



THE Undercurrents

The Official Newsletter of the Dark River Society Domain Volume 6, Issue 7

AUGUST 2005

Games, Games, Games!

Hi everyone!

This month's *Undercurrents* issue consists mainly of two things: a detailed explanation of the new Status System, brought to you by our very own ADST Paula Watt; AND a gripping short story by the AVST Requiem Rick Backhouse. I have also included some random snapshots of members from July's Requiem court game taken by GDK's Chapter Coordinator Jase Conger.



Loraine Flegal
Undercurrents
Editor

Also, don't forget, these next few months will be jam-packed with games in town and out-of-town. There's DragonCon occurring next week, the International Camarilla Conclave happening at the end of October, and our very own Domain Event in the beginning of November. Keep a close watch on our web calendar to find out what's going on in our gaming community so that you can take advantage of huge potential roleplay experiences all around the country.

Enjoy this issue, and please pass it around! ☺



Please welcome a newly transferred member **Jeremy Holland** and temporary members **Andrew Evans**, **Jason Scott**, and **Ed Dawson** to the club!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Editor's Letter	1
2005-06 Officers	1
The ADST Speaks	2
Jesse	4
Random Photos	5
Calendar of Events	6

2005-2006 OFFICERS

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CC TN-008-C

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ADC Webmistress
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VST Forsaken

Scott Mizis
VST Requiem
AVST Forsaken
AADST Mafia

Jon Watt
ADST Ghosts

Ian Harris
ADST Audits

Andrew Anderson
ADST Mortals

Henry Faust
ADC Charities

Rick Backhouse
AVST Requiem

THE ADST SPEAKS

Status IN THE NEW World of Darkness



Paula Watt
Assistant
Domain
Storyteller

Status is about to become a much more important aspect of our game. We've managed to get by pretty much ignoring it thus far, because the table top system didn't work well for live action. Because the STs are limited in the amount of free city status they can distribute, there will be a couple months of adjusting before things settle out. We'll have to use the game mechanics to get everyone to where they should be, and the game mechanics limit how much status can be awarded in any given month.

How important is status?

STATUS AND POLITICS

Just so that this is perfectly clear, Kindred justice within the Requiem is NOT based upon trail by jury, the use of Aura Perception, Beetle Barf, whatever...none of these are accepted. Status and Station wins.

Whenever things come down to one kindred's word against another's, the one with the most status wins. Period, end of discussion. If Bob's status 4 Kindred decides that your status 1 Kindred has committed a crime, guess who is going to be believed? Even if you are telling the complete truth and have proof of your innocence that no American jury could ignore. Not fair, is it? But that is the way of Kindred politics.

So how does the little guy keep from being squashed? Simple. He finds someone with equal or greater standing to speak on his behalf. How? Well, that's up to you and the guy you're asking to help. If

you know the character has a strong sense of justice, and you can convince him that your cause is just, that might work. In most cases, an appropriate boon will work wonders. Or, the occasional sucker might even do it for free (but don't count on it).

The situation changes dramatically when Bob's status 4 Kindred suddenly has to contest with another status 4 Kindred who is speaking on your behalf. Oops, Bob seems to have miscalculated, and will now have to find another way to resolve this.

And these things will differ from city to city. In Nashville, you have quite a bit more protection than you would in a city with just a single prince. In Nashville, every resident has sworn to a Primogen (all of whom have fairly high status). If you're being pushed around, your Primogen might consent to help. Again, don't expect anything in the World of Darkness to come for free. The size of the boon he'll demand will probably depend on how far he has to stick out his neck. Call on his help too often, and he may decide you're not worth the trouble.

Also note the following excerpt from the MET book page 281: "Status is not a blunt weapon. It is a scalpel that must be used carefully. Apply too much pressure and the tool breaks. Relying on Status to open all social doors is likely to establish a Kindred's reputation as boorish and unworthy of his high standing." In other words, frequently abusing high status is a good way to lose it.

High status doesn't make you immune to the rules or authority of other officers of the court. All the rules still apply.

*The ADST Speaks cont.***STATUS AND ROLEPLAY**

Status represents the respect, standing and reputation among a certain group. It can be added to appropriate social challenges, and thus is not something that can just be ignored because your character doesn't like someone. High status does not mean a "better" vampire, just one who has earned more respect within a certain group. It doesn't mean you must ignore the way the person roleplays. It doesn't mean you have to like the character. It just means their word is worth more than yours, and thus you should be respectful and careful with how you behave towards them.

Whether this is a grudging respect that masks a deep hatred for the character, or whether this is genuine admiration for the way the person has behaved, doesn't usually matter.

INCREASING YOUR CITY STATUS

How do you get more City status? The MET book provides a nice little chart of the types of things that will generally earn you an increase in City Status (page 290). If you manage to remain active for an entire year, you automatically get +1 to your city status (max of 3) for free. However, if you've managed to mess up in several memorable ways during that one year's time, don't be surprised to find that status stripped.

