

The Aristocracy of the Night

Special Rules & Skills for Vampires of different Bloodlines

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Intro, Editing & Fluff by Steve Hambrook of Games Workshop/Town Cryer fame

- A brief description of what this is;

In 2003 Mordheim and the rest of the Games Workshop Specialist Games were going strong and each had a "Fanatic Press" magazine, which for Mordheim was Town Cryer.

I wrote an article for that magazine, based on Warhammer Fantasy Battles 6th Edition Vampire Counts Army Book, I had several emails back and forth with Steve Hambrook of GW and we settled on the final edit/version of this article as it was set to be published, ultimately in what would have been Town Cryer 29.

Tragically, Mr. Hambrook passed away suddenly and all the Fanatic Magazines were abruptly cancelled (for TC that would mean number 28 would be the last) and therefore these rules were never published. My personal life changed and games took a back seat for a while, but I retained the final version of the rules as they were set to be published.

The rest of this blog contains things that are not "Official" in the same way, but my own personal balancing of rules and warbands that my friends and I used when we played many moons ago. Some people had expressed an interest in these as well so I decided to share them for anyone/everyone to use as they wish.

But what follows immediately below are the Vampire Counts Bloodline Rules from the (cancelled) Town Cryer #29 exactly as they were set to appear. I hope that people enjoy them.

- Intro

Since the release of the Vampire Counts army book for Warhammer I've been dying to include Vampires of other bloodlines in my games of Mordheim (please forgive the pun!). You can quite easily justify the presence of other Vampires – after all, aren't all creatures of the night lured to Mordheim like moths to a candle because of the ever present Wyrystone? After reading the background for each of the different Vampire Bloodlines, it dawned on me that with the exception of Sylvania there are no realms or kingdoms of Vampires and that they are spread throughout the Old World like a cancer. Powerful Vampire lords of the houses of Lahmia, Blood Dragon, Necrarch and Strigoi would soon despatch their Vampiric minions to the ruins of Mordheim so that they could recover and fetch back Wyrystone – why let the arrogant Von Carsteins have it all? This could also establish the basis for much rivalry between the different clans as they vie for power over the Cursed City.

These rules may be combined with those from Town Cryer #11. However, only those Vampire families that have *Transfix* as a Bloodline Power can choose that skill. *Transfix* works exactly as in TC #11 but is repeated here for convenience. All Bloodline powers are Special Skills for Vampires of the appropriate Family, and can be taken instead of a normal skill for an advance.

When starting an Undead Warband the first thing you need to do is choose which of the families your Vampire comes from. You can only belong to one at a time and you cannot change families (so choose wisely). Each of the different families have their own benefits and hindrances. All Statistic changes are to both starting and maximums of those characteristics.

Of Vampires...

Little is known of these supernatural, blood-sucking creatures of the night except for the tales of old crones and madmen. Men dread these mighty creatures whom they accord such outrageous facets as super-human strength, incredible constitution and lordship over the Undead. What few men are actually aware of is that the fathers of these bastard creatures were spawned countless centuries ago, far to the south in the Land of the Dead, by the blasphemous Elixir of life, created it is rumoured by the Great Necromancer Nagash. Another thing that very few men know is that Vampires are affiliated to different families or Bloodlines and the culture, loyalties and politics between these families are just as diverse, convoluted and deadly as they are between the human kingdoms of the Old World.

Von Carstein

Vampires of the von Carstein bloodline are the original aristocracy of the night. These monsters are the most prevalent Vampires within the borders of the Empire. Most Vampires of this bloodline can be found in the dark County of Sylvania where it is reputed the Elector Count himself is their ancient and inhuman leader. Vampires of the von Carstein line are renowned as haughty, foppish even, with expensive tastes and impeccable manners but they are utterly ruthless predators nonetheless. Von Carsteins occasionally have dealings with the Vampires of other clans; the Necrarchs whose knowledge in the dark arts they covet and Blood Dragons whose martial skills they admire. They are deeply suspicious of the sisterhood of Lahmians and hold the Strigoi with deep contempt and will hunt them down if they are found within the borders of their lands.

All of selections below use the standard Undead warband in the Mordheim rulebook

Blood Dragon

The Blood Dragon Vampires are reputedly descended from the great warrior of old, Abhorash, Lord of Blood. Above all Vampires these are by far the most honourable and perhaps the most in touch with their human past. They are renowned as exceptional warriors and fight with astonishing bravery and chivalry. Blood Dragon Vampires are rare in the Empire with most of their number hailing from Bretonnia and the near mythical Blood Keep, said to be located somewhere in the Grey Mountains. Blood Dragons have very little to do with the Vampires of other clans as they remain disinterested in their political squabbling and power games.

