



# WALKING THE DRAGON'S COILS

The ordo dracul  
stalks the night in  
vampire: the requiem

Clan, a Kindred's heritage in blood, is only part of what defines a character in **Vampire: The Requiem**, White Wolf's all-new game of contemporary horror. More important than heritage is whom a vampire associates with and just what she believes. These two concepts form the basis of covenants, large associations of Kindred who coexist and compete in a Prince's domain. Faith binds some covenants such as the zealous Lancea Sanctum. Shared hunger for power binds others, such as the strict Invictus. Somewhere in between stands the Ordo Dracul — the Order of the Dragon — a covenant bound by secrecy and the dread teachings of Dracula himself.

The Dragons believe that the curse of vampirism is but a hurdle in the path of achieving true power; that the Embrace is a judgment that can be overturned and even exceeded. Nothing, *nothing*, is permanent, the Order argues, not even the lingering undead that all Kindred experience. No known vampire has ever entirely escaped the Requiem through the Coils of the Dragon (as the Order's rites are called), but the Dragons have perfected ways of cheating many aspects of their curse. They are perfectly willing to admit that complete success could take centuries, if not millennia. Some crucial piece of knowledge must yet be missing, and with the world growing smaller and more integrated as technology uncovers more of it, that knowledge won't be long in coming.

Dracula himself hasn't been seen in over a century, but the Order is founded on precepts he set forth. The most widely accepted story of Dracula's origin is that God punished Vlad Tepes for his abuse of faith in mortal life. According to certain historical records, Tepes was appointed as a "defender of Christianity," a charge he then used as a means of advancing his own political agendas and as an excuse for atrocities. In addition to all his crimes against humanity, Dracula ultimately put his own desires before his holy oath, the act that Damned him. Indeed, Dracula acknowledges no sire.

what am i? i have been a tyrant, a warrior and one  
of the fallen on battle's field. i have been a christian and a  
wanderer and an enemy of god. i have begged and murdered,  
tortured and rescued, pledged loyalty and given treachery.

i have died and returned, and i drink hot blood.

my name is vladislaus, onetime prince of wallachia, onetime commander of armies. called tepes, called  
kozîglu bey, called dracula, i am now much more than once i was. perhaps much less, as well.

—rites of the dragon

## membership

The Ordo Dracul has a hierarchical structure unique to it, known internally as the Dragon's Tongue. The Order involves numerous rites and initiations, the completion of which symbolizes the member's passage from one "circle of mystery" or level of achievement to the next. Progression through the hierarchy seems to correspond to mastery of the Coils of the Dragon, but whether this is true or simply a non-member's misunderstanding remains uncertain. This structure also serves to protect the covenant's secrets. The Ordo Dracul is loath to let anyone, even low-ranking members, leave the faction. The higher one's rank in the covenant rises, the more she has invested and accomplished and, thus, the more reluctant she will (theoretically) be to leave.

The Ordo Dracul boasts members from all clans. The covenant hasn't seen that any single widespread lineage has any particular advantage over another. The decision to grant entry has more to do with a candidate's temperament and intellectual ability. The Dragons prize insight and ambition, but many of their members join the covenant to cheat the curse of undeath, pure and simple.

To join, a candidate must find a Dragon willing to serve as mentor — often a very hard task indeed. That done, the apprenticeship period begins. And because all members of the Ordo Dracul are meant to learn constantly, it never really ends. The Order observes "graduation" ceremonies from each level, and relishes the fact that even an elder might still be able to learn at the feet of a wiser and more powerful member of the Order (a fact that frightens the other covenants more than they'd ever admit).

## philosophy

The Ordo Dracul is as much a religious society as a secular one, but only insofar as the vampiric condition cannot be explained without the existence of God. Dragons respect and admire Dracula, but their order does not require fanatical devotion. Indeed,

the covenant's philosophies are as rigorously tested as any of its ceremonies, so the Dragons work their miracles without worship or reverence to a higher power. Respect, they feel, is enough. The main tenets of the Order of the Dragon are as follows:

- **Nothing Is Permanent:** Members of the Ordo Dracul know better than to consider themselves "immortal." Vampires do indeed die, and without benefit of plotting enemies or slaving werewolves. All it takes is a fire burning out of control or a miscalculation in determining the exact time of sunrise, and centuries of unlife and experience can come to an end. But the Dragons don't look at this fragility as a vulnerability. They regard their condition as mutable. After all, they reason, if God had truly wished for vampires never to change, He wouldn't have made the means of their destruction so readily available, and He certainly wouldn't have given any of them the ability to change their forms.

- **Change Must Have a Purpose:** Central to transcending the vampiric condition is an understanding of why it is necessary to do so. The Order looks at the Requiem as a challenge more than a curse, but its members never forget or deny that it *is* a curse. In researching and realizing the Coils of the Dragon, and thus changing themselves on a fundamental, mystical level, the Dragons work toward their ultimate goal of leaving their vampiric shells behind.

- **Understanding Before Action:** Every action has a reaction, and until a Dragon can understand the reactions that a given course causes, she is discouraged from taking action at all. This lesson is reflected most keenly in the Order's spiritual power. The Coils of the Dragon distinguish members from their peers very quickly, providing a superb object lesson in the nature of causality. The more power you gain, the less power you understand. Many Ordo Dracul mentors regard this as the harshest but most necessary lesson of the Requiem. If every action isn't guided by purpose, it soon spirals into entropy and eventually destruction.

## The coils of the dragon

Central to the Ordo Dracul is the philosophy of transcendence, the desire to rise above the limitations of the cursed vampiric form. Learning the Coils of the Dragon allows a Kindred to "cheat" certain aspects of the Requiem. By defeating these incarnations of vampirism, the Order believes it is on the right path toward eliminating or escaping vampirism entirely — with the goal of attaining the next level, whatever form that takes. The Coils of the Dragon include three distinct philosophies, each of which has three tiers. Members of the covenant can study any or all of the coils, but they recognize that no vampire has ever truly achieved mastery — at least, not to the Order's knowledge. One of the three Coils of the Dragon is detailed here.

### The coil of blood

Vampires must feed on living blood to survive, and only the weakest of the Kindred can draw sustenance from the blood of animals. The Coil of Blood seeks to lift this requirement, allowing the Kindred to feed on their own terms, rather than forever being slaves to their hunger.

**First Tier: Blood Sleeps Slowly** — The Dragon's undead body doesn't demand as much Vitae to animate itself as do those of other, less enlightened Kindred. The player need spend only one Vitae for his character to wake for a number of nights equal to the vampire's Resolve. So, a Kindred with a Resolve of 2 loses a Vitae every other night for rising.

**Second Tier: Blood of Beasts** — No matter what the vampire's Blood Potency is, she can take sustenance from animals and humans.

**Third Tier: Perspicacious Blood** — The character gains three Vitae for every two Vitae she takes from a human, and she receives double the Vitae consumed from Kindred or other supernatural vessels.

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vampire: the requiem (www25000; \$34.99; 280 pages) is available in August, alongside the world of darkness rulebook (www55000; \$19.99; 160 pages).

# Vampire

THE REQUIEM