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## WHAT IS A ROAD?

Roads existed before the Camarilla or the Sabbat or the Anarchs. They are *proto*-Paths and predated modern day Sects. In this revised v5 adaptation, Roads are quite similar to Paths with the key difference being Vinculum as that did not exist at the time of their creation as Roads existed before the Convention of Thorns. Roads emphasized student/teacher relationships and communities built around them. The issue was that Roads fractured into lesser *Paths* of their own and this led to most of them fragmenting even further, then dying out after the Great Revolt. This led to a lot of Road followers being left without a teacher to advance on their Roads. If Roads are still practiced or taught it is by an Elder Mawla or *Lorekeeper* and ancient texts, making them very rare indeed. A student of a Road without a mentor or tutor may study for decades before achieving any understanding. It is not recommended that a Storyteller allows a Road of Humanity to be used unless an appropriate Mawla or Loresheet is purchased to explain it. Many of the Rites of the Road in use in modern nights in fact were the basis of current Sabbat *Ritae* and similar in function.

- Roads follow the same general outline as Paths with the key difference being *Ritae*. Sabbat *Ritae* may never be used as a touchstone.
- When referencing *Paths* in a Road there is a distinct difference between a Path of Enlightenment and a Path within a Road and not to be confused with one another.
- It is assumed Road followers use human Touchstones unless specifically outlined in the description of the Road, that other Touchstones are used.
- Road followers may never be members of the Sabbat. Discovery of a Road follower within the Sect will be killed on site.
- Followers of a Road have access to Sabbat Predator Types as well as Individual Loresheets.
- Road followers may never use Sabbat Packs.
- Whenever a Road is learned beyond character creation, immediately gain the Stains associated with changing Convictions and the loss of all previous Touchstones. Then make a *Remorse* test.
- Roads are outdated and very rare in Modern Nights so should be used sparingly. Some rules and references may only be applicable in a Dark Ages Chronicle.

Much more in detail describing Roads can be found in the supplemental Dark Ages series of books on the Roads (ie. Road of Beasts).

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# Road of the Beast

The Road of the Beast is an ancient path of enlightenment predominantly practiced by members of Clan Gangrel. It controls the Beast by accepting its urges as natural and accepting their role as a hunter among hunters. This Road is autonomous from other similar Sabbat Paths.

Originating from the *Via Bestiae* of the Dark Ages, this road emphasizes the predatory nature of the vampire. Unorganized and shunning the trappings of civilization, followers of this Road often eschew technology in favor of their talents inherent to their undead form. This road later led to the Path of the Beast and the Feral-Heart.

A follower of this Road feels that the Beast is a natural part of being a vampire and that its needs must be satiated. Still, the vampire is intelligent, and a cunning hunter is a more effective one. Therefore, it is important to strike a balance between Beast and Man—the feral cunning and vicious instincts of the vampire are excellent survival tools, tempered by the reasoning and insight of the mind. By satiating the Beast's urges from time to time, the vampire ironically gains a greater degree of personal control.

In *Modern Nights*, this Road is most commonly practiced among independent Gangrels. Other clans that follow it typically include; the Brujah, Nosferatu, Ravnos and Tzimisce, with exceptions of course. It is not openly practiced in the Camarilla, as it is regarded by most as a path to diablerie. Many practitioners within the Camarilla are Gangrel who predate the existence of the Sects. Among independents in particular the Anarch Gangrel and Ashira, this Road is on the rise in the *Final Nights*. Many of the rituals practiced by the Sabbat will seem familiar in comparison to the Rites of the Road. There is a similar Path, that of the Beast and Feral-Heart, that does have practitioners within the Sabbat.

