

A Storytelling Game of Personal Horror

SECOND EDITION

"No one holds command over me. No man. No god. No Prince.
What is a claim of age for ones who are immortal? What is a claim
of power for ones who defy death? Call your damnable hunt. We
shall see who I drag screaming to hell with me."

— Günter Dörn, *Das Ungeheuer Darin*

Sample file



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VAMPIRE

The Masquerade[®]

**A Storytelling Game of
Personal Horror**

Sample file

By becoming a monster, one learns what it is to be human

By Mark Rein•Hagen

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Attention: Reader discretion is advised. The themes and issues described in this game may be disturbing to some and distasteful to others. Though our purpose is not to offend, our use of the vampire as a metaphor and as a channel for storytelling may be misconstrued. To be clear, vampires are not real. The extent to which they may be said to exist is revealed only in what they can teach us of the human condition and of the fragility and splendor which we call life.

Dedication

This game is dedicated to Vaclav Havel — poet, playwright and statesman — who was its inspiration.

"We are still under the sway of the destructive and vain belief that man is the pinnacle of creation, and not just a part of it, and that, therefore, everything is permitted.... We are incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of our actions — if they are to be moral — is responsibility. Responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my firm, my success. Responsibility to the order of Being, where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where, and only where, they will be properly judged."

Vaclav Havel, in a speech to the United States Congress



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This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.



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Monsters, Monsters, Everywhere. . .

They crowd our imagination. They hide under our beds. They lurk within the dark recesses of our primal unconscious. You can't run, you can't hide — it's going to get you. The beast, the ravager, the *Lusus Natura*. What is it, and why do we fear it?

What is its name?

We have always had our Fiends. They have long fired the romantic imagination of priest and poet alike. At one time we called them Trolls; later they were named Demons, and then they were Witches who brewed evil potions. Still later, the Monster was said to be the hungry Wolf, the Bogeyman, or the Godzilla of Cold War terror. Finally, some called it human ignorance and intolerance. For a time, they tried to tell us that monsters don't exist at all, that everything about the universe was either known or would soon be known.

But now we know better. We have made our acquaintance with the Beast. We have learned its true name.

Now we understand the expanse of eternity, its unimaginable infinitude, the chaos of its structure, and our own petty insignificance. Now we have admitted the magnitude of the problems we face and our seeming inability to affect change on the scale necessary to save us.

Today we have caught a glimpse of reality, and have seen the truth behind the veil. We have come full circle and rediscovered the Fiend. We have regained our ancient heritage. We have found that to which we have given so many names — the source of our mortal terror.

We have found the enemy... and it is us.



We are searchers, forever looking for the uncomfortable truth of our human condition, searching within ourselves for that which is unclear, uncertain or impure — for that which has no name. By looking at the monsters we create, we gain new insights into our “darker half.” These fiends express what we are at the deepest and most inaccessible levels of our unconscious. Since time immemorial, they have given us a connection to our animal self, the fulfillment of an unadulterated emotional vitality, and the promise of a brutal justice.

The vampire is the quintessential fiend, for the vampire is so much our own reflection. Vampires feed as we feed, by killing. And through death can feel the same dread, guilt and longing for escape. They are trapped in the cease cycle of fast, feast and purge. They, like us, seek redemption, purity and peace. The vampire is the poetic expression of our deepest fears, and the shadow of our most primal urges.

Just as the hero of legend must descend into the pit of Purgatory to face the tormentor, overcome personal weaknesses, and finally be cleansed in order to return home with the gift of fire, so must we descend into the depths of our own soul and return to life with the secrets we have won. That is the real journey of Prometheus. It is the meaning of the myth. Only by embarking on such a journey can we discover our true selves and look into the mirror.

The lure of this promise of spiritual connection is well-nigh irresistible. But, in the end, it is a most disturbing undertaking. You must take heed and step carefully — for no journey is ever without its perils. Do not look into your own soul, unless you are willing to confront that which you find there.

So remember:

There are no such things as monsters....