

Undying

By Paul Riddle

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A predator is made by first selecting the chosen. From among the prey, the one that exhibits the most prized traits is taken.

Finding your chosen requires patience and resolve – and may require a guiding hand for them to achieve their necessary potential. A night for the rebirth is selected. Symbolically, the longest night is preferred.

Then, the chosen must shed their mortal coil. This must be done in such a way as to avoid causing injuries to the body that may be incurable after death and persist as disfigurements to the predator thereafter. The traditional method, which offers obvious benefit, is to feed from the chosen 'till their heart beats its last. Then, the blood of the predator is given to the chosen. A few drops administered into the open mouth of the chosen will suffice.

The chosen is then entombed in a manner that prevents exposure to the sun, or to enquiring prey. For reasons both practical and symbolic, a grave is dug in unconsecrated earth – six feet is proper. Into this grave, the chosen is interred within a coffin until the following night at first dark, at which point they are exhumed. When the chosen stirs, they are reborn a predator.

Occasionally, the chosen does not stir, and instead remains a lifeless husk. Fortunately, most predators are successfully reborn at midnight, allowing ample time for both preparation and proper ceremony.

A rebirth ceremony usually consists of the maker – as all progenitors are called – the maker's maker, and any other ancestors and relations able to attend. There is as well an officiant of the Crimson Path; the loved ones or close relations of the chosen, clad in white; and such accoutrement as is deemed appropriate by custom.

When the reborn predator awakens, it awakens with a maddening, unreserved thirst for blood. For this reason, it is best to restrain the chosen prior to the awakening, but within easy reach of the prey gathered for the express purpose of satiating the reborn predator's thirst. The chosen's relations are often gathered for this purpose.

The reborn predator must quickly adapt to its new existence, which is one of immortality, and of a distinctly inhuman nature. Love and family, as the chosen would understand it, has no place in such an existence. Loved ones are oft a dangerous obsession, one made less so with their passing. It is best that the reborn put their own relations to rest, for then they alone bear the sin.

After a proper feeding, the reborn predator will, though often possessed with a tremendous grief (this is a normal consequence of rebirth), become calm and docile. Then, the new predator may be inducted into their undying family and instructed in the ways of the predator.

Introduction

You are a predator: a vampire who stalks human prey in the night, feasting on their blood.

Blood is life. It's eating, drinking, breathing, and fucking, all wrapped up in one little, crimson drop. Your thirst for blood is blinding and drinking it – that's ecstasy. Feeding from prey isn't just sucking on a juice box; it's going to a fine restaurant.

You will go to any length to feed. The craving to do so is ever-present. Even when you swallow your fill of blood, the devil whispers in your ear, tempting you to drink more. Go hungry and the beast takes over. The beast is the relentless beating in your lifeless heart; it craves excess, cruelty, and destruction. When the beast wins, you lose your free will and devolve into a mindless monster. Your humanity – your connection to what it means to be human – is the only thing that holds the beast at bay, and it is a flickering flame in the windswept darkness. Between feast and famine, restraint and recklessness, a predator's unlife offers more than an eternal, blood-junkie existence. Immortality is the reward that awaits a predator who can balance on the knife edge.

Predators are the apex: the union of man's scheming ingenuity and beast's instinctive ferocity. Though man and lesser creatures are sheep to the wolf, the wolf is among a pack of wolves. And in this pack, the most cunning and ruthless is the alpha. All predators envy that power and prestige. They nip at each other nightly, fighting over the scraps. Each hopes to one night rule the pack. Thus, from the greatest predator to the least, all are embroiled in a ceaseless conflict of intrigue and bloodshed.

This is what it means to be a predator. This is Undying.

About Undying

Undying is a diceless roleplaying game about vampirism.

Undying features player and game master (GM for short) roles. Players take on the roles of deadly, scheming predators, known as player characters (PCs for short). The GM takes the role of game organizer and storytelling arbiter, and describes a rich world full of sex, violence, and horror.

Game play revolves around brief periods of intense conflict, where old rivalries and new slights spark an inferno, and long stretches of intrigue, where intricate plots are set in motion. In this crucible, you experience conflict, desperation, and opportunity. You will bear witness to how these conflicts change you, for better or worse. The focus in these moments is on passionate action and drama. Then, the long years unfold and selfish aims ferment. Plotting and scheming over long periods of relative calm are summarized so that the narrative focuses on decisive events across the gulf of time.

Will you rise up to topple the old guard, becoming every bit as ruthless as your predecessors?

Overview of Play

Your gaming group gathers for a few hours to play a session. During your first session, the GM describes the city where the story is set: its denizens, landscapes, icons, etc. Then players create their characters. Next, the GM starts the story by describing a traumatic event that sets all of the characters into motion.

Game play in Undying cycles between periods of intense action and drama where conflicts come to a head and periods of tense quiet where wounds are licked and plots are hatched. During the course of one or two sessions, the PCs experience tumultuous events initiated by a galvanizing crisis. The story unfolds hour-by-hour, night-by-night until the conflict resolves with a new status quo. This is nightly play. When a new status quo is achieved, the time scale of play changes to months, years, decades, or even centuries. This is downtime play. When chaos is once again unleashed, predators make their gambit; through another one or two sessions of nightly play, we see who comes out on top and how the predator

community is changed.

What You Need to Play

To play the game, you need:

- One GM
- Two to four players (three works best)
- Pencils
- Printed materials, such as playbooks, moves sheets, and relationship maps
- Red tokens for tracking blood

Game Terms

Key terms that are used extensively throughout the text are defined in the Predator Lexicon section. All other game terms are defined in context in their respective sections.

Roles and Responsibilities

The story is told through the experiences of the PCs. The players lead by advocating their characters and the GM follows by making the consequences of their actions real in the fiction.

Each player takes on the role of a predator: an undying, blood-sucking denizen of the night. The player says what their character thinks, feels, and does. Each player brings their character to life by giving them ambition, depth, and tragedy.

The GM takes on two roles: portraying predator and prey non-player characters (NPCs for short) and describing the world and its effect on the characters. For NPCs, the GM's job is similar to the players in that every character is memorable and compelling, but different in that the NPCs are not the focus of the story: they exist to antagonize the PCs. The GM also moderates play by sharing the spotlight among the players, giving them an opportunity to explore their characters.

Playing in a Supportive Environment

Undying, with its dark subject matter, may present people playing the game with situations that disgust, offend, or frighten them. The fiction in Undying should be edgy, but should never cause the people at the table to feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Creating a supportive play environment starts with respect and open communication. The GM takes the lead by establishing a way for the players to express their boundaries and to say enough is enough. Then, the GM outlines their storytelling concepts for the game. Is there an emphasis on horror, tragedy, or violence? Is the exploration of difficult subjects such as murder, abuse, or sexual violence a focal point, background, or off limits? When do these scenes cut? This is your story, how do you want to tell it?

Converge on general limits for sex, violence, and other difficult subjects.

Communicate your boundaries. Boundaries can be deeply personal; but, only you know where the line is drawn. You shouldn't need to discuss specifics with the group, as long as you can be clear on general terms. The group doesn't need to know what your specific discomforts are or why, but the group does need to be aware of and respect your limits. Don't have an exhaustive discussion, but know that you can pick up the conversation during the game when a new topic comes up.

Pay attention to verbal cues and body language. Avoid uncomfortable situations, and respect others when they say they are or appear to be uncomfortable. If someone says stop, stop. Everyone at the table is responsible for maintaining a supportive play environment, but the GM takes charge.

A supportive play environment starts with the discussion you have when you gather around the table and it continues throughout the game as situations come up. Work

through difficult situations together. If you need to walk away, walk away.

Being a Predator

Predators are lifeless, undying, blood-sucking monsters.

Predators are misanthropic, but not solitary. They are a pack of wolves. One is the alpha, the rest skulk in the shadows waiting their turn. And yet they are not wolves, for predators have human cunning and intellect. Even still, they are beyond humans, for predators have immortality.

To be a predator, you must know four things: blood, humanity, status, and debt. Everything else is trivial.

Blood is your all-consuming passion. It's the object of your deepest desires and most primal needs. Your free will, your self-determination – however you choose to look at it – is a façade: a skin-deep veneer of civility gilding the life-stealer within. You can fool the prey and you can fool yourself, but you cannot fool the murderous beast inside you.

The crimson, life-giving fluid pumps through the veins of your prey with a pulsing drumbeat. You hear that beating drum when you hunger. The drum beats ever quicker when your fangs pierce and draw life from your prey. When you kill them, the drumbeat stops.

Feeding is a profoundly erotic and gratifying experience. Some like it sweet. Some like it rough. Drinking blood releases a flood of euphoria, eschews inhibition, and confers a heady sense of power that is often taken for invincibility. Though feeding abates your hunger and tames the beast, that comfort lasts only a short while. During the brief interludes between satisfying your need for blood and the return to the cold, bleak night in search of your next victim is a clarity and fleeting satisfaction that, as a predator, can be attained

through no other path.

Humanity is the remnants of your once-human self. It's sympathy, compassion, self-restraint, decency, and understanding. By simply becoming a predator, your humanity is stained with cruelty and malice. All but the saintliest of predators lose every last shred of their humanity in the end.

Diametrically opposed to your humanity is the beast. The beast is the blood-lusting evil smoldering in your veins. The beast is the millstone around your neck dragging you into depths of depravity. The beast is that numb hollow in your soul, a sump hemorrhaging love, tenderness, and joy. When you stray from the path to indulge your monstrous nature, the beast whispers its reassurances in your ear. When you let go the visions of tortured souls whose lives you've snuffed out, the beast lifts them from your cares. And when you embrace an icy, unflinching hatred toward all life, you become the beast and your soul is forever lost.

Status is your place in the hierarchical predator society. To get to the top, you must push some other predator to the bottom. Your fellow predators must do the same, embroiling you in their shadowy machinations. Play the game well and you come out ahead. Play the game poorly and you come out behind. Either way, you must play the game.

Debt is both what you owe a predator and your promise to repay them. It is the only measure of wealth that truly matters. A predator is powerful, but a predator supported by other predators has power. That power has a cost, and debt is the currency.

Every credible predator owes debts; no predator is an island. debts ensure a stable, hierarchical community where service earns reward and loyalty has its price. Predators who don't owe debts are suspect and unpredictable. Predators who are indebted way over their heads are worthless. When the debts you owe are commensurate with your means

to make good on them, then you are valuable.

Predator Lore

Predator lore is knowledge of the predator's mystical nature: undead, check; feed on blood, check; sunlight bad, double-check; and every other hidden (or not so hidden) gotcha that comes with the territory. Does garlic repel predators? Do you have to cut off the head to wholly destroy one? What about that pesky UV light we keep hearing about? And of course, is sparkling a thing? That's all up to you.

Being a predator is pretty stellar and tales are filled with things a predator can do, most of which can be done while hardly lifting a finger. Predator lore is the set of caveats concerning what a predator can't do, as well as what a predator can do but with a catch. Some of the basic, age-old questions are laid out in the Predator Lore section. Everyone answers these questions together as you all see fit during setup and in play. Your vision of the predator condition and the limitations that bound their otherwise unfettered dominance over prey sets the story's tone and makes the game truly yours.

A Predator's World

The Prey

The prey – that's what humans are to you – are dull and disbelieving, though easily spooked and deadly when roused. A wise predator takes only blood and leaves only foggy memories. Camouflage yourself well, adopting their ever-changing and whimsical fads, just as a hunter adapts to the season. Do this, and you will continue to prey on the flock indefinitely and with impunity. Fail, and bear witness to their torch-lit mobs.

Prey offer a tantalizing distraction... orgies of blood, debauched revelry, crowns for kings, writhing, fleshy life. Prey offer innumerable temptations, most of them fantastic, few of them offering any meaningful advantage. You are a predator. Becoming top dog is all that matters. The prey are just vermin. Play with them for sport, if you want to. Friend them,

fuck them, whatever, but remember that strength lies with your own kind.

The Community

The community is home to a vicious pack of predators and the prey they feed on. The predator community thrives in a city – a big, vibrant one darkened with human suffering. Ruling this community is the princeps, first among the predators. To rule, however, the princeps must have jackbooted thugs toeing the line. These thugs are the patricians. The patricians form the inner circle, a cabal of scheming elders. The princeps and the patricians share, at best, an uneasy truce. Each patrician is a potential successor. Every patrician is a rival. If any patrician steps out of line, another predator stands ready to take their place. All other predators are beneath them.

As a plebeian, you start at the bottom, where all the shit pools. Whether your ambitions are lofty or modest, crawling your way out of this cesspool is a matter of necessity. First for survival, to protect your hunting grounds from jealous rivals. Then for comfort, to enjoy the privileges that immortality has to offer. Then for power, to achieve whatever you set your mind to. That's the dream; few make it.

Think that's a raw deal? Even among the unwashed masses, there exist pariahs: the lepers of predator kind, who pick the bones clean at the very fringe of predator society. These derelicts bear the stain of shame. They are the community's outcasts, lunatics, and heretics.

Predator Lexicon

Undying uses the following terms frequently.

abundance: A tag defining the availability of prey in your hunting grounds.

agenda: A NPC's step-by-step plan to realize their ambition.

ambition: A goal that a NPC wants to accomplish. An agenda is their plan to achieve this goal.

awareness: A tag defining the likelihood that prey will discover predation on your hunting grounds.

basic moves: Moves available to all PC and NPC predators during nightly play.

blood: Sustenance – the mystical life force drawn from human vitality. blood is life. blood is power. blood is ecstasy. Blood is also a key resource that ebbs and flows in play: fueling your dark powers and sharpening your hunger.

chosen: A predator was created by another predator (see maker).

custom lore moves: Various lore moves your group creates or alters to tailor the game to the story you want to tell.

debt: The organized exchange of favors and leverage. See also major debt and minor debt.

downtime moves: Moves available to all PC and NPC predators during downtime play.

downtime play: The phase of play where years, decades, centuries, or even millennia are quickly summarized, existing between the moments of intense conflict that are explored during nightly play.

maker: A predator who has created another predator (see chosen).

gm moves: Moves available only to the GM.

grudge: A festering animosity held by a NPC predator that is directed toward a PC or NPC predator.

humanity: A predator's internal struggle between being civilized and being bestial.

hunting grounds: A place in your community where it is your right to hunt and feed from your prey and choose if other predators the allowed to do so.

lore moves: Moves potentially available to predators, prey, PCs, and NPCs alike that describe the mythical nature of predators.

major debt: A debt of great importance.

max blood: The upper limit to the amount of blood a predator can have at any one time.

minor debt: A debt of small importance, but not so small as to be trivial and forgotten.

nightly play: A phase of play where a night of intense conflict is explored moment-by-moment, between the vast gulfs of time that are explored during downtime play.

pariah: The status of being reviled, mistrusted, and shunned.

patrician: The status of being a respected elder of the community.

pecking order: The relative hierarchy of two or more predators in a given situation.

playbook moves: moves that are available during nightly play to PC and NPC predators based on their playbook.

plebeian: The status of being a respected, but junior member of the community. predator: A vampire.

predator lore: the mythical nature of predators. predator lore is described by lore moves, custom lore moves, and the tone of your story.

prey: A living person, people in general, or a person you feed from.

princeps: The status of being the ruling predator of the community.

proximity: A tag that quantifies how easily your hunting grounds are accessed from the community.

relationship map (r-map): A diagram that describes the relationships between PC and NPC predators.

starving: A predator's uncontrolled bloodlust caused by having fewer than 3 blood.

status: Monster vs. monster. The measure of your standing in the predator community.

tag: A tag is a descriptor that establishes a context in the fiction for a rule.

Playing the Game

You began life as prey. You felt the warm sun, the cool rain, love, pain, joy, and sadness.

Your heart beat life and felt emotion. Now you are a predator and those are memories.

Do you hold on to those memories and try to remember how it felt to be human?

The gradual decay of your soul is called the downward spiral. If you resist that decay, you might cling to those shreds of decency that once made you a person. If you let go, you'll become a monster. Playing the game is about that struggle.

In the sections that follow, you'll learn the rules of the game. Every rule is an opportunity to become more or less human. When there is nothing human left, then you leave the scope of what it means to be a PC.

Narrative Control

As a player, you decide who your character is, their look and personality, what they think and feel, what they say, and the actions they take. This is called your narrative control.

Neither the GM nor any of the other players are permitted to exercise narrative control over your character, and the same goes for you with their characters. Asking questions

is great. Taking control is not.

These narrative rights are sacrosanct, save for moments when one character asserts themselves over another. These situations are handled by rules called moves.

The Cycle of Play

There are two distinct phases of play in *Undying*: nightly play and downtime play. nightly play focuses on events happening minute by minute and hour by hour. downtime play concerns itself with events happening decade by decade or century by century.

In nightly play, you explore a catastrophe that unravels over the course of one or two sessions. nightly play starts with a singular event that forever changes predator society and nightly play ends when the conflict resolves and a new normal emerges. Between the catastrophic events that are explored through nightly play are large stretches of relative calm. This is downtime.

In downtime play, you explore a swath of immortality over the course of an hour or so of play. downtime play spans the period of relative calm between the turbulent periods explored during nightly play. During downtime play, predators plot and scheme, which advances their long term goals and sets up rivalries that come to a head during the next bout of nightly play.

Each phase uses a different set of rules. During nightly play, you use basic moves, playbook moves, lore moves, and gm moves to tell a story from the PCs' perspective as the events unfold, moment by moment. During downtime play, however, you take turns using downtime moves along with gm moves and lore moves, when applicable.

On your first session, you start nightly play with a bang and wrap it up by the end

of the session. On your next session, you go through downtime play to advance the timeline to the next calamity. Then, the remainder of the session is spent in nightly play. Sometimes, it takes more than one session to wrap up nightly play and that's okay too. The important thing is that you get to a point of resolution in nightly play

and then move on to downtime play. If you don't, you'll end up exploring immortality in real time. The Running A Session of Undying section describes the cycle of play in further detail.

Blood

blood is your expendable power, like a gun has its bullets. You take blood from your prey to sustain your existence and fuel your unnatural gifts. Run out of blood, and you'll draw an empty revolver. Always keep other predators guessing whether you fired six shots or only five. When you play, keep everything open and visible on the table, including taking and spending blood, but not how much blood you have. Don't ever let your rivals know how much blood you have.

blood is gained when you feed from your prey. Feeding is a fine art, when practiced with restraint. Take 1 or 2 blood from your prey, and you leave them in a foggy state of bliss (and very much alive). Take too much blood and you may very well kill them. Without restraint, blached bodies lay lifeless at your feet.

There are limits to how much blood you can horde within you. Just like the prey, you may drink your fill but no more, and your strength is sapped when your belly is empty. You cannot have fewer than 0 blood. When you have fewer than 3 blood, you starve, meaning you are overcome by a reckless need to feed. How much blood you can swallow before you have your fill is determined by your humanity: more predatory you are (i.e. the lower your humanity), the more blood you can drink. The most blood you can have at any point is called your max blood (see the Humanity and Max Blood table).

You spend blood when you use your dark gifts. Moves, that allow you to express your supernatural prowess, such as flaunt, come with a cost and blood is the payment.

blood can also be called on to fuel all manner of other profane gifts.

