

Pleasures of the Flesh

By Alasdair Sinclair

Based on an idea by Morgan Davie and Alasdair Sinclair

Trailer

As an agent of MI6 you lived on the high-wire, with the fate of the free world in your hands. Decades of intrigue left you with skills, memories and expectations that have made your retirement seem all the duller. After years of boredom, you've pooled your resources with some friends and booked a trip to make yourself feel young again.

Your voyage on the Sun Princess will be a dream come true: at sea in a 5-star floating hotel. Every luxury known to mankind is readily available aboard this floating city. Food, wine, sex, even drugs. On the High Seas you are beyond the reach of the law, perhaps beyond the reach of morality.

System:	Gumshoe (Night's Black Agents)
System Knowledge:	Not Needed
Number of Players:	3-4
Genre:	Thriller, Urban Fantasy
Style:	Procedural
Age / Maturity:	Adult themes
Classification:	R18

Preface

This is a scenario for Kenneth Hite's *Night's Black Agents*. Playing the scenario is intended to take between 9 and 12 hours (three game sessions). This scenario was written with a specific kind of character in mind - the grizzled veteran spy who's decades past their use-by date. A set of suitable characters is included to enable this basic premise.

The last chapter, "Variations on a Theme" discusses running this game with either youthful spies or more generically as a scenario for *Fear Itself* rather than *Night's Black Agents*. Sidebars are included where deviations from the scenario's main line can be expected for each of those variations.

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Part 1: Introduction

There are several movies which are touch-stones for the various parts of this scenario. You could think about the Vampire's victims as the characters from *Cocoon*, given a second lease on life by supernatural powers, only in this adventure the rejuvenation is fueled by Vampire-blood and is part of enslaving them. The total vanishing of NPCs in the scenario brings to mind *The Lady Vanishes* and *Flightplan* but it is the under-rated *Bubba Ho-Tep* this scenario most closely parallels. Once you strip out the insanity of an authentic Elvis, and the humour of a black JFK, the bleakness of old age remains as the bedrock of the horror.

In this scenario, a group of former MI6 agents are invited aboard a cruise by a former colleague to celebrate her latest wedding. In fact, the wedding is a cover story simply intended to get the former agents aboard the ship. The agent has discovered that a Vampire lives aboard the ship, preying on the sick and weak with impunity, controlling key crew members by feeding them its blood, which in turn acts as a kind of serum of youth. The agent plans to turn the tables on the Vampire, capturing it to use as her personal fountain of youth and she needs her former colleagues' aid to pull it off.

Her plan becomes derailed when her accomplice, the ship's doctor, is discovered to have betrayed his master

System Overview

This game uses Kenneth Hite's *Night's Black Agents* (NBA), a GUMSHOE derivative focused around the procedural aspects of the spy genre. *Night's Black Agents* is a tool kit that provides GMs to create worlds generally within the general description of Vampire stories or Spy stories.

This scenario uses the *Mirror* rules (refer p8 in NBA).

The Hook

The scenario takes place aboard The Sun Princess. The player characters are all former intelligence operatives invited on a cruise by a former colleague who is ostensibly having her wedding aboard the ship while it's at sea - a combined ceremony and honeymoon. Their comrade has an ulterior motive for this generosity: she needs their help in capturing a Vampire that she has discovered living aboard the ship, a parasite on the old and rich, taking advantage of their imminent mortality to escape suspicion or detection.

The opening scenes of the story place the characters in context, both geographically and physically. They should show the characters *observing* rather than *enjoying* the wonders of the Sun Princess.

Old Spies

If player-generated characters are used with the basic premise, it's important to build infirmity into the characters. The modern cinematic habit is to underplay the effects of age in anything that could be connected to a heroic or action-oriented genre. Even stars who were not part of the 1980s action heyday such as Liam Neeson are emerging as "Geriation" Heroes, where they have all the strengths and capabilities of youth except for the occasional comment about getting too old for it. For this scenario to work with aged characters, they need to be suffering the vicissitudes of old age, rather than be wrinkly youths. Refer to the "Rules of Aging" section in *Player Characters* for one mechanic for modelling age.

Young Spies

If you wish to use young spies, then the agents have been slipped aboard to find out what has caused former MI6 power-house Eunice

Williams to gather together her coterie after a long period of separation. In that version of the scenario, Kieran Godfrey can be cut out, as the PCs become the middleman between the death of Lord Godfrey and the PCs. The pregenerated player characters become the central mystery: what are they doing aboard the ship? Who are they meeting? Once the Vampire becomes aware of their presence aboard, they become targets requiring elimination in order for its plan to succeed.

Fear Itself

Being prey for a Vampire while isolated aboard a cruise ship could happen to anyone, so there are no real limitations on the player characters. Play-testing the non-spy version of this game generally showed that it worked better when the group was closely interconnected aside from their location in the scenario.

The Horrible Truth

The story moves through their arrival on the ship, their growing awareness that something dark is happening aboard the ship prompted by the death of their comrade, the revelation that a Vampire is aboard, and then the decision whether to join the cabal or fight to the death.

The Spine

Once the characters are established, the danger begins, as they are introduced to a Vampiric Serum that rejuvenates them. NPCs die mysteriously and suddenly. Their deaths cause no apparent concern in the crew of the ship. As the herd is thinned, the Vampire will turn its¹ attention more closely to the PCs.

The End

The pivot-point comes when the Vampire approaches the characters directly and explicitly. Their choice is to join it, or be killed. Those who serve are enlisted to ensure the smooth consumption of the others. Some brave PCs will opt for the third route - fight.

The scenario ends when either the Vampire or the player characters are destroyed.

¹ Throughout the text the Vampire is referred to without gender to emphasise that it is outside of conventional human norms. Gender matters no more to it than any other human frailty.

Part 2: World Concepts

This section outlines the origin of Vampires, the role they play in society, their usual tactics and relationship with humanity. This section is largely background informing the scenario rather than critical plot or story material. You should modify it as necessary to suit the aspects of your ongoing narrative.

The origin of Vampires is lost in the mists of time, but Vampires have existed alongside human beings since pre-history. They are not, and have never been human, they are perhaps a parallel evolution. While they appear to be human, their internal organs function quite differently and their life-span is measured in centuries. They reproduce much as humanity does but their extremely long lifespan and specialist dietary needs means that they have never been numerous. As modern technology has advanced, they have experienced a population explosion in parallel to humanity's. Vampires in this game are similar to those in George R.R. Martin's *Fevre Dream* or C.S. Friedman's *The Madness Season*.

Their rarity means that Vampires have never formed a globe-spanning conspiracy, but there are loose kin groups with influence throughout the world. As humanity has increased in technological power and in organisational ability, Vampires have been forced to adopt increasingly subtle methods of feeding and hiding. The Vampires who have survived are exceptionally well adapted to living amongst humanity, and their longevity means that they have had ages to accumulate wealth and power.

The wave of revolutionary and fascist movements in the first half of the 20th century created a situation where wealth and power were inadequate protection for European Vampires, who died in large numbers. The upheaval of the Second World War exacerbated their troubles, causing a diaspora on an unprecedented scale, scattering them to the four corners of the earth. Vampires fleeing with the remains of their money flooded into the USA with the other refugees. Ironically, the paranoia and extensive surveillance in the Soviet Block after the war meant that Vampires were not able to re-establish a foothold in those countries, and today Russia and its close satellites remain virtually Vampire-free. It was in the relative freedom of the West that Vampires were best able to leverage their salvaged wealth into new fortunes.

Linea Dracula

The scenario adapts quite well to using Linea Dracula. The Vampiric Thralls become simply Renfields with varying levels of time and effort invested by the Vampire. The most important decision you'll need to make is whether the Vampire is interested in only one or two of the characters and if so, why.

If your ongoing game has been involved in the Linea Dracula civil war then you may find it useful to position the Vampire on this scenario as a neutral party that could be perceived as a potential ally. Perhaps they have been at sea because they too have a legitimate claim on ruling the bloodlines, and the enemies that the players have faced in the past are also enemies of the Vampire. The enemy of my enemy is... still a Vampire.

Fear Itself

The scope of the horror can be expanded quite dramatically for *Fear Itself*. The Vampire's influence extends beyond the crew, twisting the boat to serve its needs. It can effectively manifest its powers using all the usual tricks of a haunted house. For starters, blood running down the walls, corridors which seem to trap people, machinery that obeys his will - anything that inspires fear. It is even possible that the "Sun Princess" is actually a really old liner supposedly lost at sea that the vampire has been able to cast a glamour over so that people see a modern ship. Her upper decks are fitted in a modern style, but if you descend into the bowels of the ship you find the rotting interior with 1930's fittings and rust. Below-decks live those

hopelessly in thrall to the Vampire. They are like traditional Voodoo zombies, perhaps serving as the night shift of staff in non-important functions so could be seen and followed.

In *Fear Itself*, the Vampire actually craves terror as well as blood. It has an ample food supply, below decks and a glamour to disguise the rotting palace, fresh terror and life force makes his unlife worth living. It actively seeks to strip the humanity from the characters and reduce them to either becoming one of the 'lost' below decks or, for those with spirit, he forces them to become his key staff. Thus all of those who serve the vampire hate him, and want to be free or die, but cannot express themselves openly.

Game Mechanics

Vampires are effectively *Aliens*, and their spread is limited by their low birth rates and inherent difficulty forming connections. Vampires number in the thousands worldwide. They are concentrated in the bastions of Western democracy - the United Kingdom & the United States of America. They are virtually absent from Russia and South East Asia. Vampires can be killed by any means that would suffice to slay a human but they are incredibly tough with incredible recuperative powers that means virtually any injury short of death can be healed in time. They can feed on any mammal but they derive more nourishment from animals similar to themselves. They would require impractically large quantities of shark blood to survive, but can survive on modest quantities of human blood quite easily.

