

# **A Few Thoughts Regarding Violence in Vampire the Requiem**

## **Introduction**

It was not too long ago that a few Storytellers and players uttered concerns about the lethality of the Requiem combat system. Admittedly, my first thoughts were less than complimentary. Vampires are obviously rather unfriendly creatures by definition: they exist in defiance of death, possibly even in defiance of divine will. They parasitically feed on mortals and possess abilities that are gruesome perversions of magic, often used for unwholesome purposes. Their societies thrive on infighting and oppression and their eldest need to feed on the youngest to survive. The sheer scope of the vampiric existence is defined by the downward spiral, coming ever-closer to losing all semblances of humanity and control and degenerating into a frothing beast.

Of course vampires are lethal – they fight a battle against the odds, against the mortals who may discover them and whose technology and information dissemination gets ever-more sophisticated; against other supernaturals with whom they occasionally engage in territorial battles; against each other, locked in subtle plays for control and influence between covenants with diametrically-opposed philosophies. How can some of them not afford to improve their offense to a point where they can quickly deal with a threat endangering not only their existence but possibly that of their entire race?

Lethal combat, so I agreed (with myself, of course), was only natural. I envisaged scenes from sub-par movies, lone warriors sweeping through halls full of vampires looking at them with fear and envy, realizing the magnitude of their power. I imagined acrobatic vampires engaged in deadly duels with each other, slashing blades and booming shotguns. Then, slowly, reality sank in.

## **Why Vampires Rarely Fight**

The reason why combat is lethal in Requiem is because it's rare. Very rare, in fact: vampires do not, as a matter of everynightly life, engage in acts of violence, especially not violence against other vampires. This is a simple truth. There is no debate over this, no quibbling, no semantic picking-apart. This is a fact. The reason why they do not do this is because such violence tends to be lethal. Vampires often frenzy in each other's presence – less so in a LARP context, admittedly – because they consider each other deadly predators. In a fight, the beast rages, rising to the surface. You want to kill the other predator because he is a threat or a victim. The beast only has two modes of thought – fight or flight. Either you kill, escape, or die.

Let's revisit the scenario of cool ass-kickers brimming with weaponry. The biggest problem with that scenario is that the onlookers, awed by the protagonist vampiric

warriors, are little more than antagonist movie extras. The warriors are the cool protagonists. In LARP, everybody wants to be a protagonist – with a few notable exceptions. Everybody wants to be an awesome superhero in some way or another, perhaps not always in a martial sense but nonetheless unique and special. Everybody wants to be an offshoot of the Campbellian hero since you are pursuing your own story, your own character and your own goals. It's no fun being the feeble onlooker who marvels at the powerful warriors striding by. It's no fun watching, knowing that they could easily destroy you with a few slashes of their blade. It's no fun being weak. Ergo, many LARP characters are built to fulfill the need of being able to defend themselves or ideally being able to seriously hurt or kill others with as little effort as possible. The movies and other media depictions of heroic combat work very well because there are usually a small number of heroes – ideally only one – who overcome overwhelming odds due to their innate (or trained) ability. The protagonist triumphs over fate, often in a gory display of violence. In LARP, everybody can be the protagonist; everybody can access the skills that would make you triumph over evil. Everybody can be Harry Potter. But the problem is that everybody acts like a heroic protagonist, trying to 'win.' Of course you can't 'win' in the Requiem (although you may achieve many of your goals). Worse, you can't really triumph over fate: everybody is trying to do the same thing. Violent conflict brings these desires to a catastrophic clash where the heroes try to hit each other as hard as possible so they can come out on top. The dramatic thread unravels: we operate from the point of view of the first-person hero flick when we should be operating from the point of view of the multi-person collaborative play. Once you realize what the vampire paradigm is all about, the entire scenario collapses.