Every night when you wake after sunset, the dark forces that animate your otherwise lifeless husk demand their due. The angel's share is 1 blood, spent when you wake for the evening.

Debt

Debt is an obligation that one predator owes to another. It is leverage you have over other predators and vice versa.

debts occur when you get something from a predator or when you give something to a predator. debts fall into two categories: major debt and minor debt. Since a debt could be held for centuries before being redeemed, it's important to establish a clear understanding of the debt's magnitude, but the specifics of the debt are utterly irrelevant when offered, becoming relevant only when they are determined at the point of redemption. major debts and minor debts are summarized in the table, below.

When a predator owes you debt, you draw a line from them to you on the relationship map (see The Relationship Map) with a note identifying whether the debt is a major debt or a minor debt. Include a brief statement of what the debt is for so everyone at the table will remember. When a debt is redeemed, cross out (but don't erase) the debt's description on the relationship map. debts are fulfilled, but not forgotten.

The following table defines debt.

Debt	Description
Major Debt	A great hardship: the debtor must make personal sacrifices, work to the detriment of their own interests, or risk exposure to harm or loss of status.
Minor Debt	An expenditure of time, influence, or resources that does not directly expose the debtor to harm or significant personal risk.

A minor debt is a favor. The exchange of minor debts ensures that regular service is rewarded and not forgotten. minor debts ebb and flow, forming the basis for predator commerce. minor debts should neither be shunned nor offered freely. Be penny wise.

A major debt is a big fucking deal. A predator put their ass on the line for you and now expects the same in return. No amount of minor debts are ever truly worth a major debt. The key distinction between a major debt and a minor debt is that, with a major debt, you are risking your hide or putting your status on the line. If you give up something deeply personal in the process, that may also constitute a major debt. Everything else is a minor debt.

Owing major debts is pound foolish. Sometimes you can't help it. Maybe you're in a bad spot. Maybe you happen upon the opportunity of an unlifetime but can't pull it off on your own. There's no getting around it: sooner or later, your safety or way of life demands a boon of singular importance. That'll cost you.

Owing a major debt puts you in the hole: one you may never crawl out of or one you might die trying to. If someone owes you a major debt, treasure it. Never let it go. You hold the strings; make them dance for you.

Humanity

Humanity is a measure of your connection to what it means to be human. It is determined by how you view and act toward prey. Holding onto your humanity is crucial, because

losing means giving into the beast and that spells disaster.

Your humanity is a reflection of your actions. It is fluid, changing as you do, waxing and waning as you make your way along the downward spiral. Treat prey with decency, and your humanity may rise. Show callous disregard for your prey, and your humanity may fall. Lose your soul and you lose your character.

Your humanity influences moves you make involving prey, particularly when feeding. The higher your humanity, the more options you have to act humanely towards your prey. The lower your humanity, the fewer options you have – and with fewer options to act humanely, the faster you will descend along the downward spiral.

When creating your character, choose the humanity that best matches your character concept. As your character evolves through play, their humanity shifts up and down accordingly. This is described in the How Humanity Changes section.

Your max blood is determined by your humanity. The lower your humanity, the higher your max blood is. The beast takes care of its own, rewarding your predatory nature with power.

The following table defines humanity and max blood.

Humanity		Max Blood	Description
Humane	3	10	You need and cultivate meaningful relationships with prey. You show compassion and make a concerted effort to avoid causing harm to prey and breaking their laws.
Callous	2	12	You might maintain casual relationships with prey, but generally view prey as pawns to be manipulated in your nightly games of chess. You show regard for property and ownership only when it suits your purpose. While you don't generally harm or kill prey, you will when the need arises, perhaps showing some remorse.
Monstrous	1	15	You detest or otherwise avoid relationships with prey. Their laws and customs are inconsequential to you. Prey are simply tools to be obtained, used, and disposed of as you see fit. You may kill when feeding; but, you make a point of concealing the true nature of your crime.
Lost	0	20	You demonstrate complete disregard for prey. You kill, maim, and abuse prey on a whim, for sport, and to achieve your vile ends. You leave bloodless corpses on display and you revel in their horror. Mercy and remorse are alien concepts.

How Humanity Changes

Your humanity is in constant flux, always reflecting your current attitudes. You choose your humanity when creating your character. Thereafter, your humanity will potentially change at the end of each session, when the other players will judge your humanity.

At the end of each session, recap your character's defining moments for the other players as a reminder. Then, the other players talk it over and put your humanity to a vote, using the definitions in the table above to decide how your humanity changes, or if your humanity remains the same. If the vote is a tie, the GM decides.

Though you don't have direct control over your character's humanity, it's important to recognize that you do have direct control over the decisions you make on their behalf. Act the part and you will be judged accordingly.

When your humanity changes, update your character sheet. You begin the next session

of play with your new humanity.

If your humanity increases, you may now have more blood than your new max blood permits. Should this happen, you don't immediately lose that excess blood. Your new max blood takes effect immediately in that you cannot gain more blood than your new max blood permits, but you may continue to spend your overage. Upon the next sunrise, you lose any excess blood you have, so spend it while you can.

Losing your Humanity

When you are lost, the beast inside you has won.

When the other players decide that your humanity is lost, it's a signal to you that you are no longer fighting the beast at all. You have one chance to redeem yourself. If the other players decide that your humanity is lost a second time, ever, then you hand your character over to the GM as a NPC and create a new character for yourself.

Humanity and Predator Norms

Norms in predator society are little different than norms in prey society. There are viewpoints and counterpoints. As time moves on, so does culture. Norms are always up for debate and those who challenge the norm are often persecuted for it. The predator sense of humanity is a rich topic for exploration.

There are some common threads, though. Young predators are generally callous. A few try desperately to cling to their humanity. Maybe they are gentle souls. Maybe they're in denial. Either way, they regard humane predators with disdain at best, and ridicule or hazing at worst. Seeing a "warm-blooded" predator is a harsh reminder of the horror most predators become.

Elder predators are generally monstrous. Only methodical predators with self-discipline

and an iron will last this long. Predators who wash out or lose their way are killed off. After unliving for centuries, it is a rare predator who views the prey as anything more than meals and pawns.

Status

status is a measure of where your character stands in the predator community. Every predator falls into one of four social classes: princeps, patrician, plebeian, or pariah. Your status gives you privilege over your fellow predators, like your predatory nature gives you privilege over your prey. The higher your status, the sweeter the rewards.

The following table defines status.

Status	Description
Princeps 3	The eminent predator: you have no betters, but rivals aplenty. The princeps is the acknowledged ruler of the community. As the princeps, your influence is vast and your hunting grounds are peerless. Everything is yours for the taking.
Patrician 2	A pillar of the community. You have crawled your way up out of the mire to a position of prominence and respect. You are not to be fucked with. You have the princeps' ear. Shit heel predators answer to your beck and call. Your hunting grounds are choice: whatever your pleasure or fetish, you've got it in spades.
Plebeian 1	A commoner. Most predators are introduced to the community as a plebeian. Sure, you have the short end of the stick, but that's the lot of any entry level. Your biggest rivals are your fellow plebeians because they have the same hopes of self-aggrandizement that you do. Best them and you have a shot at becoming patrician. Your hunting grounds are lean and often poached, but suffice.
Pariah 0	An outcast, a criminal, or a committed fuck-up. You have no hunting grounds. The community does not recognize any rights or debts owed to you. You have no place in the community and if other predators don't go for your throat, expect at best a cold reception.

Each community is unique and may adapt this social framework to suit the situation. The definitions above are guidelines that all predators are familiar with, but the intricacies of predator politics demand exceptions. Maybe there isn't a princeps, perhaps it's an oligarchy instead? Are there luminaries at the mention of whose name even mighty rulers tremble? If your community differs from the norm, create custom predator lore to

describe the laws and customs (see Creating Custom Lore).

How Status Changes

Like humanity, your status is also in constant flux: always reflecting your current position in the predator community. You choose your status when creating your character.

Thereafter, your status changes in one of four ways:

- Your playbook status move gives you direct control over your destiny. Each playbook's status move is different, giving each playbook a different angle. When you choose a playbook, be sure to consider how that playbook's status move fits in with your character concept and mode of play.
- At the end of each session, the GM listens to your recap (as described in the How Humanity Changes section, above) and asks clarifying questions, if needed. Then the GM thinks over your character's position in the predator community and uses the definitions in the status table above to decide how your status changes, or if it doesn't.
- When precipitous events occur during the session that demand a change to your status (up or down), the GM may also adjust your status up or down in the moment (see the change a predator's status gm move).
- When you choose a plot in the plot and scheme move that tells you to change your status.

When your status changes, update your character sheet. Your new status takes effect either immediately or as soon as it makes sense based on what's going on right now in the story.

Hunting Grounds

Hunting grounds are small pockets within the community where favorable hunting conditions exist. Bars, nightclubs, and rave scenes often fill this role. Hotels and apartment buildings where people don't pay attention to their neighbors also have potential. Only places where prey are readily available after dark, are easy to isolate and feed on, and

where they are not overly likely to notice predation will do.

hunting grounds are watering holes in the desert. These watering holes are prized and fought over. There are vast expanses of nothing between them, called barrens. The barrens include abandoned areas of the city as well as commercial and industrial districts that are devoid of prey after working hours. The barrens are rarely of concern to predators, unless it stirs their economic interests. Thus, predators wandering through the barrens are usually left to their own devices.

Your de jure hunting grounds are patches of turf somewhere in the community that other predators (by and large) recognize as yours. The terms and boundaries are vague at best and malleable. Your de facto hunting grounds are whatever you can actually fend from other predators. Sometimes that's more, often it's less.

As a plebeian, your hunting grounds were likely given to you. Usually from your maker, if they are influential and in good standing. Otherwise, the princeps or a patrician will often gift grounds, so that a weak predator (who now owes them) either fills a power vacuum somewhere in their domain or encroaches on someone else's domain on their behalf. If new hunting grounds open up – through predator machinations, sprawling human development, or victory over a competing predator faction – you might serve to settle that homestead. Your interests and comfort have little to do with your given hunting grounds, but be thankful for having them just the same.

As a pariah, you have no rights to hunting grounds under predator laws and customs, so you hunt where you can. This means you must hunt on another predator's turf or in the most dangerous and inopportune places.

hunting grounds and status are related both in terms of what a predator of a given status should expect and what is expected of a predator of a given status. If

your hunting grounds outstrip your status, advocate for your advancement or expect encroachment. If your hunting grounds are shameful for a predator of your status, strong-arm better hunting grounds from lesser predators or expect to lose your vaunted status.

Hunting Ground Tags

hunting grounds are described by tags, one from each of the three following categories:

Abundance, awareness, and proximity. Each tag defines an aspect of the hunting grounds and describes how it affects hunting and feeding. The GM uses all three tags for a predator's hunting grounds to establish a sense of the place.

Abundance measures the availability of prey in your hunting grounds. A profusion of prey eases the hunt.

Awareness: The measure of the likelihood that the prey will discover the predation of a careful predator on your hunting grounds. The warier the prey on your hunting grounds are, the more careful you must be when hunting and feeding to avoid rousing them to action. When the prey are roused to action, they actively search for a predator in their midst (though the prey may not yet be aware of the predator's supernatural nature).

Proximity measures the distance between your hunting grounds and the central hub of predator activity in the community. The closer your hunting grounds, the easier it is to both exploit your hunting grounds and to participate in the community's nightly affairs.

Hunting Grounds Abundance Tags

Tag	Points	Description
Plentiful	3	Prey are plentiful. When you hunt here, you may choose to stalk prey quickly as one of your options.
Sufficient	2	Prey can be found readily enough. When you hunt here, you may choose to stalk prey quickly as one of your options.
Meager	1	Prey can be found readily enough near the metaphorical watering holes. There is at least one regular, after-dark gathering place for prey on these hunting grounds. When you hunt here, you may choose to stalk prey quickly as one of your options.
Scarce	0	Prey are few and far between. hunting is a laborious and time-consuming affair. When you hunt here, you cannot choose to stalk prey quickly as one of your options.
Barren	-	Prey are, for all practical purposes, non-existent. Either the area is literally devoid of prey (such as a business or industrial district after business hours) or hunting prey is such a damn fool idea that only a desperate predator would try to hunt them. When you hunt here, if you even can hunt here, you cannot choose to stalk prey quickly as one of your options.

Hunting Grounds Awareness Tags

Tag	Points	Description
Oblivious	3	The prey on your hunting grounds are cozy and content, blind to others' misfortune. Hardly anything short of supervillain shit, war, terrorism, or mass murder are likely to be noticed. You rouse the prey to action only if you commit spree or ritual killing, or leave trails of exsanguinated bodies.
Inattentive	2	The prey on your hunting grounds are largely indifferent to their surroundings. Only hard evidence of supernatural powers, media storms in response to major or violent crimes, and obvious changes to well-known people are quickly noticed. You rouse the prey to action only if you show gratuitous displays of supernatural abilities, or commit violent or serial murder.
Suspicious	1	The prey on your hunting grounds are nervous and wary. Someone who looks out of place, significant crimes, and obvious changes to well-known people are quickly noticed. You rouse the prey to action if you show obvious supernatural characteristics or abilities, seriously injure someone, or fail to conceal obvious bite marks.
Vigilant	0	A newcomer, petty crimes, and subtle changes to all but the most reclusive individual are quickly noticed. You rouse the prey to action if you are believed to possess supernatural characteristics or abilities, injure someone in an unusual way, hunt often, or fail to conceal physical and psychological evidence of feeding.

Hunting Grounds proximity Tags

Tag	Points	Description
Central	3	Your hunting grounds are in prime territory. Your hunting grounds are located at the central hub of the predator community.
Close	2	Your hunting grounds are nearby. Your hunting grounds are close enough that you can make a trip between your hunting grounds and the central hub of the predator community in a matter of minutes.
Distant	1	Your hunting grounds are well out of the way. Your hunting grounds are close enough that you can make a round trip between your hunting grounds and the central hub of the predator community in an hour or so.
Remote	0	Your hunting grounds are at the fringe of the community. You can choose to spend the night hunting on your hunting grounds, spend the night participating in the predator community, or spend about half of the night doing each.

Creating Hunting Grounds

Since hunting grounds are part of the world, they are the GM's domain. The GM assigns hunting grounds to PCs and NPCs when they are created. The GM should not assign the remote tag (proximity) to a PC. The table below provides typical tag totals for predators of a given status. A recommended set of tags is also provided. When you create a predator's hunting grounds, either choose the recommended tags or choose individual tags from the tables above, comparing the total points of the tags selected to the recommended total points.

Typical Hunting Grounds Tag Point Totals by Status

Status	Total Points	Recommended Character Creation
Princeps	8	plentiful (Ab-3), inattentive (Aw-2), central (P-3)
Patrician	6	sufficient (Ab-2), inattentive (Aw-2), close (P-2)
Plebeian	4	meager (Ab-1), inattentive (Aw-2), distant (P-1)
Pariah	-	Pariahs aren't entitled to hunting grounds.

For a particularly wary or insular society, reduce the total tag points by 1 and reduce the recommended awareness tag by 1. Conversely, for a particularly hedonistic or jaded society, increase the total tag points by 1 and increase the recommended awareness tag by 1.

If the city is not a modern metropolis (or the ancient equivalent), reduce the total tag points by 1 and reduce the recommended abundance tag by 1.

Changing Hunting Grounds

Hunting ground tags always change to match the established fiction. When someone runs you off your choice spot or vice versa, the GM adjusts your hunting grounds accordingly.

Unless a dramatic change occurs, re-evaluate a predator's hunting grounds each time you make the time passes move. The plot and scheme move provides the players options to influence their hunting grounds during downtime play.

Moves

Moves are the rules that govern what you can do and how you do it.

A move is triggered when the current narrative satisfies the move's "when" condition. That is to say, whenever you do the thing the move describes, you trigger the move and then the move's outcome alters the course of the narrative.

Some moves also have a cost of either blood or debt. When a move says to spend blood or debt, you must do so or change your narration so that you don't trigger the move. If you can't spend the required cost, you are not able to make the move.

Some moves offer choices about the outcome. When the word "choose" is used, you must make the choice in that moment. If the words "may choose" are used, you have the option of choosing some, all, or none of the listed options, up to the number of options specified in the move, but must still make your choice in that moment.

Some moves are very specific about whether they apply only to predators or prey. If a

move says “When you feed on prey,” for example, that move triggers when you feed on prey but would not trigger if you tried to feed on a predator. If a move doesn’t clearly spell out whether it applies specifically to predators or prey only and if it is not otherwise clear by move category or in context, the move applies to both predators and prey equally.

There are five types of moves: basic moves, downtime moves, playbook moves, lore moves, and gm moves.

- Basic moves are available to all players and the GM. They are used when the story is told moment by moment, in nightly play.
- Downtime moves are used during downtime play to span large stretches of time. nightly play and downtime play are defined in the explained in The Cycle of Play section.
- Lore moves are created at the table by the players and the GM – you decide how they are used and when, based on their context.
- Playbook moves are available to players with that playbook (and to the GM, for their NPCs) during nightly play. playbook moves are described with their respective playbooks in the Playbooks section.
- GM moves are storytelling tools for the GM and are described in The GM section.

Basic Moves

Basic moves are the most commonly used moves. They are only available to predators (PCs and NPCs) and cover much of what predators do during nightly play.

Extended examples for some of the more complicated basic moves are provided in the Basic Moves in Action section.

Wake

When you wake for the evening, time weighs heavily on you and your hunger is sharpened.

Spend 1 blood. If you wake with fewer than 3 blood, you are starving when you

awaken. If you have 0 blood when the sun sets, you cannot wake and remain in deathlike repose until, by some providence, you consume at least 1 blood.

Starve

When you have fewer than 3 blood, you are starving: the beast takes control and does everything in its power to slake its thirst. You lose control of yourself in the carnage, a spectator to the havoc you cause. Torn, bloodless bodies are left in your wake. You are covered in the viscera of your victims. The streets now seem cold and deserted. The GM describes the situation you face after you've regained control of yourself and tells you what objective facts you remember from your killing spree, if anything. Do the faces of the slain haunt you? The GM also decides you how much blood you now have: between 3 blood and your max blood.

Hunt

When you stalk prey, you track down and corner a victim. The GM describes them and how they try to escape you. You may choose a number of options up to your status. Only the options chosen are true. If you hunt on your own hunting grounds, you may choose an additional option. You may also choose one additional option for every 1 blood you spend on this move.

- You stalk your victim quickly. They don't evade your clutches for long. (This choice is only available on hunting grounds with an abundance of meager, sufficient, or plentiful)
- You stifle your victim's screams to avoid spooking the prey. They aren't roused to action.
- You gently subdue your victim. They don't struggle against you.
- You deftly evade the prying eyes of your fellow predators. They don't confront or interfere with you.

Feed

When you sink your fangs in and feed from your prey, you take blood from them. You are intuitively aware of the physiological impact to your victim of each drop you take. Taking 1 or 2 blood leaves them tipsy. Taking 3 blood leaves them ill. Taking 4 blood leaves them in desperate need of medical attention. Taking 5 blood kills them. You may choose a number of options up to your humanity + 1. Only the options chosen are true.

