

INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE LISBOA
ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE TEATRO E CINEMA



THE WORLD OF DARKNESS

THE FALL OF ATLANTA

MESTRADO EM DESENVOLVIMENTO DE
PROJECTO CINEMATOGRAFICO – ESPECIALIZAÇÃO EM
NARRATIVAS CINEMATOGRAFICAS

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Sobre a adaptação de
World of Darkness
The Fall of Atlanta

Palavras-chave: Vampiro, Vampire the Masquerade, Adaptação Cinematográfica, Clan Novel, Bram Stoker, White Wolf, Roleplaying Game.

Resumo: Este texto consiste na desconstrução do processo de criação do argumento de longa metragem, resultante da adaptação de dois romances, baseados num *Roleplaying Game*, da *White Wolf Game Studio*, chamado *Vampire the Masquerade*. É explorado o tema do monstro no cinema, em que o vampiro é o caso principal em estudo. Procura dar uma explicação à metodologia seguida, justificar as opções técnicas de escrita de argumento tomadas e realçar a importância que têm os outros documentos produzidos durante este processo (sinopse, *step outline*, etc.).

Abstract: This text is a deconstruction of the process of development of a feature film script, resulting from the adaptation from two novels, which were based in a Roleplaying Game, by White Wolf Fame Studio, named Vampire the Masquerade. It is developed the concept of the monster in the cinema, in which the vampire is the main case study. It tries to provide an explanation for the methodology applied, justify the scriptwriting techniques chosen and enhance the importance of the other documents created during the process (synopsis, step outline, etc.).

Declaro que o presente trabalho resulta da minha investigação pessoal, que o seu conteúdo é original e que todas as fontes consultadas estão referenciadas nos termos das normas de organização e edição comunicadas aos escritos nesta unidade curricular.

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Índice

CAPÍTULO 1: INTRODUÇÃO.....	5
1.1 Contexto	5
1.2 Apresentação do tema	5
1.3 Motivação	5
1.4 Apresentação sinóptica da saga.....	6
1.5 Finalidades e objectivos do projecto	6
1.6 Estrutura do trabalho	7
CAPÍTULO 2: ESTRATÉGIA PARA A SELECÇÃO DE INFORMAÇÃO.....	8
2.1 Plano de acção	8
CAPÍTULO 3: ENQUADRAMENTO TEÓRICO.....	10
3.1 Adaptação Cinematográfica	10
3.2 O processo de escrita de um argumento.....	12
3.3 Os artefactos que acompanham o argumento.....	12
3.4 Os monstros no cinema	14
3.4.1 O caso de Frankenstein.....	15
3.4.2 O caso do Vampiro	16
3.4.2.1 Adaptações Cinematográficas de referência.....	17
<i>Nosferatu</i> de F. W. Murnau (1922)	17
<i>Dracula</i> de Tod Browning (1931).....	18
<i>Bram Stoker's Dracula</i> de Francis Ford Coppola (1992)	18
<i>Interview with the Vampire</i> de Neil Jordan (1994).....	19
Outros filmes.....	19
3.5 As fontes do projecto.....	20
CAPÍTULO 4: PROCESSO DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO	23
4.1 Escolha e análise das fontes	24
4.2 Tratamento das fontes	26
4.3 Sequenciação do trabalho.....	27
4.4 Construção da narrativa.....	29
4.5 Storyline e sinopse	32
4.6 Step Outline e tratamento	34
4.7 Caracterização de Personagens	37
4.8 O Script	41
4.8.1 Os ciclos do script.....	43
CAPÍTULO 5: CONCLUSÕES.....	45
5.1 Considerações finais.....	45

5.2 Limitações do projecto.....	46
5.3 Melhorias ao trabalho desenvolvido	47
5.4 Perspectivas de trabalho futuro	48
CAPÍTULO 6: REFERÊNCIAS.....	51
6.1 Bibliografia	51
6.2 Webgrafia.....	53
6.3 Filmografia.....	54
ANEXOS	56
Lexicon	
Storyline	
Synopsis	
Step outline	
Treatment	
Character Details	
Script	

Índice de Tabelas

Tabela 1: Exemplo da janela temporal das primeiras 5 Clan Novels

Índice de Figuras

Figura 1: *Clan Novel Toreador*

Figura 2: *Clan Novel Tzimisce*

Figura 3: *Rulebook Vampire The Masquerade*

Figura 4: *Children of the Night*

Figura 5: Gráfico da sequenciação inicial do trabalho

Figura 6: Gráfico da sequenciação final do trabalho

Figura 7: Excerto de *Children of the Night*

Figura 8: Excerto da banda desenhada: *Vampire the Masquerade Volume three – Blood & Loyalty*

Figura 9: Triângulo do universo das histórias

Figura 10: excerto da *Clan Novel Toreador*

CAPÍTULO 1: INTRODUÇÃO

1.1 Contexto

O presente texto é parte do projecto de desenvolvimento de uma longa-metragem partindo da adaptação de dois romances que fazem parte de uma saga de 13 *Clan Novels* de *Vampire the Masquerade* (VTM) lançada pela editora *White Wolf* (WW), tendo em conta o interesse pessoal do autor na área da adaptação cinematográfica e em especial nesta plataforma dos jogos de *Role-playing Game table-top* (ou também conhecidos por *pen & paper*) desenvolvidos pela WW. *Um Role-playing Game pen & paper* consiste num jogo de interpretação de personagens, em que os jogadores criam narrativas colectivamente, seguindo um sistema de regras predeterminado, dentro das quais é possível, e mesmo encorajada, a improvisação. O presente texto pretende contribuir com uma fundamentação teórica e prática consistente em relação ao processo de desenvolvimento de um argumento de longa metragem, pondo em prática várias metodologias clássicas da adaptação, explicando o processo e analisando os resultados.

Deste modo, o estudo e o processo de implementação apresentados pretendem tornar-se um auxílio significativo na definição e justificação das melhores estratégias para proceder a uma adaptação cinematográfica partindo de um objecto literário com estas características.

1.2 Apresentação do tema

A *White Wolf Publishing* é uma editora americana que abriu portas em 1991, e desde então tem investido no formato de *Storytelling*, a arte de contar histórias. Destaca-se pela criação de jogos de *Role-playing Game* (RPG) que, através de livros, estabelecem regras e sugerem contextos, permitindo aos jogadores criarem as suas personagens e o seu mundo, e decidirem livremente como jogar nele, usando apenas a imaginação. A *White Wolf Game Studio* desenvolveu o conceito de *World of Darkness* (WoD), um mundo particular onde os seus RPGs teriam lugar. De entre muitos que desenvolveu, como *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, *Wraith: The Oblivion*, *Mage: The Ascension*, *Vampire: The Masquerade*, vamos apenas destacar este último, o qual serve de referência para o projecto em causa. Mas centrar-nos no universo do vampiro, no contexto do WoD, não é excluir todas as outras criaturas sobrenaturais, pois se entende que os diferentes RPG's se podem interceptar sem que isso cause incompatibilidades. A extensa bibliografia desta editora, que complementou e inspirou este projecto, pode ser separada em três categorias: livros de regras, livros de conteúdos e livros de ficção. Esta é a base desta adaptação.

1.3 Motivação

A razão principal para escrever uma longa-metragem sobre este tema é a falta de adaptações cinematográficas sérias sobre o trabalho desenvolvido pela WW, consequência das dificuldades levantadas pela editora em vender ou ceder os direitos sobre os seus conteúdos. Outra razão prende-se com o facto de esta linha de livros da WW ter sido descontinuada em 2005, em função de uma nova abordagem ao WoD,

que os criadores pensaram ser mais acessível a novos jogadores e que iria fomentar o desenvolvimento do género. Partilhando o gosto com os fãs e jogadores do antigo WoD, pretendesse com este trabalho reavivar e homenagear o trabalho feito até 2005.

1.4 Apresentação sinóptica da saga

No fundo, o resultado do longo processo de desenvolvimento do argumento de longa-metragem vai muito além de um filme de vampiros. Classificá-lo dessa forma seria reduzi-lo e desvalorizá-lo, perante uma obra chamada *World of Darkness* que, também, não está particularmente preocupada com os vampiros. Trata-se de um jogo que se classifica como uma plataforma para criar histórias de horror pessoal. Lida-se com um mundo paralelo ao nosso, mais sombrio, onde o “mal” é hiperbolizado, onde a opressão está mais evidenciada, como que uma sátira do nosso mundo, onde o conceito de *Masquerade* explora a manipulação colectiva. Em semelhança ao conceito de *matrix*, no filme com o mesmo nome, *The Matrix* (1999), em que a *Masquerade* deste filme, está personificada por uma realidade artificial, criada pela opressão invisível das máquinas do futuro que usa a humanidade através da manipulação das mentes. No argumento que foi desenvolvido, os vampiros são as máquinas de *matrix*, escondendo a sua verdadeira natureza, para que possam caçar descansadamente, sem que a presa tenha noção de que está a ser caçada. Estamos sem dúvidas a falar de uma distopia. Podemos dizer que, este filme distópico, projectado no script, procura extrapolar ao máximo as nossas convenções sociais e limites, procurando no nosso olhar com estranheza sobre o WoD, encontrar todas as relações com a nossa sociedade. Hoje em dia, é quase impossível que nos isolemos, os problemas dos outros são os nossos problemas e o cinema manifesta, muitas vezes, um interesse em reflectir sobre como as sociedades estão organizadas, como nos relacionamos uns com os outros e como lidamos com esses problemas.

1.5 Finalidades e objectivos do projecto

O presente projecto tem por objectivo a contribuição para o conhecimento académico na área da escrita de argumentos no plano da adaptação propondo uma abordagem cinematográfica ao caso específico do WoD criado e desenvolvido pela WW. Deste modo procura servir de inspiração e exemplo ao ramo da escrita de argumentos que se debruça sobre a adaptação de obras com um mundo de base muito denso e complexo, mas também muito disperso ao longo de vários livros com diferentes formatos e finalidades. Não se trata de uma adaptação literária, mas da adaptação de um projecto multi-suportes que já se manifestou em jogos de computador, jogos de cartas, romances, banda desenhada e séries de televisão. O supra objectivo é explorar o potencial cinematográfico criando um projecto em formato de argumento, que estará no final apto a ser desenvolvido por uma produtora de cinema que tenha interesse em comprar os direitos do tema e produzir o filme que, neste caso, é apenas o primeiro de uma saga.

Este trabalho não pretende explorar exaustivamente todas as hipóteses de adaptação, mas sim concentrar-se na que melhor se adequa a este caso específico, compreendendo e relatando objectivamente esta escolha através do presente texto.

1.6 Estrutura do trabalho

A conjugação das várias áreas de conhecimento, necessária para o desenvolvimento do trabalho, procurou ser apresentada de acordo com a seguinte sequência de exposição, composta por cinco capítulos distintos:

- Introdução
- Estratégia para a selecção de informação
- Enquadramento Teórico
- Processo de Implementação
- Conclusões

O capítulo “Introdução” pretende apresentar ao leitor deste texto o contexto do projecto, e os principais argumentos que o motivaram. Não são esquecidos os objectivos com que o projecto foi concebido e apresenta ainda a estrutura do presente texto, sumariamente, de uma perspectiva global do trabalho.

O segundo capítulo, referente à “Estratégia para a selecção de informação” clarifica a estratégia adoptada no processo de escrita do argumento, capaz de responder à complexidade do objectivo proposto. É exposto o plano de acção que permitiu a sequência lógica das várias temáticas investigadas e testadas, transversais ao objectivo a cumprir, o desenvolvimento de um argumento de longa-metragem.

O terceiro capítulo, “Enquadramento teórico”, constitui o resultado da investigação necessária desenvolvida que viria a servir de apoio e enquadramento ao projecto. Este aborda, numa primeira fase a presença do “monstro” no cinema, explicando sucintamente o seu processo evolutivo, as influências artísticas e tecnológicas que têm vindo a moldá-lo até ao presente momento. Seguidamente é analisado o caso específico do vampiro no cinema percorrendo alguns dos mais importantes marcos no cinema que se debruçaram sobre esta temática.

O quarto capítulo, “Processo de Implementação”, está dividido em várias fases que são características do processo de adaptação de uma obra literária. Está explicado todo o percurso do argumentista desde a recolha e análise das fontes, justificando depois o seu tratamento. Seguido pela primeira abordagem à construção da narrativa. Todo este capítulo realça a importância da produção dos artefactos que orbitam o argumento de longa-metragem, sendo eles a *storyline*, a sinopse, o *step outline*, o tratamento e caracterização de personagens. Culminando no próprio *script* e os seus seguintes ciclos.

No capítulo final “Conclusões”, são feitas reflexões acerca do trabalho desenvolvido e são apresentadas as limitações do processo de escrita de argumentos e algumas perspectivas futuras de continuação deste processo que está em constante mutação e que só pára, finalmente, quando o filme estreiar nos cinemas. É ainda feita uma estimativa da continuação do processo de adaptação da saga de romances que se converterá numa saga de filmes.

CAPÍTULO 2: ESTRATÉGIA PARA A SELECÇÃO DE INFORMAÇÃO

Estamos a trabalhar sobre uma adaptação, ou segundo Jay David Bolter e Richard Grusin (2000), uma *remediation*, no sentido em que, numa era de tecnologias digitais em desenvolvimento, os *media* conseguem uma presença e um forte significado cultural prestando homenagem, rivalizando e refazendo as antecessoras formas de representação artísticas como a pintura, a fotografia, o filme e a televisão.

Este projecto de *remediation*, adopta uma estratégia para a selecção de informação, relevante para o filme, bastante diferente do que seria o desenvolvimento de um argumento original. O ponto de partida centra-se no levantamento de uma problemática que procura responder à pergunta “tendo em conta o meu ponto de vista, qual a melhor forma de contar esta história?”. Podemos dizer, por um lado, que há um processo exploratório para obter informação capaz de responder à problemática deste projecto. Por outro, a pesquisa bibliográfica reflecte uma necessidade de conhecer a família de filmes em que o filme resultante do produto final, o argumento, se insere. Um terceiro objecto de investigação é o mundo que serve de base para a história, o WoD, que deve ser bastante explorado e compreendido pelo argumentista para que possa manipular a história de forma coerente e segura.

Para tirar o máximo de proveito, foi seleccionado cuidadosamente um leque de leituras que permitiu abranger os aspectos fundamentais do projecto, que foram precedidas por várias pesquisas. Numa primeira fase através de recursos on-line, recorrendo a portais especializados nos jogos de RPG, que seguem o sistema do *Storyteller*. Como complemento foram usados repositórios virtuais com publicações dos autores e criadores da *White Wolf Game Studio* (<http://forums.white-wolf.com>), em simultâneo com a consulta das publicações da WW, enquanto editora, nomeadamente, de livros relacionados com o jogo e a ficção de *Vampire The Masquerade*.

No momento da análise da história do cinema, no que toca à presença dos monstros no cinema, e ao estudo de caso do vampiro, ou seja, o enquadramento do filme a ser projectado, teve-se em atenção uma filmografia particular e trabalhos de adaptação nesta área como os de Anne Rice, Coppola e Murnau, que são marcos importantes de reflexão sobre este assunto.

Relativamente à parte mais técnica da adaptação, foram tidas em conta diversas publicações académicas, como a de Chown (2001) no seu *paper* sobre a adaptação *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) de Coppola, ou o complementadas por livros de relevância na área de *scriptwriting*, realçando o *Story* (1998) de Mckee.

2.1 Plano de acção

O objectivo deste projeto visa a implementação do processo de adaptação para o cinema partindo de um conjunto de dois romances que tiveram origem num jogo de massas, bastante premiado e que conquistou um lugar no seio dos jogos de RPG. A experiência prévia como jogador, durante anos, deste RPG em específico, *Vampire The Masquerade*, forneceu um conhecimento aprofundado sobre o *World of Darkness*

que, caso não existisse, era responsabilidade do argumentista obtê-lo antes de se poder lançar nesta adaptação. Uma análise cuidada destes jogos divide o espectro dos RPG *pen&paper* em dois extremos, estando um lado, o da fantasia, representado pelo *Dungeons&Dragons*. Estamos a falar de mundos muito ricos e imaginativos que, por não se privilegiar a interpretação, acabam por ter uma falta de maturidade o que justifica uma forte presença de jogadores mais jovens neste extremo. No outro extremo temos os chamados jogos de “horror pessoal”, representados aqui por *Vampire The Masquerade*. Quem joga, sabe que este não é um jogo de objectivos claros e alcançáveis, como noutros RPGs do género. Este é um jogo de interpretação, potencialmente interminável, que normalmente dura anos, em sessões que se estendem por longas noites, onde o prazer vem de melhor interpretar as personagens e não necessariamente de alcançar *fame and fortune*, derrotar o dragão, ou recuperar o cálice sagrado.

Para a implementação do projecto foi necessária também a leitura prévia dos treze romances que compõem a saga de *clan novels* de *Vampire The Masquerade*, das quais apenas as primeiras duas seriam incluídas na adaptação. As personagens que sobrevivem aos dois primeiros romances, continuam as suas aventuras ao longo da saga e o argumentista segue-as, está atento e reflecte uma maior maturidade na personagem que transporta para o meio cinematográfico, mais tarde. Uma noção global do *megaplot*, que caracteriza esta saga da WW, iria ajudar a estruturar as ideias para a longa-metragem que se insere também numa saga equivalente, mas de filmes, por exemplo, semelhante à de *Lord of The Rings* ou *Harry Potter*.

Tendo este conhecimento de base o plano de acção passava por entender a história global, desmontar os dois romances, analisar os momentos mais importantes e separar as personagens, a acção e as divagações do narrador literário. Seguindo os passos comuns à escrita de adaptações, reagrupar tudo, reformular e recontar a história no plano do argumento cinematográfico. Para uma melhor sustentação das várias abordagens foi usada a ferramenta Final Draft 8 (software para escrita de argumentos), que permitiu não só a fácil visualização da estrutura do guião, mas também definir o *step outline* com facilidade e alterar a posição das cenas de forma ágil. Paralelamente, decorreu a investigação sobre outras adaptações que, por se terem debatido com problemas semelhantes, provaram ser muito úteis durante a implementação deste projecto.

Depois de conhecida a metodologia seguida para a procura de soluções para a problemática proposta, será desenvolvido no próximo capítulo o enquadramento teórico que servirá de suporte à implementação prática do desenvolvimento do argumento.

CAPÍTULO 3: ENQUADRAMENTO TEÓRICO

O presente capítulo aborda a temática da adaptação cinematográfica, recorrendo a alguns teóricos da área, como James Naremore, Robert Stam e Dudley Andrew. Aprofunda as fontes da adaptação do projecto, explicando o *World of Darkness* e as suas particularidades enquanto mundo ficcional de uma plataforma de jogos de RPG. É feita uma contextualização histórica em relação à família de filmes em que o argumento se insere, procurando uma visão geral do papel dos monstros no cinema e do caso do vampiro em particular.

3.1 Adaptação Cinematográfica

Para muitos a adaptação cinematográfica é um conceito que reflecte um constante confronto entre literatura versus cinema, original versus cópia, mutação versus reprodução. A maior parte das discussões sobre adaptação podem ser resumidas num cartoon do *New Yorker*, que Alfred Hitchcock descreveu a François Truffaut: duas cabras estão a comer uma pilha de latas de película e uma diz para a outra, “Pessoalmente, prefiro o livro” (Naremore, 2000:2). Acontece que se procura sempre de forma intensa esta relação entre o trabalho final da adaptação e a obra original, como que num plano de fidelidade artística. Mas adaptação é simplesmente uma forma de criação em que o autor reconhece e indica as fontes de inspiração da sua obra.

As opiniões dividem-se na questão do conhecimento herdado da obra original, por um lado defende-se que é mais fácil fazer um bom filme partindo, por exemplo, de um romance menos notável, do que de um romance de grande qualidade literária, no sentido em que o argumentista se sentiria menos constrangido em relação a obra original. Mas não faltam exemplos de adaptações bem sucedidas de romances de grande relevo, para contradizer esta teoria, destacando por exemplo, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Barry Lyndon* (1975), *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992), *Interview With The Vampire* (1994).

Outros defendem que, para uma boa adaptação cinematográfica o argumentista/realizador deve-se libertar do romance (continuando a usar como exemplo, o romance como a obra original) o mais cedo possível. Referenciando o caso extremo do realizador John Ford que diz nem sequer ter lido o romance, no caso do filme *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). Mas para todas as situações de indiferença perante o material de referência que resultaram em filmes de sucesso existem também muitos casos em que o argumentista/realizador se debruçou sobre a obra original de forma muito séria produzindo filmes de elevada qualidade, como a colaboração Hampton/Wright em *Atonement* (2007).

Vamos então questionar-nos sobre a noção de fidelidade entre a obra original e o produto final, pois muitos são os espectadores que sentem grande decepção quando uma adaptação cinematográfica não consegue captar o que mais apreciaram na sua fonte seja ela literária ou de outra natureza. Estamos a falar da narrativa, da temática e de outras características estéticas fundamentais com que identificamos uma história antes de ter sido transportada para o grande ecrã. Mas o conceito de fidelidade desconsidera um movimento característico da adaptação cinematográfica: a mudança

do meio de comunicação (Sbrissa, s/d). Devemos levantar antes algumas questões, em vez de tomar a fidelidade como uma premissa absoluta. Será possível que uma obra que se manifesta por um meio multifacetado como o cinema seja fiel a uma obra cujo meio de veiculação possa ser exclusivamente literário, como um romance? Ou exclusivamente visual como uma pintura? Ou uma música?

O passo seguinte, em relação a esta discussão sobre a fidelidade, é reflectir se a adaptação cinematográfica está apenas preocupada em expor conceitos já existentes numa determinada obra, ou se procura expressar novos valores ganhando uma dimensão tão ou mais interessante que a sua fonte de inspiração. Voltemos ao exemplo mais clássico, da adaptação de romances, em que o argumentista Marcos Rey (1989) compara o processo de adaptação ao processo de criação. Rey diz que adaptar é mais exigente do que desenvolver um argumento original, pois trata-se não só de misturar uma boa dose de criatividade além de bom-senso que de facto impõe o verdadeiro desafio à inteligência e técnica do argumentista. A adaptação não está interessada em tudo o que está no livro. Mesmo livros com muita acção têm capítulos monótonos ou vazios. O que importa é que ela seja inteira, redonda, completa, sem evidenciar amputações, cortes por falta de tempo, saltos desconcertantes e buracos entre as sequências. A adaptação requer uma planificação mais exigente do que a criação porque implica uma responsabilidade maior, principalmente quando se trata duma obra conhecida, passível de confrontos.

Adaptar é entender que a obra, que serve de inspiração, não deve estar espelhada no produto final, pois não foi pensada para ser um argumento de cinema. O argumentista pode mudar a ordem das cenas, acelerar certas sequências, resumir diálogos, valorizar ou não personagens, eliminar excessos e acentuar acções chave na intriga, como achar necessário. Só assim poderá contar a sua história no seu novo meio de comunicação.

Mas vamos alargar o uso do termo adaptar para outros géneros que não ficção. Por exemplo, podemos dizer que o documentário, neste contexto, é a representação de algo já existente, um conceito de pessoa, lugar, evento ou situação. Usando a ideia do *sign system* de Dudley Andrew em *Film Adaptation* (2000:28), a adaptação cinematográfica delimita a representação, ao insistir no status cultural de um modelo, ao insistir na sua existência, em formato de texto que projecta um filme. Atendendo ao exemplo dos textos que se denominam explicitamente como adaptações, o modelo cultural que o cinema representa, está previamente valorizado como uma representação de um outro *sign system*.

A mutação, que a história original sofre, é imensa quando consideramos os dois *sign systems*. Um romance é normalmente produzido por uma pessoa, enquanto que o filme é quase sempre resultado do esforço colaborativo de uma equipa, que pode ir de apenas uma mão cheia a centenas de técnicos e funcionários. Em *Film Adaptation, The Dialogics of Adaptation*, Robert Stam (2000) acrescenta que os romances estão, em geral, despreocupados com a questão do orçamento, mas os filmes estão profundamente limitados por questões financeiras. De facto, no romance, questões de infraestrutura material apenas se manifestam no momento de distribuição, enquanto que nos filmes começam a surgir durante o desenvolvimento do próprio argumento. Apesar de, hoje, a tecnologia não encorajar, o romance pode ser escrito num mero guardanapo, inclusive dentro de uma prisão. Os filmes exigem uma infraestrutura material complexa, incorporando câmaras, estúdios, etc, apenas para poderem existir. Um romancista escreve sem ter, necessariamente, que ter custos. Um produtor necessita de um fundo substancial para por a máquina do cinema a funcionar durante

o tempo necessário para finalizar o filme. Portanto, são dois universos muito distintos, entre os quais a história vai viajar e, inevitavelmente, mudar.

3.2 O processo de escrita de um argumento

O processo de adaptação para o cinema pode requerer que o argumentista entre em sintonia com os autores do trabalho que serve de base à adaptação. O início pode ser caracterizado por um olhar de estranheza, um olhar de fora para o trabalho de outros e esta separação é saudável, permite que nos interroguemos sobre o que neste parece óbvio aos autores da obra original. Depois, mergulhamos na história e, para histórias muito longas, procuramos e definimos os limites, até onde queremos contar. O filme tem uma duração, nós impomos esses limites, embora nada nos impeça de projectar um guião de uma longa-metragem de dez horas, a maioria prevê uma duração de mais ou menos duas horas, o aceitável para um espectador casual de cinema.

A sintonia com os autores é, não só, conhecer a história de forma profunda, mas também ganhar propriedade das personagens. Propor novos desafios e saber pensar como elas e responder, reagir a outras situações que certamente surgirão no desenvolvimento do argumento.

O argumentista tem que se socorrer de quem já pensou em formas de contar histórias, não como um dogma mas como organização de trabalho, como um ponto de partida. Cada um escolhe os seus gurus, mas só ganhamos em entender que a divisão em partes, ou actos, de uma história, é, talvez, um exercício respiratório (Mendes, 2009: 131), que nos ajuda a arrumar a história que pretendemos contar numa estrutura já testada, que simplifica a complexidade do trabalho. É aqui que começa a luz ao fundo do túnel para o processo da escrita de argumentos e é aqui que começam a surgir os primeiros artefactos que orbitam o argumento, começando, idealmente, pela *storyline*. O argumentista não se deve esquecer que, sobre o objecto que está a desenvolver, está a imprimir o seu ponto de vista particular. Não faz sentido pensar que o trabalho do argumentista é meramente transformar de forma cinematográfica, em palavras, que o realizador transformará em imagens e sons, o que a obra original invoca nas mentes dos seus utilizadores (Naremore, 2000). Tendo isto em conta, ele deve perceber qual é este ponto de vista e manter-se fiel a este.

3.3 Os artefactos que acompanham o argumento

Esta é a zona que se pode considerar invisível do desenvolvimento de um argumento cinematográfico, pois no final o que está visível é o argumento e mesmo esse torna-se de certa forma invisível assim que o filme estreia. Um argumentista, que pretende desenvolver um trabalho sério e que enfrenta uma complexidade considerável ao embarcar numa adaptação cinematográfica, não escreve um argumento. Ele “rescreve” o argumento que surgiu ao fim de diversas etapas do processo de desenvolvimento de argumentos. Etapas estas que são marcadas pela criação de artefactos que servem para orientar o trabalho do argumentista. São tão importantes, estes documentos, que se gasta a maior parte do tempo a trabalhar nestes para finalmente, quando tudo estiver com solidez suficiente, se usar o pouco tempo restante para escrever o argumento. Como diz McKee, se um projecto de longa-metragem demora seis meses a estar escrito em forma de *script*, quatro quintos desse tempo é gasto antes de se escrever o *script* (Mendes, 2009:137).

Tentaremos, então, esclarecer que artefactos são estes, começando pela *storyline*. Um argumentista que não consiga fazer um resumo do filme que pretende escrever numa

frase, corre o risco de caminhar sem destino. Como é possível encontrar em diversos manuais de narrativas cinematográficas, a *storyline* serve dois propósitos essenciais, esclarecer qualquer estranho à história sobre o que se está a falar, de forma muito geral e, também, guiar o argumentista ao longo do processo, de modo a que este não se perca na complexidade do seu trabalho. Qualquer utilizador frequente do site www.imdb.com inclui no seu ritual de pesquisa a leitura da *storyline* dos filmes que está a investigar, é o primeiro passo para entrar na história.

Junto num dossier de argumento de longa metragem é comum encontrar-se, não só a *storyline* mas também a sinopse, que em pouco mais de uma página resume toda a história, descrevendo os acontecimentos principais e fazendo uma antevisão do que é mais visível e importante destacar no argumento.

Um outro artefacto que tem muito valor e é bastante prioritário é a caracterização de personagens, que consiste num documento crucial no desenvolvimento de adaptações, sendo que muitas das personagens já foram previamente criadas e é preciso identificar e caracterizar quais irão pertencer ao filme. A principal função da caracterização de personagens não é apenas catalogar, expandir ou fundir personagens, trata-se de uma reflexão que pretende responder às seguintes perguntas: Qual é a função desta personagem no filme? Quais são os seus objectivos e motivações? Se se trata de um dos protagonistas, é importante esclarecer qual o seu passado. Este documento deve não só incluir um resumo de cada personagem mas, também, uma descrição da sua imagem, pois a maneira de vestir, de andar, de falar diz muito sobre quem nós somos ou parecemos ser e, no fundo, são esses os mecanismos que o filme utiliza para as revelar.

Numa interação seguinte, temos um outro dispositivo que permite a aproximação ao argumento, chamado *step outline*, que é uma expansão da sinopse num conjunto de fichas, em que cada uma corresponde ao resumo de uma cena. É desta forma que se começa a mexer na estrutura do argumento e a fazer diferentes abordagens, testando outras maneiras de contar a história. A liberdade que o *step outline* permite é importante quando estamos a discutir a articulação dramática e o ordenamento das cenas, o “ponto de ataque” da história, a selecção da informação, a progressão para um clímax, o ritmo e globalmente, as componentes de cada “acto” (Mendes, 2009: 137).

Por forma a nos aproximarmos mais do argumento final existe um outro artefacto que se segue ao *step outline*, chamado tratamento. Este documento, já está dotado de um considerável detalhe descritivo, não deve conter diálogos e deve ser feito em discurso indirecto, como sugerido na maioria dos manuais. O objectivo é antecipar a narrativa na forma cinemática, já com a linguagem de *script*, introduzindo numeração de cenas, distinguindo se é interior ou exterior, local e altura do dia. Se o tratamento for suficientemente claro e descritivo da estrutura e conteúdos do filme, explicará melhor as interacções entre personagens, guardando o diálogo para uma fase posterior.

Esta ordem, aqui sugerida, não é necessariamente a melhor, cada projecto tem o seu argumentista e as suas metodologias de trabalho. Seria de esperar que vários destes artefactos se desenvolvam em paralelo e que mesmo depois de “terminados” e de fornecerem os alicerces para o argumentista proceder à escrita mais segura do argumento, estes continuem a ser usados e se continuem a transformar. Da análise destes elementos podemos considerar que cada um dos documentos produzidos durante o processo de desenvolvimento do argumento são como lentes que permitem olhar para a história com diferentes ângulos ou diferentes níveis de detalhe, sendo que o *script* é a versão mais expandida e mais detalhada nesta classificação e a *storyline* a versão mais condensada, mas não menos difícil de escrever.

3.4 Os monstros no cinema

Os monstros têm conseguido manter-se vivos no nosso imaginário, especialmente desde que surgiu o cinema há cerca de cem anos, que a nossa percepção se tornou bastante mais clara e objectiva no que toca a este tema. Estamos a falar de inúmeras criaturas que sempre fascinaram os humanos, desde *Nosferatu*, *Godzilla*, *Alien*, *A Mosca*, *Zombie*, *Vampiro*, *Frankenstein*, *Lobisomem*, *Anaconda*, *King Kong*, *E.T.*, *Replicant*, *Predador*, *Mr. Hide*, *The Blob*, *Golem*, *O Tubarão*, *Chuckie*, *Gremlins*, *Clover*, *A Múmia*, etc. A lista é extensa e é curioso pensar como os conhecemos tão bem, por nos terem marcado em determinado momento das nossas vidas, tendo em conta que, enquanto conceito social, o monstro está associado ao desconhecido. Mas quando falamos de monstros estamos, na maior parte das vezes, a falar de medo. Este medo pode vir de qualquer coisa: surpresa, nojo, receio que os nossos heróis ficcionais sofram e, no limite, receio sobre a nossa própria segurança. Tememos ser as vítimas destes monstros mas, também, que nós próprios sejamos estes monstros (Bloom, 2010:3).

Falar do desconhecido e do medo, certamente que nos ajuda a clarificar diferentes significados para o monstro e, tentar defini-lo desta forma, apenas permite um ponto de partida para compreender a complexidade deste fenómeno. Mas se enquadrarmos o monstro no género de filmes de terror/horror, estamos a esbarrar, primeiro, no problema que é definir este género. Segundo Tamborini e Weaver em *Horror Film* (1996), uma problemática em definir o conceito de horror é a confusão associada com a natureza da ameaça imposta. Os autores referidos apoiam-se em Penzoldt (1965) para sugerir que a ficção de horror pode ser categorizada como fábula gótica, ficção científica e horror psicológico. Explorar estas tipologias ajuda-nos a clarificar os diferentes significados para o género de ficção de horror que o público assiste hoje no cinema e, sem dúvida, que nos ajuda a enquadrar melhor o monstro no cinema. Mas estas categorias tornam-se pouco úteis quando tentamos entender o fenómeno antes do Século XVIII, quando as concepções ontológicas que prevaleciam não tinham significado para categorias como sobrenatural, psicológico ou ficção científica. Para entender o horror moderno e o monstro do cinema de hoje convém-nos entender algo sobre as suas origens.

Interessa-nos analisar o que aconteceu previamente ao conceito do monstro, antes de dar o salto para o cinema. Para não nos dispersarmos totalmente, com esta questão tão complexa, usaremos uma das principais manifestações do monstro antes do cinema, na literatura. Em particular, a literatura mais tarde adaptada para o cinema. Esta revela-nos muitos elementos de horror na forma de monstros que ameaçam o mundo no início dos romances. Estes monstros contêm aspectos dos protagonistas e são com frequência reflexos destes. O mal vem de dentro do indivíduo, espalhando-se para fora por forma a destruir a sociedade. Os monstros são frequentemente representações de problemas da sociedade que devem ser resolvidos pelos heróis da história e pelo leitor também: o egoísmo, no caso do *Frankenstein* (1818), o desejo de uma reputação impecável, em *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), o desejo por imortalidade, em *She* (1887), a evolução em *The Island of Dr. Moreau* e o medo do homem desconhecido em *Dracula* (1897) (Bloom, 2010:7). É muito interessante esta observação que Abigail Bloom faz, dizendo que os monstros literários são muitas vezes representações dos nossos problemas, pois se olharmos para a forma como a adaptação cinematográfica de romances, muitas vezes tem tratado o horror, vemos que este se manifesta como uma força exterior, separada dos protagonistas. Ao não

usar o monstro como um mecanismo que permite reflectir o mal que existe em nós e nas personagens, o monstro parece-nos menos ameaçador. *Alien* (1979) de Ridley Scott é um exemplo curioso, em que o monstro está, literalmente, dentro da personagem. No entanto este monstro está apenas perdido no espaço sem outra ligação particular à personagem ou à sua sociedade. Um contraste claro com *Drácula* de Bram Stoker, onde é óbvia uma ligação psíquica entre Drácula e Mina Harker. É evidente que com o evoluir da linguagem cinematográfica os realizadores foram, cada vez mais, encontrando formas de sugerir a ligação entre o protagonista e o monstro do filme. Um exemplo simples de um realizador precoce, neste aspecto, é Murnau ao editar *Nosferatu* (1922), de maneira que, alternando entre planos de personagens e do monstro criou semelhanças que os relacionavam.

As histórias de monstros vivem, muitas vezes, sem lidar com o monstro em si, baseando a sua narrativa na vítima. Ou então o monstro é a própria vítima e a história muda de tom completamente, como em *The Elephant Man* (1980), de David Lynch.

Inevitavelmente, as vítimas aparecem em grande número, dentro dos filmes de horror, servindo mais para auxiliar o conceito do monstro do que para ajudar a história. A verdade é que não nos ligamos, suficientemente, às vítimas que o *Predator* caça na selva, ou às vítimas aleatórias de quem o *Drácula* se alimenta, limitamos, muitas vezes, o nosso envolvimento emocional, ao momento de captura ou ataque fatal. No entanto, não é uma generalização sem excepções, especialmente nas histórias mais modernas de monstros, as personagens principais são sempre potenciais vítimas. Embora continuem a surgir vítimas casuais para dar suporte ao monstro, o nosso envolvimento com a vítima tende a ser mais que casual. Mas o monstro “invisível” que se apoia em vítimas para se manifestar, tem evoluído para um monstro mais visual, mais gráfico, nos filmes modernos. Em *Jaws* (1975), o tubarão tem o tempo de antena cronometrado ao segundo, pois, mais meio segundo no ecrã e toda a audiência poderia dizer facilmente que se tratava de um tubarão mecânico. A tecnologia inverteu esta tendência, vemos isso em filmes como *Cloverfield* (2008), onde o monstro tem uma presença muito forte e as vítimas acabam por desempenhar um papel mais significativo na história.

3.4.1 O caso de Frankenstein

Se nos apoiarmos no exemplo de *Frankenstein* (1818), de Mary Shelley, temos em mãos um caso de um monstro suficientemente rico para levantar as questões essenciais sobre a natureza maléfica em relação com a natureza humana. A questão por trás da história de Frankenstein é se a criatura nasce maléfica ou se se torna maléfica em consequência do seu nascimento grotesco? Quem é o verdadeiro monstro da história, Frankenstein ou a criatura que ele criou? No romance, ambas as personagens têm comportamentos semelhantes ao pensarem neles próprios em primeiro lugar, ao culparem-se mutuamente pelo que correu mal, ao não assumir responsabilidade pelos seus actos. O efeito que as suas acções tiveram na sociedade são da responsabilidade de ambos, o que torna a definição, de quem é efectivamente o monstro, mais difícil. A escritora Mary Shelley referiu-se muitas vezes ao seu romance como um monstro que ela criou e soltou no mundo, uma associação entre ela e as suas personagens, entre Frankenstein e a sua criatura, que indica uma conexão com os leitores também (Bloom, 2010). Em termos de adaptação para o cinema, em *Frankenstein* (1931), de James Whale, a relação entre a criatura e seu criador é afastada e, apenas no clímax do filme, se aproximam e se ligam mais profundamente. Na versão de Kenneth Branagh, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994),

a ligação entre criatura e criador é muito mais íntima e trabalha a ideia de que o monstro não é apenas externo, mas vem de dentro. De facto, Victor Frankenstein, ao repetir o processo de reavivar um corpo, no caso de Elizabeth, acaba por, num acto de puro egoísmo, se tornar mais monstruoso do que a criatura conseguiu ser.

O caso de Frankenstein é muito útil na maneira como trabalha a relação criador/monstro, onde muitas vezes identificamos a escritora a falar directamente para o leitor, através das suas personagens, sobre o monstro que criou. Mas também é um exemplo para o tema do monstro interno versus monstro externo, personificado em Victor Frankenstein versus a criatura, que é uma questão bastante relevante ao discutir o papel dos monstros na literatura e mais tarde no cinema. A ameaça que o monstro representa nesta história em particular, é explorada a vários níveis, mas vamos realçar o facto da ameaça mais prática, pelo facto do monstro ser de um tamanho considerável, com um poderio físico tremendo e temível. O momento em que Frankenstein olhou o monstro nos olhos, apercebeu-se que aquela criatura, que não poderia ser humana pela forma como nasceu, tinha algo de humano no seu olhar, o que associado ao seu aspecto monstruoso, horrorizou Frankenstein. Ao olhar para a criatura, todos assumem que se trata de um ser maléfico por ter um aspecto monstruoso, como se se tratasse de uma projecção da sua verdadeira natureza. Na realidade, a rejeição que a criatura sofre, por causa do seu aspecto, faz com que o seu lado natural do amor se converta em ódio, fazendo com que ele pretenda punir os outros por o terem rejeitado. Esta história revela o processo de criação de um monstro como um reflexo das acções da sociedade.

3.4.2 O caso do Vampiro

A origem deste “monstro” não está localizada num ponto geográfico específico, mas sim um pouco por todo o mundo. Qualquer utilizador da Wikipédia consegue facilmente perder-se na quantidade de referências associadas a este tema. É fácil encontrar lendas por todo o mundo mas, foi na Europa, em particular na Transilvânia que ocorreu o desenvolvimento mais significativo. É curioso constatar que quando a religião cristã cresceu, beber “sangue” tornou-se parte da ritualística com a comunhão, em que o vinho simboliza o sangue de Cristo, e o pão, o seu corpo. No entanto, os cristãos encontravam-se dentro dos mais supersticiosos aquando de epidemias, como a peste, que prontamente associavam a uma maldição vampírica (Noir,2007). Nem todas as pessoas estavam efetivamente mortas quando eram enterradas, como nos contavam as nossas avós. E poderiam ser mais tarde encontradas ensanguentadas pelas feridas autoinfligidas na tentativa de sair do túmulo. O que, não é difícil de imaginar, durante a Inquisição, servia muito bem como prova de que de facto eram vampiros.

Um nome histórico é o de Vlad Tepes Dracula, conhecido por expulsar o império Otomano das suas terras, na Transilvânia, e por ser um tirano sangrento empalando os seus inimigos.

Também muito referenciado, o nome de Elizabeth Bathory, conhecida por Condessa Sangrenta, suspeita de torturar jovens virgens para se banhar no seu sangue (Noir,2007). Quanto de ficção e quanto de verdade terão estas lendas? Quanto terão crescido à custa do entusiasmo com o vampirismo? Na realidade, não interessa, desde que sirvam como fontes ricas de inspiração para quem quer fazer filmes sobre o tema. O romance *Die Braut von Korinth* (1797) de Johann von Goethe, juntamente com o poema *Lenore* (1773) de Gottfried August Burger, entre outros textos e poemas sobre

vampiros, associaram a componente de sedução ao conceito de Vampiro (Masden, 2010).

Seguiram-se *The Vampyre* (1847), de William Polidori, *Varney the Vampyre* (1847), de Thomas Peckett e James Malcolm Rymer, numa altura em que os géneros de fantasia e terror estavam em voga (Noire,2007). O vampiro manifestava-se em romances, em poemas e em prosa. Foi nesta altura que Bram Stoker escreveu o famoso romance *Drácula*, que estabeleceria uma identidade muito forte associada ao vampiro.

Com o surgimento do cinema, o vampiro teve a oportunidade de se mostrar no grande ecrã. A lista é extensa, mas há que realçar alguns como: *Nosferatu* (1922) de Murnau, *Dracula* (1931) Tod Browning, *Horror of Dracula* (1958) de Terrence Fisher, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) de Coppola, *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) de Neil Jordan.

A música também contribuiu para a expansão do mito do vampiro. Bandas como *Type O Negative*, *The Cure*, *Concrete Blonde* escreveram letras sobre vampiros, dentro de um estilo gótico e pesado em geral (Noire,2007).

O vampiro migrou também para a televisão em séries como *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971), *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* (1974-1975), *Forever Knight* (1989-1996), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), *Kindred: The Embraced* (1996).

Hoje em dia a “marca” vampiro é usado em variados contextos desde discotecas, carnavais, marcas de lentes de contacto, jogos de computador e jogos de RPG em que grupos de jogadores se sentam em volta de uma mesa e fingem ser vampiros num mundo imaginário criado por um deles.

3.4.2.1 Adaptações Cinematográficas de referência

Nosferatu de F. W. Murnau (1922)

Considerada uma adaptação não oficial, este filme mudo contém os pontos essenciais do romance de Bram Stoker, considerando pequenas alterações, como por exemplo, as personagens principais que aparecem com nomes diferentes.

Olhando para a abordagem deste realizador, vemos que optou por deixar de fora a componente religiosa com que, hoje em dia, associamos os vampiros. Símbolos como a cruz, água benta e outras referências cristãs foram ignoradas na história de Murnau, deixando o conflito de ser uma clássica luta de bem contra o mal, mas sim uma exteriorização da luta interna entre metades opostas da natureza humana.

Vejamos algumas das personagens principais de *Nosferatu*, Thomas Hutter (Jonathan Harker no romance) e o Conde Orlok (Conde Drácula no romance), são de um ponto de vista simbólico, metades de uma mesma personagem. Hutter representa o lado inocente que nutre um amor platónico por Ellen (Mina no romance) que reage de forma até ingénua às situações. Orlok representa o lado mais animalesco, seguindo o instinto para satisfazer as suas necessidades básicas. Hutter e Orlok complementam-se e Ellen acaba por tirar partido da faceta de cada um deles, no fundo, como se se tratasse de um só.

Um detalhe muito importante introduzido por Murnau na sua abordagem teve fortes repercussões nos filmes que se sucederam. O facto de os vampiros não resistirem à luz do dia, como acontece em *Nosferatu*, não é facto absoluto do romance de Bram Stoker. Num dos momentos do romance, Drácula aparece em Londres em pleno dia, o que vai contra o normalmente aceite neste género.

