

Clan Guide: Tremere

Introduction

Tremere. Immortal blood mages whose reputation inspires fear of their power and disdain for their treachery. And that's from both players and storytellers. Truth be told, playing one should never be a decision made lightly. The Tremere represent a series of contradictions. They are both rigid and flexible in concept. A bit of homework comes with the Tremere clan to understand what they're really about and how you can fit in. In the following material you will find answers that help define what make Tremere truly unique to portray. You will also find a wealth of information gathered from multiple canon sources to provide you with additional material suitable for building backgrounds and enhancing roleplaying opportunities.

Welcome to the Pyramid.

Culture

Clan Tremere holds a position of respect and fear in our game. Empowered by their political victory banning all blood magic they do not explicitly sanction, the clan enjoys tremendous power and tremendous responsibility. Members of Clan Tremere do twice as much work as other members of the Camarilla, maintaining the social status quo with deft political moves and maintaining the front lines against criminals the Camarilla has scattered to the winds.

To that end, the clan's culture is one of power and vigilance. The clan strives to project an image of power and control, benevolence and harsh sanctions, social poise and deadly magical ability. It is not secret that the Tremere believe it should have been their clan, not the Malkavians, that first began rooting out the Inconnu. The clan will not tolerate playing catch-up to another clan again.

Tremere Kindred can expect to be judged more harshly by their clanmates than the rest of the Camarilla, as they have made major gains in recent nights and must not allow those gains to slip through their fingers by being careless. The clan is secretive, insular and protective of its members, but it does not tolerate failure – there is too much at stake. Tremere Kindred must be socially adept, mystically skilled and well-versed in the esoteric. Much is demanded of them, but the rewards the clan bestows on its favored are well worth the price.

Due to the insular and hierarchical nature of Clan Tremere, its members have to be extra careful to maintain their social veneer. Many secrets must be kept confined by the Tremere, largely for the protection of the Camarilla and its members. The trouble with secrets is that they are discovered. Perhaps the most difficult battle Clan Tremere faces on a daily basis is the war against its own image. Any Tremere that goes out into public needs to be extra careful to at least appear to be an active, useful and preferably friendly member of the social community. They trade boons, making sure they owe enough that it is too expensive to kill them, and that they have enough to pull strings when they need to. The truly great Tremere will even have people believing that they are genuinely helpful and friendly, regardless of the true motivations behind the masquerade.

Structure

The Pyramid

One of the greatest strengths of the Tremere clan is its hierarchy. The clan is exceptionally organized compared to many others, and this organization gives it strength in times of trouble. The clan is nominally led by Tremere himself, who is the apex of the Pyramid, though none save the Councilors have contact with him. The seven Councilors oversee the Pontifices, who oversee the Lords, who oversee the Regents, who oversee the Apprentices. Ideally, each superior supervises seven Tremere of lesser rank, but in practice these numbers are more fluid. In places where there are many Tremere a Lord may have more than seven regents, and in many places they have less. There are always openings, and room for advancement for those Kindred with the ambition to act and the skill to avoid getting caught. Within each rank seven circles of

mystery, with a greater number of circles denoting superiority.

Local Politics

Most often, Tremere at the local level will be familiar with a Regent that oversees their local Chantry. That Regent will oversee Apprentices of various circles, all of whom will likely be competing for the Regent's favor (or the Regent's job). Tremere that find themselves in cities lacking a Regent or many other members of the clan may end up being assigned to report to a nearby Regent, but the clan strives to assign local Regents whenever it can (the better to monitor Apprentices). Interaction with Lords and Pontifices will be a rarity for most Tremere, and those that have the privilege will soon discover that having an even more dangerous and canny superior constantly watching them is a nerve-wracking experience that will never end.

Factions

Clan Tremere has many houses and societies within it. Some houses are simply a handful of like-minded Tremere who like to discuss philosophy and Thaumaturgy together. Other Houses are more robust and have a specific focus or drive in unlife. These are a few examples of large Houses that already exist, but many others exist in both canon and will evolve through player collaboration.

