

Boons – The basics

An In Character document for the Camarilla role playing game

My childe,

Of the many things that my sire taught me, one of the most important was that value and meaning of Boons. She taught me that Boons are the currency of Vampires, that if no one owes you a Boon, then you are broke. Remember that. Boons are the very threads that bind our Society together. If we look at the Society around us, we notice a situation where younger and weaker Vampires outnumber older more powerful ones three to one if not more. So how do the older Vampires keep everyone under control? Boons.

What are Boons?

Boons are the single most important way Society is run. They are the only way a younger Vampire can rise in power. There is no such thing as a favour among the Damned, there are only Boons.

Boons allow you do things. If you ask a Prince or Primogen to do something; they can refuse. If they owe you a Boon, you can force them to do it. Remember, none of us, no matter our personal power, are capable of everything. Society is such that everyone needs to do deals, and Boons are the currency of the Damned.

How to record a Boon

Unless you tell someone about your Boon it doesn't exist. Boons have to be registered, and the natural people to keep track of Boons are the Harpies. Harpies need to keep records of everyone's Boons. Several Harpies do so formally - it is said the Priscus Harpy of Dublin carries a large book into which is added each Boon between every resident of that city. Sometimes there is no suitable Harpy to do such a thing- at times like these the Invictus are usually more than happy to offer their services (for a trivial Boon, of course!).

Some Vampires prefer to have their Boons recorded with Harpies from other Domain, or have them publicly announced. Some like to have the Boons written down or witnessed by other powerful Kindred. Others seek to use Invictus Oaths to seal the agreement. Whichever method is used, the importance of making sure a record of the Boon exists cannot be underestimated. If there is no record of the Boon there is nothing to make other Kindred uphold it.

What Am I Letting Myself In For?

The hardest thing about Boons is getting a sense of perspective on them, what each Boon means to the person giving the Boon. Below are standard guidelines of what it means when you give a Boon.

By taking this Boon I understand that...

Trivial Boon

I shall do a one-time favour for the person to whom I owe this Boon. I shall aid him by protecting him, even if it places me into conflict with others. I shall agree use a

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discipline for him if he requires it. I shall support his political manoeuvre this night even if it means I have to fly in the face of my Clan or Covenant or Prince. It is a single favour that I owe; one that will take a single night to fulfil. I will not place myself in a position to break my word, however, nor will I betray my Clan, my Covenant or My Prince or any Oaths of loyalty I have taken.

Minor Boon

I have inconvenienced the person who I owe this boon by asking him to do the favour for me in the first place. I understand that I may be inconvenienced by the favours he asks in return. If need be, I will secure his safe passage into a hostile city. I shall reveal unto him secrets I know that could endanger members of my Clan, Covenant or Domain. I shall fight his enemies, whomever they may be. I expect that payment of this debt shall take many nights. This I accept because I asked roughly the same of the one I owe.

Major Boon

I have earned a great debt to the one to whom I owe this Boon. He has given much time, effort and perhaps compromised many things he believes in to give me this favour; thus I shall return it. I understand that if required I would even teach him the immortal powers of the Blood. I shall aid him in whatever political goal he so desires, even if this means openly standing against my Prince, my Covenant or my Clan. I would, if he so wished, locate for him or give him property I own or which he would wish, even if gaining this property is taken at the expense of another. A Major Boon represents something permanent, thus in return I shall give something permanent.

Life Boon

I do accept that the person to whom I owe this Boon is one to whom I owe more than can ever be repaid. My current existence is dependant upon him, thus, I owe him things that can never be repaid. I will place myself in danger for him; if my Blood is shed, then I care not. If this means I betray my Clan and Covenant and Prince and bring them low, I care not. The debt I owe can never be repaid, lest somehow I save his existence.

More on Life Boons

Let's get things into some kind of scale. 98% of Boons should be Trivial, Minor or Major Boons. Life Boons should be as rare as diamonds. When you have a Life Boon, you own someone. It's not nice or pleasant, they are your property. With a Life Boon you can have a Vampire do anything you want; they must do it unless they somehow save your life... which won't happen, as you are now making them take all the risks.

The important thing to remember about Life Boons is that they cannot be demanded. Nor can they be given away. The only way to gain one is to actively save the existence of another Vampire at the risk of your own.

A Prince who simply fails to Blood Hunt someone when he could have done so can demand a Major Boon, not Life. Chasing off a gang of mortal toughs shouldn't be worth a Life Boon either. Fighting off a group of Hunters at midday while the haven is burning down around you is closer to the fact. Life Boons require one Vampire to risk their existence to preserve that of another. Society being such that it is, this happens very rarely.

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The Harpy is the usual judge of what ought to be considered worthy of a Life Boon, and if you don't have any scars to show how close you were to final death in saving this other Vampire's existence, then don't expect them to judge in your favour.

If the Priscus of the Ventrue ends up owing a Life Boon to someone, it puts the Ventrue into a very difficult position. That person can make the Priscus do anything he wants, even betray his Clan, and the Ventrue have to live with it. If the Priscus ignores the Boon, that would be worse. The prudent response would be to get a new Priscus. The old one has fallen out of favour.

Indeed holding a Life Boon over another “devalues” that kindred, for they are no longer their own. Their loyalties, actions and motives are often considered suspect by others. It is unlikely they will every rise in power and station, for their reputation is now inexorably linked to yours. Beware of accepting a Life Boon then, when lesser boons may be sufficient. For once your Requiem is tied to another's by this bond of Prestation your debtor may seek to place you in harms way to clear the debt, in one fashion or another.