**Roleplay:** These Ferals pursue simple lives staying out of the lime-light, keeping a low profile, live modestly and try not to be noticed overall. Though they may be more in touch with nature and feeding the Beast, that is not to say they necessarily shun technology or its trappings. They simply don't rely on them. The Bestials remain anonymous if possible but will be assertive in a time of need for they are no sheep, but wolves. They believe leadership is proven and not inherited. Beasts tend to be emotional and volatile given to fits of rage when

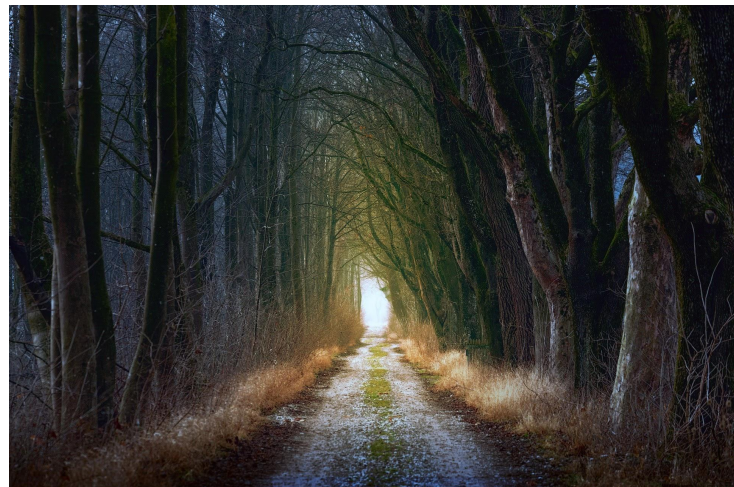
provoked. They live for the hunt and the kill. Usually described as practical, morose and lacking any moral ambiguity.

**Nicknames:** Ferals, Bestials

**Prashasti:** *Thank you for your offering (slashing, slurping, licking sounds) your sacrifice is a gift.*

**Lorekeeper:** When a Lorekeeper holds a revel, it is in prelude to hunts or assist in performing rituals. They teach the Road and scribe the texts in which to record and study from. A Lorekeeper is decided upon informally but respected for their title nonetheless. In modern nights this is a particularly rare title as there are so few practitioners left.

**Warden:** The Warden oversees the resolution of any conflict between parties and decides the form of which the arbitration will take place. They are the judges and execute the law when need be. A Warden is appointed when the need arises and performs their duties only when asked to do so. Again, in *Modern Nights*, very few disciples of this Road exist and the need of a Warden is unlikely.



## Road Tenets

### ■ Does the Wolf pray for the Sheep?

The Beastials do not feel remorse for doing what is natural. Do not shed a tear for your prey. A predator cares not for the feelings of their prey, this is the natural order of things. A true predator does not play with or waste their food.

### ■ Perfect Clarity

Do not give the beast free reign to ravage and destroy. You shall not kill for the sake of killing. You must master the Beast. Sate it out of need not sheer wantedness. You kill when provoked for an animal cornered or injured is the most dangerous of all. The hunt must have purpose and meaning; is not for joy but out of necessity.

### ■ The Hunt is the Test of the Hunter

The thrill of the hunt is important, perhaps paramount. There is more to the hunt than killing to feed. There is the chase after all. The satisfaction of knowing you have bested your prey. The look on their face when they realize you have won. There are other ways of being a predator, including; showing dominance in social interactions or proving you are the alpha in a situation. Perhaps to best all others in sport. You love a challenge, especially a dangerous one, in order to hone your skills and that means winning no matter the cost or who gets hurt along the way.

**Touchstones:** Other followers of the same Road or members of your *pack* (your *Coterie*) may be chosen as a touchstone. Humans, objects or animals may never be a touchstone. Also, any follower of this Road must choose a location as a Touchstone in which they consider their territory. This can be a Haven or Hunting Ground. Examples of ways to gain Stains would be; when you find someone hunting in your Hunting Ground without your permission or if your Haven is razed. The injury or loss of a fellow packmate or follower of the Road of whom you know is another sure way to gain stains.. You may relocate or choose a new touchstone at any time however, you immediately gain stains doing so. Additionally, the **Rites of the Road** are Touchstones. Should you be denied your Rites or if they should be interrupted, stains may occur. You choose between 1 and 3 Touchstones and one must be a Haven or Hunting Ground.

**Frenzy:** Ferals may ally themselves with the Beast, but are never to be controlled or manipulated by it. The Beast

should be an ally and tool to be directed and not denied. When faced with violence and provocation that forces a frenzy roll, they must Ride the Wave (see V5 Corebook pg. 219) tearing apart and feeding on someone in your vicinity, immediately.

