

Giovanni Chronicles II:



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You will all be missed.

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Blood Fire

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Blood and Fire is the second book in the Giovanni Chronicles and it continues the story begun in **The Last Supper**. Characters from the first story may be used during this story; in fact, such is preferable.

Two centuries have passed, and the characters are no longer the raw neonates they once were. They have gained understanding of Kindred society and may well have a modicum of power in the newly formed Camarilla (though not too much, or they won't be able to be "persuaded" to help the Founders). The year is 1666, and characters are presumed to be familiar with the

customs and institutions of the Renaissance world. (Characters may be "updated" by giving them 30 additional freebie points to spend as the players choose or as logic dictates.)

Blood and Fire may also be played with new characters created specifically for the story (**Blood and Fire**, like all the Giovanni volumes, may be played as a stand-alone story). Characters are created per the normal character generation procedure, but the Storyteller should give each character 25 additional freebie points, the better to handle the perilous tasks ahead.

What Has Gone Before

Giovanni Chronicles One: The Last Supper dealt with the death of the Antediluvian progenitor of the Cappadocian clan and the ascendancy of the Giovanni necromancers. Characters created during that story began as the food, and then the pawns, of the Conspiracy of Isaac, a group of vampires committed to helping the Giovanni attain supremacy in the Cappadocian clan. The characters were created as cannon fodder against the Conspiracy's enemies, the Founders of the Camarilla. The characters came into conflict with both the Founders and their erstwhile masters. In so doing they learned two secrets: The Antediluvian Cappadocius sought apotheosis, and Augustus Giovanni sought Cappadocius' blood. Ultimately, Augustus Giovanni slew Cappadocius and drank his blood, leading to the demise of the Cappadocian clan and the rise of the Giovanni in its place.

Creating a Character for Blood and Fire

The world of **Blood and Fire** is not the world of today's Cainites; it is far more Gothic than *Panic*. To create a character for this world requires a basic understanding of its vagaries, as well as recognizing the differences and similarities between the 17th century and today. There is far more to a Renaissance character concept than hose, a floppy hat and an outrageous accent.

Picking a Concept

The first step in creating a Renaissance character is deciding on a character concept. Certain ones that add spice to a modern **Vampire** campaign (hacker, gangsta, mafioso) have no place in the 17th century. On the other hand, that world offers some unique opportunities for roleplaying.

While the roles on the bottom (street criminal, escaped slave) and the top (noble, lord of the church) are easily defined, there are new possibilities in the middle. Merchant princes and guild artisans are examples of middle-class character concepts; explorers are another. There also exists an entire domestic servant class from which to draw, as well as the subculture of carriage drivers, grooms and whatnot necessitated by a culture that travels by horse. It's a brave old world, and your character concept should reflect and grow from that, instead of being a modern character awkwardly forced into an older setting.

Renaissance Technology

The only firearms available are flintlock pistols and muskets. Both must be reloaded with every shot. Flintlock pistols may be fired every turn by anyone with Firearms Skill, every other turn by an untrained wielder; they are otherwise treated as heavy revolvers, but with halved range. Muskets may be fired once every three turns by a trained user and may not be used without training; otherwise treat them as rifles, but with halved range.

Spending Points

Several abilities have a great deal more importance for Renaissance characters than modern ones. Esoteric abilities from the **Players' Guide**, such as Falconry, are of increased importance. Knowledge of Heraldry is the difference between seeing a carriage go by and knowing, by the coat of arms emblazoned on the outside, precisely who is in the carriage. You should select your character's Abilities and emphasize them accordingly.

A male noble character without a solid understanding of Etiquette is unthinkable, unless he is specifically designed to be a boor. Similarly, most (if not all) nobles have a good knowledge of Riding, but Driving is left to carriage drivers and servants. Pistols are becoming common, especially for dueling, but every noble worth his salt still knows how to use a rapier. French is the *lingua franca* of the continent, and not being conversant in *la Francais* is equivalent to having dung on one's shoes.