No fim, a imagem associada a este primeiro Drácula do cinema, não é uma de força, carisma ou sedução como na maioria dos casos. Orlok assemelha-se a um homem que

sofre de uma doença, uma maldição terrível e os seus comportamentos fogem do lado humano e aproximam-se do lado animal.

Dracula de Tod Browning (1931)

Este é um filme que herda indirectamente do romance de Stoker, pois parte de uma adaptação de uma peça com o mesmo nome escrita por Hamilton Deane e John Balderston, que se basearam, por sua vez, no romance de Stoker.

A referência principal deste filme é o actor Bela Lugosi que encarnou o Drácula e lhe deu uma imagem que ainda hoje é reconhecida como o cliché do género. Esta preocupação em elevar o vampiro a um novo nível contrasta com as preocupações de Murnau em *Nosferatu*, que dedicou a sua atenção principalmente ao nível da atmosfera e cinematografia.

Uma das razões que realçou tanto a performance de Bela Lugosi foi o facto do realizador Tod Browning ter dado prioridade a abordagem da peça, em vez de ir beber directamente ao romance.

Uma característica interessante na actuação de Lugosi é a maneira de falar. Consequência do seu sotaque húngaro e falta de destreza com a língua inglesa, o actor acabou por ter que treinar muito a parte fonética das suas falas. O resultado é curioso, pois a maneira particular com que o Drácula deste filme pronuncia as palavras não parece que vem das dificuldades de dicção do actor, mas sim de um lado misterioso e oculto de uma personagem que esconde segredos maléficos.

É importante realçar o uso de certos símbolos que se mantêm, quase que inconscientemente, associados aos vampiros, que muitas vezes passam despercebidos, mas que fazem parte da atmosfera típica deste tipo de filmes. No primeiro acto encontramos objectos religiosos, como a cruz, animais repugnantes, como a ratazana (muito importante em *Nosferatu*) e o morcego. Encontramos também o caixão e as teias de aranha, o uivar dos lobos e a neblina. Estes detalhes, entre outros, não têm que, necessariamente, fazer parte dos filmes de vampiros da actualidade. Mas, na maioria dos casos, acabam por se manifestar.

Bram Stoker's Dracula de Francis Ford Coppola (1992)

Coppola é um realizador com um forte passado na área da adaptação literária que, em conjunto com o argumentista James Hart, recriou o romance de Bram Stoker dando ao sujeito principal, o vampiro, um sentimento mais humano, racionalizando as suas motivações. Outras adaptações, não se conseguiram aproximar tanto do original como este filme, mas o importante a realçar não são os pontos de contacto com a obra em si, mas com os outros filmes sobre o mesmo tema.

O actor Gary Oldman dá a imagem a Drácula na versão de Coppola, o que vem reforçar a ideia de que, em todas as adaptações do género, o vampiro é sempre protagonizado por um actor prestigiado e com carisma, tal como aconteceu com Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee, Frank Langella e mais tarde Brad Pitt e Tom Cruise.

Uma consequência interessante é a ideia de que o vilão se confunde muitas vezes com o herói. A excepção clara é o filme Murnau, *Nosferatu* (1922), em que encontramos um vampiro mais monstruoso e nada sedutor, afastando-se assim dos seus sucessores noutras abordagens ao vampiro.

Há que sublinhar o tratamento que Coppola deu à personagem de Drácula neste filme, permitindo metamorfoses sucessivas ao longo do filme, mostrando várias facetas do vampiro. No início do filme, Drácula é pouco atraente e grosseiro, estando ainda num estado mortal. Mais tarde quando visita Londres, apresenta-se mais jovem, atraente e

até exótico. Passa por um momento em que toma uma aparência de um autêntico monstro e acaba por se recriar quando regressa ao seu castelo, com a aparência mais conhecida, de um velho enrugado e pálido mas ágil e intrigante.

Mais uma vez a simbologia religiosa pesa neste filme, e continuando na mesma linha do uso das sombras, do castelo, do uivar, dos ratos e dos morcegos, entre outras coisas pertencentes a uma família de símbolos que, mais uma vez, foi reafirmada neste filme.

Interview with the Vampire de Neil Jordan (1994)

Seguindo a narrativa epistolar no seu romance, o mesmo estilo que Bram Stoker impôs ao seu, Anne Rice converteu a personagem Louis no narrador homodieético no argumento do filme. Se bem que, no contexto do filme ele acaba por ser de certa maneira autodieético quando regressa ao passado e revive a sua história, passando a ser o protagonista em vez de testemunha, como é no presente do filme. O realizador Neil Jordan entregou os papéis principais a Brad Pitt e Tom Cruise, seguindo a linha do vampiro carismático e sedutor, que sempre provou ser uma maneira muito forte de agradar ao espectador. Incorpora no seu filme quase toda a simbologia inerente a este tipo de filmes, continuando a tradição, e realça alguns detalhes em particular, como as cinzas, os olhos e o piano.

Uma das interpretações que sobressaiu foi a de Kirsten Dunst no papel da criança vampira Claudia. Adiciona uma componente interessante ao trio de personagens principais que é formado por dois vampiros adultos e uma criança. Claudia desespera quando se apercebe que a sua condição de imortalidade nunca lhe permitirá desenvolver para uma adulta, uma angústia que se mistura a sua outra faceta, uma caçadora insaciável camuflada de uma inocência aparente.

Outro detalhe importante deste filme é o facto de a própria escritora Anne Rice ser quem adaptou a sua obra para o cinema. Conseguiu reter assim o tom melancólico e o enredo bastante macabro para pessoas com estômago, que vinha do seu romance com o mesmo nome. Ser o autor do romance a escrever também o argumento tem os seus pontos positivos e negativos. É evidente que a falta de distanciamento com a obra inicial pode prejudicar em algumas decisões mais complicadas que as produções cinematográficas têm, como quando se tem que retirar uma cena com que se tem uma ligação emocional grande, mas se sabe que ela não contribui para o filme de forma sustentável. Mas, de facto, o nosso objecto de estudo, o vampiro, é quem mais tem a ganhar neste cenário. Pois quando se misturam enredos complexos e sombrios, com personagens fantásticas e sobrenaturais há uma forte probabilidade de surgirem dúvidas no momento de adaptar, coisas que podem não estar totalmente explicadas no romance. Neste sentido, as respostas estão no próprio autor da obra que, sendo também o argumentista, facilita esse processo, por exemplo, na interacção com o realizador.

Outros filmes

Ainda hoje a tradição da adaptação cinematográfica partindo de fontes literárias continua forte, como se verifica com a saga *Twilight* (2008, 2009, 2010), que já se encontra no terceiro filme, do terceiro romance e curiosamente no terceiro realizador. Mas será que esta adaptação em particular traz algo de novo ao percurso do vampiro? Todos os filmes trazem, na realidade, mas a saga *Twilight* debruça-se demasiado sobre outras questões como o romance adolescente recheado de jovens bonitos mas pouco marcantes como vampiros. Trata-se possivelmente de um sucesso temporário

no universo dos vampiros. É muito comum o cinema e a televisão recorrerem à atracção que existe à volta dos vampiros e mascararem os produtos para um público mais jovem de filmes ou mesmo séries de vampiros. Se analisarmos a série *True Blood* (2008-), estamos a falar de uma “novela” com vampiros, que em nada se assemelha ao trabalho desenvolvido por quem realmente quer explorar o mundo oculto dos vampiros, como Murnau, Coppola e Neil Jordan.

No campo da animação podemos destacar *Blood: The Last Vampire* (2000) de Hiroyuki Kitakubo, com uma abordagem muito interessante, usando a clássica menina de escola japonesa como uma vampira que caça demónios.

A relação dos vampiros com os lobisomens foi bem explorada em *Underworld* (2003) de Len Wiseman, apesar da controvérsia por ter demasiados pontos de contacto com o *World of Darkness* e de não possuir os direitos de adaptação. No entanto, introduziu uma mistura de “raças” quando Michael Corvin, mordido por um vampiro e por um lobisomem se transforma num híbrido que tem características dos dois.

Outro híbrido que não pode ficar sem ser mencionado, o vampiro/humano, *Blade* (1998) de Stephen Norrington, que é uma das poucas referências aos caçadores de vampiros que são eles próprios vampiros, sendo que a norma dos caçadores de vampiros é geralmente personificada pelo histórico Van Helsing. Um dos caçadores de vampiros que vem também no contexto católico é Jack Crow em *John Carpenter's Vampires* (1998) de John Carpenter.

Sem dúvida que o vampiro deixou a sua marca na comédia, por exemplo, em *From Dusk till Dawn* (1996) de Robert Rodríguez, em que os vampiros são apenas mais um ingrediente entre violência, álcool, sangue, crime e México.

The Lost Boys (1986) de John Schumacher é o tipo de filme de vampiros que está impregnado por uma época específica, neste caso, os anos 80. O aspecto visual dos vampiros com os cabelos pomposos da altura e maquilhagem exagerada.

A lista de filmes é extensa mas, através dos exemplos anteriores, é possível perceber que o vampiro tem sido sucessivamente explorado em todos os sentidos, alguns com mais sucesso que outros.

3.5 As fontes do projecto

World of Darkness

Esta parte é dedicada exclusivamente a um tópico, que começou a ter notoriedade através dos jogos de *storytelling*, desenvolvidos pela *White Wolf Game Studio*, e que acabou por evoluir para diferentes suportes como romances, jogos de computador, jogos de cartas e séries de televisão. A força, do projecto multi-suportes *World of Darkness*, consiste na quantidade e qualidade do trabalho produzido acerca do tema do sobrenatural desde o início dos anos 90.

A *White Wolf Publishing* é uma companhia que, desde o seu nascimento, tem investido no formato *storytelling*, a arte de contar histórias. Responsável pela criação de novos mundos de terror, ficção científica e fantasia, construiu uma base através dos jogos de RPG, jogos em que através de livros que estabelecem regras e sugerem contextos, os jogadores criam as suas personagens e o seu mundo e decidem livremente como jogar nele, usando apenas a imaginação.

Dentro da *White Wolf Game Studio* foram criados RPG's como *Vampire: The Masquerade*, *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, *Mage: The Awakening*, *Hunter; the Vigil*, entre outros. Mas vamos focar-nos no universo dos vampiros apenas, dado que esse é o âmbito do trabalho adaptado.

Os livros dentro deste contexto podem ser separados em três categorias: livros de regras, livros de conteúdos e livros de ficção. Livro de regras, neste contexto consiste num manual que integra o *storyteller system*, com o sistema de dados de dez faces, com este mundo habitado por vampiros numa era moderna dentro do estilo gótico-punk. Livros de conteúdos são as expansões que desenvolvem temas particulares dentro do WoD, por exemplo, a história de um *clan* de vampiros em específico, ou como funciona a Máfia norte-americana no WoD, ou ainda, quais são, e como funcionam, os códigos morais alternativos à “humanidade”. Livros de ficção são livros que têm como fundo o WoD e as suas personagens, assumindo que o leitor está familiarizado com as particularidades sobrenaturais deste mundo.

Um exemplo flagrante de um livro de regras é o *Vampire the Masquerade* (corebook) escrito pelos principais nomes da WW: Mark Rein-Hagen, Justin Achilli, Andrew Bates, Phil Brucato, Richard Dansky, etc. É considerado indispensável para quem pensa iniciar-se no jogo, pois contém o universo base em que irão decorrer as histórias pensadas para os tempos modernos. Para outras épocas, livros de regras como *Vampire The Dark Ages* ou *Victorian Age: Vampire* serão mais úteis. A minuciosidade e a qualidade da descrição de cada universo de vampiros, são das razões fundamentais que faz de WoD uma fonte de inspiração para quem pretende inspirar-se no mito do vampiro.

Um exemplo para um livro de conteúdos é o *Children of the Night*, no qual podemos encontrar uma espécie de caracterização de personagens detalhada dos nomes mais relevantes do WoD, como se fosse um documento que acompanha um argumento de longa metragem. De facto, estas personagens estão desta forma acessíveis aos jogadores para que eles mesmo os possam interpretar, e não só estudar por curiosidade. Uma semelhança interessante ao mundo do cinema, pondo o leitor casual no mundo do actor que se prepara para interpretar um papel, conhecendo o seu personagem minuciosamente, com as características físicas, mentais e sociais, a sua história de vida, incluindo dicas de interpretação.

Um exemplo do livro de ficção, o mais apelativo para a adaptação cinematográfica, será qualquer um dos treze volumes da saga *clan novel*. Segundo o WoD, existem treze *clans* de vampiros, o equivalente a raças no mundo dos mortais, e a série de *clan novel* conta uma parte da história de VTM, ao longo dos anos de 1999 e 2000, enfatizando em cada romance, um dos *clans*. Ou seja, o primeiro volume chama-se *clan covel Toreador*, o segundo, *clan covel Tzimisce*, o terceiro *clan covel Gangrel* e assim sucessivamente.

O jogo de cartas derivado do VTM, dentro do género de *Magic The Gathering* e Pokémon, intitula-se *Vampire: The eternal Struggle*. A série adaptada também do mesmo tema, mas pouco conhecida, por ter sido cancelada ao fim de oito episódios, chama-se *Kindred: The Embraced*. Um falhanço que pode ter deixado a WW receosa de se lançar para o mundo do cinema. Uma das consequências foi o processo judicial movido contra o filme de Len Wiseman, *Underworld* (2003), por demasiadas semelhanças ao WoD.

Mas o importante a analisar é a forma como os escritores e editores trataram o tema do vampiro em si. Enfatizando a extensa bibliografia que dá forma ao WoD, um dos segredos do seu sucesso é a fusão da ficção com a realidade. Os escritores recorreram a todo o tipo de eventos históricos, conteúdos religiosos e fenómenos inexplicados para os reescreverem do ponto de vista do WoD. A influência do vampiro na história da humanidade começa assim muito cedo, baseado em textos bíblicos, foi criado um livro chamado *The Book of Nod* que explica que quando Cain matou Abel, foi

amaldiçoado com o que mais tarde se chamaria a maldição vampírica, e na solidão, inerente à imortalidade, criou a descendência que habita o WoD nas eras modernas.

Todos os detalhes relativos à fisionomia dos vampiros e aos mecanismos da propagação da maldição vampírica estão definidos ao pormenor. Mais interessante ainda, o próprio mundo do WoD, foi esquematizado. A WW explica que o WoD é um mundo em tudo parecido ao nosso, mas que por ser habitado por criaturas sobrenaturais, é mais obscuro e violento que o nosso.

Um dos detalhes a realçar é a abordagem ao código moral de uma pessoa. O que acontece, com frequência em muitos filmes, é o facto de o vampiro tratar os que não são seres sobrenaturais por “humanos”. Segundo o WoD, isto não faz tanto sentido pois, a “humanidade” de um ser, não está relacionada com a mortalidade, trata-se apenas de um código moral com que fomos educados. Somos “seres humanos”, sim, mas não somos necessariamente “humanos”. Dentro dos próprios mortais existem inúmeras referências de falta de humanidade, por exemplo, os ditadores que praticaram genocídios. Mas, melhor exemplo, são os *serial killers*. Em 2006 estreou uma série que aborda muito bem esta questão, chamada *Dexter*. Nesta série, o protagonista Dexter não se rege pelo mesmo código moral que a sociedade em geral. Ao ver isso o seu pai, Harry, um polícia de Miami, decidiu educá-lo no sentido de sobreviver mesmo sendo diferente. Assim Dexter sobrevive seguindo o que ele chama de “Código de Harry”, uma alternativa à “humanidade”.

Tal como em *Dexter*, o WoD defende que os vampiros podem ter humanidade, mas muitos seguem outros *paths*, outros códigos morais. Assim, o vampiro do WoD refere-se às pessoas como mortais e não humanos. Este é apenas mais um dos diversos contributos que o WoD fornece a quem se pretende inspirar na sua abordagem ao mito do vampiro.

CAPÍTULO 4: PROCESSO DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO

No seguimento do enquadramento teórico apresentado no capítulo 3, o presente capítulo compreende a descrição e justificação dos passos que o argumentista tomou ao longo do processo de desenvolvimento do guião. Um processo de adaptação de dois livros que se inserem numa saga de 13 romances, sendo esses os dois primeiros da saga. Romances inspirados no jogo RPG *pen & paper: Vampire The Masquerade* criado e desenvolvido pela *White Wolf Game Studio*. O objectivo principal do argumentista consistiu em desenvolver um argumento de longa metragem intitulado *World of Darkness*, com o subtítulo *The Fall of Atlanta* por se tratar de um primeiro volume de uma saga de longas metragens que percorrerá a saga de romances. O argumento pretende fazer uma abordagem ao WoD, especificamente, através de VTM, deixando em aberto a hipótese de os outros jogos servirem também de inspiração para os volumes seguintes, estimulando esta possibilidade ao manter neste filme personagens associadas a outros jogos da WW como o Envoy Spirit mais característico de *Wraith: The Oblivion*. O autor pretende manter um ponto de vista que espelhe, em parte, a sua experiência como jogador, dentro do plano do cinema mainstream, procurando explorar ao máximo o tom sombrio, misterioso e violento do WoD que existe nos livros de jogos RPG.



Figura 1 *Clan Novel Toreador* - Primeiro romance da saga *Vampire The Masquerade*, que conta a batalha de Atlanta do ponto de vista da *Camarilla*, mais especificamente do *clan Toreador*.



Figura 2 *Clan Novel Tzimisce* - Segundo romance da saga *Vampire The Masquerade*, que conta a batalha de Atlanta do ponto de vista do *Sabbat*, mais especificamente do *clan Tzimisce*.

4.1 Escolha e análise das fontes

A componente mais prática deste projecto iniciou-se com a releitura cuidada dos dois romances a serem adaptados, visto que o argumentista já tinha previamente lido a saga e estava a par do *megaplot* que nela se desenrola. É de realçar que cada romance tem o nome de um dos *clans* que caracterizam grande parte dos vampiros dos WoD. Um *clan* é um grupo de vampiros que partilham características comuns recebidas através do sangue (como poderes, defeitos, traços físicos), como está explicado no livro de regras *Vampire The Masquerade* (A.A.V.V.,1998: 59). A razão para cada romance ter esta distinção é que muda o ponto de vista que temos da história, em que o narrador acompanha e dá ênfase ao *clan* do seu romance particular. Por exemplo, no *clan Torador* acompanhamos, predominantemente, as histórias pessoais de vampiros do *clan Toreador*. Há um ênfase nas descrições de obras de arte e predominam os eventos sociais, clichés de um *clan* apreciador de galerias de esculturas e de *cocktail partys*. Outro exemplo é a *clan novel Brujah*, em que predominam cenas de acção e cada momento é um crescendo de adrenalina com explosões, tiros e muito sangue, características e comportamentos associados ao *clan Brujah*.

Portanto a escolha dos dois primeiros romances teve isto em conta e aceitou essas consequências no argumento. Para contrabalançar a tendência que o argumento teria para explorar em mais profundidade apenas os *clans Toreador* e *Tzimisce*, foram cuidadosamente respeitadas as presenças de outros *clans*, para que se mantivesse a presença de personagens que representassem outros *clans* e houvesse uma harmonia no “tempo de antena” dedicado entre eles.

Para além da ficção, foram também considerados vários dos livros de regras de VTM, para que houvesse um entendimento de todos os poderes sobrenaturais utilizados pelas personagens durante a história, melhorando a sua descrição cinematográfica e acrescentando novos detalhes às cenas. De realçar o *Chapter Four: Disciplines* do *rulebook* VTM (A.A.V.V. 1998: 146 – 187).

Para além deste, foi muito útil consultar os livros específicos de cada seita, como o *Guide to the Camarilla* e o *Guide to the Sabbat*. Uma seita é um grupo de vampiros razoavelmente unidos sobre uma mesma filosofia. As três mais conhecidas, que preenchem a noite são a *Camarilla*, os *Inconnu* e o *Sabbat*, como está explicado

no VTM (A.A.V.V. 1998: 60).

As seitas tem uma organização hierárquica com uma nomenclatura particular que ao longo da história se vai descortinando através da interacção entre as personagens, mas os *Guides* provaram ser muito

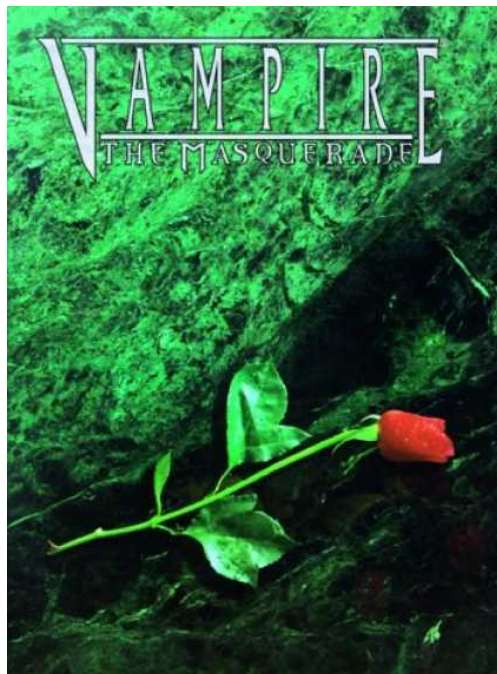


Figura 3 Rulebook *Vampire The Masquerade* – Este livro, também chamado *corebook* é centro do jogo, onde podemos encontrar detalhadas todas as regras e conteúdos necessários para poder jogar este RPG pen&paper.

esclarecedores neste sentido mostrando que há um enorme paralelismo entre as hierarquias da *Camarilla* e do *Sabbat* permitindo no argumento fazer uma insinuação às suas semelhanças.

Um dos livros que forneceu um suporte muito grande ao trabalho do argumentista, no que toca ao desenvolvimento de personagens foi o *Children of the Night*, uma coletânea de caracterizações de personagens feita a pensar nos jogadores do RPG, cujos objectivos se aproximam muito dos de um actor de cinema que pretende interpretar uma personagem num filme. O objectivo deste jogo de *storytelling* é cada jogador conseguir interpretar o melhor possível a sua personagem, no mundo criado por um outro jogador que tem a função de *Storyteller*, o narrador da

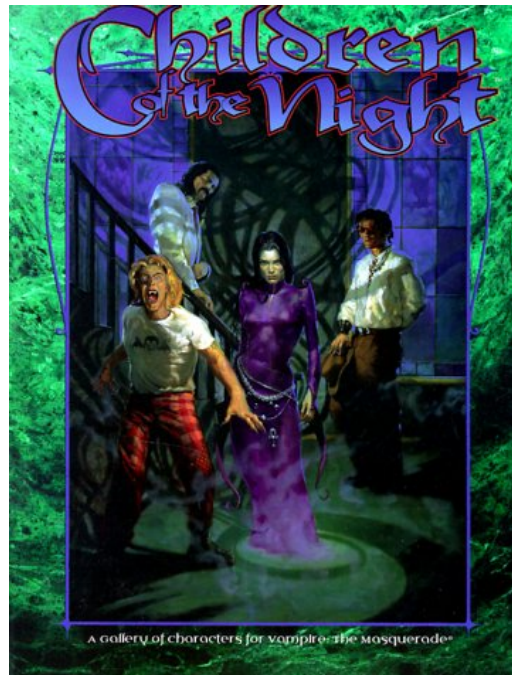


Figura 4 *Children of the Night* – Livro de conteúdos de suporte ao RPG VTM, no qual se pode encontrar a descrição detalhada das personagens mais relevantes que populam o WoD.

história que ajuda a aplicar as regras e mecanismos do jogo. É neste contexto que surge este livro *Children of the Night* com descrições pormenorizadas dos mais notáveis vampiros do WoD e com as respectivas fichas de jogo. Neste livro foram recolhidas muitas informações extra sobre personagens que se movimentam nos romances e que viriam também a integrar o argumento. Por exemplo, sobre a personagem Sascha Vykos (A.A.V.V., 1999: 24-26), ou sobre a personagem Francisco Domingo de Polonia (A.A.V.V., 1999: 23-24). Mas também existem livros específicos a explorar em maior profundidade cada um dos 13 *clans*. No final de cada um destes 13 *clanbooks* existem descrições detalhadas de alguns vampiros notáveis, pertencentes a esse *clan* em particular, provando também serem muito úteis. Por exemplo, Victoria Ash no *Clanbook: Toreador* (A.A.V.V., 2000: 93-94).

Como este argumento pretende dar origem a um filme que introduz o WoD pela primeira vez ao espectador, houve uma preocupação do argumentista em abordar a génese do vampiro no WoD, temática que não está muito contemplada nos romances, pois os seus autores assumiram que o seu público alvo já estaria minimamente familiarizado com o tema. Mas como o público alvo do filme não é o mesmo, foi adicionado às fontes que serviram de base à adaptação, um livro chamado *Book of Nod*. Esta ficção muito particular criada pela *White Wolf Game Studio*, conta o mito da criação dos vampiros, através da maldição de Cain que matou Abel e do seu exílio na terra de *Nod*, onde gerou a descendência vampírica. O conteúdo deste livro tinha então a potencialidade de entrar de alguma forma no argumento esclarecendo assim a origem vampírica ao espectador.

4.2 Tratamento das fontes

O argumentista Bráulio Mantovani, quando foi contactado por Fernando Meirelles em 2000 para adaptar o romance *Cidade De Deus*, de Paulo Lins, viu-se numa situação em parte semelhante à do projecto aqui em questão. Tratava-se de uma história poderosa que decorria ao longo de 600 páginas com cerca de 300 personagens que, nas suas histórias particulares revelavam o mundo da criminalidade das favelas do Rio de Janeiro. O grande problema revelou Mantovani, seria descobrir como contar esta história num filme de duas horas, dado o riquíssimo mundo fornecido por Paulo Lins.

Uma das primeiras medidas que Mantovani tomou, foi também seguida na adaptação do WoD, que consistiu em separar todos os personagens e seus *plots*, criando fichas que pudessem ser consultadas e colocando as suas histórias pessoais num ponto de vista linear, de modo a contabilizar o número de cenas em que aparece, a sua influência na história global, no *megaplot*. No caso de *Cidade de Deus*, estavam envolvidas várias pessoas durante o desenvolvimento do argumento, então o trabalho do argumentista deu origem a uma base de dados sobre as personagens que foi sendo consultada pelo realizador e outros membros da equipa. No caso do WoD, o resultado procurado era outro, pois estando o argumentista sozinho nesta fase, era preciso começar a desenhar a estrutura do filme com um *step outline*, em que as fichas se converteram em cenas que fossem o resultado desta primeira análise, um processo semelhante ao de Mantovani.

Sobre o caso particular da integração do mito da criação do vampiro, como referido no ponto 4.1 ao analisar as fontes, sugerido pelo *Book of Nod*, foi pensado, neste momento, usar uma das personagens, que se provasse mais propícia, para transmitir este mito e dar resposta a esta necessidade que o argumentista tinha em explicar a origem vampírica. A personagem escolhida foi Victoria Ash por diversas razões. Victoria é uma personagem atormentada pela sensação de que, vampiros mais antigos e poderosos que ela a possam estar a manipular, sendo que a ideia de liberdade de escolha que ela pensa ter não passa de uma ilusão. O conhecimento de alguns dos mitos do *Book of Nod* é uma explicação muito razoável para tal tormento. Acrescentando a isto o seu gosto pela arte, o mito de Cain que mata Abel e é amaldiçoado por isso, ganha um contorno cinematográfico muito relevante quando na história, Victoria Ash organiza uma festa num museu e, o mito em questão, é representado em diferentes esculturas nas galerias do museu. Está assim explicada a escolha desta personagem como veículo para transmitir este conteúdo no argumento.

4.3 Sequenciação do trabalho

O trabalho do argumentista desenvolveu-se ao longo de um ano sendo que o início foi marcado pela escolha e análise das fontes, desenvolvido em 4.1. A investigação teórica foi decorrendo em paralelo que, para efeitos da explicação da sequenciação do trabalho, será ignorada. Esta secção marca o momento em que o argumentista já se sentia suficientemente seguro para começar a produzir os documentos que em conjunto permitiriam chegar ao *script* final. E esse momento começa com a releitura dos romances base da adaptação, por forma a começar os levantamento de informação necessária.

Numa abordagem inicial, o desenvolvimento dos documentos de apoio ao argumento esperavam-se desenvolver segundo o gráfico da figura 5 abaixo.

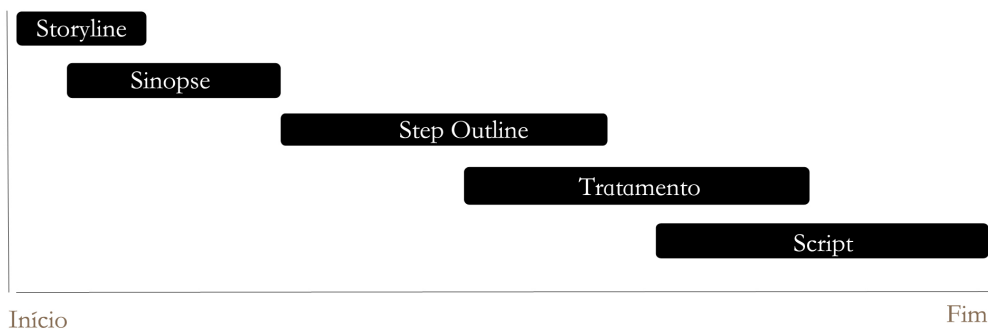


Figura 5 Gráfico da sequenciação inicial do trabalho –
Em que o Início corresponde ao começo do trabalho do argumentista no que toca à produção de artefactos e o Fim corresponde à conclusão do script.

Segundo o processo clássico da escrita de guiões, esperava-se esta ordem de desenvolvimento dos artefactos que suportam o projecto, como explicado em 3.3.

Quando no gráfico acima se evidencia que o *step outline*, o tratamento e o *script* se interceptam, significa que é muito comum que uns se ajudem aos outros e é normal que o *script* altere o tratamento e o tratamento altere a *step outline*. Do mesmo modo que cada um destes momentos poderiam requerer uma reavaliação da sinopse. O tratamento “devora” a sinopse e o *step outline*, do mesmo modo que o *script* “devorará” o tratamento (Mendes, 2009: 137).

Mas, concluído o processo, o que aconteceu foi algo diferente. O argumentista acabou por se aperceber que, dada a natureza deste projecto em particular, alterações tinham que ser feitas à sequenciação de trabalho inicial representada na figura 5. Vejamos o gráfico da figura 6.

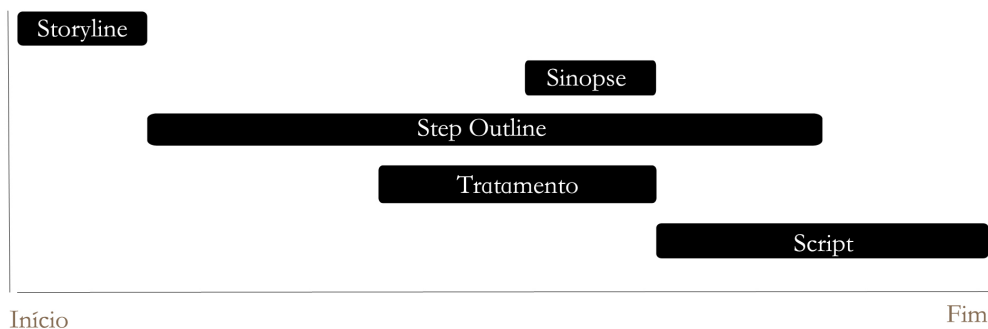


Figura 6 Gráfico da sequenciação final do trabalho – Em que o Início corresponde ao começo do trabalho do argumentista no que toca à produção de artefactos e o Fim corresponde à conclusão do script.

A *storyline*, pela função simples mas importante que desempenha, manteve-se tal como foi planeada originalmente, mas a sinopse não foi possível desenvolver logo de seguida. Apesar da história que se pretende contar já existir, ela é muito complexa para se poder criar uma sinopse facilmente. Estamos a falar de dois romances inteiros que se pretendem incluir dentro de um *script*. O problema do argumentista, era, então, o problema básico da adaptação cinematográfica: “como contar esta história?”. E este “como” só poderia começar a ser respondido pela *step outline*. Tão importante foi esta ferramenta que continuou a ser manipulada com frequência, quando o *script* já estava a ser desenvolvido. Como se pode ver no gráfico da figura 6, a sinopse só foi escrita quando se terminou o tratamento, pois nessa altura já existia uma grande confiança de que era aquela a forma mais apropriada para contar esta história. Apesar de se ter passado a desenvolver o tratamento, este não “devorou” totalmente o *step outline*, mas sim expandiu-o o suficiente para que o *script* pudesse começar a ser escrito com uma base forte por trás. Isto significa que os principais documentos manipulados pelo argumentista acabaram por ser a *step outline* e o *script* em si. Isto porque o *step outline* permitia facilmente um olhar mais afastado da história para possibilitar observação da sua estrutura e analisar as consequências que cada detalhe no *script* poderia ter. O *script* pesou um pouco mais que o tratamento, já que muitos dos diálogos foram reaproveitados dos romances. Mas, no que toca à priorização do trabalho, está explicada a alteração fundamental do plano inicial para o plano final, as justificações serão desenvolvidas em mais detalhe em cada uma das seguintes secções: 4.5, 4.6, 4.8.

A caracterização de personagens foi deixada de fora por uma razão particular que será devidamente explicada na secção 4.7.

4.4 Construção da narrativa

Recorrendo de novo ao exemplo de Mantovani em Cidade de Deus (2002), a sua história teria, não uma personagem principal, mas sim um conjunto de histórias individuais que juntas e entrecruzando-se criariam um conceito de saga, de continuação, definindo um *megaplot*. Mas em termos de narrativa, Mantovani sentiu necessidade de uma ligação, algo que mantivesse o espectador a segurar os diferentes fios que ligavam as personagens. Para tal, foi usada a personagem Busca-pé, que, segundo o argumentista, era um risco, pois era uma personagem que não intervinha directamente na acção, funcionava mais como um observador e no filme em si, era o narrador que nos conduzia ao longo da Cidade de Deus.

Foi usado um mecanismo semelhante no WoD, em que uma personagem totalmente ausente da acção se tornaria o narrador, Hazimel. Nos romances de VTM não existe este ponto de vista de uma personagem, sem ser o do próprio autor que narra a história. Mas para efeitos do filme, Hazimel, encaixava bem neste perfil, ele representa um *Methusalah* dos vampiros do WoD, ou seja, um vampiro extremamente antigo que abdicou da vida física entre os que pelo planeta se mexem, não necessariamente vivos. Mas abdicar não significa morrer, pois um vampiro está condenado e morrer significa ir para o inferno. Então, tal como muitos da sua geração, os mais antigos entraram num estado de torpor, uma espécie de coma, em que permaneciam a dormir nos seus túmulos secretos mas, por serem tão poderosos conseguiam continuar a influenciar o mundo dos vampiros e dos mortais se assim o desejassem. Em termos práticos, isso é explicável com mecanismos do jogo, segundo o *rulebook Vampire The Masquerade* (A.A.V.V. 1998: 149-152), existe um poder chamado *Auspex* que para níveis avançados, como é comum entre vampiros bastante antigos, conseguem fazer *Psychic Projection*: “*The Kindred with this awesome ability projects her senses out of her physical shell, stepping from her body as an entity of pure thought. The vampire’s astral form is immune to physical damage or fatigue, and can “fly” with blinding speed anywhere across earth – or even underground – so long as she remains below the moon’s orbit. (...)*”(A.A.V.V. 1998:152)

Embora este poder nunca seja referenciado nos romances de *Vampire The Masquerade*, há evidências suficientes de que Hazimel o usa ao longo da história, especialmente no oitavo romance, *clan novel Ravnos*, em que usa mesmo telepatia, um dos níveis de *Auspex*. Várias fontes apontam que Hazimel era do *clan Ravnos*, entre elas a principal referência, *Genealogy of the Vampires in the World of Darkness*, na secção de *Ravnos*. E como se pode ver através do *rulebook Vampire The Masquerade* (A.A.V.V. 1998: 96-97), *Auspex* não faz parte dos poderes base de um vampiro do clã *Ravnos*. No entanto, o argumentista justifica-se através dos diversos exemplos que existem entre os vampiros mais antigos, que possuem um variado leque de poderes, não sendo a maioria *disciplines* base do seu *clan*. O caso de Sascha Vykos, outra das personagens principais deste filme, demonstra bem que isso é possível, pois no *Children Of The Night* (A.A.V.V. 1999: 25-26), a sua ficha de personagem inclui cerca de onze poderes diferentes, quando apenas três são poderes base.

Portanto, podemos considerar que Hazimel, pelo facto de possuir uma espécie de projecção astral, se torna onisciente e omnipresente na história do *World of Darkness*, logo encaixa no papel de narrador do filme, não só pelo acompanhar dos acontecimentos mas também pelo seu *insight* sobre as personagens.

Agora que a narrativa já têm um fio que conecta todas as personagens e conduz o espectador ao longo dos acontecimentos, que só através de um narrador, alguns são

possíveis de entender, vamos passar à abordagem temporal da história. As *clan novels* têm uma organização temporal não linear como a tabela abaixo mostra.

Clan Novels	Início (em 1999)	Fim (em 1999)
1- Toreador	20 Junho	22 Junho
2- Tzimisce	19 Junho	2 Julho
3- Gangrel	7 Julho	26 Julho
4- Setite	21 Junho	31 Julho
5- Ventrue	25 Junho	27 Agosto

Tabela 1 – Exemplo da janela temporal das primeiras 5 Clan Novels

O *megaplot* decorre ao longo dos anos de 1999 e 2000, curiosamente a mesma altura em que os romances foram sendo publicados, um claro golpe de marketing. A janela temporal que a adaptação considerou foi de 19 Junho de 1999 a 22 Junho de 1999. Pode parecer pouco, apenas 3 dias da história global de 2 anos mas, como o primeiro romance mostra, e o grosso do segundo romance confirma, são três dias em que a história se desenrola de forma muito detalhada devido à sua importância. Por um lado, porque muitas personagens se interceptam, por outro, porque ao nível do *megaplot*, pode-se considerar que a batalha de Atlanta é o *inciting incident*, contando com o primeiro romance e grande parte do segundo para descrever este momento narrativo tão importante. A escolha deste momento em particular prende-se com a necessidade de introdução ao *World of Darkness*, o que implica mais exposição e menos desenvolvimento, pois o espectador tem primeiro que se familiarizar com as particularidades deste mundo. Mas não se trata de segurar a história até que o espectador esteja à vontade com o seu mundo, trata-se mais de isolar um evento de forma a realçá-lo e dar-lhe o merecido valor. A batalha de Atlanta foi de facto o início do fim, apesar da guerra entre as seitas de vampiros já durar há pelo menos 5 séculos, este é um momento de viragem, uma espécie de *Pearl Harbor* no WoD.

A construção narrativa tem, neste momento, definido um narrador e um espaço temporal mas, como sugere Robert McKee em *Story* (1998: 68-69): *A story's SETTING is four-dimensional – Period, Duration, Location, Level of Conflict*. Analisando então os locais de acção, podemos dizer que a guerra do WoD passou ao longo de toda a costa Este dos Estados Unidos.

Alguns exemplos são:

Washington (D.C.) na *clan novel Tzimisce*;

Cidade de Nova Iorque (Nova Iorque) na *clan novel Gangrel*;

Baltimore (Maryland) na *clan novel Ventrue*;

Columbia (Maryland) na *clan novel Setite*.

Mas qual a razão que levou a história a iniciar-se em Atlanta (Georgia)? Não existe uma explicação assumida, pelo menos em termos de história, poderia ter começado noutra cidade, mas para os autores, a cidade de Atlanta tem um valor especial. A editora WW começou quando um par de colegas de universidade, Stewart Wieck e Mark Rein Hagen decidiram criar *Vampire* juntos e iniciar o seu negócio, na sua terra de origem, Atlanta (Plummer, 1996).

Finalmente, seguindo a orientação de McKee, vamos analisar como se debruçou a construção da narrativa sobre o “nível do conflito”, ou seja, qual a dimensão a explorar no filme. Estamos a falar da dimensão social, pois as forças políticas,

económicas, ideológicas, biológicas e psicológicas, sejam elas exteriorizadas em instituições ou interiorizadas em indivíduos, moldam os eventos da história de forma tão profunda como o espaço, o período de tempo e a duração (McKee, 1998: 69).

O problema dos romances base da adaptação, foi lidarem com muitos destes níveis e o filme, como tem diversas personagens, nenhuma se podendo considerar a principal, fez também uma combinação de vários níveis. Leopold encontra-se numa luta interior, por um lado para tentar vencer o bloqueio de não conseguir esculpir vampiros e por outro por não saber quem é o seu *sire*, o seu criador. No entanto é um sobrevivente de uma luta bem exterior quando a sua seita, a *Camarilla* é alvo de um ataque do *Sabbat*. Victoria Ash vive numa luta interior assombrada pela ideia de que vampiros mais antigos e poderosos podem estar a controlar as suas acções, no entanto, exteriormente, vemos o seu plano elaborado para conseguir derrubar o *Prince* da cidade, Benison, e eliminar a concorrência a esse lugar, para sobrar só para ela o “trono”. Em algumas personagens temos uma componente interior, mas a guerra entre as seitas, que sobressai, é um conflito exterior, e é a principal ênfase do filme, que trata a batalha de Atlanta de diversos pontos de vista.

No fundo, o principal momento de construção da narrativa foi a esquematização da história através das suas personagens. Dado que o *World of Darkness* é um universo bastante complexo foi criado um mecanismo que permitisse aos espectadores ligarem-se à história facilmente através das personagens. Portanto, definiram-se 4 níveis de introdução, cada um representado por cada uma das 4 personagens principais.

1º nível é apresentado por Leopold (vampiro *neonate*: entre 20-50 anos nesta condição), que nos revela um mundo secreto de imortais, vampiros com diferentes ambições e poderes. Dado que esta personagem não sabe muito sobre esta sociedade secreta, está um pouco na posição inicial do espectador.

2º nível, em que entramos no jogo de manipulação de Victoria Ash (vampira *elder*: perto de 300 anos), que pretende subir na hierarquia da sua seita, a *Camarilla*. O plano dela consiste em juntar várias pessoas chave numa "panela de pressão" e ver se ela rebenta. Esta "panela de pressão" é uma festa em que ela é a anfitriã. Aqui o espectador toma consciência de que existe uma sociedade bastante complexa, com regras próprias e com uma hierarquia particular, na qual muitos pretendem o objectivo clássico de *fame and fortune*.

3º nível, Sascha Vykos (vampiro *elder*, perto de 1000 anos) tem uma perspectiva do mundo bastante diferente das pessoas comuns, consequência de vários séculos de existência. Ele acredita na profecia que diz que um dia os imortais mais antigos vão acordar e destruir todos os seus descendentes. O seu objectivo é destruí-los primeiro, antes que eles acordem do torpor. Para isso, tem que destruir também toda a seita da *Camarilla*, que não é mais que um fantoche manipulado pelos *Antediluvians*, vampiros tão antigos que já existiam antes do mítico Dilúvio bíblico.

4º nível, The Eye of Hazimel, mais que um artefacto mágico que Leopold encontra e pelo qual se deixa corromper, trata-se da prova de que Hazimel existe, logo os *Antediluvians* existem, e toda a comunidade vampírica está em perigo. O narrador do filme é o próprio Hazimel (considerado um vampiro *Ancient*, com idade indeterminada, mas na ordem dos milhares de anos).

4.5 *Storyline e sinopse*

Desenvolver destes dois documentos foi muito complicado neste projecto. Antes de mais, vamos esclarecer as suas funções numa adaptação deste tipo e, depois, vamos explicar porque a sinopse não funcionou como estava previsto inicialmente na sequenciação de trabalho (ver 4.3). A *storyline*, como era de esperar, foi afinada várias vezes ao longo do processo, mas não mudou a ideia principal. O que se passou foi que, ao ser criada, levantou algumas questões importantes, como por exemplo, para que público é este filme? E a resposta era complicada. Para que público são os filmes de *Harry Potter*? Para que público é a trilogia de *Lord Of The Rings*? Para que público é a saga de episódios *Star Wars*? A resposta passa por ver o que existe de comum nestas sagas, identificar um dos principais problemas de que *World of Darkness – The Fall of Atlanta*, também padece. Todos se passam em mundos complexos, particulares que precisam de ser explicados para que o espectador possa compreender a história. É evidente que muita gente leu os livros de J. K. Rowling, muitos são os fãs de J. R. R. Tolkien mas, no caso do *World of Darkness*, o desafio era o mesmo, não apostar só nesses públicos. Mas o argumentista tem que ter a noção de que não está a escrever para um público geral. Nesse sentido, Christian Metz (Metz apud Mendes, 2009:134) reflecte sobre o assunto, dizendo que “sabemos que os públicos são cada vez menos generalistas, cada vez mais fragmentários (...) quem aposta num público tenta sempre atingir, por contaminação, outros públicos para quem o primeiro serve de locomotiva”. Esses “outros” públicos são os mesmos destas outras sagas referidas anteriormente, públicos que procuram uma ficção de fantasia, de aventura, de mainstream. Tendo isto em conta, o primeiro filme de uma saga tem uma função de introdução do mundo da história, que é obrigatória, quando esse mundo necessita da explicação de conceitos próprios para o espectador entender a história. Isto tem consequências, imediatamente, ao nível da *storyline* e da sinopse. A *storyline* sofreu vários ajustes devido, principalmente, à linguagem usada para explicar alguns conceitos que tinham que aparecer inevitavelmente neste documento. Analisemos então a *storyline* em questão:

“War has been raging between vampires from secret societies, Leopold tries to survive avoiding conflict, Victoria hopes to see all her opponents kill each other, leaving her the city. And Sascha Vykos leads his soldiers to war and victory. In the middle of the Atlanta battle, a magical and powerful artifact resurfaces and its destiny may well decide the fate of the immortals at war. Who will find it first?”