General abilities: Aberrance 11, Hand-to-Hand 7, Health 12, Shooting 8, Weapons 8

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +3, Darkvision

Stealth Modifier: +1

Damage Modifier: 0, Vampiric Strength

Armour: 0; Unfeeling

Free Powers: Addictive Blood, Anaesthetic Bite, Dominance (those who ingest the serum must make a difficulty 2 stability test, difficulty 4 for pure blood), Drain, Vampiric Speed,

Other Powers: Chameleonic Form (the Vampire can alter its apparent ethnicity, and make minor cosmetic changes to eye colour, nose shape, etc)

Banes: Any normally fatal attack, the blood of those who are addicted to the Serum or Blood is highly toxic to the Vampire (treat as snake venom with difficulty 4 for those taking serum, 6 for those taking blood), sunlight weakens the Vampire (no alertness bonus, no regeneration, etc)

Blood Serum

The Vampire's blood has powerful medicinal properties for ordinary mortal creatures, including human beings. In its pure form, it gives the drinker a boost to all their natural abilities. All their senses are enhanced, as is their strength and endurance. Most crucially, in its pure form, it simulates a restoration of youth in the elderly. It cannot completely reverse the ageing process, but it restores the performance of their prime. The effects are temporary, lasting only a week or so, depending on the age and activity levels of the consumer. The accumulated effects over years can apparently rejuvenate the consumer, at the rate of 2 years restored youth per year of consumption.

A dose of pure blood restores all expended pools; a dose of the serum restores 5 expended points as distributed by the player.

The trade-off is that the drinker becomes susceptible to the Vampire's powers of mesmeric suggestion, being far less capable of resisting its commands even in the cause of self-preservation. The blood is also highly addictive.

Characters benefiting from the effects of a dose of pure blood must resist a difficulty 4 test or follow instructions by the Vampire, characters dosed on serum have a difficulty of 2. Each additional dose of either kind within 24 hours increases the difficulty by 1.

There is a limited amount of Vampiric blood available. The Vampire can only comfortably sustain 8 full thralls at any time. Once its effects wear off, the body rapidly returns to its original age. For long-term users, the shock of this is usually fatal.

A serum can be derived from the blood which has much reduced potency, but still has immediate and extensive benefits. The serum acts as a powerful combination of anti-inflammatory, painkiller, and amphetamine. In other words, there is an immediate and powerful sense of wellbeing and energy. It is also addictive, but far less so than pure blood. The serum does not have the restorative powers of whole blood, but it can be more easily disguised as medicine and greater quantities can be produced, allowing a larger pool of servant-addicts. The whole-blood dose to sustain one person can create enough serum for ten addicts.

Finally, once the blood system of mortals begins to build up traces of the Vampire's blood, they become useless to it as a food source. How long this takes varies, but those taking the serum have a use-by date measured in months, those ingesting pure blood only days. Thus, the Vampire requires constant supplies new victims - it cannot feed on its thralls.

Part 3: Scenario Outline

The Cruise

Most real cruise ships alternate between only one or two routes, spending one season doing one cruise. Most real cruises cover a surprisingly short route, but for maximum isolation this scenario has borrowed a real trans-Atlantic cruise.

Day 1 Southampton, England
Day 2 Cruising
Day 3 Cruising
Day 4 Lisbon, Portugal
Day 5 Cruising
Day 6 Ponta Delgada, Azores
Day 7 Cruising
Day 8 Cruising
Day 9 Cruising
Day 10 Cruising
Day 11 Cruising
Day 12 Cruising
Day 13 Nassau, Bahamas
Day 14 Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Locations

The cruise ship used as the template for this scenario has numerous bars and restaurants, and it is not efficient for the GM to be familiar with them all. An index of possible locations would likely just cause the scenario to stall. Instead, let the players guide the creation and appearance of the specific venues they frequent. They will draw on their real-life experiences to create suitable specific locations for the action. Instead of an exhaustive list of specific locations, this section outlines a number of general area types, and how the locations and NPCs can be used to help keep the scenario moving.

Adventure Areas

The adventure areas of the ship provide an opportunity for the characters to flex their newfound strengths without undue risk. Spread across the ship are most conceivable kinds of playground, from rock climbing walls to surf pools. Their handler, Kim Gridley, will discretely keep an eye on any characters who make use of these facilities.

- Human Terrain: Adventure Areas are not important to the Vampire or any of its functionaries. Once any specific agent amongst the crew is identified, it should be possible to see that they never ever get rostered into service there. That also makes it something of a blind spot for the Vampire.

Bars

There are several different kinds of bar available aboard ship, catering to the different tastes of the clientele. Bars are an uncontrolled social space - they exist for people to go, drink and be sociable, as opposed to meeting for specific and prescribed activities. They represent an opportunity for people to meet with lowered inhibitions and alertness.

For the Vampire, bars represent an opportunity to find victims. People who're alone, or who can be easily prised away from casual acquaintance, represent a

natural food source for the vampire. Identifying such victims is made easier by the Vampire's access to the passenger manifest, which these days includes key biometric information. The Vampire can ply their victim with alcohol under cover of social behaviour. The Vampire's relatively attractive and youthful persona helps it isolate people. Once out of sight of the staff and any potential friends, it is easy for the Vampire to overcome their victim.

Once the characters begin to become aware of the Vampire and its influence, a bar can represent a convenient meeting place where the characters can be reasonably sure they are not being bugged - at least, not with fixed installations. Having said that, none of the bars aboard ship would be remotely disreputable, and on shore would be deemed unsuitable for the kinds of shady dealings that all the characters will be familiar with from their professional lives. Note that pensioners will be noticeably out of place in the loudest and most frenetic of the on-board facilities.

The characters are most likely to encounter the Vampire in this setting in the midst of the hunt. While the Vampire is familiar with their appearance but a suitable application of their covert skills should allow them to watch the Vampire's operation in action.

- Flattery, Flirting, or Reassurance can show morale amongst the staff is low and any veterans have become accustomed to high staff turnover.
- Notice reveals that Georgia Roberts is quite the social butterfly and over the course of the voyage can be seen ardently pursuing a different one-night stand every night.

Blood Serum Lab

The lab is in a converted passenger cabin near the base of the ship. All of the interior dividers and furniture have been stripped out and replaced by a workbench with Bunsen burners, glassware, and so on. Crucially, in the lab there are two large refrigerators containing a supply of both blood and the serum. The Vampire has not had to support a full-sized coterie for several months. How much of either the blood or the serum is stockpiled will depend on whether you intend to fit this adventure into a larger campaign frame (refer facilitation notes).

The Blood Serum Lab is not listed on the passenger manifest. Determining its location can be done in several different ways:

- If the characters have the ship's manifest, they can use Bureaucracy or Accounting to obtain this core clue.
- Putting the Doctor under surveillance will eventually track him to the lab.
- A Digital Intrusion spend can gain them access to the internal CCTV cameras, which will reveal there are no functional cameras in one section of the ship. From there any simple surveillance can determine which rooms the Vampire and Lab occupy.

Bridge

The bridge is off-limits to passengers. It is not actually guarded, but there are always crew members undertaking various tasks. During the day, the Captain and First Officer will be nearby, but at night there is a lower standard of care and attention.

The bridge is not lit at night, to allow the crew to see the sea.

- Characters using Cop Talk or Forgery can potentially persuade all but the most senior staff that they work for Interpol and need access to the bridge as part of their investigation. This will not go unremarked, however, as a fairly overt move against the Vampire's power-structure. While Mimir Paulsen is not aware of the Vampire's presence, she would be

a very poor captain if she did not follow up on a visit to her bridge from Interpol.

- A two-point High Society spend could persuade junior watch staff that the characters are high rollers and that a tour around the bridge could result in favours or jobs down the line. Characters in this guise will have close and obsequious service during their time on the Bridge.
- Human Terrain or Traffic Analysis could find a time when the Bridge has only one or two nominal watch officers, who could be "persuaded" to allow the characters access. Depending upon whether a carrot or a stick is the persuader, they may have to spend other points to actually get onto the bridge once a suitable time and officer are found.

Casinos

Casinos are some of the most heavily surveilled areas in the world, to prevent cheating. This makes them very difficult areas for any kind of spy activity. The Vampire uses the Casinos as part of its strategy for meeting potential victims as it is not concerned about official observation.

- While there isn't room aboard ship to make the Casinos into the labyrinthine spaces they are on shore, Architecture will show that there are still numerous concealed and semi-concealed entries and exits to facilitate the pit bosses' work and the quick disappearance of any customers that become irate at their losses.
- If any character is brave or lucky enough to make it to the high-rollers no-stakes tables, High Society will tell them that Harvey Cooper is a non-entity to all the people who should be in the same social stratum as him.

Engine Room

The ship is powered by massive diesel engines at the base of the ship. The engine compartment is loud but comparatively well-lit and clean in this modern ship. The engines consume a vast amount of fuel, and for the trained saboteur are easy prey, since they operate at a high percentage of their nominal capacity most of the time.

Infirmary

The ship's infirmary is similar in layout and scope to a top-end private doctor's surgery or most small A&E clinics. There is a reception, two small examination rooms containing a narrow bed and desk, an operating theatre, a small pharmacy, and half a dozen short-term stay beds split amongst two rooms. The infirmary can cope with most likely shipboard emergencies, but any seriously-ill patients will be deposited at a real hospital on shore as soon as possible.

- Architecture, Diagnosis, or Pharmacy spends can tell the characters that the infirmary is better equipped and more heavily used than can be accounted for by any reasonable explanation. A feeding Vampire takes a certain toll on the Ship's population.

Morgue

The ship-board morgue is small, containing only three vaults. Bodies are stored aboard ship for the minimum length of time possible, with a maximum of 7 days. Generally cruise ships stop more frequently than once per 7 days, and discharge the bodies to shore where they can be transported back to the next of kin or cremated. The Vampire tends to interfere with operations at the port to ensure that corpses are cremated as quickly as possible. In most jurisdictions the shore authorities would usually wish to conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death, but to avoid that complication the Vampire has a network of minor local officials in most ports who will accept a shipboard death certificate without undue difficulty.

In these activities, the Vampire is unwittingly assisted by the owners of the ship, who worry that any knowledge of ship-board deaths would alarm the passengers. None of the international cruise ship operators release any statistics or information about shipboard deaths, so any information on hard numbers that might point to the presence of a Vampire must be painstakingly obtained by cross-checking passenger manifests with death certificates, which is far from easy when multiple jurisdictions are involved.

Restaurants

There are dozens of restaurants aboard, as virtually every meal eaten by the passenger contingent is eaten in a restaurant. These cover every conceivable kind of cuisine, but by-and-large, they are little better than generic mass-market chains.

Security Centre

The ship is equipped with extensive electronic surveillance equipment. In the modern world almost all public areas of the ship are under continual CCTV observation. This footage is not actively monitored, but is available to review for the entire journey. All cameras are digital and time-indexed, so searching is relatively easy.

The security centre is the hub of the surveillance system and is an adjunct to the Bridge. While the footage from the casinos can be accessed in the Security Centre, that footage is more closely observed by pit bosses onsite.

