

## The King is Dead: DHAMPIR

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# The King is Dead

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Overview .....	3
Glossary .....	4
Timeline of Events .....	5
Act 1: The Job .....	6
What the Cabal Knows .....	7
Act 2: The Asset .....	8
Sneaking In .....	8
The Salon .....	9
Act 3: The Extraction .....	11
Thursday Night: Presentation to Prince Heinrich .....	12
Saturday Night: Foxhole Gardens ...	14
Monday Night: <i>Delilah</i> at the Royal Opera House .....	16
Wednesday Night: The Masked Ball	17
Allies and Antagonists.....	18
Player Characters .....	24
Setting Rules .....	24
The Secret Societies .....	24
Appendix: Player's Aid .....	37
<i>The Sanguineum Maledicta</i> .....	37
New Hindrances .....	37
New Edges .....	38



# DHAMPIR



## Introduction

**Revolution** engulfs the island nation of Malleus. An artistic revolution flowers as the people embrace periwigs and hoop skirts, symphonies and comic operas. An economic revolution looms as the steam engine changes industry and the wealth from the colonies invigorates the middle class. An intellectual revolution boils as scholars study science and philosophy, galvanism and the social contract. And a political revolution threatens as the people of Malleus conspire to take their nation back from the vampire aristocracy that rules their land.

Throughout Malleus, revolutionaries are at work. In secret rooms, conspirators gather to destroy the old government and forge a new one. In the dark forests that line the king's roads, highwaymen in masks and greatcoats ambush nobles' coaches and plunder their wealth. In towns and villages across Malleus, a generation born with strange powers hides their gifts. In the bedrooms of the vampires' mansions, disenfranchised wives and daughters hone their minds and wills to strike with the power of the second sight. And in the farms and servants' halls, slaves dream of rising up against those who stole them from their native lands.

*The King is Dead* is a setting of revolution in a Gothic 18<sup>th</sup> century that never was.

## Overview

This adventure pits the heroes (collectively known as a “cabal”) against the clock as they must plot a way to extract a dhampir defector from the clutches of her vile family. The asset – **Lady Clarimonde von Durward-Essen** – possesses a fragment of an ancient vampire-destroying spell called the *Sanguinem Maledicta*. She is tired of being her father's pawn and offers to trade the spell for a life of her own.

As a young noblewoman coming out to society, Lady Clarimonde's schedule is busy with dances and parties. Since the lady refuses to risk the lives of her family in a snatch directly from her home, the cabal must instead arrange the extraction during one of these social occasions.

Unfortunately, the Lady Clarimonde is an opportunist, not a devotee of the cause. If the cabal doesn't succeed within a week, then she throws her lot in with the dangerous Countess Erzabeta Battori, a sorceress who tempts her with true undeath and magical power.

### **Recommended Viewing:**

*Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) or *Valmont* (1989) – Both of these adaptations of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* have much to recommend them. Secret Masters should look to Cécile de Volanges for an understanding of Lady Clarimonde's education and the Marquise de Merteuil for her cunning and frustration.

*The Duchess* (2008) - Another film showing the painful circumstances even noblewomen endured.

*Casanova* (2005) – Free spirits attempt to escape their repressive society; good for its depiction of the carnival atmosphere surrounding aristocratic festivities.



# The King is Dead

## Glossary

**Afar:** The massive southern continent from whose numerous dark-skinned cultures Malleus takes its slaves.

**Bharahtastan:** The sub-continent that borders the eastern edge of the Ostermann Empire. The Royal Bharatastani Trading Company of Malleus trades extensively with the sub-continental vampire kingdoms, importing tea and opium.

**Blood-drinker:** A generic term for vampires and blood-fed minions (dhampirs, moroi, and thralls).

**Erebus:** The small continent adjacent to Malleus.

**Dhampir:** The half-human child of either a vampire and a human virgin or two dhampirs. Dhampirs have not sold their souls to Sathaniel and are not irredeemably evil; being raised by vampires, however, they tend to be terrible people. Dhampirs see poorly in full sunlight but can otherwise endure the sun. They are stronger and faster than humans but lack most vampire powers.

