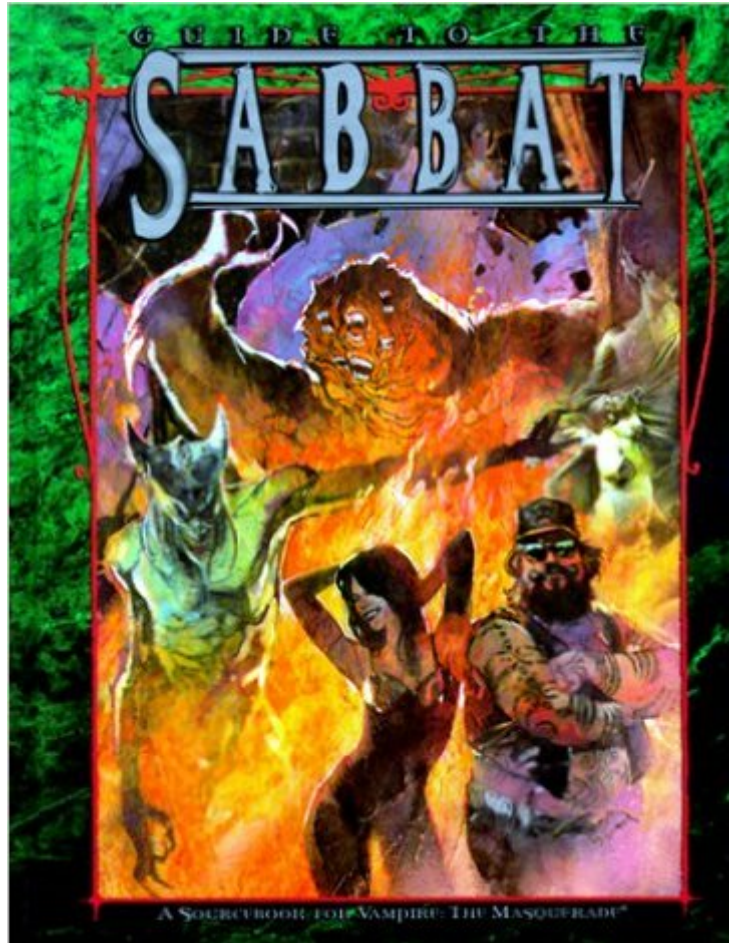


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Guide To The Sabbat: A Sourcebook For Vampire The Masquerade



Synopsis

The grotesque lords of humanity? The pitiful wretches of eternal hell? We are vampires, and that is enough. I am a vampire, and that is far more than enough. I am that which must be feared, worshipped and adored. The world is mine -- now and forever. No one holds command over me. No man. No god. No prince. What is a claim of age for ones who are immortal? What is a claim of power for ones who defy death? Call your damnable hunt. We shall see whom I drag screaming to hell with me. The Guide to the Sabbat examines the Sabbat exhaustively from the antitribu, or "anti-clans," that populate its ranks, to the terrifying Disciplines they use, to their methods of waging war on the Camarilla and Antediluvians alike. This book also explores the Sabbat's progress in its war effort, chronicling the Cainites' inexorable spread across the East Coast and back to their usurped territories in the Old World.

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Customer Reviews

It is a common and persistent misconception that Vampire characters and chronicles should be Camarilla by default. Maybe this is because the core rulebook outlines the Camarilla more thoroughly than other possibilities, or perhaps because Camarilla society is closest to human in ideology and behaviour. Either way, other storytelling options tend to be neglected, and none more so than the Sabbat. More than any other vampire group; the Sabbat is routinely labelled as the "bad guys". Most Storytellers present them as little other than marauding packs of bloodthirsty, monstrous, straightforward adversaries. Are they bloodthirsty? You're damn right. Monstrous?