The Security Centre has a single holding cell, but it is intended as a last resort and so is rarely used. It is similar to the holding cells on land - a single bed with mattress, toilet and wash basin. The usual procedure for dealing with unruly passengers and petty criminals is to confine them to their quarters with a security guard posted on the door. The brig would not be considered a secure holding area for any former intelligence operatives, such as the protagonists for this scenario.

Fear Itself

The brig should be upgraded significantly in size and downgraded in comfort. It should have all the trappings of a bygone era - close confinement and minimal facilities.

Theatre

The Sun Princess has three main theatrical areas. At the rear of the ship is a large crescent-shaped pool used for a live aqua-circus show and in the bowels of the ship are a medium-sized conventional theatre and a small cinema. There will usually be a mix of theatre and concerts on offer, and these will almost always be the current staples from the West End or Broadway.

Fear Itself

The Vampire has captured and enthralled talented performers from the past. Once they board the ship, they are snared and never leave. Missing greats from the past are kept alive for its entertainment. Alternatively, the performers may have become essentially meat puppets whose whole purpose has been bent to service the entertainment of the Vampire.

Vampire's Lair

By day, the Vampire sleeps in luxurious quarters near the ship's interior. It has a room on the second passenger level of the ship that has no exterior windows. The lair consists of two adjoining rooms, one fitted as a bedroom and one as an office, from which the Vampire manages Harvey's money.

The lair and its occupant are not listed on the passenger manifest. Determining its location can be done in several different ways:

- If the characters have the passenger manifest, they can use Bureaucracy or Accounting to obtain this core clue.

- Without the passenger manifest, they spend Human Terrain or Traffic Analysis to observe that the crew avoid one particular section of the ship. The crew subconsciously know that area is dangerous. From there any simple surveillance can determine which room the Vampire occupies.
- A Digital Intrusion spend can gain them access to the internal CCTV cameras, which will reveal there are no functional cameras in one section of the ship. From there any simple surveillance can determine which room the Vampire occupies.

Linea Dracula

A Linea Dracula does not appear on CCTV and so has no use or need for an area of blackness in the CCTV network.

Supporting Cast

The Vampire

The Vampire is a monstrous being that feeds on the blood of human beings. Perhaps it once had human emotions, but centuries of hunting humans has extinguished any trace. The Vampire is capable of simulating some human responses, but it is not capable of emotion in the conventional human sense. The Vampire feels an enormous sense of superiority to its food, and a correspondingly enormous sense of entitlement to their life-blood to sustain it. Without relatively constant feeding, the Vampire rapidly ages and loses strength.

The Vampire has enthralled some humans transforming them into slaves to facilitate its life aboard ship. It picks servants based on apparent use and value, it has no particular attachment to them beyond their utility. They, however, have a strong psychological dependency on the Vampire and a physical addiction to either its blood derivative.

The psychology of the enslaved comes from a combination of fear and love: the Vampire is a figure of threat but also temptation and help. It presents itself as capable of fulfilling an almost Faustian pact, claiming that whatever you want, it can give it. In order for this to be as effective as possible, the Vampire must be able to deduce what people really want, and pretend to provide that, no matter how debased it is. As a monster, the Vampire has no internal sense of human emotion, so it empirically matches people to its prior experiences of humans. The Vampire cannot form a genuine empathetic connection and in the crucial moments of the scenario when the PCs finally realize what they are dealing with this should become apparent.

In order for the Vampire to be of the maximum assistance possible to the player characters you will need to create incidental troubles for the PCs; trouble that is not beyond the power of the Vampire to solve. The bigger the problem, the more power the PC delivers to the Vampire in their own enthrallment.

The Vampire is the single most important NPC in the scenario, and the PCs need to be aware of the basic temptations he's offering in order for the scenario to function.

Persona

The Vampire at the heart of the scenario was born in Prussia in the mid-17th century, to parents posing as prosperous merchants. Their special adaptability had made it possible for them to undertake the more arduous journeys along the Spice Trails and accumulate a sizeable fortune, with enough uncertainty and variety to evade detection. On the eve of the French Revolution, it came to France, seeing opportunities. The French Revolution emancipated women of a certain cutthroat disposition, and the chaos of dismantling the aristocracy created plenty of chances for quick enrichment. As the crowd bayed for blood, the Vampire fed often and freely, establishing a strong foothold in the French republics and Empires.

Over the next hundred years, the Vampire consolidated and prospered, growing enormously wealthy mostly through passive investments. Instead of honing its predatory instincts, it fell into the trap of the idle rich, its financial empire managed by a series of capable slaves, each progressively deadened and worn out by their life of servitude. When war erupted in 1914 the Vampire began to recognise that the new world was a global one, as foreign assets suffered from the fighting. It was nonetheless caught unawares when France surrendered.

The corrupt Vichy government and its Nazi masters plundered the Vampire's assets. When it protested, a warrant was issued condemning it to a concentration camp - the pretext hardly mattered. In a panic, it fled with its most trusted servants on its most portable asset, the cruise ship *The Moon Prince*. Seizing the one late opportunity, the ship conveyed illegal immigrants from the South of France and North Africa to America, for a healthy profit. The rest, as they say, is history. The Vampire has spent the past 70 years on the High Seas, upgrading to increasingly luxurious ships over the years.

The Vampire is posing as Georgia Roberts, secretary to Harvey Cooper. This is a role that has no real work associated with it, as Harvey is purely for show. It provides an opportunity for the Vampire to meet people in order to gauge their usefulness, and to create the plausible image that it is a servant.

Recently it has decided that it has had a long enough holiday, and desires to return to the continent and rebuild its empire. It is becoming bored with the idyllic life at sea.

The Vampire has long lost any real interest in art or culture but has, almost accidentally, collected a reasonably large selection of art objects of significant cultural and historical interest. It passes these off as the acquisitions of its employer, Harvey Cooper.

Court of the Vampire

The Vampire has enslaved a small cadre of mortals to make its life convenient. These are purely expendable tools to the Vampire, but they regard it as something like a personal saviour and while they may not be willing to lay their lives down in cold blood in its defence, they find it easy to lose sight of where their own best interests lie when its interests are threatened.

At present, the full thralls are Harvey Cooper, Dr Coombes, Jim Kilkenny and former MI6 Operative Kieren Godfrey. The Vampire has twenty addicts in its service throughout the rest of the crew, leaving it the ability to support 2 more thralls without sacrificing existing capabilities.

The Vampire cannot directly control these thralls - they must still act on their own initiative, as compatible with its instructions and how they understand its best wishes. You might consider them in a state of deep post-hypnotic suggestion, where they are better able and more likely to do things that they fundamentally want to do, but will resist or balk at doing things opposed to their essential natures. Therefore, the Vampire has selected people based on

- How useful they will be
- How easily they are to manipulate and control

Most of its lackeys thus lack initiative and drive. They are capable of carrying out their limited functions, but none are suitable agents to assist it in claiming its rightful place of power in the new European Union. It wishes to add one or more of the player characters to its court. They will not be as easy to control as its current crop of servants, but restored to youth, they could prove to be the assets it needs to succeed. Unfortunately, its core group of servants is indispensable, and so it does not want all player characters, just the keenest two.

The Vampire has only taken residence on this specific cruise ship recently, it has not had time to enslave all the key ship personnel. The key personnel that it has under its sway are thus limited in number, but strategically placed. It has the following key ship personnel under its control. You should add NPCs without too much compunction as appears necessary to apply pressure to the PCs.

- The First Officer James "Jim" Kilkenny, a full thrall
- Security Chief Lena May, a heavy-use addict
- Cruise Director Leon Thornhill, a heavy-use addict
- Ship's Surgeon Dr Raymond B Coombes, smart enough limit blood serum to the absolute minimum, is nonetheless totally dominated by the Vampire

Harvey Cooper

Harvey purports to be a retired captain of industry, but he is never too specific about which industry. He was a factotum in the Vampire's English organisation before the war, and once France was invaded, that branch remained largely intact. When the Vampire went to sea, Harvey was taken along to facilitate the money transfers. He has spent decades aboard various cruise ships, acting as a front.

His long life of servitude has taken a toll. He tries to project the image of a genial millionaire playboy, albeit a playboy in his 50s. He can usually maintain this impression only for short bursts, before returning to drinking and brooding. His main ally is the Vampire's other indispensable asset, Dr Coombes, and together they have been plotting how to get free of its influence. The Vampire's lack of any real empathetic sense means Harvey does not run much risk of being discovered.

Unfortunately, Harvey's basically weak personality and decades of domination leave him constitutionally incapable of imagining freedom, let alone imagining dominating the Vampire. Not only is he almost wholly incapable of assisting Dr Coombes, or any other purported enemy of the Vampire, but he will sabotage them if it is possible without exposing his duplicity to either Dr Coombes or the Vampire.

Investigation of Harvey via *Data Analysis* (Internet search) or relevant *Network* use can reveal the following information:

- Harvey Cooper is a well-constructed Legend, which appears to have been in use for around 20 years, all of which time has been in transit at sea. [Accounting, Bureaucracy]

Searching Harvey's state rooms can reveal the following information:

- Harvey's clothing is generally of the highest quality, and there are tailored or monogrammed items dating back to the inter-war period; Harvey always retains the same initials for convenience. [Art History]
- Harvey is apparently on a cocktail of anti-depressants and anti-psychotics that should leave him virtually catatonic, and he is obviously continuously taking some kind of powerful stimulant too. [Diagnosis, Pharmacy]
- Title deeds and bearer bonds are in a safe that can be cracked by either an Infiltration test difficulty 8. These confirm a continuous identity for Harvey under different names back to his birth in 1887. [Forgery, Bureaucracy]

Dr Raymond B. Coombes

Dr Coombes was a successful research scientist into blood disease in the 1980s. He had devoted himself to his work exclusively, never finding a family. In 1987 after the collapse of the stock markets, his funding was cut. He embezzled what remained of his legitimate funding, sold his lab equipment to Eastern Block countries via the black market, and bought a cruise ticket to the New World. Once on board, he attracted the attention of the Vampire.

After experimentation, Dr Coombes developed a method of turning the Vampire's blood into a powerful and addictive stimulant. This allowed the Vampire to expand its circle of close control. The doctor's reward has been to spend the last 20 years living in absolute luxury, with a generous stipend to waste on board or on shore. His method for producing the serum is understood in detail by the Vampire, but making it is a delicate and time-consuming activity that it has no interest in.