Since vampires are theoretically immortal, a vampiric life is worth a lot. Centuries of experience can be lost very, very quickly. Violence has a tendency to spiral, which the Requiem simply cannot allow. Yet with the webs of alliances between individuals, coteries and covenants, violence will spiral. Blood feuds will develop. Battles across entire states or even continents could conceivably reach cataclysmic consequences. Thus, naturally, preventing such a spiraling is of utmost importance in the Requiem, to the point where some vampires emphasize justice and the investigation of such activity above all else. The Traditions are sacred for a reason – not just because they make convenient dogma to keep down young vampires. Diablerie is wicked for a reason: in a society of diablerists, violence would reign supreme and many would fall to the beast, arguably risking exposing vampiric society in the most violent manner imaginable. There would be no stability, no law. Large-scale vampiric warfare is only one step below this horror scenario. As much as some would deny it, there is no doubt that inter-vampiric fighting has a tendency to cause collateral damage. Perhaps not always the destruction of buildings or cars, but quite conceivably of retainers, herds and allies: entire sections of society may be affected by vampiric warfare. Imagine an elder setting his influences in motion to use an entire city's police for no other purpose but to eliminate his vampiric enemies. Imagine the retaliation by his ancient enemies. Imagine the involvement of their allies, perhaps drawing in entire covenants that consider turning that city, region or nation into a battleground. Then some of them realize that the social powers of vampires could be put to good use, swaying other supernaturals to enter the fight on their side. Surely a pack of Werewolves, assaulting their enemies' strongholds at noon, would turn the tide? Surely the will-workers, mysterious

spellcasters whose powers appear nigh-unfettered could thwart those covenants relying on mystical power?

That, quite simply, must never happen. The Requiem is well-aware of the catastrophic consequences that open violence between vampires has. Sometimes it is restricted to a few deaths, sometimes it destroys whole Domains and sometimes it engulfs entire regions. Vampires die quickly, whether at the hands of their fellow Kindred, mortals, or other supernaturals. In a LARP setting, players can simply make a new character, often holding a grudge against the player who killed them. This is perfectly normal as few people possess a Gandhi-like ability to transcend violence and injustice against them. Yet violence is not part of the vampiric paradigm. Sure, a prince may make an example out of a Kindred ignoring the tradition, maybe cutting off his hand publicly. Sure, maybe an unruly neonate may be staked for a week or two to give him time to cool his heels. Diablerists are often persecuted to the death, and rightly so. And those who kill other vampires for no genuinely convincing reason should meet the same fate as diablerists.

Why, then, is violence significantly more common than it ought to be – and what can be done about it?

### **Breaking the Paradigm**

Quite simply, the knowledge that your martial ability may be sufficient to win a fight often encourages players to act in ways that are against the spirit of the paradigm. Similarly, although they may have a lot to lose in terms of XP, they can simply make another character. Since another individual's life isn't at stake – “just a character” – the barrier to violence is also much lower. Sure a character might die, but so what? They can make another one, right? And perhaps that guy simply deserved it. Storytellers, on the other hand, often allow players to do “what your character would be doing in this situation.” The dual forces of permissive Storytelling and players indulging in non-paradigmatic actions conspire to destroy the non-violent fabric of the Requiem environment.

As accepted as this may have been considered so far, it now needs to stop. It's difficult to change an entire mindset, of course, but the reality of the Requiem game that we are playing is that violence is not the first or second or even third resort. Especially in a lethal form, violence is the very last resort. Vampires don't start fighting, especially not with lethal weaponry. This is a ridiculously cartoony version of vampiric society that is more akin to a pure action movie or manga than to a game driven by socio-political interaction. Requiem is not a dungeon crawl; Requiem is not a John Woo movie; Requiem doesn't star Arnold Schwarzenegger; Requiem doesn't emphasize gunfire or swordplay over role-playing; Requiem is not a playground for violent impulses. There is room for all of those: very limited room. They can flavour the game, they can influence the atmosphere and they can even shape an entire storyline. But they are not the core of the game and they do not represent the style of play that should be predominant in Vampire the Requiem. In a limited, local game, this can work – you can flavour Requiem with violence and plenty of guns. In a distributed, global game, this can't work.

Suddenly your Storyteller receives twenty emails from players wishing to travel to your Domain so they can destroy your character because you killed their friend. Suddenly an explosion leveling a city block takes on dimensions that unravel the entire venue.

Vampire the Requiem is a modern storytelling game of gothic horror. Werewolf the Forsaken has the words ‘savage fury’ in its subtitle. Requiem does not. There is a reason for that. We can’t go on pretending that reason doesn’t exist. Various interpretations of ‘gothic horror’ exist, but I will focus solely on how this applies to conflict situations – for this is when players resort to violence: when conflict arises. Rather than hitting, staking, torporing or killing another character, vampires use other methods in the vast majority of conflicts. Violence should be reserved for crisis situations such as subduing a vampire in frenzy, restraining attackers, defending yourself, etc. Offensive violence or even lethal attacks should be reserved for dealing with vampiric criminals. The Requiem does not have any genuine precedents for attacking other vampires due to petty conflicts, minor (or even major) disagreements, philosophical covenant disputes or to avenge perceived slights. Such acts are simply absurd. It is a Storyteller’s right and duty in the Camarilla to stop a player who is about to engage in such acts and to ask if he has exhausted every other avenue of action and why this is a valid action for a vampire in the Requiem to take. It’s perfectly acceptable for a Storyteller to ask players not to engage in behaviour that is contrary to the spirit of the Requiem genre. Characters and concepts that don’t fit the genre or that are used disruptively can be removed from play or desanctioned. Doing so is not a valid reason for complaining about your Storyteller unless he’s not acting to protect the paradigm.

