

Requiem 2020 pitch – From the Ashes

The Elysium stood empty, still except for the sound of a cane tapping on tiles. The outcast and the rebel stepped into the hall and looked around; they were truly alone now. The glittering parties and blood soaked rituals were a thing of the past. “It’s ours now. What’s next?” the rebel whispered. And the outcast became the visionary; they dreamed of their own glittering parties and blood soaked rituals, and could only smile.

“Depends on whether we survive to enjoy it,” the other said, as the roar of motorbikes broke the silence and a red-marked raider came through the window brandishing a crossbow.

Recently

Three months ago, Vampires suddenly with creeping horror found themselves unable to feed. They could hunt but the blood turned to thin vitae, gone almost before it was drunk. This was accompanied by a red sign, a large mark appearing somewhere upon their body.

It didn’t affect everyone at once. Some pointed to humanity and claimed it was a virus, some turned away from God and said he no longer had a use for the damned - Humanity was irredeemable. Others spread rumours about hunters and shadowy cults of demon worshippers and the enigmatic **VII**. Those who worked in visions said that a blood soaked woman walked among the garden of humanity and that she was consuming everything and leaving nothing for the kindred.

Whatever the cause, vampire society slowly collapsed and in its fall, new horrors were unleashed.

Some that were infected became prowling monsters of the night driven by base hunger, transformed into creatures half-beast and half-man. These creatures, spoken of as the **Crimson Draugar** in hushed whispers at court, are still recognisably old friends and allies. They lurk in the darkest places threatening to shatter the masquerade and attract the attention of well-meaning kine beset by these monsters that prey on them. Their name acts as a nod to both their savage madness and also to the physical transformation, the red sign creeping to consume their bodies entirely.

Others discovered that they could feed from the healthy, and have become slave-master or thrall to those free of the red mark. These relationships might be public, or secret, but either way they are viewed as dangerous for both parties. **Blood Bagging** has become a pejorative term for this kind of behaviour. Opportunistic slaving parties strike at Elysia and drag neonates away to blood markets, and Brood Masters create endless neonates to meet demand.

Nomads and those on the fringes of Kindred society have crept back into the towns. The anarchists, extremists of every flavour, and violent gangs with axes to grind now roam the streets at night looking to raise hell or raid the rack for sustenance. It has become a Mad Max, post-apocalyptic landscape hidden in plain sight amongst the lights, music and vibrancy of modern kine civilisation.

What's happening now

Some vampires proved immune to what was going on. The remaining groups have huddled together for protection, and the new social order is still shaking out. It is worst for the Carthians and the Invictus, suddenly finding themselves alone and without allies. The other covenants have struggled to find answers, putting their faith in science or religion even as their ancient rites have faltered. There is space now, room for new ideas and new philosophies to crack the established way things are done.

These new domains have tended to grow up in the middle of cities, places where there is suddenly a surplus of territory and feeding opportunities. Points of Darkness in a world increasingly lit with the light of the internet on screens and monitors, where privacy is a thing of the past.

In a city like Birmingham, Manchester or London there might be several of the new domains, but there is normally at least one to be found in each city. The wild places are now the domain of nomads, who stalk the roads and thorough-fares looking for their next victim.

But not is all a bountiful feast. The old society had made many deals, many compromises with humanity to place themselves as shadowy masters of politics, industry and the kine social structures. Without the numbers to keep them in place, vampires will need to make new deals.

Enemies stalk the night in the form of deformed monsters transformed by the plague, or raiding parties of vampires desperate to carve out their territory in this new frontier. Worst of all might be the doomsayer cults, groups who feel they have a vision for the new age and seek to recruit towards the formation of new Covenants. The most dreaded of these being the cult of the Red Queen.

Tone Notes

The focus of any Requiem game should be on ambition and a struggle against the Beast. This needs a context and I have picked personal survival and reconstruction after the apocalypse. The world should continuously fall apart as the entropic collapse of the old way sets in, and your players must fight to stop everything from falling down. So, at least at first, this Requiem game might feel a bit more like a darker Gothic Wild West - but we expect that to shake out after a while, and become more like a traditional Requiem game, only with some fresh new ideas.

Mechanics Notes

We will continue to use NWOD 1ed Vampire the Requiem and it's associated splat books. We will be running a lower XP version of the game, as we think this helps characters carve out niches, especially based on their Clan and Covenant bonuses.

How I envision the game working

Each domain will stand alone. There will be only shaky wider networks with the assumption that traditional networks have collapsed as a result of the Red Death. But players can recreate these institutions, or form brand new ones as the game proceeds. To aid in this we will make use of a Discord server where people can discuss their Requiems.

Plot will be local focussed but can draw on wider setting kits, with what happens in individual domains contributing to National level factions as they wax and wane. National events by their nature will therefore reflect these local contributions, and allow players to feel like movers and shakers in a world of their own definition.

There is only so much we can do to move away from the core setting, so the game must work on the normal expectations of Clan and Covenant to some degree and we will make sure that the core game can still just be stepped into.

All of the wider setting kits will contain both opportunity and risks to those who choose to engage with them.

I intend to create these in three phases over the next year. Clan and Covenant setting kits first, then new Antagonist and Environment setting kits second, followed by a third phase building on the first two and bringing in a wider world setting kit which will incorporate local ideas. This will be last to allow Local STs to develop their own part of this wider world. These will be accompanied by regular updates to the addenda which support the setting kits.

