

• BLOOD • & *Betrayal*

Design Document

Blood & Betrayal 4:

The Thorn Tree Pact

TAMPA by NIGHT

September 2017

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document contains all the practical information that you will need to participate in and enjoy Blood & Betrayal 4, even if you have never played in a live-action roleplaying game (LARP) before. Blood & Betrayal 4 (BB4), is a **Mind's Eye Theatre (MET): Vampire the Masquerade** LARP event happening at the Tampa by Night convention. The date of the game is Friday, September 29.

WHAT IS BLOOD & BETRAYAL?

Blood & Betrayal is a semi-annual LARP event produced by By Night Studios; 200 to 400 players gather to participate in a single evening of intense intrigue, politics, and adventure. Blood & Betrayal is also a MET: **Vampire The Masquerade** chronicle. Each chapter in this story happens only about once a year, but the chapters are linked and events continue forward, so players' actions from Blood & Betrayal 3 will affect the events of Blood & Betrayal 4. The outcome of each annual chapter is entirely in the hands of the characters to decide.

WHAT IS THIS CHRONICLE ABOUT?

At its core, Blood & Betrayal is an ongoing story of vampires struggling to cope with a world that is growing increasingly hostile to them. It has been centuries since they could lord over mortal peasants from their safe castle towers and battlements. The mythical Armageddon event they called Gehenna didn't happen, and now every night seems to produce new dangers, from frighteningly efficient vampire hunters who seem to know far too much about their prey, to the schemes of terrifyingly ancient vampires (the Methuselahs) who may be manipulating everything from the shadows.

There are some big, disturbing, global events happening in this story. A reference of events from previous Blood & Betrayal events is provided later in this document..

Despite the large-scale events, Blood & Betrayal is also a very personal story about the individual vampire characters portrayed by you, the players. Some characters first appeared at Blood & Betrayal 1 in 2013; others will be completely new. This tale is very much about personal horror, hidden secrets, and dark desires.

NEW PARTICIPANTS

If you are new to **World of Darkness, Vampire: The Masquerade**, Blood & Betrayal, or LARP, that's okay! You don't need to know anything about the previous Blood & BetrayalLARPs to enjoy this one. You don't need to read and memorize all the information in this document. You don't even need to do anything at all except purchase your event ticket and show up at the right place and time! But you'll enjoy your experience more if you try to absorb as much as you can and ask questions about elements that are unfamiliar or confusing. At a minimum, we encourage you to read the Design Principles, Immersion & Safety, and Character Creation sections of this document.

Ready? Read on....

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

PLAYER AGENCY

Our role as event organizers and Storytellers is to provide a framework for the LARP and set the night in motion. What happens next is entirely up to the players and their characters; your choices and actions will determine the events of the night. Will Madame Guil be executed the night following her Death Party, or will she find a way to escape her doom? Will the new Integrum faction destabilize the balance of power among the sects? Will the Black Queen's curse come true, or can it be thwarted?

We don't know...no outcomes are certain or predetermined! Your characters' actions decide what happens.

COOPERATIVE STORYTELLING

The narrative experience of a LARP is vastly different from traditional media such as a novel, a movie, or even a tabletop game. Classic narratives strictly follow the story and perspective of a limited set of characters, but a LARP is the combined story of every character involved in the chronicle.

Although our narrators' title is "Storyteller," it's really you, the player, who is telling the story, through your character's agency. You share this role with hundreds of other players, so every player has the responsibility to share the spotlight; to help one another have fun in the LARP; and to work together to create an interesting, dramatic, and satisfying experience for everyone.

We sometimes like to call this relationship "The Economy of Cool." All that really means is that we encourage you to be invested not only in your own enjoyment of the LARP, but also in the enjoyment of every other player. Take advantage of the months preceding the game to connect with other players, form ties between your characters, establish shared backgrounds, create character goals, and learn what your fellow players want from the experience. Then, on the big night, all this preparation and investment becomes an incredibly dynamic, intensely dramatic, highly memorable experience for every player in attendance.