LOSING CITY STATUS

Guess what? There's a little chart in the book with Sins against the city on page 289. If you commit a sin of equal to or less than your effective city status, you risk losing some of that status. If you regularly commit sins at one level above your current status, there is an excellent chance you will be deemed unworthy of higher standing.

EFFECTIVE CITY STATUS

Oooh, and things just keep getting better. The MET introduces the idea of Eminent Clans and Ascendant Covenants. I'm not going into details of the special bonuses each clan or covenant receives (it's different for each). Just be aware that your character has two status numbers. The first is his permanent city status, and the second is his effective city status. I'm going to use clan as an example, but the same thing also applies to covenants. (This is all explained in detail on page 291).

Each month the ST adds up the total permanent city status for each clan. The clan with the most *permanent* city status is considered to be the Eminent Clan for the month. If they have more than 5 members, they each get a bonus to their effective city status, and the bonus ranges from +1 to +3. So, when Gangrel are the

SPEAKING ABOUT STATUS

"Status" is an OOC term. No character refers to another as having "Status 2", no more than they refer to themselves as having "Strength 3". Thus, players should avoid using the word "Status" while referring to status. Instead, the phrases on page 282 of the MET Requiem are listed here:

- 1 **Acknowledged** (or "of low standing or rank")
- 2 **Recognized** (or "of some standing or rank")
- 3 **Valued** (or "of signification standing or rank")
- 4 **Respected** (or "of high standing or rank")
- 5 **Admired** (or "of pre-eminent standing or rank")

In addition, I would like to propose the following terms for use when Clan Eminence or Covenant Ascension bonuses raise a Kindred's effective status above 5.

- 6 **Revered** (or "of exceptional standing or rank")
- 7 **Esteemed** (or "of outstanding standing or rank")
- 8 **Venerated** (or "of superlative standing or rank")

In addition, Nashville uses the following terms:

- 0 **Drifter** (or "of no standing or rank")

Eminent clan for the month, your status 1 Gangrel gets an effective city status of 2 (1 + 1 bonus). Neat, huh?

The good news is that your Gangrel is considered to have a city status 2 for the rest of the month. The bad news is that your Gangrel is now held to the same standards of behavior of every other status 2 Kindred.

Effective city status can be stripped, exactly the same as permanent status.

The bonuses for eminent clan and ascendant covenant do stack with each other and you can benefit from both (if appropriate). Your total city status can be raised above 5 for the month due to these bonuses.

CITY STATUS AND OFFICERS

City Status is not the only thing to consider when two Kindred have a dispute. A Prince with City Status 2 is still the Prince, and he still has all the authority and powers of a Prince. Thinking you can push him around simply because you have more status is an excellent way to find yourself with significantly less City Status (since the Prince can strip it as part of his office). So if you ever find yourself with more status than a Primogen, be very careful. A Primogen carries a lot more power than simply his status. ☹

Jesse

By Rick Backhouse

The streets were dark and cold that night...much the same as any other night in the dead of winter in Chicago, and especially on these streets. I was scouting the back alleys, searching out what I knew I would find there...that fine little rock that would give me a brief escape from my dull and miserable life. It wasn't always like that. I remember a time when I had it all; a career on the fast track to the top, a beautiful wife, a wonderful daughter and so many friends...well, with hindsight, maybe not so many as I thought.

But that was all gone...it seems like a distant memory, now. A memory from a former life and a different person.

Sorry, I forgot my manners. I'm Jesse Barstow, former bright and shining star in the world of criminal law in a city where there are a lot of criminals and not nearly enough law. I'd like to say that I was a proud defender of justice, a champion of the weak, stout adversary of evil, but I wasn't. The just and the weak don't have nearly as much money as the evil and I'm guessing it's because the bad guys are willing to do what it takes to get it. This shouldn't be too much of a newflash to most of you, but there are some that really do believe that Good will ultimately triumph over Evil. They're wrong. Evil has better legal advisors. I know, I was one of them.

Unfortunately, I wasn't quite bright enough to keep my professional life and my social life separate, and that, ladies and gentleman, was my downfall.

It started off fairly innocuously—I went to a post court party after getting a particularly slippery coke supplier off on a technicality and kindly intruded me to the glorious benefits of his merchandise. I have to tell you, if you're an ambitious young overachiever that works all hours to get to the top, you would see cocaine as a godsend. At first I used it to keep myself alert and active during those late night sessions. Then I would use it as a kick start after the long, deep crashes that inevitably came after burning too much energy without nearly enough reserves. Then it was to "stimulate my synapses" during negotiations and long defenses in court. Then I was pretty much using it just to make it through the day without divebombing into oblivion. The thing is, it isn't cheap and, no matter how good you think you are hiding it, people notice.

I guess the first warning sign that it was a problem

was when I didn't have the money to pay the mortgage, but I knew that the mortgage company would cut a little slack for someone with my prospects. I didn't know jack!

