

# Ventruue Clan Guide

## Introduction

Clan Ventruue is the foundation of the Camarilla – they are the tradition, power and the leaders of kindred society. Gravitating towards positions of leadership and prestige, members of the Clan of Kings are eager to be involved in the direction of their city in both kine and kindred arenas. Often thought of by their fellows as antiquated and unchanging, Ventruue often seek to preserve the old ways because it is the tradition that the Camarilla was built on. Nobility, sophistication and duty are common traits of this Clan and the clan is the framework upon which the Ivory Tower rests.

Ventruue trace their lineages back to the Methuselah of their line and announce such, along with their Clan or Camarilla positions, during introductions to clanmates as a matter of pride. Clan Gatherings, similar to Board Meetings, occur anywhere from quarterly to yearly for younger kindred and as needed for those who are truly ancient. Board Meetings are directed by the Patrician of highest status and position – in the case of a tie, the meeting is co-managed.

## Culture:

Clan Ventruue is the Clan of Kings – the development of hierarchy, structure and true authority courses through their blood. An individual choosing to play this clan should seek to implement their desire for power and order (of all varying kinds) into their roleplay.

Ventruue are equally motivated by kine and kindred avenues. A Ventruue should anticipate the need for conquering areas of kine influence to assist him or her in their growth as kindred. Once the mortal population is controlled and culled, other Vampires will see the Ventruue as a resource and seek out or barter with them for their influence through boons. Prestation can elevate even a young Ventruue to power if well played and boost the boon economy of the city.

Ventruue players should expect to be demanded by their clanmates and lineage to ascend in position and power in their cities so that the clan might have full control over the affairs of that area. If Ventruue are not in power in a particular city, they should seek to be – whether it is by gradually taking the city in allies and influence or by manipulating those who are already in power.

Ventruue are driven to make the Camarilla succeed. They are its creators and its shepherds. The Ventruue seek to lead the sect in order to make a better society for everyone. They are dedicated to this despite the hardships that come with guiding a group of kindred. This is not to say that no other clan cares about the Camarilla, but rather that the Ventruue have built their culture around improving it through proper leadership. As a result, it is an understood expectation rather than a choice within the clan to stand forward and lead within the Ivory Tower.

Camarilla positions that Ventruue often aspire to: ALL, but commonly - Prince, Seneschal, Harpy, and Primogen

Every city will have a Praetor that will guide and direct the roles and duties of the Clan in the city.

## Dignitas (Clan Status)

Dignitas (Clan Status) will exactly reflect a Ventruue's Camarilla status (including age and position related Camarilla status) with the same language and wording.

All Ventruue who have sworn their allegiance to a Praetor, Strategos, or Ephor gain +1 Dignitas.

Ventruue with Clan positions (Ephors, Strategoi and Praetors) will gain a dignitas bonus. Ephors receive +5 Dignitas, Strategoi receive +3 Dignitas, and Praetors receive +1 Dignitas.

Only Camarilla Ventruue possess Dignitas – Anarch, Autarch and Independent will have zero Dignitas because they are traveling in a world outside of the accepted norm for the Clan.

Negative Status in the Camarilla reflects as negative status in Clan Ventrue. Destroying a Ventrue's reputation in the Camarilla *\*is\** destroying a Ventrue's reputation in his Clan.

A Praetor may directly reduce the Dignitas of those in their city by one for violating the Ventrue ethic in a way that is unrelated to the Camarilla at large. A Praetor may return removed Dignitas of those in their city, though they may not raise it.

A Strategos may directly reduce the Dignitas of anyone in a city whose Praetor has sworn an oath of allegiance to the Strategos as if they were the Praetor. Such a Strategos may return removed Dignitas of those in their territory as if they were the Praetor.

Example Sins against Dignitas

Being Disrespectful to your Elder or one of Greater Dignitas

Failing to uphold the Ethic of Succor

Raiding another Ventrue's Influence or Powerbase

Killing another Ventrue

## **Clan Structure**

The Directorate maintains Clan Ventrue as a shining beacon lighting the way for the rest of the Ivory Tower. Ventrue are less islands unto themselves in modern nights, and more part of a machine which drives the clan toward greatness.