- You stop feeding when you want to. Choose how much blood you take from your prey.
- You resist the temptation to terrorize your prey and hurt them for sport or pleasure.
- You manipulate your prey's memories so they don't remember you in their nightmares.
- You close the wounds you left on your prey's body, concealing the tell-tale signs of your predation.

Bargain

When you bargain with a predator, describe the goods or services that you desire from them. They may refuse. If they refuse and you are higher in the pecking order than them, they become a pariah. If they accept your bargain, they may demand a new debt from you, demand that you forgive a debt they currently owe you, or demand other goods or services in return. The terms are negotiated, but favor the predator that is higher in the pecking order.

You are higher in the pecking order when...

- Another move tells you so,
- Your status is higher than theirs,
- You are their maker,
- They owe you more major debts than you owe them, or
- They owe you more minor debts than you owe them.

Flaunt

When you flaunt what your maker gave you and use supernatural predator abilities to your advantage, spend 1 blood and say what you do. This includes superhuman strength, speed, savvy, allure, intimidation, etc.

Meddle

When you interfere with another predator and they resist your machinations, you set in motion a high-stakes game where winner takes all. All meddling predators ante up by spending 1 blood. "Spend" means you spend blood now. "Bet" means you commit to spending blood if your bet is called. You can't bet blood you don't already have. The betting starts with a raise from the predator making the move and passes in turn to each predator involved in the struggle.

On your turn, choose one of the following options and say how you do it:

- (Call and) Raise: You escalate, turning the tables on your adversary. Bet more blood than your competitor, then say how you raise the stakes. If no one has raised yet, you must bet at least 1 blood. If someone has raised, you call first (see below) and then raise with a bet of your own.
- Call: You counter, stopping your adversary in their tracks. Say how you thwart them. When you call another predator's bet, you spend blood equal to their bet. If they have not already spent the blood they committed to spend when they placed their bet, they spend that blood now.
- Fold: You relent, accepting the consequences as established. Once you fold, you forfeit the opportunity to call or raise even if the betting continues. You are no longer a factor and cannot resist the other meddling predators until after the move is resolved.
- Cash in Your Chips: Instead of spending blood to call a meddling predator, you may forgive a debt they owe you. You may continue to call against that predator without spending any additional blood or debt until the move is resolved.

If multiple predators act together against another, they add their blood bets together

as a single bet and they place any future bets together.

If the conflict escalates to violence, you fight them instead. Any blood already spent in this move carries forward to your bet in fight. Of course, you may add to your bet in the fight move.

The move resolves when there is no further escalation: when everyone else calls or folds.

If you have the highest bet on the table, you get what you want. If your bet is called (or vice versa), you both get something and give up something. If you fold, you lose.

Fight

When you fight another predator, it's an ugly, desperate struggle for life and death. All warring predators bet as much blood as they dare in secret. Then in unison, all predators reveal and spend the blood they bet. If multiple predators band together against another, they add their blood together as a single bet after revealing. The predator or band of predators who spends the most blood prevails.

Among the prevailing predators, the predator who spent the most blood decides the fate – life or death – of each predator involved in the conflict. If there's a tie, the GM decides each predator's fate. Each predator describes how they meet their fate.

Those who survive slink off into the night to lick their wounds.

To lose and be spared is utterly humiliating: you become a pariah. Custom dictates that you can have no place in predator society until you repay a major debt to the predator who spared you.

Captivate

When you captivate your prey, you mesmerize them with honeyed words or sensuous moves.

They fall for you and want so desperately to please you. The higher your humanity, the deeper their fascination. Tell the prey what you want from them. The GM chooses a number of options below equal your humanity + 1. Only the options the GM chooses are true.

For every 1 blood you spend on this move, the GM must choose one additional option.

- Your prey does it eagerly.
- Your prey does it faithfully.
- Your prey exceeds your expectations.
- Your prey is still drawn to you.

Dominate

When you intimidate your prey, they are frightened. When you attack your prey, they are killed or injured as you please. Your victims cannot resist your predation. They are your playthings. You decide what happens to them. If your victims are many or well-prepared, they may draw blood in return: the GM may make the overwhelm a pc move.

Basic Moves in Action

The following sections provide supplementary guidance for basic moves and surrounding situations.

Flaunt

flaunt is a catch-all move for the supernatural powers a predator might wield. The scope of flaunt is in your hands, within the bounds of the established predator lore. Within these bounds (which can be negotiated as new situations arise), anything is possible. The GM's job is to reinforce the facts and the tone established in the fiction, not to stifle creativity. If the thing you want to do is particularly spectacular, the GM may raise the blood cost.

Some feats may be uncommon or known only to select predators. Establish these bounds

through your predator lore. The GM says what you have to do first. For instance, you want to perform ritual magic with your blood? Well, you might need to make a pact with a demon first (if such fell creatures even exist). Perhaps a musty tome written by some tortured soul would also do?

Always check to see if another move covers whatever you are trying to do. If so, use that move instead. If that move is a playbook move that your character doesn't have, then you can probably still flaunt and do something similar but probably not as well. The GM decides if and how.

The Pecking Order

The pecking order is the hierarchy between predators. The pecking order comes into play in the moves bargain and plot and scheme and, in general, whenever predators size each other up.

The pecking order is fluid. While a predator's status is coarsely binned by the social classes princeps, patrician, plebeian, and pariah, within a given social class – say plebeian – the ranking of predators is nuanced. There is a kernel of objectivity to the pecking order, but there's also a measure of subjectivity – enough to muddy the waters. This grey area is an opportunity for the talented schemer.

The pecking order, as defined in the move bargain, says:

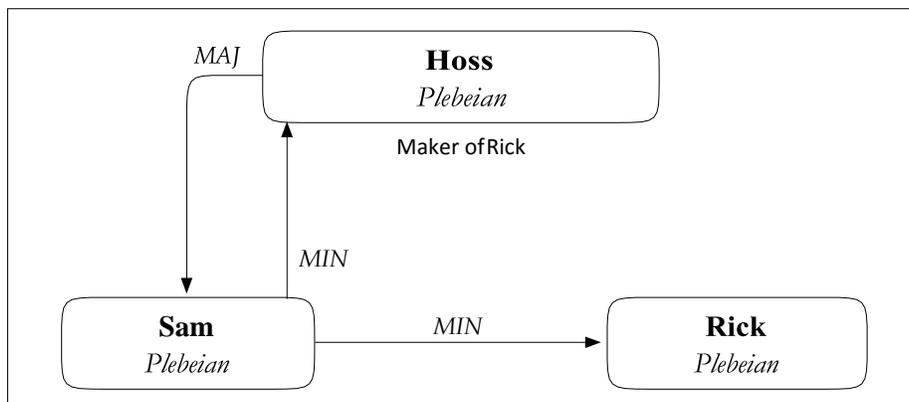
You are higher in the pecking order when...

- Another move tells you so,
- Your status is higher than theirs,
- You are their maker,
- They owe you more major debts than you owe them, or
- They owe you more minor debts than you owe them.

When you compare two predators' position in the pecking order, start at the top of this list and work your way down. Conditions higher on the list take precedence over conditions lower on the list. So, if your status is higher than theirs, but they are your maker, you are still higher in the pecking order than them because status is higher on the list than maker. Other moves may say when you are higher in the pecking order, these moves are special, specific, and always take precedence. If neither of you are higher in the pecking order (or if through some combination of other moves, both of you are higher in the pecking order), then neither of you are higher in the pecking order. To be higher in the pecking order, you must clearly be higher in the pecking order.

The most important concept about the pecking order rules is that you are comparing two predators to determine which predator is higher in the pecking order. This concept could be extended to a general ranking of predators; but, as you will see in the example below, the pecking order rules can quickly break down into a logic trap if used to solve the general solution. Instead, consider the following qualitative guidance.

Pecking Order Example



In this example, Sam owes Rick a minor debt, Sam owes Hoss a minor debt, Hoss owes Sam a major debt, and Hoss is Rick's maker. Sam, Rick, and Hoss are all plebeians.

RICK AND HOSS...

- Though Hoss and Rick are both plebeians, because Hoss is Rick's maker, Hoss is higher in the pecking order.

SAM AND RICK...

- Because Sam and Rick are both plebeians and Sam owes Rick a minor debt, Rick is higher in the pecking order.

SAM AND HOSS...

- Sam and Hoss are both plebeians, but Hoss owes Sam a major debt and Sam only owes Hoss a minor debt, so Sam is higher in the pecking order.

In summary, Hoss is higher in the pecking order than Rick, Rick is higher in the pecking order than Sam, and Sam is higher in the pecking order than Hoss.

Again, the pecking order rules only establishes a hierarchy between two predators.

Handling the general case is an art, it's qualitative, and it's debatable. You only really need to figure this out when you make the plot and scheme move or when you are trying to understand the general lay of the land. Otherwise, you always compare two predators to each other.

When you establish the general pecking order, use the same principles in as you would to establish the pecking order between two predators, but look at the big picture instead. Back to the previous example, since Sam, Hoss, and Rick are all plebeians, none of them is a clear winner in terms of status. If we threw a patrician into the mix, the patrician would be highest in the pecking order. However, since there are no patricians on the R-map above, but Hoss is a maker, that probably puts Hoss at the top of the pecking order. Sam is owed a major debt, so that probably gives her more prestige than Rick. Therefore, generally speaking, Hoss is higher in the pecking order than Sam, Sam is higher in the pecking order than Rick, and Rick is at the

bottom of the pecking order.

Meddle

Meddle starts when one predator attempts to interfere with another predator and they resist. Interfere means that predators with competing aims take action to thwart each other. The predator who makes the move is the one who takes the first step to disrupt the status quo.

Before the betting starts, discuss what is at stake. Each predator describes what they hope to accomplish, establishing a context for the bets and for the eventual win/lose/draw outcome of the move.

At each step of the betting process, you choose to raise, call, fold, or cash in your chips and then you describe what you do to make that happen. The narration is brief but descriptive and it builds on your earlier discussion. This sets you up for achieving your goal, but the process is open-ended rather than conclusive. Your competition may yet get the better of you.

The blood spent meddling fuels a contest of wills between the predators, which means you have license to be creative when describing how you use your predator abilities to outwit your adversary. Use the other moves – certainly flaunt, but also lore moves or playbook moves – as guidelines for describing how you go about gaining the upper hand or denying your adversary an advantage.

When meddling escalates to fighting, all blood spent meddling carries forward to the fight move.

Example of Meddling

Rick slinks off to meet up with his ex-girlfriend, Tara, in secret. She's prey and the pack would kick his ass if they found out and pitch him endless shit afterward.

He gives the pack another lame excuse about picking up parts for his chronically defunct motorcycle. Sam knows Rick is up to something and she has a pretty good idea that Rick has a girl on the side he's not telling anyone about. She wants to find out who it is and where they're shacking up. If she catches him in the act, she can leverage Rick's indiscretion to improve her standing with the pack's alpha.

Sam is attempting to disrupt the status quo by uncovering Rick's secret relationship. If Rick makes no attempt to resist Sam, then there isn't a conflict and this isn't a move: Sam tracks down Rick, as established. If Rick does try to lose Sam, then there is a conflict and Sam is meddling. Let's assume Rick wants to keep his secret safe. In that case, Sam is meddling in Rick's affairs – she's making the move because she's initiating the conflict.

Both Sam and Rick spend 1 blood to ante up. Spending blood means that both predators are using their inhuman advantages to get what they want.

SAM OPENS WITH A BET OF 1 BLOOD...

Sam focuses her sense of hearing. Rick's footfalls are steady and his pace is casual as he follows his seemingly innocuous route to the auto parts store. Sam moves quickly and gains on him.

In narrating the escalation, describe your actions in a way that will lead to a successful conclusion if the other predator acquiesces, but also leaves open possibilities for the other predator to resist. In the early stages of betting, leave the possibilities wide open. As betting continues back and forth, it is okay to constrain these options as the contest takes shape.

IF RICK FOLDS...

Sam catches up to him, as established: no more blood is spent, and Sam describes how her goal of catching Rick with his girlfriend is realized.

Rick knocks on Tara's door and he can hear her walking to the door to answer it. Tara opens the door with a grin, "Rick!"

Sam, lurking across the street, gets what she came for.

IF RICK CALLS...

The blood you bet is a commitment to follow through on your intent, should the conflict escalate. When your raise is called, the conflict escalates and you must honor your commitment by spending blood.

When Rick calls, both Rick and Sam spend 1 blood to cover their bets: Sam makes good on her blood bet and Rick matches it. If meddling ends with a call, Sam doesn't find out where Rick was off to but Rick can't visit Tara if he wants to keep it a secret, and he wants to keep it a secret. That said, Sam knows for sure that she's on to something and Rick now knows that Sam's stalking him. The compromise is a negotiation between the involved predators. Both win something, both lose something.

Rick catches Sam's scent on the wind. "Shit!" Rick whips out his phone and texts Tara, "Can't make it tonight, sorry." Then he loops around to run that errand he told his pack about.

Sam knows Rick is on to her. First he's sauntering through a neighborhood that's out of his way, then he beelines to the auto parts store, just like he said he would. His girlfriend's gotta be close. "Alright Rick, game on, now I know where to look."

When Rick calls Sam's bet, Sam has no further recourse. If Sam opens the betting and

her bet is called, the betting stops and then it's time to put cards on the table. If a future opportunity presents itself, Sam may again meddle in Rick's affairs.

IF RICK CALLS AND RAISES...

Rick knows he's being followed, and he knows that Sam won't give up easily.

Rick catches Sam's scent on the wind. "Fine, you want to play a game Sam? Let's play."

Rick turns down the alley behind the Ave Tavern.

Rick is cagey and willing to escalate to shake Sam's pursuit. First, Rick calls Sam's bet of 1 blood. They both spend 1 blood. blood is only spent when a raise is called. Next, Rick raises with a bet of his own: 2 blood.

Sam rounds the corner in hot pursuit, or so she thinks... The alley is empty, save for the tavern's dumpsters, a lone light bulb, and a wisp of steam emanating from a sewer grate. "Dramatic are we, Rick?" The trail is cold. Rick is serious about keeping his secret safe and has demonstrated unusual resolve in order to protect it. Sam is faced with a choice: is it worth it?

Rick watches Sam contemplate her next move from his perch on the tavern's rooftop. Sam turns around and walks off. Rick holds perfectly still, perfectly silent. Cloaked in the shadows, Rick waits until the band playing the Ave below launches into their next thrashing metal tribute. He knows he's won for now, but next time Sam will play harder.

Let's say that Sam decides not to raise any further because she doesn't want to risk spending any more blood – she could continue betting if she wanted to – but the meddling ends here. Sam folds, so Rick's raise goes unanswered. This means that neither Rick nor Sam spend any additional blood. As a result of Sam's fold, Rick gets his way and can visit Tara without Sam snooping around.

Rick grabs a bottle of cheap wine with a fancy foil wrapper from a stop-n-rob on the way, classy. When Tara opens the door, she's just happy to see him. Rick disappears behind the closed door, their secret safe.

IF RICK CASHES IN HIS CHIPS INSTEAD...

To cash in your chips, you must hold debt from the predator you are meddling with or who is meddling with you. Let's assume that Sam owes Rick a debt.

Sam is hot on Rick's trail. She rounds the corner and comes face to face with Rick. He's pissed, understandably. Sam frowns. The game's reached a stalemate.

Rick gives Sam a hard look. "You owe me," he says. Sam reflects on this, she does.

"You calling in a favor?" she asks. Rick nods. Sam's confronted with a choice: concede or dishonor her debt and risk becoming a pariah.

Sam plays it smart. Fishing, she says, "She must mean a lot to you." Rick answers with a cold glare. Sam bites back her frustration, and turns to walk back to the pack. "You really ought to be more careful, Rick. It wasn't hard for me to put the pieces together. Someone else is bound to figure it out." It's risky to taunt the predator you owe a debt to, but Sam puffs her chest with a smug sense of pride, knowing she got the last word in.

Hunt and Feed

Hunting and feeding are windows into a predator's soul. It may be the most intimate or the most unabashedly cruel act a predator can perform. How you treat your prey and how you feel about them is a projection of your humanity and, therefore, central to your exploration of the downward spiral.

GMs should find a balance between delving into the details and glossing over them. When the act of hunting and feeding serve to better understand a predator's humanity, shine the spotlight on it. When the outcome of hunting or feeding is uncertain or could lead to new and interesting conflicts, shine that spotlight. If the act is routine, if the outcome is obvious, or if you need to pick up the pace, just hit the highlights and move on.

Hunting starts when you want to find prey to feed on and it ends when you have the opportunity to feed on them. If you already have that opportunity or if you can arrange that opportunity without undue risk, then you can skip the hunting part and go straight to the feeding part. Feeding starts when you plunge your fangs into your prey and ends when you leave your victim to their own devices.

The following examples illustrate how predators at different stages of the downward spiral – that's the descent from humane to lost on the humanity scale – view the acts of hunting and feeding differently. Use these examples to establish a framework for your character's perspective and also to judge the actions of your fellow predators.

Example: Humane Predator Feeding

The door clicks shut behind Rick. Sliding the deadbolt home, he breathes a sigh of relief – force of habit. That meddling Sam is out of the picture, so now he can finally spend a moment with Tara.

Tara yawns and hugs Rick. A quick glance at the wall clock reveals the sad truth: it's way past midnight, and she has work in the morning. He sets the bottle of wine down on the end table. They kiss. She tastes like sleep. Rick feels a twinge of guilt for dragging her out of bed.

Tara leads Rick back to her bedroom. She's wearing the old, baggy men's T-shirt that

she intercepted midflight from Rick, its intended target, on free T-shirt night at the Ave Tav. That was the night that Taint Train played their landmark set, catapulting them to near-fame in the underground metal scene. That's when she first noticed him, during Rick's still-breathing days. Though faded, "Battle of the Bands" and the date of that pivotal moment years ago are still legible. It always reminds him of what life was like before.

The shirt falls to the floor. They nestle into bed together, Rick spooning Tara. She is so warm, Rick thinks to himself. He holds her close, pretending to breathe slow and steady until she drifts to sleep. Then Rick drops the pretense of mortality. His eyes trace over her silhouette as he tries to remember how he felt about her when he was alive. It's easier while he's there with her.

Each steady beat of her pulse sharpens the hunger. Rick quietly props himself up and brushes her hair back. His lips briefly trace her neck before his fangs find their mark. Tara stirs momentarily and is then lost to the feeding.

Blood! Tara's sweet, intoxicating liquor fills him. Only a taste! With a final kiss, Rick closes the two punctures in Tara's neck, concealing the truth from her and her kind, just as he was taught. Rick watches over her to make certain she is fine. Tara sleeps fitfully.

Rick doesn't need to hunt because he's with Tara right now. It doesn't hurt that he has an intimate relationship with her. The hunt is about finding your prey, so if you've already got them, you're ready to feed. He's also free from immediate danger and concealed behind the closed doors and drawn curtains of Tara's house. Rick doesn't have to play it that safe, but he knows what the pack will do if they catch him with his ex.

Rick is humane and he wants to keep his humanity that way. When Rick feeds, he can choose all four options (humanity 3 + 1), so he does. She'll wake up tomorrow feeling fine and none the wiser.