- Martial Prowess: Blood Dragon Vampires start with +2 Weapon Skill.
- Eternally Brave: Blood Dragon Vampires may re-roll the first failed Rout test (if the Vampire is not *out of action*).
- Honour: Blood Dragon Vampires may not attempt to break away from combat or Voluntarily Rout (if the Vampire is not *out of action*).
- Warrior Code: Blood Dragon Vampires cannot use Magic (even with the Book of the Dead from TC #11).
- Men-at-arms: Dregs start with +1 Weapon Skill.

Necrarchs

The dreaded Necrarchs are twisted and evil and more so than any other Vampires they resemble the dead with an emaciated, cadaverous appearance. Necrarchs are incomprehensible even to their own Undead brethren and most seem utterly insane. Their madness is tempered by their undeniable genius and mastery of necromantic magic. Whereas the Vampires of other bloodlines seek dominion over the realms of men the Necrarchs aspire to see the end of all living things such is their hatred for all. Necrarchs are by nature loners, and often live deep underground or in isolated towers where they can practice their foul magics without interruption. Occasionally, however, they emerge from their dark places in the world to gather new victims, lore and of course Wyrdstone for their experiments. Necrarch vampires have a barely contained dislike for their kin of the other clans but will deal with them on occasion when it is to their benefit to do so.

- Poor warrior: Necrarch Vampires start with -2 Weapon Skill, may only be armed with a single-handed dagger, sword, axe or mace and cannot take Strength Skills.
- Necromantic Lore: The Necrarch starts the game as a Wizard in exactly the same way as the Necromancer.
- Loathes the Living: May not hire any Hired Swords.

Lahmia

Of all Vampires, the Lahmian sisterhood follows the culture and practice of the ancient days most closely. The Lahmian Bloodline differs from the other Vampire clans in that it is made up of almost exclusively all females. This sisterhood is renowned for choosing only the most beautiful of mortals to join their ranks. They are led by the original queen of darkness herself, Neferata, of the Cult of Blood who dwells somewhere in the northern reaches of the Worlds Edge Mountains in a place called the Silver Pinnacle. Stories of the palace of the Nights Queen have been told for centuries, and can be found in the ballads of Bretonnia, the writings of the Empire and the poems of Tilea. The Lahmians compete with the Von Carsteins in their plot to wrestle control of the world of men although they are far subtler in their methods, preferring to infiltrate the upper echelons of society than using force of arms. They have a great talent for art and statesmanship and their powerful personalities hold an irresistible charm for mortals. The Lahmian sisterhood will always attempt to manipulate Vampires of the other families to their own ends.

- Poor warrior: Lahmian Vampires start with -1 Weapon Skill and cannot wear Heavy armour, and may only be armed with a single-handed dagger, sword, axe or mace.
- Enchanting Beauty: -1 to any living opponent's Leadership while in base contact with Vampire (note: this has no effect against the Undead or Daemons).
- Unnatural Speed: Lahmian Vampires start with +2 to Initiative.

Strigoi

The Vampires of the Strigoi are known as the Cursed Ones and are generally reviled amongst their own kind. Long ago in this bloodline's history the father of these Vampires was cursed by the other Vampires and since then an unending hatred has existed between them. Strigoi Vampires are little more than beasts – huge, hulking, hate-filled monstrosities. Often these solitary creatures make graveyards and cemeteries their homes where packs of flesh-eating Ghouls form grotesque courts around them. Most of them have to some degree lost their minds but they still possess the innate powers of the vampire and can command the living dead. The Strigoi sit and brood and contemplate a time when they overthrow the world of men and destroy their kin of the other clans utterly.

- Bestial: Strigoi Vampires start with +1 Attack but cannot use any Items or Equipment.
- Hatred: Strigoi Vampires suffer *Hatred* of all living things.

- Ghoul King: Strigoi Vampires may hire up to one Ghast at 50 gc (counts as a Ghoul hero that starts with 0 exp.). Ghoul Henchmen cost 5 gc less to hire.
- Reviled: Strigoi Vampires hire Necromancers and Dregs at +10 gc to hire.
- Feared: Strigoi Vampires may not hire any Hired Swords.

Von Carstein Bloodline Powers

Transfix

The Vampire can befuddle the weak-minded with just a stare of his piercing eyes.

Once each turn one enemy in base contact must make a Leadership test against his base Leadership (cannot use the Leaders). If he fails he cannot attack and all attacks directed against him automatically hit this turn. Does not affect those immune to psychology, the Undead or Daemons.

Aura of Majesty

The von Carsteins are the most authoritative of Vampires, the best generals among their kind.

The Vampire increases the range to use his Leadership by 6" and may re-roll the first failed Rout Test (if he has not been taken out of action).

Summon Bats

The Vampire produces a bestial howl that awakens dark creatures and beckons them to his aid.

Once per game the Vampire can summon 1D3 Fell Bats, which are deployed with 6" of the Vampire. Treat this power like a spell with a casting difficulty of Auto. Follow the special rules for Fell Bats below.