IMMERSION & SAFETY

Vampire: The Masquerade stories, like all **World of Darkness** roleplaying games, can include some disturbing topics and some very realistic scenes of behavior that wouldn't be appropriate in other circumstances.

Conversely, we also want the LARP experience to be as emotionally realistic as players wish. If you are uncomfortable for any reason, please find one of our staff and we will address whatever issue or concern you might have.

Blood & Betrayal uses the following immersion and safety techniques:

- Fade to Black (See **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire the Masquerade, page 345.**)
- OK Check-In Technique (See preview of MET: Immersion Secrets, page 4 - free PDF available at [DriveThruRPG](http://DriveThruRPG.com).)

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

ACQUIRE A TAMPA BY NIGHT CONVENTION PASS

Blood & Betrayal 4 is a one-night event that is part of Tampa by Night, a Mind's Eye Theatre LARP convention. You will need at least a standard convention pass in order to participate in the LARP. Please purchase your pass at www.masqueradebynight.com.

You don't need a separate ticket to play in Blood & Betrayal 4. Standard convention passes allow you entry into all LARP events at the convention, including Blood & Betrayal 4.

CREATE A VAMPIRE CHARACTER

You may request a pre-generated character to use as a template or a ready-to-go character. Conversely, you can create your own vampire character using these tools:

- *Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade* (if you need a copy, it's available in downloadable PDF or print-on-demand editions from DriveThruRPG.com.)
- MET: Vampire The Masquerade errata, available on the By Night Studios [website](http://www.bynightstudios.com)
- A character sheet, also available on the By Night Studios [website](http://www.bynightstudios.com)
- [The Story Setting Document \(SSD\)](#) – available later in this document. The SSD explains exactly what character types you can play in Blood & Betrayal 4. It also contains special rules or important changes to the rules, such as adjustments to clan rarity or merit costs, that might affect your character creation.
- Experience Points:
 - All Blood & Betrayal characters receive 100 starting Experience Points (XP).
 - For every previous time you have played Blood & Betrayal with the same character, you may add an additional 50 XP.
 - There will be an opportunity later this summer to purchase bonus XP at the worldofdarkness.com website.

- If you were awarded XP from a previous volunteer experience, add it to your character.
- The maximum XP allowed on a character is 400.

CONNECT YOUR CHARACTER

We provide the framework for the story, but players make the story through collaboration and interaction. It is not required, but we do strongly encourage you to create shared character backgrounds, goals, and connections (“ties”) to other characters. You have all summer to develop the uneasy alliances, soured child-sire relationships, doomed romances, and bitter rivalries that will play out on the night of the game and make the experience so much richer.

The best place to connect with other players is on the Blood & Betrayal Character Ties and Planning Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BBTiesPlanning/>

CHARACTER SHEETS & APPROVALS

Later this summer, the new worldofdarkness.com website will launch and provide you with online Mind’s Eye Theatre character creation tools. You’ll be able to create and manage your characters online, and send them to the Blood & Betrayal 4 Storytellers for review and approval.

Until then, just keep a record of your character on a normal character sheet. There is no need to contact the Storytellers for character approvals until the online tools are available.

CHANGELING CHARACTERS

It’s true, Blood & Betrayal 4 will include the first official playtest of *Mind’s Eye Theatre: Changeling The Dreaming*! If you purchased a special ticket that allows you to create and playtest a Changeling: The Dreaming character at this event, you will receive special instructions from the By Night Studios development team about how to make your character. (It’s still a good idea to read this document even if you aren’t playing a vampire character, especially the Design Goals and the Immersion & Safety sections.)

STORY SETTING DOCUMENT (SSD)

Theme: Decadence

Mood: Loss, Vengeance, Regret

Scope: The Castle; Tampa, Florida

Setting: Combined (Camarilla, Sabbat, Anarch and Independent Alliance)

Blood & Betrayal 4 Faction Rarity Adjustments

The Blood & Betrayal 4 Setting Style Document lists a variety of character rarity adjustments, representing its mixed setting. Information regarding the standard Camarilla, Sabbat, Anarch Movement, and Independent Alliance settings is available in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade**.