Example: Callous Predator Hunting and Feeding

Sam's blood is up. Rick eluded her. She's hungry from the chase and also looking for a win. The distant sound of thrash metal weighs heavily on the stale, steel breeze emanating from the Ave Tav, Rick's favorite place. "Well Rick, if you're busy shacking up, then you aren't minding the candy store, are you?"

From the opposite corner, Sam watches the spiked hair, metal studs, and chains come and go. A fine specimen lights a smoke, then brushes back her black, shoulder-length hair. Is she only pretending to care what the blue Mohawk says? He's so damn skinny.

Darling, on the other hand, well she's just right. Plaid skirt that sits just so, black stockings, nose and lip piercings, red beret, slinky top, and a perky push up that warms Sam's cold heart. Sam's mind wanders.

There it is, Romeo makes a pass and she blows him off. The look on her face says it all. Darling heads back inside. Romeo broodingly contemplates his cancer stick. Sam crosses the street toward the bar with a confident gait. The hunt is on.

Sam's wearing a leather jacket and boots. Her hair's good and messy from chasing Rick. Not a perfect fit, but it'll do. The bouncer's eyes linger as she walks in. Romeo's too cool for school.

Inside is packed. Three band members flagellate their instruments while a fourth spews pure, inhuman suffering into the mic. The volume is a notch past excruciating. Darling is front and center, grinding with a cute, blonde thing. Dessert, perhaps?

Sam parts the throng with poise. When a predator is on the hunt, the timid prey instinctively

separate themselves from the huntress and her quarry. They don't make eye contact as she passes. Sam's entrance is just for Darling. Even Goldilocks gets the memo, bouncing off to the bar for a refill.

Sam catches Darling's eye. Darling's lips purse and her eyes show hunger. Works every time.

Darling's movement is fluid as they dance. The prey are born to be hunted, they crave it. That's when they are at their best. The band plays as the night wears on. Last call. Sam lures Darling out into the back alley with the promise of a smoke. Inside, the band rocks an encore.

The tension building finds its outlet. Darling pounces. They kiss and caress. Sam pins her squarely to the rough, red brick wall and Darling wraps her legs around Sam. Darling's beret falls to the ground among the alley's detritus. Her eyes close and her lips part. Sam's left hand clenches a fistful of Darling's ebon hair, pulling it back to expose her neck. Sam's right hand sneaks up Darling's skirt.

Sam sinks her fangs in. Darling bucks against the pain, then against the pleasure, and then against the life-theft, all in vain. Sam takes Darling's breath away. The hungered beast rakes its claws and Sam loves it. Darling's strength fails her and she falls limp in Sam's arms. When Sam drinks her fill, she licks the pin pricks closed with a sloppy stroke. The glaze of blood, sweat, and fear is the icing on the cake.

Sam releases her grip and Darling's unconscious form slumps to the ground. She's a wreck. Her skirt is pulled a bit too high and her top is pulled a bit too low. Scrapes and bruises show along her back. Sam turns and walks away. Darling, just another indulgent wastrel passed out in an alley, completes the bucolic scene of this industrial hellscape.

Sam goes hunting. She knows what she's looking for but doesn't know what she'll

find. Sam establishes that she's hunting on Rick's turf, so she doesn't get to make any additional choices for hunting on her own hunting grounds.

Sam points out that, since Rick is out of the picture, he can't catch her in the act. Sure, Rick might find out about this later, but that's later and this is now. The GM agrees, but takes note of which other predators might have taken interest in Sam's foray onto Rick's turf as future leverage. The bar scene plays out.

Sam is a plebeian (status 1) and she is not hunting on her own hunting grounds, so she only gets to choose one option. She chooses to stifle their screams. It's now established that she doesn't draw any unwanted attention from the prey but also that she doesn't stalk them quickly, subdue them gently, or evade the prying eyes of other predators.

When Sam gets Darling alone in the alley, she feeds on her. Sam is callous, so she gets to choose three options (humanity 2 + 1): she stops feeding when she wants to, taking 3 blood from Darling (leaving her passed out), but she doesn't hurt Darling for sport and she closes Darling's wounds afterwards. When Darling comes to later, she'll remember a nightmarish scene of lust and predation. Sam will haunt Darling's memories.

Example: Monstrous Predator Feeding

“My dear Princes, welcome! So good to see you again. How are you this evening? You are looking well, sir. Can I offer you an aperitif? I have an eighteen-year-old soldier, 1917. Shall I send for the bottle? Yes?”

The maître d’ enters with the bottle. “May I offer you a glass, monsieur? Mademoiselle, please do let me know if you require anything else.”

“Are you interested in making a purchase? Excellent, I’ll arrange a showing immediately.

Young men, of course my lord!”

When the prey are ushered in, there are five of them. But truly, there is only one choice. The mademoiselle knows. The clients, however, must convince themselves that they arrived at the correct answer all on their own. So mademoiselle makes a proper show of it.

He steps forward when his name is called, Alexander. Alexander is a god: 6’4”, rippling muscles, blond hair, blue eyes, and a coy smile. The spitting image of Michelangelo’s David. “An excellent choice, sire.”

Later, in the boardroom, the Princes and the patricians gather to discuss the community’s business. Alexander is suspended upside down by the ankles above the table, in the nude. They nip at him, slowly at first. Alexander is well trained. He keeps his composure as the fiends lick their fangs.

The Princes chose well. His rival gazes longingly at Alexander. The distraction gives the

Princes an edge and the negotiations tip in his favor.

The fiends take longer draughts. Alexander is pale. A sheen of sweat glistens all over his body. He shudders. His condition worsens. The fiends continue to drain his life away as they debate minutia.

The orderly – a thin, severe-looking woman dressed in white – enters the room to check Alexander’s vitals. Standing behind him, she procures a bottle and white rag from her kit – chloroform. The Princeps catches her eye briefly and nods. The orderly applies the chloroform to her patient and renders him unconscious. She then preps an IV for each wrist, held closed by clamps. The meeting continues apace.

The orderly leaves the room and is replaced by the butler, dressed in black. He wheels in a cart with an empty crystal decanter and chalice set for the table. The butler places the decanter under Alexander and places the IV ends inside, then takes his leave.

On cue, the Princeps calls for a toast to the meetings’ success. Graciously, he gives the honor of bleeding out Alexander to the rival patrician who has been eyeing Alexander greedily all night. The patrician opens the clamps, admiring his handiwork as the red fluid traces through the clear plastic tubes, filling the decanter. The blood shines like rubies through the decanter’s many facets. Alexander’s life drains from him peacefully as the assembled predators make small talk.

Glasses are raised, the elder predators shake hands, and the deal is struck. Alexander’s lifeless husk sways gently above the meeting table. His purpose served.

The princeps acquires his prey through purchase from another predator. This establishes his possession and obviates the need to hunt. As for feeding, even though there are multiple predators feeding from Alexander, they follow the princeps’ lead, so we look

to the princeps to make the move.

The princeps is monstrous, so he gets to choose two options (humanity 1 + 1): stop feeding when they want to and resist the temptation to terrorize their prey. Though the princeps caused Alexander's death, he did so quickly and painlessly, without needlessly tormenting him.

Example: Lost Predator Hunting and Feeding

The subway car rocks, jolting Brianna back to her senses. So much time goes missing. Predators always avoid the subway, bound to step on someone's toes. Not Brianna. Not that she doesn't know better, but what choice does she have? She has nowhere else to go.

There's other reasons. Reasons she tries hard not to think about.

For starters, there's the pheromones or whatever. Those olfactory cues that so many other animals have but humans seem to lack, at least in a conscious sense. As a predator, those senses come alive. It's like the prey want their predators to know them, in ways they can't know themselves, and to be drawn to them. Drawn to their blood.

This is the sort of hocus shit Brianna used to laugh at. She used to laugh at a lot of things. She used to be respected. She was beautiful – she knew it, and she made damn sure everyone else did too. She had money, drugs, sex. Wild sex. Parties. Fame? Maybe that's the pride talking. It was all about pride then. Then things changed.

Being turned into a predator didn't teach her how to be a predator. That's problem number one. Problem two is the voices. That's how she became a pariah. Problem number three...

The hairs on the back of Brianna's tingle, as if set aflame by the icy breath of death. That's a warning from the depths of her own blackened soul. The beast asserts its dominance.

Brianna is just the caretaker of her own body: left to perform the menial tasks, like a housemaid, but in her own house. The help shouldn't think for themselves, so Brianna tries hard not to. A mantra – children's rhymes and the like – focuses her mind. She mutters to herself, not caring that the passengers on the train glance at her suspiciously and then inch further away.

Time is precious. Time that Brianna is in control is precious.

Brianna surveys the subway car. It's the middle of the night, so only the drunks, junkies, and crazies are on the train. People who were beneath her, people whose existence the old Brianna wouldn't have acknowledged, even they won't look at her now. When you are surrounded by people and none of them see you, that's how you know you're invisible.

The train slows for the station. "Is this the one?" she wonders.

She always smells them long before she sees them. Their scent is the gossamer thread that stitches her to the victims she preys on. It's a compulsion. It's act one in a three act play set in motion by a force that's beyond her control. She's merely an actor on stage for an audience of one, herself. Somewhere in this sea of vacant faces boarding the train, a bovine expression of human waste in the bowels of the city, is tonight's victim.

She'll stalk him – it's always a him. He gets off the train. She gets off the train. She follows him. She drags him into an alley, and there she brutally murders her prey. That's what the media says. They cleverly call her the "Subway Killer." But it's not her. Well, not Brianna anyway.

Brianna exists on the subway. Only on the subway. Brianna never sees the light of day nor the dark of night, only the mercurial glow of fluorescent lighting. Somewhere between the train and the street, the beast awakens, sensing the hunt. Only the caked blood under

her fingernails and the gristle of human cartilage between her teeth betray the truth of her surface sojourns.

Then there's the pictures. The badly-shot footage. The talking heads on every channel.

Mangled, torn-open bodies slumped against lamp posts or dumpsters or heaped under refuse – the beast leaves these fetishes on humanity's doorstep, just like a cat. Witnesses never see anything. Sometimes they say they heard the victim's blood-curdling screams.

Truth or fantasy. The police are chasing every lead. You can see them on the trains. But they never see Brianna. No one ever sees Brianna.

Brianna is a pariah (status 0), so she doesn't have her own hunting grounds and she doesn't get to choose any options by default when she hunts. She does, however, spend 1 blood to evade the prying eyes of other predators. If she didn't, she'd never survive this long, not after the messes she's made.

Brianna is lost, so she gets to choose one option (humanity 0 + 1) when she feeds, but she doesn't. Like the beast fucking cares what happens to its prey.

Fighting

The community, the hierarchical construct for predator society, with its alpha predator on top, arcane customs, and Byzantine intrigue, exists to provide a reasonably peaceful (if totalitarian and juvenily vindictive) existence for predators. From a certain, detached perspective, you might even say it's essential: predators have the gift of eternal unlife, but only if their enemies don't tear them asunder. Faced with the prospect that immortality could be tragically reduced to a final few seconds, rational predators avoid direct conflict at all costs.

Sometimes violence is unavoidable. When it happens, it happens quickly and it is decisive.

One predator gains the upper hand, the other is at their mercy. The outcome is almost always the destruction of the vanquished.

Downtime Moves

Downtime play begins when the upheaval of predator society – explored in nightly play – resolves or becomes the new status quo. downtime moves provide a structure to advance to the next conflict deserving of nightly play. time passes is used by the GM. plot and scheme is used by PC and NPC predators.

The GM starts with time passes, describing what happens during the expanse of time covered during downtime play and how that sparks the next conflict. Then, the GM and the players plot and scheme to advance their characters' aims and posture themselves in preparation for the rough seas ahead. When these moves conclude, the stage is set and the curtain rises on the next act of nightly play.

Time Passes

When the crucible of conflict cools and a new status quo is cast, predators slink back to their haunts to devise cunning stratagems to further their foul agendas. The nights pass quickly: years, decades, or even centuries fly by before the community is once again embroiled in turmoil. When making this move, you stop scheming night to night, taking a step back to look at the bigger picture. The GM describes events that transpire during the intervening years and sets the stage for the coming storm by choosing one of the following calamities.

Conquest – And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:2)

- A new claim is made on the title of patrician or princeps, or
- Rival predators squabble over hunting grounds.

War – And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given

unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:4)

- The prey destroy themselves and all in their path through a contest of arms, or
- Powerful predators seek to annihilate each other, having their revenge.

Judgment – And lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. (Revelation 6:5-6)

- Predators are decimated by a malady, mundane or divine, or
- Blood is scarce and the prey are sickly, cagey, or few.

Death – And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:8)

- Predators slay predators over crimson droplets, or
- The prey rise up to destroy their undead masters.

The GM reassigns hunting grounds to each predator, adapting them to the current landscape. A predator's new hunting grounds have the same total tag points as their old hunting grounds. Once their new hunting grounds are established, then the backstabbing begins.

The GM and players make the plot and scheme move. When the plot and scheme move is resolved, the GM describes how the status quo is once again upset and then nightly play begins anew.

Each PC starts nightly play with blood equal to their humanity + 7, and then spends 1 blood to wake for the evening.

Plot and Scheme

When survival is not your chief concern, you devote your attention to the high art of plotting and scheming. Each predator on the r-map makes this move. Start with the predator who is highest in the pecking order and then work your way down. The GM decides the turn order for predators whose place in the pecking order is equivalent or indeterminate.

Predators who have not yet taken their turn have the ability to thwart, reverse, or supersede the plots of predators who have already taken their turn.

Your machinations may change the pecking order. Complete your turn then, for predators who haven't taken their turn yet, revise their subsequent turn order to reflect their changed position in the pecking order.

On your turn, choose a number of plots to accomplish, up to double your status (or 1 if your status is 0). You may choose the same plot more than once, if it makes sense. As you choose each plot, describe your shrewd manipulations.

- Atone: Make peace with a rival or placate an enemy (reducing them to a rival).
- Interfere: Decrease the means of another predator by 1. They become your rival.
- Bolster: Increase the means of another predator by 1. Gain a minor debt from them.
- Bankroll: Gain a number of minor debts equal to your status from your choice of predators. Say who owes you each of these debts and briefly discuss what you did to earn them.
- Gentrify: Improve either the abundance or awareness of your hunting grounds by one.
- Conquer: You claim new hunting grounds for yourself through clever dealings or

brute force. Your new hunting grounds has a total number of tag points typical for a predator of your status. You make rivals out of the predators you displaced from these hunting grounds.

- **Murder (Devil only):** Slay a NPC predator whose status is less than or equal to yours. Any predators they owed minor debts to become your rivals and any predators they owed major debts to become your enemies.
 - **Strong-Arm (Devil only):** Take hunting grounds from a predator whose status is lower than or equal to yours. Increase the abundance of your hunting grounds by one, and you may swap your hunting grounds' proximity tag with theirs. The abundance of their hunting grounds reduces by one, and they become your rival.
 - **Renegotiate (Puppet Master only):** Upcharge a minor debt you hold from another predator to a major debt. They become your rival.
 - **Invest (Puppet Master only):** Add an asset to your enterprise or eliminate a liability.
 - **Entertain (Sensualist only):** Host a soiree on the brink of the pending crisis, earning you patrician status when nightly play resumes. You cause a patrician to lose their patrician status and they are now your enemy.
 - **Cultivate (Sensualist only):** Gain an offering from your devotees or eliminate a trouble.
 - **Muckrake (Nightmare only):** Dig up blackmail-worthy dirt on a predator of your choosing (see Devil playbook). They are now your enemy.
 - **Curse (Nightmare only):** Use fell blood magic to debase a predator of your choosing, rendering them a pariah. They become your nemesis. Any predators they owed minor debts to become your rivals and any predators they owed major debts to become your enemies.
 - **Recruit (Wolf only):** Welcome a predator to your pack. Your new packmate can be a PC, if they want to join. Say how you recruited them. They may demand a minor debt.
 - **Purge (Wolf only):** Kick a predator out of your pack in disgrace. They are now your enemy.
- After all of the characters have had their turn, compare the number of plots you've hatched to your means.

Your means = your status + bolster plots - interfere plots.

You may also cash in debts to increase your means: 1 major debt or 5 minor debts increases your means by 1. Note: debts earned while making this move cannot be used to increase your means.

Count the number of plots you've hatched from the list above and compare them to your means:

- If your means exceed your plots, then you deftly evade further repercussions.
- If your means equal your plots, then you earn the envy of a new rival.
- If your plots exceed your means, then you earn the hatred of a new enemy.
- If your plots more than double your means, you earn the vengeance of a new nemesis.
- If your means are less than 1, then choosing 0 plots earns the envy of a new rival, choosing 1 plot earns you the hatred of a new enemy, and choosing more than 1 plot earns you the vengeance of a new nemesis.

A PC may volunteer to be your rival, enemy, or nemesis if they've suffered by your hand; otherwise, the GM will name a NPC for this role. See the gm moves for introducing a rival, enemy, or nemesis.

Lore Moves

Every account of a predator's strength is accompanied by their inescapable weaknesses.

But every account is different. predator lore is the mythology you create for your story. predator lore gives predators and predator society depth. You start with the basic truths about predators given to you in this text and you fill in the rest.

Lore moves are truths about the predator condition. They state what a predator can't do; what a predator can do, but with strings attached; what a predator must do; or what is beyond a predator's control. lore moves are also special in that you decide what they are and create new ones as you play. It is through lore moves that you set the tone for your story.

Lore moves may be used by predators or prey, unless the move's description states that it applies exclusively to predators or prey or is otherwise clear in context.

There are two categories of lore moves: common and custom. common lore moves get you started and get you engaged in the process of creating predator lore. When you create your own predator lore moves, refer to the Custom Lore Moves section for guidance.

To create a common understanding with your group, start with a common cultural reference as the rule and customize by exception. Draw from your imagination and from books, TV shows, and films. Then, review the Common Lore Moves section with your players and answer the questions. If you're just getting your story started, this is enough for now. As you tell your story, refer to the Custom Lore Moves section for guidance on how to create your own lore.

Common Lore Moves

The common lore moves cover the basic questions about the true nature of predators that are likely to come up early and often in just about any game of Undying. This is not an exhaustive list and nothing here is set in stone either, you can keep, change, or trash any of these moves.

Review the lore moves below as a group before you start your first session and answer them together at the table. Each move asks you to choose one or more facts that are true about predator nature. Add your own answers to these questions, as you wish.

Create

When a human dies with blood in their veins, they become a new predator. They (choose all that apply)...

- Are bound to your will by the blood.
- Awaken a starving, bloodthirsty fiend.
- Are angry, confused, and emotionally frail. They need your guiding hand.

When you create a predator, you are their maker and they are your chosen. The chosen is expected to show respect for their maker. Between maker and chosen, the maker is typically higher in the pecking order.

Destroy

When you obliterate a predator's body or when you... (choose at least one), you destroy that predator.

- Sever their head and stuff the mouth full of garlic.
- Put torch to their body, consuming it with purifying fire.
- Bathe their body in the Sun's holy rays.
- Drive a wooden stake through their undead heart.

Decay

When a predator is destroyed, its body... (choose one)

- Disintegrates, leaving only a chalky film of ash.
- Congeals into a pool of blood and viscera.
- Desiccates into a mummified corpse.

