## CLAN NOVEL SAGA™: VOLUME TWO

## THE SYNCE OF STANK

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with a foreword by Fric Griffin and an all-new story by stefan petrucha

Dark Fantasy







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CLAN NOVEL SAGA": Volume two

# THE GYPOF CENTRAL

From Friday, 2 July 1999 to Friday, 30 July 1999

## Book two of Four



by stewart wieck, sherbod Fleming and Eric Griffin with Kathleen Ryan, Justin Achilli and Richard Dansky and additional contributions by Stefan petrucha Cover art by John Van Fleet. Book design by Mike Chaney.

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#### our story so Far

It is the summer of 1999 and the newspapers and television reports are full of stories of a rash of violence, rioting and gruesome murders up and down the East Coast of the United States. Behind these headlines lies the hidden truth that a war is afoot among the unliving vampires—called Kindred by some, Cainites by others—who have preyed on humanity since the dawn of time.

Facing off in this war are the two major sects among the undead: on one side, the genteel, haughty Camarilla, dedicated to remaining hidden from human eyes so as to prey in peace; on the other, the utterly inhuman and zealous Sabbat, dedicated to the principles of vampiric supremacy and the freedom to feed as they would. On the night after the summer solstice, the Sabbat took the Camarilla stronghold of Atlanta and sent its enemies running. Other cities fell quickly in the following two weeks, culminating in the collapse of Washington, DC and the installation of the fiendish Sascha Vykos of Clan Tzimisce as its unliving archbishop. In this, Vykos was assisted by the Assamite assassin Parmenides, sent to liaise with the Sabbat but who has fallen under Vykos's sadistic sway. No one seems to know where his true loyalties now lie—not even Parmenides himself.

Camarilla refugees from Atlanta, Charleston and the rest of the fallen burgs have gathered in Baltimore at the behest of its prince, Alexander Garlotte. Notable among his guests is his former lover, the Toreador beauty Victoria Ash, who was ready to make herself prince of Atlanta before the solstice assault ruined her grand ball. She fell into the hands of Sabbat torturers, but escaped—although not unscathed. Together, Garlotte, Victoria and Washington's displaced prince Marcus Vitel prepare for the city's defense.

The war, however, is only the stage dressing and backdrop for other tales—both personal and epic in scale. Victoria Ash's disrupted solstice ball was also the site of the sale of goods between Rolph, an agent of the Nosferatu schemer Calebros, and Erich Vegel, the agent of Hesha Ruhadze, an unliving researcher into the mysterious past and a Follower of Set. There Vegel obtained the ancient Eye of Hazimel, a powerful artifact said to be the actual eye of a vampire older than living memory, and something Hesha has been seeking for over a century. In the chaos of the Sabbat assault, Vegel was lost and with him, the Eye. To aid him in his effort to locate and recover it, Hesha has recruited art historian and restorer Elizabeth Dimitros, a mortal woman only beginning to suspect the dark world she has stumbled into.

Calebros, meanwhile, has his own worries besides the Eye. In his mind, the solstice party and sale of the Eye had only been a blind to cover the kidnapping of Benito Giovanni, a powerful necromancer, businessman, and member of Clan Giovanni—a band of Kindred who have steadfastly refused to ally themselves with Camarilla or Sabbat. Several years earlier, Benito had apparently betrayed the Nosferatu and set up an elder of theirs to be murdered. Calebros and his clanmates intend to find out why. But Clan Giovanni has no intention of