### **Appropriate Means of Vampiric Conflict**

How, then, do vampires avenge perceived slights? How do elder Kindred keep neonates in check? How does a prince enforce his will without wading knee-deep in blood? How do you deal with persistent troublemakers?

#### The Storyteller

The first and most obvious case is that of a vampire character who keeps doing things such as attacking others, disrupting the game and so on. Go to your Storyteller and ask why this is permissible since it’s obviously against the spirit of the Requiem genre. Unless the character has an overwhelming reason to ignore the paradigm (e.g. he’s under another character’s influence), no vampire character ought to willfully act in the manner described above, e.g. by violently attacking other characters. “That’s what my character would do” is a poor excuse for ignoring the paradigm and not a valid argument. If your Storyteller can’t take any direct action or if you are dealing with antagonistic storylines, you may have to use stronger methods. Note that Requiem provides two sects that are purely antagonistic in nature, who resort to violence and whose purpose is to engage in deeply anti-social activities (such as Satanism and murder). Note how they are meant to be shocking, disgusting and utterly alien to the vampires of the Requiem. If ‘normal’ Kindred act in any way in the same fashion as

those shocking antagonists, what exactly would be the point of demonstrating who the 'evil' people are in the first place, and showing what 'evil' actually means?

Storytellers are empowered to tell players that certain actions are inappropriate, and to work out ways how to come up with alternate solutions. It's never appropriate to level entire city blocks with explosives, no matter how vindictive or 'crazy' your character may be. It's never appropriate to perform destructive acts that are blatantly disruptive to the game because your character feels like it. Occasionally exceptions can be made, of course, but the Requiem paradigm isn't about vampires indulging in what is undeniably the mass destruction fantasy of a six year old boy.

### Social Recompense

Onto solving vampiric conflict: the first and most straightforward way of dealing with minor disputes is to demonstrate that a slight has been committed and to demand a boon from the vampire in question. If they are a normal resident of a normal Domain, they will most likely have some sort of Harpy or social authority, perhaps the prince himself. Demonstrate the slight and demand recompense – a boon. That vampire now owes you something. If the vampire refuses, ask the Harpy (or prince, if there is none) to determine the validity of your claim. No local resident can ignore the will of the Harpy or the prince. If they do, they're not a normal resident of the Domain. If a boon isn't sufficient, demonstrate the vampire's crimes to the prince and request punishment. Removal of a limb, staking for a while, public humiliation (e.g. being put in the stocks), perhaps a branding – those are all reasonable punishments that the prince (or sometimes a delegate such as the Master of Elysium or Sheriff) can enact.

But sometimes that sort of open solution doesn't work. Those are the cases when some players resort to simply beating up, torporing or killing an enemy. As we've already determined, that sort of aggression is largely unheard-of in the Requiem. It's acceptable as last resort when you're attacked (by staking or torporing) or in certain other crisis situations, but casual violence is not merely frowned on but actively persecuted. The first method you may resort to is to negotiate. Yes, negotiate. Find out if there's a deal you can cut and what they want. Vampires live forever and quite frankly they've got better things to do than to hit each other with big swords. Have a figure of authority supervise your deal, locally perhaps your prince or the highest-ranked member of both your covenants. If such a negotiation fails, try blackmail. Have the character followed to his haven and present evidence that you know exactly where he sleeps to him the next time you meet him. Demonstrating that you could have killed him but didn't may slow him down quite a lot, especially if he knows that your friends have the same information and that they'll come after him unless he stops antagonizing you. That failed as well? Go after his stuff. He has ghouls? Deal with them. He's got money, property, cars? Destroy them. Resources, Herd, Retainers – none of those things are free. Storytellers: If a player is directly targeting another player's Merits, don't allow the character to 'get them back for free.' This is a key part of the danse macabre – stripping away your enemy's mortal power.

