

Issue 2, 2012

L FORGOTTEN R E

In this issue: Vampire Cults!

Explore the blood
magics of the
Culter Mithras

Holy Vengance!

Father Phillip
a Plug & Play
NPC

Editorial

Welcome back to another issue of Forgotten Lore! Once again we bring to you a mix of arcane and occult articles focusing on both the Classic and New World of Darkness submitted by YOU the fans. Each issue endeavours to tie our material into the topics brought up in the Darker Days podcast; presenting them in a 'table-ready' format for your chronicle.

In this issue for the Classic World of Darkness we have a submission sent to us by none other than Beckett! His article focuses on Father Phillip, a Catholic priest who has more to him than meets the eye. Also in this issue we have a submission for the New World of Darkness by Darker Days own co-host and man of science Chris. His article delves into the Cult of Mithras and sheds new light on their Blood Sorcery.

If you would like to get involved with Forgotten Lore by submitting some of your own material (we especially need artwork) or if you would just like to give us some feedback contact us at darkerdaysradio@gmail.com

Until next time,

The Rogue Council

*This issue is dedicated to the memory of the woman who taught me to imagine
Dorothy Nurse 1949-2012*

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Due to the mature themes presented, reader discretion is advised.

The Culter Mithras, new blood sorcery for Vampire: the Requiem

The 'Knife of Mithras' is the dark gift practiced by those who form the Cult of Mithras, and is the gift bestowed upon them by their god, and rival to Ahura Mazda, Ahriman. The Cult of Mithras, and their blood sorcery, was introduced in 'Mythologies', on page 16. Here we shall revisit their blood magic and re-examine the rules for this magic, but through the new rules introduced in 'Blood Sorcery: Sacraments and Blasphemies'. In order to begin this revision we must first review the Cult of Mithras, their beliefs and rites.

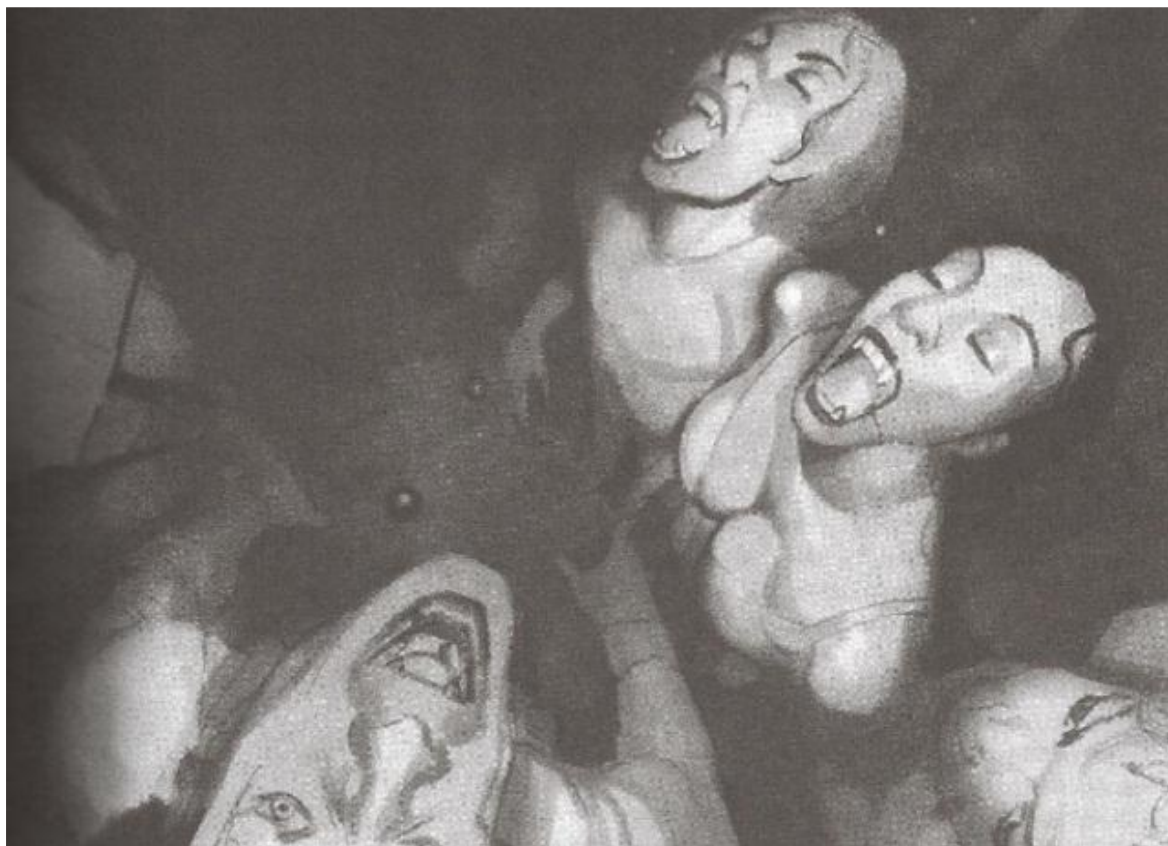
The Cult of Mithras is a cult of Mithras that see themselves as beings in rebellion to God and the Sun. Mithras may indeed have been the first vampire, and have committed a terrible sin in rebellion against God. The character, Mithras, was seduced by Ahriman, and committed a vile act by killing the Great Bull, and through this act he was able to steal the gift of life from the universe. the killing of the Bull involved a great feast of blood, and the sharing of blood is at the heart of the rites of Mithras. These rites are seen as a blasphemous twisting of the rites of the