Investigation of Dr Coombes via Internet search or relevant Network use can reveal the following information:

There is an outstanding UK arrest warrant for Dr Coombes. [Cop Talk, Criminology]

Despite his value, the Vampire is not an easy master to serve. It dominates and bullies the doctor, not out of spite but as a matter of ingrained habit. The doctor has thought about escaping, but he is too dominated and addicted to the serum to leave.

When Zelda approached him, he saw a way to keep the aspects of his life he likes - the youthfulness, the luxurious living conditions - but free himself by imprisoning the Vampire. Having known Harvey for his whole imprisonment, he approached him with his scheme, to lure Zelda's MI6 contacts onto the ship and use them to turn the tables on the Vampire.

First Officer Jim Kilkenny

Jim has been knocking about at sea for nearly 40 years, but he looks much younger. He is generally competent, but is a high-functioning alcoholic, and that has cost him the captain's chair through an accrual of small errors. He is bitter about his career having stalled, and sees Captain Paulsen as usurping the role that should be his. His fractured identity was easy for the Vampire to crack and exploit.

Security Chief Lena May

The security chief began her life in the Merchant Navy. She has had an uphill battle rising through the ranks as a woman interested in security. In her early career, nobody doubted her intelligence or drive - they doubted her ability to wrestle a drunk to the ground or chase down a robber. In order to compensate she took classes in every martial art that would take a woman, and worked out every day to add muscle mass to her fighting skills. Her inferiority complex provided the perfect entry for the Vampire's seduction; enhancing her incredible physique with Vampire's blood makes Lena more than a match for anyone who's dared to test her physically.

Cruise Director Leon Thornhill

Leon has been an aide to the Vampire for nearly two decades, as he cycles through the various ships in the line, arranging matters to suit his master. His intermittent absences have prevented him from falling as completely under its sway as Harvey has. As cruise director, he is perfectly placed to provide entertainments and inducements for the Vampire's various conquests. As essentially the chief of passenger interactions, he is also perfectly placed to identify potential victims and to silence or redirect queries or complaints that might throw suspicion on the Vampire.

Leon is a heavy-set man who appears to be in his late 50s, but he's closer to 70. He was a well-known circus acrobat before becoming a cruise director after his retirement from the stage. He takes advantage of the Vampire's lent strength to indulge himself in the finer things in life and persists in smoking whenever and wherever is still permitted aboard ship.

Handler Kim Gridley

The Handler is the first point of contact between the characters and the officialdom of the ship, and the official role of the Handler is to facilitate their trip and ensure they have a pleasant time. They don't need to like the Handler, they need to feel that the Handler is in control of the situation and will advocate their needs. The Handler should not be associated personally with the Vampire's court. Of course, it is structurally obvious that they should be intimate with the Vampire because of the role they have played in getting the PCs into this position, but maintain that doubt as long as you can.

Minions

Other strategically placed NPCs are the Vampire's tools rather than its inner circle. Lesser minions may not even be fully aware of the Vampire's existence, only their need to act in certain ways.

The Vampire also has under its sway a number of lower profile minions, who act as lures for future victims. In return, these hedonists find their debauched desires fulfilled. These are described in the following subsections in terms of their story functions, rather than in terms of their names.

Either motivation is expressed in the same way, as the Court should reinforce every urge for debasement and descent in the PCs. That is their central function, to pull the PCs into the amoral morass of the Vampire's worldview. They should reinforce to the PCs that you only live once. This should be especially applicable to the PCs, as they have already lived lengthy lives, probably devoid of the pleasures they've always craved. The implicit question the courtiers ask the PCs is: what are you waiting for?

They should be apparently flawless and appealing. Basically, you want every Court NPC to function in the same way as a flirting love interest. The first steps should always be small-scale. "Come to the bar for a drink" followed by "come back to my room, I have some E, lets take it together." Then after the small sin, the courtiers will lead them into bigger sins.

The courtiers are all profoundly broken human beings and have an instinctual self-loathing. They wish for their freedom and the death of the Vampire, but are both too accustomed to the idea of its invulnerability and too afraid of a life without his supporting and sustaining powers. That may be the ultimate fate of player characters who allow themselves to be seduced - becoming shallow wretched creatures kept for the convenience and service of a monster.

- Jennifer Vaughn
- Katelyn Russo
- Christina Huskey
- Gavin Robison
- Ty Crompton

The Complicity of the Minions

The extent to which these NPCs are complicit in the Vampire's feeding patterns will depend on the dramatic needs of the scenario. If the PCs become comfortable and trusting, then the total complicity of the crew will come as a dramatic reversal of understanding - the classic twist. If, however, the PCs keep the court and other servants at arms' length or regard them as expendable then it can be dramatically effective to

portray them as uncomprehending tools, generating pathos and causing the PCs to review their own actions.

Zelda Brandt

Zelda is the youngest of the tour group, at a sprightly 75. She was born in what became East Germany, but was educated in England. Her family were enticed to return to East Germany in the late 1950s so her father could assume an important role in the state-run industry. Sometime after the Berlin Wall was erected, she was recruited as an agent. She used her access as a secretary in the ministry to pass low-level secrets back to England, and when she was discovered, she became a double agent. Through determination, charisma, luck, and being relatively low level, she maintained this precarious balance until the wall fell. Once Germany was reunited, she relocated to England, where she worked as a secretary in the Ministry of Defence - and continued to parlay information to the now united German Intelligence.

At the tail end of the last cruise season, about six months ago, Zelda took a cruise from Southampton to Florida, and after a minor accident met Dr Coombes. Years of double-dealing and craft allowed some instinctive recognition that Dr Coombes was compromised and she began to investigate. Through careful observation she learned that Dr Coombes was supplying some kind of performance-enhancer to certain key staff members and to Harvey Cooper. She immediately grasped that the real power aboard the ship is Harvey Cooper, the permanent itinerant millionaire, whose past immediately begins to become fuzzy when examined in detail. She believes that Cooper controls Coombes, using the serum to stave off mortality.

On the last night of the cruise, she disabled the local security system and pilfered a supply of the serum, with which she has been carefully dosing herself ever since. Once she understood how effective the serum is, her thoughts have turned to how to gain control of the means of production, to suborn Dr Coombes and eliminate Cooper. She undertook the cruise a second time shortly afterwards, going out of her way to become close friends with Coombes. She learned that he was deeply troubled and she was able to turn him somewhat to her aide. As a long-dominated thrall, he was unable to tell her the full details of the operation.

After careful thought, she decided that some of her old comrades from MI6 might be just the tools she needs. She told them she was getting married because she didn't think they could be enticed aboard for anything less. Her plan hinges on a simple misunderstanding of motivation - she assumes that when she shows the former agents the serum they will reach the same conclusion she has, that it is an unmissable opportunity for immortality that should be seized immediately. Unfortunately, she doesn't know the details of how the serum is made, nor does she understand that the real power aboard the ship is not Cooper, but his "aide".

As the only "core" character who's not a player character Zelda is an obvious plant and any group worth their salt will simultaneously be suspicious of her and expect her to be killed in order to increase tension. In a way, they are right on both counts, because Zelda will alert the Vampire of their existence in a way that makes them seem complicit in her schemes, and will be killed in order to allow the player characters to assume the position of protagonists in the story.

Crew

The Vampire has been aboard the ship long enough that it is impossible for it to be completely secret, or for there to be no trace of its murderous pattern. It has hidden in plain site, living in luxurious quarters in the uppermost decks. Its well-placed thralls in the command structure of the ship are in a position to alert it to any threats to its true nature or identity. It deals with these occasional threats or difficult questions either by mentally

dominating the crew involved, or simply killing them and covering the situation up.

As a result, most of the stewards on board know enough that they could certainly piece together the true nature of the Vampire, but there are strong survival incentives involved with wilful ignorance and conveniently blind eyes.

In the latter stages of the adventure, when at least some of the PCs are the avowed enemy of the Vampire, the crew could be brought into the search under the cover of legality: they aren't mindless killers, but nor are they likely to be swayed by strange tales of a Vampire.

Captain Mimir Paulsen

The ship's captain is a veteran of the Cruise Line industry, but this is her first command. She is 51 years old and collects rare coins in her spare time.

Part 4: Facilitation Notes

The game should begin feeling as if it is a sandbox, where the characters have unlimited freedom in what is essentially a small town. There are dozens of different desirable locations, and multiple options for all but the most specialised of leisure activities aboard the ship. There are also thousands of other passengers and crew. However, once the horror begins, it should become all too apparent that in truth they are in a lockbox scenario, where their enemy has significant control over the human infrastructure and there is effectively nowhere to run.

There are two main plausible escape routes from the ship. The first is to hold out in hiding until one of the stop-over points is reached, and then escape. The second is to launch a lifeboat and hope that it is not discovered missing until they are off-course and so impossible to find. Of course, that has its own downsides.

It is more likely that the scenario will end either with the characters being eaten, or with them killing the Vampire.

The meta-game

Whether running the scenario with the regenerated characters, young spies or even *Fear Itself*, the players will leap to the conclusion that Vampires are involved the second you mention the words "blood" or "bite". Some groups will resist acting on this intuition until there's no other plausible conclusion within the fiction. The scenario runs more smoothly once there's a clear antagonist providing impetus for action so I generally encourage groups to embrace their suspicion early - they are, after all, playing in a game called *Night's Black Agents*, explicitly about Vampires.

Scenario Timing

No plan survives contact with the enemy, but this scenario has an essentially three-act structure.

Act 1

Act 1 introduces the characters to the ship and themselves. It allows them to see the main antagonists at a distance, and ends with Zelda's murder. This act is shorter than the others, usually an hour or two of play at the table.

Act 2

The procedural act has the characters digging into Zelda's fate, discovering her "ally", and learning the nature of their foe.

Act 3

The final act contains the pay-off of action that's been slipping into position over the first part of the game. By this stage in the scenario the PCs should be close to fully restored by the serum they obtained by chicanery in Acts 1 & 2, and they should know enough about the ship and its occupants to form a workable plan for defeating the Vampire. Act 3 ends in victory or death.

Part 5: Scenes

It is customary in *Night's Black Agents* to open the scenario with a blood-pumping scene of action. Those scenarios begin as they mean to go on. This scenario has a more subdued tone because the intent is to generate tension rather than action. The more tension can be developed, the more explosive the action will be when it finally erupts. This scenario is largely about trust, and about moral choices: do the characters choose to betray each other and join the Vampire Conspiracy, or do they remain true to each other and destroy an evil creature? Moral choices need time to percolate through a player's mind, and betrayal is only possible once trust is established. These things take a little time, and so the scenario opens slowly and builds to a climax.