When I was called in to see the Senior Partners, I actually thought it was because they had noticed my work and were ready to give me my next boost in the company. Oh, they'd noticed me, alright. What the meeting boiled down to was a fairly straight forward: "We feel that you should take a leave of absence to take care of your personal matters." In other words: "We know what you doing and you had better fix it. If you don't, don't bother coming back.", but I interpreted it as "Take a break, because we're ready to increase your responsibilities and want to have you fresh for the battle."

God, I was dumb!

What did I do during my "leave of absence"? I partied like there was no tomorrow. Then I got home one day and my wife and daughter were gone. On the kitchen table, next to a foreclosure notice, was a note that said, quite simply, "Jesse, I love you, but I can't watch you destroy all of our lives. Please get help." I never saw her again.

I lost the house, but not before the car had been taken back. And when I went to my "friends" to ask for a place to crash while I got things straightened out, I saw looks of pity in their eyes, sprinkled liberally with disgust.

So Jesse Barstow, rising criminal lawyer became Jesse Barstow, homeless bum.

I sold what I could salvage and bought a few more hits. Since then, I've lived on the streets, more or less, begging and stealing what I can for my next fix. Oh, I can't afford the good stuff anymore, so I make do with what I can get.

Which brings us back to that night. Cold and dark, yes, but I had enough to buy a temporary escape and damn, I needed it. My feet found their way down the familiar streets and I turned down the alley that was a shortcut to the people that I needed to see.

Then it happened.

Out of nowhere, someone attacked me. Some other bum, I figured, looking to steal something to hock for booze or dope. He was a strong son-of-a-bitch, though, definitely not the result of a life living out of

Jesse cont.

other people's garbage. Maybe some thug, looking for entertainment by beating the hell out of someone that wouldn't be noticed. He pinned me to the ground and then I saw them. Fangs. Big, nasty, vicious fangs. I'm not sure what I thought at that point. Some screwed up goth kid, maybe, that thought he was really a vampire? Someone that got a kick out of scaring street people? Then the bastard bit me. I couldn't move, but I could feel the warm trickle of my own piss making it's way down my leg. I guess that meant I was pretty damned scared at that point. It was weird. My mind was frantic, but my body was paralyzed. I literally couldn't lift a finger to help myself. I could feel my life ebbing away and my body started trembling, my mind becoming more and more detached. Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew that I was going into shock. I don't know why or how, but I was recalling old first aid lessons that I'd taken when I was a kid. The causes of shock; weak heart...obstruction to the blood flow to the heart...loss of blood or extreme dehydration...We have a winner! This psycho was literally sucking the blood out of me.

My mind became suddenly focused. He was drinking my blood. My blood. I wanted it back. Adrenaline surged through my body as I ripped

myself free from his bite, grabbed his head and bit his neck. I tore a chunk out of him and started doing it back to him. I drank while he struggled against my fury-fed strength. It was like fire coursing down my throat as I gulped mouthful after mouthful down. It felt like my stomach would explode as it churned trying to expel the foul liquid. But I was gone. My mind was working on adrenaline and pure, bestial instinct as I drained the MF that tried to kill me. I drank until I could drink no more and then threw the body away from me and clambered to my feet. I staggered away, sticking to the shadows as I found my way back to the abandoned warehouse basement that I dosed in. I collapsed in my corner and slept...I don't know how long I slept for.

That was about a month ago. I've learned quite a bit in the last month. There was no word on the street about the body of my assailant. It seems to have vanished. After that night, I haven't had even the slightest yearning for the crutch that destroyed my life.

Oh, yes, one other thing. I've bumped into a couple of others like me and I now know what it was that attacked me and what I am now.

I am a 100% genuine vampire. A blood-sucking, predatory creature of the night.

I knew I was born to be an attorney! ☺



Tetsaia



Tavish



Victoria and Marsail

Photos by Jase Conger, July Requiem Game 2005

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

If you want to contribute to the *Undercurrents* newsletter, please email your photographs, stories, jokes, and anything else you want to see in the newsletter, to drs_newsletter@yahoo.com.

If you are submitting images, the following formats are acceptable: JPEG, TIFF, EPS, PICT, bitmap. Please do not send anything bigger than 2MB through email. If your file does exceed 2MB, please burn it onto a CD and give it to either Loraine Flegal or Sam Flegal. ☺

September/CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 DragonCon	3 DragonCon
4 DragonCon	5 DragonCon	6	7	8 NWRE	9 NWRE 7:00 pm Non-Court Requiem Game	10 NWRE
11 NWRE	12	13	14 7:00 pm Domain Council Meeting	15	16	17 7:00 pm Forsaken Game
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 7:00 pm Court Requiem Game
25	26	27	28	29	30	

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GDK Coordinator	Jase Conger	tn008_cc@yahoo.com	—
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