Despite this, sitting at the table of power in Clan Ventrue still requires a kindred to become a power unto themselves. Only by showing themselves to be capable and influential do Patricians gain opportunities for power within the clan.

A two tiered leadership system which is subordinate to the Directorate exists to encourage those who have proven themselves to be leaders at one level or another to translate those skills onto a higher stage.

## **The Directorate/Ephors (NPC Only - the Guys in Charge)**

The Directorate is a group of ancient and powerful Ventrue that controls the Clan of Kings. Rarely interacting directly with other Kindred, the Directorate manipulates the economy, politics, trade and kindred affairs through lesser pawns and intermediaries. Only a privileged few know who composes the Directorate or how to get in touch with a Director/Ephor and even then, it is a dangerous prospect. The Directorate has their own agenda and does not share it with lesser members of the Clan – Ventrue merely see the outcome, though many speculate as to the how, why and what may come next.

An Ephor may dictate to the Strategoi, Senate, and the Clan as a whole as they desire and may countermand decisions made by the Strategoi or Senate at their whim.

Qualifications: *NPC Only* - It is thought that a Ephor must be at least an Elder (8<sup>th</sup> generation or less) and at least 350 years embraced – but these are just guesses from younger kindred.

Removing an Ephor: This cannot be done by PCs except by death of the Ephor.

## **Executives/Strategoi (PCs/NPCs – Powerful, High Status Ventrue)**

Strategoi are the public ruling body of the Ventrue Clan. Known as the Executives, it is rumored that the Strategoi have some interface with the Directorate and have a general idea how to guide the arms of the Clan towards their mysterious goals. The Strategoi serve to oversee the Senate. While they also sit on the Senate, the Strategoi also convene separately and have the power to veto the actions of the General Assembly or enact other decisions by majority (2/3) vote. A Strategos possesses a number of votes equal to the number of Praetors he represents in Strategoi meetings. They may call for a vote on an issue before the General Assembly if discussions become tedious and unproductive. The Strategoi also serve as the crisis leaders. Should the need for immediate action be called upon by the General Assembly or the Ephorate, the Strategoi act as the sole decision making body or are empowered to appoint a General to oversee the Patrician response to a military threat.

Qualifications: *Top Approval* - To be invited to the Council of Strategoi in the United States, a Ventrue must be a Praetor and hold the allegiance of five other Praetors (who may be from anywhere within the United States).

Strategoi Numbers: Eight to twelve in the United States. A Patrician with the appropriate fealty may be proposed to be added to the ranks of the Strategoi by the General Assembly and if the motion is not vetoed by the Strategoi Council, it is tendered to the Ephorate for approval.

A Strategos is considered disgraced if the Ephorate declares it so, if a motion for removal is passed by the General Assembly and the council of Strategoi approves the vote with a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority, or if the Strategos loses his Acknowledged status in the Camarilla.

This happened most recently in recent history in 2011, when the Directorate declared Andrew Montrose, Prince of Indianapolis, Disgraced due to a scandal over a 'forgotten' prestation that lost him his praxis.

### **Managers/Praetors (PCs – Ventrue Heads of City)**

Praetors are the Chair Person or Manager of Clan Affairs in any particular City. They ensure the orders and messages from the Strategoi body are disseminated to the Clan as a whole in their area. They also make decisions relating to City Affairs for the Ventrue of a city. All Ventrue in the area are accountable to the Praetor and the Praetor is the only individual Ventrue of a city able who may petition the Strategoi Council.

Each Praetor is part of the Ventrue Senate, which has once again become the ruling body at least in North America. The Senate serves as the daily guiding hand for the Clan for all matters that affect the Ventrue beyond the scope of the local Board of Directors. Each Senator holds one vote in the General Assembly.

Qualifications: *Domain Approval* – In general, the Praetor is the individual in a city with the most Dignitas who desires the position (A high status Ventrue may decline it if they did not have the time to dedicate to it). If the amount of Dignitas of those interested is similar (within 1), the local Board of Directors votes on the matter with each kindred receiving a number of votes equal to their Dignitas.