The scenario should begin with a set of Opening Scenes that allow the players to frame their characters, and represent them to the group. The intent is to allow the players to control who their characters really are. The ability of players to absorb and internalise a pre-written character varies hugely and most players will in effect use the information provided as a prompt for their own character. The opening scenes allow the player some space to develop that character, giving them more investment in the way the scenario plays out.

The opening scenes take place as the characters undertake their last preparations at home before leaving for the cruise. These should be short, only 2 or 3 minutes per player, where they can see their own characters in their natural state. This will be the baseline for "normalcy" whose violation is a key component of any horror narrative.

All Aboard

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene begins the scenario.

Lead Out

Champagne Brunch

The Build Up

Each character should get a very short opening scene, showing their final preparations before heading to the *Sun Princess* - it's a moment to establish what's important to them. Are they leaving behind a tidy home, or are they disengaging from a whirlwind of the lived experience?

Once the characters have been introduced to the group, you should move onto a description of the ship and the characters' arrival. There are short introductory videos available for several real cruise lines that give a concise overview of the luxuries available in 2 or 3 minutes. If these are not available, you can outline the first impressions of the ship, as vast and magnificent. Everything is in perfect order, and designed to project charm and personality. It is a little too perfect though, and the veneer of wholesome family values cannot really hide the underlying corporate control. As a side benefit, this time will allow the players to process the character descriptions they have heard.

As they embark, they will meet their *Handler*, Kim Gridley, who is administering the "wedding" tour. The handler will be their first point of contact with the crew, so it is useful if the characters initially like and trust them.

Kim is an agent of the Vampire, instrumental in finding victims. As they are travelling as a group, the player characters don't represent very promising prey, but Kim will be alert for the possibility that one of the group can be isolated. If possible, single out one PC for special treatment. This character will have their accommodation upgraded from the standard passenger cabin due to a late cancellation. This physically separates them from the support of their comrades. It can be useful to target a player whose character was not very well outlined initially, or who seems quiet. This point of difference will give impetus to early discussions with the rest of the characters.

Briefly allow the characters an opportunity to explore the ship in these opening sequences. If possible, introduce them to one or more of the Vampire's court. These boarding sequences, like the Opening Scenes, are intended to create a little room for the player to understand who their character is and what drives them. They can be quite short, little more than a way of gauging the most interesting area of the ship to each character. In the best case, these small explorations will make the final fight or flight a more engaging experience.

Champagne Brunch

The first set piece encounter in the game is a champagne brunch held in the ballroom, where the captain welcomes aboard first-class guests, and those lesser passengers who've paid to go it - which includes the player characters, thanks to Zelda's influence in the trip's planning phase. The scene is intended to provide a glimpse of the key players in the scenario, especially Harvey Cooper.

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene can be lead in cold from any other scene, provided that the characters haven't done anything too crazy.

Lead Out

This scene should foreshadow to Dinner with Harvey, though most groups will interpose exploration or discussion scenes between.

The Build Up

The brunch has a semi-structured format, and is essentially formal, so suits etc are expected. There is a short period where people arrive, have their first coffee or tea, find their spots on tables, and place their breakfast orders discretely to the swarm of service staff. The Captain then delivers a short welcome speech while the food is delivered. Once the food debris is collected, the tables are abandoned for mixing and mingling lubricated by champagne. Throughout the breakfast, the wait staff hover discretely at the periphery of the tables, ready to leap into action at a moment's notice.

During the drinks, the Captain and senior staff will mingle with the guests, glad-handing and exuding professionalism. This is an official duty for the Captain and First Officer, so they are polite, but a little aloof.

These brunches are almost a generational throw-back, unpopular with young travellers or families. The main attendees are the older and richer travellers, and so the brunch represents a prime opportunity for the Vampire to scout for potential victims. All of the Vampire's Court will be present in this scene, and in later scenes when the characters are attempting to reconstruct the Vampire's network of servants, a stray recollection from this early scene can fill in some connections.

Zelda will ensure that she and at least one of her MI6 comrades meets Harvey during the mixing and mingling. At this stage in the scenario she believes

Harvey is the real power aboard the ship, and controls the production of the serum. She believes the serum suspends ageing, in effect, and Harvey is the evidence she thinks will persuade the others - once she can get them interested in him.

The Climax

The scene finishes with Zelda cornering Harvey extracting an invitation from him to dinner either that night or the next night.

Clues

Core Clue (free)

Harvey Cooper closely resembles a member of the Regent Street Club from the 1940s. [High Society]

Supplementary Clues (spend or test)

Fun with Zelda

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene can be lead in cold from any other scene, provided that the characters haven't done anything too crazy yet.

Lead Out

This scene can lead naturally into Champagne Brunch or Dinner with Harvey.

The Build Up

Zelda will pick one or two characters to take to one of the adventure areas, for some light shuffle-boarding or swimming. Wherever they go, Zelda will seek to escalate the activity beyond the comfort level of the PC.

The Climax

When the PC flags, Zelda will offer them a vitamin, swearing that they are a powerful restorative. Refer to Blood Serum, for the effects of the tablet if taken.

Clues

A woman of 75 cannot realistically be engaging in activities of this intensity. [Diagnosis]

Dinner with Harvey

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

The characters might come directly from Champagne Brunch, or they may defer it until later. The characters can arrive together or individually.

Lead Out

This scene can lead directly to The Death of Zelda or The Riot Club.

The Build Up

Harvey's apartment is large and luxurious, and he has on hand a selection of drinks and drugs. Harvey plays the role of a charming and gracious host, anxious to ensure his guests have a great time.

Dinner is served as informal tapas, accompanied by superb quality wine. Dinner conversation can extend as long as the players and GM enjoy, before Harvey suggests retiring to his drawing room for brandy and cigars.

The Vampire, with scant facility for manipulation or charm, is not present for this scene.

The Climax

Once the characters are comfortable, he will offer them a little something extra. Just how this is presented to the characters will depend on their attitude. Some groups will need to be lead to the offer via a discussion of the pleasures of life - best wine, best cigars, and so on. The basis of the sales pitch is ultimately that you only live once - and these octogenarian characters are fairly near the end of their once. To quote Edwin Hooper from *Little Miss Sunshine*, if you get to that age and don't do drugs, you're crazy.

Harvey should offer them some vitamins before indulging in cocaine or speed, or whatever the characters' drug of choice is. The vitamins are really the serum, and Harvey's real objective. Harvey will join the characters in indulging.

It is possible that the player characters will decline the offer of drugs, but Father Donovan will indulge. The effect will be noticeable, and fairly quick in appearing (refer to Blood Serum for the effects).

The scene can simply fade-to-black, drawing a veil across the party-scape and allowing a new scene to be framed in the morning.

Clues

Core clues (free)

The effects of the so-called vitamins are on the level of some experimental performance-enhancing drugs being developed during the Cold War. [Chemistry, Diagnosis, Pharmacy]

Harvey Cooper is suffering from severe depression [Bullshit Detector, Reassurance, Shrink test at difficulty 4]

Supplemental Clues (spend or test)

Harvey was more interested in them taking the vitamin cocktail than the drugs. [Bullshit Detector, Shrink test at difficulty 4]

Harvey believes that the drugs are all as safe as applicable for illegal drugs. [Bullshit Detector]

All the furniture, artworks, clothing, etc, is of the highest quality by bespoke tailors on Saville Row (etc) and new, but it is all old fashioned beyond Harvey's apparent age. [High Society, Art History]

Looting the Infirmary

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

This scene can occur any time after Fun with Zelda.

Lead Out

This scene leads to The Death of Zelda.

The Build Up

If the characters have become very friendly with Zelda, she might approach them to assist her in obtaining another supply of the serum. At the very least, she should hint that she has some kind of plan that will make her rejuvenation permanent.

The Climax

The Infirmary is not especially secure, but it is integrated into the security apparatus of the ship. Assuming the PCs are prepared to spend their limited resources on circumventing that, they should have no trouble.

Dr Coombes has a suspect list of one, however, and when confronted by the Vampire about the threat will spill Zelda's name.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

The "vitamins" that Zelda has stolen are not mass-produced. [Pharmacy]

The Death of Zelda

Any time after Dinner with Harvey Zelda will go and visit Dr Coombes to advise him on the progress of the plan, and to pick up more of the serum. The amount she stole on her last visit is running low, exacerbated by her youthful zest and providing samples to the other characters.

Dr Coombes can't supply Zelda any more, as the Vampire monitors supply levels closely and it has taken all his ingenuity to hide the amount she took with her on her last visit. Fearing that without a significant supply her plan will fail, she breaks into the infirmary and steals a supply.

This is a difficult plan for a number of reasons, not least of which is the confined nature of the ship. However, the combination of restored youth and the addictive properties of the serum over-rule the rational objections to the plan.

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

The characters notice that Zelda is missing, or any time after Looting the Infirmary.

Lead Out

The Build Up

Zelda successfully managed to break into the infirmary, but she was somewhat unprepared for modern surveillance technology. She is spotted by the cameras, and the Vampire decides that she has fulfilled her usefulness. The Vampire visits Zelda's cabin, and breaks her neck, simulating a fall.

If the characters are still on friendly terms with Zelda they will discover the body when they visit her and can perform an examination, otherwise it will be found by the cleaning staff. The security staff will treat this as an obvious accidental death, as will the doctor's Death Certificate. This is not obviously due to the influence of the Vampire - elderly people often suffer accidents, especially when cavorting as if they were young.

The Climax

Once Zelda is dead, the stakes should be clear to the characters: death is on the line.

Saving Zelda

If the group somehow sense that Zelda is in danger and either surveil her or otherwise protect her, this is fine, because the desired effect of engendering the required paranoia will have been achieved.

Clues - Body

Core Clue (free)

There are bite marks on the body, and nearby there is a small splash of blood, as if spat out. The body has not been drained of blood. [Notice]

Supplementary Clues (spend or test)

Death was not caused by a blow consistent with a fall. [Forensic Pathology]

Zelda was in better health for her age than is possible. [Forensic Pathology]

Analysis, such as observation through a microscope, of Zelda's blood can be carried out in the Serum lab, or in the Infirmary. The analysis shows anomalies in the blood structure, especially a massive increase in the density of the plasma and white cells. [Chemistry, Diagnosis, Forensic Pathology, Pharmacy]

This clue can in turn be leveraged to postulate that the changes in the blood make it poisonous to the Vampire. [Vampirology]

Clues - Room

Core Clues (free)

Zelda's room has been searched, but not professionally. [Tradecraft]

Supplementary Clues (spend or task)

There is no sign of forced entry. [Criminology, Electronic Surveillance]

The amount of money in Zelda's room safe is beyond her means. [Criminology, High Society]

Zelda came on this mission fully equipped with a package of spy gadgets, cunningly hidden in her room and missed by whomever searched it. [Tradecraft]

In the Infirmary

The infirmary is somewhat isolated from the production of the serum, but it is also the absolutely necessary cover for Dr Coombes, and it is where most of the medical records are kept.