House Ouroboros

A faction created in the mid 1800s, House Ouroboros rose after the Camarilla truly rose to primacy over the Kindred world. Composed mostly of Ancillae that spent the majority of their unlives struggling against threats to clan and sect, these Kindred have seen the power of a united Camarilla and have pledged themselves fully to it. These Kindred still follow the Code of Tremere, and are loyal to their clan. They believe that the goals of the Camarilla intersect with the goals of the Tremere clan, and that supporting the Camarilla keeps the Tremere clan safe and in its present position of power. These Kindred work within the Camarilla system of prestation, hoping to pull off further political victories that increase clan power and prestige. These Kindred work within the system to elevate the clan, to protect Tremere that are less skilled at Camarilla politics than they (for a price), and to eliminate their rivals using Camarilla laws and Camarilla pawns (though they never take such action if they believe they will be caught). The Kindred of this house are ruthless politicians all, and have one overriding goal: to see the Tremere leading the Camarilla.

House Apotheosis

Rising out of the Children of the Pyramid and the Elite in the early 1900s, House Apotheosis believes that the ultimate victory of the Tremere over their many enemies is proof of the superiority of the Pyramid, Tremere and the clan as a whole. As a result, these Kindred are very loyal to House and Clan, though their loyalty extends only so long as they believe their superiors and peers serve the will of the Pyramid (if not, they are duty-bound to replace those who weaken the Pyramid). These Kindred seek to make the Tremere clan as powerful as it can possibly be and will take whatever steps they can to see that happen, up to and including entering very grey areas of Camarilla law, though they will avoid doing anything that would weaken the clan (such as actually breaking laws and bringing down Princely wrath or worse). These Kindred work to gather very detailed information on Kindred of all other clans, the better to allow the Tremere to know their rivals and prepare for potential conflict with them. This kind of espionage is a hallmark of this faction, and their files on rival Kindred are only slightly less detailed than those the Nosferatu maintain. These Kindred are especially ruthless judges of their clanmates, and will work to undermine and demote those that injure the clan. They also work especially hard to eliminate those who practice the forbidden magic of the independent and Sabbat clans, reasoning that each practitioner they eliminate makes their clan, their magic, and Tremere himself more powerful. Some of the founders of this faction are relatively old, and remember a time before the Camarilla when all the clan had to carry it through dark times was skill, unity and willpower.

House Icarus

Rising out of the Transitionalists in the mid 1990s, House Icarus constantly pushes the boundaries of Tremere knowledge and vampiric power. Many of the Kindred in this faction are young, lacking the memories of the long night and the precipice of extinction the clan once stood on. Many of these Kindred

have known little but Camarilla power, and have taken the clan's authority to sanction blood magic to (they feel) a logical conclusion: anything they permit is acceptable. While these Tremere avoid breaching the Code of Tremere (unless they are sure they can get away with it and the rewards are too good to pass up), they constantly push themselves to improve Thaumaturgy and their overall magical prowess. Many members of this faction attempt to befriend Setites and Giovanni, or at least make business partners of them. Some even study the magics of the Assamites, Setites and others, often justifying doing so with some outwardly noble goal involving "better understanding our enemies and turning their power against them." The truth, however, is that these Tremere seek ever-greater power for power's sake, and care only for advancing their own power, both political and magical.

Astors

Clan Tremere serves as the Thaumaturgy Police, but who watches the watchers? Astors are the internal affairs of the Tremere clan. There are very few Astors; most Lords do not have an Astor among their subordinates, at least not that they are aware of, and they would not have the authority to command them as an Astor even if they did. If a Lord desires the services of an Astor they must request it of the Pontifex of Astors, and hope that requested such aid isn't seen as a sign of their own weakness. Astors are only called into action for extreme problems or when those of extreme importance have need of them. In many cases, an Astor will be sent to investigate rumors of corruption within the pyramid. They usually arrive incognito under the guise of a simple personnel transfer. Astors do not announce their authority, or even their presence. Wait, watch and learn are among their core tenants. Once an Astor has confirmed a case of corruption, they report it to the Pontifex of Astors, who then arranges a Tribunal (without informing those who will sit in judgement what the case is about). The accused is then unknowingly invited to attend. The Pontifex presents the evidence gathered by the Astor, the target is typically determined to be a Rogue (assuming the Astor's information is determined to be accurate by the Tribunal). Once a Tremere is declared Rogue, Tremere are required by the Oath to terminate him, which is usually accomplished on the spot. An Astor's other duty is to track down and terminate Rogue Tremere that have eluded other forms of authority.