Lancea Sanctum, devised to create an army of demons. For the Cult of Mithras their rites are a sign of their ability to overcome the Sun, just as Mithras had done once before. There is an existence of pleasure, not of servitude to a unforgiving God.

Ultimately the Cult of Mithras has shadowed the church of the Lancea Sanctum. The two are diametrically opposed concerning the origin of Vampires and their place in the world. But where the rituals of the Lancea Sanctum teach order, justice and the ability to focus the divine will of God, the rites of Mithras are instead the representation of rebellion, dominion and corruption.

The Motifs of the Cult of Mithras are thus.

The first is **rebellion**. The very path followed by Mithras and followed by his disciples is that of rebellion. They rebel against the world, against life, and against God. They must hide from the Sun yet seek to reap those who grow in its light. Mithras once dominated God and the Sun, and the Cult crave that power, and to laugh in the face of the one who would



curse them to the darkness. The rituals represent this rebellion. Flames are a constant focus, in particular the extinguishing of flames or the use of burning coals. Ritual symbols of the Great Bull are used to signify their purpose, and while the ceremonies are act in a careful manner, the verses uttered are often done so in a manner that contains as much hate directed to God.

The next theme is that their power is **chthonic**. Their power comes from within the Earth, just as Mithras was born. But while the old legends speak of Mithras being fully born from a rock, for the Cult, Mithras travelled into the Earth and returned with the powers bestowed upon him by Ahriman. The powers of the Culter Mithras are of the darkness, and is vile and not of the world of mankind. The rituals of the Culter Mithras often take place deep in the Earth, in their ceremonial chambers, the Mithraeams. Here they sacrifice bull and man to empower their dark arts, mimicking the feast of Mithras and the Bull.

The last theme is that of **dominion**. The Cult of Mithras is not just concerned with their rebellion against God, they also want to command the heavens and the Earth, and to see all their banes crushed under foot. For this reason the arts of the Culter Mithras are concerned with the manipulation and control of the Vampiric banes, not unlike the Coils of the Dragon. There is even the chance that Dracula learnt his Coils from both the Crone and the Cult of Mithras.

The core themes of the Culter Mithras are destruction and transmutation.

Creation to the Cult of Mithras represents the will of God. But for the Cult this means that the theme of creation is animating the darkness and the things of the Earth. For this reason the things created by the Culter Mithras are formed from shadows, blood and earth. The creatures can often appear smoke like, and bovine features are common.

Destruction is central to the methods employed by the Cult of Mithras. Destruction of things considered pure or sacred are often the target of the Cult. Such acts are the greatest sign of defiance. Most acts of destruction take the form of the curses, the enchanting of weapons, and the summoning of flames.

Rituals

The casting of the rituals relies on a few steps. The first is the sacrifice. The Culter Mithras has it's own requirements. In some respects the rituals are like the miracles of the

Lancea Sanctum. The sacrifice is a willpower point during the casting. However, the vampire must make a pledge with Mithras (if Mithras is even a real god etc) to commit a sin. The sin must be for the Vampires Vice, and when performed must be a sin equal to their Humanity rating. The indulgence of the Vice will not bestow any willpower to the Vampire (this is the second cost of their ritual). The sin must be conducted before sunrise in a days time (so this means a vampire will get a whole evening to perform the sin within if they happened to perform the ritual towards the end of the night). Failure to do so will result in the loss of all willpower, and so make them even more inclined to sin.

Casting of the rituals relies on three parts.