If your enemy seems to ignore mortal power and influence, he's vulnerable. It's that simple. He has no way of defending himself from having his haven trashed on a regular basis. He has no way of stopping town authorities from evicting his herd or his ghouls; he has no way of avoiding having his property impounded; he has no way of stopping mortal authority from seizing the territory he wants. Some covenants treasure special locations of mystical or spiritual power. Without mortal influence, they can't stop you from having those places destroyed, seized, or simply built-over.

### Hit 'Em Where It Hurts - XP

Of course hurting your enemy's mortal influence is better done in a non-violent manner. What sort of vampire would go out and get his hands dirty killing a ghoul? Law enforcement can be used creatively to deal with your enemies, since they are incredibly keen on appearing pro-active in combating crime: buy some cocaine and leave it in a convenient location on a retainer's property, maybe hidden under his car or in his garden. Tip off the police and watch him being arrested and his property impounded. If you want to harm your enemy, destroy his haven. Not by burning it down but by hiding some drugs there and leading the police to it (anonymous tip-offs work wonders). The house will be impounded – the bigger and nicer it is, the more likely it'll look like the hide-out of a drug baron. Alternatively, make up some random crime and implicate him – it shouldn't be that difficult to fake IRS records, arrest records, warrants, etc. Find out who his Contacts and Allies are and weaken them, implicate them in crimes, make them unavailable to him. All of those things weaken a character significantly, especially since it costs a lot of XP to buy back the Merits you've lost.

In case destroying your enemy's property and Merits isn't enough, proceed to character assassination. Most vampires try to interact in some way with mortal society, either through a false identity, through their Merits, or simply because they occasionally want to be around humans and feed. The simplest means of disabling an enemy is to make him an outlaw. The drug-related methods above are always a nice way of keeping him busy but why not go one step above and make him an enemy of the state? With today's technology (or with vampiric Disciplines) it's not too difficult to make him look like a drug dealer, a terrorist, a child pornographer, or worse: having failed to pay taxes on time. It doesn't take a whole lot to put his picture on the front page of the local paper as the suspect in a particularly sordid crime. Work with your local ST and your RST to plant evidence; implicate your enemy in crimes that will make him wanted by the regional state police (e.g. regional FBI) offices and so on. It doesn't take a whole lot to get the regional FBI or Scotland Yard (or similar agencies) involved in a reasonably major case. In the US, other federal agencies have regional offices as well (e.g. Arms and Tobacco, Drug Enforcement Agency, etc) that your RST should be able to direct towards promising targets. With careful planning and a month or two of manipulation you may be able to get your target on 'Wanted by the Federal Government' posters in regional police stations – all without needing to involve the national storytelling staff. Those usually come with a reward for tipping off the police. From there it's only a small step to get pretty much anyone to betray your enemy to the police – or your enemy's allies, if that's whom you targeted. Particularly bothersome is the freezing of all assets,

confiscation of houses, cars etc. in many federal cases where money is involved. Suddenly his 15-point haven, snazzy car and jet and Resources 5 are worthless until he's cleared his name. Which may be quite some time, considering he has real trouble showing up to hearings; it gets even worse when he is meant to be arrested but has to flee, since he'd otherwise ash in prison during the day.

### Real Vampiric Warfare

If you're not satisfied with turning your enemy into a homeless, penniless chump on the run with no friends or allies remaining, proceed to vampiric warfare. By this we mean real vampiric warfare, not the dim-witted example of a few knuckle-dragging simpletons pounding the hell out of each other. It takes absolutely nothing to be a thug: the dumbest, least capable being can simply look at a character sheet and declare a test pool to hit an opponent. It's not clever, it's not imaginative, and it's definitely not vampiric: it's a pathetic testimony of a player's lack of ability to play the game, plain and simple. The sole example of a knuckle-dragging violent simpleton who likes to hit people and break things in the Requiem NPC examples is the Belial's Brood thug.

Real vampiric warfare is the subtle manipulation of Requiem society and individuals. The simplest but also most direct method is of course the use of Disciplines.