There exists a curious dichotomy for female characters; noblewomen of the period are in many cases expected to spend their days in needlepoint and harpsichord practice. Such characters would likely know several languages (French, English and Latin especially), as well as having extensive networks of Contacts and Allies in the salons of Europe. This is not to say that noblewomen would never know anything pertaining to a more active life, but rather that these characters would be rare, and have to deal with social consequences of their "unladylike" behavior. On the other hand, possessing such knowledges would provide quite an ace up the sleeve for a supposedly demure and retiring Viscountess who was faced with sassy ruffians....

Lower-class female characters, however, are fully expected to have a full knowledge of more physical and earthy skills. Such characters might well have a few points in Brawl (and almost definitely ones in Dodge); it would not be surprising for such characters to possess knowledges relating to commerce and other such traditionally "male" arenas. (See *Moll Flanders* by William Defoe for a perfect example.)

Lower-class male characters, like their female counterparts, are unlikely to know how to read or write, leaving such things for their betters. Knowledges are rarely possessed, though there is a definite emphasis on Talents. Most men cannot afford fencing masters, ergo Melee is unlikely to have more than a dot or two unless the character comes from a military or mercenary concept.

Equipment and Rules of Association

While upward mobility is slowly gaining acceptance as a social concept (so long as wealthy merchants have daughters to marry off to bankrupt nobles' sons), class delineations in 1666 are very strong and very real. Upper-class characters will not, except under great duress, voluntarily associate with characters from lower-class backgrounds. They may expect obedience or even outright servitude from them, depending upon their upbringing, but egalitarianism is unthinkable. For a noble character to be addressed as an equal by a commoner would be regarded as a deadly insult. Horsewhipping a peon who dared address his betters with familiarity would be regarded as proper behavior on the part of a noble, or even a wealthy merchant, and social opinion would be solidly on the side of the noble.

Many weapons are impossible to conceal, and formal dress for the day is not conducive to action. One cannot hide a rapier under a trenchcoat (as such do not exist) or even a traveling cloak. Even pistols tend to be too bulky to conceal easily. Remember, also, that there are no mail-order catalogs or 24-hour stores available. Broken equipment is difficult, if not impossible, to replace. If a pistol is lost in the Alps, there is no convenient gun shop around the next *coulé* with a sale on flintlocks and no seven-day waiting period. Theft and barter are common ways to acquire property, but failed thieves are punished with mutilation or death. Money is a real concern, and those who have it do not associate with those who do not.

Story Synopsis

The characters are called together by the Founders for a very important task — to reclaim certain manuscripts belonging to Cappadocius. These manuscripts basically amount to the Dead Sea Scrolls for Kindred society. The papers in question were part of the necromancer's extensive library, believed to have been lost when the Giovanni destroyed their sire. But recently, the Founders have linked the disappearances of a number of rare manuscripts with the Giovanni clan, and they fear that the Necromancers are attempting to use the information in these fragments to grant themselves godlike powers. Knowledge is power, and if these manuscripts do contain information superseding that in the **Book of Nod**, this could make the Giovanni very powerful indeed. Will the characters retrieve the manuscripts for their masters, assist the Necromancers or do something else entirely?





Act One

The adventure begins in Italy, as the players are brought together by the Founders. The characters are asked to report to a manse in Rome. Should any of the player characters refuse, the Founders will not hesitate to Summon them, or, in the unlikely event that that fails, drag them in via brute force.

A manuscript, or rather, a collection of manuscripts have disappeared. The Founders explain that Cappadocius had come into possession of a number of fragments believed to have been lost from the main religious canon for centuries (see **The Last Supper**: p. 7, “Lilith,” p. 8, “Apotheosis”). These included excerpts from ancient Christian, Gnostic and Zoroastrian manuscripts stating, among other things, that consuming the “body” of God may literally transform one into divinity — something alluded to throughout the Christian tradition. These manuscripts also postulated Lilith as the equal of Jehovah and outlined a process by which a ritual called “The Anointing,” could unite the powers of light and darkness in one being. Cappadocius sought to possess deific powers by unlocking this mystery, and obtain ultimate power over life and death.