Because of the manner in which themes work some powers have been altered to reflect the new rules while still retaining the basic concept of the power.

First of all we need to know what the dice pools are that we use for the Cult of Mithras.

Theme	Improved:	Intelligence + Occult +
Creation	Creation:	Composure + Crafts +
Intimidation + Destruction	Destruction:	Presence +
+Divination	Divination:	Composure + Survival
+ Protection	Protection:	Presence + Subterfuge
Transmutation	Transmutation:	Presence + Science +

● Coin of Betrayal (Transmutation ●) Roll Presence + Science +

Transmutation vs Resolve + Blood Potency. On success the caster takes a coin from the target (if he has none the spell automatically fails). As long as the caster has the coin then the target loses a point in Composure. The point returns on the caster losing the coin, or the caster's True Death, or once the time limit of the spell is over. This means on casting the proximity counts as touching, and is further modified by the time duration.

(So now this weakens Composure, based upon the Potency of the spell, making a great setup for Glance of Weakness)

●● Fire of Lies (Transmutation ●● Destruction ●)

Roll Presence + Science +

Transmutation to transform normal fire into balefire. A pre-existing flame is required. Balefire does not cause frenzy. It harms mortals as normal. For vampires it only causes lethal damage. Excess successes are used to manipulate the size of the area of effect, or to change the intensity of the flame (see page 180 of the WoD core book). Therefore at least 2 successes are required for line of sight range.

●●● Sword of Slaughter (Destruction ●●●)

The bladed weapon is upgraded to do armour piercing attacks. Excess successes go into duration (this is a downgrade from the weapon doing aggravated attacks. But hey, doing more damage faster is better than just doing little amounts of aggravated).

●●●● Glance of Weakness (Transmutation ●●●●●)

Roll Presence + Science +

Transmutation vs Composure + Blood Potency to trigger a target's Vice. Given the next potential chance to indulge it, the character will follow their vice. Successes need to be spent to have the effect last for a scene. The effect ends

when a degeneration roll is passed for a sin which has been brought on by the pursuit of the Vice, or once the scene is over.

●●●●● Arrow of Thirst (Destruction ●●●●●)

Roll Presence + Intimidation +

Destruction vs Stamina + Blood Potency. The target must already be bleeding. The target of the spell now loses points in his highest Discipline, in addition to losing Vitae due to bleeding. One dot is lost per turn, with the amount determined by excess successes. Successes spent into duration determine how long this loss lasts for, but only once the target feeds. So a loss for a day means that once the day is up and the Vampire feeds, his Discipline dots return.

●●●●●● Courier of the Sun (Protection ●●●●●●, Transmutation ●●●●●)

This power protects against sunlight.

While in sunlight, the caster may not use any vampiric powers or Disciplines, including Culter Mithras. One point of Vitae is spent per dot of Blood Potency. She may not expend or drain Vitae. Finally, all her physical Attributes (though none of her Skills) function as if they were half their normal level. The loss of the Attributes is what partly fuels the protection. In total 17 successes are needed for total immunity for a day.

The author would like to express thanks to David Brookshaw, who provided invaluable feedback in the writing of this article.

Father Philip, ready-made NPC

"In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. . . Yippee Ki Yay,!!!"

Background: Father Philip should have died that night - or worse. Whatever godling or monster that was, it was real; and it went far beyond any legends or doctrines about spiritual warfare that the Church had taught.

While many of his friends (what few there were) had gone to join the military just out of high school, Philip O'Hara went into the service of the Lord. He studied at the seminary, believing he would be a shining beacon for good in a dark world. Despite the lack of a church upbringing, he did well in his studies and went on to become a Catholic priest. Having no fond memories

of home, he hoped for a posting far away. His mother, had died on his 12th birthday of a drug overdose, forcing his father to take on another job. The long work hours strained their relationship, with Philip often feeling that his father was never around when needed.

Indirectly this had pushed Philip to the church. At first, it was a way to leave an empty home, but as he progressed in his studies, his growing faith gave him a comfort which had been conspicuously absent from his life up to this point. He enjoyed being helpful, deriving a sense of self-worth from volunteer work, or just helping out around the church. It was through this service to others that he finally discovered a sense of self.



For some years after being ordained he served as a parish priest. After a while, Father Philip began to experiment with a small variety of extra training opportunities, from exorcism to ministering to prisoners. He extended his care of others to include blessing houses before a family brought in a newborn baby or occasionally casting out demons to aid people give up smoking or alcohol.

That was all to change in one night.