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

The characters are all octogenarians who have lead variously adventurous lives. Their character backgrounds mention ailments leading to their retirement, or worsening their quality of life afterwards. Characters who took the vitamin supplement when offered by Harvey are likely to push themselves too hard when in the grip of the feeling of recaptured youth, and while unlikely to seriously hurt themselves, may renew a temporarily suppressed ache or pain. Even if they are cautious, the return of the aches and pains once the dose begins to wear off is an alarming reminder of the real world, and they may want to see whether the Doctor can prescribe them something - characters who have evaded temptation can experience a worsening of their symptoms requiring a doctor's visit. Finally, at some point their curiosity may be aroused about the doctor and the services he provides, prompting some old-fashioned snooping.

Lead Out

After any kind of detailed investigation into the infirmary or Dr Coombes the characters should be alarmed and ready to escalate their programme of investigation.

The Build Up

The infirmary is modern and well-equipped. There is an impressive array of medical equipment, including one overnight-stay bed. The Doctor is cordial, professional, even solicitous. He will ask for a quick summary of any relevant medical history - heart problems, arthritis, and so on.

Doctors are well placed to ask confidential questions, and he will make the most of that, framing an array of inquiries about their professional life and whether they remain active in any way as legitimate health inquiries.

The Climax

If the conversation does not go in an encouraging direction, the doctor will prescribe a fairly conventional treatment for whichever ailment prompted the visit. He will give the character the first dose of pills, plus a "vitamin", and send them on their way.

If the conversation goes well, he will offer them a new medicine. Officially still in trials, it has proven to have a wondrous effect on the character's particular ailment. While perhaps stretching ethics, the doctor will offer the character some of this wonder medicine - in reality a full dose of the Vampire's blood, added to a foul-tasting placebo to mask its true nature. He will say that the character should return in a day or two for a repeat dose, suggesting that only a handful of doses will be necessary to have a permanent effect.

In either case, he is reluctant to give the character their own supply in case they find a way to analyse it and determine its origin before the he is ready for them to move against the Vampire. As the Director, you don't need to be concerned about them inveigling their own supply, as allowing the characters to determine the real nature of the medicine allows them to become more pro-active in responding to the scenario. Nevertheless, make them do a little work for it.

There is the possibility that the character will attempt to force the doctor to reveal what he knows. The doctor is a medical man, not particularly cut out for resisting the interrogative efforts of a seasoned professional spy, so despite his conditioning by the Vampire can be made to spill with a spend from a relevant interpersonal skill.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

The infirmary is functional and shows signs of use, but there is not the kind of personal accretion of personal effects, professional notes, reference materials, etc, that would be expected if this were the doctor's primary work space. [Human Terrain]

Supplemental Clues (spend or task)

Dr Coombes' medical records include odd notes about the probability of specific patients dying of natural causes on the voyage, almost as if preparing a death certificate in advance. [Forensic Pathology]

Dr Coombes credentials are in locked storage in the infirmary, for presentation to shore officials as needed, but they are expert fakes. [Forgery]

The First Corpse

The Vampire needs to feed. It attempts to spread its feeding out over a group of people, but accidents happen and sooner or later the Vampire will go too far and kill someone. Generally, deaths are unusual aboard ship, but not completely unheard of. Disappearances are far more common, especially during stops. It is possible that the vampire has disposed of several bodies overboard before a corpse is found.

News of the body will not spread through the general population, but will be available to those with the characters' skill set if they choose to look out for it. The body will be stored in the ship's tiny morgue - refer to the "morgue" location - but more importantly, this establishes a pattern of deaths that will point the characters at the existence, nature, and presence of the Vampire.

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

If the characters have cultivated a mole or informant amongst the crew this will be easy. They could also learn about the death if they are monitoring internal communications. In the worst case, someone could mention it at bingo.

Lead Out

If this occurs after Zelda's death, it represents a small incremental escalation; of the Vampire becoming brazen. If this death is first, it's likely to trigger some concern but mostly for meta-game reasons.

Note, the essential features of this scene can be repeated as many times as interesting.

The Build Up

Edgar Frost was a cruise semi-regular, appearing almost desiccated by his lifestyle of sunning himself on deck and surviving on a diet of fruit daiquiris. He was a quiet and reclusive man, but was a famous golfer in his day, a fact unknown to the Vampire, who did not follow professional golf in the 1940s.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

The body has been drained of blood, but is otherwise perfectly healthy. [Diagnosis, Forensic Pathology, Vampirology]

Supplemental Clues (spend or task)

Cross checking Edgar's file in the infirmary will show he saw the doctor about a niggling shoulder injury. The doctor noted "possible heart attack" his notes. [Data Recovery]

Under Surveillance

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

This scene can occur any time after Zelda dies.

Lead Out

After this scene, there will be no doubt that hostile forces are moving against them and will know where to start looking for more information. They may choose further investigation, or they may make more aggressive moves. Whether there is an immediate response from the Vampire will depend on how subtle they are in counter-surveillance.

The Build Up

After Zelda's death, the Vampire will wish for her known associates to be kept under observation. This is mostly accomplished through the advanced array of security cameras throughout the ship, but each character will also be assigned

a minder - someone to keep nearby and keep an eye on them, just in case. Of course, as experienced operatives even if not at their peak powers, the characters should have little difficulty spotting these thuggish amateurs, a factor unknown to the Vampire.

The Climax

The characters will most likely choose to evade rather than confront, because they have limited resources or capability of resisting.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

The crew member following the character is not a professional. [Tradecraft]

They believe they have been instructed by the Security Chief, but this story is what they have been programmed to say if questioned. [Bullshit Detector]

Supplemental Clues

They were instructed by Georgia Roberts. [Interrogation]

Obtain Weapons

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

This scene mostly occurs after Under Surveillance.

Lead Out

Once the characters are armed the scenario moves to Fight.

The Build Up

The Sun Princess has no central weapons cache, and since the regular route is in areas not usually considered at risk from piracy there are no private security contractors on board. The chief of security has a locked cabinet that holds a taser.

However, private citizens aboard are transporting a limited array of pistols and hunting rifles. Identifying passengers transporting these goods is possible by analysing the passenger manifest [Data Recovery], or by finding the right social circles amongst the passengers [Human Terrain].

Fireworks are a minor part of the aquatic show held on the upper decks, which could be purloined and altered as one-use projectile weapons.

Finally, low-grade explosives (i.e. grenades) can be made from household cleaning materials that can be stolen from housekeeping.

The temptation to violence

Some playtest feedback suggested a weapons cache be on board to give the player characters more of a fighting chance against the Vampire. In that case, there is no reason for the security guards in the Fight scenes not to be equally armed. Either way, success is far more dependent upon the players' ability to successfully evade capture or attack until they can identify the Vampire.

Confronting Coombs

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene happens once the characters are sure there is a Vampire. It can be initiated by them, but if not then Dr Coombs must seek them out.

Lead Out

This scene can lead to Suborning Harvey, The Pitch for Immortality, or either of Fight or Flight, depending on the fate of Coombs.

The Build Up

Dr Coombs has lost his partner, Zelda, and is desperately afraid that the Vampire now knows of his disloyalty. He is becoming convinced that the Vampire will pretend not to know anything until it reaches Florida, where it will recruit a replacement and kill him. Now that he has developed the process, he realises that his value is a mere convenience, a labour-saving device for the Vampire in maintaining supplies.

The Climax

Dr Coombs will contact a player character for a private meeting, and lay the cards on the table - that he uses the Vampire's blood to produce a serum that restores youth, but which is addictive. He will avoid mentioning any of the negative side effects. His pitch is that if they can capture the Vampire, it can be held prisoner and bled forever, a veritable fountain of youth. Coombs imagines that if the Vampire can be kept in isolation and manhandled by intermediaries or mercenaries, that the risk of it taking control of his new partners is minimal. In the longer term, he plans to murder the characters once they've captured the Vampire for him.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

What Coombs says is true [Bullshit Detector].

Supplemental Clues

Coombs is holding back important facts [Bullshit Detector].

Suborning Harvey

Scene Type

Optional

Lead In

This scene should only occur once the players are actively engaged in evading or resisting the Vampire.

Lead Out

If successful, run Fight, but without any minion support for the Vampire.

If unsuccessful, move to Fight or Flight

The Build Up

Harvey is deeply damaged by his prolonged servitude, and so while he cannot mount an active resistance, he can provide information on every aspect of the Vampire's operation.

Harvey is not needed by the Vampire on a day-to-day basis, he is mostly wheeled out of storage for the beginning of voyages, before being left to his melancholy during the voyage. As the key assets are all in Harvey's name, he is usually accompanied by a steward Renfield. If the characters approach Harvey early in the scenario the steward will be relaxed, and the later their approach the more alert and numerous Harvey's protection will be.

The Climax

Once they have Harvey alone there are two main avenues, the carrot and the stick.

Harvey can never be more afraid of the characters than of his master, so attempts to bully or threaten him are met with resistance and defiance. Use of an aggressive inter-personal ability like Intimidation will trigger a psychotic break.

Conversely, if they appear sympathetic, particularly if they promise to help him recover himself while downplaying or omitting discussion of their plans for the Vampire, he can be coaxed into providing any information they need.

Clues

Core Clues (free)

Harvey is desperate to be free of the Vampire, but nonetheless is dependent upon it. [Reassurance]

Supplemental Clues

Any plausible spend will elicit the key information from Harvey, if he has it.

The Pitch for Immortality

Should the Vampire begin to lose, but where the basic infrastructure aboard the ship is still intact, such as if Harvey is killed but its officers remain in place, the Vampire will attempt to negotiate with the characters.

The meta-narrative purpose of this scene is to probe for cracks between the player characters as a way of heightening the drama. The scene does provide concrete information about what is going on too, and after this scene the characters will de facto choose whether they are going to become Vampire thralls, seek to destroy the Vampire, or become victims. After this meeting, the Vampire cannot leave them as loose ends.

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

The scene can play after the Vampire suffers any setback.

