

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

'The days just prior to marriage are like a snappy introduction to a tedious book'

- Wilson Mizner

A LIFE OF ANGST

'Stimpy, it hurts! Why?'

- Ren Hoek.

Welcome to *A Life of Angst*, a world not dissimilar to our own but no less frightening for it. Perhaps the nights are a little darker, the jeans a little baggier and the top twenty a little sparser when it comes to good tunes but the world is as ours is.

With a few little additions, like vampires stalking the land by night, nothing to be too concerned about.

Some mysterious force has allowed those who most wished they were immortal creatures of the night to become them. Goths, punks, nu-metallers, spooky kids and the simply outcast of teenage society have found themselves transformed by one means or another into the very creature they would most desire to be.

The *Bloodsucker* role-playing game allows players to take the part of one of these transformed subculture denizens and to explore the darkest nights in the world of the *Bloodsuckers*, discovering fell secrets, attending dark and dingy nightclubs, pubs and warehouse parties, drinking far more absinthe than is strictly healthy for you and perhaps, most importantly, smoking cloves.

While most will play the part of alter-egos that they create the *Games Master* will determine the world for you, describing the scenes to you and helping you explore the lives of your characters while placing obstacles in your path as you attempt to better the lot of your counterparts and advance them in the society of the *Bloodsuckers* until all fall before your might.

FELL SECRETS

The 'fell secrets' of the *Bloodsucker* world are far more likely to involve who is cheating on who with whom or that the *Lady of the Pretentious Art Whores* wears granny-pants, than they are to do with ancient knowledge, the end of the world, secret powers or plans to nuke Transylvania. *Bloodsuckers* are incredibly petty and self-centred however and will treat their little problems as though they were that important.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

'A bad workman always blames his tools.'

- Proverb.

To begin playing *Bloodsucker: The Angst* all you need is the following...

- One or more friends to begin playing with (this may prove difficult)
- A character sheet
- A pencil, eraser and spare sheet of paper
- A full set of dice including four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6), eight-sided (d8), ten-sided (d10), twelve-sided (d12) and twenty-sided (d20)
- A bottle of potent green alcohol known as absinthe and, optionally, sugar cubes, a spoon and a cigarette lighter
- A packet of clove cigarettes. Menthols are a barely acceptable substitute
- An outfit predominantly featuring the colour black
- A darkened room, but not so dark as you cannot read your sheets and dice results
- Scented candles
- Pancake-white face make-up
- Spray cobwebs
- Halloween sweets, preferably in little coffin shaped containers
- Red wine
- A complete collection of the works of *Anne Rice* or *Laurell K. Hamilton* if you're more cheesy
- Alternative, goth, metal or nu-metal playing on the stereo

INTRODUCTION

THE BLOODSUCKER RULEBOOK

'Paddle along to your local library.'
- Andover Library bookmark slogan.

This book will give you everything you need to create and play characters within the setting of *Bloodsucker* and as well as giving the *Games Master* just barely enough information to create adventures and escapades for your characters and to bring the world to life in stunning *Imaginatiovision*™. The following chapters can be found within this book.

Chapter 1 - Characters in Bloodsucker: A complete guide on how to create your denizen of the night for play in the game, from aggressive hunters to cliquey social butterflies to katana-wielding trench coat wearers and gothopotami.

Chapter 2 - Skills: A reasonably comprehensive breakdown of all the *Skills* featured in *Bloodsucker*, which will allow a character to specialise in a number of fields of expertise from an encyclopaedic knowledge of comic books to the ability to play three chords on a guitar and get girls.

Chapter 3 - Feats: *Feats* are special abilities that allow you to truly customise your character to fit their background, or trip them out like a hotrod into the ultimate munchkin. They are gained slowly over time and in *Bloodsucker* are also used to assign your supernatural vampire *Powers*.

Chapter 4 - Pros and Cons: *Pros and Cons* are a further way to customise and specialise your character at the start of play. *Pros* are innate advantages your character has while *Cons* are drawbacks that hamper them. This allows a greater amount of munchkinism in creating your suburban ninja.

Chapter 5 - Background: Who is this person you have created? Consideration must be given to where they've come from, how they think, what clothes they wear and how they came to be a *Bloodsucker* in the first place.