Astors live a double life; most of the time they are indistinguishable from any other Tremere. They are Apprentices and Regents, they attend gatherings and vie for power just like any other Tremere. They obey their superiors, file reports and engage in Thaumaturgical research just as they are expected to. Only on rare occasion will they be called to their other duties, rooting out the corruption, or hunting down a known Rogue Tremere. If they do their jobs correctly, no one will ever know they are Astors, except the Pontifex that commands the Astors.

What to Expect

Members of Clan Tremere should reasonably expect to be involved in plotlines involving mystery, magic and the Kindred condition. The Tremere are experts on things arcane, and their libraries are vast and filled with forbidden knowledge. When Sabbat blood magic is causing havoc in the city, the Prince will turn to the Tremere for help. When the Assamites are using powerful rituals to harry their Camarilla prey before they go in for the kill, the Tremere will be there working a counter ritual. When a Kindred displaying unusual powers of the blood shows up in the domain, the Tremere will be called upon to investigate. Whenever something unusual or mystical happens, Tremere players can expect to find their characters on the front lines.

Beyond magic and mysteries, the Tremere will also likely be involved in politics. The Tremere clan is one of the more political and social clans, and will keep itself busy in Camarilla politics. Players will be forced to choose between following Camarilla rules and Clan rules, between the path to power in the Camarilla and power in the Clan, and so on. Walking this fine line can be a difficult thing, and many players should expect it to cause conflict between their characters and others. The Tremere clan must remain politically strong and magically useful, because this is what gives it the position of fear and respect it enjoys and what keeps it in the Camarilla. Without political power or magical supremacy, the clan would be cast adrift and would discover how many of its enemies have long memories and plenty of time to plan their revenge.

Players, in addition to being involved in the above, should expect to be involved in clan life. They should expect to be in semi-regular contact with their superiors and inferiors, and may likely share a living space with them at the local

chantry. They should expect to supervise and give orders to inferiors and give reports to their superiors. Reports should typically be given to superiors quarterly (though significant emergency information should be reported immediately), and should provide sufficient information to help superiors understand the resources they have at their disposal and how those resources might be best used. It isn't uncommon for canny Tremere to leave out a few details here or there to keep rival Tremere unaware of their true power or to make them look foolish because of a "careless" omission. Leaving too much out will make superiors think a character is useless, and might result in menial assignments, intense training, dangerous missions suited for an expendable asset or anything else under the sun – it all depends on the superior. This is simply another fine line that Tremere characters – and their players – must learn to walk. A superior that demands reports on anything other than unlife-threatening emergencies more frequently than once per quarter is being unusually draconian, and will likely find themselves schemed against and replaced by a much more moderate clanmate.

Major NPCs

Tremere: Rumors persist that Tremere himself heads the clan, communicating his orders to the Council of Seven, which in turn relays them to the world. None claim to have seen Tremere or to have communicated with him directly, but his influence is nonetheless felt in the blood of every member of the clan. Whether or not he still exists is a mystery known only to the Council, and they see no need to explain such mysteries to their lessers.

Etrius: The right hand of Tremere, Etrius leads the clan in his stead, serving as the most powerful member of the Council of Seven. When Etrius speaks, the clan listens. Etrius only communicates with the Pontifices he supervises except in times of dire need, when he then speaks with the voice of the Council to every member of the clan. Those that fail to heed such dire commands soon receive a summons to Vienna to explain their failure in person. None return. Etrius is a major force in the clan-loyal faction. He has recently been considering joining House Apotheosis, and should he deign to do so, his influence would very likely establish a position of supremacy for the faction (or, at the least, make it very difficult to challenge).