Call Winds

The anger of a von Carstein is so powerful that even the sky reflects it.

Once per game at the beginning of his Shooting Phase, if he is not in close combat, the Vampire may attempt to summon a storm. Treat this like a spell, thus the Vampire may not shoot during this phase. Roll 1D6: on a 1 nothing happens but on a 2-6 he successfully summons a powerful storm that lasts until the beginning of his next turn. All shooting is at -1 to hit and no model may fly (they must use their ground movement). The Storm immediately ends if the Vampire takes a Wound, is *Knocked Down* or taken *Out of Action* or if he is engaged in close combat.

Blood Dragon Bloodline Powers

Red Fury

The Vampire enters battle with a savage and unstoppable bloodlust.

The Vampire has +1 Attack (this does not count toward his Maximum).

Blade Master

Superbly trained by some of the best swordsmen throughout history the Vampire can easily turn aside the blows of his enemies.

The Vampire needs only to tie the roll 'to hit' in order to *parry* (this means he can *parry* a roll of 6). He can also re-roll a failed *parry* (but cannot re-roll a re-roll, nor can he *parry* more than one attack).

Heart Piercing

Using a combination of strength and speed the Vampire can easily find a gap in his opponent's defences.

The Vampire may re-roll missed attacks when charging.

Strength of Steel

Such is the Vampire's martial prowess that he is able to strike at the precise moment when it will cause most damage.

The Vampire has +1 Strength (this does not count toward his maximum) in the turn he charges.

Necrarch Bloodline Powers

Nehekhara's Noble Blood

The Vampire has created such a stash of necromantic lore over the centuries that he is incredibly learned in the dark arts.

The Vampire is a powerful Wizard and may choose an additional spell, and all his spells are at a +1 to cast (which does add with the *Sorcery* skill).

Unholy Cynosure

The Necrarch can focus his power into a different plane to foresee the future and change the present.

Once per game the Vampire may re-roll one failed spell.

The Awakening

The Vampire can sense the remains of long-dead warriors and awaken them to bolster his unholy ranks.

The Vampire may cast the spell *Re-Animation* once per turn in addition to any other spell he uses, also once per game (instead of casting any spells) he may summon D3 Zombies that appear within 6" of him just as if he cast *Re-Animation*. The Zombies are lost after the game and do not count toward the maximum number on the warband.

Master of the Black Arts

So ancient is this Vampire that he is a dark master of the necromantic arts.

The Vampire adds 6" to the range of spells that he casts. This Power only works on spells that have range.

Lahmia Bloodline Powers

Beguile

The Lahmian is such an enchanting beauty that her foes find it difficult to raise a weapon against her.

Once each turn one enemy in base contact must make a Leadership test against his base Leadership (cannot use the Leaders). If he fails he cannot attack the Vampire (but anyone else is fair game). Does not affect those immune to psychology, the Undead or Daemons.

Transfix

The Vampire is so beautiful that a mortal's will to fight immediately disappears before her.

Once each turn one enemy in base contact must make a Leadership test against his base Leadership (cannot use the Leaders). If he fails he cannot attack and all attacks directed against him automatically hit this turn. Does not affect those immune to psychology, the Undead or Daemons.

Seduction

How can a mortal resist the lure of a creature that has preyed on the warm blood of men for countless centuries?

On each of the Vampire's turns one male enemy in base contact must make a Leadership test against his base Leadership (cannot use the Leaders). If he fails, he immediately becomes controlled by the Vampire (may move and attack etc.). Any attacks by the Vampire's warband hit automatically but control immediately returns to the original player. Make a Leadership test at the beginning of each turn to see if the warrior regains control. The Vampire can only control one warrior at a time. Does not affect those immune to psychology, the Undead, Daemons or warriors suffering from *Stupidity*.

Innocence Lost

These deceptive creatures look so innocent and vulnerable that enemies will lower their defences.

The Vampire always attacks first in close combat (even if standing up from a *knocked down* result or attacking enemy armed with spears).

Strigoi Bloodline Powers

Curse of the Revenant

So strong is the creature's desire for eternal life that it can survive even the most appalling wounds.

The Vampire has *Regeneration* ability. For any wound that is not saved the Vampire rolls 1D6, on a 4+ the wound is regenerated (negated). This power is ignored if the attack was caused by fire damage or Blessed Water (or anything else applicable).

Massive Monstrosity

The Vampire is simply gigantic!

The Vampire has +1 Wound (this does not count toward his maximum).

Iron Sinews

The Vampire is a beast of pure muscular power.

The Vampire has +1 Strength (this does not count toward his maximum).

Infinite Hatred

The Strigoi know no love, shunned by all, they brood in their solitude vowing death upon all they meet.