Chapter 6 - Magic(k): The arcane *Powers* of the *Bloodsuckers* and others are mystical and marvellous, or at least entertaining, and are detailed here for your examination.

Chapter 7 - Combat: From physical altercations over who is seeing who, or the fact you're dressed funny and have the temerity to exist in the same rail carriage as a chav, to the immortal conflicts that beset the *Bloodsuckers* night after night, combat is an essential part of *Life of Angst* and this chapter covers the rules for such battles.

Chapter 8 - The Society of the Damned: The *Bloodsuckers* have organised themselves and this organisation is detailed here along with explanations of the social systems and distinctions of the *Bloodsucker* society.

Chapter 9 - The Shadow World: The world is similar but different, to our own. This chapter describes those differences and records the experiences of the *Bloodsuckers* across the globe allowing you to create more world-spanning adventures. You may find that *Bloodsuckers* in other lands disagree with you though, that would be terrible.

Chapter 10 - The Opposition: *Bloodsuckers* are not the only things out there hiding in the night - far from it. Many of these other forces oppose them and this chapter describes those beings and sets out their abilities and motivations.

Chapter 11 - Campaigns in Life of Angst: Running games within this setting may not be the easiest of enterprises, especially for those new to role-playing or Games Mastering. This chapter will give you ideas for adventures and campaigns in *Bloodsucker*.

NEW TO THE OGL!

'Commence your ruing! I shall sit here and watch.'
- Invader Zim

It is likely that a few of you have not played an *OGL* game before or perhaps have never even role-played before. Do not panic! You should not need to read through the book completely before you begin playing unless you are the *Games Master*.

Bloodsucker contains pretty much everything you need to create a character and play but there are a few changes here and there that you will need to be aware of, so follow this book when making your characters. You are now prepared to start creating your character, commencing in Chapter 1.

The most basic rule to remember is that any check made in the *OGL* system whether it be searching a roommate's bedroom for rent money or punching a trendy in the face, is done by rolling a twenty-sided dice and adding modifiers found on your character sheet. The total is then compared to a difficulty class or *DC* to determine if you have succeeded.

That, in a nutshell, is the *OGL* system.

If you have never role-played before, you're shit out of luck. I've been role-playing for twenty years and I'm yet to come up with an adequate explanation of what it actually *is*. Your best bet is to hunt down some people who already play a role-playing game and watching them play in order to get the gist.

INTRODUCTION

THE OGL

The OGL is the *Open Gaming License*, a particularly cunning ploy by *Wizard's of the Coast* to extend their gaming *lebensraum* to swallow the whole industry. It turned out to be a massive boon to a lot of companies allowing them to use the system powering 'the world's most famous role-playing system' and to produce support material for it, boosting the profile and market penetration of *Wizard's* product. It has also helped the indy scene a great deal by helping lazy buggers like me save on game development time.

VETERAN PLAYERS

'Keep young and beautiful, if you want to be loved.'
- Cole Porter.

Those of you familiar to role-playing and to the OGL system in particular will discover that we have made a few changes to the core system. These changes have been made to better reflect the world depicted in *Bloodsucker* and to provide more options for those creating characters.

The major changes are to *Hit Points* and in combat.

Hit Points will not increase by *Level* and will be based almost entirely upon the *Constitution* score of the character or antagonist. This makes combat more fast paced and deadly and reduces the 'hacking down a tree' feel that combat can occasionally get bogged down in. *Bloodsuckers* do however get *Juice Points* which do increase by *Level* and can allow them to heal and perform other vampiric deeds.

To calculate your *Hit Points* take your *Constitution* and add your *Strength* bonus with a minimum level of three *Hit Points*. That is all.

In combat the largest change is the removal of *Armour Class* to be replaced by *Defence Class*. This is calculated as follows:

Defence Class = 10 + Reflex Save

There may be other factors for particularly large or small targets but these need not be worried about here.

Armour, which is hard to find in modern times, reduces the damage dealt rather than reducing the likelihood of a character or antagonist being hit.

We commence now with an introduction to the world and those within it.

WELCOME TO A LIFE OF ANGST

'Life, don't talk to me about life.'
- Marvin, the Paranoid Android.

