

VAMPIRE COURT

A comedy LARP about
vampires and birthdays.

Written by Charlie, Queen of the Vampires



Introduction

Vampire Court is a (sporadically) annual tradition that started when Charlie, still recovering from a killer Boxing Day hangover, realized her birthday was in two days. Not wanting her mother, who was visiting, to realize she had no friends, she frantically came up with the half-baked plan to run a LARP with twenty-four hours of preparation, and absolutely no notice, because nerds will eat that shit up. Somehow, it worked, despite being an incoherent dogpile of mechanics.

And then, some fuckwit was like, “So, same time next year? Just give us more notice, ha-ha!” So, she spitefully made an event with an entire year’s worth of notice, and now has to follow through. At the last minute. Again.

If you’re still confused, just imagine the overwrought drama of White Wolf’s World of Darkness, except it’s directed by guys behind What We Do in the Shadows.

Important Notes

1. Vampire Court is a party first, a LARP second. Having fun is much more important. If you’ve been invited, it’s because I want to enjoy your company – not listen to some petty squabble about how one person ignoring a hit in a battle three years ago led to your dog not being able to graduate from college.
2. With that said, no alt-right, /pol/, self-enlightened fascist bullshit. It’s a party, Kyle. Stop using anarcho-capitalist ideology as an excuse to make racist jokes.
3. Don’t actually punch each other, throw drinks in each other’s faces, or pull out a sword in the middle of a pub. That will get Charlie in trouble, and Charlie’s already plenty good at getting herself in trouble.
4. That’s it.
5. I assumed there would be more when I started to write this section. Now, it just looks like I want everyone to ignore interpersonal conflict in favor of giving me the attention I crave (which is true, but I’d hoped to be more subtle about it.)

“When you become a vampire you become very... sexy.”

Deacon, What We Do In The Shadows

The Premise

In other settings, there would likely be grandiose lore and backstory covering the history of vampiric existence within Melbourne, the nature of the undead, and their complex politics.

This is not one of those settings.

Charlie, retired Queen of the Vampires, is celebrating her birthday by gathering all of her vampire sons, daughters, and non-binary children together. Most of her gatherings tend to devolve into poorly-organized chaos, and it's unlikely this will be an exception.

Said vampires are organized into five rough 'families', each possessing some basic common features. Nobody knows how those families came to exist, though, and a lot of their origins are lost to time. Perhaps they're the product of some grand design. Perhaps they're the by-product of various one-night stands.

All that matters is that tonight is their chance to enjoy themselves. For vampires, this usually means engaging in convoluted, grandiose plans with minimal chance of success and a massive amount of bloodshed. There's little malice, of course; at the end of the day, despite the coups, adultery, betrayal, assassinations, blackmail, deception, and/or littering, they're still family.

Unlike other LARPs built around vampires, there's no political system to game, and no social structure to win. Don't worry about it! Make your grandiose plans... and set them up to fail spectacularly.¹ If there's one thing that Vampire Court teaches us, it's that becoming a vampire does not, apparently, make someone competent.

Gifts

It's a birthday, but honestly, gifts aren't expected.

That said, if you'd like to, feel free to bring one! My current goal is to make my house look like a vampire lives in it, and I love having my friends contribute to the project with any spooky trinkets, frames, and artworks they find in op-shops



“I have never met a vampire personally, but I don't know what might happen tomorrow.”

Bela Lugosi

Rules

I've done my best to keep Vampire Court as simple as possible – this is a party, and we don't want to get bogged down with arguments! As such, there are three core rules.

1. If you're uncomfortable with anything going on in the LARP, you can call 'cut' at any time. This is a party; you should be having fun. And if you think someone else might be uncomfortable with something you want to do, check for consent first.
2. If two characters come into conflict, go with whatever seems fun. If you can't decide, something funny, unexpected, or just plain stupid that makes the conflict irrelevant must happen. And if you **really** want mechanics, there's some wonderful ones on Page 5, under Conflict Resolution.
3. When in doubt, go for a laugh over a win. Nobody's going to give a shit if you make a dramatic political alliance to secure power, but they will remember you staging a failed coup attempt against the queen because her mother thought it would be funny.

Also, unlike other LARP creators, we're just gonna be honest about it. As ~~the organizer of the LARP~~ Queen of the Vampires, Charlie's not subject to any of the same rules as the rest of you, and basically gets to do whatever she feels like.² Don't like it? Fuck you, run your own LARP.

Pre-Party Checklist

1. Make sure you've registered on narcissism.ltd, so Charlie knows who's attending.
2. Make an appropriate vampire costume – including eyeshadow!
3. Have at least one read-through of the rules.
4. Make sure your eyeliner game is on point – and throw some eyeshadow under your eye so players can see which family you're part of!

“That’s all I get? One lame-ass vamp with no appreciation for my painstakingly thought out puns?”

Buffy, Buffy the Vampire Slayer

LARP Mechanics

If you're expecting a complicated system to represent the process of living as a vampire, go play New World of Darkness or whatever the fuck they call it now. We're keeping it super, super simple here.