**Goths:** The dominant culture of Malleus. The Westengoths were merely human invaders who conquered the Keltisch nearly 1,000 years ago; in turn, they were conquered by the Ostergoths and vampires over 660 years ago. Goths see themselves as more sensible and well-mannered compared to other cultures.

**Hammerstadt:** The capital of Malleus; the broad and powerful River Hammer, the city's lifeline to trade and the sea, bisects the city. The North Bank of Hammerstadt is home to the nobility and gentry; the South Bank houses the professional and working classes.

**Holy Panoptic Church:** The state religion of Malleus and Erebus, worshipping Sathaniel. The Holy Panoptic Church preaches a mollifying form of vampire dominance, painting them as shepherds guarding the human sheep from the outer darkness – but this is mainly enlightened self-interest, trying to defuse potential human rebellions.

**Huns:** The barbarians who overthrew the Tiberian Empire and founded the vampire bloodlines that conquered Erebus (and eventually Malleus). Most of the cultures of Erebus are Hunnic in origin, but Malleans view Huns as childish and emotional compared to Goths.

**Keltisch:** The original inhabitants of Malleus and its surrounding isles; Keltisch people are commonly perceived by Goths and Huns as drunken and lazy.

**Malleus:** The setting of *The King is Dead* is an island roughly the size of Borneo that sits where its world's Britain and France would be. Consider the culture of Malleus an unholy mishmash of the best and worst of 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain, France, and Germany.

**Moroi:** Humans who drink the blood of vampires for many years begin to develop a taste for human blood and animalistic traits; their hardiness and quickness increase to superhuman levels. These "living vampires" are some of the most dangerous human collaborators.

**Sathaniel:** The powerful demon god that created the first vampires. In the moment between life and death, every person becoming a vampire receives a vision from Sathaniel, asking for their soul. Only those who accept his offer are gifted with undeath.

**Thrall:** Vampires and dhampirs share their blood with their servants to buy their loyalty. A mouthful of vampire or dhampir blood increases health and hardiness for a week (in game terms, the human's Strength and Vigor is raised to d10 or by one die type if over d10) – but at the cost of the vampire mentally commanding them (the *puppet* power). Repeated drinking of vampire blood leads to addiction.

**Tiberian Empire:** The powerful and relatively enlightened human state that ruled Erebus and Malleus almost 2,000 years ago.



# DHAMPIR

## Timeline of Events

Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The cabal meets with Dame Zorina von Khronos and is given the assignment to make contact with Lady Clarimonde and extract her and the <i>Sanguinem Maledicta</i> fragment.</li></ul>
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No events</li><li>•The cabal is free to spend the day making plans and contacting allies.</li><li>•The von Durward-Essens are not receiving visitors.</li></ul>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Baroness Ethilda holds her <b>salon</b>.</li></ul>
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Lady Clarimonde is <b>presented to Prince Heinrich</b>.</li><li>•Lt. Stenzgard curries her favor.</li></ul>
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The von Durward-Essens are receiving visitors.</li><li>•Lt. Stenzgard calls and receives permission to court Clarimonde.</li></ul>
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•<b>Foxhole Gardens</b> opens.</li><li>•The von Durward-Essens attend with Lt. Stenzgard.</li></ul>
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The von Durward-Essens – like most of Malleus – attend church services.</li></ul>
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Delilah opens at the <b>Royal Opera</b>.</li><li>•The von Durward-Essens attend with Lt. Stenzgard.</li></ul>
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No events</li><li>•The von Durward-Essens are not receiving visitors as they are attended by costumers for the ball tomorrow.</li></ul>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Countess Erzabeta hosts a <b>masked ball</b>.</li><li>•If the cabal has not extracted Lady Clarimonde yet, she is turned by Countess Erzabeta and becomes her asset</li></ul>