At 11:15 pm, he received a phone call from a frantic female voice. The voice had seemed familiar, but despite his uncommon knack for remembering the people to whom he ministered, Philip was at a loss to recall the woman. Arriving at the source of the call, he found a small empty office building - but no distressed woman. Letting himself in, he called out, with no response. Following the illumination of the only light in the block he arrived in a room, empty save for the phone laying off the hook. And then *it* hit him.

He remembers seeing mechanical gears twisting and breaking asunder in his mind, and can't think of anything even similar to the sheer agony he felt as the force wrested his will from him. It was like being on fire, enduring the agony of flame, yet never being consumed by it. He remembers the thought, that this must be what Hell feels like. Not

the proverb, not the exaggeration, but actual Hell.

Through shattered memories, he recalls going into an unfamiliar police station. He remembers standing surreally, casting away a woman's weeping body. More memories of feeling her utter hatred of him, and not knowing the cause. He remembers a slow walk, almost a sort of saunter towards a lot of vehicles. A body, literally shredded, like those God-awful horror movies, lays outside a guard shack, the gate not open, but gone. He remembers, almost being free. Almost.

He recalls a tear, or many tears not for ruining make-up, but for hitting the ground. He remembers thinking that Jacob, returning to Canaan, wrestled an angel. He remembers yellow, with black stripes on occasion. He remembers piloting a ship. An old ship. It seemed so strange, so out of place with everything else. An unclean, an unnatural glory, as if some sort of victory. And that was one of the last things. He remembers thinking, it is time, and imagining himself striking *it*, a true demon. A loud thunder followed by a nauseated feeling. A deep pain, in the abdomen. She, the girl that was so sad. Still crying, but with her hands on his shoulders, for some reason. Another thunderclap, and *it* as gone from him. And that is how he died.

He awoke, not on a surgeon's table, not in a hospital, nor on the ground, but on his feet. Miles away from anywhere he knew, and two months past his last memory.

He knows he died, and somehow came back from that. He remembers being controlled by that thing, though not how long, or all that he had done in that time. It didn't take long for him to discover that he had been officially declared dead and his good name ruined. His world had been devastated and yet he had returned. He had been granted a glimpse of a greater truth, a world in which spirits warred for Creation. Reflecting on the previous night, he saw with startling clarity that he was not ready for this war.

Father Philip, believed dead and cast from the Church which had given him such comfort, turned his attention to another calling. He branched out into more occult understandings involving spiritual warfare, demonic possession and understanding, and ways to ward against the evils that really do exist. He has not discovered any other groups with similar goals or understandings, and isn't sure how he may react if he did. He rationally believes that he cannot be alone, but in his darker moods wonders if he is singled out for torment - the only sighted man in a kingdom of the blind. He wonders too, that if others exist who share his knowledge, would they be allies? Though he has begun to research and understand multiple religious interpretations of the motives and specifics of spirits, he still holds to his Catholic worldview, cataloguing these forces as varieties of Demonic forces, filled with lies and half-truths.

How to use in your game:

nWoD - "Father" Philip is mortal. He is not a Sin-Eater, Mage, or even a supernatural human like some versions of Hunters or those options presented in *Second Sight*, or similar books. He is an enlightened human, but a mortal still, and likely one that would view Vampires, Werewolves, Mages, and other creatures among the spiritual allies of the Devil, if he were to ever discover them. As of yet, he has only ever (knowingly) encountered spirits and ghosts, neither of which more than a handful of times.

Suggested Traits: **Physical** traits low, with **Mental** and **Social** higher, particularly Resistance traits. His **Virtue** is likely to be Faith, though Fortitude or Justice might also work well. Vice, should be exceptionally interesting based on what twists you want to add to the character's personality. Wrath might work, if you want a taste of an old-school witch-hunter, though Father Philip is not particularly fanatic in his faith. Charity and Hope are also good choices, unlike Prudence and Temperance. Pride, either overestimating his newfound holy mission or at his prior higher social station may be appropriate as well, though likely Sloth, Envy, Greed, and Gluttony (except as a "martyr") likely will not fit as well.

He may have a dot or two in **Athletics** and **Brawl**, (likely for participating in YMCA community programs and self-defense to pass the time), but would have 3+ dots in **Academics** (religion/Occult), **Investigation** (Research), **Medicine**, **Occult**

(Religion/Exorcism/Spirits), **Expression**, **Empathy**, and either **Persuasion** or **Socialization**, due to his time as being a priest and community figure. A Dot or 2 in **Politics** wouldn't be unheard of. **Willpower**, and especially **Morality** need to be particularly high. The mechanics for Exorcisms (presented in the nWoD *Core Rulebook*, p. 214) have a minimum requirement of **Morality 8** and **Occult/Academics 3**. **Meditation** would be a good choice for **Merit**, as would those that augment his mental or social aptitudes.