Vampires have existed throughout history and in almost every culture that exists around the world. It seems that the thought of some fiend intent on drinking your blood is a universal fear that unites mankind along with the fear of taxes and spiders.

From their origins as foul, deformed things and spreaders of plague they have gradually insinuated themselves into our subconscious and media as something more than a blood-drinking bogeyman: something *sexy*. The thought of living forever on a diet of haemoglobin has even become appealing and glamorous to some people.

The latest wave of the vampirism craze hit at the beginning of the 1990s and shows no real sign of abatement with the rise of teeny-goth and nu-metal leading many teenagers down a path of interest in the darker side of life. Before that was the punk and original goth of the 1970s and 80s, before that the horror comics and films of the 1950s, before that the pulps and weird tales of the 1920s, before that *Dracula* and *Carmilla* and before all of them the plague-spreading fiends of folklore.

'Have you seen zese new Bloodsuckers zese days my dear Count Krispy? No titles, no accents, all fetish-vare and poutink. Vat's wrong vis a good cape and some Carpathian inflection I ask you? I blame zer television...'

In *Bloodsucker* each of these waves brought with it an accompanying increase in the population of vampires conforming to the current mode of thinking. How are they being created? No one is quite sure how all of them come about but the others spring up in the usual way, from the bite and the blood. With each generation the vampires become 'safer', more 'cuddly' and less fearsome. Consider the difference between *Nosferatu* and *Angel*.

Each generation also feels that they have the cachet of being the most original or the defining type of vampirism and therefore looks down on those who have come after or before themselves but each generation also withers and fades to make room for the younger ones who take over their position leaving only a few bitter remnants to moan and gripe about the way the young ones do things.

The world of *Bloodsucker* is just like our world. You think it should be darker? The real world is more than depressing enough already without making things worse. Wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes, famine, poverty, tsunamis, hurricanes, reality TV: there is no need to make anything any darker. *Bloodsuckers* however have a tendency to exaggerate the bad things in their lives, blowing them out of all proportion, partly to gain sympathy and partly in a grotesque game of one-upmanship striving to be acknowledged as having the

INTRODUCTION

most difficult and goth-worthy home life.

Most *Bloodsuckers* become what they are at a youthful age, somewhere between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, from secondary school to University, the time at which youth subculture has the greatest pull upon them. It is also a time when keeping peculiar sleeping and eating habits is not especially likely to get noticed.

Bloodsuckers seem to be confined within the area reached by western media, which is not limitless. Where the stories and films about hip, cool vampires reach you will find them; shore to shore in America and across the ocean in Britain and Europe. South Africa and Australia all teem with *Bloodsuckers* hidden amongst the resurgent Spooky Kid culture that abounds in each location.

Life for the *Bloodsuckers* revolves around dealing with the remnants of their mortal life (school, parents and siblings) and the demands of their society. They hold their *Parliaments* and *Courts* at nightclubs, cafes and skate parks every night, vying for position and drama and to become Vampire *King* or *Queen* of their locale be it New York or Staines. Gossip and bitching plays an enormous part as does sleeping around, eliciting sympathy and being snide or cruel.

Bloodsuckers are interested mostly in themselves with peripheral hobbies including drink, drugs, music, clothes, the occult, bitching and the Internet. Oh yeah, and blood. The Internet in particular has become of massive interest to them, allowing the most god-awful angst poetry and 'dark' art to be posted up into the ether with Addams Family midis and 'cute' little animated bats wiggling in the background. Of course, there are also more talented and knowledgeable *Bloodsuckers* using the Internet for other purposes. More generally the community of *Bloodsuckers* uses it to communicate, bitch and whine 24-7 rather than only during their evening meetings.

When it comes to the occult most *Bloodsuckers* have as much clue as the owner of a junior chemistry set has about particle physics and supercolliders. This is largely because their exposure to *Magic(k)* is limited to knowledge gleaned from re-runs of *The Craft* and enthusiasm for the *Harry Potter* phenomenon. Some manage to make their half-arsed attempts at the mystical work, perhaps due to the opening of their minds from becoming supernatural themselves.