Praetor Numbers: 1 PC per City (can be NPC if no Ventrue PCs are present)

Removing a Praetor: Death, another local Ventrue having at least two more Dignitas than the Praetor, the local Board selecting a new Praetor, or being declared Disgraced by the General Assembly, Strategoi, or Ephorate.

### **Ventrue and Feudal Structure**

Ventrue believe in oaths of fealty, formal alliances, and sworn favors. These are agreements entered into willingly by a person or even a lineage as a whole.

The Directorate desires that all Ventrue will swear allegiance to a superior in the Clan. These agreements are as simple or complex as the two kindred agree to, though few Ventrue are willing to give up most of their autonomy if they have the choice. Some kindred avoid giving allegiance to anyone, but are generally viewed as kindred out for themselves with little loyalty to the clan.

Most Ventrue swear allegiance to their local Praetor. Declaring such elevates them and insures their inclusion in local politics. The Praetor's choice requires more consideration though another Praetor whom they are aligned with politically is considered standard. Those of particular note who are able to rise to the ranks of the Strategoi generally swear allegiance to an Ephor.

Additionally, Ventrue have a base expectation based on their lineage. One's actions reflect on one's sire rather directly and so Ventrue sires maintain a level of control over their childer who maintain control over their childer, etc.

Example oath to a Praetor:

“By my word unsullied and the blood of the Kings, I vow to be faithful in my service to Praetor <name> of the City of <place>. In such matters as concerns this domain and our clan, I, <name> pledge my service.”

## **Factions of the Ventrue**

### **The Imperium:**

The Camarilla was built on the foundation set forth by Clan Ventrue – \*the\* pillar clan of the Ivory Tower. Everything worked perfectly at inception and maintaining the status quo is how everything will sail smoothly in modern nights. Elders of the Clan have survived by force of will and adhering to these concepts. Their stranglehold on Clan direction and politics is unmovable and unshakable. The Traditional Clan faction is a top-down model – those at the top make decisions and those at the bottom carry them out. The hierarchy never changes unless someone dies and even then, their position isn't necessarily filled within the next century or so. This is a common perspective of Elders of Clan Ventrue.

### **Fellowship of Lords:**

The Fellowship of Lords believes in the Clan's traditional foundation and outlook, and simultaneously desires opportunities for upward mobility. After you have been someone's assistant for a hundred years could you not move up to an associate level or \*gasp\* junior management? These moderates understand that status quo of the Clan of Kings, but desire to move up in the clan through seniority and demonstrated performance. This movement is gaining in popularity amongst younger Ventrue of powerful blood.

### **The Brokerage:**

The Brokerage believes that numbers alone should determine the outcome of decisions and who should be in what position. If every Ventrue in the city likes you and wants to see you as Praetor – this should make it so. This democratic outlook is very popular among Neonates and decidedly frowned upon by the ancients. Most Neonates are not outspoken progressives due to fear of persecution, but a rare few voice their opinions (and are usually summarily punished by their lineage).

### **The Knights of Blood:**

As the Ventrue Clan slowly evolved away from a direct feudal structure, becoming more and more corporate in its organization and its methods, the Kings that prided themselves on their physical prowess and battlefield acumen found themselves being marginalized. The clan needs to both retain a martial presence within Clan Ventrue, and retain respect of Elders who had a martial rather than corporate mentality. The Ephorate created the Knights of Blood to coordinate the efforts of the clans martial forces to ensure they are not working at cross purposes and to show they still valued leadership and combat prowess even in these modern times. These kindred are directed by the Ephorate, the Strategoi, or even a Praetor when they are present.

### **NPCS of Note:**

#### **Suspected Ephors:**

Lady Anastasia (5<sup>th</sup> Generation – Embrace Unknown) is the childe of Tinia and the former Methuselah Prince of Frankfurt, Germany. Long retired from daily Kindred affairs, Lady Julia had been rumored to have gone to ground or been destroyed during the War of Princes. A renowned master of history, Lady Julia often has an uncanny manner of anticipating the wheel's next turn. There have been recent rumors that she has returned to activity and has been pursuing avenues in the United States with interest. Julia Anastasia is known to have a delicate, but forceful manner and was a powerful woman when the world was not as accepting of such a thing. This handicap has led her to be a decisive Kindred and her peers have difficulty persuading her once her mind is made up.