**Ban, Suspected Diablorists:** You hunt other vampires as easily or as often as mortal prey. This is incredibly dangerous and especially forbidden by the Camarilla. Thankfully most are not familiar with Roads in general and so you don't announce it. You gain the 2-dot Flaw, *Dark Secret*.

**Compulsion. Predatory.** The Beast must be satiated somehow and it will only accept blood. You must hunt and kill. If you don't hunt worthy prey (rats, dogs and vermin in general don't count) and slake your thirst (minimum 1 Hunger); subtract 3 dice from all dice pools involving mental and social rolls the rest of the night until you do. You are too distracted by your predatory nature to do anything else.



## Path Convictions

The Road of the Beast has several Paths. The follower of the Road of the Beast must choose a Path and follow its Convictions. You must have as many Convictions as you do Touchstones.

### PATH OF THE HUNTER

You embrace the Beast and its nature. The world is more black and white; there is the hunter and then the hunted. Those that are recognized as a true predator are respected but anyone deemed prey, gets little reverence.. You trust your instincts and listen to the whispers of the Beast.

- You are a predator and all others are prey, treat those you don't consider your equal prey
- The beast exists to aid you in the hunt; Master it as you would master a hunting dog. Frenzy when you must but not for the sake of violence.
- Do not hunt if it does not benefit you or is hopeless; risking injury for naught gains nothing

### PATH OF THE NOMAD

The Beast should roam free and not for civilized company. You eschew normal conveniences in favor of being a solitary hunter. The trappings of the world interest you not.

- Do not be a slave to civilized life those rules are not written for you; man's laws were not written for you
- Travel and explore under an open sky let nothing stand in your way of that; none shall impede your your travels no matter what the cost
- Take only what you need; possessions are a hindrance and a sign of weakness; you use your tooth and claw to solve your problems and won't use tools of man to do the Beasts work

### PATH OF THE SAVAGE

The laws of the wild should reign supreme over any precepts of law and order. Nothing reigns higher than nature's natural order. Human morality is a fabrication and a lie not meant for the Beast.

- Embrace the Beast and use it to destroy cull the weak; the Beast knows prey, anyone that falls victim to it deserves it rightly so
- The Beast is your salvation, release it upon your enemies when it calls for blood; your Frenzy is justified when you ride the wave

- Civilization is for the weak. Its destruction matters not for only the strong should survive; anyone not of the Road of the Beast may be treated as prey

### PATH OF THE GREY HUNTER

Civilization is the new hunting ground. Use it to feed and cull the weak. It can hide and protect you. This is where your prey flocks to, so become its predator.

- Use civilization and its vices to hunt your prey no matter where it hides; you can use whatever means necessary to hunt no matter where
- Use all tools available to your advantage, only a fool rejects any advantage over their prey; there's no action too heinous you can't use it to hunt
- The pleasures of civilization delight the Beast, do not deny it, its revelry; you participate in all manner of carnal pleasure and there's no act of hedonism you can't perform

## Road of the Beast Advantages

The Ferals were arguably the first of all the Roads. Ennoia knew that her childer and vampires in general were beyond *Humanity* and that they were no longer considered as such. Her childer needed to no longer suffer the consequences of what to some were considered deprivations or indulgences of their kind and that the natural order was to be emulated as a lesson to all. Vampires are a different animal altogether and have been transformed into the ultimate predator. Vampires are not human. Humans are prey as all other creatures of The One Above are, and to be hunted and treated as such.

This Road helped create the pathway and groundwork for what would later become the *Path of the Beast* and the Path of Power and Inner Voice. But not all followers forsake their original and ancient teachings to adopt those Paths created by a sect in which they don't ally themselves with. There are very few practitioners of this Road or any Road for that matter, left. It is practiced and taught more often by ancients and elders now and to complicate matters even more, those same vampires usually have no interest or patience to teach it to anyone save their childer. However, these lessons are gaining popularity or a resurgence in Independents and the Ashirra. But, the Road has become muddy and diluted as they must rely on ancient texts more often than not. As the final nights envelope everyone and the Beckoning takes many of the remaining practitioners of the Roads as

well as the decline of the Sabbat and therefore Paths of Enlightenment; alternative paths of Humanity such as Roads, are garnering popularity once again.