Through extensive investigation, characters learn who has made off with the manuscripts — one Ambrogino Giovanni, a favored son of the family, who was asked to obtain and make several copies of the manuscripts in question to ensure that they would not be lost again. Characters deal with many of Ambrogino’s agents, but the culprit himself has fled Rome for the Swiss Alps. Characters undoubtedly give chase, which leads to Act Two.

In the course of their investigations in Italy, particularly astute characters may realize that someone has apparently already come before them, interrogating many of the same witnesses and following the same clues they possess. At this point it is not possible for them to ascertain who it is, but it should unnerve them slightly to know they are racing against another investigator as well as the Giovanni.

Act Two

In this act, the characters travel to a remote section of the Alps, where they discover a monastery, of sorts. It is here that some of the newly formed Sabbat’s wisest members have gathered to try to discover a way to reconcile their inhumane passions with the Beast. The Paths of Enlightenment, as they would come to be known, are for the most part developed here, as vampires try to find meaning and spirituality in their damned existences.

It is to this enclave that the characters trace Ambrogino Giovanni. The elders here will insist that before they will speak with any of the characters about their search for the missing manuscripts, they must first agree to spend some time at the enclave. Here, they will each go through a vision quest

of sorts, in which they must decide for themselves what they truly value in life, and what their own morals are. For some, this may be the beginning of a search for Golconda; others may realize surprising truths about themselves.

It is here that they will encounter the other individual tracking the missing manuscripts. It is none other than Marianna, the young woman who was among them when they were brought to Giovanni's manse in Act One of **The Last Supper**. She too seeks to find this manuscript, but for reasons of her own. She is doing everything in her power to block the advances of the Giovanni, but she is unlikely to support the Founders either. She may become an ally of the player characters for the final two acts, or she may try to get the manuscript for herself, depending on the opinions and actions of the player characters.

Ultimately, characters learn that Ambrogino has fled the scene once more — this time for London, to obtain the services of a translator.

Act Three

In Act Three, the characters, having tracked Ambrogino to London, attempt to acquire the manuscript once more. Ambrogino has come here to obtain the services of one Andre Mallotte, a vampire scholar and one of the few beings who understands Chaldean, the tongue in which Ambrogino's manuscript is written. The power-hungry Mallotte obtains a portion of the manuscript and attempts to use it for his own gain, but brings about his demise in the process.

This scene also heralds the arrival of other "interested parties": the Followers of Set, who attempt to obtain Ambrogino's manuscripts for themselves. To this end they employ Count Jocalo, one of the clan's star operatives.

Through cleverness and luck, characters should end up with part of the manuscript — an apocryphal tale known as the *Lilith Fragment*. Unfortunately, the act ends with the Great Fire of London, which totals the better part of the city. In the ensuing chaos, the players will likely see their prized manuscript go up in flames, regardless of who possesses it at the time. Thus, a stalemate is reached — the Founders fail to obtain the manuscript, but it is kept out of Ambrogino's hands.

Dramatis Personae

Ambrogino Giovanni

This renegade wishes to continue Cappadocius' research, seeking apotheosis through diablerizing God Himself. Ambrogino is a wily foe and is never personally met during the story, although characters must deal with many of his agents and servitors.

The Founders

On the surface, the Founders wish Ambrogino's plot stopped, though some among them seek the Necromancer's knowledge for their own ends. They will provide some aid to the characters, but primarily serve as the "stick" goading the characters onward.