Rarity Adjustments: Camarilla Faction

Blood & Betrayal 4 uses the baseline rarities for this setting as found in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade: Chapter Nine: The Camarilla**, page 403 with the following exception.

For Blood and Betrayal 4, Kiasyd of all sects are considered an Uncommon Clan.

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit):

- Kiasyd

Rarity Adjustments: The Sabbat Faction

Blood & Betrayal 4 is primarily a Camarilla setting, but other factions may be present. Players may choose to play Sabbat characters as a faction. **Storyteller Warning:** playing a member of the Sabbat in this setting is very dangerous and the possibility of character death is high. All Sabbat players must attend a mandatory brief workshop before the event.

Blood & Betrayal 4 uses the baseline rarities for this setting as found in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade: Chapter Ten: The Sabbat**, page 450 with the following exception.

For Blood and Betrayal 4, Kiasyd of all sects are considered an Uncommon Clan.

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit):

- Kiasyd

Rarity Adjustments: Anarch Faction

Blood & Betrayal 4 is primarily a Camarilla setting, but players may choose to play Anarch characters as a faction. Blood & Betrayal 4 uses the baseline rarities for this setting as found in **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade: Chapter Eleven: The Anarch Movement**, page 484 with the following exceptions.

Due to the Anarchs gaining control of the Cirque Noir at Blood and Betrayal III, Ravnos are now available

as a common clan.

Common Clans (Available at No Cost):

- Ravnos

For Blood and Betrayal 4, Kiasyd of all sects are considered an Uncommon Clan.

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit):

- Kiasyd

Rarity Adjustments: Independent Alliance

Blood & Betrayal 4 is primarily a Camarilla setting, but players may choose to play Independent Alliance characters as a faction.

Note: The following rarity adjustments only apply to characters who are members of the Independent Alliance sect.

Due to the Lasombra *antitribu's* success at translating the Tablet of Tithes at Blood and Betrayal III, the primary clans of the Independent Alliance in Blood & Betrayal 4 are: Giovanni, Followers of Set, and Lasombra *antitribu*.

Common Clans (Available at No Cost):

A setting's common clans are the most appropriate for play in this setting. There is no additional cost for playing these clans during Blood & Betrayal 4:

- Caitiff
- Followers of Set
- Gangrel
- Giovanni
- Lasombra *antitribu*
- Malkavian
- Nosferatu
- Toreador

Uncommon Clans (2 point merit):

Your character is a member of an uncommon clan, one that is not ordinarily found in in this setting. You will find few other individuals of your clan within this setting, and you may therefore be something of an outsider who enjoys as fewer benefits than those clans that are considered proper members of society.

- Brujah (Sages bloodline)
- Kiasyd
- Tremere
- Tzimisce (Old Clan/Carpathians bloodline only)
- Ventruue

Brujah Bloodline Alteration for the Blood & Betrayal 4 Setting:

The Independent Alliance setting allows members of the Sages (the True Brujah bloodline) to be played

as uncommon characters. Thus, characters who are members of the Sages bloodline may be played after purchasing the Uncommon Clan rarity merit—no additional merit is required.

Tzimisce Alteration for the Independent Alliance Setting:

Characters of the Carpathians bloodline are the default for the Tzimisce clan during Blood & Betrayal 4.

Rare Clans (4 point merit):

Your character is a member of a rare clan, one found very infrequently in this setting. Such characters may be loners, outcasts, or solitary observers of society, and they may be treated poorly or shunned by the rest of the characters in play.

- Cappadocians (Samedi bloodline only)
- Daughters of Cacophony
- Gargoyles
- Ravnos
- Salubri

WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE – THE BLOOD & BETRAYAL CHRONICLE

The Blood & Betrayal Story Chronology

If you'd like to know more about the entire metaplot backstory for this chronicle, read **Mind's Eye Theatre: Vampire The Masquerade: Chapter 2, Introduction to the World of Darkness**. Everything noted in that chapter happens immediately before the events of Blood & Betrayal. And here are all the story premises and outcomes for the three previous Blood & Betrayal events, so that you can see what has happened so far in this story.