Lead Out

After this scene run Flight or Fight.

The Build Up

The characters have been enjoying the benefits of the serum, and have been making some headway into figuring out the strategic strengths and assets of the Vampire, and have taken specific action against its interests. The Vampire will contact one or two of the characters to arrange a private meeting in Harvey's suite of rooms - maintaining until the last possible moment any doubt they may be harbouring about whether Georgia or Harvey is the Vampire.

The Vampire will ask them whether they have been enjoying their renewed strengths and returned youth. Any prevarication or denial can be easily brushed off as patently untrue. From there, the scene plays out similarly to every other temptation scene in fiction. The catch is that the Vampire only wants two of the characters.

Mirror Mode

In the most extreme Mirror-mode games it may be worth taking the players who're meeting with the Vampire out of earshot of those who aren't. Whatever story they relate to their comrades will then need to

be evaluated by the remaining players. This will also allow the Vampire to approach all 4 characters and provide conflicting offers.

The Climax

By the time that the Vampire approaches the characters explicitly, they will know that something is not right. Once the Vampire's offer is on the table, the life of the character present is on a knife-edge. A straightforward denial makes the character an instant liability, and the Vampire will immediately try and kill the character.

Fight

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene occurs once the characters know who the Vampire is and decide to kill it.

Lead Out

This scene is effectively the end of the scenario.

The Build Up

Once the Vampire has been identified, the characters can move against it. The Vampire's cover identity has a cabin in the bowels of the ship. The Vampire rests here until it believes that its cover identity is burned, after which it relocates to Harvey's cabin, which becomes more of a strategic centre. Once the Vampire decides that the characters must die, it will mobilise its full array of thralls to search the ship for them, and will arrange for a number of other corruptible but not enthralled staff to assist.

The Climax

If the final fight happens in Harvey's cabin, the Vampire will be accompanied by one minion per character.

A far better strategy is to lure it out of the command centre, potentially by threatening the serum lab on which the Vampire's organisation. If they can get the Vampire out of the centre, it is accompanied only by a single thrall.

Flight

Scene Type

Core

Lead In

This scene occurs once the characters know who the Vampire is and decide to kill it.

Lead Out

This scene is effectively the end of the scenario.

The Build Up

Realising that the Vampire has had long-term control over the ship and its infrastructure, with an unknown number of minions and an unknown set of powers, the only sensible option is to flee. The main way of doing this is to steal a lifeboat and launch it at night.

The Climax

The anti-climax is that the characters are adrift in the Atlantic Ocean. Most likely they die of exposure before being rescued, since if they use the distress signal too early the Vampire's ship will return for them.

Part 6: Player Characters

Rules of Aging

The characters are all very old, and have had active lifestyles. They begin the game with all investigative and general ability pools expended, except for Contacts. They begin with Health at half, but full Stability.

Claude Everett

Some people are too smart for their own good. That's always been you. You should have been top of your class in primary school, college and University, but you preferred anything to the mediocrity of academic success. Your grades were never bad, but your extra-curricular shenanigans bounced you from school to school. Gambling was always a key vice, and when that proved insufficiently challenging, selling your systems to the incredulous proved more entertaining. Selling exam results to your class mates was the final straw for your Cambridge career - results not stolen, but simply interpreted from past exams. When the serious men in brown suits came to your flat as you were packing up, you assumed CID. It was MI6.

You were slated for the Cryptography section, but fascinating as code breaking is, you lacked passion for problem solving in isolation. You traded favours until you were sent abroad to receive the field experience you craved. Dead drops and surveillance of the same kept you entertained for a while, but never for too long at a stretch. You bounced from bureau to bureau, all over the service. Useful enough that no commander wished to lose you, never focused enough to make a real contribution.

Sometime in the 1970s age began to catch up with you. You found yourself less able to pick up new names, faces, locations and methods. You transferred back to where it all began, with code-breaking. Your disparate career meant you would never be promoted into management, and when computers began to arrive in a serious way, you were too old a dog to learn a new trick. You fell behind in your work, and you devoted yourself more and more to your private theory: the whole Cold War was a front for a deeper struggle, with a shadowy organisation that had a feather touch on most major crime networks, and assets inside every intelligence agency. The close friends you approached with your theory laughed in your face, and in 1995 your eccentricities were used for force you into a belated retirement. Replaced by a computer, you surmise.

Infirmity swiftly followed retirement, and you've spent the last 18 years declining gently into decrepitude. The final humiliation came last year, when your grandchildren put you into an old age home to wait for the grim reaper. You salvaged what notes you could, but you were gently, kindly and firmly told by one or other of the tykes that it was finally time to live in the real world.

Description

You are significantly over-weight. While not suffering from a specific ailment, your lung capacity has declined to a dangerous level, requiring you to wear an oxygen tank at all times while out of bed. You can no longer walk wholly unaided, and the necessity of transporting the oxygen means using a wheelchair when moving further than a few yards. More distressing is your loss of short-term focus and memory, making it impossible to really engage in complex tasks or problem solving.

Drive

Your drive is *Mystery*. When you were unceremoniously exiled, you were just beginning to realise the truth. As a private citizen, your options have been limited, but the Cold War was just a cover story and you've never given up wanting to know who was really behind the machinations.

Stat Block

PC Relationships

Wilbur Grafton

Wilbur was a field agent - Black Ops. He tried to become a Private Eye after he left the service, but didn't last long at it. Probably required a bit much brain. You've seen him a lot more this last few years while you've both been

part of the social club, and he's not a bad sort. Like all ex-army or special forces, he's got a good collection of war stories.

Trust 3 - Stolid, but reliable. He'd go to the wall for you - probably just on principle, but what does that matter?

Joshua Harrison

Joshua's what you'd call, a colourful character. He's lived a reckless and devil-may-care life that you have always envied. He found his passion in dangerous missions to transport goods for MI6 and as a cut-out, was always completely disposable.

Trust 1 - A proven field operative.

Agnes Travers

You got a look at her Eyes Only dossier. Agnes lived quite an eventful life before and after her decade as an undercover specialist: professional thief. She reportedly had nerves of steel until a near-fatal attack by one of her marks. Your private suspicion from what you've gleaned over the years, is that she was attacked by one of the shadowy deep players that you've brushed up against.

Trust 0 - How can you ever trust someone who made their living by being a consummate liar?

Eunice Wilton

Eunice's front was as a secretary within the department. Perhaps that was a ruse to prevent enemy agents targeting her. In reality, she was an influential deal-maker within MI6, and her support was considered essential for many new missions and projects. She, more than anyone else you know, was a true master of espionage.

Trust 1 - Eunice was one of the few people prepared to entertain your theories, even if she never apparently acted on them.

Wilbur Grafton

Your family survived the worst of World War II, hiding in shelters as London was destroyed around you. Your father thought the horrors of that war would mean a generation of peace, but you volunteered for the Army on your 18th birthday. You were the best of the best and so found your way into the SAS. You were recruited from there for the real war - the Cold War, as a black bag operative for MI6.

You remember the whole of the 1960s and 1970s as a heart-pounding adrenalin rush, but you know objectively that for every kind of soldier 95% of your time is spent waiting, filling your time with drills, work-outs, and planning. By 1980 you were through as a field operative. You thought all the booze and Benzedrine would hit your liver or heart first, but it was your knees that really gave out. You weren't cut out for the in-fighting back at HQ, the pointless bickering, the currying favour, the endless paperwork. You took a slightly early retirement in 1990, and went into business as a private dick.

Sleuthing was all the tedium of spying, with none of the excitement, and if the pay for a job was good, it was also a touch infrequent. That was when you began to really suspect that the Cold War had been nothing compared to the real war, between the various civilised governments and some shadowy organisation with reach and resources that you could only guess at. You were hired to extract a man from a secretive cult, which you did. The blood-worshipping cult, who performed human sacrifice and venerated the iconography of the Vampire, seemed too crazy to be real. Their leader, a surprisingly young man, confronted you as you exited. You were forced to kill him, though it proved extraordinarily difficult, as a result, some of your stranger black ops started to make more sense. When your investigations into the cult started to imply that he really was the Vampire he'd claimed to be, you retired fully.

Description

You have the spare figure of someone not eating properly. You don't eat properly because of your extensive dental problems, but you're too stubborn to have your teeth removed in order to fit dentures. Your knees have been largely obliterated, so you walk slowly with a cane and then only with difficulty.

Drive

Your drive is *Comradeship*. You got into the service for the thrills and to serve your country, but as you've gotten older you realise that friends from the old days are all that old spies really get. The wars go on without you, but you never leave a comrade behind.

Stat Block

PC Relationships

Claude Everett

Claude was something of an all-rounded, bouncing from bureau to bureau. He eventually settled in cryptology. He retired early, ostensibly for health reasons, but it was whispered in back channels that he lost his marbles. He believed in a masonic conspiracy, or some such rubbish, interfering with MI6. Your own brush with the cult caused you to wonder about that - but not for too long.

Trust 0 - Even in retirement, Claude maintains some pretty odd ideas. How can you trust a man that believes in evil fairies or whatever it was?

Joshua Harrison

Josh is one of your oldest chums. You were at Rugby together, and you got him his job as a pilot and driver for MI6. He was always damned good at his job and a better friend. You were absolutely floored when you learned not only was he gay, but had HIV.

Trust 1 - It took years for you to forgive Josh for hiding who he really was all those years, but you're too old to hold a grudge any longer.

Agnes Travers

Agnes was a superb under-cover agent, though she was a gun for hire, as it were, rather than a patriot. You never worked with her directly, but her reputation was first class until one of her marks turned on her and left her for dead. You've been friendly since you both retired.

Trust 1 - For all that she was a superb field agent, her lifestyle seems a bit beyond what should be possible on a government pension.

Eunice Wilton

Eunice sat at the centre of a web of intrigue within the department. She was one of the few who listened at all seriously to Claude's theories. You never had much to do with her professionally, but you have been friendly for the last few years.

Trust 3 - Eunice effectively ran large parts of the department for decades. She held all the keys, knew all the secrets, and never was there even a rumour that she stepped over the line.

Joshua Harrison

You were the third son and fourth child of Sir Kenneth Harrison, QC. You may not have been born with the proverbial silver spoon in your mouth, but your family never lacked for anything, and the country estate escaped the Second World War virtually unscathed. Your eldest brother saw the last few months of fighting in Europe without so much as a scratch. Your family's always been lucky that way.