When it comes to clothing black, black and yet more black is the norm with the occasional loud shirt or fluorescent cyber accessory. Other than that the style is diverse with each *Clique* having its own preferences from lacy little-black-dresses to voluminous jeans large enough to hide an ambush squad in. Some question the wisdom in dressing, well, *like vampires* in case it might attract attention but as is soon pointed out:

'Black goes with *anything* dahling.'

THE LANGUAGE OF THE NIGHT

'Does anyone here speak leet?'

- Stewardess, Megatokyo.

NAMES

'I'm going to memorise your name and throw my head away.'

- Oscar Levant

Bloodsuckers have their own unique slang terms and words for the goings on in their lives and the things that they encounter. One of their most 'endearing' aspects is a name which is chosen or modified to sound more 'dark'. Many completely change their names, picking one out of thin air or from popular fiction, movies or comics. In the course of one night you might run into as many as twelve Lestats, six Louis and four Vlads.

Another way is to modify their own name by the addition of honorific titles and messing with the letters. 'C' becomes 'K', 'I' becomes 'Y' and extraneous 'e's are added in order to render the name properly Gothic. Thus by simple transformation Derek becomes Baron Derycke and Christina becomes Lady Khrystyna. Some add other appellations such as 'Mistress of the Dark' but names can rapidly become too overblown even for other *Bloodsuckers* to stomach.

LEXICON

'You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.'

- Inigo Montoya

Bitch: Besides the conventional vernacular use *Bitch* also refers to the main movers and shakers of *Bloodsucker* society whose approval or disdain can make or break a new vampire. Much like at school the *Bitches* are the in crowd and wearing the wrong kind of boots can be enough to draw their wrath. Ironically this is precisely what many people joined alternative culture to avoid.

Bloodsucker: A Vampire, a Nosferatu, a creature of the night. *Anne Rice* literature brought to life. An immortal being that must survive by drinking the blood of the living and, apparently, whining a lot.

Clique: Hating to be categorised but nonetheless doing it anyway, alternative culture bleeds this across into the *Bloodsucker* scene. The *Cliques* are loose assortments of similarly minded *Bloodsuckers* who band together out of mutual interest and disdain for everyone else. *Cliques* share certain characteristics and *Powers* and help each other some of the time but by no means all the time.

INTRODUCTION

Crowleys: One of the *Bloodsucker Cliques*. One devoted to *Magic(k)*. The inclusion or exclusion of the letter 'k' is as hotly debated as whether *Type 'O' Negative* are Metal or Goth. Tending to the reclusive and slightly bat-shit crazy the *Crowleys* can be a little spooky, even for *Bloodsuckers*. Their tarot readings kick arse though.

Crypt: The safe haven where a *Bloodsucker* rests to avoid the dawn sun. Usually a dark room, black painted if their parents will let them paint it that colour, lined with movie posters, memorabilia and discarded clothing.

Cyber: Cybergoths are ravers who happen to listen to good music. Do not call them perky if you value your life.

Dead Kids: *Bloodsuckers* are not the only teenage undead to stalk the night. Some who have actually died have been known to re-inhabit their bodies and walk around slowly rotting. *Bloodsuckers* find them too depressing to be around, even for them.

Dogboys: Another of the transformed creatures of the dusk. *Dogboys* are werewolves but, unlike their wild kin most are domesticated and a little less intimidating than the fairy-stories would have you believe. Turning into a poodle is far less scary than the *Dogboys* seem to think. There seems to be a natural antipathy between *Dogboys* and *Bloodsuckers*, perhaps because of dog's inclination to chew on dead and rotting meat but they rarely mix, so this isn't that much of a problem.

Emo: No, not the little red fluffy guy from *Sesame Street*, that's *Elmo*; though a 'tickle-me-Emo' would be cool. Emo is an abbreviation of 'Emotional' and refers to 'Emotional punk and rock music'. Quite when those types of music were not emotional remains a mystery though perhaps they're referring to emotional vulnerability rather than anger. Either way, the kids seem to dig it. A more appropriate definition might be 'Goths with short hair.'

Fetish: Properly a fetish is an object or nonsexual part of the body that becomes a fixation or even necessary for sexual arousal. In common usage it tends to refer to the rubber, leather and spanking brigade and in the club circuit it is debased even further and tends to refer to clothing styles, many of which would not even be considered extreme any more and the wearers of which would run a mile from the prospect of a spanking. More's the pity.