● **Territorial Pissings:** You have a territory in which you hunt quite well. You know where every flickering street light is, when trash pickup is on a certain street, where the hide-a-key is in that neighborhood, so you move about easily in the Domain. The vampire gains a bonus 1-die when using Hunting Grounds in their own Domain.

●● **The Huntsman:** If you follow the Road of the Beast, you are the ultimate predator. Choose either Protean or Obfuscate. It becomes an in-clan discipline.

●● **Apex Predator :** You hunt and feed from other vampires just as surely and easily as any other prey. This advantage is where the Road gained its reputation for being Diablorists. Gain 1 less Stain when killing another vampire to feed. If you commit Diablerie, your aura does not betray you and you don't show the tell-tale 'black veins' indicative of your sins. However, you still must suffer the stains for doing so. They may be lessened due to Tenants and Convictions. Other Advantages may also lessen the amount of Stains earned when killing another of your kind.

●●● **A Beast I Am, Least A Beast I Become::** Even when you are in a frenzy, you know exactly what you're doing and why. The Beast takes over the body but you still hold the reins. It's best to feed the Beast by hand than to let it take by force. When you enter Frenzy you must Ride the Wave and never resist it. Once per session, you may lessen any stains earned due to your actions while Riding the Wave.

●●● **Natural Born Killer:** You watch your prey and determine how perverted and hedonistic they may be to determine if they are worthy of hunting. Those of particularly low Humanity are your favorite for their soul is sick and eventually will have to be put down anyway. An injured animal that shows weakness is the best prey. You gain 1 extra die when you make your Remorse tests.

## Rites of the Road

A Bestial may know a few Rites but only a Loremaster may perform and know them all. Traditionally, they are officiated by a Loremaster but in Modern Times that is less than likely. The Road of the Beast keeps few traditions and rites but the few they do have, are very important and must be adhered to. A Loremaster knows all the Rites and may perform them for as many pack members as necessary.

You may choose one or more Rites to know as a Touchstones, adhering to the rules of Convictions and Touchstones set forth above. Each Rite known may be used as a single Touchstone.

### The Rite of Prayer (FOR USE IN DARK AGES AND MODERN NIGHTS)

There are no proper words or actions for a prayer. It is a simple matter of coaxing and persuading the Beast how you see fit. Any words mean little, it is the intent. The intention of praying is to placate, acknowledge and praise the Beast both before and after a hunt. Your sincerity is what matters most when you pray and not the specifics.

The prayers before you hunt are to prepare for the Beast and its frenzy. You are acknowledging it, never to fight its urges but to convince it to do your bidding as you would an ally. You must be ready to ride the wave and accept the aftermath.

When the kill is made after the hunt, you thank the Beast for its help with platitudes. This is also to stave off its wrath and remind the Beast, the Hunt is over and it is no longer needed.

Witnesses to these prayers may see you simply talking out loud to 'yourself' or perhaps taking a moment's meditation over the kill. Words will not always be enough to give thanks however. So other forms of supplication are required such as; eating the heart or by taking trophies of the kill afterwards.

Upon preparation of any hunt, in addition to the words given, other ceremonial offerings are accepted by the Beast. Ritual scarification, animal or human sacrifice, creating implements of war to kill, bloodletting, fire-dancing and anything else the Beast may accept as a token of your devout earnestness.

Performing the Rite will lessen the stains from frenzy during the hunt, the savagery wrought during its course or the destruction incurred in its aftermath.

### **The Rite of Challenge** (FOR USE IN DARK AGES)

There are times when members of the same Road conflict and rites must be observed to resolve it. These rites are always overseen by a Loremaster as witness but may only be deemed necessary or prudent by the Warden. The Rite is almost always ritual combat.

This rite is used in cases of territorial disputes as in Hunting Grounds or challenges in leadership within a pack consisting of several followers of the same Road. It may also be accusatory between parties and the Warden deems what the challenge needs to consist of though it does not always need to be combative.

When the ritual combat is chosen it is in a selected area the Loremasters deems appropriate. The combat is usually of two varieties depending on the severity of the challenge.