Maybe. Straightforward? Hardly. If you've always found the Sabbat confounding and two-dimensional, this book will change that. The "Guide to the Sabbat" contains a wealth of information on Sabbat culture, lifestyle, philosophy, motivation, and behaviour. Included are useful guidelines for creating Sabbat characters, incorporating Sabbat into stories in a rich and interesting fashion, and developing and running Sabbat chronicles. This guide serves to show the depth and complexity of this misunderstood sect and reveals the many excellent storytelling opportunities it offers. In all, the book is handsome, well formatted, thorough, and entertaining. An extremely useful volume, it makes a necessary addition for any Vampire game.

Every now and then, the Sabbat gets mentioned in our game -- only mentioned because I really didn't have the tools to make them more than paper characters. Now I do. In fact, now I have more information on the philosophy, politics, and social lives of what might be considered "one-third" of the vampire population in terms of the major categories the undead can be placed into. I really liked the comparison between elder and younger Sabbat members because it shows some of the tensions in the Independent and Camarilla groups too. A lot of time is spent on how to make a Sabbat character more than a stereotyped killing machine and how to make a Sabbat story more than a murder spree. One huge disappointment was the repetition of information about the various clans in the Sabbat -- I think the two page summary might be better worked into the more general discussion of the clans so one doesn't have to flip back and forth so much. I also think some stories from the view of "allies, antagonists and others" would strengthen the good job done on describing Sabbat packs and Sabbat society in general.

The Sabbat are many things, mysterious and everpresent, violent and oppressive, exotic and different. These are not the Kindred of the hidden Camarilla, they are the Cainites who roam the streets. The Sabbat clans and bloodlines are given here in detail, save for those already in the primary Vampire sourcebook. Also included (and excellently done) are several bloodlines designed for non-player characters. Among these is the Harbingers of Skulls, an odd group of Cappadocian Elders who escaped the Giovanni purge. Their now-forgotten legacy is only hinted at in this book, following a powerful tradition of answering one question and opening two. The overall tone of this book is moving. Like its companions, it focuses on horror. But this is a whole different horror, from being buried "alive" to torturing mortals. It's a powerful guide to the darker half of the night, and an absolutely marvelous resource to anyone running a Sabbat chronicle.

If you're even remotely interested in the Sabbat then you should seriously consider getting this guide, as the core rulebook **barely** touches upon anything more other than Sabbat being "perceived as mindless savages and bloodthirsty fiends." This book is vital for players of Sabbat characters (and Sabbat-using Storytellers), even moreso than the Guide to the Camarilla is vital for players of Camarilla characters since much about the Camarilla is already covered in the core rulebook (but the Camarilla guide is still a nice book to have). Just about everything about the Sabbat is discussed in depth, like initiation, ritae and war tactics. Factions in the Sabbat are covered as well as individual political positions. A specifically-Sabbat method of character creation is presented and Sabbat-appropriate Abilities and derangements are also present. Many Sabbat character templates are listed, which are all extremely helpful (and pretty interesting). There are advanced Discipline entries, usually for ranks 6-9, as well as types of Disciplines not featured in the core rulebook. New shades of vampirism are presented here (though due to their awkwardness / susceptibility to abuse, not all are recommended as being playable): the twisted Blood Brothers, the ominous Harbingers of Skulls, the bizarre Kiasyd and the vengeful Salubri antitribu, as well as the gruff Panders, the Sabbat's own brand of Caitiff (who seem to have more status in their sect than the Camarilla Caitiff have in their own). Also, there are all the Camarilla clans' antitribu - excluding the Tremere antitribu (who do get a mention, however), for pretty permanent reasons. A really, really nice section takes up the burden of making Sabbat Chronicles something more than dice roll hack n' slash or rampant abuse of mortals and runs with it. It also talks about giving Sabbat characters greater meaning to their unlives than "the Camarilla hate you, so you must kill them" or any equivalent plot. I don't think it succeeds as much as it had probably hoped to, unfortunately - a lot of it borders on contradiction. (On a side note, some of the art is very **explicit,** but not much. There's really only one picture that came close to challenging my will power to not disgorge my last meal. I certainly can't say the stuff illustrated therein isn't **appropriate** for a sect like the Sabbat.)

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