Masika St. John: This innovator founded House Icarus, and has been the leading voice since its inception. Constantly seeking ways to improve the clan's magic, she bends rules and takes risks... but they pay off. After developing the Path of Technomancy, she continued her work, developing new rituals and learning more than she ever thought possible about Thaumaturgy. Her pioneering research has made her enemies but has also given her political clout and made her a capable mentor. What she plans to do with all this new-found power is something she keeps to herself.

Anastasz Di Zagreb: Perhaps the most vocal member of House Ouroboros, he is rumored to have nearly become the Tremere Justicar in 1998. He is seen as reaching far above his station given his age and strength of his blood. Whispers behind closed doors indicate that he is the political face of Lord Jean St. Frederique of Paris.

Ranks, Circles and Responsibilities:

Defining exactly what each Circle in each Rank means is a lesson in folly. Every chantry that's been raised by clan Tremere serves a distinct purpose. And each of those chantry's Regents is a little different from each other chantry's Regent. The same can be said for each Lord that has promoted those Regents, and for those above the Lords.

That said, there are common elements frequently found across the ranks and circles of the pyramid. And with Apprentices being the most numerous, they get the most definition.

Apprentice, First Circle and Second Circle- Commonly these are the Fledglings within the clan. These are the newly embraced who have just given the oath and drunk from the cup, or in rare cases, more experienced members of the clan who have been demoted to the lowest rank as a form of punishment. The apprentice is not allowed to focus on his own personal projects, and instead is conscripted to learn from and assist more experienced Magi.

Apprentice, Third Circle and Fourth Circle- The title of Magus is bestowed upon this rank of Apprentice. Those at this level are now considered responsible enough to conduct their own magical experimentation and learning with the approval of the Regent. At this point the Magus is trusted to act independently in the best interest of the Clan.

Apprentice, Fifth Circle and Six Circle- Many apprentices at this level of advancement are often tasked with teaching

and supervising the activities of the lower-ranked members of the Chantry. These ranks are filled with the more promising Neonates and most of the clan's Ancillae, along with Elders who never progressed into the higher circles.

Apprentice, Seventh Circle- For many in clan Tremere, this is the furthest they progress in rank. At this point, their chantry Regents can no longer promote them, and they must wait until a Lord makes positions available in the pyramid for new Regents and promotes them. It is also whispered that some A7s have dueled Regents in certamen when there were no openings for advancement, and that the loser then returned to lower Apprentice ranks while the victor took/kept the Regent title. A Regent may refuse such a challenge if they desire, though the realm's Lord may take this for a sign of weakness.

Regents- Among Regents the Circles of Mystery continue, but are more symbolic of trust and accomplishment. Regents of the First and Second Circle are still getting their feet under them and are likely to receive more oversight than Regents of higher rank. Regents of the Sixth and Seventh Circles are often given side projects by a Lord which extend throughout a realm. These projects serve as a test to separate those able to lead a realm from those who are better served to lead a chantry. Additionally, there are important details concerning all those of Regent rank.

Typically, the Regent of a chantry is the only one who can promote those under his authority. And without need of a tribunal, the Regent of a chantry can also demote those directly underneath him. These actions may only be vetoed/changed by a Tremere holding a rank above Regent (Lord, Pontifex, etc) in that Regents chain of command. A Regent may only advance a Tremere under his authority up to Apprentice of the Seventh Circle.

A Regent is responsible for calling together convocations. These are regular meetings for all in a chantry and can run from a simple rant to an elaborate ritual in which current and future projects are discussed.

Lords- Not much needs to be said of this rare and shadowy rank. The Circles of Mystery gague how well respected they are in comparison to the other Lords under their Pontifex. Lords often have their own personal chantries where they can pursue whatever mystical experimentations they desire in secrecy. They can also surpass the usual chain of command to speak directly to apprentices further down their line of command. They also carry the authority to demote Apprentices and Regents below them who forget their place, without the need to call a tribunal to take action.