Blood & Betrayal: The Pacifica Royale

Los Angeles by Night, September 2013

Premise

A decade has passed since the Nights of Turmoil faded into bitter memory. The fear of Gehenna no longer looms large on the horizon, but other dangers threaten Kindred society. Once a minor irritant, hunters have become shockingly successful in locating and destroying their prey, and their deadly shadow now falls across the entirety of the American West Coast. This threat is dire enough to prompt even the staid and conservative Elders to action.

Her Grace, Madame Guil, Justicar for Clan Toreador, has called for a judicial conclave to determine the

root cause behind the hunters' coordinated attacks. If the Masquerade holds, then surely the Camarilla is betrayed: a traitor from among the many West Coast domains must be feeding these hunters valuable intelligence. How else could their rampant victories be explained?

Maximillian Strauss, Prince of Los Angeles, will host the conclave aboard the Queen Mary. Sometimes called the "Grey Ghost," it is said that old feuds never really die aboard the ship; they merely slumber restlessly until the call of opportunity awakens them. Kindred legend also speaks of a curse on the ship, and claims that anyone clever enough to lift it by finding all the clues to its origins will be rewarded beyond all measure.

Not merely a forum for undead politics, the conclave will also be the social event of the season—already the Harpies are calling it "The Pacifica Royale." The guest list includes important Kindred from all of the major West Coast cities, including Camarilla domains, Anarch freeholds, and independent cities. Few will dare to refuse the Justicar's summons to discuss such an important issue, especially when the hunters are a clear danger to everyone. It is whispered that there may even be spies from the Sabbat in attendance, hoping to discover exactly who is behind the hunters' brutal strikes against their roaming packs.

As always, the Giovanni and the Followers of Set intend to profit from a gruesome and uncertain situation. These clans have stated their intention to host a private party below decks—perhaps in the ship's old boiler room—where Kindred may indulge their more violent tastes in a series of tournaments for the entertainment of select guests. The hosts have promised the victors of this "Blood Pit" competition prizes of great significance and importance.

Conclusion

A cabal of mortal hunters empowered with True Faith, trained by the Second Inquisition, surrounded the Queen Mary and prepared for a devastating assault that might have killed the entire gathering, but they were stopped at the last minute. Although they had surrounded the Queen Mary, they did not attack, pausing to await orders from South America. It was later revealed that one of the attending Princes, Marcelle Maarit of Clan Malkav, was blessed, allegedly by God, with stigmata. Naturally, Madame Guil and Prince Maximillian Strauss of Los Angeles disagreed regarding who was the proper host of this Judicial Conclave and who should handle the matter. They engaged in a Symbel to determine who would have ultimate authority at the conclave, each sending out a team to deal with the hunters. Archon Anne "Buckshot" Jones led a war party to eliminate the threat.

The Justicar won the contest, confirming the Justicars' rights, but ultimately the mystery of who tipped off the hunters was left unsolved. A few suspect the Anarchs, as they seemed to spend most of the evening creating diversions.

Something about the Queen Mary seemed to attract cursed artifacts and ghouls that seemed almost designed to test the moral character of the guests. Some of the known artifacts included Dracula's Cape, the Phoenician Orb, the Scepter of Mithras, and the Ankou's Necklace.

Members of the Independent Alliance discovered that a single hand was behind both the hunters and

the cursed artifacts... the infamous Baron Volgirre. What he paid them for their silence is not known, but he somehow convinced them that if they were to truly become a player in the Jyhad, they would have to give up running Blood Pits and instead hold a Symposium of their own.