Hardestadt(5<sup>th</sup> Generation – 942 AD Embrace) - Hardestadt's early days go back to Bavaria where he rose to become the predominant Ventrue in the Holy Roman Empire. When the Inquisition came, Hardestadt

managed to escape almost unscathed unlike many of the other Elders of the clan. This left him in the prime spot to speak against the Anarchs and eventually create the Camarilla, putting the Anarchs under his boot with the Convention of Thorns. All of this allowed Hardestadt to reorganize the hierarchy of the Clan and lead it to become the Clan of Kings it is today.

Baron Marcus Verus (5<sup>th</sup> Generation – 192 AD Embrace) is a Methuselah and a childe of Mithras. Marcus Verus was a legionnaire with the Valeria Victrix and inducted into the Cult of Mithras to be eventually embraced by his sire. Unlike Mithras, Marcus was active throughout the dark years after the fall of Rome and built his power base from the ruins of Roman Britannia and the Saxon kingdoms that followed. His combination of martial skill and classical learning have stood him in good stead as the Baron of Chester, a post he secured in the mid-eighth century before the arrival of the Danes and that he has maintained through a mix of guile and brute force. He remains a major power in the Cult of Mithras, inducting numerous mortals and Cainites into its mysteries, and aided his sire's return to power. Like Mithras, Marcus revels in battle and takes the field whenever the opportunity arises, though the opportunities are rare and the troops he faces or commands are less impressive than those of the past. Marcus is known to be active in modern nights and it is highly rumored that he is a member of the directorate.

### **Alastor:**

Lucinde (6<sup>th</sup> Generation – Embrace 1656 AD) is the childe of Severus and served as his Archon. Lucinde is a severe, loyal, no-nonsense Kindred who favors extreme loyalty from her vassals. She is equally comfortable in antiquated or modern dress – depending on what the occasion calls for. She is known to be articulate and has spoken during past conclaves. She is responsible for the death of Genina of the Red List and remains on the hunt for those who remain.

### **Here is a helpful lineage tree with canon options:**

- Ventrué Lines (4th and 5th Generation)
- Antonius
  - Belisarius
  - Caius
- Mithras (Childe of Veddartha)
  - Marcus Verus
  - Lord Amber
  - Lady Amber
- Alexander
  - Gaius Marcellus
- Arakur of Ur
  - Tiamat "Replaced" sire as 4th Gen
    - Gotsdam
- Tinia
  - Camilla the former Prince of Rome, author of Pax Romana et Vampirica (Deceased +64 CE - Died in burning of Rome)
  - Julia Anastasia
  - Fabrizio Ufila
- Unknown Sire
  - Ilse Reinegger
    - Gustav Breidenstein "Replaced" Sire as 5th Gen
- Unknown Sire
  - Hardestadt
    - Jan Pieterszoon
- Veddartha (The 4th Generation Kindred, not the rumored alias for (Ventrué))
  - Maltheas
- Unknown Sire
  - Elihu

- Rebekah "Replaced" Sire as 5th Gen
- Nefer-meri-Isis
  - Severus
    - Lucinde

### **Formal Events:**

#### **Princes' Symposia:**

Ventruie delight in planning and chairing Symposia – older Ventruie Princes can wax on about past symposiums and the difference their leadership and organization made to the Camarilla as a whole. Chairing a Symposium as a Ventruie Prince is seen as a pinnacle achievement and a talking point for decades to come.

#### **Board Meetings:**

Nothing generates more faux enthusiasm than a board meeting. Usually long, boring and passingly informative – board meetings give an opportunity for every Ventruie, young and old, to present topics of interest and to try and impress their betters. Usually – being noticed leads to failure instead of the promise of elevation, but it rarely stops eager Ventruie from making the attempt.

#### **Grand Conclave (Public Portions):**

Ventruie show up en mass to participate in the Camarilla's most important events – Conclaves and their speeches being a culmination of years of hard political and social effort. Ventruie look to be seen as a prominent and indomitable force that is as stoic and unchanging as the Camarilla's tenets.