You went to Rugby and then to Cambridge, where you got a first in Latin, and you were ceremoniously packed off to a civil service job at Whitehall, where you encountered the first whiff of failure in your life. You hated the stuffy desk job with its petty office politics, and began to spend more and more of your time indulging your hobby flying aeroplanes. Once you were sacked, you connived your way into a Formula-3 team, and were pretty handy, winning some races and showing some promise.

By that time, the so-called "Iron Curtain" had fallen across Europe, and your old school chum Wilbur asked you whether you wouldn't mind helping him make a couple of crossings into Hungary. As you took off on that first mission, your heart was racing like you'd never felt - the thrill of penetrating behind enemy lines was intoxicating and addictive. You were never what you'd call a proper spy, but you were an "arms-length" operative used more than once by His and then Her Majesty's Secret Services to deliver cargo in and out of Communist Europe.

Of course that all came to an end one day in November 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down. Communism wasn't defeated, but Glasnost in all its forms spelt the end of the existence of your specialist occupation. You could have gone private - smuggling weapons and drugs for money, but your heart just wasn't in it. You packed it in and settled down to live off your savings and the substantial income that still comes in from your family businesses, even if the whole lot is now run by your rather repulsive nephew Cyril.

To the extent possible, you live a life of perpetual summers, watching the young bucks on beaches in the Mediterranean when not in England.

Description

You've reached your late 80s in good nick, with no significant injuries or ailments. You're a spring chicken compared to the rest of the tourists. The snag is you were diagnosed HIV positive in the mid 90s, not surprising really, since you went a bit mad a bit carelessly after it was obvious your career as a spy was at an end. Every cold since then has felt like you were playing Russian Roulette.

Drive

Your drive is *Thrill-Seeking*. Despite your advanced years, you've never lost the yearning for risk, you've just had to scale back your ambitions from racing cars to j-walking.

PC Relationships

Claude Everett

Claude was a jack-of-all-trades in the department. He was always very handsome and well presented. The truth of it was you always had a crush on him, but in those days it was inconceivable to ever tell him, not just socially, but as a security risk.

Trust 3 - Perhaps because you've always fancied him, you can look past some of his eccentric ideas about conspiracies within the department.

Wilbur Grafton

You've known Willie your whole life, so have been through the thick and thin of life's travails. You always feel like he saved your life, getting you as his pilot that first time, without which who knows what kind of trouble you'd have found.

Trust 1 - The older you get, the more you need the people you knew when you were young.

Agnes Travers

Agnes was a talented field operative. You chauffeured her places with gunfire in your wake more than once. She was breathless and bold and exciting, and you liked her very much.

Trust 1 - Agnes and you have been through enough scrapes to have each other's backs.

Eunice Wilton

A desk jockey that you've met only a handful of times. She was someone or other's secretary, but she got a gong so must have been doing someone right.

Trust 0 - Don't know her, not sure you care to.

Agnes Travers

The opportunities just weren't there for you to have turned out as an upstanding member of society. Your family was dirt poor, and you were brave, dexterous, and a little amoral. You were stealing from stores before you could read, and graduated to the short con soon thereafter. It was either steal or live on rations. You may have ended up a professional thief if another career hadn't struck like a bolt from the blue. You were cast in a West End play that was the season's smash hit. You were a success, and after the production toured Europe you stayed, working as an itinerant actress.

Your facility for languages and your charm meant that you were able to live as a minor celebrity in the theatres of Europe, especially Italy, where you met your first husband. He was rich, and handsome, but mostly rich. He was also involved in financing some very dubious organisations, from even more dubious sources. When you realised the real source of his wealth, you were sickened - you had always thought of yourself as a free thinker, but he was undoubtedly evil. Somehow your dissatisfaction became known to MI6, and you provided them crucial evidence for the case against him. When they swooped in, you assumed it was to arrest him - instead they turned him, to run as a double agent.

You were pulled out and offered a new life. The excitement of the intrigue was addictive, and you convinced them to deploy you as a field agent, mostly undercover. Your career as an undercover asset was successful until 1981, when your mark, an obscure French Comte, somehow found out that you were an agent. He attacked you in a rage, and left you for dead, but you didn't die. You retired to the safety of a life of crime, but now even that occupation has been left behind.

Arthritis began to be a nuisance near the end of the 1980s, and by 2000 you needed help with the most basic movements or manual tasks. Your days have been spent trying to dictate your memoirs to your secretary, but you were never one for books, so your main real occupation is tea and gossip with other retired spies.

Description

You are gnarled and bent these days. You can still hobble around with the aid of crutches, you are not yet confined to a wheelchair. You have aged gracefully, dressing in a conservative style in tailored clothes, and eschewing signs of false youth.

Drive

Your drive is *Restoration*. Whatever lies you've told about your avaricious nature, or your lack of patriotic drive, the truth is you got out after 1981 because you were afraid. The Comte who attacked you was beyond humanly strong, tough and vicious. It broke your nerve, and more than anything else, you don't want to die afraid.

Stat Block

PC Relationships

Claude Everett

Claude was never a dedicated company man. He was in the service for the same reason as you were - adventure and profit. In his case, more adventure than profit. He retired from real spying to work in cryptography. He's a little eccentric, but that just makes him more interesting.

Trust 3 - A kindred spirit. He was the only person who took seriously your claim that your attacker was not a man at all, but literally some kind of monster in a man's shape.

Wilbur Grafton

Wilbur was a foot-soldier in the fight against Communism: a black bag operative. You never worked closely with him, but his reputation was for fearlessness.

Trust 1 - A reliable comrade.

Joshua Harrison

One of the last true Daredevils left in the world. He came in to pull you out of a tough spot more than once, and always showed an especial dedication to the cause that only an outsider can manage - he was an "arms-length" operative, disposable essentially. You always wondered why he never made a pass at you amongst all that stimulating danger.

Trust 1 - A great man to have in a tough spot.

Eunice Wilton

It's terrible to try and compare yourself to another woman in what was always a man's game. No matter how skilled a field agent you were, there was no chance of being given a promotion to running operations. Eunice side-stepped all official channels, a back-room director.

Trust 0 - Despite yourself, you've always resented her success and her being made a Dame, even as you recognised a genius at work.

Eunice Wilton

You were born a Catholic, and perhaps that helped make you suitable for your career as a keeper of secrets. Your parents were killed during the war, and you were forced to find work as a secretary to support your large gaggle of younger siblings. You were an excellent secretary: calm, hard-working and master of administrative tasks. You kept your eyes open, and after nearly a decade of excellence, found yourself as secretary to the permanent secretary to the Foreign Office. When he went to MI6 in 1960, you went with him.

Officially, you were a secretary, interchangeable with many others. In practice, you were the indispensable assistant to the head of MI6, and trusted with a great deal of sensitive information. Your opinion was privately sought on most topics until the great man retired in 1967. His replacement saw you as simply another typist, and you returned to the general secretarial pool.

Your years within earshot of the central machinations had left you with some friends and many more useful connections. You acted as the secretary for a minor bureau sub-chief, but in reality you became a broker within the organisation, using your connections to facilitate off-the-books operations and information transfers. You played your own game, a game of real power hidden from the official channels.

Through the early years of your career as a subterranean power, you sensed that you had an opponent, someone deeply entrenched in the system and utterly ruthless. In 1983, you finally extricated your enemy, Owen Conway. You had him arrested for espionage. The investigation you had instigated lead back in time, showing Owen as having been active inside the Foreign Office since Lord Grey hired him in 1924. He seemed unperturbed by any interrogation. After a year in maximum security, he broke free of his restraints and killed several guards to escape. The testimony of the survivors and witnesses all agreed that he had been shot perhaps a dozen times. No body was ever recovered. All investigative materials were classified Top Secret and buried.

In 1987 you arranged for yourself to be made a Dame, officially in recognition of your Civil Service. Privately, it was a signal of your influence. You retired once the Berlin wall fell. Your scrupulous honesty means that while still sought periodically for advice, you live a modest lifestyle on a government pension. Your dedication to MI6 means that you are estranged from your relatives, so the only people you see regularly are like yourself, spies put out to pasture.

Description

You have reached an advanced age in great condition. You get a little short of breath, and you need two naps a day, but you can walk unaided - if a little slowly. Your eyesight leaves a lot to be desired, but you can see well enough to play bridge and read your beloved Russian novels.

Drive

Your drive is *Transparency*. You fought against your country's real enemies and won some battles, but the only way the war can be won is if the public knows the truth.

Stat Block

PC Relationships

Claude Everett

Claude should have had the perfect run to being the Director General of MI6. He was a genius, and his family name earned him entry into all the right schools. Unfortunately, he was also a catastrophic fuck-up, getting kicked out of each in turn. His espionage career has been similarly turbulent. He was bounced from bureau to bureau before end his career in Cryptography. He too found out about

your great enemy, but ineptly blundered through the department raising suspicion, and so got himself removed from the game.

Trust 0 - Too much of a maverick to place any confidence in.

Wilbur Grafton

Wilbur is a straightforward meat-and-potatoes black ops asset. He was one of the most sought-after black bag men until his knees gave out. He retired a little early and tried his hand at sleuthing. He's probably spent the last 25 years at his club or an RSA reminiscing about the glory days.

Trust 1 - A good man to have in your corner in any trouble.

Joshua Harrison

Joshua was a contractor, never officially employed by MI6. He was a pilot and driver. His homosexuality could be tolerated because he never knew anything remotely important.

Trust 1 - Joshua had the zeal for service that only seems to exist in the penumbra of the service, and you're old enough not to care that he's a fag.

Agnes Travers

Agnes had a long string of arrests for varying degrees of theft but few convictions before her marriage to a shady character. She was turned by MI6 and became a major asset until one of your enemy's assets took her out of the game: broke her confidence. After that, she retired on her now-dead husband's money.

Trust 3 - You've known what a struggle it is to make it as an intelligence operative in a man's world. It's easier if the girls stick together.

Part 7: Variations on a Theme

Player-created characters

While the included pre-generated characters are tailored to the scenario, they will always be less engaging than characters devised by the players. There are numerous options for alternate characters who can suitably pursue this mission, as well as several other kinds of Vampires that are suitable substitutes.

The most convenient re-framing for the characters is to set this scenario up as counter-intelligence. The Vampire has arranged for four retired MI6 agents to be aboard the ship - clearly it wishes to use them for something: but what? The characters are tasked with establishing what the Vampire wants from the old timers and preventing the transaction taking place. Most of the scenes sketched earlier in the scenario can play out as written, with the exception that the new player characters will be observing and looking for an opportunity to interfere.