Probably the most powerful Discipline at engaging in non-lethal vampiric warfare is Animalism – easily the most versatile and destructive power in the vampiric arsenal. The two sides of Animalism are controlling the wild and possessing an animal body. Whilst in animal form, you can do a vast amount of utterly ridiculous things, since it's possible to possess almost any type of beast. Surveillance is a fairly basic example – possessing a variety of animals allows you to inspect almost any aspect of an enemy's haven, following his Retainers, finding out about his contacts, monitoring pretty much any and all aspects of his life – and acting on it. Since animals are largely unaffected by vampiric Disciplines save for Animalism, it's possible to overwhelm an enemy with the sort of pest he can do almost nothing about. The snooty Daeva who's been making your life hell suddenly has his entire existence questioned when his parties are overrun by hordes of rabid rats. Relying on his herd and his social power has become useless. The city council starts tearing down buildings because they keep being infested by plague-bearing animals. A vampire's close friends start being bitten by rabid dogs appearing out of nowhere (death by rabies is incredibly dreadful). Vampires start being pestered by random animals attacking them and harassing them at all times – even in public, threatening breaches of the Masquerade but not quite getting there. It's nice that vampires now drive anywhere or even possess private jets; it's not so nice that cars are vulnerable to animals surreptitiously chewing through everything in the engine compartment or even the brake lines. It'd be particularly annoying if a small animal were to chew through the brake lines in the middle of a trip. The uses for animalism are almost endless. A clever vampire will disguise himself, making it impossible for an animal to recognize who gave it a command – not that most small animals could recognize someone after a few hours, anyway. Most rodents etc. have no real medium-term or long-term memory whatsoever and no genuine means of distinguishing between

several creatures not of their species. Aside from special senses – e.g. dogs sniffing out and remembering scents – one human is like any other to most animals. There's very little that can't be done with animals, from simple harassment to vicious attacks. Unlike most other types of attacks, most vampires are relatively helpless against animals, especially during the daytime.

Majesty and Dominate are two Disciplines that can be used in a very obvious and very brutal manner. Sometimes that's exactly what's needed. If you're not worried about an enemy's social standing, you can simply manipulate him to become inoffensive to you. The many ways this can be done are left as an exercise to the reader; however one must always remember that open offensive Discipline use is probably as frowned-upon as open violence. Using Dominate to force another vampire in good standing to go humping a dog is not just ridiculous but plain inappropriate for the Requiem setting. Vampires don't enact in such public use of Disciplines for several reasons: first of all you don't want everybody to know what you can do; secondly you don't want to cause a crisis situation where another vampire feels so defensive that he resorts to violence (see above); thirdly you should be punished by most princes and their officers for blatantly engaging in the sort of act that disturbs the peace and causes conflict in a Domain.

Sometimes using Disciplines to indirectly achieve your goals appears too simplistic. If vampires could just destroy each other with supernatural powers, there wouldn't be much point to the political interplay of the Requiem. Destroying the standing and status of your enemy is probably more effective than anything else: if he is seen as an idiot or even a criminal, having breached the traditions, then he becomes a liability in your Domain, potentially shunned, ridiculed or even banned from the city. The most straightforward method is by making your enemy look stupid in the eyes of the prince or harpy: set him up. Make him look as if he's complicit in breaching the traditions, badmouthing the city authorities, plotting against the status quo. Commit some heinous act and then implicate him in it. Steal some of his property and have it concealed at the scene of a crime so it can be found. Make it look as if he's breached the Masquerade and is about to bring down mortal authorities on everybody due to his stupidity. If he is in a covenant that emphasizes spiritual or religious principles, make it look like he's secretly neglecting or breaching those values.

### Ties of Blood

If all else fails, vampires resort to the vinculum – the blood bond – to tie other vampires (or their minions) to them. This should be much, much, much more common than lethal violence against another vampire. If you are considering killing or torporing a vampire, determine whether you can fully bond him instead (unless he's an obvious vampiric criminal, such as a diablerist). Find out if he has strong emotional ties to anyone, e.g. through Dominate or Telepathy and if he has drunk their blood several times. If you've established that you can fully bond them, simply do so. Ideally keep them subdued during that period so they can't screw things up. And then let them continue playing their character as usual, without requiring anything special or unusual from them – no endless fawning, nothing that'd make a player retire a character rather than continue

playing it. Some players will claim that they'd rather kill off their character than continue playing it if it gets bonded. This is a gross misunderstanding of the Requiem setting: being bonded doesn't mean losing your entire free will or becoming a slave. You should be able to continue playing your character as normal, and ideally nobody will find out about it either unless a true crisis arises. Vampires don't go around boasting that they've established ties of blood over another Kindred; not only does this show their hand ("Hello, these are my loyal minions") but it also devalues the strength of alliances and causes potential aggression from those who valued the now-bound vampire as an ally themselves. Covenants do not normally engage in open warfare because one of theirs has been subjected by the vinculum by a vampire belonging to another covenant, but unless the prince openly approves of the bond, they may very well seek revenge, for instance by retaliating in the same fashion. As usual, outright violence is the last resort as it presents an escalation unacceptable in the Requiem.