Tribunals:

“When a Tremere becomes a threat to secrecy, manages to seriously confound a clan-important project or just needs a good public thrashing, the elders call for a tribunal.” Clanbook Tremere, p. 39

The tribunal serves a dual purpose for Clan Tremere. It serves as an opportunity for those who have overstepped their authority or good sense to be punished within the Code of the Tremere, and it allows for the Clan to shape the laws of its region through updates to the Peripheral Code.

Once a year each Lord calls a formal tribunal. Many Tremere attempt to attend the event to hear clan-wide changes firsthand. Some also save up special grievances and try to have them aired at this time. Beyond this social event, a tribunal can be called any time there are enough Regents within an area to sit upon it. Members of these regional tribunals are selected by the ruling Lord (the Council amended this in the Peripheral Code), who elects those that will represent a balance of the Tremere across the territory where the dispute/ruling takes place.

Common elements to all tribunals are: There must be 3 or more Regents to convene a regional tribunal (amended through the Peripheral Code, which had always required 7 or more), The Lord takes the title of Praeco and does not vote during the tribunal except to break ties.

It is not unheard of for a Pontifex or even a Councilor to call for a Tribunal when a matter of extreme importance is at hand. During these instances, the Pontifex or Councilor who called for the Tribunal sits as the Praeco.

The Peripheral Code:

The Peripheral code is relatively obscure and many are unfamiliar with what it is, let alone how to implement it in game. The simple answer is that the Peripheral Code contains the bylaws and amendments that guide a region in how

they interpret and implement the Code of the Tremere. Every major ruling that has impacted the region is included in the Peripheral Code. It sets the internal precedent within the clan for an entire Region. Sometimes those with enough political power will manipulate the Lords of many (or all) of the Regions to implement the same rule, effectively establish new laws for the bulk of the Clan.

How to get a ruling entered into the Peripheral Code so it becomes law for the entire clan: Simple, have it voted upon and approved in a tribunal. The Peripheral Code is one of the biggest role-playing event tools available in Clan Tremere. Every Tribunal is an opportunity to make history and modify the rules just slightly.

By far the biggest advantage the Peripheral Code allows is altering the structure of the Tremere hierarchy to fit with the needs of our chronicle. And it does this in a way that makes all the changes fit with the canon material. As such, though Clan Tremere have a need to break things down to fit within region and domain, the Peripheral Code can allow for such things.

Tremere Glossary:

Many are the terms used exclusively within Clan Tremere. Here then, are a few of the more interesting ones a Tremere might come across.

Archivist- Title given in a chantry to a Tremere responsible for maintaining chantry records.

Castellan- Chantry title for the Tremere responsible for maintaining the structure's defenses and overseeing the duties of the non-kindred staff located there.

Certamen- Archaic dueling custom dating to the pre-Kindred days of the clan. It takes place over the course of a night within a chantry. Lords preside over Regent duels, Pontifices over Lords, and so on. It is used to settle challenges of leadership authority, provided the challenger is of the same rank (though not necessarily Circle). Unnecessary challenges cause the one who would preside over the Certamen to demote the challenger.

Convocation- A chantry meeting called by the presiding Regent. Typically held once a month, though Regents may hold them more frequently for those Apprentices of lower circles.

Grayface- Vulgar Argot. Often used by younger Tremere to refer to clan elders and those in the higher ranks.

High- Further title accorded to those who have achieved the 6th or 7th Circle in their current rank (High Apprentice, High Regent, etc).

House and Clan - Archaic term, used to denote clan Tremere as a whole.

Magus- Archaic term formally used to identify a kindred thaumaturgist from a mortal one. Also used as an informal title by those Tremere who have attained rank of Apprentice of the 3rd or higher.

Peripheral Code- Body of laws amended to the Code of Tremere over the centuries.

Praeco- (Latin; herald) The eldest Tremere who leads a tribunal and votes only to break ties.

Procurer- Chantry member who obtains special ritual ingredients, arcane texts or vessels.

Realm - The territory a Lord oversees.