The first variety consists of the combatants fighting until one of the challengers falls into frenzy. Reasons for such a challenge may be; vying to become leader of a pack or a dispute over Domain and Hunting Grounds. The one who succumbs to frenzy first during combat, loses. The fight ends when grappling and successfully subduing your opponent or the first to cause Aggravated damage in combat. Claws and teeth are not allowed and neither are weapons but other disciplines are usually allowed. This is not a hunt and they are not prey to one another. The loser takes a single level of Aggravated Willpower damage and the victor may immediately regain a single point of Superficial Willpower. Both participants reduce stains performing this rite. Captured prey is used to satisfy the Beast of the vampire lost to frenzy.

More severe disputes are settled in fights to the death. Example reasons for this type of challenge may be; killing another's childe, diablerie, destruction of another's Haven (assumed a touchstone) and other accusations of equal severity. The winner may also Diablорize his opponent.

As there are so few practitioners of this Road in Modern Nights, the occasion for this Rite would be rare, unheard of and not particularly relevant.

### **The Rite of Blood** (FOR USE IN DARK AGES AND MODERN NIGHTS)

This is a celebration performed only a few times a year, generally in the summer. It is not necessary that it be performed with a pack but it is traditionally performed with others of the same Road. When performed, a Loremaster recites stories of Ennoia and Caine. All share deeds of past hunts and about those they vanquished. When solitarily performing this rite, it is usually written in apocryphal texts and journals to later be regaled.

After these festivities a hunt is called. A prey is chosen and it must be run to ground and fed upon, to complete the rite. In the case of a pack, captured humans are usually let loose to run down. Even a captured enemy including other vampires are used.

### **The Rite of Death** (FOR USE IN DARK AGES AND MODERN NIGHTS)

Observing this rite during the winter months is reserved for the celebration of victory in a hunt, in battle but most importantly of your mortal death and transformation of your humanity.

This rite is performed with songs, dance and revelry. Howling and fire-dancing are prime examples. Again, a hunt will take place afterwards. It will follow quite similarly to the Rite of Blood.

### **Penance** (FOR USE IN DARK AGES AND MODERN NIGHTS)

When one falls following the Road of the Beast, and summarily loses Humanity to stains, there are several ways of regaining it and even excelling in it.

Sometimes it is difficult to perform a hunt and practice the way of the Beast. This can cause you to slowly lose yourself to it. The laws of the domain or city may prevent you from performing certain rites or the company you keep may not approve of your practices preventing you from performing your duties. The local magistrate may forbid its practice or it may be too dangerous to perform without repercussions.

Atonement and purification must be performed to regain the stains lost due to this. One such way of doing so may be to forsake all worldly possessions; money, weapons, even status. Giving it all up to get back to your roots will please your fellow packmates, the Warden and most importantly, the Beast.

Another is the quest. Once again, you may not use any earthly possessions and simply rely on your wits, tooth and claw. You are given a task by the Loremaster or even on your own volition, either way, the Beast is not fooled, it knows if your chosen quest is worthy. The task either chosen or given, may be to hunt a particularly dangerous prey or travel through werewolf territory, perhaps enter a Tremere chantry uninvited. Whatever it is should be incredibly challenging and represent sacrifice, pain and loss. A Warden may be needed to determine if the pilgrimage is worthy and if the Bestial is truly penitent.

Lastly is travel to holy places revered by those that follow the Road of the Beast. Long distance travel especially overseas by one of the Path of the Beast is going to be perilous at best. Once arrived at one these holy sites, meditation and the performance of one of the other Rites is performed. After which, the penitent pilgrim must still return to his Haven or Hunting Grounds.

### **New Background: Loremaster**

Much more prominent in Dark Ages used far less frequently or at all in Modern Times. A Loremaster must be chosen by a pack and can not arbitrarily become one.

As Loremaster you know all the Rites. You can perform them for a pack as if they were their own and count as a Touchstone rite. This is a 2-dot Background.

### **Warden**

A Warden's word is law and can not be disputed. If there is a leader within the Road, this is it. They are also guardians of Holy Sites as well as relics and secrets.

Typically in the Dark Ages, a Warden has no pack and lives a nomadic lifestyle. They exist sparingly few and far between, usually one per Domain, so as not to take the chance of entering another's territory. This is a 2-dot Background. A Warden gains 3 dice in any Social Combat when it involves other followers of the same Road. You also gain a +1 Status: Gangrel.