Analisando a primeira frase, evidencia-se o uso do termo “vampires”, que no *World of Darkness* da *WW*, não é muito valorizado por diferentes razões. No *WoD* costuma-se chamar *Kindreds* aos vampiros da seita *Camarilla* e *Cainites* aos vampiros da seita *Sabbat*. Raramente é usado o termo vampiro, por ser ambíguo. Fora destas duas seitas, as maiores, existem muitas outras denominações para os vampiros, como no grupo dos chamados *Independents*, mas, com o intuito de simplificar o seu tratamento, não vamos aprofundar a sua análise neste sentido. A razão principal para este termo, “vampiro”, ter ficado na *storyline* é que, sem dúvida, a maior parte do público sabe o que significa, o mesmo não se passando com *Kindred* ou *Cainite*, cuja explicação não caberia na *storyline*. Mas o grande desconforto do argumentista em chamar vampiros às criaturas do *WoD* que, de facto são vampiros, é um conceito chamado *The Masquerade: The habit (or Tradition) of hiding the existence of vampires from humanity. Designed to protect the Kindred from destruction at the hands of mankind, the Masquerade was adopted after the Inquisition claimed many*

Kindred unives, como está explicado no rulebook *Vampire The Masquerade* (A.A.V.V. 1998:60). Ou seja, os mortais, apesar de menos poderosos que os vampiros têm vantagem numérica, o que significa que se soubessem da existência dos vampiros, facilmente, pela força dos números, os destruiriam. *The Masquerade* é então um sistema muito complexo para falsear a existência destes seres sobrenaturais, sendo que os métodos mais comuns são controlar os meios de comunicação, abafando todas as notícias que a ameacem, e, principalmente, incentivar a ficcionalização da raça vampírica, por exemplo, promovendo o cinema sobre vampiros, a literatura e todo o tipo de jogos de computador, de cartas, etc.

Voltando a questão de “usar ou não usar” o termo vampiro na *storyline*, ao fazê-lo, o argumentista estaria a dizer que este seria mais um filme sobre vampiros, ficcionando-os, ironicamente, apoiando *The Masquerade*. Mas como uma das funções da *storyline* é servir de guia para o resto do filme, o argumentista sabia que este não era um filme sobre vampiros, mas sim um filme de imortais que padecem de uma maldição chamada de vampirismo, que é diferente, no que toca a abordagem ao filme por parte deste. Mas esta função que a *storyline* tem, foi abafada por outra mais importante que é, eficazmente, resumir de forma clara, a ideia do filme. Sendo esse o caso, o argumentista cedeu à força deste argumento: “depois de ler a *storyline*, tem que ficar bastante claro, para o leitor, de que trata o filme”. Esta justificação anterior funciona da mesma forma para a escolha de “*secret societies*” em vez de explicitar que se tratava de uma luta entre as duas maiores seitas do WoD chamadas *Camarilla* e *Sabbat*. A *storyline* deve ser simples e eficaz mesmo que não esteja totalmente de acordo com a ideia defendida pelo argumentista para o filme.

Depois, é fácil verificar que se optou por uma abordagem de apontar as personagens principais que se destacarão na história, dando a ideia de que não haverá uma personagem principal, mas sim várias, o que acabou por ser uma decisão apoiada pela caracterização de personagens (ver 4.7).

Fica claro o local em que se vai passar o filme e fica também claro na *storyline* que este será um filme que misturará os géneros de fantasia, acção, aventura e thriller.

Olhando agora de perto para a sinopse, é preciso esclarecer que, este documento não foi dos primeiros a ser produzido devido à falta de distanciamento do argumentista com a obra. A sinopse já exigia uma aproximação à história que pressupunha várias decisões, como a estrutura e a linearidade. Isto pode não parecer óbvio, mas a verdade é que nesta adaptação em particular, só metendo “mãos à obra” e experimentando, é que se percebe o que é absolutamente imprescindível contar. Num resumo da história, como a sinopse, estamos a falar do que é imprescindível contar para que se perceba a história, não interessando para isso, saber a estrutura do filme, nem se era linear ou não-linear. Mas a verdade é que, para prosseguir com o processo de desenvolvimento do argumento, não houve necessidade de definir a sinopse até o momento em que muitas peças já tinham sido encaixadas e outras deitadas fora.

De notar que, a forma que se descreveu a história na sinopse, acompanha a estrutura final do filme, uma história não linear, no sentido em que se avança e recua no tempo e as várias histórias se cruzam em determinado momento.

4.6 Step Outline e tratamento

Um filme é composto por muitos ingredientes, alguns com estruturas simples, mas também outros com estruturas mais complexas, como personagens, ambiente, imagens, diálogo, símbolos, conflito, etc. Tudo isto organizado em momentos ou cenas que o argumentista procura isolar, para poder depois ordenar e construir a sua história. Enquanto estamos a trabalhar sobre o *step outline*, incidimos ao nível da estrutura. Esta estrutura não é mais que uma selecção de eventos a partir das histórias das personagens que, quando organizada numa sequência estratégica, provoca emoções específicas e mostra um ponto de vista particular da vida (McKee, 1998:33). Quando mexemos com a estrutura, no contexto deste projecto, em que a história existe previamente, muitas decisões têm de ser tomadas. O argumentista usou como referência o triângulo que mapeia o universo das histórias (figura 9), sugerido por McKee (1998:45), e tentou posicionar-se nele para fazer a abordagem ao filme.

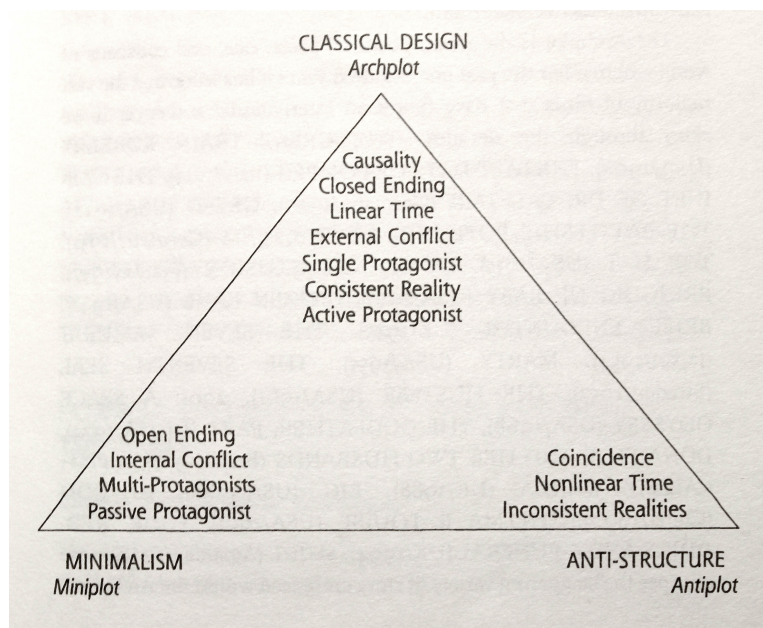


Figura 9 Triângulo do universo das histórias: Em *Story*, McKee apresenta esta proposta gráfica para organizar o desenho das narrativas cinematográficas, ajudando o argumentista a procurar o espaço para o seu argumento.

A primeira abordagem, ignorando o sugerido pela caracterização de personagens, que ia no sentido dos multi-protagonistas, do *Miniplot*, tentou o design clássico. Isto significa posicionar-se no topo do triângulo e seguir o *Archplot*, ou seja, uma história que gira à volta de um só protagonista que procura combater as forças, maioritariamente externas, que antagonizam os seus objectivos, resolvendo a história de forma linear. Isto, porque os dois romances, que contavam a mesma história de pontos de vista diferentes, continham cenas que se podiam entrelaçar e organizar, por forma a que o tempo fique linear, tendo ainda em conta, que algumas das mesmas cenas eram descritas de diferentes formas, nos dois romances base da adaptação. Mas cedo se percebeu que se perdia valor com esta abordagem. Primeiro, porque nenhuma das personagens era activa o suficiente para se destacar, sendo que, tornar uma delas

numa personagem mais activa, como por exemplo, Leopold, seria possível, mas iria contra a essência da saga. Esta diz-nos em 13 romances que existem 13 *clans* de vampiros, cada um com o seu ponto de vista sobre os eventos da história. O próprio RPG é um jogo de cooperação e sugere que não existe bem nem mal, só existem pontos de vista e no filme era importante manter essa ideia. Portanto uma abordagem clássica foi descartada. Os romances sugeriam a não linearidade, a coincidência, mas também o *open ending* e os multi-protagonistas. Portanto, o reposicionamento no triângulo de McKee, seria numa zona oposta ao *Archplot*, entre o *Miniplot* e o *Antiplot*. Segundo Dancyger (2001:135), a narrativa não linear é, de facto, o oposto à narrativa clássica dos três actos. Os elementos narrativos “personagem” e “estrutura”, estão ligados por uma outra voz narrativa que não entra no mecanismo da narrativa clássica. Destaca-se que, no trabalho efectuado pelo argumentista, apesar de o “princípio”, “meio” e “fim” terem sofrido reordenações, grande parte do mecanismo dos três actos foi usado. Estamos a falar dos *plot points*, que desempenharam na estrutura do guião, as mesmas funções sugeridas nos três actos de Syd Field. Estes três actos (*setup*, *confrontation*, *resolution*) transformam-se em cinco quando um *inciting incident* intervém algures até meio do *setup* e quando um *middle point* ajuda a estruturar a *confrontation* (Mendes, 2009:32). Vamos ilustrar para esclarecer. Se analisarmos a *step outline* é fácil perceber que o *inciting incident* é quando Leopold descobre que consegue esculpir vampiros (pág. 6 no *script*) e isso levanta-lhe muitas questões que o lançam numa demanda, em busca de respostas. O fim do primeiro acto, ou *I plot point*, é quando Victoria entra finalmente na sua festa, iniciando o seu “plano”, onde os seus convidados a esperam (pág. 24 no *script*). O *middle point* é quando a festa de Victoria fica em “pausa” e recuamos alguns dias, quando Polonia prepara o *war council* do *Sabbat* (pág. 49 no *script*). O fim do segundo acto, ou *II plot point*, é quando retomamos a festa, que ficou em pausa no *middle point*. (pág. 84 no *script*). Divisões feitas, tendo em conta um *script* de 99 páginas no total. Existem muitos dispositivos para moldar a narrativa dentro da não linearidade. Um dos usados neste argumento, que Dancyger (2001) sugere, é a existência de um evento que justifique a presença das personagens no mesmo local à mesma hora, ilustrado pela festa organizada pela personagem Victoria Ash.

Durante a construção da *step outline*, teve-se em conta a aproximação ao *Miniplot*, que incorpora a característica do *open ending*, o que encaixa no formato de saga de longas metragens. Tal como os dois romances o fizeram, algumas questões persistem no final da história. O que fará Leopold com o místico *The Eye of Hazimel*? O que fará *Hazimel* ao frágil Leopold? O que aconteceu a Victoria Ash e ao Prince Benison? Esta preocupação, ditou que, cerca de metade do segundo romance *Clan Novel Tzimisce*, fosse descartada, logo na *step outline*, por forma a controlar este *open ending*.

Houve um detalhe importante que facilitou o ordenamento das cenas, mantendo uma consistência temporal, dentro da história. Ou seja, manipulando conscientemente os eventos, prevenindo consequências futuras inesperadas que poderiam vir de continuções nos outros romances. Por exemplo, o destino do Prince Benison, que ficou indeterminado na segunda *clan novel* da saga, é continuado no nono romance, a *clan novel Malkavian*, onde finalmente descobrimos que Benison sobreviveu e de que forma. Esse detalhe está ilustrado na figura 10, onde num excerto do primeiro romance, realçamos que, em cada um dos três capítulos de cada romance, já existiam “cenas” que estavam devidamente identificadas com a data, o local e até a hora.

**Sunday, 20 June 1999, 10:55 PM
East Ponce de Leon Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia**

Tireless step by tireless stride, immortal day by immortal night, Leopold incrementally left behind a life like that of the Kine surrounding him. And that was a shame, for he felt more at home among these shadows of his old life than he did inside the halls of Elysium or within the edicts of the Masquerade, which were only two of the trappings of his life among the Kindred of Atlanta.

Figura 10 excerto da Clan Novel Treador:
Este excerto da página 24, do primeiro capítulo denominado *part one: Leopold*, inclui um cabeçalho comum a todas as divisões cénicas do livro. Neste cabeçalho encontramos a data e a hora, seguida pelo local onde se passa a cena.

O tratamento surgiu, como esperado, de uma expansão da *step outline*, mas teve um período de vida muito curto dentro do processo. A explicação, por um lado, vem de uma *step outline* já por si bastante “tratada”. Em que uma carta de cena poderia equivaler, vamos supor, a 20 páginas no livro, mas 10 dessa páginas seriam diálogo, 8 de divagação do narrador do romance sobre o passado de um ou outro personagem, sobrando 2 de acção efectiva. O tratamento está à procura de descrever a acção no filme, evitando avançar para os diálogos, mas essa era uma função já bastante completa na *step outline*. Por outro lado, ao criar o tratamento, foi feito um levantamento dos diálogos já existentes, quais necessitariam de ser editados e das zonas novas do script, que iriam precisar de diálogo. Para juntar a isto tudo, nesta fase, o argumentista tinha produzido o *step outline* em português, sendo que o script final seria em inglês, portanto era imperativo que o tratamento já fosse na língua final. A razão para manter a língua original era simples, a história passava-se em Atlanta, nos Estados Unidos, onde se fala inglês americano, portanto não fazia sentido traduzir. Ao criar o tratamento, o *step outline* foi revisto e traduzido para inglês também.

O tratamento já permitia visualizar como se iriam posicionar os actos, prever as dimensões de cada um, ajudando a gerir o tamanho do script, que não podia exceder as 120 páginas. Mas depois da análise aos diálogos, já feita durante esta fase, chegou-se a conclusão que, por limitações do argumentista, por exemplo, o facto de não estar a trabalhar com o realizador e com o elenco, uma grande percentagem dos diálogos originais iria manter-se na primeira versão do *script*. Terminou assim a principal utilidade do tratamento, iniciando-se a escrita do *script*.

4.7 Caracterização de Personagens

Este documento foi criado ao longo de todo o processo de desenvolvimento do argumento, mas só ao fim da primeira versão do *script* é que o argumentista entendeu o verdadeiro valor da caracterização de personagens. Os livros base da adaptação propunham diversos protagonistas, tendo em conta a atenção que o narrador literário foi dando às personagens. Ficou claro que esta história funcionaria bem dividindo-a em várias histórias menores. A forma clássica de contar a história seria evidenciar uma personagem, tornando-a no coração da história. Ou seja, uma história principal que domine o “tempo de antena” em que o seu protagonista é a estrela principal (McKee, 1998:49). Mas ao começar a desenhar a caracterização de personagens, durante a análise das fontes (ver 4.1), o argumentista percebeu que haveria muito a ganhar em fragmentar o filme num número de histórias menores, cada uma com um protagonista diferente, na linha do que refere McKee, pela criação de uma variação do *Miniplot*, chamado *Multiplot* (1998:49). Significa isto que, a caracterização de personagens ajudou a tomar decisões muito importantes, logo no início de todo o processo mas, durante o processo em si, foi pouco usada. A principal razão para isto é o espantoso trabalho de caracterização de personagens que a *White Wolf* já fez previamente, com o intuito de ajudar os jogadores do RPG. A figura 7 exemplifica uma ficha de personagem do livro *Children of the Night*. Como se pode verificar, cada personagem é caracterizada exaustivamente. No exemplo, a personagem Sascha Vykos é introduzida com um considerável *Background*. A sua aparência excêntrica é desenvolvida em *Image*. As dicas de interpretação em *Roleplaying Hints* servem principalmente o *Storyteller*, que é o responsável de interpretar todas as personagens que os jogadores não desempenhem, no entanto, os jogadores podem arriscar a interpretar esta personagem tão complexa. Finalmente, a ficha de jogo é exposta revelando todos os outros segredos desta personagem, numa análise que passa pela sua verdadeira natureza (*nature*), ano de transformação em vampiro (*embrace*), atributos físicos (*physical*), sociais (*social*) e mentais (*mental*), todos os seus poderes sobrenaturais (*disciplines*), etc.

Para incrementar o conhecimento desta personagem, o argumentista socorreu-se das outras ficções onde Sascha Vykos estava também presente, como na *clan novel Assamite*, *clan novel Lasombra* e *clan novel Anthology*. Maior ligação desenvolveu com Vykos, melhorando a sua caracterização no documento final, acompanhando as bandas desenhadas publicadas pela *Moonstone*, como se pode ver na figura 8.

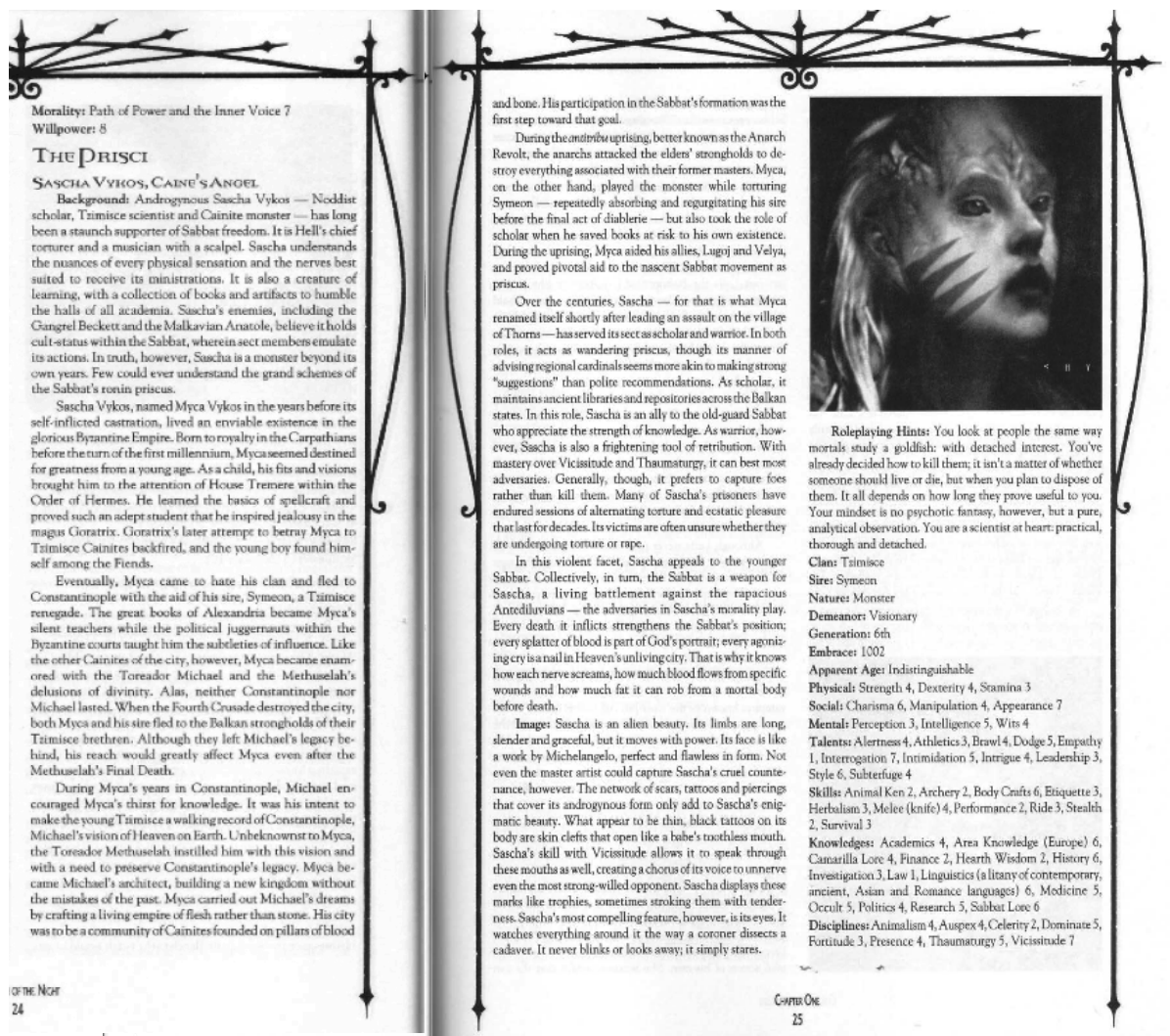


Figura 7 Excerto de Children of the Night – Caracterização da personagem Sascha Vykos providenciada por este livro nas páginas 24 e 25, que permite aos jogadores e storytellers conhecerem em maior detalhe este monstro do World of Darkness.

Figura 8 Excerto da Banda desenhada: Vampire the Masquerade Volume three – Blood & Loyalty – Nestas tiras de BD, a personagem Sascha Vykos está a interrogar um inimigo usando a tortura como instrumento. A vítima está estacada, que segundo o WoD, imobiliza os vampiros não lhes causando a morte final.



Como foi referido inicialmente, a importância da caracterização de personagens foi compreendida já com a primeira versão do script completa. Nesta altura, foi feita uma reflexão sobre se cada uma das personagens que tinham lugar no argumento. Para isso, cada uma tinha que responder a uma série de perguntas que permitiriam avaliar o valor desta personagem. Desta reflexão resultou o documento final chamado *Character Details for the script World of Darkness – The Battle of Atlanta*, ou aqui referenciado como caracterização de personagens. Segue abaixo um excerto desta caracterização de personagens, continuando no exemplo de Sascha Vykos.

Excerto da caracterização de Sascha Vykos que pode ser consultada no capítulo 7 Anexos, no documento: *Character Details for the script World of Darkness – The Battle of Atlanta*.

RESUME: Noddist scholar, Tzimisce scientist and Cainite monster - has long been a staunch supporter of Sabbat freedom. It is Hell's chief torturer and a musician with a scalpel. Sascha understands the nuances of every physical sensation and the nerves best suited to receive its ministrations. It is also a creature of learning, with a collection of books and artifacts to humble the halls of all academia.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: One of the protagonists, mainly because he is the most enlightened of all the characters, in terms of vampire lore. He represents a Sabbat elder (1000 years old) and how he can get what he wants with powerful manipulation skills. The audience will see, through this character, that there is another point of view to the kindred society.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: The main objective is to support the Sabbat in the search and destruction of the Antediluvians and the annihilation of the Camarilla. The other objectives are to help conduct the war for the Eastern American cities, to bloodbound an Assamite for bodyguard and to survive all the enemies among the Sabbat.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Sascha Vykos, named Myca Vykos in the years before its self-inflicted castration, lived an enviable existence in the glorious Byzantine Empire. Born to royalty in the Carpathians before the turn of the first millennium, Myca seemed destined for greatness from a young age. Over the centuries, Sascha has served its sect as scholar and warrior. In both roles, it acts as wandering priscus, though its manner of advising regional cardinals seems more akin to making strong "suggestions" than polite recommendations. As scholar, it maintains ancient libraries and repositories across the Balkan states. As warrior, however, Sascha is also a frightening tool of retribution. With mastery over Vicissitude and Thaumaturgy, it can best most adversaries. In this violent facet, Sascha appeals to the younger Sabbat. Collectively, in turn, the Sabbat is a weapon for Sascha, a living battlement against the rapacious Antediluvians - the adversaries in Sascha's morality play.

IMAGE: Sascha's appearance varies over time, gradually becoming more and more pristine and elegantly beautiful. His original form was a slender young man only slightly over average height, with black hair, hazel eyes

and a haunted expression. By the middle of the 16th century, he stands just over six feet in height, slender and graceful as a swan, with long silver-gold hair and golden eyes. This 16th century look, many times associated with the Elizabeth Bathory myth, is his preferred look in the modern times. Posing more as a woman than as men, since he prefers the Victorian style dress to match his face.

4.8 O Script

Já abordamos como foi feita a recolha e tratamento da informação das fontes, como é que as diferentes fases do processo de desenvolvimento do argumento foram organizadas, como se começou a desenhar a narrativa e como foi trabalhado o filme nos seus diferentes níveis, sendo eles as personagens, a estrutura, o seu posicionamento em relação aos vários *designs* de narrativas cinematográficas. Vamos agora olhar com cuidado para cada uma das partes do *script*.

O primeiro acto representa um espaço de mais exposição e menos desenvolvimento da história, em função de estabelecer a atmosfera, o lugar, o período e também os protagonistas e seus objectivos. Neste caso, como temos 4 protagonistas, cada um deles foi apresentado em momentos diferentes, sendo que no primeiro acto, a história acompanha de perto, apenas Leopold e Victoria, que estão inequivocamente ligados pela sua condição vampírica, sendo ambos membros do *clan Toreador*, pela paixão pela arte, nomeadamente a escultura, e por uma agenda que os irá juntar num mesmo evento, *The Summer Solstice Ball*.

As duas primeiras sequências do script, que englobam as cenas na casa de Leopold e a cenas que relacionam o monólogo de Victoria com o quotidiano dos habitantes (mortais) da cidade Atlanta, têm um papel fundamental. Em apenas 3 páginas pretende-se mostrar que esta não é uma história sobre mortais, mas sim sobre vampiros dotados de poderes sobrenaturais, que escondem a sua existência da humanidade, através da *Masquerade*, mas que se confundem com os mortais, pois são apenas um “reflexo pálido” do que em tempos também eles já foram. Depois, começa a funcionar o mecanismo do *multiplot*, e observamos uma ligação que se começa a formar entre as personagens, nomeadamente no fim da página 5, quando Thelonious e Benjamin são “convidados”, de forma suspeita, a participar num evento festivo na noite seguinte, sequência seguida pela descoberta de que Leopold consegue, finalmente, esculpir vampiros, materializando esta capacidade num busto de Victoria Ash. Victoria, que de seguida, usufrui de um espaço privilegiado, a entrada para as galerias do *High Museum of Atlanta*, para contar ao frágil e inocente menino mortal, o mito de criação dos vampiros, conhecido pelo mito de Cain. Ou seja, no fundo, o argumentista aproveitou um dos cenários sugeridos pelos romances para se dirigir ao público e estimular o entusiasmo ao fornecer pistas sobre a origem dos vampiros no WoD. Isto segue um *slogan* que está muito presente entre os jogadores do RPG VTM, que diz que “quanto mais sabemos, mais nãoçã temos do pouco que sabemos”. O primeiro acto é ainda composto por dois momentos de relevo. O primeiro é quando Leopold decide recorrer a feiticeira Hannah, uma vampira do *clan Tremere*, para procurar algumas respostas na sua magia. Leopold apercebe-se de como o WoD pode ser perigoso, misterioso e invisível, ao visitar a mansão de Hannah. O segundo momento é a chegada de Victoria ao *High Museum of Art*, onde já decorre a sua festa. Nesta sequência de cenas, Victoria exhibe um comportamento paranoico mas que lança suspeitas sobre a existência de outros vampiros mais antigos e poderosos. O segundo acto começa com um salto temporal atrás, quando um dos inimigos da *Camarilla*, Francisco Domingo de Polonia, prepara uma reunião do conselho de guerra do *Sabbat*, introduzindo um novo *plot*, paralela às que tínhamos estado a acompanhar entretanto.

Este acto é o mais extenso e está dividido em dois momentos, um que acompanha o desenvolvimento da festa de Victoria, os encontros com os convidados e entre convidados, e mais importante, a revelação do artefacto mágico, *The Eye of Hazimel*.

O segundo momento, trata-se da preparação do ataque, do *Sabbat*, a Atlanta, que está na posse da *Camarilla*. Ataque que está em risco devido às tensões entre os diversos *war leaders* que o *Sabbat* juntou. Este acto transmite a forma como as várias entidades de vampiros se relacionam no WoD. O *Sabbat* e a *Camarilla* batalham eternamente. Os *Independents* seguem a sua agenda paralela, ilustrado por Vogel, do *clan Followers of Set*, quando recebe The Eye de Rolph, como pagamento de uma dívida antiga e abandona a festa antes do ataque. Muito importante também, é este acto revelar como funcionam internamente as principais seitas. A *Camarilla*, com as suas intrigas e ambições por poder. O *Sabbat* com a sua sede de violência, as personalidades complicadas em confronto e as monstruosidades que nele se movimentam. Existe uma comparação entre as duas estruturas hierárquicas de cada seita que, embora diferentes, os comportamentos dentro das mesmas são parecidos. Por exemplo, o paralelismo entre a chegada real do Prince Benison à festa de Victoria Ash, onde nem todos se curvaram perante a realeza, e a chegada pomposa e misteriosa do *Archbishop* Polonia ao *war council* onde nem todos os *war lords* estão dispostos a levantar-se para lhe prestarem vassalagem.

Ainda neste segundo acto é introduzido um dos protagonistas, *Lady Sascha Vykos*, que faz sombra à manipulação de Victoria Ash e que torna as capacidades de escultor de Leopold numa brincadeira de crianças, ao conseguir esculpir carne e osso, por exemplo, quando molda a cabeça da falecida Hannah, para que se pareça com a de Parmenides. Aqui, mais uma vez a realçar o facto de os *Independents* se relacionarem com as outras seitas, Vogel com a *Camarilla*, Parmenides com o *Sabbat*.

Com o início do terceiro acto, cruzam-se finalmente as histórias das diferentes personagens. O *Sabbat* embate na *Camarilla*, com máxima força, usando todos os recursos ao seu dispor. O clímax do filme é uma batalha sangrenta, desequilibrada e que expõe a componente mais sobrenatural do filme, com exibição de muitas das *disciplines* dos vampiros. Uma das coisas que ocorre ao longo do *megaplot* que percorre os 13 romances, é que quando a sobrevivência está em questão, formam-se as parcerias mais improváveis. Neste script, o exemplo é a equipa Benison/Julius que, num momento estão prestes a lutar entre si até à destruição, mas perante o ataque massivo do *Sabbat*, decidem lutar costas com costas pela sobrevivência, não só deles, mas dos seus.

O terceiro acto é também o momento de revelação, em que Hazimel se revela a Leopold, que encontra The Eye. E tal como tinha acontecido antes, cada revelação levanta mais perguntas mas, neste momento, Leopold começa a descobrir o poder deste artefacto mágico e a deixar-se corromper por ele. É também um momento de revelação para Parmenides, que não sabia exactamente o que Vykos pretendia com ele, percebe o plano engenhoso de Parmenides se fazer passar pelo falecido Ravenna, que servia Vykos, de modo que Parmenides passa a ser o guarda-costas pessoal, disfarçado de humano, de Vykos, que o ajudará a destruir os poderosos Tremere, à medida que as forças do *Sabbat* avançam sobre as cidades da *Camarilla*.

O *script* consegue manter um certo equilíbrio entre os três actos, sendo que este último é o mais pequeno, mas também o mais intenso em termo de acção. O rácio que os que se ocupam das narrativas cinematográficas, como McKee ou Dancyger, sugerem para gerir os três actos é o 1:2:1, sendo o desenvolvimento o dobro da introdução e conclusão que, de forma aproximada, foi mantido.

4.8.1 Os ciclos do script

Uma vez terminada a primeira versão do *script*, o argumentista pode usar várias formas para o melhorar. Uma forma simples, é deixar o *script* repousar por algum tempo, de forma que a história deixe de estar tão presente na sua cabeça, e o seu julgamento volte a ser mais imparcial. Os *feedbacks* preciosos de pessoas aptas a ler guiões de longas metragens também se revelaram uma grande ajuda. Por exemplo, o caso de um desses *feedbacks* que resultou numa adição importante ao guião, em que foi apontado que o jogo da não linearidade podia não estar claro e ser confuso. Nomeadamente, o facto de se recuar no tempo para acompanhar o *Sabbat*, regressar ao presente para acompanhar a *Camarilla*, para mais tarde o passado apanhar o presente e a história se desenrolar de forma linear. A solução encontrada foi a adição de uma pequena história paralela, que envolvia uma pequena aranha que construía a sua teia durante o período de dias em que todo o filme se desenrolava. Assim, olhando para a evolução da construção da teia, permitiria-nos saber em que fase do filme estaríamos. Então as cenas da pequena aranha foram inseridas no *step outline*, de maneira a que o mecanismo fosse usado o menor número de vezes possível com o máximo de eficácia, sendo depois expandido e adicionado ao *script*.

Um das componentes que sofreram mais alterações foram os diálogos, como era de prever. O uso de diálogo original foi privilegiado, embora bastante editado. Mas muitos diálogos originais da primeira versão entraram em conflito com cenas posteriores, de modo que foram, progressivamente, sendo revistos e melhorados. Os diálogos seguiam uma lista de conceitos do WoD, que o argumentista tinha como guia para que não fosse incluída informação demais, tocando apenas nos conceitos nucleares de *Vampire the Masquerade*. Por exemplo, conceitos privilegiados no diálogos foram os de *Masquerade*, *Elysium*, *Camarilla*, *Sabbat*, *sire*, *clan*, etc. Os conceitos que foram omitidos dos diálogos podem-se exemplificar por *Anarch*, *Gehenna*, *diablerie*, *primogen*, etc. Estes conceitos podem ser esclarecido em *Lexicon* nos Anexos.

Num primeiro ciclo, algumas partes cómicas dos romances foram retiradas para não prejudicar o tom mais sombrio do filme, mas depois de terminada a primeira abordagem ao *script*, verificou-se que lhe dava uma respiração, dado os momentos de suspense bastante longos. Por exemplo, quando Leopold visita a mansão de Hannah e tropeça no velho mordomo, em função do nervosismo que o meio ambiente lhe causava. Outro exemplo, é o de Marcus que, ao subir as escadas para as galerias do museu, tenta manter-se silencioso, quando Delona, que o seguia, não resiste a perguntar-lhe o que ele vê. Marcus responde instintivamente com uma estalada desajeitada, mas esta sai com mais força do que ele pretendia e Delona cai 4 andares de escadas.

Desenvolveu-se o *script*, de modo a que este se assemelhe, o mais possível, a um projecto de uma longa-metragem. Foi assumido que ir além disto seria especular e não jogar com as cartas todas. Ou seja, o trabalho do argumentista só poderia continuar quando, com o passar do tempo, este relesse o *script*, e se apercebesse de coisas que não tinha visto antes. Mas não existe o tempo necessário. O argumentista poderia continuar também quando um novo *feedback* apontasse novas revisões a ser feitas. Mas não é fácil conseguir pessoas interessadas em ler um *script* de cerca de 100 páginas em inglês, muito menos, alguém que entenda a função do *script* no desenvolvimento de um projecto cinematográfico e seja capaz de elaborar uma crítica útil para o seu autor. A falta das parcerias seguintes, como os actores, o realizador, o produtor, impossibilita o argumentista de ajustar o *script* às limitações do contexto de produção. Deste modo, os ciclos do *script*, desenvolvidos pelo argumentista chegam

ao fim. No entanto, é comum o argumentista continuar a trabalhar durante a pré-produção e mesmo produção do filme. Os percalços de rodagem, os cortes financeiros de última hora, as condições atmosféricas, os caprichos do realizador ou a súbita doença do actor principal, são sempre motivos para iniciar um novo ciclo ao script, reescrevendo, de modo a dar resposta aos obstáculos que se criam à realização do projecto. Mas muitas vezes, estas reformulações resultam em momentos de improviso com consequências positivas para o filme. O exemplo é o caso de *Atonement* (2007), em que, por questões de produção, uma cena na praia, que envolvia centenas de figuração em roupas de época, equipamento militar, e muita logística complexa, tinha que ser gravada em apenas um dia. O argumentista Christopher Hampton teve que, num novo ciclo de reescrita do seu *script*, compactar um capítulo inteiro do romance de Ian McEwan, que descrevia a retirada dos soldados ingleses de França no início da Segunda Guerra Mundial. O resultado foi um magnífico plano de *steadycam* com cerca de 5 minutos onde o *mood* e a essência do capítulo do romance, a que se referia, estava concentrado e apresentado de forma mais intensa.

Difícilmente podemos dizer que os ciclos do guião chegaram ao fim, antes da edição final estar feita e o filme pronto a ir para a correcção de cor e pós-produção de som.

CAPÍTULO 5: CONCLUSÕES

5.1 Considerações finais

Ao chegar ao fim do processo de desenvolvimento do argumento, o argumentista reflecte se sobre o sucesso do seu ponto de vista enquanto autor, sobre se o filme se encaixa no espaço distópico que procurava e sobre a linha narrativa que pensava ser a mais indicada. A resposta é positiva para os três pontos. Esta reflexão procura, também, destapar as várias camadas do argumento e encontrar esta relação com a ideia inicial. *World of Darkness – The Fall of Atlanta*, pertence, de facto, a uma família de filmes distópicos que se encontram espalhados por toda a história do cinema, casos como, *Metropolis* (1927), *Blade Runner* (1982), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Matrix* (1999), *Minority Report* (2002), *Robocop* (1987), *Sin City* (2005), *V for Vendetta* (2006), *The Truman Show* (1998), *I am Legend* (2007), *Tron* (1982), etc.

Se olharmos para um primeiro nível, o argumento desenvolvido trata, sim, de vampiros, seres imortais com poderes fantásticos que estão envolvidos numa *Jihad*, a guerra eterna entre estes, pelo poder e supremacia, em que os mais antigos e poderosos usam os outros como peões num tabuleiro de xadrez. À semelhança da nossa situação actual, no mundo real, em que a maioria está subordinada à elite económica e política dominante mas minoritária. Ser imortal não significa ser indestrutível, e fazer parte do WoD enquanto vampiro é tão semelhante como ser mortal no nosso mundo. Num segundo nível, podemos dizer que se pratica, constantemente, um jogo de sobrevivência contra as forças opressoras que são, muitas vezes, invisíveis e não compreensíveis numa lógica humana. A estratégia de construção da narrativa montada procura usar as personagens como indicadores de conhecimento sobre este outro mundo sombrio. Leopold que sabia quase tanto como um iniciante ao WoD. Victoria que, dentro do que sabia, explorava o seu sucesso, e do que não sabia, supunha o pior. Vykos, um artista entre os monstros, revelava que tudo deve ser questionado, nada é absoluto. E Hazimel que, por pensar, logo existe, e por existir faz parte da *nemesis* vampírica, um movimento de implosão entre os descendentes de Cain que procura acabar com os vampiros, conhecido por *Gehenna* no WoD.

Poderemos encontrar ainda outros níveis mas, estas camadas que o filme vai destapando, já não fazem mais parte do domínio do autor do argumento, como não farão parte do produtor e do realizador que implementem o projecto. É o público que faz essa leitura e é a ele que lhe compete aprofundar a análise do filme.

A verdade é que se aprende mais por necessidade, do que por obrigação. Este projecto foi um desafio interessante para o argumentista e a motivação era grande, pois o tema era familiar e do seu âmbito de interesse. Em função das necessidades levantadas ao longo do processo de desenvolvimento do argumento, o argumentista conseguiu pôr em prática muitos dos conhecimentos teóricos que recolheu dos manuais de narrativas, das aulas de mestrado, anteriormente, mas que não estavam completamente sedimentados. O mais complicado foi sem dúvida gerir a quantidade de informação que o WoD fornecia à partida. A tarefa inicial de ler os 13 romances da saga *clan novel* foi hercúlea, estendendo-se ao longo de vários meses, em que o processo não podia ficar parado, desenvolvendo-se em paralelo, o estudo sobre a

família de filmes a que o produto final acabou por pertencer. Foram vistos e revistos muitos filmes, mais do que previsto, pois o que acontece, muitas vezes, é que um primeiro visionamento permite desfrutar do filme, mais do que o analisar à luz do que pretendemos retirar dele. Outra das dificuldades foi o isolamento a que o argumentista se submeteu. Existem várias razões para isso acontecer, mas não foi a dimensão do trabalho ou a língua inglesa os principais factores, mas sim o tema do WoD. Enquanto todas as pessoas frequentam o cinema, e ao longo da sua vida visionam centenas, se não milhares, de filmes, falar do conceito de RPG *pen&paper* é ainda muito estranho, para a grande maioria, que não compreende o conceito de *Roleplaying Game*. Apesar de um bom domínio do tema, por parte do argumentista, a exposição, ou o *pitching* de uma ideia de filme sobre este tema, necessitava um excelente orador. E, claramente, a falta dessa fluidez de discurso, inicialmente, sobre o WoD, isolou o argumentista num mundo em que só ele sabia do que se estava a falar.

Para entender o processo de adaptação cinematográfica, foi essencial a análise de filmes resultantes de adaptações, durante a fase inicial do curso de mestrado, que o argumentista frequenta. Adaptações mais livres, como o caso de *Million Dollar Baby*, ou mais próximas da obra original como em *Atonement*, solidificaram os conhecimentos sobre como se relaciona o argumentista com o realizador, como evolui o argumento, como cada projecto requer uma estratégia diferente e como cada argumentista funde o seu método de trabalho com as necessidades do projecto.

Esta foi uma das razões da escolha da longa-metragem e de um tema tão complexo, de modo a garantir uma maior aprendizagem, consequência de um nível de exigência maior, de modo a tirar mais partido do curso e do projecto final, em particular.

5.2 Limitações do projecto

As limitações abordadas neste ponto são, essencialmente, a dois níveis, em relação ao tema e, em relação ao processo de adaptação em si. O tema poderia ter sido melhor desenvolvido se o processo fosse acompanhado pelos autores dos romances, pois teriam um olhar diferente, mais profundo sobre a obra, muito útil para o argumentista. Mas como estamos a falar de dois escritores norte americanos, a distância, a dificuldade de os contactar, e a urgência dos prazos a cumprir, impossibilitou essa contribuição.

O processo de adaptação está limitado no sentido em que o argumento iria naturalmente sofrer mais mutações, evoluindo em novos ciclos, caso se iniciasse um processo de pré-produção do filme. O processo de produção iria remexer também e, sem dúvida que, na pós-produção, a narrativa seria modificada. Portanto, não existindo, por agora, uma possibilidade de implementação do meio cinematográfico, o argumento fica limitado ao trabalho do argumentista.

Esta história foi limitada, à partida, aos dois primeiros romances da saga, uma decisão que pressupôs uma continuidade da história em outros argumentos de longa-metragem, permitindo que este primeiro volume deixasse muitas coisas em aberto. Estas perguntas levantadas neste primeiro argumento são, de facto, limitações no sentido em que não existia espaço para as responder sem cair num registo demasiado expositivo. Torna-se assim uma responsabilidade da saga de filmes responder a estas limitações, gerindo o processo de exposição de filme para filme. Estamos a falar de questões como qual a origem dos 13 *clans* de vampiros? Qual a lenda por detrás do artefacto Eye of Hazimel? O que é e como se materializa a *Gehenna*? Quais as

consequências do acordar de Hazimel e como este vai influenciar as personagens que possuam o Eye?

É evidente que jogar com as expectativas, seleccionando o que revelar ao público de filme para filme, faz parte do sucesso da saga e o argumentista deve preocupar-se também com este aspecto. O cinema não é apenas arte e entretenimento, é um negócio, e começa no argumentista a responsabilidade de o tornar rentável, gerindo a criação dos *scripts* por forma a equilibrar a saga. Mas do ponto de vista de produção, podemos dizer que o projecto não estava limitado, pois o argumentista estava a trabalhar sem cliente, sem um produtor que lhe desse referências do ponto de vista orçamental, por exemplo. Esta liberdade tem reflexo na descrição das cenas que são potencialmente caras em termos de produção mas que não havendo ainda essa preocupação, não limitam artisticamente o argumentista.

5.3 Melhorias ao trabalho desenvolvido

Existem diversas ferramentas que o argumentista pode usar, caso tenha essa possibilidade, para tentar melhorar, testar e analisar o seu trabalho. Uma medida a ser tomada seria a contratação de um *script doctor*, alguém com a formação adequada em narrativas que, iria ajudar a rescrever e a polir o *script*, pois esse é o seu trabalho. A falta de verbas impossibilitou a contratação.

Uma outra ferramenta seria a utilização de sessões de leitura com actores profissionais para simular as cenas com diálogos mais intensas, analisando como funcionam e se se manifestam da forma esperada. A falta de tempo e de disponibilidade para organizar estas sessões impossibilitou a sua realização.

Uma medida que não seria tipicamente encontrada nos manuais de narrativas cinematográficas, mas que na opinião do argumentista ajudaria especialmente com as cenas de acção, seria a possibilidade de ter a banda sonora ainda durante o processo de desenvolvimento do *script*. É fácil entender que o ritmo impresso às cenas de acção varia em função da realização, mas a música acaba por ter uma palavra a dizer neste aspecto. Caso já houvesse uma decisão tomada em relação à banda sonora, um compositor específico que já tivesse música de referência para determinados momentos, o argumentista poderia rescrever com esse apoio extra, visionando melhor como se materializaria a cena, facilitando o trabalho posterior do realizador. Ainda dentro do tema da utilidade da música para o argumento, seria interessante acrescentar um detalhe à caracterização de personagens que, os jogadores RPG frequentemente utilizam, associando músicas às personagens. Cada personagem fica com um *mood* que vem da sua música, transmite uma ideia mais forte quando conjugamos a sua caracterização e um som que transmite emoções ou enfatiza a descrição que estamos a ler sobre a mesma.

