept slightly, but to play on the clan's notorious temper the Storyteller might stipulate that becoming a Brujah immediately shifts the character's Vice to Wrath. Resilience would make for a good bloodline Discipline.

**Systems:** The Brujah clan Disciplines in **Masquerade** are Potence, Presence and Celerity. In **Requiem**, simply change them to Vigor, Majesty and Celerity. Their favored Attributes are Presence and Strength.

The clan's weakness is also simple to convert: Brujah are prone to frenzy. Any attempt resist frenzy suffers a -2 penalty. This applies to anger frenzy and hunger frenzy, but not to Rötschreck. It does apply to attempts to ride the wave, however (see pp. 178-181 of **Vampire: The Requiem**).

### FOLLOWERS OF SET

The Setites have their own goals and methods of meeting them. Unlike the Daeva, whom they resemble in some ways, they don't just revel in vice but use it as a weapon and a recruiting tactic. The ultimate goal of the clan at large is the resurrection of Set, whom the Followers believe to be not a mere Antediluvian but the literal God of the Underworld. Whether or not there is anything to that claim is up for debate (and the Setites don't have a great deal of compelling evidence), but even the clan members that don't fully subscribe to this philosophy make use of the tactics of temptation and seduction.



**Requiem Followers of Set:** The Setites are close enough in ideology that they resemble a sect more than a clan. As with the Assamites, the Storyteller might consider allowing vampires of any clan to join the Setites, using the Discipline of Serpents (see below) as the “perk” for membership. Theban Sorcery also makes a great deal of sense for the Setites, given its Egyptian origin (and as a point of interest, the **Requiem** sourcebook **Ancient Mysteries** presents a discussion of ancient Egypt in the current World of Darkness).

Another possibility is for the Setites to be a splinter group — or rather, a heretical offshoot — of the Lancea Sanctum. While their pre-Christian roots might indicate more synchronicity with the Circle of the Crone, the Setites are nothing if not adaptable, and again, the magic of the Holy Lance has its roots in the Setites’ homeland.

If the Storyteller wishes to reduce the size of the clan and keep the familial focus on the veneration of Set, she might wish to stipulate that the Followers of Set are a Daeva bloodline. In that case, the Setites’ clan Disciplines are Majesty, Celerity, Obfuscate and Serpents.

**Systems:** As a clan, the Setites have the following Disciplines: Obfuscate, Majesty and Serpents (converted below). Their favored Attributes are Manipulation and Dexterity.

Their clan weakness works as written in **Vampire: The Masquerade** — they suffer two additional points of damage from exposure to the sun (but not to fire, making this weakness slightly different than the Mekhet weakness) and a –1 penalty to all rolls in overly bright light.

## GANGREL

Of the three clans that appear in both **Masquerade** and **Requiem** as full clans, the Gangrel are probably the one that changed the least. Both versions of the Gangrel are animalistic and self-reliant. **Masquerade** Gangrel focus a bit more on the wilderness and dwelling between cities, while their **Requiem** counterparts are simply predatory, rather than strictly animalistic. **Requiem** Gangrel are also a bit more willing to join sects and spend time around other Kindred, but beyond that, a Gangrel character can be shifted between the two games fairly easily.

**Requiem Gangrel:** The Gangrel are already a core clan of **Vampire: The Requiem**.

**Systems:** The system that needs to switch over from **Masquerade’s** portrayal of Clan Gangrel is the weakness. Every time a Gangrel succumbs to frenzy, she gains an animalistic feature, such as slitted eyes, tufted ears, wolf-like hair, and so on. While the system presented in **Masquerade** for these features (for every five, the character loses a dot of a Social Attribute) can be ported to **Requiem**, it seems a bit harsh. An alternative might be that every three such features imposes a –1 penalty to Manipulation or Presence rolls, except those made to Intimidate.

The favored Attributes of the Gangrel remain Composure and Stamina.

## GIOVANNI

The Giovanni began as a merchant family with a penchant for necromancy, and wound up usurping control of one of the Clans of Caine. In the **Masquerade** mythology, they did so when the leader of the vampiric Giovanni family (which was, at the time, a subset of a clan called the Cappadocians — in **Requiem** terms, the Giovanni resembled a bloodline) committed diablerie on the Cappadocians’ Antediluvian founder.

The Giovanni managed to survive the ensuing nights and remain an independent force in the modern era, not allying with the Camarilla or the Sabbat. They believe that when Armageddon comes, they will be able to take control of the risen dead, and make a good and comfortable unlife in the meantime. They resemble an organized crime family with a good dash of unholy death magic into the bargain.