Safety Mechanic

The primary safety mechanic will be the cut mechanic. If you're having major issues with another player, please escalate them straight to Charlie. And if you be a creep, you'll get kicked out.

Character Creation

Characters in Vampire Court have a concept, a family, a relationship, and a goal.

Concept

Your concept is essentially just a vague suggestion of the kind of character you can play, in case you need one. It sometimes has a few tips or pieces of information about the game. Feel free to completely ignore it and make your own; it's just for people who might want some inspiration. If you attended the original Vampire Court and expected Charlie to remember who was playing what, you're an idiot. When signing up, feel free to mention that you already have a character and don't need a concept.

Family

Families are one of the biggest additions to Vampire Court this year, mostly to give people some familiar faces to roleplay with. A family is basically just a group of vampires with ~~matching eyeshadow~~ common characteristics who ~~work together~~ try not to screw each other over too often. You'll be given a family along with your concept, after you sign up – mostly so it can influence any costuming you might have.

Each family also has one 'head'. They're represented by having the biggest and most intricate eyeliner wings of their family members.³ If you'd like to be the head of a family, please let Charlie know!

Characters typically indicate their families by wearing eyeshadow under their eyes, in the color of their family. For example, the Carlisle Family uses red. Get in contact with your family before the game. Mostly, this is so you can plan out what nonsense you're going to indulge in.

“My own brother, a goddamned, shit-sucking vampire! You wait ‘til mom finds out, buddy!”

Max, The Lost Boys

Relationship

You'll also receive a relationship for your character. This consists of a card you can offer another player outside your family at the game, establishing a relationship between your characters. For example, you might offer them a card establishing them as your character's mentor. They may accept it, suggest a change, or reject it. You can request antagonistic, friendly, or romantic relationships during sign-up.

Goal

Finally, you'll also receive one or two goals for your character; the amount, if you get any at all, will depend on how much effort Charlie puts into prep work.

Conflict Resolution

Players can resolve a conflict between their characters however they'd like – they can have a physical swordfight or arm wrestle, or roleplay using their vampire's supernatural charms to compel someone. Or, they can choose one of two conflict resolution systems.

Players measure the length of their eyeliner wings to determine their comparative social standing, rolling 1d6 for every 5mm of wing extending beyond the eyelid, rounded down. If they roll a 6, they get to reroll again. Compare the totals to determine who has the initiative.

Players roll 5d20 each to determine their 'target score', with the winner of initiative being able to reroll an individual d20 a number of times equal to the difference in their initiatives divided by five.

If at any time difference between target scores becomes more than the square root of the larger number, players must re-roll from the beginning of combat, with the player who had the 'lower' target number removing a portion of their eyeliner greater than or equal to the difference between them. Players then roll 1d100 each, and the player with the higher result takes the highest common factor between the two results from the other player's target score, minus that player's armor. If a player rolls a prime number, they instead take 1HP of damage.

They repeat until one character reaches 0HP (unconsciousness), they yield the contest to the opposing player, or their target number is reduced to zero.

Armor is determined by measuring each player's thickest corset, leather boots, fur, etc, with every 2mm of protection conferring one point of armor.

Players start with a total of 4HP, losing one HP for every layer of clothing that obscures their cleavage (or bare chest, for male characters. Unfastened or torn-open items of clothing do not count, if they're the only item of clothing.) At all times, physical dice must be used. Calculations must be done by hand.

Players play Scissors, Paper, Rock.

“If you're going to eat a victim on my nice clean couch, put down some towels!”

Virgo, What We Do In The Shadows

Favor

There's only one rule around the 'social expectations' vampires are expected to adhere to. This is represented in a simple form – the favor of the Queen. Essentially, it's a reward to encourage people to make the game more funny and contributing to the comedy.

(It turns out that if you reward players for acting a particular way, they engage in it *more often!* This principle is known as ~~dog training~~ basic game design.)

Making the Queen laugh will usually result in you receiving a flower, referred to as a 'favor'. It's a remarkably potent form of social currency – it's a sign that you're in the Queen's good graces! Despite that, favors are swapped or traded around as needed, usually in exchange for someone performing a task.

Their value comes from the fact that they can be returned to the Queen to make one other character do anything you want, on 'her orders'. Of course, if you use it for something too outrageous or humiliating, you might get punished for your insolence.

As a result, a strange social custom has started, wherein people try to make sure the Queen is in earshot before they do anything they think will entertain her (and earn her favor). There's nothing more concerning than hearing someone say, "Hang on, the Queen should see this!"

It's important to note: consent is important, so don't be 'that person'. Things like "oh queen, please demand matt introduce me to your beautiful friend and set me up with him," are acceptable. Things like "make matt give me a kiss," are not. (Unless you want to kiss Matt. In that case, go get some!)

¹ The likelihood a character's plans will go spectacularly wrong must be directly correlated to how intricate they are.

² Fuck you, Kiah. Now I don't have to pretend I'm not cheating. (ilu bby)

³ Heads of a family cannot force another player to remove their eyeliner.