Rite of the Cup- Also simply called The Rite. Name of the ceremony wherein a recently embraced Kindred undergoes the ritual of the Transubstantiation of Seven and becomes a true member of Clan Tremere.

Sentinel- Title given to chantry Tremere who monitor mortal, witch-hunting groups or other occult activity in the chantry's locale.

The Principles- Common elements present in the workings of Thaumaturgy. Blood, Will, Knowledge and Identity

comprise the Major Principles, while Sympathy, Contagion and Inherent Power are the Minors.

Tribunal- A body of Regents assembled to sentence a major punishment on an offending Tremere. Also called together when new laws need to be voted upon and entered into the clan's Peripheral Code.

Usurper- Vulgar Argot. Nickname appended to Tremere during the early nights of the clan's existence.

Warlocks- Modern common nickname given to members of Clan Tremere. Even used by members of the clan when referring to fellow Tremere.

Monitoring Thaumaturgy:

The Tremere were given the authority to monitor Thaumaturgy in Camarilla as a result of Conclave decisions in the last three hundred years. The Tremere do this monitoring by having their Primogen authorize others to possess Thaumaturgy.

When this monitoring first began, those who already possessed such powers were largely authorized by the Tremere unless there was a particular reason not to do so. Over time gaining the official authorization of Clan Tremere to know Thaumaturgy became more difficult. In modern nights, this usually requires gaining a major boon over a Tremere Primogen or the Tremere Primogen going out of their way to gain the permission of their Lord to authorize a Kindred. Independents who know their own Thaumaturgy still need to be authorized by a Tremere Primogen or face repercussions in Camarilla cities.

Once sanctioned by a Tremere Primogen, a Kindred may not be 'un-authorized' by a Tremere other than the Tremere Clanhead.

This authorization takes place by the Tremere Primogen publicly announcing that the Tremere are authorizing the Kindred to learn Thaumaturgy. This is passed by Harpies just like Status. As such, anyone who uses Politics to determine the Status possessed by a Kindred would gain knowledge of their being Authorized by the appropriate Primogen.

Example:

Phillip is a Status 3 Ventrue who has been authorized to possess Thaumaturgy by the Tremere Primogen Gerald, Donald uses Politics to determine Philip's Status and discovers (Acknowledged by Prince Walter, Cherished as Seneschal, Esteemed as Seneschal, and Authorized to learn Thaumaturgy by Primogen Gerald).

Characters are permitted to have been Authorized in history as we begin the chronicle, though such needs to be recorded on [this form](#) and done ICly in history by a PC who was Primogen or by an NPC Primogen with the permission of the PC Regent of the area at the time. Characters authorized in play do not need to record such.

Teaching Thaumaturgy:

The Tremere Code states "I shall further the knowledge of the House and Clan and share with its members all that I find in my search for wisdom and power. No secrets are to be kept, or given, regarding the arts of magic, nor shall I keep secret the doings of others which might bring harm to the House and Clan."

Over time this has come to mean that members of Clan Tremere are generally not permitted to teach Thaumaturgy to those outside the clan, even if the requester had previously been authorized to learn Thaumaturgy. If something happens that would force a Tremere to teach Thaumaturgy such as a boon, the Tremere is expected to divulge such to their Regent and Lord.

Different areas vary widely in how they handle such forced teaching based on the Peripheral Code for their area or specific realm, who is in charge, and how much they dislike a character. At minimum, the teacher can expect to be questioned to ensure the boon was not passed to the student intentionally so they could learn Thaumaturgy. At worst such teaching is met with death for violation of the Code.

Gargoyles:

In history, the Tremere created Gargoyles as a means of protection for themselves against those who would destroy them. At the Convention of Thorns they agreed to give up the practice of creating new Gargoyles as one of the concessions which helped form the Camarilla.

While the Tremere were not explicitly forbidden from maintaining Slave Gargoyles since then, they have all but disappeared in modern nights. Rumors persist that there still exist at a few chantries across the world, but the Gargoyle revolts and the anger that such slaves cause the other clans in modern nights have made maintaining them politically non-viable except in secret.