Marianna

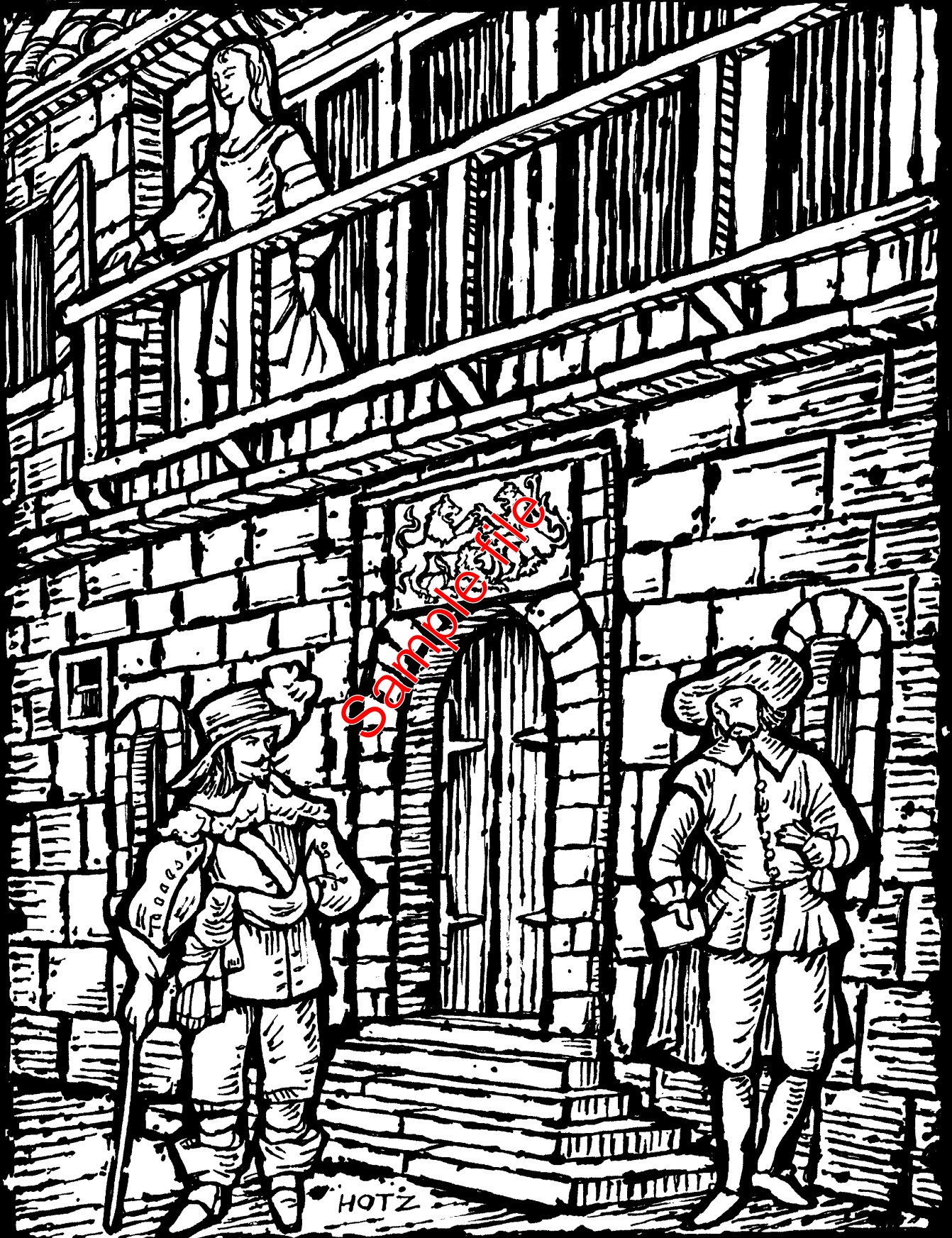
Claudius Giovanni's "dinner" has matured considerably since the events of **The Last Supper**. She now seeks to stop the Giovanni's plots while garnering their knowledge for herself.

Count Jocalo

The Setites make their interest known via the shadowy Count Jocalo, a Setite agent of vast power. Jocalo works from the shadows and is almost never met personally. The Setite serves as a plot device and source of character terror.

Andre Mallotte

A Tremere scholar consulted by Ambrogino, Mallotte attempts to use the Necromantic knowledge of the manuscript for his own gain. He is unequal to the task, however, and is ultimately destroyed by the manuscript's secrets.