Uma melhoria que foi parcialmente implementada foi a recolha das opiniões de jogadores do RPG *Vampire the Masquerade* que lidam com as personagens desta saga nos seus jogos e conhecem, muitas vezes, de forma profunda cada uma, para as poderem interpretar. Foi valorizada, especialmente, a opinião de um *storyteller* português que joga RPGs há cerca de 10 anos e conhece bem personagens como Victoria Ash, Sascha Vykos ou Francisco Domingo de Polonia. Mas para ter um efeito mais produtivo, vários *storytellers* teriam que contribuir e analisar se o comportamento das personagens que estes conhecem tão bem no plano dos jogos RPG, se mantém coerentes no plano cinematográfico. Isto é importante também para prever como reagirá a base de fãs de VTM, ou seja, se considerarmos que depois de

muitos ciclos de reescrita do *script*, a personagem Sascha Vykos pode ter perdido atributos que fazem parte das expectativas de quem a conhece da ficção e dos jogos, não se trata mais de defender um ponto de vista autoral sobre esta. Como já foi analisado em 3.1 no capítulo Enquadramento Teórico, a questão da fidelidade não é o problema, mas o que pode acontecer é que já não é a mesma personagem e o melhor será mudar-lhe o nome assumindo esse facto.

As melhorias têm, essencialmente, que ver com o auxílio ao trabalho do argumentista, agilizando o processo e solidificando as decisões tomadas. Ao entrar em fase de pré-produção o *script* tem que forçosamente sofrer algumas destas melhorias, visto que quando se pretende levar um projecto para a frente, que potencialmente envolve muito dinheiro, pretende-se que esteja o melhor possível. Portanto, tudo o que foi desenvolvido fez parte da responsabilidade do argumentista e foi o que o contexto de desenvolvimento do *script* permitiu.

5.4 Perspectivas de trabalho futuro

Todo trabalho desenvolvido durante este processo de adaptação permitiu ganhar uma destreza na manipulação dos conteúdos da saga *clan novel* de *Vampire the Masquerade*. A perspectiva de trabalho futuro, do ponto de vista da continuação da saga, significa prever como os outros 11 livros da saga poderão ser utilizados para escrever as longas metragens seguintes. Como já foi referido anteriormente, cada livro representa um ponto de vista de um dos 13 *clans* de vampiros sobre a história global. Dos dois primeiros, *clan novel 1: Toreador*, e *clan novel 2: Tzimisce*, resultou um script de longa metragem com o subtítulo *The Fall of Atlanta*, pois este é o principal evento dos dois livros, sendo que, o primeiro romance, o explora do ponto de vista da *Camarilla*, seguindo duas personagens do *clan Torador*, Leopold e Victoria. O segundo romance explora a história do ponto de vista do Sabbath, dando realce a membros do *clan Tzimisce*, como Sascha Vykos, Marcus, Bolon, etc. Este é o filme de introdução do *World of Darkness*, é o capítulo da saga de filmes onde acontece o *inciting incident* do *megaplot*, a batalha de Atlanta. Vamos agora entrar na parte do desenvolvimento do *megaplot*, onde a história se ramifica, tornando mais complexa a organização da saga de filmes. Para simplificar a explicação seguinte, vamos listar as *clan novels*:

Clan novel 1: Toreador

Clan novel 2: Tzimisce

Clan novel 3: Gangrel

Clan novel 4: Setite

Clan novel 5: Ventrue

Clan novel 6: Lasombra

Clan novel 7: Assamite

Clan novel 8:Ravnos

Clan novel 9: Malkavian

Clan novel 10: Giovanni

Clan novel 11: Brujah

Clan novel 12: Tremere

Clan novel 13: Nosferatu

Analisando os 3 romances seguintes à nossa adaptação, a *clan novel 3: Gangrel*, está pouco relacionada com a *clan novel 4: Setite*, mas tem uma forte relação com a *clan novel 5: Ventrue* e com a *clan novel 8: Ravnos*. Seguindo uma abordagem em função

da relação de proximidade entre os romances, visto que a linearidade temporal não é cumprida, como foi exemplificado pela tabela 1, a longa-metragem seguinte pode debruçar-se sobre a história da *clan novel 3: Gangrel*, seguindo a história de uma recém transformada vampira, Ramona, que segue uma mortal por quem tem uma forte atração. Mas esta jovem está nos planos de Leopold e do Eye of Hazimel. As consequências de Ramona ter atraído muitos membros do *clan Gangrel* para lutar com este monstro Leopold e o seu “olho do poder”, têm repercussões na *clan novel 5: Ventrue*, onde Xavier, líder do *clan Gangrel* revela aos outros representantes da *Camarilla* que um possível *antediluvian* destruiu os seus *clanmates* e que a *Camarilla* precisa de se unir para fazer oposição a este monstro. A única sobrevivente do *clan Gangrel*, exceptuando Xavier, foi Ramona, que escapou ao poder que Leopold soltou nas montanhas do norte de Nova Iorque destruindo dezenas de Kindreds. A sua sede de vingança continua na *clan novel 8: Ravnos*, onde se junta a um vampiro chamado Khalil Ravana do *clan Ravnos*, e procuram Leopold e o Eye of Hazimel. Ainda do ponto de vista da proximidade, a *clan novel 4: Setite* desenvolve uma parte da história que tem um forte seguimento na *clan novel 8: Ravnos*, relacionando a personagem Heshu Ruhadze com Khalil Ravana quando ambos se encontram em Calcutá e se entende que o Eye of Hazimel está na agenda de ambos, por diferentes razões. Heshu procura o Eye porque é dos poucos que sabe que se trata de um artefacto mágico com um poder inestimável e Khalil porque é assombrado pelo próprio Hazimel, membro do seu próprio *clan* que pretende recuperar o Eye de Leopold. Portanto na melhor estimativa possível será uma longa metragem que trabalhe os conteúdos da *clan novel 3: Gangrel* e *clan novel 5: Ventrue*, debruçando-se sobre a *Camarilla* e outra longa-metragem que se preocupe com a *clan novel 4: Setite* e *clan novel 8: Ravnos*, debruçando-se sobre os *Independents*.

Analisando a *clan novel 6: Lasombra* e a *clan novel 7: Assamite*, percebe-se que há uma ligação semelhante à dos dois primeiros romances adaptados neste trabalho. A janela temporal é bastante parecida e as personagens nucleares, desta parte do *megaplot*, são as mesmas em ambos os romances: Lucita, Fatima Al-Faquadi e Luis Ambrosio de Monçada. O ênfase desta estimativa de adaptação será dividido entre o *Sabbat* e os *Independents*.

A *clan novel 9: Malkavian*, é um caso complicado, pois é como que um capítulo de reflexão sobre todos os outros romances. Ou seja, a personagem de Anatole, do *clan Malkavian*, tem visões ao longo do romance todo, onde revê de forma metafórica todo o desenvolvimento do *megaplot*. As personagens principais são, normalmente, representadas por animais ou objectos, e, através do ponto de vista de Anatole, juntamos várias peças, situações, relembramos e revivemos toda a história através do seu olhar particular. Está relacionado com todos os romances que o precedem de alguma forma. Por exemplo, explica o que aconteceu com o Prince Benison que desapareceu no final da *clan novel 2: Tzimisce*, responde, finalmente, à pergunta com que Leopold se debateu durante a *clan novel 1: Toreador*, Victoria é mesmo a *sire* dele, dá uma nova leitura à escultura grotesca que Leopold desenvolveu na *clan novel 3: Gangrel*, os exemplos são inúmeros mas o importante a realçar é que faz uma transição para uma nova fase do *megaplot*, o desenvolvimento termina e começa a conclusão. Portanto, estima-se que este romance sozinho ocuparia uma longa metragem dada a sua complexidade.

O caso da *clan novel Giovanni*, é um dos mais afastados do *megaplot*, sendo que se abolirmos a história que acompanha as personagens de Chas e Isabel Giovanni, não perderíamos nada em relação à história principal. A única relação que poderíamos encontrar é o facto de Leopold destruir Benito Giovanni, algures numa casa de banho

de uma bomba de gasolina no deserto de Nevada, Las Vegas. Mas esta cena não tem explicação de qualquer natureza, nem nos romances anteriores nem nos seguintes. Portanto, esta *clan novel* seria posta de fora da saga de filmes por falta de proximidade com a história principal, que acompanha a guerra *Sabbat/Camarilla* e a evolução do *plot* do *Eye of Hazimel*.

Relativamente à *clan novel 11: Brujah*, podemos concluir que se trata de um romance que trabalha as relações lealdade/rebelião, relação-amizade/relação-profissional, desejo/dever. Com um elenco muito numeroso, apesar de centrar as atenções em Theo Bell, a história dá atenção a muitas personagens de relevo para o *plot*, que trata a guerra pela costa este americana, como o *Ventrue* Jan Pieterzoon, o *Nosferatu* Colchester e mesmo a *Justicar Ventrue* Lucinde. Dado o volume de acção, de desenvolvimento útil para a história, e de um bom trabalho a gerir várias personagens de peso, este romance merece ser adaptado para um só argumento de longa metragem.

Embora a *clan novel 11: Brujah*, já faça parte da zona de resolução da saga de romances, são as últimas duas *clan novels* que, de facto, nos esclarecem quanto as questões mais importantes levantadas durante os anteriores romances, e, não totalmente, fecham a história. A *clan novel 12: Tremere*, apesar de se ocupar bastante com o *clan* em questão, consegue ligar as histórias dos seus três protagonistas, o *ghoul Tallbott*, o *antitribu Nikolai* e a *Regent* do *Chantry of the Five Burroughs*, Aisling Sturbridge, com o *plot* de Leopold e o *Eye of Hazimel*, e o *plot* da guerra entre *sects*. Este olhar clarificador para estas histórias principais do *megaplot*, serve de maneira eficaz, a última *clan novel 13: Nosferatu* que, de modo geral, resolve a história. Ao longo de todos os romances, cenas com um *Nosferatu* em particular, Calebros, indicavam que a sua rede de espiões lhe estavam a fornecer relatórios sobre o que se estava a passar praticamente em todo o lado, permitindo-lhe montar o puzzle que constitui o *megaplot* desta saga. Neste romance final, apoiamo-nos em Calebros para que ele relacione todos os eventos e lhes dê um sentido, nos ajude a entender como se resolve a história. Tendo em conta isto, os dois últimos romances constituem o conteúdo onde o filme final, que fechará a saga de longas metragens, irá procurar inspiração e as respostas necessárias para todas as questões levantadas anteriormente na saga.

Fazendo uma retrospectiva, todos os romances procuram falar sobre algo diferente, dentro do *megaplot*, jogando com as histórias paralelas dos diversos protagonistas. Por exemplo, a *clan novel 3: Gangrel* fala sobre um amor perdido, a *clan novel 4: Setite* procura explorar a mentira, a manipulação e a traição, a *clan novel 6: Lasombra* trata a agonia e o sofrimento de uma relação irresistível mas impossível, a *clan novel 11: Brujah* trabalha sobre o que devemos fazer e o que achamos que deve ser feito, assumindo as consequências da escolha. Em algumas o *plot* da guerra *Sabbat/Camarilla* está mais desenvolvido, noutros o *plot* do *Eye of Hazimel*, tem mais destaque mas, quanto mais se afastam destes *plots* principais, seguindo outros *sub-plots* paralelos, menos interesse têm para a saga de filmes que se pretende desenvolver. Este é uma das principais atenções que futuros argumentistas terão que ter em relação as suas adaptações. Se olharmos para a *storyline* do argumento desenvolvido para a adaptação dos dois primeiros romances, percebe-se que a chave para a saga está nestes dois *plots* principais, a guerra entre os *sects* e o artefacto mágico que pode mudar o mundo dos vampiros.

CAPÍTULO 6: REFERÊNCIAS

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ANEXOS

Lexicon

Excerto do rulebook *Vampire the Masquerade*, páginas 59-61.

Even so, the Kindred attempt to foil or aid the Jyhad as they see their roles coming to critical culmination. The millennial tension that plagues the planet is certainly a precursor to the coming apocalypse, and the Final Nights are upon us. Unless....

LEXICON

The Kindred have their own dialect of specialized words and phrases. Vampires have a tremendous capacity for double-talk; what they say often means something other than its literal interpretation, or something in addition to its simple meaning. Certain words have evolved new connotations among the Damned, while others are unique to vampires and their society. The Kindred, set in their ways as they are, are loath to adopt new manners of speech or slang, and one can often determine a rough estimation of a vampire's age by listening to the individual words she chooses.

COMMON PARLANCE

These words are in common use among all echelons of Kindred society.

Anarch: A Kindred rebel who opposes the tyranny of elders. Anarchs wish to redistribute the wealth and resources of a city equitably among the vampires therein. Naturally, the elders oppose this, having cultivated their influence for centuries.

Barrens, The: The areas of a city unfit for life, including graveyards, abandoned buildings, industrial wastelands and areas of irreversible urban blight.

Becoming, The: The moment one passes from being a fledgling into "full" vampire status. One may not Become until her sire deems her ready and gains the prince's approval.

Book of Nod, The: A loose collection of Kindred legendry and history. *The Book of Nod* chronicles the origin of the Kindred, though it has never been published in its entirety. Fragments of the document and its many partial transcriptions circulate among certain strata of Kindred society.

Beast, The: The inchoate drives and urges that threaten to turn a vampire into a mindless, ravaging monster.

Blood: A vampire's heritage; that which makes a vampire a vampire. Usage: *I doubt her claims to such esteemed Blood.*

Blood Bond: A mystical power over another individual engendered by partaking of a particular vampire's blood thrice; accepting blood from a vampire is an acknowledgment of her mastery.

Caitiff: A vampire of unknown clan, or of no clan at all. Caitiff are typically of high generation, where Caine's blood dilutes too greatly to pass any consistent characteristics.

Camarilla, The: A sect of vampires devoted primarily to maintaining the Traditions, particularly that of the Masquerade.

Childe: A vampire created through the Embrace — the childe is the progeny of her sire. This term is often used derogatorily, indicating inexperience. Plural *childer*.

Clan: A group of vampires who share common characteristics passed on by the Blood. There are 13 known clans, all of which were reputedly founded by members of the Third Generation.

Coterie: A small group or "pack" of Kindred, united by the need for support and sometimes common interests.

Diablerie: The consumption of another Kindred's blood, to the point of the victim's Final Death. Vampires of high generation may lower their generation through this practice; particularly old Kindred have such rarefied tastes that mortal blood no longer sustains them, and they *must* consume vampire blood.

Domain: An area of a particular vampire's influence. Princes claim entire cities as their domains, sometimes allowing lesser vampires to claim domain within.

Elder: A vampire who has experienced three or more centuries of unlife. Elders are the most active participants in the Jyhad.

Elysium: A place where vampires may gather and discourse without fear of harm. Elysium is commonly established in opera houses, theaters, museums and other locations of culture.

Embrace, The: The act of transforming a mortal into a vampire. The Embrace requires the vampire to drain her victim and then replace that victim's blood with a bit of her own.

Fledgling: A newly created vampire, still under her sire's protection.

Generation: The number of "steps" between a vampire and the mythical Caine; how far descended from the First Vampire a given vampire is.

Gehenna: The imminent Armageddon when the Antediluvians will rise from their torpor and devour the race of Kindred and the world.

Ghoul: A minion created by giving a bit of vampiric vitae to a mortal without draining her of blood first (which would create a vampire instead).

Haven: A vampire's "home"; where she finds sanctuary from the sun.

Hunger, The: The urge to feed, as with any living creature. For vampires, however, the Hunger replaces all other drives with its own powerful call.

Inconnu: A sect of vampires who have removed themselves from Kindred concerns and, largely, the Jyhad. Many Methuselahs are rumored to exist among the Inconnu.

Jyhad, The: The secret, self-destructive war waged between the generations. Elder vampires manipulate their lessers, using them as pawns in a terrible game whose rules defy comprehension.

Kindred: The race of vampires as a whole, or a single vampire. According to rumor, this term came about in the 15th or 16th century, after the Great Anarch Revolt. Sabbat vampires scorn the term.

Kiss, The: To drink blood, especially from a mortal. The Kiss causes feelings of ecstasy in those who receive it.

Lupine: A werewolf, the natural and mortal enemy of the vampire race.

Lush: A vampire who typically feeds from drugged or drunk mortals in order to experience their inebriation.

Life, The: A euphemism for mortal blood. Many Kindred regard this term as affected and effete.

Man, The: The mote of humanity that a vampire maintains; the spark of mortality that distinguishes him from the Beast.

Masquerade, The: The habit (or Tradition) of hiding the existence of vampires from humanity. Designed to protect the Kindred from destruction at the hands of mankind, the Masquerade was adopted after the Inquisition claimed many Kindred unlivens.

Prince: A vampire who has claimed a given expanse of domain as her own, particularly a city, and supports that claim against all others. The term can refer to a Kindred of either sex.

Rogue: A vampire who feeds upon the vitae of other Kindred, out of necessity or depravity.

Sabbat, The: A sect of vampires that rejects humanity, embracing their monstrous natures. The Sabbat is bestial and violent, preferring to lord over mortals rather than hide from them.

Sect: A group of Kindred arguably united under a common philosophy. The three most widely known sects currently populating the night are the Camarilla, the Inconnu and the Sabbat.

Sire: A vampire's "parent"; the Kindred who created her.

Vessel: A source of vitae for sustenance or pleasure, primarily mortal.

OLD FORM

The elders typically use these turns of phrase, which have existed since long before the modern nights. One is advised to use these words carefully — in some company, their use may be seen as humorously anachronistic, while in the company of anarchists, for example, they may be misconstrued as the elders' propaganda.

Amaranth: The act of consuming another Kindred's blood (q.v. *Diablerie*).

Ancilla: A "proven" vampire, between the elders and the neonates.

Antediluvian: A member of the dreaded Third Generation, one of the eldest Kindred in existence.

Archon: A vampire in the retinue of a justicar. Archons are generally nomadic in nature, frequently pursuing Kindred who have fled to avoid persecution at the hands of the Camarilla.

Autarkis: A Kindred who remains outside the larger vampire society of a given city and often refuses to acknowledge the claim of a prince.

Blood Oath: The blood bond (*vide*).

Cainite: A vampire; a member of the race of Caine.

Canaille: The bovine masses of humanity, especially the uncultured and unsavory. The Canaille are viewed primarily as a source of sustenance.

Cauchemar: A vampire who feeds exclusively on sleeping victims.

Consanguineous: Literally, "of the same blood," especially with reference to lineage. Usage: *That vampire is consanguineous of Hardestadt the Elder, his childe.*

Cunctator: A vampire who avoids killing when delivering the Kiss; one who takes so little blood as to avoid bringing about her prey's death.

Domitor: A ghouls' master; one who feeds her blood and issues her commands.

Footpad: One who feeds from derelicts and other chaff of society. Footpads are frequently debased and may not maintain permanent havens.

Gentry: A Kindred who preys at nightclubs, bars and other establishments of the "red-light district," where mortals engage in reverie.

Golconda: A fabled state of vampiric transcendence; the true mastery of the Beast and balance of opposing urges and principles. Rumored to be similar to mortal Nirvana, Golconda is greatly touted but rarely achieved.

Humanitas: The extent to which a Kindred still maintains her humanity.

Kine: A term for mortals, largely contemptuous. The phrase *Kindred and kine* refers to the world at large; everything.

Leech: A human who drinks vampire blood, yet acknowledges no master.

Lextalionis: The code of the Kindred and the system for punishing transgression. It suggests Hammurabian or Biblical justice — an eye for an eye, and punishment in keeping with the grievance.

Lineage: A vampire's bloodline; the Kindred's sire, sire's sire, etc.

Methuselah: A vampire who has existed for a millennium or more; an elder who no longer exists among the greater whole of Kindred society. Methuselahs are rumored to hail from the Fourth and Fifth Generations.

Neonate: A young Kindred, recently Embraced.

Osiris: A vampire who builds a mortal cult around himself, in the interests of gaining sustenance. As the millennium approaches and passes, Osiris cults become increasingly common.

Papillon: The red-light district; the area of town punctuated by drinking establishments, brothels, gambling houses and other locales of ill repute. The prime hunting grounds of a city, where the disappearance of mortals goes hand in hand with the area's general seediness.

Progeny: All of a given vampire's childer, collectively. Less formal, and less flattering, is *Get*.

Praxis: The right of princes to govern; the prince's claim to domain. This term also refers to the prince's matters of policy and individual edicts and motions.

Primogen: The leaders in a given city; its ruling body of elders, typically composed of one member from each clan present in a city.

Regnant: A Kindred who holds a blood bond over another.

Retainer: A human who serves a vampiric master. This term is almost archaic, referring to a time when vampires kept vast entourages of mortal servants as part of their estates.

Siren: A vampire who seduces mortals in order to drink from them, and then only takes a small quantity of blood, so as to avoid killing them.

Suspire: The rumored epiphany experienced just prior to the attainment of Golconda.

Third Mortal: Caine, who was cast out and became the First Vampire.

Thrall: A vampire under the effects of a blood bond, having drunk another Kindred's blood thrice.

Vitae: Blood.

Whelp: A derogatory term for a young Kindred, originally used with exclusive reference to one's own progeny.

Wight: Human; man; a mortal.

Witch-hunter: A mortal who searches out and destroys vampires.

Whig: A contemptuous term for a vampire who possesses an interest in mortal trends and fashions.

VULGAR ARGOT

These terms are slang, the modern equivalents of older turns of phrase which have fallen out of favor due to their association with the elder ranks. These words carry great connotation, as they are associated with the younger Kindred, who seek to establish their own vampiric cultures.

Alleycat: A vampire who keeps no permanent haven, but sleeps in a different location each night. This term also refers to a Kindred who feeds exclusively from the homeless, vagrants and other elements of low society.

Banking: The practice of "withdrawing" blood from blood banks and hospital reserves. This blood has little taste, though it will sustain a vampire, and elder Kindred eschew this base indulgence. A Kindred who engages in this practice is known as a *Banker*.

Black Hand: Another name for the sect known as the Sabbat.

Blister: A vampire "Typhoid Mary" who contracts a mortal disease and spreads it to each vessel upon whom he feeds.

Bloodline: A vampire's heritage (q.v. *Lineage*).

Blood Doll: A mortal who freely gives her blood to a vampire. Most blood dolls gain a perverse satisfaction from the Kiss, and actively seek out vampires who will take their vitae.

Butterfly: One who mingles among the mortal high-society element and feeds exclusively from the famous and wealthy.

Casanova: A vampire who seduces mortals to take their blood, but does not kill them. Casanovas typically erase the

memory of their presence from their vessels' minds (q.v. *Cauchemar*).

Change, The: The moment an individual ceases to be a mortal and becomes one of the Kindred.

Damned, The: The race of Kindred; all vampires.

Donor: A sarcastic term for a vessel, typically human.

Farmer: A term of mockery for vampires who refuse to feed on human blood, instead taking sustenance from animals.

Fief: A sarcastic term for a vampire's domain or claim thereof, most commonly used in reference to a prince.

Head: A Kindred who feeds upon those who have imbibed alcohol or drugs, so as to vicariously experience the same sensations. Those Kindred who prefer individual drugs have their "poison" prefixed to the term head (e.g., crackhead, dopehead, smackhead).

Headhunter: A vampire who hunts and feeds from other Kindred (q.v. *Rogue*).

Juicebag: A contemptuous term for mortals, indicating that their sole use is for sustenance. Even more irreverent is the term *Bag*.

Lick: A vampire; one of the race of Kindred.

Rack, The: The hunting ground of choice, including bars, nightclubs, drug dens, whorehouses and other bacchanalian locales, where mortals go missing all the time (q.v. *Papillon*).

Rake: A habitual visitor to the Rack, especially in the interests of feeding (q.v. *Gentry*).

Sandman: A vampire who feeds upon sleeping victims only.

Slumming: The practice of feeding from derelicts, the homeless and other dregs of society; one who does this regularly is known as a *Slammer*.

Stalker: A mortal who hunts down and destroys Kindred (q.v. *Witch-hunter*).

Tease: A term for a female Casanova (*vide*).

Turf: A modern affectation used in reference to a domain; it may also refer to the area under a given gang's influence.

Vegetary: A term of contempt for one who drinks exclusively from animals (q.v. *Farmer*).

The World of Darkness – The Fall of Atlanta

Storyline: War has been raging between vampires from secret societies. Leopold tries to survive avoiding conflict. Victoria hopes to see all her opponents kill each other, leaving her the city. And Sascha Vykos leads his soldiers to war and victory. In the middle of the Atlanta battle, a magical and powerful artifact resurfaces and its destiny may well decide the fate of the immortals at war. Who will find it first?

Genres: Action, Fantasy, Thriller.

Plot Keywords: Vampire, Death, Blood, Sorcery, Supernatural, Clan, Powers, Legend, War, Art.

Synopsis: Mortals are “sheeps” in this World of Darkness, and its their lack of knowledge of the “wolf” that maintains their status.

Leopold is a neonate vampire that doesn't care to participate in the social games played by his peers. But his artistic abilities as a sculptor pull him towards the social event of the moment.

Victoria Ash, an older and cunning vampire, plots to rise in the hierarchy of the Camarilla. To achieve that, she organizes a Solstice Ball at the High Museum of Atlanta. Inviting specific Kindred with problematic relationships, she hopes to get the tensions high enough for them to fight each other and leave her to take control the city. The party develops as expected, with the guests enjoying the sculptures in the galleries and socializing with their kind. Leopold, the author of one of the pieces, tries to fit in this social event but tensions rise, when the problematic guests start arriving and meeting each other.

Meanwhile, a special transaction is happening during this event, when the magical artifact, “The Eye of Hazimel”, hidden in one of the sculptures, is used to pay a debt. The receiving party is advised to secretly flee the premises, not because of the issues among the guests but because of something bigger.

A few days earlier, the Sabbat had secretly installed itself behind enemy lines, in this Camarilla city. And gathering a massive battle force, devised plans to take the city. The event at the High Museum of Art provided a great opportunity to launch a full force attack, considering all the rotten eggs where all in the same basket.

A respectful member of the Sabbat, Sascha Vykos, is a very old and potent enemy of the Camarilla. Vykos is able to eliminate the dangerous sorcerous, Hannah, and with many allies in the war council, she incites the Sabbat soldiers to let their fury and violence fall upon their enemies and leads them to battle. The attack happens exactly at the time that Victoria's plans are becoming a reality. It is a bloodbath, since the Camarilla kindred were taken by surprise. Using powers of shadows, creating giant tentacles and with the help of monstrosities created for the event, called war-ghouls, the Sabbat crashed the opposition, leaving only a few survivors.

Meanwhile, the Eye of Hazimel is being carried out of the Museum when the carrier is intercepted by a Sabbat patrol and barely survives. In a last resort measure the vampire tries to use the Eye and its power, so it would enable him to survive. As a result, it awakens its real owner, the semi-God vampire Hazimel.

Leopold, miraculously survived the attack, but is badly injured and has lost a lot of blood. His desire of blood controls him and in frenzy, he sucks dry the new owner of the Eye of Hazimel. Coming to his senses, Leopold realizes he killed for survival and is seduced by the Eye and its power. Hazimel makes a mystical bond with Leopold and reveals to him that, together, they will change the destiny of their kind.

Step Outline

For the script:

The World of Darkness
The Fall of Atlanta

Ângelo González

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO -... p.1

Seq: Leopold's introduction

Leopold holds Michelle's naked body in his lap. She apparently is one of his models, given the sculpture studio, or could be simply a prostitute.

She has been bitten by Leopold, and to protect the Masquerade, he covers the traces of his vampirism using the healing powers of his saliva.

Then, he decides to take her upstairs.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT p.2

Seq: Leopold's introduction

Leopold realizes the sun is rising soon (common problem for vampires), so he hurries Michelle to the bedroom.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT p.2

p.2

Seq: Leopold's introduction

He is metodic, almost as if he has been doing for quite some time. He prepares a scene in the bedroom much like a last-night-party, and lays Michelle on the bed, then leaves.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO -... p.2

p.2

Seq: Leopold's introduction

Clearly he does not wish to share the mourning sun with his latest victim, who is left in the upstairs bedroom and he barrels himself in the basement.

EXT. CITY OF ATLANTA. - DAY p.2

p.2

Seq: The world of the living

Collection of scenes that locate the story in the modern ages, in the american city of Atlanta, and puts the mortals from the perspective of the hunter. They look fragile, distracted by their own lives, unaware of the evil that lives among them. But, they are a lot (hence the Masquerade). A spider starts working ona web, that later will be used to mark as time advances or goes back.

INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.3

p.3

Seq:Confession of an immortal

A woman (later recognized as Victoria Ash) is talking to a sleeping child and reflecting about her existence and the curse of vampirism. They are before the doors of Hell and Heaven in the High Museum of Art, but there's no information about that to this point, so the whole scene looks like a dream, a metaphor. The kid represents mortality, she represents the vampires, the doors represent the final judgement that both have to endure.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

p.3

Seq: Thelonious bate

Thomas, a ghoul of Thelonious, arrives at one of his hiding spots.

INT. STEEL MILL, STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

p.4

Seq: Thelonious bate

Thelonious reads the letter that, apparently, Benjamin sent, to invite him to the party in the High Museum of Art, that the prince will also attend.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO -... p.5

Seq: The artist in transe

Leopold is sculpting clay and the features of a woman form until he enters the state of shock.

INT. THE SKYLINE HOTEL, LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

p.5

Seq: Benjamin's bate

Benjamin reads the letter, apparently, from Thelonious, blackmailing him to go to the party at the Museum.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO -... p.5

Seq: Victoria's introduction

Leopold managed to sculpt a vampire for the first time, and not any vampire, but the object of his desire and doubts. Could this mean she is the sire he is searching for?

INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.6

Seq: The legend of Cain

Victoria appears once again with the boy, Aaron, near the artistic doors of Hell and Heaven. She shares with him the legend of Cain, the first vampire, that is partially exemplified in the doors of hell. In the end Victoria treats the story like pure fiction, nothing more than entertainment, she hopes.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT

p.7

Seq: Leopold visits Hannah

Leopold is facing Hannah's mansion, also known as the Tremere Chantry of Atlanta.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO -...

p.7

Seq: Flashback: Hannah's introduction

Hannah appears while Leopold is dealing with one of his victims, and she proposes to pose for him. She demonstrates her power by neutralizing the mortal present, even without moving one single movement. Leopold accepts to try to sculpt her but fails miserably. She leaves but offers her magic help for the future, when needed.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT

p.9

Seq: Leopold visits Hannah

Leopold introduces himself, as part of the Clan Toreador, and is welcomed to come inside the mansion.

INT. GREAT HALL, MANSION - NIGHT

p.10

Seq: Leopold visits Hannah - the maze in the mansion

The mansion is everything the cliché about the vampire wizzards would say, even the butler is the expected ghoul to have in a place like this. Leopold follows the old butler through an incredible maze of corridors and rooms, until he reaches the room where Hannah is expeting him.

INT. ARCANE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

p.12

Seq: Leopold visits Hannah - The ritual

Leopold watches an incredible magic ritual that Hannah performs and in the end he is lead to another room.

INT. OFFICE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

p.14

Seq: Leopold visits Hannah - the deal

Leopold and Hannah discuss his doubts about his sire identity, and Hannah says that she may be able to help him find him or her. But the price is to try again to sculpt her. As Leopold agrees to try, she poses naked for him at that precise moment, giving him enough time to memorize her bodylines.

Then she makes him drink a little vial of blood which was the result of the later ritual, so that in the next day's party she will finish the ritual and maybe uncover his sire's identity. He agrees to sculpt her and the deal is sealed.

INT. CAR, NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.20

Seq: Victoria's special glasses

Victoria is nearing the High Museum of art where her party is already going on. She uses her modified opera glasses to take a look through the windows that hide the imortals behind them.

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT p.21

Seq: A little spider at work

A spider continues its work on a street near the Museum. This event will in the future enable us to understand the advances or rewinds in time.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT p.21

Seq: Guests report pre party

At the arrival to the parking garage, Victoria inquires on of her ghouls about the presence of three particular guests. This conects her with Thelonious and Benjamin.

INT. 4TH FLOOR HIGH'S MUSEUM ART - NIGHT p.22

Seq: Victoria's "recieving guests game"

Victoria expects for guests in the porposefully hall between the elevator and tha museum galleries, divided by the doors of Hell and Heaven. The guests will have to choose in order for her to choose too. The two guests to arrive are Cyndy and Leopold. Cyndy, not very friendly with Victoria, choses Hell. Leopold, after a war welcom by the host of the party, also chooses the Hell doors. So by Victorias paranoid and inexplicable calculations she chooses heaven entry ti her party.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL, ATLANTA - NIGHT p.24

Seq: Polonia prepares for the war council

ACT II

This sabbat leader, prepares for the dangerous war council, showing a new side of the story, witch until then, was exclusively about Camarilla vampires.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.25

Seq: The party - Victoria arrives

The party is going as expected, Victoria is greeted by the Nosferatu present, Rolph.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.26

Seq: Stella meets Leopold

Stella finds her friend Leopold at the party. They talk about the sculptures, Leopold almost reveals that he can finally sculpt kindred but holds himself. Leopold tells Stella about the sculpture he made, and is exposed in the Museum. They talk about the Tremere clan and the Nosferato, revealing a few details more that characterize this two clans.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.28

Seq: Victoria meets Clarice

Victoria approaches Clarice while she is admiring one of the sculptures. Their conversation goes through the subject of the Masquerade and then the sculpture it self. Victoria notices Benjamin and Thelonious arrived and that Vogel is present in the party as well. She decides to spy on her guests with her special opera glasses. So she follows a conversation between Benjamin and Thelonious.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.30

Seq: Benjamin and Thelonious

Tension is high between the strong black men, motivated by the letters from earlier.

INT. SECRET SPACE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.31

Seq: Victoria spies Thelonious and Benjamin

She enjoys as her plan unfolds.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.31

Seq: Benjamin and Thelonious

Their conversation they reveal us their clans. Thelonious from the Brujah and Benjamin from Ventrue. They talk about the importance of the status of this place as "Elysium". They realize that both are mistaken, because it was a third person who sent the letters. Before they speculate further about the origins of the letter someone of importance arrives at the party.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.32

Seq: Prince Benison and his wife arrival

The arrival of the Prince Benison and his wife Eleanor, has diferent effects on the audience. Most pay respect, some ignore, but everyone acknowledges the royal entrance. Leopold and Stella see it from the distance. Two unlucky figures arrive just after the Prince and that causes Thelonious to laugh at the comical sight. The Prince, who was known to have some pending problems with Thelonious, gets furious. But for Victoria's plan to complete, they cannot fight yet, Julius still didnt arrive, so she calms the Prince down.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.35

Seq: Victoria meets Eleanor

They talk about Elysium and about their sect, the Camarilla.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.36

Seq: Victoria meets Vegel

Vegel is looking to one of the artistic pieces when Victoria approaches him. They demonstrate good knowledge about art. Vegel reveals to us he is Setite, member from Followers of Set clan.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.38

Seq: Victoria meets Vegel

Vegel is observing another piece in the museum when the author approaches. Leopold expects some kind of feedback about his work but Vegel has other business to attend and doesn't stay too long. In the center of his masterpiece, we recognize Aaron's figure in one of the statues.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.39

Seq: Rolph reveals The Eye of Hazimel to Vegel

Rolph is at a specific spot waiting Vegel. They get to business and Rolph tells him that, in order to repay an old clan's debt, he must give Vegel a magic artifact: the Eye of Hazimel. Vegel is surprised but agrees. It is revealed to us that something is going to happen at midnight, so Vegel must escape before it. Rolph extracts the artifact from one of the sculptures, where it was hidden and passes it to Vegel.

INT. EMERGENCY-STAIRS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.44

Seq: Vegel's escape

Vegel exits the party via emergency exit and tries to find his escape route that Rolph said it would be waiting for him.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.45

Seq: Vegel's escape

Vegel seems well on his way out, using underground routes to avoid meeting potential enemies.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.45

Seq: Julius arrives at the party

The final piece of Victoria's plan is set. With Julius at the party, she only has to wait until her chess pieces fight among themselves. Julius looks powerful but he doesn't leave his weapons outside and disrespects the law of Elysium. Victoria receives him, and they are interrupted by the alarm Vegel sets in motion.

INT. UNDERGROUND LOCATION - NIGHT

p.46

Seq: Vegel's escape ends bad

Vegel seems to get to the surface, and when he sets foot outside, he is attacked by something.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.47

Seq: Julius catches Victoria spying

After dealing with the alarm, well after midnight, everything seems quiet and Victoria uses her special lenses to check on her guests and Julius catches her. The prince has learned of his presence and is making a fuss about it, as Victoria expected. Julius seems ready to deal with the Prince.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.48

Seq: Benison vs Julius interrupted

Prince Benison is asking Cyndy about Julius, then one of the servants is shaken too but no one knows where Julius is "hiding". Then Julius reveals himself, ready to deal with Benison. Their status is unclear, Benison is the Prince of this city, but Julius is one Archon in the Camarilla hierarchy, so he also has a position of power. But both decide to deal with their problems the hard way. Before they start to fight, darkness invades the Museum.

EXT. A DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH - NIGHT

p.49

Seq: A little spider at work

The little spider is starting "again" the work of a web near the high museum, for the first time, because time has rewinded a few days.

INT. FEAST HALL, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

p.49

Seq: Polonia meets an Envoy Spirit

MIDDLE POINT

Polonia is preparing another of the rooms and is visited by a spirit. They engage in a long conversation. It's revealed to us that he is part of the enemies of the Camarilla, The Sabbat. They talk about a few of the important names in the Sabbat offensive: Borges, Vykos. The latter worries Polonia to the point that he plots with the spirit to assassinate Vykos if needed.

Polonia reveals to us how the hierarchy of the Sabbat works, with its ranks following the same names as the catholic organization.

INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL -... p.56

Seq: The war council

Caldwell is mocking Costello, but Borges calms the tension and conducts the council, in the absence of Polonia. Everyone is disturbed by the presence of a horrible and giant war-ghoul. Everyone is very agitated, typical meeting with Sabbat leaders, so it seems.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

p.59

Seq: Borges and Sebastian reflexions

They converse about the last council, what the tensions are and what problems to deal with.

INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL -... p.62

Seq: Polonia appears at the war council

Second day of council. Sebastian is agitating the reunion when Polonia is announced and arrives. Once again, "a royal entrance" with different reactions from the audience. He speaks to the council and surprises everyone by announcing that the siege that they were preparing is not going to happen.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HO... p.68

Seq: Vikos' introduction

Vykos watches his ghoul Ravenna being assassinated as he introduces a visitor, Parmenides. The assassin presents the fruits of his work, giving Vykos the head of Hannah and her hands. Vykos used his powers of fleshcraft to change the head and mold it exactly like the one of Parmenides, to show him how appearances can ilude. Then Vykos surprises the assassin and attacks him successfully.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA - NIGHT p.74

Seq: Sabbat prepares to attack

Act III

Sabbat forces define a perimeter around the High Museum of Art.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

p.74

Seq: War council, last details

The leaders prepare the last details about the attack and some even celebrate the eminent event.

INT. CORRIDOR, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

p.75

Seq: The last visit to the council

Someone approaches the room where the last council occurs.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA -NIGHT **p.75**

Seq: Sabbat prepares to attack

War ghouls unload from the trucks near the Museum, the soon to be battlefield.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

p.75

Seq: Vykos appears at the war council

Vykos presence in the council results in chaos from the enthusiasm of many fans. She presents evidence that the leader Tremere is defeated, Hannah. Then presents the head of the assassin sent to kill her, a forged proof crafted by her own hands. Finally announces that a fire dance shall take place during the attack, giving the audience the reason to be as euphoric as they want. Polonia takes this as a treath to the whole mission and activates the assassin spirit. Vykos survives and Averros is killed mistakingly.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT **p.78**

Seq: Caldwell delays the attack

Caldwell refuses to give the order to attack and Vallejo is not able to persuade him, so Vykos appears and deals with Caldwell, the hard way. and the attack goes forward.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NI... **p.81**

Seq: Vegel survives

One of the packs of the Sabbat that is patrolling the surrounding sees Vegel and attacks him, unaware that he posseses a magical item. Vegel survives a brutal death and the pack loses him.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT **p.83**

Seq: Vallejo's shadows advance

Vallejo, communicates with another of the comander, Bolon, and they proceed with the attack. Supernatural shadows advance towards the Museum.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.84

Seq: Benison vs Julius - The Attack

Julius and Benison are preparing to fight each other when the Sabbat attack starts. The first moments are dominated by the Lasombra clan powers, pouring blackness everywhere and creating panic and disorientation. This results in the entrance of the war-ghouls without many of the victims knowing until it's too late. Everywhere Kindred from Camarilla fall in the hands of the monsters and shadows of the Sabbat.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NI...

p.85

Seq: The Vogel situation

Vogel returns to his clothes, now that the Sabbat pack is gone. And to his surprise the Eye is still there. He is in bad shape, and considering his chances of survival, He prefers to find a more hidden place.

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

p.86

Seq: The Vogel situation

Vogel decides to try to use the potentially powerful Eye himself. A little spider working on its, almost, finished web, reminds us that time is back where it should be, in the present, once more.

INT. THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH - NIGHT

p.86

Seq: Hazimel reacts to the Eye

By trying to use the Eye, Vogel, inadvertently awakens its owner, Hazimel. This semi-God is a powerful vampire who is in torpor in a undisclosed location.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HO...

p.86

Seq: Vykos sculpts on Parmenides

Parmenides is now a hostage and Vykos is torturing him as he fleshcrafts his body into something.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

p.87

Seq: The Camarilla kindred fight for their lives

An unexpected partnership is created as Julius and Prince Benison fight back to back, against the monsters of the Sabbat. Many have already fallen under the brutality of the war-ghouls and shadows, but the strongest and the luckiest persist. Victoria survives, thanks to precious help of Julius and Leopold. Unfortunately for the later, one of the shadows throw him through the window and he falls all the 4 stories of the High Museum of Art. Some of the victims are possessed by their inner beast from the lack of blood and start attacking each other. Thelonious, amputated from the legs, is in frenzy for blood and tries to get Victoria but she escapes in the end.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PEACHTREE STREET... p.88

Seq: Marcus finds Leopold

Marcus and Delona find the corpse of Leopold who just fell from the 4 floor and is most likely dead. they ignore the body hoping to get in some of the action and decide to move on the the battlefield too.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.88

p.88

Seq: The Firedance starts

Sabbat soldiers start celebrating victory even before the end of the battle, and they light a huge fire and start testing their courage by jumping over it, in an ancient ritual called Firedance, that Vykos previously suggested.

EXT. HANNAH'S MANSION, TREMERE CHANTRY - NIGHT p.88

p.88

Seq: Atlanta's tremere chantry explodes

The attack is not located only in the High Museum area, all over the city violence and fire erupts. This event is of particular importance, since the explosion of the Tremere Mansion represents that the most defended point of the Camarilla has fallen.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HO... p.89

p.89

Seq: Vykos explains to Parmenides his situation

Vykos continues to work on the Assassin and Parmenides, now with a mouth again, swears therevenge of his masters. Vykos explains him that he is mistaken since there will be no revenge, Parmenides is a gift to Vykos.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.90

p.90

Seq: Eleanor dies, Benison goes crazy and Julius follows

Julius is fighting the Lasombra manipulators when he sees Eleanor in difficulties. One of the war-ghouls (not a ghoul but a vampire, Bolon) spills barrels of greek fire and kills Eleanor. Julius and Benison are fighting but their chances are slim, they are surrounded and with no escape, Benison dives into the Lasombra shadows. Julius decides to follow him.

INT. LASOMBRA SHADOWS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.91

p.91

Seq: Julius and Benison survive the shadows

After succesfully crossing the Lassombra shadows they move to the emergency exit, but Benison's powers of madness await them outside.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 3RD AND 4TH FLOOR, HIGH MUSE... p.92

Seq: Marcus enters the battlefield

Marcus and Delona arrive at the 4th floor but accidentally he makes her fall the 4 stories. Alone, he decides to see what's happening in the galleries.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT p.92

Seq: Marcus helps his commanders

As he arrives he realizes that victory is eminent, and only a few remain. Facing the war-ghouls clumsiness to open an emergency door, Marcus uses also enormous force to get it open, but is surprised by the unexpected view.

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

p.93

Seq: Marcus follows Julius and Benison

Using his madness powers, Benison creates a new surrounding environment. They escape apparently through a forest, when in fact they are still in the emergency stairs. Marcus appears but Julius is swift and stabs him, but does not finish him because more enemies follow. A new scenario appears through another door.

EXT. GRASS FIELD AT THE PLAINS - DAY

p.93

Seq: Madness swallows Benison and Marcus kills Julius

Benison uses his memories to create new scenarios and in this particular one he relives a moment when he was part of the Confederate Soldiers of the 37th Georgia regiment. The madness is contagious and war-ghouls "feel" the bullets of the antique weapons of the Confederate soldiers, but the Lasombra ignore the reality and press on the Kindred who's creating all of this, Benison. Julius steps back as he sees the madness escalating and claiming the lives of the ones who were possessed by it, including Benison and the War-ghouls. In the end, everything returns to normality and Julius is ambushed by Marcus and killed brutally.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HO... p.95

Seq: Vykos reveals Parmenides new look

Vykos explains further why Parmenides was "given" to him and reveals his new features. He is a perfect twin of the late Ravenna, the ghoul that Parmenides killed on the first encounter.