Freaks: The *Clique* of the cosmetically challenged, the ugly, the rake thin or the rhino-in-a-body-stocking. These adventurers boldly go in their sartorial *Enterprise* where good taste has never gone before. Oblivious to their hideousness the *Freaks* congregate around the alternative and geek scenes seeking the acceptance they

never got from conventional society. These *Bloodsuckers* often find themselves ignored and for that reason are often a primary source of gossip whose loyalty is easily won with a kind word.

Goth: The bastard offspring of punk and new-romantic musical fads in the 80s, goth proved to be more long-lived. Characterised by depression, dark clothing and a bleak outlook, many goths buck that image by being cheerful or even 'perky' but they all enjoy dark imagery and themes. Most original goths prove their gothness by denying any knowledge of goth or their place in its creation. Most notably *Siouxsie and the Banshees* and *The Sisters Of Mercy* are deep, deep in denial. These days goth has split into a grey rainbow of multiple types, all looking down on each other, all laying claim to being 'real' goths and all fitting the stereotype very nicely.

Gothistocrats: Another *Clique*, the elite of the elite. None are so goth as them and they look down upon all from the height of their original vinyl collection, blinking through their veils and passing snide comments about the *New-Rock* booted Spooky Kids. Much of the true power in *Bloodsucker* society rests within the hands of these acid-tongued bitches.

Graver: See Cyber, only even more bleepy.

Grungies: A *Bloodsucker Clique* of hippyish indy-kids who have somehow drifted into the periphery of the scene. Not truly fitting within the *Bloodsucker* culture and yet not truly outside it they enjoy a drink and a party as much as the next person. Not being full-blown *Bloodsuckers* they often act as intermediaries with the other creatures of the night. Tend to smell a bit.

Industrial: Loud music typified by samples, machinery sounds, shouting and spasmodic drum machines, musically similar to sticking your head into a tumble-drier full of rocks. It is played loud enough to shake your wisdom teeth loose and DJs can have endless fun putting on an industrial track immediately following a goth anthem and then taking bets on the number of casualties.

King/Queen: The head honcho of local *Bloodsucker* society is called the *King* (or *Queen*). They run the parties, get the best seats at gigs and rule the clubs from their booths. Their favour can make a *Bloodsucker* and their disfavour can break them. *Kings and Queens* like to talk about their eternal rule but few last longer than six months at a time since being at the top makes you a target for every ambitious *Bitch* there is. *Gothistocrats* like to think they're always the best ones for the job.

Lord: The highest regarded member of a particular *Clique* in a vampiric kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

Magic(k): The power of will used to change reality. Or, more likely, a load of hokum, old wives tales, hippy wishful thinking, aromatherapy and Hollywood witchery which, in the hands of certain *Bloodsuckers* seems to actually achieve something. Must be the blood.

Moshers: A *Clique* comprising of punks, nu-metal fans and old school rockers the *Moshers* are coming to terms with the changes in the scene and are often quite angry about it. They most often turn on each other but also express that rage at other *Bloodsuckers*, most often on the dance floor or in the moshpit. *Moshers* are probably the widest ranging and most accepting group of *Bloodsuckers* willing to take almost anyone in from industrialists to those who follow 'The Quo'.

Mundane: Alternative culture slang for someone who has conventional, middle of the road tastes. The type of person who listens to *Simply Red*, drives a *Mondeo*, has two-point-four children and mows his lawn on a Sunday morning when you've just got back from seeing *Spleenraper* live and really need to sleep.

Murder: A small group of *Bloodsuckers*, coincidentally being about the size of the average gaming group, who are bound together by circumstance, interest or position and operate as a unit and as friends.

Ned: Slang for a trendy or otherwise aggressively non-alternative person, usually of a violent and abusive bent. Slang use concentrated in Scotland and the north of England. Elsewhere they're referred to as 'jobs', 'townies', 'chavs' or 'lads'.

NotAGoth: The type of goth who vehemently denies that they are one while sporting goth trappings, wearing goth clothes, listening to or making goth music and otherwise being the very definition of goth: Andrew Eldritch embodies these.