Blood & Betrayal 2: The Grand Symposium

Las Vegas by Night, September 2015

Premise

Four years ago, in a penthouse nightclub at the Palms Hotel and Casino, two of the Great Clans formed a pact to take control of Las Vegas. Referred to initially as the Alexandrian Alliance, this compact between the Giovanni and the Followers of Set soon spread beyond Sin City to become something grand and dangerous, potentially the first new vampire sect in half a century.

Tonight, to honor its heritage and the intent of its founders, the Independent Alliance has invited its representatives from every city to the Moon nightclub for a Sacred Symposium: a jovial celebration where wine and words on the important topics of the night are exchanged. There are important questions that must be answered this evening concerning the future of the emerging sect: three clans have formally petitioned to join the Alliance, but only one shall be admitted at this time. The three clans are the Carpathian Tzimisce, the True Brujah, and the Lasombra *antitribu*.

Queen Sybil and Don Michael Giovanni, the twin holders of the Janus Seats of Praxis over Las Vegas, have opened their city to any who would treat or trade with the Independent Alliance, including delegations from both the Camarilla and the Anarch Free States. The Sabbat have remained silent, but it is believed they will attempt some sort of interference to the Lasombra delegation—diplomatic or otherwise.

Conclusion

A surprise fourth bloodline attempted to petition the Symposium to join the Independent Alliance. The anathema Ferox led a faction of the gargoyles, offering protection and dark secrets if the Alliance accepted them. Archon Jones, representing Her Grace, Madame Guil, lead the Camarilla to victory against the combined forces of the Gargoyles and the Anarchs.

The Carpathians and Sages nearly claimed victory during the trials, but thanks to an outsider Malkavian Elder named Dr. George Stuart from Brazil, the Lasombra completed their task just in time. Some folks believe that the Lasombra made a pact with the unknown elder, agreeing to do some favor for his benefactors.

Thanks to a perfect storm of intense lobbying, political maneuvering, and valuable favors from outside parties (including the Camarilla and the Anarchs), the night ended with an unexpected announcement. The Independent Alliance chose to admit none of the petitioning clans.

The infamous Kindred scholar Beckett returned, warning of a great threat emerging from the wild places of the world, hinting that this event might have been why the Gangrel returned to the Camarilla. Despite their victory in disrupting the Independent Alliance, the Camarilla and the Anarchs learned of a new threat, quite possibly related to the ancient enemy of Clan Ventrue known as the Secret Masters.

Blood & Betrayal 3: The Cirque Noir

The Grand Masquerade, New Orleans; September 2016

Premise

In what's certain to be the social event of the decade, Baron Volgirre, Toreador Elder and patron of the Volgirre bloodline, is holding a soiree at his Louisiana estate.

Ever the showman, he's made arrangements to host the final performance of the Cirque Noir, a fabled troupe of Kindred performers, featuring acts from around the globe.

The performers of the circus are hoping that one among the guests present might have the resources and the means to keep them in operation. But before that can happen, a quiet rift between the shareholders will need to be mended. The Cirque Noir has seen its share of upstarts eager for a fresh start. It's rumored that one of its founders formed the Cirque as means of hiding after uncovering a dangerous secret.

In the spirit of Southern hospitality, the Baron's guests include members of both the Anarch Movement and the Independent Alliance. Additionally, a number of former associates from his time in the Sabbat have noted his bloodline's absence and come inquiring. Should news of the Volgirre's history as Sabbat defectors spread, things could prove embarrassing for the Toreador.

The Independent Alliance is furious over the deadlock reached during its first-ever Sacred Symposium. After months of finger-pointing, it's members have gotten wind of an object connected with the Cirque that is capable of changing fortunes. Eager for a new direction, the Independent Alliance has told its three candidate groups that any who retrieves the object will be granted admission to the sect.

As befits his stature as a Prince, Baron Volgirre has invited numerous elders and dignitaries to witness what is expected to be a monumental performance.

Early rumors that Her Excellency, Madame Guil, might grace the evening with her presence were recently confirmed, sending whispers of concern and curiosity through the Camarilla. She has been seldom seen since the events of the Conclave Pacifica Royale in Los Angeles two years ago, but of course her presence has been felt.