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

p.97

Seq: Leopold and the evil Eye

Leopold awakens after a frenzy, to which he succumbed due to lack of blood. He realizes he sucked dry Vegel, while possessed by his inner beast. But, more than that, he sees the Eye of Hazimel and is seduced immediately. The Eye and Leopold become one and Hazimel shares his power with Leopold with unknown consequences. But certainly bad consequences for the vampires everywhere.

Treatment

For the script:

The World of Darkness

The Fall of Atlanta

Ângelo González

1. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

Leopold sits with a girl in his sculpture studio. She seems to be another prostitute he brought home to sculpt and feed on. Leopold takes the first measure to protect the Masquerade by licking the bite wound, closing it with its healing properties. Then he decides to take her upstairs to complete his ritual.

The narrator Hazimel guides us throughout the scene, helping us understand what kindred means in this World of Darkness filled with vampires and other supernatural creatures.

2. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Dawn inches closer so Leopold has little time to finish his task. He hurries Michelle through the corridor and towards the door of the bedroom.

3. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

He is methodical, almost as if he has been doing for quite some time. He prepares a scene in the bedroom much like a last-night-party, and lays Michelle, the out of conscience girl, on the bed, then leaves. As it is not obvious the concept of Masquerade, Hazimel still helps us understand the scene.

4. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

The basement doors are made of heavy and practically unbreakable oak, he bolts and bars them from the inside. Protected from sun and intruders, as best as he can.

5. EXT. CITY OF ATLANTA. - DAY
PARALLEL MONTAGE WITH THE NEXT SCENE

Collection of scenes that locate the story in the modern ages, in the American city of Atlanta, and puts the mortals from the perspective of the hunter. They look fragile, distracted by their own lives, unaware of the evil that lives among them. But, they are a lot (hence the Masquerade). A spider starts working on a web, that later will be used to mark as time advances or goes back.

6. INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

A woman whispers to a little boy's ear. He sleeps and she monologues about the condition of vampirism compared to the one of the mortals that life unaware of their existence. The woman is Victoria Ash, but her identity is not revealed yet, as is not the reason for this bizarre place, where the doors of Hell and Heaven rise high.

7. EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

One of Thelonious ghouls drives his bike to the hide out of the rebel and charismatic leader of a possible anarch group.

8. INT. STEEL MILL, STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas, the ghoul, arrives in the middle of one of Thelonious speeches to the gang. Then Thomas catches his attention and delivers the message. It seems to be a provocation from another Kindred called Benjamin, saying Thelonious should attend the party the night that follows.

Thelonious is not happy with this.

9. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

Leopold, the artist, sculpts and enters his trance while at it. When he finishes, his artwork is too much for him to take and he is shocked for many moments before the woman he just molded. The flaw of clan Toreador is that they enter catatonic state when faced with great beauty.

10. INT. THE SKYLINE HOTEL, LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

Benjamin receives a letter, similar to the one Thelonious' received. It says he too must attend the party next night. He is also not happy. Its signed by Thelonious.

11. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

Leopold realizes he just sculpted a kindred, Victoria Ash. His shock is even grater than before, now that he realizes this woman might bear more meaning to him.

12. INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria is still with the little boy, Aaron, in front of the doors of hell and heaven. This time the boy is awake and, his curiosity about the doors, brings her to tell him the legend of Cain and Abel. This tale suggests the origin of vampires in this world.

13. EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT

Leopold stands on the sidewalk staring at the mansion of Hannah. He is looking for answers, and Hannah might help him.

14. INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT
FLASHBACK: 1 YEAR AGO

Leopold has another prostitute/model in his basement, but this one resists him. Then a hooded figure appears. She is Hannah, one kindred wizard. She wants him to sculpt her, but he is unable to do it. He has some kind of impediment to sculpt Kindreds. Even when Hannah grabs the mortal girl and puts her in the frame to be. When she leaves, she suggests that in the future her magic might help him.

15. EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT
RETURN TO PRESENT

Here is Leopold, in front of Hannah's mansion, looking for answers, that maybe her magic will answer. He introduces himself to the inter-communicator and is welcomed in.

The mansion looks like something from a horror movie, two mastiffs guard the entrance, but let him pass.

16. INT. GREAT HALL, MANSION - NIGHT

The inside is creepy, mysterious. Several items catch Leopold's attention and then a butler meets him in the entrance hall. The ghoul explains that Leopold must follow him in order to not be lost in the mansions maze. The way they follow is in fact confusing and he would never find his way back if he needed. Leopold feels small in this place. They finally arrive at Hannah's chamber and Leopold is told to join her.

17. INT. ARCANE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

Hannah is finishing a magic ritual and Leopold witnesses the whole process. He doesn't understand it but its amazed by the whole scene. She invites him to follow her into her office. He does it so.

18. INT. OFFICE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

Leopold explains he needs help to find some answers. She seems to know his questions already and explains that the ritual previously performed will help him with that issue. Then they negotiate the terms of their deal. Once again Hannah asks him to sculpt her, but Leopold is afraid he might not be able to do it without her posing. She agrees to pose immediately and undresses herself. Stunned he tries to memorize her lines, touching her.

When she feels it is enough, she gives him a vial of blood that he must drink in order to begin a ritual, that will reveal his sire identity, which is the answer he seeks. He complies.

In order to finish their deal, he must go home and try to sculpt her, and, the next night, he will meet her at the party hosted by Victoria Ash, that Benjamin and Thelonious should also attend. At this party she will complete the ritual that might reveal his sire.

19. INT. CAR, NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria arrives at the High Museum of Art where the party is taking place. Hazimel, the narrator, brings insight on the matter and on this new character. Special spy lenses allow Victoria to penetrate the opaque glass set inside the High's standard windows. Approximately a dozen Kindred are already present, Victoria is pleased.

20. EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

A Little spider continues its work on a magnificent web. It shines now, almost complete, at the bright light of the street lamp near it.

21. INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Victoria has many ghouls. She inquires if some of the guests have arrived yet. Her tone reveals that these people are the real importance of the party.

22. INT. 4TH FLOOR HIGH'S MUSEUM ART - NIGHT

Victoria's behavior is strange, even to her own ghouls. She arrives at the entrance to the galleries in the museum, where the well known doors of Hell and Heaven are.

At this point Hazimel, the narrator, helps us understand the paranoia random games that Victoria plays in order to feel she is in control of herself. In this case she must wait for the next guests to see which door they will choose, and that will dictate the future of her night and the completion of her plans.

The two guests that appear are Cyndy and Leopold. Victoria has different treatment for each of them. Cyndy is not very friendly, and goes on the doors of hell. Leopold is one of her artists of the night and deserves a warm welcome, but Victoria knows her beauty overwhelms him and she feels his discomfort. He chooses Hell doors as well. In consequence of her guests choice, she decides to enter through the doors of Heaven, into her party.

23. INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL, ATLANTA - NIGHT

The Cainite Francisco Domingo de Polonia surveys the conference room where, soon, the Sabbat war council will take place. Hazimel offers his own view of this potent vampire from the opposite sect of the Camarilla. It seems that a Sabbat war council is a dangerous event that might end up in violence and final death for the interveners.

24. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria enters her party, everything seems to be going as expected. The first to see her is Rolph, the Nosferatu. Then she looks at the room to check her other guests and decide who will be rewarded by her attention.

25. INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Stella meets her friend Leopold near a sculpture. She knows about his block to sculpt kindred but he doesn't reveal to her that he finally managed to break it. He is worried that Hannah didn't arrive yet. Stella shares some of her knowledge about other clans, like Hannah's, the Tremere, and Rolph's, the Nosferatu.

26. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria approaches Clarice while she is admiring one of the sculptures. Their conversation goes through the subject of the Masquerade and then about the sculpture itself.

Victoria notices Benjamin and Thelonious arrived and that Vegel is present in the party as well. She decides to spy on her guests with her special opera glasses. So she follows a conversation between Benjamin and Thelonious. She mimics their conversation and dubs them.

27. INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Both men are getting confused by each others attitude, and conversation.

28. INT. SECRET SPACE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria smiles and enjoys their confusion, while she spies on them.

29. INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Thelonious and Benjamin discuss like brothers would, until they find out that they have been fooled by a third person who forged the letters in order to have them here at the party. At the same time, a royal entrance is happening, and they stop to see what's going on.

30. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Prince Benison and his wife Eleanor arrive at the party with a royal, pompous entrance. Victoria seems to have some plans for these two. Some of the guests pay respects, others don't acknowledge their authority. Leopold and Stella see it from the distance. Two unlucky figures arrive just after the Prince and that causes Thelonious to laugh at the comical sight. The Prince, who was known to have some pending problems with Thelonious, gets furious. But for Victoria's plan to go on, they cannot fight yet, Julius still didn't arrive, so she calms the Prince down.

31. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria talks to Eleanor, and between fake smiles and forced sympathy they talk about Elysium and about their sect, the Camarilla.

32. INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Vegel is looking to one of the artistic pieces when Victoria approaches him. They demonstrate good knowledge about art, and how fans they are of sculpture. Vegel reveals to us he is Setite, member from Followers of Set clan. There is some vibe between them, and Vegel seems to be under the spell of Victoria's beauty.

33. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Vegel is observing another piece in the museum when the author approaches. Leopold expects some kind of feedback about his work but Vegel has other business to attend and doesn't stay to long. In the center of his masterpiece, we recognize Aaron's figure, the little boy from the scenes where Victoria was explaining her view of vampirism and the tale of Cain and Abel. Leopold doesn't appreciate Vegel's lack of interest in giving feedback about his work.

34. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Rolph is at a specific spot waiting for Vegel. They get to business and Rolph tells him that, in order to repay an old clan's debt, he must give Vegel a magic artifact: the Eye of Hazimel. Vegel is surprised but agrees.

It is revealed to us that something is going to happen at midnight, so Vegel must escape before it. Rolph extracts the artifact from one of the sculptures, where it was hidden and passes it to Vegel. This act is only possible using cloaking powers to hide the light that the Eye casts upon the room. So no one at the party seems to notice the trade. Rolph instructs Vegel to flee the premises, and so he does.

35. INT. EMERGENCY-STAIRS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

The alarm erupts as soon as he closes the doors behind him. Vegel runs down four flights of stairs looking for the exit Rolph suggested.

36. INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Vegel seems well on his way out, using underground routes to avoid meeting potential enemies. Rolph indications fit and he might well find himself away from the Museum from a secret passage.

37. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT
BACK IN TIME A FEW MINUTES

The final piece of Victoria's plan is set. Julius arrives at the party. Now, she only has to wait until her chess pieces fight among themselves. Julius looks powerful enough for a mano-a-mano, but he doesn't leave his weapons outside Elysium. He disrespects one of the laws of Elysium, by doing so. Victoria receives him, and they are interrupted by the alarm Vegel sets in motion.

38. INT. UNDERGROUND LOCATION - NIGHT

Vegel gets to the surface, finally, and when he sets foot outside, he is attacked by a Sabbat pack that was patrolling the area, Marcus's pack.

39. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

After dealing with the alarm, well after midnight, everything seems quiet and Victoria uses her special lenses to check on her guests, but Julius catches her doing it. The prince has learned of the presence of Julius and starts making a fuss about it, as Victoria expected he would. Julius seems ready to deal with the Prince. Everyone is there, eyes set on both powerful Kindreds. Both are ready to fight when sudden darkness falls. The Sabbat attack had finally begun.

40. EXT. A DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH - NIGHT
A few days earlier

A little spider works on the project of an ambitious web, extending from the corner of one building to the nearest street lamp that flickers randomly.

41. INT. FEAST HALL, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Polonia is preparing another of the rooms and is visited by a spirit. They engage in an intense conversation. It is revealed to us that he is part of the enemies of the Camarilla, The Sabbat. They talk about a few of the important names in the Sabbat offensive: Borges, Vykos. The latter worries Polonia to the point that he plots with the spirit to assassinate Vykos if needed.

Polonia reveals to us how the hierarchy of the Sabbat works, with its ranks following the same names as the catholic organization. There is not one mention of the party at the High Museum of Art where Victoria will soon host her party.

42. INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

The first night of war council is well on. Caldwell is mocking Costello, but Borges calms the tension and conducts the council, in the absence of Polonia. Everyone is disturbed by the presence of a horrible and giant war-ghoul. The mood is very agitated, typical meeting with Sabbat leaders, so it seems. There almost no room for these egos and monsters.

43. INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Borges and his child Sebastian reflect on the first night of war council. They point out the tensions and the problem that they are facing there.

44. INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Second day of council. Sebastian is agitating the reunion when Polonia is announced and arrives. Once again, "a royal entrance" with different reactions from the audience. He speaks to the council and surprises everyone by announcing that the siege that they were preparing is not going to happen.

45. INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos watches his ghoul Ravenna being assassinated as he introduces a visitor, Parmenides. The assassin presents the fruits of his work, giving Vykos the head of Hannah and her hands. Vykos used his powers of fleshcraft to change the head and mold it exactly like the one of Parmenides, to show him how appearances can illude. Then Vykos surprises the assassin and controls him successfully.

ATTACK PREPARATION SEQUENCE - PARALLEL MONTAGE

46. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA - NIGHT

Sabbat forces define a perimeter around the High Museum of Art.

47. INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

The leaders prepare the last details about the attack and some even celebrate the eminent event. Despite the chaos of the meeting, the attack plans are meticulously organized.

48. INT. CORRIDOR, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos approaches the meeting. She holds something in one hand.

49. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA -NIGHT

War ghouls unload from the trucks near the Museum, the soon to be battlefield.

END OF ATTACK PREPARATION SEQUENCE - PARALLEL MONTAGE

50. INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos presence in the council results in chaos from the enthusiasm of many fans. She presents evidence that the leader Tremere is defeated, Hannah. Then presents the head of the assassin sent to kill her, a forged proof crafted by her own hands. Finally announces that a fire dance shall take place during the attack, giving the audience the reason to be as euphoric as they want. Polonia takes this as a treath to the whole mission and activates the assassin spirit. Vykos survives and Averros is killed mistakingly.

51. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT

The attack doesn't go on at the expected time, mid-night. Caldwell refuses to give the order to attack and Vallejo is not able to persuade him. Then Vykos appears and deals with Caldwell, killing him in an excruciating manner. The attack goes forward.

52. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

We revisit the scene where Vegel got out and was ambushed , but now, from Marcus side.

Marcus and his pack attack Vegel, unaware that he possesses a magical item. Vegel survives the brutal death and the pack loses him.

53. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT

Vallejo, communicates with another of the commander, Bolon, and they proceed with the attack. Supernatural shadows advance towards the Museum, as the silent attack starts.

54. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Julius and Benison are preparing to fight each other when the Sabbat attack starts. The first moments are dominated by the Lasombra clan powers, pouring blackness everywhere and creating panic and disorientation. This results in the entrance of the war-ghouls without many of the victims knowing until its too late. Everywhere Kindred from Camarilla fall in the hands of the monsters and shadows of the Sabbat. Its chaos, panic and death everywhere.

55. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Vegel returns to his clothes, now, that the Sabbat pack is gone. And to his surprise the Eye is still there. He is in bad shape, and considering his chances of survival, he prefers to find a more hidden place to decide what to do next.

56. EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

Vegel considers his chances of survival and decides to try to use the potentially powerful Eye of Hazimel. So he carves out one of his eyes and replaces it with the artifact.

A little spider working on its, almost, finished web, reminds us that time is back where it should be, in the present, once more.

57. INT. THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH - NIGHT

By trying to use the Eye, Vegel, inadvertently awakens its owner, Hazimel. This semi-God is a powerful vampire who is in torpor in a undisclosed location.

58. INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Parmenides is now a hostage and Vykos is torturing him as he fleshcrafts his body into something we cannot yet understand.

Vykos sixth sense makes him feel that something big might have happened, like the awakening that in fact did, but he connects that feeling with the victory of the Sabbat over Atlanta and dismisses it.

59. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

A unexpected partnership is created as Julius and Prince Benison fight back to back, against the monsters of the Sabbat. Many have already fallen under the brutality of the war-ghouls and shadows, but the strongest and the luckiest persist. Victoria survives, thanks to precious help of Julius and Leopold. Unfortunately for the later, one of the shadows throw him through the window and he fall all the 4 stories of the High Museum of Art. Some of the victims are possessed by their inner beast from the lack of blood and start attacking each other. Thelonious, amputated from the legs, is in frenzy for blood and tries to get Victoria but she escapes in the end.

60. EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PEACHTREE STREET- NIGHT

Marcus and Delona find the corpse of Leopold who just fell from the 4th floor and is most likely dead. They ignore the body hoping to get in some of the action and decide to move on the battlefield too. Leopold survives another round.

61. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

It's chaos, darkness, blood and ruin. Sabbat soldiers start celebrating victory even before the end of the battle, and they light a huge fire and start testing their courage by jumping over it, in an ancient ritual called Firedance, that Vykos previously suggested.

62. EXT. HANNAH'S MANSION, TREMERE CHANTRY - NIGHT

An explosion rockets the top floor of the Atlanta chantry. Gouts of flame burst from the upper windows.

63. INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos continues to work on Parmenides, now with a new mouth, swears the revenge of his masters. Vykos explains him that his masters gave him to Vykos, his revenge is not going to take place. Parmenides starts to believe her.

64. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Julius is fighting the Lasombra shadows manipulators when he sees Eleanor in difficulties.

One of the war-ghouls, not the ghoulish beasts but the vampire Bolon, spills barrels of greek fire and kills Eleanor. Julius and Benison are fighting but their chances are slim, they are surrounded and with no escape, Benison dives into the Lasombra shadows. Julius decides to follow him, even though it is not his more sane idea.

65. INT. LASOMBRA SHADOWS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

After successfully crossing the Lasombra shadows they move to the emergency exit, but Benison is a member of the Malkavian clan and his powers of madness await them outside.

66. INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 3RD AND 4TH FLOOR, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Marcus and Delona arrive at the 4th floor but accidentally he makes her fall the 4 stories. Alone, his curiosity wins the best of him, and he decides to see what's happening in the galleries.

67. INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

As he arrives he realizes that victory is imminent, and only a few enemies remain. Facing the war-ghouls clumsiness to open an emergency door, Marcus uses also enormous figure to get it open, but is surprised by the unexpected view on the other side, where Benison and Julius already run.

68. EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Using his madness powers, Benison creates a new surrounding environment. They escape apparently through a forest, when in fact then are still in the emergency stairs. Marcus appears but Julius is swift and stabs him, but does not finish him because more enemies follow. A new scenario appears through another door.

69. EXT. GRASS FIELD AT THE PLAINS - DAY

Benison uses his memories to create new scenarios and in this particular one he reveals a memory when he was part of the Confederate Soldiers of the 37th Georgia regiment. The madness is contagious and war-ghouls "feel" the bullets of the antique weapons of the Confederate soldiers, but the Lasombra ignore the reality and press on the Kindred who's creating all of this, Benison. Julius steps back as he sees the madness escalating and claiming the lives of the ones who were possessed by it, including Benison and the War-ghouls. In the end, everything returns to normality and Julius is ambushed by Marcus and killed brutally.

70. INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos explains further why Parmenides was "given" to him and reveals his new features. He is a perfect twin of the late Ravenna, the ghoul that Parmenides killed on the first encounter. This means that Parmenides no longer exists, he is now Vykos faux ghoul, and will help him kill their common enemies ,the Tremere, because no other options are on the table anymore.

71. EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

Leopold awakens after a frenzy, to which he succumbed due to lack of blood. He realizes he sucked dry Vogel, while possessed by his inner beast. But, more than that, he sees the Eye of Hazimel and is seduced immediately. The Eye and Leopold become one and Hazimel shares his power with Leopold with unknown consequences. But certainly bad consequences for the vampires everywhere.

A casual observer passing by, a silent bat, zooms right in the finished web of a little and patient spider, who set its silk between the corner of the building and the street lamp. The hunter examines its prey fighting for its life. The bat's wing are to attached to trap and the little spider moves in, slowly to enjoy its meal.

THE END

Character Details

For the script:

The World of Darkness

The Fall of Atlanta

Ângelo González

Characters Details

Main Characters

Leopold	2
Victoria Ash	3
Sascha Vykos	4
Eye of Hazimel /Hazimel.....	5

Secondary Characters

Sabbat	
Francisco Domingo de Polónia	6
Bolon.....	7
Caldwell	7
Costello	8
Borges	8
Sebastian	9
Averros.....	9
Vallejo.....	10
Alcaraz	10
Marcus	11
Parmenides.....	11

Camarilla

Hannah	12
Thelonious.....	12
Benjamin	13
Cyndy	13
Stella	14
Clarice	14
Julius	15
Prince J. Benison Hodge.....	15
Eleanor	16
Rolph.....	16

Outros

Vegel.....	17
Warghoul.....	18
Confederate soldier regiment 37	18

Main Characters

Leopold

RESUME: This neonate vampire is a member of Clan Toreador who pursues his vocation to sculpture that, since he's been embraced, has been compromised.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He is one of the protagonists that is still close to his human side, since he is still young and naïve. His main function is that the audience identifies with his problems and triumphs. He is a newborn to the World of Darkness and so is the audience.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: The main objective is to perfect his art, by being able to sculpt Kindred as part of it. His other objectives include finding his sire's identity, understanding Kindred society and surviving.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Leopold has been a sculptor in mortal life, more dedicated to his art, not much to himself. He was never interested in social life between the immortals, avoiding attention, but that only allowed him a hand full of, what might be considered, friends. He does the work that seems important to him and steers clear of politics. Politics get one killed.

IMAGE: Usually wears a clean t-shirt and khaki painter's pants. His hair is an unkempt mop of black that looks like it was meant to be short but has grown for six months without any care. His hands are usually filthy with dirt, under his nails and fingers too. Small mouth and pursed lips. Though quite slender and of average height and build, his face seems heavy, almost sagging and unhappy. His eyelids drooped and his too-ample cheeks seem to contain cotton wads used to calm a toothache.

Victoria Ash

RESUME: Notable member of clan Toreador, Victoria has been undead for enough time to know how to play her cards. Cards she will cautiously play, given the opportunity.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: She is one of the protagonists and, as an older and wiser vampire, her fears warn us about the possibility of the existence of older and dangerous vampires. She provides a hint about the genesis of the vampire race.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Her main objective is fame and fortune in her context, meaning that she needs to rise in the Camarilla hierarchy and the first step to do that is to become Prince of Atlanta. So she needs to deal with the present Prince (Benison J. Hodge) and take out the competition (Thelonious, Benjamin, Eleanor).

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: A singer, dancer and one-woman spectacle formerly known as Victoria de Perpignan, when alive. Born into poverty in France, in 1624. Embraced in 1650 by Maximilian, a pimp, who posed as a procurer of horses in public. She lived across Europe and left England when her sire was killed, taking a ship to the New World around 1700. Many Kindred underestimate Victoria Ash. They consider her a pillow-headed slattern or a bitchy nitwit, but she doesn't mind. Victoria has no fear of hunger or want. Her greatest skill lies in giving people what they want until their desires run totally parallel to her own. Like most Toreador she is a dedicated follower of fashion and has an army of suitors that ply her with money, cars, clothes and artwork, all in exchange for one favorable glance.

IMAGE: Victoria is an extraordinary beautiful woman, though her version of beauty is more classical than the emaciated waifs adored in the waning years of the 20th century. Generally wears clothing that reveals a suggestive portion of her perfectly rounded body. Green silk dresses and smoothly lined sportswear fit her choices. Her eyes are green, her curled hair is short and (usually) brown, and her cheeks are typically flushed red – a look Victoria knows male Kindred often prefer.

SOURCES: Whitewolf wikia, Clan Novel Saga, Giovanni Chronicles 4, The Ventrue Chronicle, Victorian Age Vampire Saga.

Sascha Vykos

RESUME: Noddist scholar, Tzimisce scientist and Cainite monster - has long been a staunch supporter of Sabbat freedom. It is Hell's chief torturer and a musician with a scalpel. Sascha understands the nuances of every physical sensation and the nerves best suited to receive its ministrations. It is also a creature of learning, with a collection of books and artifacts to humble the halls of all academia.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: One of the protagonists, mainly because he is the most enlightened of all the characters, in terms of vampire lore. He represents a Sabbat elder (1000 years old) and how he can get what he wants with powerful manipulation skills. The audience will see, through this character, that there is another point of view to the kindred society.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: The main objective is to support the Sabbat in the search and destruction of the Antediluvians and the annihilation of the Camarilla. The other objectives are to help conduct the war for the Eastern American cities, to bloodbound an Assamite for bodyguard and to survive all the enemies among the Sabbat.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Sascha Vykos, named Myca Vykos in the years before its self-inflicted castration, lived an enviable existence in the glorious Byzantine Empire. Born to royalty in the Carpathians before the turn of the first millennium, Myca seemed destined for greatness from a young age. Over the centuries, Sascha has served its sect as scholar and warrior. In both roles, it acts as wandering priscus, though its manner of advising regional cardinals seems more akin to making strong "suggestions" than polite recommendations. As scholar, it maintains ancient libraries and repositories across the Balkan states. As warrior, however, Sascha is also a frightening tool of retribution. With mastery over Vicissitude and Thaumaturgy, it can best most adversaries. In this violent facet, Sascha appeals to the younger Sabbat. Collectively, in turn, the Sabbat is a weapon for Sascha, a living battlement against the rapacious Antediluvians - the adversaries in Sascha's morality play.

IMAGE: Sascha's appearance varies over time, gradually becoming more and more pristine and elegantly beautiful. His original form was a slender young man only slightly over average height, with black hair, hazel eyes and a haunted expression. By the middle of the 16th century, he stands just over six feet in height, slender and graceful as a swan, with long silver-gold hair and golden eyes. This 16th century look, many times associated with the Elizabeth Bathory myth, is his preferred look in the modern times. Posing more as a woman than as men, since he prefers the Victorian style dress to match his face.

SOURCES: *Whitewolf wikia, Nights of Prophecy; Children of the Night; Clan Novel Saga*

Eye of Hazimel /Hazimel

RESUME: A mythical living eye believed to belong to a Methuselah, or possibly even an Antediluvian. The Eye is said to possess incredible powers of change and mutation, something for which the Tzimisce are infamous. It's owner, Hazimel, is the omniscient, omnipresent narrator of the story, something, only a potent and ancient vampire is able to be.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: The Eye is the proof that the fears of Victoria Ash are correct and that the Sabbat quest is in fact an attempt for survival against the oldest. Hazimel is, as most of its generation, in a state of torpor, so he cannot physically take actions, he uses a power called Astral Projection to travel in spirit form. So his function as narrator is only to provide us with his insight on the story and the characters.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: The Eye itself wants to connect its master spirit to a body that can carry it, in this case, any vampire that can be corrupted. Hazimel wants to fulfill the prophecy of the Final Nights, he wants to get the world rid of his descendancy and all the evil that comes with them.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Lore surrounding the Eye states that its powers and influence may be contained by encasing it in mud from the Ganges River in India. Any mutations created by the Eye may be healed by applying a smoldering stub of *tumeric* root to the wound, then using the blood to heal the burns. In order to use the powers of the Eye, it's bearer must remove one of their own eyes from its socket and replace it with the artifact.

“Hazimel, according to legend, an ancient Ravnos, a stonemason by some accounts, who ruled much of India. Pre-history. He extended his domain by bestowing his Eye upon a succession of rulers in exchange for their loyalty.” - Jan Pieterzoon, *Clannovel: Brujah*, pg. 148, by Gherbod Fleming

IMAGE: The orb is bigger than a normal eye, it's a grotesque, black and fibrous eye covered with moist ichor, with its own eyelid and with a dark-red nerv in shape of a tail hanging.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*.

Secondary Characters

Sabbat

Francisco Domingo de Polonia

RESUME: This archbishop from New York, member of the Lasombra clan, has been organizing and building great networks in the preparations before battles. With a long career as a Sabbat operative, he has been involved in a few sieges to camarilla cities before.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He represents the main vehicle of introduction to the Sabbat lore. His worries about the monsters that can be found in the war council show how dangerous and explosive this sect is.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: In the present situation, he wishes to be able to succeed in the task of host of the war council, without it turning into a bloodbath. Another objective is to prevent Vykos from causing chaos among his fanatics in the war council, preparing an assassination as a last resort.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Born in Spain, around 1600, but eager for adventure, Polonia volunteered for military duty in the New World. He arrived in Mexico as a young captain and distinguished himself. His bravery and competence drew attention from several of the Lasombra elders already established on the continent, and Polonia was rewarded for his efforts with the Embrace. As centuries passed, he has risen in both rank and generation. Now he coordinates the big offensive for the control of the American East Coast.

IMAGE: Polonia is exceedingly tall for a Cainite of his years. He has black, neatly trimmed beard that matches his short black hair and dark eyes. Unlike many of his peers, his personal style has adapted to the times. His only concession to his age is a silver crucifix necklace that he has worn unceasingly for over three centuries. A gift from his mother, that he treasures above all things. To his embarrassment, Polonia still has a red complexion on his skin, due to being embraced while having a sun burn. Pointing it out to him or staring too long as his reddened countenance is a very bad idea. For the appropriate events, he usually dresses in the typical archbishop ornaments, the traditional ermine robe, miter and crosier of an archbishop.

SOURCES: *A World of Darkness 2nd Ed. Children of the night. Clan Novels*

Bolon

RESUME: One of the main commanders in the Sabbat attack at Atlanta, responsible for the War ghouls created by Vykos and by the Bucher of Prage. Member of the clan Tzimisce.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: By his presence and his leading the other warghouls into battle, Bolon explains that a warghoul is not only a mindless monster of flesh with a hunger for destruction, but a body-sculpture that promotes defense and power in a battle situation, and even a vampire like him can be molded to gain such potent figure.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: To help the Sabbat in its objectives, and to coordinate the attack over Atlanta with the other commanders, using his battalion of war-ghouls as part of the offensive. He is the one who brings the oil drums with the greek fire, to the Museum and spills it on the floor, dissolving the bodies and the still not dead in the battlefield.

IMAGE: Bolon is a monstrous war-ghoul with more dexterity and less arms (only two) than the average beast. He is 8 feet tall and wears spiked bone armor. With every footstep the floor trembles and his voice is so deep, when he gives commands that the windows shake easily.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

Caldwell

RESUME: The most unstable of the warchiefs of the Nomad Coalition that takes part of the war councils and Atlanta attack. A member of the clan Tzimisce. The commander responsible for the outer perimeter patrols of the Atlanta attack.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He is one of the agitators of the war council. He acts on the feelings his commanders are able to control, he is more sincere and therefore more at risk.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: To help the Nomad Coalition establish a better reputation and gain experience in the Sabbat-Camarilla wars. He wishes to have the opportunity to prove himself to the other sabbat and being in the front line is the only way.

IMAGE: This commander has a bald head, that when he is agitated (which is fairly common) is distinctly marked by black pulsing veins. His white scalp is deformed with skin furrows that are self-inflicted, when Caldwell is thinking hard and massages his head with his fingertips up and down.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

Costello

RESUME: Representative of the New York Sabbat party, in the absence of its leader Archbishop Polonia.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: To promote the discussion between New York and the Nomad Coalition disputes, by allowing its leaders to stay out of the discussion. Note that the beginning of the war council starts with a confrontation between Caldwell and Costello, while Polonia and Averros are out of the discussion.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He represents the interests of the New York faction and needs to be present at every war council in the absence of his master.

IMAGE: Definitely looks old school, with a face that reflects patience and that expects authority to be recognized. Wears a classic dark suit with outdated cuts that suits his (deceiving) 40 years old look.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

Borges

RESUME: The blind Archbishop of Miami, member of the clan Lasombra. Sire of Sebastian and leader of the Miami Sabbat faction that is afraid the Sabbat's temperament is too fragile to become more democratic than the usual dictatorship of local affairs.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He shows how a strategist works without exposing his cards too much while taking the risks necessary to win. He uses Sebastian as his voice and his political advisor in order to become the mediator of the war councils.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wishes to be acknowledged as a major player in the Atlanta attack, and hopes to improve his reputation as a leader and a ruler of eastern America.

IMAGE: Borges' face is famous for having an eternal shadow covering his eyes and a predatory smile most of the times.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

Sebastian

RESUME: Lasombra protégé and child of Archbishop Borges. He is learning the politics and codes of ethics of the Sabbat. His eyes burn with ambition for himself but he always makes it clear that his masters ambitions are a priority.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: An agitator that gives vent to Borges self-controlled worries.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: To establish a space for himself in the war council of Atlanta. And to prove to Borges that he has learned well and can be trusted with more responsibilities in the Sabbat affairs.

IMAGE: Sebastian points out with much result to his immaculate regimen of suit and tie, or for battle situations, untagged versions of his old Army kit. His deep, black eyes are always alert and he is famous for his inquisitor look.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

Averros

RESUME: The leader of the Nomad coalition that takes part of the war councils and Atlanta attack. Lasombra member.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He shows the careful and more experience side of the Nomad Coalition, letting Caldwell bark when he thinks its inoffensive enough. Another function that Averros serves is to be the confused for the killer of Vykos and the wrath of the fanatic supporters of Vykos fall upon him. Leaving Caldwell in charge of the Nomad Coalition, something he clearly was not prepared.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wants to be respected and recognized for his value, and this event is the opportunity to become the major player in the theater.

IMAGE: Latino look, with the American touch. His hair is pulled back with gel and he has a fine sexy beard that points out in his chin. Like the tank tops to show his dry muscles and tattoos, but against the expectations he remains calm in most situations.

SOURCES: *Clan Novels*

António Vallejo

RESUME: This Lasombra Spaniard was trained for centuries at the hand of Luis Ambrósio Monçada, in Madrid. He is a squadron leader of the Lasombra legionnaires, an elite from Europe that represents a highly trained military force in the Sabbat.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He gives body to a stereotyped Lasombra soldier that uses his characteristic powers to obtain control and defeat from its adversaries. He is also the one who starts the attack of the Lasombra wave of blackness, the combination of many legionnaires.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: To represent the Cardinal Monçada in the American continent war councils, and to lead the Lasombra legionnaires to battle.

IMAGE: Vallejo has the Spanish tanned skin and a “Banderas” long hair. His “flamenco” way of looking to the eyes of the one who he speaks creates a mood and a tension in the conversation with the targets until he is completely finished defending his ideas. He dresses in black ops suit, and has a bandolier with flesh grenades wrapped in dark cloth, soaked in blood. (flesh grenades are normal frag grenades involved by human flesh that, when they explode in the middle of vampires, are likely to provoke frenzy because of the blood spatter in all directions).

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Alcaraz

RESUME: A legionnaire under Vallejo’s command. The stereotype of the military force trained by Cardinal Monçada, an elite soldier.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: To give the example of the legionnaires from the Lasombra clan that takes part of the Atlanta attack and use their Lasombra powers in multiple numbers creating waves and tentacles of blackness.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: to serve his masters, to fulfill orders as a soldier is supposed to do (not what happened with Caldwell).

IMAGE: In battle mode, he is nothing more that a shadow that gains the form necessary to proceed with his objectives. When meeting with superiors he stands as a dense shadow assuming a more humanoid presence.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Marcus

RESUME: This out of patience ductus of a Sabbat pack, is involved in the Atlanta battle as part of the Nomad Coalition forces. His dissatisfaction pushes him toward the battle and into new opportunities.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He represents the leader of a Sabbat pack, the lower rank of soldiers of the Sabbat forces. He uses his potent and enormous body to do what the mentally limited warghouls cant and surpass obstacles to reach his enemies.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wants to have fun in battle, to kill more of the enemies as he can find and he defies his commander orders if he has to, to obtain this objective.

IMAGE: Marcus figure resembles a human version of the Incredible Hulk, without ripped clothes, because most of the xxxl t-shirts are football t-shirts. He is a deep voice, sometimes clumsy Brutus that in needed times, is able to put mental and physical attributes together and demonstrate fantastic power and agility.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Parmenides

RESUME: This assassin is a product of the Assamite clan, that is known for these hired predators. Highly trained in the arts and powers of silent kill, Pamenides and up losing his identity and his freedom in the hand of the sculptor and persuasive Vykos. His name suggests a philosopher background but one assassin from this clan loses his human side completely when he becomes immortal.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He represents the independents, nor Camarilla, or Sabbat, his clan has some unfinished business with Tremere clan (from the Camarilla), and the agreement that Vykos reached for the head of Hannah, is a sign of mutual goals among these forces.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wants to complete his task, by giving proof of the death of Hannah to Vykos. When taken hostage and tortured by Vykos, he wishes to understand why his masters abandoned him and what Vykos plans.

IMAGE: Unlike this kind of assassin his clothes are loose, his body and head is almost entirely concealed in a draping robe of unbleached linen

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Camarilla

Hannah

RESUME: Hannah is a respected member of the clan Tremere, the clan of sorcerers. She is responsible for the Chantry in Atlanta, located in a Mansion protected by mystical powers. Some call her the All-Knowing, rumored to be only a few hundred years old but with a very potent blood.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: She opens her doors to Leopold and displays mystical rituals. She convinces him that she is able to find out his sire's identity through magic. She represents one of the most powerful kindreds in Atlanta that is amongst the first to fall to the hands of the Sabbat.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: As any other Tremere member, Hannah has her own agenda, and for some reason she needs Leopold to sculpt her in a realistic way. She intends to take part in the party organized by Victoria but that becomes an impossibility when she is murdered.

IMAGE: Hannah is known for her frozen demeanor, as she can be completely emotionless while engaging in social situations. Her attitude is the same toward friend or foe, no one will ever be fooled by Hannah, for she seems not to attempt deception. She is not shy about letting other know when their desires or goals align. Usually wears a thick robe with a hood. Well hidden under this robe hides a thin and fashioned body, with an emaciation considered beautiful by modern standards.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Thelonious

RESUME: Thelonious is a rebel by nature and is in a quest to gather all Brujah clansmen to demand respect from the Prince of Atlanta.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He shows that part of the Camarilla is not satisfied with the power game and agrees to the hierarchy system they have. The tension between him and the Prince are very useful for Victoria.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Better than simply overthrowing the Prince is to replace him by a Brujah that can understand what most of the kindreds in the city feel. But one step at the time, not all his allies seem reliable enough to attempt such an act.

IMAGE: Instead of the typical byker street punk look, Thelonious tries to always be between casual and formal, with modern suits, but never wearing a tie, that's too much

for him. In formal occasions he wears his African traditional clothes, that goes well with his black skin color and defined muscles.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Benjamin

RESUME: As any other member of the clan Ventrue, Benjamin is also in line for fame and fortune, but defying the Prince is not in his plans, but the unstable Thelonious might be not just a problem but also a useful tool to achieve his goals.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He is also an obstacle for Victoria, and his unfinished business with Thelonious might be his weak point. So he is one of the ingredients for Victoria's plan.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wants to settle things with Thelonious because facing this Prince leaves them no space to maneuver unnoticed, so if Thelonious is associated with him, he is also in danger when he rebels. He wants to attend the party at the Museum to take care of the Thelonous situation before its too late.

IMAGE: His very dark skin shines when he wears his Armani grey suits, and he tends to be always formal, no matter the situation. The Ventrus tend to be in political situations often so his posture is that of a serious and concentrated politician most of the times.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Cyndy

RESUME: This Toreador had inherited the adjectives "vapid" and "witless" before Victoria arrived in Atlanta, and now Cyndy feels quite threatened by Victoria.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: Cyndy enhances the beauty and presence of Victoria as a support character by contradiction. With none of the abilities and remarkable qualities that the older Toreador possesses.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: She also wants fame and fortune in the Camarilla but she knows the competition is overwhelming but tries to ignore it and give it a try anyway.

IMAGE: Short sized but attractive. Her movements are not so much as feminine but more clumsy, like she lacks dexterity.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Stella

RESUME: This caitiff vampire (clanless, the lowest rank of the vampires in the Camarilla) is the closest to a friend Leopold has. If Leopold ever needed a shoulder to cry or look for confidence, it would be Stella's.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: She knows she has no value as a kindred in this sect so she makes up in motivation and tries to understand better what at stakes. She explains Leopold (and the audience) more about the other characters and the politics among other clans like the Tremere and the Nosferatu.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Her main objective is survival, because she is noticing that at every corner there are sharks, so she wants to know who they are and what they do before she gets caught. She feels Leopold needs a friend, and she also needs a friend so it's a mutual and profitable friendship.

IMAGE: She has some class, and while she lacks some feminine attributes, like voluptuousness, she is compensated by her dress-code choices. In the party of Victoria, she dresses in a tuxedo which grated her petite frame and short-cut hair a certain charming and sexual quality.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Clarice

RESUME: Member of the Ventrue clan, Clarice is one of the habitants of Atlanta that hopes that the Prince keeps everything in order so she can continue to live at peace. Strangely for a Ventrue politics are not her main priority, and as much as she likes art, she lacks the touch of a Toreador.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: She reflects a lousy art appreciator that enhances Victoria's experience in the area. In her conversation with Victoria at the party, they talk about the Masquerade, and it is important that the notion of it is associated with these two clans (Ventrue and Toreador) since they are the main founders of it.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Clarice wants to continue to play politics in a safe environment, and she believes the Prince has the power to keep everything on order.

IMAGE: Taller than most woman, and with a large figure, Clarice has the posture of a chief nun, but in reality she doesn't act so formally and rigid.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Julius

RESUME: This powerful kindred represents authority of the Camarilla where he goes. Member of the clan Brujah, his position is referred to as Archon, an agent that acts as the eyes and hands of one of the Justicars (the highest authority of the Camarilla).

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He is the main piece in Victoria's plan to take the place of Benison, because Julius is the only kindred strong enough to engage on a hand to hand fight and come out in one piece. He represents one kind of authority superior to Benison, but to a Prince that is not used to bow down to others he is a threat to his domain.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He has to put the Prince in his place, for some groups of kindred in his city are rebelling (incited by Thelonious), they are forming one Anarch group that is a danger to the masquerade and the stability of the city. The Prince has been using his human resources but to no success so far. Julius came as a guest of Victoria but sure would take the opportunity to pressure the Prince into resolving his conflicts.

IMAGE: He looks like a brute man but moves like a cat. Julius is a large black man with long and dreadlocked hair. In his handsome and strong face there are several purple scars, one stretches from his eye to his forehead, other lines his right cheek and a deep one comes from his left ear to his square chin. His outfit is composed by baggy red pants and tight fitting black turtleneck, across which drapes an antique bandolier. In his back, strapped in a cross-pattern are his broadswords for which he has a reputation of being a master swordsman.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Prince J. Benison Hodge

RESUME: Prince Benison is the judge, the ruler and the authority of Atlanta. He enforces the Traditions, such as the Masquerade, the Domain and feeding grounds, and the right to progeny. His position is the equivalent of an Archbishop of the Sabbat. He is member of the Malkavian clan possessing incredible powers of madness and illusion.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He represents one of the most important positions in Camarilla hierarchy and is the obstacle that Victoria needs to remove in order to proceed with her goals.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He is, due to his clan condition, a megalomaniac. So when dealing with other kindred, even if superior in hierarchy, he thinks he is omnipotent. For him, Antediluvians are only a myth, he is at the top of the food chain. The Justicars hide in the shadows ruling the Camarilla with archons as pet dogs while he has the real responsibility of ruling a city, showing his face in political affairs and using his fists if he has too. His main objective is to hold on to the power with his wife to his side.

IMAGE: This kindred projects a powerful aura, standing a little over six feet tall. He thinks, acts and talks like royalty. His beard was a common detail in kings from past centuries, and his long thick arms and legs and bull chest impose respect from even the most confident enemy.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Eleanor

RESUME: She is the Prince's true love, a rare thing among the Immortals. Although the Prince was known for making rash decisions over which Eleanor presumably had no sway or council, she was his partner, therefore she ruled equally.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: She is the Prince's soul mate and when she dies, the Prince loses his mind for a while and it seems that the powers of madness control him instead of the other way around. She also represents the greatest competition for Victoria Ash, who might seem a undisputed Goddess until Eleanor appears.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: She is nothing more than a noblewoman with ambitions of power, and as his fantastically powerful husband, she has delusions of grander and wants more and needs more.

IMAGE: Eleanor was not quite as beautiful as Victoria but the few physical shortcomings were compensated by the other delicately crafted and boasted exquisite qualities that left men speechless, such as milky pale skin, green eyes and high, regal cheekbones. This was only possible by the phenomenal control she possessed over the powers of Kindred that Victoria also possessed and used to her advantage.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Rolph

RESUME: Rolph is a member of the clan Nosferatu, and as all his clanmates he suffers from a horrible disfiguration, which is the characteristic flaw of his clan.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: Rolph represents one kind of vampires that his appearance is simply to horrible to the naked eye. Although they still play the game of the immortal society, and in this case he goes to the party to repay an old debt the Nosferatu own to the Followers of Set, for which Vegel is the representative in the party. Rolph introduces the Eye of Hazimel to the story and the first traces that something might go wrong at the party.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He wished to complete the task his masters sent him to do, which is pass the magical artifact (Eye of Hazimel) to Vegel's possession, and help him escape unnoticed.