Hinder

When a predator is confronted with... (choose at least one), the GM says what they must do and how much blood they must spend to overcome the hindrance.

- Garlic, strong enough to smell or taste.
- A holy symbol brandished by one of the faithful.
- Consecrated ground, untarnished by evil.
- Entrance to a home, owned by its occupants, without their permission to enter.
- Running water, such as a stream or river.

Slumber

When the sun's rays grace the earth, the weight of the predator's curse is heaviest.

Predators... (choose one)

- Inevitably succumb to a dreamless, sleep-like state.
- Are awake during the day, though lethargic, weak, and easily overwhelmed by prey.
- May will themselves ambulatory during the day by spending 1 blood per waking hour.

Drink

When a predator drinks blood from their prey, the sensation is pure ecstasy and the predator gains sustenance. Drinking... (choose all that apply)

- Preserved blood tastes like cellophane decay, but will do.
- Synthetic blood tastes like candy, but barely curbs your hunger.
- Animal blood tastes like cat piss, and you must drink it by the gallon to have any relief from your hunger.

Eat

When you mimic your prey by eating their food and drink, you gain no sustenance at all and it tastes like... (choose one)

- Bitter ashes of wormwood and lye.
- Styrofoam packing peanuts, and rots in your gut.

Custom Lore Moves

Custom predator lore manifests formally as custom lore moves or informally as conversations you have at the table about what it means to be a predator. Custom lore moves impose restrictions, conditions, and other truths about the predator condition. A nucleus of predator lore is already established in the Basic Moves and Lore Moves sections. The basic moves cover what it means to be a predator. The common lore moves cover aspects of predator lore that frequently occur.

Creating Custom Lore

While a basic framework for lore is provided in the common lore moves, it's up to you, and much to your benefit, to craft custom lore moves. Customizing predator lore is how you tailor your story to suit your specific take on the predator condition.

Creating custom predator lore isn't just available when starting a game of Undying. Expand the predator lore as you play, as situations and questions present themselves. Take notes each time you do, or whenever you refine lore already established. If there's a strong, common understanding at the table, you don't have to write a formal move for it, but write down enough to remind yourselves of this fact in your game from session to session.

What is a Lore Move?

A lore move is a fact about the predator condition that is written as a move. Lore can be expressed as a move when the following are true:

1. There is a definite and repeatable trigger (cause).
2. There is a tangible and repeatable consequence (effect) that may or may not be variable.

For example, say a predator casts no reflection. Writing this in move format, you could restate this lore as, “When you look at a predator through a mirror, they cast no reflection.” There is a definite and repeatable trigger and a tangible and repeatable consequence. But, do you actually need to write this as a move? You could, but you probably don’t need to.

When You Should Write a Custom Lore Move

Write a lore move when blood, debt, humanity or status are changed in some way as a result of making the move (e.g. “when you do X, spend Y blood”).

You also write a lore move when the trigger is likely to be encountered repeatedly in the fiction and any of the following are true:

1. The consequence is detailed, not intuitive, or hard to remember
2. The consequence is determined through choices made by the player or GM
3. The consequence is determined by the predator’s blood, debt, humanity, or status
4. The lore is central to your story’s theme or mythology

If the lore doesn’t fit with the guidelines for writing a move above, simply make a note of it to remind yourself later. You could easily write a book of lore moves, but there’s really no need.

Writing Strong Lore Moves

lore moves may be used by predators or prey, unless the move’s description states that it applies exclusively to predators or prey or is otherwise clear in context.

First, focus on the move’s trigger. Start with a clear and concise statement specific to when the move applies. Think about who triggers the move, and be only as specific as necessary. It’s customary to write moves in the second person (“When you...”); but when you need to specify who can use this move, write it in the third person (“When a predator...”). After describing the trigger crisply and accurately, polish the wording. Catchy language evokes powerful imagery and makes your moves less repetitive.

Next, consider whether blood, debt, humanity, or status factor into the move. Be judicious; not every move needs one of those to tie into it. Blood and debt usually factor in as a cost. If the consequence is harmful, draining, or a manifestation of supernatural prowess, apply a blood cost. Debt doesn't often factor into lore moves, but apply a debt cost (or reward, in some cases) for moves relating to predator customs – particularly those pertaining to the service of one predator on behalf of another.

Humanity and status usually factor into the consequence as a proportional effect, where higher humanity or status affords more beneficial choices or a greater positive effect. If the consequence is proportional to how human or beast-like the predator is, then apply a sliding scale to the move's consequence based on the predator's humanity. If the consequence is proportional to the predator's standing in the predator community, apply a sliding scale to the move's consequence based on the predator's status. A lore move's consequence could be a change to a predator's humanity or status, but be wary of how these moves impact game play.

Finally, decide what the consequences of the move are and how to express them. The consequences always advance the story in some way and should be written with inspiring, evocative language. When deciding how to express the move, take a move that works similarly to the one you have in mind and modify it to achieve the desired effect. The simplest approach is: when X, then Y – which should work fine for most lore moves. If the consequence is variable or driven by character choice, the approach is: when X, then you choose/may choose up to Y (based on blood, debt, humanity, status, or fictional circumstance) – choice A, choice B... choice N. That said, avoid the temptation to create overly elaborate moves where a simple move would do, as the simpler moves are the easier to use in play.

Do Other Supernaturals Exist in Your Game?

Are predators alone or are they among a family of monsters? Undying's default assumption is that predators are alone. If you introduce other supernaturals into the story, those beings should not be protagonists or even familiar to predators. They should be antagonists – threats, moments of upheaval, or dark omens. Create custom lore moves for them just as you would for predators and use those moves to fulfill their fell purpose.

Handling PC Death

Sometimes immortality is dangerously short. A fight can result in the instant and unexpected death of a player character. Losing a PC can be difficult, so show the player sympathy. Afterwards, it's time to pick up the pieces and move on.

If a PC is destroyed, the player may introduce a new character or, with the GM's permission, take control of a NPC. To introduce a new character, follow the same steps used to create your previous character. If you take charge of a NPC, you retain their established debts, status, and grudges, but otherwise create the character as normal.

Creating Your Predator

To start the process of character creation, the GM covers the safe play guidelines, explains the setting, outlines expectations for tone and theme, and briefly introduces the NPCs. With those covered, you are ready to create your predator.

Predator Creation

To create your predator, follow this procedure.

Pick a Playbook

Each player picks a playbook. With the playbook chosen, set the character's starting status to plebeian or pariah. Then, set their starting humanity to humane, callous, or monstrous.

Introduce Your Predator into the Community

Each player introduces their character by name and playbook. Share any details about your look and heritage that are commonly known.

Then, each player exchanges debt. Each debt owed should be described in a few words – enough to get the gist. These entanglements are also recorded on the relationship map.

- Declare which predator you owe a major debt to.
- Declare which predator owes you a minor debt.

Identify which of the predators on the r-map is your character's maker; you are their chosen. Next to your maker's name, write "maker of..." your character's name. A PC may be your chosen or maker, if you both agree to it. If none of the characters on the r-map appeal to you, talk to the GM about it.

After that, decide if you are rebellious or docile.

- If you are rebellious, the GM creates a grudge for your maker that's aimed at you.

You are now their rival.

- If you are docile, add a new minor debt to the r-map that you owe your maker in return for their tutelage. Say how they've helped you.

Describe Your Hunting Grounds

The GM describes your hunting grounds and assigns the abundance, awareness, and proximity tags. The GM tells you where your hunting grounds are and what they are like.

With the GM's permission, you may choose one of your hunting ground's tags. The GM will tell you how many tag points your hunting grounds has in total and will assign the remainder.

Create your Rival

The GM establishes a rival for you (see “Establish a Rival”).

Drink Your Fill

You start play with blood equal to your humanity + 7. You will spend 1 blood to wake for the evening.

Playbooks

A playbook is a character archetype, the foundation of each PC. Each playbook paints a character in broad strokes, differentiating one another through playbook-specific moves. Each playbook pushes a theme that you build upon and explore in play.

The playbooks in Undying are:

- The Devil, who uses sin and violence to dominate predators and prey alike.
- The Nightmare, who performs crimson rituals and whose ichor enslaves prey.
- The Puppet Master, who pulls the strings and watches their minions dance.
- The Sensualist, who tempts prey and feeds from their dark desires.
- The Wolf, who leads a pack of other predators, using them to intimidate rivals.

Changing Playbooks

Your playbook should fit your character concept. If it doesn't, or if your concept changes over time, it's okay to change your playbook. When you change your playbook, transfer your blood, debt, humanity, and status to a new character sheet. Any special playbook moves or features you have from your old playbook are gone. So if you were a Wolf, your pack dissolves or they desert you. If you choose a new playbook that has special features – the Puppet Master's enterprise, the Sensualist's devotees, and the Wolf's pack – establish your possession of these special features when changing playbooks. In

effect, you don't get a pack because you changed playbook to be a Wolf, but you become a Wolf because you gained a pack.

If the transition is natural within the fiction, with the GM's permission you may change your playbook during nightly play. Otherwise, do it during downtime play.

The Devil

The Devil wears sin as a badge of honor. They are strong, resolute, and deadly – and the Devil makes a point of making sure everyone knows it. With that power comes darkness.

Status Move

You become a patrician when established in the fiction or when you trigger the regicide move.

Regicide

When you destroy a patrician, you take their place as patrician. Your new peers become your rivals, and you make enemies of predators your victim owed major debts to. What goes around comes around: other predators start openly plotting your destruction to gain your title as you have done.

You lose patrician status when another predator challenges your dominance and you yield.

Playbook Moves

Cold-Blooded

When you fight another predator and spend at least 5 blood, add 1 to the result.

When you tie for most blood spent, you win instead.

Bad Company

When you exploit your prey's want or vice, spend 1 blood to sink your hooks into them. They need you for fulfillment and they come to you with a junkie's zeal. When they do, you may give them satisfaction: make any demand within their power to fulfill and they will gladly do it. Then you spend 1 blood to feed their need... for now.

The Nightmare

The darkness is comforting, like a cloak of shadow. The Nightmare wears darkness as armor and wields it as sword. In bloody ritual, the Nightmare extinguishes life and hope, friends and rivals, with perverse joy.

Status Move

You become a patrician when established in the fiction or when you trigger the blackmail move.

Blackmail

When you blackmail a predator, threatening to expose a dirty little secret that could cause them to lose status, until that secret is exposed, you are higher in the pecking order than them. Use this leverage to bargain with them. When you expose their dirty little secret, you ruin them: they become a pariah and are forever your nemesis. When you ruin a patrician this way, you gain patrician status.

You lose patrician status when they recover from their shame and are no longer a pariah.

Playbook Moves

Dark Power

When you perform a black sacrament to invoke the powers of Hell, say what you pray for in reward, then perform a blood-soaked ritual. 5 blood is a pathetic offering, 10 blood is a modest offering, 20 blood is a respectable offering, and 50 blood is a worthy offering. The darkness rewards you in proportion to your offering. The GM describes

Hell's gift to you and any complications due to your offering's unworthiness or the Pit's newfound interest in you.

Blood Slave

When you feed blood to your prey, you own them – mind, body, and soul. The blood you feed them is now theirs. They are still mortal, and the living blood that flows through their veins is still warm and bright. A blood slave can also keep up to 5 blood, but when they have 0 blood, they crave more with mad fury.

When you impose your will on your blood slave, the GM spends 1 of their blood as follows:

- Once per week, to keep your blood slave in thrall.
- Once per night, when you compel your blood slave to perpetrate vile deeds.
- Once per hour, when you take possession of your blood slave's mind and body.

When a blood slave has 0 blood, they are no longer loyal. They remember all the terrible things you've done to them, and they remember where you sleep. A blood slave that dies with blood in their veins is reborn a predator.

You may begin play with one or more blood slaves. They come and go as established in the fiction. At the start of each nightly play, distribute a number of blood equal to your humanity + 2 among your blood slaves. This is separate from and in addition to the blood you start nightly play with.

The Puppet Master

The Puppet Master controls not with corruption, nor with vice. No, the Puppet Master pulls the strings through their force of will, making the puppets dance to their tune.

Status Move

You become a patrician when established in the fiction or when you trigger the mogul move.

Mogul

When you hold at least one major debt from the princeps or at least one major debt from two or more patricians, then the community recognizes you as a major player. You become a patrician and the other patricians become your rivals. The current patrician who holds the fewest major debts in total from the princeps and other patricians loses their patrician status and becomes your enemy.

You lose patrician status when you no longer meet the minimum debt requirements above.

Playbook Moves

Business as Usual

You have built a profitable enterprise of the prey's institutions and use them to your advantage. Managing your affairs is a job, as none of your proxies will ever be good enough to do it all for you. But, the reward is ever so sweet. When you create your character, detail your enterprise, and then choose 2 assets and 2 liabilities.

- Assets: Affluent, influential, skilled, loyal, responsive, efficient, secretive
- Liabilities: Competition, moles, litigation, strife, overextended

The GM adds and removes assets and liabilities as established in the fiction. When you invest in your enterprise, the GM may add assets or remove liabilities to reflect this. When you overcommit your enterprise, the opposite.

Pull Strings

When you meddle in the affairs other predators, you still spend blood, but you may use the enterprise you control to meddle by proxy instead of dirtying your own hands. When your minions make the move, they take the brunt of the fallout for you, putting your enterprise at risk. If the GM decides your enterprise is overburdened or harmed by your meddling, the GM may add new liabilities or eliminate assets.

The Sensualist

The Sensualist feeds as much from the pleasures of the flesh as from the blood of their hapless prey. The Sensualist is intimate, deadly, and above all jaded. This vicious cycle pushes them ever toward depravity.

Status Move

You become a patrician when established in the fiction or when you trigger the bacchanal move.

Bacchanal

When you host a social event for predators that makes a spectacle of prey: blood, sex, revelry – the more debauched, the better – you gain patrician status and the other patricians become your rivals. The current patrician who, in the GMs estimation, is the least popular or most reclusive loses their patrician status and becomes your enemy.

You lose your patrician status when your popularity fades or when another predator upstages you. Fame is fleeting.

Playbook Moves

Idol

Wherever you go, prey flock to you. You have devotees: a clique, groupies, cultists, etc. They love you, and they will do whatever they can to please you. Need blood, no problem, but there's a catch. They gather around you because they need something from you that they can't get anywhere else. When you create your character, say what you offer them, then choose 2 offerings they give you in addition to blood and 2 troubles.

- Offerings: sex, drugs, secrets, worship, protection.
- Troubles: few in number, rivalries, distractions, commitments, newcomers.

The GM adds and removes offerings and troubles as established in the fiction. When your devotees worship your magnificence, the GM may add assets or remove liabilities to

reflect this. When you abuse your devotees or fail to keep them captivated, the opposite.

Wrapped Around your Finger

When you meddle with or are meddled with by a predator who owes you debt, you may cash in your chips without spending debt. They're wrapped around your finger.

The Wolf

The Wolf lets loose a feral howl. It's a cry of freedom and independence and it's a warning to others that they not to be fucked with. But the wolf isn't alone, a chorus of howls echoes their call.

Status Move

You become a patrician when established in the fiction or when you trigger the alpha move.

Alpha

When you and your pack challenge the authority of a patrician and they fail to prove their dominance over you, you gain patrician status and they lose patrician status. They are now your nemesis. You make enemies of the remaining patricians.

You lose patrician status when your pack dissolves or when a predator proves their dominance over you.

Playbook Moves

Pack

You run with a pack of predators – 1 or 2 to start with, gaining more later if you're good at rousing rabble. PCs can choose to be your packmates. Your pack shares a tight bond over a common ambition or grievance, you detail.

Add your pack to the relationship map. The pack owes you a minor debt: this is

their starting bond with you. The more debt the pack owes you, the more loyal they are. If you don't forge strong bonds with major debts, the pack is restless, mischief-prone, and rife with petty rivalries. Pack debts work like any debt: you bargain with your pack to get what you want from them.

While you're alpha, you are higher in the pecking order than your packmates. Should you owe the pack a larger debt than they owe you, the pack will resent your leadership and someone's bound to challenge you. A proper challenge is a fight to the death. If you yield or if they best you and let you live with your shame, then you are no longer alpha. If your pack then kicks you out (which they are likely to do), you become a pariah.

Shapeshifter

When you transform into a wolf or a bat, you wear that skin as though it were your own. You transform at will with no blood cost.

The GM

You are responsible for creating and describing a rich, detailed world, filling it with all manner of characters. These serve to inspire the players to tell their characters' stories. The GM follows the PCs wherever they go, offering them opportunity and adversity in equal measure.

Your job in play involves three things: the GM's principles, the GM's agenda, and the gm moves. These are discussed in the following pages. Preparation in advance is also important, and discussed in detail later on.

The GM's Principles

The principles detailed are the motives and guidelines behind the decisions you make and the description you spout.

- Follow the PCs' lead
- Provide external pressures
- Provide continuity
- Ask insightful questions
- Provide colorful description

Follow the PCs' Lead

Creating the setting and introducing the players to it is your starting point. After that, you follow where the story goes, wherever the PCs take it.

Following the PCs is about playing to find out. "Playing to find out" is an approach to roleplaying where you show up to the table with goals and schemes, but you don't set concrete plans. It's about sharing narrative control with the players to collaboratively tell a story. Your goals and schemes provide some direction for each session, but they don't set firm expectations that you must attempt to fulfill.

Provide External Pressures

You fill the world with antagonists that challenge the PCs at every turn. The GM creates antagonists in the form of NPCs. These NPCs have motives and passions that conflict with the PCs. The GM explores NPCs' motives and passions through their effect on the PCs. This conflict drives action and action is storytelling momentum.

External pressures are provided through compelling, fleshed out NPCs who take the initiative, and a gritty, engaging setting full of intriguing people, places, and things. Give each NPC a grudge, an ambition, and a supporting agenda. Elaborate on them as play progresses. These roles are described in the Predator NPCs section.

Provide Continuity

Continuity ties the stories of all the characters together. The GM assesses the PC's effect on the world and then makes the effects of those actions felt by the PCs.

Continuity is accomplished through consequence. Give each action a reaction and weave each reaction into a complex web that ties past, present, and future actions together.

Continuity requires integrating hysteresis – a thing's dependence not only on its current environment, but its past environment – into an otherwise disparate collection of

storytelling events. For example, if a predator frequently hunts in one neighborhood, the prey living there grow increasingly wary and the police become more active, complicating future hunting and feeding.

Continuity is best expressed through poignant details, like seeing a picture of a missing person – someone known to the players as a victim of feeding – stapled to a telephone pole in a predator's hunting grounds. It ties a past action to the present and influences future actions. Tying the terrible things a predator has done in their past to present is also a powerful way to engage their humanity and to embroil them in future conflicts.

Ask Insightful Questions

These questions reveal truths about the PCs, their motives, and their intentions. The answers to these questions provokes thinking on the part of the players. This contemplation helps the players dig deeper in the exploration of their characters.

Ask questions that reveal the PC's motives, beliefs, and state of mind. For Example:

“He sighs blissfully, melting under the weight of your lips tracing kisses along his neck.