**Requiem Giovanni: Vampire: The Requiem** boasts a Mekhet bloodline called the Sangiovanni (which can be found in **Bloodlines: The Chosen**), which is quite similar to the Giovanni, down to the focus on necromancy. If the Storyteller wishes to include **Masquerade**-style Giovanni in a **Requiem** game, however, she is faced with similar choices as those encountered with the other independent clans.

The Giovanni can remain a sect unto themselves, although their familial focus precludes taking on



members of other clans. They should probably remain a clan, although their status as usurpers doesn't work, given the nature of clans in the current World of Darkness. As such, while they probably have unsavory reputations due to their history as mobsters and necromancers, this is by no means as ghastly in **Requiem** as destroying and replacing a clan was in **Masquerade**.

Another possibility is that the Giovanni are a bloodline. While Sangiovanni of the current World of Darkness are listed as a Mekhet bloodline, given the megalomaniacal nature of Augustus Giovanni, the clan's founder, the Giovanni might make more sense as a Ventrue bloodline. What this means for the bloodline's Disciplines is discussed below.

**Systems:** As a clan, the Giovanni's clan Disciplines are Dominate, Vigor and Auspex. Their favored Attributes are Resolve and Strength.

If the Giovanni are a bloodline, they might descend from either the Mekhet or the Ventrue. In the former case, the clan's Disciplines are Auspex, Obfuscate, Celerity and Vigor. In the latter, the Disciplines are Dominate, Resilience, Obfuscate and Vigor (they lose Animalism, but gain Obfuscate). In any case, Necromancy remains a form of blood magic similar to Crúac or Theban Sorcery, rather than a Discipline, and is converted to **Requiem** mechanics in the appropriate section, below.

## LASOMBRA

Clan Lasombra was once deeply involved with the Catholic Church, but in the modern nights has largely abandoned (or lost) that power base to rule the Sabbat. They are among the strangest of the clans, animating and solidifying shadows to fight their battles and obey their whims. In **Masquerade**, they were somewhere between shadowy manipulator and coldly efficient leader, fighting the holy war against the Camarilla and the Antediluvians.

**Requiem Lasombra:** Remove the Jyhad from the equation, and the modern Lasombra lose much of their *raison d'être*. Including the clan in the current World of Darkness might require looking back to their presentation in **Dark Ages: Vampire** (one of the historical settings for **Vampire: The Masquerade**) in which the Lasombra were nominally devout and heavily involved with the Church.

With a strong religious and spiritual focus, the Lasombra would make for a strong force in the Lancea Sanctum. Playing on their connection with strange shadow-magic, they might also find a home in the Ordo Dracul or the Circle of the Crone. Because they don't fill an obvious vampiric stereotype the way the five core clans of **Requiem** do, they might function as a rare but steady presence in the World of Darkness (and if you have access to **Mage: The Awakening**, you might consider making some kind of connection between the Abyss of **Mage** and the Abyss from which the Lasombra draw their darkness).

If you would prefer, the Lasombra could be a bloodline rather than a clan. As with the Giovanni, Mekhet and Ventrue make the most sense, and the choice is down to which one the Storyteller feels is a better match. The original Lasombra clan weakness effectively combines both the core Mekhet weakness and the alternate Hollow weakness introduced in Mekhet: Shadows in the Dark. This means that Lasombra fit very nicely as a bloodline of core Mekhet who acquire the Hollow weakness as their bloodline weakness, or vice versa. Which, in turn, suggests that the Lasombra may be a Shadow Cult, both culturally and under the rules provided in **Shadows in the Dark**.

**System:** The Lasombra's clan Disciplines are Dominate, Vigor and Obtenebration (converted to **Requiem** mechanics in the Disciplines section). Their favored Attributes are Composure and Dexterity.

The clan weakness works as written — Lasombra *cannot* cast reflections, even the blurry ones that most Kindred do (see p. 169 of **Vampire: The Requiem**), and cannot alter this condition with Willpower. In **Masquerade**, Lasombra also take an extra point of damage from sunlight, and if Lasombra in **Requiem** are a Mekhet bloodline, this is appropriate. If they are a clan in their own right, the inability to appear in mirrors, photographs and video recordings is probably enough.

If the Lasombra are a Mekhet bloodline, their Disciplines are Auspex, Celerity, Dominate and Obtenebration.

If the Lasombra descend from the Ventrue, their Disciplines are Dominate, Vigor, Resilience and Obtenebration.