IMAGE: He usually presents himself as a dark-clad and hooded figure. He hides his monstrous facial features, his leper skin, crooked nose and a much to sharp and long chin. He is of average height but usually crouches, a consequence from his deficient spine and years of walking in small tunnels in the underground labyrinth of the cities.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Outros

Vegel

RESUME: Member of clan Followers of Set, Vegel is devoted to his clan's affairs, and since he is from the independents (nor Camarilla, nor Sabbat) he sometimes attends events on both sides. In this case he had no idea what was it about since the Nosferato always make it very secretly.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: He shares Victoria's appreciation for art, its his line of work, more in the sense he looks for precious artifacts and the such. When he receives the Eye of Hazimel he knows he is in danger and so by fighting all the obstacles in his way until there is no more option than to try to use the Eye itself, Vegel shows what a kindred can do for survival.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: He goes to the party because of the meeting with Rolph, when he receives the magical item he understands it will not be easy taking it out of there so his main objective is taking the Eye to safe place and also surviving in this attempt.

IMAGE: As most setites, this one has a Egyptian touch in his skin and eyes. He is a tall, straight and narrow man that can sometimes assume a body shape and attributes of snakes, like impossible jaw opening and members reducing, enabling him to pass through really small holes.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*

Warghoul

RESUME: This monster is a creation of the Tzimisce, a mishmash of living beings melded together into an elephant-sized, multi-limbed monster. About half a dozen lobotomized ghouls are merged through Koldunic sorcery and Vicissitude, resulting in a giant and powerfull, walking biological weapon.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: It's the culmination of depravity among the Sabbat, the result of fleshcrafting and bonecrafting power forming this battle machines. They are the horror in this story, the personification of evil in physical form.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Their only objective is to kill. War-ghouls are usually starved before a battle, so they may be pointed in the general direction of the opposing forces. They are nearly as dangerous to their creators as they are to their enemies, thus typically deployed into the enemy's soldiers.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: Vicissitude is the most versatile of the Disciplines, and is often used in tandem with extensive ghouling. Tzimisce tend to deform their servants into war-forms szlachta, which are optimized for combat through extensive bone plating, spiked forearms and other modifications. True masters of fleshcrafting are capable of fusing multiple victims together into mammoth killing machines known as war-ghouls, but such creations are incredibly rare.

IMAGE: The end result of creating a war-ghoul is the equivalent of a flesh-and-bone tank: huge, slow, unintelligent and devastatingly powerful. Excess tissue can be molded to bestow carapaces, spines, claws, tusks, palps, mandibles, fanged maws or whatever the creators desire. War-ghouls are mindless and unsalvageably mad, killing, eating or trampling anything in their path. Since the process of becoming a war-ghoul invariably drives the component beings insane, some Tzimisce lobotomize their victims before the gestalten assembly occurs. A lobotomized beast is immune to Animalism, Dominate and Presence;

SOURCES: *Clan Novel, Guide to the Sabbat, Clanbook Tzimisce.*

Confederate soldier regiment 37

RESUME: From the American Civil War (1861–1865), also known as the War Between the States, was a civil war in the United States of America.

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS: This collective character is a materialization of a power that only a Malkavian possesses, in this case Prince Benison. He conjures in the minds of their enemies, and in his own, a living memory of the past, when he fought side by side with this soldiers.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES: Point and shoot what is in front of them.

IMAGE: Two hundred of shabby dressed Confederate soldiers form double rank lines, bearing muskets ready to fire.

SOURCES: *Clan Novel*, Wikipedia.

The World of Darkness The Fall of Atlanta

Written by
Ângelo González

Based on the novels
Clan Novel Toreador by Stewart Wieck
and
Clan novel Tzimisce by Eric Griffin

Inspired on the storytelling game
Vampire the Masquerade
by White Wolf Game Studio

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

LEOPOLD sits with MICHELLE draped across his lap. They are both naked, but it is cold in his workshop basement. Though unconscious, Michelle reacts to the chill.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

As he did with all the potential models he brought home, Leopold had picked up Michelle along Ponce before nearing his Piedmont Avenue home in Atlanta.

He follows her body lines, like a blind man playing a piano and reads her curves with the tips of his fingers until he reaches the tiny holes.

He'd bitten her inner thigh, where the femoral artery begins its descent down the length of her leg.

HAZIMEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Those that seemed disinclined to join him could always be nudged a bit. Leopold knew few of the potentially awesome powers possessed by some of his kind, but he had no trouble convincing most mortals that he was harmless and friendly.

Leopold inspects her wound. He wets his tongue in his mouth and extends it towards the holes. As he licks them, the rent skin mends and leaves no trace of the bite.

Crossed-legged on the floor with her body supported by his bare lap, he regards Michelle herself, comparing his own white, dried corpse with her vivid and soft skin. With one of his slender fingers, Leopold wipes a few strands of dirty hair from her face and gazes at her.

HAZIMEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She was pretty, yes, but he was never one for pets and on some level he needed to ingrain the reality of his still relatively new station in life: he was Kindred, a being that could only be considered superior to mortals.

He carefully shims out from under Michelle, leaving her like a ragdoll on the floor. After gathering her clothing and tucking it under his arm, Leopold stops and gains hold of each of her armpits and partly drags, partly carries her toward the stairs and then up into the first-floor of the old and worn-out house.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Dawn inches closer. He hurries Michelle through the corridor and towards the door of the bedroom.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is a bit of a mess. A bed with blankets and sheets half on and half off the bed. Many articles of men's and a few of women's clothing sprinkle about the floor.

Michelle's clothes fall to the floor, he hoists her onto the bed and covers her with a sheet and a blanket. He opens the closet. A small safe is bolted to the floor beneath the draping shadows of shirts and pants on hangers.

Leopold works the dial and promptly opens the safe. He withdraws a few items, closes the safe and the closet doors and walks to the dresser. He spreads the items across the wood surface in a somewhat random fashion. Twelve dollars. A film of cocaine powder and a nose straw. And finally a small bag with several draws of coke still in it.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

Almost without fail, the desperate women he brought to his house would grab the cash and the coke and flee the premises before the man she didn't remember re-turned to catch her or perhaps desire intercourse again. The Masquerade prevails.

He checks if everything is in place and closes the door behind him.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

The basement doors are made of heavy and practically unbreakable oak, he bolts and bars them from the inside.

EXT. CITY OF ATLANTA. - DAY
PARALLEL MONTAGE WITH THE NEXT SCENE

The sun appears in the horizon. Most people's lives begin again. They live in fast-forward. Seen from above they are no more than ants, lines of dots and dots moving in the streets, parks, schools, shopping malls.

Night falls.

In a dark street, near the High Museum of Atlanta, a little spider works on the project of an ambitious web, extending from the corner of one building to the nearest street lamp that flickers randomly.

INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

A woman whispers to the little boy, AARON. He sleeps quietly in her lap, they face the magnificent artwork of the enormous doors of hell and heaven. The set of doors are disposed like both of them just died and are about to be judged, all feels like a dream.

WOMAN

You know the saddest thing?
The saddest thing is that we're
you.
In your fantasies, my people are
just like you, only better. We
don't die, or age or suffer from
pain or cold or thirst. We're
snappier dressers. We possess the
wisdom of ages. And if we crave
blood, well, it is no more than the
way you people crave food, or
affection, or sunlight - and
besides, it gets us out of the
house, crypt, coffin, whatever.

It is impossible to see the woman's face, but the boy is a beautiful child, the kind that would be carved in stone as an angel in some cathedral.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

We're you.
We're you, with all your fuck-ups
and all the things that make you
human, all your fears and
loneliness and confusions... none
of that gets better.
It's like getting famous or getting
rich. You're the same person you
were when you were unknown or poor.
Only worse. All the bad things are
magnified, and you don't remember
where the good things are anymore.
It's all that, but it's more. We're
colder than you are. Deader. I
remember what it was to feel
something, anything, happy or sad
or anything...

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The motorcyclist speeds over the dark streets of Atlanta. He looks in the side mirror, suspicious that someone tailed him. THOMAS pumps the gas handle hard driving his BMW to 120 m.p.h., he makes a final dash across a stretch of open ground towards a massive edifice of brick and steel.

INT. STEEL MILL, STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas kills the motorcycle engine. He hops off the bike and sees THELONIOUS preaching to the gang of eight.

THELONIOUS

As for the police, perhaps we can frighten them off, or at least buy ourselves a little time. Benison, or the Prince of Atlanta as most of you know him, will not continue to spit in our clan's name. He calls us "wild pack of street punks"...

One of the gang spits to the floor on this remark, but it accidentally lands on his fellow's boot. No one of the others notices. They really fit Benison's description.

THELONIOUS (CONT'D)

Fuck him! We are the free spirit! Yes, he's got great influence on mortals. He's got a leach on the police, the courts, the fucking media, we know it. But we are all brothers here. I will not continue to bow down to the Camarilla's arrogant princes in every city they claim domain!

Thomas steps closer to the speaker and the others notice him in the badly lit storage room.

THELONIOUS (CONT'D)

Do you bring a message, or were simply returning to HQ?

THOMAS

I...do have a message.

THELONIOUS

Then give it to me.

Thomas pulls a sealed envelope from his waist and thrusts it clumsily toward Thelonious. Both stand aside from the group.

THELONIOUS (CONT'D)

It's from Benjamin.

THOMAS

Benjamin?

THELONIOUS

The Ventrue.
He says I should attend the party to-morrow night. Benison will be there...

He turns back to his audience. His voice echoes towards the already distracted bunch.

THELONIOUS (CONT'D)

Meet at the next safehouse in two nights.

Then he disappears into the blackness of the night.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

Leopold stands and pushes the stool away so he might have freedom to pace about the pedestal upon which the clay rests. He places his right hand on the clay and then walks clockwise about it. He plays this for several moments. A cat toying with its prey.

Within a matter of ten flurried moments, the ungainly lump of clay is whittled down to a vaguely humanoid bust and Leopold is covered with dollops of the stuff.

The form of a woman's face slowly gouges, carves and smoothes its way into existence, while he is absorbed by the artistic trance. Then he snaps out of it. The sculptor falters, even drops his carving blade and stands slack-jawed and dazed.

INT. THE SKYLINE HOTEL, LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

BENJAMIN stands on the top floor of this downtown hotel, overlooking the beautiful nighttime of Atlanta.

This top floor is officially full of equipment and only partially completed. A computer on a desk. A small side table. A large map table with ten flat drawers to store documents.

Benjamin walks away from the window towards the map table. His hand drifts to a single sheet of paper. Upon it is written:

THELONIOUS (V.O.)

Now is the time to take steps to block Benison. I know your secret, Benjamin, and Benison could learn of it at tomorrow night's affair.

At the bottom, Thelonious signature.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT

Leopold is instantly fully alert and conscious.

An astonishingly lovely woman stares back at Leopold. This is not a piece lost halfway to completion. It's a realized work, something of beauty.

The face is lit by a slight smile, but it's the woman's other features that give dimension to this expression. This comes mostly from the eyes, which seem slightly Asian in their bent. There's amusement in them. The cheeks are full but tapered to a narrow chin. Above, a single lock of hair falls across her forehead.

What he notices, then, are the woman's fangs. They aren't obvious, but the slightly parted mouth revealed the narrow tips of both upper teeth.

Leopold steadies himself on the pedestal, leans forward with both palms pressed on the surface that also supports the bust and his legs spread a long pace behind him as if he is about to be frisked by policemen. His head drops between his arms and hangs like a motionless pendulum from his torso.

LEOPOLD

V... Victoria.

INT. THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Aaron is by the enormous Hell doors, looking up at the magnificent sculptures that occupy its front panels.

The doors of Hell open and we see the woman from the beginning. But now we recognize her.

VICTORIA

There you are you little devil. I see you are still curious. I suppose I could tell you a bedtime story...

"In the First Times, when memory can no longer reach, there was a city called Nod, where the light of Paradise lit up the night sky. In the first city there lived two brothers. Cain, the first-born, who planted the dark seeds and watched them grow. And Abel, the second-born, who tended the animals, fed them and watched them grow.

The doors of Hell have panels in which we see the representations of Victoria's tale. She takes Aaron by the hand and points out some panels. To the boys eyes, some of them seem to gain life and follow the rhythm of her voice.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Then one day their Father told them they must make a sacrifice to Him Above. And Cain gathered the tender shoots, the brightest fruits and the sweetest grass.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And Abel slaughtered the youngest, the strongest and the sweetest of his animals. The offers were laid on the altar of sacrifices, above the fires. And they watched the smoke carry the sacrifices up to the One Above.

The sacrifice of Abel smelled sweet to the One Above and he was blessed. And Cain was struck from beyond by a harsh word and a curse, for his sacrifice was unworthy. And Cain cried. He prayed night and day, until Father said the time for sacrifice had come again.

Once again Abel led his youngest, sweetest and most beloved to the sacrificial fire. And Abel was surprised for his brother, Cain, did not bring anything to the altar. And Cain cried tears of love as he, with sharp things sacrificed that which was the first part of his joy, his brother. The Blood of Abel covered the altar. And Cain was cursed by the one above, for killing his brother, exiled to wander in the Darkness for all Eternity. This is the legend of the Dark Father, the one who made us what we are today. Nonsense, but beautifully sculpted anyway.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT

Victoria still fills Leopold's thoughts and the night is at pause when he thinks of her.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

It was the result Leopold feared the most: an answer. But one plagued with innumerable more questions. His answer was only that he could indeed sculpt a Kindred. But why Victoria? He needed more answers. And so he thought of Hannah.

Leopold stands on the sidewalk staring at the mansion on the other side of the street.

INT. LEOPOLD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT, SCULPTURE STUDIO - NIGHT
FLASHBACK: 1 YEAR AGO

GIRL

Let go of me you freak!

Leopold is holding the skinny arm as the girl squeezes out and trips on some debris of clay. Suddenly the uncooperative twitchy girl screams and points at a black-clad and hooded figure standing at the base of the stairs. He almost screams too, but HANNAH promptly lowers her hood and Leopold recognizes her face.

HANNAH

I understand that you cannot sculpt
the likeness of a kindred.

Her voice is so uninflected that Leopold has trouble paying attention to the words and its meaning. The frightened girl shrieks again, hurling herself at Leopold and pleading for protection, but her voice gurgles to a halt and she collapses to the floor. He crouches to the fallen girl and rolls her over.

LEOPOLD

Yes, that's true.

He brushes some debris from one of her breasts and off her stomach and props her into a sitting position against a pedestal.

Hannah approaches them.

HANNAH

Try me.

She grabs the mortal by the foot and drags her toward one chair. Leopold shivers at the creepy sight.

LEOPOLD

Unless you know Tremere magic that
can break my block, then you're
wasting your time.

Hannah sits in the chair and hefts the naked girl on to her black-robed lap and holds her still.

HANNAH

Start with the kine and slowly
include me in the sculpture.

Hannah remained in absolute stillness for hours while Leopold tried to complete his work.

Hannah suddenly stands, toppling the human off her lap. The clay reveals the kine but Hannah's image remains a crude outline without mirroring a single distinguishing characteristic. She walks to the base of the stairs from where she first appeared and looks back.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I brought no magic to break your block, but that does not mean that Tremere magic cannot assist you in the future.

EXT. PIEDMONT AVENUE, ATLANTA - NIGHT
RETURN TO PRESENT

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

This mysterious offer from Hannah was all he had. Not that any deal with Hannah would be anything other than a deal with the devil, but for some strange reason, she seemed to have a personal interest in Leopold, and he thought that could potentially benefit him with some valuable answers.

The mansion is enormous, four complete stories high with great windows capable of illuminating entire ballrooms with sunlight, now cloaked by thick, velvet curtains perpetually drawn.

He crosses the street and follows along a short path toward the great iron gate. He notices that two security cameras rotate towards him and stop. Leopold looks directly into one of the cameras and hesitantly waves.

He glances back at the street to see if anyone is passing, and when he sees all is clear, he speaks quietly toward one of the cameras.

LEOPOLD

I am Leopold of the Toreador Clan,
and I request an audience with...
ah, Hannah.

In a moment the iron gate cracked open, showing the massive front doors of the mansion. He walks steadily towards them. The walkway is poorly lit, and a nervous feeling tickles him when the gates behind him close.

As he mounts the first of six brick steps, Leopold detects a shadow out of the corner of his eye. He nearly trips on the step in fright when a better inspection of the shadows reveal a pair of black mastiffs. They are both hunkered down and seem ready to pounce and, in an instant, rip out his throat.

He stands for a moment watching them drink in his scent with twitching noses. Then the front doors of the house open, and Leopold retreats toward the rounded and open frame.

INT. GREAT HALL, MANSION - NIGHT

It's dark inside the room, though "chamber" is probably more apt for the impressive enclosure. The door swings shut of its own accord, leaving Leopold alone. There is no one to greet him, so he pauses a moment to examine the decorations.

They are all unsettling. The room itself is large and high. The ceiling extends at least three stories up, and various macabre portraits decorate the upper reaches of the walls.

Leopold notes a mirror on the wall, past a framed document of a confession of a convicted witch, but despite great curiosity, he resists peering within it.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

Leopold had heard stories of countless ways that the power of Kindred blood could be tapped, and at the heart of a majority of these stories were the Tremere, a clan rumored to be descended not from Caine but from a secret cabal of wizards who had transformed themselves in the Middle Ages.

Leopold stands for a moment, alternately surveying each of the vantages the room held over him, but spying nobody to attend to him, he takes a seat on a large red divan.

A white-bearded older man enters the chamber through the doors that face the front door. He is tugging at the sleeves of his tuxedo coat.

BUTLER

Pardon me, sir, but in absence of expectation of visitors this evening I'm afraid the staff has gone a bit lax.

The man is Caucasian and his white hair bristles along the line of his jaw only. He is of average height and rather haggard appearance.

LEOPOLD

I wish to speak with Hannah, mistress of this chantry.

BUTLER

Indeed, Lady Hannah has been appraised of your presence, Mr. Leopold, and she has instructed that you be escorted to her at once. You will please follow me, and please sir, do not stray a step from the path we take. If you do, you are liable to come to great harm, great confusion or both.

LEOPOLD
Great confusion?

BUTLER
Yes, sir. Though the hallways seem entirely trivial to navigate, a wayward step is likely to deposit you in another wing of this house, or another house entirely. So please take care.

The man takes a small candle-holder from a low shelf at the foot of the stairs. Also on that shelf are a number of narrow tallow candles. He places one within the holder and snaps his fingers above its wick. It lights instantly, burning with a steady yellow flame.

The man, steps to the base of the stairs, a great curling staircase wound along the wall, and looks over his shoulder toward Leopold before mounting the first step.

The Toreador takes this as a sign to follow, and he immediately falls in step behind the servant. He reacts too quickly, though, and steps on the servant's heel, causing the old man to stumble forward.

LEOPOLD
Sorry.

Leopold helps the man to his feet. The servant accepts the help, but he doesn't reply to the Toreador's apology or even look at him. He merely dusted himself off and mounts the first step.

Leopold was still close enough to hear him whisper a name.

BUTLER
Hannah.

At the mention of Hannah's name, the light loses its yellow hue and assumes a violet-colored flame. The purplish flame somehow leads the servant to Hannah's current location, and he flinches downward as if he were inspecting the light every time the pair achieve an intersection of possible paths.

The path the flame leads them along is extremely confusing. They pass through archways, traverse long and empty corridors, enter hallways and rooms through doors that seem to serve no purpose, and generally take such a circumlocutious route that Leopold retains absolutely no hint of the direction by which he might return.

Eventually they come to a halt before an ornate door that Leopold cannot not clearly see.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

Hannah is within this chamber. I will not announce you as it was her request that I not do so. She might be in the midst of careful work, so I implore you to enter quietly and await her to address you. To do otherwise would be to abuse her generosity sorely in seeing you at all this evening, young Toreador.

LEOPOLD

I understand.
But should I not simply wait outside the door until she beckons me within?

BUTLER

Such was not her request. Now please enter.

Leopold watches the servant's figure recede down the hallway. So he steps to the door. Only now when within a foot of the door can Leopold appreciate the quality of the carving on the oak door.

The door depicts a scene from the Greek myths, for the three headed dog, Cerberus, stands faithfully and realistically rendered in a position before the gates to Hades.

He opens the door and enters.

INT. ARCANE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

The room inside is filled with a thin reddish smoke that drifts in diffuse clouds. It's mostly dark, but candlelight from every corner illuminates the area just enough to cause the smoke to seem to glow. Leopold steps into the room and quickly closes the door behind him.

He hears the regular ding of some small percussion instrument. In the center of the room a silhouette, makes a slight movement. The perimeter walls of the room are lined with books of various shapes and misshapes.

And through the silky strands of red smoke, Leopold notes that Hannah stands within a pentagram fashioned of metal and inlaid in the floor. She lifts her left arm and mechanically crashes two fingers together that have cymbals attached.

Gradually, the pace of the beat hastens, and Hannah's ringing cymbals seemed louder. Candlelight begins to flash in time with the beat. First one candle and in a moment a second in unison with the first flared at the musical beat. The beat is quick enough now, that Hannah is chiming her finger cymbals once a second. A third and a fourth candle joint the pulsing rhythm.

Now, a slight wind seems to blow through the room, and its gusts also join the timing of the music and candles. The red smoke that drifts lazily about the room now, takes a shape demanded by the air flow, spinning as it is blown by each timed gust. Slowly, as if unwilling to kneel to the wind, the smoke coalesces into an air funnel that surrounds Hannah.

The beat is so rapid now that Hannah's fingers chime more than three times a second. Then, the fifth candle flares and a blinding flash floods the room as all the candles spill intense white light.

When Leopold urged his eyes to open, he finds the chamber mostly dark again. Hannah remains in the center of the chamber, and her hand is yet outstretched, though she does not clash the cymbals again.

The red smoke still swirls, only a couple of feet high from Hannah's uplifted hand. The smoke becomes denser and denser and the red transforms to ruby and that to the crimson of blood as the funnel compacts further, reducing slowly in size until Leopold can just barely make it out in the light spinning on Hannah's palm.

Her outstretched hand suddenly snaps close, Leopold jumps, startled by the movement after the hypnotic spinning of the smoke. As he calms himself, Hannah throws back her hood and regards him.

LEOPOLD

I thought the Tremere did not share
their secrets.

Hannah is silent and it is she who breaks eye contact to examine the contents of her hand. The brief look Leopold gains reveals only that the smoke must have solidified into a physical object or some sort, something that is still red.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

Your magic, I mean. I thought the
Tremere did not allow others to
learn their magic.

HANNAH

That's usually true.

LEOPOLD

Then-

HANNAH

From what substance have the
candles been fashioned?

LEOPOLD

I don't-

HANNAH

What was the order of the notes my cymbals rang?

LEOPOLD

I'm not-

HANNAH

What direction was I facing?

This time, Leopold remains silent.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You see? I have revealed nothing to you. Not yet at least.

LEOPOLD

What do you mean?

HANNAH

Follow me into the next room, Cainite.

The statement is so matter-of-fact that it is something between a request and a command. Leopold follows her.

Hannah steps to one of the walls, when she brushes her hands against its surface, the candles suddenly extinguished themselves. A moment later, the illuminated outline of a door is revealed.

INT. OFFICE ROOM, MANSION - NIGHT

Leopold steps into a room that is in stark contrast to everything else he'd seen in the Tremere chantry. It sports the furnishings and character of an archetypical corporate office. There is a small wet bar, a large, flat-topped oak desk, aerial photos of golf courses hanging framed on the walls, two plush chairs that face the desk with a small round table supporting a humidor between them.

Hannah is seated in a leather executive chair behind the huge desk. She places the object in her left hand on the desk, and it is immediately recognizable to Leopold as a vial of blood. He unconsciously licks his lips.

LEOPOLD

You said that night you visited me in my workshop that there might be a way you could help me in the future.

HANNAH

Indeed. There are some doubtless many ways I could help you.

LEOPOLD

You're probably right, though I'm sure you could name more ways than I could.

He looks up at that, with a slight grin on his face, but Hannah's face is still an emotional blank.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

But I'm hoping for one particular kind of help.

HANNAH

Of course. You seek the identity of your sire, the one who made you what you are now.

Leopold is stunned.

LEOPOLD

Yes, that's true. How could you possibly know?

She remains silent.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

Are there others who know of this uncertainty of mine as well?

HANNAH

It's unlikely that there are many. I can help you, of course.

Hannah indicates the vial of dark blood on her desk.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

That's what this is for, after all.

She raises an eyebrow at him, which on her face seems to the Toreador an almost stunning display of emotion.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

But you must tell me something first.

LEOPOLD

If I can.

HANNAH

Why should I help you?

LEOPOLD

As I am clearly the one between us who knows so little, I propose that you tell me why you should help me.

Hannah's eyes narrowed to slits, contracting not like a human's but more like a snake's.

HANNAH

Yes, there is perhaps one reason I might help you. You must promise to sculpt me-

LEOPOLD

But you know I cannot sculpt kin... Cainites. We established that when you vi-sited my work... shop... that... ni...

Her left eyebrow raises, then she cranes her neck forward a bit, and finally slits her eyes in that serpent-like manner again.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

But I've done it once now, so perhaps I can do it again. I agree to try, but inability cannot be constructed as failure.

HANNAH

Agreed, but there is more to my price.

LEOPOLD

Oh?

Hannah stands and walks around the desk toward the Toreador.

HANNAH

The sculpture must be life-size and life-like. No artistic interpretation. It must also be full-figure, not merely a bust or a portrait.

LEOPOLD

I can agree to all that.

HANNAH

Finally, it must be from memory. I will not model for the sculpture.

Leopold presses himself back in the large chair, for Hannah is practically standing on top of him now.

LEOPOLD

That's a bit more difficult, and some life-like details are bound to be lost, but I'm sure I can execute that work with reasonable success.

HANNAH

Then I will model now, to guarantee more than a 'reasonable' success.

Like a snake shedding its skin, Hannah rolls her shoulders and her thick robe slides off her torso and splashes down to her knees. Beneath the robe, she is naked, and beyond the surprise of this, Leopold is startled by the fine features of her body. She is almost painfully thin, but such emaciation is considered beautiful by modern standards.

Her narrow waist is wonderfully fashioned and its lines taper upward toward a stomach that gives way to precious, gem-like breasts.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Touch me.

He reaches the fingertips of both hands towards the Tremere and traces them along the slight curves of her sides.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

No.

Leopold quickly flinches in retreat.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

More. You must memorize me not only with your eyes but with your hands as well. Explore me, young Toreador, and think on this promise you've given. Commit my body to memory.

Hannah takes one of his hands in hers and splays the fingers wide. Then she presses his open hand on her naked thigh. He closes his eyes, rubbing, and exploring for a few minutes.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Enough.

The word jolts Leopold back to the corporate office in which he sits. The Tremere dips to retrieve her robe and secures it over her shoulders again. She steps toward her chair and sits facing Leopold once again.

Leopold is in something akin to shock and finds himself slow to recover.

LEOPOLD

I sometimes enter a trance when I do my best sculpting. I believe I must have done the same just now in order to memorize the contour of your body as you requested.

HANNAH

You were quite thorough, indeed.

LEOPOLD

The result will be better for it.

Hannah returns to her silent staring.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

So what exactly does that vial contain?

HANNAH

You may imagine it to be synthetic vitae. It has not been drawn directly from Kindred or Kine, but it would fuel the former and transfuse into any of the latter without rejection.

LEOPOLD

And I-

HANNAH

You will drink it tonight.

LEOPOLD

And afterwards?

HANNAH

It must remain in your system for a full day, so do not burn it through activity tonight. After that time, a simple ritual I can perform in but a moment, at this coming night's party, will provide some information that will put me on the track of some helpful information.

LEOPOLD

It will reveal the identity of my sire?

HANNAH

Perhaps.

LEOPOLD

Very well, then, I'd best proceed as it seems that dawn is but an hour or so away, and I must yet return to my haven.

Hannah pinches the vial between a thumb and forefinger and extends it over the plane of her desk. Leopold stands and accepts it. He looks at the Tremere.

HANNAH

Proceed.

He squeezes the cork and carefully pulls it out. With the pop of a champagne bottle, the cork slips free. A pleasing rich and earthy odor entrances Leopold and he opens his throat as to catch every bit of blood, and drinks it in-stantly.

He looks at Hannah as he replaces the empty vial atop the desk.

LEOPOLD

So, there's nothing else that needs be done tonight?

HANNAH

That completes our business for now, Toreador. We have more services to perform for the other, but you understand that your price must be paid regardless of my ritual's success or failure.

LEOPOLD

Yes. I understand, just as you surely likewise accept that I may be unable to execute the sculpture of another Kindred. I hope that I can do so, however, as I look forward to sculpting your likeness. Your exact likeness.

HANNAH

My servant waits outside the door. He will escort you out, a journey you'll find somewhat simpler than your entrance.

Leopold nods, but as he turns to leave, pauses, and looks back at Hannah.

LEOPOLD

When you first visited me that night a year ago...?

HANNAH

Yes?

LEOPOLD

What did I do to the girl after you left?

Hannah smiled, and that made Leopold visibly shiver, for she had never done that before.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

I don't recall, but for some reason I'm certain you know.

HANNAH

I do indeed possess that knowledge, young Cainite.

She levels her gaze directly into his eyes.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 You got down on your hands and
 knees and begged for her
 forgiveness.

Leopold glances the floor and then back up at Hannah.

LEOPOLD
 Did she grant it?

Hannah's smile slowly eases from her lips.

HANNAH
 I'll tell you that tomorrow night
 as well. Now begone.

Leopold leaves, closing the carved oak door gently behind
 him.

INT. CAR, NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria is delighted with herself. She savors the final few
 moments of her chauffeured ride by settling even more deeply
 into the downy-soft leather of the seats.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)
 There was difficulty planning the
 celebration on such short notice,
 but if the Toreador conventions
 allowed the candlelight plots of
 Victoria Ash to flicker unnoticed
 and to get her one step closer to
 her goal, then these situations
 could be very valuable to her.

Victoria stretches her slender arm toward the central control
 panel, her limb is covered from her upper arm to the tips of
 her fingers in a silken glove that accentuates the poise and
 flair of this beautiful woman.

Pressing a speaker button she lazily commands.

VICTORIA
 Go by the front first. Slowly.

She observes the High Museum of Art from the interior of the
 dark car. The white structure is four stories high, on a
 small rise in downtown Atlanta. The entire building appears
 to be dark and empty for the night.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)
 She was the hostess of the Summer
 Solstice Ball and it was her duty
 to provide the privacy this
 particular party would need from
 the mortal eyes.

Special spy lenses that look like ordinary opera glasses allow Victoria to penetrate the seemingly opaque glass set inside the High's standard windows on that top floor. The glasses reveal approximately a dozen Kindred present, which pleases Victoria.

As she tucks the lens away in an inconspicuous compartment she presses the button again.

VICTORIA
To the elevator now.

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

A Little spider continues its work on a magnificent web. It shines now, almost complete, at the bright light of the street lamp near it.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Rolls-Royce stops before the elevator doors in the High Museum's garage. One of her servants opens the car door for her. The Toreador kicks one sandaled foot through the opening and slowly extends her hand as well. Her hand is immediately accepted by a strong grip as one of the doormen helps her out of the car.

Now, out of the concealment of the black windowed car, we can fully absorb her astounding beauty.

Her curled hair is perfect, it seems weightless in its curled suspension, for it hangs above her shoulders but jostles down to kiss the silk of her faux-Grecian yet stylish dress when she moves.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)
For the remainder of the night, the eyes of others would speak to her of her beauty, for she was as gorgeous as ever even after over three hundred years on this Earth.

Victoria grins devilishly. In front of her a handsome and muscular servant holds the elevator door open.

VICTORIA
Send me up to the party.

GERALD
Of course, milady.

Victoria steps in and GERALD steps in behind her and quickly stabs the "4" button. The elevator doors close.

VICTORIA
Has Benison arrived yet?

GERALD

No, milady.

VICTORIA

Julius?

GERALD

No, milady.

VICTORIA

What about Benjamin and Thelonious?

GERALD

They're here, milady.

INT. 4TH FLOOR HIGH'S MUSEUM ART - NIGHT

Chin high, Victoria steps out of the elevator and swiftly turns to face Gerald.

VICTORIA

Quickly now, go back down and fetch the next guests. But remember, now is the time to create a pretext to wait until two people are ready to be lifted to this floor. More than two is acceptable, as we discussed before, but a single guest would be disastrous?

Gerald is suitably perplexed by this command.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Disastrous.

The vacuum of the elevator tube whooshes as Victoria turns. Two pairs of enormous doors face her. They are propped up as part of a temporary wall that divides a shallow entry area from the remainder of the gallery beyond.

All of the huge doors are closed, and though the ceiling of the gallery beyond can be seen over their tops, they, nevertheless, fulfill their function as entryways.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

These were the games Victoria played with her guests. Which door will each of her guests choose? More importantly, which door would the next guests select?

The doors on the left, at over thirty feet high, almost touch the altitude of the High's upper ceiling. These monstrous doors are of beautifully sculpted bronze and they display ten individual scenes in eight separate panels.

Over the door, a stretched lintel is divided by a central figure, biblically bearded. Moses holds aloft an engraved stone tablet between the Henri de Triqueti's The Ten Commandments.

HAZIMEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For that would determine Victoria's entryway, and that would have great consequences for the remainder of the night.

Victoria's plan was foolishly superstitious, but in order to believe that she was free of the invisible shackles of a power greater than herself, she rigorously applied randomness to much of what she did.

Victoria turns slightly to the right and takes in once again one of the most incredible works ever created by the hand of man. Though shorter than the thirty three feet of The Ten Commandments, Rodin's The Gates of Hell do not seem dwarfed despite its mere twenty-four-foot height. This great door also possesses a lintel divided by a central figure, Rodin's The Thinker.

Finally, the elevator doors hushed open again, and Victoria turned to see who would decide the fate of her latest plans. CYNDY is speaking in a friendly manner to a fellow occupant, falls sullenly silent when she sees Victoria. Then she looks quickly away but does not resume the conversation. Cyndy is short of stature and though attractive, she is cute in a way that slightly overweight college girls can be.

Victoria allows a deprecating chuckle to be faintly audible. Whatever potential Cyndy possessed for this formal occasion, is thrown away as she clutches her crotch when she walks past Victoria without a word.

The second occupant of the elevator emerges slowly as if afraid that the confrontation between the "ladies" is still not over.

Victoria is pleased to see Leopold but turns away from him to watch Cyndy choose between the mammoth doors. Cyndy glances back, apparently confused, but when she sees Victoria studying her, she huffs and practically dives through Rodin's Gates of Hell.

Turning to the second guest, Victoria notices Leopold's discomfort trying to hide his attraction for her. And he attempts a friendly smile as he approaches her. Calling on her unnatural skills she glances at his aura and reads fear, but not fear of Victoria herself.

VICTORIA

Are you all right, Leopold?

LEOPOLD

Yes , Ms. Ash. Just, ah... nervous
about the premiere of my work
tonight.

VICTORIA

Of course, of course.

Victoria reaches forward to embrace him, and that startles Leopold. He manages to relax as she kisses him lightly on each cheek. Still holding him, her face close to his own, she adds.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And it's a remarkable achievement,
considering the short notice I
provided. I apologize for that.

Then she suddenly disengages.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

But, please. Don't allow me to
delay you. There may be Kindred
even now admiring your sculpture. I
hope I will have the opportunity to
speak to you again later.

He stands long enough to blink twice, then he nods and walks toward the doors. But stops after a few steps and turns to Victoria mouth agape and looks her with disbelief. He points to both set of doors but she just smiles and nods before opening her own mouth slightly and pointing at it to help Leopold correct his unappealing expression.

Leopold studies each door starting with Heaven's doors. He seems to read the carving in the bronze with his hands and moves along to the other set of doors, slowly.

Victoria grows impatient as Leopold reaches the Gates of Hell but looks back at Heaven's doors as if he is still undecided. But to her relief he steps in through Hell.

She walks to the intersection line of the doors. Pauses, contemplating the doors of Hell at her right. Then she walks decidedly through the doors of Heaven.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL, ATLANTA - NIGHT

POLONIA surveys the conference room with a critical eye. He seems somewhat preoccupied. Shifting a placecard here, removing a piece of chipped crystal there. He completes one full circuit of the prodigious conference table and begins again.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

Francisco Domingo de Polonia,
Sabbat Archbishop of New York,
undeniably one of the foremost
Cainite leaders on North America.
New York was, after all, one of the
first Sabbat footholds in the New
World and it remained the jewel in
its crown. Polonia suspected that
the fact that he still thought of
America as the "New World" was a
bit too revealing of his age.

The blackened oak table is a presence in the room. Its
massive and circular shape look very heavy.

HAZIMEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He was painfully aware of just how
little it would take to transform a
Sabbat war council into an
uncontrollable raging maelstrom.
And so he corrected the last subtle
but potentially disastrous breaches
of etiquette and precedence.

Polonia finishes the circuit just to finally reach his own
seat. Behind it, hangs a body that swings gently. A prim,
effete, immaculate body. He does not seem in the least
inconvenience by the coarse noose or by the improbable angle
of his neck.

Like the rest of the room, he is perfect. His hands are
clasped before him in an attitude of supplication, in between
a black candle. Polonia lights the wick and long shadows
stretch away from him in all directions. Now he can further
scrutinize the victim's features, looking upon his
unthreatening fangs.

Pulling out a carefully folded silk handkerchief, he opens it
and reveals an intricately etched silver bauble. It's a
thimble of exquisite workmanship with a wicked lancet
protruding from the tip. Swiftly, Polonia taps the underside
of the victim's chin and some droplets of blood fall down
onto the oily candle below.

He turns back to the room. Everything looks ready, he gives
the corpse a gentle shove, and blood and wax splatter an
intricate spiral pattern on the tile floor. He takes a step
sideways into a shadow portal.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria smiles as she closes the door of Heaven behind her.
She takes in the sight and scenes of her party. Statues and
sculptures so grotesque that their assembled whole makes the
gallery seem the lair of a decadent and mad king.

Some guests are dressed in rags, others are dressed tactfully and expensively. The servants are bearing trays of crystal flutes filled with ruby blood.

All of this is amidst of a veritable maze constructed from sheets of opaque glass that also line the outer windows of the High Museum.

A hooded figure, across the room, holds his champagne flute aloft in a silent toast to Victoria. His face is impossible to see, but Victoria recognizes him as she nods back in acceptance of his appreciation. She mumbles.

VICTORIA

Rolph.

SERVANT

Milady?

A servant offers a flute in a tray. After she absently receiving it she looks again to ROLPH, but he is gone. Victoria notices Cyndy trying to insinuate herself at JAVIC, a Slav which is both good looking and not interested in Cyndy. As she sees Victoria looking at him, Cyndy tries to place herself between Javic and her hostess. All she manages to do is draw his attention to Victoria.

Victoria gives him a coy but lingering smile. His expression doesn't change, but the fact that he holds his gaze for longer than a glance infuriates Cyndy, who tries to take Javic by the arm elsewhere. He shakes her off so quickly that she almost falls.

Victoria notes Leopold stepping in the hidden confines of one of the alcoves made also of opaque glass. That particular one contains a bronze enlargement of Jean-Jacques Feuchère's Satan. STELLA steps in that direction as well.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Stella is a small woman. Her short and attractively styled hair contributes to her just-old-enough-to-drink look.

STELLA

Hey sculptor, taking notes?

Leopold turns from the statue to her and gives her a warm hug.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Are you in for some party on the dark side?

LEOPOLD

Let's hope we get better than this guy got, at least.

He thumbs his hand at the two-and-a-half-foot-high bronze sculpture.

STELLA

It's the devil, I suppose.
Seems like all the sculptures here
tonight are rather demonic.

LEOPOLD

As are the guests.
But, you're right. The piece is
called Satan and was sculpted by a
man named Feuchère. Look at him.

Stella closes in to take a better look at the figure.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

It's the kind of work my condition
should allow me to realize.

Stella gives him a sad look.

STELLA

Your block is still stopping you
from sculpting Kindred? I'm sorry,
Leo.

Leopold almost lets his breaking news out, but he sighs instead.

STELLA (CONT'D)

You can do work at least this good.

LEOPOLD

Have you seen my new piece on
display here tonight?

STELLA

No. No, I haven't. I would be
honored if you would show it to me.

Leopold takes Stella's arm and moves to the exit of the alcove, then stops suddenly.

LEOPOLD

You've not seen Hannah here
tonight, have you?

STELLA

The Tremere? No I haven't. In fact,
come to think of it, I don't
believe any Tremere are here yet.

LEOPOLD

Is that odd?

STELLA

Oh, very. The Tremere are very political, and I can't imagine a gathering like this at which they did not have someone here already in order to spy on everyone else. I call them gadflies, which is what Rolph must be for the Nosferatu.

LEOPOLD

Nosferatu?

STELLA

The ugly ones. Did you need to see her for some reason? If so, I'd be careful. She drives hard and dangerous bargains. At least that's what I hear.

Stella takes a flute from a passing servant and as she bring it to her mouth...

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Sipping from her red-filled flute, Victoria smiles at CLARICE, who is taking a long look at the work of Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, "Count Ugolino and Sons".

VICTORIA

Something interesting, I hope.

CLARICE

There's much of interest here tonight, Ms. Ash.

VICTORIA

Victoria is fine. As a Ventrue you should learn that most Kindred prefer titles in keeping with their apparent age, not their actual age.

Clarice is a tall, heavily built woman dressed in the conservative, formal clothing so characteristically expected among Ventrue clan.

CLARICE

That's odd.

VICTORIA

It's not so strange really, if you consider the instinct for the Masquerade that many Kindred have accumulated for several centuries now.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It seems a small thing perhaps, to avoid a scene where an older man calls a younger man "Sir" or "Mister" when they appear to be of the same station, but I suggest that it would sound less foreign to you if you lived in a climate where the existence of our kind was not forgotten or overlooked as it is today.

CLARICE

Yes, our beloved Masquerade...

Victoria notes the African-American Ventrue Benjamin who moves toward the other black man in the premises, Thelonious. Clarice is again distracted by the sculpture.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

It's ghastly. Those children seem so unhappy and that father...

VICTORIA

Everyone has its own interpretation of the Count's terrible predicament.

CLARICE

The Count?

VICTORIA

Come now, Clarice. Surely you know your Dante?

CLARICE

That book about Hell, you mean?

VICTORIA

Yes... Count Ugolino and his sons were imprisoned in a tower to starve to death, so, to save himself, the Count devoured his children.

Clarice shudders at this though.

Victoria looks at the tall straight and narrow man that smiles at Clarice's reaction, ERICH VEGEL. His eyes then dart to Victoria's, and the two regard one another momentarily.

CLARICE

He really ate his children?

VICTORIA

Yes. Just as we Kindred eat mortal children. Aren't the parallels between art and reality refreshing and engaging?

Victoria steps away decisively. She has lost sight of that men, so she reaches her garment pocket for her opera glasses. She enters one small area, about five feet surrounded by opaque glass, by a sliding door barely detectable among the glass planes.

The special item she possesses allows her to see through the glasses exposing everyone, especially those who hoped for some privacy. The bright orange, African robe that Thelonious wears is the first object to come into view in the Toreador's opera glasses. She adjusts the zoom and focus so she clearly sees the sides of both men's faces.

Lip reading is difficult, but not impossible for a trained one as her. She mimics what she lip reads from Benjamin.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Perhaps it's that robe you're wearing...

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

BENJAMIN
...It brings out the shaman in you.

THELONIOUS
If I were wearing my business suit, then I wouldn't try to find the subliminal message in this purposeful display of art?

There is a hint of threat in each of them as they talk eye to eye.

BENJAMIN
I'm surprised to see you here tonight, Thelonious.

Thelonious grows a more hostile face but before he can bark something...

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Obviously, you're not frightened of the Prince. But let me tell you, I don't respond to blackmail.

Thelonious cocks his at this statement and then snaps.

THELONIOUS
Nor do I.

Benjamin is also surprised now.

INT. SECRET SPACE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria smiles and enjoys their confusion. She zooms in a little more with her spy-glasses.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

BENJAMIN

But you expect others to be swayed by such strong-arm tactics? I must say I'm disappointed, Thelonious. I thought you were less typically Brujah.

THELONIOUS

"Typically Brujah"? How typically Ventrue.

BENJAMIN

Nevertheless, I remain disturbed by your tactics.

THELONIOUS

Our difference, then, is that I'm not surprised by your tactics.

BENJAMIN

Is there something unusual about using the protection of Elysium to confront you? Elysium may be a concept invented by and for elders more than neonates, but your presence here tonight, in spite of the Prince's efforts against you, reveals your faith in this convention as well.

THELONIOUS

No, there's no shame in Elysium. The integrity of your offer, on the other hand, is disputable.

BENJAMIN

My offer? Is that how you wish to view the matter? Your letter didn't give me any indication-

THELONIOUS

My letter?

BENJAMIN

Yes, your let-

THELONIOUS

You mean your-

BENJAMIN
Stop interrupting me!

Their noses are but few inches away from each other.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Mine?

At the same time, the Ventrue and the Brujah take their eyes off one another and take a look around. Then look outside of the alcove.

THELONIOUS
I take it you didn't send-

BENJAMIN
No, and nor did you?

THELONIOUS
So who then?