Is your tenderness genuine or a ruse? Every muscle in his body tenses when you sink

your fangs in. His eyes grow wide and he gasps for breath. When you feed from him, is it ecstasy or excruciating?”

Make the questions you ask advance the narrative or engage a PC's humanity in some way. Even if you are just trying to understand what a PC is doing, ask questions whose answers will lead to action or a deeper understanding of their character.

Remember and respect narrative control. If you get the urge to tell a player what their character is thinking, how they react, or what they might do next, stop and instead ask the player to describe that, either generally or with focused questions.

Bad: “She pulls a gun on you, and you freeze.”

Good: “She pulls a gun on you. What do you do?”

Good: “She pulls a gun on you. Does your expression betray surprise, do you play it cool, or do you take preemptive action?”

Ask leading questions to steer the conversation toward the dramatic, the horrifying, and the erotic. But don't ask leading questions all the time; use open-ended questions to invite broader player creativity and create moments where you engage the players in their own, personal horror or drama.

Provide Colorful Description

Colorful description is about creativity in the moment. Draw from previously established fiction and from other sources, like TV, movies, or books. Be imaginative. Painting a colorful description of the world exposes new and exciting avenues of play. The world you create should inspire your players to be creative with it. Nudge the PCs forward when

they are stuck, but let them roam where they will. They lead, you follow.

The GM's Agenda

Your NPCs are everything. They are the instruments you use to assert your influence over the story. NPCs have grudges, ambitions, and agendas that motivate them to do all of the evil shit that lays behind that sly little grin you're sporting. These are described in the Predator NPCs section.

When you get stuck or when looking for a new opportunity, review the relationship map and see which of your NPCs stand to gain at your PCs' expense, then introduce one or more of the story directions below.

Each of these story directions escalate: start at the top or if you've already established a level of conflict between your NPC and a PC, escalate further. If the PC doesn't assert dominance over your NPC, keep escalating. Stop escalating when your NPC fulfills their grudge, ambition, or agenda.

- Encroach on a PC's hunting grounds to test their strength.
- Call in an old debt or offer a PC a new one to further a NPC's agenda.
- Meddle in a PC's affairs to a NPC's benefit.
- Kick a PC when they're down to exploit weakness.
- Make the first move to seize the initiative.
- Bring a PC down a peg to humble them.
- Make a PC a pariah by destroying their reputation.
- fight a PC if you must, to save a NPC's skin or for vengeance.

Encroach on a PC's Hunting Grounds to Test their Strength

Assert your dominance over them and see whether they back down or rise to the occasion.

If they back down, take something from them, like blood, territory, or prestige. If they prove their mettle, back away slowly.

If your NPC has a PC rival, enemy, or nemesis, do this at every opportunity.

Call in an Old Debt or Offer a PC a New One to Further a NPC's Agenda

If a PC is a roadblock, an exchange of debt should clear the way. If another predator is the roadblock or if accomplishing a NPC's ambition might risk that NPC's hide, use a debt to coerce the PC into doing the dirty work.

Meddle in a PC's Affairs to a NPC's Benefit

If you can't buy a PC or intimidate them, then fuck with them. When a PC is about to triumph, spoil their plans. If they fuck with you, fuck them back.

Kick a PC When They're Down to Exploit Their Weakness

The best time to get what you want is when getting it comes cheaply. Bide your time. Strike when a PC least expects it or when they are not prepared to resist you.

Make the First Move to Seize the Initiative

If you act and a PC fails to react, then take what you want from then to further your agenda or to get even for a grudge. If a PC challenges you, show them that you're in control.

Bring a PC Down a Peg to Humble Them

If you have an opportunity to reduce a PC's status, take it from them. Look to the playbook status moves for inspiration and come up with your own ways too, to keep them guessing.

If a PC is your enemy, posture yourself to seize an opportunity to reduce their status.

Make a PC a Pariah by Destroying their Reputation

If a PC is your enemy or your nemesis, then turning them into a pariah may be the best form of vengeance available to you, short of killing them for good. A purely rational NPC may be concerned about the repercussions and potential for collateral damage. A NPC with an enemy or nemesis is not purely rational.

Fight a PC if you Must, to save a NPC's Skin or for Vengeance

Escalating to violence is a great risk, one few predators take lightly. That said, sometimes some fucker needs to die. If your own life is at stake, if what you're about to lose is intolerable, or if you'd rather see them dead than fuck with them for eternity, then you gotta do what you gotta do.

GM Moves

The gm moves are a toolkit that helps you manage your NPCs and helps you make good on your principles and agenda. Only you make gm moves. You also get to make basic, downtime, playbook, and lore moves for your NPC predators, just like the PCs do.

The gm moves work just like any other moves work: each gm move has a trigger and an outcome. The gm moves are more abstract than other moves, so pay special attention to the triggers.

Overwhelm a PC

When the prey outfox, overwhelm, or trap a PC predator, say how much blood it costs them to claw their way out of the snare: 1 blood for a nuisance, 3 blood for a good show, 5 blood for a close call, or 8+ blood for a deadly struggle. If they can't or won't pay, the GM decides their fate – life or death. They say how they meet their fate.

Introduce a NPC

When the GM introduces a new NPC predator, write down their name, playbook, status, and hunting grounds on the relationship map. Then decide how important you think they are to the story: extra, minor, or major. Give an extra 5 blood, a minor NPC 10 blood, or a major NPC 15 blood. This is also their max blood. Draw a minor debt owed to the NPC you're introducing and a major debt owed by them to one of the existing predators on the r-map.

Establish a Rival

When a PC predator outsmarts, outmaneuvers, or thoroughly manipulates a NPC predator, they make a new rival. Write "Rival (their name)" next to your NPC's name on the r-map. Look to The GM's Agenda for how to get even with them.

Establish an Enemy

When a PC predator injures, insults, or hamstring a NPC predator, they make a new enemy. Write "Enemy (their name)" next to the NPC's name on the r-map. Look to The GM's Agenda for how to ruin them.

Establish a Nemesis

When a PC predator utterly humiliates or outright ruins a NPC predator, they create a nemesis. Write "Nemesis (their name)" next to the NPC's name on the r-map. Look to The GM's Agenda for how to destroy them.

Brand a Heretic

When a predator exposes their true nature to the prey in a way that could threaten the community at large, and the community becomes aware of this transgression:

- If they call in a major debt the princeps owes them, the whole affair is quietly swept under the rug. Suspicions still run wild.
- If they call in a major debt owed to them by a patrician, some other scapegoat is found to publicly brand a heretic instead.
- Otherwise, they are branded a heretic and pursued with the community's full vigor.

When a predator is branded heretic, they become a pariah and every predator in the community becomes their enemy. The princeps nominates a Hunter, who is a personally responsible for bringing them due justice (which is probably summary execution). The Hunter is now their nemesis.

Use Your NPCs

When a NPC predator makes a move against a PC predator, they may make basic or playbook moves, same as the PCs. If they make a move against the PCs that requires blood or debt, spend it. If they make a move against other NPCs, it just happens – no need to spend blood or debt.

Sup your NPCs

When the session ends, all NPC predators gain 2 blood or fill back up to 5 blood, whichever is higher. NPCs don't starve at fewer than 3 blood or spend blood to wake for the evening: you only track their surplus. Do use NPC starvation and other blood-needs as storytelling fodder.

Change a Predator's Status

When a predator transcends their station, increase their status. Another predator stands to lose their position as a result and is now their rival (or enemy if they lose their status as a result). When a predator sinks to a new low, decrease their status.

Look to your r-map and choose a predator who stands ready to fill that void.

Non-Player Characters

NPCs are the flesh and blood of your game. They give substance to the world you create.

NPCs come in two forms: predators and prey – just as predators see the world around them.

Predator NPCs

The PCs each control one predator, but the rest belong to you. Your predator NPCs fill out the rest of the community with scheming, backstabbing antagonists. Each NPC predator has ambitions, agendas, and grudges. The following sections explain how to use these tools to create NPC predators of substance.

Creating NPCs

You create NPCs in prep and during the session through the gm move, introduce a npc. Start with a solid concept for how you plan to use your NPC to apply pressure to the PCs. How to do this will be discussed throughout the following sections.

When you introduce a npc, decide how important they are to the story. This is not to be confused with how powerful they are in the predator community. A very powerful predator in the predator community may have only passing relevance to the story. Important to the story means you envision that their influence over the narrative is important. So, an underdog rousing rabble to topple the old regime may be very important to the story; whereas, the calcified regent may not be.

When you introduce a NPC, you decide if they are a major character, minor character, or extra. As a NPC's importance changes through play, re-categorize them. Re-evaluate each NPC's importance to the story at the end of downtime play.

Predator Needs

For all their irrationality, for all their monstrosity, for all their impulsive, blood-lusting shit, predators have needs and they take deliberate measures to fulfil them, just like their prey.

First, a predator must survive the moment. When a predator is cornered and survival is at stake, they lash out in blind violence or flee with reckless abandon.

A close second, a predator must have shelter from the merciless sun, whose rays would burn them to ash as surely as fire.

Next, a predator must have blood. If a predator does not have any blood after dawn, they succumb to a sleepless, dreamless, and indefinite repose until, by some merciful feat, they acquire more blood. When a predator is starving (having fewer than 3 blood), they lose control to the beast and embark on a murderous rampage to glut themselves on the blood of their prey. Short of these extremes, basic subsistence is all about maintaining a predictable supply of fresh, human blood.

Having a predictable supply of fresh, human blood means having hunting grounds.

A predator's hunting grounds is a patch of turf over which that predator has exclusive hunting and feeding rights... conceptually. In truth, hunting grounds are only as secure as a predator's ability to protect them. The best hunting grounds are places that draw prey in droves into high-risk behavior, but they are also the hardest to hold onto because every predator knows about them and wants a piece of the action.

To have hunting grounds, a predator must have a place in the community. Being a part of the community means having status. That means they need to be at least a plebeian. pariahs have no place in the community and their best hope is to simply get by.

Most predators start at plebeian and stay there. Only a few slip the rails, becoming

pariahs. Similarly, only a precious few elevate themselves to patrician. A plebeian's lot, while hardly noteworthy, is usually enough to afford a predator's basic needs and a few comforts beyond that. After all, what's the point of an indefinite existence if it's intolerable?

Once a predator has enough to get by in the moment, the next step is to save for the future. Debt is long-term security. The more debt a predator is owed, the better off they are. Should trouble arise, debts put time and other targets between a predator and their threat. A smart predator always has debt in the bank and a solid Plan B.

Once a predator's basic needs are met and they have some margin, now it's about getting their way. For PCs, this autonomy manifests itself through their choices. For NPCs, this manifests through ambitions, agendas, and grudges, described below.

Ambitions and Agendas

An agenda is a scheme that a NPC predator acts on in order to fulfill their ambition. A predator may have many ambitions, but they always have at least one. A predator may have ambitions that are simple or lofty. For each ambition, a predator has an agenda, which is a set of goals that are the stepping stones to achieve their aim.

To start with, write one ambition for each NPC predator. An ambition is a simple statement that articulates what the predator wants. Once you know where they are and where they want to be, write an agenda that gets them from Point A to Point B.

As an example, let's revisit Sam's meddling with Rick earlier in the book.

Something drove Sam to chase after Rick to see if he has a girl on the side. Let's say Sam's ambition is to become pack beta, taking that role away from the current beta, Bones.

This means she needs to prove to the alpha that she is not only better than all of the other fuck-ups in the pack, but that she's clearly a stronger choice than Bones. Great! That's an ambition and she can probably make happen over the course of this session. That's

what you want, a concrete plan that can come to fruition in the span of nightly play.

Breaking it down: Sam's agenda is to become pack beta by exposing an ugly truth about her pack mate that, as far as she knows, no one else in the pack suspects. So, first, Sam needs to prove her hunch, that's why she tailed Rick. Then she needs hard evidence – unfortunately for Rick, that means Sam will likely grab Tara and present her to the pack alpha, putting Rick in a very tight spot. The pack alpha would have no problem tearing open some random prey to get the truth out of Rick. But, that's not enough, if the beta's around, they might claim that they knew all along or otherwise undermine Sam's work, so Sam needs to get the alpha alone with both Rick and Tara to avoid the beta's meddling.

Sam's ambition can be written as "become pack beta," and her agenda can be written as follows:

1. Confirm Rick is seeing a girl on the side
2. Grab the girl
3. Arrange a private meeting with the alpha
4. Present the girl to the pack alpha and force Rick to acknowledge his indiscretion

When Sam completes all of these steps, her ambition is realized. This shows how agendas and ambitions are crucial GM tool, as they help organize thoughts about the motives each predator NPC has and how they act when you tell the story. Every predator NPC needs to have an ambition; if an NPC doesn't or it isn't clear, why are they a part of the story?

Ambitions should be reasonably achievable during the current bout of nightly play. During nightly play, some NPCs will make good on their ambitions and some won't. At the end of downtime play, revisit each NPC's ambition. NPCs are dynamic, their ambitions adapt to the changing winds of the predator community.

The strongest agendas engage PCs by putting them directly or indirectly at risk, involving them as part of the NPC's schemes, or having some intersection between what the PCs want and what the agenda has in store. Though an agenda that only involves NPCs could be interesting in an academic sense, it misses the point. An agenda that doesn't engage the PCs won't draw player interest. A PC may not be the target, but the NPCs should be motivated to engage the PCs in pursuit of their ambition.

That said, it's fine if a NPC's agenda comes together off camera now and then. Just make sure that the PCs have opportunities to be involved or cross paths in some way, either through participation or consequence.

Also, be transparent about your NPCs' ambitions. Tell the players what the NPCs are after, but let their characters discover the details in play. Hold back only to promote suspense or surprise. Sharing your NPCs' ambitions with the players helps them understand who your NPCs are and gives the players a reason to engage with them.

Grudges

A grudge is a hatred that one predator has for another. A grudge is born from some insult or injury, real or imagined, that ranges from petty to deadly. When a predator holds a grudge, they are another predator's rival, enemy, or nemesis (see for descriptions of these roles). Whenever a rival, enemy, or nemesis is created, a grudge is created to describe the nature of this conflict.

Every predator holds grudges. When you create a NPC, create one grudge for them to start with and add more to the list as new grudges come up in play.

Describe a grudge tersely on the relationship map with a short phrase next to the predator who holds the grudge. The grudge identifies the grudge's target by

name, identifies the relationship to the target (rival, enemy, or nemesis), and briefly summarizes the nature of the grudge. Examples:

Rival (Sam): Payback for meddling with Tara

Enemy (Bones): Envy's pack beta title

Keep the descriptions short and sweet. They're cues for you to use in play.

Once you create a grudge, find ways to set it in motion. grudges are often the next ambition a predator hopes to realize. For a nemesis, this grudge is definitely their foremost ambition. For an enemy, their grudge is likely their foremost ambition, unless confronted with a more compelling opportunity. Making good on a rivalry is more often a target of opportunity or a means to an end, rather than an end in and of itself.

Like ambitions, re-evaluate your grudges at the end of downtime play. Like debts, cross out the grudges that have been settled, but don't erase them.

Making Ambitions from Grudges

Ambitions often follow grudges, and grudges often follow blood, debt, and status.

Since hunting grounds are both a source of blood and a conduit to status, they are often cause for grudges. If you're having trouble thinking of a reason for a grudge or a target for a NPC's ambition, envying a rival's hunting grounds is a perfectly sound choice.

debts are also a common source of friction between predators, particularly for predators who owe major debts. A major debt is an obligation that's very difficult to escape from, since the major debt's creditor has the leverage to keep the debtor under their thumb indefinitely. Since debt is the predator community's currency, the same envies and jealousies that the prey feel over those wealthier than them also apply to predators.

status envy is pervasive. The PCs are tempted to climb the social ladder through their playbooks' status moves and predator NPCs are no different. Every predator is always jostling to get to the front. None are content.

Predator NPCs and Blood

Track only the blood NPCs use when they make moves against the PCs. Don't spend NPC blood when your NPCs interact with each other. You own the NPCs, you decide what happens to them.

NPC predators can make any basic moves, playbook moves, and lore moves; however NPCs do not make the moves wake, hunt, feed, or starve. This is a simplification, so you don't need to hire a blood accountant to keep track of it all. In the fiction, though, your NPCs hunt, feed, and starve every bit the same as PCs.

At the end of each session, every NPC gains some blood back as described in the move sup your npcs.

Prey NPCs

Prey are also part of the world. They are creatures who live, breathe, love, hate, and fuck.

Generally, prey exist in the story only as a passing footnote: "Here lies so-and-so, another hapless victim of the city's violence and corruption; the body was found devoid of life, discarded in an alley." Your attention to and description of prey serves to put a face to the blood sloshing down your PCs' throats. The theme of humanity for predators is crucial and how the PCs interact with them is telling. To that end, however insignificant the prey are, as characters, they are deserving of your thought and creativity.

Sometimes the prey become characters of substance to the story because of their intimate or antagonistic connection to a PC. Prey NPCs that achieve importance to the story are

every bit as compelling as predator NPCs. However, prey NPCs are not predators – they lack the power and agency that predators have. Prey NPCs exist and cease to exist at your whim (and at the whim of the PCs).

Predator-Prey Relationships

humane predators and predators with the Puppet Master or Sensualist playbooks are closer to the prey than their other predator counterparts. The Nightmare may have blood slaves that they torment. These PCs may want engaging relationships with the prey and that's awesome. Embrace it.

Prey NPCs are just pure, narrative creativity on your part. They are whoever you want them to be. They do whatever you want them to do (in the context of what the prey are capable of). Have fun.

But always remember that prey are vulnerable, and that vulnerability is a weakness to the predators who depend on or even care for them. Bring lovers, friends, and family into play. Have your NPCs use them as leverage. See if the PCs give a shit about them. Use each of these relationships as opportunities to discover who your PCs really are and who they're becoming.

Preparing for The Game

Let's talk prep. Prep is the behind-the-scenes work you do before starting your first session. Prep allows you to visualize your world and to hit the ground running, both when the players create their characters and when you start telling the story. Since Undying is a "play to find out" kind of game, prep in this game focuses you on creating a vibrant world and describing various engaging NPCs as a foundation for telling the story.

The following sections describe prep. There is some essential setting prep that you need to do before you sit down to play, which is discussed next. The extent to which you should

prepare for the game beyond these minimums is personal – do what it takes to make yourself comfortable.