Nu-Metal: Baggy-trousered, 'yoof' oriented, chart-topping exploitation rock most of which can trace its origin back to *Korn*. Whatever its failings thanks to nu-metal and spooky kids you can now buy decent clothing in the shops again (but not trousers).

Outcasts: Existing even more on the periphery than *Grungies* this *Clique* has no common ground other than being outside the main sweep of *Bloodsucker* society. Perhaps they own a rap album, perhaps the *Bitches* have cut off their privileges or perhaps they just have a fetish for goth chicks. Whatever the reason they do not have the support of a *Clique* and tend to be cut off and shut out.

Parliament or Court: One of the evening meetings of the *Bloodsuckers* where they meet to see and be scene and to continue their melodramatics, attention seeking and fornication; lots of fun for everyone.

Perkies: A derisory term that has nonetheless stuck as a label for gravers, cybergoths and others who wear colour, take 'E', are happy, bouncy, have fluffy stuffed animal backpacks or otherwise cause disgust, revulsion and gagging in the more traditional *Bloodsuckers*. Just do not call them 'Perky' to their face, or they'll hurt you.

Pixies: Malicious sprites and fairies leftover from fairyland and living like rats in the walls of the modern world.

Pop-Tart: The female equivalent of the 'ned' or trendy. Pop-tarts are often jailbait, dress like hookers and parade around while their boyfriend of the hour shows off on his scooter. They're often the cause of fights, the lads all feeling a primal need to show off their martial prowess to them in the hopes of sticking their pee-pee somewhere more fun than their fist.

Powers: The term the *Bloodsuckers* use to describe their supernatural abilities as a whole.

Pretentious Art Whores: The *Clique* of drama queens and thespians. *Pretentious Art Whores* will do anything to be in film, theatre or performance and will often subject those around them to their hideous poetry,

derivative artwork or *Johnny The Homicidal Maniac* imitation web comics. They are second only in social power to the *Gothistocrats*. The *Pretentious Art Whores* make up the largest number of *Bitches* in *Bloodsucker* society.

Punk: Loud amateur music originating in the late 1970s and perhaps exemplified by *The Sex Pistols* though other punk bands lasted longer and had more artistic merit. Punk has affected a great deal of music since and still has a great many adherents even if the new wave punk is about as punk as *Piglet* from *Winnie the Pooh*.

Raver: One of a dying breed of dance music enthusiasts clinging to the illegal parties and 'E' gulping culture of the past. Their time has passed them by and has come to be a definition for followers of almost any kind of dance music. Most alternate music types use the term in a derisory fashion.

ON CHAVS

The slang for the aggressive underclass that harasses and beats the living cud out of alternative types varies from place to place. When this book was first conceived the 'chav' phenomenon was yet to take off in the UK and was only just stirring. Slang changes quickly and the more venerable and long-lasting terms such as 'Ned' and 'Townie' have been used for preference. You all know who we mean though.

INTRODUCTION

'Rents: A slang term for parents, handily encompassing their role as provider of food and board.

Rivethhead: Another term for a follower of industrial music.

Spooky Kids: Also termed 'Mansonites' for their love of *Marilyn Manson* and... little else. Spooky kids are perhaps the inheritors of the goth estate with their pancake makeup and profusion of piercings. Point out that *Blackie Lawless* and *Alice Cooper* did it first and you'll get nothing but a blank look like a dog that's been shown a card trick.

The Shadow World: A term to describe the terrible, angsty, spooky and pretty cool world the *Bloodsuckers* and other creatures of the dusk believe they inhabit.

Traditional/Trad: A traditional goth most often fits what the *Gothistocrats* believe the perfect gothic ideal to be. Dressed in black and black alone from head to toe, listening to early goth music exclusively and spending much of their time bemoaning the current state of the scene. Many of the earlier wave of *Bloodsuckers* came from this group and do not believe the newer ones to be much, if any, use.

Weekenders: Derived from the old rock/metal term 'Weekend Warrior'. A derisory term for someone with a conventional job, a non-scene significant other and other commitments that prevent them being a full time goth. Creeping out on weekends with short, hastily spiked hair and brand spanking new clothes the weekenders are rather conspicuous.

Wizkids: Wannabe magicians who take their mystical training from *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Harry Potter* and *Charmed* but nonetheless somehow manage to pull off a bit of *Magic(k)* now and then.