BENJAMIN
I don't know. Nor do I know if whether this trick was meant to unite or divide us.

THELONIOUS
To divide us, I presume.

BENJAMIN
On the eve of an affair at Elysium?
Might we not possibly have a discussion and revelation exactly like the one we're having now?

Thelonious nods in agreement.

Gasps of surprise from Kindred near the entrance of the party chamber attract both their attention and Victoria's. She turns her lenses toward the great doors of Heaven and Hell that swing open at once.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

The drama of the arrival ripples through the ranks of the assembled Kindred. Both Prince and his wife step forward into the galleries. Prince J. BENISON HODGE projects a powerful aura as he crosses the open doorway of The Ten Commandments. His wife ELEANOR is revealed through the Hell doors, crafted by Rodin.

Victoria approaches from behind some of the curious and has that enemy-at-sight look, when she feels the weight of their potent presence in the room. She barely manages to stand up. Clarice and Cyndy are particularly obsequious as they practically throw themselves on the floor in an attempt to show proper respect and worship.

Others like Javic, Rolph, even Thelonious, show the strain of resisting. Victoria notices that the curious Vegel appears to straighten himself to appear even taller.

Leopold and Stella hear the commotion just outside one alcove and they step out just in time to catch the royal entrance. Stella's mouth drops as she stares at the emerging figures.

LEOPOLD

I'm sorry, am I supposed to...

STELLA

Shush.

Stella whispers to Leopold without taking the eyes of the royal ones.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Are you from Mars? That's Prince J. Benison Hodge and his wife Eleanor.

LEOPOLD

And J. stands for...

The Prince is powerfully built with a bull chest and long, thick arms and legs. His hair is long and auburn and he wears a full beard with a generous mustache.

STELLA

You do remember this is a Camarilla city? And every Camarilla city has a Prince to call the shots.

Eleanor was not as beautiful as Victoria, but it was not that far from her unique qualities. And her confidence was clearly at the same level as the hostess of this party.

LEOPOLD

Fine. Whatever. Are those your buddies Grant and Fingers?

As the two impressive guests continue their slow entrance into the room, a pair of individuals have the misfortune of stepping into view through the still-open doorway of The Gates of Hell. GRANT and FINGERS look so ordinary and feeble in radiance of their Elders that their intrigued gawking is comical.

Thelonious is the first to laugh.

Prince Benison's eyes fly wide in shock and hatred. The color rushes from Benison's face, revealing a whole host of scars across his forehead and eyes.

BENISON

You dare!

One of his large hands curls into a sledgehammer fist.

BENISON (CONT'D)

You dare show yourself before me!

Victoria is delighted to hear this, as her plan begins to take form. Thelonious shrinks at the challenge. He is frozen like a doomed prey.

VICTORIA

Great Prince, please do not forget that the law of Elysium holds sway here because you yourself have declared it to be so.

Benison glowers at her and snarls his next words.

BENISON

I revoke my declaration.

Victoria takes a half-step back. She looks at Eleanor, but the prince's wife is also locked on Thelonious. Victoria notices Grant and Fingers finally joining the crowd unnoticed by the Prince. Then Victoria steps closer to the Prince again and whispers only for him.

VICTORIA

Please, great Prince, I worry for your safety on this night that Julius, the Brujah archon, visits. But, of course, you know best how to handle such tricky and political situations.

More quickly than she imagined the Prince's face transforms again, losing the rage and hate and giving place to magnanimity. The Prince looks again at Thelonious grinning a bit more broadly. Thelonious involuntarily steps back and shivers.

Then, Prince Benison steps toward Eleanor and puts his arm around her. With the other arm lifted skyward and with a flourish he declares their presence again.

BENISON

Let us enjoy the shortest night of the year, and let us find that every moment tonight carries the weight of two on any other.

Champagne glasses tinkle and chime with mutters of "hear, hear" and "cheers" from those present.

Leopold turns to Stella and pats her in the back as the other guests begin to disperse throughout the galleries.

LEOPOLD

I guess the party is officially on.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Victoria nears Eleanor and is received by a greeting hug.

ELEANOR

This looks like a wonderful party,
my dear. You must be very
satisfied.

Both their faces were animated with all the false sincerity
they could muster.

VICTORIA

Well, thank you, Eleanor. Such
compliments certainly mean
something when they come from you.
But I'm not satisfied yet.
Why, I'd say entertainment and fun
has really yet even to begin.

ELEANOR

It is certainly quite a cast of
characters you'll have on hand
tonight.

VICTORIA

Oh, indeed. But all of them, those
from out of town too, have been
strictly informed of the Museums'
Elysium status. I'm sure no one
would even consider breaking the
Prince's peace.

ELEANOR

Of course not. The Prince is a
vengeful Kindred, and it's not wise
to cross him.

VICTORIA

It's true that no one is safe when
opposed by the weight of Camarilla
law.

Victoria picks Thelonious in the corner of her eye.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Atlanta used to be such a backwater that the Camarilla
probably cared little what happened here. But our Prince has
done an excellent job of drawing attention to us all.

ELEANOR

Oh, he has done a fine job, hasn't
he?
I'd best rejoin my husband now.

Eleanor turns back on any farewell Victoria might offer. But
after a few steps she turns right back.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

You know, it will be good to have a Camarilla representative here tonight. I find the long memory of the organization to be simply amazing, and I'm led to believe we'll all have some interesting surprises tonight.

Victoria has no response to this. She just blinks a few times in rapid succession. Eleanor smiles and walks away.

INT. ALCOVE, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Vegel stands for many moments absorbed by the simple act of clasping the wrist of the sculpture. The gesture is almost frictionless in the cool marble.

He notes someone approaching from behind, but he continues facing the sculpture.

VEGEL

There is no marble smoother than Canova's.

He draws his "s" out a bit so his words have something of a hiss.

VICTORIA

Nor any skin so ripe for plucking by the serpent fangs.

He gathers himself and turns to her.

VEGEL

Good evening, Ms. Ash. Where you observing, expecting me to nip Eve's marble flesh and double the caterwauling of the Kine as their descent from God hastens?

VICTORIA

My, my, Vegel. I do believe this piece has you in a philosophical frame of mind.

Vegel's eyes travel up and down Victoria's slender yet sumptuous frame, which was clothed in a silken and sleeveless variation of a classic Greek robe. Then he mock-bows and recites.

VEGEL

In this beloved marble view
Above the works and thoughts of Man
What nature could, but would not,
do
And beauty and Canova can!

(MORE)

VEGEL (CONT'D)

Beyond imagination's power
 Beyond the Bard's defeated art
 With immortality her dower
 Behold the Helen of the heart.

Victoria's face is warmed by an enchanted smile. She looks now at the sculpture but Vegel cannot take his eyes from her.

VICTORIA

Am I a dancing cobra to transfix so easily another serpent?

VEGEL

I have no doubt that you could deceive as proficiently as the serpent who claimed Eve, but if we are to remain on this theme of my Setite clan, then I will admit the snake-like coils of your hair do indeed mesmerize me. However, my fascination with Eve of this "Mourning the Dead Abel" has nothing to do with cold-blooded kinship. The available knowledge claims the piece was never executed in marble from the terracotta bozzetto Canova prepared.

VICTORIA

Delightful!
 Perhaps my innuendo of snakes was misguided. Perhaps I should treat you as an honorary Toreador, so extensive is your knowledge of these masterpieces. But of course, the knowledge to which you refer is merely mortal knowledge, and we are both clearly in a position to possess much more than that.

VEGEL

That is true, Ms. Ash.

VICTORIA

Please, just Victoria is fine, or for tonight "Helen", if you prefer, and it seems that you might as I noted earlier, that you were quite taken by the bust and now quite by my own... resemblance to it.

VEGEL

That is true as well, "Helen".

Something or someone catches Vegel's attention for one moment, but he returns his gaze to Victoria.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

I fear that as delightful as I find your company, I should remind you that you have other guests here tonight as well

VICTORIA

Yes, yes, I'm certain we both have other business to attend to tonight. I hope I'll hear from you again, Vegel.

VEGEL

I bid my snake-charmers adieu.

Victoria starts to leave and Vegel turns once again to the anguished marble woman.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

Lovely Eve, save us all an inordinate amount of trouble and forgive Caine his transgression.

Right before Victoria steps out of the alcove, Vegel speaks.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

Do not give up your innuendo of serpents, lovely "Helen". Though I suspect it will serve you better with mortals than an immortal snake such as myself.

VICTORIA

Mortals do not interest me, Vegel, and neither do ordinary snakes.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Vegel walks along the galleries and he comes across a sculpture of another death scene of Abel. Something is odd about this one, and he takes a closer look. The most startling aspect of this death scene is the anatomy of the two figures. The limbs of both Caine and Abel are soft and fleshy and the heads are overly large.

The implement of death is a knotted rope of sorts, and the means strangulation. Near the base, one bronze plaque with the imprinted title of "Abel Condemns Caine". From this angle, Vegel can see that the "rope" is in fact an umbilical cord still attached to Caine's belly.

That revelation makes it ridiculously clear that the brothers are not misshapen at all, but actually infants. We recognize Aaron portrayed as Abel.

LEOPOLD

I shouldn't have made them
children, should I?

From behind Vegel, Leopold is also appreciating the sculpture.

VEGEL

I admit that aspect of the work was initially confusing, but in light of the title I find it entirely appropriate, and more than that, a very novel approach.

Vegel turns to Leopold and finds him like a starving artist. Thin, drooping, haggard and unkempt as only a person a who generally cares little for his appearance but who tries to tidy himself prior to an evening like this, could be. But Leopold has a gleam in his eyes as he looks at his own work. Vegel notes this but resists to temptation to continue further conversation.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

It is a fine piece. Now, if you'll excuse me...

LEOPOLD

These harder substances still don't respond well for me. Perhaps I should try something more malleable, like wood. Can you imagine this in wood? The umbilical cord could be so much more dynamic! I just couldn't impart any energy... through... the... stone...

But Vegel is gone from the sight of Leopold's sad eyes.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Rolph is seated in one bench placed in the far corner of the Galleries, facing the sculpture of Giovanni Dupré: "The Dead Abel".

Vegel approached the hooded figure still in his robe, not revealing anything but the tip of a knotted and crooked nose.

ROLPH

Greetings, Vegel. I've watched you make the rounds and wondered when you would settle down to the real business of your trip.

VEGEL

Hello, Rolph.

Rolph stands and faces Vegel.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

My instructions were to meet at The Dead Abel as midnight approached but before it neared. If armed with more precise instructions, I would have happily satisfied you more fully.

ROLPH

No matter. You are here in plenty of time. I wondered if perhaps you were addled by the confusing quantity of Abels strewn about this chamber, though I saw, in fact, that you were distracted earlier by living, or at least nearly living, concerns in the form of our redoubtable hostess.

VEGEL

Yes... I feel that she may be of immense help locating important artifacts which my clan seeks.

ROLPH

I see. Perhaps it's time then that we got down to business.

VEGEL

Of course.

ROLPH

I'm sorry to drag you into this den of thieves, but it was honestly my only means of providing some material that your clan has long sought.

Vegel looks around worried someone might step in the middle of their conversation.

ROLPH (CONT'D)

However, I know your risk will be worth it, for tonight, Clan Nosferatu would like to repay an old debt to your clan, The Followers of Set. What I give you should even matters regarding the Bombay affair some centuries ago. This incident was before either of our times, but I guarantee that your master will know of what I speak.

VEGEL

Very well. I will relay notice of the debt repayment and whatever information or material you hereafter provide to my master. If he deems the matter unfair or unsettled, then I am certain he will contact your masters. But if no direct payment is demanded of me, then I will gladly entertain whatever you reveal next.

ROLPH

Understood.

Rolph waves his hand like delineating an invisible circle around them, and he moves towards the sculpture.

From outside of the invisible line traced by the Nosferatu, potential spectators still see Rolph seated in the bench and Vegel standing near him. An illusion has been created.

ROLPH (CONT'D)

What I offer tonight, friend Vegel, is an artifact greatly desired and long sought by your master. I offer none other than the Eye of Hazimel.

VEGEL

The Evil Eye...

Vegel can't help been caught by surprise.

VEGEL (CONT'D)

If what you offer is truly the Eye of Hazimel, then I of course will take your information to my master so he may pursue the item wherever it rests.

Rolph laughs at this.

ROLPH

Pursuit is not necessary. The Eye is here in this statue of Abel.

Rolph stands now above the sculpture and waves his hand at the plaster corpse at his feet.

VEGEL

So it belongs to Victoria Ash?

ROLPH

Certainly not. At least not in any real sense, for its virtually certain that the lovely Ms. Ash does not even realize the Eye resides within her sculpture, if in fact she's aware of the Eye's existence at all.

Vegel is confused and can't seem to detect any sign of the artifact in the sculpture.

VEGEL

Can you explain then why everyone seems oblivious to its presence?

ROLPH

Certainly. In its present state, the Eye is undetectable. That's why it's unlikely that Ms. Ash realizes she possesses this item. It's also why it's necessary to give you this gift at so public a locale where we have access to this sculpture, or for that matter, why we arranged for you to be invited to this celebration in the first place.

Vegel examines their surroundings. The emergency exit is not far. Victoria is passing in the end of the corridor when she stops and looks at them, but doesn't seem to take interest and continues.

Outside, the huge bronze clock, set over the windows looking down to Peachtree Street in front of the Museum, is but a handful of ticktacks from midnight.

VEGEL

If I may, I have a number of questions.

Rolph glances at the same clock Vegel just checked seconds before.

ROLPH

Certainly, but our time is short, so let's be brief and relevant.

VEGEL

Why midnight?

ROLPH

Because we have arranged an escape route for you. If the route is to serve its purpose, you must be passing through that emergency-exit door at precisely one minute before midnight.

Vegel nods in agreement.

VEGEL

Will the Eye be detectable once removed from the sculpture?

ROLPH

Not for some time. Certainly enough time for you to make your escape. So long as it resides in an inanimate object it may not be detected, even by its progenitor. Actually, especially by its progenitor, but presumably others who use the same methods as well.

VEGEL

And if placed within an animated being?

ROLPH

It will come to life in the empty socket of an animate being.

Vegel is having difficulties processing all this information.

VEGEL

For this purpose, is a vampire considered an "animate" being?

ROLPH

Most certainly. The Eye comes from one of our kind, after all. Quickly now, last question.

Vegel withdraws his cell phone from his coat's pocket.

VEGEL

Why your escape route? Why should I not accept the Eye and then summon my chauffeur to depart as I arrived? After all, if the Eye will remain undetectable-

Rolph's impatience lets Vegel a glance at his monstrous, Nosferatu twisted face, as he looks him in the eyes.

ROLPH

Listen and listen closely, for after I answer I will hand you the Eye and direct you to leave immediately via the emergency door nearest us in the wall, an instruction I strongly advise you to heed. Please do call your chauffeur, but let him arrive and depart again as decoy. I promise that you will not see him again.

Looking at the sincerity of the red eyes of Rolph, Vegel indicates his understanding with a slow nod.

ROLPH (CONT'D)

Good.

Moving quickly, Rolph, draws back his large hood revealing his disgusting face. Despite the exaggerated movements, everyone seems to be pointedly looking away from the two of them.

Rolph rubs together the thumb and forefinger of his right hand, leaving his left hand to steady his weight against Abel's chest. Then he stabs his fingers toward Abel's left eye, but instead of debris raining from the point of impact, his fingers disappear into the orb as if it were deep, inky water.

The Nosferatu squirms and turns about, his wrist spins back and forth in wild gyrations. Suddenly it seizes with rigidity. Rolph smiles a pained grin at Vegel. Vegel then follows Rolph's gaze back to the bronze clock that is counting 11:59 PM.

ROLPH (CONT'D)

Ready?

VEGEL

Ready.

Rolph slowly withdraws his hand from the sculpture and luminosity, as if from 1000-watt darklight, blind Vegel. He recovers enough to see something pulsating between the Nosferatu's thumb and forefinger.

Rolph extends it to Vegel. Dollops of coagulated goo drip off the object and onto Vegel's palm before the moist object itself settles into his hand. Rolph tugs Vegel by the sleeve and then pushes him toward the emergency-door.

ROLPH

Go and don't worry about the alarm.

INT. EMERGENCY-STAIRS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

The alarm erupts as soon as he closes the doors behind him. Vegel runs down four flights of stairs until he meets an old service access door marked with police yellow tape, at the second floor.

The Eye is throbbing in his hand, as if its excited with his adrenaline. Vegel carefully opens the rusty door, unsure if that's the way. The door only opens a little, but enough to let him pass. He closes the door from inside just as it was.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

The small area consists of a catwalk surrounding that is an old elevator shaft. He climbs down a ladder after putting the Eye inside his coat pocket. He cannot reach basement level because the elevator shell is blocking it. The shaft continues down, but Vegel decides to open the hatch at the top of the elevator.

With his phone he illuminates the inside of the metal box to realize its completely empty. Before jumping inside he turns the sound off from his mobile. Inside he tries to open the elevator doors and they glide surprisingly easy.

Beyond the open doors he finds a well-lit and more modern passageway. Vegel fills himself with confidence that this might be it.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT
BACK IN TIME A FEW MINUTES

Victoria looks at the bench where Rolph is seated and apparently he also knows Vegel. She hears Stella's laugh from another side as she gives her mean critic to Leopold about his sculpture and he seems to push her like their kids in playground.

She then notices someone sneaking in via the Heaven doors. He sees her and has that you-got-me reaction, then he approaches her. Victoria extends her hands to greet the large black man. He has long and dreadlocked hair, and thought he has a handsome and strong profile, what catches the eye are his purplish scars across his face.

Unlike any other Kindred present at the event, this one is heavily armed because strapped to his back, in a cross-pattern, are two broadswords, in plain sight.

VICTORIA

Welcome, noble archon, to glorious Atlanta and my own poor party.

JULIUS

I speak and act bluntly, so I won't battle you for humble pie. I apologize if this upsets your Toreador sensibilities, Victoria, But your party looks very nice, although my opinion of Atlanta is distinctly less than yours.

VICTORIA

It sure takes you a lot of words to speak bluntly.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Are you certain you were not an author of Latin epics instead of the creator of great stories within the confines of the arena?

JULIUS

Your flowery speech rubbed off on me, is all.

JULIUS walks invitingly to a more private area, she follows.

VICTORIA

I'm certain the Prince will remind you, so let me do it first, that this is Elysium and no weapons are allowed herein.

JULIUS

This noble archon keeps his weapons. Disagreements can be taken to my master.

VICTORIA

And is the disagreement between Benison and Thelonious going to be taken to your master as well?

JULIUS

Perhaps, if matters progress that far. You object to my intervention in Atlanta?

VICTORIA

Certainly not. It's time for Atlanta to move into a new era, I believe.

JULIUS

You do, eh?

VICTORIA

May I introduce you around?

The sound of the alarm reverbs along the galleries.

INT. UNDERGROUND LOCATION - NIGHT

Vegel runs across the fluorescent lit corridor until he reaches the end of the passage. A steal ladder stretches up to a hatch in the ceiling. Climbing through the hatch he reaches a small space, presumably the ground floor of an enclosed stairwell. A small window in the top half of the exit door gives a view to the parking lot outside this space.

Everything seems quiet outside. He creaks open the door and stealthily steps out to the covered parking lot inserted in a building with three floors for this purpose.

Without warning, he is suddenly ambushed from above. There is a fluttering of a cape in the air, and then a heavy weight crashes onto Vegel's shoulders.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Gerald comes from the emergency exit door where another of the staff is standing sentinel. He reaches the back of the chamber where most of the Kindred had congregated. Victoria is speaking to a few of the groups.

VICTORIA

Such an unpleasant thing, I know,
but false alarm gentlemen, nothing
to worry about.

Gerald whispers something to Victoria's ear.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Well then, make sure to know who
was this "wise guy" who opened the
emergency door, I will not have my
guests disturbed again.

She leaves towards her secret spot, where she had spied on Benjamin and Thelonious, but Clarice and Stella are blocking the gliding panel. She goes to the back of some other panels, and she seems to be protected enough in that zone.

Victoria takes out her special glasses. Her watch, that is in the same pocket as the glasses, shows her that it is a bit before one o'clock. She turns her opera glasses toward Satan sculpture, but there is no one in that alcove.

JULIUS

What do you see, Victoria?

Victoria jumps in surprise. But recovers quickly enough.

VICTORIA

Just looking for ways to reward
myself for keeping silent about
your attendance, noble archon.

JULIUS

Indeed.

Julius walks backwards with a grin, like a kid that just stole a cookie. There is a roar from a gallery on the other side of a wall of glass.

BENISON

How dare he insult my hospitality?

Julius stops and whispers to Victoria.

JULIUS

I suppose neither of us is as tricky as we imagined.

VICTORIA

I'd wager, though, that both our imaginations are quite exceptional, so perhaps half as good as we think we are will be quite satisfactory.

JULIUS

I like your style, Victoria.

Julius starts walking away again.

JULIUS (CONT'D)

Don't miss the excitement.

When he disappears, Victoria runs the opposite way, like she is late for a movie that she really don't want to miss.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Leopold checks his wrist watch and mumbles to himself:

LEOPOLD

Where the hell is Hannah...

When he turns the corner to see what all the shouting was about, he stumbles into Prince Benison, forcibly holding a flushed Cyndy to his side. One hand holding her arm, the other her neck. Everyone is looking at this.

Prince Benison turns his furious eyes to Leopold.

BENISON

Where is he, Toreador? Do you see the bastard up there?

LEOPOLD

W-who... wh-what?

BENISON

The motherfucking asshole son-of-bitch Brujah archon, that's who, you miserable piece of trash!

Benison drops Cyndy and looks inside the nearest alcove.

CYNDY

He was there.

BENISON

When?

CYNDY

Twenty minutes ago, Prince.

Realizing he'd been forgotten, Leopold joins the crowd behind Benison. The servant present lets its tray clatter to the floor, when Benison barks at him too. Champagne glasses and blood spray across the white tiles.

BENISON

And you?

SERVANT

I served his first drink well over a half hour ago.

BENISON

Damn it all to HELL! Then where is he now?

JULIUS

Behind you, Prince.

The crowd opens and a corridor outlined by Kindred, separates the Prince from the archon. Julius assumes the innocent posture.

JULIUS (CONT'D)

Have I offended you in some way?

BENISON

To the contrary, archon. You've made me very happy. Elysium be damned, I will punish your insufferable attitude.

The rattle of metal rings in the large chamber as Julius draws one of his swords.

JULIUS

Then I guess more blood will be spilled.

Both of them assume attack positions. Benison is livid with anger and Julius is calm as a statue.

Sudden darkness washes through the chamber and floods the space like a tsunami.

EXT. A DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH - NIGHT

A few days earlier

A little spider works on the project of an ambitious web, extending from the corner of one building to the nearest street lamp that flickers randomly.

INT. FEAST HALL, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Like coming out of a portal, Polonia exits a shadow and finds himself in a different room.

Although similar in decoration with the room before, with a rough-hewn circular table too, the oaken surface is riddled with wormholes. Polonia's chair resembles an empty throne, a funerary seat that presides over a great banquet of tarnished silver, goblets brimming with dust and delicately woven cobweb linens.

He surveys the board with a hint of satisfaction, but a vibrant red apple atop a decorative fruit bowl immediately arrests his gaze. Aside from the candle flame, it is the only spot of color in the room, all else varies in subtle shades of gray.

POLONIA
Missed that one.

UNKNOWN VOICE
Poisoned, perhaps.

Startled for an instant, Polonia calms down and listens.

UNKNOWN VOICE (CONT'D)
Very romantic, but not quite so effective. Surely it will not be necessary for your guests to keep up the appearance of eating on such a grand occasion.

As his chair moves forward, Polonia is forced down to sit in it by something.

POLONIA
No, more likely the apple conceals some weapon or perhaps even an incendiary device.

UNKNOWN VOICE
Ah...!

There is a flutter of a breeze and a shadow seems to break away and stretch toward the apple. Suddenly, a brilliant flash illuminates the room. Tatters of shadow streak in all directions and then, they fall to the floor in a gentle rain of scorched confetti.

The explosion is followed by a complete silence. Polonia settles back in his chair.

UNKNOWN VOICE (CONT'D)
A most excellent incendiary. Yes, quite satisfactory. Borges?

The voice materialized in a form in front of him, standing atop of the table. It made a low bow.

POLONIA
In all likelihood. It bears his mark.

Polonia tries to appear unruffled.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

I understand that in Miami such modern contrivances are all the rage - firearms, grenades, flame-throwers...

The shape before him flutters excitedly at the very mention of flame-throwers.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Will Borges be in attendance, then?

POLONIA

Yes, of course. You will see him yourself. He will be seated directly opposite me. There.

Polonia gestured to the far end of the table where a crude wooden stool half leaned against the table leg. There is a truncheon of stale bread and a tin cup sitting before the stool.

ENVOY SPIRIT

I was under the impression that Borges had sworn never to set foot in Atlanta.

POLONIA

He made a great show of not coming. I believe my fellow archbishop took it as something of a slight that the honor of conducting the siege did not fall to him.

ENVOY SPIRIT

He may well have more to say about that issue before your gathering is concluded.

POLONIA

Yes, I am much of the same opinion. Atlanta is, after all, veritably right in his backyard.

ENVOY SPIRIT

And quite some distance from your own territory. I believe I understand you. He had, no doubt, extended his ambition, if not his actual hand, over the city already?

Polonia laughed aloud.

POLONIA

Yes, his agents were among the very first sent in to reconnoiter the city and, later to disrupt the operations and posturing of the Camarilla. But there was never any real possibility of Borges passing up this war council. The Siege of Atlanta will be something talked about for generations to come. It is simply too great an event to be missed.

ENVOY SPIRIT

If they don't all kill each other first.

POLONIA

If they don't all kill each other first.

An uncomfortable silence falls in the shadowy throne room.

ENVOY SPIRIT

And what of the regent? Does she have any representative in the council?

POLONIA

The regent? Our Most Distinguished Excellency is content to remain unavoidably engaged in Mexico City. No, she has made it quite clear that she is taking no hand whatsoever in such "regional squabblings".

ENVOY SPIRIT

Ah, but she could not remain uninterested in anyone who could bring the feuding war bands together and drive the Camarilla from Atlanta... Such a one would certainly be well on his way to winning a cardinal's throne.

Polonia can feel the seat shift beneath him, expanding, bearing him upward. He makes a dismissive gesture with the flat of his hand and the motion ceases.

POLONIA

The Vicar of Caine merely exercises her uncanny sense of when is likely to be any contention among her archbishops. She is shrewd enough to remain conspicuously absent on such occasions.

(MORE)

POLONIA (CONT'D)

No regent, no legate to argue her cause, not even a nuncio to proclaim her will.

ENVOY SPIRIT

You fear that they will not put aside their differences, that they will not follow your lead.

POLONIA

I fear that we shall bring down upon ourselves the bloodiest internecine war that has ever ravaged the Sabbat.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Ah, but you have gone to such great pains to ensure that this does not happen.

POLONIA

Look around you. All is in order. Everything in its proper place.

The shape casts an admiring eye over the precise arrangements. It pauses, its shadowy hand eclipses the placecard to Polonia's left.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Vykos? I do not believe we are familiar with...

POLONIA

No, you would not be. A Tzimisce. From the Old Country. She is the special emissary from Cardinal Monçada of Madrid.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Ah, now Monçada, that is a name that I do know. But what interest can the great cardinal have in this undertaking? It has been quite some time since he last turned his attention to these far shores.

POLONIA

Monçada is a dangerous and cunning strategist.

Polonia toys absently with a rusted chalice.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

At any rate, none would contest the fact that Monçada has set his ambitions very high indeed, and he is not adverse to resorting to extreme measures to accomplish his ends. It would not be unreasonable to think that he is positioning himself to contend for the regency itself.

ENVOY SPIRIT

And what price would be too high to pay for such a lofty prize?

The lives of a few hand-picked followers? He certainly would not scruple at so meager a cost.

POLONIA

It is not the lives of his own followers that concern me. Merely having forces present at victory in Atlanta will not bring Monçada a single step closer to the regency.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Yes, but... oh, I see, you fear that perhaps it is not only his own followers that he is willing to sacrifice, what, after all, are the lives of a few dozen upstart New World Sabbat to the great cardinal?

POLONIA

What worries me more is that Monçada might be willing to sacrifice all - his followers, his allies, victory in Atlanta itself - for some greater advantage. The cardinal weighs out his gains and losses very carefully, but I cannot see his shadowy scales and I mistrust them greatly. How does a victory in Atlanta measure up against the possibility of destabilizing the North American Sabbat? Of weakening the regent's New World power base? Of depriving her of her nearest allies? It is quite possible that Monçada's emissary comes not to bolster but to betray our war effort.

The shadowy companion nods without comment or censure.

ENVOY SPIRIT

But why would he send a Tzimisce as his representative?

POLONIA

Perhaps he hopes to strengthen his positions and support among the New World Sabbat.

After fighting side-by-side against the Camarilla, Monçada might well hold up the Siege of Atlanta as an example of how his forces had stood with Borges and myself - up to the waist in the blood of the enemy, or such romantic notions - while the regent. Whose forces were close at hand, could not be bothered to lift a finger to come o our aid.

ENVOY SPIRIT

Ah, and if some new cardinal should emerge from the struggle, he would naturally be well-disposed toward his new sword-brother.

POLONIA

A more pleasant thought, certainly, than the possibility that he might be sending a Tzimisce because no one is more capable of disrupting a fragile peace than a ravening, short-fused, shape-shifting monstrosity.

I can't help but feel that Monçada's involvement bodes ill for our best-laid plans.

Polonia fixes the Envoy with a gaze that allows no argument.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

I will be relying upon you to neutralize this threat.

ENVOY SPIRIT

How may I assist you in this matter?

Polonia unwraps a small, tattered piece of cloth. Until recently, it had been a delicate, perfumed silk handkerchief. Inside the folds of burlap shines a brilliant glare of silver light. The Envoy shrinks back instinctively.

Polonia holds out his hand. Reluctantly, the Envoy takes the proffered parcel and hastily rewraps it.

POLONIA

You will position yourself here.

Polonia pushes himself up and moves one place to his left. His hands rest on the chair back before the place marked Vykos. The frame of the chair seems to be crafted entirely of gleaming white bones, cracked off sharply at the top.

Polonia's hands wrap around the jagged edges have the knuckles almost white from the intensity of his concentration.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

The silver will strike true - even through the barrier that separates the two rooms.

One of his hands comes down around the empty space where the guest's throat would be.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

Do not hesitate to strike should I signal you. The touch of the silver will do you no lasting harm. Nothing, certainly, compared to my anger should you fail me.

ENVOY SPIRIT

We shall not fail you.

POLONIA

Please send my respects to your lord and master and tell him that Polonia has the honor to remain his good and faithful servant.

With that, Polonia, takes one brief sideward step and is back through the barrier and into his own world of shadows, once again.

INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

CALDWELL

And another thing. I don't really care how things are done back in New York. We ain't in New York. We don't want to be in New York. And I'm getting just a little bit tired of hearing about New York. If I wanted things to run just like they do in New York, you'd be the first to know.

CALDWELL punctuates each point by jabbing a finger in the face of the man opposite him.

He leans far out over the conference table to do so, as if it is the only thing holding him back from physically assaulting his counterpart. Seeing that, his antagonist is losing composure.

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

I'd call you up myself. I'd say, "Costello! I've been thinking. What we really need around here is a little more, you know, New York. Would you mind terribly coming down here to Atlanta and straightening all of us backwards bumpkins out? You will? That's swell! You're a regular guy. So in the meantime, why don't you just take your sorry old mostly dead and starting-to-stink wormy carcass back to LaGuardia, and just park it right there next to your telephone - at the very center of the known universe - and wait for my call, all right?

COSTELLO fumes while hearing all that. Liquid darkness seeped from his fists, that are balled tightly around the arms of his chair. He begins rising from his seat.

COSTELLO

Why, you misbegotten and ungrateful cur.

BORGES

Gentlemen!

All eyes turn toward BORGES.

BORGES (CONT'D)

We are not here to give vent to our differences, but rather to lay them aside. There is important work at hand. Glorious work!

The upper part of Borge's face is hidden in a perpetual shadow but the lower holds an immaculate and predatory smile. He gestures for everyone to be seated.

BORGES (CONT'D)

There will be ample opportunity to demonstrate your prowess upon our common enemies.

Reluctantly, both Caldwell and Costello settle back into their chairs.

BORGES (CONT'D)

We are gathered on the threshold of a glorious victory. Before we have parted company, we will strike a mighty blow - a blow from which neither the Camarilla, nor their Antediluvian puppet masters, shall soon recover.

Borges raises a cautionary finger.

BORGES (CONT'D)

However, we are still poised upon that threshold. There can be little doubt of what awaits you beyond the doorway.

He gestures toward the room's sole exit, but all eyes fall rather upon the corpse of the hanged corpse that swings gently next to it.

BORGES (CONT'D)

This is Camarilla territory, gentlemen. Have no uncertainty as to what fate would befall you if it were you caught on the wrong side of that door. The game, gentleman, is called Blood Siege. The stakes, nothing less than uncontested ownership of the city of Atlanta.

A howl of enthusiasm goes up from a Tzimisce war ghoull seated much further down the table. It's hulking form is easily nine feet tall, and it gives the impression of being stooped nearly double under its own weight. The crystal goblets upon the vast conference table tremble and sing slightly in response to each of the beast's movements.

The other Sabbat leaders and councilors maintain a healthy distance from the beast and its master, a slight man, who looked like a child beside his war machine.

CALDWELL

Does that - Christ, I don't even know what to call it - that thing have to be here? I can't even think with it sitting on top of me like this.

Caldwell pushes back his chair but before he can rise AVERROS puts a restraining hand on his arm.

AVERROS

Hold your ground, Capitán.

Caldwell turns his head away with a snort of disgust. He props his foot and then the other noisily upon the table, crossing them. Averros ignores this show of defiance.

AVERROS (CONT'D)

But my associate raises a good point. We have answered this urgent "summons" to council. Not because we acknowledge that this assembly has any authority to "summon" anyone - because it doesn't, let's get that straight from the outset.

He pitches his voice so that it carries across the room.

AVERROS (CONT'D)

And not because our esteemed, if conspicuously absent host, Polonia - and the rest of his New York syndicate - has any jurisdiction here at all, because they don't. And not because any one of you has any claim upon us, or even any reason to expect our support - because you don't. The Nomad Coalitions is here, gentlemen, because the word is out that Atlanta is spoiling for a fight, and you guys don't have the experience, the firepower, or the balls to carry that fight without us.

A roar and a riot goes up from the gathered Nomad warchiefs and even Caldwell is on his feet. On the left of Averros, a man shows a fist in which dance no fewer than three wicked and vitriolic-looking butterfly knives, each blade as long as the man's forearm.

Borges raises a hand asking for silence. Most guests started to return to the table, gathering whatever chairs remain in order for use after the outburst of exuberance.

BORGES

I believe we should continue, gentleman, on the subject that have united us here tonight.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Borges stares fixedly into the fire, but a shadow still hides the half of his face. His throne-like chair is facing the fireplace.

SEBASTIAN

You did not answer my question.

SEBASTIAN approaches from behind Borge's chair.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

But I did not think the council was such a decisive victory. The Nomads, for instance, monopolized far more than their share of proceedings. I was well prepared to shout down a disorganized rabble of thin-blooded ruffians. But I thought they put in quite an impressive showing.

Borges does not turn from contemplation of the flames.

BORGES

Far too few casualties for the opening session. It bodes ill for the morrow.

SEBASTIAN

An astute point. But a moment ago, you were claiming a clear victory for our party.

BORGES

Well then, consider our gains.

Borges ticks one of his finger.

BORGES (CONT'D)

One. With Polonia absent, we were uncontested in our assumption of the role and power of council chairman. I cannot overstress the importance of this preeminence. The privileges of this position have allowed us to set agenda, guide the discussion, define the terms of the confrontation with the Camarilla, bring pressing decisions to a head, or table them indefinitely. The game will be played by our rules.

SEBASTIAN

Well played. Point two?

Sebastian approaches the fireplace, but is not at ease with the flames. He picks up a poker nearby.

BORGES

Two. All parties present, including both the Coalition and the Old Worlders, acknowledged our precedence in these proceedings and the superiority of our claim - Miami's claim - in these contested territories. Did you note how they railed against our absent host while deferring to my authority? Our battle line is firm. The entire Southeast is our backyard, period. Never mind the fact that some of these renegade bands of Nomads have been operating in this region for years now. The home-field advantage, as they say, is ours.

Sebastian raises the poker up to one eye and tests its heft and strikes up the en garde position.

SEBASTIAN

Bravo. I shall especially keep this point in mind as I would like to further discuss our plans for the conquered Atlanta. But do not allow me to distract you; point three?

With a sudden theatrical twirl of the poker, Sebastian plants it like a cane and begins to walk jauntily across the room.

BORGES

Three. This Averros desperately wants to be a major player in this theater. And he's way out of his league. We can use that. Give him a bit of encouragement. Point out to him that there may well be another archbishopric to carve out of Eastern seaboard. A great triumvirate! Polonia in the North, Borges in the South and Averros - at the head of his glorious Nomad Coalition - in the Mid-Atlantic. A formidable line of battle from which the Sabbat could smash the territories in the soft Camarilla underbelly. But perhaps I get ahead of myself.

SEBASTIAN

Not at all. You, sir, are a visionary. And visionaries must be given their full head of steam. Is there a point four?

BORGES

Four. Neither of us is dead yet.

INT. WAR COUNCIL, CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Sebastian has the attention of the council.

SEBASTIAN

And will you also deny that your precious cardinal has taken an all-too-personal interest in the future of the city of Atlanta?

Vallejo weathers these accusations, as well as the outburst of barking laughter from the Coalition side of the table that accompanied them.

VALLEJO

His Eminence the Cardinal, has made no secret of the fact that he is gravely concerned with the events unfolding in and around the city of Atlanta.

SEBASTIAN

Secret? I should think not. By now, surely even the Camarilla has learned of the presence of you and your "legion" - as I believe you are calling that mob of worm-ridden, somnambulant refugees that accompanied you from Madrid. Honestly, I don't know what it is about the state of Georgia that so inspires Europe to throw wide the doors of her prisons at the slightest provocations...

Vallejo holds himself and speaks through clenched teeth. Behind him, the agitation contrasts with his self-control. Curses come out in Spanish now: "Pendejo"; "Cabrón".

VALLEJO

I think... that you overstep yourself, sir.

SEBASTIAN

Perhaps you are right.

Sebastian calms himself and begins pacing the room.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Perhaps I should rather say what is foremost in the minds of all those here assembled. I shall speak plainly, sir. As even you must be aware by now, your very presence here compromises our position.

Vallejo snorts dismissively. And the Nomads begin a new wave of catcalls.

VALLEJO

Although I am willing to grant that yours is the more intimate knowledge of compromising positions. You must in return admit that, of the two of us, I have a few more seasons of campaigning to my credit. And I, for one, have yet to see the army that was lost on account of its receiving timely reinforcements.

SEBASTIAN

It is not the reinforcements that worry me.

Sebastian has to nearly shout to be heard above the throng.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

It is the cost of that reinforcement. We are not so green as you would have it. Do you think that the significance of your ambitious cardinal's "interest" is lost on this astute assembly?

Three great blows, upon the chamber door, interrupt the argument.

HERALD (O.S.)

Open! In the name of His Eminence de Polonia, Archbishop of New York, Gatekeeper of the Paths of Shadow.

Before anyone could make a movement toward the door, it busts inward. The doorway reveals a broken and misshapen figure, wielding a gleaming silver-headed pickaxe. Its body is cumbersome and bloated like a drowned corpse. The creature's head is shaped like a molding apple which had begun to fall in under its own weight.

The HERALD comes forward dragging one leg, obviously no longer fit for bearing him. Then he bangs the head of the axe on the floor three more times.

The room falls silent.

HERALD (CONT'D)

All rise!

All around the rabble, councilors begin to stand. But on the Coalition side of the table, however, no one seems anxious to make any move. Caldwell slowly props first one foot then the other upon the table. He crosses them with an exaggerated sigh.

Averros, tips Caldwell to get up, and with a mutter of disgust gives the example. Caldwell snorts. So Averros grabs him by one foot and swings his legs violently from the table.

CALDWELL

What the hell!

Spinning around and out of his chair, Caldwell finds himself on his feet facing his leader.

AVERROS

Not worth it...

Other Nomads rise and press closer, encircling the pair.

CALDWELL

Yeah, you're not.

Caldwell turns away but he is still hot and can't resist another parting shot.

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

But if you're a real good boy and do just what master tells you, maybe the nice archbishop will let you lead us all in the national anthem. Hell, you could even make hall monitor-

Caldwell feels instantly a tightening in his throat as his collar is grabbed from behind. He twists in the grasp, launching a blow with his, now clawed, hand.

Shattered claws cascade to the floor and Caldwell curses and jerks back a few paces. Averros doesn't seem inclined to pursue him to finish the job.

AVERROS

Next time you pull a stunt like that, you're dead. The next time I have to remind you who's running this show, it's over. Now straighten up your act Capitán. Understood?

CALDWELL

Sir.

Caldwell doesn't look up and keeps himself to his broken hand. Everyone is now standing, except for Borges.

Polonia enters decked in all the formal regalia of his office, the traditional ermine robe, miter and crosier of an archbishop. He seems to cast not one, but two distinct shadows before him.

As he crosses the threshold, the two attendant shadows grow more distinct and take on substance and dimension. They ascend as if climbing a flight of stair. When they stand full on their feet, it is visible that each of them has a cushion with a recognizable artifact upon it.

Upon the right is a golden apple of New York, upon the left the orb of dominion over shadow. The bearers deposit their charges in the vast circular table, in front of Polonia's place. Then they descend in to the floor, the same way they had emerged.

POLONIA

Thank you for coming, ladies, gentleman, friends and honored guests. I sense a certain exhilarating expectancy in the air of this room, a premonition, if you will, that greatness and glory are close at hand.

Still no one dares to take a seat.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

I appreciate the sacrifices that many of you have had to make in order to be with us on this momentous occasion. You have crossed vast distances and braved great danger to reach this meeting place, isolated deep behind enemy lines.

Polonia gives a gentle push to the dangling body so it swings in a slow, circular arc. The body has a name tag now, folded from its breast pocket: Mr. Camarilla.

POLONIA (CONT'D)

Let me assure you, therefore, that the decisions we reach here, and the challenges that we are called upon to meet in these coming nights, will give the Camarilla cause to tremble.

Polonia has to pause, to allow the roar of the assembly to quiet itself

POLONIA (CONT'D)

As you are no doubt aware, Atlanta has been a Camarilla stronghold since its founding. For some time now, we have been engaged in laying the groundwork for the Siege of Atlanta. The Camarilla is reeling, gentlemen, and tearing itself apart in its flailing attempts to prevent its inevitable fall.

NOMAD #1

Is it true the Brujah are revolting
against its own Prince?

The assembled are in high spirit now and there are much side
discussions.

CALDWELL

The Brujah... Please.

VALLEJO

They are a hard-fighting clan,
always the toughest knot of
resistance in the Camarilla battle
lines.

CALDWELL

Nah, it's those damned Gangrel that
you have to watch for.

SEBASTIAN

The Gangrel? You're not from around
here are you? Where are you going
to find Gangrel around here?

CALDWELL

Well, fewer Gangrel are fine by me.

AVERROS

That only leaves the Tremere.

This bombshell brings the conversation to a halt. The mention
of the clan quiets the great part of the room.

CALDWELL

How strong is the Atlanta chantry?

BORGES

It's old.

Borges, who was almost forgotten since the arrival of
Polonia, enters the conversation.

BORGES (CONT'D)

Well, old by American standards,
over a century. That means we can
expect some pretty complex arcane
defenses. It houses at least half a
dozen warlocks under the
supervision of a sorceress named
Hannah.

Vallejo raises a hand.

VALLEJO

If I may be allowed? On this point
I have been instructed to deliver a
message from my liege.

Polonia is suddenly wary. He glances to the opposite end of the table where Borges sits, but Borges' face is inscrutable as ever behind its omnipresent cowl of shadow.

The eyes of the assembly are on Polonia and he has no choice but to acknowledge the self-proclaimed messenger.

BORGES

Yes, yes, hand it here.

VALLEJO

My cardinal thought it unwise to commit the message to paper. I can, however, recite it verbatim. It is only this:

"The council need have no anxiety over the Tremere. The cardinal's ambassador, the Lady Sascha Vykos, will neutralize the Tremere threat".

Color rises in Vallejo's face when there is coarse barks of derisive laughter from the Nomads.

VALLEJO (CONT'D)

Desist at once, these are the words of His Eminence the Cardinal Monçada. You mock them at your peril.

Vallejo's tone quieted the worst of the offenders, but from beside the Archbishop Borges, Sebastian rises to his feet to confront the Spaniard.

SEBASTIAN

Perhaps then you could illuminate us as to how this Vykos will singlehandedly defeat the assembled might of the Tremere chantry. You must admit, on the surface of it, it seems quite... ridiculous.

VALLEJO

I am not given to know my lord's instructions to his legate. Nor would I be likely to reveal them if I did. I know only that it will be done. Monçada has given his pledge. It will be done. If you persist on ludicrous attempts be prepared to defend them with your honor.