### Storyteller Supervision

As already suggested, Storyteller supervision is key to all of this. Without Storytellers ensuring that the shared universe our characters inhabit isn't violated by players, either unaware of the paradigm or in willful breach of it, there is little hope that the game will retain a high standard. You, the Storyteller, are in charge. If a character is about to do something completely uncharacteristic for the environment that he's in, pull the player aside and talk to him about it. In addition, talk to the players whose characters were about to be affected by it. Let them know that you asked the player not to act on the character's violent impulse and tell them to react peacefully, as well. Nothing is worse than asking a player not to do something violent and then having that character killed by those who would've been affected otherwise. You're responsible for stopping this.

Some players will refuse to play or complain if their characters are bonded, if they are under Dominate commands, etc. Some won't portray a Forgetful Mind accurately or they'll conveniently overlook their Entrancement. You have the right and responsibility to check that this is done properly. "My character wouldn't really do this" is not a valid excuse because the whole point of mind-affecting Discipline is that they change what your character will do. Retiring a character because "it's become unplayable now" is a weak excuse in the vast majority of cases. Role-playing is not about assuming a role and playing it solely as you see fit. Role-playing is a collaborative act of improvisation acting, reacting to others and defining your role and your character as the story progressed. It's not about being the stoic hero whose demeanor never changes and who wins at the end of the story. The hero changes, the mask slips, your behaviour adapts to what occurs in this shared universe we all inhabit. If you don't understand that, you won't have too much fun role-playing.

Finally, Storyteller supervision ensures that genuinely disruptive characters can and will be removed from play. If a character is discovered who is truly problematic, e.g. by causing non-stop disruptions, blowing things up, shooting people, etc. – let your players deal with him if they can't do anything else. Sometimes it is necessary to show that

hostile elements aren't tolerated. There is no reason why a prince or sheriff would accept having an explosives-happy neonate ruining their Domain.

### For the Good of the Story: For the Good of the Game

Perhaps the oldest mantra that Storytellers tend to repeat is "do what's best for the story." Herein lies an essential truth every single Storyteller and player has to remind themselves of every time he does something that could disturb the game: is what I am doing good for the story, and if so, is it good for the game? Sure, some actions are good for your story – bursting through a door, guns blazing, killing everybody in sight. That's a nice story, and maybe it even works occasionally. But most of the time, this isn't what Requiem is about: the vampire universe deals with minor gains, small victories – and with only a very few of them being bloodthirsty battles. What is good for the story? What's good for the game?

Your actions, quite simply, determine the progress of the story and ultimately the quality of the game. Act responsibly – do what's best for the game. Repeating that you've paid your \$20 so your character is entitled to act as you fit isn't only irresponsible but it's downright anti-social: you're denying other people the right to enjoy a story because you'd rather do whatever you damn well please. The more people act this way, the more acceptable it becomes to act irresponsibly and disruptively. The more people argue that using a power just because it's in the books is perfectly acceptable – after all, using powers isn't 'abusive' – the more the game degenerates and the more the barrier to acceptability is lowered. Soon enough people will throw burning grand pianos from buildings to crush their vampiric enemies: after all, if someone else did it first and the Storyteller didn't do anything about it, it's become acceptable. If someone in another region does it, then we can't not let our players do it. That would mean that they are denied an abuse of powers that's acceptable elsewhere.

This slippery slope fallacy is the single biggest source of destructive potential in the game: storytellers who refuse to show backbone and stand up for what is right - a shared game that can be enjoyed by everybody - denying abusive players their 'right' to behave disruptively; players who see others 'getting away' with bloody murder and thus assume that it's acceptable behaviour that can be imitated without fear of repercussion. The silent majority of members is increasingly disgusted by anti-social behaviour from a small number of abusive trouble-makers.

This must stop. This is where we draw the line. Print this out. Take it with you to your next game. Don't back down. Don't be cowed. Don't let any loud people back you down because they may have been in the Club longer than you. Don't let back-biting online communication deter you from doing what is right. Don't accept Storytellers who look away when the game is being destroyed before your very eyes. That lot has done enough harm – and they must be told.

This is our game, our club, *and by God you can't have it.*

**- Alex T., Camarilla Master Storyteller, 2005**