Nobody believes that this a mere social call for the famed Justicar...so what is her true agenda at the Baron's soiree?

Conclusion

While many sought to purchase the infamous Circus Noir, a deadly game of cat-and-mouse was waged between Madame Guil and Baron Volgirre. Each lead a faction of Kindred to locate and capture information damaging to the Toreador Justicar's reputation and proof of certain crimes committed during the Anarch Revolt centuries ago.

An agent representing the Ventrue Methuselah Purissimma Giess pushed the Camarilla to purchase the Circus Noir at all costs and prevent the Baron from taking down Madame Guil. Sadly, the Baron's agents captured the documents and diary detailing his childer's crimes.

In addition, the Anarchs helped the Cirque Noir buy the circus for themselves and then discovered it's

horrible secret. The Cirque Noir is charged with following around the dreaded Malkavian Methuselah known as the Ankou, the world's first serial killer, cleaning up his kills and protecting his intended victims until they are ready for him. If the circus refuses, the Ankou kills what's left of the circus's mortal families.

As the agent left, he revealed to the Camarilla that the war with the Secret Masters had begun, but still there was hope...

Blood & Betrayal 4: The Thorn Tree Pact

Tampa by Night, September 2017

Premise

Four centuries ago, a young French peasant girl prayed to the angels of God on the eve of her wedding. She asked for their blessing and protection, and for a loving, fruitful marriage.

Whether the angels heard her prayers is not known. But someone did: the Unseelie Queen of the Arcadia Gateway, who chose to visit the girl in her bedchamber that night and offer a choice: come live in the land of dreams forever...or be taken into eternal damnation by a terrible beast.

In love with her betrothed and fearing that she was being tempted by the Devil, the girl refused, sealing her fate. The vampire Baron Volgirre took the girl and remade her in his image. As a parting shot, the spurned Queen added a final curse—long and bitter would be the girl's unlife until, on her final night, the Queen's servants would come to collect her.

Last year in New Orleans, Madame Guil's long list of terrible crimes were finally exposed. A Judicial Conclave then found her guilty of treason and sentenced her to death, but without granting her one final wish.

And what else would a Toreador ask for, but a party? A dazzlingly gothic commemoration of her long centuries; a night to bid farewells, settle some old scores, and keep her name on every tongue for years.

Tonight

Welcome to the Death Party of Madame Guil, her final night. Sentenced to die for treason against the Camarilla, this is her last request: a grand party to celebrate her centuries before the scheduled execution.

It will be a gloriously gothic affair that evokes the darkest aesthetics of her Embrace year, with vampire luminaries in attendance, each eager to use her impending execution to their own advantage.

To keep things in hand the Inner Circle appointed the infamous La Llorona, Malkavian Justicar Dona Manuela Bolívar, to watch over her fallen colleague until the time of her execution. Why Tampa? Why this Gulf Coast city that's never been at the center of Kindred affairs? When asked, she merely smiles. What secrets will this powerful elder reveal? Who shall she drag down with her?

Some speculate that the Sabbat will seize this opportunity to rid themselves of a hated oppressor, or perhaps steal away the Justicar who has plagued them in South America. Could defection to the Sword of Caine be Madame's plan to save herself?

The Independent Alliance is expected to attend in large numbers to show respect to Baron Volgirre, and acknowledge his help in consolidating their sect. But rumor also has it that some bloodlines formed their

own new faction called the Integrum, as rivals to the Alliance that rejected them.
And then, above all hangs the curse of the Black Queen....

MOVING THE STORY FORWARD

What happens next? Will the fallen Justicar pay the ultimate price for her crimes? How will the Independent Alliance deal with the Integrum? Is there a connection between La Llorona and the Black Queen? It's up to your characters...the story is completely open-ended and your character's actions help decide the outcomes. Whatever happens on the night of the game becomes part of Blood & Betrayal chronicle canon forever!

Don't forget to register for the convention, get your ticket, book a place to stay, and then create and connect your character!

-- THE BY NIGHT STUDIOS TEAM