*The coachman smiled down at me when he saw I was behind him.
He said "Your brother Raven lives, but I think you'll never find him.
And Owl still watches all around but he listens more than speaks
And he'll never understand that it isn't you he seeks."*
–Steven Brust, "Raven, Owl, and I"

Before beginning **Blood and Fire**, one must remember that the Rome of 1666 is not the Rome of today. The streets are narrower and dirtier, and one must step carefully in certain quarters or else receive an unceremonious dousing of slop. A hodgepodge of languages is spoken in the streets: Italian, English, German, French and Spanish. The wealthy rattle by in the carriages from palace to palace while the poor die in the streets, and the Tiber serves as the entire city's dump. It is here that the characters must pick up Ambrogino Giovanni's trail, amidst the squalor and the splendor of the Eternal City, Rome.

History

Much has changed in Europe since the events of **The Last Supper**, and the world has become smaller. Copernicus and his spiritual children have literally reinvented the universe; behind Galileo, Brahe, Kepler and countless others, the Technocracy has extended a strangle hold on reality. The Age of Reason and the Age of Exploration have erupted hand-in-hand, and many of the European powers have turned their attention abroad. The Americas,

Africa and the Orient have been ruthlessly exploited, with European flags flying on every continent. The English, French and Spanish have carved up North America, while the regions to the south are primarily Spanish. Africa is a patchwork quilt of claims and unexplored territories, and lions roam freely across veldt where the Sahara will one day sprawl. To the east the Dutch have saturated Japan with more guns than all of Europe possesses, and Macao and Hong Kong are bustling ports for European traders.

At home, two centuries' worth of military blunderers have stampeded across Europe in ever-changing alliances. Even as the Founders charged the mansion of Augustus Giovanni, the English and French staggered through the Hundred Years' War; that conflict finally staggered to a close with neither side gaining any advantage. Since then the English have allied with the Dutch against the Spanish, then turned on the Dutch over conflicts regarding trade. Industrialization is creeping in as the sceptered isle attempts to shake off Cromwell's heirs.

France, when not battling the English or the Spanish, has spent decades tearing itself apart in religious strife and the Huguenot War. The passions and horrors of the witch burnings are still present, and old women and friendless girls are still being put to the stake.

The German states are still warring amongst themselves and with the rest of the Continent. The Low Countries, having only recently shaken off the Spanish yoke, find themselves in trade wars with England.

Spain's star has risen and fallen multiple times. The Moors and Jews have been expelled, but this ethnic cleansing has hardly solved all of Spain's problems. Philip II's spectacular failures in the Netherlands and with the Armada essentially wrecked his country for decades, yet the *conquistadores* have managed to hang on to Italy for over 150 years. The Papal States generally managed to maintain their independence, but most of Italy was a prize to be handed from conqueror to conqueror for as long as they could hold it.

The Inquisition's heyday has come and gone, and the transformation into the so-called Society of Leopold is well underway. Still, there are more witch hunters in the world than previously, and even if the faith of the masses has started to dim, that of the fanatics burns even more brightly.

In the world of the Kindred, the Convention of Thorns in 1493 ended the anarch uprising, but gave true birth to the Sabbat. Over the past 170 years, the wars of the Kindred raged across Europe even as the wars of their mortal pawns did, but it has become clear that the Camarilla's numbers and resources have given it the upper hand. Already the exodus to the New World and the long, slow retreat to Scandinavia have begun for the Sabbat. Hardestadt and his fellow Founders have nearly achieved their dream, or so it would seem.

The Eternal City

This is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to the geography of Rome or a sort of 17th century *Rome By Night*. Rather, it is a sketch of the major regions of the city, including those areas in which the characters are likely to stalk during their investigations. Remember that this Rome is not our Rome, but a darker one, at the same time grander and more sinister. The Vatican looms higher in this world, with the shadow of St. Peter's creeping across the River Tiber come late afternoon. The streets of the Jewish quarter form their own little labyrinth, and there are notches in the swords held by the heroes of Roman statuary.