Before Sebastian continues to inquire Vallejo on this matter, he hears his voice mentioned and turns to his master.

BORGES

I believe Sebastian was only expressing his admiration and perhaps envy of the cardinal's ruthlessness and cunning. It would be very thin-skinned of you to take a mortal offence at such innocuous comment. It was my impression that you were made of sterner stuff.

Borges flashes his mastiff grin at Vallejo.

BORGES (CONT'D)

Now, if we might return to the subject of pushing forward our preparation for the siege?

POLONIA

But that is exactly what I have been attempting to relate to you, gentlemen. There is NOT going to be any siege.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

SASCHA VYKOS looks up with a hint of annoyance when she hears the three sharp knocks at the door. She carefully refolds the letter and lets it slide into the inside pocket of her immaculate Chanel suit.

The door opens just enough to let RAVENNA pass. But he doesn't shut the door behind him.

RAVENNA

I am sorry, Vykos. There is a..."gentleman" here who insists he must see you without delay.

Ravenna's anxiety is obvious. Vykos smiles at his servant discomfort.

VYKOS

And what is this gentleman's name?

RAVENNA

My lady! I did no... one does not... What I mean to say...

Ravenna's face was close to terror now. His voice falls to a conspiratorial whisper.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

He is an Assa-

There is a sharp crack and Ravenna falls to the floor.

PARMENIDES

"Assassin" is such an uncouth word.

When PARMENIDES enters, steps over the inert body of Ravenna.

PARMENIDES (CONT'D)

A thousand blessings upon you and
your house. You may account this
the first.

Vykos holds her ground and studies the stranger. His form is almost entirely concealed in a draping robe of unbleached linen. His movements are fluid and secure.

VYKOS

Was that strictly necessary?

Her guest turns up the palms of his hands and bows his head slightly.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

You might at least return him to
the front room so that we will not
have to look at him as we talk.
I find it hard to believe that you
are always so casual about disposal
of bodies and the like. And bring
in another chair as you come. My
servants have hardly had a chance
to unpack yet.

A ice-white smile stretches across the ebony features of the visitor.

PARMENIDES

I am not in the habit of concealing
my handiwork. Unless, of course,
you count the removal of witnesses.
And you need not to concern
yourself for my comfort. I will
stand. Aren't we quite alone? You
spoke of servants.

VYKOS

Yes, we are, now. I have, of
course, sent my most valued
associates away for the evening.
Some of my guests have a reputation
of being somewhat... excitable.

Parmenides voice becomes low and menacing.

PARMENIDES

And you do not fear for your
safety? There are many in this city
who would see you come to harm.

VYKOS

Tonight, I am the safest person in
all Atlanta.

Vykos demonstrates her confidence by turning her back to him
and crossing to the cluttered desk.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Your masters are not so careless as
to dispatch an agent to kill me
when we still have unfulfilled
business. Very unprofessional. Nor
could they allow me to come to harm
from a third party when suspicion
would be sure to fall squarely upon
themselves.

No, I do not fear you, although you
bring death into my house. Tonight,
you are my guardian angel, my
knight-protector. You will fight
and even die to prevent me from
coming to harm before you can
conclude your business. Is it not
so?

The assassin flashes a predatory smile.

PARMENIDES

Tonight, I am your insurance
policy. But for tonight only. Lady.

From beneath his robes, he takes a burlap sack. With a sweep
of his free arm, he clears the clutter from the center of the
desk and deposits his sack.

Vykos plays along, and with a sigh of resignation, opens the
sack. She recognizes Hannah, the Tremere chantry leader. More
precisely, it is her head. Her hands had also been severed
and are folded neatly under her chin.

VYKOS

She is dead all right.
Are you certain it's her?

PARMENIDES

Ah, now I see you are having a
small jest at my expense. Surely,
you are more than casually
acquainted with... the deceased.

VYKOS

I have never seen her before. And
if I understand correctly, I did
not even arrive in this country
until after her death.

PARMENIDES

Have no concern on that account. All has been carried out exactly the manner you have specified. As to the matter of the witch's identity, there can be no doubt. If you allow me...

Parmenides slides one of the lily-white hands from beneath Hannah's chin. And turns the palm up.

PARMENIDES (CONT'D)

The witch's magic is still in her hands. The knife cannot sever it, the scythe cannot gather it in.

He caresses the hand gently, and the network of delicate lines that crisscross the palm darken. As he continues to brush the hand with his fingertips, the lines seem to writhe and then curl up at the edges as if shrinking back from a flame.

Vykos watches as the snaking lines knot themselves into a series of complex and subtly unsettling sigils. The assassin smiles satisfied.

PARMENIDES (CONT'D)

Do you see these signs? It is not given to me to interpret the sigils, but an adept could give them proper names. Each sign is a unique magical signature, a lingering reminder of some foul enchantment that occupied the witch's final days. Do you have need of such knowledge?

Vykos slowly shakes her head, and doesn't answer right away, as if coming back from a great distance.

VYKOS

No. No, it doesn't matter now. With Hannah dead, the entire chantry will be... But where are my manners? I must not bore you with details of such trifling and personal difficulties. Really, you are too indulgent of me. Now, what were you telling me about indisputable proof of Hannah's identity?

Parmenides gestured toward the sigils.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

A fascinating exercise, and let us assume for a moment that I believe unquestioningly your account of what I have just seen.

But this still tells me only that the hand belonged to a Tremere witch. It does not tell me that it belonged specifically to Hannah.

Vykos sits down at the desk and brushes aside a few strands of Hannah's hair, that had drifted over her pallid face.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Appearances can be fatally deceiving.

Vykos runs both hands slowly downward, stroking the unresponsive flesh of cheek and throat.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

I have seen her, of course, but only in photographs. Do you think her beautiful?

PARMENIDES

Lady, these consideration, they have no place in my work.

VYKOS

No, of course not. But I was asking a professional opinion. You surely had ample opportunity to see her, to study her. Would you say that she was beautiful?

Parmenides moves away and mutters a few syllables in a harsh and foreign language.

PARMENIDES

You will, perhaps, forgive me if I say that you are the most exasperating of clients. Of course, I observed the movements of the witch. How could I not do so? There is room neither for error, nor for hesitation, nor mercy when dealing with her kind.

Yes, she was beautiful in dying as she is in death.

Vykos smiles and continues brushing Hannah's head. Parmenides stirs uncomfortably and does not resume his pacing.

VYKOS

What then shall I call you, my sentimental assassin? You have not yet told me your name.

PARMENIDES

Nor am I likely to. You can call me
Parmenides.

VYKOS

Ah, a philosopher then. I had
nearly mistaken you for a poet. You
do not appear to be a Greek and you
surely are not so wizened as to
have walked among the luminaries of
the School of Athens. You are, then
something of a classicist, a
scholar... a romantic.

Parmenides turns to protest but he stares at Vykos in open
disbelief. She is completely absorbed by the head, great
tangled lumps of Hannah's hair cover the desk, while Vykos
caresses her cheeks.

PARMENIDES

My lady, I believe we yet have
business to discuss.

Vykos still doesn't look up from her labor.

VYKOS

You were endeavoring to prove that
this is indeed Hannah, the Tremere
witch. The more I subject this
specimen to scrutiny, however, the
less resemblance I see between the
two.

Vykos pushes her chair back to study the results of her
efforts and nods with satisfaction.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

There is a certain... luster
missing. A certain defiance no
longer apparent in this delicate
line of jaw... And the eyes, these
eyes don't have any of the fire
that is the legacy of the Tremere
devilry.

PARMENIDES

Enough. If you continue along this
lines, you will certainly mar the
remains beyond all recognition.

VYKOS

Now you have gotten you feelings
hurt again. Come here my young
romantic, my "philosophe". If you
tell me that this is the witch, I
will accept your pledge.

Vykos rotates the head on the desk to face him.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Look upon her. Do you not find her
beautiful?

Parmenides is unable to say a word while looking at the sum of these alarming alterations. The face that stares back it is unmistakably his own.

Vykos is suddenly behind him.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

...The reason I do not place my
trust in photographs. Images may be
altered.

Parmenides feels her lips in his throat and lets his eyes fall closed.

ATTACK PREPARATION SEQUENCE - PARALLEL MONTAGE

POLONIA (V.O.)

There will be no siege, gentlemen,
because the battle for Atlanta will
be decided by one single,
irresistible assault. We will sack
the city, smashing every last shard
of resistance in an all-out
offensive. That offensive,
gentlemen will take place during
the Summer Solstice Ball at the
High Museum of Art. Precisely at
midnight.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA - NIGHT

Captains of the forces spearheading the attack are taking their hidden positions in the field around the High Museum.

Nearby streets are closed by municipality signs. A fire-truck, followed by an ambulance, pass a few blocks away, lured into two distinct points of fire on the other side of the city.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

The room is in utter disarray. Carefully drafted and numbered plans for the assault are strewn haphazardly about the table. Photo dossiers of important Camarilla targets have grown hopelessly mingled and many pictures are pinned to the wall and then slashed into tatters.

Guests pour goblets of blood, cheering like its new year's eve and dripping all over the table.

INT. CORRIDOR, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

Someone, apparently a woman, crosses the corridor elegantly dressed in the style of a sixteenth-century noblewoman. Long flowing gown, puffed sleeves cuffed midway up to the forearm. She holds something in one hand.

Polonia's herald sees her and promptly goes through the door that leads to the conference room.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART OF ATLANTA -NIGHT

Four heavy trucks slowly pass one of the "street closed" signs, ignoring its warning. Turning to one of the alleys, one of those trucks stops and the rear doors open wide. Something heavy and monstrous unloads itself from the truck and gravely growls. Then another comes out to the darkness of the alley.

END OF ATTACK PREPARATION SEQUENCE - PARALLEL MONTAGE

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, OMNI HOTEL - NIGHT

The Herald pounds his axe once upon the floor.

HERALD

The Lady Vykos, legate, nuncio and ambassador extraordinaire of His Eminence, the Cardinal Monçada.

He steps aside as the elegantly attired figure sweeps forward. As Vykos enters the room, some of the assembled go absolutely berserk. A chorus of cries goes up from the capering mob.

VOICE IN THE MOB #1

The Blood Countess!

VOICE IN THE MOB #2

The coat of arms. There!
Embroidered on her collar.

VOICE IN THE MOB #3

Yes, the dragon swallowing its own tail. It is she!

Vykos has a silk handkerchief in her hand, which she uses to carry a severed head. She casually heaves the head onto the table and when it stops rolling, we recognize the head of Parmenides.

VYKOS

Your pardon, my lords and ladies,
 for the lateness of my arrival. As
 you can see, I have been engaged in
 proving that there is no force that
 can deny us our victory here
 tonight. The head of the assassin
 that was sent against me is only
 the first gift I lay before you
 this night.

Vykos unfastens the curious necklace she is wearing. It is shaped to resemble a pair of folded hands. She tosses the necklace after the head. All eyes turn to the disturbing dance of arcane symbols upon the palms.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

The hands belong to Hannah, the
 Tremere chantry leader. As I said,
 no one will deny us.

In one instant, the room became a scene of pandemonium, something like they are Brazilian football fans and their team just scored a goal. Cries of "Death to the warlocks!" erupted and like a giant octopus, many hands reached Vykos, and raised her.

Vykos steps onto the conference table. All eyes are on this curious displacement, a person walking atop the table.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you all for your affectionate welcome. You are no doubt aware that only the space of a few short hours stands between us and the utter and devastating conquest of the city of Atlanta. But I say that the conquest of this city will not be accomplished by neither siege nor assault. Tonight gentlemen, it will be a rout, a glorious Firedance. One of the most ancient and glorious traditions of our people...

Only a few remained sit down in total contrast with the fanatic behavior showed by the most part of the guests in the room. Among them, Sebastian almost took refuge under his master's wing, Borges.

SEBASTIAN

Master, this council is out of hand. This Vykos must be stopped, and stopped quickly, before her fanatic converts bring the entire council chamber crashing down around them.

From the other side of the table, Polonia sits back in his chair in shocked silence. As if he heard Sebastian, through all the shouting and jumping and accidental casualties. Polonia mutters to himself.

POLONIA

And he will.

Deliberately, Polonia folds his hands before him on the table. Slowly, he twists his Episcopal ring around in one full circuit anti-clockwise.

VYKOS

And it will not end here,
gentlemen. Already, our advanced
forces are on the move. By the
week's end we shall smash the
Camarilla forces in-

Vykos is caught up in the fervor of her own exhortations. She is cut short by the appearance of the hilt of a delicate silver knife protruding from between her shoulderblades.

There is an audible gasp from the assembly, then cries of dismay followed immediately by fury. Vykos takes one staggering step forward.

A voice whispers in Polonia's ear.

ENVOY SPIRIT

It is done, master.

Polonia rubs his temples and nods. He watches Vykos, slowly, painfully, turning to face his supposed assailant. Her eyes fall immediately upon Averros.

Averros glances quickly to each side finding himself alone and he raises one hand in protest.

AVERROS

No, my lady. You are mistaken-

The crazed mob surges toward him, and, as if animated by a single will, crashes over him. The amorphous horror seems to fill the room, when over a dozen attackers drag him to his death.

Meanwhile, Vykos shrinks her shoulders, with a cry of agony. Reaching back with one hand, in an impossible angle, she pulls the knife slowly from her back. Suddenly, dark blood sprays out of her back falling in the faces of her followers. Two drops fall on Polonia, that furiously stand up. He sees that Vykos, knelt on one knee, is actually smiling.

As Polonia goes for the doors of the council chamber, many guests behind him start picking up goblets and filling them with still spraying blood. Vykos opens his arms as if inviting everyone to join. Polonia's herald opens his door.

POLONIA

Have my commanders attend upon me
in my chambers. All of them.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT

The huge bronze clock set over the windows looking down to Peachtree Street in front of the High Museum of Art marks seven minutes past midnight.

CALDWELL

This isn't right!

VALLEJO

The attack must go forward, Señor
Commander.

Both of the Sabbath leaders stood in a shaded rooftop watching the Museum building.

VALLEJO (CONT'D)

It is a simple order. The attack
cannot go forward until you draw in
your patrols, Señor Commander.

Caldwell abruptly ceases his pacing, shoves a stubby finger toward Vallejo and bares obvious fangs as he speaks.

CALDWELL

Somebody has screwed up the orders.
This can't be right. This ain't
right. I'm not letting all the
credit for this attack go to
damned...

VALLEJO

...To damned foreigners?

CALDWELL

To... to others.

VALLEJO

Sir, your patrols ensure that our
victory will be complete. None of
those people will escape us, and no
one from the outside will be able
to interfere.

CALDWELL

I want a piece of the action!

Vallejo flinches and looks around worried.

VALLEJO

Lower your voice.

CALDWELL

My patrols should be part of the attack.

VALLEJO

Give the order, or step aside for someone who will... someone who can.

Caldwell turns to a menacing tone.

CALDWELL

I won't take that from you!

Caldwell is surprised by a voice from behind him, someone standing less than a foot away.

VYKOS

Take?

Vykos physical appearance had been slightly altered. Her feminine features had been hardened, a high forehead is now folded upward and black. She looked taller and slender. The extravagant, former dress had been replaced by a dark bordeaux suit, in the style of a Victorian orchestra maestro.

VYKOS

There's nothing for you to take, Commander. Your job is to give, to give order that were entrusted to you.

Caldwell takes a step back, then bows slightly.

CALDWELL

Councilor Vykos, I didn't expected to see you here.

VYKOS

Indeed. I had not planned to venture so close to what I presumed, in my ignorance, would be a field of battle.

CALDWELL

Something's wrong. There's been some... misunderstanding. What I got can't be the orders you gave. Somebody screwed'em up, didn't tell us right.

Vykos stares fixedly at the commander, not saying a word.

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

My patrols are ordered to stand by, to sit back and just watch the assault. My boys can kill as good as anybody. A lot of them are Tzimisce, your clansmen. They deserve a piece of the action. Some of them are here to fight against their own clans.

While Caldwell speaks Vykos leans forward and sniffs his ears, first one, then the other. Caldwell is totally unsure of what to make of this, but holds his ground.

Vallejo watches this peculiar exchange, totally ignored for the moment.

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

My patrols are... our Tzimisce, and the others...are... I mean-

VYKOS

Shh.

Vykos sounds like a mother to her baby, and she places her palms gently on his cheeks.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

You are very much mistaken, Commander.

No active part in the assault? How could you believe such a thing, my dear Commander? Caldwell is about to protest when she puts a tender finger upon his lips to silence him.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

When the patrols are ordered forward, they will form a seal around that museum. You see the museum? No one will escape because of the patrols. And do you know who is inside, Commander? The prince of this city is there, which means that it is likely that others will try to help him, mortal police, perhaps. But you know what they will find?

Caldwell is paralyzed in fear now.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

They will find their way blocked. There will be no help for the prince. Nor for any of the others. So you see how important the patrols are?

With her hands still on his cheeks, she allows him to nod his head.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Good. I wanted to be sure.

Caldwell quickly grabs her fists as she begins to press her hand together. Vykos eyes shine more brightly and Caldwell's face begins to give way beneath the steady pressure of Vykos' palms.

A garbled moan arises in his throat, as his face suddenly takes an elongated manner. Vallejo watches in horrified fascination as Vykos thumbs into Caldwell's eyes, digging into his brain. Caldwell's body slumps to the ground. And before Vykos leaves, she turns to Vallejo.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Give the order. The attack will go forward.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

MARCUS, the pack leader, is with his troop atop one parking garage, holding his walkie-talkie waiting for orders.

MARCUS

Shut your mouth before I rip it off your face.

Marcus is talking to both DELONA and DELORA, the dark, lithe twins beside him. Also part of the pack is the heavy JORGE, who is quietly wrapped in his cloak, ignoring the twittery laughter between the girls.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Shut up, you little turds.

Next to Marcus, Delona and Delora look really small, like spiders, with their long, spindly limbs.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

If I've got to tell you one more-

They all fall silent at once. Like a dog hearing something on the distance, Marcus is alerted too. A door is opening below them. They rush to the edge of the parking deck and a lone figure is indeed exiting the garage.

Marcus nods to Jorge, who is already in position. Jorge drops onto the stranger, but the victim shows incredible reflexes and is able to fall backward and roll, coming to his feet just as Jorge crashes on the floor.

Marcus roars in disbelief and Delona and Delora giggle hysterically. Vegel looks up at his attackers, he is surprised but instead of fleeing he assumes a combative stance.

VEGEL

Come on then, you bastards! I'll take one of you with me. Which one wishes to accompany me to the hellish pits of Set?

Delona and Delora are already crawling down the face of the building, while Marcus launches himself into the air with a hulk jump, landing on the other side of Vegel. He is now surrounded.

DELORA

So good of you to come to us.

Marcus uses Delora's distraction to jump on him, but Vegel dodges him, rolling once again. But before he had one open way out, Delona and Delora, incredibly agile and quick, block his way out.

Jorge strikes and manages to wrap his enormous arms around Vegel, pinning one of his arms to his side. With the free arm, Vegel pulls out a small knife. Unimpressed by the knife, Marcus moves in to finish him but Vegel whips his blade and something strikes Marcus in the face.

Marcus claws his face and his eyes burn with some kind of acid. In panic, he crashes against one of the cars that fires it's alarm, soon to be put out with a sledgehammer fist in the motor-hood. When he manages to open his eyes he sees Jorge also down with cries of agony, with the little blade through his hand burning him with poison acid.

VEGEL

Which one of you is next?

Vegel turns to deal with Delona and Delora, flicking a forked tongue at them, but Marcus takes that moment to throw a punch right between Vegel's shoulder blades, propelling him into the air. Just as he lands hard on the pavement, a few yards away, Delona and Delora are on him at once, raining blows on his head.

Marcus brushes them aside and lifts Vegel by the collar then wraps his arms around him and squeezes, looking him in the eyes, smiling. Ribs snap and Vegel screams in agony. Marcus roars in triumph as Vegel coughs blood in his face.

He squeezes Vegel beyond existence, hugging his remains in his chest. Marcus holds the remains at arms length, except, there are no remains. There are only his clothes and some blood, but somehow, Vegel managed to squeeze out of Marcus grasp.

DELONA

Gone.

DELORA

Great. Hours of waiting out here
and when finally one of them is
spotted, we let him disappear.

Marcus drops Vegel's clothes and half blind from the acid, half blind with rage, attacks Delora. He opens his powerful jaws and catches her neck, which snaps. After draining her tiny frame, her head remains attached to the torso only by a few cords of tendon or muscle. Marcus looks to Delona now.

MARCUS

Get rid of that.

He points to the corpse of Delora.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Then carry Jorge back upstairs. Now!

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, ROOF TOP - NIGHT

Vallejo seems to be alone now. He silently signals the attack to commence. A sprawling swath of blackness creeps slowly from near Vallejo's position, toward the Museum, across the street.

The wave is like a inky blackness that wraps itself around the base of the museum then oozes up the long ramp and stairs to the main entrance. The black and silent tsunami extinguishes the all the streetlamps in the area around the Museum.

Beside Vallejo, a figure of pure shadow takes shape, raising from the pavement, and gaining a human form. ALCARAZ bows to his commander.

ALCARAZ

Parking area secure, señor.

VALLEJO

And the other exits?

ALCARAZ

Si.

VALLEJO

Very well. Take up your position.

Alcaraz melts into pure shadow, once again. Vallejo raises his radio to the mouth.

VALLEJO (CONT'D)
Commander Bolon.

BOLON (O.S.)
Bolon here.

VALLEJO
Exterior secure. Phase two
complete. Prepare your war-ghouls.

BOLON (O.S.)
Phase three commencing.

VALLEJO
Confirmed.

Everywhere Vallejo looks, shadows are alive with slow, methodical movement. Large shapes, vaguely humanoid, move in ranks toward the museum.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

BENISON
Elysium be damned, I will punish
your insufferable attitude.

Prince Benison stalks forward, with murder in his eyes.

Julius tests the reassuring weight of the sword, a perfect twin to the one he still has strapped to his back.

JULIUS
Then I guess more blood will be
spilled.

Both of them assume attack positions. Darkness falls over the museum. The first screams are rapidly muffled by the darkness making the result similar to screaming underwater. Then, pregnant silence.

Shadows clear some space around Julius, leaving only multiple tentacles of blackness, grabbing his legs and arms. Someone manages to scream "Lasombra clan!" before making a sound of choking like something was around his neck.

Julius strikes at the tentacles and they seem strangely palpable when the sword slices them, just before they dissipate. Chaos takes hold all around Julius. The shadows advance and retreat menacingly. Kindred are knocked down to the ground by forceful blows from more tentacles.

Amidst it all, swirling shadows sweep through the chamber like churning storm clouds. Julius catches a glimpse of Benison holding his own against the Lasombra attack. A dozen yards away, a mass of black jerks violently on the floor, until one arm emerges from someone stuck inside fighting his way out.

The few remaining emergency lights make a strobe effect through the dancing shadows and Julius manages to discern many more shapes. Large, monstrous shapes advancing. So he shouts to Benison, trying to get his attention.

JULIUS (CONT'D)

Sabbat!

Julius finds himself staring up at the creatures, war-ghouls that seem to come from all directions, crossing the curtain of shadow. The smallest is well over seven feet. They are everything but human, a whirling mass of appendages, six, seven arms some of them.

Julius' sword whistles through the air, cutting at once, three of the arms of the closest beast. The others hesitate having seen his melee ability. Julius licks his blade.

JULIUS (CONT'D)

Tzimisce blood...

All around the gallery, most of Kindred are going down. Benjamin lays dazed on the floor, while one of the war-ghouls beats him senseless with a leg broken from one of the statues. One of the servants is lifted in the air by two monstrosities and used for a wishbone.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Vegel's clothes lay flat on the parking lot floor. Hisses of a serpent seem to resemble whispers of a word, "The Eye". The area seems deserted now, and a snake-like-thing crawls from the cover of a BMW. Its form gains a human shape as it comes to open space.

Vegel assumes his Kindred form once again. He is naked, completely covered by a greenish goo and he visibly suffered some damage. His left arm and shoulder are completely crushed, countless small injuries and bruises cover him. He drags his body inch by inch, until he reaches his jacket.

He puts his right hand inside one pocket and is visibly surprised when he grabs and pulls out the Eye of Hazimel. Vegel hears some voices above him. Deep and resonant voices like the ones belonging to the brutish Sabbat.

Quickly returning the Eye to the pocket, he clamps a strip of jacket in his mouth and crawls back, toward a covered place. His progress is tediously slow and he fears the muffled voices might come in his direction. Finally he reaches the curb, offering him a reasonable hiding place.

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

Vegel knew his choices were very limited.
Die by Sabbat, or die by sun light.
Even if he could reach a good cover, he doubted he would survive until the next night. So, Vegel realized the only thing he could do.

Vegel reaches into the pocket for the Eye. The Eye begins to throb again as he pulls it out. He takes a good look at it. It is a grotesque, black and fibrous thing. Larger than an eye should be and covered with a film of moist ichor. It also seems to have its own eyelid and the fleshy black lids wont part at Vegel's one-handed efforts.

Vegel does not hesitate, he puts the Eye carefully down over the jacket, and penetrates his own eye socket, pulling and squeezing out his fragile eye until it comes loose. Then he retrieves the Eye of Hazimel sliding it into his skull. With a soft squish it seems to settle in place.

Vegel feels the reverberations of power from the Eye from within.

Up, near the top of a street lamp, a little spider continues its work on a magnificent web, almost complete now. The light flickers for a brief seconds as Vegel opens his new Eye.

INT. THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH - NIGHT

Laughter shakes the stone walls of the tomb. Dark light rays fill the burial chamber and suddenly vanish leaving pitch black once again.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Vykos stands up, interrupting his handiwork. He has that feeling that something happened, then slowly returns to his seat.

Parmenides awakes with difficulty, he is "sitting" in front of Vykos. He is not strapped by ropes, instead his flesh is melted with the chair, and his feet rooted to the floor. He panics and tries to scream but his mouth is not there.

VYKOS

Hold still won't you. There's no reason to flail about like that, I did not expect you to come back around so soon.

(MORE)

VYKOS (CONT'D)

I'm nearly finished now, though,
and there's no sense putting you
under again.
You'll just have to tough out this
last little bit, but we're soon
finished.

Vykos uses her own hand to craft his flesh, at the sound of bones being readjusted, Parmenides consciousness leaves him to her will.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

That's my sweet boy.
My young romantic.
My philosophe.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

JULIUS

Benison!

The Prince is not far from Julius, he is protecting his wife behind him, Eleanor. They edge back closer to Julius. He pulls his second sword, from its clasp on his back, and offers the pommel to Benison.

Benison nods and takes the weapon. Glass shatters everywhere, both opaque dividers and outer windows of the museum explode inward. Julius shields his eyes but ignores the dozens of pieces of glass splinters that pierce him.

Bouncing into the gallery through the shattered windows, are a number of fist-sized orbs the color of flesh. They suddenly explode, and fresh, reddish blood sprays the chamber. The giant malformities seem to get more excited with the flesh grenades and press harder on the trio. Back to back, with Eleanor in the middle, Julius and Benison cut whatever they find as target.

A big shouldered but pinheaded monstrosity races toward Victoria. She is able to fend off the groping attacks, but then the beast raises a third arm to club the Toreador. Victoria's scream comes to the attention of Julius. The blow lifts her from the floor, striking her in the right thigh and depositing her at the beast's feet.

Then, a flash of a sword releases the war-ghoul from two of its arms and they land near Victoria. She tries to stand up, but the flood of blood and other juices gushed from the beast's wounds don't allow her to gain purchase on the floor. Julius jumps on the war-ghoul's back and buries his sword deep in its shoulder, reaching its hearth.

Suddenly, Julius' torso is wrapped by a dark anaconda-shaped shadow and thrown against Benison. The mammoth body of the war-ghoul falls death, crashing hard on Victoria. Leopold appears and approaches her.

With much effort, manages to lift enough for her to slip out. Kneeling beside Victoria, Leopold looks deeply into her eyes, not in fear but with silent questions.

She doesn't even manages to thank him, when another tenebrous tendril as thick as his leg, knots about the sculptor's waist and throws him through one of the windows of the High Museum's forth floor. She crawls away, passing Thelonious, who is also down with missing legs above the knee. He tries to grab her, possessed with hunger in his eyes and fangs showing in his mouth.

Victoria manages to reach the relative safety of her cubicle of glass, from which she spied earlier. She opens a secret hatch on the floor.

EXT. AROUND HIGH MUSEUM OF ART, PEACHTREE STREET- NIGHT

Marcus pokes the inert form of the vampire that had just landed on the asphalt, Leopold. Only Delona follows him now, she approaches Leopold's body, sniffing it like a curious dog.

MARCUS

Get away from that!

She flinches, obviously in fear of him, now.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Come on! There's a party upstairs we weren't invited, but we will crash it anyway.

Leopold's eyes move slightly as they move away, slowly his white orbs turn red with hunger, much like Victoria saw in Thelonious.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

It's chaos of darkness, blood and ruin. Body parts flying, screams of pain, threats and war cries.

Outside, at the foot of the sculpture that stands in the front of the Museum, one of the Sabbat patrols builds a heap from what they can find that might burn. Then, they light it on fire. Then as a ritual an ancient tribe might had practiced, they test their courage, jumping over the fire, some fall to their deaths, others survive with adrenaline full veins.

EXT. HANNAH'S MANSION, TREMERE CHANTRY - NIGHT

An explosion rockets the top floor of the Atlanta chantry. Gouts of flame burst from the upper windows.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

From Vykos' window, it is possible to see the flames from the explosion of the Tremere Chantry. But Vykos is still concentrated on Parmenides flesh sculpting.

Parmenides moans in pain.

VYKOS

From all the thirteen clans, from
all the childs of the third
generation, our beloved nemesis,
the Antediluvians. Your clan is
supposed to be the most silent..

Parmenides wiggles a little then moans in resignation.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Gently, now. Do not fight it, my
young romantic, my philosophe.

Vykos raises wrist with reddish-dark blood dripping from an open wound.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Even your vengeful masters will not
begrudge you this one small
indulgence. It is a gift. Drink
deeply and be content.

PARMENIDES

There... will be... others. The masters
will forge a special hell to
receive you and they will not rest
until they have seen you dragged,
screaming, and begging for your
life, into the fires that burn
eternally, but consume not.

The open wrist, that Vykos had elevated, closes dry. Unmoved by the words of his subject, she claps her hands slowly.

PARMENIDES (CONT'D)

This humiliation... It will not go
unavenged. You are doomed as surely
I am. Though I have fallen among
fiends, it is you, my tormentor,
whom I pity.

VYKOS

My young poet. Only in this one
thing am I disappointed. That you
would, even for a moment, believe
that I would be so reckless as to
take you into my care without the
knowledge of your cherished
masters.

Parmenides opens his eyes so hard they might pop out any second. Vykos voice is gentle and soft, with affection and perhaps a touch of pride.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

There will be no retribution, my gentle assassin, because you are a gift. A very special gift. A pledge between our two peoples. You have been given into my care. Do you understand this? You are mine completely, to do with as I will. Just think of it! The fun we shall have together.

Parmenides' face shows panic and prepares to let out a cry of despair.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

A cry of agonizing pain comes from a shadow by the wall that Julius sword just had pierced. The curtain of shadow in that wall recedes to the point of impact and hides behind the body of the victim. Julius goes to pick up the sword, but twists it before pulling it out. The sabbat warrior holds the wound in his chest and looks at Julius with rage. Slowly tendrils of shadow appear from behind him. But Julius decapitates him in a blink of an eye.

JULIUS

Fucking Lasombra bloodsuckers...

Julius hears a creaking noise, a moan of metal and wood. Just a few yards from him, the giant doors of bronze, of Hell and Heaven, are toppling down on Benison and Eleanor. Prince Benison lands on his side and rolls quickly, but his wife is not so lucky.

Two battle ghouls are trapped as well. One of the doors opens just enough to let Eleanor put her arm and head out. But above her, three heavy beasts stand crushing her slowly. One of them, the biggest who wears spiked bone armor, holds three oil drums.

Both Julius and Benison watch the monsters trip the barrels and a fiery flood is unleashed over the doors. Before they can respond, liquid fire sweeps down over Eleanor and her tiny body bursts into flame. Julius holds up the prince, horrified, before he tries to the rescue of his wife.

JULIUS (CONT'D)

Greek fire. She's done.

They fall back, away from the fire liquid that spreads through out the front portion of the gallery, incinerating the bodies of the dead and wounded, Sabbat and Kindred alike.

Prince Benison unleashes his vengeance upon the nearest enemies, cutting limbs and smashing skulls with his mighty fist.

The harsh alarm sounds still and adds confusion to the fight. The ghouls are slow to coordinate their attacks, and one by one, they fall beneath the Kindred swords.

They fight their way past one of the remaining intact pieces of statuary. It is a large piece, a man looking down, grinning disturbingly, over the carnage as if he approved the blood shed around him.

Julius and Benison find themselves with battle ghouls on one side and the full force of the Lasombra shadow on the other, materialized by the undulating black curtain, a fluid wall of shadow.

BENISON

Come, my archon. We must withdraw
into the woods.

Julius, uncomprehending, stares after him. Then the prince disappears into the Lasombra shadow. Julius is perplexed by the prince's words and deeds. But after looking back and forth he decides jump into the darkness.

INT. LASOMBRA SHADOWS, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Julius is immersed in a tenebrous blanket of shadow that smothers every attempt of movement. Like a fly in a spider web he is immobilized. Through the filter of the shadows he sees the figures of the war-ghouls approaching, their hands dip in the blackness trying to find Julius. The sounds of their hungry grunts reach Julius like he's hearing underwater.

Suddenly he feels a hand in his shoulder, reaching around his neck. Julius tightens his grip on his sword. The darkness wavers for a brief moment, than his face goes beyond it and he sees that his head is locked in the iron grip of Benison.

JULIUS

Benison!

The prince pulls him free from the sticky shadow. They are now on the other side of the wall of blackness, no war-ghouls around, only a last sign of hope, an emergency exit. Benison grabs Julius by the arm pulling him toward the exit.

BENISON

I hope you can trust my powers of
madness.

Behind them the shadows dissipate slowly and the beasts wait furiously for the next battle.

Julius follows Benison and when he crosses the door his confused expression is like the one of a person who entered a new dimension.

INT. STAIRS BETWEEN 3RD AND 4TH FLOOR, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Marcus and Delona run up the stairs until they reach the door leading to the galleries. Marcus opens just a crack and peers through.

DELONA
What do you see?

Marcus backhand-slaps her harder than he means, and she flies backward over the railing and falls down all the four stories.

MARCUS
Uh-oh.

But he doesn't bother to check on her. He opens the door, slowly, and all the activity seems to be at the other end of the gallery.

INT. GALLERIES, HIGH MUSEUM OF ART - NIGHT

Smoke hangs thick in the air, the alarms still scream loudly, and part of the floor seems to be a foot-deep-pool with some strange foam.

He moves toward the beasts and approaches the one with spiked armor and leader posture.

MARCUS
Commander Bolon.

BOLON
What are you doing here?

BOLON demands one answer from Marcus, but before he can answer a shadow interposes itself between them. Vallejo materializes from the shadow, facing Bolon.

MARCUS
How'd you do that?

BOLON
Commander Vallejo.

VALLEJO
We cannot pass the door. I've never come across anything like this.

War-ghouls are in fact banging on the emergency door, but they don't have much sense. Marcus shoves aside the beasts and gives it a try. The door stands.

MARCUS

Stuck pretty good.

Bolon and Vallejo watch him without any hopes. But Marcus takes three steps back and launches himself at the door, using all the strength in his massive, muscled body. To his superiors surprise, the door give his way, almost folded half around him. He stumbles through the doorway and lands in a heap, completely unprepared for what awaits him.

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Julius is reluctantly behind Benison, but shakes his head and rubs his eyes every few seconds. The landscape around him seems to shift intermittently, being the majority of time a path through a forest, with night sounds and a cold breeze. And the other part of his perception is composed by metal stairs going up and down, as expected.

BENISON

This way, archon. We'll rally the company. Sherman will never take Kennesaw.

JULIUS

How did you... Is this one of you memories?

Then, Marcus appears from behind a three in the stairwell/wilderness scenario. He too seems confused but as soon as he lock eyes with Julius he is totally focused and seems more self-possessed.

Julius advances with light speed toward the enormous Sabbat soldier and opens a deep cut in his belly. Marcus drops to his knees, but Julius does not take the chance to decapitate him because a wave of darkness approaches, and he runs behind Benison.

In the middle of the path the duo find a lone door. The door is set into a wooden frame, all of which is bound together by a rusty chain and padlock. Benison kicks the door open and takes Julius from the deep forest, through the door into an open field.

EXT. GRASS FIELD AT THE PLAINS - DAY

Julius cranes his neck around, trying to absorb this new environment.

JULIUS

By the gods, what it this?

BENISON

Why, archon Julius, it's the 37th
Georgia regiment of Hood's boys.

Benison seems casual in his response and to Julius' astonishment, truer words could not be spoken, for double ranks of Confederate Soldiers are forming into a line of battle along the far edge of the clearing. Around two hundred men bearing muskets wait, front rank kneeling, before the second, ready to fire.

BENISON (CONT'D)

This way, archon.

JULIUS

This cannot be..

Julius lets himself be led by Benison towards the Confederate Soldiers. Benison seems to be more and more lost in his madness, his power seems to be affecting him.

BENISON

God willing, General Sherman will
share your sentiment shortly. He
will never wrest Kennesaw Mountain
from us.

Sabbat war-ghouls, now entering the second scenario, seem to share Julius' disorientation. Benison trips Julius down and the Confederate Soldiers open fire over the Sabbat ghouls. Julius cannot believe his eyes when they start to fall under the lead Minié balls, that rip through them, tearing away limbs and shattering bones.

However, the metal stairwell materializes once again and a twisting flood of pure black is pouring down it and over the field. The rushing shadow sweeps over the mutilated ghouls and on toward the line of battle.

Julius and Benison manage to cross the soldier lines and from behind them they see that their volley has no effect on the darkness. The Soldiers are swallowed easily, then the darkness rises to a terrible height, only to crash down upon Benison. The prince disappears beneath the tide of blackness and simultaneously the landscape wavers.

Julius crawls away from where Benison was attacked and sees that the scenario starts to swirl into its own tidal wave of color and sound and motion. This wave of pure force turns on itself, around Benison's inert form, as soon as the darkness flees like a thousand black vipers in all directions.

The whirlpool wounds more and more tightly, its fury compresses into an area constantly growing smaller. Finally, its vector shifts and it bores straight down and everything is gone. Only a dark hole remains. The forest, the grass field, the soldiers, the sabbat ghouls and Benison, all gone.

Julius stares down into the dark hole, standing in the shock of what he'd seen.

JULIUS

His powers of madness claimed him...
at least he took the beasts.

Julius hears steps and turns to face Marcus. The Sabbat soldier is still holding the wound in his belly with one hand. He curls the free hand into a large, meaty fist, which promptly smashes into Julius' face.

The blow shatters Julius' jaw and lifts him off his feet, propelling him over the edge and into the elevator shaft. The fall is around forty feet but Julius manages to stay conscient, even with shards of bone sliced through muscle and skin, by the fall.

A shadow hangs over him, but it's not Lasombra this time, it's Marcus landings with his full force and snapping the archon's spine.

INT. THIRTEENTH FLOOR, BUCKHEAD RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - NIGHT

VYKOS

Awaken, my sweet young murderer. I
trust you had pleasant dreams.

Parmenides opens his eyes to an innocent smile from Vykos. Sitting in front of them, dead as only a mortal can be, is Ravenna, Vykos' servant, that Parmenides had killed when he arrived.

PARMENIDES

One thing only I wish to know... The
masters... you said the masters knew
of this abduction, that it had been
arranged.

VYKOS

Oh, good. You remember. They had
led me to believe that you would
deny it, rail against it. But there
is no shame in having been given.
In fact, it is a great honor that
has been lavished upon you.

PARMENIDES

An honor? Is it an honor to fall
unavenged among your enemies? To be
sold into the hands of your
persecutor?

VYKOS

I knew you would see it that way.
Your masters spoke very highly of
you.

(MORE)

VYKOS (CONT'D)

They said that you were an instrument of keen perception and one which they could ill afford to lose. That is what makes their gift all the more touching.

PARMENIDES

They would not betray me. They would not betray me and suffer me to live. I should not be alive.

Vykos moves behind Ravenna's chair and pushes it forward so that it stays perfectly in front of Parmenides.

VYKOS

Do not speak so, my young romantic, my philosophe. Can you not see that this whole complicated orchestration has been arranged so that you might yet live?

Parmenides turns the face from his late victim sitting in front of him.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Your masters would not see you fall victim to the retributions of the hated Tremere. It is within my power to help them, to help you, my dearest. But you must let me help you.

PARMENIDES

You will help me... keep me safe from the dread Tremere. Keep me here indefinitely, confined to a wheelchair, serving as a guinea pig for your demented experiments. Shall I thank you now? I would not want to appear ungrateful for your hospitality.

Vykos goes behind Parmenides and pulls one big scoreboard covered with a velvet cloth.

VYKOS

You still do not understand, I think. I do not do these things so that you will feel indebted to me. I do them for the sake of the growing friendship between our peoples. Or at least, that was the reason I initially agreed to "recycle" you for your masters.

Vykos puts the separator between the two sitting victims.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

After you had arrived, of course, I had the additional pleasure of doing it for the sheer pleasure of your company and for the affection I hold for you. Do not shake your head. You are a jewel, my sensitive killer.

We are not so different, you and I. We are joined by our common passion. Our undying enmity for the foul Tremere will be a bridge between our two peoples. You will help me by removing certain obstacles, certain sorcerous obstacles, from my path. I will help you and your people in return by rehabilitating your brothers.

PARMENIDES

And if I will not cooperate with this "alliance"?

VYKOS

Oh, I will be so disappointed. I have already invested so much in your rehabilitation.

Vykos pulls the velvet cloth from the big board and reveals a hand-carved looking glass. Parmenides recoils in apprehension.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Oh, I know it's a bit much. Overly dramatic. But I always keep several largish mirrors about the office.

Parmenides' gaze is locked on the mirror in open incredulity. The face that stares back at him is not his face. The face and all the body structure, in fact, belonged to Ravenna. He's skin is no longer the enviable true ebony, a remainder of the desert climate from which he came. His new complexion is uniform olive of a gentle Mediterranean clime. His new features are somewhere from the Italian peninsula.

VYKOS (CONT'D)

Well, what do you think?

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR THE HIGH MUSEUM - NIGHT

Leopold is down on the paved road, not quite himself. His tongue searches for the thick, viscous liquid nearly dried, on the floor. Restlessly, relentlessly, he continues his work. On his hands and knees, like an animal, he voraciously sucks, devouring even the finest dew-like film of the liquid. Every drop is sacred.

After some time, he comes to his senses. He sits, then, with his back on the floor, he massages his head. Then he violently spits, and the sand and grit from his mouth is tinged with a touch of lightly red moisture. He shakes the debris off and plucks a gum wrapper from his head, as he becomes aware of his ridiculous state. There is also a lollipop plastered to his elbow, which he pulls off.

He tries to stand but he is not in the best shape, then stumbles back to the pavement. He rubs his mouth, suddenly aware that something is inside it. He spits to his hand, but its not a tooth he sees, it's an eyeball, fragile like an egg yolk. He flings it aside, nervously.

The shadows are heavy for the weak street lamps, but Leopold makes out the form of a man, presumably a dead one, a few yards from him. He reaches the naked corpse that has his bare back turned to Leopold. He slowly circles the body only to recognize Vogel. But by seeing his face, Leopold's legs melt at the terrifyingly inhuman face of Vogel's.

The left eye is intact and strained desperately wide. The right eye is chilling, almost surreal in its obscenity. And Leopold has the unnerving impression that it is looking at him too. Then the Toreador goes slackjawed. He realizes why he'd recovered so quickly. He looks for his wounds from the fall but his body is almost regenerated. He touches his lips looking at the dried corpse of Vogel.

LEOPOLD

I did this...

Leopold's last words to the still living Vogel, flashback in his mind, from their first and last encounter. Leopold reviews the scene, when Vogel was by his sculpture admiring his work.

LEOPOLD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

These harder substances still don't respond well for me. Perhaps I should try something more malleable like wood.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

Or flesh...

Leopold glances furtively about, suddenly worried that someone might pass by and find them. But he returns to contemplate the corpse of Vogel that now enlivened the artist's eye within the Toreador. But more than that, he realizes how he covets this Eye that has been planted within Vogel skull.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

This Eye... it is the centerpiece of this great work. My work.

With savage and greedy determination, Leopold attacks Vogel's head, plunging two fingers of each hand deep along the sides of the hideous eyeball.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

My Muse... Yes... The center of my masterpiece.

The Eye's nerves start to fold around his hand and wrist, melting with his flesh, connecting with his veins. And Leopold looks deeply into the Eye, and the Eye at him.

HAZIMEL (V.O.)

I see you Leopold, descendent from my brother Toreador. We have become one, now. Know this, for in your hand, you hold the future of your brothers and the beginning of the end to this damnation.

A casual observer passing by, a silent bat, zooms right in the finished web of a little and patient spider, who set its silk between the corner of the building and the street lamp. The hunter examines its prey fighting for its life. The bat's wing are too attached to trap and the little spider moves in, slowly to enjoy its meal.

THE END