The Relationship Map

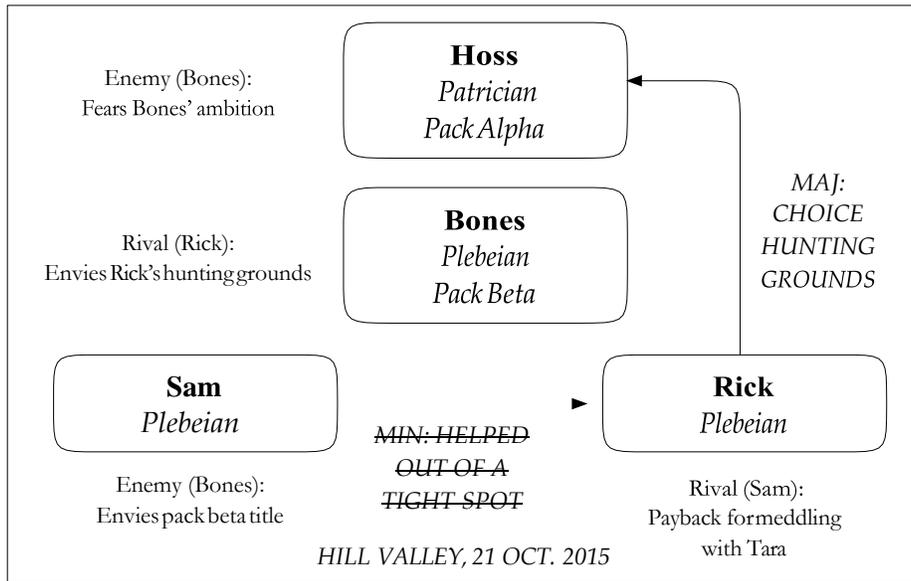
A city has geography. There are hills, valleys, rivers, and roads. Civilization fills in the gaps. Everything has its place and reason for being. Geography shapes the city. Neighborhoods form and show distinct characteristics. Through arterials, commerce flows into the beating heart at the city's center. That's where the predator community is rooted, like parasites infesting the host.

At the center of the predator community is the princeps, the nexus of power. The patricians are arrayed like spokes on a hub. Each holds sway over their niche. On the periphery are the plebeians and beyond them are the pariahs.

The relationship map is a map of the predators in the community. The r-map shows each predator of interest to the story and how they relate. The GM starts drawing the r-map in prep and the r-map is continuously updated in play throughout the game.

The r-map is essential to game play. Use the r-map to integrate the PCs, NPCs, and the community's political environment into a concise, graphical form. The GM and players alike draw from the debts, grudges, and status portrayed on the relationship map to further their characters' goals.

An example R-Map



The r-map is drawn on a piece of paper and placed front and center, for everyone to see. Each predator is represented by an oval. Inside this oval, write the predator's name and status. If you find it helpful, also write down the player's name and the character's playbook.

debts are drawn on the r-map, indicated by an arrow pointing from the predator who owes the debt to their creditor. major and minor debts are indicated by "Maj" and "min," respectively. A brief description of the debt is also provided, to remind everyone of why the debt is owed. When a debt is cashed in, the description of the debt is lined out, but never erased.

grudges, discussed in the Non-Player Characters section, are written on the r-map, indicating whether the predator is a rival, enemy, or nemesis; which predator is the target of the grudge; and a brief description of why the predator holds the grudge. When a grudge is reconciled, the description of the grudge is lined out, but never erased.

The r-map is dated to indicate when the present period of nightly play begins. Indicate the location as well.

Each time you make the plot and scheme move during downtime play (see the Downtime Moves section The Cycle of Play), re-draw the relationship map on a fresh sheet of paper. On this new r-map, only show the new debts generated and new rivals, enemies, and nemeses created while making the plot and scheme move. Build on these as you progress through the next bout of nightly play.

Each time you redraw the r-map, hold on to the old ones. When you advance through downtime play, re-draw the r-map and repeat. Like an archeological dig, you can sift through layers of the past. When you call in old debts or make peace on grudges from long ago, return to the previous r-maps and line them out. Again, don't erase anything.

Setting Prep

When you create your setting, answer the following questions: When is the story set?

Where does the story take place? What is the story's scope? How does the story kick off?

When Is the Story Set?

Is the setting modern or historic? If historic, when in history? The period must be well suited to your interests and to the players' interests because all of the fiction you create will be created in this context. Imagine how culture, historical events, and technology shape predators and consider whether or not that's appealing. Here are some ideas.

- Modern: The present, pretty straightforward. Make the present shittier than it really is. Shitty is good – predators thrive on human suffering.
- Near future/cyber: A decade or a few decades into the future. Feature some earth-shattering tech that redefines what it means to be a predator or fundamentally changes the predator-prey relationship.

- Apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic: The end of days or the aftermath. The world has gone to hell and those who survive barely scrape by. The old structures are utterly destroyed. Is a predator's status even a thing?
- Early 20th century: The fall of the old world and the rise of the new world. The world wars and cold war offer a tale of survival or shadowy manipulations, but the battlefield is no place for a predator. The old guard struggles for relevance and finds scant purchase.
- Victorian: The height of imperialism. The etiquette, occultism, and daring spirit of the Victorian age is great inspiration all on its own. The prey seem to mimic the predator social order: status is a pervasive theme to both predator and prey.
- Renaissance: The re-birth of western culture. Religion, art, wealth, and rulers. Great empires clash and a new world is discovered.
- Medieval: Rome is sundered and the West falls, only to slowly rebuild. The age of lords and ladies, knights and peasants, blood and conquest.
- Classical: Greece and Rome. Myth, heroes, philosophy, and great empires. Predators embody these myths and their kleos lives on in those immortal tales.
- Ancient: The cradles of civilization. Gods and great wonders. Humanity bows to its all-powerful undead masters and builds great monuments in their honor.

Historical Accuracy

Most stories take place in historical and contemporary settings that draw from real periods and places. How closely you adhere to historical accuracy is up to you. Predators don't actually exist in the real world, which means you can let other historical details slide too. Strict adherence to sexism, racism, and other prejudices doesn't make the fiction "real." Know yourself and know your audience. History, not unlike the present, offers many difficult subjects that can be explored and that exploration can offer insight as well as entertainment. Explore away. Don't be an asshole. Plan accordingly.

When crafting your setting and considering the human events that transpire during the span of the story, you might be tempted to attribute any and all significant events in human

history to premeditated predator machinations. That's bullshit – predators don't want significant human events. Those events bring change and change is bad. When predators do get involved in prey affairs, they try not to be noticed. Ideally, the world subtly shifts to a predator's advantage and none are the wiser. In actuality, predators are more likely to be caught off guard by and become victims of fast-moving events they don't understand, thanks to calcified thinking and the general lack of interest and empathy that predators have for their prey.

Where Does the Story Take Place?

Once you settle on the when, decide the where. Choose a big and vibrant city because that's where the action is. Color it dark. Dress it up with sex and violence.

If you choose a real place in a real time, you can study or skim the actual events that took place there. Look at period maps. Where were the great cities of the day? Which cultures seem most appealing? What happens to that area over the next couple of centuries?

If you create a fictitious locale, you can pick and choose which elements of history you like.

If you choose a present or near-future period, look to the place's past and project a compelling future of your own design.

After deciding on the locale, draw maps and print out pictures. This makes your setting visual and more compelling. Once you start playing, history unfolds as the consequence of events that transpire in the story.

What is the Story's Scope?

Every map has its edges. It's fair set boundaries. If you do, be up front about it with the players. Talking with the players about the story's themes will help them create characters that mesh well with the surroundings.

The world you create should feel open and the characters should feel free to explore it, but you don't necessarily have to make the entire world your stage. Establishing a scope for setting can help give your game shape and focus.

It's fair to state geographic or temporal boundaries for the story: that it's set in a given city, or region, or country, and that it spans from this date to that date. Be flexible and negotiate.

It's good to have this conversation before you make a personal investment in setting creation. Listen to the players. Understand what they want and help them understand what you want. Coming to a common understanding of what the game is about is powerful and unifying.

How Does the Story Kick Off?

Start the story with fireworks. Don't hype it, don't be coy about it, light the fuse and start running.

First, pick a theme: conquest, war, judgment, or death. These are defined in the time passes move. Use the chosen theme as a framework for the story and the events that unfold.

Second, pick a catalyst for upheaval. The catalyst is the combination of a character and an event. The character is a PC or a NPC and the event is either perpetrated by them or they are victimized by it. The event, whatever it is, sets larger events in motion. Choose an event that cannot help but redefine predator society in some profound way.

Third, frame the opening scene as the triggering event plays itself out or in the immediate aftermath, as the ramifications start to sink in. If you choose to start the scene with the event in progress, start at the climax, when the objective is realized. One of the PCs must be directly involved in this opening scene. Ideally, all of them if it makes sense. Enmesh

your PCs in the triggering event to give the players a personal connection to it.

Finally, pull strings. As the community's predators react to the emerging threat, they call in debts to cover their asses. Predators use each other to save themselves.

With all that in place, follow the fiction, wherever it leads.

Starting with a Bang!

If this is your first game of *Undying*, or if you're playing with people who haven't played before, start the story with the death of an NPC. Surprise them. This NPC should feature prominently among the characters on your relationship map when the players create their characters. Don't give them any hints of what you're about to do. The PCs may owe debts to or be owed debts from the dead NPC. Have the other predators look to these debts as reasons to speculate that the PCs have motive to kill that NPC.

Doing Minimum Setting Prep

At a minimum, do the following steps.

1. Select a cultural period. Study it well enough that you can explain the historical context to the players, if they need it, and to leverage their common understanding. Choosing a specific historical event can be very helpful, if it's not too on the nose.
2. Choose a prominent city, or fabricate one. Find or make at least one visual aid. Ideally, that visual aid is a map, but pictures work fine too. This helps you and the players visualize the city and its anatomy. You want them to explore all the dark corners, so give them a tour guide.
3. Establish a scope for your game. Discuss it with the players, so they understand how the characters they will create fit into the world you've imagined.
4. Come up with a couple of hot ideas for kicking off your game. Just loose, flexible ideas at this point. After the players create their characters, choose an idea that engages the PCs and run with it. A good start is not only compelling and dramatic, it also

integrates the PCs into the world you've prepared.

Lore Prep

Lore is predator mythology. At a minimum, you need a concept for predator lore that is consistent with the setting you've come up with. It's also totally fine if you just have vague notions and discover all of the details as you play.

If you have a firm vision for what the predator lore is, say from movies, books, TV, or your own devious mind, then go nuts. Consider how lore shapes predator behavior and community. Create whatever custom lore moves you need to capture the essence of your vision in prep.

Community Prep

The community is predator society. It has laws, customs, and history. It maintains order and discipline, such as it is. For all the infighting, without the community, predators are but murderous savages.

The community has a hierarchy. There's the ruling class and there's the peasants. The community probably has a history that's nearly as old as the city itself. Despite predators' longevity, much of the community's history is closer to legend than fact.

When creating the community, think about how it started, how the city's history has shaped it, the violent upsets that have occurred within it, and where it stands today. That last part is important, because wherever the community stands today, it's broken. Things weren't just peachy 'till now; they've been shit as long as anyone cares to remember.

Review the following questions, while keeping in mind the prep you've done so far. You don't need an answer for every question, but be prepared to come up with one when the situation arises.

- How have the predators shaped the history of the city? How pervasive is their influence on the prey's institutions? Which institutions are off-limits, if any, and why? What are the power structures and who controls them?
- Where does the community congregate? How often, and under what conditions? Are there safe zones or communal hunting grounds? What rights to individual predators have when it comes to their own hunting grounds and how are they enforced?
- What does it cost to be a member of the community? blood? debt? Who gives permission to create new predators, and what price must the maker pay? How do outsiders immigrate? Is there something one must do if they wish to emigrate?
- Is there a public accounting of debts, whether formal or informal? Who mediates disputes?
- Who is the princeps? When and how did they come to power? What promises did they make and who do they owe? How did the princeps before them shape the policies of the predator who is now in power?
- Is the community run by a monarch or by oligarchs? Is it matriarchal, patriarchal, a theocracy, or a meritocracy? Or is it merely run by the most vicious and conniving son of a bitch?
- Is the city divided in their loyalty, forming more than one community? Is the city so big that no one princeps could possibly control every predator?
- Is the community at war? Is the community tearing itself apart? In some way, the answer must be yes. The conflict doesn't need to be physical, but it needs to be pervasive and at the boiling point.
- What are the general laws and customs? What are the major injustices? Who is generally victimized without recourse? What's just accepted as the way it is? What are the loopholes? What's just ridiculous? Who enforces the law and who dispenses justice? How do the prey fit in? Do the prey have rights under predator law?
- Is there some codified set of mandates for preserving the secrecy of predator kind? There's at least a basic "don't fuck us all" clause. How far is the community willing to

go to protect their secrecy? What happens when a predator transgresses? Is it just the obvious? What contingencies are already in place? What are the glaring flaws in that safety net?

- Who decides when a predator must die? What are the unforgivable transgressions?

How are offenses, in general, tried and prosecuted? How does justice manifest?

The community is a rich tapestry of inspiration. NPCs you create draw from this culture and are shaped by it.

Creating the Predator Community

Creating the predator community is all about your relationship map. Every character that matters to the story, PC and NPC, shows up on the r-map. Their debts are recorded on the r-map. Their grudges are recorded on the r-map. When you get stuck and you try to figure out your next move, the r-map is the first place you look.

To start creating an r-map, take a blank piece of paper and orient it in landscape, so it's wider than it is tall. With each of the steps that follow, you name the predator, establish a grudge, and establish an ambition. At the end of this process, you will have the princeps, a couple patricians, a couple plebeians, and maybe even a pariah on your r-map for a total of five or six NPCs to introduce to the players.

Create the Central Conflict

First, create a central conflict and place the opposing sides of this conflict near the center of your r-map. For this conflict to really get out of control, one of the opposing sides must either be the princeps or a patrician.

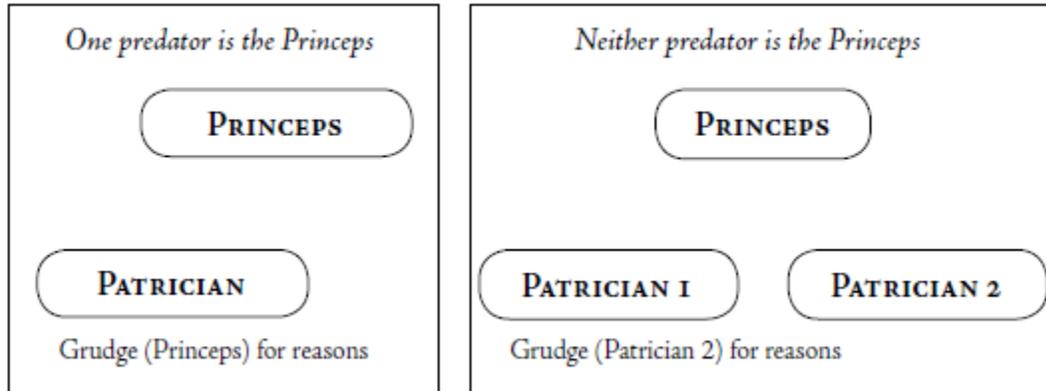
If one is the princeps, draw an oval centered left-right and near the top of the page and draw the other oval below and to the left, centered top-bottom.

If both are patricians, draw the two ovals centered top-bottom and such that, left to

right, they roughly split the page into three equal parts. Then draw the princeps centered left-right and centered between the patrician ovals and the top of the page.

In either case, this leaves plenty of room for supporters on either side of the conflict.

Center the r-map on the Conflict



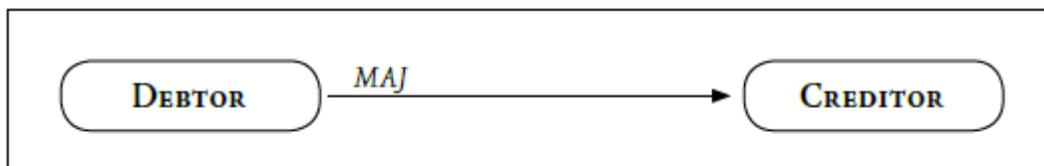
Establish the Conflict's Root Cause

Second, pick one of the following root causes and define it for the conflict.

1. A debt owed by one predator to the other. Draw a major debt from the debtor to their creditor. Why is this debt owed and why is it the source of the conflict?

Start the game with the creditor attempting to collect this debt.

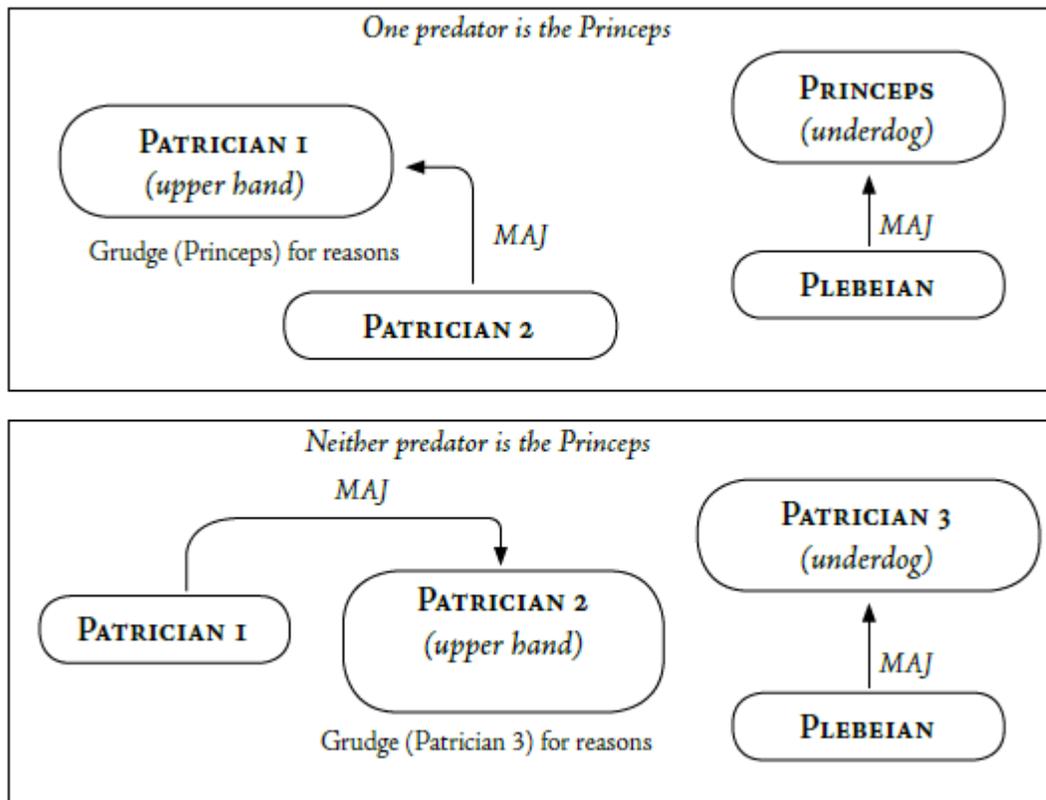
Conflict between Debtor and Creditor



2. A grudge held by one or both predators. Decide which predator currently has the upper hand. Don't give the princeps the upper hand.

- The predator with the upper hand has an ally with the same or higher status. So if this predator is a patrician, then their ally is either another patrician or the princeps (if the princeps isn't the target). Draw a major debt from the ally and write down why the ally owes this debt.
- The underdog predator has a plebeian ally. Draw a major debt from the ally and write down why they owe this debt.

Conflict over a Grudge



3. An ambition to gain status held by the other predator. One predator has higher status, and the other will not let that stand. The predator with lower status has the upper hand. Apply the same method for determining ally debts as in the second option.

4. An external threat to the community, such as plague, famine, or war. Use the same relationship structure as in the second option. One side is proactive in dealing with the crisis; the other side either hinders or actively encourages the crisis. Decide which side has the upper hand.