The Vampire re-rolls all missed attacks (remember that you cannot re-roll a re-roll).

Fell Bats

Also known as Vampire bats, the blood drinking bats of Sylvania grow to monstrous proportions. They are nightmarish predators of the dark, silent and deadly. They exist solely on the blood of the living, that of men being their favourite. Scholars of the Old World speculate that perhaps the ancestors of these beasts drank the blood of a Vampire and thus became cursed.

These can only be obtained through the Bloodline Power *Summon Bats*.

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Fell Bat	2	3	0	3	3	2	3	2	5

Fell Bats are Undead so all rules that apply to the Undead apply to Fell Bats.

Cause Fear, Immune to Psychology, May not Run, Immune to Poison.
Furthermore the following rules apply to Fell Bats:

Animal: Fell Bats are treated as animals and therefore cannot use, hold, or pick up any Items, Equipment, Wyrdstone Counters etc.

Fly: Fell Bats *fly*, which means that they may move 20" in any direction ignoring terrain. They can fly into or out of buildings and may only charge models they can see, however Fell Bats do not have to check for Initiative when moving up or down Buildings (however they cannot make a *diving charge*). Furthermore if the Fell Bats lose their last wound it plummets to the ground and is easily finished off. Do not roll for injury, they are automatically taken *out of action*, when they lose their last wound.

Bound Creature: Fell Bats are bound to the Vampire that called them. This means that if the Fell Bats end any turn more than 6" away from the Vampire, and are not in close combat, they will leave play (this range is extended to 12" if the Vampire has the *Aura of Majesty* Bloodline Power). This also means that if close combat ends and the Fell Bats are outside this range they immediately leave. Furthermore if the Vampire is taken *out of action* then the Fell Bats also leave play.

An extract from the journal of Karl Van Kulmner, the year of Sigmar 2001.

"What I banished to the underworld today was no Von Carstein. I should have known the other families would take an interest in Mordheim.

I was escorted in easy enough. One of the creature's dregs, a vile mockery of a man, named Lothar had betrayed its master to me. It seems that he was looking to be free. I was informed that the other dregs had gone with the vile wizard to search for items of worth at the trading post so they would be no threat. He brought me to the crypt where his master slept. I was not surprised at the location, ever since the meteor hit this place has been used to collect the bodies of the dead. As I walked in I could smell the rotting corpses. A lesser man would not have been able to keep from vomiting, but it was an odour, I'm sorry to say, to which I have grown accustomed. I could hear some of them eating, the sound of raw flesh ripping and bones cracking on their sharp teeth. In the shadows I could make out bright eyes staring at me, but I knew from experience that these vile creatures, Ghouls, were essentially cowardly and would not attack without their master. I cautiously eased open the door to its tomb and the dry, musty air hit me. Inside, lying upon one of the altars, not even inside a coffin, was an impossibly large creature. More beast than man, it was a monstrosity. It slept in a perverse parody of a bear in hibernation, most unlike any of the vampires I was used to dealing with. I knew immediately that it was of an ancient bloodline known as Strigoi. I moved as quietly as I could toward the great beast. With stake and hammer in hand I climbed the few steps to the altar.

I positioned myself for the strike, but the door flew open with a resonating crash as the necromancer, Visserah, burst in. He had returned early and Lothar was nowhere to be seen. And now the master was awake. My opportunity gone I quickly went for my pistol, but was slammed to the ground, the stake and hammer flying from my grasp. The creature dove for me in a flash. I barely dodged out of the way in time as the stone altar I was leaning on was shattered to rubble. I rolled onto my feet and pulled out my sabre, which I had specially edged with silver and blessed by the priests of Sigmar. It would cut deep, even into this monster. The necromancer finished an incantation and I felt as though I was in Death's grip, but then I felt a burning sensation on my chest, the symbol of Sigmar was glowing brightly and I was saved. The vampire-creature let out a roar, I do not know if it was pure rage but the ghouls immediately responded, charging in. I seized this opportunity to pull out my pistol, which was loaded with silver shot. I took aim at the vampire but was immediately charged by one of the

dregs. I barely avoided its blows and my pistol rang out, ending the attack. The shot echoed throughout the small chamber. As I pushed the corpse off of me the monster and its minions surrounded me moving in slowly so that their master could savour this moment.

But this was not the end, my pistol shot had alerted the band of mercenaries that I had employed as backup and they soon came charging in. It was over quickly after that. Once my sabre had struck home I was able to stake the beast, crumbling it to dust. The necromancer was no match for the trained mercenaries at such close quarters so he too was overrun, but not before ending the life of their captain with his foul magick. After that the zombies crumbled to dust and the ghouls fled. This was one vampire that would not be seen again.

I have seen other evidence that leads me to believe that the other families are here as well. It seems that I have my work cut out for me.”

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CITY OF THE DAMNED