Father Philip generally carries on his person some rudimentary religious texts and tools, typically a Catholic Bible, a Rosary*, some cheap incense and oils, and a personal journal with a lot of Latin quotes he tries, as well as some pagan and secular wards and phrases he has come across. If given time to prepare, he has a small library dedicated to spiritual/spirit matters and demonology, more uncommon items for exorcism, and a variety of Catholic icons and items.

* The Rosary is a special tool, not exactly a relic or magical item, but does grant him an additional bonus dice when used along with Catholic prayer to attempt to ward against, banish, trap, or manipulate spirits, above and beyond any other special gear used.

cWoD - Likewise, Father Philip is not a Mage or Hedge Witch, a Hunter, nor really a Medium. He has an experience very similar to the Imbuing, but none of their abilities of connections, and cannot recognize the unholy in any

special way. Not being a government agent, or a member of a ultra-secret group dedicated to destroying or studying the things that should not be, he really isn't a mortal hunter either. Philip is just a guy with a past touched by the supernatural.

Suggested Traits: Again, **Physical** Traits are going to be tertiary, with **Mental** and **Social** being almost equally higher. **Concept** could be Criminal, Drifter, Intellectual, Professional, or even Soldier. **Nature** could be a variety of things, really dependant on what sort of personal spin you might like for the character. Architect, Caregiver, Conformists (to heaven), Judge, Martyr, Pedagogue, Survivor, or Visionary are all excellent choices, while Bon Vivant, Conniver, Fanatic, Monster, Penitent, Rebel, and Thrill-Seeker are likely not going to work well, unless you want a particularly twisted character with more than a touch of Role-Playing difficulties.

Again, most of the equivalent traits mentioned above are likely going to be prevalent, with one rather large exception. A cWoD Father Philip has access to an item of interesting ability. The same Rosary* noted above, itself has a True Faith Rating or 2. Father Philip lacks a certain zealous conviction in his own righteousness to have True Faith, though he does have a strong sense of faith, the Rosary, when used as part of in invocations against demonic evils, does add a small taste of divine might. Primarily useful only in a defensive sense, or as an instrument of banishing

spirits (including ghosts, and disembodied werewolves, mages, and vampires), Father Philip himself does not present any particular aura or magic (unless actively using the Rosary), can not use it as a weapon, and does not know that it is an actual relic.

The other out of the ordinary aspect of Father Philip is that he has an exceptionally high Willpower, (perhaps even rivaling weaker Mages and ancient Vampires). He has always had a great deal of Self-Control, a large sense of Conscience, and over the past year has begun to develop an inner Courage to face some of the darkness. If used, good choices for **Merits** include Enchanting Voice (2P), Concentration (1M), Natural Linguist (2M), Calm Heart (3M), Iron Will (3M), Natural Leader (1So), or something that allows him similar abilities above and beyond the normal limits of mental fortitude. However, Supernatural ones, like True Faith, Medium, and Oracular Ability should likely be avoided. Suitable **Flaws** might involve Nightmares (1M), Phobia (2M), Soft-Hearted (1M), Eerie Presence (2Su), and even Haunted (3Su), related to after effects of his possession, or even his Rosary.

So how do I use him?

Father Philip can be used in a few ways with ease. As a (mostly) Ready Made Character™, he is basically ready to go, with a few minor adjustments to fit the context of your game. He is designed to be a character with proficiencies in mental and social abilities, and general and specialized knowledge. He is not

at all a physical or combat-style character, either in the defensive or offensive sense, and will likely die very quickly if that is attempted. His true strengths, however, are as an NPC. Either as someone introduced by the Storyteller to aid with a specific problem, an inconstant ally, mentor, and source of information and lore, and even as a close friend. Father Philip could be a resource that gathers the players together in an introductory story, and focuses them for the remainder of a chronicle, or even used as a broken individual, to show just how fragile mortals are in the face of an overwhelming and undefeatable darkness. Father Philip could be used as a foil or even an antagonist for Supernatural characters or even mortals that are themselves still very religious or have a very different sense of the occult. Whatever returned Father Philip to life might in fact have some very vile and unknowable plans and motives for doing so. Is he even truly human after that? Was he ever? Is that spirit that dominated him, truly (completely!!!) gone. Unlike any of *It's* other victims, Father Philip was able to resist. Why was that?