Always give one side an advantage over the other. Make it clear which side has the upper hand. It doesn't mean they will come out ahead in the end for certain, but it does mean the conflict won't begin in stagnation.

Take stock of your relationship map. The core conflict should be clear and the battle lines drawn. Once it is, it's time to fill in the details.

What about plebeians?

When plebeians rise up, they usually have the support of a patrician or a cadres of fellow plebeians (or even pariahs) by their side. If you choose a mob of plebeians, write "Pack" next to your plebeian and use the Wolf playbook for your upstart.

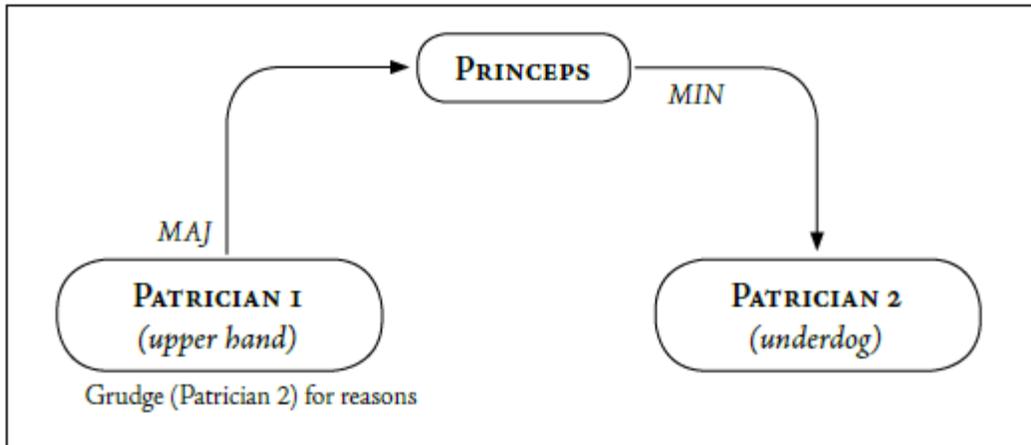
What about pariahs?

Not only are pariahs outcasts (therefore unlikely leaders), but debts owed to them and by them are null and void, meaning they make unreliable allies. That, and any assembly of more than a couple pariahs for any meaningful amount of time will no doubt prompt extreme prejudice from the powers that be.

Establish the Princeps' Role in the Conflict

Third, if the princeps isn't currently tied into the conflict draw a minor debt from the princeps to the underdog and a major debt from the predator with the upper hand to the princeps.

Integrating the princeps into a Third Party Conflict

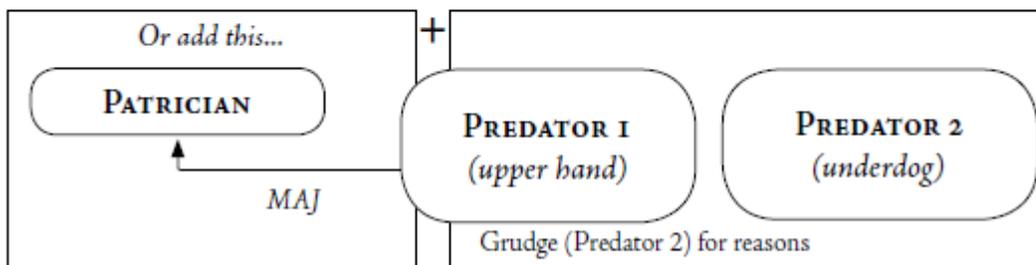
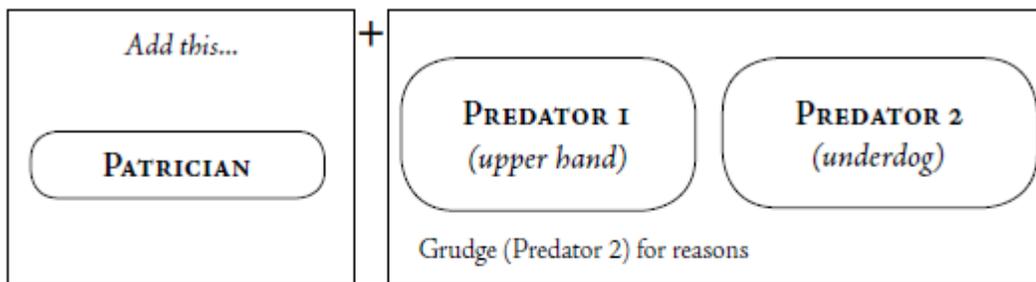


Establish the Other Patricians' Role in the Conflict

Fourth, if you don't already have two or more patricians, add a second patrician.

This patrician either aids the predator with the upper hand (draw a major debt from the predator with the upper hand to your new patrician), or this patrician is in it for themselves, seeing a golden opportunity to accomplish their own agenda.

Adding a patrician to the Conflict



Fill in the Rest of the Community

Fifth, add in plebeians and pariahs to fill out the ranks so that you have five or six NPC predators in total. These characters are wild cards. Give them independent ambitions. Do these predators aspire to greatness? Do they just want to be left alone? Or would they prefer to see the PCs take charge and oust the old guard? Of all the NPCs on the r-map, make these NPCs the most accessible and sympathetic to your PCs.

Establish Maker-Chosen Relationships

Sixth, identify some maker-chosen relationships. One or two should be there, for sure. Remember, not every predator in the community is necessarily on the r-map, so you don't need to identify a maker for every NPC. Hell, some makers may have already met their end.

Every maker-chosen relationship is fraught with drama, so look to the debts already drawn on the r-map to see which predators are already at odds. When you decide on a maker-chosen pair, write "maker of..." next to the maker's name on the r-map. If these predators don't already have grudges aimed at each other, add them now. They are at least rivals, probably worse.

Finally, survey the r-map holistically. Are there characters that just don't fit? Are there characters that aren't interesting? Replace these characters with better ones that stand out.

Hunting Grounds Prep

Hunting grounds are territories rich in prey and jealously guarded by predators. Once you know who your important NPCs are, give them each a patch of ground to lord over.

Creating hunting grounds can be as simple as assigning the abundance, awareness, and proximity tags (see the Hunting Grounds section). The next level of detail is identifying a specific location within the setting for each hunting grounds,

which you can do by using or drawing a map of the city. At a minimum, do this for each of your NPCs.

When the players create their characters, you will also need to establish hunting grounds for them too. You can prepare for this in advance by identifying unoccupied areas of the community and assigning tags to them. Then when the PCs are created, pair them with their respective, prefabricated hunting grounds.

This sort of advance prep can be helpful for introducing new NPCs, since they will also need hunting grounds. When you prepare hunting grounds in advance, give yourself a ready list of hunting grounds suitable for plebeians and patricians, as you may need to accommodate predators of these kinds at any time. The Hunting Grounds section also describes how to create hunting grounds for predators suitable to their status.

Running A Session of Undying

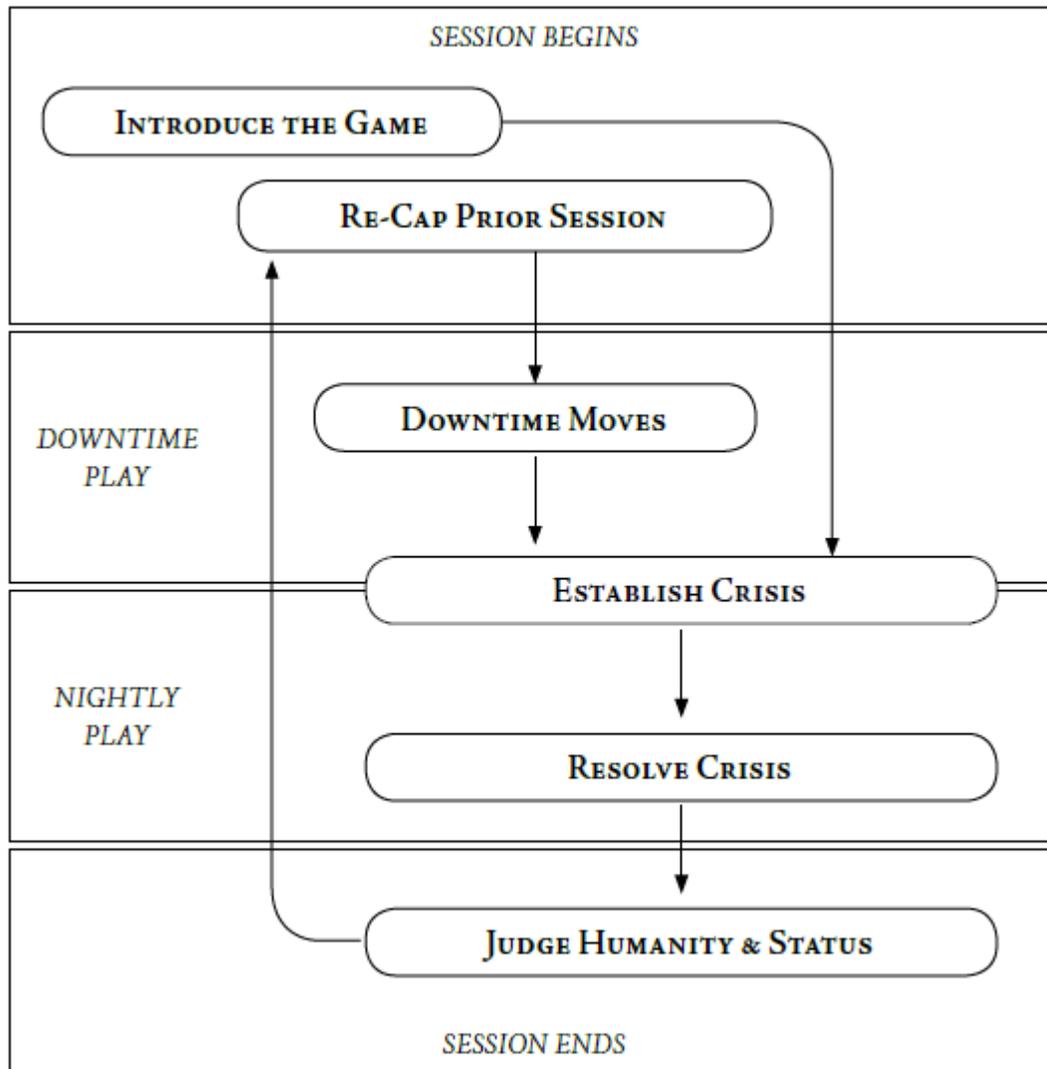
During a session, you explore a night of grave importance to your PCs in moment-to-moment play – nightly play – during which the predator community is thrown into chaos and from which a new status quo emerges. Then, the innumerable intervening years of quiet conniving that lead to the next flashpoint are summarized during downtime play. The cycle repeats itself as the predator community is thrust into turmoil once again.

The cycle of play is as follows:

1. If this is not your first session, recap the previous session and then advance the timeline in downtime play using the moves time passes and plot and scheme
2. Establish the crisis. If this is your first session, follow the Running the First Session procedure, below. Otherwise, expand on the theme established by the time passes move and describe the catastrophe in detail.

3. Play through the night's events in nightly play.
4. When the crisis resolves, wrap up nightly play.
5. Judge the PCs humanity and status (described in the How Humanity Changes section and How Status Changes section).
6. End session, and repeat the cycle in the next session.

The Cycle of Play



Running the First Session

If this is the first session, come prepped with an r-map, nefarious schemes for your NPCs, and imagery for a vibrant world seared into your mind.

1. The GM briefly introduces the NPCs and the setting (described in the Non-Player Characters section on and the Preparing for The Game section)
 2. The GM reviews the lore moves with the players. The group answers some or all of the lore moves questions.
 3. The players create their characters (described in the Creating Your Predator section).
 4. The GM starts play with a crisis and then follows the PCs as they respond to the night's events.
 5. Play wraps up, with the crisis coming to enough of a close that a new status quo is established.
 6. Each player gives a recap of their character's humane and inhumane deeds. The players judge each PCs' humanity (described in the How Humanity Changes section).
 7. The GM judges each predators' status, PCs and NPCs alike (described in the How Status Changes section).
- Take your time creating PCs. It is paramount that the players spend time together and with you to thoroughly integrate the PCs into the setting.
 - Start the story with a bang. As you prepped your r-map, you spent time thinking about the central conflict for your first session. Now is the time to present that conflict front and center. Wrangle as many of the PCs as you reasonably can into a scene where all hell breaks loose.
 - Look to the GM's principles and agenda when you get stuck or you are wondering what to do next (described in The GM's Principles section and The GM's Agenda section).

Running Subsequent Sessions

The same principles you use in the first session apply to keeping the sessions that follow going. The difference is that you now build on your previous sessions.

If you're continuing the nightly play narrative from the previous session, recap and then jump right back into it.

Starting a Session with a Move

If you want to get creative, you can write a custom move that you use to start a session – first session or subsequent sessions. A starting move establishes a framework for getting nightly play moving in a compelling and decisive way. For example,

The GM takes a single blood token and drops it onto the r-map, then draws a red "X" through the name of the NPC predator closest to where the token landed. This predator died under mysterious circumstances. When the murder is discovered,

- Predators who owed the victim one or more major debts are suspected of foul play.
- If the victim was a maker, their chosen are suspected of foul play.
- Predators who owed the victim one or more minor debts are expected to clear their names by providing the princeps evidence of their innocence or another predator's guilt.
- The princeps offers all other predators a minor debt to provide material evidence or a major debt for providing evidence leading to a conviction.

Play begins in the Paramount Theater at 3 AM. All of the predators in the community have been assembled to hear the news of a murder in their midst. Any predators who refuse to attend are presumed guilty and declared pariahs. Witnesses are asked to come forward...

A starting move can be simple or involved. You can have one for the group or one for each player. Keep the following in mind:

- Give some predators an advantage while giving others a disadvantage.
- Establish a direction to stimulate play.
- Create a fictional prompt to gather as many of your PCs into play at the same time.
- Use a starting move to organize your thoughts and just have fun with it.

Playing a Convention or One-Shot Game

If you play *Undying* at a convention, where time is of the essence, you'll need to do more prep than you might for your home group, and you must pay special attention to the clock. You'll also really need to be careful with the players, particularly if you don't already know them. The following sections will walk you through it.

If you're playing a one-shot game – that is, a single session or maybe two sessions – with your group, then choose which shortcuts below you want to take. If your players detest pre-generated characters, help them make their own. If they don't care, draw up characters for them. You know your group best.

Prepping for a Convention Game

Prepping for a con game is all about being ready to jump into the action as soon as possible.

When you prep for a con game, do everything the *Preparing for The Game* section tells you to do along with the following.

1. Answer the lore move questions on your own. The answers to those questions should align with your take on predator mythology, so that storytelling comes naturally to you. It doesn't hurt to leave a couple of open questions for the group. That will get them interested in playing the game.
2. Decide if any of the playbooks are off the table. Don't bring them with you. Bring the ones you want with you, but only one copy of each playbook. You want the differentiation between characters that the playbooks encourage so that each player

quickly understands “this is what my character does.”

3. Fill out each playbook, following the steps in the Character Creation section. Do not fill in the playbook’s humanity – leave that to the player. There are other details you can fill in or leave to the players – it doesn’t hurt to give them some options. To recap, this means you do the following for each PC.

- Name the predator.
- Decide on their social class: plebeian or pariah.
- Add a major debt they owe another predator.
- Add a minor debt another predator owes them.
- Decide which predator is their maker. Either decide in advance whether the character is docile (owe a minor debt to the maker) or rebellious (maker adds a grudge against the character), or let the players decide. If you are going to let the players decide at the table, have ideas ready for what their maker’s grudge is, should they choose to be rebellious.
- You can leave look and heritage to your players, unless you need to specify it in order to fit with your story concept.

4. Define the PCs’ hunting grounds and their rivals.

When you’re done, you will have a relationship map that includes both NPCs and potential PCs, along with filled-in playbooks.

If you end up with fewer players than you have prepped playbooks, just take on your spare playbooks as NPCs.

Pitching a Convention Game

Pitching your game is a marketing exercise. You’re trying to get people to play your game and not someone else’s. Know your audience. Your goal is to get three or four really excited people clamoring to play your game. It’s a fine art.

First, introduce yourself. These people are going to spend the next few hours with you,

help them get to know you. Be brief; don't give them your life story, but show them that you are fun and interesting.

Say a few words about the game, like "Undying is vampire roleplaying game of predation and intrigue." Mention that the game is diceless, as that will interest some people and let others know it's not the game for them. You want to attract the people who want to play this specific vampire game.

Talk about the setting and the crisis you have prepared. The description should sum that up in two sentences tops, and hit on only the key features.

Talk about how you plan to handle mature content at the table. How far do you want things to go? Be upfront about this with your prospective players. If it helps, use movie ratings as a cultural reference. Is your game R-rated? PG-13? Don't get into the details yet – you'll do that at the table – just set some basic expectations so that you draw in people with a similar comfort level.

Answer questions they have, at least in brief. Don't be afraid to say "That's a great question, and we'll talk about that in play."

Starting a Convention Game

First and foremost, strive to get through this phase in 15 minutes or less.

Once you get settled somewhere, start with introductions. Go around the table and give everyone a chance to say something about themselves.

Then, lay out the r-map, visual aids, and playbooks. If the players are not familiar with the concepts, give an overview. If they immediately grab the playbooks and start talking over which ones they want to play, move on.

Review the Playing in a Supportive Environment section with the players. Talk to them. Listen to them.

Briefly touch on the lore. When you can, describe lore in terms of books, TV shows, or movies that the players have read or seen, so that everyone gets on the same page quickly. Cover the most prominent topics, like is sunlight lethal, but don't go over every lore move. Instead, introduce lore as it comes up in play. If you intentionally left questions open for the group that you want to establish right away, answer them together at this point.

Go over the r-map. Hit the high points: the princeps, the patricians, and the festering wound that's about to split open. Point to them on the r-map, and say a few words about each. Help the players understand the community's hierarchy and how their characters fit into it. Beyond that, let the players come to know your NPCs as they interact with them.

Don't go over the playbooks or the basic moves. The players will learn by doing and you'll be there to help them.

Finally, have each player introduce their character. Encourage the players to talk about what they think's important about their character: Name, obviously. Anything they want to mention about their look or heritage. Humanity. Key relationships with other predators revolving around debts or grudges. Their maker. Maybe the defining characteristics of their playbooks too.

Special Considerations for Convention Games

Here are a few special points to remember when running a convention game:

- Start with everyone together and with a bang. Start with all of your PCs in the same place, and immediately confront them with the crisis. Engage everyone at the table from the very beginning.

- By and large, keep the group together and follow them wherever they go. Encourage them to group together, because that will keep more of the players engaged in storytelling (this is a conceit for time-constrained play).
- Break halfway through to review humanity. Go once around the table and then (about halfway through your time slot) take a break and do a humanity evaluation, like you would for the end of a normal session. This introduces the players to the concept and gives them feedback on their character so far. It also gives them some direction for playing out the rest of the session.
- As time runs out, push for resolution. Help it along as needed. For a con game, you need to fit the beginning, middle, and end into a single session because there is no next time.
- Plan to wrap up about 15 minutes before your time slot ends. Once you have, judge both humanity and status. It's a great way to reflect on the game you just played and cool down after the big finale!