Rome is laid out around the Seven Hills, with the River Tiber bisecting the city. The northern part of the city consists of exclusive residential districts, as do the Seven Hills. The heart of central Rome is the Piazza Venezia, and from this forum the Corso, Rome's most famous road, runs to the north. It passes through the Piazza Colona, which is dominated by a statue of Augustus, and ends at the Piazza del Popoli. The church of Santa Maria del Popolo, an obelisk and several fountains are here.

Extending from the south of the Piazza Venezia through the heart of ancient Rome is the Via dei Fori Imperiali. It is along this road that the Colosseum rises and the endless series of Roman forums can be found. The Arch of Constantine and the Baths of Caracalla are also accessible from the Via dei Fori Imperiali. Many of the pieces of classical statuary here have been literally defaced, if not decapitated; many of the buildings have been mined for stone to raise Christian monuments. The rape of antiquity is on full view here.

Also to the south are the Palatine and Capitoline hills, which afford spectacular views of the ancient city as well as an exclusive site on which the wealthy can dwell. In contrast, to the west of the Capitoline are the narrow streets and crooked houses of the Jewish quarter.

The so-called Field of Mars is a maze of small squares and streets that contains much of the hustle and bustle of Rome in 1666. The Piazza Navona (formerly the Diocletian Circus), once flooded for mock naval battles, is a new center of commerce. Also of note is the Roman Pantheon, which has been looted of gold but little else, and which stands south of the riverside tomb of Augustus.

The Trastevere is another Tiberside area of the city, crammed with artisans, tenement-style buildings and small shops.

On the right bank of the Tiber, north of much of classical Rome, is the Vatican. The skyline is dominated by St. Peter's Basilica, as well as the innumerable papal palaces. There are many gardens here, perfect places in which to stroll and discuss matters of faith. Also along the river but further north is the Castel San Angelo, a defensible, turreted medieval fortress. From beneath its frowning walls, a secret passageway leads to St. Peter's. Even further north is the Aurelian Wall, which stands between the heart of Rome and the Pincian Hill.

To the east of the Corso are streets lined with fashionable shops, which are patronized by the wealthy and pretentious. Notable are the Vias Condotti, Borgognona and Frattina, which lead to the Piazza di Spagna. Another one of the streets running through here is the Via Sistina, while the Piazza itself is the center of the potent Spanish presence in Rome.

Scene One: An Impolite Invitation

It is not necessary for the characters to begin the chronicle in the same coterie, or even in the same country. Each, at some impossibly inconvenient moment, will feel an irresistible urge to journey to Rome. The need may not be verbalized as such; it could be a direction given to the footsteps of Gangrel wanderlust or a sterling business opportunity for a Ventrue. No matter why the characters journey to Rome, however, they will eventually arrive in Rome and find themselves before Casa Hardestadt, a sumptuous manse done in neoclassical style and guarded by pink stucco walls and heavy iron gates. Characters nearer to the Eternal City

may find their summons delayed or perhaps weak enough to be ignored for awhile; characters starting in London or the colonies will find the call almost sexual in its urgency. Somehow, prepared as much as they could possibly be, the characters will find themselves standing on the rain-slicked streets of Rome on the night of February 13, 1666.

It is not recommended that characters roleplay their journeys to Rome, unless it affords an opportunity for the characters to get acquainted (or reacquainted) with one another.

Before the Gates

The compulsion to journey further on will weaken for a second at the very gates of the manse, allowing the characters to take a second to examine their surroundings and new companions. The casa is on one of the broad avenues on the Capitoline Hill, and is surrounded by other manses of equal size and opulence. Each is on a sizable parcel of land and is bordered by walls surmounted with iron spikes; each has gates of iron that are bolted and chained against the perils of the night. Lamplight can be seen in many of the windows and the strains of a minuet can be heard from far away; it would appear as if a party was in progress. Carriages rumble past on their way uphill as footmen with powdered wigs and immaculate livery creak at their horses; each coach is marked with a coat of

